NOT LONG AFTER THE WAR ended, an American art critic said: "It will be 25 years or so before Germany's artists will produce anything new and genuinely worthwhile..."

Last month, a 25-man show of West Berlin artists opened in Washington, D.C., and makes a mockery of this forecast. The 60 drawings and paintings, the first US exhibit of postwar German art, re-emphasize Berlin's notable art history and exhibit the pioneering touch of old. There are canvases by the now-classic Carl Hofer and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, already known in US museums, and dynamic works by artists just getting their start. There are painters of many traditions—surrealists, abstractionists, expressionists and more. They present a survey of all that is going on in modern art, not only in Germany, but throughout the world.

To Americans who will see the show in smaller art centers and universities, it may reflect little of the city from which it came. Known today as an outpost of freedom, 105 miles behind the Iron Curtain, and associated with such dramatic postwar events as the Airlift, it may not be pictured as the still devastated site of World War II's incessant bombing and the anarchic poverty which followed. Americans may not remember that for the years of Nazi rule, freedom of expression was a myth. But from this background of hardship, these men painted and produced a show.

BERLIN IS JUDGED generally to be one of West Germany's leading art centers, ranking with Duesseldorf, Munich and Stuttgart. But, absorbed in its flight against Communism's economic squeeze, it is not notably kind to its artists; there is too little money to support them. Out of this circumstance came the desire of Berlin's artists to exhibit outside their city, preferably in a place where their work might become known to prospective buyers.

Meanwhile, in the United States, curiosity about Germany's artists had been aroused. Harbinger of the present show was a folio of reproductions of German art work distributed to America by the German-American art group Prolog, formed in Berlin shortly after the war. In summer 1950, Mrs. John Alexander Pope of the American Federation of Arts contacted Dr. Beryl McClaskey, American founder of Prolog, and machinery was set in motion for a show.

Prolog and other small art societies of Berlin, consulted on show plans, dredged their resources for the financial means necessary to transport a show to America. They couldn't afford it. Then the Office of the US High Commissioner was consulted and agreed to lend its logistical support. HICOG—and its Education and Cultural Relations Division—took on the job, paid the bill, and transported the show to New York.

To do the organizational job, HICOG had personnel and facilities. But an outsider—because she was unquestionably an expert on German art—was called in for the job of selection. She is ebullient, hard-working Dr. Charlotte Weidler, representative to Germany of America's Carnegie Institute, Department of Fine Arts. In Germany for the first time since the war to cull West German works for Carnegie's International Show, Dr. Weidler has been associated with the Institute for 27 years. She knew Germany, she knew its artists of old and she was anxious to boost its resurgent art movement.

AS BERLIN ART was to be theme of the exhibit, Dr. Weidler reasoned, she had better see as much of its art as possible. She asked me, because of my acquaintance with Berlin art and artists, to help in the

Forty-three-year-old Hans Jaenisch is one of few Berlin artists who deals directly with politics and postwar events, as in painting "Die Luftbruecke," depicting the Berlin Airlift.

(Ewald Gniltka photos)
in France, the works of these artists were inherently, creatively German. Schmidt-Rottluff, when I asked about the group’s name, expressed its characteristics: “For some time after we had formed our group, we were at a loss for a name. But one day, Heckel and I were taking a walk together. We reached a bridge, and it dawned on me we were precisely that — a bridge to something new.”

Schmidt-Rottluff and Max Pechstein, of the originators, now live and work in Berlin. Their work is represented in the show.

The next important revolutionary group was Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), so called because one of its members (Franz Marc) veered away from the traditional by painting a blue horse to symbolize life and movement. Organized in 1907 in Munich, this group comprised German-Swiss Paul Klee, Russian Vassily Kandinsky, Ger-

**Carl Holer, shown at easel, devoted much time to repainting canvases destroyed during the war.** (Gerda Schimpf photo)

selection. Together, we spent weeks exploring Berlin’s most obscure ateliers. “Dr. Weidler had a merciless — and welcome — facility for saying ‘No,’” one HICOG Cultural Affairs adviser reports.

We decided on 20 painters. We also resolved upon five sculptors, whose work was important enough to be represented, but most of which was not suitable for shipment. Plaster is not transportable, and bronze, which is, has been too expensive for the artists. As a result, Dr. Weidler suggested that representational drawings be sent in place of plaster originals. This plan was carried out.

When paintings and drawings were assembled, Dr. Weidler and I applied a sharp eye to the exhibit as a whole, and decided it is dynamic, well-balanced and tells the story of how — and what — art is doing in West Berlin.

Germany was home to a number of vigorous movements in the early decades of this century; the exhibit is redolent of them all.

Probably most important was Die Brücke (The Bridge). At the turn of the century Paris was the center of experiment for the Western world, when such giants as Cezanne, Van Gogh, Seurat and Gauguin were pioneering the modernist advance. But Germany, with Die Brücke, came closest to an independent, truly expressionist school.

**Rated as one of Germany’s top abstractionists is Theodor Werner, Berlin artist, whose painting in tempera, “Convolutions,” is shown below.** (Ewald Gnilka photos)

**THE GROUP WAS FOUNDED in Dresden in 1906 by Kirchner, Heckel, Schmidt-Rottluff, Mueller, Nolde and Pechstein. Their primary aim was no longer to imitate a world of reality, but to express inner, subjective emotions. They exaggerated and distorted the familiar forms and colors of nature, they painted freely and spontaneously. Though indebted somewhat to the Fauves**
mans Franz Marc and August Macke. Their art moved on from Die Brücke, being discontent with mere subjective expression, and delved into painting without any subject or recognizable object at all.

In 1919, the internationally influential Bauhaus school was formed, first at Weimar, then at Dessau and for a brief period (until Nazism broke it up) in Berlin. Its adherents made daring experiments which combined architecture, painting, sculpture, interior decoration, furniture, weaving, pottery and textiles with functional design. The Bauhaus attracted Blue Riders Klee and Kandinsky, and a roster of students and faculty still influencing the painting world.

A pupil of Klee and Kandinsky, Hans Thiemann, rated an outstanding artist in Berlin, adds his surrealist paintings to the US show.

Others carrying on the tradition of the Bauhaus are Fritz Kuhr, and Lou Scheper-Berkenkamp, who is noted for illustrative sketches in children's books.

Carl Hofer, now in his seventies, and perhaps Berlin's most prolific painter, is classified within none of these schools but as a powerful exponent of expressionism.

Max Kaus is one of Die Brücke's offspring but he tones down the expressionist radicalism of his fellows.

Two sculptors whose work is denoted in sketches have ties with Die Brücke. They are Renee Sintenis and Richard Scheibe. The small-scale bronzes of animals and youths of the former are well-known in America.

JUST AS MUCH A TRADITION to Berlin art, however, is the flair for newness which is not lost in the US exhibit. The artist whom Dr. Weidler considers Germany's leading abstractionist, Theodor Werner, paces his own field. Former US prisoner-of-war Hans Jaenisch is inventive in his choice of medium — a mixture of oil, tempera and casein. The wife of abstractionist Werner, Wotty Werner, pioneers a completely new field of "painting" with materials — wool, silks and the like.

Despite the universalism of Berlin art — the quality which reputedly makes art great — and the continuity of its prewar tradition noted above, there now and then sneaks in some hallmark of the present and particular.

A few of the artists (but noticeably few) actually deal with the subject matter of war and postwar politics. Werner Heldt limits his painting and lithography to city scenes, sees the city directly and without sentimentality. Sculptor Bernard Heiliger, frequently compared with England's Henry Moore, will be represented in the US show with the sketch for an Airlift monument which won him a cash prize from the Berlin City Council. Painter Jaenisch presents one of his best-known paintings, Die Luftbrücke (The Airlift).

Whatever trends they represent, it is essential to note the one thing they have in common: a fierce loyalty to their freedom as artists. Dr. Weidler describes the Nazi-blighted days before 1939 — her last visit to Berlin — when the artists defied prohibitions and continued to paint their "degenerate, unhealthy" modern works. Base-

ment showrooms and private homes exhibited the artists' work in the darkest hours; canvases were transported from place to place at great risk to the painters. After 1940, it was impossible for the artists to procure brushes and other indispensable materials in Berlin stores.

WHEN THE WAR ENDED, and the freedom to paint was restored, the anarchy and crushing poverty of the immediate days afterward made their work increasingly difficult. Carl Hofer, Berlin's most venerable master, husbied himself in the beginning with repainting works destroyed in the air raids. Renee Sintenis took a step which made less courageous artists shudder — she sacrificed earlier sculptures to obtain the bronze necessary to continue working.

Juro Kubicek, who fashions large, decoratively ethereal compositions, makes his living with a highly successful workshop of industrial design at the US Information Center. He spent one year in the United States as an exchange art professor in Louisville, Ky. Hans Jaenisch
When Americans view the art of Berlin's 25 representatives, they will be reminded of Germany's once-strong culture, struggling now to re-assert itself. They will realize what sacrifices men will make for self-expression. And they will understand why the prediction of a few years ago, that German artists would produce nothing worthwhile for 25 years, could not hold true.

Says Dr. Weidler, "The painting you see in the exhibit isn't something that just grew' after the war. It is German art and it has kept going through all the years, in spite of war and persecution and poverty. The dates on the paintings' canvases will show that they determined to go on, even when the Nazis and the war were against them. This exhibit will show: you can't kill the creative spirit of an artist."

The Christmas Shooters

In addition to the pistols, the shooters employ some 25 small, snub-nosed, cast-iron mortars on wheels, with barrels about 50 centimeters long. While pistols are owned individually, these mortars are the property of the clubs. The majority of these are about 300 years old; a few lighter ones were made in 1870. The former are touched off by means of a red-hot iron, the latter are fired by percussion caps struck by a hammer. The mortars were apparently used as far back as the founding ceremonies in 1669 of the Franciscan monastery.

Shooting activities were permitted to continue during the Nazi regime, for which the association thanked Hitler by shooting New Year and birthday salutes before his Berichtsgaden house and by nominating him an honorary member. After 1945 all Nazi sympathies were denied and the above explained as having been a mere matter of policy.

The Office of Military Government raised no objection to the shooting custom during the immediate postwar years. However, these years were not without incident for uninitiated US forces. On one occasion — reportedly on Corpus Christi Day in the community of Schoenau, May 1945 — some shooters, supremely confident of their right to participate in the church festival, and naively unaware that so shortly after the war's end firearms were strictly prohibited, gathered on a neighboring height, waited for the prescribed moment and let off a volley. Numerous members of the Allied Forces, then stationed there, were watching the ceremonies.

When the sudden detonation burst just over their heads, the soldiers, in panic, threw themselves flat on the ground. German onlookers, who, of course, expected the shooting, were imperturbed but mildly surprised. After a moment the soldiers sheepishly rose, without casualties, just in time for a second volley. Again they dove for the ground. When a German at length explained to them about the Christmas shooters, the soldiers swarmed determinedly up the hillside and confiscated the whole band — pistols, powder and all.

Relations between the American forces and the shooters association have for the most part been cordial, despite such confusions. Today, as witnessed by the Freedom Bell observance, the shooters can be counted as a strong element among the population which is ready to sympathize with and support the objectives of freedom.

140 Priceless Berlin Art Works Return Home for Visit

A collection of 140 priceless art treasures have returned to Berlin for a six-month visit. The one-time favorites in Berlin's state museums, including German, Italian and Dutch masterworks dating back as far as the 13th century, have gone on public exhibit at the Museum Dahlem, in the Borough of Dahlem, in the American sector of the former German capital. Formal inaugural ceremonies were highlighted by addresses delivered by Berlin Mayor Ernst Reuter and Federal President Theodor Heuss.

Thirty-four plastic and sculptural works are also exhibited with the paintings. All the treasures, brought back to Berlin from Wiesbaden by air, were removed to secret storage sites in western Germany before the fall of Berlin in 1945.

In 1948 and 1949 the collection toured the United States. It was returned to Germany early last year; segments of the collection have since been displayed in Munich and Wiesbaden.*

Artists represented in the group include the Italian masters Rafael, Botticelli and Tintoretto, the Dutch painters van Eyck and van der Weiden, and the Germans Duerr, Holbein, Cranach and Kulmbach.

Residents of the Soviet Zone and Berlin's Eastern sector are being admitted to the exhibition on payment of East German currency.