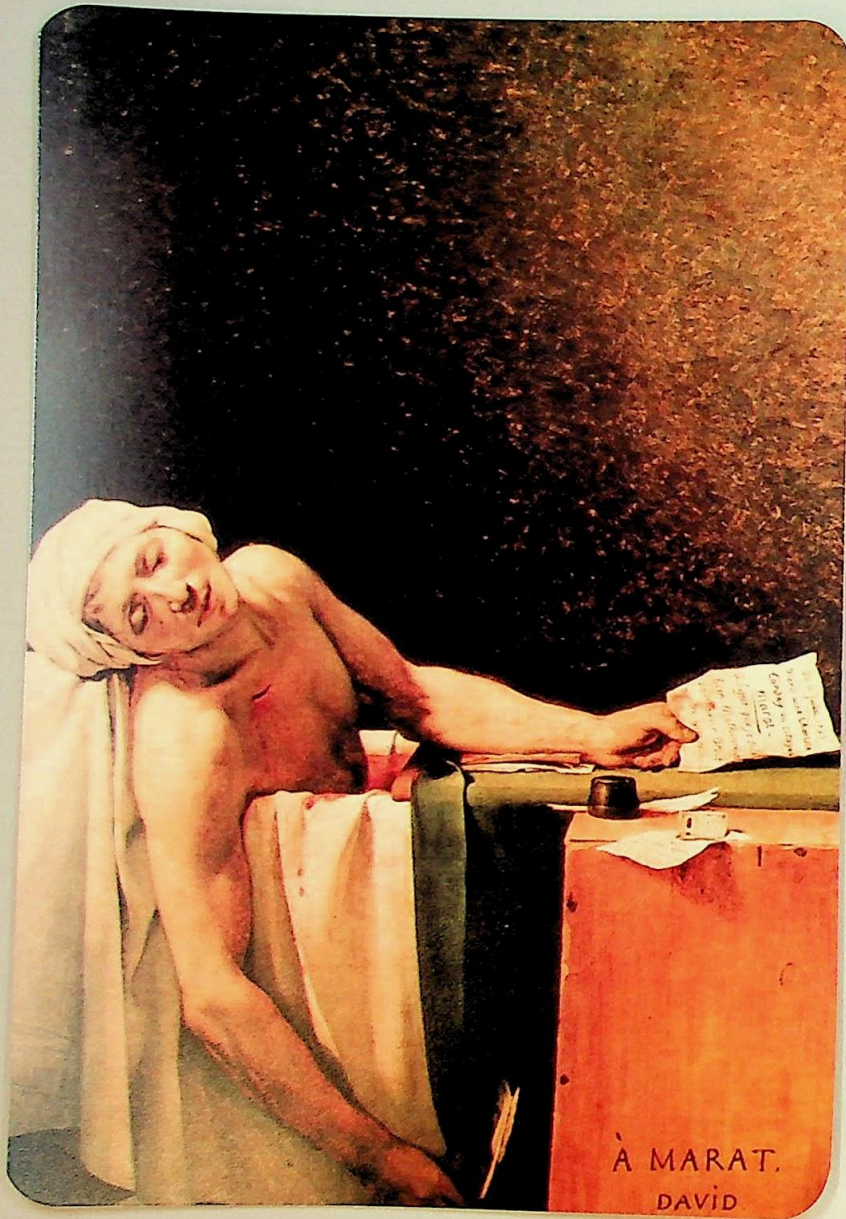


STATE ART



Marat Assaisé
Jacques Louis David
1773
(Fig. 1)

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STATE ART

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO:

THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN & COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

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CONTENTS

	PAGE NO.
INTRODUCTION	
(1) Chapter One The Life and Death of Constructivism, and the Making of Soviet Socialist Realism, 1917 - 1945	1
(2) Footnotes for Chapter One	16
(3) Chapter Two The Death of The Modernist, and the Life of National Socialists Painting in Germany 1925 - 1945	17
(4) Footnotes for Chapter Two	32
(5) Conclusion	34
(6) Bibliography	37
(7) List of Illustrations	41

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between art and politics within the cultural, economic and social framework is extremely complex. The effect that one has on the other is neither new nor totally understood.

David's Neoclassicism was a cause as well as an effect of the French Revolution and Courbet's Social Realism of fifty years later was a reflection of the Anti-Idealist train of thought popular at the time.

Throughout the twentieth century the constantly changing political systems and geo-political boundaries of Europe and to a lesser extent in Northern America have been reflected in the art produced.

In fact many of the major modern movements and "isms", such as Constructivism, the Bauhaus and Expressionism (and its many permutations) have all been affected by or conversely have affected the political systems or structures within the turbulent countries of Europe.

It is therefore a truism to say that art reflects society, and although this theory has often been questioned, most recently by Sandy Nairne in his Channel Four series; "State of the Art", I believe it to be fundamentally true.

The American Abstract Expressionists of the nineteen forties and fifties mirrored the pulse and mood of the United States at the time.

Victorious, expanding and becoming, with the help of Coca Cola and the Yankee Doltar ("Have advertising will travel"), the modern imperialist power that we know today.



Burial at Ornans's

Courbet

1850

(Fig. 2)

Pollock, Kline and Rothko et al, definitely wore their hearts on their sleeves. Even though their work was to be used, albeit unsuccessfully, by Richard Nixon, as propoganda in a large American Art Exhibition which was shown in Saigon in 1969; it did not originate from any considered state sponsored directive or influence and although the American in its name is of both historical and social importance, the works themselves are not and were never intended to be nationalistic, propogandist or even social in their message content or concerns. Yet their scale, use of colour, surface brush marks and optimism and adventurous spirit are an important finger print to the mood of the day.

American art since the end of the Second World War has left an indelible influence on the development of Western Europe art of the last forty years, and it is only with the emergence of the new so called "Bad Painting" in Europe in the last ten years that the focus of attention has begun to shift back to mainland Europe. It is interesting to note that one of the main concerns of the "Bad Painters" is nationalism and national identity and that European art should regain international favour by once again studying its own naval.

The victors took the initiative and the centre of the Western art world moved from the European cities of Paris and Berlin to New York.

But what of the pré-war era? America was very much in an economic and cultural shadow, and the focus of influence and change were the European countries: destined to become battle fields in the not too distant future, and who the United States were to fight with and against.

Russia with its post revolutionary constructivism and Germany with its pre-Nazi

Bauhaus and expressionism movements gave Western art extremely important philosophies which are still shaping the on-going argument that is the avant garde in the "free" West today.

And yet, ironically, the military, social and political forces which defeated these avant garde movements in Russia and Germany are those which brought about:

- (1) The Second World War
- (2) Caused Capitalistic America to side with Communist Russia
- (3) Insured the prominence of post war American art
- (4) Construed the widely held, but often incorrect idea that the avant garde art of any art is liberal if not completely left in its political orientation
- (5) and until recently caused the art produced under the totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin to be conveniently forgotten by Western historians and critics

The 1930's was the decade when the avant garde was finally and totally defeated in Russia and Germany and when the seeds of American Abstract Expressionism, the American avant garde of the 1940's and 1950's, were successfully sown.

The rebirth in interest in the pre-war American regionalists, such as Hopper and Grant Wood over the last twenty years has in turn led to a new interest in the work produced in Russia and Germany at the same time.

Not unlike the American regionalists, Hitler and Stalin believed in a populist art; but they freely interpreted this concept to suit themselves and their

It has been customary, easy and comfortable to see the history of 20th Century visual art as something self contained. The idea of a straight line theory, that saw the development of modernism, from impressionism through to cubism, surrealism, expressionism and abstraction as genetically correct and historically true, is still the standard "party" line of the majority of Western art critics and historians. Russian social realism and Nazi art are seen as unimportant deviations from the ongoing and progressive development of Western 20th Century art.

Russian social realism and German national socialist art have been purposefully and successfully eclipsed from what is considered to be an actuality. They have been dishonestly denied their important, if uneasy position in the history of art of this century. This refusal has overlooked the interesting development, cause and effect and work produced under both regimes. The many questions left unanswered by this omission are still of major relevance today, and therefore with the benefit of hindsight and comfort of European and Western rehabilitation ask now to be reviewed.

The most interesting aspect of the art of the 1930's is that it asks us to consider and question the relationship between the creative artist, the society he works in and the viewer, or more aptly the consumer the work is supposedly produced for.

It was the asking of these fundamental questions by the new governments in both Russia and Germany that produced the most interesting conflicts in the international history of modernism. The defeat of modernism in both countries at approximately the same time ironically insured its survival and propagation in

the Western world. The artistic and political struggles within these countries also showed us clearer than ever before or since, the complicated relationship between art and the state.

In the second chapter of this thesis I hope to investigate the defeat of the modernist avant garde movement and the rise and development of national socialist art in Germany. Showing why the Nazis were anti modernist and proving that national socialist art had a historical link with genre painting of the 19th Century.

In the first chapter I will show the ideas behind the development of the avant garde constructivist movement in Russia, the reason for its failure, defeat and its official replacement by social realism.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF
CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE MAKING OF
SOVIET SOCIALIST REALISM
1917 - 1945

Intensified history is how John Reed, the American journalist and author of the now standard work "Ten Days That Shook The World", accurately described the early days of the Russian Revolution.

The October Revolution in 1917 and the following 30 years was a period of intense political, social and artistic change which had major repercussions throughout Europe and the Western World, second only to the 1939-45 war as the most important event in world history of this century.

Understanding the relationship between the newly formed Bolshevik Government and the avant garde artists working in Russia at the time and the official reaction to the work they produced will give us a further insight into the Communist party and increase our understanding of the struggle of Modernism and its eventual defeat and replacement by Soviet Social Realism which, more than fifty years later, remains the officially favoured "isms" in Russian Art.

The immediate post revolution avant garde, that is constructivism, attracts huge interest today and greatly overshadows Stalins' Social Realism. In fact we have more information concerning National Socialist Art from Germany than we do of Soviet Social Realism with which it has much in common. This lack of critical attention is due to the fact that to a certain extent successive Russian Governments have thought of Social Realism as something purely for home consumption, and also Western critics and historians have viewed it almost entirely in terms of what it supplanted .

The gradual decline of the avant garde in Russia between 1915 and 1930 is in stark contrast to its decisive and total defeat in Nazi Germany. By the 1930's when the Russian Government made official its anti-modernist and pro-social realism philosophy the avant garde constructivist movement, diluted by emmigration, and divided by internal dissention was incapable of offering any opposition. Stalins infamous purge against the avant garde was not necessary as it was already a severely crippled body.

The changing attitude of the Russian Government to the avant garde, from active support in the immediate post revolutionary years to complete opposition by the 1930s is in international and historical terms an interesting cameo on the relationship between art, artists and the social and political system, the political system, the political naievette of the avant garde and also on reaching political maturity a realisation by a totalitarian regime that it was more comfortable and beneficial for them that art and culture be subservient to the revolution rather than active revolutionary forces in themselves.

On gaining power in 1917 Lenin's Government struck an alliance with the cultural avant garde of the day; Cubo-futurists and the constructivists, involving such artists as Malevich and Tatlin. Regardless of this alliance relations between the new government and the broad base of artists working in Russia at the time were not always good. The Artists Union of Russia openly opposed the Revolution and likewise the Government newspaper warned the general public: "Not to be infected by the putrid poison of the decaying burgeois organism". (1)



Taking in The Harvest

Kasimar Malevich

1911

(Fig. 3)

Fortunately the man appointed as Minister for Enlightenment (the Government Department responsible for Education and the Arts) sympathised with and had a good knowledge of the avant garde. He was a dramatist of some note and his influence on the arts in Russia during this evolutionary period is of major importance. Liked by Lenin and politically wise enough to organise his department in such a way as to keep it free from external party pressure, Anatoly Lanachavsky had returned from Switzerland in the second sealed train and for a period of 12 years held this ministerial position.

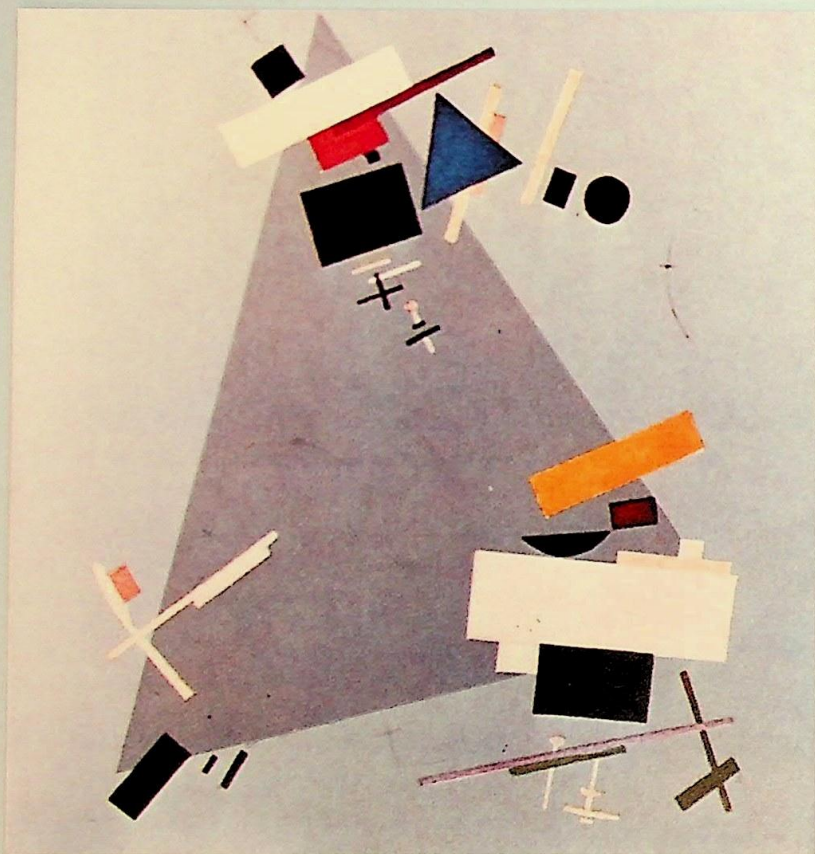
Close relations of some of the Bolshevik leaders were given positions in the department. This was to prove valuable in the future and is probably responsible for the survival of the Ministry against many odds. The Ministry was organised into various sub departments such as The Theatre Department under Trotsky's sister. Interestingly theatres throughout Russia retained their independence even though they were totally financed by the state. Trotsky's wife was in charge of the Museum department and both Tatlin and Kandinsky served on its purchasing committee. The film department, with Lenin's wife in charge was treated as part of the education department. The film industry was nationalised and enjoyed Lenin's personal encouragement; he said: "Of all the Arts, film is for us the most important".

He regarded film as the most suitable medium to deal with the political and social, and to a lesser degree aesthetic issues of the day. He was very quick to realise the propaganda value of moving pictures in a country where the majority of people were illiterate. It is interesting to note that the birth of modern day Russia coincides with the production of films on a mass scale.

The very newness of the medium complimented the spirit of the day (2) from the very start the department and the arts in general suffered greatly from practical problems such as finance and supplies. The film industry was affected by the exodus to Europe and America of technicians and producers, both before and after the revolution. Nevertheless film was to become a major force in Russia and films such as "Strike", and "Battleship Potemkin" by Sergie Ernstine are powerful testaments to the Soviet Union. Arnold Hauser in his "Social History of Art"(vol 4) wrote "The Film Industry is the only art in which the Soviet Union has important achievements to its credit" (3).

Even though the Union was in Social and Economic turmoil, it still saw patronage and state sponsored projects as the most effective way of financially helping Artists. In the State exhibition of 1919, twelve Marc Chagalls were purchased and in 1920 Tatlin's monument to the Third International was commissioned.

It was in the area of Art Education that the state made great advances. In 1918 Marc Chaggal was appointed principal of the School of Art in Belorussia while in Moscow the Tsarist system was abandoned in favour of the free studio system with a student choice of professor which included Kardinsky and Tatlin. In 1919 the system had to be reorganised because of the huge number of students now attending the art schools, 15,000 in all. This in itself is a statement on the effect of the Revolution on the arts in Russia and shows the new found vitality and commitment in this area. It is interesting to note that when reorganising the schools great emphasis was placed on the fact that all students should be equal, thereby as Malevich argued - "putting the economic principle above the individual personality" - while at the same time (1919) in Germany

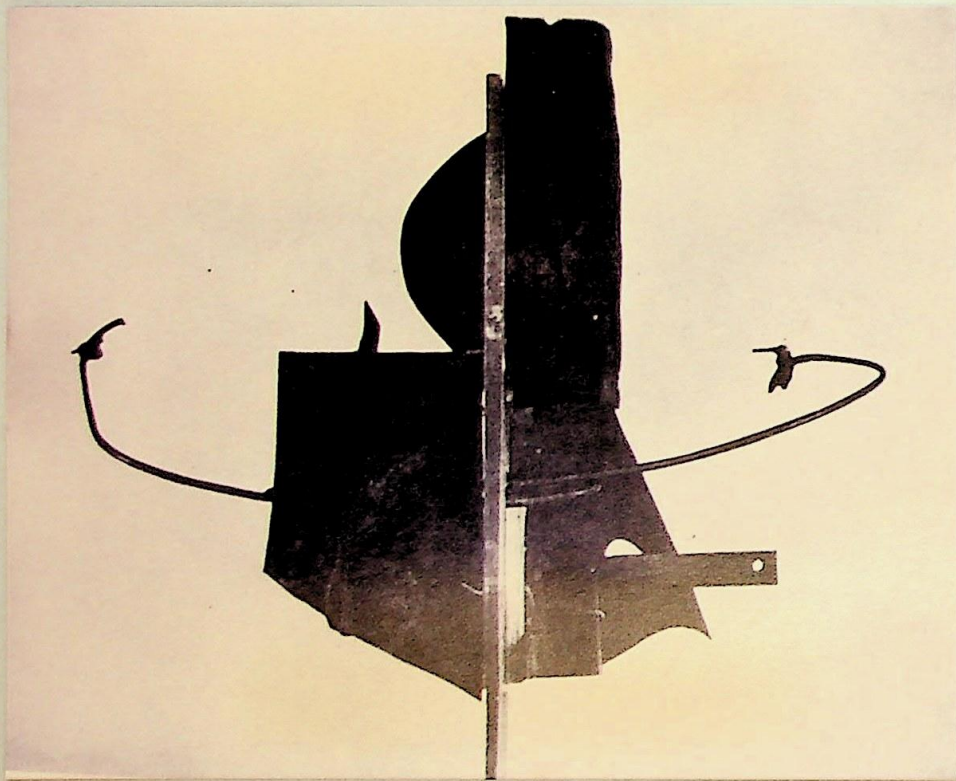


Kasimar Malevich
Dynamic Suprematism
1916
(Fig. 4)

in the introduction to the first Bauhaus prospectus Walter Gropius wrote - "let us create a new guild of craftsmen, without the class distinction which raises an arrogant barrier between craftsmen and Artists".

It was within the newly organised Art Schools with the amalgamation in one Institution of the theory and practice in both fine art and craft that the constructivist theories and the disagreements between the various factions of the constructivist movement came to a head. The spirit of constructivism is very closely linked to the spirit of the revolution and parallels can be drawn between the factions and theories involved in both movements when the term constructivist came into general use at the end of 1921, it could hardly be said to describe the work of a number of Artists working in the same style but more correctly could be used to describe their attitudes and ideals, their determination as Artists to marry themselves to the Social revolution. In 1922 Boris Arvator one of the main originators of what came to be called productivism wrote, "Constructivism is socially utilitarian, its application is situated either in Industrial production (engineer - constructor) or in propaganda (constructor - designer of posters). Constructivism is revolutionary not only in words, but in acts. It is revolutionary by the very orientation on its Artistic methods". (4)

In 1920, Tatlin along with three students working under him, published a paper called "The work ahead of us". In this he criticised individualism as "The expression of purely personal habits and tastes" (5) and at best he felt this led to "the decoration of walls of private houses, the individual nest and left behind a succession of Yaroslav Railway Stations and a variety of now ridiculous forms". (6)



Corner Relief

Tatlin

1916

(Fig. 5)

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Also in 1920, Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner published the "Realist Manifesto" in which they voiced their disappointment with the cubists and the futurists and went on to set out their own guidelines and theories. They wrote of the cubists, "The distracted world of the cubists, broken in shreds by their logical anarchy cannot satisfy us who have already accomplished the revolution or who are already constructing and building up anew. One could heed with interest the experiments of the cubists but one cannot follow them, being convinced that these experiments are being made on the surface of Art and do not touch on the basis of it seeing plainly that the end result amounts to the same old graphic, to the same old volume, to the same old decorative as of old". (7)

They criticised futurism as sternly "In the domain of purely pictorial problems futurism has not gone further than the renovated efforts to fit on the canvas a purely optical reflex which has already shown its bankruptcy with the impressionists. It is obvious now to every one of us that by the simple graphic registration of a row of momentarily arrested movements one cannot recreate movement itself. It makes one think of the pulse of a dead body" (8)

They went on to proclaim the five fundamentals of their work and constructivist technique.

- (1) In painting we renounce colour as a pictorial element
- (2) We renounce in a line its descriptive value
- (3) We renounce volume as a pictorial and plastic form of space
- (4) We renounce in sculpture, the mass as a sculptural element
- (5) We renounce the thousand year old delusion in art that held the static rhythms as the only elements of the plastic and pictorial arts (9).

The constructivists saw themselves as new men producing new art for a new world. They saw the revolution as a mode of transport for their theories. What is quite obvious about constructivism is that it rejects the comfortable assumption of a given equilibrium between man and nature. It denies that man has to live in harmony with the outside world which it has no control over. They put themselves forward as the creators of order and balance in a world which is neither hostile or caring. They felt that the artist must have a central role in determining what type of order is imposed. Michel Senphor, the Russian constructivist poet described the new man, the constructor, in his poem "Man the Constructor" written in 1920: "There are some of us who are announcing the new day, who can see the dawn rise before the others. Have not these people been awake the whole night questioning the stars? (10)

Major differences existed between Tatlin and Malevich about the creation and function of art. These differences solidly divided the Russian constructivist movement. Tatlin's view, ultimately the shorter lived internationally, was that all art had to have a social purpose and he felt that the artist had to subordinate his individuality to the common good. He stressed the utilitarian character of artistic order both in practice and in purpose and declared that the artist like the engineer must know his materials and use his skills for the good of society in general. Malevich felt that making art was a totally private experience however universal its eventual application may be and that its highest results are removed and independent from political or social concerns.



Monument to The Third International, (Model for)

Tatlin

1921

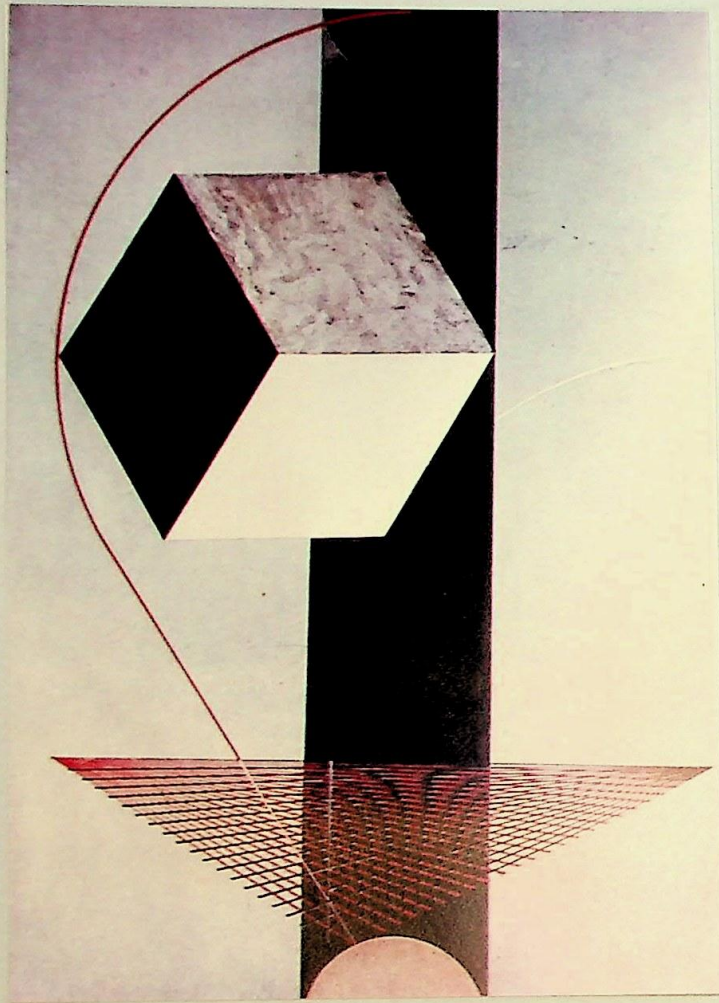
(Fig. 6)

Malevich exhibited his first major works, which he called Cubo-futurist, in the Donkey's Tail Exhibition in Moscow in 1913. The depicted peasant themes were treated in a leger like way in massive tubular constructions. In the same way as most Russian Peasant Art he reduced the figure to a carved triangular plane. He said later of these paintings: "I worked more on a peasant level, every work had a content which although expressed in primitive form revealed a social concern" (11).

This early work gives hints of the constructivist work to come, already expressing an interest in angular abstract geometric form and loading it with social concern. The futurist element in his work disappeared very quickly and by 1915 he had mastered collage and also discarded the use of all other narrative material in favour of a totally abstract design. He combined art paper with postage stamps, packing cables and actual objects but all purely for their abstract qualities and not for their literal or connection properties as an artist like Rauschenberg does. In his use of this type of collage he anticipated Schwitters Merz work by several years.

From this point onwards he started his purely geometrical work, investigating and developing the use of squares and rectangles which he described as "the most elementary fundamental and hence supreme artistic element". The increasing complexity of his work can be seen in the large suprematist composition "Dynamic Suprematism" painted in 1915. It was because of these increasing aesthetic non utilitarian concerns that he first began to differ with Tatlin.

During a visit to Paris in 1913 Tatlin saw some of Picasso's cubist



Proun 99

El Lissitzky

1924

(Fig. 7)

constructions which greatly influenced him and on his return to Moscow started making corner reliefs which he first exhibited in 1914. He consistently experimented with shape and form, always working in an abstract geometric style. However by 1920 he had narrowed and redefined his work and wished to go further than assembling real objects in space as he had done with his corner reliefs; by turning material into useful creations. His monument for the Third International was the first project carried out under these terms. He received a state grant of 700,000 roubles for the project but this only enabled him to construct a wooden model of the final piece. He saw this monument as a synthesis of the principles of painting, sculpture and architecture.

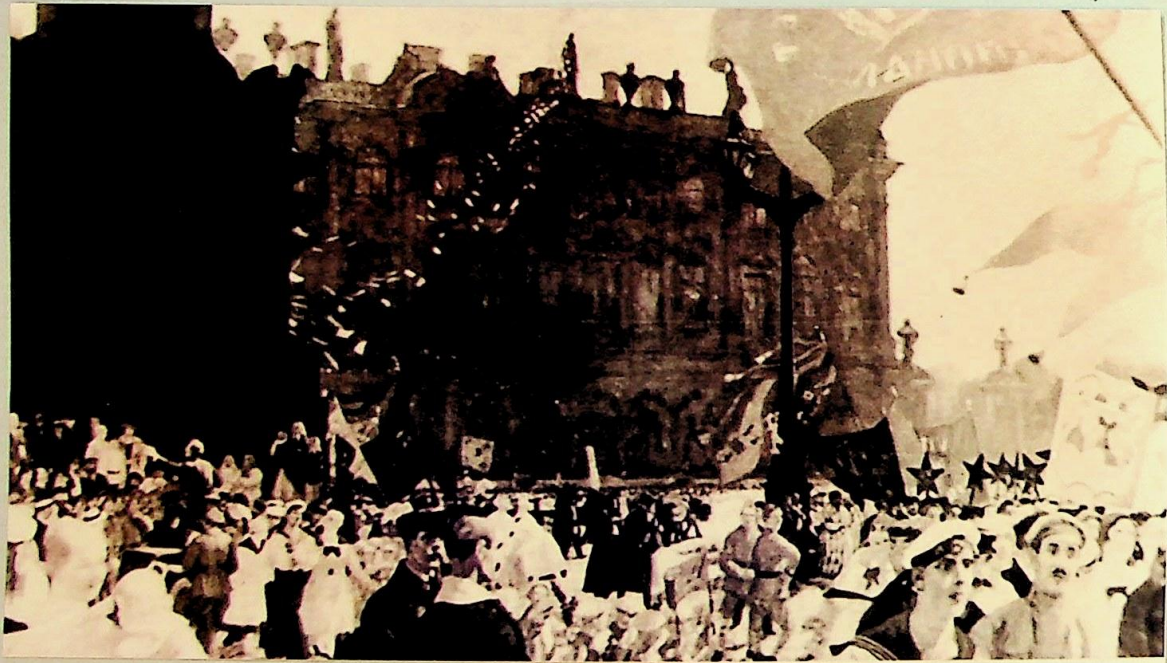
The monument was to consist of three great rooms of glass placed on top of each other supported by a complicated structure of vertical pillars and spirals. The rooms, by means of a special mechanism, were to move at different speeds. The first was to move on its own axis at the rate of one revolution per year and was to be used for legislative assemblies. The second was to move at the rate of one revolution per month and was to be used for executive bodies. The third was to rotate one revolution per day and was intended to be used as a press centre and information office. The monument was accompanied by a manifesto which stated that the task of the artist was to "unite purely artistic forms with utilitarian intentions". Throughout this period Tatlin saw his work as a "Combination of materials and a desire to utilise the geometric forms of nature in engineering to facilitate man's domination over nature" (12)

Although the above would seem to agree with Bolshevik principles Tatlin's

monument was not accepted by those who commissioned it and was never built. In many ways to suggest such a fantastic and expensive monument in a country ravished by war, both civil and international, shows a certain amount of courageous naivete.

One of the most enthusiastic propagandists for constructivism and the man through whose effort the western art world became aware of the Russian Constructivist movement was El Lissitzky. He had travelled in Europe before the first World War and met Malevich and Tatlin in 1919 when he was appointed Professor of Architecture and Graphics at the School in Vitchsk then directed by Marc Chagall. It was in the same year that he produced his first prints and typographical designs and also provided his first "Proun" paintings. Abstract geometrical works which he described as "stations for changing trains from architecture to painting." Between 1922 and 1928 he travelled throughout Europe and had considerable influence at the Bauhaus. In the argument between Malevich and Tatlin he sided with Malevich. In his brilliant self portrait, a photogram called the Constructor, he superimposes his hand over his head, his hand holding a compass tracing a flawless circle on graph paper, thereby illustrating the union of manual and intellectual skills. Much of the fascination of constructivism lies in the tensions depicted in that photogram - the tensions between art, man, the intellect and the state. These tensions and the underlying disagreement in the avant garde movement caused in 1922 the first crack to appear in the avant garde movement when artists such as Gabo and Kandinsky left for Europe.

During the post revolutionary period the art of the Russian Avant Garde



Festival in Uritsky Square

Boris Kustodiers

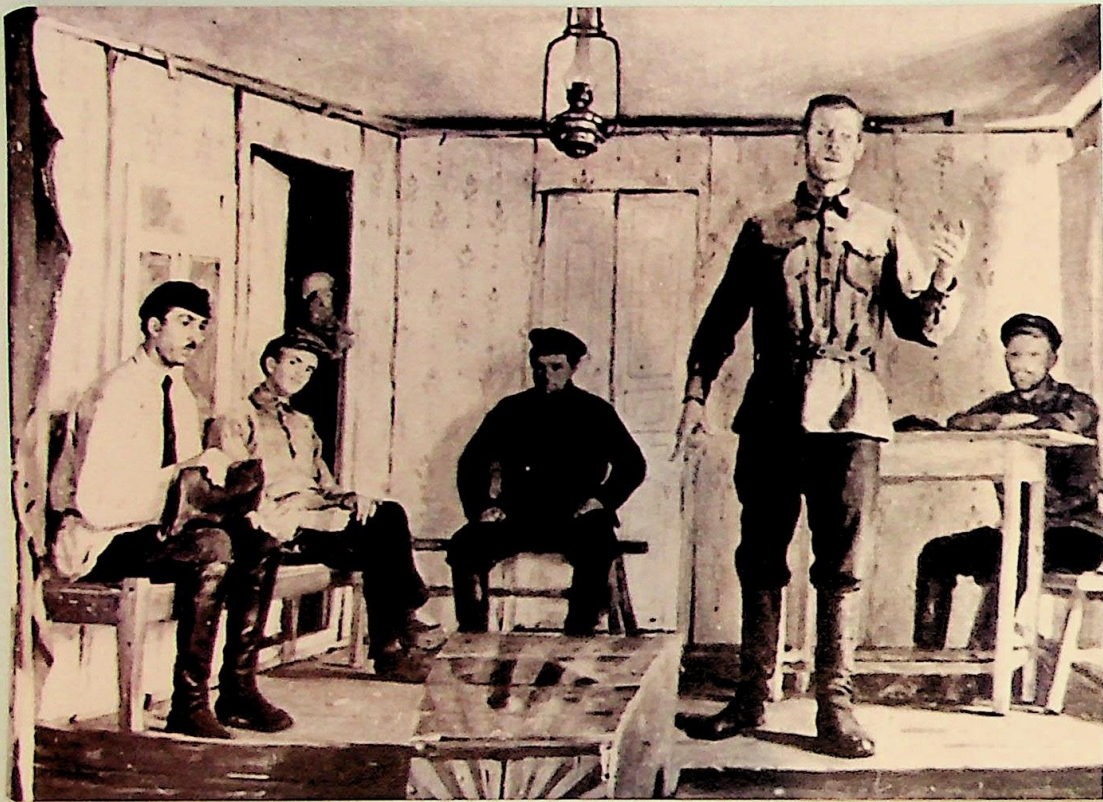
1920

(Fig. 9)

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consisted of very few paintings and concentrated generally on projects, more often than not unfinished, linked to industrial design, architecture, book and poster design, photography, theatre and film. It was inevitable that this concentration on non traditional formats and non traditional uses for art should provoke a reaction, supported by some of the leaders of the Communist party who did not feel comfortable with the avant garde.

As early as 1922 this reaction began to materialise with the foundation of the "Association of Artists of the Revolution". Its slogan was "Art to the masses" and they interpreted this phrase in a very different manner than the constructivists might have done. Boris Kustodiev's "Festival in Uritsky Square in Honour of the Second Comintern Congress" (1920) and Yefim Cheptsov's "A Sitting of the Village Party Cell" (1925) are both forerunners of the typical Soviet social realism favoured from the 1930's onwards. Both paintings show an obvious debt to the work of the nineteenth century "Peredvizhniki" or wanderers who provided Stalin's social realism with a specifically Russian source and tradition. The wanderers taking their name from a group of touring exhibitions organised from 1870 on, to voice growing opposition to the academic art of the time. They objected not so much to the style of the work but more to its elitism and indifference to national life. They in many ways preempted the inherent nationalism of Soviet social realism. The work produced by the wanderers took on a specific political flavour thanks to the absence of a more direct means of expression under Tsarist autocracy. Ilya Repin (1844-1930) alludes to Tsarist oppression in his 1884 painting "They did not expect him". This painting made a deep impression on the Russian public. The obvious political and nationalistic content of the work of the



A Sitting of The Village Party Cell

Yefim Chepstov

1925

(Fig. 10)

wanderers made it difficult for the avant garde of fifty years later to dismiss them out of hand.

As already mentioned Anatoly Lanachavsky, the Government Minister in charge of the arts from 1917 to 1929, was a supporter of the avant garde, but primarily he was a very astute politician. On sensing the disapproval of the leaders of the Communist party to the increasing internationalisation of the avant garde, he changed his tune and coined the phrase: "Back to the wanderers", and by doing so made public the party's desire to see social realism of the Russian School regain the position of the only genuine revolutionary art movement.

Although Lenin supported the increasing use of film and conceded that it was an art form in it's own right, he was basically conservative in his taste in visual art. Like Hitler he objected to the idea of newness in art and in a conversation with Clara Zetkin, one of the founders of the German Communist Party, he shows us some of the similarities that the Communist Party in Russia and the National Socialist Party in Germany shared in their theory and approach to the visual arts: "We are two great iconclasts in painting. The beautiful must be preserved, taken as an example, as the point of departure, even if it is old. Why turn our backs on what is truly beautiful, abandon it as the point of departure solely because it is old? Why worship the new as a god compelling submission simply because it is new? Nonsense! Bosh and nonsense! Here much is pure hypocrisy and of course unconscious deference to the art fashions ruling the west. We are good revolutionaries but somehow we feel obliged to prove that we are also 'up to the mark' in modern culture. I however make bold to declare myself a Barbarian".



They did not expect him

Ilya Repin

1884

(Fig. 11)



Lenin in The Smolny Institute

Isacc Brodsky

1930

(Fig. 12)

In 1925, O.S.T., the Association of Easel Painters was founded as a reaction to the view of the constructivists that easel painting, and to a certain degree all painting, was no longer relevant, not revolutionary in action and therefore dead. But it was O.S.T. that would provide the vehicle for social realism to become the officially endorsed style of the new Russia.

From approximately 1924 onwards the decline of the western orientated avant garde, due to confusion about its own place in the revolutionary process was matched by the state's own increasing aesthetic conservatism. The party gradually tightened its grip on what the artists were producing and this new repression culminated in a resolution of the Central Committee of the All Union Soviet Party forming the Union of Soviet Artists in 1932.

The primary function of this union, which is still in operation today, was to regulate and censor the art produced by its members, and membership became compulsory for any artist working to make a career in the Soviet Union. With the formation of this union the situation in Russia mirrored that of Germany where membership of the "Reich Chamber" was also compulsory.

In 1934 the union summarised the principle of Soviet social realism as "the truthful depiction of reality in its revolutionary development". This guideline, officially imposed on Soviet artists as the aesthetic norm, still operates today.

The exaggerated respect for historical or social reality caused certain categories of subject matter to be more popular at certain times. Work commemorating the Second World War was produced in large numbers between



Lenin Speaks

Alexander Gerasimov

1930

(Fig. 13)



The Interrogation of The Communists

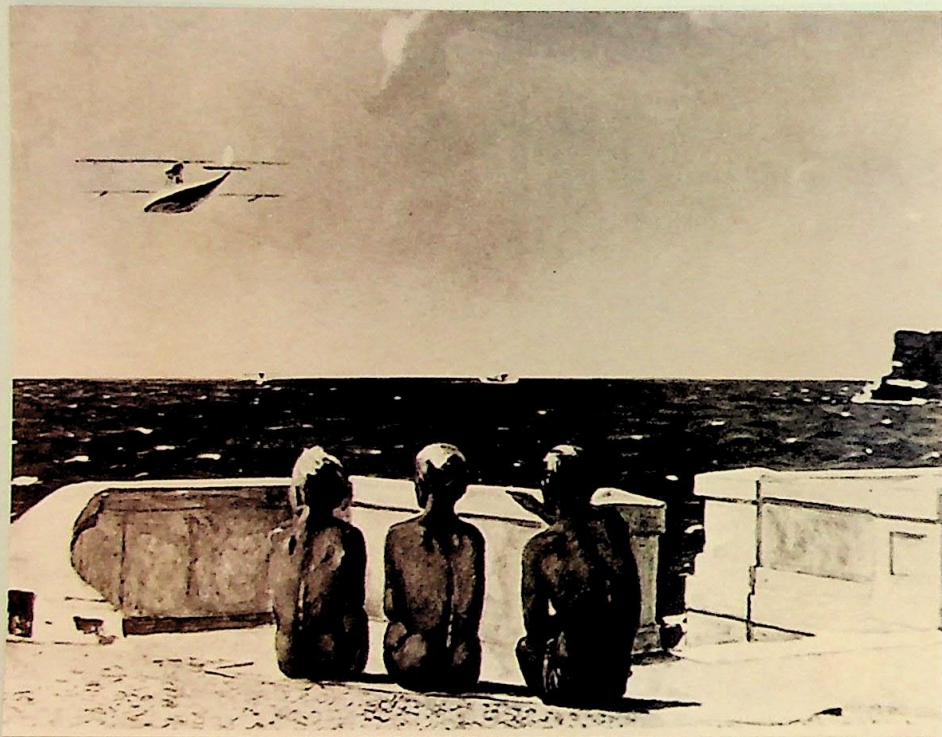
Boris Ioganson

1933

(Fig. 14)

1945 and 1955 and, as one would expect, there are numerous posthumous portraits of Lenin. What is perhaps the most famous of these portraits is Isaac Brodsky's "Lenin in the Smolny Institute" (1930). This painting was so immediately successful that the artist produced more than 30 replicas during his life time. The image of Lenin writing the Bolshevik headquarters in Petrograd during the Revolution shows him as a solitary and dedicated leader, quietly working for the benefit of his people. Conversely Alexander Gevasimor's "Lenin Speaks" also painted in 1930, shows Lenin to be a dramatic orator, at one with the people, looking to the future and obviously enjoying the revolution. Equally popular at the time were works that glorified the revolution without reference to any specific individuals. Boris Ioganson's "The Interrogation of the Communists", is typical of this type of painting. Theatrical in its composition, it shows the Communists, prisoners of the White Guards, standing erect, bathed in light, the sloping floor giving them an elevated position. Their captors are shown from the back, seated or in dim smokey light. The Bolsheviks in captivity stand shoulder to shoulder, calm and confident, aware but unconcerned by the injustice and danger of their personal situation, fortified with the final truth of the revolution.

In conjunction with the party urging the people to look to the future, modernity became acceptable subject matter. "Pilots of the future" by Alexander Deinka (1937) is a good example of this type of painting. Like most socialist realist painting, be it in Russia, Germany or elsewhere, removed from its historical situation, the painting might make a less specific impression but the title and one's knowledge of the historical context enables us to decode its ideological significance. Interestingly, mood and atmosphere colour and handling all suggest a comparison to the sea-scapes Edward Hopper



Pilots of The Future

Alexander Deinka

1937

(Fig. 15)



New Moscow

Yuri Dimenov

1937

(Fig. 16)

was painting at the time. Yuri Pimenor's 1937 painting 'New Moscow' combines elements borrowed from the cinema, chocolate box covers and Impressionism. Optimistically placing the viewer in the back seat of an open top sports car (one of the great metaphors of American, if not Western, freedom and capitalism) looking beyond the young female driver to the new Moscow, of streets busy with people, and approaching the ultimate symbol of modernity and economic progress; the sky scraper, whose size and newness are exaggerated by the old buildings to the right and left of the canvas.

Since the end of the Second World War, Russian social realism has, like many other aspects of Soviet policy, cultural or otherwise, long been neglected because it is symbolic of a cultural and political system which is condemned by the West.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER ONE

- (1) Government Newspaper from Documents of 20th Century Art, The Tradition of Constructivism, Thames and Hodson, London 1974
- (2) The very newness of film did not discourage the National Socialists in Germany from using it as a major propoganda tool in their efforts to create a society based on Germanic history and mythology.
- (3) From: The Social History of Art, Arnold Hauser - Vol. 4, Rutledge and Paul, London, 1962
- (4) From: Art of the 1930's, Edward Lucie-Smith, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1985
- (5) Tatlin, Vladimir; The Work Ahead of Us, Moscow, 1920
- (6)
- (7) Gabo and Pensner; Realist Manifesto, Moscow, 1920
From Documents of 20th Century Art, The Tradition of onstructivism
- (8) As Number Six
- (9) As Number Six
- (10) As Number Six
- (11) As Number Six
- (12) As Number Five
- (13) As Number Four

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEATH OF THE MODERNISTS AND THE
LIFE OF NATIONAL SOCIALIST PAINTING IN GERMANY
1925 - 1945

Germany

The acquisition of power in Germany by Adolf Hitler's National Socialist Party in 1933 is the central event of world history of that decade. The following twelve years of fascist rule in Germany and the countries it invaded totally changed the social and geo-political make-up of the Western world, and also had a profound effect on Germany's allies in Asia. The events, consequences and sequel of these twelve horrific years are common knowledge and standard history.

Central to the National Socialist's manifesto for the recovery and expansion of Germany was an enforced cultural renaissance. The visual arts and its many associated areas were to play a fundamental role in their intentions.

Immediately the new government set out to change and "cleanse" everything in German society which they thought was cosmopolitan, modernist and therefore degenerate.

They spared no expense and used all aesthetic means to project the new "Thousand year German Reich" as a cultural revival where all that was good in German art would prosper and all that was degenerate would perish.

From the very start modernism was under attack. Within a few short years this persecution was totally successful and the National Socialist Regime had replaced modernism, so energetic and progressive in Germany up to 1933, with a completely new and different form of expression. By no means was this the first set back or attack to be suffered by modernism which was already under pressure from the Communist government in Russia, and had never had a completely relaxed existence in many other countries such as Italy, France, England or the United States.

However the totality of the Nazi purge had major consequences for the development of Western art and the growth and survival of modernism. Many of the artists persecuted by the Nazis found refuge in the United States and are credited with having a major effect on the development of the generation of artists which were to become the post war abstract expressionists. (1)

This Nazi abhorrence of modernism has incorrectly created the commonly held idea that modernism is the contribution of the visual arts to the international struggle against fascism. It is wrong to presume that all modernist or avant garde art is left wing in its political outlook, but because the totalitarian regimes of Stalin and Hitler were both anti modernist, we have sometimes been led to believe that modernism and the avant garde we connected with the idea of personal and intellectual freedom. (2)

It is consequently presumed that National Socialist art, like the regime, was of the lowest standard, irredeemably corrupt and that any historical or aesthetic relationship that it possessed with any art produced before or since was either accidental or contrived.

Before considering the ideology and art produced under the National Socialists it is necessary to investigate briefly what they reacted to and replaced.

Although the Weimar Republic, which the Nazis overthrew in 1933, was a compromise government founded on defeat after World War One, it was in many respects more culturally vigorous and active than the victorious nations who oversaw its conception.



John Heartfield with Hitler

John Heartfield

(Fig. 17)

France had been the birthplace of Modernism and continued to be the leader of the modernist movement until the end of the First World War (1918). The only major new movement to surface in post war France was surrealism - and this to a large extent owed its theories to the Viennese Sigmund Freud.

It was in defeated Germany that the theories of modernism expanded from the comfortable confines of the avant garde art world and began to infiltrate the very fabric of society. Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus movement saw itself as much a part of a new social and political force as a purely aesthetic concept. This socialisation of the avant garde caused it to become increasingly political, and it is therefore wrong to assume that the Nazis politicised German art; it was already highly political. The majority of German artists at the time identified themselves with the left and often with the Communists, whom the National Socialists regarded as their chief opponents in the struggle for power.

Many radically inclined artists' groups were set up in Germany in the immediate post war years. The "Novembergruppe" began in 1918 when defeated Germany was in ruins, and among its successors was the "Rotegruppe" founded in 1924 especially as an organ of the K. P. D; the German Communist Party. Its distinguished membership included George Grosz as Chaiman, Rudolf Schlichter and John Heartfield as Secretaries and among its members were Otto Six and Otto Nagle. The Nazi Party was given ample reasons to dislike these men and what they propogated. John Heartfield's photomontages are among the most cutting and satirical attacks made on Hitler and his party before they achieved power and his support for Communist Russia, as shown in his 1934 phtomontage "The Vision of Lenin has become Reality" would have incensed the Nazis. (3)



The vision of Lenin has become Reality

John Heartfield

(Fig. 18)

The politisation of the avant garde insured it a high public profile, but not all the general public easily identified with their concerns. The first indications of the National Socialist anti Marxist stance was the persecution of the Bauhaus. The history of the Bauhaus movement is well known and it is not necessary to rehash it here. But it should be noted that even though their philosophy of the production of high quality domestic appliances and their leadership in the School of Corporate Architecture Design which has become become a part of, and still fuels the capitalism and consumerism of Western society, they politically identified themselves with the left. Gropius was certainly left wing. Soon after the Bauhaus began operations (1919) he answered in reply to a questionnaire: "I am convinced that for all its evil concomitants, Bolshevism is probably the only way of creating the preconditions of a new culture in the foreseeable future" (4).

But even though the majority of the avant garde associated themselves with the left, they were not always comfortable or totally accepted by those of the same political convictions. The avant garde identified with the "workers", but this identification was not reciprocated. (5)

Adolf Hitler stated in his government policy document published on the 23rd of March, 1933: "In conjunction with political decontamination of our public life the government will embark on a systematic campaign to restore the nation's moral health. The whole educational system, theatre, film, literature, the press and broadcasting, all of them, will be means to this end". (6)

The extreme importance that the National Socialists wished to be seen to place on art and all cultural activities was highlighted in Hitler's speech at the



Workers, Farmers, Soldiers

Hans Schmitz-Wiedenbruck

(Fig. 19)



Hitler Lad

Emil Dielmann

(Fig. 20)

Nuremberg Rally in 1936: "Art is the only truly enduring investment of human Labour". (7)

On their assumption to power in 1933 the National Socialists gave the visual arts four years to adjust to the policies of the new government. This four year plan started with a government manifesto which stated that German art would be based on a: "Philosophy drawn from a passionate national and state consciousness anchored in the realities of blood and history". (8)

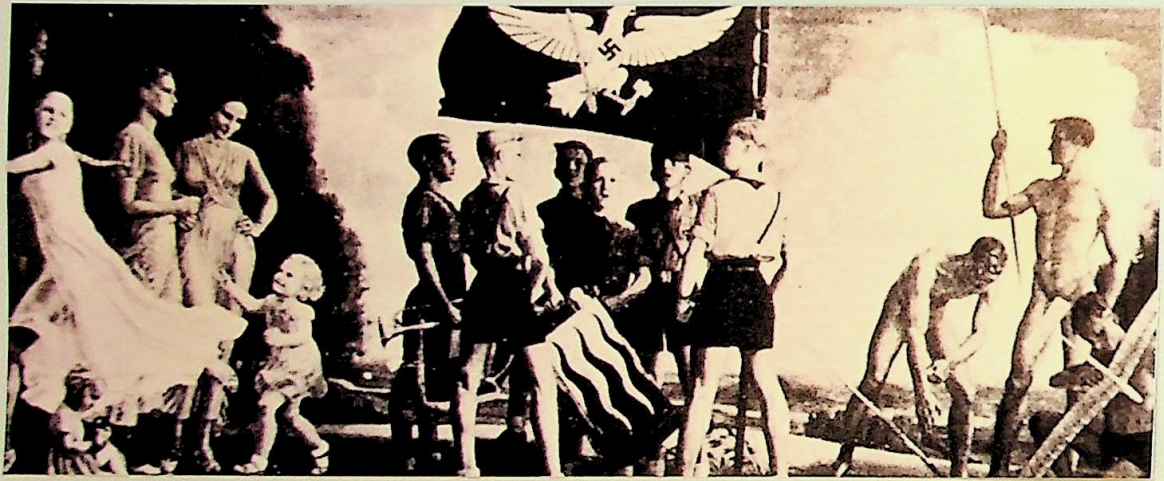
From day one the battle lines were drawn, modernism was to be the enemy. The same government document called "What the German artist expects from the new Government", went on to make five specific points which formed the foundation for the National Socialist policy on the visual arts:

- (1) That all products of a cosmopolitan or Bolshevist nature will be removed from German museums and collections. First, they should be brought together and shown to the public, and the public should be informed how much these works cost and which gallery official and Ministers of Culture were responsible for buying them. The only one useful function remains to these works of non art, they can serve as fuel for public buildings.
- (2) That all museum directors who sinned against a needy nation, by their shameless waste of public funds, who opened our art galleries to everything un-German, to be immediately suspended and declared forever unfit for public office.
- (3) That from a certain date the names of artists subscribing to Marxism and Bolshevism no longer appear in print. We must abide by the old law of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

- (4) That in future we in this country will not have to look at apartment blocks or churches that look like greenhouses with chimneys or glass boxes on stilts, and that ways will be found to claim restitution from the criminals who grew rich perpetrating such insults against our native culture.
- (5) That sculptures that are offensive to the national sensibility and yet still desecrate public squares and parks disappear as quickly as possible regardless of whether these works were created by geniuses like Lehmbruck or Barlach. They must give way to the scores of artists loyal to the German tradition. The conscientious care and nurturing of all existing impulses towards a new flowering of art will have to go hand in hand with the radical negation that will free us from the nightmare of the past years. Our powers are waiting to be called to life. The people's love of art, immobilised by the terror of artistic Bolshevism will reawaken. (9)

Two general theoretical ideas were used by the National Socialists to vindicate their attack on modernism. The first, born the same time as modernism, was the personal philosophy of Max Nordau, the German author who published his theories in 1893 in a book called 'Degeneration'. At the end of the nineteenth century the German middle classes, disorientated and displaced by the rapidly increasing industrialisation of their country felt themselves to be losing their grip on their culture. That is, the culture of Goethe, Schiller and Beethoven, the old Germanic culture which united Germans, and would be cited by Hitler as the prerequisite for the unification of all German speaking peoples. This traditional Germanic culture represented national identity in a special way as Germany had only been politically united since 1870.

Nordau saw the solution to this lack of nationalism and national pride, the



German Youth
Yurgen Wegener
(Fig. 21)

accelerating degeneration of moral standards and increasing internationalisation as a return to the old values, aesthetic as well as moral. He saw an insoluble link between the two. The trauma of defeat in World War One, and the retribution sought by the Allies reinforced this feeling in many of the post war population.

Hitler took up Nordau's idea and focussed on the new cosmopolitan nature of German culture and the subjection of the modern movement to the ideas and philosophies of fashion, and a constantly changing world. In a speech made in 1937 he said: 'Art as such is not only completely dissociate from its national origins but is also the product of a given year. The product is deemed modern today, and will of course be immodern, that is obsolete, tomorrow. The ultimate result of such a theory is that art and artistic activity are made equivalent to the work of our modern garment industry and fashion ateliers. In both cases, the underlying principle is to produce something different every year. First Impressionism, then Futurism, Cubism, perhaps even Dadaism. There had been a so-called modern art in Germany until the National Socialists took power. This meant, as the word 'modern' implies, a different art almost every year". (10)

Also in 1937, as part of a mounting anti-Modernist campaign the "Reichskammer der Bilden Kunst" (Reich chamber for the Visual Arts) was formed, and membership became obligatory for all artists and all others working in art related areas and professions who wished to continue their careers in Germany. The Central Office of the Chamber decided who was suitable or unsuitable for admission. Not admitted were those found to have "Indications that the person lacks the reliability or suitability necessary for the exercise of his profession". By 1938 the Chamber counted 3,200 sculptors and 10,500 painters among its members.

The first phase in the publicization of the crusade against modernism, and the conclusion of the Four Year Plan for the Visual Arts, was the opening in Munich in 1937 of the first "Great German Art Exhibition". The exhibition opened on July 18th in the newly built House of German Art, while on July 19th in a nearby building an exhibition of "Degenerate Art" opened. The purpose of this diptych of exhibitions was to show how art in the Third Reich triumphed over modernism. The exhibition of 'degenerate' art was housed in a few crowded rooms, the works were hung in order to make them look as insignificant and ridiculous as possible, and were accompanied by insulting slogans and captions. In line with Hitler's policy of extreme Nationalism, and his anger concerning the defeat of Germany in the First World War, the first ridiculed work to greet visitors to the exhibition was a large crucifix by Ludwig Gies originally created as a memorial to those killed in the First World War, for the town of Lubeck.

Work by some of the greatest German artists of the day, and also by a selection of distinguished "Austlanders" was shown. Included were pieces by Ernst Barlach, Max Beckman, Otto Dix, Georg Gross, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Käthe Kollwitz, Franz Marc, Emil Node, Pablo Picasso, Georges Roualt and Henri Matisse.

Ironically more than 2 million people viewed the 'degenerate' exhibition while less than one third of that number viewed the official exhibit; as usual the 'Freak Show' won out.

Because the first Great German Art Exhibition set the tone for all Nazi art to follow, we would expect that the criteria for selection would be of major importance. But as far as is known it seems highly unlikely that there was any



Three Women in Church

Wilhelm Leibl

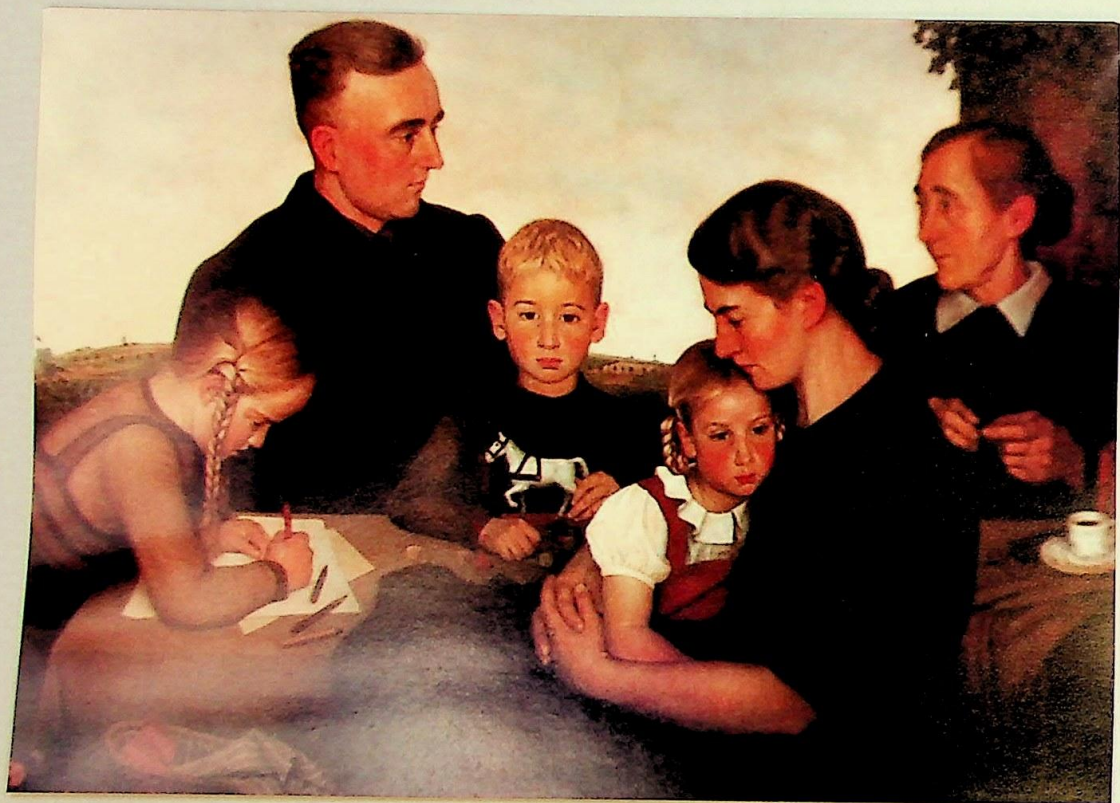
1878-87

(Fig. 22)

official or published criteria for selection at all and inclusion in the exhibitions was most likely based on a totally anti-Modernist objective. However, a statement by the Commissioner for The House of German Art, does give us some idea of what was officially acceptable: "It is obvious that our only nationwide art exhibition, and it is the Fuhrer's wish that the annual exhibition in the House of German Art in Munich be this one, now and forever will show only the best and most perfect examples of German art. Problematic and unfinished work is not and never will be, acceptable in the House of German Art". (11)

From this statement we learn that German Art was to be "finished and unproblematic" and also that the House of German Art was to be used for changing exhibitions. The second point totally undermines the National Socialists' opinion that its art was going to be unchanging and everlasting. More than 3,800 artists exhibited in the Great German Art Exhibition, and it would be wrong to assume that such a large number of artists could be willed into being overnight. They were part of an alternative tradition that long pre-dated the rise of National Socialism but which could be adapted, hijacked, comparatively easily to conform with and promote the ideological and propagandistic needs of the party.

Art, and especially painting in the Third Reich was very much a revival of 19th Century traditional painting with a strong Greek influence in the sculpture. The connection between National Socialist painting and 19th Century genre painting is very strong. Even though the subject matter of some of the National Socialist painting shows a decidedly militarist or fascist bent, which some people would cite as an innovation in the history of art, the fact is that National Socialist painting does no more than follow the traditional principle



Kalenberg Farm Family

Adolf Wissel

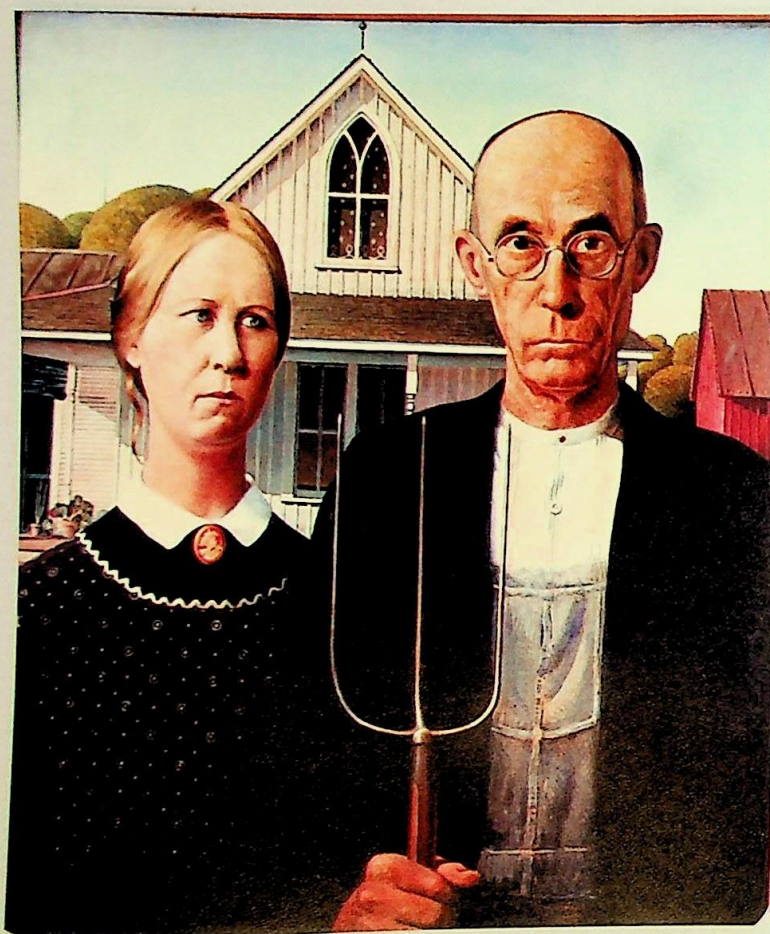
1939

(Fig. 23)

of depicting the more or less spectacular aspects of the world around us. This reliance on traditional principles does not exclude the possibility that themes may be chosen that were far from traditional such as Emil Diekmann's "Hitler Lad" or Hans Schmitz-Wiedenbruck's "Workers Farmers Soldiers". Through our modern eyes this would seem as just a revival of 19th Century genre painting, but through National Socialist's eyes, taking into account the total decimation of the avant garde, it was seen as a continuation of this tradition, leaving an unbroken progression from the last century. No longer was genre painting a sub culture, but it was officially encouraged as all that was good in art. This continuation, or at least the hint of an historical connection, provided the National Socialists with the cultural legitimacy that they desired.

One of the most important tasks of National Socialist genre painting was the portrayal of specific types, the Great German type. The depiction of the perfect German that the people were or should aspire to be. Yurgen Wegener's "German Youth" shows a group of Hitler youths standing beneath the National Socialist flag, while on the right hand side the strength, vigour and inventiveness of young Germans is depicted, while on the left hand side in typical sexist fashion young German maids are shown to be pure and maternal, the folds on their clothes imitating those on Greek sculpture, showing the importance that the National Socialists placed on Greek art.

The reversion to the conservative elements of nineteenth century painting and sculpture which was inherent in Nazi art was not only evident in the work produced but also in the way it was presented to the public. The successive Great German Art Exhibitions held between 1937 and 1945 were in part an attempt to revive the 19th Century Salons that had resisted the rise of Impressionism. (12)



American Gothic

Grant Wood

1930

(Fig. 24)

Modernism had attacked and broken down the standard practice of the division of art into specific genres such as still life, landscape - animal painting - figurative and so on. This system was restored for two reasons; works of art once again became a manufactured item, like a table or chair, to which supposedly objective standards of workmanship could be applied. This ironically echoes the belief of both the Bauhaus and Russian Constructivists movements that art and industrial design and their production were strongly linked and in many cases one and the same.

Secondly the emphasis was placed, not on the expression of subjective emotion, but on the propagandistic message of the work, whether this was conveyed through narrative or allegory.

Much of the more successful Nazi painting looked to the work of Wilhelm Leibl (1844-1900), the chief German disciple of Courbet. Leibl's work lacked the drama and action of Courbet's but, like all Nazi painting, aimed at the combination of monumental simplicity and fine technical finish.

An interesting connection can be made between German fascist genre painting and American Genre Regionalism of the same time; both states had huge social and economic problems, but even though the artists from both countries were working in the same art historical tradition, using the same medium, driven by a similarly strong sense of nationalism, the need for national re-evaluation with a strong impulse to define the nation's cultural identity and also a mutual reaction against the modern movement, they produce works of totally different meaning.

If one compares Adolf Wissel's "Kalenberg Farm Family" with Grant Woods



Time of Ripeness

Johannes Bentner

(Fig. 25)



Ripe Fruit

Richard Heyman

(Fig. 26)

"American Gothic" this should be obvious. Wood's "American Gothic" portrays the architecture, landscape and people of the mid West in the 1930's. But in his attempt to create a completely American type of painting he does not in any way try to propagate an idea or romanticise the reality of the situation. Wood, presenting us with the individual artists personal original view, is aware that he is painting real people and not just American types. Wissel's "Kalenberg Farm Family" is top class national socialist painting. It is totally agreeable with the guidelines laid down, it is unproblematic, finished and acting as a spokesman for the positive side of life. It shows a typical national socialist rural family, the father looking respectfully at his mother, while she in turn looks with hope at the youth of the new thousand year Reich. The son looks straight at you challenging you to match his confident stare and promising to make a new Germany rooted in the realities of blood and history. The mother clutching her youngest offspring is placed in the immediate foreground of the picture emphasising the role that the National Socialists placed on motherhood.

In his essay of 1941 entitled "The National Socialist Renewal of Painting and its Pictorial Content", F. Kaufman sets out the guidelines for the depiction of mothers: "Artists stress above all else the role of the mother as the guardian of life, race and character. The most precious qualities of life are in her care". (13)

Further on in the same essay Kaufmann summarises the role of the family in painting, which in this case can be applied to Wissel's "Kalenberg Farm Family": "They delight in repeatedly depicting simple German types in their social and material surroundings in the context of their families, in their shared work, in the company of domestic animals that serve them and are entrusted to their



Summer

Wilhelm Hempfig

(Fig. 27)

care. Animals that themselves so directly reveal the secret of health and the laws of natural order". (14)

It is in paintings like "Kalenberg Farm Family" that National Socialist art verges on, or becomes propaganda. The idea that a painting is a complete unquestioning statement of fact, solely concerned with the propagation of one idea, one set of standards is central to the National Socialist view on the duty of art. When Wissel's painting is situated in its precise historical context one can see that it does possess a political meaning, it offers a helping hand to the nazi mythology about the importance of blood and soil.

The depiction of woman and especially the female nude was very popular under the Nazi regime. As early as 1932 Hitler had outlined the National Socialist view on the duties and social role of women: "Woman is by nature and fate man's companion for life. Man and woman are not only comrades for life but are also comrades in work. Just as economic evolution over millennia has altered man's sphere of work, it has necessarily altered woman's field of activity as well. Above and beyond the need for common work stands the duty man and woman share in maintaining the human race". (15)

Further on in the same essay Hitler wrote: "However broadly we may define woman's field of activity, the raising of a family will always be the central goal of her organic and logical development". (16)

The National Socialist organisation of work accompanied by ideologies of this kind inevitably produced this social role and image of woman. The total functionalising of woman both physically and mentally and her sacrifice to purely utilitarian duties resulted in a specific type of relationship between the sexes.



Leda and The Swan

Paul Mathiug Padua

(Fig. 28)

Women were forced into a role that robbed them of their solidarity with men, and likewise men as workers - degraded to an object to be used in the realisation of National Socialist goals - regenerated his self esteem by in turn making woman an object for his own sexist mental attitudes and physical pleasure. He was both allowed and encouraged to do this. It is in this idea of woman as a baby producer and sexual plaything that we can see the total perverse and ridiculous nature of Nazi theory and practice in the visual arts. The false morality of German fascism deteriorated increasingly after the start of the war. It was Hitler who sanctioned this change in moral standards when in a speech in 1941 he said: "If a German man must be ready to did unconditionally, he must have the unconditional freedom to love. Love and battle belong together. The civilian should be grateful to get what's left over".

These attitudes obviously affected the image of women as it developed in Nazi art. The Third Reich expressed itself in a visualisation created by men and for men, of their sanctioned sexual domination.

As I have said already one of the most common themes in German fascist painting was motherhood and its product. But as the war progressed the emphasis changed from motherhood to the portrayal of woman in the stage of "ripeness" that precedes motherhood and is so provocative to men. "Time of Ripeness" by Johannes Beutner, "Ripe Fruit" by Richard Heymann and "Summer" by Wilhelm Hempfing, all show woman ripe to be picked and consumed.

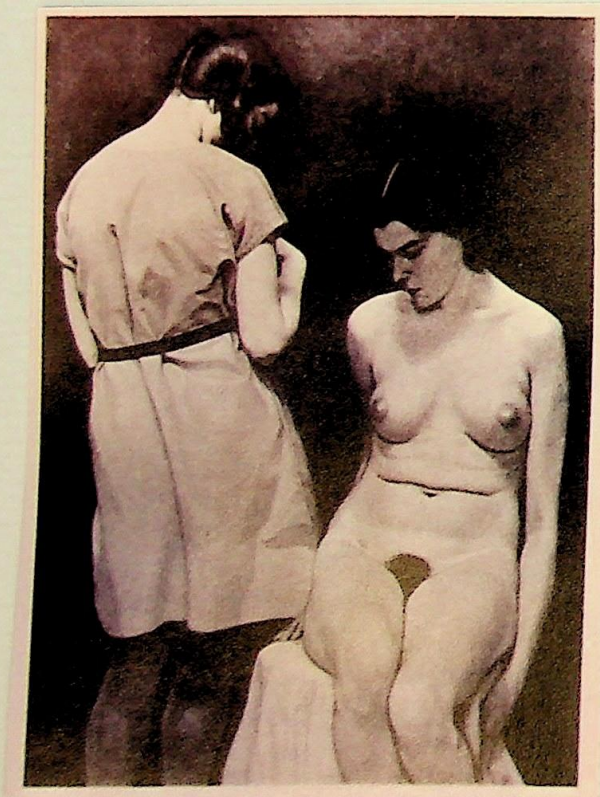
The image of woman became crasser still as nude painting gained in popularity. Impressionism had been accused of: "Showing the human body without any deeper interest in the human being; of presenting only a superficial visual experience".



Youth

Wilhelm Hempfing

(Fig. 29)



Sisters

Hanns Hanmer

(Fig. 30)

The National Socialists on the other hand focussed on: "perfect forms, on pure configuration of limbs, on glowing skin, on innate harmony of movement, on obvious reserves of vitality".

The National Socialists were, behind all their statements and false morals, singularly interested in prostitution. "Youth" by Wilhelm Hempfing, "Leda and the Swan" by Paul Mathias Padna and "Sisters" by Hanns Hanmer are all pornographic, lightly clothed in Nazi propoganda. The image of woman presented in all areas of the arts degraded her to a position of permanent servitude. The political and military success of the National Socialists depended on the degradation and subservience of the masses, but in their attempt to depict the common folk as the underlying strength of the regime, they revealed their own scorn for the people and the perversity of their idea.

The vigour and importance that the Nazi party placed on a cultural policy, shows an almost superstitious belief in the power of art to convey both ideas and feelings. Perhaps they believed more strongly in the communicative powers of art than the Modernists. Whatever about the importance the National Socialists placed on art, they like many other modern regimes used it mainly as propoganda and cited their interest in the arts and culture as primarily a way to earn political respectability.

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FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER TWO

- (1) Jackson Pollock wrote:
"The fact that good Europeans are now here is very important, for they bring with them an understanding of the problems of modern painting".
Pollock, Jackson; from - Arts and Architecture - Vol. 6, No. 2, 1944
- (2) The Italian futurist movement, although completely modernist in their aesthetic concept, linked themselves and openly supported Mussolini and his right wing fascist regime.
- (3) Heartfields house was seized by th S.A. in 1933 and he was forced to flee to Prague, where he continued to satirize the new leaders of Germany. After the Munich agreement the Germans sought his extradition but the Czech government refused.
- (4) Gropius, Walter, 1919 from Art of the 1930.
- (5) Ironically, the emphasis placed by th Bauhaus on technical ability, social application, utilitarian cincepts, and the organisation of work, shows to some extent a Germanic or tutonic link between their ideals and the National Socialists.
- (6) Hitler, Adolf - Government policy document, 23rd March 1933 - from "Art in the Third Reich", Barthold, Hinz.
- (7) Hitler, Adolf - speech from Nuvenberg Rally in 1936 from "Art in the Third Reich", Barthold Hinz.
- (8) National Socialists, Government Policy Docement, 1933, from "Art in the Third Reich", Barthold Hinz.

- (9) As number 8.
- (10) Hitler, Adolf, speech made in 1937, from "Art of the 1930", Edward Lucie-Smith.
- (11) From "Art in the Third Reich", Barthold Hinz.
- (12) A triangular connection can be made between the 19th Century Salons - The Great German Art Exhibitions and the annual R.H.A. exhibitions, were intended to stop the progress of modernism - encourage accademic painting and Sculpture and preserve the status quo, which insisted that the visual arts were safely removed from topical, social or political issues or concerns, and therby insuring the dominance of the middle and upper classes in the organisation and ownership of Art works and the art world system. However, as we have seen since 1945, modernism has triumphed, but the art world, with its colleges, accademies, private and public collections and galleries has remained to a great degree the purchassable property of the middle and upper classes. Documenta in Kassel rather than "Great German" exhibitions in Munich - but can there be a connection?
- (13) From - "Art in the Third Reich", Berthold Hinz.
- (14) As number 13.
- (15) From National Socialist Party publication from "Art in the Third Reich", Barthold Hinz.
- (16) As number 15.

CONCLUSION

There are interesting similarities between Russian Socialist Realism and German Socialist painting, in the images they produced, the mediums they favoured, the official bureaucratic organisations of artists and what they produced, and the acceptance that the visual arts should be denied artistic and editorial freedom in order that their work could be harnessed to benefit the political future of the regime. In many respects the German Reich Chamber for the Visual Arts and the Russian Union of Soviet Artists are similar. However the major similarity between the painting produced was their return to the genre system of the nineteenth century. This tells us a great deal about how both regimes intended the art work to affect their audience. It tended to redirect the viewer away from the style of work, denied the arts their function as a vehicle for individual expression and increased the importance of content which tended to have a collective and at times propagandistic, rather than a personal, meaning.

Hitler and Stalin were the first major national leaders in the 20th Century to try to create a totally populace art; that is, art by the people for the people; since the Middle Ages. In tandem with their view that the visual arts were a means of mass communication to be used and abused for the benefit of the State they also believed in a popular art. Art that was easily understood by the masses and that also addressed itself to the masses. As a pre-emphasis to the birth of a popular and more importantly a Nationalistic art style, they saw the defeat and destruction of the modernist movement as necessary. The results of their anti-Modernist purge are many and widespread. The blatant nationalism inherent in Soviet social realism and Nazi painting has caused nationalism to become an uncomfortable and sometimes forbidden subject for Western artists to deal with. The obvious nationalism in the work of the New German expressionists caused great controversy at the Venice Biennial in 1980. This anti-nationalism

of the post Second World War Western art world has benefitted the rapid expansion of an international art aesthetic. All the major art movements since 1945 have been apolitical and generally international in their outlook.

The creation of an eminent group of artistic refugees insured that the teachings and ideas of the Constructivists, Expressionists and Bauhaus movements would be widely disseminated and have major influence in France, England and above all the U.S.A., most likely a greater influence than they would have enjoyed should they have been allowed to stay within their national boundaries. John Heartfield fled to Czechoslovakia and eventually moved to England. George Grosz, Moholy Nagy, Josef Albers and Hans Hofmann all moved to America.

After the defeat of the German National Socialists in 1945, and with new battle lines drawn between East and West, Western historians and critics took a great interest in the artists, the art movements and artistic philosophies that had suffered under Hitler and Stalin. The victorious Americanised West championed the work and achievements of those persecuted under the evil fascist and communist regimes. We have seen numerous retrospective exhibitions devoted to the individual and groups concerned. Publishers have failed to tire of producing books concerning the same. While it would be preposterous to suggest that this great art, so detested by the communists and Nazis, would not have received such judicial international acclaim had the artists involved not been persecuted and their work ridiculed, it is fair to say that part of the great interest now shown them is due to the fact that the West has identified itself with their personal struggle against totalitarian regimes.

This identification of the West with intellectual and artistic freedom has

affected not only the art produced in the West since 1945, but also the Western art world system and the dissemination of ideas and images, intellectual or otherwise. Because of the complete control sought by the Communists and Nazis over the visual arts it is now extremely dangerous for national politicians to be seen to try and exert control over what is shown in the major galleries, and it would be unthought of for a politician to seek to limit, or censor the artistic or intellectual freedom of any artist or group of artists. Any serious attempt to limit or censor the spread of ideas and images in the Western countries affected by the Second World War is often counteracted with the catch all accusation, "fascist"!

National socialism in Germany and Soviet socialist realism in Russia has failed to produce little if any good art. But the phenomenon of both regimes has fundamentally affected the art produced in the West, how we view it, and how we organise our greater cultural life.

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- (1) Jacqu Louis David - Marat Assaise, 1773
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- (2) Courbet - Burial at Ornans, 1850
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- (3) Kasimir Malevich - Taking in the Harvest, 1911
- (4) Kasimir Malevich - Dynamic Suprematism, 1916
- (5) Tatlin - Corner Relief, 1916
- (6) Tatlin - Monument to the Third International (Model for), 1921
- (7) El Lissitzky - Proun 99, 1924
- (8) El Lissitzky - Self Portrait, 1922
- (9) Boris Kustodiers - Festival in Uritsky Square, 1920
- (10) Yefim Cheptsov - A Sitting of the Village Party Cell, 1925
- (11) Ilya Repin - They Did Not Expect Him, 1884
- (12) Isaac Brodsky - Lenin in the Smolny Institute, 1930
- (13) Alexander Gerasimov - Lenin Speaks, 1930
- (14) Boris Ioganson - The Interrogation of the Communists, 1933

- (15) Alexander Deinka - Pilots of the Future, 1937
- (16) Yuri Dimenov - New Moscow, 1937
- (17) John heartfield - John Heartfield with Hitler
- (18) John heartfield - The Vision of Lenin Has Become Reality
- (19) Hans Schmitz Wiedenbruck - "Workers, Farmers - Soldiers"
- (20) Emil Dielmann - Hitler Lad
- (21) Yurgen Wegener - German Youth
- (22) Wilhelm Leibe - Three Women in Church, 1878-81
- (23) Adolf Wissel - Kalenberg Farm Family, 1939
- (24) Grant Wood - American Gothic, 1930
- (25) Johannes Beutner - "Time of Ripeness"
- (26) Richard heyman - "Ripe Fruit"
- (27) Wilhelm Hempfing - "Summer"
- (28) Paul Mathius Padna - Leda and the Swan
- (29) Silhelm Hempfing - Youth
- (30) Hans Hanmer - Sisters