

Contents

Preface: The New Life	xiii
1: When the War Came Home	I
The first few days	I
Unholy alliance	9
Undefeated in the field, but vanquished by women	17
‘You can’t dance the shame from your body’	20
‘Day labourers of death’	28
Frontline experience, domestic misery	33
Servants of state in the crosshairs	40
Ebert, a man despised	43
2: When Money Dies	49
Loser pays all	49
Live for the moment	54
Inflation, new freedom and moral collapse – Otto Dix & Co. see the Republic as one big brothel	63
The turning point: 20 pfennigs = 120 billion marks	68
Hurtling again, but upwards this time	73
3: Extreme Living	79
In the Bauhaus house	79
‘We actually live like pigs, terribly thoughtlessly’	86
Door to door – new building for the urban masses	91

Built euphoria	96
The flat roof as a matter of conscience. <i>Heimatschutz</i> architecture	101
4: 'Destinies Behind Typewriters' – The Supporting Class of the New Age	109
At eight o'clock in the morning strange beings populate the streets	109
Quick even when sitting down: the quiet dramas of the office	115
'I want to stay pretty for as long as I can'	120
Intellectuals in the office – cameos from the upper class	125
5: Precarious Balance: The Death of Ebert, the Arrival of Hindenburg	131
The president sits a posthumous test – and so does the Republic	131
The hero of Tannenberg in blackredmustard	134
Flag dispute on a Baltic beach	138
6: Traffic as the Art of Citizenship	143
'Never too near or too far': the city and the sense of touch	143
A city without people	156
Flaneurs and car drivers	158
'Thinking ore' and singing cars	160
Up and away – women at the wheel	166
7: The Charleston Years	175
'They pay, and you must dance'	175
'Shimmy shake!'	179
Out of Africa	187
Shisha pipes in Haus Vaterland, an office in Moka Efti	195
8: Self-optimisation: Perfecting Leisure and the Body	205
Lunapark	205
In the cinema: visible voices	209

‘Poets should box’	215
<i>The Blue Light</i> – Leni Riefenstahl emancipates herself as well	226
‘I’m only really cheerful in my association’	229
Struggle, against whomever	235
9: Between Woman and Man – Gender Doubts	241
‘The fashionable, skinny half-boy’	241
Politics with hair-scissors: the bob	244
<i>Rittmasters</i> with bosoms – the cultural appropriation of the monocle	248
Strong women, insecure men	252
Bull necks, archangels, character studies and pea-brains – on the physiognomy of the Weimar Republic	258
10: The Work Runs Out	267
New York miscalculates, and the stone starts rolling	267
Black zero: budgetary consolidation at any price	271
A yarn manufacturer from Delmenhorst is the final straw – the plunge is unstoppable	275
Unemployed, and not on benefits	279
Work and home: the land of timeless industry	282
The jobless don’t dream of revolution	284
‘Productive and parasitic capital’ – wounded honour among workers and anti-Semitism	288
11: The Mood Plummets, Taste Adapts – Cultural Conflicts in a Time of Depression	295
‘It Only Happens Once, It’ll Never Come Again’: peak performances in spite of the crisis	295
Rule of the inferior: nothing but trash?	300
Campaigns of optimism for the climate of consumption	308
The uprising of the provinces: agrarian romanticism and ecology	310
The end of the Charleston	320

12: Evening Over Potsdam – the End of a Community of Communication	327
Banquet with easel	327
On the left <i>Die Weltbühne</i> , on the right <i>Die Tat</i>	334
Please be as ruthless as possible: arrogance and submission	340
13: Lonely Elites – Cabinet Politics vs Populism	345
The prelude: coup in Prussia – von Papen drives the regional government out of office	345
Final offer: networker Kurt von Schleicher and the cross-party front	350
14: The End: Chancellor Hitler	361
Celebration and terror	361
From chancellor to Führer out of ‘heart-breaking disunity’	367
Democracy abolishes itself	371
Epilogue	379
Bibliography	391
Endnotes	405
Acknowledgements	429
Picture credits	431
Text credits	433
Index	435