Continental Interlude II: Dada (1916–21)

Introduction

The first Dada performances began in February 1916 at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. The events consisted largely of readings of poems and stories or the performance of songs, many of them plainly ridiculed or Futurist theory and practice. The four figures who initiated these were Hugo Ball (1886–1927), a German who was horrified at the outbreak of war and had moved to Switzerland; Richard Huelsenbeck (1892–1974), another German who was a committed pacifist; Tristan Tzara (1896–1963), a Romanian who had also taken refuge in Zurich and there met Ball; and Marcel Janco (1888–1964), a Romanian artist who was Tzara’s friend. They were soon joined by a fifth figure, Jean or Hans Arp (1888–1966), a German national from Alsace, but one whose sympathies were French. The works that were written and performed were called poésie simultanée (‘simultaneous poems’), and their indebtedness to Futurist notions of simultaneity is palpable. The name Dada was created in April 1916. To Hugo Ball, as a German, the term seemed to indicate a sense of childish pleasure; to the Romanian Tzara it was a homonym with the Slavonic word for ‘yes’, and to mean ‘yes, yes, Yes.’ Dada also means ‘a rocking horse’ in French, the language that Tzara used when speaking with non-Romanians. The first publication of the Dada group, a one-page periodical called Cabaret Voltaire, appeared in June 1916 and was a comic

attack. In succession, the journal Dada, was issued and controlled by Tzara from the first, and its talents as a provocateur soon came into play. He adopted the provocative tone and typography of Futurism, but put them in the service of explosive reactions. Dada became a program against programs, an ethic of absolute freemasonry. When Huelsenbeck left Zurich to return to Berlin at the beginning of 1917, and Hugo Ball retired from all further Dada activity, Tzara found himself the heir of an international movement (the Huelsenbeck was now taking Dada to Berlin) which he now published tirelessly. Dada 1 appeared in July 1917, Dada 2 in December, and Dada 3 in late 1918, the latter containing his ‘Dada Manifesto 1918’ (see pp. 179–81 in this edition), a series of provocative negations that were an intransigent denial of everything.

In Berlin, Richard Huelsenbeck gave his first Dada speech in Germany at a meeting on February 1918, followed by a Dadaist manifesto in April signed by Ball, Tzara, the Romanian Marcel Janco, and the Swiss artist Hans Arp, as well as the German Max Haussmann (1886–1970), Franz Jung (1888–1963), George Grosz (1893–1959), and several Italians including Enrico Prampolini (1884–1956). Other figures who came to play a prominent role in Berlin Dada were Johannes Baader (1873–1955), an unabashed pacifist, and the two brothers Wieland Herzfelde (1890–1988), who founded the short-lived publishing house Malic, and John Heartfield (1891–1968), a major artist of photomontage. The April manifesto was followed by the foundation of Club Dada and a series of short-lived journals: Club

Dada, with only one number in 1918, edited by Huelsenbeck, Hausmann, and Jung; Der Dada, with three numbers in 1919–20, edited by Hausmann with help from Huelsenbeck; Dada Abstrakt, with only one number in 1920, edited by Huelsenbeck. There were also Der bittere Ernst (Deadly earnest), with six numbers in 1919, and Jehovah vom uber-Fußball (Every Man His own Football), both edited by Carl Einstein with photomontages by Heartfield and satirical drawings by Grosz.

On June 30, 1920 the group presented the ‘First International Dada Fair’ in two rooms at the gallery of Dr. Otto Buchholz, the culminating and definitive event of Berlin Dada. Collages by John Heartfield and parodies of classic paintings filled the rooms, many with an antiauthoritarian overtone. For more than was true in Zurich, Berlin Dada issued overtly political claims and made use of political and social satire. There were also small Dada movements in Cologne and Hannover. Cologne Dada was primarily the work of Max Ernst (1891–1976), collaborating with an amateur painter named Johannes Thököly Baargeld (1893–1926) and Jean Arp (1887–1966), who had moved from Zurich to Cologne immediately after the war. Der Visitekarte was a brief-lived journal edited in 1919 by Baargeld, and Die Schenkeljude (title number only) another edited by Ernst. Their most significant features were the extraordinary collages by Ernst and, from the viewpoint of art historians, his development of montages a verbal analogues to brass rubbing, using the grooves and striations of materials such as wood, foliage, or sackcloth to create textures or serve as the basis of design.

Dada in Hannover concerned a single man, Kurt Schwitters (1887–1948), whose principal achievement was to create a massive collage from the detritus of urban culture (bassettels, stamps, nails, hair, old catalogues, etc.). His works were all destroyed and are known only through photographs.

Perhaps the most controversial variant of Dada was the New York Dada. In the most extreme accounts, New York Dada is said to have been active from 1913 before Dada had even been invented and to have thrived until 1921. The key participants in New York Dada were the French painters Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia, acting
En Avant Dada: A History of Dadaism (1920)
Richard Huelsenbeck

Dada was founded in Zurich in the spring of 1916 by Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp, Marcel Janco and Richard Huelsenbeck at the Cabaret Voltaire, a little bar where Hugo Ball and his friend Emmy Hennings had set up a miniature variety show, in which all of us were very active.

We had all left our countries as a result of the war. Ball and I came from Germany, Tzara and Janco from Romania, Hans Arp from France. We were agreed that the war had been contrived by the various governments for the most autocratic, sadistic and materialistic reasons; we Germans were familiar with the book "Fascism," and even without it we would have had little confidence in the decency of the German Kaiser and his generals. Ball was a conscientious objector, and I had escaped by the skin of my teeth from the pursuit of the police myrmidons who, for their so-called patriotic purposes, were maiming men in the trenches of Northern France and giving them shells to eat. None of us had much appreciation for the kind of courage it takes to get shot for the idea of a nation which is at best a cruel of petty merchants and politicians in power, but it was a cultural association of psychopaths who, like the Germans, marched off with a volume of Goethe in their knapsacks, to shiver Frenchmen and Russians on their highways.

Arp was an Anarchist; he had lived through the beginning of the war and the whole rationalistic frenzy in Paris, and was pretty well disillusioned with all the petty chicanery there, and in general with all the sickening changes that had taken place in the city and the people on which we had all slandered our love before the war. Politics is the same everywhere, hairbaked and vile. Soldiers believe everywhere with the same brackish brutality that is the moral misery of every intellectual impulse. The energies and ambitions of those who participated in the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich were from the start purely artistic. We wanted to make like the Cabaret Voltaire a focal point of the "newest" art, although we did not neglect from time to time to tell the fat and utterly uncomprehending Züricher that we regarded them as pigs and the German Kaiser as the initiator of the war. Then there was always a hip fan, and the audience was so dispersed throughout the house that anyone outside was able to claim a right to the superlative in that respect - at any rate the audience gave a preview of the public resistance which Dada was later to encounter on its triumphant march through the world.

The word Dada was accidentally discovered by Hugo Ball and myself in a German-French dictionary, as we were looking for a name for Madame le Ray, the chanteuse at our cabaret. Dada is French for a wooden horse. It is impressive in its brevity and suggestive. From a certain point of view we launched in the Cabaret Voltaire, by "newest" art, we meant new by and large abstract art. Later the idea behind the word Dada was to undergo a considerable change. While the Dadaists of the Allied countries, under the leadership of Tristan Tzara, still

Finally, there was the group that had been more or less abandoned in Zurich, now consisting largely of Tristan Tzara. In early 1920, at the urging of André Breton, Tzara moved to Paris, and for a few months after his arrival there was a series of provocative events, performances, and manifestos. But in 1922 Breton broke with Tzara once and for all, and in effect Paris Dada was dead, as was Dada in all the other cities where it had briefly thrived.

En Avant Dada: A History of Dadaism (1920) by Richard Huelsenbeck is a seminal work on the history of Dada. It was first published in Zurich in 1920 and later translated into English. The book offers a detailed account of the origins and development of the Dada movement, focusing on the activities of key figures such as Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp, Marcel Janco, and Richard Huelsenbeck. The text reflects the radical and avant-garde spirit of the Dada movement, which sought to challenge traditional forms of art and culture. The book is noted for its vivid descriptions of the Dadaists' experiments with words, images, and serial art, as well as their political and social critiques.


1. Wally K. Hotz (1900-1991) was a Russian painter who lived in Munich, then in Weimar, and finally in Paris.
3. André Breton (1896-1966) was a French poet who worked in Paris in 1922, and thereafter in the United States.
4. Emilio Boccini (1892-1945) was an Italian futurist painter and theoretician who published Petali, selected from L'umanità futurista, in 1917.
5. T. Matsumoto (1897-1944) was a Japanese futurist and aesthetic theoretician. His works include "Futurismo e estetica," published in Futurismo e estetica in 1935.
which seems to you like a good investment, and the same postman brings you a telegram announcing that all your chickens have died of influenza and scurvy, your father has fallen on a pincushion and frozen to death, your mother has burst with sorrow on the occasion of her silver wedding (maybe the frying pan stood to her ears), how the life, my dear fellow, the days progress in the rhythm of your boils and you, who have so often been in peril of choking on a fishbone, are still alive. You pull the covers over your head and whistle the "Hohenfriedberger-Glück." And who knows, don't gloat too soon, perhaps the next day you will see you at your desk, your pen ready for the threat, bent over your new novel, Rebbi. Who knows? That is pure Dadaism, ladies and gentlemen.

If Tristan Tzara had barely suspected the meaning of this famous existence: we drag along between apes and beeches, he would have seen the fraud of all art and all artistic movements and would have become a Dadaist. Where have these gentlemen who are so eager to appear in the history of literature left their many? Where is the eye that weeps and laughs at the gigantic rump and carnival of this World? Burned in books, they have lost their independence, the ambition to be so famous as Rubelius or Flaubert has rubbed them of the courage to laugh — there is no much matching, writer, living to be done. Rimbaud jumped in the ocean and started to swim to St. Helena. Rimbaud was a hell of a guy, they sit in the cafés and rack their brains over the quickest way of getting to be a hell of a guy. They have an academic conception of life — all literati are Germans; and for that very reason they will never get close to life. Rimbaud very well understood that literature and art are mighty suspicious things — and his hell man can live as a poet at a brothel-house, as the越是的 the Dadaist sings a song of mounting profits.

In Tzara’s hands Dadaism achieved great triumphs. The Dadaists wrote books that were bought all over Europe, they put on shows to which thousands flocked. The world press adopted the Dada movement in art. A new sensation, ladies and gentlemen. In the hands of men who were no Dadaists, Dada became an immense sensation in Europe; it reached the soul of the true European who is home between the pissons and boilers of machines, which hardly looks up from the Daily News when you meet him in Charing Cross Station,28 whom you find in fashionable teewocks on the decks of Red Star liners, with a pre-tired full of flag-dancing nonchalantly limned between his gold fillings.

Dada knew how to set the big natty process in motion, it was discussed in the Café de France and in the books of the psycho-analysts. In Madrid they tried to understand it, in Chile they tore each other’s hair out over it, in London, with the grain exchange made famous by Frank Swan, they appeared for a moment as an act of a civic screen, the world Dada.

During the past decades in Europe, no word, no concept, no philosophy, no slogan of party or sect can be said to have burst upon the imagination of a civilized society with such catastrophic force. Do not forget the profound psychological significance of this fact. In the minds of all these people, the ideas, the theories, the jobs, the culture, the dreams, which were interested in Dadaism because they regarded it as a "ridiculous product of modern artistic madness," Dada had long since ceased to be a movement in art. You need to be a professor of philosophy with a carthorse29 at Berlin University not to see that ninety-nine out of a hundred people care as much about movements, individual techniques, perspectives, as art, in the legend, the story about Easter Sunday. It did not interest them and was not even known to them that Dada, which did have an effect, however imperceptible upon them, had something to do with art and originated in art. A work which affects the masses so profoundly must embody an idea that touches the most vital interests of these masses, shaming, frightening, or encouraging them in their innermost soul. That is why it is so incomprehensible that this Tristan Tzara, who out of children’s ambitions paves himself off as the inventor of Dada, should try to bind Dada to absent art: such an attempt represents a total failure to understand things both near and far; he fails to see the possibilities of the birth, life and death of an idea, or to understand the significance of an art spirituale, a fashione30 (which expressed in a word, concept

28 A pun on the similarity of Kathedra's synonyms chart and Kopferman's book.
29 A pun on the similarity of Kathedra's synonyms chart and Kopferman's book.
30 A pun on the similarity of Kathedra’s synonyms chart and Kopferman’s book.
which presupposed a personality that would treat the transcendental with inner tact and moderation, while the Germans with their expressionism evoked the immeasurable externalization of the subjective individual, giving free play to the 'I feel' and the greenscape, manifested in the arbitrary denominations of normative proportions.

The Galerie Dada famously exhibited cubism, expressionism and futurist pictures; it carried on its little art business at literary tea, lectures and revue evenings, while the world Dada conquered the world. It was something touching to behold. Day after day the little group sat in its café, reading about the critical comments that pointed them in from every possible country, and which by their tone of indignation showed that Dada had struck someone to the heart. Stricken darts with ammunition, we kicked in our glory. Tristan Tzara could think of nothing else to do but write manifestos after manifestos, speaking of "Le futur avant. futur avant, which is neither futurism nor cubism," but Dada. But what was Dada? Dada. came the answer, in a signe rue. With psychological awareness, the Dadaists spoke of energy and void and assured the world that they had advancing plans. But concerning the nature of these plans, no information whatever was forthcoming.

Incommensurable values are conquering the world. If someone bursts a word into the crowd, accompanying it with a grand gesture, they make a religion of it. Gudo, gay, absurdity. Dada, as a novel word, a truly contemplated far out of the world, even without association with any personality. This was an almost magical event. The true meaning of Dadaism was recognized only later in Germany by the people who were genuinely propagating it, and these people, succeeding to the aggressive power and propagandistic force of the word, became Dadaists. In Berlin, they founded the Dada Club, which will be discussed below. The gentlemen of the Galerie Dada apparently noticed that their own stature was not consistent with the success of Dadaism.

Things came to such a pass that they borrowed pictures from the Berlin art-dealer Henrik Weilbing (for a long time had been making money out of abstract art theories and possessed their oil on the Swiss pensioners as something extraordinary, his literature primitive academies were pursued). They read medieval prose, and Tzara round about Ngoro versus which he polished off as an inextricably disconnected remains of a Bantu or Wemdon culture, again to the great amazement of the Swiss. It was a dismal collection of Dadaists.

As I think back on it now, an art that once stood up over the Galerie Dada. it was a moronic show of the time anes, characterized by the fact that old ladies were trying to revive their vanished sexual powers with the help of something mad. The Galerie Dada was an antecedent of the cafés, where the audience in the looming art had no assurance of ourselves looking up to the leaders with the new generation, those whose new morals, new atmosphere, new spirit. The Galerie Dada was a small and cluttered kitchen of literary convictions, where even one experienced the slightest shame as long as he had a Byline. The gentlemen were all international, members of that League of the Spirit which at the decisive moment was such a catastrophe for the caricatured, for the 2-dimensional, for the dramatic creators, who had no sense of the compromise necessary to artistic activity in the restricted sense.

There might have been a way to make something of the situation. The thing did nothing, and garnered success. They produced something, anything, and saw that the world was ready to pay high prices. It was a situation made to order for the hectic art of the spirit. But none of the gentlemen who sold abstract art in the Galerie Dada understood this, or else they did not want to understand it. Tzara did not want to give up his position as an artist within the abstract Myth, for the position of leadership he longed for had come tangibly near; and Ball, the founder of the Cabaret Voltaire (incidentally a far-sighted fellow) was too honorable, too Roman Catholic, too something. Both had insufficient insight into the possibilities of Dadaism, they lacked psychological awareness. The Dadaism as a notable, as Mandes, this aspect reappeared.

"Staehle nothing," is Stuck, p. 192.

Henrietta Wallis in 1907 said Berlin art gallery and publishing house, A. A. Neumeier, that was in the center of avant-garde activity during the years before the First World War. From 1908 to 1912, a German expressionist poet.

Georg Michaelis, who also had many among the Dadaists 'first editors' issue at the same time. "Prevent: Dadaismus," was an earlier manuscript titled Einführung des Künstlers in die freie Welt, 1911, published by the famous avant-garde magazine, the avant-garde, a work that was very popular in 1912, in the years before the First World War.

The flattening out of the word Dada in France in 1918, perhaps one of the most successful, first known in the journal Der Sturm, 1919. The French Ministry of War 1919. 1925, was elected president of France in 1929.

"Walter Gropius 1883-1969, the founder of the Bauhaus, was a writer and the main architect of the Dada movement in Zurich and Geneva.

A history journal published by André Breton, Louis Aragon, and Philippe Soupault, in 1924, which was printed into an almanac, and attempts to transform the political situation of the world into art. The work of Expressionism and the avant-garde.

Reynaud-Taylor 1915-1930 was a writer of the Con-
who made abstract art the cornerstone of their new vision, no new idea deserving of very serious propaganda. They failed to advance along the abstract road, which ultimately leads from the painted surface to the reality of a post-office form. No sooner had they left the old, sentimental standpoint than they looked behind them, though still spurred on by ambition. They are neither thirty nor flesh. In Germany Dadaism became political, it drew the ultimate consequences of its position and renounced art completely.

Yet it would be ungrateful to take leave of Yara without tipping our hats. I have in hand Dada brittle, a publication recently put out by the Paris Dadaists. It contains the photographs of the publishers of Embruns Dada and André Breton, Lucien Aragon, Francis Picabia, Céline Anais, Paul Eluard, G. Richert-Dumouroy, Philippe Soupault, Paul Dornay, Tristan Tzara. All very nice and harmless-looking gentlemen with pinces-aux, horn-rimmed glasses and monocles, with flowing locks, faithful eyes and significant gestures, who can be seen from a distance to belong to literature. A Dadaist monster denunciation is announced, the program includes a Manifeste contre l’’Industrie’’ (manifesto in darksbyes) by Francis Picabia and a ‘‘Dadaephone’’ by Tristan Tzara. All this is exceedingly gay. Picabia addresses the public: ‘‘Les enfants de la terre, vous avez des petits sifflets, s’vez les?…’’

The introduction of the new medium has a certain metaphysical value, it is in a sense a transcendental revolution against empty space, the result of the fact that a part of the psychological foundation of all art and must be considered, in this special case, as a kind of born medium. The concept of reality is a highly variable value, and entirely dependent on the brain and the requirements of the brain which considers it. When Picasso gave up perspective, he felt that it was a set of rules that had been arbitrarily thrown over nature: the parrots which were on the horizon, a deplorable deception — behind them lies the infinity of space, which can never be measured. Consequently he restricted his painting to the foreground, he abandoned depth, freed himself from the morality of a plastic philosophy, recognized the conditionality of optical laws, which governed his eye in a particular country at a particular time; he sought a new, direct reality — he became, in a word, a vulgar man, non-plastic.

He wanted to paint no more men, women, donkeys and high-school students, since they partook of the whole system of deception, the theatre and the illusion of existence; and in the same time he felt that painting with oil was a very definite symbol of a very definite culture and morality. He invented the new medium. He began to stick sand, hair, paper, office forms and pieces of newspaper onto his pictures, in order to stress the value of a direct reality, removed from everything traditional. He well understood the ideal, slick, harmonious quality inherent in perspective and in oil painting; he seized the illusional cadence 12 that speaks out of every portrait, and the falsehood of the ‘‘landscape’’ produced by the sentimentality of oil painting. Picasso went against the conventional color which he calls an authentic color, and separated out his natural color. Here we can proceed with entirely different questions in regard to visual and effects, if we want to say something to the people. Here we could have discussed our patent leather pumps and our Bvadine crutches to the doorstep. While in Zurich people lived as in a health resort, changing after the ladies and hanging for nights on, this would bring pleasure, burgs, magic lanterns and music by Zenos; in Berlin you never knew where the bad mood would be coming from. Fear was in everybody’s bosome, everybody had a feeling that the big deal launched by Hindenburg & Co. 13 was going to turn out very badly. The people had an enslaved and sentimental attitude to art and all cultural values. A phenomenon familiar in German history was again manifest: Germany always becomes the land of poets and thinkers when it begins to wash up the land of judges and stomachs.

In January 1917 I returned to Germany, the face of which had meanwhile undergone a fantastic change. I felt as though I had left a smug fat self for a street full of electronic signs, bustling hawks and noisy hucksters. In Zurich the citizens, as a rule, paint onto their pictures, in order to stress the value of a direct reality, removed from everything traditional. They well understood the ideal, slick, harmonious quality inherent in perspective and in oil painting; they seized the illusional cadence 12 that speaks out of every portrait, and the falsehood of the ‘‘landscape’’ produced by the sentimentality of oil painting. Picasso went against the conventional color which he calls an authentic color, and separated out his natural color. Here we can proceed with entirely different questions in regard to visual and effects, if we want to say something to the people. Here we could have discussed our patent leather pumps and tie our Bvadine crutches to the doorstep. While in Zurich people lived as in a health resort, changing after the ladies and hanging for nights on, this would bring pleasure, burgs, magic lanterns and music by Zenos; in Berlin you never knew where the bad mood would be coming from. Fear was in everybody’s bosome, everybody had a feeling that the big deal launched by Hindenburg & Co. 13 was going to turn out very badly. The people had an enslaved and sentimental attitude to art and all cultural values. A phenomenon familiar in German history was again manifest: Germany always becomes the land of poets and thinkers when it begins to wash up the land of judges and stomachs.

In 1917 the Germans were beginning to give a great deal of thought to their souls. This was only a natural defense on the part of the people who had been harassed, milked dry, and driven to
the breaking point. This was the time when expressionism began to enjoy a vogue, since its whole attitude fell in with the retreat and the weariness of the German spirit. It was only natural that the Germans should lose their enthusiasm for reality, to which before the war they had sung hymns of praise, through the mouths of inanimate academic thickheads, and which had now cost them over a million dead, while the blockade was strangling their children and grandchildren. Germany was seized with the mood that always precedes a so-called idealistic resurrection, as it was in the Weimar-Jahn, or Schenkendorf period. 89

Now came the expressionists, like those famous medical quacks who promise to "fix everything up," looking heavenward like the gentle Muncus; they pointed to "the rich treasures of our literature," pulled them gently by the sleeve and led them into the half-light of the Gothic cathedrals, where the street rises to the distant mummur and, in accordance with the old principle that all cats are gray at night, even without exception are fine fellows. Muncus, they have discovered, is good. And so expressionism, which brought the Germans so many welcome truths, became a "national achievement." In art it aimed at straightforward abstraction, renunciation of all objectivity. When expressionism is mentioned, the first three names I think of are Diirer, Edschmid, and Hitler. 90 Diirer, the gigantomaniac of expressionism lyrical poetry. Edschmid the prose writer and prototypical expressionism. When, with Hitler, his intentions and unmentionable meandering, is the theoretician of the expressionism age.

On the basis of all these considerations, and the psychological insight that a turning-away from objective reality implied the whole complex of weariness and cowardice that is so welcome to pretentious bourgeoisie, we immediately launched a sharp attack on expressionism in Germany, under the twofold emphasis on "action," acquired through our fight for the principles of brutalism, simultaneity and the new medium. The first German Dadaist manifesto, written by myself, says among other things: "Art in its execution and direction is dependent on the time in which it is lived, and artists are creatures of their epoch. The highest art will be that which in its conscious content presents the thousandfold problems of the day, the art which has been visibly shattered by the explosions of the last great war, which is forever trying to collect its limbs after yesterday's crash. The most and most extraordinary artists will be those who every hour search the tatters of their bodies out of the frenzied cataclysm of life, who, with bleeding hands and hearts, hold fast to the intelligence of their time. Has expressionism fulfilled our expectations of such an art, which should be the expression of our most vital concern? No! No! No! Under the pretext of turning inward, the expressionists in literature and painting have banded together into a generation which is already looking forward to honorable mention in the histories of literature and art and aspiring to the most respectable civic distinctions. On pretext of carrying on propaganda for the soul, they have, in their struggle with naturalism, found their way back to the abstract, pathetic gestures which presuppose a comfortable life free from content or strife. The stages are filling up with kings, poets and Faustian characters of all sorts; the theory of a sentimental philosophy, the psychological naivete of which is highly significant for a critical understanding of expressionism, numbs the mind like the minds of men who never act. Hated of the press, hated of advertising, hated of sensations, are typical of people who prefer their armchair to the streets of the street, and who even make it a point of pride to be snubbed by every small-time profiteer. That sentimental resistance to the times, which are neither better nor worse, neither more reactionary nor more revolutionary than other times, that weak-kneed resistance, fighting with prayers and incense when it does not prefer to lead its cardinals caitiffs with Attic umbrellas--is the quality of a youth which never knew how to be young. Expressionism, discovered abroad, and in Germany, true to style, transformed into an opulent idolatry and the expectation of a perfect person, has nothing in common with the efforts of active men. The signs of this manifesto have, under the battle cry Dada!, gathered together to put forward a new art, from which they expect the realization of new ideals." And so on. Here the difference between our conception and that of Triaen is clear. While Triaen was still writing: "Dada is anti-art"--in Germany Dada has its art-for-art's-sake character with its very fine move. Instead of continuing to produce art, Dada, in direct contrast to abstract art, went on and found an adversary. Emphasis was laid on the movement, on struggle. But we still needed a program of action, which we had to say exactly what our Dadaism was after. This program was drawn up by Raoul Hausmann and myself. In it we consciously adopted a political position:

What is Dadaism and what does it want in Germany? 91

1. Dadaism demands:
   a) The international revolutionary union of all creative and intellectual men and women on the basis of radical Communism;
   b) The introduction of progressive unemployment (through comprehensive mechanization every field of activity. Only by unemployment does it become possible for the individual to achieve certainty as to the truth of life and finally become accustomed to experience;
   c) The immediate expropriation of property (socialization) and the communal feeding of all; further, the creation of cities of light, and gardens which will belong to society as a whole and prepare man for a state of freedom.

2. The Central Council demands:
   a) Daily meals at public expense for all creative and intellectual men and women on the Paradies Plats (Berlin);
   b) Compulsory adherence of all clergy and teachers to the Dadaist articles of faith;
   c) The most brutal struggle against all directions of so-called "workers of the spirit" (Hilber, Adler), against their concealed bourgeoisie, against expressionism and post-classical education as advocated by the Sturn group;
   d) The immediate erection of a state art center, elimination of concepts of property in the new art (expressionism); the concept of property is entirely excluded from the super-individual movement of Dadaism which libertates all mankind;
   e) Introduction of the simultanist poem as a Communist state poem;
   f) Requisition of churches for the performance of brutalism, simultaneity and Dadaist poems;
   g) Establishment of a Dadaist advisory council for the remodelling of life in every city of over 50,000 inhabitants;
   h) Immediate organization of a large scale Dadaist propaganda campaign with 150.curiae for the enlightenment of the proletariat;
   i) Submission of all taxes and decrees to the Dadaist central council for approval;
   j) Immediate regulation of all sexual relations according to the views of international Dadaism through establishment of a Dadaist sexual center.

The Dadaist revolutionary central council.
German group: Hausmann, Huelsenbeck
Business Office: Charlottenburg, Kastorsteasse 118.
Applications for membership taken at business office.

The significance of this program is that in it Dada turns decisively away from the speculative, in a sense loses its metaphysics and reveals its understanding of itself as an expression of this age which is primarily characterized by machinery and the growth of civilization. It desires to be no more than an expression of the times, it has taught itself all their knowledge, their breathless tempo, their perspicacity, but also their weariness, their despair of a meaning or a "truth." In an article on

89 "Taut"er -- "Gymnastic Talks," refers to Ludwig Jahn, the founder of the gymnastics movement, which played an important part in the Schenkenhöfer's Germany (from Bogomil, 1889; Schenkenhöfer 1872--1894) and the great state which the political parties played a role in the way to unite Germany (from 1914-1918).

90 "Dada" (1886--1914) was a German expressionist poet, who was, over 60 volumes of verse, Naim in Edschmid (1909--1914), a German expressionist poet, Kurt Hilber (1905--1917), was a German expressionist writer.

91 First Published as an independent manifesto in the German magazine Der Dada (1919), where it was a noted signature, by Reiner Gerschel. For Kurt Hilber see note 19; Paul Adler was a Jewish and socialist poet, originally born in Prague.
expressions of Karl Reich 1 makes the distinction between the ethical man and the psychological man. The ethical man has the child-like piety and faith which permits him to trust in God and recognize some God, who has the power to lead men from their misery to some paradise. The psychological man has journeyed vainly through the infinite, has recognized the limits of his spiritual possibilities, he knows that every "system" is a selection with all the consequences of seduction and every God an opportunity for financiers.

Here we have no intention of standing up for any nation. The French have the least right of anyone to be praised as a grand nation, now that they have brought the chauvinism of our times to its greatest height. The German has all the qualities and drawbacks of the idealist. You can look at it whichever way you like. You can construct the idealism that distorts things and makes them function as an abstraction (the divine of corpore) whether it be vegetarianism, the rigorous, the good for the German no "better" than the bad — there is only a similitude, in values as in everything else. This similitude applied to the economy of facts is communism, a communist, to be sure, which has the principle of "making things better" and above all sees its goal in the destruction of everything that has gone before. Thus the Dadaist is opposed to the idea of paradise in every form, and one of the ideates farthest from his mind is that "the spirit is the sum of all means for the improvement of human existence." The word "improvement" is in every form unintelligible to the Dadaist, since behind it lies a hammering and sawing on this life which, though useless, aimless and vile, represents as such a thoroughly spiritual phenomenon, requiring no improvement in a metaphysical sense. To mention spirit and improvement in the same breath is for the Dadaist blasphemy. "Evil" has a profound meaning, the polarity of events finds its in a limit, and thought the real political thinker (such as Lenin) seems to be creates a movement, i.e., he disolves individualities with the help of a theory, he changes nothing. And that, as paradoxical as it may seem, is the import of the Communist movement.

The Dadaist explores the psychological possibilities inherent in his faculty for flinging out his own personality at times a lacon or lets a cloud flit in the wind. He is not the same man today as he was yesterday, the day after tomorrow he will perhaps be "like Shylock" or "like a Greek with his sword," but the time has gone when he should be slowed, yet maintain an attitude of reproof; yet it is in this very anarchy that life itself consists, naive, obvious life, with its indifference toward happiness and death, joy and misery. The Dadaist is naive. The thing he is after is obvious, indifferent, unintentional life. For him a table is not a mouse-trap and an umbrella is definitely not to pick your teeth with. In such a life act is no more a psychological problem than a psychological problem. In relation to the masses, it is a phenomenon of public morality.

The Dadaist considers it necessary to come out against art, because he has seen through it its fraud as a moral safety valve. Perhaps this militant attitude is a last vestige of irascible honesty, perhaps it merely means the Dadaist, perhaps it means nothing at all. But in any case, art (including culture, spirit, athletic clubs), regarded from a serious point of view, is a large-scale swindle. And this, as I have hinted above, most especially in Germany, where the most absurd idolatry of all sorts of divinities is beaten into the child in order that the grown man and taxpayer should automatically fall on his knees when, in the interests of the state or some smaller god of thieves, he receives the order to worship some "great spirit." I maintain again and again that culture, unspiritual, vulgar, can be described soberly and with complete naivety as the national spirit become form, but also it can be characterized as a compensatory phenomenon, an obsession to an invisible judge, as venal for the conscience. The Germans are masters of dissembling, they are unquestionably the most slyly and wittily of the avaricious sect among nations, in every movement of their life they set up a cult, a spirit, a superiority which they can hold as a shield in front of their enlarged bellies. It is this hypocrisy that has always seemed utterly foreign and incomprehensible to the French, a sign of intellectual deplorable. The German is untruthful, he is a twofold and a double base.

Professor Kantas etre en raison de son intelligence English as Professor Kantas establishes the German at once of the German philosopher of the intellectual tradition of Gropius Weil 1877- 1951 is Professor Kantas. Theocratic doctrine of good soul as it is in the joke 1919 in the anti-German one.
to the fury of the public. The whole city was in an uproar. Thousands crowded around the entrances of the produce exchange. By docks they were sitting on the window-ledges and pianos, raging and ranting. Hausmann and I, in great agitation, sat in the little vestibule which had been rigged up as a green room. The windowpanes were already beginning to rattle. It was 8:20. No sign of Baader. Only now did we see what was up. Hausmann remembered that he had seen a letter "to Hausmann and Hoerenbeck" stuck in his underwear. We realized that Baader had deserted us, we would have to go through with the focus pocus by ourselves as best we could. The situation could not have been worse – the platform (an improvised bower structure) could be reached only through the masked audience – and Baader had fled with half the manuscript. Now it was the turn to dor or die.

On March 3, Hausmann and I appeared before a smaller audience in the Mousetrap, again with great success. On March 5 we were in Karlbad, where our great satisfaction we were able to ascertain that Dada is eternal and destined to achieve undying fame.

Dada Fragments (1916–17)
Hugo Ball

March 3, 1916 – Introduce symmetries and rhythms instead of principles. Contradict the existing word orders...

What we are celebrating is at once a buffoonery and a requiem mass...

June 12, 1916 – What we call Dada is a harlequinade made of nothingness in which all higher questions are involved, a gladiator's gesture, a play with shabby debris, an execution of postured morality and pietate...

The Dadaist loves the extraordinary, the absurd, even. He knows that life asserts itself in contradictions, and that age, more than any preceding it, aims at the destruction of all generous impulses. Every kind of mask is therefore welcome to him, every play at hide and seek in which there is an inherent power of deception. The direct and the primitive appear to him in the midst of this huge anti-nature, as being the supernatural itself...

The bankruptcy of ideas having destroyed the concept of humanity to its very innominate sense, the instincts and hereditary backgrounds are now emerging psychologically, Since no art, politics or religious faith seems adequate to stem this current, there remain only the slogans and the bleeding pew...

The Dadaist treats more in the sinolarity of events than in the wit of persons. To him persons may be changed, his own person not excepted. He no longer believes in the comprehension of things from we point of departure, but is nevertheless convinced of the union of all things, of totality, so that an extent he suffers from dissonances to the point of self-dissolution...

The Dadaist fights against the death-throns and death-drunkens of his time. Averse to every clever reticence, he cultivates the curiosity of one who experiences delight even in the most questionable forms of immoderation. He knows that this world of systems has gone to pieces, and that the age which demanded cash has organized a bargain sale of godless philosophies. Where bad conscience is found for the market-booth owners, mild laughter and mild kindness begin for the Dadaist...

DADA FRAGMENTS

Hugo Ball (1886–1917) was a German poet, writer, and dealer who was influential in the avant-garde of the first World War and was known to Switzerland in early 1916, when he played a major role in founding the Cabaret Voltaire and Dada. By the end of 1917, he had moved from Dada activities. He became a journalist and turned to Catholicism and a life of religious meditation. In 1917, he published Die Hoax von der Zeit (The Hoax about Time), a collection of his articles. From there, he moved to writing and English by Eugen Johns (see: pp. 180–181) and published in 1917 in Alberts, which is the text reprinted here.