

Article

From Horrors Past to Horrors Future: Pacifist War Art (1919–1939)

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Abstract: In this paper, I argue that interwar pacifists working in France presented an evolving narrative of what the First World War represented in order to maintain support for their movement and a continued peace in Europe. Utilizing posters, photographs, pamphlets, and art installations created by pacifist organizations, I interject in ongoing debates over the First World War as a moment of rupture in art and pacifism in France, arguing that the moment of rupture occurred a decade after the conflict had ended with the failure of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of 1932–1934 and the election of Hitler as the leader of a remilitarized Germany. Pacifist art of the 1920s saw a return to traditional motifs and styles of art that remembered the horrors of the past war. This return to tradition aimed to inspire adherence to the new pacifist organizations in the hopes of creating a new peace-filled world. The era of optimism and tradition ended with the economic and political crisis of the early 1930s, forcing pacifists to reconceptualize the images and styles of art that they utilized. Instead of relying on depictions of the horrors of the past war, these images shifted the focus to the mass civilian casualties future wars would bring in a desperate struggle to prevent the outbreak of another world war.

Keywords: pacifism; interwar; modernism; World War I; memory; photomontage; photography; Spanish Civil War

1. Introduction

This paper examines the evolution of pacifist art created and distributed in France from the end of the First World War until the 1937 *Exhibition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*. While the majority of scholars of the interwar pacifist movement in France have primarily focused on the political actions of the movement, such as the efforts to influence government policy, changes in education curriculums, or public campaigns for the release of conscientious objectors, the visual components of their mass media campaigns have been relatively ignored (Ingram 1991; Offenstadt 1993; Siegel 2004). I argue that the art produced and circulated by French pacifists during the interwar period through newspapers, postcards, posters, and other ephemeral mediums enabled the members of the movement to capture the attention of a national and international audience. This art, produced by an international cohort of artists living in Paris, created an evolving narrative of the lessons of the First World War to maintain support for their campaigns for continued peace in Europe. Attempting to preserve and expand the newly settled peace, the pacifist narrative of the war during the 1920s focused on the human aspect of the war and sought to memorialize the sacrifices made by military and civilian individuals. This art relied on classical mediums, such as oil painting, woodblock engraving, and sculpture, to present images of great statesmen, sacrificed soldiers, and grieving widows and mothers. The failure of the *Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of 1932–1934*, combined with Hitler's rise to power in 1933, led to an abandonment of these traditional tropes of memorialization and an explosion of modern images depicting the mass

civilian casualties caused by an increased reliance on new forms of technological warfare. Images of the war no longer focused on the front-line soldier nor those he left behind. Instead, the art produced and distributed by pacifist organizations like the *Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté* (International Women's League for Peace and Freedom) and the *Ligue internationale des combattants pour la paix* (International League of Peace Combatants) in the second-half of the 1930s depicted the potential destruction that biological and chemical weapons could cause when they were dropped alongside bombs from airplane-filled skies. Pacifists and artists working for and with these organizations no longer remembered the First World War by the sacrifices made by individuals, but instead for the technological and scientific horrors it created, horrors which could now be unleashed on innocent and unsuspecting civilian populations. This shift in the historical narrative presented in the art of French interwar pacifist organizations reflected not only a rupture with the past, but also an increased desperation to maintain peace in face of the looming outbreak of another war.

2. Historical and Theoretical Framework

In his recent work on how art can be thought, Allan deSouza reflected on the manner in which the specific histories and cultural geographies of artists shape their creative process and body of work, and in turn how these same aspects of the viewers' identities influenced their reactions to a particular piece of work by the artist (deSouza 2018). When applied to the art produced by pacifists during the interwar period, the anxieties of a society living in the shadows of the First World War are clearly distinguishable. The previously unimaginable horrors of modern technological warfare became inescapable for soldiers and civilians, ending the belief in the meliorist myth of continual progress toward a better and brighter future which had dominated public consciousness and discourse for the past century (Fussell 2000). Images of bleak, treeless fields of mud, barbed wire, decomposing bodies torn apart by machine guns, and the mutilated bodies of returning veterans shattered the notions that war was an honorable and noble cause worthy of sacrificing hundreds of thousands of lives. These shocking and disturbing images, combined with a collective sense of national bereavement, led to vast global support for the pacifist cry of "Never Again" (Eksteins 2000; Mosse 1990). Working to find a new sense of normal within the social anxiety created by the destruction of the meliorist myth, pacifism became one of the great social and political movements in France throughout the interwar period (Bondi 2000).

Although French pacifists maintained broad public support for their project of preventing future wars, the movement was riddled with in-fighting over which political strategies and philosophical ideologies provided the best methods for attaining their goal of a world without war. Traditionalists, such as the *Association pour la paix par le droit* (Peace Through Law Association), drew inspiration from their nineteenth century predecessors and sought to reinforce international law and arbitration, focusing intensely on upholding the reputation of the League of Nations. For these pacifists, the League of Nations was the apotheosis of efforts started at the end of the previous century with the convening of the Hague Conference of 1899 that had aimed to limit warfare by creating the Permanent Court of Arbitration. By ensuring the survival of the League of Nations, traditionalists sought to uphold the conventional power of established governments as the only entity which could declare war or peace. Religious pacifists, on the other hand, reasoned that if everyone refused to obey orders from the government to fight then there could never be another conflict between nations. Religious pacifists in France primarily used Christian teachings of loving thy neighbor to promote their style of a non-violent, individualist pacifism. The growing popularity of Mohandas Gandhi and his emphasis on non-violent resistance at the individual and community level, centered around the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jainist principle of Ahimsa (not causing harm to other living things), was promoted by religious pacifists as proof of the universal appeal of their style of non-violent pacifism.

Frustrated by the sluggishness of debates and the lack of action by other pacifist organizations, radical pacifists, who believed that war was a consequence of the competition inherent in a capitalist society and that only through the destruction of capitalism itself could peace be achieved, turned toward the USSR as a symbol for a new socialist peace. Following Lenin's theories of revolutionary defeatism,

radical pacifists rejected the accepted practice that only legitimate governments could begin and end wars. Instead, they believed that by refusing to partake in conflicts started by the state, and actively working to overthrow imperialist governments that relied on war as a tool of foreign policy, they could bring about eternal peace. The political stances and philosophical views of prominent French pacifists of the era, like Romain Rolland, a prominent pacifist author and figure, and Gabrielle Duchêne, secretary general of the French section of the *Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté*, vacillated between these different types of pacifism, forcing their followers and the organizations they worked with to either change with them or break away and form a new organization (Ingram 1991).

Although these divisions riddled the French pacifist effort with infighting for control over the direction of the movement, adherents, and space in the public discourse, all the organizations realized the power of mass media campaigns. Each of the ideological sects of the movement utilized large scale poster and photography campaigns, pamphlets, newspapers, and other cheaply produced ephemeral materials like stamps to spread their messages and garner support for their policies, agendas, and organizations. The organizations turned to the growing number of artists flocking to Paris during the interwar period to produce the art. Some artists, like the Belgian engraver Frans Masereel, had been exiled from and forbidden to return to their home countries due to their pacifist activities during the First World War. Masereel himself had refused to serve in the military during the war and was forced to flee to Switzerland where he was introduced to the noted French pacifist Romain Rolland, whose pacifist text *Au dessus de la mêlée* made him a household name of the pacifist cause (van Parys 2008). Masereel's growing friendship with Rolland allowed him to work with a large variety of pacifist individuals and organizations, eventually becoming a key artist for the movement. Other artists, like the Hungarian painter Imre Pérely, came to Paris to escape poor economic conditions at home, and partake in the vivid art world sweeping through Paris (Heitler 1968). These émigré artists encountered the pacifist movement in France through their fellow emigres in the city, artistic societies, and political organizations they joined. The pacifist organizations also turned to home-grown talent, relying on members with artistic talents and local newspaper illustrators and cartoonists to design images for their media campaigns. Members within this last group often did not sign their works or used a pseudonym and require further study to understand their motivations for joining the movement.

The various pacifist organizations working in France throughout the interwar period were primarily located in Paris and would distribute this artistic material to local sections throughout the country. These organizations chose to headquarter themselves in Paris originally to have access to the delegates of the Peace Conference of 1919 and decided to stay throughout the interwar era due to the ease of communication and travel afforded by the metropolitan area. According to meeting notes of the executive committee of the *Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté*, members of the local sections would then display and distribute the material within their communities by placing posters in public spaces, mailing postcards, distributing newspapers, selling pamphlets and art books at talks given by prominent pacifists, etc. (Fonds Duchêne). Other pacifist organizations most likely used a similar process to distribute their material, as it was cost effective and members of local sections knew the best ways to disseminate the material through their communities. These media campaigns were seen as the best way to inundate the public with the pacifist message, and were products of careful deliberation, reflecting the political, social, and cultural interests of the groups producing them (Faber 2018).

In order to effectively capture and maintain the public's attention, these French pacifist organizations and the artists working for them on a voluntary or paid basis restructured how they developed and garnered support for their ideas, as the experience of the First World War created a sense of suspicion and distrust of pre-war propaganda strategies amongst the public. Exploring the birth of the modern age, Modris Eksteins outlines how the war "offered extremes of emotion and efforts," along with "sights, sounds, and images that bore no relation to the staid Edwardian or even the febrile Wilhelmian world," allowing the war to act "as a veritable exhortation to the revolutionary renewal for which the prewar avant-garde had striven" (Eksteins 2000, p. 209). These extremes of emotion, and the potential for

revolutionary renewal, rendered historic ideas of peace and prosperity inadequate in the post-war era, as they failed to effectively reflect the general public's grief, anger, and sense of loss. Art, on the other hand, allowed audiences to interpret what was in front of them, finding solace in whatever 'truth' they wished to see. Unlike the literature produced by prominent historians, government and military officials, and journalists, all of who were responsible for aggrandizing the valor of the war effort, artists rejected the narrative of war as glorious and honorable, condemning the adherence to the bourgeois status-quo as having led to the needless slaughter of millions (Jannette 2018). Their depictions of the front lines instead showed the truth of modern warfare: a bleak, soulless, never-ending landscape of mud, destruction, and death. While writers and poets depicted similar images of the wartime experience, lingering wartime censorship and public distaste for war literature prevented these works from having a real impact on public perceptions of the war until the anti-war literature boom of the late 1920s. Artists, on the other hand, were able to disseminate the realities of war while the conflict was still on-going and even more prolifically as soon as the conflict ended. This availability of art aided the public in assuaging their fears and dealing with their losses caused by the war. Art was able to satisfy the public's desire for some type of escapism from the seemingly never-ending conflict, while also allowing them to memorialize the dead after the war had ended (Fox 2015).

While art was viewed as a means of disseminating the truth about the war experience and the pacifist goals for the future, artists themselves were divided over how to best represent these experiences in the post-war world. The First World War has been studied as a moment of rupture between earlier styles of art and the new modernism of the 20th century. This modernism was defined by a rejection of classical academic painting techniques and styles, most notably those of the Académie des Beaux Arts. Many artists instead turned to the streamlined aesthetics of art deco or the irrationality of Dada and Surrealism to represent the new world around them (Fer et al. 1993; Eksteins 2000; Mileaf 2001). Scholars have spent an exceptional amount of energy discussing the Dada and Surrealist movements, noting that the wasteful carnage of the First World War and the attempts made by governments to return to the 'normalcy' of the pre-war era caused them to embrace the absurd, the unconscious, and the ironic as a form of critique and rebellion against the traditional bourgeois order (Fer et al. 1993; Walker 2002; Lyford 2007). These artists embraced new artistic techniques like automatism to depict their disenchantment with the bourgeois order of the period. In the eyes of these artistic groups, the rejection of traditional styles and techniques of art was the only way to depict not only the absurdity and inhumanity of war, but also the insanity of official attempts to revert to the way things had been before the carnage (Malvern 2004). While Dada and Surrealism garnered a lot of attention from the public, and many of the artists and writers like André Breton, Louis Aragon, Tristan Tzara, and Marcel Duchamp espoused pacifist ideas, the radical subversiveness of their art made it unpalatable for the mass publicity campaigns of the French pacifist organizations, who were keen to garner support from more conservative communities outside of Paris.

This idea of the First World War as a moment of rupture has faced push back from scholars like Kenneth Silver and Jay Winter, who have extensively documented a revival in traditional motifs and styles of art following the armistice in 1918. This return to tradition in France revived the classical French academic styles of art and rejected the pre-war trends of Cubism and Fauvism, as both had become tainted by their associations with German Romanticism (Silver 1989). Winter reasoned that the dislocation, paradoxical, and ironic nature of the modernist art movements could only express anger and despair, whereas the universality of bereavement throughout Europe following the war required a return to traditional forms of social and cultural life in art, poetry, and ritual, as a way to both remember and move on from the losses of the war. He noted that "this preference for the allegorical and the naïve should not delude us into concluding that this work is in any way unsophisticated or unthinking. On the contrary, it is an attempt to return to a stylized past at a time when the present was perhaps too unpalatable to face directly" (Winter 2014, p. 131). Similarly, Silver examined the return to classicism within the Parisian avant-garde, arguing that the artists themselves knew that this classical revival was a lament for the lost innocence and hopefulness of the pre-war period versus a celebration of its

bellicose and nationalistic values (Silver 1989). Both authors discussed how this return to tradition was tempered by the experiences of the war, with the art adapting traditional iconography of military triumph and national righteousness into expressions of the grief, both communal and individual, felt throughout the nation.

While Winter argued that it was the Second World War that marked the rupture between classical and modern styles of European art, the anxieties produced by the onset of the failure of the *Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of 1932–1934* and the revival of a militarized Germany under Hitler's leadership resulted in this rupture within the pacifist art produced in France occurring a decade earlier. These events, combined with the destabilization of traditional international diplomacy, forced artists to abandon the traditional motifs and styles of presentation which looked to heal from the grief of mass loss and maintain the newly gained peace. The period of hope for a better, brighter future led by men of a strong pacifist character disappeared. Instead, the art of the later 1930s relied on modern photography, striking photomontages, and depictions of mutilated and dead civilians to illustrate the truth of what was occurring around the world. This shift reflected the explosion of fear and desperation felt by the members of French pacifist organizations and the wider public, as they were unable to stop the unarmed civilian populations of Spain from becoming acceptable targets of warfare. The realities of the outbreak of war in Spain, combined with a re-militarized German threat on their borders, intensified the political and philosophical divisions within the French pacifist movement, forcing the various ideological sects to rethink their peace campaign strategies to maintain members, political influence, and financial contributions. In desperation to save the world from itself, pacifist art of the later 1930s abandoned themes of serene reconciliation and reverential grief, and instead looked to terrify its viewers in order to gain support for the pacifist movement's increasingly desperate attempts to maintain peace.

3. A Return to Tradition

The end of hostilities on 11 November 1918 brought a profound silence throughout Europe—a silence in which reflections on the horrors and unimaginable losses of the war began to permeate. Artists, who had been forced to either work as propagandists for the government's war effort or to eke out a living by creating pacifist/anti-war images in exile, reflected on the past four years, searching for inspiration from classical religious and secular sources to capture the war and its human costs. Seeking a 'return to order,' these artists revived the traditional genres of landscape, religious painting, and portraiture, using Ingres, Goya, Grünewald, Holbein, Delacroix, and others as inspiration (Silver 1989; Winter 2014; Chambers 2018). Utilizing traditional oil painting techniques to capture great men of the era, William Orpen's *A Peace Conference at the Quai d'Orsay* captured the beginning of a new peaceful era. The painting depicted Woodrow Wilson, Georges Clemenceau, David Lloyd George, and other statesmen who crafted the terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty (Figure 1). Drawing inspiration from Jean-Baptiste Isabey's *Congress of Vienna* (Figure 2), painted a century early to commemorate the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), Orpen's painting presented the faces of the peacemakers to the public, documenting the start of the new, and hopefully permanent, peaceful period in Europe. However, while Isabey had depicted Metternich, Castlereagh, Talleyrand, and others in proportion to their surroundings, Orpen's figures were dwarfed by their gilded, ornate surroundings. This disproportionality symbolized fears that the statesmen would fail to live up to the task placed before them, a fear that was confirmed, as the Versailles Treaty failed to create the perpetual peace that was promised (*A Peace Conference at the Quai d'Orsay*). This fear was realized for many within French pacifist organizations as the ratification of Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty and the heavy reparation payments it placed on Germany were seen as an obstacle to achieving the reconciliation that pacifists were striving to achieve.

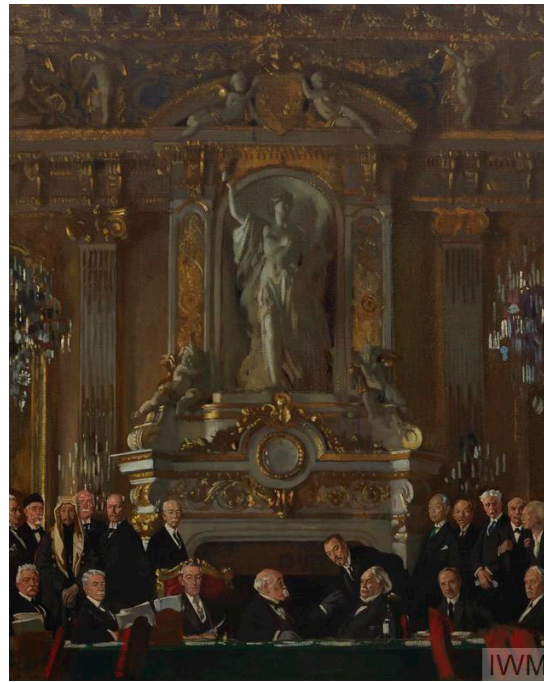


Figure 1. William Orpen. A Peace Conference at the Quai d'Orsay. 1919. Oil on Canvas. 145 cm × 121 cm. Imperial War Museum. Art. IWM. ART 2855.



Figure 2. Jean-Baptiste Isabey. The Congress of Vienna. 1815. Pen and ink with wash. 84.5 cm × 107 cm. Royal Collection Trust/ ©Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019. RCIN 451893.

Orpen's painting drew on a long tradition of painters depicting 'great men' of history as the givers of peace. The neo-classical period of the seventeenth century relied greatly on this trope to glorify the role of the king as the harbinger of peace to his people. Decorative paintings and frescos in palaces throughout France, including Versailles itself, depicted the kings of France, not only as great warriors who brought glory to their nations, but also as the bringers of peace. Paintings like *Louis XV Offering Peace to Europe* by François Le Moyne (1737) and the relief *The Peace of Nimègue* by Desjardins (1678) showed Louis XV and Louis XIV, respectively, generously giving peace to the women and children of Europe ([L'Art de La Paix 2016](#)). While the king as the peacemaker worked in the period of absolute monarchy, artists of the interwar period replaced kings of old with the democratically elected statesmen

of the French Third Republic, Great Britain, the United States, and other nations, honoring, not only the collective work of these men, but more importantly the communal efforts and sacrifices of their constituents made during the war. These works, celebrating the ends of past wars, embodied the traditional pacifist belief that peace could only be achieved through the diplomatic actions of political men. Although uneasy with the harsh terms of the Versailles Treaty, French pacifist organizations still wanted to celebrate the historic moment. Seeking to reestablish and strengthen connections with other national branches of pre-war pacifist organizations that had been disrupted during the war, as well as create connections between new groups formed after the war, images like Orpen's were shared by British sections with their French counterparts via photographs, postcards, or exhibition programs. These images were then reprinted by French pacifists in books, pamphlets, and on postcards, as a way of celebrating the new spirit of international cooperation.

While Orpen's painting hinted at the sense of disillusion many felt with the statesmen who drafted the Peace of 1919, works commemorating the efforts of Aristide Briand presented a hopeful outlook for the peace movement. Winner of the 1926 Nobel Peace Prize, Briand spent his tenure as the Prime Minister of France working toward reconciliation with Germany. One of the key developers of Locarno Treaties of 1925, which improved relations between Germany and its European neighbors, as well as the Kellogg–Briand Pact of 1928, a global treaty to make war illegal and to settle conflicts via arbitration before the League of Nations, Briand and his successful statesmanship became emblematic of the style of peace pacifists in this period wished to maintain. The Kellogg–Briand Pact was celebrated as the greatest achievement of the pacifist movement in the interwar era. While the image of Briand had been printed on copious amounts of pacifist material throughout the interwar period, the greatest testament to his work was the monument commissioned following his death in 1932. Completed in 1937, it was one of the last great works of traditional pacifist art created during the interwar period. Designed by Paul Landowski, the director of the French Academy in Rome from 1933–37, the architect Paul Bigot, and sculpted by Henri Bouchard, the monument was placed in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Quai d'Orsay, where the peace conference of Orpen's painting took place fifteen years earlier. Entitled *Peace: A Monument to Aristide Briand*, the sculpture drew inspiration from the neo-classical paintings of kings, offering peace to the people by depicting the large figure of Briand offering peace to the nations of the world, with a grateful family looking on in admiration (Figure 3). An idyllic pastoral banner rests on top of the main image of the monument, while the bountiful fruits of the harvest lay at the feet of the family and nations depicted, symbolizing the prosperity peace brings to all. Engraved along the columns and bottom of the monument, Briand's promise to end war and make France the protector of a permanent peace served as a reminder of everything that the pacifist movement attempted to achieve during the interwar era.

The monument to Briand represented an anomaly among the sculptures created during this period. As one of the oldest forms of art, sculpture's resistance to change was viewed as an embodiment of the order and permanence many artists sought to return to following the war (Braun 2010). Because of its permanence, sculpture was considered as one of the best ways to memorialize the dead and process the national bereavement following the end of the war. An explosion of commemorative war memorials spread throughout France during the interwar period, with every village commissioning a monument to the heroic sacrifice made by the sons of the local community. Extensive scholarship has outlined how these memorials applied simplified styles from the nineteenth century to commemorate the dead, often relying on Christian symbols and medieval iconography as a means of creating a link to a historical, and at times mythological, communal past (Mosse 1990; Prost 2002; Winter 2014). Instead of focusing on the efforts of one great man, like the monument to Briand, these community memorials sought to present a generic figure that could represent any one of the millions lost during, or affected by, the war.



Figure 3. Paul Landowski, Paul Bigot, and Henri Bouchard. Pax: Monument à Aristide Briand. 1937. Bronze. Photograph taken by author.

Sculpture became a touchstone for the arts during the interwar period as it was both a symbol of an ancient artistic heritage and an enduring monument that could serve as a counter to an unreliable and perishable life (Silver 2010). However, most of these war memorials did not utilize classical pacifist symbols, such as the dove or the olive branch, in their iconography. Instead, these monuments conceptualized the figure of the soldier as an idealized representation of the absent dead, with a mournful female allegory of the nation paying homage to the soldier. These icons served as a reminder of the millions who had fought and died for the supposed higher cause of the nation. Grieving mothers and widows were often relegated to a secondary place in the war memorials, if they existed at all. The absence of women in the memorial sculptures reminded viewers that it was the actions of the dead that mattered more than the grief of those left behind (Moriarty 2018). A sense of indebtedness to the dead permeated these monuments, reminding the living that they were able to now live in a new peace thanks to the sacrifices the dead had made (Winter 2014). Pacifists took the implied message that this sacrifice should never be in vain, and used it to reinforce their mission to maintain the new peace throughout Europe. To take full advantage of the large number of sculptures throughout the country, pacifists printed and circulated a wide breadth of postcards, posters, and pamphlets depicting these monuments through their networks. These prints reminded the public what the costs of war were and why they needed to fight so hard to ensure that it would never occur again.

In addition to reprinting images of these enduring monuments to the dead, pacifist ephemeral art during the 1920s also relied on the concept of grieving relatives to spread their message. This choice placed the millions of women left alone after the war at the center of the pacifist discussions, while simultaneously acknowledging the large role that women played in shaping the political action and philosophical discourse of the pacifist movement throughout the interwar period. Women had been at the forefront of the movement for peace, starting with the 1915 *International Congress of Women*. There, over 1300 delegates from 12 countries met at the Hague to discuss the principles of a constructive peace, continuing the legacies of the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907. Gabrielle Duchêne, Romain Rolland's sister Madeleine Rolland, and a small number of other French women, while banned from attending the Congress by the government, took the ideas and manifestos produced by the Congress and spread them throughout France. By doing so, these women subverted wartime censors and caused numerous public scandals (Carle 2004). These ideas, originally viewed by other French women as unpatriotic during the war, gained traction as the human and material costs of the war became more and more prevalent throughout society. The ideas were spread, in particular, by the teaching corps, which, as a consequence of the war, was dominated by female teachers, provoking outrage among

conservatives who feared the moral disarmament of the youth would weaken the nation (Siegel 2004). These pacifist women utilized their role as mothers and widows to give legitimacy to their fight for peace. The image below embodies the wartime legacy women claimed. Printed shortly after the war, it depicts a woman crying over the coffin of a dead loved one (Figure 4). The anonymity of the woman allowed for any who saw the image to emphasize and sympathize with her, as they either were her, or they knew a woman who had also lost her loved one to the horrors of the battlefield. Created by the Belgian engraver Frans Masereel, the print relied on the traditional technique of woodblock engraving to depict the grieving woman. The simplicity of design demanded by this traditional technique forced audiences to only focus on the emotion presented in the image, as no extraneous background details were presented for interpretation or distraction from the central figure. Masereel, having refused to participate in the slaughter of the First World War, lived in exile in Paris throughout the interwar period, and witnessed first-hand the sorrow of Parisian women that inspired this work.



Figure 4. Frans Masereel. Novembre 1921. 1921. Ink on paper. La Contemporaine. Fonds Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté. 4A0050-1.

Throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, the anonymity found in the hidden faces of the widows was abandoned as a motif in the art produced for pacifist organizations in France. Instead, the faces of collectives of women were brought to the forefront of pacifist art, as these women became more active in the pacifist cause, transforming their grief into action and a powerful political force. A series of paintings created by Imre Pérely, a Hungarian graphic artist working in Paris throughout the 1930s, were reprinted as a book of lithographs by the *Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté* in 1931, and sold to raise funds for the organization and its programs of reconciliation between former belligerent nations, in particular its annual summer school program aimed at forging relationships between French and German children (Fonds Duchêne). One painting in the series, titled “Five Million Widows,” shifted away from the hidden face of a singular grieving widow to a community of widows supporting one another in their grief (Figure 5). This community of women, nearly identical in their dress and facial expressions, stood before the crosses of their loved ones, united in their shared grief. In the post-war society, Pérely’s women represented an everyday sight, as seas of women draped in black infiltrated the public space. While their presence had been a marker of strength and dignity during the war and in the immediate aftermath, their continued and increasingly vocal presence in the public sphere disrupted attempts made by the government to return to normal and move on from the trauma of war. Refusing to abandon their uniform of grief, widows like Madeleine Vernet, one of the founders of the *Ligue des femmes contre la guerre* (Women Against War League), politicized their mourning dress by keeping it in the public eye at rallies, official government ceremonies, and on the streets, as they

continued to fight for eternal peace (Siebrecht 2014). The publication of Pérley's painting in 1931 marked a high point in the pacifist fight to prevent war as organizations like the *Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté* and their male-dominated counterparts, the *Association pour la paix par le droit* and the communist-aligned *Association des écrivains et artistes révolutionnaires* (Association of Revolutionary Artists and Writers) prepared for the international disarmament conference in Geneva the following year. By reminding the public of the grief caused by the millions of the deaths throughout the country, pacifists sought to reinforce the necessity for all nations to cooperate with one another, reaffirm their commitment to the tenets found in the Kellogg–Briand Pact, and garner support for the *Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of 1932–1934*. By continuously reminding the public of the grief caused by the previous conflicts, these pacifist leagues sought to gain support to ensure that war would never happen again.



Figure 5. Imre Pérely. “Five Million Widows.” War. 1931. Lithograph. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Alongside the icon of the widow, depictions of grieving mothers became a staple of pacifist art during the early interwar period. Not only had millions of mothers lost their sons on the battlefields, but other women were at risk of suffering the same fate if pacifism failed to achieve its goals. These images served as a recruitment tool for the pacifist movements, as women were forced to place themselves in the shoes of the women depicted, and contemplate their sons’ futures in the next conflict. These images also worked to heal animosity between nations, demonstrating that grief was a transnational phenomenon connecting mothers across international borders. Images like that of the “Mothers International” printed in the *Ligue internationale des combattants pour la paix*’s newspaper *La Patrie Humaine* demonstrated this shared grief, with a French mother and a German mother sharing a moment of remembrance at the tomb of an unknown soldier (Figure 6). As one of the main pacifist publications of the interwar period, images like this spread the league’s belief that it was through

the reconciliation of individuals, not governments, that peace could be achieved. With millions of unmarked and unidentified graves littering the battlefields of Europe, many families were left with no known burial site for their relatives, preventing them from partaking in traditional private mourning rituals. Deprived of a private moment with their lost sons, these women found solace with one another in their shared grief, as well as their understanding of each other's experience. This shared moment of remembrance, for many pacifists, was the first step in reconciliation between the former belligerent nations.



Figure 6. Roger Irat. “Mother’s International. My child! My child!” *La Patrie Humaine*. 16–23 April 1932. Ink on Paper. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Images of grieving mothers also invoked religious iconography for inspiration, linking the suffering of the millions of mothers to that of the Virgin Mother. The reinvigoration of religious cults, particularly Marian cults, had been a widespread phenomenon in France throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and continued throughout the First World War (Winter 2014). During the war, the constant fear of being shelled by artillery, poisoned by gas, or killed by going ‘up and over’ led soldiers to believe in superstitions and use talismans as a source of comfort all along the Western Front (Fussell 2000). In Catholic France, the Virgin Mother was one of the main images that brought comfort to the soldiers on the front, as they believed her proximity to Christ allowed her to directly intercede on their behalf and protect them from the dangers of the battlefield. Aware of the wartime legacy these images carried, pacifists continued to use images of the Virgin Mother in their art throughout the interwar period. However, unlike the war time images that had emphasized the role of the Virgin Mother as an intercessor between mankind and the divine, interwar artists working with pacifist organizations and newspapers emphasized the Virgin Mother’s humanity by depicting her as a grieving mother. This allowed them to not only link the sacrifice of the soldiers to that of Christ, but also to link the suffering of the soldiers’ mothers with the sacred suffering of the Blessed Mother herself. Printed in an issue of *La Patrie Humaine*, “Our Lady of Sorrows” references Michelangelo’s *Pieta*, substituting an innocent child in the place of the adult figure of Christ (Figure 7). Printed during the Spanish Civil War, the artist Godard returned to the obscured face of the female mourner, allowing any mother to see herself as the subject of the image. In doing so, he sought to provide an evocative reason for all women to join and continue their support for the pacifist movement in face of the growing threat of a new world war. While the veiled mother harkened back to images from the 1920s and early 1930s, the centrality of the presentation of the body of a dead child drastically differed from images of the earlier period. Pacifist images of grieving mothers created in the pre-Hitler period of the interwar years rarely depicted a body of the fallen. Instead, as seen above, women were

grieving over the graves of fully-grown sons. The inclusion in Godard's image of a dead child radically altered the narrative that pacifists were presenting to their public. Instead of focusing on the grief for a past in which fully-grown children were sacrificed for the bellicose nation, viewers were now being asked to imagine an even more terrible grief that would be caused by the indiscriminate killing of innocent children. This shock factor was aimed at provoking the public to advocate for the victims of the Spanish Civil War, while also increasing their political action to end the war and all future conflicts.



Figure 7. Godard. “Our Lady of Sorrows.” *La Patrie Humaine*. 26 March 1937. Ink on Paper. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Another poignant classical motif utilized in pacifist art was a figure with outstretched arms offering the viewer a glimpse of what was possible. These images were printed as a reflection of the hopes within the pacifist movement for the oncoming eternal peace brought by the Kellogg–Briand Pact and the multitude of other peace conferences in the early interwar period. One example of this motif was the female allegory of peace basking in the radiance of the end of war, heralding a new era of prosperity for all the peoples of the world (Figure 8). The rural setting of the image below, with traditional artisans working diligently at their craft, reflected the desire of the interwar society, plagued by the lingering wartime scarcity and the onset of the Great Depression, to return to the ‘normal’ of the prewar era. Images like this implied that by following the tenets of peace as put forth by the pacifist movement, social and financial security could once again be possible for the people of France, as wasteful military spending would instead be used to ameliorate the living conditions of those affected by the economic depression. The image of peace as bringing hope for the future was juxtaposed by the bleak battlefields of the past war (Figure 9). Here the figure of Christ, with arms spread in a similar manner to the allegory of peace, demanded that the viewers listen to the voices of the dead and open their hearts to one another. The artist relied on the reverence communities held for the dead as the ultimate moral justification for preventing all future wars. If audiences failed to listen to the dead and open their hearts to one another, they were not only dishonoring the sacred dead, but failing to heed the teachings of Christ himself. In doing so, they all but guaranteed the outbreak of a new conflict.

The stark difference between these images of a hopeful future and the remembrance of a bleak past coincided with Hitler’s appointment as German Chancellor and the start of his consolidation of power. This suggests that while pacifists in France were able to remain hopeful that peace would continue to prosper in France throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, the election of Hitler fractured this

hope, eventually forcing the pacifists to take more radical positions to protect the peace they had fought so hard to build. The fears of Hitler destroying the hope for a peaceful and prosperous future were egged on by the growing power of the communist party within France. Founded in 1920, the French Communist Party had taken a predominately antimilitarist stance during the early 1920s as a response to the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 and the use of French troops in the Rif War in Morocco in 1925. However, Stalin's takeover and purging of his rivals in 1927 reverberated within the French Communist Party, causing leaders to fall in-line with Stalinist policies and adapt an increasingly aggressive agenda to bring about the end of the capitalist imperial government. This stance was strengthened in the 1930s as Hitler's rise to power and the remilitarization of Germany threatened to unleash the forces of fascism throughout France as well (Drake 2005). The realization that images of remembrance and communal grief could no longer obtain an international commitment to peace resulted in a shift with French pacifist art to more gruesome images of war and a reliance on new styles of photography and photomontage in the hopes of staving off the threat of war.



Figure 8. “Open Your Hearts.” La Patrie Humaine. 25 March 1933. Ink on Paper. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Figure 9. “Open Your Hearts! The Voices of the Dead.” La Patrie Humaine. 26 May 1933. Ink on Paper. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

4. Horrors of a New War Bring Rupture

The abandonment of images of hope for a peaceful future and an increasing reliance on desperate pleas to maintain peace at all costs became more and more prominent in pacifist art as the 1930s progressed. For the artists involved with the pacifist movement, the shift in the tenor of the message required bolder styles of art to effectively transmit their message. While the Dada and Surrealist movements had been creating radically new art intended as a protest against the bourgeois world order throughout the interwar period, much of their work remained outside of the sphere of pacifist organizations. Those who were actively involved in pacifist circles, like André Breton and Louis Aragon, aligned themselves with the radical pacifist sects who sought a communist revolution to bring about permanent peace. These artists acknowledged that to achieve their communist revolutionary peace, the necessary evils of violence, destruction, and loss of life that were inevitable in war had to be endured one final time. This final act of violence would accomplish the renewal of society that the pre-war avant-garde had been striving to obtain (Eksteins 2000). However, a large portion of pacifists refused to engage with this branch of pacifism as they felt it would alienate the larger public, resulting in the loss of financial, political, and moral support for their cause. Furthermore, the irony inherent in the Dada and Surrealist movements was that despite their support for the proletariat and the communist ideology, the majority of their works stayed within the realm of exhibitions, art galleries, and private collections, inevitably being purchased and viewed only by the very bourgeois society they were trying to dismantle. The narrow distribution of Dada and Surrealist works and the radical politics of their creators rendered them unavailable and unhelpful to pacifist organizations in France, which aimed to communicate with the global masses.

While the avant-garde iconography, style, and themes presented by Dada and Surrealism dominated conversation within the bourgeois art world, artist working with pacifists took a subtler, yet still radically different approach to modernizing their art in the latter half of the period. Images of Christ that had once been used to symbolize the suffering of the soldier on the front were repurposed to represent the suffering pacifists faced due to an increasingly hostile government. The publication of the *Chautemps Circular* in 1933, which revealed the French government's push to actively identify, track, and prosecute conscientious objectors, and the public backlash it faced gave these images a new relevance. By depicting conscientious objectors with their arms outstretched, artists were able to symbolically link them to the iconography of Christ crucified on the cross. The image below, sketched by a member of the *Ligue internationale des combattants pour la paix*, depicted these conscientious objectors as prisoners of the very Versailles Treaty that had once promised to bring peace to the world. The artists strengthened the allegory by having the objector beg God to forgive their captors, as they "did not know what they were doing," just as Christ begged God to forgive those who condemned him to die. As prisoners of the new push for 'national security,' conscientious objectors became martyrs for the pacifist movements (Figure 10).

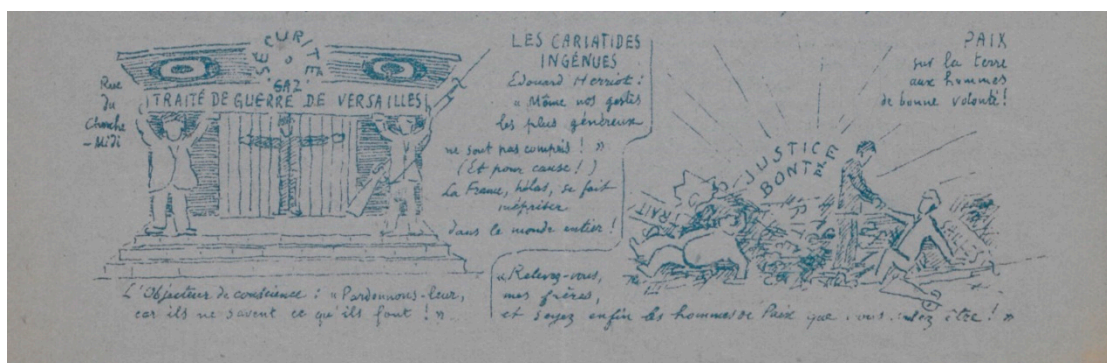


Figure 10. Les Pacifiques. 1932. Graphite on Paper. La Contemporaine. Fonds Duchêne. FΔres 0235. Box 6. Folder 7.

The shift toward more graphic messages of stopping war and violence continued during the latter part of the 1930s as pacifist art took a more overt political stance to protest against the crime of war (Malvern 2004). Disillusioned with optimistic images presented in previous pacifist artwork, some artists working for the French pacifist leagues took the motif of the sacred outstretched figure and ironically adapted it to denounce the militarization of society. Instead of referring to the sacred image of Christ who brought peace, prosperity, and justice, the figure now brought the destruction of war to civilians, deploying modern aircraft to drop bombs on unsuspecting populations (Figure 11). The sacred union, which had been the rallying call during the First World War, was no longer a force that united men across class lines and the diverse regions of France. Instead, the unholy union of government and munitions makers took center stage as the new 'sacred' union that threatened to undo all that had been achieved by the sacrifices of the previous sacred union. Graphic artists designing poster campaigns for elections depicted the former angel of peace as a corrupted shell devoid of the values that it once held. Now as the angel of death, fueled by government inaction and the profit of the military-industrial complex, it could only assure the death and destruction of all nations and their civilians if the general public did not unite with the pacifists to defeat it. Men who had once fought bravely as part of the sacred union of the First World War now had the obligation to fight against the government and the munitions industry to protect the futures of their children. Revolutionary fists of solidarity raised in defiance needed to protect the peace for future generations in the face of the renewed militarism beginning to engulf the nation.

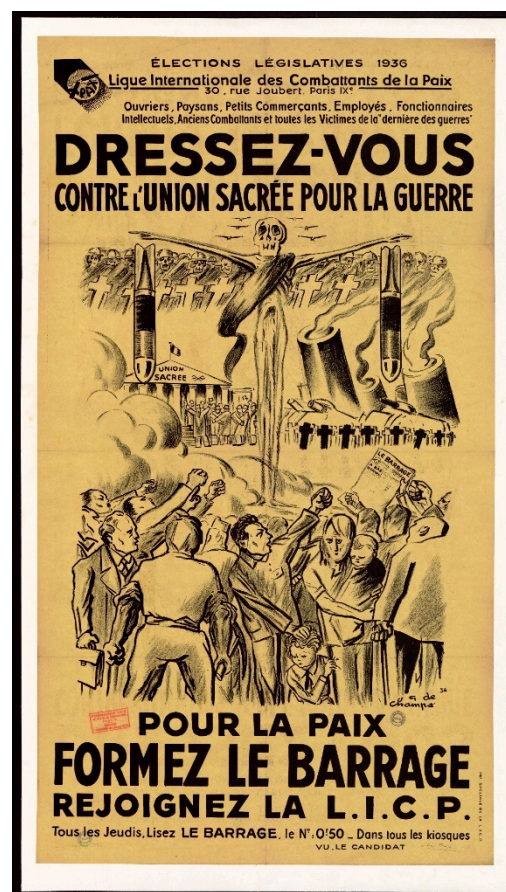


Figure 11. “Stand Up Against the Sacred Union for War. For Peace. Form the Dam. Join the L.I.C.P.” Ligue internationale des combattants de la paix. 1936. Ink on paper. La Contemporaine. AFF20566.

This significant shift away from the themes of grief and bereavement was accelerated by the continued production of newer, deadlier military technology. The expansive destruction that modern

technology had caused during the First World War had been a key component of pacifist arguments for disarmament throughout the interwar period, with the prominent pacifist leagues partaking in investigatory studies of the types of technology produced and the increased military spending needed to continue the production of these weapons. These organizations reprinted and distributed comments of prominent scientists, like Albert Einstein, condemning the use of science for military advancement (Fonds Duchêne; Fonds Romain Rolland). The failure of the *Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments* of 1932–1934, however, drastically weakened the pacifist hopes for a sustained, de-militarized peace in Europe. Aware that scientific advancements in military technology had continued to produce deadlier weapons in the interwar era, pacifists shifted the focus of their artistic campaigns to draw more attention to and protest the militarization of the work being done in the name of scientific advancement. This concentrated attack against militarized science aimed to demonstrate how the emblem of progress and a better future had devolved into a deadly tool that could be used indiscriminately against civilian populations. The “science which kills” (Figure 12) dominated discussions of executive and local committees of the pacifist leagues in France during the late 1930s, as scientists in the employment of munitions makers could now use the gases and biological weapons they created to bring about an all-encompassing total warfare, traversing any geographical, social, or moral boundary (Figure 13).



Figure 12. “The science that kills. Mothers who create life, do you know of what this man dreams? To destroy the life you have created” Ink on paper. La Contemporaine. Fonds Duchêne. FΔres 0235. Box 4. Folder 18.

The figure of the corrupted scientist became the focus for pacifist works of art during this period. Instead of using their expertise to improve living conditions for the masses, these new ‘evil’ scientists strove to achieve the highest casualty count possible, boasting of the terrible consequences that their new bacterial weapons would have on unsuspecting populations (Figure 13). Continuing to emphasize the importance that women played in the pacifist movement, artists added pleas for them, as the creators of life, to join other women and men in the fight against the military-industrial complex

and agitate to stop the work being done by scientists, and to save the lives of their children and future generations (Figure 12).

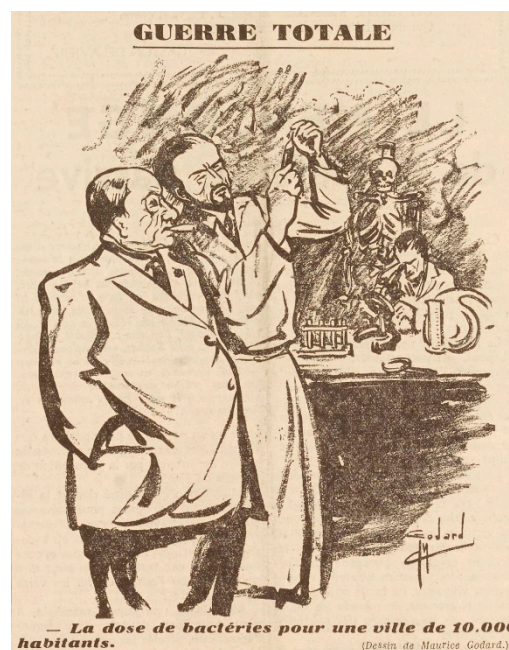


Figure 13. “Total War. The dose of bacteria for a village of 10,000 inhabitants.” La Patrie Humaine. June 17, 1938. Ink on Paper. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The artists depicting these newly developed weapons focused intensely on the ability of enemy forces to unleash these weapons at any time on a civilian population, thanks primarily to improved airplanes that could now travel farther with larger payloads. Traditionally removed from the fields of battle, women, children, and the elderly were all now susceptible to these new technologies. Pacifists recognized that the destiny of non-combatants in the new era of gas and biological warfare had radically altered from their predecessors in the First World War. Seeking to instill this same horrifying realization in their audiences, pacifist art of the late 1930s rendered these consequences as an inescapable fate for everyone. While postcards, posters, and other ephemeral material from the First World War depicted the death of women and children in times of war, these figures had been victims of the battlefield, caught in the cross-fires of opposing armies; a regrettable but expected occurrence in war. The threat of new types of weapons, on the other hand, made it impossible for non-combatants to escape from the death and destruction of war. Improvements made to aerial technology ensured that there would no longer be a safe homefront for women and children to occupy (Figure 14).

The horrors of this new style of warfare depicted by pacifists in their art became a reality with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. To ensure that audiences were exposed to the destruction modern warfare could now unleash on civilian populations, artists for the pacifist cause relied heavily on photography to capture the ‘truth’ of the new style of warfare. In his theoretical treatises on art in the age of mechanical production, Walter Benjamin highlights the importance of photography as a medium for art during this period, stating that “photographs [had] become standard evidence for historical occurrences” (Benjamin 1969, p. 226). He saw the traditional techniques and aesthetics of art as a tool through which the fascist regimes sought to depict their return to a glorious, mythological past. These regimes were responsible for the horrors unleashed on civilian populations, thus tainting the styles of art they preferred. Traditional art styles were now for individual contemplation; the new art forms of photography and photomontage were for the age of action (Benjamin 1969; Faber 2018).

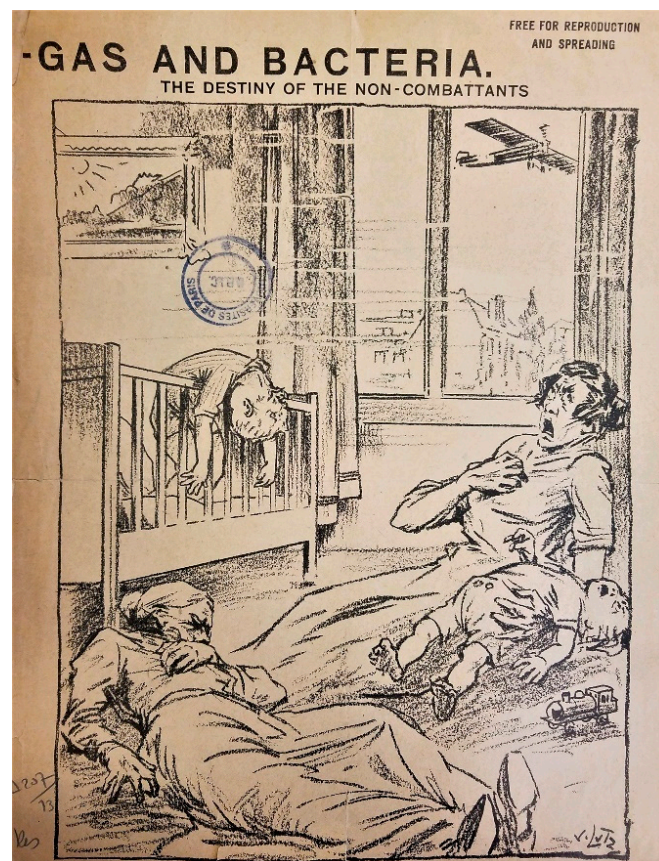


Figure 14. “Gas and Bacteria the Destiny of the Non-Combatants.” 1929. Ink on paper. La Contemporaine. Fonds Duchêne. FΔres 0207. Box 13. Folder 10.

Pacifist artists exemplified Benjamin’s theories through their use of photography as a way of capturing contemporary events as they happened. The instantaneous nature of these photographs proved to their viewing public that their earlier warnings about the horrors of a new war were true. Images of children killed by bombing raids were evocative during this period, as they showed how the most vulnerable in society were no longer safe from any conflict belligerent nations might unleash upon one another (Figure 15). No longer hypothetical, these terrors demanded a renewed commitment to maintaining the peace in Europe. Photos showing the effects of the new weapons, used as a form of propaganda, were intended to radically shift the internal political situation in France. Some pacifist artists, particularly those aligned with the communist party, used these images to condemn the Popular Front administration for failing to aid in the fight against Fascism. They sought to inspire the government and French public at large to engage in the conflict to defeat the fascist forces and bring about a new socialist world order. Religious pacifists, and a growing number of integral pacifists who preferred to surrender to a foreign power over becoming involved in new conflicts, used the images as proof that war, regardless of what it was being fought for, was not worth the cost of human lives, especially those of innocent civilians. In their opinion, it was only through resisting war at the individual and community level that the violence would stop. Facing the increasingly lethal technology available to belligerent forces, the human and material costs of war were no longer worth the potential gains. For these pacifist groups, the public needed to advocate for an immediate end to the conflict, regardless of the political and social outcomes.



Figure 15. “... and assassinate the little children.” Paix et Liberté. 17 January 1938. Photograph. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Capitalizing on the disgust, despair, and anger that the images of murdered children created among the public, artists employed the increasingly popular technique of photomontage to intensify these sentiments and drive the public to action. By the end of the First World War, photomontages had gained the reputation of being ‘truth-telling’ tools, capable of bridging the gap between documentary realism and propaganda. The montage was able to combine the referential and the symbolic, allowing news images to become visual statements with a strong political message (Faber 2018). For pacifists, photomontage allowed them to condemn the fascist actions in Spain, while reinforcing the damage that new forms of warfare caused. Hoping to inspire the French public to demand that the government intervene in the conflict, many communist-aligned pacifists plastered posters like those below across France with the hope of shocking audiences into action to condemn and end not only the Spanish Civil War, but also any potential future wars (Figures 16 and 17). These images, released in 1936, presented the audience with the simple narrative that international fascists were targeting innocent civilians in Spain, and that the general public could no longer stand by and ignore the pain and suffering caused by the renewed militarism in Europe (Faber 2018).



Figure 16. “Schools in Spain.” Photograph, ink on paper. La Contemporaine. AFF24125 (4).

The use of photography and photomontages allowed the artists working with pacifist organizations to likewise break the tradition of not depicting the bodies of the mutilated war dead that had been the *de rigueur* practice during the First World War. While some artists had attempted to depict the bodies of dead soldiers in their works of art during the war, these were heavily censored, with many not being displayed until long after the conflict had ended (Malvern 2004). Unlike the artists of the pre-Hitler period of the interwar decades who relied on traditional techniques like painting, woodblock engraving, and sketching, the instantaneous nature of photography allowed artists in the later 1930s to capture the immediate consequences of the violence of the Spanish Civil War. The ability to rapidly reprint the same image for multiple publications allowed artists to subvert censors and aided the pacifist goal to shock the general public into action by displaying the widespread and indiscriminate violence occurring both on the frontlines and in civilian population centers. These photographs and photomontages also abandoned the religious motifs of a suffering Christ and his grieving mother found in earlier pacifist art. These religious symbols embodied the communal grief of a society that while mourning those lost in a war that had ended, was also hopefully looking forward toward a new era of resurrected peace. In the face of a new, deadlier foreign conflict, that seemed to be only the first of many to come, religious iconography was no longer a potent symbol of a shared, international, collective experience.

Similarly, the images focused heavily on the civilian children killed in the fighting, a drastic difference from the art of the early interwar period that had focused on grieving widows and mothers. Unaffected by the fighting itself, pacifists working in France understood that in order to gain and hold the public's attention and, more importantly, urge them to take a stand against the fighting, they needed to agitate the public into action. By presenting supposedly instantaneous images of dead children, bombed out buildings, and mothers fleeing in terror while attempting to protect their children, pacifists hoped to overcome the antipathy that parts of the French population felt toward the conflict in Spain and inspire widespread political action that would not only bring an end to the conflict in Spain, but would also reestablish a European wide peace and stem the rise of militaristic governments (Faber 2018). This 'shock and awe' campaign was the last desperate attempt of the pacifist organizations working throughout France to prevent the next continent-wide conflict.



Figure 17. Peter Alama. “What Are You Doing to Stop This?” Photograph, ink on paper. La Contemporaine. AFF24125 (36).

5. Conclusions

The Peace Column at the 1937 *Exhibition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne* was a symbol of the achievements that the peace movement had made since the end of the First World War. Inspired by the victory columns of antiquity, the column replaced scenes of battles and conquest with the olive branch of peace as a decorative motif. Surrounding the column, a pavilion dedicated to the League of Nations served as a reminder that all nations were involved in the struggle for peace. By placing the Peace Column at the top of the exhibition, overlooking the national pavilions, the planners wished to demonstrate that the French government, along with the many pacifist organizations headquartered in the country, could continue to lead the world in its efforts to create and maintain peace, despite the threat that the fascist governments in Europe posed (Wilson 2002). Although an imposing 50 m tall, the Peace Column failed to inspire and reinvigorate the public's adherence to pacifist policies, with the conservative French newspaper *Figaro* going so far as to disregard the column as the "Salad of Peace" that had been hastily thrown together and would be quick to rot ("La Salade du Trocadero", *Figaro* 1937). Instead of inspiring a renewed fight for peace, the Peace Column became an ironic monument symbolizing the death of a once widespread ideology.

Down the street from the Peace Column, hidden within the Spanish pavilion, Picasso's *Guernica* presented a modern perspective on the horrors of war, reminding viewers of what the failure to keep the peace looked like. Located in the foyer of the Spanish pavilion, *Guernica* captured the artist's anger toward the Nazi bombers that had destroyed the peaceful town of Guernica a few months earlier. While Picasso drew on inspiration from classical works of art for the figures in his painting, the harsh and violent distortions he used to depict his figures allowed for the ugliness of human actions and the horrors of war to be expressed in a manner inconceivable to his artistic forefathers (Blunt 1969). The monochromic canvas refused to award war the distinction of an honorable, glorious, and worthy cause. Instead it focused on the artist's emotional response to the destruction of his homeland (Martin 2002). The painting made clear to all who saw it that there was no honor to be found in the destruction of innocent bystanders.

Much like the Peace Column, Picasso's *Guernica* received harsh criticism, as many supporters of the Republican Spanish forces critiqued the artist's decision to depict the destruction of Guernica without any reference to any Nazi bombers or actions of Franco's forces in Spain. For these Republican supporters, many of whom were aligned with the communist party, the painting was a missed opportunity to overtly condemn the actions of fascists forces in Spain on a global stage. More conservative viewers remained silent and refused to engage with the painting in public discourse as they found both subject matter and style of the painting disturbing and, for some, against their own political and social perspectives (Martin 2002). Although now considered one of the greatest artistic representations of antiwar sentiment, *Guernica* generally failed to motivate the interwar public to rise up en masse and demand that international and national governments stop the violence and renew the commitments they made to a perpetual international peace.

As symbols of the interwar pacifist agenda to end all future wars, the classically inspired Peace Column and Picasso's modernist *Guernica* embodied the divisions within the art created by the pacifist movement. While traditional religious and allegorical motifs centered around the great peacemakers and the grieving figures of the mother and widow proliferated throughout the 1920s, the events of the 1930s forced pacifist organizations and their artists to rely on more dramatic styles, motifs, and images that focused on the newer, deadlier forms of warfare modern technology could unleash on civilians. The use of photography and photomontage from the Spanish Civil War in pacifist art made these theoretical dangers a reality for viewers. Despite all their efforts to maintain and improve the peace laid out in the Versailles Treaty of 1919, pacifist artwork not only failed to capture the attention of audiences, but it was rejected as a compelling symbol of the social, political, and cultural attitudes of the era. Instead, it was the imposing pavilions of the totalitarian and militarized Soviet Union and Nazi Germany that dominated the conversations and images of the 1937 exhibition. Placed in the shadow of the German and Soviet pavilions, the Peace Column and *Guernica*, much like the aspirations of the

pacifists who created them, failed to captivate audiences or motivate them to hold off the advancement of the militarized totalitarian regimes that surrounded them.

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