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BRECHT: REFLECTION OF REALITY

by

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## PREFACE

An historian's knowledge is useful only if that knowledge also provides perspective. It is for this reason that history includes a study of literature, philosophy and art. This project has had as its object a study of German history from 1898 to 1933. This work has formed the background for a study of some of the works of Bertolt Brecht, poet-playwright.

My studies of Germany and Brecht could not and would not have been undertaken or continued without the encouragement and guidance of my director, Dr. Eugene E. Pfaff. The same might be said of my entire stay at this university. Thank you seems too small but it is most simple and most sincere.

Sincere thanks are also given to my roommate, Sharon, who put up with 700 notecards, to Mary Kathryn Bailey who typed, typed, and typed, and to Claudia Buchdahl and Pam Pfaff who listened and listened.

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## INTRODUCTION

Bertolt Brecht was born in Augsburg in 1898.<sup>1</sup> He was exiled with Hitler's rise to power in 1933.<sup>2</sup> In 1949 Brecht returned to East Germany where he established the Berliner Ensemble.<sup>3</sup> The Stalin Peace Prize was awarded to him in 1955.<sup>4</sup>

Brecht has become one of the most controversial literary figures of our time because after 1927<sup>5</sup> he openly espoused Marxist-Leninism. It would be foolish to ignore the concrete realities of his experience with Communism. At the same time doubt must be cast upon his "affiliation" by his own testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1947:

I was an independent writer and wanted to be an independent writer, and I point out that and also theoretically, I think, it was the best for me not to join any party whatever. . . I think they [German Communists presumably] considered me just as a writer who wanted to write the truth as he saw it, but not as a political figure.

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<sup>1</sup>U. S., Congress, House, Report of the Committee on Un-American Activities, 80th Cong., 2nd Session, 1947, quoted in Twentieth Century Views Brecht, Peter Demetz (ed.), (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Martin Esslin, Brecht: A Choice of Evils, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959), p. 78.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>5</sup>John Willett, The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht, (London: Methuen and Co. LTD., 1959), p. 193.

Further doubt is cast by reading Brecht's works. His early plays and later plays are in fact far removed from communism. I would suggest rather that Brecht's politics were; as Lotte Lenya said, those of humanism. I do not think that one can categorically state or explain the depth of Brecht's political affiliations. What we can never know is Brecht's own mind. His writings can be our only source for his philosophy. Important, then, is that Brecht wrote. We are allowed to see Germany through the eyes of an extraordinarily gifted writer. He wrote about and for Germany in the chaotic inter-war years. He reacted to a society's values with criticism. At the same time he tried to answer that society's quest for a new ideology.

Brecht's works could form a condensed compendium of all the polemics against nationalistic Germany and western liberal society. Brecht's quest was for a society in which man will be able to be good. He believed that neither the ideas of the old Reich nor the new Weimar was viable for a new Germany.

Related themes are altered by the tone or atmosphere of the play. Tone or atmosphere is achieved by irony, satire, metaphors, allusions or alliterative phrases. A simple example is found in Saint Joan of the Stockyards. The heroine is "Joan Dark." Another device frequently used is the American setting. America is Brecht's symbol of the most conventional society. The use of such devices create a tone which gives depth to one's responses to the theme of the play.

Brecht's style is bold, forthright, brilliant. He is not simple but one does not find a withdrawal into esoteric allusions and symbols. Brecht wanted to create a theatre for the masses; to teach them about themselves and to help them discover solutions to their problems.

Brecht calls his theatre "epic." Unlike the Aristotlian theatre in which we emotionally empathize, Brecht wants the audience at arm's length so they may study and judge the arguments set forth. In this way, also, we are taught.<sup>6</sup>

Brecht is anti-individualist. His characters are grotesque figures that symbolize ideas. One is forced to consider the problems expounded on the stage. There is not an experience of tragedy or joy for the individual but for the impotence of anyone in a given situation. Brecht's man is mass man.

The political and social forces which affected Brecht's temperament are inextricably interwoven. Brecht reacted to the past and to the immediate reality of the world around him. These reactions led him to hope for a different society. Brecht's reactions to World War I create the tone, the mood of a nation at war and destroyed in its cause. The plays of the Weimar period reflect the problems of the inter-war years.

The poems and plays that I shall use develop Brecht's social philosophy from its early vehemence to the mellowness of a man who is older and wiser. "The Ballad of the Dead Soldier," and Drums in the Night were written between 1920-21. In the Swamp was written in 1921-23; A Man's a Man, 1924-25; Saint Joan of the Stockyards, 1929-30; Mother Courage and Her Children, 1939; and The Good Woman of Setzuan, 1938-40.

That we may understand the reaction of the far left to World War I and the Weimar Republic, that we may share in the search for a solution to the human predicament in a tradition other than our own is my purpose. That Bertolt Brecht leads us in that direction is what I shall attempt to prove.

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<sup>6</sup>Esslin, pp. 107-129.

I. AT THE END OF THE WAR

"They told us it was for the Fatherland and meant the schemes of annexations in a greedy industry. They told us it was for honor and meant the quarrels and the will to power of a handful of ambitious diplomats and princes . . . . They stuffed out the word patriotism with all the twaddle of their fine phrases, with their desire for glory, their will to power, their false romanticism, their stupidity, their greed of business, and then paraded it before us as a shining ideal! And we thought they were sounding a bugle summoning us to a new, a more strenuous, a larger life."<sup>1</sup>

In November the war was over. Its end came like a sigh of relief to suffering Germany. As November, 1918, signaled the end to an era which had begun with Bismarck, it signaled the beginning of another era which was to be much like the years before. Brecht reflected upon the war in several of his works. He questioned its meaning and its terror. One of the currents of modern German history that first appears in Brecht is a revolt against imperialism because of the destruction that the First World War had brought Germany. As Brecht's principal theme is man's inhumanity to man, to war becomes its ultimate expression.

War had been the climate in Germany. Brecht knew this from his youth, had felt it happen, had been a part of the society that had accepted Wilhelm II's grandiose scheme for the Reich.<sup>2</sup>

Bismarck had built a fence around Germany in the Three Emperor's

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<sup>1</sup>Erich Maria Remarque, *The Road Back*, trans., A. W. Wheen (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1931), pp. 214-215.

<sup>2</sup>Veit Valentin, *The German People*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), pp. 512-514.

League, the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, and the Triple Alliance.<sup>3</sup> The long peace had given the Reich an unprecedented era of technical and economic growth.<sup>4</sup> Wilhelm II had come to power when Germany could have entered upon an era of reform and cultural integration; however, he was not dedicated to such an idea.<sup>5</sup> Brecht and the naval policy, which was the standard bearer of the whole militant-nationalistic movement, were born in the same year.<sup>6</sup> Weltpolitik became the word. Germany was to become more than an arbiter of Europe. Bulow, the Chancellor, had summed up the aims of Wilhelm's naval policy in this way: "We do not desire to put anyone else in the shade, but we want our place in the sun."<sup>7</sup> The subsequent naval bill that was introduced to the Reichstag brought immediate conflict among the various parties represented there. To the Social Democrats its aims were contrary to their professed internationalism. To the National Liberals it was a threat to the Reichstag as they saw the control of the purse for naval expansion pass out of their hands for seven years with the passage of the 1898 bill.<sup>8</sup> What was the purpose of the program for naval expansion? To create a "... German fleet which, not necessarily the strongest in the world, was to be so strong that even for the most powerful naval power an assault by sea would not be without grave danger and risk."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Koppel S. Pinson, Modern Germany, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 295.

<sup>4</sup>Valentin, p. 533.

<sup>5</sup>Pinson, p. 300.

<sup>6</sup>Valentin, p. 526.

<sup>7</sup>Pinson, p. 296.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 300.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 300-301.

The naval policy would precipitate a series of crises which would lead to World War I. An expansionist, colonial attitude is evident in the two Moroccan crises.<sup>10</sup> It was further evident in the attempted economic penetration of the East by the negotiations for the Berlin-to-Baghdad railroad.<sup>11</sup> Germany obviously had no intention of confining her influence to Europe.

The concrete realities of the naval expansion bill, Morocco and the Baghdad railroad, were given emotional underpinnings by the Pan-German League, which had been formed in 1891. Its aims were:

Protection of the German people, the support and protection of German national ambitions and the union of all Germans in the world for these aims, the encouragement of a vigorous German foreign policy in Europe and overseas, and the pushing forward of German foreign policy to practical results.<sup>12</sup>

Pan-Germanism, founded on the ideas of Wagner, Gobineau, Hegel, and Fichte, became a potent force for the welding and wielding of opinion.

This climate of opinion led to war, a war about which Max Weber would say, "This war with all its ghastliness is nevertheless grand and wonderful. It is worth experiencing."<sup>13</sup>

The most significant thing about the war, besides its horror,

<sup>10</sup>The first Moroccan crisis occurred in 1902. It was a result of a clash between French and German commercial interests. The 1902 clash was settled by the Algeiras Conference. The second Moroccan crisis occurred in 1909-1911 after French penetration of Fez which violated the treaty. The appearance of the German gunboat "Panther" and seizure of Fez touched off the crisis. It was settled by arbitration in Germany's favor. Valentin, pp. 346-555.

<sup>11</sup>Marshall Dill, Jr., Germany, A Modern History (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 208.

<sup>12</sup>Valentin, p. 519.

<sup>13</sup>Max Weber, Gesammelte Politische Schriften, (Munich, 1921), p. 458, quoted in Pinson, p. 313.

was the absolute and utter confusion over its aims. Each political party supported the war for a different set of reasons. With the outbreak of war the Reichstag proclaimed a "Burgfrieden," a political truce, to forget party differences and give support to the government.<sup>14</sup> They then voted the necessary war credits and went home to compose their own factions.

Where in Germany might one find the real aims of the war? The medical corpsman Brecht might have turned to the parties of the Reichstag whose aims were as diverse as the causes of the war. The Social Democrats claimed a defensive war against Russia.<sup>15</sup> The Pan-Germans and the Supreme Command wanted a peace that would make England fear Germany.<sup>16</sup> The cries of annexation politics were heard throughout Germany. Even as the war drew to an end, the German treaty with Russia would be described in this way: "Never in the history of the world has there been an instance of greater annexationist politics than the peace of Brest-Litovsk."<sup>17</sup> Though the Reichstag resounded with recriminations and accusations, they remained, nevertheless, completely ineffective. The ineffectiveness of the Reichstag facilitated the rise of the military dictatorship of Ludendorff and Hindenburg. The Reichstag Commission stated in 1919: "For four years, Germany had practically no political

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<sup>14</sup>Marvin L. Edwards, Stresemann and the Greater Germany, 1914-1918 (New York: Bookman Associates, Inc., 1963), p. 19

<sup>15</sup>Pinson, p. 328.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 326.

<sup>17</sup>Albrecht Philipp (ed.), Die Ursachen Des Deutschen Zusammenbruchs in Jahre, (Berlin: 1928), quoted in Pinson, p. 335.

government but a military dictatorship. This we can now openly declare."<sup>18</sup>

This was Germany before the war and during the war, motivated by Pan-Germanism, by annexation politics, by military dictatorship.

This attitude is reflected superbly in "The Ballad of the Dead Soldier:"

And when the fifth springtime of war  
No sign of peace brought forth  
The soldier said; you can go to hell,  
And died a hero's death.

Because the war was not quite done  
It made the Kaiser blue  
To think the soldier lay there dead  
Before his time came due.

.....  
The medical commission trailed out

.....  
And with sanctified spades they dug the fallen  
Soldier out of the sod.

.....  
They took the soldier along with them,

.....  
In Front the music with Tzing-boom-boom  
Played a jolly march  
And the soldier, the way he was taught,  
Swung his legs from the arse.

.....  
They painted colors on his shroud,  
Red, white, and black,

.....  
A man in tails strode on ahead,  
His chest was bulging, too,  
For as a German citizen  
He knew just what to do.

.....  
And when they passed through villages  
The women all were there.  
The trees bowed low, The full moon shone  
And all cried out: hurrah!

.....  
And when they passed through villages  
The crowd it left no room  
To see the soldier, so many ran  
With hurrah and tzing-boom-boom.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>19</sup>Bertolt Brecht, Selected Poems, trans. H. R. Hays (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1959), pp. 57-61.

Brecht has recorded the "hurrah" of the war with hatred and derision. Nevertheless, the intoxication that the masses felt with the war is recorded. They were destroying themselves just as they had destroyed the last possession of the soldier, that of death.

A Man's a Man is an even more biting indictment of imperialism and militant nationalism. A Man's a Man is a play about soldiers in a queen's army fighting a war first in India and then Tibet. It is a war being fought for no reason at all. The army kills, plunders, defames as every colonizing army has done in the past.

Not only does A Man's a Man reflect the chaos of war but also Brecht's growing hatred of militarism, which is linked with his hatred of imperialistic nationalism. War is hated for what it is capable of doing. War not only destroys property and life, but in war and in the climate of war, man can and often does lose his identity. Man becomes only a man, not a "self."

"A man's a man is Mister Bertolt Brecht's contention  
However, that's something anyone might mention  
Mister Brecht appends this item to the bill;  
You can do with a human being what you will  
Take him apart like a car, rebuild him bit by bit--  
As you will see, he has nothing to lose by it.  
We come to this chap--like one man to another  
And with emphasis but no fuss, persuade our brother  
To adjust to this world as it is and just let rot  
The fish he planned to boil in his private pot.  
And Mister Brecht hopes you will see the ground beneath your feet  
Melt away like sleet.  
And he hopes you won't miss the moral of Galy Gay's case:  
That this world is a dangerous place."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Bertolt Brecht, A Man's a Man trans. Eric Bentley in Seven Brecht Plays by Bertolt Brecht, Eric Bentley (ed.), (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), p. 103.

Galy Gay, a simple man who couldn't say no, is transformed into a blood-thirsty soldier, Jeriah Jip, so that the machine gun unit of which Jip was a part might not be punished. Through a mock fraud, trial, and execution, Gay assumes the role of Jip, and like the dead soldier loses the possession of his own death as he pronounces his own funeral oration:

I could not look without dropping dead on the spot  
 At a face emptied out in a crate  
 Face of a certain person known to me once  
 From the shimmering surface of the water into which  
 Someone looked and then  
 As I should know  
 Perished.  
 And so I cannot open up this crate  
 Because of this fear that is in both of me.  
 For perhaps  
 I am a Both that one  
 The changing surface of the earth produced  
 Tied to a navel, formed like a bat, and hanging  
 Between rubber trees and hut by night,  
 A Thing that would like to be gay.  
 One man is no man: someone must call him something.<sup>21</sup>

A Man's a Man foreshadows the brainwashing of a later war, pictures the terror of a war just passed and makes of war an expression of man's inability to find himself.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

## II. REVOLUTION AND WEIMAR

"I was a member of the Augsburg, revolutionary committee, Brecht continued. Nearby, in Munich, Levine raised the banner of soviet power. Augsburg lived in the reflected glow of Munich. The hospital was the only military unit in the town. It elected me to the revolutionary committee."<sup>1</sup>

To move from the emotionally charged atmosphere of a nation totally involved in war to the more calm atmosphere of a nation at peace places considerable strain on the resources of government. But, when that nation must be redefined according to a new plan of government, its troubles are multiplied. Left-right conflict becomes more dangerous. Intra-party conflict is almost suicidal. Such conflict characterized the birth and death of the Weimar Republic.

Touched off by a sailor's mutiny in Kiel on November 4, 1918, a wave of revolution swept Germany.<sup>2</sup> It was precipitated primarily by a desire for peace and domestic political reform.<sup>3</sup> This "November Revolution" was the work of workers and soldiers who established governing councils in the cities and towns which they took with little violence.<sup>4</sup> The revolution reached Berlin on the same day that the Kaiser abdicated.<sup>5</sup> It was within this framework of semi-socialist revolution

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<sup>1</sup>Sergey Tretaikov, "Bert Brecht" translator unknown, *International Literature* (Moscow), May, 1937, pp. 60-70. Quoted in *Twentieth Century Views Brecht*, Peter Demetz (ed.), (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Eric Waldmann, *The Spartacist Uprising of 1919* (Milwaukee: The Marquette University Press, 1958), p. 82.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 79-85.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 83.

that a second revolution had taken place. That revolution was the passing of power from the hands of the old regime into the Provisional government formed by the Majority Socialists.

The Majority Socialists had been taken into the cabinet of Prince Max of Baden prior to the armistice. The Supreme Command realized the advantages to be gained by an armistice request coupled with a democratization of the institutions of the empire.<sup>6</sup> When, on November 9, 1918, Schiedemann (a member of the cabinet) proclaimed a Socialist Republic, he was proclaiming a revolution imposed from above.<sup>7</sup> The Majority Socialists had gained control of the Provisional government and now had the reins of power within their hands. Friedrich Ebert, the head of the cabinet, formed a coalition, the Council of People's Commissars, of Majority Socialists and Independent Social Democrats to gain the confidence of the proletariat.<sup>8</sup>

The real revolution was to be fought however between the Majority Socialists,<sup>9</sup> Independent Social Democrats, and far leftist elements like the Spartacist League, which would later become Germany's Communist Party.<sup>10</sup> This conflict pre-dated the war but until the war had been a

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<sup>6</sup>Eric Eyck, A History of the Weimar Republic, trans. Harlan P. Hanson and Robert G. L. White (2 Vols., Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, Vol. I, 1962, Vol. II, 1963), Vol. I, pp. 33-36.

<sup>7</sup>Rudolf Coper, Failure of a Revolution (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1955), p. 44.

<sup>8</sup>Eyck, I, p. 49.

<sup>9</sup>The original Social Democrat party came to be called the Majority Socialists because it retained a majority of party leaders from the original organization after the split of the party. Waldmann, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-43.

struggle within the Social Democratic Party.<sup>11</sup> The incident which caused the formation of the Independent Social Democrats had occurred in December of 1915. "Twenty deputies opposed the granting of further war credits. After having increased in number, this opposition became in 1917 the Independent Socialist Party."<sup>12</sup> The Majority Socialists were committed to the ideological aims expressed in the Erfurt Manifesto of 1891: "The struggle of the working class against capitalistic exploitation is of necessity a political struggle. . . . It [the working class] cannot bring about the transfer of the instruments of production to social ownership without first having come into possession of the political power."<sup>13</sup> The Independent Socialists challenged this position as a repudiation of all Marxian teaching.<sup>14</sup> The struggle then was an ideological one over the means of achieving a real redistribution of economic and political power.

Ebert's coalition which had succeeded in gaining the means of authority now had to gain the support of Berlin. As with the November revolutions elsewhere there had developed in Berlin Councils of Soldiers' and Workers' which existed alongside the Provisional government.<sup>15</sup> On November 10, 1918, these councils decided to meet and form their own provisional governing council for Germany.<sup>16</sup> Ebert and the Majority

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>12</sup>Sir Stephen King-Hall and Richard K. Ullman, German Parliaments (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1954), p. 78.

<sup>13</sup>Coper, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup>Waldmann, p. 43.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 93-94.

Socialists were able to gain control of the assembly however and the meeting gave its endorsement to the Council of People's Commissars.<sup>17</sup> An Executive Council of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council of Berlin was formed to advise the provisional government. It was predominantly Majority Socialist, and thus gave additional support to Ebert.<sup>18</sup>

The battle was not done however. The ideological conflict between the two socialist parties became concrete in the discussion of the nature of the new government. "The Social Democrats (Majority Socialists) wished to call a national assembly which would represent the whole German people. The Independent Socialists, on the other hand, aimed at establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat or at least postponing general elections until a far-reaching social revolution had been achieved."<sup>19</sup> The Spartacists, still under the aegis of the Independent Socialists, vehemently opposed an assembly.<sup>20</sup>

Despite party clashes, the Provisional government began to function and accomplish some overdue changes. One of the most significant steps, and considered by some most fatal, was the conclusion of an agreement between the Provisional government and the Supreme Army Command.<sup>21</sup> It was imperative that some law and order be maintained during this period when the old authority had vanished and demobilization had to be worked out as speedily as possible.<sup>22</sup> Ebert made an agreement

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<sup>17</sup> Eyck, Vol. I, p. 51.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Vol I, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> King-Hall, p. 81.

<sup>20</sup> Waldmann, p. 135.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 121-122.

with General Gröner of the Supreme Command for returning troops to police Berlin.<sup>23</sup> Rudolph Coper in his book, The Revolution That Failed, claims that Ebert deliberately allied himself with the Right to prevent revolution. The other side is cogently stated by Otto Braun, a leading Majority Socialist:

. . . many who condemn the position taken by the Reich Government during that time overlook completely the serious situation in which it found itself. Without having a dependable instrument of power, it was supposed to control the frantic outbreaks of violence of the misled masses. (Military) formations which were organized to protect the government soon made impossible demands, and threatened to use force if they were not met; they even arrested the government for a time. . . . Nothing else could be done but to make use of the remaining organized parts of the regular army which, to be sure, were commanded chiefly by reactionary officers. . . .<sup>24</sup>

Whether Braun or Coper is right the army was used. In return for its use the Supreme Command pressed the Majority Socialists for a national assembly and abolition of the Soldiers' and Workers' Councils.<sup>25</sup>

The concrete conflict was on its way to reaching a climax. Spartacist involvement in strong attacks against the Provisional government pushed the moderate Independent Socialists toward the Majority Socialists. On December 15, 1918, at a Berlin meeting of all Councils of Soldiers' and Workers' the Majority Socialists and moderate Independent Socialists prevailed. The meeting endorsed the calling of a national assembly.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>24</sup>Otto Braun, Von Weimar zu Hitler, 2d Edition, (New York: Europa Verlag, 1940), p. 84, cited in Waldmann, p. 122.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>26</sup>Eyck, p. 51.

The Spartacist League was not to be silenced. Rosa Luxemburg, one of its leaders, explained the position of the League in this way:

"The Spartacist League is not a party desirous of obtaining political power over the working masses or through the working masses.

.....  
The Spartacist League rejects the idea of sharing power with Schiedemann and Ebert, tools of the bourgeoisie, because in this type of collaboration, it sees treason to the fundamentals of socialism, strengthening of the counterrevolution, and paralysis of the revolution.

.....  
The victory of the Spartacist League stands not at the beginning but at the end of the revolution: it is identical with the victory of the millions of masses of the socialist proletariat.<sup>27</sup>

The first wave of violence broke on Christmas Eve, 1918.<sup>28</sup> This clash between the People's Naval Division and soldiers of the Supreme Command had as its significant result the departure of the independentsocialists from the Council of People's Commissars.<sup>29</sup>

A second wave of violence struck Berlin on the 29th of December. It entailed a mass demonstration between the strong leftist elements and Majority Socialist supporters.<sup>30</sup> The final wave of active Spartacist revolution against what they had termed a "counter-revolution" began on January 5, 1919.<sup>31</sup> It was viciously crushed by the Imperial Army and the "Freikorps" and "Spartacist Week" ended January 13, 1919.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Illustrierte Geschichte Der Deutscher Revolution (Berlin: Internationaler Arbeiterverlag, 1929), p. 261. Cited in Waldmann, p. 133.

<sup>28</sup> Coper, p. 175.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 175-189.

<sup>30</sup> Waldmann, p. 149.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 171-185.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

Elections for a national assembly of the new republic were held on January 19, 1919.<sup>33</sup> When the two representatives assembled at Weimar they were faced with two urgent tasks, the arrangement of a treaty and the writing of a constitution. The Majority Socialists did not attain a majority and the only politically feasible coalition was formed of the Majority Socialists, Centrists, and Democrats.<sup>34</sup> This coalition is a reflection of the cleavage in the social movement in Germany.

The assembly established what has been called the "freest republic in the world."<sup>35</sup> Yet, it was within the bounds of this Republican constitution that Hitler came to power.

The history of the Republic from its formation at Weimar is but a series of clashes between left and right. The first such clash was the Kapp Putsch of 1920 which was an attempt to establish a counter-revolutionary nationalist dictatorship. To block it there was a proletarian uprising in the Ruhr and a general strike. Again the Majority Socialists had to use the armed forces and though the Putsch collapsed it left the forces on the right stronger.<sup>36</sup>

This violence would continue to affect the ability of the Weimar government to act effectively. Matthias Erzberger, the Centrist

<sup>33</sup> Eyck, Vol. I, p. 53.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, p. 65.

<sup>35</sup> Godfrey Scheele, The Weimar Republic (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1946), p. 31.

<sup>36</sup> Eyck, Vol. I, pp. 147-160.

who had supported the Reichstag Peace Resolution of 1917<sup>37</sup> and who had signed the armistice, was murdered by a secret association of rightists in 1921.<sup>38</sup> Walter Rathenau, who had directed the economy during the war and secured economic rapprochement with Russia, was murdered in 1921, primarily because he was Jewish.<sup>39</sup>

Hitler's 1923 Beer Hall Putsch in Munich was but another attempt to establish a rightist government.<sup>40</sup> Nationalist sentiment, heightened by dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Versailles, was becoming a more potent force daily.

For many, the election of Hindenburg to the presidency in 1925, following the death of Ebert, signaled the end of the Weimar Republic.<sup>41</sup> It obviously was a victory for the right against the weakening strength of the divided left. Two striking examples of the growing nationalist sentiment and the parallel weakening on the left were the reception given to the Locarno Treaty of 1925 and the cabinet crises of 1926 and 1928.

The Treaty of Locarno, in which France, England, and Germany took part, was a tremendous diplomatic success for the German nation. It was the result of a series of notes from Briand, the French Foreign Minister, Stresemann, the German Foreign Minister, and Austen Chamberlain,

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Viet Valentin, The German People (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 594.

<sup>39</sup> Eyck, Vol. I, pp. 211-213.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 270-277.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 332-340.

England's Foreign Minister.<sup>42</sup> It provided security for France on her eastern borders; reaffirmed the status of Alsace-Lorraine; provided for an earlier end to reparations difficulties; began the end of French occupation of the Cologne Zone; provided for arbitration for Germany's eastern boundaries and arranged Germany's entrance into the League of Nations.<sup>43</sup> Luther, the German Chancellor, and Stresemann had achieved a "peace with honor" and all of Europe looked with hope on the end of the negotiations. Erich Eyck describes what should have been a glorious welcome for Luther and Stresemann:

But when the train in which the German delegates were returning arrived at Anhalt Station in Berlin, they found it surrounded by cordons of police--not because they feared lest Berliners turn out by the thousands to greet their representatives who were bringing back "peace with honor", with an overwhelming ovation, but rather because they had good reason to believe that the returning delegates would be met with a disgusting and hateful reception. . . .<sup>44</sup>

Following the Locarno Treaty, Luther, as he had promised Hindenburg, dissolved his cabinet.<sup>45</sup> An attempt was made to form a new one in which the Majority Socialists would play a major role, joining with the moderate People's Party, the Center and the Democrats to keep out the German Nationalists People's Party.<sup>46</sup> The Social Democrats refused and Luther formed a minority cabinet. A vote of confidence passed 160 to 150 with 130 Majority Socialists abstaining.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Eyck, II, pp. 1-23.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., II, pp. 31-48.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., II, p. 36.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., II, p. 49.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., II, p. 49.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., II, p. 53.

One crisis followed on the heels of another. 1927 saw a cabinet dissolved and rebuilt because of a presidential decree about the flying of the old marine flag and the new red, black, and gold of Weimar.<sup>48</sup> 1928 saw the Majority Socialists form a cabinet, then suffer a near fatal blow when its position on one issue was not supported by its own parliamentary faction.<sup>49</sup> It seemed that no party could effectively govern or even understand parliamentary responsibility.

The parliamentary failure caused Hindenburg to resort to the use of Article 48 of the Constitution which would allow him to govern virtually by decree.<sup>50</sup> The growing number of nationalists and Nazis in the Reichstag compared with the weakening of the Socialists indicates in which direction German sentiment was moving.<sup>51</sup> The events that led to Hitler's appointment fell swiftly into place as the Reichstag weakened and the presidential power grew.

The general consensus among historians of this period is that the events of the 1918-1919 Revolution brought an almost irreconcilable split in the socialist forces in Germany. Furthermore, it is generally accepted that this cleavage aided considerably the rise of Nazism.

In retrospect Brecht's reaction to the Weimar Republic might

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., II, pp. 66-69.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., II, pp. 153-164. The question involved was appropriation of funds for beginning a small battleship, virtually an experiment. The Majority Socialists had opposed it as nationalistic in the previous election and felt though they had agreed practically that in principle they had to vote against it in the Reichstag.

<sup>50</sup>King-Hall, p. 151.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

be expected. The moderate left which for a time held Germany's fate failed to affect its ideas. He like so many others who rejected the ideals of a nationalistic Germany faced in a new direction. It is highly significant that the background for Drums in the Night is the Red Revolution of 1918-1919. It is even more significant that Kragler, the returning soldier, accepts a bourgeois existence rather than die in the streets for Spartacist ideals.

Drums in the Night is not the final word. It is in A Man's a Man that one finds the rejection of nationalist Germany but also one finds the entire play pervaded by a tone of abject pessimism. It is the pessimism of a society atomized by war. There is almost a total absence of a philosophy other than the violence so exalted in the characters of the soldiers. Galy Gay himself is passive to all that occurs around him until he, too, loses his identity in violence.

The disillusionment with the war had failed to bring into play a new set of principles. The "drums in the night" were muffled once more. The political failure so evident in Drums in the Night and the pessimism of A Man's a Man is heightened by the economic failure of Weimar. Saint Joan of the Stockyards is about this economic failure. It is significant that Brecht began his study of the Marxist-Leninist ideology in the late 20's.<sup>52</sup> The socialist dream, so involved with western liberalism, had failed.

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<sup>52</sup>Martin Esslin, Brecht: A Choice of Evils (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959), p. 136.

### III. IN THE JUNGLE OF THE CITIES

I am at home on pavements. From the beginning  
well provided with extreme caution--secretment  
of newspapers. And tobacco. And likewise bread.  
Victorious, lazy, yet in the end content.

I make friends with people. And I wear  
A party on my head as others do.  
I say: They're strangely striking animals.

I don't mourn the fir trees pier in the grey light.  
And their veins, the birds, begin to chirp.  
At this hour, in town, I empty my glass.  
I don't red my pipe and anxiously I sleep.

A single case, we have lived in houses  
And in the heart industriously  
We have raised the tall buildings of Manhattan Island  
And the thin antennae that span the Atlantic sea.)

There shall remain of these cities but the wind that blows through  
The streets.

The house which the feathered wren: it is emptied out.  
The house which we are making  
The house which we will come--practically wrought.

The House in the Night and A Man's a Man reflect the political

thought of a socialist revolution and the pessimistic disillusionment  
of a soldier after war, no point less of the Stockyards becomes an ex-  
pression of despair over the subsequent economic depression that up-  
set and destroyed so many people. William Stein in a discussion  
of modern poetry that "... the worst feature of unemployment is not  
the want of money (which can be mitigated by adequate relief), but the

Wagstaff Grecht, Selected Poems, trans. R. R. Rags (New York:  
The Poetry Press, 1939), p. 13.

"Concerning Poor B. B."

.....  
I am at home on pavements. From the beginning  
Well provided with extreme unction--sacrament  
Of newspapers. And tobacco. And likewise brandy.  
Mistrustful, lazy, yet in the end content.

I make friends with people. And I wear  
A derby on my head as others do.  
I say: They're strangely stinking animals.  
.....

Toward morning the fir trees piss in the gray light.  
And their vermin, the birds, begin to cheep.  
At this hour, in town, I empty my glass,  
I knock out my pipe and unquietly I sleep.

A fickle race, we have lived in houses  
Said to be built indestructibly  
(As we reared the tall buildings of Manhattan Island  
And the thin antennae that span the Atlantic Sea.)

There shall remain of these cities but the wind that blew through  
them!  
The house maketh the feaster merry: it is emptied out.  
We know that we are makeshift  
And after us will come--practically nought.<sup>1</sup>

As Drums in the Night and A Man's a Man reflect the political failure of a socialist revolution and the pessimistic disillusionment of a nation after war, so Saint Joan of the Stockyards becomes an expression of despair over the subsequent economic depression that uprooted and destroyed so many people. William Ebenstein in a discussion of fascism states that "...the worst feature of unemployment is not economic suffering (which can be mitigated by adequate relief), but the

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<sup>1</sup>Bertolt Brecht, Selected Poems, trans, R. H. Hays (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1959), p. 15.

feeling of being useless, unwanted, outside of the respectable ranks of society. It is among these spiritually homeless that fascism makes serious inroads during a depression: . . ."<sup>2</sup> It is exactly such a mass of workers, the "spiritually homeless", that one finds in Saint Joan. Brecht does not offer fascism as a new ideology but the portrayal of an industrial society and its resulting dislocation for many people reflects as adequately as Ebenstein's statement the moral condition of a majority of the German people.

The economic consequences of World War I in Germany were severe instability of currency and corresponding inflation and depression. The original causes of economic depression were found in the inflation set into motion by the Reichstag with the issuance of war credits.

"From the Reichstag session of 4th August 1914 onwards, which voted the original war credits, it became clear that Germany intended to cover her war expenditure by inflation of her currency and not by the taxation of her people. This was the significance of the creation of the 'Darlehenskassenscheine' (loan bank notes) and of the authorization to the Reichsbank to cover its note issue with three-month treasury bills. In the event of the victory Germany would have loaded on the shoulders of the vanquished the cost of the war and of this monetary inflation. Until March 1916 the general staff and the industrialists dissuaded the government from imposing higher direct taxes. . . . During the war the amount of currency in circulation, together with daily maturing liabilities of the Reichsbank, rose 7,400 to 44,400 million marks, while private deposits in the credit banks rose from 4,900 to 19,000 million marks."<sup>3</sup>

The economic condition of Germany after the war was indeed tragic. Not only was the monetary crises itself severe but the effects of war on industry is something with which we are quite familiar. Peter Reinhold,

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<sup>2</sup>William Ebenstein, Today's Isms, Third Edition, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>Godfrey Scheele, The Weimar Republic, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1946), pp. 24-25.

Minister of Finance, in 1926-27 describes the situation in this way:

"...the value of our productive plant had been reduced by approximately one-third. Germany's most important means of production, her man-power, had been partly destroyed, and that particularly in the age classes of the greatest importance for production. The stocks of raw material and the stores of reserve material were exhausted; the state was burdened with a new debt of over \$25,000,000,000 or about \$500 per head of the population."<sup>4</sup>

To this state of inflation was added the problem of reparations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. Germany found herself confronted by a debt seemingly without ceiling.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, French occupation of the Rhineland in 1920 and French possession of the coal mines in the Saar region removed important sources of income from the German people.<sup>6</sup> The problems with reparations and Germany's ability to pay for her guilt formed a chief problem not only for the Allies but for Germany. The value of the mark, as inflation increased, was by October, 1922, 4500 marks to the dollar.<sup>7</sup>

The German-Russian economic agreement embodied in the Treaty of Rapallo signed in 1922 at the Geneva economic conference was an attempt to gain some economic stability.<sup>8</sup> It was, however, received badly by

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<sup>4</sup>Peter Reinhold, The Economic, Financial and Political State of Germany Since the War (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Institute of Politics, 1928), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Erich Eyck, A History of the Weimar Republic, trans. Harlan P. Hanson and Robert G. L. White (2 Vols., Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, Vol. I, 1962, Vol. II, 1963), Vol. I, pp. 116-119.

<sup>6</sup>Reinhold, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup>Eyck, I, p. 221.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 205-211.

both the Allies and the German people. The alliance with Russia seemed a threat to Poland and also gave credence to the idea that Germany would train soldiers and produce arms in Russia.<sup>9</sup>

Yet another blow was struck at Germany's attempted economic recovery. In January, 1923, France began its occupation of the Ruhr Valley.<sup>10</sup> It began as supervision of the German coal syndicate for the maintenance of coal shipments for reparations payments, but German reaction was whole-hearted indignation.<sup>11</sup> The occupation was a violation not only of the treaty but also took from Germany vital assets.<sup>12</sup> Germany attempted passive resistance but this only intensified French action. On March 31, violence broke out at the Krupp Works in Essen and 13 workers were killed.<sup>13</sup> The inability of the government to rid the Ruhr of the French further shook the confidence of the people. By July, 1923, the drop of the mark was so swift "That even the printing presses were unable to keep pace with the demand for notes, the whole paper-money system being thereby rendered an absurdity."<sup>14</sup>

On November 30, 1923, the Reparations Commission passed a resolution asking its experts to "seek ways and means to balance the German budget and measures to stabilize her currency."<sup>15</sup> The result of this

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., I, pp. 203-211.

<sup>10</sup>Reinhold, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup>Eyck, I, p. 233.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., I, p. 234

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., I, p. 235.

<sup>14</sup>Reinhold, p. 21.

<sup>15</sup>Eyck, I, p. 303.

was the Dawes Plan. By late 1924, the stabilization of German currency and subsequent reparations agreements were set in motion.<sup>16</sup> With the stabilization of currency there came in 1926 an economic revival. But like so many other things, politics forced the Finance Minister, Reinhold, who was responsible for this, out of office.<sup>17</sup>

The Dawes Plan had but postponed the final solution to the reparations. In December, 1927, Parker Gilbert, the Allied Reparations Agent, began pressing for a final solution.<sup>18</sup> February, 1929 saw the gathering of the Congress of Experts (on reparations) meeting in Paris.<sup>19</sup> This resulted in the Young Plan which was to be the final solution to the problem of reparations. Near failure of the conference shows how unstable the German economy continued to be. There was an "... almost catastrophic withdrawal of gold and foreign exchange. The Reichsbank lost more than one billion marks in just a few days. . . ."<sup>20</sup> The Young Plan returned to Germany "... exclusive responsibility for her own finances."<sup>21</sup>

Internal conditions seemed to worsen daily, however. In the winter of 1928-29, unemployment had mounted to 2,600,000 and naturally tax receipts were dropping off as business conditions worsened.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Reinhold, pp. 45-50.

<sup>17</sup>Eyck, II, p. 125.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., II, p. 174.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., II, p. 183.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., II, p. 187.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., II, p. 191.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., II, p. 196.

Confidence in the government dropped even further as it was unable to cope with the needs of the unemployed.

By the end of December, 1930, unemployment had reached the 4,900,000 mark.<sup>23</sup> This, like unemployment in every other western nation, was a result of the world-wide depression in 1929-30. Germany turned to Austria for aid. They hoped for an economic union, an "Anschluss." This was prevented by French intervention. It brought about a banking crisis that almost led to total ruin.<sup>24</sup> The depression deepened and by 1933 the "spiritually homeless" numbered almost 6,000,000.

Retribution for Germany's war guilt seemed to be almost solely economic. Among the proletariat and the "déclassé" middle class the economic failure of Weimar was most severely felt. Brecht's reaction to this misery was first voiced in the play, In the Swamp, (also called In the Jungle of the Cities). Against a background of mobsters and "robber barons" a man seeks to maintain his freedom of action. The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny has a similar theme. Mahagonny is a city in which the sole crime is to be without money. The most full-blown expression of the evils of capitalism and the way in which the system operates (so Brecht believes) is found in the play, Saint Joan of the Stockyards. The exploitation and misery of the economically depressed proletariat is the central theme of this exposition. It is here, too, that one first openly encounters Brecht's communism.

Poverty is evil and breeds evil. Poverty is the result of the capitalistic society. In a dreamlike Chicago, also the locale for In

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., II, p. 196.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., II, pp. 305-307.

the Swamp, meat-packing kings struggle to the death while the workers  
stand idle:

THE WORKERS:

We are seventy thousand workers in Lennox's packing plant  
and we  
Cannot live a day longer on such low wages.  
Yesterday our pay was slashed again  
And today the notice is up once more:  
ANYONE NOT SATISFIED  
WITH OUR WAGES CAN GO.  
All right then, let's all go and  
Shit on the wages that get skinnier every day.  
A silence.

THE WORKERS:

For a long time now this work has made us sick  
The factory our hell and nothing  
But cold Chicago's terrors could  
Keep us here. But now  
By twelve hour's work a man can't even  
Earn a stale loaf and  
The cheapest pair of pants. Now  
A man might just as well go off and  
Die like a beast.  
A silence.

THE WORKERS:

It must be six o'clock by now!  
Why don't you open up, you sweatshop bosses? Here  
Are your steers, you butchers, open up!  
They knock.  
Maybe they've forgotten us?  
Laughter

THE WORKERS:

Open the gates! We  
Want to get into your  
Dirt-holes and lousy kitchens  
To cook stuffed meat  
For the eaters who possess.  
A silence  
We demand at least  
Our former wages, even though they were too low, at least  
A ten-hour day and at least--

A MAN (crossing stage):

What are you waiting for? Don't you know  
That Lennox has shut down?  
NEWSBOYS run across stage.

## THE NEWSBOYS:

Meat king Lennox forced to shut down his plants!  
 Seventy thousand workers without food or shelter! M. L.  
 Lennox, well-known meat baron and philanthropist.

## THE WORKERS:

. . . . .  
 We are doomed. Bloody Mauler grips  
 Our exploiter by the throat and  
 We are the only ones who choke!<sup>25</sup>

Into this chaos comes Joan Dark, a member of the Black Straw Hats, a Salvation Army type group. Joan first tries to help the workers by feeding them soup from the kitchen of the Black Straw Hats and dribble about God.

JOAN (at the head of the Black Straw Hat shock troop):

In gloomy times of bloody confusion  
 Ordered disorder  
 Planful wilfulness  
 Dehumanized humanity  
 When there is no end to the unrest in our cities:  
 Into such a world, a world like a slaughterhouse--  
 Summoned by rumors of threatening deeps of violence  
 To prevent the brute strength of the short-sighted people  
 From shattering its own tools and  
 Trampling its own bread-basket to pieces--  
 We wish to reintroduce  
 God.  
 A figure of little glory,  
 Almost of ill repute,  
 No longer admitted  
 To the sphere of actual life:  
 But, for the humblest, the one salvation!<sup>26</sup>

When this fails she sets out to deal with the meat packers but fails miserably there, too. In desperation Joan joins the workers in the stockyard. An attempted general strike fails and Joan, having caught pneumonia while standing in the yards, dies with a curse on her lips.

Saint Joan is perhaps one of the most bitter and pointed denun-

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<sup>25</sup>Bertolt Brecht, Saint Joan of the Stockyards trans. Frank Jones in Seven Plays by Bertolt Brecht, Eric Bentley (ed.), (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), pp. 153-154.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

ciations of the capitalistic, Christian society that Brecht wrote. His understanding of economics is somewhat strange but he makes his point admirably. There are the Wall Street friends of Mauler who conspire to corner the market. There is the pettiness of the masses which is shown to Joan as evil, but she traces the roots of evil to poverty.

The Christian God also figures in the picture of exploitation of the masses. The commander of the Black Straw Hats, Mr. Snyder, appeals to the meat barons to give the group the money to take care of the masses:

SNYDER (in the pulpit:)

We Black Straw Hats have heard that fifty thousand men are standing around in the stockyards without work. And that some are beginning to grumble and say: "We'll have to help ourselves." Aren't your names beginning to be called as the ones to blame for fifty thousand men being out of work and standing idly in front of the factories? They'll end by taking the factories away from you and saying: "We'll act the way the Bolsheviks did and take the factories into our own hands so that everyone can work and eat." For the story is getting around that unhappiness doesn't just come like the rain but is made by certain persons who get profit out of it. But we Black Straw Hats try to tell them that unhappiness does come down like the rain, no one knows where from, and that they are destined to suffering and there's a reward for it shining at the end of the road.

.....

PACKERS: How much will it cost?

SNYDER: Eight hundred dollars a month, because we need hot soup and loud music. We also want to promise them that the rich will be punished--when they're dead, of course.<sup>27</sup>

Joan breaks up this deal but is expelled from the ranks of the Black Straw Hats for cutting off their source of money. She goes to Mauler who explains in a speech entitled "On the Indispensability of Capitalism

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

and Religion" that because the human race is built on luck, it just cannot survive without God and money.

Joán, meanwhile, comes upon the leaders of the general strike and it is here that we find Brecht's bow to communism:

JOAN: Are there no people here with any enterprise?

A WORKER: Yes, the Communists.

JOAN: Aren't they people who incite to crime?

A WORKER: No.<sup>28</sup>

After the failure of the strike an ill Joan returns to the mission and rejects God with a glint in her eye that might be communism.

Throughout the play the vivid portrayal of poverty and exploitation is evidence of Brecht's rejection of bourgeois society with its corresponding ideologies of capitalism and Christianity. The genuflection to communism is seen in the workers, both in tone and action. They are a proletarian mass, suffering and waiting impatiently to be led to revolution. Perhaps they were waiting as the workers waited for Ebert to do something, but they wait in vain. That revolution is the answer to ending bourgeois slavery is too obvious to even be written. This is Brecht's statement on the economic justice of Weimar Germany.

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

#### IV. WAR IS ECONOMICS

. . . Brecht wasn't a communist. He made a politics of Humanism. His art was his politics; he wanted people to see it would be possible to have a better world. He was for the underdog. . .<sup>1</sup>

With Brecht's exile to America came the writing of perhaps two of his greatest plays, Mother Courage and Her Children and The Good Woman of Setzuan. These plays mark the culmination of Brecht's skill as an artist. They carry him from the nihilism of A Man's a Man, from the didacticism of Saint Joan of the Stockyards to a strength and lyricism found only in those of time-tempered talent. Mother Courage is a commentary on the causes of war; The Good Woman is a final smashing blow at the evils of a bourgeois society.

Mother Courage and Her Children is set in Germany in the years 1618-1648. It is the story of a woman, Anna, called Mother Courage, who profits from war. She follows the Protestant and Catholic armies around the Holy Roman Empire in a cart pulled by her two sons, Eilif, and Swiss Cheese. The family makes its living selling shoes, brandy, shirts, and other goods to the soldiers. She loses first one and then the other son to the army, where both are killed. Mother Courage then loses her mute daughter, Kattrin, when she climbs atop the wagon and beats a drum to warn the city of Halle of a surprise attack. Mother Courage and Her Children is supposed to depict the evil capitalists who make war and continue to finance it for the sake of profit. Instead, Mother Courage becomes an attack on war, holy or otherwise.

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<sup>1</sup>Lotte Lenya quoted in Herbert Kupferberg, "They Shall Have Music," Atlantic, (CCIX, May, 1962), pp. 113-116.

The play is begun in this way:

Sergeant: Where are your papers?

Mother Courage: Papers?

Swiss Cheese: But this is Mother Courage!

Sergeant: Never heard of her. Where'd she get a name like that?

Mother Courage: In Riga.

Eilif and Swiss Cheese (reciting together): They call her Mother Courage because she drove through the bombardment of Riga with 50 loaves of bread in her wagon!

Mother Courage: They were going moldy, I couldn't help myself.<sup>2</sup>

Mother Courage, the bold saleswoman, loses her first son, Eilif, to the recruiter while bargaining with another soldier. Throughout the play every action is tempered by her greed. Her other son, Swiss Cheese, who is paymaster for the Protestant troops is chased by the Catholics. He begs Mother Courage to hide him and the cashbox. She does so, thinking that she will get the money but discovers her son is too honest. Rather than give the cashbox to the Catholics, Swiss Cheese throws it in the river. He is captured by the Catholics who torture him, then decide to put him to death. Mother Courage intrigues to save him:

Mother Courage: . . . I think they'll let us have him (Swiss Cheese). They're not wolves, they're human and after money. God is merciful and men are bribable--That's how His will is done on earth, I don't know about Heaven.<sup>3</sup>

Mother Courage haggles over the bribe because she has to save some money to keep the wagon. She dawdles until:

Yvette (re-enters): They won't do it. I warned you.  
He (Swiss Cheese's captor) said the drums would roll

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<sup>2</sup>Bertolt Brecht, Mother Courage and Her Children trans. Eric Bentley in Seven Plays by Bertolt Brecht, Eric Bentley (ed.), (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), p. 263.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 290.

any second now--and that's the sign they've reached a verdict. I should offer one hundred fifty. He didn't even shrug his shoulders.

Mother Courage: Tell him I'll pay two hundred. Run!

(Yvette runs, Mother Courage sits. . .) I believe-- I haggled too long. (In the distance the roll of drums. . . . Mother Courage remains seated. It grows dark; it gets light again. Mother Courage has not moved.)

Yvette (re-enters, pale): You've done it--with your haggling. You can keep your wagon now. He got eleven bullets in him.<sup>4</sup>

Swiss Cheese, who was an honest man, is the victim of greed. Furthermore, his very identity is denied by Mother Courage when his body is brought to her wagon. To acknowledge his identity would have cost her life. Swiss Cheese's death is utter finality, for he dies without a name. It is that loss of identity echoed from A Man's a Man. An honest man has no place in war.

Not only does Brecht use Mother Courage to again speak against war, but for picturing a society which thrives on war. After the death of Tilly, Mother Courage discusses the war with a Protestant chaplain who has attached himself to her wagon:

Mother Courage: Seventeen leather belts.--Then you don't think the war might end?

Chaplain: Because a commander's dead? Don't be childish. Heroes are cheap. There are plenty of others where he came from.

Mother Courage: I wasn't asking just for the sake of argument. I was wondering if I should buy up a lot of supplies. They happen to be cheap right now. But if the war's going to end, I might just as well forget it.

Chaplain: There are people who think the war's about to end, but I say: you can't be sure it will ever end. Oh, it may have to pause occasionally, for breath, as it were. It can even meet with an accident--nothing on this earth is perfect--one can't think of everything--a little oversight and a war may be in the hole and someone's got to pull it out again. That someone is the King or

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 231-233.

the Emperor or the Pope. But they're such friends in need, this war hasn't got much to worry about: it can look forward to a prosperous future.

Mother Courage: If I was sure you're right. . .

Chaplain: Think it out for yourself. How could the war end?

. . . . .

Peacemakers shall the earth inherit:

We bless those men of simple worth.

Warmakers have still greater merit:

They have inherited the earth.

I'll tell you, my good sir, what peace is:

The hole when all the cheese is gone.

And what is war? This is my thesis:

It's what the world is founded on.

War is like love: it'll always find a way.<sup>5</sup>

Why should it end?

This is war for the sake of war, just as it must have seemed to Brecht, remembering World War I. War is a tool of the capitalists.

Furthermore, Brecht considers the "holiness" of war. The nationalistic sounds of Germany under Wilhelm and later Hitler are translated into the holy war of the Protestants and Catholics. The ridiculousness of such an idea is propounded in the heavy irony of the Protestant chaplain who is hidden by Mother Courage. The sound of advancing Catholic soldiers brings a change of clothing and Mother Courage and the Chaplain rush out to buy a Catholic flag. This theme is one which runs throughout. Not only is war hell; it is ironical, a satire on man's belief in God, in a cause. The choice of the Thirty Years War is subtle yet heavy irony as one remembers the mercenaries who fought for first one side and then the other. It is delightful as one remembers Cardinal Richelieu financing the Protestant forces. The Thirty Years War marked the emergence of "raison d'état." What more evidence is necessary to show that war is also the result of national self-interest? Faith is and

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 301-303.

has been dead. War is individual self-interest writ large.

Mother Courage and Her Children is a scathing polemic against war. The figure of Mother Courage becomes that of a tragic heroine. She is an individual, a definite person. One does not identify her with evil. She, like everyone else, is caught inextricably in a world that is not of her own making, and live she must. Brecht's humanity breaks through, and although Mother Courage is greedy, one sympathizes. Because of this, however, he succeeds even more perfectly in his statement that war is the ultimate inhumanity.

Capitalistic society not only breeds war, but more important, more devastating, it breeds evil, and for this reason a good man cannot expect to survive in this world. A good man cannot survive even with the help of a g-d, for g-d is helpless, is nonexistent. This is the message of The Good Woman of Setzuan:

Third God: How did the resolution read? (unrolling a scroll and reading from it:) "The world can stay as it is if enough people are found (at the word "found" he unrolls it a little more): living lives worthy of human beings." Good people, that is . . . .<sup>6</sup>

Three g-ds come to the earth to find one good person. They are turned away at every home. Finally, lodging is found for them with a prostitute, Shen Te:

Shen Te: You are the illustrious ones? My name is Shen Te. It would please me very much if my simple room could be of use to you.<sup>7</sup>

This humble prostitute becomes the prototype of a good person. In

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<sup>6</sup> Bertolt Brecht, The Good Woman of Setzuan trans. Eric Bentley in Seven Plays by Bertolt Brecht, Eric Bentley (ed.), (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), p. 409.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 411.

return for her goodness the gods give her a gift of money. Shen Te purchases a small tobacco shop in a slum area of Setzuan. Immediately she is besieged by poor, greedy relatives who come to live off her "opulence." She gladly gives all that she can give. Soon she will once again be reduced to poverty and indebtedness. Because her goodness will not allow her to deal harshly with her relatives, Shen Te discards her identity for that of an imaginary male cousin, Shui Ta. Shui Ta is all that Shen Te is not; wily, shrewd, greedy, a conscientious business man. He forces the relatives out of the shop and puts the place back into business. Shui Ta then decides to marry Shen Te to a wealthy man with capital who can help her pay the rent on her shop. On the way to meet her future husband she meets an unemployed pilot, Yang Sun, with whom she falls desperately in love. With this her troubles begin anew. She discards the disguise and all the relatives return. She then has to borrow the money to pay the lease on her business. Yang Sun convinces her to use it so that he may fly again. Shui Ta must return.

The plot becomes more and more complicated as Shui Ta tries to extricate Shen Te from her situation. Shui Ta is eventually accused of the murder of Shen Te and before the court at which the three gods are the judges Shen Te confesses her dual identity:

Shen Te: Shen Te, yes. Shui Ta and Shen Te. Both.  
 Your injunction  
 To be good and yet to live  
 Was a thunderbolt:  
 It has torn me in two  
 I can't tell how it was  
 But to be good to others  
 And myself at the same time  
 I could not do it  
 Your world is not an easy one, illustrious ones!  
 When we extend our hand to a beggar, he tears  
     it off for us  
 When we help the lost, we are lost ourselves  
 And so  
 Since not to eat is to die

Who can long refuse to be bad?  
 As I lay prostrate beneath the weight of good  
     intentions  
 Ruin stared me in the face.  
 It was when I was unjust that I ate good meat  
 And hobnobbed with the mighty.  
 Why?  
 Why are bad deeds rewarded?  
 Good ones punished?  
 I enjoyed giving  
 I truly wished to be the Angel of the Slums  
 But washed by a foster-mother in the water of  
     the gutter  
 I developed a sharp eye  
 The time came when pity was a thorn in my side  
 And, later, when kind words turned to ashes  
     in my mouth  
 And anger took over  
 I became a wolf  
 Find me guilty, then, illustrious ones,  
 But know:  
 All that I have done I did  
 To help my neighbor  
 To love my lover  
 And to keep my little one from want  
 For your great, godly deeds, I was too poor,  
     too small.<sup>8</sup>

The gods cannot help this good soul and reaffirming their confidence in her goodness they desert her as they rise in a pink cloud.

The Good Woman of Setzuan is populated with bourgeois types. They are all greedy characters who stifle any spark of goodness for gain. It is an excellent picture of slum life, of money-hungry, deprived people. It has the robber barons of Saint Joan of the Stockyards but they are turned into the petty people with whom we are all familiar.

Brecht proclaims that a man cannot live if he is good. This is a godless world, populated by evil and poverty which is bred by evil. G-d is dead and so is man. Brecht issues the universal cry for a world in which a good man can live. His voice is the voice of Shen Te in "The Song of Defenselessness":

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 491-492.

In our country  
 A useful man needs luck  
 Only if he finds strong backers  
 Can he prove himself useful.  
 The good can't defend themselves and  
 Even the gods are defenseless.

Oh, why don't the gods have their own ammunition  
 And launch against badness their own expedition  
 Enthroning the good and preventing sedition  
 And bringing the world to a peaceful condition?

Oh, why don't the gods do the buying and selling  
 Injustice forbidding, starvation dispelling  
 Give bread to each city and joy to each dwelling?

She puts on Shui Ta's mask and sings in his voice

You can only help one of your luckless brothers  
 By trampling down a dozen others.

Why is it the gods do not feel indignation  
 And come down in fury to end exploitation  
 Defeat all defeat and forbid desperation  
 Refusing to tolerate such toleration?

Why is it?<sup>9</sup>

These are the words of a social philosopher, condemning one system  
 in the terminology of a competing system. The words are there, spelling  
 out the need for a new way of life. Shen Te is universal man, exploited  
 and misused in a system which has no justice. The gods are dead and  
 so we must find new gods. Who can blame Brecht, who so wanted a good  
 man, for discarding the old and substituting a new ideology?

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 448.

V. BLOODY FIVE AND OTHERS on the one hand we have the pessimists, which (Gull) insists that he must have, on the other is optimism, on which he also insists. He is with between his two great ideas, optimism and pessimism.<sup>1</sup>

Man's humanity to man is perhaps the central theme to be found in Brecht's work. But man's essential condition must be considered and this condition forms the ultimate foundation upon which Brecht builds. Two factors constitute man's condition. One is that of isolation. The other is the conflict between man's instincts and man's reason.

Isolation or estrangement, to use a current phrase, is a dominant theme in Brecht's early plays. In The Dancer (also called In the Days of the Illusionists) a struggle between a capitalist robber bank type, Shink, and Gaby, a bank robber. Shink tries to purchase Gaby's services of opinion but Gaby rejects him and eventually wins. Although the background is very similar to Saint Joan of the Stockyards, it is separated by the meaningless of the total encounter. This is Brecht's message.

"You find yourself in the year 1912 in the city of Chicago. You witness the inexplicable boxing match between two men, and you are present at the downfall of a family which has come from the savannahs into the jungle of the big city. Do not let your brains over the motives for this fight but note the

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1. Brecht, "Lager des Gefühls - Unheimlichkeit", (Zinn -  
Theater, Second Special Edition, (East Series, 1937),  
p. 10. In Martin Esslin, Brecht: A Choice of Views, (London: Eyre  
and Spottiswoode, 1958), p. 211.

"Our arrangement is very simple: on the one hand we have the gooseliver, which (Galilei) insists that he must have, on the other is science, on which he also insists. So he sits between his two great vices: science and gluttony.<sup>1</sup>

Man's inhumanity to man is perhaps the central theme to be found in Brecht's work. But man's essential condition must be considered and this condition forms the ultimate foundation upon which Brecht builds. Two factors constitute man's condition. One is that of isolation. The other is the conflict between man's instinct and man's reason.

Isolation or estrangement, to use a current phrase, is a dominant theme in Brecht's early plays. In the Swamp (also called In the Jungle of the Cities) depicts a struggle between a capitalist robber baron type, Shlink, and Garga, a book seller. Shlink tries to purchase Garga's freedom of opinion but Garga fights him and eventually wins. Although the background is very similar to Saint Joan of the Stockyards, it is overcome by the meaninglessness of the total encounter. This is Brecht's foreword:

"You find yourself in the year 1912 in the city of Chicago. You observe the inexplicable boxing match between two men, and you are present at the downfall of a family which has come from the Savannahs into the jungle of the big city. Do not rack your brains over the motives for this fight but note the

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<sup>1</sup>K. Ruelicke, "Leben Des Galilei - Sahleussezeue", (Sinn Und Form, Second Special Brecht Edition, (East Berlin, 1957)), cited in Martin Esslin, Brecht: A Choice of Evils, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959), p. 211.

human stakes, judge without prejudice, the style of each contestant, and direct your interest to the finish."<sup>2</sup>

The "finish" of the play voices clearly the certainty of man's estrangement:

Shlink: The endless isolation of man makes even of enmity an unattainable goal. Even with animals it is impossible to come to an understanding.

Garga: Nor does speech help all that much.

Shlink: I have watched animals. Love--warmth from bodily proximity--is our only grace in all the darkness. But the union of the organs is the only union, and it can never bridge the gap of speech. Still, they come together to beget new beings who can stand at their side in their inconsolable isolation. And the generations look coldly into each other's eyes. If you stuff a ship with human bodies till it bursts, there will still be such loneliness in it that one and all will freeze. Are you listening, Garga? Yes, so terrible is the isolation that there isn't even a fight. The forest! That's where mankind comes from. Hairy, with the teeth of an ape, good beasts who knew how to live, everything was so easy, they simply tore each other to bits. I can see them clearly. How their flanks trembling, they stared into the whites of each other's eyes, sunk their teeth into each other's throats, and rolled down the slopes. The one that bled to death among the roots was conquered. The one that trampled down most young trees was the victor. You have your ears cocked for something, Garga?

Garga: Shlink, I have listened to you now for three weeks. And all the time I have expected to be seized with rage on any provocation however petty. But now as I look at you, I notice that your babbling irritates me and that your voice nauseates me.<sup>3</sup>

Garga does not and cannot understand what is most important to Shlink. The inability of expression to end our aloneness and to

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<sup>2</sup>Bertolt Brecht, In the Swamp trans. Eric Bentley in Seven Plays by Bertolt Brecht, Eric Bentley (ed.), (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), p. 32.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 62-63.

contribute some semblance of meaningfulness to existence indicates a negative attitude about life which is found in much of the writing which followed the war. The meaninglessness of personal contact is also expressed in A Man's a Man for it is this inability to communicate and be understood that contributes to Galy Gay's loss of identity. With Brecht's adoption of the Marxist-Leninist philosophy this theme becomes less important but it can be found in his later plays.

Also in young Brecht's work one finds a very real conflict between man and nature. The "... picture of the human condition is essentially one of passive acceptance. . . It matters little whether . . . we are . . . living or dead. . . The process of nature is seen as one of incessant birth and decay, with human consciousness powerless to break the eternal cycle. . . . Man in fact is merely a vessel in which the process of decay takes place."<sup>4</sup> Brecht struggles with nature and its elemental, overwhelming force in his early works.

Brecht's early poems and the plays of his pre-Marxist phase thus reveal his basic attitude to life as that of a sensitive personality passively aware of being at the mercy of compulsions beyond conscious control; irrational impulses from within, powerful and inexplicable forces from without; Nature, the jungle of the great cities, the social conditions that determine man's character and way of life. The helplessness of the individual, moreover, is heightened to nightmare proportions by his inability to communicate with his fellow human beings.<sup>5</sup>

However, in his later works that conflict between man's own reason and man's own instinct replaces the man-nature theme. Like Esslin, Willett, and Bentley, I attribute this conflict to the demands to which Brecht

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<sup>4</sup>Martin Esslin, Brecht: A Choice of Evils, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959), p. 212.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

felt himself called. Facing a society with crumbling values, committing himself to an ideology which considers itself highly rational, Brecht turned to a statement about man's own instinctual desires which create man's problems. There are not only the basic biological needs; thirst and hunger, but those higher needs of loving and being loved, of dying and facing death. I believe that Brecht saw our reason as merely a tool for individual willfulness. We have consequently created a society in which violence reigns, an almost Hobbsian state of a "war of all against all." No man is able to act satisfactorily to meet his needs. The conflict between reason and instinct is first introduced in A Man's a Man in the person of Bloody Five, the sergeant in charge of Galy Gay's regiment.

Bloody Five loses all physical self-control when it rains. He is then almost forced to indulge himself and takes both women and liquor with the voracious desires of an animal. This extreme sensuality bothers Bloody because it interferes with his military status. He always reverts to civilian clothing when he "goes wild." Being a military man is being rational, so in a moment of desperation Bloody Five castrates himself. This physical castration, the separation of desire from the body, is to be repeated or remembered throughout the remaining Brecht plays. Saint Joan is unable to act effectively because her emotions confuse her motives for action. Mother Courage becomes a tragic heroine instead of merely a gross capitalist because she does love and feel deeply. The dual personality of the good woman of Setzuan is the most effective and complete separation of instinct from reason. This separation makes possible satisfaction of physical needs and emotional needs, but they are fulfilled through two people. It works

briefly for Shui Ta and Shen Te, but it does not succeed in the creation of a good life.

Martin Esslin makes of the conflict between reason and instinct a purely personal conflict for Brecht. It is his attempt to explain his creative ability.<sup>6</sup> Taken within the historical context the conflict becomes more important. Brecht was acutely aware of the world around him. His discomfiture with his society was due in part to the hysteria of the inter-war years. He saw the human predicament as never being disengaged from this reason-instinct conflict. His new Hegelianism perhaps could synthesize man's conflicts. Within a new society that provides for man's physical and spiritual needs, man will no longer be inhuman.

Bertolt Brecht himself is the most complete example of the conflict between reason and emotion. The conflict, however, climbs to a higher plane and embodies itself in the nature of his artistic accomplishments. Brecht seeks to teach the masses to discard the willful and evil ways of capitalistic society. He reacts violently to the attempt and failure of Weimar, blaming it on imitation of the West. At the same time he is incapable as an artist of fulfilling the desires of the Communist theatre.<sup>7</sup> Brecht failed to sell or even completely put across

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 177-198.

<sup>7</sup>John Willett, The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht, (London: Methuen & Company, CTD., 1959), pp. 190-215. See also Esslin, pp. 177-198.

the Communist line. He rages like a King Lear at the evils of the world but even his new beliefs will not save him nor give him surcease for pain. He fails to create a character that is completely non-heroic. It is as though tragedy has returned in a new form. Man is not god-like but at least he is willing to try to be a man. This is not a Marxian man but a new man. Brecht could not even rationally fulfill his own artistic demands. This is the "High Noon" and the "Darkest Night" of the creative individual.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The results of the present study indicate that the use of the proposed method for the determination of the concentration of the analyte in the sample is highly accurate and precise. The method is simple and easy to perform, and it does not require the use of expensive equipment. The results obtained from the present study are in good agreement with those obtained from the standard method. The proposed method can be used for the determination of the concentration of the analyte in the sample in a wide range of concentrations. The method is suitable for the determination of the concentration of the analyte in the sample in a wide range of concentrations. The method is suitable for the determination of the concentration of the analyte in the sample in a wide range of concentrations.

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Quietly, something enormous has happened in the reality of western man: a destruction of all authority, a radical disillusionment in an overconfident reason, and a dissolution of bonds have made anything, absolutely anything, seem possible. Work with the old words can appear as a mere veil which hid the preparing powers of chaos from our anxious eyes. This work seemed to have no other power than that of a long continued deception. The passionate revivifying of these words and doctrines though done with good intentions, appears as without real effect, an impotent call to hold fast. Philosophizing to be authentic must grow out of our new reality, and there take its stand.<sup>1</sup>

History makes demands upon each genius spewed up from the masses. Some of these rebel in utter darkness for they are born either too early or too late. Some cry out in tones which cannot be heard, for they speak in unintelligible terms. Brecht was neither of these. In a time of war and severe economic depression Brecht recorded the disillusionment and despair of a society atomized by the end of an ideal. From a period in which the traditions of nationalism and militarism were a basis for meaning, Brecht recoiled with bitterness for he saw in these traditions the roots of war. The failure of Weimar with its sounds of liberalism must have convinced Brecht that this was not the answer for Germany. Brecht saw the western, liberal, philosophic tradition as the most valid generalization about the source of Germany's problems. The professed beliefs in the free individual, in the virtue of the nation-state, ~~in the free individual, in the virtue of the nation-state~~, in the capitalistic system, all become the causes of exploitation, greed, self-interest

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<sup>1</sup>Karl Jaspers, Reason and Existenz, translated by William Earl, (New York City, 3,: The Noonday Press, 1958), p. 23.

writ large or small. Considering the life-death struggle in which Germany was engaged, it is not wrong to believe that the intelligent would seek a new philosophy.

This century has experienced attempts to revitalize our value systems. Within and without man seeks to find an answer to the problems created by our technological society. Brecht stands with philosophers like Tillich, Bonhoeffer or Whitehead and Jaspers as he faces the present situation of man. Though his supposed Marxism is a different foundation, in the final analysis he himself follows a strong philosophic tradition in the West. Like Nietzsche, Brecht seeks a god that can give meaning to our impotence, our aloneness, our frightful anxiety. Like Kierkegaard, Brecht discards traditional Christianity. Like Bonhoeffer, a contemporary, Brecht states that the old ways of acting are no longer valid. In this sense Brecht becomes everyman. At the same time he is Germany, disillusioned and destroyed, but recovering a sense of balance and meaning. With a language rich in poetic tradition, with a style intense and crude as well as lyrical and beautiful, he reaches each person who will listen. One cannot hold one's self at arm's length because one is too painfully aware of the profound relevance of the statement.

Because we find ourselves in Brecht's writing we are able to find something of Germany. For this reason Brecht is important. One reads his plays and poems and the time is no longer now alone, but contains some of yesterday which will also be tomorrow. Brecht is a guide to the depths of our common predicament. This common ground is the only one on which we may build a new understanding.

## AFTERWORD

### TO OUR SUCCESSORS

#### I

Truly, I live in a dark period.  
The innocuous world is stupid. A smooth forehead  
Is a sign of insensitivity. The man who laughs  
Has merely not yet been told  
The terrible news.  
What kind of a period is it when  
To talk of trees is almost a crime  
Because it implies silence about so many horrors?  
That man there who quietly crosses the street  
Is probably out of reach of his friends  
Who are in need.  
True enough, I still earn my living  
But, believe me, that is an accident. Nothing  
Of what I do gives me the right to eat myself full.  
By accident I have been spared. (If my luck fails  
I am lost.)  
They say to me, eat and drink. Be thankful for what you have  
But how can I eat and drink it  
I am snatching my food away from the hungry and  
Someone is thirsting for my glass of water?  
And yet I eat and drink.  
I would like also to be wise.  
The old writers told what wisdom is:  
To stand apart from the strife of the world and to spend without fear  
One's short life  
Also to get through without violence  
To answer evil with good.  
Not to fulfill one's desires, but to forget  
Is held wise.  
All this I cannot do:  
Truly I live in a dark period.

#### II

I came to towns in a time of disorder  
When hunger reigned there.  
I came among the people in a time of revolt  
And I rose with them.  
So passed the time  
Allotted to me on earth.  
My food I ate between the battles  
To sleep I lay down among the murderers  
Love I practised carelessly  
And nature I regarded without patience.  
So passed the time  
Allotted to me on earth.  
All roads led into the mud in my time  
My speech gave me away to the slaughterer

It could not do much. But those in power  
 Would have sat safer without me, I hoped.  
 So passed the time  
 Allotted to me on earth.  
 Our strength was slight. The goal  
 Lay in the far distance  
 It could be clearly seen, although it was  
 Hardly to be reached by me.  
 So passed the time  
 Allotted to me on earth.

## III

You, who will rise up out of the flood  
 In which we have gone under  
 Think too  
 When you speak of our weaknesses  
 Of the dark time  
 From which you have escaped.  
 We went, changing our country more often than our shoes  
 Through the war of the classes, puzzled  
 When there was injustice only and no outcry.  
 And yet we know:  
 Hatred, even against degradation  
 Distorts the features.  
 Anger, even against injustice  
 Makes the voice hoarse. Oh, we  
 Who wanted to prepare the ground for friendliness  
 Could not ourselves be friendly.  
 But you, when things have gone so far  
 That man helps man  
 Make allowances when you think of us.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bertold Brecht, Selected Poems, translated by H. R. Hays,  
 (Originally published by Reynor and Hitchcock, 1947), (New York 3,  
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