

„WE MAKE HISTORY“
„FÜHRER LOOK AT YOU“
„BLOOD AND SOIL“

RESISTANCE THROUGH ART BY RICHARD ZIEGLER

From April to November 2018 the exhibition „Through the Filter of the Soul“ in the Hermann Hesse Museum in Calw showed the Calwer artists Rudolf Schlichter, Kurt Weinhold und Richard Ziegler - all three representatives of the New Objectivity who experienced an artistic heyday in the Weimarer Republic. However, these successes came to an abrupt end with the Nazi takeover.

Richard Ziegler, born in Pforzheim on 3.May 1891, was a painter, draughtsman and graphic artist. He graduated from the Reuchlin Gymnasium and attended in 1910 the Shakespeare Grammar School in Stratford-upon-Avon. He then studied German language and literature in Geneva, Heidelberg and Greifswald. In 1914 to 1918 he had to take part in World War I, but he was able to complete his doctorate in Heidelberg.

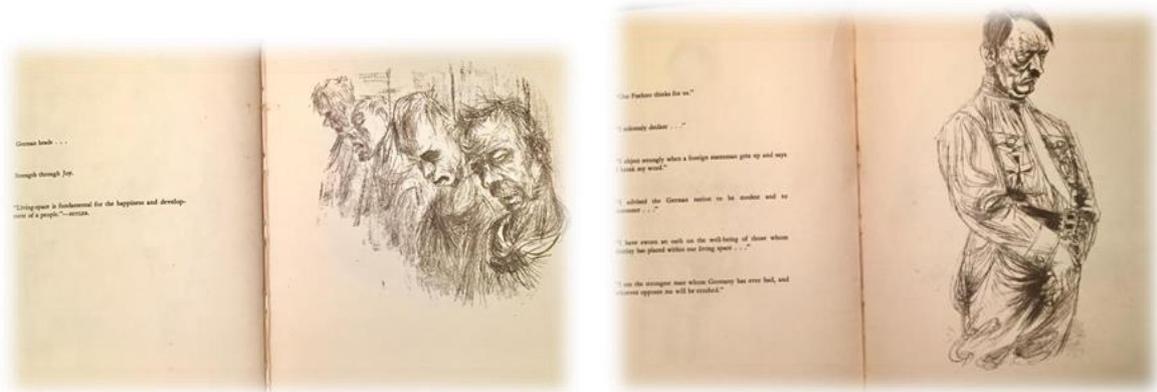
In 1920 was the beginning of his artistic career. He undertook many study trips to Italy and Switzerland. In 1925 Ziegler moved to Berlin. There he took part in various exhibitions of the „Novembergruppe“. This group of artists, formed in 1918, had given itself its name after the German Revolution of 1918/1919, which led to the fall of the monarchy the German Reich. As a result, the Weimar Republic was proclaimed on November 9th 1918, in which a parliamentary democracy was established for the first time in Germany. The aim of the „Novembergruppe“ was to unite art and people. It also tried to influence cultural tasks in public. But the work of the group ended with the National Socialists seizure of power, following Adolf Hitler appointment as Reich Chancellor on the 30th January 1933.



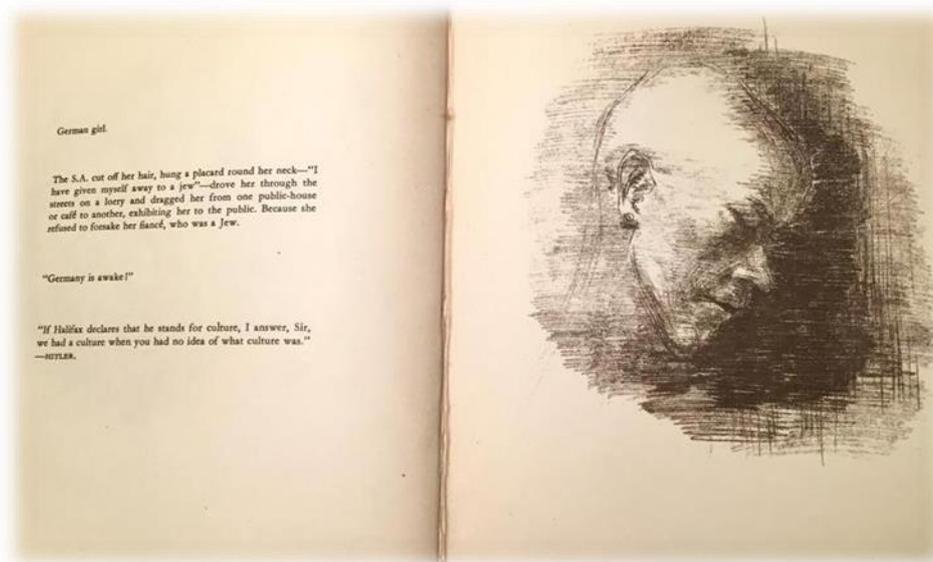
Richard Ziegler - Porträt von 1933

Due to these circumstances Richard Ziegler left Berlin with the realisation : „My work is now regarded as anti-state and anti-cultural“. He writes in his diary on 23.2.1933 :“Scheduled official contamination. Nationalist plague. Gagging of every great free human (christian!)

These drawings are not just caricatures - they reveal facts! Behind the masks, cruel distortions emerge, marked by true sentiments.



Even today, the „dictatorship“ depicted by Ziegler seems as ridiculous as it is frightening to us. He succeeds in exposing these inhuman rulers with the pencil. Berthold Brecht would say: Disfigure to the point of recognizability.



I was allowed to get to know Richard Ziegler personally and was invited to his high honorary days at the 100th Birthday Party - organized by the city of Calw and the Richard-Ziegler-Foundation - in May 1991. Fortunately, I could speak to him : he still found clear words regarding to his painting and about his lifelong struggle for to express the light truthfully.

In February 1992 Richard Ziegler crossed the threshold. With his artistic work he resisted injustice and inhumanity and left us a great legacy.

Written by
Inga Jäger