

**DEGENERATE PRACTICE: INCONSISTENCIES IN
REPRESSIVE REGIMES' CULTURAL POLICIES
AGAINST AVANT-GARDE ART**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of**

BACHELOR OF ARTS WITH HONORS

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

March 25, 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend a big, warm thank you to Dr. Andrei Markovits for inspiring me to write a thesis: I have thoroughly enjoyed every one of your classes, as well as researching and writing about my thesis topic. I could not have completed this work without your help and guidance!

Thank you to my adviser, Dr. Anna Grzymala-Busse for helping to guide me in my research throughout this past year: your comments on my writing have been wonderful! Thank you for your insightful advice!

Also, thank you to my third reader and supervisor at the Detroit Institute of Arts, Salvador Salort-Pons, for taking the time to work with me, teach me, and of course, read this thesis: I have learned so much from you! Thank you for making this project that much easier to write!

I would also like to thank my mom and dad, Linda and James Tyson, for reading and re-reading drafts of my thesis and always being there for love and support: I love you!

Thank you to my sister, Kelly Tyson, my roommates Kayley McInerney and Anna Evola, and Scott Trenary, for always being supportive and understanding of my busy schedule and (probably abnormally) high levels of stress: You are all the best – thank you for putting things into perspective for me and keeping me somewhat calm and relaxed throughout the year! I love you!

Lastly, thank you to the entire class of political science honors students and thesis writers: your support during these months has been amazing, and I wish you all the best of luck in whichever endeavors you may pursue after graduation!

ABSTRACT

Previously understood to have been totally controlling and oppressive, new research has shed light on the fact that, in regards to the enforcement of their cultural policies, some repressive political regimes were not the tyrants that many had believed them to be. In regimes such as the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and Benito Mussolini's fascist Italian state, censorship and control of creative expression and art was not enforced to the fullest extent of the governments' capabilities. In this study that questions why avant-garde artists were not oppressed equally within their repressive political societies when their governments had established clearly defined cultural policies that forbade abstraction in art, a proposed answer, which suggests that avant-garde artists with personal connections to the regime were repressed less than those without them, is supported. The results of this study are notable in that they suggest ensuring prolonged and stable political power through a broad base of support is more significant to repressive political regimes than the strict adherence to a particular ideology or set of laws.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I: Introduction

1. State Patronage for the Arts

Cultural policies are important for democratic governments and repressive political regimes alike because of the relationship that their respective societies have with the arts – a broad category that includes every form of creative expression from the many types of performance and literary art to different styles of visual art.¹ The arts help define a society; artistic fashions and creations are frequently based on artists’ or people’s reactions to that society’s past and present.² As Victoria D. Alexander and Marilyn Reuschmemeyer write in the introduction to their book, *Art and the State*, “Artists create art within a social context – within an ‘art world’ or ‘artistic field’...that is situated in the wider society.”³ Based on a society’s social norms (what the public accepts as appropriate styles and forms of art) and the type of government in which art is created (as governments respond to art in particular ways), the arts are controlled through the differing cultural policies of differing political systems.⁴ The sponsorship of particular artistic styles through the patronization of particular artists, the funding of art exhibitions, and the establishment of cultural bureaucracy are among the most popular methods through which a state can affect the arts.⁵ Through cultural policies, it is ultimately the government that decides how the arts should function in a society.⁶

¹ John Pick, *The Arts in a State* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1988), 85.

² Victoria D. Alexander and Marilyn Rueschmemeyer, *Art and the State* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), ix.

³ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁴ John Pick, *The Arts in a State* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1988), 75.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

It is necessary for a state to finance its own artistic programs and institutions because members of a state are “culture consumers.”⁷ Merit goods, such as artworks and other cultural goods, increase the social benefits and significance of living within a society, because, as mentioned, all artworks are constructed within a social context.⁸ In her book, *The Political Economy of Art: Making the Nation of Culture*, Julie Codell writes that, “state and corporate interests actively produce culture often with the intention of shaping consuming spectators to fit into social and national identities and behaviors....”⁹ Similarly, Alexander and Rueschmemeyer note that, “the state influences the production, distribution, and reception of art, and it can shape the life chances of individual artists.”¹⁰ However true these arguments may be, they are somewhat simplistic, as they focus too closely on the relationship of arts to the market – a connection that occurs more frequently in democratic societies than repressive regimes.¹¹

This study focuses on the relationship between repressive political regimes and their cultural policies because the existing literature that discusses the connection between them rarely focuses on the inconsistencies in the enforcement of repressive cultural policies. Political repression can be defined as, “the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization, within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, for the purpose of imposing a cost on the target as well as deterring specific activities and/or beliefs perceived to be

⁷ Julie F. Codell, *The Political Economy of Art: Making the Nation of Culture* (Cranbury: Associated University, 2008), 13.

⁸ Victoria D. Alexander and Marilyn Rueschmemeyer, *Art and the State* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), ix.

⁹ Julie F. Codell, *The Political Economy of Art: Making the Nation of Culture* (Cranbury: Associated University, 2008), 13.

¹⁰ Victoria D. Alexander and Marilyn Rueschmemeyer, *Art and the State* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), ix.

¹¹ Gail Harrison Roman and Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, *The Avant-Garde Frontier, Russia Meets the West, 1910-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 6.

challenging to government personnel, practices or institutions.”¹² Codell notes that the most politically and economically strong members of a society have the power to control the commission of art that has a certain political message and is consumed by a majority of the public.¹³ With their, “complete” and simplified world view, repressive regimes often sponsor art that can be considered, “monolithic, exclusivist, racist, oppressive, and reductive reifications of culture....”¹⁴ Conversely, and incorrectly, Codell argues against her previous statement, saying that the state does not control the subject matter of the art, or art’s intent.¹⁵ For repressive political regimes, there is a right and a wrong artistic style, and being the primary power holders within a state, repressive regimes determine what forms of creative expression are acceptable within their respective societies.¹⁶

The existing literature that examines the link between repressive political regimes and their cultural policies reflects the fact that repressive regimes financially and politically support a certain type of art or visual creative expression over other types of art.¹⁷ Nearly all, repressive regimes have clearly defined cultural policies against abstraction in art, and generally, the supported art is one that aligns closely with the regime’s ideology, almost acting as propaganda to further the mission of the regime.¹⁸ It can then be said that it is likely that a repressive regime *would not* censor an artist or group of artists that it supports. Therefore, it can be said with equal

¹² Christian Davenport, “State Repression and Political Order,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 2.

¹³ Julie F. Codell, *The Political Economy of Art: Making the Nation of Culture* (Cranbury: Associated University, 2008), 15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 9.

¹⁷ Julie F. Codell, *The Political Economy of Art: Making the Nation of Culture* (Cranbury: Associated University, 2008), 15.

¹⁸ Victoria D. Alexander and Marilyn Rueschmeyer, *Art and the State* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 191.

certainty that the regime *would* censor artists or a group of artists working in an avant-garde, abstract style not supported by the regime. It is highly *unlikely* that a repressive regime would censor the supported style, and, interestingly, it is possible that artists working in an abstract style might *not* be censored by the repressive regime, or might *not be repressed as harshly* as other avant-garde artists facing the same conditions within the regime. This counterintuitive creates a question regarding governmental intent. Why do repressive political regimes, when they have very clear definitions speaking out against abstraction in art, allow some avant-garde artists to operate normally and others to be censored?

2. Hypotheses

In this study, and in response to the aforementioned question, I hypothesize that avant-garde artists with connections to the ruling repressive political regime are repressed less frequently and less severely than those without such connections. This is a plausible argument because repressive political regimes are most interested in staying in power, and to do so, they protect those who support and further the ideology of the party. Alexander and Reuschmeyer's work is in agreement with this notion when it states, "authoritarian regimes are likely to control artists in the first instance by supporting those who conform to the accepted styles and career pathways, although such regimes also tend to rely on explicit censorship and punishment as an adjunct to selective support."¹⁹ Repressive regimes both fear and loathe the chaos and uncontrollable ideas that abstract art introduces to society because of the threat of loss of control that such abstract, avant-garde art can create.²⁰ Yet, this enforced "explicit censorship

¹⁹ Victoria D. Alexander and Marilyn Rueschmeyer, *Art and the State* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 9.

²⁰ Joan Kee, "The Everyday: The View From Japan and the Soviet Union" (lecture, History of Art 394, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, October 5-7, 2010).

and punishment” does not affect all avant-garde artists, when such repression might be expected to be equal among them.²¹ The previously mentioned hypothesis provides the most likely answer to this dilemma, despite the fact that different types of regimes have specific methods for ensuring that their societal control is secured.

Alternatively, repressive regimes might have other methods for staying in power that might not lend themselves to the uneven treatment of avant-garde artists due to personal ties. For example, the regimes might repress avant-garde artists unevenly because they don't picture the style of the artists' works to be particularly abstract or avant-garde. This is unlikely, however, as in each repressive society, abstraction in art was widely understood and defined in opposition to realistic art that had been popularized during the nineteenth century.²² Or, it is plausible that some avant-garde artists were repressed less than others because the government simply was not familiar with their work, or was never able to locate the artists. This, too, does not seem to provide many answers to the thesis of this study as each repressive regime had extensively well-organized secret police and investigative forces for locating regime defectors.²³

3. Methodology

In conducting the research for this project, three historical case studies, which examined the lives of four, principal avant-garde artists and how each artist was repressed and supported within his respective repressive political regime, were selected and investigated. The case studies were chosen using criteria that normalized the regimes based on era, region, and presence of avant-garde art movements. The Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy were

²¹ Victoria D. Alexander and Marilyn Rueschmeyer, *Art and the State* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 9.

²² Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 807.

²³ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 303.

selected to be the regimes of interest in this study, as all were European regimes that became powerful during the first half of the twentieth century – they experienced similar sociopolitical conditions and all supported thriving artistic sectors. Additionally, regimes representing both sides of the political spectrum were chosen for this study to demonstrate that unequal repression of avant-garde artists and thus, creative expression, is characteristic of all repressive regimes.

Within each regime, avant-garde artists were selected first by determining through published art historical studies which avant-garde movements were the most prominent in each of the aforementioned societies. The most prominent artists within each avant-garde movement were selected for this study because of the role that they played in shaping the avant-garde movements' styles. Primarily, painters were chosen for this study because of the recognizably and visually abstract nature of their work. However, as all avant-garde artists experimented with different media, this criterion was not a hard requirement in selecting the avant-garde artists for this study. The decided best way to demonstrate that repressive regimes didn't repress their avant-garde artists equally when they might have been expected to do so was to map the trajectory of the development of the regime's cultural policy alongside instances of repression against the avant-garde artists.

The lives of the selected avant-garde artists and instances of repression against them were observed using biographical information detailed in publications of catalogued exhibitions of their work. In an integrated timeline depicting the first years of each regime's existence, these artist-based events were presented alongside developments in the regime's cultural policy, as determined through the most comprehensive primary and secondary resources that shed light on the cultural and political situations within the earliest years of each regime. The developments in cultural policy were considered important, for example, if they significantly changed the existing

cultural policy or led to a significant change in the existing cultural policy within the regime, as determined by a shift away from an artistic style that had been prevalent within the society, or led to drastic increases in the repression of avant-garde artists.

These instances of repression were then coded by type, with a higher type number signifying worse repression of an artist by the repressive political regime. Type 1 indicated denunciations made in print; Type 2 referred to the closing of an artist's exhibition or the stripping of an artist's work from museums and galleries; Type 3 corresponded to removal of the artist from a position of authority; Type 4 pertained to imprisonment, house arrest, or exile of the artist, and Type 5 signified death of the artist at the hands of the regime. Then, these instances of repression were represented in a table that ranked the artists within each case study based on their repression from least repressed to most repressed, with a lower number signifying less repression, and a higher number, more repression. Rank of repression also corresponded to whether or not the artists had personal connections to the regime – the factor most determinate of whether or not the primary hypothesis of this study would be supported. Personal connections to the regime were determined by discovered instances of support for the avant-garde artists by the regime that included, but were not limited to, membership in the leading party, commissions requested by the party, and relationships with those involved in the party. The findings were finally analyzed in a three-part explanation that examined the repressive regime's motivations for repressing artists, why artists were repressed extremely harshly, how the repression of artists developed during the regime's time in power, and how the avant-garde artists were repressed differently among themselves.

When conducting this research, confounding variables were avoided. For example, the way in which an artist reacted to his repression by the regime was not coded as an instance of

repression, because the action was artist-initiated and driven. Additionally, an artist's belief in his regime's ideology, as a confounding factor, was not charted because, while interesting, it did not represent a tangible connection to the regime. As this detailed process was completed for each regime, the nuances, and thus, findings, that differed between the regimes were detailed in subsequent chapters.

4. The Results are In: Moving Forward

The initial section of this project introduces the body of existing social research that examines political regimes, be they repressive or not, and their cultural policies. As art has been linked to politics for centuries, and as it directly relates to freedom of expression as a universal human right, the body of the existing research connecting art, as a form of culture, and politics is large. It is widely known that all types of governments support the arts within their countries.²⁴ Additionally, the study of political repression as a cultural policy against art is common and well understood by social scientists. However, the study of differences in the repression of art, despite the presence of a cohesive cultural policy favoring repression, is rare, if not nonexistent. This investigative project adds to the larger body of research by asking why disparities in the enforcement of cultural policies of repression against the arts exist.

In the next three chapters of this study, the primary hypothesis that states that avant-garde artists with personal connections to the regime were repressed less than those without them is tested. The findings of the case studies conducted on the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and Mussolini's Italy as they relate to the primary hypothesis of this work are contextualized and explained. The results are garnered using tables that rank avant-garde artists in order of the severity of their repression and show that, in two of the three cases (as one case was null), avant-

²⁴ John Pick, *The Arts in a State* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1988), 85.

garde artists with personal ties to the ruling political party were, indeed, repressed less than those without such ties.

More specifically, in chapter two, the Soviet Union example demonstrates that, while many artists produced their work under the aegis of different avant-garde movements such as Suprematism and Constructivism, all avant-garde artists were repressed because of the abstract nature of their work.²⁵ However, as the instances of repression coded in the Soviet Union's repression table suggest, those avant-garde artists with closer ties to the Soviet party, such as Vladimir Tatlin, who frequently received commissions to design products for the Soviet state, were repressed less than those who did not have strong connections to the regime, such as Kazimir Malevich, who maintained the abstract style of his art, in opposition to the party's wishes, throughout his life. Similarly, though the Nazi party strictly repressed all "degenerate," abstract forms of art in Germany, instances of repression against the country's avant-garde artists, as displayed in the Nazi Germany integrated timeline, suggest otherwise.²⁶ The findings of the Nazi case study in chapter three demonstrate that Emil Nolde, as a Nazi sympathizer, was repressed less than George Grosz, another avant-garde artist representative of the same artistic style who regularly and openly denounced the Nazi regime.

Chapter four, however, introduces a different analysis to the support in favor of the primary hypothesis of this study because, in Mussolini's Italy, avant-garde art was not repressed, but supported.²⁷ Despite being a fascist regime that controlled all aspects of society, Mussolini's regime tolerated abstraction in art. The counter example demonstrates a cultural policy different from those seen in other repressive regimes. As avant-garde artists were not repressed,

²⁵ See Chapter II, The Soviet Union, pg. 16.

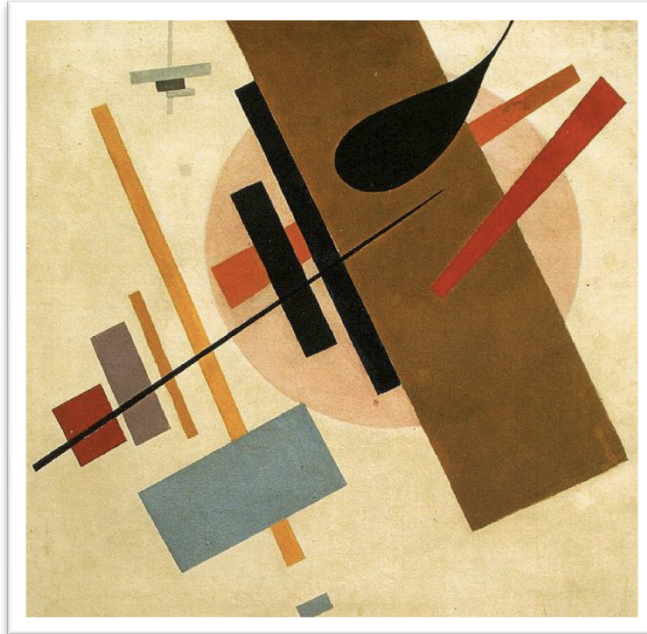
²⁶ See Chapter III, Nazi Germany, pg. 32.

²⁷ See Chapter IV, Mussolini's Italy, pg. 49.

differences in the degree of repression amongst the avant-garde artists cannot be determined, and therefore, do not support nor detract from the argument in this study. The case study introduces another layer of analysis regarding political regimes and the requisite that their cultural policies necessarily be repressive.

In the final, concluding chapter of this study, all findings are discussed in a bounded comparison of the different regime types represented in this research, examining how their cultural policies, or enforcement of them, allowed for the unequal treatment of artists. The results offer a comprehensive glance at the delicate relationship between art and politics – a relationship illustrated in the following pages of this work.

CHAPTER II THE SOVIET UNION



Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematism*, 1916-17. Oil on canvas, 31.5 X 31.5 in. Fine Arts Museum, Krasnodar.



Vasili P. Efanov, *An Unforgettable Meeting*, 1936-7. Oil on canvas, 106 X 154 in. Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow.

CHAPTER II: Soviet Opposition to the Avant-Garde

1. Introduction

Existing policy studies show that both democratic and repressive governments sponsor and support the arts within their respective societies.²⁸ However, they also stifle some art forms when the artistic styles of those forms are in opposition to the government's ideology – a phenomenon more representative of repressive political regimes, such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, Soviet Union), than democratic societies.²⁹ In a case study that examines the lives of four principal, Russian avant-garde artists, and how the October Revolution, the installation of a state-supported artistic style, and governmental threats affected their lives and their art, this chapter highlights the denial of the Soviet regime's own laws regarding creative expression. In this chapter, I examine the Soviet Union's cultural policies during the first years of its existence noting instances of repression against the abstract artists Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Tatlin, Aleksandr Rodchenko and Naum Gabo, and how these instances coincide with the policies' development. These artists were selected for this study because they were pioneers of their respective avant-garde styles, as Kazimir Malevich, for example, founded the suprematist movement. Degrees of repression are coded by type, with a higher type number signifying harsher repression. Type 1 indicates denunciations made in print; Type 2 refers to the closing of an artist's exhibition or the stripping of an artist's work from museums and galleries; Type 3 corresponds to removal of the artist from a position of authority; Type 4 pertains to imprisonment, house arrest, or exile of the artist, and Type 5 signifies death of the artist at the hands of the regime. The types of repression are not to be confused with the

²⁸ John Pick, *The Arts in a State* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1988), xi.

²⁹ Renee Baigell and Matthew Baigell, ed. *Soviet Dissident Artists Interviews after Perestroika* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 1-2.

personal reactions of the artists against their repression, such as self-imposed exile or suicide. In some instances, certain avant-garde artists are repressed more harshly than others, and at other times, they are favored by the regime, despite the abstract style of their art. The case study helps to answer the thesis of this work: why do repressive political regimes allow some abstract, avant-garde artists to produce their work without retribution when regime ideology speaks out against abstraction and modernism in art? The findings of the case study are notable, as they support the primary hypothesis of this work, which states that artists with personal ties to the ruling repressive regime or political party are less likely to be repressed than those without such connections, or those in direct opposition to governmental ideology. Personal ties include, but are not limited to, party membership, party commissions, and relationships with those involved in the party. If the regime were to abide by its own policies, it would be expected that all abstract, avant-garde artists would be repressed equally. This case study helps to demonstrate that party loyalty and protecting political ideology are more important to repressive political regimes than upholding their policy creations. Staying true to their own laws is not the top priority for repressive regimes – staying in power, however, is.

2. The Russian Avant-Garde and the catalyst that created Soviet cultural policy

Due to the changes that occurred in Russian cultural laws in the 1930s with the establishment of Socialist Realism, the state-sponsored artistic style, Western scholars often forget much of Russia's rich, innovative, artistic history because they see the rise of Socialist Realism as a regression in the development of twentieth century art.³⁰ In many European countries, including Russia, early twentieth century art movements had become abstract as they

³⁰ Gail Harrison Roman and Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, *The Avant-Garde Frontier, Russia Meets the West, 1910-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 6.

shifted away from the literal depictions of everyday life that classified art created during the previous four centuries.³¹ It wasn't until repressive political regimes like the Soviet Union reinstated these realistic styles of old as the preferred taste and official art for their societies that Western art historians erased movements such as Socialist Realism from their own memories, and thus, the memories of Westernized people.³² The importance of the Russian avant-garde for the development of the Western Tradition in art was discredited due to the lack of interest in what followed its tenure.³³ The modern, abstract styles of the avant-garde artists radically changed and challenged revolutionary Russian society, perhaps to the point at which the centralized government of the Soviet Union recognized a weakness in its power. Abstract, avant-garde art did not have a clear subject matter, and thus, was open to interpretation by the masses, introducing room for criticism of the regime.³⁴

The Russian avant-garde movement was informally established during the first years of the twentieth-century before the 1905 Russian Revolution during which political and social unrest against the steadfast control of Tsar Nicholas II dominated Russian society.³⁵ Artists sought to “return to simple and organic forms” and “purify art of its narrative element” in rejection of the realistic, historical style favored by the Tsar.³⁶ Looking to traditional, Russian folk art, considered low-culture at the time, some avant-garde artists began to work in a Neo-Primitivist style of simplified figures and bright colors – similar to the Fauve style that was

³¹ Gail Harrison Roman and Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, *The Avant-Garde Frontier, Russia Meets the West, 1910-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 6.

³² *Ibid.*, 6.

³³ For definition of *Western Tradition in art*, see Appendix A, definitions.

³⁴ Joan Kee, “The Everyday: The View From Japan and the Soviet Union” (lecture, History of Art 394, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, October 5-7, 2010).

³⁵ Yevgenia Petrova, “The Origins of Early Twentieth-Century Russian Art,” in *Origins of the Russian Avant-Garde*, ed. State Russian Museum (Wappingers Falls, NY: Antique Collectors' Club, 2003), 11.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

developing simultaneously in France.³⁷ As Yevgenia Petrova posits, “[avant-garde artists were] not so much interested in the actual subjects of Old Russia as the need to capture what they regarded as the inherent, primordial energy and vigor of the Russian people.”³⁸ The Russian avant-garde movement’s official commencement, however, dates to 1910 – a time when Moscow and St. Petersburg were recognized as the two primary cultural centers in Russia.³⁹ Gail Harrison Roman writes, “the year 1910 is commonly accepted as the beginning of [the Russian avant-garde movement] because of its inauguration of a number of exhibitions and publications in which progressive work and aesthetics were presented.”⁴⁰ Artistic circles formed and fostered the glorification of abstraction. Stylistically, in their desire to capture that “primordial energy and vigor” of a developing Russia and its people, the avant-garde artists pushed Neo-Primitivism aside and became interested in the rise of Cubism, Dadaism, and Futurism in Europe.⁴¹ It was the Italian Futurist movement that resonated most closely with many Russian avant-garde artists during the revolutionary years beginning in 1917 as they saw the development of city centers, the equalization of social classes, and industrialization as a priority for backwards Russia.⁴² The Russian avant-garde artists admired movement, construction, and material growth, as “formal and aesthetic revolution” was on their agenda, and the notion of “construction” itself seemed less

³⁷ Yevgenia Petrova, “The Origins of Early Twentieth-Century Russian Art,” in *Origins of the Russian Avant-Garde*, ed. State Russian Museum (Wappingers Falls, NY: Antique Collectors’ Club, 2003), 9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁹ Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1962) 81.

⁴⁰ Gail Harrison Roman and Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, *The Avant-Garde Frontier, Russia Meets the West, 1910-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 2.

⁴¹ Yevgenia Petrova, “The Origins of Early Twentieth-Century Russian Art,” in *Origins of the Russian Avant-Garde*, ed. State Russian Museum (Wappingers Falls, NY: Antique Collectors’ Club, 2003), 9.

⁴² Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1962), 94.

Capitalist or bourgeois than “design.”⁴³ The avant-garde artist Kazimir Malevich noted, ““Cubism and Futurism were the revolutionary forms in art foreshadowing the revolution in political and economic life of 1917.”⁴⁴ The abstraction of Futurism, later inspiring the Russian, non-objective, abstract styles of Suprematism and Constructivism, was unlike anything that Russian people had seen in art. Futurist, Suprematist, and Constructivist paintings represented real subjects, but they were not realistic renderings of those subjects.

As radical, leftist thinkers, the avant-garde artists were strongly in favor of the rise of Communism and hoped for the creation of a truly utopian society after the success of the October Revolution.⁴⁵ As Gail Harrison Roman writes, “These [avant-garde] artists believed that the imagery, technology, and formal idiom of their machine-inspired work would contribute to the construction of a new and progressive social order, to which were frequently attached numerous socialist and communist theories and associations.”⁴⁶ Through their political involvement, the avant-garde artists tried to define a new artistic style to represent Russia and its revolutionary fervor.⁴⁷ In the documentary *The Shock of the New* directed by David Richardson, Naum Gabo, the creator of the Constructivist movement and a Russian avant-garde artist, notes that the avant-garde artists were optimistic that the new, abstract styles that (to them) obviously represented a Communist, utopian ideal would become the new, official style of the Soviet Union.⁴⁸ Forward-thinking art academies and galleries were established, and the Soviet government itself initially

⁴³ Roman, Gail Harrison and Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, *The Avant-Garde Frontier, Russia Meets the West, 1910-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 5.

⁴⁴ Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1962), 219.

⁴⁵ Roman, Gail Harrison and Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, *The Avant-Garde Frontier, Russia Meets the West, 1910-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁷ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 37.

⁴⁸ Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New*, Television mini-series, Directed by David Richardson (1982; United Kingdom: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1982.), Television.

began to favor the avant-garde: “The government contributed two million rubles to buy modern works of art and to equip and set up museums throughout the country.... These museums were equipped with works bought from artists of every school....”⁴⁹ While Russian modern and avant-garde art collectors existed, museums and galleries were the largest patrons of abstract art, due to government support.⁵⁰ It is interesting that, despite their political passion for Communism, the Russian avant-garde artists were ultimately repressed for their use of abstraction in art. The avant-garde artists were permitted to flourish under liberal artistic conditions for only ten years before organizations backed by money and political clout, which were in favor of making Socialist Realism the official Soviet art style, pushed for cultural reforms.⁵¹ Print-based philosophical debates occurred in Russia’s cultural sector as the competing interests of the avant-garde artists and conservative groups like The Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (AKhRR) battled to win the support of the government and the masses.⁵² The avant-garde artists stated that their work was intelligible to all and that it represented and glorified the revolutionary ideals of a collective, utopian society more than realistic art. The AKhRR and others retorted that artwork should be easily understood, accurate depictions of the October Revolution.⁵³ Socialist Realism as a style developed independently from government intervention and the avant-garde.⁵⁴ While the Soviet regime did not hand-select its artists, it did employ Socialist Realist painters that had been trained at art academies teaching the official, government-approved style to

⁴⁹ Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1962), 230.

⁵⁰ Svetlana Dzhafarova, “The Creation of the Museum of Painterly Culture,” in *The Great Utopia*, (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1992), 476.

⁵¹ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 37.

⁵² John E. Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), 265.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 266-267.

⁵⁴ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 129.

complete propagandistic tasks.⁵⁵ It was common that some avant-garde artists also painted in a realistic style so as to stay in favor with the government.⁵⁶ Ultimately, it was party leadership that swayed the intellectual battle in favor of Socialist Realism. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, known as the father of the revolution, once said in regards to avant-garde art, ““there’s nothing to understand here, it’s charlatanism, pure and simple.””⁵⁷ Despite prior support for the avant-garde in the form of museum commissions, the Soviet regime slowly began to change its cultural policies according to the sentiments of the most important Soviet leaders, taking actions that signaled support for realistic art. In a 1928 declaration, AKhRR wrote,

““Art belongs to the people. With its deepest roots it should penetrate into the very thick of the toiling masses. It should be understood by these masses and loved by them’ (Lenin). As artists of the Proletarian Revolution, we have the duty of transforming the authentic revolutionary reality into realistic forms comprehensible to the broad masses of the workers....””⁵⁸

On April 23, 1932, a committee under the direction of Maxim Gorky convened to establish an official cultural policy for the Soviet Union.⁵⁹ While no avant-garde artists were present due to the escalating intolerance for their work, Joseph Stalin and other party leaders attended the conference.⁶⁰ The avant-garde artists were left absent from the cultural debate that they had dominated for nearly two decades. Matthew Cullerne Bown notes, “The decree of April 1932 called for the foundation of a nation-wide Union of Soviet Artists, intended to embrace all the artists of the USSR.”⁶¹ The attendees of the conference wrote, “Socialist realism...requires of

⁵⁵ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 53.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁸ John E. Bowl, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), 271.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 296-297.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁶¹ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 135.

the artist a true, historically concrete depiction of reality in its Revolutionary development. In this respect, truth and historical concreteness of the artistic depiction of reality must be combined with the task of the ideological transformation and education of the workers in the spirit of Socialism.”⁶² At this conference, a catalyst for the change in the Soviet Union’s cultural policy, the terms “Socialist Realism” were first used together.⁶³

In the following section of this chapter, the findings of this case study on the Soviet Union and its cultural policy of Socialist Realism are explained. As the Soviet Union struggled against competing personalities and ideas to determine what its cultural policies would be, I map inconsistencies in the enforcement of Soviet repressiveness against avant-garde, modern, abstract art. Similar to instances in which the Soviet government purchased avant-garde art, and then imprisoned some avant-garde artists, I look for occasions during which avant-garde artists were repressed, and later not-repressed by the government. Additionally, occasions during which there were differences in the degrees to which avant-garde artists were repressed are noted. Such occurrences demonstrate why the Soviets repressed their avant-garde artists unequally.

3. The Development of the Soviet Union’s Cultural Policy and the Regime’s Inconsistent Repression of Avant-Garde Artists

a. Analysis Part 1

Naum Gabo, Constructivist artist and author of the Realist Manifesto, said in an interview that, “[the Russian avant-garde artists] were not favored by the Government...[they] did not have any sympathy from the official leaders of the communistic party. At the time of the civil war, that means up to 1920, [the Communist leaders] simply had not the time to bother about

⁶² John E. Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), 296-297.

⁶³ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 140.

[them]....”⁶⁴ In the earliest years of the Soviet Union’s existence, repression of avant-garde artists through cultural policy was not a priority for the young government.⁶⁵ Due to the Russian Civil War that the Bolsheviks faced during their first years of power, stabilizing the economy, fighting poverty, and solidifying Bolshevik power was the government’s priority.⁶⁶ While Soviet leaders quickly created cultural institutions, such as the People’s Commissariat for Popular Culture and Enlightenment (NarKomPros), it did not instate a particular policy that would lead to the subsequent repression of abstraction in art.⁶⁷ Defining a cultural policy became more important when politically minded organizations began to debate the importance of establishing a national artistic style that accurately represented the October Revolution and the proletariat.⁶⁸ As conservative groups of intellectuals favoring realist art became more powerful, the following three types of repression against avant-garde artists occurred more frequently,

1. Verbal Repression (Type 1): denunciations against avant-garde art in printed material or speeches
2. Non-Verbal, Non-Physical Repression (Types 2 and 3): stripping avant-garde art from museums or galleries and removal of avant-garde artists from positions of authority
3. Physical Repression (Types 4 or 5): imprisonment, exile, or execution.

These three types of repression are unique because they become gradually more severe, increasingly inhibiting the ability of avant-garde artists to work freely. When suffering verbal repression, and to a lesser extent, non-verbal, non-physical repression, avant-garde artists are still able to produce their artwork. The artists are freer to choose to continue working, to stylistically change their art and conform to the state’s policies, or halt artistic production until the political, cultural climate changes. While some danger is introduced with these types of repression, the

⁶⁴ Leslie Martin and Herbert Read, *Gabo* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 159.

⁶⁵ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 37.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

artists are not in immediate danger of execution. Physical repression, conversely, does not allow for avant-garde artists to produce their artwork without obstacles. When revoked of a position of authority, such as a professorship or membership in an artistic academy (as is true of non-verbal, non-physical repression), avant-garde artists lose a venue in which to create their art, as well as the credibility that would allow them to join other, similar institutions. When imprisoned, exiled, or worse, killed by the regime, the artists are physically injured or do not have access to materials that would allow them to continue working within their home country.

These three forms of repression also differ because instances of less severe forms of repression, such as verbal-repression, occur more frequently. Published literature denouncing abstract art can be printed and circulated quickly and widely. Often, the institutions and funds for publishing such materials are already appropriated to the necessary government bureaucracy responsible for instituting such repression because, for regimes such as the Soviet Union, propaganda is central to regime ideology.⁶⁹ Additionally, conservative artistic groups with political affiliations, such as AKhRR, expand the depth of participation in the verbal, and sometimes non-verbal, non-physical, repression of avant-garde artists.⁷⁰ The AKhRR, as it focused solely on the establishment of a defined cultural policy in Russia, had the time and human resources to dedicate to the denigration of the Russian avant-garde.⁷¹ Physical repression in which an artist is imprisoned, exiled, or killed by the regime is much more rare. While the Soviet Union frequently engaged in physical repression, it did so less frequently because of the little threat that artists, once out of the public eye, had for the stability of the regime. In the

⁶⁹ Gail Harrison Roman and Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, *The Avant-Garde Frontier, Russia Meets the West, 1910-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 55-56.

⁷⁰ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 70.

⁷¹ John E. Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), 265.

Soviet Union, as the avant-garde became less popular, some artists anticipated their subsequent repression and voluntarily left the country or converted to literal, realistic art styles. When not drawing attention, the Soviet regime lost interest in them.⁷² Unlike other regimes, such as Hitler's Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union was more concerned with preventing avant-garde art from reaching the public eye than ridding all society of cultural abstraction.⁷³

Soviet leaders chose to repress avant-garde artists in the aforementioned three ways, and chose to do so harshly, because it was a way for them to contribute to and shape the public debate on cultural policy. Aside from the occasional speech that stressed the importance of properly representing the Russia's revolutionary fervor, the Soviet government was somewhat removed from the artistic battle for stylistic authority. There existed so many artistic organizations, groups, and unions representing both sides of the aesthetic argument that making a clear, easy decision in favor of one side or the other was difficult until a "winner" began to emerge in the early 1930s.⁷⁴ Simply, the Soviet government wanted to stifle any person or group, artistic or other, who challenged its authority and made it difficult for the regime to rule legitimately and completely unchallenged.

b. Analysis Part 2⁷⁵

The initial confusion in the Soviet Union regarding cultural policies and the establishment of an official, state-supported style contributed to the randomness in repression of the avant-garde. Notable inconsistencies in the enforcement of Soviet cultural laws, and thus, the repression of avant-garde artists, were more prevalent during the first decade of the Soviet

⁷² Renee Baigell and Matthew Baigell, *Soviet Dissident Artists Interviews after Perestroika* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995) 1.

⁷³ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 11.

⁷⁴ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 125, 128.

⁷⁵ See Appendix C for integrated timeline. Analysis Part 2 refers exclusively to it unless noted otherwise.

Union's existence than the rest of its reign. For example, after passing a law on the 19 September 1918 that protected the cultural heritage of the Soviet Union by prohibiting the transfer of artistic objects across international borders, Kazimir Malevich was allowed to send hundreds of his artworks to Germany. In other instances, avant-garde artists such as Vladimir Tatlin were praised in 1919, while those such as Aleksandr Rodchenko were denounced ten years later. The longer that the Soviets held power, however, the more organized they became, and the more developed their cultural policy became. Repression was more acceptable – it was the norm for artists and other intellectuals to be treated poorly. It also became more stable, more uniform, and ultimately, harsher. As opposed to merely being denounced by the regime (and sometimes supported by it), avant-garde artists had to fight to keep their studios open, especially during the two years immediately preceding the official establishment of Socialist Realism as an artistic style. However, for those artists who left the country relatively early, such as Naum Gabo, repression was infrequent, reaffirming the notion that the Soviet Union was not completely opposed to avant-garde art as it was to being challenged in its authority. It sought to educate the masses and maintain full control of cultural society through Socialist Realism.

For repression to remain constant throughout a regime's existence, as was not true of the Soviet Union example, the regime must be stable and quickly organize and enforce its cultural policy, without leaving time and room for intellectual and ideological debate. In this regard, the Soviet, communist state differs from a regime such as Nazi Germany, which identified and instated its official arts policy only one year after rising to power.⁷⁶ The Soviet Union, similar to Mussolini's fascist state of Italy, placed so much emphasis on the notion of "revolution" and a

⁷⁶ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 11.

total overhaul of societal organization that any early beginnings for Soviet cultural policy became lost in the government's new rhetoric.

c. Analysis Part 3⁷⁷

In the Soviet Union, connections to the communist party helped to prevent some avant-garde artists from being repressed as harshly as others, reaffirming the primary hypothesis of this study, which states that those artists with relations to the regime are repressed less than those without such relations. For example, as both Vladimir Tatlin and Aleksandr Rodchenko received government commissions to design new products and take photographs of Soviet events, they were less likely to be repressed because they were cooperative and useful to the regime, despite not fully putting aside their abstract, avant-garde tendencies. Conversely, artists such as Kazimir Malevich, who never truly gave up his avant-garde style in spite of governmental pressures to do so, were more repressed. Based on observations of instances of repression against the Russian avant-garde artists Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Tatlin, Aleksandr Rodchenko, and Naum Gabo, the artists are ranked by their repression from 1 to 4, with one signifying the least repressed. The table below shows which of the four aforementioned Russian avant-garde artists were repressed in which ways, and which had connections to the regime.

Figure 1⁷⁸

| Avant-Garde Artists | Repression: Type 1 | Repression: Type 2 | Repression: Type 3 | Repression: Type 4 | Repression: Type 5 | Connection to Regime | Rank of Repression |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Malevich | YES | YES | YES | YES | NO | YES | 4 |
| Tatlin | YES | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | 2 |
| Rodchenko | YES | NO | YES | NO | NO | YES | 3 |
| Gabo | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | 1 |

⁷⁷ See Appendix C for integrated timeline. Analysis Part 3 refers exclusively to it unless noted otherwise.

⁷⁸ See Appendix D for table.

In the table, Naum Gabo is ranked first because, compared to the other featured avant-garde artists, he was hardly repressed. His is a unique case. Naum Gabo immigrated to Western Europe from Russia before the establishment of Socialist Realism, but after the avant-garde was no longer tolerated. He never gave up his avant-garde style, but did not need to do so as he produced his work outside of the Soviet Union and thus, was not present to be repressed, have his work repressed, or agitate the regime in any other way. The other three artists did have some connection to the regime, but their connections and instances of repression differed. Vladimir Tatlin and Aleksandr Rodchenko, as mentioned, were each frequently commissioned by the Soviet regime for their artistic assistance. After presenting his abstract Monument to the Third International, Tatlin designed new, everyday objects to be used by average Soviet citizens. Aleksandr Rodchenko was repressed more frequently than Tatlin, and ultimately began to photograph the Soviet regime once his abstract style was no longer favored by society. Thus, Vladimir Tatlin and Aleksandr Rodchenko are ranked second and third, respectively. The worst repressed avant-garde artists, however, was Kazimir Malevich, who maintained his avant-garde style throughout his lifetime. He is ranked fourth, having experienced every type of repression except execution by the regime.

The Russian avant-garde artists were not repressed in pairs, and were only repressed in groups when denounced in the press as being members of a particular artistic style. Between the few avant-garde movements that developed in Russia during the early Soviet years, artists of one movement were not repressed more than those of another. As repression developed differently among the Russian avant-garde artists, occurring at different times and to different degrees, the notion that the Soviet government was more concerned with preventing the avant-garde from

having a political voice than it was with defining an artistic policy is clear, until in one, 1932 event, the regime finally and officially established its artistic vision for the country.

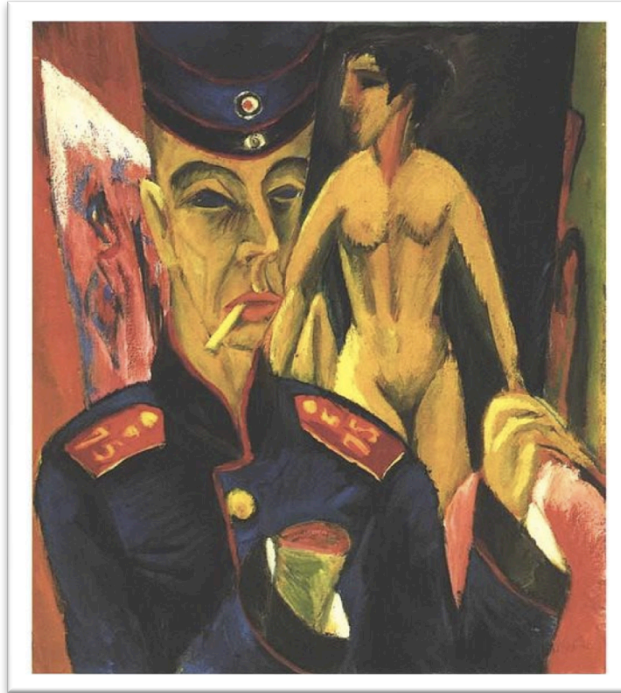
4. Conclusion

The disorganization of the Soviet Union and its cultural policies during the early years of its existence is apparent, as the government frequently changed its attitude towards the avant-garde. At one point, it nationalized hundreds of private art collections that contained great modern works of art, provided funds for the purchase of thousands of Russian avant-garde art, and sponsored art shows of avant-garde artists' works, despite its own, growing discontent with everything considered abstract. Initially, the lack of a clear artistic stance allowed the avant-garde to flourish. Those artists that did flourish were the most prominent artists working within their respective styles. They garnered the attention of some Soviet leaders, resulting in instances of support for the avant-garde during the post-revolutionary years. Different from Nazi Germany, the Soviet government didn't destroy its avant-garde art, but kept it hidden from public view in the vaults of its great museums, reaffirming the notion that the regime simply did not want to introduce the proletariat to abstract art. Perhaps it feared the power of abstraction, as a force that could destabilize the regime.

Matthew Cullerne Bown notes that the Soviet regime returned to realism due to the support of party leadership, but also because easel painting became viable again. The avant-garde, like the artistic styles that preceded it, was soon out of fashion and the artists were old. This is an oversimplified argument for the demise of the avant-garde, as realistic art such as that seen in Socialist Realism would too have been passé since the first years of the twentieth century. The need for the Soviet Union to control what was thought and experienced within its borders fostered artistic repression.

CHAPTER III

NAZI GERMANY



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Self-portrait as a Soldier*, 1915. Oil on canvas, 27.25 X 24 in. Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio.



Hermann Otto Hoyer, *In The Beginning Was the Word*, 1937. Oil on canvas.

CHAPTER III: Nazi Germany and its Degenerate Art

1. Introduction

During its brief, but absolute, control of the German government, the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist Party, Nazi Party, Nazis) transformed the country into a society based on complete conservatism in all aspects of public and private life.⁷⁹ Social purification and the championing of the Aryan race was the Nazi Party's mission.⁸⁰ While extreme focus was placed on ridding Europe of its Jewish populations, the German cultural realm was no exception to reform, as the Nazis made defining a cultural policy against abstraction a political priority.⁸¹ Adolf Hitler and other Nazi party leaders, with their belief in *volk*, a sense of "German-ness" based on blood and history, hated abstraction and avant-garde art as they believed that it did not reflect the superiority of the German people.⁸² In a sense, the Nazis subjected German avant-garde movements to a type of holocaust, despite the movements' national and international popularity. Avant-garde art was publicly ridiculed, denounced in the press and speeches made by Nazi leaders, and physically assaulted through the burning and purging of abstract art from public and private collections in Nazi-occupied territories.⁸³

As Stephanie Barron writes in *Degenerate Art*, "During the 1910s and 1920s public and private enthusiasm for contemporary art flourished in Germany in an unprecedented way."⁸⁴ Public museums expanded their collections of abstract art, and avant-garde artists were awarded

⁷⁹ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 73.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸¹ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 11.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸³ Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham, and Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, Film, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (2006; San Francisco: Actual Films, 2006.), DVD.

⁸⁴ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 6.

professorships due to their artistic ingenuity and expertise.⁸⁵ But beginning in 1933, the Nazis halted artistic advancement through avant-garde movements.⁸⁶ This case study examines the Nazi Party's repressive cultural policy through comparisons of its development with the lives of the avant-garde, German Expressionist and New Objectivist artists Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, George Grosz, and Otto Dix. These four artists were selected for this study because they are considered by contemporary art historians to have been leaders within their respective avant-garde movements before Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power.⁸⁷

In an examination of the development of the Nazis' cultural policy against "degenerate art" and the inconsistent repression of avant-garde artists, the primary hypothesis of this study, which states that those artists with a connection to the Nazi regime were repressed less than those without such connections, is supported. Identical to the Soviet Union case study, repression is coded by type, with a higher type number signifying worse repression of an artist by the Nazi regime. Type 1 indicates denunciations made in print; Type 2 refers to the closing of an artist's exhibition or the stripping of an artist's work from museums and galleries; Type 3 corresponds to removal of the artist from a position of authority; Type 4 pertains to imprisonment, house arrest, or exile of the artist, and Type 5 signifies death of the artist at the hands of the regime. From an integrated timeline that is featured in Appendix C, these instances of repression and conversely, acceptance, by the regime are assigned a repression type. Finally, they are represented in a table that ranks the artists based on their repression from least repressed to most repressed, with a

⁸⁵ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 13.

⁸⁶ Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham, and Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, Film, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (2006; San Francisco: Actual Films, 2006.), DVD.

⁸⁷ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 721.

lower number signifying less repression, and a higher number, more repression.⁸⁸ Artist connections to the regime are included in this table as well for comparison to the repression ranking. The findings are analyzed in a three-part explanation that examines the Nazi Party's motivations for repressing artists, why the Nazis repressed artists extremely harshly, how the repression of artists developed during the Nazis' time in power, and how the avant-garde artists were repressed differently.

In a speech that inaugurated the opening of the House of German Art, Hitler said, “‘Works of art’ that are not capable of being understood in themselves but need some pretentious instruction book to justify their existence – until at long last they find someone sufficiently browbeaten to endure such stupid or impudent twaddle with patience – will never again find their way to the German people.”⁸⁹ While not entirely true, his words did resonate with a conservative public, crippling the success of Germany's avant-garde artists during the Nazi Party's twelve-year power trip.

2. Old-School Style in Nazi Germany

German avant-garde art was recognized domestically and internationally with the rise of Expressionism.⁹⁰ It emerged in 1905 when Ernst Ludwig Kirchner founded Die Brücke (The Bridge) as an artistic circle that sought to link realistic art of the nineteenth century to new, innovative styles.⁹¹ In regard to this generational and stylistic link, Kirchner wrote, “With faith in progress and in a new generation of creators and spectators we call together all youth. As youth, we carry the future and want to create for ourselves freedom of life and of movement against the

⁸⁸ See Appendix C for integrated timeline.

⁸⁹ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 370.

⁹⁰ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 721.

⁹¹ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 269.

long-established older forces.”⁹² The movement, which attracted many other German avant-garde artists such as Emil Nolde, worked to express somewhat pessimistic emotions regarding society through the use of bright, jarring colors and primitive-looking subjects.⁹³ Similar to Fauvism in France and Neo-Primitivism in the Soviet Union, German Expressionism was a reaction against conservatism and realism in art, and was further developed in the artistic group Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider).⁹⁴ Recognizing the rise of abstraction in art through rapidly evolving activity in these artistic circles, museums in Frankfurt, Essen, and Berlin created special exhibitions devoted to contemporary art.⁹⁵ Private collectors, too, bought German avant-garde art en masse.⁹⁶ The German avant-garde was so popular, that even conservative, Nazi leaders such as Josef Goebbels, later appointed the Reich Minister of Propaganda, initially surrounded themselves with the finest examples of German Expressionist and New Objectivist sculpture and painting before Hitler denounced such pieces as “degenerate.”⁹⁷ Artistic freedom was plentiful in Germany prior to Nazi control, despite a general shift towards political and social conservatism, as many German citizens, artists, and government officials believed that the avant-garde visually represented a youthful, evolving Germany.⁹⁸

Drawn to exotic people and cultures, German avant-garde artists argued for the recognition of the social rights of ethnic people and published multiple, radical journals that

⁹² Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 689.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 690.

⁹⁴ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 689.

⁹⁵ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 6.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 397.

freely and openly supported abstraction in art.⁹⁹ They ultimately challenged racism – a phenomenon that became more prominent in Germany during the chaotic, pre-Nazi era of Weimar Republic.¹⁰⁰ Emil Nolde, for example, despite being a conservative, grass roots organizer for the Nazi Party, wrote a letter to the German government arguing against the plight of indigenous people at the hands of Westerners.¹⁰¹ The avant-garde artists were extremely politically active. While many of the avant-garde artists saw themselves as nationalistic, they were not racist, directly placing them in opposition to the radical, right wing Nazi Party as it became increasingly popular in the most conservative regions of Germany.¹⁰²

It was nationalistic fervor that drove many avant-garde artists, such as the New Objectivists Otto Dix and George Grosz, to enthusiastically participate in World War I.¹⁰³ However, with the death and destruction that they experienced when fighting in the trenches, the avant-garde artists became disillusioned with national glory, and they used their negative, wartime experiences for artistic inspiration.¹⁰⁴ Otto Dix and George Grosz's abstract paintings and drawings often depicted German military officials in compromising situations with prostitutes, or soldiers wearing gas masks in barren landscapes, struggling to survive in a world terrorized by chemical warfare.¹⁰⁵ The avant-garde artists received criticism for their abstract, scandalous, and shocking criticisms of the government, leading to the imprisonment of some even before the official commencement of the Nazi era.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 315.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 315.

¹⁰³ Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz, The Berlin Years* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 185.

¹⁰⁴ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 718.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 718.

¹⁰⁶ Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz, The Berlin Years* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 186-187.

Initially, art and politics seemed to agree, as they moved together away from support for the bourgeoisie and towards a deeper appreciation for German, Nordic values.¹⁰⁷ Except for those negatively affected by World War I, many abstract, avant-garde artists were quite conservative and were proud of their country and government, while some of the most conservative government officials believed in the social strength and uniqueness of the German avant-garde. It was party leadership in the form of Hitler, however, who had been trained as an artist during the height of nineteenth century realistic art, which directed the national, cultural discourse away from abstraction.¹⁰⁸ Some scholars suggest that Hitler was angry at his lack of artistic success when, in 1934 at a Nazi Party rally, he took a direct stab at avant-garde movements, denouncing their art as “degenerate.”¹⁰⁹ This argument is simplistic, however, as more concrete studies suggest that Hitler decided to use realistic art as a propaganda mechanism.¹¹⁰ Abstract art was quickly seen as “intellectual, elitist, and foreign.”¹¹¹

As was true of the Soviet Union case, party leadership had immense influence in determining the path that the government’s cultural policy would take. In his book *Art of the Third Reich*, Adam Peter writes that the Nazis did not introduce a new artistic style to their repertoire.¹¹² He mentions that, “The task of art in the Third Reich was to impose a National Socialist philosophy of life. It had to form people’s minds and attitudes. Hitler said, ‘Art has at all times been the expression of an ideological and religious experience and at the same time the expression of a political will.’”¹¹³ Hitler believed that the masses should be educated with art

¹⁰⁷ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 23.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁰⁹ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 397.

¹¹⁰ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 305.

¹¹¹ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 11.

¹¹² Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 303.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

that glorifies the Nazi state and is, generally, aesthetically pleasing and easy to understand.¹¹⁴

After the 1934 rally, and to align themselves with the party agenda, all Nazi officials who had supported the avant-garde such as Goebbels and Hermann Wilhelm Göring, the Nazi Reichsmarschall, suddenly reversed their opinions of the abstract artists and their masterpieces.¹¹⁵ They began to directly take part in the systematic destruction of the avant-garde establishment while deceitfully collecting its artworks for their monetary value.¹¹⁶

In the following section of this chapter, I will examine other inconsistencies in the enforcement of Nazi cultural policy against avant-garde, modern, abstract art. Similar to instances in which Nazi leaders like Goebbels and Göring spoke against avant-garde art, but still collected it, I look for occasions during which avant-garde artists were repressed, and later not-repressed when Nazi cultural policies were still intact. Additionally, occasions during which there were differences in the degrees to which avant-garde artists were repressed are noted. Such occurrences demonstrate why the Nazis repressed their avant-garde artists unequally.

3. Nazi Cultural Policy and Repression of Germany's Avant-Garde Artists

a. Analysis Part 1

As the Nazis rose to power, they efficiently instituted reforms of Germany's cultural policies in an attempt to cleanse society of anything other than what was representational of the Aryan race.¹¹⁷ During World War II, when other countries might have allocated all of their resources to military success, the Nazis divided their attentions and continued their assault on the art collections of Europe, forcing the invaded European countries to hide their masterpieces in

¹¹⁴ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 305.

¹¹⁵ Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham, and Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, Film, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (2006; San Francisco: Actual Films, 2006.), DVD.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008), 133.

fortresses and underground safes.¹¹⁸ Their focus on the destruction of art is unique, and prompts questions that ask why the Nazis felt that they had to repress artistic freedom so harshly, and why did they chose to do so in the following three ways,

1. Verbal Repression (Type 1): denunciations against avant-garde art in printed material or speeches
2. Non-Verbal, Non-Physical Repression (Types 2 and 3): stripping avant-garde art from museums or galleries and removal of avant-garde artists from positions of authority
3. Physical Repression (Types 4 or 5): imprisonment, exile, or execution.

Aside from obvious differences between the forms of repression, these three types of repression are distinctive in that they increasingly inhibit the ability of avant-garde artists to work freely. As mentioned with the Soviet case, when suffering verbal repression, and to a lesser extent, non-verbal, non-physical repression, avant-garde artists were still able to produce their artwork. The artists were freer to choose to continue working or to cease further creation until the political, cultural climate changed because, while some danger was introduced with these types of repression, the artists' lives were not directly threatened. For example, when in 1935 and 1936, Emil Nolde's abstract works of art were insulted in print and stripped from an exhibition, he was still able to produce his art, and did so secretly beginning in 1939.¹¹⁹ Painting on scraps of rice paper, he later translated his works into full-scale canvas paintings after the fall of the Nazi regime, when abstract art was once again accepted by society.¹²⁰ Physical repression and to a lesser extent, non-verbal, non-physical repression, conversely did not allow for avant-garde artists to produce their artwork freely. When revoked of a position of authority, such as a professorship or membership in an artistic academy, avant-garde artists lose a venue in which to

¹¹⁸ Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham, and Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, Film, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (2006; San Francisco: Actual Films, 2006.), DVD.

¹¹⁹ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 319.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 320.

create their art. When imprisoned, or worse, killed by the regime, the artists are physically injured or do not have access to materials that would allow them to continue working.

These three forms of repression differ because instances of less oppressive forms of repression occur more frequently. Based on observed occasions of repression against the German avant-garde artists, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, George Grosz, and Otto Dix, non-verbal, non-physical instances of repression occur almost as frequently as instances of verbal repression, but physical repression in which an artist is imprisoned, exiled, or killed by the regime is much more rare.¹²¹ It is easier and less costly for a regime to engage in verbal repression, as printed material denouncing abstract art can be published and distributed quickly, and circulated widely. If engaging in riskier, physical repression, it is possible that the regime could face societal backlash for repression of an important public figure, such as a famous artist.

Ultimately, the Nazi Party chose to stifle avant-garde artists through these three forms of repression, because together, they were all encompassing. The Nazis attacked the avant-garde artists' psyches by forbidding them to exercise their creative minds and by degrading their professional success; they affected the artists' physical capacities by forcing them to relocate, hide their activities, or be killed; and they destroyed the fruit of the avant-garde artists' labors, their artworks, by stealing them, selling them, or even destroying them completely – actions that surely would affect both the mental and physical well being of the avant-garde artists.¹²²

In statements made by Hitler and other Nazi officials, it is clear that the Nazi Party repressed avant-garde art because “[party officials] discovered that art not only could carry a political message but was also a perfect medium for creating and directing desires and dreams. It

¹²¹ See Appendix C for integrated timeline.

¹²² Ibid.

was able to program people's emotions and direct their behavior."¹²³ The Nazis saw art as a way to educate the masses, and they did not want that education to be confused by art that did not perfectly represent real subjects.¹²⁴ As a form of propaganda, realistic art was supported by the regime because it did not allow its viewers to create alternative understandings of the artworks, as abstract art did.¹²⁵ The stability of the regime was protected through literal, glorified depictions of real life.¹²⁶ However, what is less clear is why the Nazis attacked abstract, avant-garde art so harshly.

As demonstrated by the fact that every avant-garde artist faced some degree of the three aforementioned forms of repression, the Nazi Party wanted to make a spectacle of the artists, as many were prominent figures in German society.¹²⁷ They used avant-garde artists as examples to demonstrate what imagery, behavior, and thinking was and wasn't acceptable for a pure, German race. For example, the Degenerate Art exhibition was visited by millions of people.¹²⁸ The visitors viewed the names and pieces of the avant-garde artists juxtaposed with derogatory statements made against them.¹²⁹ The entire exhibition, as it opened in an adjacent building and only one day after an exhibition glorifying Nazi art, served as a lesson to German citizens.¹³⁰ With extremely harsh repression, the Nazis either eliminated the avant-garde artists completely through execution or kept avant-garde artists from further producing their artwork. Any

¹²³ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 10.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹²⁵ Joan Kee, "The Everyday: The View From Japan and the Soviet Union" (lecture, History of Art 394, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, October 5-7, 2010).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz, The Berlin Years* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 193.

¹²⁸ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 9.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

discovered, newly produced artwork would be confiscated and the maker punished.¹³¹ Their extreme measures deterred any other member of German society from producing or supporting avant-garde art. More generally, Nazi repression deterred any other member of society who did not wish to meet the fate of many avant-garde artists from simply thinking or acting in a way that was contrary to Nazi practice. As only six of the hundreds of artists represented in the Degenerate Art exhibition were Jewish, race was not an important factor in the repression of artists as perhaps the Nazis focused more closely on eliminating *visual* “degeneracy” through their cultural policies.¹³²

b. Analysis Part 2¹³³

The Nazi Party controlled the German government for only twelve years, but during its brief reign, it installed a comprehensive cultural policy that forbade abstraction in visual art. Almost immediately after they rose to power in 1933, the Nazis established propaganda and cultural chambers with the aim of controlling all artistic practices within the country. In creating these institutions so quickly, the Nazis signaled that they were serious about making cultural policy a cornerstone of their political agenda. Josef Goebbels, the Reich Minister for National Enlightenment and Propaganda, was largely in charge of these chambers. Exhibitions against the avant-garde were held in Germany’s principal centers for art, such as Dresden, while the repression of avant-garde artists began to increase. At this time, however, official governmental support for a particular artistic style had not been established. It was understood that abstraction in art was unacceptable, but no statement that defined Nazi cultural policy had yet been made. On September 4, 1934, at the National Socialist Party rally in Nuremberg, Hitler denounced

¹³¹ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 721.

¹³² Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 9-10.

¹³³ See Appendix C for integrated timeline. Analysis Part 2 refers exclusively to it unless noted otherwise.

abstract art. This event was a turning point in the definition of Nazi cultural policy because all government officials who had previously supported avant-garde movements, such as Goebbels, flip-flopped their opinions, and ceased to recognize it. At this point, the Nazi course of action and policy against abstract art was clear to the whole country.

After 1934, the trajectory of the development of the Nazis' cultural policy was somewhat stagnant. More committees were created and Nazi supporters filled museum directorships. Abstract art was stripped from museums across the country and Nazi-occupied lands, while government-sponsored art exhibitions that defamed the avant-garde artists occurred from time to time. The groundbreaking cultural events that had taken place in 1933 and 1934 seemed to repeat themselves. The repression of avant-garde artists, however, was slightly different.

In observed instances of repression against Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, George Grosz, and Otto Dix, most actions against the avant-garde occurred during the first years of the Nazi era. In 1933 and 1934, there was a burst of repressive activity against these artists, as they all experienced some verbal and non-verbal, non-physical repression. This burst in activity coincided with the establishment of the propaganda and cultural chambers. As the chambers were newly created, they had much work to do in purging the country of "degenerate" art, forcing government officials to work swiftly and efficiently in destroying any affiliation to the avant-garde. Compared to later years, the repression against avant-garde artists was disproportionate in 1933 and 1934. After a lull in both the development of Nazi cultural policy and repression against avant-garde artists, another burst in repressive activity against the avant-garde occurred in 1937, as abstract artists saw thousands of their pieces taken from their rightful owners in preparation for the massive Degenerate Art exhibition, which opened on July 19, 1937. It seems that while neither the development of Nazi cultural policy nor the actual

repression of avant-garde artists drastically changed after 1934, instances of repression occurred alongside significant events in the development of the Nazis' cultural policy.

The longer that the Nazis stayed in power, the repression against avant-garde artists did not increase, nor did it decrease. Repression did not change by decade, nor did it differ among artists working in different avant-garde styles, such as German Expressionism and New Objectivity. Instead, instances of repression against avant-garde artists were somewhat random, and, as mentioned, they coincided closely with the establishment of a new chamber, the appointment of a new arts minister, and notable speeches that were made against the avant-garde. In this sense, repression of avant-garde artists depended very much on the power and success of the Nazis because, with political and military prowess, the Nazis had more resources at their disposal, and more artists and artworks to repress. Conversely, and in 1944, as the Nazis were losing World War II, Josef Goebbels ordered a reduction in all culturally related activities in the regime.¹³⁴ A lack of military success shifted the Nazi focus away from art.

c. Analysis Part 3

The Nazi case is somewhat unique in that the regime was particularly harsh in repressing its avant-garde artists, despite their connections to the party. In other case studies, such as the Soviet Union example, when an artist had a relationship with the ruling party, he was repressed less than those without such a connection. The hypothesis, which states that avant-garde artists with connections to the regime are repressed less than those without them, still applies to the Nazi case, but to a lesser extent. Emil Nolde, for example, had been a Nazi supporter and organizer from the party's humble beginnings, and yet he received harsher punishment than

¹³⁴ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 400.

many of his contemporaries.¹³⁵ In *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, Fred S. Kleiner writes that, “Emil Nolde received particularly harsh treatment. The Nazis confiscated more than 1,000 of Nolde’s works from German museums and included 27 of them in the [Degenerate Art] exhibition, more than for almost any other artist.”¹³⁶ With this statement, it appears that Nolde’s Nazi background was not enough to save him from the same fate that those without any sympathy for the regime might face. However, Nolde contacted the Nazi party and requested that his stolen works be returned – the Nazi officials obliged, perhaps pointing to the fact that Nazi leaders, such as Goebbels, admired his work. In addition to being treated worse than many avant-garde artists, Nolde was treated better than some artists, such as George Grosz.

All avant-garde artists were not repressed equally. George Grosz, who frequently insulted Nazi policies and was not connected to the party, did not experience one instance of redemption against the wrong that had been done to him and his work. After moving to the United States and when giving an interview for a joint production on Hitler’s cultural policies for CBS and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he said, “I left because of Hitler. He is a painter too, you know, and there didn’t seem to be room for both of us in Germany.”¹³⁷ Though not exiled directly by the regime, Grosz was deprived of his German citizenship, and thus, forced to leave his homeland. It was the artists’ individual personalities and the abstract style of their work that led them to their repression; they were only repressed in pairs or in groups during exhibitions such as the Degenerate Art show. The Nazis were not as concerned with backlash against specific actions taken by the avant-garde artists as they were with ridding Germany of the artists and their work. The following table shows which of the four aforementioned German avant-garde artists

¹³⁵ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 721.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 721.

¹³⁷ Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz, The Berlin Years* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 193.

were repressed in which ways, and which had connections to the regime. Based on how harshly they were repressed, they are ranked from 1 to 4, with one signifying the least repressed.

Figure 2¹³⁸

| Avant-Garde Artists | Repression: Type 1 | Repression: Type 2 | Repression: Type 3 | Repression: Type 4 | Repression: Type 5 | Connection to Regime | Rank of Repression |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kirchner | YES | YES | YES | NO | NO | NO | 1 |
| Nolde | YES | YES | YES | NO | NO | YES | 2 |
| Grosz | YES | YES | YES | YES | NO | NO | 3 |
| Dix | YES | YES | YES | YES | NO | NO | 4 |

Despite the fact that Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Emil Nolde experienced the same types of repression, Nolde was repressed more frequently, although he had connections to the regime.¹³⁹ With Nolde’s sympathy for the Nazis, he should have been repressed less frequently. Thus, Kirchner is ranked first on this scale, as he faced only three types of repression, and was repressed least frequently. George Grosz and Otto Dix also experienced the same types of repression. However, when many of the atrocities against Grosz occurred, he had already been stripped of his citizenship, and had left Germany for America. Dix was one of the few avant-garde artists to remain in Germany throughout the Nazi era. He was able to survive by complying with the Nazi wishes that forced him to change his artistic style. He painted banal, somewhat realistic, landscape pieces from 1933 to 1945. Despite following Nazi orders, Dix was arrested in 1939 on charges relating to a plot against Hitler’s life. He was released a week later, but had been in grave danger of execution. It is significant that the Nazis were quite uniform in how the avant-garde artists ultimately were repressed. As mentioned, their repression occurred at different times, and did not become gradually more severe. Had the Nazis continued to stay in

¹³⁸ See Appendix D for table.

¹³⁹ See Appendix C for integrated timeline.

power past 1945, it is likely that all avant-garde artists that did not flee or die in some other manner (Kirchner committed suicide in 1938) may have met the same fate – execution.

4. Conclusion

Nazi Germany attempted to purge “degenerateness” from society by killing Jewish and other undesirable populations, and by prohibiting the creation or exhibition of abstract art within Nazi territories. To do so, they fostered the creation of realistic art, and those not associated with the Nazi approved style were harshly condemned and repressed. They were repressed verbally, non-verbally, physically, and non-physically through denunciations made in print, the theft of their artwork, the loss of their jobs, imprisonment or exile, and, in some cases, death. However, not all artists were repressed equally, as demonstrated in Figure 2. It is possible that, had the Nazi party existed longer than twelve years, all avant-garde artists still living in Germany would have been killed, but the graph reflects the hypothesis that those avant-garde artists with connections to the Nazi regime, such as Emil Nolde, for example, were repressed less harshly than those without such connections, like George Grosz. These findings suggest a question that echoes the main thesis of this work: why would repressive regimes not oppress their avant-garde artists equally? In addition to the evidence that suggests that some artists were given preferential treatment, personal connections matter but are dependent on the type of regime, or the regime’s policies for them to be significant enough to prevent harsher forms of repression. For example, personal connections would have protected Emil Nolde better had he agreed to give up making art entirely and work with the Nazi’s chamber for propaganda. It was the Nazi’s fear of abstraction, and their desire to totally purify society that led them to repress their artists unequally, and somewhat at random.

CHAPTER IV

MUSSOLINI'S ITALY



Giacomo Balla, *Speeding Automobile*, 1912. Oil on wood, 21 7/8 X 27 1/8 in. Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Felice Casorati, *Silvana Cenni*, 1922. Oil on canvas, 205 X 105 cm. Museo d'Arte della Citta, Ravenna, Italy.

CHAPTER IV: Mussolini's Championing of the Avant-Garde in Fascist Italy

1. Introduction

Repressive political regimes censor and control the art that is produced within their societies.¹⁴⁰ They do so in a variety of fashions, though the repression of artists is one, notable method.¹⁴¹ Although representing different sides of the political spectrum, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany despised abstraction in art, and to control the art that was produced within their countries, they repressed their artists accordingly.¹⁴² In these regimes, avant-garde art movements in particular were harshly repressed.¹⁴³ If such repressive regimes frequently oppress the avant-garde, why then, would Benito Mussolini, the Prime Minister of Italy in 1922, openly and freely support all artistic creation despite pronouncing his right wing, fascist regime a totalitarian state?¹⁴⁴ In her comprehensive work on Mussolini and fascist Italy's cultural policy, Marla Susan Stone writes, "The Mussolini dictatorship allowed artists to work and be supported without direct censorship (so long as they were not explicitly anti-Fascist)...The opposing aesthetics and legacies of the modern and the traditional, from futurism to neoclassicism to abstraction, all received state aid and support."¹⁴⁵ Mussolini's Italy is unique in that, despite being a repressive political regime, it accepted and even fostered avant-garde artistic growth during its heyday.¹⁴⁶ While it still engaged in propagandistic measures, and repression occurred

¹⁴⁰ John Pick, *The Arts in a State* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1988) 85.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁴² Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 11.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴⁴ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 4.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴⁶ Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 15.

against those not totally loyal to the state, the regime saw all art as representational of a new, Italian rebirth linked to the fascist regime.¹⁴⁷

In an examination of the development of Mussolini's cultural policy in favor of artistic freedom, the primary hypothesis of this study, which states that those artists with a connection to the Italian fascist regime were repressed less than those without such connections, is supported. However, because Mussolini and his government supported the arts, nearly every artist had a connection to the regime when exhibiting in state-patronized exhibitions or when having their art purchased exclusively by the government. Observations supporting this hypothesis are not as significant for the Italian case as they are for the study of other regimes due to of the widely recognized and understood connection that the Italian fascist state had to the arts. In analyzing the findings of this chapter's research, the few instances of repression against avant-garde artists in Mussolini's Italy, be there any, are coded by type, with a higher type number signifying worse repression. Type 1 indicates denunciations made in print; Type 2 refers to the closing of an artist's exhibition or the stripping of an artist's work from museums and galleries; Type 3 corresponds to removal of the artist from a position of authority; Type 4 pertains to imprisonment, house arrest, or exile of the artist, and Type 5 signifies death of the artist at the hands of the regime. From an integrated timeline that is featured in Appendix C, these instances of repression by the regime are assigned a repression type and finally, are represented in a table that ranks the artists based on their repression from least repressed to most repressed, with a lower number signifying less repression, and a higher number, more repression.¹⁴⁸ Artist connections to the regime are included in this table for comparison to the repression ranking. The

¹⁴⁷ Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 15.

¹⁴⁸ See Appendix C for integrated timeline.

findings are analyzed in a three-part explanation that examines Mussolini's reasons for supporting the arts as opposed to repressing them, how support for artists developed during Mussolini's time in power, and how different avant-garde artists were supported differently within the regime.

Mussolini was optimistic that during his time as *Il Duce* (the Duke), the arts would work alongside politics to strengthen Italy and support the country's national regeneration – now a notion that has been called a “myth.”¹⁴⁹ Italy would rise again as a prominent world power behind its great intellectuals, and especially, its artists.¹⁵⁰ Its grandiose ambitions, however, which led Mussolini to align himself with Hitler during World War II, ultimately brought downfall to his regime.¹⁵¹

2. Successes of the Italian Avant-Garde and the Struggle to Define Fascist Cultural Policy

Beginning in 1909 with the publication of *The Futurist Manifesto* by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Futurism as an avant-garde movement became the most popular artistic style in Italy during the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹⁵² Visually abstract, it favored industrialism, speed, movement, war, and other expressions of masculinity in visual art, music, theater and literature.¹⁵³ In the manifesto, Marinetti vividly supported violence and extreme nationalism when he wrote, “It is from Italy that we launch through the world this violently upsetting, incendiary manifesto of ours. With it, today, we establish *Futurism* because we want

¹⁴⁹ Emilio Gentile, “The Myth of National Regeneration in Italy: From Modernist Avant-Garde to Fascism,” in *Fascist visions: art and ideology in France and Italy*, ed. Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 11.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁵¹ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 178.

¹⁵² Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 704.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 704.

to free this land...for too long has Italy been a dealer in secondhand clothes.”¹⁵⁴ Similarly, and according to Roger Griffin in his article “The Sacred Synthesis: The Ideological Cohesion of Fascist Cultural Policy,” these two Weberian themes explored in futurism, the monopoly of violence and idealizing abstraction, were central to fascist ideology as well.¹⁵⁵ When Mussolini held his March on Rome in October of 1922, his fascist ideology aligned with Futurism, as he nationalistically thought that, similar to the Hitler’s belief in German *volk*, Italy needed to create a new society and new man by championing a sense of *Italianità*.¹⁵⁶ Philip Cannistraro writes, “Marinetti’s idea that the nation’s culture had to be infused with a sense of *Italianità* – the quality and essence of being Italian – was readily adopted by the fascists as a cardinal point of their cultural policies.”¹⁵⁷ Italian nationalism linked fascism and the avant-garde.¹⁵⁸

However, in seeking nationalistic pride through art, Mussolini’s government never clearly defined an official artistic style that would be completely representative of the Italian fascist state.¹⁵⁹ Despite its repression in other sectors of society, the government focused more on supporting those artists from all disciplines who were capable of redefining modern Italian

¹⁵⁴ Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, “Manifesto of Futurism,” in *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. R. W. Flint (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972), 42.

¹⁵⁵ According to Roger Griffin, Max Weber’s notion of “idealizing abstraction...[includes] first, the myth of palingenesis (rebirth, renewal), and, second, an organic, illiberal conception of the nation which celebrates the collective energies of the ‘people’ (ultra-nationalism).”

Roger Griffin, “The Sacred Synthesis: The Ideological Cohesion of Fascist Cultural Policy,” *Modern Italy* 3, no. 1 (1998): 7.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵⁷ Philip V. Cannistraro, “Mussolini’s Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 120.

¹⁵⁸ Emilio Gentile, “The Myth of National Regeneration in Italy: From Modernist Avant-Garde to Fascism,” in *Fascist visions: art and ideology in France and Italy*, ed. Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 42.

¹⁵⁹ Philip V. Cannistraro, “Mussolini’s Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 117.

culture for the masses through aesthetic pluralism.¹⁶⁰ Mussolini wanted the new Italy to have a successful, internationally renowned intelligentsia of which it could be proud.¹⁶¹ In March of 1925, Mussolini's government held a Congress of Fascist Intellectuals during which the establishment of a definite cultural policy was to be debated.¹⁶² Aside from reaffirming that "the fascist revolution was based on the co-operation of culture and politics," the only notable policy to emerge from the meeting was that "fascism announced its rejection of nineteenth century liberalism and set as its goal the creation of a new culture of its own."¹⁶³ It is interesting that, after such an agreement was made and without government intervention, Italian avant-garde artists decided that the more realistic style of Novecento Italiano, reminiscent of nineteenth century Italian art, should become the artistic style representative of the Italian fascist government. After holding its first exhibition in 1926, Novecento Italiano became another dominating artistic movement alongside Futurism, pushing for what it called a "return to order."¹⁶⁴

In his first public address regarding culture, which occurred at the opening of the 1926 Novecento Italiano exhibition, Mussolini supported cultural discipline, saying that culture must become an apparatus of the state.¹⁶⁵ Though his words were vague, artists believed that they were meant to represent fascist ideology in their art, no matter what style or media through

¹⁶⁰ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 255.

¹⁶¹ Philip V. Cannistraro, "Mussolini's Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?," *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 117.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

¹⁶⁴ "Return to Order," *Tate Collection*,

<http://www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary/definition.jsp?entryId=248>.

¹⁶⁵ Philip V. Cannistraro, "Mussolini's Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?," *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 122.

which they chose to do so.¹⁶⁶ Ironically, and in their belief that their art was reflective of fascism, Italian avant-garde artists from both the abstract Futurist movement and realistic Novecento group scorned internationalism, perhaps unaware of the fact that styles quite similar to their own were prominent in other European countries such as Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁷ In an attempt to nationalize Italian culture, the systematic removal of foreign cultural products from Italy began to occur.¹⁶⁸

The fascist state regularly sponsored art shows, such as the famed Venice Biennale, Milan Triennale, Rome Quadreennale, and Syndicate exhibitions for “the use of art to aestheticize politics; the application of specifically avant-garde art... and a discourse of Italian national identity and culture and its conflation with Fascism.”¹⁶⁹ Artists such as the futurists Giacomo Balla, Carlo Carrà, and Gino Severini competed with Novecento Italiano painters such as Felice Casorati for top prizes and public recognition.¹⁷⁰ In not forcing a particular artistic style on society, the Italian fascist government received a broader base of participation from artists of all media that were willing to incorporate fascist ideals in their work.¹⁷¹ During Mussolini’s era, unlike the rejection of Socialist Realism that occurred in the Soviet Union, no underground art movement that competed with an official style for the attentions of the most accomplished artists was established.¹⁷² In being a regime that did not repress creative expression, Mussolini’s Italy, interestingly, came out ahead of other, similar regimes in that it obtained its goals – increasingly receiving active and interested artists to further the fascist message through their art.

¹⁶⁶ Philip V. Cannistraro, “Mussolini’s Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 122.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁶⁹ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 130.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 256.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 256.

As art was not as harshly repressed in fascist Italy as it was in other repressive countries, the following section focuses instead on why Mussolini chose not to repress abstract, avant-garde artists. Despite following the same organizational pattern of previous case studies in this work, it discusses why a liberal approach to cultural policy was successful, and how it developed over time. There was no fear that artistic abstraction would introduce another mode of thought and inspire some sort of anti-fascist revolt, and thus, in the third section of analysis, instead of discussing why some avant-garde artists were repressed more than others, the section focuses on why some avant-garde artists were more successful than others. This counter-case example contributes to this study by demonstrating that, due to a number of factors including, but not limited to, leader personalities, history, incumbent political sentiments, and differences in ideology, not all repressive regimes are created equally.

3. The Development of Mussolini’s Idealized Cultural “Policy”

a. Analysis Part 1

As mentioned, Italian fascists supported all artistic movements because they believed that nationalistic glory, and support for the fascist state could be realized through any form of creative expression.¹⁷³ They rarely, if ever, repressed their avant-garde artists unless those artists acted in direct opposition to the fascist regime – actions usually not relating to the artwork produced by the artists, but instead, the artists’ personal political beliefs. Had Mussolini and his government harshly repressed abstract, avant-garde artists in ways similar to other, early twentieth century, European regimes, the artists would have experienced the following three types of repression,

¹⁷³ Philip V. Cannistraro, “Mussolini’s Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 117.

1. Verbal Repression (Type 1): denunciations against avant-garde art in printed material or speeches
2. Non-Verbal, Non-Physical Repression (Types 2 and 3): stripping avant-garde art from museums or galleries and removal of avant-garde artists from positions of authority
3. Physical Repression (Types 4 or 5): imprisonment, exile, or execution.

These three types of repression are different in that they categorize the increase in harshness of repression against avant-garde artists. They affect different, yet all-encompassing aspects of the artists' lives – their mental state (verbal repression), the fruit of their labors (non-verbal, non-physical repression), and their physical wellbeing (physical repression). Conversely, instances of non-repression might be classified as the opposites to the aforementioned three forms of repression. Artists could be praised by the government and the press (verbal support), they could be awarded solo-exhibitions and granted professorships at academies and museums (non-verbal, non-physical support), and they could have the quality of their lives improve through actions and other patronizations (physical support). In Italy, artists were honored most frequently through non-verbal, non-physical support by way of representation in the frequent exhibitions that were held in the country.

The Italian fascists believed that art should be accessible to the public.¹⁷⁴ Similar to ideas held by other repressive regimes, Mussolini's government thought that art served as an excellent tool for further representing the totalitarian power of fascism.¹⁷⁵ Art shows, such as the Venice Biennale, became cultural tourist attractions.¹⁷⁶ Marla Susan Stone writes, “[the Venice Biennale] offered a pleasant and attractive backdrop for a national cultural institution and the uniqueness of the Venetian artistic patrimony remained an essential element of Biennale

¹⁷⁴ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 130.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

advertising.”¹⁷⁷ In portraying avant-garde artists in a positive light through exhibitions, the Italian public was given more of an opportunity to rally behind the success of the avant-garde artists in favor of the new, fascist state. The general appreciation for creative freedom fostered support for the government.

b. Analysis Part 2¹⁷⁸

The trajectory of the development of fascist Italy’s cultural policy, in its continued partnership with Mussolini’s other politics, was somewhat static until 1936, due to Italy’s involvement in World War II, interest and support for the arts diminished. In the first two years of Mussolini’s dictatorship, new cultural institutions, such as the National Fascist Institute of Culture and the Royal Academy of Italy were established. Committees like the Congress of Fascist Intellectuals frequently met to discuss the role of culture in society, while Mussolini himself participated in the organization and inauguration in a number of artistic events, such as the first Novecento Italiano exhibition in 1926. The support for the arts was not sporadic, and it did not change from decade to decade. The support of artists’ work was stable, and even slightly increased before Mussolini took steps to align the country with Nazi Germany. Marla Susan Stone writes, “...support for official culture diminished after 1936...cultural politics after 1936 projected a conflicted attitude regarding art’s role in a Fascist state at war...by 1936 an unofficial Battle for Culture began in earnest.”¹⁷⁹ One the war began, a fracture occurred in the cultural sector, as different avant-garde groups struggled to establish dominance over the others in the race to establish an official style. It seems that violence, like repression in other societies, when introduced to society spurred competition among artistic groups, similar to the artistic

¹⁷⁷ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 126-127.

¹⁷⁸ See Appendix C for integrated timeline. Analysis Part 2 refers exclusively to it unless noted otherwise.

¹⁷⁹ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 178.

competition that unfolded after the Soviet Union’s civil war. By the end of World War II, while avant-garde artists were still not harshly repressed in the three aforementioned manners, Mussolini’s government had enough power to control the pieces exhibited at the country’s most popular and prestigious shows, such as the Venice Biennale. Pushing war propaganda on the public, the regime supported those pieces that explicitly portrayed fascist ideals most frequently.

c. Analysis Part 3

As Mussolini chose not to repress avant-garde artists, having or not having a connection to the regime was not as important in Italy as it was in other countries for safeguarding against repression. The following table shows only those instances of repression, in this case, none, against the Italian avant-garde artists. It should be noted, however, that the table does not reflect individual actions taken by the artists that might be construed to appear like an instance of repression against that artist. Additionally, the table only represents repression based on the radical, non-idealistically appropriate nature of avant-garde art, as determined under the regime’s cultural policies. For example, although Felice Casorati was arrested briefly in 1923, he was not arrested because of the offensiveness of his art. His connection to the regime came when Mussolini himself purchased his works, and his imprisonment is not reflected below.

Figure 3¹⁸⁰

| Avant-Garde Artists | Repression: Type 1 | Repression: Type 2 | Repression: Type 3 | Repression: Type 4 | Repression: Type 5 | Connection to Regime | Rank of Repression |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Casorati | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | - |
| Severini | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | - |
| Balla | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | - |
| Carrà | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | - |

¹⁸⁰ See Appendix D for tables.

Due to the fact that artistic freedom essentially was the officially established cultural policy of fascist Italy, and subsequently, as Felice Casorati, Gino Severini, Giacomo Balla, and Carlo Carrà were not repressed, they are left unranked in this table. Despite the shift in support from Futurism to Novecento during the latter years of Mussolini's dictatorship, futurist art was not repressed. They were not repressed in groups, nor based on artistic discipline, but instead were all favored by the regime through exhibitions and patronages made by fascist leaders. Interestingly, the literature does not reflect a personal preference of government leaders for one or more of these avant-garde artists. They were seen as a collective, artistic group, and were supported as such.

4. Conclusion

It is interesting that the Italian, fascist government believed that abstract, avant-garde art in the form of Futurism, and to an extent, Novecento Italiano, was representational of such a conservative state, especially when the opposite was true of other repressive regimes, such as the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. As mentioned, Mussolini's policy of toleration, while not as clearly defined as policies enforcing repression in other countries, actually delivered to him, a positive political result. His base of support broadened, and the arts realm supported him in his propagandistic measures. Mussolini's time was not spent fighting against cultural expression in visual art, and could be spent more productively, modernizing Italy in preparation for the dawning of its new age. Perhaps, had repressive governments such as those in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany had, from the beginning, aligned themselves with the artistic status quo upon coming to power, they would have been more successful in enforcing the domestic adherence to their policies by artists.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER V: Conclusion

Through three case studies that analyzed the repression of the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and Mussolini's Italy, the findings of this research project demonstrate that artists with a connection to the repressive political regime are, in fact, repressed less than those without such connections. It is important for repressive regimes, which do not place term limits on their time spent in office, to always maintain control of society. When controlling their respective cultural realms, repressive regimes create laws against abstraction and define what appropriate and acceptable art forms are able to thrive under their jurisdiction. Though repressive political regimes from opposing sides of the political spectrum define and enforce their cultural policies in similar manners, the initial purpose for repressing the avant-garde is dependent upon individualized regimes and what the goals of those regimes might be.

The Soviet Union stressed absolute control of society under the leadership of Stalin and with the creation of Socialist Realism as an artistic style in 1932. The government saw Socialist Realism as a form of education for the masses, and it did not want to confuse its largely illiterate population with the abstraction that defined avant-garde art. In this desire to establish a proletarian art that rejected internationalism, intellectualism, and the bourgeoisie culture, the Soviet Union protected itself, initially, from the decaying influences of outside pressures that could have contributed to an earlier departure for the regime. The Nazi Party in Germany, while wanting to have total control of all aspects of German life, mostly desired to create a pure, Aryan race. The purge of "degenerate" art from Germany and its occupied territories, as explained in statements made by Hitler himself, was based on a belief in the cultural inferiority of abstraction in art and anything non-German. It is interesting that, despite the pure hatred that Hitler, and more generally, National Socialism and fascism, had for communist governments, they both

rejected bourgeois avant-garde art and strove to incorporate realistic art into their cultural repertoires. Mussolini's Italy was the exception, as it, too, strove to create a new Italian society and a new Italian man and yet, did not repress the avant-garde. Despite desiring total control of society, as Hitler did, Mussolini took a different path that with less repression boosted the confidence and morale of the Italian government and its people.

As repression develops individually by regime based on the regime's type, over the regime's lifetime, and depending on forces active within the regime, this research model could be applied to assess the success or failure of other repressive governments in the establishment and enforcement of their own cultural policies.

APPENDIX A: Definitions

- Abstract:** Art that uses formal artistic elements such as line and color to create a composition that is not representational of anything known in the world.
- Avant-garde:** “French, ‘advanced-guard’ (in a platoon). Late-19th- and 20th-century artists who emphasized innovation and challenged established convention in their work.”¹⁸¹
- Constructivism:** An early twentieth century style of art characterized by geometric abstraction that rejected the idea of art as autonomous, instead supporting that it served a social purpose.
- Cubism:** “An early-20th-century art movement that rejected naturalistic depictions, preferring compositions of shapes and forms abstracted from the conventionally perceived world.”¹⁸²
- Dada:** “An early-20th-century art movement prompted by a revulsion against the horror of World War I. Dada embraced political anarchy, the irrational, and the intuitive. A disdain for convention, often enlivened by humor or whimsy, is characteristic of the art the Dadaists produced.”¹⁸³
- Degenerate Art:** A term used by the Nazi Party to describe abstract artwork that was not representational of the German, Aryan race.
- Expressionism:** “Twentieth-century art that is the result of the artist’s unique inner or personal vision and that often has an emotional dimension. Expressionism contrasts with art focused on visually describing the empirical world.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 807.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 809.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 809.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 810.

- Fauvism:** “An early-20th-century art movement led by Henri Matisse. For the Fauves, color became the formal element most responsible for pictorial coherence and the primary conveyor of meaning.”¹⁸⁵
- Fine art:** “A visual art considered to have been created primarily for aesthetic purposes and judged for its beauty and meaningfulness, specifically, painting, sculpture, drawing, watercolor, graphics, and architecture.”¹⁸⁶
- Folk Art:** “Artistic works, as paintings, sculpture, basketry, and utensils, produced typically in cultural isolation by untrained often anonymous artists or by artisans of varying degrees of skill and marked by such attributes as highly decorative design, bright bold colors, flattened perspective, strong forms in simple arrangements, and immediacy of meaning.”¹⁸⁷ Also, craft, low culture.
- Futurism:** “An early-20th-century Italian art movement that championed war as a cleansing agent and that celebrated the speed and dynamism of modern technology.”¹⁸⁸
- Neo-Primitivism:** An early twentieth century art movement that combined elements of Cubism, Futurism, and other avant-garde art movements and stylistically combined them with folk art. It also describes an art movement that borrows visual forms from non-Western or prehistoric people.
- New Objectivity:** An satirical, early twentieth century art movement that arose in rejection of Expressionism and objectively portrayed subjects, often based on their character or nature – exposing the ugly and crude.
- Non-objective art:** Similar to abstract art. Describes art that is not representational of a defined subject.

¹⁸⁵ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 810.

¹⁸⁶ “Fine Art,” Dictionary.com, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/fine+art>.

¹⁸⁷ “Folk Art,” Dictionary.com, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/folk+art>.

¹⁸⁸ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 810.

- Novecento Italiano:** An early twentieth century Italian art movement that rejected the avant-garde and portrayed large-scale renderings of historical subjects in a classical, realistic manner.
- Realism:** “A movement that emerged in mid-19th-century France. Realist artists represented the subject matter of everyday life (especially subjects that previously had been considered inappropriate for depiction) in a relatively naturalistic mode.”¹⁸⁹
- Socialist Realism:** An early twentieth century art movement that developed under Socialism in the Soviet Union. It depicted realistic subjects and actively tried to further communistic goals.
- Suprematism:** An early twentieth century, avant-garde art movement founded by Kazimir Malevich that minimized the subjects of paintings to basic geometric forms, namely the square and circle.
- Surrealism:** An early twentieth century art movement that developed from Dada and that, with an interest in Freudian psychoanalysis, portrayed abstract concepts such as the subconscious.
- Western Tradition In Art:** Art styles that were created in Europe from prehistoric times to the present. Also includes the history of these art styles.

¹⁸⁹ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: the Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 814.

APPENDIX B: Artist Biographies

Giacomo Balla:¹⁹⁰

Born in 1871 in Turin, Italy, Giacomo Balla started his artistic career after studying at the Accademia Albertina di Belle Arte, the Liceo Artistico, and the University of Turin when he moved to Rome in 1895. He became an illustrator, caricaturist, and portrait painter and his fine art was soon exhibited in the famed Venice Biennale in 1899. After exhibiting within Rome and Italy, in 1903, Giacomo Balla began to teach fellow avant-garde artists divisionist painting techniques – the precursors to the futurist movement. His abstract work was recognized internationally and was exhibited in Paris, Rotterdam, Munich, and Düsseldorf and later, the United States. In 1910, Giacomo Balla signed the Futurist painting manifesto alongside other avant-garde artists such as Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, and Gino Severini. With his continued success, Giacomo Balla was granted his first solo exhibitions at the Società Italiana Lampade Elettriche “Z” and the Sala d’Arte A. Angelelli in Rome. That same year, he wrote the *Futurist Reconstruction of the Universe* manifesto. Giacomo Balla was made a member of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome in 1935. He died in Rome on March 1, 1958.

Carlo Carrà:¹⁹¹

Born in 1881, Carlo Carrà was an artistic prodigy. He began painting murals by age twelve and enrolled in the Accademia di Brera, Milan in 1906. During his educational years, the Italian Divisionism and cubist movements inspired Carlo Carrà, and he eventually adopted the futurist style of painting. Despite signing manifestos such as the *Manifesto of Futurist Painters* and the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting* as early as 1908, in 1917 he altered his artistic style after an encounter with Giorgio de Chirico, leading him away from abstraction and toward the Novecento Italiano movement. By the mid-1920s, Carlo Carrà had developed his mature style and exhibited at the Novecento Italiano exhibitions. In 1933, he signed the *Manifesto of Mural Painting* and in 1941, he was appointed a professor of painting at the Accademia di Brera. Carlo Carrà died in Milan in 1966.

Felice Casorati:¹⁹²

Felice Casorati was born in 1883 and, despite having ambitions to be a painter, attended law school to please his mother. His creative nature never left him and he continued to paint after his graduation in 1906. A portrait of his sister was included in the 1907 Venice Biennale and was praised by the judges. Inspired by realistic art and Symbolism, popularized by Gustav Klimt, Felice Casorati never considered himself to be representative of any particular artistic group, though he did exhibit his work in both Novecento Italiano exhibitions. At the 1924 Venice Biennale, he received critical acclaim for his solo exhibition. As his art developed, Felice Casorati became a part of the Italian art establishment. In 1937, was given a retrospective

¹⁹⁰ “Giacomo Balla,” *Guggenheim*, <http://www.guggenheim.org/>.

¹⁹¹ “Carlo Carrà,” *Peggy Guggenheim Collection*, <http://www.guggenheim-venice.it/>.

¹⁹² “Casorati, Felice,” *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

exhibition at the Stampa Gallery in Turin, and in 1938, he won first prize in painting at the Venice Biennale. Despite retiring in 1942, Felice Casorati continued to be praised for his artwork. He died in Turin in 1963.

Otto Dix:¹⁹³

Otto Dix was born in 1891 and taught himself to paint by easel. Studying in Dresden, the early twentieth century artistic capitol of Germany, he was exposed to prominent artists, and used Post Impressionism and Cubism as inspiration in shaping his own, unique, new objectivist style. Otto Dix volunteered to serve Germany in World War I, but became disillusioned by the horrors of war – a reoccurring theme in his art. In 1919, he entered the Dresden Academy of Art, and began exhibiting images that were shocking to the German public. He was criticized for his anti-militaristic art. In 1926, Otto Dix was awarded a professorship at the Dresden Academy. After such success, Otto Dix conversely experienced Nazi repression of his art when many of his pieces were included in the Degenerate Art exhibition. Otto Dix died in 1969.

Naum Gabo:¹⁹⁴

Born in Belarus in 1890, Naum Gabo, formerly Naum Pevsner was a Russian avant-garde artists and the author of the *Realist Manifesto*, which defined Constructivism as an artistic style. While at school, he studied science and engineering – subjects of great influence for his constructivist style based on time and space. He rejected Cubism and Futurism. In 1922, Naum Gabo's works were exhibited in Berlin as part of a special showing of artworks from the Soviet Union. By 1933, Naum Gabo had moved to Paris, from where he relocated to the south of England in 1936. He continued to work and be honored, and in 1946, he moved to the United States. His time spent abroad garnered much attention for Naum Gabo, and he received commissions for public works while living in the United States. He died in 1977 in Connecticut.

George Grosz:¹⁹⁵

George Grosz was born in Berlin in 1893. He entered the prestigious Dresden Academy of Art at the young age of sixteen and began his artistic education, perfecting the art of free drawing. Like other German artists, George Grosz volunteered in World War I, but was deemed unfit to serve after a violent outburst in a mental hospital. His artwork was greatly influenced by the war, and he developed left-wing political sympathies. In 1918, he joined the Dada movement and experimented with collage and mixed media art. George Grosz was soon recognized internationally as Germany's leading satirical, critical artist. He was invited in 1932 to teach at the Art Students League in New York, and after Adolf Hitler seized power of the German

¹⁹³ "Dix, Otto," *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

¹⁹⁴ "Gabo, Naum," *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

¹⁹⁵ "Grosz, George," *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

government in 1933, he moved to New York semi-permanently. Two weeks after returning to West Berlin in 1959, George Grosz died in an automobile accident.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner:¹⁹⁶

Born to a German family with artistic sympathies in 1880, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner became a leader in the Expressionism movement. He initially studied architecture and, in 1905, founded the Die Brücke (The Bridge) artistic movement. His artistic style showed simplistic forms comprised of flat plains of bright color. After a disagreement among other artists of The Bridge movement, the group split in 1913. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner was unwillingly drafted to serve Germany in World War I, but suffered a nervous breakdown and was declared unfit for military service. He moved to the Swiss Alps where he could thrive in peace, but was increasingly disturbed by the restraints placed on avant-garde artists by the Nazis and his lack of popularity among his peers. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner committed suicide in 1937 after an increase in his depression, partly because his works had been included in the Nazi's Degenerate Art exhibition.

Kazimir Malevich:¹⁹⁷

Born in 1878, Kazimir Malevich spent part of his childhood in Kiev, Ukraine before his family moved to Kursk, Russia. He began painting at the age of twelve and studied at the Kiev School of Art, the Stroganov School, and the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. In 1907, he participated in the Association of Moscow Artists exhibition, and by 1910, had made a decisive break from current trends in Russian art, helping to establish the avant-garde. He exhibited in 1910 with the Jack of Diamonds group. Further developing his abstract style, along with other avant-garde artists, Kazimir Malevich helped to define the suprematist movement in 1916. After the October Revolution of 1917, Kazimir Malevich associated himself with an anti-Bolshevik group but, once it was repressed, began to work for the government's cultural and propaganda ministry. He continued to develop suprematist ideas, despite facing some repression from the Soviet Union. Kazimir Malevich died in Leningrad (now, St. Petersburg) in 1935.

Emil Nolde:¹⁹⁸

Emil Nolde was born in 1867 and, despite his age, was invited to participate in Die Brücke artistic circle in 1906 due to the bright colors seen in his expressionist artwork. He became interested in Neo-Primitivism upon taking a trip to New Guinea in 1913 and subsequently was widely recognized and respected through the 1920s for his artwork. In 1933, despite the conservative pressures put on him from forces supporting the Nazi cause, Emil Nolde rejected calls for him to resign from his position at the Prussian Academy of Art. When his pieces were included in the 1937 Degenerate Art exhibition, he wrote to Josef Goebbels, the Reich Minister

¹⁹⁶ "Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig," *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

¹⁹⁷ "Malevich, Kazimir," *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

¹⁹⁸ "Nolde, Emil," *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

of Propaganda, asking for the safe return of his works of art – a request that was granted. Although Emil Nolde was a Nazi supporter, his abstract art was still repressed by the government, and through the 1930s, he ceased to paint politically incendiary pieces. Through the 1940s, he painted small compositions on pieces of rice paper that would later be transformed into full-scale works of art through the 1950s. Emil Nolde died in Schleswig-Holstein in 1956.

Aleksandr Rodchenko:¹⁹⁹

Born in St. Petersburg in 1891, Aleksandr Rodchenko studied art at the Kazan School of Art between 1910 and 1914 before transferring to the Stroganov School. He was quickly taken by avant-garde art developments in Russia led by Vladimir Tatlin and Kazimir Malevich, and exhibited alongside them until 1920 when he gave up Suprematism, and 1921, when he quit painting altogether. Beginning in 1918, he was very active in the cultural institutions of the Soviet Union and began to work through Productivism. In 1924, he experimented with photography, and through the 1930s and early 1940s, became a leading photographer for the Soviet Union, despite criticism that his pictures were too abstract. Beginning in 1941, he returned to non-politically related painting, and died in Moscow in 1956.

Gino Severini:²⁰⁰

Gino Severini was born in 1883 and met fellow Italian avant-garde artist Umberto Boccioni in 1901. Together, they attended art classes while living in Rome and frequently visited the studio of Giacomo Balla, who taught them the techniques of Divisionism. In 1906, Gino Severini traveled to Paris, where he was introduced to the artistic circles thriving in Montmartre. He joined the Italian Futurist movement in 1910 and until 1916 his works became increasingly abstract. Suddenly, his stylistic preferences changed and shifted away from the abstract, toward realistic art reminiscent of the Italian Renaissance. He exhibited with the Novecento Italiano group in 1929 and in 1935, participated in decorative public works programs initiated by Benito Mussolini. In 1946, Gino Severini returned to France, and to a cubist style of painting. He died in Paris in 1966.

Vladimir Tatlin:²⁰¹

The Russian, constructivist artist, Vladimir Tatlin, was born in 1885 and studied at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, and the Penza School of Art. He is best known for his famous Monument to the Third International. Introduced to Italian Futurism between 1908 and 1911, Vladimir Tatlin experimented and exhibited his work alongside other Russian artists who were adapting the Italian style to their own society. He accepted geometric abstraction in his painting. In 1917, Vladimir Tatlin created his famous tower, the Monument to

¹⁹⁹ “Rodchenko, Aleksandr,” *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

²⁰⁰ “Severini, Gino,” *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

²⁰¹ “Tatlin, Vladimir,” *Grove Art Online*, accessed March 20, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>.

the Third International. He was appointed director for the arts in the Soviet Union's cultural and propaganda ministry and taught at the Free Art Studios in Moscow from 1918 until 1920. Through the remainder of the 1920s and 1930s, Vladimir Tatlin began to design small, useful, practical objects for everyday use. The objects, commissioned by the Soviet government, were to be used by the proletariat. He was given a personal retrospective exhibition at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow in 1931, and he died in Moscow in 1953.

APPENDIX C: Integrated Timelines

a. Soviet Opposition to the Avant-Garde

This integrated timeline spans the earliest years of the Soviet Union's existence, when its cultural policies were being created, from the October Revolution in 1917 until Socialist Realism, as an artistic style, is officially established in 1932. It shows the development of Soviet cultural policy and when and how avant-garde artists were repressed alongside its advancement. In the timeline, advancements in Soviet cultural policy are unmarked, and instances of repression against the Russian avant-garde artists are indented and bulleted.

1917: 26 October: The Bolshevik Revolution occurs.²⁰²

Anatoly Lunacharsky is appointed head of the People's Commissariat for Popular Enlightenment (NarKomPros), which oversaw the arts and education in the country.²⁰³

4 November: the Party is granted all lawmaking power and becomes the primary organ of the state.²⁰⁴

9 November: "...a State Committee for Enlightenment headed by Anatoly Lunacharsky was set up; it was designed for the practical day-to-day running of the arts under the guidance of NarKomPros. The decree establishing the Committee stated that it should contain members of an 'all-Russian organization of artists....'" Leftist, avant-garde artists were most willing to help with the Bolshevik cause. Anatoly Lunacharsky's colleagues were almost all leftist thinkers, and even Vladimir Tatlin and Kazimir Malevich participated in the Moscow division of NarKomPros.²⁰⁵

1918: 12 April: The Academy of Arts is dissolved despite many protests and a new school is instated, the State Free Art-Educational Studios.²⁰⁶

"Over 1,000 private art collections were nationalized."²⁰⁷

The War Communism begins, and the people of Russia experience extremely harsh living conditions.²⁰⁸

19 September: A decree forbidding the transport of art outside of the country without official permission is passed.²⁰⁹

²⁰² Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 37.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

- Despite the decree forbidding Soviet art to leave the country, an agreement is reached that allows Kazimir Malevich to send many of his works to Western Europe.²¹⁰
- Works by Kazimir Malevich are purchased by the government.²¹¹

Despite the popularity of the avant-garde with some party leaders, especially at NarKomPros, the group was small, and other forces fought for the supremacy of realist painting. “The resolutions on visual art at the 1918 all-Russian conference called for artists to be grouped into communes, for art to propagandize Communism.... Visual art was to include ‘pictures of the Revolution, agitational *luboks*, posters, portraits of social activities, monuments’ – a formula closely predictive of later professional art practice.”²¹²

December: the Secret Police is established.²¹³

1919: The politburo, the party’s primary policymaking unit is established and includes Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin.²¹⁴

- Leon Trotsky denounces the artistic style of Vladimir Tatlin’s famous Monument to the Third International.²¹⁵

The government begins buying works of avant-garde art for a series of Museums of Painterly Culture. Works by Vladimir Tatlin and Kazimir Malevich were eagerly purchased.²¹⁶

March 9: At the Eighth Party Congress, a resolution that calls for all art to be propagandistic is passed.²¹⁷

April: Beginning in the spring, NarKomPros began to hold a series of twenty-one state-sponsored art shows within the country. “The first of these shows opened I Petrograd...held in the Winter Palace, it was the biggest exhibition of contemporary art mounted in Russia during the civil war.”²¹⁸

²¹⁰ Charlotte Douglas, *Malevich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994) 50.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

²¹² Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 51.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 43.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

²¹⁵ Gail Harrison Roman and Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, *The Avant-Garde Frontier, Russia Meets the West, 1910-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 55.

²¹⁶ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 44.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

9 April: A radical article that denounces futurism is published. It argues that the avant-garde does not relate to the proletariat. David Petrovich Shterenberg and other NarKomPros officials who had almost exclusively been collecting avant-garde art made more conservative statements supporting all art forms, as the aesthetic tastes of many party officials began to shift towards realism.²¹⁹

1920: The Institute of Artistic Culture (InKhuK) is created under the control of NarKomPros and is a place where leftist, avant-garde, futurist artists can further explore their ideas. The leftists received much attention from the Soviet government during the civil war years because both fought against the bourgeoisie.²²⁰

- Naum Gabo publishes the Realistic Manifesto, laying the groundwork for the constructivist movement.
- The government appoints Aleksandr Rodchenko the director of the Museum Bureau and Purchasing Fund.

1921: Vladimir Ilyich Lenin begins to speak in favor of realistic art because it is comprehensible to all.²²¹

The Academy resumes its title and David Petrovich Shterenberg loses his position. It is reinstated for the purpose of teaching realist art.²²²

NarKomPros is reorganized, with its visual art department given very little, if any, individual powers. NarKomPros no longer held State Art Exhibitions and no longer funded artists through purchases.²²³

The notion of complete party loyalty is introduced at the Tenth Party Congress.²²⁴

The Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (AKhRR), a conservative group in favor of reviving realist art, is established.²²⁵

1922: Leon Trotsky sponsors the revival of realist painting. Other officials, such as Anatoly Lunacharsky, despite having worked almost exclusively with avant-garde artists, also pushed for a return to realism.²²⁶

²¹⁹ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 62.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

²²² *Ibid.*, 53.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 63.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 50, 69.

8 July: “On the basis of a decision of the politburo on 8 July 1922, confirmed by a decree of the Central Executive Committee of 10 August 1922, it was decided to exile abroad ‘hostile groupings of the intelligentsia.’”²²⁷

The Museum of Painterly Culture re-opens on the property of the Moscow art institute, where artists interested in leftist, avant-garde styles can work.²²⁸

1923: Leon Trotsky writes an essay titled “Art of the Revolution and Socialist Art” in which he argues in favor of realism in Soviet art. However, what exactly classifies realist art was still unknown.²²⁹

- Malevich is given a one-man exhibition at the Museum of Painterly Culture.²³⁰

1924: January: Vladimir Ilyich Lenin dies.²³¹

- Kazimir Malevich’s philosophical idealism is attacked by the AKhRR.²³²

9 May: “...there was an important meeting of party officials and literary men at which cultural policy was discussed...A resolution was issued...which emphasized cultural pluralism, stating that ‘no one literary tendency, school or group can or should speak on behalf of the Party.’”²³³

1925: “At the end of 1925 a state commission for the purchase of works of art was formed under the auspices of the art department of GlavNauka, but it was scarcely able to support all artists.”

May: “In may 1925 Joseph Stalin gave a speech entitled ‘On the Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East’, in which he talked of proletarian culture as being ‘socialist in content’ but adopting ‘various forms and means of expression with different peoples.’”²³⁴

“The position of the party, encapsulated in its resolution on *belles-lettres* of 1925, which called for the ‘free competition’ of artistic groups and rejected the idea that there were

²²⁷ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 78.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²³² Charlotte Douglas, *Malevich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994) 32.

²³³ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 66.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

definitive answers to the question of form, helped to create this terminological vagueness [regarding realist art].”²³⁵

At the opening of AKhRR’s seventh exhibition, Anatoly Lunacharsky differentiated between two different types of realistic art: “‘a realistic reflection of our present-day revolutionary and post-revolutionary life’ – a reference to the AKhRR approach...[and] ‘stylized actuality, even a symbol...a fantasy on a revolutionary y theme.’”²³⁶

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin describes his Theory of Reflection in art, and repeats that all art must be comprehensible.²³⁷

1926: “Anatoly Lunacharsky...welcoming the eighth AKhRR show in 1926, said the masses wanted art to ‘reflect in its enchanted mirror, as broadly and concentratedly as possible’ the nature of the country.”²³⁸

1927: “Ivan Matsu, for example, in an important essay of 1927, ‘Towards the Question of a Marxist Formulation of the Problem of Style,’ described the coming style as a ‘synthetic realism.’”²³⁹

1928: March: In a debate titled “Art in the USSR and the Tasks of Artists” held by the Communist Academy in Moscow solidified the fact that no single artistic group, the avant-garde or AKhRR, had suggested a fully satisfactory model for Soviet painting.²⁴⁰

Aesthetic tastes for realistic art are nearly solidified and the leftist, avant-garde journal *New LEF* closes.²⁴¹

- Aleksandr Rodchenko’s photography is “criticized as a display of excessive individualism.”²⁴²

1929: Leon Trotsky goes into foreign exile and Joseph Stalin’s overall control is established.²⁴³

“Official policy was now directed against art-world *laissez-faire* and pluralism and towards management from above and the creation of federal structures; it was no longer

²³⁵ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 87.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 106.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 101

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 110.

acceptable to be a ‘fellow-traveler’ in the arts: overt commitment to ‘proletarian principles’ and the party line was required.”²⁴⁴

13 June: “GlavIskusstvo, a body designed for ideological and organizational leadership in art, was established by decree...” It began to organize a “Five-Year Plan” for Soviet art and cultural policy.²⁴⁵

Anatoly Lunacharsky, as the commissar for enlightenment who always had argued for artistic plurality in Russia, is driven from his post. He submits his resignation on 4 July.²⁴⁶

- The Leningrad branch of the Main Science Administration begins an investigation of Kazimir Malevich.²⁴⁷
- The Leningrad Institute of Artistic Culture, founded by Kazimir Malevich, is forcibly closed.²⁴⁸
- Kazimir Malevich is granted a solo exhibition at the Tretyakov Gallery.²⁴⁹

1930: At the Sixteenth Party Congress Joseph Stalin describes Soviet cultural policy as “...socialist in its content and national in form.” This statement contributed to the definition of Soviet cultural policy for the remainder of the Soviet Union’s existence, and was especially relevant to its non-Russian territories.²⁵⁰

- Kazimir Malevich fights to keep his laboratory at the Institute of the History of Art open.²⁵¹
- Kazimir Malevich is expelled from the Institute of the History of Art.²⁵²
- Kazimir Malevich is placed on house arrest for suspicious support of modern artistic styles.²⁵³

“...art education was fundamentally reshaped in line with utilitarian ‘proletarian’ principles...In the spring of 1930 art education was taken out of the remit of

²⁴⁴ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 111.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁴⁷ Charlotte Douglas, *Malevich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994) 34.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁵⁰ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 84.

²⁵¹ Charlotte Douglas, *Malevich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994) 34.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 122.

NarKomPros and given to the VSNKh (Higher Council of the People's Economy) – a move that reflected the feeling that artists needed, above all, technical education.²⁵⁴

- A retrospective exhibition of Kazimir Malevich's work is opened at the Kiev Art Gallery but is closed abruptly.²⁵⁵
- Kazimir Malevich is detained by the government and questioned about the ideology of abstract, avant-garde art.²⁵⁶

1931: 15 April: The Union of Soviet Artists' first exhibition opens. It is the union's only exhibition.²⁵⁷

May: The Russian Association of Proletarian Artists is formed.²⁵⁸

Artistic circles, intellectuals, and government officials struggle to find a balance between leftist, avant-garde art and rightist, realist art. "Realism was not exhaustively defined; however, some of its essential components became clear. It required the artist to display class-consciousness and to participate actively in the class struggle; it required a work of art to be constructed dramatically, in such a way as to reveal class conflict and its successful resolution; and it required a figurative style, founded in observation of the real world and focusing on the human figure, even though the formal parameters of such a style were inchoate."²⁵⁹

- Naum Gabo submits plans for the Palace of Soviets in Moscow.
- Vladimir Tatlin is given his own retrospective exhibition at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow.

1932: "The Seventeenth Party Conference at the start of 1932 issued a resolution on the second Five-year Plan which called for the final liquidation of capitalist elements and classes."²⁶⁰

13 February: Thousands of artists and shock-workers gathered at a rally in Moscow to approve the results of the Seventeenth Party Conference.²⁶¹

March: a meeting between NarKomPros officials and Moscow-based painters reinforces the need for a new, Soviet intelligentsia.²⁶²

²⁵⁴ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 112.

²⁵⁵ Charlotte Douglas, *Malevich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994) 45.

²⁵⁶ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 45.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 125, 128.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 128.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 129.

23 April: All artists groups are abolished by a decree titled “On the Reorganization of Literary and Artistic Organizations.”²⁶³

25 June: “...a meeting of representatives from the various Moscow art groups was held to elect the board of the new Moscow Union of Artists.”²⁶⁴

28 June: Those in attendance at the meeting of 25 June gather and decide to dismember all existing art groups by 1 September. Socialist Realism is officially established in relation to literature, but soon is applied to all artistic media.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 129.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

b. Nazi Germany and its Degenerate Art

This integrated timeline spans the years during which the Nazi Party was in power – from 1933 until 1945. It shows the development of Nazi cultural policy during the party's twelve-year reign, and when and how avant-garde artists were repressed alongside its advancement. In the timeline, advancements in Nazi cultural policy are unmarked, and instances of repression against the German avant-garde artists are indented and bulleted.

1933: Hitler and the National Socialist Party rise to power in Germany.²⁶⁶

- March 8: George Grosz is provisionally deprived of his German citizenship.²⁶⁷

March 12: Josef Goebbels is appointed Reich Minister for National Enlightenment and Propaganda.²⁶⁸

April: The first Schandausstellungen (abomination exhibitions) against modern and contemporary art are held in Dresden and Mannheim.²⁶⁹

- George Grosz's work is included in the Abomination Exhibitions of Stuttgart and Mannheim.²⁷⁰
- May: Otto Dix is asked to resign from the Prussian Academy of Art.²⁷¹
- "On July 7, 1933, Alfred Rosenberg wrote an article in the party's newspaper, the *Volkischer Beobachter*, in which he unexpectedly pronounced Nolde's seascapes interesting, 'strong and powerful.' Others of his works in the Nationalgalerie, however, Rosenberg declared to be negroid, raw, without piety and inner strength of form."²⁷²
- July 25: The exhibition 30 Deutsche Kunstler (30 German Artists), which includes works by Emil Nolde, is forcibly closed by the Nazis.²⁷³

September 22: "The Reichskulturhammer (Reich chamber of culture), a network of government-controlled bodies, is established under Goebbels's leadership to regulate all artistic endeavor."²⁷⁴

²⁶⁶ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 320.

²⁶⁷ Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz, The Berlin Years* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 190.

²⁶⁸ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 396.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 396.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 244.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 226.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 319.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 396.

- September: “In 1933 party member Richard Muller, faculty head at the Akademie, became jealous of Dix’s success and launched an attack on him, pointing out that in 1924 a monograph about Dix had been written by the Jew Willi Wolfradt. An official statement regarding Dix’s dismissal, which had been instigated by Muller, indicated that ‘among his pictures are some that offend the moral feeling of the German people in the gravest way, and others are calculated to prejudice the German people’s fighting spirit.’”²⁷⁵
- The Prussian Academy of Fine Art requires Ernst Ludwig Kirchner to resign.²⁷⁶
- “...Eberhard Hanfstaengl, continued strengthening the holdings of the Neue Abteilung, the modern section of the Nationalgalerie, with works from private collections, including paintings by Nolde.”²⁷⁷
- Emil Nolde’s application to the Kampfbund fur Deutsche Kultur (Combat League for German Culture) is rejected.²⁷⁸
- The Kampfbund fur Deutsche Kultur’s publication calls Emil Nolde a “technical nincompoop.”²⁷⁹
- Emil Nolde’s work is supported by the Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (National Socialist League of German Students).²⁸⁰
- Nazi authorities search for George Grosz in his flat, but do not find him.²⁸¹

1934: January: Hitler appoints Rosenberg to a leadership position in charge of “intellectual and ideological training.”²⁸²

September 4: “At the Nuremberg party rally Hitler condemns both nationalism and traditional nationalist art.”²⁸³ In this instance, Hitler defines Nazi cultural policy, and other Nazi leaders, such as Josef Goebbels cease to support the avant-garde.²⁸⁴

- Max Sauerlandt supports Emil Nolde’s art and claims that it represents the Nordic history of the German people.²⁸⁵

²⁷⁴ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 396.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 226.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 241.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 315.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 319.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 319.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 319.

²⁸¹ Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz, The Berlin Years* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 190.

²⁸² Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 397.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 397.

²⁸⁴ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 10.

²⁸⁵ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 319.

- The Nazi newspaper, *Volkischer Beobachter* regularly denounces George Grosz, calling his work “art on the edge of insanity,” and singling out his portraiture, referencing the “degenerate loathsomeness of the subject.”²⁸⁶
- Otto Dix is frequently denounced in the press.²⁸⁷
- Otto Dix is forbidden to create or exhibit his art.²⁸⁸

1935:

- Emil Nolde’s work is stripped from an exhibition in Munich displaying contemporary art from Berlin.²⁸⁹

1936: October 30: The modern and contemporary galleries in the Berlin Nationalgalerie are closed by the Minister of Education, Bernhard Rust.²⁹⁰

November 26: “Goebbels bans art criticism.”²⁹¹

- Due to what was called his “cultural irresponsibility,” Nolde is forbidden, by the Nazi regime, to make art.²⁹²

1937: June 30: Examples of ‘degenerate’ art are purged from public museums and galleries in preparation for the Degenerate Art exhibition. Goebbels and Ziegler work together to strip the art from their institutions.²⁹³

July 18: “Hitler, officiating at the opening of the Haus der Deutschen Kunst and its inaugural exhibition, the *Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (Great German art exhibition), proclaims a *Sauberungskrieg* (cleansing war) against modernist, ‘degenerate’ art.”²⁹⁴

²⁸⁶ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 244-245.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 226.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 226.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 319.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 397.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 397.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 319.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 397.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 397.

- 639 of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's works are removed from museums in preparation for the Degenerate Art exhibition. Kirchner responds with thoughts of suicide, saying, "The future before us looks very dark... If need be, I shall sacrifice my life for art."²⁹⁵
- 1,052 of Emil Nolde's works are removed from museums, and 27 of them are featured in the Degenerate Art exhibition.²⁹⁶
- Emil Nolde writes to Josef Goebbels and Bernhard Rust demanding the return of his seized work. His request is granted.²⁹⁷
- 285 of George Grosz's works are stripped from museums, and 20 are included in the Degenerate Art exhibition.²⁹⁸
- 260 of Otto Dix's works are taken from collections across Germany, and 26 examples of his work are displayed in the Degenerate Art exhibition.²⁹⁹

July 19: The Degenerate Art exhibition opens in Munich across from the Haus der Deutschen Kunst, in which is displayed the Great German art exhibition.³⁰⁰

- Ernst Ludwig Kirchner is expelled from the Prussian Academy of Fine Art.³⁰¹
- In Nazi propaganda, George Grosz is called an "Arch Bolshevist," a "Flaming Red Art Executioner," and a "Bolshevist Scrawler."³⁰²
- As the Degenerate Art exhibition travels to other German cities, Otto Dix is further denounced in the press, as one writer said, "He is representative of the highest contemptuousness."³⁰³

²⁹⁵ Jill Lloyd, Magdalena M. Moeller, Andrew Robinson, and Norman Rosenthal, *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner 1880-1938* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2003), 242.

²⁹⁶ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 319.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 319.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 245.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 226.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 397.

³⁰¹ Jill Lloyd, Magdalena M. Moeller, Andrew Robinson, and Norman Rosenthal, *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner 1880-1938* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2003), 242.

³⁰² Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz, The Berlin Years* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 192.

³⁰³ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 226.

August – November: “The purging of German museums continues. Approximately five thousand paintings and sculptures and twelve thousand graphic works are confiscated and moved to a warehouse on Kopeniker Strasse, Berlin.”³⁰⁴

November: An exhibition titled *The Eternal Jew*, defaming the Jewish population features avant-garde artworks by Jewish artists.³⁰⁵

November: Josef Goebbels begins to publish *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich* (*Art in the Third Reich*), which further supports and spreads belief in Nazi cultural policy.³⁰⁶

1938: Jewish art collections are targeted as the government continues to strip artworks from public and private galleries and museums.³⁰⁷

- February 11: The Nazis seize George Grosz’s bank accounts.³⁰⁸
- March 10: George Grosz is officially denied of his German citizenship.³⁰⁹

“Franz Hofmann, president for the Committee for Confiscation in the German museums, declares the museums ‘purified.’ Almost sixteen thousand words were withdrawn.”³¹⁰

May: “Formation of a Commission for the Exploitation of Confiscated Works i.e. ‘degenerate art’” occurs.³¹¹

May 31: The seizure of artworks is deemed legitimate by post facto legislation.³¹²

“Goebbels establishes the Kommission zur Verwertung der Produkte entartete Kunst (Commission for the disposal of products of degenerate art), which spends the next four years selling confiscated works.”³¹³

1939: Hitler appoints Dr. Hans Posse to be the director of the art museum at Dresden and the director for acquisitions, seized or purchased, for a new museum in Linz.³¹⁴

³⁰⁴ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 397.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 397.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 397.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 397.

³⁰⁸ Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz, The Berlin Years* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 192.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 192.

³¹⁰ Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham, and Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, Film, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (2006; San Francisco: Actual Films, 2006.), DVD.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 400.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 400.

The Galerie Fischer in Lucerne auctions 125 works of German, avant-garde art that had been stripped from museums and galleries.³¹⁵

- “Dix was arrested in 1939 during the action against ‘unreliable intellectuals’ after an attempt on Hitler’s life in Munich and spent a week in police custody in Dresden. A note in the artist’s personal dossier, written by the minister-president of Saxony, Manfred von Killinger, asked, ‘Is the swine still alive, then?’”³¹⁶

1940: “[The] Kunstschutz, the commission for the protection of works of art of the Wehrmacht (the German Army)” is created.³¹⁷

- May: The Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Headquarters) holds private discussions about Nolde and his radical art.³¹⁸

The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die Besetzten Gebiete (The Reichsleiter Rosenberg Institute for the Occupied Territories, ERR) is established in Paris, to conduct the systematic looting and plundering of Europe’s art collections.³¹⁹

Josef Goebbels requests that the head of the Reich National Museums generate a list of all valuable, German art objects within the occupied territories.³²⁰

“More than 400 cases of seized works, accumulated in the Louvre or still in the German embassy, are transferred to the Jeu de Paume, which becomes the principal repository of the works seized by the ERR.”³²¹

“[The] first visit of Hermann Göring to the Jeu de Paume [occurs]. A selection of seized works is exhibited. Göring chooses 27 for his collection.”³²²

³¹⁴ Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham, and Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, Film, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (2006; San Francisco: Actual Films, 2006.), DVD.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 227.

³¹⁷ Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham, and Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, Film, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (2006; San Francisco: Actual Films, 2006.), DVD.

³¹⁸ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 320.

³¹⁹ Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham, and Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, Film, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (2006; San Francisco: Actual Films, 2006.), DVD.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

September 17: “The German high command in France authorizes the ‘Rosenberg task force’ to seize art from the private collections of Jewish families. Similar actions are authorized in Belgium, the Netherlands, and other occupied territories.”³²³

1941:

- August: Emil Nolde is forbidden to paint and is dismissed from the Reichskammer der bildenden Kunste (the Reich chamber of visual arts).³²⁴
- Emil Nolde’s membership in the Prussian Academy of Art is revoked.³²⁵

1943: February 6: “With Schirach’s backing the controversial exhibition *Junge Kunst im Dritten Reich* (New art in the Third Reich) opens in the Vienna Künstlerhaus, including some abstract works.”³²⁶

May 23: Over 500 works of modern art are burned at the Jeu de Paume in Paris.³²⁷

1944: June: Josef Goebbels orders a reduction in cultural activities.³²⁸

The Parisian branch of the ERR is closed as the allies begin to liberate France. A final inventory from the Jeu de Paume stands at 203 collections dismantled and 21,903 confiscated works of art.³²⁹

1945: Hitler commits suicide on April 30 and Germany surrenders to the Allied Powers on May 7.³³⁰

- Otto Dix is drafted into the Nazi Army, and is taken as a prisoner of war in France until 1946.³³¹

³²³ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 400.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 320.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 320.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 400.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 400.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 400.

³²⁹ Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham, and Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, Film, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newnham (2006; San Francisco: Actual Films, 2006.), DVD.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ Stephanie Barron, *Degenerate Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 227.

c. Mussolini's Championing of the Avant-Garde in Fascist Italy

This integrated timeline spans the years during which Benito Mussolini was in power in fascist Italy, from 1922 until 1943. It shows the development of fascist Italy's cultural policy and when and how avant-garde artists were interestingly, not repressed alongside the policy's advancement. In the timeline, advancements in fascist Italy's cultural policy are unmarked, and instances of non-repression against the Italian avant-garde artists are indented and bulleted.

1922: October 22-29: The March on Rome occurs.³³²

The Novecento artistic movement is established, "in an attempt to find an aesthetic at once traditional, modern, and quintessentially Italian."³³³

- Giacomo Balla takes part in futurist exhibitions and manifestations. He finishes writing *Pessimismo e ottimismo* (Pessimism and Optimism), "in his own opinion the chef-d'oeuvre of his Futurist period."³³⁴

1923: 12 January: The Gran Consiglio (Grand Council), the primary body of the Italian fascist state, convenes for the first time.³³⁵

- Gino Severini takes part in the Rome Biennale exhibition.
- Felice Casorati is briefly arrested for involvement with an anti-fascist group.

1925: 29-31 March: The Congress of Fascist Intellectuals is held in Bologna to try to define Italian, fascist cultural policy.³³⁶

June: Benito Mussolini establishes the National Fascist Institute of Culture.³³⁷

Benito Mussolini organizes the first collective exhibition of Novecento art.³³⁸

- Giacomo Balla represents Italy at the International Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Paris.³³⁹

³³² Philip Morgan, *Italian Fascism, 1919-1945* (London: MacMillan, 1995), 60.

³³³ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 35.

³³⁴ Elica Balla, "Bibliography," in *Works by Giacomo Balla from 1905 to 1928*, ed. Eva Lips (Zurich: Turske & Turske, 1986), 92.

³³⁵ Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 57.

³³⁶ Philip V. Cannistraro, "Mussolini's Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?," *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 120.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

³³⁸ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 47.

³³⁹ Elica Balla, "Bibliography," in *Works by Giacomo Balla from 1905 to 1928*, ed. Eva Lips (Zurich: Turske & Turske, 1986), 92.

1926: The Royal Academy of Italy is created.³⁴⁰

Benito Mussolini passes a law to suppress opposition parties.³⁴¹

Benito Mussolini speaks about the connection between culture and politics publicly for the first time at the opening of the Novecento Italiano exhibition.³⁴²

- Gino Severini exhibits at the Novecento Italiano exhibition in Milan.
- Carlo Carrà participates in the Novecento Italiano exhibition.³⁴³

1927: “The 1927 Carta del lavoro (Charter of Labor), which laid the juridical foundation for the Fascist corporate state, articulated the need to make intellectual work a social duty and a part of national production.”³⁴⁴

April: “A law of April 1927 acknowledged the ‘urgent and absolute necessity to issue regulations for the creation and organization of fairs, exhibitions, and expositions’; it ruled that all forms and types of exhibitions ‘must be authorized by Decree of the Head of State and seconded by the relevant ministries.’...The 1927 law further decreed that permission would not be granted to shows that failed ‘to demonstrate results in keeping with national noble artistic traditions.’”³⁴⁵

1928: Laws establish the permanency of the Venice Biennale and the Roman Quadriennale of National Art.³⁴⁶

24 December: “A law...declared the [Venice] Biennale permanent and guaranteed it perpetual rights to both customs exemptions and train discounts for spectators.”³⁴⁷

1929: The Lateran Pacts are agreed upon by Benito Mussolini and the Holy See, creating Vatican City.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁰ Philip V. Cannistraro, “Mussolini’s Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 122.

³⁴¹ “Timeline: Italy,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, last modified February 16, 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1065897.stm.

³⁴² Philip V. Cannistraro, “Mussolini’s Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 122.

³⁴³ “Carlo Carrà,” *Guggenheim*, http://www.guggenheim-venice.it/inglese/collections/artisti/biografia.php?id_art=170.

³⁴⁴ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 26.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁴⁸ “Timeline: Italy,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, last modified February 16, 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1065897.stm.

The Italian government gives control of non-national art exhibitions to the Fascist Syndicate of the Fine Arts.³⁴⁹

Foreign films and other forms of culture are systematically withdrawn from Italian society.³⁵⁰

After the slight decline of Novecento, Futurism rises, once again, to be representative of fascist Italy's artistic culture.³⁵¹

- Gino Severini exhibits in the Novecento Italiano exhibition in Milan and Geneva.
- Carlo Carrà participates in the Novecento Italiano exhibition.³⁵²

1930: Legislation determines the governmental and party composition of the Venice Biennale's administration.³⁵³

13 January: "...a royal decree redefined the [Venice] Biennale's administrative system...."³⁵⁴

Conte Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata becomes the president of the Venice Biennale, ushering in the "Volpi era," which promoted commercial tourist infrastructure with the Venice Biennale at its center.³⁵⁵

- Gino Severini takes part in the Venice Biennale exhibition.

1931: "...a set of laws codified previous changes and presented the reformed charter of the Autonomous Institution of the Venice Biennale."³⁵⁶

- Gino Severini participates in the Rome Quadriennale exhibition.
- The Ministry of National Education purchases works by Felice Casorati for the Rome Quadriennale exhibition.³⁵⁷
- Gino Severini's work is featured in the Rome Quadriennale, but he wanted more money from the government for his pieces than was offered to him.³⁵⁸

³⁴⁹ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 28.

³⁵⁰ Philip V. Cannistraro, "Mussolini's Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?," *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 125.

³⁵¹ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 51-52.

³⁵² "Carlo Carrà," *Guggenheim*, http://www.guggenheim-venice.it/inglese/collections/artisti/biografia.php?id_art=170.

³⁵³ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 36.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

1932: An exhibition commemorating the 10-year anniversary of fascist control of the Italian government is organized. It invites participants to interact with the artworks, which are representative of fascism's development in Italy.³⁵⁹

- Giacomo Balla is represented at the Venice Biennale.³⁶⁰
- Carlo Carrà is showcased at the Venice Biennale.³⁶¹

1933: “The policy of professional regimentation and incentive succeeded, as many artists joined the syndicates and the numbers remained high through the 1930s. In 1933, the regime claimed 1,865 card-carrying members of the artists’ syndicates...”³⁶²

The Fourth Exhibition of the Fascist Syndicate of the Fine Arts of Sicily begins to accept entries from non-union members.³⁶³

- Carlo Carrà showcases his work at the Milan Triennale.
- Carlo Carrà signs Mario Sironi's *Manifesto of Mural Painting*, as it declares that “the Fascist state art must have a social function: an educational function.”³⁶⁴
- Gino Severini is featured in the Milan Triennale exhibition.³⁶⁵

1934: “In 1934, the government enacted a major rationalization of exhibition activities: all periodic exhibitions and fairs, such as the Fair of Milan, were judicially reorganized into independent entities with the president of the institution appointed by Mussolini and the secretary-general nominated by the Ministry of Corporations.”³⁶⁶

The government begins to publish an Official Calendar of Fairs, Shows, and Exhibitions.³⁶⁷

November: “...Mussolini, as designated by law, made new appointments to the Biennale's Administrative Committee.” The Venice Biennale became a clearinghouse for all information regarding contemporary art in Italy.³⁶⁸

³⁵⁸ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 78.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 139-140.

³⁶⁰ Elica Balla, “Bibliography,” in *Works by Giacomo Balla from 1905 to 1928*, ed. Eva Lips (Zurich: Turske & Turske, 1986), 93.

³⁶¹ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 90.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 40, 42.

- Benito Mussolini's office, the president of the Council of Ministers, make purchases of Italian art by Felice Casorati and others in Mussolini's name.³⁶⁹

1935: Italy invades Ethiopia.³⁷⁰

- Giacomo Balla is represented at the 1935 Rome Quadriennale Exhibition.³⁷¹
- Giacomo Balla becomes a member of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome.³⁷²
- Gino Severini wins first prize at the Rome Quadriennale exhibition and is given his own room to present his work.

1936: Benito Mussolini forms the Axis with Nazi Germany.³⁷³

“...support for official culture diminished after 1936...cultural politics after 1936 projected a conflicted attitude regarding art's role in a Fascist state at war...by 1936 an unofficial Battle for Culture began in earnest.”³⁷⁴

1937: The Ministry of Popular Culture is established.³⁷⁵

After the Degenerate Art exhibition opened in Germany, “the Fascist establishment kept its distance from Hitler's war against modernism...”³⁷⁶

- Italian supporters of Nazi Germany denounce Novecento artists such as Carlo Carrà as “un-Italian, un-Fascist...” in publications such as *Quadrivio* and *Il Tevere*.³⁷⁷
- Gino Severini experiences the same denunciations in *Quadrivio* and *Il Tevere*.³⁷⁸

³⁶⁹ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 77.

³⁷⁰ “Timeline: Italy,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, last modified February 16, 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1065897.stm.

³⁷¹ Elica Balla, “Bibliography,” in *Works by Giacomo Balla from 1905 to 1928*, ed. Eva Lips (Zurich: Turske & Turske, 1986), 93.

³⁷² “Collection Online, Giacomo Balla,” *Guggenheim*, http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/show-full/bio/?artist_name=Giacomo%20Balla.

³⁷³ “Timeline: Italy,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, last modified February 16, 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1065897.stm.

³⁷⁴ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 178.

³⁷⁵ Philip V. Cannistraro, “Mussolini's Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3 (1972): 123.

³⁷⁶ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 192.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 192.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 192.

1938: “The Ministry of national Education devised the famous 1938 Two Percent Law, which declared that ‘in all public works projects, 2 percent of the costs will be devoted to decoration.’”³⁷⁹

A law is passed that streamlines the Venice Biennale’s operations into a series of events.³⁸⁰

- Felice Casorati wins first prize at the Venice Biennale.

1939: Albania is annexed by Italy.³⁸¹

1940: Italy enters World War II in support of Germany.³⁸²

1941: Italy declares war on the Soviet Union.³⁸³

- Carlo Carrà is appointed professor of painting at the Accademia di Brera.³⁸⁴

1942: “At the 1942 [Venice] Biennale, the regime controlled cultural production tightly enough to mount an exhibition that unambiguously displayed work supportive of its policies.” The exhibition celebrated war propaganda.³⁸⁵

1943: King Victor Emmanuel III of Sicily imprisons Benito Mussolini and signs an armistice with the Allied powers. Italy declares war on Germany.³⁸⁶

³⁷⁹ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 115.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

³⁸¹ “Timeline: Italy,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, last modified February 16, 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1065897.stm.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ “Carlo Carrà,” *Guggenheim*, http://www.guggenheim-venice.it/inglese/collections/artisti/biografia.php?id_art=170.

³⁸⁵ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 208.

³⁸⁶ “Timeline: Italy,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, last modified February 16, 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1065897.stm.

APPENDIX D: Tables of Avant-Garde Artist Repression

As it relate to the following tables, Type 1 indicates denunciations made in print; Type 2 refers to the closing of an artist's exhibition or the stripping of an artist's work from museums and galleries; Type 3 corresponds to removal of the artist from a position of authority; Type 4 pertains to imprisonment, house arrest, or exile of the artist, and Type 5 signifies death of the artist at the hands of the regime.

a. Figure 1: Soviet Union

| Avant-Garde Artists | Repression: Type 1 | Repression: Type 2 | Repression: Type 3 | Repression: Type 4 | Repression: Type 5 | Connection to Regime | Rank of Repression |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Malevich | YES | YES | YES | YES | NO | YES | 4 |
| Tatlin | YES | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | 2 |
| Rodchenko | YES | NO | YES | NO | NO | YES | 3 |
| Gabo | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | 1 |

b. Figure 2: Nazi Germany

| Avant-Garde Artists | Repression: Type 1 | Repression: Type 2 | Repression: Type 3 | Repression: Type 4 | Repression: Type 5 | Connection to Regime | Rank of Repression |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Kirchner | YES | YES | YES | NO | NO | NO | 1 |
| Nolde | YES | YES | YES | NO | NO | YES | 2 |
| Grosz | YES | YES | YES | YES | NO | NO | 3 |
| Dix | YES | YES | YES | YES | NO | NO | 4 |

c. Figure 3: Mussolini's Italy

| Avant-Garde Artists | Repression: Type 1 | Repression: Type 2 | Repression: Type 3 | Repression: Type 4 | Repression: Type 5 | Connection to Regime | Rank of Repression |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Casorati | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | - |
| Severini | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | - |
| Balla | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | - |
| Carrà | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | YES | - |

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