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**PICASSO'S RED PERIOD**  
**POLITICS, PEACE, AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION, 1937–73**

Claudia Albina Tavernese

A thesis presented for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History  
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## **Abstract**

In October 1944, Pablo Picasso joined the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) alongside numerous friends and intellectuals. Despite the fact that Picasso remained a member until his death, the sincerity of his political commitment and the connections between his art and his politics are difficult to assess. What are the methodological issues associated with being a politically engaged artist? More specifically, how can we relate art and politics in a way that problematises the question of Picasso's political commitment? This thesis will explore the various ways of evaluating Picasso's engagement with the PCF. Focus will be placed on the foundations of Picasso's involvement with the Party, the World Peace Movement, and various Communist-affiliated groups. His actions, statements, artworks, and donations must all be assessed within a broad historical framework in an effort to piece together a cohesive picture of Picasso's twenty-nine years as a PCF member. However, sincerity and personal motivations cannot be fully determined; therefore, we must also consider how Picasso's politics were constructed by others. The outside perceptions of Picasso's commitment to Communism will demonstrate the importance of public opinion in the formation of Picasso's political image. Archival findings in Paris, New York, and Texas have revealed the thousands of letters Picasso received from Communist parties, peace groups, comrades, friends, critics, and fans. The majority of this material only became available in 1992 and includes a substantial number of requests from political and charitable organisations, which demonstrate the extent of Picasso's support for Communist causes and reveal how these groups understood Picasso's values. Further documentation exposes the strategies employed by the Museum of Modern Art to separate art from politics; thus, making Picasso—and a range of modern artwork—palatable to an American audience throughout the Cold War. The diverse political methods and depoliticising strategies deployed by Picasso, his admirers, the Communist community, and cultural institutions illustrates the discrepancy in his political significance depending on time, place, audience, and personal objectives. This thesis tells the story of a political brand and an artistic icon by challenging the way Picasso's politics have been understood throughout history and by constructing associations between personal commitment, public perception, and consumption.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

AFA	American Federation of Arts
AMNPP	Archives du Musée national Picasso-Paris
CGT	Confédération générale du travail
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPUSA	Communist Party of the United States of America
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale
HUAC	House Un-American Activities Committee
ICA	Institute of Contemporary Art
JA-FRC	Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee
LLF	Les Lettres Françaises
MoMA	Museum of Modern Art
MRAP	Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OAS	Organisation de l'armée secrète
PCE	Partido Comunista de España
PCF	Parti communiste français
UFF	Union des femmes françaises
UJCF	Union des jeunesses communistes de France
VOA	Voice of America
WPM	World Peace Council and Movement

*The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.*

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents. Thank you for being my first teachers.

## **Introduction**

This dissertation is an examination of Pablo Picasso's commitment to the *Parti communiste français* (PCF). I will argue that Picasso did not join the PCF because he held narrowly partisan or dogmatic motives; rather, he viewed the Party as the vehicle by which he could pursue wider universal values of peace, humanism, and equality. The relationship between art and politics and the way we define political commitment is both complicated and easily misunderstood. My research will ask how we can relate art and politics in a way that enables us to problematise the question of Picasso's political commitment. By interrogating the biases and assumptions in the art historical scholarship, I will bring to light the methodological issues associated with being a politically engaged artist. This will be accomplished by placing a diverse collection of primary and secondary sources—some of which did not surface until the end of the twentieth century—within a broader historical framework in order to understand Picasso's actions within the international political and cultural landscape of the time.

### **The Picasso Historiography**

The whole of the Picasso literature is vast, overwhelming, and fruitful. As a result, there have been competing interpretations of his politics. The difficulty in examining the connections between art and politics has always been an issue at the heart of Modernism<sup>1</sup> and applies to many artists other than Picasso.<sup>2</sup> For example, in 1953, Marxist art critic John Berger discussed the reactions to nineteenth-century artist Gustave Courbet's socialist convictions: some critics denied the links between Courbet's art and his politics, while others believed Courbet's art was influential precisely as a result of his political allegiance.<sup>3</sup>

The Picasso historiography can be broken up into various parts prior to 1990: those who knew Picasso, formalist art theorists, and Left-wing art historians. The publications and statements from biographers, scholars, or Party members who were close friends with the artist were the first to recognise Picasso's political commitments. Their claims were grounded in personal reminiscence. This includes historical accounts from Pierre Daix, Roland Penrose, and H  l  ne Parmelin. Daix was a member of the PCF, a Picasso biographer, and a friend. Penrose was a Communist sympathiser and

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<sup>1</sup> When I use the word Modernism in this thesis, it is based on Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s broad definition: "Modern Art" is a relative, elastic term that serves conveniently to designate painting, sculpture, architecture, and the other visual arts, original and progressive in character, produced especially within the

<sup>2</sup> The political dimension of Modernism's historical developments has often been ignored in favour of its aesthetics. See Stephen Eric Bronner, *Modernism at the Barricades: Aesthetics, Politics, Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. xiv.

<sup>3</sup> John Berger, "Picasso and Others," *Mainstream*, vol. 11, no. 4, p. 23–24 in 12.III.A.14. – "Picasso Book" – corresp. and printed matter: 1958, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

an artist, in addition to being Picasso's friend and biographer.<sup>4</sup> Parmelin was an art critic, member of the Party, friend, and a reporter for the French Communist newspaper *L'Humanité*.<sup>5</sup> Penrose published his key work on Picasso, *Picasso: His Life and Work*, in 1953. Daix published many books on Picasso, but his publication *Picasso: Life and Art* of 1987 covered Picasso's entire artistic and personal life. Parmelin published multiple texts on Picasso, starting in 1959 with *Picasso sur la place*.<sup>6</sup> Penrose, Daix, and Parmelin published books at different times, but they all shared similar views regarding the relationship between Picasso's art and his politics.<sup>7</sup> Penrose constantly defended and explained the role politics played in Picasso's life and career, and he extracted the political meaning out of every one of Picasso's artworks when possible. He saw Picasso's Party membership as a logical step considering the artist's humanitarian hopes and circle of friends, and he asserted that Picasso joined the Party as a gesture of defiance against old enemies, Francisco Franco and Adolf Hitler.<sup>8</sup> Daix also recognised the political aspects of select Picasso canvases and attempted to explain that no artist had been more consistent than Picasso in using his artistic skills to promote a better life for humanity. He described Picasso's belief that with the Liberation of Paris at the end of World War II the new world he had sought in his paintings coincided with the Communist promises for a glorious future, and this would partly compensate for the defeat of the same promise in Spain.<sup>9</sup> Parmelin lived at Picasso's studio in Vallauris for some time where she tracked the day-to-day life of the artist and stressed how closely linked to the Party and its politics he was in his daily affairs.<sup>10</sup>

The friendships Daix, Parmelin, and Penrose had with Picasso offer first-person testimonies of the artist's intentions and feelings. However, this is when issues of bias come into play. As friends and fellow Communists, their words could be a form of propaganda because they wanted to depict a prominent artist such as Picasso as a Communist figurehead for the Party. It is important to take

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<sup>4</sup> See also Elizabeth Cowling and Roland Penrose, *Visiting Picasso: The Notebooks and Letters of Roland Penrose* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006); Penrose, John Golding, and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, eds., *Picasso in Retrospect* (London: Granada, 1981); Penrose and Golding, eds., *Picasso, 1881–1973* (New York: Portland House, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> See also Hélène Parmelin, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, and Vercors, *Oeuvres des musées de Leningrad et de Moscou et de quelques collections parisiennes* (Paris: Éditions Cercle d'Art, 1955).

<sup>6</sup> *Picasso sur la place* is the original French version of *Picasso Plain*. See citation in footnote 7.

<sup>7</sup> Hélène Parmelin, *Le massacre des innocents: l'art et la guerre* (Paris: Éditions Cercle d'Art, 1954); Parmelin, trans. Humphrey Hare, *Picasso Plain: An Intimate Portrait* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963); Parmelin, trans. Christine Trollope, *Picasso Says...* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969); Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1953); Pierre Daix, *Pablo Picasso* (Paris: Éditions Tallandier, 2007); *Picasso: L'homme et son oeuvre* (Paris: Éditions Aimery Somogy, 1964); Daix, *Picasso Créateur: la vie intime et l'oeuvre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987); Daix, trans. Olivia Emmet, *Picasso: Life and Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Penrose, *His Life and Work*, p. 315.

<sup>9</sup> Daix, *Life and Art*, p. 278.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Parmelin and others confirmed that Picasso was an avid reader of *L'Humanité*. Numerous copies of the newspaper—some with Picasso's notes in the margins—can be found in the AMNPP. Gertje Uitley, *Picasso: The Communist Years* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 221.

these sources and use them in conjunction with a variety of others in order to come to a more balanced understanding of Picasso as a politically engaged individual.

Next we must look at scholars of the liberal individualist tradition who have conventionally focused on the formal elements of modern art. The theory of formalism was first developed by British scholars Roger Fry and Clive Bell between 1912 and 1914.<sup>11</sup> Formalism in art criticism was popular in the early twentieth century when it became the interpretation developed in response to the abstraction of Cubism and its seeming refusal of historical referents. In order for Picasso's art to enjoy critical acclaim, a separation—or even complete denial—of his political associations was necessary. Clement Greenberg was one of the leading American formalist critics during this time. In his 1939 essay “Avant-Garde and Kitsch”, Greenberg spoke of the avant-garde's adherence to “art for art's sake”,<sup>12</sup> where “subject matter or content becomes something to be avoided.”<sup>13</sup> His review of a Picasso exhibition in 1949 mentioned only formalist elements of the artwork.<sup>14</sup> In 1951 he argued that “There is no genuine Marxist aesthetics, and never was. It is only a spurious and vulgar Marxism that presumes to assess works of art ... according to the correctness with which they mirror the social conflicts of the place and time in which they were produced.”<sup>15</sup> Greenberg went on to write in his 1960 essay “Modernist Painting” that he identified Modernism with the intensification of a self-critical tendency that began with Immanuel Kant proposing a disinterested “pure” aesthetic judgment.<sup>16</sup> Greenberg's failure to acknowledge political and social influences in art limited the ways in which scholars could evaluate Picasso's artwork and the larger implications of Picasso's political affiliations. Formalism shaped the way Modernist art was interpreted in the United States for a very long time because of Greenberg and his admirers, such as Alfred H. Barr, Jr. He was also responsible for shaping the formalist theories of future scholars, such as Michael Fried and Rosalind Krauss. Fried

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<sup>11</sup> Pam Meecham and Julie Sheldon, *Modern Art: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 11–12.

<sup>12</sup> The term comes from the French “l'art pour l'art”, which was first used in Victor Cousin's 1818 book *Questions esthétiques et religieuses* where he states that art is not in the service of religion and morals, and art should only exist for art's sake. Wallace Fowlie, *Poem and Symbol: A Brief History of French Symbolism* (London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 2

<sup>13</sup> Clement Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” *Partisan Review*, Fall 1939 in Clement Greenberg and John O'Brian, ed., *Clement Greenberg The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 1: Perceptions and Judgments 1939–1944* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Greenberg, “Review of an Exhibition of Picasso,” *The Nation*, 2 April 1949 in Greenberg and John O'Brian, ed., *Clement Greenberg The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 2: Arrogant Purpose, 1945–1949* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 297–99.

<sup>15</sup> Greenberg, “Review of the *Social History of Art* by Arnold Hauser,” *New York Times Book Review*, 23 December 1951 in Clement Greenberg and John O'Brian, ed., *Clement Greenberg The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 3: Affirmations and Refusals, 1950–1956* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 95.

<sup>16</sup> Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” *Forum Lectures* (Washington, D.C. Voice of America), 1960. Accessed: 20 April 2017. <https://voices.uchicago.edu/wittgenstein/files/2007/10/Greenbergmodpaint.pdf>; Meecham and Sheldon, *Modern Art*, p. 12.

contended that formal criteria were the best approach when evaluating Modernist artwork.<sup>17</sup> While he claimed that elements outside of the formal context of artwork could be informative, Fried also maintained that content-led types of interpretations were “largely unable to make convincing discriminations of value among the works of a particular artist, and in this century it often happens that those paintings that are most full of explicit human content can be faulted on formal grounds—Picasso’s *Guernica* is perhaps the most conspicuous example”.<sup>18</sup> In her 1980 essay “In the Name of Picasso”, Krauss attacked what she dubbed the “history of the proper name”, which was an art historical approach that devalued the use of form and style and believed that everything in Picasso’s artwork was representative of an aspect of his personal life.<sup>19</sup> Krauss instead argued that Picasso’s oeuvre—especially his *papier collés*—could be understood by evaluating the formal elements of the artwork rather than using biographical material.<sup>20</sup>

The view of many art institutions, anti-Communist intellectuals<sup>21</sup>, and Western governments was that Picasso joined the wrong side during the Cold War, and his art was occasionally criticised and considered compromised because it trumpeted his Communist views at times.<sup>22</sup> As a result, the established art historical consensus was that the quality of Picasso’s art coincidentally or not began to decline during his politicised years.<sup>23</sup> For example, in 1948 Clement Greenberg stated that by the early 1930s Picasso’s work was facing a decline from which it would never recover.<sup>24</sup> There are other scholars who have instead chosen to label Picasso’s political interactions as superficial, such as John Richardson. Richardson is one of the most respected Picasso historians. His first major Picasso publication was released in 1956, and since then he has authored the most in-depth and comprehensive Picasso biography to date. Richardson has thus far completed three volumes of his Picasso series, which ends in 1932. The fourth volume will cover the years between 1933 and 1944

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<sup>17</sup> Michael Fried, “Three American Painters: Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Frank Stella,” originally published in 1965, in Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 214.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>19</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “In The Name of Picasso,” *October* 16 (1981): pp. 7, 22.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> When I refer to intellectuals in this thesis, it is based on the definition developed by philosopher and historian Leszek Kolakowski: “all those whose profession is to create and communicate cultural values—scientific information, an outlook on the world works of art, knowledge of current society, political opinions”. Leszek Kolakowski, trans. J.Z. Peel, *Marxism and Beyond: On Historical Understanding and Individual Responsibility* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969), p. 179. My definition also includes those “who use their fame, their prestige to lend their weight to a political cause”. David Drake, *Intellectuals and Politics in Post-War France* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 1–2.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Harris, “Introduction: Picasso as a Sign of Class Struggle,” in Jonathan Harris and Richard Koeck, eds., *Picasso and the Politics of Visual Representation: War and Peace in the Era of the Cold War and Since* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> Greenberg, “The Decline of Cubism,” *Partisan Review* 3 (1948) cited in Greenberg and John O’Brian, ed., *Arrogant Purpose*, p. 214.

and conclude with the Liberation of Paris during the Second World War.<sup>25</sup> However, Richardson has already declared that Picasso was not political in an article from *The New York Review of Books* on 25 November 2010 entitled “How Political Was Picasso?” He claims that Picasso changed his opinions as often as he changed his love interests, and that these opinions—including political ones—reflected those of whomever he was involved with romantically at the time.<sup>26</sup> Richardson goes on to say that Picasso’s faith in Communism was faltering by 1956 with no evidence to back up this claim, and he contends that after an incident involving Picasso’s Stalin portrait upon the Soviet leader’s death, all of the artwork he contributed to the party was merely “fluff”.<sup>27</sup> Without fully understanding what Richardson means by “fluff”, I will maintain that Picasso provided valuable art to various Communist causes after 1956. Richardson also diminishes the political significance of some Picasso paintings based on their aesthetic value. Of the artworks displayed at Tate Liverpool’s *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* exhibition, he labels the Picasso doves of peace as “kitsch” and “out-of-date”, he calls the murals of *La Guerre*<sup>28</sup> and *La Paix*<sup>29</sup> (1952) dated and “simplistic” in their sentimentality, and he remarks that “Perhaps because the subject lacked the anguish and stimulus of a specific incident, *The Charnel House*<sup>30</sup> (1948) fails to overwhelm.”<sup>31</sup> Richardson is asserting that the lack of specificity in the painting detracts from its impact.

This perception of Picasso’s art within the early art historiography was heavily influenced by his politics and requires a re-examination in the aftermath of the Cold War and the declining influence of Communism.<sup>32</sup> That is not to say that the rich art historical literature is not relevant for me as a historian when constructing my own argument. However, it is important to understand that there are a variety of methodological approaches, which have in turn been shaped by the changing ideological landscape of the twentieth century.

In contrast, a rival tradition emerged during the interwar period rooted in the social history of art. As early as 1933’s *Marx, Proudhon, Picasso: Three Studies in the Sociology of Art*—published

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<sup>25</sup> The original intended release date has passed and a new one has not yet been confirmed. Ian Buruma, “The Personal Arcadia of John Richardson,” *New York Times*, 21 September 2014. Accessed: 5 January 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/12/t-magazine/john-richardson-art-historian-estate-connecticut.html>

<sup>26</sup> John Richardson, “How Political Was Picasso?”, *New York Review of Books*, 25 November 2010, p. 2. Accessed: 19 November 2014. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/nov/25/how-political-was-picasso/>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Guerre*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée national Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

<sup>29</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Paix*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée national Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

<sup>30</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Le Charnier*, 1945, oil and charcoal on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>31</sup> Richardson, “How Political Was Picasso?”, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Any reference to Communism or Communists in this thesis refers to various national Communist parties, their members, and their sympathisers.

eleven years prior to Picasso's admittance into the PCF—Max Raphael discussed the artist's relationship with politics: "For the Marxist, however, it is a matter of utmost importance to determine the exact relationships which exist between the work of art and the total socio-historical context ... With respect to Picasso, our task is to investigate the material and ideological conditions that have influenced him, and how he has reacted to them in his art."<sup>33</sup> Raphael went on to analyse Picasso's art from his anarchist beginnings to his Surrealism period and extracted the potential social and political factors that guided his artwork. In his 1965 publication *The Success and Failure of Picasso*, Berger explained that the moment Picasso joined the PCF "was a moment when Picasso acted and chose so as to come to terms with both the reality around him and his own genius" and "for the first time [Picasso] made his revolutionary feelings effective in terms of modern reality."<sup>34</sup> In his early texts, T.J. Clark argued for the importance of social and political contexts in relation to art history.<sup>35</sup> In *Image of the People* he wrote that an artist "responds to the values and ideas of the artistic community, which in turn are altered by changes in the general values and ideas of society, which in turn are determined by historical conditions".<sup>36</sup> Clark then addressed the problem with picking one factor in artistic production to study and stated the need to understand the historical context surrounding those factors.<sup>37</sup> These earlier works saw Clark focus on Courbet and Impressionism; however; his ideas concerning the social and ideological implications of art were also deployed in Clark's future publications. For example, in 1999's *Farewell to an Idea*, Clark discusses Modernism as being a revolutionary project and argues that broader social circumstances must be considered when looking at Picasso's work.<sup>38</sup> In 2013's *Picasso and Truth*, Clark explains how the events of the twentieth century shaped Picasso's worldview.<sup>39</sup> Raphael, Berger, and Clark all wrote from a position on the radical Left and understood the importance of the social history of art during an era dominated by formalist critical thought.

Only in recent years has the scholarship tried to move beyond qualitative judgements and reassess formalist interpretations. The 1990s brought the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a post-Marxist generation of art historians with different ideological perspectives who would re-evaluate the assumptions about Picasso's Communism and historicise the struggles of the Cold War.

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<sup>33</sup> Max Raphael, John Tagg, ed., trans. Inge Marcuse, *Marx, Proudhon, Picasso: Three Studies in the Sociology of Art* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), p. 116.

<sup>34</sup> John Berger, *The Success and Failure of Picasso* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), p. 172.

<sup>35</sup> T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973); T.J. Clark, *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France 1848–1851* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973); T.J. Clark, "The Conditions of Artistic Creation," *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 May 1974.

<sup>36</sup> Clark, *Image of the People*, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (London: Yale University Press, 1999).

<sup>39</sup> Clark, *Picasso and Truth: From Cubism to Guernica* (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 240.

Hundreds of thousands of items comprising Picasso's personal archives were donated by his heirs to the French State in 1978 to be pre-classified before becoming publicly available in 1992.<sup>40</sup> These documents allowed for a richer basis of research for Picasso scholars of the post-Communist era who have turned back to Picasso's political paintings and tried to bridge the gap that separated Picasso the Modernist from Picasso the Communist. The groundbreaking 2010 exhibition catalogue that accompanied Tate Liverpool's *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* show—edited by art historians Lynda Morris and then-director of the Tate Christoph Grunenberg—comprises a collection of essays that examine Picasso as a politically engaged artist.<sup>41</sup> Morris and Grunenberg placed key Picasso post-war works in their historical context with support from archival documents found in the *Musée national Picasso-Paris* that revealed Picasso's political activities. *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* successfully juxtaposes archival documents alongside artworks in a way that helps readers comprehend how Picasso used his art to contribute to the PCF and the peace movement. However, there is much more information in the Picasso Archives of the *Musée national Picasso-Paris* (AMNPP) that remains absent from this publication.

Gertje Utley is responsible for the most comprehensive history of Picasso during his politicised period called *Picasso: the Communist Years* (2000), which was based on her 1997 doctoral thesis.<sup>42</sup> This publication is thoroughly researched and includes interviews with Picasso's surviving colleagues, friends, and various PCF members as well as pertinent information gathered from the AMNPP. By placing the study of Picasso's art and commitment within the context of the political climate of the period in which he lived, Utley attempted to examine the depth of Picasso's political commitment, his motives in joining the Party, and his contributions as a comrade. She concluded that Picasso, though always an artist first, understood that his art played an important role in fostering and strengthening political beliefs, and therefore he could best demonstrate his political commitment through his oeuvre.<sup>43</sup> She also discussed select Picasso paintings and extracted the political, Leftist<sup>44</sup>, and anti-war elements to show the influence of his politics on his art. Utley's contribution to the

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<sup>40</sup> "The Collection," Musée national Picasso-Paris. Accessed: 3 January 2018.

<http://www.museepicassoparis.fr/en/the-collection/>

<sup>41</sup> Christoph Grunenberg and Lynda Morris, eds., *Picasso Peace and Freedom* (London: Tate Publishing, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Gertje Utley, "Picasso and the *Parti de la Renaissance Française*: The Artist as a Communist, 1944-1953," Ph.D. diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1997.

<sup>43</sup> André Malraux, trans. June and Jacques Guicharnaud, *Picasso's Mask* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), p. 13 and Brassai, *Conversations avec Picasso* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 223 in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 216.

<sup>44</sup> Any mention of the Left, Leftist, or the Left wing in this thesis refers to those who strongly support socialist values, the struggles of the working classes, and the pursuit of an egalitarian society. When speaking specifically of Leftists in twentieth-century Europe, I am referring to members of the official Communist or Socialist parties or those who sympathised with the values those parties represented. It is important to note that this label is being used despite the substantial disagreement among Leftists over how to achieve common goals.

scholarship cannot be overstated. However, *Picasso: the Communist Years* is not without flaws. The most disconcerting aspect of Utley's work is her blatant distaste for Communism. Utley described the Communist Party as an "oppressive system that did not tolerate any subversion against it, or any critique or even questioning of its actions and motives"<sup>45</sup> and she wonders how Picasso could have joined "the most repressive of political organizations, whose authoritarian hold on its artistic followers all but obliterated the freedom of the creative mind".<sup>46</sup> With these statements, Utley fails to recognise the autonomy of the PCF from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and acknowledge that the PCF operated independently within the political climate of France. Utley's use of the words "authoritarian" and "repressive" to describe the Party conflates the entire Communist movement with the coercion of Stalinism.

Like the partisan accounts from Picasso's comrades who championed the artistic expression of his Left-wing values, scholars who hold anti-Communist views are just as likely to hold biases in their analysis of Picasso's ideology. Another misstep in Utley's work was her failure to address whether certain Picasso canvases created during his Communist years was his attempt at offering an alternative to Socialist Realism but with a similar ideological message.<sup>47</sup> Picasso even remarked that his work was Socialist Realist, but it was never acknowledged as such by the Communists. Utley quotes this observation, but fails to elaborate despite its importance for noting Picasso's attempt at an alternative form of Leftist aesthetics.<sup>48</sup> Utley's art history background is also problematic at times. She describes *Massacre en Corée*<sup>49</sup> (1951) as a disappointment because "Picasso, in emphasizing the emotional content, does not seem to find in Modernism the appropriate language to express it."<sup>50</sup> When looking at Picasso's politics, the desire to comment on its qualitative merits or defects seems less urgent than understanding its political impact. Picasso's efforts to relate to the Party through his artwork—even though it was not in the Party-approved style—cannot be dismissed purely because of the perceived aesthetic qualities.

While Morris, Grunenberg, and Utley made significant contributions to the scholarship by questioning Picasso's political commitment, there is more to be discovered and different approaches

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<sup>45</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 216.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> When I refer to Socialist Realism in this thesis, I am speaking of the official cultural policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. During the Soviet Writers' Congress held in Moscow in 1934, Andrei Zhdanov called for realist and optimistic depictions that would "contribute to the building of a Communist society". In 1946, the policy was formalised in a doctrine named after Zhdanov—who was then a secretary within the Party—and it informed Soviet cultural policy until Stalin's death. Emma Barker, "Life in Paris in the 1930s," in Paul Wood, ed., *Varieties of Modernism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Roberto Otero, *Forever Picasso: An Intimate Look at His Last Years* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), p. 184 quoted in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 206.

<sup>49</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Massacre en Corée*, 1951, oil on plywood, Musée Picasso, Paris.

<sup>50</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 151.

to be taken in order to further explore the topic. In 2013, Jonathan Harris along with film and architecture specialist Richard Koeck edited a series of essays entitled *Picasso and the Politics of Visual Representation: War and Peace in the Era of the Cold War and Since*. Harris's background as a Left-wing art historian and the recent publication date makes this book one of the most relevant and closest related bodies of work to my own. In the first few chapters, Harris identifies two types of attitudes held by scholars regarding Picasso's political beliefs: he explains how the art historiography has generally ignored or attacked the artworks and statements Picasso made during his most politicised period, which sometimes meant that they either condemned the artist for his Communist affiliations or that they considered his art compromised due to his politics.<sup>51</sup> Alternatively, Harris also describes how those who are hostile towards Communism but who also want to defend Picasso's art after 1944 attempt to instead discredit his PCF membership by describing it as "the 'naïve' and 'foolish' gesture of an unworldly childish genius."<sup>52</sup> Harris and Koeck go on to explore a variety of concepts of which I will provide a more in-depth examination in this dissertation. For example, they discuss top American and European art institutions and dealers who had stakes in Picasso's art and were concerned that if Picasso's status fell because of his political activities then the profit to be made from his artwork would also decline.<sup>53</sup> This concern within the art world could very well have influenced art critics and historians to disparage Picasso's political dedication as merely a charade in order to prevent the devaluing of his art as a commodity. In another essay, Picasso's *Massacre en Corée* is described as Picasso's attempt to create a painting with a universal meaning without losing the importance of the specific historical event depicted within the canvas. Author Josie Lopez explains that Picasso refused to define realism as narrowly as the Party had, and he attempted to engage with realism in a different way in order to show that an anti-war message could still be understood.<sup>54</sup> David Craven examines anti-colonialism during the Cold War and explains why Picasso remained in the PCF when many others abandoned their Party card.<sup>55</sup> Harris and Koeck's publication tackles various subjects that all consider the misinterpretation of Picasso's political affiliations throughout the historiography and use sources that are similar to my own. However, my research goes beyond this: I not only use social historical analytical methods to explore Picasso's politics in

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<sup>51</sup> Harris, "Introduction: Picasso as a Sign of Class Struggle," in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19. It is essential to note that another attitude was prominent during Picasso's time in the PCF: these were hardline Communists who deemed Picasso's dedication to the Party as superficial because his art that did not adhere to the Socialist Realist style set forth by the Soviets. This includes Communists such as politician Auguste Lecoq and Socialist Realist André Fougeron. For example, André Fougeron wrote that the printing of Picasso's 1953 Stalin portrait in *Les Lettres Françaises* encouraged a sterile form of aesthetics. I will discuss this more in Chapter Two. André Fougeron, "Sur un portrait de Staline," *Les Lettres Françaises*, 26 March 1953, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup> Harris, "Introduction: Picasso as a Sign of Class Struggle," in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 10.

<sup>54</sup> Josie Lopez, "Picasso and the Forgotten War," in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 152.

<sup>55</sup> David Craven, "When Picasso was Feared by the US Government," in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 116.

terms of his own biography, but I am also determining the importance of public perception in creating the image of the artist as political. I analyse how the reputation Picasso built and the political choices he made were used by various individuals—in different contexts—to help further their own goals.

### **My Methodology**

The depth of Picasso's political engagement has always been controversial, and the question "What did Picasso stand for?" is one that has always been difficult to approach. This is primarily because of a problem concerning sources. The artist rarely explained his convictions and intentions to friends or during interviews. Picasso's statements changed frequently throughout his life as he was constantly reinterpreting his work and its implications. To discredit Picasso's politically inflected comments as simply tokenistic or as a means of attracting publicity is to ignore the combined meaning of his actions in a range of situations. So while particular sound bites must be considered with some scepticism, it does not mean that Picasso's recorded comments should be entirely mistrusted—especially when compared alongside other expressions of his political engagement. Picasso was active in the peace movement, but he also made politically charged comments about wars as they happened. Picasso perhaps would have preferred the civil war to never have occurred in Spain, but he took the side of the Republicans who were fighting a war of self-defence when battle became inevitable. He lived in France during World War II and he supported the Resistance. Picasso also lent support to the Algerians during their war of independence against France. These various struggles with which Picasso engaged need to be considered inter-related when evaluating his political commitment.

There are enough public statements, letters, documented conversations, artworks, and examples of Picasso's political participation to form a strong foundation for the argument that he was consistently engaged politically after 1944. His political affiliation was not always evident and only appeared episodically across his work; however, this does not mean it did not exist nor does it diminish the impact certain artworks had upon audiences. When discussing Picasso's politics, my methods will be attuned to the social history of art by discussing his artwork alongside the historical context of the time. While Morris, Grunenberg, Harris, and Koeck also use social historical methods, I explore Picasso's politics and how they were used in the Cold War even further by looking at informal sites of political influence and not just the familiar interplay with states and cultural institutions. Although the social history of art is entirely compatible with a subject-centred methodology, I intend to move beyond biography and think of Picasso's political commitment in a host of different spaces and from the perspectives of new individuals. There is an absence of discussion within the existing literature regarding the public's reaction to Picasso's politically

inspired artworks and his PCF membership. The depth of an individual's political commitment cannot be ascertained purely with reference to presumed sincerity of belief. Rather, we need to consider how this commitment was perceived and renewed through the perceptions and demands of others. It is necessary to feature a broader range of people and communities to understand the construction of the political image of Picasso and the efficacy of this image as a cultural weapon throughout the Cold War. It is important to decipher the values Picasso represented; however, it is also essential to uncover outside perceptions of the artist. The following chapters will analyse these diverse perspectives in an attempt to further evaluate the nature of Picasso's politics. I would like to add to the existing scholarship by exploring the importance of public perception and the reception to Picasso in order to establish a more complete understanding of his political image and message.

For the most part, the Picasso literature is divided into two genres. The first is biographies that include all aspects of Picasso's life (art, politics, family, colleagues, war, etc.) with little depth in the treatment of the individual topics. John Richardson's multi-volume biography is thus far the only successful attempt at this because of its multi-part structure. The other genre is one that has emerged in the scholarship within the past twenty years. These are more tightly focused studies of particular aspects of Picasso's life and oeuvre, such as Yve-Alain Bois's work on the relationship between Matisse and Picasso or Charles Palermo's new take on Picasso's art and Guillaume Apollinaire's writings. However, some of these publications offer an almost overly narrow perspective.<sup>56</sup> Picasso's political feelings were inseparable from his broader human sympathies; thus, cannot be compartmentalised. It is therefore important when looking at Picasso's politics to not limit the scope of research.

It is easy to acknowledge that gaps exist in the current literature, but what can be done to fill in those gaps? I have developed my argument by employing a vast array of secondary sources and an invaluable collection of primary resources. I spent considerable time in Paris conducting research in the archives of the state-run *Musée national Picasso-Paris*, which first opened its doors in 1985. It was not until 1992 that Picasso's personal archives—which number 200,000 items—entered the national collection.<sup>57</sup> Although it had been shut for renovations since 2009, the AMNPP lent important archival material to Tate Liverpool for the *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* exhibition. The Museum reopened its doors in October 2014; however, the archives were still being renovated. Fortunately, in early 2015 I was granted special permission to spend seven months analysing forty boxes of Picasso's political correspondence and other documentation while the re-organisation of the Picasso

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<sup>56</sup> Yve-Alain Bois, *Matisse and Picasso* (Paris: Flammarion, 2001) and Charles Palermo, *Modernism and Authority: Picasso and His Milieu Around 1900* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015).

<sup>57</sup> "The Collection," Musée national Picasso-Paris. Accessed: 3 January 2018.  
<http://www.museepicassoparis.fr/en/the-collection/>

Archives was still in progress. There are few primary sources outside of the AMNPP that document the extent and reach of Picasso's political affiliations and peace commitments. After examining the correspondence in the AMNPP, I was able to offer a fresh framework for interpreting Picasso's politics in the following chapters. The countless letters he received help us understand Picasso's commitment to Communist causes, but they also allow us to analyse the opinions of Picasso's admirers who considered him a cultural influence. Both his actions and the perceptions of those who interpreted said actions help us move beyond Picasso's personal sincerity and towards a broader understanding of Picasso as a politically engaged artist. I have specifically chosen letters from the AMNPP that illustrate the depth of Picasso's political involvement and the respect given to him by various political figures worldwide because of his commitment to Communist and humanitarian causes. These letters were written by a multitude of charitable organisations and political groups thanking Picasso for his participation in their plight, or because they include messages acknowledging Picasso's donations of artwork, time, or money to their group. Uteley also uses letters found in the Picasso Archives in *The Communist Years*; however, her objective differs from mine. I use a more diverse sample of letters to demonstrate the level of Picasso's political engagement and his involvement in issues related to disenfranchised Communists. In addition, I use a selection of letters to illustrate Picasso's standing and symbolic importance within a global network of activists and humanitarians. My aim is to explain the expectations others held of Picasso and the way his reputation, creativity, and financial generosity were counted on to support their political organisations.

The research I conducted over the span of five weeks at the Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Archives of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Archives of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution in New York City also contributed immensely to this study—particularly to Chapter Four. The letters and exhibition files within these archives allowed me to construct a narrative that explains how modern art and Picasso were depoliticised in order to become an acceptable and integral part of the American art market during the Cold War. I have used both primary and secondary sources to put politics back into the history of Picasso, support the trends in the political Picasso scholarship, and build on the work of institutions like Tate Liverpool. When read together, all four chapters outline the diverse political uses and depoliticising strategies deployed by Picasso, his admirers, his dealers, and various institutions, which illustrates the discrepancy in his political significance depending on context, place, audience, and intentions.

## Before Guernica

The bulk of my work on Picasso begins in 1937 with the Paris International Exposition and the painting of *Guernica*<sup>58</sup> (1937). While Picasso's political engagement is thought to have started with the Spanish Civil War, arguments have been made that Picasso's political ties began with an early interest in anarchism.<sup>59</sup> This is not to say that Picasso was a political anarchist, but that his formative years were spent in an environment where anarchism was widespread. It is therefore important that I map out Picasso's early interest in politics.

The overthrow of Queen Isabella II in 1868 and the political and social turbulence that followed allowed a short-lived Federal Republicanism and anarchism to flourish in Spain.<sup>60</sup> Soon factions arose. By the 1880s, anarcho-communism had become popular among the intellectuals. Literary events such as the *Primer Certamen Socialista* began in 1885 and stimulated public discourse about the value of Communism and collectivism, which had a weak tradition in Spain.<sup>61</sup> These events gave a platform to a younger generation of intellectual anarchists whose writings expanded anarchist thinking and led to the growth of the intellectual anarchist community.<sup>62</sup> When Picasso's family moved to Barcelona from Málaga in 1895, anarchism was popular among dissatisfied segments of the population as working conditions deteriorated and unemployment increased. Spanish intellectuals became more critical of their government and the Catholic Church. Catalan poet and journalist Joan Maragall wrote in 1894: "Anarchism is in the air. Everyone talks about it—in periodicals, journals, books, and conversations."<sup>63</sup> This dissatisfaction became solidified when the economy collapsed after Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War of 1898. Anarchism was important in the development of Barcelona's intellectual climate, especially in the 1890s.<sup>64</sup> During those years, Picasso frequented *Els Quatre Gats* café along with many *modernistes* and intellectual anarchist sympathisers.<sup>65</sup> In 1900, he signed a manifesto published on the front page of the newspaper *La Publicidad* that demanded the release of political prisoners held since 1898 and amnesty for those in exile.<sup>66</sup> After moving to Madrid

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<sup>58</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid.

<sup>59</sup> Donald Drew Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the Arts, Western Europe: A Cultural History from the French Revolution to 1968* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 218, 288; Patricia Leighton, *Re-ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism 1897–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); Uteley, *Communist Years*, p. 11; Berger, *Success and Failure*, p. 22.

<sup>60</sup> George R. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), p. 5.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Marilyn McCully and Michael Raeburn, "Picasso's Politics in Barcelona," *The Art Bulletin* 69, no. 1 (1987): p. 133.

<sup>64</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, vol. 1: 1881–1906* (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 61.

<sup>65</sup> Patricia Leighton, "Picasso's Politics in Barcelona," *The Art Bulletin* 69, no. 1 (1987): p. 135.

<sup>66</sup> Leighton, *Re-ordering the Universe*, p. 19.

in 1901, Picasso produced and edited the short-lived journal *Arte Joven* in which literary anarchism and sympathy for the poor flourished.<sup>67</sup>

Art historian Patricia Leighton has led the charge in re-considering Picasso's anarchist beginnings. In her 1989 volume entitled *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism, 1897–1914*, she argued that from the beginning of his artistic career, Picasso was drawn to subjects that were implicitly political: images of marginalised members of urban society in the Blue Period (1901–04); newspaper clippings used in Picasso's *papier collés* whose political context may have sparked debate among his peers; and Cubist artworks of cafés reminiscent of *Els Quatre Gats* where intellectuals would gather and exchange ideas.<sup>68</sup> These anarchist themes informed Picasso's art, and the political and social climate may have shaped Picasso's early views and informed his political sympathies for the rest of his life. Upon moving to Paris in 1904, Picasso continued to move in artistic anarchist circles and became influenced by friends such as Guillaume Apollinaire, André Salmon, and Alfred Jarry.<sup>69</sup> Picasso's anarchist involvement in Spain was widely known and solidified, which convinced the French authorities to monitor his movements immediately after his relocation to Paris.<sup>70</sup> Leighton suggested that more than half of the newspapers used in Picasso's Cubist *papier collés* between 1912 and 1914 contained political subject matter pertaining to the political state of Europe and the Balkan Wars.<sup>71</sup> For example, in *Guitare, feuille de musique, et verre*<sup>72</sup> (1912), Picasso pasted the headline of a newspaper that read "La bataille s'est engagé[e]."<sup>73</sup> In *Verre et bouteille de Suze*<sup>74</sup> (1912), Picasso incorporated many pieces of newsprint with articles pertaining to military strategy and movements in the Balkans, descriptions of war victims, accounts of the cholera epidemic among soldiers, and a mass anarchist/pacifist meeting including quotes from the speakers.<sup>75</sup> Much of the newsprint Picasso used in his *papier collés* reflected the problems in Europe leading up to the First World War.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 11; Egbert, *Social Radicalism*, p. 324.

<sup>68</sup> Leighton, *Re-ordering the Universe*, p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Richardson, "How Political was Picasso?", p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Leighton, *Re-ordering the Universe*, p. 121. This is also discussed in Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Picasso Papers* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), pp. 40–45.

<sup>72</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Guitare, feuille de musique, et verre*, 1912, cut-and-pasted wallpaper, newspaper, sheet music, coloured paper, paper, and hand-painted faux bois paper, charcoal, and gouache on paperboard, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX.

<sup>73</sup> Peter Read, *Picasso and Apollinaire: The Persistence of Memory* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), p. 86.

<sup>74</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Verre et bouteille de Suze*, 1912, pasted papers, charcoal, gouache, Mildred Lane Kemper Museum of Art, St. Louis, MO.

<sup>75</sup> Leighton, *Re-ordering the Universe*, p. 126.

<sup>76</sup> Robert Rosenblum was the first to ask if Picasso and other Cubists could have truly picked newspaper clippings for their collages with complete indifference to their potential meanings or values. Rosenblum, "Picasso and the Typography of Cubism," in John Golding and Roland Penrose, eds., *Picasso, 1881–1973* (New York: Portland House, 1988), p. 49.



Figure 1.1 – *Verre et bouteille de Suze*

In *Social Radicalism and the Arts, Western Europe: A Cultural History from the French Revolution to 1968*, art historian Donald Drew Egbert explained that anarchism attracted artists in both Europe and America because the highly individualistic, anti-official, and artistically revolutionary nature of a large portion of avant-garde art since the late eighteenth century fitted well with the individualism, experimentalism, and social justice invoked by anarchism.<sup>77</sup> Richard Sonn remarked that for many artists, anarchism rather than socialism was the only way to engage politically while retaining artistic freedom.<sup>78</sup> It was as much a political movement as it was a cultural rebellion.<sup>79</sup> When anarcho-communism became less popular, the switch to the official Communist Party for such artists could have seemed quite natural because the Party represented comparable ideals.<sup>80</sup> In the late 1880s and early 1890s, Picasso surrounded himself with artists who ran in anarchist circles. Similarly, many of the Surrealists Picasso fraternised with in the 1920s—André Breton, Paul Éluard, Louis Aragon—became members of the PCF. Picasso's experiences, the artistic circles in which he became involved, and the political landscapes of the time need to be acknowledged as potentially influencing his art and his political attitudes—from his artistic beginnings until his last brushstroke. Picasso's early years in anarchist Spain and his later years as a PCF member are the periods that have been most neglected within the scholarship. As a result, there is less scholarly work concerning these two politicised periods of his life.

Picasso's political convictions appeared to subside during the First World War until the 1930s. Many French and Italian artists—including Picasso—became drawn to the styles of

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<sup>77</sup> Egbert, *Social Radicalism*, p. 45.

<sup>78</sup> Richard D. Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp. 141, 147.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Egbert, *Social Radicalism*, p. 46. This is in spite of the fact that historically, anarchists and communists have been at odds.

Naturalism and Classicism during those years. This was considered a “return to order” after living through the trauma of the war.<sup>81</sup> For Picasso, the experience of war could have propelled him away from politics and towards classics and universals. Then in July 1936, a military coup erupted in Picasso’s homeland. Spanish Nationalists and conservative groups rebelled against the Left-wing Republican government and their socialist, anarchist, and Communist supporters in a conflict that would last almost three years. By October, General Francisco Franco established control over the insurgency. The Spanish Civil War ignited a spark within Picasso that led to an outpouring of work that would be “the first time that Picasso had taken a public stand on world events” according to William Lieberman.<sup>82</sup> This was in specific reference to Picasso’s comic strip-style etchings entitled *Songe et Mensonge de Franco*<sup>83</sup> (1937). Utley proclaimed it was Picasso’s “most obvious political work”.<sup>84</sup> Daix remarked that with *Songe et Mensonge*, Picasso had turned engraving into a “political denunciation”.<sup>85</sup> Journalist, Picasso biographer, and art critic Pierre Cabanne commented that in Picasso’s etchings “Goya’s outcry had found its echo”—linking Picasso to an old master<sup>86</sup> and the Spanish tradition.<sup>87</sup> Picasso created two plates consisting of nine sections each, with the first fourteen dated January 1937 and the remaining four produced on June 1937—after the bombing and Picasso’s creation of *Guernica*.<sup>88</sup> The last three frames related directly to the studies for *Guernica*.<sup>89</sup> Accordingly, the first fourteen frames illustrated Picasso’s opinions of Franco—he was represented as a “hairy monster with threatening fangs, soft flesh, wearing the Requeté<sup>90</sup> cap as he faced the Spanish people, embodied in a fuming bull”.<sup>91</sup> In a 1945 interview, Picasso explained that the bull

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<sup>81</sup> Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), p. ix; Deborah Wye and Diana Stoll, eds., *A Picasso Portfolio: Prints from the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2010), p. 36.

<sup>82</sup> Lieberman was MoMA’s Director of Prints at the time of the quote. William S. Lieberman, “Picasso: His Graphic Art,” the Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art, vol. XIX, no. 2 (Winter 1952): p. 6, MoMA exhibition records – 501.1, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>83</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Songe et Mensonge de Franco* (Plates I and II), 1937, etching, sugar-lift aquatint, and scraper on copper on paper, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, San Francisco, CA.

<sup>84</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 18.

<sup>85</sup> Daix, *Life and Art*, p. 248.

<sup>86</sup> The term “old master” refers to artists of note between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries.

<sup>87</sup> Pierre Cabanne, trans. Harold J. Salemson, *Pablo Picasso: His Life and Times* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1977), p. 298. Spanish artist Francisco Goya is known for his political artworks, such as *The Disasters of War* series. It is said to be a condemnation of war by using the specific example of the Spanish insurrection against the French puppet king Joseph Bonaparte, which evolved into the Peninsular War of 1808–14. Francisco José de Goya and Philip Hofer, *The Disasters of War* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1967), p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> Lieberman, “Picasso: His Graphic Art,” p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> “*Dream and Lie of Franco II*,” the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accessed: 15 January 2018.

<https://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/336519>

<sup>90</sup> The Requetés were a militia who fought on the side of the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War.

<sup>91</sup> Cabanne, *Life and Art*, p. 298.

was representative of “brutality and darkness”.<sup>92</sup> The etchings, along with an accompanying poem,<sup>93</sup> were a direct attack on the Nationalist general. The remaining frames reflected the subject matter of *Guernica*—crying women and children facing devastating conditions.<sup>94</sup> With *Songe et Mensonge*, Picasso introduced particular imagery that would become the basis of *Guernica* months later. The years leading up to *Guernica*’s creation in 1937 indicate that Picasso’s interest in politics had been developing for a large part of his life.



Figure 1.2 – *Songe et Mensonge de Franco*, Plates I and II (1937)

### **Thesis Structure and Organisation**

This is the point in history where I have chosen to begin my analysis of Picasso’s relationship with politics and peace: in the year 1937 with the Spanish Civil War and the creation of *Guernica*. I have chosen 1937 as the starting point because the majority of Picasso’s political activities occurred in the following years, including both his membership to the Communist Party and his politicised form of philanthropy. This thesis has been organised both chronologically and thematically depending on the chapter. In Chapter One I ask how Picasso’s experiences and interactions led him to become politically engaged and ultimately join the PCF. To answer this, I trace the historical events from the Spanish Civil War until the 1944 Liberation of Paris and examine Picasso’s political contributions between 1937 and 1946. This was a period of time when the PCF’s intellectuals had a strong connection with the Party and its ideals. I explore Picasso’s Party membership and what that

<sup>92</sup> Jerome Seckler, “Picasso Explains,” *New Masses*, 13 March 1945 cited in Dore Ashton, ed., *Picasso on Art: A Selection of Views* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), p. 137.

<sup>93</sup> The last paragraph of Picasso’s poem reads as follows: “... cries of children cries of women cries of birds cries of flowers cries of timbers and of stones cries of bricks cries of furniture of beds of chairs of curtain or pots of cats and of papers cries of odours which claw at one another cries of smoke pricking the shoulder of the cries that stew in the cauldron and of the rain of birds that inundates the sea which gnaws the bone and breaks its teeth biting the cotton wool that the sun mops up from the plate which the purse and the pocket hide in the print that the foot leaves in the rock.” Translated from the Spanish and cited in Russell Martin, *Picasso’s War: The Destruction of Guernica, and the Masterpiece That Changed the World* (Tucson, AZ: Hol Art Books, 2012), p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> This will be explored further in Chapter One.

membership meant to him and other intellectuals by investigating the methods used to express their attachment to the Communist cause. By emphasising the physical distance of the PCF from Moscow and its formal distinction from the Stalinist CPSU, I clarify how Picasso could embrace the politics of Communism, despite his unwillingness to bow to the Soviet-approved style of Socialist Realism in his work. I also consider Picasso's artistic engagement with Leftist ideals during these years by analysing two Picasso paintings that were political in nature.

While Chapter One highlights Picasso's desire to stand alongside like-minded individuals and participate in a political organisation as a means of defeating a common enemy in fascism, Chapter Two instead asks how Picasso's engagement with the Party changed against the onset of the Cold War. I will answer this question in a variety of ways: works of art created by Picasso between 1951 and 1961 will be studied alongside the historic events of the time as a way of establishing his shifting engagement with political issues. I also examine Picasso's relationship with the Party-supported commitment for world peace. Scholars such as Richardson have maintained that Picasso was a Communist "in name only" after 1956, which was also a time period when Party members began isolating themselves from the global Communist movement and even abandoned their membership amidst a rise of controversies surrounding the Party.<sup>95</sup> Rather than following the same path as some comrades, Picasso became a supporter of the PCF-backed World Peace Movement (WPM). Although Picasso appeared to separate himself from Party politics in the 1950s, he instead pursued political causes in a different key. Picasso chose to support elements of the Party that united rather than alienated its members, he continued to generate pieces of art that supported his politics, he participated in the WPM, and he mobilised alongside fellow intellectuals in support of political issues of the era such as anti-colonialism and the ban of biological weapons.

The compositions I have analysed in Chapters One and Two represent a small fragment of Picasso's immense catalogue. Some canvases are more known than others—as is the case with *Guernica*. However, I haven chosen specific pieces that illustrate the times Picasso engaged politically through his craft and how his art helped him participate in the cultural Cold War. These works were selected based on Picasso's stated intentions during their creation, because the artist and his critics acknowledged their political content, and due to the contexts of their exhibition, display, and sale. I offer no comment on the qualitative features of these artworks; however, I am eager to document what those qualities signified to a wide range of individuals at specific moments. I will be intertwining analyses of the artworks with examinations of the political environments at the time of their creation.

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<sup>95</sup> Richardson, "How Political was Picasso?", p. 3.

Chapters One and Two interweave a history of the artist, his work, and his political struggles within the context of the time in an effort to explain how he chose to express his commitment to the PCF. Chapters Three and Four instead draw on archival research and examine Picasso's public perception and brand.<sup>96</sup> Chapter Three focuses on my analysis of documents found in the AMNPP and the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*. The political correspondence reveals how Picasso's admirers, comrades, and colleagues understood the artist's commitment to political causes. The letters also expose the amount of artwork and money Picasso donated to lesser-known political and charitable organisations until his death. A close examination of the files uncovers the number of Communist and humanitarian groups to which Picasso belonged and his involvement with political campaigns in support of persecuted and mistreated comrades around the world. The multitude of boxes within the AMNPP not only provides proof of Picasso's continual philanthropic contributions and engagement with the Party, they also illustrate his various international identities: Picasso the Communist, Picasso the peace advocate, and Picasso the celebrity. The correspondence explains how Picasso became known as a representative of various political movements. The sincerity of Picasso's engagement with the PCF and the Party's associated causes and charities cannot be easily ascertained; therefore these perceptions of Picasso by outsiders are as valuable in the study of the artist as the reality of his commitment. The public's reception to Picasso helps us form a more complete picture of Picasso's politics and where it was seen to be most evident and effective.

Finally, Chapter Four examines how Picasso and his artworks were utilised during the cultural Cold War. Specifically, I will look at how American art institutions chose to promote Picasso and Modernism after MoMA's opening in 1929. The chapter is based on archival findings from MoMA's archives and the Archives of American Art. This is an extremely valuable facet of Picasso's life to study: I will reveal how his image, work, and reputation were adjusted by MoMA to accommodate the realities of post-WWII America. I describe how Picasso's oeuvre—despite his political affiliations—came to be accepted in the largely anti-Communist environment of the United States. While Chapter Three dealt with popular perceptions of Picasso, Chapter Four will study the contributions, strategies, and methods of Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and MoMA to create those perceptions and make Picasso's work and the work of all Modernists palatable to an American audience. This will be done through the deconstruction of the American art market and its art institutions. Exhibition catalogues, museum bulletins, and press releases by MoMA in addition to reviews from art critics will illustrate how Picasso was depoliticised and made into a brand that could be marketed towards American spectators during the Cold War. Barr's efforts as director demonstrate that while he recognised Picasso's politics, he also attempted to sever the connections between Modernism and

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<sup>96</sup> When I refer to Picasso's brand in this thesis, I am referring to a marketing tool used by American art institutions—specifically MoMA—that involved using various labels to encourage favourable opinions of the artist and his work in the overtly anti-Communist environment of post-WWII America.

Communism. By repeatedly categorising Picasso as original, as a genius, or as a Spanish master, Barr endeavoured to make Modernism acceptable for American observers. Picasso's politics go beyond his own motivations and sincerity: we must think about how his politics were constructed by others. There is no absolute way to determine a person's political engagement; therefore, I have explored Picasso's involvement with the PCF and politics both internally and externally. I will be broadening the scope of our understanding by utilising the multiple ways to determine someone's political affiliations. Chapter Four highlights the various groups who recognised Picasso as being a politically active artist, while at the same time his politics were being disguised by certain art institutions for their own benefit.

All four chapters deal with Picasso's political art, the depth and diversity of his political commitment, and how both were used as political weapons or retail commodities by the artist himself, the Communist community, the World Peace movement, and the art establishment to achieve their respective goals. I analyse the different audiences and global contexts involved. I also unveil the diverse political methods and depoliticising strategies deployed by the artist, the Communist Party, his fans, and cultural institutions, which highlights the discrepancy in the political significance of Picasso depending on place, time, audience, and personal objectives. I am not retelling the story of a prolific artist that has been written countless times before: I am unravelling the history and politics of a brand by looking at the connections between personal commitment, public perception, and consumption. I will be critically examining the social, cultural, and political factors that may have influenced Picasso's artwork, and I will explain how he used the PCF to further his goals for the creation of a new world order. However, I will also be showing that the power of Picasso's politics did not reside in his own choices but in how his reputation was enlisted or exploited by political groups and global cultural institutions. This is a story of Picasso's political commitment and how friends, comrades, critics, and fans have understood, negotiated, or even negated that commitment. I begin in 1937 at the height of the Spanish Civil War.

## Chapter One

### To the Fountain he Goes: the Road to the *Parti communiste français*, 1937–46

*So you see, more than any other “painter of reality”, Picasso reacts to what’s around him. Each of his works is a response to something he’s seen or felt, something that surprised and moved him.*<sup>1</sup> —Jacques Prévert

In 1930, Picasso made the following statement to Left-wing painter and art critic Felipe Cossío del Pomar regarding the apolitical nature of his art:

As far as I’m concerned, I’ll continue to be aesthetic, or if you prefer, purely cerebral. I’ll continue making art without preoccupying myself with the question of its influence, or if it “humanizes” our life, as you put it. If it contains a truth, my work will be useful without my express wish. If it doesn’t hold a truth, so much the worse. I will have lost my time. But I will never make art with the preconceived idea of serving the interests of the political, religious, or military art of a country.<sup>2</sup>

In stark contrast, upon joining the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) fourteen years later, Picasso made his intentions and motivations public in a statement to Pol Gaillard, which was published in October 1944 in the PCF-run newspaper *L’Humanité* and in a condensed form in the New York Marxist magazine *New Masses*:

My adhesion to the Communist Party is the logical outcome of my whole life. For I am glad to say that I have never considered painting simply as pleasure-giving art, a distraction; I have wanted, by drawing and by colour since those were my weapons, to penetrate always further forward into the consciousness of the world and of men, so that this understanding may liberate us further each day ... These years of terrible oppression have proved to me that I should struggle not only for my art but with my whole being.<sup>3</sup>

The differences between these statements are quite revealing. Which events convinced Picasso to change the direction and meaning of his artwork over such a short span of time? How was he once unwilling to place his art at the service of a nation but was then able to declare his work a weapon in the struggle against oppression? Why did Picasso choose the Communist Party as the vessel through which to express his views on politics, war, and peace? Did this new perspective mean he had to change his artwork to better serve his Party? Starting in 1937, I will trace Picasso’s path and explain how his experiences—beginning with the Spanish Civil War—propelled the artist to join the PCF.

The PCF preferred its artists to adopt the Party-approved style of Socialist Realism in their work; however, Picasso failed to embrace this aesthetic.<sup>4</sup> Even though the Party imposed some stylistic restraints upon its intellectuals, I will demonstrate how Picasso and other important artists created art without fear

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<sup>1</sup> Poet Prévert speaking to photographer Brassai at Picasso’s studio on 12 October 1943. Brassai, trans. Jane Marie Todd, *Conversations with Picasso* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Felipe Cossío del Pomar, *Con la Buscadores del Camino* (Madrid, 1932), p. 125 cited in Elizabeth Cowling, *Picasso: Style and Meaning* (London: Phaidon Press, 2002), p. 574.

<sup>3</sup> Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1953), p. 316.

of punishment or expulsion from the PCF. There is no evidence to suggest that Picasso was repressed as an artist. He was a valuable addition to the Party and was thus given a certain degree of artistic freedom. If Picasso wanted to produce artwork of which the Party would approve, it was his choice alone. Historians D.S. Bell and Byron Criddle have reminded us that the Party recruited the most members when it focused on being patriotic and reformist as opposed to secretarian and revolutionary.<sup>5</sup> This included during World War II when a considerable number of intellectuals became Communists, including Picasso. Shortly after the war, Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) director Alfred H. Barr, Jr. wrote that Picasso did not express his political views in his art and after his membership to the PCF he kept painting the way he always had, “without regard to political theories about art”.<sup>6</sup> However, in this chapter I will illustrate that Picasso adopted a universal visual language in his political artwork and his lack of adherence to Socialist Realism did not prevent some of his depictions from reflecting his humanitarian and political beliefs.

In this chapter, I will be looking at two examples of Picasso’s most politically charged art created between 1937 and 1945 and the political context surrounding their creation. Secondly, the Occupation of France during the Second World War will be analysed in order to understand Picasso’s development as a politically minded artist, which eventually led him to the PCF. Lastly, this chapter will explore Picasso’s Party membership and what that membership meant to him and other intellectuals by examining the methods they chose to express their dedication to Communist causes. In doing so, I hope to explain how Picasso went from 1930 when he was “making art without preoccupying himself with the question of its influence” to 1944 when he claimed to “struggle with his art and with his whole being”.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Conformity of Political Art: Picasso and his Oeuvre, 1937–46**

The ways in which Picasso used his art to express his political and humanitarian beliefs need to be carefully studied in an attempt to understand his intentions and goals. Through an analysis of select political works and their reception within a historical framework, a reoccurring problem will be easily identified. Picasso incorporated themes in his artwork such as victims of war, the preservation of civilisation, and the drive for peace. However, these motifs were not at the forefront of what the Party desired from its artists. Picasso saw the need for peace as both a personal and Party value. However, this was not enough to fulfil the role the PCF designated for its artists, which led to Party officials and members expressing their disappointment with Picasso’s artwork. I will develop this theory by examining *Guernica*<sup>8</sup> (1937) and *Le Charnier*<sup>9</sup> (1945). These are just two of the paintings within the oeuvre of a very prolific artist that help illustrate the moments when Picasso chose to engage with the PCF through his art. A 1985

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<sup>5</sup> D.S. Bell and Byron Criddle, *The French Communist Party in the Fifth Republic* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 33

<sup>6</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1975), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> See footnotes 2 and 3 for these citations.

<sup>8</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid.

<sup>9</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Le Charnier*, 1945, oil and charcoal on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

article written by art critic Dore Ashton entitled “Artists and Politics, Politics and Art” describes how in times of social upheaval, everyone—including artists—are affected. Ashton wrote that if we were to stop thinking in terms of politics and instead in terms of public events, and to stop thinking in terms of art and instead in terms of imagination, we could better understand the persistence and existence of what is called political art, protest art, or art of social conscience.<sup>10</sup> Has this confusion of meaning and definition that exists according to Ashton prevented many within the Picasso scholarship from seeing the political, the protest, and the social conscience in his art? Picasso once told friend, writer, and fellow Communist Ilya Ehrenburg, “They wanted to depict the world as they saw it. That does not appeal to me. I want to depict the world as I imagine it.”<sup>11</sup> If we are to relate Picasso to Ashton’s statement, the events that compelled him to create particular works of art and the use of imagination in creating them helped infuse Picasso’s canvases with political messages.

### **Guernica, the Spanish Civil War, and the 1937 World Expo**

Many intellectuals across Europe felt the impact of the Spanish Civil War, and Picasso was no exception. This would be the first time Picasso used his art to publicly support a Left-wing political party while condemning a military attack and the rival Right-wing faction responsible for it. Art historian Anthony Blunt wrote that the war brought the issue of fascism versus democracy to Europe and gave it the form of an armed conflict—the conflict was too near and potentially involved too many friends for even “ivory-tower” intellectuals to not choose a side.<sup>12</sup> In January 1937, the same month Picasso etched *Songe et Mensonge de Franco*<sup>13</sup> (1937), representatives approached Picasso from the Spanish Republican government. They asked Picasso to create a painting on a theme related to the civil war.<sup>14</sup> The artwork was intended to take up an entire wall of the official Spanish pavilion at the Paris Expo, which was slated to open its doors that coming June. The Republican delegates included the pavilion’s chief architect Josep Lluís Sert, poet and Director of Public Information for the Spanish embassy Juan Larrea, and one of the founders of Surrealism, poet, Communist, and Picasso’s friend Louis Aragon. Picasso agreed to the commissioned work; however, it took three months after this meeting for Picasso to even begin sketches for the pavilion.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps he was in need of inspiration. Picasso was an artist who used different artistic genres and forms of expression throughout his career—still life and portraiture for private clients most notably during the 1930s. He was then being asked to create for an intended political purpose and

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<sup>10</sup> Dore Ashton, “Artists and Politics, Politics and Art,” *Social Text*, no. 12 (1985): p. 76.

<sup>11</sup> Picasso quoted in Lynda Morris, “Picasso, Ilya Ehrenburg and the Soviet Union,” in Christoph Grunenberg and Lynda Morris, eds., *Picasso Peace and Freedom* (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), p. 55. This was Picasso’s response when asked by Ehrenburg about his love of Impressionism. The year of the quote is not given

<sup>12</sup> Anthony Blunt, *Picasso’s Guernica* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Songe et Mensonge de Franco* (plates I and II), 1937, etching, sugar-lift aquatint, and scraper on copper on paper, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, San Francisco, CA. *Songe et Mensonge* is discussed in greater detail in the Introduction.

<sup>14</sup> Dacia Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain: Cultural Heritage and Memory After Civil War* (Eastbourne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2001), p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> Gertje Utley, *Picasso: the Communist Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 21.

objective. When Picasso was first asked to contribute a canvas to the World's Fair, he told the Republican representatives that he was not sure he could create the sort of painting they wanted.<sup>16</sup> This was potentially because of the vast space allotted for Picasso's contribution, but more importantly, because the situation and setting suggested it be political. Before he even began, Picasso understood the potential implications if he were to produce a political canvas—and he was prepared. Picasso was internationally renowned and his artwork would attract attention, which made him a perfect artist for the Spanish to display at the World Fair.



Figure 2.1 – *Guernica* (1937)

The politics surrounding the Paris Expo were striking. In a collection of essays on the relationship between art and power, historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote that the exhibition was an event that brought all nations and the art approved by their respective governments into a public forum of confrontation.<sup>17</sup> That the 1930s saw the buildup of two opposing political systems made the enormous pavilions of the Nazis and the Soviets, facing each other on the right bank of the Seine, all the more symbolic. This was especially true for the Spanish, with the Nazis in support of the Nationalists led by General Franco and the Soviets backing the Republican government and their Basque, Catalan, Communist, socialist, and anarchist allies in the Spanish Civil War. If Picasso was waiting for inspiration, he finally received it. On 26 April 1937, ten months into the war, the ancient Basque town of Guernica was attacked by a squadron of Luftwaffe bombers of the Nazi Condor Legion and Italian planes with the intention of bombing and burning the city centre.<sup>18</sup> Four days later, Aragon published photos of the bombing in the Communist newspaper *Ce Soir*.<sup>19</sup> Picasso made his first sketches depicting the raid the next day, and he began its recreation on canvas on May 11 according to the first photographs taken by his lover Dora Maar, who chronicled its progression.<sup>20</sup> While painting the mural, Picasso made one of his first public political statements condemning Franco and

<sup>16</sup> T.J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth* (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 252.

<sup>17</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, "Foreword," in Dawn Ades et al., eds., *Art and Power: Europe Under the Dictators 1930–45* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1995), p. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Clark, *Picasso and Truth*, p. 240.

<sup>19</sup> Aragon was its director at the time. Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain*, p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

his military insurrection, which was published at the same time an exhibition in New York of Spanish Republican posters was being displayed:

The Spanish struggle is the fight of reaction against the people, against freedom. My whole life as an artist has been nothing more than a continuous struggle against reaction and the death of art. How could anybody think for a moment that I could be in agreement with reaction and death? When the rebellion began, the legally elected and democratic Republican government of Spain appointed me director of the Prado Museum, a post which I immediately accepted. In the panel on which I am working, which I shall call *Guernica*, and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death..."<sup>21</sup>

This statement was quite revealing. Picasso was named director of Madrid's *Museo Nacional del Prado* in September 1936—just two months after the war began—which suggested the Republic's respect for him even before *Guernica* had been painted.<sup>22</sup> Picasso took his duties seriously—he was responsible for the evacuation of the museum collection to Valencia that autumn after the Prado was hit by an aerial bombardment targeting a large section of Madrid, and two years later he financed the transport of artwork to Geneva for safekeeping.<sup>23</sup> Picasso used the word "reaction" to explain the Nationalists' actions in his statement. The freedom of art and the freedom of the people of Republican Spain caused a "reaction" from Franco, which in Picasso's eyes was leading to the "death of art". In contrast, the Republicans stood for art's survival. Picasso's actions were also reactive: he was using his art to respond to a political situation. Picasso was not just upholding strong political and humanitarian convictions with his creation of *Guernica*. The situation unfolding in Spain was intensely personal and visceral for him. With Franco's forces moving quickly through Spain, news of the damage was reaching Picasso in France from family and friends back home. For example, the Spanish Republic's cultural attaché in Paris José Bergamín had informed Picasso of the unfolding atrocities being committed in Spain in early January 1937—immediately before Picasso created *Songe et Mensonge de Franco*. His mother also wrote to him from Barcelona during this time.<sup>24</sup> Even while living in Paris, Picasso was confronted with the realities of the Spanish political situation. *Guernica* represented the Republican struggle and its political undertones could not be denied. With this mural, Picasso took a historical and military catastrophe and universalised it by depicting it as a destructive massacre of innocents. There was no blatant condemnation of *Guernica*'s perpetrators because pictorially the aggressors were not identified; however, the context in which it the painting was exhibited made their identities clear. The Republican government was responsible for the pavilion. There was no need to point fingers at the Nationalists responsible for the atrocity because their involvement was implied. The families and lives destroyed were the focus of Picasso's work. Those who could not speak for themselves were the ones in need of representation. And from that moment, the way in which Picasso used

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<sup>21</sup> Barr, *Fifty Years* (1975), p. 202.

<sup>22</sup> Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain*, p. 140.

<sup>23</sup> John Richardson, "How Political Was Picasso?", *New York Review of Books*, 25 November 2010, p. 1. Accessed: 19 November 2014. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/nov/25/how-political-was-picasso/>

<sup>24</sup> Amber Stitt, "Dissecting Picasso's Political Identity: Three Nude Paintings," *Journal of Art History* 4 (2009): p. 21.

his art to express his views towards war and politics began to take shape. This would not be the last time Picasso took a political event or tragedy and chose to depict it within his artwork. This decision to use his art to represent disenfranchised groups of people in the world would continue throughout WWII and after 1944 as a PCF member.

When constructing the Spanish pavilion, the Republicans' objectives were in line with Picasso's belief in the need to prevent the "death of art". "The strengthening and development of culture, like the problems of public education, today can occupy the Spanish government no less than the war itself," commented the Republic's ambassador to France.<sup>25</sup> The battle for cultural protection and control was expressed throughout the entire exposition, especially between the Soviets and Germans. An entire section of the Spanish pavilion was even devoted to the protection of artworks from the Prado.<sup>26</sup> One panel depicted a Nationalist air raid that was directed against the national museum. It portrayed a blueprint plan indicating the location of hits from incendiary and blast bombs on the museum on 16 November 1936 after flares had been dropped around it to mark the target.<sup>27</sup> Communist and Director of Fine Arts for Spain Josep Renau had written a comprehensive illustrated report on the steps taken by the government to prevent damage to the Spanish heritage during the war, which demonstrated the importance of protecting their national treasures.<sup>28</sup> He had also been responsible for removing and hiding art from the Prado so the works would be safe once the Nationalist bombings began. Fascism was destroying artwork both creatively and physically. The Spanish government had proven that they were thoroughly invested in preserving the art of the nation, which also reflected Picasso's desires and confirmed his decision to engage with and participate in the exposition. Aside from *Guernica*, Picasso contributed five sculptures to the pavilion, along with 1,000 copies of *Songe et Mensonge de Franco* and postcards with images of its eighteen frames, which were sold to raise money for the Spanish Refugee Relief fund.<sup>29</sup> A tourist exploring the Spanish pavilion made the following observation about *Guernica*: "Making no concessions to the dangerous tendency of parties of the Left to overrate the 'subject' and promote platitudes so long as these are 'on the right lines', for what is so special about the power of a beautiful work, if not the ability of certain forms to move the senses, and to bring intellectual and moral conviction."<sup>30</sup> Many of the artworks in the pavilion may not have been in a realist style, but their messages still remained clear. Art historian Elizabeth Cowling agreed that *Guernica*, like other Picasso paintings that were motivated by historical

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<sup>25</sup> Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo quoted in Fernando Martín Martín, *El pabellón español en la Exposición Universal de París en 1937* (Seville, ES, 1982), p. 37 cited in Marko Daniel, "Spain: Culture at War," in Ades et al., eds., *Art and Power*, p. 67.

<sup>26</sup> As director of the Prado, Picasso was also somewhat responsible for the art's protection. Cowling, *Style and Meaning*, p. 575.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel, "Spain: Culture at War," in Ades et al., eds., *Art and Power*, p. 68.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 66 and Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> Amessee Ozenfant, "Notes d'un touriste à l'exposition", *Cahiers d'art* 12 (1937): p. 242 ff, trans. John Willett, cited in John Willett, "Contemporary Voices," in Ades et al., eds., *Art and Power*, p. 117.

events, used “universal symbols and generic imagery” rather than specifically referring to an event.<sup>31</sup> Cowling maintained that by omitting any direct reference to a particular event, Picasso was able to preserve *Guernica* as a timeless painting that could be referenced if and when atrocities against humanity occurred in the future.<sup>32</sup> Picasso had not produced an easily recognisable narrative but instead substituted historical specificity for a universality that could “transcend a particular moment”.<sup>33</sup> The visual language of *Guernica* allowed it to remain relevant during the early 1940s with the advent of a world war.

Picasso was not the only internationally renowned modern artist to be featured in the pavilion. Joan Miró, Julio González, and Alexander Calder all helped further the Republic’s goal of presenting itself as a defender of the arts. At the pavilion’s groundbreaking on 26 February 1937, Spanish ambassador to France Luis Araquistáin gave a speech:

It seems that some wonder how Republican Spain can find the time and willpower to participate in this display of Culture and Labour while in the midst of war. It is this participation that distinguishes Republican Spain from the armed and belligerent faction that only had time for the destruction of human lives and values... it is precisely because of this that we wish to persevere and fight for intellectual and creative freedom, social justice, and prosperity.<sup>34</sup>

The Nationalists were labelled enemies of Spanish culture, while the Republicans hailed themselves as its defenders. This commitment is likely why artists such as Miró and Picasso accepted the commission and infused political meaning into their works. A speech by Araquistáin’s cultural attaché Max Aub addressed to the pavilion’s construction workers confirms that the organisers anticipated some opposition to the artistic contributions made by modern artists:

Picasso has represented here the tragedy of Guernica. It is possible that this art be accused of being too abstract or difficult for a pavilion like ours which seeks to be above all, and before everything else, popular manifestation ... but I am certain that with a little good will, everybody will perceive the rage, the desperation, and the terrible protest that this canvas signifies. Our time is that of realism, but each country perceives the real in a certain way ... That is why Goya and Picasso are realist painters even if they appear to other people as extravagant personalities...<sup>35</sup>

Aub understood the need for the pavilion’s art to be a form of “popular expression” and for each artwork to be universally understood. However, Aub also created his own version of “realism” and connected it to a national definition. Spanish master Francisco Goya and Picasso were linked in tradition as two Spanish artists who protested against war. For Republican Spain, they were “realists” as Aub described because

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<sup>31</sup> Cowling, *Style and Meaning*, p. 31.

<sup>32</sup> Cowling, “Competition and Collaboration: Picasso and the Old Masters,” in Cowling et al., eds., *Picasso: Challenging the Past* (London: National Gallery Company, 2009), p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> Kirsten H. Powell. “‘La Drôle de guerre’: Picasso’s ‘Femme nue se coiffant’ and the ‘Phony War’ in France,” *The Burlington Magazine* 138, no. 1117 (April 1996): p. 237.

<sup>34</sup> Speech by Luis Araquistáin on 26 February 1937 quoted in Mirian M. Basilio, *Visual Propaganda, Exhibitions, and the Spanish Civil War* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), p. 97.

<sup>35</sup> Max Aub, “Welcome to the Pavilion [1937 and 1967],” *Hablo Como Hombre* (Mexico, 1967), pp. 13–16, trans. Catherine B. Freedberg, in Ellen C. Oppler, ed., *Picasso’s Guernica* (New York: WW Norton and Company, 1988), p. 204.

they created art that showed the true nature of what was transpiring within their country. The preservation and protection of Spain's artistic treasures remained important to Picasso as an artist and as honorary Prado director. Moreover, this was also important to the Republicans—especially while the Nationalists seemed determined to destroy these artworks with military assaults. The correlation between those who cared about cultural protection and Leftist ideology had been established in Picasso's mind.<sup>36</sup>

A second statement by Picasso addressed to the American Artists' Congress was published in the *New York Times* in November of 1937 after *Guernica's* creation and unveiling: "It is my wish at this time to remind you that I have always believed and still believe, that artists who live and work with spiritual values cannot and should not remain indifferent to a conflict in which the highest values of humanity and civilization are at stake."<sup>37</sup> Picasso implied that he had always believed it necessary to put his artistic talents at the disposal of a worthy cause. As such, the Spanish Civil War was the first time he had felt the immediate need to do so, and perhaps it was the first international event that had jarred him enough to infuse politics into his artwork.

After its exhibition at the Paris World Fair, *Guernica* toured through England, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and the United States. Picasso was hesitant to confirm the painting's political message in public statements; however, he continued to highlight its condemnation of war. His only official position at that point was against the horrors of battle and massacre of the innocents. When MoMA first exhibited the grand mural in 1939, a panel was put up alongside the artwork that read "the mural expresses his [Picasso's] abhorrence of war and brutality."<sup>38</sup> This was a general statement about the tragedy of war rather than connecting *Guernica* to a specific political ideology. However, years after becoming a PCF member, Picasso told friend and poet Rafael Alberti "the truth of the matter is that by means of *Guernica* I have the pleasure of making a political statement every day in the middle of New York City. No one else can do that."<sup>39</sup> Picasso re-evaluated his past work. He came to see *Guernica* as a condemnation of war and brutality, but also as a mode of political engagement. Picasso's statement to Alberti indicated that *Guernica's* meaning had shifted since its creation in 1937 to its placement in MoMA. Instead of specifically aligning himself with a single political party, Picasso instead chose a more global message. The "abhorrence of war" Picasso had depicted in *Guernica* was influenced by the specific case unfolding in

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<sup>36</sup> It must be noted that the Nationalists also attacked the Republicans for destroying the cultural heritage of Spain, but this was in terms of the country's religious patrimony. Historian Mary Vincent asserted that during the Second Spanish Republic (1931–39), religion was to be confined to the private sphere while the Republic remained secular. Mary Vincent, *Spain, 1833–2002: People and State* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 122.

<sup>37</sup> Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1953), p. 283.

<sup>38</sup> MoMA, Department of Painting and Sculpture, Pablo Picasso: *Guernica* file [label/text panel] cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 24.

<sup>39</sup> Roberto Otero, *Forever Picasso: An Intimate Look at His Last Years* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1974), p. 119.

Spain at that time, but it was soon to become a universal symbol and a permanent part of his developing political consciousness.

There is no doubt of Picasso's humanitarian motivations when he agreed to paint the mural. Picasso created *Guernica* in honour of the civil war's victims and to demonstrate his support for Spain's Republican government. But as his painting toured the world and gained extensive exposure, the global political potential of *Guernica* grew. Picasso's feelings about the horrors of war and fascism were one and the same, and he was not alone. Roland Penrose wrote that those who truly appreciated *Guernica* were the intellectuals who saw it as a combination of their own negative sentiments concerning war and fascism, which had become synonymous.<sup>40</sup> T.J. Clark affirms that the new face of war was represented in *Guernica*: you cannot look for death in a specific place in the mural because death is both everywhere and nowhere.<sup>41</sup> It is the one work of art that the Picasso scholarship unanimously identifies as politically motivated.

### **Picasso and World War II: Art and Resistance in Occupied France**

After the Spanish Civil War revealed the devastating effects of fascism in Spain, living in Occupied France during the Second World War led Picasso to a new understanding of human struggles and the need to fight injustice through political and artistic means. Historian Robert Gildea explained that what seemed clear after the Liberation of Paris in 1944—right versus wrong, patriotic versus unpatriotic—was uncertain in wartime France. Family and community grew to take precedence over national loyalties because devotion to the country could have meant an allegiance to Vichy or Charles de Gaulle or even Moscow depending on your stance during the war.<sup>42</sup> Historian Richard Vinen wrote that life for the majority of the French during the war was miserable, and even those who did not attract direct hostility from Vichy or the Germans suffered from food shortages and the threat of animosity.<sup>43</sup> Picasso remained in Paris for the majority of the war. He had originally spent a year in Royan on France's Atlantic coast in order to escape the threat of German attacks before returning to Paris after the armistice and the start of the Occupation. Picasso was wealthy, had contacts in many countries, had established himself internationally as an anti-fascist since painting *Guernica*, and could have lived abroad until it was safe to return to France. Instead, he chose to remain in a city that was occupied by an invading army that did not approve of his work. Historian Julian Jackson explained that moving abroad was a real possibility for intellectuals who had foreign contacts, especially with the help of American associations that provided grants and visa assistance.<sup>44</sup> Picasso explained to his lover Françoise Gilot his rationale for remaining in Paris: "Oh, I am not

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<sup>40</sup> Penrose, *His Life and Work* (1953), p. 277.

<sup>41</sup> Clark, *Picasso and Truth*, pp. 243–45, 250.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: In Search of the German Occupation 1940–1945* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2002) pp. 16–17, 108.

<sup>43</sup> Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French: Life Under the Occupation* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2006), pp. 367–68.

<sup>44</sup> Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940–44* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 300. The Rockefeller Foundation provided assistance, the New York-based biologist Louis Rapkine helped French

looking for risks to take, but in a sort of passive way I do not care to yield to either force or terror.”<sup>45</sup> He explained that it was “not courage, just a form of inertia”, but Jackson argued that Picasso’s pro-Republican attitude during the Spanish Civil War and being categorised a “degenerate” artist by Hitler meant that the “inertia” was of itself courageous.<sup>46</sup> Fellow intellectuals also recognised this courage. Friend, photographer, and PCF member Brassai stated in 1943:

At the time of the invasion, he could have left if he had wanted, could have gone anywhere he wished, to Mexico, Brazil, and the US. He didn't lack for money or opportunities or invitations. Even during the Occupation the US consul requested several times that he leave France. But he stayed. His presence among us is a comfort and a spur, not only for those of us who are his friends, but even for those who don't know him.<sup>47</sup>

While Picasso’s reasons for remaining in France did not seem brave, he was unwilling to abandon his home and his life because of foreign aggressors staking claim to France. Leaving would mean succumbing to the oppression, which would imbue the Germans with more power. Remaining in Paris during the war was a form of private resistance to the “terror”. Jackson asked if leaving the country in its greatest hour of need was not considered desertion.<sup>48</sup> Henri Matisse said in 1940, “If everyone of value leaves France, what remains of France?”<sup>49</sup> Although he was a celebrated artist, Picasso was not living in the capital without fear. He knew his art was not well received by the Germans. *Guernica* had been denounced in the German press, one Picasso composition was included in the exhibition *Entartete kunst* (“degenerate” art) in Munich in July 1937, and a collection of 125 artworks had been auctioned off in June 1939 at the Galerie Fischer in Lucerne, Switzerland after being confiscated from German museums.<sup>50</sup> The “degenerate” art exhibit went on to tour twelve cities in the Reich, including Berlin, Leipzig, Dusseldorf, Salzburg, Hamburg, Weimar, Vienna, and Halle.<sup>51</sup>

What did the National Socialists classify as “degenerate” art and why was there a need to have it rooted out? Was it on ideological grounds, did it have to do with anti-Semitism, or was it a matter of Hitler’s personal tastes? In the Führer’s speeches of the 1920s, he had stated that the Jewish people were

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scientists who wanted to leave, and a privately funded American organization created after France’s defeat called the Emergency Rescue Committee helped approximately 1,500 intellectuals escape, including artists Amedeo Modigliani, Marc Chagall, and Fernand Léger, among others.

<sup>45</sup> Frederic Spotts, *The Shameful Peace: How French Artists and Intellectuals Survived The Nazi Occupation* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 145.

<sup>46</sup> Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 302.

<sup>47</sup> Brassai, *Conversations*, p. 76.

<sup>48</sup> Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 301.

<sup>49</sup> Michèle C. Cone, *Artists under Vichy: A Case of Prejudice and Persecution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 51.

<sup>50</sup> Berthold Hinz, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber, *Art in the Third Reich* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1979), p. 43.

<sup>51</sup> Christoph Zuschlag, “An ‘Educational Exhibition’: the Precursors of *Entartete kunst* and its Individual Venues,” in Stephanie Barron, ed., “Degenerate Art”: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991), pp. 90–91.

behind modern art and it was therefore corrupting society.<sup>52</sup> In 1935, Hitler toured Dresden's *Images of Decadence in Art* exhibition where he commented on its "ugliness", its perversion of naturalism, its primitivism, that changes of style were constant, and that it lacked national character.<sup>53</sup> Modern art posed a threat to social unity. If a painting like *Guernica* was capable of influencing the political ideologies of those who viewed it and claimed to understand it, then being able to control art and culture within the Reich could have been considered important. Why did the Nazis simply not destroy modern art instead of exhibiting it? Art curator Stephanie Barron wrote that if they had, they would have created a sort of cultural martyr; instead, the exhibition of "degenerate" art appealed to a majority of Germans who considered most modern art incomprehensible and elitist.<sup>54</sup> Barron also explained that some modern art had not always been condemned by the Nazis nor was it consistently at odds with fascism. Prior to Hitler's 1937 speech, there were those within the Party—like Joseph Goebbels—who valued the type of avant-garde art that embodied a Nordic artistic heritage, which was linked to German Expressionism.<sup>55</sup> However, with the Soviets having declared a position regarding the official artistic style of the Communist Party, soon afterwards Hitler made an equivalent move. Regardless of the type of Modernism that the Nazis could support, a cultural policy had to be established. Furthermore, with more Modernists supportive of Left-wing politics than Right, the condemnation of the avant-garde became part of the Nazi cultural program. Modernism was not an enemy, but certain Modernists were; consequently, the whole movement was condemned. The thought-provoking potential and unconventional nature of the avant-garde was deemed a risk to the type of nation Hitler was attempting to create and control. As such, by creating an exhibition that showcased a category of art the Nazis would not condone, perhaps then the country could agree on a better-suited, Party-approved type of art that would emphasise German racial traditions and could strengthen its power with a militant approach.

The exhibition of "degenerate" art was meant to include German art since 1910 held in public collections anywhere in the country. However, Goebbels as its organiser went beyond this, confiscating works prior to 1910 and art made by non-Germans. Works by Alexander Archipenko, Georges Braque, Marc Chagall, Giorgio de Chirico, Robert Delaunay, André Derain, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Wassily Kandinsky, Fernand Léger, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, Edvard Munch, Maurice de Vlaminck, and Picasso were all exhibited. If we consider which artists thought of themselves as Modernists, we realise that the Nazis condemned the entire range of modern art without ever having to define it and with anyone mentioned in the study of Modernism included.<sup>56</sup> For example, Emil Nolde had been a member of the Nazi party since the early 1920s and was an artist of the German Expressionism movement once favoured by

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<sup>52</sup> Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2002), p. 152.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>54</sup> Barron, "1937: Modern Art and Politics in Prewar Germany," in Barron, ed., *Fate*, p. 22.

<sup>55</sup> Championed by artists such as Emil Nolde, who I discuss in the following paragraph. *Ibid.*, p. 12–13.

<sup>56</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and Hinz, *Third Reich*, p. 24.

Party officials; however, he eventually saw even his own work confiscated and declared “degenerate”.<sup>57</sup> Regardless of an artist’s politics, if their work was abstract, Cubist, Expressionist, Surrealist, or any Modernist style popularised before 1933, it was deemed unacceptable to the Nazis.<sup>58</sup> Surprisingly, of the 112 artists in the exhibition, only six were Jewish.<sup>59</sup> This was because the Jewish connection to “degenerate” art was not exclusive to the artist himself. Hitler stated in a 1929 speech that “all of this so-called modern art of today would not be thinkable without its propagation through the work of the press. The press first makes something out of this crap.”<sup>60</sup> Hitler believed that Jews controlled the media and the art market prior to the establishment of the Third Reich; thus, they had intentionally turned Germans against traditional aesthetic styles and instead promoted modern art as a way to collect profits.<sup>61</sup> In total, the “degenerate art” exhibition included 650 paintings, sculptures, prints, and books confiscated from thirty-two German museum collections.<sup>62</sup>

Another exhibition in 1937 of French modern art co-sponsored by the French and German governments was held in Berlin featuring artists deemed “degenerate”, including Matisse, Vlaminck, Braque, and Léger. Although these men were considered “degenerate”, they were the least offensive of the Modernists because they were not Jewish, they were born in France, and they were familiar artists who had been exhibiting since the turn of the century. Even before the Vichy government took power in France, the Republicans beforehand had their own version of what was considered French nationalist art, and it did not include pieces created by foreign artists who lived in France nor Jewish artists, which happened to fall in line with the German definition of racial purity.<sup>63</sup>

In response to the exhibition in Munich, Picasso decided to co-sponsor an anti-Hitler art show in London in 1938.<sup>64</sup> Picasso’s Surrealism period and his anti-fascist, pro-Republican political leanings that had emerged after *Guernica* could have certainly contributed to the Nazis’ condemnation of the artist. Once German forces occupied France, Picasso and Léger—who was then living in the United States—became the only non-Jewish artists prohibited from having their works displayed in Paris exhibitions at the behest of the Franco regime. Fortunately, although they could not hold solo shows, both men could showcase alongside other artists. An influential artist in Paris with opposing views to those of the German and Spanish regimes did not go unnoticed by the Nazis. Any form of modern art could have been considered a

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<sup>57</sup> Barron, “1937: Modern Art and Politics in Prewar Germany,” in Barron, ed., *Fate*, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Klaus Backes, *Adolf Hitlers Einfluss auf die Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches: dargestellt am Beispiel der bildenden Künste* (Heidelberg, DE: Ruprecht-Karl-Universität, 1984), p. 373 cited in Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 53–54.

<sup>61</sup> Petropoulos, *Art as Politics*, p. 54.

<sup>62</sup> Barron, “1937: Modern Art and Politics in Prewar Germany,” in Barron, ed., *Fate*, p. 9.

<sup>63</sup> Michèle C. Cone, *French Modernisms: Perspectives on Art Before, During, and After Vichy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 20 and David Cottington, *Cubism in the Shadow of War: The Avant-Garde and Politics in Paris, 1905–1914* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>64</sup> Spotts, *Shameful Peace*, p. 147.

form of indirect intellectual resistance during the war because it was considered “degenerate” by the National Socialists. However, there were many artists deemed “degenerate” by the Nazis who spent the war collaborating despite their condemnation, such as Vlaminck.<sup>65</sup>

Both the Nazis and the Soviets needed the artists of their nation to use their art for propaganda and demonstrate the glory of the regime’s power. Ades wrote that Modernism was considered unacceptable because it was not necessarily heading in the same direction as the political radicals of the Right or Left; in addition, the avant-garde appealed to a minority whereas governments were populist and preferred art that would be understood by the majority on ideological and practical grounds.<sup>66</sup> Picasso never admitted that his art was a form of resistance; however, several years after the Occupation, Picasso told Gilot that painting was done “in order to overcome fear and horror by giving it a form and an image ... Painting isn’t an aesthetic operation; it’s a form of magic designed as a mediator between this strange, hostile world and us, a way of seizing the power by giving form to our terrors as well as our desires.”<sup>67</sup> With these words, Picasso acknowledged that by representing the horrors of the world in his art he could overcome the fears they created and reclaim the power they had stolen.

Although Picasso remained active in social circles throughout the war, he also kept a low profile to avoid attracting the attention of the Germans. Creating art was his only major wartime activity. His studio was even searched occasionally by Nazi soldiers. There are multiple accounts of Gestapo agents going to Picasso’s studio, with Gilot maintaining that they came every week or so to ask whether he was Jewish, and Picasso told his dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler that although people claimed the Gestapo had damaged his paintings during their visits, they had only ever stolen his bed linen.<sup>68</sup> Although Picasso avoided any negative confrontations with the police, to have his home and studio searched constantly was a form of intimidation and may have created an atmosphere of fear. Prévert spoke of Picasso’s courage in a 1943 conversation with Brassai:

We should be grateful to him. It was an act of courage [to remain in Occupied France] ... For his part, he could, and still can, lose everything. Who knows what turn the war will take? Paris may be destroyed. He’s got a bad record with the Nazis and could be interned, deported, taken hostage. Even his works—“degenerate” art, “Bolshevik” art—have already been condemned and may be burned at the stake... the more desperate Hitler and his acolytes become, the more dangerous, deadly and destructive their rage may be. Can Picasso guess how they might react? He has assumed the risk. He has come back to Occupied Paris. He is with us.<sup>69</sup>

Those who knew the artist, and perhaps even those who did not, could have appreciated Picasso’s decision to remain in Paris, even if Picasso himself did not see it as courageous. The dread of what could

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<sup>65</sup> Jonathan Petropoulos, *Artists Under Hitler: Collaboration and Survival in Nazi Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 272.

<sup>66</sup> Hobsbawm, “Foreword,” in Ades et al., eds., *Art and Power*, p. 13.

<sup>67</sup> Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso* (London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 266.

<sup>68</sup> Spotts, *Shameful Peace*, p. 148.

<sup>69</sup> Brassai, *Conversations*, pp. 76, 89.

happen at the hands of the Nazis was something that evidently remained in Brassai's mind and perhaps in the minds of several other intellectuals at the time. Although Picasso was one of the many Modernist artists not able to exhibit during the Occupation, he had the advantage of being wealthy, so as to not suffer from economic hardships during the war as much as others; however, food shortages affected all living in France. Picasso did not live completely without fear: he could have had his art taken and destroyed and he could have been worried about his overall safety just like anyone living in an occupied country during the war could have been—especially as a foreign resident. Gildea wrote that there was intense suspicion of foreigners and they were liable to persecution during wartime.<sup>70</sup> Although we now know that no artist in France was ever arrested because of their artwork, that was not known nor could it have been assumed at the time. While there were some restrictions to artists living in the occupied zone, generally they were not subject to heavy censorship or hardships. The guidelines established by the regime were quite straightforward—nothing was to be exhibited by Jewish or Masonic painters, and nothing could be anti-German, pro-Gaullist, or pro-Resistance. While the Jewish community suffered culturally, Jackson agreed with art historian Laurence Bertrand Dorléac that the cultural policies in Paris were relaxed, as the Germans hoped cultural distractions would keep the population happy.<sup>71</sup> A few Parisian galleries even exhibited works by “degenerate” and Jewish artists such as Max Ernst, Paul Klee, Amedeo Modigliani, Chagall, Kandinsky, and Léger, even though it was against cultural policies.<sup>72</sup> Did this indicate a lack of enforcement of regulations or was it a form of resistance?

The illusion of establishing lenient art policies was certainly to help calm French citizens and restore normality to their lives. According to the memoirs of Hitler's chief architect Albert Speer, Hitler upon hearing that there was decadent painting at the *Salon d'Automne* exclaimed, “Are we to be concerned with the intellectual soundness of the French people? Let them be degenerate if they want to, all the better for us!”<sup>73</sup> With Picasso unable to exhibit his works at this time, he could paint freely. This offered him the opportunity to produce countless drawings and oil paintings of a dark and ominous character, which reflected the political climate of the time.

### **Resistance, Collaboration, and Liberation**

Throughout the war, Picasso contributed artwork and money to Resistance groups, and he spent time with members of the PCF—many of whom were also active members of various Resistance organisations. Witnessing Party members actively fight to save France from its tyrannical oppressors helped shape Picasso's views of the PCF and eventually led him to join the Party after the Liberation.

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<sup>70</sup> Gildea, *Marianne*, p. 224.

<sup>71</sup> Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, *L'art de la Défaite* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1993), pp. 268–69 cited in Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 310.

<sup>72</sup> Dorléac, *L'art*, pp. 44, 49 cited in Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 308.

<sup>73</sup> Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs* (New York, 1970), p. 184 cited in Cone, *French Modernisms*, p. 94.

Bystanders, friends, intellectuals, and admirers of the artist also saw his actions as a type of resistance—and therefore a form of political engagement. The issue of the social and political Resistance during the Occupation is murky, as are all other aspects of occupied France. There were varying degrees and ways of resisting, but what specifically made someone a member of the Resistance? Jackson wrote that for most people the daily rhythms of private life were more important than their actions in the public realm. Only a small number of individuals were actively involved in the organised Resistance effort. Most people simply made choices as they came into contact with a German and their conduct was decided based on the individual experience—with the main goal being survival.<sup>74</sup> Gildea agreed that there were few Resistance networks because most of the French simply wanted to ensure their personal safety by keeping to themselves and waiting for their liberation. This more often than not meant abstaining from both the Resistance and collaboration and exercising caution when making decisions.<sup>75</sup> Historian Anthony Beevor and writer Artemis Cooper have argued, however, that all of the different degrees of Resistance should be included in the definition, including activities ranging from hiding Jewish people, distributing leaflets and underground publications, and writing poems.<sup>76</sup> An artist employing a visual style that was condemned by the Nazis or creating art that portrayed the occupiers and their actions negatively could also be included in that definition. Jackson instead argued that one of the major pitfalls when speaking of the Resistance is the adoption of a broad interpretation that includes any sort of opposition to the Occupation when instead a distinction must be made between resistance and dissidence.<sup>77</sup> Historian and political scientist Jacques Sémelin believed that an individual contesting a law was not the same as challenging the authority that makes those laws.<sup>78</sup> However, once the organised Resistance in France grew in strength and became a presence in society, there were more chances to contribute to the Resistance informally; therefore, Jackson maintained that what might have once been individual acts of disobedience became part of the Resistance.<sup>79</sup> Although Picasso never considered himself a member of the Resistance, because of his prominence within the intellectual community, his support of the Resistance and his actions during the Occupation gave hope and courage to others who were more actively involved. Gertje Utleij claimed that Picasso did not participate in the Resistance, but that his close association with the movement demands more courage than is generally given to him.<sup>80</sup> Barr agreed that Picasso's decision to remain in Paris during the Occupation was of great symbolic importance, and although his personal resistance was passive, Barr

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<sup>74</sup> Jackson, *Dark Years*, pp. 239, 240.

<sup>75</sup> Gildea, *Marianne*, pp. 329, 414.

<sup>76</sup> Antony Beevor and Artemis Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation 1944–1949* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1994), p. 18.

<sup>77</sup> Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 387.

<sup>78</sup> Jacques Sémelin, “Qu'est-ce que ‘resister’?” *Esprit* 198 (1994): pp. 52–53 cited in Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 388.

<sup>79</sup> Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 388.

<sup>80</sup> Utleij, *Communist Years*, p. 27.

considered Picasso's attitudes to be uncompromising.<sup>81</sup> I believe that among artists, Picasso participated to a degree worthy of recognition within a broad spectrum of Resistance efforts.

Picasso was not the only intellectual to either remain in Paris or return after the bombardment: Brassai, Gilot, Prévert, Braque, Paul and Nusch Éluard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jaime Sabartés, Robert Desnos, Simone de Beauvoir, Georges Hugnet, and Michel and Louise Leiris all lived in Paris and faced similar dilemmas. It was during this time that Picasso met active resister and executive PCF member Laurent Casanova, who made a profound impression and may have greatly influenced Picasso and other intellectuals to join the Party after the Liberation.<sup>82</sup> Picasso had many friends involved in the underground movement, and he maintained close ties with them. In his first letter to Penrose after the Liberation, Éluard wrote of Picasso: "He has been one of the rare painters who have behaved well and he continued to do so... Picasso had always been willing to help the Resistance movement by sheltering anyone sent to him by his friends, whether he knew them or not."<sup>83</sup> Art historian Steven A. Nash described Picasso's wartime art as a private attempt at resisting, which carried strong symbolic value for friends and intellectuals.<sup>84</sup> Every scholar holds different opinions regarding whether Picasso was a part of the Resistance or not based on their own definition of resistance.

There was a constant flurry of visitors in and out of Picasso's studio during the Occupation. The need to be in the presence of other artists, to see and discuss their work, to share issues and problems—these were ways of feeling unified within artistic circles during a war that affected their lives in many other ways. In the climate of the Occupation, friendships were formed among individuals who had rarely seen each other before the war, and friends with similar political sympathies met frequently in cafes and restaurants.<sup>85</sup> Picasso not only maintained friendships with artists of the Resistance, but he was also supportive of underground Resistance activities both artistically and financially. For example, Picasso provided monetary contributions and illustrations for Surrealist publications *Les Éditions de Minuit* and *La Main à plume*. Created in August 1941 with the purpose of resisting through language, *La Main à plume* is said to have survived in part because of Picasso's generosity.<sup>86</sup> Poet and publisher of *La Main*, Noël Arnaud, maintained that Picasso's financial donations not only funded the publication, but they were also used "to help with the daily survival of the members of the group".<sup>87</sup> He also confirmed "through numerous avenues, numerous escapees from Spanish Republicans' internment camps were... greeted by Picasso and received from him travelling moneys (sometimes sizeable) and addresses of safe refugees."<sup>88</sup> In addition, Picasso provided artwork for several books of poetry and essays published during the war, such as Hugnet's *La*

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<sup>81</sup> Barr, *Fifty Years* (1975), p. 245.

<sup>82</sup> Gilot and Lake, *Life with Picasso*, p. 63.

<sup>83</sup> Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 347–48.

<sup>84</sup> Nash, "Introduction: Picasso, War, and Art," in Nash and Rosenblum, eds., *War Years*, p. 14.

<sup>85</sup> Cone, *French Modernisms*, p. 126.

<sup>86</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 27.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from Arnaud to Cone, 16 April 1984 cited in Cone, *Artists under Vichy*, p. 152.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

*Chèvre-Feuille* (Paris, 1943) and Desnos's *Contrée* (Paris, 1944).<sup>89</sup> *Contrée*, like many of Desnos's publications, contained allusions to classical mythology that when analysed were a direct commentary on the Occupation.<sup>90</sup> Picasso was helping those participating in the Resistance the best way he knew how: with financial support and by remaining dedicated to his artwork. Picasso's contributions to such causes were to persist throughout his life.

Another publication Picasso contributed to during the Resistance was *Éditions du Chêne* in 1943—an album with reproductions of sixteen Picasso paintings with a preface written by friend and Resistance poet Desnos. Although there was no censorship of art books during the Occupation, Desnos had carried out a dangerous mission for the Resistance group *Réseau AGIR*, the album's publisher was half-Jewish, and the simple publication of a book praising an artist deemed “degenerate” was a provocative move at the time.<sup>91</sup> Desnos wrote in the album's preface: “Thus all of Picasso's oeuvre manifests an exigency of freedom that is unmistakable. It is because of this exigency that it is a cry against death, because of this exigency that it is about glorious life worth living. It is for such reasons that it cannot satisfy the appetites of those who deny it [freedom] and thereby aspire to failure and to death.”<sup>92</sup> Picasso's work was seen as a resistance cry, regardless of whether he recognised it himself. Shortly after the book was published, the Gestapo came to Desnos looking for Resistance workers he was suspected of hiding.<sup>93</sup> He was arrested and later died in a concentration camp. Risks were being taken during the Occupation years and Picasso took part in those risks—albeit in indirect ways—and could have easily been persecuted for his associations.

Various artists contributed to the Resistance in different ways. Jean Fautrier produced a series of paintings as a response to French citizens being executed by the Nazis. He painted these works after experiencing the trauma of being arrested and imprisoned by the Gestapo. André Fougeron—who became the official artist of the PCF after the war—joined the Party in 1939 and became a member of the Party-run *Front National des Arts* alongside fellow artist Édouard Pignon. It was through this organisation that *Vaincre*—an album of anti-Vichy and anti-Nazi lithographs—was created and published.<sup>94</sup> Utley wrote that in the field of visual arts, *Vaincre* was the only truly militant expression of resistance during the war.<sup>95</sup> While examples of artwork made for the Resistance effort did exist, Fougeron himself stated that it was difficult “to enlist artists to manifest resistance through their painting”.<sup>96</sup> Picasso was not the only artist during the Occupation to take a more subtle approach to the brutalities of war in his productions,

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<sup>89</sup> Nash, “Introduction: Picasso, War, and Art,” in Nash and Rosenblum, eds., *War Years*, p. 26.

<sup>90</sup> William Kulik, “On Desnos,” *The American Poetry Review* 19, no. 3 (1990): p. 31.

<sup>91</sup> Cone, *French Modernisms*, p. 124.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Desnos, *Écrits sur les peintres* (Paris: Flammarion, 1984), p. 182 cited in Cone, *French Modernisms*, p. 128.

<sup>93</sup> Kulik, “On Desnos,” p. 31.

<sup>94</sup> Cone, *French Modernisms*, p. 96.

<sup>95</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 34.

<sup>96</sup> Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, *Histoire de l'art: Paris 1940–1944. Ordre national, traditions, et modernités* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1986), p. 378 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 34.

especially among artists of the Resistance. Even Pignon, a devoted Communist and artist, said that any manifestation of modern art during the Occupation should have been considered veiled resistance.<sup>97</sup> Testing how far one could go in using art to condemn the occupying regime was not a popular pursuit. Picasso's engagement during WWII was not in the form of active resistance, but he indirectly resisted through his financial and artistic contributions.

Like the Resistance, wartime collaboration was an ambiguous activity and could be placed on a sliding scale of severity. Beevor and Cooper described the paradoxes that could be seen in France, from anti-Semites who saved Jewish families to anti-fascists who betrayed them. Similar to making a distinction between resistance and dissidence, Beevor explained that one could define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour under the Occupation, but to label actions as collaborationist or not was difficult.<sup>98</sup> Political scientist and historian Robert Paxton, however, took a hardline approach and claimed that regardless of the private attitudes of the French towards the Germans, most were "functional collaborators" if they did not participate in the Resistance.<sup>99</sup> Historian Pascal Ory agreed: "at the most extreme, everyone who remained on territory occupied by the German army or that was under its control had to some degree collaborated."<sup>100</sup> Jackson recognised the wide range of collaborationist activities, from visiting German-organised exhibitions that promoted collaboration to reading collaborationist newspapers to attending collaborationist meetings. He also mused over the vast amount of ambiguous activities: was reading the *Parisian Daily Press* a form of collaborationism? Was it wrong for Aragon, who was a Communist, to publish with a company who also published the collaborationist *Nouvelle Revue*? Jackson contended that remaining silent during the Occupation had multiple meanings.<sup>101</sup> Historian Richard Cobb explained that collaboration was an accidental relationship imposed by exceptional circumstances, and there existed a thin line between collaboration and resistance.<sup>102</sup> The intentions of those who remained silent is relevant when deciphering where on the spectrum of collaboration they belonged—if they belonged at all. I believe Picasso's passive resistance did not make him a functional collaborator because he participated in the Resistance in minor ways and expressed his sentiments through artistic and monetary contributions, if not vocally.

Picasso quietly and carefully made it through the war until Paris was liberated in the final days of August 1944. When meeting with Lee Miller<sup>103</sup> in September 1944, Picasso remarked that during the war "there was nothing to do but work, struggle to find food, see one's friends quietly, and look forward to the

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<sup>97</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 34.

<sup>98</sup> Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After*, p. 90.

<sup>99</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940–1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 234–35.

<sup>100</sup> Pascal Ory, *Les Collaborateurs, 1940–45* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1976), p. 10 cited in Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 239.

<sup>101</sup> Jackson, *Dark Years*, pp. 316, 240.

<sup>102</sup> Richard Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French: A Personal Interpretation of France Under Two Occupations, 1914–1918/1940–1944* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983), pp. 72, 162.

<sup>103</sup> Miller was a photographer and the wife of Picasso's close friend and biographer Roland Penrose.

day of freedom.”<sup>104</sup> Picasso had willingly chosen to live this way. Perhaps he felt the need to face the fascist oppressors who were against freedom of expression and the institution of modern art—especially after he was not able to directly oppose Franco in Spain. During the Occupation, Picasso had spent his time in the company of Resistance members and PCF members. Gladys Delmas, a young American who lived in Paris during the war, wrote in the *Magazine of Art* (February 1945) that “Picasso’s presence here during the Occupation became of tremendous occult importance ... his work had become a sort of banner of the Resistance movement.”<sup>105</sup> Outsiders saw Picasso’s presence in and of itself as supportive of the Resistance, which contributed to the public perception of him as a politically engaged artist.

There were signs of Picasso’s disdain towards collaborators both before and after Paris was liberated. In conversation with his biographer James Lord, Picasso reportedly remarked that “Gertrude [Stein] was a real fascist. She always had a weakness for Franco. Imagine! For Pétain, too. You know she wrote speeches for Pétain. Can you imagine it? An American, a Jewess, what’s more.”<sup>106</sup> There was no grey area for Picasso and many others in terms of collaboration, although in reality the situation during the Occupation was complex and lent itself to a very broad ambiguity between collaboration and resistance. There were those who actively resisted, and there were those who tried to avoid unwanted attention from the occupying forces and survive the war. But to appease the German occupiers or to collaborate in any way—there could be no forgiveness. A gathering in memory of poet Guillaume Apollinaire at *Père Lachaise* cemetery in 1943 saw Picasso refuse to shake the hand of his former friend André Salmon because he had expressed fascist views as a reporter for *Le Petit Parisien* newspaper.<sup>107</sup> Paul Whitney, a war correspondent for the *San Francisco Chronicle* who interviewed Picasso shortly after the Liberation, noted that the artist was glad that Abel Bonnard and Abel Hermant had been suspended from the French Academy, and when asked about other collaborators, Picasso spoke bitterly of Vlaminck who had denounced Picasso during the Occupation as a “Jewish degenerate”.<sup>108</sup> After visiting Picasso, *Chicago Sun* journalist John Groth wrote to his editor: “I asked him about the collaborationists among the painters. The only one he named was Derain. He grew very excited in telling of Derain’s visit to Weimar to shake the hand of Hitler. He said he hoped that Derain would be punished—shot.”<sup>109</sup> The extreme nature of Picasso’s remark illustrates his disgust towards anyone who could have collaborated with the Nazis.

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<sup>104</sup> Spotts, *Shameful Peace*, p. 149.

<sup>105</sup> Barr, “Picasso 1940–1944: A Digest with Notes,” *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 12, no. 3 (January 1945): p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> Philippe Pétain was the Chief of the State of Vichy France. James Lord, *Six Exceptional Women: Further Memoirs* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1994), p. 15 cited in Barbara Will, *Unlikely Collaboration: Gertrude Stein, Bernard Fay, and the Vichy Dilemma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 19.

<sup>107</sup> John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso: The Prodigy, 1881–1906, vol. 1* (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 318.

<sup>108</sup> Barr, “Notes,” p. 3

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

The purge, or *l'épuration* as it was called in French, began shortly after the Liberation. Purge committees were organised, and Fougeron headed such a committee in Paris called the *Comité Directeur du Front National des Arts*, which was comprised of artists including Picasso. The role of the group was to decide which artists would be accused of having “favoured the enemy’s endeavors, hindered the war effort, or impeded the Resistance of the French”.<sup>110</sup> Punishing the collaborators was necessary in order to pay tribute to victims and fallen comrades, and to cleanse the Party and France so a new future could be built. The group had called for the arrest of multiple artists including Derain, Maillol, Vlaminck, and others,<sup>111</sup> all of whom had been charged with having toured the Third Reich as guests of the Germans in 1941, for being members of the sponsoring committee of the Arno Breker exhibition in 1942 of Nazi-approved sculpture, and for participating in the activities of the *Groupe Collaboration*.<sup>112</sup> Scholars have since minimised the responsibility of those who participated in the 1941 trip. Historian Michèle C. Cone cites potential reasons for the visit: the attendees were promised the liberation of fellow artists from German prison camps, they were coerced, or they were simple naïve.<sup>113</sup> Those who accepted the invitation to Germany were the ones accused and condemned post-Liberation—easily marked as collaborators—when the reasons for their participation could have been more complex. Regardless, they were the artists who seemed to have most obviously betrayed France and the Resistance efforts and were therefore the ones subject to punishment during *l'épuration*. A meeting of the *Comité Directeur du Front National des Arts* was held on the eve of Picasso’s enrolment into the Party at his studio, and the arrest of suspected collaborationist artists and art critics was discussed.<sup>114</sup> With the war over, Picasso was no longer a “degenerate” artist and a foreigner with precarious status in France—he was now able to fully participate in purge committees without fear of persecution.<sup>115</sup> He was also free to show his aversion to anyone who had collaborated with France’s enemies. During the Occupation, there were those artists who actively collaborated or were sympathetic to the Germans, such as Derain or Vlaminck, while Picasso’s friends Max Jacob and Desnos did not survive the war. There were Resistance members who were also Socialist Realists, such as Pignon and Fourgeron. Furthermore, there were Modernists who were loyal to the French tradition and never took a public stance on Vichy or the Occupation. The great French master Matisse belonged to the latter group.

Matisse remained in France during the war; however, he resided in the unoccupied zone. Picasso and Matisse were both friends and rivals who respected each other deeply. Matisse had lived in Nice while keeping an apartment in Paris since 1917, and when war broke out he chose to decline invitations to both

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<sup>110</sup> *Le journal officiel*, 31 May 1945 cited in Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, p. 154.

<sup>111</sup> Kees van Dongen, Othon Friesz, André Dunoyer de Segonzac, Henri Bouchard, Paul Belmondo, Charles Despiau, Raymond-Jean Legueult, Louis-Aimé Lejeune, Roland Oudot, and Paul Landowski. Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, *Art of the Defeat: France 1940–1944* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Publications, 2008), p. 383.

<sup>112</sup> Spotts, *Shameful Peace*, p. 178. The *Groupe Collaboration* was a French collaborationist group made up of “hard-core pro-Nazis”. Dorléac, *Art of the Defeat*, p. 118.

<sup>113</sup> Cone, *Artists Under Vichy*, p. 158.

<sup>114</sup> Sarah Wilson, “Art and the Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935–1955,” unpublished Ph.D. diss. (London: Courtauld Institute, 1993) in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 63.

<sup>115</sup> Picasso would never become a French citizen.

Brazil where he was offered asylum and to Mills College in California because he believed that the French cultural flag should keep flying and to leave would be desertion.<sup>116</sup> Despite these attitudes, he lived in the south of France, far away from the Resistance fighters of the occupied zone and from the artistic circles who were constantly meeting and influencing each other with their work and political views. Matisse was seventy years old at the outbreak of war, very ill, and content being on his own as he had always been. After the Liberation, his views towards collaborators differed from Picasso's because they did not share the same wartime experience. Upon hearing the news of Vlaminck's arrest as a collaborator, Matisse wrote a letter to painter Charles Camoin saying, "Basically, I think that one should not torment those who have diverging ideas from one's own, but that is what today is called *la Liberté*."<sup>117</sup> This brings us back to the uncertain definition of collaboration and the question of whether people were unjustly accused. One also has to remember that Picasso had entered the war with disdain for those who collaborated with fascists, militarily or artistically. Unlike his former colleagues of the Fauvist artistic movement, Derain and Vlaminck, Matisse did not collaborate. But he was also living in the Free Zone and was not faced with German occupiers on a daily basis. Matisse once told art historian Georges Duthuit that he could get along with "any regime, any religion, so long as each morning, at eight o'clock I can find my light, my model and my easel."<sup>118</sup> However, he did not remain untouched from the horrors of war. The Gestapo had arrested his estranged wife and daughter, although they were later released. His Russian assistant Lydia Omeltshenko described Matisse's disgust of the growing climate of violence and fear in Vichy France.<sup>119</sup> When his publisher advised him against having the preface of his soon-to-be published catalogue written and signed by known Communist Aragon, Matisse overruled him.<sup>120</sup> Regardless of these facts, his art remained the primary focus. In the catalogue of the 1937 co-sponsored Berlin exhibit, which included Matisse, the introduction by its curator stated that the French artistic tradition was rooted "in the single desire to represent nature and life in its most ordinary everyday manifestations".<sup>121</sup> Matisse was living in Vichy and creating what could be considered French nationalistic art, at least as identified by the French and German governments who supported the 1937 exhibition. Matisse did not directly resist or collaborate, but he expressed an indifference towards politics during the war because dedication to the French artistic tradition was of foremost importance. Despite this apathy towards Vichy, Matisse was not blind to sacrifices made by other artists, and he was appalled by the actions of some collaborationists. In a letter addressed to his son during the war he wrote, "Picasso pays dearly for his exceptional qualities, but he

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<sup>116</sup> Spotts, *Shameful Peace*, p. 159.

<sup>117</sup> Cone, "Matisse and the Nationalism of Vichy, 1940–1944," *artnet Magazine*. Accessed: 24 September 2014. <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/books/cone/cone12-19-05.asp>

<sup>118</sup> Georges Duthuit, *Transition Forty Nine*, no. 5 (December 1949): p. 115 cited in Cone, "Matisse," <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/books/cone/cone12-19-05.asp>

<sup>119</sup> Hilary Spurling, *Matisse the Master: A Life of Henri Matisse, the Conquest of Colour, 1909–1954* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), p. 407.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>121</sup> Cone, *French Modernisms*, p. 32.

leads a dignified life in Paris. He works, he doesn't want to sell, and he makes no demands. He still has the human dignity that his colleagues have abandoned to an unbelievable degree."<sup>122</sup>

Based on their personal experiences, those individuals living in France during the Second World War had varying attitudes towards and definitions of what could be classified as resistance and collaboration. There were passive and active ways to both resist and collaborate with the Nazis, and a fine line seemed to divide the two. While Picasso's level of engagement with the Resistance is questionable, there were those who considered him to be a brave and active participant, and his attitudes after the war towards accused collaborationists solidified many of those views. This is especially true when compared to other respected artists—such as Matisse—who barely participated. Picasso's experiences during the war years helped shape him as both an artist and a politically engaged individual. After the Liberation of Paris, Picasso would be among a surge of intellectuals joining the PCF. The PCF would be the political organisation where Picasso could remain with many like-minded individuals he had become close with during the war and push for social change under the umbrella of the Party.

### **Picasso the Communist: the PCF and its Intellectuals**

Alice-Leone Moats, an American journalist in Paris during the Occupation, was given a rare interview with three resistance leaders in 1944 without knowledge of their identities. She asked what young resisters wanted after the war, and their response followed: "They will want a big share in the country they helped liberate. When it's refused them, as it no doubt will be for practical reasons, they will, of course, turn to Communism."<sup>123</sup> While many intellectuals of the Resistance were already Communists, why did it seem obvious that those who had not already joined the Party would soon follow suit? Historian Tony Judt wrote that the Occupation and the Resistance—even if only experienced second hand—strengthened the desire for political engagement, and that Karl Marx's theory of alienation<sup>124</sup> was a theme in the recent French experience, which proposed a moral basis for Marxist politics.<sup>125</sup> Historian Michael Kelly agreed—as have many scholars—that the active role of Communists in the Resistance drove many intellectuals to join the Party. After witnessing their cultural values hang in the balance during the war, intellectuals identified Leftists as the defenders of those values, particularly because Communists were the major political opposition during the Occupation.<sup>126</sup> Jackson explained that the Communists easily

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<sup>122</sup> John Russell, *Matisse Father and Son* (New York: Abrams, 1999), p. 231 cited in Cone, *French Modernisms*, p. 127.

<sup>123</sup> Charles Glass, *Americans in Paris: Life and Death Under Nazi Occupation, 1940–1944* (London: Harper Press, 2009), p. 361.

<sup>124</sup> Marx's theory of alienation "is a many-stranded notion ... it refers to the subjective or objective state of the individual in capitalist society, a state characterized by desires which are either distorted or frustrated, and by a lack of understanding and control of the social environment." Jon Elster, ed., *Karl Marx: A Reader* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 29.

<sup>125</sup> Tony Judt, *Marxism and the French Left: Studies on Labour and Politics in France, 1830–1981* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), p. 180.

<sup>126</sup> Michael Kelly, *Modern French Marxism* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1982), pp. 50–51.

represented the most powerful political force in France by the time Paris had been liberated: newspapers run by the Party or their satellites accounted for twenty-one per cent of the national press and *L'Humanité* was the most popular newspaper in France.<sup>127</sup> In 1945, the PCF received five million votes and became the largest party in the French General Assembly.<sup>128</sup> The Communists also garnered support from many non-PCF members who found their own leaders to be too timid.<sup>129</sup> The efficiency of the purge committees illustrated the intensity of the Party's ambitions, especially after years of oppression during the Occupation. Beevor asserted that the greater the purge after the war, the greater the opportunity for the PCF to seize power and pull support to the Left after the Right had become associated with wartime collaboration and Vichy.<sup>130</sup> Historian Charles Micaud's work supports Beevor's point. He claimed that the Popular Front<sup>131</sup> and the Spanish Civil War oversimplified the issues and that hatred of fascism led many to identify democracy and social justice with Communism.<sup>132</sup> Historian Sudhir Hazareesingh elaborated and explained why intellectuals were attracted to the PCF over the years. He identified intellectual affiliation to the Party as being either practical or philosophical. Practical support meant that intellectuals believed participation in political life could contribute to the process of social change. In Picasso's situation, I believe Hazareesingh's theory of philosophical affiliation accurately identified the appeal. These intellectuals' interests lay less with the practical goals of the PCF and centred more on the fundamental significance of Party membership as an instrument for a world-historical purpose. This type of intellectual did not base their adherence on the direct actions of the PCF but on the belief in an ideal that Party membership would reflect.<sup>133</sup> This is important to remember throughout the years when many left the PCF in the 1950s and 60s for reasons such as Soviet aggression in Hungary and Czechoslovakia—the Party continued to represent the need for collective purpose to strive for a greater social transformation. Hazareesingh's most important observation was that while intellectual affiliation to the PCF may be classified within certain general categories, every intellectual had a different story and it is necessary to analyse individual backgrounds and desires to better understand their commitment to the Party.<sup>134</sup>

Picasso's desire to punish collaborators after the Occupation was similar to the Communist need for a post-war purge. The war had forced many people to pick sides, and some survivors emerged refusing to be grouped with collaborators or Vichy supporters. To avoid this, passive politics had to end. The same reasoning could easily be applied to art. Picasso wanted his artwork to be in support of the social justice the PCF strove towards. He had developed a sense of moral responsibility, and collectively that manifested

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<sup>127</sup> Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 575.

<sup>128</sup> Bell and Criddle, *French Communist Party*, p. 76.

<sup>129</sup> Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 540.

<sup>130</sup> Beevor and Cooper, *Paris After*, p. 90.

<sup>131</sup> The Popular Front was an alliance of Left-wing parties in France during the interwar period and included the PCF.

<sup>132</sup> Charles A. Micaud, *Communism and the French Left* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), p. 58.

<sup>133</sup> Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Intellectuals and the French Communist Party: Disillusion and Decline* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 97, 98.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

itself within the confines of the Party. Anything outside of those confines could be seen as suspicious because the PCF presented itself as a Party of liberation and freedom.

Hazareesingh also described an outer circle of intellectuals: this consisted of public figures who could bring prestige to the PCF to help justify its claim of being the Party of the intelligentsia.<sup>135</sup> This is another role Picasso played for the Communists. For example, in his 1938 speech to over 1,000 intellectuals entitled “Communism, Science and Culture”, Central Committee member Jacques Duclos declared that in PCF supporter Paul Signac,<sup>136</sup> the Party had a loyal friend in one of the greatest representatives of “the new technique in painting”, referring to neo-Impressionism.<sup>137</sup> In this proclamation, Duclos placed the importance of having the support of renowned artists over the Soviet policy of Socialist Realism in the arts, which was soon to be promoted by all other Communist parties in Europe. Socialist Realism had been the prevalent artistic form in Soviet Russia since 1934, which sought to glorify the socialist struggle of the proletariat. The PCF saw more benefit in recruiting members of the intelligentsia, such as Picasso, who did not adhere to the style of Socialist Realism and perhaps never would than to not have their support at all. This was in addition to having the loyalty of those Party artists who did paint in the approved style, such as Fougeron. The prestige these intellectuals brought to the Party was of the utmost value. Even though intellectuals who became Communists during the 1930s and 40s could be grouped into these general categories, each of their political ideologies and views molded them and shaped their experiences individually within the PCF. Political militancy was not the only or the most common way for intellectuals to demonstrate their devotion to the PCF. Signac was one of the first major artists to support the PCF, but his work rarely reflected his political sympathies. He had occasionally provided propagandist work for Jean Grave’s anarchist *Temps Nouveaux*, but with his own artwork he adhered to an “art for art’s sake” policy.<sup>138</sup> Signac would never join the Party, but the idea of separating art and politics was not uncommon and he was still respected by the Party because his political support counted more than his artistic contributions.

The PCF was as attracted to giving intellectuals membership as much as those writers, artists, and scientists were drawn to the Party. Having prominent intellectual figures become Communists helped the PCF develop a certain level of respect and prominence, and this was a campaign they had been promoting since the days of the Popular Front. The Secretary-General of the PCF Maurice Thorez had successfully appealed to many intellectuals since the 1930s. Aragon wrote that Thorez had constantly inquired after leading intellectuals and was aware of the importance of the French heritage to earning the loyalty of the

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<sup>135</sup> It was typical after WWII for members of the intelligentsia to be attracted to Communist parties. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>136</sup> Signac supported the Party but never became a member.

<sup>137</sup> David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals 1914–1960* (London: A. Deutsch, 1964), p. 27 and Jacques Duclos, trans. Herbert Rosen, *Communism, Science and Culture* (New York: International Publishers, 1938), p. 33 cited in Caute, p. 36.

<sup>138</sup> Caute, *French Intellectuals*, p. 346.

intellectuals.<sup>139</sup> This need to support French culture became a greater issue after the Occupation, during which many writers, artists, and scientists could not express themselves freely nor feel safe in their own country. As early as 1933, in a speech given in parliament, Thorez called upon the workers and intellectuals to unite with other exploited classes against fascism, and he repeated this in *L'Humanité* on 7 January 1934.<sup>140</sup> Uniting against fascism was an idea supported by the PCF long before the war. Many intellectuals joined the Party for this reason, and they also influenced others to join. When French nationalism was subdued by the Occupation, the PCF members active in the Resistance displayed their dedication to preserving French culture. The PCF presented itself as a patriotic political group that worked towards a better France.<sup>141</sup> This appealed to many intellectuals—especially those who had felt oppressed during the war years. It appeared as though the PCF had offered many opportunities and hopes to intellectuals and artists.

After the Liberation, joining the PCF seemed like the logical next step for Picasso and many other anti-fascist intellectuals of distinction of the time. The catastrophe that had befallen Spain because of General Franco followed by the horrific tragedies that had swept the world at the hands of Hitler and the Axis instilled within Picasso a desire for peace. As a result, Picasso decided to make a difference through the political outlet of the PCF. Although they had signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact in 1939, the Soviets had redeemed themselves in the eyes of some and emerged from the war as a victorious ally. Their political system of Communism held a certain level of prestige, having been birthed from a nation that eventually helped save many from the Nazi invasion and had thrown its support behind the Spanish Republicans. Historian Lawrence Wittner maintained that the French were sympathetic towards the Soviet Union because it was viewed as the principal liberator of Europe from Nazism.<sup>142</sup> Judt wrote that although Stalinism may have made it difficult to side with the PCF, history made it impossible to be against them.<sup>143</sup>

Picasso had humanitarian-orientated aspirations, and since most of his comrades shared similar goals and had already joined the Party, his eventual membership was not surprising. In his statement to Gaillard upon joining the PCF in 1944 that I quoted earlier, Picasso said he saw drawing and colours as his “weapons”. He considered his art to be engaged in a fight—the Communist Party would be the means to

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<sup>139</sup> Louis Aragon, *L'Homme Communiste II* (Paris: Gaillmard, 1953), pp. 252–54.

<sup>140</sup> Caute, *French Intellectuals*, p. 27.

<sup>141</sup> At the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU in October 1952, Stalin told Western Communists “If you wish to be patriots ... you must raise the banner of national independence and national sovereignty...” Fernando Claudin, trans. Brian Pearce and Francis MacDonagh, *The Communist Movement from Comintern to Cominform* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin 1975), p. 597. Historian Donald Sassoon confirms that the PCF maintained a nationalist appeal and discourse after the war. Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), p. 232. Bell and Criddle described how the Party was hyper-patriotic in order to present itself as the real defender of France. Bell and Criddle, *French Communist Party*, p. 82.

<sup>142</sup> Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb: Volume One, One World or None: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement Through 1953* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 191.

<sup>143</sup> Judt, *Marxism and the French Left*, p. 184.

help defeat oppression in this fight after years of suffering at the hands of fascist leaders. Leading Picasso biographer John Richardson claimed that Picasso joined the Party as a result of his brief admiration for de Gaulle after his liberation of Paris. That came to an end soon after Picasso joined leading Gaullists for dinner and their Right-wing agenda frightened him so much that he joined the PCF just days later.<sup>144</sup> Picasso, like most intellectuals, had dealt with years of despair at the hands of Right-wing politics, and the appeal of the radical Left—seen as the defenders of French culture and patriotism during the war—made following his peers to the Party a natural step. After spending World War II surrounded by prominent artists and writers such as Éluard, Aragon, Desnos, Hugnet, de Beauvoir, Sartre, Prévert, Leiris, Pierre Daix, Claude Roy, and many others who were either involved in the Resistance or had Left-leaning convictions, Picasso could no longer justify making works of art for “aesthetic” value alone as he once had claimed. “Art as a weapon of struggle”<sup>145</sup> was originally a Leninist slogan that had been used during the late 1920s by the German Communist Party. Picasso’s words, whether intentional or not, were taken from the former Soviet leader.

Knowing he could never go back to Spain while Franco was in power, Picasso realised the PCF was his new home. In his interview with Gaillard, Picasso explained:

I was so anxious to find a homeland again, I have always been an exile, now I am one no longer; until Spain can at last welcome me back, the French Communist Party has opened its arms to me. I have found there all those whom I esteem the most, the greatest scientists, the greatest poets, and all those faces, so beautiful, of the Parisians in arms which I saw during those days in August, I am once more among my brothers.<sup>146</sup>

Joining the Party was not only about surrounding oneself with like-minded artists or becoming part of a political organisation, it was also about family. Picasso’s sentiments mirrored those of Communists whose convictions and commitment to the Party had developed during the dark days of the Second World War alongside fellow intellectuals who became as close as family.<sup>147</sup> These great scientists and writers included Paul Langevin, Frédéric Joliot-Curie, Eugénie Cotton, Léon Moussinac, and JR Bloch. Hazareesingh explained that one reason intellectuals joined the PCF was because of the sense of fraternity the Party fostered.<sup>148</sup> Unable to return to Spain, Picasso was determined to create ties with a new sort of family and homeland. Éluard and Aragon were two of Picasso’s closest friends in France, and both were Surrealists who had been Party members since the mid 1920s. They were to form the foundation of his new Communist clan. Picasso had spent time with many artists and writers during the Occupation who were already Communists or who also joined the PCF post-war. The people he spoke of having great respect for

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<sup>144</sup> Richardson, *A Life of Picasso: The Triumphant Years, 1917–1932*, vol. 3 (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 2007), pp. 498–99.

<sup>145</sup> Adolf Behne, ‘Kunst als Waffe’, *Die Weltbühne*, no. 34 (1931): pp. 301–04 cited in David Elliott, “The Battle for Art,” in Ades et al., eds., *Art and Power*, p. 32.

<sup>146</sup> Penrose, *His Life and Work* (1981), p. 354.

<sup>147</sup> Kriegel, *Ce que j’ai cru comprendre*, p. 195.

<sup>148</sup> Hazareesingh, *Intellectuals*, p. 101.

were those “Parisians in arms” “during those days in August”. Penrose agreed that it was these intellectuals, proud of their courage and their actions during the Resistance, who led Picasso to join.<sup>149</sup> Picasso did not perceive the Communist Party to be simply an organisation—it was a community that one did not abandon. He would follow Resistance members to the PCF because he recognised their shared values and ambitions. This is important to remember in the years to come when Picasso remained a PCF member after certain events compelled other intellectuals to leave the Party.

When Picasso told Pomar in 1930 that he would never worry about the influence of his art and he would never create art to serve the interests of others, he had not yet been forced to the point of thinking otherwise. Watching his homeland of Spain fall to the hands of the Nationalists, living in occupied France during the Second World War, and seeing many succumb to the perils of war affected Picasso more than any other event prior to 1936. Some friends—like Desnos and Jacob—never returned. Picasso had been satisfied with his art being his form of self-expression and not being used for any other cause until he discovered a cause worth investing his time into and lending his art for—the struggle for social change. This drive for equality and peace was associated with the Party because it was through the PCF that the world peace congresses would be organised. Skeptical of what seemed like Party propaganda in all of his public statements, Gilot asked Picasso what had truly made him join the Party, to which he responded, “I came into the Party as one goes to the fountain.”<sup>150</sup> Why does one go to the fountain? For water, because of necessity; because the fountain is the only way to satisfy one’s thirst. Picasso saw no other way of quenching his desire for a new world order if not through the PCF. One could find a similar statement being repeated by those who have found faith or religion in their lives. As a Marxist himself, Berger described the PCF as not just a political party but as a fraternity.<sup>151</sup> Daix commented that for Picasso, “le Parti faisait partie de sa famille.”<sup>152</sup> To call the Party family meant it was deserving of a certain level of loyalty. Picasso found a place among like-minded individuals who demanded justice and participated in the peace movement. And like a religious convert, Picasso was the new world-famous figurehead for the PCF that they could now use to garner more support for their causes.

Picasso was not the only one attracted to the Party’s promises for the future. The PCF membership jumped from 205,000 in September 1944 to 384,000 by the end of December.<sup>153</sup> The Party was at the height of its popularity, especially among the intellectuals. Philosopher and PCF member Albert Camus said in 1944 that “anti communism is the beginning of dictatorship.”<sup>154</sup> In this case, to be against the Party could translate into support for fascism. The Liberation did not erase the memories of the Occupation and

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<sup>149</sup> Penrose, *His Life and Work* (1953), p. 315.

<sup>150</sup> Gilot and Lake, *Life with Picasso*, p. 63.

<sup>151</sup> John Berger, *The Success and Failure of Picasso* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), p. 174.

<sup>152</sup> My translation. The Party was part of his family. Pierre Daix, *J’ai cru au matin* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1976), p. 336.

<sup>153</sup> Jackson, *Dark Years*, p. 575.

<sup>154</sup> Albert Camus in *Combat*, 7 October 1944 cited in Cauter, *French Intellectuals*, p. 184.

the feelings and views it had fostered. Those emotions remained in French intellectual circles, and Communism was the popular answer to the injustices they had witnessed. Daix wrote that Picasso and his close friends all believed that Communism would “realise the promises of humanism and liberty embraced by the Resistance”.<sup>155</sup>

By March 1945, Picasso was calling himself “a political being constantly alert to the horrifying, passionate or pleasing events in the world”, his art “an offensive and defensive weapon against the enemy” and “not made to decorate apartments”.<sup>156</sup> This was a far cry from his 1930 statement that began the chapter. Picasso felt he was a political global citizen and he could no longer create art solely for its visual qualities. He saw his art as the arsenal to challenge the enemies of peace throughout the world. But that is not to imply that he was prepared to bow down to the strict guidelines of Socialist Realism or consciously create for the purpose of propaganda. Picasso was willing to use his work and his symbolism to produce art in the name of peace and humanity, but he would not sacrifice the way in which he chose to do so. Picasso made a conscious decision to take his art down a particular path and to use it as a “weapon against the enemy”, even though the artistic language he employed still left his work open to interpretation due to the ambiguous nature of its content and form. He was not willing to change the manner in which he chose to paint; instead, he would depict subjects that reflected his political allegiances. Becoming a PCF member did not mean ascribing to political militancy and blindly accepting all Party policies—it meant joining a family. Picasso was not the only intellectual who joined the Party after 1944 who kept a separation between his creative and political pursuits, and it was even quite common. In 1945, when PCF and National Assembly member Roger Garaudy told a professor from the Sorbonne interested in joining the Party that he should work as a Communist in his own field, the professor replied: “No! I would like to serve in something more useful, more social.”<sup>157</sup> Those intellectuals who joined the PCF later on in their lives had spent an entire career mastering specific styles and techniques. As a result, when Picasso acquired his Party card at the age of sixty-three, he was unwilling to abandon his artistic integrity. Instead, he used his own visual language to support Communist ideals. Picasso was attempting to strike a balance between the content and form his art took. Fougeron, who was the official PCF artist and adhered to the cultural policies of the Party, did not have any notable works before his turn towards Socialist Realism. Conversely, Picasso was an internationally celebrated artist by 1944. Fougeron did not have to change a creative method that he had spent a lifetime mastering as was expected of artists like Picasso.

Léger and Picasso had very similar stories. The PCF considered Léger a prestigious artist upon his membership to the PCF in 1945. He was an internationally renowned artist of an older generation who continued to work in his characteristic style, he never adhered to Socialist Realism, but he still made

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<sup>155</sup> Pierre Daix, trans. Olivia Emmet. *Picasso: Life and Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), p. 278.

<sup>156</sup> Simone Tery, “Picasso n’est pas officier dans l’armée française,” *Les Lettres Françaises*, 24 March 1945 cited in Cowling, *Style and Meaning*, p. 632.

<sup>157</sup> Roger Garaudy, *Les intellectuels et la renaissance française* (Paris: Éditions du PCF, 1945), p. 7 cited in Cauter, *French Intellectuals*, p. 38.

artwork that represented the values of the Party. *Les Loisirs, Hommage à David*<sup>158</sup> (1948–49) depicts a working-class family with bicycles, which makes reference to other works that celebrated paid holidays—a Popular Front reform.<sup>159</sup> He produced canvases dedicated to Henri Martin and the Rosenbergs,<sup>160</sup> and he attended the world peace congresses. Yet like Signac, he generally kept a separation between his art and politics. Léger wrote, “The work of art ought not to participate in the battle, it ought to be, on the contrary, a repose after the combat of your daily struggles.”<sup>161</sup> Both Picasso and Léger would attempt to create politically charged art the Party would approve of without adhering to the style of Socialist Realism.

### **Le Charnier and the Aftermath of War**

The major compositions Picasso created immediately after the Liberation of Paris were those that contained some of the most blatant political messages. After spending much of the war years painting still lifes and portraits that would avoid unwanted attention from the occupying forces, Picasso was finally free to create without fear. *Le Charnier* (1944–45) and *Monument aux Espagnols morts pour la France*<sup>162</sup> (1945–47) are primary examples of these political artworks. They are similar in that they both depicted victims of war and both were displayed at the Communist-organised exhibition *Art et Résistance* at the *Musée national d'art moderne* in February and March 1946. If Picasso's intention was to create art that could be used as a tool for the Party against fascism and war, these two pieces fulfilled that desire. Perhaps he hoped *Le Charnier* would have had the same impact as *Guernica* had—in both paintings Picasso used the same visual language in order to communicate the effects of war on its victims. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

*Le Charnier* (a charnel house being the house or vault where bones or bodies are placed) was originally thought to represent the atrocities of Nazi concentration camps, which had just become publicised at the time of the painting's creation. Picasso was also in the midst of its creation as the post-Liberation trials and purges were beginning. He had said that the brutal imagery of *Le Charnier* was intended as a call for “justice to be done in honour of those whose sacrifice secured the survival of France.”<sup>163</sup> It is speculated that the composition was also based on one of Goya's *Disasters of War* images

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<sup>158</sup> Jacques-Louis David was an artist who participated in the French Revolution. Fernand Léger, *Les Loisirs, Hommage à David*, 1948, oil on canvas, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

<sup>159</sup> Sarah Wilson, “‘La Beauté Révolutionnaire’? Réalisme Socialiste and French Painting 1935–1954,” *Oxford Art Journal* 3, no. 2 (October 1980): p. 62.

<sup>160</sup> Martin was a young sailor who had been condemned in July 1951 to five years of forced labour for refusing to load a cargo of weapons onto a French navy ship destined for Indochina. This was the exact type of event that the PCF could turn into a propaganda campaign against colonialism. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were American citizens arrested and executed for attempting to leak information about the atomic bomb to the Soviets. I will explain these incidents in further detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>161</sup> Cauter, *French Intellectuals*, p. 343.

<sup>162</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Monument aux Espagnols morts pour la France*, 1945–47, oil on canvas, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

<sup>163</sup> Spotts, *Shameful Peace*, p. 155.

entitled *Ravages of War*<sup>164</sup>, which illustrates the horrific effects of combat.<sup>165</sup> Just as he had done in *Guernica*, Picasso depicted contemporary events in a more universal register and placed the focus on the victims of war—and not on the Socialist Realist aim of glorifying the gains of the working class.



Figure 2.2 – *Le Charnier*

While *Le Charnier* has been said to illustrate the horrors of the Holocaust within a large portion of the art historical literature, other theories refute this. Barr first described *Le Charnier* in 1946 as being a representation of “the famished, waxen cadavers of Buchenwald, Dachau, and Belsen” in a MoMA exhibition catalogue.<sup>166</sup> Art historian Jean Sutherland Boggs wrote that *Le Charnier* was a record of the concentration camps.<sup>167</sup> Art historian Alyce Mahon argued that its content, mood, and palettes evoked news reports of death camps.<sup>168</sup> This was to be a common interpretation. However, Lynda Morris believes that perhaps Barr was thinking about the feelings of his audience at MoMA when he offered his analysis, since many visitors came from Eastern European Jewish families.<sup>169</sup> Instead, Morris contends that Picasso had almost completed the painting before the first concentration camps were liberated and the photographs were publicised, even though rumours of the existence of the camps had persisted throughout the war.<sup>170</sup> The Americans liberated Dachau in April 1945, and Picasso worked on *Le Charnier* between February and May of 1945.<sup>171</sup> Morris offers an alternative interpretation that Picasso based the painting on a documentary film about a Spanish Republican family who were killed in their home by

<sup>164</sup> Francisco Goya, *Ravages of War*, plate 30 from *The Disasters of War* series, 1810–11, etching, drypoint, burin, and burnishing on ivory wove paper with gilt edges, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.

<sup>165</sup> Robert Rosenblum, “The Spanishness of Picasso’s Still Life,” in Jonathan Brown, ed., *Picasso and the Spanish Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 92–93.

<sup>166</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Picasso: Fifty Years of his Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1946), p. 250.

<sup>167</sup> Jean Sutherland Boggs, “The Last Thirty Years,” in John Golding and Roland Penrose, eds., *Picasso in Retrospect* (London: Granada Publishing Limited, 1981), p. 127.

<sup>168</sup> Alyce Mahon, *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros 1938–1968* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 2005), p. 110.

<sup>169</sup> Lynda Morris, “The Battle for Picasso’s Mind,” in Jonathan Harris and Richard Koeck, eds., *Picasso and the Politics of Visual Representation: War and Peace in the Era of the Cold War and Since* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 32.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Morris, “The Charnel House,” in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, p. 70.

Franco's army.<sup>172</sup> Morris is not the first to propose such a theory. In 1987, Daix also acknowledged that the painting depicted a murdered Spanish family. Additionally, he understood how the painting's title might confuse one into thinking it represented the death camps.<sup>173</sup> Daix claimed that Picasso never titled the painting himself, only ever referring to it as "the massacre", thus furthering the understanding as to why it might have been named after and attributed to the Holocaust instead of its true subjects—the victims of the Spanish Civil War.<sup>174</sup> Utley described the *Le Charnier* as depicting a "pyramid formed by the bodies of a family... the archetypal triad that stands for humanity as a whole—massacred in the midst of their daily existence."<sup>175</sup> Maar herself stated that the inspiration for *Le Charnier* was based on a Spanish film depicting the murder of a Republican Spanish family during the Civil War.<sup>176</sup> Art historian and curator Sarah Wilson writes that in its abstraction and non-specificity, *Le Charnier* related to all sites of anonymous burial.<sup>177</sup> The non-specific nature of the painting allowed for numerous interpretations as to its origin. The absence of colour was intended to avoid aesthetic distraction and put focus on the painting's content.<sup>178</sup> The majority of scholars and researchers now agree on the content and inspiration for the painting. Although it is important to understand how *Le Charnier* connected with those viewers affected by the atrocities of the Holocaust, it was not a direct representation of the extermination camps.

Daix wrote that the ultimate goal for Picasso after *Guernica* was that his paintings find their own logic when confronted by tragic events, and because of that his art and his membership to the PCF could coexist and work together.<sup>179</sup> Despite this attempt with *Le Charnier* to cooperate with the Party by depicting the victims of the fascist Nationalists in Spain, it was the first of a series of paintings produced by Picasso of which the PCF could never fully approve. The Party wanted Picasso to illustrate the people's struggle and victory in creating a socialist society, whereas Picasso tended to focus on the massacre of innocents. For example, at the 1946 *Art et Résistance* exhibition, the artwork received mixed reviews. Aragon said Picasso and many of the other artists whose works were on display "saw death and not that to which death gives rise."<sup>180</sup> Instead of depicting the hope and fortitude that could arise from a tragedy, Picasso only painted the horror of death. This would become a common sentiment in reaction to future Picasso paintings. Regardless, Picasso created *Le Charnier* in the name of those who had fought against

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<sup>172</sup> Harris, "Introduction," in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 16.

<sup>173</sup> Daix, *Life and Art*, p. 281.

<sup>174</sup> Pierre Daix, *Pablo Picasso* (Paris: Éditions Tallandier, 2007), p. 424

<sup>175</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 55.

<sup>176</sup> Jane Fluegel, "Chronology," in William Rubin, ed., *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 380.

<sup>177</sup> Sarah Wilson, *Picasso/Marx and Socialist Realism in France* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 111.

<sup>178</sup> Roland Penrose, *His Life and Work* (1953), p. 318.

<sup>179</sup> Daix, *Life and Art*, p. 281.

<sup>180</sup> Louis Aragon quoted in Jean Ristat, *Aragon: écrits sur l'art moderne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1981), p. 160 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 77.

fascism, which was in accordance with the values of the PCF whether the Party formally approved of the artwork or not.

In this chapter, I have described particular events in Picasso's life beginning in 1937 that propelled him to eventually join the French Communist Party in 1944. The horrors committed by the Franco and the Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War led to the creation and international exhibition of Picasso's overtly political *Guernica*. During the Second World War, Picasso indirectly participated in the French Resistance effort and he made his disdain for those who collaborated during the Occupation very clear. The PCF emerged from the war as a political group for which the intelligentsia had great respect. They eclipsed all other Left-wing parties from the Popular Front in post-war France because they truly represented the Left: they were commonly called "le parti des 75,000 fusillés".<sup>181</sup> For Picasso, the PCF and its intellectuals stood for the Republican cause in Spain, as they had been persistent Resistance fighters during the war and punishers of those collaborators who did not respect the survival of French patriotism and culture. The Party appealed to many of the artists and friends Picasso had associated with during the war. Picasso used his experiences in Occupied France and his knowledge of the horrors occurring in Franco's Spain to create works that communicated the plight of those affected by war. Many of Picasso's public and private statements show his conversion from being an artist who did not think about his art's influence to one who was politically engaged, and he infused that political language into some of his compositions after obtaining his PCF membership. I analysed the context and imagery of *Le Charnier*, which was Picasso's attempt at creating politically charged artworks that would serve the Party's needs. I have tried to illustrate that political militancy is not the only way to show adherence to a set of values and goals: Picasso demonstrated his dedication to the PCF through his Party membership, his friendships, his solidarity, and his artwork. Although Picasso's path began as an artist who painted for "art's sake", as time passed, global political events changed his way of thinking and the way in which he perceived the purpose of his art. He became part of a growing, intellectual community during the war, and he felt the need to engage with a political organisation as a means of defeating a common enemy of war and fascism in order to restore the peace and freedom that had been compromised. The Party had particular expectations of its intellectuals; however, Picasso was only willing to serve the PCF on his own terms. The preservation of peace, humanity, and freedom were to be Picasso's main contributions to the Party, which will be explored in the next chapter.

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<sup>181</sup> Drake, *Intellectuals and Politics*, p. 12.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Art, Peace, and Commitment Prevail: the Enduring Engagement with the PCF, 1947–73**

*I don't think there are many painters who have "participated" as Picasso has. He has painted ceaselessly and thrown his whole work, or for a particular occasion a single canvas or drawing, into the war in which he considered himself to be a combatant.*<sup>1</sup> —Hélène Parmelin

The popularity and moral legitimacy the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) had gained during the Occupation and its aftermath began to fade in the late 1940s and early 1950s. A series of political events throughout the world were leading to divisions between Communists and threatened the unity and strength the recent experience of the Second World War and the Resistance had built within the Party. A popular view among scholars is that Picasso's level of engagement with the PCF began to peter off in the 1950s until his death in 1973. For example, John Richardson writes that after 1956, Picasso was a Communist in name only.<sup>2</sup> While the height of Picasso's interaction with the PCF was certainly in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the artist never publicly or formally resigned from the Party. Why did Picasso remain a PCF member until his death? Did he truly continue to engage with the Communist cause? When looking at Picasso's life after 1960, it is clear his involvement with the Party had subsided. However, when compared to the multitude of intellectuals who chose instead to leave the Party, I will demonstrate how Picasso's actions in the 1950s and 60s continued to illustrate—although to lesser degrees—his support for a political ideology that stood for the values of peace and freedom, even though the ways in which he participated in the global Communist movement shifted. How can this shift be explained? Beginning in the late 1940s, the PCF had begun to alienate some members of the Party with its position on colonial issues and its response to problems emerging within the Eastern bloc. For example, the Party's inability to strongly oppose the Algerian War and the Soviet intervention in its satellite nations led many intellectuals critical of the PCF to organise themselves outside of the Party. With this division of PCF intellectuals into breakaway currents, Picasso immersed himself in activities that would have a positive impact at a time when issues such as colonialism were causing disagreements among his peers. Picasso chose to support the PCF-backed World Peace Council and Movement (WPCM)—an organisation that many like-minded Communists could rally behind based on their mutual desire for peace. The Soviet investment in the peace movement was clearly tactical. It could be utilised as an excuse to verbally condemn or militarily attack Western military aggression worldwide. It could also help the Soviets justify their own aggression in the Eastern bloc by claiming that intervention in nations such as Hungary was necessary in order to prevent Western powers from taking advantage of a weakened nation. However, it was more widely seen as a way

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<sup>1</sup> Parmelin was Picasso's friend and fellow PCF member. Quote originally printed in 1959 French edition *Picasso sur la place*. Hélène Parmelin, trans. Humphrey Hare, *Picasso Plain: An Intimate Portrait* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> John Richardson, "How Political Was Picasso?", *New York Review of Books*, 25 November 2010, p. 3. Accessed: 19 November 2014. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/nov/25/how-political-was-picasso/>

for the Soviets to maintain control of the Warsaw Pact countries.<sup>3</sup> When these problematic political moves left the Party divided, the World Peace Movement served to unite them. With the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 came First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of the former Soviet leader at the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's (CPSU) XX Party Congress. Rifts developed across all Communist parties throughout the 1950s and 60s, which deepened further after the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, the failure to support anti-colonial movements, and the crushing of the Prague Spring. I will explain how many French intellectuals spoke out against Soviet responses during these events, others distanced themselves, and even more abandoned their Party card. Picasso's move toward the WPM demonstrates the effort he made to continue supporting a Party organisation rather than participate in divisive issues that could only create dissent within a group that had emerged unified after the war.

I will also be concentrating on specific pieces of political art Picasso created between the years 1951 and 1961. While the common thread throughout the historical scholarship maintains that Picasso's political allegiances faded in these years, I will show how he continued creating artworks inspired by political events that could benefit the Communist cause. I will be placing *Massacre en Corée*<sup>4</sup> of 1951, *La Guerre*<sup>5</sup> and *La Paix*<sup>6</sup> murals of 1952, the Stalin portrait of 1953, and the Djamila Boupacha portrait of 1961 in their historical contexts and exploring how Picasso used these compositions to engage with the PCF, its intellectuals, and political issues of the era.

Donald Drew Egbert refers to Picasso when he wrote in his groundbreaking work *Social Radicalism and the Arts, Western Europe: A Cultural History from the French Revolution to 1968* that the greater the socially committed artist and the greater the artistic merit of his works of art, the more likely the artist is to be relatively uninformed about specific contemporary political matters, and the more likely to express a social mood in a personal way rather than a specific political ideology.<sup>7</sup> Instead, I hope to demonstrate that although Picasso appeared to be less interested in political matters, his artistic contributions, his participation in ancillary Party groups like the WPM, and his engagement with issues such as the use of torture in Algeria revealed his awareness and knowledge of the political affairs involving France, the PCF, and beyond. Although his interactions with the PCF were not as numerous as they had

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Soviet uses of the World Peace Movement see David Gress, *Peace and Survival: West Germany, The Peace Movement, and European Security* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press of Stanford University, 1985); Wynfred Joshua, "Soviet Manipulation of the European Peace Movement," *Strategic Review* 11, no. 1 (1983); J.A.E. Vermaat, "Moscow Fronts and the European Peace Movement," *Problems of Communism* 31, no. 6 (1982).

<sup>4</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Massacre en Corée*, 1951, oil on plywood, Musée national Picasso, Paris.

<sup>5</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Guerre*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée national Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

<sup>6</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Paix*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée national Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

<sup>7</sup> Donald Drew Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the Arts, Western Europe: A Cultural History from the French Revolution to 1968* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 732.

been after the Second World War, in this chapter I will examine the various ways in which Picasso engaged with Party ideals through his art and through his participation with the Communist-supported peace movement from 1947 until the Algerian War.

### **The Honeymoon Ends; the Push for Peace Begins**

This section will focus on the WPM and the continuous efforts of Picasso to provide support for the Party. Instead of directly engaging with the PCF, Picasso instead chose to join other Communists and support the peace movement. The period of prestige and influence the PCF experienced after the Liberation of France had slowly come to an end. The Communists were expelled from the French government on 5 May 1947, and over the subsequent months, crisis followed crisis, which set a pattern for the remainder of the Cold War.<sup>8</sup> The honeymoon period experienced between the intellectuals and the PCF began to fade. I will be looking at some of the major contributing factors: the questionable expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Soviet bloc in 1948; the trial and execution of Hungarian Communist Party Minister of Foreign Affairs László Rajk and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party Traicho Kostov in 1949; the Victor Kravchenko trial of 1949; and the publication of evidence that revealed the existence of Soviet labour camps. These were events and processes that caused divisive rifts within Communist parties throughout Western Europe. Some members decided to leave the Party. Some remained silent. Others decided to focus their efforts elsewhere. The beginning of the international peace movement was to be a major distraction from the unsavoury political activities unfolding in the Eastern bloc. According to Tony Judt, “from 1946 to the death of Stalin, no other topic so dominated public discussion.”<sup>9</sup> If the intellectuals could not assist the Party directly through their work, or if political policy was causing contention within the Party ranks, then they could at least make themselves useful by organising congresses for peace. As a result, their prestige could help attract attention to the Party-supported gatherings worldwide, which in turn could show the United States and the West that Communists were putting forth a sincere effort to secure peace in the world.

Political scientist Marshall Schulman explained that the WPM was seen by the CPSU as a defensive strategic instrument with the ability to reduce the danger of war and neutralise the superior atomic capability of the West by building up popular sentiments against the use of the atomic bomb.<sup>10</sup> Lawrence Wittner agreed that the Party feared the US would initiate nuclear war against Communist states, which was a real possibility in the political climate generated by the Cold War.<sup>11</sup> Lynda Morris maintains that because the Soviets were lagging behind the US in atomic development, it was in the Soviet Union’s best

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Kelly, *Modern French Marxism* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1982), p. 70.

<sup>9</sup> Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944–56* (Oxford, UK: University of California Press, 1992), p. 222.

<sup>10</sup> Marshall D. Schulman, *Stalin’s Foreign Policy Reappraised* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 80, 81.

<sup>11</sup> Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb: Volume Two, Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954–1970* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 87.

interests politically to create a peace movement and appeal to the international desire for peace—especially after the brutality of the Second World War.<sup>12</sup> Political scientist Ronald Tiersky went as far as to claim that the peace movement was the PCF’s only productive outlet for activity.<sup>13</sup> Although a Marxist, John Berger wrote as no fan of Stalin. He recognised that Picasso “contributed positively to the most important struggle of our time”, “he lent his name and reputation again and again to encourage others to protest against the threat of nuclear war”, and “he was in a position to use his art as a means of influencing people politically, and in so far as he was able, he chose to do this consciously and intelligently.”<sup>14</sup> Berger’s words show that a commitment to peace could remain separate from loyalty to the Soviet Union, even though the organisation still functioned as a Communist affiliate. While it may be hard to understand how Picasso could remain in a Party that was embroiled in many controversial situations within Eastern Europe, the anti-colonial stance of the PCF stood in line with Picasso’s views against war and his commitment to the World Peace Council. David Craven explains that however imperfect it was, Soviet opposition to the encroachment of Western imperialism contributed to Picasso’s continued membership to the Party.<sup>15</sup> Gertje Utley called the idea that Picasso always wanted to do what was best to support the working class a myth; however, according to Parmelin and journalist Georges Tabaraud it was Picasso’s primary goal. They claimed that upon receiving distasteful news from the Soviet Union, Picasso would always say “and the workers, are they still masters of their factories, and the peasants, the owners of their land? Well then, everything else is secondary.”<sup>16</sup>

After the first meetings were held in Paris in February of 1948 under the name *Combattants de la paix et de la liberté*, the WPM formally began in August 1948 with the first Communist Party-sponsored Congress of Intellectuals for Peace meeting in Wroclaw, Poland.<sup>17</sup> Picasso had been invited in a letter dated 15 October 1947 and was in attendance.<sup>18</sup> Although public events of that kind were completely foreign to him, he was asked to deliver a speech.<sup>19</sup> The purpose of the Congress was to formally establish the WPM, to create the permanent International Committee for the Defense of Peace, and to draft a resolution, which saw the entire French delegation signing to denounce warmongers.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, it was there that the

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<sup>12</sup> Lynda Morris, “The Battle for Picasso’s Mind,” in Jonathan Harris and Richard Koeck, eds., *Picasso and the Politics of Visual Representation: War and Peace in the Era of the Cold War and Since* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 33. For research on the competition to develop nuclear weapons during WWII, see Ronald E. Powaski, *March to Armageddon: The United States and the Nuclear Arms Race, 1939 to the Present* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>13</sup> Ronald Tiersky, *French Communism 1920–1972* (London: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 219.

<sup>14</sup> John Berger, *The Success and Failure of Picasso* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), p. 175.

<sup>15</sup> David Craven, “When Picasso Was Feared by the US Government,” in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 116.

<sup>16</sup> According to Tabaraud and Parmelin in conversation with Utley. Cited in Gertje R. Utley, *Picasso: the Communist Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 48.

<sup>17</sup> Schulman, *Foreign Policy Reappraised*, p. 85.

<sup>18</sup> Box B1; folder: Poland, Bureau d’informations Polonaises, AMNPP cited in Morris, “The Battle for Picasso’s Mind,” in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (London: Victor Gallancz, 1953), p. 327.

<sup>20</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, pp. 106–07.

International Liaison Committee of Intellectuals for Peace was appointed. The committee then met in Paris in early 1949 to announce a series of meetings to be held in major cities around the world.<sup>21</sup>

The *Congrès mondial des partisans de la paix* was held on 20–23 April 1949 in Paris at the Salle Pleyel, with a twin congress also occurring in Prague. Organised primarily by the intellectuals, these congresses led to the official creation of the *Comité mondial des partisans de la paix*. The Picasso doves of peace first appeared at this gathering. The doves were to decorate every peace congress poster and advertisement from thereon in, and they would eventually become the internationally recognised symbol for peace. Picasso designed a poster for the event, which included a dove, with his inspiration stemming from the caged, white, fan-tailed pigeon he had at the entrance to his studio on Rue des Grands-Augustins in Paris.<sup>22</sup> Intellectuals from fifty nations were in attendance, and Chairman Frédéric Joliot-Curie opened the congress with the following words: “We are not here to ask for peace, but to impose it. This congress is the reply of peoples to the signers of the Atlantic Pact. To the new war they are preparing, we will reply with a revolt of the peoples.”<sup>23</sup> Joliot-Curie’s speech revealed the Communist fears concerning the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the United States, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland had formed NATO earlier that month. While it initially lacked a military structure, NATO quickly developed a military branch in the early 1950s with the outbreak of the Korean War.<sup>24</sup> This banding of Western nations engaged a long-term Soviet fear of “capitalist encirclement”. The *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia* as late as 1974 continued to describe NATO as “a military-political union directed against Socialist countries”.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Stéphane Courtois, “Mouvements de la paix,” in Jean-François Sirinelli, ed., *Dictionnaire historique de la vie politique française au XXe siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995), p. 702.

<sup>22</sup> Penrose, *His Life and Work* (1953), p. 328. Gilot wrote of Matisse’s gift to Picasso of a pair of white pigeons. Picasso made several lithographs of them. Before the congress at the Salle de Pleyel, Aragon came to the Rue Grands-Augustins studio to collect the poster sketch Picasso had promised him. Aragon looked through the folder of lithographs, and when he saw the dove, both men agreed it was to be the symbol for the meeting. The day before the WPM meeting in Paris, Picasso would name his newborn daughter Paloma—the Spanish word for dove. Morris, “The Battle for Picasso’s Mind,” in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, pp. 34–35 and Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso* (London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 273.

<sup>23</sup> *New York Times*, 21 April 1949, p. 1 cited in Schulman, *Foreign Policy Reappraised*, p. 97. The North Atlantic Treaty for Collective Defence was signed on 4 April 1949 in Washington. Sarah Wilson, *Picasso/Marx and Socialist Realism in France* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 132.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159–60.

<sup>25</sup> Derek Hunn, “Russia and NATO” in Michael Pursglove, ed., *The New Russia* (Oxford, UK: Intellect Books, 1995), p. 85.

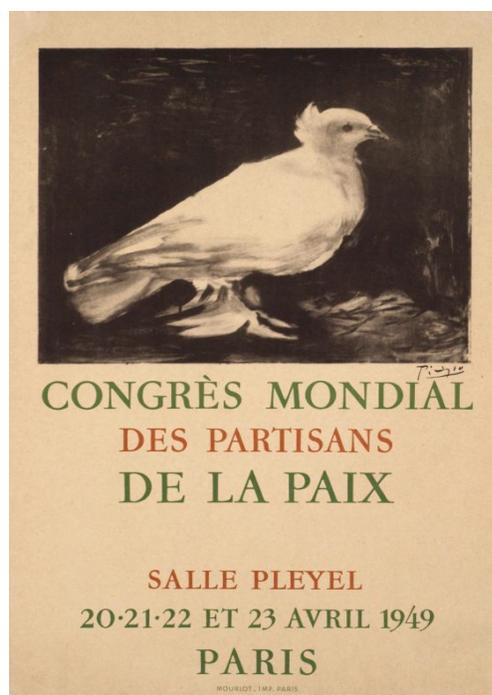


Figure 3.1 – Picasso’s poster for the Paris WPM meeting<sup>26</sup>

Schulman argued that the centre of the peace movement was in France, and the tradition of French intellectuals aligning their aspirations with the Soviet cause was engrained in the Party’s history. This made the WPM a considerable force in French politics.<sup>27</sup> Many Communist intellectuals of France did not want another war, nor did they want to see the threat of Western imperialism in Europe. The peace movement became a cause on which the intellectuals could focus their attention during the years when the Soviet Union was suppressing nationalist movements in its satellite states. This is certainly a reason why the CPSU chose the intellectuals to be the movement’s primary organisers—to offer a distraction.

The year 1949 was a busy time for Picasso’s peace-related activities. In September 1949 he gave a speech at the International Youth Congress for Peace in Nice. The following month he travelled to Rome for a World Peace Congress meeting. Never one for much travelling or public speaking, Picasso’s investment in the need for peace saw him make efforts for the causes he strongly supported. During the late 1940s and early 50s, the PCF and the WPM initiated many signature campaigns.<sup>28</sup> One of the biggest was the

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<sup>26</sup> *World Congress of the Partisans for Peace*, Paris, 20–23 April 1949, poster, Collection Gérard Gosselin.

<sup>27</sup> Schulman, *Foreign Policy Reappraised*, p. 94.

<sup>28</sup> The French National Peace Council announced on 28 February 1949 that it would send an open letter to US President Truman. It stated that the Atlantic Pact (NATO) was invalid and its provisions were not legally binding on the French people. In September 1949, the PCF introduced a “Peace Ballot to preserve France from becoming a field of the dead or battleground of a nuclear war”. The declaration opposed German rearmament, the Vietnam War, nuclear weapons, and a swollen military budget. [Irvin M. Wall, *French Communism in the Era of Stalin: The Quest for Unity and Integration, 1945–1962* (London: Greenwood Press, 1983), pp. 97–980.] This signature campaign for the peace ballot supposedly gathered approximately seven million signatures for peace by the end of 1949. (Tiersky, *French Communism*, p. 223) Then came the national “consultation” on German rearmament

Stockholm Peace Appeal Against Atomic Weapons petition of late 1949, which supposedly collected fifty million signatures worldwide, though the number varies considerably depending on the source.<sup>29</sup> Not only was the Appeal supported by peace committees in the Eastern bloc—many Communists in the West sought and received support from non-Communists who were also concerned about the nuclear threat.<sup>30</sup> The peace movement attempted to expand past Party lines and attract widespread attention. In 1950, the Soviet Union declared that the fight for peace needed to be a primary responsibility for all Communists.<sup>31</sup> Subsequently, in March 1950, Picasso and eleven others planned to visit the USA as a part of the World Congress of Partisans to personally present the Stockholm petition to the American government. This was another attempt to bridge political divides in the name of peace. However, the group was denied American visas. In 1990, author and journalist Herbert Mitgang received the recently declassified, 187-page, heavily censored FBI and State Department folder kept on Picasso for a period spanning twenty-five years. In a confidential communiqué dated 23 February 1950 from American Ambassador to France David K. Bruce to US Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Bruce stated that refusing to issue visas to Picasso and the rest of the peace group would “certainly cause unfavorable comment here [USA], particularly in intellectual and ‘liberal’ circles. It would also tend to suggest that we have something to fear from Communist ‘peace’ propaganda. However, if the decision is negative, we believe that Departmental spokesman and V.O.A. [Voice of America] should point out that [the] proposed visit is a brazen propaganda stunt for purely political motives which have no connection with professional activities of applicants.”<sup>32</sup> While the actual intentions of the CPSU were likely less sincere, Picasso sought to represent the congress as a partisan of peace. Picasso would also face American visa issues when it came to his artwork: Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the director of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City, did not even attempt to obtain an

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with major opposition coming from the PCF. Two million signatures were collected by February 1951. (*L'Humanité*, 10 February 1951 cited in Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 136) In January 1955, the World Peace Congress launched the Vienna Appeal, which opposed “any government that prepared for atomic war” and asked that “the nuclear powers abolish all the atomic weapons they have in their possession and cease to produce them immediately”. According to the Congress, 660 million people eventually signed this statement. (Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb*, p. 86)

<sup>29</sup> There are major discrepancies pertaining to the number of signatures on the Stockholm Appeal. Morris cites fifty million (“The Battle for Picasso’s Mind,” in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 35). David Caute wrote that the PCF obtained 550 million signatures in support of the congress worldwide [*Les Lettres Françaises*, 7 April 1949 cited in David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals 1914–1960* (London: A. Deutsch, 1964), p. 188]. Courtois, Wall, and Annie Kriegel wrote that more than 400 million people had signed, including fourteen million in France. (Courtois, “Mouvements de la paix,” in Sirinelli, ed., *Dictionnaire historique*, p. 703), (Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 108), [Kriegel, *Ce que j’ai cru comprendre* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1991), p. 507]. Dominique Desanti wrote that the PCF claimed to have 600 million signatures worldwide. [Dominique Desanti, *Les Staliniens: Une expérience politique, 1944–56* (Paris: Fayard, 1975), p. 193]. Deery cites 473 million signatures collected. [Phillip Deery, “The Dove Flies East: Whitehall, Warsaw, and the 1950 World Peace Congress,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 48, 4 (2002): p. 451.]

<sup>30</sup> April Carter, *Peace Movements: International Protest and World Politics since 1945* (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1992), p. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Desanti, *Les Staliniens*, p. 172.

<sup>32</sup> Since 1942, the V.O.A. has been an international radio network that is funded by and serves the American government. Herbert Mitgang, “When Picasso Spooked the FBI,” *New York Times*, 1 November 1990, pp. 1, 2. Accessed: 19 November 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/11/11/arts/art-when-picasso-spooked-the-fbi.html>

American visa for Picasso so that he could attend a major exhibition of his work in 1957 because Barr considered it “too dangerous”.<sup>33</sup>

The results of the Stockholm Appeal were meant to be announced at the second World Peace Congress in Italy in October 1950.<sup>34</sup> However, the Italian Congress was cancelled and rescheduled first to London then to Sheffield, UK because of visa refusals. Posters plastered across Paris announcing the British Congress were adorned with Picasso’s doves. The Sheffield Congress was to be the third congress Picasso attended as a delegate, and it was to be his first time in the UK since 1919. However, delegates were refused entry into the country. With a war raging in Korea between East and West, a gathering of Communists in a Western country that was supporting the South Koreans made for a complicated foreign affairs situation. Just as the US did not want to accept representatives of the Communist Party, neither did the UK. Of the approximately sixty delegates who arrived in Dover on November 11, only Picasso and select others were permitted entry.<sup>35</sup> Although Picasso was able to enter the country, he first had to wait for twelve hours at Victoria Station in London, after which Penrose used his government contacts to secure his release.<sup>36</sup> Coincidentally, an Arts Council-organised exhibition of recent paintings and ceramics by Picasso was being held in London at that time. Elizabeth Cowling believes that perhaps Picasso was allowed into the country for that very reason.<sup>37</sup> However, in an attempt to voice his disapproval of the way in which delegates were refused entry into the UK, Picasso declined an initiation to visit his own exhibition and participate in its opening even though he had previously confirmed his attendance.<sup>38</sup> When reminded that in his capacity as an artist he was always welcome in England, Picasso still declined the invitation and said: “curiously enough, Picasso the artist and Picasso the fighter for peace are one and the same person.”<sup>39</sup> The Sheffield Congress went on as planned, though with far fewer attendees. Their meeting on the evening of 13 November 1950 saw Picasso receive a standing ovation after a short speech where he declared “I stand for life against peace; I stand for peace against war.”<sup>40</sup>

To make up for the interference during the Sheffield Congress, another one was quickly organised to take place that same month in Warsaw for all those who were originally meant to attend. Picasso was

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<sup>33</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., ed., *Picasso: 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1957) cited in Wilson, *Picasso/Marx*, p. 218. Picasso’s relationship with American art institutions will be further examined in Chapter Four.

<sup>34</sup> “Work for Peace,” 17 July 1950, p. 1 cited in Deery, “The Dove Flies East,” p. 451.

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Cowling, *Visiting Picasso: The Notebooks and Letters of Ronald Penrose* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006), p. 64.

<sup>36</sup> Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1981), p. 367.

<sup>37</sup> Cowling, *Visiting Picasso*, p. 63.

<sup>38</sup> Penrose, *His Life and Work* (1953), p. 329 and Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 114.

<sup>39</sup> Picasso’s FBI file, 17 February 1955, p. 87 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 114. Picasso’s statement is interesting given the fact that there are many examples of when Picasso’s art took precedence in his life. This will be explored in Chapter Three.

<sup>40</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 14 November 1950, p. 7 cited in Cowling, *Visiting Picasso*, p. 64. For an account of the meeting, see the full article quoted in Deery, “The Dove Flies East,” p. 455; Cowling, *Visiting Picasso*, p. 64; and Penrose, *His Life and Work* (1953), p. 329.

not in attendance, but he was awarded the international Stalin Peace Prize along with the late writer J.R. Bloch and film director Louis Daquin. Chilean poet and politician Pablo Neruda<sup>41</sup> accepted the prize on behalf of Picasso, and with it made an elaborate speech that praised Picasso and his doves for being a reminder of hope throughout the world.<sup>42</sup> While Utley deemed the speech as one that highlighted the “aggressive, exaggerated rhetoric and silliness of the ‘peace’ discourse”,<sup>43</sup> it is important to study how Picasso’s friends, fellow intellectuals, and members of the international peace movement perceived the sincerity of his commitment to the Party. Although Picasso was not the ideal intellectual who adhered to Socialist Realist in his work, his worth and prestige was not to be taken for granted, and his contributions were deemed worthy of an accolade like the Stalin Peace Prize. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler—Picasso’s dealer and friend—had doubted Picasso’s political dedication when he called the artist “apolitical” prior to the Second World War.<sup>44</sup> Then in 1955 he proclaimed that “If today, millions of men see in Picasso the author of the dove, the man of peace, they are infinitely closer to the real Picasso than the stunted aesthetes... who turn away from the *Massacre en Corée* with disdain and disgust.”<sup>45</sup> Picasso continued to work for humanitarian causes through his contributions to the PCF’s peace movement. He also illustrated the global need for peace through many of his artworks. So why, as Kahnweiler mentioned, were canvases such as *Massacre* ill received?

### **Massacre en Corée and the Korean War**

*Massacre en Corée* was an attempt by Picasso to create a piece of art that could represent both his personal values and those of the PCF. Although Picasso created, dated, and named the canvas for a very specific cause, like *Le Charnier* it was not completely successful in the eyes of the Party. The outbreak of the Korean War in late June of 1950 saw North Korean forces cross the thirty-eighth parallel into the south. United Nations troops soon arrived under the command of General Douglas MacArthur to support the South Koreans against the Communist North. Many Communists worldwide interpreted the battle as an American imperialistic war and an attempt at containment. The war in Korea also saw Picasso’s anti-war sentiments resurface, and the best way for him to do his duty as a PCF intellectual at that point was to immerse himself in his art. During the war, much of the PCF’s media focus centred on the atrocities

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<sup>41</sup> Picasso helped Neruda when he was hiding in France from persecution in Chile. Jean-Charles Gateau, *Éluard, Picasso et la peinture (1936–1952)* (Paris: Librairie Droz, 1983), p. 283.

<sup>42</sup> Neruda’s speech of 22 November 1950 was reproduced in *Arts de France* 33 (December 1950), p. 8 cited in Wilson, *Picasso/Marx*, p. 143.

<sup>43</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 115.

<sup>44</sup> Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and Francis Crémieux, trans. Helen Weaver, *My Galleries and Painters* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1971), p. 108.

<sup>45</sup> My translation from the French. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, *Picasso: Oeuvres des Musées de Leningrad et de Moscou et de quelques collections parisiennes* (Paris: Editions Cercle d’Art, 1955), p. 102. “Si aujourd’hui, des millions d’hommes voient en Picasso l’auteur de la ‘Colombe’, l’homme de la paix, ils sont infiniment plus proches du vrai Picasso que les esthètes rabourgis... qui se détournent du *Massacre en Corée* avec dédain et dégoût.”

committed by the American military in North Korean territory. It was during this time when Picasso painted another one of the few unambiguously political paintings of his career.



Figure 3.2 – *Massacre en Corée*

While Picasso was painting *Massacre*, allegations of the American use of bacteriological weapons surfaced from China in late January 1951.<sup>46</sup> The Party would understandably use these claims to launch a propaganda attack against the United States, and the focus of their denunciations quickly shifted from basic American intervention to bacteriological warfare. The man who was deemed responsible for this alleged use of bacteriological weapons was the American commander-in-chief in Korea, General Matthew Ridgway. Consequently, when Ridgway became the head of Europe's NATO forces in 1952, the Communists organised a protest against his nomination in Paris on May 28, which turned into a violent demonstration.<sup>47</sup>

*Massacre en Corée* was another pictorial example of Picasso's hatred of wars that result in the suffering and deaths of the innocent. The painting depicts a group of robotic-like soldiers firing upon a group of women and children. According to Penrose, it attained its universality by leaving the identity of the aggressors unknown as Picasso had also done with *Guernica*.<sup>48</sup> Through the names and dates of both canvases, the specific historic events they referenced could be determined, while the artistic language remained a general condemnation of war. *Massacre* is often referenced in relation to or specifically said to be drawn from the nineteenth-century revolutionary artwork of an old master—Goya's *The Third of May*

<sup>46</sup> *L'Humanité*, 10 January 1952 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 165.

<sup>47</sup> Pierre Milza, "Ridgway la peste," in Michael Winock, ed., *Le Temps de la guerre froide: du Rideau de fer à l'effondrement du communisme* (Paris: du Seuil, 1994), pp.143–60 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 166.

<sup>48</sup> Penrose, *His Life and Work* (1953), p. 334.

1808<sup>49</sup> (1814)—as well as Édouard Manet’s series *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian*<sup>50</sup> (1867–69).<sup>51</sup> With *Massacre*, Picasso was in conversation with both the Spanish and French artistic traditions.

Picasso’s explicit intention with *Massacre* to create a piece of art the Party would approve of was evident not only in its subject matter but also in its title. Picasso rarely named his work. However, he titled *Massacre en Corée*, which left no doubt of its subject matter. Although the Party exhibited the painting at the *Salon de Mai* of 1951 and elsewhere, it lacked widespread support within the PCF. The political context surrounding the creation of *Massacre* made it likely that the painting portrayed the western United Nations troops of South Korea—represented by the robotic soldiers—due to Picasso’s growing contempt for the United States in the midst of the Cold War. However, because Picasso was not visually explicit when painting the aggressors, *Massacre* was not considered as critical of the capitalist forces aiding South Korea as the Party would have wanted. And although focusing on the masses was strongly encouraged by the PCF, they would have rather seen Picasso show the heroism of the Korean people rather than their tragic defeat.<sup>52</sup> Picasso’s focus, as it had been with *Guernica* and *Le Charnier*, remained on the suffering of the victims of war. While Picasso had the same opinions regarding the imperialist nature of the Americans as the PCF, to paint a North Korean victory over the US-supported South would have glorified war. Instead, as a Party member whose chief contributions were in the name of peace, Picasso attempted to voice his anti-American and pro-Soviet views in addition to his anti-war sentiments.

The PCF had allowed its artists to use their medium of choice since 1934 when expressing their political views and serving the Party’s needs. Picasso’s attempt to do this with *Massacre* is groundbreaking in terms of its blatant message without embracing the Party-approved style of Socialist Realism. Yet *Massacre* was not regarded highly in the art world either because it held a strong political message. Daix argued that *Massacre* lacked the “internal signatures that gave *Guernica* and *Le Charnier* its strength” and that Picasso “treated the subject instead of letting the painting speak for itself”.<sup>53</sup> Regardless, the intentions were similar with both paintings, even if *Massacre* was not as globally powerful or as recognised by art critics as *Guernica*. Picasso’s attempt to represent the struggle of the Left while still maintaining his artistic

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<sup>49</sup> Francisco José de Goya, *Third of May 1808*, 1814, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid. This painting depicts Spanish resistance to Napoleon and his armies during the Peninsular War of 1807–14.

<sup>50</sup> Édouard Manet, *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian* series, 1867–69, oil on canvas, various locations. This series depicts the execution of Emperor Maximilian I of the Second Mexican Empire in 1867.

<sup>51</sup> Simonetta Fraquelli, “Looking at the Past to Defy the Present: Picasso’s Paintings of 1946–1973” in Elizabeth Cowling et al., eds., *Picasso: Challenging the Past* (London: National Gallery Company, 2009), p. 144; Susan Grace Galassi, *Picasso’s Variations on the Masters: Confrontations with the Past* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), p. 128; Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 151; Josie Lopez, “Picasso and the Forgotten War,” in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 149; Wilson, *Picasso/Marx*, p. 159; Penrose, *Life and Work* (1953), p. 334; Francisco Calvo Serraller, “Picasso et l’école espagnole,” in Anne Baldassari et al., *Picasso et les maîtres* (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2008), p. 66.

<sup>52</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 151.

<sup>53</sup> Pierre Daix, trans. Olivia Emmet. *Picasso: Life and Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), p. 305.

integrity failed for both the artistic and Communist communities, even though at its core *Massacre en Corée* held the same message and meaning as the powerful *Guernica*.

### **La Guerre and La Paix Murals and Bacteriological Warfare**

*He put in this work his whole soul and heart as a Communist. The working class of France and all those for whom peace is the central issue of the moment will be happy and proud to know that La Paix and La Guerre were born for them, and that in this immense fresco there is not one little corner which Picasso has not dedicated to his participation in their struggle.*<sup>54</sup> —Hélène Parmelin

It was with the threat of bacteriological warfare presented by the Korean War and the lukewarm reception of *Massacre en Corée* that led Picasso to create his next major political artworks: the murals of *La Guerre* and *La Paix*. In these panels named after and influenced by Leo Tolstoy's 1869 novel about the Napoleonic invasion of Russia, Picasso endeavoured to paint the subject matter for the approval of the Party, yet not in the PCF-approved Socialist Realist style.<sup>55</sup> Picasso ignored this formula but created art with content that he hoped would garner the approval of PCF members. This demonstrates that Picasso may have never believed that the way in which he painted could affirm or negate his dedication to the Communist Party. In addition, mural painting was a genre that historically had been linked to revolutionary activities. For example, the mural movement in Mexico was connected ideologically with the social and political efforts of the Mexican Revolution.<sup>56</sup> Diego Rivera was at the centre of this movement, and his work was synonymous with the ideals of the Revolution.<sup>57</sup> In 1952, Picasso was commissioned and began to decorate the twelfth-century Cistercian chapel of a castle in the Communist-governed French town of Vallauris that had been deconsecrated during the French Revolution, and he insisted that he sought to decorate it not as a chapel, but as a Temple of Peace.<sup>58</sup> The chapel was to include two panels—one depicting the horrors of war and the other the need for peace. The *Peace and Freedom* exhibition at Tate Liverpool described the murals:

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<sup>54</sup> Utley's translation from the original in Hélène Parmelin, *Matricule 2078: L'affaire Henri Martin* (Paris: Les Éditions Français Réunis, 1953), pp. 1, 3 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 173.

<sup>55</sup> Gilot cited in Jean Lacambre, Dominique Forest, et al., *Vallauris, La Guerre et la Paix, Picasso* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1998), p. 58.

<sup>56</sup> Justino Fernandez, trans. Joshua Taylor, *Arte mexicano de sus orígenes a nuestros días* (Chicago, 1969), p. 151 cited in David Craven, *Art and Revolution in Latin America, 1910–1990* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 37.

<sup>57</sup> There are many similarities between Rivera and Picasso. Both became Party members without adhering to Socialist Realism in their art. Linda Downs wrote that Rivera's work has been considered politically motivated but stylistically obsolete in American scholarship, while the revolutionary ideals portrayed in his paintings are revered in Mexico. "Rivera's life was filled with contradictions—a pioneer of Cubism who promoted art for art's sake, he became one of the leaders of the Mexican Mural Resistance; a Marxist/Communist, he received mural commissions from the United States corporate establishment." Picasso also had a complicated relationship with the American art establishment, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. Linda Banks Downs, "Introduction," in Linda Banks Downs and Cynthia Newman Helms, eds., *Diego Rivera. A Retrospective* (London: Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, 1986), pp. 18–19.

<sup>58</sup> Penrose, *Life and Work* (1953), p. 333.

Mothers and children play around a central figure of Pegasus pulling a plough, personifying the fertile world of peace. *War* depicts a horse-drawn chariot against a frieze of carnage and a monumental figure with a blood-stained sword. The god of war in the chariot carries a vessel from which giant bacteria and a sack of skulls emerge. The figure of peace in the War panel carries a shield bearing Picasso's symbol of peace: the dove.<sup>59</sup>

The opportunity to paint the chapel was available to Picasso as an honorary citizen of Vallauris. In 1950, he had gifted the sculpture *L'Homme au mouton*<sup>60</sup> (1950) to the town and they in turn rewarded him with citizenship as a token of their thanks. The Greek Communist Party's Central Committee member, Nikos Beloyannis, had been condemned and executed by the Greek government for espionage the same year Picasso began working on *La Guerre* and *La Paix* panels. Picasso had followed the partisan's case closely and was deeply saddened by his death.<sup>61</sup> Accordingly, he had donated his drawing of Beloyannis entitled *L'Homme à l'oeillet*<sup>62</sup> (1952) to the amnesty committee in order to raise money to save his Greek comrade. In an accompanying poem about Beloyannis, Picasso wrote of "grains of horror sown in handfuls" "by governments sweating fear and hate" and that "an immense white dove sprinkles the wrath of its mourning over the earth".<sup>63</sup> Less than a month later, in the first studies for the murals on 28–29 April and 2–3 May 1952, Picasso depicted a bird of prey sowing grains, with the harvest appearing in several of the composition studies in the form of a heap of skulls.<sup>64</sup> Picasso had also signed a declaration by the *Artistes plasticiens, membres du parti communiste française* that denounced America's use of bacteriological warfare that same month. A folder within the Picasso Archives of the *Musée national Picasso-Paris* (AMNPP) from 1952 prepared by Dr. Stephen Lyon Endicott discusses allegations of the use of germ warfare by the United Nations and American forces in Korea, suggesting that Picasso was informed of the harmful agents being utilised during the war.<sup>65</sup> When looking at the *Guerre* mural, bacteria can be seen emanating from the shield of the figure of war. In one of Picasso's preparatory drawings entitled *The Owl of*

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<sup>59</sup> "Picasso: Peace and Freedom: Room 4: War and Peace," Tate Liverpool. Accessed: 13 February 2015. <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/picasso-peace-and-freedom/picasso-peace-and-freedom-explore-3>

<sup>60</sup> Pablo Picasso, *L'Homme au mouton*, 1943, bronze, Musée Picasso, Paris.

<sup>61</sup> Fraquelli, "Looking at the Past to Defy the Present: Picasso's Painting 1946–1973," in Cowling et al., eds., *Challenging the Past*, p. 142.

<sup>62</sup> Pablo Picasso, *L'Homme à l'oeillet*, March 1952, ink on drawing paper, Succession Picasso, Paris.

<sup>63</sup> Claude Roy, *L'amour de la peinture: Goya, Picasso et autres peintres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), pp. 97–98 cited in Dore Ashton, *Picasso on Art: A Selection of Views* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), p. 150.

<sup>64</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 166.

<sup>65</sup> International Scientific Commission: the Dossier of Bacteriological Warfare, World Council of Peace, 1952 (box G4; folder: Korea, Archives du Musée national Picasso-Paris). The dossier also alleges the US army had secret bombing raids in Korea. The findings of the dossier were upheld by the International Scientific Commission in 1952 and then again in 1976 by Dr. Joseph Needham. Morris, "The Battle for Picasso's Mind," in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 37.

*Death and Dancers*<sup>66</sup>, there are no germs coming from the shield. The change from the sketch to the final product reveals the way information he received and kept could have informed his art and his beliefs.<sup>67</sup>



Figure 3.3 – One of Picasso’s preparatory sketches for *La Guerre: The Owl of Death and Dancers*

The imagery Picasso used in his sketches shortly after condemning the use of bacteriological warfare demonstrated how his political beliefs continued to intertwine with his artistic decisions. Utley claimed that the sketches coupled with the finished painting revealed Picasso’s intentions to create a powerful denunciation of war and bacteriological warfare while specifically condemning the United States.<sup>68</sup> After being granted a chapel to decorate in a Communist-governed town, Picasso could have felt more pressure than usual to ensure what he painted reflected the beliefs of the Party. This was also during a time when Picasso was creating unmistakably political pieces, such as *Massacre en Corée*. Picasso employed his art to convey his feelings about the international situation as both an artist and a politically conscious citizen.



Figure 3.4 – *La Guerre*



Figure 3.5 – *La Paix*

<sup>66</sup> Pablo Picasso, *The Owl of Death and Dancers*, preparatory drawing for *War and Peace*, 1952, pencil on paper, private collection.

<sup>67</sup> Morris, “The Battle for Picasso’s Mind,” in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 37.

<sup>68</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 166.

According to Parmelin, Picasso painted the murals in secret at Vallauris while she and fellow PCF artist Édouard Pignon were living in another room of Picasso's studio. In her book *Picasso Plain*, Parmelin recounted the times Picasso told his visitors that she and Pignon were there to make sure that he followed the Party line, and there were times that they overheard Picasso whistling *La Marseillaise* and *L'Internationale* in his studio.<sup>69</sup> When Parmelin commented to him about his patriotic song choices, Picasso said that he could not whistle something trite while painting something as important as *La Guerre* and *La Paix* murals.<sup>70</sup> Picasso was proving his dedication to Communism outside of his artwork—at least in the eyes of Pignon and Parmelin. It was while painting the murals that Picasso even brought out *Massacre en Corée* to ask his friends why it had not been a successful Communist painting.<sup>71</sup> In a May 1951 interview with the *New York Times*, Picasso had said that he considered *Massacre* to be a study for the chapel.<sup>72</sup> It appears as though Picasso was making an effort to create murals of which the Party would approve. He considered the murals to be a logical follow up to *Massacre*, which I believe shares certain elements with *Guernica*<sup>73</sup> (1937)—those elements being the condemnation of war and American imperialism. Prior to WWII, critics, dealers, and even Picasso himself had contributed to the grouping of his artwork into various periods. The Rose, Blue, and Cubist periods were all classified and recognised by a particular style of painting. Picasso remarked that "I started painting in blue when I learned of Casagemas's<sup>74</sup> death."<sup>75</sup> Art critic Louis Vauxcelles had coined the term Cubism after seeing a painting by Braque in 1908.<sup>76</sup> While he may not have invented all of the terms now used to classify the artistic stages of his life, Picasso and many of his close friends used these terms, thus showing their acceptance.<sup>77</sup> However, neither Picasso nor any critic, curator, dealer, or art historian settled on a classification for the art he made starting from the outbreak of war. It was at this point that Picasso began to combine multiple artistic approaches he had explored throughout his life. If he thought how he painted mattered then it could have easily been what he changed, rather than changing the subject matter or the way in which it was recreated on his canvases. If he truly sought acceptance as Parmelin and Pignon claimed, Socialist Realism would have been the style to employ; however, if he had adopted a style he had never practiced, it may have validated critics who

<sup>69</sup> Parmelin, trans. Humphrey Hare, *Picasso Plain: An Intimate Portrait* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963), p. 39.

<sup>70</sup> Parmelin, *Picasso Plain*, p. 29 cited in Kirsten Hoving Keen, "Picasso's Communist Interlude: The Murals of 'War' and 'Peace'," *The Burlington Magazine* 122, no. 928 (July 1980): p. 469.

<sup>71</sup> Parmelin, *Picasso Plain*, p. 202.

<sup>72</sup> Joseph A. Barry, "The Two Picassos: Politician and Painter," *The New York Times Magazine*, 6 May 1951, p. 33 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 154.

<sup>73</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid.

<sup>74</sup> Carlos Casagemas was a Spanish poet and friend of Picasso's who committed suicide in 1901.

<sup>75</sup> Hélène Seckel, "Pablo Picasso," in Anne Distel, Richard J. Wattenmaker, et al., *Great French Paintings from the Barnes Foundation: Impressionist, Post-impressionist, and Early Modern* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), p. 192.

<sup>76</sup> Sabine Rewald, "Cubism," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 2004. Accessed: 8 October 2014. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cube/hd\\_cube.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cube/hd_cube.htm)

<sup>77</sup> "It is the success of my youth that has become my protective wall. The blue period, the rose period—they were the screens that sheltered me..." Picasso quoted in Brassai, trans. Francis Price, *Picasso and Co.* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), p. 132.

insisted that Party artists were simply creating propaganda at the behest of the PCF. In addition, it would have been especially difficult for Picasso to receive praise from the Party for this work, as Maurice Thorez—who was the leader of the PCF and a supporter of Picasso—was abroad in the Soviet Union and hardliners Auguste Lecoœur and Jacques Duclos were in charge of the Party until his return.<sup>78</sup> *La Guerre* and *La Paix*, like *Guernica*, were painted for a specific place and audience. These were also works of art that depicted specific events but came to embody a universal message. Just as *Guernica* and *Massacre* before it, due to the lack of identity of the aggressors in the mural, *La Guerre* and *La Paix* can be seen as a generic indictment of war. With *Massacre* and the Vallauris murals, Picasso sought to integrate his art and political views, which saw his participation in Cold War discourse by articulating his beliefs against American imperialism and the use of bacteriological warfare. Picasso had made more of an effort than ever before to meet the artistic demands of some PCF members. These included friends of Picasso such as Daix, who was also the editor of the PCF-supported literary journal *Les Lettres Françaises* (LLF) and as such was obligated to defend Socialist Realism;<sup>79</sup> and Aragon, who was a practitioner of Socialist Realism in his own writing.<sup>80</sup>

Although the chapel made the works stationary and was only open for a short time in 1958 due to the tensions between Picasso and the Gaullist government of France, 200 sketches and studies for the murals existed for the public's consumption, which were first publicly exhibited in Rome and Milan in 1953.<sup>81</sup> The Italian Communist Party and the PCF had shared the same levels of prestige and success after WWII, which explained the decision to exhibit these Leftist compositions in Italy. The American public also came to know of *La Guerre* and *La Paix* because of *Time Magazine* and *New York Times* articles in the summer of 1953.<sup>82</sup> *Time* reported that “within the Communist lexicon the reference to germ warfare is overtly anti-American.”<sup>83</sup> Aragon praised the murals for their directness and accessibility and said that they corresponded to a “politically essential approach in contemporary art.”<sup>84</sup> Communists in Japan commended Picasso for “unveiling before the people of the world the crimes of bacteriological warfare” and “the cruel acts committed in Korea by the American imperialists.”<sup>85</sup> If Picasso intended to express his disgust at the use of bacteriological warfare and to create something with—at the very least—content that the PCF would approve of, then according to critics of all political sides the murals were a success.

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<sup>78</sup> Thorez was interested in securing the support of prestigious figures in the arts and sciences for the Party's Left-wing programs, while Duclos pushed the PCF towards a version of the Soviet-approved Zhdanov Doctrine, which pushed its intellectuals to adhere to the style of Socialist Realism. Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 111.

<sup>79</sup> Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 46.

<sup>80</sup> Aragon was formerly a leader of the Surrealist movement but broke ties as he became more involved with the PCF. He ultimately dedicated himself to Socialist Realism. Sam Cooper, *The Situationist International in Britain: Modernism, Surrealism, and the Avant-Gardes* (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 29.

<sup>81</sup> “Picasso: Peace and Freedom: Room 4: War and Peace,” Tate Modern. Accessed: 16 November 2017. <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/picasso-peace-and-freedom/picasso-peace-and-freedom-explore-3>

<sup>82</sup> Keen, “Communist Interlude,” p. 464.

<sup>83</sup> “Murals from the Party,” *Time*, 1 June 1953, p. 72 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 168.

<sup>84</sup> Aragon 1953b in Jean Ristat, ed., *Aragon: Écrits sur l'art moderne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1981), p. 114 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 167.

<sup>85</sup> Letter from Japan to Picasso in May 1953, AMNPP cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 167.

However, the praise directed towards *La Guerre* and *La Paix* would soon end. The death of Stalin came months after the completion of the murals, which led to a heated attack on Picasso and his attempt to honour the former leader of the Soviet Union.

### **The Death of Stalin and Attack on Picasso**

On 10 October 1950, PCF leader Maurice Thorez suffered a stroke and shortly after was transferred to the Soviet Union to recover for the next two and a half years.<sup>86</sup> Duclos, with the help of Lecoœur, took over as Party Secretariat in Thorez's absence, and over the next few years managed to conduct affairs in a way that led to Lecoœur's expulsion from the leadership in March 1954. One of these mismanaged incidents surrounded the controversial Stalin portrait. Picasso was asked to commemorate the late Soviet leader with a piece of art, and he did so to the best of his ability with the limited time he was given. The events surrounding Picasso's Stalin portrait are crucial: if Picasso needed an excuse to leave the Party, this would have been the moment. Why did Picasso instead choose to remain a card-carrying Communist? In this section, I will outline the details of the incident, explain why the portrait received negative feedback from Party officials and members, and discuss why Picasso decided to remain in the PCF. I will illustrate the ways in which Picasso remained dedicated to the cause despite the attitudes and actions of some comrades.

Throughout Picasso's time as a PCF member, certain paintings were criticised by Party members for various reasons: the lack of a Socialist Realist style, its message was not explicit enough, or it did not serve the Party's cultural demands to the fullest extent. Lecoœur was not a fan of Picasso's work. For example, after *Massacre* had been painted, he wanted the Party's publications to mention it as little as possible.<sup>87</sup> This demonstrates the intense divisions that already existed within the PCF regarding cultural policies. One of the greatest testaments to Picasso's dedication to the PCF came after the death of Stalin on 5 March 1953. On the morning of the official announcement of Stalin's death, Aragon, who had just been appointed director of LLF along with Daix as its chief editor, telegraphed Picasso and asked if he could contribute a portrait of Stalin for the commemorative issue and to "do whatever he thought best".<sup>88</sup> All of Picasso's past portraits of political figures were fairly simple drawings that were similar stylistically, and very few were painted.<sup>89</sup> This was something that Aragon must have been aware of by this point in their friendship. The drawing arrived at the offices of LLF the following morning right before the print deadline, and it was quickly put on the front page of that week's issue.<sup>90</sup> Almost immediately after publication, letters of disapproval appeared at the LLF office. Art historian Michael C. Fitzgerald wrote that many

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<sup>86</sup> Ronald Tiersky, *French Communism 1920–1972* (London: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 176.

<sup>87</sup> Pierre Cabanne, trans. Harold J. Salemsen, *Pablo Picasso: His Life and Times* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1977), p. 420.

<sup>88</sup> Daix, *Life and Art*, p. 309.

<sup>89</sup> See figures 3.8, 3.10, and 4.1 for other examples of Picasso's political portraits.

<sup>90</sup> See figure 3.6.

believed the portrait was disrespectful because it did not portray the Soviet leader in glory nor did it illustrate the details of his aged features.<sup>91</sup> Picasso had drawn Stalin not as he was, but as he used to be—he had sketched a younger Stalin. Was this a way for Picasso to idealise Stalin? Did Picasso feel more comfortable representing a younger Stalin in his revolutionary days? As a comparison, one Party member who adhered to the Socialist Realist style was Boris Taslitzky. He also composed a portrait of Stalin upon his death, but he chose to paint an older Stalin visiting a sick Thorez.<sup>92</sup> This painting drew no criticism from the PCF, unlike Picasso's. But it also was not pictured prominently on the front page of LLF and thus was not publicised widely enough to receive potential mass criticism.



Figure 3.6 – *Staline*<sup>93</sup> by Picasso



Figure 3.7 – *Stalin pays a visit to the Ailing Thorez*<sup>94</sup> by Taslitzky

On March 18, a communiqué<sup>95</sup> of the Secretariat was published condemning the portrait. The Secretariat at the time was made up of Lecoœur, François Billoux, and Étienne Fajon—Duclos was excluded because he was away from Paris at the time.<sup>96</sup> This group ruled the Party as strategic hardliners who did not handle cultural matters with the same tact as Thorez. Daix suggested that the Secretariat were trying

<sup>91</sup> Michael C. Fitzgerald, “A Triangle of Ambitions: Art, Politics, and Family during the Postwar Years with Françoise Gilot,” in William Rubin, ed., *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996), p. 438.

<sup>93</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Staline*, 8 March 1953, LLF.

<sup>94</sup> Boris Taslitzky, *Stalin Pays a Visit to the Ailing Thorez*, 1952.

<sup>95</sup> On 18 March 1953, the following communiqué appeared in *L'Humanité* under the title “Communication du secretariat du Parti communiste français”: “The secretariat of the French Communist Party categorically disapproves of the publication in LLF of 12 March, of the portrait of the great Stalin by comrade Picasso. Without doubting the sentiments of the great artist Picasso, whose attachment to the cause of the working class everyone knows, the secretariat of the French Communist Party regrets that comrade Aragon, member of the Central Committee and director of LLF who in other areas fights courageously for the development of realist art, should not have permitted this publication...” *L'Humanité*, 18 March 1953, p. 1 cited in Sarah Wilson, *Picasso/Marx*, p. 194.

<sup>96</sup> Annette Wieviorka, “Picasso and Stalin,” in Christoph Grunenberg and Lynda Morris, eds., *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), p. 28.

to indict Aragon for not promoting Socialist Realism while also suggesting that Picasso himself had never been a Realist.<sup>97</sup> According to this explanation, Aragon should have known Picasso would not live up to the standards of the majority of Party members. Why were some comrades so upset about the portrait? There could have been a fear that the depiction of a young Stalin would send a subtle message to enemies of the PCF, and even Trotskyists, that Stalin in his later years perverted the revolution and was not the Stalin who should be remembered and immortalised. There were those within the Party, such as Lecoœur and André Fougeron, who believed in the cultural policies of the Soviets and would not stray, regardless of the fame and popularity of the artist and regardless of the PCF's cultural leniency with its intellectuals. However, Picasso's politician and artist friends within the PCF—such as Laurent Casanova, Aragon, Parmelin, and many others—approved of Picasso as an artist. Berger explained that there were many who accepted Picasso's artwork and spent their energy trying to stretch the artistic vocabulary outlined by the CPSU in order to cover as many paintings as possible.<sup>98</sup> Historian Irvin M. Wall described how Aragon and many members of the PCF understood that in order to keep the support of prominent artists they had to exercise a level of artistic tolerance that was not to be extended to all other artists within the Party.<sup>99</sup> Harris adds that Picasso had come to represent a more general ideal of humane idealism and universalism that was internationally recognised and popular.<sup>100</sup> While Thorez always understood the importance of securing the support of prestigious intellectuals for the Party, by contrast, the Secretariat pushed the Party towards the Zhdanov-influenced cultural policy.<sup>101</sup> The PCF could not risk losing Picasso, and this was something comrades such as Casanova and Thorez realised. While Thorez understood never to condemn Picasso's paintings, Lecoœur did not seem to have a high regard for the Party's intellectuals or their work.

Under orders, Aragon began publishing letters that condemned Picasso and his depiction of Stalin.<sup>102</sup> In addition, any letter the LLF received that was pro-portrait was censored by the Party and could not be printed.<sup>103</sup> One letter in particular could not be published, which has been sent from Thorez in the USSR expressing his endorsement of Picasso's portrait.<sup>104</sup> Another letter that condemned the portrait came from the official painter of the Party, Fougeron. He had written that “avec d'autres camarades peintres je connais nos difficultés pour nous placer sur la ligne constant de notre Parti pour la littérature et l'art définé par notre secretaire general Maurice Thorez” and therefore how could comrades be expected to make the necessary effort in their art, if drawings like Picasso's were allowed to be publicised within the

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<sup>97</sup> Pierre Daix, *Aragon* (Paris, 1994), pp. 456–63 cited in Wiewiorka, “Picasso and Stalin,” in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, p. 29.

<sup>98</sup> Berger, *Success and Failure of Picasso*, p. 176.

<sup>99</sup> Harris, “Picasso as Screen,” in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 165.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 111.

<sup>102</sup> Caute, *French Intellectuals*, p. 345.

<sup>103</sup> Daix, *Life and Art*, p. 310.

<sup>104</sup> Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 164

Party-approved media?<sup>105</sup> With this statement, Fougeron admitted that all Communist artists and writers must work hard to meet the Party's cultural demands, and they even find it trying. An intellectual's willingness to sacrifice the way in which they created and wrote certainly showed their devotion to their politics. However, they also shaped their art to conform to their target audience: the Party. Fougeron continued, writing in his letter that "what saddens me is also the fact that in 1953 such a great artist should be incapable of rendering a good but simple drawing of the man most beloved by the whole world's proletariat..."<sup>106</sup> This attack focused on the artistic merit of Picasso's sketch. In Fougeron's eyes, Picasso's sketch of Stalin was not good enough for a man of Stalin's stature, and for that he should feel ashamed as an artist.

Romantically involved with Picasso for a decade beginning in 1943, Françoise Gilot stated that Picasso considered the backlash from his Stalin portrait to be a familial skirmish:

I suppose it was the Party's right to condemn me, but it's certainly the result of a misunderstanding, because I had no bad intention. If my drawing shocked or displeased anybody, that's something else again. It's an aesthetic matter, which can't be judged from a political point of view. You've got the same situation in the Party as in any big family: there's always some damn fool ready to stir up trouble, but you have to put up with him.<sup>107</sup>

Picasso's comment provides insight into the way he believed the PCF perceived and interpreted his works. Picasso did not paint in a style that the Party officially endorsed; however, this was never because of his lack of commitment, lack of respect, or bad intentions. Perhaps he never saw an association between the aesthetic and the political when the content of the art seemed to be the more pressing matter. He had once said in an interview with *Arts de France* in 1946 that "Everything in painting is just a sign. So, what counts is what is signified, not how it is done."<sup>108</sup> Regardless of the political message he was trying to project, if the manner in which it was created was not in the style of Socialist Realism, then it would never be universally accepted by the Party. However, it is true that a painting in the Socialist Realist style did not guarantee Party approval if the content or execution was not appropriate. Gilot herself did not understand the disappointment: if what the Party wanted was something with an exact likeness to Stalin, then a photograph should have been used and not the interpretation of an artist who was known to not adhere to Socialist Realism.<sup>109</sup> Aragon's wife, Elsa Triolet, remarked to Daix that no one had thought about what the portrait meant to Picasso. He did not deform Stalin's face; he had simply dared to create an image of the Soviet leader.<sup>110</sup> Historian and PCF member Annie Kriegel commented that perhaps many were upset

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<sup>105</sup> My translation: "With other painter comrades, I know the difficulties we have in positioning ourselves on the firm Party line for literature and art defined by our Secretary General Maurice Thorez." André Fougeron, "Sur un portrait de Staline," *Les Lettres Françaises*, 26 March 1953, p. 9.

<sup>106</sup> Wieviorka, "Picasso and Stalin," in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> Gilot and Lake, *Life with Picasso*, p. 278.

<sup>108</sup> *Arts de France*, no. 6, 1946 cited in Cabanne, *His Life and Times*, p. 389.

<sup>109</sup> Gilot and Lake, *Life with Picasso*, p. 278.

<sup>110</sup> Pierre Daix, *Aragon: Une vie a changer* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975), p. 372.

because “the genius of Stalin was tamed by the genius of Picasso.”<sup>111</sup> This is in contrast to Fougeron’s statement that Picasso’s sketch did not meet the Party’s high artistic expectations. Reasons for discontent were extremely varied, and ultimately Picasso could do nothing more than defend his intentions. In conversation with Daix after the incident, Picasso revealed his thoughts on the whole affair:

Just imagine if I had done the real Stalin, such as he had become, with his wrinkles, his pockets under the eyes, his warts... a portrait in the style of Cranach! You can hear them scream. He has disfigured Stalin. He has aged Stalin. And then, I said to myself, why not a Stalin in heroic nudity? ... Yes, but, Stalin nude, and what about his virility? ... If you take the willy of classical sculptors ... So small... but Stalin, he was a true male, a bull. So if you give him the phallus of a bull, and you’ve got this little Stalin behind his big thing they’ll cry: but you’ve made him into a sex maniac! A satyr! So then, if you are a true realist you take your tape measure and you measure it properly. That’s worse—you made Stalin into a regular man. And then, as you are ready to sacrifice yourself, you make a plaster cast of your own thing. Well, it’s even worse. You dare take yourself for Stalin! ... After all, Stalin, he must have had an erection all the time, just like the Greek statues... Tell me, you who knows Socialist Realism, is that Stalin with an erection or without an erection?<sup>112</sup>

Picasso’s statement suggests his frustration with the Party but also a need to align his artwork with their attitudes—even as he poked fun at them. It is also clear that Picasso realised his fault had been trying to recreate Stalin in an artistic form. But it also seems as though he is speaking of Naturalism and not Socialist Realism when describing how he should have portrayed the former Soviet leader. Regardless of how he had chosen to depict Stalin, there would have been a backlash. This is the very reason why Picasso did not disparage the Party, even after his portrait was criticised in the Communist media. He was asked by his friends to honour Stalin and he accepted. Picasso had been solicited to create this portrait, and it came with certain expectations. He was then scrutinised simply because he had made an attempt. Ultimately, his dedication to the Party ran deeper than this one event and he would not abandon his Communist ideals. Casanova was Picasso’s closest friend within the PCF executive, but he had been out of the country at the time of the publication. Gilot believed that once Casanova returned to Paris, under his influence the Party modified its original position two weeks after the incident and stated that the drawing had been done with the best of intentions.<sup>113</sup> Picasso again reiterated his feelings to Gilot: “I made a drawing. My drawing was good or not so good. Maybe it was bad. That’s an affair between me and myself.

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<sup>111</sup> Wieviorka, “Picasso and Stalin,” in Grunenber and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, p. 30.

<sup>112</sup> My translation from the French. Pierre Daix, *J’ai cru au matin* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1976), p. 327. “Tu imagines un peu, si j’avais fait le vrai Staline, tel qu’il était devenu, avec ses rides, ses poches sous les yeux, ses verrues ... Un portrait dans le style de Cranach! Tu les entends gueuler. Il a défiguré Staline. Il a vieilli Staline ... Et aussi, je me suis dit, pourquoi pas un Staline en héros tout nu ... Oui, mais, Staline nu, et sa virilité? Si tu prends le zizi classique des sculpteurs ... Si petit... Mais voyons, Staline, lui, c’était un vrai mâle, un taureau. Alors, si tu lui poses un vit de taureau, il te reste un tout petit Staline derrière son gros machin et on te crie: Mais vous en avez fait un obsédé sexuel! Un satyre! Alors, tu es un vrai réaliste, tu prends ton centimètre, tu mesures tout comme il faut. C’est pire, tu as fait de Staline un homme moyen. Alors, comme tu es prêt à te sacrifier, tu moules ton truc dans le plâtre. Eh bien, c’est pire. Comment, vous osez, vous prendre pour Staline... D’ailleurs Staline, il devait tout le temps bander, comme les statues grecques... Dis-moi, toi qui sais, le réalisme socialiste, c’est Staline qui bande ou bien Staline qui ne bande pas?”

<sup>113</sup> Gilot and Lake, *Life with Picasso*, p. 279.

My intention was very simple: to do what somebody had asked me to do.”<sup>114</sup> According to this statement, Picasso believed he had been asked to complete a project, and he did it in the way he saw most fitting. There was no ulterior motive and no intention of causing an uproar. Picasso was asked by his Party to do something, and so he did.

Shortly after the denunciation of Picasso’s portrait, Thorez returned to France. With the death of Stalin came the end of the Zhdanov Doctrine, which allowed Thorez to adopt even more moderate cultural policies for the PCF.<sup>115</sup> In May 1953, Duclos questioned the PCF’s original response to the portrait publicly: “We can even ask ourselves whether the declaration [of the Secretariat] relative to a portrait by Picasso has not to an extent permitted our enemies to campaign among intellectuals whom they seek to turn away from us....”<sup>116</sup> This was to be a common sentiment within the Party in the coming years. Divisions within the PCF were a sign of weakness and offered an opportunity to the enemies of Communism. Duclos understood that support for all Party members was imperative in order to maintain a strong and secure PCF.

Nine months after the publication, Billoux offered an official apology for the way in which the Secretariat handled the issue.<sup>117</sup> An apology could have been issued for a number of reasons: firstly, to prevent losing one of the most prominent intellectuals the PCF had in its ranks. If a high-profile member such as Picasso had ever left the Party, it could have started a domino effect and possibly have led to further departures on the basis of either support or simply because someone had opened the flood gates.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, Billoux was worried that the portrait’s criticisms would lead outsiders to suspect that the Party forced its intellectuals to create in a certain manner rather than allowing them to work as they saw fit.<sup>119</sup> If something as simple as a portrait of a fallen leader could provoke such an intense negative reaction within the Party, then this event—more than any other during Picasso’s time in the PCF—demonstrated just how important cultural policies were to the Party’s politics. However, the scandal had occurred during the reign of Lecoœur. Sarah Wilson believes that Thorez’s return from the Soviet Union calmed these internal power struggles.<sup>120</sup> Thorez recognised that those with vested interests had used the portrait as a way to profit from his absence.<sup>121</sup> It also made a public debacle of a potential fracture within the Communist family, which unintentionally offered power to their political rivals. A political party such as the PCF that prided itself on being close-knit had just attacked one of its most prominent

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 165

<sup>116</sup> *L’Humanité*, 8 May 1953 cited in Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 165.

<sup>117</sup> Caute, *French Intellectuals*, p. 55.

<sup>118</sup> A similar tactic was used during the Hungarian crisis, where prominent intellectuals were no more than chastised for their dissent while other intellectuals were expelled.

<sup>119</sup> François Billoux, “Sur les intellectuels,” *La Nouvelle Critique*, December 1953, pp. 4–5 cited in Caute, *French Intellectuals*, p. 56.

<sup>120</sup> Wilson, *Picasso/Marx*, p. 170

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

intellectuals in their own newspaper. This was not the image the Party wanted to project. Nevertheless, Picasso was in the PCF to stay—apology or not. Picasso considered the Party a family, and he believed the incident was a misunderstanding and a quarrel among siblings. He had already withstood disapproval over paintings like *Massacre*. Personal attacks were not enough to convince him to abandon an organisation that continued to represent the values for which he also stood. These values were what originally drew certain intellectuals to the PCF during the Occupation and after the Liberation of Paris, and they continued to coincide with the tenets of the Party.

### **Disillusionment Among the Ranks**

The sources of disenchantment within the PCF were multiple: the Prague coup (1948), the expulsion of Josip Broz Tito and Yugoslavia from the Eastern bloc (1948), the Hungarian and Bulgarian show trials (1949), the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising (1956), colonial wars, and Khrushchev's 1956 secret speech and the process of de-Stalinisation. These were events that left many PCF members confused as to what their Party card actually represented.<sup>122</sup> How could Picasso remain a dedicated member when so many intellectuals left the PCF due to these issues? Historians Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, François Furet, Alain Besançon, and writer Dominique Desanti all resigned in 1956 followed by Kriegel the following year. In addition, numerous intellectuals were expelled from the Party for voicing concerns or opinions that were contrary to those of the PCF, such as writers Pierre Hervé and JF Rolland in 1956. Daix wrote in his memoirs in 1976 that one had to choose between the two camps in the world: socialism or American imperialism.<sup>123</sup> Even though the situation was more nuanced than Daix's statement proclaimed, in the eyes of the PCF, to turn against the Soviets meant turning towards the Americans and their imperialist aspirations. Rather than become disillusioned with the troubles in the Soviet-controlled nations, intellectuals who chose to remain within the PCF focused their concentration on the peace movement. Historian Richard Sacker agreed that many intellectuals would never form their opinions based on the bourgeois press, and the majority could not abandon a party that represented the workers and could prevent the return of fascism.<sup>124</sup>

For some hardline Leftists, capitalism and fascism were closely related.<sup>125</sup> So when Khrushchev's speech revealed the many atrocities of the Stalinist period, why did many artist and writers like Picasso, Fernand Léger, Paul Éluard, J.R. Bloch, Elsa Triolet, André Stil, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, and others choose to remain PCF members? Although the Soviets were going through a process of de-Stalinisation after the

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<sup>122</sup> Some of these events will be described in more detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>123</sup> My translation from the French. Daix, *J'ai cru au matin*, p. 186.

<sup>124</sup> Richard Sacker, *A Radiant Future: The French Communist Party and Eastern Europe 1944–1956* (Bern, SUI: Peter Lang AG, 1998), p.154.

<sup>125</sup> This correlation had been stirred up by the growing sentiment of anti-Americanism in France. Anti-Americanism had become solidified among the Left who saw the Marshall Plan as an attempt to colonise France economically. Philippe Roger, trans. Sharon Bowman, *The American Enemy: A Story of French Anti-Americanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 322.

twentieth CPSU Congress held in February 1956, PCF leaders had to maintain a semblance of loyalty to Stalin and Stalinist policies that they had been following since the Party's creation. Wall wrote that the PCF had continually been Stalinist in its nationalism and defended its solidarity with the USSR in terms of the national interest.<sup>126</sup> Sacker described how criticising Stalin would weaken the authority of the PCF and therefore be detrimental to the cause of socialism in France; however, they could also not break their allegiance with Moscow and risk creating a divide within the international Communist community.<sup>127</sup> Instead, the PCF responded by concentrating on the public issues raised by the CPSU Congress and less on de-Stalinisation. This way, the PCF could concentrate their efforts on colonial struggles, the WPM, and the importance of working class unity to prevent war.<sup>128</sup> The Party's emphasis on these key issues helps explain why many intellectuals remained within the Party while the Soviet system that had been built on the foundation of Stalinism was unravelling. The peace program was as political a movement as any other with which the Party had concerned itself. Wall wrote that the WPM gave Party members a new sense of purpose and hope for victory on an international scale by furthering Soviet political objectives, especially once the PCF was expelled from the government.<sup>129</sup> It was a way for Picasso and fellow comrades to remain united under a common goal. Picasso was a key participant in one of the Party's main political campaigns. The Party was presenting itself as the only alternative to Right-wing politics. Wall concurred that the historical scholarship focuses on the hidden motives of the PCF policies, when at the time the Party remained the only political alternative to the encroaching conservatism of post-war Europe.<sup>130</sup> However, the idea that Europe was either conservative or Communist was not true; there also existed successful social democracies that offered stability to their populations.

Over a year after the twentieth CPSU Congress exposed the problems of Stalin's reign, Picasso explained in a July 1957 interview his personal reasons for remaining in the PCF:

...Communism stands for certain ideals I believe in. I believe Communism is working toward the realization of those ideals ... You'll ask me, 'what about Stalin?' ... You would have said he was no good—but you didn't know that; you only thought it. Well, I thought he was (good). It turned out that I was wrong. But is that any reason why I should renounce the ideals I believe in? Let's say I were a Catholic and I met a priest who was no good ... He's all the bad things you can think of. Is that any reason why I should give up believing in Christianity?<sup>131</sup>

Regardless of the crimes of Stalin, Picasso's primary concern remained the Party and its peace oriented goals.

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<sup>126</sup> Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 4.

<sup>127</sup> Sacker, *Radiant Future*, pp. 177, 178.

<sup>128</sup> Later in the thesis I will be discussing how the PCF took their time in establishing a position against colonialism in both Indochina and Algeria.

<sup>129</sup> Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 89.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>131</sup> Picasso in Carlton Lake, "Picasso Speaking," *The Atlantic*, July 1957.

## **Political Portraiture: Picasso, Boupacha, and the Algerian War**

*If we want to put an end to the atrocious and bleak cruelty, and save France from this disgrace and the Algerians from this hell, there has always been and still is only one way: to open negotiations and to make peace.*<sup>132</sup> —Jean-Paul Sartre

The death of Stalin and the disillusionment of some of the intellectuals were not the only issues concerning the Communists of France in the 1950s. The Algerian War began in 1954 and would demand the attention of the entire French nation until the African colony gained its independence in 1962. Between 1955 and 1962, close to two million soldiers crossed the Mediterranean from France to fight.<sup>133</sup> Historian Benjamin Stora wrote that an entire generation found themselves embarking on a war they did not understand.<sup>134</sup> In this section, I will consider how Picasso chose to engage with the colonial problem in Algeria; specifically, I will study his portrait of *Front de Libération Nationale*<sup>135</sup> (FLN) militant Djamila Boupacha, the young woman who became a *cause célèbre* after she was imprisoned and tortured at the hands of the French army. Picasso's portrait was part of an effort to raise awareness in France about the use of torture during the Algerian War. I will also compare Picasso's portrait of Boupacha to other political portraits he created during his time in the PCF, including those of Nikos Beloyannis and Henri Martin. This will illustrate his continued engagement with political causes and instances of injustice through his art.

The issue of colonialism was one that would divide PCF members for much of the 1950s and 60s. Historian James LeSueur wrote that any French Communists who were against colonialism would then have to condemn Soviet imperialism in the Eastern bloc nations.<sup>136</sup> Instead of being forced to publicly recognise the Soviet hypocrisy, intellectuals instead chose different avenues through which to express their opinions. On 1 November 1954, the FLN launched attacks against colonial police and military, which formally led to the outbreak of war and an eight-year struggle for independence in the French colony of Algeria. During these years, Picasso began to engage with North Africa in both artistic and political ways. On 13 December, just over a month after the outbreak of war, Picasso began a series of paintings modelled after a painting by Eugene Delacroix titled *Women of Algiers*<sup>137</sup> (1834), which Picasso would finish in February 1955.<sup>138</sup> This painting demonstrated Picasso's continuous engagement with artistic traditions and the old masters. Auguste Renoir, Henri Matisse, and Wassily Kandinsky were other members of the

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<sup>132</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre in Henri Alleg, *The Question* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), p. xlv.

<sup>133</sup> Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie (1954–1962)* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1995), p. 3.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> The FLN were a paramilitary independence group who spearheaded the Algerian War.

<sup>136</sup> James D. Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 8.

<sup>137</sup> Eugene Delacroix, *Women of Algiers*, 1834, oil on canvas, The Louvre, Paris. Delacroix's *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment* had two versions: one created in 1834 and another in 1849. Cabanne wrote that Picasso started his series of paintings modelled after Delacroix's original after it "had obsessed him for years, but which he did not bother to go back to study at the Louvre where he had seen it years before." The 1834 version is held in the Louvre. This statement by Cabanne implies that Delacroix's 1834 version was the one Picasso used as the foundation for his recreation. Cabanne, *His Life and Times*, p. 455.

<sup>138</sup> Morris, "The Battle for Picasso's Mind," in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 40.

French artistic community who had explored North Africa in their paintings; however, Picasso was unusual for not having visited the places he depicted. Art historian MaryAnne Stevens wrote that almost all paintings that emerged from the encounter between the West and North Africa—known as Orientalism—showed an enthusiasm for the beauty of the foreign lands.<sup>139</sup> Picasso falls out of this tradition. He did not depict exotic Muslim women or bright and colourful landscapes; rather, he sketched a simple portrait of an Algerian girl for a political purpose.

Picasso's interest in Algeria began long before he drew his portrait of Boupacha. A series of files in the AMNPP show that Picasso was informed of the events transpiring in Algeria through a variety of sources. The Association of Veterans of the Spanish Republic sent documents to Picasso that compared Franco's coup—launched from a base in Morocco—to the actions of the French army in Algeria.<sup>140</sup> Morris maintains that Picasso was actively concerned with events in Algeria, and that even after the war he continued to campaign for women's organisations.<sup>141</sup> Algerian women's movements had been growing since the mid 1940s, and FLN women played a major role in both the rural and urban resistance during the war. They would carry messages, money, and weapons through French checkpoints, and they acted as lookouts, nurses, cooks, and doctors.<sup>142</sup> Many other women in the FLN engaged in propaganda and educational work.<sup>143</sup> Picasso's interest in Algeria and the plight of its women may have been sparked after hearing the story of Boupacha's treatment following her February 1960 arrest.

The political situation in both Algeria and France leading up to the Boupacha portrait was grim. Her case was not the first occurrence of torture brought to the attention of the intellectuals. Henri Alleg was the editor of the Communist Algerian newspaper the *Alger républicain*, and he was also involved with the FLN. On 12 June 1957, Alleg was arrested and faced torture at the hands of French paratroopers.<sup>144</sup> He went on to publish a book entitled *La Question* in 1958 that described his experiences, which sold 60,000 copies before it was banned and seized by the French authorities.<sup>145</sup> Subsequent editions came with a preface by philosopher and writer Jean-Paul Sartre entitled "The Victory", which was originally published in the Parisian newspaper *L'Express* on 16 March 1958 and drew attention to the atrocities being

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<sup>139</sup> MaryAnne Stevens, "Western Art and its Encounter with the Islamic World," in MaryAnne Stevens, ed., *The Orientalists, Delacroix to Matisse: European Painters in North Africa and the Near East* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1984), p. 22.

<sup>140</sup> Numerous files in box F1; folder: AVER (Association of Veterans of the Spanish Republic), AMNPP.

<sup>141</sup> Morris, "The Battle for Picasso's Mind," in Harris and Koeck, eds., *Visual Representation*, p. 41. I will explore Picasso's engagement with other women's groups in Chapter Three.

<sup>142</sup> Haideh Moghissi, *Women and Islam: Images and Realities* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 89 and Neil Macmaster, *Burning the Veil: The Algerian War and the 'Emancipation' of Muslim Women, 1954–62* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 315.

<sup>143</sup> Macmaster, *Burning the Veil*, p. 323.

<sup>144</sup> Alyce Mahon, *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros, 1938–1968* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 2005), p. 147.

<sup>145</sup> Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 1991), p. 57.

committed in Algeria.<sup>146</sup> This attempt to bring awareness to the French general public continued with the trial of FLN member Djamila Bouhired, who had been arrested and tortured. Her lawyer, Jacques Vergès, published a book about the case entitled *Pour Djamila Bouhired* (1961). These are just some of the accounts of torture that had transpired in Algeria, which then sparked reactions back in France. By the 1960s, the number of abuses had grown and intellectuals of the Left were aware of the injustices being committed in the African colony. However, historian Judith Surkis argues that prior to the Boupacha trial, the details of torture and extrajudicial execution did not produce an outcry among the French in the early 1960s—including the intellectuals.<sup>147</sup> A January 1960 article in the FLN newspaper *El Moudjahid* even stated that the initial lack of response from the French was “the total failure of the Left, of those whose role it is to make the people participate in the direction of its affairs.”<sup>148</sup> Historian Alistair Horne agreed that awareness did not spread until the Boupacha trial, which up to that point received more publicity in France than any other event during the Algerian War.<sup>149</sup>

The PCF failed to take a strong position against the Algerian War and the atrocities being committed, which also meant the Left did not fully unite in its views. In March 1956, the PCF voted in favour of granting the socialist government of Guy Mollet special powers to engage in the war in Algeria.<sup>150</sup> This was a political tactic in order to move closer to the creation of a popular front alliance with the socialists.<sup>151</sup> However, it also meant taking a step back from the Party’s anti-colonial and peace-seeking values that many intellectuals admired. Instead, the PCF expressed their continual support for these principles in other ways: in October of 1957, Thorez announced that he would support the socialists with any policy or platform that would bring about peace.<sup>152</sup> However, this was a weak statement for a Party that had been the beacon of hope during the Resistance. Although the PCF finally made its position clear in the final year of the war, historian Michael Scott Christofferson claimed that even then it was less about supporting Algerian independence and more about combatting the fascist *Organisation de l’armée secrète* (OAS).<sup>153</sup> Thorez had even proclaimed back in February 1939 that “barring the road to fascism” came before the “violent struggle against French democracy on the pretext of independence”.<sup>154</sup> Nevertheless, at

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<sup>146</sup> Judith Surkis, “Ethics and Violence: Simone de Beauvoir, Djamila Boupacha, and the Algerian War,” *French Politics, Culture and Society* 28, no. 2 (2010): p. 40.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>148</sup> “Lorsque la torture est scientifiquement enseignée!,” *El Moudjahid* 2, 5 January 1960 cited in Surkis, *Ethics and Violence*, p. 42.

<sup>149</sup> Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962*, [1977] (New York: New York Review of Books, 2006), p. 416.

<sup>150</sup> These special powers gave the ruling socialist government the right to take any measures deemed necessary to restore order. Martin Evans, *Algeria: France’s Undeclared War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 155.

<sup>151</sup> Evans, *Undeclared*, p. 155 and Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), p. 40.

<sup>152</sup> Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 192.

<sup>153</sup> Christofferson, *Against the Left*, p. 40.

<sup>154</sup> Benjamin Stora, trans. Jane Todd, *Algeria, 1830–2000: A Short History* (London: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 16.

the Sixteenth Party Congress in 1961, the PCF finally stated its official position concerning Algeria: "Since the first days of the Algerian War, Communists fight for the recognition of the right to independence."<sup>155</sup> This was not a completely honest statement, as the PCF had taken years to firmly implement a policy regarding Algeria. But by 1961 the Party had established a platform its members could support. However, many intellectuals of the Party could not wait until 1961 to stand up for their ideals. Because the PCF failed to establish a firm viewpoint against colonialism in Algeria, many intellectuals decided to organise themselves outside of the Party and joined dissident groups such as *Tribune du Communisme*, *L'Étincelle*, and *La Voie communiste*.<sup>156</sup> The trials of Alleg, Bouhired, the Jeanson network, and the Manifesto of 121 were all used to create awareness of the plight of the Algerians and their need for independence, which saw many intellectuals offer their support.<sup>157</sup>

The signatories of the Manifesto included some of the biggest names of the intelligentsia,<sup>158</sup> and by the end of October 1960, several hundred thousand people demonstrated on the streets of France in support of the 121.<sup>159</sup> The accused of the Jeanson case warned that if France did not live up to its moral and intellectual heritage by condemning the French actions in Algeria, its intellectuals would never be able to hold their heads high again.<sup>160</sup> It was after years of intellectuals organising themselves outside the framework of the Party that the PCF finally declared it was in favour of the "defense of the 121" and of those who "fought in their war" for peace in Algeria.<sup>161</sup>

As complicated as the situation was within the PCF, the situation on the ground in France was no better. De Gaulle had returned to power in 1958, which effectively ended the Fourth Republic. The Fifth Republic began in an atmosphere marked by terror and torture associated with the Algerian War. Protests,

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<sup>155</sup> Transcript of the Sixteenth PCF Congress, Saint Denis, 11–14 May 1961 in *Cahiers du Communisme*, June 1961, p. 567 cited in Danièle Joly, *The French Communist Party and the Algeria War* (London: Macmillan Press, 1991), p. 51.

<sup>156</sup> Christofferson, *Against the Left*, p. 40.

<sup>157</sup> On 5 September 1960, six Algerians and eighteen French (the Jeanson network) were on trial for plotting to overthrow the French state. The network's most severe crime was smuggling money that had been raised by Algerian workers for the war effort out of France. 121 intellectuals showed their solidarity with the accused by signing "the Declaration on the Right to Refuse to take up Arms in the Algerian War", which was published to coincide with the beginning of the trial. It stated: "Growing numbers of French people are wanted by the authorities, being taken into custody and sentenced for refusing to take part in the war or for assisting the Algerian combatants. Distorted by those opposed to them, but also toned down even by those whose duty it should be to speak up for them, their reasons are largely misunderstood." Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954–1963)* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1997), p. ix.

<sup>158</sup> None of the signatories were members of the PCF. Communists, like Picasso, perhaps still wanted to respect the Party's position regarding Algeria to a certain extent. Picasso's contribution to the Boupacha case was against the use of torture in Algeria, while the Manifesto of 121 was in support of those aiding the FLN. Torture was a more universal concept that the Party would also be opposed to, while signing the Manifesto would be directly political and would undermine the Party's position.

<sup>159</sup> Horne, *Savage War*, p. 416.

<sup>160</sup> James D. Le Sueur, "Decolonising 'French Universalism': Reconsidering the Impact of the Algerian War on French Intellectuals," *The Journal of North African Studies* 6, no.1 (2001): p. 182.

<sup>161</sup> François Fejtő, *The French Communist Party and the Crisis of International Communism* (London: The MIT Press, 1967), p. 118.

bombings, and curfews were declared in Paris during the summer and fall of 1961. Between 1958 and mid-October 1961, forty-seven officers in France were killed and 140 were wounded.<sup>162</sup> On 17 October 1961, an FLN-organised protest occurred in Paris to challenge the curfew that was in effect for Algerians living in France.<sup>163</sup> Tens of thousands of demonstrators attended.<sup>164</sup> The police response was brutal. Protestors were arrested en masse, officers opened fire into crowds, and there were reports of police throwing unconscious demonstrators into the Seine.<sup>165</sup> The Archives of the Paris Police Prefecture confirm that by the end of the week more than 14,000 people had been arrested, and recently published estimates claim that between thirty-one and 200 people were killed.<sup>166</sup>

The Boupacha affair unravelled in the midst of this confusion and violence. She had been accused of planting a bomb for the FLN in the Algerian capital, which had then been diffused before it could explode. She was arrested and confessed to her crime, but only after extensive physical and sexual torture. This incident was heavily publicised in France after Boupacha's lawyer, Gisèle Halimi, contacted the prominent intellectual Simone de Beauvoir to ask for assistance. Picasso also decided to design a portrait of Boupacha at this time. This sketch, which was on the cover of the 1962 book by de Beauvoir and Halimi that told the story of Boupacha's case, was also reprinted in LLF on 8 February 1962 and in many other magazines.<sup>167</sup> Picasso's 1961 portrait of Boupacha shows her without the traditional *haik* (veil). Historian Joan Wallach Scott wrote that the veil came to have conflicting meanings for Algerians who sought independence. On one hand it was a way of resisting French appropriation and maintaining an independent identity; however, many leaders of the revolution saw the veil as a symbol of backwardness that needed to be overcome on Algerian terms.<sup>168</sup> The *haik* also came to be used militarily. Woman transporting messages, money, and weapons could use the veil to smuggle goods unnoticed. When the French army began to frisk those with veils, women began to dress as Westerners.<sup>169</sup> The *haik* could be used to their advantage during these campaigns. Boupacha was middle-class and studied at a French *lycée*, and French-educated urban women usually dressed in a European manner.<sup>170</sup> Many photos of Boupacha at the time show her without

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<sup>162</sup> Jean-Paul Brunet, *Police contre FLN: Le drame d'octobre 1961* (Paris: Flammarion 1999), p. 82.

<sup>163</sup> Joshua Cole, "October 1961 in French and Algerian Memory," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 21, no. 3 (2003): p. 24.

<sup>164</sup> Michael Rothberg, "17 October 1961: A Site of Holocaust Memory?" in Carola Hähnel-Mesnard, Marie Liénard-Yeterian, and Cristina Marinas, eds., *Culture et mémoire : Représentations contemporaines de la mémoire dans les espaces mémoriels, les arts du visuel, la littérature et le théâtre* (Palaiseau, FR: Éditions de l'École Polytechnique, 2008), p. 35

<sup>165</sup> Joshua Cole, "October 1961 in French and Algerian Memory," p. 24.

<sup>166</sup> Archives de la préfecture de police, Ha 110, Manifestation du 17 octobre 1961, Subfolder: Manifestation du 17 octobre 1961, Comptes-rendus cited in Joshua Cole "Entering History: the Memory of Police Violence in Paris, October 1961," in Patricia M.E. Lorcin, ed., *Algeria and France 1800–2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), pp. 118–19 and Brunet, *Police contre FLN*, p. 329.

<sup>167</sup> Mahon, *Politics of Eros*, p. 148.

<sup>168</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 62.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>170</sup> Marnia Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 120–21 and Macmaster, *Burning the Veil*, p. 138.

the *haik*. Thus, it is understandable that Picasso chose to sketch Boupacha with an exposed head. Political philosopher Sonia Kruks believes that this was an attempt to present Boupacha as any white French reader's own daughter, rather than as a veiled Oriental woman.<sup>171</sup> Picasso could have simply been depicting Boupacha as an Algerian woman with a European style who was also a fierce supporter of independence. The portrait demonstrated that those seeking independence were not so different from the French and from the intellectuals who had in the past fought for their own freedom and justice.



Figure 3.8 – *Djamila Boupacha*<sup>172</sup> by Picasso



Figure 3.9 – Photo of Boupacha

The Boupacha case was an opportunity for intellectuals like Picasso to unite with de Beauvoir and publicly declare themselves to be against the war. Before the book was published, de Beauvoir wrote an article for French newspaper *Le Monde* that outlined the basic information surrounding Boupacha's incarceration, and she called on the French people to face up to the violence being perpetrated by the French towards the Algerians. In addition to the article and eventual book publication, de Beauvoir set up the Djamila Boupacha Committee and was joined by many notable individuals such as Sartre, François Mauriac, René Julliard, André Philip, Françoise Sagan, and Germaine Tillon. The intellectual community—Communist or not—was committed to the case.<sup>173</sup> The committee was responsible for a campaign on Boupacha's behalf, which included the use of Picasso's sketch that had appeared widely throughout the press.<sup>174</sup> De Beauvoir wrote in the last line of her book's introduction that "The truth confronts you on all sides. You can no longer mumble the old excuse 'we didn't know'; and now that you do know, can you continue to feign ignorance, or content yourselves with a mere token utterance of horrified sympathy? I hope not."<sup>175</sup> It is easy to recall the memory of concentration camps during the Second World War or Soviet labour camps when reading de Beauvoir's plea. One can also see that the connections go beyond

<sup>171</sup> Sonia Kruks, *Simone de Beauvoir and the Politics of Ambiguity* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 117.

<sup>172</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Djamila Boupacha*, 8 December 1961, charcoal on paper, private collection.

<sup>173</sup> For example, Mauriac was a Catholic moderate and by no means a Communist or a Leftist. However, certain moral and political choices went beyond Party lines. Even during the Spanish Civil War, Mauriac could not accept the fascist coalition of leaders and instead came out on the side of the Republicans. Cabanne, *His Life and Times*, p. 305.

<sup>174</sup> Evans, *Memory*, p. 143.

<sup>175</sup> Simone de Beauvoir and Gisèle Halimi, trans. Peter Green, *Djamila Boupacha* (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd. and George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd, 1962), p. 21.

Vichy and the Occupation to the days of the Dreyfus Affair,<sup>176</sup> which again saw the French nation divided over an act of injustice. Many intellectuals of that generation evoked Dreyfus as the battle cry of protest against the army's use of torture and brutality in Algeria.<sup>177</sup> Dreyfus, like Boupacha, was a *cause célèbre* among the French intellectuals. Historian David L. Schalk explained that "For the first time, *les intellectuels* emerged in France during the Dreyfus Affair, and did so in order to take a political stance."<sup>178</sup> Historian Venita Datta concurred. She described how the Dreyfus Affair gave the intellectuals an opportunity to affirm their place in society as a social category.<sup>179</sup> The intellectuals had historically been the conscience for the general public and had appointed themselves to speak out against injustice that threatened the French identity. Historian Martin Evans agreed that the intellectual was seen as the independent voice willing to defend society against the evils of injustice.<sup>180</sup> They saw themselves as the defenders of morality within France, so naturally the use of torture by the French military in Algeria inevitably became a prominent topic of debate among French Communists.

It was common for those intellectuals who had lived through and experienced the German Occupation to forge their commitment to Algeria out of those memories, which set a pattern for subsequent commitments.<sup>181</sup> The past was mobilised for certain political purposes, perhaps explaining how intellectuals who joined the PCF after the Liberation of Paris recalled those old feelings when forming an opinion during the Algerian conflict. De Beauvoir would not let the use of torture in Algeria be another event the intellectuals could later ignore. However, there were limits to the Left using these past events as analogies for the present problems in Algeria, argued historian Henry Rousso.<sup>182</sup> Regardless, the heavy publicising of Boupacha's story thanks to the efforts of de Beauvoir, Halimi, Picasso, and others helped ensure the mobilisation of the intellectuals of the Left, and ultimately, the entire French populace. De Beauvoir wrote in her *Le Monde* article that "such an abdication of responsibility would be a betrayal of France as a whole ... When the government of a country allows crimes to be committed in its name, every

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<sup>176</sup> Alfred Dreyfus was a French artillery officer of Jewish descent who was convicted of treason for passing military secrets to the Germans in 1894. Ruth Harris writes that this incident differed from regular politics because it appeared to demand passionate involvement from France's intellectuals and sparked debate concerning more broad philosophies and politics. The crisis in Algeria sparked interest among the intellectuals in a very similar way. Ruth Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair That Divided France* (London: Allen Lane, 2010), p. 7.

<sup>177</sup> Evans, *Memory*, p. 209.

<sup>178</sup> David L. Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower: Algeria and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 40.

<sup>179</sup> Venita Datta, *Birth of a National Icon: The Literary Avant-Garde and the Origins of the Intellectual in France* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 82.

<sup>180</sup> Evans, *Memory*, p. 209.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>182</sup> The Algerian War had dimensions that the Resistance or Dreyfus Affair did not. For example, France's internal problems differed from the ongoing conflict that affected Algerians more directly. Henry Rousso, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 76.

citizen thereby becomes a member of a collectively criminal action.”<sup>183</sup> This assertion meant that a lack of response from the public was as bad as one that did not condemn the French army for its crimes. Kruks explains that as a writer, de Beauvoir possessed an authoritative voice that could influence public opinion.<sup>184</sup> The same applied to Picasso and his art. Just as he had lent his dove to the peace movement, he contributed a portrait to show his support for Boupacha and all others facing torture at the hands of the French during the war. The prominent figures who fought against the injustices being committed in Algeria would stimulate a public political discourse in France, not only against the use of torture, but perhaps in favour of independence for the Algerians. There was an eventual referendum in 1962 that revealed a substantial amount of support for Algerian independence among the French electorate.<sup>185</sup> Even though the PCF’s position on Algeria was not straightforward and clear from the beginning, historian Danièle Joly claimed that the Party had always defended the right of the Algerians to self-determination; however, they were also concerned Algeria would become a victim of US expansionism after liberation.<sup>186</sup> This was similar to the Soviet’s defence of its actions in Hungary during their revolution in 1956.<sup>187</sup>

Picasso’s portrait of Boupacha was not only a way of supporting fellow intellectuals such as de Beauvoir, it was a way of supporting victims such as Boupacha who were being tortured in Algeria and advocates such as Halimi in their quests to denounce the war and campaign for the freedom of the Algerians. Picasso was supporting the delayed—but eventual—policy of his Party.

How does Picasso’s Boupacha portrait compare to his other political portraits? Henri Martin was a French Communist and sailor who had protested against the war in Indochina, and as a result he was sentenced to five years in prison by a military tribunal in 1950.<sup>188</sup> Picasso’s portrait of Martin was an ink drawing originally published in *L’Humanité Dimanche* on 28 October 1951 and subsequently in *L’Humanité*, *Regards*, and *Les Lettres Françaises*. Picasso’s sketch of Martin also was on the cover of Parmelin’s publication *Martricule 2078: L’affaire Henri Martin*, which retold Martin’s story.<sup>189</sup> Picasso, Léger, Taslitzky, and many other PCF artists contributed to Martin’s defence campaign. Artists, poets, musicians, and even non-Party members participated. Wall wrote that the PCF-led campaign saw many anti-Stalinists of the Left put their dislike of colonial war above their hostility towards the Party, which in turn allowed the PCF

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<sup>183</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, “In Defence of Djamila Boupacha,” *Le Monde*, 3 June 1960 cited in de Beauvoir and Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*, p. 19

<sup>184</sup> Kruks, *Politics of Ambiguity*, p. 113.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>186</sup> Joly, *Algerian War*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>187</sup> The Soviets would argue that intervention in Hungary was in accordance with the terms of the Warsaw Pact, which justified their involvement against external aggression. They classified the uprising as “external aggression” by arguing that it had been instigated by American imperialists. Robert A. Jones, *The Soviet Concept of ‘Limited Sovereignty’ from Lenin to Gorbachev: The Brezhnev Doctrine* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), p. 120.

<sup>188</sup> Wilson, *Picasso/Marx*, p. 62

<sup>189</sup> Gérard Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse* (Paris: Éditions Cercle d’Art et L’Humanité, 2000), p. 104.

to lead a united mass movement.<sup>190</sup> At the November 1951 *Salon d'Automne*, authorities removed seven works with content involving Indochina and Henri Martin created by Communist artists. Picasso, Matisse, and others protested against the police intervention.<sup>191</sup> Then in March 1952, Léger and Picasso were just two artists among many who participated in a Parisian art show in support of Martin called *Témoignages pour Henri Martin*.<sup>192</sup> This campaign for Martin, which was spearheaded by the Party, brought artists together of all styles to unite under the banner of the PCF for a common cause.



Figure 3.10 – *Portrait d'Henri Martin*<sup>193</sup> by Picasso      Figure 3.11 – *Portrait d'Henri Martin*<sup>194</sup> by Léger

The campaign for Nikos Beloyannis was another example of Picasso and other Communist artists rallying around a fallen comrade. As I mentioned earlier, Beloyannis was a member of the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party charged with espionage and eventually shot dead on 30 March 1952 under orders from the monarchist Greek government.<sup>195</sup> This was in the wake of the Greek Civil War, which ended in 1949 and resulted in the Greek Communists' defeat. The Civil War had become an international concern for nations such as the UK and the United States who worried that failure to intervene on the side of the Greek ruling forces with financial and military assistance would result in the expansion of Soviet control in Greece and even the Middle East.<sup>196</sup>

Picasso's drawing of Beloyannis, called *L'Homme à l'oeillet*,<sup>197</sup> was not only used to raise money to help save his fellow comrade, it was also published in *L'Humanité Dimanche* on 9 March 1952 along with

<sup>190</sup> Wall, *Era of Stalin*, p. 185.

<sup>191</sup> Wilson, *Picasso/Marx*, p. 162.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>193</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Portrait d'Henri Martin*, 1951, wash drawing with India ink on paper, Musée Municipal d'Art et d'Histoire de la Ville de Saint-Denis, France.

<sup>194</sup> Fernand Léger, *Portrait d'Henri Martin*, 1952, pencil and gouache on paper, Musée national Fernand Léger, Biot, France.

<sup>195</sup> Wilson, *Picasso/Marx*, p. 186.

<sup>196</sup> André Gerolymatos, *An International Civil War: Greece, 1943–1949* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), p. xii.

<sup>197</sup> Beloyannis was known as “the man with the red carnation.” *Ibid.*, p. 298.

signatures of protest from Picasso, Matisse, Raoul Dufy, Jacques Villon, Marcel Gromaire, and others.<sup>198</sup> The French were not the only ones asking for mercy: pleas came from thousands of individuals globally, including 159 members of the British Parliament.<sup>199</sup> Claude Roy wrote on 31 March 1952 about the events of the previous night, which was the same day as Beloyannis's execution.

Depuis quinze jours, Picasso a multiplié les efforts en faveur de Beloyannis. Quand j'arrive rue Gay-Lussac, ce soir, il est bouleversé, le visage tendu, vielli. Il dit: "C'est comme dans le tableau de Goya, aussi horrible..." Nous essayons de mettre sur le papier un court texte ou il dise son horreur. J'esquisse des phrases simples, je suggère un mot... Picasso est muet, noué de chagrin. Tout à coup, il prend la feuille de papier sur laquelle nous essayons, dérisoirement, de capter sa fureur, il descend dans l'atelier. Une demi-heure passé. Picasso revient et me tend un court texte—un cri: "La lueur de l'huile des lanterns éclairant la nuit dans la Madrid du soir de mai les nobles faces du peuple fusillé par l'étranger rapace dans le tableau de Goya ont le même grain d'horreur semé à pleines poignées de projecteurs sur la poitrine ouverte de la Grèce par des gouvernements suant la peur et la haine. Une immense colombe blanche saupoudre la colère de son deuil sur la terre."<sup>200</sup>

This statement was published in the 31 March issue of *L'Humanité* and was accompanied by a cartoon that showed Beloyannis beside a man wearing an American helmet—his executioner.<sup>201</sup> Art historian Kirsten Hoving Keen mused that Picasso may not have blamed the Americans for Beloyannis's death, but the Party's publication of the comic shows that it did indeed place responsibility on the United States for, at the very least, supporting the Greeks in their condemnation of Beloyannis.<sup>202</sup> Picasso had demonstrated that he was willing to commit his words, his money, and his art in honour of a fallen comrade.

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<sup>198</sup> Wilson, *Picasso/Marx*, p. 186.

<sup>199</sup> Gerolymatos, *International Civil War*, p. 298.

<sup>200</sup> Claude Roy, *La Guerre et la Paix* (Paris: Cercle d'Art, 1997), p. 174. The following is my translation: "For the past fifteen days, Picasso has multiplied his efforts on behalf of Beloyannis. When I arrived that evening at Gay-Lussac Street, he was distressed, upset, and aged. He said: 'It's like the picture by Goya, just as horrible...' We're trying to compose a short text in which to express his horror. I'm putting down simple phrases, suggesting a word... Picasso is silent, overcome by grief. Suddenly he takes the piece of paper on which we in vain had tried to capture his anger and he leaves to go down to his studio. Half an hour passes. Picasso reappears and hands me a short text—a cry: 'the gleam of the oil lanterns illuminating the May night of Madrid, the noble faces of the people being shot by the rapacious foreigner in the painting by Goya, has the same grain of horror sown in handfuls by the headlights on the open chest of Greece, by governments sweating fear and hate. An immense white dove sprinkles the wrath of its mourning over the earth.'" Picasso's referencing of Goya is important to note, just as *Massacre en Corée* and *La Guerre* and *La Paix* murals also evoke Goya's work and demonstrate how Picasso was continuously in conversation with the old masters and artistic traditions.

<sup>201</sup> The United States supported the Greek government in a civil war against the Communists starting in 1947 by sending substantial financial aid. Mark Pittaway, "Making Postwar Communism" in Dan Stone, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 277 and D. Michael Schafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 182.

<sup>202</sup> Keen, "Communist Interlude," p. 468.

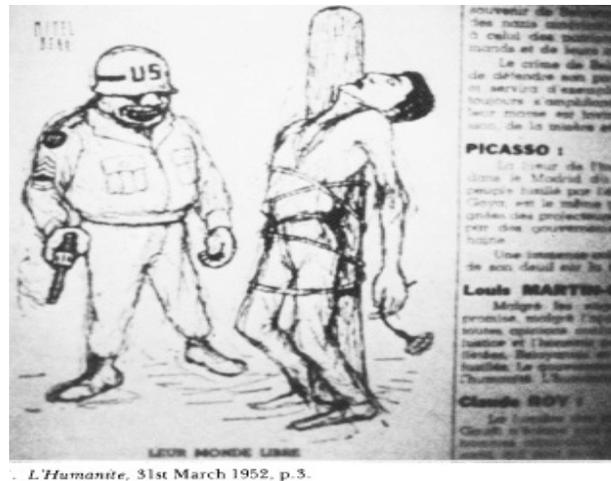


Figure 3.12 – Cartoon of Beloyannis and his executioner accompanied by Picasso’s poem<sup>203</sup>

Picasso’s portrait of Boupacha was just one among numerous artistic contributions he had made for those who were either linked to topical news, Communist victims of Western attacks, or casualties of colonial wars. All of Picasso’s portraits were published in the Communist press, which demonstrated the Party’s approval of his works. The Stalin portrait was the only contribution to receive major backlash. While Martin, Boupacha, and Beloyannis were victims of political injustice, Stalin was not. Picasso’s rushed portrait of a venerated comrade and leader was presented to the Communist community during its time of grieving, which led to hasty responses that were eventually retracted. It is the anomaly among the portraits Picasso created and produced for the Party and its causes.

I have spent this chapter re-evaluating aspects of Picasso’s life so that we may challenge certain assumptions within the scholarship regarding his lack of political engagement in the 1950s and 60s. During the last decades of his life, Picasso did not create universally known works of art condemning war as he had with *Guernica*. He did not make countless statements and give interviews to demonstrate his dedication to the PCF as he had when he first joined the Party. There existed no united intellectual communities of the Left fighting for their right to be free as artists as there had been during the Resistance. The circumstances had changed by the 1950s. I have attempted to explain that there is more than one way to contribute and express loyalty to a political organisation. *Massacre en Corée* demonstrated Picasso’s continual hatred of war and the need to honour its victims. *La Guerre* and *La Paix* murals illustrated his condemnation of the use of bacteriological warfare used by the United States in the Korean War. He sketched a portrait of Stalin upon the leader’s death and remained part of an organisation that promoted peace and freedom—despite the harsh criticism he received from some comrades. He used his artwork to help raise awareness of the torture being committed by the French military during the Algerian War alongside fellow intellectuals—even though the PCF did not proclaim its support for Algerian independence immediately. He contributed many other political artworks when Communists around the

<sup>203</sup> Artist unknown, *L’Humanité*, 31 March 1952, p. 3.

world were facing persecution and injustice. Pierre Cabanne maintained that Picasso would always rush to meet press deadlines so his art could be published in a Communist newspaper, he would design posters for the WPM, and he would draw portraits of Party members or victims of fascism.<sup>204</sup> Rather than becoming disheartened with the PCF and abandoning his Party card when the Soviet regime's actions became questionable or when his artwork was attacked, Picasso remained a figurehead of the Communist-sponsored World Peace Movement. Many Communists left the Party when the CPSU became plagued with problems that led to widespread discontent. Instead, Picasso changed the nature of his relationship with the Party and remained a member until his death. Picasso offered his time, money, and artwork to support humanitarian causes, and he attempted to protect the ideals of the intellectual Left by remaining united with the Party in its Communist struggle.

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<sup>204</sup> Cabanne, *His Life and Times*, p. 419.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Politics of Sincerity: Picasso's Fan Mail, Branding, and Public Perception**

*Now that the seventh World Festival of Youth has just ended, we can express to you profound gratitude from the 18,000 delegates in Vienna; each of them appreciates the fine effort that your work represents for peace and friendship. Your canvas presided at our festival of peace, and it will remain an unforgotten image. Youth from all countries of the world are proud to have you as a friend: a new step on the path of friendship between people has been accompanied by the name of Picasso. For that reason, on their behalf, we say thank you. You know many people are not accustomed to your painting. What better way to get to know one another than here at the festival, where your painting seemed to mirror their deepest desires—this is also why we thank you.<sup>1</sup> —Jean Garcias<sup>2</sup>*

In the previous two chapters, I have looked at the various ways Picasso chose to engage with the *Parti communiste français* (PCF). I have analysed select artworks and examined the political climate at the time of their creation in an effort to explain how Picasso used the subject matter of these canvases to support the ideals of the PCF and the World Peace Movement (WPM). In this chapter, I will be dealing with the correspondence found in the archives of the *Musée national Picasso-Paris* (AMNPP) between Picasso and several Communist parties throughout the world, Communist charities, peace organisations, members of the PCF, friends, art dealers, and fans of both his artwork and his contribution to the WPM and the Communist cause. This chapter will show how many of these letters uncover requests for artwork, financial donations, or words of support. They also reveal how various groups understood Picasso's relationship with Communism. I will study these letters and attempt to illustrate the degree of Picasso's political commitment, how that commitment continued to change over time, and how it was perceived and interpreted by others. Picasso also curated various brands for himself and placed himself within a political narrative through his artwork and charitable donations. The letters within the archives reveal the admiration for these brands, such as Picasso the Communist or Picasso the peace activist. Because we are unable to establish the sincerity of Picasso's politics based solely on his words and actions, we must use all available resources and establish a more comprehensive history of Picasso's time in the PCF. By going beyond the work of historians who also deal with the political engagement of Picasso, by reconsidering the ways we measure political commitment to include things like public opinion and

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<sup>1</sup> My translation from the French. Jean Garcias to Picasso, 13 August 1959, G9 - Mouvements internationaux et associations étrangers pour la paix, box ARPECB0360; folder: Festival mondial de la jeunesse et des étudiants pour la paix et l'amitié, 1950–63, AMNPP. "Maintenant que vient de se terminer le VIIe festival mondial de la jeunesse, nous pouvons vous transmettre la profonde gratitude des 18,000 délégués à Vienna; chacun d'eux a apprécié le bel effort que représente votre oeuvre pour la paix et l'amitié. Votre toile a présidé à notre fête de la paix, elle en restera l'image immobile. Les jeunes de tous les pays du monde sont fiers de vous avoir comme ami: une nouvelle étape sur le chemin de l'amitié entre les peuples a été accompagnée de nom de Picasso et d'abord pour cela, en leur nom, nous vous disons merci. Beaucoup de gens qui vous connaissent ne sont pas accoutumés à votre peinture. Comment faire mieux connaissance qu'ici au festival, où votre tableau leur semblait le miroir de leurs désirs les plus profonds, c'est aussi pour cela que nous vous remercions."

<sup>2</sup> Garcia was the secretary of the permanent commission of the international committee of the seventh *Festival mondial de la jeunesse et des étudiants pour la paix et l'amitié* in Vienna.

philanthropic work, and by outlining the perspectives of various actors in order to explore the diversity of cultural politics, I will illustrate how Picasso's engagement with the PCF is more extensive than some scholars have previously thought. Both the reality of Picasso's political engagement and the perception of that engagement need to be taken into consideration.

The AMNPP website states that Picasso took special care of the letters he received by gathering them in bundled packages and placing them in chronological order until he left for the south of France in 1947.<sup>3</sup> However, there is no explanation from the Picasso Archives or evidence otherwise to establish how his letters were handled after Picasso's departure for the Côte d'Azur. According to the "Picasso! An Anniversary Exhibition" in honour of the *Musée national Picasso-Paris's* thirtieth birthday, Picasso never threw out documents.<sup>4</sup> The very size of the AMNPP is proof of this—Picasso's archival collection contains 200,000 items.<sup>5</sup> The way he meticulously organised his mail shows the importance he placed on his correspondence. It is possible that his habit continued after 1947 simply because these letters can be found in the AMNPP. Picasso also had his longtime Spanish friend Jaime Sabartés act as his business and personal secretary from the time he moved to Paris in 1935 until his death in February 1968. While still living in Paris, Picasso would have his servants bring him all of his post and newspapers each morning, and alongside Sabartés he would spend up to two hours going through them.<sup>6</sup> Afterwards, Picasso would make piles of these letters around the house with the intention of re-reading them more carefully—however, he received so much post daily that he never found the time.<sup>7</sup> As his secretary, Sabartés surely continued to go through all mail sent to Paris, while Picasso or his significant other likely organised and read any mail sent to their home in the south of France. Picasso's involvement with Party and peace matters tapered off after 1968, which was the same year of Sabartés' death. Even though Picasso may not have been personally handling all of his mail after 1947, and although he may not have been as politically involved after 1968, Picasso did continue to read and respond to letters, as I will demonstrate in this chapter. I will also be looking at the generous gifts of paintings and sketches Picasso donated and the range of support he offered to various Communist campaigns, charitable organisations, and peace groups. Through a detailed analysis of the letters and messages in the archives of the *Musée Picasso*, I will uncover the images of Picasso created by his admirers so that we may better understand the importance of this public opinion.

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<sup>3</sup> "Présentation générale du fonds," Fonds Picasso, Centre historique des Archives nationales. Accessed: 19 October 2015.  
[http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/chan/fonds/picassohtml/DAFANCH00AP\\_0000515AP.html](http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/chan/fonds/picassohtml/DAFANCH00AP_0000515AP.html)

<sup>4</sup> The exhibition ran for a year beginning on 20 October 2015.

<sup>5</sup> "The Collection," Musée national Picasso-Paris. Accessed: 3 January 2018.  
<http://www.museepicassoparis.fr/en/the-collection/>

<sup>6</sup> Jaime Sabartés, trans. Angel Flores, *Picasso: An Intimate Portrait* (London: W.H. Allen and Co. Ltd., 1949), p. 107.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107–08.

The existence of admirers, fan mail, and the act of letter writing throughout the centuries has been the subject of many academic articles and publications. In their introduction to a series of articles on reception, Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies Charles Johanningsmeier and historian Barbara Ryan write that those who have studied fan mail have then used the letters as credible sources. The rich body of evidence fan mail provides sometimes contradicts the conclusions of scholars regarding the same subject.<sup>8</sup> For example, historian Robert D. Priest has examined the ways in which fans and critics responded to French historian and writer Ernest Renan's controversial nineteenth-century book *Vie de Jésus* by analysing letters sent to the author. This article is one of many that highlights the public's perceptions of an influential figure and the importance of that figure's cultural influence. Priest believes that the amount of ordinary people who wrote to Renan demonstrated the prominence of his public image.<sup>9</sup> The same point can be made for Picasso—after 1944, he received countless letters from strangers around the world, and the majority expressed their appreciation for Picasso's commitment to the international peace movement, praised his artistic abilities, or confirmed their solidarity with the Party. The admiration displayed for Picasso was not solely based on his status as a renowned artist, but rather—to use the words of Priest—because he was a figure with cultural influence. Picasso then used his influence and power to contribute to an organisation that advocated for peace in the world. Picasso had gained this influence over the course of his career as an artist. The fan mail he received revealed which of Picasso's artworks were most referenced and appreciated by admirers, friends, comrades, and members of the public.

Painting in the same century as Picasso, American modernist Georgia O'Keeffe<sup>10</sup> also received large amounts of fan mail from her followers. Women's studies and American studies specialist Linda M. Grasso writes in her article entitled "'You are no stranger to me'—Georgia O'Keeffe's Fan Mail" that although O'Keeffe was a painter and not a Hollywood starlet, she was seen as a celebrity by many of her correspondents.<sup>11</sup> Similar sentiments are also found in many of the letters Picasso received. He was often treated as a celebrity, with the letter writer asking for a signed

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Johanningsmeier and Barbara Ryan, "Guest Editors' Introduction: Fans and the Objects of Their Devotion," *Reception: Texts, Readers, Audiences, History* 5 (2013): p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Robert D. Priest, "Reading, Writing, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century France: The Popular Reception of Renan's Life of Jesus," *The Journal of Modern History* 86, no. 2 (June 2014): p. 272.

<sup>10</sup> Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) was known for painting abstractions, flowers, landscapes, still lifes, cityscapes, and New Mexican vistas. O'Keeffe's popularity came from her attachment to widely understood American subject matter. During the last forty years of her life, she became a sort of national icon, and she was seen as a representative of freedom, integrity, and creative vision to many women. Ann Lee Morgan, *The Oxford Dictionary of American Art and Artists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 348.

<sup>11</sup> Linda M. Grasso, "'You are no stranger to me'—Georgia O'Keeffe's Fan Mail," *Reception: Texts, Readers, Audiences, History* 5 (2013): p. 24.

print to raise money for an art group,<sup>12</sup> a message of encouragement to relay back to a community centre,<sup>13</sup> or in one case, even an old paint brush or palette.<sup>14</sup> Historians Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi claim that the phenomenon of classifying an individual as a celebrity goes back to the mid-nineteenth century and the mass distribution of newspapers. Cultural historian Leo Braudy expands further, maintaining that along with the growth of media, the political system and the cultural definition of a “perfect” person transformed the history of fame.<sup>15</sup> Celebrity became a common cultural type. This established a new and powerful social force where cultural figures could influence those who desired authority and guidance in an uncertain world.<sup>16</sup> Fame manifests itself when an individual becomes the frequent subject of public discussion. Furthermore, absence and inaccessibility of a celebrity served to increase an individual’s fame.<sup>17</sup> Picasso spent the remaining twenty-six years of his life somewhat isolated in the south of France, which very well could have bolstered his status as a celebrity. He also received letters from fans who respected his authority on art or respected his leadership in regards to the peace movement.

Grasso explains that between the 1950s and 80s, women grappled with social conditions that led to the re-emergence of feminism as a public discourse and political movement, and it was during these years that many female fans wrote to O’Keeffe that they saw in her paintings life-guiding values and inspiration.<sup>18</sup> After World War II, many people were confronted with a different set of social issues that made Picasso’s work particularly significant during those years. He was creating politically motivated works of art at a time when many concerned individuals around the world were reeling from the devastating effects of war and fascism. This was at a time when Communism represented hopes of social transformation, as was demonstrated by the influx of people joining the Party. Tony Judt confirmed that the decade following the war saw a near monopoly exercised by the appeal of Communism among French intellectuals and an enthusiasm with which the case for

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<sup>12</sup> Museum coordinator Wanda Hill to Picasso, 3 November 1960, E16 - Relations avec les institutions culturelles, musées et bibliothèques publics, Étas-Unis, 1925–1970, box ARPECB0339; folder: Étas-Unis 1; subfolder: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, AMNPP.

<sup>13</sup> Coordinator of senior citizen activities at the Jewish Community Center in St. Paul, Minnesota to Picasso, 21 April 1958, G4 - Partis et mouvements politiques à l’étranger, Italie à Vietnam 1935–70 et s.d., box ARPECB0355; folder: USA, AMNPP.

<sup>14</sup> Sam R. Shaw, chairman of the Sidewalk Art Show of the Birmingham Museum of Art to Picasso, 7 April 1956, box E16; folder: Étas-Unis 1; subfolder: Birmingham Museum of Art, AMNPP.

<sup>15</sup> Leo Braudy, “Secular anointings: Fame, Celebrity, and Charisma in the First Century of Mass Culture,” in Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi, eds., *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), p. 168.

<sup>16</sup> Berenson and Giloi, “Introduction,” in Berenson and Giloi, eds., *Constructing Charisma*, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History* (New York, 1986), part V in Berenson and Giloi, “Introduction,” in Berenson and Giloi, eds., *Constructing Charisma*, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Grasso, “O’Keeffe’s Fan Mail,” pp. 25–26.

Communism was defended.<sup>19</sup> The post-war period saw an emergence of sincere hope and desire for peace after so many years of death and destruction—especially with the growing nuclear threat.

In her article, Grasso describes how spectators saw O’Keeffe’s paintings as revelations of the artist’s feelings, which promoted the idea that to know the painting would be to know O’Keeffe. This idea created an impression that the admirers could be connected with the artist and work.<sup>20</sup> Picasso received a multitude of letters from fans who would send words of admiration in honour of his dove of peace. If we are to believe Grasso’s argument, then those who wrote to Picasso did not see him as merely the creator of the dove but as someone who truly believed in the cause. The man who designed posters for the peace movement was also demonstrating his genuine dedication to the cause and to the PCF.<sup>21</sup>

Some historians and academics of various disciplines have discredited the value of using Picasso’s fan mail to validate his engagement with the PCF. In a 2013 *New Statesman*<sup>22</sup> article, current PhD student at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, Jonathan Vernon, dismisses using correspondence to prove Picasso’s dedication to the Party: “Picasso’s personal engagement with them [the Party] is ‘proven’ by letters he received—and rarely even bothered to answer.”<sup>23</sup> Vernon makes this statement specifically in response to Tate Liverpool’s 2010 *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* exhibition’s use of the letters. Vernon argues that Picasso’s lack of response to most of his fan mail also proves his lack of commitment to peace and the PCF. This idea seeks validation solely in the fact that no response from Picasso automatically meant he lacked interest in those causes. Hélène Parmelin, described the extensive amount of requests Picasso received via mail from comrades and admirers:

And since Picasso read every letter and gave of himself and of his money super abundantly for both painting and society; for strikers and newspapers; for one man’s lawsuit and another’s life... for peace and misfortune; since he was endlessly kind and fatally generous... since he had to choose between the fifteen movements that supported peace and the thousand individuals who called themselves Communists, Spanish Republicans, or merely Spaniards, or friends of and sympathizers with China; between all those who asked for help

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<sup>19</sup> Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944–1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Grasso, “O’Keeffe’s Fan Mail,” pp. 28–29.

<sup>21</sup> For example: the First Secretary of the office of the sixth arrondissement to Picasso on winning the Lenin Peace Prize, Paris, 4 May 1962, G1 - Partis politiques et syndicats, 1937–69 et s.d., box ARPECB0352; folder: Parti Communiste – Ass. Jeunesse, Ass. Étudiants; subfolder: PCF: félicitation de anniversaires, prix Lenine de la paix, 1956–64 et s.d., AMNPP. “C’est un peu de cet honneur qui rejaillit sur nous, de compter dans nos rangs l’artiste de génie et l’homme conscient, le communiste que cette haute distinction récompense. Née de ton génie, la colombe de la paix guide la lutte de millions d’hommes de tous les continents pour un monde d’où la guerre serait bannie.”

<sup>22</sup> A British political magazine.

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Vernon, “Comrade Picasso: The Man and the Political Myth,” *The New Statesman*, p. 2, September 2013. Accessed: 6 September 2015. <http://www.newstatesman.com/art-and-design/2013/09/comrade-picasso-man-and-political-myth>

in the name of art, or in the name of a community of thought or opinion... and since as many people as letters came to the door of *La Californie*, Picasso would have required hours of twenty-four days each to satisfy one-hundredth part of the demands made upon him.<sup>24</sup>

Parmelin did not exaggerate. As evidenced by the extensive number of boxes containing hundreds of thousands of letters kept at the AMNPP—whether they concern political issues, artistic matters, or general letters from friends—it would have been physically impossible for Picasso to read let alone respond to every one without compromising the amount of time dedicated to his art and his everyday life. And yet for many years Picasso still managed to participate in PCF events, lend his name to Party-sponsored causes, and donate art when asked. Picasso received a remarkable number of letters on a daily basis, and to pick and choose which to respond to would have taken a considerable amount of time. Or perhaps Picasso was not the type of person who cared to always reply. Regardless of the reason, it is important to understand that Picasso's silence was customary in relation to all letters he received—whether they were personal or concerned his art—and not just with those regarding politics.

Paul Éluard was one of Picasso's closest friends. They met through the Surrealist circle in the 1920s, and they spent a significant amount of time together until Éluard's sudden death in 1952. During World War II, Picasso chose to move back to Paris from Royan in August 1940 during the Occupation, just days after Éluard returned. It is Éluard who is credited with convincing Picasso to join the PCF.<sup>25</sup> Dore Ashton stated that Éluard spent many hours in Picasso's studio with the artist.<sup>26</sup> Brassai remarked that Picasso's political statements often mirrored Éluard's poems.<sup>27</sup> Their families spent holidays and summers together, Picasso produced artworks to accompany Éluard's writings, and the AMNPP holds numerous poems Éluard wrote for Picasso. Éluard even dedicated a book to his good friend.<sup>28</sup> And yet, not even to one of his closest friends did Picasso find the time to respond. On 5 March 1940, Éluard wrote to Picasso complaining of his silence and distance: "Mon cher ami, comme vous êtes silencieux, absent, loin—presque distant. Votre affection pourtant serait doit bien ... un mot de vous me consolerait un peu!"<sup>29</sup> Then again in 1942, Éluard acknowledged how Picasso was known

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<sup>24</sup> *La Californie* was the name of Picasso's villa in Cannes. Hélène Parmelin, trans. Humphrey Hare, *Picasso Plain: An Intimate Portrait* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963), p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> Gertje Utley, *Picasso: the Communist Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 42; Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), p. 63; Pierre Cabanne, *Pablo Picasso: His Life and Times* (New York: William Morrow and Company Inc., 1977), p. 364.

<sup>26</sup> Dore Ashton, ed., *Picasso on Art: A Selection of Views* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), p. xxii.

<sup>27</sup> Brassai, *Conversations avec Picasso* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 244 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> "C'est à toi Pablo Picasso, mon ami sublime, que je dedié ce livre. Par ton audace, tu prolonges notre vie, tu nous liés chaque jour, un peu plus harmonieusement à cet univers sans défaut ou notre espoir ignoré les mirages." Éluard to Picasso, no date, C44 - ÉLUARD (1938–52) – ERR, box ARPECB0409, AMNPP.

<sup>29</sup> Postcard from Éluard to Picasso, 5 March 1940, *ibid.*

to never write.<sup>30</sup> These statements occurred prior to Picasso joining the PCF in 1944, which demonstrates that his distaste for correspondence was entrenched long before receiving his Party card and had little bearing on the degree of his commitment to the Communist cause.

Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler had been one of Picasso's dealers throughout his career, and after 1947 he held an exclusivity contract with the artist. During those years, Kahnweiler did not go a week without writing his artist long letters that always began with "My dear friend". Pierre Assouline, Kahnweiler's biographer, asserted that Picasso never felt at ease writing, so more often than not he would make his wife respond to his dealer's letters.<sup>31</sup> Even when he received letters that pertained to business transactions, Picasso still did not feel compelled to always respond.

Lynda Morris has consistently maintained that the letters Picasso received are indicative of his importance to the Party and the World Peace Movement. In her and Christoph Grunenberg's *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* exhibition catalogue, they wrote in the foreword that the boxes of correspondence in the AMNPP "revealed a rich variety of original and unknown material", were "evidence of Picasso's political commitment", and they "shifted considerably our understanding of his political position and its significance for his art".<sup>32</sup> John Richardson dismissed Morris's claims, countering in his 2010 *New York Times* article that the receipts documenting Picasso's charitable donations to Communist and humanitarian causes were known to scholars such as Gertje Utley long before Tate Liverpool's 2010 exhibition.<sup>33</sup> In this case, Richardson is speaking of the receipts that prove Picasso's donations, which only represent a small amount of material in the Picasso Archives. Many of the boxes in the AMNPP contain letters from political organisations and figures from around the world. That is not to say that Utley has not done extensive research in the AMNPP, which is clearly evidenced by her work in *Picasso: The Communist Years*. However, Utley does minimise the importance of some of the archival material. The way this information about diverse and lesser-known aspects of Picasso's time in the PCF was used and the conclusions that were drawn from these records differ greatly depending on each scholar's critical perspectives of Picasso's political commitment.

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<sup>30</sup> "Je t'ai écrit une longue lettre sur des Grand Augustins. Il est bien entendu que tu n'écris pas ... Ah! Si je pourrais le faire pour toi, que je me ferais plaisir!" Postcard from Éluard to Picasso, 11 March 1942, *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Assouline, trans. Charles Ruas, *An Artful Life: A Biography of D.H. Kahnweiler, 1884–1979* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), p. 332.

<sup>32</sup> "Foreword," Christoph Grunenberg and Lynda Morris, eds., *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> John Richardson, "How Political was Picasso?" *New York Review of Books*, 25 November 2010, p. 1. Accessed: 19 November 2014. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/nov/25/how-political-was-picasso/>

In previous chapters, I have analysed politically charged artworks Picasso created after he joined the PCF in 1944 (with the exception of 1937's *Guernica*<sup>34</sup>). These widely known canvases, set in their historical context, were interpreted to reveal how the Party was a vehicle through which Picasso could advocate for universal values of humanism and peace. In this chapter, I will examine the documents and correspondence found in the AMNPP in order to bring to light the lesser-known monetary donations, messages of supports, and pieces of art Picasso created for Communist organisations, peace groups, comrades, and charities. The countless folders within the archives reveal the thousands of letters sent to—and sometimes even from—the artist, which reveal his involvement in PCF meetings and gatherings of Communist and humanitarian groups, his participation in events held for persecuted Party members, and the numerous manifestos and petitions he signed that advocated for the fair treatment of wrongly accused Communists worldwide. Furthermore, these letters will help us to construct a more complete picture of Picasso's politics by incorporating the perceptions of Picasso held by various comrades, fans, charities, and political organisations and the various brands of the artist to which they subscribed. By analysing Picasso's lesser-known artistic and political contributions to official Party events and campaigns, his donations to affiliate peace organisations, and his public perceptions and brands, I will demonstrate how his commitment to the PCF and the fight for peace was maintained to varying degrees until his death and that establishing political dedication is not a straightforward task.

### **Picasso the Communist Warrior**

The Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) was first founded in 1919. It took the government of the United States only four months to interfere with the development of the American Communist movement with the Palmer raids of January 1920. There were invasions of meetings, headquarters, and homes, thousands of arrests, mass deportations, and it successfully drove the movement underground.<sup>35</sup> These sorts of attacks on the Party would become common throughout the following years. The Party was regularly involved in public demonstrations and strikes—which were sometimes violent and attracted the attention of local and federal agencies. Some of the best known Supreme Court cases of the twentieth century dealt with civil liberties and involved members of the CPUSA.<sup>36</sup> In the late 1940s, Picasso began offering support to accused American Communists who were being persecuted by the government of the United States. Picasso was one of many intellectuals in France who denounced the arrest of twelve American Communist

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<sup>34</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain.

<sup>35</sup> Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 20.

<sup>36</sup> Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov, *The Secret World of American Communism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 4.

Party members who were indicted in June 1948 in New York City.<sup>37</sup> These top leaders of the CPUSA were being charged under the Smith Act of 1940. More specifically, the twelve comrades were accused of violating the membership clause of the Smith Act, which stipulated that it was unlawful to “organise... any society, group, or assembly of persons who teach, advocate, or encourage the overthrow or destruction of any such government [in the United States] by force or violence: or becomes or is a member of, or affiliates with, any such society, group, or assembly of persons, knowing the purposes thereof.”<sup>38</sup> The group had allegedly violated the law by reconstituting the CPUSA, which had been dissolved during the Second World War.<sup>39</sup> Even though the Smith Act had existed since 1940, during the war the United States and the Soviet Union had been allies. After 1945, tension increased between the two countries over a variety of issues—including nuclear weapons—and as the Cold War progressed, American Communists became the targets of their own government.<sup>40</sup> After a nine-month trial in New York City, all twelve defendants were convicted. To rally support for the accused CPUSA members, months before their trial began, Picasso signed the *Déclaration des intellectuels français contre le procès des douze communistes américains*, in addition to joining the *Comité de défense des douze communistes américains*, along with Éluard as its chairman, Victor Leduc as its secretary, and other politicians, scientists, writers, and artists such as Yves Farge, Jacques Duclos, Jean Cocteau, Fernand Léger, Paul Langevin, Édouard Pignon, Jean Lurçat, Tristan Tzara, Boris Tazlitsky, Louis Aragon, Frédéric Joliot-Curie, Elisa Triolet, and many others.<sup>41</sup> One of the committee’s biggest initiatives was its attempt to collect signatures from all those intellectuals who protested the Smith Act and the arrest of the accused CPUSA members.<sup>42</sup>

In June 1947, Picasso received a letter from artist and PCF member Francis Jourdain, asking him to become a member of the *Comité de patronage* for Jacques Woog.<sup>43</sup> Woog was a Communist architect who was guillotined in a Parisian prison—along with two other resisters—on 24 September

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<sup>37</sup> Athan G. Theoharis, *The FBI: A Comprehensive Reference Guide* (Phoenix, AZ: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), p. 64.

<sup>38</sup> 18 United States Code, sections 10, 11, 1946 (current version at 18 U.S.C. § 2385 [2006]) cited in James E. Moliterno, *The American Legal Profession in Crisis: Resistance and Responses to Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 49.

<sup>39</sup> Kermit L. Hall, *The Oxford Companion to American Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 214.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Letter from Leduc to Picasso, 4 November 1948, G6 - Associations de lutte contre le racisme, 1932–64 et s.d., box ARPECB0357; folder: Comités de Défense et Libérations – divers; subfolder: Procès des 12, AMNPP.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from Leduc to Picasso, 16 December 1948, *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Letter from the Comité du monument Jacques Woog to Picasso, 1947, signed by Francis Jourdain, Le Corbusier, Marcel Lods, Jean Lurçat, Auguste Perret, Pierre Vago, and René Herbst, G5 - Anciens combattants, résistants, déportés et internés, 1930–64 et s.d., box ARPECB0356; folder: Ass. Déportés, Internés; subfolder: Commemorations, AMNPP.

1941 by the *Section spéciale* state tribunal, which had been created by Vichy.<sup>44</sup> Like many other members of the Resistance, Woog had been accused of participating in covert activities against the occupying forces.<sup>45</sup> Picasso responded later that month, and he accepted the committee's request gladly. At the end of his letter, Picasso explained that the things done to honour the memory of those who gave their lives for liberty never seem to be enough.<sup>46</sup> Picasso demonstrated his willingness to participate in a committee whose goal was to honour a fallen comrade. Woog was neither a Central Committee member of the PCF nor a well-known intellectual. Picasso was not persuaded by a high-ranking Party member to accept the invitation. He was simply asked by fellow comrades to help commemorate one of their own. Post-war memory in Europe developed within a national frame of reference, and for the French that meant remembering a collective resistance, struggle for liberation, and commemoration of those resisters who died. This was just one rare example of Picasso personally responding to a letter. When Picasso wrote, "...il me semble qu'on fait toujours trop peu, pour honorer la mémoire de ceux qui donnèrent leur vie, pour la liberté," he showed his enthusiasm for a cause that held genuine meaning for him.

Another better-known case that garnered the support from not only Picasso, but from many other PCF members, was that of Howard Fast, Edward Barsky, and the other members of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee (JA-FRC). Fast was an author, a member of the American Communist Party, and a JA-FRC member. Barsky was a surgeon from New York, a member of the CPUSA, a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain,<sup>47</sup> and chairman of the JA-FRC. Barsky played a major role in the JA-FRC's creation in 1941—it was established to raise money through different fundraising groups and then help distribute funds to aid Spanish refugees. The committee was also responsible for lobbying the American leadership on behalf of the deposed Spanish Republican government.<sup>48</sup> One of the many JA-FRC fundraising efforts was called the Spanish Refugee Appeal, which distributed food and medicine to Republican Spaniards who had fled their homes after Franco

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<sup>44</sup> "Jacques Woog (1912–1941)," Bibliothèque nationale de France. Accessed: 22 June 2015. [http://data.bnf.fr/atelier/16684860/jacques\\_woog/](http://data.bnf.fr/atelier/16684860/jacques_woog/); Devers-Dreyfus, Nicolas, "Figure tragique de a résistance communiste," *L'Humanité*, 1 September 2010. Accessed: 22 June 2015. <http://www.humanite.fr/node/444787>.

<sup>45</sup> Monique Houssin, *Résistantes et résistants en Seine Saint-Denis: Un nom, une rue, une histoire* (Seine-Saint-Denis, France: Éditions de l'Atelier, 2004), p. 183.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Picasso to the Comité du monument Jacques Woog, 19 June 1947, box G5; folder: Ass. Déportés, Internés; subfolder: Commemorations, AMNPP. "Cher ami, je viens recevoir la letter, où les amis du comité du monument Jacques Woog, me demandent de faire partie du comité de patronage, que va être constituée. J'accepte très volontiers, car il me semble qu'on faire toujours trop peu, pour honorer la memoire de ceux qui donnerent leur vie, pour la liberté. Croyez cher ami à mon amitié tres cordiale. Picasso."

<sup>47</sup> The Abraham Lincoln Brigade was a military brigade sanctioned by the Comintern in Moscow to defend the Spanish Republic against Franco's fascist rebellion. Barsky was the head of the medical division of the Brigade. Peter N. Carroll, *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 10, 68.

<sup>48</sup> "Edward K. Barsky," *Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives*, 2008. Accessed: 22 September 2015. <http://www.alba-valb.org/volunteers/edward-k.-barsky>.

came to power.<sup>49</sup> This particular fund received donations from prominent political figures and celebrities all across the United States, from former First Lady of the United States Eleanor Roosevelt to comedian and actress Lucille Ball.<sup>50</sup> By 1946, JA-FRC had attracted the attention of the Un-American Activities Committee of the House of Representatives (HUAC). The HUAC was a government group created in 1938 to investigate all “subversive propaganda that ... attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by the constitution”.<sup>51</sup> While the HUAC was originally established amidst fears of Nazism, during the Cold War its focus shifted to Communism.<sup>52</sup> Because they believed that a substantial number of Americans were working to overthrow the American government on behalf of international Communist groups, the HUAC’s hearings were intended to identify those with ties to the Communist Party.<sup>53</sup> Barsky, Fast, secretary Helen R. Bryan, and the eight other executive board members were subpoenaed to appear before the HUAC and surrender financial records and the names of all those who had donated or received financial aid through the JA-FRC.<sup>54</sup>

The HUAC examination occurred on 27 June 1947, and every member of the JA-FRC refused to disclose any information. As a result, they were all charged with contempt of Congress and sentenced to three to six months in prison.<sup>55</sup> In a pamphlet written by Fast after his arrest, he stated that “these eleven people were sentenced to jail because they are anti-fascists; for that reason, and for no other reason ... But because we helped those who fought Franco, the Un-American Committee of the House of Representatives (now the Thomas-Rankin Committee), decided to smash us.”<sup>56</sup> This event gained widespread attention among French intellectuals. Éluard and Jean Cassou, as co-presidents of the *Comité France-Espagne*, wrote to Picasso in September 1947 and asked for his signature to be included in a letter of solidarity and support that was to be sent to Fast.<sup>57</sup> It is unclear whether Picasso signed the letter when looking at the AMNPP files; however, he did send a handwritten letter to Bryan of the JA-FRC. In his short statement, Picasso declared his opposition to the arrest of Fast and his comrades, which went against the American constitution and the

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<sup>49</sup> Howard Fast, *Being Red: A Memoir* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 144.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Kenneth O’Reilly, *Hoover and the Un-Americans: The FBI, HUAC, and the Red Menace* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1983), p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> David Schultz and John R. Vile, *The Encyclopedia of Civil Liberties in America* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 471.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Fast, *Being Red*, p. 146 and Lynda Morris, “Republicans in Exile: Spain, Hispanic America and the USA,” in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, p. 40.

<sup>55</sup> Howard Fast, “Three Names for Fascists,” box G5; folder: Fascisme et antifascisme, AMNPP.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Cassou and Éluard to Picasso, 29 September 1947, box G5; folder: Fascisme et antifascisme, AMNPP. Picasso was very involved with the *Comité France-Espagne* and allowed members to meet in his studio on Rue des Grands-Augustins. Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 82.

democratic spirit.<sup>58</sup> Picasso also sent letters of support to Barsky, with whom he had corresponded in the past.<sup>59</sup> The two men were close enough that Barsky continued to send supporters of the committee to visit Picasso if they were ever in France. This was during the time the JA-FRC was fighting for an appeal of the HUAC's decision. One such visit occurred when Picasso received a couple named Mr. and Mrs. Blanche Weisbert. After their visit, Picasso received the following message from Barsky: "She [Mrs. Weisbert] is deeply appreciative of your cordiality, your kindness, and the amount of time that you and Mrs. Picasso spent that afternoon in Vallauris. It was a wonderful surprise to me to receive the ceramic which you sent me... to raise funds for the appeal."<sup>60</sup> Picasso was sending messages of support, signing letters to show his solidarity with the JA-FRC, and sending ceramics to be sold to raise money for the convicted group.

A few years later in April 1949, Picasso and Fast encountered each other at the Paris Peace Congress. Art historian Lydia Csato Gasman explained that this meeting with Fast revealed Picasso's passion for Communism and hatred of fascism.<sup>61</sup> In Fast's memoir, he wrote that Picasso "threw his arms around me, kissed me full on the mouth... and said to me, 'Come to my studio, I want you to have something' ... I handed him my pen, and with a single motion he drew a lovely perfect dove, and then signed his name to it."<sup>62</sup> Picasso went beyond what was asked of him and reached out to his American counterparts personally, which demonstrated his support for the cause and the bond that could exist between comrades. These letters from Picasso also helps us to see a pattern. The few letters he did write that are in the AMNPP hold messages of support for Party members and Leftist ideals.

In 1950, another major event in the United States gained the attention of Left-wing intellectuals globally. The English-language newspaper published by the Communist Party USA, the *Daily Worker*, reported that Picasso was among the hundreds of intellectuals protesting against the imprisonment of the "Hollywood Ten", which they deemed an attack on intellectual freedom.<sup>63</sup> The

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<sup>58</sup> My translation. Picasso to Helen R. Bryan, no date, box G5; folder: Fascisme et antifascisme, AMNPP. "Je proteste contre arrestation Howard Fast et ses camarades contraire constitution États-Unis et esprit démocratique Lincoln. -Picasso."

<sup>59</sup> These interactions with Barsky will be examined later in the chapter. Lynda Morris, "The Battle for Picasso's Mind," in Jonathan Harris and Richard Koeck, eds., *Picasso and the Politics of Visual Representation: War and Peace in the Era of the Cold War and Since* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> The date of the letter is unknown; however, Picasso lived in Vallauris between 1948 and 1955. Barsky to Picasso, F1 - Lettres reçues d'organismes et associations politiques, 1930-64 et s.d., folder: The League of Wounded and Invalids from the Spanish Civil War in Exile, AMNPP cited in Morris, "Republicans in Exile," in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, p. 40.

<sup>61</sup> Lydia Csató Gasman, *War and the Cosmos in Picasso's Texts, 1936-1940* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2007), p. 311.

<sup>62</sup> Fast, *Being Red*, p. 212.

<sup>63</sup> "Rally tonight at Manhattan's Center for 21 Victims of Un-American's, as Shaw, Picasso Blast Jailings," *Daily Worker*, 5 June 1950 cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, pp. 105-06.

trial and conviction of the Hollywood Ten was the culmination of the HUAC investigation of the alleged Communist infiltration of the motion picture industry.<sup>64</sup> This was yet another occasion when PCF members united over an act of discrimination against their comrades. Picasso consistently remained critical of all American prosecutions against Party members living in the United States during the Cold War, and in many cases, he maintained ties to individuals personally affected by these events. The most publicised example of this was the case of the Rosenbergs.

### **Picasso and the Rosenberg Affair**

Julius and Edith Rosenberg were American citizens and former members of the CPUSA<sup>65</sup> who were accused of leaking secrets regarding the atomic bomb to the USSR. The Rosenbergs were Communists, they were both the children of Russian immigrants,<sup>66</sup> they collected funds for the JA-FRC, and they were members of the International Workers Order<sup>67,68</sup> Their trial in 1951 and eventual execution in 1953 was accompanied by a heavily publicised campaign that advocated for their lives, which was led by the PCF and attracted the support of many of its intellectuals. Picasso was one of those intellectuals, and letters in the AMNPP show the personal efforts he made to raise awareness of the Rosenbergs' plight after their sentencing and even after their death.

The worldwide attention directed towards the Rosenberg trial snowballed in November 1952, even though the couple had been convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage and subsequently sentenced to death back in the spring of 1951. The Rosenbergs were the first Americans to be sent to the electric chair for espionage during peacetime.<sup>69</sup> The couple gained the most support in France, where you could not pick up a newspaper without reading a sympathetic article regarding the Rosenbergs or avoid a poster that depicted a grinning President Dwight Eisenhower with small electric chairs in the place of teeth.<sup>70</sup> The Rosenbergs' case first received publicity in a November 1952 article in the daily newspaper of the PCF *L'Humanité* written by

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<sup>64</sup> Bernard F. Dick, *Radical Innocence: A Critical Study of the Hollywood Ten* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> They left the Party in 1943 and publicly resigned from any Communist activity for appearance's sake, but they continued to pay Party dues. John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Early Cold War Spies: The Espionage Trials that Shaped American Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 143

<sup>66</sup> Julius' parents were Jewish Russian immigrants, and Ethel's father was born in Russia. Her mother was Austrian. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Julius and Ethel Rosenberg: The FBI Files* (Minneapolis, MN: Filiquarian Publishing, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> The International Workers Order was a fraternal benefit insurance company with alleged ties to the Communist Party. Arthur J. Sabin, *Red Scare in Court: New York Versus the International Workers Order* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. xiv.

<sup>68</sup> FBI, *The FBI Files*, pp. 6–7 and Elizabeth Schulte, "The Trial of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg," *International Socialist Review*, issue 29, May–June 2003. Accessed: 10 September 2015. <http://www.isreview.org/issues/29/rosenbergs.shtml>

<sup>69</sup> Joyce Milton and Ronald Radosh, *The Rosenberg File* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 452.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

Howard Fast.<sup>71</sup> However, many French Communist intellectuals, including Picasso, had begun rallying behind the Rosenbergs in the months prior to the publication of the article. In the 4 October 1952 edition of *L'Humanité*, a letter was published from the head of the American Civil Rights Congress William Patterson, which urged readers to throw their support behind the Rosenbergs. The end of the article featured a photo of a petition signed by Picasso and many others that pleaded for a reopening of the case. This petition was dated 20 August 1952, and it had already been sent to the government of the United States.<sup>72</sup> In the 19 November 1952 issue of *L'Humanité*, Picasso made a public call to all intellectuals of France and the world to save the Rosenbergs.<sup>73</sup> In this request, Picasso urged readers that the hours and minutes counted and not to allow the Americans to commit this crime against humanity.<sup>74</sup> While the Rosenberg case was to become a universally known and supported cause among Communists, Picasso was one of the first to show his support in France. It was not until December 1952 that pro-Rosenberg committees began popping up in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Ireland, Israel, the UK, and throughout Eastern Europe.<sup>75</sup> Picasso was a member of the French committee— *le Comité français de défense des Rosenberg* (a part of the *Mouvement contre le racisme, l'antisemitisme et pour la paix*)—which was formed on 2 December 1952. These groups had the common goal of reopening the case against the Rosenbergs in the hopes of saving the American couple from the death penalty.

Picasso received a continual flow of letters on behalf of the *Comité français de défense des Rosenberg* up until the American couple's execution. Picasso was constantly reminded of the injustice faced by the Rosenbergs, and he received invitations to every single committee meeting. In the months leading up to their execution in June 1953, the meetings were held more frequently—almost every week. Although he was never one to make many appearances, Picasso did attend at least one meeting at the *Maison de la Mutualité* in Paris, as evidenced by one of the letters in the AMNPP: the head of the French committee for the defence of the Rosenbergs, Paul Villard, wrote to Picasso on 5 December 1952, thanking him for his RSVP to their meeting on the eighth of the same month.<sup>76</sup> This was a crisis where Picasso was not contributing solely as an artist, but he was also investing his time in a humanitarian cause that had gained the attention of many Communists. He responded to this situation as a concerned PCF intellectual. The committee would surely have benefitted from Picasso's support. Having a noteworthy artist back the committee's plight could have potentially had a

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<sup>71</sup> French novelist and PCF member André Stil was editor at the time. *Ibid.*, p. 350.

<sup>72</sup> *L'Humanité*, 4 October 1952.

<sup>73</sup> Picasso quoted in "Empêchons ce crime. Plus que quelques jours pour sauver les Rosenberg. Un pressant appel de Picasso," *L'Humanité*, 19 November 1952. "Sauvez les Rosenbergs! Les heures comptent. Les minutes comptent. Ne laissons pas commettre ce crime contre l'humanité!"

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* My translation of the Picasso quote referenced in footnote 73.

<sup>75</sup> Milton and Radosh, *The Rosenberg File*, pp. 347–48.

<sup>76</sup> Letter from Paul Villard to Picasso, 5 December 1952, box G6; folder: Mouvement contre le racisme, l'antisemitisme et pour la paix - Ligue International contre le racisme et l'antisemitisme; subfolder: Mouvement contre le racisme, l'antisemitisme et pour la paix (MRAP), AMNPP.

significant impact—it could have helped to attract more members or perhaps the judge in the Rosenberg case could have seen the substantial pressure coming from prominent intellectuals and reopen the case. However, Picasso was not just being used as a figurehead. Letters in the AMNPP show that the committee also respected his opinions and believed in his dedication to the Rosenberg case. On 12 June 1953, with the execution date a week away, Villard asked Picasso if he had any last-minute suggestions.<sup>77</sup> On 17 June 1953, Villard invited Picasso to a meeting and explained that he understood Picasso’s “profonds sentiments de justice”.<sup>78</sup> These are just a few of the examples among many letters that asked Picasso for advice or input, which demonstrate how invested Picasso was in the effort to save these Americans Communists from the electric chair—or at the very least, that others perceived Picasso to be greatly invested in the Rosenbergs’ cause.

Picasso was one of many Communist artists to contribute substantial artistic and financial support. He issued limited-edition lithographs to raise money for the Rosenberg defence, Fernand Léger created a design of the Rosenbergs with the caption “Liberté, Paix, Solidarité”, and Italian Realist Renato Gattuso designed a poster that became prominent all over Italy.<sup>79</sup>



Figure 4.1 – *Ethel et Julius Rosenberg*<sup>80</sup> by Picasso



Figure 4.2 – *Liberté, Paix, Solidarité*<sup>81</sup> by Léger

<sup>77</sup> Letter from Villard to Picasso, 13 June 1953, box G6; folder: Comités de défense et libérations – divers; subfolder: Affaire Rosenberg, AMNPP.

<sup>78</sup> Letter from Villard to Picasso, 17 June 1953, *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> There are varying accounts of these portraits. Some scholars say they were created prior to the Rosenbergs’ execution (Landauer and Selz, *Art of Engagement*, p. 80), while others say they were done as commemorative portraits afterwards (Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 180). The dates of the Picasso and Léger works in footnotes 80 and 81 reflect when they were published, not necessarily when they were created. It is likely the portraits were made prior to their executions in order to raise money, but perhaps they were not published or utilised until afterwards.

<sup>80</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Ethel et Julius Rosenberg*, 1954, ink on paper, Musée Municipal d’Art et d’Histoire de la Ville de Saint-Denis, France.

<sup>81</sup> Fernand Léger, *Liberté, Paix, Solidarité*, 1955, serigraphy on cotton.

After their conviction, a long imprisonment, and constant efforts from the many Communist-organised committees around the world that attempted to advocate for their release, the Rosenbergs' execution day arrived. The day after their deaths, Picasso made a statement to *L'Humanité* stating that they—likely referring to the committee organised by the PCF to save the Rosenbergs—had asked for the trial to be reviewed and for the pair to be given mercy. They had also asked Eisenhower to save these innocent individuals and their country from a mistake that could never be erased.<sup>82</sup> In the months leading up to the Rosenberg execution, Picasso had asked for their lives to be spared and the case to be reopened, but in this statement he went one step further and called the Rosenbergs innocent of their alleged crimes. Although they had already been executed, Picasso still reached out and made his feelings clear about the treatment of the ill-fated couple. The Left viewed the story of the Rosenbergs as a tragic event, which united all Communist Party members globally and saw Picasso's continued engagement—even after their deaths.

On 19 April 1954, almost a year after the Rosenbergs were sentenced to death, Picasso was asked by Norma Aronson of the Rosenberg Memorial Committee to contribute a drawing for their memorial service.<sup>83</sup> Although it is unknown whether Picasso produced a new drawing for the memorial committee, he more than likely contributed the lithograph portrait that he had designed to raise funds for the defence of Ethel and Julius during the trial.<sup>84</sup> That portrait was also given to *L'Humanité Dimanche* and published two months later on 20 June 1954 to commemorate the anniversary of their deaths.<sup>85</sup> Picasso's portrait of the Rosenbergs was also reproduced in a booklet of poems and artwork handed out at the Rosenberg anniversary memorial service at the *Salle Pleyel*, along with works by Léger, Lurçat, Pignon, and others.<sup>86</sup> It was reproduced again in the book *Le chant interrompu, histoires des Rosenberg*, which was published in 1955.<sup>87</sup> This was a cause that—like others before it and many afterwards—saw Picasso engage artistically and politically, from its beginnings until years after the Rosenbergs' deaths.

The entire Rosenberg case had far-reaching implications for the Communist Party as a whole. It was an event that united Party members, especially at a time when events unravelling in Eastern Europe were proving to be divisive. In November 1951, Czechoslovakian Communist Party General Secretary Rudolf Slansky was arrested and became the subject of a phony Soviet show trial after he

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<sup>82</sup> Picasso in "Hommage unanime," *L'Humanité*, 20 June 1953. "En demandant leur grace et la revision de leur procès, nous demandions au president Eisenhower de sauver deux innocents de la mort et son pays d'une faute ineffaçable."

<sup>83</sup> Letter from Norma Aronson to Picasso, box G6; folder: Comités de défense et libérations – divers; subfolder: Affaire Rosenberg, AMNPP.

<sup>84</sup> See footnote 80.

<sup>85</sup> *L'Humanité Dimanche*, 20 June 1954.

<sup>86</sup> Gérard Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse* (Paris: Editions Cercle d'Art et l'Humanité, 2000), p. 158 and Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 180.

<sup>87</sup> Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 158.

was accused of being an anti-Communist conspirator.<sup>88</sup> Many more Party officials were arrested after Slansky, and in November 1952, eleven of the fourteen accused were sentenced to death while three others were given life sentences.<sup>89</sup> Those sentenced to death were publicly hung at a Prague prison the following month. This was a perfect opportunity for the Party to rally its members in support of the Rosenbergs—a distraction across the ocean. The sentencing in the Slansky trial coincidentally came at the same time the Rosenbergs gained popularity, and their case occupied the time and attention of many Communist Party members worldwide.

The Slansky trial was just one of the many international political events that would cause rifts between some Communists and lead others to ultimately leave the Party. The 1949 trial and execution of Hungarian Communist Party Minister of Foreign Affairs László Rajk and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party Traicho Kostov was supported by many Party members, as both men had confessed to their crimes. Replying to André Breton's objections to the Rajk trial, Éluard remarked, "I have too much to do for innocents who proclaim their innocence to occupy myself with the guilty who reclaim their guilt."<sup>90</sup> However, historian David Caute stated that this incident also alienated many Party members and some defected as a result.<sup>91</sup> Picasso, like his close friend Éluard, never voiced dissent regarding the Rajk decision.<sup>92</sup> However, after the death of Stalin came a period of de-Stalinisation, which was accompanied by Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev's re-establishment of a relationship with Yugoslavian leader Josip Broz Tito.<sup>93</sup> A PCF member until 1956, Dominique Desanti claimed that if Tito was not actually a traitor as had originally been thought, then neither were Rajk or Kostov, whose executions were accepted by many Party members.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Random House, 2011), p. 185.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>90</sup> Edgar Morin, *Autocritique*, p. 113 cited in David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals, 1914–1960* (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1964), p. 181.

<sup>91</sup> Defectors included the writers Vercors, Edgar Morin, Dionys Mascolo, Robert Antelme, and Édith Thomas. Caute, *French Intellectuals*, pp. 177, 182.

<sup>92</sup> Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz wrote an open letter to Picasso in 1956 that said "No one knows what consequences a categorical protest from you might have had... against the Rajk trial, for example." Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944–56* (Oxford, UK: University of California Press, 1993), p. 275.

<sup>93</sup> The long-standing historiographical view has been that Tito's break from the Soviet Cominform occurred because of the Yugoslav Communist Party's desire to take "a separate path towards socialism that could not be reconciled with the hegemonic Soviet concept of the hierarchical organisation of the socialist bloc", and this has been the most accepted version of events by scholars. Based on more recent discoveries in the former Eastern bloc archives, historian Jeronim Perovic wrote that Tito's unwillingness to give up on political ambitions and territorial holdings in the Balkans was what sparked the 1948 conflict. These documents show that the conflict actually stemmed from Tito's expansionist foreign policy towards countries like Albania, against the advice of Moscow. Jeronim Perovic, "The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 2 (2007): p. 34.

<sup>94</sup> Dominique Desanti, *Les Staliniens: Une expérience politique, 1944–56* (Paris: Fayard, 1975), pp. 411–12.

While Picasso never mentioned the trial or the events in Czechoslovakia, he—like many other PCF members—chose to concentrate his energy on the plight of the Rosenbergs. Perhaps this was easier than having to confront the issues associated with questionable Soviet actions in the Eastern bloc. Picasso’s declining participation in political issues and focus on peace activities and mistreated Communists worldwide that would continue until his death could potentially be rooted in this attempt to avoid controversial Party decisions in order to maintain harmony. The Rosenberg affair did successfully shift attention away from Czechoslovakia and towards a fight that saw Communists unite against a common enemy: the threat of American fascism. Fast wrote about the “stale smell of Fascism... detected around Eisenhower” and that the Rosenbergs’ condemnation was “a threat to all those... who want to put an end to American imperialist aggression in Korea.”<sup>95</sup> After his sentencing, Julius Rosenberg claimed he was not surprised: “...There had to be a Rosenberg Case because there had to be an intensification of the hysteria in America to make the Korean War acceptable to the American people.”<sup>96</sup>

Desanti claimed that Communists saw the Rosenberg execution as an absence of justice in the United States, which only served to cement an already growing anti-American sentiment among members.<sup>97</sup> Historian Philippe Roger argued that this French anti-Americanism was based on a historical construct with deep roots in French culture.<sup>98</sup> In the 1920s and 30s, intellectuals who saw themselves as the protectors of threatened French values drove anti-Americanism to its peak.<sup>99</sup> These beliefs continued during the Cold War among Leftists who saw the Marshall Plan as an American attempt to enslave France economically.<sup>100</sup> After the Second World War, many Europeans feared that Western civilisation would become tainted by American materialism.<sup>101</sup> Ultimately, the French wanted to accept American economic aid while preserving their social and cultural values.<sup>102</sup>

Jean-Paul Sartre sent a message to the United States just after the Rosenberg execution, which appeared in the French newspaper *Libération*. Originally the underground publication of the French Resistance starting in 1944, it became a daily newspaper after the Liberation of France until 1964. Its founder and creator was Emmanuel d’Astier de La Vigerie, a former member of the

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<sup>95</sup> Milton and Radosh, *The Rosenberg File*, p. 350.

<sup>96</sup> Robert and Michael Meeropol, *We Are Your Sons* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), p. 326.

<sup>97</sup> Desanti, *Les Staliniens*, pp. 264–65.

<sup>98</sup> Philippe Roger, trans. Sharon Bowman, *The American Enemy: A Story of French Anti-Americanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. x.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 270, 272.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>101</sup> Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance Through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 21.

<sup>102</sup> Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), p. 3.

Resistance and a Communist sympathiser.<sup>103</sup> In Sartre's published statement, he attacked those Americans who did nothing to protect the Rosenbergs, while praising the level of European support for the couple:

...yesterday, the whole of Europe, with its masses, priests, foreign ministers, and heads of state, demanded in a single voice that your President make the most human, the most simple, of gestures ... Class conflicts, old animosities, everything was set aside; the Rosenbergs had brought about European unity. Just one word from you and you too would have reaped the benefit of this unity: the whole of Europe would have thanked you ... don't come to us about alliances any more. Allies consult one another, talk things over, make mutual concessions; each one influences the others. If you answer no when all we're asking you is not to dishonor yourselves for nothing, how could we possibly believe that you will let us have our say when major interests are at stake? ... There really is something rotten in America ... You are collectively responsible for the Rosenbergs' death—some of you because you provoke the murder, others for allowing it to be carried out. You have tolerated the United States being the cradle of a new Fascism ... Your country is sick with fear. You're afraid of everything: the Russians, the Chinese, the Europeans. You're afraid of each other. You're afraid of the shadow of your own bomb.<sup>104</sup>

Not since the Resistance had the French—Communists or otherwise—united in such grand fashion for a common cause. On the day of the execution, an all-day rally in Paris culminated in one protestor being shot and hundreds being arrested as demonstrators clashed with police.<sup>105</sup> As Sartre wrote, the American criminal justice system was ignoring the global cries of prejudice, perhaps out of fear and the need to remain strong against the Soviet bloc and its supporters. Just one year after painting *Massacre en Corée*<sup>106</sup> (1951), and mere months after creating *La Guerre*<sup>107</sup> and *La Paix*<sup>108</sup> (1952), Picasso was again confronted with the American persecution of Communists. Unlike those works of art, Picasso's commitment to the Rosenbergs was not in the context of the Korean War, but it was certainly part of the larger Cold War framework.

Perhaps the Rosenbergs' execution was still lingering in Picasso's mind when he received a letter on behalf of Morton Sobell. Sobell was a Communist supporter and friend of Julius Rosenberg who had been accused of espionage and arrested at the same time as the Rosenbergs. Despite the fact that they had a joint trial and were all found guilty, Sobell was spared the death penalty and instead

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<sup>103</sup> Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Intellectuals and the French Communist Party: Disillusion and Decline* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 120.

<sup>104</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "Les Animaux malades de la rage," *Libération*, 22 June 1953 in Michael Contat and Michel Rybalka, eds., trans. Richard C. McCleary, *Selected Prose: The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, vol. 2* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), pp. 208–10.

<sup>105</sup> Elizabeth Schulte, "The Trial of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg," *International Socialist Review*, issue 29, May–June 2003. Accessed: 10 September 2015. <http://www.isreview.org/issues/29/rosenbergs.shtml>

<sup>106</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Massacre en Corée*, 1951, oil and on plywood, Musée national Picasso, Paris.

<sup>107</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Guerre*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée national Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

<sup>108</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Paix*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée national Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

given a thirty-year prison sentence.<sup>109</sup> After Sobell's conviction, intellectuals established the Committee to Secure Justice for Morton Sobell, which advocated for his release. Almost five years after Sobell's sentencing, Picasso received a letter from a member of the committee named Theodore Jacobs. In the letter, Jacobs praised Picasso for his profound sentiments concerning the Rosenberg case and claimed that Picasso's portraits of the ill-fated couple resonated deeply for thousands of Americans.<sup>110</sup> Jacobs went on to explain that the Sobell committee had gained substantial support and would be attempting to secure a new trial to prove the innocence of both Sobell and the Rosenbergs. Subsequently, they were trying to raise funds for legal fees and asking artists to provide artwork for an exhibition to be held in New York the following month.<sup>111</sup> In the case of the Rosenberg and Sobell espionage case, Picasso was seen as someone who truly cared about the lives at stake and the supposed injustices the American government had committed against these Communist sympathisers during the Cold War.

A series of letters from Sobell's wife Helen and his mother Rose to Picasso in the early 1960s show the continuous efforts Picasso made on behalf of Morton, years after the popularity of the Rosenberg case had subsided. On 19 April 1960, Rose sent the artist a letter, recounting their memorable visit from a few years before and restating the promise Picasso had made to contribute his art to raise money for Morton's cause.<sup>112</sup> Less than two years later, Helen wrote to Picasso asking if they could meet during her upcoming European trip.<sup>113</sup> Then on 23 April 1963, Helen again wrote to Picasso and thanked him for his promise to Rose to donate some of his artwork in order to help the finances of their committee. She also asked that Picasso meet with a friend who would be visiting Europe so that they could discuss additional ways of commemorating the Rosenbergs and tactics to secure the release of Morton.<sup>114</sup> In her message, Helen specifically stated that she hoped Picasso

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<sup>109</sup> Steven T. Usdin, *Engineering Communism: How Two Americans Spied for Stalin and Founded the Soviet Silicon Valley* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 236.

<sup>110</sup> Theodore Jacobs of the Committee to Secure Justice for Morton Sobell to Picasso, 25 January 1956, New York, box G4; folder: USA, AMNPP. "Notre comité vous écrit à ce moment parce que nous connaissons vos sentiments profonds vers le cas de Julius et Ethel Rosenberg. Des milliers des gens dans notre pays ont été émus par vos dessins sensibles d'Ethel et de Julius qui ont été circulés partout."

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Letter from Rose Sobell to Picasso, 19 April 1960, box G6; folder: Comités de défense et libérations – divers; subfolder: Comité de libération – divers, AMNPP. "My dear Pablo Picasso, it was a wonderful and memorable experience for me to have had a visit with you a few years ago, I will never forget it. Your promise of giving us a contribution of your art has meant so very much to me, and I am very grateful to you. At the present, a very good friend Mrs. Rosemary Lusher is traveling Europe as a representative of the committee to free my son and I have given her your address. I know you're busy but I also know you are thinking of the imprisonment of my son and will find it in your heart to give her some token to help in the fight for the freedom of my son."

<sup>113</sup> Letter from Helen Sobell to Picasso, 10 January 1962, *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Letter from Helen Sobell to Picasso, 23 April 1963, *ibid.* "... You were good enough to promise Rose Sobell some of your works to make it financially possible to continue our efforts. A good friend, Mr. Louis Zemel, is now in Europe seeking to encourage meetings of commemoration for the Rosenbergs and activity

would use his “world famous talent and prestige” to help with the case. Helen Sobell could have just been flattering Picasso with kind words. Additionally, she seemed to recognise that she could use Picasso’s influence as a prestigious artist to her advantage; however, she also appeared to understand that Picasso would use that status to help with humanitarian causes such as hers based on his past involvement with the Rosenberg case. The following year, Picasso received a New Year’s greeting from Helen, where she thanked him for his “support and continuing concern for the freedom of Morton Sobell”.<sup>115</sup> All of these letters sent to Picasso throughout the first half of the 1960s show not only that he remained connected to humanitarian and Communist causes in his later years, but that his support was recognised as valuable to the efforts of organisations such as the Committee to Secure Justice for Morton Sobell.

Although the Rosenbergs were the most publicised case concerning the incarceration of CPUSA members, there were others who also sought assistance from Party members around the world in the 1950s. In December 1957, Picasso signed a letter—as did Roger Vailland, Aragon, Pignon, Jourdain, and Joliot-Curie—which was then given to Eisenhower during his visit to Paris. The letter asked for the release of American Communist Party officials Gilbert Green and Henry Winston. These men had been imprisoned in 1949 under the Smith Act. A letter from the administrative secretary of the Central Committee of the PCF Gaston Plissonnier to Picasso on 8 October 1959 stated that Green’s wife had written a letter to Picasso.<sup>116</sup> In the attached letter, Lillian Green thanked Picasso for his efforts on behalf of her husband and his colleague, but informed him that their pleas went unanswered. She wrote:

...although we sent to the leading newspapers throughout the country, the statement presented to our President Eisenhower in your name and the name of other outstanding Frenchmen, it was deliberately kept silent, it has been printed in the *Daily Worker* and in a bulletin which we mail out giving information on the fight in our country against the Smith Act, the law under which Green and Winston are imprisoned.<sup>117</sup>

Picasso was just one of six PCF intellectuals who gave their names in support of Green and Winston. This was a political situation where Picasso was not asked to use his abilities as an artist to contribute a piece of work; he was asked to sign his name and command the release of two fellow comrades being persecuted by the American government. He was asked to use his clout as a public intellectual and a cultural figure. This commitment to Party members and charitable causes would continue throughout the 1960s.

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to free my husband. He will seek an appointment with you. I sincerely request that you meet with him and use your world famous talent and prestige to bring an end to the horror of this incredible case.”

<sup>115</sup> Letter from Helen Sobell to Picasso, December 1964, *ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Gaston Plissonnier to Picasso, 8 October 1959, box G1; folder: PCF vie des sections du parti, 1944–69 et s.d., AMNPP.

<sup>117</sup> Lillian Green to Picasso, c/o the PCF, 28 September 1959, *ibid.*

## **Picasso and Communism in the 1960s and 70s**

Picasso's participation in Communist events and campaigns appears to have slowly dwindled later in his life. However, in addition to his artistic contributions to political causes discussed in previous chapters, he remained committed to the PCF through his involvement in different Party organs that promoted peace. On 16 June 1962, Picasso received a letter from Professor V. Chkhikvadze and Yves Choliere on behalf of the secretary of the *Comité de congrès mondial pour le désarmement général et la paix*. They proceeded to thank Picasso, yet another time, for the beautiful poster he designed for their upcoming conference.<sup>118</sup> Then on 17 September 1963, a letter was sent to Picasso from Jacques Madaule of the *Comité de préparation des états généraux du désarmement*. In this letter, Picasso was listed as a member of the committee and was being invited to its next meeting.<sup>119</sup> Picasso joined this sub-committee so that he could engage with disarmament issues, which concerned both the World Peace Movement and the Communist Party. While Picasso may not have been in the spotlight during the 1960s politically, these archived letters show that he was still participating and lending his name to Party-affiliated peace groups.

The Vietnam War was another international conflict that saw nations take sides as they had during the war in Korea. And much like the Korean War, the conflict in Vietnam saw engagement from intellectuals worldwide. This was yet another issue which concerned the French anti-colonial struggle. Historian Alessandro Brogi contends that although the PCF actively pursued intellectual support for the Communist North Vietnamese, opposing the war and opposing imperialism was the best way for the Party to strengthen ties with its intellectuals.<sup>120</sup> Picasso and a number of other French intellectuals signed an appeal to hold a *journée des intellectuels pour le Vietnam* that was published in *l'Humanité* on 1 December 1967.<sup>121</sup> The appeal warned that the Vietnamese conflict could escalate to nuclear war and needed to be stopped; therefore, it was crucial for all intellectuals to unite under the banner of peace. The article went on to suggest that in order to return to peace, the rights of the Vietnamese people had to be respected and American troops needed to retreat. Talks could not commence between Hanoi and Washington until the bombardments in North Vietnam ceased. All intellectuals who agreed with these statements were asked to sign the appeal.<sup>122</sup> By 1 February 1968, over 400 intellectuals had signed, including leading members of the PCF and Left-wing sympathisers including Aragon, Vercors, Sartre, François Mauriac, and Simone de Beauvoir.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Letter from the secretary of the Comité de congrès mondial pour le désarmement général et la paix to Picasso, 16 June 1962, Moscow, box G9; folder: Commission d'organisation du congrès pour le désarmement et la coopération internationale, AMNPP.

<sup>119</sup> Letter from Jacques Madaule to Picasso, 17 September 1963, Paris, *ibid*.

<sup>120</sup> Alessandro Brogi, *Confronting America: the Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), p. 266.

<sup>121</sup> Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 202.

<sup>122</sup> "Appel aux intellectuels pour le Vietnam," *L'Humanité*, 1 December 1967.

<sup>123</sup> Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 202 and Brogi, *Confronting America*, p. 266.

The Intellectuals' Day for Vietnam came to pass on 23 March 1968 in Paris, and although Picasso did not attend, he donated a piece of work to the event's art sale. *Le char à visage humain*<sup>124</sup> was originally a study for *Massacre en Corée* that had been completed and signed on 5 October 1951.<sup>125</sup> Picasso also contributed a statement that was read in front of the delegation by fellow PCF member and actor Jean Vilar.<sup>126</sup> In the declaration, Picasso reaffirmed his solidarity with the rest of his comrades and with the Vietnamese people. Picasso described his belief that all modern art was supportive of the Vietnamese and that their struggle was present in his artwork and the artwork of his fellow painters. Picasso's statement ended with a declaration of his admiration for the Vietnamese courage throughout the years of war, and, ultimately, that he hated Guernica and all the Guernicas of the world. Picasso mentioned numerous times in his message that his views in support of the Vietnamese were in accordance with those of his fellow Communist intellectuals. Picasso's use of a study from *Massacre en Corée* and his reference to the bombing of Guernica demonstrated how he associated post-colonial struggles of the 1960s with events from the 1930s and 40s. Much of his political consciousness was formed during those earlier years, and the recycling of his past art in the 60s illustrated that he continued to view the world through the lenses formulated during the Spanish Civil War and Second World War.

The year 1968 also saw trouble brewing back in France in the form of mass demonstrations, strikes, and protests. What began in early March as student clashes over anti-war activism and poor conditions at the Nanterre campus of the University of Paris soon spread to all universities in Paris. Within days, students were joined by teachers, researchers, intellectuals, and workers.<sup>127</sup> Within a few weeks, hundreds of thousands of students were joined by Left-wing groups in demonstrations across the country against the education system.<sup>128</sup> On the night of May 10, students and police clashed on the streets. Mimicking the Paris Commune of 1871, students constructed makeshift street

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<sup>124</sup> Other than the date it was created, I could not find the provenance of this artwork.

<sup>125</sup> Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 202

<sup>126</sup> Picasso et la politique, 13.1, AMNPP. Message pour la journée des intellectuels pour la paix au Vietnam, 1968. "Je dis avec vous: tout pour le Vietnam. Ce 'oui' magnifique de tout le monde à l'Appel aux intellectuels rend heureux. On passé son temps a se dire: Qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire pour que ça serve? Et tout ce qu'on peut faire paraît petit à côté du massacre du Vietnam et à côté de la bataille des Vietnamiens pour être libres. Pour nous, peintres, notre métier est la, dans la guerre et dans la paix. Et c'est un fait que tout l'art modern est avec le Vietnam. Je ne peux pas m'empêcher de saluer ceux de notre métier, dont je vois le rassemblement pour le Vietnam avec tellement de joie. J'admire tous les jours et depuis combien d'années le courage énorme des Vietnamiens. Ce qu'ils font pour leur victoire, personne n'a jamais pu l'imaginer. C'est un peuple de chevaliers. J'envoie a tous mon accord pour tout. Je hais Guernica et tous les Guernica."

<sup>127</sup> Daniel Singer, *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002), p. xvii

<sup>128</sup> Rebecca J. DeRoo, *The Museum Establishment and Contemporary Art: The Politics of Artistic Display in France after 1968* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 19.

barricades—by the morning of May 11, 500 people had been arrested.<sup>129</sup> The issues were multiple: there were protests against Vietnam, the French school system, worker salaries and conditions, capitalism, American imperialism, consumerism, and President Charles de Gaulle’s government.<sup>130</sup> By May 13, a group of one million workers, students, and teachers united in a mass demonstration in Paris.<sup>131</sup> Mass violence and arrests took place. Shortly afterwards, approximately nine million workers went on strike and occupied factories.<sup>132</sup> By the time de Gaulle addressed the country on May 24, ten million workers were already on strike, only medical services could access petrol, public transportation was suspended, and many other amenities were in short supply.<sup>133</sup> The French media was regularly reporting on the events, and although Picasso was living far from Paris in the south of France, his friend Roberto Otero claimed that they watched the news on television together.<sup>134</sup> Daix maintained that Picasso followed the events of May 1968 closely and threw his support behind the students.<sup>135</sup> Picasso, Aragon, Parmelin, Pignon, Alexander Calder, Max Ernst, and other PCF intellectuals signed a manifesto that was printed in the 15–21 May 1968 issue of *Les Lettres Françaises* (LLF), which condemned the police violence, asked for amnesty for those charged, and demanded negotiations be held to solve the problems with the universities.<sup>136</sup> The entire LLF issue was dedicated to the protestors and their plight. Under a headline that read “Long live the struggle of the workers and students!”, the PCF professed it was working to unite all the workers who were fighting the same enemy in the name of the same hope.<sup>137</sup> Picasso remained in the south of France during these years, but he still managed to offer his name for the same causes he had been supporting throughout his years in the PCF.

Although he attended fewer Party-related events as he grew older, Picasso never stopped donating artwork, signing appeals, making political statements, and supporting those in need. Throughout the Vietnam War years, the PCF remained the political party that most supported the end of imperialism and war. Historian David Drake maintained that the PCF Central Committee, like its members, saw the war in Indochina as a struggle between Communist and anti-Communist

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<sup>129</sup> Jeremy Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 191.

<sup>130</sup> DeRoo, *Museum Establishment*, p. 19.

<sup>131</sup> Singer, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. xviii.

<sup>132</sup> DeRoo, *Museum Establishment*, p. 20.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. and Memory Holloway, *Making Time: Picasso’s Suite 347* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2006), pp. 61, 62.

<sup>134</sup> Roberto Otero, trans. Elaine Kerrigan, *Forever Picasso: An Intimate Look at His Last Years* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1974), pp. 171–72 in Holloway, *Making Time*, p. 63.

<sup>135</sup> Pierre Daix, *Picasso Créateur: la vie intime et l’oeuvre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), p. 370.

<sup>136</sup> Écrivains, peintres et sculpteurs, résistants,” *Les Lettres Françaises*, 15–21 May 1968, p. 2 quoted in Holloway, *Making Time*, pp. 63–64.

<sup>137</sup> “Vive la lute des ouvrières et des étudiants,” *Les Lettres Françaises*, 15–21 May 1968, p. 28 quoted in Holloway, *Making Time*, p. 64.

forces.<sup>138</sup> Just as they had during the Korean War—and even when they attempted to justify Soviet involvement in Hungary during its revolution in 1956—the Party saw a Communist loss as an open door for American ideology and imperialism. Drake maintained that the PCF could argue that to support Indochinese independence was to support French independence from American influence and to support world peace. However, the Party ultimately desired peace more than an eventual North Vietnamese victory.<sup>139</sup> And this was the exact attitude that the intellectuals— including Picasso—had maintained during the Algerian War. The PCF stood behind its intellectuals and their involvement in the World Peace Movement.<sup>140</sup> Picasso’s views remained in line with those of the Party and he continued to support Party-sanctioned events and causes for the rest of his life. In February 1972, after the Americans had bombed Hanoi, and a little over a year before his death, Picasso made one last statement regarding Vietnam.<sup>141</sup> Picasso lamented that there was nothing new that could be said about a war that was so clear and so horrible, but that he had always been and would always be united with those who fight until freedom can prevail: “...je suis avec eux, comme j’ai été avec eux toujours, et comme je serai avec eux encore et toujours jusqu’à la victoire et dans la liberté.”<sup>142</sup>

I chose these examples to illustrate the numerous domestic, American, and international political events that Picasso supported throughout his twenty-nine years as a member of the PCF. He may not have been in the public eye as an activist—taking to the streets to protest or attending every single committee meeting—but he played his individual part as an involved member of a Communist organisation. To his fellow comrades and to humanitarians around the world, Picasso was seen as a Communist and artist who stood for the same values and beliefs for which they too were advocates.

### **Picasso the Humanitarian**

Cases like that of the Rosenbergs or the Hollywood Ten were internationally known trials that attracted the attention of many. But Picasso was also known to give his time, money, and art to smaller groups and charities within France and beyond. Those scholars who argue that Picasso’s lack of dedication to the Communist Party can be proven by his lack of engagement in the 1960s fail to see

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<sup>138</sup> David Drake, *Intellectuals and Politics in Post-War France* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 101.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> The anti-war sentiments went far beyond the PCF. The global Vietnam anti-war movement had its base right in the United States as a form of peace advocacy that was organised around issues of international disarmament and opposition to great-power interventionism. Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfield, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), p. 2

<sup>141</sup> “Un Message de Picasso,” *L’Humanité*, 12 February 1972. “Qu’est-ce qu’on peut dire? Dans cette guerre tout est tellement clair, et tout est tellement horrible qu’on ne peut rien raconter de nouveau. Je peux seulement dire que tous ceux qui se battent en Indochine comme des lions, et tous ceux qui font ce qu’ils peuvent, en Amérique ou ailleurs, je suis avec eux, comme j’ai été avec eux toujours, et comme je serai avec eux encore et toujours jusqu’à la victoire et dans la liberté.”

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

the value in the significant contributions he made to various Communist affiliate groups, which kept him out of the spotlight but still illustrated his participation in Party campaigns.

Historian Mark Mazower contended that Hitler's defeat allowed democracy to base itself in European life through a new sense of social solidarity.<sup>143</sup> This led to the promotion of civil engagement, the legitimacy of organisation outside of the state, and the extension of civil rights from classic forms.<sup>144</sup> After the Second World War, there existed divisions along Cold War lines within global civil society.<sup>145</sup> Numerous Communist, international, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) associated with women and youth groups were formed, and their membership grew in the 1950s.<sup>146</sup> Anti-Communist NGOs were established as well. But those who saw their own views align with the Party's gravitated towards groups and organisations to which Picasso had also donated his time, money, and support. The most obvious and known groups that Picasso supported were those connected to the World Peace Movement. Numerous Communist organisations advocating for Western disarmament emerged in France and worldwide after the end of World War II. Technological developments—such as the hydrogen bomb and the intercontinental missile—transformed the nature of warfare between world powers and thus prompted the creation of widespread popular peace movements that sought to prevent and lobby against the prospect of nuclear war.<sup>147</sup> These movements came to be associated with the Soviet Union and Communist parties due to their involvement with peace campaigns. The Communist Party had spearheaded the World Peace Congresses since 1948 and they were often held in Communist-governed nations.<sup>148</sup>

Picasso regularly received letters asking for his opinions regarding the meetings and decisions made by various Communist peace committees and organisations internationally. This demonstrated the number of people worldwide who valued his opinion and considered him an important player in the peace movement. Picasso received invitations to numerous events held by each French department and their respective peace organisations. Communist international peace movements and anti-rearmament movements sent Picasso information concerning their activities, invitations to events, requests for donations of art or money, or they simply asked for statements of support. Sometimes these requests came from the smallest of organisations. Regardless of the group's size, Picasso would offer a contribution.

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<sup>143</sup> Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), p. 78.

<sup>144</sup> Nicholas Deakin, *In Search of Civil Society* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 99–100.

<sup>145</sup> Thomas Davies, *NGOs: A New History of Transnational Civil Society* (London: Hurst and Co., 2013), p. 133.

<sup>146</sup> This is in large part because of population growth in Communist countries. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>147</sup> April Carter, *Peace Movements: International Protest and World Politics Since 1945* (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1992), p. 27.

<sup>148</sup> For example: World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace, Wroclaw, Poland, August 1948; World Peace Congress organised by the PCF, Paris, April 1949; World Peace Congress, Prague, April 1949; Stockholm Peace Appeal against atomic weapons launched by the World Peace Committee, 1950; World Peace Congress, Warsaw, November 1950.

Picasso maintained a consistent relationship with organisations within the peace movement, even though he did not attend international conferences after 1950. For example, in 1951, Picasso did not travel to the World Congress for Peace in Vienna; however, he sent a joint message with Henri Matisse that was later published in LLF. In their letter, they expressed their ongoing support of the congress, and they believed reciprocal respect between people and governments would allow for international disarmament and peaceful co-existence.<sup>149</sup> Aside from direct involvement with the congresses, Picasso also had connections with affiliate organisations such as the *Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples* (MRAP). This organisation was tied to the *Comité de défense des Rosenbergs* and also had links with the PCF.<sup>150</sup> MRAP representatives were in constant contact with Picasso during the Rosenberg trial, but they had also begun sending him letters in 1949 (when MRAP was first created) until the late 1960s, as evidenced by the collection of correspondence found in the AMNPP. These letters would always begin with the writer explaining that the MRAP recognised Picasso's dedication to humanitarian causes, after which they would request his help with an injustice that was currently unfolding in France.<sup>151</sup> As with everything found in the Picasso Archives, it is hard to decipher which of these causes Picasso contributed money or art towards unless a thank-you note or acknowledgement existed among the files. However, I did discover confirmation of Picasso's involvement with MRAP. Secretary General Charles Palant wrote to the artist in 1964 to thank him for donating a piece of work to the group's art exhibition and sale and for agreeing to be present at the event.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Matisse and Picasso, *Les Lettres Françaises*, 31 October 1952. "Chers amis qui travaillez pour la paix, nous sommes heureux d'apprendre que des hommes de toutes opinions vont se réunir pour discuter librement des problèmes de la paix. Nous sommes d'accord avec eux pour vouloir une détente de la situation internationale. Le désarmement doit être l'oeuvre de négociations entre les états et non pas basé sur l'étalage de la force. Nous sommes persuadés que le respect réciproque des peuples et des formes de gouvernement qu'ils se sont choisies avancera la cause de la paix. Et, pour le maintien de ce bien précieux entre tous, la paix, nous pensons que discuter vaut mieux que menacer. Avec la profonde conviction que, grâce aux efforts réunis de tous, l'esprit pacifique prevaudra sur celui de la guerre, nous vous adressons, chers amis, nos souhaits pour la réussite de vos rencontres. Nice, le 10 octobre 1952."

<sup>150</sup> In 1977, the name of the group changed to *Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples*. MRAP was not founded until 1949, but it had roots in the Resistance and was seen as sympathetic to the PCF. Herrick Chapman and Laura L. Frader, *Race in France: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Politics of Difference* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), p. 171; Maxim Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 63; Timothy Peace, "The French Anti-Racist Movement and the 'Muslim Question'," in Christopher Flood et al., eds., *Political and Cultural Representations of Muslims: Islam in the Plural* (Lieden, NL: Brill, 2012), p. 133.

<sup>151</sup> MRAP committee member I. Blum to Picasso, 14 February 1949, box G6; folder: Mouvement contre le racisme, l'antisemitisme et pour la paix; Ligue International contre le racisme et l'antisemitisme; subfolder: Mouvement contre le racisme, l'antisemitisme et pour la paix (MRAP), AMNPP. "Connaissant vos sentiments pacifiques et humanitaires ainsi que votre attachement aux glorieuses traditions de la France..."

<sup>152</sup> Charles Palant to Picasso, 16 June 1964, *ibid*.

The AMNPP contains thousands of invitations addressed to Picasso from peace organisations all over the world. There are countless postcards from fans proclaiming their admiration for Picasso, and numerous groups—big and small—requested Picasso’s assistance. Presumably, this is because they believed in his genuine interest in the peace movement. In one instance, he received a letter from the *Fédération française contre l’armement atomique* signed by physicist Alfred Kastler on 30 October 1961. In his request, Kastler asked Picasso to speak out on the group’s behalf against the USSR and their nuclear program in the name of peace.<sup>153</sup> With this request, Kastler must have recognised the prestige and level of influence Picasso had within the WPM. It also confirms the significant gap that existed between Communism and some peace activists. Just because many Communists were involved in the WPM did not mean that all peace advocates were in favour of Communism, and certainly there were members of the movement who called for the disarmament of the Soviet Union. This request from Kastler was especially remarkable considering he was asking Picasso to petition against the leaders of his own political party. While Picasso was perceived to be a proponent of peace because of his widely known involvement in the movement, documents within the AMNPP demonstrate that Picasso also paid attention to minority factions within the Party—particularly groups in support of women and youth.

The PCF had promoted gender equality in politics since its inception in 1920. They supported universal suffrage and often had women candidates running in their elections.<sup>154</sup> The Party denounced the exploitation of women workers and created women’s organisations devoted to peace, anti-fascism, and the education of young girls.<sup>155</sup> Many of these Communist women’s groups received significant donations from Picasso throughout his political years. In 1949, Picasso met with Émilienne Brunfaut of the *Comité du congrès mondiale* where he gave the *Rassemblement des femmes pour la paix* permission to reproduce his artwork *L’enfant au pigeon*<sup>156</sup> (1901) and sell it in the form of postcards to raise money for their group.<sup>157</sup> In May 1955, Picasso was thanked by the *Union des femmes françaises* (UFF) for his offering of two artworks to help their Commission of Cultural

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<sup>153</sup> Alfred Kastler on behalf of the *Fédération française contre l’armement atomique* to Picasso, 30 October 1961, G7 - Picasso et les associations d’anciens combattants, déportés et mouvements pour la paix et les droits de l’homme (Mouvement pour la paix en France); folder: Association Paix France; subfolder: Paris et Marne, Île-de-France, AMNPP.

<sup>154</sup> Christine Bard and Jean-Louis Robert, trans. Nicole Dombrowski, “The French Communist Party and Women 1920–1939: From ‘Feminism’ to Familialism,” in Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves, eds., *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books, 1998), p. 338.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.

<sup>156</sup> Pablo Picasso, *L’enfant au pigeon*, 1901, oil on canvas, private collection.

<sup>157</sup> Brunfaut to Picasso, 7 November 1949, Brussels, box G6; folder: Femmes: UFF Femmes Françaises, Union Filles de France, Fédération international des femmes; subfolder: Rassemblement des femmes pour la paix, AMNPP.

Activities raise funds.<sup>158</sup> In 1962 he drew *Portrait de jeune fille*<sup>159</sup> for a postcard in support of the *Jeunes filles travailleuses* meeting that was to be held in January the following year.<sup>160</sup> Then again in 1963, Picasso helped the UFF raise money by signing two hundred reproductions of his work entitled *Maternité*<sup>161</sup> (1963) for their congress.<sup>162</sup>

During the interwar period, French political groups had pushed their ideology through youth programs.<sup>163</sup> France in the aftermath of the Second World War was no different. Youth were considered a political, cultural, and social force on which elements of a new society would be built, and they were seen as agents of socioeconomic transformation for the country.<sup>164</sup> Communist youth had also participated during the Resistance.<sup>165</sup> The youth represented many hopes for the future; therefore, they would receive support from the community. Communist youth and student groups were on the receiving end of many of Picasso's contributions in the 1950s and 60s. In June 1950, Picasso designed a piece of work for the *Comité français* of the *Fédération mondiale de la jeunesse démocratique*, which would then be reproduced in the press and on postcards to raise money for the organisation.<sup>166</sup> In July 1959, Picasso was sent a letter of thanks from the *Union des jeunesses communistes de France* (UJCF) for the artwork he donated to their organisation in honour of the *Festival mondial de Moscou*.<sup>167</sup> Then in 1960, Picasso gifted the UJCF signed lithographs for another festival in Vienna.<sup>168</sup> In 1961, Picasso designed the cover image for the December edition of *Clarté*, which was the journal for *L'union des étudiants communistes*.<sup>169</sup>

*L'avenir social: Maison de l'enfant du fusillé et des enfants de travailleurs* was an orphanage that received numerous donations from Picasso throughout the 1950s and early 60s. The home was originally founded in 1906, but in the early 1920s the *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT) took

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<sup>158</sup> President of the Commission nationales des activités culturelles, UFF to Picasso, 31 May 1955, box G6; folder: Femmes: UFF Femmes Françaises, Union Filles de France, Fédération international des femmes; subfolder: UFF, AMNPP.

<sup>159</sup> I could not find the provenance of this artwork.

<sup>160</sup> The portrait is dated 4 April 1962. Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 186.

<sup>161</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Maternité*, 1963. The original is pencil on paper. The pieces being referred to are 200 colour lithograph reproductions. Published by Éditions Combat de la Paix, Paris.

<sup>162</sup> Conseil National member Gilberte Rodrigue and Secretary General Yves Dumont to Picasso, UFF, 1963, box G6; folder: Femmes: UFF Femmes Françaises, Union Filles de France, Fédération international des femmes; subfolder: UFF, AMNPP and Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 190.

<sup>163</sup> Richard Ivan Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 27

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 11, 66.

<sup>165</sup> Annie Kriegel, *Ce que j'ai cru comprendre* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1991), p. 270.

<sup>166</sup> Jacques Denis to Picasso, 15 June 1950, Paris, box G6; folder: Ass. Jeunesse et Ass. Étudiants; subfolder: Fédération mondiale de la jeunesse démocratique, comité français, AMNPP.

<sup>167</sup> Secretary General Paul Laurent to Picasso, 18 July 1959, box G6; folder: Ass. Jeunesse et Ass. Étudiants; subfolder: Union des jeunesses communistes de France, AMNPP.

<sup>168</sup> Laurent to Picasso, 21 October 1960, *ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> Design dated 21 November 1961, Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 186.

over its operations.<sup>170</sup> After the Second World War, the CGT was known to be predominantly influenced by the Communists, which explains the donations it received from Party intellectuals such as Picasso.<sup>171</sup> A 1958 letter from the orphanage's director thanked Picasso for his annual contributions.<sup>172</sup>

*Le Bol d'air des gamins de Paris* was another youth organisation founded by the PCF that supported children of those killed during the French Resistance.<sup>173</sup> Between 1950 and 1964, Picasso received annual letters from the *Bol d'air gamins de Paris kermesse des étrennes, association pour le soutien et l'arbre de Noël des enfants de fusillés de la résistance* thanking him for his contributions. Picasso was the president of honour of this association and each year he donated a piece of artwork that would be sold at their annual sale to benefit the orphans.<sup>174</sup> Letters in the AMNPP demonstrate that Picasso also made monetary donations. Many other artists also offered their artwork throughout the years, including Brassai, Cocteau, Matisse, Jean Fautrier, André Derain, André Lhote, Boris Taslitzky, and Maurice de Vlaminck.<sup>175</sup>

The *Festival mondial de la jeunesse et des étudiants* was an annual event organised by a Left-wing, anti-fascist youth group starting in 1947. For its event in Berlin in 1951, Moscow in 1957, Vienna in 1959, and Helsinki in 1962, Picasso created and donated designs.<sup>176</sup> An administrator for the 1962 festival said that Picasso's donations were used to make lithographs, posters, postcards, and that 250 copies were signed by Picasso—200 prints and fifty drafts.<sup>177</sup>

Youth and women were just two groups who profited from Picasso's donations between the 1940s and 70s. Various organisations that supported the families of prisoners of war or those who had been deported received attention and funds from the artist as well.<sup>178</sup> For example, in March 1945, Picasso was thanked for offering a painting to be sold at the *Mouvement national des prisonniers de guerre et déportés* gala.<sup>179</sup> On 20 November 1963, Picasso received a letter and

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<sup>170</sup> André Carrel, *Mes humanités: itinéraire d'un homme engagé* (Paris: l'Oeil d'or, 2009), p. 252.

<sup>171</sup> George Ross, *Workers and Communists in France: From Popular Front to Eurocommunism* (London: University of California Press, 1982), p. x.

<sup>172</sup> Louis Blésy to Picasso, 19 March 1958, box G5; folder: Association des familles des fusillés et massacres, AMNPP.

<sup>173</sup> "Archives du Parti communiste français," Fonds Raymond Guyot, 1926–88, 283 J 1-81, Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint Denis, September 2008, p.184. Accessed: 26 September 2015. [http://archives.seine-saint-denis.fr/IMG/pdf/283j\\_pcf\\_r\\_guyot\\_inv.pdf](http://archives.seine-saint-denis.fr/IMG/pdf/283j_pcf_r_guyot_inv.pdf).

<sup>174</sup> Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 180.

<sup>175</sup> Box G5; folder: Association des familles des fusillés et massacrés, AMNPP.

<sup>176</sup> Utlej, *Communist Years*, p. 123 and Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 186.

<sup>177</sup> Gosselin, *Picasso & la presse*, p. 186.

<sup>178</sup> Over 1.5 million French soldiers were captured and put into prisoner-of-war camps during the Second World War. Philip G. Nord, *France 1940: Defending the Republic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), p 143.

<sup>179</sup> Vincent Recco to Picasso, 5 March 1945, box G5; folder: Ass. Déportés, Internés; subfolder: Mouvement national des prisonniers de guerre et déportés, AMNPP.

Christmas card from the *Association d'Athénès des familles des exilés et prisonniers politiques*. In it he was thanked by “the families of 1,250 political detainees [who] recognize your sincere friendship to assistance towards their prolonged ordeal.”<sup>180</sup> It is unclear what Picasso contributed to their cause, but he did show solidarity with the group in their task of liberating political prisoners.<sup>181</sup> A receipt in the AMNPP shows that Picasso donated a painting to the *Artistes, peintres, et sculpteurs prisonniers* organisation.<sup>182</sup> There are letters found in the Picasso Archives written by the *Association des déportés, internés et familles des disparus des Alpes-Maritimes* between 1957 and 1962, thanking Picasso for donating works of arts on numerous occasions.<sup>183</sup> Similarly, Picasso was a prominent supporter of the *Amicale des déportés d'Auschwitz et des camps de Haute Silésie*. This organisation supported former French deportees to Auschwitz and their families, and it was administered by non-Jewish Communists with support from the PCF.<sup>184</sup> Letters can be found in the AMNPP dated up to 1964 from the group, inviting Picasso to events and thanking him for his donations of artworks on various occasions—including his commemorative piece on the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1955.<sup>185</sup>

Picasso's involvement with Communist and charitable groups stretched beyond the PCF and the United States. Within the AMNPP, frequent thank-you cards can be found that reveal the variety of Picasso's contributions to foreign organisations. For example, on 29 October 1953, the British Soviet Friendship Society thanked him for a signed copy of one of his artworks for their annual bazaar.<sup>186</sup> Sometimes the organisations that asked for support were quite noteworthy: the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in 1964 sent a card to Picasso's wife Jacqueline, thanking her and Picasso for a signed reproduction.<sup>187</sup> There may be even more examples of Picasso's potential donations, but it is difficult to prove without evidence such as these tokens of thanks. Even so, the Picasso Archives hold a substantial number of letters expressing gratitude for the donations and contributions Picasso did indeed make to a significant number of campaigns and groups.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Secretary General Marie Kyriakidou to Picasso, 20 November 1963, G3 - Partis et mouvements politiques à l'étranger, Afrique à Israel, 1935–71 et s.d., box ARPECB0354; folder: Greece, AMNPP.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Joseph Riviera to Picasso, no date, box G5; folder: Ass. Déportés, Internés; subfolder: Mouvement national des prisonniers de guerre et déportés, AMNPP.

<sup>183</sup> Box G5; folder: Ass. Déportés, Internés; subfolder: Association des déportés, internés et familles des disparus des Alpes-Maritimes, AMNPP.

<sup>184</sup> Rebecca Clifford, *Commemorating the Holocaust: The Dilemmas of Remembrance in France and Italy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 40.

<sup>185</sup> Box G5; folder: Ass. Déportés, Internés; subfolder: Amicale des déportés d'Auschwitz, AMNPP.

<sup>186</sup> Box G3; folder: Great Britain, AMNPP.

<sup>187</sup> Monique Bierens de Haan-Barbey to Jacqueline Picasso, 7 November 1964, box G4; folder: Switzerland, AMNPP.

<sup>188</sup> My judgment is based on how the archives are organised. Picasso's papers are arranged thematically rather than chronologically, with folders labelled with the names of political groups, organisations, charities, and galleries. Each of these hundreds of folders holds multiple letters of admiration and thanks. Some

Letters stored in the AMNPP also illustrate the types of relationships Picasso had with various national branches of the Communist Party. Picasso was considered an important intellectual to have among the ranks, which is evidenced by the telegrams, letters, and cables from a variety of Communist leaders. When in December 1944 the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) and the secretary of the National Spanish Union (a group consisting of Spanish Communists) asked Picasso if they could use his home for a meeting, he agreed.<sup>189</sup> On the occasion of Picasso's seventy-fifth birthday in 1956, Fernando Claudin wrote a celebratory message to the artist on behalf of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the PCE in exile in Mexico: "We celebrate your work... your position as a man before the problems of his time... we remember Algeria in saluting you. You are not only a great Spanish painter, but through your campaigns you are also a great Communist."<sup>190</sup> Claudin described Picasso as a man worth celebrating because of his artwork but also because of his dedication to Communism. Cuban President Fidel Castro also sent Picasso two messages in his lifetime: one in 1961 to wish Picasso a happy eightieth birthday and the other in 1962 congratulating him on receiving the coveted Lenin Peace Prize.<sup>191</sup> In addition, Picasso received congratulatory messages from peace organisations in Vietnam, Korea, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and so on. Within the AMNPP one can find multiple copies of Communist newspapers and bulletins from an array of countries.<sup>192</sup> Whether he read them or not is unknown. But the fact that he kept them is perhaps a good indication that he had a keen interest in the international state of affairs.

Picasso was a supporter of Edward Barsky and his work with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the JA-FRC—even before the trial and imprisonment of twelve of its executives in 1947, as discussed earlier. In November of 1945, Barsky sent a telegram from New York to Manuel Azcárate, the leader of the Spanish Communist Party in exile in Toulouse, France. In the telegram, Barsky stated that he had cabled Picasso and asked him to be the honorary chairman of the appeal for

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examples of these letters can be found in footnotes 186 and 187. As a result, I can not trace the number of donations he made in a set time frame because I did not have access to all boxes of letters and correspondence, but I have noted the numerous groups that sent Picasso messages of gratitude for his artistic and monetary contributions to their respective causes.

<sup>189</sup> PCE and National Spanish Union to Picasso, 11 December 1944, F1 and F2 - Lettres reçues d'organismes et associations politiques, 1930–64 et s.d. and Lettres reçues des organismes chargés d'aider les réfugiés espagnols; folder: Spanish Civil War, AMNPP cited in Morris, "Republicans in Exile," in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Picasso: Peace and Freedom*, p. 34.

<sup>190</sup> Claudin to Picasso, 23 October 1956, box G4; folder: Italie à Vietnam, 1935–70 et s.d.; subfolder: Mexico, AMNPP cited in Morris, "Republicans in Exile," in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, p. 37.

<sup>191</sup> Fidel Castro to Picasso, 10 May 1962, G7 - Picasso et les associations d'anciens combattants, déportés et mouvements pour la paix et les droits de l'homme (Mouvement pour la paix en France); folder: La Paix – Lenin Peace Prize, AMNPP.

<sup>192</sup> *The People's Korea* of North Korea from January 1964 to January 1965; Socialist newspaper *New Age* of South Africa from July to December 1957; North Vietnamese journal in France *Bulletin du Vietnam* from March to April 1949; East Germany's *Echo d'Allemagne* from 1961 to 1964, AMNPP.

Spanish Republicans in France.<sup>193</sup> After Franco's victory, over half a million Spanish Republicans had fled to France by the start of 1939.<sup>194</sup> During the Occupation, most were sent to concentration camps: thousands died at Mauthausen and 30,000 were sent to camps in North Africa.<sup>195</sup> The approximate 18,000 who escaped internment fought in the Resistance.<sup>196</sup> The Spanish Refugee Appeal was able to send thousands of dollars, food, clothing, and medicine to Spanish refugees in France and North Africa.<sup>197</sup> Picasso's undated draft reply illustrated his support for the project, verified his close ties with Azcárate and the PCE, and confirmed his willingness to participate in Communist groups:

In answer to your cable which shows American people don't forget Spaniard's share in fight for World Freedom stop I gladly accept Honorary Chairmanship Spanish Committee here and hope fullest success will crown your campaign to aid Spanish refugees in France who greatly need your help stop am in close contact with Azcárate and Committee who will carry work to this end stop Greetings P.<sup>198</sup>

In 1946, Barsky invited Picasso to a meeting in New York that would focus on the Spanish Republican cause. Picasso's response in Spanish a few weeks later showed his appreciation for the work Barsky and the JA-FRC did in the United States to help secure political aid to the Republican refugees. In his cable, Picasso expressed "...gratefulness to you for all the friendly efforts of yourself and of the Joint Anti-Fascist Committee in realizing constantly in so many countries contributions to the triumph of Spanish Democracy. The superb work of solidarity is due to you ... I take advantage of this occasion to renew my gratefulness to you..."<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Edward Barsky to Manuel Azcárate, November 1945, box F1; folder: Spanish Communist Party, AMNPP cited in Morris, "Republicans in Exile," in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, p. 39.

<sup>194</sup> John Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France: The French Under Nazi Occupation* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 112; Scott Soo, *The Routes to Exile: France and the Spanish Civil War Refugees, 1939–2009* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 2; Phillip Deery, *Red Apple: Communist and McCarthyism in Cold War New York* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), p. 14

<sup>195</sup> Soo, *Routes to Exile*, p. 156 and Deery, *Big Apple*, p. 14.

<sup>196</sup> Deery, *Big Apple*, p. 14.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>198</sup> No date, box F1; folder: Spanish Communist Party, AMNPP cited in Morris, "Republicans in Exile," in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, p. 39.

<sup>199</sup> Picasso to Barsky, 22 November 1946, NYC, box F1; folder: The League of Wounded and Invalids from the Spanish Civil War in exile, AMNPP cited in Morris, "Republicans in Exile," in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, pp. 39–40. "My Dear Friend, Thank you for your cablegram notification of the next celebration of a great act for the Spanish Republic in your city, as well as invitation for my personal participation in it. I want to take advantage of this occasion to express my gratefulness to you for all the friendly efforts of yourself and of the Joint Anti-Fascist Committee in realizing constantly in so many countries contributions to the triumph of Spanish Democracy. The superb work of solidarity is due to you. Here with us are many Spanish Republicans, ill or in need. The political aid that you render to us shows America every time as a country of kindness, that knows the justice of this cause. I am very sad not to be able to accept an invitation that constitutes for me a great honor. After an absence of several months, I am returning to Paris, where numerous actions await me that can't be postponed. It has the security of my total adhesion to the cause, with participation of Spanish personalities that are actually in the United States.

Messages from international humanitarian groups arrived in Picasso's mailbox daily. The author of each letter believed Picasso was willing to defend misrepresented and disenfranchised portions of society. He received multiple letters, requests, and telegrams from Iraq asking for his help to stop the Baathist regime's military operation against the people in Kurdistan<sup>200</sup> and he was asked for a donation by the National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment in London on 22 February 1956.<sup>201</sup> On 27 October 1952, Picasso received a letter from the president of the Congress of Japanese Intellectuals with an attached copy of *Atomic Bomb*—a weekly photo magazine issued by one of the leading newspapers in Japan. The Congress proceeded to ask Picasso for his reactions to the photos so they could relay his horror back to the Japanese people and strengthen the unity among all those longing for peace in the world.<sup>202</sup> Between 1955 and 1956, the *Comité national d'information et d'action pour la solution pacifique des problèmes d'Afrique du Nord* sent numerous letters keeping Picasso up-to-date with their organisation's actions.<sup>203</sup> Picasso received multiple letters from the *Front de Libération Nationale* between 1955 and 1960, and he received constant updates from the Algerian Communist Party throughout the Algerian War. These are just a few examples of the hundreds of groups who wrote to Picasso in an effort to spread information about their causes and to gather support for their campaigns. Why Picasso? His name was known by most. He was praised for his art. Some admired him for his political views and his contribution to the peace movement. He also received the amount of letters he did because of the public's growing perception of Picasso as a warrior for peace and justice.

### **Picasso's Image**

The letters Picasso accumulated contain multiple communiqués, *appels*, and declarations on the behalf of political organisations worldwide. He was approached by numerous peace-driven, Left-wing charitable groups. Letters poured in from comrades around the world who believed that Picasso cared about the struggle for peace and the Communist cause as much as they did. These letters exist in the AMNPP, although it is unknown how many of these documents Picasso personally read. Despite that uncertainty, the image of Picasso built up by many Communists and admirers gave the impression that he was someone worth contacting.

Bertrand Russell was a British mathematician, philosopher, and political activist who strongly campaigned for nuclear disarmament. On 13 May 1963, he sent a letter to Picasso that read:

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I take advantage of this occasion to renew my gratefulness to you as well as the testimony of my good wishes. PP.”

<sup>200</sup> President of the High Committee of the Movement of Defending Iraqi People, MM Jawaheri to Picasso, 28 October 1963, box G3; folder: Iraq, AMNPP.

<sup>201</sup> June Osborn to Picasso, 22 February 1956, box G3; folder: Great Britain, AMNPP.

<sup>202</sup> Box G4, 27 October 1952, folder: Japan, AMNPP.

<sup>203</sup> G2 - Conflits Coloniaux, 1945–63 et s.d., box ARPECB0353; folder: Comité national d'information et d'action pour la solution pacifique des problèmes d'Afrique du Nord, 1955–56, AMNPP.

“I am at the moment in the course of preparing a serious and long-term project concerning the question of nuclear warfare. I should be grateful if it would be possible for two of my secretaries to meet with you to discuss these plans. And I hope sincerely that you will feel able to support them.”<sup>204</sup> Russell spent much of the 1950s and 60s engaged in the fight for peace. In 1955, he worked with a number of leading intellectuals to create the Russell-Einstein Manifesto that called for nuclear disarmament and included the signatures of Albert Einstein and Joliot-Curie.<sup>205</sup> It is unclear which long-term project Russell was referring to in this particular letter to Picasso. However, years later in 1966–67, Russell did collaborate with intellectuals such as Sartre and de Beauvoir and formed the Russell Vietnam War Crimes Tribunal to investigate American conduct during the southeast Asian conflict.<sup>206</sup> Moreover, Russell was known to correspond with heads of state—in 1962 he intervened in political matters such as the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Sino-Indian border dispute. His constant and extensive involvement with political issues and the merits and awards he received for his work and talent demonstrate the power and influence Russell held. People in the field of mathematics and science—such as Russell, Joliot-Curie, and Einstein—approached the issue of peace and disarmament in different ways than writers or artists. As experts in their respective fields, they understood more than anyone the devastating effects of their own discoveries. In an open letter to the Society for Social Responsibility in Science published in December 1950, Einstein wrote that “In our times scientists and engineers carry particular moral responsibility, because the development of military means of mass destruction is within their sphere of activity.”<sup>207</sup> Collecting support for their peace campaigns was part of that responsibility. There were those in the scientific field who understood the power they held; however, Russell confirmed that artists and intellectuals such as Picasso were also men of great intelligence and great influence in their areas of expertise. In writing that letter, Russell acknowledged Picasso to be a celebrated figurehead who could offer assistance to help solve the problems created by nuclear warfare.

A letter from an Australian Communist newspaper in the 1950s provides another example of the brand Picasso had created for himself: Picasso the peace advocate. On 17 May 1953, Picasso received a letter from *The Tribune*, which described itself as “Australia’s weekly newspaper carrying the message of peace, democracy, socialism and international brotherhood”. It was known to be the newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia.<sup>208</sup> The letter explained that the publication was going to be celebrating its second annual festival and they sought greetings and good wishes from leading world figures who were involved in the struggle for peace: “Because your activities in these

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<sup>204</sup> Letter from Bertrand Russell, O.M, F.R. to Picasso, 3 May 1963, box, G9; folder: Grande Bretagne, AMNPP.

<sup>205</sup> A.J. Ayer, *Bertrand Russell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 25–26.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>207</sup> Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (Crown/Archetype, 2010), p. 27.

<sup>208</sup> Letter from *Tribune* to Picasso, 17 May 1953, box G9; folder: Australia, AMNPP.

struggles are well-known throughout the world and because, as a consequence, your name is loved and venerated by millions, we would deeply appreciate such a letter from yourself.”<sup>209</sup> This letter did not mention nor address Picasso the artist, but rather Picasso the Communist and Picasso the proponent of peace. Picasso may have become a “leading world figure” because of his art, but the veneration he received in many of his letters mentioned his commitment to the Party and the peace movement. To those who were also heavily invested in the fight for peace, Picasso was a PCF member and active participant in the international peace movement who also happened to be a celebrated artist. It was his commitment to peace that mattered to those like *The Tribune*. Both Picasso’s politics and his art could be polarising, but his desire for peace was universal.

How did fellow PCF members address Picasso in their letters? In 1952, Picasso received a handwritten letter signed by approximately 100 intellectuals within the PCF, including Parmelin, Taslitzky, Éluard, and Daix. The letter read: “Les artistes plasticiens et les critiques communistes, remis en conference d’étude salient avec une affection confidante leur camarade de combat et, avec respect, le grand peintre qui met son talent au service de la paix et du socialisme.”<sup>210</sup> In this letter, which expressed much respect and admiration for Picasso, he was first referred to as their comrade of combat, and secondly as a great painter who put his talents towards the fight for peace and social transformation. In the eyes of these peers, his contribution to the movement was their primary acknowledgement. While we must recognise that some of the flattery Picasso received via mail may have been strategic, many individuals still considered him a global figurehead.

In this chapter, I have attempted to look beyond Picasso’s sincerity. The AMNPP holds thousands of requests for Picasso’s art, money, words, and time from comrades, art galleries, charities, and political groups around the world. The amount of thank-you notes Picasso received reveals that he regularly donated money and art to peace groups and anti-rearmament campaigns associated with or advocated by Communists. The boxes of letters addressed to Picasso help us to understand his celebrity cultural status. They also demonstrate how that status was acknowledged in both artistic and political spheres. I have attempted to illustrate that the perception of Picasso as an involved Communist and humanitarian was validated by his participation in political events, by his generous support to charitable groups and associations, by his reaction to instances of injustice, and by his actions during times of war. I have shown that the letters Picasso received regarding his politics all exhibit both respect and gratitude for his efforts and contributions. Without these carefully preserved letters, scholars may never have been able to trace the extent of Picasso’s political and philanthropic engagement. The genuine nature of Picasso’s responses—written or

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Letter to Picasso, 24 April 1952, box G1; folder: PCF Vie des sections du parti, 1944–69 et s.d., AMNPP.

otherwise—is not something that can be ascertained. As a result, the various Picasso brands and the public's perception of Picasso as Communist, Picasso as peace advocate, and Picasso as celebrity are as significant as his actual commitment. Picasso's charitable and political work further cemented these brands and affirmed his humanitarianism, and the perceived sincerity of Picasso's dedication to peace and justice guaranteed that his mailbox would remain full for the remainder of his life.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Picasso, MoMA, and the American Art Market**

*Some kinds of art should be restful and easy—as [Henri] Matisse said, like a good armchair. Other kinds, like Picasso's, challenge and stimulate us. They are often hard to understand at first but, like our minds and muscles, our artistic sensibilities are strengthened by exercise and hard work. I have never thought of art as something primarily pleasant—but as something which stirs us to a fresh awareness and understanding of life—even of the difficulties, confusions, tragedies of life as well as its joys.<sup>1</sup>*

—Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

In the late 1960s, journalist and art historian Russell Lynes asked then-Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) director Bates Lowry when modern art came to be. As many others before and after him, he replied: “With [Édouard] Manet”.<sup>2</sup> Lynes went on to argue that various generations have disagreed over which artistic movement ushered in the beginning of Modernism relative to their age—from Impressionism, to post-Impressionism, to Fauvism, to Cubism, and even starting with Abstract Expressionism.<sup>3</sup> In 1934 on the fifth anniversary of MoMA’s opening, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. published a board of trustees-approved definition of modern art in a press release, which included a broader definition: “‘Modern Art’ is a relative, elastic term that serves conveniently to designate painting, sculpture, architecture, and the other visual arts, original and progressive in character, produced especially within the last three decades but including also pioneer ancestors of the nineteenth century.”<sup>4</sup> Nine years later in 1943, MoMA trustee and former MoMA president A. Conger Goodyear described a slightly different definition: “What is Modern Art? Most definitions use dates for their boundaries within which lies a territory of hazy character. For our purposes it has been agreed that Modern Art began fifty or sixty years ago with the Big Four of Post-Impressionism—[Paul] Cézanne, [Paul] Gauguin, [Georges] Seurat, and [Vincent] van Gogh. The common characteristic of these men was originality.”<sup>5</sup> David Cottington explained that to be modern, art had to be original in some respect.<sup>6</sup> Labelling the artist as original became a way in which to market the works of these great artists, by associating originality with innovation, creativity, inspiration, and a process that could not be repeated or replicated.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Abby Rockefeller, 15 January 1947, MoMA Archives: Alfred Barr, Archives of American Art 3264:1339 in Sybil Gordon Kantor, *Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and the Intellectual Origins of the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Russell Lynes, *Good Old Modern: An Intimate Portrait of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Kingsport Press, 1973), p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> J. Pedro Lorente, *The Museums of Contemporary Art: Notion and Development* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 4

<sup>5</sup> Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> All scholars referenced in this chapter are art historians unless otherwise stated. David Cottington, *Modern Art: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989), pp. 176–77.

Even within the same organisation it was difficult to come to a mutual understanding as to the origins of modern art. This difficulty in determining a standard definition would not get easier. Serge Guilbaut wrote that regardless of Modernism's origins, the American art establishment found it hard to accept because they saw it as provocative, elitist, hard to understand, and European.<sup>8</sup> Instead, they sought to Americanise it and remove its politically contentious content in order for it to be accepted nationally.<sup>9</sup> This effectively meant removing its historical specificity. What were the implications for Picasso's work?

After World War II, both sides of the Iron Curtain attempted to use art to support their ideological agendas throughout the Cold War. The lines often blurred if the same artist was used by both the Soviets and the Americans for their respective goals. David Caute argues that although Modernist art was initially labelled as subversive and decadent by various academies and institutions in both the East and West, the cultural Cold War linked art with power not only through censorship and repression, but also by means of patronage and promotion.<sup>10</sup> Picasso was a Communist and a Modernist, which allowed both Americans and Soviets to use him to their advantage by emphasising the aspects of his art or his politics that best supported their views and aims. In this thesis, I have demonstrated that it was the prestige Picasso brought to the Party and particular political Picasso artworks that were most valued by the Communists despite the CPSU's stance towards Modernism during the Stalin years. Claudia Mesch explains that it was easy for certain American art institutions to take abstract art, which was assumed to have no subject matter, and interpret it as the free, experimental expression of a free society.<sup>11</sup> This included the work of Communists such as Picasso. It was far easier to integrate Picasso's abstraction into this liberal model than it was his polemical, figurative works. Modernist art created or displayed in the United States after the war cannot be completely understood through a critique of purely its visual content. An analysis of the historical context and the ideological content is necessary with all art. Guilbaut explained how the cultural history of the United States after the war is the story of a "reconstruction of American culture on new foundations laid by changes in the world economy"; thus, the cultural history of the nation must be analysed with the historical framework in mind.<sup>12</sup> Francis Frascina asks the following questions: how can we account for the dominance of particular biases, interests, and the politics of art institutions, dealers, and critics in post-war America? And what is the relationship between the way in which

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<sup>8</sup> Serge Guilbaut, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 218.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 6, 541.

<sup>11</sup> Claudia Mesch, *Art and Politics: A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Guilbaut, *How New York Stole*, p. 8.

institutions present artworks and the historical meanings of those artworks?<sup>13</sup>

One can assume that American art critics wanted to remove the subject matter from modern art being displayed in the United States—especially from the work of artists who considered themselves members of the political Left. MoMA had become one of the most influential and respected organisations since its inception in 1929. Its director for just over fourteen years,<sup>14</sup> Barr “played a greater role than any other figure in American history in shaping the understanding of the artistic achievements of the modern age”.<sup>15</sup> One of those achievements was the collecting of multiple Picasso artworks as well as the organisation of numerous Picasso retrospectives. American art critic Hilton Kramer wrote that during Barr’s time at MoMA, the press in the United States was uneducated, if not hostile, towards modern art.<sup>16</sup> In this chapter, I will examine the following: whether the press was truly unreceptive to Modernism during the whole of Barr’s tenure; how Barr handled displaying the work of a Modernist and a Communist; the various strategies introduced in order to justify displaying the work of a Communist artist in the United States; how different museums, dealers, art critics, and the press reacted to one of the world’s most famous living artists being a member of the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) while still supporting his artwork; and whether political biases affected the business of art in the United States in regards to Picasso. First, one needs to understand the structure of the American art market between the early 1910s and mid 1960s and how Picasso was established within it. Secondly, I will study the creation of MoMA, Barr’s rise to the position of museum director, and how he built an audience for Picasso and other Modernist artists at the museum. Thirdly, I will outline the different stylistic debates surrounding Modernism in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. Lastly, I will examine the changes that had occurred by the late 1950s and 60s and how Modernism came to be more widely accepted in the United States. Anti-Communist sentiment was prevalent in the United States, and Modernism was not initially a popular art form within American art institutions. Yet in this chapter I will show how the efforts of MoMA and Barr led to Picasso’s acceptance and the growth of Modernism’s cultural acceptability. East and West may have been waging a cultural war; however, Picasso and his art were utilised by both the PCF and by modern tastemakers and museum officials in the United States alike. Not only will I demonstrate the important role Barr played in normalising Picasso’s art, I will also use archival documents to draw out the complexities surrounding the recognition of Modernism in a Cold War context and the way in which validation from the market was transformed into endorsement from art institutions.

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<sup>13</sup> Francis Frascina, “The Politics of Representation,” in Francis Frascina, Jonathan Harris, Charles Harrison, and Paul Wood, *Modernism in Dispute: Art Since the Forties*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 82.

<sup>14</sup> Although Barr was only director of MoMA for fourteen years, he remained on staff as advisory director, then as director of collections until 1968.

<sup>15</sup> Hilton Kramer, “Alfred Barr at MoMA: An Introduction,” *New Criterion*, Special Issue (1987), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

## **The American Art Market, 1910–65**

It is necessary to first examine the history and structure of the American modern art market in order to understand MoMA's development. The 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art—more commonly known as the Armory Show—was the first major modern art exhibition in the United States, which showcased both European and American artists. The show was organised by the Association of American Painters and Sculptors and travelled to New York City, Chicago, and Boston. It featured 1,200–1,300 pieces of art from nearly 300 artists, and in terms of attendance it attracted nearly 250,000 people.<sup>17</sup> Approximately \$45,000 worth of modern art was bought and sold.<sup>18</sup> Associate Director of the Whitney Lloyd Goodrich wrote that it was “the opening gun in the long bitter struggle for modern art in this country...”<sup>19</sup> Despite the exhibition's success, reviews were mixed. The *New York Times* described the show as being “hideous to our unaccustomed eyes”<sup>20</sup> and accused the artists whose works were on display as having “abolish[ed] the art of painting”.<sup>21</sup> The *Times* wrote that the Armory Show's “so-called art” was part of an attempt to “disrupt and degrade, if not to destroy, not only art, but literature and society too”.<sup>22</sup> In contrast, an article in the Leftist journal *The International* proclaimed that “the artistic spirit” had been liberated, that modern art was a display of “exuberant individualism”, and that modern artists were “extending the boundaries of liberty”.<sup>23</sup> Another Leftist magazine, *Current Opinion*, labelled it “The Greatest Exhibition of Insurgent Art Ever Held”.<sup>24</sup> Photographer, dealer, and advocate for modern art Alfred Stieglitz declared in the *New York Journal-American* newspaper that Modernism was bringing “life” to “the decaying corpse of art”.<sup>25</sup> The impact of the show on the New York art scene was tremendous. It opened the door for more modern art to come to the United States, as European artists soon realised the potential of the

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<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Lunday, *The Modern Art Invasion: Picasso, Duchamp, and the 1913 Armory Show That Scandalized America* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2013), p. xi.

<sup>18</sup> All dollar amounts in this chapter are in USD. J.M. Mancini, *Pre-Modernism: Art-World Change and American Culture from the Civil War to the Armory Show* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 133.

<sup>19</sup> Lloyd Goodrich in Michelle Elligott and Harriet Schoenholz Bee, eds., *Art in Our Time: A Chronicle of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004), p. 30

<sup>20</sup> David E. Shi, *Facing Facts: Realism in American Thought and Culture, 1850–1920* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 289

<sup>21</sup> Allan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 47.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

American art market.<sup>26</sup> Modernism would eventually rival Impressionism in sales, which would ultimately enable New York to replace Paris as art capital of the world.<sup>27</sup>

In 1921, the Metropolitan held an Impressionist and post-Impressionist show, which four months later led to the anonymous publishing of a pamphlet entitled “A Protest Against the Present Exhibition of Degenerate ‘Modernistic’ Works in the Metropolitan Museum” where the exhibition was called “Bolshevist Propaganda” and an “art crime”.<sup>28</sup> The pamphlet went on to say that “this ‘Modernist’ degenerate cult is simply the Bolshevich philosophy applied to art” and that “‘Modernism’ began with a small group of neurotic Ego-Maniacs in Paris who styled themselves ‘Satanists’.”<sup>29</sup> According to the *New York Herald*, pamphlets were mailed to “many persons in New York City”.<sup>30</sup> Negative responses to Modernism among the American press and general public were common from the beginning; however, this was not reflected in the monetary value of the artwork.

The sale prices of modern art after the stock market crash of 1929 is perhaps not what one would expect. The art market between 1934 and 1940 slowed significantly.<sup>31</sup> Some galleries had to declare bankruptcy and artwork was being sold at low prices. However, the difference in sale prices between other Cubists and Modernists compared to Picasso should be noted. For example, when a bankrupt Chicago gallery was forced to liquidate its stock in 1934, a Juan Gris went for \$17.50, a Georges Braque still life sold for \$185, the highest price for a Fernand Léger was just \$60, but Picasso’s *Supper Party* fetched \$4,000.<sup>32</sup> Overall, the modern art market was the only one that experienced an increase in the price of works after the crash—whereas the Impressionists, Italian and French old masters, French nineteenth-century, English eighteenth-century, etc. all saw a decline.<sup>33</sup> Duncan Phillips, Albert C. Barnes, Albert Eugene Gallatin, George David Thompson, the Cone sisters, and the Stein siblings were just some of the American modern art collectors who played an instrumental role in the success of the market during the 1930s.

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<sup>26</sup> Lunday, *Modern Art Invasion*, p. xii.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Claus Virch, *The Adele and Arthur Lehman Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1965), p. 67.

<sup>29</sup> Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, pp. 43, 44.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Watson, *From Manet to Manhattan: The Rise of the Modern Art Market* (London: Hutchinson, 1992), p. 261.

<sup>32</sup> By comparison, work of Italian old master Vittore Carpaccio that went for over £10,000 pre-WWI was then being priced at £3,000 between 1934 and 1940; Andrea Mantegna’s works had once been priced as high as £29,500 but in the 30s could not sell for over £5,000. Peter Watson, *From Manet to Manhattan: The Rise of the Modern Art Market* (London: Hutchinson, 1992), pp. 252, 261.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261–63.

By the end of the 1930s, the European art market had come to a standstill with the advent of the Second World War; meanwhile, the market in the United States saw a rise in sales. Picasso's dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler admitted that the rise in prices of Picasso and other Modernists could be attributed to the emergence of the American modern art market.<sup>34</sup> These artists may also have been riding the successes of earlier Modernists, such as the Impressionists. Deirdre Robson explained that by the early 1940s, the old masters and some of the more popular Impressionists and post-Impressionists once again gained the most attention and highest prices among American collectors.<sup>35</sup> This is partly due to that fact that these collectors were Europeans who had immigrated to the United States in 1939 and 1940 to escape the war and by 1942 they were estimated to constitute one-third of all art buyers in New York City.<sup>36</sup> One collector was particularly instrumental in the New York art scene at this time: Peggy Guggenheim. After living in Europe for twenty-one years, owning a gallery in London, and buying art in Paris to start her own contemporary gallery, she returned to New York City in 1941 with Surrealist Max Ernst.<sup>37</sup> While in New York, an influx of European artists who had come to seek refuge from the war formed relationships with their American counterparts.<sup>38</sup> These interactions and exchanges of views between various modern artists from both continents helped shift the centre of the art world from Paris pre-war to New York City post-war.<sup>39</sup> P. Guggenheim then used these connections to open a gallery on 20 October 1942 known as Art of This Century, which showcased the full range of both European and American Modernist artists residing in New York at the time, from the Surrealists to the Abstract Expressionists, such as William Baziotes, Robert Motherwell, Ad Reinhardt, and Jackson Pollock.<sup>40</sup> These men were to become the most internationally respected group of American artists to date and the pillars of the new American School.<sup>41</sup> It was P. Guggenheim who gave Jackson Pollock his first one-man show in 1943, which led to the first solo shows for Baziotes, Motherwell, Giorgio de Chirico, Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, and others, up until the gallery's closure in 1947.<sup>42</sup> P. Guggenheim had said in the gallery's press release that "This undertaking will serve its purpose only if it succeeds in serving the future instead of recording the past."<sup>43</sup> Without the war, these relationships between artists, dealers,

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<sup>34</sup> Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and Francis Cremieux, trans. Helen Weaver, *My Galleries and Painters* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1971), p. 120.

<sup>35</sup> Deirdre Robson, *Prestige, Profit, and Pleasure: The Market for Modern Art in New York in the 1940s and 1950s* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1995), p. 220.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 220–21.

<sup>37</sup> Watson, *Manet to Manhattan*, pp. 275–77.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>39</sup> Anton Gill, *Peggy Guggenheim: The Life of an Art Addict* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), p. 290. The stagnation of the European art market during the Second World War was a major reason for the shift.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>41</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Introduction," in Peggy Guggenheim, *Confessions of an Art Addict* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 14

<sup>42</sup> Watson, *Manet to Manhattan*, p. 278; Guggenheim, *Confessions*, p. 104–05; Gill, *Art Addict*, p. 341.

<sup>43</sup> Gill, *Art Addict*, p. 327.

galleries, and collectors in New York may never have developed. It was an important step for the growing modern art market.

Sales began to stagnate in 1946 due to post-war economic conditions; in addition, one could not find the work of any Impressionists or post-Impressionists in an American gallery for less than \$10,000, which meant that only the wealthiest could even consider buying art from those periods.<sup>44</sup> However, that also meant that the more affordable artwork of twentieth-century painters was now attracting buyers.<sup>45</sup> Picasso's paintings could sell for anywhere between \$350 and \$200,000 depending on their period and size.<sup>46</sup> A 1966 *New York Times* article discussing Picasso's success in the US remarked that his joining the French Communist Party in the early 1940s resulted in a drop in sales and prices of his paintings in the country for several years, according to some dealers.<sup>47</sup> However, this could easily be due to the economic climate in the United States after the war. In addition, Picasso's artwork maintained quite high prices, even during this difficult economic time, and they were still consistently higher than those of other Modernist painters (as I cited earlier in this chapter, when looking at the year 1934). For example, the sale price of Gris's *Portrait of Picasso*<sup>48</sup> (1912) was \$12,000, Roger de la Fresnaye's *La vie conjugale*<sup>49</sup> (1912) was \$11,000, and Léger's Cubist works sold for a few thousand dollars in the late 1940s.<sup>50</sup> MoMA may have been partly responsible for Picasso's high sale prices. Barr, as MoMA's director, was very supportive of Picasso's work. MoMA trustee Phillip Goodwin even questioned the perhaps excessive representation of Picasso in the museum collection—in 1952, the museum members' room and restaurant were exclusively decorated with Picassos, twenty per cent of the permanent collection was dedicated to Picasso, and a Picasso-Redon print exhibition on the ground floor was also dominated by Picasso.<sup>51</sup> Regardless of Barr's adoration of Picasso or his rising popularity, it is probable the museum trustees wanted a more balanced collection. However, this heavy exposure to Picasso's work may have contributed to his rising sale prices.

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<sup>44</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, pp. 227–28.

<sup>45</sup> "Auction Record," *Art News*, vol. XLIX, no. 5 (1950–51): p. 9 cited in Robson, *Prestige*, p. 229.

<sup>46</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 229.

<sup>47</sup> Milton Esterow, "Booming Art Market Makes Shares of Picasso Good as Gold," *New York Times*, November 1966, p. 18 in 12.III.A.6, "Picasso Book" - corresp. & printed matter: 1966, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>48</sup> Juan Gris, *Portrait of Picasso*, 1912, oil on canvas, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.

<sup>49</sup> Roger de la Fresnaye, *La vie conjugale*, 1912, oil on canvas, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis.

<sup>50</sup> Aline Louchheim, "Where Art and Economics Meet," *New York Times*, 13 March 1949, II, p. 8; *American Artist*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1947): p. 6; Sidney Janis: Paul Cummings interview, 21 March–26 September 1972, Archives of American Art; Germain Seligman Gallery Papers, Oral History Series, Archives of American Art cited in Robson, *Prestige*, p. 229.

<sup>51</sup> Philip Goodwin, letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 12 March 1952, microfilm 2179, AHB Papers, Archives of American Art and Alice Goldfarb Marquis, *Alfred H. Barr, Jr.: Missionary for the Modern* (New York: Contemporary Books Inc., 1989), p. 309.

The stagnation of the late 1940s art market began to recover in the early 50s due to the improving gross national product, which was a result of federal spending on arms and industry during the Cold War.<sup>52</sup> This improvement in the American economy saw an increase in private wealth, which was then reflected in the record prices being paid at auctions throughout the decade. For example, in 1958, Picasso's *Mother and Child*<sup>53</sup> (1921) sold for \$152,000 at the auction sale of hotelier Arnold Kirkeby in New York—the highest price paid for a living artist's work at the time.<sup>54</sup> The high auction bids established New York as a city where collectors were willing to pay top dollar for works of art.<sup>55</sup> And the sale of *Mother and Child* demonstrated that it was not just Impressionist and post-Impressionist art fetching such substantial amounts, with twentieth-century artists such as Picasso, Braque, and Matisse—who were by then very well established—now achieving the same price levels.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the growing admiration for modern art was supported by the multiple exhibitions held at prominent and respected museums such as MoMA.<sup>57</sup> It was Braque and Picasso who became the first living painters from the School of Paris<sup>58</sup> to receive six-figure prices for their work in New York in the 1950s, with their prices quadrupling post-war.<sup>59</sup> And it was MoMA's taste-making activities that actively stimulated the growth of the modern art market. As early as the 1940s, dealers were citing MoMA as the single most important influence on the art market.<sup>60</sup>

With the hard work of Barr at MoMA and other contemporary galleries in New York, there was a rising demand for art in the 1950s, which led to the growing popularity of twentieth-century artists like Picasso and an expanding market for their works. From 1937, MoMA offered an educational program as a way of encouraging art appreciation and thus developing a larger audience for modern art.<sup>61</sup> Publishing was another area in which MoMA surpassed both the Whitney and Guggenheim museums, especially at a time when there were few books available on modern art. By 1954, MoMA was publishing roughly eight books a year and had published 204 books and catalogues in total.<sup>62</sup> Lynes concurred that Barr and MoMA set a new standard for museum publishing.<sup>63</sup> MoMA also stimulated the market by advertising the sale of certain works at their exhibitions and displaying

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<sup>52</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, pp. 234–35.

<sup>53</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Mother and Child*, 1921, oil on canvas, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.

<sup>54</sup> Richard H. Rush, *Art as an Investment* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1961), p. 44.

<sup>55</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 237.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>58</sup> The School of Paris consisted of those artists who worked in Paris between 1900 and 1950.

<sup>59</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 240.

<sup>60</sup> Louchheim, "Who Buys What in the Picture Boom," *Art News*, vol. XLIII, no. 9 (1944–45): pp. 12–14, 22, 23 cited in Robson, *Prestige*, p. 74.

<sup>61</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 47.

<sup>62</sup> Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art, vol. XXII, no. 1–2 (1955): p. 20; *idem*, vol. XXII, no. 3–4, p. 18 cited in Robson, *Prestige*, p. 49.

<sup>63</sup> Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, p. 355.

reasonably priced artworks to show the public that modern art was attainable.<sup>64</sup> Beginning in 1950, MoMA began an art lending library where members could rent artworks for months at a time, with the rental fee deducted from the purchase price if in the end they decided to buy the canvas.<sup>65</sup> When the lending library was first established, one piece of art sold for every eight loans; by the end of the 1950s, one sold for every 3.5 loans.<sup>66</sup> According to A. Joan Saab, the museum's early success was due to its concentration on educational programs, informational catalogues, and exhibitions designed to demystify modern art to the American public and create a growing audience for Modernism.<sup>67</sup> In 1963, MoMA attracted 730,000 visitors; by 1965, attendance exceeded one million people.<sup>68</sup> This jump in numbers was common among various art institutions in the United States during this time.<sup>69</sup> MoMA used various techniques in an attempt to broaden their support base and audience, which led to the spread of public knowledge, growth of appreciation, and encouragement of consumption of modern art in New York. MoMA was the museum responsible for making modern art easily accessible to the public and thus encouraged its ownership. But how did MoMA get to this point? How was it established and how did it come to be known as one of the leading modern museums in New York, the United States, and the world?

### **MoMA, Barr, and the American Art Museum**

The modern and contemporary art museums of note in New York during the post-war period were MoMA, the Whitney Museum of American Art (1931), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (the Met) (1870), and the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (later known as the Solomon R.

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<sup>64</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 72.

<sup>65</sup> The works were generally of living Americans or up-and-coming artists. Most were already in the museum collections. Others were borrowed from various New York galleries. *Ibid.*, pp. 72–73.

<sup>66</sup> “Polonius Notwithstanding,” *Art Digest*, 1/5/1952, p.5; “Museum Increases Art for Rentals,” *New York Times*, 5 August 1952, p. 29; Aline B. Saarinen: “Picture Rentals,” *New York Times*, 10 February 1955, II, p. 15 cited in Robson, *Prestige*, p. 73.

<sup>67</sup> A. Joan Saab, *For the Millions: American Art and Culture Between Wars* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 93.

<sup>68</sup> “Record High Attendance of 1,058,700 at M.O.M.A.” MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, 28 May 1965, p. 1. Accessed: 5 March 2018.

[https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press\\_archives/3480/releases/MOMA\\_1965\\_0056\\_55.pdf](https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/3480/releases/MOMA_1965_0056_55.pdf).

<sup>69</sup> The Met's attendance jumped from roughly 2.9 million in 1957 to just over 4.0 million in 1960. The Art Institute of Chicago and the National Gallery of Art in Washington each attracted close to 1 million visitors in 1961. McCandlish Phillips, “Attendance Soars at Museums Here,” *New York Times*, 27 November 1961, p. 32; Roland L. Redmond and James J. Rorimer, “Review of the Year 1960–61,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, New Series* 20, no. 2 (1961): p. 39. Attendance statistics also include entrance to the Met Cloister. Georges Wildenstein, “Les Musées et leurs visiteurs,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, July 1961, pp. 1–2. All cited in Catherine Dossin, *The Rise and Fall of American Art, 1940s–1980s: A Geopolitics of Western Art Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 114.

Guggenheim Museum) (1937).<sup>70</sup> However, it is important to understand the history and general landscape of museums in the United States in order to understand the nature of MoMA as an institution at its inception.

After the American Civil War (1861–65), it became apparent that there was a lack of art institutions and education in the United States—American visual culture was lagging behind that of other nations.<sup>71</sup> Soon after, a movement developed within the cultural sphere to create public art museums, starting with Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts and the Met in 1870.<sup>72</sup> Afterwards came the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art (later known as the Philadelphia Museum of Art) in 1876. The museums in Boston and Philadelphia were originally meant to be functional museums that focused on art, education, and industry, and exhibited examples of industrial design.<sup>73</sup> Through this industrial-design education, the museums could contribute to the growth of the nation’s economy.<sup>74</sup> The Met, on the other hand, saw the Louvre in Paris as its inspiration, and it was created to showcase fine art collected by benefactors.<sup>75</sup> While the Philadelphia Museum’s collection reflected the factories and manufacturers of its city, the Met equally reflected its home: “New York, concentrating large masses of the capital of the country, naturally attracts the incidental accompaniments of great wealth, collections of art in the houses of its rich men.”<sup>76</sup> Philadelphia and New York had varying concepts in regards to the types of art a museum should display. However, when in 1893 the Philadelphia Museum presented the Wilstach Collection of over 300 predominantly European paintings, they saw attendance skyrocket to 60,000 people the same year.<sup>77</sup> By the end of the century, the Pennsylvania Museum had shifted its focus from industrial design to fine art.<sup>78</sup>

The Art Institute of Chicago (1879), the Cincinnati Art Museum (1881), and the Portland Art Museum (1892) were the next major museums founded. The commercial aspects of the American art world were also developing at this time. Due in part to the growth of wealth following the

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<sup>70</sup> Barr wrote a memorandum in 1940 defending MoMA from constant criticism of favouring foreign artists and neglecting American artists. He wrote: “I think the statistics will show that we have been more concerned with the American art than with the art of all foreign countries combined”, and that the Whitney and Metropolitan “confine themselves in the 20<sup>th</sup> century exclusively to American art” and “only the Museum of Modern Art deals with foreign art.” Barr, “Re: Bulletin on what the Museum has done in field of American Art,” Memorandum to Miss [Dorothy C.] Miller, 10 October 1940, AHB [AAA: 3262; 405] MoMA Archives, New York in Sybil Gordon Kantor, *Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and the Intellectual Origins of the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), pp. 237–38.

<sup>71</sup> Mancini, *Pre-Modernism*, p. 45.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>73</sup> Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 29.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

Reconstruction era (1865–77), the American art market grew with the integration of the United States into the international art market and the arrival of art dealers who specialised in trading American art.<sup>79</sup> Art criticism also grew after the Civil War, thanks to the boom in magazine publishing and journals that were devoted to art in the 1870s.<sup>80</sup> The arrival of more museums and the development of the market at this time created a solid foundation for a modern art museum like MoMA to eventually flourish. In the decades following the Civil War, critics and publishers worked with museums to create an organised art scene. Even though the 1913 Armory Show was groundbreaking because it was the first major Modernist art exhibit in the United States, it faced heavy criticism. The show included eight Picasso works.<sup>81</sup> Historian J.M. Mancini wrote that many critics of the show were not opposed to change, but they were suspicious of “the interpretative machinery” that came with this new form of art, which they felt disrupted the foundation of the American art world.<sup>82</sup> Mancini also argued that the Armory show and Modernism as a whole presented these critics with a world where experts—rather than the public—controlled American art.<sup>83</sup> Although many American artists embraced Modernism’s break from nineteenth-century aesthetic traditions because they felt a change in aesthetic would bring about social change, many others did not relate the two.<sup>84</sup> It is important to understand these attitudes to art and culture in the United States prior to the arrival of modern-art-focused institutions and the European Modernists they chose to promote.

The twentieth century brought about revolutionary changes and reform to American museums, which began with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A new generation of progressive connoisseur museum trustees and board members were hired and their mandate consisted of educational reform to effect social change—these political and social reforms were intended to promote order, rationality, and efficiency.<sup>85</sup> Throughout the 1920s, these progressive connoisseurs expanded the Met’s audience by making its galleries a destination for furnishing industries; they created partnerships with industry in order to improve the design quality of American products; they trained teachers to use the art collections at the Metropolitan and to bring their classes to the museum to learn about art appreciation; and they opened a wing of American decorative arts in the

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<sup>79</sup> Mancini, *Pre-Modernism*, pp. 51–52.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>81</sup> Gary Tinterow, “Picasso in The Metropolitan Museum of Art,” in Tinterow and Susan Alyson Stein, eds., *Picasso in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), p. 4.

<sup>82</sup> Mancini, *Pre-Modernism*, p. 137.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>85</sup> Jeffrey Trask, *Things American: Art Museums and Civic Culture in the Progressive Era* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 49.

hopes that other museums would follow suit.<sup>86</sup> Jeffrey Trask explains that the early 1900s saw American museum reformers create a new type of relationship between urban centres and museums by destroying the long-standing belief that museums catered to the elite.<sup>87</sup> Instead of the older view among cultural leaders that art could be a civilising influence on the lower classes, this new generation instead believed all citizens had the right to art and beauty.<sup>88</sup>

By 1929—the same year MoMA opened its doors—the Met had transformed the American art museum into a place that exhibited and promoted American modern design.<sup>89</sup> However, the same did not apply for modern artwork. The Met displayed a Picasso for the first time at an exhibition that debuted in May 1921, but it was not by choice. A letter dated 26 January 1921 and signed by artists Arthur Davies and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney and collectors Lillie P. Bliss and John Quinn asked the Met to organize an exhibition of French modern art, and they promised to secure the loans for the exhibition.<sup>90</sup> The curator of modern art at the Met at the time was Bryson Burroughs. Stieglitz—who was responsible for putting on the first Picasso exhibition in the United States in 1911—said that Burroughs “saw nothing in Picasso and vouched that his mad pictures would never mean anything to America”.<sup>91</sup> Burroughs only wanted to show work from Cézanne, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro, Odilon Redon, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, but the letter’s signatories demanded a broader scope.<sup>92</sup> The Met continued to avoid promoting twentieth-century modern art, and by 1934 they still did not have a single Picasso, Gauguin, Seurat, Matisse, Henri de Toulouse Lautrec, Henri Rousseau, or André Derain—all of which were represented at MoMA.<sup>93</sup> The Met did not receive its first Picasso painting for the permanent collection until 1947.<sup>94</sup> The 1920s were instead a time when American realists were being celebrated such as Edward Hopper and Andrew Wyeth rather than European Modernists.

Many of the progressive connoisseurs responsible for the Metropolitan’s path in the 1920s died in the 1930s, as did their visions, which coincided with the opening of MoMA. Rather than promoting an American-based aesthetic, MoMA sought to exhibit an international type of

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., pp. 185, 186, 150.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Trask, *Things American*, p. 188.

<sup>90</sup> Tinterow, “Picasso in The Metropolitan Museum of Art,” in Tinterow and Stein, eds., *Picasso in The Metropolitan*, p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> Alfred Stieglitz, “Under Postage: [Letter] to the Art Editor,” *New York Times*, 24 December 1939, p. 91 cited in Tinterow, “Picasso in The Metropolitan Museum of Art,” in Tinterow and Stein, eds., *Picasso in The Metropolitan*, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> Tinterow, “Picasso in The Metropolitan Museum of Art,” in Tinterow and Stein, eds., *Picasso in The Metropolitan*, p. 5.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

Modernism.<sup>95</sup> This is important to remember when trying to understand the reasons for the American backlash against foreign Modernists at MoMA post-World War II. The progressive museum connoisseurs of the 1920s tried to make the Metropolitan appealing to a larger audience, whereas after World War II museum leaders did not see the value in promoting American things in American museums—especially as New York was slowly becoming an international cultural centre for art.<sup>96</sup> MoMA and Barr’s shift in direction towards Modernism—diverging from the path of museums like the Metropolitan in the 1920s—illustrates just how new and innovative their ideas actually were.

The deaths of the early generation of progressive museum reformers were not the only reasons for the change in American museums after the 1920s—another was the education of its cultural leaders. Edward Robinson was director of the Metropolitan for twenty-one years until his death in 1931.<sup>97</sup> Henry Watson Kent was the Metropolitan’s assistant secretary (1905–13), its secretary (1913–40), and its supervisor of museum education (1907–25).<sup>98</sup> These two important figures did not learn their skills through formal museum studies because those educational programs did not exist at the time.<sup>99</sup> In contrast, many museum professionals of the 1930s enrolled in newly developed museum studies courses, such as the classes at Harvard taught by Fogg Museum Director Paul J. Sachs.<sup>100</sup> Sachs taught the importance of professional standards, art-historical formalism, and elite traditions of connoisseurship (described as “the direct examination and evaluation of the work of art without regard for its authorship”<sup>101</sup>), and his students went on to become leaders of institutions such as the Wadsworth Atheneum, the National Gallery, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, and the Metropolitan.<sup>102</sup> He also taught the man who would become the first director of MoMA—Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

Before enrolling in Sachs’ courses at Harvard, Barr received both his Bachelor of Arts in art history and his Master’s from Princeton in 1922 and 1923, respectively, at a time when the art historical methodology being taught was formalist.<sup>103</sup> Susan Noyes Platt wrote that two of the founders of art history and connoisseurship in the United States at the time were Charles Rufus

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<sup>95</sup> Trask, *Things American*, p. 230.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 234–35.

<sup>97</sup> Howard Hibbard, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 16.

<sup>98</sup> Merriell Maddux Parsons, “Henry Watson Kent: Distinguished Museum Educator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” *Roundtable Reports*, vol. 9, no. 2/3, *Museum Education: Past, Present, and Future* (Spring-Summer 1984): p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> Trask, *Things American*, p. 230. It is also important to note that many museum officials received museum-studies training in Europe.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 230, 231.

<sup>101</sup> Susan Noyes Platt, “Modernism, Formalism, and Politics: The ‘Cubism and Abstract Art’ Exhibition of 1936 at the Museum of Modern Art,” *Art Journal*, vol. 47, no. 4, *Revising Cubism* (Winter 1988): p. 286.

<sup>102</sup> Trask, *Things American*, p. 231.

<sup>103</sup> Platt, *Politics*, p. 285.

Morey and Frank Jewett Mather, who were great influences on Barr throughout his studies and career.<sup>104</sup> Morey taught Barr the separation of art history's development rather than being subject to social and political pressures.<sup>105</sup> From Mather, Barr learned about modern painting, and it was at this time Barr began writing about modern art.<sup>106</sup> After taking Sachs' courses on connoisseurship during his doctoral degree, Barr began to adapt that methodology to Modernism. In the spring of 1925, Barr made a presentation in Sachs' History of Engraving and Drawing class that displayed the principles he had adopted: "... I will show you a series of portraits ... I will be emphasising neither personalities nor chronologies, nor nationalities. I will merely propose a series of comparisons from which you must draw your own conclusions."<sup>107</sup>

After receiving formalist academic training at Harvard, Barr was exposed to a different perspective during his travels to the Soviet Union in the spring of 1927. There he met artists whose works were informed by politics, such as Mexican muralist Diego Rivera and members of the Russian avant-garde.<sup>108</sup> Barr learned about the impact politics could have on art, and both his academic background and this experience can be seen in his writings, perspectives, and work at MoMA from this point forward. Two years after Barr's Soviet trip, MoMA was founded.

### **MoMA: Financial Beginnings**

Of the four major New York art institutions, MoMA opened second to the Metropolitan in November of 1929. This was thanks to three wealthy patrons of the arts: Elizabeth (Lizzie) P. Bliss, Mary Quinn Sullivan, and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. According to MoMA's website, these women "perceived a need to challenge the conservative policies of traditional museums and to establish an institution devoted exclusively to modern art".<sup>109</sup> Late in May 1929, the group asked Goodyear, who had been director of the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, if he would be the chairman of a committee to organise a new museum.<sup>110</sup> Soon after, the rest of the committee was assembled: editor of *Vanity Fair* Frank Crowninshield, Professor Sachs, and patron of the arts Josephine Boardman Crane. It was Sachs who recommended his former student to be MoMA's first director.<sup>111</sup> Barr had been working as an associate professor at Wellesley—a women's liberal arts college close to Boston—for three years

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>106</sup> Rona Roob, "Alfred H. Barr, Jr.: a Chronicle of the Years 1902–1929," *New Criterion*, Special Issue (1987), p. 3.

<sup>107</sup> The Museum of Modern Art Archives: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, unlabeled lecture notes for seminar report (dated on internal evidence to Spring 1925) cited in Platt, *Politics*, p. 286.

<sup>108</sup> Platt, *Politics*, p. 287.

<sup>109</sup> "The Museum of Modern Art History," Museum of Modern Art. Accessed: 4 January 2017.

<https://www.moma.org/about/history>

<sup>110</sup> Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, p. 9.

<sup>111</sup> Platt, *Politics*, p. 288.

and had just been offered a Carnegie fellowship to study at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University; however, Sachs' offer was too good to reject.<sup>112</sup> In terms of funding, the committee decided not to provide MoMA with an endowment. Instead, they decided to raise enough money to cover the museum's running costs: this meant the goal for subscriptions would be \$100,000 a year for three years.<sup>113</sup> By August 1929, Goodyear reported to Sachs that subscriptions were already over \$50,000—the proposed first-year operations budget was \$75,000.<sup>114</sup> By contrast, both the Whitney and Guggenheim were given large endowments and a foundation for their collection by their respective founders.<sup>115</sup>

During its first years, MoMA was to exhibit loaned artwork until it could establish its own collection.<sup>116</sup> The first items procured by MoMA were eight prints and a drawing from Sachs, and the first painting was a donation of Edward Hopper's *House by the Railroad*<sup>117</sup> (1925) in 1930 from Stephen C. Clark.<sup>118</sup> Much of the artwork soon to become part of the permanent collection was donated by art collectors. *Head*<sup>119</sup> (1909) was the first Picasso to be bequeathed to MoMA by Saidie A. May in 1930.<sup>120</sup> The first major donation—which was to form the basis of the museum's collection—was in 1931 from MoMA's founder and trustee Lizzie Bliss.<sup>121</sup> In her will, Bliss not only left a large portion of her personal collection to MoMA, but she also allowed for the sale, transfer, and exchange of those works so that the trustees could use the artworks as capital in order to further develop the museum's collection.<sup>122</sup> Bliss also stipulated that the museum had three years to raise one million dollars in order to establish a firm financial foundation, guarantee its long-term existence, ensure the safety of her collection, and elect a legitimate governing board.<sup>123</sup> However, the onset of the Great Depression saw the requirement lowered to \$750,000.<sup>124</sup> Bliss's initial donation included Picasso's

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<sup>112</sup> Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, p. 32.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>115</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 27.

<sup>116</sup> Editorial, *New York Times*, 9 September 1929 cited in Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, p. 54.

<sup>117</sup> Edward Hopper, *House by the Railroad*, 1925, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>118</sup> "MoMA Starts: An 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition," Museum of Modern Art. Accessed: 26 January 2017. <https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2009/momastarts/>

<sup>119</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Head*, 1909, gouache on paper, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>120</sup> "The Museum of Modern Art and Picasso," MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, October 1967. Accessed: 12 February 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjUzNSJdXQ.pdf?sha=6e36d3ec33e5796c](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjUzNSJdXQ.pdf?sha=6e36d3ec33e5796c)

<sup>121</sup> "Ways of Giving," Museum of Modern Art. Accessed: 9 March 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/support/planned\\_giving/index](https://www.moma.org/support/planned_giving/index)

<sup>122</sup> Kathryn Porter Aichele, *Modern Art on Display* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2016), p. 109.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, and Robson, *Prestige*, p. 29. Though I am not sure what would have happened if these stipulations were not abided by.

<sup>124</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 29.

*Woman in White*<sup>125</sup> (1923) and *Green Still Life*<sup>126</sup> (1914).<sup>127</sup> Friends of the museum played a critical role in the development of its collection.

Many of MoMA's associates were wealthy and able to help the museum in its first years, with both donations of funds and acquisitions. Unlike the Whitney and Guggenheim who had regular sources of funding for acquisitions, MoMA had to rely on donations of artwork or monetary gifts in order to purchase art. For example, after MoMA's establishment, funding was received from fifty-four private subscribers.<sup>128</sup> Co-founder Abby Rockefeller was instrumental in establishing a foundation for MoMA. In 1931 she wrote a cheque for \$500 to buy prints; in 1935 she gave Barr \$1,000, which was used to purchase European modern works; and in 1926 she anonymously donated \$2,500 for the purchase of American art and \$2,000 for the acquisition of foreign art.<sup>129</sup> In 1936, she donated thirty-six oil paintings and 105 watercolours, gouaches, and pastels.<sup>130</sup> Two years later, A. Rockefeller donated \$20,000 for an acquisitions fund for the museum, in 1939 she donated thirty-six sculptures, and in 1940 she donated 1,600 prints.<sup>131</sup> A. Rockefeller's son, Nelson Rockefeller, anonymously pledged \$100,000 to the museum in 1934.<sup>132</sup> Then in 1938, N. Rockefeller contributed another \$11,500.<sup>133</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation was responsible for funding the museum's film library, and between 1934 and 1954 the library received \$338,730 from the foundation.<sup>134</sup> In 1942, N. Rockefeller anonymously donated \$25,000 for the acquisition of Latin American art.<sup>135</sup> These sorts of donations continued well into the 1940s. MoMA was continuously receiving large donations since its foundation.

Moreover, the Rockefellers were not the only ones investing large amounts of money in MoMA. After 1940, various MoMA trustees and staff offered funds towards acquisitions. Edgar

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<sup>125</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Woman in White*, 1923, oil, water-based paint and crayon on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>126</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Green Still Life*, 1914, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>127</sup> "The Museum of Modern Art and Picasso," MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, October 1967. Accessed: 14 April 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjUzNSJdXQ.pdf?sha=6e36d3ec33e5796c](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjUzNSJdXQ.pdf?sha=6e36d3ec33e5796c)

<sup>128</sup> Robert F. Dalzell, Jr. and Lee Baldwin Dalzell, *The House the Rockefellers Built: A Tale of Money, Taste, and Power in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2007), p. 179.

<sup>129</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 29.

<sup>130</sup> Haidee Wasson, "Hollywood Bypass: MoMA, the Rockefeller Foundation, and New Circuits of Cinema," in William J. Buxton, ed., *Patronizing the Public: American Philanthropy's Transformation of Culture, Communication, and the Humanities* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), p. 104.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> Dalzell and Dalzell, *The House the Rockefellers Built*, p. 204.

<sup>133</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 30.

<sup>134</sup> William Buxton, "Rockefeller Support for Projects on the Use of Motion Pictures for Educational and Public Purposes, 1935–1954," Rockefeller Archive Center, 2001. Accessed: 30 March 2017.

<http://rockarch.org/publications/resrep/buxton.pdf>

<sup>135</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 30.

Kaufmann, Jr. donated \$750 quarterly for design- or architecture-related purchases; Philip Johnson contributed \$1,000 for the acquisition of paintings and another \$1,000 for industrial design; and in the late 1950s, collector Larry Aldrich allowed the museum to have a fund of \$10,000 per annum for the purchase of artwork by unknown artists.<sup>136</sup> One of the most significant funds made available to MoMA was given by someone who was neither a founder nor a trustee: Olga Guggenheim. Thanks to her, starting in 1940 MoMA had an annual renewable fund of \$50,000, and by the 1960s it had risen to \$150,000, which allowed MoMA to buy some of its most important works: Léger's *Three Women*<sup>137</sup> (1921), Matisse's *The Red Studio*<sup>138</sup> (1911), and what Barr called three of the four most crucial or climactic Picassos the museum owned, *Three Musicians*<sup>139</sup> (1921), *Girl Before a Mirror*<sup>140</sup> (1932), and *Night Fishing at Antibes*<sup>141</sup> (1939).<sup>142</sup> Barr claimed that O. Guggenheim was responsible for no less than eleven Picasso purchases.<sup>143</sup> Walter P. Chrysler, Jr. was responsible for making the largest loan to the *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* exhibition in 1939–40, lending thirty-two paintings and drawings and one sculpture from his own collection.<sup>144</sup> He also donated Picasso's *The Studio* in 1935.<sup>145</sup>

In 1934–35, the total amount of donations from trustees and friends equalled fifty per cent of the museum's income; whereas by 1955 donations only accounted for one-quarter of the total income.<sup>146</sup> Donations from MoMA's wealthy patrons slowly declined over the years, which made it necessary to seek other sources of funding, unlike the mostly self-sufficient Guggenheim and Whitney.<sup>147</sup> However, artwork was still being donated. In the 1950s alone, paintings, sculptures, drawings, and collages were given to MoMA by Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Bunshaft, Mr. and Mrs. Allan D. Amil, Goodyear, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Hazen, Mr. and Mrs. Alex L. Hillman, Mr. and Mrs. Werner E. Josten, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Saidenberg, Mrs. Bertram Smith, Miss Eve Clendenin, Pierre Loeb, John S.

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Fernand Léger, *Three Women*, 1921–22, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>138</sup> Henri Matisse, *The Red Studio*, 1911, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>139</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Three Musicians*, 1921, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>140</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Girl Before a Mirror*, 1932, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>141</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Night Fishing at Antibes*, 1939, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>142</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, pp. 30–31 and Alfred H. Barr, Jr., first draft of preface to Picasso pocketbook for 1962 anniversary exhibition, "Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art," p. 6, MoMA exhibition records – 705.4, *Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art - 80th Birthday Exhibition* [MoMA Exh. #705, 14 May–18 September 1962], MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> "Final Paintings Arrive from Europe in Time for Big Picasso Exhibition at Museum of Modern Art," MoMA press release, 6 November 1939, MoMA exhibition records – 91.8, *Picasso - Forty Years of His Art* [MoMA Exh. #91, 15 November 1939–7 January 1940], MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>145</sup> "Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art," MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, 16 May 1962. Accessed: 14 December 2016.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjI3MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=bd197b5a7de14fb6](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjI3MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=bd197b5a7de14fb6).

<sup>146</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 68.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

Newberry, Mrs. Stanley Resor, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Sam Salz, and Justin K. Thannhauser.<sup>148</sup> This community of trustees and private donors shaped the public collection of MoMA and created a solid foundation for it to flourish.

### **The First Years and the Failed Exhibition**

With MoMA's financial foundations stable, it was then up to Barr to successfully exhibit and market European and American modern artwork. MoMA's brochure from August 1929 was written to introduce the public to the museum before its November opening. In its pages, the need for a modern art museum in New York was explained:

For the last dozen years, New York's great museum—the Metropolitan—has often been criticized because it did not add the works of the leading “modernists” to its collections ... As a great museum, it may just take the stand that it wishes to acquire only those works of art which seem certainly and permanently valuable. It can well afford to wait ... But the public interested in modern art does not wish to wait ... It [MoMA] would attempt to establish a very fine collection of the immediate ancestors, American and European, of the modern movement; artists, whose paintings are still too controversial for universal acceptance.<sup>149</sup>

The inaugural exhibition at MoMA in November 1929 featured the works of post-Impressionist artists Cézanne, Sauguin, Seurat, and van Gogh, lasted a month, and attracted an astounding 47,000 people.<sup>150</sup> The second exhibition in January 1930 featured nineteen contemporary American artists—such as Hopper and O’Keeffe—but failed to attract that same number of visitors as the European Modernists had the month before. The third exhibition entitled *Painting in Paris*, which opened on 19 January 1930, featured fourteen Picasso works<sup>151</sup> and saw even higher attendance records than the inaugural show—58,575 attendees in six weeks.<sup>152</sup> These exhibitions were held at a rental space of six rooms on the twelfth floor of the Heckscher building at 57th Street and Fifth Avenue, which was the first of four temporary MoMA headquarters until the permanent location was built in 1939 on West 54th Street where a former Rockefeller-owned home used to stand.<sup>153</sup> MoMA was able to quickly cultivate this large audience very soon after its opening. By the end of February

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<sup>148</sup> “Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art,” MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, 16 May 1962. Accessed: 14 December 2016.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjI3MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=bd197b5a7de14fb6](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjI3MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=bd197b5a7de14fb6).

<sup>149</sup> *The New Art Museum* (1929 brochure) in Elligott and Bee, eds., *Art in Our Time*, p. 29.

<sup>150</sup> Lorente, *Notion and Development*, p. 150. As a comparison, the Met attracted 6,000 visitors during its first three months beginning on 20 Feb 1872. Winifred E. Howe, *A History of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Arno Press, 1974), p. 149.

<sup>151</sup> “Master Checklist,” *Painting in Paris from American Collections*, Museum of Modern Art, 1930, pp. 35–36. Accessed: 13 September 2017. [https://www.moma.org/documents/moma\\_master-checklist\\_324917.pdf](https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_master-checklist_324917.pdf)

<sup>152</sup> Lorente, *Notion and Development*, p. 150.

<sup>153</sup> Dalzell and Dalzell, *A Tale of Money*, pp. 179, 180.

1930, MoMA had to begin charging 50 cents admission “every afternoon from noon to 6 o’clock in an effort to discourage attendance” because they were so overwhelmed with visitors.<sup>154</sup>

Within seven months of MoMA’s opening, Barr was already taking steps to present a Picasso exhibition. Barr and MoMA soon encountered certain obstacles that would become common when doing business with Picasso and his dealers in the future. In early June of 1930, Barr visited Picasso’s Paris studio to discuss the possibility of an exhibition at MoMA in the fall of 1931.<sup>155</sup> However, it soon became clear that without the cooperation of the European dealers and galleries (such as Paul Rosenberg or the Galleries Georges Petit, for example), a retrospective would be impossible—even with the consent of Picasso himself. Once Picasso sold a piece of artwork to a dealer, he no longer had control of it. A 1964 newspaper article quoted Louise Leiris of the Galerie Leiris, to which Picasso was under contract, where she referenced three Picasso artworks bought from the gallery by Spain for their pavilion at the New York World’s Fair. Picasso’s disdain for the Franco government was well known at the time: as per Picasso’s request, *Guernica*<sup>156</sup> (1937) was to be displayed at MoMA until it could return home to Spain once Franco was no longer in power. This made the Picasso transaction for the World Fair something that would perhaps not be permitted by the artist. However, Leiris stated that Picasso had not expressed hostility to the purchase, nor could he have opposed the sale even if he had wished to.<sup>157</sup> Once dealers purchased art from Picasso, they could sell it to whomever they wanted. However, that is not to say that Picasso did not have any power.

On 21 June 1931, Barr sent a wire to his assistant director Jere Abbott, which read “Picasso absolutely postpones temperamental reasons Reber refuses without Picasso’s approval.”<sup>158</sup> Picasso’s unwillingness to cooperate with MoMA at this point led Reber—a collector whom Barr needed to contribute to the exhibition—to refuse assistance as well. Michael FitzGerald explains that the exhibition planning was not halted solely because of “temperamental reasons”: Picasso also did not want to be distracted from his work, and his Parisian dealers advised him not to be rushed by Barr—a newcomer onto the art scene.<sup>159</sup> Picasso had always avoided disruptions. The older he became, the less and less he would leave his home and studio—for both exhibition openings or Communist Party gatherings and events. The advice from Picasso’s dealers demonstrates how much power Picasso’s business team held and would continue to have over his work. While multiple scholarly articles and

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<sup>154</sup> “Art: Museums,” *Time Magazine*, 3 March 1930. Accessed: 5 March 2018. <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,738790,00.html>

<sup>155</sup> Michael C. FitzGerald, *Making Modernism: Picasso and the Creation of the Market for Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1995), p. 206.

<sup>156</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid.

<sup>157</sup> Henry Gingier, “3 Picassos Bought by Spain for Fair,” newspaper unknown, 2 April 1964, III.A.8., “Picasso Book” – corresp. and printed matter: 1964, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>158</sup> FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, p. 206.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

texts claim that New York took over from Paris as the centre of the art world, Picasso made sure his dealers remained Paris-based, so as to keep a balance of power. Lynda Morris and Christoph Grunenberg argue that Picasso helped sustain the Paris art market in the post-war years by always insisting American sales went through his European dealers and galleries.<sup>160</sup> FitzGerald maintains that Picasso was unwilling to potentially damage his relationship with his dealers in order to cooperate with Barr on the exhibition.<sup>161</sup> However, a press release for the 1972 Picasso birthday show at MoMA indicates that Barr borrowed fifteen Picasso paintings a few months after the museum was founded—this was when no other museum in the country had held a major Picasso exhibition.<sup>162</sup> The planned exhibition may not have worked out, but Barr was still leading in the public presentation of Modernist work in the United States.

### **MoMA Picasso Retrospective, 1939–40**

How was Barr able to obtain enough European artwork to establish MoMA as a notable modern art institution in the United States? By the late 1930s, Barr was in the midst of organising MoMA's first Picasso retrospective—*Picasso: Forty Years of His Art*—which opened on 15 November 1939 and focused heavily on the Blue and Rose periods.<sup>163</sup> This was not the first major Picasso retrospective in an American art museum—the first having been at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, CT in 1934—but it was to be an impressive one. Barr had technically started work on the exhibition as early as 1931, but after being unable to put together a retrospective.<sup>164</sup> Barr then used the following eight years to acquire important Picasso works for MoMA's permanent collection. The first was Chrysler's donation of *The Studio* in 1935. In 1938, O. Guggenheim allowed Barr to choose a painting that she would purchase for the museum. Barr selected Picasso's *Girl Before A Mirror*, which O. Guggenheim had bought from Rosenberg for \$10,000.<sup>165</sup> Although only three acquisitions were made during that time, they were quite important works. This was especially true of the final purchase in April 1939: *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)*<sup>166</sup> (1907). William Rubin estimated that Picasso made more than 400 studies for the painting, which was “a quantity of preparatory work... without

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<sup>160</sup> Lynda Morris, “Republicans In Exile: Spain, Hispanic America and the USA” in Christoph Grunenberg and Lynda Morris, eds., *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), p. 43.

<sup>161</sup> FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, p. 211.

<sup>162</sup> “Picasso at the Museum Modern of Art,” MoMA press release, no. 5, 3 February 1972, 12.III.A.1.b. “Picasso Book” – corresp. & printed matter: 1973–72 – gen'l, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>163</sup> Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, p. 214 and Marquis, *Missionary*, p. 361.

<sup>164</sup> Due to the aforementioned stalemates with Picasso and, ultimately, financial reasons on the part of MoMA.

<sup>165</sup> Before giving MoMA an annual renewable fund starting in 1940, Olga Guggenheim gave set amounts the two years previous: \$10,000 in 1938 to purchase *Girl Before A Mirror* and \$30,000 in 1939 to buy Henri Rousseau's *Sleeping Gypsy* (1897). Robson, *Prestige*, p. 30.

<sup>166</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger, 1907*, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

parallel, for a single picture, in the entire history of art.”<sup>167</sup> FitzGerald calls it “indeed probably the most important single acquisition ever made by MoMA” and that it was “acknowledged as the chief icon of the twentieth-century avant-garde.”<sup>168</sup> David Lomas explained that *Les Demoiselles* had a sort of “mythic stature” as the source from which modern art emerged.<sup>169</sup> André Breton remarked in 1921 that the historical importance of the painting was “undeniable” and that it marked the beginning of Cubism.<sup>170</sup>

In a MoMA press release announcing the Picasso retrospective, Barr also took time to speak about the importance of *Les Demoiselles*:

[*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* is] one of the very few paintings in the history of modern art which can justly be called epoch-making ... The *Demoiselles d'Avignon* has, in fact, been considered the first Cubist painting ... It is not primarily for its historic importance, however, that the Museum of Modern Art has acquired this extraordinary picture, for as a work of art the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* remains one of Picasso's most formidable achievements... In few modern works of art is the arrogance of genius so powerfully asserted.<sup>171</sup>

By referring to Picasso as a genius, Barr was attempting to place him within an acceptable category that would become essential when marketing his works in the United States.

Picasso originally sold *Les Demoiselles* to the French fashion designer and art collector Jacques Doucet in 1923–24 for 25,000 French francs.<sup>172</sup> It was Doucet's widow who then sold it to the French and American art dealer Jacques Seligmann in 1937.<sup>173</sup> MoMA eventually acquired the canvas in 1939 for \$24,000 after selling an Edgar Degas equestrian painting for \$18,000 in order to raise

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<sup>167</sup> William Rubin, Helene Seckel, and Judith Cousins, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (New York: MoMA, 1994), pp. 14, 119 cited in David W. Galensen, *Old Masters and Young Geniuses: The Two Life Cycles of Artistic Creativity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 9.

<sup>168</sup> FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, p. 244

<sup>169</sup> David Lomas, “A Canon of Deformity: *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and Physical Anthropology,” *Art History* 16, no. 3 (September 1993): p. 424.

<sup>170</sup> Monica Bohm-Duchen, *The Private Life of a Masterpiece* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), p. 203.

<sup>171</sup> “Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Art Institute of Chicago Will Cooperate in Showing Largest Exhibition of Works by Picasso Ever Held in this Country,” MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, 20 January 1939. Accessed: 23 January 2017. [https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press\\_archives/471/releases/MOMA\\_1939\\_0002\\_1939-01-20\\_39120-2.pdf?2010](https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/471/releases/MOMA_1939_0002_1939-01-20_39120-2.pdf?2010).

<sup>172</sup> Malcolm Gee, *Dealers, Critics, and Collectors of Modern Painting: Aspects of the Parisian Art Market between 1910 and 1930* (New York: Garland, 1981), p. 201 cited in Walter L. Adamson, *Embattled Avant-Gardes: Modernism's Resistance to Commodity Culture in Europe* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), p. 267.

<sup>173</sup> FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, p. 244.

funds for its purchase.<sup>174</sup> Jacques Seligmann & Co. co-owners Germain Seligman and Cesar de Hauke donated the remainder of the money.<sup>175</sup>

Timing was in Barr's favour. With Europe on the brink of war, North America became a safe place for a painting of such prominence. While modern art was being classified as "degenerate" in Europe in the 1930s, the increasingly popularity of museums such as the Guggenheim and the Whitney made New York the city of choice to protect these works of art. In addition, both MoMA's and Barr's reputations had grown due to the museum's acquisitions and exhibitions, making it a suitable home for *Les Demoiselles*.<sup>176</sup> The Picasso retrospective was finally announced after Barr and the Director of Fine Arts of the Art Institute of Chicago Daniel Catton Rich agreed to collaborate on the exhibition.<sup>177</sup> Collaboration was necessary, as it enabled the two institutions to both exhibit and co-finance the show.<sup>178</sup> However, as with the 1931 exhibition, the retrospective's organisation faced many obstacles.

American sculptor Meric Callery was living in Paris at the same time MoMA was planning the Picasso exhibition, and she had promised to keep Barr informed of any news from France. In January of 1939, Barr wrote to her and expressed many of his fears concerning the retrospective: "Picasso's own good will I think we have, but he is capricious and irresponsible so that it is possible that in the end we would find ourselves without his collaboration."<sup>179</sup> Less than a month later, Callery confirmed many of these fears. "Rosenberg seems adamantly [sic] opposed to a large Picasso show. He says that 100 oil paintings are all that a person can see. He has persuaded Picasso of this too. He is going to write to you to suggest that you do it in sections or periods... it will be very difficult for you if Rosenberg is against you as he has great influence with Picasso. He has a way of knowing how to poison Picasso's mind. I have seen him at it many times."<sup>180</sup> Rosenberg could have been wary of flooding the market with Picasso's work, which could potentially depreciate its prices, or perhaps he worried about the overrepresentation of Picasso's work in exhibitions. Regardless, these letters show that there were legitimate fears and motives for Rosenberg's actions.

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<sup>174</sup> Jane Fluegel, "Chronology," in William Rubin, ed., *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 309.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, p. 212.

<sup>177</sup> Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, p. 214.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Meric Callery, 27 January 1939, MoMA exhibition records – 91.2, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>180</sup> Meric Callery to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 17 February 1939, MoMA exhibition records – 91.7, MoMA Archives, New York. The original letter states "100,000 oil paintings are all a person can see." FitzGerald quotes the letter as saying 100 oil paintings (FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, p. 246). Because Rosenberg and Picasso thought that 300 oil paintings would be too many, it is safe to assume that the original letter includes a typo and that 100 is the correct number.

Due to a miscommunication concerning the number of paintings Barr intended to display at MoMA, there were a series of letters exchanged between Rosenberg and Barr before they could come to an agreement that would satisfy all parties. Rosenberg's letter to Barr a few days after he had received Gallery's read "Gallery informed me that you have the intention to exhibit next year at the Museum of Modern Art 300 pictures by Picasso; I also read this information in an American art paper." Rosenberg went on to say that he would be willing to collaborate and lend paintings, as would Picasso, if Barr was willing to cut the number of works.<sup>181</sup> Rosenberg reiterated his logic in a letter to Catton Rich the following month: "I wrote to Mr. Barr, some time ago, a letter on this subject, telling him that Mr. Picasso and I do not agree at all to exhibit 300 pictures. As we are both afraid that it would tire the public to see such a great number of paintings of the same artist."<sup>182</sup>

This last letter from Rosenberg must have come as quite a shock to Barr. Especially considering the fact that Rosenberg and Picasso had guaranteed their cooperation back in June.<sup>183</sup> Barr needed the support of both dealer and artist for the retrospective to go forward. Even though by 1939 MoMA could easily have been considered one of the most prestigious and unique modern art institutions at the time, Picasso was arguably the most famous twentieth-century artist in the world and did not need a retrospective at MoMA as much as perhaps the museum needed him. Unlike in 1931, the Picasso retrospective had already been announced. In addition, it involved two high-profile institutions from major American cities. If it had been cancelled, the reputations of the museums involved would have been tarnished and jobs could have been jeopardised. The full cooperation of both artist and dealer would be the only way the show could continue. Barr and Catton proceeded to send a letter explaining that the planned exhibit would not have 300 paintings, but 300 total works with only 150 of those works being oil paintings.<sup>184</sup> This response seemed to placate Rosenberg, and soon afterwards in June 1939, Barr headed to Paris to select works for the retrospective—a trip important enough to warrant a press release from MoMA.<sup>185</sup> Once in Paris, however, a whole new set of complications became apparent. Collectors were not allowing their artworks to be sent abroad when there was a looming threat of war.<sup>186</sup> During Barr's visit to Paris in early summer of 1939, he had to plan the show based on photographs because most pictures had already been stored in the

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<sup>181</sup> Copy of a letter from Paul Rosenberg to Daniel Catton Rich, sent to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., originally dated 14 March 1939, MoMA exhibition records – 138.2, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Copy of a letter from Daniel Catton Rich to Paul Rosenberg, dated 15 March 1939, sent to Barr for editing, MoMA exhibition records – 138.2, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> "Alfred Barr Sails to Europe to Collect Picasso Paintings for Exhibit," MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, 9 June 1939. Accessed: 4 March 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press\\_archives/498/releases/MOMA\\_1939\\_0029\\_1939-06-09\\_39609-26.pdf?2010](https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/498/releases/MOMA_1939_0029_1939-06-09_39609-26.pdf?2010)

<sup>186</sup> FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, pp. 252–53.

*Banque de France* for safekeeping.<sup>187</sup> Luckily, due to assistance from Picasso and Rosenberg, Barr was able to secure many important works, including thirty-three pieces from Picasso (such as *La danse*<sup>188</sup> of 1925 and the *La flûte de pan*<sup>189</sup> of 1923) and forty from Rosenberg (including *L'acteur*,<sup>190</sup> *Two Nudes*,<sup>191</sup> and *Three Musicians*).<sup>192</sup>

The influence of both artist and dealer continued to make itself apparent, even after Barr received the loans. Picasso used this cooperation with Barr to not only lend works MoMA wanted to display but also many works that Barr would not have shown otherwise. Barr even wrote a letter to Rosenberg in August 1939 and attempted to justify the removal of some of the canvases from the exhibition. Either Picasso did not agree or Rosenberg did not relay the message to him, as they all appeared in the retrospective.<sup>193</sup> All of Picasso's loans remained on display at MoMA for the duration of the war.<sup>194</sup> Ultimately, the painter—not the curator—had the final say. Although there exists no evidence, perhaps Picasso believed MoMA to be the institution where his works would be seen by the greatest number of people in New York, thus he wanted to send a greater range of work—especially those pieces of art that may not have been exhibited otherwise. Or maybe Picasso realised that the war would prevent any of his art from being displayed, so he wanted MoMA to present a variety of newer pieces. This could raise the profile of Picasso's more recent work by hanging these canvases next to established paintings from the Blue and Rose periods.

How did MoMA market Picasso in the late 1930s and early 40s? How did the press react to this first major Picasso retrospective? In a MoMA press release regarding the exhibition, it described Picasso as a “celebrated Spanish artist” and a “master”.<sup>195</sup> An exhibition preview in *Newsweek* simply referred to Picasso as a “Spaniard”.<sup>196</sup> It was important to place Picasso in a context that would be widely accepted instead of calling him a radical Left-wing Modernist and risking criticism. The New York-based fine arts magazine *Art News* was just one of many publications excited about the upcoming retrospective. In their January 1939 publication, the author called the exhibition “the most

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<sup>187</sup> Margaret Scolari Barr, “Our Campaigns,” *New Criterion*, Special Issue (1987), p. 56.

<sup>188</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La danse*, 1925, oil on canvas, Tate Gallery, London.

<sup>189</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La flûte de pan*, 1923, oil on canvas, Musée Picasso, Paris.

<sup>190</sup> Pablo Picasso, *L'acteur*, 1904, oil on canvas, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>191</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Two Nudes*, 1906, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>192</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, 6 July 1939 and Paul Rosenberg to Barr, 18 July 1939 cited in FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, pp. 253, 254.

<sup>193</sup> Barr to Rosenberg, 10 August 1939 cited in FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, p. 254.

<sup>194</sup> Margaret Scolari Barr, “Our Campaigns,” *New Criterion*, Special Issue (1987), p. 58.

<sup>195</sup> “*Picasso: Forty Years of His Art*, November 15, 1939 through January 7, 1940,” MoMA press release, no date, MoMA exhibition records – 91.6, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>196</sup> “The Biggest Picasso Show: 360 of Varied Works Are Put on Display in NY,” *Newsweek*, 27 November 1939, MoMA exhibition records – 91.8, MoMA Archives, New York.

ambitious event that has been undertaken in this country”.<sup>197</sup> The exhibition opened to massive crowds (100,670 people in fifty-four days<sup>198</sup>) and broke attendance records in New York before touring the rest of the United States.<sup>199</sup> The exhibition ultimately included more than 360 works, ninety-one<sup>200</sup> of those works lent by Picasso, twenty pieces from the permanent collection of MoMA, with contributions from sixty-two American lenders and eight European collectors.<sup>201</sup> The show was so popular that Barr wrote to Chrysler in July of 1941 asking him to loan some of his Picassos yet again because so many people had contacted MoMA requesting another Picasso exhibition.<sup>202</sup> The success of the exhibition demonstrated that New York was capable of being the hub for the modern art world while Paris and the rest of Europe were embroiled in a world war. Since the outbreak of the Second World War, the American media had been advocating for the defense of American culture against fascism—as they believed fascism was intent on destroying it.<sup>203</sup> In reality, fascism was against many forms of Modernism, which meant that the US press was, in a way, inadvertently defending it.<sup>204</sup>

The popularity of the exhibition also signalled to MoMA’s board of trustees that it was worth allotting a large portion of acquisition funds to Picasso’s work in the coming years.<sup>205</sup> Barr worked

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<sup>197</sup> “Picassiana: Purchase and the 1939 show,” *Art News*, 28 January 1939, p. 15 cited in FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, p. 245.

<sup>198</sup> “Large Attendance at Picasso Exhibition Causes Remodeling of Museum of Modern Art and Forces it to Remain Open Evenings,” MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art. Accessed: 22 January 2017. [https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTE0MSJdXQ.pdf?sha=c645999c6d822faa](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTE0MSJdXQ.pdf?sha=c645999c6d822faa).

<sup>199</sup> “Picasso at the Museum Modern of Art,” MoMA press release, no. 5, 3 February 1972, 12.III.A.1.b. “Picasso Book” – corresp. & printed matter: 1973–72 – genl, Bar Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>200</sup> A different MoMA press release and a *Newsweek* article instead said that ninety-five works were lent by Picasso. “Picasso Loans Come to Museum of Modern Art from Every Section of the United States,” MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art. Accessed: 17 February 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTE0MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=1ed6259d6ac3565f](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTE0MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=1ed6259d6ac3565f) and “The Biggest Picasso Show: 360 of Varied Works Are Put on Display in N.Y.,” *Newsweek*, 27 November 1939, MoMA exhibition records – 91.8, *Picasso - Forty Years of His Art* [MoMA Exh. #91, November 15, 1939–January 7, 1940], MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>201</sup> “Picasso at the Museum Modern of Art,” MoMA press release, no. 5, 3 February 1972, 12.III.A.1.b. “Picasso Book” – corresp. & printed matter: 1973–72 – genl, Bar Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York and “Picasso Loans Come to Museum of Modern Art from Every Section of the United States,” MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art. Accessed: 9 March 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTE0MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=1ed6259d6ac3565f](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTE0MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=1ed6259d6ac3565f).

<sup>202</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., 1 July 1941, MoMA exhibition records – 138.2, MoMA Archives, New York. An exhibition called *Masterpieces of Picasso* was eventually held because of high demand from those who had not seen *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art*. The exhibition opened on 16 July 1941 and was composed of twenty-four paintings and drawings—including *Guernica* and its ten studies. “Masterpieces of Picasso and Prize-Winning Posters Go on Exhibition July 16 at Museum of Modern Art,” MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art. Accessed: 17 April 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTI0MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=5da5d9580feed77d](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNTI0MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=5da5d9580feed77d).

<sup>203</sup> Guilbaut, *How New York Stole*, p. 55.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> FitzGerald, *Making Modernism*, p. 245

hard to make this first Picasso retrospective come to fruition, and in subsequent years it was clear that a level of trust was granted to him by Picasso, his dealers, and the New York art scene.

### **European Art at MoMA**

The post-war period of the 1950s saw MoMA present multiple retrospectives and exhibitions featuring twentieth-century painters and sculptors. Among them were Pierre Bonnard (1944, 1948, 1949); Georges Braque (1949); Marc Chagall (1946, 1958); Giorgio de Chirico (1955); Otto Dix (1934); Juan Gris (1958); Paul Klee (1930, 1941, 1949, 1954); Fernand Léger (1935, 1953); Aristide Maillol (1930); Henri Matisse (1931, 1944, 1951, 1952, 1956); Joan Miró (1941, 1959); Amedeo Modigliani (1951); Piet Mondrian (1945); Henry Moore (1946); Georges Rouault (1945, 1953); Yves Tanguy (1955); and Édouard Vuillard (1949, 1954).<sup>206</sup> Picasso was featured in more exhibitions at MoMA than any other Modernist: in 1939, 1941, 1944, 1947, 1950, 1952, and 1957.<sup>207</sup> There were close to eighty individual retrospectives of European modern artists at MoMA from its opening in 1929 until 1959, whereas only twenty-five exhibits featuring American artists were displayed within the same thirty years.<sup>208</sup> Of the European artists with multiple exhibitions, Picasso, Léger, and Moore each had ties to Communism.<sup>209</sup>

Kahnweiler was a man who believed that Paris would reclaim its place as the art capital of the world after WWII.<sup>210</sup> By 1947, he had agreed to an exclusivity contract with Picasso.<sup>211</sup> Historian Peter Watson claims that while the Parisian art market was alive and well in the 1950s, it was also a time of quick decisions among artists, dealers, and collectors rather than cautious planning and long-term calculations, which led to a rise in a lower calibre of artist than Paris was known for.<sup>212</sup> This is in comparison to New York, where the artistic community was more careful in its dealings.<sup>213</sup> Guilbaut maintained that when art critic Clement Greenberg declared New York the new cultural centre of the

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<sup>206</sup> “Exhibition History List,” Museum of Modern Art. Accessed: 27 May 2017. [https://www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/archives\\_exhibition\\_history\\_list](https://www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/archives_exhibition_history_list).

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Robson, *Prestige*, p. 58.

<sup>209</sup> In a 1934 survey by the Unit One group, Moore said his “greatest sympathies lie towards Communism”. Tom Overton, “‘I tried to push him down the stairs’: John Berger and Henry Moore in Parallel,” in *Henry Moore: Sculptural Process and Public Identity* (Tate Research Publication, 2015). Accessed: 4 April 2017. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/tom-overton-i-tried-to-push-him-down-the-stairs-john-berger-and-henry-moore-in-parallel-r1151306>.

<sup>210</sup> Watson, *Manet to Manhattan*, p. 303.

<sup>211</sup> It was a verbal contract. Kahnweiler would disapprove when Picasso would sometimes give small things away or sell directly to customers. Pierre Assouline, trans. Charles Ruas, *An Artful Life: A Biography of D.H. Kahnweiler, 1884–1979* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), p. 327.

<sup>212</sup> Watson, *Manet to Manhattan*, p. 305. I will speculate as to Watson’s definition of “lower calibre”: that the art coming out of Paris in the 1950s was not of the same standard as when it had been Picasso, Chagall, Matisse, Mondrian, Modigliani, etc. producing the majority of works.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

world, Paris was not strong enough politically or economically to protest.<sup>214</sup> The number of significant Modernist artworks circulating through American museums in the years after the war showed that New York was worthy competition. Even though Parisian art institutions were still held in high regard, American museums and galleries were gaining more and more prestige. By the end of the 1940s, Picasso's works could be found in twenty-seven museums and galleries throughout the United States, including twenty-four at MoMA, twenty-three at the Art Institute of Chicago, twenty-nine in the Barnes Collection, along with pieces found in Baltimore, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Hartford, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Oberlin, Rochester, St. Louis, San Francisco, Toledo, Washington D.C., and Worcester.<sup>215</sup> Between 1947 and 1957, four times as many articles were published in the US about modern art as in the previous thirty years.<sup>216</sup> Of the 198 art museums in existence in the United States in 1980, sixty-seven per cent had been founded since 1940; of the ninety-nine corporate collections in existence in 1980, ninety-three per cent had been founded in the forty years previous; and nationwide, the number of galleries had risen at least five-fold since 1945.<sup>217</sup> In 1952, MoMA presented the largest exhibition of Picasso's graphic art ever held in the United States, which comprised 153 prints, posters, and illustrated books.<sup>218</sup> For Picasso's seventy-fifth birthday in 1957, MoMA in collaboration with the Art Institute of Chicago presented an exhibition featuring more than 300 of Picasso's works over the span of sixty years, with loans from ninety-five American and European private collections and museums.<sup>219</sup> This included thirty-one loans from Picasso himself—fifteen of which had never before been seen in the United States.<sup>220</sup> Even throughout the 1960s, MoMA continued to showcase Picasso's art more than the work of any other artist.<sup>221</sup> From May to September of 1962, the exhibition *Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art - 80th Birthday Exhibition* was shown at MoMA. This was the first time MoMA had a Picasso exhibition drawn entirely from its own collection: it included eighty paintings, sculptures, drawings, and

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<sup>214</sup> Guilbaut, *How New York Stole*, p. 5.

<sup>215</sup> Marquis, *Missionary*, p. 220.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>217</sup> Frascina, "The Politics of Representation," in Frascina et al., *Modernism in Dispute*, p. 128.

<sup>218</sup> "Fifty Years of Picasso's Graphic Art to be Exhibited: First Survey in America," MoMA press release, 11 February 1952, 12.III.A.19. – "Picasso Book" – corresp. and printed matter: 1953, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>219</sup> "Major Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture by Picasso on View All Summer at the Museum of Modern Art," MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, 22 May 1957. Accessed: 7 March 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjA5NSJdXQ.pdf?sha=893908637436c83e](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjA5NSJdXQ.pdf?sha=893908637436c83e).

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* and "Picasso Exhibition to Include Many Loans Never Seen in This Country Before," MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, 29 April 1957. Accessed: 7 March 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjA5NSJdXQ.pdf?sha=31605d6a81ea5e3a](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjA5NSJdXQ.pdf?sha=31605d6a81ea5e3a).

<sup>221</sup> "It makes me very happy to tell you that although we have always shown more of your works than that of any other master..." Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, 8 April 1964, 12.III.A.8. – "Picasso Book" – corresp. and printed matter: 1964, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

collages, ninety-seven prints, and five illustrated books.<sup>222</sup> In 1962, Christian Zervos<sup>223</sup> informed Barr of the sale of Picasso's *Le peintre et son modèle*<sup>224</sup> (1927) because he thought Barr would be interested.<sup>225</sup> Even though Zervos lived in Paris, he thought of Barr and MoMA in New York when this canvas was being sold. The respect and admiration bestowed upon MoMA by European art experts was growing. Even though Kahnweiler had complete control over Picasso's works after 1947, and despite the fact that the promotion of Modernist art in the United States had been difficult, Barr managed to procure many Picasso paintings for MoMA for both its exhibitions and its permanent collection. And with its educational programs and marketing efforts, the museum attempted to make the artwork of Picasso and other Modernists palatable when they were once seen as foreign and unattainable. This allowed for the ongoing promotion of Picasso at MoMA as the museum continued to establish itself as a major part of the international art scene.

### Criticisms

What were the critical responses to Modernism from prominent scholars during Barr's tenure at MoMA? And how could Barr use these theories to create distance between Picasso's art and his ideology? Guilbaut explained that most critical studies of post-war Modernist art in the United States dealt with either the aesthetic of action (see Margit Howell and Harold Rosenberg) or the formal qualities of the work, with focus being placed on the medium itself and the stylistic influences (see Clement Greenberg, William Rubin, Michael Fried, and Irving Sandler).<sup>226</sup> This debate within the scholarship saw critics attempt to create a balance between the social influence of Modernism and its formalism and autonomy. Greenberg ultimately focused on what was in the frame—the formalist aspects of Modernism. Rosenberg instead concentrated on the impact and context of modern art and the implications of viewer participation. Rosenberg's definition relied on the existence of museums as a place to facilitate and support the interaction and engagement of viewers and modern art.

With his 1939 essay "Avant-Garde and Kitsch", Greenberg outlined a blueprint for Modernism that would become a reality for the American art scene.<sup>227</sup> Although he supported a formalist view, Greenberg and his critical theories until 1940 were inspired by a concern for the

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<sup>222</sup> "Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art," MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, 16 May 1962. Accessed: 20 March 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjI3MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=bd197b5a7de14fb6](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjI3MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=bd197b5a7de14fb6).

<sup>223</sup> Zervos was responsible for publishing a thirty-three-volume *catalogue raisonné* of Picasso's works and for founding the popular French art journal *Cahiers d'Art*.

<sup>224</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Le peintre et son modèle*, 1927, oil on canvas.

<sup>225</sup> Christian Zervos to Alfred H. Barr Jr., 13 November 1962, 12.III.A.10. – "Picasso Book" – corresp. and printed matter: 1962, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>226</sup> Guilbaut, *How New York Stole*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>227</sup> Mancini, *Pre-Modernism*, p. 113.

public value of art. In his article of the same year entitled “Towards a Newer Laocoon”, Greenberg wrote that the avant-garde had to “perform in opposition to bourgeois society the function of finding new and adequate cultural forms for the expression of the same society, without at the same time succumbing to its ideological divisions and its refusal to permit the arts to be their own justification.”<sup>228</sup> Modern art exposed hostility towards—yet dependence on—bourgeois society and a need for art to exist in a space free from capitalist society. Greenberg claimed that modern art should aim to be independent from society and politics.<sup>229</sup> Thomas Crow wrote that in Greenberg’s early writings, mass culture was a constant pressure on the modern artist, which in turn restricted the artist’s creative freedom.<sup>230</sup> Jonathan Harris has referred to a “post-political” Greenberg after 1940—meaning Greenberg no longer saw the market as a form of political constraint—who then went on to describe modern art as a “tradition of... ever advancing formal developments stripping the medium down to the bare bones of its material conditions and means.”<sup>231</sup> Harris also notes that there was a change from the use of “avant-garde” to “Modernism” in Greenberg’s essays by 1960 because of the political connotations associated with the avant-garde.<sup>232</sup> In Greenberg’s early political criticism—shortly before the United States entered World War II—he claimed that avant-garde culture was “some kind of desperate work against the forces of capitalism and fascism”, and he continued to write about art, capitalism, and socialism even after the war.<sup>233</sup> It is important to consider the time period when Greenberg was writing—with the world consumed by war—in order to also understand his views. Both capitalism and fascism were considered threats to artistic autonomy at the time.

Barr, since very early in his career, disagreed with Greenberg’s claim that art was progressing in one direction.<sup>234</sup> He wrote: “the truth is, modern art cannot be defined with any degree of finality either in time or in character and any attempt to do so implies a blind faith, insufficient knowledge, or an academic lack of realism.”<sup>235</sup> However, Barr adhered to Greenberg’s formalist critical theory. Greenberg and other like-minded critics sought to create a divide between

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<sup>228</sup> Clement Greenberg, “Towards a Newer Laocoon,” cited in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art Theory 1900–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), pp. 554–60.

<sup>229</sup> Mesch, *Art and Politics*, p. 4.

<sup>230</sup> Thomas Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 10.

<sup>231</sup> Jonathan Harris, *Writing Back to Modern Art after Greenberg, Fried, and Clark* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 61.

<sup>232</sup> Harris, *Writing Back to Modern Art*, p. 60.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40, 61.

<sup>234</sup> Irving Sandler, “Introduction,” in Amy Newman and Irving Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art: Selected Writings of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986), p. 13.

<sup>235</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., “The Meaning of ‘Modern,’” *New York Times*, 13 May 1934, p. 7 cited in Kristina Wilson, *The Modern Eye: Stieglitz, MoMA, and the Art of the Exhibition, 1925–1934* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 108.

politics and art criticism both pre- and post-World War II.<sup>236</sup> Greenberg viewed the works of Modernist movements—such as Abstract Expressionism—as concerned with form and style. There was a departure from those artists active during the Great Depression of the 1930s who viewed art as part of an ideological struggle.<sup>237</sup> Harris argued that Abstract Expressionist artists such as Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock had also been active during the Depression; therefore, their post-war work could not be separated from the political and social principles they had engaged in during the 1930s.<sup>238</sup> Harris, Guilbaut, and other Leftist critics writing in the 1980s and 90s believed that the history of the post-war period needed to take into consideration the Cold War environment and the capitalist structures of the art market that influenced the artwork being produced at the time.<sup>239</sup> This was also the position of Rosenberg who was writing art criticism before academics like Harris and Guilbaut. Rosenberg saw a new avenue of modern art emerging when in his influential 1952 essay “American Action Painters” he maintained that modern art is not “a style. It has nothing to do either with the period when a thing was made nor with the intention of the maker. It is something that someone has had the power to designate as psychologically, aesthetically, or ideologically relevant to our epoch ... The new painting calls for a new kind of criticism, one that would distinguish the speech qualities of each artist’s act.”<sup>240</sup> Artwork is a recording of an event: “The interest lies in the kind of act taking place in the four-sided arena.”<sup>241</sup> For Rosenberg, the act of creation was emphasised over the formalist aspects of the art. How the artwork is perceived, how the audience responds to it, and the entire interaction defines how the meaning of art is created by its viewers.

Where did Alfred Barr’s opinion lie? Firstly, it is important to understand what Barr’s definition of modern art was. As we saw earlier, when the term Modernism is used, it is not always being used in the same way. Barr acknowledged the inconsistency in the meaning of Modernism and tried to create an up-to-date definition of the word. He wrote the following in the 1930 MoMA catalogue for the *Painting in Paris from American Collections* exhibition:

Ten years ago it might have been possible to generalize about modern art. In fact, even at present there are some who are courageous—or blind—enough to declare that modern art has one dominant characteristic such as the belief in pure self-expression, or an exclusive interest in form, or a contempt for natural appearances but the truth is that... contemporary art... is merely so extraordinarily complex that it defies generalization ... Any attempt to classify modern artists must lead to treacherous simplification.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Jonathan Harris, “Modernism and Culture in the USA, 1930–1960,” in Frascina et al., *Modernism in Dispute*, p. 3.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Guilbaut, *How New York Stole*, p. 5.

<sup>240</sup> Harold Rosenberg, “American Action Painters,” *Art News* 51, no.8 (December 1952): p. 49.

<sup>241</sup> “Four-sided arena” presumably refers to a canvas. Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>242</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., “Foreword,” *Painting in Paris from American Collections*, exh. cat., 1930, Museum of Modern Art, New York, p. 11 cited in Platt, *Politics*, p. 288.

Barr attempted to define Modernism by classifying it as indefinable, and he believed that any attempt to label such a broad genre would lead to oversimplification of a movement that was anything but. Then what was Barr's opinion of Modernism in the realm of art criticism? We already established that Barr studied formalist art theory while at Harvard. Years later, Greenberg's formalist art criticism was developed in parallel with Barr's formalist theories written in the 1940s. Sybil Kantor believed that Barr "was receptive to a perspective devoid of subjectivity, or interpretation, with its emphasis not on content, representation, or imitation of reality but on form, the language that elucidates it, and the structure that composes it."<sup>243</sup> Ralph A. Smith described how some scholars argue over whether Barr actually accepted a more pluralist approach to Modernism.<sup>244</sup> For example, in Barr's 1936 essay "Cubism and Abstract Art", which accompanied an exhibition at MoMA of the same name, Barr acknowledged the importance of subject matter but only for certain Modernist movements (Dadaism, Surrealism, Futurism).<sup>245</sup> Kantor claimed there was an overlap in the writings of cultural historian Meyer Schapiro and Barr, as Barr's formalist approach still acknowledged the artist's expressive content.<sup>246</sup> However, Schapiro would have disagreed with Kantor's belief. In Schapiro's 1936 article "The Nature of Abstract Art", he wrote that "All renderings of objects, no matter how exact they seem... proceed from values, methods and viewpoints which somehow shape the image and often determine its contents. On the other hand, there is no 'pure art', unconditioned by experience; all fantasy and formal construction, even the random scribbling of the hand, are shaped by experience and by non-aesthetic concerns."<sup>247</sup> Schapiro specifically criticised Barr for speaking of abstract art "as independent of historical conditions, as realising the underlying order of nature and as an art of pure form without content."<sup>248</sup> He believed that Barr had made no attempt to draw connections between Cubist art and external conditions.<sup>249</sup> In a 1958 personal letter, Barr explained his position, claiming that he did not want to "burden the arts with social and political responsibility..."<sup>250</sup> Schapiro believed that abstract art was more than its aesthetic qualities, whereas

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<sup>243</sup> Kantor, *Intellectual Origins*, p. xix.

<sup>244</sup> Ralph A Smith, "MoMA as Educator: The Legacy of Alfred H Barr, Jr.," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 39, no. 2 (2005): p. 103.

<sup>245</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Introduction," in *Cubism and Abstract Art*, exh. cat., p. 15. Accessed: 10 December 2010. [https://www.moma.org/documents/moma\\_catalogue\\_2748\\_300086869.pdf](https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_2748_300086869.pdf)

<sup>246</sup> Barr subtly makes references to the artwork's value and context. Kantor later quotes Barr from his essay "Cubism and Abstract Art": "In any case the iconography of Cubism should not be ignored." Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: MOMA, 1936), p. 15 cited in Kantor, *Intellectual Origins*, pp. 330–31.

<sup>247</sup> Meyer Schapiro, "Nature of Abstract Art (1937)," in Meyer Schapiro, *Modern Art: 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Selected Papers* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1978), p. 196.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 187–88.

<sup>250</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Dr. Berle, 17 January 1958, 12.II.3.a., Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

Barr and Greenberg valued the aesthetics of the artwork over the historical position of the artist as producer.<sup>251</sup>

This formalist critical theory allowed Barr to separate Picasso's political views from his art, thus making it palatable to an American, anti-Communist audience. It is important to remember Barr wrote articles such as "Cubism and Abstract Art" from a leading position at an influential art institution; therefore, his views were seen as representative of MoMA. Barr needed to downplay Picasso's political engagement. Ultimately, this debate within the scholarship witnessed critics struggle to maintain a balance between an artist's social influence and an artist's autonomy. Even those who leaned towards formalist arguments found it difficult to ignore the social influence of Picasso and the impact of the art market.

### **Barr and Picasso**

Barr and Picasso had a complex relationship. Letters in the AMNPP and MoMA Archives confirm that despite their friendship and despite Barr always supporting Picasso's art, Barr saw Picasso's political affiliations as problematic. Picasso was both an artist and a Communist. Barr demonstrated in a letter to MoMA trustees his desire for Picasso to separate himself from the PCF. On 1 August 1957, Barr wrote to MoMA president William Burden—with copies sent to both director René d'Harnoncourt and Chairman of the Department of Painting and Sculpture James Thrall Soby. Barr informed his colleagues of the photographer David Duncan who had recently spent three months photographing Picasso in the south of France. Barr quoted from a letter he received from Duncan dated 23 June 1957:

During our many, many talks, especially during these days since I came back from New York, I've come to the firm conclusion that he'd [Picasso] love nothing better than to visit the States. If he were invited by someone in our highest circles I feel that he's ready to come. He's fully aware of the residual McCarthyist elements that might make for some embarrassing moments, but I think he'd take his chances on facing such moments as they arose. Incidentally, at the political level, from people who should really know, I'm sure that he has very, very little to do with the French Party—if at all. In fact, a visit to the States would, in every likelihood, bring some sort of statement from him that might make him break with them openly, for good. Anyways, simply as the artist who produced your great exhibition, I've been hoping that some of your Museum trustee-brass might smooth the way to have him invited, for this autumn.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Frascina, "Institutions, Culture, and America's 'Cold War Years': The Making of Greenberg's 'Modernist Painting'," *Oxford Art Journal* 26, no. 1 (2003): p. 92.

<sup>252</sup> See part of Picasso's interview in the July 1957 issue of the *Atlantic* in Chapter Two, page 85. David Duncan to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 23 June 1957, 12.III.A.15.b., "Picasso Book" – corresp. and printed matter: 1957 – David Duncan, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

Duncan did not hint at what Picasso may have said to indicate that his allegiance to the PCF was weak, which makes it difficult to judge his statement. However, this letter must have piqued the interest of Barr—a Picasso visit to the United States that included his renunciation of the Party would have made Barr’s job of promoting Picasso’s art much easier. Barr appeared to agree with Duncan in regards to Picasso’s convictions:

I think that Duncan may well be right about Picasso’s attitude toward the Party. And even if he still has the same degree of rather idealistic loyalty he expressed in the July *Atlantic*, I think we might do a great deal to “corrupt” him if he could be invited. Even if he shouldn’t come—which is more than likely—him being asked would make a great difference to him and even more to the artists and intellectuals throughout the world who are impressed by Russia’s “thaw” but wonder whether we are going to respond. I think inviting Picasso would be a bold stroke in the cultural struggle between them and us in which thanks to various reasons we miss one chance after another...<sup>253</sup>

Barr believed that Picasso could be easily convinced to leave the PCF if he first visited the United States so that they could, in Barr’s words, “corrupt” him. Art could be an index of artistic and political freedom, and MoMA wanted Picasso to choose their “side” of the ideological struggle during the Cold War. It is interesting how a simple invitation to a leading artist featured prominently at MoMA could have represented something much more profound.

Barr was not ignorant of Picasso’s connections to the PCF. Letters in MoMA’s archives demonstrate that Barr kept tabs on Picasso’s relationship with the Party. In a confidential letter from Richard Hunt of the National Committee for a Free Europe, Inc. to Barr in 1954, Hunt explained that Barr had expressed “interest in the information [on the Communist attitude toward Picasso] and the hope that I might find other attacks on Picasso.”<sup>254</sup> The National Committee for a Free Europe was an anti-Communist organisation created in 1949 as a public-private partnership of the United States Office of Policy Coordination/Central Intelligence Agency and leading members of the American establishment, which promoted the liberation of Eastern European bloc countries from Soviet rule.<sup>255</sup> Attached to this particular letter from Hunt was information regarding the Communist Party’s relationship with Picasso. One section outlined how the Party wanted to end its discussion on Socialist Realism in regards to Picasso, not because it wanted to abandon the art form, but rather because it was preferable to not offend a Party member and artist of such prestige.<sup>256</sup> Moreover, with

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<sup>253</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., to William Burden, 1 August 1957, *ibid*.

<sup>254</sup> Richard Hunt from the National Committee for a Free Europe, Inc. to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 9 January 1954, *Communists & Picasso: 1950s*, 12.II.C, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>255</sup> “From Free Europe to Free Poland: Free Europe Committee in the Cold War,” Wilson Center Cold War International History Project. Accessed: 12 May 2017. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/free-europe-to-free-poland-free-europe-committee-the-cold-war>

<sup>256</sup> Attached documents to letter from Richard Hunt to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 9 January 1954, “Picasso, Casanova, and ‘Socialist Realism’,” item no. 5484/52 – 29 April – IV-2128, *Communists & Picasso: 1950s*, 12.II.C, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

the death of Stalin in 1953, the Soviet Union had made efforts to move away from former Central Committee Secretary Andrei Zhdanov's cultural doctrine. Barr saw no problem with displaying the works of a known Communist in post-war America, even with the existence of McCarthyism and with politicians openly trying to warn the American public about the connections between Modernism and Communism.<sup>257</sup> In 1953, with the public denunciation of Picasso's Stalin portrait by the French Communist Party, Barr's point was reinforced by the fact that even Soviet and French Party members did not approve of Picasso's art. This condemnation from the PCF could then show skeptical Americans that Picasso's art clearly did not conform to the art championed by the Soviet Union.<sup>258</sup>

While Barr may have been averse to Picasso's politics, he was always supportive of his friend's art. His affinity towards Picasso was apparent by the sheer number of Picassos he had obtained for MoMA during his years as director. Barr himself was responsible for most of MoMA's acquisitions, as he noted in a 1948 letter.<sup>259</sup> The subject matter of many letters found in MoMA's archives make it appear as though Barr acted as an unofficial personal assistant or ambassador for Picasso in North America. Barr was constantly sending letters to the artist regarding important people in the artistic community. For example, on 25 July 1949, Barr wrote a letter to Picasso to introduce him to an art specialist of the Pan American Union and leading art critic and journalist in Latin America named José Gomez Sicre. Barr informed Picasso that Sicre was writing an article on the most important present-day artists in Europe and hoped he could help.<sup>260</sup> Picasso evidently took Barr's advice, as in August of the same year Sicre interviewed Picasso for a Spanish article that was printed in the November–December 1973 issue of *Americas* entitled "An Afternoon with Picasso".<sup>261</sup> This was not the only time that Picasso followed Barr's guidance. There exists a box of letters at the archives of the *Musée national Picasso-Paris* that documents the relationship between Picasso and various American libraries, cultural institutions, and museums. There are four subfolders, including one that is dedicated specifically to Barr and MoMA that holds thirty-six letters pertaining to both business and personal matters. One such letter was written in 1945. Barr had asked Picasso to consider selling paintings to the Boston Institute of Modern Art and its director James Sachs Plaut.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Examples of this will be explored later in the chapter.

<sup>258</sup> Mesch, *Art and Politics*, p. 25

<sup>259</sup> Barr claimed to instigate up to ninety per cent of MoMA's acquisitions. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to A.H. Morey, 1 April 1948, microfilm 2171, AHB Papers, Archives of American Art, New York.

<sup>260</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, letter of introduction to José Gomez-Sicre, 25 July 1949, E16 - Relations avec les institutions culturelles, musées et bibliothèques publiques, États-Unis, 1925–1970, box ARPECB0339; folder: New York MoMA, Archives du Musée national Picasso-Paris (AMNPP).

<sup>261</sup> José Gomez-Sicre, "An Afternoon with Picasso," August 1949, printed in *Americas*, vol 25, no. 11–12, (November–December 1973), 12.III.A.1.b. "Picasso Book" – corresp. & printed matter: 1973–72 – genl, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>262</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, 15 January 1945, E16 - Relations avec les institutions culturelles, musées et bibliothèques publiques, États-Unis, 1925–1970, box ARPECB0339; folder: New York MoMA Barr, AMNPP.

In 1954, Barr introduced Picasso to the photographer Alexandre Georges, who wished to photograph Picasso in his studio for publication in American periodicals.<sup>263</sup> In 1957, Barr sent Picasso a note of introduction to American journalist Caroline Burke, who wished to visit with and interview the artist. Barr even wrote Picasso's wife at the time, Jacqueline Roque, asking the same favour.<sup>264</sup> In each letter having to do with museum business, Barr always made sure to speak about their personal relationship.<sup>265</sup> Barr certainly referenced his friendship with Picasso as a way of highlighting one of the many facets of their relationship so that it seemed as though Picasso would be doing Barr a favour as a friend instead of as a man with which he conducted business. These interactions were examples of cooperation rather than official transactions.

Other letters in MoMA's Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Archives also demonstrate that Barr was considered a Picasso expert within the United States. An undated letter to Barr from *The New Yorker* journalist Stanley Eichelbaum was filled with questions regarding Picasso's art, politics, and personal life.<sup>266</sup> It is not difficult to understand why. MoMA's archives are also filled with personal postcards to Picasso from Barr, speaking of vacation time spent together, past visits, and warm holiday greetings. In one letter Barr wrote, "I received with much pleasure and amusement the card signed by you and Françoise [Gilot], Roland and Lee Penrose, and Paul [Éluard]. Rarely have I seen so many distinguished signatures on one small postcard. I wish I could have been with you. I hope you all had a good swim!"<sup>267</sup> Picasso and Barr maintained not only a business relationship by the 1950s, but they were also friends who spent leisure time in each other's company whenever Barr visited Europe. In 1955, Barr sent Picasso a letter thanking him for the introduction to his sister, Maria Dolores Ruiz de Vilató, and wrote of his hope of meeting her in person during his trip to Barcelona that month.<sup>268</sup> Barr also added that he would like to stop by Cannes at the end of summer to visit Picasso.<sup>269</sup> Picasso trusted Barr enough to introduce him to his family. He allowed Barr to visit his home whenever he was in France. He responded to letters of introduction and requests for interviews when asked by Barr. Prominent Americans within the cultural community saw Barr as the man who could connect them to the artist. Barr may not have supported or defended Picasso's politics, but he made sure to

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<sup>263</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, 21 June 1954, *ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, Barr to Jacqueline Roque, 23 July 1957 (separate letters), *ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> "My wife and I did not come to Europe this summer and greatly missed seeing you." Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, 23 September 1953, *ibid.* "My wife joins me in sending you our most cordial greetings. We both look forward so much to seeing you again." Barr to Picasso, 12 May 1956, *ibid.* "It's hard to believe that a whole year has passed since my wife and I arrived in Cannes last summer. What a wonderfully interesting time you gave us." Barr to Picasso, 17 June 1957, *ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> Stanley Eichelbaum to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 20 November (no year), *ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, 31 July 1953, *ibid.* It is unclear why these postcards exist in Barr's archives and not Picasso's.

<sup>268</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, 4 August 1955, *ibid.*

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

create a separation between Picasso's art and his Communist affiliations in order to promote Picasso's work at MoMA and ensure its success.

One of the more significant letters Barr sent Picasso concerned a visit from former American president Harry Truman and Judge Samuel Rosenman. In May of 1958, Barr explained that the two prominent men would be on the French Riviera and would love to meet with the artist.<sup>270</sup> The next month, Barr received letters from both Rosenman and Truman about their visit in Cannes. Rosenman thanked Barr for "opening the door to the 'Private World of Pablo Picasso'".<sup>271</sup> The pair spent the day in Picasso's private studio and gardens before visiting Picasso's ceramics studio and the Museum of Antibes. Rosenman's comment about Picasso's "private world" reveals how Picasso's seclusion in the south of France could have prompted more interest in the artist—especially from those in the West. And this did not apply solely to Picasso. There are other examples of modern artists removing themselves from the public eye, such as Matisse.<sup>272</sup> An artist's seclusion made it harder to meet and perhaps added considerable appeal to their art. It could have also contributed to the image of Picasso as an artistic genius. Furthermore, Rosenman's comments demonstrated that prominent American politicians could set aside their political views to knowingly visit a Communist of great talent. Especially since Truman's foreign policy Doctrine enacted during the Cold War sought to counter Soviet expansion. The amount of time Picasso spent with Rosenman and Truman is also significant. Generally, Picasso avoided distractions from his work. Yet he spent a day showing Truman and Rosenman around the Côte d'Azur. This event also illustrated the respect Picasso must have had for Barr and his recommendations. After the visit, Barr received thank-you letters from both Truman and Rosenman, which described their "pleasant and instructive" and "interesting and enjoyable" visit with Picasso and Jacqueline Roque.<sup>273</sup> However, one must not forget that in 1947—the same year the Truman Doctrine was introduced—Truman described Modernist art as "ham and eggs art" and "the vaporings of half-baked lazy people".<sup>274</sup> Perhaps with over a decade having passed, Truman's opinions on the merits of modern art had changed. Truman's disparaging feelings towards modern art could have stemmed from the association that existed between Communism and Modernism at the time. There could also have been a significant difference between Truman as a politician versus

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<sup>270</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Picasso, 26 May 1958, *ibid.*

<sup>271</sup> Samuel Rosenman and Harry Truman to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 12 June 1958 (separate letters), Barr Picasso Papers, 12.III.A.14 – "Picasso Book" – corresp. and printed matter: 1958, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>272</sup> Matisse spent much of his life living in the south of France, not far from Picasso.

<sup>273</sup> Harry S. Truman to Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and Samuel Rosenman to Barr, 12 June 1958, Barr Picasso Papers, 12.III.A.14. – "Picasso Book" – corresp. and printed matter: 1958, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>274</sup> Taylor D. Littleton and Maltby Sykes, *Advancing American Art: Painting, Politics, and Cultural Confrontation at Mid-Century* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1989), p. 55.

Truman as a private citizen. This change in attitude may also suggest a shift in the way Modernism was understood in the United States.

### **The Ideological Resistance**

Throughout his career, Barr attempted to publicise both the Modernism and traditionalism in Picasso's artwork. This was potentially a strategy concocted in order to place Picasso within a lineage—a Modernist who was not a one-off genius but an inheritor of a tradition. Harold Rosenberg called modern art in the United States a “revolution of taste” and that the American reactions to Modernism were responses to “claims to social leadership”.<sup>275</sup> This meant the Cold War saw the emergence of opposing views regarding the value of modern art, which contributed to the struggle for cultural leadership within the United States.<sup>276</sup> Fred Orton observed that Rosenberg was referring to the struggle concerning what modern art represented, which was fought between two distinct groups during the Cold War.<sup>277</sup> There were those who collected it and made it available to the public (such as MoMA), and there were those who saw it as un-American, subversive, “snobbish, red, immoral, etc”.<sup>278</sup> Amy Newman explained that modern art was attacked and deemed subversive by the popular press, conservative intellectuals, academic artists, and members of Congress.<sup>279</sup> Barr used various methods to discredit the associations between modern art and Communism in the years following the Second World War. This was essential in order to make MoMA's collections palatable to the American public. Barr was battling against strong opposition; however, he attempted to minimise the impact of the attacks by calling them “a campaign of muddleheaded reaction”.<sup>280</sup> Discounting the value of these hostile reactions towards Modernism would be easier than debating them, which worked in Barr's favour as director of MoMA.

In November 1946, the American Artists Professional League wrote a letter of protest to then-Secretary of State James Byrnes to condemn an exhibition organised by the State Department and first exhibited at the Metropolitan called *Advancing American Art*.<sup>281</sup> They argued that the exhibition was “strongly marked with the radicalism of the new trend of European Art” and thus was

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<sup>275</sup> Harold Rosenberg, “American Action Painting,” p. 49.

<sup>276</sup> Fred Orton, “Action, Revolution and Painting,” *Oxford Art Journal* 14, no. 2 (1991): p. 10.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Harold Rosenberg, “American Action Painting,” *Art News* 51, no. 8 (December 1952): p. 49 cited in Orton, “Action, Revolution and Painting,” p. 10.

<sup>279</sup> Newman, “The Statesman,” in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 203.

<sup>280</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Statement in *Tenth Anniversary Exhibition*, 13 April–10 May 1949 (Cincinnati, OH: The Cincinnati Modern Art Society, 1949), p. 2 cited in Newman, “The Statesman,” in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 203.

<sup>281</sup> Dossin, *Rise and Fall of American Art*, p. 40.

“not indigenous to our soil”.<sup>282</sup> Hearst-owned newspapers such as *New York-Journal American* ran photos of the exhibition accompanied by insulting captions written by American conservatives.<sup>283</sup> After the show had ended, Illinois Republican Congressman Fred Ernest Busbey published a list of twenty-four of the exhibition’s artists along with information taken from files belonging to the House Un-American Activities Committee to prove that they were subversive.<sup>284</sup> In 1948, Picasso was sent a cable from artist Stuart Davis, sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, and former MoMA curator James Sweeney. In the cable, they described the “serious wave of animosity towards free expression” in painting and sculpture that was growing in the American press.<sup>285</sup> This “wave of animosity” led to one of the most famous accusations regarding the connections between Modernism and Communism, which originated from member of the United States House of Representatives George A. Dondero. In a speech made to Congress on 6 August 1949 entitled “Modern Art Shackled to Communism”, Dondero—backed by 2,000 letters of support from the American public—made his point clear:

All these isms are of foreign origin, and truly should have no place in American art. While not all are media of social or political protest, all are instruments and weapons of destruction ... We are now face to face with the intolerable situation, where public schools, colleges and universities, art and technical schools, invaded by a horde of foreign art manglers, are selling to our young men and women a subversive doctrine of “isms”, Communist-inspired and Communist-connected, which have one common, boasted goal—the destruction that awaits if this Marxist trail is not abandoned.<sup>286</sup>

Dondero’s speech also targeted Picasso and called him a “hero of all the crackpots in so-called modern art”.<sup>287</sup> Further assaults on modern art arose in 1951 when a city council-sponsored survey of contemporary art in Los Angeles was attacked by those who questioned some of the political backgrounds of the artists involved.<sup>288</sup> In 1956, Dondero wrote to MoMA Director d’Harnoncourt insisting that “the sooner these distorted and grotesque representations are wiped out, the better it will be for legitimate and decent art in this country.”<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> William Randolph Hearst was a Right-wing publisher. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., “Statement on Artistic Freedom,” *College Art Journal* (Spring 1956) in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 222.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Cable from Davis, Lipchitz, and Sweeney to Picasso, 5 January 1948, Series III. Pablo Picasso, 1944–1952, Incoming Correspondence D.H. Kahnweiler – 327.8, Françoise Gilot Collection 1944–56, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>286</sup> George A. Dondero, “Modern Art Shackled to Communism,” *Congressional Record*, 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, First Session (16 August 1949) cited in Dossin, *Rise and Fall of American Art*, p. 41.

<sup>287</sup> Mesch, *Art and Politics*, p. 25.

<sup>288</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., “Is Modern Art Communistic?”, 14 December 1952, *New York Times Magazine*, Roll 3262, Series IV: Writings 1918–1984, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>289</sup> George A. Dondero to René d’Harnoncourt, 21 May 1956, Alfred H. Barr Papers, MoMA Archives, cited in Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 211.

These negative sentiments uncomfortably echoed those put forth a decade earlier by Hitler and the Nazis on their assault against “degenerate” art. While the American Artists Professional League was protesting against the radicalism of non-American Modernist art, Nazi Germany was trying to attack that same art for its elitism and for its lack of national character. Both in Germany and then in the United States, a campaign was being mounted in the press to prove modern art was both unpatriotic and corrupt.<sup>290</sup> However, it was also true that the Nazis had a complicated relationship with the art forms they shunned by appropriating some of its features while condemning it at the same time. Historian Jeffrey Herf coined the phrase “reactionary modernism” to describe the Nazis attempts to reconcile their links to traditionalism with technological modernism.<sup>291</sup> The United States was no different. Modernism became more and more accepted with efforts from tastemakers such as Barr to merge traditional aspects of art with the present world of modern artists.

Specific problems soon arose involving Picasso, Modernism, and Leftist thought with the painting of *Massacre en Corée*<sup>292</sup> (1951). The unveiling of *Massacre* at the 1951 *Salon de Mai* in Paris made the job of removing the political from Picasso’s art difficult for Barr and the rest of MoMA’s administration. Of course, *Guernica*—which was on display at MoMA—was a painting of the political. However, *Guernica* was in response to the destruction of a small Basque town at the hands of General Franco and fascists in Spain, which was not controversial for most Americans. *Massacre*, on the other hand, was being described as a painting that displayed the treacherous acts of American soldiers in the ongoing Korean War. No longer could Picasso’s political affiliation be understated. Thomas Hess, editor of *Art News*, wrote to Barr expressing his confusion concerning the painting:

*Art News* has offered a picture story on some recent Picasso paintings, including one of some soldiers shooting some naked women and children. I have heard that this picture represents American soldiers committing an atrocity on North Korean civilians. Do you know if this is true or is it simply an atrocity of war picture reminiscent of Goya’s *3 of May*?<sup>293</sup> Alfred Frankfurter heard somewhere that it was painted specifically as a piece of

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<sup>290</sup> However, in the United States it was not a state policy as it was in Nazi Germany. See Chapter One for discussion on “degenerate art”.

<sup>291</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 12–13.

<sup>292</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Massacre en Corée*, 1951, oil on plywood, Musée national Picasso, Paris.

<sup>293</sup> Francisco Goya, *The Third of May 1808*, 1814, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid. One interpretation of *Massacre* is that it is a general condemnation of war whose composition is influenced by Goya’s *The Third of May 1808*. Jesse Lopez wrote that “Goya is often mentioned without discussion of the specific formal and thematic elements layered within Picasso’s painting, much less the political circumstances in which all of these artists were critically engaged.” Jesse Lopez, “Picasso and the Forgotten War,” in Frascina et al., *Modernism in Dispute*, p. 149. Utlery wrote that, like with Goya, “the fate of the civilian population was always the focus of Picasso’s views on war and politics.” Gertje Utlery, *Picasso: the Communist Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 23. Pierre Daix in conversation with Utlery called *Massacre* “un act politique” and Annie Kriegel told Utlery that with

communist propaganda ... Is the artist actually taking on an active political role, or simply commenting as an artist on a world situation?<sup>294</sup>

By asking if *Massacre* was a general indictment of war like Goya's *Third of May 1808*, as opposed to an denunciation of America's role in the Korean War, Hess could have been attempting to universalise *Massacre* as an artistic statement and put Picasso back into a tradition. This was a way of making the artwork more acceptable. In his response, rather than dismissing the thought that Picasso could have used his painting as propaganda for the Communist Party, Barr admitted to Hess, "Yes anti-American propaganda, though Picasso might dismiss this as he dismissed the fact that the painting *Guernica* was political."<sup>295</sup> Despite Barr's acceptance of *Massacre en Corée's* anti-American message, he continued to publicly disassociate Modernism from Communism. This was especially apparent in Barr's 1952 *New York Times Magazine* article "Is Modern Art Communistic?":

It is obvious that those who equate modern art with totalitarianism are ignorant of the facts. To call modern art communistic is bizarre as well as very damaging to modern artists; yet, it is an accusation frequently made. Most people are merely expressing a common dislike by means of a common prejudice. But this is a point of view which is encouraged by the more reckless and resentful academic artists and their political mouthpieces in Congress and elsewhere. It was given voice in the recent attack on the Metropolitan Museum by the National Sculpture Society, in the ridiculous but sinister debate in the Los Angeles City Council late in 1951, and in the well-coached speeches of Representative George A. Dondero of Michigan. Those who assert or imply that modern art is a subversive instrument of the Kremlin are guilty of fantastic falsehood.<sup>296</sup>

Barr along with many modern art enthusiasts in the United States made efforts to demonstrate that art and politics could exist separately from each other, especially since Modernism predated the current wave of Communist thought. Irving Sandler wrote that questions regarding art's aesthetic value and social use, and freedom of creation and censorship were ones that Barr engaged with throughout his life.<sup>297</sup> Barr was continuously advocating for artistic freedom. In 1954, the American Federation of Arts (AFA) Committee on Artistic Freedom—of which Barr was a part—drafted and released a press release entitled "Statement on Artistic Freedom", which read, "Freedom of artistic expression in a visual work of art, like freedom of speech and press, is fundamental in our democracy. This fundamental right exists irrespective of the artist's political or social opinions,

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*Massacre*, Picasso truly wanted to show his solidarity with the Left. Utley agreed that whatever Picasso's true feelings about the drama in Korea may have been, *Massacre* illustrated his support for the Communists. Utley, *Communist Years*, p. 151.

<sup>294</sup> Thomas Hess to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., microfilm 2178, AHB Papers, Archives of American Art, New York.

<sup>295</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Thomas Hess, *ibid.* Picasso did not deny the political connotations in *Guernica*, as I explained in Chapter One. In addition, Barr is making an unfounded claim.

<sup>296</sup> Barr, "Is Modern Art Communistic?", p. 4.

<sup>297</sup> Sandler, "Introduction," in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 10.

affiliations or activities...<sup>298</sup> Barr had attempted to connect free artistic expression to democratic values. William Ainsworth Parker of the American Council of Learned Societies wrote in the Fall 1955 issue of the *College Art Journal* that “Because those who are ... Communists do hold identifiable socio-political opinions, it seems to me that when using public money, the AFA ... can not operate on the policy that ‘artistic expression must be judged solely on its merits as a work of art and not by the political or social views of the artist,’” quoting from the AFA statement of 1954.<sup>299</sup> In a 1956 letter to the *College Art Journal* responding to Parker, Barr explained the AFA’s position further. He asked the AFA, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the College Art Association to join in an “out-spoken defense of American principles of freedom” against “the Communists and the fanatical pressure groups working under the banner of anti-communism”.<sup>300</sup> His disdain was for both the Communists and anti-Communists who were attempting to suppress artistic freedom. Sandler claimed that it was people like Dondero and movements like anti-Communism, which were so rampant in the United States, that more than anything else motivated Barr to want the best American art shown abroad—whether it was created by alleged subversives or not.<sup>301</sup>

In addition to certain politicians, critics, and the general public, another art museum became problematic for Barr and MoMA. In 1948, the Boston Institute of Modern Art changed its name to the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA). Plaut as its director and President Nelson W. Aldrich issued a statement entitled “‘Modern Art’ and the American Public” where they stated that “‘modern art’ described a style which... has become both dated and academic.”<sup>302</sup> Why was the change in name by the Boston ICA and the accompanying statement by Plaut seen as extremely damaging by Barr? Firstly, 10,000 copies of the statement were distributed,<sup>303</sup> and secondly, it was another way of criticising modern art and MoMA.<sup>304</sup>

Barr proceeded to launch a campaign against Plaut’s attempt to discredit Modernism. In a confidential memo sent to the trustees of MoMA, Barr rebutted Plaut’s argument, claiming that the director’s new plan did not indicate how contemporary art was any different from the “dated and

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<sup>298</sup> Newman and Sandler, *Defining Modern Art*, p. 220.

<sup>299</sup> William Ainsworth Parker, “Artistic Freedom,” *College Art Journal* XV, no. 1 (Fall 1955) in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 220.

<sup>300</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., “Statement on Artistic Freedom,” *College Art Journal* (Spring 1956), pp. 184–88 in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 225.

<sup>301</sup> Sandler, “Introduction,” in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 47.

<sup>302</sup> James S. Plaut, “‘Modern Art’ and the American Public,” a Statement by the Institute of Contemporary Art, formerly the Institute of Modern Art,” (Boston: 17 February 1948) in Richard Meyer, *What was Contemporary Art?* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013), p. 194.

<sup>303</sup> Guilbaut, “The Frightening Freedom of the Brush: The Boston Institute of Contemporary Art and Modern Art,” in Marcia Pointon, ed., *Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology Across England and North America* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 232

<sup>304</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., to Nelson A. Rockefeller, 5 March 1948, Alfred Barr Papers, MoMA Archives, Archives of American Art 2171:208 in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 33.

academic" style of Modernism.<sup>305</sup> Aside from a few protests in New York and Boston, nothing else came from Plaut's statement, and the matter was laid to rest for a year.<sup>306</sup> Then on 20 February 1949, *Life* published an article that said the Boston ICA could no longer "stomach the word 'modern'", and that Modernism was "a silly and secretive faddism".<sup>307</sup> After receiving messages from both Barr and Goodrich of the Whitney concerning the *Life* article, the Boston ICA decided to make peace with both institutions. A joint "Statement of Modern Art" between the Whitney, MoMA, and Boston ICA was issued in March 1950, which reaffirmed all three institutions' beliefs in the importance of modern art.<sup>308</sup> In the statement, the three men declared the following:

We believe that a primary duty of a museum concerned with contemporary art is to be receptive to new tendencies and talents...  
We believe that the so-called "unintelligibility" of some modern art is an inevitable result of its exploration of new frontiers...  
We hold that American art which is international in character is as valid as art obviously American in subject matter...  
We also reject the assumption that art which is esthetically an innovation must somehow be socially or politically subversive, and therefore un-American...  
We believe that it is not a museum's function to try to control the course of art or to tell the artist what he shall or shall not do; or to impose its tastes dogmatically upon the public...<sup>309</sup>

According to Sandler, the statement was generally accepted by American museums, and afterwards it was no longer intellectually respectable to attack modern art as if it were a joke.<sup>310</sup> It also led to changes in the way Americans viewed modern art. For example, the Boston ICA held a show in 1951 called *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America*, another in 1952 that showcased first-generation Abstract Expressionists called *Fifteen Americans*, and a 1956 show *12 Americans* that presented second-generation Abstract Expressionists to the American public. In 1951, Motherwell, Reinhardt, and MoMA librarian Bernard Karpel celebrated Modernism's acceptance: "Today the extent and degree of Modern Art in America is unprecedented. From East to West, numerous galleries and museum, colleges and art schools, private and regional demonstrations display their

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<sup>305</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Confidential notes on "'Modern Art' and the American Public," p. 8, Alfred Barr Papers, MoMA Archives, Archives of American Art 2171:223 in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 33.

<sup>306</sup> Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 33.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Rachel Rosenfield Lafo, "The Boston Art Scene: A Community and Its Institutions," in Rachel Rosenfield Lafo, Nicholas Capasso, and Jennifer Uhrhane, eds., *Painting in Boston: 1950–2000*, exh. cat. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), p. 20.

<sup>309</sup> James S. Plaut, Frederick S. Wight, René d'Harnoncourt, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Andrew C. Ritchie, Hermon More, and Lloyd Goodrich, "A Statement on Modern Art," by The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, March 1950 in Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 35.

<sup>310</sup> Newman and Sandler, eds., *Defining Modern Art*, p. 35.

mounting interest in original plastic efforts.”<sup>311</sup> When comparing MoMA’s marketing of Picasso to the press’s reactions to Picasso’s art throughout the years, it appears as though Sandler was correct. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, press clippings, press releases, and exhibition catalogues seemed to suggest that Modernism had finally come to be accepted in the United States.

### **The American and International Media**

When analysing American attitudes towards Picasso after 1929, we have discovered different responses from various members of the American political elite, the media, and museum administrators. But how did the media in New York respond to having a Communist’s artwork displayed so prominently in its prestigious galleries by the end of the 1950s? Did art and politics remain separate now that MoMA had existed as a modern art institution for almost three decades? Did MoMA market Picasso differently in the 1960s when compared to the marketing strategies employed during the first Picasso retrospective in 1939? Why did criticism against Modernism and Picasso eventually dissipate?

American journalist, painter, collector, and art critic Charmion von Wiegand wrote an article in late 1939 at the same time *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* was being exhibited at MoMA. In a rough draft of the article, she explained that American art critics always needed time to catch up with Picasso:

Our most conservative critics plume themselves on accepting Cubism of two decades ago while decrying the new and terrifying Picasso of the present. ‘All, all we accept’ say critics (Picasso has been hallowed by tons of publicity) ‘but not this new last work. This is not art fit for a museum, this is not art at all.’ So Picasso is beloved with the old conservative broomstick. Ten years from now these same critics will be shouting that the period 1929–1939 is marvelous but that the world of 1949 is impossible.<sup>312</sup>

If anything, this statement acknowledged the absence of fixed standards in art criticism. By the 1950s, newspapers steered away from commenting on Picasso’s politics. For example, on 6 May 1953, the *New York Herald Tribune*<sup>313</sup> reviewed the biggest Italian Picasso exhibition ever held, which

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<sup>311</sup> Bernard Karpel, Robert Motherwell, and Ad Reinhardt, “A Statement,” in *Modern Artists in America: First Series* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1951) p. 6 cited in Robert Motherwell, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell*, eds., Dore Ashton and Joan Banach (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), p. 101

<sup>312</sup> Charmion von Wiegand, *Accord*, November 1939, New York (though it also says December 1939 on the same document), p. 4, MoMA exhibition records – 91.4, *Picasso - Forty Years of His Art* [MoMA Exh. #91, 15 November 1939–7 January 1940], MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>313</sup> In addition, the *New York Herald Tribune* is described as having been a Republican newspaper. Sam Roberts, “Recalling a ‘Writer’s Paper’ as a Name Fades,” *New York Times*, 7 March 2013, A21 cited in Lawrence R. Samuel, *The American Way of Life: A Cultural History* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2017), p.9.

took over fourteen rooms of the Museum of Modern Art in Rome, and included 137 paintings, forty sculptures, thirty-nine ceramics, and forty lithographs.<sup>314</sup> Author of the article, Frank Kelley, commented on the number of Communist Party members present, even though the infamous Stalin portrait incident had caused uproar between Picasso and the Party only a few months earlier. Present at the exhibition opening were Russian ambassador Mikhail Kostylev and head of the Communist-controlled General Confederation of Italian Labour Giuseppe di Vittorio.<sup>315</sup> Kelley made no derogatory comments in regards to the presence of Communist Party members nor did he discredit Picasso's politics or his art. Mesch explains that New York art critics took a cue from Greenberg and chose to focus on the formalist elements of Picasso's art instead of discussing the political and contextual elements of the work.<sup>316</sup> This perhaps accounts for the lack of articles tackling the subject matter or historical context of many Picasso paintings post-*Guernica*. Picasso was submerged in the cult of "genius". His originality—and not the context of his art—was at the forefront for critics. Regardless, the wording used in newspaper articles by the 1950s showed an overall acceptance of all-things Picasso.

Between May and September 1957, MoMA held an exhibition in honour of Picasso's seventy-fifth birthday. The museum press release described Picasso as "the most famous and controversial artist of our time".<sup>317</sup> Picasso appears to have become more widely accepted by that point; thus, the more controversial aspects of his life and art could also be acknowledged more openly. Immediately after the exhibition opening, the *New York Times Magazine* published an article written by Barr that discussed both the traditional and modern aspects of Picasso's artwork:

Whether or not one approves his art, it is a fact that Picasso is generally considered the greatest living painter, a draftsman, a printmaker and a ceramist without rival, and a formidable sculptor... Picasso is linked with the masters of the past... he works in the great tradition of European subject matter ... If the wide range of Picassos subject matter is strictly traditional, the variety and originality of his styles are incredible... None of Picasso's discoveries is quite so important as Cubism, which he initiated in 1907. Cubism began as a discipline but developed into a revolutionary agent liberating the artist from traditional conventions. Yet all these disturbing innovations were interspersed with periods or even single works which revive classicism or realism.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Frank Kelley, title not visible, *New York Herald Tribune*, 6 May 1953, 12.III.A.19 – "Picasso Book" – corresp. and printed matter: 1953, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Mesch, *Art and Politics*, p. 28.

<sup>317</sup> "Important Picasso Exhibition To Be Held at the Museum of Modern Art," MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, 23 March 1957. Accessed: 2 May 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjA5MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=4a39e6af8f3f41ac](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjA5MyJdXQ.pdf?sha=4a39e6af8f3f41ac).

<sup>318</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Portraits by Picasso," *New York Times Magazine*, 19 May 1957, MoMA exhibition records – 619.65, MoMA Archives, New York.

Barr made sure to acknowledge that Picasso was “not only the greatest radical of his generation, he is also the greatest traditionalist”.<sup>319</sup> What was once Picasso’s artistic rebellion could now be re-imagined as a part of various artistic traditions. Picasso incorporated classical and realist elements into some of his work, but he also revitalised the traditional genre of History painting.<sup>320</sup> Barr recognised that both aspects of Picasso’s art should be highlighted and praised. Some scholars consider paintings such as *Guernica*, *Le Charnier*<sup>321</sup>, *Massacre en Corée*, and *La Guerre*<sup>322</sup> and *La Paix*<sup>323</sup> to be History paintings.<sup>324</sup> Picasso also recreated artwork originally painted by some of the old masters: the 1955 recreation of Delacroix’s *Les Femmes d’Alger*<sup>325</sup> (1834); a 1957 version of Velázquez’s *Las Meninas*<sup>326</sup> (1656); a 1960 reinterpretation of Monet’s *Le déjeuner sur l’herbe*<sup>327</sup> (1865–66); a 1962 canvas that incorporated both Poussin’s *L’Enlèvement des Sabines*<sup>328</sup> (1934–35) and David’s *Les Sabines*<sup>329</sup> (1799). Morris and Grunenberg explain that the aforementioned artworks combined narrative structure with themes drawn from classical history, which are the elements that define History paintings.<sup>330</sup> However, Picasso’s stylistic choices and the timing of these works were not random. Picasso’s recreations of the old masters coincided with major political events of the era. For example, Picasso began *Les Femmes d’Alger* just a month after the beginning of the Algerian War. *L’Enlèvement des Sabines* was painted ten days after American reconnaissance planes first recorded the construction of Soviet missile bases in Cuba.<sup>331</sup> In both of these examples, Picasso presented contemporary events in a modern way with the help of the old masters and classical iconography.

Picasso once said, “Nous sommes les héritiers de Rembrandt, Vélasquez, Cézanne, Matisse. Un peintre a toujours un père et une mère, il ne sort pas du néant...”<sup>332</sup> Picasso acknowledged that

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> History painting is a seventeenth-century term that describes artwork “with subject matter drawn from classical history and mythology, and the Bible. In the eighteenth century it was also used to refer to more recent historical subjects.” “History Painting,” Tate. Accessed: 3 March 2018.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/h/history-painting>

<sup>321</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Le Charnier*, 1945, oil and charcoal on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>322</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Guerre*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée national Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

<sup>323</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Paix*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée national Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

<sup>324</sup> T.J. Clark, Lynda Morris, Christoph Grunenberg, Paul Wood, etc.

<sup>325</sup> Eugène Delacroix, *Les Femmes d’Alger*, 1834, oil on canvas, Le Louvre, Paris.

<sup>326</sup> Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

<sup>327</sup> Claude Monet, *Le déjeuner sur l’herbe*, 1865–66, oil on canvas, Musée d’Orsay, Paris.

<sup>328</sup> Nicolas Poussin, *L’Enlèvement des Sabines*, 1934–35, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>329</sup> Jacques-Louis David, *Les Sabines*, 1799, oil on canvas, Le Louvre, Paris.

<sup>330</sup> Grunenberg and Morris, “What Picasso Stood For,” in Grunenberg and Morris, eds., *Peace and Freedom*, pp. 15–16.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>332</sup> My translation. Mercedes Gullién, *Picasso* (Madrid: Ediciones Alfaguara, 1973), p. 154 cited in Anne Baldassari, “La peinture de la peinture,” Baldassari et al., *Picasso et les maîtres* (Paris: Editions de la

every artist is connected to traditions. Scholars have later vindicated Barr's insights into Picasso's relationship with the old masters. Elizabeth Cowling described how Picasso maintained a dialogue with the old masters throughout his entire career.<sup>333</sup> Jonathan Brown asserted that Picasso earned the right to be considered a peer of the old Spanish masters.<sup>334</sup> In the exhibition catalogue for *Picasso et les maîtres*, which was on display at the *Grand Palais* in Paris in 2008, Anne Baldassari argued that Picasso was in constant dialogue with the old masters beginning in 1896 with portraits reminiscent of El Greco to his History paintings of the 1950s and 60s.<sup>335</sup> In the same collection of essays, Francisco Calvo Serraller declared that when looking at the precursors of Cubism, one cannot deny the influence of masters such as Cézanne, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Ingres, and most importantly, El Greco, to whom Picasso remained faithful until the end.<sup>336</sup> Serraller described Picasso's *Grand nu*<sup>337</sup> (1964) and how it was heavily influenced by Ingres's *Odalisque à l'esclave*<sup>338</sup> (1839).<sup>339</sup> He then went on to say that Goya also had an immense influence on Picasso, which can be observed in the parts of Picasso's work with the least amount of formal elements.<sup>340</sup>

In addition, Picasso himself publicly stated many times that for him, Vélazquez was the best Spanish master of all time, and with further analysis, art historians have drawn parallels between the works of these two great artists.<sup>341</sup> Beat Wismer argues that Picasso directly referenced El Greco as early as 1899 with his *Portrait of an Unknown Man in the Style of El Greco*<sup>342</sup> and in another drawing from the same year that contained the words "Yo El Greco".<sup>343</sup> Picasso also studied El Greco's *Opening of the Fifth Seal*<sup>344</sup> (1608–14) at the studio of his friend Ignacio Zuloaga who had bought it, and it is obvious that in *Les Femmes d'Alger* Picasso is working on ideas derived from the painting.<sup>345</sup>

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Réunion des musées nationaux, 2008), p. 21 "We are the heirs of Rembrandt, Vélazquez, Cézanne, Matisse. A painter always has a father and a mother. He does not come from nothing."

<sup>333</sup> Elizabeth Cowling, "Competition and Collaboration: Picasso and the Old Masters," in Cowling et al., eds., *Picasso: Challenging the Past* (London: National Gallery Company, 2009), p. 16.

<sup>334</sup> Jonathan Brown, "Picasso and the Spanish Tradition of Painting," in Brown, ed., *Picasso and the Spanish Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 25.

<sup>335</sup> Baldassari, "La peinture de la peinture," in Baldassari et al., *Picasso et les maîtres*, p. 22.

<sup>336</sup> Francisco Calvo Serraller, "Picasso et l'école espagnole," in Baldassari et al., *Picasso et les maîtres*, p. 64.

<sup>337</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Grand nu*, 1964, oil on canvas, Kunsthhaus, Zurich.

<sup>338</sup> Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Odalisque à l'esclave*, 1839–40, oil on canvas, Fogg Museum, Cambridge, USA.

<sup>339</sup> Serraller, "Picasso et l'école espagnole," in Baldassari et al., *Picasso et les maîtres*, p. 69.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66. In addition, in Chapters One and Two I made connections between select political Picasso works to both Goya and Manet, and I cited the multiple scholars who have confirmed those connections.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>342</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of an Unknown Man in the Style of El Greco*, 1899, oil on canvas, Museu Picasso, Barcelona.

<sup>343</sup> Beat Wismer, "Shaking Hands Across the Centuries: El Greco and Early Modernism in Germany," in Wismer and Michael Scholz-Hansel, eds., *El Greco and Modernism* (Ostfildern, DE: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012), p. 158.

<sup>344</sup> El Greco, *Opening of the Fifth Seal*, 1608–14, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>345</sup> Wismer and Scholz-Hansel, *El Greco and Modernism*, p. 158.

Former Director of MoMA's Department of Painting and Sculpture William Rubin said that Picasso brought elements of Cézanne to Cubism.<sup>346</sup> German artist Oskar Schlemmer commented on Picasso's ability to change styles as early as 1921: "I was amazed at the versatility of the man ... he could easily assume the role of any artist of the past or of any modern painter."<sup>347</sup> Picasso's interactions with the old masters and artistic traditions are heavily acknowledged in the scholarship, which was crucial to MoMA's efforts when decontaminating Picasso's Modernism and marketing it to the American public.

Barr was not the only one to reference both the modern and traditional aspects of Picasso's artwork.<sup>348</sup> An article published in the *New York Times* shortly after the 1957 exhibition opening explained that Picasso "has been and is the most controversial artist of the period. Probably few would dispute that he has also been the most prolific, the most publicized, the most influential, and... the most incalculable and the most uneven."<sup>349</sup> He is described as controversial and his radical nature is acknowledged alongside his influential standing. Another article in the *Times* by the same writer two months later again described and accepted the multi-faceted nature of the "Spanish master": "For all his apparent Modernism, he has not abandoned tradition."<sup>350</sup>

In April 1962, MoMA celebrated Picasso's eightieth birthday, alongside nine other prominent New York City galleries. The *Picasso: An American Tribute* exhibition—which ran from 25 April until 12 May—included 309 paintings, drawings, and sculptures from both private and public American collections, and each gallery simultaneously exhibited a different time period of Picasso's artwork.<sup>351</sup> The *New York Times* published an article on the exhibition's opening day:

For whatever one may think today of his achievement, or however posterity may judge it once the tumult and the shouting die, the fact remains that he is the greatest artistic phenomenon of the twentieth century. A genius and the genius of modern art, he stands as a colossus, both for his work itself and for having taught that anything can be made either beautiful or significant.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> William Rubin, *Lecture on Braque and Picasso Pioneering Cubism*, unreleased, cited in Pierre Daix, "Picasso et la tradition française. Un historique," in Baldassari et al., *Picasso et les maîtres*, p. 79.

<sup>347</sup> Tut Schlemmer, ed., *Letters and Diaries of Oskar Schlemmer* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1972), p. 102 cited in David W. Galensen, *Old Masters and Young Geniuses: The Two Life Cycles of Artistic Creativity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 10.

<sup>348</sup> It is important to add that Picasso's engagement with the old masters provided supporting evidence to those who claimed he was traditional; however, those claims were presumably politically motivated.

<sup>349</sup> Howard Devree, "Art: The Work of Picasso," *New York Times*, 22 May 1957, MoMA exhibition records – 619.65, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>350</sup> Howard Devree, "Picasso: A Magnet," *New York Times*, 28 July 1957, MoMA exhibition records – 619.65, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>351</sup> "Art: 9 Galleries Pay Honor to Picasso," *New York Times*, 25 April 1962, MoMA exhibition records – 705.7, *Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art - 80th Birthday Exhibition* [MoMA Exh. #705, 14 May–18 September 1962] MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*

Picasso's genius was considered to be more significant than his controversial politics. The article also acknowledged the role Barr played in Picasso's success, from building MoMA's collections to inspiring private buyers—these are efforts that should never be underestimated.<sup>353</sup> The day after the exhibition opening, the *New York Times* published another article discussing the public's acceptance of Picasso's artwork: "All the gallery owners felt that the public had no difficulty in appreciating Picasso. 'Twenty years ago it was different,' said Klaus Perls. 'People then just couldn't read some of Picasso's pictures. Now they have no difficulty at all.' ... Apart from occasional puzzlement, no outrage was evidenced. Picasso has obviously made the transition smoothly from new to old master, in the public mind."<sup>354</sup> With time, Picasso had become artistically accepted by the American public.

A pocketbook accompanied the 1962 exhibition and included a preface written by Barr that explained Picasso's links to traditionalism: "He is indeed a revolutionary artist, but by comparison with much work of the mid-twentieth century Picasso seems one of the old masters, perhaps the last old master, in his attitude towards painting and its traditional subject matter."<sup>355</sup> While being able to recognise and speak of Picasso's revolutionary nature—whether that be through his art or his actions—Barr still maintained that Picasso belonged to a lineage of great painters. With these words, Barr managed to dissolve fears prompted by Modernism by showing that Picasso was not only worthy of comparison with the old masters, but he was also one of their equals. However, Barr warned that Picasso may be the last of the old masters. This undermined any claim that Picasso's work was a radical break from the work of past masters. It also portrayed Picasso as somewhat of a transitional figure: an artist who had connections with the traditions of the past but who was also a representative of present-day Modernism.

There are several examples of Picasso exhibitions and their reviews that by the 1960s indicated that the gap was closing between East and West. On 25 October 1961, the *New York Herald Tribune's* editorial article made the following statement: "Even those who dispute—as we do—Picasso's political views, or who find the work of other artists more to their own taste, will not attempt to deny his genius."<sup>356</sup> The editor firmly made their own political position known while also recognising that despite a general Western aversion to Communism, Picasso's skills as an artist could

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> Brian O'Doherty, "Picasso Displays Attract Crowds," *New York Times*, 26 April 1962, MoMA exhibition records – 705.6, *Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art - 80th Birthday Exhibition* [MoMA Exh. #705, 14 May–18 September 1962] MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>355</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., first draft of preface to Picasso pocketbook for 1962 anniversary exhibition, "Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art," p. 1, MoMA exhibition records – 705.4, *Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art - 80th Birthday Exhibition* [MoMA Exh. #705, 14 May–18 September 1962], MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>356</sup> Editorial, *New York Herald Tribune*, 25 October 1961, 12.III.A.11. – "Picasso Book" – corresp. and printed matter: 1961, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

not—and should not—be questioned. The *Mainichi Daily News*, which was an English version of a popular Japanese newspaper, reviewed the 1964 Picasso exhibit held in Tokyo at the Museum of Modern Art. This retrospective sought to cover seventy years of Picasso's work and exhibited paintings that came from both sides of the Iron Curtain—early Picasso artworks never before exhibited in the West were on loan from the National Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.<sup>357</sup> The writer even noted that “...through this show, Picasso has seemingly succeeded, where politicians have failed, in uniting the two worlds.”<sup>358</sup> Picasso's genius was something that could be agreed upon by all. Perhaps by that point in the Cold War—and by that time in Picasso's career— ideology mattered less: the American modern art market was solidified, the public had grown comfortable with Picasso's works, and his place in the modern art museum was secured. Over thirty years had passed since MoMA's opening, during which Barr was able to carve out Picasso's place in the American art market and in American museums. By the 1960s, the entire notion of having a modern art museum in New York had become vindicated and modern art was deemed museum-worthy.

This chapter was an examination of the context and history of the American art market and its cultural institutions in the twentieth century. I then endeavoured to explain how Barr and MoMA employed various strategies in order for Modernism to become an accepted artistic style in the United States. The prevalence of formalist critical art theory allowed Barr to create a separation between Modernism and Communism. A group of modern art collectors donated artwork and money to MoMA upon its opening, which allowed the museum to showcase well-known Modernists from its inception. There were recurrent labels—or brands—assigned to Picasso that helped facilitate his integration. The idea of putting Picasso in a lineage— Picasso as Spanish master, Picasso as genius, Picasso as original, Picasso as traditional—was an idea that was constantly brought up in articles, reviews, exhibition catalogues, and press releases. Rather than be categorised as extreme and subversive, Picasso's art was placed within a tradition of brilliant innovators and his politics were neutralized.

Barr retired from MoMA in July 1967. In the thirty-eight years since he started at the museum, MoMA had presented eighteen shows dedicated to Picasso and his artwork—the majority of which he directed.<sup>359</sup> In the same span of years, MoMA published six books on Picasso—three of

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<sup>357</sup> Thomas T. Ichinose, “Picasso Exhibition in Japan,” *Mainichi Daily News*, 2 June 1964, .III.A.8. – “Picasso Book” – corresp. and printed matter: 1964, Barr Picasso Papers, MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> “The Museum of Modern Art and Picasso,” MoMA press release, Museum of Modern Art, October 1967. Accessed 28 May 2017.

[https://www.moma.org/d/c/press\\_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjUzNSJdXQ.pdf?sha=6e36d3ec33e5796c](https://www.moma.org/d/c/press_releases/W1siZiIsIjMyNjUzNSJdXQ.pdf?sha=6e36d3ec33e5796c)

which were written by Barr.<sup>360</sup> By 1962, MoMA held 550 works by Picasso, and according to Barr, the collection surpassed “in range, general importance, and number of capital works that of any other museum”.<sup>361</sup> Museum trustee Monroe Wheeler wrote in the foreword of MoMA’s 1967 *The Sculpture of Picasso* exhibition catalogue that “no examination of Picasso is possible without reference to the years of study of his works by Alfred H. Barr, Jr.”<sup>362</sup> Barr was able to distance Picasso’s art from his Communism because he understood that Picasso’s success depended on the institutional and geographical context of where he was being exhibited. MoMA demonstrated that by focusing on his genius, originality, and tradition, Picasso’s ideology could be justified or even replaced by more favourable marketing labels. Before MoMA opened its doors in 1929, modern art was regularly attacked in the United States. Eventually, with the help of Barr, MoMA, the marketing of Modernism, and the passing of time, Picasso and his art gradually came to be praised throughout the United States.

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., first draft of preface to Picasso pocketbook for 1962 anniversary exhibition, “Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art,” p. 6, MoMA exhibition records – 705.4, *Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art - 80th Birthday Exhibition* [MoMA Exh. #705, 14 May–18 September 1962], MoMA Archives, New York.

<sup>362</sup> Roland Penrose, foreword by Monroe Wheeler, *The Sculpture of Picasso*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1967), p. 5, MoMA exhibition records – 841.1, MoMA Archives, New York.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, I have discussed how we can evaluate an artist's political commitment. I have questioned the problems associated with being a politically engaged artist. Specifically, I have explored the foundations of Picasso's adherence to the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) and the public's perception of that commitment. This was accomplished through a variety of analytical approaches. I traced Picasso's actions and statements to demonstrate his continual engagement with the Party and its ideals—albeit to varying degrees—from 1937 until his death in 1973. After analysing a selection of his political artworks within their historical contexts, I have attempted to communicate the ways Picasso utilised his craft to contribute to the PCF, the World Peace Movement (WPM), and the cultural Cold War. The nature of Picasso's interactions with politics shifted in the 1950s and 60s as the Cold War progressed, and I have brought to light the financial and artistic donations he made to various Communist groups and charities during those years. While it is important to study Picasso's actions and artworks when deciphering the depth of his political engagement, this cannot be the only method of assessment. Because the sincerity of Picasso's political commitment cannot be fully determined, I have outlined the importance of moving beyond individual motivations and considering outside perspectives. My seven months of extensive examination of the Archives of the *Musée national Picasso-Paris* (AMNPP) revealed the thousands of letters Picasso received from various Communist parties, charities, peace groups, comrades, friends, art dealers, and fans. The documents include a substantial number of requests from political and charitable causes, which demonstrate the extent of Picasso's support and uncover how these groups understood Picasso's values. The correspondence also reveals the types of labels—or brands—asccribed to Picasso. Further research at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Archives and the Archives of American Art (AAA) of the Smithsonian Institute allowed me to examine the usage of these brands and other marketing strategies by MoMA. With Barr as its director, MoMA employed tactics to encourage favourable opinions of Picasso, his artwork, and the work of other radical Modernists during the Second Red Scare. In each chapter I discuss the ways Picasso's politics were utilised and exploited by various political groups and art institutions to achieve their own goals. This in turn revealed how different global contexts, audiences, and intentions highlight the discrepancy in the political significance of Picasso. I began this dissertation wanting to problematise the question of Picasso's political engagement. With the use of Picasso's statements and actions, personal accounts from his friends and comrades, analyses of particular artworks, numerous letters and documents found in both the AMNPP and MoMA, and various articles and media—all placed within a historical framework—I have developed a more comprehensive understanding of Picasso's most politicised years and the strategies employed in the creation of his image. But I will also be showing that the power of his politics did not reside in Picasso's own choices but in how his reputation was enlisted or exploited by global cultural and political institutions.

Chapter One was an examination of select pieces from Picasso's oeuvre between 1937 and 1946 within their cultural settings in an attempt to explain Picasso's political engagement during the Spanish Civil War and how his subsequent experiences throughout the Second World War ultimately led him to join the PCF. The context and reception of *Guernica*<sup>1</sup> (1937) and *Le Charnier*<sup>2</sup> (1945) were described to demonstrate Picasso's use of a universal visual language that brought to the forefront the horrors of war and the need for peace. The political art Picasso created post-1944 was not always accepted by the PCF, which could be explained by Picasso's lack of commitment to specific Communist values in his work. However, Picasso's personal understanding of his Communism—an ideology that flourished during the French Resistance with its message of peace and disgust for fascism—made these works successful. The atrocities committed during the Spanish Civil War inspired Picasso to create *Guernica* and renewed his political sympathies that had first manifested in the 1890s and early 1900s when he was active in Spanish and French anarchist circles. The resistance efforts of Communists and fellow intellectuals during the German Occupation of France helped Picasso shape his opinion of the Party and its members, which facilitated his growth as a politically engaged artist. I described the nature of the French branch of the Party in order to discredit claims of Picasso's participation in a repressive organisation administered from Moscow and made sense of Picasso's adherence to the PCF. I explained how strict political militancy and devotion to the style of Socialist Realism were not necessary components of Picasso's time in the PCF. I then explored his membership to the PCF, his visions of what the Party represented, and how he depicted the values of Communism in his art.

Chapter Two was a study of the changes in Picasso's engagement with his Party against the onset of the Cold War. The experience of the Occupation had proven to many intellectuals that Communism was the only valid response to the fascism and oppression they had witnessed during the war. However, by the 1950s the Communist Party began to lose popularity due to its stance on colonial issues and its actions in the Eastern Bloc. Instead of dwelling on divisive issues and leaving the Party, Picasso and others shifted their focus to Communist organisations that promoted peace. This was a way of unifying PCF members during tumultuous years. Although he became less involved with the Party as time progressed, Picasso supported the Communist-backed World Peace Movement and contributed artwork, money, and words of support to Left-wing groups and causes. I examined four periods of Picasso's artistic production in the 1950s and 60s and how his artwork continued to serve the Communist movement. *Massacre en Corée*<sup>3</sup> (1951) honoured the innocent victims of the

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<sup>1</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid.

<sup>2</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Le Charnier*, 1945, oil and charcoal on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>3</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Massacre en Corée*, 1951, oil on plywood, Musée national Picasso, Paris.

Korean War. The murals of *La Guerre*<sup>4</sup> and *La Paix*<sup>5</sup> were indictments of the American use of bacteriological warfare in Korea and a hope for peace, respectively. Upon the death of Stalin in 1953, Picasso created a portrait of the former Soviet leader when asked by his comrades and he remained in the Party even after being attacked for the portrait's visual composition. He brought awareness to the struggles of anti-colonial nationalists and the use of torture during the Algerian War with his sketch of Algerian victim Djamila Boupacha. Though the nature of his political adherence shifted throughout the years, Picasso continued to speak out against war and promote the ideals of the Left on a global stage.

The majority of Chapter Three was based on my time spent in the AMNPP and the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* exploring Picasso's political correspondence and various other documentation. Of the forty boxes of documents, I selected specific letters that revealed the depth of Picasso's political involvement, the numerous charitable organisations and peace groups to which he donated money and artwork, the PCF-affiliated meetings he attended, and the level of respect given to him from various political figures worldwide due to his commitment to political and humanitarian campaigns. These documents exposed how Picasso's friends, comrades, colleagues, and fans interpreted his politics and his art; thus, creating a series of labels for the artist such as Communist, humanitarian, and even celebrity. Many of these letters reveal the growth of Picasso's global cultural influence during his most politicised years. For many of the letter-writers, to know Picasso's artwork was to know Picasso. The number of letters he received related to politics is indicative of—if not his actual dedication—the perceived notion of his dedication to Communist groups and their ideals. Sincerity is always difficult to assess. As such, we cannot fully gauge the genuine nature of Picasso's dedication to the Party and its associated organisations; therefore, Picasso's actions, statements, and bodies of work must be considered alongside material that acknowledged the public's perception of those commitments.

In Chapter Four I analysed the role Picasso played in the cultural Cold War for American art institutions. I developed my argument through the use of primary documentation obtained from the archives of MoMA and the AAA. Personal correspondence, memos, museum bulletins, exhibition catalogues, and newspaper reviews provided examples of the marketing techniques applied by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and American art museums to promote Modernism in a Cold War climate. I studied the history of Modernism in the United States to better comprehend how a type of art deemed abhorrent by anti-Communists came to be accepted. I discussed how the influx of wealthy Europeans

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<sup>4</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Guerre*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée National Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

<sup>5</sup> Pablo Picasso, *La Paix*, 1952, oil on fibreboard, Temple de la Paix, Musée National Picasso La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France.

to the United States during the Second World War led to the rising prices for Modernist work while art institutions began to recognise the potential of Modernism's appeal and promote modern artists. Specifically, MoMA's range of tastemaking activities allowed Modernism to find a place in the American art market. This was in large part due to the efforts of Barr as MoMA's director who spent time debunking the theory that modern art was Communistic. Barr's marketing strategy involved separating Modernism from Communism and insisting that art and politics could exist separately from each other. In addition, Picasso's work was turned into a very lucrative and non-subversive brand of modern genius, which was echoed in exhibition catalogues and press material: Picasso was labelled as original, as part of the Spanish tradition, and as a genius in order to create palatable perceptions of the artist among American audiences, neutralise the radicalism of his politics, and help Modernism become an established artistic style.

Throughout my dissertation, I have addressed the problematic conclusions found in the Picasso historiography regarding his politics. In his 2013 *New Statesman* article, Jonathan Vernon dismissed Tate Liverpool's 2010 *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* exhibition because it associated the amount of letters Picasso received with his genuine political commitment. Vernon discredited Picasso's politics because he rarely replied to his political mail. I have uncovered evidence from Picasso's dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and close friend Paul Éluard who both admitted that Picasso did not respond to anyone in his life—the Party and its comrades were no different. To have simply read all of the letters that exist in the AMNPP would have taken up a significant amount of time. Friend and comrade Hélène Parmelin argued that Picasso received as many visitors as he did letters and could never have satisfied all of the demands asked of him.<sup>6</sup> I have seen the Picasso Archives, I understand the amount of mail that the artist received, and I can attest to Parmelin's claims. Picasso's perceived lack of dedication to his Party membership cannot be based on his indifference to letter writing. The selective nature of his responses was common in all aspects of his life—personal or business.

Problems also arise with Gertje Utley's 2000 publication. *Picasso: the Communist Years* is unparalleled in terms of its research and is the most extensive body of work pertaining to Picasso's politics. Without it, my thesis would have lacked a significant secondary source; however, it is not without its issues. Utley's failure to understand the independent nature of the French Communist Party in the opening page of her book taints the chapters that follow. I have explained the many reasons why Utley's attitude is problematic: the PCF functioned within a very different environment than the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. After World War II, when many intellectuals—including Picasso—joined their ranks, the PCF was seen as the primary group that fought fascist

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<sup>6</sup> Hélène Parmelin, trans. Humphrey Hare, *Picasso Plain: An Intimate Portrait* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963), p. 69.

forces during the French Resistance. The Party under Maurice Thorez allowed many of its prominent artists to create with no limitations. Party officials may not have enjoyed Picasso's artwork, but he was never punished or ejected from the Party because of his artistic style.<sup>7</sup> Utley dismissed certain Picasso canvases—particularly *Massacre en Corée*—because of their perceived aesthetic quality rather than understanding their impact politically. I have indicated that Picasso's artwork did not have to be critically successful in order to understand that a universal visual language was used to communicate his abhorrence of war. Although he did not usually title his work, Picasso named and dated *Massacre* so there would be no doubt as to its reference. Contextually, *Massacre* was created just as the United States was being accused of using bacteriological warfare in Korea. Picasso certainly intended the perpetrators in his painting to represent the American-backed South Korean forces. The painting failed to receive praise from the Party, even though it was reminiscent of Francisco Goya's *The Third of May 1808*<sup>8</sup> (1814) and Édouard Manet's series *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian*<sup>9</sup> (1867–69). The overall Communist response to *Massacre* left Picasso wishing his comrades had understood his contribution to their cause. I explained how Picasso had even asked his friends why it had not been a successful Communist painting. For Picasso, he had fulfilled the desires of the PCF with this piece of work, and those intentions—not the artistic merit of the painting—is what illustrated Picasso's support for broader PCF values.

John Richardson is the foremost Picasso scholar and the depth of research in his biographical volumes is immense; however, he makes a number of claims that seem unsubstantiated. He argues that after 1956 Picasso was only a Communist by name; that his political opinions changed each time he changed romantic partners; and that after the Stalin portrait debacle of 1953, Picasso only contributed artwork to the Party that was “fluff”.<sup>10</sup> Richardson knew Picasso personally and there could be proof of these assertions from Picasso himself. However, Richardson has never published such proof. The amount of interactions Picasso had with the Party, its members, and its causes; the plethora of letters in the AMNPP praising Picasso for his contributions to the Party and his support of its beliefs; the endless requests for support because he was seen as a figurehead for Communist-supported movements; and the way he used his artwork to respond to political events before and after 1956 all help to disprove any claim that Picasso did not engage with politics after the Hungarian Revolution of the same year—regardless of the women in his life. Although I cannot discern exactly what Richardson means by “fluff”, I have outlined the numerous pieces of artwork and statements of

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<sup>7</sup> The exception being the incident involving the portrait of Stalin, which was soon remedied with an apology from Thorez after he returned from the Soviet Union.

<sup>8</sup> Francisco José de Goya, *Third of May 1808*, 1814, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

<sup>9</sup> Édouard Manet, *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian* series, 1867–69, oil on canvas, various locations.

<sup>10</sup> John Richardson, “How Political Was Picasso?”, *New York Review of Books*, 25 November 2010, pp. 3, 2. Accessed: 19 November 2014. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/nov/25/how-political-was-picasso/>

support Picasso provided to the PCF and its affiliate organisations after 1953 until his death. These groups represented victims of war, political prisoners, women and children of the Party, and multiple other charitable causes: 1953 and 1954 for both the defence of and in memory of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg; 1955 for the *Union des femmes françaises*; 1957 for imprisoned American Communist officials; 1957, 1959, and 1962 for the *Festival mondial de la jeunesse et des étudiants*; between 1957 and 1962 for the *Association des déportés, internés et familles des disparus des Alpes-Maritimes*; 1959 and 1960 for the *Union des jeunesses communistes de France*; 1961 for *L'union des étudiants communistes*; yearly donations for *L'avenir social*; 1961 for Djamila Boupacha; 1962 for the *Comité de congrès mondial pour le désarmement général et la paix* conference; 1962 for the *Jeunes filles travailleuses*; 1963 for the *Union des femmes françaises*; 1963 and 1964 for the defence of Morton Sobell; 1964 for the *Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples*; yearly donations between 1950 and 1964 for *Le Bol d'air des gamins de Paris*; yearly donations until 1964 for the *Amicale des déportés d'Auschwitz et des camps de Haute Silésie*; annual contributions to *L'avenir social*, and so on. Even in the last six years of his life he remained involved in political campaigns: he signed an appeal in late 1967 against the Vietnam War; in March 1968 he donated work for the Intellectuals' Day for Vietnam art sale; in May 1968 he condemned the violence against students and workers who were protesting in Paris; and in 1972, a year before his death, he once again publicly called for peace in Vietnam. These donations are only known because of thank-you cards that exist within the AMNPP. There could easily be countless more examples of Picasso's philanthropic contributions to political groups of which we are unaware. To label these donations after 1953 as "fluff" or to call Picasso an unengaged Communist after 1956 when there is proof that he consistently supported an abundance of Communist charities and political causes is a complete dismissal of these contributions.

Richardson also critiques Picasso's works from the *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* exhibition based on their aesthetics. This concentration on evaluating a composition's visual language is not something with which I concern myself, nor should it be indicative of Picasso's genuine interest in supporting the PCF. Picasso intended artwork such as *Le Charnier* and *Massacre* to speak to the horrors of war and costs of freedom, and their historical contexts and political connotations cannot be dismissed. The doves of peace represented a movement that brought together Communists around the globe to unite for a cause about which they felt passionately. The Vallauris murals were named after war and peace—the problem and solution. Picasso publicly stated that the murals were a continuation of *Massacre en Corée*, which was a condemnation of the Korean War. He signed a declaration against the American use of bacteriological weapons in Korea the same month that he began the sketches for the murals. The message may not be as powerful today as it may have been in 1952 while in the midst of war, but the murals were intended to criticise the United States and their involvement in the conflict. Whether these pieces of art have stood the test of time in the eyes of an expert does not devalue their contribution and perception at the time of their unveiling. Richardson's

artistic critiques do not take into consideration the public response to these paintings and their impact. The letters in the Picasso Archives prove that these pieces of art contributed to Picasso's image as a supporter of the PCF, peace, and justice throughout the world.

While it is important to understand the gaps in the Picasso scholarship, it is also necessary to acknowledge the limitations of my own research. Ultimately, we will never know Picasso's true intentions. We will never be able to establish the genuine nature of his public and private statements. Although Picasso moved in anarchist circles in his youth, ran in anarchist circles upon moving to Paris, and included anarchist material in his Cubist collages, beginning from the onset of the First World War there is little to prove Picasso's interest in politics. This period was marked by a return to Classicism in his art and a "return to order" for many artists after the traumatic experience of the First World War. In 1930 Picasso declared he would "never make art with the preconceived idea of serving the interests of the political, religious, or military art of a country".<sup>11</sup> Fourteen years later he described his membership to the Communist Party as "the logical outcome" of his life.<sup>12</sup> Although I do not give a detailed account of the years prior to the Spanish Civil War, I have also never intended to. I have only sought to determine why and how Picasso chose to engage politically from 1937 onwards.

Another limitation involves a segment of my primary sources. There are not only doubts raised by the authenticity of Picasso's own words, but also with the words of fellow Communists. The accounts of Picasso's PCF membership from various comrades are of utmost importance when constructing a biography of Picasso's politicised years. However, as both intellectual representatives of the Party and close friends with Picasso, people such as Parmelin, Éluard, Pierre Daix, and Louis Aragon would have wanted to defend Picasso's PCF membership to preserve the integrity and legitimacy of the relationship and to promote the prestige the Party held among high-standing intellectuals. Problems also arise in regards to the hundreds of thousands of letters and newspapers Picasso received and kept in his lifetime. After 1947 it cannot be said for certain whether every one was read. What can be established is that beginning in 1937, Picasso donated time, money, and artwork to political organisations and charitable groups, and he made statements and signed petitions on behalf of humanitarian causes until his death. It can therefore be discerned that letters had to have been read either by his secretary and friend Jaime Sabartés, his significant other at the time, or the artist himself. In order to address this issue, I have used partisan accounts proving the extent of Picasso's political engagement in conjunction with a variety of other primary and secondary sources.

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<sup>11</sup> Felipe Cossío del Pomar, *Con la Buscadores del Camino* (Madrid, 1932), p. 125 cited in Elizabeth Cowling, *Picasso: Style and Meaning* (London: Phaidon Press, 2002), p. 574.

<sup>12</sup> Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1953), p. 316.

The 2000 publication of *Picasso: the Communist Years* and the 2010 *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* exhibition piqued an interest in the validity and importance of Picasso's relationship with revolutionary politics. I believe this is a topic of conversation that will remain relevant within the Picasso scholarship. The opening of the *Musée national Picasso-Paris* in 2014 after five years of renovations has allowed the public to reconsider and re-analyse Picasso's works—which span across his entire career—at a museum that holds the world's largest collection of Picassos.<sup>13</sup> From 27 March until 29 July 2018, the *Musée Picasso* in conjunction with the *Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía* in Madrid held an exhibition entitled *Guernica*. This four-month display was in honour of the artwork that saw its eightieth anniversary pass in 2017. According to the *Musée Picasso* website, the exhibition focused on the history of the “anti-Franco, anti-fascist, and pacifist symbol” that is *Guernica* and clarified “questions about Picasso's political engagement” with the use of “an exceptional collection of sketches and archives”.<sup>14</sup> After eighty-one years, *Guernica* is still facilitating discussions regarding Picasso's politics and its implications. This exhibition may now lead to further political analysis of some unlikely Picasso works. For example, the *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* exhibition highlighted the political associations in select Picasso still lifes such as *Poireaux, crâne, et pichet*<sup>15</sup> (1945) and *Crâne de chèvre, bouteille, et bougie*<sup>16</sup> (1952), where Picasso evoked the forms of *memento mori* and *vanitas* during wartime years when death was prominent.<sup>17</sup>

Going forward in this field of research, it is my hope that the AMNPP will be considered an asset for scholars, museums, curators, and future Picasso exhibitions. The wealth of information available at the archives of the *Musée Picasso* must be consulted when re-evaluating parts of Picasso's oeuvre so that further discussion regarding Picasso's politics can be generated. It is critical that the scholarship continue to recognise all aspects of Picasso's life when evaluating the extent of his political engagement: Picasso's actions, statements, artworks, and charitable donations must be assessed within the historical and cultural framework of the time. In the future, we need to consider

<sup>13</sup> The Musée Picasso-Paris collection is comprised of 5,000 works. “The Collection.” Musée national Picasso-Paris. Accessed: 3 January 2018. <http://www.museepicassoparis.fr/en/the-collection/>

<sup>14</sup> “*Guernica*,” Musée national Picasso-Paris. Accessed: 20 January 2018. <http://www.museepicassoparis.fr/en/a-venir-2/>

<sup>15</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Poireaux, crâne, et pichet*, 1945, oil on canvas, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, CA.

<sup>16</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Crâne de chèvre, bouteille, et bougie*, 1952, oil on canvas, Tate Modern, London.

<sup>17</sup> *Memento mori* reminds viewers of their mortality and the fragility of life, with depictions of skulls, clocks, candles, fruit, and flowers. *Vanitas* is also associated with mortality while also signifying the worthlessness of worldly pleasure and goods with images of candles, skulls, and books. “Memento Mori,” Tate. Accessed: 23 March 2018. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/m/memento-mori>. “Vanitas,” Tate. Accessed: March 23 2018. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/v/vanitas>. The goat skull is said to symbolise a scapegoat, which may be a reference to Nikos Beloyannis's execution in 1952. The human skull symbolises death from war, which had ended the year Picasso painted *Poireaux, crâne, et pichet* (1945). “Room 2: Still Lifes,” Tate. Accessed: 23 March 2018. <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/exhibition/picasso-peace-and-freedom/picasso-peace-and-freedom-explore-1>. “Pablo Picasso, *Goat's Skull, Bottle, and Candle*, 1952,” Tate. Accessed: 23 March 2018. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/picasso-goats-skull-bottle-and-candle-t00145>

the potential political relevance and impact of Picasso artworks that are considered secondary in terms of artistic value. The negative connotations sometimes associated with the Communist Party should not prevent balanced assessments of Picasso's years as a PCF member. Moreover, the public's opinion of Picasso must be taken into account when measuring the importance, legitimacy, sincerity, and value of his politics. It is important that all available sources are utilised so that we can further understand Picasso's motives and intentions during his politicised years. My work on Picasso also offers wider implications for future studies of other Modernists. The history of certain modern artists could benefit from a broader analysis of their life, work, and political beliefs. For example, Georges Braque's self-appointed apolitical stance is challenged in Alex Danchev's study of the artist. While Danchev maintains that Braque failed to follow any social or political movements throughout his life, he explores the artist's ethics during the German Occupation of France and how those ethics could be interpreted as a type of political statement when analysed in conjunction with Braque's still lifes and actions between 1939 and 1944.<sup>18</sup>

In this thesis, I have demonstrated that there are multiple markers of political engagement. One indicator cannot provide a complete picture of what it means to be political or determine political sincerity. While public opinion is as significant as the reality of personal motivations, we must remember that individuals may interpret political commitment differently so as to fulfil their own personal needs. Ultimately, I have hoped to raise questions for historians that concern public culture, the presentation of politics in the public realm, and the marginalisation of politics in cultural spheres so that going forward we can re-establish the ways we measure political commitment.

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<sup>18</sup> Braque lived near Paris during the Occupation, he rejected gifts from Nazi officers, he refused a commission to make an emblem for the Vichy government, he gathered with "freethinkers" whose assembly was a "conscious act of intellectual resistance", and he attended Max Jacobs' funeral. Danchev describes Braque's canvases of black fish (the Occupation in France is commonly referred to as the "Black Years"). Braque referred to a stove he painted as one which "warmed us with its embers during the Occupation." Alex Danchev, "The Strategy of Still Life, or the Politics of Georges Braque," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 31, no. 1 (2006): pp. 1, 11, 12, 18, 21. This article is based on Danchev's 2005 publication. See Alex Danchev, *Georges Braque: A Life* (New York: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 2005).

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