

The art scab george
groesz, berlin dada,
and the spartacus
league



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I. Introduction A. Topic During post World War I Germany, the Weimar Republic was established as bourgeois capitalistic democracy. However, the period was plagued with income inequality, corruption, and authoritarianism. At the start of this period, the German Revolution spread around the country. In Berlin, the Spartacus League, founded as a communist alternative to the Socialist Democrats of Germany party, was pushing for a workers revolution to put in place a Communist system. The Spartacus League's radical message, as spoken through their leader Rosa Luxemburg, would inspire the art of a young Dada artist George Grosz. A former soldier in WWI, he was an anti-war artist of paintings and cartoons who in 1917 joined forces with other radical artists in the Berlin version of Dada. By 1918, Grosz officially joined the Spartacus League, and used Luxemburg's ideas of a "spontaneous revolution" with both his style and means of distributing his art.

B. Thesis From 1917 to the end of Spartacist Uprising in August of 1919 George Grosz employed the avant-garde techniques of Berlin Dada in order to propagandize for the spontaneous and continuous revolution that Luxemburg and the Spartacists supported. Grosz achieved this by producing paintings that attack the bourgeois class, caricatures that attacked the military and political leaders with political commentary that accompanied the caricatures, and collaborating on publications and street performances to spread the Spartacist ideology. C. Methodology

This paper will be using a Marxist materialist approach to examine how the stratified Berlin society produced an environment that was both a catalyst and muse to Grosz. The communist political philosophy of the Spartacists was a variant of Left-wing Communism that rejected authoritarian figures, <https://assignbuster.com/the-art-scab-george-grosz-berlin-dada-and-the-spartacus-league/>

such as the dictator of the proletariat, for government by the people directly using unions. Therefore, the relationship of Grosz and the Spartacus League will be viewed as a reaction not just to the economic and political landscape of Berlin Germany, but also as part of the communist conversation going on in a post-Russian Revolution Europe. D. Historiography

Grosz's misanthropy is often used to discredit his relationship to the communist left. He is often profiled by other scholars as a participant who just joined because of his need to be against authority, for example, Beth Irwin Lewis in *George Grosz: Art and Politics in the Weimar Republic*. Lewis, while acknowledge Grosz's activist roots, instead focuses on his anti-authoritarian stance against the Nazis. This stance as presented as Grosz the individual and pro-American wanting to leave the totalitarian Germany for America. However, this paper will be examining his politics as something that Grosz was passionate about. Grosz often mockingly criticized the working class, so his own word is often suspect with regard to his view on the working class. It is unlikely though that he would risk his life being part of a radical political group if he did not believe in the ideology himself. Grosz's autobiography will not be used here very much because it was written in the 1950s when Grosz was living in America. This environment and time period would not be safe for an immigrant or even citizen to speak favorably of their former communist activities. His so called rejection of communism is contradicted by Grosz moving back to East Berlin, so his disillusionment with communism is does not seem to be too strong, if he was willing to live in a communist state.

As well as a historical approach, a formal analysis of his work will be employed to examine how Grosz's art showed an influence from Luxemburg and the Spartacists. Berlin Dada will be examined as an influence both in his art and his application of Spartacist politics, especially with Grosz's relationship with the Herzefelde brothers. Grosz's work will also be put in context of both the political and economic realities of Germany during the revolution. II. Body

A. Background and World War I Towards the end of World War I revolution broke out in Germany from 1918 to 1919. During this German Revolution the Berlin based Spartacus League was a left-wing communist group that was active up until the Spartacist Uprising of January 1919. After the government put down this uprising, the leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were killed by the Social Democratic Party lead government. Luxemburg's ideas on spontaneous revolution was an inspiration to one of the artists arrested at the uprising. This artist, George Grosz, resided in a society that had been devastated by the industrial advancements of World War I and the free market advancements of capitalism in the early 20th century. Grosz himself believed that:

When war broke out, it became clear to me that the vast majority of the people had no will of their own...I could see that the individual freedom that I had enjoyed until then was being threatened...I viewed this was a monstrous and denatured manifestation of the ugly struggle for ownership.... At this time I began to draw, not only because it gave pleasure but also in the knowledge that other people shared my way of thinking.[1]

Grosz wanted to use his art to propagandize for the cause of liberating the underclass of Germany that he felt was being used by the political rulers and the upper-class. This propaganda followed in the intellectual frames of dialectical materialism as dictated by the Spartacus League. The basic idea of dialectical materialism is that every economic order grows to a state of maximum efficiency, while at the same time developing internal contradictions or weaknesses that contribute to its decay. George Grosz showed, via his political art, the decay of society and the absurd reality vis a vi his art. Luxemburg and the Spartacists pushed for a spontaneous revolution because it would exploit the internal weaknesses of German society and thus create an opportunity for the masses to overthrow the government. Luxemburg stated in *The Mass Struggle, the Political Party, and the Trade Unions* that “ The revolution is not an open field of maneuver of the proletariat, even if the proletariat was social democracy at its head plays the leading role, but it is a struggle in the middle of incessant movement, the creaking, crumbling and displacement of all social foundations. In short, the element of spontaneity plays such a supreme role in the mass strikes in Russia, not because the Russian proletariat is “ unschooled,” but because revolutions are not subject to schoolmastering.”[2] However, what separated the Spartacists from the Bolsheviks is that instead of a party lead government, perpetual revolution would have kept the leaders checked by the people. This anti-authoritarian brand of Marxism would have appealed to Grosz, not just because of his penchant for his disdainful depictions of authority figures, but also because of his disdain for authority itself.

Grosz's Early Life and Military Service George Grosz was born Georg Ehrenfried Grosz (he would later Anglicize his name in protest of the German war effort). Grosz's father was a failed business man and the family lived in poverty for most of Grosz's life.[3] This poverty would lead Grosz to resent authority and at the same time become successful. Grosz found art a way in which to both find success and challenge the authority he abhorred. He went to the Dresden Art Academy where he first became interested in depicting the common people that he lived with in the poorer area of Dresden. These subjects would later find themselves in Grosz's later depictions of Berlin's lower class citizens and the upper class citizens that took advantage of them.[4]

Though he clashed with the authorities of the Dresden Art Academy, it was in the armedforces that George Grosz's anti-authoritarian views surfaced fully. In 1914 Grosz volunteered so as not to be called up for service, however he saw some action anyway. The horror that Grosz experienced sent him to a mental institution.[5] While in the institution Grosz continued his art, which was appreciated by other soldiers for its harsh depictions of both war but military and political leaders.

Grosz's art was deemed by officials as insane and he was dismissed from the military.[6] This so-called " insane" art was in fact a radical depiction of urban life and decay. The work Metropolis, 1917 presents the city as a place that is as hellish as the battlefield that Grosz had left. His use of fiery reds, flame blues, and rich purples evoke the sense that one is in a fiery inferno.

The toppling city buildings combined with multiple perspectives and flat space create a dizzying and claustrophobic composition. This creates a sense
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that one cannot escape the hell of the city. The figures in the painting are three business men and a prostitute. Thus, Grosz is depicting a scene of moral decay. There is a combining of capitalism and prostitution which is responsible for the decay of society through war. This is the start of Grosz attacking the viewer (middle-class art patrons) and their way of life to put forth a political message.

Another work from this period is *Explosion*, 1917 transports World War I onto the the Berlin city scape. With a fiery glow in the background and collapsing high rise buildings reinforce the idea that a war is happening in the city. Naked bodies and shadowy figures litter the composition like dead bodies. Like *Metropolis* there are multiple perspectives and intense color which highlights the feelings of instability and danger. This particular work was produced after Grosz was deemed as unfit for service and sent to a mental hospital. So, there is a way in which Grosz is commenting on how the insanity of war does not just affect the individual, but the society as a whole.

B. Berlin Dada Dadaism, the only artistic movement in Germany for centuries. No status of outdated workshop projects. Dadaism was no ideological reaction against the cloud-cuckoo-land tendencies of so-called sacred art.....What does it matter if you spend your time gold-plating the heels of boots or carving Madonnas? People are being shot. There is mass profiteering. And hunger. People are being lied to. What is the point of art? Today I no longer hate people arbitrarily but I hate their corrupt institutions and those in power who defend these institutions. And If I have any hope at all, it is that these institutions and the kind of people they protect disappear.[7]

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Richard Hulsenbeck brought Dada from Zurich to Berlin in 1918. Grosz by this time had become friends with Hausmann and his associate Richard Hulsenbeck by way of the Heartfield/Herzefelde brothers John and Wieland. With the Heartfield/Herzefelde brothers Grosz became part of the political and satirical magazine Die Pleite[8]. For Grosz, Berlin Dada's opposition to the German war effort and its radical anti-authoritarian stances against political, social, and art conventions was appealing. The radical and spontaneous nature of the Berlin Dada can be summed up via their Dada Manifesto: Their sentimental opposition to the times, no better nor worse, no more reactionary nor revolutionary than any other, that feeble resistance with half an eye on prayer and incense when not making paper maché cannon balls from Attic iambics — these are the characteristics of a younger generation which has never known how to be young. Expressionism, which was discovered abroad and has quite typically become a portly idyll in Germany with the expectation of a good pension, has nothing more to do with the aspirations of active people. The signatories of this manifesto have banded together under the battle cry of DADA !!![9]

Grosz started collaborating on Dada collages and participating in Dada activities such as protests and collaborative publications such as Der blutige Ernst (" Deadly Earnest").[10] But most importantly, the Heartfield/Herzefelde brothers introduced Grosz to the Communist Party of Germany, which was dominated by the Spartacist Leaders. In fact when Grosz was sworn into the party it was by Rosa Luxemburg herself in December of 1918. Grosz would look back at this time in the publication G in 1923 and say thusly: High art did not interest me because it sought to

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represent the beauty of the world.... what interested me were those largely scorned moralists and 'Tendenzmaler' artists who reflected currents of thought...Hogarth, Goya, Daumier and the like. I drew and painted out of protest and I tried through these works to convince the world that this world was ugly sick and untruthful. I had no noteworthy successes nor did I have any particular hopes yet I felt like a revolutionary and had traded in my resentment for knowledge.... I began to hear about revolutionary trends but remained skeptical - one needed only to look at the Socialist Party of Germany.... a huge brotherhood that had financed the war. That was the reality.[11]

By 1919, Grosz along with Wieland Herzfelde and his brother John Heartfield deepened their commitment to revolutionary art, especially after military troops inadvertently shot at a Rubens painting in the downtown Zwinger gallery " instead" of firing on striking workers. As redress, Oskar Kokoschka, a highly respected artist and intellectual at that time, " appeals to the inhabitants of Dresden asking them to settle their arguments somewhere other than in front of Zwinger, where works of art could be damaged"[12] . In response, Grosz and Heartfield published their manifesto, " The Artist as Scab": We welcome the news that bullets are being fired into museums and palaces, into the works of Rubens, instead of into the houses of the poor in working class neighborhoods!

We welcome it when open struggle between capital and labor takes place where culture and art feel at home. The art and culture that gag the poor, that delight the bourgeois on Sunday and accommodate oppression on Monday.

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Every expression of artistic indifference is counterrevolutionary![13]

Like the Spartacists, Grosz and Heartfield believed that all forms of Bourgeoise cultural capital was also linked to their economic and political power. The Rubens did not just represent art, instead it also represented the cultural dominance that the upper class had. By protecting something with cultural stock like a Rubens, the Bourgeoise were valuing an inanimate object more than human life in the working class neighborhoods. Thus art becomes not just an aesthetic object, but a tool of political power, because those with power can afford to protect it. Thus, Grosz would agree with the Spartacus Manifesto when it states:

Rather, it means using all instruments of political power to achieve socialism, to expropriate the capitalist class, through and in accordance with the will of the revolutionary majority of the proletariat.[14]

Unlike Heartfield and Herzfelde, though, Grosz never entirely embraced the proletariat, perceiving the “ common man” as enjoying his “ baser instincts.” He felt frustrated in the lack of concern the common man had regarding his own situation. Nonetheless, in response to the shootings Grosz said: “ There were the people and there were the fascists. I chose the people.”[15] And under the auspices of Herzfelde’s press, Malik Verlag, Grosz, Heartfield, and Herzfelde, “ use art as a weapon” against the ruling class.

The critical nature of this work meant that few German Dada periodicals survived confiscation, the exception being Hausmann’s Der Dada (1919–20).

This reflected the heightened international activity of 1920. In February,

Baader, Huelsenbeck and Hausmann undertook an increasingly riotous <https://assignbuster.com/the-art-scab-george-grosz-berlin-dada-and-the-spartacus-league/>

performance tour to Leipzig, Teplitz-Schönau, Prague and Karlsbad. In May, at the Erste Internationale Dada-Messe, paintings and drawings were combined with Dada posters, photomontages and assemblages, including a uniformed dummy with a pig's head, for which Grosz and Heartfield were fined for ridiculing the military. The show was accompanied by the Dada Almanach (Berlin, 1920), edited by Huelsenbeck, which included contributions from Zurich, Barcelona and Paris Dada.[16] These events marked Berlin Dada's culmination, as personal conflicts led to its fragmentation shortly after.

Along with their Dada affiliation, Grosz, Heartfield, and Herzfelde belonged to the Young Germany Movement, a communist organization formed during the Revolution of 1848, their art was informed by Tendenz, or "tendentious art," "which [deliberately] expresses political opinions and ideological presuppositions... is politically committed... is a tool in class warfare and... is propaganda"[17]. According to them, the argument between form and content is meaningless, since all art is determined by class relationships. Unlike Stalin's proclamation that social realism was the true art for the worker, tendency artists incorporated experimentation in their work when it was perceived as a worthy didactic tool for educating workers. It would be as a Spartacist and Communist that Grosz would full fill realize these ideas in art.

Roots of the Spartacus League

The roots of the Spartacus League can be traced to the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and was formed in 1869 to give voice to the aims of the First

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International. Amongst these goals was to develop a voice for the newly created labor unions and worker councils. By 1875, the party became united under a banner of both worker rights but also, democratic socialism. This action would start the gradual moderation of the SPD that came to fruition in 1914 with the SPD's support of Germany's entrance into World War I. This support led to the Marxists in the party to split from the party and form the Spartacus League in 1917[18].

Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Clara Zetkin, Wilhelm Pieck, and August Thalheimer were the founding members of the new Marxist organization, the Spartacus League. The Spartacists worked with German workers to end the war via mass strikes and organizing anti-war action through out Germany, and agitating against so-called "social chauvinism"[19]. Social chauvinism is the term Marxists use to describe hyper-patriotism and nationalism. During WWI this stance was taken up by most political factions and Germany and other European Governments.

The Marxists of the Spartacus League believed that the SPD had taken up social chauvinism in their support of the war. The Spartacists believed that violence should only be used if it had revolutionary aims. V. I. Lenin's (the Bolshevik leader in Russia) observation of Karl Liebknecht in 1917 describes this anti-social chauvinism thusly: "Karl Liebknecht called upon the workers and soldiers of Germany to turn their guns against their own government. Karl Liebknecht did that openly from the rostrum of parliament (the Reichstag). He then went to a demonstration in Potsdamer Platz, one of the largest public squares in Berlin, with illegally printed leaflets proclaiming the slogan "Down with the Government!"[20]

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However, Lenin and the Spartacists, though both communists, disagreed in one aspect: the role of the party. Herman Gorter said thusly: “ here we are still seeking the right leaders, those that do not try to dominate the masses, that do not betray them; and as long as we do not find these leaders, we want to do all things from below, and through the dictatorship of the masses themselves.”[21] Herman Gorter was commenting on Lenin’s concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat wherein a leader (in this instance himself) would lead in the stead of the masses. But, the Spartacus League disagreed with this concept. They believed that constant revolution by the masses creates a pressure on the government to keep in mind the will of the people. Grosz and the aftermath of the Spartacus Uprising

Grosz’s art and political involvement developed during a period of social unrest in Germany. On October 29, 1918, sailors on the coast of Kiel were given the order to attack the British fleet. Instead the sailors mutinied, starting what would become the German Revolution. The Kiel mutiny quickly spread to Bavaria in November and by December the rest of Germany as well.[22] As riots and unrest spread throughout Germany, the leader of the Social Democratic Party Phillip Scheidman declared a German Republic from the windows of the Reichstag. Hours later, Karl Liebknecht declared a “ Free Socialist Republic of Germany”[23] from the City Palace. It had become apparent that a desire for true freedom was in effect. However, whether that freedom would be Marxist or Socialist was now the question as both the SPD and the Spartacists reacted to the Revolution. In effect the worker councils of the SPD aimed to work within a Republican system while the supporters of a Red Revolution wanted to model their revolution on the Russians.

During the first two weeks of January, 1919 a workers revolt took place. The Social Democratic Party's Minister of Defense Gustav Noske had the proto-fascist Freikorps brutally quell the rebellion with the help of more than four-million right-wing former military soldiers. By the 13th of January the SPD had restored order, and on the 15th of January Rosa Luxemburg and her fellow Spartacus League Leader Karl Liebknecht were put to death. fn

In response to the uprising, Wieland Herzfelde, himself a committed Spartacist, proposed a militantly radical Communist paper to George Grosz, which would be called " Everyone his own Football" , a Dadaist nonsense title. The authors would drive through the city in horse-drawn taxis and pass out the 7, 000 copies that they had managed to print.[24] The action was both to win mass support from the exploited they passed by, but also a provocation of the Bourgeoisie.

The paper's cover was a photomontage designed by Grosz. It included a fan with the faces of the Social Democrats Scheidemann, Ebert, Lunderoff, Erzberger and the Minister for the armed forces, Noske, the leaders in charge during the Spartacist Uprising. The caption underneath promised a competition of " Who is the best Looking?" GG Berlin 85 Openly mocking the political leaders of Germany.

At this point of his life, George Grosz valued work only for its propagandist value. As his acquaintance Count Harry Kessler once said: Fundamentally Grosz is a Bolshevik in painting. He has profound dislike of painting, of the purposelessness of painting hitherto; he wants to achieve by pictorial means something quite new, or more correctly, something that painting achieved in

earlier periods (Hogarth; religious painting), but which it lost sight of in the nineteenth century.[25]

Grosz was using his Dada art to shock and educate the viewer all at the same time. However, one could not do this just in a gallery. Therefore, Grosz along with the Heartfield/Herzfelde brothers took art out of the Bourgeoisie realm of the gallery, into the streets via their Dada Communist publications. His photomontage is another example of this. As part of Dada, Grosz depicted mechanized bodies to demonstrate a consciousness of the dehumanizing effects of the industrial age. During an era of industrialized warfare, the destructive capability of machinery was palpable and visible as wounded veterans became fixtures on the home front. In Grosz' A Victim of Society, montage fragments of machine parts disfigure an unfinished oil portrait of the German president. Creating an unlikely link between the defaced president and the mutilated bodies of soldiers, the artist turned a proponent of the war into a victim of his own mechanized aggressions.

Luxemburg did not believe that the mass strike should be limited to a purely defensive measure, nor was it an isolated incident. In fact, the mass strike was "the sign" of the class struggle, which had developed over years. For Luxemburg, mass strike did not lead to revolution; but rather the revolutionary period created the economic and political conditions for mass strikes to occur. This spontaneous action by the masses could not be contained by discipline, planned, or tampered with by the party.

Luxemburg fully intended the party leadership to play an active role at the head of strikes. She did not believe that the leadership could plan the hour of

the mass strike; the masses would have to decide for themselves the critical moment of the mass strike. She did, however, believe that the trend and character of the party would play a crucial role in determining the nature and the course the strikes took during the revolutionary period:

“ To fix beforehand the cause and the moment from and in which the mass strikes in Germany will break out is not in the power of social democracy, because it is not in its power to bring about historical situations by resolutions at party congresses. But what it can and must do is to make clear the political tendencies, when they once appear, and to formulate as resolute and consistent tactics. Man cannot keep historical events in check while making recipes for them, but he can see in advance their apparent calculable consequences and arrange his mode of action appropriately.”

Rosa Luxemburg, “ Mass Strike, the Party, and Trade Unions,”[26]

The conditions for spontaneous action did not appear out of nowhere, nor did workers arbitrarily decide to “ have” a mass strike. The economic and political conditions needed already existed. It was not only necessary for the party to play an active role in educating and preparing the proletariat for their historical role in the overthrow of capitalism; indeed the party was itself a pre-condition of a successful revolution.

George Grosz’s actions at this time were due to his idea of spontaneous revolution. For him his art was not for aesthetic value. Instead it was propaganda against the people that he hated.

Today I no longer hate people arbitrarily but I hate their corrupt institutions and those in power who defend these institutions. And If I have any hope at <https://assignbuster.com/the-art-scab-george-grosz-berlin-dada-and-the-spartacus-league/>

all, it is that these institutions and the kind of people they protect disappear.

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His strategy in confronting the observer with the most ghastly aspects of reality and his utmost precision of line were soon found also in the works of Otto Dix.[28] Alexander Dückers observes that “ Once Grosz came to see the appearance of things as a masquerade, he dissolved the static unity of place and time and came close to the pictorial formula developed by the Futurists, who had exhibited in Berlin as early as April 1912: reality is captured not by a static, framed section of the visual field, but by the representation of moving objects occurring simultaneously in different places.”[29] Like medieval narrative paintings or the sculptures of Alberto Giacometti, Grosz’s 1921 offset lithographs for *Die Abenteuer Des Herren Tartarin Aus Tarascon* present a crowded field on which characters move or dream surrounded by other people or their thoughts but without any overt interaction.

George Grosz took aim at the stupidity and brutality of the German military in his portfolio *Gott mit Uns* (God with us). In nine unremittingly caustic, clearly rendered illustrations, Grosz focuses on the corrupt nature of the pompous, overfed, and self-satisfied officers and officials who had dragged Germany into the cataclysm of World War I and who still governed the Weimar Republic. Grosz depicts the violent suppression of the working class by the ruling class. In *Die Kommunisten fallen—und die Devisen steigen* (Blood is the Best Sauce), uniformed soldiers beat unarmed protestors as an officer and a profiteer enjoy a decadent meal. Elsewhere, a dead body washing ashore does not disturb a soldier’s cigarette break. Grosz sharpens his visual attacks with captions printed in three languages—English, French, <https://assignbuster.com/the-art-scab-george-grosz-berlin-dada-and-the-spartacus-league/>

and German. These statements are not always direct translations, but sometimes different phrases that together heighten Grosz's satirical attacks. "Gott mit Uns" (God with us), taken from the inscription on German soldiers' belt buckles, originally meant to invoke God's support, becomes in the English caption "God for Us," a nationalist cry to smite the enemy.

Grosz's political stance (as a communist) and intentions (working-class revolution) were obvious. Kurt Tucholsky, one of Weimar Germany's leading satirists, said of the portfolio, "If drawings could kill, the Prussian military would certainly be dead." [30] Grosz, along with his publisher, Wieland Herzfelde, was tried for defamation of the military; found guilty, they were fined and forced to surrender all copies of the portfolio to the army, thus solidifying his reputation as a political agitator.

About a decade later, Grosz's notes before his 1930 trial for blasphemy offer another statement of his artistic practice:

"In 1917 . . . I began to draw what moved me in little satirical drawings. Art for art's sake always seemed nonsense to me . . . I wanted to protest against this world of mutual destruction . . . everything in me was darkly protesting. I had seen heroism . . . but it appeared to me as blind. I saw misery, want, stupor, hunger, cowardice, ghastliness. Then I painted a big picture: in a sinister street at night a hellish procession of dehumanized figures rolls on, faces, representing Alcohol, Syphilis, Pestilence. One figure blows the trumpet, and one shouts 'hurrah!', parrot fashion. . . . Against Mankind gone mad, I painted this protest" [31]

The artist may not be the spokesperson for sanity, but he or she must be willing to portray insanity for what it is. For Grosz, that meant, more often than not through his drawings and watercolors recreated in editions via offset lithography, and offered in multiples in both limited edition portfolios and larger edition books.

Perhaps the most famous of Grosz's collections is *Ecce Homo* (Berlin: Malik Verlag, 1923). The title echoes Pilate's presentation of Jesus as King of the Jews, beaten, with a crown of thorns, bloody and ready for crucifixion, and clearly not the Messiah he had been proclaimed to be six days earlier when he was greeted by rapturous crowds. Just so, the image of the heroic German, brave in war and moral in peacetime, took such a beating in Grosz's drawings, watercolors, and paintings, that he was prosecuted for "offenses against public morality and for besmirching the values of the German people." [32]

Ecce Homo was found to be a slanderous attack upon the army, which won damages and the removal of 5 color plates and 17 black and white plates from the portfolio in a law suit. Grosz was also fined 6000 marks. Since Grosz had been attacking the Nazis since the early 1920s and since he had singled out Hitler in particular, it is not surprising that after the Nazi's took power in Germany, his works were singled out for ridicule and destruction. 285 of his works were removed from German collections and destroyed and the 1937 Munich Exhibition of Nazi-labelled "Degenerate Art" included five of his paintings, two watercolors, and thirteen drawings. [33]

Aftermath

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By 1922, George Grosz had visited Soviet Russia and started to become less optimistic about Communism and the left. Never the less, in 1924 the artist became chairman of the artists' association " Rote Gruppe" (Red Group); until 1927 he was a regular contributor to Communist publications. In 1928 he was co-founder of the " Association Revolutionärer Bildender Künstler Deutschlands" (German Association of Revolutionary Artists). This activity would eventually force him to leave Germany for the United States after the Nazi takeover of Germany in 1933.

Conclusion

The radical art of Grosz continued in America, and has been preserved for latter generations to enjoy. This art was not for pure aesthetic enjoyment or for Bourgeoise pleasure. It was intended to document the plight of the common man and propagandize for the revolutionary forces like the Spartacus League and Communist Party who intended to bring down the Bourgeoise establishment. Grosz was able to do this by using the Dada anti-art techniques and ideas that he learned from the Heartfield/Herzfeld brothers. And it is this art that will continue to live on as like Goya and Daumier before him, Grosz intended and continued until his death to speak to truth to power.