1/ Policies

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1.2 / Totalitarian Art Policy

/1 PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL CONTROL

/1.1 STATE AND PARTY MANAGEMENT

/1.1.1 POLICY STRUCTURES

The political systems of the three foremost totalitarian states of Europe operated on the claims advanced by parties with a monopoly on political authority to act on an unaccountable mandate from the people, over and above any representative institutions. Rather than enacting their underlying societies' political will, they strove to subsume them under a 'total state.' Through an increasingly straightforward subordination to state government in Italy and Germany, and to the governing party in the Soviet Union, these regimes construed their populations as virtually homogeneous bodies. Ignoring the social and political divisions reflected in the multi-party government systems they replaced, they claimed a legitimacy flowing from the people as a whole. To demonstrate such a legitimacy without political representation, totalitarian governments fashioned multiple ceremonial, symbolical, and aesthetic venues for mobilizing, manipulating, or coercing their underlying populations into mass manifestations of political assent, overruling class distinctions and perverting submission into the semblance of political will.

Thus, different from autocracy or despotism, totalitarian rule rested on a fiction of popular government. It was internationally promoted as an alternative to democracy in heeding the will of the people. Scholars who construe totalitarianism and democracy as exclusionary opposites tend to underrate the majority support that gave totalitarian regimes their international appeal. All three totalitarian regimes responded to the Depression by an enforced, accelerated coordination of disparate social groups and interests previously engaged in competitive or conflictive relations. These were now organizationally aligned with one another so that they would work toward far-reaching economic and social conditions, suppressing their disparities. This political mobilization of working societies impressed politicians and observers from Western European states, who found it hard to pool the political will of their antagonistic societies to overcome the economic crisis wrought by the Depression within the parameters of democratic politics. In comparison to totalitarian governance, democracy looked indecisive and unstable.

The term 'totalitarian' started out as an argumentative self-designation of the fascist system in Italy alone, derived from the concept of the 'total state.' Starting around 1932, it tended to be widened into a comparative or polemical catchword for characterizing first the political systems of Fascism and National Socialism, and later that of Bolshevism, in their shared antagonism vis-à-vis democracy. From then to now, the categorical expansion of the term developed in four stages: first, the ideological self-description of Italian Fascism; second, the transfer of the term onto systemic comparisons between Fascism, National Socialism, Bolshevism, and Democracy; third, the conceptual abstraction of a structural model in political science; and fourth, the debate about its historical applicability. During the last of these four stages the term has been undergoing a steady historical as well as conceptual differentiation. From a label of reciprocal reproach, it has turned into a critical yardstick of revisionist scholarship. As a result, it can no longer serve to exhaustively characterize any one of the three regimes. The distinct histories of their art confirms this state of affairs.

/1.1.2 TOTALITARIAN ARTISTIC CULTURE

During the first four years of the Depression, when the totalitarian regimes of Italy and the Soviet Union, and later that of Germany, took decisive measures to tighten their grip on society, they devised new art policies designed to fashion an artistic culture made-to-measure by maximizing political intervention in the arts. At this point in time, starting from 1929, totalitarian art policies took shape. In Italy, the elections of March 24, 1929, restructured the Chamber of Deputies on a corporative model, included artists, and brought Giuseppe Bottai into the government as Minister of Corporations. In the Soviet Union, the 16th Party Conference of April 1929, devoted to adjustments of the Five-Year Plan, called on artists to be enlisted for that task. Four years later, when Germany became a totalitarian state almost overnight, it took Hitler's government just six months to reach a similar position. In March 1933, Hitler created a new Propaganda Ministry under Joseph Goebbels, who in September set up the Reich Chamber of Art for compulsory membership. This enabled the government to reorganize the artistic professions.

Totalitarian artistic cultures intended to contribute to the political homogenization of their underlying societies by placing the economic working conditions and social functions of art under political control. They endeavored to anchor the artistic professions in the politically regulated social fabric and to make them function on the premise of social cohesion. Art politicians and art administrations of all three regimes saw it as their task to refashion artistic practice to be economically viable within a streamlined social environment, as opposed to its previous precarious standing, which had exasperated the contest between traditional and modern art to the point of becoming

politically disruptive. They achieved this by taking modern art out of competition. Their efforts entailed a reorganization of the art market according to ostensibly egalitarian, corporative principles; state-directed public works programs for constructing monumental government and party buildings; and personnel changes in state art schools in order to groom artists for providing their respective regimes with a symbolic and aesthetic self-representation.

A fundamental difference in art policy between Italy and Germany on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other pertains to the relationship between state and party. While oversight of the arts in Italy and Germany fell to state ministries at the expense of party agencies, in the Soviet Union, starting in 1928, it was the reverse, prompting a more thorough ideological alignment. The Fascist and the National Socialist Parties, despite recurrent efforts at influencing government art policy, were eventually reduced to shaping and voicing ideological tenets with little impact on state governance. The Bolshevik Party, by contrast, whose central committee sections mirrored government commissariats, started to extend its mission of turning ideology into policy of the arts. This difference matched the different economic policies devised to cope with the Depression. While in Italy and Germany economic policy was limited to state allocations of capitalist production and state funding of job-creating public works, in the Soviet Union the government forcibly appropriated most, if not all, economic activity to run it on policies conceived by the Party.

/1.1.3 CHRONOLOGY

Totalitarian art policies were devised to replace the equitable political art management—professed, if not consistently enacted, by democratic governments—, with partisan guidance. While in Russia and Italy the change from one to the other was drawn out over the ten-year period from 1922 to 1932, in Germany it was accomplished from 1933 to 1934, in less than two years. In 1929 the Bolshevik Party started to systematically correct earlier art policies, ostensibly in the name of calibrating continuity and change, while the Fascist government made some long-delayed choices after a drawn-out debate about its options. The National Socialists, on the other hand, rushed to dismantle the art policies of the Weimar Republic without any coherent alternative in mind. As a latecomer, National Socialist art policy took a more precipitated course than that of the two other states. While the parameters of Fascist and Soviet art policy stood settled by the end of 1933 for the remainder of the decade, those of German art policy were initially so uncertain that one year later the government squelched a fledgling debate about them to prevent a marginal inclusion of modern art.

Whatever the time lag, by 1934 all three totalitarian regimes had achieved a political alignment of the arts, each in a different way, just in time to prepare for their

ambitious capital rebuilding projects. These projects made art policy a pivotal element in their competing drives for ascendancy within the European balance of power, which the reconstructed capitals were to proclaim. It was in that year that Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin all intervened in setting the shape of their state architecture. Mussolini, addressing architects at the Palazzo de Venezia on June 10, called for modern styles; Hitler, speaking at the Nuremberg Party Rally on September 5, insisted on the classical paradigm; and Stalin, from behind the scenes, made the Palace of Soviets a model for fusing architecture and sculpture. From then on, totalitarian art policies shifted from populist projection to autocratic planning. They fed into government initiatives for laying the financial, technical, and organizational groundwork of big official building projects towards which the other arts were geared. To make both institutional and private art markets ideologically conformist—which the Fascist regime never attempted—was not enough.

After 1934, between five and ten years remained for the three regimes to ready their politicized artistic cultures for delivery, depending on their flexible calculations about the starting date of a war they all regarded as inevitable. Aware that time was running out, they publicized models and films which showed their projects as if they already existed, and publicized fictitious deadlines for their completion. While the Fascist art administration managed to commit its willing artists to a common program without enforcing uniformity, the Soviet and German art administrations, keen on endowing their regimes with a distinctive artistic profile, turned to an increasingly rigorous selection and exclusion of artists based on pre-established aesthetic and expressive norms. By 1937, all three regimes finally had their artistic accomplishments ready for display in their pavilions at the Paris World Exposition, where international juries lavished gold and silver medals on their exhibits. Press reviewers jumped at the opportunity of interpreting their political characteristics from their art, often missing out on their differences, eager to subsume them under the totalitarian art equation.

/1.2 WORK UNDER CONTROL

/1.2.1 ECONOMIC REGULATION

During 1929-1933, totalitarian art policies started to be implemented by forcible installation and supervision of artists' organizations for the purpose of streamlining the economic and social transactions of artistic culture, imposing political regulations on the art market in line with ideological preferences, and managing state patronage according to political objectives. In Italy, the Ministry of Corporations, established in 1929, drew artists' organizations into the institutional framework of state policy. The National Council, established the following year, even accorded artists their

own representation. Four years later, Hitler's new government also subordinated artists as a professional group to the newly-created Propaganda Ministry, but without a political voice. In the Soviet Union, from 1929, a newly-appointed, non-expert Education Commissar, Andrei Bubnov, oversaw a gradual transfer of authority over artists' organizations from the government to the Party. The April Decree of 1932, issued by the Party, ordered all of them fused together and controlled by 'cells' of Party members in their midst. This political control of artists was the most severe of all three regimes.

True to the corporative premise of economic management by the state, Italian artists' and architects' organizations launched a stream of exhibition programs directed at the private art market as well as state and party agencies, blurring the distinction between ideological propositions and private tastes. Hence they were short on ideological prescriptions or restrictions. The German Reich Chamber of Art likewise saw it as its foremost task to stimulate the art market through organizational and technical measures, with the difference that it excluded modern artists from competing. Without the requirement of ideological zeal, and having the market for themselves, traditional artists continued to offer conventional work to private demand. By contrast to these two states with their private art markets intact, the Soviet Union's Five-Year Plan limited the art market to catering to state or Party commissions. Artists had no choice but to work through their political organizations for public or official sponsors. They ended up having to follow step-by-step selection procedures of works in progress, on demand.

While the two capitalist dictatorships were largely concerned with alleviating the economic hardships plaguing masses of artists by way of state-induced market programs, the only socialist dictatorship found them a place in the all-out industrialization scheme of the First Five-Year Plan. This was the only venue for their sales, with thematic and formal requirements to heed. With combinations of marketing initiatives and assistance programs, Italian and German artists' organizations strove to create opportunities for artists to make a living, without necessarily enlisting them for state or party projects. While in Italy such market policies were all-inclusive, in Germany they were restricted to traditional artists, whom the regime promoted on ideological grounds. The Soviet Union went much further than Germany in making working opportunities for artists dependent on their tightly judged ideological conformity, which was eagerly offered but not always honored. When the First Five-Year Plan had been fulfilled in 1932, and artists were thrown back onto working outside coordinated programs, guidance turned into censorship.

/1.2.2 CONTROLLED DEBATE

The political coordination of artists' organizations, accomplished between 1931 and 1934 by all three totalitarian regimes, was to restrain their ideological quarrels in

competing for official acceptance and to commit them to shared cultural policy objectives set by political authorities. These, in turn, were often unsure of how to manage professional artistic cultures. In Italy and the Soviet Union, competing groups of architects and artists were prone to attack one another by way of resolutions, shows, and press declarations. The new umbrella organizations induced them to reconcile their differences. In Italy traditional and modern artists had to compromise with one another. In the Soviet Union, modern artists had to retreat. After Hitler's accession two years later, mutually hostile groups of traditional and modern artists in Germany also vied for the new regime's acceptance. Administrative action from above, however, quickly made their confrontation pointless. In contrast to the other two totalitarian states, organized artistic culture was denied the possibility of turning their ideological propositions into politics.

Totalitarian regimes, being no unilateral dictatorships, did not have it in their power to install an art of their liking by decree. Instead, they channeled traditional artists, who were ideologically either naïve or neutral, into a competition for conformity by a guided process of exhibitions, press campaigns, and publications. Such venues of assessment and debate were preempted by the undisputed task of meeting the regimes' expectations. Taking functions and themes for granted, they were confined to the formal and expressive qualities for art to be acceptable. Within this limited range of debate, the alternative of traditional and modern features was the fundamental yardstick. Because of their longer lead time, the Italian and Soviet regimes had settled the pertinent questions with consensual and coerced blueprints for a future course of artistic development by 1934. The German regime, suddenly empowered in early 1933, never managed to fashion a similar artistic culture of guided ideological self-clarification, as the Art Chamber's failure to deliver four years later made it clear.

The first and foremost venues of debate in the Soviet Union and in Italy were the competitions for the Palace of Soviets from 1931 to 1933 and the Palazzo del Littorio from 1933 to 1934. Conducted under government authority, they focused the discrepant efforts of organized architects on a paramount political goal, and thus determined their future alignments. Likewise, both regimes in 1931 and 1932 mounted programmatic shows juxtaposing traditional and modern art to argue for a decision in favor of one tendency—modern in Italian architecture, traditional in Soviet painting. Both continued organizing—in the USSR until 1936, in Italy until 1939—diversified, comparative shows as venues of calibrating art policy. Only Germany lacked competitions or exhibitions as venues for shaping art for the regime. After Hitler overruled the ongoing competition for the new Reichsbank building immediately upon his accession, building commissions were administratively allocated, and, until 1937, a steady stream of vituperative modern art shows was never complemented by paradigmatic shows of traditionalist accomplishment.

/1.2.3 STRUCTURAL CONFLICTS

It was in Fascist Italy, where, starting in 1931, a corporative coordination of state and society had been sanctioned as an overarching policy, that the ideological self-regulation of artists' organizations satisfied the regime's expectations. When Bottai, who had been Minister of Corporations since 1929, was moved to the Education Ministry in 1937, he took care to shield it from resurgent Party interference. The first test of this policy was the debate about the competition for the Palazzo del Littorio held in the Chamber of Deputies in 1934. A majority of Fascist deputies charged the submissions with "Bolshevism and Marxism," without being able to derail the architects' corporation from its goal of endowing fascism with a decidedly modern architectural style. The last such test was Party Secretary Roberto Farinacci's creation of the Cremona Prize in 1938 for promoting traditionalist art on an anti-modern, even anti-Semitic, ideological platform like Germany's. One year later, Education Minister Bottai squarely met him with his own Bergamo Prize, intended to uphold the competitive autonomy and pluralist diversity of the artists' corporation.

In 1934 the National Socialist government expressly disavowed the idea of a corporative state. It regarded its national organization of architects and artists as little more than a means to keep them under control, but never charged them with the task of elaborating ideological guidelines. While Hitler determined architectural policy in person, art policy remained without orientation. Four years into the regime, Hitler's draconian intervention in jurying the first Great German Art Exhibition, and his decision on short notice to flank it with the punitive 'Degenerate Art' show, amounted to admitting that the mere organization of artists with a license to practice had not worked to generate a viable art of National Socialism, such as it had been achieved the year before at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin. As a result, Hitler and Goebbels tacitly relieved the organized members of the Reich Chamber of Art from any art-political task and let them direct their efforts at a growing private art market on condition of an undefined conformity. They left artists so disoriented that as late as 1939 the SS Security Services registered complaints by some of them about a lack of guidance from above.

In the Soviet Union the stern subordination of artists' organizations under Party control culminated in the setup of a 'Committee on the Arts' by a joint Party and government decree of January 17, 1936. Artists' groups were now deprived of the last remnants of ideological initiative and reduced to guarding Socialist Realism against any deviancy, real or perceived. The ensuing rush to prove or disprove conformity engulfed national architects' and artists' organizations in a frenzy of all-round internecine personnel struggles that fed into the murderous purges racking Soviet society during the years 1936-1938. After Education Commissar Andrei Bubnow was executed in 1937, their artist leaders ran them in cooperation with the NKVD. Throughout this

self-destructive turn of Soviet art policy, persecution of artists and art officials cannot be tied to their stylistic preferences, and rarely to their affiliations with past artists' groups long dissolved but discredited in retrospect.[19] This disciplinary extreme, devoid of artistic substance, was only meant to curb the last residues of professional self-determination.

/1.3 REPUDIATION OF MODERN ART

/1.3.1 STACKED COMPETITION

The political logic of totalitarian states entailed the creation of a single, all-comprehensive artistic culture with no structural conflicts. It was unsuited to leave room for the alternative culture where modern art had thrived on the assurance of a socially limited acceptance, exempt from satisfying the traditionalist majorities to which government-sponsored art was to appeal. The totalitarian artists' organizations, newly consolidated after 1931, did not exclude modern artists outright. Instead, they drew them into a compulsory competition with traditional artists which left them no niche of their own. As far as public acceptance is concerned, it was an uphill contest, since all three regimes left no doubt about their traditionalist preferences. During the first six years of the Depression, modern artists in totalitarian states were still holding out for a minimum of ideological tolerance, even though the realization dawned on them ever more clearly that any residual competition was stacked against them. By 1936 they had to resign themselves to marginalization in Italy, repudiation in the Soviet Union, and condemnation in Germany.

In Italy and the Soviet Union, state-sponsored national exhibitions—the Rome Quadrennial in 1931 and the 'Fifteen Years of Soviet Art' show at Leningrad and Moscow in 1932-1933—were mounted for the purpose of positioning traditional and modern artists next to one another for a comparative ideological assessment, with a foregone conclusion as to who would win. By 1934, traditional and modern architects were still competing for the Palazzo del Littorio in Rome and the Commissariat of Heavy Industry in Moscow. Although neither one of these competitions produced a winner, they cemented the categorical distinction between traditional and modern architecture as the common denominator of megalomania for the remainder of the decade. These two competitions concluded a process of altercation that had been going on since 1925, yielding a steady accumulation of arguments for the final choice. While in Italy further attacks on modern art by fringes of the Fascist Right failed, in the Soviet Union, Party-backed attacks from above eventually did away with it for good. In both states, most modern artists came around to toe the line.

The National Socialist Party in Germany had, since its foundation in 1920, denounced modern art as part of its campaign to discredit the Weimar Republic which

had granted modern art official support. From 1930 on, it developed its anti-modern stance into an effective propaganda platform for its electoral campaigns, assisted by its cultural mass organization, the 'Combat League for German Culture'. Accordingly, in his first 'culture speech' given as chancellor on September 1, 1933—entitled "German Art as the Proudest Justification of the German People"[20]—Hitler contemptuously rejected the overtures of modern artists and their supporters to cooperate as just so many turncoat ploys made by members of the Weimar 'system,' eager to perpetuate their undue influence. Numerous modern artists were admitted to the Reich Chamber of Art upon its foundation later that month, perhaps to keep them under a tight watch. Predictably, their competitive bids during the following three years invariably met with a rejection that needed little argument. Not even a debate environment like the one that orchestrated the Fascist and Soviet anti-modern policies was allowed.

/1.3.2 PUBLIC DISCRIMINATION

When the repudiation of modern art in the Soviet Union and in Germany was being enacted as an across-the-board policy in 1932 and 1933 respectively, it was not by way of any anti-modern legal dispositions or government decrees, but rather by a relentless series of pronouncements, interventions, and events creating a hostile public environment without recourse. However, Soviet and German anti-modern art policies proceeded from different political premises. While in the Soviet Union they were pursued as the last consequence of a long-term course correction five years in the making, in Germany they pertained to the new government's uncompromising break with the Weimar Republic under the banner of a fundamental national renewal. Soviet modern artists were being taken to task for deviating from a supposedly coherent policy, hammered out along procedural lines of Party decision-making, which until 1936 allowed for recalcitrant accommodation. German modern artists, on the other hand, found themselves fatally tied to a vilified regime, vituperated years after its demise.

An unspecified warning against "the influence of alien elements, especially those revived by the first years of NEP [New Economic Policy]" is the only reference to modern art in the Party's April Decree of 1932.[21] It acknowledges "that over recent years literature and art have made considerable advances, both quantitative and qualitative," which it purports to encourage and accelerate. Only now did Osip Beskin, head of the art critics section of the Moscow Artists Union and editor of its two art journals, follow up his long-term efforts at championing realism with a prescriptive book, titled *Formalism in Painting*. The preamble—"Formalism in any area of art, in particular in painting, is now the chief form of bourgeois influence"[22]—links modern art to the anti-Stalinist opposition. When in 1934 the Party proceeded to proclaim Socialist Realism as a prescriptive style, it contrasted a majority contingent of extant accomplishment with a minority residue of 'bourgeois' deviations. A few prominent modern

artists such as Pavel Filonov and Kasimir Malevich were singled out as warning examples. Both unsuccessfully tried to adjust their offensive styles.

In Germany, the April 1933 law on purging the civil service served to remove pro-modern art officials and academy personnel, without specific mention of their artistic persuasion. Still, the public condemnations of modern art that Hitler and Rosenberg pronounced later that year were not followed up with any policies for the authorities to implement. The clampdown on modern art remained confined to the public sphere. It was not until the fall of 1936 that the authorities finally proceeded to curb persisting attempts at self-assertion on the part of pro-modern museum officials. Administrative interventions by supervising ministries thwarted the rearrangement of the National Gallery's modern wing and the mounting of a Franz Marc Memorial Exhibition. However, such measures fell short of policies enacted across the board. And it was not until 1937 that Party artist Wolfgang Willrich matched Beskin's book of 1933 with a comparable anti-modern treatise, which immediately served as a blueprint for the punitive 'Degenerate Art' show of that year, although Willrich was unable to rest his argument on any government or party regulation. His book would have been redundant at this point in time had modern art been officially contained before.

/1.3.3 OPPRESSION

Finally, in 1936-1937, the Soviet and German governments, on a head-on ideological collision course with one another, proceeded to oppress their artistic cultures by administrative measures of contrived ad-hoc legality. Both branded modern artists as stand-ins for their adversaries, but while the Soviets only generically labeled them as 'imperialist,' the Germans called them 'Bolshevik' outright. When Hitler, in a speech at the opening of the first 'Great German Art Exhibition' of 1937, declared an "implacable mop-up war"[23] to the remnants of modern art in the country, he related old charges of 'art Bolshevism' to the Comintern's current anti-German policies. In 1938 a nationwide tour of 'Degenerate Art' follow-up exhibitions was synchronized with anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitic propaganda shows. The other two totalitarian regimes desisted from linking the oppression of modern art to the war scare. The Soviet regime, no matter how gratuitously it tied 'formalism' to political subversion, could not possibly pin it on its prospective German enemy. The Italian regime, still aiming for Fascist preeminence in a Europe at peace, kept anti-Bolshevik attacks on modern art at bay.

On August 3, 1937, while the 'Degenerate Art' show of works raided from state museums was still on view, Interior Minister Hermann Göring ordered all modern art works in public collections to be confiscated "without regard to legal form or property status."[24] A law Hitler signed on May 31, 1938, confirmed his decree. The confiscated works were stored, sold off, or burned. Only now was the Prussian Education Ministry, along with public museums under its jurisdiction, cleansed of the last officials

suspected of delaying the implementation of anti-modern policy. And only now were erstwhile prominent modern artists expelled from the Reich Chamber of Art, losing their license to practice, even when they had long ceased to work in their past styles. From 1938 on, German artistic culture was finally subjected to the all-pervasive surveillance of society by the newly-founded SS Security Service, which monitored the resurgence of 'art-Bolshevik' tendencies for the Propaganda Ministry. It was a milder version of the NKVD control to which Soviet artists' organizations had been subjected two years earlier without, however, targeting modern art as such.

These extreme measures, uniquely German, amounted to a last-ditch effort at enforcing totalitarian governance in artistic culture, which both the Soviet and the Fascist states had long accomplished by that time. Hitler's violent speech of 1937 about the "implacable mop-up war" against modern art set the tone of their propagandistic orchestration and press coverage. Enforcing the tenets of the 'Führer State,' Hitler and his subordinates proceeded to do away with the last remnants of an institutionalized art policy that had still been functioning, if only to a limited degree, as a venue for efforts by some government and museum officials at sidetracking confiscations of modern art works. They simply overruled legality. The staging of the 'Degenerate Art' show exemplifies the totalitarian practice of eliminating institutional intermediaries between leadership and populace. It made it appear as if mid-range state institutions still harboring modern art were at last being exposed to the outraged German people for evading its judgment.

/ 2 MOBILIZATION AND MONUMENTALITY

/ 2.1 TOTALITARIAN CAPITALS

/ 2.1.1 MONUMENTAL URBANISM

That all three totalitarian states should have envisaged the thorough reconstruction of their capitals in the midst of the Depression constituted the paramount feature of their artistic cultures compared to those of Western European democracies, France in particular, whose constitutional continuity gave them no political reason for upsetting the architectural status quo. Topping anything democracies were capable of building formed part of those states' competitive, even confrontational, posture on the European geopolitical scene. Their capital reconstruction schemes put them into a position to focus their art policies on pivotal political objectives. They made them appear to inspire the arts with the political will of a grand design. The Soviet, German and Italian pavilions at the Paris World Exposition of 1937 were meant to prove that their regimes were capable of erecting—even for a short duration—monumental buildings in steel and stone, according to plan and within a deadline,

demonstrations of an art arising from a combination of economic accomplishment and political determination.

The revolutionary ideologies of totalitarian regimes, all of which had done away with democratic governance, entailed claims of refashioning the site of government along with government itself. The new topographies of their capitals were designed to suit the manifest enactment of their alternative configurations of state, single party, and popular representation. In Moscow and Berlin, capital planning culminated in giant central buildings of people's representation, called 'Palace of Soviets' and 'Assembly Hall,' for performative demonstrations of the mass base claimed by their regimes. Both buildings gave different solutions to the fundamental question of totalitarianism: mass assent to a repressive government. Only the Fascist state, for all its revolutionary rhetoric, clung to some constitutional continuity with the parliamentary monarchy it had replaced. Hence its projected capital reconstruction did not upset existing government centers. An architectural center of Fascist ascendancy in the middle of Rome, the Palazzo del Littorio, was never started to be built.

In all three schemes, Baron Haussmann's rebuilding of Paris for the Second Empire, with its comprehensive alignment of zoning, utility infrastructure, and traffic circulation and its visual enhancement of representative architecture by clearing surrounding spaces, set a precedent for balancing, if not reconciling, urbanistic and monumental concerns. In the decade preceding the Depression, urban planning had tended to align both these goals on the common denominator of a technological aesthetic to harmonize public and residential building. Le Corbusier's syndicalist scheme of 1925 for a "classless" *Ville radieuse* would have eradicated a large chunk of Paris' monumental cityscape to make room for functionalist living quarters. By contrast, urbanist requirements in the projected restructuring of totalitarian capitals were subordinated to artistically overdetermined monumental centers. The relationship between representative claims and residential requirements remained a precarious issue, addressed in Moscow and Rome by relocating housing to the outskirts, but altogether disregarded in Berlin.

/ 2.1.2 STATE AND PARTY ALLOCATIONS

As early as 1924, barely two years after his accession to government, Mussolini demanded a thorough architectural restructuring of Rome, reminiscent of Haussmann's mission in 19th-century Paris, but with a different monumental chronology. He wished to strip the cityscape of its 19th-century accretions in order to enhance the monumental presence of the ancient Roman Empire. At first, Mussolini's project did not include new monumental buildings to house the political institutions of Fascist rule. Only in late 1933 was one such building, the Palazzo del Littorio, envisaged, not for the conduct of government, but as a party headquarters, including a commemorative shrine for party members killed in the 1922 revolution. It never even reached the

planning stage. When in 1936 the reconstruction plans of Rome were revised for implementation, all new buildings were displaced from the core of the ancient city, with its restored monuments, to a distant seaside area near the ancient port of Ostia. There they were to house the 1942 World Exposition and later serve as a permanent cultural center showcasing the accomplishments of Fascist rule.

By contrast, planning for the reconstruction of Moscow was anchored in a complete rebuilding of the city center. It took its cue from imaginary designs of workers' or party palaces, devised during the first years after the 1917 Revolution. In accordance with the revolutionary concept of council rule, these hypothetical buildings were to monumentalize the ascendancy of party organizations over city governments. In March 1918, both party leadership and state government were moved from Petrograd to Moscow and installed together in the Kremlin, the secondary government center of Tsarist times. The new capital planning revived the concept of the workers' palace to reaffirm the original separation of powers inherent in the Council system, that is, the preeminence of the party over the government. When in 1932 the Central Committee reactivated the planning process for capital reconstruction, it scuttled earlier plans for urban decentralization in favor of the concentric topography already in existence. That this decision should have been taken after the first competition for the Palace of Soviets, goes to show how monumental concerns prevailed over urbanistic ones.

In Berlin, finally, the building of the Reichstag in 1884-1894 and its axial alignment with the 'Victory Boulevard' ('*Siegesallee*') in 1890-1901 had created a monumental political center which was to visualize the ideological fusion of historical memory and political design to fit the newly-founded empire of 1871. Yet it had left government buildings scattered throughout the inner city. Starting in 1936 Albert Speer, under Hitler's supervision, designed a huge expansion of this monumental center to become a continuous architectural environment that grouped new buildings for the government and the military command near a giant hall for mass assemblies. By contrast to Moscow, it excluded the Party headquarters which were left in Munich, located in new buildings. A long, wide boulevard connected the government center with a new railway station in the South, the homestretch of an expansive system of radial and peripheral main roads, highways, railways, and airports for a nationwide pilgrimage to the capital. Its outward reach extended beyond the German borders into Europe at large, anticipating future conquests, suggested by rows of outsize cannons flanking the boulevard.

/ 2.1.3 **PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATION**

True to the structural ambivalence of totalitarian systems, all three capital projects combined populist aspirations to mass participation with autocratic aspirations to overpowering rule. However, only Moscow and Berlin featured central buildings for mass assemblies, expressing the ensuing double sense of representation—empowerment of

authority and ideological performance. Both the Palace of Soviets and the Assembly Hall were to manifest the ideological transfiguration of the popular support claimed by both regimes as the source of their political legitimacy, no matter how differently they calibrated participation and obedience. They were to showcase a mass base configured in staged ceremonials of unconditional allegiance. The five-stage competition of 1931-1933 for the Palace of Soviets led from a procedural enactment of people's sovereignty to a choreographed mass ritual of submission to Party guidance. In the design of the Assembly Hall, a similar submission to Hitler's one-man leadership, with no adjustments for an ever so fictitious protocol of power delegation, was projected from the start.

Until the fourth stage of the Palace of Soviets competition in July 1933, the remit assigned the smaller of two main auditoriums to alternate sessions of the Party Plenum and the Congress of Soviets, that is, the legislative bodies of Party and government. The convergence of both according to the notion of a "centralized" mass democracy was codified in the Constitution of 1936. Thus, at first a structured assemblage of discrete spaces for deliberative and executive bodies was to be opened to non-party masses allowed to enter and to watch. Eventually a compact tower encasing one hall alone reduced the delegates themselves to a mere audience looking up to the leadership on a giant stage. The transformation occurred in sync with the restructuring of Party and society during the purges. In its final form, the Palace of Soviets embodied a streamlined, ritualized one-party mass democracy, as it was called, using the catchphrase 'connection to the masses' for its self-legitimization, complete with sham elections and committees. It monumentalized the underlying principle of 'democratic centralism,' a give-and-take of decree and acclaim between leaders and followers.

Through its sheer grandeur, the Assembly Hall was to dwarf the Reichstag which lay at the far corner of the main square, gutted by fire on February 27, 1933. Leaving it in place in a semi-ruined state as a testimony of the discredited past seemed to suggest that in the National Socialist state representative democracy was superseded by mass participation of the people themselves. After the failure of the *Reichsreform* and the political disenfranchisement of party organizations in 1934-1935, the plebiscite of 1934 legitimized the 'Führer state' in perpetuity, at the expense of pre-existing government structures and with no constitutional codification whatsoever. From a set of four parallel chanceries, Hitler enacted legislation by decree. Different from the Soviet system, no institutional mechanisms were foreseen to bring the political will of the populace, be it framed or fabricated by the Party, to bear on any legislative or executive procedure. Hence, unlike the Palace of Soviets, the Assembly Hall was not even to mimic any accountability to the people, only to parade the people's acclaim on unspecified occasions.

/ 2.2 MONUMENTALIZED MOBILIZATION

/ 2.2.1 PSEUDO-PLEBISCITARY POLITICS

The capital schemes of all three totalitarian regimes were linked to the realignments of party memberships undertaken in 1932-1933 to energize their mass base. The Fascist and National Socialist parties were entrusted with mass indoctrination but kept at arm's length from governance. The Bolshevik Party, on the other hand, was empowered to remedy the government's shortcomings. In Italy, the appointment of Achille Starace as PNF secretary in December 1931 and the membership drive in 1932 on the tenth anniversary of the 'March on Rome' signaled the conversion of an elite party into a mass party. Similarly, in December 1932, Hitler dismantled the NSDAP's tight personnel organization and after taking office in 1933 opened it to mass membership, albeit only for a limited time. In the USSR, conversely, the Central Committee resolution of 28 April 1933 inaugurated a five-year process of purges and restructurings supervised by Party Secretary Andrei Zhdanov. When in March 1939 the 18tth Party Congress formally concluded this process, a detailed statistical report certified an all but complete replacement of older by younger party cadres.

It was for these newly-activated mass parties, as driving agencies for a thorough politicization of their underlying societies, that the new monumental architecture of all three capitals was to provide a setting. Here they were expected to perform acts of symbolic acclaim, which replaced the conflictual procedures of party policy with the semblance of a unanimous mass assent. On July 14, 1933 Hitler's second government issued the 'Law on Plebiscites' which for crucial issues substituted plebiscites for Reichstag votes or government decrees. Henceforth such plebiscites became instruments of public legitimacy for National Socialist governance. They sanctioned Hitler's elevation to sole leader in 1934, and Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1936. The two other totalitarian states refrained from having plebiscites formalize mass assent. In the Soviet Union, five years of party reforms culminated in the semblance of an electoral democracy in 1936. Two years later in Italy, the replacement of the Chamber of Deputies by an appointed National Council completed the corporative reorganization of Fascist governance.

Consistent with the semblance of popular empowerment through plebiscite or sham democracy, the projected new capital structures in Moscow and Berlin were to cement the political culture of mass mobilization by steering it toward the giant assembly buildings in their city centers. Their performative topography of mass assent replaced deliberative scenarios of delegate assemblies. Only in Italy did the monarchic constitution and the collective authority of corporative organization prevent mass mobilization from substituting for representative legitimacy, no matter how theatrically the regime

used to tout its claims for mass support. The huge assembly centers mandated in both competitions for the Palazzo del Littorio were never built. Such differences notwithstanding, a dynamic enhancement of public architecture served in all three totalitarian states to mask political disenfranchisement by staged acclamation spectacles. The mass mobilization for which this architecture was to serve preempted the political will of diverse constituencies with a choreographed enthusiasm of a unified people.

/2.2.2 GERMANY

In late 1933, Hitler deliberately fused mobilization with monumentality when he decided to have the projected Olympic Stadium complex in Berlin double as a staging area for party rallies and military spectacles, and in late 1934 to have the Party Rally Grounds at Nuremberg built up into an elaborate site for the same combination of performative politics on an annual schedule. In Berlin, the actual sports stadium proper opened onto an adjacent, enclosed parade ground called 'May Field' for assembling formations of party organizations in uniform, or military units along with their equipment. The May Field was centered on a memorial for German infantry killed at Langemarck in World War I (see Chapter 4.2 /1.1.2). The combination of both sites revived the ancient Greek idea of sports as combat training. A wide staircase above and a tunnel below connected the Olympic Stadium and the May Field to form a joint staging ground for political mass celebrations, to be regularly held after the Olympic Games were over. Hitler would proceed from one to the other, mount the speaker's rostrum in the stadium, and address the whole complex through an all-pervasive sound system.

In apparent contradiction between political practice and operative ideology, Hitler decided in 1934, the year the NSDAP was deprived of any institutional influence on governance, to transform the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds, in use since 1927, into a "national sanctuary" on the model of Ancient Greek and Roman temple areas, and underwrote its construction with government funds. It is here rather than in the capital that Hitler and his ministers used to pronounce themselves on fundamental policy issues every year, speaking amid mass rallies that gave them a maximum live resonance. It was a travesty of democratic party conventions, whose function is intended to fashion policies by motions, debates, and votes for elected governments to implement. Because it served to underscore the politics of the moment, the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds, under constant development, were given more propaganda coverage, than any other venture of National Socialist architecture. Eventually they were to include an oversized sports stadium for the world to compete in 'German Games' that would replace the Olympics after victory in a future war.

In the reconstructed capital of Berlin, the self-representation of mobilized masses was to be dynamically deployed across the full length of the reconfigured city center. The Assembly Hall formed the destination of a straight trajectory, leading from

the southern railway station through the triumphal arch, on to a central avenue past key government and business buildings. Hitler's boast that the central avenue would facilitate the deployment of tanks and troops against potential uprisings was redundant, since the Third Reich precluded any chance of mass rebellion. All one could imagine were nearly two hundred thousand people from across the nation pouring out of special trains and into the Assembly Hall to 'represent' the nation as an amorphous crowd. That the reconfigured capital should have included no monumental party building was due to the deliberate detachment of ideological and political components in the governance of the Hitler State. While the Nuremberg Party Rallies were confined to one September week, the ceremonial topography of the new capital would have allowed mass politics to be performed at any time.

/ 2.2.3 **USSR**

The topography of mass mobilization[25] envisaged for the reconstructed capital of Moscow was bound to deal with the elaborate scheme of parades and street spectacles which had been developed during the preceding decade. Initially this scheme foresaw a variety of festive pageants with multiple events for at least six annual holidays. By 1930 it was simplified to standard marching demonstrations. The Central Staff for the Conducting of Holidays in Moscow, established in early 1930, oversaw the organizing work of district committees. It issued detailed guidelines for the organization, banners and slogans of individual marching columns, thereby orchestrating mass movements for the ideological promotion of the First Five-Year Plan, the foremost theme of any celebration. Starting in 1931, the setup of mass demonstrations was adjusted, and repeatedly changed, in relation to the developing Palace of Soviets project. At first, the concentric parade flow was steered away from its original rallying point on Red Square toward the future building, designed to embrace the arrival of the marching columns, and to open its doors to their delegations.

The first competition brief for the Palace of September 1931 stipulated that the building "must be easily accessible for great multitudes of demonstrating laborers and workers,"[26] and that therefore, the submissions were to include a "schematic planning of the adjacent area with marked routes for the procession of demonstrators, types of traffic and their access."[27] However, it was one thing to design a building in compliance with these specifications—as functionalist designers such as the ARU team or the brigade working under Swiss architect Hannes Meyer intended to do when they pierced its walls on street level for marching columns to traverse—, and quite another to plot corresponding access routes across a constantly reconfigured city center. When the Construction Committee rejected the soundest solution—proposed by Le Corbusier, who assigned each group, as specified by the competition brief, a distinct passageway through the Palace—it not only took exception to its functionalist overdetermination,

but even more so, it seems, to the architect's ruthless interference into city planning, as he did not hesitate to propose razing adjacent areas for easier access.

Already in 1932, the Construction Committe, in its revised stipulations for the next stage of the competition, rescinded the requirement of having masses march through the interior of the Palace. Now they were to stop and assemble on a large square before the main entrance, in recognition, as it were, of the representative authority granted to the delegates inside. In the definitive general plan for the reconstruction of Moscow, issued in 1936, the avenue connecting the Lenin Hills with the Palace of Soviets met the building from behind, so that marchers would have to circle it before they reached the main facade. The preamble of the new Soviet constitution, spelled out in large letters over the entrance, proclaimed the legitimacy of the elected bodies. Now Red Square, with the Lenin Mausoleum before the Kremlin wall as its focal point, was reinstated as the goal for mass parades, and therefore to be cleared of adjacent buildings. Even the giant Commissariat of Heavy Industry, planned as late as 1934 to face the Palace of Soviets across the square, was eventually dropped from the topography.

/2.3 PROJECTION INTO THE FUTURE

/2.3.1 PLANNING AND STYLE

Boris Iofan, winning architect of the final competition for the Palace of Soviets, was nonetheless not authorized to build the final version of his design, but enjoined to develop it still further, not only in co-operation with the runner-up, Vladimir Gelfreikh, but also subject to instructions from a new building commission including prominent architects, artists, critics, and, since 1938, Stalin in person. No sooner had the competition been concluded than another one was opened for a matching monumental building facing the Palace of Soviets on Red Square, the Commissariat of Heavy Industry. Although modern proposals had just been categorically rejected in favor of 'Socialist Realism in Architecture,' the new competition once again was open to architects of all persuasions. The select group of architects to whom participation was restricted even included the most intransigent protagonist of functionalism, Ivan Leonidov, who four years earlier had been singled out for vituperative attacks in architectural debates. His entry, a functional design blown up to monumental shape, was rejected, to be sure, but by way of respectful reasoning rather than denigration.

In striking contrast to the elaborate Soviet planning processes lasting several years, Hitler and Speer alone determined the entire monumental core area of the reconstructed Berlin in one full sweep. The two foremost buildings dominating its two focal points—the Assembly Hall and the Triumphal Arch—were based on quasi-historic sketches Hitler himself had drawn in 1925. Numerous representative buildings flanking the axial avenue connecting those two focal points were assigned

to the most prestigious architects of the Third Reich, without any competition, only by Speer's Hitler-backed selection. Speer's subsequent checks on their designs-in-progress and requests for changes ensured their alignment with his vision. The most prominent of these buildings, comparable in its monumental scope and political significance to the Commissariat of Heavy Industry in Moscow, was the 'Soldiers' Hall' adjacent to the Army High Command. Speer commissioned it from Wilhelm Kreis, an old, prestigious architect from imperial times, who after 1938 rose once more to the highest positions.

When in 1936 the reconstruction plans for Rome had to be finalized in time for the World Exposition of 1942 (E42), Marcello Piacentini, Italy's preeminent state architect, was charged with total oversight, just as Speer was in Berlin. Different from Speer's empowerment by Hitler, however, he was accountable to a building corporation especially assembled for the purpose. As in Berlin, single buildings of the E42 were farmed out to leading architects of the country. However, again unlike Speer, Piacentini had no authority to determine their assignments and influence their shapes and styles. Open competitions with different juries were held for each one, making for laborious procedures of adjustment to the ever-changing priorities of the master plan. The large-scale plaster model of the E42 area, built by Piacentini's office for public viewing, shows these buildings as plain, generic blocks, which suited Piacentini's ideal of a classical architecture stripped of its decorative surface for the sake of a modern appearance. Their initial stereometric abstraction persisted in their final form, even after their architects had specified their designs.

/2.3.2 HYPERBOLIC BUILDING

In all three capitals, the technical and financial feasibility of planning and design remained hypothetical, even though preparatory work was carried just far enough to lend them credibility. Since financing formed no part of published budgets, they were even exempt from the tenuous statistical plausibility of totalitarian economic planning. Their artistic hyperbole was essential for their political purpose. The Italian capital reconstruction, ostensibly to be completed for the 1942 World Exposition, was more pragmatically pursued than its Soviet and German counterparts, which lacked any operational timetables despite their published target dates of 1950 and 1952 respectively. Since both regimes anticipated an imminent war with an uncertain starting date, their completion remained hypothetical. When war did break out on September 1, 1939, none of the three capitals was even close to taking shape. In Rome, only the archaeological clearing of the ancient city core had been completed. In Moscow, the steel-reinforced concrete perimeter of the Palace of Soviets had risen to a height of circa 50 meters. In Berlin, only one giant concrete corner block of the foundations for the Assembly Hall had yet been cast.

To counter these uncertainties, designs and preparations were profusely publicized through plans, models, photographs, and films. An ample propaganda literature dwelt on the exemplary significance of the projects and gave assurances of their completion. The underlying concept of a pictorial architecture took effect by a pictorial narrative of anticipation. At the Paris World Exposition of 1937, the pavilions of all three totalitarian states were built as stand-ins for these capital schemes. Piacentini and Speer, the architects in charge, designed the Italian and the German pavilions. However, only the Soviet and Italian pavilions featured large scale models of the future capital centers, while Speer preferred a model of the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds. Domestically, the Soviet and German regimes, mindful of the particularly precarious status of their planning, sought to balance utopian hyperbole and token accomplishment with two-short term showcase projects, completed in a rush (see Chapter 12/2.2). The Moscow subway and the New Reich Chancellery in Berlin—the latter even earmarked as provisional—boasted maximal lavishness as a standard to attain.

Standing in for building, planning was staged to demonstrate the mobilization of politically homogenized societies at work for distant goals. Its forced publicity was to highlight the capacity of self-confident artistic cultures to crown social well-being with monumental splendor. The open-ended long-term timelines anticipated the longevity of all three regimes. These campaigns-in-progress became political endeavors in their own right. They were staged to manifest the political will of the leadership to go through with them in disregard of short-term budgets, and the resolve of the underlying populations to dedicate themselves to their pursuit. How they were to be reconciled with equally publicized rearmament programs remained unclear. Fundamentally, the three totalitarian capitals-in-the making were featured as imaginary projections of their forms of government and social order, even though these were still under fast-paced, conflictive development from year to year. Their completion at some future time was to finalize the constitutional configuration of a totalitarian power no longer subject to change.

/2.3.3 MONUMENTAL TIMELINES

Reclaiming millennial traditions of historic legitimacy, totalitarian capital schemes were meant to place their regimes on a par with world-historical precedents such as the kingdoms of the Ancient Near East and the Roman Empire. Leapfrogging back over historical continuity, they construed ideological timelines back into the millennial past and forward into a perennial future. Such lengthy timelines compensated for the revolutionary discontinuity with the immediate past which all three totalitarian regimes claimed for themselves, their constant short-term internal upheavals and, eventually, their interdependent high-risk war policies, which required them to constantly recalibrate their planning of arms production and monumental architecture. Faced with such disparities between imaginary and real timelines, the public credibility

of totalitarian capital schemes depended on their correlation with war policy. However, this correlation was only apparent in Berlin, the capital of future conquest. Neither the smug triumphalism of Empire regained in Rome nor the decorous semblance of socialism achieved in Moscow was realistic by comparison.

When, in his campaign speeches of 1929, Hitler dwelt on the buildings of the coming Third Reich as monuments of a new epoch to come, he expressly referred to those of Fascist Italy, which, he pointed out, were inscribed with the chronology of the new regime, starting from year I. Like the French Revolution of 1789, where such a reset had been decreed before, the new epoch drew on a past beyond chronology. In 1930 the commission charged with drawing up the new master plan of Rome distinguished between 'Roma monumentale' of Antiquity and the Renaissance, to be restored, and 'Roma moderna,' extending from 1870 to the start of the regime, to be demolished to make room for 'Roma modernissima' or 'Roma fascista,' a synthesis of ancient and modern. In Berlin, Speer's projected recreation of Roman triumphal architecture on a scale disproportionate with the rest of the city discarded any monumental continuity. When Hitler imagined the new Berlin as "only comparable to Ancient Egypt, Babylon, or Rome,"(28) he speculated it might outlast his own 'Thousand Year Reich' as a site for posterity to admire, even when ruined.

It was the reconstruction of Moscow that was predicated on the most contradictory scheme of all three: the short-term achievement of Socialism as a political system in one country, ahead of its economic and social fulfillment. The VI Comintern Congress of 1928 proclaimed this doctrine as the premise of the First Five-Year Plan, desisting from socialism as the goal of a worldwide revolution. Belied by the stalling Second Five-Year Plan, the monumental scope of the Palace of Soviets and the Commissariat of Heavy Industry never ceased to grow. Their discrepancy to the country's lagging economic progress was just as big as that of Berlin's triumphal architecture, with the difference that it was not to be made up by conquest but by a domestic leap to productivity. Trotsky, the loser to Stalin in the 1928 debate about socialism in one country, included the Soviet capital scheme in the critiques of the policy he wrote in exile. Here he reiterated his earlier view that an art of socialism could only be the outcome of socialism accomplished in reality, which in turn required the victory of a world-wide revolution combining uprisings and wars.

/ 3 POLICY AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

/ 3.1 SETTING STANDARDS

/ 3.1.1 PARTIES AND POLICIES

When in 1931 the totalitarian regimes of Italy and the Soviet Union, and two years later that of Germany, embarked upon the task of fashioning a representative

state art made to measure, they could not rely on any art policy written into their party programs, no matter how categorically their party politicians occasionally pronounced themselves on artistic matters. Before 1929, the Bolshevik and Fascist parties had adopted selective judgmental positions vis-à-vis competitive offerings by artistic groups of various trends which vied for their support. However, different from their policies and ideologies on economic and social matters, they had not framed any pro-active art-political tenets. The National Socialist Party had nothing to show but anti-modern polemics. It is since the start of the Depression that party organizations in Italy and the USSR started to intervene in the ideological determination of a state art in the making. As both were ready to devise art programs of their own, success or failure of their efforts depended not just on the absorption of their ideologies by existing artistic cultures, but on their influence on government art agencies.

Once the Bolshevik Party assumed organizational control of the arts as part of its activist pursuit of the First Five-Year Plan, it belatedly lived up to its policy-making prerogative in most other areas of Soviet governance. It started not only to define artistic guidelines in a curt, deliberate fashion, but also to see them through by way of its ubiquitous representatives in artistic culture. The Central Committee's three principal decrees on art policy—the 'Five-Year Plan for the Arts' of April 1929, the 'Resolution on Posters' of March 11, 1931, and the 'April Decree' of April 23, 1932—were meant to remedy Soviet artists' erratic lack of political direction. In 1931 Party members within the Association of Revolutionary Artists split off to form a separate group devoted to following the Party line. In early 1934, coinciding with the proclamation of Socialist Realism, a special term—*partiinost*—was coined to ensure adherence to party ideology. Since Socialist Realism was being discussed for years, it denoted the subordination of artistic practice to an uncertain Party doctrine. Party members forming the cells of the new artists' organizations enforced and adjusted it as time went by.

On the other hand, Fascist and later National Socialist party organizations, consistent with their more limited influence on governance, were prone to take doctrinaire positions critical of government art policy, only to be rebuffed by the ministers in charge. While in Italy, such party positions were reduced to passing protest declarations, in Germany they were enhanced by power struggles which only subsided in 1936. Fascist Party Secretary Roberto Farinacci led two art-political initiatives to protest the modernizing tendencies prevailing in government art policy—the 1934 censure of the Palazzo de Littorio competition in the Chamber of Deputies and the 1938 creation of the Cremona prize to reward a traditionalist art which glorified nation and even race—yet both to no avail. In Germany, the 'Combat League for German Culture,' a mass organization affiliated in 1929 with the National Socialist Party, lost out in its bid to become the official artists' organization of the state once the Party came to dominate the government in early 1933. Its leader, Alfred Rosenberg, was sidelined to a

Party office of cultural supervision, whence he continued to promote his views with a limited resonance.

/ 3.1.2 PARTIES VERSUS GOVERNMENTS

The different constitutional relationships between party and government in the three totalitarian states made setting standards for the arts a matter of contest between party politicians in charge of mass indoctrination and government officials in charge of art administration, that is, between ideology and policy. Not until 1936 were these contests decided either way. In the Soviet Union, on July 4, 1929, pluralist Education Commissar Anatoly Lunacharsky was replaced by Andrei Bubnov, a non-expert party commissar coming from the army, to ensure that the Commissariat would implement party directives rather than setting policy by itself. By 1934, Leningrad Party Secretary Andrei Zhdanov assumed that task in his capacity as a secretary of the Central Committee. As if in mirror reverse to the Soviet Union, strong, resourceful government officials in Italy and Germany—Bottai, corporations minister from 1929 to 1932 and education minister since 1936, and Goebbels, propaganda minister since 1933—used their executive authority to subsume the arts under their programs for an all-embracing culture of the Fascist corporate state and the Führer state respectively. While Zhdanov, at the All-Soviet Writers' Congress held in 1934 at Kharkov, was in a position to promulgate Socialist Realism as an all-encompassing paradigm, Bottai and Goebbels, no matter how intellectually ambitious, and hence intent on a political micro-management of the arts, never aspired to formulating ideology-based aesthetic prescriptions.

Zhdanov, who had no personal interest in the arts but a deliberate notion of their place in cultural policy, attained a firm grip on their regulation without having to make any substantive pronouncements, because he could rely on a well-organized process of policy formulation and policy implementation by means of the party cells within compulsory artists' organizations. Bottai and Goebbels, on the other hand, relied on state-guided but self-regulating artists' corporations with a built-in competitive diversity, which they sustained against recurrent party interference calling for more ideological zeal. Their policies were not aimed at enforcing aesthetic conformity for the sake of social conformity, but at setting tasks for an adequate art of the state.

On January 17, 1936, the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars jointly established the Committee on Arts, detached from the Education Commissariat, in accord with the organizational convergence of Party and government envisaged by the 1936 Constitution. Education Commissar Bubnov was summarily shot, and the Committee subjected the arts to NKVD control. On June 11, 1936, Corporations Minister Bottai was transferred to the Ministry of Education, in time to activate the corporate alignment of the arts in preparation for the E42, where Italy aspired to international leadership in the arts. His pluralist art policy stifled attempts by Party officials to

polarize Italian artistic culture in ideological terms, all the more since the Fascist look of that culture was by now assured. Finally, in September 1936, Propaganda Minister Goebbels asserted his authority by having the National Socialist Cultural Community absorbed by the Reich Chamber of Culture, curbing its quest for a distinct art to be sponsored by the Party. Unlike Bottai's, however, his corporate approach failed to net him an art of ideological conviction, as became apparent in the following year.

/ 3.1.3 DICTATORS' INTERVENTIONS

Stalin ostensibly abided by Lenin's well-known abstinence from state or party guidance of the arts, which had informed Soviet art policy until 1929. He kept mindful of standing back from any visible intervention even when, starting with the First Five-Year Plan, that policy was shed in favor of an activist control. His scarce judgments and choices in matters of art were cloaked in Party decisions. It was behind the scenes that Stalin endorsed the crucial term Socialist Realism as a label for an authoritative paradigm of style, first in an unofficial gathering of five participants which reportedly met shortly after the April Decree of 1932, and later in a discussion with a group of writers who socialized at Maksim Gorki's country house on October 26 of that year. Only as late as 1936 did architect Vladimir Ghelfreikh, in charge of developing the final project of the Palace of Soviets along with Boris Iofan, publicly acknowledge Stalin's leadership in the large building committee, although Stalin did not become a member of that committee until September 1938. This late acknowledgement may have been due to the Stalin cult burgeoning at that time.

Not unlike Lenin, Mussolini, on March 26, 1923, within a year of his appointment as prime minister, asserted in an opening speech for an exhibition of the Novecento group: "It is far from me to encourage anything which could look like an art of the state."(29) Accordingly, during the next five years, he ignored the Futurists' call for the setup of "a true and proper ministry of fascist art presided over by the Duce."(30) In 1928, however, Mussolini abandoned his detachment. He permitted his generic call for "a new art, an art of our time, a fascist art"(31) to be placed over the entrance of the first exhibition held by the 'rationalist' faction of the architects' corporation. Henceforth he gave his personal approval to this faction, without, however, preempting the corporative allocation of commissions. Similarly, Mussolini's support for the ascendancy of the Novecento group, and for its leader's Mario Sironi's bid to shape the character of Fascist art, was channeled first through the informal network of his companion Margharita Sarfatti, and later through the corporative system where Sironi played a leading part. Finally, in 1936 he oversaw the E42 project, a government venture.

In blatant contrast to both Stalin and Mussolini, Hitler claimed a personal leadership of National Socialist artistic culture. Already in 1920, when he expressly changed profession from artist to politician, he had formed a political, that is operative, rather

than merely ideological understanding of the arts, which in 1925 he set forth in the first volume of *My Struggle*. Since 1933, when he came to power, he used his annual 'culture speeches' at the Nuremberg Party rallies to categorically chart the course German art was to take. He soon found out, however, that neither the Propaganda Ministry nor any party agency stood ready to implement his views. All the more overbearing was his intervention in important ventures of state and party architecture. When the persistent structural shortcomings of National Socialist art policy precipitated the crisis of early 1937, Hitler took personal charge in making the twin shows of approved and banished art in Munich the scene for setting the terms for German art to follow. These he spelled out in his opening speech of the Great German Art Exhibition. His leadership overrode all art institutions.

/3.2 LIMITS OF ORGANIZATION

/3.2.1 REACH OF CONTROL

In all three totalitarian regimes, initiatives aimed at organizing artists preceded those meant to fashion an art of the state. However, the first initiative did not feed into the second. Even the tightest organization could not make artists produce the innovative, ideologically compelling works all three regimes desired for their state art projects. For these, outstanding artists were needed. None of the responsible politicians was naïve enough to expect that state art could be made to order like in pre-modern modes of patronage, as foreign critics of totalitarian culture charged. The elaborate management of their organized artistic cultures was not conducive to delivering the desired excellence, at least not within the short terms of their monumental timetables. These politicians recognized that a representative state art could not be achieved by forcing artists into conformity along with the society at large. Neither could they wait for their academies to groom new artists in the spirit of their ideologies. They had to authorize extant artist's elites for leadership, in sync with the expansion of authoritarian over populist policies, underway since the middle of the decade.

With a decade or more of lead time for organizing their own artistic cultures, the Soviet and Fascist regimes never had to face a crisis of the kind the National Socialist regime incurred in 1937. Still, by 1932 they became impatient with the management of their artists' organizations and intervened with measures from above to force the pace of monumental art production. By means of the competitions for Palace of Soviets in 1931-1932 and the prescription of Socialist Realism in 1933-1934, the Soviet regime engaged in the most systematic, most drawn-out processes adopted by all three in setting the terms for a state art to be newly developed. The delivery of such an art was entrusted to a select group of overpaid, prestigious artists with personal ties to political leaders. In Fascist Italy, the corporate system allowed for a self-development

with only remote government supervision. Two outstanding artists—architect Marcello Piacentini and painter Mario Sironi—were entrusted with setting the course for the internal workings of their corporations, in which they held multiple assignments. Their work was rated so successful that by 1936, a Fascist style could be hailed as the style of the age (see Chapter 12/2.2.3).

It is because the National Socialist government was faced with having to fashion its organized artistic culture from scratch that the structural shortcomings of that artistic culture persisted unresolved throughout the decade. In 1937 Hitler exposed them in his devastating judgment on the submissions to the first Great German Art Exhibition under the slogan "They've had four years of time." The Reich Chamber of Art might have pronounced guidelines of aesthetic, thematic and ideological conformity. The Prussian Ministry of Education, if not the Reich Ministry of Propaganda, might have framed academic curricula combining professional art instruction and political indoctrination. Competition juries might have spelled out categorical criteria of selection. Yet nothing of the kind was done. Thus, the launch of active planning for the reconstruction of Berlin, promulgated in Hitler's Reichstag speech of January 30, 1937, entailed a trenchant change of art policy. Now Hitler, Goebbels, and a handful of subordinates, discarding institutional entitlements, entrusted the creation of state art to a small group of elite artists under their close-up supervision.

/3.2.2 EFFORTS AT INSTRUCTION

As they embarked on their monumental projects, all three totalitarian regimes found themselves unable to count on extant art schools and academies to prepare committed artists with integrated teaching programs that would have bundled professional with political education. Given the sudden urgency of their planning, whatever they undertook to remedy this deficiency came too late. Only the Soviet regime undertook a quick but thorough academic reorganization to deal with the deficiency. The Fascist regime, consistent with its policy of refraining from direct political guidance of the arts, desisted from interfering with the curricula or staff. In Germany, brutal but haphazard imposition of government-picked art professors could not make up for the lack of reasoned programs. In 1932 the Leningrad Art Academy was expanded into an art school, charging its conformist members with a teaching mission. The Prussian Academy of Arts, which had featured master classes all along, was repeatedly purged and re-staffed between 1933 and 1937, but without tangible result. Only Mussolini's 'Fascist Academy,' newly created in 1929, had no teaching mission from the start.

In the spring of 1930 Soviet art instruction was shifted from the jurisdiction of the Education Commissariat to Party oversight. During the following years, it was twice revamped, first at the inception and then at the completion of the First Five-Year Plan. On both occasions, tightly organized technical curricula were meshed with

political indoctrination. In 1930, in accordance with the mission of having the arts contribute to the all-out industrialization of the Soviet Union, the aesthetically overdetermined Higher Art and Technical Institute (*Vkhutein*) in Moscow was split up into several separate schools for different professional practices. These schools offered technical along with political courses to a new generation of students recruited from the working-class. Four years later, in a policy turnabout from technology to aesthetics, the Leningrad Academy became a national teaching center. Its new curriculum revalidated traditional art instruction from pre-revolutionary times and combined it with a broad-based cultural education along Party lines. It took another four years to produce its first outstanding graduate, the painter Aleksandr Laktionow (see Chapter 10/2.3.3).

Although Hitler's government, within months of its accession, dismissed every one of the better-known modern artists from their teaching posts at academies and art schools, their makeshift replacements—either conservative artists with nationalist credentials or party artists with little distinction—proved incapable of installing a genuinely National Socialist art instruction. Moreover, the ideology of National Socialism—different from both Fascism and Bolshevism—included no articulate aesthetic tenets. Neither the Propaganda Ministry nor the Education Ministry even tried to inspire the restoration of traditionalist art instruction with a persuasive political mission. Hitler's views on art, no matter how often they were invoked could not make up for lacking academic guidelines. As a result, German academies and art schools shared in the blame for the art-political crisis of 1937. Now Hitler personally installed some of the elite artists working on his state art projects—such as Arno Breker and Josef Thorak—as academy professors. These busy star artists, however, were disinclined to fill the ideological vacuum in the teaching routine of their schools.

/3.2.3 MARKET LICENSE

Masses of organized artists in Italy and Germany, where private art markets where largely intact and on their way to recovery from the Depression, were dispensed from aiming for official projects and encouraged to work for private demand. Both regimes even sought to ensure the economic viability of the profession by means of government-organized initiatives of market stimulation. Helping average artists in this way had from the start been on the art-political agenda of both regimes, with sales rather than political conformity as their prime concern. Throughout the decade, the Fascist regime kept numerous programs going to remedy the market slump brought about by the Depression. The National Socialist regime did likewise immediately upon its accession. Although both artistic cultures were still operating under constraining ideological requirements—tighter in Germany than in Italy—Culture Minister Bottai and Propaganda Minister Goebbels were obliged to mount elaborate rebuttals of recurrent attacks on the ideological vacuity of the commonplace art encouraged by such policies.

In the Soviet Union, by contrast, after the end of the New Economic Policy, the art market had been monopolized by an all-embracing system of state and party patronage, which provided expansive work programs for artists during the First Five-Year Plan. Even after these programs were fulfilled, there was no letup in the demand for ideological expression. In the viciously competitive environment of police-supervised artists' organizations predominant since 1936, all participants, including artists' of rank and file, exercized a bitter ideological control over one another, even when no official commissions were at stake. Debates about acceptance of work proposals were just so many pretexts for terrorizing artists into an uncertain conformity. It is to escape the omnipresent ideological control even of the non-institutional art market that leading modern artists—Filonov first and foremost, Malevich and Tatlin to a lesser degree—withdrew from any public display of their work. Filonov, a self-declared Communist who refused Party accountability, piled up work after work for a personal museum to be built after his death.

Thus, for a variety of reasons, all three regimes dealt with the question of how far their political organization of artists was to ensure the ideological conformity even of work that was not intended for political use. This question was related to the totalitarian politicization of society at large. Bolshevik art policy, which alone was administered by the Party, went farthest in this regard. Artists' organizations had little if any say in the pursuit of monumental art programs, which in turn were losing the procedural clarity that had come with competitions and debates. As all three dictators became more prominent in their personal supervision or involvement, close-knit circles of politicians, art officials, and favorite artists negotiated decisions among themselves. Those artists who were the beneficiaries of the change gained the status of artistic elites like in pre-modern patronage by ecclesiastical or secular rulers. The political elites, in turn, treated them with admiration and showered them with inordinate privileges, awards, and fees. Their personal achievement thrived on their ideological conformity, exempt from political supervision.

/3.3 ASCENDANCY OF ELITES

/3.3.1 FROM POPULISM TO ELITISM

The preferential treatment which totalitarian regimes gave to artists' elites starting in 1936 departed from their initial coordination of professional artists with politicized society, backed up by the ideology of an artistic creativity arising from the people. In Italy and the Soviet Union, the transition was smooth, but in Germany it led to a division between a populist and an elitist art. In a speech of November 26, 1937 to the annual convocation of the Reich Chamber of Culture, Propaganda Minister Goebbels conceded that National Socialist ideas were "not yet ripe to be fashioned into art," and

that "the young generation, which will one day solve this problem, is still emerging."[32] One year later, the SS Security Service regularly picked up complaints about the ideological vacuity of current art shows. After Hitler had personally censored the first Great German Art Exhibition of 1937, he claimed to have outlined a "newly-reached canon"[33] for the arts. And yet, in this and subsequent annual shows, works of Josef Thorak, Arno Breker, Werner Peiner and some others stood apart, surrounded by masses of ideologically nondescript, business-as-usual paintings and sculptures.

In the preceding decades, modern artists in the Soviet Union and Italy, led by writers Mayakovsky and Marinetti, had claimed the status of elites on the avant-garde paradigm (see Chapter 1.1/3), embracing Bolshevik or Fascist ideologies in a contentious self-promotion against their populist, traditionalist rivals. This claim was based on the premise that a genuine Soviet or Fascist art was still in a formative stage. Now this posture could no longer hold because both regimes, intent on consolidating their artistic cultures, were not prepared to grant individual artists any influence on cultural policy, all the less so since they had had failed to deliver an art of mass appeal. In Germany, where modern artists, all of them expedient latecomers to the regime, lacked any political credentials, their offerings could be ignored. By 1936, in all three states, political leaders and their inner circles selected, groomed, and eventually lionized new artists' elites of traditional observance. They granted them operative, but never political, leadership of agencies set up to implement large-scale artistic projects. Exempt from the uncertainty of competition, they were assured of choice commissions.

The rise of elite artists went hand in hand with the transition from populist to autocratic governance in all three totalitarian states. Their license to operate over and above the rules of their professional organizations was due to a recognition that efficient and imaginative art production could not be achieved by controlling artists, but only by empowering them. Whereas the Fascist regime limited itself to cultivating hierarchies of major and minor artists—such as formerly Futurist painter Gino Severini had accurately forecast in his book *Reasoning About the Figurative Arts* of 1936—Hitler extended the 'Leader Principle' that had guided National Social Socialist politics all along to artists who appeared to be inspired by his ideas. The Soviet regime, finally, loath to openly admit social hierarchies or political power structures outside the Party's 'democratic centralism,' drew its favored artists into a select meritocracy of scientific and cultural achievers exempt from socialist equality. These artists were lavished with exorbitant financial rewards, enjoyed luxurious lifestyles, and were socially courted by Stalin and other Party leaders.

/ 3.3.2 LEADERSHIP POSTURES

Pre-eminence of elite artists in totalitarian regimes differed from the professional advancement open to career-minded party activists, regardless of merit. It was

due to the ambitions of political leaders to sponsor the arts, as pre-modern aristocrats or modern business tycoons had done, to exalt their prominence near the top of their political hierarchies. It was in Germany, where Hitler's claim to artistic leadership compensated for an underdeveloped political organization of the arts, that the ascendancy of elite artists was most spectacular. From the start of his rule, Hitler looked up to architect Paul Troost, then made Albert Speer his architectural plenipotentiary, and eventually drew sculptors Arno Breker and Josef Thorak into his innermost circle. In Italy and the Soviet Union, with a more thorough organization of the arts in place, preeminent architects such as Luigi Moretti and Boris Iofan were privileged with prime commissions over and above institutional procedure, while painters such as Mario Sironi or Isaak Brodsky so endeared themselves to political leaders that they came to exercise a de-facto art-political authority of their own.

The leadership of elite artists' over and above political organizations of the arts mirrored that of political leaders in governance who favored and promoted them, whose mode of dealing with them was one of admiration rather than condescension, and who even shielded them from accountability when their irresponsible political behavior got them into trouble. While Goebbels in his diary congratulated himself on showering Thorak with top commissions, a local party group rated him as politically unreliable, whereupon Munich Gauleiter Adolf Wagner summarily ruled, "that the political assessment of Professor Thorak can be regarded closed on account of the fact that he is one of the most important artists of our time."(34) Attacks on Pavel Korin's paintings extolling orthodox priests in the middle of Stalin's clampdown on the Church did him no harm, since he was a friend of War Commissar Kliment Voroshilov. "Voroshilov said: 'Korin, stop painting popes!'" Korin remembers from a visit. "We [...] began to wrestle [...]. I was pleased: Voroshilov commanded the army, but he did not command art."(35)

Still, totalitarian elite artists owed their success less to their sponsors' preferences than to their own combination of talent and assertiveness within their political environment. Their self-assurance fitted in with the reckless self-promotion of totalitarian political elites. It prompted them to make the expression of power jibe with their creative self-fulfillment. They needed no conformity to serve. Consistent with their de-facto positions of leadership, Sironi and Breker were able to impose their personal styles of brutalized classicism as aesthetic hallmarks of their regimes and as paradigms for others. They rose above the multifarious literary attempts at defining Fascist or National Socialist styles in the debates and pronouncements of artistic culture. Sironi's and Breker's role-model standing remained unmatched by any Soviet elite artist, none of whom could escape some form of arbitrated competition. No personal accomplishment was permitted to stay aloof from Socialist Realism as a shared paradigm, authorized and supervised by Party leadership, while still allowing for personal preeminence.

/3.3.3 POWER, MONEY, SOCIAL STATUS

In Italy, elite artists tended to blend into the leadership of corporations and juries. They dealt with cultural officials on an all but equal footing, and issued programmatic declarations to back up their positions, sometimes even against party orthodoxy. Sironi, who promoted his views in a ceaseless stream of writings, came closest to policymaking, unmatched by any other totalitarian artist. Once Hitler in 1937 lost patience with political art institutions and took art policy in his own hands, elite artists rose to the highest institutional independence. Disregarding regular appointment protocols, Hitler appointed Thorak and Breker as academy professors. Unlike Italy, however, such artists had no authority on commissions and awards, and stood back from influencing policies. Only in the USSR was the ascendancy of elite artists channeled through existing art institutions. Brodsky rose to head the Leningrad Academy and Aleksandr Gerasimov to head the national artists' organization. Iofan's monopoly on the commissions for the Palace of Soviets and for the Soviet Pavilions at both World Expositions of 1937 and 1939 was masked by pro-forma competitions.

Skyrocketing financial rewards exempted elite artists in totalitarian states from the economic equity that artists' organizations had been meant to ensure. In the two capitalist dictatorships, they joined the big earners of other professions, not unlike their late 19th century predecessors. In the USSR, they joined a meritocracy of specialists allowed to crash socialist wage ceilings. Speer charged fees amounting to millions of marks for his work on the reconstruction of Berlin. The atelier he built for Thorak at Baldham near Munich was touted as "the world's largest atelier" in the national press.(36) Breker set up a private company for the production and marketing of his outsize sculptures. Hitler gave him a huge atelier next to a villa for living and hosting lavish parties of National Socialist high society. In the USSR, the 'Stalin Prize' was established in 1939, with exorbitant dotations of 100,000 and 50,000 rubles awarded to single artists for specific works. Iconic works such as Mukhina's *Worker and Collective-Farm Girl* were singled out for these awards. It was the culmination of an inordinate rise of fees for artists included in the so-called "new class" of a privileged intelligentsia.

Eventually, elite artists were drawn into the social networks of the totalitarian regimes' highest dignitaries, including dictators in person. Earlier claims to egalitarian lifestyles—advertised in the tales of Stalin's, Mussolini's, and Hitler's frugal lifestyles—were shed for a mix of pseudo-aristocratic and upper middle-class self-representation, whose cultural veneer elite artists were drawn upon to validate. The salon of Margharita Sarfatti, with Mussolini in attendance, even became the springboard for artists' careers. Sculptor Arturo Martini, unable to shed his low-class origins for the sake of this social posture, eventually fell from favor. Painter Aleksandr Gerasimov and sculptor Arno Breker, rewarded with large villas, entertained totalitarian high society

in their salons. Soviet painter Mikhail Nesterov, himself an overpaid elite artist and in 1941 recipient of one of the first Stalin Prizes, included four of his peers in a series of portraits he painted of the newly-ascendant cultural elite. In 1940, he pictured Vera Mukhina in her Sunday best, polishing the finished plaster model of a flying wind figure, done in 1938, in a spirited interaction with her work.