

THE AUTONOMOUS ARTS AS BLACK PROPAGANDA

ON A SECRETIVE CHAPTER IN GERMAN 'FOREIGN CULTURAL POLITICS' IN THE NETHERLANDS AND OTHER NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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In the second half of the previous century, strategically planned and openly implemented state support for the proliferation of indigenous, so-called 'national' culture, beyond the borders of the state, virtually became an undisputed common practice in and amongst most modern European states. In this context, the German Goethe-Institut and Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, the French Maison Descartes and Alliance Française, the British Institute, the Dutch Institut Néerlandais in Paris and the translation section of the Nederlands Literair Productie- en Vertalingenfonds¹ are just a few examples of the state or state-related agencies and institutions that can be found in most European states, amongst many more throughout the rest of the world.²

In Germany, *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 'foreign cultural politics' as implemented by the Goethe-Institut and other state and semi-state agencies, has for several decades even constituted – in the terms of Willi Brandt – the *dritte Säule*, 'third column' of the foreign policy of the Federal Republic,³ alongside economic policies and politics proper. The following article focuses on what could be called a secretive chapter in the prehistory of the present-day German *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, occurring within the context of the First World War. It is not only a contribution to the archaeology of governmental cultural politics and the history of the arts in wartime, but

¹ Officially mistranslated in a telling way as: Foundation for Promotion and Translation of Dutch Literature.

² For a survey see: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, 'Online Services. Europanetz', at: <<http://cms.ifa.de/info/online-services/europanetz/>> (consulted 15.05.2006).

³ Cf. K. Düwell, *Deutschlands auswärtige Kulturpolitik 1918–1932. Grundlinien und Dokumente* (Köln, 1976); K. Düwell, W. Link, eds., *Deutsche auswärtige Kulturpolitik seit 1871. Geschichte und Struktur* (Köln, 1981); K.J. Maaß, 'Auswärtige Kulturpolitik im Spannungsfeld zwischen Konzeption und Umsetzung' [2002], at <<http://www.ifa.de/w/download/aussenpolitik.pdf>> (consulted 15.05.2006); J. Pehrke, 'Die dritte Säule', *konkret*, no. 3 (2006), pp. 48–50.

within a more general theoretical context, is also an interesting case study regarding questions of autonomy and engagement in the cultural field.⁴

1. *Foreign cultural politics*

In a recent monograph on the origins of the Goethe-Institut, the German historian Eckard Michels points to an initially private institution called the Deutsche Akademie (German Academy) as the precursor of the present-day Goethe-Institut. The Deutsche Akademie was founded in 1925 in Munich, and was primarily intended to maintain and promote the German language abroad. The *Sprachpflege* of the Deutsche Akademie aimed at the supposedly threatened German linguistic and cultural minorities in other countries, seen as exclaves of the German *Kulturnation*; and from 1932 this objective became the mission of the first Goethe-Institut, founded as a subsidiary of the Deutsche Akademie. Simultaneously, the Deutsche Akademie was a response to the assumed advance of French and English language and culture in the international arena, as a counter to the Alliance Française and the British Institute. In its later years – during the Second World War – the Deutsche Akademie rapidly expanded under the presidency of the German Reichskommissar für die Niederlande, Arthur Seyß-Inquart, becoming a major institution for the proliferation of the German language in occupied Europe as the lingua franca of the new ‘thousand-year’ superpower. After the collapse of the Third Reich, the Deutsche Akademie was consequently dissolved and banned by the Allied authorities as a Nazi institution. In 1951, however, the Goethe-Institut was resurrected as a state agency of the Federal Republic for the proliferation of German culture in foreign countries, and these days has a much wider programme, in which language courses are just a small segment. The programme no longer aims at a nationalistically motivated unilateral proliferation of German culture and language, but rather at the pursuit of multilateral cultural exchange in a wider context of European transnational collaboration with similar institutions from other countries.

As Michels points out, the first plans for the Deutsche Akademie coincided with the emergence of the concept of an *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik* in the Wilhelmine Empire on the eve of the First World War. In fact, the still common term was coined by the cultural historian Karl Lamprecht in a lec-

⁴ The research for this essay was funded by the Flemish-Dutch Committee for Dutch Language and Culture (VNC) of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). I would also like to express my gratitude to Christiane Caemmerer of the Handschriftenabteilung of the Staatbibliothek zu Berlin for her kind invitation to a conference in this library on *Flugblätter*, which served as an eye-opener to many aspects of the practice of twentieth-century war propaganda.

ture entitled ‘Über auswärtige Kulturpolitik’ in October 1912, although the idea of an active and planned ‘foreign cultural politics’ had already surfaced some years earlier, after the so-called Moroccan Crisis, when the one-dimensional military-muscle politics of the Kaiser ended in failure. This debacle provoked reflections on the possibility of a differently styled foreign politics that comprised a cultural component as well, based to a considerable extent on the nationalist German self-image of the cultural excellence of its *Denker und Dichter*.⁵

In this context, amongst others, practical propositions were made by the Bavarian legation in Paris, Lothar Freiherr von Ritter zu Grünstein, in the late summer of 1913.⁶ Von Ritter zu Grünstein proposed the foundation of a Deutsches Institut (German Institute) as the German counter to the Institut de France and the Alliance Française. As Von Ritter zu Grünstein envisaged, the core mission of this Deutsches Institut would encompass cultural exchange with foreign, non-German countries, to create not only a more convincing self-representation of Germany abroad, but also to provide an instrument to alleviate political tensions between the German Empire and – in particular – France by means of cultural exchange and, hence, promote mutual understanding between the German and French nations.⁷ Initially, Von Ritter zu Grünstein’s idea did not materialize. Instead, the Great War broke out a year later. However, a decade after his first propositions, Von Ritter zu Grünstein was one of the initiators of the Deutsche Akademie.

As Michels focuses on this institution, he skips the war period and continues his historical account in 1923, when the first plans for the Deutsche Akademie emerge. Yet, in the meantime, while the theatre of war became the privileged stage for international exchange in Europe, the concept of an *Ausländische Kulturpolitik* aiming at (bilateral) cultural exchange did not vanish completely. In present-day historiography, the promotion and prac-

⁵ E. Michels, *Von der Deutschen Akademie zum Goethe-Institut. Sprach- und auswärtige Kulturpolitik 1923–1960* (München, 2005), p. 17.

⁶ As a semi-autonomous kingdom within the German Empire, Bavaria still had its own embassy in Paris – and other cities – in the years before the First World War.

⁷ Michels, *Akademie*, p. 11. As Von Ritter zu Grünstein’s remarks indicate, the competition between France and the United States, as described by Pierre Bourdieu, in P. Bourdieu, ‘Deux impérialismes de l’universel’, in C. Fauré and T. Bishop, eds., *L’Amérique des Français* (Paris, 1992), pp. 149–156, in the period after the Second World War, was preceded by a similar competition between Germany and France before the First World War. Although they were competitors, in an intriguing way both are historically related to each other on a conceptual level: whereas the notion of ‘culture’ was imported from Germany by Madame de Staël in the early nineteenth century, cf. J.M. Djian, *Politique culturelle: la fin d’un mythe* (Paris, 2005), pp. 12–13, ‘cultural politics’ was imported from France a century later.

tice of international cultural exchange during the First World War and the interwar period is often described and was undoubtedly indeed often intended as a move against the war, its horrors and its suspected main perpetrators: the Kaiser, the militarized German imperial regime and nationalist ideology. Ostentatious transnationality, cross-border and cross-frontier cultural collaboration and exchange, as in the case of Dada in Zurich,⁸ are often seen – to use a term by Franz Pfemfert – as an indication of the outright ‘anationalist’ rejection of the war and its belligerent patriotisms.⁹ Yet, maybe surprisingly, this cultural exchange was also a key element in the practice of German war propaganda during the First World War, in particular after 1916. During the course of the war, policies of cultural proliferation and exchange were perforce restricted to the neighbouring neutral countries. Nevertheless, they anticipated *in nuce* the cultural component of the programme of the Deutsche Akademie and even more of the second Goethe-Institut, as these policies did not solely aim at the unilateral proliferation of German culture, but – as internal documents show – rather at genuine bilateral and multilateral exchange.

As such, these policies possessed some quite paradoxical dimensions. Obviously, there existed a clear-cut tension between the main focus of this so-called *Kulturpropaganda*,¹⁰ on culture with a capital ‘C’, and the undeniable fact that these policies did not just flank the mass slaughter on the battlefields, but were also intended as a contribution to the war effort – as cultural support for the military ventures in the theatre of war, which could only be seen as a relapse into barbarity. In addition, although German *Kulturpropaganda*, in particular in the later war years, comprised policies that

⁸ Cf. H. van den Berg, *Avantgarde und Anarchismus. Dada in Zürich und Berlin* (Heidelberg, 1999); H. van den Berg, “‘Übernationalität’ der Avantgarde - (Inter-) Nationalität der Forschung. Hinweis auf den internationalen Konstruktivismus in der europäischen Literatur und die Problematik ihrer literaturwissenschaftlichen Erfassung”, in W. Asholt and W. Fähnders, eds., *Der Blick vom Wolkenkratzer. Avantgarde – Avantgardekritik – Avantgardeforschung* (Amsterdam/Atlanta, 2000), pp. 255–291.

⁹ Cit. in H.M. Bock, ‘Antipatriotismus, Westeuropa und Weltrevolution in der expressionistischen Zeitschrift Die Aktion von 1911 bis 1932’, in M. Grunewald and H.M. Bock, eds., *Der Europadiskurs in den deutschen Zeitschriften (1918–1933)* (Bern, 1997), pp. 197–212, p. 205.

¹⁰ In the documents of the German imperial Foreign Office as well as in literature on the subject, this policy occurs under four names: *Kulturpropaganda*, *Kunstpropaganda*, *Kultur- und Kunstpropaganda*, as well as *Kunst- und Kulturpropaganda*. For language-economic reasons, a shorter label with the widest range is chosen here. Since the policy extended beyond the common understanding of ‘art’, also encompassing sciences as well as entertainment (variety shows, cabaret), ‘culture’ seems to be the best label.

would facilitate mutual cultural exchange, the bottom line of the *Kulturpropaganda* was, nevertheless, in so far as it was initiated and orchestrated by the German Foreign Office and diplomatic service, ultimately intended to serve the interests of the German Empire, in other words: German imperialism. In fact, the term *Kulturpropaganda* itself was introduced by the conservative politician Paul Rohrbach in his book *Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt* (1912) in the same context in which the notion of *Ausländische Kulturpolitik* emerged, that is, the aftermath of the Moroccan Crisis. Convinced by the supremacy of German culture *and* the necessity of colonies for the prosperity of the German Empire, Rohrbach propagated the proliferation of German culture as an alternative to exclusively military campaigns to acquire and control colonial territories, as a key element of openly imperialist politics.¹¹ In the war period, Rohrbach was one of the leading men in the German propaganda apparatus. At least officially, the *Kulturpropaganda* as implemented by the Foreign Office and the diplomatic service was indeed in line with Rohrbach's conceptions to a considerable extent. In the course of time, conceptions of *Kulturpropaganda* seem to have evolved. Notably, during the second half of the war this propaganda policy did not just pursue unilateral proliferation in line with Rohrbach's views, but rather – as said above – aimed at mutual exchange. This was undoubtedly facilitated by the situation in which several policymakers did not have a narrow nationalist background, but were rather outspoken cosmopolitans, often with a clear-cut predilection for French or Italian Romance culture.

In addition to these obvious paradoxes, the *Kulturpropaganda* policy contained another less visible paradox: pursuing the genuine exchange of cultural actors, activities and artefacts *as* politically autonomous, while simultaneously being an integral part of German war propaganda and as such conceived heteronomously as support for the German nationalist cause. Basically, war propaganda and autonomous art might seem to be two absolutely incompatible phenomena. The exploitation of art (or artistic techniques) for propagandistic objectives generally implies a drastic decrease or even complete erasure of artistic autonomy, since self-determination, self-regulation and a large degree of independence constitute the basic traits of artistic autonomy. In sharp contrast to this notion of autonomy, and according to its self-understanding and definition, propaganda only constitutes a tool or aid to the political authorities and military command, as Ortwin

¹¹ Cf. G. Riederer, 'Zwischen Fronteinsatz, Propagandakrieg und Diplomatie – Harry Graf Kessler und sein Tagebuch in der zweiten Hälfte des Ersten Weltkriegs (1916–1918)', in H. Kessler, *Das Tagebuch 1880–1937. Sechster Band 1916–1918* (Stuttgart, 2006), pp. 9–66, p. 19.

Buchbender and Horst Schuh have pointed out.¹² As such, propaganda lacks any autonomy or independence – it is subsidiary to other aims and ambitions.¹³ However, a closer look at the role of autonomous art as a cultural asset in German *Kulturpropaganda* in the Netherlands and other neutral countries in the years 1914–18 reveals a more complex relationship between war propaganda and autonomous art and culture.

2. Conventional artistic war propaganda

The employment of art and culture in the framework of German war propaganda meant a considerable increase in the heteronomy of artistic and other forms of cultural production in the German Empire. When the war broke out, many artists, writers, musicians and theatre directors, amongst others, placed their work at the service of the official war-propaganda apparatus. Others saw themselves as being urged to produce propaganda in favour of the German war effort in the context of related private initiatives.¹⁴ Here, an obvious and often-mentioned example is the journal *Kriegszeit. Künstlerflugblätter*, which was created by the Berlin art dealer Paul Cassirer as a platform for the artistic support of the German war effort after the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914.

Kriegszeit contained belligerent images by modern artists such as Max Liebermann, Ernst Barlach and Max Beckmann in support of the imperial war policy. A drawing by Max Liebermann on the cover of the second issue of *Kriegszeit* with the blunt title *Jetzt wollen wir sie dreschen!*¹⁵ is emblematic of the way in which many German artists for some time lost any critical sense with respect to a regime which had been opposed to them and – in turn – had been opposed by them, at least artistically, in previous years. Liebermann's work, for example, had been under direct attack from the Kaiser, who had openly disqualified impressionist and naturalist paintings

¹² Cf. O. Buchbender and H. Schuh, *Die Waffe, die auf die Seele zielt. Psychologische Kriegsführung 1939–1945* (Stuttgart, 1983), p. 7.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Cf. J. von Ungern-Sternberg and W. von Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf 'An die Kulturwelt!' Das Manifest der 93 und die Anfänge der Kriegspropaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 1996); J. Segal, *Krieg als Erlösung. Die deutschen Kriegsdebatten 1910–1918* (München, 1997); U. Schneider and A. Schumann, eds., "Krieg der Geister". *Erster Weltkrieg und literarischer Moderne* (Würzburg, 2000); S. de Rachewiltz, ed., *Die Düstern Adler – Aquile Funeste. Der Erste Weltkrieg in Kunst, Literatur und Alltag, Wahn und Wirklichkeit – Arte, letteratura e vita quotidiana nella Grande Guerra. Tra delirio e dolore* (Tirolo, 2005).

¹⁵ English translation of the title: 'Now we will thrash them!' For an image see Segal, *Krieg*, p. 72.

such as those of Liebermann as being *Rinnsteinkunst* – ‘gutter art’ – unfit to be exhibited in ‘his’ national gallery in Berlin.

These artists, like many others, were partly lured by the official propaganda in the lead up to the actual war. Many accepted the incorrect suggestion by the military that Germany was under immediate threat of an invasion by Russia and its Western allies and, thus, had to defend itself with a pre-emptive strike to avoid an invasion from two directions (in fact, the whole ‘defence’ strategy had been based on a pre-emptive strike long before 1914).¹⁶ Many were also blinded by hurrah patriotism and befuddled by the *Burgfrieden*, the internal truce offered by Wilhelm II from the balcony of the imperial palace in Berlin on the first day of the war, in the famous line: ‘In dem bevorstehenden Kampf kenne ich in meinem Volke keine Parteien mehr. Es gibt unter uns nur noch Deutsche.’¹⁷

In the setting of this *Burgfrieden*, not only the majority of the Reichstag representatives of the hitherto internationalist and anti-militarist Social-Democrat Party gave their votes to the war policy of Wilhelm II, but also large sections of the cultural field. Even many artists who had been outspoken critics of the regime followed the example of the SPD representatives in the Reichstag, the German parliament. An example is Frank Wedekind who had previously been an explicit opponent of Prussian militarism, Wilhelmine cultural conservatism and moral puritanism. For decades he had been engaged in a constant battle with state censorship which seriously impeded his work as an author and director of controversial plays such as *Frühlingserwachen* and *Lulu. Die Büchse der Pandora*. Despite being an icon in the pursuit of more artistic autonomy and the fight against philistine censorship practices that were broached and supported by the Kaiser and his court, for example, in the form of the so-called *Lex Heinze*, Wedekind also made a complete U-turn, ‘as he declared at a patriotic rally in Munich on 18 September 1914: “The unity of German Social Democracy with the Imperial High Command is the loyal brotherhood of arms!”’¹⁸

Another tragic example is the appeal entitled *An die Kulturwelt!*, in which ninety-three prominent German writers, artists and scholars proclaimed their unrestricted support for the German Kaiser and his war policy,

¹⁶ D. Stevenson, *1914–1918. The History of the First World War* (London, 2004), pp. 45–47.

¹⁷ ‘In the battle to come, I do not know any parties in my people anymore. Among us there are only Germans.’ Cit. in Anon., ed., *Der Kriegsausbruch 1914. Thronrede. Kanzlerrede. Das deutsche Weißbuch. Kaiser, König und Zar. Deutsch-englischer Telegrammwechsel. Ansprachen und Urkunden* (Berlin, 1914), p. 61.

¹⁸ D. Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War, 1914–1918* (New Brunswick, N.J., 2000), p. 18; German original in F. Wedekind, *Prosa: Erzählungen, Aufsätze, Selbstzeugnisse, Briefe* (Berlin/Weimar, 1969), p. 259.

as safekeepers of true culture, denouncing all suggestions of German aggression or reports of German atrocities and devastation as propagandistic lies by the Entente.¹⁹ This ultimately rather counterproductive ‘appeal to the civilised world’²⁰ was signed by many prominent scholars, writers and visual artists including Richard Dehmel, Max Halbe, Gerhart Hauptmann, Max Klinger, Max Liebermann, Franz von Stuck, Hermann Sudermann and Hans Thoma as well as by academics such as Ernst Haeckel, Max Planck, Wilhelm Röntgen, Wilhelm Windelband and Wilhelm Wundt.

Interestingly, *An die Kulturwelt!* was not a product of expansionist warmongers. The actual initiative stemmed from circles of the so-called Goethe-Bund (Goethe League), an organization founded in 1900 by Hermann Sudermann and other signatories of the appeal – once again – to oppose the cultural policies of the Kaiser. The Goethe-Bund had campaigned in particular against state censorship and interference in artistic matters in the form of the *Lex Heintze*, a law proposed by the imperial court itself, which seriously impeded artistic freedom in the name of moral decency. The Goethe-Bund achieved a partial revision of this law and in the following year maintained its critical stance: once more, only until August 1914. Many of the signatories not only gave their names in support of German war policy, but also contributed to propaganda activities by artistic means – as did Liebermann.²¹

This engagement of the arts or at least of artistic techniques in German war propaganda was certainly the most obvious form of artistic engagement in favour of imperial war policy. The arts did not serve, though, only as a tool or medium for military or political propaganda. Art, literature and other cultural practices were actually also mobilized in a completely different way during the war years which followed – not as an art explicitly fulfilling its patriotic duties by open engagement, partisanship and political-military *parti pris*, but instead as a partly real and partly pretended genuine autonomous phenomenon, consciously attempting to avoid any trace of political heteronomy.

¹⁹ For the full text of the appeal see von Ungern-Sternberg and von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, pp. 144–145.

²⁰ It only received a scornful reception outside Germany, where it was seen as a ridiculously uncritical contribution by hitherto critical intellectuals, who were now falling prostrate before the Kaiser and his militarism, cf. *id.*, pp. 81–104.

²¹ Cf. *id.*, pp. 27–49.

3. *Black propaganda*

The engagement of art and culture as autonomous phenomena in German war propaganda of the First World War was a deliberately secretive policy and belonged as such, following common taxonomies of war propaganda, to the categories of ‘black’ and ‘grey’ propaganda. Whereas ‘white propaganda’ openly identifies its provenance and producers (for example, some state propaganda agency or a military commander) and ‘grey propaganda’ – as a kind of middle ground – leaves doubts about its producers and auctorial intentions, which have to be interpreted by its readers (for example, some seemingly independent journal, which – on closer consideration – can be identified as the product of one party), ‘black propaganda’ consciously tries to conceal its origins.²²

While the proliferation of German art and culture in the framework of the *Kulturpropaganda* might have been and was indeed noticed as such, the framework itself has by and large remained concealed until the present day. It has remained virtually unknown, for example, that exhibitions by the Berlin avant-garde art gallery Der Sturm, which took place in The Hague (1916), Basel and Zurich (1917) as well as Copenhagen (1918), were not just exhibitions organized by the gallery to promote and disseminate avant-garde art, but also served another objective: the creation of a more favourable image of Germany as a country where modern art flourished. Whereas links between Der Sturm and the propaganda and intelligence apparatus were revealed in the mid-1990s,²³ much of the involvement of representatives from the cultural field in propaganda and intelligence activities is still undisclosed.²⁴

²² Cf. O. Buchbender and H. Schuh, *Heil Beil! Flugblattpropaganda im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Dokumentation und Analyse* (Stuttgart, 1974), pp. 21–22; Buchbender and Schuh, *Waffe*, pp. 14–16.

²³ Cf. K. Winskell, ‘The Art of Propaganda. Herwarth Walden and “Der Sturm”, 1914–1919’, *Art History* 18 (1995), pp. 315–344.

²⁴ A typical case is Robert Musil’s involvement in Austrian war propaganda as editor of a *Soldaten-Zeitung* in Bozen/Bolzano, cf. R. Urbaner, ‘Alles in allem ein Exzess’. Robert Musil als Chefagitor der ‘Soldaten-Zeitung’ in Bozen (1916/1917), in S. de Rachewiltz, ed., *Die Düstern Adler – Aquile Funeste. Der Erste Weltkrieg in Kunst, Literatur und Alltag, Wahn und Wirklichkeit – Arte, letteratura e vita quotidiana nella Grande Guerra. Tra delirio e dolore* (Tirolo, 2005), pp. 27–33, which was omitted from earlier contributions on Musil’s opinions on the war (e.g. A. Russegger, “Daß Krieg wurde, werden mußte, ist die Stimme all der wuiderstrebenden Strömungen und Einflüsse und Bewegungen, die ich zeige.” Erster Weltkrieg und literarische Moderne am Beispiel von Robert Musil’, in U. Schneider and A. Schumann, eds., “Krieg der Geister”. *Erster Weltkrieg und literarischer Moderne* (Würzburg, 2000), pp. 229–246). While several publications on the in-

Several factors have contributed to the fact that the secret purpose of 'black' *Kulturpropaganda* remained secret throughout the twentieth century and, as a result, it has received only scarce historiographic coverage until now. The main factor is undoubtedly that this policy of covert cultural operations was by definition of a secretive nature (and in this respect admittedly quite successful). Another reason for the hitherto rather fragmentary coverage of the *Kulturpropaganda* is the fact that war propaganda is certainly not one of the main subjects in the historiography of the First World War. Those studies which deal with war propaganda focus in general on 'conventional' political and military propaganda.²⁵ In turn, war propaganda is not the obvious subject of literary and art historical studies.

Furthermore, those artists, writers and intellectuals who were involved in the *Kulturpropaganda* were in general not very forthcoming about the programme. During the war, reticence was part of business. After the war, silence continued to be observed like a holy commandment. Most artists and art dealers, writers, publishers, musicians and others who were involved

volvement of Austrian artists and writers can be found, also naming those involved, cf. I. Stiaßny-Baumgartner, *Roda Rodas Tätigkeit im Kriegspressequartier. Zur propagandistischen Arbeit österreichischer Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 1982); J. Džambo, ed., *Musen an die Front! Schriftsteller und Künstler im Dienst der k.u.k. Kriegspropaganda 1914–1918. 2 Bde.* (München, 2003); S. de Rachewiltz, ed., *Die Düstern Adler – Aquile Funeste. Der Erste Weltkrieg in Kunst, Literatur und Alltag, Wahn und Wirklichkeit – Arte, letteratura e vita quotidiana nella Grande Guerra. Tra delirio e dolore* (Tirolo, 2005), studies addressing the stand taken by German writers and artists during the war, e.g. Segal, *Krieg*; U. Schneider and A. Schumann, eds., *"Krieg der Geister". Erster Weltkrieg und literarischer Moderne* (Würzburg, 2000), tend to ignore their (often anonymous) engagement in the propaganda apparatus, although this involvement unmistakably influenced the work of those involved, as the studies of Austrian writers and artists show. For publications on French and English artists and writers, see among others: Hansi [i.e. J.J. Waltz] and E. Tonnelat, *Trois années d'offensive contre le moral allemand* (Paris, 1922); D.G. Wright, 'The Great War, Government Propaganda and English "Men of Letters" 1914–16', *Literature and History* 7 (1978), pp. 70–100; P. Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: Literature as Propaganda, 1914–18 and After* (London, 1989); K.E. Silver, *Esprit de Corps. The Art of the Parisian Avant-garde and the First World War, 1914–1925* (London, 1989); S. Malvern, *Modern Art, Britain and the Great War. Witnessing, Testimony and Remembrance* (New Haven/London, 2004).

²⁵ Cf. H.D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in World War I*. (Cambridge, Mass./London, 1971); C. Roetter, *Psychological Warfare* (London, 1974); C. Hundhausen, *Propaganda. Grundlagen, Prinzipien, Materialien, Quellen* (Essen, 1975); Buchbender and Schuh, *Die Waffe; Welch, Germany*. The latter discusses the role of cinema at length, but confines a discussion of the role of poetry in German war propaganda to one note, cf. Welch, *Germany*, pp. 267–268.

were apparently not very eager to admit that their artistic production was implicated in this scheme. Unlike military service at the front, this programme was not marked by heroism. On a personal level, involvement provided a chance to escape lethal frontline duty, while the work itself was marked by the aura of propaganda – improbity and untruthfulness. In the course of the war and certainly afterwards, the opinion that German militarist aggression was the essential cause for the actual outbreak of the war, soon became a commonplace and generally accepted truth (not only internationally, but also in many sections of German society, disputed mainly by the German political right). Hence, this propaganda received an even more dubious status, as it obviously constituted an attempt to legitimize, defend and promote a highly despicable policy.

Another reason for concealing one's involvement in 'black' *Kulturpropaganda* was the fact that many representatives of the cultural field who were involved were actually not fully fledged supporters of the imperial regime, particularly with respect to the cultural politics of the Kaiser and the court. With respect to political sympathies or loyalties that existed at the start of the war, many of those who initially supported imperial war policy in the first months of the war²⁶ changed their opinion during the war or ultimately in November 1918, after the abdication of the Kaiser, the demise of the imperial regime and the proclamation of the Republic.

While propaganda itself already possesses the aura of deceitfulness and despicability, intellectual involvement in war propaganda, in particular propaganda for the 'wrong' party, could count on even more disapproval in the cultural field, considering the symbolic surplus value of autonomism and the contrasting objectionable status of heteronomous artistic servility.²⁷

²⁶ In general, on the belief that initial German aggression against Belgium and France was basically a defensive act conceived of as a pre-emptive strike, id., pp. 8–19.

²⁷ While Vincent Dubois, in V. Dubois, *La Politique culturelle. Genèse d'une catégorie d'intervention publique* (Paris, 1999), has suggested that – for France – a basic 'antagonism between art and the State' can be distinguished in the first half of the twentieth century, preventing any serious cultural politics by the state, cf. G. Sapiro, 'The literary field between the state and the market', *Poetics* 31 (2003), pp. 441–464, p. 457; C. Lavergne and A. Perdoncin, 'Notes de Lecture. Dubois, Vincent (1999) – La Politique culturelle. Genèse d'une catégorie d'intervention publique' [2004], <http://socio.ens-lsh.fr/livres/livres_dubois_politique_culturelle_note.pdf> (consulted 15.05.2006), in the German cultural field, 'policies of control and repression against which the fields of cultural production affirmed their autonomy', Sapiro, 'The literary field', p. 457, could be observed – with a similar effect e.g. in the opposition to the *Lex Heintze*. However, whereas opposition to such restrictive, negative policies might indeed have been constitutive for the formation of an autonomous cultural field in the German Empire, not least in the so-called *Künstler-*

Noteworthy is the frequently recurring rhetorical figure in contemporary discussions on art and politics that ‘true’ art should not be confused with propaganda nor – vice versa – propaganda confused with art – artists should abstain from painting posters.²⁸

The reputation of propaganda as such was already dubious. The standing of black propaganda was, however, certainly worse, as it encompassed conscious deceit as its essential trait. The fact that this type of propaganda was labelled ‘black’ leaves little doubt about its status, in particular if one considers that the label was coined by those working in the propaganda branch themselves. Moreover, black *Kulturpropaganda* was not just about ‘ordinary’ political or military deceit and falseness, but encompassed both intellectual commitment and the exploitation of artistic talent in the name of a dubious policy. Obviously, disclosure of one’s involvement would most likely provoke a slur on one’s character in terms of truthfulness and sincerity, which could compromise one’s position in the cultural field to a considerable extent, particularly in a transnational context. As several post-war transnational relationships involving those who had been engaged in the black cultural-propaganda trade originated from operations occurring within

bohème, cf. H. Kreuzer, *Die Bohème. Beiträge zu ihrer Beschreibung* (Stuttgart, 1968), or in the figure of secessionism, cf. G. Cepl-Kaufmann, ‘Anarchismus und Sezessionismus. Denkbilder der Jahrhundertwende’, in J. Grave, P. Sprengel and H. Vandevoorde, eds., *Anarchismus und Utopie in der Literatur um 1900. Deutschland, Flandern und die Niederlande* (Würzburg, 2005), pp. 11–21, simultaneously, as early as the first decade of the twentieth century, demands from the autonomous cultural field for positive state intervention were articulated, e.g. to protect writers against the capitalist market (at an earlier stage than in France, following Gisèle Sapiro’s account), leading to the foundation of a writer’s union, the Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller (SDS) that aimed – among other things – for state legislation and protection, cf. E. Fischer, *Der “Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller” 1909–1933* (Frankfurt/M., 1980). Remarkably, one of the most active members in the Munich section of this union was the anti-étatist anarchist bohemian Erich Mühsam, cf. H. Hug, *Erich Mühsam. Untersuchungen zu Leben und Werk* (Vaduz, 1974). Like the Goethebund the SDS also joined the *Burgfrieden*, cf. Anon., ed., *Kriegsmappe des SDS* (Berlin, 1915). In addition, the fact that several representatives of the field of limited production were involved in *Kulturpropaganda* policy suggests that German artists and writers might have had a different attitude towards the state, cf. P. Parret, ‘The Artist as *Staatsbürger*. Aspects of the Fine Arts and the Prussian State before and during the First World War’, *German Studies Review* 6 (1983), pp. 421–437. One might nevertheless interpret the conscious silence about their involvement in the propaganda apparatus as a reflection of the antagonism between the cultural field and the state as outlined by Dubois.

²⁸ Cf. H. Ball, *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* (Zürich, 1992), p. 163; T. van Doesburg and K. Schwitters, *Holland’s bankroet door dada. Documenten van een dadaïstische triomftocht door Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1992), pp. 34–36.

the framework of this policy, silence was self-evidently the best option. Revelations about the full role of the contacts during the war between those engaged in black propaganda and those it addressed, in other words, between deceivers and deceived, could only harm relationships abroad.²⁹

Moreover, since autonomous art *as* autonomous art was involved, any insight into the true or, at least, additional purpose of this art in other countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland could have affected the carefully guarded reputation of it as autonomous and, hence, the reputation and status of the art involved and its producers. The fact that the revelation by Kate Winskell in 1995 of the Sturm gallery involvement in the black cultural-propaganda scheme still led to – some eighty years later! – a clear-cut condemnation of the deceitful behaviour of its director, Herwarth Walden, indicates that an earlier disclosure, for example in the 1920s, would have had a disastrous effect on, for example, Walden's reputation.³⁰ Even the art historian Barbara Alms, who believed she had to defend Walden against Winskell's 'denunciatory' article, conceded that Der Sturm gallery's involvement in war propaganda was an ex-

²⁹ The catastrophic effects of such revelations for the reputation of those involved are obvious in another more recent case: the large-scale involvement of the CIA in US foreign cultural politics during the Cold War. The revelations of CIA involvement not only destroyed the reputation of several key figures from the cultural field, but also caused the demise of several journals which were implicated in the scheme, such as *Partisan Review* and *Encounter*, cf. F.S. Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War. The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York, 1999).

³⁰ In Walden's case, this reputation was already affected by rumours about his assumedly merciless way of exploiting the artists he represented. Ironically, Walden's wealth and the seemingly unlimited financial resources of his Sturm enterprise originated largely from work as a private contractor for the state intelligence and propaganda apparatus, which he could not disclose, cf. N. Walden, 'Aus meinen Erinnerungen an Herwarth Walden und die "Sturmzeit"', in N. Walden and L. Schreyer, eds., *Der Sturm. Ein Erinnerungsbuch an Herwarth Walden und die Künstler aus dem Sturmkreis* (Baden-Baden, 1954), pp. 9–63, pp. 38–42. Additionally, the fact that Walden not only participated in the *Kulturpropaganda* policy, contributing works from his gallery stock to so-called *Ausstellungspropaganda*, 'exhibition propaganda', but also played an active role as an agent of the secret services, the army, navy and Foreign Office in Scandinavia and the Netherlands, cf. Winskell, 'Art of Propaganda'; H. van den Berg, "[...] wir müssen mit und durch Deutschland in unserer Kunst weiterkommen." Jacoba van Heemskerck und das geheime Dienstliche "Nachrichtenbüro 'Der Sturm'", in P. Josting and W. Fähnders, eds., *Laboratorium Vielseitigkeit. Zur Literatur der Weimarer Republik. Festschrift für Helga Karrenbrock* (Bielefeld, 2005), pp. 67–87, gives his case a special dimension, undoubtedly an aggravating factor if his secret history had been uncovered during his lifetime.

pression of ‘political immorality’,³¹ yet it was in her view undertaken for a good cause – the promotion of avant-garde art.

Presumably to avoid such damage to their reputation, most writers and artists as well as artist’s groups and organizations involved avoided any subsequent revelations. Whereas any involvement in open, ‘white’ propaganda could not be denied,³² those exclusively engaged in ‘black’ propaganda could do so – and they did so in most cases, again certainly not in an unsuccessful way, given the fact that the history of the role of writers and artists in the *Kulturpropaganda* policy, as well as in other covert programmes and secretive sections of the propaganda apparatus, is by and large still unwritten, despite many indications that substantial sections of the cultural field were involved in these operations and agencies.³³

The fact that the history of the secretive *Kulturpropaganda* is still to be written is, additionally, the result of the fact that many documents concerned with German war propaganda have been destroyed. Part of the material was burned by the intelligence agencies involved at the end of the First World War. When revolution broke out in Germany, more files were destroyed to protect the names of secret agents and structures. The bombing of and fighting in Berlin during the Second World War was also not beneficial for the remaining documents. Since many surviving documents subsequently ended up behind the Iron Curtain in the state archive of the German Democratic Republic, they only became accessible when the GDR state archive was integrated into the *Bundesarchiv*. However, the damage to and concealment of the relevant archives is not the only reason why a compre-

³¹ B. Alms and W. Steinmetz, eds., *Der Sturm im Berlin der zehner Jahre* (Delmenhorst, 2000), p. 32.

³² Even when this propaganda was a product of state intelligence and the propaganda community, it could still be presented (as it was at that time) as an authentic personal gesture. In so far as those involved distanced themselves in later years from their belligerent views during the 1914 hurrah-patriotic ‘August experience’, this could again be presented as a genuine self-critical move. Since many, if not most, German artists, writers and intellectuals had an ‘August experience’, this weak moment had little effect on one’s later reputation, although, for example, the German anarchist and anti-militarist writer Erich Mühsam had a few problems in the anti-war movement due to a hurrah-patriotic slip of the pen, cf. Hug, *Erich Mühsam*, pp. 34–38.

³³ There is self-evidently an obvious difference here between these representatives from the cultural field and those actually in charge of German intelligence and propaganda, cf. M. Erzberger, *Erlebnisse im Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 1920); W. Nicolai, *Nachrichtendienst, Presse und Volksstimmung im Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1920); P. Stotter, ‘Öffentliche Meinung im Kriege, Presse und Kriegspresseamt’, in W. Foerster, ed., *Kämpfer an vergessenen Fronten. Feldzugsbriefe, Kriegstagebücher und Berichte. Kolonialkrieg, Seekrieg, Luftkrieg, Spionage* (Berlin, 1931), pp. 576–587.

hensive historiography has not been written. Both the complex organization of the German propaganda apparatus, or perhaps rather community, and the related complexity of the practical implementation of black *Kulturpropaganda* policy, are self-evidently not beneficial to the historiography of this propaganda policy.³⁴

4. *Psychological warfare in the neutral countries*

Attempts to influence the opinions of those involved have been part of armed conflicts ever since Antiquity, if not earlier. However, propaganda, or in modern military terms psychological warfare, only became a substantial, mass-scale element of war during the Great War of 1914–18. All major parties involved in the war were engaged in extensive psychological warfare operations in combination with the build-up of a propaganda apparatus of formidable size to address this new ‘front’. As Buchbender and Schuh point out in their monograph on psychological warfare during the Second World War, this type of warfare generally pursues three aims: (1) the systematic undermining of the morale of the enemy army and civil population of the enemy state, (2) the strengthening of the morale of the propagandist’s own army, population and allies, and (3) the limitation and reduction of unfavourable public opinion in neutral countries and – as far as possible – the increase of sympathy and support for the propagandist’s own cause in these countries.³⁵

Whereas the first two objectives might be regarded as the quintessential areas of propaganda operations (in particular in the actual theatre of war), and, indeed, historical accounts of the First World War often present images of posters or pamphlets targeting either the enemy or the home front,³⁶ the third objective was no less important. Hitherto, however, it has received far less attention in studies on war-related propaganda activities in the Great War.

As the course of the First World War showed, an important role in the war’s development was played by third-party countries such as Italy in 1915 and the United States in 1917, who abandoned neutrality in favour of the Entente. As well as the military consequences of neutral states joining the Entente one after another, there were also major psychological effects associated with the growing isolation of the Central powers. Moreover, the turn

³⁴ J. Wilke, ‘Deutsche Auslandspropaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg: Die Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst’, in S. Quandt, ed., *Der Erste Weltkrieg als Kommunikationsergebnis* (Gießen, 1993), pp. 95–157, p. 97; Michels, *Akademie*, p. 6–8.

³⁵ Buchbender and Schuh, *Die Waffe*, p. 20.

³⁶ For the Netherlands see A. Staarman, *Verre van vredig. Nederland tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog 1914–1918* (Delft, 2004).

to the Entente by neutral countries also caused economic problems. The Central powers had growing problems in their supply of essential resources, commodities and raw materials, which had to be imported (and likewise the possibility of export trade, particularly as Germany had been a major exporting country before the war). In this respect, the maintenance of the neutrality of the Netherlands and Denmark in particular, who provided two transit areas and Germany's only remaining backdoor to the rest of the world, was therefore of the highest priority from the German perspective.³⁷ As a result, both countries were high on the agenda of the German war-propaganda agencies. Since the Entente aimed to further isolate Germany, they also directed propaganda at these countries, with each becoming the target of a plethora of psychological warfare operations – coming from all possible directions.

It should be noted here that neutrality, in the sense of non-involvement in a military conflict, says nothing about the sympathies of one party or another in a neutral state. In fact, during the Great War the policy of neutrality in most neutral states coincided with strong views about the conflict next door. Indifference was an exception, all the neutral countries were marked by sharp divisions between supporters of the Entente and those sympathizing with the Central powers. Within this context, the German propaganda apparatus considered it essential to keep public opinion in balance, maintaining a situation of pro-German neutrality.

It is indicative of the importance attached to psychological warfare that the first British act of war was the cutting of the Transatlantic German-American telegraph cables to block further direct communication through these lines,³⁸ although one could argue that this first hit was simply chosen as a relatively easy, undefended civil target. As such, this act is, however, characteristic of the new, 'total' dimension of the war. While the war might have had its military hot spots in the respective theatres of war in Belgium, Northern France, Galicia, the Ukraine, the Balkans and the Alps, on an hitherto unprecedented scale the war was not restricted to the battlefields but affected virtually all other sectors of society on the 'home front'. In this context, psychological warfare was neither just a military matter nor had its focus confined to the military sector. On all sides, including the respective Foreign Offices, diplomatic services and several other civilian state agencies, numerous quasi or real private initiatives with an intelligence mission

³⁷ M. Frey, 'Kriegsziele, Politik und Wirtschaft. Deutschland und die Niederlande im Ersten Weltkrieg', *Jahrbuch Zentrum für Niederlande-Studien* 9 (1998), pp. 175–193; P. Moeyes, *Buiten schot. Nederland tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog 1914–1918* (Amsterdam/Antwerpen, 2001); Staarman, *Verre van vredig*.

³⁸ Welch, *Germany*, p. 22.

(for example, economic espionage) or with propaganda ambitions, as well as press agencies and the actual press (frequently functioning as a façade for covert official operations), were implicated in psychological warfare.

In so far as propaganda was directed at the neutral countries not yet militarily involved, psychological warfare was, in fact, predominantly a responsibility of civilians at both governmental and non-governmental levels. In Germany, two central agencies played a pivotal role in the coordination, organization and implementation of propaganda operations in the neutral countries during the First World War: the so-called Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst (Central Agency for Foreign Service, ZfA) and the Kriegspresseamt (War Press Office, KPA).³⁹

As a new department within the German imperial Auswärtiges Amt, the ZfA was created in autumn 1914 to bring together and coordinate intelligence and propaganda activities undertaken by the Foreign Office as well as by some thirty private, non-governmental organizations. As the German term for 'intelligence service' indicates – *Nachrichtendienst* – intelligence services usually have a dual function, supervising, controlling, organizing and carrying out both the collection *and* distribution of *Nachrichten*, 'news', that is, disinformation. The ZfA had precisely this dual mission, albeit with considerable competition from the military.

The ZfA was to some extent the civilian counterpart to the military intelligence and propaganda apparatus, with initially two – again competing – agencies: the Nachrichtenbüro im Reichsmarineamt (Intelligence Bureau in the Imperial Navy Office), led by Paul Rohrbach, and the so-called Abteilung III B (Section III B) of the Oberste Heeresleitung (General Army Command), which included a later detached subdivision, the Preßdienst (Press Service). Whereas espionage, reconnaissance and counterintelligence, both in the war zones and on the home front as well as in neutral countries, remained the core fields of operations for Abteilung III B, acting as a military secret service, the Preßdienst, renamed Kriegspresseamt (KPA), became an independent division under the direct supervision of the Oberste Heeresleitung. The KPA functioned from the start (it was founded in October 1915) both as a military information and propaganda agency and as the office with nationwide responsibility for military censorship, and it had an enormous staff. As Oberstleutnant Paul Stotten, the leading officer of the KPA in the years 1916–17, later reported, the KPA was housed in

³⁹ For more detailed accounts of the history of these agencies see W. Foerster, ed., *Kämpfer an vergessenen Fronten. Feldzugsbriefe, Kriegstagebücher und Berichte. Kolonialkrieg, Seekrieg, Luftkrieg, Spionage* (Berlin, 1931); Wilke, 'Auslandspropaganda'; Von Ungern-Sternberg and Von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, pp. 126–135; Welch, *Germany*.

two interconnected buildings in Luisenstraße in Berlin with some four hundred employees, of which one-quarter came from the military and comprised officers who could no longer serve at the front, mainly due to war injuries. The other three-quarters comprised ‘wissenschaftlicher, literarischer und künstlerischer Bedeutung’ – academics, writers and artists.⁴⁰

Whereas the navy’s Nachrichtenbüro played only a minor role in the neutral neighbouring countries, the coordination and control of war propaganda in the Netherlands and other neutral countries was the shared responsibility of the ZfA (exclusively focused on the neutral countries) and the KPA, with the obvious competition between the military apparatus and the civilian Foreign Office being won by the former. As early as the summer of 1916, the ZfA had lost most of its initial intelligence and propaganda assignments to Abteilung IIIB, the KPA and a newly founded Militärische Stelle im Auswärtigen Amt (Military Authority in the Foreign Office) controlled by the army. As such, the ZfA was sidelined, forming a subdivision of the Nachrichtenabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes (Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office), and was assigned only two minor missions, undertaken by two departments, Referat B (Department B) and Referat K (Department K), these being to undertake *Bücher- und Broschürenpropaganda* and *Kunst- und Kulturpropaganda*.⁴¹ The simultaneous emergence of the latter as a new brand of propaganda existing alongside the ‘conventional’ *Kriegspropaganda*, which addressed political and military affairs, resulted undoubtedly from the reorganization. Having been stripped of its previous assignments, the ZfA had to find new areas of operations and obviously made a virtue of necessity.

Although the military monopolized conventional war propaganda, it remained dependent on the Foreign Office and diplomatic service as far as field operations in the neutral countries were concerned. Here, the military had to resort to the diplomatic service of the Foreign Office. For example, in the Netherlands, the Kaiserlich Deutsche Gesandtschaft (Imperial German Legation) in The Hague and the Deutsches Generalkonsulat in Amsterdam were the local centres of intelligence and propaganda activities. Since the embassy was not equipped for this assignment – it had hitherto fulfilled merely ceremonial duties – a special Hilfsstelle (Auxiliary Office) was created for this purpose and subsequently dissolved after the war.⁴² This Hilfsstelle served, as it were, two masters: both the military intelligence and propaganda community and its civilian counterpart.

⁴⁰ Stotten, ‘Öffentliche Meinung’, p. 583.

⁴¹ Cf. Wilke, ‘Auslandspropaganda’, p. 138–139.

⁴² Cf. M. Bußmann, ‘Richard von Kühlmann und die Niederlande’, *Jahrbuch Zentrum für Niederlande-Studien* 9 (1998), pp. 139–173.

Alongside the intelligence and propaganda agencies in the military and civilian state apparatus, there were – as said – a large number of often inter-related private organizations. According to Matthias Erzberger, one of the key figures in the intelligence and propaganda community, there were twenty-seven private agencies working in the sector in October 1914.⁴³ These were in part conventional news agencies, correspondence bureaus and other private contractors and initiatives, which had focused on gathering and distributing news in a conventional, journalistic sense, but from August 1914 onwards assumed an obvious intelligence role, gathering and distributing ‘news’ with an apparently secret-service dimension. Although military censorship was imposed immediately after the promulgation of the ‘state of war’, this only involved military matters, and the German press maintained a considerable degree of liberty in their work.⁴⁴ However, the export of newspapers from the regular press to other neutral countries would be repeatedly blocked by the military authorities when military operations were ongoing or new manoeuvres were immanent and vital information needed to be kept from foreign observers.⁴⁵

Examples of ‘conventional’ news agencies working as subsidiaries of or in close collaboration with the state propaganda apparatus were the existing Wolff’sche Telegraphenbüro (WTB), the main German press agency in those days, and the Hirsch’sche Telegraphenbüro, which had a specific focus on the Netherlands. In addition, several new agencies were founded: an Überseedienst Transozean (Trans-Oceanic Overseas Service, also, Transozean-Nachrichtendienst, Trans-Oceanic Intelligence Service) was created under the direction of Matthias Erzberger to maintain the flow of information to the American continent after the destruction of the transatlantic cable; a Korrespondenzbüro Norden under the direction of Björn Björnson and a number of other Scandinavians with close contacts to the circles of Walter Rathenau,⁴⁶ aimed both at the Nordic countries and the Netherlands; and a Niederländisches Comité zur Verbreitung deutscher Kriegsnachrichten in Niederlanden zu Dortmund (Dutch Committee for the Distribution of German War News in the Netherlands) aimed exclusively at the Nether-

⁴³ Wilke, ‘Auslandspropaganda’, p. 98; Erzberger, *Erlebnisse*.

⁴⁴ As part of the *Burgfrieden*, which implied national unity based on patriotic responsibility, loyalty to the nation, its state and Kaiser, and not primarily through coercion and repression, cf. Welch, *Germany*.

⁴⁵ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71112, p. 1

⁴⁶ Id., R901/57693–57696; E. Schulin, ‘Zur Edition der Briefe Walter Rathenaus (1914–1922)’, *Mitteilungen der Walther-Rathenau-Gesellschaft* 13 (2003), pp. 26–40.

lands.⁴⁷ It is remarkable that, in this context, there was significant involvement of cultural institutions, organizations and enterprises, which became engaged in intelligence and propaganda activities. Although these activities were basically aimed at ‘ordinary’ propaganda concerning military and political developments, their involvement was, however, undoubtedly beneficial to the cultural component of *Kulturpropaganda* as part of the German war-propaganda effort as whole. Likewise, the high percentage of academics, artists and writers in the propaganda apparatus, employed on the basis of their practical skills,⁴⁸ was also most likely conducive to the prominent role of the arts in German propaganda.

Of the cultural organizations involved in war propaganda from the start, the most important was probably the Deutscher Werkbund (German Work League), founded in 1907 to promote German design at home and abroad. From August 1914, the Werkbund participated in war propaganda and, from the start, alongside its ostensible objectives, served as a cover organization for other propaganda activities. The secretary of the Werkbund, Ernst Jäckh, had been involved in private intelligence and propaganda ventures before the war as a close associate of Erzberger and Rohrbach (Jäckh was an expert on the Ottoman Empire). When the war began, he used the Werkbund’s lists of foreign contacts as mailing lists for propaganda material. He also turned the offices of the Werkbund into a cover for the state apparatus.⁴⁹ In a similar way, Herwarth Walden and Nell Walden-Roslund created a Nachrichtenbüro Der Sturm, alongside but actually housed in their Kunsthandlung Der Sturm, acting as private intelligence and propaganda contractors and focusing on Scandinavia and the Netherlands (parallel to the Büro Norden).⁵⁰ Whereas the Werkbund and Der Sturm by and large operated in the field of conventional military, political and economic war propaganda, another organization focused in particular on *Kulturpropaganda*: the Bund Deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler (League of German Scholars and Artists) or simply, the Kulturbund (Cultural League), which was founded by

⁴⁷ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/72170.

⁴⁸ Not forgetting that their connections allowed them to avoid frontline duty and as a result of their *Unverzichtbarkeit für den Heimatdienst* they secured a place behind a desk in Berlin or Vienna, or at worst in a diplomatic mission or military administration within occupied territory, cf. Džambo, *Musen*.

⁴⁹ Cf. Wilke, ‘Auslandspropaganda’, pp. 101–102, 107–108.

⁵⁰ Cf. Winskell, ‘Art of Propaganda’; Van den Berg, ‘Heemskerck’. The special role of the Waldens and their Nachrichtenbüro is also apparent in the archive of the Zentralstelle, in which several files are specifically reserved for documents concerning their activities, cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/72396–72399. In addition, documents relating to Walden and Der Sturm can also be found in many other files of the Zentralstelle.

those involved in the same circles as those responsible for the appeal *An die Kulturwelt!* As in the case of this appeal, the Kulturbund was not entirely a private initiative. State agencies were also involved in the background. Like the Werkbund, the Kulturbund also served on some occasions as a seemingly independent cultural cover for the operations of these agencies,⁵¹ but its main mission was, as its name indicates, the proliferation of German culture, including the sciences.

5. Kriegspropaganda and Kulturpropaganda

Above all, the main focus of the intelligence and propaganda community was conventional *Kriegspropaganda*, war propaganda addressing military and political issues in all possible forms and all available media. As can be gathered from the inventory of the ZfA archive,⁵² *Kulturpropaganda* had – in relation to war propaganda in a more narrow sense – a double character. In the ZfA inventory, propaganda operations are arranged according to the different channels and media used for propaganda purposes: ‘Bibliotheken, Verlage, Buch- und Kunstbuchhandlungen’ (libraries, publishers, bookshops and art bookshops), ‘Ausstellungspropaganda’ (exhibition propaganda), ‘Bild- und Filmpropaganda’ (picture and film propaganda), ‘Vortragspropaganda’ (lecture propaganda), ‘Kultur- und Kunstpropaganda’ (cultural and artistic propaganda, including art, variety shows, music, theatre and recitation), ‘Hotelpropaganda’ (hotel propaganda) and ‘Propaganda mit Druckerzeugnissen’ (propaganda using printed material), comprising ‘Zeitungen’ (newspapers), ‘Merkblattpropaganda’ (leaflet propaganda), ‘Schriftenversand und Broschürenpropaganda’ (book and leaflet dispatch and distribution, brochure propaganda) and – in the inventory arranged under ‘Kultur- und Kunstpropaganda’ – ‘Kioskunternehmungen’ (newsstand enterprises).

Here, *Kulturpropaganda* seems to be simply war propaganda propagated by means of culture and art. Put differently, art and culture are simply channels for propaganda distributed through bookshops, publishers, lectures, newspapers, pamphlets and hotel lobbies.⁵³ As such, art and culture

⁵¹ Cf. Von Ungern-Sternberg and Von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, pp. 136–143 and, on the role of the Kulturbund in lecture tours in the Netherlands and Sweden, for example, see Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71884–71891 and 71914.

⁵² The following list stems from the *Findbuch* R901 of the Bundesarchiv in Berlin-Lichterfelde comprising the files of the ‘Auswärtiges Amt, Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst 1911–1923’. Cf. Wilke, ‘Auslandspropaganda’, pp. 110–117.

⁵³ Interestingly, photography and film are – at this point – not yet regarded as ‘true’, ‘high’ art, unlike certain forms of variety, although German cinema in particular was

were indeed engaged and exploited until the end of the war (for example, for creating posters or propaganda poetry).

Sometime during 1915 or, ultimately, in 1916, art and culture became more than just channels or media for war propaganda in a more strict sense. Already since the start of the war, psychological warfare had not been exclusively confined to the military course of events and to politics. In the spheres of economics, commerce and trade, as well as culture, propaganda had flanked the 'ordinary' military and political war propaganda. Initially, this happened only on a very limited scale and – as far as culture was concerned – in a quite unsophisticated, unconsidered way (as in the case of the counterproductive appeal of *An die Kulturwelt!*), in artistic demonstrations and confessions of patriotism which had little consideration of their effect or the best way to influence different audiences. This changed, however, after the first negative experiences during the first year of the war.

Based on the documents and research currently available, it is difficult to say precisely at what time during the years of 1915–16 that the *Kulturpropaganda* began to emancipate itself from its initial ancillary role as a medium for political and military propaganda. There was probably no central decision or ministerial order to change the status of *Kulturpropaganda* within the German propaganda effort. The new role was most likely a product of gradual revisions and small adaptations in the daily propaganda practice of the many agencies and actors involved. During 1915–16, several different factors led to a reassessment of the policies hitherto followed to exploit art and culture for propagandistic means. Some of these factors were undoubtedly the reorganization, or rather the dismantling of the ZfA, and the gradual insight that the war would be a long-term affair, instead of the rapid advance to Paris that many Germans initially expected with the 1870–71 war in mind.

In any case, the change resulted in a new policy in which the other channels and media mentioned above in the inventory of the archive of the ZfA, as far as applicable (libraries, publishers, bookshops and art bookshops, exhibitions, pictures, lectures, variety, music, theatre), became channels and media for the restyled *Kulturpropaganda* as a separate propaganda policy alongside the conventional *Kriegspropaganda* with its military and political focus. *Kulturpropaganda* encompassed basically all the 'high' arts and sciences (mainly humanities), but also 'lower' forms of artistic expres-

heavily supported by the propaganda apparatus, leading to a boom in film production, films that are today appreciated for their aesthetic merits. Nevertheless, as part of the *Ausstellungspropaganda* in the framework of the *Kulturpropaganda* policy in 1920, the Zentralstelle supported an 'Internationale Kino-Fachausstellung' in Amsterdam, cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/72213.

sion, such as crafts, design, artistic performances and sophisticated popular entertainment with some cultural ambition, for example, variety and cabaret.⁵⁴

The prime objective of *Kulturpropaganda* was the subtle dismantling of the anti-German sentiments that prevailed among intellectuals, writers and artists in the neighbouring neutral countries. The policy aimed at changing attitudes in the long term, rather than immediate results.⁵⁵ As a representative of the Kaiserlich Deutsche Gesandtschaft in The Hague, Fromme, in a general review of parameters, requirements and possibilities of German propaganda, divided Dutch society into clearly identifiable sections, which were either *deutschfreundlich* (the common term for a pro-German stance) or *deutschfeindlich* (hostile to Germany). *Deutschfeindlichkeit* was dominant in the urban population in the western parts of the country, and included most students and academics, journalists and artists, as well as a number of Catholic intellectuals and most of the so-called 'modernist' Protestants. This divide in public opinion,⁵⁶ which also existed in other neighbouring neutral countries, provided a major challenge to the German propaganda community. The *deutschfreundliche* strata of society could be addressed by conventional – white or grey – propaganda. The addressees would not object to German disinformation. In contrast, propaganda which was identifiable as such would be completely ineffective or even counter-productive within the *deutschfeindliche* strata, as these sections of society were a priori critical or even hostile to the German cause and mistrustful of any information originating from German sources. This strata of society may well have been only a minority, as the internal reports suggest, but were nevertheless a part of society which dominated public opinion. This situation not only held true for propaganda related to political, military or economic subjects, but also that concerned with cultural affairs.

This divide forced the German propaganda apparatus to follow a dual policy. Firstly, to sustain the *Deutschfreundlichkeit* in pro-German sections

⁵⁴ Cabaret had a somewhat special status here, as it had been a common supplement to 'high art' in the German autonomous literary field in the previous decades (not least as a financial resource). Renowned writers such as Frank Wedekind, Otto Bierbaum and Peter Hille were also active in cabaret. Cf. H.H. Ewers, *Das Cabaret* (Berlin, 1904); K. Riha, *Moritat, Bänkelsong, Protestballade. Kabarett-Lyrik und engagiertes Lied in Deutschland* (Königstein/Ts., 1979).

⁵⁵ As such, *Kulturpropaganda*, in terms of the taxonomy of psychological warfare, was a form of strategic propaganda and not tactical propaganda with short-term objectives.

⁵⁶ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71997, pp. 97–98 (see Annex). This assessment is acknowledged by later studies, cf. Moeyes, *Buiten schot*.

of society, which generally coincided with a clear preference or even outspoken admiration for ‘typical’ German culture – elements such as Wagner’s operas, the *Denker und Dichter* of the classical-idealist tradition, *Heimatromane* and Germanic prehistory – with conventional political, military and economic propaganda, flanked by the proliferation of this ‘typical’ German culture. This strategy was, however, rather senseless in *deutsch-feindliche* circles. Here, any visible involvement of the German state, German propaganda organizations (such as the Bund Deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler) or pro-German agencies (for example, the German Club in Amsterdam or the Dutch Wagner society) had to be avoided at all costs.

Although the proliferation of ‘typical’ German culture could certainly not be abandoned, to avoid the risk of alienating pro-German sectors of society in the neutral countries, another more sophisticated approach to anti-German groups seemed necessary and viable, as the anti-German sentiment in these groups was not a given. On the contrary, many who chose the side of the Entente in the war did *not* have any previous long-term aversion to Germany. For example, the Dutch writer Albert Verwey and the Dane Georg Brandes had spent quite some time in Munich and Berlin, yet distanced themselves from Germany⁵⁷ when it assumed the role of the aggressor, starting the war, violating the neutrality of another small neighbouring country, and causing – to use present-day euphemisms – large-scale ‘casualties’ among the civilian population and enormous ‘collateral damage’ to cultural heritage (as defended and glossed over in the *An die Kulturwelt!* appeal). In the academic world a similar turn away from Germany could be observed.

As far as the sudden violation of Belgian neutrality was concerned, the arrogance displayed by the German superpower towards its small neighbour did not auger well for other, similarly small neutral countries. It was, moreover, grist to the mill of the Entente propaganda, which self-evidently exploited German atrocities and pillaging in Belgium to fan fears in the still neutral neighbouring countries. Images from the actual theatre of war were used to strengthen the caricatured image of the German people as a bunch of narrow-minded, repressive and destructive uniformed Huns, who lacked any true sense of culture, let alone any trace of profound aesthetic sensibility, and constituted an imminent danger to their peaceful neighbours. Kaiser Wilhelm II had provided the pretext for the association of the Germans and

⁵⁷ Cf. A. Verwey, *Holland en de oorlog* (Amsterdam, 1916); see also a letter from Georg Brandes dated 31 August 1917 to Erik Lie, employee of the Korrespondenzbüro Norden, inviting Brandes to write an article for the *Berliner Tageblatt* on German culture, assuming that such an article would have a favourable character; cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/57695, pp. 25–27.

himself with the Huns and Attila, as on the departure of a German expeditionary force to China to assist in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in July 1900, Wilhelm II had instructed the troops in Bremerhaven to act mercilessly, taking no prisoners, so as to leave an impression on the Chinese like that left in Europe by Attila some thousand years before, so 'that the Chinese would never again dare to look at a German with squinted eyes'.⁵⁸ The terror, mass homicide and destruction during the Western campaign in August 1914 seemed to confirm the words of the Kaiser. The blunt denial of any cruelty or senseless destruction by the German army, as occurred in *An die Kulturwelt!*, strengthened the image of the narrow-mindedness of a number of German scholars, artists and writers.

The policy of *Kulturpropaganda* now aimed at a careful and gradual reversal of this bad reputation, consciously avoiding war themes, let alone praise for German militarism (as occurred in *An die Kulturwelt!*). Ultimately, the policy was designed to create a more favourable image of Germany, suggesting that it was a country where modern culture and art flourished. This 'other' image of Germany was intended to lead people to the conclusion that the German state was not so bad after all, for despite the Kaiser's outspoken opposition to modernist *Rinnsteinkunst*, the state apparently allowed or even helped create a favourable environment for the free blossoming of the arts. An image of Germany as a country where modern art and culture could flourish in an autonomous way was also designed to convince those critical or hostile towards Germany that in fact the country had much to offer in the cultural sphere.

As every reference to the political or military sphere had to be avoided, the involvement of the state propaganda apparatus and related private initiatives also had to keep a low profile, or rather become virtually invisible. In so far as initiators of individual operations could not remain completely behind the scenes, for example, in the case of a lecture tour, ideally, German propagandists resorted to trusted local sympathizers, but only if they were not renowned for their *Deutschfreundlichkeit* and as such easily identifiable as a German agent or as a voluntary link in the German propaganda chain. As is rather common in the sphere of intelligence and propaganda, in several instances one cover was covered by another, with the ZfA in Berlin, for example, as the coordinating agency, hidden behind several covers, such as the Werkbund or the Bund Deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler, which again used local intermediaries, individuals or ad hoc organizations to conceal the origins of certain initiatives.

⁵⁸ Wilhelm II., 'Hunnenrede, Bremerhaven 27. Juli 1900', at <<http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/dokumente/wilhelm00/index.html>> (consulted 15.05.2006).

The representatives involved in the German (or at times Swiss or Austrian) cultural field, for example, someone presenting a lecture or organizing an exhibition, would be carefully selected for their trustworthiness. They were explicitly instructed to abstain from making any political statement on the war – *Kriegspropaganda* was to be avoided at any price. Most did so, and for the rest, those involved were free to do and say what they wanted or to pursue what they would have in a peacetime situation in which propaganda was not the ultimate aim. As a consequence, quite remarkably, even outspoken German opponents of the war could be and were indeed involved in the *Kulturpropaganda*, not just as addressees, but as actors and intermediaries, although self-evidently they could not be informed about their role. For example, in Switzerland, the Galerie Dada devoted two exhibitions and a dada soirée to *Der Sturm*,⁵⁹ unknowingly implementing cultural-propaganda policy. In a similar way, the expressionist war opponent, Leonhard Frank, whose book *Der Mensch ist gut* was banned as an anti-war best-seller in Germany, is mentioned on a list of possible speakers for lecture evenings in a German reading room planned for Zurich.⁶⁰

6. *Theatre propaganda, academic lectures and other forms of Kulturpropaganda*

In general, *Kulturpropaganda* policy presented contemporary German culture in all its diversity. There was, however, a clear-cut preference in the artistic and literary field for *die Moderne*, for recent modern currents in literature and the arts – naturalism, impressionism, symbolism, *Jugendstil*, neoromanticism and neoclassicism – as well as for the latest novelty, ‘ultramodern’ expressionism. Likewise, in the academic field, a preference for the latest developments in the humanities and sciences can be observed, in which, at that time, German academia indeed played a leading role in many disciplines. To avoid the suggestion of any supremacist unilateral proliferation of German ‘superior’ culture, the *Kulturpropaganda* policy aimed at projects with a bilateral or multilateral character. These projects aimed at cultural exchange to restore old ties and create new ones, as can be gathered from documents in which the policy was outlined and discussed. In a letter dated November 1917, an official from the Hilfsstelle of the Kaiserlich Deutsche Gesandtschaft in The Hague, Franz Dülberg, suggested that

⁵⁹ Cf. R. Meyer, “‘Dada ist gross, Dada ist schön’. Zur Geschichte von ‘Dada Zürich’”, in H. Bolliger, G. Magnaguagno and R. Meyer, *Dada in Zürich* (Zürich, 1985), pp. 9–96, p. 89.

⁶⁰ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71869, p. 47–48; H. Kessler, *Das Tagebuch 1880–1937. Sechster Band 1916–1918* (Stuttgart, 2006), p. 367.

within the framework of the *Kulturpropaganda*, German plays for Dutch theatres should be selected with more care, as the wrong choices would be counterproductive. Instead of classical, all too German drama, it is suggested that support be given to the performance of modern plays. In exchange, staging Dutch plays in Germany was thought to help create some balance.⁶¹ In another letter from the embassy almost a year later, one of Dülberg's colleagues, Von Maltzan, again pointed to the problem that the more traditional works of German theatre and opera, among others those by Wagner, were ineffective. Although receiving positive coverage in pro-German circles, as favourable critiques in the pro-German weekly *De Toekomst* indicate,⁶² the majority of the possible audience could not be reached. Instead of such works, Von Maltzan also proposed staging modern German plays, which would have *deutschfreundliche* Dutch directors such as Ben Royaards, Eduard Verkade and Herman Heijermans, rather than German directors, so as to avoid giving the impression of German propaganda.⁶³

In the preceding winter of 1917–18, the head of the Hilfsstelle in The Hague, Albert Erich Brinckmann, had developed a master plan, 'Propaganda und akademische Vorträge' (Propaganda and academic lectures),⁶⁴ as a blueprint for a scholarly exchange programme, which was recommended by his superior, Ambassador Friedrich Rosen, as 'wichtiges Glied in der Kette der deutschen Propaganda' – as an 'important link in the chain of German propaganda'.⁶⁵ In his master plan, Brinckmann stressed that the scheme of academic lectures in the framework of *Kulturpropaganda* policy should avoid any suggestion of German cultural (or in this case, academic) supremacy. Instead, the programme was to focus on elements common to Germany and the Netherlands. Moreover, he adds that the programme should avoid any obtrusiveness, and instead create the impression of a fundamental German interest in Dutch developments, in so far as the scheme was identifiable as a German initiative. As Brinckmann writes, propaganda should avoid giving the impression of being compulsory consumption, but instead aim for the construction of bridges.⁶⁶ As such, the programme of

⁶¹ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71164, pp. 4–5 (see Annex).

⁶² M. Krol, 'De Toekomst und Der Sturm' [2005], at <<http://143.169.1.61/-vlaamsebeweging/page/toekomst/toekomstindex.html>> (consulted 15.05.2006).

⁶³ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71171, pp. 112–114 (see Annex)

⁶⁴ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71888, p. 9.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9–10 and 11 (see Annex).

academic lectures was intended to take the form of *Austausch*⁶⁷ – ‘exchange’ – rather than one-way traffic, and in order to avoid the impression of a German invasion of Dutch academia, Dutch scholars were also to be invited to Germany.⁶⁸ As Brinckmann stressed in the transcript of a speech to be given at a meeting of *deutschfreundliche* scholars, the project had the long-term objective of gradually creating a different attitude towards German scholars and Germany in general, one which might only be realized after the war.⁶⁹

Last but not least, Brinckmann suggested that the academic exchange scheme ‘in keiner Weise einen propagandistischen Charakter tragen solle – wozu ich bemerken darf, dass der propagandistische Wert sich auch ohne besondere Betonung sofort einstellen wird’ – ‘in no way should the programme have a propagandistic character – in this regard I would like to note that the propagandistic value will materialize without particular stress’.⁷⁰ To avoid ‘den Anschein deutscher Propagandatätigkeit’,⁷¹ any visible relationship with the German embassy, the Foreign Office, or German organizations such as the Bund Deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler had to be avoided at all costs. Instead, Dutch scholars and academic organizations were to act as the organizers and provide the framework for the lectures. As a start, a secretive ‘vorläufiges Komitee zur Veranstaltung von Vorträgen deutscher Gelehrter in den Niederlanden’ (preliminary committee for the organization of lectures by German scholars in the Netherlands) was created in November 1917, chaired by Brinckmann, who acted on the occasion as a scholar, rather than as an official of the German embassy, as he suggested in his first address to the committee. Although Brinckmann played a double role here (as can be seen from the correspondence between the embassy and the ZfA he almost certainly also operated as the German propaganda policymaker), this first address demonstrates the firm intention of keeping *Kulturpropaganda* apart from the ‘regular’ war propaganda.⁷² Members of the committee were established academics from different Dutch universities and the Technische Hoogeschool in Delft, as well as the secretary of the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Akademie voor Wetenschappen. They were not only chosen for their academic prestige, but also for their decisively *deutschfreundliche* opinions, and as such they were willing to participate

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 16 (see Annex).

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 15 (see Annex).

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

⁷¹ ‘the impression of German propaganda activity’. Ibid., p. 13.

⁷² Ibid., p. 18 (see Annex).

knowingly in Brinckmann's scheme,⁷³ which started in 1918. The scheme, which – as foreseen – continued into the first years after the war, brought several renowned German scholars to the Netherlands, among them Lujo Brentano, Georg Simmel, Wilhelm Bölsche, Walter Rathenau and Hans Delbrück. The title of Delbrück's lecture, 'Die Vielheit der Nationen als Grundlage der europäischen Kultur', had an almost emblematic character for Brinckmann's exchange project.⁷⁴ Although Brinckmann had to invite some of his most loyal Dutch collaborators in the scheme to give lectures in Germany – J.H. Valckenier Kips, C.A. Verrijn Stuart and B. Symons went to Berlin in 1918 – he was obliged to do this mainly for reasons of courtesy. Their ostentatious pro-German stand was actually seen as a risk for the exchange scheme, as they could contaminate the 'purely' academic character of the project with their open *Deutschfreundlichkeit*.⁷⁵ As their invitation to Germany would primarily create the impression of a reward for loyal services, at least among those academics who were the main target of the project – those who were opposed to Germany – it was decided to bypass 'holländische Gelehrte [...] die durch eine allzu demonstrative Deutschfreundlichkeit ihren holländischen Kollegen gegenüber belastet sind' – 'Dutch scholars, who have incriminated themselves in the eyes of their colleagues through an overly demonstrative friendliness to Germany'. As an example, the art historian Cornelis Hofstede de Groot is mentioned by

⁷³ As members of the committee the proceedings mention: Dr H.H. Breuning (German, Groningen), Prof. Coenraad Alexander Verrijn-Stuart (Economics, Utrecht), Prof. Willem Vogelsang (Art History, Utrecht), Lector Johannes Kapteyn (German, Leiden), Prof. Sebald Rudolph Steinmetz (Ethnology/sociology, Amsterdam), Prof. Jan Hendrik Valckenier Kips (Law, Delft), Prof. Pieter Molenbroek (Mathematics/Geometry, KNAW), Prof. Barend Symons (German, Groningen), Prof. Pieter Zeeman (Physics, Amsterdam), the cloth manufacturer C.H. Krantz (Leiden), the coffee merchant Michiel Onnes (Nijenrode) and the margarine producer W. Salomonski (Nijmegen). Since several of the Dutch academics involved were renowned for their pro-German stance (a number of them were editors and collaborators with the pro-German journal *De Toekomst*), any meeting organized by them would have been immediately identifiable as a German propaganda operation. To avoid this, they had to act through intermediaries or organizations of which they were members. For the outside world, in so far as secrecy could not be maintained, the meeting of the organizing committee would be presented as a 'Versammlung holländischer Gelehrter', a 'meeting of Dutch scholars', which had been held 'gewissermassen als kollegiale Zusammenkunft', more or less as an 'as it were fraternal convocation' and not as set up by the embassy, *ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 5; for an extensive list of the academics involved, see *id.*, R901/71891, pp. 3–10 and 15. For reports on the touring German scholars, see *ibid.*, R901/71885, 3–6, 30–38.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, R901/71885, p. 36.

Brinckmann as one who was too *deutschfreundlich* to fit into the scheme despite the fact that he was basically a good friend of Brinckmann.⁷⁶

In line with Brinckmann's academic exchange project, similar lecture tours were organized by the ZfA in other countries. Another example was a tour of Sweden organized in close cooperation with the Bund Deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler, the German embassy in Stockholm and local Swedish pro-German organizations. The tour comprised a series of lectures in Stockholm, Uppsala, Gothenburg and Lund in April 1918, initially planned under the title 'Neudeutsche Gedanken und Persönlichkeiten' (New German thoughts and personalities), but eventually held under the caption 'Das junge Deutschland' (The young Germany). Four speakers were scheduled: the sociologist Alfred Weber spoke on 'Das Führerproblem' (The leadership problem), the art historian Gustav Hartlaub⁷⁷ on 'Die Zukunft der Kunst' (The future of art), focusing in particular on German painterly expressionism, and the expressionist writer and critic Kasimir Edschmid lectured on 'Über die dichterische deutsche Jugend' (On the poetical German youth, that is, literary expressionism). As well, a German essayist living in Sweden, Klaus Albrecht, spoke on 'Das jüngste Deutschland' (The youngest Germany, that is, the German youth movements), while Thomas Mann had already been engaged for the following tour.⁷⁸ Again, in exchange, lectures by Swedish intellectuals on 'die geistigen Strömungen Schwedens' ('the spiritual currents in Sweden') were scheduled in exchange, but were prevented by the November Revolution in Germany.⁷⁹ Again, any association with *Kriegspropaganda* was undesirable: 'Selbstverständlich sollen strengstens alle politischen Äusserungen vermieden werden.'⁸⁰

In addition to these lectures and the above-mentioned plans for the Dutch theatre, *Kulturpropaganda* encompassed basically all forms of cultural expression and communication, other performative arts such as music, opera and variety, but also translations of German literature into other lan-

⁷⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁷⁷ Hartlaub actually replaced the pre-war director Fritz Wichert (see below) as director of the Kunsthalle in Mannheim while Wichert was engaged in the *Kulturpropaganda* policy, first in The Hague and later in Berlin. Hartlaub stood down after the war, but became director again in the early 1920s and was, as such, the organizer of the epoch-making exhibition 'Die Neue Sachlichkeit' in 1925.

⁷⁸ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71884, p. 31; K. Edschmid, *Über den Expressionismus in der Literatur und die neue Dichtung* (Berlin, 19218), pp. 11–38.

⁷⁹ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71884, p. 30.

⁸⁰ 'Self-evidently all political statements should be avoided in the strictest way.' *Id.*, p. 31.

guages and of foreign literature into German. Plans were also made for the creation of German libraries in the neutral countries. In 1917, the classical philologist Karl Hönn developed a master plan for a Deutsche Lesesaal (German reading room) in Zurich. The reading room was not only intended as a library, but also as a cultural centre where lectures could be given and art could be shown. It is remarkable that the plan included several expressionists in the provisional schedule of activities – lectures and exhibitions – and that the works that were required to be on the shelves were by writers including Johannes R. Becher, Alfred Döblin, Kasimir Edschmid, Otto Flake, Leonhard Frank, Theodor Däubler, Walter Hasenclever, Georg Heym, Else Lasker-Schüler, Ernst Stadler, Carl Sternheim, Georg Trakl, Franz Werfel and the painters Ernst Heckel and Max Pechstein. The Deutscher Werkbund was not only envisaged as the intermediary for the interior design, but also as intermediary cover for the ZfA as the initiator of the library.⁸¹ In following years, the ZfA no longer pursued the establishment of its ‘own’ libraries, but rather facilitated interaction between German and foreign libraries.⁸² Initially, the plans aimed to create state-funded German libraries, concealed by the provenance of an independent cultural institution (such as in Zurich, as the subsidiary of the Werkbund). They were not to be recognizable as outlets of the German propaganda apparatus in any way.

In a similar way, in 1916 the German embassy in The Hague decided to buy a bookshop in Amsterdam, camouflaged as a Dutch takeover. This operation was initially a countermeasure designed to address a flood of French propaganda material arriving in the Dutch cultural field. German intelligence observed an enormous orchestrated importation of French literature into the Netherlands, swamping Dutch bookshops.⁸³ An increase in the activity of Alliance Française was observed, combined with the launch of a French-oriented (and probably financed) cultural magazine, *Revue de Hollande*,⁸⁴ as well as a cultural liaison bureau called Office français des Pays-Bas (French Office of the Netherlands) under the direction of the Dutch literary critic Henri Borel.⁸⁵ The first action taken by the German embassy in The Hague was to decide that more German literature should be made available to the Dutch press for reviews. As well, the embassy arranged considerable financial ‘support’, some 40,000 Dutch guilders, for a Dutch bookseller from The Hague, Bernhard F.M. Mensing, who was friendly to-

⁸¹ Ibid., R901/71869, pp. 43–55.

⁸² Ibid., R901/71914.

⁸³ Ibid., R901/71081.

⁸⁴ Ibid., R901/72170, p. 1–3.

⁸⁵ Ibid., R901/71082, p. 11.

wards Germany. The bookseller was thus able to purchase the Amsterdam bookshop and press owned by C.L. van Langenhuysen, which was ideally located next to the university on the Spui at numbers 14–16 (today the Atheneum bookshop). The store was practically in the possession of the German state, yet appeared to the outside world to be Mensing's enterprise.⁸⁶ The purchase of the bookshop created the opportunity to display German publications on this central square in Amsterdam. As part of the *Kulturpropaganda* policy, these publications were in particular of a literary, artistic and academic nature.

Furthermore, *Kulturpropaganda* encompassed the organization and facilitation of exhibitions, both through subsidies from the ZfA and practical support from the diplomatic service. *Inter alia*, the above-mentioned exhibitions by Der Sturm art gallery⁸⁷ and the Berliner Sezession were involved.⁸⁸ Following the outbreak of the war, art could no longer be exported from Germany without prior permission and involving complicated paperwork and a lengthy bureaucratic process. As a result, border formalities were avoided by using the diplomatic courier service to handle the transportation of works of art. In both The Hague and Copenhagen, works were delivered to the German embassies, which also handled their return to Berlin. Likewise, Herwarth Walden was allowed to send his international mail through the Zentral-Einkaufsgesellschaft which acted as the covert mail service of the German Foreign Office.⁸⁹ In a similar way, the border crossings of representatives of the cultural field who could contribute to a favourable image of Germany was managed at the highest level. Instead of painstaking procedures at a consulate where there was a high possibility of being bullied by a low-ranking official, special procedures were followed which informally provided the Dutch painter Jacoba van Heemskerck and her friend and patron Marie Tak van Poortvliet, for example, with the necessary travel documents.⁹⁰ In a similar way, the crossing of the Dutch-German border by the Dutch playwright Herman Heijermans,⁹¹ who had lived for some time in Berlin and had close contacts with the Berlin theatre world, was facilitated through bypassing the normal procedures.

⁸⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, R901/72178.

⁸⁷ Cf. Winskell, 'Art of Propaganda', pp. 331–336; Van den Berg, 'Heemskerck', pp. 81–82.

⁸⁸ Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/-71936.

⁸⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, R901/71003.

⁹⁰ Van den Berg, 'Heemskerck', p. 81.

⁹¹ Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71233, p. 11.

7. *Propaganda as a niche*

In her article revealing Herwarth Walden's involvement in German war propaganda and his role in exploiting autonomous art within this framework, Kate Winskell accuses Walden of mendacity and the misuse of autonomous art for propaganda purposes. According to Winskell, this assumed subjugation of *Der Sturm* to the directives of the propaganda apparatus of a despicable militaristic, aggressive, culturally conservative, if not fossil regime, made Walden's repeated claim about the virtual absolute autonomy of the art he represented in *Der Sturm* a blatant lie.⁹² In her eyes not artistic autonomy but 'mercenariness'⁹³ characterized his trade. To some extent, Winskell's assessment might not be completely wrong, in so far as Walden supported the imperial regime by means of an art it detested, presenting art that purported to be autonomous while secretly fulfilling a heteronomous service to German psychological warfare. However, in other respects her assessment is based on a misjudgement of the heterogeneity of the views held in the state apparatus. In her article, Winskell quotes an internal letter written by a Foreign Office official which stresses both the necessity of complying with the Kaiser's rejection of modern art and the 'total idiocy' of the art presented by *Der Sturm*, which could only be exhibited

⁹² In contrast to suggestions by Peter Bürger, cf. P. Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde* (Frankfurt/M, 1974), and others, substantial sections of the avant-garde did not oppose the autonomy of the artistic field, but instead, propagated this autonomy. In the 1910s Walden was among the most radical avant-garde defenders of artistic autonomy, cf. H. Walden, *Einblick in Kunst. Expressionismus, Futurismus, Kubismus* (Berlin, 1924), pp. 36–38; N. Walden and L. Schreyer, eds., *Der Sturm. Ein Erinnerungsbuch an Herwarth Walden und die Künstler aus dem Sturmkreis* (Baden-Baden, 1954); N. Walden, *Herwarth Walden. Ein Lebensbild* (Berlin/Mainz, 1963); V. Pirsich, *Der Sturm. Eine Monographie* (Herzberg, 1985); M. Godé, *Der Sturm de Herwarth Walden ou l'utopie d'un art autonome* (Nancy, 1990); F. Mühlhaupt, "'Vad är der STURM? Der STURM är Herwarth Walden"/ "Was ist der STURM? Der STURM ist Herwarth Walden". En tysk särling inom Modernismen / Ein deutscher Sonderweg der Moderne', in J.T. Ahlstrand et al., eds., *Svenskt Avantgarde och Der Sturm i Berlin. Schwedische Avantgarde und Der Sturm in Berlin* (Lund/Osnabrück, 2000), pp. 169–196; Alms and Steinmetz, *Der Sturm*, as were the Zurich Dadaists, cf. H. van den Berg, 'Sprachkrise als Zeitkrankheit. Hugo Ball und die Wiederfindung des Wortes', in P.V. Zima, R. Kacianka and J. Strutz, eds., *Krise und Kritik der Sprache zwischen Spätmoderne und Postmoderne* (Tübingen/Basel, 2004), pp. 123–147; H. van den Berg, 'From a New Art to a New Life and a New Man. Avantgarde Utopianism in Dada', in S. Bru and G. Martens, eds., *The Invention of Politics in the European Avant-Garde (1906–1940)* (Amsterdam/New York, 2006), pp. 133–150.

⁹³ Winskell, 'Art of Propaganda', p. 322.

with the support of the Foreign Office if it served the higher purpose of positive propaganda:

As I gather from a letter I received from the civil cabinet of His Majesty, the Kaiser takes an interest in our art exhibitions abroad, though, in accordance with his taste, he does not exactly approve of the exhibitions of the most modern German art. [...] I don't know if you expect from the planned 'Sturm' exhibition – the paintings are, after all, completely idiotic – so exceptional a propagandistic effect that we should support it after all [...]⁹⁴

Based on this and similar opinions in the documents of the ZfA, Winskell assumes that the state support for the exhibition of Sturm art abroad was only based on dubious propagandistic calculations.⁹⁵ Undoubtedly, many officials in the diplomatic service, intelligence agencies and propaganda apparatus held opinions on art which were in line with the Kaiser's rejection of *Rinnsteinkunst*. These opinions were, however, by no means shared by all. On the contrary, as indicated previously, at the start of the war a propaganda apparatus had to be developed quickly, and many artists and writers were employed in these initially improvised organizations. Of these, many had unmistakably modern taste, judging from their own work alone. Also, the fact that through the right contacts in higher places these artists and writers could and did find a safe haven behind a desk, shows that the taste of some high-ranking officials was obviously not in line with their anti-modernist Kaiser. The fact that Der Sturm exhibitions could be held in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Denmark with substantial support from the diplomatic service (the exhibited works were even being transported by the diplomatic courier service), might also be taken as a sign that within the propaganda apparatus a different view on art prevailed among those responsible for these exhibitions.

Although without any doubt the works exhibited by Der Sturm to some extent did not yet meet the aesthetic preferences of most officials involved – even those with decisively modern tastes – expressionism was indeed rapidly and increasingly accepted by a wider audience over the course of the war.⁹⁶ Despite the art of Der Sturm perhaps being too radical (or 'idiotic'), even for officials with modern taste, the inclusion of Der Sturm, nonetheless, was in accord with the modernist direction taken by the *Kulturpropaganda* policy. Der Sturm was not only decidedly modern, its mere existence

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 333, for original German text see *ibid.*, p. 343.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Cf. J. Weinstein, *The End of Expressionism. Art and the November Revolution in Germany, 1918–19* (Chicago/London, 1990), pp. 1–22.

could also be used to create the impression of predominant cultural liberalism within the German Empire. This liberalism could be demonstrated not only on the basis of the 'idiotic' works involved, but also – a recurring feature in the documents relating to Der Sturm exhibitions – with regard to the consciously chosen international background of the exhibited artists, who originated not only from Germany but also from neutral *and* enemy countries (Archipenko, Chagall, Jawlensky and Kandinsky from Russia, Gleizes, Léger and Metzinger from France). This internationalism was seen as a sign of both strength and tolerance. Whereas in Paris, German art had been virtually banned and German art collections had been confiscated and compulsorily auctioned by the French state, it was thought that the internationalism of the German exhibitions would convince the artistic field in the neutral countries that Germany was far less oppressive than France.

In so far as *Kulturpropaganda* was intended to rectify – as those involved saw it – a caricature-like image of German anti-modern Teutonic or Hun-like barbarism, personified by the Kaiser and his obsession with *Rinnsteinkunst*, the policy can also be seen as an expression of a new generation gradually taking over the state apparatus. This new generation of diplomats and other officials almost openly countered and defied the will of the Kaiser (whose role in military matters also rapidly declined during the war), as they adjusted the cultural image of Germany to suit their own modern tastes.

For example, several diplomats in charge of *Kulturpropaganda* in the German embassy in The Hague had themselves been active in the cultural field before the war, or had belonged to the autonomous field of limited production or its immediate environs. The German ambassador from April 1915 to October 1916 was Richard von Kühlmann,⁹⁷ an industrialist with a long career in the diplomatic service, who alongside his professional obligations, also cherished a special predilection for the modern aestheticist literature of the *fin de siècle*, a taste he shared with his wife, Marguerite von Kühlmann, née Freiin von Stumm-Ramholz. The couple belonged to the upper-class entourage of writers such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rainer Maria Rilke, Stefan George, Annette Kolb, Rudolf Alexander Schröder, Rudolf Borchardt, Stefan Zweig, Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse,⁹⁸ the publisher of the Insel Verlag, Anton Kippenberg, the bibliophile Bremer

⁹⁷ Cf. Bußmann, 'Kühlmann'.

⁹⁸ Several of these authors – Rilke, Schröder, Kolb and Dülberg – contributed to a bibliophile edition of one hundred copies of a volume published by Richard von Kühlmann to commemorate his wife, who died during one of his diplomatic missions to Istanbul in 1917. The booklet was printed by the renowned Dutch printer Johannes Enschedé in 1919, cf. R. von Kühlmann, ed., *Marguerite von Kühlmann. Gedenkblätter aus ihrem Freundeskreis* (S.l., 1919).

Press, the theatre director Max Reinhardt, the art historian and critic Julius Meier-Graefe, painters such as Max Liebermann, and liberal intellectuals such as Gustav Radbruch, Theodor Heuß and Walter Rathenau. Not only did they share an enthusiasm for modern turn-of-the-century German literature and art, their interests in art and literature extended beyond Germany and German-speaking Central Europe, as they had decisively international tastes in the visual arts, in particular for French impressionism.

Several of the authors just mentioned also worked in the propaganda apparatus or in other sections of the civilian administration during the war, among them also the previously mentioned official of the Hilfsstelle in The Hague, Franz Dülberg, a playwright, theatre director, essayist and translator, who – among other subjects – wrote a small book on Stefan George. He maintained his autonomist position as a theatre director in Nordhausen in the 1920s, arguing – in the context of the growing politicization of cultural life in the Weimar Republic – that “‘der Dramatiker nicht zum Knecht und Herold eines Parteiprogramms’ werden dürfe”.⁹⁹

Another figure from the cultural field with a high position in the German embassy in The Hague was the diplomat in charge of the Hilfsstelle during Von Kühlmann’s period as ambassador: Fritz Wichert.¹⁰⁰ Wichert was a pre-war acquaintance of Von Kühlmann. Before the war he had been the director of the Kunsthalle Mannheim – a position he resumed afterwards – and during this time, he purchased contemporary modern art from Germany and France for the museum in line with the acquisition policy of Hugo von Tschudi, who had been sacked by the Kaiser from his position as director of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin because his taste was far too modern. In Mannheim Wichert had met similar opposition, but was able to continue where Von Tschudi had failed. After the war, when Wichert returned to Mannheim as museum director, his modern taste again determined the museum’s acquisitions, which included more works by contemporary impressionist and expressionist painters – a policy which had also been followed by the wartime deputy director Gustav Hartlaub. In a similar way, another prominent figure on the sidelines of autonomist aestheticism of the *fin de siècle*, Harry Graf Kessler, held the same position as Wichert at the

⁹⁹ ‘the playwright should not become a servant or herald of a party programme’. Cit. in Theater Nordhausen/LOH Orchester Sondershausen: ‘Geschichte. Das Theater vor und im 2. Weltkrieg’, at <<http://www.theater-nordhausen.de/index.php?id=80>> (consulted 15.05.2006).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. B. Becker, ‘Die Kunst, das Wort, die Tat. Fritz Wichert: Kunsthistoriker, Diplomat und Menschenfreund’ [2003], at <http://www.stadtarchiv.mannheim.de/Wichert/_clips/portraet.pdf> (consulted 15.05.2006).

German embassy in Bern, with Count Kessler managing similar *Kulturpropaganda* operations.¹⁰¹

When Wichert followed his diplomatic patron Von Kühlmann to Berlin – the latter became foreign minister in 1916 – another established figure from the cultural field, Albert Erich Brinckmann, art and architecture professor at the University of Karlsruhe who specialized in Baroque architecture, took over his position until 1919, then returning to Karlsruhe. Von Kühlmann's successor Friedrich Rosen had been a professor of oriental studies in Berlin and continued in that field in the 1920s on leaving the diplomatic service.

As the biographical background of these policymakers indicates, their promotion of autonomous art and science was, in fact, completely in line with their earlier and later held positions, including all the contradictions that these positions already entailed regarding claims for the autonomy of the arts.¹⁰² Basically, they could promote the art they appreciated, unlike Stefan Zweig and Rainer Maria Rilke, who were from the same circles but who were engaged as ghostwriters, preparing literary propaganda in the Austrian capital Vienna.

To escape serving at the front and almost certain death or mutilation, high-society admirers had arranged an alternative, safe place for Zweig and Rilke – and others – to fulfil their military duties: the so-called Literarische Gruppe of the Austrian Kriegsarchiv (War Archive) in Vienna. This 'literary group' was obliged to use their literary skills to anonymously create narratives figuring 'real' war heroes. For the production of these stories the group received copies of recommendations for the decoration of individual soldiers and officers, and based on these reports, the 'literary group' had to create 'real', literary accounts of the heroism at the front. This literary prostitution was certainly not to the taste of most of them, as can be seen in a letter from Rainer Maria Rilke to his publisher, Anton Kippenberg, describing the forced and in his eyes utterly repulsive *Dicht-Dienst* (poetical service), as he called it.¹⁰³

In contrast with the *Dicht-Dienst* of the Literarische Gruppe, which in Rilke's case provoked an almost physical repulsion towards this literary drudgery, the exploitation of art in the framework of *Kulturpropaganda* al-

¹⁰¹ Cf. Kessler, *Tagebuch*.

¹⁰² These autonomous arts were as a rule economically dependent on the financial benevolence of representatives of the economic (and political) elite such as the Von Kühlmanns and other affluent art-loving representatives of the German nobility and *haute bourgeoisie* who acted as patrons, or on Wichert, in his role as director of the city-owned Mannheim art gallery, turning the autonomy of the arts to some extent into an ornament of such benefactors.

¹⁰³ Cit. in Džambo, *Musen*, Bd. 1, p. 22.

lowed autonomous art to remain as autonomous or heteronomous as it had been in peace time. Since the propagandistic facilitation and presentation of autonomous art *as* autonomous art corresponded with the conceptions of art that Von Kühlmann, Wichert, Dülberg, Brinckmann, Kessler and others had held earlier, their intention to present this art as such was in this respect certainly genuine and not some deceit based on propaganda reasons (despite the ultimate rationale of their role in the propaganda apparatus being self-evidently the latter).

In a similar way, the intention of creating or recreating bilateral or multilateral cultural exchange was certainly not feigned or simulated just for the occasion. There can be no doubt about the genuine international orientation and cosmopolitan taste of the policymakers, both before and after the war. Typical is a remark in an article by Dülberg in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1918. In this laudation of the Dutch writer Marcellus Emants on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, Dülberg praises one of Emants' plays as 'eine ebenso seltsame wie reizvolle Verknüpfung voltaireschen Geistes mit raimundscher Simplizität'.¹⁰⁴ Although he was an official of an embassy of a state at war with France, Dülberg obviously regards Voltaire as an example to follow and not as an anti-German icon, as did Hugo Ball as well, when in early 1916 he baptized a cabaret in Zurich 'Cabaret Voltaire'.

As far as the Netherlands and the Dutch cultural field were specifically concerned, in the case of the embassy and the Hilfsstelle there was most certainly indeed a profound interest in the local cultural field. Moreover, there were a number of close relationships between the embassy officials and the Dutch cultural field. Von Kühlmann had been an embassy official in The Hague for some years before the war. As such, he had already established close relationships with like-minded representatives of Dutch high society, such as the art collectors Kröller-Müller, Otto Lanz and Hannemadé Stuers, as well as with critics and art historians such as Adam Bredius, Cornelis Hofstede de Groot and Willem Vogelsang.¹⁰⁵ Married to a Dutch woman, Margareta Brouwer, since 1908, Wichert had similar contacts in the Netherlands. Likewise, Franz Dülberg's contacts in the Netherlands were well established, as is indicated by the fact that he published a series on early-modern Dutch painters with a Dutch publisher shortly after the turn of the century.¹⁰⁶ In an illustrated article in the German review *Die Woche* in

¹⁰⁴ English translation: 'a curious as well as delightful combination of the spirit of Voltaire with the simplicity of Raimund'. Cit. in P. Dubois, *Marcellus Emants. Een schrijversleven* (Den Haag, 1980), p. 304.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Bußmann, 'Kühlmann'.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. F. Dülberg, *Frühholänder (1450–1550)*, 3 vol. (Haarlem, 1903–1904).

1917, Dülberg¹⁰⁷ presents a small panorama of the local Dutch entourage which was attached to the embassy (many names from this article pop up regularly in the documents in the archive of the Zentralstelle), including authors such as Marcellus Emants, Dirk Coster¹⁰⁸ and Frederik Carel Gerretson, as a poet known under the *nom de plume* Geerten Gossaert. In turn, the latter was closely associated with Rudolf Alexander Schröder, the German censor in Brussels, but in his position of responsibility for the cultural dimension of German propaganda in Belgium also a frequent visitor to the German embassy in The Hague.¹⁰⁹ Whereas Gerretson most likely liaised between the German embassy and the Flemish journal *De Vlaamsche Stem*, edited by the Flemish activist exiles René de Clercq and Antoon Jacob, in line with the German *Flamenpolitik*, Gossaert fitted in well with the aesthetic preferences of the policymakers of the *Kulturpropaganda* in The Hague.

While it was part of the propaganda job to prepare translations, seek contact with Dutch writers, artists and academics and write essays on Dutch art and literature, after the war both Dülberg and Schröder continued as translators of Dutch literature. It was obviously more than just a propaganda job for them, or rather, the *Kulturpropaganda* policy allowed Dülberg and Schröder, as well as Von Kühlmann and Wichert, to follow their literary and artistic interests and ambitions, at least to some extent.¹¹⁰ In this respect, the propaganda policy created a niche for the autonomist literature and art they cherished or created. The same can be said for, among others, Walden and Edschmid, who were able to use the cultural-propaganda platform for their own artistic and literary propaganda supporting expressionism and in-

¹⁰⁷ Cf. F. Dülberg, 'Holländische Dichter und Kunstgelehrte', *Die Woche* 19 (1917), pp. 969–972.

¹⁰⁸ Coster was, however, also spotted on the enemy side, alongside J. de Meester and Lodewijk van Deyssel, as a collaborator in a cultural venture involving French propaganda in 1915, *Revue de Hollande*, cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/72170, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. B.J. Spruyt, "'Daemon en anti-daemon'. De vriendschap tussen Geerten Gossaert and Rudolf Alexander Schröder', *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* (1996–97), pp. 19–42; H. Roland, *La 'Colonie' littéraire allemande en Belgique 1914–1918* (Bruxelles, 2003).

¹¹⁰ The same holds true for the academic exchange programme of Albert Erich Brinckmann, which corresponds with conceptions of autonomous science that were developed by Max Weber partially in response to the confusion of science and politics in the appeal *An die Kulturwelt!*, Von Ungern-Sternberg and Von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, p. 111. Weber was scheduled for a lecture in the German reading room planned for Zurich, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71869, p. 44.

ternational avant-garde art as well.¹¹¹ As such, *Kulturpropaganda* functioned as a strange temporary expatriate safe haven for a literary and artistic field which had lost much of its autonomy because of the war, curiously in a context that seems to exclude any autonomy.

Simultaneously, the *Kulturpropaganda* framework imposed many restrictions, notably the secrecy required with regard to the true purpose of the activities and projects involved. In this respect, the policy dictated limitations which also affected the proliferation of German culture and the envisaged exchange. A typical example is the exclusion of the art historian Hofstede de Groot from the German-Dutch academic exchange programme, simply because he was too openly pro-German. Likewise, reports on Kasimir Edschmid's behaviour during the Swedish tour of April/May 1918 indicate that his participation in further projects was seen as undesirable, as he could not remain silent about politics.¹¹² Conversely, Walden was admonished on several occasions because he advertised the merits of his Sturm enterprise too openly in reports on the political, social and economic situation in Berlin produced by his own Nachrichtenbüro for publication in the foreign press, and in this way endangered the strict divide between conventional war propaganda and *Kulturpropaganda* from the other side.¹¹³ Since autonomous culture (be it artistic or academic) had to be strictly apolitical, the propaganda policy demanded a separation between the arts and academia on the one hand and politics on the other. Imposed by the black character of the *Kulturpropaganda* policy and not by the actual abstinence from or indifference to politics of those involved, this strict divide was far more rigid than the actually rather fluent demarcation lines between the cultural and political fields.

While the black character of the policy might have created limitations so as to conceal the propagandistic purpose of many projects from the wider audience, another factor creating restrictions was that the Germans were not

¹¹¹ However, it should be added here that neither Walden nor Edschmid were really part of the circles that dominated *Kulturpropaganda* policy. Walden was even a fierce opponent of impressionism, cf. Walden 1924, Edschmid was also definitely another generation. Their inclusion in the programme was rather an expression of the tolerance of the policymakers and their ambition to present a modern heterogeneous image of German culture, as well as, in Walden's case, undoubtedly the fact that he was deeply involved in intelligence and war-propaganda activities, and in Edschmid's case that he had made a good impression at a meeting of the Bund Deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler with a lecture on Expressionism, cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71891.

¹¹² Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Altes Reich, Auswärtiges Amt, R901/71884, p. 57–58 (see Annex).

¹¹³ Ibid., R901/72396–72399.

the only party operating in the neutral countries. The French and the English were also active, with similar operations, agents and supporters in the cultural field of the respective neutral countries. In this respect, the trained eye could observe more than the average audience. A recurring anxiety for the German policymakers was based on the fear of interference or other countermeasures introduced by the Entente. For this reason, lectures were often restricted to small selected audiences, to avoid disturbances by supporters or agents of the Entente or to avoid larger campaigns by the enemy in response. These considerations prompted organizers of the Swedish lecture tours to keep their audiences small, as large events could provoke a cultural arms race with the Entente, which the German organizers could ill afford.¹¹⁴

8. *Effects and continuities*

Countermeasures (of a comparable black nature) by the Entente were not the only effects of *Kulturpropaganda*. Although a more comprehensive reconstruction of the operations occurring in the framework of this policy is needed for a more precise assessment of its effectiveness, six provisional observations can be made.

Firstly, considering the previously quoted report by the German official Fromme, the policy did not provoke a radical shift. Written in 1918, his account of pro and anti-German sentiments within different strata of Dutch society indicates that the situation in 1918 was still basically the same as in 1914–15. Such changes were, however, not expected by the policymakers, who regarded the programme as a project that would lead to long-term results.

In the second place, one can observe some continuity concerning the direction chosen after the war. Whereas, for example, the academic exchange programme was continued by the ZfA, there is an apparent upsurge of German publications on contemporary Dutch culture from 1919 onwards, among others, by Dülberg,¹¹⁵ Schröder and the German writer and art critic Friedrich Markus Huebner. Translations of Dutch literature by Dülberg, Schröder and others can be seen either as a result or a continuation of the *Kulturpropaganda* policy after the war. In turn, Huebner had been engaged in the German occupation administration in Flanders during the war and moved to The Hague in 1918 (probably with previous ties to the embassy

¹¹⁴ Ibid., R901/71884, p. 31.

¹¹⁵ Cf. F. Dülberg, *Die Nachbarn. Bücher offenerherziger offenerherziger Aussprache. Bd. 1 Holland* (Leipzig, 1919). Dülberg was also the translator of Jo van Ammers-Küller.

circles responsible for cultural propaganda).¹¹⁶ Huebner was also involved in an initiative called Die Coornschuere in Dutch and Die Kornscheuer in German, in which a journal from the German side called *Die Kornscheuer. Monatschrift für die Gesamtinteressen der Kunst* collaborated with an art gallery in Delft called Die Coornschuere, where lectures were also held by – *inter alia* – Huebner.¹¹⁷ While Die Coornschuere focused on German expressionism, *Die Kornscheuer* organized exhibitions of Dutch contemporary modern art in Berlin.

Another obvious result of the policy was the role of *Der Sturm* as a major point of orientation for German expressionism and international avant-garde art after the war, both in the Netherlands and Denmark. The fact that *Der Sturm* could maintain its presence abroad, notably in the Netherlands and Scandinavia, contributed undoubtedly to its foreign reputation after the war, not least in the Netherlands and the Nordic countries.¹¹⁸

More generally, *Kulturpropaganda* might have contributed to the positive role of Berlin as a cultural magnet for the Dutch cultural field after the war. At least the policy did not impede the popularity of German culture in the 1920s.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, *Kulturpropaganda* was undoubtedly a first practical step towards an institutionalized *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik* coordinated by the German Foreign Office. In the Foreign Office, a separate Kulturabteilung (Culture Section)¹²⁰ was created which followed in the footsteps of *Kulturpropaganda* and the Referat K of the ZfA (or, more correctly, the

¹¹⁶ Cf. D. Coster and F.M. Huebner, eds., *De nieuwe Europeesche geest in kunst en letteren* (Arnhem, 1920); F.M. Huebner and D. Coster, eds., *Europas neue Kunst und Dichtung* (Berlin, 1920); Huebner, F.M. *Moderne Kunst in den Privatsammlungen Europas. Bd. 1 Holland* (Leipzig, 1920); Huebner, F.M. *Die neue Malerei in Holland* (Leipzig, 1921); F.M. Huebner, *Lodewijk Schelfhout* (Leipzig, 1921); F.M. Huebner, *Gustaaf de Smet. Mit einer Selbstbiographie des Malers* (Leipzig, 1923).

¹¹⁷ Cf. Anon, 'De nieuwe beweging in Duitschland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, November 15, morning edition (1919); T. van Helmond, *Bob Hanf 1894–1944* (Amsterdam, 1982).

¹¹⁸ Cf. Reidemeister, L. ed., *Der Sturm. Herwarth Walden und die Europäische Avantgarde. Berlin 1912–1932* (Berlin, 1961); U. Prinz, 'Der Konstruktivismus und der Sturm', in: *Herwarth Walden und der Sturm. Konstruktivisten. Abstrakte. Eine Auswahl* (Köln, 1987), pp. 10–22; T.O. Benson, ed., *Central European Avant-Gardes. Exchange and Transformation, 1910–1930* (Cambridge, Mass./London, 2002); and in particular for Denmark see D. Aagesen, ed., *Avantgarde i dansk og europæisk kunst 1909–19* (København, 2002); Jelsbak, T. *Ekspressionisme. Modernisms formelle gennembrud I Dansk Malerkunst og poesi* (Hellerup, 2005).

¹¹⁹ Cf. K. Dittich et al., eds., *Berlijn-Amsterdam, 1920–1940, wisselwerkingen* (Amsterdam, 1982); A.H. den Boef and S. van Faassen, 'Verrek, waar is Berlijn gebleven?' *Nederlandse schrijvers en hun kunstbroeders in Berlijn 1918–1945* (Amsterdam, 2002).

¹²⁰ Cf. Michels, *Akademie*, p. 18.

Nachrichtenstelle), implementing foreign cultural politics. In this context, the open concept of black propaganda policy, aiming at cultural exchange and not cultural domination, anticipates in a curious way the concepts of transnational cultural proliferation and exchange of the late-twentieth century rather than the nationalist policies followed by – among others – the Deutsche Akademie, which would be integrated into the National Socialist regime's aggressive imperialist project. It is in this respect certainly not accidental that several protagonists of the *Kulturpropaganda* policy in the First World War were clear-cut opponents of National Socialism. In the 1930s, some were forced to leave their positions and go into either internal or foreign exile, among them Herwarth Walden, Ernst Jäckh and Fritz Wichert. Wichert took refuge on the island of Sylt, becoming its first post-fascist mayor shortly before his death in 1948. Walden went to the Soviet Union, where he became a victim of the Stalinist purges in 1941. Jäckh went in the other direction, via London to the United States, where he became a professor at Columbia University.

The policy of *Kulturpropaganda*, as implemented to a large extent by intelligence agencies such as the ZfA in Berlin and the Hilfsstelle in The Hague, was and still is certainly not the most common form of foreign cultural politics. There is, however, at least one other well-documented case: the cultural policy of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the Cold War, again promoting art and culture as autonomous phenomena and again, probably accidentally, involving another form of expressionism, albeit now American 'abstract expressionism'.¹²¹ It is tempting to assume some connection. Since quite a number of German anti-fascist emigrants went to the United States and several of them became involved in intelligence and propaganda operations (for example, Klaus Mann), some personal links are not unlikely. At this point, however, there is no evidence, and to avoid any suggestion of speculation, there is certainly no evidence in the case of Jäckh, although Jäckh was involved in transatlantic politics before and after the war.¹²² The fact that – at least to some extent – history repeated itself, might have other explanations as well. For example, the CIA again targeted artists, writers and other intellectuals, attempting to convince them that the United States was the true defender of freedom and democracy, and this coincided once more with the fact that many of those who were approached were sceptical about the United States, because, while belonging to the European left, they had witnessed the US state apparatus

¹²¹ Cf. Saunders, *Cold War*, pp. 252–278.

¹²² E. Jäckh, *Amerika und wir. Amerikanisch-deutsches Ideen-Bündnis* (Stuttgart/Berlin/Leipzig, 1929); E. Jäckh, 'Amerika und wir, 1926–1951', *Amerikanisch-deutsches Ideen-Bündnis* (Stuttgart, 1951).

hunting ‘communists’. Culture constituted a major element both in the Second World War and the following Cold War, again as a means of propaganda. In this respect, it might well be part of the logic of foreign cultural politics that in such instances, in which the (visible) state has a serious image problem, a possible solution is the engagement of (invisible) intelligence agencies to act as temporary cultural proliferators abroad, notably especially when proliferating autonomous art *as* autonomous.

9. *Heteronomous autonomy*

A more fundamental question remains: if propaganda is marked by absolute heteronomy, as Buchbender and Schuh rightfully observe, how, then, can we define the nature of the artistic or cultural autonomy apparent here, which is unmistakably the fundamental presupposition of the exploitation of art and culture in the framework of *Kultur- and Kunstpropaganda* as outlined above? One might argue that this policy indicates once more that artistic autonomy is just a fiction. Assuming that autonomy is indeed just fiction, it is, however, no less or no more fictional than the value attached to shares, bonds or options on the stock exchange. As such, autonomy might be fictional, but nevertheless possesses quite ‘real’ symbolic value, not as a value as such, but as a relative value, notably in the relationship between the artistic/cultural and political spheres.

In his schematic outline of the relationship between the field of cultural production and the field of power in his essay ‘The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed’ (1993), Pierre Bourdieu describes autonomy and heteronomy as opposing or at least competing principles. War propaganda, as an activity serving the interests of the field of power, is unmistakably heteronomous in this context. In this respect, the common form of the propagandistic exploitation of the arts, in which these arts become a medium for propaganda, and also ultimately subjugated to the demands and necessities of psychological warfare, implies a drastic heteronomous reduction of autonomy.

As the previous *tour d’horizon* of German *Kulturpropaganda* indicates, propaganda is, however, not in principle at odds with an art that is regarded by its producers, distributors, recipients and consumers as a genuine autonomous phenomenon. Such an autonomous art could and did serve – retaining its autonomous identity – as an integral part of German war propaganda. Different from the conventional exploitation of art for propaganda purposes, artistic autonomy was not temporarily suspended by those writers, artists, theatre directors, musicians and composers who were involved. On the contrary, as far as art production is concerned, no concession was made, or demanded, that reduced the autonomy of the arts which ex-

isted independently from war propaganda. In the course of the propaganda venture, as far as content was concerned, only one heteronomous concession had to be made: the paradoxical demand that those involved abstain from any open political statements (and even more paradoxically, in particular from statements in favour of the German war effort).¹²³ Here, one of the intriguing, though in the light of the instruction to avoid politics, maybe not completely surprising elements of the *Kulturpropaganda* policy, was the fact that works by outspoken opponents of the war and the German imperial regime were included in the art that was facilitated and proliferated as part of the *Kulturpropaganda* policy. This inclusion could obviously serve as proof of the heterogeneity of German culture and as *amuse-gueule* for those sceptical about anything German.

Within the framework of Bourdieu's schematic outline, one paradox leads to another, as autonomous art, which kept a distance from patriotic poetry, belligerent posters and other forms of propaganda art, and which sometimes even explicitly distanced itself from the war policies of the German Empire and – what is more – openly objected to the submission of the arts to some external, non-artistic agency or policy, was actually engaged as autonomous art in the framework of the psychological warfare that flanked the armed hostilities in the different theatres of war. Put differently, at stake, here, is *not* the heteronomous reduction of artistic autonomy but the heteronomy of this autonomy as such, in short, the heteronomy of artistic autonomy.

This heteronomy can be characterized in a positive sense as a concrete negative expression of its counterpart and opposite, that is, the dominance of the sphere of power. In this dominant sphere, the autonomous cultural field of limited production can be left in peace and can be organized and hierarchized according to the logic of its own symbolic capitalism, yet always and only to the extent to which this autonomy is allowed and tolerated by the hegemonic bloc that dominates society as a whole. As such, autonomy, in three related ways, possesses an implicit political dimension (without any necessity of explicit political articulation) that might be summarized as liberalism, modernity and the nation state.

In the first place, as Gisèle Sapiro has stressed, '[t]he situation of different national literary fields depends on two main factors: the degree of

¹²³ And one could argue that in the framework of the *Kulturpropaganda* policy even certain forms, which Bourdieu qualifies as economically heteronomous (theatre, variety), were subject to autonomization, they were withdrawn from the market and highly subsidized in the framework of *Kulturpropaganda* in a form that reminds us of later cultural politics described by Sapiro in 'Literary Field' as a safeguard against economic heteronomy in the second half of the twentieth century.

economical liberalism and the degree of political liberalism'.¹²⁴ The occurrence as well as the substantial degree of autonomy of the literary and artistic field as autonomous strata within the borders of a single state and, as such, a demarcated economic territory, is indeed unthinkable without a considerable degree of liberalism, both political and economic. Without freedom no autonomous cultural field can exist (or at best it takes the form of illegal pockets of resistance). Given this essential precondition, Sapiro's remark can also be reversed: the occurrence of a literary and artistic field with a substantial degree of autonomy indicates a substantial degree of liberalism, both political and economic. In this respect, any proof of the existence of an autonomous literary or artistic field (and on another level autonomous art and the autonomous work of art as well) possesses an unmistakable inherent value as propaganda 'material', in so far as liberalism is seen as a virtue.

There is no doubt that liberalism was indeed seen as a virtue by many in the past century. In the case of imperial Germany and its authoritarian, militarist image abroad, proof of liberalism established by the litmus test of the real presence of an autonomous literary and artistic field could well serve as an antidote to its assumed absolutist backwardness. Precisely this consideration seems to be at least one of the basic thoughts behind the *Kulturpropaganda* policy outlined above. Essential in this context is the fact that most of the policymakers directly involved were themselves representatives of a decisively liberal political and economic elite. Their liberalism might have been coloured by some degree of nationalism or confessionism: they might have been elitist, conservative and traditionalist in many respects and they were certainly not revolutionaries. They might not have been free from imperialist ambitions, either politically, economically or culturally, but they were definitely cosmopolitan, open-minded and tolerant, not really hindered by chauvinist and xenophobic blinkers or any degree of populism designed to accommodate the chauvinism and xenophobia of others. Against this background, their (not unsuccessful) attempt to present autonomous culture – arts and sciences – as autonomous culture was to a considerable extent a genuine self-presentation of the liberal factions in the German hegemonic bloc.¹²⁵ However, it was also more than just a self-presentation of these liberal factions.

Secondly, the propagandistic engagement of the autonomous field of limited production as an autonomous field of limited production also attempted to document German modernity. Since the relative autonomy of the

¹²⁴ Sapiro, 'Literary Field', p. 442.

¹²⁵ Cf. A. Gramsci, *Grondbegrippen van de politiek: hegemonie, staat, partij* (Nijmegen, 1980).

cultural field is dependent on relative political liberalism, it is not 'just' a side effect, but – as said above – a genuine product of this liberalism. It is one of its trademarks and showpieces in the setting of twentieth-century European culture, as an emblem of the adherence of the involved regime to 'modern' pluriform democracy or at least to a substantial degree of tolerance regarding dissent and deviation from, as well as opposition to, the ruling order (in other words, the regime itself). Moreover, this is not just an indication of its stability (allowing a fundamental opposition), but also an indication of the absence of authoritarian or totalitarian rule and adherence to the enlightened principle of tolerance. In short, it is an indication of its liberal, modern open-mindedness.

Some time earlier, Friedrich Schiller had pointed out in his letters on aesthetic education that liberalism was a precondition of artistic autonomy, but he also described artistic autonomy as an indicator of political liberalism.¹²⁶ In Schiller's understanding of art and the aesthetic, however, the political character of the autonomy of the cultural field has yet another dimension. In the hegemonic idealist aesthetics of the nineteenth century, which was partly anticipated by, partly based on Schiller's reflections, art was seen as an agency which was or ideally should be autonomous, identified by its complete freedom from external constraints, yet not in the '*l'art pour l'art*' way, withdrawn into itself, but rather as the agency representing, cherishing, enunciating, propagating and anticipating beauty, truth and the good, not just in the domain of the arts, but in all spheres of human activity. As this idealist-aesthetic conception of art was widespread, dominating reflection on the arts in the nineteenth century and also the early decades of the twentieth century, the attribution of this quality to the arts endorsed the symbolic value of the autonomy of the cultural field as a political asset. It indicated that the state apparatus involved acted as a sensible and worthy guardian of the aesthetic as a salutary agency, beneficial to the wellbeing of the whole of society and humanity – at least in universalist approaches such as that of Schiller.

In the nineteenth century and continuing into the twentieth century, the flourishing of art and – maybe even more so – literature became an important indicator of the wellbeing of 'nations', for which both were regarded as authentic expressions.¹²⁷ In the context of the cultural construct of a 'na-

¹²⁶ Cf. F. Schiller, 'Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen, in einer Reihe von Briefen', in F. Schiller, *Werke. Bd. 7 Philosophische Schriften* (Leipzig/Vienna, 1895), pp. 251–392, here p. 269; T. Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford, 1991); H.H. Hiebel, 'Autonomie', in A. Nünning, ed., *Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie* (Stuttgart/Weimar, 1998), pp. 27–28.

¹²⁷ An assumption that can still be found even in studies suggesting that the modern 'world of letters' has a genuine transnational character, as in the case of Pascale

tion', art and literature produced by supposed representatives of a nation were regarded as essential expressions and articulations of this nation. As such, the prospering of this national art became an important indicator for and proof of the prospering of 'the nation' and, hence, an important asset of nationalism and the state claiming to represent this nation. In addition, the flourishing of the arts which, from an idealist-aesthetic perspective meant as an autonomous entity, supported in the spheres of power by the 'national' state apparatus involved, could and did serve as a parameter to measure the extent to which the state fulfilled its accommodating and guardian role in a proper and successful manner.

This nationalist aspect of the political dimension of the autonomy of the cultural field, or perhaps rather of a plurality of cultural fields partitioned by nationalisms and states pretending to represent the nations evoked by these nationalisms, could be confined solely to the aesthetic production of 'the nation' itself and was most certainly indeed mainly confined to this national production and marked by the exclusion of the other. In so far as xenophobia, chauvinism, racism and other forms of the rejection of the other prevailed in many varieties of nationalism, this narrow, national focus might have prevailed as well. Simultaneously, though, the prospering of the arts as an indication of the benevolent, salutary and accommodating role of the state as the proper guardian of the nation could also entail the hosting and accommodation of art, literature, artists and writers of other nationalities in the state's sphere of power, indicating once again not just liberalism, but also the apparent attractiveness and appeal of the local, 'national' cultural field – hosted and/or tolerated by this state – to expatriate artists and writers and, which must not be forgotten, as an indication of its modernity.

From this perspective, it seems logical that the German propaganda apparatus fostered 'international' art exhibitions by Der Sturm. However, basically, the flourishing of a 'national' autonomous cultural field – including the arts and sciences – served in a widely acknowledged way as an indicator of the quality of a 'nation' state as a proper caretaker of its nation. This was undoubtedly something German *Kulturpropaganda* in the First World War intended to document by presenting the autonomous cultural field as such, to some extent with an even higher degree of autonomy than the cultural

Casanova, cf. P. Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass./London, 2004), pp. 34–37 and 103–108), who assumes an almost natural relationship between 'nation' and 'national literature' on the basis of a supposedly intrinsic relationship between 'nation' and language. Instead, 'nation' is here seen as a cultural construct generated by nationalism, cf. E. Gellner, *Nationalismus und Moderne* (Berlin, 1991); H. Schultze, *Gibt es überhaupt eine deutsche Geschichte?* (Stuttgart, 1998); and the introduction by H. Schultze to *Phoenix Europa. Die Moderne. Von 1740 bis heute. Siedler Geschichte Europas Bd. 4* (München, 1998).

field actually possessed in the war situation. In this respect, the presentation of the autonomous arts *as* autonomous arts possessed and already possesses a political, heteronomous dimension, be it of an order that transcends Bourdieu's binary opposition of an autonomous and heteronomous principle.

The arts are indeed engaged in a heteronomous way in the German *Kulturpropaganda* of the First World War, yet this is done to exploit their autonomous quality, and without any substantial reduction of this autonomy. Autonomous art as autonomous art is placed, on the contrary, in the service of psychological warfare with a clear-cut aim. To repeat the third element of Buchbender's and Schuh's triple objective for this form of warfare: it should foster the limitation and reduction of unfavourable public opinion in neutral countries and – as far as possible – increase sympathy and support for the propagandists' cause in these countries.¹²⁸ In the case of the *Kulturpropaganda* policy, these parts of the population primarily encompassed writers, artists and intellectuals; in other words, producers of culture, who – in turn – could be found in the cultural field in the neutral states as well, and who were often, more precisely, involved in the field of limited production. In this respect, German psychological warfare in the Netherlands functioned in this specific case as a heteronomous framework for the exchange and cultural transfer between the two nationally partitioned – German and Dutch – cultural fields and the respective autonomous fields of limited production within these cultural fields.

¹²⁸ Buchbender and Schuh, *Die Waffe*, p. 20.

