Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: The Artist and His Politics

By

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2009

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

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Much of the existing interpretations of Marinetti's political activities and views tend to divide a radical 'heroic' period up to 1920 from the less palatable period thereafter under the Fascist regime. Additionally, research on Marinetti's activities on behalf of the Fascist regime is not as thorough as his political activities before and immediately after the Great War. Consequently, a comprehensive narrative and interpretation of Marinetti's political views and activities throughout his political life—1909-1944—is lacking.

My goal in this dissertation is to provide an interpretive framework that encompasses the whole of Marinetti's politics, and seeks to explain how the supposedly radical Marinetti did in fact become one of the leading members of a reactionary Fascist regime. My thesis is that Marinetti's politics were made up of two fundamentally contradictory sets of goals, and throughout his life he sought to bring these two goals together into a workable politics. He sought to advance individual liberties in modern society, but he also desired national greatness, which entailed a certain level of collective order and unity that perforce required limits on individual liberties. This attempt to achieve both liberty and order manifested itself in a series of radical and nationalist political objectives which always sounded reconcilable in the abstract, but never worked out in practice. When faced with the urgency of political reality, when Marinetti had to

choose between his radical and nationalist goals, he invariably chose the latter. Thus, I argue that there was no split between the supposedly radical Marinetti of the early years (1909-1920) and the Marinetti of the Fascist era. Politically, the latter was the logical development of the former.

Acknowledgements

Working on a dissertation is ultimately a very solitary task. I cannot even begin to count how many hours of my life I've spent researching, reading, organizing, and writing, not to mention the cumulative time spent navigating the anxieties that inevitably arise when one makes their way through a mammoth project such as this. However, through this very long process I was very lucky to have significant support and guidance that allowed me to finally reach this point.

I want to first acknowledge the role Professor Philip Cannistraro, my first adviser, played in this project. I originally came to the CUNY Graduate Center to study modern Italian history with him, and from 1997 to 2005 Phil was a steady guide as I made my way through classes and examinations, and through the early stages of my research. Phil was forever recommending people I should get to know, finding sources of funding for me, and always made me feel better about my work when I needed it. When he became ill he could not be as involved in my work as before, but his moral support was palpable whenever we met. His passing in 2005 was a personal tragedy, and I think of him often, regretting we did not have more time to develop a relationship beyond student and teacher to one of colleagues.

It is at this point that Professor Marta Petrusewicz stepped in and unhesitatingly took on the job of seeing my work to its completion. I will forever be thankful to Marta for taking on this responsibility. She came into a project that was already well under way and took on a student who, to put it mildly, had not always handled criticism well. Marta had the graciousness to give me the space I needed to do the first draft of writing, and then when called upon to read through the sizeable first draft she showed up with

enthusiasm and humbling editing skills. My work is simply far better than it ever could have been without her unwavering commitment to the finely honed sentence and the eloquently delivered point.

I would like to recognize Professor Mary Gibson for her consistent support throughout my time at the CUNY Graduate Center. I took my first class there with her and was immediately impressed with her abilities in the classroom, and subsequently with her academic work. She served on every committee I've had and invariably made me a better scholar with her questions and comments at every stage of my work. Mary, along with Professors Emily Braun, Stan Pugliese and Sandi Cooper, served on my dissertation defense committee and they will forever be in my debt for making the time to read through my work carefully and to offer helpful suggestions at the defense.

During my time at the Graduate Center the History Department has been under the stewardships of Professors David Nasaw, James Oakes and finally Joshua Freeman. All have done a great job in developing the level of professionalism within the department, and providing the students with the guidance they need to complete the program. Personally, the History Department provided much needed financial support throughout the early years of my work, for which I remain very grateful. I would be remiss if I did not mention Ms. Betty Einerman. She runs the department efficiently, and always with good cheer. One never left her office without feeling she would do whatever she could to help you through the bureaucratic end of completing your doctoral work.

My parents Roberto and Mirella deserve special thanks for their support through the years. When I told them I wanted to move to New York to pursue a doctoral degree

they did whatever they could to make it happen. Their support, both financial and moral, were as important as the academic support I've received through the years.

Last, but certainly not the least, I'd like to recognize my wife Nicole Branca, to whom this work is dedicated. She has been and continues to be my best friend and greatest supporter. Her intellectual and emotional contributions throughout this project were innumerable. She frequently and patiently listened to me as I worked out the various ideas I had jumbled in my head, nudged me when I needed to stop researching and start writing, and never lost faith in the value and the quality of the developing project. For all this, and for so much more, thank you.

For Nicole

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Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: The Artist and his Politics

Introduction

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti does not require an introduction for most people. From 1909 to 1944 he was the leader of the Futurist art movement and his fame was widespread both in Italy and internationally. Since the end of World War II Futurism has become widely recognized as a critical component in the development of modern art, and retrospectives of Futurist artwork have appeared with increasing frequency. The year 2009 marks the centenary of Futurism's birth, and numerous conferences and exhibits have been scheduled.[1]

However, Marinetti's modern art bona fides are not the focus of this work. It is his politics which this dissertation investigates and attempts to explain. Specifically, how did the founder of a revolutionary art movement, who clearly sympathized with radical left-wing political movements in Italy early in his career, end up becoming a founding member of the reactionary Fascist movement, and then a leading member of the Fascist regime?

This question has not been answered satisfactorily in spite of all the attention scholars have given to Futurism. In a recent review article Walter Adamson lamented the fragmentary nature of the work that has been done on Futurism over the last generation. He found that scholars have generally focused on only an aspect of Futurism and have failed to provide a 'holistic' interpretation of the movement. Some have ignored politics

[1] See, for instance, Joshua Charles Taylor, *Futurism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961), Karl Gunnar Pontus Hultén, *Futurismo & futurismi = Futurism & futurisms* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), Enrico Crispolti, ed., *Futurismo: 1909-1944: arte, architettura, spettacolo, grafica, letteratura* (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001). A major Futurist exhibit will be at London's Tate Modern, Paris' Centre Pompidou and Rome's Scuderie del Quirinale through 2009. For the English language catalogue of this exhibit, see Didier Ottinger, ed, *Futurism* (London: Tate, 2008).

altogether and focused only on Marinetti and Futurism's contributions to modern art. Others have tended to deal with the politics in a somewhat uncomplicated manner. For instance, Marinetti's revolutionary pronouncements and associations prior to the Great War are emphasized, and then his association with the Fascist regime are largely ignored. Or scholars trace a continuing strand of radicalism in Marinetti that survived under Fascism and that is their means of interpreting his activities during the *ventennio*. Some focus on the Fascist years, but cannot explain how the earlier 'radical' Marinetti ended up so closely aligned with the reactionary regime. Of course, there are those scholars that have labeled Marinetti as a committed Fascist, and a proto-Fascist before that, and dismiss the radical aspects of his politics as just rhetoric.[2]

My goal in this dissertation is to provide an interpretive framework that encompasses the whole of Marinetti's politics, and seeks to explain how the supposedly radical Marinetti did in fact become one of the leading members of a reactionary Fascist regime. My thesis is that Marinetti's politics were made up of two fundamentally contradictory sets of goals, and throughout his life he sought to bring these two goals together into a workable politics. He sought to advance individual liberties in modern society, but he also desired national greatness, which entailed a certain level of collective order and unity that perforce required limits on individual liberties.[3] This attempt to achieve both liberty and order manifested itself in a series of radical and nationalist political objectives which always sounded reconcilable in the abstract, but never worked

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[2] Walter L. Adamson, "Fascinating futurism: The historiographical politics of an historical avant-garde," *Modern Italy* 13, #1 (February, 2008), 69-85.

[3] In using the terms 'liberty' and 'order' I recognize they have a significant pedigree, as detailed, for instance, in Isaiah Berlin's "Two Concepts of Liberty." However, I use them in the general sense as described below. See Berlin's essay in his *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969; the essay was originally delivered as a lecture in 1958).

out in practice. When faced with the urgency of political reality, when Marinetti had to choose between his radical and nationalist goals, he invariably chose the latter. Thus, I argue that there was no split between the supposedly radical Marinetti of the early years (1909-1920) and the Marinetti of the Fascist era. Politically, the latter was the logical development of the former.

Marinetti's radical goals sought to unleash the individual from all forms of repression, be it cultural, social, economic or political. Just as Futurist art sought to unleash the creative potential of the modern artist from the shackles of traditionalist art and its academies—from *passatismo*—Futurist politics as defined by Marinetti would release the individual from the social constraints imposed by the Catholic Church, the political limits of Italy's parliamentary system and its monarchy, and free the worker from the oppression of the capitalist system. Thus, the revolutionary nature of Futurist art fit in well with Marinetti's early interest in revolutionary political groups in Italy such as the anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists and revolutionary socialists that were collectively anti-clerical, anti-bourgeois, republican, anti-parliament and desirous of direct-action politics. Yet, Marinetti was also a nationalist, and hoped to use the revolutionary potential of these liberated individuals for national advancement. However, such advancement required national unity and strength at home as preconditions for expanding Italian influence abroad. His nationalism led him to support every war Italy was involved in, from the Liberal to the Fascist era, and to side with the state whenever national unity was threatened or an opportunity for national advancement presented itself. It was his nationalism which made him such a committed Fascist, and led to the slow and steady abandonment of his radical goals under Fascism. Moreover, he was an avant-garde

elitist, in all things, and though willing to unleash the power of the masses for political ends, he never intended a democracy to emerge in the new Futurist world order. It was to be a government of the elite, which included artists and intellectuals having real political roles.

Terminology is critical in this dissertation, as I place much emphasis on the 'radical' and 'nationalist' components of Marinetti's politics. Certainly, these terms are fraught with meaning, and need to be clearly defined. The problem, however, is that these contradictory components of Marinetti's politics do not fit into a simple category of either radicalism or nationalism. The best one can do is to identify what type of radicalism and nationalism Marinetti's politics most closely approximated at the time, and then point out how his politics differed from them.

When I refer to Marinetti's radicalism, I am referring specifically to his drive to free the individual from all constraints that impeded individual freedom and self-fulfillment. If there is a type of radicalism that best defines Marinetti's it would be anarchic individualism, a term he himself used in his *Al di là del Comunismo*.[4] Anarchic individualism was first conceptualized by the German philosopher Max Stirner in his 1844 book *The Ego and Its Own*.[5] The book was translated into Italian in 1902 and had a significant second life, owing to the widespread influence of Friedrich Nietzsche at that time and the belief that Nietzsche's notion of the 'Overman' had its roots in Stirner's

[4] F.T. Marinetti, "Al di là del Comunismo: Il cittadino eroico—Scuole di coraggio—Gli artisti al potere—Le case del genio—La vita festa," ["Beyond Communism: The Heroic Citizen—Schools of Courage—The Artists in Power—The Houses of Genius—The Festive Life"] in F.T. Marinetti, *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, edited by Luciano De Maria (Verona: Arnoldo Mondadori Editori, 1968), 411. Note, this was written in December 1919 and published in *La Testa di Ferro*, "The Journal of *Fiumanesimo*," on August 15, 1920.

[5] Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, edited by David Leopold (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995; original German publication, 1844).

anarchic individualism, or as the latter termed it, 'egoism' or 'ownness'.[6] According to Stirner's modern editor, the philosopher's goal was the attainment of ownness, and " 'Ownness' is best understood as a variety of self-mastery, a form of substantive individual autonomy which insists that any actions or desires which involve waiving or suspending individual judgment violate the self-mastery and independence of the person concerned."[7] Thus, Stirner did not recognize the right of any church, state, party, or even the family, to dictate an individuals' code of conduct, as that would be an infringement of individual freedom, and would stunt the attainment of self-fulfillment. Only if the individual consented to live by such rules would autonomy be maintained, and such consent would have to be continuously reappraised. Whatever Stirnerian associations could exist, would thus be of the voluntary sort, a 'union of egoists' as he put it, with each individual within those associations free to opt out whenever they felt their membership had lost its benefits.[8] Stirner also had no patience with the concept of Christian or bourgeois morality dictating how an individual should live. In essence, Stirner argued that all ideas are relative, and those that are commonly accepted as the proper means of doing something do not have any inherent and absolute value—they are simply the ideas of the dominant forces in society. Thus, Stirner insisted that each individual had the right to challenge all oppression, all ideas they disagreed with, and if they succeeded, then they would have attained the right to live as they chose. As he

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[6] Max Stirner, *L'unico*, translated by Ettore Zoccoli (Milan: Bocca, 1902). On Stirner's many revivals, see Lawrence S. Stepelevich, "The Revival of Max Stirner," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 35, #2 (April-June, 1974), 323-328. On Stirner in Italy, see Alberto Ciampi, *Futurist e anarchici: quali rapporti? Dal primo manifesto alla prima guerra mondiale e dintorni (1909-1917)* (Pistoia: Edizioni Archivio Famiglia Berneri, 1989); Stephen B. Whitaker, *The Anarchist Individualist Origins of Italian Fascism* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2002).

[7] David Leopold, "Introduction" to Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, xxii.

[8] Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 146, 160.

argued, "Might is a fine thing, and useful for many purposes; for 'one goes further with a handful of might than with a bagful of right.'"[9]

Marinetti was certainly an anarchic individualist in his denunciations of the Church, the state, bourgeois and Christian morality, and traditionalism as shackles on individual freedom. And, during Marinetti's most radical political period, 1918-1920, his view of a libertarian society of self-regulating individuals owed much to Stirner's influence. However, as I argue, Marinetti recognized the need of the state to impose the discipline required in times of national emergency or opportunity. Thus, the best one could say was that Marinetti was a contingent anarchic individualist, or, in the context of this dissertation, a contingent radical.

Marinetti's nationalism is also difficult to pin down to one specific type. Certainly Marinetti's nationalism had much in common with the extreme nationalism common in early Twentieth century Italy, which Emilio Gentile has termed 'modernist nationalism', Zeev Sternhell refers to as 'organic nationalism', Salvatore Saladino has labeled the 'new' or 'nationalist' Right, and Eugen Weber, for France, has labeled 'national socialism'. This extreme nationalism, as practiced, for instance, by Enrico Corradini in Italy, sought to reverse the emphasis on individualism and materialism—legacies of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution—which were deemed responsible for the development of weak and divided nations. Consequently, extreme nationalists were anti-liberal, anti-parliament, anti-socialist, and anti-democratic. They sought national unity of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat through a secular religion of the nation, with the individual being subsumed to the collective will of the nation, and with the totalitarian state acting as the nation's educator and protector. Extreme

[9] Ibid., 151.

nationalism embraced mass society and modernity, and sought to harness them both in its quest to build national strength. The masses would be educated to their new level of national unity through both a cultural revolution, as directed by the modernist avant-garde, and through war, that crucible in which individual and material interests melted away in the common pursuit of nationalist goals against other nations in a never-ending Darwinian struggle for international hegemony.[10]

Certainly, Marinetti was an extreme nationalist, in that he similarly believed in the secular religion of the nation, in the educative and regenerative properties of war, and, as mentioned, when the nation was in danger or there was an opportunity for national advancement, Marinetti always sided with the expansive powers of the state and the sublimation of individual rights to the needs of the collective. However, this latter point, a critical feature of extreme nationalism, was not Marinetti's default position in his politics. Marinetti was perpetually struggling throughout his political life with finding a means to advance *both* the needs of the individual *and* the needs of the collective. That he consistently compromised his defense of individual rights in his politics does not change the fact that he attempted to formulate a politics that reconciled the needs of the one and the many. Such an intellectual and political struggle was never countenanced in

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[10] Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy*, translated by Keith Botsford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996; original Italian publication, 1993); Emilio Gentile, "The Conquest of Modernity: From Modernist Nationalism to Fascism," *Modernism/Modernity* 1.3 (1994), 55-87; Zeev Sternhell, with Mario Sznajder and Maia Asheri, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994; original French publication, 1989); Salvatore Saladino, "Italy," *The European Right: A Historical Profile*, edited by Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965); Eugen Weber, "Nationalism, Socialism, and National-Socialism in France," *French Historical Studies*, 2, #3 (Spring, 1962), 273-307. Walter Adamson advances the same thesis of a new, modern, and extreme nationalism based on a secular religion of the nation, though placing more emphasis on the role of the modernist avant-garde in this project, and their contribution to the development of Fascism, in his "Fascism and Culture: Avant-Gardes and Secular Religion in the Italian Case," *Journal of Contemporary History* 24 (1989), 411-435; and Walter L. Adamson, "Modernism and Fascism: The Politics of Culture in Italy, 1903-1922," *American Historical Review* 95, #2 (April, 1990), 359-390.

the nationalism of Enrico Corradini, Maurice Barrès, or, ultimately, in the politics of Benito Mussolini.[11] Marinetti was simply not as militantly anti-individualist as his extreme nationalist contemporaries.

Nor, it should be pointed out, was Marinetti somehow a latter-day Mazzinian nationalist, as has been argued by Giovanni Lista. Lista contends that Marinetti, like Mazzini, was avant-garde, anti-clerical, republican, and directed his manifestoes at the Italian people as a means of fomenting a cultural revolution that would give birth to a new and modern national consciousness, which would then lead to a new and modern Italy. Similarly, Lista believes that just as Mazzini sought to one day universalize his hoped for revolution in Italy, so Marinetti sought to globalize his revolution in modern art by spreading Futurism throughout the world.[12] However, Lista glosses over the very obvious facts that Marinetti was not a democratic nationalist as Mazzini was, he was a political elitist. Moreover, Mazzini hoped for global amity, as peoples throughout the world acquired their democratic rights and national self-determination. Marinetti's nationalism was purely chauvinistic. His goal was to spread Italian, and Futurist, influence globally so as to dominate, not cohabitate.[13]

In order to show the evolution of Marinetti's politics and the consistent compromise of his radical goals to further his nationalist ones, my chapters are organized chronologically. In each period I show that Marinetti's political choices were in direct

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[11] On Maurice Barrès, see the aforementioned Weber, and Zeev Sternhell, "National Socialism and Antisemitism: The Case of Maurice Barrès," *Journal of Contemporary History* 8, #4 (October, 1973), 47-66.

[12] Giovanni Lista, "The Activist Model; or, the Avant-Garde as Italian Invention," *South Central Review* 13.2-3 (Summer-Fall, 1996), 13-34.

[13] Certainly, the argument can be made that within Mazzinian nationalism lay the roots of Italian chauvinistic nationalism, as Mazzini always saw Italy as having a leading role in the global revolution in politics and society he envisaged, however this point is beyond the scope of my work. See Hedva Ben-Israel, "Nationalism in Historical Perspective," *Journal of International Affairs* 45, #2 (Winter, 1992), 367-397.

response to Italy's evolving political situation. Marinetti's politics always included both radical and nationalist goals, but just how prominent the radical goals were, and just as importantly, how easily they were compromised, was a consequence of Marinetti's reaction to changing circumstances. My goal in each chapter is to show what Marinetti claimed to believe in at that time and how it evolved, but I also place a great deal of emphasis on what he actually did. Much of Marinetti's reputation for radicalism is based on the controversial statements found in his many manifestoes, speeches and articles. Yet, when Marinetti's words are matched to his actions, when he actually tried to put his ideas into practice, it was the nationalist element of his politics which predominated.

In Chapter One I focus on the years 1909-1918. I look at Marinetti's politics from the foundation of Futurism to near the end of the Great War, and I argue that right from the very beginning there was tension between his radical and nationalist goals. From 1909 to 1911 Marinetti courted the revolutionary left with rhetoric that was anti-bourgeois, anti-parliament, anti-clerical, republican, and pro-worker. At the same time he was engaging in nationalist politics aimed at securing Italian *irredenta* from Austria and trumpeting the glories of war for the rejuvenation of the Italian nation. His nationalism alienated much of the left and he failed to make substantial converts. From 1911-1918 Italy was engaged in two wars, and Marinetti threw himself into both conflicts whole-heartedly. During this period his initial attempts at trying to reconcile his radical and nationalist goals came to an end. He became a committed believer in the idea that support for the nation in a time of war took precedence over the preservation or advancement of any individual freedoms, including artistic freedoms. All had to be sacrificed to the war effort.

It was only in 1918, in the final months of the war, when Marinetti resurrected his long dormant radical politics. He transformed Futurism into a formal political party to help determine the shape of post-war Italy. In the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party Marinetti laid out a whole series of radical points which would have drastically reformed Italian society if put into place. The manifesto called for, amongst other things, the redistribution of lands to peasants and veterans, worker participation in the running of factories, the vote for women, the expulsion of the Vatican from Italy, and a drastic reduction in the powers of the military and the state. However, this very radical document was only offered because Marinetti had become convinced that the war had transformed Italians and given them a firm national consciousness. During the war they did their duty and voluntarily accepted whatever limits on individual freedoms were required to achieve victory. Thus, Marinetti concluded that national unity would not be harmed by the drastic expansion in individual liberties envisioned by the manifesto, as the people had shown themselves ready to voluntarily renounce such liberties when the nation required them to. The manifesto of the Futurist Political Party was the closest Marinetti ever came to working out a detailed political program that brought together his radical and nationalist goals, preserving both individual liberty and collective order. Yet it was based on an illusion of national unity that simply did not exist. Certainly the war had produced an unprecedented display of Italian nationalism, but it had also radicalized the working classes and the Italian Socialist Party. The result was the social cleavages of the Red Biennium, as militant workers and socialists battled equally militant nationalist anti-socialists to determine the shape of post-war Italy.

In Chapter Two I look at Marinetti's attempts at trying to craft a workable politics that was both radical and nationalist in the turbulent years of 1918 to 1920 and why it was doomed to failure. During this period he simultaneously campaigned for the drastic expansion of individual liberties as laid out in the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party, and engaged in nationalist politics to defend Italian territorial claims at the Paris Peace Conference and to resist a socialist revolution in Italy. To achieve these goals Marinetti allied his Futurist Political Party with Arditi veterans and Benito Mussolini's followers. Together they founded the *Fasci di combattimento* in March, 1919. The Fascists proved up to the task in furthering Marinetti's nationalist goals. They forced the Italian government to hold firm to much of the territories promised to Italy as a condition for its entry into the war on the Allied side, and they violently repressed any sign of a potential socialist uprising.

Yet the Fascists failed to advance Marinetti's radical goals, and he became increasingly disenchanted with their 'reactionary' tendencies, especially Mussolini's. Marinetti was committed to improving the economic condition of Italian workers, and thus insisted on their right to strike for economic reasons. Mussolini, and many Fascists, came to believe that in the politically charged atmosphere of the Red Biennium all workers were controlled by socialists, and a strike was a prelude to a revolution. Mussolini also had little interest in attacking the monarchy or the Vatican. Consequently Marinetti abandoned Mussolini in the Summer of 1919 and sought another means to transform Italy through a politics that was both radical and nationalist. His solution was Gabrielle D'Annunzio who had seized the city of Fiume when the Italian government had signaled it was willing to part with it in the interest of settling territorial disputes with

Yugoslavia. However, D'Annunzio proved to be a disappointment as well, and resisted Marinetti's attempt at bringing his revolution into Italy. With no other options left, Marinetti tried once again to work with Mussolini in the fall electoral campaigns. He insisted on making his radical goals part of the Fascist platform, and openly dissented with Mussolini on Fascism's campaign platform. The Fascists received few votes at the election. Consequently, Mussolini moved Fascism into a rightward direction and more aggressively targeted the socialists in an attempt to broaden Fascist support amongst the middle classes. Marinetti finally realized his radical goals had no place within Mussolini's Fascism, and he and other Futurists abandoned the movement in May, 1920.

In this concentrated post-war period Marinetti had decided he was going to settle for nothing less than a politics that advanced both his radical and nationalist goals. However, the futility of this quest became apparent when he tried to put his ideas into practice. His political goals were fundamentally incompatible. They had failed to find a mass audience in the relatively peaceful early years of Futurism, 1909-1911. During the Red Biennium it was impossible to find support for a politics of radicalism and nationalism when the country had divided itself over just these issues. In the end, Marinetti had his ideals, but no means to bring them into reality.

Chapter Three traces Marinetti's journey back to Fascism from 1920 to 1924. Contrary to much of the historiography of political Futurism that argues Marinetti abandoned politics after 1920 and re-joined Fascism primarily to advance the interests of the Futurist art movement, I argue that in this period Marinetti's was still very much involved in politics, and his choice to re-join Fascism was based on the same political calculation that had determined his political choices prior to 1920. I show that after

having abandoned Mussolini in 1920 Marinetti was still concerned with a potential socialist revolution in Italy and the failure of the Liberal government to resist it. Consequently, by 1922 he had come to believe that Mussolini's Fascists were the only hope for halting the advance of socialism in Italy, and to achieving the domestic order the country needed for national advancement. As such, when Mussolini became Prime Minister Marinetti made the decision to re-join Fascism on its so called radical, *dicianovista* wing. Marinetti believed that in being a radical Fascist he could simultaneously achieve his nationalist goals and could also moderate the reactionary elements within Fascism by preserving its more radical heritage. These radical ideals had been laid out in the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party and had been the basis of the early Futurist-Fascist alliance. Yet, in choosing to re-join Fascism primarily for nationalist ends, Marinetti had chosen to compromise his radical goals, just as he had done in the period 1911-1918, when he frequently proclaimed that 'the word Italy must dominate the word Liberty.' Simply the act of joining was an abandonment of the claim that Fascism was too reactionary. Moreover, while in the party Marinetti certainly expressed misgivings that Fascism was not anti-clerical enough, was too repressive of workers, and was too accommodating to the monarchy, yet these criticisms never amounted to any fundamental challenges to Mussolini's leadership. During the Matteotti Crisis, when Mussolini's leadership was challenged from both within Fascism and the country at large, Marinetti remained loyal to Mussolini, muted any criticism of the regime, and then welcomed the institution of the dictatorship that brought national order back to Italy.

In my final two chapters, Chapter Four dealing with the years 1925-1929 and Chapter Five dealing with 1929-1944, I focus on Marinetti's contributions to the advancement of the Fascist dictatorship as the means to advance his nationalist goals, and the gradual and complete compromise of what remained of his radical goals in the process. Marinetti's contributions to the dictatorship have not received anywhere near the level of scrutiny which Marinetti's pre-Fascist life has received. Consequently, the historiography of this period can make the claim that Marinetti had either abandoned politics in this period to focus on his art movement, or remained a true radical that resisted Fascist reactionism throughout the dictatorship. However, I argue that no such break in Marinetti's life existed. He had compromised his radical principles to advance his nationalist ones when he re-joined Fascism in 1922, just as he had compromised them in the period 1911-1918, and under the dictatorship he continued this process. He became ever more committed to advancing Fascism because it promised national greatness, and along the way he systematically renounced each of his radical goals.

In Chapter Four I emphasize Marinetti's contributions to the development and strengthening of the dictatorship in its early formative years, 1925-1929. I show that Marinetti was instrumental in the formation and implementation of Fascist cultural policy, wherein the state took an active role in the management and direction of culture as a means of building a national consciousness. He had been calling for just this level of state involvement since 1919. Marinetti was an early and public supporter of Mussolini's cultural policy, and served in the institutions created by the state to direct culture. Marinetti was also instrumental in expanding Fascist influence abroad. Marinetti aided in the Italianization of the recently annexed South Tyrolese, he traveled to South America to

strengthen Fascism's link to Italian emigrants abroad, he traveled to France to firm up connections to French fascists, and he also traveled to Spain to solidify Fascist Italy's ties to that country. For all of these activities, Marinetti was rewarded with a nomination to the Royal Academy of Italy, the *Accademia*.

But loyalty and the advancement of Fascism were not enough for this promotion; Marinetti also had to renounce much of his radical goals. Thus, in this period Marinetti consciously abandoned his belief in a libertarian state and society in the interest of a strong, totalitarian state. He abandoned his defense of workers' economic rights when he accepted the imposition of the corporative state. He abandoned his anti-clericalism when he accepted Mussolini's policy of making peace with the Vatican through the Lateran Accords. He abandoned his republicanism when he accepted the position to the *Accademia* and had to swear an oath of loyalty to the King. The one component of his radical agenda which he kept and chose to fight for within Fascism was the defense of artistic freedom, specifically the freedom of the modern artist against the attacks of conservative and anti-modernist Fascists. However, even here Marinetti compromised in the interest of national advancement, as he chose to support state initiatives that promoted *all* Italian art, modern and traditional, when in the past he would have refused the validity of such *passatista* art.

In Chapter Five I shift my focus to Marinetti's contributions to Fascist imperialism and its wars. His actions for the regime in the period 1929 to 1944 were the logical extension of his activities in early formative years of the dictatorship. Then, Mussolini's goal had been to secure the dictatorship and lay the foundations of the totalitarian state. Marinetti had been integral in that process. Now, with the dictatorship

secure, Mussolini turned his attention to more aggressively project Fascist influence abroad, and Marinetti was there at every step of the way. Mussolini wanted Italy to become more culturally and economically autarchic in preparation for its eventual wars and Marinetti responded with the manifestoes of the Futurist Kitchen and Futurist Hat. Though generally regarded as ridiculous documents that displayed the Futurists' dwindling relevance, and the decline of their once fiery revolutionary potential, these documents were clearly in line with the regime's autarchic policies. Mussolini needed to solidify the allegiance of Italy's Catholics to the Fascist state before engaging in any foreign adventures, though he did not want to further empower the Vatican in the process. Marinetti responded with the *Arte Sacra* movement which had similar goals. Scholars have explained this art form as either gross hypocrisy from the once fiery anti-clerical, pure opportunism, or a sincere religious re-birth as Marinetti got older. These all have some truth to them. However, the *Arte Sacra* movement was launched in the midst of Mussolini's battle with the Vatican over its autonomy and its threat to the totalitarian state. This was hardly a coincidence. Marinetti was furthering Mussolini's, and his own, goal of national unity as a prelude to imperial wars. When Mussolini sought to build a militarist sensibility in the Italian people in preparation for imperial warfare Marinetti was instrumental in furthering this policy. *Aeropittura* and *Aeropoesia* were launched in this period to glorify Italy's expanding air-force and its ability to project Italian influence abroad. Again, some scholars have dismissed these movements as signs of pure opportunism to curry favor with the regime, and somehow out of line with earlier Futurist art. I show that these movements were in keeping with long-established Futurist artistic principles and were specifically a reflection of the strong nationalist impulse that

dominated Marinetti's politics during the Fascist era. When Mussolini sought to build a colonialist sensibility in the Italian people, and to signal to other nations Italy's intent on expanding its empire, he organized a series of colonial exhibitions to highlight Italy's role as a colonial power. Marinetti made sure the Futurists contributed to such exhibits.

Besides furthering Fascist policy through Futurist artwork, Marinetti also sought to expand Italian influence abroad through well-timed overseas trips to countries Mussolini was specifically interested in. Mussolini desired greater influence in North Africa, especially amongst the Italian emigrants there, and in Eastern Europe. These were the countries Marinetti traveled to, and in each country he delivered the same basic speech that glorified Mussolini, the 'new' Fascist Italy, and how integral Futurism was to the 'revolution' that had created this new Italy.

The capstone to all this activity of solidifying the domestic base and the first steps towards expanding Italian influence abroad was the Ethiopian War. Marinetti campaigned for this war right from the moment Mussolini had signaled that it was his intent conquer the country and erase the humiliation of Adowa. When the British threatened sanctions if Italy went to war, Marinetti responded with a manifesto denouncing the British and preparing Italians for a possible war with that nation. When the war began Marinetti campaigned in France to reduce the severity of such sanctions. He founded the Futurist *Naturismo* movement as a response to the sanctions and to further Mussolini's autarchic policies. He recruited for the war, fought in the war, did propaganda for the war, and even justified the use of poison-gas in the war.

Through all these efforts at advancing his nationalist goals through Fascism, Marinetti did not resurrect the radical goals that he had so convincingly buried in the

early years of the dictatorship. The one component of his once lengthy series of radical goals that he had preserved and continued to fight for within the dictatorship was the defense of artistic freedom. He had successfully resisted the onslaughts of Fascist conservatives and anti-modernists in the culture battles of the late Twenties, and would fight the same battles in the later Thirties. However, something had now changed, which would seriously undermine Marinetti's ability to defend cultural freedoms within Italy, and in the end he compromised on this one last freedom in the interest of preserving national order as Italy embarked on World War II.

Marinetti's elevation to *Accademico* in 1929 gave him far more influence and visibility than he had ever had under Fascism. However, it also made him a target for his opponents. At home and abroad Marinetti lost support amongst the youth, students, and intellectuals because he was seen as too Fascist, too accommodating to the regime, and having compromised too much of the radicalism that they considered integral to Futurism. In the Thirties Marinetti was routinely attacked from within his own movement, at the performance of his plays, and most especially in the international arena at the PEN Congresses where left-wing intellectuals denounced his Fascist allegiance and eventually drummed him out of the organization. Yet, at the same time Marinetti was also facing growing antagonism from conservatives and anti-modernists at home who felt he was not Fascist enough. As an *Accademico,* every one of his actions were, they felt, a reflection of the regime. Thus, he incurred their ire because his behavior and his various Futurist projects brought ridicule to the regime. More importantly, his claim that Fascism was distinctly modern and Futurist-inspired clashed with their view of Fascism that was distinctly anti-modern, as they associated modernism with internationalism, radicalism

and Bolshevism, and ultimately saw it as being too 'Jewish'. Moreover they desired an art that had clear Fascist and nationalist themes, and not what they viewed as the chaos that defined modern art. Having made so many enemies on both the left and the right, at home and abroad, Marinetti was powerless to stop the advance of Fascist conservatives and anti-modernists during the culture wars of the late Thirties. He also failed to derail the increasingly close relations of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany which had triggered the culture wars in the first place.

In these struggles to defend modern art and to resist the growing Nazi influence in Italy, many scholars see signs of Marinetti's continuing radicalism in the face of the increasingly repressive years leading up to World War II. However, this is an overly generous interpretation of Marinetti's actions. Recognizing his weakness, Marinetti compromised on his defense of modern art, which was the only real freedom he had tried to protect within the regime. He accepted the anti-Semitic premise of the anti-modernist attack on modern art, and then simply defended modern art by claiming it was free of any Jewish influence. Additionally, he did this in the midst of the regime's implementation of the Racial Laws. Thus he accepted the regime's new repressive turn and aided in the persecution of the Jews. However, even this tainted defense of cultural expression did not last very long. When the regime made clear it would no longer tolerate any of his dissent, as it was seeking to increase its control over society and culture in preparation for war, Marinetti abandoned this one final liberty he had stood up for and loyally accepted the regime's cultural dictates. During the war he supported the regime and resigned himself to work that was clearly propagandistic, regardless of the claim that it was art. Marinetti's resistance to the Nazi alliance is also a questionable marker of his continuing

radicalism within the regime. Marinetti made some controversial anti-Nazi comments in early 1939, however scholars have not focused on the fact that once the war began Marinetti buried all of his criticisms of Italy's ally. In fact, during the war Marinetti worked to solidify ties with his cultural counterparts in Germany to strengthen the alliance, and publicly referred to Hitler as the logical extension of Futurist political principles which glorified war as the central element in human history. In the period leading up to the war Marinetti was not a radical heroically resisting the reactionary development of Fascism. He was a nationalist who abandoned the last of his radical goals, partly out of weakness, but mostly because his nation was about to embark on war, and as he always said, 'the word Italy must dominate the word Liberty.' Once the war began, all traces of his radicalism were gone.

In writing this dissertation and positing that Marinetti's politics were a mixture of radical and nationalist goals, and that his nationalist goals were always privileged in times of national crisis or opportunity, I am specifically responding to the state of the historiography of political Futurism. The historical literature has been unable to explain how the supposedly radical Marinetti ended up being such a committed Fascist that he spent his final months of life trailing Mussolini into exile into the Republic of Salò. As such, scholars who focus on the radical aspects of Marinetti's politics are unable or unwilling to explain the more nationalist and reactionary components of his politics. Scholars who focus on his nationalist elements cannot quite explain why Marinetti was viewed as a radical for much of his life. In the end we have contradictory interpretations that fail to provide an explanation as to the motives of this man who had significant influence at home and abroad far beyond his role as a cultural impresario. My conclusion

is that he was both a radical and a nationalist, but always a nationalist when choices had to be made to turn his varied political impulses into a workable politics. As such, because of the predominant nationalist component of Marinetti's politics, in combination with the social and political upheavals that rocked Italy from the birth of Futurism through to Mussolini' acquisition of power, it was almost inevitable that Marinetti the Futurist would evolve into Marinetti the Fascist who progressively expunged whatever radical impulses had once made up his political world-view.

The Historiography of Political Futurism

Marinetti's association with Fascism has dominated the historiography of political Futurism. The central question has always been how the supposedly radical Marinetti ended up as such a devoted Fascist. The answers provided by scholars have invariably served to further their view of Marinetti as either a radical or a reactionary nationalist. However, this dichotomous approach has failed to provide a comprehensive interpretation of Marinetti's entire political life because it places limits on the analysis from the very beginning.

In interpreting Marinetti's politics I have made some clear decisions as to what my focus will be in order to provide an interpretation of Marinetti's whole political life. As already mentioned, I do not seek to answer whether Marinetti was a radical or a nationalist. I posit he was both, and in the final section of this introduction I trace the origins of these fundamentally contradictory political impulses. This dissertation is a study of how Marinetti tried to reconcile these impulses into a workable politics and the predominance of his nationalist goals in this process.

I have also chosen to keep my focus specifically on Marinetti throughout my dissertation. Political Futurism attracted members from the extreme left and right wing of the political spectrum, who went on to become communists or Fascists, respectively, when the Futurist Political Party dissolved in 1920. The multiplicity of members' ideologies within Futurism has often befuddled scholars' attempts at determining the nature of political Futurism. I argue that for all intents and purposes Marinetti was Futurism, and he dictated the direction of its politics. Certainly there were members that were more radical or reactionary than he was, but they ultimately left the movement.

Marinetti's politics were a mixture of radicalism and nationalism, and consequently he attracted, and lost, a wide range of followers as he adapted his political goals to changing circumstances.

Finally I have chosen to define politics in the broadest fashion. The Futurist Political Party came to an end in 1920. Thereafter, many historians write as if Marinetti abandoned politics altogether and their resulting analysis of Marinetti under Fascism is superficial. In this fashion Marinetti is absolved of any responsibility for the success of Fascism, as he was simply an artist, or he is dismissed as a straightforward opportunist and not deserving of any closer analysis. In both cases the extent of Marinetti's contributions to the success of the Fascist regime at securing order at home and then expanding its overseas influence are severely under studied. The one event that is studied in great detail is Marinetti's defense of modern art in 1938, which is used to show Marinetti's continuing radicalism under the repressive regime and his courage in dissenting with regime policy. However, I will show that this was hardly an example of courage and, put into the context of Marinetti's political life as a whole, was proof of the final compromises of his radical principles under Fascism.

The decision by most scholars to treat the period after 1920 as Marinetti's abandonment of politics rests on an overly narrow definition of what Marinetti's political activities entailed. The Futurist Political Party only existed from 1918-1920. For the period 1909 to 1918 most scholars interpret the nature of Marinetti's politics through the analysis of his political manifestoes and speeches, the political themes found in his poetry and prose work, his support for the Libyan War, his involvement in the interventionist campaign, and then his service in the Great War. There is no reason to conclude that the

dissolution of the Futurist Political Party meant that Marinetti had abandoned politics. Marinetti was still writing political articles and giving political speeches after 1920. He released *Futurismo e Fascismo* in 1924 justifying his re-entry into Fascism and positing Futurism as the radical precursor and most significant element within Fascism. He released *Marinetti e il Futurismo* in 1929 upon his nomination to the *Accademia* in order to provide an historical justification for his elevation to the Fascist elite. Throughout the regime he gave a host of political speeches supporting its policies. His prose and poetry work were still influenced by political themes. In 1920 he wrote the manifesto for *Tattilismo* and the novel *Gli indomabili*. Both were concerned with the rising tide of socialism in Italy and that a means had to be found to win over the working classes from the Socialist Party. In 1937 he published *Il poema africano della Divisione '28 Ottobre'* which glorified the conquest of Ethiopia. During World War II he published a variety of *aeropoemi* which glorified Italy's military in that conflict. Finally, Marinetti's support for Mussolini's regime and his policies is undeniable. He aided in the development of the dictatorship and the expansion of Fascist influence abroad. Even if we limited our focus to just his activities on behalf of Fascist wars, these would be extensive. He did propaganda for them, recruited for them, and fought in them. The same nationalist impulse which had led Marinetti to support the Libyan War and Italy's participation in the Great War led him to support Mussolini's wars. Marinetti was politically active from 1909 right to the very end of his life. Through it all the unifying theme of his politics was the attempt to advance both radical and nationalist goals, and the consistent triumph of his nationalism when compromises were made to turn his irreconcilable goals into a workable politics.

The historiographical approaches to interpreting Marinetti's politics fall into two broad categories: those that emphasize the nationalist and reactionary components of his politics and see an uncomplicated evolution from Futurism to Fascism, and those that emphasize the radical components of his politics and underplay the connection between the two movements.

Scholars on the left have explained Marinetti's Fascism by discounting any radical components in his politics in the years leading up to 1918, when Marinetti and Mussolini began a formal political alliance. Umberto Carpi and Enzo Santarelli, for instance, have viewed Marinetti's politics as being unambiguously proto-Fascist up to 1918, and then convincingly Fascist thereafter. They point to such similarities as both movements' extreme nationalism and imperialism, their use of revolutionary rhetoric to attract the working classes, but never actually threatening the capitalist-bourgeois state, their collective anti-democracy, anti-liberalism, anti-parliamentarism, and their proclivity for extra-parliamentary violence to achieve their ends.[14]

Although these similarities are beyond doubt, this approach fails to explain why Futurism did elicit some support from the revolutionary left in Italy, and why even Antonio Gramsci, the Italian communist, once saw the possibility of a union of the Turin working class and the leftist Futurists in the *Proletkult* movement in 1921, whose goal was to educate workers in modern art and revolutionary politics.[15] That Futurism in the

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[14] Umberto Carpi, "Sovversivismo anti borghese e borghesia sovversiva: appunti sull'ideologia del 'primo futurismo'," in *Lavoro Critico* 25 (January/April, 1982), 5-38; Enzo Santarelli, "Il movimento politico futurista," in his *Fascismo e neofascismo: studi e problemi di ricerca* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1974).

[15] On Gramsci's interest in the revolutionary potential of a Futurist cultural alliance, see his often quoted letter to Trotsky "Marinetti rivoluzionario?" dated January 5, 1921 and published in *Ordine nuovo*. An English translation is available in Antonio Gramsci, "Marinetti the Revolutionary," in *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from Cultural Writings*, edited by David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, translated by William Boelhower (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 49-51.

early 1920s should have split into a left and right-wing is testament to the fact that its politics, as formulated by Marinetti, contained aspects of both from the beginning.

Most scholars of political Futurism have generally underemphasized Marinetti's political activities under Fascism, and tend to posit a clear break between an 'Heroic', or First Futurist, phase (1909-1920) and a 'Fascist', or Second Futurist, phase (1920-1944). The earlier period is characterized as a union of revolutionary art and politics (with the politics being judged as either theoretically sound or evidence of political naiveté), and the latter by a turning away from politics altogether, and a focus purely on modern art. When Marinetti's activities rise to the level of being overtly political in the latter period, as was his defense of modern art of the later 1930s and his resistance to the Nazi alliance, such events are interpreted as evidence of Marinetti's continuing radicalism, and are given added significance because of the purported stand Marinetti took against the dictatorship.

In splitting political Futurism into two halves, historians have offered a variety of often contradictory explanations of Marinetti's politics. Gian Battista Nazzaro, for instance, in an early work simply discounted Futurist politics altogether, claiming it was filled with such obvious inconsistencies as wanting to unite the revolutionary individual found on the radical left (syndicalists and anarchists) with a modern nationalism that required the individual to subsume themselves into the collective. Thus the politics of First Futurism hardly contributed to the politically hard-nosed realism of Mussolini's Fascism.[16] Emilio Gentile, on the other hand, believes the attempted union of the individual and the collective was a reasonable response to the politicized masses of post

[16] Gian Battista Nazzaro, "Futurismo e politica," in *Introduzione al Futurismo* (Naples: Guida Editori, 1973).

World War One Italy. However, he too discounts Marinetti's role under Fascism, claiming he restricted himself predominantly to artistic ventures under the regime, and was thus not responsible for Fascism's reactionary policies, having tired of politics.[17] Niccolo Zapponi's interpretation of Marinetti's politics is that it was never geared towards developing a rational world-view, and that its only goal was to establish the 'cultural hegemony' of Futurism, first by dabbling in the political realm in the period 1909-1920, and then just as quickly dropping politics altogether and working to achieve the designation of state art under Fascism.[18]

This method of highlighting an earlier radical phase of political Futurism and de-emphasizing, or ignoring, Marinetti's activities for the Fascist regime, and treating Futurism at that time as purely an artistic movement, has dominated even book-length treatments of Futurism. Enrico Crispolti, in many ways the dean of Futurist scholars, devotes little space to Futurist relations with the Fascist state in his general history of Futurism.[19] When he has written extensively on the matter, he has emphasized Futurism's pariah status under the regime owing to its continuing radical nature. Proof of this radical nature could be seen in Futurism's inability to acquire state patronage,[20] and its defense of modern art versus Fascist conservatives and anti-modernists.[21] Nazzaro's treatment of Futurism under Fascism similarly emphasizes this continuing radical strand, and argues Marinetti and the Futurists collaborated with the regime simply to maintain

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[17] Emilio Gentile, "Il futurismo e la politica. Dal nazionalismo modernista al fascismo (1909-1920)," in Renzo de Felice, ed., *Futurismo, Cultura, e Politica* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988).
[18] Niccolo Zapponi, "La politica come espediente e come utopia. Marinetti e il Partito politico futurista," in Sergio Lambiase, ed., *F.T. Marinetti Futurista* (Naples: Guida Editori, 1977).
[19] Enrico Crispolti, *Storia e critica del futurismo*, 2nd edition (Rome: Editori Laterza, 1987).
[20] Enrico Crispolti, "La politica culturale del fascismo, le avanguardie, e il problemo del futurismo," in Renzo de Felice, ed., *Futurismo, Cultura, e Politica* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988).
[21] See his book-length chapter "Il secondo futurismo contro l'operazione 'Arte degenerata' in Italia," in his *Il mito della macchina e altri temi del futurismo* (Trapani: Editore Celebes, 1969).

the autonomy of their movement, and mistakenly hoped the supposedly radical Mussolini would one day re-emerge.[22] Gunter Berghaus' work follows Crispolti and Nazzaro's narrative and interpretation quite closely, though goes further and argues that Marinetti was never trusted by the regime because of his continuing radicalism, and his police file, he argues, attests to that fact.[23] Giovanni Lista's treatment of Marinetti's politics are unapologetically focused on its radical components, and has little interest at all in tracing Marinetti's activities under Fascism.[24] Finally, Claudia Salaris' work on Marinetti and Futurism under Fascism is very good at tracing their continued cultural productivity, but she does not devote extensive space to detailing Marinetti's relations with the Fascist state, and relies on interpretations similar to Nazzaro and Berghaus when dealing with politics.[25]

Some of the more recent literature on Fascist culture and ideology have provided insights into how one could interpret Marinetti's politics under Fascism, though they have their own limitations. This literature is not directly concerned with Marinetti's relations with the Fascist state. Instead, it seeks to engage the debate initiated by Renzo De Felice and Emilio Gentile over the nature of Fascism. Contrary to older, left-wing interpretations of Fascism that have characterized it as primarily an anti-socialist movement based purely on violence and devoid of any ideological coherence, De Felice argued Fascism was rooted in pre-war revolutionary socialism, and that in the 1930s the

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[22] Gian Battista Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica* (Naples: J.N. Editore S.p.A., 1987). This idea was drawn from an older interpretation by Luciano De Maria in his lengthy introduction to the collection of Marinetti's writings he edited as F.T. Marinetti, *Teoria e invenzione futurista* (Verona: Arnoldo Mondadori Editori, 1968).
[23] Gunter Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909-1944* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996).
[24] Giovanni Lista, *Arte e politica: Il futurismo di sinistra in Italia* (Milan: Multhipla, 1980), and his *F.T. Marinetti: l'anarchiste du futurisme: biographie* (Paris: Séguier, 1995).
[25] Claudia Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista* (Rome: Riuniti, 1997), and more generally her *Storia del futurismo: Libri, giornali, manifesti* (Rome: Riuniti, 1992).

regime acquired a certain level of 'consensus' or mass support.[26] Gentile argued that Fascism did in fact have a coherent ideology, and moreover the reason for Fascism's popular support was that it offered Italians the 'secular religion' of Fascism, complete with heroes, myths, rituals, and the order Italians desired after the destruction of many traditional forms of life through modernization, secularization, urbanization and the Great War.[27] Responding to these writers, Marla Stone, for instance, has sought to show that consensus on the part of artists and intellectuals was achieved with the Fascist state acting as their primary patron and by allowing a certain amount of 'cultural pluralism', at least until 1936.[28] Ruth Ben-Ghiat similarly argued that the Fascist state acquired the consensus of intellectuals, as Fascism offered a 'third way' between the modern cultures of liberalism and communism and the 'illusion' of cultural pluralism. The means to preserving the best of individual autonomy and collective interest was to be found in Fascist corporativism, though this proved to be a failure in practice.[29] Barbara Spackman, turning her attention to the language of Fascism, and the 'pre-Fascists', found a coherent Fascist ideology by focusing on the concept of 'masculine' virility, which broadly encompassed both physical and imperial domination.[30] Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi also focused on Fascist ideology, and conversely found a lack of coherence. She argued that in order to make up for a dearth of a coherent set of ideas, Fascism relied

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[26] Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini,* v. 1, *Il rivoluzionario, 1883-1920* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965) and *Mussolini*, v.3, *Il duce:* part 1, *Gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974).
[27] See Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista* (1918-1925) (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001). This book is the expanded version of a work first published in 1975. Also see *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy,* translated by Keith Botsford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996; originally published in Italian in 1993).
[28] Marla Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
[29] Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).
[30] Barbara Spackman, *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

on a unifying set of rituals, myths and images (the all-knowing Duce, Fascist Italy as ancient Rome re-born, etc.) to bind Italians together and to the regime, thus using Gentile's work to undermine his conclusions on how seriously one must take Fascist ideology.[31]

These works have proven useful in shaping my thinking on how to interpret Marinetti's politics, but they have also left me aware of the limits of their particular methodologies when applied to Marinetti specifically. Stone's argument for patronage certainly could explain Marinetti's support for the regime, but does not explain the sheer amount of activities he undertook for it, which went beyond self-serving interests. Ben-Ghiat can show that the 'third-way' attracted modern intellectuals, but not why it kept someone like Marinetti loyal even when it was a clear failure. Spackman's focus on textual analysis is critical, especially in seeing continuities between Marinetti the 'pre-Fascist' and Marinetti the Fascist, but it misses the areas of discord between Marinetti and conservative Fascists that characterized part of his relationship to Fascism. Falasca-Zamponi's emphasis on the 'aestheticization of politics' in Fascist Italy works well in the analysis of Marinetti's politics, as so much of what he did was to highlight the myth of Mussolini as the unifying, all-knowing father figure, and Fascism as a truly revolutionary movement. However, Marinetti did much more than simply create myths. He was instrumental in developing and institutionalizing the 'fascitization' of culture wherein these myths were created. In helping to bring the Fascist state so deeply into the organization of culture, Marinetti guaranteed that the culture of Italy was either going to

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[31] Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997). Certainly, Falasca-Zamponi is indebted to Walter Benjamin's seminal essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, Second Version," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 3, 1935-1938*, edited by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, translated by Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

be apolitical or, as so often happened for remunerative purposes, a glorification of the Duce and Fascism.

In order to understand the full breadth of Marinetti's politics, incorporating both the Liberal and the Fascist era, bringing together what he believed and how he put these ideas into practice, the common theme that runs through the years 1909 to 1944 was his desire to craft a workable politics that advanced both radical and nationalist goals. His radical goals sought to unleash the revolutionary potential of the individual freed from every sort of constraint. His nationalist goals required these revolutionary, liberated individuals to somehow channel their energies into the advancement of the nation. The fundamental contradiction in his politics was his desire to simultaneously advance the interests of the individual and the collective. This never worked out in practice; when compromises had to be made to turn ideas into action, it was the radical goals that were consistently subordinated to the goal of national advancement.

The Roots of Marinetti's Political Ideas

When Futurism was founded in 1909 Marinetti had a broad series of often irreconcilable political influences which he drew from and then tried to put into practice. In trying to ferret out the origins of Marinetti's contradictory political goals, it is best to point out that Marinetti was not a close reader of the materials that shaped his thinking. Although he was undoubtedly an intelligent man, he was also an impatient one, owing to what he would have referred to as his Futurist temperament that acted more on feeling than drawn out rational consideration. Consequently, he absorbed currents of thought from a variety of sources that satisfied his varied political needs, without bothering to see if they all could reasonably be put into practice. In laying out the origins of Marinetti's political thought I am mindful that one cannot be absolutely certain of what Marinetti read or the ideas he was exposed to. There is no inventory of Marinetti's personal library. Consequently I have limited my analysis to streams of thought and particular writers which Marinetti would have had access to and whose influence are clearly evident in Marinetti's political thought and actions.

There were two broad streams of thought that Marinetti dipped into. One dealt with the question of how to 'make' Italians, or how to form a national consciousness once Italian territory had been mostly united by 1861, and the other dealt with the emergence of 'mass society'. In attempting to form a common national consciousness, the Italian government was mindful that unification had been a primarily elite-driven affair, and that significant regional divisions still persisted. The government had faced a veritable civil war in the south once the Kingdom of Italy had been proclaimed. As such, the emphasis on preserving and developing the new nation fell to a strong, centralized state. There was

little emphasis on the expansion of individual liberties, as they were considered a threat to national unity, and were often curtailed in times of crises. The suffrage was extended slowly and universal manhood suffrage came to Italy relatively late, in 1911. In 1894, in response to the uprising of the Sicilian *fasci,* Prime Minister Francesco Crispi declared martial law on the island, dispatched the army, imposed press censorship and banned public meetings. In response to the emergence of the Italian Socialist Party and militant labor organizations in the north, and specifically the left's protest of Crispi's actions in Sicily, Crispi extended press censorship throughout the country and gave prefects wide latitude in cracking down on any meeting that seemed to be subversive. Similar crackdowns by Prime Minister Antonio di Rudinì followed uprisings in 1898. Crispi's one time finance minister Sidney Sonnino went so far as to argue in 1897 that the king had the authority to choose his own ministers without having to be responsible to parliament.[32] Although the emergence of Giovanni Giolitti signaled a more liberal era in Italian politics, the lesson Marinetti took from these episodes was that liberties had to be curtailed when the interests of the nation were at stake. This is what motivated him to write in 1911, upon the outbreak of the Libyan War, and the left's protest of that war, that "To every individual and to the entire populace is granted all liberties, except the liberty to be a coward," and "It is proclaimed that the word ITALY must take precedence over the word LIBERTY."[33] It was also the reason he supported the state uncritically through World War I and never protested the curtailment of civil liberties in the interests of the

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[32] Guido De Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism*, translated by R. G. Collingwood (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959; originally published in Italian in 1925), 298, 326. Richard Jensen in his *Liberty and Order: The Theory and Practice of Italian Public Security Policy, 1848 to the Crisis of the 1890s* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1991) traces the political debate over the needs of the state versus the rights of the individual in post-unification Italy.

[33] F.T. Marinetti, "Movimento politico futurista," in F.T. Marinetti, *Teoria e invenzione futurista* [*TIF*], edited by Luciano De Maria (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1968), 291.

war effort, and why he eventually compromised all of his radical goals in his commitment to Fascism.

In response to the state's centralization there was an inevitable backlash that argued for a more federal or de-centralized union, one that would allow the regions more autonomy to meet their particular needs, especially the South. The cry for de-centralization, however, was more than a demand from the provinces for greater responsibility, it was also a reaction against the perceived iniquities of the national parliament. By the turn of the century, parliament was increasingly viewed as a corrupt body of self-serving deputies who were ultimately responsible to the small group of enfranchised and influential citizens that voted for them, and not to their constituents at large, or to the nation for that matter. Specifically there was a growing concern that the national government was failing to unify Italians and to provide national order, particularly with reference to the 'social question'. The social question had both a rural, Southern and an urban, Northern component. The South continued to be vastly underdeveloped compared to the North, and had witnessed popular, rural insurgency since unification. In the North, the growth of the Italian Socialist Party and growing labor militancy were further proof that the national government was failing in its ability to unify Italians.[34] Marinetti's own anti-parliamentary sentiment was part of this broader

[34] The criticism of the national government for its failure to deal with the social question could be heard from a variety of quarters. These included the Liberal *meridionalisti*, such as Pasquale Villari in his *Le lettere meridionali ed altri scritti sulla questione sociale in Italia*, ed. by Luca Chiti (Turin: Loescher Editore, 1971; originally published in 1885, first edition published in 1878), 266-268; the conservative Sidney Sonnino who called for a return to the restrictive Piedmontese *statuto* of1848 to deal with the upheavals of 1898; the Catholic Luigi Sturzo in his "Nord e Sud, Decentramento e Federalismo [1901]," in Sturzo, *Mezzogiorno e Classe Dirigenti*: *Scritti sulla Questione Meridionale dalle primi battaglie politiche siciliane al ritorno dall'esilio* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Litteratura, 1986), 27, 27, 30; and the socialist Gaetano Salvemini in his "La Questione meridionale e il federalismo [1902]," in G. Salvemini, *Opere di Gaetano Salvemini*, Tomo 4, *Il Mezzogiorno e la democrazia italiana*, Vol. 2, *Movimento socialista e questione meridionale*, ed. by Gaetano Arfé (Milan: Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 1963), 159.

tradition of political criticism of that institution for its ineffectiveness and self-serving nature. He made his feelings on parliament clear in 1910 when he called for "the necessary intervention of artists into public affairs, so as *to turn government into a selfless art*, at last, in place of what it is now, robbery [that has] become a pedantic science."[35] However, Marinetti never envisioned a reduction in the power of the central state as he lamented the paralytic nature of the Italian parliament. He simply desired the reduction of parliament's authority and the transference of power to a more 'disinterested' political elite. The one time he called for decentralization was in the drafting of the very radical manifesto of the Futurist Political Party in February, 1918. However, as with much of the radicalism of 1918-1920, this aspect of his politics did not survive into the Fascist years.

The other stream of thought that Marinetti was influenced by was a much broader and international body of literature that was a reaction to the emergence of 'mass society'. Mass society was generally associated with the expansion of democracy, the emergence of demagogic politicians, and the political empowerment of the laboring classes in various socialist parties or syndicalist organizations at the end of the 19th century. Marinetti borrowed liberally and indiscriminately from this literature, and consequently problems of coherence and applicability arose. He borrowed from those that abhorred the growth of mass society, seen as symptomatic of the decline of rational, liberal politics to be replaced by an irrational crowd psychology that was easily manipulated by populist politicians. From these writers Marinetti acquired his belief in the necessity of the elite to rule the masses. But Marinetti also borrowed from those that

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[35] F.T. Marinetti, "The Necessity and Beauty of Violence," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, edited by Günter Berghaus, translated by Doug Thompson (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 418- 419.

welcomed mass society, as the necessary infusion of revolutionary energy in an era dominated by bourgeois, liberal politicians and positivist social theories. Though informing the nationalist and radical aspects of Marinetti's politics, none of these writers provided a working blueprint for how to bring these two strands together.

From Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca, the theorists of the political elite, Marinetti accepted that history was ultimately shaped by the elites, regardless of the democratic pronouncements of these elites, socialists included, owing to the greater talent, organization and ability to communicate amongst political leaders than among the populace at large. The masses, they argued, were motivated by irrational impulses. Consequently, the task of the modern politician was to find a means of harnessing the energy of the newly politicized masses, similar to the success of the Italian Socialist Party.[36] Where the socialists utilized the class struggle to unite the working class, Marinetti sought to tap into this revolutionary energy for nationalist ends and to unite Italians across class lines. Another point that Marinetti derived from Mosca specifically was the need to get 'disinterested' politicians into office and to break the 'clientelistic' and self-serving nature of parliament. Mosca's solution was a limitation of the suffrage, the appointment of the executive by the king, and the executive to be made up primarily of the middle-classes who were supposedly the least prone to corruption.[37] When Marinetti wrote of his vision of Italian government, he envisioned it being run by a group

[36] Richard Bellamy, "The Advent of the Masses and the Making of the Modern Theory of Democracy," in the *Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Political Thought*, edited by Terence Ball and Richard Bellamy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 72, 80, 89, 94.
[37] Ibid., 93.

of elites made up of artists, intellectuals, veterans, and technocrats who would be free of the whims of the voting public.[38]

More profound influences on Marinetti's political thinking can be discerned in the writings of both Friedrich Nietzsche and Gustav Le Bon. While Pareto and Mosca wrote mammoth tomes that Marinetti was unlikely to have read first-hand, Nietzsche and Le Bon's publications were far more accessible and direct, and their resonances in Marinetti's mixed bag of political influences is more clear, especially when one focuses on their most popular books: Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1891) and *The Antichrist* (1895), and Le Bon's *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895).

From *Zarathustra* Marinetti adopted a number of themes. Marinetti went out of his way to insist that the Futurists were not simply neo-Nietzscheans, but the influence of Nietzsche's ideas on Marinetti's thinking are undeniable.[39] First and foremost, Nietzsche argued that the onset of mass society, or the 'herd' or 'rabble', posed a danger to civilization. Culture and politics had decayed in order to accommodate the lowest common denominator. On the leveling of culture, Nietzsche wrote that: "Everybody wants the same, everybody is the same: whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse."[40] On the leveling of politics, Nietzsche had Zarathustra proclaim that "I turned my back on those who rule when I saw what they now call ruling: higgling and haggling for power—with the rabble."[41] He further denounced the virtuous talk of equality and democracy as simply the vengeance of the weak against the powerful: "You

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[38] This idea will be investigated further when I analyze Marinetti's *Democrazia Futurista* (1919).
[39] See, F.T. Marinetti, "Contro I professori" [1910], in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 262-266; Günter Berghaus, *The Genesis of Futurism: Marinetti's Early Career and Writings, 1899-1909* (Leeds, UK: The Society for Italian Studies, 1995), 12-17.
[40] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in Walter Kaufmann, ed., *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954), 130.
[41] Ibid., 209.

preachers of equality, the tyrannomania of impotence clamors thus out of you for equality: your most secret ambitions to be tyrants thus shroud themselves in words of virtue."[42] To reverse this decline, Nietzsche called for a new nobility of artists and intellectuals—supermen—who would dare to stand above the masses, overcome human inertia, harness the irrational passions that dominate the human psyche, and put them to work in an indomitable struggle after 'wisdom'. The supermen had to be better than the people, they had to be "brave, unconcerned, mocking, violent,"[43] and the supermen had to 'dominate' the masses with their superior values and ideas.[44]

Marinetti's conception of the avant-garde and its role in politics and society was to a large extent derived from these themes. When the Futurists first appeared on the scene in 1909 their goal was to act as an elite that challenged the accepted manner of doing all things—cultural, social, political—in the most overt, bombastic fashion possible, instigating their audience into a violent fury as a means to break them out of their passive toleration of tradition and to accept the Futurist view of the world. Such was the rationale behind the grand pronouncements of the manifestoes and the frequently violent *serrate,* or public performances, in the early years of Futurism, and the direct-action politics that characterized Marinetti's activities to push Italy into the Great War and his resistance to socialist insurgency after the war.[45] Furthermore, when battling the socialists, one of the most common themes Marinetti would repeat would be the intellectual and political leveling that the revolutionary left would impose on Italy, as the

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[42] Ibid., 212.
[43] Ibid., 153.
[44] Ibid., 226-228.
[45] See, for instance, the "Manifesto of Futurists Playwrights: The Pleasures of Being Booed, [1910]" in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings,* 181-184.

Bolsheviks had in Russia, thus depriving Italy's artistic elite from what he perceived was their rightful role in the upper echelons of government and society.[46]

Marinetti's anti-clericalism can also be traced back to Nietzsche. Zarathustra felt repulsion for priests, men he considered prisoners fettered by "false values and delusive words."[47] These sentiments were further developed in Nietzsche's *Antichrist*, where he lamented that Christianity was responsible for the emergence of mass society, and the rise of mediocrity in western civilization. Christianity, he argued, had made a sin of all of the qualities that would have produced the higher, or super, man: "Christianity has sided with all that is weak and base, with all failures; it has made an ideal of whatever *contradicts* the instinct of the strong life to preserve itself; it has corrupted the reason even of those strongest in spirit by teaching men to consider the supreme values of the spirit as something sinful, as something that leads into error—as temptations."[48] Christianity had in effect sapped the 'will to power' from life, the desire for talented individuals to raise themselves up from the masses and to dominate them, and "where the will to power is lacking," he concluded, "there is decline."[49]

Much of the nationalist rhetoric that Marinetti used throughout his life was suffused with this somewhat desperate belief that life is struggle, and anything that blunted the warrior spirit was superfluous. Thus the hand-wringing about the Libyan war, the neutralism of Italy from July, 1914 to May, 1915, and the government's failure to demand all the land promised to Italy as a condition for fighting on behalf of the Allies were all unacceptable to Marinetti. Any prescriptions Marinetti had for strengthening

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[46] Marinetti's dwells on this issue at length in his *Al di là del comunismo* (1920).
[47] Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, 202.
[48] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, in Walter Kaufmann, ed., *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954), 571.
[49] Ibid., 572.

Italians and Italy generally included a desire for some sort of *svaticamento*: the physical removal of the Vatican from Italy and the reduction of the Church's influence over the Italian people. He was always on the side of action on behalf of national greatness, and it was the Fascist promise of this greatness which kept him a loyal member of the regime throughout its life—in spite of Mussolini's peace with the Church in the 1929 Lateran Accords.

However, in borrowing from Nietzsche, Marinetti ran into a series of intellectual problems which were never really resolved. Nietzsche believed the masses were slaves to their passions, to the irrational, and the supermen's ability to sublimate these passions to productive ends is what made them stand above both the undisciplined masses as well as the overly disciplined liberal, bourgeois politicians that had reduced politics to a series of rational decisions devoid of any passion.[50] However, Marinetti found value in the irrational passions of the masses. If the socialists could harness such energy for revolution, then certainly, he believed, it could be harnessed for national advancement. The question remained how one could control and direct this energy. Nietzsche did not provide an answer. Though he insisted the supermen must dominate the masses, this dominance seemed to rest in the realm of culture and values, and not in any clear political prescription. Moreover, how was this dominance to be acquired? Nietzsche called on his supermen to flee from the cultural 'market place' of the masses, where fame, instead of truth, determined value,[51] but this was at odds with Marinetti's conception of the politically engaged avant-garde intellectual. And what of the state as a means of mobilizing the people to a higher calling? Nietzsche felt the modern state had become

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[50] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 223, 388.
[51] Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, 164.

the repository of the multitudinous desires of mass society, wherein it simply responded to the masses, but failed to lead them to a higher plane. Only demagogic politicians thrived in the realm of mass politics, but these could not be counted on to advance the nation, only to cater to the passions of the masses. "Only where the state ends," Nietzsche wrote, "there begins the human being who is not superfluous. . . . Where the state *ends*—look there, my brothers! Do you not see it, the rainbow and the bridges of the overman?"[52] However, this sentiment was, again, at odds with Marinetti's recognition that in the era of mass politics, especially in post-unification Italy, a strong state was critical for national advancement. One solution Marinetti would proffer forcefully at the end of the Great War was that artists and intellectuals should in fact enter politics and take over the state. However, while rhetorically alluring, such a solution failed to garner any significant support in the face of real world politics as Fascists and socialists battled over Italy's future.

While Nietzsche provided some major overall themes that Marinetti latched on to, it was Le Bon that provided more of the tactical specifics Marinetti needed to navigate his way through mass politics. Le Bon's *The Crowd* was a thorough, though highly biased, analysis of how the crowd worked, and how one could harness such mass energy, and it was a direct reaction to the mass support that socialism enjoyed in France. For Le Bon, the crowd was any large group of people, be it a mob, the audience at a demonstration, the electorate, and even the deputies in a parliament. Within these groups, individuality and rationalism were lost as the crowd devolved to its irrational (and racially determined) sentiments and converged on a solitary, simple idea put to it by

[52] Ibid., 163.

a clever, forceful, demagogic leader.[53] "Crowds," Le Bon wrote, "are only cognizant of simple and extreme sentiments."[54] In communicating ideas to crowds, correctness was less important than the effect they produced on the crowd in order to stimulate them to action.[55] "To know the art of impressing the imagination of crowds," he continued, "is to know at the same time the art of governing them."[56] And to impress such crowds Le Bon recommended that "words whose sense is the most ill-defined are sometimes those that possess the most influence."[57] Such words, such as democracy, socialism, equality, and liberty had different meanings for different people, and so "a truly magical power is attached to those short syllables, as if they contained the solution of all problems. They synthesise the most diverse unconscious aspirations and the hope of their realization."[58] Finally, in order to convert a crowd to one's ideas, a potential leader only needed to follow three simple steps: affirmation, repetition, contagion. The leader would affirm the value of an idea, would repeat it as a simple solution to multiple problems, and eventually the idea would spread on its own as a contagion amongst the crowd.[59]

Marinetti adopted all of these maxims as he engaged in politics. Two of his main ideas, for instance, fit all of Le Bon's qualifications: his claim that war was 'the world's only hygiene', and later his depiction of Mussolini as a seemingly perfect leader of Fascist Italy. In the years leading up to the Great War Marinetti often claimed that war was the solution to all of Italy's ills. It would unite the people, crush the socialist movement, awaken the patriotism of the workers, and unleash the Italian warrior instinct,

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[53] Gustav Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2002; originally published in French in 1895), 5-6, 45, 73.
[54] Ibid., 24.
[55] Ibid., 36.
[56] Ibid., 37.
[57] Ibid., 61.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 77-81.

freeing it from 'feminine', bourgeois, materialist comfort and break the stereotype of the pleasure-seeking, lazy Italian; it would also force the modernization of Italian industry and society and crush the tourist trade that condemned Italy to live on its laurels; it would inspire new and modern art; finally it would bring Italy an empire and international glory.[60] War as the catch-all solution was repeated endlessly up to the Great War, and after a brief respite in the post-war era it figured prominently in Marinetti's activities on behalf of the Fascist drive for empire. Marinetti's depiction of Mussolini as a near deity also satisfied Le Bon's recommendation for communicating with the masses. After Marinetti decided to return to Fascism in 1922, he threw his unwavering support to Mussolini and was instrumental in developing the 'cult of the Duce.' The Duce, he argued, could do no wrong, and he would solve all of Italy's problems. He was eminently 'Futurist', that is the perfect combination of a nationalist, revolutionary and defender of personal liberty, even in the era of the dictatorship when the latter claim was patently absurd. He was portrayed as a brilliant military leader, even when the experience of World War II and defeat had shown this to be false.[61] Marinetti's cult of the Duce also satisfied another of Le Bon's dictums, that the crowd instinctively is drawn to a strong leader, even a tyrant, as long as the leader provides order, satisfies the crowd's vague aspirations for whatever type of improvement they desire, and is sure of themselves. The crowd does not desire intellectual, complicated leaders, but decisive

[60] Many of these ideas were present in F.T. Marinetti, *Guerra sola igiene del mondo* **(**Milan: Edizioni Futuriste di "Poesia", 1915), reprinted in F.T. Marinetti, *Teoria e invenzione futurista* [TIF**],** edited by Luciano De Maria **(**Milan: Mondadori, 1968).
[61] Marinetti's contribution to the 'cult of the Duce' will be discussed in the final chapter of this work.

ones.[62] Marinetti provided just such an image in his depiction of Mussolini, though he was sure to point out how much of a 'genius' Mussolini was as well.

One of the most important points that Marinetti acquired from his reading of Le Bon, which he could not have gotten from Nietzsche, was that the masses, or the crowd, were neither inherently good nor bad, they were simply powerful, and this power could be mobilized for any goal. A mob could be instigated to rampant destruction. Workers could be mobilized for a general strike. But, most importantly to Marinetti, the people could also be mobilized into an 'heroic' crowd, a group bound by nationalism and the dream of national advancement. "Appeals to sentiments of glory honour, and patriotism," Le Bon wrote, "are particularly likely to influence the individual forming part of a crowd, and often to the extent of obtaining from him the sacrifice of his life. History is rich in examples analogous to those furnished by the Crusaders and the volunteers of 1793. Collectivities alone are capable of great disinterestedness and great devotion."[63] It was Marinetti's goal to mobilize Italians to such disinterested, nationalist service and to strip the revolutionary masses from the socialists' grip.

However, in terms of specific political prescriptions on the mechanisms of a potential Futurist state, Le Bon proved to be as unhelpful to Marinetti as Nietzsche had been. Le Bon felt the masses would be most effectively led by a demagogic, authoritarian politician who could play on their hopes and channel their desires. This would of course degenerate into tyranny immediately, and so he recommended that parliament was the most effective means of government within modern mass society. Even though parliament was as susceptible to irrationally driven group-thinking as any

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[62] Le Bon, *The Crowd*, 25, 38-40, 73, 75.
[63] Ibid., 27.

crowd, and the deputies were more interested in their local constituents than the common good, it at least acted as a filter for the whims of the people, diffused power, and had a series of checks and balances.[64] But Marinetti had no interest in perpetuating the rule of parliamentary democracy. Le Bon, at root, was fearful of the rise of the masses, their harnessing by the socialists, and the consequent decline in civilization.[65] Though he allowed for the possibility of being able to harness their energy for 'heroic' goals, his primary goal was to limit their influence on modern politics. But this was not Marinetti's goal. He wanted to find a means of unleashing the masses' revolutionary potential and channel it into nationalist ends on a permanent basis. For help in formulating this aspect of his political thinking he would need to turn to someone who welcomed the rise of mass society and politics. And in his search he settled upon Georges Sorel.

Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* was seminal to Marinetti's thinking. Sorel had written his work as a response to the reformist socialists of Italy who, he argued, had watered down the revolutionary goals of Marxism, and were more interested in advancing their careers as newly elevated bourgeois, parliamentary politicians than in destroying parliament, and capitalism along with it. He championed instead the anarcho-syndicalists who would unleash what he felt was the inherently revolutionary potential of the proletarian masses, and would not compromise with the bourgeoisie until capitalism had been violently overthrown through the general strike.[66] The general strike was central to Sorel's thinking. Its goal was simple, easy to understand, and not open to the deal-making of parliamentary politics. It was inherently violent, as the strike would

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[64] Ibid., 124, 134.
[65] Ibid., X, XV, 96.
[66] Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, edited by Jeremy Jennings (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999; originally published as a series of articles in Italian in 1905, and then as a book in Italian in 1906), 49, 54, 59, 63.

induce a bourgeois reaction, followed by more violence on the part of the strikers until the capitalist system collapsed. And violence, Sorel felt, was rejuvenative and would halt the slow degeneracy of civilization which bourgeois materialism and humanitarianism had caused. The general strike also acted as a means to mobilize the proletarian masses to self-sacrifice, as an aspirational 'myth', in the achievement of their socialist goals.[67] Lastly, Sorel disagreed with Le Bon's claim that the masses were simply an irrational rabble, where individuals lost their capacity for independent thought and were then easily manipulated to any end by a demagogic politician. He argued that this would never happen in a society with a well developed class-consciousness. Once the syndicalists triggered the revolution, the workers would not need leaders. They would know their goal, and would work together to achieve it as a collection of individuals, not as an unthinking mob.[68]

Marinetti drew heavily from Sorel. He took the positive and regenerative value of violence directly from Sorel, and this subsequently influenced Marinetti's thinking that war would similarly rejuvenate Italians. The idea of the aspirational value of the myth also came directly from Sorel. Though it was based on Le Bon's work, Sorel gave the idea a real world practicability, as he was writing in defense of the general strike launched by the syndicalists in Italy in 1904. Though Marinetti abhorred how the strike had paralyzed Italy, he could not ignore how it had mobilized thousands of Italians to one goal, and consequently influenced his idea that the quest for national greatness could act as a similar means to bind Italians together. Most importantly, Sorel provided a means of thinking about the masses as something other than an irrational mob. Sorel posited the

[67] Ibid., 79, 113.
[68] Ibid., 124.

idea that workers were in a sense self motivated, and self-led to ultimate forms of sacrifice to achieve their ends. Though they acted as a collective, harnessing their strength, they did not act as a faceless mass, but as a group of individuals working toward a common goal. Marinetti wanted Italians to posses just this sort of revolutionary, anarchic, individualism, but on behalf of the nation.

Yet this was Marinetti's problem with his Sorelian influence specifically, and more generally his cherry-picking of what he liked from a variety of not always reconcilable sources. Sorel was advocating anarchic syndicalism whose goal was to ultimately destroy capitalism and the state. He specifically noted that anarchic syndicalist revolution was different than all previous forms of revolutionary violence in Europe, as the syndicalists had no desire to take over the state. All previous forms of revolution, he argued, had sought to supplant one group of leaders for another, and never questioned the existence of state. The syndicalists, however, were to use violence to exterminate the state.[69]

So how was Marinetti to harness the revolutionary passions of the masses, yet direct them to nationalist ends, which presupposed some form of a state? His answer, was that the people would somehow channel their revolutionary energies voluntarily for nationalist ends, with the appropriate 'patriotic education' for the working classes, and thus the state would simply be a means to achieving national greatness. In this sense the state would not act as a limit to individual freedoms, since the people would not want any freedoms that interfered with national greatness in the first place. This was the implicit resolution to Marinetti's balancing of liberty and order in his politics up to 1922, and thereafter he was explicit about it. He would define liberty as broadly as possible when it

[69] Ibid., 103, 108.

did not threaten Italian unity and strength. When Italy was in a crisis or required unity to pursue national goals, liberties were consequently redefined and limited, and anyone who desired greater liberties at this point was not considered a real patriot. Up to 1922 there was some room in Marinetti's politics for shifting back and forth between a politics that privileged liberty or order. But under Fascism, the quest for, and seeming ability to achieve, national greatness made it easy for Marinetti to temper much of his early radicalism and demands for individual liberty.

However, the consequences of Marinetti's contradictory political impulses when met with the real world is the subject of subsequent chapters. In 1909, when Marinetti launched Futurism, it seemed like a reasonable goal to fashion a politics that would harness the revolutionary energies of the masses and channel them for nationalist ends. Marinetti was not alone at that time in seeking to blend right and left in a new modern nationalism, and this other Italian nationalist, Enrico Corradini, was the final influence in Marinetti's developing political ideas.[70]

Enrico Corradini, like Marinetti, was a writer who had turned his attention to politics, though much earlier and much more fully than the Futurist. Like Marinetti, he was troubled by Italy's failure to achieve greatness after national unification, and was troubled by the corrupt and parasitic parliamentary regime that he blamed for Italy's weakened state. Similarly, he was troubled by the rise of the Italian Socialist Party and

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[70] Marinetti's interest in the Nationalists and the influence they had on his thinking is recounted in Lista, *Arte e politica: Il futurismo di sinistra in Italia* (Milan: Multhipla, 1980), 14, 43, 116, note #13; Berghaus [who references Lista here], *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909-1944* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996), 59-62; Claudia Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista* (Rome: Riuniti, 1997), 148-149. Berghaus claims Marinetti attended the Nationalist congress in December, 1910 in Rome. In fact, the Rome congress was held in December, 1912, which is what Lista reports Marinetti attended. Salaris reports that Marinetti also attended the Rome congress, and the May, 1914 congress in Milan. However, neither Lista nor Salaris provide references for these findings. Berghaus does, however, use E. Settimelli, "Storia del partito politico futurista," in *Oggi e Domani*, December 27, 1931, in addition to his reliance on Lista on this matter.

its emphasis on a divisive class consciousness, which further weakened the nation. Corradini's solution was an unapologetically nationalist, imperialist, anti-democratic, anti-parliamentary ideology which was eventually formalized in the foundation of the Italian Nationalist Association in December, 1910, and then turned into the Italian Nationalist Party for the 1913 elections. Like Marinetti in 1909, Corradini realized earlier on that a rejuvenating nationalist movement required healing the class divisions in Italy, and so he turned to the revolutionary wing of the socialist movement that shared his disdain for parliament, the syndicalists.[71] Corradini respected the syndicalists' commitment to action and the discipline they showed in their commitment to a national general strike, especially in their ability to subsume their individual desires in furtherance of their common goal of revolution. Corradini, like Marinetti, hoped to turn that activism to nationalist ends.[72]

In his "Sindicalismo, nazionalismo, imperialismo," of December, 1904, Corradini sought to highlight the basic similarities of syndicalists and nationalists. He admitted that on the surface syndicalism and nationalism seemed incompatible, as the former wanted the union of working classes across national boundaries, and the latter desired the union

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[71] For Corradini and Italian nationalism, see: Alexander De Grand, *The Italian Nationalist Association and the Rise of Fascism* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1978); Franco Gaeta, *Il nazionalismo italiano*, 2nd edition (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1981; 1st ed., 1965); Francesco Perfetti, "La dottrina politica del Nazionalismo italiano: Origini e sviluppo fino al Primo conflitto mondiale," in *Il nazionalismo in Italia e in Germania fino alla Prima guerra mondiale*, edited by Rudolfo Lill (Bologna: Mulino, 1983). Corradini's writings are collected in several works, including Enrico Corradini, *Scritti e discorsi, 1901-1914*, edited by Lucia Strappini (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1980); Enrico Corradini, *Discorsi politici, 1902-1923* (Florence: Vallecchi Editore, 1923); Enrico Corradini, *Il nazionalismo italiano* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1914); Delia Frigessi, ed., *La cultura italiana del '900 attraverso le riviste.* Volume One. *"Leonardo," "Hermes," "Il Regno."* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1960). Corradini was part of a broader nationalist ferment coming out of Florence at the turn of the century, which has been well chronicled by Walter L. Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[72] Enrico Corradini, "Tornando sul nostro programma II. La libertà," in *Il Regno*, October 9, 1904, reprinted in *La cultura italiana del '900 attraverso le riviste,* 513-514.

of all classes within Italy's borders.[73] However, he argued, syndicalism was an extreme, violent and uncompromising ideology, similar to nationalism. Moreover, syndicalism did not desire to conquer the bourgeois state or reform it, it wanted to create a new state. Syndicalists, he argued, believed in government by the elites, and, hence were anti-democratic (though this plainly ignored the anarchist element within syndicalism). They were also anti-parliament. All these things they shared with the nationalists, according to Corradini. Lastly, the syndicalists declared that the general strike was the ultimate goal to strive for, everything else must be sacrificed for this grand union of the proletariat. The union of the working class for a violent confrontation with the bourgeoisie, Corradini claimed, was very similar to the nationalist desire to unite the Italian nation for international warfare.[74] Corradini also pointed out that both movements were movements of solidarity, that required the union of all their members. Furthermore, both movements had economic goals. The syndicalists desired the union of the working class in order to improve their economic condition and the nationalists desired the union of all classes to improve Italy's economic position. Importantly, Corradini pointed out that theory and practice were not the same thing. Hence, for all of the syndicalist's internationalist rhetoric, he claimed, it would not be impossible to imagine the syndicalists confining their activities within the Italian border, and would then be one step closer to a union with nationalist ideology.[75] Lastly, Corradini pointed out how the concept of imperialism bound the two ideologies. Syndicalism believed in an imperialism of the working class, in which their ideology would spread throughout the working class internationally and

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[73] Enrico Corradini, "Sindicalismo, nazionalismo, imperialismo, [December, 1904]" in Enrico Corradini, *Discorsi politici,* 53.
[74] Ibid., 55-58.
[75] Ibid., 59-61.

then transplant the bourgeoisie in power. Nationalists believed in the spreading of Italian culture and the building of a new empire.[76]

Corradini legitimated Marinetti's attempt to reach out to the revolutionary left, but he also acted as a model of the type of politics Futurism was not to become. Marinetti felt the Italian Nationalists were far too conservative, too enraptured with the glories of Italy's past, too committed to the Italian monarchy and the Papacy, and too determined on the primacy of the state over individual freedoms. When the Nationalists fused with the Fascists in 1923 Marinetti's concern was that the move would sap Fascism of its radical heritage and turn it into a simple authoritarian regime.[77] However, in trying to achieve a balance of liberty and order in his politics, Marinetti was stuck with a contending set of goals which were forever shifting in their relation to each other depending on Italy's situation at the time. Corradini did not struggle with such contending forces. He explicitly recognized national greatness was founded on a strong state, and individual liberties were a necessary sacrifice. Marinetti came to this conclusion intermittently, and only completely at the end of his life, and thus his reputation as a political theorist has never been held in high regard.

In the following chapters I will trace Marinetti's attempt at fashioning a politics that met both his radical and nationalist goals, which sought to expand individual liberties and advance the collective interest. I will show, however, that when compromises were made to put these contradictory goals into practice, it was Marinetti's nationalist sentiments which always triumphed.

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[76] Ibid., 59 and 63.
[77] See, F.T. Marinetti et al., "L'Impero Italiano, [1923]" in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 495-498.

Chapter 1: From the Foundation to the Crisis of Caporetto, 1909-1918

Introduction

This chapter deals with the formative years of Marinetti's politics from the foundation of Futurism in February, 1909 to the emergence of the Futurist Political Party in February, 1918. In this period Marinetti made his initial forays into the political world and sought to delineate what his politics stood for. At the most basic level, Marinetti sought a politics that had both radical and nationalist goals. He sought to unleash the creative and revolutionary potential of the 'anarchic' individual, as personified by the Italian revolutionary syndicalists. But he sought to harness these revolutionary individuals for national advancement. Thus he sought a politics that advanced individual liberties while at the same time preserving the collective order required for national greatness. The means to bring these contradictory goals together into a workable politics eluded Marinetti for most of this period. Until 1918 Marinetti did not have a comprehensive political vision. What he had were a variety of sentiments which spanned the political spectrum and shifted in their relation to each other depending on the political needs of the moment.

From roughly 1909 to 1911 Marinetti clumsily reached out to the revolutionary left with rhetoric that was anti-bourgeois, anti-parliament, anti-clerical, republican, revolutionary, pro-worker and extolled the freedom of the individual from all constraints. However, at the same time he was engaging in nationalist politics on behalf of Italian *irredenta* and proclaiming the unifying and rejuvenating properties of war, which undermined whatever initial connection he would have made with the left. His

explanations that his politics could equally advance the fortunes of the individual and the collective were unconvincing and unsuccessful.

From 1911 to 1917 Marinetti gave up the struggle of speaking the language of the revolutionary left while trying to convince them of the glories of war. Instead, faced with the need for a workable political agenda as Italy fought first the Libyan War and then World War I, Marinetti's politics uncritically subsumed the needs of the individual to the needs of the collective. During this period all liberties, including artistic freedom, were to be geared towards the achievement of national glory. Marinetti's political radicalism was convincingly dormant in this period.

However, it was not dead, and Marinetti still desired a politics that would further both individual liberties and nationalist goals. Such a solution was attempted in the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party [FPP], released in early 1918. After the crisis of Caporetto had been surmounted, Marinetti published the manifesto and it contained the most comprehensive enunciation of his political vision to date, and posited what he believed was the perfect means of advancing both his radical and nationalist goals. The solution to bringing these two contradictory forces together was to be found in the experience of the Great War. Marinetti had always believed that war would make Italians stronger, would unite them, and would unleash in each individual a passion for self-sacrifice for a greater goal—national advancement—just as socialism had mobilized and empowered the working classes. Marinetti believed the war had done just that. It had created a cadre of self-motivated, self-directed soldiers who *voluntarily* subsumed their 'revolutionary' energies to the interests of the nation. The exemplars of this revolutionary, nationalist individualism were the Italian shock troops the Arditi. Now

that the war had produced such revolutionary nationalists, Marinetti saw no contradiction or problem in offering a variety of radical proposals in the manifesto of the FPP, such as the socialization of land, protection of workers' rights, the exchange of a permanent military for a militia, and the abolition of marriage. Such proposals on behalf of individual liberties and self-fulfillment were, he believed, no longer viewed as potential detriments to the collective unity of Italy, as many soldiers and civilians had shown that when called upon they would gladly put such liberties aside for the good of the nation.

This was the political agenda Marinetti brought with him into the post-war era and sought to put into practice as he put his politics into action. How this program would fare when faced with a newly empowered working class and Socialist Party, which did not share Marinetti's vision of post-war Italy, is the subject of the Chapter 2.

The Foundation and Early Politics

In this early period of Marinetti's political development, from circa 1909 to the Fall of 1911, Marinetti put forward his nascent political program, that sought a union of the 'anarchic individualism' of the revolutionary left with the goal of national rejuvenation through war. It would be difficult to reconcile the two, as Marinetti would soon discover. This period would see Marinetti reaching out to anarcho-syndicalists, anarchists and revolutionary socialists on the basis that 'liberty and progress' were not antithetical to the nation, that the former could be achieved through the latter. He failed in this attempt, and with the outbreak of the Libyan War in 1911 these early attempts at courting the left ended and Marinetti's politics became unambiguously nationalist.

On February 20, 1909, Marinetti published in Paris' *Le Figaro* his famous "Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism."[1] In this founding document Marinetti paired the Futurist assault on traditional art with an assault on contemporary Italian politics, both of which were considered emblematic of a *passatismo* that kept Italy backward and weak. It was also the first time the contradictory nature of his politics were made apparent. Next to his cultural proclamations that "We wish to destroy museums, libraries, academies of any sort," and that "Poetry must be thought of as a violent assault upon the forces of the unknown with the intention of making them prostrate themselves at the feet of mankind," Marinetti wrote that "We wish to glorify war—the sole cleanser of the world—militarism, patriotism, [and] the destructive act of the libertarian. . . ."[2] This phrase neatly encapsulated the seemingly cross purposes of Futurist politics. On the one

[1] F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, edited by Günter Berghaus, translated by Doug Thompson (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006). Note: As Berghaus translated much of Marinetti's *Teoria e invenzione futurista* (*TIF*), and the book appeared at the time of writing of this chapter, I will be using Berghaus' and my translations interchangeably throughout this chapter.
[2] F.T. Marinetti, "The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism," in *Critical Writings*, 14.

hand, the glorification of war as a means of strengthening and unifying the national collective. On the other, the glorification of the revolutionary individualism of the libertarian, which in this case specifically meant Italy's anarcho-syndicalists.

In addition to the intellectual roots of Marinetti's politics discussed in my Introduction, the roots of Futurism's bellicose nationalism was in keeping with the nationalist turn in Italian politics at the turn of the century and was a response to the perceived failures in Italian history from the Risorgimento onward. These failures included Italy's inability to defend its interests against the French in the Mediterranean, its inability to acquire the Italian *irredenta* from Austria, its inability to acquire a sizeable colonial empire, as well as suffering defeat at the hands of the Ethiopians at Adowa in 1896, and the failure to create a truly national consciousness. Nationalists sought to overcome Italian weakness borne of divisions between North and South, Church and state, the working classes and capital, and the peasantry and the state ('real' versus 'legal' Italy).[3]

Paired with this nationalism was the other component of Marinetti's politics—the attempt to harness the "destructive act of the libertarian." In this phrase, and in the final point of the manifesto, wherein Marinetti declared that "We shall sing of the great multitudes who are roused up by work, by pleasure, or by rebellion; of the many-hued, many-voiced tides of revolution in our modern capitals," he pointed to an appreciation for

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[3] For the so-called failures of the post Risorgimento, see Richard Drake, *Byzantium for Rome: The Politics of Nostalgia in Umbertian Italy, 1878-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Richard Thayer, *Italy and the Great War: Politics and Culture, 1870-1914* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), *passim*, and especially Chapter 7: "The Italian Nationalists." On the Southern Question, and its historiographic resurgence, see Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); Jane Schneider, ed., *Italy's "Southern Question": Orientalism in One Country* (New York: Berg, 1998); Robert Lumley and Jonathan Morris, eds., *The New History of the Italian South: The Mezzogiorno Revisited* (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 1977); Marta Petrusewicz, *Latifundium: Moral Economy and Material Life in a European Periphery,* translated by Judith C. Green (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

the revolutionary politics of the anarcho-syndicalist wing of Italian socialism.[4] This group, that had little patience for the compromises required for parliamentary politics, and the reformist socialists who engaged in them, put their faith in Georges Sorel's myth of the general strike, and, more importantly, direct action to bring on the hoped for revolution. Marinetti witnessed the power of this movement in the 1904 general strike that all but paralyzed Italy. Marinetti did not only seek allies amongst the anarcho-syndicalists. He welcomed any member of the revolutionary left that rejected the reformist parliamentary policies of the Italian Socialist Party.[5]

However, uniting the individualism of revolutionary left with the nationalist/collective half of Marinetti's politics was not an easy sell. Marinetti spent the early months of 1909 having to publicly explain his cultural pronouncements and his politics.[6] In an interview with the Paris magazine *Comœdia* he noted that:

> In general, there has been little or no comprehension of how, in our thinking, we can reconcile the glorification of patriotism and the exaltation of the anarchists' acts of destruction. Without getting bogged down in long, tedious digressions of a more or less philosophical nature, you will acknowledge, as I do, that these two apparently contradictory ideas, the collective and the individual, are, in fact, closely related. Does not the development of the collective depend on the exertions and initiatives of individuals? Similarly, the prosperity of a nation derives from antagonism toward, and imitation of, the multiple elements of which it is composed. In the same way, the industrial and military competition that emerges between peoples is a necessary element in the progress of mankind.[7]

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[4] F.T. Marinetti, "Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism," in *Critical Works*, 14.
[5] For the revolutionary left in Italy, see David D. Roberts, *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Gaetano Arfé, *Storia del socialismo italiano (1892-1926)* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), Chapter 9: "La lotta interna nell'eta giolittiana;" Zeev Sternhell, with Mario Sznajder, and Maia Asheri, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution*, translated by David Maisel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).
[6] In a letter to an unnamed woman at this time, Marinetti lamented that people were focusing on his bombastic claim to destroy museums, and neglecting to notice that the whole point of the Foundation manifesto was to free youthful artists from their veneration of, and the grip of, traditional art, as "I believe that fecund and renovating ideas can no longer be propagated solely in books." See, Marinetti to unnamed woman; no date, but likely 1909, in GMC, Box 10, Folder 203: FTM letters to others, no date 1905-09?
[7] F.T. Marinetti, "Futurism: An Interview with Mr. Marinetti," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 18; originally published on March 26, 1909 in *Comœdia*.

This hardly settled the issue for the revolutionary left. For all of Marinetti's claims to challenge bourgeois society, his bellicose nationalism remained the stumbling block.

The two issues Marinetti addressed in this period were emblematic of the seemingly mixed messages he was sending: anti-clericalism and irredentism. The former would have appealed to the left (and to many Italian Liberals), but the latter would have left them wondering just how revolutionary and new Futurism actually was.

Marinetti's anti-clericalism had two components. He viewed the Catholic Church as the bulwark of conservative thought, and so it was targeted in his broad offensive against cultural and social *passatismo*. However, Marinetti also viewed the Church as a political threat. At the turn of the century the Church was becoming more actively engaged in national politics, and was moving the national agenda in a more conservative direction when Marinetti was hoping for a more dynamic, adventurous Italian state. He also feared that the Catholic (read pacifist) influence in government would imperil his goals of making Italy a more war-like nation.[8] In the March, 1909 general elections the fear of expanding Catholic political influence gripped Marinetti. Consequently, he released the "First Futurist Political Manifesto." Though not as detailed as later pronouncements, it's brevity highlighted its urgency:

> We Futurists, whose sole political program is one of national pride, energy, and expansion, denounce before the whole country the irrevocable shame which a possible clerical victory would bring upon us.
>
> We Futurists call on all the talented young people of Italy to engage in a struggle to the bitter end against candidates who have any truck with the traditionalists and with the priests.

[8] On the political mobilization of the Catholic Church, see Mark Seymour, *Debating Divorce in Italy: Marriage and the Making of Modern Italians, 1860-1974* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 114, 158; John N. Molony, *The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy: Partito Popolare, 1919-1926* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 30; John F. Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy: Religion, Society and Politics since 1861* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

> We Futurists want a national representation which, freed from mummies and from every sort of pacifist cowardice, will be ready to extricate us from any snare and to respond to any offense whatsoever.[9]

Marinetti's invective notwithstanding, Catholics would become a major political force in Italy in a few short years.

Whatever credibility Marinetti would have garnered with the left after the above pronouncement was more than counterbalanced by the efforts he made towards redeeming the *terra irredenta*.[10] The earliest recorded instance of Marinetti's irredentist activities occurred in late 1908 after Austria's latest expansion into the Balkans with the annexation of Bosnia-Hercegovina.[11] The occasion was the death of the mother of Guglielmo Oberdan. The latter had made an attempt on the life of the Austrian Emperor in 1882, failed, and had paid for the attempt with his life—becoming a hero to the irredentists. When Oberdan's mother died in 1908, Marinetti was there in Trieste in December laying a wreath at her grave. Immediately thereafter he publicly attacked Austria for its treatment of Triestine students in Vienna and demanded that Trieste have its own Italian university regardless of Vienna's wishes. All of this led to Marinetti's arrest.[12] In the following months Marinetti returned to keep the irredentist issue alive. In January, 1909 he prepared his visit with an article that declared that the Triestine cry of "Viva l'Italia!" is matched by "a similar cry [that] is rising in every part of Italy, agitating

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[9] F.T. Marinetti, "First Futurist Political Manifesto," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 50.
[10] Beginning in 1906 the Italian government no longer obstructed irredentist activities in Italy, in an effort to distance Italy from its Austrian ally in the Triple Alliance. See, Giovanni Sabbatucci, "Il problema dell'irredentismo e le origini del movimento nazionalista in Italia," *Storia Contemporanea* 2, #1 (March, 1971), 53-106.
[11] According to the terms of the Triple Alliance, Italy was entitled to territorial compensation for such a move, as it also desired to extend its influence into the Balkans. As Italy received neither notification nor compensation, Italian nationalists responded with increased irredentist activity aimed against their ally.
[12] F. Balilla Pratella, "Il Futurismo e la Guerra: Cronaca sintetica di Balilla Pratella," in F.T. Marinetti, *Teoria e invenzione futurista* [*TIF*], edited by Luciano De Maria (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1968), 482; Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 48; Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 106.

the masses red with disdain and ripping open the decrepit walls of Montecitorio, and unmasking the cowardliness of our diplomats."[13] In March he traveled to the city and encouraged irredentist activities against the Austrian overlords as a means of bringing on the hoped for war against the historical enemy. He told the Triestines that "you are the crimson and violent face of Italy, facing the enemy . . . that is preparing itself [for war], we will not forget! . . . Trieste! you are our unique powder keg. In you we place our hopes! . . . Thus, [we] scorn pacifist and internationalist theories."[14]

The irredentist themes were given prominence in the initial Futurist *serate* in 1910 as well. The first serata took place in Trieste at the Politeama Rossetti on January 12. The very choice of Trieste was telling. In a tour that would include Milan, Turin, Naples and Padua, to begin in Trieste was a clear enough signal of the importance of the irredenta to the Futurists. However, Marinetti did not address the issue directly, possibly wanting to avoid being arrested when the goal of the evening was to propagate the ideas of Futurism. Instead his speech laid out Futurism's nationalist and militarist principles, which, given in the context of an evening in Trieste, could only have been interpreted as an irredentist speech. He declared that in "politics we are as distant from internationalist and antipatriotic socialism—an ignoble exultation of the needs of the stomach—as from timorous and clerical conservatism. . . . We exult patriotism, militarism; we glorify war, the world's only hygiene. . . ."[15] It was in this speech, however, that Marinetti also gave

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[13] F.T. Marinetti, "Trieste, polveriera d'Italia," in *La giovane Italia*, January 1, 1909, quoted in Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 106.
[14] F.T. Marinetti, "Trieste, la nostra bella polveriera," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 247-248.
[15] F.T. Marinetti, "Discorso ai Triestini," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 213. There is some confusion over the sourcing of this serata. Berghaus in his *Futurism and Politics* and in his *Italian Futurist Theatre, 1909-1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) uses this speech as a source of Marinetti's presentation, although De Maria, the editor of Marinetti's *TIF*, notes that Marinetti dated this discourse as March 1909 on two separate occasions, but that the indication was that it was also given at the Politeama Rossetti, which

the first hint of how he would reconcile nationalism and individual liberty, which further disqualified him with the revolutionary left. He exulted that "All liberties and all progress [must be made] in the great circle of the Nation!"[16]

The irredentist impulse was given freer reign at the subsequent serata when the Futurists were back on home soil, at the Teatro Lirico in Milan on February 15. The Foundation manifesto, as well as a sampling of Futurist poems, were presented, but for this occasion Marinetti had instructed Paolo Buzzi to prepare an "Ode to Asinari di Bernezzo," the general who had been forced to resign in 1909 because of his outspoken irredentist views. Michelangelo Zimolo volunteered to declaim the speech. In the midst of the piece it became clear that it was far too political, even republican, for an evening billed as an artistic event. In Marinetti's recounting:

> I take a seat with my back to the curtains to enjoy it all but a hand begins tugging at my jacket from behind it's the police commissioner of Milan muttering
> "Don't let Zimolo go on I repeat I demand you stop him"
> "I can't interrupt this admirable poem"
> "I repeat my warning that the law allows me to arrest him if he goes on reciting"
> Michelangelo Zimolo projects the free verse right up to the top balcony with great flare condemning the antipatriotism of the Monarchy and its cowardice. . . .
> "I'll have you all arrested" [says the commissioner]. . . .
> Dashing to the footlights with Zimolo Armando Mazza I shout about fifty times without stopping
> "Dowwwwnnnn with Austria"
> Deafening uproar masses of police carabineers and detectives and a boxer to arrest the athlete Mazza
> Marinetti and Michelangelo Zimolo also arrested. . . .[17]

Although Marinetti was released relatively quickly, the episode succeeded in its objectives: the Futurists had stimulated controversy and press coverage, and had given

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occurred in January, 1910 (*TIF*, p. XCIX). Thus, it would seem Marinetti gave the same speech on March, 1909 and January, 1910, though only specifically noted the earlier event.

[16] F.T. Marinetti, "Discorso ai Triestini," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 213.

[17] F.T. Marinetti, "Great Traditional and Futurist Milan (selections)," in F.T. Marinetti, *Let's Murder the Moonshine*, edited by R.W. Flint, Translated by R.W. Flint and Arthur A. Coppotelli (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1991; originally published as *Marinetti: Selected Writings* [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972]), 197-198.

further stimulus to the irredentist cause. The day after the event the Milanese Prefect had to explain the event to the Austrian consulate.[18]

Just as Marinetti was becoming more actively engaged in nationalist politics in 1910, he was also actively reaching out to anarcho-syndicalist circles, seeking to convince them that his was a new politics, wherein their revolutionary individualism and his nationalism could in fact work together—with predictably disappointing results. In "Our Common Enemies," published in the anarcho-syndicalist journal *La demolizione*, he wrote that "We are well aware of the noxious black fogs exhaling from the hell in which you live your tormented lives, because the same gigantic, brute force prevents us from flying to the empyrean and touching the stars with our brows." "Our enemy," he continued, "is one and the same. . . . Is it indeed necessary to rehearse their banal, doom-laden names: clericalism, moralism, commercialism, academicism, pedantry, pacifism, and mediocrity?"[19] In fact, not only did they all have the same enemies, but they were all, in a way, workers struggling for some future revolutionary era. "Trade unionists all," he wrote, "whether of manual labor or of the intellect of life and of art, destroyers and creators together, realistic or idealistic anarchists, heroes of all strengths and of all beauties, let us go forward dancing, propelled by the same superhuman intoxication, toward the common apotheosis of the Future!"[20]

This 'dancing to the Future', however, was only going to happen through war, and Marinetti never made a convincing argument that transformed enough of the

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[18] Berghaus, *Italian Futurist Theatre*, 96.
[19] F.T. Marinetti, "Our Common Enemies," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 52; originally published in March 16, 1910 in *La demolizione*, edited by the syndicalist Ottavio Dinale, who had printed the original Futurist Manifesto in this journal and was one of the few syndicalists who welcomed Marinetti as an ally against the Liberal state.
[20] F.T. Marinetti, "Our Common Enemies," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 52.

internationalist anarcho-syndicalists into bellicose nationalists. In the above article he simply tried to shame them into being nationalists, asking "Can you really be sure that your offspring will not one day condemn you for having raised them by ignoring, by scorning the greatest of all Aesthetics, that of frenzied battalions, armed to the teeth?"[21]

This was effectively the method he used as he went on a speaking tour during the Summer of 1910 to various workers' centers: vague explanations reconciling contradictory elements, followed by berating. The latter revealed Marinetti's recognition that his audience was simply not being convinced. In a speech entitled "The Necessity and Beauty of Violence," given at the Chamber of Labor in Naples on June 26, and then at the Sala d'arte moderna in Milan on July 30, Marinetti repeated his facile explanation used the previous year that the "the collective and the individual—are, in reality, very closely related," that the "collective depend[s] on the exertions and initiatives of individuals," and that "the prosperity of a nation has its origins in hostility toward, yet imitation of, the multiple elements of which it is composed."[22] In a later part of the speech he returned to this theme yet again, seemingly unsure if his point was understood. "We have come to the point where it is necessary to accept, within and outside ourselves, the coexistence of the most contradictory elements." "These individual freedoms," he argued, "which proliferate as they develop toward a possible and desirable anarchy, must coexist with the principle of authority." This struggle between liberty and order is what

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[21] Ibid.

[22] F.T. Marinetti, "The Necessity and Beauty of Violence," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 416-417. This document has a rather extensive publishing history. Like much of Marinetti's writings, those that had recyclable idea were republished often, generally with simple emendations that made the article more up to date by adding contemporary references. Thus the original version of the manuscript is available at Yale as: F.T. Marinetti, "Conferenza su l'amore del pericolo e l'eroismo quotidiano," in YMP, Box 18, Folder 1180: L'amore del pericolo e l'eroismo quotidiano. This was partly published in *La giovane Italia* on July 10, 1910, in *L'internazionale* on July 16¸1910, in *La propaganda* on July 16-17, 1910, and later was updated to suit post-war needs and published in *L'ardito* on June 15, 22, and 29, 1919. Textual notes can be found in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 72 and F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, CVI.

kept a nation vibrant, and "by the same token, Italy must always maintain within herself a dual passion for either a possible proletarian revolution or an even more likely patriotic war."[23] Possibly as a means of calming the ire of his anarchist audience he hurriedly pointed out that "we can no longer conceive of the authority of the State as a check on a people's desire for freedom. To the contrary, we believe that the revolutionary spirit of the people must act as a check on the authority of the State and its conservative spirit, that symptom of old age and steadily encroaching paralysis."[24] It is difficult to see, however, how the power of the state would not interfere with this anarchic liberty if the goal of the nation, as Marinetti frequently said, was to periodically engage in a purifying and rejuvenating war.

Sensing resistance to his message, Marinetti turned on his audience, questioning their revolutionary sincerity, and offering the Futurists as the true anarchists. He accused them of having grown soft by the reformist socialists in their midst. These reformists, he argued, had decided to play the game of corruption and self-interest which characterized the Italian parliament. In response to this, Marinetti put forward the idea that artists must enter politics, specifically Futurist artists, the self-proclaimed "anarchists operating in the field of art."[25] It was their patriotic selflessness which would steer Italy right. "Futurism therefore proclaims," he added, "the necessary intervention of artists in public affairs, so as *to turn government into a selfless art*, at last, in place of what it is now, robbery [that has] become a pedantic science."[26]

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[23] F.T. Marinetti, "The Necessity and Beauty of Violence," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 65.
[24] Ibid., 66.
[25] Ibid., 416.
[26] Ibid., 418, 419. This anti-parliament sentiment was further espoused in Marinetti's "Against Sentimentalized Love and Parliamentarianism," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 55-59.

Marinetti's quest to channel the revolutionary left into a nationalist agenda was never successful. He did manage to recruit some artists with left-leaning politics, such as Umberto Boccioni (Marxist and socialist), Luigi Russolo, Carlo Carrà, Notari, Buzzi and Lucini (who had 'strong anarchist leanings'). He also managed to have his material printed in anarcho-syndicalist journals.[27] But that seems to be about it.

Marinetti came to this conclusion himself sometime in 1910, likely after his speeches to workers in the Summer. In 1911 he published a collection of writings in French entitled *Le Futurisme*, as a means of getting the French up to speed with what the Futurists were about. In it he published for the first time the article whose title would be the Futurist motto, "War, the Sole Cleanser of the World" ["La guerra, la sola igiene del mondo"]. After having spent the better part of 1910 trying to explain what bound the nationalist Futurists with the anarcho-syndicalists, he started the article by pointing out that "now you find me ready to explain to you what it is that cleanly separates Futurism from the concept of anarchy." His denunciation of the anarchists deserves quoting at length:

> Anarchy, turning its back on the infinite principle of human evolution, suspends its curving leap only at the absolute ideal of universal peace, at a ludicrous paradise composed of warm embraces, under rustling palm leaves, out in the country.
> We Futurists, on the other hand, affirm the continuous perfection and endless progress of humankind, both physiological and intellectual, as absolute principles of Futurism.
> We consider the hypothesis of the friendly unification of peoples to be outmoded and utterly dispensable, and we see for the world only one form of purgation, and that is war.
> The distant goal of anarchy, a sweet affection, sister to cowardice, seems to us like a horrible cancer that disposes peoples to great sufferings.[28]

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[27] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 53-54.
[28] F.T. Marinetti, "War, the Sole Cleanser of the World," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 53.

If that wasn't enough of a break with the anarchists, Marinetti finished by essentially calling them *passatista*, as they squandered their youthful energies in pointless meetings wherein they delegated authority to the oldest and least daring of their group.[29]

Further proof of the more pronounced nationalist turn in Marinetti's politics in 1910 came in a pair of manifestoes released during the Summer that demanded Italy move away from its dependence on its tourist trade and more actively embrace its modern industrial economy. The shift to the latter would make Italy stronger and more independent of foreigners. On April 27 Marinetti published "Futurist Manifesto to the Venetians" and then distributed a broadsheet containing both "Against Traditionalist Rome" and the Venetian piece in June. In the Venetian manifesto Marinetti unambiguously declared that "We reject the Venice of foreigners,"—the tourists who continued coming to Venice for its gondolas and kept the city locked into a veneration of its past. His solution: "We wish to prepare for the birth of an industrial and military Venice which can dominate the Adriatic, this great Italian lake." With typical bravado he went on to prescribe that Venice should have its canals filled in, and metal bridges and factory smoke stacks should dominate the new landscape.[30] Thousands of these pamphlets were dropped from the Clock Tower in the Piazza San Marco in Venice. However, this was in fact just an opening salvo against traditionalist Venice. On August 1 Marinetti held a *serata* at the Teatro Fenice in Venice to coincide with the opening of a Boccioni exhibit. There, Marinetti went beyond the bombast of the manifesto to the withering critique of the Venetians themselves, who persisted, he argued, in offering up their city as a prostitute does to anyone willing to pay the price. "Enough!," he declared,

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[29] Ibid., 54.
[30] F.T. Marinetti, "Against Traditionalist Venice [aka "Manifesto futurista ai Veneziani"]," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 165.

"We've had enough! O Venice, old procuress that your are, stop whispering obscene invitations to visitors from all over the Earth. . . ." Venetians, he explained, had become obsessed with enriching their hotel industries, to which he pointed out

> At one time you were invincible warriors and artists of genius, you were bold navigators, clever industrialists, and tireless merchants. . . . And now you have become hotel waiters, guides, pimps, antique dealers, swindlers, forgers of old paintings, plagiarizing and imitative painters. Have you therefore forgotten how, above all else, to be Italians, and that this word, in the language of history, means "builders of the future"?[31]

If they could not remember their duty as Italians, Marinetti recommended that "You should throw yourselves down, one on top of the other, like sandbags, to make a dike at the outer limits of the Lagoon, while we prepare a great, strong, industrial, commercial and military Venice on the Adriatic, our great Italian lake!"[32]

Marinetti's "Against Traditionalist Rome" was not any less dismissive of the nation's dependence on tourism and his desire for a more industrial future for Italy. After lamenting that art critics like the Victorian John Ruskin had laid the groundwork for the European fetishization of Italy's past, he pointed out that Europeans "are hardly aware of the tremendous industrial and commercial development taking place in Lombardy and Liguria." "Milan! Genoa!," he continued, "This is where the new, revitalized Italy lies! Here are the cities that we love! It is cities such as these that lift our Italian pride! We have great centers which are aflame day and night, breathing their huge fires all over the open countryside."[33] But the tourists only had eyes for Rome, Florence, and Venice, "which we think of as the three suppurating sores of our peninsula. . . ." Florence he dismissed as an "exquisite piece of medieval parchment which has fallen into the

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[31] F.T. Marinetti, "A Futurist Speech by Marinetti to the Venetians [aka "Discorso futurista ai Veneziani"]," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 166, 167.
[32] Ibid., 168.
[33] F.T. Marinetti, "Against Traditionalist Rome," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 170.

loveliest countryside. . . ." Rome, he wrote, "languishes among its pestilential ruins, with the six-monthly circulation of its blood which foreign gold pumps slowly around its arteries of great hotels." The tourist industry, he concluded, "that is what we are fighting against, remorselessly."[34]

Marinetti's desire to modernize Italy's traditional cities was not simply a blind fetish with all things modern. He believed a war with Austria was coming, and Italy had to be prepared for it. After the *serata* in Milan at the Teatro Lirico in February, 1910, Marinetti had continued propagating his Futurist artistic ideas across Europe, and part of his message included his ever insistent anti-Austrianism. That same February he was in Paris glorifying the new Futurist Italy, but also calling for an "intellectual *riavvicinamento* between France and Italy, with the goal of preparing for the eventual strangulation of the Central Powers."[35] In March and April he was in London twice, both times declaring that war with Austria was inevitable, "We nurture in our blood the principle hatred of all Italians, the hatred of Austria," and that war would ultimately 'strangle' pan-Germanism.[36] Marinetti returned to London in December. In an interview for a London paper, likely the *Daily Chronicle,* Marinetti continued this theme, stating that "Our national destiny depends on Futurist propaganda. As inevitably as the sun rises and sets we shall have to struggle for our life against Austria. If the contest comes when Venice is still sunk in the lethargy of its old romanticism, when Rome is living on its

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[34] Ibid., 171. Berghaus recounts the distribution of the broadsheet and the Venetian *serata* in his *Italian Futurist Theatre*, 68-70, 102-103.
[35] F. Balilla Pratella, "Il Futurismo e la Guerra: Cronaca sintetica di Balilla Pratella [1924]," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 483.
[36] Ibid.

classical traditions, when Florence is nothing but a picture gallery, we are doomed."[37]

"The existence of Italy," he continued,

> depends upon the success of our creed, because on the one hand, as I have said, she is decaying with the putrefaction of dead things, and on the other she is being weakened by that most dangerous of all philosophies, the Gospel of Cowardice. Tolstoyism and passive resistance are so debilitating the workingmen of Italy that I believe if it is not checked by the awakening spirit of Futurism, the Italian people will be as helpless sheep before a horde of wolves when Austria marches over the frontier.[38]

This consistent anti-Austrian activity, even overseas, brought Marinetti to the attention of the Italian authorities. His earliest records in the Ministry of the Interior's *Casellario politico centrale* are from this period. After Marinetti had given his interview to the *Daily Chronicle* in London, he attended a number of conferences in the city expounding his Futurist and anti-Austrian views.[39] Italy's Consul General in London requested information from the Italian Ministry of the Interior precisely because of these activities. The Prefect of Milan reported that Marinetti was "of good moral standing, but has an impetuous and restless character. He is an irredentist without any clear political

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[37] Marinetti quoted in "War on the Past, New Creed's Cry," in the *New York Times*, December 25, 1910, though the original dateline of the *Times'* foreign correspondent is "London, December 10." These views were reprinted in "Italian's War on Past Traditions: Views of F.T. Marinetti, Young Reformer," in the *Boston Daily Globe*, February 19, 1911. Similar anti-Austrian comments justifying the modernizing of Venice can be found in an English translation (translated by the Futurists) of the manifesto "Against Traditionalist Venice" which was sent to the *New York Times* and published in its entirety: "We want to prepare the birth of a commercial and military Venice, able to brave and affront on the Adriatic Sea our eternal enemy Austria." See, " 'Futurists' Desire to Destroy Venice," in the *New York Times*, July 24, 1910.

[38] "War on the Past, New Creed's Cry," in the *New York Times*, December 25, 1910.

[39] As Marinetti wrote to Pratella, "A Londra ebbi due grandissimi successi: uno come declamatore di versi futuristi, l'altro come conferenziere." See, Marinetti to Pratella, December 22, 1910, in Marinetti and Pratella, *Lettere ruggenti a F. Balilla Pratella*, edited by Giovanni Lugaresi (Milan: Quaderni dell'Osservatore, 1969), 19.

tendencies, but sometimes he expresses extreme principles when these benefit the Futurist ideas he believes in."[40] Not an altogether inaccurate portrait.

Marinetti's increasingly nationalist politics, and his failure to recruit amongst the revolutionary left did not mean that he had abandoned his goal of finding a means to advance both his radical and nationalist goals. However, it was already clear that in this balancing act, as the ultimate goal was strengthening the nation, Marinetti would privilege the latter and circumscribe the former. Marinetti's comments to the Triestines in January, 1910, that "All liberties and all progress [must be made] in the great circle of the Nation!"[41] was the earliest hint to his thinking. In 1911 this shift towards order became more obvious in his Spanish manifesto of June of that year.

"Contro la Spagna passatista," was written on the request of the publisher of the Spanish version of the Foundation manifesto.[42] Marinetti did not have much trouble applying his Futurist principles to Spain. He felt both countries were in the grips of reactionary clericalism and general *passatismo*. The solution was the expansion of industry, the reduction in Spain's dependence on its tourist industry, and the taxation of religious houses in order to fund the public education needed to move Spain forward. All of this was meant to "defend and develop the dignity and liberties of the individual."[43] As the individual's condition was ameliorated and liberated, he argued it would then be harnessed in the service of the nation. For those that would likely be confused at the possibility of reconciling the furtherance of the individual while at the same time

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[40] Consul General of Italy, London to Ministry of the Interior, Rome, December 29, 1910, ACS, MIN, Casellario politico centrale, B.3066, f.97613, Marinetti; Prefect of Milan to Ministry of the Interior, Rome, February 2, 1911, ACS, MIN, Casellario politico centrale, B.3066, f.97613, Marinetti.
[41] F.T. Marinetti, "Discorso ai Triestini," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 213.
[42] F.T. Marinetti, "Contro la Spagna passatista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 34-40. Background information to the manifesto can be found in the notes to F.T. Marinetti, "Futurist Proclamation to the Spaniards," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 103.
[43] Ibid., 38.

promoting the collective, seemingly left and right on the political spectrum, he argued that the nation, a strong army, and war were not simply the preserves of a reactionary and clerical monarchy. In fact, these ideas could be linked with "the idea of progress and the liberated proletariat." And to harness the energies of the revolutionary proletariat for nationalist ends, he called for the "patriotic education of the proletariat."[44]

Here, in this often times overlooked manifesto, lay the clearest enunciation of Marinetti's politics in this period. He had given up appealing to the revolutionary left on the principle that war would revolutionize society and free individuals from all forms of constraints. Now, as relations with Austria were worsening, and Italy was about to embark on its first major war since Adowa, the nationalist component in Futurist politics would unambiguously trump the advancement of any radical agenda on behalf of individual liberties. The "patriotic education of the proletariat," Marinetti's solution to the class war, was an idea that Marinetti returned to often in the years to come, as the needs of Italy required order at home, and not the defense of the workers' liberty to strike, or any other individual liberty.

[44] Ibid.

The Libyan War and the Nationalization of Marinetti's Politics

The period from the Fall of 1911 to the Summer of 1914 would see a pronounced shift in Marinetti's politics. Once Italy found itself in a real war Marinetti's nationalist impulses drove his politics, and there was no longer any effort put into trying to recruit the revolutionary left. In these years, Marinetti's radical goal to advance individual liberties in Italy would be completely subsumed to his nationalist desire to expand Italian influence abroad.

Italy invaded Libya in the latter half of September, 1911, and Marinetti was an immediate supporter of this imperialist venture. There was opposition to the war, notably on the left, and it was to these opponents that Marinetti addressed the second Futurist political manifesto. The manifesto was released on October 11, 1911 and proclaimed:

> We Futurists who, for more than two years, amid the disapproving whistles of the citizens of Goutville and Paralysis, have been glorifying a love of danger and violence, patriotism and war, the sole cleanser of the world, are happy to be experiencing, at last, Italy's great Futurist hour. . . ."[45]

The principles laid out in this new incarnation of Futurist politics were clear enough: "To every individual and to the entire populace is granted all liberties, except the liberty to be a coward," and "It is proclaimed that the word ITALY must take precedence over the word LIBERTY."[46] Here, the supposed conflict between liberty and order, which Marinetti had previously proclaimed was at the heart of Italy's rejuvenation, was summarily tamed. Expanding Italy's empire was now the primary goal, and as such national order was required and individual liberties had to be curtailed.

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[45] F.T. Marinetti, "Second Futurist Political Manifesto," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 72. The manifesto, at the time of distribution, was titled "Per la guerra, solo igiene del mondo," and has also been published as "Tripoli italiana," "Manifesto a Tripoli italiana," and was included in the chapter "Movimento politico futurista" in the book *Guerra sola igiene del mondo* (1915), which was reprinted in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*.

[46] F.T. Marinetti, "Movimento politico futurista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 291.

Marinetti, in fact, became quite carried away in his nationalism now that he had a real battle to engage in. He proclaimed that this new empire would cancel out the 'bothersome' memory of Roman greatness with this new example of Italian greatness that was a 'hundred times' greater.[47] He urged the Italian government, "which has at last become Futurist, to magnify our national ambitions," and to proclaim "the birth of PANITALIANISMO."[48] During the course of the war, all things were to be subordinated to the national will, even art itself: "Futurist poets, painters, sculptors and musicians of Italy! While the war is on let us put aside verses, paint brushes, scalpels and orchestras. . . . We can admire nothing today but the formidable symphonies of shrapnel and the crazy sculptures that our inspired artillery creates amongst the enemy masses."[49]

True to his word, Marinetti departed for Libya and acted as war correspondent for the French journal *Intransigeant*, to "glorify Italy's politics and the Italian army."[50] He even took part in some of the fighting. Before he left for Libya, he wrote that he hoped "to shoot at some Turks."[51] When he returned, he wrote that

> I passed two months in Tripoli where I even had the pleasure of engaging in combat a few times, following platoons on patrol into assaults on Arab houses in oases. At the end of one fight, in which I had the joy of seeing three Arabs fall from the shots of my Mauser pistol, the lieutenant, who commanded the platoon I was with, gave me a Turkish bayonet taken from a prisoner as a trophy.[52]

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] F. Balilla Pratella, "Il Futurismo e la Guerra," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 485; Marinetti to Pratella, February 2, 1912, in Marinetti and Pratella, *Lettere ruggenti a F. Balilla Pratella*, 29.
[51] Marinetti to Pratella, October 11, 1911, in Marinetti and Pratella, *Lettere ruggenti a F. Balilla Pratella*, 28.
[52] Marinetti to Pratella, January 3, 1912, in Marinetti and Pratella, *Lettere ruggenti a F. Balilla Pratella*, 28-29.

From this experience emerged the poem *La battaglia di Tripoli* in January, 1912, which Marinetti read throughout Italy in 1912, as well as London.[53] This propaganda effort on behalf of Italy's wars was something Marinetti would undertake for the rest of his life, and it went beyond simply reciting poetry. During the Libyan War he was involved in physical altercations with socialist opponents of the war, and even traveled to London to berate a journalist who had revealed the horrific treatment of Arab rebels at the hands of the Italian army as the latter sought to subdue them.[54]

Italy's defeat of Turkish forces in 1911 triggered the First Balkan War in 1912, and Marinetti similarly sought to participate in this conflict, and to write about it and to glorify the experience of warfare as central to the Futurist world view. As the Futurist Francesco Balilla Pratella later recounted, "Concerned with the importance the Balkan problem had for Italy, and foreseeing the general war, Marinetti departed for Sofia, assisted in the Bulgaro-Turkish war, and particularly in the siege of Adrianopolis [October, 1912-March, 1913]."[55] At the time, Marinetti wrote to Francesco Cangiullo, another Futurist, that at Adrianopolis [today's Edirne] he had "had the pleasure of assisting in a number of fights, and in one great battle, in my role as a war correspondent. . . ." For this war Marinetti sent dispatches of the siege of Adrianopolis to the Parisian journal *Gil Blas*. As in Libya, Marinetti's war-time experiences were immediately

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[53] F. Balilla Pratella, "Il Futurismo e la Guerra," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 485; Marinetti to Pratella, February 2, 1912, in Marinetti and Pratella, *Lettere ruggenti a F. Balilla Pratella*, 29.
[54] F. Balilla Pratella, "Il Futurismo e la Guerra," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 485; Mack Smith, *Italy: A Modern History*, 278.
[55] F. Balilla Pratella, "Il Futurismo e la Guerra," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 485.

produced into a book, *Zang Tumb Tuuum* (1914),[56] which was then read aloud at a number of conferences in Italy and throughout Europe.[57]

On October 15, 1913 Marinetti released what he termed the third Futurist political manifesto, on the occasion of the 1913 general elections, and it brought together much of the scattered political sentiments that he had published in the past five years. In it, his experiences in both the Libyan War and the First Balkan War were clearly evident. There was a greater emphasis on imperialism and the means with which to achieve imperial expansion. There were also further attacks against the enemies of national expansion, be they domestic or foreign. And, as in the last political manifesto, there was precious little regarding individual liberty.

Most of the manifesto concerned itself with the national order needed for national greatness. Thus, the opening words were "Italy, absolutely sovereign. – The word ITALY must take precedence over the word LIBERTY,"[58] and "All liberties, save for that of being cowards, pacifists, anti-Italians." Once again, Marinetti insisted on the "patriotic education of the proletariat" to combat socialism's pacifistic influence on the working class, as well as its ability to organize the working class. Thereafter Marinetti provided a very detailed list of what was required to achieve this "absolute sovereignty." These included a bigger navy and a bigger army, a "cynical, astute and aggressive foreign

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[56] Reprinted in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*.
[57] Ibid.; Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 131. Also see Jeffrey Schnapp, "Politics and Poetics in Marinetti's *ZANG TUMB TUUUM*," in *Stanford Italian Review* 5, #1 (Spring, 1985). Schnapp's analysis is concerned primarily with the visual presentation of the poem, a syntax-free, typographically-morphing words-in-freedom, which, he believes, was part of the general Futurist project of breaking down traditional literature as something enjoyed quietly and independently. This poem was meant to evoke the experience of war, both on the page and orally, and was meant to be performed. This breaking down of the distance between writer and reader can also be seen as part of the project of putting the artist and his art into real life, and out of the proverbial ivory tower.
[58] F.T. Marinetti, "Movimento politico futurista [third Futurist political manifesto, 1913]," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 291. The manifesto is dated October 11, but was published in the October 15 edition of the Florentine *Lacerba*.

policy," colonial expansionism, irredentism, "Panitalianismo," and the "primacy of Italy." All of this was to be made possible with "a people proud of being Italian," who were also supporters of "War, the world's only hygiene." Both Italy and Italians were to be strengthened to achieve these goals. For Italy, Marinetti recommended "economic defense," or protectionism, schools of commerce, industry and agriculture, the "violent modernization of the *passatiste* cities," and the "abolition of humiliating and uncertain foreign-owned industry." For the Italians, Marinetti recommended the "cult of progress and speed, sport, physical strength, reckless courage, heroism and danger, against the obsession of culture, classical teaching, the museum, the library and ruins – Suppression of the Academies and the Conservatories." Italians should devote themselves to professions that strengthened Italy, and thus he called for "a minimum of professors, very few lawyers and doctors, [but] very many farmers, engineers, chemists, mechanics and businessmen."[59]

The socialists and their internationalism were certainly one of the primary targets of this political manifesto. But the other primary targets were the Catholics, and the timing of the manifesto makes this abundantly clear. The 1913 general election was the first to be held since the extension of male suffrage in 1911, which tripled the voting population from 3 to 8.5 million, and removed the literacy qualification for men over 30 and for men with military service.[60] Marinetti's concern was that these new, illiterate voters would vote Catholic and empower conservative and pacifist forces in Italy. Thus, in addition to the manifesto calling for anti-socialism, the Futurist insistence on anti-clericalism remained as strong as it had been in 1909. Even though the Church has

[59] Ibid., 292.
[60] Martin Clark, *Modern Italy, 1871-1982* (London: Longman, 1984), 156.

supported the Libyan war, Marinetti accused the "clerico-moderate-liberal" program as being laced with "traditional and commemorative patriotism," "intermittent militarism," (no different than the straight anti-militarism of the left) "*passatismo*," and "black cowardice," (a trait shared with the left, though Marinetti called theirs "red cowardice").[61]

Such was the extent of Marinetti's nationalism in late 1913 that he threatened the monarchy as well if it did not support Italy's empire in North Africa. In an article published in December, in addition to deriding the cowardice of socialists, republicans, radicals, liberals, conservatives and clericals, referring to them as "miserable scum,"[62] he also declared that "if the monarchy, which currently encapsulates our national powers, were some day or other to harm, reduce, or corrode the strength of the Nation, we should come out ferociously against it."[63]

Another important trigger for publishing the 1913 political manifesto was as a response to an article by the Florentine Futurist Giovanni Papini in his journal *Lacerba*. Papini believed the upcoming elections were inconsequential as the entire political game was fixed. In his "Freghiamoci della politica," ["Let's Not Give a Damn About Politics"] Papini wrote that "an intelligent man cannot belong to any party," as "the real political forces are outside the parties." These forces were the Church, the monarchy, the masons, high finance, workers' organizations, the large daily newspapers, and career politicians.

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[61] F.T. Marinetti, "Movimento politico futurista [third Futurist political manifesto, 1913]," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 293.
[62] F.T. Marinetti, "The Battle of Florence: Great Futurist *Serata* at the Verdi Theater, December 12, 1913," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 177. The article was originally published in *Lacerba* on December 15, 1913.
[63] Ibid. The earliest display of republicanism, at the Milan *serata* of February 1910, was to a limited audience, and Marinetti's narrative for that evening was published years after the fact, making this pronouncement likely the first republican declaration on his part.

Thus, Papini saw no reason why anyone should involve themselves in Italian democracy, as it was all a sham.[64]

For Marinetti, this was the exact opposite of what he wanted published under the Futurist banner. He felt Papini had taken to heart the anarchic, destructive side of Futurism, violently doing away with all forms of *passatismo*, but failed to see that Futurism was intent on strengthening the nation, not simply critiquing it. Consequently the third Futurist political manifesto was published in *Lacerba* (where Papini had published his article), and was very clear about the Futurist alternative to both a clerical-liberal politics of the right and a democratic-republican-socialist politics of the left. Moreover, Marinetti ended up writing an 18 page letter to Papini refuting his entire position, clearly exacerbated that anyone should have misinterpreted the Futurist message so thoroughly. The letter deserves to be quoted at length:

> We read with pleasure the powerful demolition that you made of contemporary Italian politics. However we were disappointed not to see a second part that would seem to us absolutely necessary, in fact indispensable: that which must contain the <u>hopes, faith, and desires</u> of us the Futurists, to purify, rejuvenate, accelerate the Italian political conscience. The absence of this second optimistic part, full of Futurist faith, renders, to our mind, dangerous the title: <u>Freghiamoci della politica</u>.
> No dear Papini: we cannot simply not give a damn about politics, nor exclaim it as a pessimistic invitation to the young.
> There are many of these [young people], many and many thousands, that ask us with anguish and with faith for a directive, an enthusiastic exclamation, not simply artistic, but even political and national. Art is tied to politics, and as the latter is at the moment held in such low regard in Italy, as in many other nations, the game [as Papini referred to politics in his article] is anything but over. . . .
> The Futurist movement, as spectacle and as fertile action, rehabilitative and able to excite, corresponds perfectly with the Libyan campaign, complete with order,

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[64] Giovanni Papini, "Freghiamoci della politica," in *Lacerba*, October 1, 1913, quoted in Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 146. Berghaus translates the title somewhat confusingly and incorrectly as "Let's Give a Damn About Politics." See Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 69. For the Florentine avant-garde, and their troubled relationship with Marinetti, see Walter Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism*, 166-181.

> precision, tenacity and heroism . . . I remain full of faith in our military, industrial, artistic and even political Italy![65]

This nationalistic fervor did not have long to wait for an outlet. Within a few months Europe would be at war and Marinetti would be one of the earliest leaders of the interventionist campaign.

[65] Marinetti to Papini, October, 1913, Archivio Papini, Fondazione Primo Conti, Fiesole, Italy.

Interventionism and War: Nationalist Apotheosis and the Re-emergence of Radicalism in Marinetti's Politics

The nationalist trajectory of Marinetti's politics found its fullest development in both the interventionist campaign and then his participation in World War One. From 1914 to 1917 his primary goal was first to get Italy into the war on the side of the Triple Entente, and thereafter he devoted himself to the war effort on the battlefield and as propagandist on the home-front and amidst the troops. However, it is at the latter end of this period, when Italy had been fully mobilized to fight a total war, that one sees the resurgence of radicalism in Marinetti's politics. The war had settled whatever misgivings existed in Marinetti's mind over how to reconcile the individual and the collective. The heroism and camaraderie of Italy's soldiers in their successful war effort proved to Marinetti that his original theory was correct, that war would simultaneously unleash the revolutionary, anarchic individualism of the Italian people, but would channel that energy for nationalist goals. Consequently, the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party released in February, 1918 prescribed significant radical policies that were geared towards the improvement of the standard of living and the protection of individual liberties. It was based on the assumption that patriotic Italians deserved such policies, and more importantly that 'real' patriots would voluntarily limit such liberties in the interest of the nation.

Upon the outbreak of the Great War in July, 1914, Italy declared its neutrality. Though nominally an ally of Austria and Germany, there was little public support for Italy to fight on their behalf, or to engage in the war at all. For Marinetti this was unacceptable. Italy, he felt, should be in this great, historical conflict, and it should be on the side of France against the scourge of German/Austrian *passatismo* and to conquer

irredentist land. Milan was a hotbed of interventionist activity. Violent public confrontations between pro and anti-war demonstrators had already begun by August 1.[66] Marinetti was rumored to be setting up a legion of volunteers who would fight on behalf of France while Italy continued its neutrality,[67] and felt that "if the government, contrary to Italian public opinion, wants to lead us against France, hiding behind [the promise of] vague compensations that will then be lessened or refuted by our [German] masters after a victory, . . . I say a revolution will occur, and we will be the ones to start it in Milan, with pistols."[68] On August 12 Marinetti participated in a pro-France demonstration organized by republicans and pro-war socialists "to let the government know that Milan is absolutely ready for cautious but energetic preparation against Austria."[69]

This tepid interventionism did not last long. Within a month Marinetti and his group were demonstrating against the Austrians and pushing Italy towards war. On September 15 Marinetti informed Papini that "in Milan the probability of war grows, but too slowly."[70] The French had just stopped the German drive for Paris at the Battle of the Marne. On the evening of the 15th, at the opening of Puccini's *Fanciulla del West* in Milan's Teatro del Verme, Marinetti, Carrà, Mazza and Boccioni disrupted the performance with Marinetti (or Mazza) unfurling an Italian flag and yelling "Viva la Francia," and Carrà (or Boccioni) unfurling what looked to be an Austrian flag, yelling

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[66] Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, August 2, 1914, ACS, MIN, DGPS, Categoria A5G, Prima Guerra Mondiale, B.103, f.225/1.
[67] Ungaretti to Marinetti, August 9, 1914, in YMP, Box 17, Folder 1087: Ungaretti, Giuseppe.
[68] Marinetti to Soffici, August 6, 1914, in *Archivi del futurismo*, edited by Maria Drudi Gambillo and Teresa Fiori, volume 1 (Rome: De Luca, 1958).
[69] Marinetti to Cangiullo, August 13, 1914, in Marinetti and Cangiullo, *Epistolario Cangiullo-Marinetti*, 78-79. Cautious in that Marinetti was not sure of the government's reaction to such public anti-Austrian activity.
[70] Marinetti to Papini, September 15, 1914, Archivio Papini, Fondazione Primo Conti, Fiesole, Italy.

"Abbassoooo l'Austriaaa!" Thereafter they were escorted out of the theatre.[71] The following day a number of Futurists including Marinetti stormed into the Galleria and, according to the Prefect of Milan's report, unfurled an Italian and Austrian flag, burned the Austrian one, yelled "Viva la Francia," and "Viva la Guerra," and, of course, "Abasso Austria," while they launched into the air a number of flyers calling for war with Austria. They were all arrested again, and kept at San Vittore prison for a number of days.[72]

Upon leaving prison Marinetti continued his interventionist activities and published "In This Futurist Year" in an effort to court Italy's university students, who had shown themselves receptive to Futurism and it nationalist message. He wrote that "our Nationalism, which is ultra- violent, anticlerical, antisocialist, and anti-traditionalist, is rooted in the inexhaustible vigor of Italian blood and is at war with the cult of ancestors which, far from welding the race together, makes it anemic and causes it to rot away."[73]

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[71] There is some confusion over what happened that evening. Marinetti in a 1929 recollection "I futuristi primi interventisti," in *TIF*, 519-520, has Mazza unfurling the Italian flag and Boccioni unfurling the Austrian one and setting it on fire. This is the narrative recounted in Berghaus' *Futurism and Politics*, 74, and Salaris' *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 164. However, the Prefect's report for that evening has Marinetti unfurling the Italian flag and Carrà the Austrian one, and then simply ripping it. See Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, September 16, 1914, ACS, MIN, DGPS, Categoria A5G, Prima Guerra Mondiale, B.103, f.225/1. Berghaus actually translates in full the report, but does not note the discrepancy. What may have happened was that in his recollection Marinetti chose to highlight Boccioni's and Mazza's roles, who stayed loyal to Futurism, and to eliminate Carrà's, who eventually left the movement. However, in Pratella's "Il Futurismo e la Guerra," which Marinetti included in his 1924 *Futurismo e Fascismo,* Boccioni also has pride of place. This article was published in a 1919 collection of Futurist manifestoes, and was noted to have been finished by December 11, 1915. [See De Maria's notes to F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, CXIII]. If this original writing date is correct, then the answer to the discrepancy may simply be that the prefect recorded the events incorrectly.

[72] Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, September 17a, 1914, ACS, MIN, DGPS, Categoria A5G, Prima Guerra Mondiale, B.103, f.225/1. Marinetti's recounting has Austrian flags being burned. See F.T. Marinetti, "I futuristi primi interventisti," 521; F. Balilla Pratella, "Il Futurismo e la Guerra," 487. However, the Prefect of Milan made a point of noting that an Austrian flag, which *Il Secolo* had said was burned, was in fact collected and being held at the Questura. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also duly informed, so as to avoid a potential diplomatic fracas with Austria. See Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, September 17b , 1914, ACS, MIN, DGPS, Categoria A5G, Prima Guerra Mondiale, B.103, f.225/1; Ministry of the Interior to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 18, 1914, ACS, MIN, DGPS, Categoria A5G, Prima Guerra Mondiale, B.103, f.225/1. The Futurists were released on September 22. See Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, September 22a, 1914, ACS, MIN, DGPS, Categoria A5G, Prima Guerra Mondiale, B.103, f.225/1.

[73] F.T. Marinetti, "In This Futurist Year," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 231.

As such, Italy must fight in the war, as "War cannot die, for it is one of the laws of life. Life [equals] aggression. Universal Peace [equals] the decrepitude and death throes of races. War [equals the] bloody and necessary trial of a people's strength."[74] And for the war to be successful Italians had to put aside their individual needs and come together for the nation. As before the war, he proclaimed that all liberties were allowed, except those that allowed cowardice, pacifism, and neutralism.[75]

Such focus on collective needs also extended to art. In the second political manifesto he had called on artists to put aside their work and engage in the Libyan War. Now he was encouraging his fellow Futurists to make war their artistic subject, even if it shaded into propaganda.[76] In a letter to the Futurist painter Gino Severini in Paris on November 20 he wrote

> this war will eventually take in the entire world . . . [and] the world will be at war (even if there are breaks, armistices, treaties, diplomatic congresses), that is, in an aggressive, dynamic, Futurist state for at least 10 years. Thus, it is imperative that Futurism not only collaborate directly in the splendor of this conflagration (and many of us have decided to commit our bodies energetically to it) but also become the plastic expression of this Futurist hour. I'm talking about a vast expression, not limited to a small circle of experts, but a truly strong and synthetic expression that affects the imagination and the eyes of all or nearly all intelligent people.[77]

Marinetti was aware that this goal could probably lead "to paintings and drawings that are less abstract, too realistic" but he hoped that "we will have a new, bellicose, plastic dynamism. Boccioni and Carrà agree with me, and believe that *significant artistic originality* is *possible.*" And so, Marinetti asked Severini to

> interest yourself in the war and its repercussions in Paris pictorially. Try to live the war pictorially, studying it in all its marvelous mechanical forms (military

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[74] Ibid., 235.
[75] Ibid., 237.
[76] Ibid., 234-235
[77] Marinetti to Severini, November 20, 1914, in *Archivi del futurismo*, volume 1, 349.

> trains, fortifications, the wounded, ambulances, hospitals, funeral processions). You have the fortune of being in Paris right now. Take absolute advantage, abandon yourself to the enormous military, anti-Teutonic emotions that agitate France.[78]

This suggestion of how artistic material could be used for nationalist purposes was a harbinger of things to come, as the need to trim the Futurist sails to meet the political needs of the future would ultimately lead to such 'realistic', though essentially propagandistic, art work as the *Aerofuturismo* of the 1930s and 1940s and Marinetti's relentlessly propagandistic poetry of the same period.

Marinetti's increasingly nationalistic politics was now beginning to alienate some of his fellow Futurists. Neither Papini nor his collaborator Ardengo Soffici were exited about the overwhelmingly nationalist tone of the 1913 political manifesto, and neither were tolerant of Marinetti's increasing desire to shape their journal *Lacerba*'s content as World War I approached. After the 1913 political manifesto Soffici wrote "Eh! No, Sweet friends. An Italy absolutely sovereign is fine […]. But the word liberty […] let me put it at the beginning, before everything else."[79] By February, 1915 the break was open. Papini, Soffici, as well as Aldo Palazzeschi, quit the movement, accusing Marinetti of diluting the Futurist message simply to increase Futurist membership.[80]

Through the Winter and Spring, as the rest of Europe was coming to grips with the hellacious quality of the war, a war that was supposed to be have been over by

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[78] Ibid., 350. Severini actually attempted what Marinetti suggested, trying a less abstract realism, though he generally did not share Marinetti's view that the war was going to last 10 years or that Italy would benefit from it. In fact, once the war was over, and France won, he felt, Italy would have to deal with French "chauvinism," especially if Italy got in the game too late to take part in the victory. See Severini to Marinetti, November 28, 1914, in YMP, Box 16, Folder 1005: Severini, Gino.

[79] Ardengo Soffici, "Giornale di bordo," in *Lacerba*, November 1, 1913, quoted in Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 147.

[80] Giovanni Papini, Ardengo Soffici, Aldo Palazzeschi, "Futurismo e Marinettismo," in *Lacerba*, February 14, 1915, quoted in Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 150. Salaris also quotes at length a much more strident letter that Soffici wrote to Folgore explaining the break, on p. 151.

Christmas, Marinetti kept busy rousing the public and Italy's politicians over the need for Italy's involvement in the conflict. He led a raid at the University of Rome, *La Sapienza*, on December 9 and 11 against 'pro-German' professors.[81] On February 19, 1915 he was arrested along with a number of other Futurists demonstrating in front of parliament at the opening of a session of the Chamber of Deputies,[82] and he was involved in numerous altercations with neutralists.[83]

Then on April 12 occurred an event that Marinetti would immortalize in endless repetition in the future in order to establish his nationalist (and later Fascist) bonafides. On that day he was arrested along with Mussolini and a number of other Futurists in a pro-war demonstration in Rome.[84] This may have marked the first major activity that the two interventionists had undertaken together. In an interview published on February 23, Marinetti had expressed his admiration for Benito Mussolini's conversion to interventionism, and consequent expulsion from the Socialist Party, and claimed that "His recent actions, his attitudes and his rebellion are clear demonstration of a Futurist consciousness."[85] Mussolini, the next day coincidentally, for his part noted to Cangiullo that "We [at the *Popolo d'Italia*, his newspaper] are sympathetic to Futurism, and understand what it stands for and its strength. . . ."[86]

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[81] Berghaus, *Italian Futurist Theatre*, 74-77; F.T. Marinetti, "In This Futurist Year," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 237.
[82] F. Balilla Pratella, "Il Futurismo e la Guerra," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 487.
[83] Severini to Marinetti, March 1, 1915, in YMP, Box 16, Folder 1005: Severini, Gino; Marinetti to Folgore, April/May, 1915, in Marinetti and Folgore, *Carteggio Futurista*, Letter 35.
[84] F. Balilla Pratella, "Il Futurismo e la Guerra," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 488; F.T. Marinetti, "I futuristi primi interventisti," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 522. Again, there is a discrepancy in the record. In the former, Marinetti, Mussolini, Bruno Corra and Emilio Settimelli were arrested. In the latter, it was Marinetti, Mussolini, Settimelli and Balla.
[85] F.T. Marinetti, "The Meaning of War for Futurism: Interview with *L'avvenire*," in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 242.
[86] Mussolini to Cangiullo, February 24, 1915, in *Archivi del futurismo*, volume 1, 353. Also see, Mussolini to Buzzi, c. May 11-16, 1915, in Julie Dashwood, "An Unpublished Letter: Benito Mussolini to Paolo Buzzi," *Italian Studies* (1977), 97, in which Mussolini wrote: "Boccioni must have told you – if he's ever

With Italy finally at war on May 23, 1915, Marinetti, true to his innumerable pronouncements regarding the war as being the "worlds' only hygiene," and the path to Italy's national rejuvenation, set out for the front, at age 39. He was one of the earliest of Italy's volunteers, and his commitment to the war effort and Italy's military leaders was unwavering, even when the first blush of interventionist enthusiasm faded from many of the early volunteers, and the country at large turned against the war. The war was a transformative event for Marinetti. It proved that Italians could be transformed into a patriotic body of 'revolutionary' individuals and would result in the formation of the Futurist Political Party, but also brought into stark relief all those he considered the enemies of the *Patria*: the weak Liberal government, the workers who stayed home to work in the factories and never saw action on the front, and the socialists who kept to their neutralism. It was to these 'enemies' that Marinetti, the Futurists, and their allies would turn their attention after the war when they sought to put their politics into action.

Marinetti got into the fighting almost immediately. After having a hernia operation to allow him to sustain the rigors of the front, and convincing the government that he was not a political subversive, as his police file indicated, he made his way to the front with a number of other Futurists and took part on the assault on Dosso Casina between October 21 and 24 on the heights of Monte Altissimo on the Isonzo Front.[87] The battle was hard and bloody, and was a reality check to most soldiers. The army was undersupplied, the terrain was rocky and impassable, and an initial war of movement

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mentioned me – that all my sympathies are – even in the realm of art – for the innovators and demolishers: for the 'Futurists."

[87] These Futurists included Boccioni, Sant'Elia, Russolo, Mario Sironi, and Achille Funi, all in the *Battaglione lombardo volontari ciclisti e automobilisti.* See, Walter Vaccari, *Vita e tumulti di F.T. Marinetti* (Milan: Omnia Editrice, 1959), 329-330; Enrico Crispolti, *Storia e critica del futurismo* (Rome-Bari: Editori Laterza, 1987), 178-182; Regio Esercito Italiano, Comando del Distretto Mil. Roma, Copia dello Stato di servizio di Marinetti, in ACS, Carte Renzo De Felice, B.20, f.105.

ground down to a punishing trench warfare every bit as morale-sapping as the fabled Western Front.[88]

Marinetti's reaction, however, was to embrace the war experience that brought Italians together for a national goal. In his first entry in his war diary, Marinetti recounted everyone's shock at seeing their first dead soldier, but he wrote that:

> All things being equal, the individual desire for conservation gives an absolute value to human life. This value, however, becomes relative and nearly nothing at all when the individual (the building block [*cellula*] of the collective) sees this [collective] in danger and sacrifices his life for the life of the collective. Heroism thus becomes normal and individual life loses its value.[89]

Two nights later, after some grumbling over the cramped and frozen sleeping conditions the volunteers, as opposed to the regular army, had to endure, he wrote: "Patriotism is our new great religion. We are the mystics of war. A maximum of torture and physical suffering before arriving at the blessed day in which one dies for Italy. Italy is deserving of our ferocious and violent activities."[90] At the end of the victorious campaign he wrote that "all the bloody evenings of my adolescence (a nostalgia for battles) are satisfied."[91]

This optimistic view of the war was not a commonly held one. As southern peasants started being drafted en masse, and casualty figures increased with every fruitless battle on the Isonzo front, the public went from being resigned to the war to actively hostile. Already by January, 1916 Luigi Cadorna, the commander in chief of the army, was concerned with the rising tide of defeatism amongst his troops and the public

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[88] John Whittam, *The Politics of the Italian Army, 1861-1918* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 193-195.
[89] Entry dated October 22, 1915, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini, 1915-1921*, edited by Alberto Bertoni (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1987), 5.
[90] Entry dated October 23-24, 1915, in F.T. Marinetti, "30 pagine dimenticate e inedite del diario di guerra di F.T. Marinetti," *Simultaneita* 1, #1, (1997), 82. The original is available at Yale's Beinecke Library. See, Diary entry, "Giorno 23 e Notte 23-24," in YMP, Box 40, Folder 1696, p. 10 [of the whole manuscript, not this particular entry]. The entire manuscript covers October 22-27, 1915.
[91] Entry dated October 27, 1915, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 32.

at large. Soldiers were also beginning to talk of all their efforts in contrast to the shirkers (*imboscati*) at home.[92]

It was to this atmosphere that Marinetti returned when placed on leave on December 10, 1915, and led him to release the manifesto *L'orgoglio italiano* ["Italian Pride"].[93] The manifesto highlighted the two themes that characterized Marinetti's nationalist-laden politics of the war: that the war was good for Italy, as it transformed Italians into warriors, and it highlighted Italy's enemies. He recounted his exploits in the capture of Dosso Casina and noted that:

> We observed that the Italians, who were once workers, clerks or sedentary bourgeois, knew how to outmaneuver every platoon of *Kaiserjagers*. We observed that a corps of 300 Volunteer [soldier] cyclists, improvising as *Alpini* [alpine troops], knew how to strategically maneuver on unknown mountains, with such ability that the enemy thought they were encircled by thousands of men. We observed that an Italian student, transformed into an officer, could command the entire artillery of a zone and could demolish 6 or 7 Austrian forts that had been scientifically prepared for the defense over 20 to 30 years.[94]

As the war had transformed Italians at the front, it had also transformed them at home, specifically the Milanese, who had "seemed poisoned by pacifism" at one time, but were now "watching with pride this noble, useful and hygienic profusion of Italian blood."[95]

However, for those that did not support the war effort, he had stern words: "the Italian that does not manifest themselves as arrogantly proud of being Italian and convinced that Italy is destined to dominate the world with the creative genius of its art and the strength of its incomparable army deserves slaps, punches and to be shot in the back." Italians who deserved such treatment included the neutralist former Prime

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[92] Whittam, *Politics of the Italian Army*, 196-197.
[93] Regio Esercito Italiano, Comando del Distretto Mil. Roma, Copia dello Stato di servizio di Marinetti, in ACS, Carte Renzo De Felice, B.20, f.105; F.T. Marinetti, "L'orgoglio italiano, [December 11, 1915]" in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 437-440. This manifesto was co-signed by Boccioni, Russolo, Sant'Elia, and Sironi, who were all in the same unit with Marinetti.
[94] F.T. Marinetti, "L'orgoglio italiano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 437-438.
[95] Ibid., 438.

Minister Giolitti, the supposedly 'pro-German' Benedetto Croce, and the socialists Claudio Treves, Enrico Ferri, and Filippo Turati. Once again artists were called upon to put away their work and he decreed full punishment for those artists who, "physically able, demonstrate the most absolute absence of human valor, and then shut themselves off in their art as in a sanatorium or as in a hospital for cholera sufferers and do not offer their lives in order to expand Italian Pride."[96]

In addition to the uncompromisingly nationalistic view of the individual's duty in the midst of the collective war effort, this manifesto also showed another characteristic of the blind nationalism that had taken over Marinetti's political views during the war: an unquestioning support of the military leadership, specifically Cadorna, in spite of widespread proof that his four battles of the Isonzo in 1915 accomplished little more than increasing casualties. By January, 1916 the Italian government was already expressing concern over Cadorna's autocratic handling of the war, his failure to advance in 1915, and the casualties his failures had caused.[97] In response to the public criticisms, Marinetti wrote in his manifesto, somewhat exaggeratedly, that "we witnessed how the Italian people, under the genius direction of Cadorna, knew how to improvise in a few months the world's first artillery and to continually win in the most frightening and difficult war that had ever been fought."[98] No mention how this improvisation was the result of the unpreparedness of the Italian army, or that no substantial territory had been gained in the supposed victories achieved by Cadorna. Marinetti was in effect mythologizing Cadorna

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[96] Ibid., 440.
[97] Whittam, *The Politics of the Italian Army*, 198; John Keegan, *The First World War* (Toronto, ON: Key Porter Books, 1998), 227.
[98] F.T. Marinetti, "L'orgoglio italiano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 438.

as he would one day do with Mussolini, both in the service of uniting the country behind a strong leader.

Throughout 1916 and 1917 Marinetti continued to defend Cadorna and worked to keep up the national morale. Marinetti did not abandon him even after the crisis of the Austrian *Strafexpedition.* The Austrian offensive, commenced on May 15, 1916 and lasting until June 16, looked to break out of the Austrian Trentino and seize the plains of Lombardy and possibly the Veneto. Its first few days were a stunning success, as Cadorna had failed to re-enforce his front-line troops and left them dangerously over-exposed. Though Cadorna managed to blunt the attack, he failed to make-up all the lost ground. Italy lost 76,000 men in the initial attack, with 41,000 captured or surrendered, and 70,000 lost in the botched counter-attacks. Someone had to pay, and Cadorna seemed destined for replacement.[99]

In response to this crisis atmosphere Marinetti threw himself into the fray. On June 1 the first issue of *Italia futurista* appeared, and it became the mouthpiece for much of Marinetti's political and patriotic pronouncements throughout the rest of the war. For the first issue, when the *Strafexpedition* had yet to be stopped, Marinetti wrote "L'offensiva autriaca" ["The Austrian Offensive"] which urged all Italians to support the armed forces, and insisted that it was not the time to point out the military's mistakes.[100] In the next issue two weeks later Marinetti responded to complaints over rising casualties

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[99] Mario Isnenghi and Giorgio Rochat, *La Grande Guerra, 1914-1918* (Milan: La Nuova Italia, 2000), 176-183.

[100] F.T. Marinetti, "L'offensiva austriaca," in *Italia futurista*, June 1, 1916. In this first issue Marinetti, in the interests of propagating Futurist ideas beyond their purely political ones, also published his new manifesto "La nuova religione della velocità. Manifesto futurista di Marinetti," which extolled the religion of speed which had been realized by the great 'liberalizing' war. This was in contradiction to the slow and outdated Christian religion that would protect against the excesses of sensuality, but not the rigors of war that required quick thinking. Note, the manifesto appears with the date May 11, 1916, owing to Marinetti's fascination with the number 11, but it actually appeared for the first time in *Italia futurista*. The manifesto is reprinted in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 111-118.

from, he assumed, Italian women who put their personal grief over the needs of the nation. In "Donne, dovete preferire i gloriosi mutilati" ["Women, You Must Prefer the Glorious Wounded"] he argued that they should instead focus on respecting the wounded and castigating those who refused to fight. He even went so far as to demand the enrollment of women to fight on the front, less to replace Italy's soldiers than to convince them that their personal tragedies were insignificant in the face of the collective war effort.[101] In a subsequent article Marinetti re-iterated his belief that, in spite of the recent troubles, "War is a great and sacred law of life. . . . Universal peace [equals] the degeneration and agony of the race. War [equals the] bloody and necessary test of the people's strength."[102] Finally, on July 10, with Cadorna still insecure in his position, Marinetti published his "Lettera aperta al Generale Cadorna" ["An Open Letter to General Cadorna"], in which he lamented the belief in some quarters in the supposed superiority of the Germans and Austrians after the recent crisis. However, he noted that "We, who have always hated the Central Powers as the most stupid, professorial, and traditionalist of nations, await the pleasure of returning to the front to combat them under the command of the least German, most brilliant, most improvisational and Futurist of generals."[103] Cadorna's position, in fact, was only solidified when he captured Gorizia in a well-planned offensive lasting from August 6 to 16.[104]

Marinetti held firm to Cadorna even after the debacle of the Battle of Caporetto (October 24-November 3, 1917). The Austrians and Germans succeeded here in what

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[101] F.T. Marinetti, "Donne, dovete preferire i gloriosi mutilati," in *Italia futurista*, June 15, 1916.
[102] F.T. Marinetti, "Contro Vienna e contro Berlino," in *Italia futurista*, July 20, 1916.
[103] F.T. Marinetti, "Lettera aperta al Generale Cadorna," in *Italia futurista*, July 10, 1916.
[104] Isnenghi and Rochat, *La Grande Guerra*, 183; Whittam, *The Politics of the Italian Army*, 200. It was the Prime Minister Salandra who was forced out of office, having failed in a showdown with the General over who ultimately directed the war.

they had failed to do in the *Strafexpedition*. They had surprised Cadorna's dangerously overexposed troops, and, after managing to get into the Italian Army's rear, the initial retreat had turned into a rout. Italy lost the Veneto, Venice was threatened, and 275,000 prisoners had been captured.[105] Marinetti's response was to declare this a 'temporary' retreat, after 31 months of supposedly victorious battles against the Austrians, and that Cadorna had somehow been betrayed by traitors among his officers.[106] The government did not share Marinetti's view, and replaced Cadorna with Armando Diaz.

The crises of the *Strafexpedition* and Caporetto pushed Marinetti further down the road of his rigidly nationalist politics. Increasingly, his entire world view was made up of those that fought and supported the war effort and those that did not. For the first time the Liberal state was coming under the category of potential enemies of the nation because of its poor handling of the war. In addition to what he believed was its failure to support Cadorna, Marinetti believed the government was also entertaining the idea of a peace without territorial acquisitions in response to concerns over rising casualties. Consequently, an editorial appeared in *Italia futurista* in late 1916 from "Un gruppo di futuristi al fronte" ["A Group of Futurists at the Front"]. It stated that "We futurists at the front, happy to shed our blood for our divine and renewed Italy, will not accept any but an Italian peace, a peace that will permit the Italian flag to unfurl in Trento, Trieste, Pola, Fiume, Zara, the islands and all the Adriatic cities (not already promised to the Croatians and Serbians)."[107] Though Marinetti was not at the front at the time (he was in fact in the

[105] John Keegan, *The First World War*, 347-349.
[106] F.T. Marinetti, "Teniamo duro!," in *Italia futurista*, December 9, 1917; Entry dated 18 December, 1917, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 156.
[107] F.T. Marinetti, untitled editorial, in *Italia futurista*, November 15, 1916.

military district of Rome),[108] the style of the article suggests that Marinetti likely wrote it. Lumping the Liberal state in with other 'shirkers' would become a common theme in post-war Futurist politics.

He also increasingly saw his soldierly comrades as brothers in arms who had been transformed by the war and, for the first time, noted that they would be the backbone of a new movement against the nation's enemies. On March 6, 1917, Marinetti noted that "the 30 million men that fight in the mud will bring with them after the war into the cities a new sensibility completely immune to the nausea and disgust for the worst stink, the worst filth. A profound difference, and [they will likely] clash with all the shirkers and reformists [socialists] that did not live in the mud of the trenches."[109] After Caporetto this feeling of union with men who had left their regional identities behind to fight for Italy was evident in a diary entry wherein he noted the

> Marvelous elasticity of the Neapolitan who went easily from the peaceful, sweet, voluptuous, erotic cheerfulness of Posillipo to 3 meters of snow in the Cadore. . . . Improvisational elasticity of the Tuscan who comes from the languid curves of the Tuscan hills *and after* the Carso [which] bristled with stones and grenades, [and was] red from cadavers and filled with heroic [gravesite] crosses, today enters the marshy Piave to fight and defend Italy.
>
> [Being able to pass] from the songs of poetry, from the spirited witticisms of the cheerful Sundays on the blue and full-mooned Mediterranean, passing from rhythm and sentimental aspiration to an ambush on patrol torn by grenades, here is the superiority of our race![110]

This collective effort for the *Patria* was contrasted with the petty behavior of those at home, who thought of their own comfort, and were increasingly viewed as unpatriotic. In the lead up to the Tenth Battle of the Isonzo (May 12-31, 1917) Marinetti

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[108] Regio Esercito Italiano, Comando del Distretto Mil. Roma, Copia dello Stato di servizio di Marinetti, in ACS, Carte Renzo De Felice, B.20, f.105.
[109] Entry dated March 6, 1917, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 58.
[110] Entry dated 18 December, 1917, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 164.

believed the biggest problem the army was having were soldiers who had failed to receive adequate leave because of the shirkers who refused to do their part in the war effort. Increasingly, he noted, there was talk of the poor that were doing the fighting while the rich somehow escaped the trenches.[111] When Marinetti was hospitalized after fighting on Mount Kuk at the Tenth Battle of the Isonzo, his diaries were filled with accusations of those that failed to do their duty. When Gabriele D'Annunzio came to visit him he noted that they discussed "the war on the Carso and the marvelous infantry. [And] . . . the strange contrast between the *better, sublime, heroic Italians, astonishing, divine*, and the pessimistic, vile, repellent, lurid, quite lurid other Italians, [that are] frightened, neutralists, [and] shirkers."[112] After Caporetto, he wrote to the Futurist Primo Conti that "We must win *without* dying! In order to win again – later – [against] other enemies! . . . We must win at all costs! For the Futurism of our dear, unique Italy!"[113]

Marinetti's identification with his fellow soldiers was partly the result of his experiences with the soldiers in his own unit. However, Marinetti also had the opportunity to communicate with soldiers from a variety of units. Through the latter part of 1916 and early 1917 Marinetti was furiously engaged in keeping up national morale by publishing a number of articles in *Italia futurista* justifying the continuing national effort, citing Austria and Germany's exhaustion and the arrival of American troops on the Entente side to make up for the loss of Russian troops, owing to the latter's revolution.[114] Marinetti's relentlessly positive outlook on the war, and his fame, led him to the attention

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[111] Entry dated April 29, 1917, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 82.
[112] Entry dated June 4, 1917, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 112.
[113] Letter dated 19 November, 1917, in F.T. Marinetti and Primo Conti, *Nei proiettori del futurismo, Carteggio inedito, 1917-40*, edited by Gabriel Cacho Millet (Palermo: Edizioni Novecento, 2001), 43.
[114] Emilio Settimelli, "Intervista con Marinetti sulla fine della guerra," in *Italia futurista*, March 4, 1917; F.T. Marinetti, "Ritornando al fronte," in *Italia futurista*, July 22, 1917.

of the commanders of the Italian army, who felt he could be an effective morale booster to the troops, especially leading up to the expected major offensive in May. On April 2 Marinetti recorded in his diary that General Capello, the most popular general in the army, was sending him his own doctor to help Marinetti recover from the bronchitis he had contracted at the time, and noted that Capello "counts on me as his orator for the war."[115] Two days later the doctor arrived as promised, as well as Generals Capello and Badoglio, to check on his condition and to see when he could start speaking to the troops.[116] In a few weeks Marinetti was being driven around in Capello's car to give speeches to six different units of troops, totaling two to three thousand men. One of these units included the Italian shock troops, the Arditi, which would be put to extensive use in the final years of the war, and became the model Italians for Marinetti: brave, reckless, independent, but committed to the *Patria*.[117]

It was at this moment, mid 1917, that Marinetti began considering the shape of post-war Italy, and what a Futurist political program would entail. The result was the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party that would be released in February 1918, which was far more radical than any political pronouncement he had made since 1911. What accounts for this switch from a politics that had been defined purely by the nationalist goals and the collective order required to achieve these goals, to one that sought to empower and advance the well-being of the individual? There are multiple reasons for the change. Firstly, the Russian Revolution had empowered socialist parties throughout Europe, and in Marinetti's view had shown the consequences of failing to respond to increasing mass disaffection with the war, be it at home or on the front. Marinetti

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[115] Entry dated April 2, 1917, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 67.
[116] Ibid.
[117] See entries dated April 22, 29, 30, May 1, May 4, 1917, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 73-90.

recognized that for all their sacrifices the Italian soldier would expect something for their effort. In September, 1917 he noted in his diary that many soldiers, many of which were peasants, expected the division and redistribution of large landed estates after the war, otherwise, he believed, the war would be brought to the home-front. "[This was the] general idea," he noted, "implanted like a nail in all the combatants that after the war a revolution would occur to divide the lands. . . ."[118] Similarly, he was willing to accede to workers' demands for economic reform, so long as they steered clear of socialism. Secondly, Marinetti's radicalism had not disappeared during the era of nationalist politics from 1911 to 1917. It had been subsumed to the needs of the collective, and any attempt at unleashing revolutionary individualism and focusing on individual liberties would have exacerbated the divisions that Marinetti felt were already weakening Italy. This was less of a concern in 1917. The war had shown that when called upon, most Italians had put aside their individual needs, had served on the front, and in the process had been transformed into 'revolutionary warriors'. They had become, as Sorel had characterized the syndicalists, a mass of revolutionary individuals all working towards a common—albeit in this case nationalist—goal. It was to these soldiers, and loyal Italians back home, that the manifesto was addressed, and it was the Arditi, whom he had first met in Spring, 1917, that personified the best of this transformation in Italians.

In the Arditi Marinetti saw the way to ultimate victory, with soldiers recklessly hurling themselves into enemy lines without a care for their lives. He also saw in them the model of the new, Futurist man of post-war Italy: audacious, reckless, fiercely patriotic, and, importantly, resistant to any authority that hampered their liberty. The last quality was particularly important to Marinetti, as he had spent much of the last decade

[118] Entry dated September 27, 1917, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 133-134.

railing against the *passatisi* that simply hemmed in the vitality and creativity of the youth and the artistic avant-garde. He specifically referred to the Arditi as the 'avant-garde of the nation.'[119] When he had the opportunity to see them in action he noted that

> the assault units are a new corps borne of this war. They have nothing in common with the *Bersaglieri*, they live and fight this war by a tradition that is violent, a little libertarian, and a little *maffiosa*. The assault units are not even the new *garibaldinismo* (though that would be a good definition). They are the new Italy, young, impetuous, revolutionary, Futurist. They are the new revolutionary nationalism that hurls itself at the front to sweep away Austria and then turn around and sweep away from the interior the Vatican and all of the old Giolittian Italy."[120]

In mid September, 1918 Marinetti had occasion to speak to a unit of Arditi and was more explicit in how he viewed them as the perfect balance of liberty and order, revolutionaries and nationalists.[121] He introduced himself as a 'revolutionary nationalist.' "A revolutionary, but not like Lenin, Serrati, Lazzari, Treves . . .," he quickly pointed out, "I'm talking about that revolutionism that adores Italy, that wants to clean her out, clear out the old and render her more virile, more youthful, stronger, faster, more intelligent, more advanced."[122] Marinetti then went on to extol the virtues of the Arditi: their love of "our divine Italy," their desire to solve all of Italy's problems, their desire to expand its borders, their love of violence and war, their arrogance, their independent and improvisational spirit on the battlefield, all things that made them Futurist, and, like himself, revolutionary nationalists.[123]

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[119] F.T. Marinetti, "Gli Arditi, avanguardia della Nazione (Discorso di Marinetti a 300 Ufficiali della Seconda Divisione d'Assalto)," in *TIF*, 403.
[120] Entry dated August 26, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 320.
[121] Entry dated September 15, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 347-353. This speech was reprinted with slight variations as "Gli Arditi, avanguardia della Nazione (Discorso di Marinetti a 300 Ufficiali della Seconda Divisione d'Assalto)," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 403-407.
[122] Entry dated September 15, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 348.
[123] Ibid.

Beyond their nationalism and bellicosity, what Marinetti particularly highlighted was the Arditi's ability to reconcile their desire for liberty and order. He noted that one of the Arditi's greatest qualities was that they loved liberty, but "you reconcile it with the discipline necessary for an army that wants to win." What he proposed to the leaders of the Arditi units was an "elastic discipline," in which "one does not only, or even all the time, salute the officers. One salutes Italy!"[124] In response to a general who had qualms with giving the Arditi even more latitude, as they were infamous for their reckless behavior on and off the battlefield, Marinetti warned him that the military would squander the Arditi's heroism simply for the sake of discipline. Tellingly, he wrote, "We are all Arditi because we love liberty and so we want liberty. It is very difficult reconciling discipline with liberty. An elastic, effective, just, and intelligent discipline requires competent lieutenants capable of psychological insight and good non-commissioned officers."[125] Marinetti was looking for a form of leadership that encouraged and embraced the revolutionary potential of the unfettered individual, especially as that individual had shown itself committed to the nation. And such ideas were at the root of the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party.

[124] Ibid., 348-349.
[125] Ibid., 350-52. Quote on p. 352.

The Manifesto of the Futurist Political Party

In February, 1918 Marinetti began the process of transforming Futurism into a formal political movement. The first step was the announcement of the creation of the Futurist Political Party [FPP], and the release of their political program, or manifesto. The time was propitious. The devastating retreat after the Battle of Caporetto had been halted on the Piave. The Italian government had recognized the severity of the situation after the retreat, and it had galvanized the various pro-war factions into working more closely together as the parliamentary *Fascio* of National Defense. Morale was up as soldiers received more leave and rations. The Americans were coming in on the Entente side. Victory was not guaranteed, but there was increasing hope the end of the war was not that far off, and Marinetti intended to be a key player in post-war Italy.

The manifesto was a comprehensive program that encompassed much of the scattered political pronouncements since 1909. As such it was a nationalist program that made specific recommendations for the strengthening of Italy, but it also resurrected much that defined the radicalism of early Futurist politics, and was premised on the idea that the war had bound Italians together enough that radical policies could be pursued.

The opening line of the political manifesto clearly set the stage – "The Futurist Political Party that we found today wants a free and strong Italy, that is no longer under the burden of its great Past, [of] the tourist who is loved too much and the priests who are too tolerated . . . an Italy that is no one's ward, the absolute master of all its energies . . . looking to its great future."[126] Within this sovereign Italy, Marinetti proposed the remaking of the Italian nation. He proclaimed "Revolutionary nationalism for the liberty,

[126] F.T. Marinetti, "Manifesto del partitio futurista italiano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 130. This was originally published in *Italia futurista*, February 11, 1918.

health, physical and intellectual improvement, strength, progress, greatness and pride of the Italian people."[127]

To bolster Italy's strength and sovereignty, the manifesto called for the construction of more roads and rail lines, the industrialization and modernization of the ancient Italian cities and the devaluation "of the dangerous and uncertain tourist trade." Marinetti wanted the merchant marine expanded, more canals dug and more marshes drained. Italy's waters and mines needed to be nationalized and exploited. There should be public works at the local level, support for co-operative industry and agriculture, and emigration had to be halted.[128]

However, the manifesto was primarily geared towards advancing radical policies to expand individual rights and economic opportunities. For workers, Marinetti called for his oft-repeated "patriotic education of the proletariat," as a means of ending the class war in Italy.[129] If workers would agree to put the nation above socialist class warfare, the FPP would fight for their freedom to strike, to gather, to organize and to a free press. Moreover, he called for the purging of the police, the elimination of the political police, and the end of the practice of using the army to put down domestic disturbances. The manifesto also called for free access to the justice system, minimum wages tied to the cost of living, the eight-hour work day, a system of direct and progressive taxation, and workers' pensions.[130] Furthermore, he called for the sequestration of two-thirds of all war profits and consumers were to be defended by the state.[131]

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[127] Ibid., 130.
[128] Ibid., 130, 134. Quote on p. 134.
[129] Ibid., 130.
[130] Ibid., 132.
[131] Ibid., 130, 133.

For the veterans, many of whom were landless peasants, Marinetti called for the socialization of public and Church lands, and the expropriation of uncultivated or poorly cultivated lands for eventual resale to the soldiers at fixed and reasonable prices. Funds required for the state to purchase lands for redistribution would be acquired through a national tax. If veterans went to work in the public sector, then their time in the military would be counted towards their seniority and the calculation of their pension.[132]

To court women, who even Marinetti recognized had had their lives drastically altered by their wartime experiences, he called for the abolition of marriage and easier divorce in order to free them from what he considered the shackles of traditional marriage and motherhood. For unwanted children, Marinetti proposed a state institution that would raise the children and make them model citizens, instead of leaving them with parents without the means or will to care for them. More importantly, he called for women to have the vote and equal pay for equal work.[133]

What may have been most surprising, though not out of keeping with the newly radical turn in Marinetti's politics, were his recommendations for the armed forces. Anyone who knew Futurism knew of its commitment to a strong armed forces.[134] Yet, in the manifesto of the FPP Marinetti called for maintenance of the armed forces at their present levels only until the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Thereafter, they should be gradually reduced, keeping only a limited number of trained officers and troops. These would be augmented by call ups in times of crises. Italy's mobilization of its citizenry would be expedited by Marinetti's further demand that there

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[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., 131, 132.
[134] For instance, as recently as July, 1917 Marinetti published "Movimento politico futurista" ["Futurist Political Movement"], which reprinted the 1911 and 1913 political manifestos that called for a strong army and navy. See, F.T. Marinetti, "Movimento politico futurista," in *Italia futurista*, July 29, 1917.

be a drastic expansion of military and athletic training in the schools, and thus he envisioned a vast reserve army ready to go at a moment's notice. [135] What Marinetti was suggesting was a drastic change in how Italy should defend itself. Prior to the war, Italy depended on the army as a reliably national, and nationalist, institution to maintain domestic order and defend the country from invasion. However, Marinetti believed the war had created the national and patriotic consciousness Italy had been lacking, and had shown that Italians could be transformed into warriors when needed. Therefore, there was no longer any need for the traditional army that had been occasionally used to blunt political and social radicalism.

The political system also had to be radically altered. It was to be more efficient, and more responsive to the needs of the people. Here Marinetti offered his first substantive alternatives to parliamentary democracy, going beyond simple criticism of the institution as a repository of self-serving deputies. Parliament was to be transformed into a group that had an equal representation of industrialists, agriculturalists, engineers and businessmen. The minimum age to be a deputy was to be reduced to 22 years, and lawyers and professors were to be strictly limited in the new parliament. If this did not provide beneficial results, Marinetti suggested scrapping parliament altogether for a government of technocrats elected by universal suffrage. The Senate was to be abolished and be replaced by a chamber of people under the age of thirty, elected by universal suffrage that would, instead of moderating the lower house, motivate it to new initiatives. Additionally, proportional representation was to be introduced.[136]

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[135] F.T. Marinetti, "Manifesto del partito futurista italiano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 132.
[136] Ibid., 131.

Marinetti also wanted the bureaucracy to be thoroughly purged. It had become, he believed, "a state within the state." He recommended, as many democrats, such as Gaetano Salvemini, had before him, drastic decentralization so that the government could be more responsive to the needs of its constituents. He wanted the number of the civil servants reduced, but the various heads of the services better paid and trained so they could be more efficient with less people. Promotion should be done strictly on merit.[137]

Possibly the most controversial, though, again, not surprising, part of the manifesto was the section dealing with religion. Marinetti wanted to "substitute the current rhetorical and quietist anticlericalism with sharp and violent action to clear Italy and Rome of its medieval theocrat, who can then choose somewhere else to die slowly." He proclaimed that their intransigent anticlericalism was integral to the Futurists' political program and they would not accept anything short of Papal expulsion, *svaticamento*. But not just Papal expulsion, Marinetti was calling for the liberation of Italy from the rule of the Church in general. No more priests, monks, or nuns. The government censor cut off the remaining part of this section, though it is hard to imagine what Marinetti could have written that was more controversial than what the censors did allow.[138] Papal expulsion and the de-clericalization of Italy was a significant advance over his previous anti-clericalism, which had simply attacked the Church as one of the forces of *passatismo*.

His final statement on the matter of religion was particularly prescient. He demanded that the "only religion, [should be] the Italy of tomorrow."[139] In light of how Fascism would present itself as a type of "secular" religion, in which politics was

[137] Ibid., 134.
[138] Ibid., 131.
[139] Ibid.

"sacralized," and Mussolini became for all intents and purposes a mythical and god-like figure, this statement takes on added importance beyond Marinetti's anti-clericalism at the time.[140] It pointed to the realization that in an era of increasing secularism, but also a time of increasing social cleavages, a unifying phenomenon—nationalism—was needed. It would prove to be one of the binding ingredients in Marinetti and Mussolini's relationship, and why Marinetti expended such effort in contributing to the myth of the Duce.

The manifesto of the Futurist Political Party clearly reflected a profoundly radical turn in Marinetti's politics, but also what he believed was the appropriate balance of radicalism and nationalism, wherein the needs of the individual and the collective could be met. After failing to reconcile these two contradictory components of his politics in the early years of Futurism, and failing to recruit from the revolutionary left, Marinetti had switched to a politics of pure nationalism from 1911 to 1917, responding to the need for national order and unity in the midst of the Libyan and Great War. However, the experience of the war had convinced him that Italians had been transformed. They had been united by the war effort, had been transformed into revolutionary warriors who channeled their 'anarchic individualism' into the defense of the nation, and voluntarily subsumed their demands for liberty (be it economic, political or civil) to the interests of the nation. As such, the manifesto of the FPP resurrected Marinetti's radicalism, without any fear that this would undermine the national unity borne of the war.

This was the political program that Marinetti brought into the post-war era, and what he sought to put into practice. However, political reality would complicate this

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[140] The central book on this issue is Emilio Gentile's, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy*, translated by Keith Botsford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

theory that posited a perfectly reconcilable blend of nationalism and radicalism. Italy was far more divided than Marinetti recognized when he drafted the manifesto of the FPP in 1918. Though he acknowledged there were workers and socialists who did not support the war effort, the perennial *imboscati*, he underestimated the depth of the social cleavage that Italy would suffer during the post-war era, when nationalists battled socialists, and there was little room on the political spectrum for a workable blend of the two. The story of how Marinetti navigated this era, and the political choices he made, is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Futurist Politics in Action, Summer 1918-May 1920

Introduction

This era marked the most intensive political period in Marinetti's life, and it was his most sustained attempt at bringing Futurist political ideals to life. Futurist politics were above all nationalist, and through these months Marinetti focused on securing Italy's territorial claims at the Paris Peace conference and resisting a socialist insurgency in alliance with the Arditi and Mussolini's followers. But Futurist politics were also radical, revolutionary, and libertarian. The union of nationalism and radicalism, liberty and order, had been briefly laid out in the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party in February, 1918, and through 1919 Marinetti defined more specifically what his ideal Futurist society, or Futurist 'democracy' as he termed it, would look like. However, this period also showed the difficulties Marinetti would have in achieving these goals in practice. His alliance with the Arditi and Mussolini's followers in the *Fasci di combattimento* proved up to the task at furthering Marinetti's nationalist goals, but it became increasingly clear as the year went on that the Fascists, and Mussolini specifically, were unwilling to advance his radical goals. The social cleavages wrought by the Red Biennium curbed much of Fascism's early radicalism and the movement became increasingly counter-revolutionary, and, Marinetti felt, reactionary. The end result was Marinetti leaving Fascism in May, 1920 over this reactionary turn.

This chapter will narrate Marinetti's attempt to navigate the realities of politics in post-war Italy. In the first section I will trace the formation of the Futurist Political Party, its alliance with the Arditi and Mussolini, and the pursuance of their collective nationalist goals leading up to the formation of the *Fasci di combattimento* in March,

1919. The following section highlights Marinetti's developing misgivings over the 'reactionary' elements of his allies, his determination to more clearly define Futurist politics as both radical and nationalist, and his attempts at finding alternatives to achieving these goals, specifically with Gabriele D'Annunzio in Fiume, and their failure. The final section traces Marinetti's last attempt at pursuing his politics within Fascism, trying to advance his radical proposals and to curb its more reactionary tendencies, his failure, and then clean break from Mussolini.

The broader point of this chapter is that in this one very limited period, Summer 1918-May 1920, Marinetti was the most willing to try and find a workable politics that blended nationalism and radicalism, and when it failed he opted to preserve his radical principles and quit Fascism. However, he returned to Fascism in 1922. He did not do so simply to exploit his relationship with Mussolini for personal gain. As in 1911, when Marinetti pursued a politics of pure nationalism in the face of what he perceived as Italy's need for order in a time of war, so in 1922 Marinetti once again curbed the radical components of his politics and returned to Fascism to pursue nationalist goals. The priority that Marinetti accorded to the radical component of his politics in the period 1918-1920 is very much a parenthesis in his full political life.

Political Futurism Formalized

After releasing the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party [FPP] in early 1918, Marinetti spent the latter half of the year making the Party a reality. He allied with the Arditi through Mario Carli in the Summer to begin the process. Shortly thereafter they began publishing their combination of nationalist and radical politics in their newspaper, *Roma futurista,* and Marinetti set up FPP units, or fasci, throughout Italy. Marinetti also made contact with Mussolini at this time and they agreed to work together. The Futurists, the Arditi and Mussolini's followers harnessed their efforts to bring the war to a victorious conclusion, to make sure the Liberal government held firm at the Paris Peace Conference to the territorial promises made to Italy when it joined the war on the Entente's side, and to resist any attempt at a socialist revolution in Italy. The alliance of these three groups worked well enough to culminate in the formation of the *Fasci di combattimento*, at which point Marinetti began having misgivings over how much of his radical goals could be attained with the Fascists.

In order to align the Futurists with the Arditi, Mario Carli, himself an Ardito, proved to be the key. On his own, it is unlikely that Marinetti could have had much influence with the Arditi. But Carli believed the Arditi and the Futurists had similar world views, and it was Carli who reached out to Marinetti. Carli believed that in the "Arditi triumphs a totally modern and Italian youth, undisturbed by skepticism and corroding experiences. (. . .) And because these are also the characteristics of the Futurist, I won't be wrong in defining the Ardito 'the Futurist at war' and the Futurist 'the Ardito of the artistic and political battle'. (. . .)"[1] After Italy's victorious Battle of the Piave in

[1] Mario Carli, *Noi Arditi* (Milan: 1919), quoted in Günter Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909-1944* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), 103.

June, 1918 Carli contacted Marinetti and wrote that "the moment is favorable for restarting an energetic and significant Futurist action." Specifically, the victory on the Piave had shown that the war had done exactly what the Futurists had always claimed it could; it had made Italians into a stronger, more united, and more war-like people. Consequently the people would be more amenable to listening to the rest of the Futurist political program.[2]

Within days Marinetti met with Carli and Emilio Settimelli, a writer and Futurist who had worked with Carli on the now defunct *Italia futurista*, and together they began work on the Futurist Political Party's newspaper, *Roma futurista*.[3] The goals of the paper were straight-forward: to legitimate the concept of a Party founded by artists and soldiers, to disseminate the ideas laid out in the Party's manifesto, and to highlight the continuing struggle against internal enemies, defeatists, and the weak handling of the war by the Liberal government.[4]

In the first issue of *Roma futurista* the political manifesto appeared, as it would in the next few issues, and was accompanied by an editorial addressed to those who had only ever thought of the Futurists as the madmen of the artistic world. "Futurism," it explained,

> which until this point offered a specifically artistic program, now proposes an integral political action to resolve [our] urgent national problems. Those that

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[2] Letter dated August, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste*, 52.

[3] Entries dated August 11, 12, 14 and 17, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 304, 305, 307, 308, respectively. Marinetti also put up some, if not all, of the money for the venture, which, in addition to the mutuality of interest between Carli and Marinetti, was probably instrumental in the former going after the latter. Marinetti was responsible for providing 750 lire a month for the publication of a journal three times a month. Additionally, Settimelli was to get 50 lire.

[4] Entry dated August 14, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 307-8; Letter dated End of August, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste*, 55. The anti-defeatist mission of the paper was also evident in Marinetti's correspondence with Conti, in which he urges him to "launch with energy our political newspaper that fights against all the defeatists and neutralists for the great, Futurist Victory." See the letter dated 19 October, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Nei proiettori del futurismo*, 74.

> accuse us of being unbalanced will have to rethink their judgment. The . . . pedantic seriousness and quietism . . . of weak-kneed professors, anti-Italian priests and corrupt Giolittians seek to devalue our young, audacious and innovative genius.
> But the real Italy cannot and will not remain, not even partially, in their incapable hands. The war revealed the real Italian strengths. These forces are young, violent, anti-traditional and ultra-Italian. They must be more justly valued and respected for Italy's success.[5]

The editorial argued that the Futurists were justified in harnessing these energies released by the war as they were integral in the Interventionist Crisis to get Italy into the conflict against Austria and Germany in the first place, and then had fought valiantly on the front lines. Now, near the end of the war, the Futurists would refute their enemies with "our precise, practical, and inexhaustible investigation against the traitors and swindlers of our *Patria,*" would make sure the government stayed the course and saw the war to a victorious conclusion, and then defended Italy's interests at the peace congress, and would look after Italy's veterans.[6]

Marinetti, Carli and Settimelli were clearly making an active bid for the support of the combatants, specifically the Arditi. In the initial issue of *Roma futurista* Marinetti's speech glorifying the Arditi, given just a few days before, was published.[7] However, the combatants were not the only group that the Futurists reached out to. In keeping with the goals of the manifesto, the Futurist Political Party sought the allegiance of the 'patriotic' working class, drawing them away from the socialists. Marinetti also renewed his attempts to appeal to the revolutionary and nationalist left in this period by trying to recruit Paolo Orano, a revolutionary syndicalist, into the Futurist political camp.

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[5] "Roma futurista," in *Roma futurista*, September 20, 1918. Marinetti is very likely the primary author of this document.
[6] Ibid.
[7] F.T. Marinetti, "Gli Arditi, avanguardia della Nazione (Discorso di Marinetti a 300 Ufficiali della Seconda Divisione d'Assalto)," in *TIF*, 403. Originally published in *Roma futurista* on September 20, 1918, and delivered on September 15.

Orano had adhered to Futurist principles since 1909 and had expressed interest in publishing in *Roma futurista*. In 1917 he had published "La Dalmazia è Italiana, sarà Italiana" ("Dalmatia is Italian, Will Be Italian") in *Italia futurista* (September 9, 1917), which put him in line with the broad nationalist principles espoused by the Futurists. Further interest from the left seemed evident from the publication of a public letter from Olao Gaggioli, an Ardito from Ferrara, who announced in the October 10, 1918 issue of *Roma futurista* that he was leaving the Unione sindacale italiana in order to adhere to the program of the Futurists.[8]

Also in keeping with the political manifesto, the Futurists courted women. The political manifesto had already called for the vote for women, easier divorce, equal pay for equal work, and some rudimentary form of state child-rearing for unwanted children. To build on this, Marinetti instructed Settimelli to "open the polemics on the vote *for women*."[9] Settimelli's resulting article was an attempt to explain the Futurist view of women, which, he argued, had been misunderstood. Many were familiar with the Futurist cry of "disprezziamo la donna" ("let us scorn women"), however, he wrote,

> Our scorn for women is not because of their mind, spirit or senses, but for the animalistic, insidious. . . [and] hypocritical woman, that we have always considered to be different from the truth. Our scorn is thus against a conception of woman and not against women. It is a conception derived from the sentimentalism of men and from the insuperable fiction [of the] feminine. Our scorn is against the woman that mutilates masculine surges, who is afraid, egotistical, restricted to the house or to [the whims of] society, [who then becomes a] dangerous influence on the husband, lover and son. . . .[10]

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[8] F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste*, 65, note # 10; 66, note # 2; Entry dated August 17, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 308.
[9] Letter dated September 26, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste*, 57.
[10] Emilio Settimelli, "Il futurismo e la donna, Il disprezzo della donna," in *Roma futurista*, September 30, 1918. A fine introduction to the Futurists' view of women and femininity is Douglas Brent McBride's "Militant Modernism: The Cultural Politics of the Pre-War Avant-Garde," Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Germanic Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington (February, 2000).

However, he noted, the Futurists were strong supporters of women's rights, because "The war has shown the capacity of women with respect to the nation. And because of the war there can be a vast and well organized feminism in Italy."[11] Just as the Futurists were willing to advance the interests of 'patriotic' workers, they, at least in theory, would also advance the interests of 'patriotic' women.

Having established the mouthpiece of the Futurist Political Party, Marinetti completed the formalization of political Futurism by setting up fasci of the Party throughout Italy. In December Marinetti personally set up fasci in Florence, Rome and Pisa. Soldiers, Arditi, and republicans, attracted to the combination of radicalism and nationalism, turned up to join the Party. Under Marinetti's direction, the fasci endorsed the political manifesto of the Party, but specifically highlighted that its priorities were stiffening the government's resolve in demanding the territories promised to Italy (at that time being negotiated in Paris) and an uncompromising anti-clericalism.[12] Over the next few weeks fasci of the Party sprang up all over Italy.[13]

As Marinetti brought the Futurist Political Party into being, he also sought out like-minded allies with whom he could combine forces and shape the direction of post-war Italy. The alliance with the Arditi was crucial in reaching out to soldiers, but more

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[11] Emilio Settimelli, "Il futurismo e la donna, Il disprezzo della donna," in *Roma futurista*, September 30, 1918.

[12] Entries dated December 6-8, 14-16, 28, 1918 in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 394-400.

[13] According to De Felice, by February, 1919 Futurist *fasci* could be found in Perugia, Messina, Taranto, Genoa, Cassino, Rovigo, Bindisi, Livorno, Palermo, Cagliari, Modena, Naples, Milan, Ferrara, Venice, in addition to the aforementioned Rome and Florence. See De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, *1883-1920* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1965, 1995), 476. Berghaus adds Turin, Bologna, Messina, Piacenza and Stradella to the list. See Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 104. However, as De Felice bases his count on Marinetti's *Futurismo e Fascismo* (1924) and Berghaus on Marinetti's *Marinetti e il Futurimso* (1929) we must take these lists with a grain of salt. For instance, the government looked into the new FPP *fasci* and determined that in Venice and Genoa the Futurist presence was minimal, small in Ferrara, though more substantial in Rome. See, Prefects of Venice, Ferrara, Genoa, Rome to Ministry of the Interior, February, 1919, ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1919, B. 97, f. G1, Associazione futurista. Of course, this was at the beginning of 1919, and in Genoa their numbers would grow to at least 60 members by May. See Berghaus, note #48, in *Futurism and Politics*, 159.

was needed, and this led Marinetti to re-acquaint himself with Mussolini. In July, 1918, around the time Carli had reached out to Marinetti to give Futurism a more formal political structure, Marinetti met with Mussolini in Genoa. Mussolini, like Marinetti, was looking to the post-war political re-organization of Italy, and the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party, especially with its emphasis on catering to soldiers, appealed to Mussolini who was seeking closer relations with the then developing combatants' groups.[14] The two men shared a broad community of interests. They agreed that the government needed a firmer hand in conducting the war, and that its weakness only encouraged the inconsistent behavior of Turati and the socialists, and failed to free Italy of German spies.[15] They denounced the artists and intellectuals who had not committed themselves to the war, and, worse, those that were outright defeatists.[16] Finally, they agreed that the Arditi should be glorified and given whatever they wanted, as their reckless bravery on the battlefield, what Marinetti termed 'revolutionary nationalism', had brought Italy success.[17]

However, these shared interests were based on their shared nationalism, and right from the very beginning of their relationship Marinetti doubted Mussolini's revolutionary potential, and how committed he would be to the radical components of Futurist politics. What specifically struck him was Mussolini's latent conservative nature when it came to the workers' right to strike and his views on the Vatican. Marinetti supported the former,

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[14] Claudia Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1997), 185; Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini: Il rivoluzionario,* 473-4. De Felice intimates that Mussolini really only became interested in the Futurists in September, 1918, when the political manifesto had been published in *Roma futurista*. If fact, as shown above, the manifesto was published in February, and led to the June meeting.
[15] Entry dated July 18, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 284. Turati, who had been against the war, had, after the Battle of the Piave, and the entrance of the Americans, fighting for Wilson's Fourteen Points, then softened his opposition.
[16] Entry dated July 19, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 286.
[17] Entry dated July 20, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 287.

provided it was free of any taint of socialism, and was certainly against the latter. Mussolini was not in clear agreement on either. For example, with regards to the auto workers then striking in Genoa, Mussolini assumed they did not have any legitimate economic grievances. He claimed they "don't even know why their striking," and immediately suspected that the roots of the strike were German instigators.[18] Another harbinger of trouble was Mussolini's reaction to Marinetti's anti-Vatican pronouncements. Marinetti recounted that Mussolini "Remains silent (I don't know why) when I point out the dangerous enemy: [the] Vatican, [and] Clericalism!"[19] In their subsequent meeting in December, Marinetti was less circumspect in his characterization of Mussolini. After a particularly violent outburst by Mussolini over Italy and Yugoslavia's contending demands over Adriatic territory, Marinetti concluded that

> He comes from the people but no longer loves them. He tends towards an aristocracy of thought and heroic will. He is not a smart man [Non è un gran *cervello*]. He did not see the necessity of the war. He was an anti-militarist demagogue without a country. Now because of the war against the autocratic empires he is deriving a need for order and a will for discipline at all cost, a reactionary order, [and] militarism, [as an end in itself].
> I sense the reactionary [in him] that has its roots in this violent and agitated temperament, full of Napoleonic authoritarianisms and nascent aristocratic scorn for the masses.
> He doesn't see clearly. He is pulled by his temperament for heroic battle and by a Napoleonic ideal and I believe he aspires to wealth.
> He studies wide-eyed my impermeable wealth.[20]

However, the problems inherent in their alliance was not an immediate concern for Marinetti. Futurists, Arditi, and Mussolini's followers had come together for specifically nationalist goals: securing territory for Italy and resisting socialist insurgency. As soon as the war came to an end it was to these tasks that they turned their immediate attention.

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[18] Entry dated July 19, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 286.
[19] Entry dated July 19, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 287.
[20] Entry dated November 28-December 5, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 392.

The end of the war was playing out while Marinetti was setting up his party and securing his alliances. Newly arrived American troops on the Western Front had helped blunt the Germans' Summer offensives, and the Entente's successful counter-attack pushed Germany back to its frontier, unleashing civil unrest in the country, the abdication of the Kaiser, and Germans to sue for peace in November. Austria was similarly on its last legs. The June Battle of the Piave had been a failure for them, and in October Italy looked to take the offensive and push Austria off its territory and put itself in a better bargaining position for the peace conference.[21] On October 24, the anniversary of Caporetto, the Battle of Vittorio Veneto was launched. Within a week, the Italians recaptured all the lost territory of the previous year, and ended up on Austrian territory, capturing Trento and Trieste.[22] The war with Austria was formally over by November 4.

With Italy having won the war, Marinetti turned to winning the peace. Just before the war ended Marinetti published the Futurists' demand for the upcoming peace conference, which were exactly what they had demanded two years earlier in *Italia futurista* (November 15, 1916): nothing less than "an ITALIAN PEACE, a peace that will permit the Italian flag to unfurl at Trento, Trieste, Pola, Fiume, Zara, all the Adriatic islands and cities [except those specifically promised to Yugoslavia]."[23]

But the Italian government was hardly united in demanding all of these territories in Paris. Italy entered the war in 1915 based on the territorial promises negotiated in the

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[21] The time for attack seemed ripe to Italy's Prime Minister Orlando. Italy had been re-enforced by British and French troops after Caporetto, and the Austrian empire was slowly coming apart at the seams. Throughout October the various nationalities declared their independence from the Empire, forming independent Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Austrians themselves declared they wanted independence to form a union with Germany. Of course, many of the soldiers from these new countries that were serving in the Austrian army stopped fighting and made their way to their new homes. See Keegan, *The First World War*, 415-6.

[22] Foreseeing this eventuality, Marinetti instructed Carli and Settimelli to send copies of *Roma futurista* to both Trento and Trieste. See, Undated letter, but October, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste*, 61.

[23] F.T. Marinetti, in *Roma futurista*, October 20, 1918.

Treaty of London. According to these secret stipulations, Italy would receive Trento and Trieste, as well as much of the Dalmatian coast across the Adriatic as a means of increasing its security. What was not included was the port city of Fiume across the Istrian peninsula from Trieste. Yet, by the end of the war, Italian nationalists could not bring themselves to give up Fiume to the new state of Yugoslavia, as a sizeable number of Italians were living there, though not a majority. Italy's representatives at the Paris Peace Conference were divided over what to press for, Fiume or Dalmatia, and so asked for everything, garnering resistance from the United States.[24] This struggle over the peace after having won the war defined Futurist, as well as Italian, politics over the next year, as people either came down on the nationalist side (wanting Fiume) or the so-called renouncers (*rinunciatori*) side (willing to give it up for Dalmatia or completely). The political situation was further poisoned by the fact that many of the renouncers were socialists, like Bissolati, who were already tarred with accusations of not supporting the war effort enough in the first place. Thus, for the nationalists, including Marinetti and his allies, the struggle against socialism at home paralleled the struggle for Italian territory at the peace conference.[25]

Consequently, in late December Marinetti made his way to Rome and took place in his first nationalist demonstration. Nationalists, Arditi and Futurists all spoke up on

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[24] Martin Clark, *Modern Italy, 1871-1982* (London: Longman, 1984), 203-4, Margaret MacMillan, *Paris, 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001), 279-305; Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini: Il rivoluzionario,* 452, 455. For a detailed account of Italy at the peace conference, see H. James Burgwyn, *The Legend of the Mutilated Victory: Italy, the Great War, and the Paris Peace Conference, 1915-1919* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993).

[25] Fiume had been occupied on November 4, armistice day, by the Italian navy, just as it had taken Trieste that day. By the 17th Italian forces occupied the city, along with American, French and English troops. Fiume's outcome was up in the air. Yugoslavia wanted it, and Italy had no claim to it. But its troops were there. Marinetti had no doubt of his feelings, Fiume "must be Italian." He recognized the "Yugoslavs want it," but, he concluded, "Yugoslavia is only around because of our victories." See Entry dated November 13-16, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 386.

behalf of Dalmatia. Marinetti, asserting the right to speak on behalf of Italian claims to Dalmatia because of his war service, declared "If it will not be Italian, then we will take up the war again. We should be exhausted, but we are not." In closing, he shrieked "Down with Bissolati," which was then taken up by the crowd."[26] A few days later Marinetti was back out on the streets, this time protesting US President Woodrow Wilson, who resisted most of Italy's territorial demands, specifically its claim to Dalmatia.[27]

All this was a prelude to a more concerted protest on January 11, 1919 at La Scala in Milan. That night Bissolati attempted to present his case that Italy should make a just peace, and renounce any territories in the Adriatic. Marinetti, a number of Arditi, and Mussolini were there to disrupt the proceedings. When Bissolati began to speak, Marinetti's group began yelling and whistling to disrupt the speaker. This drew the police, which only caused a greater ruckus that disturbed the proceedings. Mussolini in another box encouraged Marinetti's group and further assailed Bissolati. Bissolati tried to speak through the disruption, but was slowly unnerved by Marinetti's sarcastic yelling of "Amen!" at the end of every important point he tried to make. He eventually gave up, turned his back on the audience, and walked off stage.[28]

The evening of the 11th was critical in the development of post-war Italy, as it made clear the nationalist agenda could not be ignored. Marinetti's take on the event was to the point. "The first Scala evening. . . ," Marinetti noted, "was to signal the triumph of

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[26] Entry dated December 29, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, edited by Alberto Bertoni (Bologna: Società Editrice Il Mulino, 1987), 400-401.
[27] Entry dated December 1918-January 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 404.
[28] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 485-90; Ernesto Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia* (Rome: Edizioni Ardita, 1934), 17-19; Entry dated December 1918-January 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 404-405. The quotes are from Marinetti's *Taccuini*.

the renouncers. [The] undoing of Sonnino's ministry, [replaced by] Turati [and] Bissolati. Bissolati to Paris etc. [They wanted] To tame a revolution [and] seduce the masses with a renouncing, sedate, pacifist and castrated clown. Luckily we were there, Mussolini, the Futurists, and the Arditi."[29] Years later, historians were of the same mind: "the fact is that, even with Bissolati's supporters in the majority at La Scala, their leader's speech was a complete failure: a small group of extremists essentially stopped Bissolati from talking and – what is more important – transformed what was supposed to be an appeal to reason and to national concord into a manifestation condemning 'renunciation.'"[30] Thereafter, Italy's representatives in Paris, even if they had wanted to, could not possibly give up Italian claims in the Adriatic. Over the next few weeks Italian public opinion was galvanized by nationalists of all stripes, including Marinetti, to hold fast to Dalmatia and Fiume. Socialists were routinely sought out and assaulted as a consequence of these nationalist demonstrations.[31]

This initial period of solidifying ties to the Arditi, veterans, and Mussolini and the engagement in public demonstrations against the government and socialists were indicative of the type of politics Marinetti would engage in for much of 1919: violent and extra-parliamentary. Real change would be achieved on the streets and through the physical annihilation of one's enemies. Formal political activity, such as election

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[29] Entry dated December 1918-January 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 405.
[30] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 489.
[31] Margaret MacMillan, *Paris, 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001), 297. Instances of Marinetti's pro-Dalmatia activities in January included leading a group of students and veterans in Piazza del Duomo on January 11, leading a group along with Mussolini in vandalizing *Il Secolo*'s building (suspected of supporting Bissolati) on the 14th, participating in a demonstration at La Scala on the 17th with veterans and Arditi that was followed up with assaults on any suspected socialists, and on the 29th Marinetti was in Florence leading a demonstration. See Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia*, 20-23; Entry dated December 1918-January 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 405-406; Letter dated January 16, 1919, YMP, Folder 18: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1918-1919 May 27.

campaigning, was not yet a priority.[32] The next step was the union of Futurists, Arditi, soldiers, Mussolini's followers, and many others, into Mussolini's *Fasci di combattimento*. However, it is at this point that Marinetti started to have serious misgivings about the consequences of his political choices. The Fascists were an ideal vehicle to advance nationalist goals, but proved unwilling to advance radical ones whilst they battled the socialists.

[32] In an article written in February or March of this year, but not published until September in *Democrazia futurista*, Marinetti argued that force, or might, and not right, was the determining factor in history. Just as brutal force had determined victory in the war, force would determine who would get the Dalmatian territories. Any discussion about the moral right of Yugoslavia to Dalmatia, or even Austria to South Tyrol (Alto Adige to Italy) was irrelevant. See F.T. Marinetti, "Ideologie sfasciate dalla conflagrazione," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 307-08. In this period, Marinetti also refused to run for a special election in Florence that Settimelli had set up, wanting to steer clear of the corrupting influence of parliamentary activity. See Letter from Settimelli to Marinetti, dated March 14, 1919, in ACS, Carte De Felice, B. 20, f. 105. In December, 1918 he had similarly refused to run for a parliamentary seat in Florence, declaring "his hatred of parliament, that must be abolished. [And be replaced by a] Government of technocrats without parliament." See Entry dated December 6, 1918, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 393.

The *Fasci di combattimento*, Disillusionment and the Search for a Political Alternative

In March, 1919 Marinetti brought his Futurists into the *Fasci di combattimento* under Mussolini's leadership. This formalization of an already existing political alliance was the next logical step for a group that was brought together for primarily nationalist and anti-socialist purposes. However, Marinetti insisted that Fascism had to offer something more than a bulwark against socialism, otherwise it would simply be a reactionary and counter-revolutionary movement. It must advance its own form of radicalism to reshape Italian society, and it should seek to keep alive the 'revolutionary nationalism' that had been unleashed by the war. Certainly socialism had to be crushed, but the passions that it unleashed should not simply be eradicated. They should be encouraged and harnessed for nationalist ends. Marinetti's disillusionment with Fascism led him to more specifically lay out his vision of a nationalist and radical Futurist society in his writings of this period. Moreover, with Mussolini's increasingly reactionary turn over the Summer, Marinetti sought to achieve his political goals with another Duce: D'Annunzio in Fiume, with equally disappointing results.

On March 23 in the hall of the *Alleanza industriale e commerciale* (Industrial and Commercial Alliance) in Piazza San Sepolcro in Milan the *Fasci di combattimento* were formed, bringing together Futurists, Arditi, combatants, republicans, syndicalists, socialists, nationalists, anarchists and others. The reason Mussolini called for a union of these groups, and Marinetti accepted a formal alliance of his Futurists with Mussolini under the Fascist banner, was due to the social and political developments at the time that required more than spontaneous public demonstrations and expeditionary raids. Certainly there was the continuing need to pressure the government over Dalmatia and

Fiume. Additionally, in January the *Partito Popolare Italiano* was formed by the left-leaning Sicilian priest Don Luigi Sturzo. This was the first concerted attempt by Catholics to enter politics on the national stage and acquire the votes of Italy's overwhelmingly Catholic peasants. In the upcoming elections they were bound to seize a significant number of seats in parliament.[33] A third and more immediate threat was the beginning of a socialist and labor insurgency known as the *Biennio rosso* (Red Biennium, 1919-20). Conditions in Italy were ripe for crisis. The government had relaxed its war-time prohibition on strikes. The cost of living had shot up with the end of the war, foreign subsidies and domestic price controls. Returning soldiers and industrial conversion were leading to massive unemployment. The maximalists in the Italian Socialist Party had gradually taken over from the more moderate reformists during and after the war, and in 1919 they were instrumental in setting off a wave of strikes throughout Italy's industrial and agricultural areas. One of the first factory and land occupations took place in March, and factory councils were forming and demanding that workers have a share in factory management. All this seemed like the first stages of a Bolshevik revolution in Italy.[34]

At the founding of the *Fasci di combattimento* it seemed that Marinetti's mixture of radical and nationalist politics would define the Fascist political agenda. Mussolini adopted the full nationalist claim to Alto Adige, Dalmatia, and Fiume, denounced

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[33] Ivone Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1964), 86; John N. Molony, *The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy: Partito Popolare, 1919-1926* (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

[34] Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power*, 80; De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 503; Spencer Di Scala, *Italy: From Revolution to Republic, 1700 to the Present*, 1st ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 206-08. To give a sense of the socialist/labor onslaught, days lost to strikes on the land went from 3,270 in 1918 to 3.4 million in 1919 to 14.1 million in 1920. In the factories, days lost went from 249,000 in 1918, to just over a million in 1919 to 2.3 million in 1920. See Di Scala, *Italy: From Revolution to Republic*, 207.

"Yugoslavian imperialism," and pledged that the Fascists were committed to "sabotaging with all possible means the candidacy of the neutralists of all parties."[35] Additionally, it seemed Mussolini adopted Marinetti's position on the working class and their relationship to the Socialist Party. Marinetti wanted to appeal to the workers on the grounds of economic amelioration and the liberty to strike for economic ends. However, he was unsparing in his attacks on the Italian Socialist Party for its neutralism in the war and commitment to class conflict thereafter. This was what Mussolini committed the Fascists to. In an afternoon speech, Mussolini made clear that

> We declare war on socialism, not because it is socialist, but because it was against the nation. On what is socialism, its program and its tactics, everyone has an opinion, but the Socialist Party has been reactionary, absolutely conservative, and if its ideas had triumphed then there would not be any possibility for us to live in this world. It is not the Socialist Party that can put itself at the head of an action of renewal and reconstruction. It is we, who have been moving toward politics these last years, who must hold the Socialist Party responsible [for their actions].[36]

Mussolini went on to point out that the Fascists must separate the workers from the Socialist Party, which Marinetti had originally proposed with his "patriotic education" of the proletariat. Mussolini also adopted most of the populist sections of the Futurist political manifesto when he announced that the Fascists' supported the 8 hour day, pensions for sickness and old age, and even some worker participation in the running of factories.[37] Mussolini further adopted the Futurist demand for the abolition of the Senate, universal suffrage for men and women, proportional representation, and even came out for a republic.[38] When the Fascists released their political program in June, the Futurist

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[35] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 507. De Felice reprints most of Mussolini's speech. An English translation is available in Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power*, 82, however it is not as complete as the De Felice selection.
[36] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 507.
[37] Ibid., 507-08.
[38] Ibid., 508.

influence was even more pronounced, with broad sections of their political manifesto making it into the Fascist political program.[39]

In spite of this pronounced Futurist influence in early Fascism, Marinetti had serious reservations with his allies almost immediately. Specifically, he feared that Fascist anti-socialism would lead to straight counter-revolutionary action, attacking all forms of labor militancy, even strictly economic ones. He started to wonder if the radical provisions of Fascist politics could become more than simple rhetoric. In his notes on the foundation meeting, he wrote that "I spoke with energy against a tendency that was a bit too reactionary at the meeting, which was completely against Socialism."[40] This feeling had been growing since at least mid-January. In recounting a joint Futurist and Arditi assault against *rinunciatori* and socialists after a nationalist demonstration, he noted that "I suffer to feel an air of the police in us. I don't like it."[41] Moreover, Marinetti had always suspected Mussolini of a reactionary temperament. Just before the demonstration at La Scala he and some Arditi had seen Mussolini dining in a rather elegant restaurant and noted "We passed the megalomaniacal Mussolini in his luxury, who is becoming reactionary little by little."[42] This suspicion was hardly alleviated when at the foundation meeting, in spite of the adoption of much of the Futurist platform, Marinetti noted in his diary that the adoption of a strong anti-clerical policy was not discussed at any length.[43]

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[39] In addition to the provisions adopted at the founding meeting, the Fascist political program called for Parliament to be replaced with a National Technical Council. Land was to be cultivated by owners or it would be expropriated and given to peasants. Church lands were to be expropriated specifically for redistribution. The wealthy were to pay a significant progressive tax and war profits were to be mostly sequestered. Even Marinetti's call to reduce the standing military and to train the people for use in a national emergency found its way into the program with its call to found a national militia. De Felice reprints the "Programma dei Fasci di combattimento" in *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 742-745

[40] Entry dated March 23, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 409.

[41] Entry dated December 1918-January 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 407.

[42] Ibid., 405.

[43] Entry dated March 23, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 409.

Marinetti's misgivings about his new partners were only increased after the first Fascist campaign against the socialists in the "Battle of Via Mercanti" on April 15.

On April 13 socialists and anarchists held a demonstration in Milan in Piazza Garigliano. Filippo Turati, the reformist socialist, was supposed to speak, but did not show up. In his place, the anarchist Ezio Schiaroli spoke and attacked Mussolini, denounced the government and called for a revolution. As a result, the authorities moved in to break up the gathering and casualties ensued. Consequently, the Chamber of Labor declared a general strike for April 15. The authorities tried to keep nationalist forces from having a counter-demonstration that day, but to no avail.[44] The Fascists were convinced the strike was the beginning of a socialist uprising, and by the evening of April 13th were already preparing themselves in the *Popolo d'Italia* headquarters for the expected clash with the socialists.[45] On the 15th, when the socialists began their march, Marinetti was at a café with Vecchi, Balla, Russolo and Mazza, all fellow Futurists. When a spontaneous patriotic gathering appeared outside their door, Marinetti called on Vecchi for them to lead the group in a march. Along the way, this original group of 300 was augmented by a further 500 military officers. Eventually they gathered in the Galleria after having broken through various *carabinieri* lines and then made their way in force into the Piazza del Duomo. There, they faced the socialist marchers, and the two groups were separated by another line of *carabinieri*. It is unclear who triggered the following melee, but tensions were running high, and what began with verbal exchanges quickly escalated into the hurling of various projectiles, and then culminated with the

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[44] Claudia Salaris, note #1, in F.T. Marinetti and Mario Carli, *Lettere futuriste tra arte e politica*, edited by Claudia Salaris (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1989), 81; Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 120, De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 519-20.

[45] Entry dated March 24, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 409; Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia*, 44.

Fascists firing shots in the air and advancing on the socialist group. The result was a clear victory for the Fascists: the piazza was cleared, the socialist demonstration broken up, and later, the Fascists made their way to the headquarters of the Socialist newspaper *Avanti!* and torched it. The total number of casualties are unknown, but we do know that four people died that day.[46]

The events of April 15, 1919 represented the first real squadrist offensive of the Fascists and is seen as a turning point in the struggle with the socialists, in which the previous battles of rhetoric were now matched with violence to counter the increasing socialist presence in the piazza and their increased strike activity.[47] Later in his career as a Fascist grandee, Marinetti rhapsodized about this day in order to emphasize how instrumental he was in the "first victory of Fascism."[48] Yet, at the time, Marinetti was altogether of a mixed mind on the event. Certainly he shared his allies' concern over a potential Bolshevik uprising, and thus was committed to stopping any moves in that direction. However, in his immediate recollection of the event there was no gloating over the victory, but much misgiving over the level of violence the Arditi and other Fascists had committed against the workers. In recounting the event, Marinetti noted that "The heaps of terrorized Bolsheviks are beaten. I see the blood on the ground and I feel a profound anguish in seeing these young, innocent, for hire, and reckless kids being

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[46] Entry dated April 15, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 414-416; F.T. Marinetti, "La Battaglia di Via Mercanti il 15 aprile 1919 prima vittoria del Fascismo," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 448-452; Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 120-122; De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 519-523; Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia*, 44-47; Claudia Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1997), 196-197; Gaetano Arfé, *Storia del socialismo italiano(1892-1926)*, new edition (Turin: Einaudi; 1965, 1977), 276.

[47] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 484.

[48] Marinetti published versions of "La Battaglia di Via Mercanti il 15 aprile 1919 prima vittoria del Fascismo" in both *Futurismo e Fascismo* (1924) and *Marinetti e il Futurismo* (1929). Moreover, he published versions of this article in *L'Impero* on April 16, 1926, in *Giornale del Veneto* on April 15, 1926, and in an unidentifiable Roman paper (Marinetti only kept the clipping) on April 15, 1934. The clipping can be found in GMP, Box 18, Folder 2. The earliest version, however, seems to be the preface to Antonio Beltramelli's *Uomo Nuovo (Benito Mussolini)*, 2nd edition (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1926; first edition, 1923).

clubbed." Marinetti still felt this way after he discovered that one of the workers had German money on him and might have been a spy. Later in the chaos Marinetti was engaged in hand to hand combat with a worker who had already tried to stab him twice. When the worker ran off, Marinetti chased him and finally managed to get him cornered. However, far from administering more blows, he now became concerned that if the Arditi found him they would surely kill him.[49]

Marinetti's alienation from the more reactionary wing of Fascism was part of a broader split developing between what has been referred to as right-wing and left-wing Fascism, with Mussolini in the former and Marinetti, the Futurists and the leftist Arditi, specifically led by Carli and Vecchi, in the latter. This split became more pronounced during the Summer. Popular uprisings and strikes were taking place in Liguria and Tuscany in late June, and spread to the Romagna and elsewhere by July. The peasants, with the help of returning soldiers, were occupying large landed estates. The climax of this activity was to be an international general strike, joined by British and French workers, on July 20-21 to protest the Allies' decision to send troops to Russia and Hungary to quell the revolutions in those countries.[50] The Fascist attempt at weaning workers away from the Italian Socialist Party was not working, and socialist insurgency in the Summer was likely exacerbated by the Fascist assaults inaugurated by the Battle of Via Mercanti.[51] Mussolini's response was a clear and vibrant anti-socialist and anti-

[49] Entry dated April 15, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 415.
[50] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 535-537; Arfé, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, 277.
[51] Report of the Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, April 25, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1921, B. 102, f. 209 (Fasci di Combattimento, Iº fascicolo); De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 519; Arfé, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, 276.

strike stance. This response, however, only further alienated Marinetti and the leftist Arditi.[52]

The most visible signs of this split occurred in July, when both Carli and Vecchi sought to reach out to the Socialist Party and find some common ground. Carli made his case in a July 13 article in *Roma futurista*, entitled "Partiti d'avanguardia: se tentassimo di collaborare?" ("Parties of the Avant-Garde: What If We Tried to Collaborate?"), in which he suggested Futurists, Arditi, Fascists and veterans could work with maximalist and reformist socialists, republicans and syndicalists to help the working class in this time of trouble, and to eventually overthrow the Liberal order, their common enemy. Vecchi visited the *Camera del lavoro* (Chamber of Labor) in July to make the case in person. The result was a very public airing of differences in a six month long debate that ran between *Roma futurista* and *Il Popolo d'Italia,* and Mussolini publicly denying on July 19 at the Liceo Beccaria in Milan that "the Socialist Party had any revolutionary substance," and declared it "futile, dangerous, and downright idiotic to flatter and 'serenade' them."[53]

During this internal crisis Marinetti's sympathies lay with Carli and Vecchi's initiatives.[54] Although Marinetti participated in various Fascist initiatives that month against what were deemed socialist insurgencies, he supported Carli and Vecchi's attempt

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[52] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 532, 536, 540-541. See also the Report from the Questura of Rome to the Ministry of the Interior, dated July 30, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1920, B. 104, f. 58 and f. 51 [*Associazione fra gli Arditi*]. In this report, the Questura notes that a spy has reported that in spite of Mussolini's interest in the Association of the Arditi, they do not want to be a part of the *Fascio delle forze ex-interventiste*. Specifically Carli, Vecchi and Ambrosini were said to have negated their adherence to Mussolini's group and expanded on their socialist propaganda as a way to get closer to the socialists, which they believed would help in the upcoming elections.

[53] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 126; Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 198; Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 122-127. Quote from Berghaus.

[54] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 124-128, suggests Marinetti was looking for other coalition partners; Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 198, suggests that Marinetti surely approved of Carli's publications in *Roma futurista*; De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 541, note #1, suggests that Marinetti was in line with Carli as he did accept an invitation to speak to speak to socialists in 1922.

at maintaining a radical component within Fascism.[55] During the lead up to the expected general strike of July 20-21, when tensions amidst the Fascists ran high with anyone suspected of being soft on socialism, Marinetti defended Vecchi. He claimed that Vecchi's commitment to a real revolution was greater than many of the Fascists, whom he accused of simply being journalists who wanted to make *Il Popolo d'Italia* into an important paper and who "Talk about a revolution, but don't want it."[56] A few days later at another meeting Carli came under attack, but Marinetti defended his attempt at uniting the revolutionary forces of Italy, and criticized those that, like the police, suspected all revolutionary activity as being Bolshevist. He noted that "We [the Futurists] are evidently decided on making an Italian revolution that is not liked by our soft and frightened friends."[57] Later that Summer, Carli published "L'Ardito futurista" ("The Futurist Ardito") in *Roma futurista*, which, according to Salaris, "in trying to recuperate the creative, rebellious, extremist aspects of the avant-garde sounded like an implicit criticism of Mussolinian moderation."[58] Marinetti did not try to stop Carli from publishing this piece and, based on the entries in Marinetti's diary, it seems likely he collaborated on it as early as July 4.[59]

Marinetti went beyond simply supporting Carli and Vecchi's initiatives. During the Summer he wrote a number of articles that sought to more specifically define what

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[55] On July 5 in Genoa he participated in a Fascist offensive against a rampaging crowd that was vandalizing stores suspected of hoarding food. This seemed like a case of an economically aggrieved crowd being roused to violent, revolutionary activity. On July 20, in expectation of the planned general strike (which, in fact, never came off) Marinetti was part of the squads that patrolled the streets seeking to resist any socialist activity. In his diary he noted how it was critical to respond to any Bolshevik initiative immediately, which the Russian bourgeoisie had failed to do. See, entries dated July 5, 20, 21 in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 420-426.

[56] Entry dated July 18, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 422.

[57] Entry dated July 23, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 427.

[58] Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 198.

[59] Entry dated July 4, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 419.

Futurist politics were and what a Futurist society was to look like, in contrast to the counter-revolutionary movement he felt Fascism was turning into. These writings, which would be collected into his *Democrazia futurista* in September, expanded on the points briefly laid out in the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party over a year before. His main goal was to lay out a political vision that was both radical and nationalist and would lead to a society that preserved both liberty and order. Additionally he was far more specific than he had ever been before in the role assigned to the elite in the running of this new Futurist society. To achieve his main goal his writings have four main purposes: challenging the idea that radicalism and nationalism are contradictory, reaching out to workers and weaning them away from the Socialist Party, laying out a series of radical, libertarian policies that would break the forces of *passatismo* in Italy and release the 'anarchic-individualism' of the people, and finally laying out the elite-run government that would lead this new Futurist society.

To convince people of the feasibility of a Futurist politics that brought together radicalism and nationalism, he first had to break down the accepted view of these terms that deemed them irreconcilable. He argued that one could be a nationalist and support the army, war, and the nation, but did not have to support the reactionary monarchy. Nationalism had generally been thought of as conservative, reactionary, traditional, repressive, aristocratic and clerical, but it did not have to be this way. Just as importantly, democracy was generally assumed to mean pacifism, renunciation, anti-colonialism, and internationalism without pride of race, but it also did not have to be this way. Revolution connoted anti-patriotism, internationalism and pacifism, and this was not necessarily true. Lastly, Marinetti argued that when one thought of justice, equality,

liberty, the rights of workers and peasants, one generally equated these things with anti-patriotism, internationalist pacifism, Marxism and collectivism. Again, it did not have to be this way. This, Marinetti argued, was what the Futurists had promoted 11 years ago with the Foundation manifesto when they glorified patriotism in combination with the destructive gestures of the anarchists. "Today," he continued, "we separate the idea of the Patria from the idea of the reactionary and clerical monarchy. We unite the idea of the Patria with the idea of Audacious Progress and revolutionary, anti-police-like [*antipoliziesca*, or libertarian] democracy."[60] The masses, he argued, were not inherently socialist. They were easy pickings for the left because they had always had an antagonistic relationship with the state, known only for conscripting and taxing the poor. Thus, they were anti-national, anti-militarist, and anti-government even before the onset of socialism. However, the war had stripped them from their isolated and tradition-bound existences, and now the challenge was to bind them to the nation.[61]

To break the socialist grip over the masses, specifically the working-class during a period of increasing labor militancy, Marinetti attempted a somewhat complicated sleight of hand wherein he sought to, on the one hand, undermine the foundations of socialism, but then adopt one of its basic premises to attract workers to Futurism. He posited that Marx had gotten it wrong in his three basic conclusions. First, labor was not more important in the production of value than capital, otherwise manufacturing industries would be more profitable than commercial and investment firms. Second, materialism had proven to be only one determining factor in history, not the only one. What could not be ignored was the power of ideas. Lastly, Marx's claim that workers

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[60] F.T. Marinetti, "Vecchie idee a braccetto da separare," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 308-309. This was originally published in *L'Ardito* on May 11, 1919.
[61] F.T. Marinetti, "Vecchie idee a braccetto da separare," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 312-313.

would form a world-wide union had proven to be false. At the critical moment, the Great War, most workers had sided with their nation.[62] However, he then turned around and argued that the workers were a part of the nation, and as such the state had an obligation to manage the economy in such a way that their interests were not being ignored in the interests of the capitalists' profit margins. Specifically, he wanted workers made into shareholders as well as managers of the industry in which they worked, and called for a hefty land tax on the property on which factories resided to be paid by the factory owner. The first suggestion would guarantee class harmony and the second would redistribute wealth. Both were a means of advancing the collective interests of the workers, and society, and thus radical policies were to be used to build a stronger nation.[63]

Marinetti's writings during the Summer also sought to further define his vision of a Futurist government and society that sought to protect and advance the interests of the individual against the forces of repression and traditionalism. This desire for a more libertarian society brought together Futurism's long running attacks on the purveyors of *passatismo* and were a direct reaction to the level of repression that Marinetti feared was growing around him, in both Italian society and the right-wing elements that made up the Fascist movement. Harkening back to a speech given to workers a decade ago, Marinetti argued that government had to allow for the free development of 'anarchic individualism' in its citizens. "The authority of the state," he continued, "can no longer be conceived of as a brake on the libertarian aspirations of the people. We believe instead that the

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[62] F.T. Marinetti, "Sintesi della concezione marxista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 363. This was originally published in *Roma futurista* on May 11, 1919.
[63] F.T. Marinetti, "L'Azionariato sociale," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 367. This was originally published in *L'Ardito* on May 31, 1919 and *Roma futurista* on July 20, 1919; F.T. Marinetti, "La riforma fondiaria di Henry George," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 369-72. This was originally published in *Roma futurista* on August 10, 1919.

revolutionary spirit of the people must break—or better—slowly corrode the authority of the state and the conservative spirit, [an] index of old age and progressive paralysis."[64] This anarchic individualism would have to coexist with some form of authority in order to advance the national interests.[65] Thus, Marinetti continued to rely on the hope that the patriotism unleashed by the war would legitimate the dismantling of repressive state apparatuses and traditional institutions, as these patriots would voluntarily subsume their individual liberties to the needs of the nation when needed.[66]

In re-fashioning the state, he argued that its repressive mechanisms used to maintain public order had to be done away with. The state's reliance on police forces, jails, and the military had not only led to the increasing curtailment of individual liberties, but also had the effect of making people weaker, as they became increasingly dependent on these forces for public order and national defense. Instead, he posited that people should take responsibility for their own public order. These abilities were to be taught in the schools—'schools of courage'—so that "We could form, in this way, strong, agile, courageous, audacious, decisive, young people, equally able to dismantle a motor, to manage the accounts of a commercial enterprise, to drive a car, to grab a purse snatcher by the neck and to slap a traitor."[67] Similarly, citizens in a Futurist society were also to be responsible for national defense. Instead of Italy depending on conscription, a traditional standing army and a conservative officer corps, who had no problem turning

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[64] F.T. Marinetti, "Il cittadino eroico, l'abolizione delle polizie e le scuole di coraggio," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 390 and 392. The quote appears on p. 392.
[65] Ibid., 390.
[66] Marinetti hints at this solution when he writes that "In putting on the military uniform, a revolutionary mind [ingegno] like myself accepted for four years the most mathematical obedience to superiors that were often mediocre, often not deserving of respect." See F.T. Marinetti, "Morale del pericolo: la libertà elastica senza carceri e carabinieri," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 402.
[67] F.T. Marinetti, "Morale del pericolo: la libertà elastica senza carceri e carabinieri," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 399-402. The quote appears on p. 401. This was composed in May and published in *Democrazia futurista* in September, 1919.

the army on the people in times of crises, Marinetti wanted a small, voluntary force that could be augmented when need be. The same training that would produce individuals able to maintain public order would also produce individuals ready to take up arms. This society of independent-minded, though right-thinking, individuals who would safeguard the nation took the Ardito as its model. What the war had produced in the person of the Ardito, Marinetti hoped to produce in the Futurist curriculum.[68]

In addition to the police and the military as obstacles to individual freedom, Marinetti's other main target was the Church, specifically the Papacy. As Marinetti had argued for years, the very root of Futurism's struggle against *passatismo* resided in its anti-clericalism. The Church imposed traditional values on Italians that did nothing but quell individual expression and advancement. It kept women trapped in loveless and deadening marriages raising children they did not want, which punished the women, the children, and society at large as it absorbed these dysfunctional children when they grew to adulthood. Moreover, its moralizing and preaching about suffering on Earth for rewards in Heaven snuffed out every courageous instinct for adventure, risk and improvisation. For Marinetti, the "priest was the brother of the policeman," as they both excelled in the repression of individual liberties. Consequently, the expulsion of the Papacy from Italy remained high on Marinetti's list.[69]

Having eliminated the forces of repression from his theoretical Futurist society, and thus advanced individual liberties, what type of state did Marinetti envision that

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[68] F.T. Marinetti, "Abolizione della coscrizione, esercito volontario, scuole di forza, coraggio e patriottismo; corsi di strategia e d'armi," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 380-383. This was originally published in *L'Ardito* on May 18, 1919.

[69] F.T. Marinetti, "Contro il Papato e la mentalità cattolica, serbatoi[o] di ogni passatismo," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 331-334. The quote appears on p. 334. This was originally published in *L'Ardito* on June 8, 1919; F.T. Marinetti, "Contro il matrimonio," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 317-320. This was originally published in *Roma futurista* on May 25, 1919.

would provide the appropriate level of order in this society? Though Marinetti placed a great deal of emphasis on removing obstacles to individual liberties, he had no desire to give the 'more or less blind masses' full political power in the form of unfettered democracy. Instead, he posited a 'Futurist democracy' wherein Italy's reservoir of untapped 'geniuses', or elites, would be elevated to positions of power, while at the same time abolishing the Papacy, the monarchy, parliament, the senate, and the bureaucracy. The forces of *passatismo* would be replaced by the forces of Futurist initiative and drive. "We intend democracy in Italy, " he wrote, "as a mass of brilliant individuals, who have become conscious of their rights [as] the natural shapers of their political futures." This mass of brilliant individuals were the politicized soldiers who received their political education in the war, and now sought to shape post-war Italy.[70]

However, it was not just the veterans who should have a role in the new Italy, but also the artists and intellectuals, the intellectual 'proletariats', who had been held down by the forces of *passatismo*. These young artists and intellectuals had suffered through an educational system that stifled all initiative, and a society that did not provide outlets for their talents. To remedy this continuing problem, to uncover the geniuses that would make up Italy's future, Marinetti suggested what would become a critical part of his program: free monthly exhibits, presumably paid for by the state, that allowed anyone to display their artwork. In this way, the most talented would emerge and would shape Italy's future.[71]

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[70] F.T. Marinetti, "Democrazia futurista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 328-331. This was originally published in *Roma futurista* on May 11, 1919. The quote appear on page 330.

[71] F.T. Marinetti, "Il proletariato dei geniali," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 350-353. This was originally published in *Democrazia futurista* in September, 1919, but composed in May. This notion of the patron state was eventually established under the Fascist regime. See Marla Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

By bringing artists and intellectuals into the political system, Marinetti argued that Futurism was fulfilling its original promise of harnessing the heroic, revolutionary energy of the anarchist for the betterment of the nation. The war had not only produced revolutionary patriots in the form of the Arditi, but had also mobilized artists and intellectuals on behalf of the nation. Thus, from both their desire to renew Italy, as well as their experiences in the war, Marinetti declared that artists and intellectuals had every right to immerse themselves in formal politics. It was critical that they do so, Marinetti continued, because they acted solely for the betterment of Italy, versus the heap of lawyers that currently made up Parliament and were in it solely for the money.[72] The type of government that would harness the talents of Italy's genius elite was to be a technical government of syndicates (of industrialists, agriculturalists and workers) which would replace parliament and focus on the business of government without having to beg for votes. The senate would be abolished and replaced by an *Eccitatorio* made up of the young, presumably the artists and intellectuals, who would prod the syndicates into new and revolutionary ideas.[73]

Marinetti's desire for an elite-run government, in contrast to what he felt were the 'leveling' tendencies of socialism, brought into stark relief his underlying political principles and the problem of reconciling them. On the one hand he wanted a government that encouraged 'anarchic individualism' and the advancement of individual liberties, yet on the other he required some form of national order that would be directed by the elite and the hope that these anarchic individuals would voluntarily curb their

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[72] F.T. Marinetti, "Il cittadino eroico, l'abolizione delle polizie e le scuole di coraggio," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 383-388. This was first published in *L'Ardito* on June 15, 22, and 29, 1919.
[73] See F.T. Marinetti, "Governo tecnico senza parlamento, senza senato e con un Eccitatorio," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 357-358. This was originally published in *L'Ardito* on July 13 and 20, 1919.

liberties when the nation required them to. In the context of the Red Biennium, with its escalating violence between nationalists and socialists, this theory that blended radicalism and nationalism seemed increasingly naïve. But Marinetti stuck to it, and since Mussolini and the Fascists seemed bent on counter-revolutionary politics during the Summer of 1919, Marinetti turned to a revolutionary alternative: D'Annunzio and Fiume.

On September 12, 1919 Gabriele D'Annunzio and an army of 2000 men, many of them Arditi, invaded Fiume and claimed it for Italy. It had become clear that the Nitti government was willing to relinquish the territory after months of stalled negotiations with Italy's former allies and Yugoslavia. Marinetti followed D'Annunzio the moment he heard of the occupation.

The Fiume crisis had been building to a crescendo for months. The Orlando government had demanded both Fiume and Dalmatia at the Paris Peace Conference, but the Americans had refused on the principle of national self-determination and suggested Italy take the Brenner Pass instead. Orlando refused to budge, but his government fell nonetheless in June. The new government, led by Francesco Saverio Nitti, was not trusted by the nationalists to either effectively resist a socialist insurgency or to press Italy's claims in Paris, and he in fact dropped Italy's claim to Dalmatia, agreed to make Fiume a free city, and settled for the Brenner. When Nitti began pulling out Italian troops was when D'Annunzio moved in.[74]

Marinetti's following D'Annunzio to Fiume had also been presaged by a number of developments. Regardless of Marinetti and Mussolini's disagreements over how to deal with striking workers, the Fascists were united that Italy should have the Adriatic

[74] MacMillan, *Paris, 1919*, 279-305.

territory promised to it. *Roma futurista* denounced Woodrow Wilson's and France's 'betrayal' of their Italian ally, and the Fascists planned a whole series of public demonstrations on behalf of Dalmatia and Fiume, a direct assault on parliament, and the possibility of invading Fiume.[75] All of these things came to pass after Nitti came to power. The Fascists staged two demonstrations in Milan in June, and in July Marinetti and Vecchi disrupted a session of parliament where Nitti was making his case.[76] Marinetti recounted that he yelled at Nitti the following words:

> In the name of the Fasci di Combattimento, the Futurists and the intellectuals, I protest your politics and declare *Down with Nitti! Death to Giolittismo!* I declare that this ministry cannot subsist, that sabotages Victory, [and] insults officers, a Ministry that defends itself with carabinieri and the police! [You offer] Your most coarse cowardice and scorn for the sacrifices of the veterans, who despise you and negate your right to represent them anymore. Shame on you! The youth of Italy, from my mouth, yells to you: You are disgusting! You are disgusting! [Fate schifo! Fate schifo].[77]

However, the desire to advance Italy's nationalist goals were not the only reason Marinetti followed D'Annunzio to Fiume. Mussolini's Fascists had proven an ineffective vehicle for advancing a politics of both nationalism and radicalism. D'Annunzio's Fiume seemed the perfect combination of both, and Marinetti hoped to use Fiume as the jumping off point for a similar transformation in Italy.[78] D'Annunzio showed that a

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[75] *Roma futurista*, May 25, June 15, 1919; Report of the Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, dated June 8, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1921, B. 102, f. 209 (Fasci di Combattimento Iº fascicolo).

[76] Reports of the Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, dated June 20 [all throughout the early morning] and June 23, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1921, B. 102, f. 209 (Fasci di Combattimento Iº fascicolo).

[77] F.T. Marinetti, "Il discorso di Montecitorio," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 462. At the end of this document Marinetti reprinted D'Annunzio's congratulations on his performance, and the original letter can be found at GMSN, Folder 29: "D'Annunzio."

[78] Salaris has recently shown that D'Annunzio's politics were broadly in line with Marinetti's, at least in the period 1919-1920. See her analysis of D'Annunzio's *Carta del Carnaro* in her *Alla festa della rivoluzione: Artisti e libertari con D'Annunzio a Fiume* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), Chapter 4: "Marinetti e D'Annunzio." Additionally, in an earlier work she also concluded Marinetti's choice was dictated by frustration with Mussolini's reactionary turn. See her *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 198-199. However, in *Alla festa della rivoluzione* Salaris tends to skirt the more relevant issue that while in Fiume Marinetti was more determined to expand the Fiume expedition than D'Annunzio ever was.

determined minority could impact national politics, just as the interventionists had done in 1915. Marinetti now hoped D'Annunzio would turn his attention to Italy and similarly effect a revolution there.

Yet the Fiume adventure did not turn out as expected, and Marinetti had to eventually return to Italy and the limitations of working with Mussolini. What Marinetti found in Fiume was a D'Annunzio that seemed to have been caught off guard by the importance of what he did in challenging the government's goals in the Adriatic. Thus, he was not all too eager to spread the 'revolution' as Marinetti, and others, such as Mario Carli, who also made his way to Fiume, expected him to do. D'Annunzio never refused Marinetti's plans for expanding the Fiume enterprise, but he did little to encourage him, and D'Annunzio's lieutenants, surely with D'Annunzio's blessings, did everything in their power to limit Marinetti's plans for Fiume.[79]

When Marinetti arrived in Fiume D'Annunzio was at first happy with the show of support. Marinetti wrote that D'Annunzio "embraced" him upon his arrival.[80] D'Annunzio was frustrated with the other Fascists who had not supported his venture. On the day Marinetti arrived D'Annunzio had written a scathing letter to Mussolini upbraiding him for his lack of support at a time when he, D'Annunzio, was taking all the risks and doing all the work. He told Mussolini that "*you are all there gossiping, while*

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[79] Paolo Buchignani points out that Carli was hardly welcomed as well, owing to his increasingly radical leftism and sympathy with Bolshevism in Russia. Carli contrasted the Bolsheviks with the cowardly socialists of Italy who denigrated, he felt, the revolutionary and nationalist potential of Fiume for Italy. Of course, Carli could do this because he tended to focus on the revolutionary aspects of Bolshevism, while downplaying their internationalism, which is what he, and Marinetti, detested in Italian socialism. See Buchignani, "Settimelli e Carli dal futurismo al fascismo," in Renzo de Felice, ed., *Futurismo, cultura e politica* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988), 201. Aspects of Carli's essay, "Il nostro bolscevismo," which put forward these views, originally appeared in *I nemici d'Italia* on March 14, 1920, later in Carli's *Con D'Annunzio a Fiume* (Milan, 1920), and is partly reprinted in De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 579.

[80] Entries dated September 14-16, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 431-432.

we fight from moment to moment, with an energy that makes this enterprise the most wonderful since the departure of [Garibaldi's] Thousand. *Where are the combatants, the Arditi, the volunteers, the Futurists?*"[81] And then Marinetti arrived.

Marinetti's initial impression of Fiume was that it was 'truly Futurist',[82] and that it represented the 'divine' and 'new' Italy.[83] He was welcomed by the troops, and D'Annunzio publicly feted him.[84] Yet, already on the day after he arrived he was expressing doubts about D'Annunzio's willingness to use the Fiume enterprise for a revolutionary movement that could engulf Italy. He noted that "D'Annunzio does not see the decisive and revolutionary importance of his enterprise."[85] A few days later he introduced D'Annunzio to a fellow Futurist and Ardito, Ferruccio Vecchi, and explained their plan for expanding the Fiume enterprise to Italy. During that meeting Marinetti made it clear that he disapproved of the men that surrounded D'Annunzio (Carlo Reina, head of the Fiume Armed Forces, and Giovanni Giuriati, head of D'Annunzio's cabinet). "Quietists and obstructionists [*frenatori*]," he called them, "of every logical development of the [Fiume] expedition." D'Annunzio said he shared their concerns, but Marinetti noted "I don't think he is capable of freeing himself from those probable traitors."[86]

Marinetti and Vecchi did receive the go ahead to develop their plan in D'Annunzio's name. Marinetti duly met with a number of D'Annunzio's advisors, and it was determined that these advisors should go to Trieste to see if it was ripe for

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[81] Quoted in De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 560.
[82] Letter from Marinetti to Benedetta, dated September 12, 1919, YMP, Box 1, Folder 19: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa, 1919 May 28-Dec 31.
[83] F.T. Marinetti, "Una lettera di Marinetti da Fiume," in *Roma futurista*, October 5, 1919; Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia*, 79-80.
[84] Entries dated September 17-20, 24,1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 434-437.
[85] Entry dated September 17, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 434.
[86] Entry dated September 21, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 437. D'Annunzio's indecisiveness, noted lack of desire to fully support Marinetti's revolutionary initiative, and D'Annunzio's conservative circle is also noted by Nazzaro in his *Futurismo e politica*, 135.

revolution. However, Marinetti had little faith in their abilities.[87] When he tried to convince D'Annunzio that they should expand the propaganda in Italy supporting the Fiume expedition, he was again disappointed by D'Annunzio's handling of the whole affair, and felt that he had simply remained an artist in the midst of real-world politics: "D'Annunzio is a marvelous man of force, will, astuteness, and fortune. But he has remained the aesthete. A maniac for the beautiful gesture [*bel gesto*], a prisoner of beautiful phrases and mediocre men that flatter him and favor his manias."[88]

Things only got progressively worse from this point forward. The mission to Trieste was a failure, having only led to anxiety in Trieste that it was D'Annunzio's next target. Vecchi had spoken to the Arditi about expanding the Fiume enterprise, and received a chilly reception. Marinetti's relations with the Fiume leaders consequently degenerated. Marinetti recorded that "they are all *passatisti* monarchists, they don't want to understand or admit that their act was *revolutionary, and they declare that they are not doing anything political*. Many are probably regretful, wanting everything to finish quickly and well, without inconveniences in their careers and with the approval of His Majesty!!!"[89]

On the 27th Marinetti had another meeting with D'Annunzio and a number of his advisors. D'Annunzio lamented the low morale of the troops and wanted to do something decisive to stir them up. He felt he should do something about the Italian

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[87] They later returned with the belief that Trieste was not ready for revolution, and urged caution to those that wanted it. See Alberto Bertoni, Note #72, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 603-604. His source is F. Guerra, *L'impresa di Fiume*, volume one (Milan: Longanesi, 1974), 115-116.

[88] Entry dated September 22, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 439. Incidentally, this view has been supported by historians, who did not have access to Marinetti's diaries. De Felice wrote "D'Annunzio in his way, with his hesitation, his plumes, his second thoughts, his commitment to one idea or another, demonstrated what he was: a writer of politics, incapable not only in mastering the situation, but also unable to orient himself politically within the situation with even a minimum of coherence." See, De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 557.

[89] Entry dated September 25, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 440.

army that had just seized the mail that was bound for Fiume. Marinetti suggested a bold gesture, like threatening to kidnap their general if they continued interfering with the mail. However, nothing seems to have come of this. Marinetti felt D'Annunzio was deluded by the false hope that further Italian troops would come to his side. "D'Annunzio," he noted, "although shrewd and possessed [*invasato*] of his power, is too trusting and forgets to act, eliminating the spies, the lukewarm, and the traitors."[90]

Finally on the 29th Marinetti realized that it was time for him and Vecchi to leave Fiume. That day he had had another unproductive meeting with D'Annunzio's advisors, and then when he met with D'Annunzio the latter conveniently produced a letter from Milan requesting that Marinetti and Vecchi return to Italy to help with the struggle there.[91] After reading the letter Marinetti recounted that "*I see that everything is coming apart and that D'Annunzio is indecisive.*"[92] As neither D'Annunzio nor his advisors wanted to expand the Fiume expedition, and their continued presence in Fiume would only jeopardize the whole enterprise, Marinetti and Vecchi decided to leave the next day. In their parting letter, to preserve the façade of unity, they denied that they came to Fiume to expand the enterprise, pledged their unswerving loyalty to D'Annunzio, and claimed they were leaving because of the rumors regarding their motives which were hindering troop morale.[93] D'Annunzio for his part similarly praised Marinetti for his aid to the cause, though was happy he was leaving.[94]

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[90] Entry dated September 27, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 442-443.
[91] Copy of a letter from Umberto Pasella to Marinetti and Vecchi, dated September 27, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, A5, "Agitazione Pro Fiume," B. 5, f. Milano.
[92] Entry dated September 29, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 443.
[93] Copy of a letter from Marinetti and Vecchi to D'Annunzio, dated September 30, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, A5, "Agitazione Pro Fiume," B. 5, f. Milano.
[94] Copy of a letter from D'Annunzio to Marinetti, dated September 30, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, A5, "Agitazione Pro Fiume," B. 5, f. Milano

Having failed to convince D'Annunzio to bring his revolution to Italy, Marinetti recognized that his only political option was to go back to Italy and work within the Fascist movement as best he could. However, before committing to such a compromise, Marinetti decided to foment a revolution in Trieste on his own. On the first of October he and Vecchi made their way to Trieste. There they tried to interest the local section of the Italian Republican Party to support their goal of a revolution against the Italian government similar to what happened in Fiume. The republicans had no interest in such a move, especially after D'Annunzio had been contacted to see if he supported Marinetti's initiative, which of course he did not.[95] Marinetti quickly determined that the Triestine republicans were a hopeless vehicle for revolution. They were "opposed to any project in Trieste, for fear (of putting in danger the annexation of Trieste, with a spectacle of Triestine revolution)." He felt they were blinded by their desire to join Italy, after years of irredentist struggle and living under Austrian rule. He could not make them understand that it was not enough to join the current Italy, but to change it. "Trieste has of Italy a vision as a paradise from before the war. Everything that is Italian is fine. We talk, we plan, it is all useless."[96] Marinetti and Vecchi left the following day and headed for Milan, their Fiume expedition over.

With Fiume—and Trieste—exhausted as revolutionary alternatives, Marinetti returned to Italy and rejoined the Fascists. They were the most effective vehicle left to him to shape post-war Italian politics, especially with the upcoming Fall elections. Once again he would try to promote a politics of radicalism and nationalism in a movement he

[95] Entries dated October 1-2, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 444-5.
[96] Entry dated October 3, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, in *Taccuini*, 446.

considered as having become too reactionary. And once again he would end up abandoning Fascism.

The Fall Political Campaign, Further Disillusionment and the Abandonment of Fascism

Returning to Italy in October and competing in the Fall general elections with the Fascists was not Marinetti's ideal plan. Fascism was an effective tool to advance nationalist goals. It offered a means to contest the November parliamentary elections against the Liberals, Socialists and Catholics, and to combat socialist insurgency on the streets. However, the Fascists had shown themselves resistant to the more radical elements that made up Marinetti's ideal Futurist society. In this period from October, 1919 to May, 1920 Marinetti would renew his attempt at promoting his radical policies within Fascism, and, in failing, would abandon the movement altogether.

When Marinetti left for Fiume he had not completely severed his ties to Mussolini and the prospect of running in the November elections on the Fascist ticket. Fiume seemed like a critical opportunity that could not be missed. However, he kept planning for the upcoming elections. Before he left, Marinetti arranged to publish the political essays that he had individually published during the Summer into a book. *Democrazia futurista-Dinamismo politico* (*Futurist Democracy-Political Dynamism*) was released in September and it was the quintessential campaign book.[97] In bringing together his many political essays Marinetti was attempting to provide a comprehensive analysis of what defined Futurist politics and what were its goals. As noted above, the essays laid out a program that offered something to all voting blocs, and specifically defined the contours of an elite-run Futurist society that was above all nationalist and anti-socialist, but radical in that it sought to achieve a "new and Italian virility" through the abolition of all the

[97] F.T. Marinetti, *Democrazia futurista-Dinamismo politico* (Milan: Gaetano Facchi Editore, [September] 1919), and reprinted in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*. The exact publication date is taken from Domenico Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia* (Milan: Skira, 2002), 62.

passatista forces that hindered individual advancement and liberties (the academies, the police, the army, the Papacy, the monarchy, and parliament).[98]

Marinetti jumped into Fall campaign as soon as he arrived in Milan from Fiume. He visited Mussolini first to firm up their political alliance.[99] Then, at the Fascist national congress in Florence (October 8-11), he worked to get his radical policies written into their political platform. The platform that was adopted resembled the Fascist political program of June, which had adopted much of the original manifesto of the Futurist Political Party, but Marinetti felt it did not go far enough.[100] In his speech at the congress he pointed out that it failed to recommend the expulsion of the Papacy from Italy, to eliminate the traditional armed forces and police, or to eliminate parliament. And even though it replaced the Senate with a National Technical Council, it failed to adopt Marinetti's provision that an *Eccitatorio* group be created to keep the Council from becoming a stagnant political body. Most importantly, it failed to highlight the need to bring intellectuals into the government, specifically to staff the new *Eccitatorio,* and as a pointed response to what he felt were the 'leveling' and anti-intellectual tendencies of socialism.[101]

The influence of Marinetti's speech on Fascist political strategy had less impact than he had hoped. He recorded that his speech was greeted with "continuous ovations," and that "My speech agitated [and] Futurized the entire assembly,"[102] and, according to Berghaus, Marinetti's influence was great enough that "in the crucial meeting of the

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[98] F.T. Marinetti, "Un movimento artistico crea un Partito Politico," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 297-302. Quote on p. 302.
[99] Entry dated October 4, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, in *Taccuini*, 446.
[100] Entry dated October 10, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 448-449.
[101] F.T. Marinetti, "Il discorso di Firenze, improvisato al Congresso fascista di Firenze nei primi di ottobre 1919," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 463-470.
[102] Entry dated October 10, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 449.

Central Committee in Milan on 16-18 October, the Futurist line triumphed over the conservative position. Even Mussolini declared himself a supporter of the Futurist wing."[103] However, it is difficult to find any proof that such a sea-change of opinion took place within the political debates of the Fascists during October. De Felice does not record any significant shift in Mussolini's thinking. In fact, such a shift would have been dangerous for Mussolini, as he was trying to mollify the more extreme right-wing faction of the Fascists at that time. Moreover, Mussolini had never supported Marinetti's strident anti-clericalism, as it would have alienated the masses of recently enfranchised peasants.[104]

Consequently, although Marinetti kept to the party line in glorifying the war and attacking the Nitti government and the socialists for failing to defend Italy's territorial claims, he frequently acted on his own and continued to press for an anti-clerical policy as part of a broader Fascist commitment to individual liberties, and for policies that promoted the role of the intellectual in politics.[105] At Piazza Belgioioso Marinetti emphasized the transformative effect of the war, which had "liberated us for all time from our hereditary enemy" and allowed the Italian people to achieve "its new national conscience in the war."[106] Turning to the socialist threat, Marinetti said that "We are optimistic because not only was the patriotism of the race revealed in the war, but especially the marvelous genius of the race. . . . We do not believe that the Italian race

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[103] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 145.
[104] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 570.
[105] Daquanno notes briefly the speeches that Marinetti gave on November 2-4 and 8. See Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia*, 89-94. Marinetti was on the Fascist list for Milan with Mussolini and Arturo Toscanini. For the full list, see Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia*, 88; Alberto Bertoni, "Note # 99," in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 607. *Il Popolo d'Italia* ran a story, "I nostri candidati: Marinetti," on November 5, 1919 which lauded Marinetti's career and the 'masculine' qualities he brought to the ticket.
[106] F.T. Marinetti, "Discorso di Piazza Belgioioso [November 10, 1919]," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 472. This speech was printed in *Il Popolo d'Italia* on November 11, 1919 as "Il 'travolgente' comizio fascista in piazza Belgioioso: Marinetti."

must dominate the world with industrial forces, but we are convinced that it will dominate it with the undoubted force of its creative geniuses." Consequently, the 'communist' idea of leveling off all people in Italy, regardless of talent, especially with Italy's high concentration of geniuses and inventors, "is a criminal absurdity."[107] Two days later Marinetti used the same theme of defending the genius of the Italian race by going after the Catholic *Popolari*. Speaking just after Mussolini, Marinetti stood up and declared that he wanted the Papacy kicked out of Italy and that the Fascists' "fiery anticlericalism, like our many other revolutionary desires, are not utopian nor are they vain hopes. The victory of our purifying, anti-*passatista* and renewing Fascism is at hand."[108] Thus, the 'proletariat of genius' that Italy was rich in had to be defended from both socialist leveling and Catholic *passatismo*. Mussolini, who had spoken just before Marinetti, and kept to the Fascist line, had not mentioned anything anti-clerical. The differences in these two men's view of Fascism could not have been more apparent.[109]

While Marinetti was trying to bring more radical elements into the Fascist political platform, however, he continued working with the Fascists to resist any socialist militancy on the streets. In addition to campaigning on the Fascist ticket, Marinetti was involved in a number of altercations against socialists throughout the campaign. Twice during the Fascist congress, for instance, he assaulted groups of socialists taunting the

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[107] F.T. Marinetti, "Discorso di Piazza Belgioioso," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 473. Marinetti at this moment began using communism and socialism interchangeably, arguing that the Italian socialists had adopted Russian Bolshevik principles. The theme that war exhaustion was leading to socialist sympathies in Italy, and that the socialists would level off, and thus 'decapitate' Italy, were also prevalent in Marinetti's "Discorso di Piazza Sant'Alessandro [November 14, 1919]," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 475.

[108] F.T. Marinetti, "Discorso di Monza [November 12, 1919]," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 474-475. The quote is on p. 475. This speech was printed in *Il Popolo d'Italia* on November 13, 1919 as "Il trionfale comizio fascista al Politeama di Monza: Il discorso Marinetti."

[109] For Mussolini's speech see "Il trionfale comizio fascista al Politeama di Monza: Il discorso Mussolini," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, November 13, 1919.

Fascists.[110] Back in Milan, at the celebration of the battle of Vittorio Veneto, Marinetti alternated speaking to the crowd and assaulting socialists that were heckling the speakers.[111] On November 7, when socialists were celebrating the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Marinetti, Vecchi, and Ernesto Daquanno interrupted the meeting with cries of "Viva l'Italia" to their calls of "Viva Lenin," and were arrested for the disturbance that followed.[112]

During this heated pre-election atmosphere Marinetti kept to the idea that a politics that brought together radical and nationalist elements was still possible. Yet, many of the Fascists had no tolerance for his radical ideas and insisted on counter-revolutionary action, and many of the workers that he hoped to attract were unwilling to abandon socialism during the Red Biennium. Still he pressed on. At the Fascist congress he lauded a worker who agreed that socialist policies were anti-intellectual and that the Italian genius elite should be preserved.[113] At the rally in Piazza Belgioioso he lauded a member of the Chamber of Labor who did not 'fetishize' Lenin.[114] He still tried to limit the level of violence meted by the Fascists during their altercations with the socialists and workers, trying to keep Fascism from becoming just another reactionary police force.[115] However, what these episodes show above all was the failure of his politics to either radicalize Fascism or to nationalize workers.

And the Fascists in general were a failure at the polls. In the elections held on November 16, the Fascist list in Milan managed to get a total of 4,657 votes out of

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[110] Entry dated October 8 and 9, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 447-448.
[111] Entry dated November 4, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 458; Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia*, 91.
[112] Entry dated November 7, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 459; Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia*, 92-93.
[113] Entry dated October 10, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 449.
[114] Entry dated November 10, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 461.
[115] Entry dated November 4, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 458.

roughly 270,000 votes cast, without a single member of the list being elected. The Socialist leader Turati himself trounced the Fascist line with 180,000 votes. The *Popolari* also did well, garnering enough votes nationally to get 101 seats in parliament, third behind the Socialists' total of 156 and the Liberals' 129. The results not only displayed the utter failure of Fascist electoral strategy, but also presaged the paralysis of parliament over the next few years, as Socialists and Catholics refused to work with each other.[116]

The election defeat prompted Mussolini to turn to a more overtly anti-socialist politics and to capitalize on fears that socialism was overtaking Italy. This shift in policy was formalized at the Fascist congress of May, 1920. At the congress Marinetti abandoned Fascism, having realized that his radical goals had no home within the movement. In August, 1920 Marinetti published the manifesto *Al di là del Comunismo* (Beyond Communism) which clearly defined Futurism as distinct from Fascism, as the former was both radical *and* nationalist, and not simply the reactionary movement Fascism had become. Historians have interpreted *Al di là del Comunismo* as a direct response to the shift in Fascist policy laid down in the May congress. However, the manifesto was not written after the congress. It was written just after the November, 1919 elections while Marinetti was serving a 21 day sentence in San Vittore prison in Milan. So why was Marinetti in jail, and why did he draft a manifesto there that laid out the reasons for his abandonment of Fascism, after he had just campaigned on the Fascist electoral ticket?

Marinetti, as well as Vecchi and Mussolini, were arrested on the morning of November 18. On the evening of November 17, when the results of the election started

[116] Clark, *Modern Italy,* 212-215.

coming in, and the enormity of the Socialist Party's victory became clear, tensions between the Fascists and socialists in Milan were high. During the evening socialists were parading through the streets of Milan celebrating their victory, and Marinetti and Vecchi taunted them when they passed by Fascist headquarters in Galleria Vittorio Emanuele. The police directed the socialists away from the Piazza del Duomo, and blockaded the Fascists within their headquarters. However, shortly thereafter a bomb exploded in the midst of the socialist marchers. They suspected the Fascists were responsible and marched on their headquarters. The police forcibly broke up the socialist procession, and then investigated both Fascist and Arditi headquarters to find any connection to the attack. Guns, ammunition, daggers and bombs similar to the one used in the attack were discovered, and numerous people were arrested. Marinetti and Vecchi had escaped, but the following day they were arrested along with Mussolini when more guns and bombs turned up after a search of *Il Popolo d'Italia* offices.[117] Yet, a few hours later, Prime Minister Nitti contacted the Prefect of Milan personally and upbraided him for aggravating an already tense situation, and that unless definitive proof linked Mussolini to the crime he should be released right away.[118] Mussolini was quickly released on the 19th.

But then why was Marinetti forced to remain in San Vittore prison until December 9? Part of the answer is undoubtedly that Mussolini was simply more important than Marinetti, and Nitti did not want a Fascist uprising on his hands. More

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[117] De Felice provides a brief synopsis of this event in *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 573-574. However, the details of my narrative are derived from the state files. See, Prefect of Milan to Ministry of the Interior, November 18, 1919 (18:00), Questore of Milan to Procuratore Generale, November 21, 1919, and Prefect of Milan to Ministry of the Interior, November 18, 1919 (19:20), all three in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1919, B. 95, f. E1, Elezioni politiche, Milano.

[118] Nitti to Prefect of Milan, November 18, 1919 (19:35), in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1919, B. 95, f. E1, Elezioni politiche, Milano.

importantly, after Mussolini had been released, Nitti was informed that documents were discovered at the *Il Popolo d'Italia offices* that suggested the Fascists were in fact planning an insurrection on the evening of November 17, and that their uprising was to coincide with an invasion from Fiume. There was no definitive proof that such a plot actually existed, and just how serious it was if it did exist. Nitti did not have enough reason to re-arrest Mussolini and incur the ire of the Fascists. However, Nitti had no qualms with keeping Marinetti and many others in jail for a another 20 days while further investigations were undertaken.

Though Mussolini was released, and then allowed to remain free, for political reasons, his involvement in the plot was just as deep as Marinetti's, who spent another three weeks in jail. The police had found a letter dated November 17 by a Major Baseggio to Pasella (Secretary General of the Fascists) which stated that he had been appointed to a secret directorate on or about November 2 by Mussolini so that he could prepare for and then commit some kind of act on a day chosen by Marinetti and Vecchi in Mussolini's name. Baseggio was to receive clarifications from Mussolini, which never arrived. However, at a meeting on November 17 Vecchi stated that much had been prepared by the secret directorate, but without Mussolini's knowledge so he could not be held responsible for whatever happened.[119] Corroborating evidence that some scheme was being hatched comes from Marinetti's diaries, in which he recorded that "Mussolini speaks to the *Fascio* about the necessity of forming a true [military] organization [*quadrato*] of Fascist forces. And he gives the command to Vecchi and I."[120] Moreover, on November 8, 9, and 11 Marinetti recorded that friends, possibly reinforcements, were

[119] Questore of Milan to Procuratore Generale, November 22, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1919, B. 95, f. E1, Elezioni politiche, Milano.
[120] Entry dated November 6, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 458-459.

arriving from Fiume and from other cities in Italy.[121] As a consequence of the evidence found at the *Popolo* offices, the Questore informed the Procurator General, somewhat breathlessly, that

> there is a Committee and a Secret Directorate in Milan, which, with the help of Mussolini, Pasella, Vecchi, Marinetti and others are in contact with emissaries and other trusted colleagues of D'Annunzio in Venice, and in other cities, and with the Command of Fiume in the hopes of organizing and putting into effect movements of sedition and revolt in the country, and for such movements there were concrete actions already taken, and that the Arditi from Fiume who came to Milan, and those already here, were organized into armed bands that were to take part in actions in addition to those referred to in the other report [to attack socialists], [specifically] in a violent action against public officials and the powers of the State.[122]

However, there are no other files relating to his incident, and Marinetti and the other Fascists were finally released on December 9 and all charges were dropped. It is likely the state recognized the purported plot was not serious enough to warrant holding them any longer.[123]

The most relevant aspect of this episode, regardless of how serious the plan for a Fascist insurrection actually was, was that Mussolini was released in less than a day, whereas his compatriots, specifically Marinetti, remained in prison for an event they were all equally guilty of. This seeming act of betrayal, that Mussolini had done nothing to secure the release of his compatriots, taken in conjunction with Marinetti's long-standing concerns over Mussolini's reactionary temperament and policies, were the reasons Marinetti drafted *Al di là del Comunismo* while in prison. It was the first step in the termination of Marinetti's alliance with Mussolini, as it clearly laid out that Futurism's

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[121] Entries dated November 8 and 9, and November 11, 1919, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 460-461.
[122] Questore of Milan to Procuratore Generale, November 21 and 22, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1919, B. 95, f. E1, Elezioni politiche, Milano.
[123] Marinetti's release may have been helped by lobbying on his behalf by conservative Liberal deputy Candiani. See, Prime Minister to the Undersecretary of the Cabinet, December 2, 1919, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1919, B. 95, f. E1, Elezioni politiche, Milano.

radical goals would no longer be compromised in an alliance with Fascism. Upon leaving prison Marinetti ceased any further activities with the Fascists, and then formally quit the movement in May, 1920. The alliance with Mussolini's movement had proven to be a political failure, and was fraught with too many compromises for Marinetti. So he went out on his own.

Al di là del Comunismo is a brief, clear statement of Marinetti's political vision at the end of 1919.[124] When published in August, 1920 this small pamphlet was roundly criticized by Marinetti's former colleagues as a betrayal of the Futurist commitment to political engagement. It had come out after Marinetti had quit the Fascists, and seemed to offer unrealistic, or 'utopian', political solutions when many Futurists were choosing to either follow Mussolini's lead in the Fascist movement, or to join the Socialist Party, and later the Communist Party, and actively resist the Fascists. Historians have interpreted this document in two ways. Santarelli, for instance, focuses on its anti-socialism and concludes that Marinetti was a reactionary. Gentile, on the other hand, focuses on the radical components of the manifesto, and uses it to differentiate Futurism from Fascism, and to argue that Marinetti abandoned politics altogether when he abandoned Fascism. Most historians, in fact, follow Gentile's interpretation and use both Marinetti's abandonment of Fascism and his publication of *Al di là del Comunismo* to argue that a break occurred in Marinetti's political life, between the earlier and more radical Marinetti and the Marinetti of the Fascist years.[125]

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[124] This was originally written in French. The original French text is located at the Getty Research Institute in GMP, Box 19, Folder 1193, Au delà du Communisme.

[125] See Enzo Santarelli, "Il movimento politico futurista," in *Fascismo e neofascismo: Studi e problemi di ricerca* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1974), 43-44; Emilio Gentile, "La politica di Marinetti," in *Il mito dello stato nuovo dall'antigiolittismo al fascismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1982), 158-160, "Il futurismo e la politica. Dal nazionalismo modernista al fascismo (1909-1920)," in Renzo de Felice, ed., *Futurismo, cultura, e politica* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988), 137-147.

Yet, *Al di là del Comunismo* was hardly a turning point in Marinetti's thinking about politics. It is consistent with Marinetti's political ideas from the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party, to the essays that make up *Democrazia futurista*, to his speech at the Fascist congress in October, 1919. It was simply a clearer and more accessible statement of Marinetti's political ideas to distinguish Futurism from the reactionary movement Fascism was becoming. Specifically, *Al di là del Comunismo* unequivocally argued that Futurism sought to unleash the revolutionary 'anarchic individualism' of the people (found in the Arditi and the Italian wartime population) for the benefit of the nation, and that this individualism would be subject to the needs of the state, that harnessed the nation's energies for future greatness. This argument was premised on the assumption that these anarchic individuals would want to willingly subject themselves to the state when the needs of the nation required them to.

Al di là del Comunismo had two basic goals: to convince Italians that socialism/communism was bad for Italy, especially with the recent victory at the polls of the Italian Socialist Party, and that the Futurists were a better, more authentically revolutionary alternative. It was a Futurist revolution that united individual liberties with national greatness, elevated artists and intellectuals to positions of power, and offered artistic creativity as a means to end the class war.

Marinetti argued that Futurism believed "Humanity marches towards anarchic individualism, the means and the dreams of every strong spirit." "Communism," however, "is instead an old and mediocre formula, that the exhaustion and fear of the war have repainted and transformed into something spiritual." Communism for Marinetti was

nothing more than bureaucracy run amok.[126] The Futurists, in their defense of the *Patria*, was the opposite of communism. Futurism was a means of advancing the race, where the individual had its fullest expression, but communism stunted development by preaching pacifism, internationalism and an artificial leveling of citizens' worth, regardless of their talents. Thus,

> The nation represents for us the maximum extent of the generosity of the individual overflowing onto all the others similar to him, both sympathetic and pleasant. It represents the most vast, concrete solidarity of spiritual, agricultural, river-going, port-managing, industrial interests, tied to a single geographic configuration, by a similar mixture of climes and by a similar coloring of horizons. . . .
> Futurist patriotism is . . . a furious passion for the future, revolutionary progress of the race. . . .
> The nation is the maximum extension of the individual, or better: the most vast individual capable of living for a long time, leading, dominating and defending all the parts of its body. The nation is the psychic and geographic conscience of the effort for individual betterment.[127]

Thus, the communist demand for an international class war to transcend national boundaries was an absurdity, as the concept of the nation was indestructible. Even Lenin, Marinetti pointed out, was a nationalist at heart, as he had set the Red Army on to the seceding Poles, even after he had convinced the Russians to withdraw from the Great War. Another failure of communism, he argued, was its renunciation of heroism and struggle as a means of advancing the race. "All those that are tired by the tempestuous, dynamic variety of life dream of the restful and fixed uniformity that communism promises. They want a life without surprises, the ground smooth like a billiard ball. . . .

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[126] F.T. Marinetti, "Al di là del Comunismo: Il cittadino eroico—Scuole di coraggio—Gli artisti al potere—Le case del genio—La vita festa," ["Beyond Communism: The Heroic Citizen—Schools of Courage—The Artists in Power—The Houses of Genius—The Festive Life"] in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 411. Note, this was written in December 1919 and published in *La Testa di Ferro*, "The Journal of *Fiumanesimo*," *on* August 15, 1920.

[127] Ibid., 412. This is actually quite close to the definition of Fascism worked out by Mussolini, and Giovanni Gentile, a few years later in Benito Mussolini, "The Nature of Fascism," in *Fascism: Doctrine and Institutions* (Rome: Ardita Publishers, 1935), 10-31.

[But] Human progress, which has as its essence an increasing velocity, needs . . . obstacles to overcome, that is, revolutionary wars [to fight]." Communism, he emphasized, was only getting a foothold in Italy because of the temporary exhaustion caused by the war.[128]

And communism simply did not work in the real world. Communists declared that "everyone will have enough bread, everyone will be rich," instead starvation haunted the Russian countryside.[129] Communists wanted complete equality, but in Italy this would never work, as it was filled with such a high percentage of geniuses, and it would be 'silly' to treat them the same as everyone else. "Every country," he added," has its own special conception of democracy. In a country filled with individuals and geniuses like Italy, democracy signifies quality and not quantity."[130] Lastly, communists insisted a class war was inevitable, but this had no basis in reality. Marinetti argued, "There does not exist a bourgeoisie that is completely moribund, nor a proletariat that is completely healthy and vigorous, . . . [there are] rich bourgeois that work much more than workers; [and] workers that work as little as possible hoping to do absolutely nothing. . . ."[131] Specifically, Marinetti highlighted the bourgeois officer corps of the war: "They are the best part of our race. The war was fought by these energetic youths always by leading the masses of peasant and worker infantry. The peasants and workers in the war, not having a national conscience yet, could not have won without the example and intelligence of those heroic petty bourgeois lieutenants."[132]

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[128] F.T. Marinetti, "Al di là del Comunismo," in *TIF*, 417.
[129] Ibid., 415.
[130] Ibid., 420.
[131] Ibid., 415.
[132] Ibid., 416.

Having punctured what he considered the basic tenets of communism, Marinetti then went on to lambaste the Italian Socialist Party for trying to bring communism to Italy, for their neutralism during the war, their belief that the war was a useless slaughter, and for forgetting that the war had "morally raised everyone, rich and poor."[133] More importantly, Marinetti accused them of not being revolutionary at all. They urged the masses to rebellion, but never followed through, and they allied with the reactionary *Popolari* to simply stop the advance of the true revolutionary movements. The Futurists, he countered, were the real revolutionaries. They would free Italy of the Papacy, sell Italy's artistic patrimony for the betterment of all Italians, and abolish the tribunals, police and prisons. In addition, the Futurist political program called for the abolition of marriage, the senate, parliament, and standing armies. Thus, "We are not only more revolutionary than you, Official Socialists, but are beyond [*al di là*] your revolution."[134]

Marinetti concluded *Al de là del Comunismo* by sketching out how the Futurists would solve the social problem without having to resort to a socialist class war. It is at this point that the 'utopian' quality of the work stands out. Once artists had come to power, he argued, they would be responsible for two major policies. First, as Futurists they would push for the most modern machinery to be used in the factories, as a way of maximizing production and salaries, while reducing the physical and time burdens on the workers. Second, as life in a factory was never going to be pleasant, the Futurists would create 'Houses of Art' throughout Italy so that all Italians could display their artwork for free. In this way, the frustrations that workers felt at the workplace over their

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[133] Ibid., 418.
[134] Ibid., 419. The Official Socialists was the Italian Socialist Party as dominated by the maximalists, that had recently taken over the party, and relegated the reformists to minority status.

unrealizable dreams, rather than leading to socialist revolution, would under a Futurist government be channeled and fulfilled in the workers' art:

> The Futurist revolution that will bring artists to power does not promise Earthly paradises. It certainly cannot overcome the human torment that is the rising force of the race. The artists, [however], . . . will be able to attenuate the pain. . . .[135] Thanks to us, the time will come when life will no longer be simply a life of bread and work, nor even a hateful life, but one in which life becomes a *work of art.* . . .We won't have a terrestrial paradise, but the economic inferno will be brightened and pacified by innumerable art festivals.[136]

Of course, it was unrealistic to assume that during the Red Biennium workers would give up on class-warfare and socialism and be satisfied solely with the distraction of artistic expression. However, Marinetti was not simply offering art as a distraction. His political ideas at this time, 1918-1920, envisioned a variety of reforms that were meant to advance the economic and personal freedoms of all people, including workers (provided workers did not threaten national unity). However, this latest work was short on the details of the complete Futurist political program, and thus the more outlandish sections stood out.

What is more important to pick out from this manifesto was that Marinetti still clung to the idea that he could bring together a politics of nationalism and radicalism, when the elections of November, 1919, the increasing strength of the Socialist Party, and the consequent anti-socialist backlash made this increasingly unlikely. However, he was committed to a politics that would not be simply counter-revolutionary, and *Al di là del Comunismo* made it clear that he was finished with Mussolini's Fascists.

Having decided he could not work with the Fascists, however, Marinetti now found himself with few political options with which to further his political agenda. The

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[135] F.T. Marinetti, "Al di là del Comunismo," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 423.
[136] Ibid., 424.

Futurist Political Party slowly came apart after the failure of the November elections. Left-wing Futurists felt their alliance with the Fascists had only destroyed their reputation with workers, and sought a more direct policy of engagement with the working class and the Socialist Party. Right-wing Futurists felt the road to political success lay in an unequivocal offensive against socialism and the militant working class. This latter group felt Mussolini's increasingly anti-socialist Fascism was the most realistic political option.[137] This period is generally interpreted by historians as a time when Marinetti disengaged from politics and/or immersed himself in utopian political fantasies, which *Al di là del Comunismo* represented.[138] However, Marinetti's 'disengagement' was not from politics in general, but from the immediate options then available to him. Because of his sympathies with the workers' economic plight and respect for the revolutionary energy of socialism, he could not work with the Fascists. But he was also fundamentally opposed to socialist internationalism, materialism and the notion of equality regardless of talent, so he could not fully commit to the socialists either.

Consequently, Marinetti once again turned to the only option left for effecting a revolution that would create a society based on radical and nationalist principles: D'Annunzio's Fiume. Marinetti's connection to Fiume was Mario Carli, who had remained after Marinetti departed in October, 1919. Marinetti and Carli, at least since the Summer of 1919, had both been concerned with the Fascist anti-strike policy, and wanted a more explicit pro-worker stance. Moreover, both admired the revolutionary potential of

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[137] Berghaus, *Italian Futurism and Politics*, 146-153. A similar split was developing with in Fascism, though clearly without the same corrosive effect. See, De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 588-589.
[138] Berghaus, *Italian Futurism and Politics*, 148; Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 208; Gian Battista Nazzaro, "Futurismo e politica," in *Introduzione al futurismo*, 99; Emilio Gentile, "Il futurismo e la politica. Dal nazionalismo modernista al fascismo (1909-1920)," in Renzo de Felice, ed., *Futurismo, cultura e politica*, 139; Niccolo Zapponi, "La politica come espediente e come utopia. Marinetti e il Partito politico futurista," in Sergio Lambiase, ed., *F.T. Marinetti Futurista*, 236-239; Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 117, 131, 147.

socialism, and sought to harness it, but without its leveling and internationalist aspects. Consequently, in early 1920 Marinetti threw considerable support to Carli's *La Testa di Ferro*, which was based in Fiume and called itself the paper of *Fiumenismo*. Marinetti's goal was to re-focus his attention on developments in Fiume, with Fiume possibly acting as a catalyst for revolution in Italy, just as he had hoped for in September (and, it would seem, in November), 1919. In September, D'Annunzio had proven to be a disappointment and Marinetti believed he was surrounded by too many conservative advisors. However, by December, 1919 D'Annunzio had a new advisor, the syndicalist Alceste De Ambris, who believed Fiume could be the launching pad for a revolution into Italy with socialist support, or at the very least their benevolent neutrality.[139]

Carli was in the midst of this radical ferment. His articles talked of societies divided between the exploiters and the exploited;[140] and in "Il nostro bolscevismo" (Our Bolshevism) he declared that " 'Between Fiume and Moscow there is probably an ocean of darkness. But indisputably Fiume and Moscow are two shining shores. We need to throw a bridge between these two shores as soon as possible.' "[141] Carli's view of Bolshevism was complex and paralleled Marinetti's view. He admired the Bolshevism in practice in Russia, which was truly revolutionary, but had then developed into a nationalist, elite driven, and hierarchical movement, regardless of its rhetoric.[142] Consequently, Marinetti and Carli admired socialism in practice in Russia, but railed

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[139] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 579.
[140] Carli, "La Testa di Ferro," in *La Testa di Ferro*, February 1, 1920, quoted in Buchignani, "Settimelli e Carli dal futurismo al fascismo," in Renzo de Felice, ed., *Futurismo, cultura e politica*, 202.
[141] Carli, "Il nostro bolscevismo," in *I nemici d'Italia*, March 14, 1920, quoted in De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 579. The article first appeared in *La Testa di Ferro* on February 15, 1920.
[142] Mario Carli, "Il nostro bolscevismo," in *I nemici d'Italia*, March 14, 1920, quoted in De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 579; Carli, "Il piccolo padre bolscevico," in *La Testa di Ferro*, March 7, 1920, quoted in Buchignani, "Settimelli e Carli dal futurismo al fascismo," in Renzo de Felice, ed., *Futurismo, cultura e politica*, 204.

against it in Italy, where the Socialist Party was actually trying to hold true to socialist theories of internationalism and egalitarianism.[143]

In early 1920 Marinetti counted on Carli and *La Testa di Ferro* as his outlet to keep Futurism alive in the only revolutionary spot left 'in' Italy. After Carli was forced to leave Fiume in June, Marinetti continued to depend on Carli's paper to disseminate his political views. Marinetti financially subsidized its publication, as is evident from a number of letters between Marinetti and Carli,[144] and he actively distributed *La Testa di Ferro* and talked it up wherever he traveled in Italy.[145] In return, he expected Carli to give ample space to Futurism in his paper, and in late March he asked Carli to run in *La Testa di Ferro* "a series of brief and accessible articles of *objective* clarification about Futurism."[146]

However, furthering Futurism in Fiume was not any easier to do the second time than it was the first time. Carli became *persona non grata* there because of his radical views, which seemed to go beyond whatever De Ambris and D'Annunzio were planning. In early April Carli apologized to Marinetti for not writing more about Futurism in his paper: "You, who know something about the environment here, know that it is very hostile to Futurism. If I am to stay afloat, it is best not to antagonize too much these

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[143] Mussolini himself had a similar view of Bolshevism. He admired the success of the Russian Revolution, and Lenin, and was comforted by the fact that Bolshevism in practice did not create a dictatorship of the proletariat, but the rule of "a few intellectuals who had found the secret of winning power." See, Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1982), 41.

[144] See, Carli to Marinetti, Letters dated February 26, March 2, April 1, and April 8, 1920, in GMSN, Box 1, Folder 32: Mario Carli.

[145] At one point Marinetti was asking for 200 copies per issue. See Marinetti to Carli, February, 1920, in Mario Carli and F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste tra arte e politica*, 85.

[146] Marinetti to Carli, March 24, 1920, in Mario Carli and F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste tra arte e politica*, 90.

people. D'Annunzio does not have any prejudices, but in his entourage there are many *passatisti*, and they cannot be ignored, because, at least for now, they have influence."[147]

In addition to using *La Testa di Ferro* to clarify what Futurism stood for, Marinetti sought to further distinguish Futurism from Fascism at this time by publishing "Che cose'è il futurismo: nozioni elementari" ("What is Futurism: Elementary Notions") in February. The flyer laid out a list of what Futurism stood for in life (the Arditi-like qualities of energy, liberty, progress, courage, novelty, and audacity), in politics (abolition of the Papacy, parliament, senate, the bureaucracy, conscription, permanent armies, the police, the encouragement of citizen self-defense, the expropriation of uncultivated lands for distribution to workers, adequate compensation for workers, and the love of liberty, although not the liberty to be a "coward," "parasite" or an "anti-Italian"), and lastly in art (originality, clearness, simplicity, forceful, anti-academic, anti-*passatista*, and anti-Purism).[148]

Such a declaration put Marinetti on a collision course with Mussolini. At a Fascist meeting in early February Mussolini insisted he would support all strikes that were motivated by economic motives, but would crush all strikes that were socialist inspired. Yet, it was clear that Mussolini considered all strikes socialist inspired and that Nitti's government was too weak to do anything about it.[149] By April, the Fascists were placing their squads under temporary military rule when it seemed the military needed

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[147] Carli to Marinetti, April 1, 1920, in GMSN, Box 1, Folder 32: Mario Carli.
[148] F.T. Marinetti, Mario Carli, Emilio Settimelli, "Che cose'è il futurismo: nozioni elementari," in Getty Research Library, Accession number NX 456.F8 M27 1920B. Cammarota notes that this was originally published in February, 1919. See Domenico Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia*, 133.
[149] Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, February 8, 1920, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1921, B. 102, f. 209 (Fasci di combattimento).

extra help against socialist demonstrations,[150] and squads were also being detailed to industrialists to protect their establishments.[151]

All this was too much for Marinetti, and the formal break with Mussolini finally came after the Fascist national congress in May. In the days leading up to the congress Marinetti had already determined that a public break with Mussolini was necessary, which he noted in his diary:

> I believe in the necessity of leaving the Fasci di Combattimento with Carli and Nannetti with this declaration:
> Having seen the differences between us and the Fasci di Combattimento regarding
> 1. the active sympathy that we believe honest economic strikes deserve
> 2.the antimonarchism that we believe is indispensable
> 3.the insufficient anticlericalism of the Fasci di Combattimento,
> we tender our resignations as members of the Central Committee and as members of the Fasci di Combattimento.[152]

At the Congress Marinetti was explicit in his dissent with Mussolini's direction. Even before Mussolini gave his opening remarks, Marinetti declared in an impromptu speech that "Having returned from the Carso [in an allusion to the war] we do not want to go towards reaction."[153] When Mussolini laid out the Fascist program on the 24th, it was the 'reactionary' components which stood out for Marinetti. Though he agreed, as always, with Mussolini's goal of improving Italy's international standing, it was Mussolini's internal politics that remained the sticking point.[154] Marinetti was unconvinced that Mussolini was serious about protecting 'honest' (non-socialist) workers, and declared that that the Fascists must get closer to the masses, not farther, and should begin " 'a decisive politics defending proletarian economic claims, supporting

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[150] Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, April 18, 1920, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1921, B. 102, f. 209 (Fasci di combattimento).
[151] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 592.
[152] Entry dated May 20, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 486.
[153] Entry dated May 23, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 487.
[154] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 598; Entry dated May 24, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 487.

strikes and agitations that are founded and formulated on the principle of justice.' "[155] "There are," he added, "sacrosanct strikes that must be supported."[156] Mussolini's stand on the monarchy and the Papacy was also deeply troubling for Marinetti. Mussolini did not care if Italy was a monarchy or republic, and did not want to waste any time discussing the matter. As for the Papacy, he noted that it was politically unrealistic to attack the Pope in Italy. He noted that "the Vatican represents 400 million men spread out all over the world and an intelligent politics must use this colossal force for expansionist aims," and that he personally was "completely outside any religion, but political problems are political problems. No one in Italy, unless they want to start a religious war, can threaten this spiritual sovereignty."[157] To which Marinetti insisted that Italy must free itself of both the reactionary and 'useless' monarchy, and the must remove the Papacy from Italy.[158]

All this was to no avail, as was evident from the "Postulates of the Fascist Program" that were formulated at the congress. To De Felice, the Postulates represented a clear shift from the radical and libertarian, and Futurist-inspired Fascist Political Program of June, 1919 to a more conservative Fascism. Calls for the vote for women, the abolition of the senate and convocation of a national assembly to revise the constitution to this end, and the total sequestration of war profits, which were in the June, 1919 Program, were not in the Postulates. Instead what stands out is the support for the 'productive' bourgeoisie, that was deemed critical to Italy's development, and

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[155] Quoted in De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 596.
[156] Entry dated May 24, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 487.
[157] Quoted in De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 596.
[158] Entries dated May 24-25, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 487; Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, May 26, 1920, in ACS MIN, DGPS, A1, 1920, B. 4, f. Marinetti.

unrelenting opposition to the "degeneration of the working class struggles."[159] The Postulates declared that the Fascists rejected "those worker struggles in which purely economic motives are overtaken and mystified by speculation and base demagoguery."[160] This effectively rejected all strikes, as the Fascists claimed that the General Confederation of Labor, which directed such strikes, had come under the sway of socialism.[161] Just as importantly, the Postulates stipulated that the Fascists did not have any prejudices against any form of government (i.e., the monarchy), and would accept whatever benefited the current and future needs of the nation. The Papacy was not even mentioned.[162]

The Postulates were the last straw for Marinetti. On May 29, Marinetti and a number of other Futurists "left the *Fasci di combattimento*, not being able to impose on the Fascist majority their antimonarchism and anticlericalism."[163] Mussolini, after hearing the news, was rumored to have exclaimed that Marinetti was an " 'extravagant buffoon that wants to be in politics and that no one, not even I, take seriously in Italy.' "[164]

Mussolini was not wholly off the mark, in so far as he was referring to Marinetti's unrealistic political goals during the Red Biennium. Throughout the period 1918-1920 Marinetti had sought to offer a political vision that was both radical and nationalist, that advanced both individual liberties and collective order. He had started out promising

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[159] De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 598.
[160] "Postulati del programma fascista (maggio 1920)," in De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 746.
[161] Ibid., 747.
[162] Ibid.
[163] F.T. Marinetti, "I futuristi nella lotta fascista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 442.
[164] Cesare Rossi, *Mussolini com era*, quoted in Claudia Salaris, *Storia del futurismo: Libri, giornali, manifesti* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1985; 1992), 123. Berghaus has the same quote from a different book by Rossi, *Ventitre vicende mussoliniane* (Milan, 1958). See Berghaus, *Italian Futurism and Politics*, note #102, p. 163.

enough, taking advantage of the upsurge in patriotism and the demands for radical reform unleashed by the war. The Futurist Political Party recruited amongst the soldiers and Arditi, and offered a bevy of radical proposals to the 'patriotic' Italians on the home-front. These proposals were meant to expand individual liberties and economic opportunities, but were offered on the assumption that they would be voluntarily subsumed to the national interest when need be. However, this vision crumbled in the face of political reality. Socialists and workers took over the radical end of the political spectrum and had little faith in nationalists who proclaimed radical social agendas. Nationalists, specifically the Fascists, were unwilling to tolerate any radicalism during the Red Biennium. Marinetti's alliance with the Fascists proved only good enough to advance Italian territorial claims and resist socialist insurgency, but was hopeless in advancing a radical agenda. Marinetti's attempts to work with D'Annunzio as a revolutionary alternative also failed. In the end Marinetti was left with his vision of an Italy transformed through radical and nationalist policies, but no vehicle to put them into effect.

When Marinetti re-joined the Fascists in 1922 this powerlessness was certainly on his mind. Additionally, in 1922 he made a choice to alter his political strategy. From 1918 to 1920 he had chosen to keep the radical and nationalist components of his politics in balance and had abandoned the Fascists rather than compromise his radical goals. However, from 1920-1922 Marinetti determined that Mussolini was the only option left to 'save' Italy from socialist insurgency and weak Liberal governments. When Mussolini came to power, the opportunity for national greatness and an end to national disunity was too great to pass up. At that point, Marinetti's nationalism would again come to

dominate his politics, and his radicalism would again be progressively curbed, as it had been from the Libyan War through most of the Great War. Marinetti's journey back to Fascism is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3: The Return to Fascism, 1920-24

Introduction

When Marinetti quit the Fascist Party in 1920 he did so on the principle that it had become too reactionary. The Fascists had been an ideal vehicle for defending national interests at the Paris Peace Conference, and for resisting a socialist revolution in Italy, but had proven to be a complete failure when it came to advancing Marinetti's radical goals. Marinetti could not use the Futurist Political Party to advance his political goals either. It had dissolved after Marinetti quit the Fascists, some members choosing to remain with Mussolini, some choosing to join the Socialist Party and later the Communist Party. Marinetti's attempts to work with D'Annunzio as the revolutionary alternative to Mussolini were also failures. Now, in 1920, Marinetti found himself politically powerless to effect the direction of post-war Italy. But he had all the same political concerns as before. He was afraid of a socialist revolution in Italy and the imposition of a leveling, egalitarian democracy. He had no faith that the Liberal government or parliamentary democracy were strong enough to either resist the socialists, halt the advance of political Catholicism, or to advance Italy's international status. The only group that seemed able to address these concerns were the Fascists.

Consequently, when Mussolini became Prime Minister in 1922 Marinetti re-joined the Fascist Party as a means of achieving his goal of national advancement. Marinetti believed that Mussolini would bring domestic order and stability to Italy, and then expand Italy's international influence and empire. In re-joining Fascism Marinetti made the same political decision he made in 1911 when Italy fought the Libyan War. Then, he had decided that national interests trumped any commitment to expanding

individual liberties through radical policies. In 1922 Marinetti made the same decision. He did not completely abandon his radical goals however. He claimed that he was joining Fascism on its so-called 'radical' or *dicianovista* wing, and would work to preserve Fascism's radical heritage within the Party. *Dicianovismo* referred to the very early months of the *Fasci di combattimento* when the Fascists had broadly adopted the combination of radical and nationalist policies laid out in the political manifesto of the Futurist Political Party, and which Marinetti had further developed in *Democrazia futurista* and *Al di là del Comunismo*. Specifically, Marinetti's *dicianovismo* meant he would do two things within Fascism. First, he would support Mussolini in his quest to bring domestic order to Italy, and to use that stability at home as a platform for expanding Italian influence abroad. Second, he would promote radical policies which were meant to moderate Fascism's reactionary trajectory. Consequently, Marinetti insisted that the Fascist state had to promote modern Italian culture to break the 'tyranny' of the traditional academies and museums, and that modern artists and intellectuals had to have real political roles to guarantee this cultural reform. Marinetti also continued to denounce the monarchy and the Vatican as forces of *passatismo*, and criticized Mussolini's desire to accommodate these institutions. Finally, although Marinetti accepted that a strong Fascist state was required to bring domestic order to Italy, he insisted that Fascism not degenerate into a reactionary movement. Thus, Marinetti still claimed that workers should have the right to strike if their goal was strictly economic reform.

Marinetti's claim to being a 'radical', *dicianovista* Fascist, however, was problematic from the start. Simply in re-joining Fascism to advance his nationalist goals Marinetti had signaled that he was ready to compromise his radical goals. If he could

have achieved his nationalist *and* radical goals within Fascism he never would have quit the movement in the first place. Marinetti recognized this when he re-joined Fascism. Consequently, his attempts to further radical policies within Fascism were limited. Certainly Marinetti railed against the conservative policies of the Fascist state, and proclaimed that it should be anti-clerical, republican, and respectful of workers' economic rights. But such declarations never amounted to a fundamental challenge of Mussolini's leadership of Fascism. During the Matteotti Crisis, in fact, when Mussolini faced the most serious challenge to his authority and Italy was politically fractured, Marinetti silenced all criticism of the regime, and then enthusiastically welcomed the imposition of the dictatorship to end the political instability brought on by the crisis.

Marinetti had placed his faith in Mussolini to advance his nationalist goals, and he would only go so far in criticizing him for not being radical enough. Marinetti claimed to be a radical Fascist, but he was above all a loyal Fascist, and it was this loyalty to Mussolini and Marinetti's progressively tamed and circumscribed radicalism which would allow him to slowly rise through the ranks of the Fascist regime.

This chapter is divided into two broad sections. The first section deals with Marinetti's activities in the two years after he abandoned Fascism. It shows that, in spite of his political isolation and powerlessness, Marinetti was still concerned with socialist insurgency, and the Liberal governments inability to resist the socialists or to even advance Italian interests abroad. During this period Mussolini emerged as the 'savior' of Italy, and when Mussolini became Prime Minister in 1922 Marinetti re-joined the Fascist Party as a 'radical' Fascist. The second section deals with Marinetti's attempts to get Mussolini to accept him as a viable partner in the development of Fascism closer to its

radical *dicianovista* heritage, and the compromises Marinetti made to his radical principles in exchange for a strong Fascist state and the promise of national greatness.

Marinetti: Isolated, 1920-1922

In May, 1920 Marinetti found himself politically isolated and powerless. Every means Marinetti had used to simultaneously advance his nationalist and radical goals had come to naught. Fascism had become too reactionary, the Futurist Political Party had dissolved after he quit Fascism, and D'Annunzio showed no interest in expanding his Fiume enterprise into Italy. The Catholic *Popolari* were never an option, and the Nationalists were considered too reactionary because of their devotion to both Pope and King. Yet, Marinetti had all the same political concerns and goals as before. From 1920 to 1922 Marinetti was still concerned that a socialist insurgency could succeed in Italy. He still believed the Liberal government was incapable of resisting the socialists, and certainly was incapable of expanding Italian influence abroad. Finally, he still believed there was a way to formulate a workable politics that could advance both radical and nationalist goals. However, by 1922 Marinetti tired of his political powerlessness and looked to the Fascists as the means to advance his political goals. They had shown themselves capable of meeting the socialist threat, and Mussolini now had real political power with his appointment as Prime Minister. Marinetti would join the Fascists to advance his nationalist goals, but on the Party's radical, *dicianovista* wing and simultaneously work to advance his radical goals as well.

After his resignation from the Fasci, Marinetti retreated to the residence of his friend Primo Conti at Antignano for the summer to concentrate on his writing. After the year and a half of political battles with the Fascists and D'Annunzio, and their failures, Marinetti took a short break. However, even in isolation Italian politics was never far

from him mind.[1] Two of the works he wrote at Antignano were *Gli Indomabili* (*The Untameables*) and his new manifesto on *Tattilismo* (*Tactilism*). Scholars have interpreted these works as proof that Marinetti had abandoned politics, and was solely focusing on his art.[2] Yet, in both works, and a little later on with the manifesto "Ad ogni uomo, ogni giorno un mestiere diverso! Inegualismo e Artecrazia" ("For Every Man, Every Day a Different Job! Inequality and Artecrazia", also known as the "Manifesto dell'inegualismo" or "Manifesto of Inequality"),[3] Marinetti revealed that the socialist threat to Italy was still a primary concern for him, and that a means had to be found to strip the working classes from the socialists.

That Marinetti was still concerned about the success of socialism in mid-1920 is directly attributable to the continued virulence of the *Biennio rosso*. The number of strikes had actually increased in 1920 over the already sharp increases seen in 1919. Moreover, there was a growing belief that the government was too lenient on the strikers, always seeking to compromise with them and forcing industrialists to negotiate. This dissatisfaction was hardly limited to militant nationalists. Now, with increasing instability within the public services industries (railway, postal and telegraph workers struck in January, railway workers struck again in April and September), the Liberal

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[1] Conti revealed to Corrado Pavolini that Marinetti "is tired from too many adventures, and says he is tormented by a great desire to be alone and to work. Thus, I beg you, in his name, to not tell anyone of his stay at Antignano, so that he can avoid the inevitable nuisances." See Conti to Pavolini, July 18, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti and Primo Conti, *Noi proiettori del futurismo, Carteggio inedito*, 1917-1940, edited by Gabriel Cacho Millet (Palermo: Edizioni Novecento, 2001), 105.

[2] For instance, Berghaus feels *The Untameables* represented Marinetti's general drift away from politics, referring to the novel as "emphatically unpolitical." See Günter Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909-1944* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), 218. For the general trajectory of the historiography, see Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 180-210; Gian Battista Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica* (Naples: J.N. Editore S.p.A., 1987), 151-174; Claudia Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1997), 220-234, Claudia Salaris, *Storia del futurismo: Libri, giornali, manifesti* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1985; 1992), 131-135; Giovanni Lista, *Arte e politica: Il futurismo di sinistra in Italia* (Milan: Multhipla, 1980), 54-81.

[3] Published in *Il Resto del Carlino*, November 1, 1922. Now in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 478-482. Drafts of the manifesto appear in his diary, Entry dated Autumn-Winter 1921, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 511.

government was losing support among the middle classes. The highest point of this labor militancy were the factory occupations of September, 1920. Workers in the engineering industry feared a lock out in the midst of stalled negotiations over wage disputes, and to preempt the owners they occupied the factories, with some syndicalists and anarchists using this moment to hopefully kick-start the long-awaited revolution. This action was alarming enough, but much of the middle and upper classes were further disturbed by Prime Minister Giolitti's decision to ignore the occupations and wait them out. Later when rumors spread that the workers were making weapons in the factories, Giolitti put pressure on the industrialists to concede, and even promised to introduce legislation which would have given unions an actual say in the running of factories. Giolitti ended the occupations, but poisoned the image of the Liberal government.[4]

Occupations of the factories clearly influenced Marinetti's writing that summer. In the manifesto *Il Tattilismo* he wrote "Last summer, at Antignano, where the Amerigo Vespucci . . . road curved along the sea, I invented Tactilism. Atop the factories, occupied by the workers, flew the red flags."[5] In *Gli Indomabili* he noted "Undoubtedly I had *Gli Indomabili* in my blood during my last trip to Upper Egypt. But the idea for this free-word poem struck me when I was dozing one morning in September [1920], a few days after I had finished *L'Alcova d'acciaio* [*The Steel Alcove*] at Antignano. Red banners fluttered over the factories in Livorno occupied by workers."[6]

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[4] Martin Clark, *Modern Italy, 1871-1982* (London: Longman, 1984), 207-208; Paolo Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories: Italy 1920* (London: Pluto Press, 1975; originally published in Italian in 1964).
[5] F.T. Marinetti, "Il Tattilismo," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 136.
[6] F.T. Marinetti, *The Untameables*, translated by Jeremy Parzen (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1994), 63-64. Originally published in 1922, and also found in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 839-922.

Marinetti's *Indomabili* is not a political tract, it is in fact a traditional parable, with little of the "free-word" poetry that Marinetti claimed for it. But for all its stylistic failings, its message was clear enough: a society must be run by its intellectual elite, this elite, the Futurists, and not the socialists, were the authentic revolutionaries that workers should follow, and that in a Futurist society class conflict would be assuaged by diverting workers with variety in their work and with creative opportunities—all themes developed in *Al di là del comunismo* a few months ago.

These themes are somewhat clumsily advanced in this book that traces the adventures of the "Untameables." In one scene the Untameables come across a group of workers who perform repetitive, specialized tasks that lead to the atrophy of the unused parts of the workers' bodies. In this scene, Marinetti has the workers exclaim:

> -Yes, yes, work and speed. We'll take anything, but we're tired of turning the same wheel all the time!
> -I want to diversify my work. Today I'll build a motor, tomorrow a sickle, the day after tomorrow a rifle!
> -I'm tired of running a machine somebody else invented; I want to invent and build a whole new machine!
> -Yes, yes, I want to invent things! We all want our own personal, inspired work. Everybody should create and build whatever he wants. Anything! Death to monotony!
> -Long live imagination![7]

In another scene, 'honest' workers were fomenting a rebellion against their oppressors and turned one of the Futurist-inspired Untameables for leadership. This leader, Mirmofim, had just discovered the book *Futurist Manifestos. Marinetti,* which claimed that a force of will was all that was needed to change destiny, and he would eventually lead the rebellion to victory. In his struggle for leadership of the rebellion he convinced

[7] F.T. Marinetti, *The Untameables*, 177.

the rebels not to follow a 'false' revolutionary who promised change but always failed to act, and to follow him, as "The great Tomorrow is here in our hands!"[8]

Marinetti's belief in art and culture generally as a means to defuse class tensions were more explicit in his diary while he was writing *Indomabili*. During the factory occupations Marinetti wrote

> It was a great error to impose sacrifices and limitations on the people after the Great War. Instead of destroying the pleasures of the night and of *notambulismo* what was needed was the expansion of the fantastic, drunken, open-air, mass festivals in the countryside, [as well as] sporting events on land, the sea and in the air to liberate the people from the incubator of the war. It was absurd to pass from the dissipation of the war to the strangled economy of the post-war era. We could have, with great festivals, pacified the exasperation that today explodes everywhere in a revolutionary manner.[9]

Of course, Marinetti knew that workers could not be diverted from their economic interests simply through art, culture and other pursuits. However, he offered this interesting assessment of propaganda as a force for shaping popular desires:

> Ideas have a personal life that is magnetic, suggestive, and endemic, and win out often against the forces brought together by material wants. An assiduous, tenacious propaganda for an idea, even if in contrast with all the needs of the masses, ends by imposing and propagating that idea. For example, the propaganda for the intervention [in the war] sustained by a minority-[and] the propaganda over the security of victory even after Caporetto.[10]

If a resolute minority could convince a nation to go to war, and then persevere to victory, then, he argued, it could convince workers to renounce socialist revolution and bind themselves to the nation.

The other work composed at Antignano, the manifesto *Tattilismo* (*Tactilism*), was similarly concerned with the current political crisis. In this manifesto, as in *Indomabili*, Marinetti offered Futurist support for the amelioration of workers' economic grievances

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[8] F.T. Marinetti, *The Untameables*, 202-203.
[9] Entry dated September 6, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 494.
[10] Entry dated September, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 495-496.

through revolutionary, but not socialist means. He wrote that the majority of the people "came out of the war with the sole preoccupation of conquering a better standard of living," and the Futurists were "favorable to all the revolutionary assaults that the majority will attempt." But he made clear the Futurists would not accept an 'artificial' leveling of society as socialism promised. The intellectuals, he argued, as society's elite, were its natural leaders and must resist the advance of socialism. Fulfilling this call to arms for intellectuals, Marinetti had introduced *Tattilismo*, a new form of art which emphasized its tactile nature and used materials that summoned the sensations the work called for. In this way Tactilism emphasized human contact over "cold" and "distant" conversation, which was meant to help heal society's social and economic fractures.[11]

One final example of Marinetti's thinking in this period is to be found in his "Manifesto dell'inegualismo," the first draft of which was written in late 1921. Again, it is the concern over socialism and its promise to transform Italy into an artificially egalitarian society, thus robbing intellectuals of their leadership roles, which continued to haunt Marinetti. The manifesto would be published in a more lyrical format in November, 1922. However, in late 1921 Marinetti laid out its salient features. He wrote "The new world, [has] an excessive desire for equality. *Inequality* is the political theory of *Futurism*." As such, Futurism's goal was to "Increase human inequality," and to "Provoke genius." The workers must learn to accept their role as society's laborers, and not put their faith in the promise of socialist egalitarianism. "*Variety*" in the workplace,

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[11] According to Marinetti, when referring to his first tactile table, named *Sudan-Paris*, in "its *Sudan* this table has spongy material, sandpaper, wool, pig's bristle, and wire bristle. (*Crude, greasy, rough, sharp, burning tactile values, that evoke African visions in the mind of the toucher*)." See F.T. Marinetti, "Tactilism," in F.T. Marinetti, *Lets Murder the Moonshine: Selected Writings*, 119. This is a version of *Tattilismo* that Marinetti published in 1924, and from which the translation was done. Marinetti finished writing the manifesto in 1920, as he read it at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre in Paris and the World Exposition of Modern Art in Geneva in January, 1921.

Marinetti wrote, would keep them happy with their jobs. "Every day," he concluded, "[they should have] a mixture [of tasks], at the very least every month."[12]

While challenging the left in his art, Marinetti simultaneously engaged them more directly in the press. In *Al di là del Comunismo* and *Democrazia futurista* Marinetti had glorified anarchic individualism, wherein the revolutionary individual, freed from all social, political, and cultural constraints, would achieve their fullest potential in service to the nation. Modeled on the war-time Arditi, and the Italian soldier in general, anarchic individualism was to allow for a politics that reconciled radicalism and nationalism. However, Marinetti never convincingly argued how one could simultaneously advance individual liberties and national interests. At the very foundation of Futurism, for instance, anarchists, had challenged his contention that the revolutionary individual and national advancement were compatible. When Marinetti published *Al di là del Comunismo* in Mario Carli's *La Testa di Ferro* in August, 1920, it was the anarchists once more who denounced his political views. Marinetti relished the opportunity to attack his opponents on the left, and asked Carli to "Open the newspaper to the most vast polemics, with absolute liberty."[13] Specifically, letters from anarchists were to be printed right next to his responses under the heading "Polemics."[14]

Anarchists protested Marinetti's contention that one needed the nation to fulfill anarchic individualism. The nation was, in fact, a detriment to the individual. One anarchist wrote "The nation suffocates me, and in the International I spread myself out." To which Marinetti responded "In the International I squander myself, meanwhile in the nation I never suffocate." More to the point, he continued,

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[12] Entry dated Fall-Winter, 1921, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 511.
[13] Marinetti to Carli, September 16, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste*, 100.
[14] Marinetti to Carli, October, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste*, 101.

> The nation, being the maximum affective force of the individual, constitutes my own affective force.
> The patria, being the maximum extension of the individual, is my own maximum extension.
> The nation is me.
> I am Italy.[15]

In another letter Marinetti accused the anarchists of being interested simply in mindless destruction. The Futurists, on the other hand, offered a revolutionary patriotism that intended to renew Italy. "One cannot usefully agitate [for change]," he wrote, "except in things one knows about and which one has direct interest in. That which we know the best, and which interests us the most, is our peninsula." Most importantly,

> we believe that we need to destroy everything that suffocates the individual. The Nation [*Patria*] does not suffocate the individual, it develops it; the Nation is in fact the maximum development of the individual. . . .
> One cannot abolish the idea of the nation without escaping into an absenteeist egoism. To say, for example: I am not Italian, I am a citizen of the world, is the same as saying: "I don't give a damn for Italy, for Europe, for Humanity: I care only for myself."
> To negate the Nation is the equivalent of isolating, castrating, diminishing, degrading and killing oneself.[16]

Of course, such eloquent defense of his political views did not gain Marinetti any new converts to his political vision. He remained as politically powerless and isolated as before.

The other target of Marinetti's political attacks in 1920 was the Liberal government. He believed it was too weak in its response to socialist insurgency and labor militancy. Just as importantly, he believed the government failed to defend Italian interests abroad. Specifically, it refused to support D'Annunzio's position in Fiume. In fact, in the fall and winter of 1920 Prime Minister Giolitti was determined to break D'Annunzio's hold on Fiume, as it poisoned relations with Yugoslavia, encouraged civil

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[15] F.T. Marinetti, "Polemiche di anarchismo," in *La Testa di Ferro*, November 7, 1920.
[16] F.T. Marinetti, "Polemiche di anarchismo," in *La Testa di Ferro*, October 10, 1920.

disobedience at home, and was mostly an affront to the authority of the Italian government. Giolitti first undermined D'Annunzio's support within Italy. He convinced Mussolini to trade in his increasingly lukewarm support for a clearly lost cause in exchange for government funding, tacit acceptance of the Fascists' violent anti-socialist policies, and the opportunity for the Fascists to run on the Liberal ticket in the May, 1921 elections. After eliminating Mussolini's as a threat, Giolitti then came to a territorial agreement with Yugoslavia in the Treaty of Rapallo (November, 1920), which gave Italy Trieste, Istria and some islands of Dalmatia, but left Fiume and the bulk of Dalmatia to Yugoslavia. On Christmas Eve, 1920 Italian warships shelled Fiume and forced D'Annunzio to finally relinquish the city.[17]

Marinetti was more consistent in his support for D'Annunzio than Mussolini, as Marinetti still hoped that Fiume could be the launching pad for a Futurist revolution in Italy. Certainly, he believed possessing Fiume was a critical national interest and D'Annunzio had to be supported by the government. When it became clear that Giolitti was negotiating away the possession of Fiume to Yugoslavia, Marinetti publicly protested the government's action. On the anniversary of the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, November 4, 1920, Marinetti harangued a crowd in Rome from the windows of *Il Resto del Carlino* on the treachery of the Giolitti government, and the Nitti government before him, for failing to support D'Annunzio's acquisition of Fiume and Italy's territorial

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[17] Martin Clark, *Modern Italy, 1871-1982* (London: Longman, 1984), 205; Denis Mack Smith, *Italy: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1959), 341-342; Ivone Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1964), 92-100; Richard Bosworth, *Mussolini* (London: Arnold, 2002), 146; Martin Clark, *Mussolini* (London: Pearson Longman, 2005), 45-46. Mussolini had met with Giolitti already in October, and by mid-November was defending Rapallo as the lesser of two evils, civil war being the other. This was the position he maintained into December, though still offering lip service to D'Annunzio's enterprise. See Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini: Il rivoluzionario, 1883-1920* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1965, 1995), 605-606; 637-655; Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, December 6 and 9, 1920, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, 1921, B. 102, f. 209 (Fasci di Combattimento, I° fascicolo).

interests in general. If Italy were ever to achieve greatness, he declared, the 'renouncers' had to go, along with those other enemies of revolutionary Italy: the Pope and the monarchy. At that point, the police broke into the offices of the *Resto del Carlino* and arrested Marinetti, and his companions Carli and Mino Somenzi.[18]

The state considered Marinetti a threat to Giolitti's negotiations to bring an end to the Fiume occupation. He had been placed under surveillance through much of 1920, and the police knew he had arrived in Rome on November 4.[19] On December 21, when it was clear Giolitti would use force on Fiume, Marinetti, Carli, Mario Dessy and Ernesto Daquanno held a spontaneous demonstration denouncing the government and offering sympathy for D'Annunzio. The police quickly arrived, and placed Carli under arrest. The next day Marinetti's house was searched and he was questioned by the police.[20] Documents were discovered in either his, Carli's or Bolzon's possession (it is not clear from the police report) which showed that Marinetti and Carli were still active supporters of D'Annunzio, but, in the case of Marinetti, the most recent document was a September 30, 1919 letter from D'Annunzio to Marinetti and Vecchi thanking them for their service in Fiume. Consequently, Marinetti was told "'<u>For now, you won't be arrested.</u>'"[21] Carli, however, was implicated with a more recent document dated November 23, 1920, that showed he was still in communication with D'Annunzio.[22] Much more damning was the police's discovery that Carli and a group of anarchists intended to explode the central

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[18] F.T. Marinetti, "Il nostro Vittorio Veneto," in *La Testa di Ferro*, November 14, 1920. A reprint of an unidentified newspaper article recounting the event is published in F.T. Marinetti, *Noi Proiettori*, 113, note #2 (Marinetti to Conti, November, 1920).
[19] Prefect of Rome to the Ministry of the Interior, November 5 and November 8, 1920, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, A1, 1920, B. 4, f. Marinetti.
[20] Ernesto Daquanno, *Vecchia guardia* (Rome: Edizioni Ardita, 1934), 163-164.
[21] Marinetti to Benedetta, December 23, 1920, in YMP, Box 1, Folder 22: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa, July 1920-December 1921.
[22] Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, December 27, 1920, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, A5, Agitazione Pro Fiume, B. 5, f. Milano.

power plant in Milan on the evening of December 28. This was meant to trigger the mass uprising which *La Testa di Ferro* had been calling for in the days leading up to the government's intervention in Fiume.[23] As Marinetti had been funding Carli's newspaper, as a means of keeping the Fiume/Futurist connection alive, one can assume that Marinetti knew about the plot, and may have been holding out for one last opportunity to exploit Fiume's potential for revolution.[24]

In the midst of all this activity, however, one gets the sense that Marinetti was coming to realize that he wasn't making any difference and he grew frustrated with his limited political influence. He could protest the Liberal government's policies, but it acted against D'Annunzio anyway, and failed to curb the advance of socialism. He lamented the 'false' promises of socialism, but had no effect on the growth of the movement. His claim that Futurism was a viable political option in Italy was not taken seriously by anyone. In an era when the fear of a socialist revolution had gripped much of Italy, the only group that was doing anything about it were the Fascists. Consequently, at some point in 1921 Marinetti started coming around to the idea that Mussolini may be the only reasonable hope Italy had for arresting socialism. Notwithstanding Mussolini's reactionary nature and lack of commitment to anti-clericalism and republicanism, Mussolini's nationalism and anti-socialism were beyond doubt, and those were the qualities, along with his armed Fascist squads, that Marinetti appreciated were needed at the time. Marinetti chose to subordinate his radical goals to the primary goal of 'saving

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[23] Anna Scarantino, *"L'Impero": Un quotidiano "reazionario-futurista" degli anni venti* (Rome: Bonacci, 1981), 30.

[24] It was difficult getting Carli's release, and Marinetti had to call on the aid of a Deputy Gasparotto of the Chamber of Deputies to procure it. Carli was not let go until the following April. See Prefect of Milan to the Ministry of the Interior, December 28, 1920, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, A5, Agitazione Pro Fiume, B. 5, f. Milano; Scarantino, *L'Impero*, 154, Note #63. Marinetti, according to the Prefect of Rome, asked Gasparotto to "ask for provisional liberty for Mario Carli, arrested last night without any reason."

Italy'. Once the latter was achieved, he could return to the former. Hence, for Marinetti, Mussolini seemed to be the only one that could bring order to Italy.

Italy in these years had descended into a veritable civil war. The *Biennio rosso* of 1919-1920 generated a wide-spread fear among the bourgeoisie of an imminent socialist take-over. As mentioned above, the factory occupations of the summer of 1920, and Giolitti's failure to quash them, frightened many. The Socialist triumph at the local elections a couple of months later further frightened and infuriated much of the middle-classes. At this point, Giolitti recognized his weakness and began harnessing the Fascist squads to quell the socialist offensive. He turned a blind eye to the wave of squadrist violence that engulfed Italy in the winter of 1920-21.

When Mussolini tried to reign in the squads in the summer of 1921, so as to avoid a wide-spread crackdown under the new government of Ivanoe Bonomi, the squads threatened to rebel against him. Thereafter he bound himself ever more tightly to the squads, and unleashed their fury. The middle classes, far from seeing the Fascists as the primary reason for Italy's chaos, saw them as the only ones willing to bring order to the country. The Socialist-led 24 hour general strike of July 21, 1922 further convinced the middle-classes of the malaise their country was suffering. The Socialists had sought to force the formation of a new government that banned Fascist violence, and had positions for reformist Socialists. Not only did the strike fail to attain mass support, but it offered further proof to the middle classes that the country needed an able force to bring order to Italy.[25] As Lyttelton has written, "By perpetuating the climate of civil war, they themselves [the Liberal state] helped to heighten the yearning for authority, order and an

[25] Clark, *Modern Italy*, 213-221; Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919-1929,* 2nd Edition (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987; 1st Edition, 1973), 37-38, 54, 73, 77, 81; Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, 50, Clark, *Mussolini,* 53-54; Bosworth, *Mussolini*, 158-161.

end to perpetual crisis, which was to allow Mussolini to present himself as the saviour of the nation."[26]

The evidence that Marinetti was similarly starting to view Mussolini as the 'savior', and was thus slowly moving back into Mussolini's orbit during these years is limited. One indirect piece of evidence may be Marinetti's association with Carli and Settimelli's monarchic journal *Il Principe*, which appeared from March, 1922 to January, 1923. Gramsci made mention of Marinetti's working on the newspaper in a letter to Trotsky, within the context of Futurism having lost its vibrancy since the end of the war:

> The Italian Futurist movement completely lost its character after the war. Marinetti is not particularly active in it. He has gotten married and prefers to devote his energies to his wife. [In fact, Marinetti and Benedetta were formally married in 1923]. At present, monarchists, communists, republicans and fascists participate in the movement. A political weekly has recently been founded in Milan with the title *Il Principe* which supports or tries to support the same theses that Machiavelli preached for Italy in the Cinquecento, namely that the struggle between the local parties which would result in the collapse of the nation could be stopped by an absolute monarch, a new Cesare Borgia who could decapitate all the leaders of the belligerent parties. Two Futurists edit the magazine – Bruno Corra and Emilio Settimelli. [Actually, it was Carli and Settimelli]. Marinetti, although arrested during the patriotic demonstration in Rome in 1920 for a violent speech against the king, contributes to the weekly too.[27]

Why would an anti-monarchist like Marinetti collaborate with a monarchist journal? Why, in fact, would Carli, just as anti-monarchic as Marinetti, even found such a journal? Moreover, how could *Il Principe* be the bridge between Carli and Marinetti's departure from Fascism (partly based on the monarchist issue) and then their rejoining it?

It is unclear that Marinetti ever published in the journal. The only mention of it in his letters is a promise to Carli to write an article that he had promised for the journal, but

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[26] Lyttelton, *Seizure of Power*, 41.
[27] Gramsci, "A Letter to Trotsky on Futurism [September 8, 1922]," in Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from Cultural Writings*, 52. Gramsci clearly overstated Futurism's loss of character after the war. In fact its political character was fully developed between 1918-1920, and then bifurcated thereafter into left and right wings.

had not gotten around to yet.[28] Scarantino, an authority on Carli and Settimelli's publishing ventures, does not note any articles by Marinetti in the journal.[29] However, it is clear that Marinetti was informed of the journal, and at least promised to write something for it. He may have even contributed some money to the venture, as he had bank-rolled Carli as editor of *Roma futurista* and *La Testa di Ferro*, and *Il Principe* needed the money.[30]

That being said, why the collaboration? It may be that Marinetti, Carli and Settimelli all shared the belief that Italy needed a 'strong man' to bring order to Italy, and that Mussolini was that man. Scarantino argues that Carli and Settimelli came to this conclusion through a variety of steps. They had once sought to fundamentally alter Italian society through Futurism and then through D'Annunzio's Fiume adventure. Both had failed, and thereafter their primary concern became the possibility of a Bolshevik revolution in Italy and the Liberal government's inability to stop it. They determined that Italy needed a strong individual that the country could rally around, could defeat the socialists, quell the rebellious masses and bring order to Italy. This desire for order, combined with the fact that they had always been elitists in their politics led Carli and Settimelli to first support the king at their hoped for 'strong man', and eventually they turned to Mussolini, who had long ago renounced his anti-monarchism, as the more effective option. In 1922 he seemed to have tamed the socialist and communist threat when the Liberal government seemed helpless.[31] Marinetti easily fits into this political evolution. His plans for organized political Futurism had come to naught, as did his

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[28] Marinetti to Carli, September 13, 1922, in F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere futuriste*, 107.
[29] Scarantino, *L'Impero*, 32-48.
[30] Ibid., 37.
[31] Ibid., 34-36, 38, 46; Paolo Buchignani, "Settimelli e Carli dal futurismo al fascismo," in Renzo de Felice, ed., *Futurismo, cultura e politica* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988), 203-05.

plans to work through D'Annunzio. He had abandoned Fascism in May, 1920, but was still concerned with the political situation in Italy and did not trust the Liberal state to deal with it. Most importantly, Marinetti was an elitist like Carli and Settimelli, and refused the leveling promise of socialism.[32] Thus, Marinetti also slowly came to the realization that whatever divided him and Mussolini, it was certainly not enough to resist backing the one person who could be the 'savior' of Italy. Moreover, Carli and Settimelli may have become convinced monarchists, and that is why they started *Il Principe*, but by the time Marinetti promised to write for the journal in mid-September, 1922 the journal had thrown its support behind Mussolini, who was clearly on the road to political power, and would in fact subsidize the journal upon taking office.[33]

Marinetti's elitism and anti-socialism were clearly evident when he drafted his *Gli Indomabili* and the "Manifesto dell'inegualismo*"* in 1920. However, the publication dates of these works are also worth noting as reflective of his political mindset at the time. Marinetti published *Indomabili* in June/July 1922,[34] just before the general strike that summer, and he published the "Manifesto dell'inegualismo" on November 1, 1922, just a couple of days after Mussolini took office. The dating of the first should be read as proof of his continuing concern over socialism, and the latter as his public declaration that he supported the new government and its anti-socialist orientation.

Marinetti recognized that in backing Mussolini he would have to compromise on the radical principles that drove him out of Fascism in 1920. As a political realist, he knew that ideas were only of value if they were put into practice, and this required compromise:

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[32] Lista makes this point quite strongly in his *Arte e politica*, 60-62.
[33] On *Il Principe* finances, see Scarantino, *L'Impero*, 46.
[34] Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliographia*, 67.

> Ideas are rarely realized in their complete form, and they always waste themselves in the process of realization. Valid ideas make an impression when they have a potent verbal expression.
> The external form, verbal or optic, of ideas age and waste themselves.
> The formulas for order or social well-being are always good when they are new, but lose any possibility of useful realization if they are wasted for too long rhetorically, without any attempt at real application.
> The formulas for human order—social well-being—must be embodied in individuals adapted for expressive potentiality.[35]

Marinetti wrote this in September, 1920. Already, he was realizing, that to make any changes one could not simply discuss them and wait for the perfect opportunity to put them into practice. One had to make some compromises to realize an idea, and one had to put their faith in someone "adapted for expressive potentiality." Marinetti had already come to this conclusion in late 1920, and so it is not a complete surprise that Marinetti should make his way back to Mussolini, and in a short time declare Fascism to have attained the 'minimum' program of Futurism.

The compromise Marinetti had determined on by September, 1922 was that he would re-enter Fascism, but on its radical, or *dicianovista* wing. This was a tacit admission that he could not attain the ideals of political Futurism on his own. When he had abandoned Fascism in 1920 he did so because his radical goals were not being met by his alliance with Mussolini. Certainly his nationalist goals were. The Fascists actively resisted socialist insurgency and defended Italian interests abroad. But Mussolini was unreceptive to Marinetti's radical goals: republicanism, anti-clericalism, libertarianism and defense of workers' economic rights. Moreover, Futurism had always envisioned a cultural revolution to advance modern art as part of the broader Futurist political 'revolution'. It was a cultural revolution that would free Italians from the oppression of the *passatista* academies and museums, and unleash a creative potential

[35] Entry dated September, 1920, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 502-3.

that would both embrace and advance modern Italy. To secure the cultural and political revolution, Marinetti insisted on the inclusion of intellectuals and artists in the government. Mussolini, on the other hand, though supportive of the idea of intellectuals taking active political roles, was primarily concerned with seizing political power first; he would only turn to the organization of culture and the mobilization of artists and intellectuals for national purposes once power was attained, and then secured. Thus, what *dicianovismo* meant, specifically in the period 1922-1924, was that Marinetti would be loyal to Mussolini in his quest to impose domestic order in Italy, and to use that order as a springboard for expanding Italian influence abroad. But this loyalty also meant that Marinetti would only go so far in criticizing the regime when it failed to live up to its radical, *dicianovista* heritage. He would publicly dissent with Mussolini's policy of working with both the Vatican and the monarchy, he would defend workers' economic rights, and would protest the desire in some quarters of Fascism to crush all individual liberties in the interest of establishing domestic order. However, this dissent never amounted to a challenge of Mussolini's leadership, and when Mussolini faced the most serious threat to his authority during the Matteotti Crisis, Marinetti backed him unquestioningly, and welcomed the imposition of the dictatorship for the domestic order it would bring to Italy. Under the dictatorship, a period covered in subsequent chapters, Marinetti's radicalism went from simply being restrained and/or muted to being completely abandoned in the interest of national advancement. The only area where Marinetti had any real success in achieving radical, *dicianovista* goals was in the advancement of modern art and the elevation of artists and intellectuals to positions of power to further this cultural policy. However, even here Marinetti was not as radical as

he once was. From 1922 to 1924 he would promote a policy of state aid to advance modern Italian art and continue to publish manifestoes that denounced *passatista* institutions. However, under the dictatorship Marinetti stopped his attacks on traditionalist art and the institutions that promoted it in the interest of advancing *all* Italian art. *Dicianovismo*, in the end, meant a compromise of Marinetti's radical goals in the interest of furthering his nationalist goals within Fascism. A compromise that began with the de-prioritization of his radical goals would eventually lead to their complete abandonment.

However, the extent of this compromise was not apparent to Marinetti in 1922. At that point, the politics of *dicianovismo* seemed a workable way to advance both nationalist and radical goals within Fascism. Futurism and Fascism, in fact, were to be partners in a 'revolution' that encompassed politics, culture and society. In a rather obscure article given on September 25, 1922 Marinetti signaled this was his intent.[36] He declared himself an "ultra-fascist", and that he was "'disposed to open another political parenthesis, supporting the Fasci di Combattimento,'" because "'there were two postulates in the early Fascist political program . . . relating to anticlericalism and republicanism.'"[37] However, he also made clear that he had no interest in challenging Mussolini's political leadership, and declared that the Futurists had effectively renounced politics.[38] One other point he made, which presaged the problems he would consistently encounter within Fascism, was that Italian Futurism was different from Russian Futurism, which had allied itself with Bolshevism. The former, he insisted, was the original

[36] Obscure because both Nazzaro and Lista refer to the interview, the latter actually quotes at length from it, but neither cite the source. See Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 171-172; Lista, *Arte e politica*, 79-81.
[37] Lista, *Arte e politica*, 80.
[38] Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 171; Lista, *Arte e politica*, 79-80.

Futurism, founded on the bases of Italian nationalism, and should not be associated with the political decisions made by Russian Futurists. Far from the leveling collectivism promised by Bolshevism, "'[Italian] Futurism is essentially about inequality [and is] ultra individualist. . . .'"[39] This would not be the last time Marinetti would have to defend Futurism's nationalist bonafides.

On October 29 Mussolini was appointed Prime Minister. After months of Fascist violence, an ever increasing list of occupied cities and towns, and the inability of the Liberals to decide how to deal with Fascism, and Mussolini specifically, the King chose to appoint Mussolini as Prime Minister rather than risk a civil war in putting down a movement that had widespread support in the army, society, business, and government circles.[40] On November 3, 1922 Marinetti signed "An Homage to Mussolini by Poets, Novelists and Painters," published in *Il Popolo d'Italia* (sent by way of Carli and Settimelli's *Il Principe*):

> With the ascendance of the young Italian Benito Mussolini to the Government, the mediocre mentality, that has for many years strangled the principle quality of the race: the excellence of the artistic sprit, has finally been shattered. Fascism, reservoir of idealistic values, is applauded by all those who can legitimately call themselves Italian poets, novelists, and painters. We are secure in having in Mussolini the Man who will justly value the force of our world-dominating Art.[41]

And so began the long tale of Marinetti's voyage within the Fascist regime.

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power*, Chapter 4; Mack Smith, *Italy: A Modern History*, 347-372; Clark, *Mussolini,* 57-61; Bosworth, *Mussolini*, 166-169 and for certainly one of the most detailed treatments: Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista: I. La conquista del potere, 1921-1925* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966), Chapter 4.

[41] F.T. Marinetti, et al., "Un omaggio a Mussolini di poeti, romanzieri e pittori," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, November 3, 1922. The other signatories included Giuseppe Brunati, Mario Carli, Carlo Carrà, Bruno Corra, Ernesto Daquanno, Marco Dessy, Achille Funi, Arnaldo Ginna, Salvator Gotta, Armando Mazza, Settimelli, Mario Sironi, Mino Somenzi, and Volt.

Marinetti: *Dicianovista*, 1922-1924

As soon as Mussolini took office Marinetti began the long and tortuous path to get back into the good graces of the man from whom he had so publicly split over two years before. In these early years of Mussolini's government Marinetti had a number of goals that he pursued concurrently. He sought to first and foremost re-connect with Mussolini, and be accepted as a viable partner in the making of Fascist Italy, possibly having Futurism recognized as the official state art. Secondly, he promoted the politics of *dicianovismo* and sought to keep alive Fascism's early radical, and Futurist-inspired, heritage. In order to do this Marinetti was relentless in propagating the idea that 'radical' Futurism was Fascism's precursor, and that Mussolini was himself a Futurist. However, the dangers of Marinetti portraying himself as the loyal but radical Fascist would be readily apparent in this period, and forecast the compromises Marinetti would have to continually make to advance his nationalist goals through Fascism. He had already compromised his radicalism to ally with Mussolini in the first place. During the next two years Marinetti's demands that Mussolini reclaim his radical heritage (anti-clericalism, republicanism, defense of workers' economic rights, libertarianism) did not amount to more than rhetoric, and when Mussolini faced real danger during the Matteotti Crisis, Marinetti muted his criticism completely. It was this loyalty, and muted radicalism, which would ultimately allow Marinetti to rise through the Fascist ranks under the dictatorship.

The public declaration of loyalty to Mussolini printed in the *Popolo d'Italia* (quoted above) was Marinetti's first act in reaching out to Mussolini and showing his support for the new regime. The gesture must have been well received, as Marinetti was

able to tell Pratella a few days later that he would consult with Mussolini over a problem Pratella was having with a certain Sonzogno. Marinetti counseled Pratella that "With regards to Sonzogno, you are perfectly right to complain about how to proceed, however I absolutely advise against a court case, [which is] slow, annoying, [and] results in little or nothing, ecc. ecc. I'll talk to Mussolini at the first occasion."[42] This was hardly an empty boast, as Marinetti would repeatedly meet with Mussolini in the future seeking aid for his friends.

Within a couple of weeks Marinetti was revving up the Futurist/Fascist propaganda machine. In early December he was in Lyons and he took the opportunity to promote his movement and Fascism as well. He wrote his wife Benedetta that "I talked about Futurism and of the new Italy with enthusiasm."[43] This was not a meaningless gesture. An internationally renowned artist praising the new, and still quite tenuous, Prime Minister of Italy must have been well appreciated. Mussolini was anxious to make his mark on the international stage, and to show Italians back home that Italy would be treated as an equal by the Great Powers. These were his goals in his first international congresses: the mid-November conference in Lausanne (on the status of Turkey), and the early December London conference on German reparations.[44] In December Marinetti spent time in both Paris and Prague, and followed these international trips up with a visit to Rome where he "had a long talk with Mussolini."[45] This was likely the first of many

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[42] Marinetti to Pratella, November 6, 1922, in F.T. Marinetti, *Lettere ruggenti*, 73.
[43] Marinetti to Benedetta, December 1, 1922, in YMP, Box 2, Folder 30: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa, 1922, November-December.
[44] Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power*, 197-200; De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista, I*, 560-561; H. James Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918-1940* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 22-23.
[45] Marinetti to Benedetta, January 19, 1923, in YMP, Box 2, Folder 31: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa, 1923, January-April.

sessions in which Marinetti acted as an informal emissary for Fascism abroad, and would then report on his travels and his reception in these nations.

Having re-established his relations with Mussolini, Marinetti immediately exploited his access to the Prime Minister to put into practice a key, and not very controversial, element of *dicianovismo*: a much closer relationship between the state and the nation's artists and intellectuals in order to both promote modern art and to advance national strength and unity. Both Marinetti and Mussolini epitomized the concept of the artist/intellectual working on behalf of the nation, and both had lamented those artists who were 'neutralists' during the war. Since 1919 Marinetti had called for the closer link between the state and culture, whether it was in the form of direct artist participation in governing technical councils, or in expanded state subsidization of the arts, specifically modern Italian arts. In this way Italian art would be liberated from the stifling traditionalism of the academies and schools, and would finally receive the recognition it deserved at national exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale. At both the 1920 and 1922 Venice Biennales Futurism and other modern Italian artists had been excluded, though foreign modern art had been showcased. In 1920 the Director of the Biennale, Vittorio Pica, had included Matisse and the French Post-Impressionists, in 1922 it was Modigliani, Bonnard, Denis and Bernard.[46] Marinetti's reaction to Pica's decisions was straight-forward: the Biennale was not an independent entity, it received state funding, and as such had an obligation to promote Italian art as part of a broader goal of promoting national pride and international recognition for Italy's achievements.[47] Just after

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[46] Bernard Smith, *Modernism's History: A Study in Twentieth-Century Art and Ideas* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1998), 208.

[47] F.T. Marinetti, "Vittorio Pica è un idiota," in *Roma futurista*, March 14, 1920. This article was an endorsement of the original protest launched by Margherita Sarfatti against Pica in her, "L'avanguardia

Mussolini took power Marinetti presented to him a draft of *I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani* (*Artistic Rights Proposed by the Italian Futurists*), which sought to put these ideas into practice.[48]

The *Diritti artistici* collectively requested a profound increase in state involvement in the arts in order to develop a national culture by specifically protecting and sponsoring Italian artists, and avant-garde artists in particular. This state aid was to operate in the domestic and international arena. Many of the points reflected long held Futurist beliefs. For instance, the first point requested the Italianization of all hotels, effectively removing all foreign languages in the hotels and thus propagating the Italian language. This echoed Marinetti's pre-war concern that Italy was far too dependent on the tourist trade and should instead develop its industrial economy.[49] Moreover, the *Diritti artistici* demanded an end to foreign influence in Italian architecture, thus allowing for the development of a national architecture.[50]

Another request was for the state to mandate the presence of Italian artists in all exhibitions in Italy which were supported by the national or local governments. The state was to also enforce the presence of Italian artists in private exhibits. Marinetti, never forgetting the Futurists' inability to get into the Biennales, noted that "At the Venice Biennale foreign avant-gardists and Futurists were invited (Archipenko, Kokoscka,

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artistica italiana e gli inviti alle Biennali di Venezia," in *Il Popolo d'Italia,* February 29, 1920. Also see Philip V. Cannistraro and Brian R. Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1993), 223.

[48] The draft can be found in ACS, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 1923, B. 710, f. 3.11.313. Marinetti, Carli, Settimelli, Cangiullo, Depero, Marchi, Balla, Janelli, Nicastro, and Carrozza were all mentioned as contributors, with Marinetti and Prampolini providing the most input. An English translation has recently become available in F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, edited by Günter Berghaus, translated by Doug Thompson (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 357-363.

[49] F.T. Marinetti et al., "[I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani]," in ACS, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 1923, B. 710, f. 3.11.313. Proposed by Marinetti, Carli, Settimelli, Cangiullo and Depero.

[50] Ibid. Proposed by Marchi.

Campendonk) but never Italian Futurists (creators of all the Futurisms). We must eradicate this ignoble and systematic anti-Italianità." Later in the *Diritti artistici* this demand for access was made more specific, calling for proportional representation in which "the Italian avant-garde must be invited to participate with a proportional representation in all national, local and private artistic manifestations and charges."[51]

To help develop Italian artists at home, the *Diritti artistici* requested, consistent with past Futurist declarations, the abolition of all academies, institutes of art and professional schools on the grounds that the current methods of teaching "do not correspond to the aesthetic needs of the evolution of art," and that the current teachers "are neither competent technicians nor artists." They were to be replaced by free institutes of artistic technique, which would teach technique and thus produce better teachers, as well as institutes of aesthetic experience whose job would be to increase popular appreciation for the arts.[52] There were also to be free art competitions, restricted to those under 25 years of age, which would be judged by popular referendum. In this way a new crop of Italian artists could be discovered without being stifled by the artistic bureaucracy.[53]

In order to propagate the value of Italian art abroad, the *Diritti artistici* called for institutes of artistic propaganda which would act as centers of propaganda for Italian art overseas, and would also protect the economic and artistic interests of Italians. Young artists would staff these centers in the major artistic locales of the world, and would spread the word on the "innovative Italian genius" through conferences, concerts, expositions, and publications. To further protect Italian artists' rights overseas, the *Diritti*

[51] Ibid. Proposed by Marinetti, Janelli, Nicastro, Carrozza.
[52] Ibid. Proposed by Prampolini.
[53] Ibid. Proposed by Balla.

artistici called for an international consortium for the defense of the artistic and economic interests of avant-garde artists. This consortium would achieve its goals through "the centralization of the best artistic institutions of the avant-garde . . . [for] solidarity, defense and artistic and economic propaganda."[54]

The *Diritti artistici* also called for some basic economic help from the government such as state recognition of the legal rights of authors and artists in copyright issues, a 75% reduction in all costs for shipping art work and for artists' travel expenses, the abolition of international tariffs on the importation and exportation of modern art, and requested that railroad and shipping companies should provide insurance and letters of exchange for artwork, otherwise poor artists wouldn't have protection for their work.[55]

Another of Marinetti's prominent ideas from 1919 re-surfaced in the *Diritti artistici* in the form of consultative, technical councils. Originally these were meant to be a replacement for parliament with technocrats from all professions. Now, Marinetti, with Prampolini's help, envisioned them as being formed and elected from artists, with a proportional representation for the avant-garde, with the role of protecting the artists' rights in their dealings with the state, with private interests and with other artists.[56]

Perhaps the most important recommendation was the demand for institutes of artistic credit. "Just as banks of credit are opened for industry and commerce," the *Diritti artistici* explained, "so should similar institutions be created that subsidize artistic manifestations or institutes of industrial art or advance money to artists for their work, their travel, for instruction or for propaganda." These could be either privately or state funded. If the state funded these, then money could be acquired through a tax on war

[54] Ibid. Proposed by Prampolini.
[55] Ibid. Proposed by Prampolini.
[56] Ibid. Proposed by Marinetti and Prampolini.

profits, estates or through a national subscription. The institute could accept deposits of money or art from which it would offer credit and use the materials on hand for promoting artistic initiatives.[57]

The draft that was shown to Mussolini was a simple wish list to benefit modern Italian arts and artists. The underlying theme, however, was a drastic restructuring of the relationship between the state and culture. The former was to become much more involved in the latter as a means of sponsoring, protecting, and propagating modern Italian art. Where in the 19th century modern art freed itself from the strictures of the state and church in the 'art for art's sake' movement, made possible through the wealth of bourgeois benefactors, Marinetti was now seeking a reunion of the state and national culture to free the latter from the culture entrepreneurs who refused to recognize the value of modern Italian art.[58]

Marinetti justified this close relationship between the state and culture in Italy by arguing that just as Futurism was a revolutionary art movement, Fascism was a revolutionary political movement (with roots in political Futurism), and the two could work together for the advancement of a modern Italy. This was the point Marinetti made explicit in a second version of the *Diritti artistici* which he circulated amongst a number of Futurists for their commentary. However, many Futurists objected to Marinetti's claim that Fascism was a radical movement, and believed that radical, *dicianovista* Fascists, as Marinetti claimed to be, were an insignificant part of a more broadly reactionary movement.

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[57] Ibid. Proposed by Marinetti, Prampolini, Settimelli, and Carli.
[58] Peter Gay explores the 'art for art's sake' movement and its relationship to bourgeois consumers and private gallery owners in Part One of his *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

Between the draft Marinetti presented to Mussolini, and the draft he then circulated to a wider group of Futurists prior to publication, Marinetti added significantly to the original. The original draft did not have any preliminary commentary, but the later one started with what would become the oft-repeated lines that "Vittorio Veneto and the advent of Fascism to power constitute the realization of the minimum Futurist program, launched (with a maximum program not yet fulfilled) 14 years ago by a group of audacious youth that put themselves in opposition to the entire Nation, poisoned by senility and by a mediocrity-producing fear of foreigners.[59] Clearly Marinetti had decided in late 1922 and early 1923 that Futurism's best bet in the new Fascist world was to posit itself as Fascism's precursor, and that Futurism would work to achieve its 'maximum' program within Fascism. Just as in the September, 1922 interview, he made clear the distinction between Italian and Russian/Bolshevist Futurism, and that "Futurism is a movement that is straight-forwardly artistic and ideological. It intervenes in political struggles only in the hours of grave danger for the Nation."[60] Marinetti was being somewhat disingenuous here. In claiming to abandon politics Marinetti hoped to assure Mussolini he was not a political rival. However, in seeking a firmer union between the state and culture Marinetti was making a pronounced effort to shape the politics of Fascism.

The most resistant to Marinetti's politics of *dicianovismo* were the left-wing Futurists. Two such Futurists from Turin were Frassinelli and Rampa Rossi, and their

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[59] F.T Marinetti et al., "I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani, Manifesto al Governo fascista," in *Fillia e l'avanguardia futurista negli anni del fascismo*, edited by Silvia Evangelisti (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1986), 308. The original is located in YMP, Box 23, Folder 1274 and Box 54, Folder 2001. The marginalia appears in the version located in Box 54, Folder 2001. Analyses of the draft are also available in Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 193-196 and Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 166-167.

[60] F.T Marinetti et al., "I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani, Manifesto al Governo fascista," in *Fillia e l'avanguardia futurista negli anni del fascismo*, edited by Silvia Evangelisti, 308.

comments on the *Diritti artistici* highlighted dissenting Futurist views on Fascism. In response to Marinetti's claim that Futurism was no longer an opposition political movement, they noted sarcastically that Futurism now had to "ask" for things in their manifestos, and not demand them. After a section in which Marinetti sought to highlight the Futurists' interventionist past and their work with Mussolini from 1914 to 1919, and the fact that they had created the first Arditi associations, Rampa Rossi pointed out that the Futurists had also abandoned the Arditi when they became too reactionary. Where Marinetti sought to paint Mussolini as a Futurist, declaring that the latter had once told journalists that "'We are a young people that wants to and must create, and refuses to be a syndicate of hoteliers and museum guardians,'" Rampa Rossi pointed out that Mussolini had then demanded that he wanted obligatory religious education, exaltation of the monarchy, suppression of workers' organizations and chambers of labor, and the suppression of the free press. Where Marinetti sought to highlight a recent speech Mussolini gave that sounded typically Futurist, as he spoke of his government as one of speed, in that it "'abbreviates everything that signifies stagnation in our national life,'" Rampa Rossi pointed out that what he meant was the abolition of inquiries on war profits. Moreover, Rampa Rossi pointed out that "we've seen what the Fascists are good for: to be police, no more no less. Mussolini himself has understood that, and has made them into a police corps. We Futurists have always combated *carabinierismo* [a policeman's mentality]. Fascism has created a policeman's mentality." Where Marinetti argued that "With Mussolini Fascism has rejuvenated Italy. We wait for Him to help us in the renewal of the artistic environment, where inauspicious [*nefaste*] men and things remain. The political revolution must sustain the artistic revolution-that is, Futurism and all the

avant-gardes," Rampa Rossi added "Let's stop calling the coming of Fascism a revolution. It has revolutionized none of the old institutions!," and Frassinelli pointed out that "Fascism learned much from the socialist experiences, and thus was not original in its revolutionary aspects, if it wants to call itself that."[61] In reference to a new proposal that called for all national and local festivals to be organized by Italian avant-garde artists "who have already proven incontestably their innovative genius, [which is] the fount of that optimism that is indispensable to the health of the Patria," Rampa Rossi added "I can't conceive a state art. As to processions for 'national festivals' it's better to let the *passatisi* organize them. Aren't we against commemorative patriotism?," to which Frassinelli added "Good!"[62]

Of course, none of this mattered. The draft that Mussolini originally saw, along with the additions referred to above that made the case for Futurism as Fascism's precursor and for Mussolini as being a Futurist who would help in the revolution of the art world, was what was published in Carli's and Settimelli's new journal *L'Impero* (*The Empire*) in March, 1923.[63] Marinetti had decided to throw in his lot with Mussolini, and as such he printed the *Diritti artistici* in a journal that was widely considered to be Mussolini's mouthpiece, especially as it was being funded by him, and was edited by two intransigent (or radical) Fascists, and onetime Futurists.[64] Carli and Settimelli were themselves also committed to making the case of Futurism as Fascism's precursor, as well as to defend the spirit of *dicianovismo* within Fascism. In the inaugural edition of

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[61] Ibid., 308-309.
[62] Ibid., 309.
[63] F.T. Marinetti et al., "I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani, Manifesto al Governo fascista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 489-495. The manifesto was published in the inaugural issue of *L'Impero* on March 11, 1923. See De Maria, "Nota ai testi," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, CXIII; F.T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, 363.
[64] Scarantino, *L'Impero*, 49-50, 53.

L'Impero, in a "*Saluto ai Maestri*" ("Salute to Our Teachers") their dedication was "To B. Mussolini, the man destined to command Imperial Italy; to E. Corradini, the Clairvoyant and Announcer of Imperial Italy; to F.T. Marinetti, the great artist that imposed on the world the imperialism of the Italian renewing genius."[65]

There are three known versions of the *Diritti artistici*: the draft to Mussolini in late 1922, the draft circulated to Marinetti's colleagues in early 1923, and the published version of March 1923. As mentioned earlier, the draft to Mussolini did not contain the preamble about Futurism being Fascism's precursor. However, other differences appeared in the second and final version of the *Diritti artistici*. The second version not only included the preamble, but the order of proposals were changed. Now, the forced entrance of Italian artists to all exhibits in Italy was number one, and the Institute of Artistic Credit was number two. Previously, in the Mussolini draft, these had been numbered five and six, respectively. Clearly, Marinetti had decided that these two issues were paramount and needed to be addressed by the state. Secondly, many more artists had decided to sign their names to particular proposals in between the first and second version, and between the second and third version. In the second version the new supporters included Russolo, Giuseppe Steiner, Somenzi, Azari, and Buzzi. In the third version the number of artists attached to various proposals expanded even further. Marinetti was trying to show that he was the leader of a vast movement, and needed to be listened to. Consequently, the list of co-signers was long, but it was also perforce quite diverse. Thus, not only were committed Futurist-Fascists like Carli and Settimelli on the list from the beginning, but Marinetti then augmented that group with Volt, Steiner, and

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[65] Carli and Settimelli, "Saluto ai Maestri," in *L'Impero*, March 11, 1923, reprinted in Scarantino, *L'Impero*, 61.

Depero. However, Marinetti also included the various leftist Futurists Illari, Soggetti, and even the very recently critical Frassinelli and Rampa Rossi. Marinetti's ability to keep such a diverse group under his leadership could only last so long, and would crumble as Marinetti became an ever more public supporter of Mussolini.

Throughout the *Diritti artistici*, Marinetti was careful to speak of the need for the state to preserve and help expand the reach of modern Italian art, and the avant-garde in particular. That Futurism was to primarily benefit from this arrangement was not made explicit. However, in Marinetti's papers at Yale, in addition to various drafts of the *Diritti artistici*, there exists a manuscript which makes Marinetti's parochial interests more clear. In a manuscript entitled "Centrale futurisa italiana di creazione e di espansione" ("Italian Futurist Center for Creation and Expansion") Marinetti repeated much of the ideas found in the *Diritti artistici*, but made them more specific to Futurism. As the piece is unpublished, I reprint it below:

> The Italian Futurist movement has already influenced the worldwide artistic evolution and revolution in all camps.
> Foreign Futurisms exist:
> Russian (state art)-German-French-American-…
> These Futurisms have different names: but all are recognizable as more or less categorically derived from Italian Futurism: Constructivism-Expressionism-Zenitismo-Ultraism-Dadaism-Surrealism etc…
> In nearly all the European nations there exists laboratories, schools, academies, centers of <u>avant-garde</u> culture . . . all supported by their governments.
>
> What is needed is:
> 1) to support these artists that, only in Italy, have heroically fought until now without any help, etc.
> 2) to impede the dispersion of their artwork, of all their completed work
> 3) to claim in an unequivocal and tangible way in front of the whole world that for Italy, through the Futurist movement, there awaits the merit of having once again guided the artistic revolution in all camps.
>
> Thus the Italian Futurists ask the Fascist government (that having realized the greatest political revolution [which] has brought itself to the head and against the

> current of social evolution in all the world)…to valorize in a tangible way the Italian artistic revolution (Futurism) by financing an adequate and thus worthy and great:
> Italian Futurist Center
> Of Creation and Expansion
> With headquarters in Rome and tied to the centers of avant-garde culture in all the world, which would:
> 1) constitute a concentration of Futurist energies, intensification, coordination etc
> 2) . . . finance and support the exportation of laboratories, studios, small industries, publishing works etc. that already exist
> 3) . . . [variegate] the editions of propaganda and documentation in a way that there unequivocally results the absolute primacy of Italy…
> Therefore the under signed, leader and exponents of the Italian Futurist Movement-reserve to themselves [the opportunity] to present a more detailed etc…"[66]

The dating of the *Centrale futurista* manuscript cannot be ascertained, however, as many of its points parallel those found in the *Diritti artistici*, it was probably written at the same time. Thus, one can reasonably conclude that Marinetti's general language in the *Diritti artistici* was ultimately a means for seeking state intervention in the cultural sphere for the primary benefit of Futurism.

Marinetti believed the *Diritti artistici* were the beginning of a fruitful relationship between himself and the Duce. In fact, Mussolini wrote Marinetti that "I cordially approve your idea for the formation of a Discount Bank specifically for artists."[67] An extended version of this letter was appended to the beginning of the third version of the *Diritti artistici*, which also included "I believe that you will know how to surmount the eventual obstacles of the usual misoneists. In every way this letter can serve as your viaticum."[68]

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[66] F.T. Marinetti, "[Centrale futurista italiana di creazione e di espansione]," in YMP, Box 19, Folder 1216: Centrale futurista italiana di creazione e di espansione.
[67] Mussolini to Marinetti, March 2, 1923, in YMP, Box 14, Folder 783: Mussolini, Benito.
[68] F.T. Marinetti et al., "I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani, Manifesto al Governo fascista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 489.

However, Marinetti's *dicianovismo* was not simply a desire for a stronger link between the state and culture. It involved radical political changes as well, specifically in the realm of the state's relationship with the Pope and King. In spite of his very recent claim that Futurism would not interfere in politics, Marinetti had two immediate reasons for breaking that promise in early 1923. First, Mussolini seemed to be moving Fascism in a conservative reaction. In March, 1923 the Fascist Party absorbed the Nationalist Party, which shared Fascism's hatred for socialism, liberalism, parliament and democracy, but, to Marinetti's chagrin, supported the monarchy and the Papacy. Mussolini was courting the establishment (the army, Church, and monarchy) to solidify his hold on power, and Marinetti aimed to blunt the influence of such *passatista* forces within Fascism.[69] Secondly, this fusion with the Nationalists occurred around the time of the schism between the leftist Futurists and Marinetti over the latter's support for Mussolini. Thus, in order to maintain the allegiance of the left-wing Futurists Marinetti had to immediately respond to the fusion with the Nationalists.

On April 25, 1923 Marinetti, Carli and Settimelli published "L'impero Italiano" ("The Italian Empire") in *L'Impero*.[70] It was dedicated to "Benito Mussolini-Leader of the New Italy," but was in fact a public message to Mussolini to not allow Fascism to develop in a conservative direction. The manifesto expressed the Futurists' support for a strong state in the interest of both national unity and the conquest of a new Italian empire, and that individual liberties had to be subsumed to the needs of the nation. However, the Futurists emphasized that the state's power could not be used to simply recreate the old Roman Empire. This was a not so veiled reference to the conservative politics of the

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[69] Alexander De Grand, *Italian Fascism: Its Origins and Development* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 45-49; Clark, *Mussolini*, 70.
[70] F.T. Marinetti et al., "L'Impero Italiano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 495-498.

Nationalists. Marinetti argued that "Our ancient greatness has been obscured by the glow of the Carso! We are sons of the Isonzo, the Piave, of Vittorio Veneto and of four years of Fascism. . . ."[71] The manifesto explicitly attacked the Monarchy and the Church. Marinetti made clear that he had not changed his old anti-monarchist and anti-clerical views, and expected Mussolini to remember this aspect of *Fascismo dicianovista*. The manifesto declared that the Futurists were "Hostile to a cowardly, anti-artistic, anti-literary, socialistic and passatista monarchy. . . ."[72] Moreover, he wrote that the Futurists wanted an "Italian empire [that] will be anti-socialist, anti-clerical, anti-traditional, with all liberties and all progress in the context of an absolute patriotism."[73]

The manifesto was a bold move. It demanded that Fascism adhere to its radical heritage at a time when Mussolini was trying to maintain an aura of respectability, but was also trying to keep his militant *squadristi* in line, who demanded a more thorough-going revolution of Italian society and government.[74] Marinetti recognized now was the time to influence the direction of Fascism, as all interested parties sought a say in the new government. But, Marinetti was never as much of a threat to Mussolini as the establishment or the *squadristi*. There is no record that he mounted any significant opposition to Mussolini's hold on power other than the public chastisement in this most recent manifesto. However, even in this manifesto he left enough wiggle room to signal that, though critical, he would remain loyal. For instance, although he denounced the monarchy, he qualified it by writing it in such a way that he'd be amenable to it if it proved itself to be a supporter of the arts, anti-socialist and for imperial expansion.

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[71] F.T. Marinetti et al., "L'Impero Italiano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 496-497.
[72] Ibid., 497.
[73] Ibid.
[74] De Grand, *Italian Fascism*, 43-44.

Moreover, he made clear that he was also hostile to an "an anti-war, humanitarian, renunciating and mediocre republic. . . ."[75] Additionally, Marinetti made clear that he supported Mussolini's trend toward authoritarian government. The manifesto called for liberties to be subsumed to the national interest, and specifically declared that the "right of criticism, control, [and] opposition [will be] negated only for the anti-patriots. – The Italian empire in the hands of the best Italians. These will govern without Parliament, with a Technical Council made up of young people,"—a reference to his political reforms enunciated since the war.[76] A few weeks later, on July 21, Mussolini forced the passage of the Acerbo Law in parliament, mandating that whatever party garnered 25% of the popular vote was entitled to a majority of the seats in parliament.[77] This was a blatantly undemocratic move meant to further solidify Mussolini's power. There is no record that Marinetti was critical of this electoral reform. In fact, Marinetti made a point to vote in the first election held under this law, in spite of his hectic travel schedule.[78] Whatever problems Marinetti had with Mussolini, Mussolini was his only option for having any political influence whatsoever. He wouldn't side with the Liberals against Mussolini, as the former had failed to provide a strong national government in the first place, and the *squadristi* could only be counted on to destroy the old Italy, not to build a new one.

Consequently, Marinetti intensified his public support of Mussolini, depicting Futurism as the precursor to Fascism, and downplaying whatever differences existed between himself and Mussolini. Along the way he engaged in a fair amount of historical revisionism. In September, he published a "Ritratto" ("Portrait") of Benito Mussolini in

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[75] F.T. Marinetti et al., "L'Impero Italiano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 497.
[76] Ibid.
[77] De Grand, *Italian Fascism*, 45-46.
[78] Marinetti to Benedetta, April 4, 1924, in YMP, Box 3, Folder 36: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1924, April-December.

Italia letteraria.[79] Gone were Marinetti's one-time concerns over Mussolini's reactionary temperament. Now Mussolini was described as having a "rich, powerful and quick temperament." He was not an "ideologue" because then he would be chained to "weak ideas" and "dead books," but "a socialist and an internationalist, but only in theory. Revolutionary yes, but never a pacifist. In the end, he had to obey his special patriotism. . . ." As these were all such obviously Futurist qualities, "we Futurists," he concluded, "the diviners and long time preparers of today's great Italy, are honored to salute the marvelous Futurist temperament of the not-yet-forty-year old President of the Council of Ministers."[80]

A similar, though more extensive and revisionist effort was published as a preface to Antonio Beltramelli's *L'Uomo Nuovo (Benito Mussolini)*.[81] In the first section, "Benito Mussolini," the entire preface of the *Diritti artistici* was reprinted, reiterating Futurism's long history of contributing to the national advancement of Italy and how Fascism was the embodiment of its 'minimum' program. The following section, "Come nacque il Fascismo" ("How Fascism was Born") was a reprint of the early section of the *Manifesto dell'inegualismo* and highlighted how Fascism was born after Vittorio Veneto, when a "strong minority," like the interventionists of 1914-1915, which included the Futurists, fought to preserve victory and the Army. Thereafter Marinetti recounted how the *Fasci di combattimento*, with the Futurists as part of them, combated the socialists and the Nitti government that sought to strip Italy of the fruits of its victory, how the Futurists were with D'Annunzio in Fiume, and how the Futurists ran on the Fascist ticket

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[79] F.T. Marinetti, "Benito Mussolini," in *Italia letteraria*, Anno 1, #3 (September, 1923); found in GMP, Box 18, Folder 4.
[80] Ibid.
[81] F.T. Marinetti, "*Appendice*," in Antonio Beltramelli, *L'Uomo Nuovo*, 2nd edition (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1926; first edition, 1923), III-XII.

in November, 1919 and how Mussolini and Marinetti were arrested after those elections for plotting against the state. There was no mention of Marinetti's critical disagreement with Mussolini throughout 1919, or that D'Annunzio had acted as the revolutionary alternative to the reactionary Mussolini, or that Mussolini had left his co-conspirators in prison for three weeks after being released. Marinetti was frank about having left the Fascists in May, 1920, "not being able to impose on the Fascist majority their [the Futurists'] antimonarchical and anticlerical tendencies." However, he was quick to point out that many Futurists stayed within the Fascist Party, even after his resignation, such as Balbo, Bottai, Bolzon, Steiner, Masnata, and Castelli.[82]

In the final section, entitled "La battaglia del 15 aprile 1919" ("The Battle of April 15, 1919"), Marinetti provided the only truly original part of the article. As part of his quest to make Futurism the precursor of Fascism, he narrated the story of the Fascist/Futurist/Arditi attack on the socialist columns and the burning of their newspaper *Avanti!*. This is likely the first publication of his narrative of this event, one that he would republish repeatedly over the next two decades.[83] Certainly, he consulted his diaries about the sequence of events, as they match up very closely. However, two major differences appear, as Marinetti played down the less-convenient parts of his recollection. As discussed in the previous chapter, Marinetti's diary entry showed that he had misgivings amount the level of violence used against the socialists during the assault. This disappeared in his narrative in Beltramelli's volume. The diary entry recounting Marinetti defending a lone socialist from the Arditi was replaced with one in which he chastised and beat the socialist for yelling "Viva Lenin!," to whom, Marinetti recounted,

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[82] F.T. Marinetti, "*Appendice*," in Antonio Beltramelli, *L'Uomo Nuovo*, VIII.
[83] See the previous chapter for the citations.

he yelled "'At least yell viva Serrati [the Italian Socialist and editor of *Avanti!*]!'"[84] Moreover, in the diary Marinetti was not explicit about his participation in the burning of *Avanti!*, and in fact in *L'Ardito* on August 1, 1920 had actually denied any involvement, saying it was purely Vecchi's doing.[85] Now he wrote as if he had been there and was fully involved, and that General Caviglia, who had restored order in Milan after the event, had congratulated him and Vecchi for their "decisive" action.[86]

This somewhat delicate process of establishing Futurism as Fascism's radical precursor, which legitimated radical, though loyal, criticism of Fascism's reactionary trajectory in the interest of its *dicianovista* heritage, was given a much fuller treatment in Marinetti's *Futurismo e Fascismo* (*Futurism and Fascism*) published in March, 1924.[87] Just as *Democrazia futurista* was a statement of Marinetti's political thinking in 1919, *Futurismo e Fascismo* was a similar statement of just how Marinetti's political thinking had evolved in the interim. *Democrazia futurista* was an uncompromising statement of Marinetti's politics that sought a workable blend of radicalism and nationalism, and envisioned wholesale social and political reforms that would greatly expand individual liberties and quality of life, and assumed national unity would not suffer as patriotic Italians would voluntarily subsume their individual liberties for the national good. This political view justified the abandonment of reactionary Fascism in 1920. But now, after four years of political paralysis, fears of socialist insurgency, Liberal ineptitude, and the proof that Fascism could bring the order that Italy needed, Marinetti had resigned himself to trying to preserve some of Fascism's original, Futurist-inspired radicalism from within

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[84] F.T. Marinetti, "*Appendice*," in Antonio Beltramelli, *L'Uomo Nuovo*, X.
[85] See Alberto Bertoni, "Note # 22," in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 595.
[86] F.T. Marinetti, "*Appendice*," in Antonio Beltramelli, *L'Uomo Nuovo*, XI.
[87] F.T. Marinetti, *Futurismo e Fascismo* (Foligno: Franco Campitelli, 1924); reprinted in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*.

the movement, and was willing to make the appropriate compromises. Thus, the point to publishing *Futurismo e Fascismo* was to show the connection between the two movements, use it to legitimate pushing a radical agenda, and to specifically define what that agenda was. The book, incidentally, was dedicated "Al mio caro e grande amico Benito Mussolini."

The detailed goals of the book were laid out in the "Prefazione." It was one of the only original pieces written for the book, and sought to establish how the reader was to interpret the rest of the book, which was mostly a republication of older articles. He laid out Futurism's basic principles of nationalism, anti-*passatismo*, republicanism, anti-clericalism, and the movement's 'revolutionary' influence in the development of modern art, all leading up to the declaration that Fascism was the realization of the Futurist 'minimum' program, and that Futurism and Fascism envisioned a revolution that was above all nationalist, and should not be associated with Bolshevism.[88] To prove that Fascism was the culmination of the radical and nationalist politics pursued by Futurism, Marinetti sketched out a history of political Futurism from pre-war irredentism, through the Great War, leading up to their inclusion in the foundation of the *Fasci di combattimento*. To be abundantly clear, Marinetti declared that "This book presents to the reader Futurism and Fascism, the influence of the first on the second, the political alliance of the two movements and the differences that distinguish them."[89] With this alliance of the two movements, Marinetti intended that Fascism would create a new Italy. As he had written often before, the Italian had to be transformed into a "cittadino eroico" (the heroic citizen), a new man shorn of all softness.

[88] F.T. Marinetti, "Prefazione," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 428-430.
[89] Ibid., 432.

This is what the nation had become in the Great War, and, as the war had shown that conflict was endemic to human history, Italy now had to prepare itself for the next stage: a further war to conquer an empire.[90]

The rest of *Futurismo e Fascismo* contained articles that broadly made the points raised in the "Prefazione." For instance, many of the early articles deal with Futurism's long history of battling *passatismo*, its desire to rejuvenate Italy through war, and to modernize and strengthen it by freeing Italy of its dependence on the tourist trade and by industrializing its cities.[91] Marinetti also included a number of articles that made clear that in spite of Futurism's claim to advance individual liberties against the forces of *passatismo,* he believed the state needed enough authority to produce the domestic order required for a strong foreign and imperial policy.[92] Consequently, Marinetti also signaled that he would support any action that would reduce the authority of parliament, and just as likely its abolition, to be replaced by 'technical councils.[93] Futurism's revolutionary, though anti-socialist, bonafides were also given much exposure.[94]

The goal of positioning Futurism as Fascism's precursor and radical element was fulfilled in a new piece, "I futuristi nella lotta fascista" (The Futurists in the Fascist Battle") in which Marinetti recounted his and Mussolini's interventionist days and arrests, their forming of the *Fasci di combattimento*, the Fascist/Futurist/Ardito attack on

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[90] Ibid., 433-434.
[91] See, the Foundation manifesto, (1909), "Trieste, la nostra bella polveriera" (1909), "Contro Venezia passatista" (1910), "Discorso futurista ai Veneziani" (1910), "Contro Firenze e Roma piaghe purulente della nostra Penisola" (1910), "Discorso futurista agli Inglesi (1910), "Manifesto agli studenti" (1914), "L'orgoglio italiano" (1915), "Il Futurismo e la Guerra" (1915), and "Ideologie sfasciate dalla conflagrazione" (1919).
[92] See, "Manifesto a Tripoli italiana" (1911), "Programma Politico-Futurista" (1913), and "L'Impero Italiano" (1923).
[93] See, "Contro l'amore e il parlamentarismo" (1910), and "Governo tecnico senza parlamento, senza senato e con un eccitatorio," (1919).
[94] See, "Programma Politico-Futurista" (1913), "Discorso di Piazza Belgioioso" (1919), "Discorso di Piazza Sant'Alessandro" (1919), *Al di là del Comunismo* (1920), and "Ad ogni uomo, ogni giorno un mestiere diverso" (1922).

the socialists on April 15, 1919, their participation in the Fiume venture, the elections of November, 1919, and then subsequent arrest.[95] Another new piece, "'Il Popolo d'Italia,' 'Roma Futurista' e fondazione dei Fasci di Combattimento," ("The *Popolo d'Italia, Roma futurista* and the Foundation of the *Fasci di combattimento*") argued these two newspapers were the only ones defending Italy in its time of need at the end of the war in the face of the *rinunciatori*.[96] "La Battaglia di Via Mercanti il 15 aprile 1919 prima vittoria del Fascismo" ("The Battle of Via Mercanti of 15 April 1919, First Victory of Fascism) was included to give a detailed narrative of the Futurist/Fascist/Arditi assault on the socialists and sacking of the *Avanti!* offices in Milan.[97]

Having made the argument that Futurism and Fascism were unambiguously linked, Marinetti included in *Futurismo e Fascismo* a number of articles that specifically defined Futurism as the radical wing of Fascism, and would not be afraid of curbing the slide towards reactionism within Fascism. The common themes to these articles were an unrelenting anti-clericalism, republicanism, and a libertarian organization of society that did not give the state the authority to crush all individual liberties.[98] Though this somewhat contradicted the other articles that emphasized the authority of the state over individual liberties, in the "Prefazione" Marinetti had warned that this was a "live book that sometimes contradicts itself."[99] However, he never explained how he would

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[95] F.T. Marinetti, "I futuristi nella lotta fascista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 440-442.
[96] F.T. Marinetti, " 'Il Popolo d'Italia,' 'Roma Futurista' e fondazione dei Fasci di Combattimento," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 442-448.
[97] F.T. Marinetti, "La Battaglia di Via Mercanti il 15 aprile 1919 prima vittoria del Fascismo," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 448-452.
[98] See, "Primo manifesto politico futurista" (1909), "Programma Politico-Futurista" (1913), "Discorso del Teatro Verdi" (1913), "Concezione futurista della Democrazia" (1919, previously published as "Democrazia Futurista"), "Contro il Papato e la mentalità cattolica, serbatoi di ogni passatismo" (1919), "Discorso di Firenze" (Oct, 1919 at the Fascist Congress), "Discorso di Monza" (November, 1919), and "L'Impero Italiano" (1923).
[99] F.T. Marinetti, "Prefazione," in *TIF*, 432.

reconcile the contradictions. Instead, he focused on the expansion of individual liberties with the abolition of marriage, the elimination of the regular military and police forces in exchange for a society educated for self and national defense, and advocated on behalf of allowing workers to strike for their economic interests, though not if they were allied with socialists. However, in another contradiction, he also revived the idea that workers could assuage their frustrations with industrial labor through the distraction of art, thus obviating their need to organize.[100] This radical influence within Fascism was ultimately to produce a new man free of all constraints, though self-disciplined enough to strengthen the nation and conquer a new empire.[101] If Fascism continued to slide towards reaction, Marinetti explicitly noted in "I futuristi nella lotta fascista" that the Futurists had once bolted from the Fascists over the latter's reactionary tendencies, and signaled that this may very well happen again.[102]

Possibly the single most important point that Marinetti wanted to emphasize in his Futurist-inspired Fascist state was the elevation of the artist to a much more exalted position in society. To achieve this end, artists would not only have to leave their ivory tower and engage in and mold the world, be it in their art, war, or in political office, but also that the state needed to increase its role in culture by both helping to develop new Italian art and helping it achieve national and international recognition.[103]

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[100] See, "Concezione futurista della Democrazia", "Il cittadino eroico, l'abolizione delle polizie e le scuole di corragio" (1910 and 1919), "Abolizione della coscrizione, esercito volontario, scuole di forza, coraggio e patriotismo, corsi di strategia d'armi" (1919), "Vecchie idee a braccetto da separare" (1919), "Morale del pericolo e la libertà elastica senza carceri e carabinieri" (1919), *Al di là del Comunismo*.
[101] See, Foundation manifesto, "L'uomo moltiplicato e il regno della macchina," "Contro l'amore e il parlamentarismo," "Discorso agli Arditi," "Contro il lusso femminile," "L'Impero Italiano".
[102] F.T. Marinetti, "I futuristi nella lotta fascista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 442.
[103] See, "Manifesto a Tripoli italiana," "Manifesto agli studenti," "L'orgoglio italiano," "Il Futurismo e la Guerra," "Governo tecnico senza parlamento, senza senato e con un eccitatorio," "Il cittadino eroico, l'abolizione delle polizie e le scuole di coraggio," "Proletariato dei geniali," "Il discorso di Firenze," "I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani."

For all of Marinetti's claims in *Futurismo e Fascismo* that the Futurists were the radical component within Fascism, and that it, or specifically Marinetti, would not be afraid of demanding that Mussolini not abandon his radical heritage, Marinetti never considered any real challenge of Mussolini's leadership. Marinetti's initial decision to work with Mussolini to advance his nationalist goals was a compromise of Marinetti's radical principles, and the revisionist editing he did with the articles he republished in *Futurismo e Fascismo* made clear that he was only going to push Mussolini so far. Marinetti never called Mussolini a reactionary, as he had before; he simply implored him to remember his radical roots. When he first wrote on the concept of technical councils replacing parliament in 1919, he wanted them elected by universal suffrage. In 1924 this point was eliminated to reflect the limits on democracy imposed by the Acerbo Law.[104] When Marinetti recounted his work with Mussolini on behalf of D'Annunzio's Fiume, he conveniently forgot how Mussolini had never really supported D'Annunzio as he had.[105] And when he told of the Futurist-Fascist assault on the socialists in the Battle of Via Mercanti he emphasized an unquestioning unity of purpose that simply did not exist at the time.[106] These edits reflected a conscious choice on Marinetti's behalf to smooth out the troubled history he had with Mussolini, and showed that in being a radical, *dicianovista* Fascist, Marinetti privileged loyalty to Mussolini over any substantial radical criticism of his regime. Mussolini was providing the order Marinetti felt the country needed to achieve greatness, and in return Marinetti was willing to compromise on the liberties he once held so dear.

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[104] F.T. Marinetti, "Governo tecnico senza parlamento, senza senato e con un Eccitatorio," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 357.
[105] F.T. Marinetti, "I futuristi nella lotta fascista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 440-442.
[106] F.T. Marinetti, "La Battaglia di Via Mercanti il 15 aprile 1919 prima vittoria del Fascismo," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 448-452.

However, it did not seem that Mussolini was ready to welcome Marinetti back into the upper echelons of Fascism just yet. Within a month of the publication of *Futurismo e Fascismo*, the Futurists were effectively snubbed from the Venice Biennale once again. Moreover, the rival *Novecento* group, led by Italy's premier cultural critic (and Mussolini's mistress) Margherita Sarfatti, whose inaugural show Mussolini had opened the previous year, was invited to display as a group at the Biennale in 1924—the first time that had ever happened.[107] This time Marinetti did more than simply complain in the press. At the opening of the Biennale on April 24, after the Minister of Education, Giovanni Gentile—whom Marinetti considered to be the height of *passatismo*—had introduced the King, Marinetti stunned the crowd by declaring "'I denounce the senile and anti-Italian incapacity of the Directorate, that massacres Italy's young artists, invites foreign Futurists, [and] systematically excludes all the Italian Futurists!'" Then, directing his comments to the King, he declared "'Majesty, you have inaugurated an exposition of camorristi [mafiosi]! Camorra! Camorra! Camorra! Camorra!'" Thereafter Marinetti was hustled out of the exhibition to the police station, but not arrested.[108] Later that day he planned to interrupt the performance of "Aida" at the Teatro la Fenice with another anti-Biennale outburst. However, the police warned him against another disruption and kept him under surveillance. Later, in the Café Florian, he denounced the Biennale yet

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[107] The *Novecento* was a group made up of modern artists, many of which were former Futurists, who epitomized a 'return to order' in art ('modern classicism'), as Fascism did in politics. See, Philip V. Cannistraro and Brian R. Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1993), 195, 205, 219, 252, 256-264; "Alla mostra del Novecento. Parole di Mussolini sull'arte e sul governo," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, March 27, 1923. For recent work on Sarfatti, see Catherine E. Paul and Barbara M. Zaczek, "Margherita Sarfatti & Italian Cultural Nationalism," *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 13, #1 (January, 2006), 889-916; Emily D. Bilski and Emily Braun, editors, *Jewish Women and Their Salons: The Power of Conversation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

[108] F.T. Marinetti, "Il Re disse: che ha Marinetti?," in *Originalità*, August 10, 1924, quoted in Salaris, *Marinetti Arte e vita futurista*, 238; "La XIV Esposizione internazional d'Arte a Venezia inaugurata ieri alla presenza del Re, Una protesta di Marinetti," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, April 26, 1924.

again, a safe distance from the theatre—though some spectators were anxious he might actually show up at the theatre after all.[109]

After the Biennale, the majority of the *Novecento* group left their patron Margherita Sarfatti, as they objected to her attempts to tie the *Novecento* so closely to Fascism. But this was small consolation to Marinetti.[110] It was clear that he would have to do much more than publish a number of essays showing the relevance of Futurism to the new Fascist state. He even resorted to calling on the eminent Benedetto Croce to make his case, an interesting decision as Marinetti had lambasted him as a pro-German *passatista* just a few short years before. Marinetti republished Croce's essay entitled "Fatti politici e interpretazioni storiche" ("Political Issues and Historical Interpretations"), that argued that Fascism can be traced to, among other things, the Futurists' resolution to descend into the piazzas, their anti-traditionalism, and exultation of youth. Marinetti published the essay as a stand-alone pamphlet entitled "Il futurismo e il fascismo giudicati da B. Croce" ("Futurism and Fascism as Judged by B. Croce"), in which he wrote that "Croce today glorifies political Futurism as the precursor and preparer of Fascism."[111] Possibly Marinetti felt someone as important as Croce making

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[109] Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 238; Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 221; Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 284. Marinetti's letter to Cangiullo is a colorful recollection of the event: "You can imagine the truly Futurist uproar provoked by my speech against the Biennale. You would have enjoyed yourself immensely [seeing] the finest women worn out by their terror. Half the hall took me for an anarchist. That night, acclamation in Piazza San Marco, and a new speech, while in the theatre l'Aida was performed in the presence of the king, with an audience that nervously expected my second intervention!!! A Venetian seaquake!" See, Marinetti to Cangiullo, April 24, 1924, in F.T. Marinetti, *Epistolario Cangiullo-Marinetti*, 149. Marinetti later recounted the event, substantially copying the *Originalità* piece, in what seems like an unpublished document entitled "Sensibilità di un anarchico alla vigilia di un attentato," in YMP, Box 24, f. 1308: [Fascism]. What is most interesting about this piece was that it was printed on Reale Academica d'Italia letterhead, and so done after 1929 when he was appointed to the Accademia. Thus, the rebel safely ensconced in the *Accademia*.

[110] Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 284-285.

[111] Croce originally published the article in his *La Critica* on May 20, 1924. Marinetti published the pamphlet in 1924. See, Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 240-241. The article was subsequently republished as "Il Futurismo e il Fascismo," in F.T. Marinetti, et al [Fillia wrote the introduction], *Arte*

the connection between Futurism and Fascism would have influenced Mussolini, but it did not. What did prove to be consequential was Marinetti's behavior during the Matteotti Crisis, when Marinetti refrained from attacking Mussolini. Judging from their closer relationship thereafter, this event greatly enhanced Marinetti's trustworthiness and value to Mussolini.

The period between April, 1924 and January, 1925 was extremely tense and dangerous for Mussolini, as he was fighting a multi-front battle over the future and survival of his government. In the elections of April, 1924 Mussolini acquired the majority he desired thanks to the passage of the Acerbo Law. The Liberals, such as Giolitti, now hoped that with constitutional legitimacy Fascist lawlessness would be curtailed. This was the crucial element in maintaining their support for Mussolini. Without Liberal acquiescence, the King would likely pull his support from Mussolini. But Fascist violence did not end. Intransigent Fascists, such as Roberto Farinacci, called for a complete abolition of parliament and a 'second wave' of Fascist violence, similar to the offensive that smashed the Left during the period 1919-22. On the other hand Mussolini had to contend with the moderate Fascists, such as Giuseppe Bottai, who sought a drastic curtailment of parliamentary government, but not through the uncontrolled violence of the Fascist *squadristi*, that were the power base of the intransigents in the provinces. Lastly, Mussolini was still courting the conservative elements in Italian society, such as the army. The army was unwilling to accept the autonomous nature of the Fascist Militia, the MVSN (*Miliza volontaria per la sicura* na*zionale*), which acted as the loose umbrella organization for the fairly independent

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fascista: Elementi per la battaglia artistica (Turin: Edizioni Sindacati Artistici, 1927), 109-112. The book notes that the article originally appeared in *La Stampa*, May 14, 1924.

Fascist squads. Thus, Mussolini was desperately trying to balance between acquiring the cooperation of the Liberals, King, and army, while at the same time not alienating his party, which was his power base until he could establish firmer control over the state.[112]

What forced these latent tensions to the surface, and ultimately forced Mussolini onto the path of dictatorship, was the Matteotti Crisis. On May 30, 1924 the Socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti stood up in Parliament and boldly denounced the April elections as a sham because of the violence and intimidation used by the Fascists during the contest. Then, on June 10 Matteotti was abducted, and widely believed to have been murdered. It was immediately determined that Fascist thugs led by Amerigo Dumini, who happened to be an assistant in Mussolini's press office, were the culprits.

Suspicions immediately arose as to the level of Mussolini's involvement, and Mussolini struggled to maintain power in the face of the rival groups mentioned above. The King did not retract his support for Mussolini, but Mussolini was forced to relinquish the Ministry of the Interior to ex-Nationalist Federzoni. The Opposition (Socialists and *Popolari*) walked out of parliament, in what became known as the Aventine Secession. The remaining deputies, conservative Liberals mostly, gradually lost faith in the government, especially with the press restrictions imposed on July 8, and Mussolini's inability or unwillingness to get the intransigents and the squads under control. In November the leading Liberals, Giolitti and Salvatorelli, spoke out against the government, and it seemed the Liberals within the cabinet would soon resign and force the King to intervene and form a new government. Within the Fascist Party, Mussolini contented with the intransigents who wanted the revolutionary overthrow of parliament,

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[112] See, Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power,* Chapter 10, "The Matteotti Crisis," *passim*; Clark, *Mussolini*, 79-88; Bosworth, *Mussolini,* 194-207.

and became increasingly critical of Mussolini's kowtowing to the Liberals. On November 30 Mussolini sought to stem the defection of the Liberals by issuing a circular that called for the purging of extremist elements from the Fascist Party. The Liberals were not satisfied, but the intransigents were sufficiently piqued. In the midst of increasing *squadristi* violence throughout the country, talks of a coup surfaced in the MVSN in December. The moderate Fascists, for their part, became increasingly critical of Mussolini's inability to master the situation and act against parliament without having to unleash the squads. The army also became increasingly concerned with the threat posed by the MVSN. Finally, on December 31 a group of intransigent MVSN 'consuls' gathered and issued what seemed like an ultimatum to Mussolini, calling on him to act with 'vigor' to resolve the situation. This was the critical moment that forced Mussolini to move forward and give his speech of January 3, 1925 that effectively announced the formation of a dictatorship to bring stability back to the country, before the intransigents acted to move against him, and before the Liberals and King could think of a way to replace him. Thereafter Mussolini quashed political opposition in Italy, and imposed effective control over his party.[113]

However, this was the ultimate and successful resolution, for Mussolini, of the Matteotti Crisis. During the period from April, 1924 to January, 1925 Mussolini struggled to maintain his hold on power. It was during this time that Marinetti made the calculated decision to not publicly criticize Mussolini, as he had done earlier. And, the evidence seems to point to the fact that, in spite of the differences Marinetti had with Mussolini, he certainly had no desire to see him toppled from power, and very much supported the imposition of the dictatorship in January, 1925.

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[113] Ibid.

As noted above, 1924 was not a good year for Marinetti and Futurism. The Futurists had been snubbed from the Biennale and the *Novecento* had received pride of place there. Immediately thereafter Marinetti sought to regain the initiative. A Futurist Congress was planned for November 23-24. It was to honor Marinetti's life achievements, as well as to determine some common goals for the varied members that belonged to Futurism. Ultimately, the event was to boost the visibility of Marinetti and Futurism in Mussolini's eyes so that they could not be ignored. As Berghaus put it,

> Marinetti did not wish to give the impression of a prodigal son: defeated, repentant, with ashes on his head begging to be re-admitted to the fold. His idea was rather to confront Mussolini triumphantly, as celebrated leader of a vast national and international movement. Only by consolidating his status on the cultural scene could he hope to gain influence over the new political authorities, to secure his role in the cultural bureaucracy of the Fascist State, and thereby vouchsafe the survival of his movement.[114]

Historians of political Futurism are generally in agreement that this Congress marked Marinetti's capitulation to the Fascist regime and its authoritarian politics, and the suppression of his idealistic dreams of a new, more libertarian Italy. Berghaus notes that "The Futurist Congress of 1924 and the honours bestowed on Marinetti were a clear sign that the movement was ready to enter into a dialogue with the Fascist régime and was keen to claim its place within the predominantly conservative artistic establishment. . . . Marinetti accepted this *modus vivendi* and was accordingly stigmatized by the leftist forces in the movement."[115] Nazzaro believes the Congress was meant to "drive away

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[114] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 221. Earlier, Nazzaro came to the same conclusion: "[Marinetti] wanted to re-enter [Fascism] not as someone who had been defeated, but triumphantly, and with sufficient artistic and political autonomy to be able to act in the future with the decisiveness of his early years." See, Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 186. Or, as Carpi put it, "The objective of the organizers (Dessy, Prampolini, Azari above all) was, through a celebration of Marinetti as artist-precursor and Futurism as avant-garde-detonator, to obtain an official guarantee [for Futurism] in exchange for the substantial renunciation of any political *fronde*." See, Umberto Carpi, *L'estrema avanguardia del Novecento* (Rome: Riuniti, 1985), 194.

[115] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 223.

the fear of an irreversible and little gratifying marginalization [within the Fascist regime]," specifically by Marinetti establishing control over Futurism, curbing any criticism of Mussolini, and bringing it back into the Fascist Party.[116] Carpi feels that at the Congress "the decision to try and secure for Futurism the semi-official recognition as the avant-garde of the regime was successful, and every persistent extremist demand was muted."[117] Even the generally sympathetic Salaris points out that "the objective of the organizers . . . was in fact to focus on the honoring of Marinetti, and, through the celebration of Marinetti as precursor [to Fascism], to achieve some sort of official recognition on the part of the regime, promising in exchange an effective renunciation of any political activity."[118]

However, Marinetti was not betraying Futurist principles at the Congress. Marinetti had never made a secret that his political priority was national unity and strength, and that a radical agenda would be advocated as long as such unity was not threatened. Since 1921 Marinetti had chosen to support Mussolini as the solution to Italy's political problems, and as his means to effect change in Italy. Nothing had changed in 1924. Marinetti still supported Mussolini, especially now that Italy was again stricken with political crisis and paralysis. Thus, the Congress of November, 1924 should be viewed as a further step in Marinetti's drive to re-enter Fascism. It not only boosted his influence as the leader of a large movement that could not be ignored in determining the evolution of Fascism, but it also highlighted Marinetti's loyalty when Mussolini was at his most vulnerable. Consequently, at the Congress he solidified his control over the

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[116] Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 186.
[117] Umberto Carpi, *L'estrema avanguardia del Novecento* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1985), 195.
[118] Claudia Salaris, *Artecrazia: L'avanguardia futurista negli anni del fascismo* (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1992), 54.

movement to provide himself a unified base (even if that meant alienating many leftist Futurists), made sure not to criticize Mussolini during the height of the Matteotti Crisis (quashing both anti-Fascist and radical/squadrist Fascist views), and re-affirmed his support of Mussolini, reiterating that he had conceded the political lead to Mussolini.[119]

Marinetti recognized that his movement was politically fractured. "During the conflagration," he wrote (about the First World War), "the Italian Futurists were politically united in a revolutionary, anti-socialist, anti-clerical, anti-monarchic interventionism. At the end of the war diverse political viewpoints appeared. Many Futurists," he continued, referring to himself, "after having collaborated in the creation of Fascism, left because they were decisively anti-clerical and anti-monarchic. Others remained within Fascism. Others closed themselves in their art, not being able to deal with the nausea that politics causes in artists' stomachs." But, he concluded, "these diverse Futurist currents will be cleared up at the Congress."[120]

However, it was unlikely that he was going to establish a real political consensus. Participants at the Congress included leftists, such as Gino Soggetti, who evidently spoke on the issue of "Futurism and Communism" and intransigent Fascists, such as Enzo Mainardi, who was reported to have spoken on "Art and Politics." Arturo Blangino hoped for neutrality with a discussion on the "Necessity to Keep Futurism Out of the Political Competition."[121] The most Marinetti could hope for was to keep the various

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[119] F.T. Marinetti, "Primo Congresso Futurista (23 novembre 1924)," in *L'Impero*, November 20-21, 1924, reprinted in Claudia Salaris, *Artecrazia: L'avanguardia futurista negli anni del fascismo* (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1992), 56.

[120] Ibid.

[121] In what is truly one of the most frustrating aspects of writing on the history of political Futurism, there are evidently no records of the contents of the papers delivered at the Congress, only the titles, which were reprinted in "Dichiarazioni politiche acclamate dal congresso," in *Il Futurismo*, February, 11, 1925, as noted by Salaris in *Artecrazia*, 63, note #100. Moreover, it is not altogether clear that these, and many other politically orientated papers, were actually delivered at the Congress. *Il Popolo d'Italia* devoted three

participants in line and not publish a pronouncement that Mussolini could consider a criticism or threat. Thus both the leftists and intransigent Fascists at the Congress were, as Carpi noted, "muted."

Nearing the conclusion of the Congress, debate began over the content of the order of the day that would be published and sent to Mussolini. Obviously, Marinetti wanted a united front, and he could not afford to have the Congress disintegrate in the midst of political in-fighting. Thus, when he heard Mainardi wanted to introduce an order of the day that urged Mussolini to eliminate the remaining institutions of Liberal Italy, Marinetti convinced him not to. Similarly, Marinetti had to convince Soggetti to hold off on an avowedly anti-Fascist pronouncement. According to Mainardi's recollection of a backroom meeting between Marinetti and Soggetti, amongst others,

> Gino Soggetti was animatedly discussing, if not actually fighting, with Marinetti, Russolo, Prampolini and a couple of others, because he wanted to present an order of the day and a report, influenced by the anarchic currents of Turin and Novara, that was decidedly anti–Fascist that would have evoked the hostility of the majority of the Congress.
>
> Marinetti listened patiently then pulled out of his pocket a sheet of paper and said: 'This is the order of the day that Enzo Mainardi wanted to present. I convinced him not to. Its text and conclusions are, if nothing else, amusing. They don't bother me. Personally, however, I believe it inopportune to conclude with votes on an order of the day. Ours is not a congress of a party; it is a gathering of Futurist friends, that want to remain Futurist, thus free to think as they wish and to act as they believe best. In any case, they are things that don't concern me. The organizing committee will decide.'[122]

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stories to the Congress, one of them actually summarized the talks given at the Congress, and none of talks listed involved the politically themed ones later mentioned in *Il Futurismo*. See "Le onoranze a F.T. Marinetti," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, November 22, 1924; "Le odierne onoranze nazionali a F.T. Marinetti," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, November 23, 1924; "Le solenni onoranze a F. T. Marinetti," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, November 25, 1924. Moreover, the *Corriere della Sera* also covered the *onoranze* and the Congress and listed the talks that were heard, which were similar to what *Il Popolo d'Italia* listed. See "Le onoranze a Marinetti e il Congresso futurista," in *Corriere della Sera*, November 25, 1924.

[122] Mainardi's recollection is printed in S. Lambiase and G.B. Nazzaro, *Marinetti e i futuristi* (Milan: Garzanti, 1978), 158-159, reprinted in Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 184-185.

Soggetti was bitterly disappointed. He felt Marinetti had already decided that the Congress was not going to criticize the government at all.[123] This was in fact what Marinetti had decided.

If Marinetti had any doubts about choosing not to publish anything critical about the government at the time, Mussolini's telegram to the Congress would have put them to rest. In it, Mussolini asked to "Consider me present at the Futurist meeting that synthesizes 20 years of great artistic and political battles, often consecrated with blood." But then also pointed out that the "Congress must be the point of departure, and not the point of arrival."[124] Mussolini was making it clear that he had no patience for the type of radicalism that had caused Marinetti to abandon Fascism in 1920. Marinetti accepted this, as he had decided any Futurist goals could only be achieved through Mussolini.

Consequently, nothing formal was published at the end of the Congress, thus maintaining the façade of uniformity for Marinetti, and, more importantly, nothing critical of the regime emerged from the meeting. But three months later Marinetti published a summary of the Congress with an extended order of the day which, according to Berghaus, surprised many.[125] However, having traced Marinetti's political evolution since 1922, there was nothing altogether shocking in the pronouncement. Marinetti's "declaration" bears translating in full:

> The Italian Futurists, the first of the first interventionists in the piazze and on the battlefields, and the first of the first *dicianovisti* more than ever devoted to ideas and to art, far from politics, say to their old companion Benito Mussolini:

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[123] See Soggetti's letter to Mainardi, dated February 24, 1925, printed in Carpi, *L'estrema avanguardia del novecento*, 196-7

[124] Mussolini to Marinetti, November 22, 1924, in YMP, Box 14, Folder 783: Mussolini, Benito. The telegram is also reprinted in F.T. Marinetti, "Onoranze nazionali a Marinetti e Congresso futurista," in *TIF*, 534.

[125] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 263, note #22; Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 185.

> With a gesture of force now considered indispensable, free yourself from parliament. Restore to Fascism and to Italy the marvelous spirit of 1919- disinterested, *ardita*, anti-socialist, anti-clerical, anti-monarchical. Concede to the Monarchy only its provisional unitary function, refute its ability to suffocate or morphinize [morfinizzare] the greatest, the most genius and the most just Italy of tomorrow. Do not imitate the inimitable Giolitti, imitate the Great Mussolini of 1919. Always think of immortal Italy, of the divine Carso. Break the anti-Italian clerical opposition of Don Sturzo, the socialist anti-Italian opposition of Turati and the mediocre opposition of Albertini with an iron, dynamic, aristocracy of armed thought, that supplants the actual demagoguery of arms without thought. You can and must do this, we must want it and do want it.[126]

With this document Marinetti signaled that he supported and even encouraged Mussolini's establishment of the dictatorship on January 3, 1925, and the imposition of the requisite order the country required to avoid the return of socialism, to tame the intransigents, and to quell the Liberal establishment. However, as befitting the politics of *dicianovismo*, he was not endorsing the politics of complete reaction. But how much radicalism was he willing to compromise in exchange for the national order and greatness that Mussolini promised?

Sticking to his radical principles after having left Fascism in 1920 had left Marinetti in the political wilderness with all his original concerns over the threat of socialism and the weakness of the Liberal regime still intact. Both were sapping the unity and strength of the Italian nation, and they were still a concern for him through the period 1920 to 1922. During that time Marinetti came to believe that Mussolini's Fascists were the only group that could bring order to Italy. Thus, Marinetti had once again put his faith in Fascism as the vehicle to effect his nationalist goals, and consciously de-prioritized his radical goals. He portrayed Futurism as the radical wing and precursor of Fascism, and this legitimated his critical, though always loyal, relationship to Fascism in

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[126] F.T. Marinetti, "Onoranze nazionali a Marinetti e Congresso futurista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 536; originally published in *Il Futurismo*, February, 11, 1925.

the hopes of reviving its *dicianovista* heritage. Yet, this criticism never amounted to anything more than rhetoric, and during the Matteotti Crisis Marinetti muted all criticism. Whatever Marinetti said in public, his stance as the loyal, but critical, *dicianovista* ultimately meant that the emphasis was always on loyalty to the regime first, and that his radical criticism would be contingent on what was good for national unity—as it always had been. It was this loyalty and increasingly limited criticism that allowed Marinetti to climb the ranks of the regime to its pinnacle as a Fascist *Gerarca* in the early years of the dictatorship, and it is this process that the following chapter is devoted to.

Chapter 4: Building the Dictatorship, 1925-29

Introduction

This chapter deals with the period from the founding of the dictatorship to Marinetti's nomination to the Italian *Accademia*. The periodization is meant to highlight Marinetti's role in the development of Mussolini's totalitarian regime, with the elevation to *Accademico* as the result, and reward, for his activities. In this era we see the outcome of Marinetti's choice to re-join Fascism which was covered in the previous chapter. He had decided that Mussolini was Italy's only chance for national unity and greatness, and was willing to curb his radical goals of anti-clericalism, republicanism, a libertarian state and society, and the defense of workers' economic interests in the interest of his nationalist ones. Though he proclaimed himself as a member of Fascism's radical, *dicianovista* wing, his criticism of the Duce and Fascism as a loyal Fascist never amounted to more than rhetoric. During the Matteotti Crisis this criticism was muted altogether, and Marinetti was heartened by the imposition of the dictatorship.

In these early years of the dictatorship Marinetti would similarly privilege his nationalist goals, and would contribute significantly to the development and success of the regime, specifically in the realm of Fascist cultural policy and in acting as Fascism's international emissary. Along the way his radical goals were muted or extinguished as they were subsumed to the interests of a strong state. His libertarianism and defense of workers' economic interests disappeared in his acquiescence to the dictatorship's political repression and imposition of the corporative state. His anti-clericalism was muted when Mussolini signed the Lateran Accords with the Pope. His republicanism was forgotten when he joined Italy's Royal Academy. All of this was done in support of a regime that

had brought order to Italy, and promised to make a 'New Italy.' Since 1911 Marinetti had proclaimed that he defended all liberties until those liberties interfered with the health of the nation. His loyalty and contribution to the dictatorship were the logical outcome of a political viewpoint that had always sought to balance nationalist and radical interests, but had never denied the primacy of the former. The only liberty Marinetti was willing to defend under the dictatorship was the freedom of the artist, specifically modern artists and intellectuals, against the onslaught of conservative, *passatista*, Fascists. However, even in this arena Marinetti would compromise and agree to work with conservative and traditional artists in order to advance the development and appreciation of all Italian art.

This chapter narrates Marinetti's role in the early years of the dictatorship in three broad sections. The first section looks at Marinetti's acceptance of and then contributions to the dictatorship. Marinetti's role in furthering Fascist cultural policy, Italianizing the recently annexed South Tyrolese, and his numerous international trips as a Fascist emissary are covered in this section. The second section focuses on Marinetti's only real advancement of a radical agenda in this period: the defense of modern art and a broader offensive against Fascist conservatives. The final section looks at Marinetti's elevation to the post of *Accademico* as a reward for his loyalty and ever muted criticism of the regime, and looks ahead to the consequences of this elevation. As *Accademico,* Marinetti was now a Fascist *gerarca*. With this elevation came greater influence, but also greater scrutiny and condemnation of the 'radical' Marinetti.

Marinetti and the Dictatorship

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mussolini's imposition of the dictatorship after his speech of January 3, 1925 was supported by Marinetti. He saw the dictatorship as the solution to Italy's political chaos as Mussolini's government was buffeted by opposition from the Liberals, Socialists, the king, the military and from both intransigent and moderate Fascists. Marinetti's support, he claimed, was conditional, in that he would accept the dictatorship so long as it did more than impose political order. It had to free Italy from the forces of *passatismo* and unleash its productive capacities, its genius. It had to, in other words, be true to Fascism's radical heritage. However, other than implementing Marinetti's general idea of the state more actively directing and cultivating the arts in Italy, none of Marinetti's other radical goals formulated between 1918 and 1920 were fulfilled in the dictatorship. This, however, was of no concern to him. Having made his decision to be a loyal follower of the Duce, he did everything he could to advance Fascism both at home and abroad, kept his criticisms to a minimum, and never directed them at the Duce directly.

Marinetti's reception of the dictatorship can be gleaned from his comments on his copy of Mussolini's speech declaring the dictatorship on January 3, 1925.[1] In a paragraph in which Mussolini declared "If Fascism has been nothing but castor oil and the club and not a superb passion of the best of Italy's youth, then the fault is mine!," Marinetti underlined and emphasized the sections "a superb passion of the best of Italy's youth." In another section, after listing the ascendance of socialist activities against the

[1] Mussolini's speech is covered in Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista, I. La conquista del potere, 1921-1925* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966), 716-730; Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919-1929,* 2nd Edition (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987; 1st Edition, 1973), 265-267; Ivone Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1964), 239-241; Martin Clark, *Mussolini* (London: Pearson Longman, 2005), 87-88.

Fascists, Mussolini declared that "You see from this situation that the Aventine secession has had profound repercussions throughout the country. Now the time has come to say: enough! When two elements are in conflict and are irreducible, the solution is in force. There has never been another solution, and there never will be." In Marinetti's copy he underlined "When two elements are in conflict and are irreducible, the solution is in force. There has never been another solution, and there never will be." Finally, in a concluding section Mussolini declared that "Italy, sirs, wants peace, wants tranquility, wants a laborious calm; we'll give it to her with love, if it is possible, or with force if it is necessary. You must be assured that within 48 hours of my speech, the situation will be clarified everywhere . . . and all will know that it is not the capriciousness of one person, it is not the lust of the government [for power], it is not ignoble passion, but only boundless and powerful love for the Patria [that guides us]." Here Marinetti underlined the section "but only boundless and powerful love for the Patria."[2] Taken together these emendations showed that Marinetti believed Mussolini should impose order in Italy, but he trusted, or hoped, that Mussolini would steer Fascism away from simply the squadrists' club and castor oil to something more idealistic, to the early Fascism of 1919.

The opportunity to publicly show that Marinetti would support the dictatorship, though would speak out on its reactionary elements, was immediately available in the form of a banquet thrown in his honor by Carli and Settimelli after he had moved to Rome in March, 1925. The banquet, or *Onoranze*, like the Futurist Congress of the previous November, was meant to glorify Futurism and its leader so that they could not be ignored by the regime, and could consequently influence Fascism in a more radical

[2] Undated typed manuscript of Mussolini's January 3, 1925 speech, in GMP, Box 14, Folder 55: Mussolini. Quotes on pp. 7, 9, and 10, respectively.

direction. Carli, Settimelli, and Marinetti all supported a Fascism that was anti-socialist, anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and committed to imperial expansion. However, where Carli and Settimelli had accepted the place of the Pope and king in Italy as unifying forces, as Mussolini had done, Marinetti remained anti-clerical and anti-monarchical.[3]

Marinetti's speech at the *Onoranze* emphasized that the Futurists had accepted the imposition of the dictatorship because a strong state needed to take precedence over individual liberties, and a strong state was now needed to conquer a new Fascist empire. However, in defining this new empire he specifically targeted the monarchy and the Vatican as reactionary forces that held Italy back. He declared that the Futurists were "hostile to monarchism that is frightened, anti-artistic, anti-literary, socialist and *passatista,*" and that there are "in Italy, unfortunately, Italian forces that block the imperial idea. We'll fight them as well, never forgetting, however, that amongst these the most secret and most anti-Italian is: the Vatican"[4] Other reactionary forces that were targeted in the speech included "*passatisti* senators" that were hindering the implementation of a "war-like education for young Italians." Here Marinetti was referring to the Italian philosopher Giovanni Gentile who was Mussolini's Minister of Education from 1922-1925, and had been made a senator in 1922. Gentile was responsible for educational reforms put in place in 1923 that, amongst other things, made teaching Catholicism compulsory in elementary schools, and generally devalued technical education in the place of more emphasis on the study of Latin and philosophy

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[3] Claudia Salaris, *Artecrazia: L'avanguardia futurista negli anni del fascismo* (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1992), 65-66; Paolo Buchignani, "Settimelli e Carli dal futurismo al fascismo," in Renzo de Felice, ed., *Futurismo, cultura e politica* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988), 206; Günter Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909-1944* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), 228; Doug Thompson, *State Control in Fascist Italy: Culture and Conformity, 1925-43* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1991), 63.

[4] F.T. Marinetti, "Il discorso di Marinetti," in *L'Impero*, March 3, 1925; found in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

as a means of creating a new, humanist-educated, ruling elite.[5] Marinetti considered these reforms positively retrograde when Italy required experts in modern technology and weaponry to conquer an empire.

Marinetti's anti-monarchic and anti-clerical statements were what caused the greatest impression, however. When Settimelli published the proceedings of the *Onoranze* in *L'Impero,* he was anxious to play down the apparent differences between Futurism and Fascism. He argued that because "Futurism gave Fascism its idealistic force when it was born, it should not be a stranger to the formation of [Fascist] doctrine," and that there was more that united the two movements than separated them, such as the exultation of speed, courage, strength and faith in Italy's future. Even the apparent contradiction between Fascism's glorification of Italy's past, and Futurism's seemingly complete renunciation of it was explained as the excesses of 'polemics'—a not so veiled jab at Marinetti. Nonetheless, the regime press attacked *L'Impero* for giving so much space to such an unorthodox person.[6] Even the *Corriere della Sera* was taken aback, and highlighted Marinetti's critical passages.[7] Carli and Settimelli buckled under the pressure, and a couple of days later released a statement in which they argued that "'the *Onoranze* for Marinetti organized by the writers of *L'Impero* […] did not imply an unconditional and complete adhesion to his political conceptions, and in matters of religion or the regime.'"[8]

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[5] Edward Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience: Society and Culture, 1922-1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), 154-158; Lyttelton, *Seizure of Power*, 402-406.
[6] Claudia Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1997), 247.
[7] "Una carica di Marinetti contro il Vaticano, L'on Tittoni e l'arte futurista," in *Corriere della Sera*, March 4, 1925.
[8] "A proposito del discorso di F.T. Marinetti," in *L'Impero*, March 5, 1925, quoted in Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 67.

Mussolini himself was not altogether sure what to do with the *Onoranze*. Certainly he could not attend, and cast his lot in with one wing of Fascism while he was trying to juggle moderate and intransigent Fascists (for instance Bottai and Farinacci, respectively) as well as trying to reassure king, Church, army, and the monied classes of the stability, and worth, of his regime. However, neither could he ignore a leading intellectual who was proclaiming loyalty to Fascism, even if with conditions. Especially after the Matteotti Crisis, and the groundswell of opposition it engendered, Mussolini was quite aware of the need to build support for the regime amongst Italians, specifically artists and intellectuals.[9] In the period 1925-1929 Mussolini would try to organize intellectuals to support the regime, and his reaching out to Marinetti in March, 1925 was part of this general plan of building support, without committing himself to one particular group of intellectuals or artists. Thus the telegram he sent was more personal than official:

> I am sorry that I cannot attend the banquet offered to F.T. Marinetti. But I would like you to add my fervid adhesion [to the *Onoranze*], which is not a formal expression, but a lively sign of great sympathy for the indefatigable and genial assertor of Italianità, for the innovative poet that gave me the sensation of the ocean and the machine, for my dear old friend of the first Fascist battles, for the intrepid soldier that offered to the *Patria* an indomitable passion consecrated in blood.[10]

Yet, for all the controversy, what Marinetti said was hardly consequential. Of course he railed against reactionary tendencies in the regime, but he did not do much more. As Mussolini worked towards reconciliation with the Vatican Marinetti did not mount any serious opposition. He may have attacked the monarchy as a threat to Italian

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[9] Philip Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso: Fascismo e mass media* (Bari: Laterza, 1974), 16.
[10] *L'Impero*, March 3, 1925; found in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446. The telegram was reprinted in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 536-537. The original of the telegram is in GMP, Box 2, Folder 25: Tributes to Marinetti given during the conference in his honor in mid 1920s.

imperial ambition, but he also attacked a "humanitarian" and anti-war republic in that same speech, signaling that his interest was in a strong state and an empire, and less in whether Italy had a king. Moreover in accepting the dictatorship in the first place he had shown that he was abandoning one of his core radical principles that the state and society could be organized along libertarian lines. Marinetti did not utter a word of criticism in the next few months as the press was muzzled, freedom of association and assembly were eliminated, political opposition outlawed, dissidents arrested, and eventually parliament was dissolved in 1928.[11] Marinetti justified this drastic expansion of the state's control of society since, as he also declared at the *Onoranze,* "the right of criticism [and] opposition will be negated only for the anti-patriots."[12] Thus, in spite of the criticisms highlighted by Settimelli and the press, Marinetti was hardly a threat to the regime, and in fact was an active contributor to the developing dictatorship, as evidenced when Mussolini moved the dictatorship into the organization of culture.

In imposing the dictatorship Mussolini sought to quell political opposition. However, the dictatorship also marked a new relationship between the intellectual and the state, and the intellectual and society, and in this area Marinetti and Mussolini marched in lock step. Both believed in socially and politically engaged intellectuals, and the state's need to develop and harness culture as a means of national advancement. Marinetti had been writing about formal ways of institutionalizing a closer relationship between the state and culture since 1919, and in early 1925 Mussolini began implementing policies to this end, as well as beginning the process of determining just what a Fascist culture was. Thus was the birth of the Convention of Fascist Institutions of Culture (a.k.a. the

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[11] De Grand, *Italian Fascism*, 54-57.
[12] F.T. Marinetti, "Il discorso di Marinetti," in *L'Impero*, March 3, 1925; found in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

Convention/Congress of Fascist Intellectuals), held in Bologna in late March 1925, just a few weeks after the *Onoranze* for Marinetti. Marinetti, along with a host of Italy's other leading intellectuals, was invited to attend.[13]

Another reason for the Convention was that Mussolini wanted to raise the cultural profile of the regime. Anti-Fascists had been unsparing in their declarations of the barbarity of Fascism, specifically Fascism's lack of any cultural pretensions. Mussolini sought to put this notion to rest by uniting Italy's leading intellectual lights behind him. In his telegram to the Convention he wrote that "The initiative that is being realized today has a great historical, cultural and political importance. It will end once and for all the foolish myth of an incompatibility between intelligence and Fascism."[14] The regime's paper made it clear that "the Bologna convention will demonstrate the consensus of the best members of the Italian intelligentsia for that movement [Fascism] that has been represented as devoid of any intellectual quality, a product of the *manganello* and not of thought."[15] Such sentiments were clearly shared by Marinetti who sought a dictatorship that was more than simple repression.

The leading intellectual, and its guiding force, at the Convention was Giovanni Gentile, to Marinetti's obvious displeasure. However, Marinetti and Gentile had more in common than the former would want to admit, and would explain why both were at this congress. Both rejected the Idealist philosopher Benedetto Croce's notion that art was an autonomous institution. Croce had developed this notion in reaction to the dominant

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[13] Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 68-69; Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 9, 19; Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 21. See also, Guido Vitali, "L'odierno Convegno di cultura fascista a Bologna sarà una solenne affermazione di fede e di intellettualità," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, March 29, 1925.
[14] Quoted in Emilio Papa, *Storia di due manifesti: Il fascismo e la cultura italiana* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1958), 50.
[15] "La coltura nazionale al Convegno fascista di Bologna," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, March 28, 1925.

positivist mentality of the 19th century that argued ideas were expressions of their social environment and the biography of the writer. Croce argued that art was the product of 'pure intuition' not tied to material roots. Thus Croce's Idealism privileged the intellectual divorced from the perambulations of the state and society, and affirmed the liberal belief in the freedom of individual expression over the needs of the state. Both Gentile and Marinetti, however, felt that the state's role was paramount in modern society. The state was to educate and guide the nation to greatness, and the intellectuals' role was not to separate themselves from society, but to act as public intellectuals in the fulfillment of the state's goal. Pure individualism would be demoted in place of individual fulfillment through the collective advancement of the nation.[16]

The Convention covered a number of wide-ranging issues, most of which Marinetti felt were tedious, besides the point, and "idiotic."[17] When he finally spoke he focused on what he felt the point of the meeting was: to find a way for the state to harness its cultural resources:

> I have carefully listened to the speeches given to the first Congress of Fascist Culture held in Bologna, but to my surprise I did not hear mentioned one indispensable, essential, urgent word: Art.
>
> We did not come to Bologna to display economic, political, sociological and philosophical programs or programs for the science of banking.
> We came to find the practical methods for enriching, developing, and multiplying the spiritual forces of the great Fascist Italy.
> . . . the primary spiritual forces of our country have been, are, and will always be the creative artists. The greatness of our country is tied to its poets, painters,

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[16] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 20-21; Lyttelton, *Seizure of Power*, 375; Tannenbaum, *Fascist Experience*, 285. More generally, see H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society, The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930* (New York: Knopf, 1958; reprinted, 1979), Chapter 3, "Critique of Marxism," *passim*; Melissa Lane, "Positivism: Reactions and Developments," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought*, edited by Terence Ball and Richard Bellamy (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 321-342.

[17] Marinetti to Benedetta, March 30b, 1925, in YMP, Box 3, Folder 37: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa, 1925. Papa, *Storia di due manifesti*, 48-49 has a full listing of the program.

> sculptors, architects, musicians, the only primary resource of which Italy is abundant in.
> It is the case, however, that while all categories of citizens have found at some point help and support from the government and from private sources, creative artists in Italy are ignored by all.[18]

Consequently, he argued that the state should offer aid to its artists because there were clear political opportunities in the support of the Italian artist at home, and the diffusion of Italian art overseas: "Our books, our statues, our music, illuminated by the indispensable light of celebrity could become our best agents of foreign policy, our most intelligent ambassadors." D'Annunzio, he pointed out, did more for the Italian language and the name of Italy than any Italian cultural society ever did. There are, he continued, Germans, French and English speakers who had learned Italian simply to be able to read D'Annunzio. The Futurists, he argued, continued this form of Italian cultural imperialism in the Twentieth century. Thus, Marinetti felt the greatness of Fascism would be tied to the greatness of its art and artists.[19]

In order to guarantee this greatness, Marinetti suggested what state cultural intervention should look like, and it was modeled on the manifesto "*I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani*" discussed in the previous chapter. The *Diritti artistici* had originally been submitted to Mussolini after he took office, and then were published in early 1923. Marinetti now took this opportunity to re-publicize them, as the goal of the Convention was exactly what the *Diritti* had suggested: the establishment of some form of interventionist state cultural policy. He argued that Italian artists should be represented by a state subsidized professional organization, such as his *Camera delle arti* (Chamber for the Arts). One of the *Camera*'s primary goals was to be the financial

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[18] F.T. Marinetti, "La camera degli artisti," in Fillia et al, *Arte Fascista: Elementi per la battaglia artistica* (Turin: Sindacati artistici, 1927), 27.
[19] Ibid., 28.

subsidization of the Italian artist as a means of freeing them to create their art. Just as importantly, the *Camera* was to "defend the new, young, Italian artists in all the artistic manifestations promoted by the State, by the Communes and by private [organizations]." Specifically, he singled out the Biennale, the Augusteo and Scala, and the Syracuse Theatre as examples of institutions that privileged foreign artists to Italian ones. On a very practical level, Marinetti also suggested such things as the modernization of art schools, extension of copyright protection to Italian artists, and reduction in transportation fees and tariffs for art.[20]

More broadly, Marinetti used the speech to further his goal of defining Fascism as modern, revolutionary and specifically Futurist-inspired. This was clearly in line with his policy of keeping the radical heritage of Fascism alive, however this time it was more than mere rhetoric. The politically and socially radical aspects of *dicianovismo* had already been compromised or muted when he re-joined Fascism. The only thing left was a commitment to the advancement of modern art. As many of Italy's Fascist intellectuals were at the Convention, it was critical that Marinetti should define Fascism as modern and revolutionary. He recognized that if the state was to involve itself in culture, it was imperative that state cultural policy should not be directed by anti-modernist, conservative Fascists. To wit, he highlighted that Fascism was a revolutionary idea, and that this was due to the Futurist nature of both Fascism and the Duce himself. That Fascism was obviously Futurist in nature Marinetti proved by referencing both Ciarlantini (Fascist organizer of the Convention) and Croce (the anti-Fascist who boycotted the Convention), who both argued that Futurism was integral to Fascism.[21]

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[20] Ibid., 30-34.
[21] Ibid., 28.

Marinetti emphasized Mussolini's Futurist nature through a recitation of a number of passages by the Duce in which he called for a government of 'speed,' and a government that would look beyond the glories of the ancient Roman Empire.[22]

The Convention did not produce a coherent Fascist cultural policy. This would have been impossible at the time, and the regime never in fact came up with a policy that specifically defined what 'Fascist' culture was.[23] However, the goal of uniting Italy's intellectuals behind Fascism after the imposition of the dictatorship, as well as justifying the dictatorship to the outside world, was at least partly successful. The Convention released "Il manifesto degli intellettuali del fascismo" ("The Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals") on April 21, which put these intellectuals squarely behind the new dictatorship, justifying its extraordinary means against socialism and Liberal anti-Fascism and its intent to create a new Italy. Marinetti, of course, signed the document.

Marinetti's signature was certainly self-serving, but the closeness of his own views and those of the state in the manifesto highlight that Marinetti was far more than a fellow-traveler, he was a true-believer. The manifesto laid out the basic Fascist principle that the state had the right to crush political opposition in the interest of national unity, regardless of the cost to civil liberties, and to harness the nation's full resources for national advancement, all of which Marinetti subscribed to. Marinetti was in full

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[22] Ibid., 29-30.

[23] Mussolini recognized early in that favoring one group of artists over the other simply alienated too many potential supporters. At the opening of the *Novecento* exhibit in 1923 he stated that:

> He who governs cannot ignore art or the artist. . . . In a country like Italy, a government uninterested in the arts would be deficient. I declare, however, that the idea of fostering anything resembling a state-sponsored art is far from my mind. The state has only one duty: not to undermine art, but to create humane conditions for artists and to encourage them from the artistic and national points of view. It is important that I say that the government over which I have the honor to preside is a sincere friend of art and of the artist.

See "Alla mostra del Novecento. Parole di Mussolini sull'arte e sul governo," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, March 27, 1923.

agreement with the manifesto's claim that Fascism emerged in reaction to socialist activity after the war, that socialists had exploited the economic crisis and fomented a class war, which emphasized the economic rights of the individual over the needs of the state, and that socialists had also attacked the institutions of the state, the king and the army.[24] No doubt the references to the king and the army were a little embarrassing to a supposed 'radical', but as mentioned, his political radicalism amounted to little more than rhetoric at this point and his primary goal was always national strength. Marinetti also supported the manifesto's claim that Fascism represented the needs of the nation, and that individuals found their spiritual fulfillment in service to the state.[25] Moreover, Marinetti agreed that the Liberal state was an institution that the Fascists needed to combat because of its support for the individualism that allowed for the growth of socialism.[26] Consequently, he was untroubled by the manifesto's declaration that in the face of political opposition, the Fascist government saw fit to limit civil liberties, such as freedom of the press.[27] Lastly, he supported the declaration that Fascism intended to unite the state (the "juridical force of the nation in its organic and functional unity") and the syndicate (the "juridical force of the individual in their economic activities"), and that the state was to act as the "organizer of all individual activities in their organic and concrete forms."[28] These points spoke directly to Marinetti's desire for the state to become more actively involved in the organization and support of Italian artists, as well as to take on a more direct role in economic management, from eliminating the class war,

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[24] "Il manifesto degli intellettuali del fascismo," in Papa, *Storia di due manifesti*, 59. The Manifesto is also available in Papa's expanded *Fascismo e cultura* (Venice: Marsilio, 1974), 186-194. An English version is available in Jeffrey T. Schnapp, ed., *A Primer of Italian Fascism* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 297-303.
[25] "Il manifesto degli intellettuali del fascismo," in Papa, *Storia di due manifesti*, 60.
[26] Ibid., 61.
[27] Ibid., 66.
[28] Ibid.

to favoring the modernization of the Italian economy and breaking its dependence on the foreign tourist trade. Of course, in accepting this corporative organization of the economy, Marinetti was signaling another compromise of his radical goals. If the state was to organize the economy, the freedom of workers to organize to advocate even for purely economic ends would be curtailed if the state deemed their demands harmful to the nation.

The "Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals" did not, of course, speak for all intellectuals in Italy. Benedetto Croce released his "Risposta di scrittori, professori e pubblicisti italiani, al manifesto degli intellettuali fascisti," ("A Reply From Italy's Writers, Professors and Journalists to the Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals") on May 1 in *Il Mondo.* Holding to his Idealist and liberal faith, he argued there was no reason for intellectuals to prostrate themselves before the authoritarian state, as it would only contaminate their art and the state had not proven itself as a guarantor of the moral uplift of society. The number of intellectuals who signed Croce's "Counter-Manifesto" far exceeded the signatories of the state's document, and required *Il Mondo* to publish two subsequent editions (May 10 and 22) to carry all the names.[29] Croce's response to the state's cultural initiatives accelerated the drive to organize culture. Simply quashing intellectual dissidents would not bring the regime the intellectual legitimacy it desired, nor generate wide-spread support from Italian intellectuals. No coherent Fascist cultural policy could be put into place, owing to the multiplicity of views on what culture was supposed to be, but the infrastructure of culture could be organized and brought under state control. In this way overt anti-Fascism would be eliminated, and patronage would

[29] Benedetto Croce, "Una risposta di scrittori, professori e pubblicisti italiani, al manifesto degli intellettuali fascisti," in *Il Mondo*, May 1, 1925, reprinted in Papa, *Storia di due manifesti*, 92-97. Schnapp has translated the document in his *A Primer of Italian Fascism,* 304-307.

be provided for all those intellectuals who either left politics out of their work or were friendly to the regime.

The results of this organization of culture were numerous, and they all bore some resemblance to ideas Marinetti had been floating for years. These not only solidified Marinetti's allegiance to the regime, but mark him as instrumental in the development of the Fascist dictatorship. These cultural initiatives involved the creation of a variety of institutions, such as the *Enciclopedia italiana* (Italian Encyclopedia), the *Reale Accademia d'Italia* (The Royal Academy of Italy), and the *Istituto nazionale fascista di cultura* (National Fascist Institute of Culture), as well as the nationalization of the Venice Biennale and the Monza (after 1929 Milan) art exhibits, as well as the creation of the Rome Quadriennale. Moreover, all artists were to be organized into national syndicates in the Fascist organization of labor.

The *Enciclopedia* was the brainchild of Giovanni Treccani and was launched in February 1925. The goal was to not only collect in one place the achievements of Italians through the ages, countering what was considered an excessive French and English influence on European culture, but, in a clearly nationalist vein, to provide an Italian "point of view" that concerned Italian culture.[30] The *Istituto nazionale fascista di cultura* was launched during the Fascist Party's national congress in June, 1925. It was the first systematic mass propaganda initiative of the Fascist government, and sought to create a 'New Italian' through raising the cultural life of the poor and working classes.

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[30] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso,* 51; Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 286; Giovanni Lazzari, *L'Enciclopedia Treccani* (Naples: Liguori, 1977); Gabriele Turi, "Ideologia e cultura del fascismo: l'Encicopedia italiana,'" in *Il fascismo e il consenso degli intellettuali* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1980), 74. Anti-Fascists were briefly allowed in the early volumes, as a mark of 'intellectual freedom' in Italy. Cannistraro has a concise summary of his views on Mussolini's cultural policy, in English, in the last work he published before he passed away. See Philip Cannistraro, "Mussolini and the Italian Intellectuals," in *Culture, Censorship and the State in Twentieth-Century Italy*, edited by Guido Bonsaver and Robert S.C. Gordon (London: Legenda, 2005).

Representatives of the *Istituto* were stationed all over Italy and were responsible for everything from free concerts, visits to museums, public conferences to issuing a variety of publications that became mandatory holdings in the schools, libraries, and the offices of the Fascist Party.[31] The *Accademia* was also created in 1925, though not inaugurated until 1929. Here Mussolini's goal was to place Italy's leading intellectuals into a prestigious society that would be responsible for the advancement of Italian art, letters, and science through the organization of competitions, publications, and conferences, as well as the subsidization of Italian work. This would not only elevate Italy's cultural legitimacy, by focusing attention on the *Accademia* and its work, purposely modeled on the French Academy, but also had the added bonus of co-opting the intellectuals chosen to serve. They would be required to swear allegiance to the king and the Fascist regime in exchange for the prestige and financial subsidy that came with the position of *Accademico*.[32]

The next step in the Fascist organization of culture was to impose direct control over Italy's artists through their inclusion into the regime's new corporativist system in 1926. Revolutionary syndicalism had been a critical ingredient in the early Fascist movement and its ideology, and when Mussolini came to power there were hopes for Italian labor being organized into a unitary body that would both protect the interests of labor and harness its productive capacity in the interests of the state.[33] This idea was

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[31] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 22-23; Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 139.
[32] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 24-26; Marinella Ferrarotto*, L' Accademia d'Italia: Intellettuali e potere durante il fascismo* (Naples: Liguori, 1977); Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, 292-293; Mario Isnenghi, *Intellettuali militanti e intellettuali funzionari: Appunti sulla cultura fascista* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), 79.
[33] For syndicalism and Fascism, see David Roberts, *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Zeev Sternhell, with Mario Sznajder and Maia Asheri, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution*, translated by David Maisel

effectively quashed in 1926 when Mussolini first concluded the Palazzo Vidoni Pact with Italian industrialists, and then crushed the independence of the *Confederazione nazionale delle corporazioni*, and replaced them with the thoroughly tamed *Confederazione nazionale dei sindacati fascisti*. As part of this totalitarian organization of labor, intellectuals were now required to be members of either the *Confederazione nazionale dei sindacati fascisti dei professionisti e degli artisti* or the *Confederazione dello spettacolo*. Within the former confederation there were five syndicates, one each for journalists, writers, architects and engineers, painters and sculptors and musicians—known collectively as the *Sindacato fascista delle belle arti* (Fascist Syndicate of Fine Arts). The latter confederation included syndicates for artists from the opera, theatre, and the cinema.[34] The syndicates, like the *Accademia*, transformed intellectuals into willing functionaries of the state. In theory, the syndicates were meant to provide some form of economic protection to artists by uniting intellectuals and artists, the culture industry, and members of the government in the same unit to regulate prices and access, as well as to subsidize the cost of artistic production. In the case of the syndicates, however, pure economic need drove many intellectuals into being at least tepid Fascists. To make any money from your craft, one had to be a member of the syndicate that controlled your

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(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista (1918-1925)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996).

[34] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 32-33; Marla Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 25. Stone notes that the five syndicates also went by the name the *Sindacato fascista delle belle arti*. Mussolini's general thinking about the corporative state was made clear at the foundation of the Ministry of Corporations, in which he pointed out that the greatness of the Ministry was that it empowered the state to "transcend the contrasting interests of individuals and groups in order to co-ordinate them for a higher goal…," and that this was possible because "all the economic organizations recognized, guaranteed, [and] protected in the corporative state live in the common orbit of Fascism; that is, accept the doctrinal and practical conceptions of Fascism. [And] Are led by men enrolled in the Party." See "Le grandi realizzazioni della Rivoluzione fascista. Ieri si è inaugurato solennemente il Ministero delle Corporazioni," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, August 1, 1926.

field, and membership was contingent on membership in the Fascist Party and proof that you had an acceptable political record.[35]

The effectiveness of the syndical organization of intellectuals and artists lay in the state's final effort at organizing culture—taking control over the exhibition of culture from the local to the national level starting in 1927. At the provincial level, all exhibits were put under the direction of the Fascist Syndicate of Fine Arts, where a successful showing would allow the artist to exhibit ultimately at the national level. That year the city of Venice lost control over the Biennale when Mussolini forced the appointment of Antonio Maraini (Secretary General of the Fascist Syndicate of Fine Arts), Margherita Sarfatti and Cipriano Oppo (President of the Fascist Syndicate of Fine Arts) to the Biennale's formerly all Venetian board. By 1930 the Biennale was firmly under Mussolini's control, and consequently Italian artists received more favored treatment at the exhibit.[36] The Biennale had always been a showcase for international art, and the state's intervention tilted the balance more towards Italian artists. However, in 1928 the regime created the Rome Quadriennale, which would specifically highlight the accomplishments of Italian artists in the national capital. Led by Secretary-General Cipriano Oppo, the Quadriennale was directed as closely by the state as the Biennale.[37] Finally, the decorative arts also came under the control of the state. In 1927 Mussolini imposed direct state control over the Monza International Exhibit of Decorative Arts. Sarfatti, as with the Biennale, was appointed to the organizing committee, and she was

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[35] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 34-35; Stone, *The Patron State*, 26-28. Stone and Cannistraro disagree over the need to be a member of the Fascist Party to be a member of a syndicate. Moreover, Stone notes that there were some occasions in which artists could display without membership in a syndicate, though these were not common.
[36] Stone, *The Patron State*, 35-41; Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 50.
[37] Stone, *The Patron State*, 36.

instrumental in transforming the Monza into a showcase for modern design and mass-produced industrial goods, for using it to introduce Rationalist architecture to the Italian public, and for moving the exhibit to Milan. Thus the Milan Triennale was born.[38]

All of this state intervention into the cultural sphere was welcomed by Marinetti. The *Enciclopedia*, *Accademia*, and *Istituto* all met his often stated demands that the state had to promote Italian culture and break the nation's inferiority complex and its fascination with all things foreign. Moreover they elevated the artist and intellectual into active partners in the making of a new Fascist Italy. The latter goal, as well as the protection and patronage of the Italian artist and intellectual, was also the purported goal of their organization into syndicates. Lastly, the nationalization of local and national exhibits spoke to Marinetti's frustrations with, for instance, the Venice Biennale's failure to recognize Italian contributions, specifically Futurist, to modern art. Marinetti and Futurism benefited from the state's new cultural policy. Marinetti was appointed National Secretary of the Syndicate of Authors and Writers in 1928, and Futurism would no longer have difficulty breaking into the Biennale, much less the Quadriennale and Triennale. Marinetti was able to secure funding and jobs for his associates, and, of course, Marinetti would ultimately be nominated to the *Accademia* in1929.

Whatever measure of responsibility we can ascribe to Marinetti for Fascist cultural policy also means that he must be held responsible for the consequences of this policy. Although Italian arts and artists were given far more exposure and funding under the Fascist regime, they also lost their autonomy as the dictatorship became more

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[38] Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 322-324; Emily Braun, *Mario Sironi and Italian Modernism*: *Art and Politics Under Fascism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 142; Fernando Tempesti, *Arte dell'Italia fascista* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976), 87; Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, "Architettura, pittura e arte decorativa in Italia: 1923-1940, dalla I Biennale alla VII Triennale," in *Arte Italiana: Presenze, 1900-1945*, edited by Pontus Hulten and Germano Celant (Milan: Bompiani, 1989).

totalitarian in the 1930s. Marinetti had always believed that a 'revolutionary' Fascist state would promote and protect its national artists and liberate them from both domestic and international obstacles to their advancement. He thus encouraged the state into the realm of autonomous culture. But having brought the state in, the autonomy—the liberty—of the Italian artist, no matter how Fascist or loyal, would ultimately be curtailed according to the state's needs.[39] This, however, was a consequence not readily apparent in the years 1925-1929. At that time Marinetti continued to aid in the growth and legitimation of the Fascist dictatorship believing it was a force for Italy's renewal.

From the summer of 1925 through to the end of 1926 Marinetti took on ever more public roles on behalf of the dictatorship, all in some measure geared towards expanding Fascist influence abroad. At the Paris Exhibit of Modern and Decorative Arts he defended the regime from the embarrassment of a poor showing at a time when it was still seeking international legitimacy, he worked towards the Italianization of the recently acquired Alto Adige, traveled to South America to solidify ties with the *Fasci al estero* (Fascists Abroad), acting as an informal emissary for the Duce, and did similar duty when he promoted Fascism in France and Spain. However, it was during these extended bouts of propaganda that Marinetti began to experience the consequences of his support for the regime. Regardless of his claims that Fascism was a revolutionary movement that allowed for freedom of expression, many could not get beyond the image of the brutal murder of Matteotti, and that Marinetti, the purveyor of 'anarchic individualism', was supporting an authoritarian dictatorship.

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[39] For instance, the *Enciclopedia* once published anti-Fascists, but this was curtailed in the 1930s. The *Accademia* spent more and more of its time in basic political and cultural propaganda in the 1930s, and the syndicates evolved into mechanisms to implement the state's directives. See Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso,* 24-26, 34-35, 51; Stone, *The Patron State*, 26-28.

The Paris Expo was important for Mussolini primarily because it was the first international exhibit that Italy participated in since the Matteotti Crisis. The murder of the socialist deputy had soured many on the supposed glories of Italian Fascism. The imposition of the dictatorship likely did not garner too many new converts either. More to the point, Mussolini was still sensitive to the idea that Fascism was simply a thuggish movement devoid of any cultural aspirations, or any constructive impulses for that matter. This had explained his organization of the Convention of Fascist Intellectuals, and his increased state intervention in culture in response to the embarrassing Crocean anti-Fascist manifesto. Paris was to be the place where Mussolini could silence his critics.[40]

To guarantee that Italy made a good showing, Mussolini put Sarfatti in charge of Italy's pavilion at the Expo. Sarfatti was a well-respected art critic. However, she was also the patron of the *Novecento* movement, which had been experimenting with a modern form of classicism, thus bridging the ages as Fascism proclaimed itself to be doing. But this balance between the old and the new was never a simple formula, and this would explain the discomfiture that the Italians suffered at the Expo. Sarfatti had convinced Mussolini to appoint Armando Brasini as the designer of the Italian pavilion. Brasini produced a "huge, uninspired mausoleum of a building combining Roman and Cinquecento elements, [which] proved to be something of an embarrassment." Clearly, in this instance, the balance had fallen too far in the direction of classicism, and not enough on the modern side. This folly was compounded by the Russian pavilion designed by Konstantin Melnikov directly across the street, and Le Corbusier's independent pavilion. Both of which had produced stark designs devoid of the

[40] Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 317; Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 249.

"decorative excess" of Brasini's creation.[41] Some have dismissed Brasini's work as simply "banal."[42]

Another reason for Italy's poor showing in Paris was Sarfatti's preference for practical, artisanal, hand-crafted work, when the general trend in Paris was towards the decorative or industrial arts. Somehow, Sarfatti had missed this developing international trend. The Futurists, specifically Depero, excelled in the new art movement, but Sarfatti dismissed Depero's work at the 1925 Monza exhibit as erring on the side of decoration versus practicality. Consequently, the Futurists were not the main part of the Italian pavilion in Paris.[43]

However, much to Sarfatti's disappointment, and Marinetti's ultimate gain, the Futurists turned out to be the saviors of the Italian exhibit. Firstly, the Futurists' work highlighted that Italy was competitive within the emerging world of the modern decorative arts.[44] Secondly, Futurism's broader influence at the Exposition was apparent beyond their contribution to the Italian exhibit. Le Corbusier's designs, for instance, were deeply influenced by the work of Antonio Sant'Elia, the first Futurist architect.[45] Consequently, Marinetti defended the Italian exhibit in an open letter to *Paris Soir.* In response to a negative review of the Italian exhibit in that paper, he wrote that

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[41] Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 317-318.
[42] Giulia Veronesi, *Into the Twenties: Style and Design, 1909-1929*, translated by Diana Barran (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968; originally published as *Stile 1925* [Florence: Vallecchi, 1966]), 221.
[43] Tempesti, *Arte dell'Italia fascista*, 86-87; Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 317; Lampugnani, "Achitettura, pittura e arte decorativa in Italia: 1923-1940, dalla I Biennale alla VII Triennale," in *Arte Italiana: Presenze, 1900-1945*, edited by Pontus Hulten and Germano Celant, 69.
[44] Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 318; Veronesi, *Into the Twenties*, 224. In Depero's later recollection, he specifically stated that at the Paris expo, "Futurism had saved Italy." See, GMP, Box 14, Folder 13: Depero, which contains an undated letter [though likely late 1928 or early 1929] from Depero in New York to Marinetti, and the text of his speech "Discorso fascista-futurista," from which the quote is taken.
[45] F.T. Marinetti, "Il carattere italiano delle originalità parigine," in Fillia et al, *Arte Fascista: Elementi per la battaglia artistica* (Turin: Sindacati artistici, 1927), 21, 25-26; Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 319.

> In your authoritative newspaper I read an article on the exposition of Paris, [and] showing the anti-Fascist and anti-Italian judgment of 'Paris-soir', the writer came to these two strange conclusions: 'Italy did not have a good showing in Paris. The modern decorative arts in Italy do not exist,' and then, 'The French are already slaves to the German decorative arts."
> I must demonstrate to you that these conclusions do not correspond to reality. First of all the Brasini pavilion was only a part of the Italian exposition. What Italy presented at the Grand Palace was magnificent work….[46]

He further explained that Art Deco did not begin in France or Germany, but had only emerged in those countries because of the international influence of Italian Futurism.[47] Thus, Marinetti was able to not only solidify the cultural bona-fides of the Fascist regime, but he did so by promoting his own movement at the expense of a rival as 'the' depiction of Fascist culture.

Based on the scant evidence we have for this period, it would seem that Marinetti extolled the virtues of Fascism publicly and often, though the first consequences of his role as a spokesman for Fascism were also apparent in Paris. In October, near the end of the Exposition, Marinetti was back in Paris, and hosted a conference dedicated to Futurism and Fascism, specifically touting Futurism as the precursor of Fascism and glorifying Mussolini. Marinetti was enthusiastic about the event, writing Benedetta from Paris that "life is beautiful and worth living when one loves . . . and fights in the brightness of our Italy. . . ."[48] Marinetti, however, ran into opposition from fellow avant-garde artists. On the day of his conference he encountered Branko Ve Poljanski, co founder of the Yugoslavian avant-garde movement Zenithism. Zenithism was internationalist, and anti-political, which would have put it at odds with Futurism to begin

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[46] F.T. Marinetti, Undated letter, YMP, Box 1, Folder 12: [Paris Soir?].
[47] F.T. Marinetti, Undated letter, YMP, Box 1, Folder 12: [Paris Soir?]; F.T. Marinetti, "Il carattere italiano delle originalità parigine," in Fillia et al, *Arte Fascista: Elementi per la battaglia artistica*, 25-6. Marinetti essentially recounts the contents of the former letter in the latter document.
[48] Marinetti to Benedetta, October 27, 1925, in YMP, Box 3, Folder 37: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa, 1925.

with, but it was also opposed to Futurism because of its close connection to Fascism, which, according to Poljanski, was terrorizing Slavs in Istria, and closing their schools. At their meeting, Poljanski made it clear that he welcomed Marinetti as the founder of Futurism, but "as the propagator of Fascism, you lose our sympathies."[49] While this encounter was harmless enough, a simple exchange of words, it foreshadowed Marinetti's future problems with international artists who were repelled by his increasing closeness to the Fascist regime.

It is not altogether clear if Marinetti was acting under any sort of official orders when he stumped for Fascism through Paris during the Exposition. Certainly his highlighting of any criticism of Italy at the Exposition as anti-Fascist could not have been pure coincidence. Anti-Fascism was a growing problem for the regime, and many Italian anti-Fascists made their home in Paris when forced into exile.[50] Moreover, back in May, before having left for Paris, Marinetti requested an interview with Mussolini.[51] Though the contents of this interview are not available, it fit into a pattern in which Marinetti would meet with Mussolini either before he departed for another country, where he invariably sang the praises of Futurism and Fascism, and then always debriefed Mussolini when he returned.

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[49] "Dialogue Marinetti-Poliansky," in YMP, Box 22, Folder 1269: Dialogue Marinetti-Poliansky. On Zenithism, see Dubravka Djuric and Misko Suvakovic, eds., *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Timothy Benson and Eva Forgacs, eds, *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); Peter Nadas, *Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910-1930*, edited by Timothy Benson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

[50] Charles F. Delzell, "Anti-Fascism," in Philip V. Cannistraro, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982). Delzell's entry is based on his *Mussolini's Enemies: The Italian Anti-Fascist Resistance*, revised edition (New York: Howard Fertig, 1974).

[51] Marinetti to Mussolini, May 22, 1925, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

Whatever the exact nature of Marinetti's and Mussolini's relationship in 1925, Marinetti's very public gestures in support of the regime, from his participation at the Convention of Fascist Intellectuals to his activities at the Paris Exposition, would slowly elevate him in the ranks of the Fascist hierarchy and make him an ever greater contributor to the development of the dictatorship. The first obvious sign of this was Marinetti's appointment as Honorary President of the *Associazione dei "Tricolori del Brennero" per la Guardia al Brennero* (Association of the "Tricolors of the Brenner" for the Brenner Guard). This association was created by Mussolini in February, 1926 to Italianize the recently incorporated Austrians of Alto Adige (or South Tyrol in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire). Mussolini's drive to totalitarian dictatorship reached out to this group of Tyrolese that resisted not simply Fascism, but Italian culture altogether.[52] According to Mussolini,

> The *Guardia al Brennero* is an alpine tourist association that proposes to Italianize the frontiers of Italy and particularly the Alto Trentino. This will be achieved through vast and variegated summer and winter programs of climbing, tourist races, records of unreachable mountain tops, [and] alpine festivals in which the *Tricolori del Brennero* must impose, with elegance and firmness, the Italian language, Italian pride and the indisputable superiority of our race. . . . The Guardia al Brennero is organized in sections of *Tricolori* and explicates its action in harmony with and coherently with the principles informing Fascism, the only movement that encompasses in a complete vision the true means of national reconstruction.[53]

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[52] Ben Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, 19; Dennison I. Rusinow, *Italy's Austrian Heritage, 1919-1946* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1969), 170-179. There seems to be some discrepancy as to who created the organization. Marinetti claims he did, and many of the clippings in his *Libroni* at the time claim he did. Whatever the pedigree of the idea, it is enough to say that both Mussolini and Marinetti shared the desire to aggressively expand Italian culture northward into the Tyrol. See F.T. Marinetti, "La guardia al Brennero, [1929]" in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 539; "Twenty-three clippings related to the creation by Marinetti of the association: La Guarda al Brennero, gen 1926," in *Marinetti Libroni*, Beinecke Library, Yale University, Filing Call Number GEN MSS 475 / 04002-01, Carousel Number 51, Slot Number 22, Master CD Number 0262-3231-4692.

[53] Benito Mussolini, "*La Guardia al Brennero*, [February 8, 1926]" in YMP, Box 47, Folder 1895: Mussolini, Benito.

Marinetti was thus brought into an enterprise critical to the dictatorship. Marinetti's feelings on the aggressive, imperialist, nationalism of the *Guardia* were clear from the manifesto he published for the project. In it he praised the "Divinity of Italy," and the "ancient Romans [who] conquered all the known peoples of the world," and declared that "Italy today is insuperable." Consequently, he argued that the "least Italian is worth at least a thousand foreigners," that the "Italian language is the most beautiful in the world," that "Italy has complete rights [over all] because it has and will always have an absolute monopoly on creative genius, and thus, "every foreigner must enter Italy as if it were a holy event." Moreover, always liking to use Mussolini's words to further his owns ends, Marinetti, in a reference to Mussolini's telegram to the November, 1924 Futurist Congress, stated that the "Brennero is not a point of arrival, but a point of departure."[54] What exactly did this mean? According to the *New York Times*' coverage of the event, the Fascists were not simply interested in Italianizing the Tyrolese that fell into their borders, but also sought the conquest of the Austrian Tyrol, essentially controlling the strategically important Brenner Pass from both ends, and eliminating the threat of a northern invasion which Italy had repeatedly suffered. And, of course, Marinetti was there in the thick of things. According to the *Times*, "As Gabriele D'Annunzio, the poet and birdman, drilled his Arditi to demand Fiume and nothing less than Fiume from Yugoslavia, so is the Futurist painter, Marinetti, instructing the Brenner Guard that Italy's destined objective is the Austrian Tyrol."[55]

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[54] F.T. Marinetti, "La guardia al Brennero, [1929]" in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 539. Note, when Marinetti wrote this in 1929 he did not emphasize that this was a 'new' Italian empire, and was perfectly happy to glorify Rome's imperial past, a sign of the inevitable compromises when linked to an authoritarian regime.
[55] P.W. Wilson, "Italy Eyes Historic Brenner Pass," *New York Times*, January 10, 1926.

After Marinetti helped establish the *Guardia al Brennero*, he undertook two international trips in 1926 which were essentially propaganda campaigns for the regime. The first, to South America, from May to July, 1926 was ostensibly to glorify Futurism, but was really a means for the Fascist government to establish closer relations with Italians and specifically Fascists living overseas. The second, to Paris, in November was a more overt attempt on the part of the Duce to use Marinetti to establish relations with French fascists. In the historiography, the latter has not been covered, and the former has been misinterpreted, thus leading to a failure to adequately comprehend Marinetti's contributions to the dictatorship, and how he made his way up the Fascist ranks to the level of *Accademico* in 1929.

The South America trip was billed as a tour for Marinetti to speak on Futurism, but he experienced a variety of anti-Fascist demonstrations throughout visit, as he was increasingly viewed primarily as a Fascist.[56] Yet, even with these troubles, Marinetti's police file is stamped "Anti-fascista." Thus historians do not know what to make of this trip. Salaris readily admits that the trip had clear Fascist objectives, but then laments that Marinetti was still considered an anti-Fascist, thus frustrating his goal of making Futurism the state art, even though he was considered its spokesman overseas.[57] Berghaus and Nazzaro, conversely, argue that the trip had political messages, but anti-Fascist ones, thus justifying Marinetti's designation as an anti-Fascist because of his activities while on tour in Argentina.[58] In Schnapp's and Rocha's very commendable

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[56] Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Joao Cezar de Castro Rocha, "Brazilian Velocities: On Marinetti's 1926 Trip to South America," *South Central Review*, vol. 13, #2/3 (Summer-Autumn, 1996), 107. The authors argue that money problems may have also motivated the speaking tour through South America.
[57] Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 258.
[58] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 282; Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 189. Some frustrating errors in citation occur with Berghaus here. He was informed of Marinetti's police file by Nazzaro, and argues it was opened because of Marinetti's critical behavior since the 1924 Biennale exhibition (Berghaus, 303,

study of the trip they completely ignore the political import of the tour. They accept Marinetti made pro-Fascist pronouncements, but argue that these were simply sops to local government functionaries and patriots, and, more to their point, should really be seen as a means of rousing the crowds to a rebellious fervor in order to re-create the glories of the early Futurist *serate*.[59]

What these interpretations fail to grasp is that Marinetti's trip to South America was part of his overall activities aimed at furthering the development of the dictatorship in these early years. What needs to be understood is that the trip did have clear pro-, and not anti-, Fascist objectives, that Marinetti acted essentially as an informal emissary for the Duce in South America, and that the trip played a part in the larger Fascist goal of organizing the *Fasci all'estero* (Fascists Abroad). As for the designation of Marinetti as anti-Fascist on his police file, the only explanation seems to be that it was a mistake. As will be shown below, Marinetti did nothing but champion the regime in South America, and was surrounded by Italian government officials and local Fascists. It is unlikely he would have done anything critical. In fact, there is no record that he did do anything critical. The press either noted or condemned his Fascist connections, none mentioned he ever criticized the regime.[60] Moreover, the only document that deals with the Argentinian anti-Fascist episode does not note that Marinetti did anything untoward. It reads:

> Communiqué: From the first conference held on the evening of the 2nd by the noted Filippo Marinetti in the Coliseo theatre, of which took part and were

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note #11). However, Nazzaro makes clear that the anti-Fascist designation was the last entry in the file, and thereafter there were no further entries. Reference to the original confirms Nazzaro's observation. See ACS, MIN, Casellario Politico Centrale, B. 3066, f. 97613 (Marinetti).

[59] Schnapp and Rocha, "Brazilian Velocities," 114-115.

[60] Neither Schnapp and Rocha in "Brazilian Velocities," nor Sylvia Saítta in her "Futurism, Fascism and Mass-Media: The Case of Marinetti's 1926 Trip to Buenos Aires," *Stanford Humanities Review*, 7.1 (1999), mention any press account of Marinetti's allegedly anti-Fascist activities.

> arrested for behaving badly against the government and launching into the front of the theatre seditious manifests: Sergio Luigi, Preto Michele, Ricci Ilvio, Pelligra Raffaele, Bertelottia Ottavio di Giulio.[61]

Thus, the designation of anti-Fascist on Marinetti's file may have been an error on the part of the person receiving the telegram from Buenos Aires. More to the point, this document was the last one in this particular Marinetti file. If he had been truly viewed as an anti-Fascist, many more citations would have been added, but none were.

To make sense of Marinetti's trip to South America in 1926 it is best to put it into context. This was still a relatively early period in the formation of the dictatorship, and Mussolini was still interested in improving Fascism's image after the Matteotti Crisis. Having Marinetti do a tour of Italian expatriates in South America fit the bill. Moreover, during this period Mussolini was also imposing stricter controls on the *Fasci all'estero*, the foreign colonies of Fascists that spontaneously formed after the war and now needed to be harnessed for the regime's ends. At the first general congress of the *Fasci all'estero* held in Rome in late October, 1925, Mussolini specifically called on the *Fasci* to

> think of yourselves, in all your work and in every moment of your life, as pioneers, as missionaries, as bearers of Latin, Roman, and Italian civilization. . . . You must counter the common platitudes according to which Italy is merely a county rich in splendid memories, full of venerable museums, eternal monuments, but backward in what is called modern civilization.[62]

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[61] ACS, MIN, Casellario Politico Centrale, B. 3066, f. 97613 (Marinetti). The original reads: "Comunica: Da una prima confrenza tenuta la sera dell'II corrente dal noto Filippo Marinetti nel teatro 'Coliseo' di cui presero parte e arrestati perché emisero griga [sic] contro il Governo, e lanciando nella platea dei manifestini sedizioni, Sergio Luigi, Preto Michele, Ricci Ilvio, Pelligra Raffaele, Bertelottia Ottavio di Giulio."

[62] Benito Mussolini, "I compiti dei Fasci all'Estero," October 30, 1925, *Opera Omnia*, XXI, 430-431, quoted in Philip Cannistraro, *Blackshirts in Little Italy: Italian Americans and Fascism, 1921-1929* (West Lafayette, IN: Bordighera Press, 1999), 67. Also see Cannistraro's entry for the *Fasci all estero*, in his *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*. On the regime's desire to strengthen ties to overseas Italians, see Philip Cannistraro and Gianfausto Rosoli, "Fascist Emigration Policies in the 1920s: An Interpretive Framework," *International Migration Review*, 13, #4 (Winter, 1979), 673-692; Luca de Caprariis, " 'Fascism for Export'? The Rise and Eclipse of the Fasci Italiani all'Estero," *Journal of Contemporary History* 35 (2000), 151-183.

Certainly, the idea that Italy must look beyond it's role as simply a repository of museums would have appealed to Marinetti.

Specifically targeting Latin America was something Marinetti had publicly discussed a year before he went there. In his speech to the Convention of Fascist Intellectuals, Marinetti specifically referenced Antonio Beltramelli's paper at the convention, "On the Cultural Interchange between Italy and Latin America," which highlighted the incapacity "demonstrated by our ambassadors and consuls that do not know and do not want to know the political importance that the diffusion of literary works can have overseas."[63] At the time Marinetti used this argument to trumpet state support for artists in Italy, whose work could then encourage non-Italians to learn more about Italian culture. A year later, Marinetti decided to heed his own advice and went to South America to trumpet the glories of Futurism, and while there he acted as propagandist for the regime as well.

It is not clear who initiated the idea, Mussolini or Marinetti. What is clear, however, is that both were thinking along the same lines. Marinetti requested an audience with Mussolini before he left, in both March and May, and then requested an interview when he returned. It is likely Marinetti's planned activities were discussed at the first interview, as a number of government and Fascist functionaries were prepared to receive Marinetti when he arrived in South America, and then Marinetti debriefed the Duce on his travels in the latter interview.[64]

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[63] F.T. Marinetti, "La camera degli artisti," 28.
[64] Marinetti to Mussolini, March 9, 1926; no date, but early May, 1926; July 29, 1926, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

Marinetti prepared the groundwork for his arrival in South America with local publications of some of his work. What he chose to publish was telling. For samplings of his work he released *Futurismo. Manifestos de Marinetti e seus Companheiros* in Brazil in June, as well as *Como se seducen las mujeres y se traicionan los hombres* in Argentina at about the same time. Within the collection of the manifestos, Marinetti published "Futurisme et Fascisme," and he also separately published a piece entitled "Fascismo e Futurismo" in the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *A Patria* on May 20. Suffice it to say that Marinetti was not trying to hide the connection between Mussolini's regime and his movement.[65]

The connection between the Fascist regime and Futurism was apparent as soon as Marinetti and his wife Benedetta arrived in Rio de Janeiro on May 13. Not only were they received by a bevy of journalists and members of the Brazilian avant-garde, but also by the Italian consuls Guglielmo della Fontana and Galeazzo Ciano, the head of the local *Fascio* Luigi Sciutto and Commander Vella of the Dante Alighieri Society.[66] This could be dismissed as simply the honor bestowed on a famous visiting Italian. However, at Marinetti's first performance on May 15, after speaking about the greatness of Brazilians and Futurism, he concluded by holding "'forth on fascism and on the greatness of contemporary Italy.'"[67] It seems this stunned the crowd more than anything else, as there is no record of a protest. But at Marinetti' next performance on May 18 it wasn't so

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[65] Publication information can be found in Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia*, 71, 134.
[66] Schnapp and Rocha, "Brazilian Velocities," 109. The Dante Alighieri Society was founded in 1889 with the specific purpose of diffusing Italian culture worldwide. Early in the Fascist period they retained their autonomy, but eventually their duties were taken over by the *Fasci all'estero* and the local chapters of the *Istituto di cultura* when cultural diffusion became a much more overtly political activity. That representatives of the *Fasci* met Marinetti as well as representatives of the Dante was an early sign of the eventual Fascitization of this aspect of Italian culture, as was happening at that time in Italy. See Filippo Caparelli, *La "Dante Alighieri,"* 2nd edition (Roma: Bonacci, 1987).
[67] Schnapp and Rocha, "Brazilian Velocities," 114, quoting "A conferência do Sr. Marinetti," in *Jornal do Comércio*, May 16, 1926.

peaceful. As it followed the same pattern as the preceding performance, concluding with a "description of the historical ties between Futurism and fascism to outright praise of Mussolini," the crowd exploded into protest, both for and against Fascism, with disturbances then flowing out into the street.[68] The Agencia Americana press agency in Rio de Janeiro informed its colleagues in Genoa of the event, highlighting the political dimensions of the evening:

> last night second Marinetti Lirico [Theatre] conference to thousands of overflowing varied spectators of all social types, the university element predominating […] interest caused by the disclosure of the speakers' Futurist assertions led to restless intense expectation that initially interfered with normal development of the conference […] in spite of frequent interruptions Marinetti was able to brilliantly dominate the imposing audience reaffirming with energy Futurist artistic and political theories […] evening culminated in spiritual and propagandistic triumph for Marinetti who was given a frenetic and unanimous ovation and accompanied by impressive and acclaiming procession to Hotel Palace […] the entire press makes note of the important event with a double purpose, artistic and political.[69]

In the following days Marinetti was treated as much more than simply a traveling artist. It was clear that he was considered to be someone with the ear of the Duce. On the evening of May 20 a dinner was held in his honor at the Italian embassy, at which the Italian Ambassador Montagna and the Brazilian Foreign Minister were present. The next day Montagna approached Marinetti and informed him of the sorry state of school funding for Italians in Rio, and the need to appoint more consuls to Brazil, as they were the ones who decided where government subsidies would go. Then Marinetti was taken to visit one of the schools for Italians, the *Scuola Pio Americano*. Even Marinetti was taken slightly aback by his treatment as a political functionary. In his diary he noted he

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[68] Schnapp and Rocha, "Brazilian Velocities," 115.
[69] Agencia Americana, Rio de Janeiro to Agencia Americana, Genoa, May 19, 1926, in YMP, Box 7, Folder 76: Agencia Americana, Rio de Janeiro to Agamerican (Agencia Americana), Genoa.

had the "strange sensation of visiting [the school] as a minister of public education."[70] The next day, Marinetti spoke about a variety of political issues at the Dante Aleghieri Club, with Ambassador Montagna in attendance. He noted that "continuous ovations interrupt my speech on Futurism and Fascism." Specifically, he highlighted the "interventionist and Futurist origins of Fascism." He also took this opportunity to press the case for more funding for Italian schools, the likelihood of a future world war, and means to attract anti-Fascists to the regime.[71] Dealing with anti-Fascists may have been a response to the criticism he experienced recently, but it was also a part of the Fascist regime's desire to combat its Italian expatriate critics in Europe and overseas, as Marinetti had done the previous year in Paris. After speaking at the Dante, he also gave a radio address in which he further discussed his "original inventive theories [of] artistic political renewal."[72] Having conquered Rio, as the press releases noted, Marinetti went off to São Paolo, with a send-off by the Italian consul general Francisco Valladares and Ambassador Montagna.

In São Paolo Marinetti had a much harsher experience than in Rio. News of his political pronouncements preceded his arrival, which alienated the Paolisti avant-garde, and mobilized the city's anti-Fascists, or "Matteottisti," as they came to be called, who were prepared to disrupt Marinetti's performances.[73] Such was the difficulty in locating a willing theatre for Marinetti to perform in, that Ambassador Montagna had to step in and

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[70] Entry dated May 21, 1926, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 520.
[71] Entry dated May 22, 1926, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 521, Enrico Rocca, "Con F.T. Marinetti dal Sud America a…piazza Adriana," *Il Popolo d'Italia*, September 4, 1926.
[72] Agencia Americana, Rio de Janeiro to Agencia Americana, Genoa, May 23, 1926, in YMP, Box 7, Folder 76: Agencia Americana, Rio de Janeiro to Agamerican (Agencia Americana), Genoa.
[73] Schnapp and Rocha in "Brazilian Velocities" detail this rivalry, as does Rocha in his recent Ph.D. dissertation "Marinetti goes to South America": Confrontos e diálogos do futrismo na América do Sul," Stanford University, June 2002.

insist the Cassino Antártica be made available.[74] Marinetti and Benedetta arrived in São Paulo on May 24 to a much more subdued reception than they had received in Rio. Legions of adoring avant-garde artists were not there. But the journalists, and, importantly, the local Fascists had shown up to greet him and accompany him back to his hotel.[75]

After a brief visit with the President of the State of São Paulo, Carlo do Campos, Marinetti made his way to the Cassino Antártica for his performance. The crowd was well-prepared to disrupt Marinetti's performance, as the Paulisti were both aware of Marinetti's political utterances in Rio, and had been subjected to an intense debate between pro and anti-Fascist newspapers in the previous days. Anti-Fascist demonstrators first made it difficult for Marinetti to enter the theatre by blocking the entrance ways. Thereafter, once he took to the stage, he was met by flying projectiles, endless heckling, and cries of "Down with Italy and long live Matteotti!" as the demonstrators tried to keep him from performing. The local press concluded that "Mr. Marinetti could simply not perform" because of these disruptions.[76] However, Marinetti's own recollection of the evening is different and more relevant to our purposes. In his diary he noted that he was able to make himself heard,[77]and in a later recollection, he noted that "I replied with a characteristic, Futurist phrase of immediate impact, a phrase that was repeated by the newspapers: 'Between the prewar Italy of Nitti

[74] Schnapp and Rocha, "Brazilian Velocities," 118.
[75] Entry dated May 24, 1926, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 522.
[76] Schnapp and Rocha, "Brazilian Velocities," 118, quoting *Jornal do Comércio*, May 25, 1926. Even the American press noted the resoundingly violent reception of Marinetti, "the duce's futurist champion." See, "South American Italians Hiss Fascist Speaker," *Atlanta Constitution,* May 27, 1926.
[77] Entry dated May 24, 1926, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 523.

and the Italy of Mussolini there is the same difference as between a pile of horseshit and a magnificient pure-blooded stallion.'" He went on to say that

> I glorified today's Italy, listed everything that has been accomplished, glorified Futurism, identified fascism and Futurism; I affirmed that these two elements can never give rise to laziness or stagnation, that fascism and Futurism sweep away all prejudice, that fascism is the response of all Italian youth even before it became youthful, that fascism stands for everything that the young fought for along the Carso, that it is the actualization of the race's right and will. I also said that fascism had achieved everything that Futurism had hoped for as regards the race, the very fabric of the Italian sensibility, giving it political vigor and prestige on the world stage.

Marinetti concluded that the anti-Fascists were simply anti-Italian, "denigrators who left Italy when times were rough, when there was little to he had!" "We," he pointed out, meaning Futurists and Fascists, "on the contrary, endured an era of suffering to the cry of 'Long live Italy!' sounded despite life's uncertain outcome and despite the Matteottis of the world."[78]

The attacks against Marinetti continued at his next performance on May 27. Here, ticket prices were sextupled in order to keep out the raucous demonstrators. However, a few 'Matteottisti', still got in and disrupted the performance for 20 minutes before they were expelled. When Marinetti exited the theatre a throng of students met him. He claimed they were there to support him, and complained of being kept out of the theatre. This is debatable, as the scene quickly devolved into a riot that led to the vandalization of Marinetti's hotel.[79]

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[78] F.T. Marinetti, "The Battle of Cassino Antártica (24 May, 1926)," excerpted and translated by Schnapp and Rocha, in "Brazilian Velocities," 141-142. The talk originally was published as "Per la inaugurazione della esposizione futurista alla Casa del Fascio," in *Università Fascista—Lezioni* (Bologna: Casa del Fascio, 1927).

[79] Schnapp and Rocha, "Brazilian Velocities," 120; Entry dated May 27, 1926, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 524-525.

The following day Marinetti continued his barely veiled duties as a representative of the Fascist regime. He was taken on a tour of a model prison, and later that night spoke at the local *Fascio*. There he extolled the greatness of Mussolini as politician, who was, he said, "strong, imperial and practical against astute diplomacy disguised with worthless ideologies." As in Rio, he spoke on the issue of anti-Fascism, calling on the Fascists to "fraternally absorb the anti-Fascists, convincing them of the solidity of the new Italy."[80]

In his final show in São Paulo on June 1 Marinetti was once again heckled by 'Matteottisti', in spite of all the precautions against letting demonstrators into the building. The consul, Marinangeli, who attended the performance, was convinced the demonstrators had been paid to attack Marinetti.[81] However, judging from Marinetti's reception in the city so far, the demonstrators were likely genuine.

All of this criticism had a profound effect on Marinetti. After this last demonstration it must have become clear to him that his public comments on behalf of the regime were likely winning him points among the local Fascists and government functionaries, as well as back home, but it was killing his reputation as a supposedly independent artist. Increasingly, people viewed Marinetti as a Fascist primarily, and not simply as a Futurist. Thus, on the Argentina leg of his tour Marinetti decided to keep a markedly lower political profile, at least in public.

This was in fact not what Argentina had been expecting. The press, specifically the *Crítica*, had been drumming up public expectations of Marinetti's visit by calling on the Argentine avant-garde to write in their views of Futurism, and, more importantly,

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[80] Entries dated May 28, 29, 30, 31, 1926, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 525-531.
[81] Entry dated June 1, 1926, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 532.

keeping Argentinians abreast of Marinetti's political pronouncements. On the day of Marinetti's arrival in Buenos Aires, *Crítica* published a report from their correspondent in Brazil that concluded that Marinetti's tour was clearly political, and not literary. He wrote

> Marinetti is no doubt a "cabotino," and a talented one. This excursion through America evidently has a political mission. He is a messenger of fascism, disguised in literary clothing. Here, in Río, this aspect was not so prominent because most of the Italian colony paid no attention to the visitor. But in São Paolo things have been different. São Paolo has the largest Italian nucleus in this part of the continent. Thousands of socialists of that extraction, stifled under Mussolini's regime, have established themselves in the great Brazilian city, taking part in its prominent industrial activity. Now there is the arrival of an envoy of the irreconcilable adversary. It is natural, then, that these exiles rise up in a "revanchè", displaying in their reception all the violence of their abhorrence for the emissary and his master [82]

Marinetti was clearly aware of the tenor of the press coverage that his visit to Argentina was eliciting. Consequently, the very night that he arrived he gave a series of interviews in which he specifically stated that "despite being a personal friend of the head of the Italian Government 'that does not mean that I have any personal participation in Italian politics at the present time. I do not hold nor have I held any post or representation of a political nature. I am merely an artist.'" To another paper, Marinetti was less able to hide his true political intentions when he noted "'I have come to Argentina with the sole aim of making the theory of futurism known. Nothing more. It is also true that if my compatriots residing in your beautiful country ask me about present

[82] Sylvia Saítta, "Futurism, Fascism and Mass-Media: The Case of Marinetti's 1926 Trip to Buenos Aires," *Stanford Humanities Review*, volume 7.1 (1999), 7, quoting "¡Dos horas y cuarto aguantó Marinetti el 'meneo' de San Pablo! El líder futurista habla para *Crítica,*" in *Crítica*, June 7, 1926. The *SHR* is available at http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/7-1/html/body_saitta.html . Citations from this online article will refer to the page number of my printout, which is the only means of reference I've been able to establish for this article.

conditions in Italy, I can only tell them the truth: what I have seen. The climate of order is admirable, industry is flourishing, the whole country is progressing day by day.'"[83]

The tactic by and large worked. Marinetti gave 11 performances in Argentina, and one in Uruguay, and there were minimal public demonstrations against him. To be sure, at his first performance in Buenos Aires on June 11 security was very tight, and partisans were in the Coliseo Theater ready to erupt at the least bit of instigation. This was the night that was quoted in Marinetti's police file as involving anti-Fascist demonstrations and arrests, and then led to Marinetti's designation as an anti-Fascist. However, as shown above, Marinetti never criticized the regime in South America. Moreover, Sylvia Saítta makes it clear that this performance was emblematic of all of Marinetti's remaining performances in South America, in that it avoided any public pronouncements on politics. Marinetti's failure to publicly speak on politics eventually led the press, and potential protesters, to mostly lose interest in him for the remainder of his stay in South America.[84]

Of course, Marinetti did not really change the dynamic of his trip—just its public features. In Argentina he continued acting as a representative of the Fascist regime. From June 13 to 16 in Buenos Aires he visited a *Circolo Italiano* (Italian Circle) and gave a "breve saluto patriottico" (brief patriotic greeting), visited the *Legazione d'Italia*

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[83] Sylvia Saítta, "Futurism, Fascism and Mass-Media," 7-8, quoting "Ha llegado anoche el fundador del futurismo F. T. Marinetti," in *La Nación* June 8, 1926 and "Desde ayer es nuestro huésped Felipe T. Marinetti. El creador del 'futurismo' nos hizo interesantes declaraciones," in *La Prensa* , June 8, 1926, respectively.

[84] Saítta, "Futurism, Fascism and Mass-Media," 8. Schnapp and Rocha, "Brazilian Velocities," 122-123, list the shows and dates for Argentina and Uruguay. Even the Futurist-Fascist *L'Impero* indirectly conceded that Marinetti won over the Argentine crowds by avoiding politics. About Marinetti's performance at the Coliseo Theater, the journalist Volta writes that Marinetti's first hour was met by stone silence, then the audience warmed up. Volta attributes this to his performance style, when clearly it was also helped out by his avoiding any inflammatory political statements. See Sandro Volta, "Marinetti a Buenos Aires," in *L'Impero*, July 18, 1926.

(Italian Legation) and another school for Italian children. On the 18th he visited another *Circolo Italiano* and was honored at the embassy that evening. On the 22nd he was in Cordoba, spoke at the university, and that evening dined with Governor Carcano, to whom, Marinetti noted, "I talk about Mussolini. [I] explain [him to the Governor]." On the 23rd he spent the day with Consul Armao, and gave a speech at the *Circolo Italiano* dealing with "Italy and Mussolini." On the 25th he was again with Consul Armao, re-visited Governor Carcano, and eventually met Consul Martinoli and the president of the local *Fascio*.[85] Armao subsequently thanked him for his "beautiful and strong words to the Italians of Cordoba and for the efficacious propaganda of Italianità given to the Argentines. . . ."[86]

The most obvious political gesture Marinetti made in Argentina was his visit with President Alvear on June 28. Accompanied by a representative of the Italian government, Marinetti expressed his concern "for the demonstrations that are being prepared for July against Mussolini and to commemorate Matteotti." Alvear responded that he could not prohibit the demonstration, and Marinetti recognized Alvear was not willing to encounter the press' wrath in order to accommodate the visiting Italian dignitary. Alvear may have also been motivated by the fact that Marinetti's visit had engendered an anti-Marinetti demonstration—the only real demonstration of substance against Marinetti on his visit to Argentina—just outside the President's office.[87]

After a stop in Montevideo, Uruguay, and a few more days in Rio, Marinetti and Benedetta departed for Italy on July 12. The Italian Ambassador to Brazil, Montagna,

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[85] Entries dated June 13-25, 1926, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 533-540.
[86] Armao to Marinetti, June 26, 1926, in YMP, Box 7, Folder 120: Armao, Ermanno.
[87] Entry dated June 18, 1926, in F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini*, 540-541.

issued two statements that made it clear what Marinetti was doing in South America. To the Agamericana press agency, he wrote

> Marinetti left today with his consort aboard the Giulio Cesare for Italy after having had four conferences in Rio Janeiro, four in San Paolo, eight in Buenos Aires, two at Università Cordoba, one at Rosario, one at Montevideo. . . . Well received everywhere, maximum interest, exhibiting Futurist doctrine and carrying out active operation of exalting Italianità and constructive activities for Fascist Italy.[88]

To the customs authorities of Genoa he asked them to approve Marinetti "who re enters Italy with the piroscafo 'Giulio Cesare' accompanied by his consort, after having finished a mission of national propaganda in South America."[89]

When Marinetti was back in Italy he did not make any secret of the propaganda purposes of his visit to South America. As mentioned earlier, within days of his return to Italy, Marinetti requested an interview with Mussolini to brief him on his travels.[90] He subsequently gave two interviews to regime-friendly papers recounting his activities in South America. In *L'Impero* the headline declared that "Marinetti, 'Honorary Black Shirt', triumphantly brought to South America the voice of today's Italy."[91] To *Il Popolo d'Italia* Marinetti declared that "My Futurist propaganda tour ended up being, due to my own desire, and my surroundings, a tour of Fascist propaganda and a continuous exultation of the marvelous artistic and political energies of the new Italy."[92] He recounted his triumphal performances, somewhat exaggerating how successful they were, and down played the level of anti-Fascism he encountered, dismissing it as unimportant,

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[88] Brazillian Embassy to Agamericana Genova, July 12, 1926, Box 12, Folder 586: Italy, Ambasciata (Brazil) to Agamericana Genova

[89] Montagna, G.C. to Regie Autorità Doganali di Genova, July 12, 1926, in YMP, Box 13, Folder 762: Montagna, G.C.

[90] Marinetti to Mussolini, July 29, 1926, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

[91] Mix, "Marinetti 'Camicia nera d'onore' ha portato nell'America del Sud – trionfalmente – la voce dell'Italia d'oggi," in *L'Impero*, August 8, 1926.

[92] Enrico Rocca, "Con F.T. Marinetti dal Sud America a…piazza Adriana," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, September 4, 1926.

cowardly, and supported only by "'our worst emigrants.'"[93] When he did acknowledge it, it was simply as a way of showing how he had triumphed over them by declaring the glories of Fascist Italy. There was, of course, no mention that he had stopped discussing politics publicly after the initial disturbances. More importantly, he was careful to note that he was received as an important visitor from Italy, and had been accompanied by Italian ambassadors and local Italian dignitaries throughout his travels, had inspected Italian schools and had met the Argentine president, who, he recounted, "expressed to me the most lively sympathy for Italy and Mussolini."[94] In the end, he reported, "I found in all of South America love, respect and admiration for Italy and Mussolini."[95] Marinetti's activities on behalf of Fascism were well-regarded. Even Sarfatti, his rival, congratulated him. She informed Marinetti that "Amedeo [her son] says you fought well and with great success and held high the flag of Italy, of art and of Fascism. . . ."[96]

Within a few months of his return, November to be exact, Marinetti was off on another propaganda mission for the regime. This time to Paris to speak to Georges Valois' recently formed *Faisceau*. In the 1924 French elections the *Cartel des Gauches*, a broad center-left coalition, had replaced the conservative *Bloc National*. The latter had failed to collect reparations payments from Germany the previous year with the Ruhr invasion, which extended France's post-war financial crisis. The result was an upsurge of radical right-wing movements in France that believed the existing liberal parliamentary institutions were incapable of resisting the spread of Bolshevism, which they interpreted the election of the *Cartel* to signify. One of the first truly French fascist

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[93] Rocca, "Con F.T. Marinetti," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, September 4, 1926.
[94] Rocca, "Con F.T. Marinetti," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, September 4, 1926.
[95] Mix, "Marinetti," in *L'Impero*, August 8, 1926.
[96] Margherita Sarfatti to Marinetti, August 4, 1926, in YMP, Box 11, Folder 517: *Gerarchia*, Rivista Politica, Il Direttore, [Margherita Sarfatti].

movements to emerge from this 'red scare' was Georges Valois' *Faisceau*, which was consciously modeled on Mussolini's Fascism. It called for a dictatorship, a corporative organization of the economy, a nationalistic union of the state and its people, and extra-parliamentary violent activity to bring about a 'New France'. Valois, like Mussolini, sought to move beyond traditional right-wing movements with a narrow base to a broad, cross-class, nationalist mass party. In February, 1925 Valois launched *Le Nouveau Siècle* to propagate his ideas, and in November he officially founded the *Faisceau.* By July 1926 the desire for immediate action against the left on the part of many swelled the ranks of the *Faisceau* to its maximum number, denuding members from other radical right wing organizations, specifically the *Action Français*.[97]

Why did Marinetti visit Valois and speak to the *Faisceau*? The connection between the French and Italian Fascists is murky, but there are a few events we know of. Valois had publicly defended Mussolini during the Matteotti Crisis, and this surely made its way to Rome.[98] One of Valois' early financial backers was the Duke of Camastra, the vice president of the Italian *Fascio* in Paris. *Le Nouveau Siècle* was given wide circulation in Italy due the large number of Italian subscriptions to the paper, especially after Valois traveled to Italy in September, 1926. And, lastly, another of Valois' backers, François Coty, had originally offered Valois a million francs to transform his paper into a daily, but then doubled the offer after an October, 1926 meeting with Mussolini.[99] Thus,

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[97] Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France*, translated by David Maisel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986; originally published as *Ni droite, ni gauche: L'Idéologie fasciste en France* [Éditions du Seuil, 1983]), 90-118; Robert Soucy, *French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 87-93.
[98] Soucy, *French Fascism: The First Wave*, 90.
[99] Soucy, *French Fascism: The First Wave,* 99. Sternhell, however, doesn't believe the Camastra connection (which he spells Comastra) amounted to much as the French police never acted on the intelligence. That the French did not consider the *Faisceau* a serious threat does not, however, discount that a connection of sorts existed between the two fascist movements.

what we can deduce is that Mussolini was at the very least sympathetic to Valois' endeavors, though not likely to engage in a public endorsement of a movement that desired to overthrow a government Italy was allied with in the Locarno Treaties, signed just a year before. Of course, this did not stop Mussolini from utilizing a spokesman to show solidarity with Valois' movement, and this would explain Marinetti's trip to Paris.

In late October, 1926 Marinetti received a letter from Valois urgently requesting "that you come to the meeting . . . in Paris on November 2 and speak of Italy's . . . sentiments for the Latin Bloc against the plutocracies. . . ."[100] Valois was trying to form a Latin Bloc of nationalist movements with representatives from Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Italy. Marinetti agreed to go, but he cleared the trip with Mussolini first. This was obvious from the text of Marinetti's speech. He began by thanking the French fascists for inviting him to their conference, then after the expected glorifications of the bellicose Latin race, and the menace of Bolshevism, the remainder of the speech was a glorification of Mussolini. "I tell you, my friends," he said,

> that I am not a deputy, or minister and I don't have any government title. I came here to talk to you as a poet, as an Italian, as a patriot; and so, I tell you that this is a great Italian [Mussolini] who merits the admiration of the world. This great Italian has in himself the future of Italy. He is not a reactionary, or a barbarian, or a dictator who oppresses his county, he is a man who, every day, with his indefatigable will, resolves all the problems of the peninsula. Every day he tries to ameliorate the situation in Italy. Every day he works with Latin simplicity, with intelligence, for the grandeur of the new Italy.

"I am a free man," he continued,

> I am a great friend of Mussolini, but I am not charged by him to say these things! This great Latin wants a Latin alliance. He wants an alliance of this Great France and Italy, a clearing of the old questions that still separate us. He wants that the two nations become allies with a solid pact in the face of all the monstrous menaces of the future. These menaces exist, we should not forget that. We do not want to conquer territories. We want to develop our strength, our national

[100] Valois to Marinetti, October 26, 1926, in YMP, Box 17, Folder 1099: Valois, Georges.

> genius, our powerful workers. . . . Thus, we believe that an alliance between France and Italy is indispensable. A futurist poet tells you this . . . with enthusiasm and great love for all things French.[101]

That Marinetti should have to insist that he was not charged by Mussolini to deliver this address is proof enough that he in fact was likely charged to do just that. Further proof that Marinetti was speaking on behalf of Mussolini was that he also actually read out a telegram from Mussolini to the French fascists thanking them for their condolences after a recent assassination attempt on the Duce.[102] When he returned from Paris, just as after his return from South America, Marinetti scheduled another debriefing session with Mussolini, because, in his words, "I have many important things to tell you."[103]

The next time Marinetti represented Italian Fascism abroad was in a much more formal capacity, and showed his growing stature in the regime. In February, 1928 he was invited by the Italian Ambassador to Spain, Medici del Vascello, to visit the country, ostensibly as a guest to a golfing match, but more specifically to help improve relations between Spain and Italy.[104] In many ways the visit to Madrid with Benedetta was like his visit to South America in 1926. He visited as an internationally renowned celebrity, but it was increasingly difficult, primarily because of Marinetti's own designs, to separate the Futurist from the Fascist regime. Thus, again Marinetti acted as an emissary for Fascism with access to influential members of Spanish society. At the golfing tournament he was in the company of the Queen of Spain, though this was not as important as his meetings with General Primo de Rivera, the military dictator of Spain since 1923, and Ernesto

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[101] "Discours de Marinetti", in *Le Nouveau Siècle*, November 7, 1926, located in GMP, Box 18, Folder 5.
[102] "Discours de Marinetti," in *Le Nouveau Siècle*, November 7, 1926.
[103] Marinetti to Mussolini, November 27, 1926, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.
[104] Salaris gives a general description of the visit. See, Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 259-260.

Gimenez Caballero, the leading proponent of fascism in Spain and the editor of the literary journal *La Gaceta Literaria*.

Primo de Rivera was an avid fan of Mussolini, and eagerly sought advice from the Duce throughout his reign (1923-1930), which Mussolini freely dispensed. Like Mussolini, Primo de Rivera based his rule on the support of, among others, industrialists and large landowners, magnifying the Bolshevik threat that he would stand against. Also like Mussolini, he sought to transform what had been a coup into a more broadly based political movement, attempting to mimic the transformation of Fascism into a 'secular religion' under the dictatorship.[105] Thus the link between the two dictators was a critical element to each leader's foreign policies, and Marinetti contributed to the relationship. After having spoken at the *Residencia Circulo de Bellas Artes* on Futurism and art and literature, he "was then received by Primo de Rivera, who reaffirmed to him the unanimous sympathy of the Spanish people for the Italian people and expressed much admiration for the new Italy and for Mussolini, 'the defender of Western civilization in the world.'"[106]

Marinetti's other relevant visit was with the journalist Gimenez Caballero, with whom he gave a lengthy interview for the February 15, 1928 edition of *La Gaceta Literaria.* In fact this entire edition was devoted to Italy, carrying not only the interview, but translations of Curzio Malaparte's work, and a letter from Mussolini extolling Marinetti and the work of the *Gaceta*.[107] The relevance of this visit was the importance

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[105] Shlomo Ben-Ami, "The Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera: A Political Reassessment," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 12, #1 (January, 1977), 66, 68.
[106] "Marinetti in Spagna," *Le Opere i Giorni* (Genoa), April 1, 1928, article found in letters from Marinetti to Benedetta, May 14, 1928, in YMP, Box 4, Folder 44: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa, May, 1928.
[107] Douglas W. Foard, "The Forgotten Falangist: Ernesto Gimenez Caballero," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 10, #1 (January, 1975), 17, note #28. For a summary of the evolution of political/art journals in

the Duce ascribed to Gimenez Caballero's activities in Spain. The latter was an enthusiastic supporter of Fascism as a model through which Spain could reverse its seemingly inevitable decline from one time imperial grandeur. Interestingly, like many nationalists in Italy who were politically awakened by the Italian army's defeat at the hands of Ethiopians at Adua in 1896, Gimenez Caballero slowly evolved into a nationalist and then fascist after having witnessed the Spanish armies' catastrophic defeat at Annual in Morocco in July, 1921 at the hands of Berber rebels.[108] What particularly appealed to Gimenez Caballero was the Fascist corporative system that pulled artists out of their 'ivory towers' and engaged them in the making of a new country.[109] Thus, Marinetti's visit, accompanied by Mussolini's tribute, was meant to further spread the uniquely Fascist phenomenon of corporativism beyond Italy's shores. In fact, Gimenez Caballero was so highly thought of that when he visited Italy in 1928 he was treated as a guest of the state, meeting various Ministers, and even the Duce.[110]

The political import and complexion of Marinetti's visit to Spain was evident to the Spaniards and to the Fascist regime, even if Marinetti did not make any overt political announcements. In a letter reprinted in *Critica Fascista* after Marinetti's visit, Gimenez Caballero lamented that more Italian writers needed to visit Spain in order to increase cultural exchanges, though writers without the level of political baggage that Marinetti brought with him. Marinetti's visit, he argued, limited cultural interchange as Spaniards sympathetic to the Futurist were turned off by his Fascism, and ultimately regarded his

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Spain, with a particular reference to Gimenez Caballero, see Jaime Brihuega, "Art and Politics in Spain, 1928-36," *Art Journal*, 52 (March, 1993), 55-60.
[108] Foard, "The Forgotten Falangist," 6.
[109] Ibid., 10.
[110] Ibid.

visit as more political than literary.[111] The response by Ettore de Zuani revealed Marinetti's increasing stature in the regime, and his commitment to its state-directed cultural initiatives. De Zuani had been a collaborator of Bottai's for years, and thus was intimately involved in corporative institutions and their uses by the state. Consequently, De Zuani explained, in Italy one can no longer talk about artists as either political or not. Fascism, he wrote,

> for us Italian writers is not simply about politics, it is above all about faith, enthusiasm, passion, and thus we cannot forget about it while we are writing. The pure writers, the writers that don't want to interest themselves with politics and live closed off in a world of their beautiful contemplations, are no longer of our time and no more in Italy, where now it is no longer a question of politics, but of sentiment. . . . To think of our generation of writers as neutral, indifferent, apolitical, is not possible, Fascism and Italy is for us the same thing, and to be Italian writers means being Fascist writers.

Tellingly, De Zuani further explained how Marinetti could be a Fascist with his pronounced love of liberty. He pointed out, as Marinetti would surely have done, that "only where there is political discipline can there be political liberty."[112]

There were repercussions, however, to Marinetti's extensive support for Fascism, and specifically his linkage of Futurism and Fascism. In South America, on a trip purportedly to glorify Futurism, it had triggered anti-Fascist demonstrations. Just as importantly, Marinetti faced resistance at home. His activities on behalf of Fascism ignited a conservative and anti-modernist response in Italy as the struggle to define Fascism, and specifically Fascist culture, intensified. It was in the defense of modern art

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[111] E. Gimenez Caballero, "Spagna e Italia, Circuito senza concorrenza," in *Critica Fascista*, n.d., p. 125-127, found in letters from Marinetti to Benedetta, April 14, 1928, YMP, Box 4, Folder 43: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa, 1928, January-April.

[112] Ettore de Zuani, "I letterati italiani e il fascismo," in *Critica Fascista*, n.d., p. 125-127 found in letters from Marinetti to Benedetta, April 14, 1928, YMP, Box 4, Folder 43: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa, 1928, January-April.

in this struggle that Marinetti pursued what was left of his original, *dicianovista* radical agenda.

Battling Conservative Fascism

Having effectively abandoned any claim to defending political liberties when he decided to become an active member of the dictatorship, Marinetti resolved to defend Fascism's 'radical' and 'revolutionary' nature in the field of culture against Fascist conservatives. While a not inconsiderable task, the fact that Mussolini favored cultural pluralism as a means of building broad-based support amongst the cultural community meant that Marinetti was simply jockeying for position within the Fascist bureaucracy, not challenging the regime in any meaningful way.[113] However, even in the battle with the cultural *passatisti* Marinetti decided to compromise and work with them in projects that specifically advanced Italian culture, whether it was modern or not. Again, faced with the choice of advancing a nationalist or radical goal, Marinetti consistently chose the former under the dictatorship.

Within Fascism a debate raged over what constituted a truly Fascist art, and Mussolini was unwilling to take sides on the matter. His only pronouncements on the content of art was the desire that it should embrace the present, while not turning its back on the past.[114] While seeming to endorse the *Novecento* group, Mussolini never made them the official state art, nor did much to stop the onslaught of criticism it suffered in the late 1920s and early 1930s on its way to extinction. Within this debate—one which was never resolved as various groups rose and fell in Mussolini's favor—Marinetti had more to worry about than Sarfatti's *Novecento*. Futurism and the *Novecento* at least shared a respect for modern culture. However, there were groups in the later 1920's that

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[113] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 57, Stone, *Patron State*, 4.
[114] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 63, referencing Mussolini's speech at the Academy of Fine Arts in Perugia on October 5, 1926, "Discorso del 5 ottobre 1926," in Benito Mussolini, *Opera Omnia*, XXII, 230.

hardly shared this view: the conservatives and anti-modernists. Marinetti's—and modernism's—enemies were many. The conservative traditionalists represented by Ugo Ojetti, poet and culture critic for *Il Corriere della Sera* opposed all modernist initiatives. Fascist intransigents, such as Roberto Farinacci, not only disdained modern art as too internationalist, and foreign inspired—read Jewish—but also felt art should be a firmly controlled arm of the state, ultimately a form of propaganda that the masses could easily understand. Similarly intransigent, though much more critical of the regime, and an enemy of modernism, was the *Strapaese* group, made up of former Futurists such as Ardengo Soffici, and *squadristi* like Curzio Malaparte, Ottone Rosai, and Mino Maccari, who were grouped around the journal *Il Selvaggio*. The *Strapaese* group felt modernism—broadly defined as urban, cosmopolitan, international, materialistic, bourgeois, American and Jewish—was robbing Italy of its national identity, and sought to preserve it with an art based on the virtues of the craftsman and the countryside, and based on Italian traditions. Moreover, they were further motivated by their desire to preserve the intransigent, anti-liberal and anti-bourgeois strand of Fascism they felt was weakening as the regime became older and more stable.[115]

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[115] This rough categorization is merely for convenience, as there seems to be some dispute over how to divide the contributors to the cultural debate. For example, Soffici has been called a *Novecentista* by Schnapp, because of his contribution to the *Critica Fascista* debate, but a *Strapaesano* by Adamson who focuses on his later work. Moreover, Cannistraro lumps the *Strapaese* group in with other 'anti-moderns' like Ojetti, but Adamson treats them as modernists, like the Futurists and the *Novecento,* because of their goal of cultural renewal, and Braun calls them avant-garde, 'in a particular Italian sense,' because of their cultural intervention. Curzio Malaparte founded the *Strapaese* group, and wrote for its *Il Selvaggio,* yet he also founded with Massimo Bontempelli *'900,* a journal of international modern fiction, whose premise was the bane of the *Strapaese*. See, Walter Adamson, "The Culture of Italian Fascism and the Fascist Crisis of Modernity: The Case of *Il Selvaggio*," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30 (1995), 559; Walter Adamson, "Avant-garde Modernism and Italian Fascism: Cultural Politics in the Era of Mussolini," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 6, #2 (2001), 242; Jeffrey Schnapp and Barbara Spackman, "Introduction to 'Ardengo Soffici,'" in Jeffrey Schnapp and Barbara Spackman, eds., "Selections from the Great Debate on Fascism and Culture: *Critica Fascista* 1926-1927," *Stanford Italian Review*, 8, #1-2, "Fascism and Culture," (1990), 238; Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 57-58; Gary Indiana, "A Million Little Theses: Curzio Malaparte Became The Proust Of The Abattoir Of Europe's Upheaval. Does

The debate over Fascist art, which had simmered since Fascism came to power, broke out into the open in 1926 as a result of the Matteotti Crisis, and the imposition of the dictatorship and the greater involvement of the regime in the realm of culture thereafter. As Mussolini noted at the opening of the Novecento art exhibition in Milan in February, 1926 Fascism intended to build a "hierarchy between politics and art" in which "artists and intellectuals . . . must be considered 'political' men who immerse themselves fully in the life of the nation and the state, and put their abilities at the service of fascism to fulfill its goals."[116] However, the real trigger was Mussolini's speech to the students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Perugia on October 5, 1926, in which he explicitly stated that "we must not remain solely contemplatives. We must not simply exploit our cultural heritage. We must create a new heritage to place alongside that of antiquity. We must create a new art, an art of our times: a Fascist art."[117] Taking his cue, Giuseppe Bottai, editor of *Critica Fascista*, put out the call for a definition of Fascist art. The result was a wide-ranging series of submissions, but the battle lines were clearly between the modernists and the anti-modernists, with Marinetti put in the rather complicated position of arguing that Futurism was quintessentially modern, Italian, nationalist and revolutionary, and that even though it had influenced international modern art movements, it was not, as the anti-modernists argued, internationalist, Bolshevik, anarchic or foreign.

It Matter That He Made It Up?" in *Book Forum*, (Summer, 2006); Emily Braun, "Speaking Volumes: Giorgio Morandi's Still Lifes and the Cultural Politics of *Strapaese*," *Modernism/Modernity*, 2, #3 (1995), 98.

[116] Philip Cannistraro, "Mussolini's Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?" *Journal of Contemporary History*, 7, #3-4 (July/October, 1974), 122.

[117] Benito Mussolini, in *Il Popolo d'Italia,* October 7, 1926, quoted in Schnapp and Spackman, eds., "Selections from the Great Debate on Fascism and Culture," 235.

Soffici's contribution to the debate was emblematic of this view. Fascist art, he argued, could not be strictly traditional as "fascism, which respects and can even adore the past and antiquity, is not reactionary or regressive . . . and it is not the enemy of modernity." However, with the Futurists in mind, he felt that Fascist art could not be something that renounced the past completely, "discarding all principles in a revolutionary overturning of all recognizable values. . . ." For Soffici, this Futurist tendency "has been followed and glorified, logically enough, by Russian Bolshevism." Fascism, he believed, was "a revolutionary movement but not a subversive or extremist one, [and] does not tend toward the overturning of values as much as towards their clarification, does not accept anarchy or whim, but rather desires that the law be stabilized and reinforced."[118] He criticized Fascist bureaucrats as being too soft in its policing of culture, choosing its men "from among those whose mentality, aesthetics, and forms of artistic expression were in essence and in derivation not only foreign, but more precisely, barbarian, anti-Italian, liberal, Judaic, Masonic, democratic – in a word, antifascist *par excellence*."[119]

Soffici's *Strapaese* colleague Malaparte echoed the same sentiments against modern art and Fascist bureaucrats in his contribution to *Critica Fascista*. He believed that Fascist art was "a profoundly and essentially Italian art that has roots in our true, classical and most Italian tradition; an art that is vulgar (in the correct sense) rather than academic and insolent, up-to-date rather than old hat, rural and provincial rather than dottardly; an art which, to be more precise, would have not only our own home-grown

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[118] "Ardengo Soffici," in Schnapp and Spackman, eds, "Selections from the Great Debate on Fascism and Culture," 240. Translated by Elizabeth MacIntosh and Barbara Spackman. Appeared in *Critica Fascista* on October 15, 1926.
[119] Ibid., 228.

virtues but also our own home-grown defects, rather than home-grown virtues and foreign defects, or maybe even only our own defects rather than only foreign virtues." The opposite spirit, which he felt many *arriviste* Fascists had subscribed to, was "in politics, democratic and liberal, and in art, boorish or Romantic or neo-classical or cosmopolitan or French or foolish or convenient-take your pick."[120]

A fear of the novel, the foreign, the decadent and immoral also permeated the novelist Mario Puccini's contribution. Puccini wanted an art that was virile, which meant it had to be "healthy, peasant, municipal and earthy" as well as "simple, homey, provincial, [and] realistic," against an "immorality which hides and crouches between the lines of false artistic and even noble beauty, the immorality of books which present a reality that does not exist and which causes the weak-spirited to fall into frivolous and melancholy dreams that weaken all desire for struggle and all good instincts toward action." For this type of art, which he ascribed as coming from France, with its examples of "moral decadence" that culminated in an art that represented "nothing less than the cult of pederasty," Puccini recommended vigorous censorship. This was the only way to produce a Fascist race, by making sure that the youth did not "read adulterated books, see adulterated paintings, nor hear adulterated music so that, from the very start, they breathe in a healthy, honest, ardent and fibrous atmosphere in both the artistic and practical life of the nation."[121]

When Marinetti finally sent in his essay on Fascist art he needed to respond to the accusation that Futurism was somehow internationalist and Bolshevik. To highlight

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[120] "Curzio Malaparte," in Schnapp and Spackman, eds, "Selections from the Great Debate on Fascism and Culture," 255-256. Translated by Spackman. Appeared in *Critica Fascista* on November 15, 1926.
[121] "Mario Puccini," in Schnapp and Spackman, eds, "Selections from the Great Debate on Fascism and Culture," 258-259. Translated by Spackman. Appeared in *Critica Fascista* on December 1, 1926.

Futurism's nationalist and Fascist character, he contrasted its history with the activities of Italy's noted anti-Fascists Benedetto Croce and Gaetano Salvemini. He argued that neither of these men, unlike Futurism, had any faith in the creative genius of the Italian race, and were enthralled with all things foreign, and thus, we are led to believe, they rejected Fascism which was quintessentially Italian. Moreover, Salvemini and his colleagues, like Soffici, at the pre-war journal *La Voce*, again unlike the Futurists, resisted Italy's imperial expansion into Libya in 1911. Men like this, he argued, did not have the right to comment on Fascism and its art, but the Futurists did, and his justification was Futurism's nationalist and Fascist history:

> The futurists foresaw everything eighteen years ago. In an Italy weakened and defeated by socialism and xeno-maniacal culturalism, they asserted innovative Italian pride by dint of fisticuffs and blows. They were the first interventionists, imprisoned for love of the great renovating war. They fought the war with bold Italian pride, did not despair at Caporetto, went down into the streets to defend the victory and were Mussolini's first collaborators in the streets, the assemblies, the prisons, for the foundation of the *Fasci di Combattimento*.[122]

Having established Futurism's Fascist bona-fides, he then pointed out that the movement had world-wide significance, and thus could only redound to the benefit of Fascism. He argued that Futurism was the innovative movement that brought to the world words-in-freedom, the synthetic theatre, the aesthetic of the machine and "the plastic Dynamism which gave rise to the new pictorial schools," and revolutionized architecture through Sant'Elia's work. The Soviet adoption of Futurism, he argued, was irrelevant, as it came after Futurism had established itself as a nationalist, Italian,

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[122] "F.T. Marinetti," in Schnapp and Spackman, eds, "Selections from the Great Debate on Fascism and Culture," 261. Translated by Roberts and Spackman. Appeared in *Critica Fascista* on January 1, 1927.

movement. "Futurist art," he insisted, "is extremely Italian because it is virile, bellicose, joyous, optimistic, dynamic, synthetic, simultaneous, and colorful."[123]

Simultaneous to the attacks Marinetti was receiving in the *Critica Fasicsta* debate, he was also having to defend Futurism in the Palermo journal *L'Arte fascista*, which may help to explain his hyper-nationalist contribution to the former journal. The debate in *L'Arte fascista* was inaugurated with an article by Dino Tonini entitled "Will Fascist Art Be Futurist Art?" Tonini made the case that Futurism should be a Fascist art because of its patriotism, and because it "'exalts the pulse of the factories, [and] the machine with its heart and spirit of steel.'" Tonini concluded that because of this "'the futurists will certainly be the artists of the Fascist Revolution.'"[124] Gesualdo Manzella-Frontini, a one time Futurist, immediately responded and disagreed, citing Futurism's 'cosmopolitan' and 'destructive' elements which were not in keeping with the cultural goals of Fascist Italy, which aspired to an art of 'equilibrium and tradition' and a 'classical' art, just as their conceptions of political, civil and social life are "'derived from the healthy and sacred sense of the integrity of the family, and from the healthy and sacred sense of the rights and responsibilities of the people and of the Nation.'"[125] Ferdinando Caioli similarly argued that Futurism could not possibly be a Fascist art, as Fascism "'cannot ignore tradition; which has always had an indestructible force.'"[126] In the face of this conservative criticism, Marinetti responded with the same nationalist defense of Futurism used in his *Critica Fascista* essay, but also seemed to compromise

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[123] Ibid., 262.
[124] D.V. Tonini, "L'arte fascista sarà l'arte futurista?" in *L'Arte fascista*, May 7, 1926, quoted in Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 80.
[125] G. Manzella-Frontini, "L'arte facista non sarà l'arte futurista," in *L'Arte fascista*, 9, 1926, quoted in Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 80. Unfortunately, Salaris does not provide the full dating and citation for this and subsequent articles in this joural.
[126] F. Caioli, "Arte futurista, arte fascista, arte nazionale," in *L'Arte fascista*, 11, 1926, quoted in Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 81.

when he suggested a new 'superfuturism' would emerge "'that is, a Futurism renewed and calibrated for the needs of new times.'" The title of his contribution implied a softening of Futurism's anti-*passatismo*: "Fascist Art Will Be a More or Less Audacious Futurism."[127] This hardly stopped the assault, as Manzella-Frontini responded that the idea that "'today's Italy could export to the world Marinettian and Futurist art, or Bontempellian *Novecentismo,* as a genuine product of Italianità, with a Fascist label, meaning an art born from the ethico-politico-religious conception of Fascism, is a HERESY, A CONTRADICTION, AND AN AWFUL ACT.'"[128]

These incessant attacks that Futurism was too destructive, foreign, international, etc. were finally met with a more general counter-attack in a volume entitled *Arte Fascista: Elementi per la battaglia artistica*, edited by the Futurist Luigi Colombo, aka Fillia, in 1927.[129] The title itself made clear that Marinetti and his cohorts were not going to be driven underground by the anti-modernists: "Fascist Art: Elements for the Artistic Battle." It is an eclectic collection of essays, many by Marinetti. Within the first few pages one senses the Futurist anxiety over the anti-modernist attack. Fillia, likely with Marinetti's prompting, published a number of passages that strove to prove that Mussolini was a Futurist, that Marinetti was a loyal Fascist and nationalist, and that Futurism was far too influential worldwide to be ignored.[130] In his introduction Fillia made clear that "Futurist art is the only art rich in Fascist elements and values," and Fascist values were defined as clearly modern, not traditional. Fascism was fed, he argued, on 'Futurist principles,' which led to Italy's 'political renewal,' and Futurism

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[127] F.T. Marinetti, "L'arte fascista sarà futurismo più o meno audace," in *L'Arte fascista,* 1, 1927, quoted in Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 81.
[128] G. Manzella-Frontini, "Romanesimo," in *L'Arte fascista*, 2, 1927, quoted in Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 81.
[129] Fillia, ed., *Arte Fascista: Elementi per la battaglia artistica* (Turin: Edizioni sindacati artistici, 1927).
[130] Fillia, ed., *Arte Fascista*, i-iii.

would thus provide for Italy's artistic renewal, with its legion of young followers and novel style that "characterized the world modified by the machine." Anything else would be a "manifestation and a residue of an old mentality, in contrast with the young, modern, fast, innovative, optimistic and mechanical spirit of Italian Fascism that carries out its formidable work, whose objective is expansion, competition and victories that are typically Futurist."[131]

Marinetti's contributions to this collection represented a coming together of all that he had been arguing since 1922/23 when he decided that he would cast his lot with Mussolini and work within Fascism to reform Italy. Thus, the works included in this book made the broad points he had used to justify his association with Fascism. He argued that Fascism was a revolutionary, Futurist-inspired movement, and as such it was up to Mussolini to help the Futurists "renew [Italy's] artistic environment, in which evil men and objects persist."[132] This state-sponsored artistic revolution would then lead to an expansion of Italy's international influence.[133] And, finally, he once again, and not for the last time, reiterated that Italian Futurism was a nationalist movement and could not be associated with Russian, Bolshevist Futurism.[134] In an original essay, he attacked his critics who insisted that Fascist art should be more classically inspired, by reminding them of the failure of the Brasini pavilion at the 1925 Paris Exposition of Decorative Arts, and highlighted Futurism's contribution to Italy's ultimate triumph at that same event.[135]

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[131] Fillia, "Introduction," in Fillia, ed., *Arte Fascista*, 9-10.
[132] F.T. Marinetti, "I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani," in Fillia, ed., *Arte Fascista*, 11-12.
[133] F.T. Marinetti, "La camera degli artisti," in Fillia, ed., *Arte Fascista*, 27-34.
[134] F.T. Marinetti, "L'arte futurista italiana," in Fillia, ed., *Arte Fascista*, 13-15.
[135] F.T. Marinetti, "Il carattere italiano delle originalità parigine," in Fillia, ed., *Arte Fascista*, 25.

Having been blind-sided by the wave of attacks in 1926 and early 1927, Marinetti decided to go on the offensive against conservative and anti-modernist Fascists, taking advantage of his high profile, growing status within the Fascist regime, and, not the least important, his close relations with the Duce. After having to defend his movement from claims of moral degeneracy, he lashed out at the regime's conservatives and their quest to impose 'moral order' in the Piazza del Duomo in Milan by extinguishing its illuminated signage and curbing its night-life. In an open letter to Mussolini, "Gli avvisi luminosi. Lettera aperta a S.E. Mussolini" ("The Luminous Signs. An Open Letter to S.E. Mussolini"), published in *L'Impero,* a perennial critic of conservative Fascism, Marinetti argued that only "obscurantist cretins [which replaced 'clericals and traditional critics' in an earlier draft] truly believe in saving the aesthetics of Piazza del Duomo in Milan by abolishing the illuminated signs."[136] Marinetti also fought to keep open the avant-garde theatre of Anton Giulio Bragaglia, the *Teatro Sperimentale degli Indipendenti*, which had staged a variety of Marinetti's plays. After closing its doors in 1926 owing to the same moralizing tendencies that attacked the illuminated signs in Milan, the theatre was re-opened on January 29, 1927. Marinetti presided over the opening and took the opportunity to call for a national theatre on the model of Bragaglia's theatre. This elicited the expected conservative response that in the place of an experimental, avant-garde theatre representing the state, Fascism required something that represented

[136] F.T. Marinetti, "Lettre ouverte a Mussolini pour defendre la publictè lumineuse," in GMP, Box 1, Folder 29: "Lettre ouverte a Mussolini pour defendre la publictè lumineuse." The article appeared in *L'Impero* on February 12, 1927. This folder at the Getty contains French and Italian drafts of the article. In Folder 30 an English version, published in *Edison Monthly,* is available. The English version refers to this piece being published in *Il Carroccio*, possibly as early as 1915. Thus, Marinetti may have, as per his custom, recycled an old piece for contemporary purposes.

"order."[137] However, Marinetti took his idea directly to the Duce. He sent his "Memoriale per il Teatro di Stato" ("Petition for a State Theatre") to Mussolini's personal secretary Alessandro Chiavolini with a request for the proposal to be forwarded to Mussolini, adding Mussolini "himself advised me to write it and to have it delivered to him through you."[138] The financing for the project was not available,[139] but, owing to Marinetti's support, and Bragaglia's own maneuvers, Bragaglia's avant-garde theatre remained open and was able to receive state funds until the outbreak of World War Two.[140]

The tenth anniversary of *Roma futurista* proved to be another opportunity for Marinetti, as well as Carli and Settimelli, to take a public stand against Fascist conservatives and anti-modernists. The journal was published from September, 1918 to early 1920 and at the time it represented the best of *dicianovista* or radical Fascism, as it was the mouthpiece of the Futurist Political Party, which was then allied to the nascent *Fasci di combattimento* and the *Associazione fra gli Arditi*. As such, its anniversary was used to highlight Fascism's radical roots, Fascism's continuing radicalism in its *dicianovista* wing, and that the *dicianovisti* would resist any attempts to paint them as somehow against the 'true' nature of Fascism. Settimelli set the tone for the event when in his opening statement he declared

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[137] Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 259. Salaris quotes Silvio D'Amico in *La Tribuna*, February 1, 1927, as the conservative response to Marinetti's suggestion.
[138] Marinetti to Chiavolini, January 22, 1927, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.
[139] Minister of Public Instruction Giulio Santini to Alessandro Chiavolini, March 16, 1927, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.
[140] Mabel Berezin, "Cultural Form and Political Meaning: State-Subsidized Theater, Ideology, and the Language of Style in Fascist Italy," *American Journal of Sociology*, 99, #5 (March, 1994), 1256, 1262, 1275. Berghaus interprets this episode as a sign of Marinetti's general failure to court Mussolini's support for the arts. However, judging from this and other examples of patronage Marinetti acquired for his friends, this episode should be interpreted as a clear sign of the improving relations between Marinetti and Mussolini. See, Günter Berghaus, *Italian Futurist Theatre, 1909-1944* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1998), 341.

> The atmosphere was propitious for some form of open and ferocious lesson to be meted out against certain anachronistic Fascists who have tried to bring against us, in [a] cowardly fashion through secret assemblies, as it concerns important national debates, the misery of their personal rancor against us, caused by their impotence and masonic-demagogic-diarrhoetic fear.[141]

Such frontal assaults were negated however, in the interest of focusing on the twin themes of establishing Futurism as Fascism's radical precursor, and the continuing radical element within Fascism—ideas Marinetti had been propagating since 1923.[142] The keynote speech for the evening was Marinetti's. Much of his remarks replayed the various anecdotes that he had been publishing since the early 1920s, and included well-worn tales of Futurist service in the war and involvement in the early Fascist movement. Having established the historical link between the two movements, he was then able to highlight the continuing connections between Futurism and Fascism. He argued that the spirit that animated *Roma futurista* then was now the "imperishable vigor of Fascism." This included an "absolute love of Italy, considered an ultimate good, above all else, even liberty." In addition, Futurism and Fascism shared "the will to perfect, rejuvenate, and liberate [Italy] from its academic, numismatic, archaeological past, in order to genially win the great world competition. For this, the revolutionary, explosive and improvisatory spirit must be maintained that creates a heroic, innovative and sportive citizen." This second point was important to emphasize, as the Futurist spirit of Fascism, he argued, sought to make a new Italian, similar to the Arditi of old, which would fight the inevitable war against either France or Germany, or both, as they each looked unfavorably on the development of Fascist Italy. He urged Mussolini to remember his

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[141] Emilio Settimelli, "Schietezza," in "Il poderoso discorso del Capo del Futurismo nel decennale di 'Roma Futurista' " in *L'Impero,* October 2, 1928. A copy of the article is located in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

[142] Carli touched on these issues in his "Mario Carli," in "Il poderoso discorso del Capo del Futurismo nel decennale di 'Roma Futurista' " in *L'Impero,* October 2, 1928.

radical roots, and to be true to them by favoring the modern arts within the dictatorship: "Viva *Roma Futurista*, viva 1919, glory to the *dicianovisti*, glory to the great and invincible Futurist temperament of Benito Mussolini that perfects the great, Fascist Italy, finally bringing about the artistic revolution that unfortunately is just beginning."[143]

However, even though Marinetti was now essentially defining *dicianovismo* with cultural radicalism only, as opposed to political *and* cultural radicalism, as *dicianovismo* was originally intended to be, even here he was just as open to compromise. In 1928 Marinetti was chosen to head a large-scale, state-sponsored cultural initiative. It involved the formation of the literary group *I dieci* that included Marinetti as president, and a variety of other writers from vastly different styles, many of which Marinetti would have at one time dismissed as *passatisti*. These writers included Antonio Beltramelli, Massimo Bontempelli, Lucio D'Ambra, Alessandro De Stefani, Fausto M. Martini, Guido Milanesi, Alessandro Varaldo, Cesare Viola and Luciano Zuccoli. Marinetti himself recognized the vast differences of the writers, noting in the preface to their first collaborative effort that only "artistic patriotism has brought together and solidified the ten Italian writers who belong to the most characteristic and opposed tendencies in contemporary literature (futurism, intimism, etc.)" However, he felt it was worth the effort to work together, as their ultimate goal was to encourage the development of Italian literature and to increase its publicity world-wide. In order to do this the *Dieci* would offer an annual 10,000 Lire prize to an outstanding and original literary work, would produce "the most beautiful and absolutely modern edition of a celebrated contemporary Italian novel, would publish the works of the *Dieci* in Spanish, French and English,

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[143] "Parla Marinetti," in "Il poderoso discorso del Capo del Futurismo nel decennale di 'Roma Futurista' " in *L'Impero,* October 2, 1928.

publish young Italian writers, would regularly exchange anthologies of contemporary Italian writers with other well-known foreign centers of literary excellence, and would financially help publishers who seek to publish the first work of young Italian writers."[144]

Marinetti was attacked by Settimelli for his association with these *passatisti* writers.[145] However, Marinetti's work with the *Dieci* was not out of character. Having compromised much of his radicalism in the interest of a strong state, it was not a surprise that he would deign to work with *passatisti* artists in the interest of advancing the nationalist goal of promoting Italian culture both at home and overseas. He had been calling for just this type of state support since 1919, and the use of Italian art as a form of cultural imperialism since 1925. His justification for working on the *Dieci* project was that he believed "literature to be the most able and dynamic ambassador that Fascist Italy could have overseas."[146] Of course, these ideas had once been meant to develop and protect the modern arts, and now Marinetti was using them to advance *all* Italian art. He was signaling that he was not interested in a war of annihilation with the *passatisti*, as he once was. The cultural battles had shown how difficult it was to defend Futurism as a revolutionary *and* nationalist movement. Thus, Marinetti decided to extend an olive-branch to his cultural rivals.

To be sure, in his battle against reactionary Fascists, Marinetti did make some attempts to help those he believed were unjustly treated by the political repression of the dictatorship. For instance, in December, 1926 Marinetti intervened with the authorities to

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[144] F.T. Marinetti, "Preface," to I Dieci [F.T. Marinetti et al.], *Lo Zar non é morto* [1928], in F.T. Marinetti, *Collaudi futuristi*, edited by Glauco Viazzi (Naples: Guida Editori, 1977), 54-55.

[145] Settimelli attacked Marinetti in two open letters in his own paper, *L'Impero*, both entitled "Al Presidente dei 'Dieci,' " on June 6 and July 6, 1928, quoted in Buchignani, "Settimelli e Carli dal futurismo al fascismo," 210-211. This all in spite of the fact that Marinetti acted as his *padrino* in his near duel with Farinacci at the end of the previous year. Settimelli and Marinetti's relationship was, to say the least, riddled with inconsistency and tension.

[146] F.T. Marinetti, "Prefazione," to *Lo Zar non é morto*, 53-54.

secure the release of Lioubomir Mitzitch, the head of the Yugoslavian avant-garde movement Zenithism, who had fled Yugoslavia for Paris, but was detained en route in Fiume. Though Mitzitch was an anti-Fascist, and told Marinetti so at their last meeting in Paris a year before, Marinetti got him released. Mitzitch acknowledged the gesture, writing that "after 7 days I find myself free, and thankful for your fraternal intervention. . . ."[147] In another instance we have a record of Marinetti helping two young men in trouble with the regime, at the request of his brother in law Alberto Cappa. Benedetto Croce himself heard of his intervention and lauded him for his act, since, as he wrote, "one of the most painful things in these painful times is to see how, in this era of general fear, every sense of generosity, every noble habit is spent, which was never lacking in the past even in the midst of the most intense and ferocious struggles," and that it "was very painful for me to realize that young people were oppressed who think and study and search for their own ways of truth. Italy cannot do less than the spontaneous efforts of the intelligent and the courageous, and it is foolish when it tries to suffocate them."[148] Some biographers, like Gino Agnese, feel these actions tend to mitigate Marinett's contributions to the development of the dictatorship.[149] However, as these actions only deal with private interventions on behalf of individuals, they hardly counter-balance Marinetti's activities in support of the regime.

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[147] Mitzitch to Marinetti, December 25, 1926, in YMP, Box 13, Folder 752: Mitzitch, Lioubomir. Marinetti was originally contacted on December 17. See Mitzitch to Marinetti, December 17, 1926, in YMP, Box 13, Folder 752: Mitzitch, Lioubomir.

[148] Croce to Marinetti, July, 12, 1928, in GMSN, Box 1, Folder 40. The original is in YMP, Box 9, Folder 368: Croce, Benedetto. The original is on *La Critica* letterhead, Croce's newspaper, while GMSN version was typed onto *Accademia* letterhead.

[149] Gino Agnese, *Marinetti: Una vita esplosiva* (Milan: Camunia, 1990). Agnese provides a number of instances of Marinetti's personal intervention. However, he does not offer much citation material in his book. The various records I perused only provide hard evidence for Marinetti helping the people discussed in this section.

And it was for this very support, and lack of any significant opposition to the regime that earned Marinetti elevation to the upper echelons of Fascism with his nomination to the *Accademia d'Italia*.

Marinetti *Accademico*: The Loyal Radical

In March, 1929 Marinetti was nominated for the *Accademia*, the Royal Academy.[150] This elevation to the Fascist elite was the culmination of political choices Marinetti had made since 1922, and a clear reward for his loyalty to the regime. At the beginning of Mussolini's tenure in office Marinetti had decided to cast his lot with the Fascists in the interest of national security and order. Consequently he had drastically curbed and muted the radical goals that he had sought from 1918 to 1920 and inserted himself into Fascism on its *dicianovista* wing as a critical, though always loyal, radical Fascist. His radicalism, however, had been reduced to the defense of modern art, and even here Marinetti had compromised and made his peace with his one-time *passatista* foes in the interest of national advancement. His political radicalism had been limited to rhetoric, and was heard less and less often. In elevating Marinetti, Mussolini had acquired a modernist, with a reputation for radicalism, but with a proven record of unstinting loyalty. However, there were consequences to Marinetti's elevation. His association with the regime was now official and undeniable. Attacks he had received from anti-Fascists on the left and conservative Fascists on the right because of this association would now greatly increase. The first hints of this increased virulence of attack would appear just after Marinetti was formally sworn in to the Academy.

Why did Mussolini nominate, in fact insist on, such a controversial character as Marinetti?[151] The answer was Marinetti's reputation for radicalism, specifically his anti-

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[150] Mussolini to Marinetti, March 21, 1929, in YMP, Box 14, Folder 783: Mussolini, Benito. Mussolini contacted Marinetti personally, writing "I'm happy to inform you that His Majesty the King on My proposal has nominated S.V. Accademico d'Italia for the Class of Letters." The actual nomination was likely on the 18th.

[151] Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 332-333. Other initial nominees included the physicist Enrico Fermi, playwright Luigi Pirandello and composer Pietro Mascagni. Eventually Mussolini

clericalism, but just as importantly, his unswerving loyalty. Both were critical to Mussolini's broader political objectives with regards to the Fascist Party and the Catholic Church. Mussolini needed a reconciliation with the Church to buttress his support amongst Italians and Catholics worldwide, and the Church was too influential to be left out of the Fascist orbit. However, the closer he got to the Church, the more the radical and intransigent wing of Fascism would howl—everyone from Marinetti to Farinacci. Thus, in nominating Marinetti to the *Accademia*, a man known for his constant desire for *svaticamento*, even in 1929, Mussolini was covering his radical flank by nominating the outspoken, though loyal, Marinetti while coming to an agreement with the Church. It was a wise move. Marinetti had signaled long ago that his radical pronouncements would not be followed up with any real opposition to the regime. Proof of this, most recently, was Marinetti's acceptance of the nomination to the Royal Academy, which required a formal and public abandonment of his republicanism by swearing an oath to the King. Similarly, through 1929 Marinetti kept his disagreements over Mussolini's Church policy to himself, and continued to support the Duce publicly.

The Lateran Accords were signed on February 11, 1929 and gave the Vatican the designation of a sovereign state, paid them for the Roman lands taken in the unification of Italy, and granted the Church a variety of privileges, such as the introduction of religious education into secondary and primary schools, the exemption of seminarians from military service, the recognition of Church marriages as legal, and a measure of autonomy (short lived) for its lay Catholic Action group. Mussolini received in turn the settlement of the 'Roman Question,' with the Pope's recognition of the Kingdom of Italy,

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would also add other internationally known figures such as the writer Massimo Bontempelli, and Gabriele D'Annunzio, Giovanni Gentile and Guglielmo Marconi.

and finally the unqualified support of Catholics. Politically, the Accords also helped Mussolini, as they sapped whatever sympathy may have remained for the suppressed Catholic *Partito Popolare Italiano*. The Lateran accords did not come out of the blue. Mussolini had been attempting to improve relations with the Church from his first appearance in the Chamber of Deputies, to his assumption of power. As Prime Minister and Duce Mussolini had restored the crucifix in schools and law courts, strengthened laws against blasphemy, made divorce more difficult, guaranteed equal treatment of state and private confessional schools, recognized the Catholic University of Milan, suppressed the Freemasons and increased state contributions to the Church. Actual plans for the conciliation were begun in 1926 and patiently brought to fruition in 1929, as Mussolini imposed his dictatorship on the rest of Italy. Of course, throughout all this, the radicals, Marinetti among them, lamented the compromises with the Church.[152]

That Mussolini recognized he would have trouble with the radical Fascists is not in doubt. After the signing of the Accords, Mussolini gave a three hour speech in the Chamber of Deputies defending the agreement, insisting that the Fascist state had not given away anything of any real value. He noted that though the Vatican was sovereign, the Church in Italy was not; it was subject to Italian laws. Moreover, the concern that the Church would now dominate the education of the young was dismissed. "'In this matter,'" he declared, "'we are intractable. Education must be ours.'"[153] Thus,

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[152] Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power*, 256-272; Clark, *Modern Italy*, 254-255; Albert C. O'Brien, "Lateran Pacts," in Cannistraro, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, 298-300; De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista: L'organizzazione dello Stato Fascista, 1925-1929*, 382-390; Clark, *Mussolini,* 115-119; Bosworth, *Mussolini*, 237-239.

[153] Mussolini's speech to the Chamber of Deputes, May 13, 1929, quoted in Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power*, 268 and De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista: L'organizzazione dello Stato Fascista, 1925-1929*, 429-430.

Marinetti's nomination should be seen within the broader context of the evolution of the dictatorship and Mussolini's balancing of the various factions within Fascism.

Marinetti's continuing anti-clericalism was not a secret. His most recent collection of political writings, *Futurismo e Fascismo* (1924), purposefully highlighted anti-clericalism as integrally Futurist and part of the origins of Fascism. Just after the Accords were signed, Libero Altomare (aka Remo Mannoni) recounted

> It was one evening in February 1929, just after the signing of the Lateran Pacts by the Duce and Cardinal Gaspari, that Marinetti, speaking in muffled tones amidst a group of friends, expressed in my presence his sincere, but impotent, disdain for that political act which he felt was dangerous for the future of our nation, and in absolute contrast with the ideal Futurist program.[154]

Marinetti continued on this tear throughout the year. In Marinetti's recently opened political police file there are three separate occasions in 1929 in which he vented his frustrations regarding the conciliation. On July 26 he lamented the compromise with the Church.[155] On September 19 it was reported that according to Marinetti's "faithful followers," he "would be happy, if he was allowed to . . . begin an active Futurist anticlerical campaign."[156] Finally on October 10 it was reported that in artistic circles Marinetti was being teased for his new found respectability in the *Accademia*, and since Marinetti could not respond to these jibes, "he vents by speaking badly of priests and the Pope."[157] Of course, these were private expressions of disagreement with the state. Mussolini embraced Marinetti because of his controversial reputation and because in the end Marinetti accepted whatever Mussolini did and was ever loyal to the Duce, unlike Settimelli and Farinacci who were far more critical and would need to be disciplined.

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[154] Libero Altomare (Remo Mannoni), *Incontri con Marinetti e il Futurismo* (Rome: Corso, 1954), 79.
[155] July 26, 1929, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[156] September 19, 1929, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[157] October 10, 1929, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

Marinetti recognized the delicate balance he had to master in order to be elevated to Fascist *gerarca* as a loyal 'radical.' Thus his protestations for a more radical Fascism remained at the rhetorical level only, had been gradually reduced over the years, and were always surrounded by oaths of loyalty to the Duce, to Italy, etc. And this was the general theme that coursed through Marinetti's last book of collected prose and political writings, *Marinetti e il Futurismo.*

Like *Democrazia futurista* and *Futurismo e Fascismo,* this book marked a critical point in Marinetti's political life, and was a combination of older and newer pieces, some never published, and some revised to accommodate his evolving needs. *Democrazia futurista* was an unabashedly radical and libertarian alternative to Italian parliamentary democracy. It represented Futurist and Fascist political thought in the period 1918-1919. *Futurismo e Fascismo* kept the radical flavor of its predecessor, but placed more emphasis on establishing that Futurism was the precursor of Fascism, in an attempt to both preserve the original *dicianovista* spirit of Fascism and to acquire a niche for Futurism within it. *Marinetti e il Futurismo* was an altogether different work. It was less polemical, and much more historical, or, more to the point, teleological. It was not written, as the previous ones were, critically and from outside the political power structure. It was written because Marinetti was finally on the inside, and the book was a historical justification for the inclusion of Marinetti and his movement in the upper reaches of the regime.

The publication date of *Marinetti e il Futurismo* was not random. It came out on March 19, 1929 the day after Marinetti's nomination to the *Accademia*. This was obviously timed. The book was announced the previous year, and its publication was

meant to highlight Marinetti's elevation to Fascist *gerarca.*[158] The book itself was published in a series entitled the *Prefascisti*; thus, as Marinetti had been proclaiming since 1924, Futurism was now officially recognized as Fascism's precursor. The purpose of the series was made immediately clear by the editor's preface. Fascism had always sought to place its 'revolution' within the context of Italian history, to make Fascism seem like an inevitable development in Italian history, and this is what the series aimed to show. As the editor claimed,

> Fascism is a profoundly modern reality, but it is above all else profoundly Italian: it could not have emerged in any other nation. It thus has its own position in our history, [as] it developed tendencies and numerous strains of thought and characters that were already alive in past centuries, and especially during the Risorgimento. Only an insensitive and overly intellectual critic could see in Fascism the antithesis of the Risorgimento: [Fascism] is instead its development and vindication.[159]

Thus the inclusion of *Marinetti e il Futurismo* in the series was a critical embrace of Futurism within Fascism, when before it had been shunned, and it was done as part of the broader effort to normalize Fascism within the Italian national tradition.[160]

Marinetti e il Futurismo is a chronological, somewhat memoirist book that attempts to tell the story of Futurism from young Marinetti through early 1929. It emphasizes the aspects of Futurism which would have made it indistinguishable from Fascism, such as nationalism, imperialism, and war and violence as the rejuvenator of nations. It also emphasizes how influential Futurism had been in transforming the art world. These two themes served to justify why Marinetti had been elevated to Fascist

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[158] Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia*, 75.
[159] Editor's Introduction, in F.T. Marinetti, *Marinetti e il Futurismo* (Rome: Edizioni "Augustea," 1929), 5. The editor's introduction to the "Prefacisti" series is not reprinted in the version of *Marinetti e il Futurismo* available in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*.
[160] Other titles included Mario Carli's *Arditismo*, Ugo Barni's *Corridoni*, Franco Ciarlantini's *Carducci*, and Ugo D'Andrea's *Enrico Corradini e il nazionalismo*, among others. All were published in Rome by Augustea in 1929, except D'Andrea's which appeared in 1928.

gerarca. However, the book also needed to deal with Futurism's radical nature. It certainly could not ignore it, but it would have been impractical to unleash the same diatribes against the forces of *passatismo* that had laced *Democrazia futurista* and *Futurismo e Fascismo*, even if they were merely rhetorical flourishes. Thus, in *Marinetti e il Futurismo* one gets a tamer presentation of Futurist radicalism, and a greater emphasis of its nationalist characteristics. Futurist radicalism appears in the book less as a critical element of Futurism, than as a relatively harmless, and minor, ingredient in the development of Futurism. Consequently, there is no hint of the fundamental differences between Futurism and early Fascism, which Marinetti had spent the past few years trying to obfuscate. Often times Futurist radicalism was excised from the narrative in the interest of preserving the fiction that Futurism and Fascism had always been of one mind.

Marinetti, for instance, included the Foundation manifesto of 1909 in the book as part of his history of Futurism, but reworked it so that it positioned Futurism from its conception as a predominantly nationalist, pre-Fascist movement. In a new preface to the manifesto, he wrote that "In 1909, while patriots contented themselves with polemicizing against the negators of the hoped for great Italy of today [ie., Fascism], we Futurists imposed our daring and aggressive faith with millions of manifestos and hundreds of conferences in the theatres and the *piazze*, inculcating our *Italianità*, proud and innovative, with legendary beatings."[161] Additionally, he inserted his mantra of the 1920's that "We saw with Vittorio Veneto and the coming to power of Fascism . . . the realization of the minimum Futurist program. . . ."[162] Thus, in retelling the history of the founding of Futurism Marinetti projected backward onto the period pro-Fascist

[161] F.T. Marinetti, "Fondazione e manifesto del Futurismo [1929]," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 508.
[162] Ibid, 508-509.

arguments, thus reducing the independence of Futurism at its infancy, and teleologically driving it into its inevitable Fascist home. The Founding manifesto was a radical document, calling for the obliteration of museums, libraries, museums, and "academies of all sorts." Yet, put in the context of the new nationalist preface Marinetti wrote above, and the fact that it was 20 years old, the manifesto lost much of its radicalism as a consequence. It reads more like an historical document, somewhat quaint in its railing against academies from one of the first members of the *Accademia.*

Similarly, the inclusion of Marinetti's first political manifesto of 1909, that was roundly anti-clerical, lost its relevance two decades later, as Marinetti did not publicly oppose the Lateran Accords.[163] Moreover, the first political manifesto was dwarfed by the inclusion of the second and third political manifestos, published in 1911 and 1913, respectively, which furthered the process of defining Futurism as nationalist first, and radical second, if at all. It was in these documents that Marinetti laid out, in the context of the Libyan War, that "all liberties are given to the individual and the people, except that of being a coward,"[164] that Italian workers needed a 'patriotic education', and that Italy needed a larger military establishment in the quest for irredentist lands and a new Italian empire.[165]

When Marinetti recounted the war years, the foundation of the Futurist Political Party and the establishment of the *Fasci di combattimento,* he engaged in some significant historical and textual revisionism to establish a smooth link between Futurism

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[163] F.T. Marinetti, "Irredentismo e arresti," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 509. The quote comes from a previous printing of the manifesto in F.T. Marinetti, "Movimento politico futurista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 290.
[164] F.T. Marinetti, "La concezione politica futurista," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 517. The manifesto was published earlier and printed on pp. 290-291. The quotes are from p. 291.
[165] F.T. Marinetti, "Battaglia di Roma e secondo manifesto politico," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 517-518. The manifesto was printed earlier in *TIF* on pp. 291-293.

and Fascism. He wrote that "After Caporetto the Futurists Marinetti, Mario Carli, Settimelli founded 'Roma Futurista,' [and that in] all Italian cities *Fasci politici futuristi* sprang up, which gradually transformed into *Fasci di combattimento.*"[166] He then provided a detailed narrative of the nationalist and anti-socialist activities of the Futurists, Arditi, and Mussolini's followers leading up to the establishment of the *Fasci di combattimento.*[167]

This was a fairly common narrative in his history of post war Futurism, but with important differences. First, Marinetti neglected to highlight that after the foundation of the *Fasci di combattimento* Marinetti and Carli maintained the autonomy of their respective Futurist and Arditi movements, as they were uneasy with the overt reactionism of the *Fasci.* More importantly, Marinetti left out any mention of the manifesto of the Futurist Political Party, which was first published in February, 1918. This was quite a radical document, and its call to make anti-clericalism the policy of the state, and demands for a republic, universal suffrage, the abolition of marriage, a reduced army and navy, land sequestrations, the abolition of political police forces, and the freedom to strike for workers would have caused more than a little controversy in an official publication released in 1929.[168]

In recounting the presence of the Futurists at the official founding of the *Fasci di combattimento* in Milan on March 23, 1919, Marinetti wrote that he roused the attendees with the cry that they had to go out about the masses and strip them of their 'evil

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[166] F.T. Marinetti, "I futuristi primi interventisti: Manifesto dell'Orgoglio italiano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 524.
[167] F.T. Marinetti, "Fasci politici futuristi, arditi e legionari fiumani," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 524-525.
[168] See F.T. Marinetti, "Manifesto del partito futurista italiano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 131-132.

shepherd'—the socialists.[169] Again, a certain retelling of history was taking place. When this line was originally given, there was a second section wherein Marinetti lamented that Fascists were attacking socialists and workers alike—the evil shepherd and the sheep—and that the Fascists had to be better at protecting workers and respecting their right to strike for purely economic reasons. Such overt sympathy with the working class was unsound in the dictatorship. Similarly, all sympathies with the working classes were stripped from his narrative of the Futurist-Fascist attack of socialists at the Battle of April 15, 1919 (Via Mercanti).[170]

When Marinetti recounted the Futurist contribution to D'Annunzio's Fiume expedition he presented it as if he, Mussolini and D'Annunzio were all of one mind at the time.[171] However, this was also a gross distortion of events. Marinetti had abandoned Mussolini as too reactionary in September, 1919 in the hopes of launching a revolution into Italy from Fiume. D'Annunzio was skeptical of Marinetti's plans and eventually forced him out of Fiume. Moreover, D'Annunzio felt abandoned by Mussolini while in Fiume. When explaining why Fiume did not develop into a 'March on Rome', Marinetti argued that Fascist forces were still too small to bring the Fiume revolution to Italy.[172] But this was another distortion of the truth. *Fiumenismo* and Fascism were not one and the same thing at the time. D'Annunzio and Mussolini were rival political upstarts, and Mussolini was happy enough to see him gone when Giolitti cleared him out of Fiume.

Marinetti's recollection of the November, 1919 elections were also cleaned up of any hint of disagreement with the Fascists. In the one speech in which he had railed

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[169] F.T. Marinetti, "Il Fascismo e il discorso di Milano," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 527.
[170] F.T. Marinetti, "La battaglia del 15 aprile," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 448-452. This essay was printed earlier in *TIF* in the *Futurismo e Fascismo* section.
[171] F.T. Marinetti, "Discorso di Montecitorio," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 528-530.
[172] Ibid., 529.

against the Vatican in page after page of vilifying rhetoric, he now shortened the text, and reduced his *svaticamento* to a brief mention, which is what it received in the other speeches of the time, and thus became a minor historical detail.[173] He recounted his time in jail with Mussolini after the November elections, but failed to mention that Mussolini was immediately released and left him in prison for an extra three weeks, where he then composed *Al di là del comunismo* and signaled his intent to finally break with Fascism.[174]

The republication of *Al di là del comunismo* in *Marinetti e il Futurismo* was an interesting choice for Marinetti, as it was the sum of the most radical positions he had held during the period 1918 to 1920, and the bulk of *Marinetti e il Fascismo* played down Futurist radicalism. However, the manifesto published in 1929 had a different function than when it was first published in 1920, and reprinted in *Futurismo e Fascismo* in 1924, and would have been read differently in 1929.

When first published in 1920, it was a parting shot at the Fascist movement that Marinetti believed had grown increasingly reactionary during 1919, and from which he had just resigned. Thus, one would have read *Al di là del Comunismo* and focused on its radical prescriptions for reforming post-war Italy: *svaticamento*, and the abolition of parliament, the senate, the monarchy, matrimony, permanent armies, the courts, the police and prisons. The Italian populace was to be taught to defend themselves through "schools of courage" that would re-produce the free, though disciplined, anarchic-individualism that the Arditi had mastered during the war. Moreover, one would also

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[173] F.T. Marinetti, "Discorso di Firenze," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF,* 530-531. Compare to the version published in *Futurismo e Fascismo* as F.T. Marinetti, "Il discorso di Firenze," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 466-469. The other speeches at the time included "Discorso di Piazza Belgioioso," "Discorso di Monza," and "Discorso di Piazza Sant'Alessandro," all in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 471-476. These pieces were printed earlier in *TIF*.

[174] F.T. Marinetti, "Elezioni e prigionia del 10 novembre 1919," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 532.

have focused on Marinetti's rather naive solution to the then raging class war, which was to offer a means through which workers could tolerate the "economic inferno" of capitalism by offering them diversions through their own artistic creativity or access to free art exhibits, theatre and music.[175]

However, when it was re-printed in 1924, and Marinetti's goal was to paint Futurism as the radical precursor of Fascism, as well as to preserve the radical nature of early Fascism, *Al di là del Comunismo*'s radical passages would have been read less as a criticism of Fascism than a reminder of the Futurist origins of the movement which could not be denied. The manifesto was surrounded by a variety of articles that made the connection between Futurism and Fascism inescapable and it lost its critical virulence. The passages that showed the commonality of the Futurist and Fascist world view would have had more resonance, such as those that dismissed the leveling tendencies of communism, that posited war as a critical aspect of national development, and glorified the nation as "the maximum extension of the individual, or better: the most vast individual capable of living a long time, ruling, dominating and defending all the parts of its body."[176]

When published in 1929, after Marinetti had been elevated to the *Accademia,* the manifesto would have been viewed simply as an historical document, a reminder of the radical origins of Fascism that had survived in its *dicianovista* wing. Moreover, aspects of the manifesto, which in 1920 would have been viewed as criticism of Fascism's reactionary turn, in 1929 would have been viewed as harbingers of Fascist policies. For instance, Marinetti's claim that the class war could be ameliorated by providing workers

[175] F.T. Marinetti, *Al di là del Comunismo*, in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 419-420, 421-424. The manifesto was printed earlier in *TIF*.
[176] F.T. Marinetti, *Al di là del Comunismo*, in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 412.

a means to dissipate the frustrations they experienced at the workplace,[177] sounded very much like the *dopolavoro* program Mussolini had just instituted, which was meant to improve the quality of life of the working classes and to gain their 'consent' to the dictatorship.[178]

Marinetti's remaining narrative in the book looks at the history of Futurism within Fascism, and presents an overly smooth rendition of Marinetti's path to *Accademico*. For instance, he wrote that an order of the day was published after the November, 1924 Futurist Congress which called on Mussolini to free himself from parliament and restore the Fascism of 1919 by declaring a dictatorship at the height of the Matteotti Crisis. Yet, this order was published in 1925 only after the dictatorship was announced, as Marinetti had sought to hold together his fractious movement during the Matteotti Crisis and avoided any political pronouncements. He wrote of the Futurist triumph at the Paris Art Deco Expo in 1925, yet forgot to mention that this was an accident, as the Futurists had been marginalized by Mussolini's hand-picked organizer of the expo, Margherita Sarfatti.[179] He wrote that his trip to South America had resulted in the "triumphant explosion of Futurism in South America," which redounded well to Italy's international

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[177] F.T. Marinetti, *Al di là del Comunismo*, in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 424.

[178] See Victoria De Grazia's entry, "Dopolavoro," in Philip Cannistraro, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, 175-177 and her *The Culture of Consent: the Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). The notion of 'consent' under the Fascist regime is by no means an uncontroversial topic. De Felice and Cannistraro argue that the success of the regime lay in building up legitimate support amongst the populace via the cult of the Duce, successful foreign policy, ability to resist the ravages of the Depression, and the propagandistic effectiveness and reach of the Ministry of Popular Culture. De Grazia and Paul Corner argue that voluntary consent of the Italians to Fascism is impossible to measure in a regime that was ultimately based on the rule of force, surveillance and fear. For our purposes, it is enough that both camps agree that there was extensive state outreach into all manners of popular culture as a means of building either the support or acquiescence of Italians, which Marinetti's 'art as spiritual solution to the class war' was certainly in line with. See, Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il duce: I. Gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974); De Felice, *Fascism: An Informal Introduction to its Theory and Practice* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1976); Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*; De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent*; Paul Corner, "Italian Fascism: Whatever Happened to Dictatorship?," *Journal of Modern History*, 74, #2 (June, 2002), 325-351.

[179] Ibid., 538.

reputation, but neglected to mention he was hounded by anti-Fascists throughout the trip.[180]

In his final piece in *Marinetti e il Futurismo*, "Il futurismo e la conflagrazione futura," ("Futurism and the Future War") Marinetti finished the book by focusing on the themes that bound Futurism and Fascism: their nationalism and desire to acquire an empire. He argued that Futurism had always glorified war, and that it had sought to prepare the Italian race for the First World War by curing it of its excessive affectations and nostalgia, and now the same formulas were needed to prepare Italians for another war, which was inevitable. A future war was not only inevitable, but it was needed, as the time had arrived for Italy to acquire its "indispensable lands."[181]

The origins of this final piece in *Marinetti e il Futurismo* was an article Marinetti published in early 1929, entitled "La guerra futura." It was written after Marinetti had spoken with Mussolini, who suspected that war would result from the international tension caused by his desire to expand Italian influence into the Balkans.[182] In this article Marinetti made the case that war was inevitable, and that Italy had to prepare for it properly. Unlike the British and French, he argued, who focused on tanks and infantry,

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[180] F.T. Marinetti, "La guardia al Brennero," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 540.
[181] F.T. Marinetti, "Il Futurismo e la conflagrazione futura," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 541.
[182] See the entry dated January 24, 1929 in Enrico Caviglia, *Diario (aprile 1925-marzo 1945)* (Rome: Gherardo Casini Editore, 1952), 59. Caviglia recounts encountering Marinetti when the latter had just finished meeting with Mussolini and then told Caviglia about their conversation. The entry reads as follows: "L'altro ieri sono andato a far visita a Mussolini. Nella sala d'aspetto intoppai in Marinetti, futurista. "Vengo da Benito", mi disse. Poi domandò il mio parere sulla situazione politica; il duce era pessimista e pareva prevedere la guerra. Io dissi che nessuno ha denari per farla, che il meccanismo di guerra esistente prima del 1914, quando bastava una molla per farlo scattare, nel momento attuale non esiste, e tutti possono gridare, minacciare, suonare le trombe, e nessuno se ne preoccupa. D'Altra parte, se prima non si modifica la situazione, oggi tutto e in mano dell'Inghilterra. Marinetti mi dava ragione. Si scherzò alquanto e io gli dissi che quando prese moglie, capitolò anche lui. Egli rispose che il far figli e futurismo. Osservai che anche Adamo era futurista e ci si lasciò allegramente." On Fascist foreign policy, see Chapter 3: "Italian Revisionism" of H. James Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1940* (Westport, CT: Praegar, 1997), 35-55. Mussolini antagonized the French and British by destabilizing Central and Eastern Europe through his support of Croatian separatists, the proto-fascist Austrian Heiwehr, Albanian irredentists, and Hungarian and Bulgarian revisionists of the Paris Peace Treaties.

respectively, the future war would be an aerial war, a more "Futurist" war, to counter the trench warfare of the last war. Consequently, he warned that the Germans may prove to be a threat, as their civilian air-force was ready to be transformed into a military one. Consequently, "although wanting peace, [Fascist Italy] prepares itself intrepidly."[183]

The final article in *Marinetti e il Futurismo* served to round out the book's major themes of connecting Futurism and Fascism, with the latter fulfilling the dreams of the former. He wrote that "After Vittorio Veneto I predicted the necessity for every veteran to become a heroic citizen. In fact, in the famous Fascist [year of] 1919 we all transformed into heroic citizens in order to defend our interventionist integrity with bombs and revolvers. Today there exists a Fascist state that protects national pride."[184]

Marinetti clearly benefited from his elevation to *Accademico*. He could now enforce the inclusion and purchase of Futurist art at the Biennale and at other state-run exhibits,[185] and he eliminated Sarfatti and the *Novecento* as rivals in the quest for the designation of 'state art'.[186] But there was a cost. Having been triumphantly elevated to

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[183] F.T. Marinetti, "La guerra futura," in *Gazzetta del Popolo,* January, 1929, in GMP, Box 18, Folder 4. Marinetti's *Libroni* at Yale cannot confirm the exact date of the article, but notes a response was printed in the *Gazzetta* on January 29, so Marinetti's article was obviously before then, and likely around the date of his conversation with General Caviglia (see above) on January 22 or 23, when he had just finished speaking with Mussolini. In the draft version of the article there was no mention of Italy 'wanting peace.' See F.T. Marinetti, "La guerra futura," in YMP, Box 26, Folder 1343: La guerra futura. The ultimate published version may have had the peace amendment attached after consultations with Mussolini.

[184] F.T. Marinetti, "Il Futurismo e la conflagrazione futura," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 542.

[185] In Marinetti's file with the Division of Political Police in the Ministry of the Interior it was reported that Marinetti had proclaimed that "Mussolini had given the order that Futurist art was to be placed at the forefront of any artistic exhibit." "He added," the report goes on, "that at the recent exhibit, as neither Belluzzo [Giuseppe, Minister of Public Instruction] nor Bottai, much less Oppo, acquired paintings by Futurist painters, he had the Ministry of the Interior take all eight of them," and that Marinetti consequently "openly rebuked Beluzzo, Bottai and especially Oppo." See, June 28, 1929, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

[186] Marinetti held two conferences in late 1929 that attacked the *Novecento*, successfully piling on the abuse that was then being leveled against Sarfatti by Farinacci. Farinacci used the traditional anti-modernist attack that accused the *Novecento* of being foreign-inspired and essentially anti-Italian, but his attacks eventually degenerated into straight anti-Semitism. Marinetti accused the *Novecento* of similarly being too beholden to foreign (French) inspiration, specifically French Cubism, and failing to recognize Italian Futurism as the inspiration for all 20th century avant-garde movements. On Sarfatti's troubles, see

the upper reaches of the regime, Marinetti would now be viewed as a Fascist first, and a Futurist second, if at all. Not only was his reputation tied to the vagaries of Fascist politics and diplomacy, but as an *Accademico* he had to publicly answer attacks on him and the regime, thus further raising his Fascist profile, which was an increasing burden in the international arena as the years went on. One such example of the consequences of his new found identity appeared around the time of the inauguration of the *Accademia*, in the form of a public letter by French novelist and essayist, as well as Prix Goncourt winner, Maurice Bedel, who asked how Marinetti could possibly have joined an academy founded by the dictator Mussolini—the assumption being that art could not survive in the stifled atmosphere of Fascism.[187] Bedel was a well known writer, and published a number of works dealing with the development of Fascism in Italy and later Germany.[188] Thus, Marinetti could hardly have ducked the question, nor did he want to.

In a long public response to Bedel, Marinetti made clear that he did not feel the liberty of the artist and the order of Fascism were incompatible. In fact, his very nomination to the *Accademia*, he argued, should be enough to "pulverize in an instant all the perplexities and the objections that agitate you," as he, Marinetti, was "the most violent libertarian of the arts and literature." The *Accademia*, he went on to argue, was meant to stimulate the Italian creative genius, not to stifle it; Mussolini, in fact, welcomed

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Cannistraro and Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman*, 346-348, 373-379, 383-386. Marinetti's conference proceedings were published in F.T. Marinetti, *Futurismo e Novecentismo* (Milan: Edizioni Galleria Pesaro, 1930).

[187] Bedel's letter appeared in *Les Nouvelles Litteraires et Artistiques* of Paris. The date cannot be ascertained, but it likely appeared in mid to late November,1929, as Marinetti's response (more below) refers to his conferences on the *Novecento*, which were held on October 18 and mid-November, as happening just a few days before. Moreover, Marinetti held a public conference on his response to Bedel on December 2, 1929. Bedel was not the only Frenchman that publicly commented on Marinetti's nomination. The conservative Camille Mauclaire joked of the "old anarchist and internationalist that became a fiery fascist," in the January 23, 1930 edition of *L'éclaireur de Nice*, quoted in Michel Ostenc, *Intellectuels italiens et fascisme (1915-1929)* (Paris: Payot, 1983), 259.

[188] On Bedel, see Leo O. Forkey, "Maurice Bedel, Prophet of Disaster," *The French Review*, 20, # 5 (March, 1947), 366-371.

into the *Accademia* scientists who had signed the manifesto of anti-Fascism. He noted, more broadly, that even such an avowed anti-Fascist as Benedetto Croce was free to publish his works and speak in the Senate under the Fascist regime. Moreover, being a Fascist did not automatically mean that one's creative output would be valued by Mussolini, who had once declared that "the membership card does not provide genius, nor put it back where it was missing in the first place." He also pointed out that in the midst of the reconciliation with the Church, Mussolini had not only nominated the anti-clerical Marinetti to the *Accademia*, but also allowed the production of his virulently anti-clerical play *Re Baldoria*. Finally, Marinetti held up his rivalry with the *Novecento*, recently displayed in two conferences held in October and November, as proof of the freedom of the artist in Italy, as he had successfully resisted their claim to monopolize the only expression of art under Fascism.[189]

Marinetti also met the accusation of repression within the Fascist regime head on, and simply claimed it was only limited to those that were a danger to national security. Thus, just as he argued in 1911 that 'the word Italy must dominate the world Liberty', Mussolini, he now argued, had to act against parliament and communism because both were a danger to Italy. Whatever freedom of expression had been curtailed of Italy's "internal enemies," or the "saturated journalism of the *gerarchi*" during periods of crises, he added, was re-instated with the consolidation of victory. To show just how little he respected Bedel's concerns, Marinetti claimed that they did not stem from a concern with

[189] The article was ultimately published as "Replica a Maurice Bedel," in *Gazzetta del Popolo*, November 29, 1929. However, the analysis above is taken from the Italian draft of this article found in Marinetti's papers at Yale. See, F.T. Marinetti, "Risposta a Maurice Bedel," in YMP, Box 34, Folder 1575: Risposta a Maurice Bedel.

liberty in Fascist Italy, but were symptoms of French jealousy now that Italy was now no longer a *passatista* nation beholden to the French for all their culture.[190]

Marinetti's response to Bedel was a fairly accurate portrait of his mindset in late 1929. On the surface, it looked as if he had maintained his principles throughout his years of political activity, balancing liberty with the order needed for national security and greatness. Thus the Marinetti of the pre-war years, he would have argued, was in line with the Mussolini of the dictatorship years. Yet, this was far from the truth, and disguised just how much Marinetti had compromised his desire for liberty for the national advancement promised by the Fascist regime. His letter disingenuously stated that freedom of expression had been returned to Italy after a period of political crisis had passed. But this was simply not true. The dictatorship proceeded apace from the Matteotti Crisis until 1929, and continued thereafter. Yes, a number of intellectuals who had signed the anti-Fascist manifesto had remained in Italy and continued to do their work, such as Croce, but they weren't active. All the active anti-Fascists had been exiled (Salvemini), jailed (Gramsci), or killed (Matteotti and the Rosselli brothers). Even Marinetti, as shown above, had tried to help some supposed anti-Fascists that he felt were being unfairly persecuted by the regime. Moreover, Marinetti's anti-clericalism and rants against the *Novecento* were not proof of artistic freedom in Italy. Mussolini allowed both because they fit into his broader political plans. Marinetti's anti-clericalism was tolerated because it showed that Mussolini was not giving up too much when he signed the Lateran Accords with the Church, and Mussolini allowed debate over what constituted Fascist art as it kept all art movements loyal to him. Lastly, Marinetti, like Croce, enjoyed their

[190] F.T. Marinetti, "Risposta a Maurice Bedel," in YMP, Box 34, Folder 1575: Risposta a Maurice Bedel.

respective freedoms in Italy because of their fame, and were very much the exceptions to the rule.

Marinetti sincerely believed that he was still the same radical he had always been, even if his radicalism had been reduced to defending the freedom of the modern artist. A hint of his thinking was revealed during his conference on the *Novecento* when, in the midst of criticism from the young *Novecentisti* in the audience, he declared "To those of you that are young, remember this: you can care less about my praise or my support, but if you create work that is truly original, you will always have me as your obstinate defender. Audacious, courageous, [and] anti-opportunistic!"[191]

However, in spite of Marinetti's protestations and beliefs, he was hardly a radical anymore. He was now a member of the Fascist elite, and compromises had been made to get him to this point. He had committed to the dictatorship to achieve his nationalist goals for Italy, and had consequently curbed, muted, and de-prioritized his radical goals. In exchange for a strong state and the promise of future greatness, Marinetti had abandoned his republicanism, anti-clericalism, libertarianism and defense of workers' economic rights. What remained of his radical agenda was the promotion and defense of modern art. However, even here there was compromise. He was no longer at war with *passatista* artists. He worked with them in the interest of advancing all Italian art, again for nationalist purposes. But it was more than the compromises that brought Marinetti to the top levels of the regime. He had shown unstinting loyalty to the dictatorship and was instrumental in its development, contributing to its organization of culture, the Italianization of the South Tyrolese, and extending its political and cultural influence overseas.

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[191] F.T. Marinetti, *Futurismo e Novecentismo*, 29.

Yet, the very dictatorship that he worked so hard to bring into existence, to harness Italian resources to conquer a new Italian empire, would ultimately be his undoing. Once the dictatorship began marching towards war, it would become ever more totalitarian and snuff out all liberties, including the one liberty Marinetti had committed himself to defending: the freedom of the modern artist. When this happened, Marinetti accepted it, and abandoned this one final component of his radical politics. His nation was at war, and, as he had done throughout his life, he put national interests ahead of advancing radical goals.

Chapter 5: Marinetti, 1929-1944: Living and Dying with the Regime

Introduction

This chapter deals with Marinetti's activities within the Fascist regime from his ascension to *Accademico* to his final days with the regime in the Salò Republic. Marinetti's activities in this period were the logical extension of those covered in the previous chapter, when he was instrumental in building the dictatorship. In those years, he had willingly sacrificed all of his radical goals in the interest of the national order promised by the dictatorship. The only radicalism he preserved was in his defense of modern art against Fascist conservatives. This trend continued in the period covered by this chapter, when the regime, with the dictatorship now secure, planned to more aggressively project its influence abroad. Consequently, as the regime became more culturally and economically autarchic on the road to war, as it sought to expand its cultural and economic influence in North Africa and Eastern Europe, as it built up its armed forces, and then conducted imperial warfare, Marinetti was there at every step of the way, acting as propagandist and participant. He had been calling for a new Italian empire since 1923, and now he committed himself to acquiring it. And, just as in the previous chapter, Marinetti also sought to act as a bulwark against Fascist conservatives and anti-modernists.

However, something changed in this period. The combination of loyalty and a sufficiently tamed radicalism was enough to get Marinetti appointed *Accademico* in 1929. But thereafter this new official position, and the regimes' increasing need for order as it prepared for war, actually limited Marinetti's ability to influence Fascism's development and preserve any meaningful cultural freedoms. In this period, Marinetti simultaneously

lost the support of the domestic and international artistic community and the youth because he was considered too Fascist, but also met the increasing antagonism of conservative and anti-modernist Fascists for not being Fascist enough. With regards to the former, few looked to him as the beacon of revolution or liberty within the totalitarian regime because he was viewed as too accommodating, conformist, and loyal to the state. With regards to the latter, conservatives and anti-modernists viewed him as an embarrassment and a detriment to the regime because of his outlandish behavior and projects, viewed his modernism as a threat to their notion of Fascism, and demanded an art that was little more than propaganda for the regime. It was this group, taking full advantage of Marinetti's weakened and isolated position, that finally prevailed on the eve of World War II. During the conflict, Marinetti loyally supported the war effort, accepted the regime's repressive cultural dictates, and consigned himself to work that was obviously propagandistic, regardless of its claim to being art.

This chapter is divided into three sections: "Working Towards the Regime," "Consequences: Isolation and Impotence," and "Final Compromises: Marinetti in World War II." In the first section I trace Marinetti's activities on behalf of the regime as it solidified support at home, laid the groundwork for imperial expansion, and then engaged in colonial warfare in Ethiopia. In the second section I trace the consequences of these actions on Marinetti himself, wherein he lost support both at home and abroad, which left him incapable of defending the one liberty he was still committed to: the defense of modern art against a resurgent anti-modernist, and now anti-Semitic, movement in the late Thirties. His efforts to keep Italy from drawing closer to Nazi Germany in this period were also fruitless as the two fascist nations became locked into a

military alliance on the road to war with the West. However, even in his losing struggle against the anti-modernists at home, Marinetti was hardly taking a heroic last stand against the forces of reaction. He compromised yet again, accepted the basic anti-Semitic premise of the attacks on modern art, and simply tried to prove modern art was not Jewish—thus perpetuating the regime's persecution of the Jews. Finally, in the last section I show that once Italy had decided to commit to war Marinetti abandoned any further struggles against the regime. He ended his criticism of Nazi Germany, and he gave up his defense of artistic freedom. This was the only liberty he had fought for under the regime and he fully compromised on that one as well, submitting wholeheartedly to the order the regime demanded in the midst of war. It wasn't a difficult decision, however. He had always claimed that 'the word Italy must dominate over the word Liberty,' and this had justified every compromise of his radical principles under Fascism. Abandoning cultural freedom in the service of the war effort was the logical conclusion to a whole series of compromises he had made since 1922.

Working Towards the Regime

Marinetti's contributions to the regime in this period were as critical, if not more so, than in the previous period of 1925 to 1929. Then, he had aided in the building of the dictatorship, both in the development of its infrastructure and in furthering its international and cultural objectives. After 1929 the more mature dictatorship moved in a new direction. Having quashed domestic dissent and imposed state control or direction on most aspects of Italian life, the next step was in projecting Italian influence abroad. To this end, Mussolini set about building an imperialist and militarist consciousness amongst the people, moved Italy towards economic and cultural autarchy, and engaged in various levels of diplomacy, all leading up to the Ethiopian War in 1935. At each of these steps Marinetti was an active participant in the furtherance of Mussolini's goals and the Fascist regime.

In keeping with my analysis of Marinetti's political decisions since Mussolini came to power, I also argue that Marinetti's activities as *Accademico* should not be seen as somehow new or 'more' accommodating to the regime, and were not simply opportunistic. All of Marinetti's activities analyzed in the following pages were the logical development of Futurist aesthetic and political principles that originated 20 years earlier, and were now finding their fulfillment within, and contributing to, Fascism. In a very real sense, Marinetti was so active in the regime's policies, working towards the regime's goals, because Fascism's commitment to national advancement was at the core of Futurist politics, and all other (radical) components of those politics were expendable.

In using the phrase 'working towards the regime,' I am purposefully playing off of Kershaw's idea of the Nazis who were 'working towards the Fuhrer.' Kershaw seeks

to explain the workings of the Nazi dictatorship partly through the immense popularity Hitler enjoyed through most of his regime, which allowed for the far-reaching initiatives put forward by his government. Moreover, as a consequence of this popularity, the "Hitler myth" of the leader as all knowing and good, government functionaries did not wait for specific orders from Hitler to initiate a policy. They actively 'worked towards the Fuhrer' to achieve his general aims. Marinetti, I believe, similarly 'worked towards the regime,' or the Duce. In some cases I believe he acted under instructions, but mostly he sought to fulfill Mussolini's aims, which coincided with his own. Moreover, in glorifying the Duce, Marinetti actively participated in the development of the 'myth' of Mussolini as the omni-present, well-intentioned, father-figure which, at the very least, facilitated the implementation of Mussolini's aims.[1]

The most immediate evidence that Marinetti would be working towards the regime were the various Futurist art initiatives launched upon his promotion to *Accademico.* In the various *aero*-prefixed movements of this period Marinetti was consciously responding to the regime's greater emphasis on developing air power in Italy—and the public's appreciation for it—in the lead up to future imperial expansion. In *Arte sacra* Marinetti was following the perambulations of the Duce's relationship with

[1] See Ian Kershaw, *The "Hitler Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) and *Hitler, 1936-45: Nemesis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000). Bosworth discounts the idea of using Kershaw's idea with reference to Mussolini, as he would then have to accept De Felice's concept of popular consensus to the Fascist regime, which he does not. I, however, believe one can accept the influence of Mussolini's popularity without fully ascribing to the consensus theory. See R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (London: Arnold, 2002), 5-12; Renzo De Felice, *Fascism: An Informal Introduction to its Theory and Practice*, edited by Michael Arthur Ledeen (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976) and *Mussolini il duce, I. Gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974). Cannistraro discusses the use of the media in creating the myth of the Duce in his *La fabbrica del consenso: fascismo e mass media* (Bari: Laterza, 1975). Also helpful are Piero Melograni, "The Cult of the Duce in Mussolini's Italy," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11, #4 (October, 1976), 221-237 and Alexander De Grand's recent review article "Working Towards the Duce: Five Recent Books on Mussolini," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 11, #4 (2006), 551-562.

the Vatican, wherein Mussolini sought to secure national unity by solidifying the loyalty of Italy's Catholics without necessarily strengthening the autonomy of the Vatican.

The first series of initiatives that Marinetti and his Futurists launched in this period, specifically the early to mid-1930s, involved the host of *aero*-prefixed artistic movements that the public were repeatedly introduced to. These included *Aeropittura* (1929), *Aeropoesia,* (1931), *Aeromusica* (1933), *Architectura aerea* (1934), *Aeroplastica* (1934), *Aeroceramica* (1934), and even *Aerosilografia* (blockprinting) (1941) and *Aeroprofumi* (1942). The roots of these initiatives were quite clear: they responded to a "flight craze" that was epitomized by Charles Lindbergh's cross-Atlantic solo flight in 1927, and, more importantly, to Italo Balbo's cross-Atlantic squadrons to Brazil in 1931 and the US in 1933. Balbo's trips were a clear signal that Fascism was on the cutting edge of new, potentially military, technology, and that Italy could project its influence world-wide.[2]

Berghaus interprets these *aero* initiatives as simply accommodations with the regime in the hopes of achieving some form of patronage. Specifically, *Aeropittura* allowed Futurists to depict Fascist themes of speed, strength, power, not to mention airpower, that would be especially well regarded by the state after the Ethiopian war.[3] Though there is something to be said for this interpretation, it tends to posit a break in the goals of Futurist art and Marinetti's politics which did not occur. Marinetti did not become 'more' accomodationist after his appointment to the *Accademia*. As an

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[2] On the "flight craze," see Robert Wohl, *The Spectacle of Flight: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1920-1950* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), specifically Chapters 1 ("The Ambassador of the Skies") and 2 ("Flying and Fascism"); Claudio G. Segrè, *Italo Balbo: A Fascist Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); A. Scott Berg, *Lindbergh* (New York : G.P. Putnam's, 1998).
[3] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction 1909-1944* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996), 247.

Accademico he was certainly a more public face of the regime, but Futurist and Fascist goals of national rejuvenation had bound them together from the start. Having helped found Fascism in 1919, then committed himself to Mussolini's government in 1922, and the dictatorship in 1925, all the while arguing Futurism was the precursor to Fascism, as well as its most critical ingredient and loyal supporter, Marinetti's introduction of the *Aero*-initiatives, for better or worse, were simply an extension of this policy of remaking Italy through Fascism and of advancing Italian and Fascist influence world-wide. Moreover, the *Aero*-initiatives, specifically Marinetti's own *Aeropittura* and *Aeropoesia*, were not conjured from nothingness to meet contemporary political needs. They had their roots in the revolutionary goals of early Futurist painting and poetry. Finally, that the state embraced some *Aero*-painters after the Ethiopian War does not explain why the movement was launched in 1929, nearly seven years earlier.[4]

Marinetti's aesthetic goal since the founding of Futurism, and then, he claimed, through Fascism, involved a revolution in art that would drag it into the modern era. The revolution would crush *passatismo,* and glorify, amongst other things, the speed resulting from modern technology, such as the automobile, and attempt to reproduce the multitude of stimuli one is subjected to in modern society, or simultaneity.[5] As he wrote in "The New Religion-Morality of Speed," (1916) "The Futurist morality will defend man from

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[4] Berghaus dismisses this period in Futurism, and Marinetti's life, as slavish accomodation that did not even produce as much state patronage as the Futurists would have liked. His source, Patrizia Rosazza-Ferraris, "The aeropainters and the state: commissions and acquisitions," in Bruno Mantura, Patrizia Rosazza-Ferraris and Livia Velani, eds., *Futurism in Flight: "Aeropittura" paintings and sculptures of Man's conquest of space (1913-1945)* (London: Aeritalia, 1990), provides a good list of what the Futurists sold at various exhibits, but lacks any comparison to other movements and what they sold. Moreover, considering that the Futurists were shut out of exhibits for the first few years of the regime, their ability to show and sell at the Biennales and Quadriennales should not be considered a small feat.

[5] Anne Bowler, "Politics as Art: Italian Futurism and Fascism," *Theory and Society*, 20, #6 (December, 1991), 774-775, 779. See also her "Art and politics in the historical avant-garde: Italian futurism and Russian constructivism," Ph.D. Dissertation, New School for Social Research, 1992.

the decay caused by slowness, by memory, by analysis, by repose and habit. Human energy centupled by speed will master Time and Space."[6] In "The Birth of the Futurist Aesthetic" (1915) he wrote that "We create the new aesthetic of speed. We have almost abolished the concept of space and notably diminished the concept of time. We are thus preparing the ubiquity of multiplied man. We will thus arrive at the abolition of the year, the day, and the hour."[7] If this was true for the revolution in transportation wrought by the automobile, then it was, at the very least, doubly true with the emergence of the airplane as a relatively safe and rapid form of long-distance travel. As he wrote in the *Manifesto della aeropittura*: "We Futurists declare that . . . the mutable perspectives of flight constitute an absolutely new reality that has nothing in common with traditional reality seen from terrestrial perspectives . . . , the elements of this new reality have no fixed point and are derived from perennial mobility. . .[and] painting this new reality from high up imposes a disdain for detail and a need to synthesize and transfigure everything. . . ." "Time and space," he wrote later in the manifesto, "are pulverized by the observation that the Earth travels swiftly under the [seemingly] immobile airplane."[8]

Marinetti's introduction of *Aeropoesia* in 1931 was also a continuity of Futurist aesthetic ideas going back to the pre-war years. When Marinetti introduced *Parole in libertà* (Words-in-Freedom) the goal, as Bowler puts it, was "the abolition and complete breakdown of the stultifying structures of traditional grammatical, syntactic, and narrative forms as impediments to the aesthetic embodiment of simultaneity and speed."[9] In

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[6] F.T. Marinetti, "The New Religion-Morality of Speed," [1916] in F.T. Marinetti, *Let's Murder the Moonshine: Selected Writings*, 102. Cited by Bowler, "Politics as Art," 774.
[7] F.T. Marinetti, "The Birth of a Futurist Aesthetic," [1915] in F.T. Marinetti, *Let's Murder the Moonshine*, 89.
[8] F.T. Marinetti et al., "Manifesto della aeropittura," [1929] in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 170, 171.
[9] Bowler, "Politics as Art," 782.

Marinetti's "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" (1912) he wrote that one could achieve this goal though the destruction of syntax, the scattering of nouns at random, the use of infinitives, the abolition of the adjective, the adverb, and punctuation, with the latter being replaced with mathematical symbols.[10] These goals and methods were at the root of *Aeropoesia*. In the manifesto of *Aeropoesia*, Marinetti wrote that "The characteristics of flight, that is: the upward thrust, the religion of speed, suspension without contact, the indispensable health of the motor, the dangers and sensibilities of the air, the fusion of the man with the airplane . . . impose on Aeropoesia methods and principles that are absolutely new." Of course, these methods were broadly similar to what he recommended for the writing of *Parole in libertà*, and included a dependence on infinitives, the alogical juxtaposition of verb tenses, and a continued ban on adjectives—at least initially. Again, the use of mathematical symbols was encouraged. In keeping with the new subject matter, poets were encouraged to focus on images of light, clouds, fog, etc., and to avoid terrestrial images, to focus on the pilot's bodily features and the vibrating power of the airplane. However, the original goal of *Parole in libertà* still held: providing a "synthesis of the world," by "destroying time."[11]

If Marinetti's introduction of the *Aero*-initiatives cannot be chalked up to some radical break in the Futurist mission for Italy, then why the re-naming of Futurism as a movement of the 'aerial' viewpoint from 1929 onwards?[12] Certainly, the 'flight craze' I

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[10] F.T. Marinetti, "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," [1912] in F.T. Marinetti, *Let's Murder the Moonshine*, 92-93.

[11] F.T. Marinetti, "L'Aeropoesia-Manifesto futurista ai poeti e agli aviatori," in *Futurismo*, October 2, 1932, reprinted in Luciano Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi e documenti teorici del futurismo, 1909-1944*, Volume 2, f. 1932 (Florence: SPES, 1990). Also see Willard Bohn's "The Poetics of Flight: Futurist Aeropoesia'," *MLN* 121 (2006), 207-224, for a good introduction to what constituted *Aeropoesia* and what forms it took.

[12] Crispolti, in a very good introduction to Second Futurism, recognizes the continuity in themes between First and Second Futurism, but does not explain why the new fascination with the airplane, other than

mentioned above partly explains it, as Marinetti was attuned to the tastes of the public, and, according to Salaris, in his quest to attain the mantle of state art for Futurism Marinetti tried to transform it into a mass art in a period when the regime was trying to nationalize the masses.[13] However, it is difficult to believe that the *Aero*-initiatives were primarily construed as attempts at catering to a mass audience, as sales for the artwork were not extravagant, and radio broadcasts of *Aeropoesia* usually elicited significant listener and state displeasure because of their incomprehensible nature.[14]

What is more helpful is looking at the *Aero*-initiatives as reflections of, and contributions to, the growing sense of the importance of air-power to Fascist Italy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Marinetti had published an article entitled "La guerra futura" in January, 1929, which posited that the future war was going to be an aerial war, and the leading practitioners were going to be the Germans, who needed a new approach to war after their defeat in World War I.[15] Surely, it was not a coincidence that the manifesto of *Aeropittura* appeared a few months after this article was published. Neither was it a coincidence that the article was republished in January, 1933, in the midst of the excitement caused by the exploits of Fascist Air Minister Italo Balbo from 1928 to 1933, which had effectively put Italy on the map as a leading nation with air-power.[16] D'Avanzo summarizes Balbo's importance to Italian flight thusly:

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writing that "By the end of the 1920s, interest in the machine had given way to *Aeropittura* (aeropainting) and its themes of flight and extraterrestrial fantasy." See Enrico Crispolti, "Second Futurism," in Emily Braun, ed., *Italian Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture, 1900-1988* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1989), 167.

[13] Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 103.

[14] More on this later. The secret police files on Marinetti are filled with reports of Marinetti's behavior which, it was believed, reflected poorly on the regime. See the report dated February 23, 1935, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

[15] F.T. Marinetti, "La guerra futura," in YMP, Box 26, Folder 1343: La guerra futura.

[16] F.T. Marinetti, "La guerra futura, in *Futurismo*, January 29, 1933, reprinted in Caruso, *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, v. 2, f. 1933.

> After the nomination to Undersecretary of State for the *Aeronautica*, on November 6, 1926, the ascendant parabola of Italo Balbo would continue for exactly seven years. Seven years that remain for Italian military aviation the most luminous period, not simply because of the world-renowned feats that were completed . . . but because of the customs and dynamic nature that were imposed on it, and above all for the development of military thought that matured in those times and that, if it had been properly applied, would have possibly avoided the tragedy and humiliation of the Second World War for the nation.[17]

Balbo's mass flights in this period were undertaken to prove that Italy had the ability to produce not simply daring solo pilots, like Lindbergh, but disciplined squadrons that could fly in formation anywhere and project Italian power overseas, somewhat like Teddy Roosevelt's cruise of the Great White Fleet. Moreover, the flights "showed the Italian flag, publicized fascism, displayed the Aeronautica's technical prowess, and demonstrated the excellence of the Italian aircraft industry to prospective customers."[18] With the Duce's blessing, in May/June 1928 Balbo led a mammoth aerial cruise of sixty-one seaplanes, the largest to date, through the Western Mediterranean, and in June 1929 Balbo led a somewhat smaller fleet through the Eastern Mediterranean. However, his major accomplishments came in December 1930-January 1931 with a 12 aircraft cruise from Italy to Brazil, via stops in West Africa, and in July/August 1933 with a 25 aircraft cruise from Italy to Chicago and back. The latter flight was critical for Fascist propaganda as it showed that "in 1933, in the depths of the Depression exported from the United States, fascist Italy was vital and resilient. . . ."[19]

Marinetti recognized the value of these flights, both for Italy and for Fascism. In many ways, Balbo's Atlantic crossings mimicked Marinetti's 1926 trip to South America, and the various trips he would make through Europe and Africa in the 1930s. Both Balbo

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[17] Giuseppe D'Avanzo, *Ali e poltrone* (Rome: Ciarrapico Editore, 1976), 94.
[18] Segré, *Italo Balbo*, 192-193. Quote on p. 193. The following section relies on the narrative by Segré in Chapters 9-11.
[19] Ibid., 231.

and Marinetti acted as Fascist emissaries and spoke of the glories of Italy wrought by Benito Mussolini.[20] Both sought out the Italian communities on each of their stops and strengthened the bonds between the homeland and the emigrants. Both incessantly glorified Mussolini and his transformation of Italy into a great power, ending the period of "humiliation" under the Liberal regime.[21]

Marinetti glorified Balbo's exploits as a Fascist triumph. In March, 1931, after the completion of the first trans-Atlantic flight, Marinetti was in Geneva hosting a conference, which the local press considered a counter-attack against the anti-Fascists residing in Switzerland, and at that conference he specifically noted Balbo's successes and how they proved the superiority of the Fascist regime.[22] Thereafter he composed "Omaggio della nuova Poesia ai Transvolatori," ("Homage to the Trans-Atlantic Pilots Through the New Poetry") in which he congratulated the fliers on their crossing, and how they represented the *squadrismo* of 1919 in their daring exploits, their destruction of all things anti-Italian, their heroism, patriotism, and, of course, their Futurism, as they became the modern man fused with machines. "Glory to the thinking machines," he wrote, "and to the mechanized men of steel and gasoline that, inspired by Benito Mussolini and led by Italo Balbo, have intensified the adamantine light of that most pure and most high star that is called Italy."[23] That year Marinetti wanted Balbo himself to

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[20] Even before Balbo's American trip the New York Times was already glorifying the amazing, and cost effective, advances made in both military and civilian aircraft in Italy. See, Arnaldo Cortesi, "Italian Air Force Runs at Low Cost," in the *New York Times*, April 9, 1933. The Italian government itself hailed Balbo's flight to Chicago, as it was proof of both the efficiency of Fascist training and tight bonds between Italians in Italy and America. See, "Italy is Jubilant at Feat of Fliers," in the *New York Times*, July 16, 1933.

[21] Segré, *Italo Balbo*, 233.

[22] March 16, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

[23] F.T. Marinetti, "Omaggio della nuova Poesia ai Tranvolatori," n.d., in GMP, box 1, Folder 34: Marinetti.

open a show of *Aeropittura*, and even called on Mussolini's help, but to no avail.[24] Still, when Balbo returned home in August 1933 from his second Atlantic crossing, Marinetti gave an impassioned radio address:

> Listen to the music of the sky with its mellowed tubes of pride, the buzzing drills of miners of the clouds, enthusiastic roars of gas, hammerings ever more intoxicated with speed and the applause of bright propellers. The rich music of Balbo and his transatlantic fliers hums, explodes, and laughs among the blue flashes of the horizon. . . . The cruiser *Diaz* fires salvos. The crowd shouts with joy. The sun mirrors the Italian creative genius. . . . The crowd yells: "Here he is, here he is, here he is! Duce! Duce! Duce! Italy! Italy!" The rumble, rumble, rumble of the motors that pass a few yards over my head.[25]

Another new art form introduced in this period was *Arte sacra* (Sacred Art). Again, one is faced with the question of whether it was rank opportunism or was it something more? Why would someone known for being virulently anti-clerical choose to launch a movement of Sacred Art? At first glance, it does look like opportunism, as the manifesto of *Arte sacra* was released in 1931, a bare two years after the Lateran Accords, and it would seem the Futurists were simply adapting to the changing dynamics of Fascist Italy. However, on closer look, Marinetti did not go from being an anti-clerical to a fervent Catholic. He simply followed Mussolini's policy of securing national order by appealing to Catholics, without also strengthening the Vatican in the process, which would have interfered with the state's totalitarian goals.

It is unclear when this change from being anti-clerical, which until at least 1931 was interchangeable with being anti-Vatican and sometimes anti-religion, to a position of respecting spirituality and wanting to simply limit the independence of the Vatican occurred. Certainly after the Lateran Accords were signed Marinetti was adamant that it

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[24] Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 111.
[25] Quoted in the English translation in Segré, *Italo Balbo*, 255. It appeared in the *Gazzetta del Popolo* as "L'improvvisazione di Marinetti," August 13, 1933.

was a poor strategic choice which could only hamper the Fascist "revolution."[26] But in 1931 Marinetti released the *Manifesto dell'arte sacra futurista*, co-written with Fillia, in which he laid out the reasons for the new movement:

> Premise: it is not indispensable to practice the Catholic religion in order to create great works of sacred art; premise: art without evolution is destined to die; Futurism, the distributor of energy, thus posits this consequent dilemma to sacred art: either renounce every possible exultive action for the faithful, or completely renew oneself through synthesis, transfiguration, the dynamism of interpenetrative time-space, the simultaneity of the spirit, and the geometric splendor of the machine aesthetic.[27]

Marinetti's solution to this quandary was that "Renewal is indispensable." In fact, he argued there were already numerous examples of Futurist sacred art, such as the "marvelous sacred paintings of Gerardo Dottori" and "the Futurist frescoes of Gino Severini in the Swiss churches." Thus, Marinetti felt justified in issuing a manifesto over something that was already occurring. Moreover, he argued the *Aeropittori* were uniquely qualified to depict sacred art. Only they could depict the Hell that was the Great War. Only they could reproduce the 'blessed clearness of the infinite' with their aerial view. "Only Futurist artists, anxious for originality at every cost and systematic haters of the already seen, can give to the painting, the fresco, and to the sculpture the force of magical surprise necessary to depict miracles." Also, only the Futurists with their many years of trying to capture simultaneity can depict the simultaneity of, for instance, the Holy Trinity."[28]

Some have argued that Marinetti's new tolerance for religiosity stemmed from an acceptance that the Church was now no longer a threat to the nation, and since the

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[26] February 20, 1930, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[27] F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, "Manifesto dell'arte sacra futurista," [1931] in *Aeropittura Arte Sacra Futurista* (La Spezia, 1932), reprinted in Caruso, *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, v. 2, f. 1931.
[28] F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, "Manifesto dell'arte sacra futurista."

Church would eventually support the Ethiopian War, this likely further raised its patriotic credentials in Marinetti's eyes.[29] Also, one could argue that in his advancing age, with a growing family, and later the travails of Italy in war-time, Marinetti came to see the value and comfort of religion in his own life, and that of the nation, and, in fact, much of his writing after 1936 did deal with religious themes.[30] However, this was the Marinetti of the later Thirties and into the Second World War. At the time of the manifesto of *Arte sacra,* Marinetti was making a strategic choice to exploit the growing influence of Catholics in Italy, while denying the Vatican's complete autonomy. In essence, he was breaking the associative link between two ideas so as to co-opt one of them. Thus, just as he once argued the case for Futurist revolutionary nationalism, by breaking the association revolution had with socialism, and nationalism had with the reactionary forces of king, Church and the army, now he was arguing that one could be spiritual through Futurism and the Fascist state by breaking the association of spirituality with the Vatican.[31]

The proof for this contention lays in the timing of the release of the manifesto. It was released on June 28, 1931, exactly one month after Mussolini had ordered the closing of the *Azione Cattolica* offices. *Azione Cattolica* acted as the Church's equivalent to the mass organizations of the regime, and included women's groups, youth groups, sport and

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[29] Marja Härmänmaa, *Un patriota che sfidò la decadenza. F.T. Marinetti e l'idea dell'uomo nuovo fascista, 1929-1940* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2000), 314, 317.

[30] Härmänmaa, *Un patriota che sfidò la decadenza*, 318; Cinzia Sartini Blum, *The Other Modernsim: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 158. Blum also feels Marinetti's religion may have been part of his incessant drive to "ward off the abyss of nothingness." Thus, "Marinetti turns to the Catholic ideologemes of resurrection, salvation, and divine love as new avenues for pursuing fantasies of transcendence, omnipotence, and immortality." Blum, *The Other Modernism*, 156.

[31] According to Härmänmaa, "Evidently, as an effect of the ever growing presence of Catholics and their notable role in cultural life, the Futurist artists committed themselves to getting involved in sacred art." See Härmänmaa, *Un patriota che sfidò la decadenza,* 309. On Marinetti's previous efforts at ideological realignment, see his, "Vecchie idee a braccetto da separare," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 308-309. This was originally published in *L'Ardito* on May 11, 1919.

labor groups, and were rumored to be full of ex-*Popolari* politicians. The Lateran Accords had recognized the autonomy of *Azione Cattolica*, but Fascist anti-clericals denounced this independent group. Rumors abounded that it was working against the state, seeking to unite Catholics against the Accords, which the regime was supposedly not honoring. Through the Summer and early Fall of 1931 tensions between the regime and the Church hierarchy ran high, with Pope Pius XI issuing his *Non abbiamo bisogno* encyclical denouncing totalitarianism. Mussolini wisely sought out a compromise, and by September *Azione Cattolica* was back up and running, but with the proviso that it had to abstain from anything that resembled either political or labor activities.[32] It was during this poisonous atmosphere that Marinetti released the manifesto of *Arte sacra,* that, just as Mussolini, sought the adherence of Catholics without the Vatican intermediary.

Another tell-tale sign of Marinetti's thinking was a conversation the Political Police recorded just before Mussolini closed the *Azione Cattolica* offices, in which Marinetti argued that

> If the Duce had opened his eyes to all these Catholic manifestations, which if today have a spiritual and religious character, they clearly demonstrate an organization for the future. I believe it is more necessary than ever to create a clear anti-Vatican movement. We don't mean an anti-Catholic or anti-religious movement, but a purely anti-Vatican movement. It is time to finish with this priestly drama, that is slowly and silently threatening the Revolution. An anti-Vatican movement can only be started by Futurism, and this movement could give to Mussolini that fresh sensibility that today seems bureaucratized. [33]

Mussolini clearly did see *Azione Cattolica* as a political threat and shut it down. Then, while he worked out a deal with the Vatican, trying simultaneously to retain Catholic

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[32] Edward Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience: Society and Culture, 1922-1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), 192-4; Martin Clark, *Mussolini* (London: Pearson Longman, 2005), 117-119.
[33] May 24, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

support and reduce the Vatican's autonomy, Marinetti released the manifesto of *Arte sacra* which tried to do the same things.

Just as Futurism reflected and enhanced the regime's embrace of air-power and its Vatican policy, when Mussolini's totalitarianism sought to make the 'New Italy' more self-sufficient and less dependent on foreign imports, or autarchic, Marinetti steered Futurism in the same direction. Again, the resulting initiatives, specifically in the realm of food and fashion, cannot be dismissed simply as accommodations to the regime. They were, in fact, the fulfillment of Futurist political goals of national rejuvenation through economic independence, and thus should be seen as active components in the developing dictatorship.

Autarchy was not new to the Thirties, though it did take on added significance with the onset of the Depression and Italy's international isolation because of the Ethiopian War.[34] After the failed harvest of 1925, and consequent import of 2.3 million tones of wheat, Mussolini unleashed his "Battle for Wheat," taxing wheat imports as a means of stimulating domestic production. Thereafter the value of the lira was fixed at 90 to the pound sterling (versus the previous 150), which curbed Italy's export industries such as cars, light engineering and textiles. However, this new exchange rate benefited steal, armaments and shipbuilding industries, which required plentiful coal and iron imports to operate. Thus, "the Fascist economic pattern was becoming set. Italy was turning away from her export markets, and boosting instead the industries which stood to

[34] Freeing Italy from international dependence went back at least to the turn of the century, when the Nationalist (later Fascist) Enrico Corradini denounced the plutocratic nations that exploited the proletariat ones, namely Italy. See Enrico Corradini, "Il Primo Congresso Nazionalista," in *Il Nazionalismo Italiano* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1914), 53, 58.

gain most from Empire and re-armament."[35] In culture as well, the Thirties witnessed an attempt to purge foreign influences from Italy, which, after Ethiopia, were ever more successful.[36] Further instances of this drive to create a stronger and more independent Italy can be seen in the regime's land reclamation and pro-natalist policies.[37]

Marinetti actively supported the regime's drive for autarchy, both economically and culturally, as a means of strengthening Italy on the road to empire. Since the pre-war years Marinetti had railed against Italy being simply a place dependent on, for instance, the tourist trade, and that it had to actively industrialize to take its place among the Great Powers.[38] He had also called for greater state support of Italian artists as a means of building up national talent and countering Italian *esterofilia,* or the love of the foreign.[39] Of course, it clearly bolstered Futurism's claim to being the authentic Fascist art by being in the forefront of the autarchic movement, which was never far from Marinetti's mind. Moreover, with the memory of the cultural battles of the late Twenties still fresh, associating Futurism with such nationalist endeavors could immunize it from future attacks from anti-modernists and conservatives who doubted Futurism's nationalist credentials. This, however, as will be shown below, proved to be a faulty assumption.

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[35] Martin Clark, *Modern Italy, 1871-1982* (London: Longman, 1984), 264, 269. Quote on p. 264. More detailed analysis is provided by Shepard B. Clough, *The Economic History of Modern Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964); Giovanni Federico, ed., *The Economic Development of Italy Since 1870* (Aldershot, England: E. Elgar, 1994); Vera Zamagni, *The Economic History of Italy, 1860-1990* [New York: Clarendon Press, 1993; originally published in Italian as *Dalla periferia al centro: la seconda rinascita economica dell'Italia, 1861-1981* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990)].

[36] Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 135.

[37] Carl Ipsen, *Dictating Demography: The Problem of Population in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73-75.

[38] See, for instance, Marinetti's "La Battaglia di Venezia," in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 229-233.

[39] This can be seen in his *Al di là del comunismo*, in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, and "I diritti artistici propugnati dai futuristi italiani," in ACS, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 1923, B. 710, f. 3.11.313. An English translation is now available in Günter Berghaus, ed., *F.T. Marinetti: Critical Writings*, translated by Doug Thompson (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006).

Perhaps one of the most controversial initiatives of the Thirties that Marinetti brought forward was the purported revolution in Italian food consumption, with his "Manifesto della cucina futurista" ("Manifesto of the Futurist Kitchen"), published in the *Gazzetta del Popolo* on December 28, 1930, and his subsequent full-scale cookbook, *La cucina futurista,* (*The Futurist Kitchen*, aka *The Futurist Cookbook*) released with Fillia in 1932. Public reception at the time, and subsequently, focused on the most outlandish of Marinetti's suggestions: the abolition of pasta from the Italian diet. Even before the publication of the manifesto, Marinetti was floating his ideas at banquets in Milan, to the disconcertment of both the listeners and the Political Police tailing him. "Everywhere," a report begins,

> people are astounded and ask themselves whether or not Marinetti has understood what it means to be an Accademico of Italy, and that in every way his new discovery has rendered an awful service to the Nation, because in these difficult times all men of the Regime must focus on them and other matters that are much more serious than the *passatismo* or Futurism of pasta asciutta.[40]

Subsequent historians, Berghaus in particular, have been just as dismissive, echoing the remarks of some of Marinetti's own colleagues who felt food and cooking were "silly" places to spread the Futurist revolution, and that this latest venture was further proof of Marinetti's increasing loss of direction as he lashed out in any direction desperate to keep Futurism in the public eye.[41]

However, beyond the bombast and extraordinary demands, which were nothing new in Futurist rhetoric (one need only think of Marinetti's pre-war declarations to burn

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[40] November 20, 1930, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

[41] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 244. The criticism was severe enough that Bruno Corra, a friend to Marinetti, wrote "Marinetti, o dell'avanguardia," in *Il Popolo d'Italia,* May 20, 1931, wherein he defended Marinetti's patriotism and trumpeted his role in founding the avant-garde. He argued that one had to place Marinetti's declarations about 'pastaciutta' alongside his life as a political activist, veteran, and artist, and that it was all part of an 'excessive faith' that the Italians and Italy could be renewed, and that he would always be in the forefront propounding new, and often unpopular, ideas to this effect.

museums and libraries to the ground, or to fill in the canals of Venice), the "Manifesto of the Futurist Kitchen" was a response to Italy's economic needs during the Depression, the Fascist drive for autarchy, and part of the ongoing Futurist and Fascist project of making Italians faster, tougher and stronger.[42] In the manifesto Marinetti argued that the Italian dependence on pasta had to end. The reason was that a future war was inevitable, and the Italian people had to be prepared. They had to be more agile, more fast. Pasta, he argued, was less nutritious than meat, fish or legumes and was too difficult to digest, leading to fatigue, pessimism, inactivity and—oddly—neutralism. Moreover, in a specific reference to Mussolini's autarchic turn, he made a special note that "the abolition of pasta will liberate Italy from costly foreign grain and will favor the Italian rice industry."[43]

Re-enforcing the autarchic nature of Futurism's foray into food, when Marinetti and Fillia released the full cookbook Marinetti added to the volume the manifesto "Contro l'esterofilia: Manifesto futurista alle signore e agli intellettuali." ("Against *Esterofilia*: Futurist Manifesto to Women and Intellectuals"). The manifesto served first and foremost to identify those guilty of *esterofilia* (love of all things foreign), which Marinetti believed were ultimately anti-Italian. Thus, "they are esterofili, and . . . guilty of being anti-Italian, the young Italians that idiotically and ecstatically fall over themselves for all things foreign, even in a time of crisis that is impoverishing Italy. . . ."

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[42] A recent article on the *Cucina futurista* which argues this point, though mistakenly attributes Marinetti's motives to a desire to publicly criticize Mussolini for not doing enough to revolutionize Italy (an odd motive as Marinetti's and Mussolini's policies were inevitably always in synch) is Carol Helstosky's "Recipe for the Nation: Reading Italian History through *La scienza in cucina* and *La cucina futurista,*" *Food and Foodways* 11 (2003), 113-140.

[43] F.T. Marinetti, "Manifesto della cucina futurista," in *Gazzetta del Popolo*, December 28, 1930, reprinted in Caruso, *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, v. 2, f. 1932. The press at the time did recognize the economic importance of this manifesto. See, Edmund Taylor, "Ah! Mussolini! Spare Italy this Great Hardship," in *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 30, 1930. One should also note that Marinetti was essentially the precursor to the modern day "South Beach Diet" and the craze to reduce carbohydrates.

Italians who welcomed foreign orchestras into Italy were deemed anti-Italian. Italian industrialists who used machinery that was not wholly made in Italy were also guilty. The manifesto also represented a reaction against the influx of American mass consumer culture, and thus Italians who criticized Italian plays and films, and favored the "invasion of foreign and mediocre plays and films," were considered anti-Italian. Marinetti also wrote that the upper class women who adopted the notion and the terms "cocktail party" and "bar" were similarly guilty of being anti-Italian. He recommended the former be replaced with "Convegni pomeridiani" (Afternoon Meetings) and the latter with "Quisibeve" (Here One Drinks), anticipating the later Fascist drive to purge foreign terms from the Italian language.[44]

The manifesto was also evidence that the drive for autarchy could only mean that Italy was gearing up for war. Italy would be prepared for the inevitable international conflict through economic and cultural independence, but also through the quelling of internal dissent that would undermine national order. This was emphasized in the following passage:

> Other nations, less populous, neither criticized nor threatened by foreign enemies, can doze through the buzzing of revolutionary plots, considering national pride as an object of luxury. Our virile, proud, dynamic and dramatic peninsula, envied and threatened by everyone, ready to spring in order to realize its immense destiny, must consider national pride as its first rule of life.

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[44] F.T. Marinetti, "Contro l'esterofilia: Manifesto futurista alle signore e agli intellettuali," in F.T. Marinetti and Fillia, *La cucina futurista* (Milan: Sonzogno, 1932), reprinted in Caruso, *Manifeti, proclami, interventi*, v. 2, f. 1932. The manifesto first appeared in *Gazzetta del Popolo*, September 24, 1931. Language purification was one of Achille Starace's goals during his tenure as Secretary of the Fascist Party (1931-1939) as he sought to create a more autarchic and totalitarian society. On Starace, see Sebastian Rappa, "Achille Starace and the Italian Fascist Party, 1931-1939: The Creation of the Totalitarian Myth," Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1977; Antonio Spinosa, *Starace: l'uomo che inventò lo stile fascista* (Milano : Mondadori, 2002); Philip Cannistraro and Monte Finkelstein, "Starace, Achille," in Philip Cannistraro, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 517-519.

Consequently, as Marinetti had written so often before, he wrote that "The word Italy must dominate the word Liberty!" and that now was the time to go further, claiming that the word Italy would dominate the words genius, intelligence, culture and statistics, and, most disturbingly, "*verità*" (truth). "The fire of criticism," he wrote, "will be, if necessary, directed against foreign nations, never against Italy."[45] Having dropped his one time commitment to political liberties when he embraced the dictatorship, Marinetti was now clearly marching in lock-step with the evolving totalitarian state.

The themes of autarchy and national renewal were similarly evident in another initiative of this period, this time sartorial, launched in March, 1933: *Il manifesto futurista del cappello italiano* ("Futurist Manifesto of the Italian Hat"). Like *La cucina futurista*, the goal here was to remake and to strengthen Italians and to do it by building up an Italian industry that had suffered because of foreign influences.[46] And, like *Aeropittura*, the desire to reform Italian dress was not particularly new. In 1914 Giacomo Balla released "Il vestito antineutrale: Manifesto futurista" ("The Anti-Neutral Suit: Futurist Manifesto"). In it he sought to transform the Italians from neutralists to interventionists by replacing the dull, "neutral" colors of men's suits with dynamic colors, declaring that the Futurists wanted to "color Italy with Futurist audacity and risk, and finally give Italians joyful and bellicose clothing," and in the process make them

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[45] F.T. Marinetti, "Contro l'esterofilia," in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi,* v. 2, f. 1932.
[46] F.T. Marinetti, Francesco Monarchi, Enrico Prampolini, and Mino Somenzi, "Il manifesto futurista del capello italiano," in *Futurismo*, March 5, 1933, reprinted in Caruso, *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, v. 2, f. 1933. An English translation is available in Emily Braun, "Futurist Fashion: Three Manifestoes," *Art Journal* 54, #1 (Spring, 1995), 34-41. More generally, see Enrico Crispolti, *Il futurismo e la moda*: Balla e gli altri (Venice: Marsilio, 1986).

faster, stronger, and more agile.[47] Marinetti made the connection to Balla's manifesto explicit in the preamble to his manifesto on the Italian hat.[48]

What was new in 1933 was the economic crisis, the quest for autarchy, and the avowed interest of the regime to remake Italians. Thus, the Futurists launched a contest for the most Futuristic hat made by an Italian based on the demands of their manifesto. They made clear that their point was the "the rebirth of our great hat making industry."[49] "The world preeminence of the Italian hat was absolute for a long time," they argued. However,

> recently, for love of foreign things and misunderstood hygiene, many Italians have taken up the American and German way of the bare heard. The decline of the hat, which impoverished its market and prevented any possible improvements, has damaged the masculine look, amputating the profile and substituting for the severed part the stupidest savagery of mops of hair, which are hardly aggressive, virile, or smart.[50]

Similar to Balla's manifesto, Marinetti's manifesto called for the replacement of neutral colors with vibrant colors, and a design that privileged functionality. "We will create the following types of hat," he continued, "which through aesthetic, hygienic, and functional perfection, will serve, complete, or correct the ideal Italian masculine figure with emphases on variety, ferocity, dynamic momentum, and lyricism indebted to the new style of Mussolini." What followed was a long list of hats that would be designed for speed, the evening, for parading, for the sun, rain, mountain climbing, for defense, a therapeutic hat, and even an "intelligence imparting hat for the idiots who criticize this

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[47] Giacomo Balla, "The Antineutral Suit: Futurist Manifesto," in Braun, "Futurist Fashion," 39.
[48] F.T. Marinetti et al., "Il manifesto futurista del cappello italiano," in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi,* v. 2, f. 1933.
[49] "Bando di concorso," in *Futurismo*, March 5, 1933, reprinted in Caruso, *Manifesto, proclami, interventi*, v. 2, f. 1933.
[50] F.T. Marinetti et al., "The Futurist Manifesto of the Italian Hat," in Braun, "Futurist Fashion," 40.

manifesto."[51] The nationalist and autarchic component of the manifesto was further emphasized at the subsequent exhibition of Futurist hats on June 17, 1933 at the Galleria Pesaro in Milan. There, *Il Popolo d'Italia* recognized that, although the number of hats on display were somewhat small, the motive was commendable, as all the designers (Futurists all) had not only engaged in a competition for a new type of hat, but were doing it in support of "the Italian product and to conserve for Italy an industrial primacy."[52]

The primary motivation behind autarchy was to make Italy strong and independent enough to pursue an aggressive foreign policy and expand Fascism's influence abroad, be it in the form of direct colonization, seeking greater influence among eastern European nations, or solidifying ties with Italian emigrant communities in North Africa. Simultaneous to moving Italy in an autarchic direction, Mussolini began probing Africa and eastern Europe for areas to interject Italian influence. To fulfill Fascist imperialist ambitions Mussolini needed to concurrently foment an imperializing consciousness at home, to prepare Italians for the inevitable imperialist war that autarchy presupposed, and to secure international acquiescence to his goals. At each step of the way, Marinetti and his Futurist movement were there furthering Fascism's imperialist goals.

The culmination of this imperialist drive, prior to World War II, was the Italo-Ethiopian War (October 1935-May 1936), a conflict which Marinetti volunteered for, recruited for, and subsequently glorified in print. However, Marinetti's imperialist aims had a long and consistent history as part of political Futurism, and he was now fulfilling

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[51] Ibid.
[52] "Un'altra iniziativa futurista: La Mostra del cappello italiano," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, June 18, 1933.

them within Fascism. In 1911 he had supported Italy's conquest of Libya. In the Great War his goal was to conquer the *irredenta*, and after the war he sought to expand Italian control across the Adriatic. From the moment Mussolini came to power Marinetti had been calling on him to create a "new" Italian empire. Beyond the rhetoric, as shown in the previous chapter, Marinetti was instrumental in expanding Fascist influence abroad with his propaganda trips to South America, France, and Spain.

In the early 1930s Mussolini was set to begin imperial expansion. In 1932 Italy had finally subdued the last remaining Libyan rebels that resisted Italian rule, and had brought Libya's once ambiguous boundary right to the edge of French territory.[53] Also, in 1932 Mussolini informed his military of his intentions to one day move against Ethiopia, the last sizeable African nation that had escaped imperial conquest, and had, memorably, inflicted a humiliating loss on Italian forces in 1896 at Adua.[54] However, France, and eventually Britain, were seen as obstacles to Italian expansion.[55] One particular bone of contention was the issue of rearmament, specifically naval rearmament, that was critical to Italy projecting its power across the Mediterranean. Mussolini wanted the French to concede naval parity, which the latter refused to do, prompting Mussolini to declare on April 2, 1931 that the "Italo-French problem will not be resolved by a naval accord. This problem will be resolved only on the field of battle."[56] Of course, this was hardly a settled decision to go to war and more a reflection

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[53] See, John Gooch, "Re-Conquest and Suppression: Fascist Italy's Pacification of Libya and Ethiopia, 1922-1939," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, #6 (December, 2005), 1005-1032; "20 Year War Ended by Italians in Tripoli," the *New York Times*, January 27, 1932.
[54] Mack Smith, *Italy: A Modern History*, 448; John Gooch, *Mussolini and his Generals: The Armed Forces and Fascist Foreign Policy, 1922-1940* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 239-240.
[55] A good summary of the state of affairs between France and Italy in 1930 is Henry Kittredge Norton, "Franco-Italian Rivalry Touches Many Spheres," in the *New York Times*, April 27, 1930.
[56] Quoted in H. James Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1940* (Westport, CT: Praegar, 1997), 62.

of Mussolini's rather erratic diplomacy that veered between the bombastic and conciliatory, with the bombastic satisfying public demand, and the conciliatory being ministered to by foreign policy officials privately—to actually get things done.[57]

One of the means used to further an Italo-French understanding on Italian imperial expansion was the first International Exposition of Colonial Art in Paris in May, 1931, and Marinetti contributed to this particular diplomatic initiative. Italy and France were the primary participants at the expo, and the goals of the expo were clear to both the participants and the press: to highlight each nations' accomplishments as colonial nations and the supposed unity of the Latin sister nations.[58] Gone were the threats of war uttered by Mussolini. What was on display here was peaceful co-existence. (Another critical component to this, albeit temporary, Italo-French rapprochement was the growing power of Germany, which convinced them that it was best not to alienate one another in the face of a threatening neighbor).[59] The opening of the Italian expo was timed for May 24, the anniversary of Italy's entrance into the First World War on the French side. The opening speeches were filled with, on the Italian side, declarations that the expo would highlight "the simultaneous celebration of the heroic effort of the Italian people during the Great War and the no less glorious pacific effort of our race in the diffusion of civilization in [our] overseas holdings." On the French side, Colonial Minister Paul Reynaud recognized the comity of the nations, but, having just been recently subjected to Mussolini's harangues, pointed out that "the nations of Europe must understand that the era of conquest and bloody rivalry is past," and to achieve each of their goals, "the two

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[57] Ivone Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1964), 278.
[58] "International Exposition at Paris Opens," in *The Hartford Courant*, May 7, 1931; "La Mostra italiana all'Esposizione di Parigi solennemente inaugurata," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, May 26, 1931.
[59] Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 61-64. This was also mentioned in "La Mostra Italiana all'Esposizione di Parigi," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, May 26, 1931.

sister Nations will learn to surmount all of the difficulties they will encounter in the future."[60]

Marinetti was an integral part of the Italian exhibit at the Expo. He, in fact, supported peaceful co-existence with France,[61] but his priority was the furthering of Fascist colonial aims, and, concurrently, Futurist fortunes. The Futurists had their own pavilion at the expo, and Marinetti was there to present the Futurist work to the Italian and foreign dignitaries.[62] However, besides the Futurist work of Prampolini and the architect Fiorini, who constructed an edifice for the restaurant in which the Futurists exhibited their work, the complete Italian exhibit featured a variety of products and styles. The main Italian exhibit, for instance, housed reproductions of native industries and colonial residences, exhibits of colonial troops, and the monumental entrance was designed by that perennial architect of Fascist classicism: Brasini. Marinetti, once a critic of all things *passatista*, now glorified the mixture of styles at the expo and noted that the "colonial Exposition of Vincennes [the Paris suburb the Expo was held at] has permitted Italy to affirm its immortal genius in the most diverse expressions, from the most classical and traditional all the way to Futurism." Consequently, he praised Prince di Scalea, Italy's Commissioner-General for the expo, who had "well interpreted the totalitarian will of the Duce" in allowing such a varied collection of artwork to be exhibited.[63] As in 1928, when Marinetti joined the state-sponsored cultural group the

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[60] "La Mostra Italiana all'Esposizione di Parigi," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, May 26, 1931. The French, in fact, suspected Ethiopia was Mussolini's next target and in the following months offered to negotiate for Italian concessions in Africa if they dropped their demand for naval parity. These came to nothing. See Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 66-7.
[61] October 26, 1930, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[62] Marinetti to Benedetta, May 23, 1931, in YMP, Box 5, Folder 50: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1931 Jan-May.
[63] "L'Esposizione coloniale di Parigi," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, May 24, 1931.

Dieci, battling the *passatisti* of Italian culture would now take a back seat to co-operation in the interest of furthering Fascist ends.

Not to be outdone by the French, the Italians hosted their own International Exhibit of Colonial Art a few months later in Rome, and again the Futurists were a part of the exhibit. The importance of the event as a means of highlighting the development of the Italian colonies and, which was left unsaid in Paris, their future expansion, was clear. De Bono, the head of the exhibit, underscored the increasing state interest in colonial matters when he addressed Mussolini and noted that his presences at the expo was "highly significant for us because I know that you are not here to simply fulfill one of your many obligations, but because of your continuing interest, and if you will, for the increasing passion you have for all that deals with the growth and development of the colonies." To the ambassadors of France, Belgium and Denmark, whose countries were also a part of the exhibit, De Bono declared that the "foreigners with their contributions show that Italy is viewed as a colonial power and that it has the right to have a colonial policy." Mussolini was reportedly pleased that the exhibit was building a "colonial consciousness" in Italy.[64]

Other activities that Marinetti undertook in these years that furthered Fascist expansionist aims were his international propaganda trips for Futurism and Fascism. Even when Marinetti did not make explicit political speeches on these trips, the fact that he was an *Accademico* made him an official representative of the regime, and he was invariably met by Italian state and Fascist Party functionaries when he visited countries with sizeable Italian emigrant 'colonies' that Italy wanted to solidify ties with. These

[64] "La 1ª Mostra internazionale di arte coloniale inaugurata alla presenza del Capo del Governo," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, October 2, 1931.

trips were spread out from late 1929 to 1933 and were all concentrated in North Africa and Central and Eastern Europe, all places that Mussolini sought to expand Italian influence.

Marinetti's first such trip was in December 1929 to Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt, just after he had been formally appointed to the *Accademia*. He was met in Alexandria on December 18 by the Consul General Conte della Croce, Commissioner of the local *Fascio* Cignolini, and various other Italian luminaries. On the evening of the 19th he spoke at the *Circolo italiano* on "Letteratura ed Arte della Nuova Italia," ("Literature and Art of the New Italy") and then paid a visit to the *Casa del fascio* and met the presidents of the various Italian associations overseen by the *Fascio*. The following evening, the Consul-General organized the speech Marinetti gave at the Teatro Alhambra on "Le futurisme mondiale" ("Global Futurism"), a speech he often gave showing the Futurist, and thus Italian, influence on all modern art movements.[65] The political import of the trip was punctuated by Marinetti's audience with King Fuad. As the point of Marinetti's trip was to solidify Italy's ties to North African countries, this meeting showed that it was a success. In their meeting, the King declared that "The Italian colony [in Egypt] is admirable because of its swift and laborious intelligence." He further added that "I have for the House of Savoy a filial affection," and that "I feel great friendship for your Minister of Foreign Affairs Grandi, a worthy disciple of the Duce!"[66] When Marinetti met with Mussolini after this trip, he reported that the time was ripe for Italian

[65] "S.E. Marinetti ad Alessandria," in *Messagero Egiziano*, December 19, 1929, located in Marinetti's *Libroni*, Item Number: 06317-01, Filing Call Number: GEN MSS 475 / 06317-01, Beinecke Library, Yale University.
[66] See, F.T. Marinetti, *Il fascino dell'Egitto* [1933], in F.T. Marinetti, *TIF*, 967.

penetration of Egypt, and believed pro-Fascist articles should be placed in the local Italian newspaper, the *Messagero Egiziano.*[67]

At this meeting Marinetti also reported on his impressions of Paris after a recent trip in January, 1930 for a Futurist exhibit. France was the biggest obstacle to Italian imperial ambitions, and the large cohort of Italian anti-Fascists in France were deemed similarly threatening as they sought to undermine the regime internationally. Consequently, Marinetti believed that the Italian Ambassador Manzoni should be immediately replaced, as he was too *passatista*, and could not keep up with the anti-Fascist exiles, who then "fuck us with impunity." Marinetti also felt that Bodrero, the Italian Ambassador to France's ally Yugoslavia, needed to be replaced as well, as he was ineffective in strengthening Italian ties to that country and loosening them with France. He believed that Bodrero was too overtly friendly with the King, who could not appear friendly to an Italian, which the Yugoslavs would have considered traitorous behavior.[68]

In June, Marinetti made his way to another ally of France in Eastern Europe, Rumania, to "enlist Romanian fellow modernists in [his] campaigns for a new, engaged aesthetics and political ethics."[69] Immediately upon his return from Bucharest he requested an appointment with Mussolini as he had "many things to tell you."[70] Then, in just over a month Marinetti accompanied the Futurist poet Barela to visit Mussolini. Upon exiting that meeting Marinetti nominated Barela as head of the Futurist movement

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[67] March 5, 1930, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti; Marinetti to Mussolini, March 7, 1930, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446; SPD to Marinetti, March 7, 1930, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446. The report in the Polizia Politica file is of Marinetti speaking to an agent of the Polizia, and informing him of his foreign policy views, and that he would be reporting them to Mussolini shortly, as he had when he made the appointment for March 7.
[68] March 5, 1930, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[69] S.A. Mansbach**,** "The "foreignness" of classical modern art in Romania," *The Art Bulletin* (September 1, 1998), note #6.
[70] Marinetti to Mussolini, June 6, 1930, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

in Central and Eastern Europe.[71] Clearly, Mussolini had determined that a well-organized Futurist presence in these regions, working on behalf of the regime, was worth having.

The following year Marinetti sought to expand Italian influence in French North Africa through a variety of trips to the Italian emigrants living there. In a propaganda tour through French Tunisia and Algeria in April, 1931, his topic was frequently the glories of "Global Futurism," though the nationalist import of such a speech coming from an *Accademico* speaking to Italian co-nationals was obvious. No one believed that this Futurist did not also speak for the Duce when he emphasized that Futurism was meant to destroy Lamartine's phrase that "L'Italie est une terre morte."[72] In fact, the political nature of his visit was undeniable when one considers that he took his trip in the midst of the aforementioned international exhibits of colonial art, and the ramping up of colonial interest in the press.[73] Like his trip to South America, Marinetti also spoke at the nationalist Dante Alighieri club. In Tunis, also like his time in South America, fear that anti-Fascists would disrupt Marinetti's performances led to the Italian Consul-General to limit the audience to select invitees and to beef up security. Moreover, the Political Police was keeping a close eye on him, reflecting how seriously the regime took Marinetti's North African sojourn.[74]

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[71] July 13, 1930, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[72] "La conférence de S.E. Marinetti: Le futurisme mondial" in *La Depeche Tunisienne*, April, 25 1931, attached to the May 1, 1931 memo to Bocchini in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[73] A testament to this growing interest was a series of articles that appeared in *Il Popolo d'Italia* that purported to raise the Italians' interest in colonial matters, including "Italia e colonie," March 17, 1931, Italia e colonie: Possibilità in Tripolitania," March 18, 1931, and "Italia e colonie: Elementi integrali," March 19, 1931.
[74] Memos to Bocchini, April 26 and May 1, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

In late 1932 and early 1933 Marinetti completed his travels of French North Africa, and then did a thorough tour of Eastern Europe, making the political reason of his visits explicit this time. The timing was purposeful, as it was just after the opening of the *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista*, commemorating ten years of Fascist rule in Italy, and Marinetti was highlighting this fact, in addition to glorifying Futurism, on his trips.

Through most of November 1932 Marinetti was in Morocco, visiting the cities of Fez, Rabat, Tangiers and Casablanca.[75] In each city he delivered a standard speech which began with "an impassioned defense of Futurist ideology and Futurist realizations, [after which] Marinetti specified the Italian contribution to the formation of the foreign avant-gardes"—the basic elements of his "Global Futurism" speech. Marinetti would then move on to exulting the *Decennale* (ten year anniversary of Fascism) in Italy. He would also speak of "the ascendant, constructive power of today's Italy," and of Italy's "youthful nationalist strengths." When speaking of the Duce, Marinetti spoke of him "in all his historical greatness and his typically Futurist action-oriented qualities." In describing the *Mostra*, Marinetti claimed that the innovative design of the exhibit was a triumph, that is, "a triumph of Futurism, the only artistic movement that can profoundly render the spiritual and aesthetic atmosphere of Fascism."[76] After finishing with Morocco, Marinetti took his speaking tour to Seville, Spain and Lisbon, Portugal. Marinetti returned to Italy in early December and within a few weeks had an audience with Mussolini.[77]

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[75] Details of Marinetti's itinerary can be attained from perusing his many letters to his wife, Benedetta, at YMP, Box 5, Folder 52: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1932 Jan-Dec.

[76] **"***S.E. Marinetti esalta all'estero il Decennale Fascista e il Futurismo Mondiale," in* Futurismo, *November 20, 1932.*

[77] Unsigned note to Mussolini, December 27, 1932, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446; Sebastiani to Marinetti, December 28, 1932, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446. This was not the last trip Marinetti took to North Africa. After the Ethiopian War, when relations with France became strained,

This meeting was certainly to inform Mussolini of his travels through Morocco and the Iberian Peninsula, but the itinerary of Marinetti's continuing propaganda tour was likely also discussed, as Marinetti would spend January, 1933 in Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey, and then March and April traveling through much of Eastern Europe repeating the messages of the trip he had just completed in December. That Marinetti was actively contributing to the Fascist drive for hegemony in Eastern Europe, especially through the weakening of France's allies in the Little Entente (Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia), was further evidenced by Marinetti publishing an article on December 18, 1932 that declared "Futurists: Traù! Traù! Traù! Everybody must be ready for the eventual order of the Duce against the Serbs, and not to ever mistake them for the Croats or with other European peoples who would never commit the huge folly of helping our enemies. . . . The Futurists, the first in interventionism, in Fascist squadrism and in Fiume, still believe as we did 23 years ago in a COMPLETELY ITALIAN DALMATIA."[78]

The regime was particularly interested in Eastern Europe as an avenue for greater Italian exports. Greece, and generally the eastern Mediterranean, were seen as prime outlets for Italian goods, particularly agricultural goods. The Italian exports to Greece, compared to French exports, were meager. But, the protectionism of the French against

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Mussolini likely cast his eye yet again on the Italian residents of Tunisia, as Marinetti returned there on one of his propaganda tours. There Marinetti spoke to Italian residents, amongst others, about the glories of the recently concluded Ethiopian War, the glories of the Italian soldiers, and his participation in the war. He also highlighted the continuing freedom of expression for artists in Fascist Italy, even though it was now building an empire-a matter of some dispute amongst the international intelligentsia in 1936, as will be detailed below. It is also interesting that on this trip Marinetti also made a point to visit Italian schools, as he had in South America, clearly checking on the preservation of Italian culture in this French colony. See the correspondence between the Italian Consul General in Tunis and the Italian Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Popular Culture from November 26, 1936 to December 12, 1936 in ACS, MCP, NUPIE, B.28, f.Marinetti. This file also contains a number of newspaper clippings forwarded by the Consul General to Rome. Of course, when Marinetti returned he visited Mussolini right away to debrief him. See December 11, 1936, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

[78] Marinetti, in *Futurismo,* December 18, 1932.

Greece offered a potential for Italy to supplant them as leading economic partner. "Fascist Italy," the regime's paper announced, "looks to the Eastern Mediterranean as one of its destinations. Pacific, civil, cultural and commercial expansion [is what we desire]." Just as the medieval corporate regimes had expanded the Italian republics' influence in the eastern Mediterranean, the Fascist corporative regime would know how to manage the "re-conquest of a necessary primacy for Italy [in the region]."[79]

The success of Marinetti's propaganda trips were dutifully reported by his mouthpiece, the newspaper *Futurismo*. It reported that in "these last few months Kings, Princes, Presidents of Republics, Heads of Government, Ministers, diplomatic corps, illustrious scientists, famous artists and valorous intellectuals of Bulgaria, Turkey, Hungary, Rumania,[80] Spain, Portugal and Morocco have, with the consent of enthusiastic masses, given homage to S.E. Marinetti and to Italian Futurism." "The recent triumph in Greece," the paper continued, "with the precise declarations of the President, members of government and the entire Greek intelligentsia can only be compared to the equally clamorous success that S.E. Marinetti and Futurism had a few years ago in Rio di Janeiro."[81] Although Marinetti opened a show of *Aeropittura/Arte sacra* in Athens, his ostensible reason for going there, it was clear that the trip was part of a broader political initiative to strengthen ties with Greece and with Italian nationals living there, and to represent Fascist Italy. "The numerous colonies of our co-nationals abroad," the paper noted, "have not forgotten the 23 years of heroic artistic and political battles fought by

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[79] Gino Arias, "Italia-Grecia: Le relazioni di scambio," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, June 7, 1930; and see "Turkish Minister visits Italy," in the *New York Times*, November 28, 1930.

[80] Marinetti may have made a quick trip to Hungary and Rumania at the time, but I found no proof these visits occurred in this period. Either the paper made a mistake, or was conflating past visits and those scheduled for the immediate future by Marinetti.

[81] "Futurismo Mondiale: Le entusiastiche trionfali accoglienze di Atene a S.E. Marinetti," in *Futurismo*, February 12, 1933. Marinetti was in Athens from circa January 29-February 5.

the Futurist movement and everywhere acclaim S.E. Marinetti as the finest representative of the new Mussolinian Italy."[82] As soon as Marinetti returned to Italy he went to see Mussolini and delivered a report to the Duce on his travels in Greece, which Mussolini had specifically asked him to prepare.[83]

In March, Marinetti was on the road again. Between March 8 and 14 Marinetti traveled to Warsaw, then Budapest, then Vienna, then back to Poland, visiting Lvov and Krakow. In Poland, the ostensible reason for the visit was the opening of his play *I priogionieri*, but while there he continued the general themes of his recent talks of both glorifying Futurism and celebrating the tenth anniversary of Fascist rule. "Continuing his Futurist and Fascist propaganda tour, that is his Italian tour," *Futurismo* recounted of his Polish trip, "S.E. Marinetti visited in these last few days the principal cities of Poland. Acclaimed everywhere by indescribable enthusiasm, the head of the Futurist movement held numerous conferences in Warsaw, Lvov and Krakow, illustrating the Fascist revolution in its historical, political and social importance and discussing the marvelous, triumphal march of the Futurist idea in every art camp."[84]

Before Marinetti reported to Mussolini on his trip to Poland, he made two quick trips to Paris and Berlin and reported on them as well.[85] Taken together with his tour of Poland, Hungary, and Austria, his visit to France and Germany hint that these collective trips may have had an additional motive other than strengthening Italian ties to Eastern Europe and supplanting French influence there. In January, 1933, Adolf Hitler had been

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[82] Ibid.
[83] Marinetti to Mussolini, February 14, 1933 and SPD to Mussolini, February 18, 1933, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446; Chiavolini to Marinetti, February 23, 1933, in YMP, Box 9, Folder 315: Chiavolini, Alessandro.
[84] *Futurismo*, March 12, 1933 and March 26, 1933. The quote is from the latter edition.
[85] Marinetti to Mussolini, April 6, 1933, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446; Chiavolini to Marinetti, April 10, 1933, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

appointed Chancellor of Germany, and he had made no secret of his desire to revise the Treaty of Versailles and recover territory in Eastern Europe and to unite with Austria. Mussolini needed stronger relations with Eastern Europe against a resurgent Germany, but he could also use the fear of Germany to bolster his negotiating position with France. Not coincidentally, in March Mussolini drafted a Four-Power Pact with Germany, France and Britain which was meant to guarantee consultations to avoid disputes on outstanding issues. The Pact was finalized in June.[86] Thus, Marinetti's most recent trips on behalf of the regime were, in addition to everything else, also very likely intelligence gathering missions contributing to this most recent diplomatic maneuver on Mussolini's part.

Britain, France and Germany would all play a critical part in the culmination of Italy's expansionist aims, the conquest of Ethiopia. Again, Marinetti was there at every step of the way. The emergence of Germany as a destabilizing force in Europe convinced Mussolini that if he wanted to conquer Ethiopia it would have to be done sooner rather than later, before Germany began to threaten Italian interests in Europe and caught Italy with its troops in Africa. The threat of Germany also made France amenable to working out unresolved issues with Italy and supporting some form of Italian expansion in Africa in the hopes of having an ally against Germany. The British were also amenable to working with Italy as a counter-balance to Germany, though not as much as the French. Consequently, when the war did begin, the results of Fascist diplomacy were mixed. The League of Nations imposed sanctions against Italy, fulfilling British and French commitments to the League, but with the French-sponsored exception of oil sanctions, so as to not completely alienate Mussolini. The result, of course, was the inability of the

[86] Clark, *Mussolini*, 183-184.

League to end the war, the alienation of Italy, and the coming together of Italy and Germany against the western nations.[87]

Marinetti was in the midst of this drama right from the beginning. He recognized that a resurgent Germany would be a threat to Italian interests in Europe, and re-published his article "La guerra futura" on January 29, 1933, a few short days before Hitler was elevated to Chancellor, which again warned that a future war was inevitable, that it would be an air war, and that it would likely be against Germany.[88] As tensions rose between Ethiopia and Italy, with the former resisting economic dominance by the latter, the inevitable armed conflict occurred at Walwal, Ethiopia in December, 1934, which Italy used to legitimate their invasion in October, 1935. However, Marinetti was already calling for an Italian invasion as early as March, 1934. For the occasion he republished "Il futurismo e la conflagrazione futura," the final essay from *Marinetti e il Futurismo.* When the essay was first published the goal was to inform Italians that the time was soon approaching when Fascist Italy would have to conquer its 'indispensable' lands, and that the Futurists would be responsible for nourishing "the spirit of the heroic

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[87] Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 109-111, 114, 119, 127-129. France's policy on Italy's Ethiopian claims was ambivalent. In January, 1935 they conceded Italian economic preponderance in Ethiopia, and did not specifically rule out military conquest, in return for Mussolini giving up his claim to special treatment for Italians in Tunisia. However, Mussolini saw it differently. He felt that as "'he had yielded to France the future of 100,000 Italians in Tunis and received in return half a dozen palm trees in one place and a strip of desert which did not even contain a sheep in another, it must be clear that he [Laval, the French Foreign Minister] had understood that France had disinterested herself in Abyssinia." Quoted in C.J. Lowe and F. Marzari, *Italian Foreign Policy, 1870-1940* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 273. British policy was similarly ambivalent. On April 14, 1935 they joined the Stresa Front with Italy and France to re-enforce their commitment to the Treaty of Versailles and resist German revisionism, after Hitler had announced the rearmament of Germany, contrary to the treaty. However, they then signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 18, 1935 that allowed Germany to build their navy to 35% of British naval strength. On these complicated Anglo-Italian relations, see "Chapter 3: A New Alignment," in Robert Mallett's, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War, 1933-1940* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 32-47.

[88] F.T. Marinetti, "La guerra futura," in *Futurismo*, January 29, 1933, reprinted in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, Volume 3, f. 1934. The article had a dual role, as it also represented and furthered the national attention being paid to the aforementioned cross-Atlantic flights by Balbo.

citizen . . . because tomorrow we will have to improvise the indispensable volunteers of our new war."[89] That time had now arrived, and so Marinetti declared

> We Futurists speak of empire convinced and happy to fight [for it] tomorrow. We want to prepare Italy's youth to imperially, that is, rapaciously, confront the secure, maybe proximate, certainly ferocious, conflagration. . . .
> Nearly all races fear war. The bellicose exuberance of our race prohibits this fear, in fact it forces us to desire it. The Futurist political program launched on October 11, 1911, that championed an astute, cynical and aggressive foreign policy is now more than ever relevant.[90]

True to his word, on July 15, 1935, when war was looking inevitable with Ethiopia, Marinetti wrote Mussolini and asked to be allowed to join the fight.[91] Marinetti was 58 years old at the time, and thus needed the permission, which Mussolini granted. But Marinetti did not only offer himself up to the cause; he brought along a host of Futurists. Around the time of his signing up he published an "Invitation to the African War," in which he declared that "there is nothing better than fighting for Italy in Abyssinia." This African war, he went on to write, was the realization of the Futurist motto that war was the "world's only hygiene," and that it was the "most synthetic means of today reassuming a life in service to the new Italy of Mussolini," as well as being an "adventure crowned by a passionate fusion with the Patria." "Thus," he concluded, "Italian poets and artists of Italy, I hope to meet you all down there as volunteer soldiers of that virgin territory, to Italianize it, transfigure it and to transfigure yourselves."[92]

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[89] F.T. Marinetti, "Il futurismo," in *Sant'Elia*, March 1, 1934, reprinted in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, Volume 3, f. 1934.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Marinetti to Mussolini, July 15, 1935, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.
[92] F.T. Marinetti, "L'invito di Marinetti ai poeti e artisti d'Italia," no paper name or date, in GMP, Box 18, Folder 2: Clippings. Marinetti published a similar article, "Invito alla guerra africana. Manifesto futurista agli scrittori e agli artisti d'Italia," in *Gazzetta del Popolo,* July 30, 1935. See, Domenico Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliographia* (Milan: Skira, 2002), 128. Salaris in *Artecrazia* identifies the same article in *Stile futurista*, September 11-12, 1935, on p. 180, note # 100 of her book.

Marinetti managed to get 84 Futurists to volunteer.[93] When he went to see Mussolini before his departure for Ethiopia he proudly delivered this list to the Duce.[94]

During the summer of 1935, when it looked like England would make trouble in the League of Nations if Italy went ahead with the Ethiopian war, Marinetti released "Italiani liberatevi dalle abitudini inglesi. Manifesto futurista" ("Italians Free Yourselves from English Customs. Futurist Manifesto"). Like the manifesto of the Futurist kitchen, the bombastic and somewhat ridiculous were in evidence here, but, like its culinary predecessor, in the proper historical context it reveals itself as a further means of furthering the regime's goals. If war with Britain would result over the Ethiopian war, then the public would have to be prepared for such an eventuality, just as they had been prepared for the war in Africa, and would be prepared for the war in Europe in a few years. Marinetti's manifesto was meant to demonize the British, and called on Italians to achieve their independence from the various customs adopted from England, which he characterized as symptoms of a culture in degeneration. These were to be replaced with the culture of the new and Fascist Italy on the path of imperial expansion. He denigrated English "snobismo", as "the gasping surrogate of every authentic human exertion and worth, that praises the most closed-minded impermeability to ideas and the most lachrymose pity for the little Chinese [recently invaded by Japan], Tripolitani [Libyans], Abyssinians, etc." Furthermore, he denigrated "'the well-shaven beard', a surrogate for personality," "the small 'pipe', a surrogate for thought," "the 'puritanism' of clothing

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[93] "Poeti e artisti futuristi volontari in Africa Orientale," in *La Forza*, August 30, 1935, found in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446

[94] Ibid. This is a copy of the front page of *La Forza* with the list of volunteers- "Poeti e artisti futuristi volontari in Africa Orientale"- highlighted. By hand is written "di Marinetti in udienza il 17 ott. 1935-XIII."

starched with the rigid pleats of alcoholism, degeneracy, and the lack of genius," and "'the indifference to women', and let's not even talk about their sexual abnormalities."[95]

Marinetti's contributions to the war effort did not end with volunteering, recruitment and propaganda. He also worked towards derailing any serious sanctions being imposed on Italy once the war began. The war broke out on October 2, 1935, and a few days later Marinetti was in France attempting to shore up Franco-Italian relations, hoping that a reluctant France would keep Britain and the League from imposing ruinous sanctions. He was also reaching out to the sizeable Italian population in France, specifically in Lyon, which was sending volunteers to Africa. Again, the cover of the visit was artistic—the Futurists had been invited to exhibit at the "Salone d'Autunno" at Lyon—but Marinetti used the occasion for political purposes. Marinetti's speech at the opening of the exhibit, according to the Italian Consul-General Tamburini, was a great success for both Futurism and the Fascist war effort. He informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, amongst other Ministries,

> that S.E. Marinetti spoke yesterday at this *Salon d'Automne* in front of a large audience on the origins of Italian Futurist art generating great enthusiasm and provided a vibrant manifestation of Franco-Italian friendship. Today he spoke in front of the people of Lyon that gathered to salute the departing volunteers for east Africa in the presence also of veterans' organizations and the *Jeunesse Française* [a right wing, anti-parliamentary group, possibly the mis-named *Jeunesse Patriotes*], for whom two delegates spoke and affirmed that French veterans would never move against Italy nor approve any sort of sanctions. Amidst the audience, that could not be contained in the grand hall, were many French people that wanted to offer their solidarity in this moment to our demands. . . .

[95] F.T. Marinetti, "Italiani liberatevi dalle abitudini inglesi. Manifesto Futurista," in Marinetti's *Libroni*, Item Number: 07885-01, Filing Call Number: GEN MSS 475 / 07885-01, Beinecke Library, Yale University. There is no source in this digital record, but Cammarota notes it was first published on August 30, 1935 in *La Forza*, and then published through September in various other journals. See Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliographia*, 137.

> A commemorative medal was distributed to the departing volunteers, and the meeting ended with the playing of the national anthems . . . in an atmosphere of exceptional enthusiasm.
> S.E. Marinetti was given a dinner on Saturday evening by the committee of the Salon d'Automne, at which were present the honorable Dreyssel, Deputy of the Loire, representatives of the Prefect, of the Mayor and of the Military Governor, as well as the President of the [association] France-Italie and numerous friends and admirers of S.E. Marinetti and of today's Italy.
> Many speeches were given, all exulting the Franco-Italian friendship.[96]

Thereafter, Marinetti made his way to Paris to speak with the Italian Ambassador and high level French authorities. Marinetti was back in Italy by the middle of October, and just before he shipped off to Africa he debriefed Mussolini on his visit to France.[97]

Marinetti and the Futurists also offered a solution in the event that sanctions were imposed on Italy, in the form of the nascent *Naturismo* movement. The movement was officially founded the previous year at the first congress of Naturism-Futurism in September, 1934 in Milan. Unlike the prevailing conception of naturism at the time that advocated nudism, pacifism, and internationalism,[98] *Naturismo* advocated "patriotism, virility, individual heroism, the physical and spiritual perfecting of the race, the machine as a source of well-being, and war as a cosmic decongesting phenomenon." More to the point, the movement's specific goal was "the evolution of man into a *superuomo*, to be achieved by expanding natural resources through technological means."[99] The natural

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[96] Consolato Generale di S.M. il Re d'Italia, UFF. 1 (Lyon) to R. Ambasciata d'Italia in Parigi, R. Ministero degli Affari Esteri, R. Ministero Stampa e Propaganda, October 6, 1935, in ACS, MCP, NUPIE, B.28, f. Marinetti. Marinetti raved about the "enthusiastic" response he received from the "enormous" crowd in a letter to his wife. See Marinetti to Benedetta, October 5, 1935, in YMP, Box 5, Folder 56: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1935.

[97] SPD to Mussolini, October 2, 1935, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446; Marinetti to Mussolini, October 12, 1935, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446; Sebastiani to Marinetti, October 14, 1935, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446. Marinetti saw Mussolini on the 16th.

[98] For an example of the public debate over naturism/nudism in the US at the time, see, "ANTI-NUDISM BILL SIGNED BY LEHMAN; He Holds Law Is Necessary to Curb Commercialization of Such Practices…," in the *New York Times*, May 14, 1935.

[99] Cinzia Sartini Blum, "The Futurist Re-Fashioning of the Universe," *South Central Review*, 13, #2/3 (Summer-Autumn, 1996), 88. This paraphrases the major ideas of F.T. Marinetti and A. Ginna's "Il naturismo futurista. Manifesto futurista 1934," in *Stile futurista,* October, 1934.

resources were foodstuffs—grains, wines, vegetables—that Italy was trying to become self-sufficient in, while at the same time curbing meat consumption. Like *Cucina futurista,* the goal was Italian alimentary independence, specifically in grain production.[100] The movement's goals became ever more relevant the following year, and *Naturismo* was back in the public eye in the months leading up to the outbreak of the war.

On August 30, 1935 an exhibit of *Naturismo in Piemonte* was announced in the movement's paper, *La Forza*. The exhibit was to open in Turin on October 15, and the announcement made clear that *Naturismo* was aimed at preparing Italy for its imperial war and the inevitable sanctions that would follow. Fillia announced that the *Naturismo* program to remake Italians was critical for colonization, as "men that understand the valorous effects of the products of nature are those destined to civilize peoples and to cultivate conquered lands."[101] Marinetti, it was announced, would speak on October 15 on the various ways *Naturismo-Futurismo* could be put to practical use, one of them was to be a discussion on "Naturism and East Africa."[102] After the League had imposed sanctions on Italy, Fillia, who with Marinetti and Federico DeFilippis had organized the exhibit, wrote

> Futurist *Naturismo* today sees its program assume exceptional importance in the face of the holy need to react to the sanctions. . . . Futurist *Naturismo*, insisting through its doctors and hygienists on the need to limit the consumption of meat in favor of greater vegetable consumption, insisting on the need to valorize only the qualities and resources of our land, . . . has intuited those formidable defensive laws that are at this moment unquestionably needed for all Italians.[103]

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[100] Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 178-181.
[101] Fillia, "La preparazione della Mostra," in *La Forza*, August 30, 1935.
[102] "Il Congresso nazionale," in *La Forza*, August 30, 1935.
[103] Fillia, "Il Naturismo futurista e la Mostra del Naturismo in Piemonte," in *Stile futurista*, November 13-14, 1935, quoted in Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 180.

Once the war began Marinetti was one of the earliest volunteers to arrive in the theater, departing on October 21 and returning in mid April 1936.[104] He also maneuvered himself to serve in the prestigious "October 28" Division of the Blackshirts, named for the Fascist seizure of power in 1922, wherein other *sansepolcristi* served, which also happened to be in the more prestigious of the two fronts of the war, the northern one. Here the northern armies under the direct leadership of Marshal Pietro Badoglio of the regular army would ultimately conquer Adowa, thus removing the legacy of the Italian defeat in 1896, and then go on to defeat the main Ethiopian armies and march into Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital.

Marinetti also happened to be in the right place at the right time at a turning point in the war, and recorded it accordingly for propaganda purposes. Early in the war, the effort had been directed by Emilio De Bono, an old Fascist in charge at the Ministry of Colonies. After initial advances in October, he halted the drive of Italian forces in the northern theatre of operations to regroup. However, this went against Mussolini's plans of a rapid conclusion of the war to avoid being hampered by the long-term effect of sanctions. In November Mussolini gave the northern command to Badoglio, who then prepared Italian troops for a further advance. In mid-December Ethiopian forces under the Rases Kassa, Seyum and Mulugeta attacked the northern Italian line. After resisting the Ethiopian assault, Italian troops with the help of airpower and poison gas were able to finally launch a consistent offensive that ultimately crushed all Ethiopian forces by the

[104] Again, the many letters Marinetti sent to his wife allows us to track his movements when overseas. See YMP, Box 5, Folder 56: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1935 and Folder 57: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1936 Jan-July.

end of March. It was in the defense against the initial Ethiopian attack, at Passo Uarieu, that Marinetti found himself from January 20 to 24, 1936.[105]

Besides actually fighting in what was a critical period in the Italian war effort, Marinetti was instrumental in propagandizing the war through his narrative of this battle. Initially his activities were among the troops. In his first notes on the battle he emphasized how the Italians were outnumbered, outgunned, lacking water and surrounded in their defense of Passo Uarieu, but both General Summa and the troops maintained remarkable discipline and never showed any panic. The "Courage, mobility and moral resistance," he wrote

> of the Blackshirts were completely validated in 4 days and 4 nights [of this battle] under the incessant fire of rifles, machine guns and small artillery . . . combined with the preoccupation of having relatively little munitions, and under a torrid sun with insufficient water, which was reserved for the wounded until the end. Even people of scarce military experience would have admired the calm discipline of Italian fire, maintained day and night, in the face of tenacious aggressiveness and the insidious pressure of a self-confident enemy noted for its barbarism.[106]

This was substantially the message he delivered to the troops a few days later, adding further color to his original notes by stressing how "Black Shirt machine gunners burned their hands on their red hot guns rather than use water to cool [their] weapons. . . ."[107]

Later, in June, back in Rome, Marinetti held a conference on "The Defense of Passo Uarieu by the Blackshirts" wherein he glorified the troops and the will of Mussolini that, he argued, desired and successfully prosecuted the Ethiopian War. He

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[105] The summary of the war's developments is derived from G.W. Baer's entry "Ethiopian War" in Philip Cannistraro, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982). More detailed analyses are available, among many others, in G.W. Baer, *Test Case: Italy, Ethiopia, and the League of Nations* (Stanford; Hoover Institution, 1976); Luigi Emilio Longo, *La campagna Italo-Etiopica (1935-1936)* (Rome: Stato maggiore dell'esercito, Ufficio storico, 2005-); Alberto Sbacchi, *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1997).

[106] F.T. Marinetti, "Rapporto fascista sulla Difesa del Passo Uarieu," [January, 1936], found in YMP, Box 5, Folder 57: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1936 Jan-July.

[107] "Tells How 600 Blacks Shirts Fell in Battle, Held Off Ethiopians in the North Four Days," in *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 3, 1936.

spoke lyrically of how this battle was very much like the ancient Battle of Thermopylae, as the desperately outnumbered Italians held off a much larger and ferocious enemy in the defense of a strategic location, until they were re-enforced and the Italian Air Force drove off the Ethiopians. A Futurist lesson was learned from this battle, he concluded, "that even the impossible can be tamed by this proud, victorious Italian pride. . . ."[108] This same heroic narrative of the Battle of Passo Uarieu was retold and republished often, and was starting to become one of those emblematic battles in Futurist/Fascist lore in which a righteous and outnumbered Fascist minority triumphed over some larger force, just as the Battle of Via Mercanti was used to describe the Fascist/Futurist defeat of socialists in 1919.[109]

However, this heroic retelling tended to skirt over some basic issues which tarnish the simple narrative that Marinetti would have his contemporaries believe, and was very much in keeping with Marinetti's proclivity for historical revisionism for propagandistic purposes. The analogy to ancient Greece was flawed. The Italians were not the heroic Spartans defending against the invading Persians, they were in fact the invaders. However, associating the 'brutal', and dark-skinned, Ethiopians with the ancient Persians, and Fascist Italy with the Spartans as defenders of western civilization made for a good storyline in keeping with the racially charged propaganda of the Ethiopian War. Moreover, like the official communiqué released by the Italian government after the battle was concluded, the emphasis was always on the ability of a small force to resist a

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[108] "Termopoli d'Africa, 'Passo Uarieu' nella eloquenza di Marinetti," 13 June, 1936, no newspaper name, found in GMP, Box 18, Folder 4. Marinetti's *Libroni* has the same article and date as being printed in the journal *Ottobre*. See, Item Number: 08121-01, Filing Call Number: GEN MSS 475 / 08121-01, , Beinecke Library, Yale University.

[109] For instance, F.T. Marinetti, "Le battaglia del Passo Uarieu," in *Corriere Eritreo*, October 21, 1938, found in GMP, Box 18, Folder 1.

much larger one.[110] What is left out of the narrative is the question of why the Italians were so outnumbered on this front and had to hold out against all odds against a technologically inferior foe.[111] Italy eventually committed half a million troops and an air force of 254 airplanes to the war to win it, but none of this superiority was evident during the heady days of the Battle of Passo Uarieu. Additionally, emphasizing the glories of the Italian Air Force in the conflict skirts the issue that the Ethiopians did not have a ready air force to defend themselves with, and thus an earlier use of Italian air power would have obviated the need for a heroic defense of the pass in the first place. Lastly, what is not mentioned in these speeches and articles is the use of poison gas to effect a successful conclusion to the war.

In addition to his tales of the Battle of Passo Uarieu, Marinetti further glorified the war and the Fascist regime in a book-length poem, sections of which were also declaimed throughout Italy. At first the work was serialized in *La Gazzetta del Popolo* from January 10 to May 1, 1936, and then published as a compilation the following year.[112] The poem, *Il poema africano della Divisione '28 Ottobre'* is a retelling of Marinetti's exploits throughout the campaign in his inimitable "words-in-freedom" style, with every chapter entitled the "Simultaneità" of one thing or another. For instance, one would find chapters entitled the "Simultaneity of the Suez Canal," the "Simultaneity of the Arabian Desert," and, of course, the "Simultaneity of the Returned [Soldiers] and of the Defense of Passo Uarieu," and the "Simultaneity of Imperial Rome, Addis Ababa,

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[110] The communiqué is reprinted in "Italians Also Claim Victory," in the *New York Times*, January 26, 1936.
[111] The noted military historian Basil Liddell Hart theorized at the time that the Italians had tried an initial, poorly planned offensive, and then were driven back and had to defend the Uarieu Pass. Thus, their tactical incompetence forced them to resort to the 'heroic' defense of the pass. See, Captain B.H. Liddell Hart, "Divergent Claims Befog War Status," in the *New York Times*, February 6, 1936.
[112] Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia*, 128.

Passo Uarieu."[113] As was his custom, Marinetti opened the poem with a glorification of his words-in-freedom style, claiming that "Nearly all the writers who have been influenced by the world-wide reach of our words in freedom . . . have recognized that without syntax, punctuation, with the various uses of tenses, and verbs and the atmospheric adjective, one can obtain the simultaneous poetic presence of the simultaneous moods [*stati d'animo*] of today and tomorrow."[114] However, it would be difficult to mistake the *Poema africano* as a poetic exercise, as the bluntness of its bellicose and nationalistic message was hard to ignore.

Two of the initial pieces of the book were overtly propagandistic. Marinetti reprinted his "Invitation to the African War" which had hyped the glories of fighting in Africa for Italy and had urged Futurists to fight as he would.[115] He also reprinted his "Estetica futurista della guerra" (**"**Futurist Aesthetic of the War"), that claimed "war has its own beauty because it definitively heals men of individual fear and collective panic with the refinement and stylization of heroism," and "it contributes to the power of the great Fascist Italy."[116] It is a poem that begins with crowds cheering at Italian soldiers making their way through the Suez Canal, yelling "Viva l'Italia Duce Duce Duce a chi l'Abissinia a noi tornate vittoriosi a noi a noi a noi" ("Viva Italy, Duce, Duce, Duce, to whom Abyssinia, to us, come back victoriously, to us, to us, to us"), and ends with Mussolini standing on the balcony of Palazzo Venezia proclaiming "l'Italia avrà finalmente il suo Impero viva il Re Imperatore di Etiopia" ("Italy will finally have its

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[113] F.T. Marinetti, *Il poema africano della Divisione '28 Ottobre'* (Milan: Mondadori, 1937).
[114] Ibid., 16.
[115] Ibid., 24-26.
[116] F.T. Marinetti, *Il poema africano,* 28-29. "Estetica futurista della guerra" was originally published in *La Gazzetta del Popolo*, October 27, 1935. See Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia*, 128. Note, this is the manifesto that Benjamin referred to as proof of the aestheticization of politics in his famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in his *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, edited by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 241.

Empire, viva the King, Emperor of Ethiopia").[117] The point of the poem is hard to miss. In fact, this was the concern of contemporary critics, specifically Giacomo Debenedetti, who felt the poem was a failure because it erred on the side of "civic, patriotic, and imperial exultation of the war."[118]

On a more disturbing note, in a later publication Marinetti publicly defended the use of poison gas in the Ethiopian war once its use became common knowledge. In a preface to his book *Patriottismo insetticida: Romanzo d'avventure legislative* (*Insecticidal Patriotism: A Novel of Legislative Adventures*),[119] he argued that what "is delineated in this merry book is a New Simultaneous Morality that liberates the Good from the leaden weight of logic," and would purify "bad acts through a sieve of good intentions." "For example," he continued, "the use of toxic gas in war, judged immoral by the creators of a morality for war because it its too insidious and deadly, is in fact quite moral because its mortality rate reaches only 4%, whereas an individual projectile's casualties reach 25%."[120]

Having proven his loyalty to the regime as a good Fascist and nationalist with pronouncements such as these, and the varied other activities he undertook to advance the regime's goals, Marinetti assumed that his position in the regime would remain secure and would allow him to continue influencing the development of Fascism. Specifically he hoped to keep Fascist Italy a relatively open place for modern artists to work. This

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[117] F.T. Marinetti, *Il poema africano*, 41 and 312, respectively.
[118] Giacomo Debenedetti, "Il 'Poema Africano' di Marinetti," in Giacomo Debenedetti, *Saggi Critici, Nuova Serie* (Rome: O.E.T.-Edizioni del Secolo, 1945), 215. Also see O.A. Bontempo, "Italian Literature in 1937," *The Modern Language Journal*, 22, #7 (April, 1938), 526-531, in which Marinetti's book is part of a broad review that lamented the 'crisis' of Italian literature.
[119] F.T. Marinetti, *Patriottismo insetticida: romanzo d'avventure legislative* (Milan: Mondadori, 1939).
[120] F.T. Marinetti, "Prefazione a *Patriottismo insetticida*," in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, v. 3, f. 1939.

was the one liberty he was still committed to defending within the regime. This assumption, however, was mistaken.

Consequences: Isolation and Impotence

Marinetti's contributions to the Fascist regime's domestic and foreign policy goals were undeniable. Moreover, he was a member of the Fascist elite. Consequently, he assumed he would continue in his role as the controversial and 'radical' figure of old that would defend modern art and challenge the excesses of conservative and anti-modernist Fascists. Certainly his bond with Mussolini became much closer in the 1930s and during the Ethiopian War. However his efforts on behalf of the regime actually had the negative effect of limiting his sphere of independence and influence. On the one hand many fellow Futurists, friends, allies and co-artists, both at home and overseas, rebelled at what seemed his too overt support of the Duce. Thus, with his base of support within the intellectual and artistic community eroded, Marinetti hardly had the influence to meaningfully challenge the increasingly repressive development of Fascism in the late Thirties. Moreover, now that he was such a leading and outspoken member of the regime, he also attracted the negative attention of those at the opposite end of the political spectrum—the conservative and anti-modernist Fascists who thought he was still too radical, too modern, too influenced by foreign tendencies, not nationalist enough, or simply too much the buffoon and an embarrassment to the regime. Thus, when Marinetti again battled this group at the end of the Thirties, as he had originally at the end of the Twenties, the results were markedly different. His efforts to preserve the freedom of the modern artist within Fascist Italy, and to limit the trend towards blind, Nazi-influenced authoritarianism, met with increasing and ultimately successful resistance as the regime prepared for another war. Additionally, even his efforts on behalf of modernism at this time were hardly heroic, as they perpetuated the anti-Semitism that had led to the anti-

modernist attacks in the first place. When the war did come, Marinetti dutifully silenced his criticisms, did the necessary propaganda, donned the uniform, and ultimately followed the Duce and Fascism to their end.

Marinetti's justification for allying himself to Fascism was that it advanced his nationalist goals, and that he would be able to preserve some aspects of Futurist and Fascist radical *dicianovismo* within the dictatorship. He may have actually believed that Mussolini remained a radical at heart, and was thus amenable to ideas that would blunt the descent of the dictatorship into simple political oppression and conservative policies. The Political Police, for instance, reported in February, 1930 that Marinetti habitually lamented privately that Fascism was no longer that of his days with Mussolini in 1919, and he singled out the Concordat of the previous year and the general attitude to the Vatican as proof. He blamed the people who surrounded the Duce, who were without "idealità" (idealism). He believed that many of Mussolini's good ideas, that would have supposedly balanced out the regime's conservative policies, were not being carried out, they were simply allowed to get lost in the bureaucracy.[121] Four years later he was reported to have said the exact same thing about the potential of the Duce being held back by the bureaucrats who had remained "small" and "idiotic," as in the times of Giolitti and Orlando.[122]

Yet, for all of Marinetti's complaining, where the Duce led, he followed. He may have privately complained about the reconciliation with the Church, but in June of 1931 he released the manifesto for *Arte sacra* and closely followed Mussolini's policy of appealing to Catholics without further strengthening the Vatican. Marinetti's public

[121] February 20, 1930, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[122] January 31, 1934, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

hypocrisy, and some could argue sycophantic relationship with the regime, was too much to bear for many that identified themselves as Futurists, and even those, the youth, who used to look up to Marinetti as a radical. Some believed he was becoming a *passatista* himself in going along with the regime's gradual shift to conservatism and reconciliation with the Church, monarchy, army, the bourgeoisie, etc. Consequently, in the early 1930s Marinetti had a *fronde* on his hands.

Emilio Settimelli was Marinetti's *bete noire* in this era. If Mussolini had his Roberto Farinacci, constantly pushing him to be more radical, to push the Fascist revolution to its ultimate and violent conclusions, then Marinetti had Settimelli. Settimelli had broken free of Marinetti's leadership of Futurism as early as 1922, declaring himself an independent Futurist.[123] Back then Marinetti seemed to have lost his political way, and Settimelli hoped to promote Futurist ideals on his own. After Mussolini came to power, Settimelli and Marinetti teamed up again and urged Mussolini to be true to his *dicianovista* ideals, and Settimelli regularly attacked the conservative members of the regime in his *L'Impero*. But by 1928, Settimelli and Marinetti were on the outs again, as the former believed the latter was too compromising with the conservative tendencies of the regime, specifically in Marinetti's leadership of the *Dieci,* a group of authors (none of which were Futurist) seeking to re-invigorate the Italian novel with state support.[124] Marinetti's appointment to the *Accademia* likely didn't help matters much. Finally, Marinetti's release of the *Manifesto dell'arte sacra futurista* was the proverbial last straw. Following the release of Marinetti's manifesto, Settimelli,

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[123] See his, "I futuristi indipendenti: Lettera-manifesto di Settimelli," in *Futurismo*, June 1, 1922.
[124] See Paolo Buchignani, "Settimelli e Carli dal futurismo al fascismo," in Renzo De Felice, ed., *Futurismo, cultura e politica* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988), 210.

along with a few others, released *Svaticamento: Dichiarazione agli Italiani* (*DeVaticanization: Declaration to the Italians*).

Svaticamento was written in direct response to the conflict between the Church and state over *Azione Cattolica*, and the Pope's *Non abbiamo bisogno* encyclical that criticized the totalitarian state and seemingly released Italian Catholics from their obligations to the government. Settimelli argued that because of the

> treason of Achille Ratti [Pope Pius XI's birth name], a disavowed Italian—masquerading as Head of the Catholics, but who has been for some time manifestly operating in profane and political territory—[who] tried for a coalition of all the anti-Fascisms of the world, proving in this way for the umpteenth time the constant ties of the Pontifical State to the foreigner, against the Patria: and because of the imbecility of nearly the entire Italian press, we feel the high and irresistible need, as intellectuals of the Fascist Faith and temperament, to affirm [the following]. . . .[125]

What followed was a truly *dicianovista* document. It argued that there were hardly any observant Fascist Catholics, and that most Italians were Catholic in name only. That being the case, it was time to cut the Gordian Knot with the Church. The word "priest," it continued, had always been known as synonymous with hypocrite, parasite, louse and anti-Italian. The Risorgimento had been a bloody and desperate fight against the priests that allied with the enemies of the *Patria*, such as the Austrian Emperor and the Bourbons. All the leaders of the Risorgimento—Garibaldi, Mazzini, Cavour, Vittorio Emanuele—were all enemies of the Church. And today, "we die by the hands of the priests or by their complicity with our oppressor. . . ." "Thus," it concluded, "in the name of all the blood spilt by Italians for Italy, we dare to appeal to the Duce—after the brief illusion of a possible conciliation—to denounce the Concordat." After the renunciation

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[125] Emilio Settimelli, Ottone Rosai, Remo Chiti, Alberto Maurizio, and Bruno Rosai, *Svaticamento: Dichiarazione agli Italiani* (Florence: Edizioni Fiorentine, 1931), reprinted in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, Volume 2, f. 1931.

of the Concordat, the Pope would then return to the position of Pius IX in 1870 after the conquest of Rome: at the mercy of the Italian state and its troops.[126]

Later that year, when Marinetti launched a new journal, *Futurismo*, edited by Mino Somenzi, Settimelli sensed another move towards compromising with the regime, especially in the journal's very obvious desire to propagate Futurism as the official art movement of Fascism. Settimelli believed Marinetti's Futurism, in its quest for official recognition, with all the compromises that entailed, had long ceased to be a medium for renewal, and he said so publicly. From October to December of 1932 Settimelli relentlessly attacked both Marinetti and Somenzi in *L'Impero*, finally declaring on December 24 that his "friendly letters" to Marinetti to help him reform his movement would come to an end, as Marinetti had shown himself to have the "most cruel and *passatista* intolerance."[127] In the Spring of 1933 Marinetti excommunicated Settimelli from Futurism.[128]

However, Settimelli was not the only problem for Marinetti at this time. He was representative, and a trigger point, for those that felt Marinetti's leadership was bringing Futurism in the wrong direction politically, and had lost its way creatively. Such a group was the *Gruppi futuristi di iniziative* (*Futurist Groups of Initiative*) led by Antonio Marasco, an old friend of Settimelli from the days of *Lacerba*, as well as an old friend of Marinetti from the same pre-war era. Marasco's political sympathies had always been on the left, and when it was clear the direction Fascism, and Marinetti, were going, in he decided to build an autonomous movement that still benefited from the Futurist name, but

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[126] Ibid.
[127] E. Settimelli, "A Marinetti," in *L'Impero*, December 24, 1932, reprinted in Buchignani, "Settimelli e Carli dal futurismo al fascismo," 212.
[128] For a summary of what Settimelli wrote in this period, see Buchignani, 210-212; Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 127-133; Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 241.

not the baggage of Marinetti's leadership. This was hardly as surprising as it sounds, as Settimelli had tried the same thing when he petitioned Mussolini to be recognized as the leader of some autonomous Futurist movement, which came to nothing.[129] Marasco simply decided to go out on his own, and released his manifesto on January 1, 1933.

The manifesto was at pains to explain that the separation had nothing to do with any hard feelings towards the official Futurist movement led by Marinetti, "who for 23 years imposed on the world a immeasurable, innovative, and accelerative Italian pride," but, Marasco argued, he and his allies had come together because of the need for a "rapidity of action" and "independent initiative." They were not supposed to be viewed as a separation from the official movement, as they were all "enemies of the *passatista* life." However, it is difficult to take these pronouncements seriously, as Marasco's group claimed they would produce the true art that would represent the "new life created by Benito Mussolini: an optimistic, dynamic, bellicose, realizable, inspiring life in which the Futurist genius breathes magnificently."[130] Of course, Marinetti could perfectly claim that all of these goals were the goals of the official movement. The proverbial gloves came off the following year when Marasco's group teamed with Lino Cappuccio, another dissident, who published *Nuovo Futurismo*, and declared "official Marinettian Futurism, as it is set up today is not serious, cannot be taken seriously; in fact with its eccentricities, its *buffonate* and its interminable polemics have discredited Futurist art in the eyes of the

[129] February 20, 1933, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[130] *Gruppi futuristi di iniziative, diretti da Antonio Marasco* [Florence, January 1, 1933], reprinted in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, V. 2, f. 1932.

public."[131] The eccentricities that the dissidents were referring to were, for instance, the manifestoes of the Futurist Kitchen and the Futurist Hat.

However, as Marinetti did in 1924, when he faced a similar internal political division, he called a major congress of all Futurists to heal the breach and to re-establish his leadership. As in the first congress, he chose to avoid a straight political battle, knowing it would fracture the movement even further than it already had. Instead, he welcomed all practitioners of Futurism, even Marasco's group.[132] Marinetti recognized that since Futurist dissidents continued to identify themselves as Futurists, they would never gain any traction. He was the leader of the movement, both in name and in the public's mind, and most importantly in the eyes of the Duce. He gave the dissidents a chance to air their grievances, and then let them peter away.

What is more important about Marasco's and Settimelli's dissidence is not how Marinetti handled them, but the fact that Futurists were actually challenging his leadership in the first place because of his compromises with the regime. Marinetti was in a position to deliver state patronage to his followers, and yet he had two public challenges to his leadership for having betrayed Futurist radicalism. For all the dissidents that spoke up, there were certainly more who felt similarly betrayed by Marinetti and silently drifted away from the movement.

Just as his support within Futurism was eroding, it was also collapsing among the Italian youth, particularly students, who had once looked to Futurism as a medium for rebellion and had now been similarly disillusioned. The break became public on the tour of Marinetti's new play *Simultanina* in May, 1931. At one of the earliest performances in

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[131] Nuovo Futurismo, "Serietà in arte," in *Nuovo Futurismo,* May 30, 1934, cited in Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 130.
[132] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 241-242; Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 131.

Milan, on May 9, students booed throughout the play, calling it a "Futurist abortion." Thereafter they continued to protest in front of the Café Savini while Marinetti was inside.[133] At a second performance, similar demonstrations broke out, and it was reported that a number of people felt that the play wasn't even that Futuristic, lamenting that "Marinetti had once done much for Futurism, but now he could care less, and eats the best that he can, without many scruples."[134] When the show went on the road to Genoa, the demonstrations continued, with students following him calling him an "*Accademico* buffone." Marinetti became so enraged that he attacked them as being "allies of communists." At this point, the students broke out into open rebellion, remembering the Duce's warning that "one cannot take refuge with Fascist licenses and coverings in order to avoid criticism in matters of thought and art."[135] Thus, Marinetti had been reduced in the students' eyes to the very person he had once railed against, the *passatista* leader of the establishment that held himself above criticism. Years later, Marinetti still rankled at the memory of the student demonstrations, though this time he simply dismissed them as the ravings of disgruntled Catholic youth, attempting to preserve the image that the youth were still with him.[136]

The government was concerned that Marinetti would likely generate anti-Fascist protests, in addition to simply anti-Marinetti protests, as he was an *Accademico,* and these

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[133] May 10, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[134] May 13, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti. The Political Police reported that generally "Amongst the youth it is said that Marinetti is a buffoon and that he has betrayed the revolutionary artistic cause. Politically, he is held as an ignoble opportunist. Many remember his Bolshevik attachments in the first years of Fascism and the phrases he wrote in his book *Democrazia futurista*, which praised the red flags that flew over the occupied factories in 1921." Although that book was published in 1919, one understands the point the spy was making. And, for accuracy's sake, the book that referenced the red flags was 1922's *Untameables*. See, Undated document, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[135] May 16, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[136] F.T. Marinetti, *Il 25° del futurismo festeggiato dai futuristi venticinquenni*, in *Futurismo*, March 1, 1934, reprinted in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, V. 3, f. 1934.

concerns were borne out in this period. Prior to performances of *Simultanina*, Marinetti would take the opportunity to expound on his favorite themes of the world-wide influence of Futurism and the close connection between Futurism and Fascism. When the *Simultanina* show rolled into Lugano, Switzerland on May 20, a large police presence was required to deal with the crowds that had shown up to protest the show, and it was suspected the protest could turn into a political demonstration. During the Lugano show this in fact happened, as a certain Giglia tried to incite a political disturbance by yelling out to Marinetti that "you talk of an Italy in the hands of assassins, such as Arpinati," referring to Matteotti's assassin.[137] Other noted anti-Fascist exiles, such as Masini, Blesio, Tonello, Guglielmoni and Pacciardi, similarly attacked Marinetti's political allegiances, and the anti-Fascist press were just as vocal in their condemnation.[138]

The Lugano incident was a good example of how Marinetti was starting to be viewed abroad, and how his international influence was eroding. This was most in evidence in his worsening relations with the international intellectual community at the annual PEN Congresses.[139] Having become *Accademico*, and continuing to be a vocal supporter of the Duce's foreign and domestic policies were now starting to take effect. His role as the leader of a supposedly radical avant-garde movement committed to individual freedoms was increasingly challenged. He was now seen primarily as a Fascist to many people, who saw only a propagandist for dictatorship, and who legitimated crushing intellectual dissent for political motives. Marinetti believed himself to still be the beacon of cultural freedoms within the Fascist dictatorship. However, this was never an absolute commitment, as it did not extend to overtly anti-Fascist

[137] May 22, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[138] May 22, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[139] PEN stands for Poets, Playwrights, Publishers, Essayists, Editors and Novelists.

intellectuals and artists. Marinetti believed that all serious intellectuals had to commit themselves to furthering the interests of the state through their work. Thus, he believed all serious intellectuals in Fascist Italy were also nationalists, and only enemies of the state would be subjected to censorship. Yet, in the totalitarian Thirties the international intelligentsia were clear that any censorship was simply unacceptable.

This division between Marinetti and some of the more vocal members of PEN derived from the founding principles of PEN. It was meant to be an apolitical movement that championed freedom of expression, and communication across boundaries in order to further international peace.[140] Yet, apoliticism may have been easier to manage in Britain, where PEN was founded, than on the Continent, where intellectuals had been politically mobilized throughout the 19th century, to either fulfill the promises of the Enlightenment and French Revolution, or to reject them. In other nations, intellectuals were vitally involved in using their national culture to legitimate the creation of an actual national state, such as those within the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. Moreover, it was difficult to claim to be apolitical and still want to foster international peace without taking a political stance against intellectuals whose ideas were rooted in bellicosity—and, thus, the confrontation of Marinetti and his PEN colleagues.[141]

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[140] The founding principles of PEN were "1. Literature, national though it may be in origin, knows no frontiers and should remain common currency between nations in spite of political and international upheavals. 2. In all circumstances, and particularly in time of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passions. 3. Members of PEN will at all times use what influence they have in favour of good understanding and mutual respect between nations." Quoted in R.A. Wilford, "The PEN Club, 1930-1950," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, #1 (Jan, 1979), 100.

[141] On the problems between the ideals of PEN and the political realities of inter-war Europe as well as the nationalist uses of culture by continental Europe, see Wilford, "The PEN Club," *passim*; Andrea Orzoff, "Prague Pen and Central European Cultural Nationalism, 1924-1935," *Nationalities Papers*, 29, #2 (2001), 243-265; Venita Datta, *Birth of a National Icon: The Literary Avant-Garde and the Origins of the Intellectual in France* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999); Walter L. Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Charles Russell, *Poets, Prophets and Revolutionaries: The Literary Avant-Garde From Rimbaud Through Postmodernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

The earliest record we have of Marinetti being targeted at a PEN Congress was the meeting held in Budapest in May, 1932. At this meeting, John Galsworthy, the first president of PEN, reiterated the apolitical goals of the PEN, specifically that the PEN had no connection to any particular ideology or party politics and was committed to peace and freedom of expression. But this ideal was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain. At Budapest the German communist writer Ernst Toller took the opportunity to attack Marinetti, Fascism and the Duce for the censorship that Italian writers were suffering in their country. As Marinetti had done in the past, most recently to Maurice Bedel after he had been appointed to the *Accademia,* he spoke up for the "marvelous" freedoms that existed in Italy, and denounced the lies that were being spread by "Italy's enemies."[142]

At the May, 1933 PEN Congress in Ragusa (Dubrovnik) political tempers flared once again, though this time the target was the German PEN delegation that had just recently purged its rosters of Jewish and communist members, and, it was believed, had not come out against Nazi book burnings. Moreover, the new German delegation's first act was to issue an oath of loyalty to Hitler. When challenged by Ernst Toller and others to account for their behavior at the Congress, the German delegation stormed out of the meeting. It's reported that the Italian delegation, though not Marinetti specifically, had sent letters of support to the German delegates after their initial reorganization.[143]

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[142] Giuseppe Hengen, "Futurfascismo di scrittori antifascisti," in *Futurismo*, March 5, 1933, reprinted in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, V. 3, f. 1933. Although Marinetti played this episode up as his successful defense of Fascist domestic policy, the Political Police's informers reported that Marinetti's actions were a failure on many counts. He should not have allowed the discussion of politics to enter the PEN in the first place, and when such offensive remarks were hurled at Fascist Italy, Marinetti should have stormed out of the meeting. See May 20, 1932, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

[143] The Italians, however, did not go so far as to join a splinter nationalist writers' group in 1935. The general narrative for these early years is available at the PEN Russia's website, at

Marinetti's specific feelings concerning nationalist writers being attacked by leftist intellectuals were, however, in evidence at next year's meeting.

At the Edinburgh PEN Congress in June, 1934 Marinetti caused quite a stir when he was the lone dissenter on the resolution on freedom of expression that was proposed on the opening day. The resolution was specifically introduced as a criticism of Nazi censorship policies, and German writers that had been banned by the Nazis were welcomed as representatives of their country. Moreover, Marinetti was targeted by the new president H.G. Wells and forced to justify the exclusion of anti-Fascist writers from the Italian PEN delegation, in seeming contradiction to Marinetti's pronouncements from previous years that Italy was a land of intellectual freedom. Marinetti's response was the rather lame explanation that this decision had been taken simply to avoid political differences on the delegation.[144] When Marinetti sought to highlight that in Italy intellectual freedom did truly exist, pointing to the freedom of the noted anti-Fascist Benedetto Croce, the Belgian delegate Louis Piérard countered that everybody knew that Croce's house had been raided and his books seized.[145]

Marinetti knew that these international meetings had very real political objectives, and he treated them as he had all of his international trips in which he acted as a representative of Fascist Italy. Beyond simply defending Fascism at the Congresses, he

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http://www.penrussia.org/genl/th-veg.htm (accessed 3/15/07). The flurry of Nazi state activity in the German art world in 1933-1934 is chronicled in Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), Chapter 1, *passim*.

[144] J. Donald Adams, "Italian Causes Row at the P.E.N. Congress," in the *New York Times*, June 20, 1934; "Nazis Face Attacks at Writers' Meeting," in the *New York Times*, June 18, 1934.

[145] June 20, 1934, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

kept Mussolini informed of what transpired at each meeting, providing the Duce with intelligence regarding how Italy was viewed abroad.[146]

The May, 1935 PEN Congress in Barcelona also dealt with the liberty of writers, and Marinetti once again "clearly expressed Fascist Italy's point of view with regards to the issue."[147] The records for this Congress are sparse, and they do not specifically detail that Marinetti suffered any critical response for his defense of Fascist Italy's cultural policies. However, this is unlikely. The records state that the PEN took up the "difficult and delicate question of writers' freedom of expression."[148] Marinetti's speech which 'clearly expressed Fascist Italy's point of view' was very likely the one he'd given before and would give again: that intellectual freedom existed in Fascist Italy, as proven by the existence of anti-Fascist writers there. This contention had already been challenged in previous meetings. Moreover, this was two months after Hitler had announced German rearmament and during the period that Mussolini was gearing up for war in Ethiopia. The PEN delegates would not have become less politicized this particular year, especially as Wells was still the president. In the absence of other sources for this Congress, the details of Marinetti's exchanges with PEN delegates cannot be more firmly ascertained. However, when Marinetti attended the next meeting, after the Ethiopian War, there were plenty of sources documenting the critical reception he received there.

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[146] Marinetti made appointments to see Mussolini after the Budapest, Ragusa and Edinburgh Congresses. See Marinetti to Mussolini, June 8, 1932, May 31, 1933, June 27, 1934, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

[147] "Proposta di Marinetti accettata al Congresso dei P.E.N. Club," in *Il Gazzettino-Venezia*, May 24, 1935, found in Marinetti's *Libroni*, Item Number: 07631-05, Filing Call Number: GEN MSS 475 / 07631-05, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

[148] "Un ufficio mondiale dei traduttori approvata dai Pen clubs su proposta di Marinetti," no paper name, no date, found on the same page as the above article in Marinetti's *Libroni*, Item Number: 07631-05, Filing Call Number: GEN MSS 475 / 07631-05, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

It was, in fact, the Ethiopian War that took center stage at the 1936 PEN Congress in Buenos Aires. In Argentina the full consequences of Marinetti being the cultural front-man of the Fascist regime became unmistakably apparent as he was repeatedly attacked by leftist intellectuals from around the world, with France in the lead. Since the 1934 Congress in Edinburgh Marinetti had become the ever more public face of Fascism, and his support of the Ethiopian War, and his participation in it and glorification of it, only strengthened this image. But the opposing side of the political spectrum was also developing, and becoming more forceful in this period. Since Hitler had come to power the Soviet Union had recognized that it could no longer ignore the German and Italian fascist threat by focusing on its enemies on the left, the so-called fascist social-democrats. The Russians had joined the League of Nations and had signaled that communists of all nations should cease their attacks on leftists and seek 'popular front' movements to resist fascism. In France, after the nationalist/fascist riots of February, 1934, this saw the triumph of the Popular Front government of Leon Blum. Thus, what Marinetti faced in Buenos Aires were French intellectuals who were coming from a very recent and politically mobilized anti-fascist environment. Additionally, in July 1936 the fascist Francisco Franco had begun his insurrection against the Spanish Republic, and this also further mobilized French intellectuals against the rising tide of fascism.[149]

The Argentine PEN Congress was held in September, 1936, and, as in the previous Congresses, the treatment of the arts in Nazi Germany were a main topic of discussion. On the morning of September 7 Emil Ludwig, a Swiss-German writer whom

[149] Roger Shattuck has a fine treatment of this period in his "Having Congress: The Shame of the Thirties," in his *The Innocent Eye: On Modern Literature and the Arts* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1984), 3-31. Also see Eugen Weber's "A Famous Victory," in his *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1994), 147-181.

Josef Goebbels himself considered a threat, spoke on the plight of his fellow persecuted Germans. In his discussion he frequently alluded to Fascist Italy as he condemned Nazi Germany. That afternoon Marinetti rose to demand leave to respond to Ludwig's assertions. He began by declaring that he, of course, agreed with Ludwig that freedom of expression should be defended, and that it was unconscionable the book burnings and harassment that had been going on in Germany. He also made clear, however, that Fascist Italy could not be lumped in with Nazi Germany. Firstly, Italy had never made any pronouncements against the Jews, and in fact the *Accademia* and Fascist government had Jewish members. Secondly, Italy did not crush artistic expression like Germany did. Marinetti again reminded the Congress that in Italy such well-known anti-Fascists like Benedetto Croce and Alberto Cappa, Marinetti's brother in law, were free to publish their work. Lastly, he pointed out that he personally was able to intervene and stop the harassment of the writer Tich, who had published an article critical of government policy, and friends of Croce who were suspected of anti-Fascism.[150]

However, Marinetti's efforts at trying to distinguish Italy from Germany were a complete failure. The fact that intellectuals were being harassed and only someone of his stature could save them, or that only Croce and Marinetti's brother-in-law were free to write as they wished, was hardly a ringing endorsement of the Fascist cultural environment. Moreover, Marinetti was not arguing for complete freedom of expression, which was a cardinal principal of PEN. He was arguing, specifically for Germany, but also more generally, for the freedom of expression for "all German writers who

[150] "Actes du XVI Congrès interntional des P.E.N. clubs (1936)," in Giovanni Lista, ed., *Marinetti et le Futurisme* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1977), 245-246.

experiment artistically without attacking or putting their nations in danger."[151] Specifically, he argued, "if writers don't occupy themselves with politics . . . then I am a complete partisan for the liberty of thought and I am ferociously hostile to everything that opposes it."[152] It is unlikely anyone took this narrow definition of freedom of expression seriously, as it ultimately meant that the intellectual could only comment on their society if they happened to agree with state policies.

Just how isolated Marinetti was in his opinions became clear in the following days when the French delegation repeatedly attacked his politics. On the morning of September 8 the Congress adopted a resolution "calling on world governments to safeguard peace."[153] Thereafter, the President of the Argentine PEN delegation, Ibarguren, chose Marinetti to run the meetings for that day. That afternoon a member of the French delegation, Jules Romains, stood up to protest the selection of Marinetti as contradictory with PEN principles, most recently voted on that morning. His proof was a manifesto that Marinetti had just published in his new journal *Azione Imperiale* in August, wherein Marinetti claimed to love all things Italian, to be against all friendships with foreigners, to call for the scientific preparation for war, the education of the young for war, and that war was "the world's only hygiene."[154] Consequently, Romains demanded that Marinetti give up the leadership of the day's events. Thereafter matters proceeded to get thoroughly out of hand. While Ibarguren sought to close debate on such a politically sensitive matter, which was contrary to the apolitical goals of PEN, Marinetti inflamed the situation by declaring that the French delegation were anti-Fascists and,

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[151] Ibid., 245.
[152] Ibid., 246.
[153] J. Donald Adams, "Peace Move Stirs PEN Congress Row," in the *New York Times*, September 9, 1936.
[154] "Actes du XVI Congrès," 247. Salaris in *Artecrazia* reprints the full manifesto on p. 182.

worse, anti-Italian. That did not end the matter, as the delegate from India, Sophia Wadia, asked Marinetti to reconcile his manifesto with his vote on the morning's resolution. Though she asked as a "friend," the round of applause her query generated made clear that Marinetti did not have the support of the Congress on this issue.[155]

Marinetti's response was in keeping with his hedged views expressed the day earlier. He declared that he made no apologies for his pro-war manifesto, as it was written after Italy had suffered months of economic sanctions, from some of the very nations who that morning had voted for universal peace. Marinetti argued that he had no problems supporting the quest for universal peace, as long as his nation was not attacked in any way.[156] He was asked by Ibarguren to retract his accusation of the French delegates, which he did, as a means of closing this politically divisive tangent in the day's events, but the French came back yet again. This time Benjamin Crémieux took the lead, making clear that the French delegation had no problem with Italy, it was Marinetti they had a problem with. He pointed out that Marinetti's explanation that his pro-war manifesto was written to defend Italy was unacceptable, as it was written after the sanctions had been lifted. Moreover, he noted that Marinetti had every right to believe that war was the world's only hygiene, but that he did not have a right to hold that view and sit in the PEN, which was soundly against it. Cremieux finished off by asking that the matter be sent into executive session, but made it clear that the French delegation felt the Italian Fascist delegation should not be allowed to be a part of PEN. His suggestions received a round of applause. Georges Duhamel reiterated his countryman's view that

[155] "Actes du XVI Congrès," 248.
[156] Ibid., 248.

Italy was not under attack, but that Marinetti's Fascist views on war were not welcome.[157] The remainder of the meeting was less dramatic, but Marinetti felt the chill of isolation. The dismal cap to the whole event came in November when Romains, newly elected President of PEN, informed Marinetti that the following year's Congress would no longer be held in Rome; it would be held in Romains' Paris.[158]

When the 1937 Congress approached, Crémieux let it be known that Marinetti was not welcome.[159] Marinetti went anyway, but regretted his decision right away, writing Benedetta that Paris "stank of rancid politics."[160] At the meeting Marinetti sat in on a discussion of "The Future of Poetry in the Modern World," and was faced with a majority vote that declared that "intense nationalism was a dangerous stumbling block for the creation of enduring poetry." Moreover the PEN held that any "poetry written with the sanction of a totalitarian state might be intensely sincere and highly effective propaganda, but would be very unlikely to capture any eternal truth or universal beauty."[161] Marinetti immediately resigned his presidency of the Italian delegation to avoid the chaos of the previous year.[162] The following year in Prague Marinetti ran into further animosity at the hands of the French delegates and immediately returned home—his connection to the international artistic community essentially severed.[163]

It is unlikely that Marinetti was completely surprised by the reception he received in Buenos Aires in 1936. After all, international animosity to Fascism and Nazism had

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[157] Ibid., 249-250.
[158] Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 187.
[159] Ibid. Salaris mistakenly argues that the Italian delegation did not make the trip at all, when in fact they did.
[160] Marinetti to Benedetta, June 16, 1937, in YMP, Box 5, Folder 59: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1937.
[161] "Chauvinism is Stumbling Block to Enduring Poetry, Says P.E.N.," in the *New York Herald*, June 23, 1937, found in: Various clippings on PEN, June, 1937, in GMP, Box 4, Folder 7: (Marinetti).
[162] F.T. Marinetti, no date, in YMP, Box 30, Folder 1449: [Pan Club] [ie P.E.N. Club].
[163] Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 187.

been steadily growing, and the Ethiopian War was widely condemned outside of Italy. In a telegram to his wife just a few days before the Argentine Congress, Marinetti wrote that the "Congress will be, it is said, apolitical as per the request of the Argentine [PEN] Center. However, I expect a cunning siege from the French . . . Romains [and] Duhamel."[164] Even if they had not acquired a copy of his pro-war manifesto, Marinetti had in fact been giving speeches in Argentina glorifying the war and condemning the sanctions, acting as a Fascist emissary, just as he had on his last visit in 1926.[165] In fact, Marinetti was replaying his entire trip of 1926, traveling to Brazil and Uruguay as well.[166] Dino Alfieri, Minister for Press and Propaganda, congratulated him on his trip to Uruguay, specifically its political import, commenting that "The Royal Minister in Montevideo has informed this Ministry of the success of the conference recently held by Your Excellency in that city. . . [and of the] meetings Your Excellency had with the President of the Uruguayan Republic. I received the news of Your Excellency's activities with sincere pleasure . . . ."[167] For this trip to South America, as for every other international trip of substance, Marinetti met with Mussolini, this time before he left. He also met with Alfieri before he left, and debriefed him upon his return.[168]

Marinetti's defense of Fascist Italy at both the PEN Congress in Argentina, and then at speeches throughout South America, had the clear intention of breaking the isolation Italy had found itself in as a consequence of the Ethiopian War. However, he

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[164] Marinetti to Benedetta, August 27, 1936b, in YMP, Box 5, Folder 58: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1936 Aug-Dec.
[165] Marinetti to Benedetta, August 27, 1936a, in YMP, Box 5, Folder 58: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1936 Aug-Dec.
[166] See Marinetti to Benedetta, September 16, 1936, in YMP, Box 5, Folder 58: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1936 Aug-Dec.
[167] Alfieri to Marinetti, November 7, 1936, in YMP, Box 7, Folder 84: Alfieri, Dino.
[168] Marinetti to Mussolini, July 4, 1936, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446; Luciano to Marinetti, July 13, 1936, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti; MCP note, "Appunto," October 8, 1936, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.

failed, and was in turn swallowed by the global condemnation emanating from the international community. He tried to put the best face on the debacle that was the Argentine Pen Congress. To his wife he reported that he had had "a terrible fight with the French at the Pen Club, [but] I won."[169] In an article published upon his return, he wrote of the Congress as a battle between Fascist Italy and the French communists, and that their attacks on Fascist Italy were in fact in the minority and that they had somehow manipulated the delegates to vote for the resolution against war on the opening day. But, he wrote, in the face of this communist attack he had successfully defended Mussolini's Italy.[170] This take on the Congress was more than a little disingenuous. There wasn't any manipulation in the passage of the anti-war resolution, as Marinetti had voted for it. In fact, the Political Police reported that they were stunned that a member of the Fascist hierarchy would actually vote for an anti-war measure.[171] Moreover, the French attack was hardly some fringe movement. Anti-fascism had been growing at the PEN Congresses for years, and delegates from other countries took issue with Marinetti's politics besides the French.

Having lost the respect of the intellectual community both at home and abroad for being too Fascist, in these years Marinetti also ran into trouble with Fascists who felt he was not Fascist enough, and often times an embarrassment to the regime. The opposition came in two phases. Up to the Ethiopian War there was a general dissatisfaction with Marinetti's behavior, a sense that his outlandish and Futurist proposals that were once tolerable were now unacceptable coming from an *Accademico*. After the Ethiopian War,

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[169] Marinetti to Benedetta, September 16, 1936, in YMP, Box 5, Folder 58: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1936 Aug-Dec.
[170] F.T. Marinetti, "Battaglia al Congresso dei P.E.N. Clubs," in *Gazzetta del Popolo*, November 1, 1936, found in GMP, Box 4, Folder 7: (Marinetti) 1930s.
[171] September 14, 1936, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

as Italy became isolated from the West, more focused on autarchy to compensate for its isolation, and closer to Nazi Germany, Marinetti and modern art fell victim to accusations of being too foreign, internationalist, Bolshevik, and, ultimately, Jewish. Marinetti and his ally Mino Somenzi defended themselves and modern art in this period, and some have said they were successful because the Nazi Degenerate Art movement was never imported into Italy,[172] but this overstates the effectiveness of the Futurist resistance to the anti-modernists. Moreover, it elides the means used by Marinetti to defend modern art, which perpetuated the anti-Semitic environment which led to the attacks in the first place, and that, in the end, Marinetti went along with the state's repressive cultural dictates as Italy prepared for war.

The earliest expressions of concern for Marinetti's behavior derived from his attempt at remaking the Italian diet. What to Marinetti seemed like a contribution to the Fascist goal of autarchy, was interpreted by many as a ridiculous gesture. In November, 1930, when Marinetti first floated his ideas in Milan, the Political Police reported that the newspaper reports were first marked by a sense bewilderment, but, the report continued,

> that which has stupefied the most people has been the collection of articles that have appeared in various newspapers that happily make fun of the *Accademico* Marinetti and that in such a way a part of the ridicule falls on the *Accademia* itself.
> Many approve of the coverage of the *Corriere della Sera* that published a brief note, very reserved, that disapproved of the coverage of the Fascist newspapers that should have had the good sense to remain silent, even if Marinetti would have disapproved, and it is hoped that an intervention from above will quickly end this state of affairs.[173]

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[172] See Enrico Crispolti, "Il Secondo futurismo contro l'operazione 'Arte degenerata' in Italia," in his *Il mito della macchina e altri temi del Futurismo* (Trapani: Editore Celebes, 1969).
[173] November 20, 1930, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

A few months later similar concerns about the sarcastic treatment of Marinetti's nutrition ideas were also heard from Rome.[174] But what must have been more disturbing were the reports that amongst foreigners there was starting to be a similar reaction: amusement followed by bewilderment that the Fascist government would allow an *Accademico* to bring upon himself and the *Accademia* the ridicule of the entire world. Many considered the *Cucina futurista* to be a publicity stunt to benefit Futurism at the expense of the *Accademia* and the regime.[175] A year later, as the effects of the Depression spread through Europe, the Political Police reported

> Those that work and those that, because of events, cannot work, openly blame these humorous exhibitions. The public observes that next to Marconi, in the *Accademia* . . . , the reformer of the Italian kitchen must be uncomfortable . . . The people say: Marconi with his daily works honors Italy; Marinetti with his clowning around (especially in these times) has people laughing at him behind his back.
> This is 'vox populi vox dei'."[176]

When Marinetti was touring with his show *Simultanina* in 1931, it will be recalled that he had to weather the criticisms of the Italian youth who felt he had sold out, but also the attacks of Italian anti-Fascists when he took his show over the border into Lugano, Switzerland. After that show, the Political Police reported that "it cannot be said that Marinetti held high the prestige of the Regime and it would be preferable to no longer send him abroad, as he is considered both insane and a con-artist."[177]

When Marinetti lent his hand to remaking Italian fashion, complaints quickly followed at the poor image he was projecting at home and abroad. In May, 1931 Marinetti was in Barcelona, and the Political Police reported "Here the voyage of . . .

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[174] January 12, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[175] January 15, 1931; March 15, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[176] July 6, 1932, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[177] June 2, 1931, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

Marinetti has elicited the wrath of the Spanish intellectuals for his habitual nonsense, amongst which is the [recent] invention of the aluminum tie."[178] Nor was the Manifesto of the Futurist Hat given a better review, it being reported that no one took seriously the new Futurist styles, deeming them simply 'funny hats.'[179]

These general impressions of the sorry figure Marinetti was cutting in these years could be dismissed as the result of the inherent bias of the Political Police that reported on Marinetti's activities and, of course, emphasized what they thought were embarrassments to the regime. Yet, there was some more obvious proof that Marinetti's did not endear himself to the Fascist hierarchy. One need look no further than the rather limited role the Futurists had at the tenth anniversary of the Fascists' coming to power, the *Mostra della Rivoluzione fascista* (Exhibit of the Fascist Revolution), which opened in October, 1932. The *Mostra* was a particularly important event in Fascist history. The tenth anniversary of the 'seizure of power' was a perfect time to remind Italians in as grand a spectacle as possible that, after a decade of Fascist rule, Italy and Italians never had it so good. The timeline of the *Mostra* covered 1914 to 1932, and thus provided a visual representation of the oft-repeated theme that where there was once chaos now there was order, that subversion had been replaced with national unity, and that national weakness had been substituted with international respect for the *Patria*. This was a story that the regime wanted as many Italians, and foreigners, to see, and consequently the

[178] May 31, 1933, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti. On the aluminum tie, see Crispolti, *Futurismo e la moda*.
[179] July 21, 1933, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

regime offered a host of train, travel, and hotel discounts to encourage visitors to attend the show.[180]

Mussolini had no intention of producing a staid, one could say *passatista*, museum exhibition. To the artists that were called upon to bring the *Mostra*'s theme to life, Mussolini had demanded that they "produce something contemporary, and thus modern and audacious, without the sad reminders of the decorative styles of the past."[181] With these modern ambitions, and with Marinetti's undeniable participation in the formative years of Fascism and under the regime, one would have assumed that the Futurists would have received a significant share of the *Mostra*. But that was not the case, and it was readily apparent to anyone who walked through the exhibit, and to historians of the event. Marinetti may have been a good and loyal Fascist, but, as shown above, his actions tended to diminish the image of strength, order and seriousness which Fascism projected and which were on display at the *Mostra*.

Mussolini's goal was to attract artists from as wide a spectrum as possible in order to build further support amongst the cultural community, which was in keeping with the broader goal of the corporate organization of culture and the transformation of the Italian state into the 'patron state.' Thus, the Futurists were represented by Gerardo Dottori and Enrico Prampolini, the *Novecento* by Mario Sironi and Achille Funi, the Rationalist architects by Giuseppe Terragni and Adalberto Libera, the *Strapaese* group by Mino Maccari and Leo Longanesi, and a variety of other unaffiliated, though modern, younger

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[180] Marla Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 169-174.
[181] Quoted in *Mostra della Rivoluzione fascista* [catalogue], edited by Dino Alfieri and Luigi Freddi (Rome: Partito nazionale fascista, 1933; reprint edition, Milan: IGIS spa Industrie Grafiche Italiane, 1982), 8.

artists also received commissions.[182] However, though represented in the *Mostra*, the Futurists had a relatively muted presence, being shunted to the end of the exhibit, at the back of the second floor. The rooms that Dottori and Prampolini designed were not even part of the historical narrative that played itself out in the first floor halls. Prampolini's room was a *Mostra delle Realizzazioni del Regime fascista* (Exhibition of the Fascist Regime's Accomplishments), which was nothing more than a rather well-designed but ultimately disappointing presentation of statistics that laid out, for instance, increased exports under the regime. Dottori's room glorified Fascist achievements in agriculture, sea, air and land transport, and internal navigation, and was thus another room of well-designed statistics. After visitors had passed through the dynamic history of early Fascism laid out on the ground floor, the Futurists' rooms would not have made much of an impression.[183]

It was on the ground floor where the *Mostra* achieved its true purpose of presenting Fascism as savior of Italy, and where the other art movements dominated. Non Futurist artists were responsible for everything from the towering *fasci* that greeted visitors at the entrance to the halls depicting the history of Fascism. Upon passing the *fasci,* visitors would have walked through rooms depicting the interventionist years, the war years as the "foundation of the Fascist Revolution,"[184] the struggle with socialists and *rinunciatori* in the post war years leading up to the founding of the *Fasci di combattimento*, and then the "triumphal march of Fascism,"[185] capped with the appointment of Mussolini as Prime Minister in 1922. The next four halls, deemed the

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[182] Stone, *Patron State*, 158; Emily Braun, *Mario Sironi and Italian Modernism: Art and Politics under Fascism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 148.
[183] Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 281; *Mostra della Rivoluzione fascista*, 246-252.
[184] *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista*, 93.
[185] Ibid., 93.

most important of the exhibit at the time and by historians, all went to the *Novecentista* Mario Sironi, and covered the March on Rome, the Advent of the Fascist Revolution, the Salon of Honor (a glorification of Mussolini), and the Gallery of Fasces (commemorating each of the ten Fascist years in power).[186] Futurists were also shut out of a hall depicting a history of Mussolini's life, and the final hall, the culmination of the exhibit, the Shrine of Martyrs.[187]

Marinetti recognized that Futurism had been marginalized at the *Mostra,* and that it undermined his argument that Futurism was the ideal movement to depict Fascism, that Futurism was Fascism's precursor and that it remained Fascism's most dynamic and 'radical' element. Consequently, he tried to convince people of these very points, even if they were not apparent at the exhibit. Just before the show opened, the cover of Marinetti's *Futurismo* journal informed its readers that "The Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution Signals the Triumph of Futurist Art."[188] The subsequent issue, October 28, the anniversary of the March on Rome and the opening of the *Mostra*, was completely devoted to the Futurist/Fascist connection. The front page reprinted a speech Marinetti gave in Piazza Belgioioso in Milan for the November, 1919 elections just after Mussolini had spoken. The point here was to highlight that Marinetti and Mussolini were co-equals in the early years of Fascism, which was left out of the *Mostra*.[189] On the same page a sort of manifesto appeared that declared, somewhat desperately, that even though only two Futurists had been chosen for the *Mostra*, all the artists were in fact drawn to a

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[186] Braun, *Mario Sironi*, 146; Salaris, *Marinetti, Arte e vita futurista*, 281, Stone, *Patron State*, 150; *Mostra della Rivoluzione fascista*, 192-221.
[187] *Mostra della Rivoluzione fascista*, 221-232.
[188] "La Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista segna il Trionfo dell'Arte Futurista," in *Futurismo*, October 23, 1932.
[189] F.T. Marinetti, "Piazza Belgioioso," in *Futurismo*, October 28, 1932; *Mostra della Rivoluzione fascista*, 131-132.

Futurist style in order to express "the entire heroic and glorious Fascist Revolution."[190] The rest of the issue hammered the theme of the Futurist/Fascist connection, retelling the story of post-War Futurism and its contribution to Italy's nationalist goals, its battles against the socialists, and prominent standing in the early *Fasci di combattimento.*[191] Of course, Marinetti's tense relationship with Mussolini in the immediate post-war years was left out of the narrative.

When looking at the 1930s as a whole, what Marinetti experienced in the first half of the decade ultimately amounted to annoyances and a certain lack of respect. In the latter half of the decade, Futurism, and modern art in general, faced a concerted frontal assault from conservative and anti-modernist Fascists that succeeded in crushing artistic freedom. Having lost influence at home and abroad, Marinetti was incapable of defending this one liberty he was still committed to. Moreover, in his weakened position, he chose to accept the anti-Semitic premise of the anti-modernist attacks, and thus perpetuated the anti-Semitic climate. In the end, however, what is most important is that he accepted the elimination of cultural freedoms as Italy prepared for and then engaged in World War II.

The roots of this assault on modern art, viewed as too internationalist, Bolshevik, un-Italian, unpatriotic, and, more insidiously, as Jewish, coincided with a shift in Fascist Italy's international position. As Italy became more antagonistic to France and Britain, it became more dependent on Nazi Germany. Partly as a result of this new international

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[190] F.T. Marinetti, in *Futurismo*, October 28, 1932. Marinetti made the same argument in his "L'Arte della Rivoluzione Fascista non si può esprimere che Futuristicamente," in *Futurismo*, November 6, 1932, as did Prampolini in his "Futurismo: Arte della Rivoluzione fascista," in *Futurismo*, November 27, 1932.
[191] Mario Scaparro, "Battaglie fasciste dei futuristi romani (1918-1920);" F.T. Marinetti, "La prima Vittorio del fascismo, La battaglia di Piazza Mercanti (15 aprile 1919) capeggiata da Marinetti. L'incedio de 'l"Avanti';" "Marinetti contro Nitti alla Camera dei Deputati," in *Futurismo*, October 28, 1932.

alignment, in conjunction with existing domestic sources, Italy witnessed an upsurge of cultural autarchy and a more public racism in the later 1930s that manifested itself in a cultural battle for 'Fascist' art. This battle was certainly not new, but it was more virulent in the late Thirties, and this time the conservatives and anti-modernists were far more successful.

Italy's isolation from the West and consequent dependence on Germany had many roots. From 1933 to 1936 Mussolini had followed the policy of the *peso determinante* (the determining influence) in the fluid atmosphere of European diplomacy. He clashed with Britain and France over his expansionist aims and blustering diplomacy, but maintained his ties to them, and they to him, in the face of the rising threat of Hitler. Additionally, though he feared German expansion in Europe, he had more in common ideologically with Hitler than the West, and kept his ties open with the fellow dictator to avoid being overly dependent on the West.

This balancing act became much more difficult, however, because of the Ethiopian War. The lead up to the war, and the consequent sanctions against Italy, had poisoned relations between the Fascist regime and the West, and neither France nor Britain would recognize the Italian conquest. Hitler, on the other hand, immediately recognized Italy's new empire. The Spanish Civil War (July, 1936-April, 1939) further poisoned Italian relations with the West and drew Mussolini and Hitler closer together. Although Italy, Germany, Britain and France had agreed not to interfere, Mussolini supported Franco's fascists, fearing that a Spanish Republican victory would leave Italy facing the combined anti-fascist governments of Spain, France, and the Soviet Union.[192]

[192] France, in addition to being led by the anti-fascist Popular Front government of Leon Blum in this period, had, in 1935, signed a treaty of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Soviet

Hitler supported Mussolini in this venture, hoping to drive a wedge between Italy and the West, and in November, 1936 the Rome-Berlin Axis was announced. As the war progressed, Mussolini's ties with the West were shredded, and the German connection was critical in order to avoid isolation if Hitler and the West were to come to some sort of working arrangement. Thus, Mussolini held on to the Axis ever tighter, and acquiesced to Hitler's various expansionist moves in Europe, starting with his annexation of Austria in March, 1938, which Mussolini had previously resisted. By the time the Spanish Civil War was finally over, Mussolini had little ties left over to the West, and was feeling increasingly like the junior partner in the Axis, as Hitler was prone to taking foreign policy initiatives without consulting him, such as the German occupation of the rump Czech state in March, 1939. Germany was Italy's only real ally in Europe, and so it was inevitable that in May, 1939 the Axis was formalized into a military alliance, the Pact of Steel.[193]

The connection between Hitler and Mussolini was more than simply the logical solution to a series of ever constricting foreign policy options. What cannot be underestimated was the intense admiration that Mussolini had for the discipline, strength and military bearing of the German people that Hitler had wrought. Mussolini visited Germany in September, 1937, and was "tremendously impressed with German military war production figures and swept off his feet by the goose-stepping parades of the S.S. and the motorized columns of the Wehrmacht."[194] It was this discipline which he wanted

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Union came to dominate the Republican side in Spain. All this left Mussolini with a feeling of a creeping communism throughout Europe that would encircle Italy.

[193] The major themes in Italian foreign policy for this period are succinctly dealt with in Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy*, chapters 9-10; Mallet, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War*, chapters 7-11.

[194] Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 157. According to Kirkpatrick, after the visit Mussolini was "manifestly intoxicated by the spectacle of so much power and fascinated by the man who was plainly resolved to wield it. Here was an ally whom it would be profitable to join and whom it would be dangerous

to instill in the Italians, and Hitler's visit to Italy in May, 1938 only further encouraged Mussolini to commence a "spiritual revolution aimed at the restoration of Squadrist activism that glorified and acted out a life of risk and violence."[195]

And thus we come to the issue of Fascist anti-Semitism, the concomitant attack on modern art, and Marinetti's role in the resulting cultural battle. Partly as a consequence of Mussolini inching closer to Germany from 1936 onwards, one sees the introduction in Italy of German style cultural and racial persecution. The former was launched against modern art and the avant-garde, and the latter against Italian Jews, who were frequently associated with modern art, the bourgeoisie, Bolshevism, internationalism, pacifism, etc.[196] However, as Cannistraro has argued, the racist component of the cultural battles of the 1930s was not wholly a consequence of Italy's closer relations to the Nazis. When modernists and anti-modernists had battled in the late Twenties, some of the anti-modernists attacked modern art on the basis of its supposed Jewish characteristics. Farinacci, for instance, had already used Sarfatti's Jewish background to attack her *Novecento* movement in 1929. The foreign policy dictates of the late Thirties reinvigorated these culture debates, specifically the Nazi alliance, and brought the Fascist anti-Semites to the forefront.[197] Cannistraro's conclusions that Fascist anti-Semitism was partly rooted in domestic sources has been borne out by the recent literature on this topic. The postwar historiography of Fascist anti-Semitism posited that it was a foreign import to meet the needs of the Axis alliance, did not have the support of the Italian people, was

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to cross." See Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: A Study in Power*, 354. Bosworth feels the Germans had sought to impress Mussolini and were very successful, with Mussolini returning home and proclaiming that "he was now more sure than ever that 'the future of Europe will be fascist.'" See Bosworth, *Mussolini*, 329.

[195] Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 176.

[196] Stone, *Patron State*, 179.

[197] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 147.

resisted by the Catholic Church, and was generally not that effective. The recent literature emphasizes the domestic roots of Italian anti-Semitism, the brutal effectiveness of anti-Semitic legislation, the willing participation of Italians in the persecution of the Jews, and the Catholic Church's complicity in the Holocaust.[198] It is in the context of this recent literature that I believe Marinetti's actions during the defense of modern art should be judged.

The Italian cultural battles of the late Thirties were triggered by the formation of the Axis in November, 1936 and then further stimulated by the opening of the Degenerate Art show in Munich in July, 1937.[199] The response to Nazi cultural policy in Italy, even before the opening of the Degenerate Art show, was immediate. Marinetti was a target of the attacks precisely because of his policy of attempting to portray Futurism as "the"

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[198] For a sampling of the recent literature on Italian Fascist anti-Semitism, see Aaron Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (London: Routledge, 2001); Joshua Zimmerman, ed., *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule, 1922-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Michelle Sarfatti, *The Jews in Mussolini's Italy: From Equality to Persecution*, translated by John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006; originally published in Italian in 2000); Frauke Wildvang, "The Enemy Next Door: Italian Collaboration in Deporting Jews During the German Occupation of Rome," *Modern Italy,* 12, #2 (June, 2007), 189-204; Davide Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire: Italian Occupation during the Second World War*, translated by Adrian Belton (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006; originally published in Italian in 2003); Davide Rodogno, "'Italiani brava gente?' Fascist Italy's Policy Toward the Jews in the Balkans, April 1941-July 1943," *European History Quarterly* 35, #2 (2005), 213-240. De Felice stands somewhere in the middle of the early and later historiography. While arguing that Fascist anti-Semitism was a consequence of the Nazi alliance, he also emphasized that there were domestic sources of Italian anti-Semitism, and that the effects of the Racial Laws were in fact quite deleterious. See Renzo De Felice, *The Jews in Fascist Italy: A History*, translated by Robert L Miller and Kim Englehart (New York: Enigma Books, 2001; originally published in Italian in 1961). In his biography of Mussolini De Felice upheld his belief that the Nazi tie was critical in Fascist anti-Semitism, stating that "Italian-German . . . relations had arrived at such a point where even on the functional plane the anti-Semitic choice was . . . practically an obligation." See Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il duce: II. Lo Stato totalitario, 1936-1940* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1981), 488.

[199] Enrico Crispolti, "Il 'Secondo futurismo' contro l'operazione 'Arte degenerata' in Italia," in his *Il mito della macchina e altri temi del futurismo,* 649; Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 52-58. After the initial years of confusion in the Nazi regime over how to treat modern art, Hitler's anti-modernism was put into force in June, 1937 when the works of modern artists such as Max Beckman, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Marc Chagall and many others were seized on the orders of Josef Goebbels. A month later the Degenerate Art show opened and the work was displayed specifically to educate the German masses about the decadence of modern art, and modern society, which the Nazi's were to reverse. That same day an exhibition of art approved by the German state was also opened to make clear the differences with modern art.

Fascist art. After having published "Revisione del Futurismo" ("A Review of Futurism") in *Il Meridiano di Roma* on April 26, 1937, wherein Marinetti repeated his oft-stated theme of the unity of Futurism and Fascism, Stefano Tuscano responded in *Il Perseo* that he saw nothing original in Futurism that could be of use to Fascism, in fact what Fascism needed in its culture was patience, discipline and nobility, and not the "improvised poems of the bohemian." Moreover, hinting at the racist nature the debate would take, he implied that Marinetti's foreign birth made him an unlikely person to dictate what was Fascist art, labeling him an "Italian from Egypt."[200] Later, Tuscano expanded his attack:

> We are of the opinion that Fascism has everything to lose from an alliance with Futurism . . . The most sane Italians and Fascists, especially those that support Roman ideas, would not allow that our artistic glory—already discouraged and frustrated—would be abandoned to the whims of subversives who would . . . submit man to the machine, reason to instinct, and law to arbitrariness."[201]

Marinetti's ally, Mino Somenzi, responded to Tuscano's attacks, as he would to all the anti-modernist attacks over the next two years, to keep Marinetti above the fray, but Marinetti believed the public attacks on his movement needed to be dealt with officially. He suspected that if such attacks could appear at all they must have had some official backing. The Political Police noted that Tuscano's first article had been read favorably by intellectuals and "given the political position of S.E. Marinetti, it is also said the article was tacitly authorized by the *Alte Gerarchie* [Fascist elite]."[202] The Political Police reported these rumors on May 23, and on May 25 Marinetti asked the Minister of Popular Culture, Dino Alfieri, for an appointment.[203] Alfieri was not as accommodating

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[200] Stefano Tuscano, "Eroismo e pagliaccismo nell'arte e nella vita-Ultimo comandamento Futurista di S.Ecc. Marinetti," in *Il Perseo*, May 15, 1937, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 672.
[201] Stefano Tuscano, "Futurismo e Fascismo. Equivoco degli 'undici paladini'," in *Il Perseo*, June 15, 1937, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 673.
[202] May 23, 1937, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[203] MCP note, "Appunto," May 25, 1937, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti. The Ministry of Popular Culture [MCP] was the regime's new catch all propaganda ministry meant to reign in and

as Mussolini, and did not seem to have made the appointment. However, he realized it was politically dangerous for writers to openly attack an *Accademico*, and so Marinetti was informed that "S.E. Alfieri, on July 2, had the Prefect of Milan inform the editors of the periodicals "Perseo" and Giornale dell'arte" to cease the polemics initiated against You."[204]

This warning would prove ultimately fruitless, as will be shown below. But even if Marinetti was not mentioned specifically, a general attack on modern art would also affect him negatively. This was increasingly the case throughout 1937-1938, with the link between anti-modernism and anti-Semitism beginning to appear. In July, 1937 Giuseppe Pensabene made the argument that Jews were ultimately responsible for modern art. He reasoned that Jews never had any natural talent for the traditional arts, and sought to infect the Italian race with their modern, internationalist ideas "through contorted and sickened intellectualism, [which is] most adapted to their nature." Moreover, picking up on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Pensabene argued that Jews were hoping to use modern art to enfeeble various peoples as they sought world dominion. "Thus," he argued, "painting and sculpture are served to the people in order to strip them of any sense of their race, devaluing the ideal derived from nature, and substituting for it a morbid propensity or [moving it towards] every type of deformity. . . ."[205]

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ultimately censor, if need be, any and all forms of media. See, Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 129-30.

[204] MCP to Marinetti, July 7, 1937 in YMP, Box 12, Folder 598: Ministero della Cultura Popolare. The *Giornale dell arte* likely also contributed to the attacks on Marinetti, though I have not been able to find a copy of it.

[205] Pensabene, "Le 'tradizioni moderna' nella pittura e nella scultura," in *Quadrivio*, July 18, 1937, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 714.

Marinetti publicly responded to these attacks on himself and modern art by publishing an open letter on Hitler's cultural politics, which the Fascist anti-modernists had taken to mimicking. However, from the beginning of these cultural battles Marinetti's strategy was a narrow one of self-preservation. He did not challenge the association of Jews with Bolshevism and modern art. He simply argued that Futurism was neither Bolshevik nor Jewish, it was, as he had always argued, Italian and nationalist. Consequently, Marinetti's strategy had the effect of accepting and perpetuating the idea that the Jews were somehow a problem for Italy, and he thus helped legitimate their persecution. His open letter to Hitler laid out his general response to his collective enemies. He argued that "Hitler has fallen into a prejudice for an art that is realistic, analytical, static and photographic" by condemning the entire evolution of art from Post-Impressionism onward which had mastered "synthesis," "geometric splendor," "abstraction," and "simultaneity." Moreover,

> Hitler has fallen into another grave error when he considers the Futurist avant-garde of Germany [meaning, the Futurist-inspired German avant-garde] as either Jewish or communist.
> There were some Jews and communists in this group, but they could not have been influenced by Italian Futurism, which is anti-communist by definition.
> In general, in modern art the Jews have been and continue to be not the generators but the able merchants of Futurist or Cubist modern art, as they were and still are the able merchants of older art.
> Italian Futurism, the inventor of modern art . . . after 30 years of victorious struggle, prepared the way for the Imperial Italy of Benito Mussolini through conferences, interventionism, the Fascist squadrism of the *piazze*, prison, and colonial voluntarism.
> Of its many definitions, this is the best one. *Futurism is a rejuvenating, renewing and accelerative Italian pride.*[206]

[206] F.T. Marinetti, "Germania senza futurismo," in *Il Merlo*, August 15, 1937, found in GMP, Box 19, Folder 6: (Marinetti); "L'ostracismo di Hitler alle opere di avanguardia: La risposta di F.T. Marinetti," in *Cronaca Prealpina*, August 4, 1937, found in GMP, Box, 18, Folder 2: Clippings. *Il Merlo* was an Italian language Parisian paper that actively resisted Hitler's cultural policies. Crispolti argues that *Il Merlo* was an arm of OVRA, the Italian secret police. However, it is difficult to reconcile Mussolini's closer relations with Nazi Germany with the journal's anti-Nazi articles. Of course, Mussolini may have been playing both sides, but proof of that is lacking at the moment. See, Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 684.

In October, 1937, in spite of the state warning issued above, *Il Perseo* opened another attack on Marinetti and modern art. This time A.F. Della Porta took the lead, arguing that in Germany "it is finally understood that the degenerations of modern art have arrived at a point of such criminality as to require extreme measures in order to free ourselves of this dangerous illness, especially for future generations." In Germany, he continued, all the propagators of modernism have had their "backs to the wall." Moreover, the time was propitious to look at Italy. "If we were to look at our own house," he wrote,

> and even begin with the Futurist movement, that arrogates to itself the right . . . of being the creator of an artistic renaissance, we could then ascertain that the same creators, such as Carrà, Severini, Soffici, etc., degenerate children of Picasso, Delaunay, [and] Archipenko, don't simply forswear their credo and betray the postulates of their pseudo-artistic idealism, but demonstrate the inanity of their principles and of their prophetic conscience. Futurism, Cubism, Expressionism, Suprematism, etc., banned today in Germany, repudiated even in France, excluded from Russia, demonstrate their definitive historical stupidity and their corrosivity over time.[207]

The cultural climate continued to degenerate as Italy and Germany tightened their relations. On November 6, 1937 Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, signed the previous year between Germany and Japan, against the Soviet Union. In that same month Marinetti was attacked yet again, not by the anti-modernist and anti-Semitic Fascists, but by the conservative writer Ugo Ojetti. Marinetti had made some passing comments on the influence of Pablo Picasso on modern art and on Italian artists. Ojetti, and later Della Porta, condemned him for his support of an artist who was currently backing the Soviet-supported Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. Marinetti responded that art had to be viewed in isolation from politics, and that it would be absurd to ignore Picasso's artistic

[207] Della Porta, "L'arte degenerata bandita in Germania," in *Il Perseo*, October 1, 1937, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 669.

influence simply because of his current political alliances. This was a rather hypocritical stance from someone who had made his career from the union of politics and art. Just as disturbing was his continual insistence that the avant-garde in Italy, specifically Futurism, had nothing to do with the avant-garde in Germany. Specifically, he argued, the Italian variant had no Jews in it, and was ultra-patriotic, and thus not communist.[208]

As 1937 turned to 1938, and the Spanish Civil War continued, Italy's relations with the West became more strained, and consequently Italy's connection to Germany grew closer. Mussolini acquiesced in the German *Anschluss* of Austria, and supported Hitler's aims, short of war, throughout the Czechoslovakian crisis. It was in 1938 that the full consequence of the Nazi influence was evident, with the passing of the Racial Laws. On July 14, 1938 the "Manifesto of the Racist Scientists" [aka. the "Manifesto of Race" and the "Race Manifesto"] was published anonymously in *Il Giornale d'Italia* and it laid out a new direction for Italian Fascism. This Mussolini co-written and edited document argued that different races were a fundamentally defining characteristic of humanity. It pointed out that race was not simply defined by common language and history, but was biologically defined. From this it was argued that the Italian race was Aryan by definition, tracing its origins to the invasion of the Lombards a thousand years previously. During that time the Italian race had retained its racial purity. That being the case, the manifesto argued that the time had come for Italians to recognize their racial distinctiveness, and their superior racial distinctiveness at that. Thus, the manifesto prohibited any theories that posited that Africans had any connection to the roots of some Europeans or that claimed "Semites" were part of a common Mediterranean civilization.

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[208] F.T. Marinetti, "Il pensiero di S.E. Marinetti sull'autarchia letteraria artistica," *Agenzia "A.L.A,"* December 20, 1937, excerpted in Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 195.

Specifically, the manifesto pointed out that "Jews do not belong to the Italian race." Somewhat contradicting the claim that race was biologically defined, the manifesto argued that the Jews were not part of the Italian race because they never assimilated, thus holding out the possibility that they actually could have become Italian. Lastly, the manifesto decreed that marriage was only permissible between people of European races. There would be, it concluded, no "crossbreeding with any non-European race . . . which is different from the millennial civilization of the Aryans."[209]

Thereafter, formalization of these ideas was quick in coming. On September 5, 1938 Jews were no longer allowed to send their children to Italian schools or be employed in any Italian school. On November 15, all textbooks written by Jews were barred from the classroom. The Royal Decree Law of November 17, 1938 formally barred the marriages of Aryans and non-Aryans, Jews could not be part of the armed services, could not be guardians of non-Jewish children, could not work for the state, own or manage a business with more than a hundred employees or one that received defense contracts, could not own land worth more than 5,000 Lire, or an urban building worth more than 20,000 Lire. Jews granted citizenship after 1919 had it revoked, and all foreign Jews were forced to leave the country unless they were married to an Italian or were elderly. On June 29, 1939 Jews were banned from the skilled professions such as doctors, lawyers, architects, journalists, dentists and engineers, were prohibited from vacation spots, from owning a radio, publishing books or lecturing.[210] By 1943, as many

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[209] The manifesto is published in Renzo De Felice, *The Jews in Fascist Italy*, 679-80, from which the quote is taken. A slightly better translation is available in Schnapp, ed., *A Primer of Italian Fascism*, 173-175. Schnapp also helpfully appends two further documents—"Critique of the Manifesto of Race" and "New Revised Draft of the Manifesto of Race"—which show the evolution of racial thinking as a result of the opposition the original manifesto engendered.

[210] Zimmerman admirably summarizes the full extent of the Racial Laws in his "Introduction" to his *Jews in Italy Under Fascist and Nazi Rule*, 3-4.

as 5,429 Jews had their names removed from the Union of Italian Israelite Communities, through conversion, and 6,000 Jews emigrated. This amounted to a quarter of Italy's Jewish population having disappeared by 1943, even before the Nazis and Fascists began deportations.[211]

The Racial Laws in Italy clearly had a profoundly deleterious effect on its Jews. Where was Marinetti in all this? Although some have argued that Marinetti was resisting the increasingly authoritarian trend of the regime in this period,[212] he was hardly taking a stand against the persecution of Italian Jews. Not only was he busy trying to prove Futurism was acceptable because it was free of Jews, Marinetti sat on the *Commissione per la bonifica libraria* which had as its goal the elimination of Jewish writers from Italian bookshelves. Although 900 writers were targeted for censorship, the commission was not as successful as the Nazis in curbing cultural production.[213] However, the fact that Marinetti participated in it speaks volumes about his priorities.

Marinetti was sitting on this commission just when the anti-modernists and anti-Semites re-started their campaigns, coinciding with the implementation of the Racial Laws. Of course, Marinetti was a target of these campaigns, and it was likely he may have sat on the commission to protect himself. If so, the plan was a failure. On September 1, 1938 Della Porta launched another attack in *Il Perseo*. With regards to the "devotees of internationalist ideas," he wrote,

> the cultists of Dadaisms, Surrealisms, Cubisms, Futurisms, *Novecentismi* and all the inauspicious and arrogant isms that for more than 15 years have infected Italy . . . we have frequently been revolted by them and have often pointed them out to

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[211] Zimmerman, "Introduction," 5.
[212] Salaris, for example, notes that Marinetti joined a collection of theatre writers in May, 1938 to protest the MCP's censorship policies. See Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 202.
[213] Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 117. Salaris notes, but does not comment, on this particular episode in her narrative of Marinetti's 'strategic' dealings with the regime.

> the Nation as the perverted negators of our race. In fact who can demonstrate that Dadaism, Cubism and Futurism were produced by Italian spirit and genius? . . . All of these goods brought in from France and the defeated Germany from its Bolshevik period are nothing more than the product of a perversion.[214]

Marinetti's response was a public radio address against the varied anti-Semitic attacks that Futurism and modern art were suffering, though he kept to his usual theme of denying modern art's Semitic character, as opposed to denouncing anti-Semitism altogether. At the end of October he announced that

> we consider the attempts made to accuse modern art of Judaism as completely defeatist. In my position as one of the people most responsible for modern art, which, according to many foreign declarations, derives almost entirely from Italian Futurism, I would like to patriotically affirm that there have never been, nor are there now, Jews in the Italian Futurist movement, nor amongst the principal Italian avant-garde poets, painters, sculptures, musicians, architects and ceramicists. Thus, continuing to attack modern art with such accusations is an offense to the Italian creative genius, exalted *autarchicamente* [autarchically] every day by Fascism.[215]

Telesio Interlandi jumped into the fray and denied that modern art was, in fact, Italian. Instead, he argued that Italian art was tied to Italian aesthetic traditions, and modern art was clearly tied to foreign, Jewish, traditions. "As far as we are concerned," he wrote, "we believe that 'modern' is a trap of both Judaism and Judaicized intellectuals to continue tampering with our artistic lives." Moreover, Interlandi argued that the worship of the foreign and modern in Italy was strangling the vitality of Italian artists who had to debase themselves and their art in order to appear modern.[216]

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[214] A.F. Della Porta, "Il razzismo e l'arte," in *Il Perseo*, September 1, 1938, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 781.
[215] Excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 802, n. 212.
[216] Telesio Interlandi, "La questione dell'arte e la razza," in *Il Tevere*, November 14-15, 1938, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 733-736. Quote on p. 734. Interestingly, Interlandi and Marinetti both felt Italian artists were being smothered or ignored by the worship of the foreign, or *esterofilia*. The only, and major, difference being that one defended traditional artists and the other modern artists, with both calling themselves patriots for doing so.

Marinetti's response upped the ante considerably, by responding directly to Interlandi a few days later:

> It is good to consider modern art, disapproving of one part of it and exalting another, choosing and discarding [as you wish]. It is not right to do what *Il Tevere* has tried, that is to admit the existence of a modern Italian art, boast that one knows it well and then to erroneously declare it foreign, Bolshevik and Jewish. Modern Italian art has many tendencies, of realist traditionalism, or moderated transfigurations, or dynamic, synthetic expressions of mechanical civilizations; it manifests typical characteristics or principles that have been impressed upon it by Italian artists completely free of Judaism and Bolshevism. In conclusion given that the Jews excel in commercial intelligence and never in creative genius, and that one of their most celebrated writers affirmed that 'all the literary and plastic avant-gardes throughout the world from 1909 onwards owe something to Italian Futurism', that is, to the extreme end of modern Italian art, the attempt, as *Il Tevere* tries to, to attribute to modern art the merits and defects of the Jews is, for them, unmerited praise, while it offends the Ministry of Popular Culture and the Confederation of Professionals and Artists that protect modern Italian artists, and above all it insults in a defeatist fashion the prestige of the Mussolinian Empire.[217]

Having referred to the *Tevere* by name, Marinetti now became the specific object of attack in Interlandi's response. He accused Marinetti of sowing confusion amongst Italians with his defense of modern art, and that "in Italy, there is a thirst for clarity." After highlighting that the true defeatists were the anarchists and Bolsheviks that made up the European avant-garde, Interlandi asked

> must Italy still submit to this inadmissible violence that deters it from its artistic vocation and imposes on it a barbaric aesthetic, born in the gutter of the International and consecrated in the capitals of Jewish and mixed-race cosmopolitism, in Paris? Dear Marinetti, you can call us defeatists if you like, you cannot call us imbeciles, as was the custom when we still attacked the bourgeoisie; we say no, we reject the 'modern' as the biggest fraud that has been perpetuated to the harm of a provincial Italy that today no longer exists. . . . Modern art is a tumor that must be cut, it must not be exhibited as a national glory simply because it is to Marinetti's liking.[218]

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[217] F.T. Marinetti, "Italianità dell'arte moderna," in *Il Giornale d'Italia*, November 24, 1938, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 736-740. Quotes on pp. 736 and 740, respectively.
[218] Telesio Interlandi, "Il Dadà di Marinetti," in *Il Tevere*, November 24-25, 1938, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 740-745, quotes on pp. 741 and 743, respectively.

Marinetti's response to this ever increasing antagonism that was more directly aimed at him was a significant frontal assault on his enemies on multiple planes to once and for all settle the matter of the *Italianità* of modern art, and Futurism specifically. It was an act of frustration and desperation which would ultimately end in failure, and Marinetti's acquiescence to the state's new cultural turn. His first act was a conference held on December 3, 1938 at the Teatro delle Arti in Rome on the *Italianità dell'arte moderna* (The Italian Quality of Modern Art). The audience was primarily made up of artists, but also included high-ranking Fascists such as Alessandro Pavolini and Cornelio Di Marzio, the President and Director-General, respectively, of the *Confederazione Professionisti e Artisti*. At the conference Marinetti publicly and forcefully repeated the ideas that he had put forward in his article of November 24, that laid out the Italian, and specifically Futurist, origins of "all modern art," and used the occasion to "mock and deride the accusation of Judaism and Bolshevism, anti-Fascistically launched against the modern art of the Mussolinian Empire."[219] The state's response to Marinetti's very public condemnation of the anti-Semitic/anti-modern attacks revealed the growing concern at the highest levels of government that Marinetti's free-wheeling lifestyle was starting to become a problem, and foreshadowed the severe curtailment of his independent, and critical, activities in the months ahead. A report prepared for Alfieri, and also read by the Duce, noted that Marinetti's

> oratorical tournaments in our current climate are anachronistic, damaging and sterile. Anachronistic because they are not of our time, damaging because they generate deplorable and dangerous confusion in art and in politics, sterile because no concrete contribution is brought forward for the clarification of ideas, [with] everyone wrapped in a game of artifice, of mindless talk, sophisms, [and] rhetoric. . . . The real artists, the authentic men of culture, the genuine intellectuals, keep

[219] F.T. Marinetti, "Nuove battaglia per l'italianità di tutta l'Arte moderna," in *Artecrazia*, January 11, 1939, reprinted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 792-794, quote on p. 792.

themselves apart, they don't defend or condemn modern art, but *prefer to work*. . . .[220]

The second point of Marinetti's attack was the publication of issue 117 of *Artecrazia* on the same day as the conference in Rome, in which Somenzi and Marinetti launched their most overt attack on their enemies. Somenzi wrote the bulk of the issue, defending Marinetti and the Futurists as critical to the advancement of modern art in Italy and abroad, and as critical to the development of Italy and Fascism itself. In "The Necessity of Futurism," he wrote that Futurism was "indispensable" in 1911, 1914 and 1919 when Italy needed to be prodded into war to advance its interests, and then to defend those interests in the post-war era. It was indispensable in the early Twenties when the twin threats of democratic-socialism and the Masons had to be defeated to allow Fascism to take and then keep power. It was indispensable in the early Thirties when Italian Fascism needed new and modern ideas to design its airports, the symbols of Italy's technological advancement and growing international influence. And, finally, "it is still necessary today when a new 'racial' *camorra*, with a defeatist political background, attempts to diminish our value, wanting to strike at the glorious *Italianità* of modern art through Futurism."[221]

However, the most memorable article of the issue was entitled "Italiantà dell'arte moderna," in which the anonymous writers (generally understood to be both Somenzi and Marinetti) accused the anti-modern Fascists of having launched the anti-Semitic campaign for purely personal ends, to taint Futurism with the accusation of Semitism so

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[220] MCP note, "Appunto per il Signor Capo di Gabinetto," December 4, 1938, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.
[221] Mino Somenzi, "Necessità del Futurismo," in *Artecrazia*, December 3, 1938, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 790-791, quote on p. 791.

as to keep it from being recognized for its achievements. "Every once and a while," the article noted,

> someone feels the desperate need to attack, more or less ferociously, modern art. There are those that accuse it of incomprehension, those that feel it is inadequate to actual needs, or accuse it of various paroxysmal follies; today, in the full development of the anti-Semitic campaign, there are those that accuse it of conniving with or of having Jewish inspirations, just as a little while ago it was accused of having relations with and tendencies that were Bolshevik.[222]

Somenzi and Marinetti didn't believe any of this was sincere. They argued the anti-Semitic, anti-modern campaign was being launched by parvenu Fascists that were seeking to deny the value and the influence of the early (or "first") Fascists to the regime. In a widely reprinted quote, once thought to belong solely to Somenzi, though some now believe to have been written as well by Marinetti, they argued

> Today what serves your purpose is the war against the Jews, but between a Jew, war veteran, squad member, Fascist legionnaire and a pseudo-Fascist Communist, swindler, ruffian, ready to serve any master and any party for a price, as long as they are in power, I am decidedly in favor of the first.
> When they speak of the Jewish anti-Fascist International I am puzzled. I ask myself whether this international includes the 60,000 Jews who reside in Italy, who according to the Duce himself have never been and are not a danger, or does it include you, who serve the regime so poorly and all its best men?
> And I ask myself, even more puzzled, if it's not you, rather than the Jews, who through these recurring campaigns have taken on the task of sweeping away these last, very few authentic Fascists of the early days, who are somehow still walking around freely and preventing, ignorant and hungry, the triumphant march of innumerable profiteers and eleventh-hour heroes?[223]

This issue of *Artecrazia* was, of course, sequestered. However, Marinetti continued his propaganda offensive throughout December, with conferences at the *Circolo artistico* of Naples and the *Circolo Barbera* in Milan. After the conference in

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[222] Artecrazia, "Italianità dell'arte moderna," in *Artecrazia*, December 3, 1938, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 786-790, quote on p. 786.
[223] Artecrazia, "Italianità dell'arte moderna," in *Artecrazia*, December 3, 1938, excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 786-790, quote on p. 790. The translation, however, is taken from De Felice, *The Jews in Fascist Italy*, 302. It was De Felice who felt Marinetti had a hand in writing this editorial.

Milan, Marinetti sent a telegram to Alfieri informing him that "Two hundred modern Italian poets and artists gather in Milan around me exalting the absolute *Italianità* of modern art and salute the Duce, the founder of the empire, this intoxicating bloc of new literary and artistic inspiration."[224] Immediately thereafter Marinetti held a commemoration for the Futurist architect Sant'Elia, who had died in the First World War, in the *Casa del Fascio* in Como. Again Alfieri received a telegram informing him that at the commemoration modern artists, poets and architects "affirm the absolute *Italianità* of modern art, [while] saluting the Duce as the FIRST builder of cities."[225] The meeting in Como was not a unilateral success however, as Interlandi attended the event and protested Marinetti's use of a commemoration in order to gain contemporary political advantage. The dispute continued for a few days after the event.[226]

In the next, and final, issue of *Artecrazia* released on January 11, 1939 Marinetti made one final attempt to get his message to the public, in what were ever less propitious times. In this issue Marinetti recounted how the Futurists had taken the lead in the battle of modern art, describing the events of the previous month in Rome, Naples, Milan and Como. He extolled the superior nature of modern Italian poetry with its combination of Futurist and Fascist influences, and forcefully repeated his earlier warning against "defeatists" that denigrated modern art. He wrote that modern Italian art included everything from realism, to "moderate transfigurations of reality," to "dynamic syntheses, at times, abstract, of mechanical civilization." "These three tendencies," he continued, "were created and followed by Italian artists that were neither Jewish nor Bolshevik, and, through an inexhaustible activity in Italy and abroad, they gave direction to foreign

[224] Marinetti to Alfieri, December 15, 1938, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.
[225] Marinetti to Alfieri, December 16, 1938, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.
[226] December 28, 1938, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

artists, globalizing [these tendencies], which then sometimes returned to Italy with a false certificate of birth."[227]

The desperate nature of Marinetti's rearguard action, however, was evident at this time, as he made increasingly exaggerated—and repugnant—claims as to the *Italianità* and non-Jewish nature of modern art. In "New Battle for the *Italianità* of all Modern Art," Marinetti, Giuseppe Terragni and Alberto Sartoris, both Rationalist architects, published a detailed 'history' of modern art and argued that all modern art had been created by Italians, none of which were Jews. Thus, Surrealism was born in Italy in 1500 with Giuseppe Arcimboldi, who wasn't a Jew. Cubism was invented in Italy around 1620 by Giovanni-Battista Bracelli, who wasn't a Jew. It was then taken up by Apollinaire, who wasn't a Jew. Futurism was invented by Marinetti in 1909, who wasn't a Jew. Abstractionism was invented by the Incas, then taken up in the Italian Renaissance, then by Theo Van Doesburg and by Piet Mondrian, who weren't Jews. Rationalism and urbanism were invented in Italy by Sant'Elia, who wasn't a Jew. Abstract sculpture ("sculpture with the big feet") was invented by Boccioni, who wasn't a Jew. Paintings "with the long neck" were not invented by Amedeo Modigliani, a Jew, but by the Etruscans, the Byzantines and by primitive Christians. Thus, if Jews and Bolsheviks picked up these art forms, it did not mean anything, as they did not create them.[228]

The result of Marinetti's assault on the cultural reactionaries was two-fold. Marinetti was crowned the head of the movement defending modern art, and, temporarily

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[227] F.T. Marinetti "Nuove battaglia per l'italianità di tutta l'Arte moderna," in *Artecrazia*, January 11, 1939; excerpted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 792-794, quote on p. 794.
[228] F.T. Marinetti, Giuseppe Terragni, Alberto Sartoris, "Panorama sintetico di tutti gli inventori dell'Arte moderna," in *Artecrazia*, January 11, 1939; reprinted in Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 794-796, quotes on pp. 795 and 796, respectively.

at least, had regained some of his avant-garde luster as a defender of liberties in the face of Fascist repression. Letters of support from all across the artistic spectrum (Futurists, *Novecento*, Rationalists, Abstractionists) flooded the office of *Artecrazia* and were reprinted in its final issue. Moreover, Marinetti brought the cultural debate to a national, and even international prominence, because of his leadership of the modernist side. *Artecrazia* published a host of supportive letters from other journals, including one from *Il Popolo d'Italia,* as well as from Fascist *gerarchi* such as Alfieri, Maraini and Pavolini.[229] News of the culture wars made their way to France, with Marinetti and Interlandi personifying each side.[230]

The other result was that *Artecrazia* was shut down because of the boldness of its attacks. In addition to accusing their opponents of being 'defeatist', opportunist and anti-Fascist for attacking Futurism and modern art, the journal went too far when it specifically attacked the *Premio Cremona*, an artistic competition organized by the leading anti-Semitic anti-modernist Roberto Farinacci. Such an overt attack on a leading *gerarca* could not be tolerated. Public sparring between Marinetti and Interlandi was bad enough, as the former was an *Accademico*, but to have two Fascist leaders publicly sparring was intolerable. Marinetti's connection to the journal was well known. Marinetti had visited Mussolini on January 9, 1939, and it was rumored that the Duce "severely reproached him, intensely deploring his attachment [to *Artecrazia*]."[231] The

[229] Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 207-209.
[230] Pierre Lœwel, "Le martyre de Marinetti," in *L'Ordre*, December 1, 1938, found in ACS, MIN, DGPS, DAGR, A1, 1938, B.38, f.Marinetti.
[231] January 11, 1939, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

January 11, 1939 issue of *Artecrazia* was sequestered and the journal was permanently shut down, and, according to Salaris, Somenzi was called to arms.[232]

How does one judge Marinetti at the end of this final episode of the Fascist culture wars? Many historians have interpreted Marinetti's defense of modern art in these years in a positive light. Renzo De Felice wrote that Marinetti's (and Somenzi's) attacks against the reactionaries constituted "one of the most violent attacks ever written by Fascists about the corruption and hypocrisy of Fascism."[233] Enrico Crispolti in a wide ranging narrative of both sides of the 1930s' culture wars frequently points out that the Futurist leadership of the modernist "front" was ultimately successful in keeping the Degenerate Art movement from ever being fully adapted in Italy, going so far as to say that throughout the battle what was clear was "the faith in individual liberty against officialism, conformism, and the opportunism of power."[234] Nazzaro tells a familiar tale of Marinetti using his position of *Accademico* and closeness to the Duce to resist the reactionary moment in Italy, as "Italian Futurism, [and] all the other avant-garde movements, found itself having to face, with its struggles and its polemics, its tricks and its resistance, this extremely dangerous situation."[235] Certainly Salaris' work on Marinetti is centered on his position as defender of modern art while the regime became ever more conservative. With reference to his strategy of dividing the Jews from Futurism and modern art, as his way of defending the latter, she writes that this was all part of the limited freedom of movement Marinetti enjoyed in this debate, and the "realismo diplomatico" he had to follow. Clearly, she argues, Marinetti was not an anti-

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[232] Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 209.
[233] De Felice, *The Jews in Fascist Italy*, 302.
[234] Crispolti, *Il mito della macchina*, 843.
[235] Nazzaro, *Futurismo e politica*, 203.

Semite, and she provides numerous quotes from Mussolini's *Taccuini* to show that the Duce himself considered Marinetti a defender of the Jews and an opponent of the racial laws.[236]

Yet, this interpretation of Marinetti's behavior is difficult to accept. Marinetti's defense of modern art cannot be viewed solely as the heroic last stand by the former revolutionary against the rising tide of conservative Fascism. It was, after all, a desperate attempt at preserving his own movement, and later, when he was in even more dire straits, an attempt at defending all modern art. Yes, he was defending the liberty of the modern artist, but this should not be confused with the liberty he had once struggled for in the past when he had campaigned against a broad array of social, cultural, political and religious forces of reaction. Instead, his actions during the culture wars should be viewed as representative of the many compromises he had made with the Fascist regime. He had jettisoned every aspect of his radicalism save that of defending the liberty of the modern artist when he had committed himself to Fascism. Now, when this final liberty was threatened, he compromised again. He willingly accepted the negative stereotypes of Jews, and simply sought to cleanse first his movement and then modern art in general from the taint of Judaism and Bolshevism.

Marinetti was not an anti-Semite. There are no records that show he harbored any animus against Jews. Somenzi, in fact, was Jewish, and a close friend and collaborator of Marinetti. By 1938, however, Marinetti should not have been under any illusion as to the plight of the Jews in Europe. The Nuremberg Laws had been passed in Germany in 1935, and Marinetti had faced some of the world's opposition to these laws at the PEN

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[236] Salaris, *Artecrazia*, 196. Salaris quotes from: Yvon De Begnac, *Taccuini mussoliniani*, edited by Francesco Perfetti (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), 325, 349, 358.

Congresses because of his support for his own fascist regime. There was *Kristallnacht* in 1938, and, of course the Racial Laws in Italy, which Marinetti helped put into practice by banning books by Jews. I have yet to find any defense of the Jews in Marinetti's writings or performances. Marinetti had the courage to stand up to reactionary, conservative Fascists who threatened to turn Fascism into a deadening, anti-revolutionary movement, yet never used his prestige to question the morality of persecuting 60,000 Italian Jews who were not a threat to the regime. This is in fact the position taken by recent historians of Marinetti's participation in the culture wars. Berghaus and Stone both fault Marinetti for accepting the basic premises and conceptions of his adversaries when it came to the Jews, and that he simply sought to prove the purity of modern art.[237] As the recent historiography of Italian anti-Semitism has shown that there was hardly a dearth of domestic support for the persecution of Jews, Marinetti's failure to act at this time must be viewed as helping to enable that very persecution.

Part of the reason for Marinetti's rather limp performance through 1937-1939 was that he was becoming increasingly aware of how limited his own freedom was. The frequency of the public attacks against him were a sign that his standing had waned in Italy, regardless of his personal position with the Duce—this had only limited the extent of the attacks. By 1939 Marinetti's ability to effectively preserve any liberty within the increasing totalitarian order of the regime was fading. He did keep the Degenerate Art movement out of Italy, but the result was the same in the long run: the curtailment of his own and all artistic freedom.

However, in spite of his moral failures during the culture battles, they were still, in a very limited sense, a very public resistance to the conservative direction the regime

[237] Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 253; Stone, *The Patron State*, 181.

was taking after it had formed the Axis with Nazi Germany. Marinetti had never been silent about his views of Hitler, and had publicly scolded him on his cultural policy in 1937. The Political Police were aware of the latter event, and noted that Hitler himself was particularly annoyed at this criticism, as Hitler did not suffer any criticism, particularly in matters of art, in which he felt he was quite "competent."[238] A few months later Marinetti gave an interview in Paris to Roger de Lannes for *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* and commented on the liquidation of the modern cultural movement in Germany, declaring that "I believe that Germany is committing a grave error. You cannot separate with impunity national life from intellectual and spiritual life. In the measures recently adopted by the German government there is a complete absence of artistic sense."[239] Over the next few months Marinetti was engaged in the cultural battle at home, and his comments were less directed at the Nazis than their proxies in Italy. However, once *Artecrazia* was shut down in early 1939, Marinetti made one final pubic declaration against Nazi Germany, and especially Italy's closer relations with it.

On March 26, 1939 Mussolini addressed the Blackshirts and declared that Italy would never again be an unreliable ally, and that Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were indissolubly linked together by a common revolutionary ideology "'in direct antithesis to all other conceptions of contemporary civilization.'"[240] A few days later it was reported that Marinetti was publicly complaining of the "disproportionate" advantages the Germans were receiving from the Axis compared to the Italians.[241] On May 6 and 7 Von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, met with Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister,

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[238] August 9, 1937, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[239] January 23, 1938, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[240] Mussolini, March 26, 1939, in *Opera Omnia,* vol. 29, 251, cited in Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 187.
[241] April 3, 1939, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.

in Milan to work out the transformation of the Axis into an alliance. Marinetti was in Milan on May 9th at a conference commemorating the foundation of the empire at the Teatro Dal Verme, with Nazis in attendance. He took this opportunity to publicly declare his disapproval of the Axis. He pointed out how Italy had suffered at the hands of the Germans and Austrians in the First World War, which led him to declare that, with regards to the Axis partners, "Italy cannot depend on them, in fact it has to look out for itself with its own means, because history has shown that alliances are very uncertain and that the friends of today can be the enemies of tomorrow." It was reported that his speech did not go over well with the Germans.[242] However, the alliance was signed on May 22, and Marinetti's public criticism of May 9 was to be his last. In a few short months Europe would be at war, and within a year Italy would enter the war on Germany's side. Marinetti, the ever loyal Fascist, followed where the Duce led.

[242] May 10, 1939, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti; May 10, 1939, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

Final Compromises: Marinetti in World War II

During the war Marinetti's goal to serve the regime and the order it required on the one hand, and to preserve some form of liberty on the other, was essentially at an end. After war broke out, Marinetti did not protest any state action. He supported the war, was tireless in his propaganda efforts, recruited fellow Futurists for the war effort, and even served on the front. He reversed his opposition to the Nazi alliance, and abandoned his defense of modern art. The Ministry of Popular Culture would not tolerate any artistic expression that did not have a readily understandable pro-war/pro-state message. Marinetti did not question this policy publicly, and eventually accepted the curtailment of even his own artistic freedom. Italy was at war, and, as he so frequently stated, 'the word Italy must dominate the word Liberty.' During the war he abandoned the one liberty he had committed himself to defending under the regime, grasped on ever more tightly to the Fascist state, and followed it to its bitter end.

When World War II broke out in September, 1939 Mussolini faced a difficult decision: live up to the years of militarist rhetoric and the very recent promises to Nazi Germany that Italy would fulfill it's obligations as an ally, or listen to his military and political advisors who pleaded for neutrality, as Italy was not ready for the conflict. Mussolini did the practical thing and declared Italy a non-belligerent—a more savory adjective than neutral. However, once Nazi Germany took the war to the West and gobbled up territory after territory, seemingly without any difficulty, Mussolini sought to get in on the spoils of war, finally settle outstanding territorial questions with France, and declared war on France on June 10, 1940.[243]

[243] Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 214.

Marinetti, true to form, once his nation was at war he became an ardent, and very public, patriot. It is not known if Marinetti welcomed this war as he had the previous Italian wars. One can reasonably assume that, given his recent statements on Nazi Germany and Italy's alliance with it, he was likely not thrilled at the prospect of fighting alongside Hitler. However, there were other factors at work. Marinetti had supported Mussolini in all of his foreign adventures because he sincerely believed in Italian expansion and, of course, in 'war as the world's only hygiene.' Thus, where Mussolini led, Marinetti would follow. However, what should also be borne in mind is that Marinetti's relations with France had severely deteriorated in the Thirties because of his Fascist politics. One need only remember his humiliation at the various PEN Congresses at the hands of French intellectuals as he was forced to defend Fascism, and then was finally drummed out of the organization by a French PEN president. On a visit to Paris in November, 1937 he concluded that "everyone bristles with hate for Italy. It is tragic and stupid . . . [They are] ferocious about our military alliance with Germany."[244]

Within a few days of Italy declaring war on France Marinetti was recruiting Futurists for the war effort. "Dear Futurista," he wrote in a recruitment letter, "if you have not been called up . . . and you want to immediately fight for our great, glorious Mussolinian empire, send me your request for volunteer service [and] I will [then] transmit [it] to the competent authorities." He added that he hoped his own health would allow him to join the war effort as well.[245] Marinetti was recovering from a recurring ulcer. However this did not stop him from telling Mussolini that "as soon as I ascertain

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[244] Marinetti to Benedetta, November 10, 1937, in YMP, Box 5, Folder 59: Marinetti, Benedetta Cappa 1937. A formal military alliance had not yet been signed, but the closeness of Italy and Germany is revealed by Marinetti's phraseology and how others viewed the relationship.

[245] F.T. Marinetti, Recruitment Letter to Fellow Futurists, June 18, 1940, in GMP, Box 2, Folder 1: Marinetti.

an authentic improvement in my health, I will ask for a brief meeting so that I may salute you and ask for the honor of fighting on the front lines for our glorious Fascist Italy." In the meantime, he assured the Duce that the "majority of the Futurist poets and artists are already under arms or have been called up. Others have gone directly to the various Ministries of the Armed Forces and to the Militia asking to be enlisted as volunteers."[246] Marinetti would not see combat until the end of 1942. However, his propaganda efforts for a war with France began immediately. The day after he informed Mussolini of the Futurists' commitment to the war effort the Ministry of Popular Culture was already reporting that the "*Accademico* Marinetti has let us know that Monday or Tuesday of next week *'Le Stanze del Libro'* will organize a demonstration on the *Italianità* of Corsica, during which Marinetti . . . will speak."[247] He couldn't fight yet, but he could certainly engage in propaganda to justify a war against France.

When France was defeated, and Britain driven off the continent, Marinetti was positively exultant, and petty, in his reaction. The humiliations he had endured at the PEN Congresses still rankled him, but these were now being washed away by the recent fascist victories over the West. On July 12 Marinetti published "Risposta del poeta Marinetti agli scrittori Jules Romains-Duhamel-Benjamin Cremieux-Pierard-Ludwig Wolf-Wells" ("The Poet Marinetti's Response to the Writers Jules Romains-Duhamel-Benjamin Cremieux-Pierard-Ludwig Wolf-Wells") wherein he wrote

> Today you must clearly accept our Italian Futurist principles that for the last thirty years we have propagated . . .
> 1.The aesthetics of War, and War as the world's only hygiene
> 2.The aesthetics of the machine and of velocity. Man multiplied by the machine . . .

[246] Marinetti to Mussolini, June19, 1940, in GMP, Box 2, Folder 21: Marinetti, 1940.
[247] MCP note, "Appunto per il Capo di Gabinetto," June 20, 1940, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.

> 3.The word Italy and Patria must dominate the word liberty. . . .
> . . . at the International Congresses of the P.E.N. Clubs of Edinburgh, Paris, Budapest, Barcelona, Ragusa, Buenos Aires, while you attempted to defeat our Italian Futurist principles with irony and [then] expelled me, there emerged in your speeches an anti-Futurist aesthetic of peace, [a] dreamy immobility and nihilistic psychology filled with sentimental fantasies that certainly determined the defeat of France and England.
> Clearly you must recognize that you accumulated against me the most preciously researched and catastrophic literary-artistic errors.[248]

However, what was even more telling about this letter was Marinetti's *volte face* on Hitler. Up to 1939 Marinetti had publicly declared his distaste for the Nazi regime and the harm an alliance with the Germans would likely do to Italy. Now, Marinetti strategically changed his tune. After laying out the three Futurist principles in the above letter, Marinetti noted that "first Benito Mussolini concretized these Italian Futurist principles in the Fascism he created." Then, Marinetti went on, "Hitler developed them to their logical extent in his integral victories."[249] Amazingly, Hitler had now become the logical development of Futurist principles, when a few months ago Marinetti was actively struggling against his anti-Futurist progeny in Italy. Hitler had once been representative of that very reactionary fascism that Marinetti declared he did not want Italy to fall into. Now, as Mussolini had bound himself to Hitler, Marinetti compromised yet again and followed where the Duce led. A few months later Marinetti further showed his new commitment to Italy's ally by coordinating cultural contacts with his counterparts in Germany. To Pavolini, the new Minister of Popular Culture, Marinetti wrote "the Fascist National Syndicate of Authors and Writers [which Marinetti headed] considers it opportune to establish contacts with the corresponding syndical organization of German

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[248] F.T. Marinetti, "Risposta del poeta Marinetti agli scrittori Jules Romains-Duhamel-Benjamin Cremieux-Pierard-Ludwig Wolf-Wells," in *Il Giornale d'Italia*, July 12, 1940, found in Getty Research Center, Letters to Angelo Rognoni and One of His Manuscripts, 1914-1957, accession #850150, Box 2, Folder 4: Marinetti and Benedetta, 1916-1946.
[249] Ibid.

writers in order to increase knowledge of all Italian literature, with all of its tendencies and Italian characteristics."[250] As these cultural exchanges had to be cleared by the Ministry of Foreign affairs, their goal was not simply to promote Italian literature, but to serve the alliance.[251]

In the meantime the war progressed, and progressed badly for Italy. Immediately after declaring war on France, the Italians invaded British territory in Africa, hitting Egypt, Kenya, Sudan and British Somaliland simultaneously. However, after initial victories in Egypt, the Italians were pushed back and Libya nearly lost, until the Germans sent in help in February, 1941. In east Africa the story was one of consistent failure, because of the lack of any German help. The Italian east African empire was effectively gone by April, 1941. In October, 1940 Mussolini also opened up a Balkan front, seeking to deny German hegemony in the area. Italy invaded Greece from Albania (conquered the previous year), but were promptly driven back into Albania, requiring the Germans to send help in April, 1941 to conquer both Yugoslavia and Greece as a prelude to their invasion of Russia. If these string of defeats in 1940 and 1941 were not bad enough, the British launched a surprise aerial attack on Taranto on November 11, 1940 and took three Italian battleships out of commission.[252]

In the immediately dire circumstances of Italy's war effort Marinetti spent much of his time doing propaganda work and keeping up morale. In January, 1941 Marinetti hosted *Aeropoesi e aerocanzoni di guerra* (*Aeropoems and Aerosongs of War*) at which a

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[250] Marinetti to Pavolini, October 18, 1940, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.
[251] Pavolini to Marinetti, October 23, 1940, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.
[252] For narratives of Italy's campaigns in World War II, see Giorgio Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella guerra fascista 1940-1943* (Bari: Laterza, 1969); Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (New York: Viking Press, 1976); and more generally Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

number of Futurists recited work that exalted war, and Marinetti specifically recited portions of his *Il Poema africano* which glorified the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, as Italian troops were desperately trying to hold on to that territory.[253] The following month he was again extolling the virtues of Italy's east African empire, but now he had to begin extolling the virtues of Italian troops in the Balkans to gloss over their reverses on that front.[254] By April, Marinetti had contracted with *La Rivista*, the illustrated version of *Il Popolo d'Italia*, to produce an article a month, with the editor of the paper informing him that the next issue "intends to especially exalt the heroic feats that our Armed Forces are accomplishing on all fronts, and the great effort of the Nation, in every sector, to sustain Italy's role in this conflict and to achieve, with inflexible will, complete victory."[255] In furtherance of bucking up Italian morale, Marinetti spoke at the *Casserma Mussolini* (Mussolini Barracks) in early April to an audience of Blackshirts. He delivered a rousing patriotic speech entitled "Adorare l'Italia" ("Adore Italy"). However, the speech was published and was meant for a wider audience. It specifically targeted women in the effort to maintain morale, and encouraged them to not share their hardships with their family members under arms.[256] Marinetti clearly recognized that the war was already going badly and Italians needed to be braced for the long road ahead.

It wasn't Marinetti alone who was engaged in propaganda work. He had made clear that all Futurists supported the war effort, and further proof of this effort was

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[253] "Aeropoesie e aerocanzoni di guerra," invitation for event on January 29, 1941, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.
[254] Ronchi to Marinetti, February 26, 1941, in GMC, Box 5, Folder 61: January-February, 1941 [Box 3, Folder 8]; Il Presidente, Istituto fascista dell'Africa italiano to Marinetti, February 2, 1941, in GMC, Box 5, Folder 61: January-February, 1941 [Box 3, Folder 8].
[255] Editor, *La Rivista Illustrata del 'Popolo d'Italia'* to Marinetti, April 5, 1941, in GMC, Box 5, Folder 62: March-September, 1941 [Box 3, Folder 8].
[256] "L'Accademico Marinetti parla alle CC.NN del Presidio di Roma," in *Il Lavoro Fascista*, April 10, 1941, found in GMC, Box 5, Folder 62: March-September, 1941 [Box 3, Folder 8].

available in May, 1941 when he presented three Futurists, Gaetano Pattarozzi, Geppo Tedeschi and Castrense Civello, to the Duce. Pattarozzi presented the Duce with his poem "Inghilterra fogna di passatismo," ("England: The Sewer of *Passatismo*"), which Mussolini especially liked, and a copy of Tedeschi's paper, *Mediterraneo futurista,* was also presented "as a testimony of their fervent and tenacious activity in the major cities of Italy for the exultation of our war. . . ."[257] Shortly thereafter the Ministry of Popular Culture began providing a monthly subsidy to *Mediterraneo futurista*.[258]

By the fall of 1941 the Italian war effort was taking its toll on Italians. Besides the humiliating reversals, and the increasing dependence on the German armed forces, the Italian economy was ill-equipped to handle a war that would cut it off from many overseas suppliers. Food, for instance, became increasingly scarce and costly, with rationing being imposed in October, 1941. However, shortages were dire before then, and even the Marinetti family resorted to hoarding food, which was duly confiscated by the local authorities in Rome.[259]

In response to these worsening circumstances, Marinetti delivered a high profile propaganda speech at the commemoration of Bruno Mussolini, who had died in an air accident in August. On September 30, at the *Teatro Comunale* of Barzanò, Marinetti announced, disingenuously, that "I am a poet, I don't have any political value, I have not come here to give you warnings about the war: I speak with the heart, as poets do, but as an Italian poet, thus clearly tied to the destiny of this adored peninsula which today, as

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[257] "Il Duce riceve Marinetti e i poeti futuristi," May 22, 1941, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.
[258] GMC, Box 5, Folder 62: March-September, 1941 [Box 3, Folder 10].
[259] March 3, 1941, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti. Interestingly, the hoarding was discovered because one of Marinetti's children revealed at school that one of their rooms in their house was off limits because it contained oil, flour and other things. The school president then reported the story to the head of the local *Fascio*.

you know, is completely embodied in our brilliant and victorious Duce Benito Mussolini." However, in spite of this preface, he then launched into an obvious propaganda speech. "We declare," he continued, "that everything that is done for the war is sacred, and that everyone must come together because victory will be real." "Everyone," he emphasized, "involved in Italy's great war effort must say to themselves: 'faith in Mussolini, away with criticisms, away with petty egoisms.'"[260]

Marinetti, and his followers, did well in their very public patriotism during increasingly difficult times. His patriotism, without doubt, was heartfelt, but it was to the regime's benefit that he had mobilized his movement to bolster public morale. The reward was in the varied subsidies that Marinetti was able to secure from the Ministry of Popular Culture for various Futurists and their journals throughout the war, and all at a time of increasing hardship for the regime.[261] Just as importantly, Marinetti began receiving subsidies, secretly, in May, 1941 of 15, 000 Lire a month which continued until Mussolini was overthrown in July, 1943. This was a significant amount of money, even without its added value during wartime.[262]

In addition to supporting the war effort, Marinetti muted any criticism of the regime's domestic policies during the war. This meant accepting the complete elimination of artistic freedom, even his own, as the Ministry of Popular Culture sought to use any and all means in furtherance of the war effort. For instance, Pavolini, the Minister of Popular Culture, ordered the sequestration of Marinetti's book *Come si*

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[260] F.T. Marinetti, "Celebrazione di Bruno Mussolini tenuta a Barzanò il 30 settembre 1941 XIX nel Teatro Comunale," September 30, 1941, in GMP, Box 1, Folder 37: Marinetti.
[261] The file ACS, MCP, B.190, f.Lista Marinetti, anni 1932-1942 contain a large number of telegrams confirming subsidies that were given to Futurists.
[262] The file ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f.509446 chronicles these monthly subsidies.

seducono le donne in 1941.[263] It is not clear why he did so. Possibly he found it offensive.[264] More likely, he did not want the regime to lose any further popular support by supporting such a controversial title written by an *Accademico*. The Political Police were still reporting that Marinetti was viewed by many as a buffoon, and this could only redound negatively to the regime.[265] There is no record that Marinetti protested this action either publicly or privately with the Minister.

Pavolini also curtailed Marinetti's radio addresses in 1941, as all they did was upset the public, reflected badly on the regime, and failed to have any propagandistic value. Marinetti protested this censorship, but privately, and in the end accepted Pavolini's decision. Since the early Thirties, these addresses had frequently acted as a means of trumpeting some new Futurist artist, or Futurist support for the Duce's policies, and often were simply a means for Marinetti to share his work with the largest possible audience. Marinetti had written that "Aero-poetry finds in the radio its natural vehicle."[266] However, the state agency in charge of the radio, *Ente Italiano Audizioni Radiofoniche* (EIAR), was not interested in giving Marinetti free reign on the airwaves, and the conflict periodically was played out publicly in the pages of *Futurismo,* with the EIAR being accused of *passatismo* in its programming. EIAR wanted to keep the airwaves available for programs that the majority of its listeners could comprehend.[267] EIAR never effectively limited Marinetti's use of the radio during the 1930s because of

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[263] Pavolini to Ministry of the Interior, all Prefects, the Rome police, the Ministry of National Education, the Foreign Ministry, and offices dealing with colonial matters, May 8, 1941, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446. The book had originally been published in 1917.
[264] Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 319.
[265] June 6, 1941, in ACS, MIN, DGPS, Divisione Polizia Politica, B. 60/a, f. Marinetti.
[266] F.T. Marinetti, "L'Aeropoesia-Manifesto futurista ai poeti e agli aviatori," in *Futurismo*, October 2, 1932, in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, v. 2, f. 1932.
[267] Mino Somenzi, "Spettacoli radiofonici futuristi," in *Futurismo*, January 1, 1933, in Caruso, ed., *Manifesti, proclami, interventi*, v. 2, f. 1933.

his standing as *Accademico* and, no doubt, closeness to the Duce. Mussolini was, in fact, informed of the perception of Marinetti's radio addresses as 'silly,' but never chose to reign him in.[268] In 1939, the Director-General of EIAR, Chiodelli, was finally exasperated with Marinetti's off-the-cuff performances that were never pre-approved and which did not have, he felt, any critical merit. Marinetti's addresses, he believed, were simply glorifications of artists that no one knew about. He thought it was time to limit Marinetti's broadcasts, and asked Luciano, the Head of Alfieri's cabinet for his advice (Alfieri was Minister of Popular Culture until October 31, 1939 when he was replaced with Pavolini). On Chiodelli's letter Luciano simply scribbled "Ma come si fa?" ("How is it to be done?"), and responded to Chiodelli that he would share his concerns with the *Accademico*.[269] Accordingly, Luciano informed Marinetti that he should bear in mind that his radio shows were meant to appeal to a large audience and not simply to propagandize about his painters.[270] Of course, there was no direct action to stop Marinetti from doing what he was doing.

This changed in 1941 when the war required that the radio be used efficiently to maintain public morale. Pavolini had much less patience than Alfieri did with Marinetti. In October the Director-General of EIAR again complained of Marinetti's behavior, this time directly to Minister Pavolini:

> As you know, the *Accademico* Marinetti hosts a monthly radio program that, essentially, he improvises, during which time he has only some small piece of paper. Afterwards he sends along the text, which, however, does not exactly reflect that which was transmitted.

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[268] Unsigned note to Mussolini, February 23, 1935, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.
[269] Direttore Generale, E.I.A.R. to Capo Gabinetto di S.E. Il Ministro della Cultura Popolare, October 5, 1939, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.
[270] Ministro della Cultura Popolare to Marinetti, no date, but likely just after October 5, 1939, in ACS, MCP, Gabineto, B.53, f.Marinetti.

> His last transmission outdid all the others, and I reservedly send to you the text so that you can judge it, keeping in mind naturally the way in which, if you can imagine, the text was read into the microphone by the author.

The broadcasts caused quite a stir, as, Chiodelli noted, "the central telephone line of EIAR is very busy during Marinetti's transmissions."[271] Pavolini immediately informed Mussolini of the EIAR's complaints, and highlighted that they felt the transmissions "provoked the most intense protests from numerous listeners." Pavolini believed that this was for the Duce "the opportunity to suspend these broadcasts by Marinetti."[272]

Even before informing Mussolini of Chiodelli's complaint he instructed EIAR to suspend Marinetti's broadcasts immediately and to await more detailed instructions.[273] Marinetti protested the order, but privately, and requested an appointment with Pavolini, writing "I await the order from your Ministry that will permit me to restart my impassioned and poetic declamations, at the hour most suitable for diffusion, which, as they are bound up with the exultation of the warrior spirit and the glorification of the Gold Medal Heroes of the Mussolinian war, are at this moment indispensable and irreplaceable."[274] However, this was to no avail. Pavolini was clear that the radio was for the masses, and they could not understand what purpose his talks served. Eventually, Pavolini relented, and allowed Marinetti to host one show a month, for ten minutes, where he could discuss "World Futurism" and read pro-war lyrics on the air. Marinetti silently accepted the drastic reduction on his own artistic freedom, and the Ministry's

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[271] Consigliere Delegato, Direttore Generale, EIAR to Pavolini, October 2, 1941, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti. Recordings of Marinetti's radio performances, specifically him reciting his poetry, are now widely available on the internet.
[272] MCP Ministro to Mussolini, October 8, 1941, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.
[273] Direttore Generale, E.I.A.R. to Pavolini, October 8, 1941, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti. This telegram refers to Pavolini's letter of October 7 to the EIAR.
[274] Marinetti to Pavolini, December 1, 1941, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.

overall policy of curtailing such freedoms in general, and resigned himself to his propaganda duties.[275]

Marinetti accepted the regime's increasingly repressive policies since his primary goal had always been to further his nationalist interests within Fascism. He had subsumed all other interests to this end, and now Italy found itself in a war that it was simply losing. By this point, late 1941, the Nazi invasion of Russia had also bogged down. Even the seemingly invulnerable Axis ally was now hitting up against a wall. Marinetti, like Italy, was in it to the end. Any pretence that he could somehow influence Fascism away from complete totalitarian oppression was gone. All that was left was the war effort, and survival. And so, Marinetti's propaganda and morale boosting activities went on.

In early 1942 he gave a series of speeches to solders and civilians alike. In February he spoke with the 18th Turin Infantry Regiment.[276] Within a few days he spoke with two groups of artists and assured Mussolini that they "reaffirm their devotion to your military, political genius and to the indispensable victory of our Mussolinian war."[277] During 1942 Marinetti also published a number of works which were as propagandistic as his *Poema africano della Divisione "28 Ottobre,"* that had glorified Italy's Ethiopian War. On April 8 he hosted a discussion at the *Accademia* wherein he recited his *La poesia sublime dell'Esercito italiano* (*The Sublime Poetry of the Italian Army*), which he then subsequently published in *Il Giornale d'Italia* (April 10), and then

[275] Pavolini to Marinetti, December 7, 1941, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti; Marinetti to Pavolini, December 11, 1941, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti; Pavolini to Direttore Generale dell E.I.A.R., Chiodelli, December 14, 1941, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti.
[276] Antonelli to Marinetti, February 2, 1942, in GMC, Box 5, Folder 65: January-April, 1942 [Box 3, Folder 12].
[277] The quote refers to the first meeting, and is found in Marinetti to Mussolini, c. February 15, 1942, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.53, f.Marinetti. The second meeting is recounted in Marinetti to Mussolini, March 21, 1942, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

in the house journal of the Fascist Syndicate of Authors and Writers, *Autori e Scrittori* (June, 1942).[278] In May he published *Canto eroi e macchine della guerra mussoliniana* (*Song for the Heroes and Machines of the Mussolinian War*), a collection of poems that had originally appeared throughout 1941 in newspapers paying tribute to members of every branch of the armed services who had died in battle.[279]

In early June Marinetti requested an appointment with Mussolini at which he took the next logical step in his support for the war effort, and requested that he be allowed to fight on the Russian front. Roughly 60,000 Italian troops were on the Russian front in 1941, but in June, 1942 Mussolini upped that number to 200,000. Marinetti was part of this new crop of soldiers, and he served with the Militia division *Camicie Nere "23 Marzo"*, with the rank of "Primo Seniore" from July 15 onward—at 66 years of age, thinned and weakened from recent struggles with his ulcer.[280] At the end of July he left for Russia, and rendezvoused with his unit at Kantamirovka, in southern Russia, west of Stalingrad, on the Don River. The only major action Marinetti saw was as an observer of the Italian counterattack of the Russians on September 12, who had crossed the Don and occupied Sviniuca. It was a successful counterattack, with the Russians retreating. However, with the cold weather setting in, Marinetti became ill yet again and was sent

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[278] F.T. Marinetti, *La poesia sublime dell'esercito italiano: discorso tenuto 1'8 aprile 1942-XX alla Reale accademia d'Italia* (Rome: Reale accademia d'Italia, 1942); Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia*, 94.

[279] Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia*, 93. The full title is *Canto eroi e macchine della guerra mussoliniana. Aeropoema simultaneo in parole in libertà futuriste alla gloria di Savarè Borsini Ciaravaolo Visintini Pepe Bellotti Morgagni Balbo Bruno Mussolini Pagliarini e dei gondarini carabinieri di Culquabert.*

[280] June 11, 1942, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

home.[281] Just as well, in the next few months Axis forces would have to retreat from the area of Stalingrad as the Russians triumphed at that city's battle.

As the Axis war effort crumbled, being pushed back in Russia and North Africa, Marinetti held on ever tighter to the Fascist regime he had worked so hard to associate himself with. In early January, 1943 Marinetti hosted a discussion in the *Accademia* at which he discussed the "Heroism of the *Camicie nere* at Sviniuca on the Don," which was subsequently published in the March edition of *Autori e Scrittori*.[282] In May, Marinetti came out with another propaganda publication, *Lo riprenderemo* (*We Will Retake Them*), referring to the recent Axis losses, which was immediately translated into German.[283]

Mussolini, it would seem, similarly held on tight to his dwindling allies. In February, after years of lobbying, and as a reward for his war-time efforts, Marinetti finally got Mussolini to recognize Futurism as a near-official state art. Mussolini authorized the *Accademia* to create two prizes of 50,000 Lire each, one for architecture named for the Futurist Sant'Elia, and one for painting named for the Futurist Boccioni, with Marinetti heading the awards commission. Mussolini also approved a *Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Futurista* (National Gallery of Futurist Art).[284]

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[281] Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 321. The Italian exploits on the Russian front are briefly chronicled by Giorgio Bocca in his *Storia d'Italia nella guerra fascista 1940-1943*, 514-531.
[282] Reale Accademia d'Italia Invitation, January, 1943, in ACS, MCP, Gabinetto, B.46, f.279; Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia*, 95.
[283] Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: Bibliografia*, 95.
[284] GMC, Box, 5, Folder 69: January, 1943 [Box 3, Folder 17]. These awards and the gallery were first mentioned by Marinetti while on the Russian front. Thus, Mussolini had immediately rewarded Marinetti for his service, as well as funded Futurist art that was plainly, and clearly, pro-war. See: Emilio Buccafusca, " 'Col Foturista [sic] Marinetti in un villagio cosacco,' 1942," September, 1942, in GMP, Box 9, Folder 20: Buccafusca, Emilio, 1942 (for the awards); Marinetti to Di Marzio, no date, but Oct/Nov, 1942, in ACS, Carte Di Marzio, B.70, f.Marinetti (for the gallery).

In March, Marinetti was invited to sit on a committee of the *Istituto dei 'Panorami di realizzazioni del fascismo' per la pubblicazione di opere sulla Rivoluzione fascista*, (Institute of the "Panoramas of Fascist Accomplishments" for the Publication of Works on the Fascist Revolution), chaired by Bottai.[285] By this point, if the regime had to make clear what its accomplishments were, then clearly Fascism was in trouble. And it was. Northern Italy was raked by allied bombing throughout 1942. Italians faced shortages of heating fuel, shoes, soap, coffee, and gasoline. Basic food stuffs were rationed and left most Italians with a bare 1000 calories a day. By December, 1942 public morale had "collapsed." No clearer sign of the regime's lost legitimacy was needed than the industrial strikes of March, 1943, which started in Turin and then spread through Piedmont, Lombardy, the Veneto and Emilia, and were thus "the first mass protest demonstrations in Axis Europe. . . ."[286]

And yet Marinetti was firm in his support of the Duce and his war effort, and never wavered in reminding people how much the Futurists had done for it. In April, 1943, Marinetti read an article by Tito Silvio Mursino in *Il Messagero* entitled "La 'settima sintonia'" in which Mursino had commented that artists had to get more involved in the war effort, and then had heard that Pavolini had commented favorably on it. This was enough to motivate Marinetti to write a public letter to Pavolini in which he agreed that artists should be more involved, but then chastised Pavolini for forgetting the years of Futurist support for all Fascist wars. Thus, at a time when Axis forces were retreating in Eastern Europe, and were just about pushed out of North Africa, Marinetti

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[285] Di Giacomo to Marinetti, March 25, 1943, in YMP, Box 10, Folder 422: Giacomo di Giacomo.
[286] Clark, *Modern Italy*, 289. For a detailed narrative of the labor revolt in the war, see Paolo Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano*, Volume 4, *La fine del fascismo, dalla riscossa operaia alla lotta armata*, 2nd edition (Turin: Einaudi, 1973).

had no qualms with highlighting his *Canto eroi e machine della guerra mussoliniana,* his *Lo riprenderemo*, his service in Africa (and the poem that resulted from it), his service in Russia (and the poem that resulted from it) and the "300 [Futurist] declamations of war poetry and aero-paintings of war."[287]

In May, 1943 the Allies cleared all Axis forces from North Africa. On July10 Sicily was invaded, and half the island occupied within a week by Anglo-American forces. On July 19 Rome was bombed for two hours. Public support for the war had disappeared everywhere. The end was near for Mussolini. The leading Fascists on the Grand Council called for a meeting with the Duce, which was granted for the evening of July 24. At this meeting, after hours of stormy debate, the Council voted to strip Mussolini of his executive authority and role as commander-in-chief. The next afternoon Mussolini visited the king, was dismissed, and was arrested.[288] In these closing hours of Mussolini's life as the Duce, when even his son-in-law Galeazzo Ciano turned on him at the Grand Council, Marinetti stuck by him, sending him a telegram on July 19, the day of the Rome bombing, declaring that

> Futurist groups, adorers of the *Patria*, . . . while our heroic soldiers refuse our adored land to an enemy that can only boast of a superiority in numbers and gold, reaffirm the original, indestructible superiority and creativity of Italy's war in accordance with our allies Germany and Japan. All Futurists, the journals *Mediterraneo Futurista* and *Fede in Mussolini,* insistently call on me to reaffirm their metallic faith in Benito Mussolini, the incarnation of the immortal *Patria*.[289]

Matters progressed quickly thereafter for Italy, Marinetti and Mussolini. Allied forces invaded the mainland in Calabria on September 3, and on September 9 Allied

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[287] Marinetti to Angelo Rognoni, April 17, 1943, in Getty Research Center, Letters to Angelo Rognoni and one of his manuscripts, 1914-1957, accession #850150, Box 2, Folder 4: Marinetti and Benedetta, 1916-1946.
[288] Clark, *Mussolini*, 289-292.
[289] Marinetti et al. to Mussolini, July 22, 1943, in ACS, SPD, "Marinetti, F.T.," f. 509446.

forces took Taranto. Both of these landings were a diversion for the main landing at Salerno on September 9. General Badoglio, the effective leader of Italy now, had been negotiating an armistice with the Allies though August, and it was finally announced on September 8. Italian troops laid down their arms, but the Germans had expected this and had quickly poured troops into Italy to occupy the country and disarm their former Italian allies. On September 12 Hitler had Mussolini rescued from his Abruzzi prison, and immediately set up as puppet leader of the German dominated Salò Republic in northern Italy. Over the next year and a half southern Italy was the battleground between the Allies and determined German troops, and northern Italy was the scene of an Italian civil war as the Italian Resistance and Fascists engaged in a brutal conflict over the remains of Fascist Italy.[290]

Marinetti, in the face of Fascism's collapse in the south, did the only thing he could do: he followed Mussolini north. A few short weeks after Mussolini had been rescued and set up in Salò, Marinetti established himself in Venice and wrote the following to Mussolini:

> Dear Mussolini
> My cardiac condition (a degenerative pulmonary edema) that I contracted in four months of war on the Russian front has withstood until now the lacerating pain of seeing the assassination of Italy, you, and Fascism, and even my tenacious will for Futurist poetry.
> But I no longer have the strength to walk and eventually return to the battlefields.
> I quickly—though vainly—expressed my desire to meet with you and speak with you for a half-hour, and I hope you will arrange it.
> I embrace you with my long-standing affection.
> F.T. Marinetti.[291]

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[290] For a recent treatment of the war in Italy, see Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944* (New York: Henry Holt, 2007), and James Holland, *Italy's Sorrow: A Year of War, 1944-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008).

[291] Marinetti to Mussolini, October 18, 1943, in ACS, SPD, CR, R.S.I., B.16, f.80 (Marinetti), and YMP, Box 1, Folder 10: Benito Mussolini.

Marinetti would live out his remaining months in the north in the service of Salò. It would be tempting to argue that Marinetti followed Mussolini north because in Salò he found the resurrected *dicianovismo* that he claimed he had been trying to unleash in Fascism through the 1920s and 1930s. Certainly this would have played a part in his decision to follow Mussolini. Salò had declared itself a republic, and plans were laid for the socialization of northern industries, wherein workers would be part of the management of their industries (though this was more rhetoric than fact).[292] This had the ring of the Futurist and Fascist political programs of 1919. However, the socialization plans were worked out at the Verona Fascist Congress of November, 1944, and Marinetti had long since established himself in the north by that point. It is unlikely he did so simply because Salò had declared itself a republic. It is much more likely that, having made himself the premier Fascist, he had no option but to follow the regime where it went, and then to try and preserve whatever was left of it.

Marinetti did not lessen his connection to and support of Mussolini in Salò, and still took the effort to reproach anyone who failed to publicly note his contributions to Fascism over the years. Such was the case in February, 1944 when Giovanni Amicucci lamented the lack of support for the war by the intellectuals in his article "Gli intellettuali e la guerra" ("The Intellectuals and the War"). Marinetti publicly chastised him for not accounting for all of his own contributions, and thus dismissed the article as "not having any relationship to the truth," and felt this line of argument was simply turning Italians on

[292] On Salò see Mario Ragionieri, *Salò e l'Italia nella guerra civile* (Florence: Ibiskos, 2005); Aurelio Lepre, *La storia della repubblica di Mussolini: Salò: il tempo dell'odio e della violenza* (Milan: Mondadori, 1999); Luigi Ganapini, *La repubblica delle camicie nere: i combattenti, i politici, gli amministratori, i socializzatori,* 2nd edition (Milan: Garzanti, 1999).

each other to their enemies' benefit.[293] Marinetti then forwarded the letter to Mussolini.[294]

Marinetti was, even in his weakened state, an important propagandist for the Ministry of Popular Culture in Salò. In March, 1944 the Minister Fernando Mezzasoma contacted Marinetti and asked him to work as a consultant for the Ministry, "on the most important cultural and artistic questions." "This consultantship," he explained, "would require you giving to my Ministry your precious and illuminated judgment on the problems of cultural and artistic order. . . ."[295] However, what order meant to Mezzasoma was the complete quashing of all dissent in the media and the arts, as well as a purging of all anti-Fascists. Thus, Marinetti's duties for the Ministry of Popular Culture in Salò, just as his duties for the Ministry prior to Salò, would remain strictly at the level of propaganda.[296] His aid was requested because he had proven his loyalty, and would not make trouble for the Republic. There would be no mixture of liberty and order, no freedom for the artist/intellectual—no *dicianovismo*—in Salò.

Marinetti's pro-war publications, though slackening in these years, did not cease. In March, 1944 he published a small anthology entitled *Futuristi in armi* (*Futurists in Arms*), and in May published *L'Aeropoema di Cozzarini primo eroe dell'esercito repubblicano* (*Aeropoem for Cozzarini, First Hero of the Republican Army*). Rino Cozzarini had died in November, 1943 defending the Falciano-Mondragone line north of Naples. The publisher of *L'Aeropoema di Cozzarini*, incidentally, ERRE or

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[293] Marinetti to Amicucci, February 24, 1944, in ACS, SPD, CR, R.S.I., B.16, f.80 (Marinetti). Also in GMP, Box 2, Folder 22: Marinetti, 1944.
[294] Marinetti to Mussolini, February 26, 1944, in ACS, SPD, CR, R.S.I., B.16, f.80 (Marinetti).
[295] MCP, Ministro to Marinetti, March 3, 1944, in YMP, Box 12, Folder 597: Ministro della Cultura Popolare.
[296] On Mezzasoma, see Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 325.

'Repubblica,' was subsidized by the Ministry of Popular Culture.[297] The editor of the *Gazzetta del Popolo* also requested that Marinetti write an article entitled "Intellettuali e la guerra" ("Intellectuals and the War"), which was needed, since, as the editor wrote, "in this moment of confusion and desertion, Marinetti must be heard."[298] Marinetti took up the offer, and then extolled his creative engagement with the war in a letter to Mussolini, when other artists, he pointed out, lamented their withering faculties in such troubled times.[299] In fact, 1944 was an incredibly creative year for Marinetti. In addition to the articles he produced for *La Gazzetta del Popolo*, Marinetti also worked on his memoirs *La grande Milano tradizonale e futurista, Una sensibilità italiana nata in Egitto* (*The Great Traditional and Futurist Milan, An Italian Sensibility Born in Egypt*), amongst other works.[300]

However, in writing his memoirs Marinetti must have sensed the end was near. His health failed to improve, his money was running out, and on June 4, 1944 the Allies captured Rome and kept pushing north. Marinetti and his family were forced to leave Venice, and he hoped to escape to Switzerland if he could secure a right of entry from the Swiss. This never arrived in time. After months of moving westward, the Marinetti family finally settled on the coast of Lake Como at Bellagio, at the Hotel Splendido,

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[297] F.T. Marinetti, *L'aeropoema di Cozzarini, primo eroe dell'esercito repubblicano* (Salò: Edizioni Erre, 1944); Cammarota, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti*, 96.
[298] March 31, 1944, GMC, Box 5, Folder 76: 1944 [Box 3, Folder 23].
[299] Marinetti to Mussolini, April 29, 1944, in ACS, SPD, CR, R.S.I., B.16, f.80 (Marinetti). Marinetti referred to an article by Dino Buzzati in the *Corriere della Sera* entitled "Miniera stanca," which made the point of the suffering artists, in his letter to Mussolini. Marinetti noted his writings in the *Gazzetta del Popolo* in an October/November letter to Mezzasoma requesting financial aid, as his *Gazzetta* writings were not covering his needs. See: Marinetti to Mezzasoma, October or November, 1944, in YMP, Box 6, Folder 64: Mezzasoma, Fernando [1944 Oct or Nov].
[300] F.T. Marinetti, *La grande Milano tradizionale e futurista, Una sensibilità italiana nata in Egitto*, edited by Luciano De Maria (Milan: Mondadori, 1969).

where, at dawn on December 2, Marinetti succumbed to a heart attack and died.[301] Mussolini, loyal to a friend who had remained loyal to him, followed up the private family funeral with a state funeral in Milan on December 5 at St. Sepolcro Church, across the piazza from where Fascism had been founded. A few days later Benedetta wrote to him:

> Mussolini, I felt your pain close to my pain.
> Thank you for the honors shown to the soldier-poet Marinetti.
> Perhaps he left us to better protect Italy.
>
> Benedetta
> Milan, December 9, 1944.[302]

Mussolini would be dead in five months, shot by communist partisans; Fascism and the war in Italy was finally over.

If communist partisans had captured Marinetti he would have suffered the same fate. Marinetti's identification with the regime was undeniable. He had worked tirelessly to advance his nationalist objectives through Fascism. Futurist artwork paralleled and advanced the Duce's military and Vatican policies. Futurist manifestoes advanced the regime's autarchic policies as a prelude to imperial war. Marinetti was an indefatigable Fascist emissary as he traveled throughout Africa and Europe and sought to increase Fascist influence abroad. And when Italy went to war with Ethiopia, Marinetti was instrumental in preparing Italians for the war, recruiting for it, fighting in it, glorifying it after the fact, and defending it internationally. Yet, despite all of these efforts, though they would have earned him a bullet from the Resistance, Marinetti actually witnessed the gradual disintegration of his authority within the regime. To one time allies, both at home and abroad, he was too Fascist, and had abandoned his radicalism to further the

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[301] Salaris, *Marinetti: Arte e vita futurista*, 331-332.
[302] Benedetta Marinetti to Mussolini, December 9, 1944, in ACS, SPD, CR, R.S.I., B.16, f.80 (Marinetti).

regime. To the Fascist conservatives and anti-modernists at home, he was not Fascist enough. In his weakened and isolated position Marinetti was unable to withstand the attacks on modern art and cultural freedoms which were launched in the lead up to World War II. As a consequence of his weakness, he defended modern art by accepting the anti-Semitic premise of the anti-modernist attacks, and simply argued that modern art was not Jewish. Thus, he facilitated the persecution of Italy's Jews. When the war came, his compromises with the regime were complete. He abandoned every semblance of his once radical self, and committed himself to the nationalist objective of winning the war. He accepted Italy's reactionary German ally and swallowed the regime's censorship policies. He threw himself into propaganda work, fought in the war, and followed the Duce and Fascism to the end.

Conclusion

It seemed inevitable that Marinetti should end his life as he did, a political refugee in his own country. His commitment to Fascism was complete, and when Mussolini was toppled Marinetti had no other option but to follow him, and Fascism, to the end. But how did it come to this? How could a man who continues to be viewed as primarily a 'radical' come to his end as a renegade Fascist, just a few steps ahead of communist partisans who would have surely strung him up next to his Duce if they could?

As this dissertation has argued, Marinetti's politics always had both radical and nationalist components, but throughout his life Marinetti consistently privileged his nationalist goals and compromised his radical ones. Marinetti's politics were the product of a variety of political influences which were fundamentally contradictory. He sought to unleash the revolutionary potential of the individual liberated from all forms of oppression, be it social, political, cultural or economic; but, he also sought to channel this revolutionary individualism into nationalist causes, which perforce required such individualism to be circumscribed to the national interest.

Marinetti never resolved how he could bring together the expansion of individual liberties with the pursuance of national interests into a workable politics. Instead, compromises had to be made to his varied political goals in order to achieve at least some of them, and throughout his life Marinetti chose his nationalist goals over his radical ones.

From 1909-1911 Marinetti sought to build a revolutionary nationalist movement by attempting to recruit from the revolutionary left in Italy. He promised them a program of anti-clericalism, republicanism, libertarianism, the defense of workers' rights, and

embraced their call for a violent end to parliamentary democracy in Italy. However, he simultaneously pursued the nationalist agenda of conquering Italy's remaining *terra irredenta*, and called for war as the 'world's only hygiene'. Specifically, war was to be the means to both achieve nationalist ends and to revolutionize Italian politics and society. The left never accepted such an argument, and few joined the Futurist movement. When Italy entered the Libyan in 1911 Marinetti gave up on trying to pursue both radical and nationalist goals, and unambiguously promoted the expansion of Italy's colonial empire. He claimed that all liberties had to be sacrificed to the national interest. Marinetti continued on this resolutely nationalist path through the Great War, and never advocated for any radical goals.

It was only in the final year of the war that Marinetti resurrected his radicalism, but then only because he believed they could be reconciled with his desire for a strong and unified nation. He believed the war had fulfilled Futurism's promise that a national struggle would unleash the revolutionary potential of the Italian people, but also create a true national consciousness that would channel this energy into nationalist interests. The Arditi were the prime exemplars of this revolutionary nationalism, but Marinetti saw the same collective effort on behalf of the nation throughout the military and amongst the Italian population on the home front. Thus, when Marinetti transformed Futurism into a formal political party, the Futurist Political Party, its manifesto offered a wide-ranging set of radical goals which would have drastically expanded individual liberties in Italy, including universal suffrage, the abolition of traditional marriage, the defense of workers' rights, and land sequestrations and redistribution to the poor. Italy was to be a thoroughly libertarian society without a king, Pope, or repressive state. Marinetti believed Italians

had shown themselves patriotic enough to be given such liberties since, as they had done in the war, when called upon to sacrifice individual liberties for the national interest they had done so.

The manifesto of the Futurist Political Party was the political vision Marinetti sought to put into practice in the turbulent post-war years of 1918-1920, but it was based on a mistaken assumption. Although the war had unleashed a patriotic fervor that bound Italians together more than ever before, it had also radicalized the working classes and the Italian Socialist Party. Thus, Marinetti sought to implement a politics that advanced both radical and nationalist goals when Italy had become polarized on just these lines. Consequently, Marinetti's political experiences in this period were a string of failures. He attempted to meet his radical and nationalist goals in the *Fasci di combattimento*, but the Fascists were only adept at pursuing a nationalist agenda of crushing socialist insurgency at home and defending Italian territorial interests in the Adriatic. Mussolini had no interest in advancing Marinetti's radical political goals, specifically the defense of workers' right to strike for economic ends, as well as the abolition of the monarchy and the expulsion of the Vatican. After failing to find a revolutionary alternative to Mussolini in D'Annunzio, and the Fascists complete failure in the November, 1919 elections, and Mussolini's resolutely reactionary turn after those elections, Marinetti abandoned Fascism. He was determined to find a way to advance both his radical and nationalist goals.

Yet, from 1920 to 1922 Marinetti was in the political wilderness. He had no means to influence Italy's political development, but he had all the same concerns as before, specifically the fear of a socialist insurgency, and the weakness of the Liberal

state to resist it and simultaneously advance Italian interests abroad. During that time Mussolini emerged as the 'savior' of Italy, crushing socialist insurgency and labor militancy, and promising a stronger Italy at home so that it could project its influence abroad. When Mussolini took power in 1922, Marinetti made the first of his many compromises in his relationship with Fascism and re-joined the Party.

He claimed he would advance a radical agenda reminiscent of *dicianovista* Fascism while he supported Mussolini's quest to impose order at home and expand Italian influence abroad. Yet, in re-joining Fascism for primarily nationalist ends, Marinetti recognized he would have to compromise his radical goals. He protested Mussolini's accommodations with the monarchy and the Church, he insisted workers had a right to strike for purely economic ends, and still sought a more libertarian state, but he never seriously challenged Mussolini's leadership. The only radical goal he actively sought was state support in the promotion of modern Italian art. However, this was not a controversial move. Marinetti's goal was to advance modern art for its own sake, but also as a means of expanding Italian cultural influence abroad—goals which Mussolini fully supported. When Mussolini faced the most serious challenge to his authority in the Matteotti Crisis, from within his party and the country at large, Marinetti ceased all criticisms of the regime, and then welcomed the imposition of the dictatorship as a means to bring order back to Italy.

The defining characteristic of Marinetti's time under the dictatorship was the consistent compromise of his radical goals in order to promote nationalist interests. In the early years of the dictatorship, 1925-1929, Marinetti's contribution to the 'building of the dictatorship' were extensive. He promoted Fascism assiduously in the South Tyrol,

France, South America, and Spain, bringing legitimacy to the regime, and solidifying ties to fascists abroad and to Italy's emigrant communities, even at the cost of his reputation as a 'radical'. He accepted the imposition of the dictatorship as a means of bringing stability to Italy, and thus abandoned his belief in a libertarian state and society. He fully supported Mussolini's cultural policies, as they would develop Italian culture, involve artists and intellectuals in the advancement of national interests, and expand Italy's cultural influence world-wide. However, in welcoming the state into the cultural arena, he accepted the premise that complete cultural autonomy was to be done away with, and that the state had the right to censor what it perceived as anti-Fascist. Marinetti believed that all serious artists and intellectuals were also nationalists, and thus Fascists, and free from censorship worries. Yet, his activities in this period facilitated the eventual elimination of all creative autonomy, even for Fascist artists and intellectuals, when the state required straight-forward propaganda from them. Marinetti agreed to the imposition of the corporative state as a means of harnessing Italy's productive capacities, and thus abandoned his belief that workers had the right to strike for economic purposes. He accepted Mussolini's Lateran Accords, and consequently buried his anti-clericalism. For all his help in the formative period of the dictatorship, and specifically for his loyalty and muted criticism of the regime, Marinetti was elevated to the Fascist elite with his nomination to the *Accademia*, which necessitated another compromise, Marinetti's abandonment of his republicanism. The only radical goal Marinetti promoted in these early years of the dictatorship was his defense of modern art against Fascist conservatives and anti-modernists. However, even in this area there was compromise. Marinetti abandoned his once vitriolic attacks on *passatisti* artists, and decided to work with them

in state-funded initiatives to promote *all* Italian art in the interest of national advancement.

Once the dictatorship was secure, Mussolini sought to expand Italian influence abroad, and Marinetti was involved in every aspect of this policy. To solidify domestic order as a prelude to international adventures, Marinetti promoted *Arte sacra*, which furthered Mussolini's goal of securing Catholic loyalty without increasing Vatican autonomy. Marinetti's *Aeropittura* and *Aeropoesia*, as well as all the other *aero*-prefixed arts, were meant to further Mussolini's goal of building a militarist consciousness in the Italian people. Marinetti's Futurists were prominent in a variety of colonial exhibitions to further Mussolini's goal of building a colonial consciousness as well. Marinetti's initiatives in Futurist cooking and fashion, as well as the *Naturismo* movement, were all meant to further Mussolini's drive for economic and cultural autarchy in preparation for imperial war. Marinetti also traveled extensively to North Africa and Eastern Europe, areas Mussolini sought to increase Italian influence, and promoted Fascism there. When Italy finally embarked on the Ethiopian War, Marinetti was active in its promotion and in recruiting for it. He worked to meliorate the sanctions France and Britain imposed on Italy as a consequence of the war, fought in the war, and then glorified it in print and performances.

For all of these efforts Marinetti expected he would continue in his duties as the 'radical' Fascist who, as in the period 1925-1929, defended modern art and resisted the degeneration of the Fascist dictatorship into complete, reactionary conservativism. However, this was a mistaken assumption. His extensive efforts to link himself to Mussolini, and Futurism to Fascism, had the obverse effect of weakening him. He lost

the support of Futurists, the youth, students, and the international intellectual community for being too Fascist, and for having abandoned his radicalism. To Fascist conservatives and anti-modernists, he was viewed as not Fascist enough. His behavior and artistic initiatives, they believed, were an embarrassment to the regime. His defense of modern art and claims that Fascism was quintessentially modern and revolutionary clashed with their depiction of Fascism that was distinctly anti-modern, as they associated modernism with Bolshevism and internationalism, and considered it too 'Jewish.' As Italy grew closer to Nazi Germany in the late Thirties, a new culture war erupted and Marinetti once again defended modern art as he had in the late Twenties. But, recognizing his weakened position, he accepted the anti-Semitic premise of the anti-modernist attacks and simply tried to argue modern art was free of Jews, thus perpetuating their persecution at the time. He also tried to speak out against the dangers of allying with Nazi Germany and the reactionary influence it was having on Italian Fascism. Yet, as war was on the horizon, once the state determined that his defense of modern art was too disruptive of public order, Marinetti ceased his criticism of the regime's cultural evolution. Once the war began, Marinetti abandoned all efforts on behalf of artistic freedoms, and resigned himself to doing the propaganda work the state required of him. And, once the war began, Marinetti dropped his opposition to the Nazi alliance. Marinetti's nationalist impulses completely triumphed over what was left of his radical sensibilities. He fought in the war and followed Mussolini until the end.

For too long historians of Marinetti's politics have struggled with the question of whether Marinetti was a radical or a nationalist. An emphasis on either of these aspects of his politics has led to contradictory and not altogether satisfying interpretations.

Marinetti was both a nationalist and a radical, but always a nationalist first. As I've shown in this dissertation, throughout his life Marinetti consistently tried to advance both radical and nationalist goals that would simultaneously unleash the revolutionary potential of the liberated individual and then harness this energy for national advancement. What was fundamentally incompatible at the intellectual level, proved impossible to implement at the level of real-world politics, and compromises were always made to the radical goals.

In spite of Marinetti's contributions to the advancement of modern art with the creation of Futurism, I believe it is time to hold him equally responsible for Italy's descent into the Fascist dictatorship. No more can we depict Marinetti as a political and cultural radical up to 1920, and then as having abandoned politics under Fascism in order to continue promoting modern art. Marinetti was politically engaged his entire life, and Marinetti's contributions to Fascism were not a break in his political evolution. Marinetti was primarily a nationalist, always ready to compromise radical goals when national interests required him to. This was true in the Liberal era, and it was true in the Fascist era. Fascism was not a break or aberration in Marinetti's politics. Fascism was the result of his politics.

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