

Lexikon der Revolutions-Ikonographie in der europäischen Druckgraphik (1789–1889)

[Lexicon of Revolution Iconography in European Graphic Prints (1789–1889)]

Rolf Reichardt (ed.)

with Wolfgang Cilleßen, Jasmin Hähn, Moritz F. Jäger, Martin Miersch, and Fabian Stein

An interdisciplinary handbook of the history of illustrative political journalism

An international culture of illustrations with a tendency towards democratic convictions was an integral part of the identity of 'old' Europe. This was suppressed by the counter-revolutionary and nationalistic movements of the 19th century and today the abundance of those illustrations and their long term interrelations have become almost forgotten. These comprise the international political symbolic language of diverse visual topoi found in images of events, symbols, and caricature. Most were commercial graphics by unknown artists and have largely been neglected by art and other historians.

With openly didactical-educational intent, these illustrations would, in a concise manner, demonstrate what 'despotism' and 'freedom' were, explain the relationship between 'progression' and 'reaction' and freedom of the press and censorship, show how political orientation could be expressed in physiognomy, body language and clothing, and how the 'bourgeoise' and the 'red' republic were different from one another. Furthermore, they politicized the roles of traditional religious and mythological characters such as 'St. George' and Diogenes and coined new symbolic figures such as the 'aristocrat', the 'sans-culottes', and the (revolutionary) 'blouse wearer'. Formed during the French Revolution utilizing both old and newer elements, this political symbolic language spread out through all of Europe within a century, propagated by the increasing mass-production of printed materials, e.g. flyers and illustrated journals. This was achieved through a wealth of allusions in re-use of illustrations using direct quotations, adaptations, and polemic reversals and conversions, which can be traced down along their way through history in chosen motives.

This is the objective of the sixty authors of the LRI in their 120 detailed documentary essays. The essays are all based on a common iconographic corpus of illustrations which were collected with the support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation). The illustrations were compiled from numerous collections and are available in an online database. This three volume work is rounded up by indices of the illustrations' titles, the artists, names and subjects.

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