

WEST CULTURE AND MEDIA
UNDER THE THIRD REICH

ART, CULTURE, AND MEDIA
UNDER THE THIRD REICH

Edited by

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THE BAUHAUS, 1919–1928

Gropius in Exile and the Museum of Modern Art, N.Y., 1938

Karen Koehler

In December 1938, the exhibition *The Bauhaus, 1919–1928* opened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, an exhibition that has come to have an unforeseen significance for our subsequent understanding of the famous German art school. The two-hundred-page exhibition catalog continues today to be regarded as an accurate, neutral record of Bauhaus history.¹ Yet, the complex ways in which the exhibition negotiated events in world history have not yet been adequately considered. The 1938 Bauhaus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) clearly intersected with its historical context in numerous ways, and the significance of these contextual exchanges will be explored below.

The exhibition opened eighteen months after the former director of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius, had emigrated to the United States from Nazi Germany. It is my contention that the design of the exhibition and the contents of the catalog were directly related to the historical tensions of the late 1930s, both in Germany and in the United States, particularly the emigration of Gropius and other Bauhaus members. The style of exhibition design, the objects shown, and the images and text reproduced in the catalog—all of these elements reflected the experience of exile, particularly through the denial of political controversy and the avoidance of historical specificity. The self-imposed censorship of the organizers (principally the former Bauhaus members Walter Gropius and Herbert Bayer and the director of the museum, Alfred H. Barr, Jr.) is but one indication of how the exhibition represented a depoliticized and incomplete history of the Bauhaus. Yet, the critical response to the exhibition in 1938 was domi-

nated by discussion of contemporary political issues. In this essay I will explore these conflicting and intersecting strategies by focusing on different aspects of the historical context of this exhibition: after an account of the history of Bauhaus exhibitions in Germany, I will turn to the exile experience of Walter Gropius and the ways in which Gropius and Bayer designed an exhibition that was itself symbolic of exile.

After a long and controversial career in Germany, the architect and former director of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius, left his homeland and the threat of persecution by the National Socialists. Gropius emigrated first to England in 1934 and later to the United States in 1937, where he lived for the rest of his life. In 1937, as he was leaving England for the United States, Gropius gave a farewell address to his British friends and colleagues. Clearly he had mixed emotions. He spoke of when he first came to England and he had been "in a state of bewilderment"; now, again, he was being "plunged into an entirely new world." Yet, he hoped his upcoming appointment at Harvard

[would be] further proof of the American ability to reconcile . . . the most diverse type of people to create a new form of life of typical American stamp. My stamp is definitely German and to Germany I owe the whole of my education and the possibilities of building up a world of my own. The greater part of my life has been spent there and very often I feel rather homesick. But in the different stages of my life I have always found it impossible to tackle new problems with my head turned back. . . .²

Despite this claim, Gropius did look backward, he did look forward, and perhaps most importantly, he looked at the tensions and the turmoil of the world around him in 1937 with a sense of pragmatism, urgency, and I think, fear. I would like to use this image of a Janus-faced Gropius as a metaphor by which to examine his position as an exiled German on the eve of World War Two. Looking backward, then, what would Gropius have seen?

Gropius and the Bauhaus in Germany

Walter Gropius was born into a landowning Prussian family in 1883. By 1914, he was an active member of the German Werkbund, gaining recognition for both his buildings and his writings.³ When World War One broke out, however, he left his architectural practice in Berlin to become a lieutenant in the army, where he witnessed the atrocities of trench war-

fare.⁴ Demobilized in November 1918, Gropius returned to Berlin where he became active in the German Revolution as a member of the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* (Workers' Council for Art).

The following spring, Gropius founded the *Staatliches Bauhaus* in Weimar, by merging the Weimar Art Academy with the School of Arts and Crafts. As director of the Bauhaus, Gropius hoped to create a new kind of art institution—a school that emphasized the unification of art with craft, as well as a new kind of community that emphasized the unification of art with society. Lyonel Feininger, Johannes Itten, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Georg Muche, Oskar Schlemmer, László Moholy-Nagy, Josef Albers, Gunta Stölzl, and Herbert Bayer were among those who joined the faculty of the Bauhaus and contributed to its unique development.⁵ The most innovative aspects of the Bauhaus course of study included classes in basic design, in which Bauhaus students learned to use line, color, materials, and form through abstraction—freed from subject matter and from the mimetic practices of conventional art education. Each student was also required to study a craft discipline, working in the printmaking, ceramics, woodworking, wall painting, metalwork, stained glass, or textile studios. Eventually, these methods of art education were meant to mold new kinds of artists sensitive to aesthetics and trained in the crafts. The ultimate goal was to “reunify all practical artistic disciplines as the inseparable components of a new architecture.”⁶

Gropius wanted the Bauhaus to be a school that would initiate changes in art, architecture, and education, but most important, changes in society. The Bauhaus was to bring about these transformations not only by creating a new relationship between people and the objects that surrounded them but also by emphasizing new kinds of communities; the school itself was to serve as an example of such a place. In 1919, Gropius wrote of the need for the Bauhaus to take part in “the communal planning of extensive utopian buildings.”⁷ Yet, as is well known, Gropius’s vision was to remain on paper.

The Bauhaus was involved in political intrigue on many levels from the time of its initial opening in Weimar in 1919 to its closure in Berlin in 1932. There were confrontations between the Bauhaus, state and city parliaments (responsible for funding the Bauhaus), and ultimately, a fateful collision between the Bauhaus and the Nazi government. In each instance, these political controversies pivoted around particular exhibitions.

In the summer of 1919, Gropius asked the students to mount an exhibition of their work for evaluation in the newly opened Bauhaus, including the new students and the former Academy students now assimilated into the Bauhaus. Gropius specifically asked for compositions and idea

sketches; what he saw instead were finished paintings in fancy frames. In a lecture after the exhibition, Gropius severely criticized the work, particularly that done by the former Academy students (and, by extension, their professors.) Gropius's harsh comments came precisely because he felt that the students were not responding to their current political circumstances:

We find ourselves in a dreadful catastrophe of world history, in the midst of a revolutionary change in our entire lives and the entire inner life of man. . . . Many students have just returned from the field of battle. Those who experienced death out there have come back totally changed. . . . We are, of this I am convinced, the precursors and first instruments of . . . a new world philosophy.⁸

Gropius's criticism of the artistic conventions of the Academy was bound to create tensions. Furthermore, just as the Bauhaus opened in Weimar, so too did the new German government. The National Assembly, charged with creating the constitution of the German Republic, moved from Berlin to Weimar in order to avoid the street fighting between different socialist factions that had taken place in the capital the previous spring.⁹ As a result, Weimar was surrounded by federal troops and security police. The anxiety this caused in Weimar was angrily directed at the Social Democratic government and extended to the Bauhaus, which was seen as a product of the newly designated state government and not as a city institution.¹⁰ Thus, the bohemian students of the Bauhaus were seen as a threat to the traditional culture of Weimar, which was simultaneously being politically altered by the new Democratic Socialist regime.

These issues came to a boiling point in December 1919, when a public discussion of the Bauhaus took place. Anti-Bauhaus speakers used anti-Semitic insinuations against the Bauhaus and labeled the school a "Spartacist-Bolshevist" institution. Conservative local newspapers began a series of articles on "foreign" and "un-German" influences at the Bauhaus.¹¹ Gropius referred to these charges as "nationalistic and anti-Semitic slander." He countered that "Germanness in art cannot be cultivated. There has been no real German art for several hundred years. First let there be a true spiritual community in the nation, and then it will express itself in art."¹²

In 1921, the Academy was reestablished as a separate institution, and for a few months the controversy over the Bauhaus quieted, only to be revived in 1922 and 1923. After a small exhibition of Bauhaus works at the Weimar Landesmuseum in the summer of 1922, the writer and architect Arthur Buschmann criticized the housing models displayed by Grop-

ius as "an attempt to return to the primitive art forms of inferior races" and suggested that modernist architecture was comparable to the racial mixing that would bring about the downfall of German culture.¹³ Buschmann's remarks were likely part of the growing interest in Oswald Spengler's racial definitions of culture outlined in *The Decline of the West* (1922), ideas that were then creating a sensation in the German press.¹⁴

In response to government pressure, in August and September 1923, the Bauhaus staged *Art and Technics: A New Unity*, an enormous exhibition of Bauhaus art and objects displayed either in the Bauhaus buildings or in the newly constructed model house, the Haus am Horn, a flat-roofed modular home outfitted with fixtures, furniture, textiles, and other objects designed in the Bauhaus workshops.¹⁵ The international reaction to the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition was overwhelmingly positive and full of praise. The reaction, however, of local critics in the Weimar newspapers and in the Thuringian parliament was predictably hostile. Eventually a coalition of conservatives and extreme nationalists took over control of the Weimar government, the Bauhaus was searched for subversive literature, and new scandals arose. In 1924 the proto-Nazi groups in the parliament refused to fund the school, and the Weimar Bauhaus closed.

Gropius was invited to bring his school to Dessau, an industrial city about one hundred miles southwest of Berlin. He designed new buildings for the Dessau Bauhaus, which, in international avant-garde circles, rapidly came to represent the best of modernist architecture; even before the official opening, the Bauhaus buildings were receiving international attention.¹⁶ Yet local opposition to the Bauhaus was strong, and when the new Bauhaus buildings were dedicated on December 4, 1926, the 1,500 invited guests were handed leaflets opposing the school.¹⁷ Increasing tensions within and outside of the school, including libelous attacks in the Dessau press, brought about Gropius's resignation as director in 1928.¹⁸ He was replaced by Hannes Meyer, whose communist sympathies and endorsement of the student communist organization, *kostufra*, or "kommunistische Studentenfraktion," brought about greater divisions within the school and still more vicious opposition from the Dessau government. On August 1, 1930, Hannes Meyer was fired and was replaced by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who directed the school for two more years in Dessau, insisting on the complete absence of political activity at the school and expelling those students who made up the communist enclave.

In November 1931, the Nazis won a majority on the Dessau town council, promising to dissolve the Bauhaus if elected, and at the soonest possible moment the funding for the Bauhaus was terminated. In order to make their decision seem legal, Nazi officials insisted that Mies mount



Fig 41. Former Bauhaus building as Nazi training ground, Dessau, Christmas 1933. Photo courtesy of the Bauhaus-Archiv, Museum für Gestaltung, Berlin.

the routine exhibition that took place at the end of term, which they would judge to determine if the Bauhaus deserved to continue. They called in as their expert the ultranationalist writer Paul Schultze-Naumburg, author of *Art and Race*.¹⁹ After taking a few perfunctory minutes to view the show, the Nazis rendered their judgment; the Dessau Bauhaus was dissolved on October 1, 1932. Eventually the Bauhaus buildings were turned into a Nazi training camp (fig. 41).²⁰

Mies reopened the school in an abandoned telephone factory in Berlin. In April 1933, the Gestapo surrounded the building and searched for communist literature, which the police falsely claimed they had found. Those without proper identification papers were arrested and detained. The newspapers erroneously reported that Gropius had fled to the Soviet Union and that Mies had gone to Paris.

Gropius in Exile

As Peter Hahn has shown, it had been increasingly difficult for Gropius to find work in Germany. Modernist architecture was disfavored by Nazi commissioners and eventually outlawed. Consequently, Gropius's designs for competitions were consistently rejected. His move to England and subsequent move to the United States certainly had an economic expediency to it.²¹ But his emigration must be seen as multicausal: it was a matter of personal safety and of artistic and political principles. In order to begin to understand the tensions surrounding Gropius's position in Ger-

many, one must consider his relationship to the cultural organizations of the Reich. In 1934, Gropius confronted Eugen Hönig, president of the Reichskammer der bildenden Künste (Reich Chamber for the Visual Arts [RkdbK]).²² Using language suggestive of military conquest, Gropius rejected a formalist interpretation of his work and stressed the social nature of his plans:

How do you think . . . a German like myself must feel, who, after four years of hard combat duty during the war, has been working on our problems responsibly and with great intensity, incessantly fighting in an exposed position for cultural concerns . . . and being respected everywhere abroad as a representative of a living *German* culture. . . . My homeland, being ashamed of my achievements, shuts me up and people like me while [others] mislead the public opinion. . . . Is it now really true that this strong, new architectural movement of German origin shall be lost for Germany? Are we forced to stop working on this movement after the whole world has begun to accept our suggestions and to further pursue what we began? . . . I am convinced that the victory of this new architecture cannot be halted in this world. . . . I cannot accept always being labeled from a merely formalist point of view as originators of cubes with flat roofs; this point of view ignores the comprehensive work in design and sociology which we have been doing for German society as a whole.²³

It is tempting to question Gropius's judgment, in that he admits in 1934 to the president of the RkdbK, that his architecture linked design and sociology. Passionately committed to the social agenda of modernist architecture, Gropius evidently hoped to convince Hönig to look past the conservative critique of the avant-garde aesthetic. Ignoring the Nazi attack on the international aspect of Bauhaus architecture, Gropius appealed to an alternative and older set of values, the sense of Germany as a leading cultural force in the world. Conversely, he also made the point that the following for his architecture was international, and therefore, by extension, not exclusively German—and these were the aspects of modernist art and architecture that so often were the basis of Nazi attacks against the Bauhaus: that the work was intended to have an effect upon social organization and that it was not German. However, he also wrote, "You demand the German man. I feel very German—and who can make himself a judge over what is German and what is not . . . I feel . . . that I am outlawed in Germany along with all that I have built in my life."²⁴

On September 5, 1934, Hitler spoke out against modern art in his

Nuremberg speech.²⁵ In October 1934 Gropius and his wife Ise left for a conference in Rome, after which they exchanged their return tickets to Berlin for one-way passages to England.²⁶

Once in England, Gropius enjoyed the patronage and support of Jack Pritchard and formed a brief partnership with Maxwell Fry, with whom he worked on problems of design and housing. Yet, despite the support of many individuals, Gropius and his wife were financially strapped. He continued to be quite cautious concerning his relationship with the German authorities. When asked by a London newspaper to write about the arts in Germany, he refused: "I cannot have my name put up against an official report from Germany without risking very unpleasant consequences."²⁷

During the next three years, Gropius made only a few brief return trips to Germany, each time under increasing threat. During a trip in 1936—made at the request of the National Socialists—Gropius was twice intercepted, detained, questioned, and searched in a complicated series of events. Charges were being brought by the Third Reich against a state official regarding business dealings in cooperative housing associated with the Weimar Bauhaus. Gropius was subpoenaed in England and left for Erfurt in November 1936. Gropius's testimony was damaging to the government's case, and the charges were dropped. In apparent retribution, Gropius was arrested by the Erfurt Gestapo shortly after the trial ended, where he was questioned and released. Later he was taken from the train en route to Holland; again he was questioned and searched. Since Gropius's address book contained the name of Lion Feuchtwanger, an author critical of the Nazis, he was retained for five hours while authorities debated how to proceed. Gropius was again released and finally returned to England. He did not make another trip to Germany until after the war.²⁸

Gropius's attempts at finding substantive architectural work in England were unsuccessful. When he was invited by Joseph Hudnut to join the faculty at Harvard as a professor in the school of architecture, he, of course, accepted.²⁹ When Gropius came to the United States he quickly acquired financial security, prestige, and influence. Still, his position as an exiled German in the late 1930s was not without its complications and difficulties—personally, professionally, and politically. One might imagine that, having left Germany and the Nazi cultural programs behind and now being comfortably positioned in the United States, Gropius was suddenly free of persecution and political controversy. This, however, was not the case. In the United States in the late 1930s, there was considerable malaise and a collective tension brought about by social, political, and economic circumstances both at home and abroad. Gropius, as an exiled German,

was in a potentially volatile situation. When Gropius worked on the Bauhaus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art he was in very significant ways responding to the difficult historical circumstances in which he found himself. One must look very closely, then, at the historical conditions not only in Germany but also in the United States to begin to reconstruct Gropius's exile and consequently the issues surrounding the MoMA exhibition.

The Context for the 1938 MoMA Exhibition

When Walter Gropius emigrated to the United States in 1937, he arrived in the midst of the Great Depression. The stock market crash of 1929 and the economic crisis that lasted throughout the 1930s created an era of political and cultural chaos. When Franklin Roosevelt won the presidency in 1932, he started on a path of sweeping reforms—his New Deal legislation—which put many people back to work. Yet, in the late thirties, the social disintegration brought about by the Depression was still evident in bread lines, soup kitchens, foreclosed farms, and collapsed banks. There were still over nine million people out of work in the United States in 1938. Beginning in 1935-36, there had been an expansion of federal relief programs, which intensified a smoldering class antagonism. By 1938, the extension of the New Deal had brought an end to a decade of labor unrest, which had been, in part, supported by American Communists. The newly empowered and radicalized labor unions staged numerous work stoppages—often ending in bloody confrontations, as in the sit-down strike against General Motors in Flint, Michigan, in 1937 and the San Francisco general strike of 1934 led by the longshoremen. Wealthy industrialists continued to brand Roosevelt's initiatives as "Bolshevist," and many leading capitalists turned against the expansion of the New Deal to form the American Liberty League. These top men from the largest corporations published pamphlets that referred to the New Deal as either communist, fascist, or both. Yet in 1936 even established conservative newspapers like the *Chicago Tribune* claimed that "Moscow Orders Reds in U.S. to Back Roosevelt," and the papers of William Randolph Hearst cited "The Red New Deal with a Soviet Seal."³⁰ In the furthest reaches of the conservative movement against Roosevelt, anti-Semitic phrases such as the "Jew Deal" and "President Rosenfeld" were included in their subversive pamphlets, as were references to a widespread Jewish world plot.³¹

In 1938, right-wing extremists in the United States like Father Coughlin and the German-American Bund preached a message of anti-Semitic

hatred. Reaching a radio audience of at least ten million, Coughlin maintained that Roosevelt was a dictator, an "anti-God" who had to be removed from office, by force if necessary. In the summer of 1938 the German-American Bund held a mass rally in New York, with upward of 4,000 fascist sympathizers watching members of the Bund march in swastika-adorned uniforms, shouting against the "Jewish rabble rousers."³² These kinds of spectacles caused anti-German sentiment in the United States to grow.

In 1938 the U.S. Congress authorized the House Committee on Un-American Activities to monitor the movements of the Bund, as well as any communists, socialists, and foreigners in the United States thought to be seditious. The so-called Dies Committee was set up to assess "Americanism" because, according to its chairman, Congressman Martin Dies, the treasonous were everywhere in the United States:

The enemies within a country constitute a peril as great as any foe. . . . Stalin and Hitler have pushed their Trojan Horse tactics to the point of perfection. . . . Indeed, the Trojan Horse, as we have seen, has been drawn into labor organizations, political parties, peace societies, educational institutions, civic clubs, and even into the government itself.³³

Also in 1938, Germany took back the Rhineland and annexed Austria, setting the stage for the invasion of Poland and World War Two. In November 1938, the Reichkristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) took place, in which Nazi storm troopers destroyed Jewish temples, demolished Jewish shops, robbed Jewish homes, and began the importation of thousands of Jews to concentration camps.³⁴ Yet, in the United States, hostility toward immigrations became more intense in 1938; there were millions of Americans unemployed, and the labor competition from these new émigrés was regarded as a threat.

And, in December 1938, the Museum of Modern Art in New York opened *The Bauhaus, 1919-1928*, an exhibition of the work of modern German artists, many of whom had been declared degenerate, Marxist, communist, Jewish, and Bolshevik by Hitler in the *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibition in Munich the previous year. The *Entartete Kunst* exhibition included banished and confiscated modern art and illustrated virtually every modern movement from postimpressionism to expressionism, cubism, and dada, as well as the art produced at the Bauhaus.³⁵ Every effort was made through the hanging of the show, the accompanying texts, and the catalog to characterize modern art as non-Aryan, racially impure, and

harmful to the German people. The Bauhaus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York must be seen in the context of these political events.

The exhibition *The Bauhaus, 1919-1928* was open from December 7, 1938, until January 30, 1939, in the museum's temporary quarters in Rockefeller Center (figs. 42-44). Portions of the exhibition traveled throughout the United States in the following months. About 17,000 people saw the exhibition during the seven weeks it was displayed in New York. The exhibition was designed and organized by the former Bauhaus artists Herbert Bayer and Walter Gropius, at the suggestion of the MoMA's director, Alfred Barr, Jr., with contributions by many other Bauhaus teachers, notably Josef Albers and Alexander Dorner. The show included some seven hundred objects, including items made in the workshops, basic design courses, and by individual faculty members—Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Oskar Schlemmer, Joseph Albers, Herbert Bayer, and others. Everything was arranged in a stridently dynamic style of exhibition design, which Gropius and Bayer were then practicing. Objects were hung from the ceilings, pictures and labels were hung at sharp angles from the walls, photographs were wrapped around posts, and the floors were painted with abstract designs, even with footprints that led the viewer through the exhibition.

Originally scheduled to open in the spring, the exhibition was postponed because, as Albers wrote from Black Mountain College, "There are many difficulties in preparing such an exhibition—most of the material is abroad and probably scattered or not existent any more. . . . Furthermore, Bauhaus members dare not lend their materials for political reasons." Albers was referring to the Nazi confiscation of modern art in Germany at the time, a purging of museums that started in 1937 and was legalized *ex post facto* in 1938. He was also referring to the persecution of those who made and collected the art. Albers continued, "I have come to the conclusion that this show should be more one of principle rather than an historical collection."³⁶ MoMA's press release restates Albers's concerns—while carefully avoiding direct references to political threats: "Under existing conditions in Germany, it was not possible to bring more actual objects to this country for this exhibition." The collection was therefore "limited to objects which were available, supplemented by enlarged photographs."³⁷ There were additional problems with customs regulations once objects reached the United States. For example, Gropius's model of the Dessau Bauhaus building was held up in customs because of German tariffs on removing works of art.³⁸ There were also, more importantly, prob-

lems getting Bauhaus people out of Nazi Germany by 1938; Bayer and his wife both used the exhibition as a means of getting visas to leave Germany.³⁹

The exhibition, therefore, could not show the entire scope of Bauhaus work. According to the press release, the exhibition did, however, reflect the main principle: "The Bauhaus as an idea."⁴⁰ How, then, did they exhibit an idea? And what kind of an idea?

Recasting the Bauhaus

The temporary exhibition of *The Bauhaus, 1919–1928* and the accompanying catalog established a distorted vision of the institution. As outlined above, the Bauhaus was founded in Weimar Germany in the frenetic atmosphere of the German Revolution, was forced by political reactionaries to move from Weimar to Dessau in 1925 and to Berlin in 1932, where it was searched and closed in 1933 by Nazi police. Bauhaus pedagogy from the very beginning put an emphasis on the education of socially committed artists and on the creation of objects—whether handcrafted or mass-produced—that would have a profound effect on refashioning society. Bauhaus objects were intended to contribute to environments that were aesthetically unified and, therefore, more conducive to productive human interactions and harmonious social relationships, while those who made the objects were engaged in fulfilling, unalienated labor.

Yet all of these factors were misrepresented or simplified in New York in 1938 by the exhibition organizers. Both the exhibition and the catalog skewed the chronology in numerous ways. Very little attention was given to the work produced in the Bauhaus after 1928 under Gropius's successors, and certainly there was no mention of the conflicts produced by the communist theories and activities of Hannes Meyer, director of the Bauhaus from 1928 to 1930. One might conclude that this was outside the chronological focus of the exhibition (1919–28) except that much contemporary work by Bauhaus artists in the United States was included, such as the objects made by Josef Albers at Black Mountain College or by Moholy-Nagy at the New Bauhaus in Chicago; graphic designs by Herbert Bayer after 1928 were also featured. On the other hand, the exhibition favored the work produced after 1923, despite the importance of the early expressionist experiments of 1919–23 in the formation of the school's ideology and aesthetic. Why, then, did those who contributed to the exhibition intentionally neutralize the social and political history of the Bauhaus and its radical, albeit contradictory, ideological ambitions?

There are many possible motives for this strategy, all of them complex and interconnected. Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, and Joseph Albers had clear reasons to favor their current work in the United States and likely wanted to protect their status as émigrés. It is important to remember that as the exhibition was being planned, the House Committee on Un-American Activities was investigating foreigners with ties to communism and socialism with the intention to deport those considered to be subversive. The regulations requiring that all refugees from Germany have employment in this country had been eased in the spring of 1938; yet there was continuing controversy surrounding the number of German and Jewish émigrés, especially in New York City.⁴¹

Barr was concerned with the critical reaction to the exhibition and the effects the Bauhaus show would have upon the reputation of the museum; but he also had a critical and historical agenda. Beginning with the 1932 exhibition *Modern Architecture—International Exhibition* (and the accompanying book by Henry Russell Hitchcock, Jr., and Phillip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922*), modernist art and architecture at MoMA was clearly and deliberately regarded as a purely aesthetic phenomena to be considered solely in the realm of art.⁴² This formalistic approach was continued in Barr's 1936 exhibition and catalogue at MoMA, *Cubism and Abstract Art*.⁴³

As demonstrated above, Gropius had good cause to refuse to allow the real political history of the Bauhaus to be discussed. In 1919, 1922, and 1923, politically motivated journalists in Weimar had used Bauhaus exhibitions to denigrate the school on nationalist and racist grounds. The inclusion of Bauhaus art in the *Entartete Kunst* exhibition in 1937 was the culmination of these attacks. Gropius was concerned with how the Bauhaus would be depicted and tried to control the way in which its history would be written. In his 1935 book *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, Gropius adopted a stance somewhat similar to Barr's in that he discussed the Bauhaus historical context only in the abstract. Yet, he refused to completely treat Bauhaus art and architecture as a style and continued to speak out against those critics who reduced his architecture to formalism or functionalism; he saw the goal for modern architecture to be part of "the technical, economical, and social conditions within which the architect works."⁴⁴ After leaving Germany, Gropius always avoided specifics and speculated about what architecture would be like in the future; he never publicly discussed the controversial history of the Bauhaus or the political realities of his own exile. In connection with the MoMA exhibition in 1938 Gropius steadfastly refused to discuss social and political issues. According to an article in the *New York Post*,

[a]t a preview of the exhibition yesterday, [Gropius] was reluctant to discuss the political vicissitudes of his movement except to observe that the same architectural and aesthetic phenomenon is condemned in Russia as "western bourgeois," and in Germany as "Bolshevik" while it is acclaimed in Italy as "real fascist style."⁴⁵

There were also resonant political issues connected with the site for the MoMA Bauhaus exhibition—the museum's temporary quarters in Rockefeller Center. Four years before the Bauhaus exhibition there, a scandal had arisen over the murals Diego Rivera had painted in the building. Rivera included a small portrait of Lenin in the midst of a large and complex narrative, prompting a controversy that caused the murals to be removed in 1934.⁴⁶ Clearly, in 1938, Gropius and Barr were not going to stress the origins of the Bauhaus in the German Socialist Revolution and the Workers' Council for Art; it would have been potentially risky to mention other aspects of Bauhaus history, such as Hannes Meyer's communist doctrines or the activities of the Bauhaus *kostufra*.

The Bauhaus artists were Germans, and people were terrified of Hitler and, by extension, all Germans—often without distinguishing between those who were Nazis and those who were not. Anti-German propaganda had been part of U.S. visual culture since World War One and was still prominent in 1938. Many Americans were also afraid of the Soviets, and the Bauhaus artists had also been labeled Bolshevik, communist, Marxist, and Jewish, most recently in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition. Anti-Soviet and anti-Bolshevik imagery was also prominent in contemporary popular culture in 1938. In other words, whether they were identified as Germans or as Bolsheviks, from any perspective, the Bauhaus artists were potentially a threat to the dominant isolationist mood in the United States. In a poll taken in February 1937, 95 percent answered that the United States should stay out of the impending war at all costs, and the isolationist voices in the United States grew more pugnacious—ranging from pacifists to senators to extremist figures like Father Coughlin.⁴⁷ Anxiety about war was increasingly pervasive—Americans feared both military invasions and the mass immigration of the thousands of ethnic and political refugees then fleeing from fascism in Europe.⁴⁸ The anxiety of the populace was forcefully demonstrated by the mass hysteria in October 1938, occasioned by Orson Welles's radio play, *The War of the Worlds*, when many Americans were duped into believing in an invasion from outer space.

In the catalog for the Bauhaus exhibition, a brief essay, "Background of the Bauhaus" by Alexander Dörner and a short selection, "Press Comments," later in the book do make brief reference to the difficulties the

Bauhaus experienced in Germany.⁴⁹ In the his catalog introduction, Barr noted that many of the works were shown without the consent of the artists and that it was "considered advisable" to delete their names, although he offers no clarification whatsoever as to why (i.e., their status as former Bauhaus members still residing in Nazi Germany.) Indeed, nowhere are the social passions of the school's early years, nor the vehemence of the reactionaries' hatred, nor the intrigues involved in closing the school anywhere fully discussed or, most importantly, judged. Instead, the "Background" reads almost like a mea culpa. It is almost as if the Nazi criticisms of the Bauhaus were accepted as true, such that the evidence needed to be hidden—that is, the Bauhaus was being seen through the eyes of its Nazi detractors and was retreating from its origins.

When the exhibition first opened in December, Barr wrote to Gropius that he expected hostile criticism from four main sources: "pro-Nazi, anti-modern sources"; "pro-French, anti-German sources"; "American anti-foreign sources"; and "people who felt that the Bauhaus was too old-fashioned."⁵⁰ In effect, many of these types of criticisms were raised in the reviews, but they are not so clearly categorized.

"As we could have guessed, we have reports that the exhibition is considered Jewish," Barr wrote.⁵¹ Americans, he wrote, were so ignorant of European names that they considered the names Gropius and Moholy-Nagy to be "probably Jewish-Communist," and he wanted to issue a statement about why the Nazis persecuted the Bauhaus. He suggested that it state the following:

In 1933 the Bauhaus was closed by the National Socialist Government. Because the Bauhaus developed during the Social Democratic regime, the National Socialists felt it was politically related to German Democracy and therefore suspect. Furthermore, the kind of art and architecture fostered by the Bauhaus was hated by several of the most influential National Socialists who expressed the hostile attitude of the uninformed public toward any kind of artistic innovation. . . .

Barr wanted to make a statement about how many Jews were on the faculty: "Although the Bauhaus welcomed Jewish students, there were no Jews on its faculty (or only two Jews) or whatever."⁵² Gropius refused to allow such an account to be written. While Barr feared the response of his U.S. critics, Gropius feared for the lives of Bauhaus students and staff still in Germany and continued to refuse to make any public remarks against the Nazis.⁵³

Despite Gropius's desire to avoid making political statements about

the exhibition, the contemporaneous reviews stressed the Nazi persecution of the Bauhaus. Even the brief notices in the press made mention of the political tensions in the world and the position of the Bauhaus within it, whether reviewing the exhibition or the catalog. The fact that the Bauhaus artists were exiled Germans exhibiting works of art that had been banned in Germany did not go unnoticed by reviewers. A selection of the headlines, captions, and excerpts from throughout the United States reads: "New York Holds Exhibit of Nazi-banned Art"; "Refugee Art Exhibit Will Remain Here Until Friday . . . Democracy in Relation to the Applied Arts Is on View"; "German Creative Genius before the Blight of the Nazis . . ."; "Suppressed by the Nazis . . . Called Bolshevistic. . . . International in Character and Therefore unGerman"; "Charged with Teaching Architectural Socialism"; "Nazi-banned Art Shown"; and "Gropius and His Bauhaus: Museum Honors a German Group in Exile for Art's Sake."⁵⁴

Some articles directly commented on the forced ahistoricity of the exhibit. An essay in the socialist journal *New Masses* referred to the "lack of chronological continuity which gives the effect of a chapter of history in a vacuum."⁵⁵ Elizabeth McCausland, writing for the *Springfield Morning Union* [Mass.], complained the exhibition design was chaotic and anarchic—an "unhistoric presentation."⁵⁶ On December 4, 1938, the *New York Times* reviewed the Bauhaus exhibition with a headline that read: "Nazi Banned Art Exhibited Here." The text began by noting that the Nazis closed the school when they came to power and mentioned that "the school came into official disfavor because of the Nazi illusion that modern furniture, abstract painting and flat roofed architecture were degenerate or bolshevistic."⁵⁷ These excerpts make it clear that in 1938, the political and ideological chaos of the world made it impossible to isolate Bauhaus art from the political crisis taking place.

The inability to separate art from politics was also a dominant concern for U.S. artists at this time. Roosevelt had initiated federal funding for artists under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration and the Federal Arts Project; but these programs came under attack by a coalition of Southern Democratic and conservative Republican senators, most vociferously in 1937–38, resulting in a decrease in funding. In some cases, the charges of subversive content brought by the senators were justified, as artists included seditious images in the pictures they were hired to paint. For example, in San Francisco, a mural in the Coit Tower contained the images of a hammer and sickle, the phrase "Workers of the World, Unite," and the front covers of left-wing and communist newspapers; in a mural for a post office in Washington, the artist Rockwell Kent (eventually called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities) included an

Alaskan Eskimo and a Puerto Rican exchanging messages about liberation from the United States.⁵⁸ Initially, the decrease in federal funding for artists was met with protest: in December 1936, New York artists marched to the Works Projects Administration headquarters on East 69th Street. Both police and artists were wounded in the ensuing scuffle.⁵⁹ However, the protests quieted down in 1938, when a number of artists and arts administrators were called before the Dies Committee, where carefully chosen witnesses testified that the Federal Arts Project was infested with communists.⁶⁰

The relationship of U.S. artists to communism and socialism was complex and confusing, for the artists and their critics alike. In 1936, in response to the Soviet call for a united front against fascism in Germany and Italy, many left-wing artists redirected their criticisms from U.S. capitalists to the cause against Hitler and Mussolini. The so-called Popular Front strategy was to organize as many people as possible into visible anti-fascist organizations, such as the American Artists' Congress, whose first symposium was held in February 1936.⁶¹ Artists and critics such as Lewis Mumford, Meyer Schapiro, Lynd Ward, Max Weber, and George Biddle spoke against fascism as the true enemy of the artist; an exiled German artist also spoke at the symposium on the condition of anonymity. "To remain in Germany means to goose step," according to this artist, "to march in public, in private, [and] in art. The 'intellectual beast' who does not wish to march must be exterminated."⁶²

The American Artists' Congress was opposed not only to fascism but also to U.S. involvement in the war—isolationism was as prominent in artistic circles as it was with the population as a whole.⁶³ Many U.S. artists debated the relationship of their work to the international community, including artists like Thomas Hart Benton who called for an art that was exclusively concerned with themes of the American landscape and people. Others like Stuart Davis polemicized for a modernist vocabulary inspired by European art and labeled artists like Benton as nationalistic and fascist.⁶⁴

Considered in this context, the critical responses to the Bauhaus exhibition in the popular press make it clear that the attempt to avoid political issues by the exhibition organizers was simply not going to work, at least in the immediate sense. It was impossible to erase history and politics from the Bauhaus, and the desire to do so was, and is, itself political. But it is by their conspicuous absence that these issues are manifested in the exhibition and in the catalog. The combined effect of the photographs, the models, and the spatially dynamic means of presentation displaced any sense of the intended function (utilitarian, polemical, or pedagogical),



Fig 42. Installation view of the exhibition *The Bauhaus, 1919–1928*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1938. Photo © 2000 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

which was so essential for the Bauhaus. Two examples that are especially revealing: the *Bauhaus Manifesto* and a set of rugs from the Bauhaus textile studio.

The *Bauhaus Manifesto* was a pamphlet issued in Berlin in the spring of 1919 in the midst of the German civil war. It was printed in the form of an illustrated broadsheet, similar to the street literature that was then being distributed by the different left-wing factions vying for power in the aftermath of the German Revolution. Gropius's text, which called for an end to the "class distinctions between the arts and the crafts" and the "new building of the future . . . which will one day rise from the hands of a million workers like the crystal symbol of a new faith!" was also patterned after radical political manifestos.⁶⁵ Yet, in the 1938 exhibition, the *Bauhaus Manifesto* was not represented in the original but by a poster-sized photograph of the woodcut (fig. 42, left). The fact that the manifesto was a broadsheet with both image and text was not represented in the exhibition. Furthermore, the image that was reproduced was not the actual woodcut that was printed and distributed in 1919; Gropius chose instead a photograph of the preliminary design for the manifesto, of which only one example existed. The catalog reproduced a cropped image of the same preliminary design, which was not as fractured nor as abstract and, in a



Fig 43. Installation view of the exhibition *The Bauhaus, 1919–1928*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1938. Photo © 2000 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

sense, not as visionary, as the actual cover for the manifesto. As a consequence, for many years, surveys of modern art and architecture, as well as some more specialized studies of the Bauhaus, continued to illustrate what was essentially the wrong cover design; the manifesto was most often shown as if it were a rarified image, separated from its function as a propagandistic document.

In the 1919 manifesto, Gropius wrote that artists, painters, and sculptors had to recognize the composite nature of a building in order to create total works of unified art. In the Bauhaus program, it was stressed that everyone at the school was to make utilitarian objects that could in one way or another be used in an architectural setting. Yet at the MoMA exhibition, photographs illustrating Bauhaus articles were wrapped around columns, or hung at strange angles to the wall, in an effort to make them appear as art objects themselves, rather than as documentation. Many objects were represented by photographs, a situation that further accentuated the sense of contextual alienation.⁶⁶

The two Bauhaus rugs displayed there (fig. 43) represent another example of how the exhibition altered the context from which Bauhaus objects were created and used. These rugs, which were suspended in space at sharp angles to one another, formed an X that fractured the space as

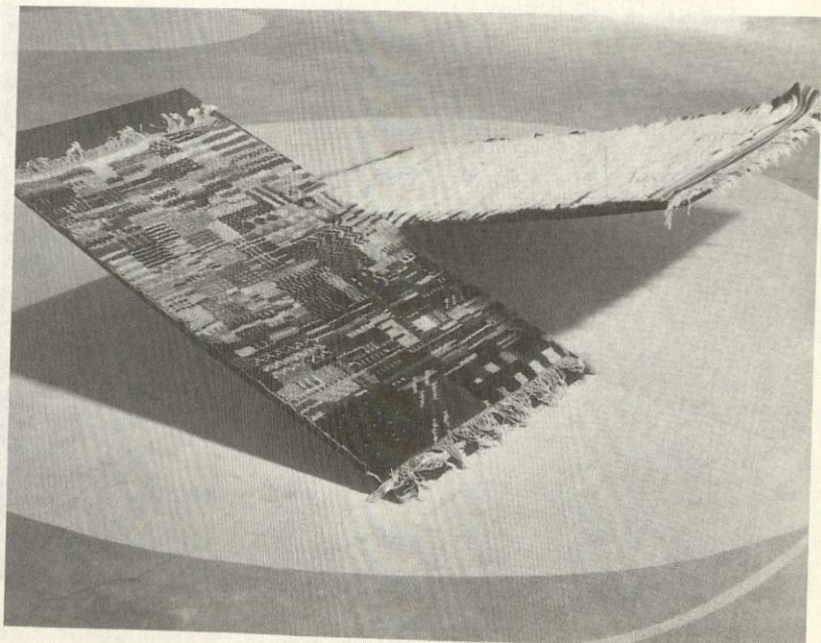


Fig 44. Rugs. Installation view of the exhibition *The Bauhaus, 1919–1928*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1938. Photo © 2000 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

three-dimensional components of an abstract floor pattern (fig. 44). This strange attempt at activating the space all but erased the intended function of the objects. If one compares the display of the rugs in 1938 with similar objects at the 1923 Weimar exhibition (fig. 45), where they were exhibited in use as part of an interior, it becomes clear that the functional aspect was ignored in New York. The inability to walk on the rugs and their bizarre suspension in space separated the objects from the world of usefulness. In this way, the rugs were removed from the realm of daily life to be enshrined in that of the museum; the objects did not exist in the everyday; they existed in isolation, in a realm of untouchable aesthetics.

Like the artists, then, the objects on display in the Museum of Modern Art were also, in some ways, in exile. The exhibition format isolated objects that were intended by the Bauhaus to be, in all cases, part of a utilitarian architectural context. They became, instead, objects purely for aesthetic consumption and therefore illustrations of the reductivist modernism proposed by Barr, with Philip Johnson and Henry Russell Hitchcock, Jr., in the 1932 *Modern Architecture—International Exhibition*.

But there was another effect of this style of display. That is, the removal of Bauhaus products from the chronological and geographical setting in



Fig 45. Installation view of the exhibition *Art and Technics: The New Unity*, Haus am Horn, The Bauhaus, Weimar, 1923. Photo courtesy of the Bauhaus-Archiv, Museum für Gestaltung, Berlin.

which the objects were crafted made them seem somehow no longer utilitarian but also no longer German and perhaps no longer Jewish, Bolshevik, or degenerate. By transplanting the Bauhaus objects into a jazzy American context, the museum display in 1938 turned what were intended to be socially embedded products of artistic labor into art-world objects, denied the syntactical substance of their initial historical and economic situations.

After the exhibition was over, Barr wrote to Gropius, describing, at length, his feelings about the exhibition:

While we are speaking frankly about the Bauhaus exhibition I want to assure you that, although it was one of the most expensive, difficult, exasperating and in some ways unrewarding exhibitions we have ever held, we do not in the least regret having had it. . . . I would like to suggest to you that after all our press clippings are in you should take some time to go through them carefully. I am under the impression from your previous letters and from conversations that you were inclined to ignore or belittle

the adverse criticisms, somewhat as you did in Germany fifteen years ago. To be perfectly frank, this seems to me rather unwise. . . . The fact is that in the Bauhaus exhibition a good many works were mediocre or worse, so that the critics were naturally not impressed.⁶⁷

In fact, the critics were so unimpressed that Barr had been forced to send a memo to the museum's board of trustees defending the exhibition. In his memo, "Notes on the Reception of the Bauhaus Exhibition," Barr categorized those critics who were "hostile," "noncommittal," "favorable," or "enthusiastic."⁶⁸ According to Barr, the museum had not expected large audiences because of a "lack of popular elements." Yet the show had a larger attendance than any other exhibition, and "the controversy aroused has been more violent than almost any exhibition that the Museum has had." Indeed, it seemed in many instances that the controversy over the criticism was going to eclipse discussion of the exhibition itself. For example, *Arts Digest* included review articles entitled "Bauhaus Attacked" and "Bauhaus Defended."⁶⁹ Yet, rather than rehearse the political controversies, as outlined in the exhibition reviews, Barr remained most comfortable discussing the exhibition and its reception in formalist terms. His memo to the trustees discussed the style of the installation and concluded that the negative criticism came from "art critics, unaccustomed to seeing education, architecture and design."

It was precisely Barr's formalist methodologies and lack of historicist specificity that caused the U.S. art historian Meyer Schapiro to criticize Barr. In his now canonical essay, "The Nature of Abstract Art," Schapiro reviewed Barr's book and exhibition of 1936, *Cubism and Abstract Art*.⁷⁰ Schapiro rejected the kind of aestheticism and stylistic classifications that Barr had introduced in the 1936 exhibition. He also rejected Barr's focus on artistic autonomy and challenged Barr's inability to look beyond the realm of art for causes and effects. Schapiro criticized Barr's reliance on theories of stylistic exhaustion and offered instead an interpretive model based upon the social contexts surrounding the development of modernism.

Indeed, it did seem as if Barr consciously rejected contextualization and intentionally assumed an ahistorical approach when it suited his purposes or his argument. In Barr's preface to the Bauhaus catalog, he briefly sketched the problems that confronted the Bauhaus in Germany but then dismissed them. "This is history," he wrote. He was not concerned with what he termed the "obsolescence" of Bauhaus art—its existence in Germany's past—but, rather, its reformation in the United States:

Are this book, then, and the exhibition which supplements it, merely a belated wreath laid upon the tomb of brave events, important in their day but now of primarily historical interest? Emphatically no! The Bauhaus is not dead, it lives and grows through the men who made it, both teachers and students, through their designs, their books, their methods, their philosophies.⁷¹

Barr's conclusion was that the Bauhaus, once again, was not an institution, but an idea.

The MOMA exhibition catalog, which referred to itself as "the most comprehensive and authoritative account of the Bauhaus so far attempted," was, in fact, the only account written for well over a decade. After World War Two, as Gropius wrote, "the traces of the Bauhaus in Germany have been pretty much destroyed under Hitler"; and the MoMA catalog was consequently reprinted in 1955 in German.⁷² Certainly since then there have been numerous scholarly studies that have done a great deal to recoup the history of the Bauhaus and its political situation as well as the complications and contradictions of Bauhaus ideology.⁷³ What is at issue here is that these studies needed to be recuperative.

Even today, collections of documents are presented as histories themselves, with little distinction between reminiscences and actualities, between memories and recorded events.⁷⁴ Produced in the 1970s and 1980s during the cold war, books on the Bauhaus from East Germany are useful for their discussions of the sociopolitical issues surrounding the institution yet limited because of their obvious polemical prejudices.⁷⁵ Certainly there are many provocative connections between this type of art historical writing and the historiography of German history, including the postwar desire to start with, again, a *tabula rasa*. The question of German history in relationship to a German sense of war guilt and complicity is, of course, a very complex one, and recent publications on the relationship of the Bauhaus to National Socialism are surely part of a new post-cold war revisionism.⁷⁶ A thorough discussion of the problematics of Bauhaus scholarship is outside of the scope of this essay; it is, nonetheless, important to recognize the extent to which the decisions made in 1938 by the organizers of the MoMA exhibition have had a lasting effect on the Bauhaus legacy.

In conclusion, I want to clarify that I am not blaming Gropius or others involved with the Bauhaus exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art for their actions. My intention, rather, has been to uncover the historical context that they were forced to negotiate and to disclose the very real connec-

tions between Gropius's exile and the design and content of *The Bauhaus, 1919–1928*. In 1938, with many Bauhaus artists still in Nazi Germany, with the U.S. Congress investigating anyone accused of being fascist or Bolshevik, and with Americans marching in New York wearing swastikas, the Bauhaus artists in the United States were justifiably in fear of their reception. In 1938, Gropius had looked back, and he looked around him; he could not act as an historian when putting together the MoMA exhibition.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius, eds., *The Bauhaus, 1919–1928* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1938).
2. Walter Gropius, "Farewell Address," March 9, 1937, Walter Gropius Archive, Houghton Manuscript Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (WGA, Harvard)
3. For discussions of Gropius's life and work, see Marcel Franciscano, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar: The Ideals and Artistic Theories of Its Founding Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); and Reginald Isaacs, *Gropius* (Boston: Bulfinch, 1991).
4. Gropius was often directly engaged in the fighting and at one point was even buried under the rubble of a building, covered with dead bodies and structural debris for days. See Isaacs, *Gropius*, 54.
5. In 1922, Johannes Itten, a Swiss expressionistic painter and follower of the cultish Mazdaznan religion, was forced to resign and was replaced by Wassily Kandinsky. In 1923, the Hungarian constructivist artist and engineer László Moholy-Nagy joined the Bauhaus. These personnel changes were themselves controversial, and together with the 1923 exhibition, signaled a shift in emphasis for the Weimar Bauhaus.
6. "Programm des Staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar," in Frank Whitford, ed., *The Bauhaus: Masters and Students by Themselves* (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook, 1995), 38–41.
7. "Programm des Staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar." Gropius also wrote that the activities of the Bauhaus would include "[i]nvolvement in public life, with the people, in the form of exhibitions and other activities." Furthermore, these would include "new attempts at exhibition-making to solve the problem of how to show pictures and sculptures in an architecturally-designed space," 41.

8. Walter Gropius, "Speech to the Students of the Bauhaus" (July 1919), in Whitford, *The Bauhaus*, 48-49. Perhaps Gropius's sensitivities to the "catastrophe of world history" and the need for a "new world philosophy" blinded him to a great extent to the realities of his current situation: Weimar was the home of German romanticism, of Goethe and Schiller. The people of Weimar were fiercely proud of this historical legacy and felt that their Academy was part of this lineage.
9. The German Republic, which existed from the end of World War One to Hitler's seizure of power, is, therefore, referred to as the "Weimar Republic" or "Weimar Germany," which is distinct from the actual city of Weimar in the post-World War One state of Thuringia. For a discussion of the history of the German Revolution and civil war, see Chris Harman, *The Lost Revolution: Germany 1918-1919* (London: Bookmarks, 1982.)
10. For a thorough discussion of the "Bauhaus Affair" in Weimar, see Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (1968; reprint, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), 70 ff.
11. Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 74.
12. "The Dispute over the Bauhaus," excerpt in Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 238, n. 9.
13. A. B. [Arthur Buschmann], "Die Bauhaus-Siedlung von Gropius," *Jenaische Zeitung*, July 27, 1922, cited in Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 77. See also Éva Forgács, *The Bauhaus Idea and Bauhaus Politics* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 1991), 79.
14. Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 77.
15. Writers on the Bauhaus have consistently stressed that Gropius was forced to put on this exhibition, even though he believed that the school should have been allowed to continue to experiment in relative seclusion. More recently, Forgács has suggested that, in fact, the exhibition was Gropius's idea, since no documents exist to prove that the state government demanded a display of Bauhaus work. See Forgács, *The Bauhaus Idea*, 98-103.
16. See, for example, Christian Zervos, "Bauhaus" *Cahiers d'Art* 1 (1926): 259-62; "The Dessau Bauhaus" *Kunst und Künstler* (1926) in Whitford, *The Bauhaus*, 206. See also the discussion of the opening of the school in Elaine Hochman, *Bauhaus: Crucible of Modernism* (New York: Fromm, 1997), 201-4.
17. Forgács, *The Bauhaus Idea*, 135.
18. In Dessau, many problems continued within the school as well. In particular, many of the painters on the faculty were troubled that the program of the Bauhaus had clearly shifted toward the design of prototypes; in fact, Gropius referred to the workshops as "laboratories . . . for mass production" (Forgács, *The Bauhaus Idea*, 147).
19. Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kunst und Rasse* (Munich: J. F. Lehmann, 1928).
20. For discussion of the Dessau Bauhaus, see Forgács, *The Bauhaus Idea*, 159-81; Hochman, *Bauhaus*, 181-247. Franz Schulze discusses Mies's position as Bauhaus director during the final exhibition in *Mies van der Rohe: A Critical Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 185.
21. Peter Hahn, "Wege der Bauhäusler in Reich und Exil," *Bauhaus-Moderne im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Winfried Nerdinger (Munich: Prestel, 1993), 202-13, "Bauhaus and Exile: Bauhaus Architects and Designers between the Old World and the New," in

Exiles and Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler, ed. Stephanie Barron (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum/Abrams, 1997), 211–23. See also Kathleen James, "Changeable Agenda: From Bauhaus Modernism to U.S. Internationalism," in Barron, *Exiles and Emigrés*, 235–52.

22. For a detailed discussion of how this group was formed, its relationship to Joseph Goebbels's agencies, and to Hitler's position on the arts, see Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), esp. chapters 1–3. For a discussion of these agencies in relation to the Bauhaus and modernist architecture, the best source remains Lane, *Architecture and Politics*.

23. Walter Gropius to Eugen Hönig, Berlin, March 27, 1934, in Isaacs, *Gropius*, 180.

24. Isaacs, *Gropius*, 180.

25. See Petropoulos, *Art as Politics*, 23.

26. Gropius was asked to speak on theater design to the Fondazione Allesandro Volta Symposium; see Isaacs, *Gropius*, 182–83. According to Isaacs, "Mindful of possible reprisals against his and Ise's families and Bauhäuslers and confiscation of their possessions were he to leave Germany without permission, Gropius wrote [on September 19, 1934] to Eugen Hönig requesting authorization to attend the Rome conference . . . and for a permit to work temporarily in England."

27. Gropius to the BBC, London, May 12, 1936 (Isaacs, *Gropius*, 204).

28. Isaacs, *Gropius*, 213–15.

29. Negotiations to bring Gropius to teach in the United States dated back to 1934. Joseph Hudnut took over as the dean of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard in 1936 and visited Gropius in London in August that year—a visit preceded by Alfred Barr, who informed Gropius of Hudnut's impending offer (Isaacs, *Gropius*, 237). For a thorough discussion of Gropius's appointment at Harvard and his relationship with Hudnut, see Jill Pearlman, "Joseph Hudnut's Other Modernism at the 'Harvard Bauhaus,'" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56 (December 1977): 452–77. It is, of course, likely that Gropius and Barr also discussed the Bauhaus exhibition at this time (*Defining Modern Art: Selected Writings of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.*, ed. Irving Sandler [New York: Abrams, 1986], 286.)

30. William E. Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 295.

31. James MacGregor Burns, *The Crosswinds of Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 45.

32. Susan Canedy, *America's Nazis, a Democratic Dilemma: A History of the German American Bund* (Menlo Park, Calif.: Markgraf, 1990), 133. Although the German American Bund in fact posed little of an actual threat, this and other fascist groups in the United States garnered a tremendous amount of publicity and therefore created considerable anxiety in the populace.

33. Canedy, *America's Nazis*, 175–76. For a discussion of extremist positions in this country in the 1930s, see Geoffrey S. Smith, *To Save a Nation: American Countersubversives, The New Deal, and the Coming of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). Not only the Dies Committee but also the FBI investigated suspected communist or Nazi sympathizers; as Margaret Kentgens-Craig has shown, in 1940 Gropius was among them (Kentgens-Craig, *Bauhaus-Architektur: Die Rezeption in Amerika, 1919–1936* [Frankfurt am

Main: Peter Lang, 1993], 199-201). These investigations proved to be ludicrous, but the very existence of FBI files on Gropius indicate that as an exiled German he was considered inherently suspicious.

34. The actual extermination of Jews in the camps did not begin until 1941, although there is a great deal of debate on the precise origins of the Holocaust, i.e., whether it began with the actual violence unleashed on Kristallnacht or later with a policy decision to murder the Jewish population; whether it was Hitler's or Goebbels's program or the conclusion of years of vehement German anti-Semitism first manifested in earnest on Kristallnacht. The second edition of Ian Kershaw's *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: Arnold, 1989) is a useful analysis of the issues involved in Holocaust research; see esp. 1-17 and 82-106.

35. Stephanie Barron, ed., *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum, 1991). Bauhaus art was scattered throughout the exhibition, and a special section was reserved for the international print portfolios produced by the Weimar Bauhaus, the neue Europäische Graphik.

36. The Museum of Modern Art Department of Registration: The Bauhaus 1919-1928, Exhibition no. 82, Exhibition File [Letter from Josef Albers to Janet M. Heinrich, dated November 19, 1937].

37. Press Release, *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, Album A2, II.1/40 (5).

38. Gropius refused to pay the tariff and wrote to Barr asking that the museum pick up the tab; Gropius to Alfred Barr, October 21, 1937, WGA, Harvard.

39. See Arthur A. Cohen, *Herbert Bayer* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 41-42; and Eckard Neumann, "Kunst als universelle Verantwortung der Weg Herbert Bayers in Amerika," in *Herbert Bayer: Kunst und Design in Amerika, 1938-1985* (Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv, 1986), 9.

40. Press release, *Bauhaus 1919-1928*.

41. See David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-41* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968); and Richard Breitman and Alan M. Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

42. See the exhibition catalog, Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Modern Architecture—International Style* (New York: MoMA, 1932); and Henry Russell Hitchcock and Phillip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922* (New York: Norton, 1932). For the debate on the absence of social issues in the *International Style* exhibition (as it has come to be called), see Franz Schulze, *Phillip Johnson: Life and Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), esp. 75-86; Irving Sandler, introduction to *Defining Modern Art: Selected Writings of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.* (New York: Abrams, 1986), 17-25.

43. Alfred Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1936).

44. Walter Gropius, "Address to the Birmingham, England, Design and Industry Association" (1935); and Walter Gropius, "Address to Harvard" (March 30, 1937), WGA, Harvard. Gropius, however, adopted a stance similar to Barr's in his book, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (London: Faber & Faber, 1935), in which Gropius discussed contextualization in the abstract and intentionally avoided discussing any direct controversies concerning the situation in Germany (Isaacs, *Gropius*, 195).

45. *New York Post*, December 1, 1938, from the Museum of Modern Art Archives, N.Y., Public Information Scrapbook [no. 9,826].
46. See *Diego Rivera: Paradise Lost at Rockefeller Center*, ed. Irene Hermer de Larrea (Mexico City: Edicupes, 1987).
47. MacGregor Burns, *The Crosswinds of Freedom*, 153.
48. For an outline of the U.S. reaction to the increasing number of refugees from Nazi Germany, see Barron, *Exiles and Emigrés*, 293.
49. *The Bauhaus, 1919-1928*, 11-15, 92-97.
50. The Museum of Modern Art, Department of Registration: *The Bauhaus 1919-1928*, Exhibition no. 82, Exhibition File [Letter from Alfred Barr to Walter Gropius, December 10, 1938].
51. Barr to Gropius, December 10, 1938.
52. Barr to Gropius, December 10, 1938.
53. Gropius insisted on acting only in a private manner to help Bauhäuslers still in Germany. His urgent letters to foreign consulates on behalf of the textile artist Otti Berger are an example. Unfortunately in her case, he was not successful; Berger died at Auschwitz. Gropius refused, on the other hand, to work publicly with the American Guild for German Cultural Freedom even though he was asked to help identify artists that might need financial assistance to emigrate. See Gropius's correspondence, 1937-1939, WGA, Harvard. See also Hahn, "Bauhaus and Exile," in Barron, *Exiles and Emigrés*, 216-19.
54. *New Haven* [Conn.], December 4, 1938; *New Orleans Sunday Item-Tribune*, November 12, 1939; *Springfield Republican* [Mass.], March 8, 1939; *Yonkers*, 1938; *New York Times*, December 4, 1938; *Newsweek* [Dayton, Ohio], December 12, 1938; in the Museum of Modern Art Archives, N.Y.: Public Information Scrapbook [9, 826].
55. *New Masses*, December 21, 1938, in the Museum of Modern Art Archives, N.Y.: Public Information Scrapbook, [9, 826].
56. *Springfield Morning Union*, December 18, 1938, in the Museum of Modern Art Archives, N.Y.: Public Information Scrapbook, [9, 826].
57. *New York Times*, December 4, 1938, 40.
58. Burns, *The Crosswinds of Freedom*, 132-46.
59. Burns, *The Crosswinds of Freedom*, 135.
60. Burns, *The Crosswinds of Freedom*, 132.
61. American Artists' Congress, 1936, *Artists against War and Fascism: Papers of the First American Artists' Congress*, intro. by Matthew Baigell and Julia Williams (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1986).
62. *Artists against War and Fascism*, 169. According to the artist, the term "intellectual beast" was coined by Hans Hinkel, secretary of the Reich Chamber of Culture.
63. The pact between Hitler and Stalin in 1939 threw the American Artists' Congress into turmoil; some left-wing artists continued to support the Soviet Union while others turned away from the Popular Front, denounced the Russo-German Pact, and seceded from the congress; see Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 39-41.
64. Henry Adams, *Thomas Hart Benton: An American Original* (New York: Knopf,

1989), 227-34; James M. Dennis, *Renegade Regionalists* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 70-71.

65. Walter Gropius, "Manifesto and Programme of the Bauhaus," in Whitford, *The Bauhaus*, 38. For a discussion of the manifesto as street literature, see my dissertation, "Great Utopias and Small Worlds: Architectural Visions and Political Realities in the Prints of the Weimar Bauhaus, 1919-1925" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1993).

66. An interesting contemporaneous source for the Bauhaus exhibition are the writings of the German philosopher and literary critic Walter Benjamin. Although his ideas are often applied in a historically nonspecific way, Benjamin wrote about the effects of photography on art while in exile in the late 1930s. He claimed that a photograph of a piece of art removed the sense of originality and preciousness for the work. In a strange reversal of this argument, the Bauhaus objects, often reproductions or prototypes that were intended to be mechanically duplicated, were forcibly given a rarified "aura." Benjamin also discussed the aestheticization of violence by fascist regimes. See Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 217-51.

67. Gropius had initially written to Barr, asking him to consider giving Bayer royalties for his work on the catalog; Barr's comments on the exhibition follow his refusal to pay additional fees to Bayer. Alfred Barr to Walter Gropius, March 3, 1939, WGA, Harvard.

68. The Museum of Modern Art, Department of Registration, *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, December 7-January 30, 1939, Exhibition no. 82, Exhibition File ["Notes on the Reception of the Bauhaus Exhibition," Alfred Barr, Letter to Trustees and Advisory Committee, n.d. (1939)].

69. *Arts Digest* (December 15, 1939): 6, 34; and *Arts Digest* (January 15, 1939): 8.

70. The critical debate between Alfred Barr and Meyer Schapiro is regarded as one of the most significant exchanges on the methodologies of modernist art, that is, the autonomy vs. the sociopolitical history of abstraction; Alfred Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art*; Meyer Schapiro, "The Nature of Abstract Art," *Marxist Quarterly* (January-March 1937): 77-98.

71. Bayer et al., *The Bauhaus, 1919-1928*, 7-9.

72. Walter Gropius to Alfred Barr, June 13, 1955; WGA, Harvard.

73. Marcel Franciscono, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Lane, *Architecture and Politics*; and more recently, Forgács, *The Bauhaus Idea and Bauhaus Politics*; and Hochman, *Bauhaus* are among those studies that have reconstructed the complex history of the Bauhaus.

74. See, for example, the recent collection of Bauhaus documents by Whitford, *The Bauhaus*, which includes many important and previously unknown sources as well as new translations but which also includes many reminiscences alongside original documents, identified as such only in an appendix.

75. For example, see Karl-Heinz Hüter, *Das Bauhaus in Weimar* (Berlin, 1976); and Christian Schädlich, *Bauhaus Weimar, 1919-1925* (Weimar: Stadtverordnetenversammlung der Stadt Weimar, 1980).

76. *Bauhaus-Moderne im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Winfried Nerdinger (Munich: Prestel, 1993).