

Podcast three- Who had the right to expect what?

It has always been difficult for me to imagine why my great-aunt Angelika Hoerle would alienate her parents by eloping with Heinrich Hoerle.

Family photographs indicate she was a beauty. She was musically accomplished, artistically gifted, politically astute and earned a small income as a millinery apprentice from 1915 onwards. As the last child in the Fick family she had been indulged by her parents and older siblings. She was able to visit art exhibitions and music events, including the symphony and opera, whenever she wanted-- always clad like a fashion plate.

Heinrich Hoerle, by contrast, had dropped out of secondary school, wandered penniless around Europe and worked for the circus before returning to Cologne to set up an atelier in his parents' home on Erfstrasse. His girlfriend Milly Theophil had died suspiciously of a lower body inflammation in 1917; his father had died of tuberculosis during the war. Hoerle had no income and few prospects.

Heinrich and Angelika probably met through Angelika's brother Willy Fick whose part time studies at the Cologne Applied Arts School before the war had overlapped with Hoerle's short time there. There were, however, other possible intersection points that include the Café Luna, the Jatho discussion group and the Fick family music evenings, all magnets for those against the war and for the arts.

Marta Hegemann recounts a meeting between Angelika and Heinrich in an unpublished manuscript she wrote immediately after Angelika's death. In her memory she paints a picture of a tall, fashionable woman who swept through rooms like a princess meeting a man Marta later refers to as a dwarf. Angelika was indeed at least a head taller than Hoerle.

What then was the allure? According to many different accounts, Hoerle, like her favourite brother Willy, was incredibly funny. His sarcastic wit and inspired repartee made him the focus of any gathering. He had a brooding intensity. According to Hegemann, Hoerle said he would marry Angelika the first time he saw her and he stuck to that resolve with determination. Although he was still officially linked with Milly Theophil, Hoerle wrote Angelika from the front and then pursued her relentlessly until their elopement a mere six months later. Their courtship took place during the heady days of street fighting and revolution in 1918-1919 when artists all over Germany felt empowered to start anew. Artists were politically on fire. Hoerle worked on his Cripple Portfolio and Angelika on political cartoons for the United Socialist Parties of Germany. They broke the curfew of the British Occupiers to bring art to the people by placarding original works around Cologne.

In the adrenalin of the times, Angelika must have seen a union with this witty, talented, smouldering man as a means for them to advance each other and their drive towards societal renewal. Certainly there must have been chemistry. However, right from her father's stinging denunciation of Angelika with the words, "I no longer have a daughter" to their dicey honeymoon in the Eifel mountains, which Hoerle hated, to the economic necessities that forced Hoerle to paint bars and nightclubs part time, the marriage began to unravel. The more successful Angelika became as an artist and political figure, the more difficult the marriage was for them both. As the revolution sputtered, Dada failed to attain its

goals of clearing out everything old and the pre-war establishment consolidated its hold on politics and culture, the spotlight turned back on the personal, the marriages made right after war.

The men liked the sexual freedoms represented by the new woman; independent females such as Angelika, Marta Hegemann and Luise Straus-Ernst were drawn to the equality of opportunity that the new voting woman represented. In spite of Marta and Lou having children, they wanted to pursue their careers--which they could have with the help of their husbands. Obviously these particular men and women did not perceive 'the new woman' in the same way. It was no accident that Ernst and Hoerle left their wives in the fall of 1922--both headed to another woman. Max pursued the sexually gregarious Gala Eluard while Hoerle was drawn to Marta Kleinertz, known as Tata, the wife of architect Willi Kleinertz. Although Anton Raederscheidt stayed with Marta, he started to paint lonely pairs.

Whatever drew Angelika and Heinrich, Marta and Anton and Lou and Max together in 1918 and 1919, commitment was the issue by 1922--Commitment to art and commitment to marriage.

We may learn a lot about these same issues today by discussing the question: Who had the right to expect what?