Acknowledgments

Principal thanks are due to the Bertolt Brecht Archive in Berlin, for permission to use the photocopies there of Brecht's unpublished work, for arrangements for me to work there at an inconvenient time, and for permission to quote the unpublished passages that I requested, granted by Helene Weigel.

I would also like to thank the following people in East and West Berlin, who gave generously of various kinds of help: Elisabeth Hauptmann, Helene Weigel, Werner Hecht, Herta Ramthun, Werner Otto, Volker Klotz, Dieter Knaup, Jürgen Werth, and Helfried Rieger.

Apologies, on the other hand, are due to citizens of Canada and Latin America for the use of the word “America” as if it referred only to the United States. At the time of Brecht's early writings, the United States had appropriated the name “America” for itself, and Brecht used it half consciously to refer to the public-relations image the United States propagated of itself abroad: “America” was not so much a geographical region as an ethical concept, as in the “American dream” and the “American myth.” It would have been too confusing to try to correct Brecht's usage.

Postscript, 1980: In revising this work (originally written 1968–70) for publication, I have added materials that were suggested to me by James K. Lyon and Michael Morley, and made many cuts and changes suggested by Fred Jameson and Reinhold Grimm, who
deserve special thanks. John Willett, as always, has been very kind and helpful in many ways. John Fuegi, John Barlow, Verne Moberg, and Virginia Parmalee made additional suggestions that I used, and Darko Suvin and Lee Baxandall were always very supportive. I want to thank Robert Demorest of Ohio State University Press, and the Miami University Editorial Board, for their advice about improving the manuscript and their friendly support; and I especially want to thank Gisela Bahr, my editor at Miami, who deserves more thanks and credit than I can say or than she usually gets. Finally, I would like to mention the pleasure of working in common with the international Brecht "community," through the International Brecht Society; the degree of helpful sharing of tips, ideas, and writings that goes on among the members would have pleased Brecht, who was always such a collaborator and help and inspiration to his fellow creative workers.

I have resisted the friendly suggestion, however, to expand the scope past 1933, since I am interested in exploring the impressions Brecht had of America while he was in Germany, and while he was first developing his Marxist and dramatic theories. The American visit has in the meantime been thoroughly studied by James K. Lyon, and anything I could say would only be derived from his research. For information on the later American works and Brecht's stay here, readers should consult the works by Lyon and Seliger listed in the bibliography.

By now much of the factual matter from my original research has become familiar knowledge, partly because I made photocopies widely available through the International Brecht Society. I am delighted that the general English-speaking public will now have the chance to see all the information about Brecht's interest in America in the context of his developing politics and aesthetics. Even if you already know about Joe Fleischhacker, Dan Drew, and Anne Smith—figures new to most of the Brecht world in 1970—I think you will find their origins and their political results fascinating.

I have added the relevant recent studies of Brecht to the bibliography, and have updated the text to reflect important materials both by and about Brecht that have been published in the last ten years. However, I have taken little information from other critical studies, preferring to leave this a book that reports on my own research and thinking.

Since the time when they graciously agreed to talk with me about
Brecht's early interest in America, both Elisabeth Hauptmann and Helene Weigel have died. (In the text, all unannotated references to statements by them are based on their interviews with me.) Without either of them, Brecht's work described in the following pages would have been very different from what it was, and so I like to think of publication of this study as a small contribution to their memorial.

All translations are by me.

In the quotations from Brecht's manuscripts, I have retained his idiosyncratic (or bad) spellings, and his use of lower case letters for capitals and spaces for punctuation.

Depending on knowledge of German, the reader can choose to read all quotations in English or German. However, to avoid tedious repetitions in the text, the titles of all Brecht's works and projects are given in English only; there is a list of the German equivalents included in the index.
BRECHT'S AMERICA