Candide ou camouflé, partout ou nulle part? Art and Anti-Semitism in *Candide*, *Gringoire*, and *Je suis partout*

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ABSTRACT

Candide ou camouflé, partout ou nulle part? Art and Anti-Semitism in *Candide*, *Gringoire*, and *Je suis partout*

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In the years that followed World War I, conditions in Europe were the major reason for the rise of extreme Right and extreme Left parties. A unique period in history, it invested many aspects of life with its characteristic political atmosphere. Not least among these dimensions was art, which - according to the ambiguous aesthetic guidelines of the time - was perceived, politicized, and produced differently by the various parties throughout Europe. For the western-European Right, one unambiguous guideline pervaded and transcended the Franco-Germanic border: anti-Semitism.

In an attempt to contribute to the debate that surrounds the cultural politics of inter-war and Occupation France, this thesis looks at the three leading weekly newspapers produced by the French Right, namely *Candide*, *Gringoire*, and *Je suis partout*. Covering the period from 1936 to 1944, it seeks to understand how the arts were dealt with, especially but not exclusively by the resident art critics at each of the newspapers. Considering occasional editorials, reviews, news snippets, and even cartoons, this thesis argues above all that though anti-Semitism and lament for the current state of the French arts are both ubiquitous, the link between the two - made elsewhere in France and Europe, before, during, and after the period under discussion - is not made before the Occupation, and is only made by one writer at *Je suis partout* in the occupied capital city.

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INTRODUCTION

The years that followed World War I constitute a unique period in history, one that fatally shaped the nations of Europe. France, supposedly among the victors of a war that had been fought mostly on its own soil, struggled to come to terms with a peace that did little to calm French nerves. As the uncertainty and restlessness in interwar Europe increased, extreme right and extreme left parties, within France as well as without, rose to prominence. In some cases, like in Russia, Germany, and Italy, these parties came to rule their respective countries. This not only had very real implications in their own territories, but also influenced and encouraged opinions and activities in other territories. Most (if not all) aspects of life in Europe in this period realized their full political potential. When the Second World War began, occupation did little to de-politicize the various dimensions of life in Europe.

Not least among these was art, which – according to the ambiguous aesthetic guidelines of the time – was perceived, politicized, and produced differently throughout Europe. Art took on an unprecedented importance and relevance in the interwar period, and the French capital was widely regarded as the center for contemporary modern art. As such, Paris was inevitably entangled in the backlash against –and the defence of - the avant-garde, which became synonymous with the political Left. For the western-European political Right, aesthetic sensibilities tended to gravitate toward the general themes of traditionalism, nationalism, anti-modernism, and anti-academism. Still, this did not mean that tastes were uniform throughout the right wing parties and their supporters. Nationalism and traditionalism, inherently native, were certainly not conducive to cross-

border uniformity. However, one seemingly unambiguous guideline pervaded and transcended the Franco-Germanic border: anti-Semitism. This particular brand of xenophobia manifested itself in the arts in France before and during the Occupation, and complicated matters for aesthetes who tried to reconcile the various (and often contradictory) strands of their ideology and their tastes.

There have been many studies on France in the nineteen thirties and forties, nearly all of which address the issues outlined above, and historians continue to struggle with the complexities of the period. However, the efforts are divided up along very firm and well-defined lines, ones which historians and art-historians alike have been comfortable with. The first of these is the line drawn by conventional – if convenient – periodization. Frequently, the history of France in the 1930s and early 1940s is broken up into two parts, whereby the first (1930-1939) belongs to a period of appeasement and decadence, while the second (1940-1944) is the period of the Vichy regime and the Occupation. This is especially true of works by art historians. Even though various dates are chosen throughout the 1930s as starting points – usually in response to political events, as in 1933, 1936, and 1938 – these studies often end in 1940. The implicit emphasis is on discontinuity, though it is overtly political and military discontinuity. Hence, studies are either of art in the period before the Occupation, or they are studies of art during the Occupation.[1] However, this use of the Occupation as a bookend does not lend itself well

[1] An authority in the field, Michèle Cone's works demonstrate this trend: "Art and Politics in France during the German Occupation, 1940-44." Ph.D. diss., (New York University, 1988); *Artists Under Vichy:A Case of Prejudice and Persecution*, (New Jersey: Princeton university Press, 1992); "French Art of the Present in Hitler's Berlin", *Art Bulletin* vol. 80 (September 1998) pp. 555-567. It is only with her most recent work, *French Modernisms: Perspectives on Art Before, During, and After Vichy,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) that she transcends 1940 (though it is still the reference point).

to studies of art. There is a general consensus that little changed in the French art community with the signing of the Armistice, and that it continued to flourish. This, combined with the Nazis' concerted efforts (which were relatively successful) to maintain a sense of everyday normalcy, suggest that June 1940 is not a useful starting point for a work dealing with the arts in France. To isolate the Occupation for this purpose is also curious, given that Pétain – unlike his National Socialist counterpart – had very little interest in art. Even his project for *L'Art Maréchal* was begun well after the Vichy regime came to power, and it never approached the scale of deification-through-art that it did east of the border, in Germany and Russia. Moreover, periodization that transcends the barrier of June 1940 need not preclude the possibility of arguing discontinuity, and can serve as a framework for interesting comparisons.

Another of these dividing lines is disciplinary, by which the fine arts are separated from the other aspects of the past, traditionally regarded as being strictly 'historical'. Though the two are by no means mutually exclusive, the efforts to incorporate and contextualize seldom extend beyond acknowledgement of the other, frequently in citations of the best-known works and suggestions for further reading. However, historians look primarily at what are considered to be more socio-political sources (state documents, memoirs, newspapers and so on), while art historians focus on sources of more directly artistic relevance (art journals, artists' writings, exhibition catalogues and so on). Even with the upsurge of inter-disciplinary approaches over the last couple of generations of historians and art historians, there are still areas that have yet to be done justice. This is not to say that, for example, the chapter on culture in Eugen Weber's *The*

Hollow Years[2] (one of the most important overviews of French society in the interwar period), is without merit. Nor is Cone's study of the arts in *Artists Under Vichy* without a proper socio-political grounding. The fact remains that historians go to sources familiar to them to write history, and art historians do the same to write art history.

In this thesis, I intend to go against the grain in both of the aforementioned methodological tendencies. Using three of the most popular and most important right wing, anti-Semitic weekly newspapers in France, namely *Gringoire, Candide,* and *Je suis partout*, I will look at how the arts were addressed in these publications of the 'ordinary' press, for the period 1936-1944.

The dates chosen respond to both socio-political and aesthetic considerations. Politically, 1936 was a watershed year. In Spain, the Civil War broke out and caused much agitation in France. To the east, Germany remilitarized the Rhineland, in direct violation of the Versailles Treaty. In France itself, Léon Blum's Popular Front government – comprised of socialists and radicals, and supported by the French communists - came to power, much to the dismay of the French Right. Artistically, the watershed appears to be 1937. It was in this year that France sent an exhibition to Germany of French modern art, and hosted the much-criticized International Exhibition. It is also the year that Hitler simultaneously opened the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst* and the *Entartete Kunst* exhibitions in Munich. However, the criticism of the Popular Front's perceived misrepresentation of true France and true French art in the International Exhibition began in 1936. In Germany, though the exhibits of 1937 certainly put an exclamation point on Nazi aesthetic sentiment, examples of the art that the Nazis sought

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[2] Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994).

to promote had been seen in 1936 at the Olympics. What's more, news had trickled out of Germany that Dr. Joseph Goebbels had banned all art criticism, and critics would have to be registered with the *Kulturkammer*. As for the end date, 1944 is obviously the year of the Liberation. However, it is not for this reason that it is chosen, but rather because it is the year that all three of the weekly newspapers ceased to publish.

In using these newspapers as a voice of French right wing, anti-Semitic, even fascist aesthetics, this thesis takes a road less traveled. Almost none of the works by art historians consider the three newspapers.[3] René de Livois' *Histoire de la Presse Française*[4], still considered a work well worth consulting, gives no indication that *Gringoire, Candide,* and *Je suis partout* all had regular fine arts columns. Even Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat's book *Je suis partout 1930-1944*[5] makes little mention of the columns and editorials that deal with artistic and aesthetic concerns. When an historian does deal with the fine arts writings in these newspapers, as David Carroll does in *French Literary Fascism*[6], it is only the writings of the fascist anti-Semite Lucien Rebatet that are of interest. A result of historians' tendencies to view history in terms of heroes and villains, it is the fascists, the virulent anti-Semites and the sensationalism that is attached to them that have piqued the interests of most historians. This has meant that of the art-related columns and editorials in the three weeklies for the period 1936-1944, only those that support the notion that anti-Semitism manifested itself in French fascist aesthetics have been studied thus far. This translates to fewer than thirty "Beaux Arts" columns, written

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[3] Michèle Cone, in *Artists Under Vichy*, cites *Je suis partout*, but it is as part of a chapter on Lucien Rebatet, (pp. 20-25) rather than an analysis of the newspaper itself.

[4] René De Livois, *Histoire de la Presse Française*, 2 vols., (Paris: Éditions Spes, 1965).

[5] Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat, *Je Suis Partout 1933-1944: Les Maurrassiens Devant la Tentation Fasciste*, (Paris: Éditions de la Table Ronde, 1973).

[6] David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the*

by Rebatet, and appearing in *Je suis partout* between 1941 and 1944. Though they are important writings, using them only to confirm that Rebatet was an anti-Semite is less than fulfilling, since this is already well known. It is when compared and contrasted with all of the other arts-related writings that appeared in *Je suis partout*, as well as *Gringoire* and *Candide* that these diatribes become interesting. With the fascist conquest of the art world in Nazi Germany – which was not lacking in French admirers and supporters – it is surprising that such vital expressions of Right wing opinion have been largely ignored for their views on art prior to the rantings of Lucien Rebatet.

Given the time period, the situation in Germany, and the political leanings of the three newspapers (the very reason they were selected), the material was certainly approached with expectations, many of which were met and some of which were, surprisingly, not. There are the familiar stereotypical elements throughout all three of the newspapers: xenophobia, Anglophobia, anti-Communist rants, anti-Soviet rants, anti-Semitic rhetoric, attacks against the Popular Front and Léon Blum, conspiracy theories, drawings of hook-nosed Jews, and poorly concealed admiration for Nazi Germany. In looking at the regular fine arts columns, occasional reports and editorials, and even the cartoons dealing with the arts from the period 1936-1944, there is, however, a curious void. This thesis will argue that though there is abundant evidence of anti-Semitic feeling throughout the newspapers, and evidence of a perceived crisis in the art world, there is no direct, overt correlation made between the two, prior to Lucien Rebatet in *Je suis partout*. This is especially interesting, given the strong tradition of anti-Semitic aesthetic writing in France, which dates back to the 1920s.[7] It will also be argued that in looking at the

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Ideology of Culture, (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[7] Cone confirms this in *French Modernisms*: "Rebatet's argument that Jewish artists had

fine arts columns, a certain type of nationalism through affirmation of artistic past glories - different from the offensive, combative, and anti-foreigner nationalism commonly associated with the Right - is discernable.

Though the aim is to get as complete a picture as possible of how the arts were perceived and portrayed in these newspapers, the emphasis inevitably falls on the weekly art columns of the three newspapers.[8] In all three, the columns were written by art historians with monographs on art and art history to their credit (with the exception of Rebatet). In addition, editorials, reviews, and reports on art sporadically appeared throughout these newspapers, but especially in *Je suis partout*. Also to be considered are the cartoons that appeared regularly in all three of the weeklies, many of which – by comparison to today's press – frequently depicted art and artistic issues. The importance of these cartoons lies in their role of communicating on a lowest common denominator of readership understanding, sentiment, and sympathy. The message must be clear, familiar, and popular, which enables a cartoon to be absorbed and processed by the reader in an instant. As a result, while a reader might skip a lengthy editorial, most readers will pick up on the ideas communicated by cartoons. At once a potential shaper and a reflection of popular sentiment, the accessibility of cartoons makes them a source that should not be ignored. Moreover, they present the interesting idea of art depicting art, even if one of the

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'infiltrated' the Paris art world and received more attention than their due, thanks to a well-organized network of partisan critics and dealers, was hardly new." p.74. See for example Fritz Vanderpyl, "Existe-il une peinture juive?", *Mercure de France* 15 (novemebre, 1925) pp. 386-96; Louis Hautecoeur, *Considérations sur l'art d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Librairie de France, 1929); Camille Mauclair, *La farce de l'art vivant: Une campagne picturale* (Paris: Nouvelle revue critique, 1929).

[8] As is to be expected, the column sometimes did not appear, especially during the Occupation when paper shortages caused the newspapers to dwindle from a peak length of twenty-two pages to a low of four. For the sake of differentiating, they will hereafter be referred to as the 'weekly' art columns, despite the occasional absences.

two is not counted among the *fine* arts.

For the frequency with which it will be used, it might be helpful (if not necessary) to briefly define what is intended by the word 'modern.' An immense topic in its own right, covering a wide range of human endeavours, it is here used in reference to art. As the eminent art historian Horst Woldemar Janson writes, it is in the etymology that a simple and workable definition can be found. The word itself has origins in the early medieval *modernus*, which itself ultimately derives from the Latin *modo*, meaning 'now.' Essentially, the medieval usage meant that which is present, or of our time, and as a consequence, is also current and new. As an artistic movement, it looks to the future, though it is ultimately subject to the constraints of modernity, that is to say, the present. Modernism in art can be said to have begun toward the end of the nineteenth century, with impressionism and the fallout of 'isms' that followed. Though in more distinguished art theory a division is made between 'avant-garde' and 'modern', it is unnecessary to detail the finer points of this distinction, and the terms are therefore treated as synonyms. Essentially, to the artists involved, "modernism is a trumpet call that both asserts their freedom to create in a new style and provides them with the mission to define the meaning of their times – and even to reshape society through their art."[9] Any art that was not traditional, conformist, academic, or conservative, and was created during or after the late 1800s, will be hereafter considered as 'modern' art.

The thesis will begin by establishing the contexts (political and aesthetic) in which the three newspapers, *Gringoire, Candide,* and *Je suis partout* were published. It will be followed by a brief look at these newspapers, the press generally, and some other

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[9] Horst Woldemar Janson, *History of Art*, 5th ed., rev. and exp. Anthony F. Janson, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997) pp. 640-644.

publications of the period. The third chapter will look at the occasional editorials and other articles, while the fourth will look at the cartoons that deal with art. The fifth and final chapter will deal with the weekly fine arts columns.

CHAPTER 1

PLÛTOT HITLER QUE BLUM, PLÛTOT BREKER QUE PICASSO: FRANCE AND ART 1936-1944

France had long been the center of the art world. With the advent of the impressionist movement, France became the center of the struggle – yet to be resolved – between modern, avant-garde art and traditional realism. As a result, many artists in France worked between the two extremes, in a movement that became known as the *juste milieu*. When World War I broke out and lasted longer than expected, the nonconformist dabbling of cultural and intellectual turn-of-the-century dilettantes did little to assuage the people of the host nation. As a result, a call for moderation in the arts led to an aesthetic reaffirmation of traditional values and recognizable themes. While technically France emerged from the First World War victorious, the social, political, and cultural repercussions were to be felt right through to the Second World War. The Great War had led to the disenchantment and disillusionment of many Europeans. These manifested themselves most evidently in the rise of extreme Right wing and extreme Left wing political parties, but also in the arts. Weber observes that while European politics became increasingly surreal, art responded in kind. He writes:

> Surrealist arts imitated contemporary politics by draining words of their original meaning, exploiting signs and symbols for their affective charge, incorporating the most effective clichés of publicity, mobilizing color, shape, motion, action, and their messages in the service of idiosyncrasy.[1]

The fates of art and politics, despite many artists' claims of being apolitical, were intertwined. Those who wanted only to work in art could not escape politicization and labeling, and those who intended to lead their nations were forced to make an aesthetic cultural statement. According to Romy Golan, "it is in France, a bastion of democracy

from 1918 to 1939, that one finds the most compelling demonstration of the covert interaction between art and politics."[2]

Many of the avant-garde artist refugees came to Paris during the 1920s and 1930s. The capital of modern art, in a country with relatively tolerant immigration laws, Paris beckoned artists such as Marc Chagall, Moïse Kisling, Amedeo Modigliani, and Chaim Soutine. In what may ultimately have contributed to their own demise, many of these artists sought to avoid being labeled as 'German' by exhibiting in and contributing to Jewish- or Communist-sponsored exhibitions, publications, and events.[3] Many artists and non-artists spoke of a new 'art for the people', and "dreamed of sculpting or painting for a classless society of workers only... [but] most of the art inspired by such ideals was abstract; much of it was banal; little of it spoke to the people it claimed to address."[4] The trouble was that the Modernists were perhaps too revolutionary. As Frederick Spotts opines, "they rejected the notion that art must be rooted in a nation's history, and they deliberately sought change and experimentation."[5] This was incongruent with popular sentiment.

In France, the popularity of conservatism was widespread. As a result, the threat that international artists posed to French culture was a threat "most frequently perceived and articulated by conservative guardians of the national culture."[6] An interesting parallel can be drawn between the popularity of conservatism in French politics and the

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[1] Weber, *The Hollow Years*, p. 225.
[2] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. xi.
[3] Keith Holz, "Modern German Art and its Public in Prague, Paris and London, 1933-1940", Ph.D. diss., (Northwestern, 1992) p. 29.
[4] Weber, *The Hollow Years*, p. 219.
[5] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics,* p. 159.
[6] Robert Young, *France and the Origins of the Second World War*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996) p. 115.

abandonment of the avant-garde by many of those French artists who had once been its practitioners.[7] This conservatism, which stressed national values (if not outright nationalism), celebrated the simple life of years gone by, rejected heavy industrialization, and favoured organic retrenchment in the arts. By the close of the 1920s, even devoted leaders of the avant-garde art movement like Fernand Léger and Le Corbusier leaned towards a more organic style. The same can be said of other major modernist artists, such as Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and even some Surrealists.[8]

However, the international and oftentimes apolitical nature of the avant-garde paradoxically ensured not only its persecution by those right of center, but also its survival. This, despite its abandonment by many of its pre-war supporters and its being targeted by conservative zealots. In the confusion of the times, extreme politics won over the masses, and modern art – while not eliminated or extinct – became ostracized.[9] As the 1920s came to an end, support for the avant-garde had dwindled, and with the exception of "a brief parenthesis during the years of the Popular Front", 1931 and the Depression marked the end of the modern artists' days in the sun.[10] Agitated and provoked by political propaganda, which promised answers and solutions to the perceived state of decadence, the populace targeted modern art. The straits that some painters found themselves in caused them to adapt by toning down their aesthetic explorations in favour of more popular, acceptable forms. Other artists adapted by introducing politics into their art: no more decorations, only socialist realism.[11] However, this inevitably led to a

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[7] Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, p. 15.
[8] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. x.
[9] An exception to this generalization is fascist Italy's embracing of futurism in the arts as representative of their revolution.
[10] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. 37.
[11] Weber, *The Hollow Years,* p. 219.

complication of matters, as there are "fundamental problems in efforts both to aestheticize politics and to politicize art in the first decades of the twentieth century."[12] Regardless, the convenience of associating the ills of society with the avant-garde was irresistible, and complemented the xenophobia that attained new heights during the Depression. Moreover, while the well-established artists were not very much affected by the times, the masses of mediocre artists were primed for state service.

By the time the Popular Front came to power, it had become clear that in practice as well as in theory, the conservative and traditional themes in middle of the road art appealed to many French people, and their government. Young says of the Popular Front "this was a bourgeois Republic which was far more committed to order than to change, to capital than to labour, to tradition than innovation."[13] As a result, many of the mediocre artists of traditional social realism enjoyed preferential treatment. Conversely, the Popular Front has also been considered by some to be an anomalous supporter of avant-garde artists. However, in 1937, at an exhibition entitled *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart* (French Art of the Present), which took place in Berlin, the selection of artists seems to indicate that France sought to appease Germany. None of the works included were 'decadent' by Nazi standards, which left out many of the artists the Popular Front purported to support. When one considers that the Popular Front was the first French government to "demonstrate serious interest in helping the cause of avant-garde art... a bolder selection may have been expected."[14] This exhibition, despite

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[12] Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff, "Art and Fascist Ideology in France and Italy", in Affron and Antlif, eds., *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997) p. 18.

[13] Young, *France and the Origins of the Second World War*, p. 90.

[14] Cone, "French Art of the Present", p. 557. This is especially true, since the rhetoric in the French camp was about 'rayonnement culturel', or cultural radiance, whereby French

perhaps some aggressive intentions in its original conception, was hardly the cultural tour de force it could have been, and hinted more at cultural collaboration.

The position of the French became more clouded when Léon Blum's government opened the *Exposition International des Arts et des Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, in May 1937. Of the many interesting points about this World Fair, it gave the nations of Europe a chance to see what the others were up to. As Eric Hobsbawm puts it, "the show itself was designed to bring glory to France... it was the one occasion when all states and their arts were in public confrontation."[15] Interestingly, pride of place was given to the Albert Speer-designed German pavilion, though this was directly opposite the Soviet pavilion. At once flattery and antagonism, it symbolized the struggle in European art and politics. For its part, Germany attempted a cultural rapprochement with France, at least superficially. The German Art Exhibition inside the Pavilion for International Art was compiled according to expected tastes of the French audience. This effort complemented the Propaganda Ministry's 'peaceful' cultural policy toward France, which up until November 1938 "remained bent on a rapprochement between the conservative elements in French public life and Nazi Germany."[16] Though the show might have intended a nobler cause, it did more to underscore the problems of art and culture that were emerging in Europe. This was especially true since all of the art exhibited had the stigma of state-endorsement attached to it. Through displays of nationalist art, one of the main aims of the 1937 Exhibition was to "shore up Europe's faith in civilization (the question

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culture would be illustrated and defended, as would be democracy in the face of totalitarianism, through freedom of expression in art and literature. pp. 555-6.

[15] Eric Hobsbawm, "Forward", in David Britt, ed., *Art and Power: Europe Under the Dictators 1930-1945*, (London: Hayward Gallery, 1995) p. 11.

[16] Holz, "Modern German Art", p. 182.

of whose civilization could not be looked at too closely)."[17] However, in looking at the predominantly academic style in the art on display, it is easy to see the roots of artistic collaboration under the Occupation, a result perhaps unavoidable given the 'return to order' in French art. One of the main problems with the 1937 Exposition was that when the nations came up against each other in the cultural arena, the avant-garde could seldom be presented as the art of a particular country, due to the perception of it as an international movement. The French state sought to promote nationalist art and ideas, not the international avant-garde. This was especially important in the face of their German neighbours, whose art was openly – if not offensively – more nationalistic.[18] An image of France, along the lines of German nationalism and heritage, was presented, at the expense of much important art.

The long history of French art was split into two exhibitions by the Blum government. The first contained works from the fourteenth century up to Cézanne and Monet. The second and more controversial – given the inevitable confrontation of the avant-garde and modern art issue - included everything that came after. The former, called *Chefs d'oeuvre d'art français*, met with relative success, given the glory associated with France's strong tradition in painting. The latter, however, did not enjoy the same reception. A greatly contentious issue in the contemporary cultural arena, the display of French modern art was "savagely attacked from the right for its character of hideous

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[17] Dawn Ades, "Art and the Power of Nations", in Britt, *Art and Power*, p. 58.

[18] To date, the authority on art in Nazi Germany remains Berthold Hinz, *Art in the Third Reich*, trans. J. Murphy, (New York: Random House, 1979). Stephanie Barron, ed., *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*, (New York: Harry Abrams, 1991) is an excellent source on modern art and artists in Hitler's Germany. Other significant contributions to the historiography include Peter Adam's *Art of the Third Reich*, (New York: Harry Abrams, 1992), and more recently Frederick Spotts' *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, (New York: Overlook, 2002).

obscenity, and from the left and the international avant-garde for its omission of foreign artists."[19] Germany also expected better. "Corollary to the German government's calculated self-presentation toward France" writes Holz, "were its appeals for official French cultural propaganda to embrace an image of France based upon its traditional arts instead of recent modernist manifestations."[20] More than ever before, art was a problematic, politicized, and emotionally charged issue in France and the rest of Europe.

The Vichy regime and the Occupation marked undeniable change, but not to the exclusion of some strands of continuity. The elements of discontinuity are more apparent and, as such, have received much attention. However, changes such as new government, armistice, occupying forces, and more overtly nationalistic rhetoric (while at the same time expression of the desire for full collaboration), were accompanied by continuities. The very nature of French politics was such that some of the ministers who served as members of earlier governments retained their positions. In addition to personnel, the Vichy regime "[a] repr[is] quelques-unes des principales préoccupations du Front populaire: extension de l'intervention de l'État dans la vie culturelle, ferme volonté de rendre accessible au peuple une culture jusque là réservée à une frange de privilégiés."[21] Some of the continuation seemed like the breaking of new ground, but was simply more overt promulgation of older ideas. Golan argues that in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, "the glorification of the national soil and of racial purity became almost immediately integral to the totalitarian rhetoric and to the art produced," whereas in France "these same issues would remain hidden under a veneer of cultural pluralism, tolerance, and

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[19] Ades, "Art and the Power of Nations", p. 59.
[20] Holz, "Modern German Art", pp. 182-3.
[21] Pascale Goetschel and Emmanuelle Loyer, *Histoire culturelle et intellectuelle de la France au XXe siècle,* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1994) p. 80.

liberalism: until Vichy."[22] As for the apparent German-prompted persecution of the avant-garde, "les accusations portées contre l'art moderne jugé trop hermétique, trop éloigné des traditions populaires, ne sont pas l'apanage des hommes de Vichy."[23]

Under the Occupation, one would expect art production to have been limited to those styles that met with government and occupying authority approval. Authorization for a gallery or salon to resume activities required an appointment at the German *Propaganda-Abteilung.* Posters advertising exhibitions had to be approved by the same body before being posted. When a show was mounted, it had to be seen by a German *referat* or 'observer'.[24] Pétain, affirming that 'the land doesn't lie', urged his people to return to the traditional ways of old, regional France. The regime "veut s'intégrer dans la continuité historique d'une France éternelle; (semblant ignorer superbement l'Occupation)."[25] However, the assumption that the period must have been fallow, due to the exodus of so many major artists, is not entirely justified. In fact, because no clear and concise aesthetic was officially indoctrinated, or suggested and guided by restrictive laws as it was in Germany, the avant-garde persevered. When compared to the situation in Hitler's Germany, "the period 1940-1944 was surprisingly lively in spite of the witch-hunt against decadent art undertaken by the Nazis, and of the position against decadence taken in official Vichy circles."[26]

The Vichy government took great interest in German art, which manifested itself most clearly in 1941, with the organization of a trip for thirteen French artists to Germany. The nature of this trip was questionable, at best. Visiting Berlin, Munich,

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[22] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. xi.
[23] Goetschel and Loyer, *Histoire culturelle et intellectuelle*, p. 80.
[24] Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, p. 12.
[25] Goetschel and Loyer, *Histoire culturelle et intellectuelle*, p. 80.

Nuremberg, Dresden, Potsdam, Düsseldorf, and Vienna (at this time, part of the Reich), the artists were shown German art studios, gargantuan statuary, and the new Reich Chancellery, all in about two weeks. It is not likely that the trip was organized for 'educational' purposes, since the financial desperation of the Depression years had already converted many artists to styles more palatable to the public. Perhaps simply a goodwill gesture from the French government, the motivation for the Germans was probably less unselfish. Though German artists and musicians were encouraged by Hitler to exhibit and perform abroad, foreign artists were only invited into Germany when it suited his political and propagandistic aims.[27] In France, those artists who went on the trip were blacklisted once the Vichy regime ended. Referred to derogatorily as '*ceux du voyage*', they would later be forbidden to exhibit at the Salon d'Automne of October 1944, and were publicly denounced in the press on the opening day.[28] Some people involved in this denunciation – as in most post-Occupation denunciations and other frenzied efforts toward *épuration* – painted themselves as hypocrites, given their full-fledged support of the Paris exhibition of Arno Breker's art.

French admiration and appeasement in the arts was most evident in the common admiration for the Reich's official sculptor, Arno Breker. Breker, who was Hitler's personal selection as official sculptor of the Third Reich, had studied in Paris. After spending seven months there in 1926, he returned the following year, married a French woman, and remained there until 1932. Developing a style of sculpture that was reminiscent of the French master Auguste Rodin, Breker won a prize for his efforts in the art competition at the 1936 Olympics, not to mention recognition from the Führer. His

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[26] Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, p. xviii.
[27] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics,* p. 32.

predilection for neoclassical idealization of the human figure was in tune with Hitler's conception of great art.[29] In May-July 1942, a retrospective of his work was held at the Orangerie in Paris, the honorary committee of which was made up of those artists who had gone to Germany the year before.[30] This was not only to show off a German artist and the accomplishments an artist of the Reich could achieve, but was also a tribute to the society that had produced such an artist. By extension, it forced French approval, since hostile criticism would be perceived as criticism of Nazi Germany. For a French person to visit the exhibit "became in itself a measure of approval of Nazi art and society."[31] Based on the networking Breker had done prior to the Occupation, and the generally positive impression he had made, even his identification with the Nazis did not prevent many French people from continuing to support him. In his memoirs, Marcel Déat looked back fondly on his visit with the sculptor: "Breker et sa femme.. sont des hôtes fort aimables, parlent très bien le français, et ne sont pas des francophiles d'occasion... L'atelier est plein de choses fort belles."[32] Much of France liked Breker, which made an aesthetic complement to their Germanophilia.

Hitler was less enamoured with France, which he certainly did not see as the 'partner' many at Vichy tried to make France out to be. Politically, Hitler criticized France and its leadership, observing that "because they were anxious to sit on every chair at the same time, they have not succeeded in sitting firmly on any one of them. The

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[28] Wilson, "Collaboration in the Fine Arts", p. 123.
[29] David Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich: A History of the German Occupation, 1940-44*, (London: Collins, 1981) p. 162.
[30] Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, p. 157.
[31] Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich*, p. 162.
[32] Marcel Déat, *Mémoires politiques*, (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 1989), p. 918.

explanation is that the soul of the country has been torn asunder."[33] It is not surprising that French art failed to impress Hitler, when one remembers that his own cultural project failed to produce much art that he liked.[34] Among his countless aesthetic demands, he ordered that Strasbourg be denuded of any 'French traits'. When the governor of Vienna, Baldur von Schirach proposed in October 1941 an exhibition of French Impressionist paintings that belonged to the Berlin National Gallery, Hitler strictly forbade it.[35] Considered one of the brightest points of French art history, impressionism was considered by Hitler to be a modernist aberration. Whereas he himself once considered Paris the center of the arts, he later called the Pantheon in Paris "a poor building", complained that there was "something queer about the Paris buildings", and claimed "what I saw in Paris has disappeared from my memory: Rome really seized hold of me."[36]

Hitler also did not take France as seriously. Much of this apathy seemed to be translated into aloofness on the part of both the occupying force and the Vichy government. As Robert Paxton comments, "neither diplomats nor soldiers at Berlin cared a fig for Vichy's internal acts as long as order was maintained and French wealth poured into the German war machine."[37] Control by the occupying authorities appeared to be

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[33] Adolf Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944*, 2nd ed., trans. N. Cameron and R. H. Stevens, (London; Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1973) p.476.

[34] Despite having purchased thousands of pieces of contemporary art, Hitler had only one contemporary painting, Adolf Ziegler's *The Four Elements*, on display. Interestingly, the French ambassador is supposed to have called Ziegler's painting "The Four Senses", quipping "*taste* is missing." Adam argues that this paucity of contemporary works in Hitler's collection indicates that the Führer himself was unhappy with the new art that his country was producing. Adam, *Art of the Third Reich*, p. 119. Spotts confirms this, stating "National Socialism had failed to inspire great paintings." *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, p. 172.

[35] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, p. 35.

[36] Hitler, *Hitler's Table Talk*, p.11.

[37] Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard, New Order, 1940-1944*, (New York: Alfred A, Knopf, 1972) p. 142.

loose, but the tools for control were certainly in place. Almost immediately after the June armistice, a branch of the Propaganda Ministry was set up in Paris. Among the various tasks, surveillance of the French press and the art community were assigned to the department. Any Frenchman who earned his living in the arts or the press had to pass through the Ministry, which would decide upon the degree of liberty allowed to the artist or writer. Otto Abetz and Karl Epting, heads of the German Embassy and the German Institute respectively, also organized social functions designed to attract certain elements of the French artistic and literary intelligentsia.[38] Even if the full potential of these branches of German administration was not realized, the impression of normality was illusory, and cold calculated control always belonged to the occupiers. However, it was not only the illusion of disinterest that created the 'business as usual' atmosphere. Calculated liberties given to the French meant that the greater the freedom given, the more the Nazis could point to the collusion of French intellectuals and artists. "Intellectual and artistic productivity," writes Pryce-Jones, "as widespread and stimulating as ever, surely proved that the French did not feel themselves oppressed."[39] Nor were they to be saved by the Germans. According to Albert Speer, Hitler asked "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."[40]

The harmony of Occupied France and apparent lack of interest on the part of the Germans also served another purpose. Maintaining a sense of normality served to distract people from Nazi activities in the art trade. Illegally seizing museum pieces and private collections, the Nazis sent crates of French art treasures back for Nazi officials, for

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[38] Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, p. 9.
[39] Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich*, p. 164.

German galleries, and for the great art museum Hitler dreamed of opening in Linz. The seizures were organized and systematic to a certain degree, though Hermann Göring found ways around the bureaucracy to ensure many of the choice pieces came to him.[41] Prior to the Occupation, two German art historians drew up a three-hundred page list of art that had been allegedly stolen or destroyed by foreign wars in Germany since 1500. The list included the usual paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts, but also books, manuscripts, musical instruments, archives, military trophies, and weapons.[42] The suggestion implicit not only in the intention of the Germans, but also in the uninspired resistance on the part of the French is that Germany did not wish to collaborate with France, but rather expected France to prostitute herself quietly to her conqueror. When the feeble protests against the looting were sufficient in quantity, the Nazis responded. In a document drafted in November 1941, they reasoned that the German army had liberated France from the Jews. Since the armistice was signed with the French people and not with the Jews, the latter could not be seen as equals. The Jews were conveniently seen as being outside the laws pertaining to the armistice and the Occupation, and therefore seizing their possessions was perfectly acceptable.[43]

As the pot did comment on the kettle's shade of ebony, so too was Vichy guilty of precisely the crime they charged the Germans with. Attempting to profit from the now-

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[40] Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, (New York: Collier, 1970) p. 184.
[41] In ten visits to the famed *Jeu de Paume* in 1941, and four more the following year, Göring laid claim to not only an interesting quantity of works, but also an interesting quality. In all, he reserved ten Renoirs, ten Degas, five Van Goghs, four Cézannes, three Sisleys, and two Monets. This selection seems to indicate that what was considered degenerate art for the German public could be enjoyed by high-ranking Nazis. Wilson, "Collaboration in the Fine Arts", p. 107.
[42] Lynn Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Art Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994) p. 121.
[43] Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, p. 136.

booming art market, the new Vichy government "tried – in truly blundering fashion – to use new administrative measures to take advantage of the bullish market."[44] While the Germans confiscated vast amounts of French art under the pretense of securing insurance for payment of war reparations, the Vichy government proved a disappointment. They weakly protested that the takings were French property, not German. The government "naturally tried to oppose these confiscations – while at the same time taking part in them."[45] The most astonishing example of misguided complicity in the confiscation of the arts is that of the prized Ghent altarpiece, a fifteenth century triptych by the Flemish master Jan Van Eyck. The endeavour to take the work to Germany, incredibly, was sanctioned by the French government. The Prime Minister of Vichy, Pierre Laval, personally approved an order on 3 August 1942, which authorized the removal of the work. To top it off, the Vichy militia was sent to escort the team that was taking the work to the demarcation line.[46] Art market profiteering and collaboration was not the exclusive domain of governments though. The art dealers of France would be hard-pressed to deny participation in these same ventures. Despite the scores of Nazi confiscations, there was still much business to be had. The instability of currency in wartime led many to buy up works of art, solid investments that were also easily transported. The incomes of French art dealers soared. Marcel Déat confirms this, stating "je ne suis pas loin de penser que ces sombres années ont été particulièrement favorables aux investissements esthétiques, sous forme de tableaux ou de sculptures."[47] Perhaps predictably, after the war most art

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[44] Hector Feliciano, *The Lost Museum: The Nazi Conspiracy to Steal the World's Greatest works of Art*, trans. T. Bent, (New York: Harper Collins, 1997) p. 124.
[45] Feliciano, *The Lost Museum*, p. 39.
[46] Jonathan Petropoulos, *Tha Faustian Bargain: The Art World in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 34-5.
[47] Déat, *Mémoires politiques*, p. 776.

dealers would claim that they had abstained from dealing with German would-be clients.

Despite what may have been the intention, the Vichy regime was not very like its neighbour and occupier. Part of the reason for this arises from the lack of the right kind of personalities. To put it bluntly, the octogenarian leader of Vichy France was not Hitler – not as leader, and not as patron or as one with appreciation of the arts. Further to Hitler's aesthetic efforts, Vichy did not have personnel to mirror the output of propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, who tirelessly worked at converting his Führer's whims into legislation, law and practice. France could not emulate the Nazi cultural project. As a result, the cultural project of Vichy:

> Ne s'agit pourtant pas d'un idéal fasciste où l'encadrement social et idéologique est total, mais plutôt d'une pensée autoritaire dans laquelle les aspects culturels jouent un rôle déterminant. On ne peut évoquer une unique norme culturelle imposée d'en haut par le régime.[48]

Even in looking at the influence it had on public opinion, Vichy propaganda simply did not approach the kind of memory erasing and constant recreation of collective memory necessary to mirror the ideology and politics of the Reich.[49] In a speech in October of 1940, Philippe Pétain laid out the ambiguous guideline of nationalism, but in the service of collaboration. The *Révolution Nationale* would return France to "le véritable nationalisme, celui qui, renonçant à se concentrer sur lui même, se dépasse pour atteindre la collaboration internationale… Cette collaboration, la France est prête à la rechercher dans tous les domaines."[50] The *Révolution Nationale*, having never been properly defined, articulated, or enforced, did not realize the potential Vichy envisioned.

Nobody in the art community really found their way into a secure position of

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[48] Goetschel and Loyer, *Histoire culturelle et intellectuelle*, p. 81.
[49] Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, p. 66.
[50] Philippe Pétain, *Quatre années au pouvoir*, (Paris: La couronne littéraire, 1949) p. 62.

preference with the Vichy regime. Despite their best efforts to exploit the motifs thought to be harmonious with Pétain's public and private artistic taste, they ultimately failed to persuade the government that they were loyal and on the same page. Even the Salon failed to assume the role of official image creator for Vichy. In its last stages, Vichy was "no more than the politics of opportunism, drawn toward highly derivative Nazi style, but with no coherent ideology, and no fundamental class basis."[51] With too many factors influencing the minds of the leaders, it is perhaps understandable that Vichy never arrived at a precise aesthetic code. While not consistently in support of a particular style, the fear of decadence, and the all too familiar anti-foreigner stance enjoyed sustained support throughout. Though euphemisms abound, the strongest component in this was French anti-Semitism.

Racism, xenophobia, anti-foreigner sentiment, and anti-Semitism are all regrettable but real forces in French history. The victorious Germans did not import them in 1940. Politically, anti-Semitism was "translated into an equation between Jews and communism in terms of political oppression and control, and between Jews and democracy/capitalism in terms of economic oppression and control."[52] When decadence in culture and the arts emerged as a popular idea in Europe (for it was not a National Socialist invention), it was blamed on the Jews. This followed a period of what some contemporaries referred to as 'xenophilia', whereby foreign art "had reduced the French to servile adoration – no matter what the form or its provenance. Russian music, Viennese opera, American films, Mexican dance, German architecture, Czech painting, it did not matter as long as it was foreign." With this came foreign customs, in which 'bad

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[51] Roderick Kedward, "Introduction", in R. Kedward and R. Austin, eds., *Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology*, (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1985) p. 3.

taste' was included.[53] In France, the association between the Jews and the perceived crisis in the arts can be traced back to the nineteenth century, predating even the Dreyfus affair. With the influx of immigrants following the First World War, the issue of foreign – and especially Jewish – artists was fiercely debated from the mid- to the late 1920s. When compared to that of the Depression period, the anti-Semitic and xenophobic rhetoric was tame. For several decades in Europe, conditions and politics were such that xenophobia, racism, and anti-Semitism could conveniently (and dangerously) be excused as nationalism and even patriotic concern for native cultures. Even during the Popular Front government, under the Jew Léon Blum, the compliance with anti-Semitic and anti-foreigner doctrine was evidenced by the aforementioned *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart*, in which no foreign artists who made their homes in France were included. Jewish artists – even if born there - were not considered French. While appeasement of the Germans certainly has a role to play in interwar and Occupation French anti-Semitism, there was no shortage of anti-Jewish sentiment in French circles. This, despite a Jewish population that in 1939 constituted only seven percent of Parisians, and less than one percent of the total population of France.[54]

By the time of the Vichy regime, anti-semitism was made into legislation, beginning in 1940. On 3 October, the *Statut des Juifs* was passed. A "purely French invention, drafted and issued without any pressure from the occupying powers", it excluded Jews from elected bodies, forbade Jews from the civil service, the military, and judiciary responsibilities, as well as from positions of potential cultural influence.[55] This

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[52] Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, p. 208.
[53] Young, *France and the Origins of the Second World War*, p. 115.
[54] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. 141.
[55] Allen, "Jews and Catholics", p.75.

last part included teaching in public schools, writing or editing for the press, and being involved in films or radio.[56] By 4 December, a French agency – the *Société du Contrôle-Administrateurs Provisoires* – was set up to take over Jewish enterprises, and to suppress Jewish control in the French economy.[57] The following year, the legislation was supported with an exhibition entitled *Le Juif et la France*, which opened on 5 September at the Palais Berlitz. Organized by the *Institut d'Études des Questions Juives*, the aim of the exhibition was to convince the French that Jews were not and could not be nationals of any country. Above all, the exhibit demonstrated to visitors the great evils the Jews had plagued society with, and how much they had infiltrated society.[58] Even the notion of a National Revolution, the Vichy cultural project, was indirectly anti-Semitic in that while it included the French by affirming their nationalism, it excluded the Jews by denying them French nationalism.

To complement general laws, legislation pertaining particularly to Jews and the arts was also put into place. Even the general laws had implications in artistic circles though. For example, the banning of Jewish art critics was a result of the *Statut des Juifs*. Obstacles were set up for those artists brave enough to want to exhibit. At the Salon d'Automne, reputed for its showcasing of moderate avant-garde art, would-be exhibitors were required to sign a register affirming that they were of Aryan birth, and not Jewish.[59] Vichy blacklisted even French artists who had left France. The exclusions continued after the initial measures, and by a decree of 6 June, 1942, Jews were closed off completely

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[56] Paxton, *Old Guard, New Order*, p. 174.
[57] Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa*, p. 161.
[58] In one of the rooms at the exhibit, statistics informed visitors of the percentage of Jews in various professions. Incredibly, the statistics claimed that Jews constituted forty percent of artists in France. How this figure was arrived at was not indicated. In Cone, "Art and Politics", pp. 47-8.

from the stage, film, and concert worlds. In addition to the expulsion of Jews from teaching and administrative positions, student quotas for the universities were introduced. Again, it must be remembered that these were French people, passing French laws. Paxton is clear on this point: "I have been unable to turn up any direct German order for French anti-Masonic, anti-Semitic, or other legislation during the most active period of Vichy legislation in 1940."[60] It was France that was anti-Semitic. Under the guise of art purification, anti-Semites were able to justify their exclusion of Jews from social and cultural activities by masquerading as the protectors of national interests and culture.

Xenophobia generally, and anti-Semitism specifically, had an important impact on the arts in France, particularly during the Vichy regime. Here Cone is worth quoting at length:

> What characterized the Vichy regime as much as its traditionalism – the return to 'community, métier, humanism, roots' – was its racism. During those four years, France... reached a peak of xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and sectarianism that caused drastic changes in the art world. The uniqueness of the visual arts during Vichy goes far beyond the traditionalist values it revived.[61]

Paxton confirms this, adding that "Vichy xenophobia was more cultural and national than racial in French assimilationist tradition... traditional conservative French xenophobia demanded cultural conformity."[62] Looking to reclaim its place as the cultural leader of the world (as the Nazi program prescribed for Germany), France's program sought to emulate *some* degree of *some* of the elements of National Socialist aesthetics, though in a more French manner. Pétain affirmed, from 1940, that the first priority was "d'exorciser

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[59] Cone, *French Modernisms*, p. 95
[60] Paxton, *Old Guard, New Order*, p. 143.
[61] Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.
[62] Paxton, *Old Guard, New Order*, p. 175.

les démons de la décadence de l'entre deux-guerres."[63] The style was – at least in theory – the product of inspiration drawn from French traditions, and an awareness of interwar developments. Galleries reacted by filling their catalogues with 'middle-of-the-road' art. Many artists saw themselves as resisters, based on their refusal to adopt the Social Realist style believed to be preferred by the authorities. The response from artists was varied though. Some adjusted, and some did not. Some were able to leave, but many stayed. To have remained silent out of protest would ruin an artist, whereas to flee was the privilege of precious few. To further confuse and alarm artists, the definition of decadence in art was inconsistent, and it was difficult to align oneself accordingly.

Despite efforts to organize, there was confusion and few concrete results. Much in the way Germany was unable to completely and decisively eliminate modern art from its midst, France could not implement any uniform changes. As regrettable as it is, Spotts points out that Hitler's abhorrence of Modernist art was in common with the majority of people in Europe, and "even his terms of abuse were common currency."[64] In France, this position was apparent in the rather conspicuous 1942 opening of the Musée National d'Art Moderne, in which the permanent collection was void of Picassos, Soutines, Modiglianis, and had no examples of abstract art at all. As in Germany, it was not always clear what was considered decadent art, for modern art was at some times accepted, and at others rejected. "Far from being a protected outpost of culture" writes Golan, "the art world became the sector *most* vulnerable of all to the waves of nationalism and

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[63] Goetschel and Loyer, *Histoire Culturelle*, p. 80.
[64] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, p. 160.

xenophobia that had come to affect French social and political life."[65]

[65] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. 137.

CHAPTER 2

TUMULT IN TYPE: THE RIGHT WING PRESS

France did not want another war with Germany, and to that end, no detail of life - however minute, indirect, or abstract - could be ignored. For the vast majority of the population, anxiety about comparative birthrates, cultural defence, constitution, the Church, capitalism, and communism was largely the domain of politicians, academics, and other literati. War was what was real, what was feared, and what was to be avoided, for some people at any cost.[1] A fanatical mélange of all these themes, often times sensationalized at the expense of objective truth, the Right wing press in France was ambiguously anti-German in the 1930s. Struggling to reconcile their admiration for the National Socialist revolution with their instinctual Germanophobia, many members of the press were swayed. By the Occupation, many who were not already in support of the Nazis swung behind them almost obsequiously. As Robert Soucy points out though, "if French fascism was influenced by other fascisms, it also had a national past of its own; consequently, in many instances developments abroad merely served to fortify a set of pre-existing attitudes at home."[2] A period full of uncertainty, the Right wing press in France from 1936 to 1944 is fraught with paradox, not only from one newspaper to the next, but even within the newspapers. These paradoxes were further compounded by the Occupation, though again, this does not rule out some strands of continuity throughout.

There have been many Right wing, anti-Semitic broadsheets in France, but for the most part, their over-zealous fanaticism and conspiracy-theory paranoia kept their circulation numbers low, and kept them on the fringes of the French press. This changed

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[1] Young, *France and the Origins of the Second World War*, p. 133.
[2] Robert Soucy, "The Nature of Fascism in France", in *Journal of Contemporary History*

in the 1930s. Golan writes "the number of Anti-Semitic publications rose exponentially after 1933. No longer confined to the extreme Right, it included major weeklies like *Candide, Gringoire*, and *Je suis partout*."[3] Important newspapers, these three were the most popular Right wing, anti-Semitic weeklies in France during the 1930s. On May 3 1936, the Popular Front triumphed at the ballots. This was a big blow to the French Right. Charles Maurras, who had many sympathizers in the Right wing press, saw his *Action Française* league disbanded as part of the legislation handed down by Blum banning armed leagues. It almost sounded the death knell for *Je suis partout*, whose team offered to give up their salaries in order to keep the weekly alive. This was possible because the networking that took place in the French press would have allowed them to sustain themselves with income form other sources. Writers in these newspapers often wrote for several papers and magazines, and wrote guest columns. Following this defeat of their aspirations for France, "La droite affolée s'enfonce dans l'inconnu."[4] After a few weeks, the Right regrouped, and began an anti-Popular Front, anti-Léon Blum campaign. In the May 30 issue of *Je suis partout*, Pierre Gaxotte writes:

> S'il fut un temps où le courant était à la démocratie, il est maintenant au fascisme. La démocratie parlementaire et socialisante est une vieillerie qui ne subsiste plus que dans quelques pays très arriérés ou très primitifs. S'il est défendu à la France de frayer avec les États organisés selon la formule nationaliste, nous finirons par nous trouver tout seuls.[5]

With the Occupation, through various adjustments and – in the cases of *Candide* and *Gringoire* – relocations, all three enjoyed continued importance and popularity.

Of the three, *Candide* was the longest–running. Created in the mid-1920s by the

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1 (1966), p. 30.
[3] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. 153.
[4] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout,* p. 97.
[5] Pierre Gaxotte, "Tandis que M. Blum accouche d'un ministère.", *Je suis partout,* 30

Right-leaning, French nationalist editor Arthème Fayard, it was to be the first of a new genre of political and literary weeklies in France.[6] It met with great success from the beginning, attaining circulation numbers in the 300 000 range, which constituted a record for the time. Described by Evleth as being "philosophically close to *Action Française*", politically it was traditionalist far Right wing.[7] The average issue of this 'new style' included stories and drawings, and articles on an array of topics including music, literature, science, entertainment, and the arts. In a period when foreign affairs were of great (if superficial) interest to the general public, weeklies in the style pioneered by *Candide* began to pop up in the early thirties. As Weber notes, the newspapers with the highest circulation numbers in the 1930s were the virulent publications that were sympathetic to Mussolini, and admiring of Hitler's authoritarian rule, newspapers like *Candide, Gringoire,* and *Je suis partout.*[8]

Not long after *Candide* appeared, Horace de Carbuccia, Joseph Kessel, and George Saurez created *Gringoire*. First appearing in 1928, it was similar in its political and literary style to the immensely popular *Candide*. It enjoyed immediate success, and its popularity rose exponentially, eventually surpassing that of *Candide*. By the eve of the war, in 1939, *Gringoire* was far and away the leading weekly of this genre, boasting a readership of one in ten French people, and one of every two electors.[9] In its early years, it was not as extreme, shifting more decidedly to the Right in the mid-1930s. Less

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mai, 1936, p. 1.

[6] De Livois is not clear on the actual date. In a caption that cites the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, the year it first appeared is given as 1923, whereas in the text itself, it is 1924. *Histoire de la Presse Française*, vol II, p. 502. In Donna Evleth's bibliography, which also cites the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, *Candide*'s dates are listed as 1926-1944. *The Authorized Press in Vichy and German-Occupied France*, p. 146.

[7] Evleth, *The Authorized Press.*

[8] Weber, *The Hollow Years*, p. 128.

exclusively literary than *Candide*, its circulation numbers went from 225 000 in 1929 to 331 000 at the end of 1933, to 666 000 a year later, and more than 720 000 in 1936, a number unheard of for political and literary weeklies. When war was declared, numbers were still hovering around an average of half a million.[10] When war came, and the Occupation ensued, its anti-Semitism became violent, and its anti-Communism was supplemented with a strong collaborationist, anti-Gaullist streak.

Recognizing the success of the genre, Fayard added another weekly, *Je suis partout*, to the mix. In November of 1930, Fayard's already popular *Candide* announced the arrival of the new weekly: "*Je suis partout* est un frère de *Candide*. C'est-à-dire qu'il ne sera ni pédant, ni ennuyeux, mais au contraire qu'il sera vivant, varié et qu'il contiendra, chaque semaine, les meilleurs dessins de toute la terre."[11] It had a definite focus on foreign affairs, and the newspaper featured entire pages on the important nations. After a couple of years, its nationalism was bolstered in original ways with a number of reoccurring themes: imperial consciousness, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, criticism of democracy, and an insistence on the necessity of a national revolution.[12] Without a clearly specified political orientation, it eventually became more combative in its increasingly extremist nationalism. For much of the interwar period though, it claimed to have no single ideological conviction, as was reflected by the eclecticism of its team. The great irony that amused the team no end was that in a capitalist country with a socialist government at the helm, the only newspaper that was run by a 'soviet' (which they referred to themselves as constantly) was paradoxically an

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[9] De Livois, *Histoire de la presse*, vol. II, p. 464.
[10] De Livois, *Histoire de la presse*, vol. II, p. 503.
[11] "Le nouvel hebdomadaire", *Candide*, 27 novembre, 1930, p. 3.
[12] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout*, p. 79.

extreme Right weekly. During the Popular Front era, *Je suis partout* carved a niche out for itself with "l'originalité de sa conception en tant que journal, la véhémence de ses prises de position politiques et ses inclinations 'fascistes'."[13] Of all the political weeklies, it became the most widely read, "même par ceux qui n'approvent pas toujours de ses positions."[14] During the Occupation, the now openly fascist and virulently anti-Semitic weekly was the only one of the three to remain in Paris. There is no doubt, according to Pryce-Jones, that the newspaper influenced a considerable part of public opinion, and included many of the educated in its numbers. Incredibly, its circulation rose from about 100 000 at the outset in 1941 to a stunning 300 000 by the end of its run, success unequaled at the time.[15]

There are three issues of ideology and doctrine that these newspapers raise, issues that many French people struggled with throughout the period being discussed. Overflowing with paradoxes, the questions seldom had answers. The first issue is that of the French Right. It is difficult to determine what this entails, and how it evolved from its first incarnations until 1944, but it was even more uncertain at the time. To different people, there were differences in where borders were to be drawn - both within France and without – as well as differences between a *nationalist* Right and a *conservative* Right. The second is the issue of French nationalism. In Europe, ideologies transcended borders, and were regarded by some as being international, which ran counter to nationalism. Some wondered if nationalism could be reconciled with international political ideology, while others insisted on the native roots of their political convictions. Some saw fascism as being a betrayal of French nationalism, especially the more

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[13] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout*, p. 8.
[14] De Livois, *Histoire de la presse*, vol. II, p. 544

traditional minds. The third issue is that of fascism. Though the term fascism is frequently used in reference to these newspapers, they themselves did not refer to it as such prior to the Occupation.[16] It seems as though, judging by the three newspapers, the French Right was an umbrella under which a plethora of 'anti-ites' and their various 'anti-isms' congregated. When France was still free, they were nationalist. When the country was occupied by fascists, they called themselves the same, for they could not be fashionably referred to as fascists before the Occupation. Nationalism, now out of fashion given the defeat of the decadent French nation, was demoted to a kind of nostalgia, whereby France was a romanticized and idealized recollection of years gone by.

Of the many issues debated in the weekly press, none seem to have been as acerbic as those concerning foreign affairs. On this question, the press of the Popular Front and the three papers of the Right faced off constantly. As much as France and patriotism were discussed, for the most part, the political struggle extended beyond the borders. With the United States entering the era of Roosevelt (who did not have many fans in the French Right), authoritarian regimes spreading over Europe, and Germany given over to National Socialism, ideologies permeated national borders more than ever before. Fascism was seen as respectful of western tradition, whereas soviet methods opposed this with Asiatic, oriental tendencies. In this image of the western tradition, the Right wing press saw France as a great pillar of western culture and civilization. This view was not exclusive to the Right though. Dioudonnat writes "quelles que soient leurs idées politiques, même s'ils déplorent sa décadence, les Français sont persuadés que leur

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[15] Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich*, p. 62.
[16] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout,* pp. 8-9.

pays est indispensable à la bonne marche de l'univers."[17] All nationalist programs had as their main goal the re-establishment of France in its rightful place as leader of nations.

A corollary to this was a desire for Franco-Italian rapprochement, based on the notion of the nations being descended from the great Latin tradition of culture and civilization. When this did not occur, many on the French Right scrambled desperately to understand or even rectify what was believed to be an affront to logic. The Italian-German alliance that came instead was seen less in terms of the politics that ultimately united the two fascist countries, but rather in terms of a cultural impossibility. Blaming the rapprochement with Great Britain for the missed opportunity, they assured themselves that there could never be a true and lasting entente between the Latin Italians and the Germanic Nazis. Of course, as time passed, it became evident that the axis would last. The explanation that was offered by the Right was that there were two Frances: one which was equated with the elected government and considered false, decadent, and ephemeral; the other was the ideal, eternal France of noble tradition. The leaders of other nations, especially Italy, were confused about which France was the real one, so the reasoning went. French Right wing Italiophiles loathed the German-Italian rapprochement, and longed for the reconstitution of the Stresa front, which would bring Italy back into the French fold, along with Great Britain.

There was also the issue of Germany itself, a favourite topic of the Right wing press. Even before the National Socialists, France was wary of Germany, which had always been a threat. The French Right wing kept a close eye on their neighbour. In *Je suis partout*, of the many international pages, the one on Germany was always the most important. When the Nazis did come to power, through the many fears expressed by

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[17] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout,* p. 232.

French writers, a conflicting sense of admiration could be discerned. As Carroll writes, "the problem for many on the extreme right before the war was how to relate to what seemed positive in German National Socialism without proposing that France ally itself with Germany or attempt to copy it in a servile manner."[18] While Germanophobia was the main pillar of French nationalism, Germany under Hitler was also the prime example of a national revolution, something the Right believed France needed. The image of Germany that emerges from the Right wing press in these years is composed of nuances, contrasts and contradictions - hardly a cohesive picture of the ever-threatening neighbour. For most, a grudging acceptance of Germany was forced by the widely–held view on the Right that not only did a Russian alliance mean war, but so too did a Popular Front government. Peace was on the Right, war on the Left. This is an interesting line of reasoning, whereby the perceived threat – perhaps in an effort to make it appear easier to defeat – is placed within the borders, rather than without. Dioudonnat writes "écrire que Léon Blum est un barrage insurmontable entre les deux pays est un argument polémique à l'usage intérieur, c'est l'affirmation toujours repétée que 'le Front populaire, c'est la guerre', non que l'Allemagne s'est transformée en une masse pacifique dont il n'y plus rien a craindre."[19] As the intentions of Germany became increasingly evident, the Right wing press' occasional Germanophilia waned considerably. As the nations of Europe attempted appeasement, the French Right rarely took openly pro-German positions on anything.

The newspapers of the Right, seemingly ignorant of their poorly concealed veneration for Germany in years past, became strongly if not completely Germanophobic.

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[18] Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, p. 114.
[19] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout*, p. 160.

As war neared, *Je suis partout* printed a page of warnings they had issued over the years since their beginning. This amounted not only to a prophetic 'we told you so', but also served to portray the newspaper as having never been seduced by the charms of the Nazi social revolution,[20] and having always been wary of Germany and Hitler. Amidst the reprinted article segments, the top of the page explained:

> DEPUIS que JE SUIS PARTOUT [*sic*] a été créé, il a étudié l'Allemagne et affirmé la nécessité d'une politique en Europe Centrale dès son premier numéro. À dater de ce jour (28 novembre 1930), il annonçait l'importance de Hitler... Pendant toute l'année 1931, nos collaborateurs ont dit: Hitler arrive... pas une année ne s'est écoulée depuis la fondation de notre journal sans que nous ayons cessé de mettre en garde les Français contre les illusions pacifistes, sans que nous ayons céssé de dire que l'Allemagne, quel que soit son régime, restait PAR POSITION l'adversaire toujours possible de la France... On n'a pas voulu nous écouter.[21]

They aligned themselves behind the hero of World War I, Philippe Pétain, and left partisan politics on the side. Hoping against hope, *Candide* had "LA NATION UNANIME DEVANT LE DANGER" printed above its title.[22] When the war did start, *Je suis partout* printed a *liste des mobilisés* every week, demonstrating in yet another way the patriotism and nationalism of their staff. Despite these actions, the *Je suis partout* team was investigated by the government, to the extent of summoning Robert Brasillach back from the army, and arresting two members, including the editor in chief, Charles Lesca. The other newspapers similarly distanced themselves from the Germans, affirmed their support for France and waited to see what fate held for their nation.

The war, and the 'strange defeat' that ensued shocked all of France. The French

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[20] For a detailed study of the Nazi revolution, see David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967). He argues that the Nazis, through 'smoke and mirrors' tactics, created the illusion of a social revolution, without having taken any real measures to that end. The desired result was the same as if a real project had been put into action.

[21] "Ce qu'ont été nos avertissements", *Je suis partout*, 24 mars, 1939, p. 5.

[22] *Candide*, 6 septembre, 1939, p.1.

scrambled to get on side with Germany. The belief was that the war would be short, and Germany would win, therefore siding with Germany was the way to go. In the particular case of *Je suis partout*, this constituted an about turn. Having ceased publication for exactly eight months following the armistice, the newspaper reopened in Paris, hoping to profit from the void left by *Candide* and *Gringoire* which had re-established themselves in the unoccupied zone. On February 7, 1941, the weekly returned, bearing the new subtitle "Grand hebdomadaire politique et littéraire", instead of its pre-Occupation "Grand hebdomadaire de la vie mondiale." Abandoning all the hostility toward Germany it once propagated, the weekly seldom admitted that a change had occured. Reappearing in Paris, *Je suis partout* "proclame bien haut sa fidelité à ses idées d'avant guerre, mais sa nouvelle existence a pour cadre un monde fondamentalement différent où ne subsistent du passé que des décombres. Les circomstances provoquent une véritable mutation dans la politique du journal, lui faisant oublier progressivement le 'réalisme' au profit de 'l'idéologie'."[23] Perhaps the truth is to be found in the way that the Germans viewed the newspaper. *Je suis partout*, according to Pryce-Jones, was seen as "a double edged weapon." The Germans realized that its contributors were "abler than Nazi apologists elsewhere, and this was all the more valued because French."[24]

The themes of the Right wing press during the Vichy regime are quite familiar, if intensified. There is still hostility toward democracy and the republic. Anti-Communism is, after the Nazi-Soviet split, absolute. Anti-Semitism is even more virulent, and more racist than it was before the war. Many of the newspapers on the Right, at first optimistic, became disillusioned with the Vichy government. Strangely, Pétain was absolved of

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[23] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout*, p. 342.
[24] Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich*, p. 62.

responsibility in this disappointment, and support for the person and ideas of the Maréchal is unwavering: during the Vichy years, virtually every page of *Gringoire* has an inspirational Pétain-ism. Anglophobia rises exponentially, and Churchill becomes almost as bad as Blum was before the war, but for different reasons. For the French Right wing, disappointment marked the Vichy period, which itself was positioned between two defeats: the defeat of their nation in 1940, and the defeat of their ideology in 1944-45.[25] The regime – never realistically given the potential – did not realize the hopes that the French Right had for it. Not seeing the arrangement for what it was, they desired partnership rather than subservience.

As mentioned above, *Candide* and *Gringoire*, among other newspapers of all types, fled to the unoccupied zone. In Paris, where *Je suis partout* continued to operate, the Nazis exercised careful control of the press. This was of utmost importance for the occupying power. The tradition of the Paris press was one that had always stimulated and challenged politics in France, and so some degree of amenability was necessary. The *Propaganda Abteilung*, set up almost immediately, was the body responsible for censorship of the press. Further to this, it exercised great influence in the appointment of French journalists and editors, and was essentially in control of French public opinion. On top of all of this control, the Nazis assumed responsibility for the allocation of paper, which came under tight control by the middle of the war. By 1942, with the Germans taking over the southern zone in November, the weekly newspapers were restricted to six or eight pages, and then only appeared every other week towards the end of the Occupation.

Under Vichy, newspapers and magazines strictly for the purpose of entertainment

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[25] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout*, p. 342.

were largely left to continue on. The rest of the Parisian papers all followed the same format. The first page featured an article by a trusted and reliable collaborator, in which the reader would hopefully be persuaded to view the issues of the week 'the right way'. The second page usually featured a cartoon, frequently political, under which was a section of snippets about the local topics of interest. It was here that the greatest potential for voicing of grievances existed, given the brevity of the format. Pages three and four had columns on books, the cinema, the theatre, music, and often had cooking and women's sections. Much of the newspaper was devoted to serialized fiction, which was the only possibility for most writers to make money.[26] The format not only nullified the possibility of reportage, and secured control for the Nazis, but it also conveniently nurtured French wartime escapism. The one bright spot for those who still wanted some degree of independence in the press resulted from Hitler's chronic redundancy in setting up his administrative bodies. Calculated to ensure departments would fight each other instead of the Führer, the overlapping of the embassy's responsibilities with those of the propaganda department meant that French journalists were able to win themselves more room to maneuver, as a result of feuding between Goebbels and Joachim von Ribbentrop.

That *Je suis partout* was seen as collaborationist is beyond doubt. The trial of many of its members was one of the most important trials of the press in all of the *épuration.*[27] On Friday, August 18, 1944, offices on the *rue des Pyramides* were completely ransacked, and their contents scattered about the streets. Among those looted offices were those of the PPF, *La Gerbe*, and *Je suis partout*. All three of the weeklies ceased to publish after the liberation, and many of their members attempted to flee to

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[26] Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich*, p. 53.
[27] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout*, p. 405.

other parts of Europe. The accusations made against them in trials or in their absence, were related to their collaboration. However, little was made of the anti-Semitism of the Right wing press.

Regrettably, the anti-Semitism of the French Right wing was not theirs exclusively. Though more virulent in the three weeklies than in other examples, it was nonetheless a real force in France. Resurfacing periodically since the Dreyfus affair of the 1890s, the anti-Semitism of the French Right became one of the main pillars of French nationalism, as engendered by the Action Française and its allies. It increased further as the effects of the Depression were felt in France. By the time of the Popular Front government, French popular opinion was flooded by a wave of violent anti-Semitism. The newspapers declared that Blum and his cronies were planning for a war, and that the Jews would drag the nation into war. The Jews, naturally, wanted to profit from a war between the European powers. In April 1939, a decree-law prohibited incitements of hatred for reasons of religion or race. The effect was that for the most part, anti-Semitism in the Right wing press was only hinted at, encrypted in euphemisms and the like. There were, despite its continued existence, many ambiguities and contradictions in French anti-Semitism on the eve of war. Some Jews were not as bad as others were. Some Jews were friends and some were foes. Jews from further east than Germany, more recent immigrants as well as those less assimilated culturally, were the worst. With the war, and then the Occupation, anti-Semitism hit a high-water mark in France, and the weekly newspapers, especially *Gringoire* and *Je suis partout*, became shockingly anti-Semitic.

Before the war started though, *Je suis partout* was particularly aggressive in its anti-Semitism. Inasmuch as criticism of the Popular Front is a corollary of the Right's

hatred for the Jews, the February 11, 1938 edition was the first of three exceptional occurrences in the weekly's operations. In a parodic insert entitled "*Je suis partout* s'il voulait plaire au gouvernement", the newspaper presented a ridiculous four pages of sarcastic articles and features. The explanation on the first page of the newspaper itself reads "le gouvernement de M. Chautemps s'apprête à faire voter la loi d'étouffement de le presse que n'avait pas osé faire voter M. Blum... Que devrait donc devenir la presse indépendente pour plaire ces messieurs? Elle devrait sans doute dire que tout va bien, que le franc monte, que l'alliance Russe est une bénédiction..."[28] The headlines included "La Reichswehr a renversé Hitler", "'Je suis un grand ami de la France' nous déclare M. Staline", and even the crossword's title was "tout va très bien".

Even more shocking was the special edition that came out on April 15 that same year. Entitled *Les Juifs*, it was devoted in its entirety to the Jewish question. Every column, every article, and every feature focused on the Jews. The effort, mostly the work of Lucien Rebatet, viewed the Jews not as a race, not as a religious group, but simply as a people that could not be assimilated, with interests and goals that were in direct opposition to those of France. The reception was astounding. Having sold out all the copies of the original run, the weekly scrambled to reprint it, and in the end reprinted it three times within a month. The next year, the newspaper announced that, based on the success and popularity of the first special issue on the Jews, another one would be put together. This second effort, more specifically entitled *Les Juifs et la France*, appeared on February 17, 1939. In the weeks leading up to the anticipated release, advertisements of substantial size listed the topics that would be dealt with: the Jews under *l'Ancien*

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[28] "À nos lecteurs", *Je suis partout*, 11 février, 1938, p. 1. It is ironic that the four-page format of the parodic insert was not far off from what the newspaper would become in

Regime, the Jews and religion, the history of French anti-Semitism, the Jews and big business, the press and art, the Jews and war, what a *statut juif* would entail, the question of immigration, and the Jews and nationalism.[29] As with the first one, the special issue was wildly popular, and it too was reprinted. The driving force behind the projects, Rebatet would become even more overt and more combative in his anti-Semitism while writing during the Occupation.

The anti-Semitism of the French Right wing is a phenomenon with many examples, but few logical explanations. Certainly linked to fascism and nationalism, it is curious that these and other forces in France consumed so many supposedly intelligent and educated writers and readers during the years 1936 to 1944. The key, however, in understanding the elements of the French Right wing press may lie in the Right wing's aesthetics. Carroll theorizes that "understanding the commitment to fascism of various intellectuals and writers is as much an 'aesthetic' as a 'political' problem, one in which aesthetics and politics are both at the same time fundamental issues, inseparable from each other, no matter the singularity or autonomy attributed to each."[30] However, this aesthetic interest did not prevent the writer of the Right from being openly biased, xenophobic, or racist. The aggressive nature of the writings was such that they often condoned hatred and even violence against others. For Carroll, "it was precisely their particular literary and aesthetic convictions and ideals that led them to and supported the anti-Semitic prejudices and extremist political positions they formulated and defended in their literary and critical texts as well as in their more directly political writings."[31] How

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both style and length during the Vichy regime.

[29] *Je suis partout*, 27 janvier, 1939 and 3 février, 1939.

[30] Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, p. 6.

[31] Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, p. 7.

did these writers of the French Right wing, other writers at Right wing weeklies, cartoonists, and art critics (who were usually less overtly political in their writings) combine to formulate views on the arts, as presented in *Candide*, *Gringoire*, and *Je suis partout*? While Carroll's hypothesis can be applied to extreme Right aesthetes, it is less easily applied to the other ways in which the three newspapers deal with the arts.

CHAPTER 3

À PART LA RUBRIQUE HEBDOMADAIRE: THE ARTS IN BOOKS, OCCASIONAL COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

That there was a 'crisis' in the arts in the inter-war period was the main preoccupation of the writers of art monographs. For writers other than the resident art critics at the weekly Right wing newspapers, there was an awareness of the affairs of the art world that merited occasional commentary in the pages of the newspapers. These elements, together, largely constitute the context in which the fine arts columns of these weekly newspapers appeared. As such, their importance should not be overlooked.

While it is not claimed that the books on the fine arts were read by as many people as the papers were, the selection to be discussed here indicates that art writers were agreed that there was a crisis in French art, and that the Jews were to blame. At once precedent and context, these books demonstrate that the open association of Jews with a perceived crisis in the arts already existed, and came from a highly regarded circle of art critics and historians. The occasional treatment of the arts outside of the weekly arts column serves as an indicator of those artistic and aesthetic issues that were of general interest, and were not confined to the esotericism associated with the fine arts column. For the average reader, even one who would ordinarily skip over the weekly column, the desire to keep abreast of current issues must certainly have compelled them to read these occasional treatments of the arts.

The anti-Semitism of cultural commentators and aesthetes is in some ways more dangerous than pseudo-scientific racial anti-Semitism. Whereas the latter is bound by biological determinations, leading inevitably to blood lineage, the former can be applied more extensively. As Carroll notes, "literary anti-Semites are limited only by their

imaginations."[1] Thus, writers concerned with virtually any field could not only blame Jews for their problems, but could also determine trends or tendencies to be 'Jewish' in origin. Not least among these fields was art. Though it is more commonly in Germany that examples of literature blaming the Jews for cultural decadence and degeneracy are found, there was also a similar trend in France. Perhaps euphemisms for 'Jewish', the terms used to describe those held responsible for the crisis in French art are at very least the constituent parts of anti-Semitic equations. In Camille Mauclair's *Painting Gone Mad*, a collection of essays written for *Le Figaro* and first published in 1929, the author writes that "the 'wild-men gathered from all countries, where some of them were undesirables, into Paris where they live well, to teach us how to paint and to crowd all the art schools while cloaking their ignorance with arrogance." He goes on to argue that these arts are dangerous, in so much as the people who create them are also connected to dangerous politics. He maintains that "it is impossible not to realize that extremist painting is on all fours with political and social extremism."[2] Throughout the book, terms such as 'savage', 'shameful buffoonery', 'Freudian putrefaction', 'art-communism' 'art-bolshevism', and 'the international academism of Ugly' are used forcefully to establish the foundation of the Rightist attack on the avant-garde.

Other works were even more explicit in their anti-Semitism. Fritz Vanderpyl, in articles such as "Existe-t'il une peinture juive?" accused the Jews of artificially creating international reputations for Jewish artists such as Chagall, Modigliani, Soutine, Kisling, and Picasso. He argued that because painting was essentially nationalistic in nature and origin, not only were the Jews incapable of it, they were propagating a false aesthetic at

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[1] Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, p. 180.
[2] Camille Mauclair, *Painting Gone Mad: A Collection of Articles From the Paris*

the expense of the French.[3] In *Les Méteques contre l'art français*, another of his works, Mauclair reasoned that the Jewish critics should not be allowed to comment on contemporary French painting, since they had no sense of French values.[4] As Golan notes, *Les Méteques* was "facetiously dedicated to dealers with fictive but vilifying Jewish sounding names such as 'Rosenschwein and Lévy-Tripp,' to the 'pseudo-critics' (whose names Mauclair would not divulge), and 'to Montparnasse, filth of Paris.'"[5] Louis Hautecoeur, who would later become the *Director Général des Beaux Arts* for the duration of the Vichy government, also weighed in on the problems of the avant-garde, Jews, and French nationalism in the arts. In his *Considérations sur l'art d'aujourd'hui*, Hautecoeur too complained that the Jews were conspiring against France. He writes "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."[6] Through the Jewish corruption of the arts, technique had gradually disappeared, replaced by foreign aesthetics.

With the Occupation, the brief lull in monographs and collected essays attacking the Jews for corruption of the French art community ended, and the attack was renewed with vigour. Though not original in their content and reasoning, works by some of the old anti-Semites were even more virulent than their pre-war efforts had been. Hautecoeur, now the head bureaucrat in charge of the arts, added a scholarly veneer to the collection of works. In *Peinture et Litérature en France du XVIIème aux XXème siècle*, his narrative form incorporates what he sees as Jewish crimes against French art. For example, in

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"Figaro", trans. F. Emanuel, (London: Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1931) pp. 11, 17.

[3] Vanderpyl, "Existe-t'il une peinture juive?".

[4] Camille Mauclair, *Les Métèques contre l'art français*, (Paris: Nouvelle revue Critique, 1930), cited in Cone, "Art and Politics in France", p. 107.

[5] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. 151.

[6] Hautecoeur, *Considérations sur l'art d'aujourd'hui*, p. 72, cited in Cone, "Art and

discussing expressionism, he writes that it "found a favorable terrain among Jewish painters who in the aftermath of 1918 gathered in Paris from the corners of Europe. They brought to us their anxiety."[7] Vanderpyl repeated his attacks on the Jews in his unambiguously titled *L'Art sans patrie – Un mensonge: le Pinceau d'Israel.*[8] As much a problem as ever it was, in France as in Germany, the enemies of decadence among these critics never could properly circumscribe what made art 'Jewish', nor could they satisfactorily define what constituted non-decadent art.

For Cone, the discussion of these authors serves to demonstrate that, as one might suspect, there were many anti-Semitic voices in the French art community. However, here they serve as the context in which to examine the writings of the art critics at overtly political newspapers. For Cone, to have found anti-Semites within the ranks of the French art critics and historians is the end in itself. These authors are but part of the issue, albeit an important one. Collectively, they constitute a fertile ground for the critics at *Candide*, *Gringoire,* and *Je suis partout*. Yet it is these critics, writing in context and conditions most conducive to Right wing, anti-Semitic aesthetic rhetoric and propaganda, that have been largely ignored. Cone's only foray into these sources was to track down Lucien Rebatet's Occupation columns, as further - if banal - proof that there were French anti-Semitic aesthetes. Essentially, Cone briefly dips into the pages of these newspapers to extract specific examples of virulent anti-Jewish sentiment in the arts, retrieving little. This paper attempts to give a more complete picture of the arts as written about in these weeklies.

Politics in France", p. 11.

[7] Louis Hautecoeur, *Peinture et Litérature en France du XVIIème aux XXème siècle*, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1942) p. 306, cited in Cone, "Art and Politics in France", p. 11.

[8] Fritz Vanderpyl, *L'Art sans patrie – Un mensonge: le Pinceau d'Israel*, (Paris: 1942).

That these writers were to be found on the Right of the political spectrum is no coincidence. There is no dearth of examples to illustrate the connection of the perceived crisis in the arts – blamed on the Jews – with the Right wing and fascism. Carroll even argues that they are not only complementary elements, but rather that they are inextricably linked to one another. These writers, and writers of the same ilk were not irrational nihilists, but were actually truly committed to traditional values in art and culture, as well as their version of classical humanism. For these theorists, writers, and intellectuals, fascism was seen as the guarantor of rationality, of classical humanist tradition, which had, according to them, been all but destroyed by modernism. One of the problems with this view is that they themselves – as the proponents of a movement that had fused together different notions of the romanticized past with elements of modern aesthetics - were a product of modernity, rather than an irrational anomaly or simple reaction against modernity.[9] Regardless, the fact remains that the French Right fostered an anti-modernist, anti-Semitic tradition, with many examples of works linking the Jews with the perceived crisis in the arts. Given this, one would expect to find this same theme repeated in the columns of the three main Right wing weeklies, especially since it was already well-established, and regrettably well-received by the year 1936.

French pride was to be found in many facets of everyday life. This, along with the status (real or imagined) of France as the center for the arts, yields a unique situation. It may be hard to understand, geographically and chronologically far removed as we are, the importance of the arts in French life from 1936 to 1944. As demonstrated above, many books were published on the arts, and for a populace that prided itself on voracious reading this has great implications. That some of those books were actually collections of

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[9] Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, pp. 3, 124.

essays originally printed in daily newspapers also gives some indication not only of the demand for these writings on aesthetic issues, but also of the number of people who would have been aware of these writings. The arts were not confined to art monographs and fine arts columns, and aesthetic issues and events spilled over into the other pages of the newspapers with a frequency unparalleled in today's press. These are not only instances where aesthetic sensationalism borders on the shock value associated with contemporary art stories that find their way into the regular pages of newspapers. The examples of how art appears and is dealt with in the rest of the three weeklies indicate the importance and interest in the arts, and help give a more complete impression of the arts generally in three Right wing newspapers.

In 1936, *Candide* complemented its weekly fine arts column with a series of memoirs by the important print publisher and art dealer Ambroise Vollard. Appearing several times throughout that year, the first of these recollections appeared in July. In a short note at the top of this first article, the newspaper introduced the series as follows: "nous sommes heureux de pouvoir publier ces pages de M. Ambroise Vollard qui, durant ces cinquante dernières années, a connu et même lancé les peintres les plus célèbres. Il a bien voulu évoquer pour *Candide* quelques-uns de ses plus 'pittoresques' souvenirs."[10] This series of columns was awarded a distinguished place on page three, and each was allotted at least double the space given to the weekly arts column which appeared on various pages, but never before page four. His columns read as a who's who of French art, discussing personal encounters with artists of such renown as Cézanne, Renoir, Degas, and Manet. Though anecdotal, they seem to perpetuate the theme of retreating into a romanticized, glorious French past, which would come through in full force during

the Occupation.

The closest these recollections come to addressing the issue of Jews and art comes in the last column of the series, which incidentally was the only one to appear on page six. Entitled "Quand les princes de la peinture dînait dans ma cave", the end of the article describes a night where, viewing a Cézanne with admiration, Degas is said to have commented "Quelle noblesse là dedans! Voilà qui nous change de Pissarro." He was challenged by another guest, who reminded the artist that it was Degas himself who had once steered him to a Pissarro, which Degas found at the time "joliment bien." Without blinking, Degas said "Oui, mais c'était avant l'affaire Dreyfus." With a dismissive tone, Vollard claims "de telles boutades étaient familières au peintre."[11] In all the reminiscences of the distinguished Vollard published in *Candide*, the issue of Jews in art is barely hinted at. Even when it is alluded to, it has little to do with the Jews ruining art, so much as political events had caused some older, notoriously ill-humoured and acerbic personalities - as Degas was – to become anti-Semitic. It is also interesting that Vollard's association with more controversial figures is conveniently left out. Despite having sat for Picasso, the resulting portrait being an unabashedly cubist work, no mention is made of him (see fig. 1).

Of the three newspapers, *Je suis partout* was the most concerned with the arts. It regularly kept its readers up to date on the sales in the art market, frequently mentioning the names of Jewish collectors and dealers – most notably Rothschild and Rosenberg - though this matter-of-fact reportage was without any anti-Semitic commentary. For its part, 1936 proved to be a year in which the arts often found their way into pages other

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[10] "Comment je découvris Cézanne", *Candide*, 2 juillet, 1936, p. 3.

[11] Ambroise Vollard, "Quand les princes de la peinture dînaient dans ma cave",

than the weekly fine arts column. Like in *Candide* and *Gringoire,* there was nervous criticism of the lack of preparedness for the *Exposition International des Arts et des Techniques*, which, for the French Right, was to prove France's continued preeminence in the arts (see fig. 2).

As the weekly advertised, *Je suis partout* was concerned with keeping its readers up to date on international affairs. The motivation for this was more than simply to keep an eye on potential military threats, as reports on all aspects of life abroad found their way into its pages. Dioudonnat writes:

> les nationalismes étrangers se recommandent de lointaines splendeurs: le fascisme prétend s'inspirer de la Rome impériale et le national-socialisme invoque la Germanie légendaire et son dynamisme. Comme eux, *Je suis partout* se réfère à un moment plus ou moins idealisé du passé français, qui sert de mythe nationale, frein à la décadence, moteur de l'éventuelle résurrection.[12]

Though fondness for Italian cultural traditions was pardonable, examining Germany was more delicate.

A more open and shut case than posed by Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy, the Soviet Union was dealt with almost dismissively. On April 4, *Je suis partout* published a special edition entitled "La Russie des Soviets". The full-page article on culture in Russia asserts that "les artistes soviétiques n'ont produit de véritable chefs-d'oeuvres que dans la mesure où ils ont pu s'évader des absurdes principes marxistes." It goes on to list the principles of proletarian art, as defined at a congress held in Kharkov in 1930, among which are included "l'art prolétarien renonce à l'individualisme; l'art prolétarien doit être collectivisé; l'art prolétarien doit être discipliné; l'art prolétarien doit être créé sous la direction prudente, mais ferme, du parti communiste; l'art prolétarien doit être une arme

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Candide, 29 octobre, 1936, p. 6.

de classe."[13] It concludes that this atrocious jargon is completely void of meaning, a fitting dismissal of a system the French Right has no intention of emulating in any way, let alone culturally.

Imagining a natural connection based on a shared Latin tradition, the writers of *Je suis partout* express admiration for Italy. In two articles on the page devoted to the country, the virtues of Italian art and architecture are again extolled. Apologetically, one of the articles explains "on sait que le régime fasciste a balayé bon nombre de 'vielleries'; il ne l'a cependant pas fait sans discernement et, malgré ses fortes tendences centralisatrices, il ne décourage pas le maintien ni même le renouveau des traditions locales."[14] Short shrift is given to the avant-garde art of the Italian futurists, the movement associated with Italian fascism. Strangely, the two articles – based on the correspondence of a writer who was there – make almost no mention of the contemporary. Rome and Roman art are, effectively, romanticized. Not nearly as much of a threat as Germany, the writers could afford to select only the more desirable elements of Italy.

Germany, a constant source of conflicting opinions and ideas, was markedly different. The year started off noting cheerfully that the new German ambassador to Paris was "un homme d'une grande habilité, un Allemand de culture française."[15] From here, the tone becomes more cautious and scrutinizing. The rumblings of Joseph Goebbels over the matter of art criticism were discussed in January, and turned out to be a forewarning of the ban on art criticism that Goebbels would institute in November of that year. In a

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[12] Dioudonnat, *Je suis partout*, p. 234.
[13] *Je suis partout*, 4 avril, 1936, p. 10.
[14] "Italie", *Je suis partout*, 11 janvier, 1936, p. 10.
[15] "Paris", *Je suis partout*, 4 janvier, 1936, p. 4.

March article, Claude Jeantet relates that the *Voelkische Beobachter*, the official organ of the Nazis, claims "la France ne se rend pas compte de ses responsabilités culturelles... En s'alliant avec le bolchevisme, elle trahit la culture européenne."[16] The article concludes by hoping that the Franco-Soviet pact, the cause of this attack, will not prevent a rapprochement. Certainly, the Right was shaken by this accusation, having always prided itself on the tradition of French leadership in culture and western tradition.

A professor at the University of Grenoble, René Lote responded with a dismal short history of German painting. Inhis article, entitled "Comment juger la peinture allemande?" he explains that "la saine et vraie humanité a eu aussi sa place dans l'art allemand. Malheureusement, comme partout, et plus encore, d'autres éléments l'y ont déformée."[17] He proceeds to list some of the German masters over the years, but his real purpose soon becomes obvious. Essentially, he demonstrates that the decline in the arts can be traced through German painting. Originality in German art, he claims, ended in the early nineteenth century. Since such time, there have only been followers of foreign trends. German symbolism, he writes, "veut être puisant et profond, ça ne parvient qu'a être prétencieux ou gauche." He concludes by saying that there is in fact no national art, "malgré la réaction farouche du 'Troisième Empire'", that originality has become very artificial, and that genius is now simply an empty word that is thrown around without meaning in modern society.[18]

The exhibition of Olympic art held in conjunction with the Olympics in Berlin also warranted a write up. Appearing in the "En zig-zag à travers le Reich" section of the

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[16] Claude Jeantet, "l'iniative diplomatique en Europe", *Je suis partout*, 7 mars, 1936, p. 8.

[17] René Lote, "Comment juger la peinture allemande?", *Je suis partout*, 18 avril, 1936, p. 7.

German page, a section which featured short paragraphs on various happenings in Germany, the write up reviewed the art supposedly inspired by sport. On the grounds of a general lack of appreciation of the beauty of the male figure in modern societies, the review states that the majority of the sculptures are devoid of any beauty – whether through violent poses the Greeks never used, or through a style 'plus ou moins cubiste, de simples caricatures du corps humain."[19] The exception is a German sculptor named Breker, whose athlete demonstrates a natural look and harmony. The review concludes on a sour note. Acknowledging the distinction of sport-inspired architecture, especially that of Italy, Germany and Austria, the author laments "la carence de la France est complète: elle n'est même pas présente à cette exposition – apparemment parce qu'elle n'avait rien à présenter."[20] The French Right wing press, exchanging blows in the cultural arena, seems to have come away embarrassed at the evident decline in its country's status as world leader in the arts. The crisis is acknowledged, but the laying of the blame is difficult.

A desire to reaffirm the culture of France seems apparent in the midst of the European finger pointing that accompanied the perception of a general cultural degeneration. In an article based on conferences held by Pierre Gaxotte, a contributor to *Je suis partout*, Robert Brasillach writes about how France is to regain a sense of its national culture, which he says is not reading "Paris-Soir-Dimanche", or going to see "le film imbécile du boulevard." Nor is it to be lowered to "ces créations bâtardes et insultantes qu'on appelle l'art pour le peuple, ou lui faire entendre au contraire que la culture est réservée à ceux qui comprennent Mallarmé et apprécient Picasso." In terms

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[18] Lote, "la peinture allemande", p. 7.
[19] "En zig-zag à travers le Reich", *Je suis partout*, 1 août, 1936, p. 9.

startlingly similar to those used in Nazi Germany, he goes on to claim "dans la vraie culture, il n'y a pas de passé ni de présent: il y a seulement l'éternel."[21] It is interesting that Picasso is regarded positively by the French Right here, especially since, paradoxically, the later reference to the eternal nature of true culture is strikingly similar to Nazi cultural rhetoric of the same period.

In an earlier issue though, an over zealous review of a small exhibition of works by Fernand Maillaud serves to underscore the problems of defining culture in France. The author of the short piece, which includes a picture of a landscape by the artist, writes "ni la reproduction qu'on trouvera ci-dessous, ni les descriptions les plus éloquentes – nous n'y prétendrons pas – ne peuvent donner une idée juste de l'émouvant ensemble offert à notre attention par l'un des grands peintres de ce temps." He goes on to conclude that the artist, who is now seventy three, "en pleine puissance, est l'une des gloires les plus pures et les plus rayonnantes de l'Art français."[22] This example is also reminiscent of Nazi Germany in that there is little agreement in defining what constitutes good national art. Not only was the featured artist not included in the *Maîtres de l'Art Indépendant* held later in 1937, he was not included in the *Ausstellung Französischer Kunst der Gegenwart*, the driving force behind which was the Popular Front's idea of "Rayonnement culturel".

The Right wing press continued to criticize the Popular Front government for their handling of the World Exposition. Alarmingly behind schedule, the project was attacked incessantly from every different angle and perspective, before, during, and after. The main charge leveled against Blum was that he was hijacking the exposition for the

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[20] "En zig-zag à travers le Reich", p. 9.
[21] Robert Brasillach, "Portrait de la France", *Je suis* partout, 30 janvier, 1937, pp. 1, 6.

Left; an exhibition to celebrate the Popular Front, rather than *la France éternelle*. In retaliation, the Left portrayed the opening – scheduled for May 1 – as a battle against fascism. In the April 24 edition of *Je suis partout*, page five was given over in its entirety to Lucien Rebatet's article on the Popular Front's sabotage of the Exposition. When it did finally open, the exhibition of French art was a disappointment to the French Right. One article hastily dismissed the artistic and aesthetic worth of the exhibition itself, and asked rhetorically was not France itself always on display to visitors? Reminding readers that Notre-Dame, les Invalides, le Louvre, Versailles, and Chartres "sont terminés" (a shot at the fact that construction continued after the official opening), the article asserts that admiring the Louvre, "vous serez au coeur de la France."[23] Again, the theme of an eternal culture of France, and idealized romanticizing of past glories in art is evident.

In July, Pierre Gaxotte's review of the French art on display at the Exposition further supported the notion of France as being immovable from its eternal glory. The first exhibition, however, (dealing with French art from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries) is given the majority of his attention and praise. A continuous stream of genius without a single sterile period, he writes that "la richesse d'art français est infinie," and "il est le maître pour toujours." He goes on to claim that French civilization "ne vieillit-elle pas. Elle est d'une actualité éternelle."[24] As did many on the Right who weighed in on the aesthetics debate, Gaxotte finds an escape from the contemporary crisis by seeking refuge in the familiar, affirmed past. In Gaxotte's article, the frequency with which he uses absolute terms to describe French art and culture, terms such as 'infinite', 'forever',

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[22] Robert Delille, "Exposition Fernand Maillaud", *Je suis partout,* 9 janvier, 1937, p. 4.
[23] Dorsay, "L'exposition est ouverte et le cousin Jules est ministre", *Je suis partout*, 29 mai, 1937, p. 1.
[24] Pierre Gaxotte, "Voici la France!", *Je suis partout*, 9 juillet, 1937, p. 1.

and 'eternal' is quite interesting. This rhetoric is comforting to the Right, because it assures those who do not want to change with the times that they do not have to. As for the other exhibition, French art from the nineteenth century to the present, Gaxotte cedes that the country has not gone completely sterile, though there are only a few isolated cases of contemporary talent.

As diligent in its observations as ever, *Je suis partout* continued to note artistic and aesthetic happenings in Germany. In what would become a characteristic tone, Lucien Rebatet writes about the exodus of Jews from Germany. Among their other cultural contributions, "les monstruosités pathologiques de la peinture judéo-surréaliste" were incompatible with German national honour, according to German racists. Rebatet follows with a curt "les racistes ont eut parfaitement raison." This, surprisingly, is a rare condoning of anti-Semitic aesthetic policy for the French Right wing press, and it is still not yet the railing that would come later from Rebatet. It also indicates Rebatet's acceptance of Nazi propaganda. He affirms that "la judaïsation de l'Allemagne intellectuelle, qui datait de bien avant la guerre, apparaîtra sans aucun doute comme une des causes essentielles de l'engourdissement ou des déviations de la littérature, de la musique, des arts plastiques dans tout ce pays."[25] Who better than the French, according to him, to understand the German desire to return to the national purity of years gone by, before the Jewish corruption of culture? Rebatet's admiration – if not his desire for cultural rapprochement - is evident here.

Still, other occasional arts commentators continued to dismiss what Germany had to offer as substitutes for the modern art purged from its midst. In a review of a Berlin exhibition of Reich artist Wilhelm Petersen's work, the author writes in no uncertain

terms "ces tableaux sont de pures horreurs."[26] Another article, reviewing an exhibition of German art from Dürer to the present, states "devant cette exposition – qui n'est nullement dénuée d'intérêt – on ne distingue aucune influence de la race allemande sur l'art allemande; les influences artistiques des pays voisins sont beaucoup plus visibles."[27] When talk of the upcoming week of German art to be held in Paris revealed that there would be no National Socialist painting, journalists asked why. A short column explained that according to Walther Funk, then state secretary of propaganda, many artists in Germany were still caught up in cubism and dadaism. Much surprised by this, the French journalists were assured that a National Socialist painting existed, but that it was not destined for export, and would only be seen when the new House of German Art was opened.[28] The German exhibition that received the most positive response was the exhibition of French art in Berlin. For *Je suis partout*, this marked a French victory. Whereas the belief in Germany was that France was the home of artistic extravagance, the review concluded by stating "la critique allemande se déclare satisfaite. Elle découvre que la peinture française n'est pas si révolutionnaire qu'on le pensait en Allemagne."[29] French art had German approval, which *Je suis partout* enjoyed immensely.

To be certain, the simultaneous opening of the House of German Art and the Degenerate Art exhibition did not escape the attention of the weekly. While the architecture of the building itself received a favorable mention for its neo-classicism, the contents of the House did not. Despite the rigorous selection process by which nine hundred works were selected from the 15 000 submissions, the article dryly reports that

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[25] Lucien Rebatet, "Culture Allemande", *Je suis partout*, 13 février, 1937, p. 5.
[26] "Un artiste du troisième reich", *Je suis partout*, 6 février, 1937, p. 9.
[27] "Le tableau de genre allemand", *Je suis partout*, 20 février, 1937, p. 9.
[28] "l'art allemand à Paris… et ailleurs", *Je suis partout*, 2 juillet, 1937, p. 9.

"l'impression qui domine est celle d'une médiocrité parfois honnête, c'est-à-dire témoignant d'une connaissance suffisante du métier de peintre." The article notes that there are no examples of works that are in any way unfinished in their style, and the article comes to the shocking conclusion that by this criterion, the French genius Rodin would be excluded. On the other hand, the exhibit of Degenerate Art is applauded. The author seems to ultimately be persuaded by the Germans, and ends up repeating the familiar rhetoric of Nazi aestheticism. Walking through this museum of horrors, the viewer is revolted by the infantile and pretentious nullity of the pieces. The article concludes that the title of the exhibition is not exaggerated: "il ne suffirait pas de parler d'une décadence de l'art, et M. Hitler n'a pas tort d'appeler les choses par leur nom."[30] It is not only surprising how quickly the writer begins journalistic heel-clicking in discussing the Degenerate Art exhibition, it is surprising that the anti-Semitic thread (a veritable towline in Nazi aesthetic propaganda) has not been picked up. The exhibition does seem to have put into action what many on the French Right were thinking and feeling in regards to the avant-garde.

After the important artistic events of 1937, articles on the arts were less frequent, especially as war neared. Still not finished with the Exposition, an article by Georges Blond in *Je suis partout* the following year entitled "histoire vraie de l'Exposition" states that the most successful exhibit was of French art until the nineteenth century. Though the splendor of the nineteenth century masters impressed countless visitors, Blond reminds the reader that "pendant cette floraison de chefs-d'oeuvre, l'État démocratique

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[29] "Une exposition de peinture française", *Je suis partout*, 12 juin, 1937, p. 6

[30] André Nicolas, "Gloires et sourcis de l'art allemand", *Je suis partout*, 27 août, 1937, p. 10.

commandait les pire navets."[31] Academism and the avant-garde were still considered to be the undesirable extremes of art, and to have ignored the artists who would become the heroes of French art was unpardonable. In *Candide*, an article about a *foire surréaliste* that took place in Paris demonstrates the other extreme, perhaps even more contemptible than the first. In *Gringoire*, Clément Vautel discusses the poverty of French artists becoming a problem. Recounting a plan that essentially amounts to an 'adopt an artist' program, Vautel rejects this idea, citing its many flaws. If one wants to help artists, he writes, "commandez leur, achetez-leur quelque chose... La peinture à l'huile n'a pas augmenté de prix comme le beurre."[32] Many struggling artists had already accommodated their styles to suit popular tastes, and so one can assume that this suggestion to buy art in support of artists does not contradict the Right wing aesthetics.

In the year that World War II would begin, there was little indication in the arts-related writings that the world was on the brink of total war. *Candide* did however print a short article on the front page of its June 21 edition on the Nazi sale of 'decadent art'. Entitled "L'Allemgne et les arts", and printed in italics to further distinguish it from the rest of the page, the short article began with "Hâtons-nous de rire. On ne sait trop ce que l'avenir nous réserve." Explaining that Germany was ridding itself of works by Gaugin, Picasso, and Utrillo, under the pretext that they were not suitable for a virile people like themselves, the article asserts "elle [Germany] va les vendre. Avec cet argent, elle fera des canons, naturellement." At the same time, Goebbels is said to have affirmed that the German people are the chosen people of music, arts and literature. "Quels arts? Quelles

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[31] Georges Blond, "Histoire vraie de l'Exposition", *Je suis partout,* 7 janvier, 1938, p. 3. 'Navet', in an artistic context, is a derogatory term for a failed work.
[32] Clément Vautel, "Un artiste chez soi", *Gringoire*, 13 mai, 1938, p. 5.

littérature? Quelle musique? Peinture au pistolet et musique de 380, sans doute."[33] The sale of these works was also discussed on the arts page, which noted that among the works to be sold as 'degenerate' were those of the heroes of painting in France such as Van Gogh, Derain, and de Vlaminck. If the issue of culture and Germany was ambiguous in past references, clouded by thinly veiled admiration for the National Socialist revolution, it is only slightly less so here. What is interesting in this article is that it objects to the sale of works by French artists, or at least artists who had their lives in France. It does not object to the principle of decadent art, and the purge of this art from the museums and collections of Germany. There is no mention of, let alone objection to, the action taken on March 20 of that year, in which the Nazis burned over a thousand paintings and almost four thousand watercolours, drawings, and other works.[34] It does not condemn Nazi policy, but rather hints at the irritating irony that proceeds of sales of 'French' art (a definition that shifts frequently) will be used to make guns that will be fired at France.

In *Je suis partout*, the protection of French art treasures – referred to as the "mobilisation artistique et historique"- is described in detail in the September 22 edition. Beginning with a brief history of arts in war, the article explains how it was recognized that armies cannot be expected to respect important art. Therefore, *la Société des Nations* and the *Office international des musées*, "ont établi ce principe que chaque État, responsable envers la civilisation des oeuvres d'art qu'il possède, est tenu d'assurer leur défense matérielle." The article concludes that the measures taken, and the plans made constitute "la protection 'totale' de nos archives, autrement dit de notre histoire, qu'il faut

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[33] "L'Allemagne et les arts", *Candide*, 21 juin, 1939, p. 1.
[34] Adam, *Art of the Third Reich*, p. 127.

assurer partout."[35] Though certainly rational and important measures to take in the face of war, it is tempting to make a link between this article and the Right's desperation to support their notion of an eternal France, one with a duty to western civilization. This claim would be difficult to support without the works of the masters.

The importance of art to the French Right, even in the shadow of looming war, should not be underestimated. In February, *Candide* noted that their one-time art critic, André Salmon, had collected some memoirs about Amedeo Modigliani. Though he was Jewish, this is curiously overlooked in this polite article, which calls him "une des gloires de l'École de Paris."[36] In May, full-page advertisements announced the release of *L'Histoire Générale de l'Art*, a four-volume collaborative effort. With much art work hidden away in anticipation of hostilities, the advertisement cleverly claims of this timely work "c'est le plus beau de tous les musées du monde."[37] In an article that same month, *Candide* laid further claim to the Latin tradition emphasized by the French Right. Reporting on an exhibition of Leonardo da Vinci to be held in Milan, the article proudly related that despite the fact that da Vinci was Italian, "il appartient quelque peu à la France."[38]

The most dramatic writings of the year, as perhaps is to be expected, came from the notoriously anti-Semitic Lucien Rebatet. Though dramatic, they are not original. That they are exceptional is what is interesting, for nowhere else in the three weeklies are the Jews blamed directly for the crisis in the art world, and for wreaking the excesses of

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[35] Pierre d'Espezel, "La protection des objets d'art et des monuments", *Je suis partout*, 22 septembre, 1939, p. 6.
[36] "Modigliani bourgeois", *Candide*, 1 février, 1939, p. 7.
[37] *Candide*, 24 mai, 1939, p. 14.
[38] Léopold Mabilleau, "Le génie vivant de Léonard de Vinci", *Candide*, 31 mai, 1939, p. 4.

modern art on Europe. In February, *Je suis partout* published its second special edition on Jews. Organized mostly by Rebatet himself, he also wrote the cultural column, which he entitled "La corruption des esprits." The familiar complaints are echoed by Rebatet, who asserts "il n'y a pas d'art plastique juif, pas un seul monument juif. Pisarro est un exception." He goes on to list other Jewish artists who are *not* exceptions, notably Chagall, Soutine, Modigliani, Kisling, and Ernst. He claims that not only are the Jews guilty of their own abominations, but also of the influence they exercised over French art, the result being that "la peinture française parait depuis une vingtaine d'années en régression."[39]

In December, Rebatet wrote another piece on the theme, entitled "Pour un art Occidental." Speaking about what he calls "l'art 'judéo-marxiste", he writes "nous avons été nombreux à écrire qu'il proliférait sur l'art français comme des charançons sur une plante vigoureuse." Rebatet even manages to blame them for debasing the works of dead French artists like Cézanne, Renoir, and Toulouse-Lautrec. In a passing clever comparison, he manages to associate the true, eternal France with the noble Latin tradition, claiming that these Jews "engendrent l'anarchie comme des horizons français ou italiens engendrent la raison et la beauté équilibrée." Paradoxically, the mission he is calling people to is an international defence of Occidental culture against the 'Slavic-Oriental' influences: "nous nous battons maintenant non pas pour quelques entités vaseuses, mais pour sauver l'Occident dont notre pays est le coeur." He goes on to accuse Germany of having betrayed the Occidental tradition, and adds that the neo-academism of Nazi Germany is not the answer, nor is it to imitate Hitler, "qui a vendu pêle-mêle les

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[39] Lucien Rebatet, "La corruption des esprits", *Je suis partout*, 17 février, 1939, p. 9.

Van Gogh des musées allemands et les peintres 'dégénérés'."[40] For Rebatet, the German model has but some elements of worth in its revolution. Perhaps the most important difference is to be found in how the Right still views France as the world leader in the arts.

Understandably, 1940 was a relatively quiet year for the arts outside of the weekly columns. After the Occupation began, articles in *Candide* of an artistic nature were restricted almost exclusively to the celebratory reminiscence style, whereby a guest writer who personally knew one or more of the heroes of French art filled the bottom half of a page with charming anecdotes and hero-worship. Through the Vichy years, articles of this type discussed Rodin, Monet, Renoir, Manet, Matisse and Gaugin. One of the many forms of escapism to be found in France during the Occupation, readers of aesthetic concern and inclination were allowed by these articles to escape to the glorious past. It was here that they were safe from the current state of French art (which presumably did not improve). In so much as current art is concerned, a short paragraph in 1942 notes that Maurice de Vlaminck sent a vitriolic article to *Comoedia*, in which he attacks cubism, and accuses Picasso of being "incapable d'une création originale et de n'avoir fait copier et singer les maitres les plus divers."[41] Confident in his position as a preferred French artist, and one who had been on the trip to Germany in 1941, this attempt to distance himself from the enigmatic Picasso is not surprising. Other than this, commentary on day to day art happenings was mostly restricted to formulaic reviews of exhibitions (such as that of the Breker exhibition in 1942), and affirmations of the booming art market, as evidenced by the record sales. Lamentably, even an interview with Jérôme Carcopino, the

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[40] Lucien Rebatet, "Pour un art Occidental", *Je suis partout*, 1 décembre, 1939, p. 7.
[41] "Le cubisme, voila l'ennemi", *Candide*, 17 juin, 1942, p. 3.

State Secretary in charge of National Education and Youth, contains but half truths and nationalist bravado.[42]

Over the same period, the artistic articles outside of the weekly column in *Je suis partout* were similar to those of *Candide*. One article that stands out is a rare literary contribution from the well-known Right wing cartoonist, Ralph Soupault. In "Un scandale permanent: L'OFFENSIVE de la peinture juive" [*sic*], the cartoonist complains that despite the National Revolution supposedly taking place, the Jews are still hanging on. Not yet rid of "ce flot putride d'art dégénéré", he claims "en peinture comme ailleurs, le Juif ne lâche pas un morceau." Works by Jewish artists continue to be included in exhibitions, and people continue to buy them. For Soupault, "ce scandale a suffisamment duré."[43] In line with Rebatet's writings and opinions, Soupault's editorial is still the exception rather than the rule. One of the only other indications that this equation is made by the newspaper comes in 1944, in a review of Mauclair's *La Crise de l'Art moderne*. A favorable review, it states "sans fioritures inutiles, mais avec sobriété et précision, M. Camille Mauclair analyse justement et sainement le mal dont souffre notre art français."[44] Of course, Mauclair blames the Jews for the rotting of French art, and the only regret the reviewer has is that Mauclair was limited to thirty-two pages.

Without doubt, art was of great importance to the French Right. It often spilled over to pages other than the designated cultural page, especially in *Candide* and *Je suis partout*. Many themes – common currency in artistic circles – were echoed in these occasional articles, reviews, and editorials. There was a desire to restore French glory,

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[42] Gaëtan Sanvoisin, "Le patrimoine artistique de la France: une interview de M. Jérôme Carcopino", *Candide*, 4 février, 1942, pp. 1, 3.

[43] Ralph Soupault, "Un scandale permanent: L'OFFENSIVE de la peinture juive", *Je suis partout*, 7 février, 1942, p.6.

though this often did not go further than wistful reminiscing, or even escapism. There was also a recognition (or invention) of a Latin link with Italy, and to a lesser degree, Spain. Seldom officially reciprocated, it was a source of constant disappointment to a French Right that struggled to affirm its notion of an eternal France. In many instances, what was promulgated as nationalism in the arts was simply exercises in list making, whereby complaints and rhetorical questions about art were preceded or followed with a list of French art heroes. Finally, it was widely agreed on the Right that art, specifically French art, was in crisis. At one extreme, the influence of Academism was despised for outstaying its welcome. At the other, the extravagances of the avant-garde enraged aesthetes on the Right. With the anticipated exception of Lucien Rebatet, and a late article by a cartoonist, the clear and overt correlation between the crisis in the arts, the decline of French artistic and cultural glory, and the Jews is not made in the pages of the three leading Right wing French weeklies. Even Rebatet only becomes an exception in 1939, well after Germany has identified its enemy in the arts, declared war, and sold the left-overs. This is even more impressive, given the precedent set by the works of French authors discussed above.

In looking at the art critics who wrote the weekly columns at these three Right wing weeklies, it becomes quite apparent that this is a body of interesting, important, and relevant material that deserves to be researched further. Among the many possible avenues for further research, the material seems to beg a comparative study, whereby the columns in these, and perhaps other Right wing French newspapers, would be compared and contrasted with the fine arts columns in the Left wing French press. One might also consider pursuing a study of the columnists themselves, and how they came to write for

[44] "Lecture", *Je suis partout*, 10 mars, 1944, p. 4.

their respective newspapers, and why they left when they did. Clearly, there is much here to be studied, and it is hoped that it will be.

CHAPTER 4

IMPORTANT IMAGES: CARTOONS IN THE WEEKLIES

For the cartoonists of the Right wing weeklies, the art world was a source of comical lack of understanding between artists and the general public, never to be bridged. Often, the views on art depicted in cartoons transcended politics, though this does not mean that the cartoonists were apolitical. Admittedly, the proportion of political cartoons to any other type leans heavily in the favor of the former. Regardless, the cartoons printed in the three newspapers (some selected from foreign newspapers) often dealt with the arts, and are an important part of understanding how the arts were portrayed in the newspapers. As discussed earlier, the accessibility of the cartoons also makes them a very important element. In an instant, a cartoon conveys its message through use of familiar visual cues and symbols, with pithy text, if there is any text. It is readily and quickly absorbed and processed, which virtually guarantees its 'consumption' by the reader. Articles and columns do not enjoy this same privilege, and can be easily skipped over. For this reason, cartoons have to work on a lowest common denominator of sentiment and comprehension. Thus, they can be considered a good indicator of the majority of their readership. Their importance both as an indicator and potential shaper of public sentiment suggests that the treatment of the arts in the cartoons should be taken into consideration in trying to get a sense of how the newspapers – in their entirety – dealt with the arts.

In looking at the cartoons that appeared in the three Right wing weeklies, one can almost put together the positions of the newspapers without reading the articles and columns. Not surprisingly, anti-Semitism was a common subject in the cartoons, and a few examples will suffice, though there is no dearth of them. The first (fig. 3), entitled

"Le complot judéo-soviétique contre la paix" appeared in *Je suis partout*, January 4, 1936, and is originally a German cartoon. In it, five figures depicted in familiar stereotypical fashion, pore over a map of the world, presumably figuring out a way to instigate a war they can stand aside and profit from. This 'conspiracy' theme was quite common in anti-Semitic cartoons. Another theme was the Jewishness of the Popular Front leader, Léon Blum. In a cartoon simply entitled "Lui !" (fig. 4), published in the July 9, 1936 edition of *Candide*, Blum is depicted straining to hold up a large menorah. Balancing his own Jewishness and the Leftist-radical-anarchist make up of his government - as indicated by the clenched fists that top the menorah - Blum presents two reasons for the Right to hate him. Finally, in another German cartoon reprinted in *Je suis partout* on February 6, 1937 (fig. 5), much to the alarm of the French Right, France is depicted as the haven for the hook-nosed soviet Jews kicked out of Italy, Germany, and Spain. By the last panel, the French soldier has been kicked out of France, which has been taken over and made a soviet republic. These three cartoons essentially sum up the themes of anti-Semitic cartoons.

The cartoons also criticized the Popular Front government, which it blamed for the current state of French affairs. In a cartoon that appeared in the 15 May, 1937 edition of *Je suis partout* entitled "Qui crèvera le premier?" (fig. 6), an elderly Blum is depicted administering poison to a decrepit and bed-ridden France. This depicting of Blum and his government as irreverent of France was a theme that was transferred to irreverence for western aesthetic tradition and glory. In "Le musée du Louvre revu par le Front populaire" (fig. 7), museum visitors are confronted with classical statues who have had arms with clenched fists added to them. Even the treasured Mona Lisa now raises a

clenched fist, abandoning her enigmatic smile for support of the Popular Front. Defacing the art treasures of the great Louvre museum for political ends is not beneath the Popular Front, which makes a considerable impact as an image.

This criticism of Blum's government by the French Right is part of a wider criticism of the international Left. In a cartoon laden with potential meanings, "Les instruments à mutiler la Victoire" (fig. 8) depicts the hammer and sickle, with other tools, at the base of the famous Greek statue, *Nike of Samothrace*, which is displayed in the Louvre. Commonly known as *Victory*, this cartoon can be taken to mean that the Left is weakening France to the point of seriously jeopardizing their chances of winning an upcoming war. However, it could also be charging the Left with the destruction of western art and its traditions. Conveniently, the chosen work no longer has arms or a head, which suggests that the soviets, as symbolized by the tools, are responsible for the damage, rather than two thousand years of aging. Both depend on a considerable familiarity with classical art, which either credits the readership with considerable art historical background, or else means this cartoon's message went over the heads of many readers. Furthermore, unless the reader equates the soviets with the Jews, this cartoon does not blame the Jews for the destruction of the western art tradition.

As for the writers, the International Exhibition of 1937 was a common theme for cartoonists. In France and abroad, the Exhibition was seen as being hijacked by Blum and the Left (figs. 9-11). The cartoons reflect the writings of the time, which complained that the real France was not being represented at the Exhibition. The only direct reference to the issue of national art is in a cartoon published in *Candide* entitled "C'est encore eux qui se disputent!" (fig. 12), in which the sculptures atop the Russian and German

pavilions have come to life and are fighting. The cartoon ridicules the statues of the Russian pavilion, the male being reduced to tears and the female screaming angrily. The imperial eagle on the German pavilion is transformed into a squawking hatchling. Not only is the art produced by these two countries degraded, the decision taken by the organizers (or the Popular Front) to put these two powers in direct confrontation is also questioned. For the French Right, a cartoon that strips its two greatest threats, namely Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, of their dignity also serves to shore up courage in the face of a future made uncertain by the leadership of the Popular Front.

An important feature of Paris life, the art market was another subject cartoonists played with. Interestingly though, when the art market boomed during the Occupation years, no cartoons accompanied the upswing. Perhaps due to the illegitimacy of much of the business being done, or simply the lack of comic potential in success, the art market cartoons seem to have stopped after 1938. One cartoon, appearing in *Je suis partout* in 1937 (fig. 13), calls into question the pricing of paintings. Depicting an appraiser seated before a painting of a woman, the caption reads "Je dirai que ça vaut sept cent cinquante dollars, pas un cent de plus." How such precision can be arrived at based on an arbitrary and subjective assessment of a painting is questioned here, and serves as grounds for dismissing the whole market as a racket. In another called "Reflets" (fig. 14), an art dealer tries to sell what appears to be an impressionist painting to a hesitant woman. Claiming that the customer would be getting two paintings for one, this cartoon seems to make fun of the notorious ignorance of the public (as represented by the woman) in aesthetic matters. The most commonly employed device in cartoons dealing with the arts, it is acceptable because ignorance of the arts – especially the modern arts – is never equated

with a lack of common sense. Quite the opposite, the fault is not to be found in the common person's lack of understanding, but rather in the esoteric nature of art and artists.

With the art market inevitably comes counterfeiting. In figure 15, we have a very rare example of anti-Semitism being associated with art, though it is couched in terms of monetary greed rather than corruption of artistic tradition. In it, a Jewish art dealer accuses the customer of paying with a fake bill, who retorts that the dealer's Corot is also a fake. The Jewish dealer is the one whose treachery is at issue, and the smiling customer is celebrated for cleverly foiling him. In another cartoon (fig. 16), an art dealer comes rushing over to a woman who extends a finger to a Rubens. Though oil paintings do take a long time to dry completely, the dealer's concern that the seventeenth-century painting is still wet would be absurd, were it not a forgery. In addition to these 'professional crooks', the cartoons also depicted lowly thieves. The German cartoon that appeared in the November 21, 1936 issue of *Je suis partout* (fig. 17), has a chilling prophetic quality in the French context. Claiming the transportability of art as the determining criterion in their art appreciation, the thieves in this cartoon would be replaced by many ordinary French citizens, who during the Occupation would invest in art for similar reasons. For cartoonists, the art market, even before the war, was full of dishonesty. Despite this, it was not exclusively, or even commonly defined as Jewish dishonesty.

The aesthetic ignorance of common people was also to be used in the simple viewing of art. Anxious to appear cultured, many people went to the museums and galleries, as much to be seen as to see, which is not necessarily different from today. In figure 18, a man – presumably with his wife and daughter – ponders a typically classical sculpture. As with many examples of this kind of delicate and ancient art, the arms and

head have broken off at some point long ago. The father, however, confidently asserts that it was in transporting them to the museum that they must have been broken. In another cartoon (fig. 19), an older lady wearily requests of her husband that he select one painting from the crowded room that is worth looking at, and she will get up to look. Whether a comment on the quality of the art, or the woman's level of interest, the cartoon indicates that for the majority of museum visitors, it is a cultural activity rather than a true passion. However, being keenly interested in art, or at least appearing to be, does not work either. In "Au Louvre" (fig. 20), printed in Gringoire in June 1939, a common person staring too intently rouses suspicion rather than acknowledgement as a cultured connoisseur. The cartoon reinforces the exclusivity commonly associated with the art world, and puts even its appreciation beyond the realm of the average French person.

On the other hand, the affluent and powerful do not always appreciate art for its aesthetic qualities. In two separate examples, the practical usage of art is valued. In "Le petit roi apprécie la sculpture" (fig. 21), a king's visit to a sculpture exhibit yields the purchase of one statue. Upon returning to his palace, it is set up as a seat for him to review his troops. In 1936, this can easily be interpreted as a criticism of European dictators and their abuse of art in the promotion and glorification of the military. It could also indicate that world leaders, despite their high standing, are no more sensitive to aesthetics than the people they lead. In a similar example (fig. 22), a well-dressed man is in an artist's studio, eyeing a particular statue of a hunched figure. The man requests six of them from the artist, so that he can play leapfrog in his garden. To insinuate that copies of an original work can be easily manufactured is greatly shocking and insulting to the artist. In the end, few people other than the artists themselves appreciate art. The way this

idea is portrayed in the cartoons reassures readers that there is no shame in this, since it is the artists who have ostracized themselves.

Nudity and eroticism, elements included in many examples of traditional and classical art, are another source of amusement to the cartoonists. However, they are used to set up contrasts and make statements about contemporary society, rather than to criticize or ridicule the art itself. In a gallery filled with paintings of nudes in provocative poses and compositions, and a similar sculpture in the corner, a young couple is seated on a bench (fig. 23). Despite both of them being clothed up to their necks, the security guard informs them that "those types of things" are not tolerated in the gallery. It is as though to appreciate the nudes of classical and traditional works, one must be not only fully clothed, but also at a safe distance away from others. In a cartoon entitled "Chaleur" (fig. 24), the title a play on being 'in heat', a security guard is scolded by a superior. Surrounded by nude statues, most recognizably the *Discobolus*, and the ancient Egyptian *Seated Scribe*, the security guard has inappropriately unbuttoned his collar and vest, an act unbecoming of a museum worker. Propriety, again, is the safeguard against the potential depravity of art.

Conversely, the cartoonists sometimes target the very people who are supposed to be immune, if not oblivious to this. Already considered questionable members of society, artists' motives for dealing with young female models raise suspicion. In one example (fig. 25), a young male art student is apparently shaken by the female model sitting for the class. Looking at the shaky lines drawn by a trembling hand, the teacher embarrasses the student, asking if it is his first time. Though in this instance, the apparent offense could be attributed to youthful excitability, another example depicts artists as conniving

manipulators. In figure 25, the artist has employed a young female model to work for him. Unbeknownst to her, she is unnecessary for the painting, as it is a painting of the flowers she is holding. As confirmed by the grin on the artist's face, she is there only for the artist's pleasure. For a general public that has trouble accepting the idea that artist can separate the aesthetic qualities of the human figure from their own sexuality, cartoons such as these must be well received. Under the guise of practicing fine art, these cartoons confirm that many artists are as depraved and corrupt as people need to believe they are.

Simply, artists are not understood. It is this general theme that permeates the cartoons. This is typified in a cartoon that appears in the *Je suis partout* of 10 April, 1937 (fig. 27). Near a wharf, two artists have set themselves up to render the scene. In the foreground, two workers stand puzzled. Evidently having seen this many times before, one asks the other if he knows why artists are so interested in the area. Though one of the artist's gifts is claimed to be the ability to find the extraordinary in the ordinary, this is lost on the workers, as presumably it is on the reader. All is not in vain though, as the art critics supposedly understand the artists. However, the great potential to bridge the gap of understanding is sometimes impeded by resentment. Often artists themselves, art critics are frequently seen as sellouts. This is demonstrated in figure 28, where a frustrated artist informs his son that an art critic is "quelqu'un qui veut gagner de l'argent avec l'art." This cartoon suggests that not only are artists generally aloof, but some resent that their voluntary aloofness does not pay them very well. Consistently, lack of understanding is the stumbling block.

In the case of modern art, it is clear that the general public is not to be blamed for not understanding the artists at their most outrageous. Ridiculed in art journals and

monographs, it should come as no surprise to find modern art a common subject in the cartoons of the Right wing weeklies. The difference is that in the cartoons, modern art and artists are a source of amusement, and are then dismissed. This is different from the writings in that the cartoons do not portray 'Art' as being seriously threatened by the avant-garde. Because the cartoonists' audience is the general public, who are unofficially the guardians of reason and common sense, it is assumed that good taste will prevail. The general public would not stand for anything else. Perhaps because it is not portrayed as a threat, the need to assign blame to - and even to wage a war against - the perpetrators is negated. Instead, the modern artist in these cartoons is an innocuous eccentric, guilty of being a bad dresser more than anything. As in figure 29, these people are amusing rather than threatening. It is not because cartoonists only draw what is innocently humorous. Nor is it because they always refrain from warning about threats (see figs. 3, 5, 6). For the cartoonists, modern art has not ruined French art, and the Jews are nowhere to be seen in these cartoons.

One of the views of modern art is that it forces people to reconsider aesthetic conventions. The general public has never been as intimately knowledgeable about these conventions as the academics, and therefore is less resistant to these changes, if it is not simply apathetic. In "Sculpture Moderne" (fig. 30), the barely figurative abstract sculpture forces the two men to wonder if, as convention dictates, they should place a vine leaf, or if this has been rendered unnecessary by the abstraction. While in art circles, the dispensing of recognizable guidelines and traditions is equated with aesthetic anarchy, for the cartoonists it is comical, and perhaps a relief to those who suspect artists of depravity, as discussed above. Modern art even forces people to reconsider up and down, as in

figures 31 and 32. In the former, a man is disappointed to see that what to him is clearly his portrait was seen by the museum as a modern painting of a female figure and has been hung 'upside down'. Though this example illustrates how there is more than one way to look at art, the latter takes a different approach. Using a cursory awareness of modern tendencies to cover up an apparently obvious mistake, the workers in the cartoon claim the painting was hung upside down purposely, to look more modern. This demonstrates that the common desire to emulate trends is not always accompanied by genuine understanding. Here, it may even be suggested that because the idea that perspective is at the discretion of the viewer does not apply to all art, it is to be rejected. A common idea in the anti-modernist writings of the time, all that flies in the face of tradition, or does not speak to the eternal principles of western art, is to be rejected.

Whereas the lack of understanding in art could traditionally be explained as the result of intellectual and creative isolation of the genius and his work, with modern art this was harder to accept. Many believed that much of modern art was impulsive, irrational, and arbitrary, and therefore far removed form the traditional works that clearly demonstrated technique and a quest for visual realism. Basically, the more the artist left up to the viewer, the less the viewer believed the artist had created art. In the cartoons, this was exaggerated slightly. In an example from *Je suis partout* (fig. 33), a street artist has apparently given up on trying to compose meaningful works. Instead, the abstract painting represents nothing, which is all that the artist feels that everyone can understand. In figure 34, the viewer is shocked to find out that doodles on the canvas constitute a portrait of the artist's father. Again here, the more the artist leaves up to the viewer, the more ridiculous the final product can be. To anyone besides the artist (whose shirt in this

cartoon is also an interesting work of art), the composition is an arbitrary assembly of elements that do little to convey meaning, and nothing to display technique. That composition of modern abstract paintings is arbitrary is the message of another cartoon (fig. 35). A whimsical assembly of colourful geometric forms, this cartoon's message can be summarized as 'anybody could do it'. Like the others, it assures the public that there is no need to worry; common sense will prevail.

As war approached Europe, Germany's intentions were clearer than ever. In an interesting cartoon that appeared in the March 17, 1939 issue of *Candide* (fig. 36), Botticelli's famous painting is the basis for a work by the fictional German artist, 'Brauchitschelli'. The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this is that it is a reference to the German commander in chief, General Walther von Brauchitsch. Further to this, the German word *Brauch* can be taken to mean either a custom or a tradition. The play on words suggest two things to the viewer. The first is that war is the custom of the German people, a people who have always been warlike and always will be. The second is that despite the cultural overtures of the 1930s, Germans have no respect for the great tradition of western art. The intention may be even more specific, alluding to the Latin tradition by using an Italian painting in a French cartoon. For the French, the Germans are a perennial threat, but in 1939, this threat was flowering in spring. To go even further, it may be interpreted as a knock against Nazi masculinity, given the gender reversal. Are Nazi supermen here to be seen as being equivalent to the idealized, youthful females that appear in the original masterpiece? Certainly, the issue of gender is also present in this cartoon.

When war did finally come, the cartoonists still did not leave the artists alone. In a

series of cartoons that appeared in *Gringoire* in 1940 (figs. 37-39), artists are involved in the camouflaging of military vehicles. The first cartoon (fig. 37) shows that the art world has not stopped, and even the critics are still active. In figure 38, the artist, holding a palette as though he were in a studio rather than an army depot, is informed that he will have to erase his signature and the 'grand-prix de Rome' written underneath it. In figure 39, the frustrated artist informs a soldier that he does not have the inspiration to work today. Collectively, these cartoons insinuate that even in war, artists do not unite with the rest of the nation the way ordinary French people do. In figure 37, the critic discourages the artist, and by extension, the war effort. In figure 38, there is no room for an artist's ego in the national cause. In figure 39, a lack of inspiration should not be possible when one's country is threatened; national defence should be more than enough. In fact, it would not be unreasonable to surmise that the patriotism of the art community is being questioned here. At the very least, their grasp of the seriousness of the war is being criticized. In this way, the tables have been turned, and it is now the art community that lacks understanding. Not only do they not understand, but their worth even in camouflaging vehicles is challenged, since in figures 37 and 39, it is an ordinary soldier – not an artist – who is actually doing the painting.

As in the writings in the three newspapers, there are a few common themes in the cartoons. There is the anti-Semitism, as typified by the hook-nosed Jew, who is involved in various conspiracies. There is also the criticism of the Popular Front, and their take over of the International Exhibition. In the numerous cartoons that deal with the art world, those who are involved are seen as crooks, perverts, or talentless eccentrics trying to pull the wool over everyone's eyes. The most common theme throughout the art

cartoons is the lack of understanding that exists between artists and the general public. Again, this does not charge the public with a lack of common sense, but rather suggests that the esotericism of the art community has caused them to be ostracized.

Of all the cartoons that appeared in *Candide, Gringoire,* and *Je suis partout*, few if any can be interpreted as warnings that the noble tradition of western art is threatened, or that there is a crisis in the arts. There is a self-assuredness that comes across in these cartoons, a reflection of the popular attitude that in art, as in all matters, common sense will prevail. Though modern art is certainly targeted and ridiculed in many cartoons, it is not seen as an evil that must be vanquished by the guardians of French tradition. Conversely, the Jews, the soviets, and anyone left of center are portrayed in cartoons that warn people of threats. They are demonized, and they are depicted as always plotting to drag down, ruin, get rich off, or take over France. That cartoons can serve a purpose other than unadulterated entertainment is certain. Numerous examples show that they can be used to alert people to danger, as in the countless depictions of the Germans and the threat they pose to France.

However, the popular equation of modern art (or crisis in the arts) with the Jews is not made here. This, despite having Ralph Soupault at *Je suis partout*, whose cartoons "had a violent anti-Semitism all their own, even by the standards of *Der Stürmer*."[1] This is astounding when one recalls his article on this very issue (see note 43, chapter 3). In their book about cartoons and modern art, George Melley and J. R. Glaves-Smith note "strangely, given that the Nazis chose to believe that modern art, like everything else they

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[1] Pryce-Jones, *Paris in the Third Reich*, p. 62.

proscribed, was the work of the Jews, we didn't come across any anti-modern art cartoon on this theme. Indeed the only example of an anti-Semitic nature was French."[2] That these French examples exist – especially when there are none from Nazi Germany - is fascinating. Yet, that none of these French examples are to be found in the three leading Right wing weeklies between 1936 and 1944 is truly remarkable.

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[2] George Melly and J. R. Glaves-Smith, *A Child of Six Could Do It!: Cartoons about Modern Art*, (London: Tate Gallery, 1973), p. 13.

CHAPTER 5

LA RUBRIQUE DES BEAUX ARTS

The importance of the arts in France – despite the chronic lack of understanding depicted in the cartoons – should not be underestimated. As the art critic for *Gringoire* notes in 1936, "maintenant, puisque les discussions esthetiques en public sont de mode..."[1] That each of the three Right wing weeklies ran a regular fine arts column is but one of many proofs of this preoccupation. Though when the war came, *Gringoire* eliminated its arts column in favour of occasional arts-related snippets on the culture page, *Candide* and *Je suis partout* ran weekly columns through the entire period from 1936-1944. It is interesting and revealing to look at these columns, especially since, as Golan notes, art criticism in interwar France "was not blessed by the interventions of men of letters of the stature of an Émile Zola, a Charles Baudelaire."[2] While Golan's interest lies in the mediocrity of what he calls "middle of the road" art magazines, the combination of anti-Semitic Right wing weekly circulation numbers with regular art criticism is at least as intriguing. Moreover, given that the period studied here, especially the first half, marked the height of activity –indeed, combat – against the decadence of the avant-garde in Germany, the art critics at the leading weeklies of the French Right constitute a highly relevant voice.

In this chapter, critics and their columns will be considered first individually, and then collectively. Though the themes of guarded nationalism through the arts, crisis, and retreat to a romanticized past are common throughout, with the notable exception of Lucien Rebatet, the art critics writing these weekly columns do not blame the Jews for

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[1] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 3 juillet, 1936, p. 9.
[2] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. xi.

the modernist corruption of the arts. Despite the examples provided by anti-Semitic aesthetes like Hautecoeur, Mauclair, and Vanderpyl, the correlation between the Jew and the challenge to French art is not made in the art columns of the three leading Right wing weeklies.

The fine arts column in *Gringoire*, as mentioned above, was abandoned once the war started. Prior to that, the page that the column appeared on, entitled "Paris, ma grand'ville", would be replaced every year for seven or eight weeks during the summer by a page called "En vacances". In 1936, the resident art critic at *Gringoire* was André Salmon. An established figure in French art criticism, he was one of many who had once supported cubism and other modern movements. By the time he was writing for *Gringoire*, he had abandoned these styles in favour of the return to order, much the way many French artists (Derain, Vlaminck, and Dunoyer de Segonzac, to name a few) had returned to naturalism. Stressing after the early 1930s the French sources that could be traced through the centuries, Golan suggests that Salmon was himself "most probably an *Israélite*."[3] A characteristic of many artists but few critics, Salmon was not political in his aesthetics. As he affirms in a January column, "il est vrai qu'il n'y a ni peinture de droite, ni peinture de gauche; rien que la bonne peinture."[4] This, however, could also apply to the French galleries, divided into those of *la rive gauche*, and *la rive droite*. He concluded his stint with *Gringoire* in December 1936.

Of the subjects Salmon concerns himself with, the crisis in the arts merits his attention in a couple of his columns. As did many at the time, he sees it in terms of

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[3] Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia*, p. 149. *Israélite* is the French term for a French-born Jew, and was a distinction that was made anxiously by those who wanted to differentiate themselves from the immigrant Jews from the east.

[4] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 10 janvier, 1936, p. 7.

extremes, though the opposite of academism is never clearly defined, let alone equated with Jewish artists. Using the term "pompier" – a derogatory way of referring to academic artists – Salmon writes of the selection of artists for the decorating of the Exposition "funeste timidité! Elle permattrait le retour offensif et triomphal du pompiérisme."[5] Later in the year, he asks whether contemporary artists can really blame anyone but themselves for not being better represented at the Exposition. In October, he asks "ne boude-t-on pas depuis assez longtemps? Il n'est plus vrai que les 'pompiers' barrent la route."[6] For Salmon, despite "l'ennui du Salon", excellent painting is still offered, "en gros et en détail, dans les encore, malgré la crise, somptueuses galeries."[7] The crisis itself lies in the new generation of painters, who have not been given proper instruction. In October, Salmon concludes his column lamenting "ces jeunes peintres qui, non seulement n'apprennent pas à peindre mais encore ignoreront tout de l'histoire de l'art," and warns "attention... la décadence est proche."[8]

Another theme that can be discerned is that of nationalistic pride. This took the shape of pride in the headlines of American papers that reviewed the French *Exposition napoléonienne* in the February 7 column. Proudly quoting headlines like "La France remporte de nouveaux lauriers sur le terrain des arts", and "L'art français tient son rang parmi les nombreux centres artistiques de New York", Salmon writes "on ne peut qu'être profondément touché d'un tel mouvement de sympathie."[9] In other columns, specific individuals are discussed as the heroes of French painting. Of these, Paul Cézanne is far and away the greatest, and is mentioned in ten of thirty-one columns written by Salmon

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[5] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 3 avril, 1936, p. 7.
[6] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 2 octobre, 1936, p. 9.
[7] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 8 mai, 1936, p. 7.
[8] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 9 octobre, 1936, p. 7.

that year, two more than even Picasso - who was still active (see table 1). This may have been helped by the exhibition of Cézanne's works held at the Orangerie that spring. Still, Salmon insists "lorsque l'on tient une rubrique d'art moderne, c'est en tout temps et tout au long de l'année que l'on a mille prétextes à évoquer ou invoquer Cézanne, père de la 'reconstruction de la peinture'."[10] These examples both indicate national pride, but it is a pride in past accomplishments. In this sense, the contemporary is replaced with an idealized image of the past, a past from which the critic can selectively recall only the desirable.

Salmon also covered other popular themes and issues in his column. The idea that France and Italy, and to a lesser extent, Spain, were linked by a Latin tradition was supported by Salmon. In a review of an exhibition of Italian painting and sculpture in Paris, he refers to Italy as "notre soeur latine", and ends with "inaltérable, l'amitié de nos deux pays a encore trouvé ici un magnifique occasion de s'affirmer."[11] Picasso, an important contemporary artist, is admired, even if some critics refuse to talk about him. Curiously, Jews are not discussed as a demographic, let alone blamed for anything. Of all the columns, only one mentions a Jewish painter, J. D. Kirschenbaum, and even this is only a final note at the end of the column.[12] As for the politicization of art in this troubled period, Salmon again longs for it to be depoliticized: "peut-être connaitrons-nous cet âge d'or de la Peinture où il n'y aura plus ni droite, ni gauche, mais plus rien que le talent."[13]

In 1937, the fine arts column in *Gringoire* was taken over by André Villeboeuf. An artist in his own right (he had one of his works included in the 1920 *Indépendants*), he

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[9] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 7 février, 1936, p. 7.
[10] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 2 octobre, 1936, p. 9.
[11] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 28 février, 1936, p. 7.
[12] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 31 janvier, 1936, p. 7.

would be the art critic there until the column was discontinued in 1939. As with other critics, the importance of (and refuge found in) the heroes of French art was not lost on Villeboeuf. As was most of the French Right, he was discontented with the International Exposition. Having complained many times about the decoration commissions – picking up where Salmon left off – Villeboeuf congratulated the organizer of the French art retrospective. In the July 30 column, he singles out the curator of the Louvre, praising his "merveilleuse sélection…et qui mérite de fréquentes visites et de longues méditations."[14] Prior to this, he used a Géricault exhibition as the pretext to argue the continuity of French genius. He writes "la chaîne n'est point rompue et, de Géricault, nous passons tout naturellement, sans solution de continuité, à Delacroix, Bonnington, Isabey, Huet, Courbet, Manet, Monet, Sisley, Cézanne, Renoir."[15] The richness of the French tradition was again affirmed the following year, when Villeboeuf reviewed an exhibition of nineteenth century French painters. Describing each as though they were saints, he lists Courbet, Corot, Renoir, Cézanne, Gaugin, Delacroix, Manet, names that appear again and again in the weekly columns at all three newspapers.[16] Of course, in the constant listing of the masters of French painters, the highest praise is reserved for Cézanne. For Villeboeuf, as it was for Salmon before him, Cézanne is the quintessential French master, whose work is "concret et purement français d'ordonnance."[17]

To complement his direct and indirect endorsements of national art, Villeboeuf questions the notion of 'international art'. In response to an exhibition held at the Jeu de

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[13] André Salmon, "Les Arts", *Gringoire*, 13 march, 1936, p. 7.
[14] André Villeboeuf, "Une désillusion", *Gringoire*, 30 juillet, 1937, p. 7. Unlike Salmon before him, Villeboeuf's column was always given a title.
[15] André Villeboeuf, "De Géricault à Delacroix", *Gringoire*, 28 mai, 1937, p. 9.
[16] André Villeboeuf, "Bouquet de maîtres", *Gringoire*, 13 mai, 1938, p. 7.
[17] André Villeboeuf, 'Cézanne", *Gringoire*, 9 mars, 1939, p. 11.

Paume in 1937 entitled "Origines et développement de l'art international indépendant", he scoffs "qu'appelle-t-on: 'l'art international indépendant'? Classification purement arbitraire, car l'indépendance est une et non collective, par essence même et que, d'autre part, l'art véritable sent toujours son fruit!"[18] The following year, Villeboeuf once more attacked the notion of 'international art' in an otherwise national context. In an article reviewing an exhibition of three centuries of American art, again at the Jeu de Paume, he takes issue with the contemporary section. He writes "peinture dites à juste titre 'international', sans origine, sans saveur, marquée seulement d'un primarisme qu'accentue encore l'indécence de son arrogance, la puérilité de sa vanité." He smugly adds "déjà passée de mode chez nous (elle n'avait séduit que quelques snobs complaisants), rien de particulièrement américain ne la distingue."[19] Overall, Villeboeuf feels American art could have been better represented, especially given the reception of French art in the United States. All nations, though none so well as France, should promote national art, and the sham of 'international art' should be eliminated, as he claims it has been in France.

Somewhat paradoxically, Villeboeuf is a supporter of the idea of France being connected to Italy and Spain by a Latin tradition and culture. Moreover, he does not condone the combative stance some other art critics adopted at the time. Ever concerned about the great works of art at the Prado, which were threatened by the Spanish Civil war, Villeboeuf and other French art writers begged that the collection be moved out of Spain. For Villeboeuf, it is France which must take the initiative, since it is loyal to the Latin tradition. In a pacifistic tone unfamiliar to art criticism, he urges "il est le temps qu'un cri

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[18] André Villeboeuf, "Salade russe", *Gringoire*, 8 octobre, 1937, p. 7.
[19] André Villeboeuf, "L'art américain", *Gringoire*, 3 juin, 1938, p. 9.

d'amour s'élève au-dessus des cris de haine et que l'Europe... s'avise enfin de sauveguarder les plus beaux fruits de leur génie. La France se doit de brandir ce rameau d'olivier."[20] As for Italy, the admiration for a nation that in so many artistic endeavors is the model of beauty and fruitfulness is undeniable. The linking of the two nations under the idea of a Latin tradition in the arts, for Villeboeuf and others, is also undeniable.

As for the contemporary French arts, Villeboeuf sways back and forth between deploring the state of the arts, and insisting that there are numerous examples of active French talent. For Villeboeuf, "le temps présent n'est cependant pas avare en artistes de valeur."[21] Later that month, he would respond to a Paris-based foreign artist (no name is given) who he has saying that French painting is dead. Emphatically, he asserts "cent fois non. La peinture française se porte bien et de solides rejetons ont jailli de sa souche."[22] The following year, he can proudly boast, after visiting various Parisian galleries, "combien dans le domaine de la plastique et de l'imagination poétique notre pays était resté le premier du monde."[23] However, state commissions do not evidence that this talent exists in current French art. Referring to works "des plus insignes pompiers", Villeboeuf complains that "la grande majorité des décorations murales commandées par l'État ne feront que grossir le stock déjà imposant des navets officiels."[24] The academies specifically are the source of the disappointing art that the state commissions, and according to Villeboeuf, the fault lies with the teachers. He writes "l'affligeante médiocrité des travaux en lice est imputable davantage aux maîtres qu'aux élèves, car ses derniers, dans l'innocence de la jeunesse, ne demandent la plupart du temps qu'a suivre

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[20] André Villeboeuf, "Sauvetage du Prado", *Gringoire*, 7 mai, 1937, p. 9.
[21] André Villeboeuf, "Exposition-express", *Gringoire*, 12 février, 1937, p. 9.
[22] André Villeboeuf, "La fausse morte", *Gringoire*, 26 février, 1937, p. 9.
[23] André Villeboeuf, "Actualités", *Gringoire*, 2 décembre, 1938, p. 7.

les conseils de leurs mentors."[25] Regrettably, this has resulted in an appalling lack of *savoir-faire*; a lack of technique and understanding.

At the other end of the spectrum, the moderns also pose a problem to French art. For the most part, the moderns are easily dismissed, as Villeboeuf does in his column of 12 November 1937. He writes "la fameuse sobriété moderne n'est que trop souvent le signe d'une pauvreté de conception et d'une grande pénurie de moyens." Villeboeuf scorns the arrogance of modern artists, who have to realize that in art, it has all been said and done before, and usually said better and done better. The aim of the artist is to equal his predecessors through new expressions of eternal values and ideas. As a parting shot, Villeboeuf concludes that "avec un peu d'humilité, un immense espoir doit secourir ceux qui s'apercevront enfin que leur nombril n'est pas le miroir des siècles."[26] Even the term 'modern art' is problematic for Villeboeuf: "on parle, sans cesse, aujourd'hui, d'art 'moderne' en voulant donner à ce qualificatif un sens superlatif, prestigieux, en quelque sorte déificateur de notre seul époque... Art moderne a toujours étymologiquement signifié: art du moment."[27] Somewhat pedantic, he is less kind in other columns.

That the confusion and deception in the arts also has serious ramifications in the art market is not lost on Villeboeuf. He reminds the reader that a true artist – like Van Gogh, who only managed to sell one painting during his lifetime – should not create according to salability. For too many artists, being able to sell their works is their sole ambition, which causes them to make miserable parodies of current stylistic trends. Disgusted, he writes "vendre, vous m'entendez bien, est pour eux le souverain critère!...

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[24] André Villeboeuf, "Commandes de l'État", *Gringoire*, 25 mars, 1938, p. 10.
[25] André Villeboeuf, "Prix de Rome", *Gringoire*, 15 juillet, 1938, p. 9.
[26] André Villeboeuf, "Mosaïques", *Gringoire*, 12 novembre, 1937, p. 7.
[27] André Villeboeuf, "Vacances", *Gringoire*, 29 juillet, 1938, p. 7.

Voilà aussi une preuve de cette corruption de l'âme qui lentement gagne notre pays comme un cancer."[28] The market, both buyers and sellers, is also at fault for perpetuating faulty judgement based on monetary value. Of works of art now, Villeboeuf writes "la somme de beautés qu'on leur reconnait varie suivant celle des billets de mille qu'on les paie." According to Villeboeuf, "la seule valeur réelle d'un tableau est sa valeur plastique, spirituelle."[29] Pleading with his readers, he counsels them to buy art according to their own taste, and to never buy a piece that they do not like, no matter what the value. Deceptively simple, this advice is the last effort of an overwrought critic.

Clearly irritated by much of the activity in French *art du moment*, Villeboeuf is driven to xenophobic rhetoric in two of his columns. In April of 1938, he continues his complaining about the two extremes, asserting "si l'académisme n'est que le reflet lunaire des grands maîtres, l'avantgardisme qui se targue d'originalité à tout prix, ne vaut guère mieux." Blaming liberal thinking and a moral aversion to xenophobia, Villeboeuf claims that French artists were duped into thinking ill of the very devices France employs for their own protection. After associating various avant-garde movements with foreign countries, he declares "déplorons cet excès de centralisation qui, groupant à Paris la fine fleur de notre école, a permis la confusion avec ses éléments parfois doués, mais toujours parasitaires lorsqu'ils veulent camoufler leur véritable provenance et forcer le destin."[30] By December, he is now combative in his defence of French art, despite his earlier overtures in regards to the Prado. Villeboeuf calls his readers to arms, stating "il faut ici, à Paris, mener le bon combat, défendre l'art français contre les parasites, le débarrasser de cette lèpre métèque qui depuis quelque temps se greffe sur l'arbre sain, et après avoir

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[28] André Villeboeuf, "Peinturomanie", *Gringoire*, 18 mars, 1938, p. 7.
[29] André Villeboeuf, "Un coeur simple", *Gringoire*, 19 mars, 1937, p. 9.

sucé sa sève, le gorge de venin pour le faire crever par métastase."[31] The use of biological and organic rhetoric in discussing the problem – nearly identical to that used in anti-Semitic diatribes - falls short of specifically identifying the Jews as the cause of the problem, an accusation that scores of other writers had no difficulty in making. However virulent the terms of this xenophobia, or combative aggressive nationalism, it is not specifically aimed at the Jews.

Pierre du Colombier, an art historian and art critic who also wrote for *Les Beaux Arts*, was the arts columnist at *Candide* for the entire period from 1936 to 1944. Though he wrote columns right through the war, almost all of them were descriptive, usually taking the form of either an exhibition review, or an obituary. An expert in medieval and religious art, he often wrote about the distant French past, but not to the exclusion of the glorious nineteenth century that French critics saw as a sanctuary. Like Salmon and Villeboeuf, du Colombier's columns often gravitated towards certain themes and issues.

As for many arts writers in France at the time, there is a national pride that is affirmed through constant reminders, and numerous listings of the great artists of French tradition. For example, of the five most frequently mentioned artists in his 1936 columns, only one, Picasso, was still living (see table 2). In 1937, it is only Dunoyer de Segonzac, and in 1938, the five most frequently mentioned were all deceased. In one of these articles, du Colombier lists "les 'big five' comme on dit en politique: Manet, Renoir, Degas, Cézanne et Monet", yet another reference to the veritable institution of French impressionism that makes them the cultural equivalent of political super powers.[32] In particular, du Colombier sees Édouard Vuillard as one of the most important figures – an

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[30] André Villeboeuf, "Crépuscule", *Gringoire*, 8 avril, 1938, p. 9.
[31] André Villeboeuf, "Actualités", *Gringoire*, 2 décembre, 1938, p. 7.

anomaly of sorts, given his being still alive. In a review of a show at the Musée des Arts décoratifs respectfully entitled "Édouard Vuillard: maître français", du Colombier attempts to bestow upon Vuillard a title akin to knighthood. He writes "les musicographes ont donné à Claude Debussy le surnom de Claude de France. Ne devrions-nous pas dire aussi Édouard de France, pour Édouard Vuillard."[33] This is high praise for an artist whose renown was modest within the borders of France until the last years of his life, and practically non-existent outside of France.

The French masters of the past also provide the disappointed Right – du Colombier and Villeboeuf to be counted among their number – with a bright spot in the 1937 Exposition. The exhibition of French art up to the nineteenth century "embrasse l'art français d'un bout à l'autre, aucun de nos grands peintres n'y est trahi, et le visiteur qui en sort, même s'il connaît mal le Louvre – ce que je ne saurais assez lui reprocher – emorte cependant une idée valable."[34] The article proceeds to list yet again the familiar names of the heroes of France. In a review of the same exhibition of nineteenth century French masters that thrilled Villeboeuf, du Colombier is no less reverent, beginning his column with "cette exposition du XIXe sciècle français, cette exposition d'une beauté presque écrasante."[35] Though somewhat disheartened by the fact that the show is made up of works from Swiss collections, it is spun into being further testimony to the glory of French art.

Du Colombier also stressed a link between France and the other countries of the Latin tradition. While certainly not devoid of genuine aesthetic and cultural concern, the

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[32] Pierre du Colombier, "Monet et Pissarro", *Candide*, 30 avril, 1936, p. 6.
[33] Pierre du Colombier, "Édouard Vuillet: maître français", *Candide*, 5 mai, 1938, p. 7.
[34] Pierre du Colombier, "Chefs-d'oeuvre de l'Art français", *Candide*, 1 juillet, 1937, p. 7.
[35] Pierre du Colombier, "L'art français du XIXe sciècle", *Candide*, 12 mai, 1938, p. 7.

Right's pleas to save the masterpieces of Spanish art were often accompanied by the notion of a common tradition, justifying France's interests. When the works from the Prado were sent to Switzerland, and an exhibition held in Zurich, du Colombier's review sprawled over two pages – taking up approximately three times as much space as his usual column.[36] Reveling in the works on display, the celebration was of a Latin tradition in art that is understood to include France.

Extolling the virtues of a Latin neighbour was often seen by the art critics of the Right as an opportunity to associate France with the greatness being discussed. However, du Colombier appears so enamoured with Italy that he makes sure to include them in an otherwise French acclamation. Proud of French preeminence in the arts, he asserts in a 1937 column "nos richesses d'art qui, vraiment – je le dis sans chauvinisme et instruit par bien des voyages à l'étranger – ne sont égalées par aucun pays, l'Italie mise à part."[37] Perhaps inevitably, the artistic initiatives taken by the fascists in the capital city pose a bit of a problem for du Colombier. Claiming simply a genuine love for Rome as the motive, du Colombier speaks for a France that by rights should have a say. He notes "certains Italiens n'aiment pas beaucoup qu'on leur dise que si Rome leur appartient sans doute, nous avons pourtant sur elle, nous tous, quelques droits moraux. Ils ont tort." Later, he explains that "un danger esthétique tient à l'essence même de l'idéologie fasciste. Les fascistes ont, ou veulent avoir, une vision un peu unilatérale de Rome."[38] Even by 1939, Italian fascism did not discourage du Colombier from admiring the eternal country. He defends this, pointing out that before there even was an 'axis', there were artists at work

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[36] Pierre du Colombier, "Les chefs-d'oeuvre du Prado à Zurich", *Candide*, 7 juin, 1939, pp. 7-8.

[37] Pierre du Colombier, "Pour l'inventaire de nos richesses d'art", *Candide*, 7 janvier, 1937, p. 7.

who, though separated by four or five decades, "ont conservé le privilège singulier d'être plus proches de nous que les trois quarts de ceux que nous coudoyons tous les jours." He adds "ce n'est pas en raison des événements que nous allons nous abstenir de parler d'eux."[39]

As the counterpart to du Colombier's pride in the French past, and its association with a Latin tradition, he is displeased with much of contemporary French artistic output. In an article that further praises Italy, du Colombier is envious of the art education program in there. Suggesting there is much worth in the Italian model, he specifies "n'oublions point qu'il ne s'agit pas de former des peintres ou des sculpteurs – nous n'en avons que trop – mais des hommes complets que leur culture rende aptes a éprouver certaines jouissances de qualité, à discerner la vulgarité de la distinction."[40] For du Colombier, the problem with French art – as it is for many of the critics – is binary. As he relates in a review of the Salon d'automne, "entre la volonté, d'une part, et la crainte de manquer de style, de s'entendre traiter de pompier, d'autre part, le naturel a peine à se faire jour."[41] The result is that the academies and salons are a constant disappointment. In a column entitled "Les Salons", he laments "depuis un quart de sciècle et plus, il n'est pas sorti des salons officiels *un seul* grand peintre. Ces choses finissent par être remarquées, même du public le plus indifférent."[42]

Sadly, there are – according to du Colombier - many examples of this lack of talent. In an acerbic conclusion to a column on the reincarnation of the Royal Academy

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[38] Pierre du Colombier, "Rome nouvelle", *Candide*, 18 février, 1937, p. 7.
[39] Pierre du Colombier, "Artistes de 'l'axe'", *Candide*, 19 avril, 1939, p. 14.
[40] Pierre du Colombier, "L'éducation artistique en Italie", *Candide*, 17 septembre, 1936, p. 4.
[41] Pierre du Colombier, "Le Salon d'automne", *Candide*, 15 octobre, 1936, p. 4.
[42] Pierre du Colombier, "Les Salons", *Candide*, 7 mai, 1936, p. 8.

as *l'Institut*, he writes "lorsqu'on vous répétra que la classe des beaux-arts de l'Institut est comme la fille et l'héritière légitime de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, répondez 'non', sans hésiter, et changez de conversation."[43] The once important *Salon des Indépendants* is also a source of frustration, and he refers to the 1937 effort as "cet océan de médiocrités prétensieuses, de vanités agressives."[44] There is little improvement the following year. Claiming that the *Indépendants* of 1938 does little to make people think good or bad about it, the indifference that the viewer comes away with is the most terrible thing about it. He affirms "ce qu'on reproche à la plupart de ces peintures, qui ne sont ni bonnes ni mauvaises, qui témoignent de connaisances moyennes, de talents tempérés – ce qu'on leur reproche, c'est de n'avoir pas en elles-mêmes de raison suffisante."[45] Not even the Louvre escapes his criticism. Unhappy with the way in which the museum carries out their renovations, he claims "chaque fois que le Louvre me convie à visiter quelques-unes de ses salles nouvellement aménagées, je ris d'un oeil et je pleure de l'autre. Je me réjouis pour ce que je vois, mais je ne puis m'empêcher de songer à ce que je ne vois pas."[46]

At the other end of the artistic spectrum, modern art appears to be comparatively benign. As Villeboeuf does, du Colombier questions the use of the term 'modern art'. In an article that attempts to define the "French tradition", he opines "il m'a toujours paru absurde de se proclamer 'moderne', parce qu'on ne peut pas s'empêcher de l'être et que la volonté n'y fait rien."[47] Better referred to by the names of the individual movements,

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[43] Pierre du Colombier, "Académie et Institut", *Candide*, 8 avril, 1937, p. 7.
[44] Pierre du Colombier, "Le Salon des Indépendants", *Candide*, 1 avril, 1937, p. 7.
[45] Pierre du Colombier, "Peinture inutile et peinture utile", *Candide*, 17 mars, 1938, p. 7.
[46] Pierre du Colombier, "Pour un Louvre provisoire", *Candide*, 11 août, 1938, p. 7.
[47] Pierre du Colombier, "Définir la tradition française…", *Candide*, 19 octobre, 1938, p. 7.

he deplores the attraction to surrealism he sees in young French artists. Having overcome cubism, and having never been seriously caught up in expressionism, du Colombier claims "en revanche, il est assez de mode, chez les jeunes, de coqueter superficiellement avec les surréalistes."[48] Further condemning the movement, a column in 1938 deals with the surrealists, claiming that 'the great surrealist master' has yet to be born, or at least has yet to paint. Despite having a greater ideological importance than some might like to admit, surrealism "reste stérile au point de vue plastique." In an attempt to incriminate them on grounds other than aesthetic output, he politicizes the issue. According to du Colombier, "on notera comme une particularité assez piquante que la plupart d'entre eux font profession de communisme."[49] Never really having blamed 'modern art' for the current state of French art, it is perhaps not so surprising to find him using the term positively during the war. In a note following his column, Du Colombier observes that at the newly reopened musée de Lyon, works by masters like Delacroix, Corot, and Courbet are accompanied by "l'admirable collection de peinture moderne qui rivalise avec celle du musée de Grenoble."[50]

In all of the columns written by du Colombier, only once does he mention Jews. Even then, it is in a particular context that mention is made, and he does not develop it in the direction of aesthetic anti-Semitism. It is in discussing Waldemar George, an art critic whom du Colombier has the deepest respect for, that Jews come up. He writes "L'angoisse avec laquelle cet homme de naissance étrangère aborde le problème des valeurs françaises, avec laquelle cet israélite envisage le problème juif dans la société contemporaine, est chose que l'on doit prendre très au sérieux." However, this is not

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[48] Pierre du Colombier, "Jeunesse et intimité", *Candide*, 16 janvier, 1936, p. 6.
[49] Pierre du Colombier, "Chez les surréalistes", *Candide*, 3 février, 1938, p. 7.

developed into anything concrete about the issue of anti-Semitism in the arts. Later in the column, du Colombier uses the Nazis as an example to illustrate the danger of exclusionary measures in the arts. He writes "en ce moment le chancelier Hitler et les dirigeants du Troisième Reich prétendent, au nom d'une certaine conception de l'art allemand, se livrer à une épuration qui me paraît fort dangereuse."[51] He asks that this monopoly on exclusion be left to Germany. In an earlier article, du Colombier refers to Camille Mauclair in a list of art historians. Demonstrating the obscurity of an artist named Edmond Céria, he writes "M. Eugene d'Ors n'écrira jamais de livre sur lui, M. Camille Mauclair non plus, d'ailleurs."[52] What is interesting is that the context in which Mauclair is referred to suggests a familiarity with his books, yet du Colombier never mentions Mauclair the xenophobe, or Mauclair the anti-Semite.

At *Je suis partout*, the columnist until 1940 was the prominent art historian and critic, Georges de Traz. Born in Paris to Swiss parents, he wrote the weekly column for *Je suis partout* under the pseudonym François Fosca. Unlike his colleagues at *Candide* and *Gringoire*, his admiration for Italian and Spanish art never translated into support for the idea of a common Latin tradition – at least not in his columns. Nor was he a Germanophile – though from July 1938, the arts column appears on a page called "La force dans la joie", an interesting nod to the German maxim "strength through joy". Of the critics at the three newspapers, Fosca was probably the least concerned with issues other than aesthetics, and it is difficult to pick up any political or social threads in his columns, if they exist at all. Though he recognized the heroes of French art, he was sober

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[50] Pierre du Colombier, "La vie artistique", *Candide*, 23 juillet, 1941, p. 3.
[51] Pierre du Colombier, "Constantes de l'Art français", *Candide*, 23 septembre, 1937, p. 7.
[52] Pierre du Colombier, "Edmond Céria", *Candide*, 5 mars, 1936, p. 10.

in his assessment, and never obsequious.

No exception to the writers of the Right wing weeklies, François Fosca found that the Exposition of 1937 left much to be desired. However, it is here again that the critic could find a great indicator of French genius. As did others, Fosca delights in the French masters exhibit. Disappointed that there were no catalogues left after the first twenty-four hours, he writes "les merveilles rassemblées là font vite oublier ce mécompte… ceux qui en sont responsables méritent pleinement notre reconnaissance et nos félicitations, car il ne saurait être meilleur." He adds "ils ont tenu compte de tout: importance des artistes, qualité des oeuvres et leur valeur représentative, harmonie de la présentation, ils ont tout mûrement pesé."[53] What is different here is that Fosca's appreciation is for the organizers. He spends little time praising what the reader already knows is essentially the constituent parts of the French canon. In his review of the exhibit of nineteenth century French masters drawn solely from Swiss collections, he briefly offers "une éblouissante réunion de chefs-d'oeuvre." Fosca is more concerned with how so many of these have ended up in Switzerland, which he attributes to the good sense of buyers who buy according to their own taste, rather than market trends.[54]

Of course, Fosca does recognize certain individuals as being particularly noteworthy (see table 3). No art critic of the period, it seems, could ignore Cézanne. In a review of one of many Cézanne exhibits over the years, Fosca gives the great painter his due. He maintains that since Gustave Courbet, "aucun peintre, je crois, n'a exercé une domination aussi générale et aussi forte; domination qui, quoi qu'on en ait dit, ne semble

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[53] François Fosca, "Les beaux-arts à l'exposition", *Je suis partout*, 2 juillet, 1937, p. 4.
[54] François Fosca, "Trésors de France", *Je suis partout*, 20 mai, 1938, p. 9.

pas en train de s'affaiblir."[55] However, the hero rhetoric familiar to the other critics who seem preoccupied with the dead is less familiar to Fosca. The lists of past masters common in other columns are less common in Fosca's. For him, living masters are also important. Vuillard, he writes, "cet homme à la parole douce et discrète, est un des grands peintres de notre temps."[56] In an earlier column, Fosca calls attention to Henri Matisse. Reviewing a book on the enigmatic artist, he begins by hypothesizing that if one were to ask a dozen connoisseurs "quel est le plus grand peintre français vivant", at least half would respond 'Matisse'.[57] At a time when many critics complain that there are too many artists, this statement makes a bigger impact than it first appears to.

Whereas the hero worship of other critics can be equated with national pride, or even nationalism, Fosca is again, less like the others. He is not unequivocally nationalistic. In a 1938 column, he challenges the notion of nationalism in the arts. Those who claim a correlation between nationalism and the fine arts "se trompe complètement." He writes "rien n'est plus puéril, et plus vain, que l'obstination de certains historiens à revendiquer pour leur pays tel ou tel artiste dont la nationalité est incertaine; d'autant plus vain lorsqu'il s'agit d'artistes vivant à une époque où l'idée de nationalisme était confuse et flottante."[58] In the case of Géricault, he is almost shocking, given the tone set by other critics. Though perhaps not quite as important as his successor Delacroix, Géricault was nonetheless part of the pantheon of French masters, made all the more holy given his untimely death at the age of thirty three. A frank passage in a respectful review, Fosca writes of the exhibit "elle mérite d'être vue. Ceci dit, on me permettra de remarquer que

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[55] François Fosca, "Triomphe de Cézanne", *Je suis partout*, 3 mars, 1939, p. 9.
[56] François Fosca, "Vuillard", *Je suis partout*, 13 mai, 1938, p. 9.
[57] François Fosca, "Le cas Matisse", *Je suis partout*, 20 août, 1937, p. 8.
[58] François Fosca, "Les primitifs français", *Je suis partout*, 12 août, 1938, p. 9.

cela fait, sauf erreur, la troisième exposition Géricault que l'on nous montre depuis dix ans; ce qui est peut-être excessif."[59] This objective, sober approach to his role as art critic may have ruffled some feathers in discussing the heroes of the past, but it was in tune with the others in discussing the problems of contemporary French art.

The efforts of the salons in France during the 1930s left much to be desired by the critics of the right wing press. Even then, it is doubtful that Fosca could have realized the full impact of his words in his review of the galerie 'Art et Industrie'. Seeing what he thinks is the beginning of an abandonment of whimsical art, he writes "s'il est permis de considérer des objets d'art comme des présages, et de pencher sur eux pour y lire l'avenir, on pourrait en conclure que la France va vers un régime dictatorial."[60] Still optimistic that France is coming out of a relatively dark period of experimentation, he writes later that year that "la peinture française semble s'arrêter au bord du chemin, pour souffler un moment, avant de reprendre sa route."[61] After a while, it did not seem as though things were really improving. A major source of the problem is seen by Fosca to be the education given to young painters. Some thirty years prior, student painters would be instructed that the essence of painting is the expression of the true and virtuous beauty of nature, which can only follow a careful study of how the masters of the past have dealt with the challenge. Since then, it seems things have changed. He writes "on a décidé que peindre, c'était 'exprimer sa personalité'. Comme on le voit, les rôles sont renversés: le principal personnage n'est plus la nature, mais le peintre."[62] It is this reversal that he identifies as being the cause of the disarray the arts are in. By 1938, he is no longer

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[59] François Fosca, "Géricault et d'autres", *Je suis partout*, 29 mai, 1937, p. 4.
[60] François Fosca, "Formes d'aujourd'hui', *Je suis partout*, 9 mai, 1936, p. 4.
[61] François Fosca, "Le cas Hodler", *Je suis partout*, 3 octobre, 1936, p. 8.
[62] François Fosca, "Jeunesse", *Je suis partout*, 1 mai, 1937, p. 4.

optimistic. In a review of a book on Degas, he hopes that the book will be read and absorbed. He finishes by stating "peut-être l'art de demain en sera-t-il modifié, et pour le mieux. Mais demain, existera-t-il encore un art?"[63] Though perhaps a bit melodramatic, it is a good indicator that Fosca felt there was something desperately wrong with art in France.

The crisis for Fosca was binary. As did other critics, Fosca defined the current situation in terms of two extremes, between which French art must find itself. Officially, this was known as *le juste milieu*. Addressing himself to the organizer of the *Salon du Temps Présent*, he writes "entre le conformisme des 'pompier' et le vôtre, le conformisme de l'avant-garde, il y a place pour ceux qui refusent tout conformisme et se contentent d'aimer la bonne peinture, sans s'inquiéter si elle est de 'droite' ou de 'gauche'."[64] He reiterates this thinking in 1939, stating "ce n'est ni dans les derniers partisans du cubisme agonisant, ni dans les ennuyeuses et stériles inventions des surréalistes qu'il faut espérer découvrir des germes d'avenir."[65] On the other hand, he continues, to see the salvation of French painting in the art of academy students is a complete mistake. One wonders though what Fosca means by terms such as 'left' and 'right', given the often apolitical position of the art community.

For Fosca the salons are a seemingly limitless source of mediocrity, much to his chagrin, and that of most critics. One of the problems, it seems, is that while one could previously refer to 'the' salon, since there was only one, there is now a plethora of salons showing disappointing work year after year. Of these, *les Tuilleries* received poor reviews in two consecutive years. In his review of the 1938 show, Fosca relates how the

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[63] François Fosca, "Degas par Valéry", *Je suis partout*, 30 septembre, 1938, p. 8.
[64] François Fosca, "Le salon des vielles lunes", *Je suis partout*, 14 march, 1936, p. 8.

show was advertised as being superior to any past show. Full of hope, he attended with great expectations. Nevertheless, "j'y ai retrouvé la même médiocrité morne, la même atmosphère de torpeur et d'ennui qui se dégageait des Salons précédents, et qui envahi le Salon d'Automne."[66] Fosca does not, however, take this as an indicator of a general decadence in France. There is nothing mediocre about the works of the great French painters of the last century, and so to find the salons yielding only mediocre works is seen as an affront to the French tradition. The following year, he uses the term "morne médiocrité", a simple reversal of the previous year's comment. In elaborating, he adds "nous n'avons qu'un monotone rassemblement de toiles peintes, dont un bon tiers (au moins!) parait être dû a des amateurs sans personalité ni dons."[67] A salon attracts visitors, he reminds the reader at the end of the column, by showing something they will not see everywhere else.

The salon that most warrants Fosca's scorn is the *Indépendants*. In a column about the public disinterest in the salons, he asserts that the French artists of the day exist only because of the French people's respect for anything with an official stamp of approval. He goes on to add "quant aux Indépendants, ils ont cessé d'être le refuge des talents méconnus, et exposeent dans le vide les travaux inutiles de deux mille amateurs."[68] Later that same year, he devoted his entire column to the *Indépendants*. Yet again using the term 'mediocre', Fosca writes that the show is made up of "l'énorme masse des 'peintres du dimanche', et des artistes qui exposent ici parce que l'on ne veut pas d'eux dans les autres Salons." That it is not just the critics who are fed up is

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[65] François Fosca, "Un nouvel académisme", *Je suis partout*, 28 avril, 1939, p. 9.
[66] François Fosca, "Tuilleries 1938", *Je suis partout*, 1 juillet, 1938, p. 8.
[67] François Fosca, "Tuilleries 1939", *Je suis partout*, 23 juin, 1939, p. 9.
[68] François Fosca, "La nouvelle génération", *Je suis partout*, 11 janvier, 1936, p.9.

apparently indicated by the "nombre extraordinairement restreint de visiteurs que l'on y rencontrait."[69] By 1939, still nothing had changed. By the second sentence of his review, Fosca has already said what he has always said, that the show is "une cohue innombrable de médiocrités."[70] Of approximately three thousand works, about a dozen are of any interest to Fosca.

As for the many faces of modern art, there is little of worth to be found there either. A problem of situating oneself within the time and space they believe they are ahead of, many moderns are accused of being ignorant not only of the fact that they belong to the present, but also of the idea that there are eternal aesthetic principles and truths. In a column on an exhibit of avant-garde painting, Fosca notes that the artists "vivent sur un ensemble d'idées qui n'a plus aucune réalité. Ils s'imaginent représenter l'avenir, l'art vivant, l'avant-garde; en fait, ce sont de vénérables fossiles."[71] Fosca's contempt for the surrealists is the most odious manifestation of his dislike for the moderns. In a 1936 column, Fosca concedes that the arts are in disarray, and have been for a few decades. From movement to movement, he writes, "on est arrivé au surréalisme, qui est proprement, par son subjectivisme effréné, l'équivalent en art de l'anarchie en politique."[72] The impact of such a comparison is realized when one considers the political context in which this was written. Dismissal of the movement is in its entirety, as indicated by his review of Salvador Dali, who is not considered an exception. He writes "toute l'esthétique de Dali se résume en un article: prendre le contre-pied de ce qui

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[69] François Fosca, "Réveil des Indépendants", *Je suis partout*, 15 février, 1936, p. 9.
[70] François Fosca, "Indépendants 1939", *Je suis partout*, 14 avril, 1939, p. 9.
[71] François Fosca, "Peintures d'avant-garde", *Je suis partout*, 20 février, 1937, p. 4.
[72] François Fosca, "Espoirs", *Je suis partout*, 21 novembre, 1936, p. 4.

jusqu'ici était admis sans conteste dans les milieux artistiques."[73] It is in his review of the 1938 exhibition of surrealist art at the *Galerie Beaux-Arts*, that he is more damning than ever. He begins by asserting 'ce prétendu 'movement d'art' n'est qu'une duperie." The works in this show, he charges, "ne valent exactement rien," and that the most striking thing about the whole display, "c'est l'absence complète de ce que l'on appelle le talent."[74] This is essentially his complaint about both extremes of the art crisis in France.

Much like the other critics, François Fosca makes no mention whatsoever of the Jews, or Jews in art, or anti-Semitism. Because of the particularly violent nature of *Je suis partout*'s anti-Semitism, this is even more interesting. According to Michèle Cone, Fosca was replaced by Lucien Rebatet because he was a Jew, and as such, could no longer be an art critic after the fall of France.[75] While this seems to make sense, it is rendered questionable by the entry in the *Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs,* which calls Georges de Traz (Fosca) "peintre de compositions religieuses, il exécuta des fresques représentant des scènes bibliques ainsi que des gravures religieuses, notamment des eaux-fortes pour l'église Saint-Paul, à Genève."[76] It seems unlikely - though not impossible - that a Jewish artist would be commissioned to paint the insides of a Christian church.

By the time Lucien Rebatet takes over the fine arts column at *Je suis partout*,

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[73] François Fosca, "Salvador Dali", *Je suis partout*, 23 juillet, 1937, p. 8.
[74] François Fosca, "La duperie du surréalisme", *Je suis partout*, 28 janvier, 1938, p. 9.
[75] Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, p. 20, and *French Modernisms*, p. 77. Cone provides no documentation for her assertion that Fosca was Jewish. When I contacted Cone to inquire, she believed that Rebatet had stated this in his first column after taking over from Fosca. When I assured her that Rebatet made no such assertion, in that or any other column, she was unable to provide a source identifying Fosca's faith.
[76] E. Bénézit, *Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs de tous les temps et de tous les pays par un groupe d'écrivains specialistes français et étrangers*, tome 13, (Paris: Éditions Gründ, 1999), p. 780.

much of what he argues has already been said. Moreover, with Europe embroiled in war, the great period of struggle in the arts was largely over. What sets him apart from the other art critics writing for the weeklies is his anti-Semitic view of the art crisis in France. That this should come when his newspaper was publishing in Occupied Paris seems predictable. However, what is found in Rebatet's articles is more akin to what might have been expected uniformly from the art columns of the three newspapers, prior to the war. Rebatet himself writes of arts columns "la rubrique des arts est depuis bien longtemps l'une des plus négligées de la presse française, trop souvent voisine de la publicité rédactionelle, ou bâclée avec des épithètes usées et interchangeables."[77] An exception, in his estimation, is Pierre du Colombier, whose book is the focus of the column.

Not to be outdone by other critics, Rebatet is fiercely nationalistic in his aesthetic views. Recounting an exchange with a museum director who asked why it is that when one discusses the art of the nineteenth century it becomes centered on France, he claimed not to know. This did not prevent him from boasting "les mystérieuses interférences de l'histoire, des moeurs, du goût, ont voulu que la France possédât, durant un siècle la plus magnifique école de peinture du monde, l'une des plus belles de tous les temps."[78] He even takes pride in what he sees as acknowledgement of French greatness by the Nazis. In a 1944 column, he writes:

> on connait depuis dix ans l'histoire. L'Allemagne, submergée de 'barbouilles' juives comme aucune nation ne l'a été, évinca en 1933 de ses musées quelques-unes de ces grimaçantes saloperies. Il n'est pas une peinture française de quelque intérêt qui ait été décrochée des galleries berlinoises, munichoises, viennoises, où elles sont souvent en place d'honneur.[79]

The definitions of both 'French painting', and 'interesting' would be useful in measuring

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[77] Lucien Rebatet, "Une nouvelle histoire d'art", *Je suis partout*, 5 février, 1943, p. 3.
[78] Lucien Rebatet, "Peintres modernes", *Je suis partout*, 11 avril, 1942, p. 6.

the significance of this apparent accomplishment.

The current state of French art did not please Rebatet either. For the most part, he was only an echo of the complaints bounced between pre-war critics, who also saw the crisis in terms of 'pompier' mediocrity and modern extravagance. The only difference was that he was more ostentatious in his displeasure. In a review of the *Indépendants*, he dramatically closes by stating "je me refuse à laisser paraître dans notre journal cet article sous la rubrique habituelle des Beaux-Arts avec laquelle il n'a rien de commun. La liquidation des Indépendants doit être inscrite dans le grand nettoyage de la France."[80]

This rhetoric, using terms like 'purge', 'cleansing', and 'liquidation' is the same rhetoric used in anti-Semitic discussions of the 'Jewish question'. Though other critics recognized that the arts were in peril, they do not use the same language, which incidentally, is the exact language that had been used in Germany. It is therefore not entirely surprising to find Rebatet the anti-Semite blaming the poor state of French art on the Jews. "Je répéterai aussi longtemps qu'il le faudra que le virus juif, véhiculé par les barbouilleurs des ghettos orientaux et les marchands de tableaux, est le principal responsible de cette maladie."[81] His position on this matter, of course, could not have come as a surprise, given his contribution to the special edition *Les Juifs et la France* in 1939. If there was any doubt, he outlined his views in his first column, "Entre le Juif et le pompier". He writes that the column will now be "une chronique où le combat aura la part la plus importante pendant le temps qu'il faudra."[82] What is noteworthy about Rebatet's treatment of the Jews is that in spite of many demonstrations of his competency

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[79] Lucien Rebatet, "Le Salon des Tuileries
[80] Lucien Rebatet, "Au salon des Indépendants", *Je suis partout*, 21 mars, 1941, p. 7.
[81] Lucien Rebatet, "L'offensive des pompiers", *Je suis partout*, 12 mai, 1941, p. 9.
[82] Lucien Rebatet, "Entre le Juif et le pompier", *Je suis partout*, 14 février, 1941, p. 7.

as an art critic, he approached the well known Jewish artists as someone who did not understand anything about modern art.[83] That he is so emphatic in specifying the Jews and their influence as the main causes of the rot is not only indicative of the virulence of his anti-Semitism, but also that he feels it was a point that was not sufficiently emphasized. That he is beginning anew suggests that Rebatet believes Fosca to have either missed the point, or else ignored it.

As a whole, art criticism in the French Right wing weeklies, *Candide*, *Gringoire*, and *Je suis partout*, identifies two extremes that frame a crisis in the contemporary art world. All are agreed that the academies and salons offer little other than mediocre banalities, and the modern art movements offer what amounts to emotional and impulsive spatterings apparently devoid of skill and technique. Nationalism is another theme that is discernable throughout, though it is a strain of nationalism that is less conspicuous than is to be found in the other pages of the weeklies. It is a more passive nationalism, whereby the greatness of the country is affirmed by constantly listing the masters of French art. The nationalism in aesthetics, as demonstrated by Lucien Rebatet, is a more aggressive nationalism, whereby the greatness of the country can only be enhanced by attacking others and purging the nation of unwanted elements – in Rebatet's opinion, the Jews. Related to these ideas is the escapism demonstrated by the critics. This is also two-fold, since there is the direct escapism of immersing oneself in the glories of the past, and the indirect escapism of calling for the reconstitution of the same nostalgic ideals in contemporary art.

The most significant absence in all but Rebatet's columns is the anti-Semitism that was nearly ubiquitous in France, and even had examples of its aesthetic applications

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[83] Cone, "Art and Politics", p. 93.

in books, not to mention in Germany. If, as Cone suggests[84], euphemisms such as 'foreigner' should be read to mean the Jews, then the anti-Semitism of French art critics constitutes a dialogue similar yet decidedly distinct from that of Germany, or of Rebatet, Mauclair, Vanderpyl, and Hautecoeur. However, that Rebatet is so insistent on the need to cleanse French art, to liquidate the Jew, suggests that the critics before him did not do their duty by France (according to Rebatet). Therefore, Cone's explanation that euphemisms must be decoded is not convincing. If the art critics at the weeklies in fact used euphemisms, they certainly clouded the issue of Jews in French art. This issue did not surface in France in the 'combat period' of the arts; the 1930s. The books by the art historians and critics seem to frame this apparent void in the art criticism of the Right wing weeklies, having come in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and returning with a vengeance (conveniently during Occupation) in the 1940s. It is also worth noting that in the period immediately preceding the outbreak of war, when even a crossword could be clipped by the censors, as it was in *Je suis partout*, not a single word of an arts column at any of the three newspapers was censored. This too suggests that there was no real anti-Semitism, or any other controversial content in the art columns.

[84] "There was competition between French and 'foreign' artists (often a euphemism for Jewish artists)" in Cone, "Art and Politics", xi,

CONCLUSION

The weekly newspapers of the French Right are interesting and relevant for many reasons. They have been studied from different perspectives by countless other historians, and, as discussed above, *Je suis partout* was the subject of a Pierre-Marie Dioudonnat monograph. However, their abundant artistic content has been overlooked by historians who use them for social and political ends, and eschewed by art historians who favour fine art journals and catalogues for their work. This is a curious void, given that art and politics were so intertwined in the period 1936-1944. While no historian familiar with the French press of the period need be convinced of the strength and importance of the political voices of the newspapers, the artistic and aesthetic voices are also strong and important in these weeklies. Through editorials, weekly columns, and even cartoons, *Candide*, *Gringoire*, and *Je suis partout* not only dealt with the arts, but did so in a manner unlike what one could reasonably expect from a venomously anti-Semitic, Right wing newspaper.

One of the main themes to be discerned in these columns is the aspect of nationalism through past glories. All of the columnists hark back to centuries past, when all of the leading artists were French, or at the very least Italian, and therefore part of the Latin cultural tradition. Though this romanticizing of the past is a familiar practice on the Right, it fell short of the more aggressive nationalism prescribed by the often organic or botanical rhetoric of fascists, wherein the national body or plant must be purged of the disease (the Jews). While the cause for their escapism is displeasure with the current condition of the French arts, the columnists do not make direct accusations against any specific individuals.

In looking at the ways in which three French Right wing weekly newspapers – *Candide, Gringoire,* and *Je suis partout* – dealt with the arts, the most striking discovery is an apparent lack of the anti-Semitic aesthetics one would expect to find. Though many examples of blaming Jews for the crisis in the arts were available, both within France and within the oft admired Third Reich, the occasional articles, the cartoons, and even the weekly columns do not make this association, and instead seem to ignore the issue of Jews in the arts completely. Even if, as Cone suggests, euphemisms such as 'foreigner' are used to mean 'Jew', the French aesthetic anti-Semitism of the weekly newspapers constitutes a dialogue that is decidedly different from that of the rest of France and Germany. It could also be argued that the failure to discuss or even mention Jewish artists with any frequency is a form of passive anti-Semitism, but the Jewish artists and art dealers still appear occasionally. Because the columns are not vehemently and violently anti-Semitic, they failed to pique the interest of scholars who tend to gravitate toward the sensational extremes (hence Cone's and Carroll's use of Rebatet's columns).

It is precisely because the weekly columns are not aggressively anti-Semitic that they are interesting. One would expect that the fine arts columns at the three most popular French Right wing, anti-Semitic weeklies would be an excellent source of all the worst of anti-Semitic aesthetic rhetoric, and yet they are not. Even the cartoons do not equate the Jews with the state of the art world, despite both being favourite targets of the cartoonists. While it is not the goal of this thesis to exonerate the writers and cartoonists at these weekly newspapers, the aesthetics of these newspapers are different from the virulent anti-Semitism and aggressive nationalism historians have grown accustomed to, and accustomed to looking for. There is still, however, much work that could - and, indeed,

should - be done in this area. It is a body of material that is relevant and interesting, and certainly has much more to offer to both the historical and art historical fields.

Figure 1 – *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard*. Pablo Picasso. 1910.
The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Figure 2 – Advertisement for L'Exposition Internationale
Je suis partout, September 19, 1936

Figure 3 – "Le complot judéo-soviétique contre la paix."
Je suis partout, January 4, 1936

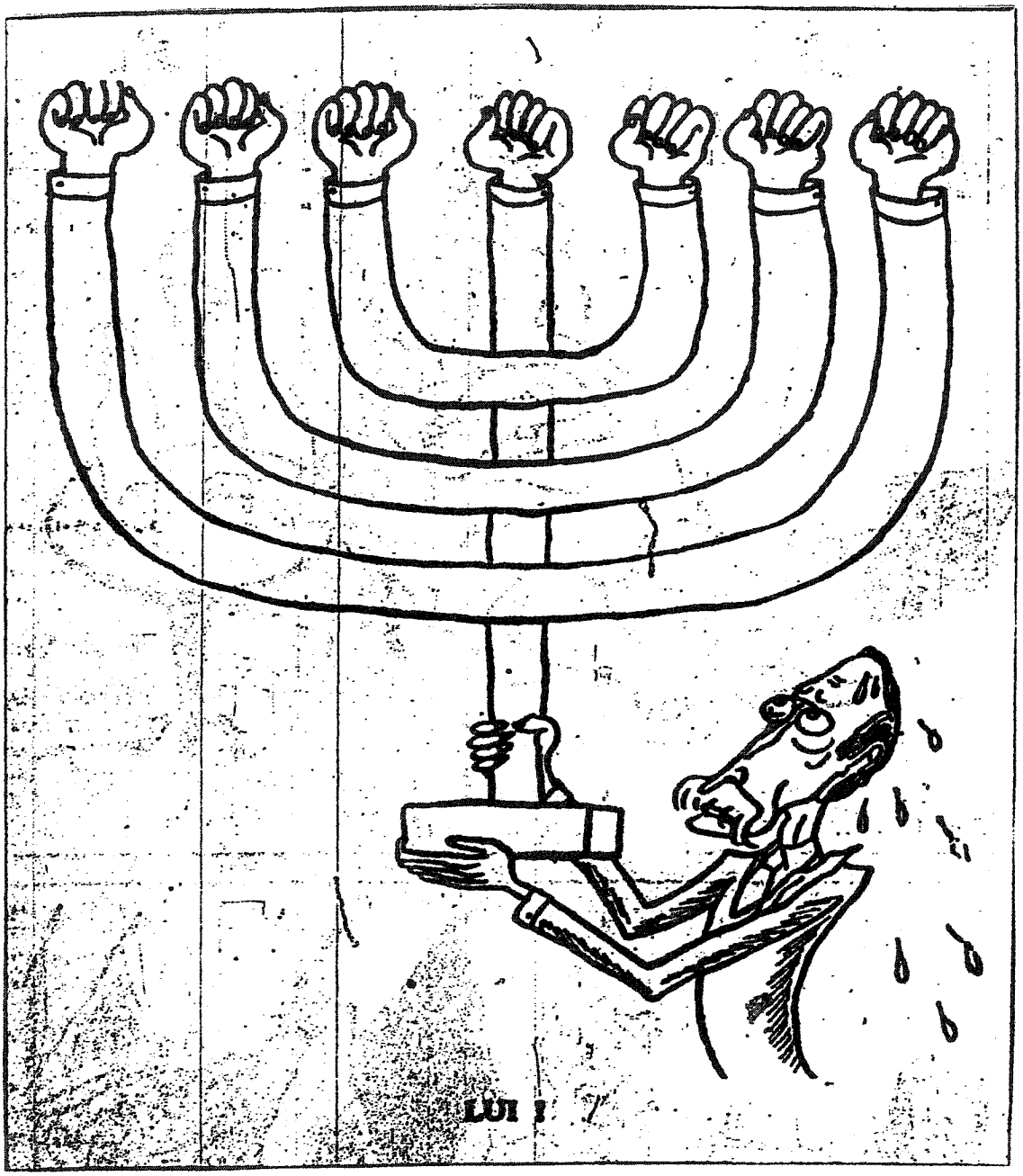


Figure 4 – "LUI !"
Candide, July 9, 1936

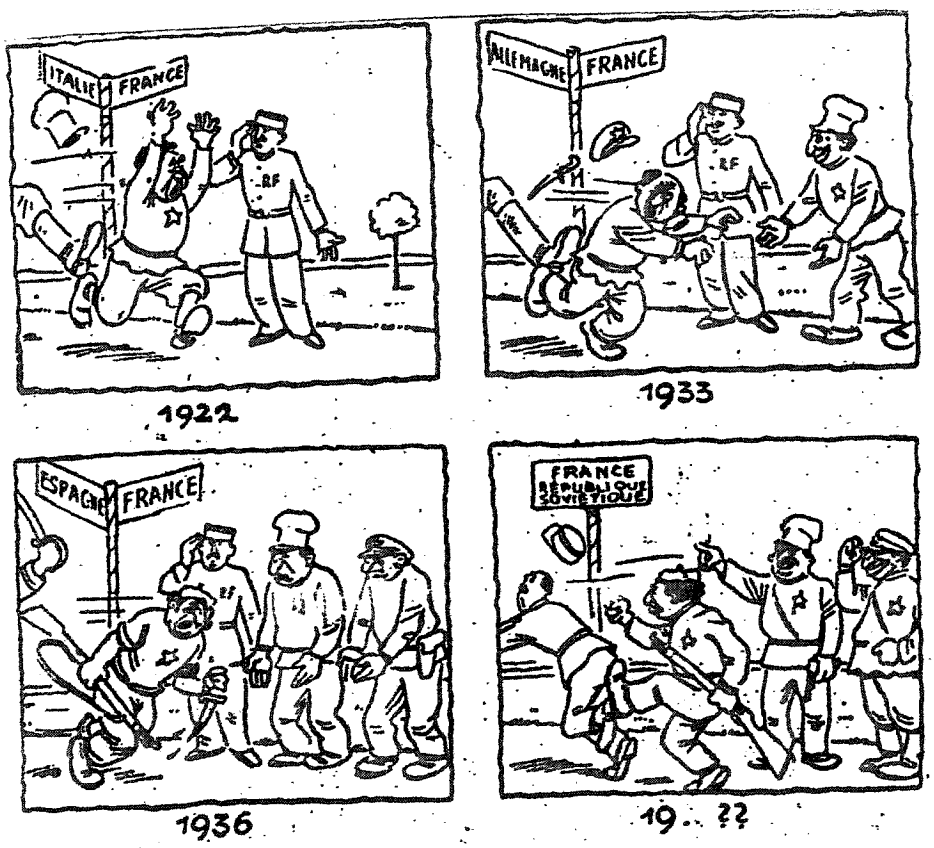


Figure 5 – "1922, 1933, 1936, 19??"
Je suis partout, February 6, 1937

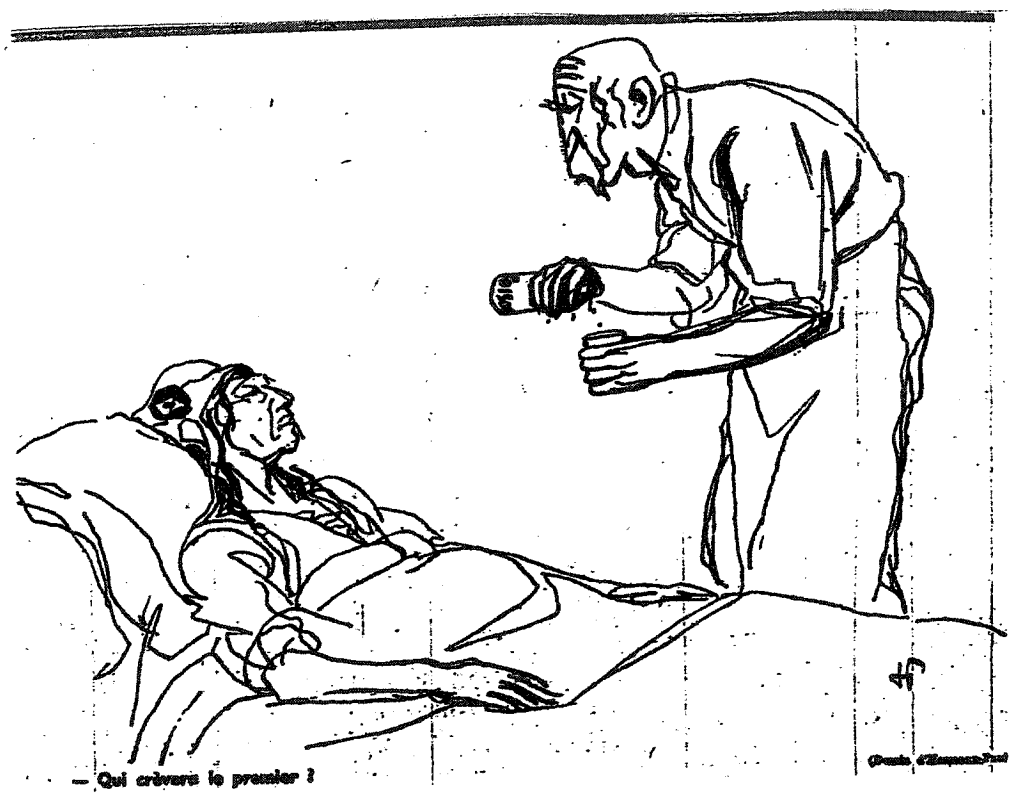


Figure 6 – "Qui crèvera le premier?"
Je suis partout, May 15, 1937

Figure 7 – "Le musée du Louvre revu par le Front populaire"
Je suis partout, October 29, 1937

Figure 8 - "Les instruments à mutiler la Victoire"
Je suis partout, November 11, 1938

Figure 9 – "Les réalisations de M. Blum"
Je suis partout, March 6, 1937

L'Exposition de M. Léon Blum
(Guerin. Machino).

Figure 10 – "L'Exposition de M. Léon Blum"
Je suis partout, March 6, 1937

Figure 11 – "La porte d'entrée de l'Espagne rouge"
Je suis partout, October 15, 1937

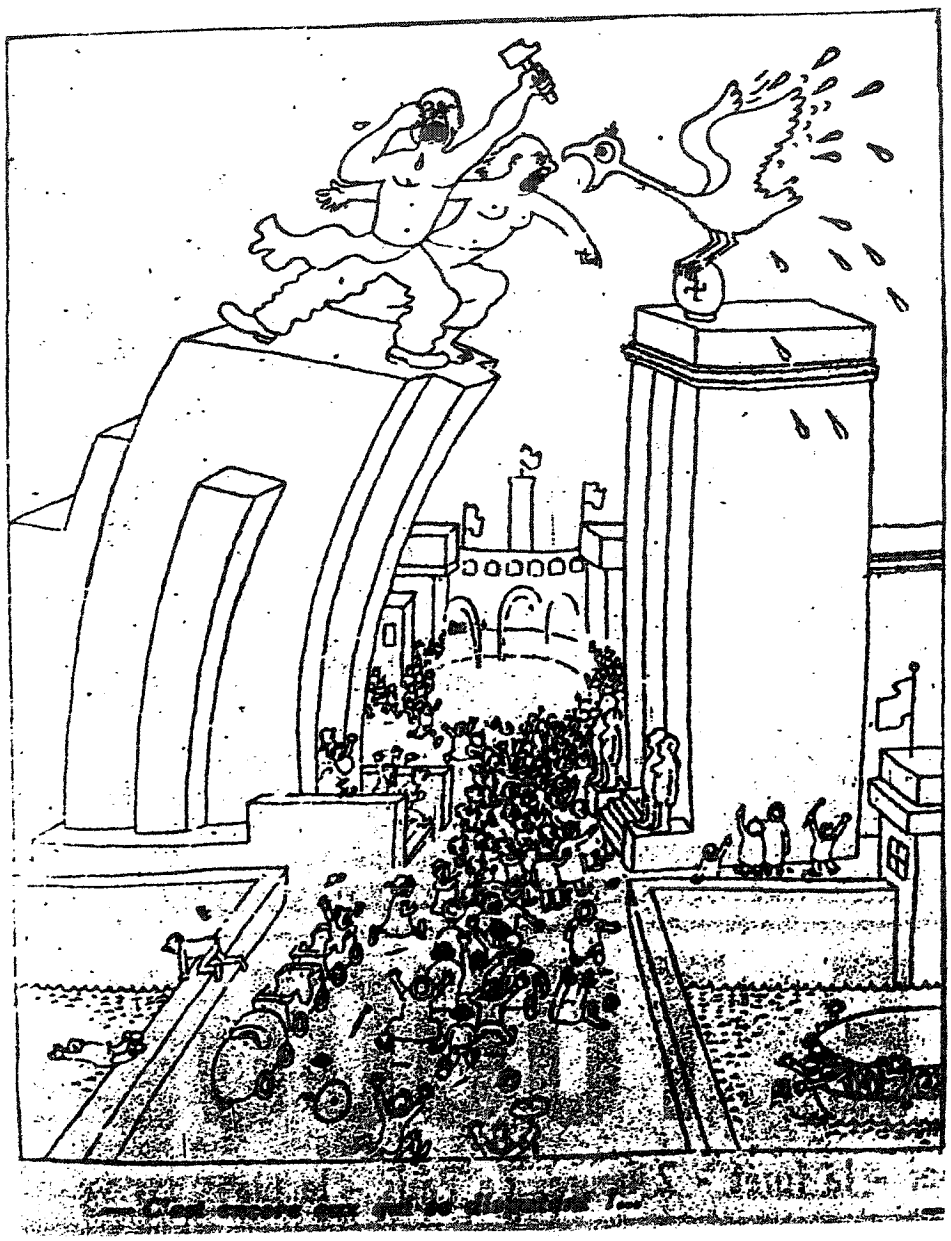


Figure 12 – "C'est encore eux qui se disputent!"
Candide, July 15, 1937

— Je dirai que ça vaut exactement sept cent cinquante dollars, pas un cent de plus !

(New York World-Telegram.)

(Dessin de George Clark.)

Figure 13 – "Je dirai que ça vaut exactement sept cent cinquante dollars, pas un cent de plus!"
Je suis partout, April 10, 1937

REFLETS

— Pour 200 francs, vous avez en réalité deux peintures.

(*New Yorker.*)

Figure 14 – "Reflets"
Je suis partout, April 24, 1938

Figure 15 – "Votre billet de mille était faux!"
Candide, February 4, 1937

— Ne touchez pas, vous voyez bien que ce n'est pas tout à fait sec !

Figure 16 – "Ne touchez pas, vous voyez bien que ce n'est pas tout à fait sec!" *Gringoire*, July 22, 1938

— Nous aussi, nous aimons l'art, mais seulement s'il est emportable.
(Kladderadatsch.)

Figure 17 – "Nous aussi, nous aimons l'art, mais seulement s'il est emportable."
Je suis partout, November 21, 1936

Figure 18 – "C'est en les transportant qu'ils ont dû faire ça!"
Gringoire, September 4, 1936

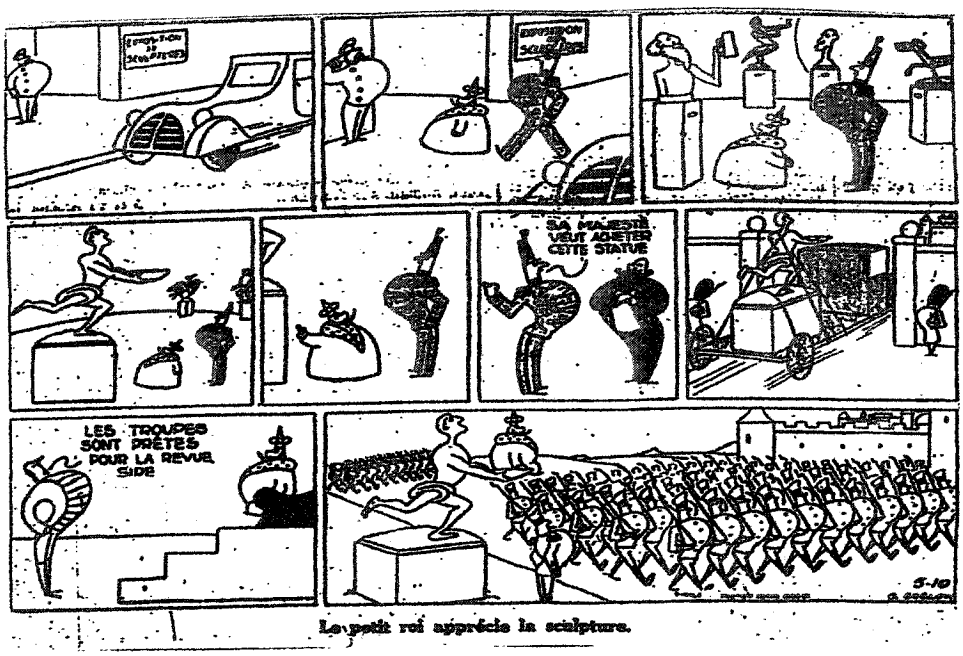
UN GROS EFFORT

— Choisis-en un qui vaille la peine que je me lève, et j'irai le voir.

(New York World Telegram.)

Figure 19 – "Un gros effort"
Je suis partout, April 10, 1937

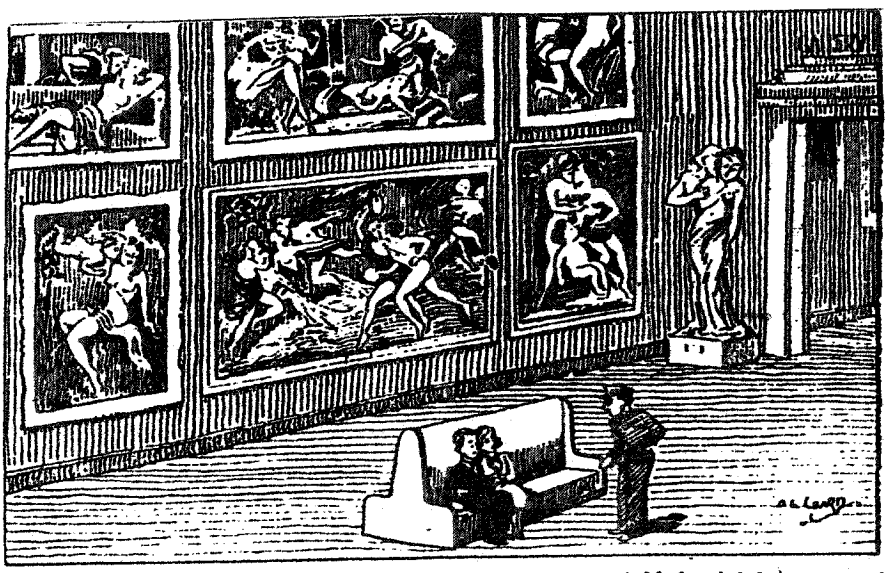
Figure 20 – "Au Louvre"
Gringoire, June 22, 1939



Le petit roi apprécie la sculpture.

Figure 21 – "Le petit roi apprécie la sculpture."
Candide, July 2, 1936

Figure 22 – "J'en voudrais six comme ça dans mon jardin, c'est pour jouer à saute mouton."
Candide, June 14, 1944



— Jeunes gens, ces sortes de choses ne sont pas tolérées ici !

(London Opinion.)

Figure 23 – "Jeunes gens, ces sortes de choses ne sont pas tolérées ici!"
Je suis partout, May 2, 1936

Figure 24 – "Chaleur"
Je suis partout, August 4, 1941

Figure 25 – "Votre première leçon, j'imagine, m. Popplewick?"
Je suis partout, April 29, 1938

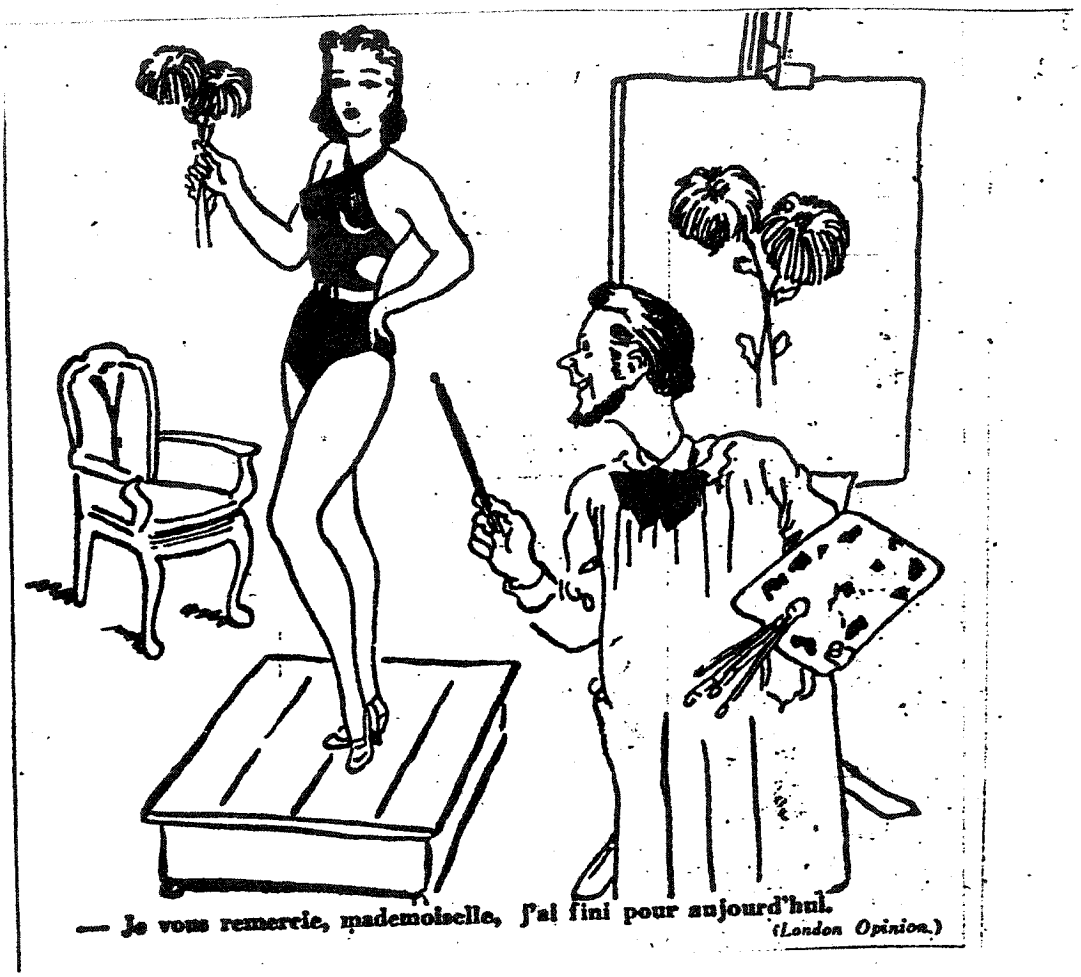


Figure 26 – "Je vous remercie, mademoiselle, j'ai fini pour aujourd'hui."
Je suis partout, April 29, 1938

— Je ne vois vraiment pas ce que les artistes trouvent d'intéressant dans ce coin-là, et toi ? (*New York World-Telegram.*)

Figure 27 – "Je ne vois pas vraiment pas ce que les artistes trouvent d'intéressant dans ce coin-là, et toi?"
Je suis partout, April 10, 1937

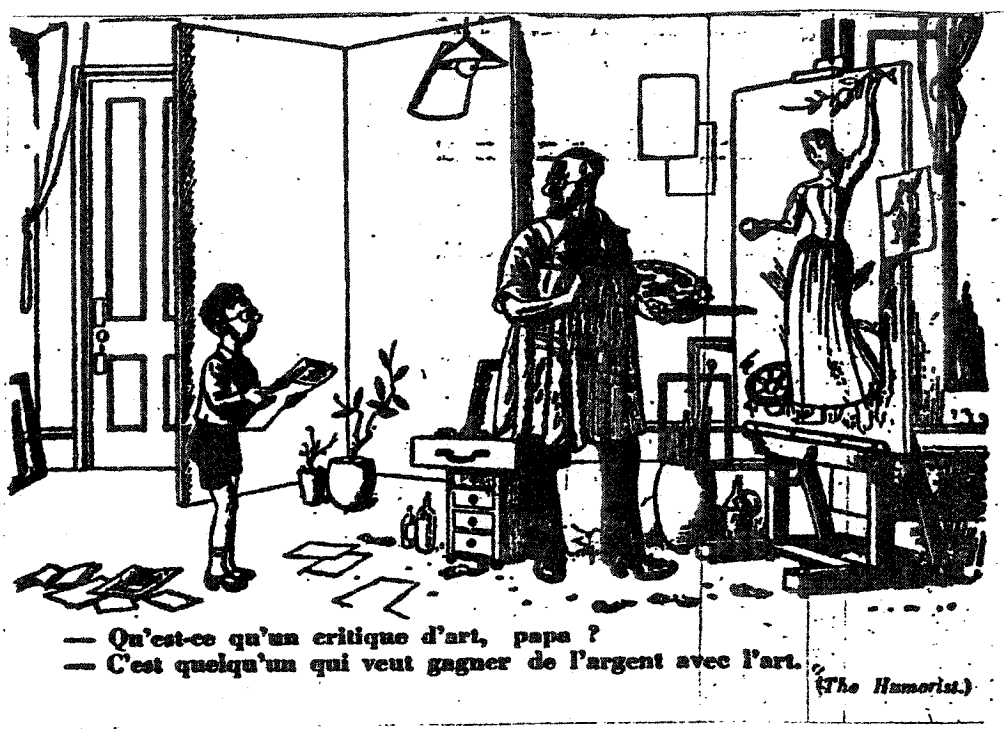


Figure 28 – "Qu'est-ce qu'un critique d'art, papa?"
Je suis partout, April 29, 1938

— Le directeur artistique ne s'occupe d'humour que le deuxième lundi de chaque mois...

(Bystander.)

Figure 29 – "Le directeur artistique ne s'occupe d'humour que le deuxième lundi de chaque mois..."
Je suis partout, April 10, 1937

SCULPTURE MODERNE

— Alors... on met la feuille de vigne ou on ne la met pas ?

Figure 30 – "Sculpture moderne"
Je suis partout, August 29, 1936

Figure 31 – "Ces imbéciles ont pendu mon portrait la tête en bas."
Je suis partout, January 28, 1938

— Très bien, Madame, si vous voulez. Mais nous trouvions que ça faisait plus moderne comme ceci.

(DESSIN DE NICOLAS BENTLEY.)

(*The Bystander.*)

Figure 32 – "Très bien Madame, si vous voulez. Mais nous trouvions que ça faisait plus moderne comme ceci."
Je suis partout, July 22, 1938

Figure 33 – En réalité, ça ne représente rien, j'ai seulement voulu faire quelque chose que tout le monde puisse comprendre."
Je suis partout, September 17, 1937

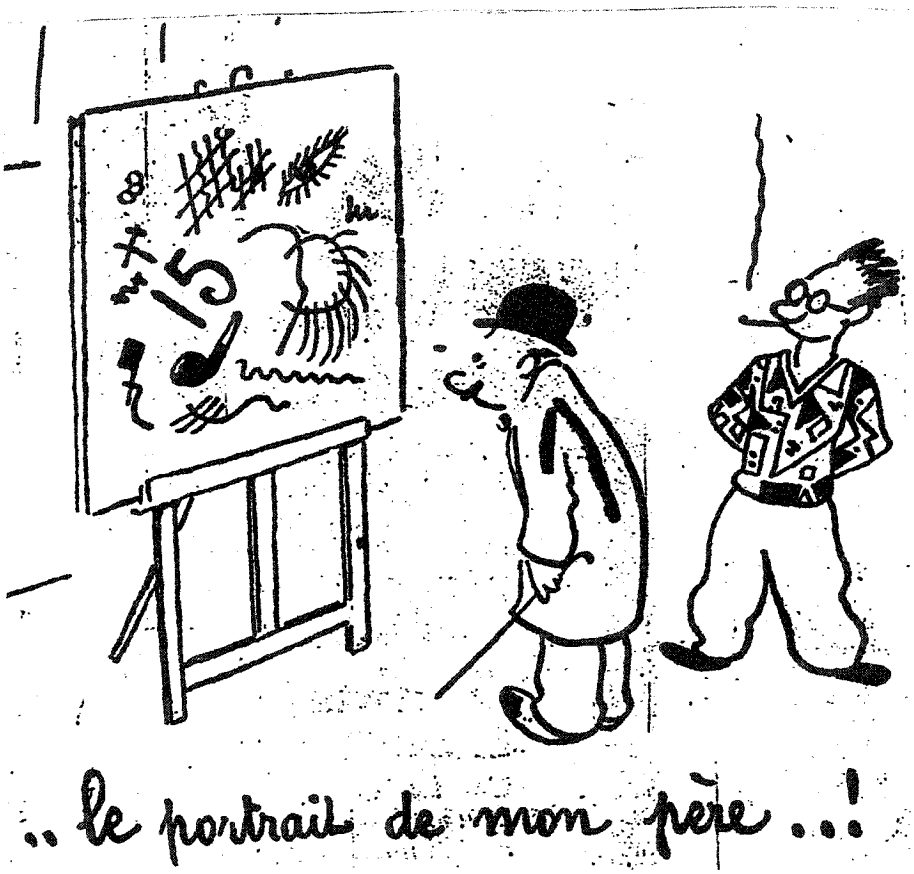


Figure 34 – "Le portrait de mon père..!"
Gringoire, April 3, 1936

Figure 35 – "Ce serait parfait si je mettais un cercle bleu ici, n'est ce pas, M. Dubois?"
Je suis partout, April 29, 1938

Le « Printemps », de Brauchitschelli

Figure 36 – "Le 'Printemps', de Brauchitschelli"
Candide, March 17, 1939

Figure 37 – "La critique est aisée"
Gringoire, March 21, 1940

Figure 38 – "Vous allez m'effacez cette inscription et rapidement, mon garçon!" *Gringoire*, March 21, 1940

Figure 39 – "Un artiste"
Gringoire, March 21, 1940

Table 1
Number of Gringoire articles in which artists born or active in France appear

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Number of columns	31	33	40	23					
Artists									
Braque	1	2	1	2					
Breker									
Cézanne	10	5	6	4					
Chagall		1	1	1					
Clouet	1		1						
Corot	1		5	4					
Courbet	3	1	2	2					
David		1	3	1					
Degas	1	1	4	5					
Delacroix	3	5	5	2					
Derain	3	2	4	5					
Dufy	1	3	4	6					
Dunoyer de Segonzac	3	2	6	4					
Gaugin	2	2	3	2					
Géricault		1	2	1					
Ingres	1	1	1	3					
Kisling	5	1							
Manet		2	4						
Matisse	3	5	7	1					
Miro		2		1					
Modigliani		1							
Monet	1	2	1	2					
Picasso	8	6	2	4					
Pissaro	1	1	1	1					
Renoir	4	5	5	2					
Rodin	1	1	2	1					
Rouault	4	1	2	2					
Rousseau		1	2	1					
Seurat	1		2	1					
Signac	2			1					
Sisley		1	1	3					
Toulousse-Lautrec	1	2		1					
Soutine				2					
Utrillo	2		2	1					
Van Dongen	2			3					
Van Gogh		2	5	1					
Vlaminck	5	2	5	3					
Vuillard	3	3	8	2					
Watteau	2	1	2	1					

Note: The weekly fine arts column was written by André Salmon in 1936, André Villeboeuf from 1937 to 1939, and was discontinued as a regular feature thereafter.

Table 2

Number of Candide articles in which artists born or active in France appear

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Number of columns	38	33	33	24	8	14	11	18	7
Artists									
Braque		2		3				1	
Breker							1		
Cézanne	5	4	6	5			1	1	
Chagall				1					
Clouet								1	
Corot	6	4	8	1		1		2	1
Courbet	1	5	2	2				1	
David	1	4	2	1			1	1	
Degas	3	3	5	3					
Delacroix	4	6	7	3	2	1	1	1	
Derain	3	2		1		2		1	
Dufy	1	4		1		2	2	1	
Dunoyer de Segonzac	1	5	2	1	3	2	2		1
Gaugin	4	2	3			2		2	
Géricault	2	3	1	1			2		
Ingres	1	2	1	1					
Kisling						1			
Manet	4	1	4	4					
Matisse	4	4		2	1		2		1
Miro	1			1					
Modigliani	1								
Monet	3		1	3	2		4		
Picasso	6	3	1	6			2	2	
Pissaro	2	1	1	2		1	2		
Renoir	5	2	1	4		1		1	1
Rodin	3	3	2	1	2	1	3		
Rouault				1					
Rousseau			1					1	
Seurat	2	1					1	1	
Signac	3	1					1		
Sisley	1		1	2					
Toulousse-Lautrec	2		1			1		2	
Soutine									
Utrillo	2	1	1		1			3	1
Van Dongen	3	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Van Gogh	2	1	2	1		1		1	
Vlaminck	1	1				2	2	2	
Vuillard	4	4	1	2	2	4		3	3
Watteau	1	1	2						

Table 3
Number of Je suis partout articles in which artists born or active in France appear

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Number of columns	26	41	46	32	4	8	8	8	5
Artists									
Braque	2	2		2				2	
Breker									
Cézanne	2	7	6	4	1	4	5	6	3
Chagall						1			
Clouet		1				1			
Corot	4	4	6	3	1	4	4	1	2
Courbet		2	3	2		1	4	2	2
David		2		1			2		2
Degas	5	10	6	7	1	3	5	2	
Delacroix	3	12	7	6	1	2	3	2	2
Derain		2		1		1	2	3	3
Dufy		1	1	3		2		1	1
Dunoyer de Segonzac	1	2	1	3	1	1	2	2	2
Gaugin		3	5	4	1	1	1		
Géricault	1	2	1			1	3		2
Ingres		3	2	1		2	3	1	2
Kisling									
Manet	5	7	4	2		2	5	2	1
Matisse	2	4	1	2		2	3	2	2
Miro	1						1		
Modigliani									
Monet	1	5	8	3	1	4	5		3
Picasso	4	2	2	3			3	2	1
Pissaro		2	2	3	1	2	4		1
Renoir	4	5	5	4	1	5	6	2	3
Rodin	1	1	1				1	1	
Rouault	1	1	1	5				1	
Rousseau	2	1	1	1		1	2	1	1
Seurat	1						2		1
Signac	1	2		1		1	1		1
Sisley		2		2	1	3	4	1	
Toulousse-Lautrec		5	3	1	1	1	3	3	1
Soutine						1		1	
Utrillo			1	1	1	1	1	5	3
Van Dongen		1		1		2	2	1	
Van Gogh		6	4	2		2	2	4	
Vlaminck			1	2		1	1	2	
Vuillard	4	3	2			1	3		1
Watteau	1	4	3	4		2	1		2

Note: The weekly fine arts column was written by François Fosca from 1936 to 1939. Of the four columns in 1940, one was written by Fosca, the other three by Pierre d'Espezel. From 1941 to 1944, the weekly column was written by Lucien Rebatet. It is also interesting to note that despite French enthusiasm, Arno Breker is never mentioned in the regular column.

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