

THE FACE OF THE RULING CLASS

GEORGE GROSZ



ALLISON & BUSBY

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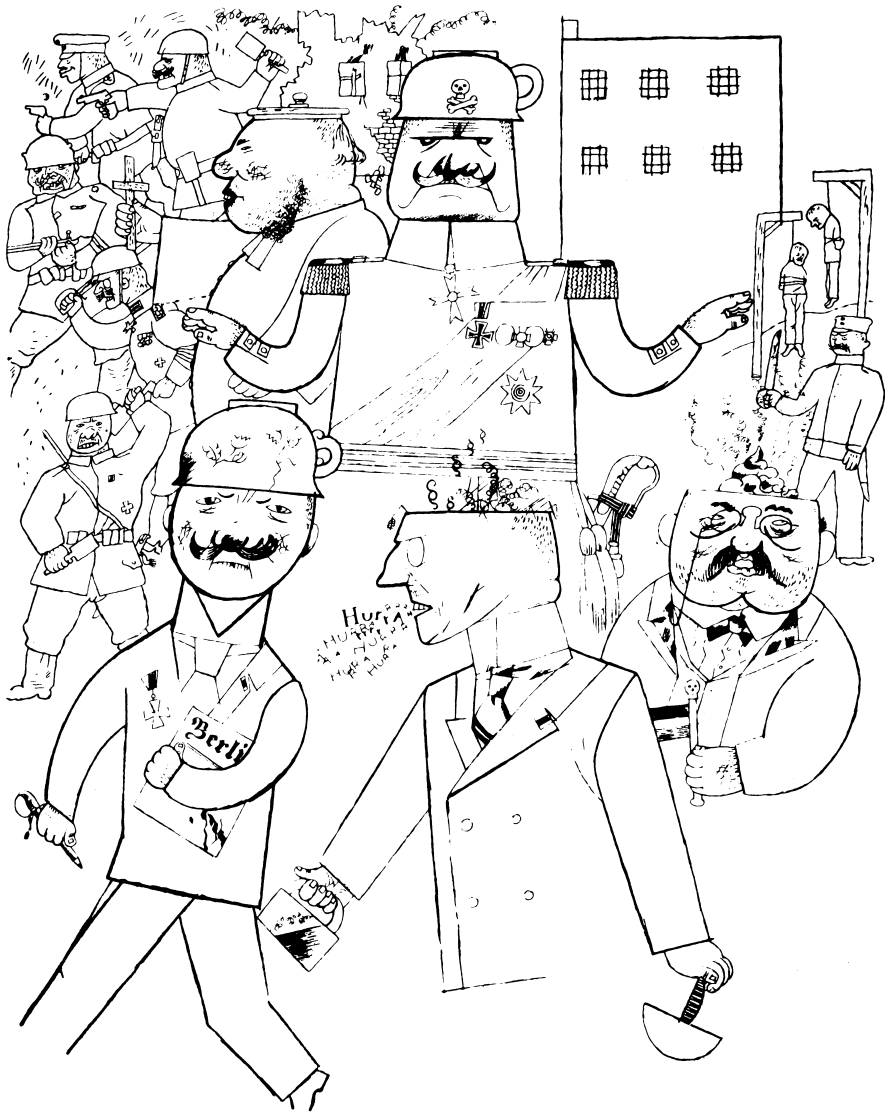
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3 The return of ordered conditions

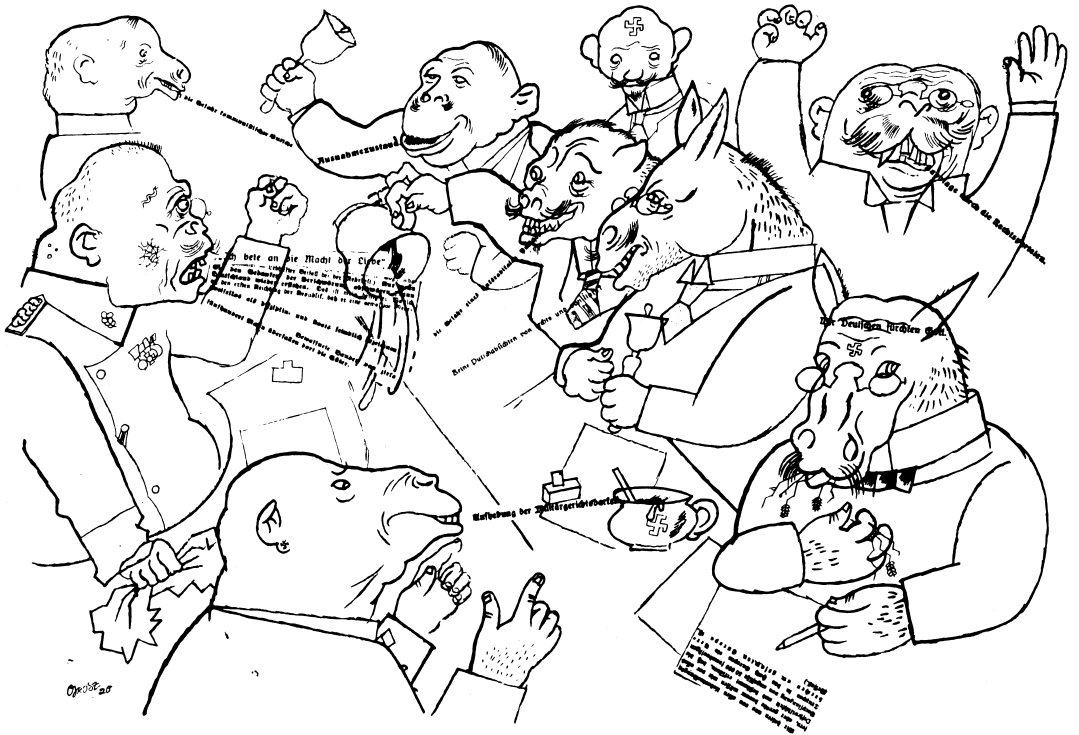






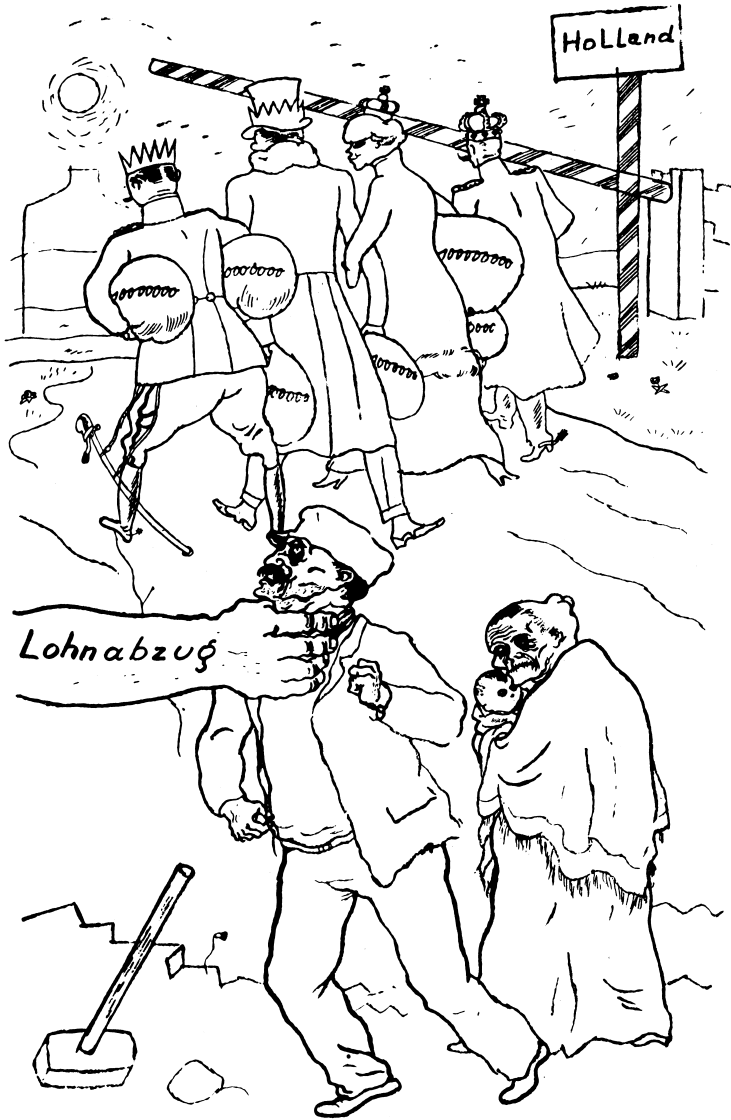


7 Fehrenbach, the most Christian Chancellor of the German Reich



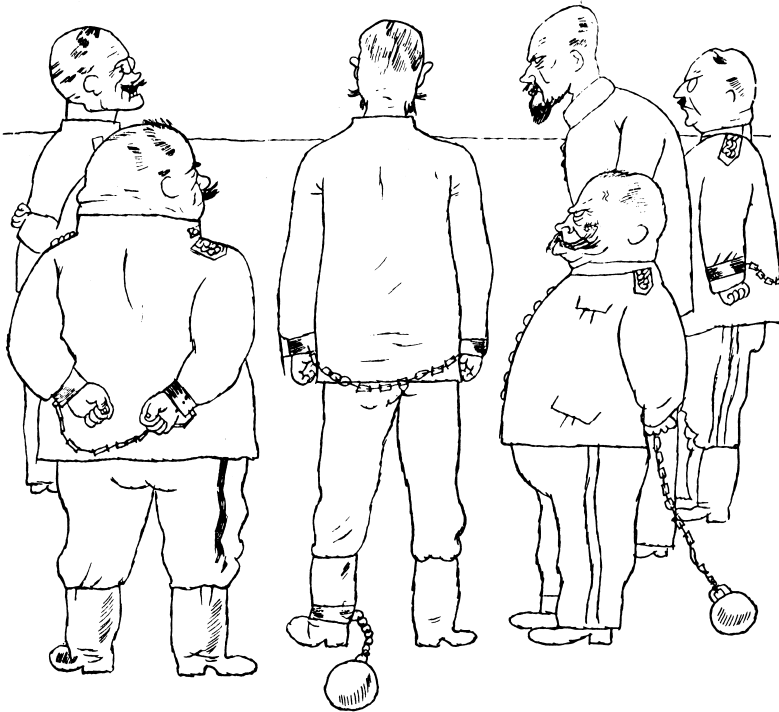
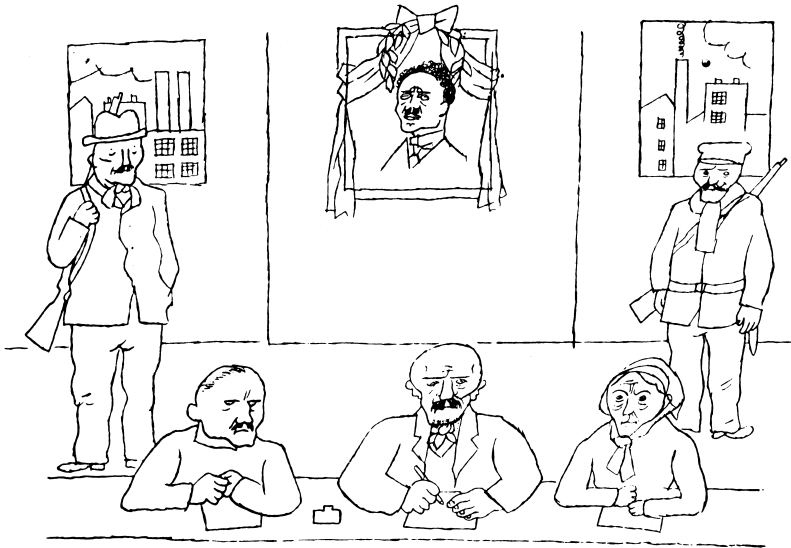


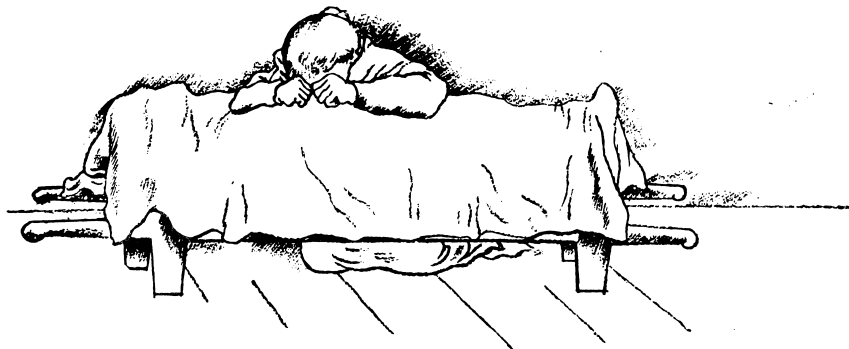
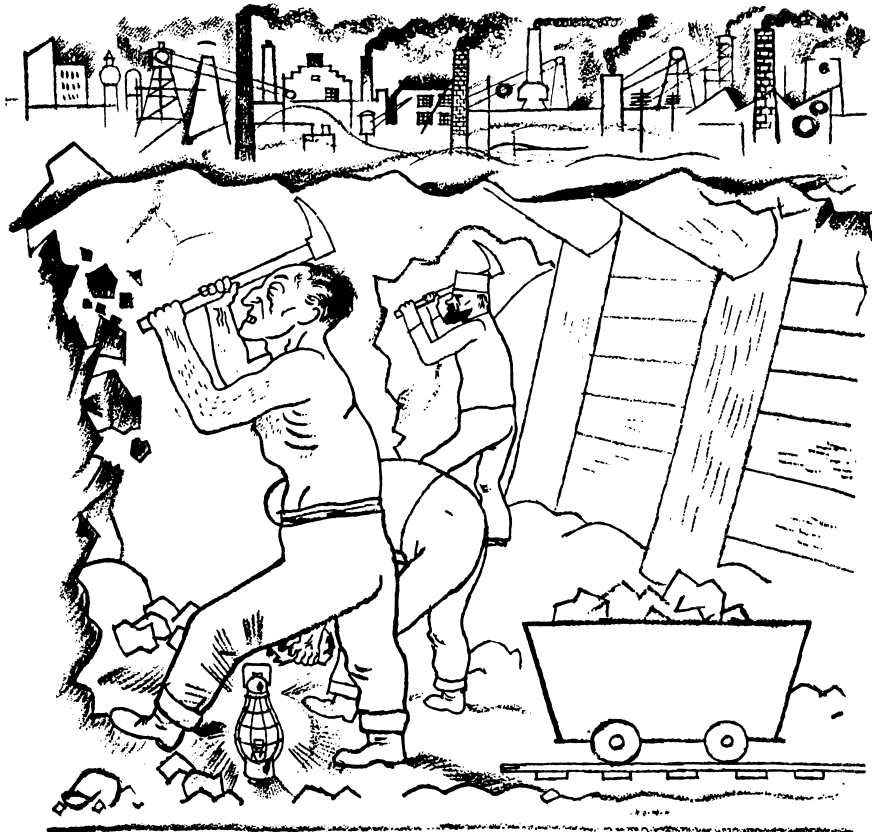
9 It smells of vulgar people here!



10 Give unto the Kaiser that which is the Kaiser's –
to the last breath of woman and child!

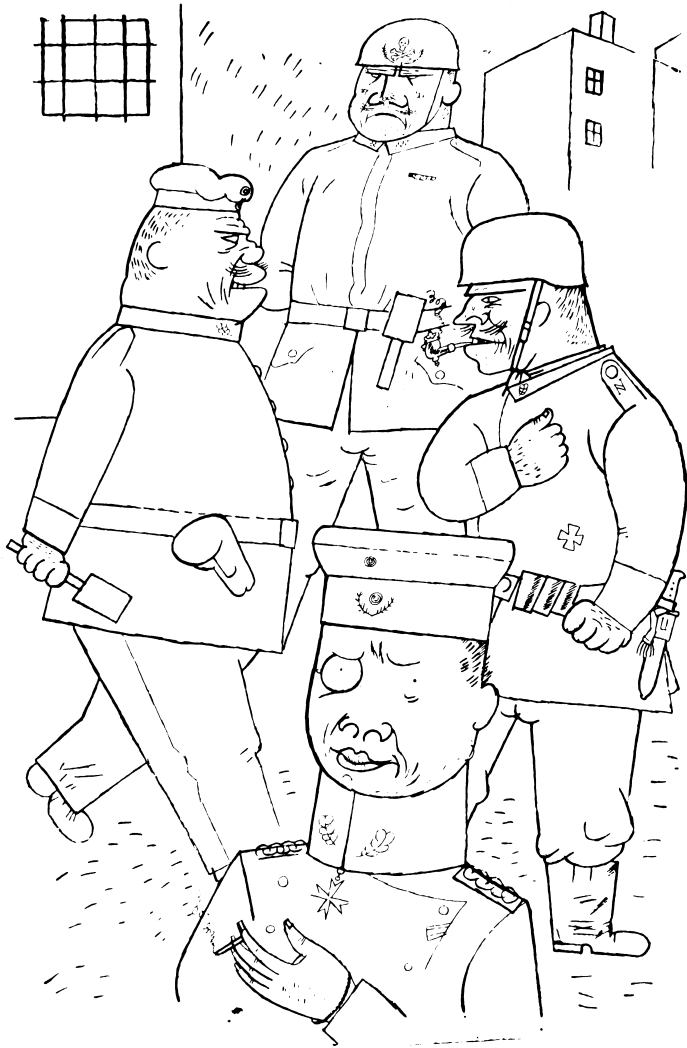


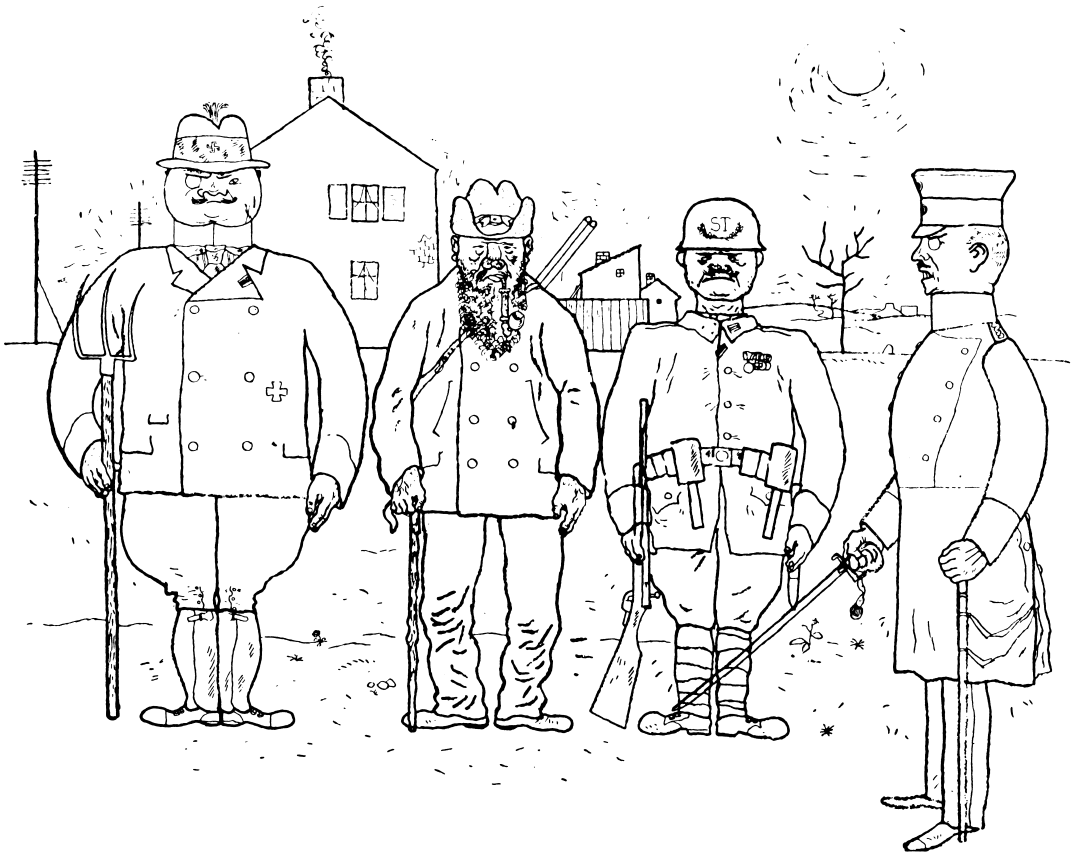




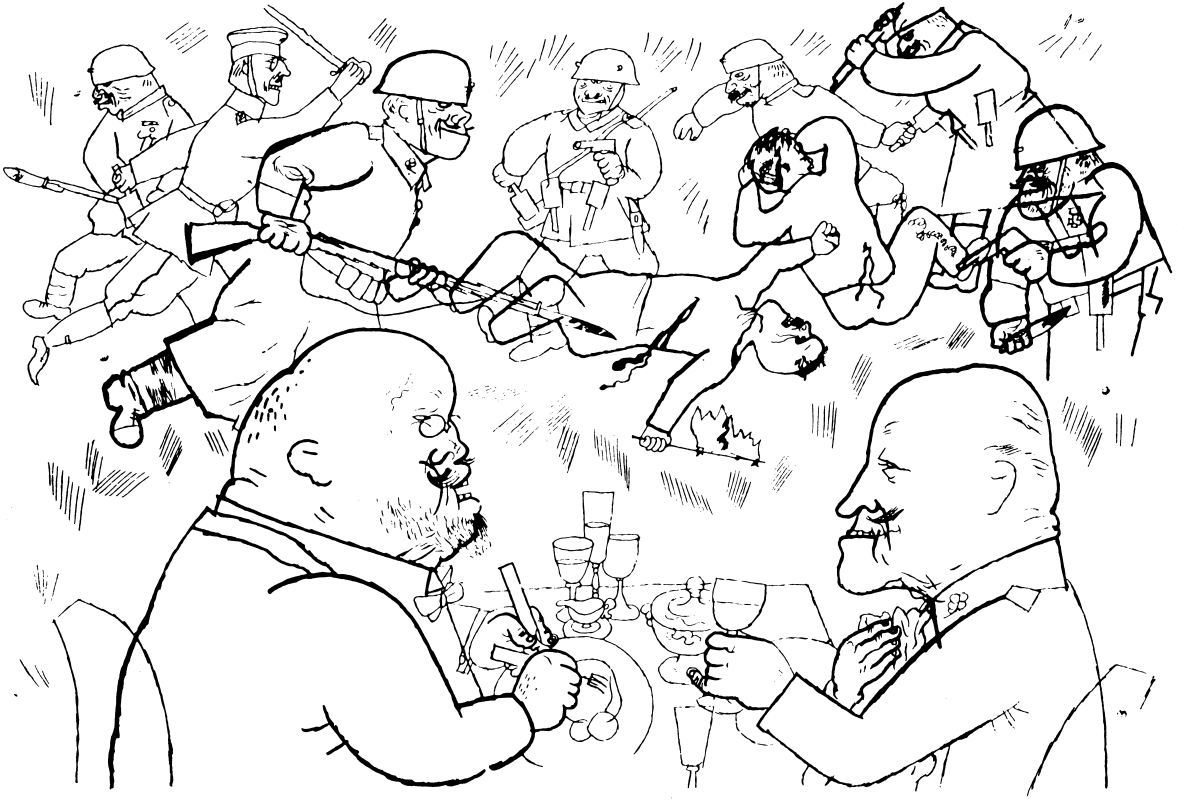




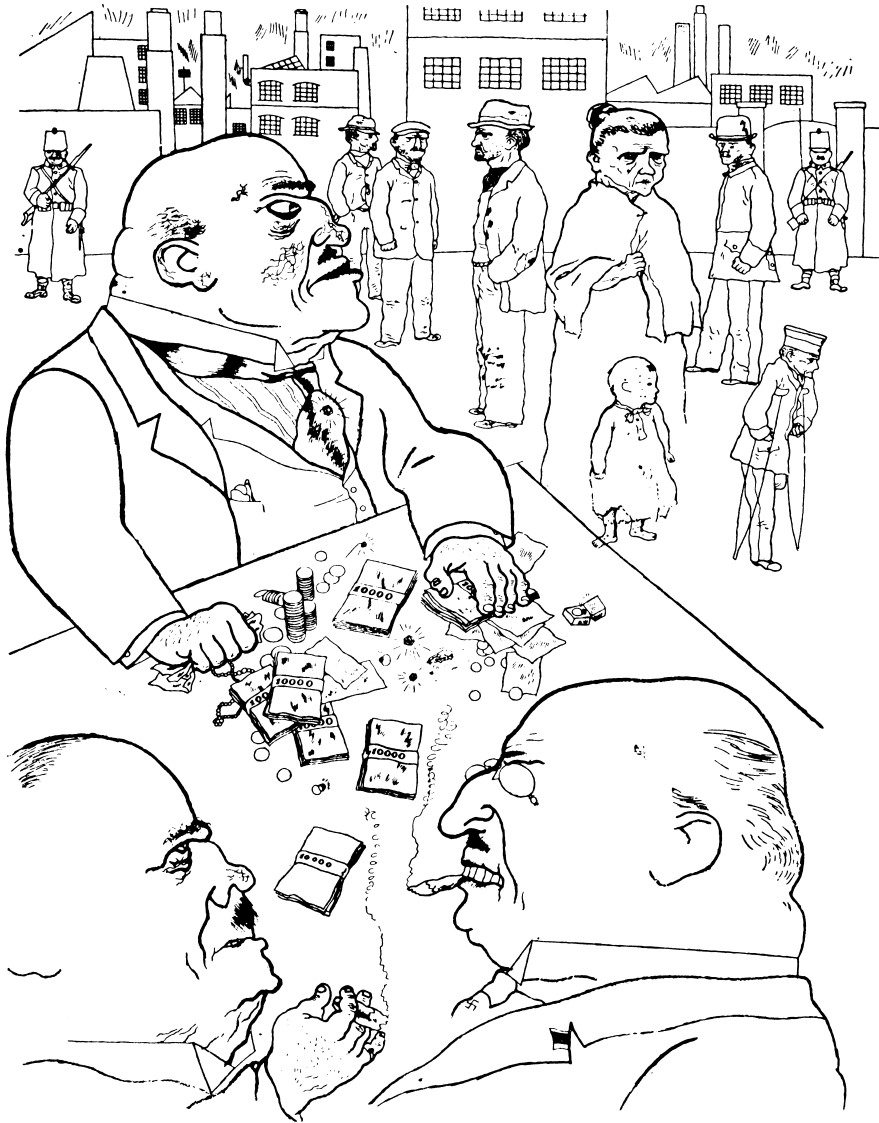




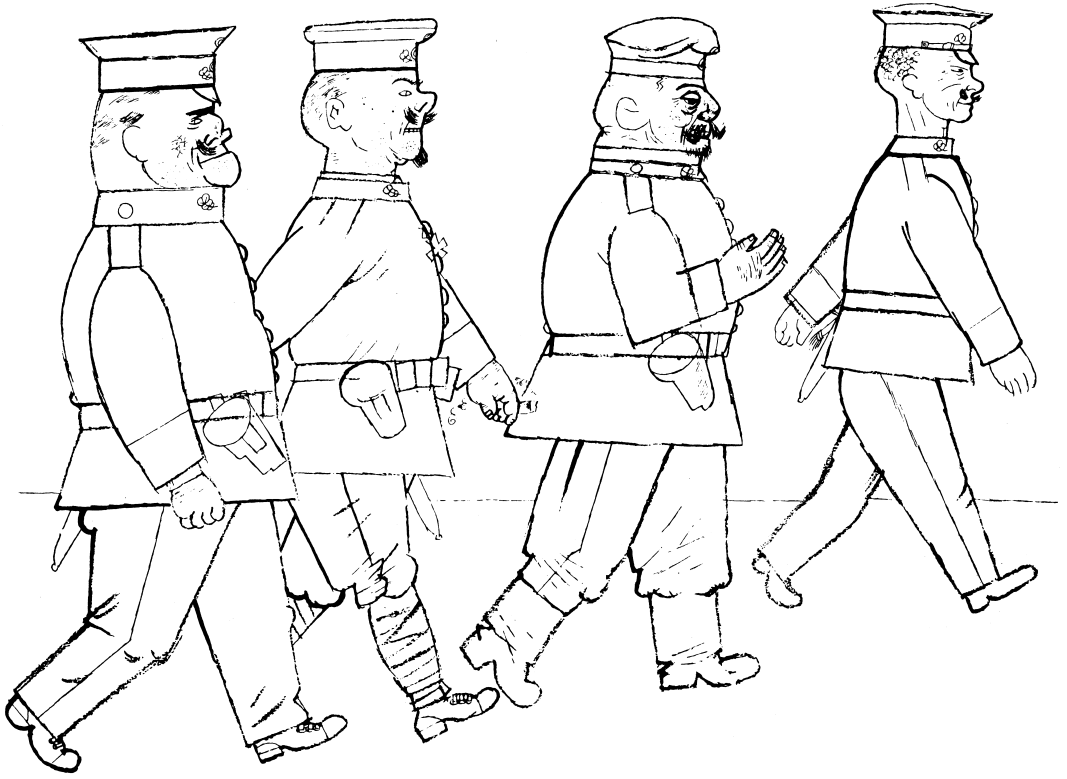
17 This is the 'Orgesch' which our Stinnes loves!

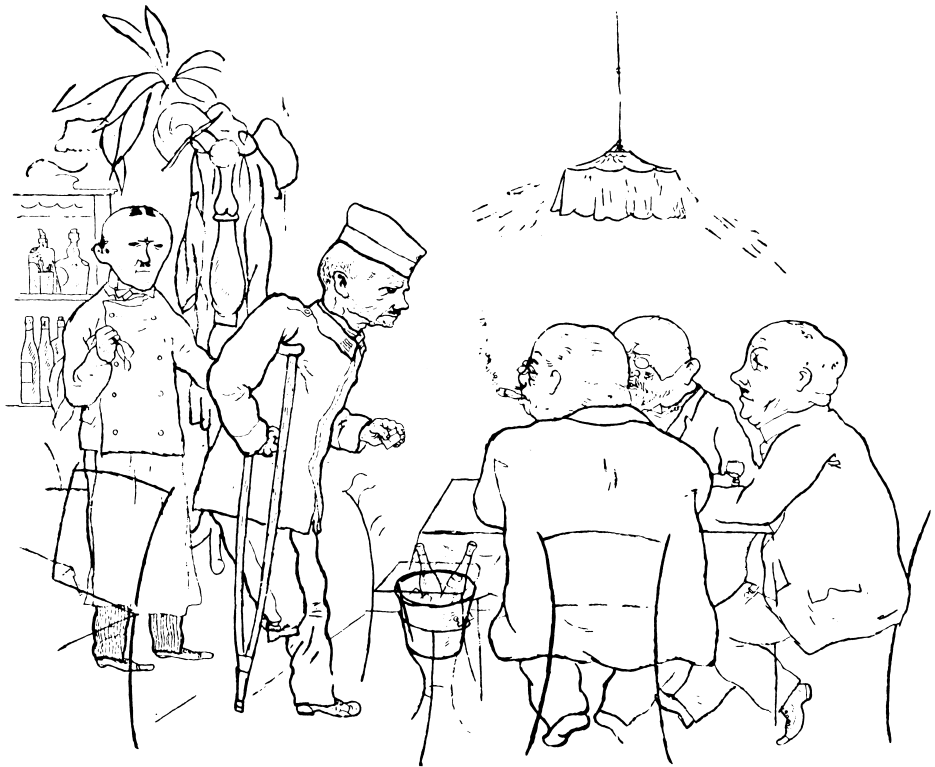




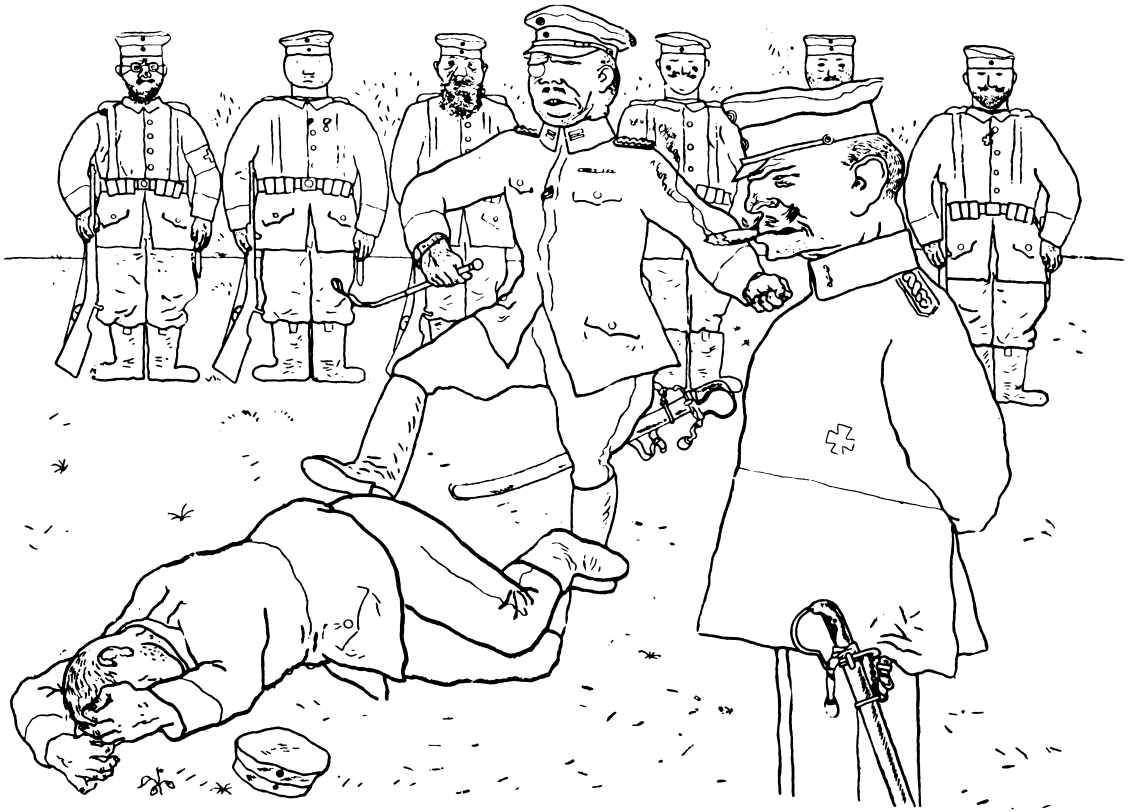








24 These people could, but simply don't want to work!



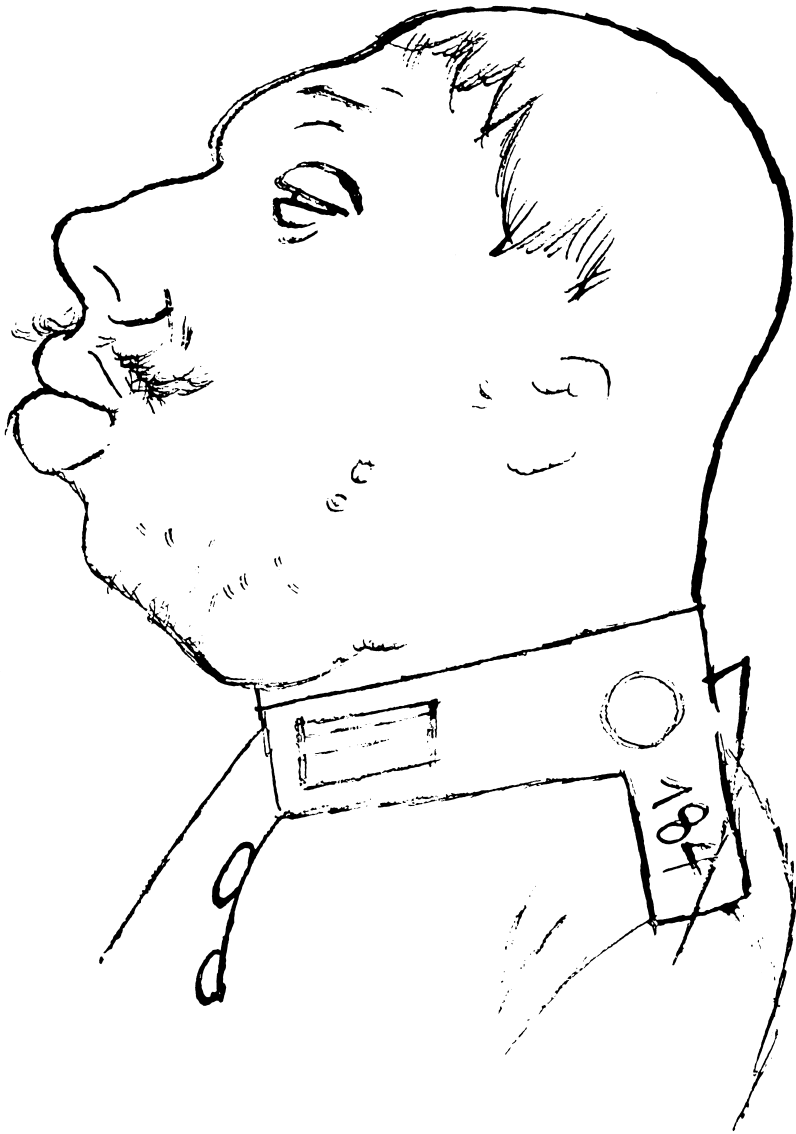




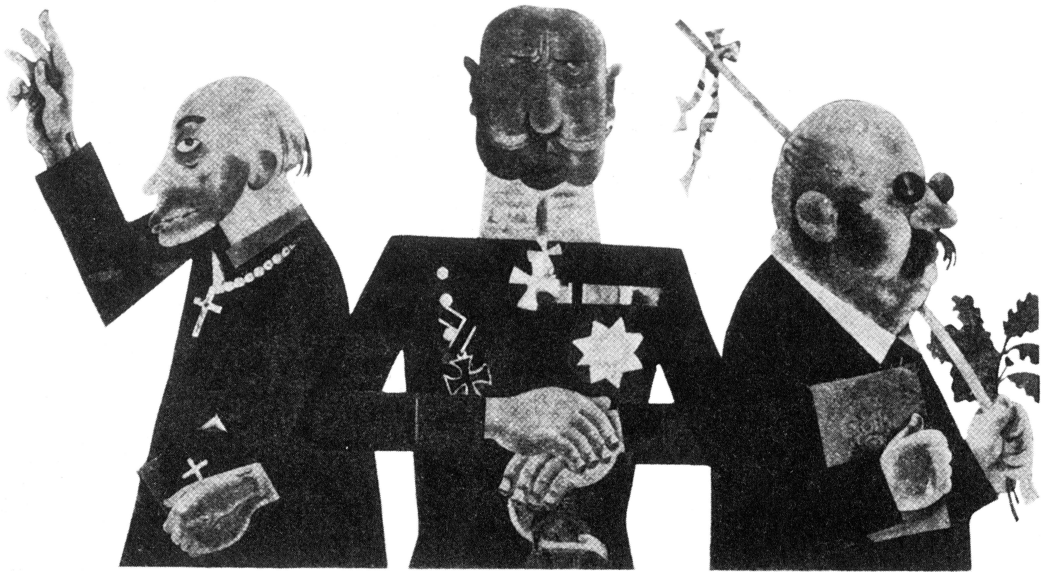






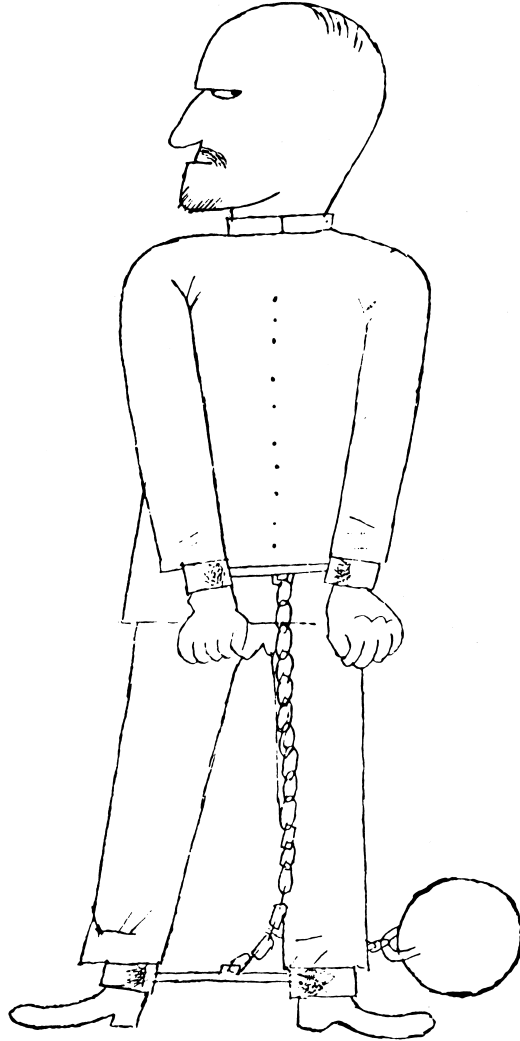
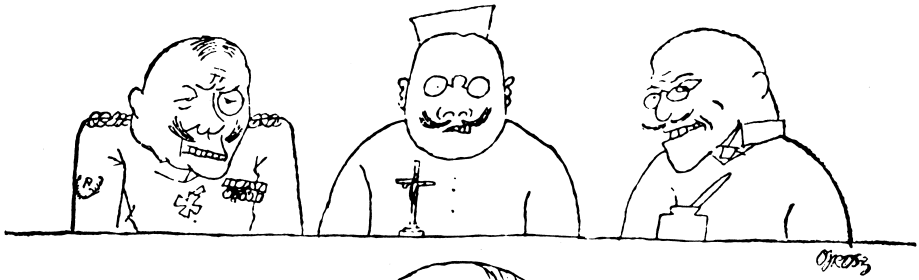


31 None of us can emulate him!



32 We fix as one! We revel as one!
We all have but one enemy: RUSSIA!

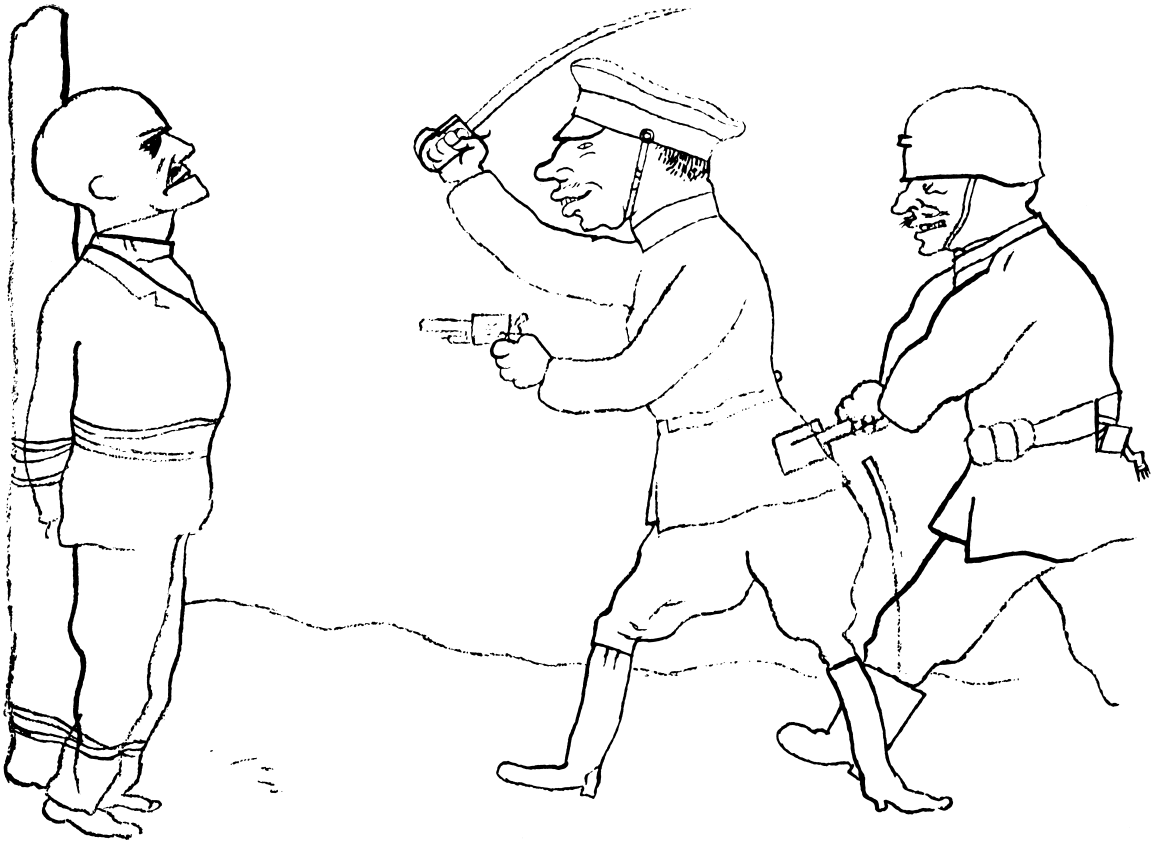






35 Oh Marburg, oh Marburg, you wonderful city
In which many murderers have such good friends!

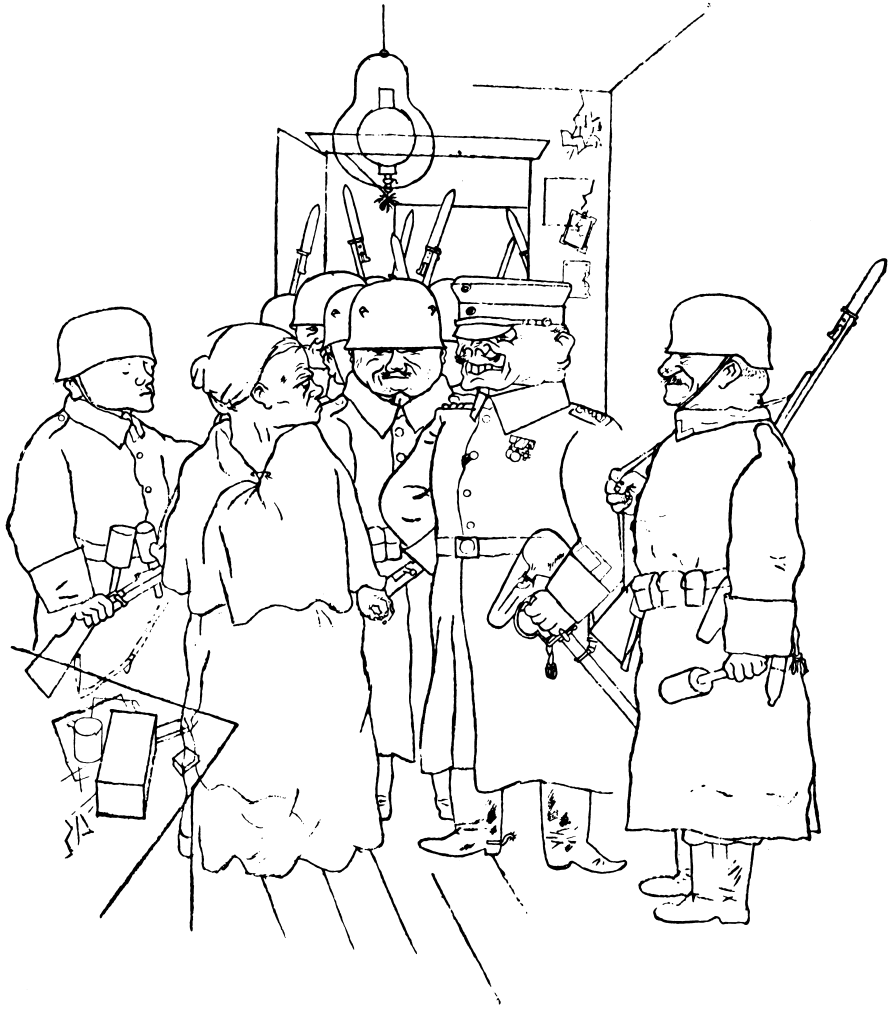


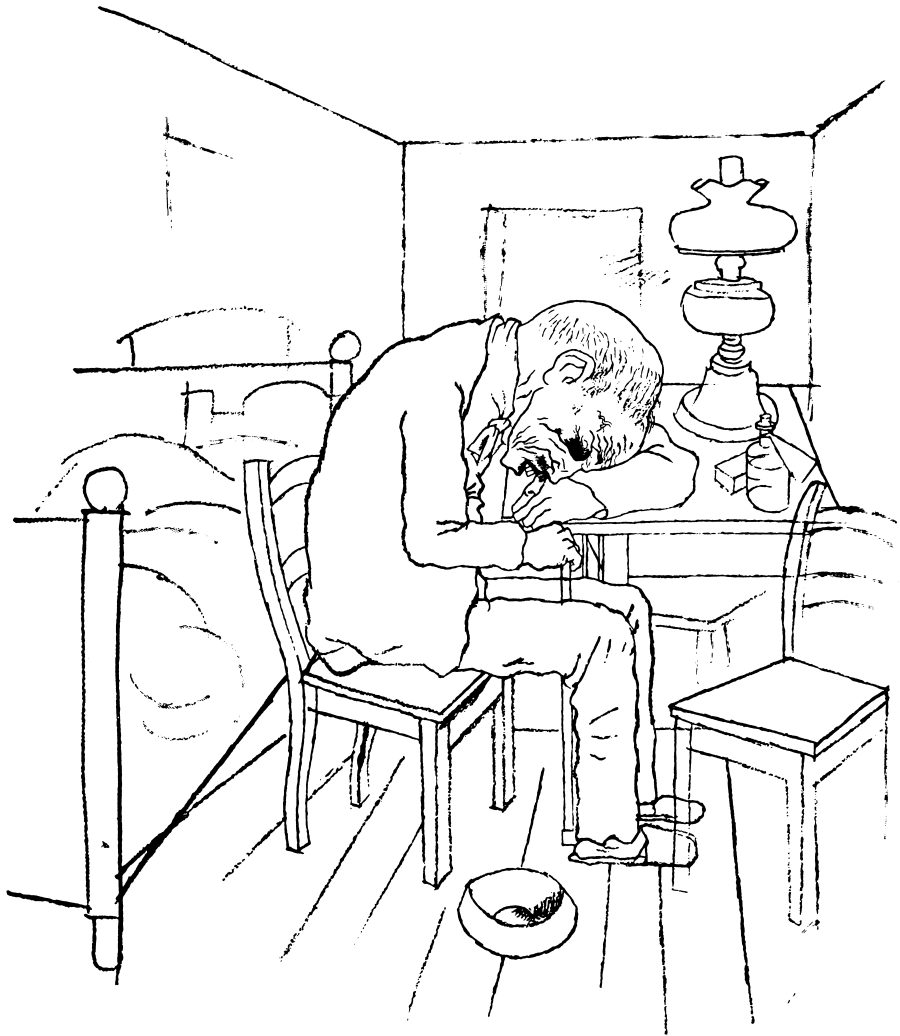






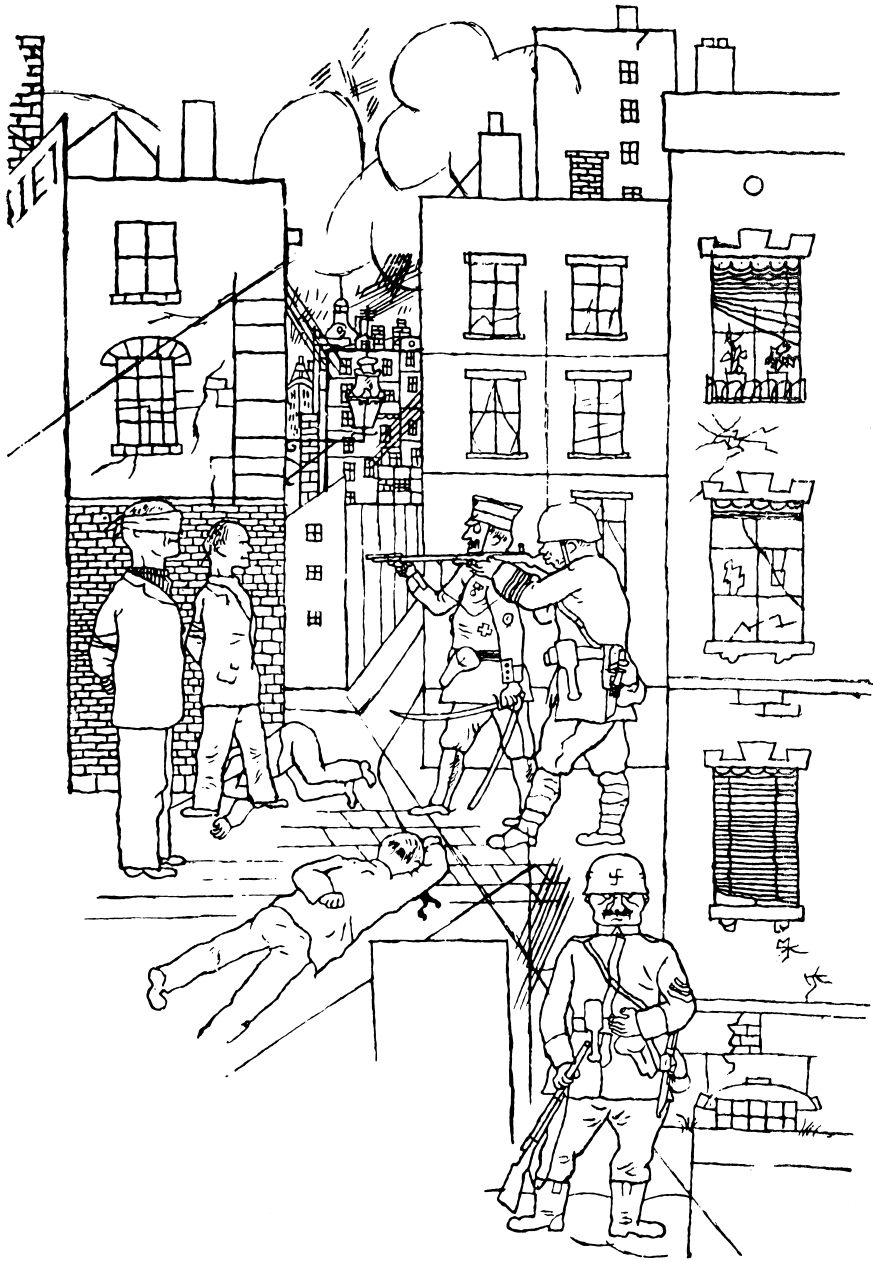




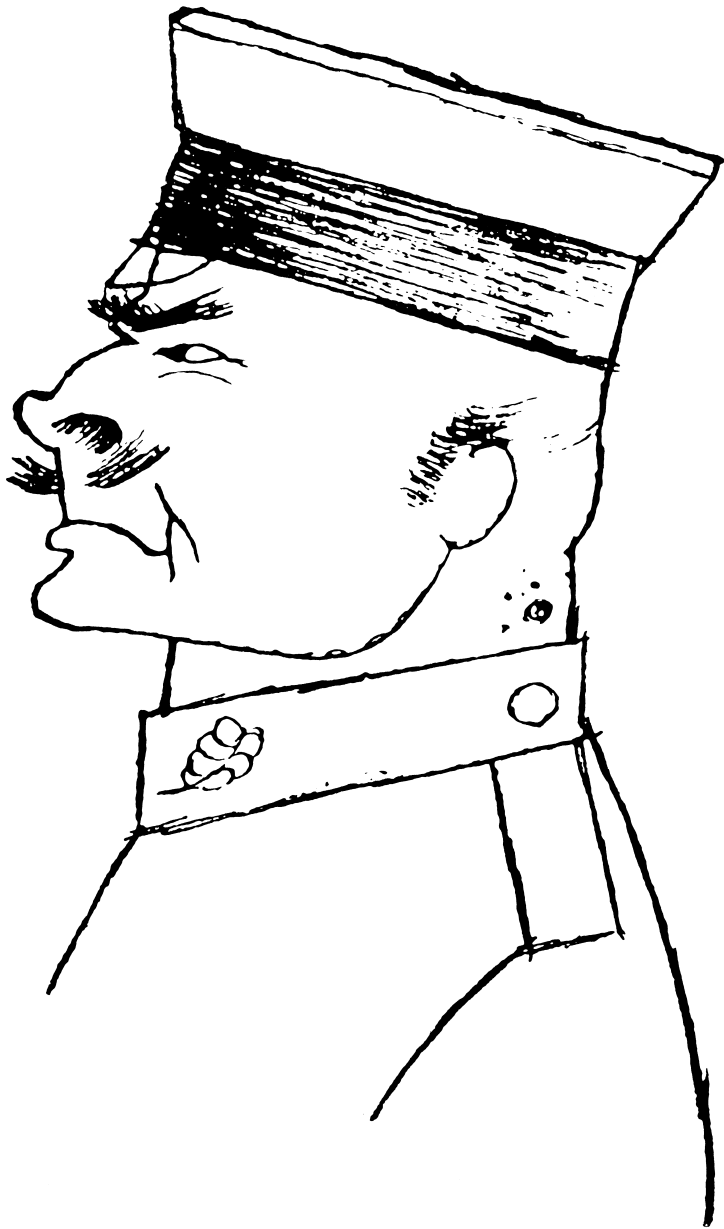


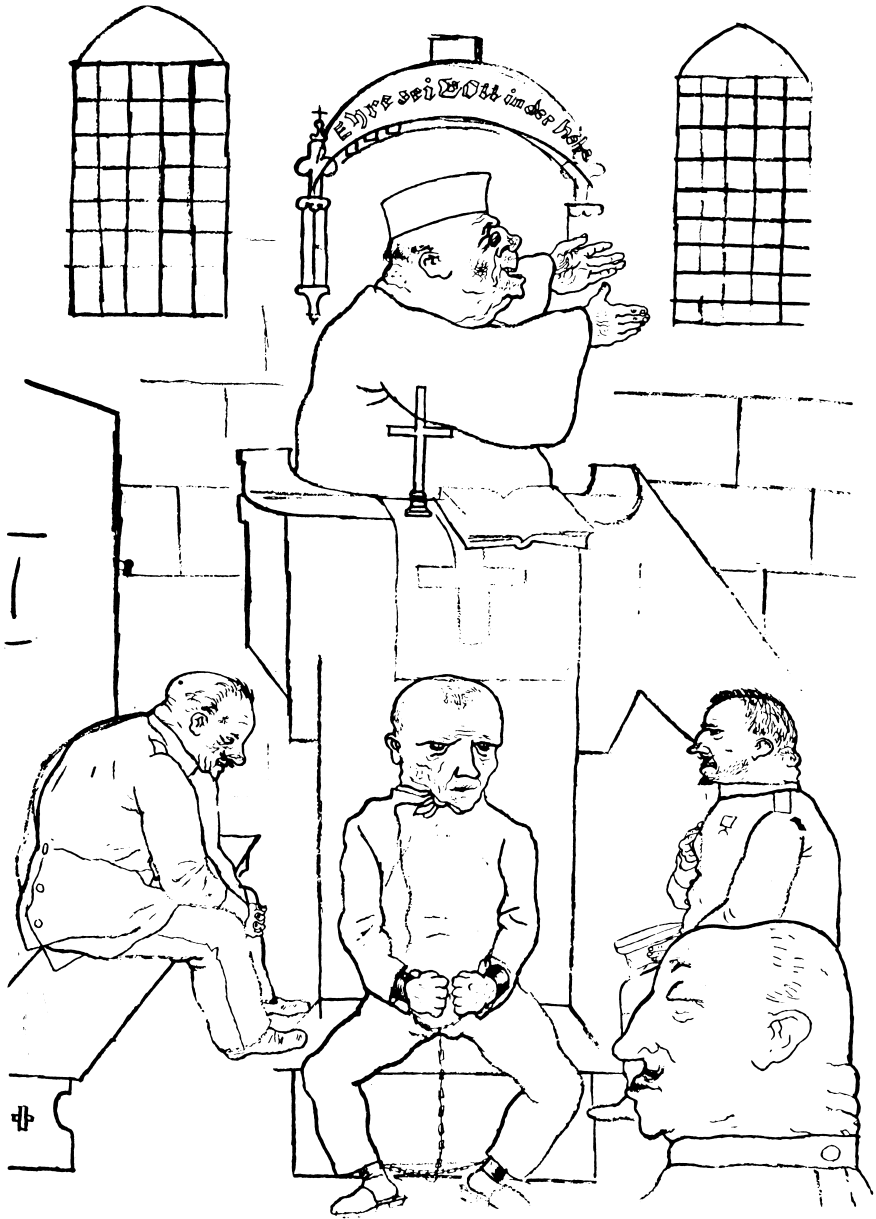




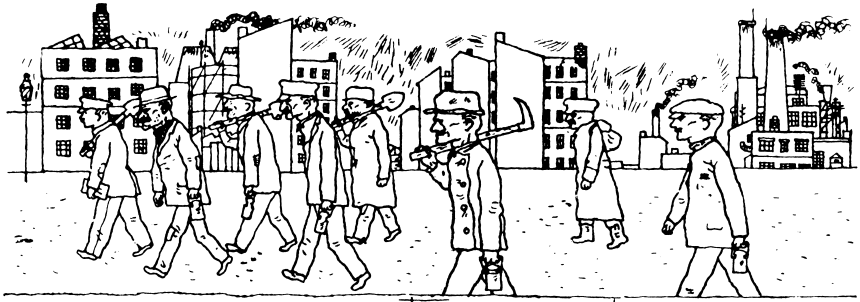


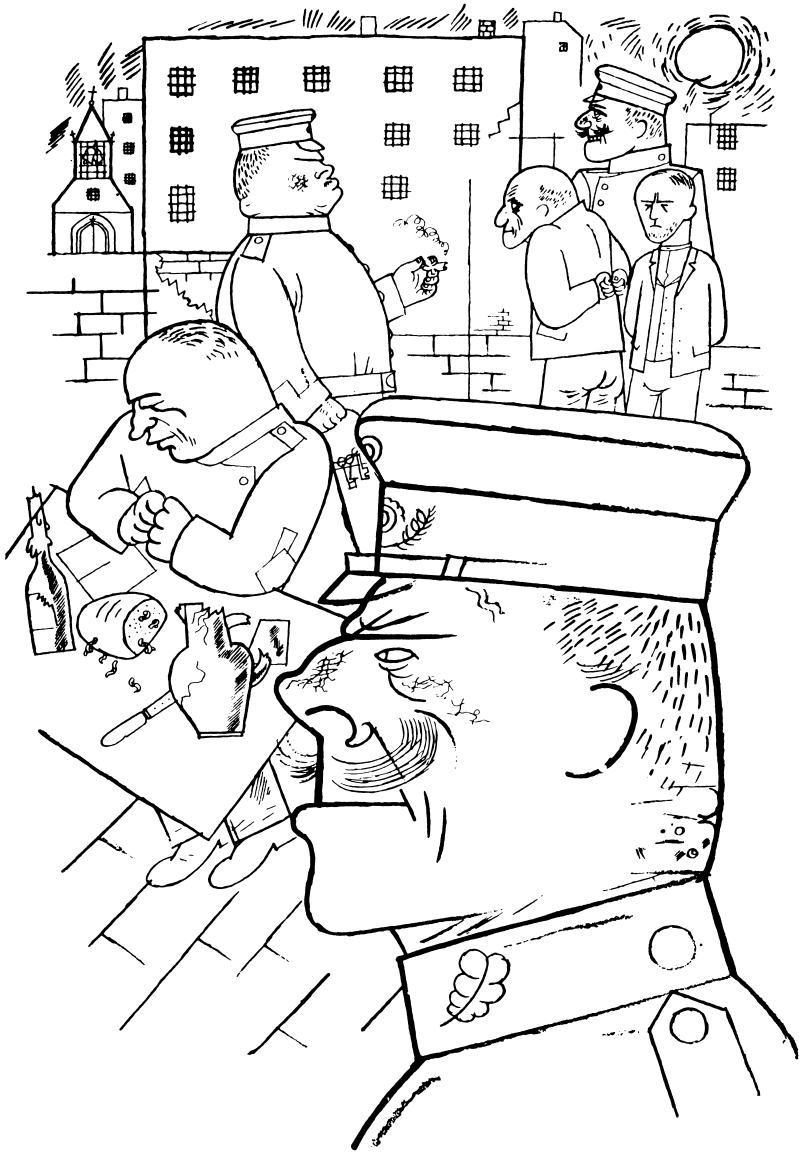












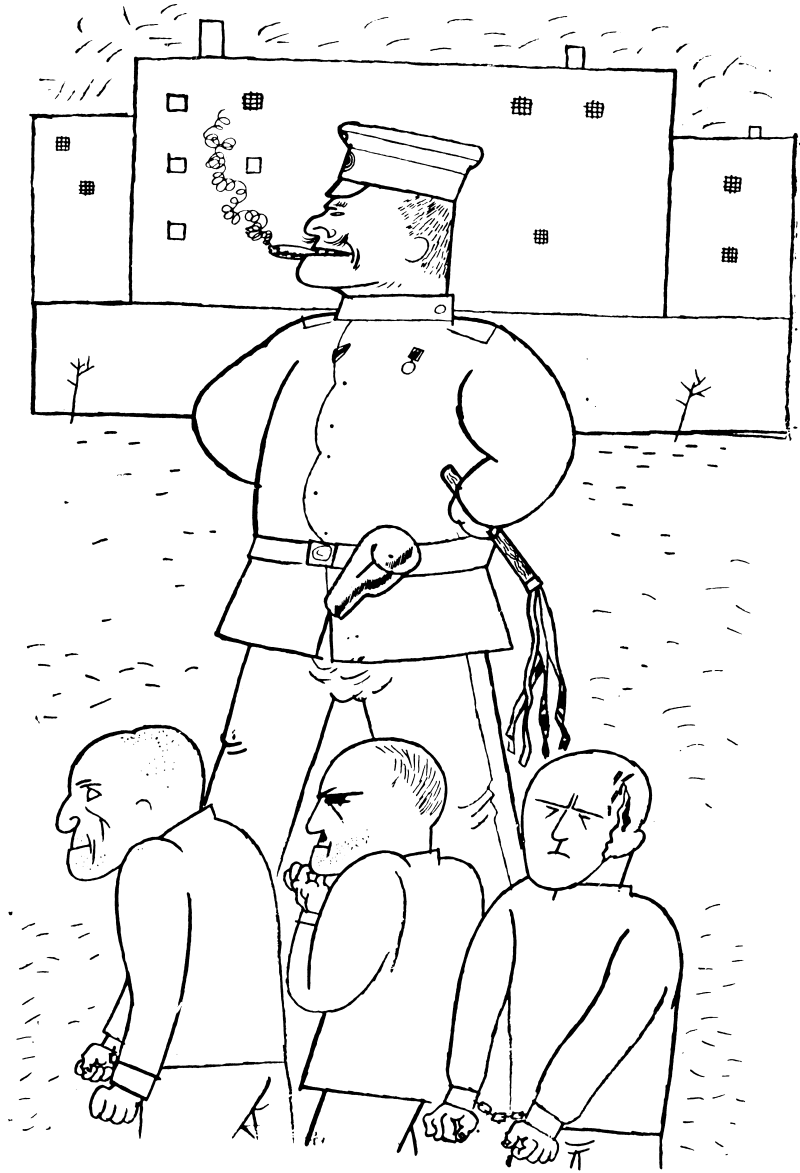


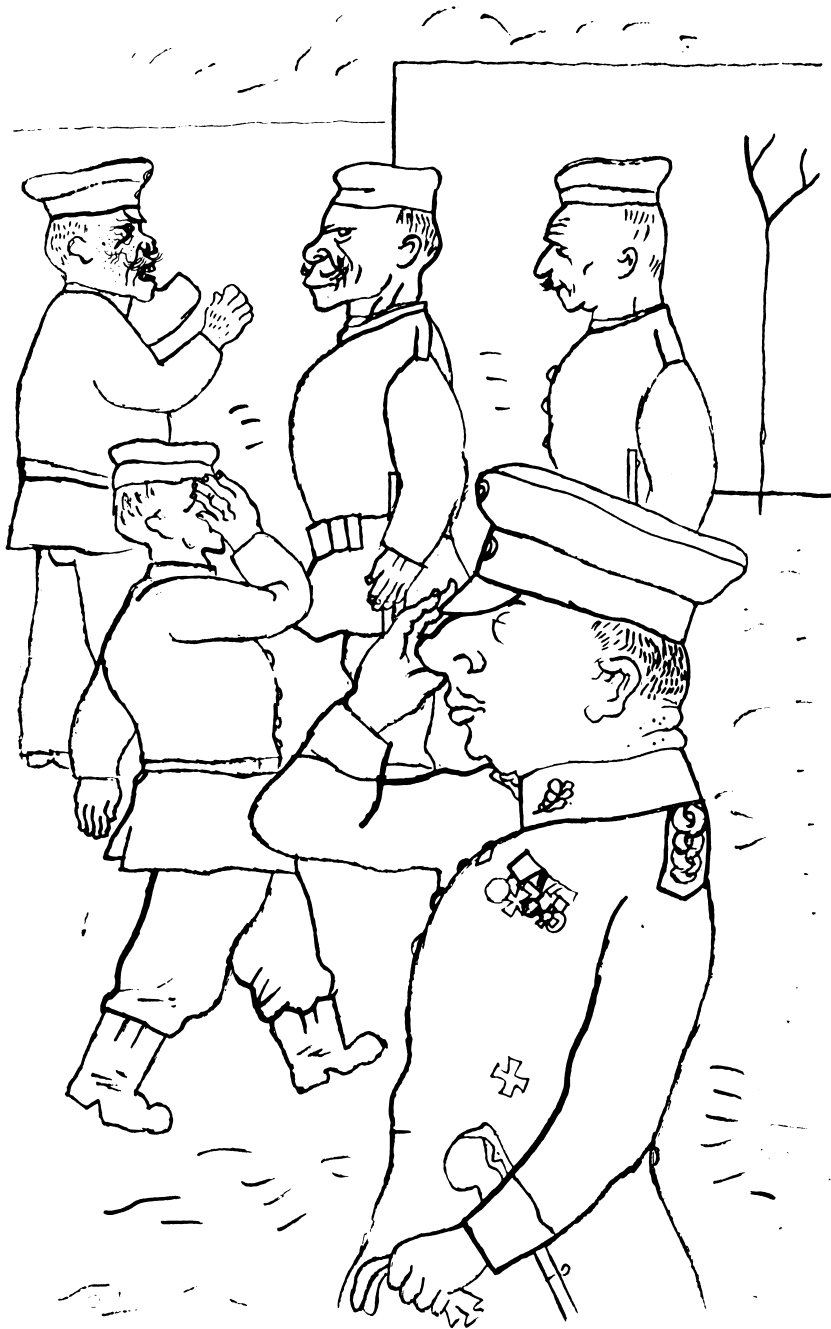


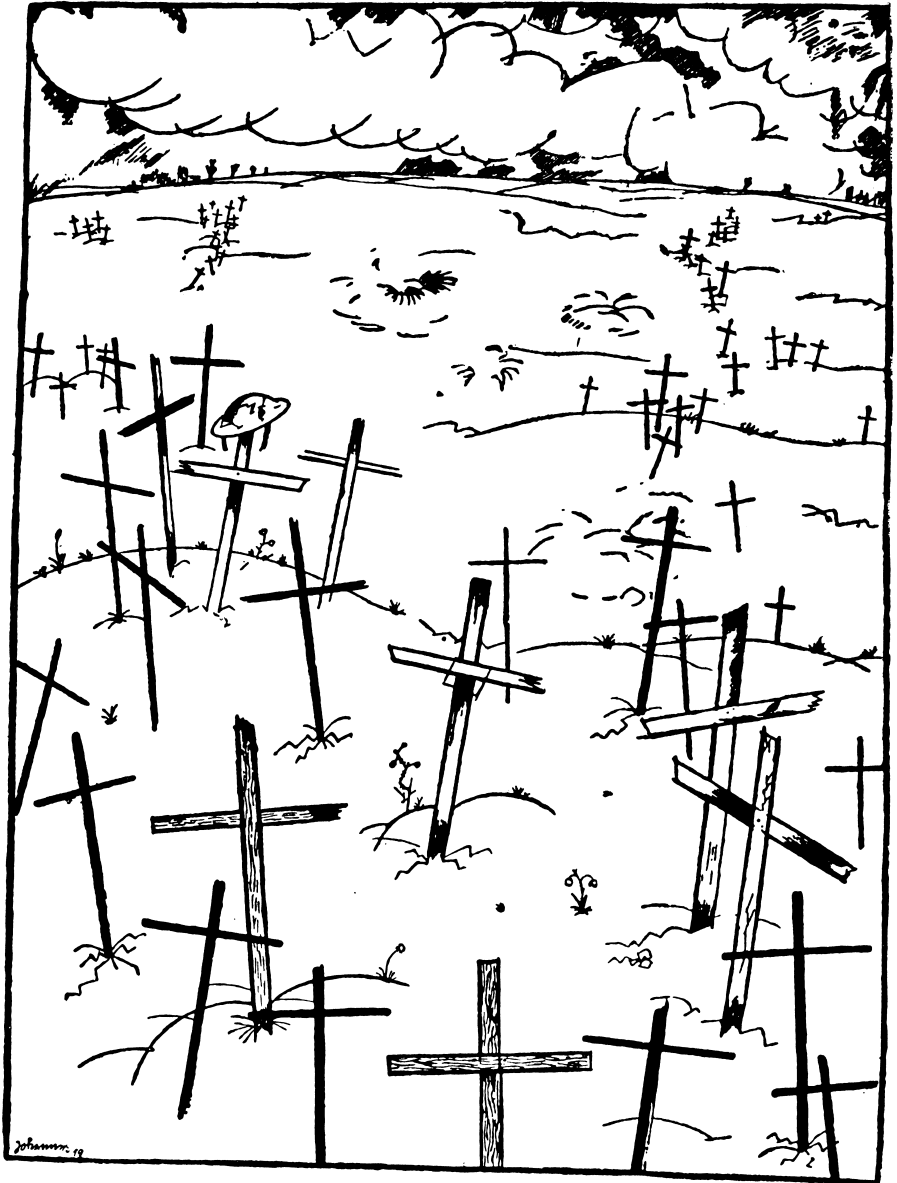
53 Like the masters, so too the lackeys –
revolution is a business for them, too

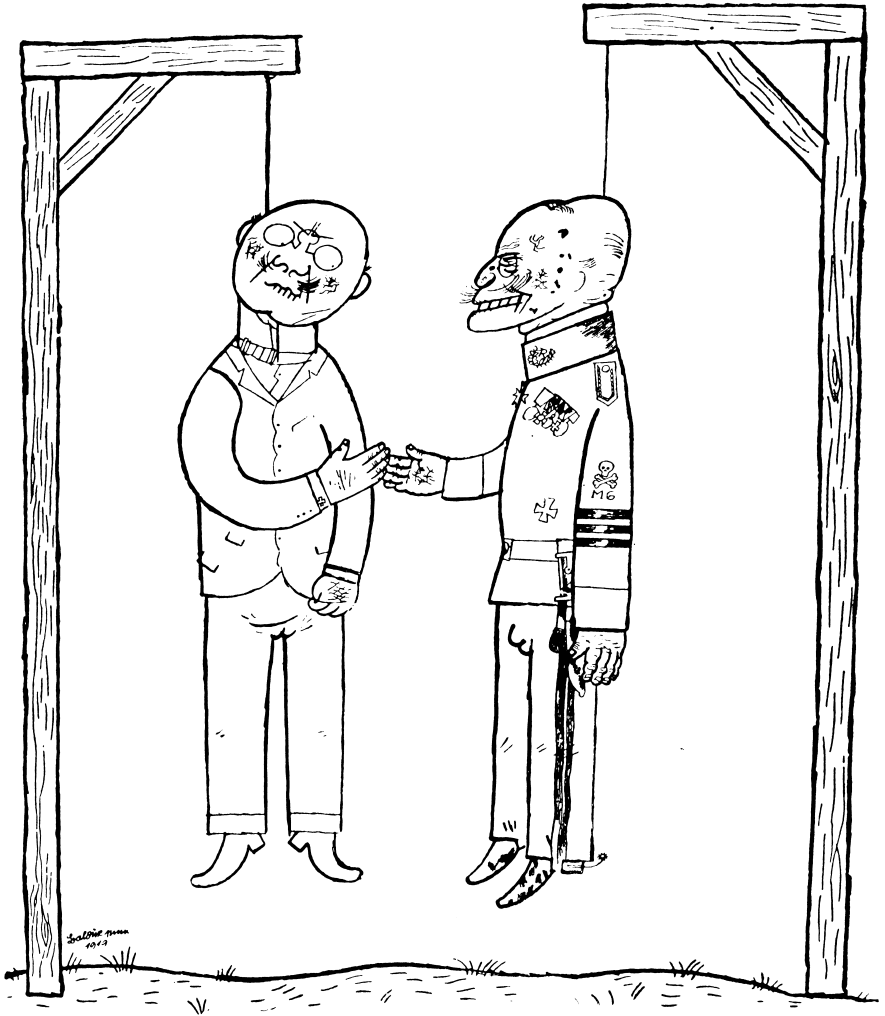












Notes

- 3 The return of ordered conditions
Rückkehr geordneter Zustände
The wreath in the foreground was presented by the leaders of the new, Republican Germany, Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske. *Burgfrieden* refers to the temporary suspension of the parliamentary, adversarial system.
- 4 From the life of a Socialist
Aus dem Leben eines Sozialisten
A portrait of the first President of the Weimar Republic, the Socialist Friedrich Ebert. Grosz shows him wearing a miniature Imperial crown, its cross broken, with his feet on a cushion and being served a drink by a liveried lackey. Ebert's dress, the armchair and the drink on the tray (probably a glass of the typical Berlin beer known as *Weisse*) are characteristic bourgeois attributes. The outward signs of the new Republic may distinguish it from the Reich of Wilhelm II, but fundamental attitudes have not changed.
- 5 Untitled
In place of the toppled statue (of Bismarck?) stands not the 'Iron Chancellor' but 'The Iron Noske', the politician who was responsible for putting the revolution down (see No.30). In his right hand he holds grenades, in his left a proclamation – 'Whoever proceeds will be shot'. At the foot of the plinth is a wreath 'to the great man' from a grateful Germany.
- 6 We go to pray before God the just!
Wir treten zum Beten vor Gott den Gerechten!
The main figures here, all of them representing Nationalist and Imperialist attitudes, later
- reappeared in Grosz's painting 'Pillars of Society' (1926). In the foreground from left to right stand a journalist (holding a sword-like pen), a member of a duelling society and a man with excrement instead of brains who holds a small Imperial flag.
- 7 Fehrenbach, the most Christian Chancellor of the German Reich
Fehrenbach, des deutschen Reiches allerchristlichster Kanzler
Konstantin Fehrenbach, a Centrist politician, became President of the *Reichstag* in 1918 and President of the National Constituent Assembly in 1919. From June 1920 until May 1921 he was German Chancellor. According to this drawing, he dreamed of military revenge (*Revanche*). Behind one of the toy soldiers is a piece of paper which reads 'Disarmament No!!!'.
- 8 The voice of the people is the voice of God
Volkes Stimme ist Gottes Stimme
This drawing includes texts cut from newspapers. Collage was a technique which Grosz had employed since the final years of the war. All the texts express typically reactionary views. The swastika on the donkey's brow (beneath the words 'We Germans fear God') was a symbol for Nationalism generally at this time and had not yet become exclusively associated with the Nazi party.
- 9 It smells of vulgar people here!
's riecht hier nach Pöbell!
If this is a portrait of a specified person, its subject cannot be identified. It was used on the cover of the original edition of this book.
- 10 Give unto the Kaiser that which is the Kaiser's – to the last breath of woman and child!
Gebet dem Kaiser, was des Kaisers ist – bis zum letzten Hauch von Weib und Kind!
The title obviously alludes to the biblical 'Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's'. The drawing shows the German royal family taking

a fortune into exile in Holland while, in Germany, a worker is being strangled by 'deductions from pay' (*Lohnabzug*).

11 Vampires of humanity

Vampire der Menschheit

The two generals are Ludendorff and Hindenburg.

12 How the State Court ought to look

Wie der Staatsgerichtshof aussehen sollte

The framed portrait is of the Spartacist leader Karl Liebknecht who, together with Fosa Luxemburg, had been murdered by *Freikorps* soldiers in 1919.

13 Where the dividends come from ...

Wo die Dividenden herkommen ...

14 ... Where they go

... wo sie hinkommen

15 Post-war idyll

Nachkriegsidyll

The 'wanted' poster on the wall may refer to one (misspelled) Eugen Leviné, a German Communist who took part in the Munich revolution and was executed by shooting squad in June 1919. The sign around the ex-soldier's neck (he is selling matches) reads 'blind'. The signature – Böff – was one of Grosz's favourite pseudonyms.

16 From Kapp's menagerie

Aus Kapps Menagerie

Wolfgang Kapp was a Nationalist who had cofounded the 'German Fatherland Party' in 1916. In March 1920 he attempted to overthrow the government by force of arms and declared himself Chancellor. Civil war followed in many parts of Germany and the Socialists called a general strike in an attempt to restore order. It was successful, Kapp conceded defeat and fled to Sweden.

17 This is the 'Orgesch' which our Stinnes loves!

Das is die Orgesch, die unser Stinnes liebt!

'Orgesch' was an abbreviation for the 'Organisation Escherich', a short-lived paramilitary group which had confused political aims. According to Grosz, it was controlled by the military and consisted largely of (from left to right) South German landowners, Bavarian peasants and members of the military organisation called the *Stahlhelm* (steel helmet). Hugo Stinnes was one of the most powerful capitalists of the period, active in coal-mining, energy production and manufacturing. His aim was to control everything in the economy from the acquisition of raw materials to the production of manufactured goods. In 1920 he was elected to the German parliament as a member of the German People's Party.

18 The Communists fall and the exchange-rates rise!

Die Kommunisten fallen – und die Devisen Steigen!

The title alludes to a phrase used by Rosa Luxemburg in a pamphlet in 1916.

19 Work and don't despair!

Arbeiten und nicht verzweifeln!

The advertisements collaged into the background are for bars, cafés, cabarets, horseraces and other amusements.

20 Workers' sanatorium: Let the proletariat have light and air!

Arbeitersanatorium: Licht und Luft dem Proletariat!

The scene is an exercise yard in the Plötzensee prison, Berlin. The composition is based on the famous illustration by Gustave Doré which also inspired Van Gogh.

21 The toads of possession

Die Besitzkröten

22 For German law and German customs!

Für deutsches Recht und deutsche Sitte!

- 23 God with us!
Gott mit uns!
- 24 These people could, but simply don't want to work!
Diese Leute könnten wohl – sie wollen bloß nicht arbeiten!
- 25 On the Hiller trial: how German manhood is kept upright at the front
Zum Prozeß Hiller: Wie man an der Front deutsche Manneszucht aufrecht erhielt
- 26 The thanks of the Fatherland are yours for certain!
Des Vaterlandes Dank ist euch gewiß!
- 27 Pimps of death
Zuhälter des Todes
Hindenburg is in the centre, Ludendorff on the right. Compare No.11: Grosz repeated himself often, but rarely in the same book.
- 28 The faith-healers or the A1 machines
Die Gesundbeter oder die K.V.-Maschinen
An army doctor pronounces a rotting cadaver fit for active service. K.V. is the abbreviation for *Kriegsverwendungsfähig*, literally 'capable of war use', or 'A1'. The drawing might also play on the German word, popular with the military, *Kadavergehorsam* – 'obedient as a corpse'.
- 29 Halting-place, Ghent
Etappe Gent
A scene from the Great War, showing German soldiers convalescing in Belgium.
- 30 Cheers Noske! The young revolution is dead!
Prost Noske! Die junge Revolution ist tot!
Gustav Noske became a member of the *Reichstag* in 1906 and, in 1919, represented the Majority Socialists in the National Constituent Assembly. From February 1919 until March 1920 he acted as Minister for Defence and in that capacity organised troops loyal to the government (the *Freikorps*) who brutally put down the revolution. They murdered the Spartacist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Noske was regarded with special hatred by the Communists. (See also No.5).
- 31 None of us can emulate him!
Den macht uns keiner nach!
The title refers to what Wilhelm II allegedly said of the 'Captain' of Köpenick.
- 32 We fix as one! We revel as one!
We all have but one enemy: RUSSIA!
*Wir schieben vereint! Wir prassen vereint!
Wir haben alle nur ein Feind: RUSSLAND!*
These are the three main figures from Grosz's painting 'Germany, a Winter's tale' (1919). The figure on the right is a schoolmaster. He holds a copy of Goethe's works, a cane with a ribbon in the Imperial colours tied at the end and some oak leaves (a symbol of German fortitude).
- 33 Ludendorff's return
Ludendorffs Rückkehr
Ebert (right), the President, and Scheidemann (left), the Chancellor of Germany (holding a sword-cum-broken-palm leaf), greet General Ludendorff. Ludendorff had been largely responsible for German military policy during the war, had resigned his post in October 1918 and had fled briefly to Sweden. Here he stands as a symbol of remilitarisation.
- 34 Spartacus on trial
Spartakus vor Gericht
The original Spartacus was a Thracian slave, the leader of the third slaves' revolt against Rome, who had been crucified in 71 B.C. Karl Liebknecht had used the name for his anti-war 'Spartacus letters' which he had begun to publish in January 1916. With Rosa Luxemburg he later led the Spartacus group which, inspired by the Bolsheviks, sought to impose the rule of the proletariat by force. The German Communist Party emerged from the Spartacists at the end of 1918.

35 Oh Marburg, oh Marburg, you wonderful city
In which many murderers have such good
friends!

*O Marburg, o Marburg, du wunderschöne
Stadt,
Darinnen mancher Mörder gar gute Freunde
hat!*

Marburg is the location of one of Germany's
oldest and best universities and the title plays
on a student drinking song. The figure in the
cap in the foreground is a patron of one of
the student duelling associations. These clubs
were a hot-bed of reaction and Nationalism.

36 The court of the ruling class

Das Gericht der herrschenden Klasse

The German title is a play on the similarity
between *Gericht* (court) and *Gesicht* (face).

37 'Shot whilst escaping'

'Auf der Flucht erschossen'

This is how the *Freikorps* described their
murder of the Spartacist leaders Liebknecht
and Luxemburg in 1919.

38 Hohenzollern Renaissance

HOHENZOLLERN-RENAISSANCE

A collage, in which the faces of some
celebrated political figures have been
superimposed on a painting of the royal family
(the Kaiser was a Hohenzollern.) 'The
unhappy married couple' on the left are
Wolfgang Kapp (see No.16) and Walter
Lüttwitz, the leader of the troops supporting
Kapp in his putsch. Erich Koch was Minister
for Home Affairs from October 1919 until May
1921. Gustav Bauer was Chancellor from
August 1919 until March 1920 and then
Treasury Minister. Adolf Köster was Minister
for Foreign Affairs from April until June 1920
and in October 1921 took over Home Affairs.
Hermann Müller was Chancellor from March
until June 1920. Hermann Ehrhardt, 'the
troublesome son', was a naval officer who,
during the putsch of March 1920, had led
troops occupying government buildings. Ebert
was the President. Otto Gessler was Minister

for Reconstruction until March 1920 when
he took over defence. He is described here
as 'the girl from the Bendlerstrasse', which
is where the German Admiralty was situated.
General Oskar, Freiherr von Watter and Carl
Severing, a Social Democrat and
Reichskommissar for the Ruhr area, were
responsible for brutally putting down a left-
wing rebellion in 1920. The point of the
collage, signed, incidentally, with a rubber
stamp, was to make a comparison between
the new rulers of Germany and the repressive,
authoritarian *ancien régime*.

39 Because he demanded work!

Weil er Arbeit forderte!

40 For the sake of 'internal peace' ...

Um des 'Inneren Friedens' willen ...

41 ... the 'greens' are sent as friends to the
people,

*... schickt man die 'Grünen' als Freunde dem
Volk,*

The 'greens' were the army – it was the colour
of soldiers' uniforms.

42 ... and grant the jobless man his daily death
benefit.

*... und gönnt dem Arbeitslosen sein tägliches
Sterbegeld.*

43 God-willed dependence

Gottgewollte Abhängigkeit

44 Stinnes & Co., or the dealers in humanity

*Stinnes & Cie. oder die Menschen-
schacherer*

Arbeit means work. For Stinnes see No.17.

45 For national reasons ...

Aus vaterländischen Motiven –

46 End of the day's work

Feierabend

The twin towers of the Marienkirche dominate
the skyline of Munich in the background. On

- 7 April 1919 Munich briefly became the capital of the revolutionary, 'Soviet' Republic of Bavaria. The national government in Berlin sent a number of *Freikorps* detachments South to link up with loyal forces and suppress the dissident regime. There was a great deal of bloodshed before the *Freikorps* triumphed. These events form the background to Grosz's drawing.
- 47 The German plague
Die deutsche Pest
- 48 Come unto me all ye who are troubled and heavy-laden!
Kommet zu mir, die ihr mühselig und beladen seid!
The words behind the priest read 'Glory to God in the highest'.
- 49 Businessman's initiative
Unternehmer-Initiative
- 50 Early at 5 o'clock!
Früh um 5 Uhr!
- 51 Bavarian order-cell
Bayrische Ordnungszelle
- 52 Reconstruction
Wiederaufbau
- 53 Like the masters, so too the lackeys –
revolution is a business for them, too
Wie die Herren so die Knechte ...
... auch Revolution is ihnen ein Geschäft
- 54 Swamp flowers of capitalism
Sumpflumen des Kapitalismus
- 55 Pillars of society
Stützen der Gesellschaft
- 56 Perfected democracy
Vollendete Demokratie
- 57 The German idea in the world
Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt
- 58 Freedom is assured them
Ihnen ist der Friede gesichert
- 59 Parting hurts!
Scheiden tut weh!