

ART AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY:
THE BAUHAUS AS VICTIM

by

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-PREFACE-

The Bauhaus, as a vital entity of the Weimar Republic and as a concept of modernity and the avant-garde, has been the object of an ongoing study for me during the months I have spent in the History Department at Kansas State University. My appreciation and grateful thanks go to the faculty members who patiently encouraged me in the historical process: to Dr. Marion Gray, who fostered my enthusiasm for things German; to Dr. George Kren, who closely followed my investigations of both intellectual thought and National Socialism; to Dr. LouAnn Culley who brought to life the nineteenth and twentieth century art world; and to Dr. Donald Mrozek who guided this historical pursuit and throughout demanded explicit definition and precise expression. I am also indebted to the Interlibrary Loan Department of the Farrell Library who tirelessly and cheerfully searched out and acquired many of the materials necessary for this study.

Chapter I

Introduction

John Ruskin and William Morris, artist-philosophers of mid-nineteenth century England, recognized and deplored the social isolation of art with artists living and working apart from society. Since the Renaissance, Ruskin and Morris claimed, tradition had proclaimed artists high priests of aestheticism and placed them on pedestals where they created art for art's sake and disdained what was useful. The stodgy stance of the Academy in France reflected this snobbery as did the woeful lack of aesthetic guidance in the design of new household products exhibited at the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace in London in 1851. Morris postulated that art would die out of civilization if it could not belong to the people.¹ For him, art should be beneficial, it should be shared, and it should be for everyone.²

Following William Morris' personal example in which he considered it his social duty to turn from painting to the crafts, the art world began to merge with the industrial world. Once again, the artist began to consider the aesthetic questions involved in how men and women lived and worked. As artists focused on the life and events of their times, artistic expression evolved into a social and political entity. Politicization of art might be intentional as with the Italian Futurists who advocated their country's entry into World War I or the Dadaists who deplored the senselessness of war. The taint of politics might also be used against artistic groups who were not purposely political.

In Germany during the years between the world wars we see how one

political system, the Nazis, made use of aesthetic expression. The Bauhaus, the first educational institution which promoted the New Architecture, unintentionally fell victim to the National Socialists while at the same time Hitler resolutely employed art in all media to his political advantage.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the relationship between art and political ideology, and particularly to examine how one artistic institution, the Bauhaus, became a political object. We shall attempt to distinguish between the outlook of those who worked inside the Bauhaus and those who considered the school from the outside. Specifically, we will investigate the extent to which those who taught and learned within the Bauhaus community regarded themselves to be political activists. Was the modern movement in general and the New Architecture, which was the end product of their research and exploration, politically controversial and damning from their perspective? At the same time, we will examine how those people on the outside, including the international art world and the German people in the decade of the twenties, viewed the Bauhaus personalities and their aesthetic efforts. A viable and powerful group on the outside was the political force of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, the NSDAP. What was their position on the arts, and in what ways could the Nazis capitalize on attitudes already rampant in Weimar society?

Discussion and clarification of these areas suggest that, although those who worked at the Bauhaus for the most part intended to be non-political, the nature of the avant-garde notion, effected both by the kind of teachers and by the quality of the work produced at the Bauhaus

as seen by those on the outside, gave the school a political tinge, pushed it toward the Left, and caused the ire of the National Socialists. The Nazis found it politically expedient to oppose modernity in the arts, but then they made full use of other kinds of art to extend their political platform.

Conceived in the new outlook of the industrial age and born in the aesthetic expressionism which reflected both despair and hope at the close of World War I, the Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar first opened its doors in 1919 under the Directorship of Walter Gropius. A school of industrial design in the Weimar Republic, the Bauhaus incorporated the fine arts with craftsmanship in its classrooms and workshops and became a laboratory for research and development of art in the machine age. Nicholas Pevsner, the well-known English art historian, has referred to the Bauhaus as "a paramount center of creative energy in Europe."³

We characterize the lofty life of the Bauhaus as creative and experimental, yet it lived continuously under the grey storm clouds of conflict. The disruptions of moving the school and its short lifespan of only fourteen years were evidence of the perils it faced. With the invitation from the Dessau City Council in 1925 and the steady patronage of Mayor Fritz Hesse, the sun broke through the cloud cover and for a few years the Bauhaus blossomed and prospered. However, this period of productive creativity did not last long. By 1932, amidst severe economic problems, the political tempests which had battered the beleaguered institution ultimately forced its demise.

The year 1932 was crucial for the Bauhaus as it was for the Weimar Republic. In the summer of that year, the Great Depression was at its

depths in Europe and America. In every country, leaders frantically sought methods to restore the economy. In America, an aristocratic Harvard man who was winsome and appealing in his wheelchair claimed to have the answers; Franklin Delano Roosevelt entered the race for President as the Democratic candidate against the incumbent Herbert Hoover. In England, Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald joined the new French Premier Edouard Herriot and Chancellor Franz von Papen of Germany to discuss the question of reparations in hopes of stabilizing the quivering economy. At Lausanne, on July 9, the three agreed to renounce ninety percent of the reparations set up by the Treaty of Versailles and allowed Germany delayed time to pay the remaining three billion marks.

In Germany, unemployment of over six million people and the nearly 49,000 bankruptcies since 1930 reflected the severity of the depression.⁴ Efforts to reconstruct the economy had affected the political scene; it appeared to be the twilight of the republic. Already for two years, President von Hindenburg had ruled with emergency decree according to Article 48 of the constitution. At the national level, with von Papen as Chancellor, as well as in provincial areas, the in-fighting of the political parties had made coalitions difficult and finally impossible. Parallel to the erosion of democratic procedures was the rise of the extreme right wing; and, at the polls in July, the National Socialist vote rose to over thirteen million which more than doubled the previous Nazi delegation in the Reichstag.

In spite of the economic outlook and the somber political overtones, the lively cultural milieu of Weimar had not disappeared. Throughout

the country festive gatherings commemorated the two-hundredth anniversary of Goethe's birth; and, in Frankfurt am Main, Gerhart Hauptmann received the coveted Goethepreis for 1932. Emil Jannings and Marlene Dietrich fascinated the crowds at the movies in Der blaue Engel. The same film enthusiasts mourned the death of a favorite star, Rin-Tin-Tin. The entire country proudly sent off the German athletes to the Olympic Games in Los Angeles and began to plan for the 1936 Olympics which would be held in Berlin. Albert Einstein prepared to go to Princeton as Gastprofessor, and the indomitable artistic spirit of the proletariat Käthe Kollwitz celebrated her sixty-fifth birthday.

In Dessau, the Bauhaus under Director Mies van der Rohe continued experimentation in its workshops. Housed in the building which Walter Gropius had designed, this institution known in artistic circles far beyond the boundaries of Germany should have arrived at the pinnacle of creative success, if it is possible to describe an ever-developing institution as having arrived. But the political winds stirred unfavorably, and it was in August of 1932 that the City Council of Dessau in the State of Anhalt delivered the decisive blow to the Bauhaus. The Nazi majority on the City Council was able to force its closing on October 1 and to dismiss its faculty and students. Director Mies van der Rohe managed to move the school to Berlin and operate it as a private institution until July 1933, when, faced with loss of operating funds, he and the faculty voted to close the ill-fated institution permanently; and for all intents of purpose that should have been the end of it.

At some point, however, a transformation occurred from the realm of physical actuality; and, from the defunct school, the Bauhaus myth

arose. Mies put it very simply when he said many years later, "The Bauhaus was not an institution with a clear program -- it was an idea."⁵ The idea, which had had its beginnings as the art world glimpsed its products, took shape and dispersed when the National Socialists closed the physical plant and the faculty and student body scattered, carrying with them the seminal ideas from the institution. As an evolving organism, the Bauhaus was constantly changing and continually developing, a sign of growth and progress necessary for vigorous life. Yet the "idea" or the Bauhaus "influence" was ultimately a synthesis of Walter Gropius' dreams for his school. The idea embraced architecture and design and their relationship to the quality of life for people in the industrial age. Gropius combined the practicality of the machine with an aesthetic based on the qualities inherent in materials and, in his educational theory, stressed honesty of design and technology.

It is curious that the Bauhaus is today considered integral to the culture of the Weimar Republic, but in its own day it was little appreciated outside of liberal artistic circles. The ordinary German citizens, if they regarded the Bauhaus at all, looked upon it as an avant-garde community which promoted a new architecture they found meaningless, cold, and unfeeling. At the same time, they vaguely accused the teachers of being "bohemian" and "socialist," terms which were colorful but which lacked clear meaning. It was these views about the Bauhaus which turned it into a political object, and it was the political connotation which caused the ever present conflicts surrounding it.

The Bauhaus story had its origins in the visions and dreams of Walter Gropius. World War I had interrupted his promising architectural

career; and, during his years as an officer on the front, he had dreamed of a new art school suited to the industrial age. In 1919, Gropius created a new institution in the combination of the Art Academy and the School of Arts and Crafts in Weimar. His hope was to infuse crafts and technology with the principles of the fine arts to culminate in architecture. The Bauhaus remained in Weimar until 1925 when the city of Dessau extended an invitation to the institution and provided funds for new buildings to hold the workshops, classrooms, and living space for the students and faculty. In 1928, Gropius resigned, and the City Council appointed Hannes Meyer as Director. His directorship lasted two years when, in 1930, Mies van der Rohe took over; and it was Mies who presided over the final years of the Bauhaus, its closing in Dessau in 1932, the subsequent move to Berlin, and its closing there in 1933.

The short life of this institution falls roughly into three phases--early, middle, and late years. The early, struggling years emphasized the formulation of Bauhaus methods with a concentration on handcrafts; the middle years evidenced the fruition of Gropius's vision for industrial design and machine products; and the late years testified to the accomplishment of his architectural goals. In Chapter Two we will attempt to understand these three phases as we explore what the Bauhaus meant to those who worked there.

Chapter II

The Bauhaus Experience: In Pursuit of the Aesthetic

As participants in the Bauhaus experiment, the artist-teachers and students earnestly pursued an aesthetic which sought to deal with the needs of people in a changing industrial society. This aesthetic, social in nature, carried great political potential, a fact which those within the Bauhaus seemed to ignore. In their pursuit of the aesthetic, they did not consciously consider the political consequences of a social art but concentrated intensely on the creative process. From the standpoint of the life within the school and the community and of the school's unique contributions to society in methods and products, our understanding of the Bauhaus experience shows that the artists and craftsmen for the most part considered themselves outside of politics and gave little attention to political matters. Instead, the students and faculty worked toward the conscious goal of a creative and pragmatic educational process: they sought creative solutions for the practical aesthetic problems of the industrial world which grew out of the ashes left by the destruction of the Great War. The fourteen years of the Bauhaus' existence awakened and nurtured the creative spirit in its students, and this approach was the major emphasis of the Bauhaus experience and the underlying factor in the aesthetic which developed there.

In spite of this internal obliviousness to political considerations, politics had affected the Bauhaus from its beginning. Charges against the Bauhaus cast it in a vaguely unfavorable political light. Undoubtedly, these charges had a great deal to do with the premature closing of the

promising young art institute. Not only was the aesthetic burdened with political possibility but as a state-supported institution, politics and public demand held influence over and motivated the direction in which Walter Gropius guided its policies. The pressure from the city and state governing bodies which controlled the budget of the Bauhaus forced Gropius to mediate constantly between the demands and needs of the public and his goals for artistic education which would be viable in the age of developing industry. An administrator of exceptional ability and insight, Gropius intuitively molded and changed the curriculum to meet the requirements of the public and industry. However, behind all of the developments was the ideal of creative awakening within the students who would become artists designing tomorrow's world.

The Bauhaus aesthetic as seen in the curriculum, under Gropius' guidance, evolved from a utopian fervor in the early years through a more structured era to a predominant interest in architecture in the late years. The Bauhaus' experience for those who studied and worked there encompassed these differing phases. It is fair to say that, although subtle political influences were ever lurking in the background, most students and faculty who engaged in the Bauhaus experience were politically inactive and their major emphasis was aesthetic. In the classroom and workshop and in the living area, lectures and discussions and projects opened the doors for creative and original activity. The goals of the Bauhausler (Bauhaus people) concentrated on design which could be both functional and beautiful for products in modern life.

By exploring some of the major personalities in the faculty and examining the products of the workshops we can glimpse the differing

emphases of the Bauhaus aesthetic and the means of arriving at its expanding goals. In the early period, Johannes Itten and his development of the Basic Course set the tone for the Bauhaus educational method which was to greatly influence twentieth century art education, and the Exhibition of 1923 provided an overview of the early Bauhaus product. During the middle period, the energetic Hungarian Lazlo Moholy-Nagy developed the more pragmatic and structured theories which dominated the aesthetic, and the German Exhibition in the Grand Palais in Paris in 1930 portrayed the shift from handcraft to industrial product. Oskar Schlemmer in his pursuit of the dance provided the connecting link between the periods. The figure of Mies van der Rohe towered over the later years when pure architectural interest was paramount and the New Architecture became the ultimate Bauhaus product.

Early Years

The Bauhaus evolved from a provincial institution into one well-known in design circles in Europe and America. The early years are often designated as expressionistic in tone. In his vision of the total work of art, Gesamtkunstwerk, Gropius held art in awe; and to him the highest manifestation of art was architecture. It was in the building, such as the medieval cathedral, that all of the artists and crafts people could combine efforts to produce the total work of art. This was the utopian aim of the early Bauhaus -- to produce artist-crafts people who could work cooperatively on projects and create designs which would emanate from the material and technology. The emphasis was on craft work.

It was Gropius' idea to have two masters in each workshop, one

as Formmeister to represent the arts and the other as Technicallehrer to represent the crafts. In order to be in touch with the age in which young students lived and worked, Gropius believed that the artists he invited to teach at the school should be leading representatives of that age; and he managed to gather painters who were in the avant-garde of modern art, men and women who through color and line and space explored the problems of the twentieth century. The curriculum included not only workshop experience but also the Basic Course, or Vorkurs, which was designed to clear out traditions and inhibitions and make the way for the creative process. As Director, Gropius tirelessly worked out the inevitable conflicts and problems which arose as the program developed. Problems of a political nature arose from outside the Bauhaus; but within the walls of the school the conflicts were those between the highly motivated individuals who were independently minded and of an artistic nature.

The early development of the curriculum and philosophy of the Bauhaus clearly leave the imprint of Johannes Itten. As we examine his career as teacher and developer of the Basic Course, we will have a clearer understanding of the importance of creativity in educational philosophy, an idea which radically changed art education. His approach culminated in the first major exhibition of Bauhaus products, held in 1923; and the early efforts of this revolutionary educational process excited the progressive art world and dismayed the public who did not grasp the new outlook of a very different world.

Johannes Itten and the Basic Course

Johannes Itten was a native of Switzerland and the only professional

teacher whom Gropius brought to the Bauhaus. In writing about the Bauhaus painters, Eberhardt Roters has described Itten's colorful personality:

a personality torn by a constant struggle to harmonize strong inner tensions. Of all the Bauhaus masters, Itten radiated the most intense personal aura.¹

A highly intuitive individual, Itten left a clear and definite impression on his students. Felix Klee, son of Paul Klee, remembered Itten: "He looked like a priest to me, with his red-violet, high-buttoned uniform, his bald, shaven crown, and his gold-rimmed glasses."² From the very first, the student Klee was fascinated by Itten's personality, his teaching ability, and his overwhelming imagination.³ Characteristic of Itten's distinctiveness was his interest in the ancient Persian religion of Mazdaznan which was popular along with other sects in the years of social upheaval after the war. These religions offered inner peace and tranquility in those troubled times; and the Mazdaznan sect incorporated fasting, a vegetarian diet, and deep breathing exercises to accomplish these goals. Paul Citroen wrote about his teacher:

There was something demonic about Itten. As a master he was either ardently admired or just as ardently hated by his opponents, of whom there were many. At all events, it was impossible to ignore him. For those of us who belonged to the Mazdaznan group -- a unique community within the student body -- Itten exuded a special radiance. One could almost call it holiness. We were inclined to approach him only in whispers, our reverence was overwhelming, and we were completely enchanted and happy when he associated with us pleasantly and without restraint.⁴

Itten's major contribution to the Bauhaus experience was in the development of the Vorkurs which became the foundation of the educational

method. A sensitive painter and a dedicated art teacher, he had studied under Adolf "Holzel in Stuttgart. "Holzel influenced his form and color theory but the system of instruction based on stimulating individual creativity he learned from Frank Cizek in Vienna who in turn was highly influenced by the progressive educational theories which abounded in the early twentieth century.⁵ Itten was teaching in Vienna when Alma Gropius introduced him to her husband and Gropius invited him to become part of the Bauhaus. Gropius assigned the Vorkurs to him and left him free to develop it as he chose. Originally, this course was the trial term for all students before they learned a craft in the workshops and prepared for cooperation with industry. Itten attempted to achieve three goals in the Basic Course:

- 1) To liberate creative forces and thereby the artistic talents of the students through their own experiences and perceptions
- 2) To make the students' choice of career easier with exercises in materials and textures
- 3) To present the principles of creative composition to the students in the laws of form and color.⁶

About his task in the Vorkurs, Itten later wrote that he considered it essential in the teaching of art to draw out of each student his own individual responses, to liberate and strengthen the imagination and creative ability; and only when this had been accomplished was he ready to move on to the technical and practical demands of medium and style.⁷

Itten began his classes with meditation and exercises in breathing which were often very vigorous. It was a loosening up process which

was designed to relax the students and prepare them for intensely creative work. Another one of his students, Alfred Arndt, reported that Itten always wanted the students to be free and completely loose.⁸ Fasting and vegetarian diet went along with the exercises, and Itten even had the diet prepared in the Bauhaus canteen: mushy vegetables which reeked of garlic used in large quantities to make the meal palatable. In the basic studies, Itten emphasized contrast in chiaroscuro, in textures and materials, in color and form theory, in rhythm and expression. His students studied these elements of design by analyzing the old masters, by observing nature, and by creating their own exercises in dark and light, in color contrasts, and in collages which showed the effects of placing various materials near each other.

As the Bauhaus evolved into more of a technical institution, Itten's philosophically determined approach proved to be less compatible with Gropius' more pragmatic program; and in 1923 Itten resigned his position. Although dogmatic in his own ways and unable to appreciate the practicalities which Gropius faced, Johannes Itten was a brilliant teacher who enabled the student to develop a creative identity. It was Itten's Vorkurs combined with the workshop experience which produced the unique quality of the Bauhaus educational approach.

Joseph Albers and Lazlo Moholy-Nagy continued the Vorkurs using Itten's precepts and enlarging upon them with more emphasis on structural and visual experience meant to prepare the students ultimately for industrial design and architecture. In his teaching, Albers conducted studies in the creative and economic handling of materials. His experiments began with free manipulation of materials in order to construct inventively

and creatively with no practical aims. He encouraged the use of materials in ways unfamiliar to their usual application in industry using as few tools as possible. Albers described one such exercise in constructive thinking:

For example, paper in handicraft and industry, is generally used lying flat; the edge is rarely utilized. For this reason we try paper standing upright, or even as a building material; we reinforce it by complicated folding; we use both sides; we emphasize the edge. Paper is usually pasted; instead of pasting it we try to tie it, to pin it, to sew it, to rivet it. In other words, we fasten it in a multitude of different ways. At the same time we learn by experience its properties of flexibility and rigidity, and its potentialities in tension and compression. Then, finally, after having tried all other methods of fastening we may, of course, paste it.⁹

By twisting, cutting, folding, curving flat materials such as paper or cardboard or tin, his students created new shapes and learned the potentialities of the materials. One student made a novel sculpture nine feet tall by fastening wooden sticks together through the holes in used razor blades; another created a sculpture with glass rectangles. Another experiment investigated optical illusions by repetition of two-dimensional elements, such as concentric circles, resulting in three-dimensional design. Wire screening could be folded and torn to represent the three dimensional. The ultimate aim was the natural study of materials before assigning function to them. Albers' interest in economy in the application of materials was a useful prerequisite for architecture and industrial design. He wrote: "Economy is the sense of thriftiness in labor and material and in the best possible use of them to achieve the effect that is desired."¹⁰

In the expanded second semester of the Basic Course, Moholy used three-dimensional construction exercises to demonstrate problems of balance, weight, expansion, and optical illusion. His students combined any materials available, such as wood blocks, glass tubes, wire, string and sheet metal, to build sculptures in which they developed their own expression of space and experiments with the play of tensions and forces. To Moholy architecture was space arranged aesthetically. He explained it rather simply:

The way to learn to understand architecture is to have direct experience of space itself; that is, how you live in it and how you move in it. For architecture is the functionally and emotionally satisfactory arrangement of space.¹¹

He went on to explain technically that space was created by the real effect of the balance of tense contrary forces or of the flow of interweaving spaces.¹²

As the preliminary course developed during the later years of Gropius' directorship and the era of Hannes Meyer, the instruction by Kandinsky and Klee in basic design and drawing supplemented the workshop experience and classes by Joost Schmidt and Oskar Schlemmer in free hand figure drawing and lettering.¹³ The analytical drawing classes under Wassily Kandinsky continued Johannes Itten's premise of direct observation and experience of the students. In rendering still life compositions which they put together themselves, the students learned to recognize the major forms of the objects, their constructional elements and the tension and energy of their arrangement. In this way, the students explored not only the handling of the plane surface but also the handling of space.¹⁴ Along with design analysis, Paul Klee emphasized the importance

of intuition in exact research:

One learns to look behind the facade, to grasp the root of things. One learns to recognize the undercurrents, the antecedents of the visible. One learns to dig down, to uncover, to find the cause, to analyze.¹⁵

To Klee, the element of intuition stood behind and above the rational, and in all creative activity it was the primary and the final criterion.¹⁶

Although a strange and odd personality, Johannes Itten had been able to form a foundation course upon which the other artist-teachers could build and develop. This foundation based on the creativity of the individual was basic to the Bauhaus image and educational experience and was essentially aesthetic in emphasis.

Bauhaus Educational Method

The method of architectural education which Gropius developed was radical yet probably was not politically controversial. In 1930, Ernst Kallai wrote about the first ten years of the Bauhaus in Die Weltbühne,¹⁷ and he pointed out that while the Bauhaus did not invent the new movement in architecture, it had the distinction of being the first school to promote the new design.¹⁷ The approach to education at the Bauhaus was no longer to learn the forms of the past but to recognize that form was an intrinsic truth which could be discovered through the creative effort of the individual. Walter Gropius developed this theme in the pamphlet The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus which he published in 1923:

We perceive every form as the embodiment of an idea, every piece of work as a manifestation of our innermost selves. Only work which is the product of inner compulsion can have spiritual meaning.¹⁸

For Gropius, form did not have to fit into a set pattern of rules but, instead, was the manifestation of inner truth. Freedom from the bonds of historic design would elicit a new and creative form which would be harmonious with modern life in the industrial world.

Teaching practices at the Bauhaus were the final revolt against the academy which Bayer described as the "tool of the spirit of yesterday."¹⁹ Until the advent of the modern movement in the 1920's, L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris had been the school for aspiring young architects to study the Greek orders and the Gothic lines to prepare to decorate their buildings with Doric or Ionic pedestals or with rounded or pointed arches. As opposed to these eclectic principles from past ages, the Bauhaus sought to put its students in touch aesthetically with their own world so that they might explore and create new forms which would perfectly embody the nature of materials, technology, and function.

The new architecture demanded a forthrightness in its buildings -- buildings which represented the age of precision and technology. Formal truth and honesty required structure that was true to the materials and technology of the present as well as straightforward in its function or use. Bauhaus students explored the aspects of materials in the Basic Course and learned the application of the new technology in the workshops. Experiments and research into the needs of modern people helped the students to discover the best function of the building. Gropius' credo echoed the new philosophy of building:

The character of an epoch is epitomized in its buildings. In them, its spiritual and material resources find concrete expression, and in consequence, the buildings themselves offer irrefutable evidence of inner order or inner confusion.²⁰

In his Scope of Total Architecture, Gropius restated the idea that the architect of the future should create an original and constructive expression of the spiritual and material needs of human life. This would renew the human spirit instead of rehearse the thought and action of former times.²¹

Instead of beginning with specifics, the Bauhaus method evolved as an inductive process which began with general elements of design in the preliminary course required of all students and branched into workshop-laboratories and ultimately into training in building design. This method of creative approach allowed the students to form conclusions on the basis of their own experience and observation.²²

It proved to be the fundamental difference in educational approach which distinguished the Bauhaus from other contemporary schools of design. The prevailing method in teaching art and design which led to architecture was to train students to learn from existing forms, either that of their teachers or from a past age. In providing an objective education in art, the Bauhaus trained students to act on their own initiative. These students had to determine their own aesthetic and no authoritative outside pressures were to obstruct their way.²³ Wolf van Eckert, art director of the Journal of the American Institute of Architects, at a symposium in 1961 summed up the educational contribution of the Bauhaus by saying that its approach to design would not be outdated but would always be applicable and valid.²⁴

This educational method was to change radically the existing styles of academic teaching of L'Ecole des Beaux Arts. The art world in Germany and later in Europe and America learned of this revolution in education

from publications and exhibitions, but it was after the close of the Bauhaus that the new methods slowly began to replace the old. For it was the Bauhaus teachers and students who emigrated to America and other countries who instigated the different approach. Josef Albers and Alexander Schawinsky settled at the experimental Black Mountain College in North Carolina, and Albers later went to Yale University; in Chicago, Moholy-Nagy, Bredendieck, and Kepes organized the New Bauhaus and eventually the Institute of Design and Mies went to the Armour Institute. Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer were in the Department of Architecture at Harvard University. These educators, as well as some Bauhaus students, disseminated the new method and in turn introduced the revolution into other schools of art and architecture.²⁵

Criticism of the new method came from older architects who were wary of the new ideas in building aesthetics. These professionals regarded traditional styles to be fundamental in architectural design; and they feared that architectural students were not receiving those basics in their art education. The modern movement had shifted the basic emphasis to intuitive creativity and had treated traditional elements of design in their historical context. Although educational processes are inherently political due to their social nature, the new educational method should not be tainted with overt political overtones during the Bauhaus years. Changes in art education were not put into general practice until after the Bauhaus closed and the criticism was from within the art world and from an aesthetic and not political standpoint. The inductive process has proven its usefulness and today is perhaps the most timeless of the Bauhaus contributions.

Exhibition of 1923

Most early products of the Bauhaus' search for form intrinsic in materials and technology were handicrafts. In the workshops, the students explored the qualities of materials; and the products they created were both aesthetic and practical -- they were objects of art, but equally important they were objects for use in everyday life.

At first, the public had little understanding of the Bauhaus' goals; and, after several years, the Thuringia Landtag (State Parliament) demanded that Gropius stage an exhibition of the work created at the Bauhaus. Although Gropius and the other masters considered the show premature, it displayed visually the aesthetic direction of the first years and reflected the political influences which persistently were to plague the Bauhaus. In a letter to his wife, Julia, Lyonel Feininger wrote: "We are making a great and weighty concession in the Bauhaus by going ahead now with the planned exhibition. We are all reluctant inside to abide by such 'art politics.'"²⁶ Feininger understood that the Bauhaus had to show results to the outside world and win the industrialists to their side. Awareness of this necessity for support and political intrigue increased the sense among the Bauhaus leaders that within the Bauhaus the aesthetic should remain apart from politics as much as possible.

It was for this exhibition that Gropius formed the slogan, "Art and Technology -- a new Unity." This was an abrupt change of direction for the Bauhaus, and not all of the masters went along with it. This resulted in the resignation of Itten and the hiring of Moholy-Nagy. Feininger wrote: "With absolute conviction I reject the slogan 'Art and Technology -- a new Unity.' This misinterpretation of art is, however,

a symptom of our times."²⁷ He spoke for the other artist-teachers who felt that technology could not be compatible with the creative spirit. However, Feininger recognized that technology was a component of the modern world, and he was able to work within the more pragmatic structure.

A special "Bauhaus Week" celebrated the opening of the exhibition. For the first time, the public glimpsed what the controversial school attempted to accomplish within its workshops. The Deutsche Werkbund, an organization interested in German art and industry, met in Weimar at the same time and its members attended the lectures and exhibits. An added attraction was the premier of Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat" performed simultaneously in the Weimar theater. The press reports of this festive occasion and about the Bauhaus reached out from Weimar into Central Europe; and, in artistic circles, the name of the Bauhaus became well known.²⁸

Every workshop contributed to the Exhibition. Postal cards and posters designed by Klee and Feininger as well as other students and teachers advertised the event. The masters hung an exhibition of their paintings in the museum and Kandinsky even designed a ballet which was an experiment in choregraphy of abstract forms. Sigfried Giedion visited the exhibition and vividly remembered the ballet dancers dressed as a red square and a blue square forming abstractions as they glided past each other against a black background.²⁹

The best examples of unity among the arts in architecture were in the remodelled vestibule of the Bauhaus building and in the experimental Haus am Horn. The vestibule of the building originally designed by Henry van der Velde took on an entirely different appearance with the

abstract reliefs in stucco by Joost Schmidt and new lighting fixtures produced by the metal workshop. On the walls, the earth tones of Oskar Schlemmer's murals of man made a spectacular showing. The review in the art magazine Das Kunstblatt pronounced the murals the most significant achievement of the exhibition:

His work is most convincing in his paintings: giant figures of marionette-like ornamentality, their sensitive contours placed against a light-colored background, enlivening and intensifying the form of each corresponding wall surface to perfection. In addition, the delicately balanced color: light blue, brown, violet, pink, lilac, pale gold. Schlemmer has a pronounced talent for the monumental which is also to be seen in his sculptures.³⁰

The Haus am Horn was an experimental house which was part of a plan for a future housing project.³¹ Planned by Georg Muehe, the winner in the design competition, the building used as many prefabricated and industrially produced parts as possible. The central part of the one story house was the living space lighted from clerestory windows. Around the center were the smaller rooms serving specific purposes such as the bedrooms, bath, kitchen and dining. The interior used industrial products such as radiators and mirrors as well as custom-designed furniture from the cabinet-making workshops, lighting fixtures from the metal workshop, dishes from the pottery workshop, and rugs designed and woven in the weaving workshop. About the products from the workshops, Das Kunstblatt remarked: "There are very beautiful textiles, ceramics, and metal work. The carpets and tapestries exult in the joy of pure color and pure form and in the composition of different materials. In all these works, one perceives the thorough training in craftsmanship."³²

One demonstration centered around the Vorkurs; and for Heinrich "Konig, a German businessman and industrialist who maintained a lifelong interest in new forms, it was the main attraction:

This was the high point and at the same time the main stumbling block of the show. Here there could not be any completed work. Even the detailed nature studies were not exhibited for themselves, but as a part of the educational program of free exercise in composition using different materials.³³

The Bauhaus' formal aesthetic emerged in this exhibition, whether in dance or household products or architecture itself. Handcrafted or produced by the machine, it was distinctively simple and utilitarian, the beauty implicit in the materials and the design created by the combination of materials, technology, and function. The Exhibition of 1923 introduced the Bauhaus to the public in Weimar and to those people interested in the art world in Germany, and it provoked a wide variety of responses from enthusiastic raves to disgusted bewilderment.³⁴

By 1923, Gropius had established the broad foundation in the educational process, and the early craft products and the shift toward industrial production grew out from this creative base. Throughout the ages, art has required patrons for support; and often the demands of the patron have molded the artist's aesthetic direction. The Bauhaus leaders understood the necessity for support and were able to work with the political demands and include them within the overall policy of the school without compromising the aesthetic goals. Gropius' decision to more explicitly identify with technology at the time of this exhibit was in part his answer to such outside pressure. It remained his wish that the Bauhaus aesthetic continue the search for truth in form. Creative experimentation

was possible because the leaders of the Bauhaus chose to remain aloof from the aesthetic demands of politics as much as they could.

Middle Years at the Bauhaus

After the high pitch of initial excitement in the early development of the Bauhaus, the middle years were fraught with frustrations and changes followed by an unprecedented peaceful time of productivity. The school itself moved from the provincial city of Weimar, steeped in the tradition of Goethe and Schiller and marked as the birthplace of the Republic, to Dessau. As the capital of the State of Anhalt, Dessau's inclination toward culture and her industries, which included the manufacturing of the Junker all-metal airplane, produced a progressive atmosphere which welcomed the Bauhaus with open arms.³⁵

At Dessau, the institution received full university status, and the masters gained the more prestigious title of "Professor." The name and energetic personality of Walter Gropius permeated the Bauhaus buildings designed to house the studios and workshops of this Hochschule "fur Gestaltung (College of Form and Design). Although Gropius resigned as Director in 1928, his name continued to be associated with the school which he had created, and his interest would always follow the ideas which emanated from its workshops and classrooms. In the first years after the Bauhaus moved to Dessau, there were few outside pressures, and the workshops were at their highest level of production. With the addition of the Department of Architecture in 1927, the institution approached the vision which Gropius had had for it.

The Bauhaus' aesthetic and the educational process provided the continuum from the early years through the transition to the few years

of tranquility. Many of the same teachers pursued the goals which Gropius had envisioned and Itten had effected. The Bauhaus' slogan which united art and technology foreshadowed a change from the expressionistic style to a more structured one with a greater emphasis on function. The influence of Lazlo Moholy-Nagy was most evident during these years when his constructivist background and his interest in spatial tensions directed the tone of the Bauhaus aesthetic. Oskar Schlemmer, an innovative member of the early Bauhaus, went on to teach in Dessau; and his approach illustrated the continuing aesthetic which became embodied in the products displayed at the 1930 Exhibition in Paris. For those within the Bauhaus, the aesthetic goal was of highest import.

The Influence of Lazlo Moholy-Nagy

If in the early romantic period, the clou was Itten, then it was Lazlo Moholy-Nagy who became the clou with the new emphasis on "Art and Technology -- a new Unity."³⁶ Moholy took over the second semester of the Basic Course and was in charge of the metal workshop; his major interest lay in abstract art with a strong propensity toward structured spatial relationships. A Hungarian farmer's son, he was trained in the law, like Kandinsky, and had been an artillery officer in the Austro-Hungarian army. During his convalescence from a wound in Russia, he first became acquainted with painting. After completing his law course in Budapest, he became a full-time artist and worked his way through German Expressionism and Suprematism and then became interested in Constructivism. Gropius was drawn to him as a rationalist, but there were differing feelings among the students and teachers over his arrival at the Bauhaus. Not yet thirty, he represented the younger generation

to the older teachers such as Kandinsky, Feininger, and Klee who were in their forties and fifties; and the art form with which he was associated was at first foreign to the artists at the Bauhaus who were devoted to German Expressionism.³⁷ Moholy's philosophy was congruent with the Bauhaus philosophy, and he tended to build on the aesthetic ideas prevalent in the Bauhaus faculty. However his formal development was manifest not in expressionism but in the spatial tensions underlying his constructivist approach.

Moholy was an abstract painter interested in the projection of psychomotor impulses as expressed in the relationships of tension, relaxation, and harmony of forces. As opposed to the metaphysical, his interest was in the physical action -- motor action which directly proceeded from mental activity.³⁸ For him, art did not have to represent reality but only the effects of these tensions expressed through harmony of colors and the relationship of light and dark. Under Moholy, the second semester of the Vorkurs expanded the curriculum designed by Albers in the first semester. His motto for the Vorkurs became "education by process."³⁹

Unlike the school under Itten's influence, during Moholy's tenure the Bauhaus turned more and more toward practicalities. In the metal workshop, Moholy led this trend toward the practical, and he influenced some of the most talented designers to produce modern products for every day living. Gropius has noted that Moholy's contributions at the Bauhaus were multifaceted, as a thinker, a writer, an inventor, and a teacher.⁴⁰ Paul Citroen much later described the energetic and curious creative

Hungarian:

Like a strong eager dog, Moholy burst into the Bauhaus circle, ferreting out with unflinching scent the still unsolved, still tradition bound problems in order to attack them. The most conspicuous difference between him and the older teachers was a lack of the typically German dignity and remoteness prevalent among the older "Masters" as all Bauhaus teachers were called... with the smiling enthusiasm of a child, Moholy accepted all demands, and his vitality seemed unlimited.⁴¹

Moholy's work in typography and photography followed his interest in the psychological-physical and kinetic optical processes and continued his interest in practical industry. Typography should be aesthetic and have clarity, compactness, and precision. In 1924 he wrote that

Typography depends on the effectiveness of optical relationships. Every period has its own optical norm which finds expression in typography... Opportunities for innovations in typography are constantly developing, based on growth of photography, film, zincographic and galvanoplastic techniques. The invention and improvement of photogravure, photographic typesetting machines, the birth of neon advertising, the experience of optical continuity provided by the cinema, the simultaneity of sensory experience -- all these developments open the way to an entirely new standard of optical typographic excellence.⁴²

Moholy and Gropius collaborated in the publication of the Bauhaus Bücher, many of which were textbooks used at the Bauhaus. These books today are a testament to Moholy's experiments in layout and design, not only in the dust jackets, but the script as well.⁴³ His experiments in photography influenced the students to explore the new art form, although photography as a course was not introduced until after Moholy left the Bauhaus.

A highly energetic and talented young artist, Moholy-Nagy attacked

each artistic problem not only from a practical standpoint but from a deeply intellectual one as well. His contributions to the Bauhaus were many and varied, and they reflected the greater technical emphasis of the school in the Dessau years.

The Contributions of Oskar Schlemmer

Johannes Itten's personality and the basic course he developed represented the expressionistic phase in the early years of the Bauhaus, and Lazlo Moholy-Nagy embodied the turn toward industrialization which pointed toward the later years. It was, however, the choreography of Oskar Schlemmer which stood between these polarities. The sensitive and artistic Schlemmer was drawn to the metaphysical of inner expression but at the same time could adjust to the more pragmatic emphasis. An inveterate letter writer often separated from his family and friends, he has left his impressions of the Bauhaus years in letters and diaries published by his wife after his death.

His contributions to the Bauhaus programs were of many kinds. At Weimar, he was in charge of the stone sculpture workshop and soon took over the theater workshop. His murals decorated the Weimar buildings, and it was he who designed the angular profile which became the Bauhaus logo or signet. His major theme in all of his work was "Mensch (human being) in Space." This developed in his paintings, in his choreography and ballet; and, in 1928, he taught the required third semester course on Mensch. He confided in his dairy about this course:

My teaching gives me both joy and sorrow. This latter because the students react so little to things that really should interest them, partly out of incompetence, partly out of laziness for which this place is notorious. Joy, because I

am dealing with areas which may not be essential but which fascinate me: internal anatomy, physiology, and especially psychology, not to forget philosophy in general...I am curious to see where it leads, what picture of the world will emerge by the end of the semester, and whether anything both personal and universal can be extracted from the contradictory opinions of the scientists and philosophers...The nude drawing also gives me pleasure, and the students likewise. They themselves model, on my suggestion.⁴⁴

Schlemmer's "Das Triadische Ballett" ("The Triadic Ballet"), begun in 1912 and first performed at the Stuttgart State Theater in 1922, became the basis for his later Bauhaus dances. The figures, two male and one female, danced in vertically split costumes, padded tights on one side and rigid forms of colored or metallic papier-mache on the other. Some of the costumes so interfered with movement that they had to be revised!⁴⁵ A lemon-yellow stage provided the background for the gay and burlesque first act, the second act was a festive ritual with pink sets, and the third mysterious and fantastic on an all black stage.⁴⁶ The dance of the trinity was a scientific exploration in space relationships which Schlemmer elaborated on in his diary:

It should also follow the plane geometry of the dance surface and the solid geometry of the moving bodies, producing that sense of spatial dimension which necessarily results from tracing such basic forms as the straight line, the diagonal, the circle, the ellipse and their combinations. Thus the dance, which is Dionysian and wholly emotional in origin, becomes strict and Apollonian in its final form, a symbol of the balancing of opposites.⁴⁷

In the dance, Schlemmer was searching for harmony in creation which was lost with the fall of humanity. While modern artists longed to recover primordial impulses, which were the unconscious, unanalyzable

elements, they had also discovered opposite extremes in rational science and mathematics. They yearned to synthesize the deepest wells of creativity in man with scientific aspects of modern life. Schlemmer believed that this synthesis could be found in the theater.⁴⁸

On the light side, Schlemmer with his theatrics was instrumental in putting on the festivities for which the Bauhaus community became famous. Such parties usually had a theme such as the "White Festival" when white was the predominant color, or the "Beard, Nose and Heart Festival."⁴⁹ Schlemmer helped plan the "Metallic Festival" at the Bauhaus in 1929. His lively imagination was unfettered as all phases of the party emphasized a variety of metal; for example, they sat on steel chairs and ate from nickel bowls, and aluminum lamps provided illumination. Even the Bauhaus band dressed in silver top hats, and cakes gleamed with glittered icing. In a humorous vein, Schlemmer said, "On the stage, bolts of foolishness dropped from leaden tongues."⁵⁰

Oskar Schlemmer's pursuit of the aesthetic influenced students from the early Bauhaus through the middle years. His predominant influence was to search for and open up creatively whether in the area of the performing arts or the visual. Probably his philosophy was closer to Itten's than Moholy's but in the years following, he proved to adjust to the evolving Bauhaus styles. For example, his costumes echoed the same structural rigidity which Moholy employed. In his study of Mensch, Schlemmer included not only figure drawing but he also delved into psychological relationships.

Moholy-Nagy, youthful with boundless energy, and the more introverted Schlemmer were both artists of sensitivity and insight. At the Bauhaus

they maintained their individuality and style which were a part of their contributions to the educational effort. As teachers, their influence had similar thrusts in the area of exploring avenues of creativity within the students. The pursuit of the aesthetic was for them all-consuming, and they had little time for or inclination toward politics.

The Werkbund Exhibition in Paris in 1930

Bauhaus design and activity of these middle years became widely known through its publications and products actually in use. The Bauhaus books, the industrially produced designs for fixtures and wallpapers, the furniture of Breuer and especially the new Bauhaus buildings built in Dessau in 1926 -- all were positive examples of the new design believed to be inherent in the materials and function. The 1930 Exposition de la Société des Artistes Décorateurs in the Grand Palais in Paris provided an opportunity to display the German contribution to the development of modern furniture and industrial design.⁵¹ The products were a positive statement for the new idea of functionalism. Will Grohmann, a supporter of modern art who published monographs and books on several contemporary artists and their work, defined functionalism in terms of the products exhibited:

For the first time, the international public saw models and objects that were beautiful and functional at the same time. The much-criticized functionalism proved to be neither dry nor without feeling for building or commodities, it was no more than a necessary regulation of the imagination, a technical and economic partner.⁵²

The Deutsche Werkbund appointed Gropius along with Marcel Breuer, Moholy-Nagy, and Herbert Bayer to develop the allotted five rooms to represent the formative expression of German art and industry since

the war. The first room was Gropius' design of a club room or lounge with a curved coffee bar and the tubular steel chairs and glass top tables by Breuer. Moholy-Nagy, in the next room, was in charge of the lighting exhibition which displayed the best lighting solutions for different needs of home and industry. Just off of this room an automatic projector flashed photos which together portrayed the new development of photography. The subject matter pictured modern Germany and the theater. On the long wall were characteristic pictures and texts of the design work of each artistic movement of the twentieth century. This display began with Jugendstil and the artists' colony at Darmstadt and carried through the work of the Bauhaus. It was the story of the development from individual craft work to standardization, from handwork to industrial production.

Before the entrance to the third room visitors went over a ramp with a high landing to have an overview of the collection of rooms. In the last three rooms were a new concept for a house, a display of mass-produced items such as eating utensils, furniture, and textiles for draperies, and a room of photographs of architectural development in Germany. This exhibition included many of the designs and ideas from the mature Bauhaus.

The Bauhaus products and exhibits of architecture and ideas projected at the Werkbund Exhibition in Paris were an aesthetic continuation of those exhibited in 1923 at Weimar. However, the handmade craft product, so prominent in 1923, was missing. Instead, the emphasis was on the industrialization of production. The architectural display with photographs laid emphasis on the architecture in society, especially in the great

Siedlungen or housing projects built in the large cities for the workers. This was a logical development of the Haus am Horn of 1923 which had been an experimental house to be part of a housing project in Weimar.

The Bauhaus product as envisioned by those who created it was the result of the endless search for formal truth. This underlying philosophy did not change through the middle years, but the resulting products of industry illustrated a difference in the means of production away from handcrafts. For those faculty and students involved in this struggle for truth, this struggle was purely aesthetic and not political. Over ten years of experiments and laboratory projects had produced a "Bauhaus style" which was easily recognizable: no frills or applied design but clean lines and efficient and imaginative use of materials. Even in later years, Gropius never admitted to the idea that there was a particular Bauhaus style. He maintained that the students were always free to create the best design for the material used and the function of the object. Nonetheless, a common approach developed.

The Last Years at the Bauhaus

The economic turmoil and the resulting political upheavals marked the last years of the Bauhaus. It had become a school which promoted the new architecture, the International Style; and, although the major emphasis was on architecture, some of the artist-teachers remained on the faculty. It was at the end of these years that the Nazis forced the closing of the school in Dessau, and it moved for a short period to Berlin. These years can best be characterized in the directorship of Mies van der Rohe. He was neither the visionary nor the educator that Gropius had been but his practical nature and intense interest

in architecture typified the evolution of the Bauhaus toward a school of modern architecture.

Mies van der Rohe as Director of the Bauhaus

Recommended by Walter Gropius, Mies seemed to be the perfect choice to lead the Bauhaus. An accomplished architect, his one interest all of his life was in building. He had his own firm in Berlin; and, by 1930, he had become renowned in the field, although he had built very little at that time. As a leading architect in the modern movement, Mies showed a strong disposition toward Bauhaus interests, including his intense feeling for materials and for the value of technology.

On the other hand, there were several areas which might have made Mies an unlikely selection for association with the Bauhaus. He did not have a university degree,⁵³ and most of his own education after trade school he had gleaned from personal experience. The image which he projected both in his personal life and in his work was opulent and bourgeois. Not only did he maintain a conservative personal appearance, but his buildings had thus far used the finest of materials exuding a richness which seemed opposed to the new architecture's search for economy in building. Underneath his modern facade, he had a natural affinity for German Romantic Classicism. Stripped of ornamentation and using modern means of construction such as cantilevering and the steel structure, the certain symmetry of some of his plans can be compared to the neoclassical buildings of Schinkel in nineteenth-century Berlin and showed that Mies continued to be influenced by aspects seen in this tradition. Related to this tension with the new architecture was Mies' belief in flexibility of the plan, a free plan as opposed to a functional

plan. Instead of building for a specific purpose, Mies' buildings were neutral in character. He once told the functional architect Hugo Haring that he should make his rooms big so he could do anything he wanted in them.⁵⁴ Julius Posner has identified Mies' use of a free plan as his weakness, for many of his buildings were similar in plan and thus lacked distinctiveness. Another difference which Mies showed from the functionalist approach was his tendency toward the monumental. The huge and important appearance of his buildings was definitely in opposition to the modern movement's anti-monumentalism and economy in building.⁵⁵

Mies' problems at the Bauhaus did not stem so much from his own style of architecture or from his administrative abilities. Instead he seemed to have an inability to be an integral part of the school as his predecessors had been. During the three years he was associated with the Bauhaus, Mies continued to have an active practice in Berlin; and he commuted to Dessau. He shared responsibilities with Hilberseimer and was at the Bauhaus approximately three days of the week. When he was in Berlin, Hilberseimer was in charge.

Mies was head of the Architecture Department; and in the classroom he would give the students his undivided attention, ever pressing for precision and detail. He was a man of few words and his huge frame and craggy countenance, which seldom broke into a smile, spoke for him. Richard Neutra once said of him: "He is more impressive as a person than as a talker. The way in which he empties a cup of coffee and puffs a cigar is more memorable than most lively people can be. The slow speech with which he refers to his very simple credo remains with the listener forever."⁵⁶

As Director, Mies presented a conservative image. He was all business in his relationships; and in his personal appearance, he was always immaculately dressed in a well-tailored suit with an expensive handkerchief trailing out of his breast pocket.⁵⁷ He enjoyed good food and a good cigar, and while his house in Dessau was sparsely furnished, he kept a white-gloved male servant to run it. Little can be gleaned of Mies' personal life. He had three daughters and was divorced from their mother in the early 1930's. He apparently led a bachelor's existence both at the Bauhaus and later in Chicago.⁵⁸

Early encounters with student groups demonstrated Mies' indifference to politics within the Bauhaus. The situation which he inherited was a free and easygoing leftist atmosphere which Hannes Meyer had allowed. The Swiss-born Meyer, invited by Gropius in 1927 to develop the Department of Architecture at the Bauhaus, had become Director in 1928. His previous association with the ABC group of left-wing architects centered in Basel and interest in socially relevant building pointed toward his leftist leanings.⁵⁹ During his tenure as Director, emphasis at the Bauhaus shifted toward a more socially responsible program, and at that time, the Bauhaus aesthetic came close to being political in nature. Meyer discouraged active politics⁶⁰ but he seemed to encourage a more bohemian lifestyle among the students.⁶¹ The problems which occurred because of his leftist stance were the cause for his dismissal and the appointment of Mies.

Mies' presence and rather austere lifestyle were more forbidding to the students than that of Hannes Meyer. The students remembered Meyer's engaging personality⁶² and resented that Mayor Hesse and the

the City Counsel of Dessau had fired him. The bourgeois image initially disturbed the students, and they held meetings in the Bauhaus Canteen to discuss the new Director. One such discussion ended in demands to see Mies' work so that the students could judge whether he was a qualified leader for the Bauhaus. Howard Dearstyne remembered the incident as a student:

In the course of one of these (canteen revolts), they dared Mies to descend from his sanctuary on the 'bridge' spanning the street between the Trades School to defend himself. The new director, incensed at this lese-majeste [sic], ordered the canteen cleared and, when the students refused to leave, called in the Dessau gendarmes to disperse them.⁶³

Mayor Fritz Hesse felt it necessary to close the school for several weeks. When the Bauhaus reopened, some of the leaders of the revolt were gone; and Mies brought order by personally interviewing all of the students. Mies' response to the student agitation which had been influenced by communist sympathies left over from the Meyer era emphatically accentuated the fact that Mies had no sympathy with the social implications of left/liberal politics; and under Mies, the Bauhaus aesthetic was to be apolitical. Later in his career, Mies was accused of both collaborating with the Nazis and being a Communist;⁶⁴ but neither charge had any real foundation. He was, in fact, naive in politics, as we shall see when he dealt with the Nazis in Berlin.

The early rows with the students brought out a factor of Mies' personality which kept him aloof from the students and apart from the Bauhaus community. He simply was not very sensitive to the students. He had no consoling manner in getting along with them; and he was always

to be abrupt. Such abruptness was hard for the students to get used to at first. Two students showed Mies prints of building plans which they had made earlier, and Dearstyne described the incident: "I winced when Mies rode roughshod over them (the plans), marking them up with a black pencil to indicate how they should have been done."⁶⁵ Often after hours of sketching, Mies' only words would be a gruff, "Try again."⁶⁶

His students could appreciate later his continual press for excellence and the high standards which he set. Since he was in residence only part of each week, the students valued the opportunities to be with him. In June 1932, Dearstyne wrote his family in America:

We saw a lot of Mies van der Rohe last week...He came on three different days to our atelier...We discuss everything, architecture, art, philosophy, politics, etc. These discussions don't therefore always have a direct bearing upon our work but are tremendously interesting and valuable because Mies van der Rohe is a man of profundity and richness of experience.⁶⁷

Mies' conservative image belied the radical path of development which his progress in the field of architecture had taken. It was his conversion from Schinkel neoclassicism to the modern movement which endeared him to the Bauhaus principles. His break from the classical school, which was never a clean or a permanent one, occurred in the avant-garde and revolutionary influences found in Europe after the Great War, and he was able to make his own statement in radical new forms: the glass office building project of 1919 and the glass skyscraper of 1920-21.⁶⁸ His use of structure as skeleton and an outer covering of glass as skin caused Theo van Doesburg to call him an anatomical architect and was to be his trademark in later years. His developing aesthetic

in building paralleled the simultaneous direction of the avant-garde visual arts in which the Russian Constructivists were experimenting in structural sculpture, and the Suprematists were challenging the art world with a new abstract image.

Mies became head of the architectural section of the Novembergruppe, an organization of artists, architects and sculptors which, during the uncertain yet exhilarating times at the beginning of the Weimar Republic, attempted to bring the public's attention to the radical role of the artist in the society of the new republic. Mies was influential in setting up the Novembergruppe exhibitions in which his own early projects were exhibited. While this group was motivated by leftist political objectives, Mies' primary objective was the promotion of architecture.⁶⁹

During these years, Mies was also associated with other radical groups including the Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Working Council for Art) and Der Ring, an organization of modern architects who published in the professional journals and sponsored exhibitions. In 1928, the Ring architects formed the International Congresses for Modern Architecture (CIAM) which included architects in England, France, Italy, and Germany. This organization encouraged cultural exchange and greatly influenced modern art through its publications and exhibitions.

Mies' bourgeois image might be traced to his work in the Deutsche Werkbund. Founded in 1907, this organization included architects and engineers, artists interested in crafts and businessmen whose interests were to promote a higher standard of design in German products. Not only was the goal to have a better product for international trade but also to improve German culture.⁷⁰ The Werkbund did much to promote

modern art not only in its publications but also in the exhibitions. Mies became First Vice President and directed the exhibition in Stuttgart in 1927. This exhibition, known as the Weissenhof Siedlung, was the summation of modern architectural achievement and furniture design. It was most creditable to Mies that he was able to design the exhibit to include varied examples of modern European architecture.

This exhibition was a milestone in Mies' development, for he displayed his ability at city planning in cohesively designing the area for the thirty-three units, which varied from his own apartment block to Gropius' two small prefabricated units. Mies' directorship of this exhibition showed that he had great administrative skills, and later charges leveled against his administration of the Bauhaus were probably unfounded.⁷¹

In the architectural trade, Mies acquired the reputation for honest structure and simple decor, both as revealed in the materials used. Many practical experiences gave him first-hand knowledge of structure and materials and how they were executed. The son of a stone mason in Aachen, he was born in 1886 and grew up on the construction site helping his father and, later, making odd pennies bringing hot water for coffee as well as sausage and cheese to the masons. After elementary school, he entered a trade school and at fifteen his father, despairing of his abilities as a stone mason, apprenticed him to an architect from whom he learned to draw classical details and to work with stucco. Later in Berlin, he worked with wood in the furniture shop of Bruno Paul. In the three years in Peter Behren's office, he had opportunity to design and go to the site as he did in St. Petersburg. There Mies helped with Behren's classical German Embassy. During the war, he was an enlisted

engineer in the German army and built bridges and roads.

For Mies the material could be not only the structure but also the ornamentation. He was always very careful to find exactly the right material and often went to the kiln to choose the best bricks. Both in the German pavillion at Barcelona (1929) and the Tugendhat House in Bryn, Czechoslovakia (1930), his combination of marble walls and silk drapes, gleaming chrome pedestals, and freestanding onyx partitions was breathtakingly beautiful yet simple. The use of black glass-lined pools at Barcelona created a reflecting mirror indoors and a distorted mirror outdoors as the natural elements of wind and rain across the pool water broke up the reflections of the smooth walls of the building. At the Tugendhat House, a semicircle of striped black and brown Macassar ebony set off the dining area,⁷² and the expansive glass windows opened out to include the colors of nature as another kind of material with which to dazzle the eye. In the monument to the communist leaders Liebknecht and Luxemburg, the solid slabs molded in brick conveyed a monumental dignity to the cause which they represented.

Along with materials, Mies was interested in technology. In 1924, he predicted standardized parts:

I consider the industrialization of building methods the key problem of the day. Once we succeed in this, our social, economic, technical and even artistic problems will be easy to solve...How can industrialization be carried out?...Our first consideration, therefore, must be to find a new building material ...It must be a light material which not only permits but requires industrial production. All the (building) parts will be made in a factory and the work at the site will consist only of assemblage, requiring extremely few man-hours.⁷³

Mies pioneered in studies for structure and space; and, as an experi-

ment, he embodied the Bauhaus instinct for searching out the new. When he was in Peter Behren's office, he spent some time in Holland and learned of H. P. Berlage's work. From Berlage Mies got a respect for honesty in material structure; that is, the structure was not to be disguised in the material but to be clearly and openly articulated in the materials.⁷⁴ In his own projects, he later worked out that the aim of building was not in the form; the form or design was only the result of the structures and the materials. By itself, form did not exist. In this way, Mies rejected formalism.

In the same manner, Mies rejected the pragmatic approach of die Neue Sachlichkeit, the architectural movement in Europe which developed in the wake of World War I and promoted an objective and functional design in building. He felt that the purpose of a building could change and that its function should not necessarily determine its design. In the Tugendhat House of 1930, he created open spaces in the living area and defined specific areas such as the dining area by freestanding, non-load-bearing walls. After World War II, this building was used for a kindergarten, and the living space was easily converted to this very different purpose. The Barcelona Pavilion had no function except as an exhibit. In contrast, the Bauhaus buildings designed by Gropius and the architecture which the Bauhaus promoted were functional in design. The dormitory rooms were designed for living and studying; and the glass wall of the workshop, while decorative, allowed for maximum light for experimental projects.

Mies van der Rohe went on to become even more prestigious in architectural education in Chicago and for his building designs which were

constructed in many different areas of the world: among them, the Illinois Institute of Technology complex (begun in 1939); the office building for the Bacardi Administration in Santiago de Cuba (1957); the National Gallery in Berlin (1968); and with Philip Johnson, the Seagram Building in New York (1958). The years during which he was associated with the Bauhaus were but a minor inclusion in his long career in architecture. From the standpoint of the Bauhaus, he was at the helm during the few years that the school had reached architectural status, the apex of the intended goal of Walter Gropius; and it was within the same time frame, that the Bauhaus underwent its tumultuous relationship with the Nazi party which resulted in its closing.

The Bauhaus as a School of Architecture

Under the directorship of Hannes Meyer and Mies van der Rohe the major thrust of the Bauhaus had become architecture. Hannes Meyer established the architectural department in 1927 and developed and strengthened it with the addition, among others, of Ludwig Hilberseimer, a Karlsruhe native. Meyer implemented scientific studies and planning that were based on the psychological and practical functions which rooms and buildings were intended to serve. Such studies investigated the factors of movement in a given building as well as natural light exposure and even the required amounts of air circulation including production of carbon dioxide.⁷⁵ Hilberseimer's interests lay in overall city planning; he supported the use of tall buildings with large green spaces, and the separation of industrial and residential areas as provisions to guard against regional deterioration into slums.⁷⁶

Under Meyer's directorship at the Bauhaus from 1928 to 1930, functional

architecture had become all important. The painters Josef Albers and Paul Klee continued to shape the Basic Course which still explored materials and spatial relationships. Also in the curriculum, along with representational drawing, lettering, descriptive geometry, and design were mathematics, science of materials, psychology, principles of standardization, and workshop training.⁷⁷ When Mies became Director in 1930, the architectural instruction included structural work, finish work, construction design, heating and ventilation, installation, lighting technique, cost estimating, strength of materials, statics, steel and reinforced concrete structures, comparative types of building and design, city planning, interior design and practical training in cabinetmaking, metal and wall painting workshops.⁷⁸

The continual evolution of the Bauhaus during the directorship of Mies mirrored his character and personal example. A man of extraordinary discipline himself, Mies demanded the same hard work and precision in detail from his students. Howard Dearstyne, one of those students, has written of his experience in class:

Mies started us off with a simple problem, the design of a single-bedroom "court house," a house that is facing a walled garden...He used to remark that if one could design a house well, he could design anything...After making many sketches (Mies said that we should make at least a hundred), I finally came up with a house plan which he liked...I shall not forget the trouble we had smoothing out the rough spots. At one point we were about to abandon the scheme because we could find no place in the kitchen for the garbage pail!⁷⁹

In its last years, the Bauhaus was in reality a school of architecture and interior design. This emphasis on architecture resulted in reduced production in the workshops and an expansion and development of the

teaching program. Ludwig Hilberseimer and Mies worked closely together in the architectural department. The two, in fact, complemented each other and together added a balance to the Bauhaus program. As a part of his larger concern for the city, Hilberseimer's interests were in the problems of housing developments and especially in living space for the working population. In contrast, Mies worked largely with one-family dwellings.⁸⁰ A practical man, Hilberseimer was principally concerned with the demographic and sociological framework for specific buildings. In the curriculum, Mies dealt with the aesthetic aspects of architecture, while Hilberseimer taught the introduction to architecture seminars. Technical instruction was important and was taught by engineers Alcar Rudelt and Friedrich Engemann. Its practical emphasis was on structure and finishing, heating and ventilation, lighting techniques, cost estimating, and materials. The workshops, which were by then incorporated into the interior design program, provided practical experience in cabinetmaking, textiles, wall painting, and metal. Few products or designs, except for wallpaper, became industrial productions. This was partly due to the economic depression and partly due to a greater emphasis in architectural training.

Mies appointed his associate and collaborator Lilly Reich to the Bauhaus in early 1932. As an interior architect, she had worked closely with Mies since the Weissenhof Exhibition in Stuttgart where she collaborated with him on the interior design of his apartment building. Outstanding examples of their co-operation were in the Silk Exhibits in 1929 both at the International Exposition in Barcelona and the Exposition de la Mode in Berlin. Reich had a brilliant sense of color, and it

was her design to drape the exquisite silks over the tubular steel frames and partitions.⁸¹

Mies van der Rohe's zeal was in architecture. As Director of the Bauhaus, he anchored the institution strongly in the line of architectural education of the International Style. He squarely rejected any socialist radical sympathies within the Bauhaus, and it is to his credit that the Bauhaus pursuit of the aesthetic remained within the aegis of industrial design with little political influence or direction.

Although Mies was unsophisticated and guileless in his dealings with the National Socialists, he has never been blamed for the abrupt fall of the Bauhaus. Nor can we lay the blame on the pursuit of the aesthetic that we have documented through the early, middle, and late years of the Bauhaus. The artistic pursuit of these painters, architects, engineers, and students who were deeply involved in the Bauhaus classrooms and workshops lay in the pragmatic aesthetic realm. With few exceptions, they never considered themselves or their work in terms of politics. If we are to continue our study of the relationships of art and political ideology in the case of the Bauhaus, then we must look at the reactions of those people on the outside to find how the Bauhaus became a significant political issue.

Chapter III

The Bauhaus Image: Views of the Outsiders

To those within the Bauhaus, it was an innovative school of applied arts. Their experiences in its workshops led to the design and industrial production of goods for everyday living such as furniture, fabrics, wallpaper, and lighting fixtures. Further, the Bauhaus as understood by its faculty and students was an institution which creatively pursued an aesthetic applicable to the machine age. In order to understand the political implication of the Bauhaus, we must turn from the investigation of those who worked within its walls and had this essentially aesthetic and pragmatic pursuit to the views of those outside of the Bauhaus. We must delve deeper into the meanings which the Bauhaus conveyed to those outside it within the historical context of twentieth-century Europe and Germany in the years between the World War and the Machtergreifung, the Nazi take over of the government in 1933.

Perceptions of the Bauhaus by those outside its threshold were not always clear-cut nor were they uniform. Their ideas developed from the products of the Bauhaus, and, more importantly, from the mythical quality which surrounded the institute from the beginning. Some outsiders, especially in artistic circles, could appreciate the aesthetic and practical features in the everyday products created in the workshops. Yet they mustered even greater admiration and excitement for and were truly captivated by the Bauhaus myth which seemed to make the institution greater than it really was. The same products and mythical potential diametrically affected other outsiders who represented some areas in

the aesthetic community and outside it in the political world. The modern aesthetic both in the actual product and in the visionary mythos produced distrust and suspicion in these outsiders. It was their image of the mythical Bauhaus which implicated the school politically and eventually caused its disfavor and downfall.

Although the Bauhaus was in one sense just a provincial art institution in the State of Anhalt, its mythical potential had helped to make it known throughout Germany. How widespread were the knowledge of and interest in the Bauhaus is suggested by what some German newspapers reported during the final months of its existence in Dessau and its move to Berlin, roughly the last half of the year 1932. The rhetoric used to describe it as well as what kinds of people showed interest in it and which opposed it suggest the political slant which was ascribed to the Bauhaus.

Those hostile to the Bauhaus perceived it as politically radical. To them it represented most strongly the avant-garde, epitomized by the abstract painters whom Gropius had brought to the Bauhaus faculty and also by the design which came from the workshops and studios. Perhaps most explicit was the New Architecture. The New Architecture was both a style and a concept of living. As a style, it developed as part of the stream of the so-called Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity); and, as a concept, it was socialist in nature. Catherine Bauer Wurster captured this conceptual feeling when she referred to the "social front of modern architecture,"¹ and Barbara Miller Lane described it as architecture in the service of society.² This idea connected the new architecture with the prominent socialist governments of the German cities and states

and the Weimar Republic itself. This made the new architecture seem to be a radical phenomenon -- one which the conservative element in the Republic did not understand and actually feared. The Nazis, as anti-liberal reactionaries, sensed this opposition and an opportunity to exploit the Bauhaus for political reasons.

In this chapter, we will define the outsiders' views from the treatment of the Bauhaus' closing in Dessau in several contemporary German newspapers. Since the news coverage branded the institution as avant-garde, we must examine this concept with regard to its political potential. The outsiders considered the Bauhaus avant-garde in its star-studded faculty and in its product, especially architecture. We need to analyze these areas to determine if the outsiders' views were essentially correct -- that the implied radicalism and its political connotation which went along with the avant-garde concept truly applied to the artist-teachers and to the architecture. Our findings should substantiate that most of those on the faculty who created the radical aesthetic did not intentionally cultivate political significance in their lives or their work while the New Architecture blatantly evidenced a political thrust because of its socialist connections. A discussion of the opposition to this New Architecture will show that it was conservative in nature before the Nazis politicized it.

German Newspapers, July - December 1932

A study of the coverage of the Bauhaus in the German press provides a means to determine the evasive and nebulous political quality of the Bauhaus image. The last half of the year 1932 was the period in which the Dessau City Council tried and condemned the Bauhaus and Mies moved

it to Berlin. Newspaper articles about the institution which appeared during these months portray a sense of the kinds of people we might include in the group of outsiders whose rhetoric played a real part in the politicization process. Although some of the outsiders were champions of the Bauhaus' cause while others professed opposition to it, the rhetoric of both those for and against it served to orient the Bauhaus towards the Left.

Walter Gropius had a lifelong interest in the Bauhaus; and he employed a clipping service and kept scrapbooks of articles from newspapers, periodicals, and professional journals as well as letters and any other items which pertained to the Bauhaus and to modern architecture.³ The information he kept was a cross-section of Bauhaus articles, some praising it and others discrediting it. Some of the newspapers which his clippings represent are available for research today, but others are not. The value of his collection for our purposes is that it demonstrates how geographically widespread was the interest of the German newspaper-reading public, as a part of the outsiders, in the Bauhaus. Press reports from July to December 1932 alone show us that the Bauhaus was not just a local affair but was recognized all over Germany. There are at least twenty-seven newspapers represented in his clippings from these months; almost half of them are from Berlin, but there are articles from Bremen, Essen, Hanover, Dresden, Darmstadt, Paderborn, Frankfurt am Main, and "Köln among other cities of the Republic.

Gropius also had articles from journals such as Die Form, Die Weltbühne, and Bauwelt. These periodicals had a circulation throughout Germany, and their discussions of the Bauhaus pointed toward the same

greater spread of interest. That most of the newspaper articles briefly reported some of the facts including the National Socialist participation in the Bauhaus' closing, the search for a new home, and the move itself suggests that, although the interest was broad, it was not deep. This widespread surface interest in the fate of the Bauhaus was a direct result of the political myth which had developed around the beleaguered institution.

Understanding the outsiders and their newspaper rhetoric requires understanding the German press in 1932. At this time, so near the close of the Weimar Republic, the press was not a cohesive force but as a whole was weakened not only by a division between the editors and the publishers, the one representing the news and the other the business angle of the newspapers, but also by the sheer number of papers published. In 1932, there were 4,703 dailies and weeklies including the local editions of parent papers; and there were a total of fourteen million papers printed daily.⁴ Each city had several larger daily papers and many smaller ones. In 1928, over eighty per cent of the newspapers were family-owned,⁵ and there was little reason to think that this had changed by 1932. These small, home-owned papers were called the Heimatpresse and had local patronage.

There were several definitive groupings of newspapers not all of which could be considered free press.⁶ Some newspapers were strictly political instruments and represented the parties. The information in them was partisan, and their readers were usually party members. Each of the larger parties such as the SPD, the Catholic Center, the KPD, and the NSDAP controlled its own party organ. A second group of

newspapers was the powerful Interessentenpresse which had special interests in banking or industry, such as the great Hugenberg concern of Ruhr industries. The readers of these newspapers were generally conservative and had little interest in cultural affairs. A third class of the press included metropolitan dailies which had a larger reputation in Europe. These included the Frankfurter Zeitung, the Berliner Tageblatt, the Hamburger Fremdenblatt and the Munchner Neuste Nachrichten among others. These large city dailies were not overtly politically connected, although they might lean from liberal to conservative in outlook and were distinguished for a sense of responsibility in their efforts to guide public opinion. Most Germans read one of these metropolitan editions along with a local and perhaps a party newspaper.

The political press generally had little to say about the Bauhaus, although there were many general articles on culture. Usually small in size, easy to handle and inexpensive, these papers were most interested in promoting their party propaganda. The SPD press and that of the Center parties were the oldest of the political newspapers in Germany. The main SPD organ, Vorwärts, printed in Berlin, and the SPD local, Leipziger Volkszeitung had as a main thrust the struggle against fascism and the Nazis in particular. One bold headline in Vorwärts read "Warning! whoever plays with fascism plays with the decline of Germany."⁷ Both of these papers reported sympathetically but in few words on the Bauhaus. The Leipziger Volkszeitung had a series of three pictures of the Bauhaus with captions telling of its closing and move to Berlin. When it sarcastically called the closing the "social improvement" of the Nazis,⁸ it clearly blamed the Nazis, and their sympathy gave the Bauhaus support from

the Left. Vorwärts rejoiced in the relocation in Berlin and went on to say the strength of the creative idea had stood the test and the new home safeguarded the Bauhaus.⁹ The readers of the socialist press, primarily Social Democrats, were for the most part left liberal workers who as outsiders regarded the Bauhaus favorably but with little intellectual support.

Die Rote Fahne claimed to be the "Central Organ of the Communist Party in Germany." It was printed in Berlin and dedicated to the memory of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Although the Nazis had leveled the charges of bolshevism against the Bauhaus and the new architecture, this communist paper in the issues available for this study made no mention of the Bauhaus during the last half of 1932. There were some cultural articles such as a review of the leftist writer Anna Segher's new novel, Die Gefährter,¹⁰ but the paper like the KPD itself was occupied with anti-fascist action. The Prussian Police General suspended Die Rote Fahne five different times during these months. Its motto, "Arbeit, Brot und Freiheit" ("Work, Bread and Freedom") proclaimed its major interests, but clearly it was fighting for survival as the arch enemy, the Nazis, made inroads into the Prussian government. While many of the intelligentsia were Marxist sympathizers, the readers of the party organ were the hard line members of the party. These German communists had little time for such action as the Bauhaus' closing, and it was most probable that the outsiders whose views influenced the Bauhaus were not these party members.

On the other end of the political spectrum, the "Volksischer Beobachter", the Nazi party organ, made the most vehement protest against the Bauhaus.

Except for the heading and a few advertisements and headlines, the typography was gothic, in character with the anti-modern stance of the Nazi ideology. Adolf Hitler had been instrumental in having the Nazi party purchase an obscure rightist weekly, the Munchner Beobachter, which had been in existence since 1887, and transformed it into the newest of the political party newspapers. The Nazis changed the name to the "Volkischer Beobachter" and by 1923 published it daily. When the Nazis came into power, there were several editions including ones published in Berlin and in Munich; after the Anschluss, Vienna also had an edition. The heading carried the slogan "Freiheit und Brot" ("Freedom and Bread") over the eagle and swastika. This paper had the sub-title of the Kampfblatt fur national-socialistischen Bewegung Grossdeutschlands (Combat Organ of the National Socialist Movement of Germany), and subscription to it was required of all party officials. Ordinary party members were pressured to support National Socialism by taking and reading the NSDAP organ.

There were very few articles in the VB about the Bauhaus -- in the available editions there was only one for the six month period -- but the rhetoric was extremely vitriolic and cast political and racial slurs which were vague in origin but damaging to the Bauhaus. The VB reported that the Bauhaus was the "Cathedral of Marxism" which looked "damned similar to a synagogue" and promoted "oriental boxes" repugnant in the extreme. This architecture, supposed to be of the highest achievement, was not structurally sound; it exhibited cracks and was dangerously damp. In a vague association, the VB went on to say the Bauhaus revealed the relationship between the new objectivity and bolshevik politics. The new housing was an instrument for the destruction of the family

and of race consciousness -- the Bauhaus followers were strongly Judaized -- and belonged to nomads of the metropolis, people who no longer knew of blood and soil. This unrestrained construction, non-German in character, was related to insanity, for it would cause mankind to be seized by a mass psychosis.¹²

The Bauhaus outsiders represented in the VB readership were Nazis or those interested in National Socialism. Those people on the extreme Right rejected the modern spirit of the Bauhaus and their rhetoric emphasized its international, non-German spirit. They charged it politically with socialism, and, worse yet, bolshevism; and racial slurs pointed it toward the Jews. All of these charges leveled against the Bauhaus strongly placed it on the Left.

The major metropolitan dailies proved to have a more general field of interest than the political press. These covered not only the German politics, but sports, arts and culture, financial and foreign news. During the last six months of 1932, these papers showed an interest in American news such as Roosevelt's election and the repeal of prohibition. The Frankfurter Zeitung and the Berliner Tageblatt were two of the best known and most highly regarded of the internationally distinguished press. In Mein Kampf, Hitler had referred to them as the Jewish so-called intellectual press,¹³ and he had hated their democratic quality. The Frankfurter Zeitung was the most intellectually demanding. The members of its editorial board had extensive academic training. Several editors had studied with such renown scholars as Lujo Brentano and Max Weber and a number on the board held doctorates.¹⁴ The FZ emphasized news coverage rather than entertainment and variety. It was directed

at the intelligentsia and the business community, and it was socially conscious and liberal in its political orientation. The FZ wrote about the Bauhaus closing with an article laudatory of its efforts in July 1932. It praised the ethical and social values of the institution and regretted that it had been cast in a political mold. The Bauhaus struggle represented a battle for principles.¹⁵ In August, there was a small article merely reporting the closing itself.¹⁶

The Berliner Tageblatt was the only newspaper among those examined for this study that really took up the cause of the Bauhaus. A modern paper with no trace of gothic type, it had a broad sweep of articles from foreign news and politics to many articles about German culture. It reported exhibits of German art in Switzerland and Norway and commemorated birthdays of varieties of people from artists to President von Hindenburg whose birthday was on the first of October. Articles about the Bauhaus were favorable but not sentimental. The Bauhaus was portrayed as one of the most earnest and interesting art schools in Germany.¹⁷ The closing was reported as the result of a year-long struggle with the reactionary politics of the Right, a "little" war which was really systematic harassment.¹⁸ Hatred directed at the Bauhaus was a misunderstanding which came from the resentment of the National Socialists toward the bourgeoisie.¹⁹ The weekly discussion page called "Die Brücke" featured the whole Bauhaus question.²⁰ There were articles both for and against the institution, and a former student and an architect rounded out the discussion. The opposition was clearly stated with no vague or unfounded accusations: because the Bauhaus was a political entity, by that nature, it would never be able to peacefully carry on its important work.

The open-minded editorial policy and the variety of subject matter as well as the stylistic quality of the writing suggested that the readers of the Tageblatt were educated and interested in German culture and in the world. They were international in spirit rather than nationalistic. They incorporated a sense of adventure and earnest, thought-provoking inquiry; and they looked less to the past than to the future. In this light, they were probably sympathetic to the modern outlook and supportive of the republican government. An example of the Tageblatt reader was Count Harry Kessler, an educated former aristocrat who could accept the changes of the new age and had a lively interest in the world of the present. The BT rhetoric recognized the political nature of the Bauhaus as opposed by the Nazis and therefore placed the Bauhaus to the Left.²¹

Those outside the Bauhaus had definite views and feelings about the institution, and these views by both friends and foes were a major factor in placing it toward the Left on the political spectrum. But the political identity also stemmed in part from the image which outsiders had of the Bauhaus as avant-garde.

The Bauhaus as Avant-Garde

It was largely as a symbol of the avant-garde that this institution caught the imagination of those outside the Bauhaus in the art world not only in Germany but in Europe and America in the twenties. The Bauhaus' stance as representative of the new and its radical break with tradition excited many of the outsiders, but it also helped to cause its downfall and ultimate closing. Although Walter Gropius did not consciously intend it, his enthusiasm for the Republic, for a fresh

beginning in the new society, constituted a political viewpoint. Without his being aware of it, the Bauhaus was construed as his own concrete political statement. For Gropius was not merely continuing the Arts and Crafts School founded by Henry van de Velde in Weimar, nor was he organizing just another school of architecture. His dream and his plan was to infuse craftsmanship with creative and imaginative aesthetics so that the resulting architecture would mirror a new age in Germany -- the age that had cast off traditional monarchy in favor of a republic, the age that held all the promises and problems of industrialization.

To describe the Bauhaus as modern is accurate, but it was the connotation of avant-garde that assigned a radical quality to its modernity. More than contemporary and up to date, the "modern" implied a criticism of the past and a definite commitment to change and to the values of the future. The process of change came about through a militant urgency, through experimentation and stages of nonconformity, and ultimately through a confidence to go beyond the limits of the present. The Manifesto of the Bauhaus illustrated its call to modernity:

The complete building is the final aim of the visual arts. Their noblest function was once the decoration of buildings. Today they exist in isolation, from which they can be rescued only through the conscious cooperative effort of all craftsmen. Architects, painters and sculptors must recognize anew the composite character of a building as an entity. Only then will their work be imbued with the architectonic spirit which it has lost as "salon art."

Gropius elaborated on modernity fervently:

Together let us conceive and create the new building of the future, which will embrace architecture and sculpture and painting in

one unity and which will rise one day toward
heaven from the hands of a million workers
like the crystal symbol of the new faith.²²

The concept of avant-garde as applied to the Bauhaus included the element of modernity but went much further. While modernity was based on the idea of present time, the avant-garde was in the forefront of time. Modernity involved recent innovations in techniques, methods, and ideas; but the avant-garde involved the development of future ideas and techniques. The avant-garde was the vanguard of the present, the forerunner of the future. Its place ahead of present time was of necessity the radical position, unswerving, inflexible, intolerant.²³

Meyer Schapiro has defined another facet of the avant-garde -- its liberating quality.²⁴ Challenging present-day concepts and ever seeking new possibilities, the avant-garde introduced perceptions, ideas, and experiences and had a far-reaching, limitless attitude toward experimentation and the search for knowledge. The avant-garde had to be venturesome and of necessity it had to break tradition: in the exploring of new fundamentals it experienced an emancipation and a freedom from restraints of the past. This liberalizing break with tradition was revolutionary in nature and gave the avant-garde its radical quality.

Historically, the term avant-garde described the advanced position in French medieval warfare; and it acquired political overtones after the French Revolution when it was first used in periodicals addressed not to the military but to the people as "patriots." It was Saint-Simon who first included artists in the term as part of the leadership elite of his ideal society. As the elite, however, those in the artistic world were to be conscious of and committed to equal sharing by all

people of the benefits of life. In this analogy, the radical element crept into the aesthetic avant-garde.²⁵ Future-oriented socio-political doctrines such as Marxism and Utopian Socialism with their radical political philosophies considered themselves as the political avant-garde.²⁶ In this way, the term took on revolutionary character and by the 1920's was used in aesthetics to describe the new "isms" that characteristically rejected tradition and employed and even worshipped the new.²⁷

The term avant-garde, revolutionary and radical from a socio-political standpoint, took on radical, leftist meaning in art when it was applied to the artists of the 19th century who championed the poor, the oppressed, and the insane. As the romantic Gericault had expressed in his subject matter, the realist Courbet also sympathized with the workers and the poor; and Honoré Daumier, through the medium of cartooning, satirized the king and the bourgeoisie. While the realists were revolutionary in their subject matter, the Impressionists were revolutionary in their style as they dared to paint out of doors, casting off the academic rules and catching the moment in rude brushstrokes. Their explorations into new modes of expression were continued by the Neo-Impressionists and the Post-Impressionists; and in the twentieth century the avant-garde included those artists whose work fell within the new artistic movements -- among them, Cubism, Expressionism, De Stijl, Constructivism, and Suprematism. All had the connotation of being liberal and to the Left because of their radical artistic techniques and their sympathies with the plight of the working men and women whom they saw as victims of industrialization. The aesthetic avant-garde was international in scope and encouraged intercultural exchanges as the various movements crossed

national boundaries. This tended to place them in opposition to the nationalist Right and into allegiance with the Left.

In summary, the evolution of the term avant-garde with its radical nature in art was a product of its stance in the vanguard, its liberating quality in its break with tradition, its socio-political connections, and the revolutionary concept of art both in subject matter and style. Outsiders perceived of the Bauhaus as avant-garde in two rather general areas: in the faculty which Gropius had gathered and in the new architecture which was the end product of the Bauhaus emphasis on design derived from the nature of materials and technology. We must investigate these areas to determine why the outsiders saw them in a radical light. If these areas were radical, we need to discover further if their radicalism was purely aesthetic or if it actually had a political bent.

The Artist-Teachers of the Bauhaus

Gropius' new plan of art education was to put the students in touch with themselves and with the world in which they were living. Therefore, his idea required artist-teachers who had an understanding of the present day, the world at that time. This meant that academicians prominent in the art world such as Franz von Stuck or Hans Thoma would not serve his purpose, for the Academy represented nineteenth century art before the Impressionists first had made the break with tradition. The academicians were bound to aesthetic formulas which had been carefully worked out through the years. They rejected innovations in technology, and their work was realistic and unoriginal. Their subject matter tended toward historical events, religion, classical myths, and portraits.²⁸ For Gropius, the painters who would teach in his school did not need

to investigate the rules from the past but instead to grope with the complexities of the present. They had to express in their own ways the Zeitgeist, the spirit of the time.

With the Bauhaus emphasis on present times, Gropius was able to entice painters who were modern in outlook. As we have seen, the various artists included such names as Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee, and Wassily Kandinsky as well as Oskar Schlemmer and Johannes Itten, Georg Muche and Lothar Schreyar. There followed Moholy-Nagy and later Josef Albers and Herbert Bayer. There can be no doubt that these painters were in the aesthetic forefront, many of them before the war and certainly after it. Most of them had received their art education in southern or western Germany, and they held a common bond in that they all grew out of Expressionism of the Blaue Reiter (Blue Rider) or out of Constructivism. These groups were radical in their break with tradition and in their revolutionary and free aesthetic styles. Expressionism and Constructivism were interested in the laws which governed creative endeavors and in the aesthetic construction involved in the visual arts.

Each Bauhaus painter had an individual style which was revolutionary in comparison to traditional realism -- the transparent planes of light which marked Feininger, the deeply symbolic yet almost amusing Klee antics, the geometric abstractions and explorations into color of Kandinsky, Schlemmer's stylized figures, the abstract constructions of Moholy-Nagy. Each painter created an expression which seemed radical and revolutionary to the outsiders yet all experimented with architectonic problems of space and light, of analysis and organization. Each style had an affinity with architecture evident not only visually in the dream buildings of

Feininger but in the construction in painting of Klee and Kandinsky, in Schlemmer's stage settings, as well as in Itten's system of art education in the preliminary course.

The aesthetic radicalism of these artists had a quasi-political side based in the groups they formed after the war, such as the Arbeitsrat " fur Kunst. They were caught up in the revolutionary fervor which followed the German revolution of 1918, and they sought to give the arts a role in the social and cultural revolutions which they believed would follow in the wake of the political revolution.²⁹ In the turbulence of the months following the revolution, these groups attempted to bring modern art to the people and to promote the radical tendencies in art through exhibitions, speeches, and publications. While these artists were not interested in formal partisan politics as such, their desire to use art within the social revolution can be regarded as inherently if unconsciously political. These artist expressed the hopes and dreams of the new age.

Aesthetically, then, the Bauhaus painters did display the radical tendencies which we defined in the avant-garde; and because of this the outsiders felt them to be disturbingly dangerous. Wilhelm von Bode, Director General of the Museum in Berlin, in a letter to the Hofmarschallamt in Weimar, made clear that Gropius had taken a preposterous stand in hiring Feininger:

I am absolutely appalled, and at the time of the first appointment by Gropius -- of the cubist Feininger -- I expressed astonishment to him. Gropius had presented me with a program that to me appeared a little radical but was quite acceptable in its essential points. He elucidated it verbally, to the effect that he was

primarily concerned, as I am, with the reestablishment of the crafts; that he intended to enlist only competent craftsmen and to train young people thoroughly in the crafts for some years -- fine art would have to come later! And then he started right off with the appointment of Feininger.³⁰

Giedion later pointed out that it took courage for Gropius to associate with the radical artists and thus to hazard the creation of a false public image:

It was sheer madness to jeopardize one's reputation and position by the appointment of artists such as Klee, Kandinsky, Feininger, Schlemmer and Moholy-Nagy as government servants in a state institution: artists whose significance was appreciated only by a very small circle and whose work and outlook excited the strongest expressions of outrage, abuse and detestation throughout Germany.³¹

Although their aesthetic style was radical and they had certain utopian desires for the use of art in society, it was probably only inference that associated them with active politics. Their personalities and lifestyles gave little hint of revolution. With few exceptions, their lives were in no way even bohemian, and they appeared to be solid, middle-class professors. If this is true, in terms of the Bauhaus painters, then we can say that the avant-garde designation only implied political action.

To have a picture of how the painters might fit into the avant-garde as the outsiders perceived them, their appearance, and lifestyles at the Bauhaus, we can compare three who came to the early Bauhaus and stayed to the end, or almost that long. Kandinsky, Klee, and Feininger reflected the norm of the early artist-teachers at the Bauhaus. They were not young in age, as the outsiders might have expected of the avant-garde, but when they came to the Bauhaus, they were in their middle

years: Kandinsky was fifty-five; Klee, forty-one; and Feininger, almost forty-eight.³² There was little unusual or different about their appearance, they were not explosive nor loudly demonstrative but were sedate and polite. A quiet and gentle person, Feininger shunned the public and was extremely shy. Roters said of him: "He was so shy that he would never attend the opening day of exhibitions of his own works but would go later, incognito. He blushed to have his innermost feeling displayed in public."³³ Paul Klee and Kandinsky were both well-dressed although Klee gave an odd appearance with a little hard hat perched on his head. He was reserved and refined, and his manner toward the students was one of benevolence and wisdom; for this they called him "Der liebe Gott."³⁴ Always a person of great dignity, Kandinsky had the aura of a scholar and seemed conscious of his intellectual superiority. Roters described his professional manner:

His slightly leathery ram's face with its broad, strongly modelled features, had a distinctly oriental cast. He looked out with a searching gaze, through rimless spectacles, while the studied elegance of his exterior suggested the scholar rather than the painter. In face, he looked every inch the theoretician. His colleagues and friends could always sense the foreignness of his mentality.³⁵

An outsider gazing into the lives of these three would have found nothing extraordinary or subversive about these painters. The first hint that they were suspect might have come from their international character. They did not consider themselves German nationals. Feininger's father was the son of a German immigrant to America from Baden. Lyonel was born in New York and traveled to Germany as a teenager. Klee's birthplace was Switzerland. His mother was Swiss; but, because his

father was German, he was a German citizen and was even drafted into the German army during the war.³⁶ Kandinsky's Russian origin was evident not only in his physical features but in his art, especially the early paintings which reflected the gaiety and color and rhythms of the Russian peasants which he remembered from his childhood. The outsiders, then, might begin to question the loyalty of these three artists since they were not "good" Germans.

Their artistic training, to the outsiders, would at first not have seemed so unusual. Feininger studied in Hamburg and Berlin, and both Klee and Kandinsky studied under Franz von Stuck who taught in Munich. Since von Stuck was an academic painter of the most morbidly realistic style,³⁷ the outsiders would not have realized that, as a teacher, he seemed to be able to ignite the creative spark in his pupils which ultimately enabled them to find their own style. Kandinsky, Klee, and Feininger at different times traveled extensively; and it was an accepted thing for young artists to make a tour of the continent and England. However, if the outsiders had been able to perceive the influences on these painters in their travels, they would have found them far from acceptable. In Paris, they had studied the new Cubism as well as the Impressionist paintings. Delaunay's color experiments directly influenced Klee, and both he and Kandinsky made trips to Tunis. In London, the expansive seascapes of Turner influenced Feininger's mature style. It was not until these three had associated themselves with Expressionism and the Blaue Reiter in Munich that the outsiders would come to realize that these men were truly radical in their styles. As members of the artistic forefront in the expressionist movement before the war, they

came to the Bauhaus committed to the avant-garde of pre-war years. This right away cast the Bauhaus in the radical light of the painters. It was probably because of the painters that the outsiders first labelled the school as avant-garde, and the conservative element began to distrust and misunderstand it.

At the Bauhaus, the three painters continued with their revolutionary art and thus remained for the outsiders in the shadow of the avant-garde. They had a common metaphysical orientation to delve past the conscious and the known and into the mysteries which lay beyond cognition.³⁸ Feininger's restless composition matured into more composed designs of a quiet tension, characterized by large transcendental planes.³⁹ Klee continued almost as a scientist in research to analyze the creative process in painting. Roters described him at work:

He usually worked on several pictures at the same time. He would sit in his studio, contemplating the works in progress, and wait until he was inspired to add something here or something there. One might say that after bringing his work to a certain stage of completion, he lay in wait to see what would fall into his trap; he would wait until the spirit emerged, as it were, through the back of the picture on to its surface. Then the picture was really complete, and Klee would say, 'Now it is looking at me.' He thought of himself as a customs official guarding the border traffic between this world and the beyond.⁴⁰

Kandinsky created a great many paintings during his years at the Bauhaus. His earlier abstract and warm fluid style gave way to a precise, geometric, rigid composition often in black or white or specific color shapes. His interest was in the exact construction of the composition, and he scientifically conducted a series of tests to determine the effects and reactions to color combinations.⁴¹ As a teacher, Kandinsky was

extremely dogmatic and very correctly dressed, but his teaching was in the same radical vein as his art. One student remembered his using a variety of colored rectangles, squares, disks and triangles positioning them to test the visual perception of the students.⁴²

So the perception of the Bauhaus painters as avant-garde resulted more from their radical aesthetic than from their lifestyle, which was not radical at all. What social content there was in their art was more in their aesthetic development than for political intent. Paul Klee satirized the bourgeoisie in early etchings and even later mocked the artistic taste of the middle class.⁴³ Before he became a painter, Lyonel Feininger was a successful cartoonist, and his satirical caricatures appeared in Ulk, Die Lustigen Blätter and the Chicago Tribune.⁴⁴ Kandinsky could be directly connected with the revolution in Russia, for he spent four years there after the overthrow of the Czar working with the Department of Art in the Commissariat for Popular Education. During this time, he helped set up the Museum of Painting Culture and twenty-two other provincial museums. He taught in the State Academy of Art and later was a professor at the Moscow "Higher Technical-Artistic Studios" or vhutemas.⁴⁵ He became disillusioned with the Bolshevik philosophy and also could not work with the more radical avant-garde constructionists and eventually left his native land, returned to Germany, and came to the Bauhaus. The outsiders might never discover real political connections with Kandinsky, Klee, or Feininger even if there were any, for their radical art blinded the outsiders to any serious investigation.

The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde

The ultimate manifestaton of Bauhaus design and of its avant-gardism

was in the modern architecture, and it was the outsiders' view of this new style of architecture that continued to brand the Bauhaus as liberal and leftist. For it was in the area of building construction that the Bauhaus had to have public, and therefore political, recognition in order to concretely carry out the new expression.

From the beginning Gropius had intended for the Bauhaus to be a school of architecture, but it took him eight years before he was able to begin a separate department devoted to architecture. It was only in the last six years of the Bauhaus that architecture was a subject in itself. Outsiders came to equate the Bauhaus with the New Architecture because of the extraordinary publicity which the new style received in the 1920's in Germany and because of the prominent architects of the new style who were connected with the Bauhaus. The later emigration of the faculty and students to schools of architecture in the United States augmented the earlier publicity and permanently cast the Bauhaus along side of the New Architecture.

Walter Gropius placed the New Architecture solidly within the bounds of the avant-garde when he described it as an attempt to express a new age:

A break has been made with the past, which allows us to envisage a new aspect of architecture corresponding to the technical civilization of the age we live in; the morphology of dead styles has been destroyed, and we are returning to honesty of thought and feeling.⁴⁶

This evaluation and casting off of traditional architecture in order to make way for a new expression implied that the forms of buildings in which people lived and worked symbolized unspoken beliefs. The very

expression of a New Architecture that would express a new world view invited a conscious evaluation of the old architecture and the old world view. Unequivocal and unswerving, the break with tradition, in effect, required the people to take a side, to declare either for or against the New Architecture and its new age.

Stylistically, the New Architecture was radically different from the neoclassical tradition of the nineteenth century. New structural techniques enabled the architects to design buildings which no longer needed to be massive. As a young architect in collaboration with Adolf Meyer, Gropius had experimented with technical innovations in two buildings which won them acclaim: The Fagus Shoe Factory in 1911 and the "Fabrik," the model factory at the Werkbund Exhibition of 1914. The upright framework of steel assumed the load bearing, and the walls of glass gave a freshness and lightness to these buildings, which no longer needed ponderous and imposing walls for support. Gropius explained the outstanding achievement of the new construction as the

abolition of the separating function of the wall. Instead of making the walls the element of support, as in a brick built house, our new space-saving construction transfers the whole load of the structure to a steel or concrete framework. Thus the role of the walls becomes restricted to that of mere screens stretched between the upright columns of this framework to keep out the rain, cold and noise.⁴⁷

The New Architecture implied a mastery of space, and the use of up-to-date technology along with newly developed materials created a design which not only gave a lighter, floating, hovering effect but also incorporated the flat roof. The development of reinforced concrete made the flat roof possible, and the architects praised it as a marvelous

way to gain more space. Inside, its squared-off ceilings allowed regular shaped rooms with no unused spaces such as could be found under the eaves of a sloping roof. On the outside, the flat roof created space which might be used for gardens and playgrounds. Green gardens on rooftops of city buildings appealed to Gropius. He said, "Seen from the skies the leafy housetops of the cities of the future will look like endless chains of hanging gardens."⁴⁸ The advent of air transportation gave to architecture a new aesthetic dimension, the design that the building made to those who saw it from above.

The development of the New Architecture paralleled aesthetic explorations in space and movement in Cubism and later Futurism and Constructivism. The architectural historian, Sigfried Giedion, has explained that space was no longer a static and absolute entity but it had become relative to a moving point and this led to new ways of perceiving space.⁴⁹ Giedion has clearly demonstrated this idea when he explained that Cubism

views objects relatively; that is, from several points of view, no one of which has exclusive authority. And in so dissecting objects, it sees them simultaneously from all sides -- from above and below, from inside and outside. It goes around and into its objects.⁵⁰

Along with this new conception of space, Cubism dissected images: the plane emerged as fragments of objects which conveyed feeling, and the first collages gave textural interest to the painting.

The cubist revolution paved the way for many other explorations in space and time which directly affected the development of the New Architecture. In Germany, the New Architecture developed as objectivity or functionalism, die Neue Sachlichkeit, and several aesthetic movements

contributed to its development: De Stijl in Holland and Suprematist-Constructivist ideas from Russia. Both movements were abstract in form and structural or geometric in nature. In De Stijl, principals such as Mondrian, Van Doesburg, and Rietveld developed floating planes in primary colors and black bars. These non-objective designs were used in architecture and in furniture. In 1923, Van Doesburg published "Sixteen Points of a Plastic Architecture" which described in detail the architectural features of De Stijl: in form the architecture was elementary, economic and functional; it was unmonumental and dynamic, anti-cubic and anti-decorative:

The new architecture is anti-cubic, that is to say, it does not try to freeze the different functional space cells in one closed cube. Rather, it throws the functional space cells (as well as the overhanging planes, balcony, volumes, etc.) centrifugally from the core of the cube. And through this means, height, width, depth and time (i.e. imaginary four-dimensional entity) approaches a totally new plastic expression in open spaces. In this way, architecture acquires a more or less floating aspect that, so to speak, works against the gravitational forces of nature.⁵¹

It was evident that De Stijl artists melded into the more cosmopolitan Neue Sachlichkeit for these very requirements were found in the New Architecture. The Russian El Lissitzky became a member of the De Stijl group for a while, and his Suprematist orientation from an earlier influence of Malevich encompassed a reduction of form to single geometric concepts such as a square and a reduction of color to contrasts of black on white or even white on white. De Stijl incorporated the idea of the open plan, and it was from Lissitzky and other Russian Constructivists that ideas of functionalism became an integral part of Neue Sachlichkeit.

In the Bauhaus building at Dessau, Walter Gropius reflected the principles of the New Architecture as outlined in Neue Sachlichkeit. An asymmetrical composition sometimes described as a pinwheel revealed three wings of the building. The structure was a reinforced concrete skeleton with "mushroom" columns, brick masonry and hollow tile floors.⁵² While the structure was concealed behind the concrete ribbons of the Technical School and the glass curtains of the laboratory workshops and classrooms,⁵³ the functional design was exposed in such fittings as the radiators, the fenestration, the balustrading, and the light fittings. Welded asphalt tile laid on insulation of compressed peat moss covered the roof.⁵⁴ The roof drainage was in pipes on the inside of the building. The buildings of white cement stucco formed a harmony of cubes of differing sizes and heights; the studio wing housed twenty eight student apartments with room to work as well as sleep. In the basement were such functional areas as the electric laundry, baths, locker room, and gymnasium.

Gropius employed the most advanced engineering concepts known, and the building was an excellent example of a unity of the arts. He used the effect of the glass curtains to bring the inside space outside and the out-of-doors inside; and the entire complex was one which needed to be seen from every angle, the same multiple viewpoints, or simultaneity, established in Cubism. The students in the workshops designed and produced much of the interior finishing including the walls, the lighting, the furniture and lettering.

The New Architecture epitomized by Gropius in the Bauhaus building was a style which incorporated the new techniques and building materials

to create a lightweight framework or skeleton out of steel or reinforced concrete so as to relieve the wall from its load-bearing. Aesthetically, the coverings of the skeleton, sometimes referred to as "skin" or "curtains" could be a membrane of glass which allowed the sunlight and fresh air inside and which gave a light hovering feeling to the planes of the building. In Gropius' own words, "Instead of anchoring buildings ponderously into the ground with massive foundations, it [the New Architecture] poses them lightly, yet firmly, upon the face of the earth."⁵⁵ The architect no longer was tied to the massive structures formerly necessitated by older construction methods. Spatial harmony, repose, proportion in clear, crisp, and simplified forms could satisfy the aesthetic demands of the epoch according to Gropius. He referred to the New Architecture as a bridge uniting opposite poles of thought, on the one hand the technological and functional demands and the other the aesthetic.⁵⁶ Hitchcock and Johnson described the New Architecture in 1932:

The effect of mass, or static solidity, hitherto the prime quality of architecture, has all but disappeared; in its place there is an effect of volume, or more accurately, of plane surfaces bounding a volume. The prime architectural symbol is no longer the dense brick on the open box.⁵⁷

The very radical new aesthetic with its definite break in tradition and marked revolutionary style placed the new architecture in the vanguard and well within the bounds of the avant-garde. The development of the aesthetic itself suggested the socio-political connections of the New Architecture. Die Neue Sachlichkeit not only had explicit connections with the new Marxist government in Russia but with such radical movements as the ABC group in Switzerland. At the same time it implied a reform

of industrial society, and each of the artistic movements which contributed to its development were philosophically socialist in orientation. The reduction to abstract forms in De Stijl and Suprematism-Constructivism was a search for harmony of an unrealizable utopia. Malevich had hoped that his Suprematist art would be the expressive form for the new society which would arise in the Soviet Union. Tatlin had proclaimed that art must express the social needs of society, and his Constructivist forms were to be used in the construction of a new society. The theosophical movement which influenced De Stijl and the functionalist Opbouw group pronounced a concern for universal spiritual values. In Germany, the expressionistic fervor of the artists in the wake of the November revolution was their attempt to promote art as a basic element in the better society for which they hoped.

Sachlichkeit, incorporated the idea of objectivity and functionalism, of sensibility, practicality and pertinence. Around the turn of the century, Hermann Muthesius had applied the term to architecture and had given it a socio-political nature when he described the English Arts and Crafts as die Neue Sachlichkeit, a new attitude toward design which suggested a reform or better life for people. In the 1920's in Germany, the term described both paintings of "Magic Realism" and the New Architecture. Stylistically, the paintings and architecture were divergent; but the underlying philosophy or intent was the use of art in the improvement of society.

Die Neue Sachlichkeit with its philosophical social awareness had very real ties with Marxism. In the cultural exchange between Russia and Germany which followed the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922, influences

in the visual arts, films, and theater crossed the borders of these two countries. Many of the cultural elite in Germany were inclined toward Marxism, and El Lissitzky and Ilya Ehrenburg came to Germany as cultural ambassadors from Russia.⁵⁸

In the course of the next years, Lissitzky greatly influenced the development of the New Architecture with its underlying sachlich principles. A synthesis of functional structures with abstract elements, that is engineered objects combined with non-objective design, characterized Lissitzky's work. He was instrumental in revealing the social implications in functional architecture. He persuaded Van Doesburg in the De Stijl movement to consider social structure and technology as determinants of form. The left wing ABC group which Lissitzky helped to organize in Switzerland became dedicated to building with social relevance and in accordance with scientific principles. Some of the members of this group were the Dutch architect Mart Stam and the Swiss Hannes Meyer and Hans Wittwer.⁵⁹

Although the ABC group never adopted the phrase Neue Sachlichkeit, its ideas were essentially the same -- normative standards, economy of building technology, anti-monumentality, precise calculation, and social relevance.⁶⁰ Hannes Meyer described the functional yet social implications which this group projected when he wrote about his League of Nations design in collaboration with Wittwer:

If the intentions of the League of Nations are sincere, then it cannot possibly cram such a novel social organization into the straight jacket of traditional architecture. No pillared reception rooms for weary monarchs but hygienic workrooms for the busy representative of their people. No back corridors for back-

stairs diplomacy but open, glazed rooms for public negotiation of honest men.⁶¹

Mart Stam returned to Holland from Switzerland to help in the very dynamic functional design of the Van Nelle Packing Factory. Stam's own social relevance echoes in the descriptive words of Le Corbusier: "The Van Nelle tobacco factory in Rotterdam, a creation of the modern age, has removed all formal connotations of despair from the word 'proletarian.'"⁶²

The very idea of functionalism implied an improved working and living situation of Neue Sachlichkeit. While functionalism in the New Architecture meant the full use of modern technology and its open expression in design, it also in principle took on the meaning in Catherine Bauer Wurster's words of the "scientific approach to human needs and uses in programming, planning and design."⁶³ The double meaning of function provided the New Architecture with an ideology which the buildings themselves represented. Colin St. John Wilson of Cambridge University defined the ideology as adhering to the highest principles and ideals, forming a border zone which lay between aesthetics and morality and politics.⁶⁴ These highest of ideals built into the New Architecture gave the buildings a stature, an added dimension which to the outsider became a basis for political opposition in the 1930's.

Functionalism carrying with it the highest ideals of social responsibility was translated into the vast housing developments, Siedlungen, which grew up in the major urban areas in the years of the Weimar Republic. The demand for housing and better living conditions grew out of the increases in urban population during the war as families moved to the cities to work in the war-related industries. Also the break up of large family

groups led to a need for small living areas.⁶⁵ Not only did the increased populations need new schools, shops, and other community buildings, but the depression later brought demands for public works to stimulate employment. The need for both more houses and for work led to a search for new housing which would provide the best living conditions mostly for lower income families. After the stabilization of the mark, a new rent tax in 1924 provided revenue for building societies to erect housing for their members. Because the radical architects attempted to offer answers for the living problems of the new age, the housing was often, though not entirely, designed in the new architectural styles; and the great Siedlungen promoted the flat-roofed buildings of the new approach. The Social Democratic governments of the cities had much to do with these housing programs and thus the architecture itself took on the meaning of social renewal. Such cities as Berlin, Frankfurt, Magdeburg, and Karlsruhe, among others, had areas of flat-roofed housing designed for most economical living as well as the greatest amounts of air, sunshine, and green space.

In his diary, Count Harry Kessler wrote of visiting the Siedlung Römerstadt in Frankfurt with Maillot, the sculptor:

Another expression of this new feeling for life (a fresh outlook) is the new architecture and the new domestic way of living. To show him what I meant, I drove with him and Mlle Passavant to the Römerstadt. Maillot was practically speechless with astonishment...his exclamations of admiration grew even greater...I explained to him once more that this architecture is simply an expression of the same new vitality...This German architecture cannot be understood unless it is visualized as part of an entirely new Weltanschauung.⁶⁶

Ernst May, as city architect of Frankfurt, fully supported by the Socialists

as well as by the Democratic and Center parties, designed and created the Siedlungen, vast public housing in the outskirts of the city. "Romerstadt" was in a suburban area with over 4000 dwelling units. During his six years in the municipal office, May used new systems of construction and innovative planning in community facilities including interior design. He promoted the famous Frankfurt "Kuche" (kitchen), designed by the architect G. Schutte-Lihotzky.⁶⁷ This prefabricated kitchen, compact for economy of space and movement, was mass-produced and sold in a package. The technical and social research which accompanied the housing construction continued to improve living conditions.

The aesthetic movements of Cubism, De Stijl, Suprematism and Constructivism incorporated a vision of utopia through abstraction of art towards an internal harmony; and die Neue Sachlichkeit held a more practical vision of social renewal through the engineered object. The New Architecture drew together these ideas and sought to improve man's environment in the modern industrial society.⁶⁸ The Marxist influence of Lissitzky was very real and might have provided the outsider with facts with which to label the New Architecture as bolshevist. However, it was not explicit political desires but social awareness of the concrete needs of people in a new age which prompted the architects to create the radical new designs. To the outsiders, it was probably not the subtle and hidden technical influences of Lissitzky that branded the New Architecture as radical and socio-political, but it was the ideas of social responsibility which the buildings themselves carried and their connections with the Social Democratic Party which labeled the New Architecture as leftist. To the conservative outsiders who had but contempt for the new age of

the Republic, the New Architecture became the visible manifestation of the new age and as such was an object of the bewilderment and misunderstanding and finally the hatred of the outsiders.

Opposition to Modern Architecture and the Bauhaus

To the outsiders, the concepts of the avant-garde New Architecture and the Bauhaus came to have the same meaning. Opposition to one meant at the same time opposition to the other. The opposition grew in reaction to the zealous publicity which the architects of the New Architecture spread throughout Germany. The ideas which were inherent in the New Architecture became affixed to the Bauhaus, and it was this connection with social reform that caused the gap between the Bauhaus/New Architecture and the anti-liberal and reactionary outsiders of the Right.

Aesthetically, there had always been objections to the modern art from those who did not understand it or were uncomfortable with it. In 1913, a newspaper critic gave vent to his frustrations upon viewing an exhibit by Kandinsky by describing it as a "mad jumble of color and form," a "horrible smear of colors," and a "tangle of line." The critic went on to define the "ism" which Kandinsky's works reflected as idiotism!⁶⁹ A writer in the Berliner Tageblatt Monthly Edition in December 1926 civilly disagreed with the new design in architecture at the Bauhaus as he argued against the aesthetic appeal and described how the function of the new design affected people:

The danger that lies in wait for the Bauhaus school seems to be the rectangular and cubicular...A new hideousness is apt to result from this dogma, and we obtain not simplification, but sheer hard, soulless, downright nudity. The aesthetic element, apart from color and proportion, vanishes at once and we become petrified amidst the horizontal, the

perpendicular and the linear. The cubistic forms offend the eye and violate the sense of gravity without making a recompense. A chair that is built upon purely straight lines can never become a comfortable chair, since the human body is not rectangular, but rounded. And Nature too prefers the curved or irregular line.⁷⁰

The gulf between the new art and society caused the frustrations of people who were not able to understand modernity either in the visual arts or architecture. A patient and careful educational process might have helped to close the gap. However, when the avant-garde element became politicized, then the battle for art became a life and death matter, and there was little hope for reconciliation. During the Weimar Republic, artistic controversy inevitable in the conflict between the new and the old, the modern and traditional, was translated into political terms of Left and Right. It was in this context that the Nazis forced the Dessau closing and the end of the Bauhaus in Berlin.

Controversy seemed built into the Bauhaus from its beginning, but the opposition of the outsiders in Weimar was for the most part localized in the city and the state of Thuringia. This provincial area which basked in the German tradition of Goethe and Schiller was a ducal principality which had created spacious and beautiful parks and gardens and stately neoclassical palaces and public buildings. Steeped in these traditions, Weimar was unprepared for Walter Gropius' new ideas.

In the creation of the Bauhaus, Gropius had incorporated Weimar's beloved art academy which was renowned for teaching landscape painting. To the outsiders not only did he not get along with the academy teachers, but he employed strange and foreign Expressionist painters. Following the November Revolution, the political confusions of the merge of the

State of Weimar-Saxe-Eisenach into the State of Thuringia and the rhetoric which came from the National Constituent Assembly confused the citizens of Weimar. Already upset, they could not comprehend the expressionistic euphorism of Gropius' "Cathedral of Socialism." Not only did the citizens of Weimar oppose the Bauhaus, but at the same time the local craftsmen feared competition from the products of the newly outfitted workshops of the school.

The first public discussion in December 1919 forced the Bauhaus to take a defensive stance, and for the next years Gropius patiently and diplomatically answered the critics to their satisfaction until a rightist coalition curtailed the budget and in effect forced the move to Dessau. although a detailed study of this opposition to the Weimar Bauhaus is not within the scope of our investigation we need to see that art was the basis of a controversy that took on political features and this controversy would continue and become enlarged in the discussions of modern architecture.

We may draw two conclusions from this overview of the controversy. The first is that, as an institution which was financed and run by state and municipal governments, the Bauhaus was always vulnerable to political winds. As a state institution, its accomplishments had to be compatible with the outlook of the majority parties. Because of its radical aesthetic and its image as socially left-oriented, it always tended to conflict with representatives from the conservative Right. From the beginning, the rightist parties had objected to the Bauhaus budget and the nationalist and conservative newspaper Thuringia Landeszeitung "Deutschland"⁷¹ had taken up the opposition to the Bauhaus.

The second observation is that the later rhetoric which outsiders used to denounce the Bauhaus and its modern architecture and art had come out of the pre-Nazi local controversies in Weimar. During the course of the early public discussions and the press coverage of the school and its exhibitions, the outsiders who were in opposition applied political terms to the Bauhaus and its design. From the beginning, those who objected to the Bauhaus labeled it a "Spartacist-bolshevist institution," maligning it as a haven for "foreigners" and comparing its "Jewish" art to the art of the insane.⁷² Resolutions against the Bauhaus emphasized political dangers by linking Expressionism with communism and the spiritual dangers in the "un-German" art which was the cause of cultural disintegration.⁷³

One of the first writers to make racial overtones was Arthur Buschmann, an architect in Weimar. He surmised that cubist forms of modern architecture were primitive art forms of inferior races. Only when primitive art was a genuine product of the race could it be beautiful. Civilized men who attempted it reflected the harmful effects of racial mixture.⁷⁴ A Weimar art critic, Franz Kaibel, continued in this vein when he cited the dangers of mechanized dwellings which would result in a decline in German culture and the advent of a machine civilization.⁷⁵ Sigfried Giedion has recorded a letter from the President of the Swiss Werkbund to the Swiss magazine Das Werk which verged on a racial slur in talking about the new design and the Exhibition of 1923:

Not only political and economic circles but also artistic and above all intellectual circles are caught up in a mad frenzy of revolution. This feverish dance is at times both staged and promoted with an uncanny intelligence and sense of opportunism that is unquestionably largely induced and fostered by alien elements.⁷⁶

The opposition of the outsiders to the Bauhaus in the early years in Weimar was name-calling at its worst, but it remained local to the Thuringia area. The controversy which spread throughout Germany was that which revolved around modern architecture. This controversy renewed the debate over the Bauhaus since it was the major school for the New Architecture. It began as a sort of infighting within the professional and personal world of architects but soon became politicized and acquired the same labels which the opposition had thrown at the Bauhaus in Weimar. In the enlarged controversy, it was the supporters of modern architecture who were initially responsible.

In a controversy, the loudest voice is often heard from the group promoting a new cause rather than from the opposing group representing the status quo. Often the aggressive group promoting an idea is small but has influence far greater than its numerical strength. This was true with the promoters of modern architecture. Buildings in the new styles formed only a minority of the construction in Germany during the 1920's,⁷⁷ but these buildings stood out because of their distinctive architecture which contrasted with the traditional. The architects of the new style took every opportunity to put their new ideas in front of the public. Not only were they enthusiastic, but they took on the responsibility to inform the public and to help them understand the aesthetically radical theories and ideas which produced the radical styles. Their explanations instead of accomplishing an educational purpose often succeeded in rubbing the public the wrong way.

A rash of publicity met the public at every turn; and when the economy had begun to level off after the inflation, the buildings themselves,

especially the Siedlungen, testified to the efforts of the new technology. Within liberal and artistic circles, discussion about the modern architecture was all the rage. Even without benefit of modern advertising techniques, people all over Germany could not help but hear about the architecture which defied tradition and resembled white cubes and sparkled with glass walls. The Deutsche Werkbund was solidly behind it, and the modern architects themselves created the professional organization Der Ring which promoted the new style through exhibitions and publications.

The first signs of opposition to the New Architecture were professional and came from other architects. They objected to the brash statements of the modern architects which inferred emphatically that the New Architecture was the most predominant and important style among all contemporary building. This egotistical stance automatically goaded the quieter, more conservative architects who, in fact, had some admiration for the modern movement and its place in architectural history; and it forced some of them to defend their more conservative position in German architecture.⁷⁸ Not only were the proponents of the New Architecture too positive of their style and their place in the architecture of the twentieth century; but the more they wrote, the more they seemed to move away from the aesthetic of the new style as the spiritual or intellectual expression of the new culture and toward the more technical aspects which were practical in nature.

A young professor of art history in Halle, Emil Utitz, in friendly criticism, voiced the opinions that many of the outsiders held. The functional style, he said, reflected the working world, like a modern factory, designed for greatest efficiency. He went on to say that men

and women needed more than such functional forms for living -- they needed the forms which expressed qualities of life appropriate to leisure hours after work such as warmth, rejoicing, splendor, brilliance, and elegance.⁷⁹

In the architecture and construction trades, the opposition reflected the personal bitterness which the outsiders felt when the new architecture squeezed them out or otherwise ignored them. The leader of the opposition was Paul Schultze-Naumburg. Forward-looking as a young architect, he had been one of the founders of the Deutsche Werkbund and a well-established architect of prewar country homes; but since the war he had found few commissions during the period of economic inflation. At first, Schultze-Naumburg leveled criticism at the practical aspects of the new architecture. He questioned the efficiency of the new architecture in his book ABC des Bauens. It was a classic comparison of the old versus the new, the traditional versus the modern the experimental nature versus the permanent, the untried versus the known. In each case, Schultze-Naumburg discredited the new in favor of the old. The new architecture's flat roof was not only ugly and un-German, but it also leaked. The cement walls cracked and stained easily, the metal fittings rusted. Other objections of a practical nature came from the National Union of Roofers who claimed the flat roof caused unemployment. Other guilds such as building foremen, carpenters, stone masons, brick manufacturers -- all found fault with the technological advances of the new style. As the depression came on, their argument was even stronger.

The opposition of the outsiders took on nationalistic and racial overtones when Emil Hogg, Professor of Architecture at Dresden, in a speech before the National Congress of German Architects and Engineers,

accused the new architecture of causing cultural decadence in destroying German tradition. Modern architecture had a foreign attitude which was dangerous, he said, for it had a death-dealing spirit that would murder Germany's finest soul.⁸⁰ Such books as Adel und Rasse (Nobility and Race), 1926, and Racial Elements of European History, 1927, by Hans F.K. Günther and Kunst und Rasse (Art and Race), 1928, by Paul Schultze-Naumburg promoted the idea that racial characteristics were important to the German peoples and that they were reflected in art and architecture. Modern architecture had lost the concept of die Heimat, or home, and created buildings which could say anything and be anywhere. The flat roof was derided as "oriental"⁸¹ and as "the child of other skies and other blood."⁸²

The Swiss architect Alexander von Senger added political dimensions to the charges of cultural decadence when he attached the explosive word "bolshevism" to the modern architecture. His methods, such as making up quotations, using them out of context, charging guilt by association, and accusing by implication were discreditable but useful; and the Nazis also employed them successfully.⁸³ "Bolshevism" to Senger vaguely described the conspiracy that involved modern architecture not only in exploiting the proletarian masses but also in supporting capitalism. It was the worship of material things and technology rather than things which were cultural and spiritual, and it ultimately destroyed the soul of the building. The Volkischer Beobachter decried radical architecture: "the appearance of a building...shall no longer inspire us and make us happy; rather the products of the new architecture are intended to impress upon us day after day that we are merely 'geometric' animals without past or future."⁸⁴ Senger brought in racism in describing architectural bolshevist

materialism as the destroyer of racial health, and the cultural tradition of classical Greek he described as the "Nordic antique character," the builder of racial health.⁸⁵

If we assess the charges which outsiders lodged against the new style, and in turn against the Bauhaus, we can find some foundations of truth in them. We have already pointed out that the great amount of publicity was disproportionate to the amount of building actually done in the modern style. In the practical matters, there were problems connected with the new design. Much of the use of materials and methods were experimental, and the very roof of the Bauhaus had a leak which Gropius could trace to untested roofing material. Some of the Siedlungen were hastily put up and not always built to exact specifications. The Dessau-Torten was a victim of bickering among the builders who used some unauthorized materials and methods. The result was that there were problems with the Torten housing, and such fundamental parts as the windows proved to be defective and had to be replaced long before they should have worn out.⁸⁶ It was true that the new style used little brick or stone, but the handwork such as laying the roof still employed union labor. It was the depression which really caused the unemployment, but the New Architecture was a convenient scapegoat.⁸⁷

It is harder to evaluate the charges of cultural decadence and bolshevism. The new style went beyond national borders; but Kenneth Frampton points out that the International Style, as the new architecture was labeled, never became as truly universal as the neoclassical style of the late eighteenth century. However, its approach had a universalist implication.⁸⁸ It is true the new style did not have the look of the

Volk tradition, the rural German farm house; but the critics failed to remember that other styles of the past including the neoclassic and the baroque were not confined by nationality either. As for the "bolshevist" and "Jewish" labels, we see that these words described what was the most feared and the most hated and despised, and therefore the outsiders applied them in this sense somewhat indiscriminately. The careful researcher could have detected Marxist connections such as in the influence of the Russian Lissitzky in the development of Neue Sachlichkeit and in the work of Hannes Meyer and his leftist group in Switzerland. It is most probable however that outsiders such as Senger did not intend to back up their charges even with remote political realities.

The real truth behind the discussion about the New Architecture and the Bauhaus was that architecture and the arts were an integral part of the modern society. As such, these art works -- whether they were buildings, paintings or sculpture -- carried ideas which reflected the various views of the liberal as well as the conservative elements. Frampton described this in terms of architecture:

The new horizons in technology led architects to reconsider what architecture should be about turning it into a battleground of ideas.⁸⁹

The avant-garde stance of the New Architecture and the Bauhaus threatened those on the outside and was the basis for their opposition which ultimately discredited the modern style and forced the closing of the Bauhaus. In the beginning, the opposition was aesthetic, and those outsiders who propagated it were professionals from within the architectural trade. It was the personal and professional instincts of these architects, builders, and craftsmen that developed the opposition.

As the opposition became politicized through the rhetoric flung at the new style, the group of outsiders swelled and finally included the National Socialists. While the opposition to modern architecture was a continuation of the commotion created by the Bauhaus in Weimar, it was the National Socialists as outsiders who recognized the propaganda value of this struggle between the modern and traditional. That the Nazis were able to capitalize on this controversy and to assimilate the arguments and rhetoric of the conservatives was to their advantage, but we shall see they were not necessarily always in agreement with the anti-liberal aesthetic.

Chapter IV

Nazi Culture: Art and Ideology

Nazi culture rejected the ideals for which the Bauhaus stood, and it embodied boldly the political ideology of the National Socialists and became an instrument of their politics. Where the modern aesthetic inadvertently involved the Bauhaus in politics, the Nazi aesthetic became a conscious arm of the totalitarian state. The new directions in the arts epitomized by the Bauhaus and encouraged in the milieu of the republic were not absorbed by the population at large. The more conventional art which the dictatorship recognized as the popular taste was the product of a creativity shaped by the Nazi bureaucracy and held within the boundaries allowed by the political state.

Our investigation of Nazi aesthetics, especially architecture, will provide an understanding of its character and direction and an explanation of its failure to accommodate the modern. In Nazi Germany, the boundaries between art and politics fused, and the two became part of the same creative process. Dr. Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda and head of the Reich Chamber of Culture (Reichskulturkammer) confirmed this interrelationship in a letter:

Politics, too, is an art, perhaps the highest and most far-reaching one of all, and we who shape modern German politics feel ourselves to be artistic people, entrusted with the great responsibility of forming [a political unity] out of the raw structure of a Volk. The statesman is also an artist. To him the Volk is nothing more than stone is to a sculptor.¹

Just as the Nazi leaders attributed an artistic quality to politics, so they also applied politics to art: art took on the message of the state.

Hitler defined this task of the arts and artists in his speech to the Reichstag on March 23, 1933:

We are convinced that in the sphere of politics we have truly expressed the character and the vital will of our people, we believe also in the capacity to recognize and thus to find the corresponding cultural complement. We shall discover and encourage the artists who are able to impress upon the State of the German People the cultural stamp of the Germanic race which will be valid for all times.²

Perhaps more valuable for us today than the formal content of Nazi art is its propaganda value -- the ideology which it represented and the picture it presented of the short-lived National Socialist culture.

Devoid of liberalism, Nazi culture was the product of the reactionary revolution in politics which created the totalitarian state. The new culture which emerged was counter revolutionary in the sense that it opposed the leftist policies of the November Revolution of 1919 and the subsequent Weimar culture. At the same time, Nazi culture provided a continuum of conservative popular tastes which reflected the days of the Empire but were present, although understated, in the Republic.³

This seeming contradiction between a revolutionary culture and one which carried over in a continuum resolves itself when we consider that Nazi culture in essence was the attempt of the right wing to cure the ills of the machine civilization by elimination of the modern and the return to proven art forms. This reform movement blamed the depersonalization of human existence on the new technology and the ensuing urbanization and internationalism and retreated to the certainties of ages past.⁴ The so-called liberals, which included those who worked at the Bauhaus, had recognized the same problems in society, but their attempt at reform

had diametrically opposed that of the Right. Instead, it led to the use of new technology and materials and pointed toward the future. Both movements incorporated a quest for wholeness and meaning; but the basic difference in the Nazi culture and that of Weimar was the former's emphasis on the past, a return to elements which, it was believed, had once brought stability to the German people and would erase the alienation which modern life had brought upon them.

Rejection of modernism and a retreat in time were the negatives in the Nazi ideology. An understanding of the Nazi culture will show that the ideology positively affirmed a search for identity and roots of the people in nationhood, in their "Germanness." The forms meant to represent "Germanness" varied from the neoclassical to symbolic and "völkisch" realism.

From Machtergreifung, the Nazis successfully infused their arts with the ultra right wing ideology. The message which art, music, and literature were meant to portray was the power and permanence of the Third Reich along with the essence of being German. This ideology shaped the form, for in order to convey these ideas, the arts could not be abstract; they had to be recognizable. They could not be objectionable or provocative but had to be completely understandable and soothing. Unquestionably, the cultural elements had to have appeal for the German people and evoke in them the highest feelings of pride and patriotism. The heroic ideal was predominant; and, if the arts portrayed a nineteenth century morality, it was because they hallowed the family and hard work and the sexual mores of the days before industrialization.

Underlying the Nazi ideology was an attempt to reinforce what it

meant to be German. In foreign policy, this elitist racism pointed toward the superiority of the Nordic-Aryan race and the subordination of any other peoples, especially the Jews but also such "inferior" races as the Negroes and the orientals. It led to the union of all Germans, and the policy of Lebensraum was central to the aggressive expansion of the National Socialists to the east. In the culture, this "Germanness" was not easily defined. Hitler himself had difficulty with the concept in a speech at the opening of the House of German Art in 1937:

We cannot but wish for an art which may correspond to the increasing homogeneity of our racial composition, and thus present in itself the characteristics of unity and homogeneity. Many attempts have been made through the centuries to define what "to be German" really means. I would not seek to give an explanation in the first instance. I would rather state a law -- a law previously expressed by a great German: "To be German is to be clear," and that means that to be German is to be logical and true. It is this spirit which has always lived in our people, which has inspired painters, sculptors, architects, thinkers, poets and above all our musicians.⁵

This rather wordy definition only managed to cloak "Germanness" with such generalities as clarity, logic and truth. Hermann Burte reflected on poetry and the need for the German mode of being in a speech to assembled poets of the greater German Reich:

German poetry of the present can boldly take its place alongside every other in the world! Before all things it seeks the heart of its own people, it wants to be one with the feeling of all, and the calling that is most uniquely its own is to create a special breed.

It must turn all the vital energies of the German people toward the discovery, solidification, and perpetuation of the German mode of being. For how would it help German poetry

to win the world but to lose the soul?⁶

The search for and reenforcement of what was German appeared as a fervent nationalism which took diverse forms within the philosophical thought and the arts of National Socialism. On the one hand were the right wing nationalists who expressed German superiority in the powerful state and culturally promoted the monumental and neoclassical forms representative of the Greek ancestors of the German race. Hitler and most of his staff followed this line. The völkisch thought, on the other hand, sought to reaffirm and stabilize the German community by going back to the preindustrial Volk, the Germanic tribes and their myths. This romantic trend, espoused by Rosenberg and Darré, was never enthusiastically accepted by Hitler, but it proved to be a popular and simplistic reminder of the Germanic roots. Hitler wisely allowed this tradition even if he did not follow it himself.

If we briefly review these two strains of cultural nationalism we will see that they were divergent in style and somewhat in content but the ends were the same -- to promote the confidence of the German people in their nation and the ideals for which its authoritarian government stood. The formal content pretentiously omitted the modern, but the new technology to some degree influenced the styles. It was the ideology integrated into the culture and the revolutionary and anti-liberal philosophy behind the ideology which created the clash between the Nazi culture and the Bauhaus modernism which it rejected.

Right Wing Nationalists and Neoclassical Form

Adolf Hitler and the major policy makers in the Nazi regime saw in neoclassical forms the possibility to portray the strength and greatness

of the Third Reich. The neoclassical style with its clean and forceful lines and idealized sculpture lent itself to feelings of national importance. Not only Germany but every other country in the West used it for its government buildings. Much of official Washington was shaped in the neoclassic, and the Paris Exhibition of 1937 showed strikingly similiar buildings in a simplified neoclassicism -- one represented the Third Reich and the other represented Marxist Russia. Democracy, fascism, and communism -- all chose the neoclassic for their governmental buildings; for this form in its simplicity was capable of representing the highest of ideals, no matter what they were.

In Germany, the neoclassical revival dated to Johann Joachim Winkelmann who rediscovered the art of ancient Greece in the eighteenth century. He had maintained that ideal beauty was both in the proportions and in the structure of Greek art, not only in symmetry but in the unity of forms. A nude sculpture, he said, must not be a composite of unrelated forms of the body but "must possess the unity of an ocean which appears smooth as a mirror, although constantly in motion."⁷ Friedrich Gilly became a teacher of great importance as he inspired his students Karl Friedrich Schinkel in Berlin and Leo von Klenze in Munich. The nineteenth century classical revival combined proportional Greek beauty with the Roman grand scale; and there emerged the monumental style which Hitler came to admire and which later marked the official buildings of the Third Reich.

A self-professed artist and a frustrated architect,⁸ Hitler early showed preference for the neo-baroque and romantic classicism. From his youth in Vienna, he remembered the Ringstrasse where he said the

ornate classical buildings sent him into ecstasy.⁹ In painting, his favorites were the nineteenth century academicians such as Caspar David Friedrich, Hans Makart, and Franz von Stuck. In music, he doted on the brooding romanticism of Wagner. Two architects helped to refine Hitler's tastes: his friend Paul Ludwig Troost wooed him to the simpler lines of Klenze's Renaissance buildings in Munich; and Albert Speer, later the official Nazi architect, endeared him to the stripped classicism which was to mark the monumental buildings planned for the Third Reich. Another influence toward a simpler classicism may have been a book on Gilly's life which was published during the Nazi regime.

For the Nazis, the neoclassical form, heroic in its simplicity and powerful in its monumentality, suggested the greatness and permanence which Hitler wished for the Thousand Year Reich. Classical symmetry and clarity exuded a sense of well-being and security; and its order intimated the new discipline of a revived Germany,¹⁰ the return of authority and law and order. Harking back to the Nordic-Greek ancestry which the Nazis emphasized as the true Aryan forebears of the German race, the neoclassic could be a racial reminder of Aryan superiority and a promise that the community of the German people, or Volk, would have the glorious history and culture that classical Greece once had enjoyed.¹¹

In the arts, the neoclassical form laden with Nazi ideals lent itself particularly to sculpture and architecture. Classical figures, perfect in ideal beauty, could suggest the pure Aryan, the ideal German. Busts abounded as ideal likenesses of prominent Nazis appeared in public buildings. These heads which played up the best features of these personalities were sculpted first of all to be photographed, for the fine technical

nuances of photography could erradicate or play down any blemishes.¹² The prowess of the athlete and the courage of the soldier could be portrayed in oversized figures with larger than life muscles and limbs. Neoclassical monumentality was itself a device to portray the greatness of the German nation. Such an example of gross monumentality was the work of Viennese sculptor, Josef Thorak. His "Monument for the Workers of the Autobahn" was a gigantic mass of muscular nude men straining at a boulder. The model was triple life size; and the final version, which would have been placed alongside the Munich-Salzburg Autobahn, was to be three times larger than the model.

Sculpture adorned the government buildings complementing and reinforcing the message revealed through the neoclassical forms. At the Chancellery, two large nude statues by Arno Breker presided at the Court of Honor entrance. In the garden stood two of Josef Thorak's powerful bronze horses as well as another sculpture of a man wrestling with a bull by Louis Tuailon.¹³ These pieces symbolized strength and such ideals as "the intellectual" and "the guardian of the state."¹⁴

Only a few of the official buildings were completed before Hitler committed the nation's economy to war, but there were many designs in the planning stages. Hitler's great passion was architecture, and he spent much time poring over plans and plaster models. He had grandiose ideas to remodel the cities and was especially interested in Linz, Austria, his hometown, which he wanted to make into a sacred city for German art. In Munich, Paul Ludwig Troost remodeled the Brown House, the original quarters of the Nazi Party, and designed the House of German Art to replace the Glass Palace destroyed by fire in 1931.

This museum was the first of the official projects completed; and, at its opening, Hitler showed he was extremely pleased with it:

This building is so unique, so individual that it cannot be compared with anything else. It is a true monument for this city and more than that for German art...It represents a turning-point, the first of the new buildings which will take their place amongst the immortal achievements of German artistic life.¹⁵

Interestingly enough, the smooth limestone surface and the flat roof were similiar to the ideas of the New Architecture so detested by the Nazis. However, the neoclassical colonnade stretched symmetrically across the front of the building and disguised its offensive modernity. The stiff formality of the interior which was not conducive to the purpose of accommodating rotating exhibitions did not have the practical functionalism which the moderns had developed.

When he was barely thirty, Albert Speer became Hitler's architect upon Troost's death. Talented and ambitious, he followed Hitler's wishes; and his classicism became ever more monumental. The architect of Hitler's designs for Berlin, Speer executed models for the great domed hall which would be the center of the east-west and north-south axes of the city. This building would accommodate 150,000 to 180,000 people standing and would be the sacred temple for the people to worship National Socialism. The great dome would be supported by an inner dome, and its copper plate roofing would dominate the city skyline. Other buildings which would complement the domed hall on Adolf Hitler Platz would be Hitler's residential palace, the offices of the Chancellery, the High Command of the Armed Forces, and the new Reichstag.

The Reichskanzlerei (the Chancellery) was the only building to be finished and used in Speer's Berlin complex. That the first government building of the Greater German Reich was constructed within one year's time, January 1938 to January 1939, illustrated Speer's extraordinary ability to complete a project according to Hitler's rather fanatic requirements. The imposing exterior with its horizontal lines topped by heavy cornices and the solidly framed windows gave the appearance of the severe discipline, authority, and penchant for order of the new government.¹⁶ A series of rooms which opened out into the Marble Hall led to Hitler's reception hall; and Speer has reported how delighted Hitler was with the arrangement. In the long approach to have audience with the Führer, diplomats would get a taste of the power and greatness of the German Reich in the same manner that courtiers approached Louis XIV through the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.¹⁷ Not only was the Chancellery admired for its function as government offices; but it also became a symbol of the revival of Germany, the triumph of National Socialism, and the glories of the Volk.¹⁸ Produced by many individual craftsmen, the building reflected the Volk community and was organically a part of all of Germany -- the materials, especially the marble, represented the Lahn valley, Bavaria, Thuringia, the Kelheim region, the Jura, and Austria.¹⁹

The classical framework of the Zeppelinfeld at Nürnberg was one of Speer's executed masterpieces and an example of the mania for monumentalism which had captivated Hitler. Speer had initially renovated the Luitpold Arena and Hall. The Arena, which held 120,000 people, became an area for mass rallies where the Volk community could be united.²⁰ When this area did not prove large enough, Speer designed the Zeppelin Field which

would accommodate 240,000 participants. The focal point of this field, surrounded by grandstands, was the main stand with its symmetrical colonnades and huge pylons decorated with the wreathed swastika. Hitler needed an even larger area for military shows and had the March Field constructed to hold 500,000 people in the stands alone with a parade field which was nearly a kilometer in length.²¹ Other parts of this complex included a congress hall, designed by Ludwig Ruff and which could hold 60,000 people, and a planned amphitheater, the German Stadium, for 300,000. As in ancient Greece, the stadium was to be for sporting contests between the best athletes in the Volk community.²² These gigantic areas together made up a shrine for Party and Volk experience which was a concrete effort to join the people with the dictator and the Reich.

Another successful neoclassical complex was the Olympic Grounds. More than a sports center, the complex in Berlin included a stadium, parade field, and an open air theater. Its architect, Werner March, visualized it as a festival place for Volk parades, choruses and concerts, and military contests. The stadium was designed to seat 65,000 spectators and allow for 35,000 standing. The rows of pillars outside balanced by the heavy horizontal lines of the cornice followed the neoclassical monumentalism which the Nazis preferred. Through the Marathon Gate with its eternal Olympic Flame one could see the bell tower at the end of the May Field, the parade field which was next to the stadium. There the Langemarck Tower stood, a solemn memorial to the dead from the Battle of Langemarck in 1914. As a national festival and sport center, the Grounds were for communal rituals where the Volk as spectators and

participants could have proof of its vitality.

Völkisch Tradition and Germanic Roots

Nationalist sentiment expressed in a different form was present in the "völkisch" tradition which espoused a German art and culture rooted in a sense of the Volk myth. A symbolic return to primeval Teutonic tribal ways would provide a psychological security in the disordered modern world.²³ This strain of Nazi ideology combined the Volk tradition with Richard Walter Darre's racial purity and rootedness in the German soil, "blood and soil," and produced an anti-urban, rural emphasis which dwelt on a preindustrial morality. This philosophy was most evident in genre painting and regional architecture.

Paintings stressed a return to the past and to the soil, and they ennobled the workers: the farmer, the woodcutter, the spinner, the weaver -- all sturdy German peasants joyful at their tasks using tools which were picturesque but long outdated. True Aryan types emulated the finest of mankind and womankind, and sturdy young people were at wholesome play. Loving family scenes and mothers nurturing their babies provided uplifting moralisms on family life. The titles often suggested greater substance and reflected on nineteenth century morality in the Nazi ideology: "Time of Ripeness," "Expectation," "Permanence and Change," or "Blood and Soil."

Völkisch architecture was usually intimate and small in size. It professed its "Germanness" in regional styles and native materials with the idea of being rooted to local landscapes and customs. Its style was a return to the German past -- a celebration of the tribal ancestry, or the peasant and medieval Volk community. Particularly adaptable to buildings for youth, völkisch designs could influence the German young

people as they participated in outings. Hitler Youth Leader Baldur von Schirach said that suitable buildings for youth activities could "train the young person into a conscious bearer of national values."²⁴ In the youth Heim (clubhouse) and the hostels, young people daily came in contact with the Nazi ideology imbedded in regional architecture. Hostels were set a day's hike apart and often were in the style of the Alpine chalet or the half-timbered house. In some cases, purely functional buildings appeared in the Volk tradition. A weather service broadcasting station or an autobahn hotel would be built low to the ground with a thatched roof; an autobahn service station might have the white stucco walls and the appearance of the mountain cottage of south Germany. The regional styles bore heavy Germanic ideology and had little which seemed modern in technology or line.

The Ordensburgen, the leadership schools which trained the elite of the Nazi Party, were in the style reminiscent of the German middle ages, the golden ages of völkisch unity.²⁵ The massive fortress-like buildings constructed in the natural materials of the area were usually set off in rural areas and like the Volk style marked a return to the soil. Clearly elitist in their function, these buildings could remind those who used them of their own Aryan superiority as leaders of the Party as well as of the power and discipline of the new Reich. Although the Romanesque features were strong, these schools were remarkably modern in their integration into the landscape and the clearly functional plan.

Another purely völkisch expression was the rural Volk celebration at the Thingplätze, the open air amphitheaters based on the Greek theater and also on prehistoric German tribal meetings. To communicate a sense

of the German past, these theaters in the round comparatively small in size, were built near mystical ancient sites such as battlefields or graves. The productions were quasi-religious dramas with readings and choruses drawing together the Volk community in a revival of the Teutonic worship of nature. The sacred and mystical connotations were meant to restore a sense of community to the German people. Hitler never enthused over this attempt at a return to the Volk past, and the concept of these plays, Thingspiele, essentially failed.

Nazi housing projects were intended to strengthen völkisch character. Under Gottfried Feder, Reichssiedlungskommissar (the Federal Commissioner for Housing), the National Socialists proposed to relocate the urban population by building individual homes with gardens in rural areas. The purpose, Feder said, was to reincorporate "the metropolitan population into the rhythm of the German landscape."²⁶ The vision for the National Socialist "new towns" specified an ideal population of 20,000, a number calculated to include the advantages of both small towns and cities. They were to be built with government buildings at the center; industry, public utilities, and railroad stations would be to the east, and sport facilities and parade grounds to the west. Housing would fan out from the center, and garden areas would be at the edge of the city. Since the largest buildings would be the political ones in the center, these government buildings would in effect crown the circular city which would be like a medieval walled town.

Although great planning went into the movements of populations and the "new towns," only slight changes from the housing policies of the Weimar Republic were actually carried out. The control moved to the

central government from the building societies and municipalities, and the houses were modified with gabled roofs and less mechanized equipment. Nazi architects continued to build apartment houses, but they eliminated the large glass areas and the balconies which had been the trademark of the New Architecture. They did construct a few one-family dwellings for workers according to Feder's plan. The houses of these Kleinsiedlungen had only 600 square feet, but each had its own garden area. Some were in the völkisch style of half timber, but most were stucco with sloping roofs.

Modern Nazi Architecture

In both the neoclassical and the völkisch forms, we have noted some elements which imitated or came directly from the modern movement. There were some buildings which followed the New Architecture closely. Structures in this kind of architecture, modern in design and technology, were built by business or the military for utilitarian purposes. The Opel factory in Brandenburg with its large strip windows and undisguised steel structure might have been pure avant-garde functionalism. The Air Force Ministry in Berlin with its smooth walls and even windows or the German Experimental Station for Air Travel, brick and glass functionally combined for greatest efficiency, were comparable examples. The mighty Autobahn system with its highways and bridges might be included in this modern and utilitarian category. The Autobahnen did symbolize the Nazi ideology when one considers that the Roads of Hitler were built to honor him and had a national mission to unite physically the German Gaue (districts). Not only were the highways great technological achievements of modern engineering, but they were planned and executed to harmonize with the landscape. The bridges, too,

were feats of modern technology, and they often used native materials which "rooted" them to the regions.

Monuments and Festivals as Patriotic Expression

The most fervent expressions of the new nationalism could be felt in the monuments, stone edifices which memorialized the great victories of the past and those who gave their lives for the movement, and in the festivals, the regulated mass celebrations of National Socialism. Both art forms carried heavy ideological weight, although their execution might be neoclassic or völkisch in style. Traditionally, German monuments were sacred places for national heroes. One such example was the nineteenth century Walhalla, the German Hall of Fame near Regensburg. The Tannenberg, which Walter and Johannes Kruger had designed earlier, was built in 1935. A series of three square brick blocks, the monument was an eloquent memorial to the German soldiers killed at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1914. Symbolically, this memorial conveyed the sense of struggle of the living and the dead for the continuation of the Volk community.²⁷ In contrast to this eloquently simple design, Hitler preferred the traditional monuments. He had an older monument builder, Wilhelm Kreis, prepare sketches and models ahead of time for heroes of the war over which Hitler himself presided. One such plan was for a colossal pyramid surrounded by flames and mounted by an eagle. Kreis was responsible for planning the German military cemeteries which trailed the armies of the Third Reich across Europe.

George Mosse has written that the living experience of the festivals, the involvement of the masses, was politics in dramatic form. They were the "ideas of Mein Kampf [which were] translated into liturgical forms

and [which] left the printed page to become the mass rites of national, Aryan worship."²⁸ In some cases, the national monuments provided sacred spaces for these rituals of the community of the Volk. The gathering places in the German landscape or the wood gave way to the parade fields in the cities and towns throughout Germany. The film Triumph des Willens made by Leni Riefenstahl captures one such festival, the Party Rally in Nürnberg in 1934. The flames, symbolic of purification and eternal rebirth, and the flags which were the national symbol in red and black, the symmetry of the troops and the Labor Corp, as well as the fresh Aryan beauty of the faces of the mothers and children dancing in their native costumes -- all became part of the ritual of Hitler worship and the experience of Volk community, a celebration of nationalism and adulation of the Third Reich which had attempted to bring order to the lives of the German people.

Nazi Culture and Anti-liberalism

The picture of Nazi Germany which its art sought to create was one of renewal and unity of community. The return to stabilizing qualities of ancestry, both Greek and Germanic, so emphasized in the art forms, and the resulting racial pride in the Nordic-Aryan blood gave a direction and purpose to a people perplexed by the complexities of modern industrial life. We have observed that the National Socialists, at least philosophically, seemed to abhor the concept of modernity. In practice, however, they employed the latest technology in the rebuilding of the nation; and in their art, modern elements were present along with the older forms.

The philosophic rejection of modernity in the Nazi ideology was a product of the Nazi revolution in German culture, a reaction to the

government which it overthrew. At the same time, the rejection of modernity could be traced to a long standing and a deep conservatism which lay at the base of German thought. This conservatism, or anti-liberalism, developed as a reaction to the liberal ideas emanating from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Industrialization had been swift in Germany, and the resulting rapid social changes had created a sense of alienation which expressed itself in a cultural pessimism. As a result of this despair, nationalism became cultural and inner directed and took on the shape of dreams and hopes, inner longings for harmonious völkisch community, the quest for a national soul through the structuring of a national culture.

Recognized as the major ideologue of National Socialism, Alfred Rosenberg, a Baltic German architect, inherited this deeply anti-liberal and pessimistic thought. In his youth, in eastern Europe and his education in Russia, he developed an extreme racist version of nationalism. The racial writings of Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain probably influenced his belief that the common bond in nationalism was that of ancestry and blood. Although Rosenberg is not considered an original thinker, his synthesis of these prevailing conservative ideas articulated the philosophy which the National Socialists adopted.

The Conservatives of the nineteenth century had condemned all that was modern in society: capitalism, the growth of commercialism and industry, and especially the parliamentary government of the Reich united under Bismarck. Each of these they believed were divisive elements in the culture, and their spiritual longing was for the idyllic unity in community in the return to the small town and rural areas and simple life of the

Volk. They wished for an authoritarian figure to unite the German people, and in their despair, they idealized war and a fierce patriotism. Violent conflict symbolized strength and dedication and vitality.

Twentieth century right wing reactionaries in Germany inherited this condemnation of the modern in anti-liberal thought. They, too, felt despair with modernity in the Weimar Republic which seemed unable to cope with the economic problems which stemmed from the aftereffects of the Great War. Because the Nazi ideology had its roots in this anti-liberalism and pessimism and because modernity was forward looking and progressive, in the revolution which ensued, the Nazis had to reject the modern, at least philosophically.

Nazi Opposition to the Bauhaus and Modern Architecture

Encouraged by Rosenberg and other conservative writers, the National Socialists condemned modernity and what it stood for, but they did not join in the opposition to modern architecture until it was opportune to do so. Hitler seemed to have a sense of timing,²⁹ and he himself did not attack the New Architecture at all before 1933.³⁰ He did allow the Party to take advantage of the furor which Schultze-Naumburg and Alfred Rosenberg created. In the Völkischer Beobachter, the early National Socialist propaganda had been directed against the Republic with emphasis on the Versailles treaty and anti-Semitism. Around 1928, the VB began to print articles about culture;³¹ and, by 1930, articles in the VB were comparing the New Architecture with the economic and social distresses of the people and what they called the cultural decline of Germany. The New Architecture was equivalent to cultural bolshevism and symbolic of all that was modern.³²

It took many years for the Nazis to activate their cultural ideology,

and it was not until the National Socialists attained political power that the cultural revolution could begin, first at the local level as the Nazis made inroads into state and city governments. When Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, cultural policies went into effect at the national level. The Bauhaus Dessau fell when the Nazis gained power in the city government, but the final closing in Berlin was after the Machtergreifung.

In January 1930, the Nazis for the first time received a plurality of votes in a Land (State) government, in Thuringia; and Hitler selected Wilhelm Frick, a Reichstag delegate from Munich, to represent the National Socialist movement in the coalition government. Thuringia was an undeveloped land of high unemployment, home labor, and latent Protestant radicalism.³³ As Minister of Interior, Frick had control over the police; and, as Minister of Education, he was influential in the cultural life of Thuringia. The vehemence with which he put forth the Nazi program of moral and spiritual renewal³⁴ was but a hint of what the National Socialists would do throughout Germany.

Ruthlessly, he closed down Bartnug's school of architecture;³⁵ and he turned it into a school for unified arts with Schultze-Naumburg as the Director. Schultze-Naumburg discharged all of the faculty from the school because there was still too much of Gropius' influence. This was a latter day attack on the Weimar Bauhaus, which had occupied the buildings before the move to Dessau.³⁶ Schultze-Naumburg continued to ravage art by having all the modern paintings in the Weimar museum by Bauhaus Masters taken down, for they were reminders of "eastern or otherwise racially inferior subhumanity."³⁷ He also had Schlemmer's murals which he had created for the Bauhaus Exhibition of 1923 whitewashed. Schlemmer

learned of the destruction of his work while he was teaching in Breslau and wrote to Paul Westheim on October 8, 1930:

You might be interested to know that last week my wall paintings and reliefs in Weimar, for which you were once such a powerful advocate, have been either removed or painted over. I received this information from the building superintendent, who managed to carry some of the lighter pieces of sculpture to safety and writes in his letter, "Everything has been painted over in white, which I and many others deeply regret. But who can block the march of history?" I have not been able to discover who initiated this particular march, whether it was Director Schultze, born Naumburg, or freaky Frick of the Ministry of Culture. In any case, these products of mine had withstood the storms and the march of history for five years.³⁸

The local authorities began to suspect Frick when he removed a school principal in Weimar for having forbidden his pupils to join a National Socialist organization. Later, when Frick tried to introduce into the schools racist prayers which were heavily anti-Semitic, the Supreme Court declared the act unconstitutional. When Frick refused to give way, the Reichstag withheld national police subsidies. Finally, he was out of favor in Thuringia, but not before he packed the police force with Nazis and tried to pass an enabling act which would have given unprecedented power to the parties in control.

Frick and his cohort Schultze-Naumburg were in office only a little over a year and actually accomplished little; but his vicious activities made Frick a Nazi hero and brought Schultze-Naumburg to the attention of the National Socialists. He soon became a major spokesman for the Kampfbund. The year marked the first Nazi attempt to use the powers of constituted government for private ends;³⁹ and it was the first time

that the Nazi Party was identified with opposition to the Bauhaus.⁴⁰ Granted that the incidents had only alluded to the Bauhaus; however, the past objections in Weimar had come from the conservatives, but they were not Nazis. The purge of the Bauhaus Dessau in 1932 was a continuation of the same program of destruction that Frick had begun in Thuringia and that the Party would accomplish with full force after Hitler became Chancellor.

The fate of Oskar Schlemmer's exhibition in Stuttgart early in March 1933 was an example of the Nazis' brutal censorship of modern artists. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the first Director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, witnessed the Nazi takeover in Stuttgart where he spent the first four months of 1933. He reported that the National Socialist government had established itself with little apparent trouble and had invaded every professional and cultural activity.⁴¹ Within a week, authorities closed Schlemmer's exhibit, which was to have run for a month, and had two of his paintings removed from the walls of the Wurttemberger Museum of Modern Art. That Schlemmer was the most famous living artist from Stuttgart meant nothing to the Nazis. The critic in the National-Socialistisches Kurier described his work from the Nazi view point:

[His pictures] are fragments of the most preprimitive kind, without benefit of organic form or resonant color. And throughout this brutality of form and impossibility of color runs a dissonance of English red and Prussian blue. After the most-careful examination there is apparent absolutely no reason why these pictures should be lent to an art exhibition unless it were to show the insolence of the "artist" who has sent such half baked rubbish out on tour as works of art.⁴²

The critic went on to assume the now familiar supposition that because

the pictures were radical in style, they were also radical politically.⁴³ This was but one first hand account of the direction in which National Socialist art policy would go, culminating in the famous Degenerate Art Exhibition in Munich in 1937.

Nazi Cultural Bureaucracy

The Nazis swiftly accomplished cultural censorship, the process of Gleichschaltung, with the help of the Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur. Alfred Rosenberg had founded this Combat League for German Culture about 1928.⁴⁴ One of many small conservative organizations to combat modernity in Germany, the Kampfbund had local organizations in the major cities. It not only promoted the now common line of condemning modern art as "bolshhevik" and "Jewish," but it also encouraged the arts by sponsoring events such as poetry evenings and classical plays at the theater, and awarding prizes for literary achievement.

As the Nazi Party became more virulent in its attacks on modern art and architecture, Schultze-Naumburg and other conservative architects who were Kampfbund members such as Schmitthenner, Bestermeyer, and Senger joined its ranks and the League rose in power and prominence. A daughter organization was formed especially for architects, Kampfbund Deutscher Architekten und Ingenieuren, or KDAI (Combat League for German Architects and Engineers). By 1933, the Kampfbund was very powerful and Rosenberg and Gottfried Feder assumed that this organization would become the instrument of cultural control of the Third Reich. However, this group, which advocated the return to the Volk traditions in architecture, tangled with Goebbels, who vaguely talked of the need for a revolutionary style, hinting that he might lean toward Expressionism.

In architecture, the three professional societies included the KDAI under the Kampfbund, the Werkbund, and the BDA (Bund Deutscher Architekten). After Gleichanschaltung, when both the BDA and the Werkbund were reorganized along Party Lines, the three organizations promoted roughly the same architectural doctrine: rejection of the modern and a National Socialist style founded on "blood and soil."⁴⁵ Eventually, the three organizations merged under the Kampfbund; and finally the functions of the Kampfbund were absorbed in the Reichskulturkammer under Dr. Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment.

Various chambers for the press, radio, theater, motion pictures, music, literature, and the arts made up the Kulturkammer. The Kunstammer (Art Chamber) had divisions for painting, sculpture, and architecture as well as interior decorations, landscape gardening, arts and crafts, graphic arts, art and antique dealers, art publishers, and every other sort of professional organization which had anything to do with art. Anyone connected with the arts in any way had to belong to the Kunstammer. The authorities maintained control through membership, for some who might have been considered racially inferior or politically undesirable were not allowed to join and therefore could not practice their profession. By the end of 1936, a total of 42,000 men and women were a part of the Kunstammer.⁴⁶ The headquarters were in Berlin, but there were regional offices in the thirty-two Gaue throughout the Reich. The most notorious President of the Kunstammer was Professor Adolf Ziegler, painter of nudes and instrumental in organizing the Exhibition for Degenerate Art in 1937.

Under Goebbels, architectural control was loose; and only the architects

most connected with the New Architecture, such as Martin Wagner who designed the great housing projects in Berlin, lost their jobs. Many architects marginally associated with the New Architecture were left in peace, although they had few commissions. Even Mies van der Rohe, when interviewed in 1935, seemed to have a positive position. His interviewer, George Nelson, wrote:

At the present time, oddly enough, Mies is on the up-grade. Hitler and his aides have condemned modern architecture repeatedly, evincing a preference for a kind of bombproof Nuremberg style, but Mies, who has never shown much love for pitched roofs, has been made head of the architects in the German Academy. And only a short while ago his competition drawing for a new Reichsbank won first prize, although his design will not be built. Whatever it is that accounts for his enviable position it is to be hoped that he will get some jobs out of it. With Mendelsohn, the Tauts, and Gropius out of the country there surely ought to be a commission for those who remain, and it would be interesting to see what Mies would do on an important building.⁴⁷

Rosenberg, Schultze-Naumburg and other conservative architects who had played such a vital role in the propaganda of the National Socialists before Machtergreifung found themselves left out of the National Socialist hierarchy. In 1934, Rosenberg was appointed to the Custodianship of the Entire Intellectual and Spiritual Training and Education of the Party and of all Co-ordinated Associations. The title was more impressive than the job, and the major work he accomplished was to edit the official and elite art magazine, Die Kunst im Dritten Reich.

The very complexity of the organization of the arts illustrated the importance given to culture in the Third Reich. Hitler believed that the arts were an integral part of the new Germany; for in his public

speeches and private talks, he referred repeatedly to art and culture. Even in times of economic distress art was not a luxury, Hitler said, but a necessity; for it lifted a people out of its poverty and "ennobled its existence through great creative effort."⁴⁸ Works of art corresponded with the greatness of the human soul and thus expressed the determining spirit of an age.⁴⁹ At the same time, art might reflect traditions of the past and pride in the present; and, in the spirit of a millennial inheritance, it would form a bridge which would lead to the future.⁵⁰

The Bauhaus was eliminated from the Nazi culture because it became the object of Nazi hatred as a symbol of the Socialist party and the Weimar Republic. At the same time the Nazi ideology philosophically rejected modernity. However, it took more than philosophical thought to fell the Bauhaus. The action which caused its destruction grew out of the inner Party struggle for power in which art policy became political policy. Hitler had made his preferences in form known, but it was Rosenberg and his posture for battle in the arts who forced the issue and promoted the dramatic elimination of modernity. Wilhelm Frick in Thuringia and the Nazis in Dessau were only following the battle procedure laid out by Rosenberg in his extreme racist and völkisch philosophy. When Joseph Goebbels became head of the Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (RMVAP) on March 11, 1933, he instituted a more moderate program toward the arts which opened battle with Rosenberg. The struggle lasted a little over a year when Hitler was forced to rule against the modern. The paradox of the end of this struggle was that he reinforced Goebbels' position on his staff although he could not agree with his tendency toward modernity. He settled the fight by going along with

Rosenberg, but at the same time he dismissed Rosenberg from any position of power within National Socialism. Because art had become political, Hitler had to take a stand on the question; for National Socialism could not be threatened with dissension within its ranks.⁵¹

Chapter V

Conclusion

The physical destruction of the Bauhaus is the logical conclusion to this study of art and political ideology. A representative of liberal politics through its association with the New Architecture, this institution was a casualty of anti-liberal assault as the power of right-wing politics sought to crush the liberal aesthetic. After months of Nazi pressure, the Dessau Bauhaus fell; its last year, fraught with conflict, saw a repetition of past controversies between the Right and the Left. Paradoxically, the Nazi action in destroying the institute augmented the mythos which, in effect, made the Bauhaus "idea" imperishable.

Closing of the Bauhaus in Dessau

Support of the Bauhaus Dessau lay with the City Council and the State of Anhalt. After the turbulent years in Weimar, the years in Dessau had been productive; and, for the most part, there had been little opposition. Initially in 1925, the right-wing DNVP and the DVP, had voted against the Bauhaus on financial grounds, but the SPD and the Democratic party overruled them.¹ During the directorship of Hannes Meyer in 1928 and 1929, Bauhaus activities briefly reflected sympathy with radical political thought; and the right wing objected once more. The appointment of Mies van der Rohe in 1930 quieted the Communist agitation within the Bauhaus as well as the objections of the Right from without. However, when the National Socialists gained a plurality in the Dessau City Council in January 1932, they immediately began strenuous opposition which culminated in the closing of the Bauhaus in Dessau on October 1, 1932.

Bauhaus Director Mies van der Rohe had guided the school during this time of conflict. At the suggestion of Gropius, Mayor Fritz Hesse had appointed Mies Director of the Dessau Bauhaus after Hannes Meyer. Not only was Mies an outstanding architect in the Modern Movement, but Hesse hoped that Mies would protect the Bauhaus from political challenges both within the school and from without. The contract signed by Hesse and Mies on August 5, 1930, extended the directorship to Mies until March 31, 1935, and stated that the city had the right to terminate the contract only in the case of the dissolution of the Bauhaus:

The Bauhaus can be dissolved only when there are urgent reasons for doing so; for example, when the number of enrolled students sinks below 75, or when the Directorate of the Bauhaus in agreement with the staff decides that the cultural mission of the Institute has been fulfilled or deems it possible to fulfill this mission only at another location. Such a dissolution, in case of disagreement with the city administration, is to be decided on by an impartial arbitration committee, which shall be constituted by a representative of the city, a representative of the Bauhaus Dessau, and the art commissioner for the German Reich as impartial chairman.²

It was clear from the contract that the city intended for the Bauhaus to keep operating and for it to remain in Dessau.³ In 1930, neither Mies nor Hesse could foresee the difficulties which the National Socialists would bring about. The contract set the range of legitimate reasons for dissolution of the Bauhaus, but the Nazis circumvented this contract and withheld financial support. Certainly, there was no arbitration committee set up by the city government to decide the question. An examination of the contract shows that the closing was an extra-legal affair; and this, in the end, would give Mies an upper hand in negotiating with

the city.

Gropius had forbidden any political agitation; and Hannes Meyer, while an avowed Marxist himself, had realized the necessity to close a cell of Communist students at the Bauhaus. At the same time, the opposing political attitudes which were showing themselves in the Weimar Republic were found among the students. In an inflammatory newsheet, the leftist Meyer supporters tried to slander Bauhaus personalities such as Gropius and Kandinsky:

Herr Kandinsky, is it true that you or your wife Nina spread the news about Hannes Meyer's contribution to the "red relief" to the proper quarters, so that it would appear in the newspapers?⁴

These student demonstrators demanded a change in the Vorkurs to include the theory of history developed on a socialist and materialistic basis. With a firm hand Mies had dealt with these agitators; but, just as in the charged atmosphere of the ailing Republic, political conflict at the Bauhaus was inevitable.

A young student who entered the Bauhaus in the spring of 1932 wrote in a letter dated June 26 about the friction within the student body:

A few days after we arrived, new student representatives were to be elected. It was then that we noticed that there are two factions at the Bauhaus that are fighting each other like cat and dog. The Communists and leftists on the one side and the rightists representing all shades, beginning with those of the "youth movement" and right up to the Nazis on the other...After the third meeting and several hours of mutual shouting, we finally agreed on one representative of the Left and one of the Right.⁵

In the same letter, this student mentioned with foreboding the impending closing:

Obviously it is a wretched feeling never to know when the place is going to be closed. The budget used to be 150,000 marks (city subsidy), and today it is 80,000 marks. Votes in the city legislature concerning the existence or nonexistence of the Institute are always decided with a margin of one or two votes.⁶

When the National Socialists obtained a plurality in the Dessau City Legislature in January 1932, there were four members of the City Council -- the Lord Mayor, Mayor, and two city aldermen -- and thirty-six representatives including fifteen National Socialists, five belonging to rightist parties, twelve Social Democrats, and four Communists. On January 21, 1932, at the third Open Session of the City Legislature, Representative Hofmann and his associates in the NSDAP moved that all funds for the Bauhaus teachers and employees be cancelled as of April 1 and that the Bauhaus be demolished. This was followed by a contingency motion by Representative Jericke and his associates that any funds allocated for the Bauhaus be made available to the welfare department to help the unemployed.⁷

After debate, the first ballot called for the demolition of the Bauhaus. A vote of twenty-five to fifteen defeated this part of the motion and thus dismissed the rest of the motion. This meeting of the City Legislature was a sign of what was to come; and, in the months ahead, the leftist members of the legislature led by Lord Mayor Fritz Hesse had to hold out again and again against the Nazi proposal. On July 8, when the city budget was being prepared, the National Socialists proposed that they inspect the Bauhaus in order to have a better understanding of the work carried on there. Howard Dearstyne recalled that inspection:

Fully intending to do away with the hated Bauhaus,

they nevertheless saw fit to give their contemplated action the appearance of legality by arranging a trial bearing the semblance of justice. They required the director to make an exhibition of Bauhaus work and appointed as judge Paul Schultze-Naumburg, an ultra-conservative architect who despised the Bauhaus and who, in turn, was despised by it. So Mies assembled the best of the student work for the fruitless exhibit. We were all intent upon putting our best foot forward so I asked Hinnerk Scheper, our color teacher at the Bauhaus, to make a rendering of my bathing pavilion for the exhibition. He cheerfully complied, and I am still happy today to possess this memento of that talented and modest man.⁸

In one last effort, on August 19, 1932, the Lord Mayor Hesse invited representatives of all the parties to inspect the institute again and view an exhibition which provided a comprehensive summary of accomplishments of the Bauhaus. In addressing the visitors, Hesse proudly proclaimed that the work of the Bauhaus displayed for them demonstrated the responsible and serious nature of the institution. In its seven years in Dessau, the Bauhaus had necessarily gone through stages of growth. He pleaded that the new style and form which had reached into all areas -- clothing, lamps, curtains, advertising posters, and buildings -- were politically neutral. The difference, he said, between the Bauhaus and other technical schools was that the one united all disciplines into a single curriculum:

At the Bauhaus, students are systematically acquainted with working in wood, in treating walls, in the techniques of lighting, and in the problems of interior design...The students are responsibly trained in theoretical and scientific subjects as well as in practical and craft work.⁹

He went on to discuss the Bauhaus models and manufacturer's prototypes which trade and industry reproduced. Lamps and wallpaper and curtain

textiles had brought commissions into the Bauhaus amounting to about 30,000 marks per year. A stringent tightening of the budget combined with the commissions had reduced the need for the city subsidy from 133,000 marks in 1930 to the 80,000 for 1932. The one hundred sixty-eight students at that time, he said, included one hundred thirty-five Germans (seventeen residing out of the country) and thirty-three foreigners, some of whom were American, British, and Swiss. Hesse had given an accurate picture of this institution which had his full support: artistically and industrially, the Bauhaus had helped to provide answers for the new age. Within its walls, there had been little question of politics:

History will pass its judgment on the Bauhaus and the work it did...There is no reason for us and for all friends of German educational and cultural work to be afraid of this judgment.¹⁰

Fritz Hesse might have saved his breath, for the word was that the Bauhaus fate was already sealed. The seventh Open Session of the City Legislature, on August 22, 1932, terminated teaching activity at the Bauhaus effective October 1. The ever growing pressures from the Right finally forced the Social Democrats to abstain in the vote, making it 20 to 8 in favor of dissolution.

Although the dissolution was illegal under the terms of the contract with Mies van der Rohe, an emergency decree issued by the Reich President would have made the action legal at the end of 1932. Because the Nazis insisted on the October date, Mies and the faculty were able to negotiate their contracts. Not only did the city give up to them the royalties from the wallpaper production but also salary compensation. These two sources of income enabled Mies to relocate the school immediately as

a private institute in Berlin.

We can imagine that the summer days had created much anxiety for the students themselves. At the end of July, their appeal for law and order went to President von Hindenburg himself, asking that the school be kept open at least as long as necessary for the present students to complete their training;

We students are in no way oriented toward any partisan political activity and hence demand that our claim for the completion of our course of studies not be set aside for any one-sided partisan political considerations. Despite the fact that we, as students, are the ones hardest hit by the proposed closing of our school, we have been silent until now believing in a reasonable settlement of this problem, honoring the student's right to complete his training as a matter of course. But since the development of the last few days has clearly shown that our hopes are in vain and are apparently inopportune, we are now adopting the only way left open to us, in that we are turning to our highly revered Reich President, firmly believing that he will be able to prevent the Bauhaus in Dessau from closing its doors.¹¹

It is probable that the Bauhaus and its modernity were of little interest to the aging President von Hindenburg.

Throughout the Dessau years, the staunch supporter and real hero of the Bauhaus struggle was Lord Mayor Fritz Hesse. It was Hesse who recognized the value of having the Bauhaus in the city, who invited Gropius to move to Dessau, and who persuaded the city council to provide funds for the new buildings which were to stand as a monument to the new age. It was Hesse who provided an able and interested leadership in administering the Bauhaus at the city level; and, during the embattled months in 1932, as the Lord Mayor, he led the fight for the Bauhaus against

the Nazi determination to dissolve it.

A native of Dessau, Hesse was a lawyer who entered politics in his hometown with the aim of developing his city as a modern industrial center. In the same progressive spirit with which he welcomed the Bauhaus, he was instrumental in supporting the Junker-Werke, a factory which manufactured the Junker all-metal airplanes. In 1929, he was elected for a second twelve-year term as mayor of Dessau, but he was to pay a price for his support of the Bauhaus.¹²

After Hitler came to power on January 30, 1933, the National Socialists arrested Fritz Hesse and accused him of irregularities in office. The Dessau public prosecutor ordered a search of the Bauhaus in Berlin in order to locate "Communist" material which would incriminate Hesse. In May 1933, Hesse went to Berlin to work as a lawyer and remained there until July 1945 when he was reinstated as Mayor of Dessau. Characteristically, his concern was the rebuilding of his beloved city; and he even tried to reopen the Bauhaus. He remained in office over a year but realized that he would be unable to work with the political regime under the Soviet occupation and left for good in November 1946.¹³ A forward-looking, progressive public servant, who was sensitive both to the needs of industrial growth and to aesthetic fulfillment, Fritz Hesse remains in posterity as the supreme friend of the Bauhaus.

Gropius wrote reflectively to Hesse in May of 1953:

One can hardly believe that in spite of mounting difficulties the Bauhaus made such an impression. When you live in Germany, you can hardly imagine how world famous the Bauhaus has become, especially in the United States and England...it was all worthwhile, though neither you nor I knew beforehand the great and almost insurmountable

difficulties we were going to have.¹⁴

Closing of the Bauhaus in Berlin

With the funds from the wallpaper design contracts and teacher subsidies from the city as well as a substantial investment of his own bank account, Mies moved the Bauhaus to Birkbuschstrasse in the Steglitz area of Berlin. He intended to operate the school without any political ties for he did not expect any support from the city of Berlin.¹⁵ From October 1932 to April 1933, the school functioned as a private institution; its home was no longer the elegant buildings of the New Architecture but an abandoned factory building.

Less than six months after it had relocated on April 11, 1932, Gestapo troops sealed the building after they conducted the search for Communist materials in connection with Fritz Hesse. To Mies, this brutality was surely a mistake. His naivete in politics was evident as he first managed to have an interview with Alfred Rosenberg and then went every other day to Gestapo Headquarters in Alexanderplatz in an attempt to get the school reopened. Not only was he unable to understand the Nazi rhetoric which Rosenberg threw at him, but he was gullible enough to believe the young chief officer of the Gestapo when this policeman told him that he was very interested in the Bauhaus movement but only distrusted the foreign-born Kandinsky.¹⁶

Finally, on July 21, 1932, the Gestapo sent a letter allowing the school to reopen with certain conditions. They demanded dismissal of Hilberseimer and Kandinsky and the appointment of true Nazi sympathizers in their place; the teaching program of the Bauhaus would have to be approved by the Minister of Culture; and the faculty would be required

to answer a questionnaire.¹⁷ Not only would Mies not comply with the Nazi conditions, but he and the faculty realized that funds were all but gone.¹⁸ Two days before receipt of the Gestapo permission to operate, Mies and the faculty voted to close the Bauhaus for good.¹⁹

For Mies, the return of the keys to the building was a clarification of a bureaucratic mistake. In his excitement, he projected that Gestapo approval meant the Bauhaus and modernism were not a threat to the Nazis. In effect, Mies felt that a principle had been established; for, while the Nazis had not officially approved modernism, they had at least removed the label of treason from it.²⁰

Mies' earlier meeting with Alfred Rosenberg graphically portrayed his innocence of the political struggle of the arts. Both Mies and Rosenberg were architects interested in building for their country. At first, the new regime had put Rosenberg in power, and Mies was anxious to convince him that modernism could exist within the Third Reich. This very naive proposition of Mies' was evidence that he did not consider the modern aesthetic in terms of politics. All along, he had staunchly maintained that he and the Bauhaus were apolitical. In this simplification of a complex issue, Mies was sincere; for at stake were his career, his beloved architecture, and the work of many other builders. Blinded only by his wish to build, he could little realize that for the Nazis modernism was very political. In their meeting, Rosenberg had referred to the armies which fought in a spiritual field, but Mies seemed to have no grasp of the interrelationship of art and political ideology.²¹

In all fairness, we should realize that in the months after Machtergreifung, the position of the arts was in great confusion. At that

time, there were some Nazis who hoped that Nazi art could include Expressionism and other modern sentiments. This was behind part of the conflict which later surfaced between Rosenberg and Goebbels. It was Hitler who made the final decision and set the course for the mediocre art which would follow.²²

The Bauhaus as Victim and Victor

The accomplishments of the Bauhaus in the area of modern art and architecture involved the institute in social and political purposes. Although this political tendency was not consciously sought by the artists at the Bauhaus, it nonetheless made the Bauhaus prey to the vicissitudes of politics. In the sense that the Bauhaus' goal was to nurture the creative spirit of the modern age, it became a victim of Nazi political ideology which sought to limit creativity within political bounds.

We have determined that the Nazi destruction of the Bauhaus did not kill its creative spirit. In a peculiar way, it added to the mythos which had always surrounded the Bauhaus and which kept it alive. Evidence of its vitality spread with its teachers and students as political oppression forced them to emigrate thus spreading the Bauhaus "idea." The Bauhaus remains in history, a representative entity of the Weimar Republic. Despite its physical destruction, it lives embodied in the lives of those who worked there, in numerous buildings which represent the New Architecture, and in the educational methods of schools of applied design. The Bauhaus, a victim of politics, became victorious through its mythos.

This study of the conflict between the aesthetic of the modern movement and that of the far Right has reflected upon art within a political context. Not only has our investigation revealed a wide divergence in style but,

more importantly, it has also emphasized the interrelationship between the aesthetic and the society which it portrays and to which it speaks. The very act of John Ruskin and William Morris in calling for a return of the artist to the everyday world foreordained that art would have a propensity toward social purpose and therefore have a political nature. The broader interpretation of politics as the total complex of relationships between men and women and their society suggests that art is the expression of those relationships.

We have seen that the development of the artistic avant-garde which led to the modern movement in architecture followed the path initiated by the nineteenth century realists and the Impressionists. These artistic pioneers attacked prescribed rules for subject matter and design as they created expressions which sought in singular ways to aid in the development of society in which people could live in harmony. The inescapable social nature of art, most explicit in architecture, also meant a tendency toward political purpose.

The Bauhaus aesthetic and its counterpoint in Nazi art invite observations of the relationship between art and political ideology. Clearly, both the liberal and conservative/reactionary aesthetic demonstrate that art and architecture have a political nature. With the Bauhaus' aesthetic, the political thrust lay in the underlying will to reform society after the ensuing chaos which followed World War I and the overthrow of the Kaiser's empire. In the unity of arts and technology, Gropius envisioned the betterment of society by combining the machine aesthetic with the creative spirit and working toward a positive new way of life. In effect, Gropius wished to counteract the destructive qualities of the machine

which had come to fore in the brutality of the Great War.

Nazi art followed some of the precepts of German Romantic Classicism and with its subject matter and style marked a return to academic rules of the nineteenth century. Within national boundaries, the art form, instead of seeking to reform society through the use of modern technology, sought to lend stability to the German nation with a return to a society remembered as a time of cohesion and strength.

We have determined that the differences in style and thrust could demonstrate the political natures of the Nazi aesthetic and the modern movement. The natural and classical art of the National Socialists was blatant in its political purposes -- to portray the power and greatness of the Third Reich and its Germanic/Nordic people. The modern aesthetic as represented in the Bauhaus/modern architecture also made a political statement. The message inherent in the abstract art and functional architecture was a freeing one of liberalism and support for the German republic.

While both art forms had a political purpose, the great difference was in the creators and their own awareness of their political possibilities. Those who worked at the Bauhaus felt it necessary to work outside of the mainstream of academic art but they seemed unaware that their place in the avant-garde also gave them a specific political purpose oriented toward the Left. This obliviousness was probably a product of the very intense pursuit of the aesthetic as men such as Gropius and Mies, Kandinsky and Moholy-Nagy, charted a new course for artistic expression in the twentieth century. The Nazis, sophisticated in politics, recognized that art conveyed social and political content and carefully orchestrated an aesthetic program producing political messages which promoted the National

Socialist cause.

The Bauhaus story conveys that creative expression while aesthetic is also social and hence political, and, unintentionally or intentionally, reflects the political climate in which it is nurtured. The Weimar Republic with its democratic constitution and governed by the SPD provided a milieu which was open and free for the experimentation of the aesthetic avant-garde. The Nazi political climate based on cultural controls sustained an aesthetic which was didactic and purposely meant for propaganda. Thus the aesthetic and political statements of the modern movement, products of freedom had to be incompatible with the controls of the totalitarian state and could not survive in the reactionary political climate.

In Germany, both the abstract style of the modern movement and the academic style used by the Nazis have outlived their political birthrights. The modern movement, which appeared to be crushed, surfaced at the close of World War II to have a major part in the rebuilding of Germany. This is evident in its architecture and in the enjoyment of modern art in the museums and galleries and in such displays of vitality as the Documenta series of art exhibitions in Kassel. However, the International Style, born out of experimentation, in its more recent years has suffered from a subtle lack of the aesthetic qualities which had marked its early development. The earnest sense of purpose which created the New Architecture and which molded the aesthetic of the Bauhaus has not always been evident in later designs. The academic style continues in the art and architecture favored by those who feel comfortable with predictable, non-provocative and natural art forms.

The short-lived Bauhaus is an example of men and women in their

search for a design which expressed creatively in a positive way the age in which they lived. Their goals were aesthetic and constituted high ideals for the improvement of people's lives. However, the political nature intrinsic in the twentieth century avant-garde impeded their progress and eventually brought the down fall of the Bauhaus, the institution which applauded and greatly aided in the development of the New Architecture.

ENDNOTES

Chapter I

Introduction

¹Nikolaus Pevsner, Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius (Thetford, Norfolk: Lowe & Brydone Printers Limited, 1977), p. 23.

²Ibid., p. 22.

³Ibid., p. 38.

⁴Joachim Remak, ed., The Nazi Years: A Documentary History (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 24.

⁵Sigfried Giedion, Walter Gropius: Work and Teamwork (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1954), p. 17.

Chapter II

The Bauhaus Experience: In Pursuit of the Aesthetic

¹Eberhard Roters, Painters of the Bauhaus, trans. Anna Rose Cooper (London: A. Zwemmer Ltd., 1969), p. 47.

²Eckhard Neumann, ed., Bauhaus and Bauhaus People: Personal Opinions and Recollections of Former Bauhaus Members and Their Contemporaries, trans. Eva Richter and Alba Lorman (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1970), p. 38.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 45.

⁵Kenneth Frampton, Modern Architecture: A Critical History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 125.

⁶Johannes Itten, Design and Form: The Basic Course at the Bauhaus and Later, trans. John Maass (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1975), pp. 7, 8.

⁷Ibid., p. 8.

⁸Neumann, Bauhaus People, p. 56.

⁹Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius and Ise Gropius, Bauhaus 1919 - 1928 (Boston: Charles T. Branford Company, 1952), p. 114.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 116.

¹¹Ibid., p. 122.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Hans M. Wingler, The Bauhaus: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago, trans. Wolfgang Jabsand and Basil Gilbert (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1969), p. 546.

¹⁴Bayer, Bauhaus 1919 - 1928, p. 168.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁶Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 524.

¹⁷Tim Benton and Charlotte Benton, eds., Form and Function (London: Crosby Lockwood Staples, The Open University Press, 1975), p. 172.

¹⁸Bayer, Bauhaus 1919 - 1928, p. 20.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 21.

²⁰Ibid., p. 20.

²¹Walter Gropius, Scope of Total Architecture (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955), p. 43.

²²Bayer, Bauhaus 1919 - 1928, p. 110.

²³Ibid., p. 40.

²⁴School of Architecture, Columbia University, Four Great Makers of Modern Architecture: Gropius, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Wright. The Verbatim Record of a Symposium Held March - May 1961 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), p. 238.

²⁵Bayer, Bauhaus 1919 - 1928, p. 215. At first in the schools of industrial design which did not have the direct influence of former Bauhaus personnel, the new method manifested itself in a greater freedom for student exploration and creativity. It was not until after World War II that the modern movement with its new educational approach had really taken hold in America. See Harold Bush-Brown, Beaux Arts to Bauhaus and Beyond: An Architect's Perspective (New York: Watson-Gupstill Publications, 1976), pp. 34 - 36; 41.

²⁶Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 56.

²⁷Ibid., p. 69.

²⁸Ibid., p. 376.

²⁹Neumann, Bauhaus People, p. 76.

³⁰Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 67.

³¹This housing project was never executed.

³²Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 67.

³³Neumann, Bauhaus People, p. 120.

³⁴This display along with all such exhibits in which the Bauhaus participated provided incriminating evidence for those enemies outside the Bauhaus. This evidence would contribute to the politicization of the Bauhaus.

³⁵Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 69.

³⁶Neumann, Bauhaus People, p. 28.

³⁷Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, Moholy-Nagy: Experiment in Totality (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1950), p. 35.

- ³⁸Roters, Painters of the Bauhaus, p. 169.
- ³⁹Moholy-Nagy, Moholy-Nagy, p. 39.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 36.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 41.
- ⁴²Roters, Painters of the Bauhaus, pp. 172, 173.
- ⁴³Seven of these books are in the Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress. These include Volumes 1 - 4, 7, 11 and 13. The subjects range from International Architecture to the theater to Paul Klee's text.
- ⁴⁴Tut Schlemmer, ed., The Letters and Diaries of Oskar Schlemmer, trans. Krishna Winston (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1972), p. 40.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., p. 129.
- ⁴⁶Bayer, Bauhaus 1919 - 1928, p. 63.
- ⁴⁷Schlemmer, Letters and Diaries, p. 128.
- ⁴⁸Roters, Painters of the Bauhaus, p. 79. Schlemmer believed that the perfect synthesis could not be found in humans but in the choreography of puppets who did not have the original sin of human beings.
- ⁴⁹Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 483.
- ⁵⁰Schlemmer, Letters and Diaries, p. 239.
- ⁵¹Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 569.
- ⁵²Neumann, Bauhaus People, p. 167.
- ⁵³Mies was not eligible to be an officer during the Great War because he lacked the university degree.
- ⁵⁴Julius Posener, From Schinkel to the Bauhaus (London: Lund Humphries for the Architectural Association, 1972), p. 38.
- ⁵⁵Mies did not accept all of the facets of die Neue Sachlichkeit but kept his own individuality. His use of the monumental and the open plan in design was evidence of the independence of thought which was one of his trademarks.
- ⁵⁶Richard Neutra, "Epoch," The Canadian Architect 15 (May 1970): 60.
- ⁵⁷Peter Blake, The Master Builders (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 153.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 219.

⁵⁹Frampton, Modern Architecture, p. 132.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 129. Meyer realized that it would be unhealthy to have the Bauhaus become a tool of left-wing party politics, and he prevented the formation of a student communist cell. However, the complications which his leftist sympathies encouraged forced Mayor Hesse to remove him as Director against Meyer's will and the wishes of the students.

⁶¹George Nelson, "Architects of Europe Today -- Van Der Rohe, Germany," Pencil Points 16 (September 1935): 458. Mies identified this lifestyle as loose living which resulted in a large crop of illegitimate babies.

⁶²Howard Dearstyne, "Mies at the Bauhaus in Dessau: Student Revolt and Nazi Coercion," Inland Architect 13 (August/September 1969): 14.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Sibyl Moholy-Nagy leveled the charges of Nazi collaboration against Mies because he had continued to work in Nazi Germany until he emigrated to the United States in 1938. For a lively exchange of letters between Mrs. Moholy-Nagy and Howard Dearstyne see the Letters in the Journal of Society of Architectural Historians 24 (October 1965): 254-256. Mies was accused of communist sympathies because he designed the memorial to the German communist martyrs Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in 1926. It is clear that both accusations are unfounded and that Mies was not politically but only aesthetically interested in the projects.

⁶⁵Dearstyne, "Mies at the Bauhaus," p. 16.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁸Neither project was ever executed.

⁶⁹Blake, The Master Builders, p. 171.

⁷⁰Barbara Miller Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918 - 1945 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 62.

⁷¹Dearstyne, "Mies at the Bauhaus," p. 14. Dearstyne said "Mies was not cut out to be an administrator but he proved to be a great teacher." Sandra Honey has gone further to say that Mies left the internal administration to his collaborator, Lilly Reich. See Sandra Honey, "Mies at the Bauhaus," Architectural Association Quarterly 10:1 (1978), pp. 52, 53.

⁷²Blake, The Master Builders, p. 204.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 180, 181.

⁷⁴Frampton, Modern Architecture, p. 161.

⁷⁵Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 489.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 496.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 546.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 540.

⁷⁹Dearstyne, "Mies at the Bauhaus," pp. 14-16.

⁸⁰Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 537.

⁸¹Lilly Reich was somewhat of an enigma. Although there was no real evidence, some architects hinted that she was responsible for the design of the famous Barcelona chair. She seemed to be a rather unpleasant person with little sense of humor and a strain of jealousy of Mies' time. Although they had worked together for many years, she did not follow him to America.

Chapter III

The Bauhaus Image: Views of the Outsiders

¹Catherine Bauer Wurster, "The Social Front of Modern Architecture in the 1930's," Journal of Society of Architectural Historians 24 (March 1965): 48.

²Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, Chapter IV, pp. 87-124.

³The scrapbooks which Gropius kept are on file at the Bauhaus Archiv in Berlin. Microfilms of these clippings are at the Widener Library, Harvard University.

⁴Modris Eksteins, The Limits of Reason: The German Democratic Press and the Collapse of the Weimar Democracy (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 74.

⁵Oron J. Hale, The Captive Press in the Third Reich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 3.

⁶Eksteins, Limits of Reason, p. 70. Germany had inherited from the days of the Empire a strong propensity towards freedom of expression. Article 118 in the Weimar Constitution stated that every German had the right to express his opinions freely within the bounds of the general laws. The "bounds of general laws" limited freedom of expression and subjected it to penal laws, police ordinance and regulations in trade and business practices. Article 48 of the constitution gave the Reich president emergency powers to forbid freedom of expression when it threatened the security of the state and its citizens.

⁷Vorwärts (Berlin) Sunday Edition, August 7, 1932.

⁸Leipziger Volkzeitung, July 14, 1932.

⁹Vorwärts (Berlin) Evening Edition, October 1, 1932.

¹⁰Die Rote Fahne (Berlin), December 15, 1932.

¹¹Hale, The Captive Press, p. 32.

¹²"Völkischer Beobachter (Munich), November 4, 1932.

¹³Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943), p. 245.

¹⁴Eksteins, Limits of Reason, pp. 125, 126.

¹⁵Frankfurter Zeitung Evening Edition, July 31, 1932.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, Evening Edition, August 25, 1932.

- 17 Berliner Tageblatt Morning Edition, August 25, 1932.
- 18 Ibid., Evening Edition, August 23, 1932.
- 19 Ibid., Sunday Edition, August 21, 1932
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Bayer, Bauhaus 1919 - 1928, p. 16.
- 23 Matei Calinescu, Faces of Modernity: Avant Garde, Decadence, Kitsch (Bloomington, Indiana: University Press, 1977), p. 96.
- 24 Meyer Schapiro, "The Liberating Quality of Avant Garde Art," Art News 56 (Summer 1957): 36-42.
- 25 Calinescu, Faces of Modernity, p. 105.
- 26 Ibid., p. 114.
- 27 Ibid., p. 117.
- 28 Theda Shapiro, Painters and Politics: The European Avant-Garde and Society, 1900 - 1925 (New York: Elsevier, 1976), p. 87.
- 29 Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 43.
- 30 Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 33.
- 31 James Marston Fitch, Walter Gropius (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1960), p. 30.
- 32 Feininger arrived at the Bauhaus in May 1919, Klee, in January 1921; and Kandinsky in June 1922.
- 33 Roters, Painters of the Bauhaus, p. 19.
- 34 Ibid., p. 94.
- 35 Ibid., p. 128.
- 36 Ibid., p. 106. At the end of his life, Klee had applied for Swiss citizenship, but the paperwork did not arrive before his death, and he died a German citizen.
- 37 Von Stuck was reportedly one of Hitler's favorite painters.
- 38 Roters, Painters of the Bauhaus, p. 96.

³⁹Ibid., p. 22.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 96.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 146. Kandinsky's work after the Bauhaus years when he lived in Paris marked his late style which was lighthearted and whimsical. See p. 163.

⁴²Neumann, Bauhaus People, p. 162.

⁴³Shapiro, Painters and Politics, p. 86.

⁴⁴Hans Hess, Lyonel Feininger (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1959), pp. 12, 29. Feininger was first known as a cartoonist, and it was by this means that he supported his family until he began painting seriously around 1908.

⁴⁵Shapiro, Painters and Politics, p. 177.

⁴⁶Walter Gropius, The New Architecture and the Bauhaus, trans. P. Morton Shand (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press for the MIT Paperback Series, 1965), p. 40.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 26.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 29, 30.

⁴⁹Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of the New Tradition (Cambridge, Mass.: The Harvard University Press, 1944), p. 356.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 357.

⁵¹Frampton, Modern Architecture, p. 145, Van Doesburg's eleventh point.

⁵²Bayer, Bauhaus 1919 - 1928, p. 101.

⁵³The hidden structure was a slight variation from Neue Sachlichkeit principles.

⁵⁴Gropius in the roofing used experimental materials which resulted somewhat embarrassingly in a leaking roof.

⁵⁵Gropius, The New Architecture, p. 44.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 23.

⁵⁷Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., and Philip Johnson, The International Style: Architecture Since 1922 (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1932), p.41.

⁵⁸Frampton, Modern Architecture, p. 131.

- ⁵⁹Stam, Meyer and Wittwer would all become associated with the Bauhaus.
- ⁶⁰Frampton, Modern Architecture, p. 132.
- ⁶¹Ibid., p. 134.
- ⁶²Ibid.
- ⁶³Wurster, "Social Front of Modern Architecture," p. 48.
- ⁶⁴Colin St. John Wilson, "The Committed Architect," Journal of Society of Architectural Historians 24 (March 1965): 65.
- ⁶⁵Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 88.
- ⁶⁶Harry Kessler, In the Twenties: the Diaries of Harry Kessler, trans. Charles Kessler (New York: Holt Rinehard and Winston, 1971), p. 390.
- ⁶⁷Frampton, Modern Architecture, p. 138.
- ⁶⁸Wurster, "Social Front of Modern Architecture," p. 48.
- ⁶⁹Berthold Hinz, Art in the Third Reich, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), p. 49.
- ⁷⁰Berliner Tageblatt Monthly Edition, English Edition, December 1926.
- ⁷¹Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 73.
- ⁷²Ibid., pp. 72, 73 and 238. The term Spartacist came from the painter Sachs who was a member of the Spartakusbund in Munich. The Bauhaus faculty had distributed "Spartacist" pamphlets on the arts published by the republican government in Berlin. Originally the Spartacus group had been the extreme left wing of the SPD which broke off to form the KPD. Prinzhorn had used the study of the art of the mentally ill to further understanding of the insane. The abstractions of modern art were favorite comparisons to the art of the insane; this was a subtle inference that modern artists were mentally ill. Pictorial comparisons may be seen in Paul Schultze-Naumburg, Kunst Und Rasse (München: T.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1938), pp. 114-123.
- ⁷³Ibid., p. 74.
- ⁷⁴Ibid., p. 76, 77.
- ⁷⁵Ibid., p. 77.
- ⁷⁶Sigfried Giedion, Walter Gropius, p. 36.
- ⁷⁷Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 125.
- ⁷⁸Ibid., p. 128.

79 Ibid., P. 131.

80 Ibid., p. 137.

81 Völkischer Beobachter (Munich) November 4, 1932.

82 Frampton, Modern Architecture, p. 218.

83 Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 141.

84 Ibid., p. 142.

85 Ibid.

86 Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 416.

87 Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 136.

88 Frampton, Modern Architecture, p. 248.

89 Ibid., Backpiece.

Chapter IV

Nazi Culture: Art and Ideology

¹ John H. Hanson, "Nazi Aesthetics," The Psychohistory Review 9 (Summer 1981): 269.

² Adolf Hitler, The Speeches of Hitler, ed. Norman H. Baynes, English trans., 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), vol. 1: April 1922 - August 1939, pp. 575, 576.

³ Hanson, "Nazi Aesthetics," p. 251.

⁴ Ibid., p. 253.

⁵ Hitler, Speeches, 1:587.

⁶ George L. Mosse, ed., Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich, trans. Salvator Attanasio, The Universal Library (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1966), p. 141.

⁷ Ibid., p. 24.

⁸ Hitler's postcard sketches brought in a small income in his Munich days. He applied twice to the School of Architecture in Vienna but was not admitted.

⁹ Mosse, Nazi Culture, p. 184.

¹⁰ Robert R. Taylor, The Word in Stone: The Role of Architecture in the National Socialist Ideology (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1974), p. 138.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 165.

¹² Lincoln Kirstein, "Art in the Third Reich -- Survey, 1945," Magazine of Art, October 1945, p. 231.

¹³ Taylor, Word in Stone, p. 134.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁵ Hitler, Speeches, 1:589.

¹⁶ Taylor, Word in Stone, p. 133.

¹⁷ Albert Speer, Inside the Third Reich, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1970), p. 103.

¹⁸ Taylor, Word in Stone, p. 137.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 138.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 168.

²¹Ibid., p. 171.

²²Ibid., p. 173.

²³Frampton, Modern Architecture, p. 216.

²⁴Taylor, Word in Stone, p. 235.

²⁵Ibid., p. 205.

²⁶Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 205.

²⁷Taylor, Word in Stone, p. 188.

²⁸George L. Mosse, Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars Through the Third Reich (New York: Howard Fertig, 1975), p. 10.

²⁹Hellmut Lehman-Haupt, Art Under a Dictatorship (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954), p. 62.

³⁰Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 148.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 166.

³³David Schoenbaum, Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany 1933 - 1939 (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1966), p. 36.

³⁴Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 156.

³⁵Ibid., p. 84. The Thuringia authorities had chosen Bartnung to take over the school which Gropius vacated when he moved the Bauhaus to Dessau. Surprisingly, Bartnung was a radical architect who later became a firm advocate of the new style.

³⁶Ibid., p. 157.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Schlemmer, Letters and Diaries, p. 269.

³⁹Erick Eyck, A History of the Weimar Republic, 2 vols., trans Harlan P. Hanson and Robert G. L. Waite (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), 1:265.

⁴⁰Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 157.

⁴¹Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Art in the Third Reich -- Preview, 1933," Magazine of Art, October 1945, p. 212.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 215, 216.

⁴³Ibid., p. 216.

⁴⁴Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 149.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 175.

⁴⁶Lehmann-Haupt, Art Under a Dictatorship, p. 68.

⁴⁷Nelson, "Architects of Europe Today," p. 459. It was this apparent cooperation with the Nazis which caused Mrs. Moholy-Nagy to later label Mies a Nazi.

⁴⁸Hitler, Speeches, 1:575, 576.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 583.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 584.

⁵¹Hildegard Brenner, "Art and the Political Power Struggle of 1933 and 1934," in Republic to Reich: The Making of the Nazi Revolution, ed. Hajo Holborn, trans. Robert Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 395.

Chapter V

Conclusion

¹Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, p. 247, note 48.

²Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 168. A copy of this contract may be found in the Mies van der Rohe papers in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

³At Mies' instigation in the contract, the name "Bauhaus" was to become the property of the Director. This was to cause some ill feeling between Mies and Moholy-Nagy who opened up the New Bauhaus in Chicago in 1937. The contract also included a yearly salary for Mies of RM 11,200 and the city was to provide him with an adequate home. In return, the contract called for Mies and the Bauhaus to help out in future Dessau city planning.

⁴Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 169.

⁵Ibid., p. 175.

⁶Ibid. While these figures were not completely accurate, they illustrated that the Bauhaus was partially self-supporting. The Nazis ignored this economic factor.

⁷Ibid, p. 176.

⁸Neumann, Bauhaus People, p. 218.

⁹Wingler, The Bauhaus, p. 178.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 179.

¹¹Ibid.. p. 177.

¹²Neumann, Bauhaus People, p. 143.

¹³When he left Dessau after the war, Hesse worked as a lawyer again in Berlin.

¹⁴Neumann, Bauhaus People, p. 145.

¹⁵Elaine Hochman, "Confrontation: 1933 - Mies van der Rohe and the Third Reich," Oppositions 18 (Fall 1979): 53.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁷American Radio University in Berlin, "Mies Speaks," Architectural Review 144 (December 1968): 452.

¹⁸Hochman, "Confrontation," p. 58. The authorities in Dessau cut off

the teacher subsidies according to the Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service. This law which was passed by the Reichstag on April 7, 1933, forbid the presence of Jews and politically unfavorable people at state supported institutions.

¹⁹Sandra Honey, "Mies at the Bauhaus," Architectural Association Quarterly 10 (1978): 58. Mies later said that the faculty decision was made after he received the letter from the Gestapo. This was a lapse of memory on his part since the letter he wrote to the Gestapo was dated July 20, 1933. See Hochman, "Confrontation," p. 59, Note 22.

²⁰Hochman, "Confrontation," p. 58.

²¹Ibid., p. 55.

²²Paul Heyer, Architects on Architecture: New Directions in America (New York: Walker and Company, 1966), p. 11.

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2. German newspapers for 1932 included the Berliner Tageblatt, Frankfurter Zeitung, Völkischer Beobachter, Die Rote Fahne, Vorwärts, Leipziger Volkzeitung, Kölnische Zeitung, Münchner Neueste Nachrichten. A reference for newspapers available in microfilm is Newspapers in Microform: Foreign Countries. Washington: Library of Congress, 1973. The Center for Research Libraries in Chicago has a large holding of foreign newspapers and periodicals in original form.

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- Nr. 2 - Pädagogisches Skizzenbuch, by Paul Klee.
- Nr. 3 - Ein Versuchshaus des Bauhauses, by Gropius and Adolf Meyer.
- Nr. 4 - Die Bühne im Bauhaus, by Oskar Schlemmer, et. al.
- Nr. 7 - Neue Arbeiten der Bauhauswerkstätten.
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_____. Mein Kampf. Translated by Ralph Manheim. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943.

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ART AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY:
THE BAUHAUS AS VICTIM

by

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The first German republic, 1919-1933, provided a milieu for free thinking and experimentation which encouraged a phenomenal outgrowth in the arts and culture. The Bauhaus, an institution of design organized by Walter Gropius to incorporate the fine arts into the process of craftwork and machine design culminating in architecture, was a product of this short era characterized by political freedom. In parallel with the republic, the Bauhaus was born in the revolutionary fervor which followed World War I, developed during the years of economic uncertainty, and flourished in the years of economic growth. The institution had been in operation a scarce fourteen years when the National Socialists brought about a revolutionary political change and forced its close.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the interaction between politics and art specifically as it affected the Bauhaus and modern architecture. Three major chapters constitute a study of the political nature of the modern aesthetic in the Bauhaus and the conservative classical trend which the Nazis incorporated in place of the modern. After the introduction in Chapter One, Chapter Two deals with the Bauhaus from the standpoint of those who worked within its walls and the program of study as well as the product they developed. A discussion of selected personalities and the developing Bauhaus products as seen in the major exhibitions determines the aesthetic pursuit of the institution. Chapter Three focuses on those outside the Bauhaus and the political nature which the Bauhaus represented to them. Examination of popular German newspapers in 1932 reveals the orientation of popular thought towards the Bauhaus to the Left. The text develops the concept of avant-garde with reference to the modern painters at the Bauhaus and the modern movement in architecture to substantiate that the Bauhaus represented a liberal, left wing image.

Chapter Four turns from the inadvertant political nature of modern art to the blatant incorporation of art as a means to promote the political views of the Nazis. In the conclusion, Chapter Five provides the major thrust of the argument that art which is social by nature must also be political. Discussion of art and politics centers on the closing of the Bauhaus in Dessau in 1932 although throughout the study sketches are provided of the fourteen years of the Bauhaus existence.