

## **A new start in the GDR**

'As we have come to love the English so much, and London has become very dear to us, it is only out of a sense of duty that we are returning', Heartfield wrote to his brother Wieland in October 1946. With his poor health and the difficulty of obtaining visas to enter Germany, however, Heartfield, Gertrud ('Tutti') – who would later become his wife – and their cat did not arrive in Leipzig until August 1950. There, bitter disappointment awaited him. The technique of photomontage, the very core of his work, was officially rejected as formalistic and decadent.

Heartfield eventually managed to establish himself in the GDR, thanks to commissions for the theatre, but he was not awarded any larger projects. Furthermore, he was accused of having had contact with a US secret agent, Noel Field, during his exile in London. As a result, he was not allowed to join the Party (SED) 'for security reasons'.

The efforts of some good friends – particularly Bertolt Brecht and Stefan Heym – eventually led to Heartfield's rehabilitation and the recognition of his work. In July 1956 he was finally admitted to the Party. In October that year he was appointed a member of the Deutsche Akademie der Künste (Germany Academy of Arts), and he moved from Leipzig to East Berlin. Membership of the academy came with modest financial support and a few privileges. In 1957, the academy paid for Heartfield to go to China on a study trip lasting several months, along with two Meisterschüler from the academy, Werner Stötzer and Harald Metzkes.