

Art as Propaganda in Vichy France, 1940-1944

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## ABSTRACT

The French government under Philippe Pétain, based at Vichy, simultaneously collaborated with the Germans and promoted French patriotism. French artists and designers produced an abundance of posters, paintings, sculptures and other *objets d'art*, examples of which are included here, to promote the values of the "new order." Although Christian symbols were common, fascist symbols among the mass-produced images support the idea that the Vichy regime was not merely authoritarian, but parafascist.

The fine arts were purged of "foreign" influences, yet the German Arno Breker was invited to exhibit his sculptures in Paris. In the spirit of national *redressement*, traditional French art was promoted; however, Modern art, which Hitler condemned as cultural Bolshevism, continued to be produced. With reference to the words of Pétain, Hitler, French artists and art critics, and a variety of artworks, this thesis shows how art was used to propagate the ideology of the Vichy regime.

## RÉSUMÉ

Le gouvernement de la France de Vichy, sous Philippe Pétain, collaborait avec les Allemands tout en encourageant le patriotisme français. Les artistes français produisaient en abondance affiches, peintures, sculptures et autres objets d'art dans le but de propager les valeurs de «l'ordre nouveau.» Bien que les symboles chrétiens fussent communs parmi les images créées, la présence de symboles fascistes appuie l'idée que le régime de Vichy n'était pas seulement autoritaire mais parafasciste.

Les arts furent purgés des influences «étrangères,» cependant, l'Allemand Arno Breker fut invité à exposer ses sculptures à Paris. Dans un esprit de redressement national, l'art traditionnel français était promu; pourtant l'art moderne, qu'Hitler condamnait comme bolchevisme culturel, continuait d'être produit. En se référant aux dires de Pétain, d'Hitler, d'artistes français et critiques d'art, ainsi qu'à des exemples d'œuvres d'art, cette thèse montre comment l'art fut utilisé pour propager l'idéologie du régime de Vichy.



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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Professor James L. Stokesbury.

## INTRODUCTION

Let us exhibit pictures of virtues, and they will find imitators. The sort of exhortation which appeals to the heart by means of the senses, aside from its permanence, is more within reach of the common man. The people make better use of their sight than of their understanding. Images preach, preach without ceasing, and do so without wounding our vanity.<sup>1</sup>

In the advent of the age of mass politics, Diderot, quoted above, recognized the potential use of imagery to effect social change by conveying ideas instantly and continuously. The Church and monarchy had long used art to impress and indoctrinate the people; then came the Revolution, when art was used as an ideological weapon of the people *against* the Church and monarchy, objectifying the ideals, heroes, and enemies of the Republic. Finally, in the early twentieth century, art and politics were totally fused in fascism. In the words of Walter Benjamin, fascism inaugurated "the aestheticizing of politics."<sup>2</sup> The Nazis particularly exploited the visual arts and may be regarded, as Robert S. Wistrich puts it, as "the unacknowledged pioneers and masters of modern media philosophy," who seduced a nation and led it to war and genocide.<sup>3</sup> Their consolidation of power included the aesthetic "cleansing" of Germany,<sup>4</sup> a process

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<sup>1</sup> Denis Diderot, quoted in James Leith, *Media and Revolution: Moulding a New Citizenry in France During the Terror* (Toronto: CBC Publications, 1968) 43.

<sup>2</sup> See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," 1936, rpt. in Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, eds., *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Vol. 3, 1935-1938* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2002) 139-140.

<sup>3</sup> Robert S. Wistrich, *Weekend in Munich: Art, Propaganda and Terror in the Third Reich* (London: Pavilion, 1995) 160.

<sup>4</sup> Hitler wrote: "The cleansing of our culture must be extended to all fields. Theater, art, literature, cinema, posters, and window displays must be cleansed of all manifestations of our rotting world and placed in the service of a moral idea of State and culture." *Mein Kampf*, trans. John Chamberlain et al. (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1939) 348.

of redefining beauty according to the precepts of the Führer, who presumed to be leading a struggle not only for the resurgence of Germany but for the very survival of civilization, which was threatened by race-mixing and cultural Bolshevism.<sup>5</sup> With the conquest of France in 1940, Hitler gained valuable raw materials, industrial resources and human resources. France retained a semblance of autonomy under the leadership of Philippe Pétain, whose government at Vichy collaborated with the Nazis to the point of arresting Jews *en masse*, for deportation to the death camps, and raising an auxiliary force, the *Légion des Volontaires Français contre le Bolchevisme*, to help Germany fight the Soviet Union. Art played a part in the process, sometimes giving form to fascist yearnings.

In *The Anatomy of Fascism* Robert O. Paxton, one of the leading scholars on Vichy France, argues that Pétain's regime was "certainly not fascist at the outset" but authoritarian, relying on traditional intermediary bodies—including families, churches, local notables and economic cartels—as agencies of social control, instead of creating a single national party that would dissolve the private sphere.<sup>6</sup> His analysis holds true for the system of government; however, fascism was not just a system of government but, as Mussolini emphasized, "also, and above all, a system of thought."<sup>7</sup> Professor Paxton's definition of fascism<sup>8</sup> is quite

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<sup>5</sup> See *Mein Kampf*, 396.

<sup>6</sup> See Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage, 2005) 9, 216-218.

<sup>7</sup> Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism," 1932, rpt. in Franklin Le Van Baumer, ed., *Main Currents in Western Thought* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Knopf, 1964) 689.

succinct in comparison to Kevin Passmore's,<sup>9</sup> published two years earlier, which indicates the complexity and resonance of the issue sixty years after Fascism and National Socialism were demolished. Zeev Sternhell has written that fascism was a "universal category with regional and cultural variants," like liberalism, socialism, and communism, but "so fluid and so ill-defined" that many are unwilling to grant it the status of an ideology.<sup>10</sup> Richard J. Golsan suggests that "fascist ideology is contradictory in its very essence,"<sup>11</sup> and it follows that any attempt to define fascist aesthetics will involve contradictory terms. According to Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff,

fascist aesthetics, though revolutionary and modernist, comprised progressive and traditionalizing currents, and were both elitist and populist in its [sic] logic. It is important to note, furthermore, that fascist aesthetics brought together these opposed terms in such a way as to challenge, on the theoretical level, any simple parallelism between progressive aesthetics and utopian and revolutionary ideologies, on the one hand, and reactionary art and authoritarian politics, on the other.<sup>12</sup>

Whereas images can express ineffable ideas or feelings, our definitions and descriptions of art and art styles may be inadequate. This thesis makes no attempt to further define fascism or fascist aesthetics, but merely to present the reader with a survey of artworks (excluding photographs) endorsed by the Vichy

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<sup>8</sup> "Fascism may be defined as a form of political behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy, and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion." Op. cit. 218.

<sup>9</sup> See Kevin Passmore, *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford U P, 2002) 31.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Richard J. Golsan, ed., *Fascism, Aesthetics, and Culture* (Hanover: U P New England, 1992) x-xi.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff, "Introduction," *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1997) 17.

government, some of which contain explicit fascist symbolism, and some of which seem plainly apolitical. The examples include reproducible art, such as posters and insignia, which are examined in Chapter One, and fine art, which includes singular works, such as paintings, which are examined in Chapter Two.

This thesis is intended to provide an overview of the plastic arts under Vichy, particularly regarding the attitude of the Germans, in a way that is accessible to readers who may have little or no knowledge of Vichy France, or only a passing acquaintance with Modern art. This line of research began when I learned that Picasso, whose canvases were burned in Nazi Germany, was somehow permitted to continue making his "Jewish-Bolshevist" paintings, as Hitler described them, in occupied Paris; whereas Emil Nolde, an Expressionist and a *bona fide* Nazi, was ousted from the Prussian Academy of Art and ordered to stop drawing and painting altogether. That paradox indicates that the Third Reich's totalitarian cultural program was not total, at least not in *Frankreich*. This thesis attempts to make sense of the situation, which has been acknowledged but not adequately explained in other studies.

Also examined here is the mythification of Pétain and the French nation through imagery. Pétain gained power by charisma, the same kind of charisma possessed by the fascist leaders, which Paxton describes as follows: "It rested on a claim to a unique and mystical status as the incarnation of the people's will and

the bearer of the people's destiny."<sup>13</sup> Quasi-religious portrayals of Pétain and utopian images of France were mass produced. The imagery of Vichy France stands apart from Fascist Italian and Nazi German imagery because it includes distinct Christian symbols: crucifixes and French Catholic saints. Nevertheless, other elements indicate fascist intentions, borne out by official policies and actions, leading me to think that the term "parafascist" best describes the Vichy regime.<sup>14</sup>

The groundbreaker in this field of study was Helmutt Lehmann-Haupt's history of art in Hitler's Germany, *Art Under a Dictatorship* (1973), which has been followed by dozens of books on the subject, perhaps the most thorough one being *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (2002) by Frederic Spotts. The first scholarly volume on the French art world under the Nazi shadow, focusing on the fine arts in Paris, was *Histoire de l'art: Paris 1940-1944* (1986) by Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, who returned to the subject in *L'art de la défaite: 1940-1944* (1993). Whereas those books examine Franco-German collaboration, Michèle C. Cone's *Artists Under Vichy* (1992), which is well illustrated, goes farther by also revealing the plight of German refugee and Jewish artists. Christian Faure's *Le projet culturel de Vichy* (1989), which is concerned with regionalism and folk culture, is well illustrated and most informative about the production of Pétainist imagery. In *Modernity and Nostalgia* (1995), Romy Golan examines the trend

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<sup>13</sup> Paxton, op. cit. 126.

<sup>14</sup> Roger Griffin used the term in 1991, cited in Michèle C. Cone, "Decadence and Renewal in the Decorative Arts under Vichy," in Affron and Antliff, 241.

toward regionalism and naturalism in French art and design, which began in the 1920s and continued into the Vichy years. Michèle C. Cone examines Modern art in France before, during, and after the Vichy period in *French Modernisms* (2001).

Many facets of the media and society under the Vichy regime are examined in *La propagande sous Vichy 1940-1944* (1990), edited by Laurent Gervereau and Denis Peschanski, which includes hundreds of reproductions of posters, documents, cartoons and photographs. This outstanding volume contains twenty-four essays by French and foreign scholars, including three essays about fascist Italian, German, and Spanish propaganda.



## CHAPTER ONE

Nazi German troops invaded the Low Countries and France on 10 May 1940, having already laid claim to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark and Norway. They demolished whole armies as they advanced, which they did quickly in the Low Countries although they were outnumbered by Allied troops two to one.<sup>1</sup> Their strongest opponent at the time, the Army of France, was forced to retreat continuously, divided and decimated. Four weeks after the Blitzkrieg began, Panzer tanks rolled up to the Seine at Rouen and to the Aisne near Reims, threatening Paris from north-west and north-east. While the Germans crossed the rivers, the French government and millions of citizens fled south from the capital, which was declared an "open" city. Three days later, Paris belonged to the Third Reich. In Germany the event was acclaimed "the most glorious and mighty victory of all time."<sup>2</sup> At their makeshift headquarters near Bordeaux, France's leaders quarrelled about what to do. The Supreme Commander of the Army, General Maxime Weygand, argued that terms should be sought immediately to prevent total defeat, while the Prime Minister, Paul Reynaud, argued that negotiations with the Nazis would be worthless. "Hitler is Genghis Khan," he said.<sup>3</sup> But Reynaud's plan to continue fighting and to remove

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<sup>1</sup> James L. Stokesbury, *A Short History of World War II* (New York: Morrow, 1984) 93. "Figures vary widely—wildly even," writes Stokesbury, who settles on a ratio of 4 million Allied soldiers to 2 million German. The Allies had more tanks, in addition to superior troop strength. The only substantial material advantage to Germany was a higher number of aircraft.

<sup>2</sup> The Gauleiter of Swabia, quoted in Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 155.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Robert Aron, *The Vichy Regime 1940-44*, trans. Humphrey Hare (Boston: Beacon, 1969) 7.

the government to colonial North Africa or America, if necessary, was scuttled by his newly appointed deputy, Henri Philippe Pétain.

Pétain, commonly known as "*le Maréchal*," had been recalled from the French embassy in Madrid to help save his country under siege. He was a national hero since he defended Verdun in 1916, a cautious but successful strategist and a humane commander, beloved of the troops. He was now eighty-four years old but still sharp and remarkably fit.<sup>4</sup> Siding with General Weygand, he said an armistice was necessary "for the perpetuation of France eternal," and he vowed to stay in France, among the people, "to share their sufferings and their misfortunes."<sup>5</sup> In effect he offered to take personal responsibility for France's safety, and the offer was accepted. On 16 June the President of the Republic, Albert Lebrun, accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Reynaud in favor of the Marshal, who would lead the people in a *modus vivendi* with Nazi Germany. Lebrun thanked Pétain for taking on "the heaviest responsibility ever borne by a French statesman."<sup>6</sup>

Pétain disregarded parliamentary procedure from the outset. As soon as his leadership was announced by radio on 17 June, without bothering to consult the elected members of government he proclaimed France's surrender.

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<sup>4</sup> Many personal accounts match that of Georges Lamirand, who recalls his "stupefaction" upon meeting Pétain, who was "straight as an I" and had a look of steel ("au regard marmoréen"), yet was "extraordinarily at ease" and "infinitely courteous." Quoted in Marcel Ophuls, *Le chagrin et la pitié* (Paris: Éditions Alain Moreau, 1980) 86.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Aron, 10.

<sup>6</sup> "[L]a responsabilité, la plus lourde qui ait jamais pesé sur un homme d'État français...." Quoted in Weygand, *Rappelé au service* (Paris: Flammarion, 1950) 236.

C'est le coeur serré que je vous dis aujourd'hui qu'il faut cesser le combat. Je me suis adressé cette nuit à l'adversaire, pour lui demander s'il était prêt à rechercher avec nous, entre soldats, après la lutte et dans l'honneur, les moyens de mettre un terme aux hostilités. Que tous les Français se groupent autour du gouvernement que je préside pendant ces dures épreuves et fassent taire leur angoisse pour n'écouter que leur foi dans le destin de la patrie.<sup>7</sup>

Entire regiments laid down their arms at once. The battle for France was at an end, although the Wehrmacht continued to advance and the Luftwaffe bombed Bordeaux. That bombardment, however, was a momentary and negligible threat to Pétain's government in contrast to the threat of subversion posed by General Charles de Gaulle.

De Gaulle, recently promoted for his courageous counter-attacks on German armor near Laon, was safe in London on 18 June when he made the first of his radio broadcasts rebuking Pétain's politics.

The Free French do not accept this defeat. The Free French do not consent to an arrangement whereby, under the pretext of keeping order and harmony in Europe, their country can be used as a base for the enemy from which to attack other countries. . . .<sup>8</sup>

[With British and American aid] we can conquer in the future by superior mechanized forces. The fate of the world depends on it. . . . Whatever may happen, the flame of French resistance must not go out and will not go out!<sup>9</sup>

Ultimately his words proved prophetic, but in the summer of 1940 they amounted to wishful thinking at best, high treason at worst. Pétain referred to

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<sup>7</sup> Philippe Pétain, *Actes et Écrits*, ed. Jacques Isorni (Paris: Flammarion, 1974) 449.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in *The Sorrow and the Pity: A Film by Marcel Ophüls*, trans. Mireille Johnston (New York: Outerbridge & Lazard, 1972).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Aron 43-44.

de Gaulle as "a blot on the honor of the French officer corps"<sup>10</sup> and "that viper."<sup>11</sup> In order to keep peace and receive the best possible terms from the Germans, Pétain needed the undivided attention and cooperation, or obedience, of the entire nation. In the months to come, his government would launch a multimedia propaganda effort to keep the faith of the people, which would prove ever more difficult to do. In the meantime, General de Gaulle was convicted of treason *in absentia* and sentenced to death.

When the armistice came into effect, six weeks after the Blitzkrieg began,<sup>12</sup> the Germans occupied three-fifths of the country. Although many of the French agreed with de Gaulle, the majority believed that the Germans were unbeatable, and they praised Pétain for putting an end to the bloodshed and destruction. The unevenness of the Battle for France is evident in the casualty figures: German losses were approximately 45,000 killed and 100,000 wounded, whereas French losses were 125,000 killed and 200,000 wounded, plus a minimum of 1,500,000 taken prisoner.<sup>13</sup>

On 25 June Pétain spoke to the people of metropolitan France and the colonies, saying the surrender had been necessary because Germany proved superior in tactics, equipment, and fighting spirit. He assured them that the

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944* (New York: Knopf, 1972) 69.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Robert O. Paxton, *Parades and Politics at Vichy* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1966) 23.

<sup>12</sup> The armistice between France and Germany was signed on June 22. A second armistice, between France and Italy, which had joined the fight on June 11, was signed on June 25.

<sup>13</sup> Stokesbury 103. Venner gives a much higher number for prisoners: close to 1,900,000, of which 520,000 were released prior to the Liberation. See Dominique Venner, *Histoire de la Collaboration* (Paris: Pygmalion/Gérard Watelet, 2000) 645.

Empire was intact and the Government remained free, but that the people would have to depend on themselves and their own hard labor to restore France, beginning with the soil. (War disrupted the vital planting season, and more than one third of the prisoners of war were farmers,<sup>14</sup> so the harvest of 1940 would be a poor one.) The Marshal exhorted parents to instil a sense of duty in their children, and finally, he called for a spiritual change, a moral revolution throughout the country. He saw the terrible military defeat as a direct consequence of the Third Republic's moral laxity—as if the German Army was an instrument of divine retribution.

Nous avons à restaurer la France. Montrez-là au monde qui l'observe, à l'adversaire qui l'occupe, dans tout son calme, tout son labeur et toute sa dignité. Notre défaite est venue de nos relâchements. L'esprit de jouissance détruit ce que l'esprit de sacrifice a édifié. C'est à un redressement intellectuel et moral que, d'abord, je vous convie. Français, vous l'accomplirez et vous verrez, je le jure, une France neuve surgir de votre ferveur.<sup>15</sup>

One year later, when food and fuel were in short supply and daily life remained difficult in both the occupied and unoccupied zones, Pétain reminded the people of their collective guilt. "You are suffering and you will suffer for a long time to come," he said, "because we have not finished paying for all our faults."<sup>16</sup>

On July 10, 1940, when the government moved from Bordeaux to the spa town of Vichy in the Free Zone, Pétain officially became the Head of the French State. By a vote of 569 to 80, the Senators and Deputies granted him

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<sup>14</sup> Paxton, *Vichy France*, 209.

<sup>15</sup> Pétain, *Actes* 452-454.

<sup>16</sup> Pétain (my translation), *Actes* 552.

extraordinary executive powers, effectively relinquishing their own power and burying the Third Republic. At that moment Pétain might have repeated the famous boast of Louis XIV, "*L'état, c'est moi*," because France's fate seemed to be in his hands. In fact he took to using the royal pronoun, first person plural. Many years later, Jacques Duclos recalled:

He was thought of as a good old man. He had made France the gift of his person. It was quite a good formula, you know. . . . The people could say, "He can't hurt anyone, that old man, he can only serve the cause of France. At his age, what can he hope for beyond that?"<sup>17</sup>

The "good old man" hoped to salvage war-torn France by restoring values that had been forgotten by modern, secularized society. By restoring traditional French Catholic values and instilling a strict sense of civic duty, he imagined that he could ensure peaceful coexistence with the Germans, revive morale, the land and the economy, and preserve French sovereignty. His proposed *redressement* was given the name "*Révolution nationale*," a term borrowed from the vocabulary of the Jeunesses Patriotes, a youth group that became a major right-wing organization in the 1930s.<sup>18</sup> The motto of the French Republic, "*Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité*," was replaced with a new motto, "*Travail, Famille, Patrie*," which was taken from the 1936 program of the right-wing veterans' association, the Croix de Feu (which expanded in the late 1930s under a new name, the Parti Social Français).<sup>19</sup> The Jeunesses Patriotes had a strong following among Catholics, as did the Scouts, Action Française, and other conservative organizations for youths

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Ophuls, *The Sorrow and the Pity* 32.

<sup>18</sup> W. D. Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France* (Oxford: Oxford U P, 1981) 12.

<sup>19</sup> W. D. Halls, *Politics, Society and Christianity in Vichy France* (Oxford: Berg, 1995) 53-54.

and adults. Pétain's rhetoric struck a chord with these Catholics, who were community-minded, strongly opposed to Communism, unhappy with the secularism and materialism of modern society, and receptive to authoritarianism and dogma.<sup>20</sup>

Pétain himself was raised a Catholic—he learned his catechism from a chaplain who was a veteran of Napoleon's Grande Armée<sup>21</sup>—and although he was not very devout<sup>22</sup> he had the Church's support. Pope Pius XII did not explicitly commend Pétain but his approval was implied by his acceptance of the existing fascist regimes. In 1939 the Pope lauded Franco's victory in Spain as a "crusade" which defended "the ideal of the Christian faith and civilization;"<sup>23</sup> he respected the Lateran Treaty and the Concordat, even after the German government violated the terms of the Concordat; and although he disapproved of the Nazis' racism and brutality he never denounced the Hitler regime, which he seems to have regarded as an indispensable buffer against godless Communism.<sup>24</sup> French bishops urged their flocks to follow Pétain, whom the

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<sup>20</sup> John Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France: Uriage, 1940-1945* (Montreal: McGill-Queens U P, 1993) 7. Other organisations include: the JOC (Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique), the ACJF (Action Catholique de la Jeunesse Française), and the PSF (Parti Social Français), which stemmed from the Croix de Feu in the late 1930s.

<sup>21</sup> Aron, 11.

<sup>22</sup> Halls, *Politics*, 53-54. Halls writes, "In 1940 both Cardinal Suhard and the Pope were anxious to obtain a 'regularisation' of [Pétain's marital] situation" which was long overdue. Pétain's liaison with Eugénie Hardon began when she was a married woman. She divorced in 1914, married Pétain in a civil ceremony in 1920, and obtained an annulment of her first marriage in 1929. No religious ceremony was held until March 1941, when Pétain was married by proxy and without publicity at the archbishop's chapel.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Halls, *Politics*, 25.

<sup>24</sup> See Saul Friedlander, *Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation* (New York: Knopf, 1966) 130-132, 237. More recently, Rabbi David G. Dalin posits that by denouncing Hitler the Pope might only have endangered more people. See *The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews From the Nazis* (Washington: Regnery, 2005) 80.

Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Suhard, dubbed "the unimpeachable Frenchman."<sup>25</sup> Other Christians supported him too. Speaking for the Reformed Church, Pastor Marc Boegner declared, "There is only one duty: to follow the Marshal."<sup>26</sup> Saintliness was ascribed to the old man who had given himself to the nation ("Je fais à la France le don de ma personne pour atténuer son malheur"<sup>27</sup>) and who brought peace, the cost of which would be tallied later. The *Révolution nationale* was promoted from pulpits throughout the country.

Yet Pétainist rhetoric by itself could not be counted upon to consolidate some forty million people and sustain their belief in the new leadership, a geriatric leadership that ordered a spiritual revolution, looking to the past for models of behavior in the future. Other forms of propaganda were required, and Pétain was well aware of the power of art as propaganda, as were Hitler and Goebbels, who took a lesson or two from the example of the British propaganda campaign of the Great War, which involved a great proliferation of posters. Art has been used to awe and inculcate since the time of the pharaohs, but the mass politics and warfare of the twentieth century, in the machine age, required rapid production and distribution of images in the millions, including heroic depictions of the Leader and the nation he envisioned, plus the entities to be opposed. Pétain's need grew as the months passed, particularly after October, when he issued the first of the anti-Jewish laws (*Statuts des juifs*) and shook

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Halls, *Politics*, 45.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Halls, *Politics*, 49.

<sup>27</sup> From his radio message of June 17. Pétain, *Actes* 449.



hands with Hitler at Montoire, signalling a new policy of "collaboration" with France's erstwhile enemy.

Pétain found a promising artist-propagandist in Gérard Ambroselli, a Corsican painter he met in the summer of 1940. Ambroselli, who had served in the Army until late June,<sup>28</sup> had been commissioned by General de Lattre de Tassigny, head of the Army of Alsace, to create an album of inspirational pictures to be distributed to the troops. With the help of an engraver named Soulas, Ambroselli created a series of woodcut prints in the tradition of Épinal,<sup>29</sup> depicting the military heroes of Alsace since the Thirty Years' War. Approximately 20,000 copies of the pictures were distributed to Alsatian schools for the children to color. Pétain was so impressed with the work, he hired Ambroselli to assemble and direct a team of graphic artists to make promotional imagery for him. This organization, named *Imagerie du Maréchal*,<sup>30</sup> would generate romantic visions of Pétain and the French heritage to be displayed in homes, schools and work places. In keeping with the marshal's tastes, all of the work would be done in the naïve figurative style of Épinal, a two-dimensional style reminiscent of medieval art, using traditional materials and techniques.

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<sup>28</sup> At the end of June, by the terms of the Armistice, the French Army was reduced to 100,000 men.

<sup>29</sup> Stencil-colored woodcuts of storybook characters and Napoleonic history, very popular throughout the nineteenth century, were produced by Imagerie d'Épinal, a company located in the eponymous town in the Vosges. Ambroselli revived interest in the style, which had waned in the twentieth century. Imagerie d'Épinal is still in business today.

<sup>30</sup> Christian Faure, *Le projet culturel de Vichy: Folklore et révolution nationale 1940-1944* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires, 1989) 156.

Classic French *métier*, or craftsmanship, was required to represent Pétain and his National Revolution.

Studio space was prepared in Vichy, artists and artisans were commissioned, and in 1941 the first body of work was completed: a series of twelve woodcut prints depicting episodes from Pétain's life. The captioned images were issued in several sets, including a colored set for framing, a calendar, and a coloring book, *La vie du Maréchal, petit album à colorier par les enfants de France*.<sup>31</sup> The series constitutes an official illustrated biography, or perhaps more appropriately, hagiography. Pétain is portrayed as: a born leader, fearless since childhood [see Fig.1]; a considerate officer, making sure his soldiers in the trenches are well fed; a brilliant strategist, consulting his maps near an equestrian statue of Napoleon; the victor of Verdun; the victor of the Moroccan rebellion; a friend of the working man; and ultimately, a messiah. He is shown resting beneath a crucifix [Fig. 2], giving encouragement to a plowman [Fig. 3], and making an offering of himself, Christ-like, dividing light and life from darkness and death [Fig. 4]. The oeuvre is kitsch, through and through.

Kitsch is defined as any shallow, pretentious, sentimental artistic production; its original German meaning is "trash". Surely that definition fits *La Vie du Maréchal* and a few other Vichy productions, which will be examined later. Kitsch is an excellent vehicle of propaganda because it represents the lowest

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<sup>31</sup> Denis Peschanski et al., *Collaboration and Resistance: Images of Life in Vichy France 1940-1944*, 1988, trans. Lory Frankel (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000) 15.

## "JE ME DIRIGE TOUT SEUL"



Enfant d'un humble village de l'Artois, PHILIPPE PÉTAIN, en 1870 avait atteint l'âge de 13 ans. Bien avant que la France fut envahie, dès ses premières années, il avait rêvé aux exploits des grands Capitaines, qu'il voulait d'imiter. Ses camarades pressaient pour quel cet enfant intrépide aux cheveux d'or. Il les guidait dans leurs jeux. Il les commandait. Aussi en abordant la vie pouvait-il dire, comme il le fit au Supérieur des Dominicains d'Arcueil, qui l'accueillait dans son école où il voulait préparer Saint-Cyr: "JE ME DIRIGE TOUT SEUL".

IMAGERIE DU MARÉCHAL - Paris - 1941

Figs. 1 - 2. Woodcuts by Ambroselli and Soulas, from *La vie du Maréchal* (Limoges: Imagerie du Maréchal, 1941); rpt. in Christian Faure, *Le projet culturel de Vichy* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires, 1989) n.p.

## LA RELEVÉ DES ÉTOILES



SOUS un régime indifférent au seul mérite, il n'avait eu qu'un avancement très lent. Aux prises avec l'action, sa supériorité s'avère éclatante. Après quinze jours de campagne, il est nommé GÉNÉRAL. Ce soir-là, il continue dans la demeure des petites-filles du Général de SONIS. Elles perdurent avec pour les rehausser de celui qui naguère avait chargé à la tête des ZOUAVES PONTIFICAUX à LOIGNY. Tandis que leur hôte repose, elles entrent sur la pointe des pieds. Elles ont déposé de ses insignes l'uniforme violet des HÉROS DE LA LOIRE, leur a-t-il. Et, celles de l'autre leur ont offert à l'élire le dessin de la France. Elles remettent les étoiles sur le tricolore du futur HÉROS DE VERDUN.

IMAGERIE DU MARÉCHAL - Paris - 1941

## "LA TERRE, ELLE, NE MENT PAS"



J'ai les montagnes qui vous ont fait tant de mal. La Terre, elle, ne ment pas. Elle demeure votre demeure. Aux heures les plus sombres, c'est le regard paisible et décidé du PAYSAN FRANÇAIS qui a soutenu ma confiance. La TERRE DE FRANCE n'est pas moins riche de promesses que de gloire. Il arrive qu'un paysan de chez nous voit son champ devant par le soleil. Il ne désespère pas de la maison prochaine. Il arrive avec la même foi le même aïeul pour le grain futur... Construction que les Français refusent à la France l'ennemi et la foi qu'ils accordent à la plus petite parcelle de leur champ? UNE FRANCE NOUVELLE, JE VOUS LE JURE, NAÎTRA DE VOTRE FERVEUR! (Paroles du Maréchal - 1940)

IMAGERIE DU MARÉCHAL - Limoges - LIMOGES 1941

Figs. 3 - 4. Woodcuts by Ambroselli and Soulas, from *La vie du Maréchal* (Limoges: Imagerie du Maréchal, 1941); rpt. in Faure, *Le projet culturel de Vichy*, n.p.

## LE DON A LA PATRIE JUIN 1940



Depuis la Victoire, L'ESPRIT DE JOUISSANCE L'A EMPORTÉ SUR L'ESPRIT DE SACRIFICE. On a revendiqué plus qu'on n'a servi. On a voulu épargner l'effort, on rencontre aujourd'hui le malheur. JE FAIS A LA FRANCE LE DON DE MA PERSONNE pour atténuer son malheur. Je ne serais pas digne de rester à votre tête, si j'avais accepté de répandre le sang français pour prolonger le rêve de quelques Français mal instruits des conditions de la lutte. Je n'ai voulu placer hors du SOL DE FRANCE ni ma personne, ni mon espoir. (Paroles du Maréchal - 1940)

IMAGERIE DU MARÉCHAL - Limoges - LIMOGES 1941

common denominator, that is, it appeals to a basic, general taste. It has the power to render complex issues into simple, identifiable figures and gestures, conveying such lofty feelings as love, devotion, and courage; in a word, it romanticizes. As Saul Friedlander puts it, "kitsch [neutralizes extreme situations], particularly death, by turning them into some sentimental idyll."<sup>32</sup> The combination of kitsch and death was fundamental to Nazi aesthetics. It is also expressed in *La Vie du Maréchal*, a sanitized version of Pétain's life story wherein the bloodshed and destruction visited upon France by the Germans in 1914 and again in 1940 are overcome, or neutralized, by the presence of the heroic, Christian marshal.

Documentation is lacking, but in all likelihood *La Vie du Maréchal* was well received by the public, as suggested by the popularity of other mass-produced effigies of Pétain. His grandfatherly face was featured in a set of five portraits by different artists, which sold nearly 1.4 million copies in the Free Zone in just fifteen days, in March 1941.<sup>33</sup> A poster by Philippe Noyer, entitled *Révolution nationale*, which shows Pétain in his *képi* in front of the *tricolore*, was issued in a first edition of 510,000 copies and a second edition of 550,000.<sup>34</sup> Also in the early months of 1941, busts of Pétain took the place of Marianne, the personification of French democracy since 1789, in the nation's town halls, schools, and other public spaces. In some cases Marianne and the Marshal may have been

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<sup>32</sup> Saul Friedlander, *Reflections on Nazism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984) 26.

<sup>33</sup> Peschanski et al., 13. The portraits were sold door-to-door by mail carriers.

<sup>34</sup> Judith K. Proud, *Children and Propaganda: Il était une fois....: Fiction and Fairy Tale in Vichy France* (Oxford: Intellect, 1995) 55.

displayed together, as implied by a photograph taken at the Hôtel de Ville, Paris, dated 5 January 1942,<sup>35</sup> but such a case seems rare. Yvon Bizardel, who lived in Paris at the time, gives the distinct impression that Marianne virtually vanished overnight.<sup>36</sup> After the war, when Pétain was put on trial for treason, he claimed that he never condoned the switch. "I formally and publicly opposed it," he said.<sup>37</sup> But considering how he replaced the Republic's motto with "*Travail, Famille, Patrie*" in 1940, it is hard to believe that he was seriously opposed to replacing the Republic's figurehead in 1941.

Pétain's portrait bust brings us to the matter of organization, or the lack of organization, of Vichy's propaganda-art production, and some conflicting details that may be found in historical records. To begin, the official bust of Pétain which replaced Marianne in March 1941 has been attributed to François Cogné by Bizardel, who was then curator of the Musée Galliéra, and by the historians Laurent Gervereau and Denis Peschanski,<sup>38</sup> but historian Michèle C. Cone attributes it to Léon Drivier, while attributing only "small plaster busts" to Cogné;<sup>39</sup> and adding to the confusion, a contemporary photograph shows another sculptor, Dusnel, finishing a clay model of "[le] buste officiel de Maréchal Pétain" which was exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français in April 1942.<sup>40</sup> It

<sup>35</sup> Reproduced in Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite 1940-1944* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1993) n.p.

<sup>36</sup> Yvon Bizardel, *Sous l'occupation: souvenirs d'un conservateur de musée 1940-1944* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1964) 170.

<sup>37</sup> "Je me suis formellement et publiquement opposé." Pétain, *Actes* 458.

<sup>38</sup> Bizardel 170; Gervereau and Peschanski 11; Peschanski et al., 13.

<sup>39</sup> Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 66, 75.

<sup>40</sup> "Voici le sculpteur Dusnel mettant la dernière main au modèle du buste officiel du Maréchal Pétain..." Photograph with 1942 caption in Gervereau and Peschanski, 212.

seems that Cogné, who had previously sculpted portraits of Clemenceau, Joffre, Lyautey and Mussolini, was Pétain's pre-eminent portrait sculptor, but not the only one to receive a State commission. Cogné also made a "gigantic" full-length statue of Pétain, which was shown at the same Salon as Dusnel's bust,<sup>41</sup> as well as a medal bearing "*le portrait officiel du maréchal*;"<sup>42</sup> whereas "the marshal's official portrait" was painted by Constantin LeBreton.<sup>43</sup> Many more portraits were painted and sculpted by other artists,<sup>44</sup> but the matter of "official" works is open to question. Exactly how the works were commissioned, and by whom, remains unclear. The office of fine arts (*Secrétariat des Beaux Arts*) sponsored exhibitions and gave commissions, but these concerned unique pieces of art, discussed in the next chapter, rather than templates for mass production for purely propagandist reasons, as were commissioned by other government offices and government-sponsored associations.

As Laurence Bertrand Dorléac has observed, Vichy did not have a well planned, unified artistic propaganda program; instead, a series of artistic ventures were arranged *ad hoc*, involving a variety of art styles and materials; only the theme of the Marshal and his maxims provided commonality.<sup>45</sup> A number of art and artisanal organizations were involved, some of which can be

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<sup>41</sup> Bizardel 170.

<sup>42</sup> Gervereau and Peschanski, 213.

<sup>43</sup> Cone, op. cit. 66.

<sup>44</sup> Laurence Bertrand Dorléac mentions "a contest, open to artists, on the theme of the effigy of the Marshal, in 1941" (my translation). Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, *Histoire de l'art: Paris 1940-1944: Ordre nationale, traditions et modernités* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1986) 43.

<sup>45</sup> Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, "Les arts plastiques," in Gervereau and Peschanski, 212-213.

confusing. Ambroselli's group in Vichy, *l'Imagerie du Maréchal*,<sup>46</sup> sold some of its goods at the *Boutique de l'imagerie* in Vichy, which should not be confused with the *Salon de l'imagerie*, an annual exhibition of arts and crafts in Paris, which was organized in 1940 by Paul Lavalley under the patronage of the Beaux-Arts and the City of Paris. Located at the Musée Galliéra for two years, then at the Museum of Decorative Arts in the Louvre, the *Salon de l'imagerie*, one of many "salons" or annual group exhibitions, seems to have exhibited the products of *l'Imagerie du Maréchal*, but only as a contingent of its array of arts and crafts created by more than six hundred people.<sup>47</sup> That, in turn, should not be confused with the salons organized by the director of the *Salon des Décorateurs*, Maurice Dufrène, who was engaged by Pétain personally; Pétain wrote to him, "Je veux attacher mon nom à un art neuf, bien français."<sup>48</sup> Dufrène organized exhibitions entitled "*le Foyer*," "*l'Art pour l'enfant*," "*l'Art religieux*," and "*les Arts textiles*," to name but a few, providing publicity for artists and artisans while spreading the ideals of the National Revolution.<sup>49</sup> These exhibitions may be counted as part of a general phenomenon known as "*art-Maréchal*," a term that has always been associated with Robert Lallement and the *Service artistique du Maréchal*, which actually came late to the game.

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<sup>46</sup> Neither Bertrand Dorléac nor Cone discuss "Imagerie du Maréchal" as a distinct organization, which Faure does. See Faure 158.

<sup>47</sup> 600 participants were registered in 1940 and the number increased by 68 % over 4 years. .Faure 159-160.

<sup>48</sup> Bizardel, 172. "Le roi des Bourges ne visait pas si haut," adds Bizardel.

<sup>49</sup> Bizardel 171.



Lallement was a ceramicist and decorator who left the arts for industrial work in 1933, then joined the Navy, was discharged, and went to Vichy in August 1942, when he was introduced to Pétain by his brother-in-law, Dr. Bernard Ménétral, who was Pétain's physician and confidant.<sup>50</sup> Ménétral had set up a propaganda organization, *l'Amicale de France*, in 1940, which was taken over by Paul Marion, the information minister, in 1941; but Marion was pushed aside by Pierre Laval, who was now prime minister.<sup>51</sup> With the aim of maintaining his pre-eminence in the public view, Pétain commissioned Lallement to organize a variety of artists and artisans, mostly creators and decorators of luxury goods, to create objects bearing Pétain's likeness, motto, or emblem, the Francisque.<sup>52</sup> The *Service artistique du Maréchal* produced pocket flasks, cutlery, crystal vases and other unique objects, but these were slow to appear. Lallement had rejoined the Navy by the time the group's first exhibition was held in May 1944, just weeks before the Normandy invasion.<sup>53</sup>

Colorful posters were the prevalent form of visual propaganda, delivering simple messages to the masses instantly and continually, almost everywhere. Posters had been used for political and commercial purposes since the nineteenth century, and increasingly in the twentieth century, when modern factory

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<sup>50</sup> Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite* 119-120.

<sup>51</sup> After Laval returned to power on 18 April 1942, the French referred to him as "President;" yet historians usually refer to him as the "prime minister" or "head of government," whereas Pétain was his superior, the Head of State, a new office which replaced the presidency of the Third Republic.

<sup>52</sup> See Fig. 16, discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>53</sup> Bertrand Doléac, *L'art de la défaite* 120.

methods made mass production quick and easy. Over three million posters are known to have been issued for a single propaganda campaign, that of the Fête du Travail of 1941, the copies being distributed on both sides of the demarcation line.<sup>54</sup> The vast majority of Vichy's posters were silkscreened from handmade art, rather than photographs, and some were quite pretty, combining good design with airbrush techniques and sometimes five or more color separations.<sup>55</sup> The demand from multiple branches of the government was too great to be met by any one company, so Vichy's poster needs were met by several established firms, including Bedos, Chaix, and Karcher, and also by a new firm, *l'équipe Alain-Fournier* of Lyon, which was to take the forefront as a creator of images associated with the regime.

The *Alain-Fournier* company was formed by two young soldiers, Jean Demachy and Géraud de la Garde de Saignes, upon their demobilization in 1940, and named for the author of *Grand Meaulnes*, as a patriotic and romantic homage.<sup>56</sup> Philippe Noyer and P. Prudhon were the most prolific members of the team, which produced a total of sixty-two designs for Vichy, including the popular *Révolution nationale* [Fig. 5] which, as stated earlier, was printed in two editions, surpassing one million copies. Apart from that particular poster, the team did not produce many pictures of Pétain, but they did illustrate his favorite

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<sup>54</sup> A total of 3,091,490 posters were printed for the Fête du Travail of 1 May 1941, by order of the Secretariat of Information. 30% were distributed in the Free Zone and 70% in the Occupied Zone. See Gervereau and Peschanski, 148.

<sup>55</sup> For example, see *Travail/Sport*, reproduced in Gervereau and Peschanski 150.

<sup>56</sup> Laurence Gervereau, "Les affiches," *Propagande sous Vichy* 151.

themes. Forty-two designs were devoted to didactic images of work, family, and fatherland, and fifteen others to health and education. Orders came from the Navy, the Commissariat for Education and Sports, the Commissariat for Families, and very often, the Secretariat of Information,<sup>57</sup> whose circular insignia appears on many *Alain-Fournier* posters—in addition to the name of the company, the name of the individual artist, and the name of the printing house, *Imprimeries réunies de Lyon*. The appearance of four different source-names on a single poster, which can be confusing, indicates the horizontal structure of propaganda production under Vichy.

In general, very few numbers are available, but from the few concerning poster production we get a sense of the value placed on the graphic arts. Hundreds of posters were designed and reproduced in untold millions of copies during the early years of the regime, and there is evidence of editions of over 200,000 still being produced in 1944.<sup>58</sup> Typically, or so it seems, a single design would be reproduced in several different sizes, ranging from a modest 30 X 40 centimetres (nearly 12 X 16 inches), suitable for the smallest areas indoors, to a daunting 240 X 320 centimetres (94 X 126 inches), which could be clearly seen from several hundred paces or while speeding past on a bicycle, the commonest means of speedy locomotion at the time.

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<sup>57</sup> More precisely, in French: “*Secrétariat d’état à la Marine*”; “*Commissariat générale à l’éducation générale et aux sports*”; “*Commissariat général à la famille*”; and “*Secrétariat général de l’information de l’État Français*.”

<sup>58</sup> See Gervereau, *op. cit.* 150.

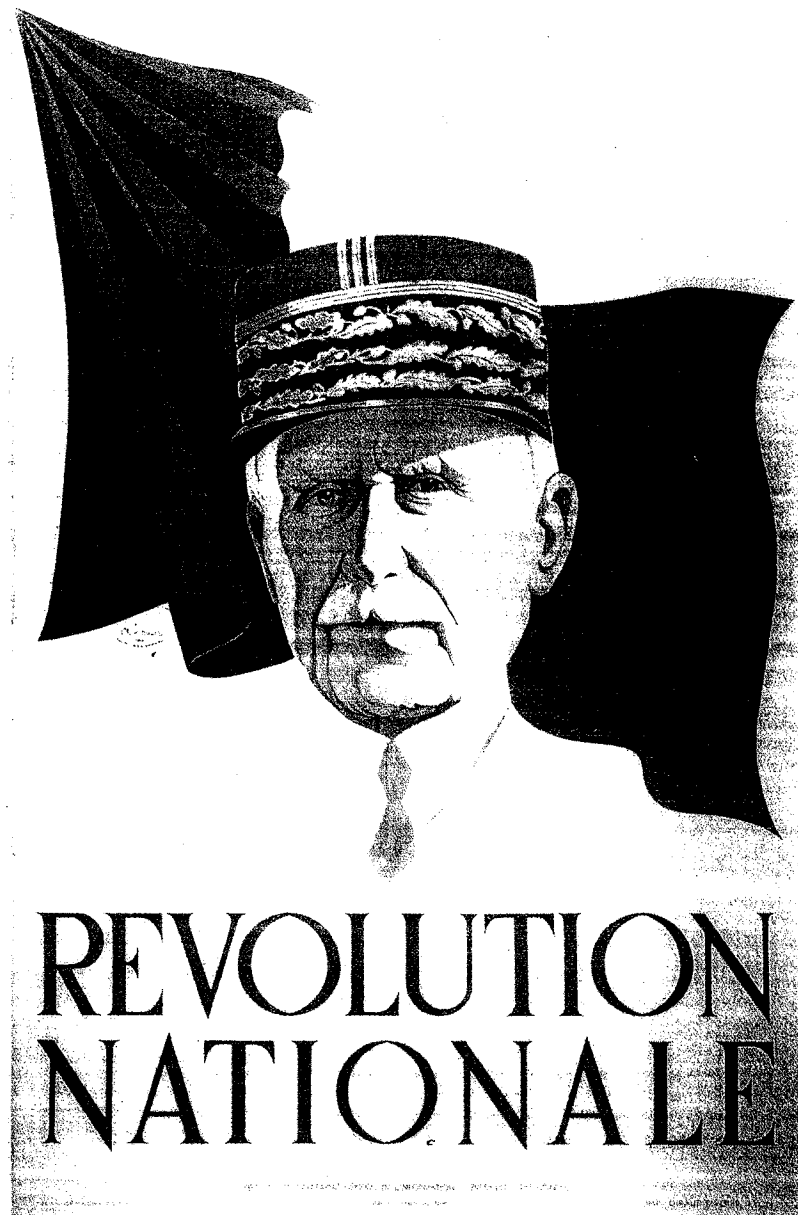


Fig. 5. *Révolution nationale*, poster by Philippe Noyer (Lyon: Équipe Alain-Fournier, 1940); rpt. in Laurent Gervereau and Denis Peschanski, eds., *La propagande sous Vichy 1940-1944* (Paris: BDIC, 1990) 145.

Besides creating brightly colored posters many graphic artists illustrated pamphlets and books, made woodcuts and etchings, or designed badges and insignia, the salient themes of which should now be surveyed.

The theme of *paysannerie*, the peasantry, was probably the most salient theme after that of Pétain himself, and it naturally lent itself to depictions of *travail*, *famille*, and *patrie* at the same time. "Peasant" was a dignified term, applicable to farm workers and agrarian landowners great or small: the peasantry was the proverbial backbone of society, without whose efforts everyone would certainly starve. The First World War had claimed a large portion of the peasant population, which was already in decline, and destroyed much arable land; prewar production levels were not reached until the late 1920s. When the Great Depression struck, the land and its cultivators gained urgent attention. "Return to the soil" became a motto of the 1930s; regionalism and folk culture were newly appreciated;<sup>59</sup> and peasantism became a political force in the form of pressure groups and parties, from the Union Nationale des Syndicats Agricoles (USNA) to the Fascist-inspired Défense Paysanne.<sup>60</sup> Under Pétain's government, peasants' interests were represented by the Peasant Charter and the National Peasant Corporation. Farmers and their products were never more valued than they were during the Vichy years, since the Blitzkrieg

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<sup>59</sup> In 1929 the Société du Folklore Français was founded; in 1937 the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires was inaugurated in Paris, under the auspices of Léon Blum and his Popular Front government. See Faure 23-30 and Herman Lebovics, *True France: the Wars Over Cultural Identity 1900-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1992) 148-149, 164-170.

<sup>60</sup> The Parti Agraire et Paysan Français was founded in 1928; the USNA in 1934. Henri Dorgère's Défense Paysanne, a private militia of green-shirted peasants who threatened to clean out the bureaucracy in Paris, claimed to have 400,000 members in 1939. See Paxton, *Vichy France* 200-203.

disrupted the sowing season of 1940, hundreds of thousands of farmers in arms were taken prisoner, and the German army of occupation had to be fed at French expense. Continuing an aesthetic trend of the interwar years,<sup>61</sup> Vichy's graphic propaganda included many scenes of rural life.

The graphics show the peasants' life as a happy one. In the children's book *Il était une fois un Maréchal de France*, for example, an idyllic farm scene accompanies the text which explains that Pétain's meeting with Hitler at Montoire was the first step in building "a great, new Europe"<sup>62</sup> [Fig. 6]. Here we see a farming family of three generations, enjoying the fresh air and a bountiful harvest; there are no Germans in sight, to be sure, only peace and prosperity. Such naïve conceptions of the peasants' life became commonplace: men heading home from the fields as night falls, shouldering pitchforks and scythes, guided by the light of the marshal's seven stars;<sup>63</sup> bare-chested boys of the *Chantiers de la jeunesse* cheerfully pitching hay and digging irrigation ditches; women, when they are depicted, cradling babies or feeding the chickens. All is well in the kingdom of Pétain, the pictures seem to say. A nostalgic, fairy-tale quality pervades the graphic arts of Vichy France, particularly those images pertaining

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<sup>61</sup> See Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995).

<sup>62</sup> "[France...] dans la grande Europe nouvelle en train de s'edifier." Written by Albert Paluel-Marmont, illustrated by Pierre Rousseau and Germaine Bouret, published by Éditions et Publications Françaises (Imprimerie Curial-Archereau) 1941. See bibliographic entry in Proud 89; illustration with partial text in Peschanski et al. 23.

<sup>63</sup> Seven stars adorned the baton and the uniform sleeve of a marshal of France. The device was frequently used as a reference to Pétain.



riants, dans le département du Loir-et-Cher, à Montoire, près de Tours, où l'on dit que le poète Ronsard et le bon roi Henri IV séjournèrent, il rencontra le chancelier Hitler, chef de l'Empire allemand. Les drapeaux des deux pays décoraient la gare. C'était vers le milieu de l'après-midi ; l'entrevue dura deux heures. Quand Pétain quitta le Führer, la nuit était déjà tombée, et il regagna sa voiture à la lueur de torches...

Puis il adressa un message au pays pour lui expliquer que cette libre et loyale rencontre entre le vainqueur et le vaincu marquait le premier redressement de la France, qu'une collaboration entre les deux pays avait été envisagée, qu'il s'y était décidé dans l'honneur et afin que notre pays conservât son unité, une unité de dix siècles, dans la grande Europe nouvelle en train de s'édifier : « Suivez-moi, dit-il en terminant. Gardez votre confiance en la France éternelle ! »

C'est parce qu'il ne cessa jamais, en effet, de croire et d'avoir confiance en Elle que les Français ne cessèrent jamais non plus de croire et d'avoir confiance en lui.

Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche comme le fut Bayard, sauveur de la France comme le fut Jeanne d'Arc, il reste l'une des plus belles, des plus pures figures de notre grande Histoire.

Sa vie est aussi claire et lumineuse qu'une légende.

Et c'est pourquoi, lorsqu'on veut la conter, on commence ainsi que nous avons commencé ce livre : « Il était une fois un Maréchal de France... »

Fig. 6. French peasant life under Pétain, depicted by Pierre Rousseau and Germaine Bouret, in Albert Paluel-Marmont, *Il était une fois un Maréchal de France* (Éditions et Publications Françaises, 1941); rpt. in Denis Peschanski et al., *Collaboration and Resistance: Images of Life in Vichy France*, trans. Lory Frankel (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000) 23.

to rural life, regardless of the actual trend of modernization that was taking hold of French agriculture and industry.<sup>64</sup>

"Despite their frequent talk about 'revolution,'" writes Robert Paxton, fascists wanted a "revolution of the soul" in order to "unify and invigorate and empower their decadent nation."<sup>65</sup> This certainly pertains to the *Révolution nationale*, although Paxton does not classify the Vichy regime as fascist, but authoritarian.<sup>66</sup> The artists and the adult population were aware of the artificial nature of these rustic visions, but there was a genuine hope, at least until the war turned against the Reich and the STO (*Service du Travail Obligatoire*)<sup>67</sup> began, that such imagery would foster a real, revolutionary change.

Si l'image influence ainsi l'âme enfantine, elle n'influence pas moins l'âme populaire qui est d'une fraîcheur analogue . . . Si l'imagier n'exclut pas la naïveté, il exige la foi, l'enthousiasme, car il se propose de glorifier, de moraliser, d'édifier, tout en réjouissant l'oeil.<sup>68</sup>

Imagerie du Maréchal portrayed the French countryside, peasantry and folklore in several sets of decorative and didactic prints: "*Les Travaux et les Jours*," "*Les Fables de La Fontaine*," "*Sentences et Dictons*," "*Les Beaux Métiers de France*," and "*Les Saints Patrons*." At least two picture-books celebrating rural life and manual work were produced by Ambroselli's organization: *Les Saints*

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<sup>64</sup> Especially in terms of organization, i.e., corporatism, as Paxton explains in *Vichy France*, 208. Most farm work was still being done by hand, horse, and simple machinery. Although tractors and other mechanical engines were present, fuel was scarce during the war.

<sup>65</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage, 2005) 142.

<sup>66</sup> "The boundary separating fascism from authoritarianism may be ... subtle, but it is one of the most essential for understanding," Paxton declares, proceeding to explain why the regimes of Franco, Salazar and Pétain were authoritarian rather than fascist. Op. cit. 216-218.

<sup>67</sup> Whereby French citizens were forced to work in Germany, beginning in February 1943.

<sup>68</sup> J. Vignaud in the catalogue for the Salon de l'imagerie of 1941, quoted in Faure 171.



*Patrons des métiers de France*<sup>69</sup> and *Les Artisans de la ville et du village*.<sup>70</sup> These efforts were aided by Georges-Henri Rivière, a consultant of the Peasants' Corporation and curator of the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires, located in Paris. He gave artists free access to the museum's collection, which included regional costumes, models of antiquated farms and houses, and devotional images of the patron saints of all trades, which were reproduced in almanacs, calenders and postage stamps. In December 1941 the first *Salon de la paysannerie française*, which was organized by René Henry, opened in Paris.<sup>71</sup>

Pétain was portrayed in the company of kings and heroes of Christian France, including Henry IV and the Duc de Sully, who are renowned for returning the land to peace and prosperity after the wars of religion. In a woodcut commemorating Sully on the tricentennial of his death, Ambroselli depicted Sully with Pétain in the background, standing shoulder to shoulder with King Henry, overseeing peasant men and women at work. At the top of the picture are Sully's words, "Labourage et paturage sont les mamelles de la France."<sup>72</sup> At the bottom Pétain is quoted in bigger, bolder letters: "La terre, elle, ne ment pas. Elle demeure votre recours. Elle est la patrie elle-même." In 1943, 5000 of the prints were ordered by the Peasants' Corporation in Haute-Vienne

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<sup>69</sup> Faure 158.

<sup>70</sup> Proud 19.

<sup>71</sup> Faure 171. See reproductions in Faure 157, 165, 168-170.

<sup>72</sup> The same words appear with Sully's portrait on a Vichy banknote etched by Lucien Jonas in 1940, which is reproduced in Gervereau and Peschanski, 121.

alone, with new captions, for example, "Comme Sully, la Corporation restaurera l'agriculture."<sup>73</sup>

In another woodcut, one designed by M. Albe [Fig. 7], Pétain is shown standing near Joan of Arc, followed by a multitude of people coming from the cities associated with the venerable maiden warrior—Rouen, Orleans, Paris and Reims—to the site where she appears amid flowers and wheat. The scene is surmounted by the names of Jesus and Mary, printed in medieval letters on the saint's banner, to which the figure of Pétain is visually linked by the device of the scabbard. Here, perhaps most explicitly, Pétain is depicted as being proximate to the divine.

Pétain went to Orléans for the annual Festival of Joan of Arc on 11 May 1941. The city that the maid of Lorraine liberated from the English was now occupied by the Germans, whose aggression the Reverend Father Bouley referred to when he mentioned "la souffrance de la patrie" in his sermon welcoming Pétain:

Nous avons connu hier une faveur inattendue, une joie inespérée. Le drapeau tricolore a flotté sur Orléans. Les rues et les places ont retenti des cris de "Vive la France! Vive le Maréchal! Vive Jeanne d'Arc!" L'hymne national a salué vingt fois le glorieux vieillard dont personne ne niera qu'il ne porte dans son coeur la souffrance de la patrie comme il incarne en sa personne le vouloir vivant du Pays.<sup>74</sup>

The priest did not mention the National Revolution or the New Order, but there were others, including Pétain, who would use Joan of Arc's name for Vichy's

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Faure, 172. See reproduction of the original 1942 woodcut in Faure, 170.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Gerd Krumeich, "The Cult of Joan of Arc," *Collaboration in France: Politics and Culture During the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1944* ed. Gerhard Hirschfield and Patrick Marsh (Oxford: Berg, 1989) 98.

# JEANNE D'ARC



DOMRÉMY 1412 - ROUEN 1431

LE 11 MAI 1941

DEVANT JEANNE D'ARC. HÉROÏNE DE L'UNITÉ NATIONALE  
QUI A DIX-HUIT ANS SAUVA SA PATRIE. LES JEUNES FRANÇAIS  
RASSEMBLÉS S'ENGAGENT À SERVIR LE PAYS ET SON CHEF  
PAR L'EFFORT. L'UNION ET LE DON DE SOI.

IMAGERIE DU MARÉCHAL - Imprimé à LIMOGES

Fig. 7. Joan of Arc with Pétain and followers, woodcut by M. Albe (Limoges: Imagerie du Maréchal, 1941); rpt. in Herman Lebovics, *True France* (Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1992) 174.

propaganda campaign against Jews, Freemasons, Communists, Gaullists, and France's former allies, the British, who attacked the French fleet and killed 1200 sailors at Mers-el-Kebir on 3 July 1940. In his speech for the Festival of Joan of Arc in 1942, Pétain likened the saint's struggle to his own. The following excerpt conveys not only the political usage of her name, but also the tone of many of Pétain's public addresses and his sense of forces opposing him:

La France doutait d'elle-même et de son chef. On eut dit que tout ressort était brisé et que le pays était devenu incapable de trouver en lui-même les éléments de son redressement. La majorité des Français n'attendait son salut que de l'Angleterre . . . .

Si [Jeanne] a pu sauver la France tombée si bas, sans doute nous suffirait-il d'appliquer les mêmes remèdes pour guérir encore une fois cette France malade.

Le premier de ces remèdes a été l'amour . . . .

L'autre remède était la foi. Elle croyait en son Dieu, en son pays et en son roi. Animée de cette foi ardente, libérée de tous les doutes, elle s'attaqua hardiment à tous les obstacles qui se dressaient sur la route. Pourtant, elle ne connut pas le succès tout de suite. Trop d'égoïsmes l'entouraient, trop de lachetés, trop de scepticismes, trop d'intrigues. Il fallut lutter durement avant de voir se ranimer les énergies. Secouer tout un peuple est une lourde tâche. C'est seulement après de rudes efforts qu'elle eut la joie de se sentir suivie. On comprenait enfin la nécessité de se grouper derrière le chef et d'abandonner les chimères de l'Etranger. . . .

Mes amis, sous l'égide de Jeanne d'Arc dont nous méditons l'exemple, je vous convie à appliquer les mêmes remèdes. . . . Fermez les oreilles aux propagandes étrangères, et groupez-vous étroitement derrière votre Chef, n'ayant plus dans vos coeurs que des pensées françaises.

Faites de cette consigne la règle de votre vie, et bientôt vous aurez, comme Jeanne d'Arc, la joie de voir la France reprendre le chemin glorieux de ses destinées éternelles.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Pétain, *Actes* 231-232.

In order to put France back on her glorious path, as he put it, internal enemies had to be routed out. An article by Pierre Pascal, published in *L'Appel* in May 1942, reads in part: "Si Jeanne n'avait en vérité qu'une volonté: chasser le trahison par le sacre de son roi; le Maréchal n'a qu'un volonté: chasser le trahison par le sacre de la justice."<sup>76</sup> A poster depicting the dawn of 1941 neatly combines metaphors of France's internal enemies with a metaphor of renewal: under the cry of "Leave us alone!" a French couple does some planting, annoyed by nasty little animals representing Freemasonry, Jews, de Gaulle, and "the Lie" [Fig. 8].

Joan of Arc is used as a racial symbol, a personification of "the French race," in a virulent poster by Tellebo [Fig. 9] which identifies France's greatest traitors as the Jews "who became masters of the Army, of Justice, of Parliament and municipalities" under the Third Republic. One of the men named in the poster, Jean Zay, who had been Minister of Education under the Popular Front, was eventually murdered by *miliciens*.<sup>77</sup> Zay, who was only half-Jewish by descent (his father had converted to Christianity), was particularly hated for having "deserted" France in her hour of need: he was one of the few politicians who sailed to North Africa on 17 June 1940, instead of capitulating to the Germans. Clearly, the nature of treason was a matter of opinion.

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<sup>76</sup> Quoted in Krumeich, 101.

<sup>77</sup> On 20 June 1944, on the pretext of moving him from one prison to another, three members of the Milice took Zay for a walk and shot him. See Julian Jackson, *France: the Dark Years 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) 579.



Fig. 8. *Leave us alone!*, poster by Té, 1941; rpt. in Françoise Passera, *Les Affiches de propagande 1939-1945* (Caen: Éditions de Mémorial de Caen, 2005) 28.



Fig. 9. Joan of Arc, "who personifies the French race and who kicked the Foreigner out of France," poster by Tellebo, n.d.; rpt. in Gerhard Hirschfeld and Patrick Marsh, eds., *Collaboration in France: Politics and Culture During the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Berg, 1989) n.p.

Freemasons (*francs-maçons*), represented by the symbol of the calipers and the carpenter's square [see Fig. 9], were also vilified in Vichy propaganda and outlawed under the rubric of "secret societies" in a law of 13 August 1940. The names of some 14,600 members were published, including that of François Cogné, Pétain's portrait sculptor, whose membership was reported in the *Journal Officiel* in early 1942.<sup>78</sup> Vichy's antipathy toward the Masonic Lodges may be hard for foreigners to understand, but as Robert Paxton has explained, the French Freemasons, unlike the Scottish-rite Masons of North America, were not only anti-Catholic but outright anti-religious by the late nineteenth century. They were suspected of constituting a "clandestine shadow government," working in collusion with Jews to impede the progress of Catholics in the civil service and the professions, under the atheistic Third Republic.<sup>79</sup> In October 1940 an anti-masonic exhibition, which was organized by the French but financed by the German embassy, was held at the Petit Palais in Paris, and later toured the provinces. The free exhibition of masonic paraphernalia and documents linking Freemasonry to Jewish and English interests drew large crowds, and other exhibitions of a similar nature followed: "*La France européenne*," "*Le Juif et la France*," and "*Le Bolshevism contre l'Europe*," which collectively drew three million visitors.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Bizardel 170.

<sup>79</sup> See Paxton, *Vichy France* 172-173.

<sup>80</sup> See Phillippe Burrin, *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: New Press, 1996) 292-296. The author argues that many visitors were merely curious, not necessarily in agreement with German or Vichy propaganda; however, the numbers suggest that "people



As of 3 September 1940, prefects were authorized to arrest Jews, Freemasons, Communists, or anyone else considered dangerous to national security. At year's end there were 55,000 to 60,000 people in 30 internment camps in the Free Zone and Algeria—French camps which were entirely independent of the Germans.<sup>81</sup>

The symbol of Joan, the saint of national defense, was employed by the resistance as well as by Vichy. One of the few resistance graphics that survives is a cartoon showing the armed maid of Lorraine (which territory was annexed by Germany in 1940) facing the diminutive figures of Laval and Hitler.<sup>82</sup> Simone de Beauvoir attended a play about Joan of Arc by Claude Vermorel, performed in Paris in 1942, in which Joan's enemies were simply called "the occupants." She found the play "unequivocally against the Germans and Vichy."<sup>83</sup> However, Rebatet watched the same play, *Jeanne avec nous*, and saw Joan as the "patroness of French Fascism."<sup>84</sup> Gerd Krumeich notes how Joan was used for more than three centuries for various political purposes, and used often during the First World War as a symbol of resistance toward the "barbaric" Germans, so it would be impossible for Vichy to monopolize her image.<sup>85</sup> Nonetheless, Vichy propagandists persistently implied that to follow Pétain was to follow the spirit

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had dropped their guard. From the [German] point of view, of course, this was an advantage," deflecting attention away from the occupying power on to its enemies, "thereby deferring outright rejection of its dominion."

<sup>81</sup> Jackson, 151.

<sup>82</sup> See Peschanski et al., 232.

<sup>83</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *La force de l'âge* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1960) 522.

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Simon Kitson, "Ambiguity in Culture Under Vichy," *Vichy Web* <http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/vichy/culture.htm#bibculture>

<sup>85</sup> Krumeich, 102.

of Joan of Arc. After 3 March 1942, when British planes bombed the Renault factory in the suburbs of Paris, killing many civilians, Joan was depicted at the stake, a victim of the treacherous English.<sup>86</sup>

On the first page of *Pétain*, a children's book by Albert Paluel-Marmont (published in 1942 by Librairie des Champs-Élysées, Paris), the Marshal is portrayed with Joan of Arc and the knight Bayard [Fig. 10]. This illustration, probably done by M. Albe, as suggested by the monogram in the lower left corner, exemplifies a combination of themes, seemingly incompatible themes, frequently appearing in Vichy's visual propaganda: militarism, piety and peace. Militarism is evident in Pétain's uniform, which bears a medal, and in the medieval arms and armor of the others; piety is shown by Joan, who is posed to pray; and peace is represented by the olive branches decorating the first word of the text. Pétain is shown looking to his left: since classical times, artists have depicted heroes looking to the left—in Latin, *sinister*—to guard against evil, and so Pétain is on guard against the evils of the political left. Such symbolism may have eluded the children and perhaps also the parents who read the book to them, but no matter; the image of the trinity of the marshal, the knight and the saint immediately delivers the message of the text: the Head of State is “the Man who saved your life, the emulator of Bayard the Knight, and the disciple of the

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<sup>86</sup> See reproduction in Françoise Passera, *Les affiches de propagande 1939-1945* (Caen: Éditions Mémorial de Caen, 2005) 56.



mon pays, je veux chanter  
l'Homme qui t'a conservé la vie,  
l'émule de Bayard le Chevalier et le  
disciple de Jeanne la Très Sainte,  
comme lui sans reproche et sans peur  
et comme elle portant l'armure de la  
Foi.

Fig. 10. Pétain with Bayard the Knight and Joan of Arc, illustration in Paluel-Marmont, *Pétain* (Paris: Librairie des Champs-Élysées, 1942); rpt. in Peschanski et al., *Collaboration and Resistance*, 228.

very holy Saint Joan, like him above reproach and fearless, and like her armed by Faith."

Pétain showed genuine affection and concern for the young, whom he often addressed by radio and in person. "Like so many childless people," writes Richard Cobb, "Philippe Pétain delighted in the company of little boys and little girls, to whom he could address himself at their own mental level." Even an enemy such as Cobb, an Englishman who worked with the Free French, was affected by Pétain's "clearly deeply felt grandfatherly tones," which altered his view of Pétain as "a politician of consummate wickedness."<sup>87</sup> Much of the visual propaganda of Vichy was aimed at children, the most impressionable and credulous portion of the population, whose "enthusiasm and purity of heart" were essential for the success of the National Revolution.<sup>88</sup> Pétain worried about "la formation de la race," which had been neglected under the Third Republic. In 1934, when he was the Minister of Defense, he said: "La jeunesse et l'enfance ne sont pas éduquées en vue de leurs devoirs;" what France needed, in addition to better military preparations, was "[un système d']instruction première assurant à l'enfance la santé du corps et de l'esprit." He concluded that France should learn from the example of the fascist states: "Il faudrait, à ce double point de vue, s'inspirer de ce qui se passe en Allemagne et en Italie."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Richard Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French: A Personal Interpretation of France Under Two Occupations 1914-1918/ 1940-1944* (Hanover: U P New England, 1983) 36.

<sup>88</sup> Georges Lamirand, speaking to French youth. See *The Eye of Vichy* (DVD, First Run Features, 1993) Chapter 4.

<sup>89</sup> Quoted in Herbert R. Lottman, *Pétain* trans. Béatrice Vierende (Paris: Seuil, 1984) 173.

Socialists, Jews, Freemasons, and other “undesirable teachers” were removed from the schools, and the remaining teachers were required to take an oath of loyalty to Pétain. Religious instruction was made available in State schools for the first time since the 1880s, and crucifixes, which had been banned, were hung on the walls along with the Marshal’s portrait.<sup>90</sup> Children were taught to revere the Head of State, the flag, the hard-working *paysans* and the historical heroes of the nation. New books, slates, posters and games were commissioned by different government agencies, including the Ministry of Information and the *Commissariat Général à l’Éducation Générale et aux Sports*, to educate and politicize the children. A small sampling of the book titles includes: *De Vercingétorix à Pétain: Le don de soi-même; Il était une fois un Maréchal de France; Il était une fois un pays heureux; Jeanne d’Arc: Sa mission, son exemple; Présentez armes! Les voyages du Maréchal;* and *Vive le sport*. For the little children learning the alphabet, new *abécédaires* were created; one example, edited by the Bureau de Documentation du Chef d’État in 1943, shows Pétain or an object associated with him, such as his baton or his *képi*, on every page.<sup>91</sup> The children sang “the Marshal’s song” (*Maréchal, nous voilà!*) and showed their respect with letters and art work. In 1940 Pétain received two hundred bags of letters and one million drawings, ten thousand of which were put on display in Vichy.<sup>92</sup> In January 1942 an exhibition of children’s art, “*Hommage au Maréchal*,” opened at

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<sup>90</sup> The crucifix was banned from State institutions in 1905. By November 1942, “in the Verdun diocese alone,” writes H. D. Halls, “the crucifix had been replaced in 500 schools.” See Halls, *Politics*, 56-57.

<sup>91</sup> Proud, 18, 88-89.

<sup>92</sup> Halls, *Youth* 14.

the Musée Galliéra in Paris.<sup>93</sup> A new course, "*Éducation morale, civique et patriotique*," was introduced at the elementary and secondary levels, and everyone was expected to attend flag-raising ceremonies—which many of the teachers did reluctantly, rather than risk being denounced.<sup>94</sup> Discipline and physical activity were stressed. "We are committed," declared Pétain, "to destroying the disastrous prestige of a purely bookish pseudoculture, councilor of laziness and generator of uselessness."<sup>95</sup>

Minus the French words, one poster for youth sports, "this modern knighthood" [Fig. 11], could be mistaken for a Fascist or National Socialist production. Designed by Jean Mercier and printed by Bedos in 1940, this poster includes a romantic image that became common in Vichy graphics: the image of a mounted knight holding a lance, a motif which was used in publicity for the S.O.L. (Service d'Ordre Légionnaire), in an emblem of the Uriage leadership school, on the cover of *La France que nous aimons*,<sup>96</sup> and in many depictions of Bayard specifically. The chivalric symbol became common in Vichy France but it was not uniquely French: since 1937, ersatz Teutonic knights rode their chargers in the annual Day of German Art pageant in Munich,<sup>97</sup> and Hitler himself was

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<sup>93</sup> Cone, *Artists Under Vichy* 56.

<sup>94</sup> According to one of the retired teachers interviewed by Marcel Ophuls in 1969. See *The Sorrow and the Pity* (DVD) Part I, Chapter 13.

<sup>95</sup> From his "Social Policy of Education" (published 15 August 1940), quoted in Francine Muel-Dreyfus, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine: A Contribution to the Political Sociology of Gender*, trans. Kathleen A. Johnson (Durham: Duke U P, 2001) 221.

<sup>96</sup> A set of posters for classrooms. See Fig. 19.

<sup>97</sup> From 1937 to 1939. See stills reprinted from color film in Robert S. Wistrich, *Weekend in Munich: Art, Propaganda and Terror in the Third Reich* (London: Pavilion, 1995) 134-135.

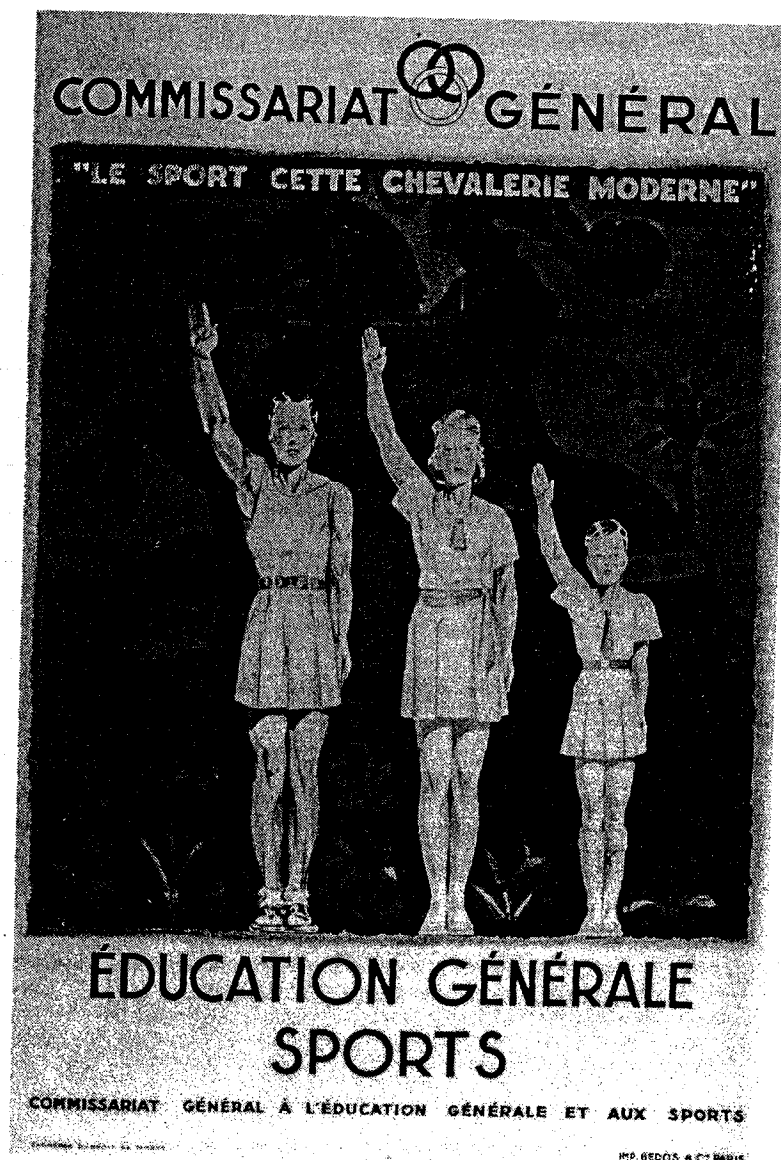


Fig. 11. "Le sport cette chevalerie moderne," poster by Jean Mercier (Paris: Bedos, 1940); rpt. in Gervereau and Peschanski, eds., *La propagande sous Vichy 1940-1944*, 136.

portrayed in one painting as a mounted knight in shining armor,<sup>98</sup> the chief crusader against international Communism and Jewry. But the most striking element of Mercier's poster is the straight-arm salute of the two youths and child in the foreground, whose clothing and posture give them a sporting and military appearance at once; they seem to belong not in France but in a Hitler Youth camp.

One does not usually associate the fascist or Roman salute with Pétain, but in fact it was part of Pétainism. A Vichy newsreel captured a crowd in Marseilles saluting Pétain in "Heil Hitler" fashion during the Head of State's visit in December 1940.<sup>99</sup> Other examples appear in *La Propagande sous Vichy 1940-1944*, edited for the exhibition of the same name in 1990, including: a photograph of the men of the Chantiers de Jeunesse de Theix saluting the flag; a poster depicting a veteran saluting Pétain before the Arc de Triomphe; and a poster depicting a legionnaire swearing to uphold the "21 Points du S.O.L.," overseen by a Crusader in chain mail.<sup>100</sup> The same straight-arm gesture may be seen in French art of the eighteenth century, but there it was used in reference to the Roman Republic, or its principles.<sup>101</sup> In the twentieth century the gesture belonged only to fascists. These Vichy images may be uncommon but they are nonetheless

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<sup>98</sup> The painting, held in the U.S. National Archives, is shown in the last scene of Peter Cohen's film, *The Architecture of Doom* (DVD, First Run Features, 1991), chapter 10.

<sup>99</sup> A brief excerpt is shown in *The Eye of Vichy* (DVD) chapter 2; a longer one in *The Sorrow and the Pity* (DVD) Part 1, chapter 6.

<sup>100</sup> See Gervereau and Peschanski 42, 60, 66.

<sup>101</sup> The most famous example is the *Oath of the Horatii* by Jacques Louis David, but a rare and interesting etching depicts National Guardsmen saluting the Constitution, atop a pedestal bearing the Roman *fascis*, while a birdlike King Louis and a batlike bishop fly away. See Claudette Hould, *Images of the French Revolution* (Quebec: Les publications du Québec, 1989) 354.



important. They bear witness to the empathy and admiration many French citizens felt for the fascists, especially the Germans, whose ardor and discipline seemed to pay high dividends in 1939, 1940 and 1941. Taking athleticism very seriously, in 1941 the General Education and Sports Commission issued another poster showing an athlete making the salute, with the following oath: "Je promets sur l'honneur de pratiquer le sport avec désintéressement, discipline et loyauté pour devenir meilleur et mieux servir ma patrie."<sup>102</sup>

The veterans' organization, the Légion Française des Combattants, contributed to Vichy's pictorial propaganda a series of classroom posters by Sogno, which glorified French warriors throughout the centuries, including the hatchet-wielding Jeanne Hachette, defender of Beauvais in 1472 [see Fig. 12]. Judging from the available evidence, the posters were stencil-colored woodcuts in Épinal style, and the pantheon of heroes included one non-combattant: Louis Pasteur, shown with a microscope,<sup>103</sup> a warrior against disease. Most of the others were killed in action; for example, the flying ace Georges Guynemer, who "fell in glory" in 1917.<sup>104</sup> Self-sacrifice was a persistent theme of *art-Maréchal*. In 1942 the Minister of Education, Abel Bonnard,<sup>105</sup> ordered another set of historical posters for classrooms, which glorified many of the same self-sacrificing personalities and more. *La France que nous aimons*, illustrated by Alain

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<sup>102</sup> Reproduced in Gervereau and Peschanski, 136.

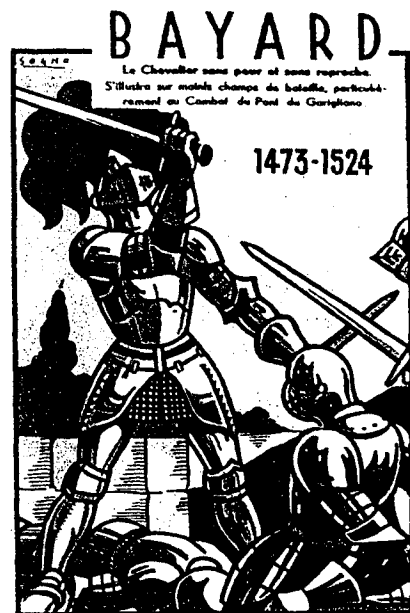
<sup>103</sup> See reproduction in Gervereau and Peschanski 65.

<sup>104</sup> The poster reads: "Guynemer / L'As de la Grande Guerre / Tombé en plein ciel de gloire / 1894-1917." See reproduction in Faure, n.p.

<sup>105</sup> Vichy's sixth and last Minister of Education, appointed in April 1942.



LA LEGION FRANÇAISE DES COMBATTANTS  
Chevalerie des Temps Nouveaux  
combat, aux ordres du Maréchal,  
pour la Révolution Nationale



LA LEGION FRANÇAISE DES COMBATTANTS  
Chevalerie des Temps Nouveaux  
combat, aux ordres du Maréchal,  
pour la Révolution Nationale



LA LEGION FRANÇAISE DES COMBATTANTS  
Chevalerie des Temps Nouveaux  
combat, aux ordres du Maréchal,  
pour la Révolution Nationale



LA LEGION FRANÇAISE DES COMBATTANTS  
Chevalerie des Temps Nouveaux  
combat, aux ordres du Maréchal,  
pour la Révolution Nationale

Fig. 12. Some of the French warriors celebrated in woodcuts by Sogno, for classrooms, n.d.; rpt. in Faure, *Le projet culturel de Vichy*, n.p.

Saint-Ogan, featured twenty-nine famous men, from Vercingétorix to Pétain, and two famous women, Saint Geneviève and Saint Joan. A related art contest was held from October to December, the prize being a board game showing the French Empire from Indochina to St. Pierre and Miquelon.<sup>106</sup>

Vercingétorix, the Gallic chieftain who organized an ephemeral but fearsome resistance to Caesar's legions, was used in the nineteenth century as a symbol of defense against foreign invasion. Now he was being employed not as a symbol of resistance, but as an ancestral hero of the northern European type, not unlike the Wagnerian characters of German nationalist culture. He is portrayed with big, blond moustaches and long hair under a winged helmet, riding a white charger and wielding a sword, on the cover of *Vercingétorix*, the premiere issue of *La belle histoire de la France*, an illustrated series of biographies for children, written by Paluel-Marmont and illustrated by Pierre Luc.<sup>107</sup> The same sort of winged helmet also appears in the emblem of the Legion, superimposed on a tricolor shield with a sword [see Fig. 12].

Dynamic images of Vercingétorix and other heroes were meant to instill a sense of manly courage and duty in the boys of Vichy France, who would be the next generation of soldiers and civic leaders—hopefully tougher, better men than the stewards of the Third Republic. A different kind of imagery was made for the girls, who were meant to be the next generation of mothers and homemakers.

<sup>106</sup> Proud 18; Gervereau and Peschanski 121, 143. There were at least two board games on the same theme: "*Jeu du drapeau*," and "*Le voyage impérial*," shown in Faure, n.p.; and Gervereau and Peschanski, 143.

<sup>107</sup> The booklet was published in 1943. See color reproduction in Gervereau and Peschanski 183, or black and white in Proud 9.

With the exception of a rare image of Jeanne Hachette, Vichy's depictions of women usually included a baby or a broom. Joan of Arc, who was never portrayed in combat, though often in armor, was described in Vichy school books as a girl from a large family, who was accustomed to cooking and sewing.<sup>108</sup> "We have to think twice before educating girls," wrote René Benjamin in 1941. "I will not offend anyone by saying that these are fragile creatures: it would be better to protect their nerves. . . . A girl must first and foremost be the double of her mother, in the home and in the family . . . ." <sup>109</sup> Homemaking classes (*enseignement ménager*) became mandatory for girls, and Vichy's posters promoted the stereotype. One poster shows a little girl caring for her baby dolls ("Now a game, later a mission"); another shows a young woman with a mop, baby bottle, cookware and distaff on a scale ("Your costs will be less with a wife at home"); another has a barefoot woman sweeping the words "cowardice" and "indiscipline" out of France ("1941, Year of the Clean-up").<sup>110</sup> Girls were to help with the nation's recovery and proudly take their place in the New Order, but at home.

In addition to the challenges of feeding their children in spite of food shortages, doing farm chores normally done by husbands now dead or in prisoner-of-war camps, and taking jobs in factories, women were urged to help the nation by having more babies. "You who want to rebuild France, first, give

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<sup>108</sup> Jackson 331.

<sup>109</sup> From *Vérités et Rêveries sur l'éducation*, quoted in Muel-Dreyfus, 225.

<sup>110</sup> See reproductions in Gervereau and Peschanski 22, 23; Ophuls, *The Sorrow and the Pity*, 54.

her children," reads one poster [Fig. 13]. Mother's Day was well promoted with posters and celebrations arranged by the Commissariat-General for Families, and Pétain acknowledged the mothers of France as the ones who endured the heaviest sorrows and sacrifices of all. To some women who raised large families he awarded medals, as did Hitler in Germany. Meanwhile, the Commissariat issued posters illustrating the sadness of an only child, the aimlessness of a childless couple, and the utter uselessness of "the childless *coquette*."<sup>111</sup> Whether Vichy's pronatal propaganda actually effected a rise in the birth rate is uncertain; however, financial incentives do not seem to have been the cause, because poor and prosperous families alike were having more children; but by the end of the war, France's birth rate was the highest it had been in a century.<sup>112</sup>

*Famille* was fundamental to the National Revolution, and the raising of families almost exclusively the duty of women, but a very small proportion of Vichy's graphic propaganda featured women or girls, apart from the boyish Joan of Arc. Boys and young men were the main objects of the propagandists' attention, partly because of the regime's need to direct the energies of unemployed discharged soldiers and adolescent males, but also because of the secondary status of females, due to the male chauvinism (as it would later be known) that prevailed in Vichy France as in the fascist states. Women were

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<sup>111</sup> "The childless *coquette* has no role in society. She is useless." From the poster *Maman*, cited in Miranda Pollard, *Reign of Virtue: Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1998) 51.

<sup>112</sup> Paxton suggests that the republican family policy was also influential, because there were signs of a rising birth rate as early as 1940. The reasons for the increased birth rate may be hard to determine, but the concurrent, dramatic increase in abortions may be attributed to the long absence of French husbands and the presence of German soldiers. Vichy tightened the abortion laws and imprisoned dozens of offenders. Two notorious abortionists were executed. Paxton 168; Jackson, 332.

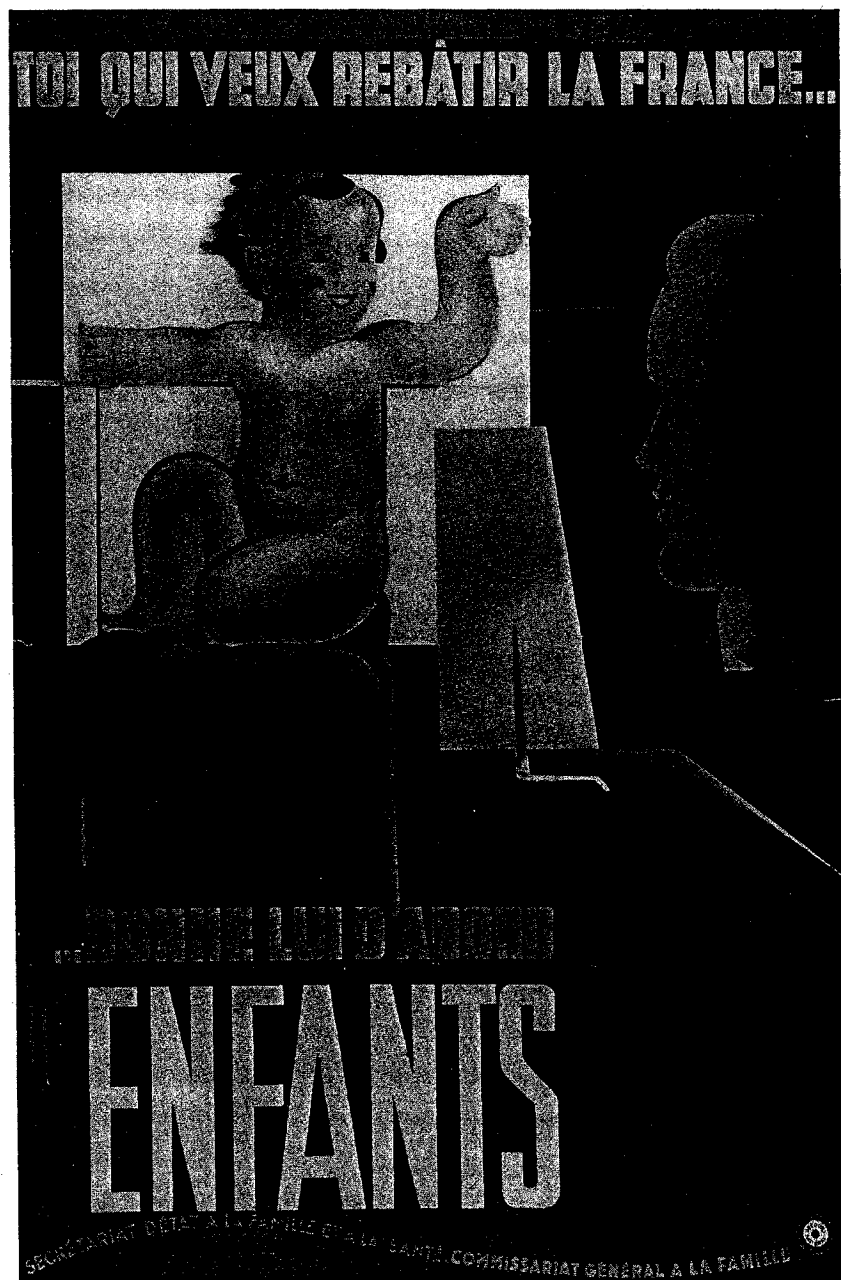


Fig. 13. *You who want to rebuild France...First, give her children*, poster by Philippe Grach and Ch. Stefani, n.d.; rpt. in Miranda Pollard, *Reign of Virtue: Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1998) 53.

advised not to follow the modern example of Hollywood starlets, but to be "rooted in nature without horizon beyond their hearth, and without any aspiration beyond the joys of motherhood."<sup>113</sup> Boys and young men were also advised to be "close to nature," but without such restrictions, and could do so by joining one of six scouting movements (there was one for Jews) or more than a dozen other youth groups, most of which were church-sponsored. Vichy's official organizations for youth included the voluntary Compagnons de France, for boys of fifteen to twenty, and the compulsory Chantiers de la Jeunesse, for twenty-one-year-olds, for a term of eight months. Both organizations were aimed at remaking the young men of France through active community service, frequently on farms and in forests, along with Pétainist indoctrination. The brightest young men could go to one of the national leadership schools (*écoles des cadres*), such as the École Nationale des Cadres de la Jeunesse d'Uriage, which occupied the Château Bayard. These Vichy organizations sought to develop a tougher manhood for France, a "virile order,"<sup>114</sup> but the surviving artwork of their posters and pamphlets has a comic-book quality more appropriate to Boy Scouts than men's organizations.<sup>115</sup> Perhaps this is an effect of what Judith K. Proud has described as the regime's aim "not only to indoctrinate the nation's

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<sup>113</sup> *Pétainist* writer Gustave Thibon, quoted in Jackson, 328.

<sup>114</sup> Jean-Jacques Chevallier, quoted in Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France*, 50.

<sup>115</sup> See Gervereau and Peschanski, 46-51.

youth, but also to infantilise its adults" vis-à-vis the octogenarian leader, Pétain.<sup>116</sup>

Vichy's pedagogical program was similar to the National Socialist program insofar as its imagery incorporated nationalism with iconic leadership, mythic heroism, militarism, athleticism, and for the girls, maternalism. However, there were at least two important differences. First, French children were not compelled to join any youth organization, much less a singular State organization like the Hitler Youth or the Girls' League. Second, French schools were not supplied with anti-Semitic imagery, whereas German elementary schools were supplied with two illustrated anti-Semitic booklets, *The Poisonous Mushroom* (*Der Giftpilz*) and *Trust No Fox On His Green Heath and No Jew On His Word* (*Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jüd auf seinem Eid*).<sup>117</sup>

At least one anti-Semitic book for children was published in Vichy France, in 1942, the year of the "Final Solution." *Il était une fois: l'Histoire de Doulce France et Grojuif* is a pastiche of the fairy tale of Little Red Riding Hood, that is Perrault's *Petit Chaperon Rouge*. In this version of the story, the little girl is named *Doulce France*, and she is menaced not by a wolf but by a Jewish ogre, *Grojuif* [Fig. 14], who meets his nemesis in the form of a young man in uniform, a legionnaire. The book was published anonymously, bearing only the author's and illustrators' initials. Although it may have been entirely French in origin, it is also possible

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<sup>116</sup> Proud, 12.

<sup>117</sup> See Frederic V. Grunfeld, *The Hitler File: A Social History of Germany and the Nazis 1918-1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1974) 240; and [http://ushmm.org/uia-cgi/uia\\_doc/query](http://ushmm.org/uia-cgi/uia_doc/query)



that it was produced by the German Propaganda Staffel in Paris, or by a collaborative effort.

Another French children's book that may have originated with the Propaganda Staffel is the apocryphal *L'Homme aux Mains Rouges*. This illustrated fairy-tale is an adaptation of the gory story of Bluebeard (Perrault's "*Barbe-bleue*," also known as the Grimms' tale, "Fitcher's Bird"). The eponymous villain is revealed to be Joseph Stalin; his intended victim is the good but foolish Princess Europa, who has been betrayed by John Bull; her rescuer is the tall, blond Prince Germain, whose knights' helmets are strikingly similar to German soldiers' helmets [see Fig. 15]. Clearly, the book was intended to promote the concept of Hitler's New Order: Stalin has murdered his previous brides, including the princess Polonia, and he is about to kill Europa herself when Germain and his good knights come to the rescue, slaying Stalin and his henchmen ("*partisans*") and setting Europa and her people free. The grateful princess "*se mit sous la protection du vaillant Prince Germain, sa saveur*," and peace and prosperity are then assured "*au Monde entier*."<sup>118</sup> The book makes reference to the Forest of Katyn, where in April 1943 the Germans found the bodies of more than 4000 Poles executed by the Russians; therefore, the date of publication can be estimated, but otherwise the book's origins are unknown.

Violence was romanticized not only in childrens' books, but also in the official emblem of the Head of State, known as the Francisque Gallique. The

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<sup>118</sup> *Douce France* and *L'Homme aux mains rouges* are both transcribed in Proud, 77-86.



Fig. 14. Grojuif and Douce France, illustration by JB and NEF in N [anonymous], *Il était une fois (l'Histoire de Douce France et Grojuif)*, 1942; rpt. in Judith K. Proud, *Children and Propaganda* (Oxford: Intellect, 1995) 26.



Fig. 15. Princess Europa and Prince Germain, illustration [anonymous] in *L'Homme aux mains rouges*, n.d.; rpt. in Proud, *Children and Propaganda*, 37.

Francisque takes the shape of a double-blade axe or hatchet, a throwing weapon used by the ancient Gauls. The handle is made of a marshal's baton and the blades are banded blue, white and red, the colors of the flag. The symbol was created by Robert Ehret, a jewelry designer and Army officer who was acquainted with Pétain's friend and physician, Dr. Ménétral. Pétain adopted the Francisque in September 1940, and thereafter it appeared in many different sizes and materials, produced by various manufacturers. Francisques were wrought in metal, embroidered cloth, and leather, to be worn as lapel pins, brooches, and badges; they were painted on walls, printed on plates and curtains, and etched in glass; a pin of gold was made for the Marshal himself, and a gigantic model was made as a stage decoration for some of his public appearances. The unregulated reproduction of his emblem irked Pétain, so he regulated it by decree in October 1941 [Fig. 16]. Only Pétain would determine who should wear the emblem, which would be manufactured under government license, in the form of a shield-shaped, enamelled badge to be awarded for meritorious service. A total of 2620 men—including the future President, François Mitterrand<sup>119</sup>—and three women received the honor. Anyone caught wearing an unauthorized Francisque could be fined up to 1000 francs.<sup>120</sup>

Following a decree of 31 July 1942, anyone who wanted to wear the Francisque had to take an oath of allegiance, not to France but to Philippe Pétain.

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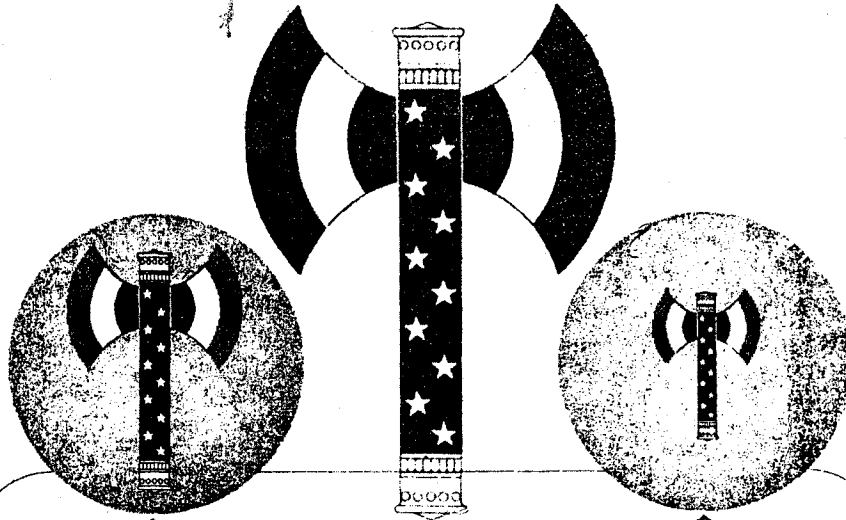
<sup>119</sup> Jackson 510.

<sup>120</sup> Pierre Philippe Lambert and Gérard Le Marec, *Organisations, mouvements, et unités de l'État Français: Vichy 1940-1944* (Paris: Grancher, 1992) 9-14.

# LA FRANCISQUE GALLIQUE

## *Insigne et armes*

# DU MARÉCHAL



AUCUNE REPRODUCTION DÉCORATIVE  
N'EST AUTORISÉE ENTRE CES 2 DIMENSIONS

### ★ LOI DU 16 OCTOBRE 1941 CONCERNANT LE PORT DE L'INSIGNE LA FRANCISQUE GALLIQUE

Nous, Maréchal de France, Chef de l'Etat français,  
Le Conseil des ministres entendu.

#### Décretions :

- Art. 1<sup>er</sup>. — La Francisque gallique, telle qu'elle a été définie par l'arrêté du 26 Mai 1941, est l'insigne du Maréchal de France, Chef de l'Etat français.  
Art. 2. — Elle est distribuée, au nom du Maréchal de France, par un Conseil de douze membres nommé par lui. Ce même Conseil a le pouvoir de révoquer les autorisations précédemment accordées.  
Art. 3. — Nul ne peut porter cet insigne s'il n'a reçu la carte d'autorisation spéciale du Chef de l'Etat. Toute personne qui arborerait cet insigne sans pouvoir justifier de cette autorisation est passible d'une amende de 200 à 1.000 francs.  
Art. 4. — Le présent décret sera publié au Journal Officiel et exécuté comme loi de l'Etat.

Fait à Vichy, le 16 Octobre 1941.  
Ph. PETAIN.

Par le Maréchal de France, Chef de l'Etat français :

Le Ministre secrétaire d'Etat à l'Intérieur,  
Pierre PUCHEU.

Le Gardes des Sceaux,  
Ministre secrétaire d'Etat à la Justice,  
Joseph BARTHELEMY.

### ★ EXTRAIT DE L'ARRÊTÉ DU 26 MAI 1941 — J. O. DU 27 MAI

- Art. 4. — Toute contrefaçon de cet insigne exposera le fabricant, le détaillant, le détenteur ou le porteur à des poursuites judiciaires.  
Art. 5. — La reproduction de la Francisque dans la décoration industrielle est autorisée sous les réserves suivantes : la Francisque devra être sans relief sur fond plein uni ou ornementé et d'une dimension de 25 % inférieure ou supérieure à l'insigne officiel. Toute reproduction décorative devra être soumise à la censure centrale (Bureau de Documentation) préalablement à la fabrication et à la mise en vente.  
Art. 6. — Le présent arrêté sera inséré au Journal Officiel.

Fait à Vichy, le 26 Mai 1941.

L'Amiral de la Flotte,  
Ministre secrétaire d'Etat à l'Intérieur.



Fig. 16. *La Francisque Gallique: Insigne et armes du Maréchal*, poster featuring design by Robert Ehret (Vichy: Secrétariat Général à l'Intérieur, 1941); rpt. in Pierre Philippe Lambert and Gérard Le Marec, *Organisations, mouvements et unités de l'État français: Vichy 1940-1944* (Paris: Grancher, 1992), 8.

The candidate was to pledge his person to the Marshal, as follows: "Je fais don de ma personne au maréchal Pétain comme il a fait don de la sienne à la France. Je m'engage à servir ses disciples et à rester fidèle à sa personne et à son oeuvre."<sup>121</sup> That oath bears comparison to this one, which was required of German soldiers as of 1933:

I swear by Almighty God this sacred oath: I will render unconditional obedience to the Führer of the German Reich and people, Adolf Hitler, Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht, and, as a brave soldier, I will be ready at any time to stake my life on this oath.<sup>122</sup>

The wording of the Pétainist oath is comparatively mild but its meaning is no less serious; both oaths can be reduced to the same essential idea, that can be paraphrased: "I pledge my person to the Leader." The fact that many, mostly young men of Catholic upbringing, were willing to pledge themselves wholeheartedly to a mortal leader may be taken as proof of the power of charismatic leadership, and fanaticism, but not necessarily as evidence of fascism. As Robert Paxton argues in *The Anatomy of Fascism*, Vichy France was "certainly not fascist at the outset," being conceived as an authoritarian state rather than a fascist state: relying on the traditional civil service, the Church, established economic and social elites, and permitting pluralistic organizations.<sup>123</sup> Vichy did, however, collaborate with fascist Germany and

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<sup>121</sup> In Lambert and Marec, 14.

<sup>122</sup> Peter Hoffmann, *A History of the German Resistance 1933-1945*, trans. Richard Barry (London: McDonald & Jane's, 1977) 27.

<sup>123</sup> See Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage, 2005) 218.

make donations to the Reich,<sup>124</sup> give important posts to French fascists, institutionalize anti-Semitism (without any German prodding), contribute volunteers to the German forces on the Russian front, and create a domestic armed force, the Milice, to help the Nazis by hunting down the Resistance. In light of those developments, the debate about whether Vichy was really a fascist state seems a matter of splitting hairs, an academic pursuit that would probably seem pointless to the men, women and children who went to their deaths in French camps.<sup>125</sup>

The *fascies*, the eponymous symbol of Fascism, is found among the artifacts of the Vichy administration. The ancient Roman *fascio littorio*, or *fascies*, a bundle of rods tied around an axe, symbolized the power of Roman magistrates to punish by flogging or putting to death. This sign of authority and the binding rule of law, after which Mussolini named his belligerent political movement, was chosen for the insignia of the French National Police, with one modification, the axe becoming double-bladed, as in the Francisque [see Fig. 17]. The new symbol adorned the various shields, caps and buttons worn by the French police, who rounded up approximately 75,000 French and foreign Jews, the vast majority of whom died in the concentration camps.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Pierre Laval reportedly donated France's stock in the Bors copper mines in Yugoslavia, and all the gold that the Bank of Belgium had given France for safekeeping, telling the Minister of Finance that France must give the Germans "testimony of our good faith." Jackson, 174.

<sup>125</sup> Approximately 3000 Jews died from cold and undernourishment at the French detention camps, before the Final Solution began. See Jackson, 356.

<sup>126</sup> Only 3 % survived. Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1981) 343.

A distinctly Christian theme was chosen for the symbol of the École Nationale des Cadres d'Uriage, Vichy's prime leadership school, which occupied Bayard's castle overlooking Grenoble. It is a minimalistic image of a mounted knight holding a lance and shield [Fig. 18], an ideational device also used in Vichy posters and on the cover of *La France que nous aimons* [Fig. 19]. In the Uriage version, significantly, the knight's shield is emblazoned with the Latin cross. This emblem was worn as a cloth badge on the school instructors' jackets, and printed on the cover of the school's newsletter, *Jeunesse...France!* which was, according to Vichy authorities, "the official organ of the Ministry of Youth."<sup>127</sup> Like the *Ordensburgen*, the Nazi leadership schools that were designed to resemble Crusaders' castles, the Uriage school represented the romanticized militarism and elitism of the New Order. The graduants pledged: "Pour la France, je m'engage à commander et à servir de tout mon coeur et de toutes mes forces, jusqu'à la mort."<sup>128</sup> Unlike their German counterparts, however, the young men of Uriage were trained to lead a non-violent crusade, a purely spiritual and intellectual one: their castle was dubbed "*Château de l'Ame*," the "spiritual university" of the *Révolution nationale*.<sup>129</sup> This changed in early 1943, when the school was closed and the Château Bayard became a training centre for the Milice.

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<sup>127</sup> Hellman, *Knight-Monks*, 32.

<sup>128</sup> Lambert and Marec, 150.

<sup>129</sup> Hellman, 8, 9.



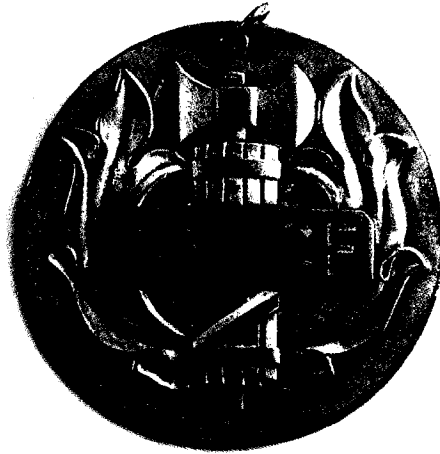


Fig. 17. Insignia of the French National Police, 1941; in Lambert and Le Marec, *Organisations, mouvements et unités de l'État français: Vichy 1940-1944*, 43-45.



Fig. 18. Insigne of l'École Nationale des Cadres d'Uriage, from a brochure, 1942; rpt. in John Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France: Uriage, 1940-1945* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's U P, 1993) n.p.



Fig. 19. Cover of *La France que nous aimons: Documents destinés à la décoration des salles de classe* (octobre à décembre 1942), by Alain Saint-Ogan; rpt. in Gervereau and Peschanski, eds., *La propagande sous Vichy 1940-1944*, 121.

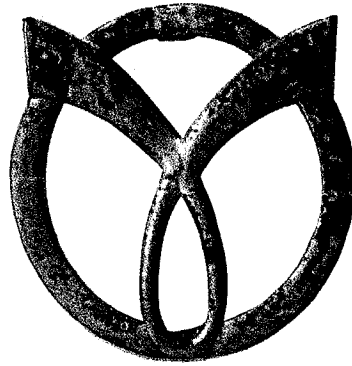


Fig. 20. Metal badge of the Milice, 1943; in Lambert and Le Marec, *Organisations, mouvements et unités de l'État français: Vichy 1940-1944*, n.p.



Fig. 21. *The Force at the Service of the People*, poster (Paris: Imprimerie spéciale de la Milice française, 1944); rpt. in Gervereau and Peschanski, 72.

The new crusaders, the *miliciens*, were trained to actually fight for the New Order. The Franc-Garde, which was the full-time, armed branch of the Milice, was involved in hunting, torturing, and killing the *maquis*, their countrymen who sabotaged and assassinated the Germans and *collabos*. The sign of the Milice was the lowercase Greek letter gamma [ $\gamma$ ], an ancient symbol of the ram. It was worn on black berets and armbands, and printed on banners and posters [see Figs. 20-21]. As the struggle against the *maquis* became increasingly bitter in 1943 and 1944, the Milice gamma became as hated a symbol as the Germans' gammadion, the *Hakenkreuz* (hooked cross) or swastika, which is known in French as the *croix gammée* (from the medieval Latin, *crux gammata*) because it resembles a cross made of four uppercase letters gamma ( $\Gamma$ ).<sup>130</sup> This semiotic link between the Nazi symbol and the Milice symbol may not be obvious but it must have been understood by Joseph Darnand, the leader of the Milice, who chose the gamma for his organization's emblem. In any case, the *miliciens* were closely linked to the Nazis. The *Milice Nationale* was authorized by Pétain on 5 January 1943,<sup>131</sup> in response to German demands to keep order, following the occupation of the southern zone in November 1942. The men were armed and trained by the Germans; their leader was made a *Sturmbahnführer* (major) in the Waffen-SS;<sup>132</sup> they killed French subversives and others thought to be traitors, such as the defenseless Jean Zay; and in return, they were assassinated

<sup>130</sup> Carl Liungman, *Dictionary of Symbols* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1991) 48.

<sup>131</sup> Not, as commonly believed, by Laval on 30 January. This according to Lambert and Le Marec, 127.

<sup>132</sup> Paul J. Kingston, "The Ideologists," Hirschfeld and Marsh 64.

in the dozens. Late in 1943 Philippe Henriot, Minister of Information and the voice of Vichy's Radio Journal, wrote: "Alas, it is no longer enough to speak of civil war; the truth is that the man hunting season is now open."<sup>133</sup>

The Milice was a continuation of the S.O.L., the strong-arm unit of the Legion, founded in 1941 "pour des missions d'ordre et de protection."<sup>134</sup> The S.O.L. was about 30,000 strong at the end of 1942. Most legionnaires came from middle-class Catholic families. Many were veterans who first belonged to the Légion des anciens combattants, founded in 1940, which soon extended membership to non-veterans under a new name, Légion Française des Combattants. The S.O.L. creed contained twenty-one sets of principles, including the following:

Contre l'individualisme/Pour l'esprit communautaire;  
Contre la démocratie/Pour l'autorité;  
Contre la dissidence gaulliste/Pour l'unité française;  
Contre la lèpre juive/Pour la pureté française;  
Contre la franc-maçonnerie païenne/Pour la civilisation chrétienne.<sup>135</sup>

Members pledged themselves to Pétain and the *Révolution nationale* in a solemn ritual that began with a tribute to France's fallen soldiers.<sup>136</sup> The same sort of quasi-religious ritualism was fundamental to National Socialism. The annual Nazi Party rallies commenced with a tribute to the German soldiers killed in the

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<sup>133</sup> Quoted in David Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich: A History of the German Occupation, 1940-1944* (London: Collins, 1981) 181. Henriot was assassinated June 28, 1944.

<sup>134</sup> Francois Bout de l'An, quoted in Lambert and Marec 123.

<sup>135</sup> The complete list of "21 Points" appears on a poster reproduced in Gervereau and Peschanski, 66; the list is also transcribed in Lambert and Marec, 123.

<sup>136</sup> The S.O.L. oath: "Je m'engage sur l'honneur à servir la France et le Maréchal Pétain, chef de la Légion, à consacrer toutes mes forces à faire triompher la Révolution nationale et son idéal suivant les ordres de mes chefs et la discipline librement consentie du S.O.L." Lambert and Marec, 118-119.

Great War, and furthermore, Hitler ceremoniously consecrated the flags of each regional Party chapter by touching them to the *Blutfahne* (Blood Flag), a bullet-riddled relic of the “martyrs” of the Munich Putsch.<sup>137</sup>

A poster announcing a *prestation du serment* expresses the romanticism required to attract young men to the S.O.L., the “knighthood of modern times” [Fig. 22]. Here we see a lean, broad-shouldered, Aryan type of young man in his legionnaire uniform, on bended knee, the prescribed position for the oath-taking. Gazing heavenward, he is being knighted by an unseen mystical monarch, presumably the sainted crusader Louis IX, whose gauntleted hand holds the sword. Vichy’s artist-propagandists continued to employ the mythic symbol of the sword until the end, as in the Milice poster of June 1944 [Fig. 21], when an undeclared civil war was being fought with submachine guns and explosives.

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<sup>137</sup> See Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will* (1935, DVD Synapse Films, 2006).



Fig. 22. *S.O.L. Knighthood of Modern Times: Taking the Oath*, poster by Roland Hugon, n.d.; rpt. in Peschanski et al., *Collaboration and Resistance*, 162.

## CHAPTER TWO

On 22 March 1939 a "symbolic propaganda action" was taken against Modern art in Germany: in the courtyard of the headquarters of the Berlin Fire Brigade more than 4000 drawings, paintings, prints and sculptures were piled up and burned by agents of the Chamber of Culture.<sup>1</sup> That holocaust finished an aesthetic purge which had lasted six years, in which time some 16,000 artworks were removed from German museums, galleries and private homes.<sup>2</sup> Before they were destroyed, hundreds of the doomed works were culled for the Exhibition of Degenerate Art (*Entartete Kunst*),<sup>3</sup> which provided contrast to the annual Great German Art Exhibition in Munich. "These achievements which might have been produced by untalented children of from eight to ten years old," as Hitler described them,<sup>4</sup> included works by some of the most famous artists in the world, many of them French: Beckmann, Braque, Cezanne, Chagall, de Chirico, Derain, Dix, Dufy, Ensor, Ernst, Gauguin, Grosz, Kandinsky, Kirchner, Klee, Kokoschka, Marc, Matisse, Modigliani, Mondrian, Munch,

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<sup>1</sup> A division of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Chamber of Culture), or RKK, regulated the arts in Germany. Precisely 4829 items were burned in this last immolation of "degenerate" art in Germany, seized by a confiscation committee of the Chamber of Fine Art (*Reichskammer der Bildende Kunst*), a subdivision of the RKK. See Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Art Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Vintage, 1994) 25.

<sup>2</sup> Grunberger, 535.

<sup>3</sup> Starting in 1933, "Degenerate Art" exhibitions were held in many Germany cities, including Dessau, Dresden, Nuremberg, Mannheim and Stuttgart, prior to the major exhibition in Munich (July to November 1937), which featured about 650 pieces and which drew an estimated two million visitors, making it the most popular art exhibition of the Nazi period. See Richard Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974) 535-536; and Peter Cohen, *Architecture of Doom* (First Run Features, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> In his speech at the opening of the House of German Art (13 July 1937), reprinted in Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Documents on Nazism 1919-1945* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974) 347.



Picasso, Pissarro, Rouault, Signac, van Gogh, and Vlaminck, among a total of 112 artists. Hitler, who once tried to make a living as a traditional scenic painter,<sup>5</sup> categorically condemned Modern artists in the following terms:

Prehistoric art-stutterers...what do you manufacture? Misformed cripples and cretins, women who inspire only disgust, men who are more like wild beasts, children who, were they alive, must be regarded as being under God's curse . . . . In the name of the German people I have only to prevent these miserable unfortunates, who clearly suffer from defects of vision from presenting [their impressions] as "art". . . . One has to ask how the defect in vision arose, and if it is hereditary the Minister for the Interior will have to see to it that so ghastly a defect shall not be allowed to perpetuate itself.<sup>6</sup>

When the German Army approached Paris in June 1940, the avant-garde artists and dealers were among the refugees fleeing southward. They were well aware of Germany's anti-modernist cultural policy, thanks in part to the reporting of Christian Zervos, editor of *Cahiers d'art*, since 1937.<sup>7</sup> French or foreign, Jewish or Gentile, they might be persecuted for propagating "Jewish-Bolshevist" culture. The better known refugee aesthetes, few of whom were Jews, included: Hans (Jean) Arp,<sup>8</sup> Balthus,<sup>9</sup> Georges Braque, André Breton, Marc Chagall, André Derain, Robert and Sonia Delaunay, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Otto Freundlich, Alberto Giacometti, Peggy Guggenheim, Wassily

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<sup>5</sup> By the time he became Chancellor at the age of forty-two, Hitler had produced about 2000 drawings and paintings, hundreds of which are shown in Billy F. Price, *Adolf Hitler: The Unknown Artist* (Houston: Price, 1983). Hitler's youthful artist period is detailed in John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (New York: Ballantine, 1976).

<sup>6</sup> As quoted in Noakes and Pridham 347.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, 104.

<sup>8</sup> An Alsatian, Arp is known by his given name, Hans, and also by his assumed French name, Jean.

<sup>9</sup> Balthassar Klossowski de Rola, a part-Jewish Pole.

Kandinsky, Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler,<sup>10</sup> Le Corbusier,<sup>11</sup> Jacques Lipchitz, André Masson, Henri Matisse, Joan Miro, Felix Nussbaum, Amédé Ozenfant, Pablo Picasso, and Chaim Soutine. (Salvador Dali, Fernand Léger, Matta,<sup>12</sup> Piet Mondrian, and Yves Tanguy all emigrated to the United States prior to the panic of June 1940.)<sup>13</sup>

The Jewish artists and dealers, particularly the German nationals, had the most to fear. Otto Freundlich, whose sculpture *Cubist Head* was shown on the cover of the Degenerate Art catalogue, was first interned as an enemy alien in September 1939 (as were Max Ernst and Walter Benjamin), then released, rearrested in May 1940, released after the armistice, and finally caught by the Gestapo in 1943, deported and killed. Felix Nussbaum, too, was deported and killed. Sarah Wilson reports sixty-four named Jewish artists of the Ecole de Paris being sent to the gas chambers in Poland.<sup>14</sup> The writer Walter Benjamin, a known critic of fascism, avoided that fate by committing suicide in his jail cell in 1940, after French police caught him trying to sneak through the Pyrenees into Spain. Marc Chagall, who had recently gained citizenship, was one of the first French Jews to be rounded up by the police in the spring of 1941 in Marseille, in the Free

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<sup>10</sup> Kahnweiler was Picasso's art dealer, a French Jew.

<sup>11</sup> Le Corbusier, one of the most important architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, signed his paintings with his given name, Charles-Eduard Jeanneret.

<sup>12</sup> Roberto Sebastian Matta Echaurren, of Chilean origin.

<sup>13</sup> *Éxilés + Émigrés: Les artistes européens qui ont fui Hitler: Guide du visiteur* (Montréal: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, 1997) 8-10.

<sup>14</sup> Sarah Wilson, "Saint-Germain-des-Prés: Antifascism, Occupation and Postwar Paris," *Paris: Capital of the Arts 1900-1968* (London: Royal Academy of Art, 2002) 240.

Zone,<sup>15</sup> but through the efforts of Varian Fry and the American Emergency Rescue Committee, he and his wife were brought safely to the United States. Peggy Guggenheim, an American citizen, dallied in Grenoble and Marseille, but thought better of it and departed after the *rafle* (round-up) in 1941. Balthus escaped to Switzerland, but Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler and Chaim Soutine remained. Kahnweiler managed to outlast the war but Soutine died of ulcers in 1943.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the refugee artists eked out a meager living in southern France, taking charity and privately selling or bartering their paintings. (Michèle Cone suggests that "in the French provinces there is still today, not yet accounted for, refugee art that was once bartered for favors.")<sup>17</sup> Their distress is evinced here by Arp, writing to his Swiss patrons in 1941: "Life is especially hard for [me and my wife] because we have no relatives with nice farms. . . . We are beginning to suffer from hunger. I am not saying this in jest. Dear friends, could you please increase my monthly allowance?"<sup>18</sup>

Provincial life provides little in the way of market opportunities for artists, as opposed to city life, but furthermore, the artists who left Paris for the unoccupied southern zone found themselves in a milieu even more conservative

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<sup>15</sup> The Unoccupied Zone, also known as the Free Zone, was occupied by the German Army on 11 November 1942, after the Allies landed in North Africa.

<sup>16</sup> Cone, *Artists Under Vichy* 116-130.

<sup>17</sup> Cone, op. cit. 112.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

and timid than that of the occupied capital. During a visit to Paris, after one year of working as a journalist in Vichy, Maurice Martin du Gard writes in his diary:

Although this may seem strange, to one who comes back to it after a long absence Paris gives the impression of ease and even of freedom ... I overhear relaxed language on the back platforms of buses; at the sidewalk café tables no one worries about being overheard, as in Vichy.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, André Gide writes in his diary on 6 May 1941: "I even go so far as to find it preferable, for a while, German servitude with its painful humiliations, less prejudicial to us, less degrading, than the stupid discipline that Vichy offers us today."<sup>20</sup> Key members of the art community in the Free Zone were afraid to help the refugee artists, as indicated by Guggenheim:

[André]Farcy [director of the Musée de Grenoble] was in a very bad jam himself at this time and nearly lost his museum directorship and finally ended up in prison. Because of the Vichy government he couldn't do much for me. He did want to give an exhibition of my paintings but he was so scared that he kept putting it off. The museum's collection of modern art he hid carefully in the cellar, as he was expecting Pétain's visit to Grenoble. ...M. Farcy would never fix a date for the show... after six months I lost my patience and told him that I was going to America.<sup>21</sup>

By the end of 1941, Guggenheim, Ernst, Breton, Duchamp, Lipchitz, and Masson had all sailed to New York, "the Christmas tree of the world."<sup>22</sup> There many refugee artists, architects and designers, including Walter Gropius and Ludwig

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 152.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Herbert R. Lottman, *The Left Bank: Writers, Artists, and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War* (San Francisco: Halo, 1991) 151.

<sup>21</sup> Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (New York: Anchor, 1980) 186-187.

<sup>22</sup> Jacqueline Breton, quoted in Cone, op. cit. 124.

Mies van der Rohe of the defunct Bauhaus school, found sanctuary and lucrative opportunities.

Yet some of the purveyors of “cultural Bolshevism”—including Braque, Derain, Dufy, Kandinsky, Le Corbusier, Matisse, Picasso, Rouault, and Vlaminck—were allowed to continue working in France, even in the Occupied Zone, in spite of Hitler’s fulminations. Had they lived in Germany they would have been forced to give up any teaching positions they held, and they would have been totally forbidden to paint, draw or sculpt even in the privacy of their own homes: the Expressionist painter Emil Nolde, a member of the Nazi Party since 1920, was thus proscribed.<sup>23</sup> In *Frankreich*, however, the German authorities were less than zealous in their defence of Aryan culture. Paintings that would have been thrown into the bonfire in Berlin were openly exhibited in Paris. Kandinsky’s “non-objective” paintings, for example, went beyond abstraction by not depicting recognizable objects at all [see Fig. 23]; they were, therefore, antithetic to the National Socialist principle of “popular and comprehensible” art<sup>24</sup> [see Figs. 24-25]. When the art purge began, Hitler stipulated that only works produced since 1910 should be considered;<sup>25</sup> not coincidentally, that was the date of the first non-objective paintings, created by Kandinsky, who led the

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<sup>23</sup> Approximately 1000 of Nolde’s artworks were seized and destroyed, while he argued in vain that he was a loyal Party member. Naturally, not all Nazis agreed about modern art. In 1933 Josef Goebbels wanted to organize an exhibition of German expressionists, but the idea was cancelled by Hitler, who even demanded the removal of all Nolde paintings from Goebbels’ own house. Grunberger 535; Adam 15; Speer 58-59; Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (New York: Overlook, 2004) 155.

<sup>24</sup> One of the official rules for art to be submitted for selection to the annual German Art exhibition was that the subject be “popular and comprehensible.” Adam, 95.

<sup>25</sup> Spotts, 163.

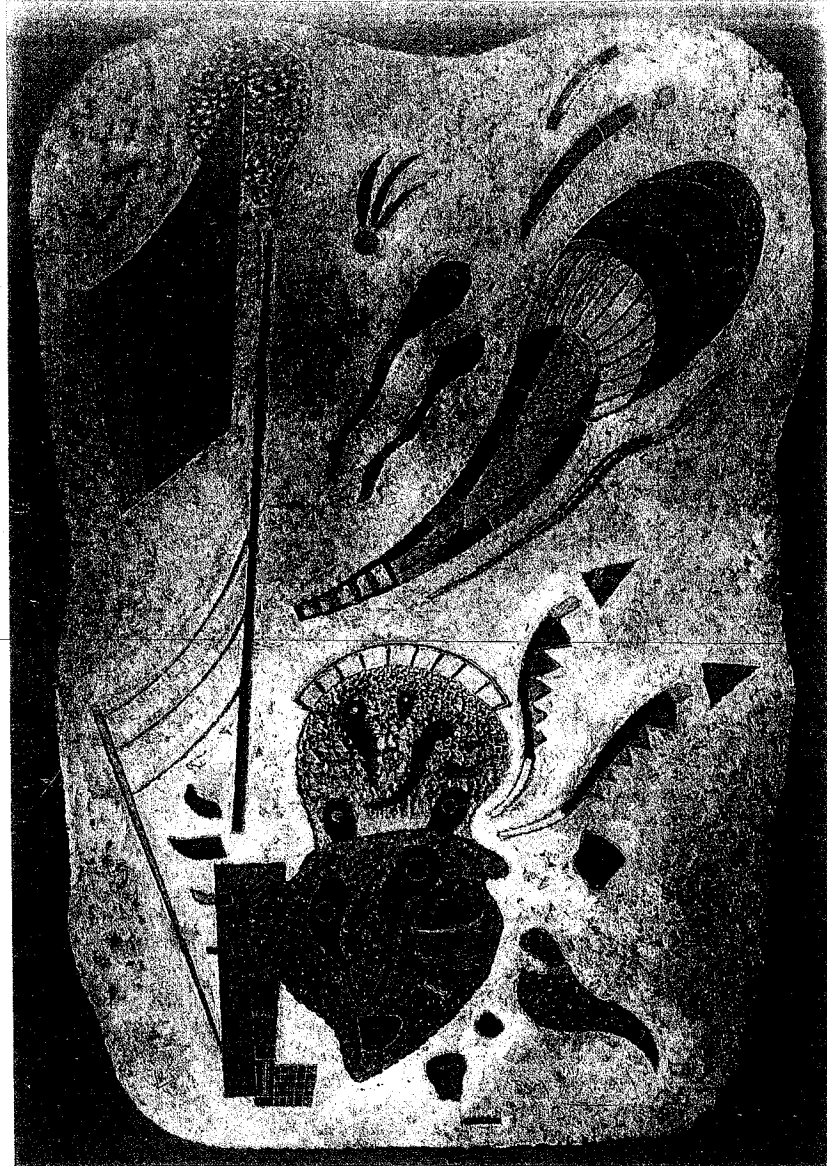


Fig. 23. *Crépuscule* [Twilight], oil painting by Vassili [Wassily] Kandinsky, 1943; rpt. in Ulricke Becks-Malorny, *Vassili Kandinsky 1866-1944: Vers l'abstraction* (Paris: Taschen, 2003) 188.

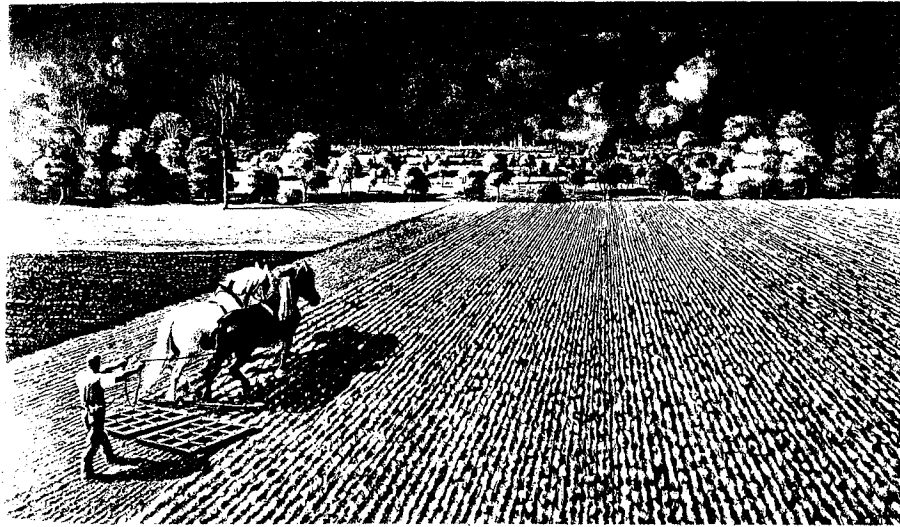


Fig. 24. *German Soil*, oil painting by Werner Peiner, in the Great German Art Exhibition of 1937; rpt. in Peter Adam, *The Arts of the Third Reich* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) 131.



Fig. 25. *Thanksgiving*, oil painting by Jurgen Wegener, in the Great German Art Exhibition of 1943; rpt. in Adam, *The Arts of the Third Reich*, 149.

expressionist Blue Rider group in Munich. The man himself was born of the inferior Slavic breed, according to Nazi thinking, in Russia; he got German citizenship under the Weimar Republic in 1928 but exchanged that for French citizenship just before war broke out in 1939; yet he lived in Neuilly-sur-Seine throughout the Occupation, undisturbed by the Germans.<sup>26</sup> Fourteen of his canvases were included in the Exhibition of Degenerate Art and burned,<sup>27</sup> but Kandinsky was not prevented from making degenerate art in France, where his paintings were openly exhibited in 1942 and 1944.<sup>28</sup>

From 1941 onward, according to Laurent Gervereau, the Galerie Jeanne Bucher in Paris exhibited the works of several “degenerate” artists besides Kandinsky, including Max Ernst, Paul Klee, Fernand Léger, Joan Miro, and Nicolas de Stael.<sup>29</sup> Other galleries and museums, as we shall see, displayed abstract and otherwise “degenerate” works. The *referats*, the German censors, were surprisingly lenient.

There seem to be several reasons for this, which are not altogether clear-cut. One factor is the attitude of French officials, in particular, Louis Hautecoeur, whom Pétain appointed Secretary General of Fine Arts in 1940.<sup>30</sup> Although

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<sup>26</sup> Kandinsky and his wife went to the Pyrenees in June 1940 but returned home within three months. Becks-Malorny, 182.

<sup>27</sup> Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> At the Galerie Jeanne Bucher in July-August 1942 and in January-February 1944, and at the gallery l'Esquisse in 1944, although it is unclear whether the latter exhibition occurred before or after the Liberation. Kandinsky died in December, 1944. See Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 12, and Ulrike Becks-Malorny, *Vassili Kandinsky 1866-1944: Vers l'abstraction* (Paris: Taschen, 2003) 196.

<sup>29</sup> Laurent Gervereau, “Y a-t-il une « style Vichy»?,” *La propagande sous Vichy*, 147.

<sup>30</sup> He replaced Georges Huisman, a Jewish radical socialist who sailed from Bordeaux aboard the *Massilia* on 21 June. An amateur painter and art historian specializing in the Grand Siècle (17<sup>th</sup> century), Hautecoeur had worked as a curator, an instructor at the École du Louvre, and as head of artistic services for the Paris



Hautecoeur shared the Nazis' disapproval of German Expressionism, which he believed was introduced to Paris by Jewish immigrants, he approved nonetheless of the expressionism of the Fauves<sup>31</sup> and of such abstract art as Braque's cubism—as opposed to the foreigner Picasso's cubism, even if the two were virtually indistinguishable. Sketchiness, abstraction, arbitrary coloration, lack of recognizable subject matter, all of these were quite acceptable to Hautecoeur, provided the artist was French and the work showed the characteristic French “taste for moderation, for harmony, and for nature.”<sup>32</sup> Those criteria may have been ambiguous, but there was no question about primitivism or melancholic expressionism. Distortions of the human form, faces resembling masks, images of misery or despair, the weird vistas of Surrealism and the nonsensical concoctions of Dadaism, were all unacceptable in Vichy France as in Nazi Germany.

Another factor seems to have been the Germans' desire to improve their relationship with the French population, as indicated by a series of concerts given by Germany's top musicians, which were very well received in Paris and in the provinces, throughout the occupation. The concerts were organized by the

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Exposition of 1937. In March 1944, Hautecoeur was replaced by the “*secrétaire général pour l'administration au ministère de l'Intérieur*,” Georges Hilaire, a protégé of Laval. See Cone, *Artists Under Vichy* 215 n.57; Bertrand Dorléac *L'art de la défaite* 38, 62.

<sup>31</sup> The *fauves* (“wild beasts”) were an informal group, not a school of painters, who gave primacy to color, to “painting in itself.” They exhibited together from 1905 until about 1908, when Braque discovered what was to become known as “cubism,” at which time the group started to disintegrate. The Fauves included, among others: Henri Matisse, André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck, Kees van Dongen, Othon Friesz, Raoul Dufy, Georges Braque, Henri Manguin, Jean Puy, Louis Valtat, Charles Camoin and Albert Marquet. See Jean-Louis Ferrier, *Les Fauves* (Paris: Terrail, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Cone, op. cit. 81.

German Institute,<sup>33</sup> which was conceived by Otto Abetz, the German ambassador, who was far more concerned with improving French-German relations than were his superiors, Hitler and his Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop. Abetz's official position and personal attitude toward French art must be taken into account.

Abetz was a Francophile who had a taste for modern art. In the 1920s he was an art instructor at a girls' school in Karlsruhe, and at that time he started a Franco-German youth fellowship, the Sohlberg Club (*Sohlbergkreis*), which was reorganized in 1934 as the *Comité France-Allemagne (Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft)*. Through this fellowship he met a number of men who would later become important collaborators, including Fernand de Brinon, Georges Scapini, and Jean Luchaire, whose secretary, a French woman, Abetz married in 1932. Recruited by Ribbentrop, Abetz joined the Foreign Service in 1935 and by necessity, two years later, the Party.<sup>34</sup> On 3 August 1940 he was appointed ambassador to France, at which time he received Hitler's instructions that all objects of art, public, private, and especially Jewish-owned, were to be "safeguarded." He began immediately, having lists of Jewish-owned art drawn up and having certain works moved from public museums to the German Embassy on the Rue de Lille. He was unaware that Goebbels had already sent

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<sup>33</sup> The German Institute, begun in 1940, offered German language courses in several cities in the Free Zone and the Occupied Zone, which drew approximately 30,000 students. Poetry, plays, and lectures were also arranged, but the concerts proved most popular, featuring the best German musicians, including Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. In a period of 14 months, from May 1942 to July 1943, as many as 71 concerts were given, more than one a week. See Philippe Burrin, *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise* (New York: New Press, 1996) 296-303.

<sup>34</sup> Venner, 62-63.

agents to France, who were compiling a three-hundred page list of *objets d'art* that had been taken from Germany since 1500, which were to be repatriated; in addition, Hans Posse was working his way through the conquered Low Countries and into France to acquire artworks for Hitler's personal collection and the grand museum which was to be built at Linz; moreover, General Keitel of the Wehrmacht, which had its own art and monuments protection office (*Kunstschutz*), was under the impression that to "safeguard" meant to prevent any removals at all, which complicated the situation beyond Abetz's capacity to sort it out. In September, Hitler gave full powers for art seizures to Alfred Rosenberg and his special unit, the ERR (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*).<sup>35</sup> Abetz kept 121 paintings, including a group of 26 by Braque, Picasso, Léger and Rouault, which he claimed he wanted for "trading for artistically valuable works." The remaining 95 pieces, reserved for decorating the Embassy, included paintings by Braque, Bonnard, Degas, Monet, and the "naïf" École de Paris painter, Utrillo.<sup>36</sup> Under the influence of Abetz, presumably, the censors were willing to tolerate art that seemed frivolous or meritless by National Socialist standards, provided that the subject matter was innocuous and the artists were not Communists or Jews. Decades later, Jean Bazaine of *Esprit* recalled the second year of the Occupation as still being a time "when the Germans wanted to

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<sup>35</sup> Nicholas, 119-125.

<sup>36</sup> Nicholas, 125. While Maurice Utrillo is frequently defined as a "naïve" (similar to "folk") artist, art historian John Canaday maintains that he is unclassifiable: "Fauvism, expressionism, cubism, may all be read into his perspectives of the streets of Montmartre or of small towns, but so may the quiet, gentle art of Corot." Canaday, *Mainstreams of Modern Art* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981) 418.

be nice."<sup>37</sup> Likewise, the hôtelier interviewed in *The Sorrow and the Pity*, Mioche, avers that his German soldier "guests," who never had to pay, were "even too polite . . . because they knew we didn't like them, so they tried hard."<sup>38</sup>

Even so, the highest authority was Hitler, who in *Mein Kampf* refers to Cubism and Dadaism as "the sickly excrescences of lunatics or degenerate people," occurring in "States that have [been] Bolshevised."<sup>39</sup> His ravings against Modern art were not only frequent, but at times he grew so agitated, "as though out of his mind," as one witness put it, that "even his entourage stared at him in horror."<sup>40</sup> One would expect him to react very badly upon learning that his opinion was being ignored in France, and with a simple phone call he might have adjusted Abetz's attitude. Oddly, he did not. When his esteemed architect, Albert Speer, told him about the degenerate art being shown at the Salon d'Automne in Paris, Hitler said he was unconcerned. Speer writes in his memoirs: "His reaction was as surprising as it was logical: 'Are we to be concerned with the intellectual soundness of the French people? Let them degenerate if they want to! All the better for us.'" <sup>41</sup> Hitler's indifference seems out of character, and one wonders if he was simply rationalizing because he had

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Dorléac, *Histoire de l'art*, 174. Jean Bazaine was associated with Emmanuel Mounier's review, *Esprit*. In 1941 he belonged to Vichy's Jeune France organization, dedicated to France's cultural regeneration.

<sup>38</sup> "Ils étaient même trop gentils, pour dire le mot, car ils savaient qu'on ne les aimait pas, et alors ils faisaient du zèle." Transcribed in Ophuls, *Le Chagrin et la Pitié*, 123.

<sup>39</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, ed. & trans. John Chamberlain et al. (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1939) 353.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Rave, acting director of the Berlin National Gallery, recalling Hitler's speech at the opening of the House of German Art in Munich in 1937. Quoted in Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (New York: Overlook, 2004) 162.

<sup>41</sup> Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Avon, 1970) 251.

more consequential matters to think about, including the war on the Eastern front.<sup>42</sup>

As unlikely as it seems, the most famous and prolific producer of degenerate art, Pablo Picasso, was allowed to live and work in Paris throughout the Occupation. In June 1940 he fled to a villa near Royan, on the west coast, but the Germans overran it. Then fifty-nine years old, Picasso declined an opportunity to escape with the help of the Emergency Rescue Committee, who put him at the top of their list of endangered artists mainly because of *Guernica*, his sensational, polemical painting for the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 World's Fair. *Guernica* was an indictment of the fascists, especially the Germans who bombed and strafed defenceless women and children in the eponymous Basque town, rehearsing the cruel tactics that became part of their Blitzkrieg repertoire.<sup>43</sup> ("Guernica literally levelled to the ground," the leading pilot boasted.)<sup>44</sup> The artist might have expected to end up in a concentration camp, yet he chose to remain in France. Perhaps he thought his fame would keep him safe, in which case he may have been right.

In his studio on the rue des Grands Augustins Picasso produced over 1400 pieces during the Occupation, many of which he sold or gave to his visitors, who

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<sup>42</sup> Speer is not specific about the date, but the event seems to have occurred toward the end of 1941.

<sup>43</sup> On behalf of the rebel General Franco, Luftwaffe planes dropped incendiary bombs on the undefended town on 27 April 1937, killing about one-quarter of the population. Many who ran from their burning homes were strafed. For a detailed account of the event and Picasso's painting, see Russell Martin, *Picasso's War: The Destruction of Guernica, and the Masterpiece That Changed the World* (New York: Dutton, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Wolfram von Richthoven, head of the Condor Legion, quoted in Simon Schama, *Power of Art* (Toronto: Viking, 2006) 375.

were legion.<sup>45</sup> *Guernica* was not there; in 1939 it was shipped on the *Normandie* to New York for safekeeping; but Picasso brazenly printed little copies of the painting and handed them out as souvenirs to his visitors, including the occasional German soldier. The Gestapo sometimes searched the premises but they always went away empty-handed. "They insulted me, called me a degenerate, a communist, a Jew," he told his friend Dubois after one of their visits. "They kicked the canvases. They told me they'd be back. That's all...."<sup>46</sup> André-Louis Dubois worked at the Paris prefecture, saw Picasso almost every day, and may have warned him of upcoming searches.<sup>47</sup> Although Picasso was officially forbidden to exhibit, Lynn Nicholas claims that throughout the Occupation his work was sold "publicly at the Drouot" and surreptitiously at the Galerie Simon,<sup>48</sup> which Louise Leiris had bought from Kahnweiler, her Jewish brother-in-law, before it could be "Aryanized."<sup>49</sup> According to Michèle Cone, the *referats* were always quick to remove a Picasso from public view.<sup>50</sup>

In any case, during a time of deprivation and hardship, circa 1942, Picasso created a masterpiece of Modern art, the *Bull's Head* [Fig. 26], from a bicycle seat

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<sup>45</sup> Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 149, 230 n. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Cone, 134.

<sup>47</sup> This according to Dubois' memoirs, quoted in Cone, 133.

<sup>48</sup> Nicholas, 180.

<sup>49</sup> The Germans expropriated 11,000 buildings and 27,000 businesses from French Jews, entrusting them to provisional administrators (*commissaires-gérants*) who were to sell them to Aryans or liquidate them, with proceeds going to the state. David Pryce-Jones, "Paris During the Occupation," *Collaboration in France: Politics and Culture During the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1944*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld and Patrick Marsh (Oxford: Berg, 1989) 22.

<sup>50</sup> Cone, 147.

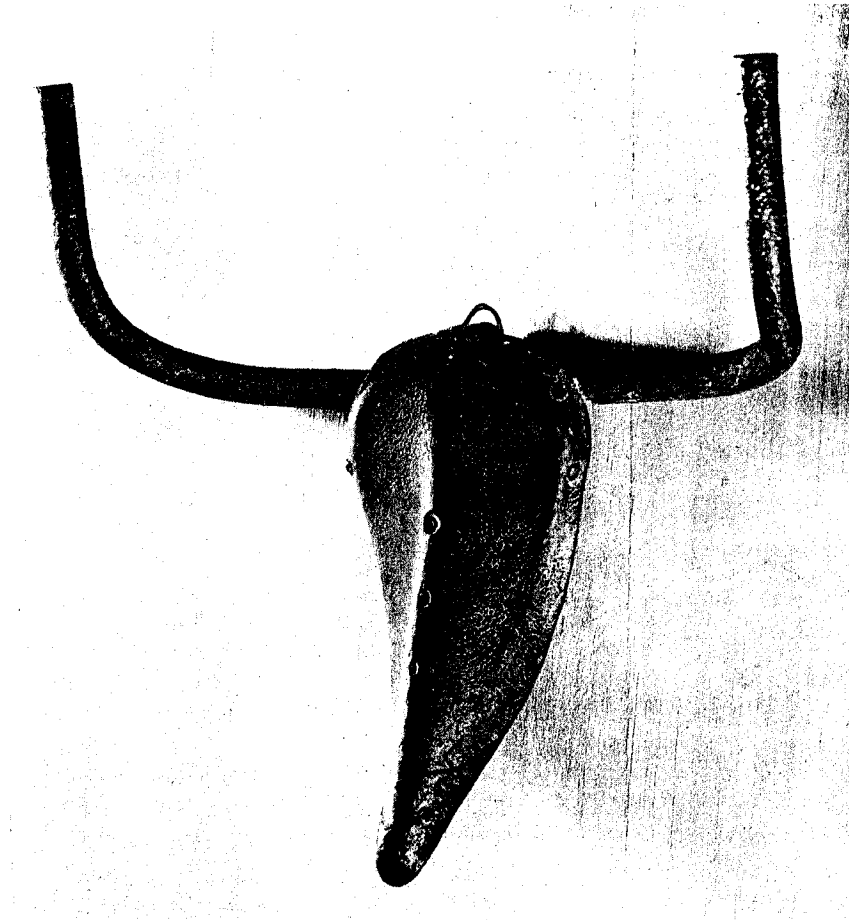


Fig. 26. *Bull's Head*, bronze cast of bicycle parts, by Pablo Picasso, 1942; rpt. in H. W. Janson, *History of Art*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986) 9.

and handlebar.<sup>51</sup> The fact that he was able to have it cast in bronze, a prized war material, was an accomplishment in itself. What makes the piece noteworthy here is its simplicity and inherent playfulness. Simplicity and playfulness are decidedly lacking in National Socialist art. The *Bull's Head* serves to represent the antithesis of fine art as the Nazis understood it—indeed, as many people understand it today—because it appears to have required little time, labor, or special skill from the artist. As explained in Germany's official art magazine, *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich*, to create respectable and beneficial art "the artist has to fight in a serious and concentrated working procedure."<sup>52</sup> Art was not supposed to be simple and playful. Picasso was lucky for not being incarcerated or worse, because he, more than anyone, was known for what Hitler defined as "degenerate" works: those that "destroy or confuse natural form or simply reveal an absence of adequate manual and artistic skill."<sup>53</sup>

Georges Braque, who shares credit with Picasso for inventing cubism in 1908, also returned to Paris after the armistice. Although a residence for German officers was situated directly across the street from his studio, he went about his business undisturbed.<sup>54</sup> He was invited to create an emblem for the Vichy

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<sup>51</sup> H. W. Janson dates the *Bull's Head* at 1943 but Pierre Daix cites evidence that it was made in 1942. See Pierre Daix, *Picasso: Life and Art*, trans. Olivia Emmet (New York: HarperCollins, 1993) 270.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Peter Adam, *The Arts of the Third Reich* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) 115.

<sup>53</sup> From a decree of 1937, quoted in Spotts, 163.

<sup>54</sup> Nicholas, 180.



government, but he declined.<sup>55</sup> In 1943 his art was exhibited at the Salon d'Automne and the Galerie de France.<sup>56</sup>

Henri Matisse spent the Vichy years on the Riviera. Leader of the *fauves*, the “wild beasts” whose intense, arbitrary color schemes shook the art world in 1905, Matisse was seventy-one when the Germans came in 1940. He fled from Paris to Saint-Jean-de-Luz, where he bought a ticket to Rio de Janeiro, but changed his mind, encouraged by the example of Marshal Pétain. He wrote to his son: “If everyone who has any value leaves France, what will remain of France?”<sup>57</sup> Settling in Nice, he lived in peace throughout the war. His work was exhibited in numerous galleries in Paris and Cannes; he illustrated a book, *Pasiphaé*, by the collaborationist Henry de Montherlant;<sup>58</sup> and Vichy acknowledged his place in French culture, hanging Matisse paintings in the Museum of Modern Art, which opened in Paris in 1942. “Wild” painter though he may have been, Matisse was French bred. He and the other Fauves followed the path of abstraction and color-structure blazed by their French predecessors, Gauguin and Cezanne; therefore, Hautecoeur could appreciate them as contributors to a national artistic

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<sup>55</sup> Nicholas, 182.

<sup>56</sup> Cone, 12.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Cone, 51.

<sup>58</sup> Nicholas, 181. Montherlant described the Second World War as the “heroic struggle of the new European civilization against the lower Europeans,” and celebrated Germany’s conquest of France in *Le solstice de juin*. (1941). See Philippe Burrin, *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise* trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: New Press, 1996) 344-346.

tradition, although his personal preference, and also Pétain's, lay with the pre-impressionist, classically-oriented "Salon" style.<sup>59</sup>

French nationalist art critics had long complained of the alien aspects of the avant-garde circle centered in Montparnasse. The "École de Paris," as it was known, included Modigliani,<sup>60</sup> Picasso, Soutine, and many foreigners who arrived after the First World War and drew international attention, especially for Dada and Surrealism. In 1929 *Le Figaro*, the widely respected newspaper owned by François Coty,<sup>61</sup> started running a daily column by Camille Mauclair, an award-winning art critic who regarded Montparnasse as the "filth of Paris." The column also ran in the weekly *L'Ami du Peuple*, which reached an estimated one million readers, and in 1930 Mauclair's diatribes were published in two volumes, *Le Farce de l'art vivant* and *Les métèques contre l'art français*. His war of words in defense of a national artistic tradition was joined by others, including Waldemar George, Louis Hautecœur, Fritz Vanderpyl, André Salmon, and Lucien Rebatet, whose opinions were published in books and in the major weeklies *Candide*, *Gringoire*, and *Je suis partout*.<sup>62</sup> Rebatet wrote of paintings having "colors

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<sup>59</sup> "Academic style" is synonymous with "Salon style," which refers to the art shown at the annual exhibition of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, known as the Salon de Paris. The term "Salon style" is problematic because there were numerous Salons, e.g., the Salon des Indépendents and the Salon d'Automne, which featured art styles that were unacceptable to the Academy, e.g., Impressionism and Fauvism.

<sup>60</sup> Amadeo Modigliani died in 1920, at age 36, but his work was influential and enduringly popular.

<sup>61</sup> Coty gave financial support to several fascist writers and organisations, starting with Georges Valois, who produced the first book to explain Fascism to the French public, Pietro Gorgolini's *Le Fascisme* (1922), and who founded France's first fascist group, the *Faisceau*. Coty backed Charles Maurras' *Action française*, Jean Renaud's *Solidarité française*, and other right-wing ventures. See Eugen Weber, *My France: Politics, Culture, Myth* (Cambridge: Belknap/ Harvard U P, 1991) 267-269.

<sup>62</sup> Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale U P, 1995) 150-151.

reminiscent of Jewish putrescence," and argued that the public exhibition of "a Jewish or half-Jewish work of art must be forbidden . . . without nuance or reservation."<sup>63</sup> Even Waldemar George (born Georges Jarocinski), a Jewish Pole who became a French citizen in 1914, commented on "the Jewish problem" in French culture. In 1936 he wrote:

Is the Jew's deficiency in the plastic arts the distinctive sign of the race? Was the Jew the promoter of cubism and expressionism, or did he merely find these [artistic] movements a fertile terrain for action? Cubism complements the Jewish penchant for abstract thought. Expressionism favors the Jew's fits of pessimism.<sup>64</sup>

But perhaps Louis Hautecoeur, who was more moderate, best expositis the protectionism and xenophobia of the French art community in the following passage from his book, *Considérations sur l'art d'aujourd'hui*, published in 1929:

At the time of Romanticism, the English crossed the Channel, visited France, and exhibited in the salons. Today, Czechs, Poles, Romanians, Russians, Yugoslavs, Americans, Spaniards, Portuguese, Belgians, and Dutch artists participate in our artistic life. But this pacific invasion is not without its drawbacks. We are overly friendly toward foreigners. We tend to praise in them what is strange and new. Since they are anxious to achieve Parisian recognition, they show an ardour, and sometimes, one must admit, a sense of publicity that is lacking among our compatriots. Solicited art critics praise them to the skies so that this foreign colony plays a role in our midst that their production does not always justify.<sup>65</sup>

Eleven years later, when he became France's *directeur des Beaux-Arts*, Hautecoeur sought to shift attention from the over-publicized foreigners to the under-

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<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Cone, *Artists Under Vichy* 23.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Matthew Affron, "Waldemar George: A Parisian Art Critic on Modernism and Fascism," *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy*, ed. Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997) 186.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Cone, 81.

appreciated, *bien-pensant* French artists whose work better suited his taste. Like many others, he joined Pétain's government in hopes of doing good for his country, but he soon found himself complicit in the politics of persecution.

It should be noted that Hautecoeur was a Pétainist but not markedly collaborationist or anti-Semitic. He considered the exclusionary Jewish Statutes "unjust." He was in tears when he dismissed Jean Cassou from his designated post as director of the new National Museum of Modern Art, still under construction in 1940.<sup>66</sup> As late as May 1943, Hautecoeur purchased paintings and drawings by French Jews for government offices and at least one museum; the names and dates were recorded in the official inventory of art purchased by the State, which is cited in Bertrand Dorléac's *L'art de la défaite*.<sup>67</sup> The sculptor Paul Landowski,<sup>68</sup> director of the École des Beaux-Arts, also found himself obliged to "retire" some of his colleagues because they were Jewish, an odious task that he claimed he found inescapable. Since he was denounced in 1940 and had to prove his own *aryanité*, it would do no good to resign. Later he wrote:

Ce qui serait bien, ce serait que tout le monde démissionne. Alors la France serait dans la même situation de gabegie. Mais c'est trop tard. Ce n'est plus possible. Si je démissionnais seul, immédiatement on ferait courir le bruit que c'est parce que je suis juif . . .<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite* 64.

<sup>67</sup> Op. cit. 324 n. 77. For example, several paintings by Michel Kikoïne were purchased for the secrétariat d'État du Travail, and one for the musée des Augustins de Toulouse, between December 1940 and May 1943. The author also mentions a series of drawings by Mané-Katz, purchased in January 1941.

<sup>68</sup> Winner of the Prix de Rome in 1900, he is best known for the tomb of Marshal Foch at les Invalides, and the colossal *Christ the Redeemer* at Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite* 65.

He chose not to extend his term as director when given the opportunity, leaving the school in June 1942.

By 1943 the National Revolution had fizzled and died,<sup>70</sup> and the regime moved further to the right. In March 1944 Hautecoeur was replaced by Georges Hilaire, one of Laval's secretaries-general at the Ministry of the Interior,<sup>71</sup> a keen collaborationist who held the opinion that "Jewish painting, like all Jewish arts, is parasitic."<sup>72</sup> Hilaire, more *dirigiste* than Hautecoeur, tried to establish the Order of Graphic and Plastic Arts, a national corporatist organization which had been discussed by an Entraide committee in the early days of the National Revolution.<sup>73</sup> The effort, which involved discriminating between professional and amateur artists and establishing rules for them to follow, fell flat. A proposal that the artists would swear an oath "that they would exercise their jobs conscientiously without ever deserting the standards of their profession" only begat jokes about possible repercussions for "painting a bottom too pink or not round enough."<sup>74</sup> Hilaire was unable to stir up interest in a regulatory body of French artists along the lines of the Reich Chamber of Fine Art. His short term as *directeur des Beaux-Arts* brought no significant changes.

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<sup>70</sup> In June 1942 the postal censors reported "Everywhere...pessimism," and by August 1943, "for the most part unanimity: the National Revolution is 'definitely buried'." See excerpts in Miranda Pollard, *The Reign of Virtue* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1998) 195-196.

<sup>71</sup> The other was René Bousquet. Hilaire was a prefect when Laval promoted him to Secretary-General in 1942. Jackson, 214.

<sup>72</sup> "La peinture juive comme tous les arts juives est parasite." Quoted in Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite* 62.

<sup>73</sup> Bizardel, 122. Entraide d'Hiver du Maréchal (the Marshal's Winter Relief) was a charitable organization, also known as the Secours National, that sold Pétainist portraits and books as part of its fundraising plan.

<sup>74</sup> Nicholas 183; Bizardel 122-123.

Vichy France did not undergo a cultural “cleansing” to the same degree as Nazi Germany, but it did witness the immolation of “Jewish-Expressionist” paintings and the wrecking of untold numbers of statues, pulled down from their pedestals in the parks and town squares by order of Pétain himself.

The ERR’s looting of French national museums and Jewish homes, galleries and bank vaults, which Vichy protested in vain,<sup>75</sup> resulted in a glut of artworks at the Louvre, where the Germans sorted their loot. The overflow was sent to the avant-garde museum Jeu de Paume, which received four hundred crates under Luftwaffe guard in October 1940. After selections were made for Hitler and the Reich museums, and after Göring picked out what he wanted for himself,<sup>76</sup> there remained between five hundred and six hundred paintings that the ERR designated “*inemployables et dangereux*.”<sup>77</sup> They included works by Dali, Ernst, Klee, Léger, Picabia, Picasso, Masson, Miro, and other “*expressionnistes enjuivés*,” whose least sketches are highly valued today. The canvases were slashed, the stretchers and frames were broken, and the wreckage was piled up and burned in the courtyard on 27 May 1943.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> According to Nicholas, protests came from “the Vichy Prime Minister” (possibly Laval or Darlan) and the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs (Xavier Vallat), which the ERR answered in November 1941. The Germans reasoned that their “safeguarding” of the art should be considered “a small indemnity for the great sacrifices of the Reich made for the people of Europe in their fight against Jewry.” See Nicholas 136-137.

<sup>76</sup> In addition to German art, some of which Napoleon had seized, the ERR claimed many paintings by Boucher and Courbet for Hitler, including Boucher’s famous *Madame de Pompadour*. Göring helped himself to some 600 *objets d’art*, including antique furniture and impressionist paintings. See Rose Valland, *Le Front de l’art* (Paris: Plon, 1961) 181; and Nicholas, 131-132.

<sup>77</sup> Valland, 178.

<sup>78</sup> Valland, 182.

The destruction of bronze statues commenced with an edict of 11 October 1941, which began, "Nous, Maréchal de France, Chef de l'État français, décrétons: Il sera procédé à l'enlèvement des statues et monuments en alliages cuivreux . . . ."<sup>79</sup> Copper being the main ingredient of bronze, which is used for statues and church bells, and brass, which is used for shell casings and marine hardware, was needed to feed the ravenous German arms industry, a fact that must have been widely understood although it was not mentioned by the Marshal, who only implied that French industry and agriculture would be served. The Germans stripped the Low Countries of their statues and church bells,<sup>80</sup> but Vichy ensured that France's church bells would not be melted for weaponry, by requiring the parishes to contribute their bells' weight in coppery substitutes.<sup>81</sup> The wrecking of the statues, however, was planned and carried out by the French. More than ninety-two statues disappeared from Paris alone during the first five months,<sup>82</sup> but the total number is unknown.

Bizardel describes the affair as the "Saint-Barthélemy des statues," a sheer massacre of familiar figures of bronze, including: Berlioz, Louis Blanc, Charcot, Chopin, Clemenceau, Condorcet, Delacroix, Diderot, Fourier, Franklin, Gambetta, Hugo, Joffre, La Fayette, La Fontaine, Lamartine, Lavoisier, Marat, Rousseau, Voltaire, Zola and others, as well as lions and centaurs and such.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Bizardel, 93.

<sup>80</sup> Nicholas 140.

<sup>81</sup> Bizardel 102.

<sup>82</sup> According to an article in *Nouveau Journal* (24 Mar 42) quoted in Nicholas, 140.

<sup>83</sup> Bizardel 94-98, 105.

Rude's *Maréchal Ney* and Rodin's *Balzac* were saved by Pierre Darras, who hid them until the Occupation was over;<sup>84</sup> effigies of Joan of Arc, Henry IV and Louis XIV were left untouched, by order of the Marshal; and some twenty other Parisian bronzes were spared because of their Baroque beauty or, as in the case of the Vendôme column and the *Richelieu* at the Sorbonne, because of their political symbolism. The collaborationist press celebrated the disappearance of "the most ugly and ridiculous" statues,<sup>85</sup> particularly the effigies of *métèques* and republicans, "undesirable by their political character."<sup>86</sup> It is unclear to what extent the director of Fine Arts was involved in the culling process. Bizardel names the Secretary-General of the Seine, Pierre Revilliod, as head of the commission for confiscations, which affixed "*certificats de laideur*" to the condemned,<sup>87</sup> but the geographical limits of Revilliod's mandate are unspecified, and no other names are given. Cone suggests that Hautecoeur was one of the main arbiters of the second wave of confiscations, promulgated on 28 October 1943.<sup>88</sup>

In any case, Hautecoeur did exercise his prerogative to hire sculptors to make new statues of stone to fill the empty pedestals. One of the vanished bronzes was *Victor Hugo* at Place Victor Hugo, by Barrias, who was one of Henri Bouchard's teachers at the École des Beaux-Arts; Hautecoeur commissioned

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<sup>84</sup> Bizardel 106.

<sup>85</sup> *Nouveau Journal* (24 March 1942), quoted in Nicholas 140.

<sup>86</sup> Anonymous, quoted in Bizardel 97.

<sup>87</sup> Bizardel 95.

<sup>88</sup> Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 237 n.33.



Bouchard to sculpt a replacement in stone for 100,000 francs.<sup>89</sup> He allocated considerable funds for a group of classical sculptures by seventeen artists of the École des Beaux-Arts, who mostly sculpted nymphs and monumental vases.<sup>90</sup> On behalf of the State, Hautecoeur disbursed up to 12,000,000 francs annually, purchasing some 1500 to 2000 works in total. He later admitted that his choices were not always determined by the quality of the art, but instead sometimes by his sense of philanthropy.<sup>91</sup>

What follows is a discussion of four artworks that represent the essential styles of fine art endorsed by the Vichy regime. The selected works include: *Venus* by Aristide Maillol, *Interior (Intérieur)* by Alfred Giess, *The Two Hangars (Les Deux Hangars)* by André Derain, and *Still Life in Front of the Window (Nature morte devant la fenêtre)* by Jean Bazaine.

The first piece, Maillol's bronze *Venus* [Fig. 27], exemplifies the classical style, specifically, post-impressionist classicism. The sculpture imitates the human body in the time-honored style of ancient Greek statuary, but with an impressionistic touch: for example, Maillol has rendered Venus' hair as one smooth shape, giving the impression of a full head of hair as seen at a glance or

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Nicholas, 182.

<sup>91</sup> In his book, *Beaux Arts en France*, Hautecoeur wrote: "Certes toutes les oeuvres acquises ne furent pas des chef d'oeuvre, en de telles circonstances la philanthropie dut parfois primer sur le mécénat." Quoted in Cone, 224 n. 91. Bertrand Dorléac shows that the French Government purchased almost 600 works of art in 1940, approximately 400 in 1941 and again in 1942, and slightly more than 500 in 1943 and 1944 combined. See the graph, "Courbes annuelle des achats d'oeuvres d'art par l'état..." Bertrand Dorléac *L'Art de la défaite 1940-1944* (Paris: Seuil, 1983) n.p.



Fig. 27. *Venus*, bronze, by Aristide Maillol, 1925; rpt. in *Paris 1937: L'art indépendant: Exposition présentée dans le cadre du cinquantenaire de l'Exposition Internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* (Paris: Paris-Musées, 1987) 114.

at a distance, without meticulous details.<sup>92</sup> This same simplicity of form, while conveying a fleshy realism, can also be seen in the work of Maillol's teacher, Auguste Rodin.

Maillol may have been the most highly regarded living artist in Vichy France; six of his sculptures were chosen for the entrance hall of the Museum of Modern Art in Paris. His *Venus* and other life-size nudes, the most famous being *Méditerranée* and *Île de France*, seem to be faithful imitations of real, ordinary young women. They reflect the natural beauty of the human being, evincing strength, softness, health and serenity, all together: qualities unseen in the sculptures of the avant-garde artists Brancusi, Duchamp, Giacometti, Lipchitz, or Picasso. Classicism was fundamental to Fascist and National Socialist aesthetics,<sup>93</sup> and Maillol's sculptures had been particularly popular in Germany since the turn of the century. "I am so famous in Germany," he once remarked. "Much more than in France."<sup>94</sup> He was highly praised in *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich* in 1937:

He showed the way to a new European monumental art. The genuine Greekness of this art is the basis of the fact that it breaks through the boundaries of nineteenth-century bourgeois art and demands by its very nature a wider sphere, a place under the open sky connected to nature, to architecture, to the world and the *Volk*. . . . Maillol's sculpture . . . can be called popular art [*Volkskunst*], meaning that it is not art that makes concessions to the miseducated taste of the time. It

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<sup>92</sup> H.W. Janson suggests, "Maillol might be called a 'classical primitivist'; admiring the simplified strength of early Greek sculpture, he rejected its later phases." Janson, 659.

<sup>93</sup> Italian Fascists valued ancient Roman culture as well as Futurism, the new, dynamic style, whereas the National Socialist aesthetic was completely retrograde, based on the Classical and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century styles of art and architecture.

<sup>94</sup> Cone, *Artists Under Vichy* 165.

is art for the people as Greek art was: naive, blunt, healthy, unromantic, true to nature (not naturalistic).<sup>95</sup>

Maillol was commissioned to design a fountain for Berlin,<sup>96</sup> the city Hitler wanted to rebuild until it surpassed Paris for beauty and grandeur. The French sculptor's feminine figures would have complemented massive, masculine figures by the Reich's principal artists, Arno Breker and Josef Thorak. To Hitler and Mussolini, the self-styled modern Caesars, the Greco-Roman style of art and architecture was useful as a visual reference to the ancient power and glory, historic or mythic, that they imagined was theirs to recreate. (Hitler professed that the German people, as opposed to the Italians, were the purest descendents of the ancient people who founded Athens and Rome!)<sup>97</sup> Both used classical art and architecture to lend a sense of magnificence to their dictatorships.

Pétain was not a self-styled Caesar, but his National Revolution shared an essential assumption with Mussolini's and Hitler's revolutions—that national decadence was real but reversible,<sup>98</sup> and that reversal required a return to cultural traditions. Tradition involved an abiding, common conception of beauty, which was upheld by the classicism of Aristide Maillol, Charles Despiau, Paul Belmondo, Henri Bouchard, Léon Drivier, Paul Landowski, and Hubert

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<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Cone, 165.

<sup>96</sup> Cone, 239 n. 63.

<sup>97</sup> "If you examine the statues of a Caesar...a Cicero...a Socrates—I ask you, do those heads bear any resemblance to the indigenous inhabitants of Italy or Greece? Might they not rather...have a place today in the Prussian senate or the British House of Lords? No, these were not natives, these were the last great return wanderers of Nordic blood after the epoch of the last ice age." *Hitler: Memoirs of a Confidante*, ed. Henry Ashby Turner, trans. Ruth Hein (New York: Yale U P, 1978) 85.

<sup>98</sup> See Cone's discussion of "fascistic paradigms" in "Decadence and Renewal in the Decorative Arts under Vichy," *Fascist Visions*, ed. Affron and Antliff, 241.

Yencesse. Not only did their sculptures signify tradition and discipline, but by representing human beings, as opposed to the idiosyncratic and sometimes inscrutable subjects of the Modernists, they appealed to the majority. They portrayed healthy human bodies with dignity and grace—curvaceous female bodies, for the most part. Powerful male figures, which were vital to fascist culture, were evidently rare in France, where most sculptors preferred to study the feminine form.

More common was figurative art in the form of portraits, landscapes, still life and domestic scenes, such as the *Interior* [Fig. 28] by Alfred Giess, a Salon jurist who won the silver Prix de Rome in 1926 and the gold in 1929.<sup>99</sup> This oil painting provides a good example of the technique and illusionary spatial effect that have been standard in Western art for five hundred years. The theme is secular and mundane; the subject matter is immediately recognizable; the perspective, contours, colors and shades have been carefully worked out so that the image comes close to photographic exactitude; the composition includes three women and various shapes and objects, yet there is a sense of spaciousness, not clutter; the overall image is tranquil and believable. *Interior* is an old-fashioned, slowly crafted, peaceful painting, an example of “conscientiousness and hard work,”<sup>100</sup> well suited to Pétain’s era. Only the style of the women’s clothing and the date written at the bottom indicate that it is a product of the

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<sup>99</sup> Georges Mathieu, “Notice sur la vie et travaux de M. Alfred Giess (1901-1973),” [http://www.academie-des-beaux-arts.fr/membres/actuel/peinture/Mathieu/Discours\\_hommage\\_Giess.htm](http://www.academie-des-beaux-arts.fr/membres/actuel/peinture/Mathieu/Discours_hommage_Giess.htm)

<sup>100</sup> Jacques Baschet, quoted in Cone, 69.



Fig. 28. *Interior*, oil, by Alfred Giess, 1942; rpt. in Michèle C. Cone, *Artists Under Vichy: A Case of Prejudice and Persecution* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1992) 70.

twentieth century. Such labor-intensive, mimetic artwork was what Louis Hautecoeur had in mind when he declared, "French painting has always manifested its taste for moderation, for harmony, and for nature."<sup>101</sup>

Although Geiss's *Interior* refers to a common French domestic scene, when the men were long absent, it is very much like the paintings favored in Germany. It includes references to youth, agriculture and craftsmanship, which were common to the visual and verbal propaganda of Nazi Germany and Vichy France alike; however, it shows a certain passiveness or inertia that sets it apart from the images made in Germany. Instead of action or grim determination it seems to depict the *attentiste* attitude of the French people during the early phase of the Vichy regime.

*The Two Hangars* by André Derain [Fig. 29] suggests *Sturm und Drang*, with lively figures and dramatic lighting but without the exacting, time-consuming technique that characterizes the Salon style. It would have been welcome in Italy, but not Germany. Nevertheless, Derain's painting and others like it, classified as "poetic realism,"<sup>102</sup> were acceptable to the German censors and even preferred by Lucien Rebatet. The sardonic, racist art critic of *Je suis partout* admired poetic-realism, whereas he despised Salon art for being "bourgeois." He wrote, "We must Aryanize our fine arts . . . [but] the purification of our art must not bring about the return of academism." He described the annual Salon as "an

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<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Cone, 81.

<sup>102</sup> Bernard Ceysson coined the term in the 1930s. See Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 16.



Fig. 29. *Two Hangars*, oil, by André Derain, n.d.; rpt. in Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 26.



assemblage of the ugliest imaginable stuff that an industrial civilization can produce in a democratic country" (as if Vichy France were a democratic country); and in 1944 he asked, "Why can't Jewish [Allied] bombs fall on the Salon, for heaven's sake?" Unlike the art of bourgeois society, "[gone] to its grave," poetic-realism represented the vitality of the common man and therefore, the spirit of fascism.<sup>103</sup> In this sense, Derain's rough, energetic painting fits Mussolini's definition of Fascism, which reads in part:

[Fascism is] positive: not skeptical, nor agnostic, nor pessimistic, nor passively optimistic . . . . Fascism desires an active man, one engaged in activity with all his energies: it desires a man virilely conscious of the difficulties that exist in action and ready to face them. It conceives of life as a struggle . . . . Hence . . . the essential value of work, with which man conquers nature and creates the human world . . . .<sup>104</sup>

Silhouetted against two dark, crude wooden sheds (*hangars*) near a village church, under a stormy sky, a farmer restrains his skittish horse: this subject-matter is compatible with the fascist ethos, and also it would have been compatible with nineteenth-century Romanticism or Realism. The technique of the finished painting—call it sketchy, playful, or "poetic-realist"—firmly belongs in the twentieth century. It is clearly Modern. The clouds, in particular, bring to mind the distinctive style of Thomas Hart Benton, one of the American Social Realist artists of the 1930s. Realistic in subject matter but not labored, *The Two Hangars* is a lively hybrid of nineteenth-century and twentieth-century art that

<sup>103</sup> See Cone, op. cit., 20-22.

<sup>104</sup> Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism," reprinted in *Main Currents of Western Thought: Readings in Western European Intellectual History from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Franklin Le Van Baumer, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Knopf, 1964) 688-691.

celebrates the French countryside and its people. It is a picture with broad appeal: one could read into it the joy of the outdoor life, or the Pétainist *retour à la terre*, or Mussolini's "active man" who "conquers nature," or simply a man with a horse and two sheds. It is what Romy Golan and Michèle Cone have identified as "middle-of-the-road" art,<sup>105</sup> which was the most popular type during the interwar period.

The term "middle-of-the-road" does not pertain to a specific style, but to paintings and sculptures that avoided controversy. Whereas academic art represented bourgeois values; and whereas École de Paris art often reflected the nihilism and melancholy effected by the Great War and the Great Depression, middle-of-the-road art conveyed a sense of moderation and positivity. The term may be applied to the *naïf* paintings of Maurice Utrillo and to a number of works by Picasso and the fauves, who turned away, at least temporarily, from the eccentric styles that made them famous, to produce new works with traditional motifs and earthy colors, which were readily received by a public recuperating from the war and disenchanted with the machine age. Even Le Corbusier, who dreamed of French skyscraper-cities, and who conceived of white box-like houses as "machines for living in," turned to organic, curvilinear designs after the stock-market crash of 1929. Humanism, rusticism, legibility and simplicity were the definitive qualities of middle-of-the-road art, which sold very well in

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<sup>105</sup> See Cone, 15-16, and Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995) 23-60.

comparison to the avant-garde, as Eugen Weber notes in his review of Romy Golan's *Modernity and Nostalgia*:

Golan . . . does not mention the sales in 1921 of hundreds of Cubist canvases from the collection of D.-H. Kanweiler, confiscated as enemy property in 1914, and their depressing effect on the prices of the avante-garde. The *Gazette-Drouot* rejoiced that buyers were mostly foreigners. "The French public finds this sort of painting amusing, but buys little of it." No wonder that sensible craftsmen should conclude tradition might pay better.<sup>106</sup>

Traditional French paintings should naturally be expected from a group calling itself "Young Painters in the French Tradition" (*Jeunes Peintres de Tradition Française*), however, this group specialized in Modernism, as represented here by Jean Bazaine's *Still Life in Front of the Window* [Fig. 30], which could hardly be recognized as such without its title. The tradition being upheld, if it can be properly called a tradition, was no older than the Young Painters themselves, starting in the twentieth century with Fauvism and Cubism. This was art that flatly rejected the laws of perspective that had ruled Western painting since the Renaissance. For that reason alone the Nazis might have banned it, but instead, they permitted it to be shown in Paris repeatedly, from 1941 to 1944.

The Young Painters, who were mostly men in their thirties or early forties,<sup>107</sup> were led by Jean Bazaine of Jeune France,<sup>108</sup> an organization with a strong Catholic bent, which was created in 1941 by the *Secrétariat Général à la*

<sup>106</sup> Eugen Weber, "Back to the Landscape," *Times Literary Supplement* (10 Nov 95) 8.

<sup>107</sup> See names and ages in Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 37. One woman, Suzanne Roger, is included.

<sup>108</sup> Bertrand Dorleac, *Histoire de l'art*, 167.

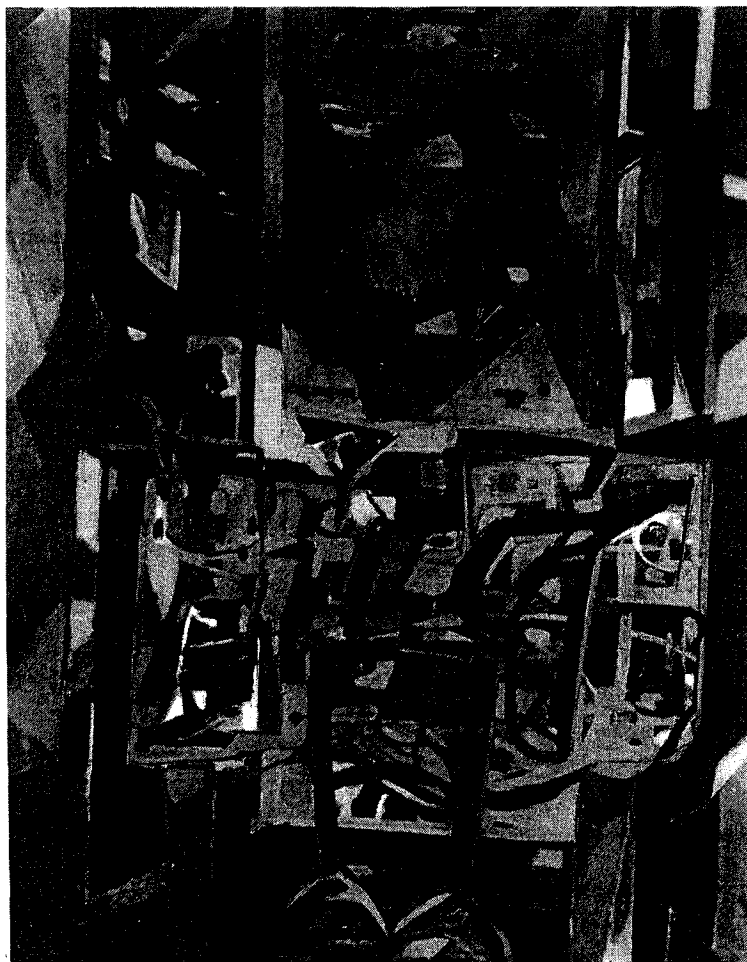


Fig. 30. *Still Life in Front of the Window*, oil, by Jean Bazaine, 1942; rpt. in Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 42.

*Jeunesse* to "renovate all forms of French artistic life."<sup>109</sup> At this time, when morale was low, young artists could help by producing "paintings of optimism and hope"<sup>110</sup> that would contribute to a sense of national-cultural continuity. The people of France should not forget, wrote Bazaine in *La Nouvelle revue française*, "French painting was for thirty years our sole act of presence in the world, and one of the rare, vital flowerings of our epoch." By continuing the progressive tradition of French painting "outside of all politics," the young artists could preserve "true and strong French values."<sup>111</sup>

The group's first exhibition, "*Vingt peintres de tradition française*," opened in Paris on 10 May 1941, the first anniversary of the Blitzkrieg. It was followed by at least six more exhibitions in Paris, most of them held at the Galerie de France, and two foreign shows, "*Artistas Franceses Contemporaneos*," in Madrid in 1943, and "*Jeunes Peintres Français et Leurs Maîtres*," which travelled through Switzerland in 1942 and 1943. Although scant evidence of these exhibitions remains, it seems that they consisted mostly of still life, portraits, landscapes, and religious images. The religious content was attributable to a few artists who had been involved with *Témoignage Chrétien*, a lay Catholic association, and others, including Bazaine, who subscribed to the Personalist philosophy of Emmanuel Mounier, one of the directors of *Jeune France*.<sup>112</sup> Bazaine's paintings may not

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<sup>109</sup> Emmanuel Mounier, one of the directors of *Jeune France*, quoted in John Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left, 1930-1950* (Toronto: U Toronto P, 1981) 179.

<sup>110</sup> Edouard Pignon, one of the *Jeunes Peintres*, quoted in Cone, op. cit., 48.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Bertrand Dorléac, *Histoire de l'art*, 168. (My translation.)

<sup>112</sup> See Bertrand Dorléac, op. cit., 167-173.

have been ostensibly religious, but inasmuch as they resembled stained glass windows, they alluded to the Christian heritage of France, which was essential to Pétainist ideology.<sup>113</sup> The seeming flatness of the paintings, due to lack of modelling (tonal gradations giving an illusion of volume), can also be attributed to a nostalgic religious sentiment: the painters from *Témoignage Chrétien*, in particular, sought a kind of "return to the spirit of the distant past" free from the rationalism and illusory perspective of Renaissance painting.<sup>114</sup> A few showed a preference for reds and blues, which, with a dab of white added in, could be interpreted as painterly patriotism. Bazaine called attention to the use of the French colors in a bombastic article, "La Peinture bleu-blanc-rouge," which ran in *Comoedia* shortly before the opening of a Young Painters' exhibition in 1943.<sup>115</sup> Although most of the works seem to have been figurative, there were a few that bore no obvious relation to their titles; for example, Charles Lapique's *Joan of Arc Crossing the Loire* and Bazaine's *Mass for the Armed Man* appear to contain many parallel and criss-crossing lines, but no people.<sup>116</sup> Whether Pétain himself admired such paintings is unlikely; in fact there is no evidence that he did. To him, as to many others, the Young Painters' works probably seemed simply "abstract" and harmless.

One wonders, then, what tradition the Young Painters in the French Tradition were supposed to represent. According to Bazaine, who was

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<sup>113</sup> See color reproductions at [www.republicarts.kataweb.it/republicarts/francia/foto.html](http://www.republicarts.kataweb.it/republicarts/francia/foto.html)

<sup>114</sup> See Bertrand Dorléac, *Histoire de l'art*, 170.

<sup>115</sup> See Cone, *Artists Under Vichy* 40-41; excerpts in Bertrand Dorléac, op. cit., 161.

<sup>116</sup> See black and white reproductions in Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite*, n.p.

interviewed by Laurence Bertrand Dorléac in 1984, the name of the group was meant to be misleading.

Nous étions tous gaullistes. . . . On ne montrait que de la peinture dite "réaliste-socialiste." . . . [Le] titre . . . a été . . . mal compris: "peintres de tradition française": c'était . . . à double tranchant. Il y avait le mot "française" d'une part, ce qui voulait dire que la tradition française existait et en même temps le mot "tradition" servait . . . ce que les Allemands ne se méfient pas trop. . . . [Pendant la première exposition] sont arrivés deux officiers allemands qui se sont avancés jusqu'au milieu de la galerie. Ils ont jeté un coup d'oeil, se sont regardés, ont tourné les talons et sont partis. C'est tout. C'était l'époque où les Allemands voulaient être gentils.<sup>117</sup>

French critics described the paintings as "*l'art zazou*," "*arrière-garde*," and "*rabachage laborieux*."<sup>118</sup> Indeed, the Young Painters deserved to be labelled "*arrière-garde*" because they offered no new technique or style, but only pastiches of the older generation of French Modernists, particularly, Matisse, Braque and Léger. Their colors were strong and harmonious, but as they strictly avoided any politically sensitive subject matter, the Young Painters produced images as static as Maillol's *Venus* or Giess's *Interior*. Their body of work may be best described as "cubism tempered by the return to order,"<sup>119</sup> or middle-of-the-road cubism. Nevertheless, they received more positive press than negative. One of their admirers, Pierre Francastel, wrote glowingly:

J'ai rarement eu plus de plaisir à découvrir de la peinture.... De la peinture, de la vraie, grande, neuve, et d'autant plus émouvante qu'elle témoigne de la survie, dans cette guerre, de Paris, du vrai Paris, celui des jeunes, celui que les philistins ne connaissent pas encore, ne

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Bertrand Dorléac, op. cit., 174.

<sup>118</sup> Op. cit., 174-175. The author names five writers who denounced the artists and eight who defended them, including the xenophobic Pierre Imbourg.

<sup>119</sup> Op. cit., 181.

connaîtront jamais alors même qu'ils viendraient séjourner des mois ou des années sur les bords de la Seine.<sup>120</sup>

Seven of the Young Painters' works were selected for the inaugural exhibition of the Musée National d'Art Moderne, which opened on 6 August 1942, in the newly constructed Palais de Tokyo on the Quai d'Orsay.<sup>121</sup> Abel Bonnard, the newly appointed Minister of Education,<sup>122</sup> and Louis Hautecoeur, head of the ministry's department of fine arts, officiated at the ceremonies which, judging from published photographs, were well attended by German officers. Hautecoeur spoke in patriotic terms, describing the event as an inspiration at a sad time:

Il nous a semblé que, inaugurer ce bâtiment en de semblables moments, était manifester notre confiance en la survie de l'art qui est la fleur de notre nation, en la persistance d'une activité qui a besoin de toutes les forces de notre race. Dans les tristes circonstances que nous traversons, ces oeuvres diront la fois d'un peuple en un idéal qui, depuis tant des siècles, ne l'a jamais abandonné; elles seront comme une préfiguration des travaux pacifiques où [sic] nous souhaitons que les hommes puissent bientôt se consacrer.<sup>123</sup>

Bonnard, who followed, exalted the Franco-German cultural bond before he officially opened the exhibition, knowing that the Germans were about to see some abstract pieces in the mostly figurative, middle-of-the-road collection.

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<sup>120</sup> Op. cit., 174.

<sup>121</sup> Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 37.

<sup>122</sup> Bonnard was appointed to his post by Laval in April, 1942. One of his contributions to French education was *Éloge de l'ignorance* (1926), in which he argued against intellectualism and the education of women. See Francine Muel-Dreyfus, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine* (Durham: Duke U P, 2001) 227-228.

<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Dorléac, *Histoire de l'art*, 122.



Visitors first encountered six of Maillol's feminine nudes in the entrance hall, followed by two statues by Bouchard and several busts by Despiau. At least fifteen more sculptors were represented farther inside. According to the catalogue, still life, landscapes, town and village scenes, and marine subjects were abundant, but female figures were by far the most popular subject. Male figures, interiors, and religious subjects were among the smaller categories, numbering fifteen to twenty-five pieces each.<sup>124</sup> In sharp contrast to the House of German Art, the new French national museum held only six war scenes, but also twenty-three works listed as "undetermined."<sup>125</sup> French Symbolism, Fauvism, Cubism, and even one example of Surrealism—a single canvas by the émigré Yves Tanguy—were on display. The inclusion of the Tanguy is surprising, as is the listing of another émigré modernist, Fernand Léger; but no Chagalls, Soutines, Kandinskys, or other École de Paris creations were to be seen. The press was positive; however, attendance figures are something of a mystery.

Unbeknownst to visitors, the vast lower level of the museum was used as a storage space for stolen Jewish property. It was one of several depots for the German Möbel-Aktion project, whereby Jewish homes were looted of furniture and other items that could be put to practical use in Germany or on the Eastern Front. Crates of lamps, linens, rugs, pianos, toys, and other objects were catalogued and stacked high, in long rows, awaiting biweekly export by rail.

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<sup>124</sup> See the graph, "Histogramme de répartition par sujets, des oeuvres d'art exposées au Musée d'Art Moderne en août 1942, en nombre, d'après le catalogue." Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite*, 394.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

Over 29,000 boxcars were filled during the Occupation, yet the basement was still full when Paris was liberated.<sup>126</sup>

The most famous art exhibition of the Vichy period was not the Museum of Modern Art's inaugural, but rather Arno Breker's retrospective at the Orangerie des Tuileries, which opened on 15 May 1942.<sup>127</sup> An exhibition of sculptures by Hitler's favorite living artist, it stands out as a case of Franco-German cultural collaboration: Breker was not forced upon the French by their conquerors, but invited. He was an exemplar of the artist of the New Order, decorated with the Gold Badge of the Nazi Party for his aesthetic contributions to the Reich, and one of a select few who accompanied Hitler on his brief triumphal tour of Paris in 1940.<sup>128</sup> He was honored with receptions and champagne toasts by Abel Bonnard, Jacques Benoist-Méchin<sup>129</sup>, Georges Grappe,<sup>130</sup> André Derain, Alphonse de Chateaubriant,<sup>131</sup> Otto Abetz, Karl Epting,<sup>132</sup> and Prime Minister Laval.<sup>133</sup> According to Bertrand Dorléac, a "quasi-general hostility" was sensed among the

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<sup>126</sup> Nicholas, 138-139, 179.

<sup>127</sup> The exhibition was scheduled for ten weeks, from 15 May to 31 July (see Cone, *Artists Under Vichy* 161); however, a German catalogue suggests it was held over until 31 August (see Wilson 120).

<sup>128</sup> The three-hour tour occurred on 28 June, early in the day, without fanfare. Hitler also brought along his architects, Albert Speer and Hermann Giesler. The rest of his entourage were military officers and film and press agents. David Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich: A History of the German Occupation, 1940-1944* (London: Collins, 1981) 12.

<sup>129</sup> French Secretary of State. Author of a history of the German army, taken prisoner during the invasion, in the summer of 1940 Benoist-Méchin was appointed Vichy's delegate for prisoners in Berlin by Georges Scapini, who was then Pétain's ambassador to Germany. Benoist-Méchin became a delegate-at-large. He accompanied Admiral Darlan to Berchtesgaden in 1941 and was named Secretary of State by Laval in April 1942. See Venner 543-545.

<sup>130</sup> Curator of the Rodin Museum and head of the Fine Art section of Groupe Collaboration.

<sup>131</sup> Chairman of Groupe Collaboration and publisher of the weekly *La Gerbe*.

<sup>132</sup> Director of the German Institute.

<sup>133</sup> Pierre Laval took office on 26 April 1942, after a hiatus of 16 months, during which time he was replaced by Pierre Flandin and Admiral François Darlan.

ninety journalists at the press conference held prior to the exhibition;<sup>134</sup> however, she provides no details and no source. Breker himself later recalled the journalists' "frantic applause" when he promised that "nobody who was critical would be harmed," and the exhibition was "more or less as it would have been in peacetime."<sup>135</sup> Undoubtedly, many Parisians were disdainful of Breker's work; however, there seems to be no record of any French art exhibition during the Second World War receiving as many visitors—up to 2000 paying entries per day,<sup>136</sup> amounting to a total of 80,000.<sup>137</sup> The visitors included Maillol, Despiau, Vlaminck, Landowski, André Dunoyer de Segonzac,<sup>138</sup> Fernand de Brinon,<sup>139</sup> Marcel Déat,<sup>140</sup> Sacha Guitry,<sup>141</sup> and a number of Germans, including Göring and Speer. Marshal Pétain was conspicuously absent, but he did send Breker a congratulatory letter, explaining that he had to keep his distance for reasons of politics and security.<sup>142</sup> Simone de Beauvoir maintains that "almost all" of the French intelligentsia boycotted the exhibition,<sup>143</sup> and Yvon Bizardel cynically recalls the excuses made by friends and colleagues who attended, including

<sup>134</sup> "[L]e sculpteur eut beau se heurter à une hostilité quasi générale..." *L'art de la défaite* 94.

<sup>135</sup> Quoted in Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich*, 220.

<sup>136</sup> Wilson, 119.

<sup>137</sup> Venner 195. Far greater numbers, including many schoolchildren, visited the free exhibitions on Freemasons, Jews, European France and Bolshevism, but those were exhibitions of documents and paraphernalia, not art exhibitions. See Burrin 292-295; Jackson 198-199.

<sup>138</sup> One of the Young Painters in the French Tradition.

<sup>139</sup> The first French journalist received by Hitler in 1933, and acquainted with Abetz since 1937, de Brinon was Vichy's delegate to Occupied France. In 1942 Laval made him a Secretary of State.

<sup>140</sup> Leader of the Rassemblement National Populaire (RNP), one of several ultracollaborationist groups.

<sup>141</sup> Comedian and dramatist, author of 120 plays, and a devout Pétainist.

<sup>142</sup> Dorléac, *Histoire de l'art*, 92.

<sup>143</sup> "Presque toute l'intelligentsia [sic] française bouda l'exposition Arno Breker...." Simone de Beauvoir, *La force de l'âge* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) 528.

"politeness" and "professional obligation,"<sup>144</sup> but the ticket sales suggest that there were many others who simply wanted to see the art.

The initiative for showing Breker's sculptures in France came not from the Germans but from Jacques Benoist-Méchin and Pierre Drieu la Rochelle,<sup>145</sup> who in 1934 joined Breker's friend Abetz in the Comité France-Allemagne.<sup>146</sup> In 1940, after the defeat, they implored Breker to exhibit his work in Paris for the sake of Franco-German reconciliation. Benoist-Méchin later wrote, "To do the Breker exhibition was just to continue an old friendship,"<sup>147</sup> but that is clearly an understatement. In late 1940 Benoist-Méchin was Vichy's delegate in Berlin for prisoners of war. He was probably hoping to get concessions for French prisoners, some of whom worked for Breker, who had one hundred assistants at his studio in Germany, including the son of the head of police, Bousquet, and the son of the publisher Flammarion.<sup>148</sup> As it turned out, Breker only released a founder named Eugène Rudier, who had worked for Rodin, and put him in charge of casting the bronzes for the exhibition. By his own account, Breker also prevented Picasso, "a great coward," from being arrested by the Gestapo, and

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<sup>144</sup> See Bizardel 161-165 for his recollections of some amusing comments and dialogues.

<sup>145</sup> First Benoist-Méchin and then Drieu approached Breker in Berlin with the same proposal, according to Breker's memoir, *Im Strahlungsfeld der Ereignisse, 1925-1965*, excerpted in David Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich*, 220. Drieu was a novelist and a fascist who, under the aegis of Abetz, directed the top literary magazine in France, *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.

<sup>146</sup> Venner 62-63; Pryce-Jones, op. cit., 217-218.

<sup>147</sup> Quoted in Pryce-Jones, op. cit., 218.

<sup>148</sup> Both served as Breker's secretaries. Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 160.

arranged for the release of Maillol's teenage Russian Jewish model and mistress, Dina Vierny, who was about to be deported to Auschwitz.<sup>149</sup>

Breker greatly admired Maillol, whom he once visited at the master's home in Banyuls-sur-Mer, near the Spanish border. In his youth, Breker spent several years in Paris, where he associated with other figurative sculptors, including Despiau, who had been an assistant to Rodin.<sup>150</sup> In 1933 he went to Fascist Italy, where he saw Michelangelo's *David*, which inspired him to adopt a shiny, muscular, oversized style of sculpture that he called "street art."<sup>151</sup> Upon returning to Germany he caught Hitler's attention with his classical nudes, and soon he was flush with state commissions. In 1938 two of his forceful male figures, *Torchbearer* and *Swordbearer*, were stationed at the entrance of the new Reich Chancellery. The artist was provided with an enormous studio at Jäckelsbruch, near Berlin, where he started working on gigantic reliefs, some fifteen meters tall, for the vast new buildings that Hitler planned to raise in Berlin.<sup>152</sup>

Now the artist laureate of the Third Reich, Breker returned to Paris. He was given the "superb" apartment of the Jewish American Helena Rubenstein, which

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<sup>149</sup> See Pryce-Jones, op. cit., 220; Cone, op. cit., 161.

<sup>150</sup> Breker was in Montparnasse from 1924 to 1933. Some sources describe him as a pupil of Despiau, who was a pupil of Rodin, but according to the biography on the Charles Despiau website, Breker merely consulted with Despiau, who was a paid assistant to Rodin, not a pupil. See [www.charles-despiau.com/en/bio.htm](http://www.charles-despiau.com/en/bio.htm)

<sup>151</sup> In an interview with Michèle Cone in 1984. See Cone, *Artist Under Vichy*, 159.

<sup>152</sup> These included a triumphal arch more than double the size of the Arc de Triomphe, and a great domed hall several times larger than St. Peter's Basilica. Speer 115-116.

Abetz had Aryanized especially for him.<sup>153</sup> Thirty tons of bronze were required to cast his sculptures, some of which may have been rendered from the French statues torn down and melted by writ of the Government, as described earlier. Regardless, Breker denied the political import of his visit, saying: "Je ne viens pas ici faire de la propagande, je viens simplement soumettre mes travaux, au pays de Rodin, de Maillol et de Despiau, envers qui j'ai, en tant qu'artiste, un dette de reconnaissance à payer."<sup>154</sup>

Abel Bonnard officiated at the opening, saying Breker's work was representative of the new Germany, whose colossal feats preserved Europe from a "flood of darkness" from the East. His sycophantic speech, equal to the most overblown Nazi propaganda, cast France in the role of sidekick to the valiant Germany. He described the German sculptor's grim male archetype as "*le supérieur d'un peuple de frères*" and harbinger of a new epoch, "*une époque qui soit grande*."<sup>155</sup> Benoist-Méchin went even further, praising not only Breker's sculpture but also his Führer,

un homme passionné d'architecture qui a suscité une pléiade de talents . . . [grâce à qui] l'art cesse d'être un luxe réservé à quelques amateurs privilégiés . . . mais [est] relié, comme dans les années les plus fécondes du XVe et du XVIe siècles italiens, à la vie la plus directe et la plus intime de la nation.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Bizardel, 157.

<sup>154</sup> *Arno Breker: 60 ans de sculpture* (Paris: Jacques Damase, 1981) 124.

<sup>155</sup> "Discours prononcé par Abel Bonnard à l'inauguration de l'exposition Arno Breker à l'Orangerie des Tuileries, le 15 mai 1942," <http://abelbonnard.free.fr/breker.htm>

<sup>156</sup> Quoted in Bertrand Dorléac, *Histoire de l'art*, 93.

Jean Cocteau, who once described Hitler as "a poet beyond the comprehension of the souls of drudges,"<sup>157</sup> delivered an ode that was published in the new art review, *Comoedia*.<sup>158</sup>

Je vous salue, Breker. Je vous salue de la haute patrie des poètes, patrie où les patries n'existent pas, sauf dans la mesure où chacun y apporte le trésor du travail national. Je vous salue parce que . . . la grande main du David de Michel-Ange vous a montré votre route. Parce que vous nous parlez de la France.<sup>159</sup>

The last line seems to express a hope that French men aspired to be like Breker's, which were for the most part overbearing, tense, hard-muscled athletes and gods. They epitomized the Aryan "superman" (*Übermensch*), in the nude. To find comparable physiognomy in French art one needs to look back to the *Oath of the Horatii* or *Death of Socrates* by Jacques-Louis David; but in those paintings, clothing breaks up the muscular tension, which in Breker's works is unrelenting. Although Breker was inspired by Michelangelo's *David*, his sculptures entirely lack the illusory softness of the latter, which keeps the muscular tension in check. The "exaggerated virility" of Breker's nudes "reflects a disturbing, homoerotic aspect of Fascist [sic] ideology," as Sarah Wilson puts it,<sup>160</sup> which is obvious in the relief sculptures *The Sacrifice*, in which a dying warrior seems to be flexing every

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<sup>157</sup> Quoted in Philippe Burrin, *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: New Press, 1996) 348.

<sup>158</sup> The weekly art and literature review was originally published from 1906 to 1936. It was revived in 1941 by Paul Delange, with the permission of the Propaganda Abteilung. Contributors included Bazaine, Brasillach, Montherlant, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Venner, 659-660.

<sup>159</sup> Excerpt from "Salut à Breker" (*Comoedia*, 23 May 1942), reprinted in Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite* 332.

<sup>160</sup> Wilson 118.

muscle of his arching body, and *Comrades*,<sup>161</sup> in which an overwrought warrior holds the limp body of his comrade—a motif that recalls the classical *Menelaus Holding the Body of Patroclus*,<sup>162</sup> which Breker would have seen in Italy. These were two of several sword-bearing figures, including the free-standing *Preparedness* (*Bereitschaft*) [Fig. 31], which were exhibited along with the unarmed *Conqueror* (*Die Sieger*), *Casualty* (*Der Verwundete*), *Olympic Torchbearer*, and other bronze and marble nudes, twice as large as life.

Breker seldom sculpted women, and apparently only two female figures were included in the Paris exhibition, both of which were imperious Aryan figures. Even *Anmut*, one of the Three Graces, towered over the spectators like a nude Olympian goddess.<sup>163</sup> Maillol, who travelled a great distance at the age of eighty-one to see the Breker show, was disappointed. He told a friend, “Breker works too big these days.”<sup>164</sup> The sculptures were of the classical genre, but also of a forceful and haughty spirit that was alien to the art of Maillol, Despiau, Drivier, and other French classicists. When Breker proposed to make a gift of one of his statues, Pétain politely turned him down, saying he would prefer to have a *Grace antique*.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> See *The Sacrifice* and *Comrades* in Arno Breker: *60 ans de sculpture*, 79, 85. .

<sup>162</sup> Located in the Loggia dei Lanzi, on the Piazza della Signoria in Florence, which Breker could hardly have missed when he saw *David*. See the sculpture at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Firenze.Loggia.Menelaus.jpg>

<sup>163</sup> See photographs taken *in situ* reprinted in Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite* and *Histoire de l'art*, n.p. The female figure *Anmut* is shown in full at <http://arno.breker.free.fr/statuenazie.htm>

<sup>164</sup> Quoted in Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 162.

<sup>165</sup> Dorléac, *L'Art de la défaite*, 100.





Fig. 31. *Preparedness*, bronze, by Arno Breker, c. 1942; rpt. in Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la défaite 1940-1944* (Paris: Éditions Seuil, 1993) n.p.

The popularity of Breker's exhibition lay partly in the appeal of his primary subject, the ideal male physique, which was fundamental to National Socialist aesthetics and race propaganda. Tall, Nordic, physically fit youths and soldiers played key parts in Nazi art and films, including a film shot in France in 1940 that showed scrawny, dark, dentally deficient French and allied prisoners of war, for contrast. The Germans' appearance of physical fitness, even beauty, and orderliness, made up part of their "skillfully indirect method" of propaganda in preparation for conquest.<sup>166</sup> "I must say that the German Army made quite an impression on the youth at that time," recalls Christian de la Mazière, one of thousands of French youths to join a French division of the Waffen-SS. "To see these soldiers, stripped to the waist! [They were] disciplined . . . an ideal army . . . they put the fear of God into everyone. It's terrible but I have to say it. It's the truth."<sup>167</sup> Breker's art contributed to the myth of German superiority, which had profound effects.

The published works on graphics and fine art under Vichy reveal few examples of French art comparable to Breker's, but there is no telling what was destroyed, nor what might have been produced had the regime lasted longer. (Romy Golan writes, "a strange 'gap' occurs in the photographic archives of the

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<sup>166</sup> Yves Simon observed, "Through a skillfully indirect method, propaganda has achieved the artillery preparation . . . the motorized columns can advance, Hitler has already won the battle of France." Yves Simon, *The Road to Vichy 1918-1938* (1942) *Revised Edition*, trans. James A. Corbett & George J. McMorrow (Lanham: U P America, 1988) 150.

<sup>167</sup> (My translation.) *The Sorrow and the Pity* DVD Part I, Chapter 8.

Mobilier National for the years 1941 to 1945.”)<sup>168</sup> A tapestry by Jean-Paul Montagnac, which was exhibited at the Orangerie in 1943, may provide a clue. *Youth and the Return to the Soil* [Fig. 32] could easily be mistaken for a work from the Great German Art exhibition, but it was actually a product of the *Service Artistique du Maréchal* organized by Robert Lallement, and part of an exhibition celebrating traditional French tapestry skills, “*Cartons et tapisseries modernes des Manufactures Nationales*.” The tapestry depicts a utopian pastoral scene with allegorical doves, flowers, and three Graces in gossamer tunics; but what distinguishes it from other idyllic harvest scenes is the shirtless *Übermensch* at left, with wife and children at his feet. The fair-haired figure with rippling muscles is reminiscent of Breker’s sculptures, the German soldiers seen by Christian de la Mazière, and the German Man, stripped to the waist, commonly depicted in Nazi art as in the children’s book, *Trust No Fox*. (“The German is a proud man who can work and fight. He is beautiful and full of courage.”)<sup>169</sup> Montagnac’s tapestry is not anti-Semitic in any way, but its depiction of French manhood is identical to the Aryan-German type.

Albert Bouquillon, who won the Prix de Rome for sculpture in 1934, exhibited a classical female figure at the 1942 Salon whose description closely

<sup>168</sup> Golan, 209-210 n. 27. The Mobilier National is responsible for furniture, including carpets and tapestries, belonging to the State.

<sup>169</sup> Quoted in Adam, 12. See illustration at [www.ushmm.org/uia-gi/uia\\_doc/query/39?uf=uia\\_ZqBWzI](http://www.ushmm.org/uia-gi/uia_doc/query/39?uf=uia_ZqBWzI)

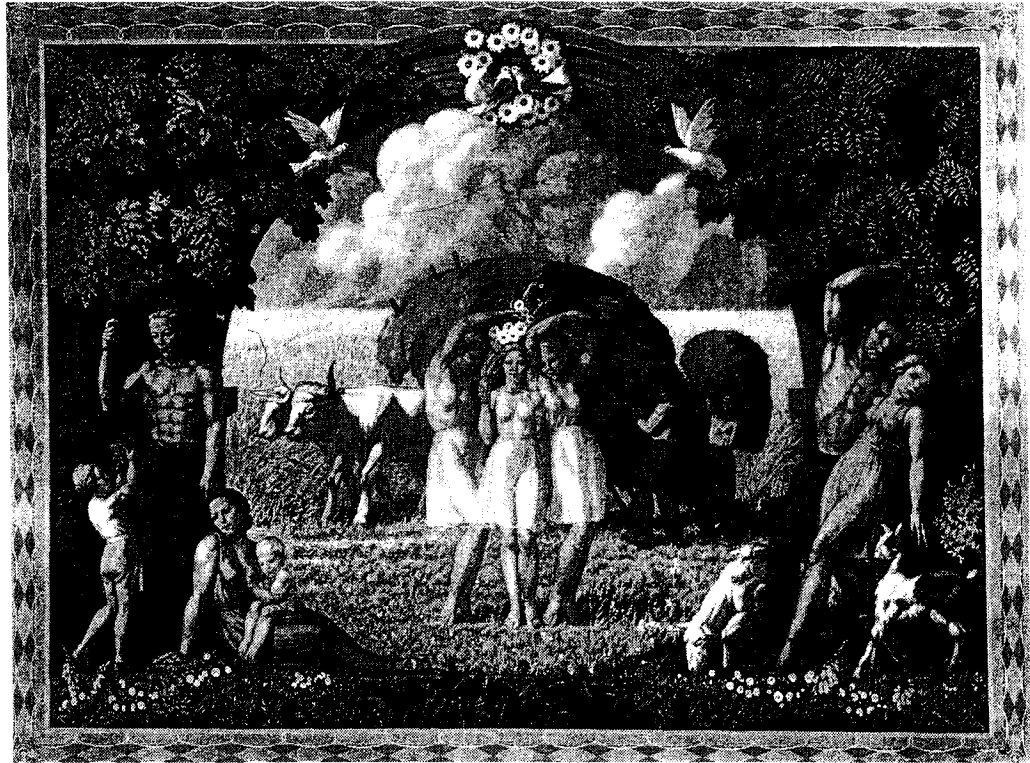


Fig. 32. *Youth and the Return to the Soil*, tapestry, by Jean-Paul Montagnac, 1942; rpt. in Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars* (New Haven : Yale U P, 1995) 161.

resembles that of Breker's females;<sup>170</sup> but it was his male figure, *The Athlete*,<sup>171</sup> that implicated him in Vichy's racial propaganda when it appeared as the ideal type of man, versus Jewish caricatures, at the sociological exhibition "*Le Juif et la France*," in Paris in 1941. Bouquillon was one of Bouchard's pupils at the Academie des Beaux-Arts, and benefited from his teacher's friendship with Louis Hautecoeur, who commissioned him to do some sculptures in Marseilles; but after the Liberation he was accused of collaboration and disqualified for any government art commissions.

The only French works explicitly concerned with the aesthetics of race were the plaster sculptures made by René Péron for "*Le Juif et la France*," but those were three-dimensional caricatures, blatant propaganda, not fine art. One was a huge, ugly male head, showing "typical" Jewish features; the other a colossal woman, possibly France or Europa, with a small child, towering over a sinister Jew clutching the Earth.<sup>172</sup> They were meant to express ugliness and disharmony, precisely the opposite goal of fine art, *les beaux-arts*. Péron and Michel Jacquot, who went to work in Germany, both made posters for the exhibition depicting the Jew as a hook-nosed villain, but such hateful racial stereotypes form a small part of the images produced in Vichy France. The tragic fate of French Jews seems to have resulted from animosity based on religion and social history, without

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<sup>170</sup> *Le Génie de la musique* is described by Michèle Cone as "a tall, Wagnerian heroine with broad shoulders, small breasts, and stern stance, towering immobile over her viewers." *Artists Under Vichy*, 69.

<sup>171</sup> Cone refers to the piece as *The Perfect Athlete*, which may have been the title under which it appeared at the exhibition "*Le Juif et la France*." See [www.bouquillon.com/images/athlete.jpg](http://www.bouquillon.com/images/athlete.jpg)

<sup>172</sup> See reproductions in Gervereau and Peschanski, 103; Gilles Perrault and Jean-Pierre Azema, *Paris Under the Occupation* (Paris: Vendome, 1989) 85.

need of many new images. While Jews were demonized at the exhibition, set up by Vichy's commissariat for Jewish affairs (the *Commissariat-général aux questions juives*), people of other ethnicities, not of the French race represented by Joan of Arc or Pétain, were celebrated. In a poster published in 1941, the faces of three French colonials are shown side by side: a tan African, a black African and a yellow Asian, in front of the *tricolore*, with the caption, "Three colors, one flag, one Empire."<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Designed by Eric Castel for the Secretariat of State for the Colonies, edited by the Secretariat General of Information. See reproduction in Gervereau and Peschanski, 17.

## CONCLUSION

The historian Marc Bloch, who served in the French Army during both World Wars, attributed Pétain's empowerment in 1940 to "a form of collective psychosis," which was directly related to Pétain's popular image.

In the eyes of the defeated, uniforms bristling with badges of rank and smothered in decorations symbolize not only sacrifices willingly endured on the field of battle, but also the glories of our past and, quite possibly, of our future.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1940 the majority of the French people still thought of the eighty-four-year-old marshal as the hero of Verdun, a genuine patriot, even though he surrendered France to the Nazis. Artists helped to maintain the illusion. The Vichy regime produced ideational images by the millions, to inspire and indoctrinate the masses. Whereas Bloch was immune to Pétainist propaganda,<sup>2</sup> there were many others whose faith in Pétain and the New Order may be attributable to the effects of imagery; perhaps one of those was Madame Solange, the hairdresser interviewed by Marcel Ophüls in *The Sorrow and the Pity*,<sup>3</sup> who could not explain why she liked Pétain, only that she always liked him.<sup>3</sup> Chances are she was won over by his grandfatherly image, which she would have seen virtually every day for four years.

Images, which preach without ceasing, as Diderot put it, set examples for the people to follow and inspired them with visions of a bright future under the

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat: A statement of evidence written in 1940*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (New York: Octagon, 1968) 26.

<sup>2</sup> Bloch, who was Jewish, worked for the Resistance until 1944, when he was caught and executed.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Sorrow and the Pity*, DVD Part II, Chapter 14.

New Order. They represented French national pride, unity, and continuity at a time when the nation was actually humiliated, divided, and exploited. They also diverted attention from the Germans and directed animosity toward Freemasons, Communists, and Jews, the scapegoats for France's defeat.

Vichy's fascist inclination is evinced by the symbol of the National Police, the double-bladed *fascies*. It is true that the Roman *fascies* had been borrowed by republicans as well as fascists: Jacobin artists employed it as an attribute of the goddess Fraternity<sup>4</sup> in allegorical images of the nascent French Republic; and in the nineteenth century the United States House of Representatives was decorated with a pair of bronze *fascies*, which remain on the wall behind the speaker's dais; but in both cases, the device represents the unity and strength of a republic. When the French National Police adopted the *fascies* in 1941 it was well known as the symbol of Fascism; its association with Mussolini's doctrine could not be overlooked. The fact that the French police were willing to identify themselves with the *fascies* at that particular time, and were permitted by Pétain to do so, suggests that theirs was a parafascist state.

Other images and emblems contribute to this view. Whereas the instance of a crowd saluting Pétain in fascist style, as in Marseilles in 1940, may seem out of the ordinary, a number of posters depicting the same straight-arm salute were actually published by the Vichy government between 1940 and 1942,<sup>5</sup> meaning

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<sup>4</sup> James Leith, *Media and Revolution* (Toronto: CBC Publications, 1968) 48.

<sup>5</sup> See reproductions in Gervereau and Peschanski 60, 66, 136.



that there was official approval and some intention, however limited, of propagating the gesture. The semiotic link between the Milice's gamma and the Nazi's gammadion (*croix gammée*, *Hakenkreuz*, swastika), is further evidence of Vichy's fascist inclination.

Regarding education, Pétain plainly expressed his admiration for the Fascist and National Socialist models. No wonder that the slates, books, posters and board games created for schoolchildren promoted patriotism, and emphasized military and athletic prowess instead of intellectual or cultural achievement. Men were depicted as warriors or field workers, women as mothers or domestic workers. Recurrent images of knights, swords, lances, axes, and warriors who gave their lives for France, represented a violent romanticism that was essential to fascist ideology.

Conservative tastes prevailed in France's galleries and museums, but not to the extent that all traces of twentieth-century innovativeness were eliminated. Humanism and rusticism, which had gained popularity during the interwar years, predominated; traditional figurative art assumed new importance within the context of national *redressement*; but Fauvism and Cubism, which could be considered purely French, remained. For Braque, Picasso, Matisse and other avant-gardists, things could have been worse. Picasso was unable to exhibit, but he could have been locked up. The others were free to exhibit and sell their work because Vichy approved, and also because Hitler's functionaries in France did not share his fanatical views on art. One report by the Cultural Affairs division of

the *Propaganda Abteilung* reveals that the German authorities were still trying to establish "an unambiguous position" as late as January 1944.<sup>6</sup> In some cases, the Germans purchased Modern art: according to Bizardel, in 1942 an *occupant* bought a Cézanne for six million francs, at least ten times more than the price paid for a Breughel or Rembrandt.<sup>7</sup> By the time Hitler learned that "degenerate" art was being shown in Paris, it seems he no longer felt threatened by it. He had expunged it in Germany, which mattered most, and after he saw Paris he turned his attention to Berlin. "When we finish in Berlin," he said to Speer, "Paris will only be a shadow."<sup>8</sup>

Further information on the German censors, their relationship to the Embassy and to Abetz personally, would have been useful here. More statistics about art production and distribution, and the words of ordinary French citizens concerning art exhibitions and Pétainist imagery, would have been most helpful to this study. For a better understanding of the relationship between aesthetics and fascism, however, a broader perspective is needed, which could be provided by a comprehensive, comparative study of art in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Vichy France.

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<sup>6</sup> See "Report of the Propaganda-Abteilung on the Visual Arts, January 1944" in Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, 187.

<sup>7</sup> See Bizardel, 118-120.

<sup>8</sup> Speer, 237.

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24. *German Soil*, oil, by Werner Peiner, in the Great German Art Exhibition of 1937; rpt. in Peter Adam, *The Arts of the Third Reich* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) 131.
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26. *Bull's Head*, bronze cast of parts of a bicycle, by Pablo Picasso, 1942; rpt. in H. W. Janson, *History of Art*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986) 9.
27. *Venus*, bronze, by Aristide Maillol, 1925; rpt. in *Paris 1937: L'art indépendant: Exposition présentée dans le cadre du cinquantième de l'Exposition Internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* (Paris: Paris-Musées, 1987) 114.
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