

DADA in GERMANY

By

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THE country tormented most, after France, by this tide which knows no barriers, has hitherto been Germany. Already in 1918, Huelsenbeck, a vigorous and intelligent man and a poet of talent, who had assisted at the foundation of Dada in Zurich, brought the Dadaist verities into German in the rôle of a true apostle. There he found enthusiastic friends; George Grosz, who had lived in America, and who expressed in his drawings the tumultuous life of the great American cities, W. Heartfield, a sensitive poet, and Raoul Hausmann, whose field is life. They had long been convinced of the Kaiser's guilt at the beginning of the war, and their relations with Liebknecht, Professor Nicolai and the pacifists were generally known. The many demonstrations which they organized had a great influence on public opinion, and they can boast of having helped to bring on the German revolution.

They have their newspapers, their publishing houses and a Dada Club, where some remarkable talents soon appeared—the song writer, W. Mehring, the painter, Mlle. H. Hoech, and the philosopher, Daimonides. They have organized international expositions and tours of the chief German cities. These tours came to a bad ending; only the intervention of the police saved the Dadaists from being killed by the public. At Hanover, where the crowd confiscated their baggage, they had to leave in a great hurry. At Dresden their cash box was confiscated. An opera singer who had no connection with Dada, and who wanted to calm the public, was beaten by the angry mob. At Prague the scandal took on such

proportions that the Czecho-Slovak government was forced to drive the Dadaists out, and to forbid any Dadaist demonstration on Czecho-Slovakian territory.

I have not yet spoken of Baader, who is the chief of the Dadaist religion. The number of his disciples is enormous. He has also played a political rôle. At Weimar he threw proclamations into Parliament and interrupted the city by accusing the new revolutionary Germany of being inspired by the reactionary spirit of Goethe and Schiller. Baader, who calls himself the President of the World, is the father of three children. He was twice locked up by mistake in a lunatic asylum. He is not a very interesting man, but certainly a very genial one. On the occasion of the death of his wife, he delivered a long oration to the three thousand people at the funeral, explaining that death is essentially a Dadaist affair. He was smiling throughout the speech. He had, none the less, been very fond of his wife. The same day he cut off his beard, which had been that of a true apostle.

Huelsenbeck is at present a doctor and journalist at Danzig. He is a great friend of America, which he has glorified in three books: *Dada the Conqueror*, *En Avant, Dada!* and *Germany Must Disappear*. The last Dadaist exposition at Berlin also came to a bad end: the Minister of War brought an indictment against the men who had organized it for having insulted the German officers "by deformation and tendentious inscriptions." The defenses of some of the Dadaists are masterpieces of malice and irony.