4 / Toward War

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4.1/ Art Policy and War Policy

/1 GERMAN ART SUPREME

/1.1 BUILDING AND REARMAMENT

/1.1.1 THE CAPITAL OF FUTURE CONQUEST

When the reconstruction plans for Berlin were finalized in 1936, to be publicly revealed on January 30, 1937, a functional correlation of art policy and war policy in Germany became apparent. Renamed 'Germania,' Berlin was to be turned into a capital of future conquest, both in the geopolitical range of its traffic connections and in respect to the resources needed for its reconstruction. This supra-national capital was to be exalted into a world-historical monumental cityscape on a par with ancient Babylon or Rome, shedding any national characteristics or functional correlation with the specifics of city or national governance. For such an absolute monumentality, questions of traditional or modern art, or of a characteristically German or National Socialist art, were no longer relevant. Procurement of labor and building materials was expanded beyond the private economy to include the economic enterprises and the police jurisdiction of the SS, which developed its concentration camps at Flossenbürg, Mauthausen, Sachsenhausen, and elsewhere into facilities for quarrying and cutting stone. After the start of the war, this resource base was to extend into the newly-conquered territories.

In the monumental topography of 'Germania's' projected government center, the 'Führer's Palace' and the Supreme Army Command flanked the panorama of a giant 'People's Hall' behind a plaza, shielding its entrance like a vise. Given the political emptiness of the central building, the symmetrical pair of blocks conveyed the pre-eminence of military policy in the governance of the 'Führer State.' A huge 'Soldiers' Hall' by Wilhelm Kreis, preceding the three-building group on the left-hand side, was to loom over the arrangement. It was meant to celebrate the fallen of past wars, whose remains were to be collected in a giant crypt for public view. The front wall of the barrel-vaulted hall, which looked like the nave of a Romanesque basilica, was to feature a statue of *The Victor* by Arno Breker, towering fourteen meters tall. This quasi-sacred building, which the accompanying literature likened to "a giant altar,"[192] was to be the site of a commemorative liturgy celebrating perennial warfare as the destiny of the German nation. Taken together with the symmetrical pair of adjacent buildings, it proclaimed the current German government's ongoing war preparations as a historic mission.

The enormous triumphal arch at the start of the central parade avenue leading up to the government center, for which Speer adapted a sketch Hitler had made in 1926 while in prison, was to be inscribed with the names of every single one of the millions of German soldiers fallen in World War I. In a reckless reversal of triumphal logic, it turned the German defeat of 1918 into an anticipation of victory. Speer's adaptation of Hitler's old drawing for the political architecture of 'Germania' matched Hitler's principled but unspecific war plans as outlined in *My Struggle,* shortly after his release from prison. Now Hitler wished to line the access route with rows of captured Soviet cannons, unequivocally anticipating an invasion of the Soviet Union. The political timeliness of the projected building contrasts with the intended significance of Alberto Libera's equally giant aluminum arch projected in March 1937, which was to surmount the 'Peace Altar' in the center of the planned E42 at Rome (see below, 2.2.3). While Mussolini's vacillations between peace and war discredited Libera's design, Speer designed his own in lockstep with Hitler's steadily unfolding war policy.

/1.1.2 ARCHITECTURE OF AGGRESSION

In 1936, synchronous with the introduction of the draft, the long-planned monumental addition to the Olympic Stadium in Berlin of an even larger, rectangular parade ground, called 'May Field' after the staging areas of Merovingian troops, was built. It confirmed the National Socialist view of the Greek ideal of sports as a war training, as if the Olympic Games were just a passing truce, as it had been in ancient Greece. The memorial hall in the center of the stands was named after Langemarck, the area near Ypres in the Belgian province of Western Flanders, where in October and November 1914 two thousand German soldiers were machine-gunned in a futile attempt to break through French lines. In the center of its floor, a steel slab covered earth shipped from the local war cemetery. Here the ancient Greek notion of physical fitness as the ethics of a warrior caste was displayed with historic topicality, in open contradiction to the modern Olympic ideal of a festival of peaceful competition. After the Olympics, the May Field continued to be used for political and military mass events that celebrated the convergence of sports and politics on the goal of readiness for war.

Two years later, in 1938, shortly after the annexation of Austria, a similar 'March Field,' named after the ancient Roman military staging area, opened as the last addition to the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds. It was a war games theater for 650,000 visitors, where the assembled party members, SA, and other affiliated organizations could watch the *Wehrmacht* boast its modern weaponry and combat tactics. Military games had been part of the annual Nuremberg Party Rallies since 1934, but were confined to the Zeppelin Field, which they had to share with rallies and parades, careful not to damage its stone structure. Although the March Field had been part of the initial planning, its construction had been delayed. In 1938 it was suddenly deemed

so urgent it was used for military shows while still under construction. Six times the size of the Luitpold Arena and encased by twenty-four square stone towers connected by a floating wall of swastika flags, this giant area, true to its name, looked like a Roman fortified army camp. By far the largest of the rallying grounds, it was landscaped inside to evoke a wild heathland, a natural environment for realistic battle games complete with blazing cannons and roaring tanks.

The ostentatious deployment of an ornate architecture of aggression culminated in the breakneck, semi-secret completion of the long-planned New Reich Chancellery in Berlin, replete with triumphal military imagery, signs and symbols. It was built within the time stretch between the annexations of Austria in April 1938 and Czechoslovakia in January 1939. In the official book issued on the Chancellery's completion in January 1939, Hitler made no bones about what he considered the urgency of having it ready for starting the implementation of his expansionist plans. It is here that, after dismissing his war minister and his Army commander, he began to exercise his own supreme command of the *Wehrmacht* to ready it for action. The menacing Mars head and the half-drawn sword inlaid on the front panel of the mahogany desk in Hitler's office reveal to what extent the New Chancellery was a monument of anticipated triumph in an imminent war. Hitler especially liked the half-drawn sword. "Very well, if the diplomats sitting before me at this desk will see this, they will learn to be fearful," he is reported to have said.(193)

/1.1.3 ARCHITECTURAL WAR POLICY

The ever more unbridled architectural display of military power as the bedrock of both domestic stability and foreign territorial expansion quickly shed the populist and diplomatic restraints that German art policy had observed until 1936. It grew in tandem with the government's political turn towards increasingly repressive governance at home and increasingly unmitigated threats of war abroad. Hitler's vision of Berlin as a City of Future Conquest pertained to the anticipatory character of totalitarian rule. It only appears imaginary in the hindsight of its later refutation. Hitler was determined to transpose the making of architecture from the realm of social policy into that of war policy, where it was being pursued as part of Germany's eastward colonization drive. A keen if failed student of architecture, Hitler had largely assumed personal oversight of national architectural policy from the start of his regime. When in late 1937 German war preparations became operational, he used his increasingly personalized conduct of governance to correlate architectural policy with the war effort underway, micromanaging both simultaneously.

Jochen Thies, Robert Taylor and others have pointed out that the comprehensive architectural programs in Berlin, Nuremberg, and almost fifty other German cities, earmarked for rebuilding according to Hitler's notions of monumental state

architecture, could never have been implemented with the financial, material, and labor resources available in Germany alone. Rather, those programs required the resources from the Eastern territories in Poland and the Soviet Union, to be conquered in the coming war. The intended transformation of cities monumentalizing future conquests was to be part of those conquests, anticipating the split of the subject population into a German master race and a non-German mass of working slaves. Procurement of labor and building materials was increasingly expanded beyond the private sector to include the economic enterprises and the police jurisdiction of the SS, which had already developed its domestic concentration camps into facilities for quarrying and cutting stone. Extended to the conquered territories, this policy was to collect labor as a by-product of extermination.

In a crucial passage of his preface to a book on his architecture published in 1978, Albert Speer takes issue with the merely ideological understanding of his work which had been current until then. He draws the essential distinction between ideology and policy, between ideological programs and political objectives. Hitler "had to determine the sense of his buildings" if he wished to implement his policies, Speer insisted.(194) Indeed, he did not care to translate the commonplace elements of National Socialist ideology into his architecture. Classical to the core, it expresses nothing about race, nothing about Germanic origins, nothing about a healthy people's community—in short, nothing of all those concepts that Rosenberg and other Party ideologues had long highlighted as ingredients of National Socialist culture. It was Jochen Thies who in 1976 first characterized Hitler's architecture as an instrument of his policies, rather than their mere expression.(195) As in ancient Babylon, Egypt, or Rome, which Hitler looked up to as his paradigms, grand designs of state policy and architecture were pursued in tandem. Monumental building was an integral part of political strategy.

/1.2 HITLER'S ART STRATEGY

/1.2.1 FROM IDEOLOGY TO POLICY

To what extent Hitler's professional origins as a minimally-trained painter and vainly-aspiring architect, along with his experience as a frontline soldier through all four years of World War I, determined his approach to politics, is a much-debated question, particularly since he often asserted that he formed his key convictions early on in his political career and held on to them unchanged. The first volume of *My Struggle,* published in 1925, includes only two passages of a few pages each devoted to art policy, little by comparison to the lengthy sections about republican government, war, "race," foreign policy, and many other themes. The first passage deals with painting, the second with architecture. They address the two concerns of Hitler's failed artistic career.

From these passages and other testimonies Thies concludes "that since 1924/26 Hitler found himself in a sort of preliminary planning phase which after his accession to the chancellorship, he stepped up from one day to the next and implemented by decisions."[196] Hitler's origins as a semi-skilled artist and a low-rank combat soldier informed his later pursuit of art policy as war policy.

The two principal doctrines informing Hitler's concerns for art and architecture—Anti-Semitism and Anti-Bolshevism in the visual arts, and the ideal of world-power architecture on the paradigms of Egypt, Greece and Rome—emerged as art-political guidelines of the military expansionism he pursued almost instantly upon his accession. The first doctrine was easier to pursue than the second. It was made operational in the interrelated promotion of the Great German Art Exhibition and the Degenerate Art exhibition in 1937, the year of the Hossbach conference, and in the subsequent continuation of both shows until the summer 1944 as endeavors of an increasingly militant propaganda mission. The interrelation between architectural policy and war policy was a project of a different magnitude. In 1941, when conquests in the USSR should have provided forced labor, the priority of arms production stopped most building in its tracks. Yet Hitler's phantasy of power architecture kept haunting him until April 1945, when he viewed Speer's models in his 'Leader's Bunker' in Berlin, as Soviet troops were closing in above.

It is the triple relationship between long-term ideological projections initiated before 1933, medium-term strategic planning in government, and short-term tactical decisions to build at appropriate moments, which until 1939 shaped the timeline of Hitler's architectural policy. Its up-to-the minute synchronicity between politics and building impressed contemporary beholders. Although the March Field at the Olympic Stadium complex in Berlin was part of the 1933 plan, it was only built for immediate use in 1937. The May Field at the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds was part of the 1934 plan, but it was only built in 1938. And although plans for the New Reich Chancellery were ready in 1936, Hitler attributed its breakneck construction within one year to a political decision of January 1938. Thus, by 1938 German art policy and German war policy were meshed. Except for the short-lived, inexpensive, non-monumental art of the Spanish Republic under siege, only German art, in lockstep with German diplomacy, made the coming of war apparent for all to see. Nowhere else in Europe—the other two totalitarian states included—was art policy so keenly timed.

/1.2.2 ART POLICY FOR WAR

Already in *My Struggle*, Hitler had openly stated his expansionist geopolitical plans of quick rearmament and future conquest. However, once he had been appointed chancellor, for three years his foreign policy was designed to project a deceptive posture of peaceful coexistence, no matter how determined he remained

in the pursuit of his original intentions. The worries of other European states about this seeming contradiction, which Hitler deliberately nurtured, is the overriding political sentiment of the years leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War. They failed to take Hitler's synchronization of architectural policy and war policy as seriously as they did his diplomacy. It was the time lag between early planning and delayed building which made this architectural policy deceptive. In July 1936, at the Olympics in Berlin, the militaristic signals of the May Field were overlooked. In September 1938, the first war games held at the partially completed Nuremberg March Field coincided with Neville Chamberlain's dictum "peace in our time" pronounced after the Munich conference.

At the secret Hossbach Conference of November 5, 1937, Hitler had decided on the timetable of a war to come. In the public forum of foreign relations, however, he pursued a deceptive policy of voicing his demands for expansion as conditions for a lasting peace. Foreign governments were aware of the contradiction between the menace of rearmament and the promise of peaceful cooperation, but nonetheless gave in. Arms production dominated the display of industrial advance at the huge show *Give Me Four Years' Time*, held in Berlin between April 30 and June 20, 1937, whose title referenced a promise Hitler had made at the time of his accession. "You are seeing only military airplanes, submarines and combat vehicles," reported French ambassador André François-Poncet.[197] As late as August 25, 1939, six days before the attack on Poland, the annual Nuremberg Party Rally was planned under the motto "Reich Party Rally of Peace" ("Reichsparteitag des Friedens"), only to be cancelled the next day. That Hitler should have pursued his barely deceptive posture to the end confirms that he regarded architectural policy as both a tool of and a smokescreen for his strategy.

In a speech delivered to the commanding generals of the Army on February 10, 1939, Hitler addressed concerns about the risk of economic overextension caused by simultaneously pursuing military buildup and monumental building. He pointed out that his numerous architectural projects were intended to impress his military resolve, which the tactics of diplomacy let him conceal abroad, upon the people. "They will tell me: but you rearm.—Gentlemen, that's what the people unfortunately don't see, because of course I cannot speak about it quite openly. That's the hidden part."[198] Hence it was necessary, Hitler went on to say, to increase monumental building for creating the environment of a strong state, which would fill the people with enthusiasm. Fritz Erler's idealized Hitler portrait on display at the Great German Art Exhibition five months later is an apt illustration of his posture. It depicts Hitler as the patron of a monumental building-in-progress, standing before a huge statue of a sword-bearing warrior about to release an eagle into the sky, personifying the start of war. He is shown as a live component of a monument to his duplicitous strategy.

/1.2.3 ALBERT SPEER

Albert Speer, since 1934 head architect of the Nuremberg Party Rally grounds, and since 1936 General Inspector of the Reconstruction of Berlin with the authority to override local building administrations, internalized the loyalty principle of the 'Führer State' so thoroughly as a creative motivation that Hitler entrusted him with making his vision of political architecture a reality. Speer's new office in Berlin empowered him "to avail himself of the authorities of the Reich, of the Prussian State and of the City for his purposes,"[199] answerable to Hitler alone. It was an instance of the totalitarian practice of overriding established political and administrative institutions. Speer's competencies reached far beyond his practice as an architect. The New Reich Chancellery was, in Hitler's judgment, a prime example of the efficiency that enabled Speer to use his leadership for timely achievement. "No discussion, no try-outs have preceded the common work. Speer traced the marching route in a Prussian manner, [and] we met again when our results were fitted into the almost finished organism," sculptor Arno Breker characterized Speer's routine.[200]

As early as the fall of 1940, Speer made a futile bid for nation-wide organizational authority when he asked Hitler to create the party office of a 'Führer's Commissioner for Architecture and Urbanism,' which he himself expected to head. Here his jurisdiction would have been amplified far beyond his own building projects to include the oversight of all architects working for the government. At that time, Minister of Armaments Fritz Todt, whose authority included that of a plenipotentiary for building, still stood in the way of Speer's ascendancy. It is only after Todt's accidental death on February 8, 1942, that Hitler appointed him Todt's successor as Minister of Armaments and Ammunition, and in 1943, Minister for Armament and War Production at large. In this capacity, Speer kept war production at full tilt until the end. Speer's last appointment fulfilled the long-harbored ambition of numerous 20th-century German architects to shape social and political conditions. But while they pursued such goals by means of urbanism, public buildings and mass housing, Speer's public architecture had been ceremonial and monumental. As soon as he rose to political power, he stopped building.

Yet, unlike modern architects, Speer, for all his political ambitions, abstained from any claims to setting architectural policy. When he outlined his principles in an article of 1936, he defined architecture as a key part of the political process rather than a flanking ideological measure, and hence as an integral component of Hitler's undivided political will. The two other protagonists of art policy from the early years of the regime, Alfred Rosenberg, himself a former architect, and Joseph Goebbels, a former writer, likewise moved into crucial functions of political responsibility during the war—Rosenberg as Reich Minister for the occupied Eastern territories in 1941, and Goebbels as Reich Commissar for Total War in 1943. It seems that Hitler rated the ideological

intransigence of the three men's cultural activities as a benefit for implementing war policy with the necessary ruthlessness, a risky assignment for more sober minds. In his eyes, their reckless disregard for historical circumstance—inherent in National Socialist ideology—qualified them to steer a losing cause under the delusion of victory to the end.

/1.3 WAR ART BEFORE THE WAR

/1.3.1 GUARDED WAR PROPAGANDA

When did German preparations for expansionist warfare, secretly underway since the reintroduction of the draft on August 24, 1936, surface as a public policy, entailing war propaganda in the arts? Did Hitler's duplicitous practice of whipping up domestic sentiment for war while dangling out prospects of peace abroad impose diplomatic limits on such openness? Even though the political changes undertaken since January 1938 to prepare the German state for imminent war—shakeup of the Wehrmacht command and empowerment of the SS as a national police force—were deliberate enough, war propaganda in the arts was calibrated to balance military resolve and peaceable intentions, as Breker's pair of sculptures *Party* and *Army* proclaims. Hitler's foreign policy of territorial expansion by diplomatic pressure, backed up by threats of war, was flanked by an art policy that proclaimed adamant but peaceable strength. In 1937, at the Paris Expo, the German Pavilion, unlike its Soviet counterparts, featured neither arms nor soldiers. In his opening speech, Economics Minister Hjalmar Schacht emphatically denied any German war plans.

In 1938, the difficulties of an economy gearing up for war coincided with a slump in the state-controlled artistic culture catering to the market. The number of visitors to the second Great German Art Exhibition fell from over 500,000 to 460,000, and the sales from 750,000 to 420,000 Marks. SS Security Service agents recorded artists' complaints about lacking government support.(201) Particularly striking was the small number of war and military themes in the three Great German Art Exhibitions of 1937-1939. Of the 896 works on view in 1937, only 16 fell under that category; of the 1,405 shown in 1938, only 27; and of the 1,564 shown in 1939, only 31. These exhibitions, it turned out, barely registered the overriding policy issue of their time. Only a few elite artists, parading their state commissions, put symbolic images of combat-readiness on view. In 1939, less than three months before the attack on Poland, Arno Breker exhibited a nude warrior walking uphill and drawing his sword, entitled *Bereitschaft (Readiness)*. It looked as if his warrior figure in the courtyard of the New Reich Chancellery from the year before was shedding his restraint and moving into action.

The near-complete absence of contemporary military imagery in the art of the state that was the driving force in the European arms race toward World War II,

betrays the circumspection whereby German art policy was handling the war theme. It went hand in hand with the absence of any foe imagery which might have given a clue as to whom German rearmament was targeting. The limited number and generic vagueness of war subjects is astonishing, since the Wehrmacht had long displayed its combat readiness in parades, shows, and films, culminating in the massive war games staged at the Nuremberg Party rallies. Perhaps the visual ubiquity of the military in the public sphere was considered out of place in an art for private enjoyment. No doubt the scarcity of war themes in the two Great German Art Exhibitions of 1938 and 1939 was due to the German public's weariness of facing the prospect of a sequel to World War I, of which in 1938 Army Chief of Staff Ludwig Beck had warned in a secret memo. Since no themes were set for participating artists, they stuck to their professional goal of finding buyers for pleasant pictures.

/1.3.2 ANOTHER WAR

The German war art that appeared before the start of World War II had a clear ideological focus, lacked by that of the two other totalitarian states: a revisionist commemoration of World War I, whose supposedly undeserved loss the National Socialist government pledged to reverse. This was the issue that had marred the bitterly antagonistic war memorial culture of the Weimar Republic. From 1933 on, war monuments from the Weimar Republic judged to be defeatist were removed. Starting in 1937, the traveling 'Degenerate Art' show denounced anti-war imagery from that time under the slogan "Painted Undermining of Military Strength (*Wehrkraftzersetzung*)." Such measures were aimed at suppressing any fear of loss standing in the way of yet another war within one generation. Of the scarce number of military themes in the three Great German Art Exhibitions of 1937-1939, 4 out of 16 included images of World War I in 1937, 8 out of 27 in 1938, and 19 out of 31 in 1939. These historical depictions of outdated fighting were the only war images on view. Descriptive images of the contemporary military in its new uniforms and modernized battle gear were nowhere to be seen.

Two months after the outbreak of the war, *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich* published an article entitled "Painters of the World War 1914–1918" by Werner Rittich, a collaborator of Alfred Rosenberg. Going beyond the ideological commonplace "that the National Socialist world view and the new Germany were born at the fronts of the World War,"[202] the author construed a continuity between that war and the one just started. He reviewed some well-known war painters of 1914–1918, whose works, unlike conventional battle pictures, had foregrounded the fighting spirit and endurance of common soldiers, a "readiness for sacrifice without distinctions as to social status and origin."[203] They could now resume their civilian work where they had left off, he expected, since the class-less ideal of a people's war was being revived. The only work by a contemporary painter illustrated in Rittich's article, Albert Henrich's *1917,* which

had just been shown at the Great German Art Exhibition of 1938, juxtaposed a German and a British steel helmet, both pierced by bullet holes. The image would have suggested an even-handed commemoration of fallen enemies, were it not for the dominant position of the German over the British helmet.

A large painting by Wilhelm Sauter, the author of the famous *Heroes' Shrine* of 1936 (see Chapter 2.2 / 3.1.2), entitled *Badensian Grenadiers at Cambrai 1917*, shown at the Great German Art Exhibition of 1939, complies with Willrich's readjustment of the topicality of World War I for tracing the political struggles of the National Socialist movement to the war effort of 1939. It shows a detachment of German infantry crawling forward through the mud in a successful counterattack to retake their positions overrun by British tanks, one of which looms, disabled, at the top of the hill. Sauter stressed the soldiers' exertion to the point of showing one of them dead or dying. However, since they are lifting their heads, no longer seeking cover, their victory seems assured. The painting refers to the month-long 'tank battle' of Cambrai between November and December 1917, where British tanks overran the German positions, only to be repelled by a comeback of German infantry using hand grenades, heavy-ammunition machine guns, and light cannon to destroy them. The battle became emblematic for German soldiers' tenacity in overcoming superior weaponry.

/ 1.3.3 HARDSHIP AND ENDURANCE

A widely-publicized mural cycle for the City Hall in Berlin-Schöneberg, inaugurated on January 11, 1939, struck the tone for this commemorative imagery of fierce determination. Painted by Franz Eichhorst, who had served as a frontline painter in a government art program of World War I, it linked the common soldiers' endurance to the common people's readiness to fight. For his depictions of peasants on the field and construction workers on the scaffold heeding the call to arms without hesitation, Eichhorst adapted Ferdinand Hodler's famous oil painting *Departure of the Students of Jena* of 1909. He grafted the excited disposition of university students volunteering for the Prussian War of Liberation in 1813 onto working-class conscripts. However, Eichhorst's battle scenes from World War I did not dwell on the popular war enthusiasm of summer 1914, but on the fierce endurance of steel-helmeted German shock troopers in 1917-1918. Taking a page from popular and commercial war art of those years, he even included the somber retreat of German troops after the armistice of November 1918.

Franz Radziwill, Party member and front soldier in World War I (see Chapter 3.1 / 1.1.3), now thought the time was right to paint some more of the gloomy pictures of battlefield destruction he had produced in 1929-1930, to take two paintings of shrapnel-pierced German steel helmets of 1933 and 1934 out of storage, and to assemble all of them in varying World War I series at several shows. The series culminated in a

large canvas of 1939 depicting the iconic tank battle of Cambrai, featuring two pierced German steel helmets in the foreground near a pile of empty cartridge shells. Perhaps Radziwill speculated that works like this would match the new propagandistic evocation of World War I with its non-triumphalist emphasis on hardship and endurance. Yet, perhaps because he shunned the uplifting expression of tenacity usually pervading this kind of imagery, he failed in his bid to have them purchased by regional military commanders. After his official repudiation by Reich Chamber of Art President Adolf Ziegler in late 1937, he did not follow the advice of some of his more successful colleagues to submit them to the Great German Art Exhibition of 1938.

The series of wall tapestries designed by Werner Peiner for the New Reich Chancellery in 1939-1940 set the benchmark for a German war art foregoing triumphalism for endurance. The cartoons worked out at the Hermann Göring art school at Kronenburg, which Peiner directed, were never woven, but prominently displayed at the Great German Art Exhibition of 1940 and widely reproduced. For a building whose triumphalist splendor had been intended to exalt the Third Reich's political preeminence in Europe, personified in Breker's sword-bearing warrior at the entrance, it was remarkable that two of the seven battles Peiner represented—Marienburg and Kunersdorf—depicted defeats, and three more—Teutoburg Forest, Vienna, and Cambrai—successful defenses. The last event in chronological order, the 1917 tank battle of Cambrai. which Peiner designed in 1940 after two *Blitzkrieg* victories over Poland and France, brought the historic battle cycle up to World War I, the ideological precedent of the war under way. True to its iconic significance, Peiner pitted the British tanks against German horse-drawn artillery and included several dead or wounded German soldiers.

/ 2 TOTALITARIAN DISPARITIES

/ 2.1 PREPARED OR UNPREPARED FOR WAR

/ 2.1.1 OVERVIEW

The next World Exposition after that of Paris opened in New York on April 30, 1939, four months before the start of World War II (see Chapter 4.2/1.1.1). It featured a Soviet Pavilion even more triumphalist than that in Paris, yet with no German one to match. This representative asymmetry obscured the political dynamics of the moment, which was to turn both adversaries into temporary allies. When the Hitler-Stalin Pact was signed on August 22, 1939, it seemed as if the two states that were now both routinely called totalitarian had arrived at a shared geopolitical strategy. The Pact seemed to confirm their political symmetry, rather than their confrontation, as the message to be drawn from their facing pavilions at the Paris Expo two years earlier,

obscuring their ongoing war preparations against each other. Even though the Italian Pavilion at the New York World Fair continued to promote the E42 as the event that would foster peaceful international cooperation on the terms of Fascist order, the Paris Expo's phantom of a monumental art of national diversity, pooling antagonistic political regimes at peace with one another, had evanesced. By the second season, the Italian and the Soviet pavilions were closed.

In the course of the decade, the art policies of the three totalitarian states regarding war drifted apart. Unlike Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union, the two states still present at the New York World Fair—for all the generic militarism of their artistic cultures—had no firm war policies in place to endow large art projects with a timely propaganda mission. After Italy's colonial mutation into an 'Empire,' war was no longer an ideological component of Mussolini's capital reconstruction scheme, which was now focused on the projected World Exposition of 1942. The E42, he reckoned, would confirm the international acquiescence to his North African conquests obtained in 1936, and would be acknowledged as a monumental setting of peace on Fascist terms. In the Soviet Union, the expansionist project of a communist world revolution, proclaimed in Vladimir Tatlin's 1921 design for a *Monument of the Third International*, no longer informed the plans for the reconstruction of Moscow in general and for the Palace of Soviets in particular, both of which were focused on celebrating the achievement of socialism in one country.

Thus, the synchronization of art policy and war policy in Germany, which proceeded in lockstep with its calibrated mix of war threats and peace promises until the Wehrmacht was ready to strike, proved to be the most consistent scheme of a totalitarian coordination of the arts with a strategic timetable, a manifestation of political will to which the other two totalitarian states had no deliberate response. Italy's lack of any art anticipating the coming war—as opposed to its earlier war art celebrating its North African aggression—followed from Mussolini's misjudgment of Hitler's short-term strategy and his reluctance to be drawn into the conflict. To design the E42 with spaces for pavilions of states that might be soon at war with one another amounted to political self-deception. The Soviet Union, which had gutted its own military command in the Tukhachevsky purge of 1937, was politically so unprepared for war that it joined Germany as a short-term ally when war was within weeks of breaking out. Although its industry was geared to match, and eventually overtake, German arms production, its artistic culture merely continued showcasing its defensive resolve.

/ 2.1.2 'INTER-WAR' CULTURE

All three totalitarian states shared a militarization of their societies and their political cultures, albeit with profound distinctions. Each one had a different ideological memory of the First World War and a different ideological anticipation of another war

to come. These differences had a bearing on the strategies that determined their military build-ups during the decade. Only Germany's political culture envisaged a coming war as a political option, ostensibly conceived as a rectification of the losses and restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. What it concealed was Hitler's long-term goal of an eastward territorial expansion, although it became ever more visible in his conduct of foreign policy after having been defined in the Hossbach conference of November 1937. In the USSR, on the other hand, the First World War, which had ended in an ignominious surrender by the incoming Bolshevik government, was never commemorated. Instead, the ensuing Civil War, which had secured the Soviet state against foreign intervention, was celebrated as a precedent of vigilance against the danger of capitalist encirclement.

Fascist Italy commemorated World War I as a hard-won victory, which had steeled the resolve of the military personnel that formed the core of the Fascist Party. Monuments to the *fante,* the common soldier, dotted the country, replete with references to this continuity. Marinetti and his Futurist artists flaunted their voluntary war service to bolster their Fascist credentials. National Socialist Germany, on the other hand, denounced the German loss of the war as undeserved, due to a treacherous political submission rather than military defeat, and to be overturned one day. Seemingly defeatist War memorials from the Weimar Republic mourning soldiers of World War I as mere victims, with an implicit or explicit pacifist message, were removed. In the USSR, by contrast, the historic precedent for the military component of political culture remained the Civil War, as it had been during the preceding decade, without noticeable enhancements, although in 1932 it acquired a new topicality after Soviet policies of linking up with the world economy had failed. And when another German attack appeared to threaten, the previous one was not invoked.

After 1936, Italy's war art was reoriented onto its victorious colonial war in North Africa, which had transformed the Fascist state into a supra-national 'Empire,' now eager for international cooperation. Hence the absence of any prospective belligerency in the political culture of the following years, as confirmed by Mussolini's declaration of neutrality as late as September 3, 1939. The USSR included the build-up of its military strength in the general triumphalism extolling the achievement of socialism in one country, with an emphasis on its readiness for defeating territorial encroachments from abroad. This was the message conveyed by the armed soldiers alternating with joyful civilians on the socle reliefs of the Soviet Pavilion at the Paris World Exposition of 1937. Thus, it comes as no surprise that, for all their military imagery, neither Italy nor the USSR came up with any big-time ventures of war art to match those of Germany in monumental grandeur, aggressive thrust, and, above all, coordination with long-term strategic planning. Neither one of them had an art policy designed to foster readiness, if not enthusiasm, for a war to come.

/ 2.1.3 WAR OBJECTIVES

Italy's imperialist glorification of its Mediterranean conquests was tempered by its ambition to make the World Exposition of 1942 into a scene of international peace, discredited in 1940 by its ill-fated invasion of Greece. In Germany, on the other hand, the surge of triumphalist war art was keyed to the military threat as a diplomatic component of its expansionist drive. Soviet art responded to the apparent German threat by abandoning the aggressive posture of a world revolution, which the Comintern called off after Hitler's accession, and parading Soviet rearmament as a salient part of the two Five-Year Plans in the triumphalist style of Socialist Realism. But it produced no visual narratives of past or recent military action. The differences in the scope and significance of war art between the three totalitarian states—first, between Germany and the other two, and second, between Italy and the USSR—point to the functional connection between war policy and art policy. Only Germany had a calculated, long-term policy of military expansion in place, to which the other two totalitarian states reacted in their different ways.

The Spanish Civil War, which for the first time pitted Germany and Italy against the Soviet Union in an armed conflict, left no trace in the arts of any one of the three totalitarian states involved, but became a major theme in the art of democratic France. Their unacknowledged interference did not require whipping up political support at home or propaganda abroad. Behind this equilibrium of muffled interventions lurked the long-term antagonism between two of the three totalitarian states supporting opposite sides. Although the art of the Civil War in Spain and France often enough denounced 'fascist' intervention, it ignored Soviet support. This asymmetry concealed the inherent German-Soviet confrontation. The lack of either coverage or political specificity about the Spanish Civil War in the art of all four states contributed to the all-pervasive but disoriented anticipation of war in the public sphere during the last three years of the decade. Hitler keenly exploited this rampant uncertainty about the start and conduct of a war that was regarded as inevitable.

Of the pre-war war arts of all four states, only those of the Soviet Union and of France manifested an underlying strategy—defense of the territory—, seemingly unspecific in the Soviet Union, directed against Germany in France. This common strategy, which in 1935 led to their military alliance, accounts for the anti-fascist or anti-German flanking ideology. The pre-war war arts of Germany and Italy, on the other hand, despite their aggressive appearance, were ideologically obtuse. Neither the revanchist ideology of German art nor the retrospective triumphalism of Italian art revealed any underlying strategy. Germany's strategy was deliberately concealed, whereas Italy's was inconsistent even after the start of the war. All these differences clouded the pre-war war art of the three other states. It was the most blatant aspect

of the discrepancies between policy and ideology pervading their artistic cultures (see Chapter 2.3). Accurate foreign assessments of current art in Germany, such as the reports of French ambassador André François-Poncet, remained exceptions without political consequences.

/2.2 ART OF *PAX ROMANA*

/2.2.1 MEMORIALS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The construction of 'monuments to the fallen' of World War I, undertaken by regional and local authorities all over Italy, had never been a controversial political issue, not only because Italy counted itself on the winners' side, but also because Mussolini had promoted Italy's entry into World War I from the start, and his Fascist Party kept eulogizing this decision. Debates about the artistic makeup of such monuments, on the other hand, fanned by the elaborate competitions preceding their construction, had been fervent, but had merely focused on expressive and symbolic aspects of their imagery. The foremost issue of these debates was the alternative of mourning and triumphalism in the commemoration of the simple soldier, typecast as *fante.* Thus, Fascist Italy was spared the toxic controversies surrounding the Weimar Republic's war memorials, which were decided with a vengeance in the Hitler State. Italian war monuments did not have to convert the reality of defeat into the semblance of a victory, nor to frame the memory of World War I as an unresolved predicament to be redressed by yet another war.

The best-known case of the debate was the project of a *Monumento al Fante* on the San Michele Mountain, pursued since 1920 through several competitions, eventually commissioned from Eugenio Baroni, but cancelled by Mussolini in early 1923. Critics had denounced Baroni's depiction of the common soldiers' sufferings according to the seven stations of Christ's Calvary as defeatist. Still, because Baroni was a decorated combat officer, his approach to the subject imbued his realistic depictions of the *fante*'s hardships with an experiential authenticity. As late as 1935 he prevailed over modern sculptor Arturo Martini with this approach in the protracted competition for a monument to the Duke of Aosta in Turin, started in 1932. Baroni's victory, due to Mussolini's final verdict, vindicated his populist realism against Martini's classical transfiguration of the theme. Martini's own graphic rendering of combat, including gas warfare, was confined to a set of eight bronze reliefs attached to the socles for a set of tall allegorical statues. Their realism jarred with the idealism of these figures.

In the same year, Giuseppe Terragni achieved the first intrusion by a radically modern architect into Italian war memorial culture. He was commissioned to build a non-figurative war monument at Como, his native city. Following a suggestion by Marinetti, he adapted the drawing of an imaginary building by Futurist architect

Antonio Sant'Elia, a casualty of World War I. Devoid of any imagery that might have triggered ideological disagreements, Sant'Elia's design had once been published as "the entrance of a monumental commemorative building." Terragni took it for the depiction of an electric power plant, which he may have felt to symbolize the will to fight. The structure's ad-hoc rededication as a war memorial depended on Sant'Elia's prestige as a war hero. Terragni's monument constituted a belated success for the war enthusiasm of Marinetti and his Futurists, which during World War I, for all their fervent rhetoric, had rarely been expressed in their art. It inaugurated an idealized war art that was no longer tied to the gruesome memory of World War I, a war art of which Martini at Aosta had unsuccessfully advanced a classicized version.

/2.2.2 ART OF THE AFRICAN CONQUEST

The conquest of Libya and Ethiopia in 1935-1936 updated the celebration of war to match the ideology of the newly-fashioned Fascist 'Empire.' Modern artists who contributed to this new war art left past controversies about the monuments of World War I behind. They were now backed by a regime intent on combining the ideologies of modernization and imperial rule. In the journal *Critica Fascista* of September 1936, Culture Minister Giuseppe Bottai demanded "to furnish ideas to the combatants: clear, even if limited, and if necessary, limited so as to be clear; ideas that spur the will to impose, to dominate: the iconography of *romanità* and imperial monumentality do not do justice to the ultimate hopes of rationalization and modernization."(204) Mario Sironi's painted stele on the facade of the Mostra Nazionale del Dopolavore in Rome, dated 1938, faithfully complies with Bottai's demands. It shows a stylized, winged victory figure flying forward over a throng of steel-helmeted soldiers on the march. With his compact streamlining, Sironi stripped the figures of both traditional realism and classical stylization.

The modern turn of war art came to a head in the "Sala della Vittoria" of the Palazzo dell'Arte at the 1936 Triennal of Milan, planned shortly after Mussolini's declaration of the 'Empire.' The winning team of Edoardo Persico, Marcello Nizzoli, and Giancarlo Palanti designed a steep, stripped-down space, encased by a colonnade of plain, square pillars with no Roman decoration. In the central axis of the white, light-flooded room, Lucio Fontana's personification of *Italy* could be seen striding forward, her arms extended, leading a pair of horses. Its pedestal was inscribed with the starting phrase of Mussolini's proclamation of the 'Empire' on May 9, 1936: "The Italian people has created its empire with its blood. It will fertilize it with its work and will defend it against anyone with its arms."(205) Although Fontana has followed ancient iconography, his figure, with its thinned proportions and loose drapery, has shed any trace of classical style. On the back wall, five huge photographs featuring the sculpted portrait heads of victorious Roman leaders presented ancient imagery in a contemporary medium. Thus, all components of the installation modernized the Roman paradigm.

In the Ethiopian War, Marinetti and his Futurist painters dusted off their war enthusiasm from a quarter of a century ago. Accompanied by several other writers and artists, Marinetti even once again enlisted as a combat soldier. However, unlike during World War I, the Futurists devoted a significant part of their artwork to their personal war experience or to war subjects. "The Italian Futurist movement, which was created twenty-seven years ago with the outcry 'war is the only world hygiene,' launched by me, [...] breathed with full lungs on the day when Benito Mussolini, armed with his political and military genius, went into the great African war, crowned with a quick imperial victory today," wrote Marinetti in the preface to the Futurist section of the 20th Venice Biennial of 1936.(206) And at the 21st Milan Biennial of 1938, he even presented his group as 'Futurist Aeropainters of Africa and Spain.' Their figurehead was Mario Menin, whom Marinetti styled as "the greatest painter of modern battles,"(207) because Menin had sketched his works in the trenches. However, the Futurists' increasingly figurative depictions of bombing and machine-gunning met with little official approval.

/ 2.2.3 EMPIRE OF PEACE

The speedy international recognition of Italy's colonial conquests culminated on October 30, 1936 in the award of the World Exposition of 1941, later postponed to 1942 to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the proclamation of the 'Empire.' Although it was the Ethiopian victory which had prompted Mussolini to seek the award, the propagandistic exploitation of the conquest did not last. In the remaining three years before the war, Italy, at odds with and uninformed about the relentless war drive of Germany, its closest ally, made no discernible plans for an approaching European conflict. On the contrary, the E42 was to redeem the cultural ascendancy of Italian Fascism, promoted by the annual Volta Conference, which in 1936 was devoted to the arts. "Italy wants peace for itself and for all," the *Duce* declared on May 9, 1936, the day he proclaimed the 'Empire.'(208) Unlike Hitler, who often said the same, he meant it, at least for the medium term. Thus, between 1936 and 1939 Italian art had no future war to propagate. Its outstanding monuments were focused on what Mussolini called an 'empire of peace' on the model of Emperor Augustus' *Pax Romana.*

Mussolini's peace policy was monumentalized by the restoration of Augustus' *Ara Pacis*, inaugurated on September 23, 1938. The altar commemorated Augustus's victorious wars as preconditions of the peace he had secured throughout the Empire. It was encased in a modern-style glass pavilion within the area of ancient Rome that had been excavated for public viewing. The *Ara Pacis,* revamped for exhibition, was to be matched by a 'Peace Altar' in the center of the projected E42, which Marcello Piacentini still planned in 1940, and which Arturo Martini was to cover with reliefs depicting the accomplishments of Fascist rule. This modern counterpart to the ancient monument was to serve for quasi-religious ceremonies of allegiance. The complementary pair

of ancient and modern peace altars as focal points of Fascist Rome would have been a far cry from Speer's belligerent triumphal arch, concurrently planned for National Socialist Berlin, a barely veiled announcement of a war of retribution against France and of conquest against the Soviet Union. Mussolini's art policy did not envisage Italy's participation in such wars.

It took Adalberto Libera and his team of architects and engineers four years, starting in October 1937, to work out the statics and materials for another arch spanning the 'Via Imperiale,' which was to connect the city center with the site of the E42. It was to be a match for the technical achievement of the Crystal Palace in London and the Eiffel Tower in Paris, landmarks of the 1851 and 1889 world expositions. The planning commission had specified its purpose to serve as a "triumphal arch for large military and political parades" or simply as a "monumental entrance" to the Exposition. However, no image or symbol marked it as a monument of victory. It was its size—200 m wide, 100 m high—and its daring technology which made for its significance as a historic achievement. By the time the project was finalized in March 1941, even after the E42 had been relocated, it had outlived its purpose, recklessly—or deceptively—maintained, almost a year after Italy had entered World War II. It would have been the first of the many triumphal arches built in the preceding fifteen years all over Italy that lacked any military significance.

/2.3 DEFENSE OF SOCIALISM

/2.3.1 FROM CAPITALIST ENCIRCLEMENT TO THE GERMAN THREAT

The defining precedent of Soviet war policy and war art was not the First World War, but the Civil War after the armistice and the October revolution, when Western European military contingents intervened on the counterrevolutionary side. It prompted the enduring assumption of a geopolitical encirclement by capitalist states as an answer to the Soviet ambition of world revolution. Battle imagery from the Civil War seems to have been limited to the art programs of the Red Army and its anniversary exhibitions. Aleksandr Deineka's and Boris Ioganson's semi-caricaturist paintings of prisoner interrogations by interventionist officers, or Deineka's painting of a *Mercenary of the Intervention* overtowering civilians at his feet, all dating from 1931, were reminders of a foreign threat. However, the Civil War theme did not spread into the mass-produced propaganda imagery flanking the First Five-Year Plan, which highlighted the military protection of Soviet economic achievement against foreign threats. Much less was it apt to furnish templates for a future war whose potential adversaries and allies remained uncertain.

Still, military resolve was prominent in the art of the First Five-Year Plan, when forced industrialization was organized on the command principles of what has

been called "militarized Socialism"[209] and ideologically dramatized as a defiant stand against a capitalist war threat. "All art is to be redirected upon defense of the country," the 15th Party Congress decreed in 1931.[210] This propagandistic war art, however, lacked a historic narrative. It was focused on two emblematic images: the lone soldier with long cloak and pointed cap, standing guard with a bayonet cocked on his rifle, and the tank as the foremost product of the Red Army's mechanization which strategists were calling for. Taken together, they represented the origins and the future of Soviet defense. In Lev Rudnev's initial designs of the Defense Ministry and the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow, both built from 1932 to 1938, the tank was a ubiquitous sign of military might. Rudnev even planned to convert one block of the Academy building into the socle for a full-sized tank, accompanied by a life-size platoon of bronze soldiers. Such a monumental scene would have been historically unspecific.

Soon after Hitler's accession, the perceived all-round threat to the Soviet state was narrowed down and intensified to a German attack, against which the government sought alliances with other capitalist states. Yet, although in 1933-1934 the arms budget quadrupled, and in 1935-1939 quadrupled once more, no war art was designed to serve as flanking propaganda. Stalin's dictum "We do not desire a single piece of alien soil. But we concede to no one as much as a foot's length of our own,"[211] inscribed over the entrance of a hall inside the Soviet Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Expo, was, rather discreetly, illustrated by the traditional motif of single soldiers standing guard at the corners of Iosif Chaikov's steel relief at the entrance, protecting merrymaking civilians. Why the virtual absence of a triumphalist war art in a militarized society gearing up for a war the leadership envisaged as a matter of course? Was it due to the peaceable posture of the Soviet Union's foreign policy of treaties and agreements, which culminated in 1935 with its adherence to the League of Nations? Or was it due to the hardship which rearmament imposed on the living standard of the Soviet population?

/ 2.3.2 A PEOPLE'S ARMY AT PEACE

The Soviet Union was the only one of the three totalitarian states where the military had long cultivated an institutionalized interest in an art of its own. Surprisingly, during the decade of 1929-1939 this sponsorship did not produce any belligerent war art to match that of Germany and Italy. Rather, it stressed the Red Army's vigilant participation in a civil society at peace. Since 1923, the Red Army Command had sponsored huge 5th-anniversary art shows in cooperation with the Association of Revolutionary Artists, which furnished realistic propaganda images on demand. One might have expected that the shows of 1933 and 1938 illustrated the intensified rearmament drive underway, but this was not the case. In the summer of 1939, a Military-Defense Commission of the Union of Artists was created, jointly shared by Union chairman Alexandr Gerasimov and War Commissar Kliment Voroshilov. It arranged

for artists to live with military units and to undergo weapons drills. What came of this initiative is unknown.

The foremost monument of the military's adaptation of Soviet architecture is the Theater of the Red Army, jointly designed by Karo Alabian, the incoming president of the Soviet Architects' Union, and Vasily Simbirtzev. It was started in 1934 and completed in 1940, less than a year before the German invasion. The press hailed it as a paragon of Soviet theater design. Alabian and Simbirtzev shaped the classical ground plan of a circular amphitheater as a five-pointed star, even though the stage and the auditorium faced one another in conventional fashion. The five-pointed star, symbol of the Soviet Union and emblem of the Red Army, recurs throughout the decoration, including the circumference of the columns ringing the building. The sculptural decor was restricted to this symbolism and its pictorial ramifications. Only the roof sculptures of the main façade depict the two standard emblems of defensive vigilance from the First Five-Year Plan—the tank and the long-cloaked Red Army soldier with his pointed cap standing guard, clutching his bayoneted rifle—updated by a squad of airplanes.

A reviewer of the Red Army anniversary exhibition of 1938 defined the unity of the army and the people as its "leading leitmotif," "expressed through images of meetings between soldiers and other sectors of society,"[(212)] invariably in high spirits. This leitmotif rather than any forecast of a war to come dominated military themes in Soviet art after the First Five-Year Plan. In Ekaterina Zernova's *Collective Farmers Greeting a Tank* of 1937, members of a farm collective, young and old, women and a child, flowers in hand, are hailing a tank rolling into the kolkhoz. To anyone who had suffered the military enforcement of collectivization a few years earlier, the painting must have looked cynical. At a time when tanks were being mass-produced for defense, it shows them as a prop of social harmony. Aleksandr Deineka's pair of giant oil paintings entitled *1917* and *1937*, produced as pendants in 1937, exemplifies this ideology. While *1917* shows workers and peasants rushing to enlist in the Red Army for the Civil War, *1937* shows them happily trooping forward in an environment of technical accomplishment, complete with tractor, power lines, and airplanes in the sky, but with no soldiers in sight.

/ 2.3.3 READINESS AT RISK

The military iconography of the First Five-Year Plan did not pinpoint any potential aggressors. It merely dwelt on the dogma of capitalist encirclement, which was historically founded on the foreign interventions of the Civil War. By 1932, this dogma seemed to be confirmed by the failure of the Soviet Union to integrate its industrialization drive into the capitalist world economy. War Commissar Mikhail Frunze's military doctrine had long conceptualized this defense posture, to the point of making arms production and army organization integral components of Soviet economic development. After his death in 1925 it was promoted by his adjunct, General Mikhail

Tukhachevsky, who in 1930 became Deputy Commissar for War. Initially, Hitler's rise to government was taken to herald a 'fascist' surge of capitalist encirclement in general. Only since 1934, when it became apparent that National Socialist Germany posed the altogether different danger of eastward colonization, did the Soviet Union seek to forge alliances with France and England, capitalist states it no longer regarded as a threat.

Since the art on view in the two Red Army shows of 1933 and 1938 is not documented, it remains a mystery why Soviet artistic culture fell as short as it did of providing a suitable propaganda for the newly focused anti-German defense efforts. Perhaps the authorities felt that during the Great Terror there was no way to mobilise the Soviet populace for war. What if anything did the execution in the summer of 1937 of Marshal Tukhachevsky, along with that of numerous officers of the Red Army high command, have to do with his adherence to Frunze's outdated military doctrine? It may have been the lagging preparation for an anticipated German attack, despite the Red Army's personnel expansion and the multiplying output of the arms industry. The Hitler-Stalin-Pact of August 28, 1939, confirmed that the Soviet military was not ready to confront the ever more apparent German threat at this time. Is this why the strident anti-Soviet propaganda in German artistic culture, even before the Hossbach conference of November 1937, remained unmatched by any Soviet show of anti-German defiance?

Aleksandr Laktionov's huge canvas *Hero of the Soviet Union N. V. Yudin Visiting KomSoMol Tank Troops* (*Military Cadets designing a Wall Newspaper*), painted in 1938, one year after the murderous decimation of the Red Army officer corps, extols a relaxed, joyful attitude permeating the newly-uniformed younger officers, about to take the place of their former superiors. In view of the recent purge, this widely publicized picture of the newly-fashioned Red Army leadership by a young academy graduate drives the stereotypically joyful sentiment of Socialist Realism to an uncanny extreme. It is centered on a double portrait of Stalin and War Commissar Voroshilov on the back wall, framed by columns like an altarpiece. Instead of any show of military preparedness for war in the offing, let alone of readiness to fight, the painting illustrates propaganda work by soldiers from the Party's youth organization being applauded by a decorated officer from the Civil War. We may assume that the cadets' wall newspaper spells out their ideological fervor rather than their professional training.

/ 3 DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY

/ 3.1 FRANCE

/ 3.1.1 THE MAGINOT MENTALITY

Almost immediately after the end of World War I, French military planning was focused on a continuous fortification of the country's Eastern border, according

to a military doctrine of preventing yet another German invasion. In December 1929, after ten years of changes and adjustments, War Minister André Maginot pushed the plan through Parliament so that construction could start in January 1930. Since 1935, consistent with the mounting threat from National Socialist Germany, and in sync with growing French rearmament, the project steadily expanded. The "Maginot Mentality," as it has been called[213]—an obsession with never again letting the homeland be turned into a devastated battlefield—came to dominate the Third Republic's military doctrine. That between May 11 and June 22, 1940, Germany should have defeated this all-out defense in less than six weeks' time was due neither to any technical failures of the Maginot Line, nor to insufficient French rearmament, but to the inadequacy of that military doctrine to match an unexpected German strategy envisaging the conquest of France by invading adjacent neutral states.

When Maginot, a wounded veteran of World War I, died in office on January 7, 1932, he was given a national hero's funeral at Invalides Cathedral, and a huge monument in his honor was built near Verdun, dedicated on August 18, 1935. It was on this occasion that war Minister Jean Fabry adopted the term "Ligne Maginot" for the fortification system under belated construction. At the far end of a vast, elevated platform, the monument by architects A. Jasson and N. Chappey presents itself as a truncated pyramid of rough-hewn stone, resting on a base of shooting embrasures and vertically shielded by an upright circular bunker lid forged from steel. It is a specimen of the massive, semi-abstract symbolic structures designed throughout Europe at the time. The bunker lid doubles as a circular glory for Gaston Broquet's group of three bronze figures depicting André Maginot as a wounded war hero, a simple sergeant—as the inscription calls him—being rescued by two comrades after an action for which he was awarded the *médaille militaire*. Thus Maginot's personal heroism as a front soldier was related to his political zeal as a minister of war.

The plain look of the symbolical structure jars with the expressive academic realism of the bronze group, characteristic of the countless monuments devoted to the common soldier's self-sacrifice built all over France in the preceding decade. Broquet was a specialist in this genre, with bronze groups to his credit named *La Dernière Relève* at Chalons-en-Champagne, *La Patrouille* at Raon-l'Étape, and *L'Alerte aux gaz* at Samogneux. This retrospective imagery recalls the emphasis on hardship and endurance in contemporary German imagery of World War I, with the difference that it was animated by the pathos of high-minded heroism, long cultivated in academic tradition. The unique profusion of such monuments throughout the country is a testimony to the urgency of France's defense policy. In their scope and cost, two giant monuments to the defensive victories of French armies in World War I at famous battlegrounds in the eastern countryside, by academic sculptors Paul Landowski and Henri Bouchard, flanked the construction of the Maginot Line. Their strategic locations and

their exorbitant funding by the national government underscored their programmatic importance.

/ 3.1.2 LANDOWSKI'S *FANTÔMES*

As early as November 21, 1919, Paul Landowski, the preeminent sculptor of France, had been commissioned with a monument to the fallen at an undetermined location. In the following year, he had a model ready, but had to sit out a decade of inconclusive deliberations about the site. Finally, on June 1, 1929, he received the go-ahead, and on July 21, 1935, President Albert Lebrun inaugurated the finished work. The site eventually selected was a hill on the Chalmont plains, near Oulchy-le-Château, where between July 15 and August 4, 1918, three French Army groups had jointly dealt a decisive blow to the German invaders, setting off the rebound to victory. The choice of the site and the date of the go-ahead coincided with the construction start of the Maginot line. Through its historic topography, Landowski's generic configuration of a group of eight dead French soldiers rising from their graves and following a young woman personifying France, who will lead their return to action, signaled the intensified defense effort marked by the two-year extension of the draft and the signing of the military pact with the Soviet Union, both in 1935, the year of its inauguration.

Landowski derived his pictorial idea from a famous episode of World War I. On April 8, 1915, staff sergeant Jacques Péricard had led his badly decimated unit out of the trenches at Bois Brûlé to a successful counterattack, reportedly shouting "Dead, Arise!" ("Debout les morts!"). War minister Joseph Gallieni reported the episode in the Senate, and writer Maurice Barrès eulogized the battle cry in *l'Echo de Paris*. Péricard's "Dead, Arise!" became a patriotic slogan of French wartime culture, popularized in a profusion of texts and images. Beyond transfiguring the common soldiers' tenacity in the defense of the homeland, it carried the Christian connotation of the resurrecting dead, as if hecatombs of soldiers killed in action were eager to emerge from their graves and to re-cycle their lives in yet another battle. After World War I, Péricard, one of Frances's highest-decorated war heroes, became a writer specializing in World War I memoirs, including his own, and actively engaged himself on behalf of veterans' affairs. When France declared war on September 3, 1939, he published a press appeal titled "Volunteers of Death," calling for veterans exempt from service to re-enlist.

Thus, when Landowski was at long last charged with building his generic war monument for the promotion of the Maginot Line, he could count on the recurrent topicality of the pictorial idea he had conceived in the aftermath of World War I. Placed at a strategic site, as if it were an imaginary stronghold, the monument embodied the World War I experience as an inspiration for rearmament, anachronistically suggested by the state-of-the-art assault rifle in the only helmeted soldier's hand. In a pictorial reversal of the visitors' ascent up the stairs to the sculpture group atop the hill, it

seemed as if the resurrecting soldiers were about to descend, after having dug their way out of a mass grave, with clods of earth still in their hands, some still in shrouds, others already in uniform, assembled in a closely-packed unit, ready to heed the call to duty by following the advance of the young woman at the bottom of the hill. Landowski avoided the conflation of his *La France* with the armed goddess Athena in Bourdelle's famous bronze sculpture at the war monument of Montauban (see Chapter 4.3 / 2.3.1). His version has a peaceable but determined look as she is striding forward to reclaim the land, without spear or helmet, merely armed with a bulging shield featuring figures in relief of *Liberté*, *Égalité*, and *Fraternité*.

/ 3.1.3 BOUCHARD'S MONUMENT AT MONDEMENT

The second national war monument at a historic battlefield of World War I was also planned in 1929. It was to be placed near Mondement to commemorate a battle of September 6-11, 1914, where three armies under General Joseph Joffre put a stop to the German advance. Taken together, the two monuments marked two decisive turning points in the defense of France at the beginning and the end of World War I. In June 1930, architect Paul Bigot and sculptor Henri Bouchard won a competition to erect the monument, a tall block suggesting the irregular shape of a Celtic memorial slab, cast in reddish concrete, and carved in a non-classical figure style with archaic-looking lettering, suggestive of the ancient origins of the French nation. This imaginary prehistoric memorial stands alone, visible from afar across the land. After long delays due to the Depression, the National Assembly funded the monument with allocations from outside the budget. After the block had been cast in 1932, it should have been carved before the concrete settled, but a cancellation of financing by the Senate caused a three-year interruption. When France declared war on September 3, 1939, the work was still unfinished.

Upon the steep, pseudo-natural rock slab, a winged victory appears to be flying from the outside into the pictorial field, horizontally extended, unarmed, both hands raised in the defensive gesture of warding off the enemy. An apocalyptic storm surrounds her, with the multiple tubes of the Last Judgment jutting forward between arrows of lightning flashing from behind cumulating clouds. From cave-like cavities in the concrete slab, a group of generals and officers emerge, lined up with a folkloric simplicity recalling the Douanier Henri Rousseau. Their figures vary in size, overtowered by General Joffre, who is protectively presenting the smaller figure of a common soldier, standing at attention, as the true hero of the battle. With this combination of *Art Deco* expressiveness up in the sky and populist simplicity down on the ground, Bouchard abandoned not only his customary academic classicism, but also all other historic styles he used to imitate according to the themes of his commissions. It was his way of following the trend toward an incremental modernization of traditional art, current at the time.

More than a month after France's war declaration, on October 8, 1939, Bouchard received the commission for a monument to the common infantryman of World War I in the heart of Paris, next to the Passy cemetery, to the north of the Palais de Chaillot, where Albert Laprade's Peace Column had stood two years before. Preparatory work stopped on December 12, 1940, three months after the defeat. A competition had started on November 27, 1937, while the Peace Column was still standing. Centered on an over-life-sized statue of the common soldier, narrative relief friezes were to picture, according to the brief, "the sufferings, the misery, and the sacrifices of all these martyrs: departure, toil, gas attacks, trenches and battlements, the wounded," culminating in a "resurrection of the Dead."(214) As the last World War I monument undertaken in France during the Depression, Bouchard's Passy project reaffirmed the slogan "Dead, Arise!" as the foundational ideology of French rearmament. It combined the commemorative acclaim of the common soldier with the belligerent perversion of the Christian resurrection doctrine to a fantasy about a return of the fallen to the fight.

/ 3.2 SPAIN

/ 3.2.1 A WAR POLICY FOR THE ARTS

The Popular Front government of Spain, fighting a Civil War in which all three totalitarian states were intervening, while its fellow Popular Front democracy in France stayed aloof, put forth the first comprehensive war art policy pursued before the Second World War. It was the artist-politician Josep Renau who devised and enacted it with a personal authority unmatched in any other European state. From his government position as Director of Fine Arts in the Ministry of Public Instruction, headed by Communist José Hernández, Renau managed to assemble diverse cultural organizations of trade unions and political parties on the Popular Front platform, where the policy's principles were debated in the public sphere. It enabled numerous artists to produce war propaganda in non-governmental settings. By the summer of 1937, Renau had been so successful in aligning artists' political activities that he was able to set up a state workshop in Valencia, where artists congregated to tailor-make contributions for the art show in the Spanish Pavilion of the Paris Expo. In March 1938, these and other works were shown in an exhibition devoted to the war in beleaguered Madrid.

In his policy-setting tract *Social Function of Poster Art*, published in the spring of 1937, Renau ranked the poster medium as the foremost art form of the time, apt to pool diverse social groups and government organizations in a common activism. The appeal of such an art was founded on a mix of age-old Spanish realism and Soviet First Five-Year-Plan agitation. Unlike the party-guided uniformity of Soviet propaganda art, it was the diversity of sponsoring agencies which, for Renau, confirmed the Popular Front credentials of poster art, whose ideological adequacy could be secured through

loose supervision. Eventually, however, a 'Workshop of Graphic Propaganda' within the Ministry of Public Instruction took poster art under political control. Under such elastic working conditions, Renau's insistence on realism as the generic style of poster art never matched the look of uniformity characterizing Soviet posters, although Renau recommended them as models. His key term 'realism' was too important a theme for animating the public debates which attracted artists to cooperation, just as in France, but with the difference of a productive outcome.

The exhortatory presentation of social issues addressed by the art of a people's war betrays the tenuous authority of republican governance, which the Spanish Communist Party sought to tighten. Calls for volunteers to fight and admonitions to focus agriculture and industry on the war effort made it look as if the government had to advertise for support rather than impose its will. In the absence of an operative conscription policy, the panoply of fighting figures presented on posters extended from lightly-armed, bare-headed militiamen in white shirts all the way to steel-helmeted regulars strapped in leather gear and wielding bayonets the way they had been drilled. All of them featured expressions of either enthusiastic or grim determination. The catchwords 'discipline' and 'militarization' addressed the contradiction between popular self-dedication and military professionalism inherent in the ideology of a people's war. Posters commemorating the first anniversary of the Civil War on July 18, 1937 dwelt on the conversion of civilian militiamen into uniformed soldiers.

/3.2.2 THE PAVILION OF WAR

The Spanish Pavilion at the Paris Expo of 1937 was intended to appeal for the support of Europe's democratic states for the defensive war of the Spanish Republic, and hence at variance with the peaceable bearing of the Exposition. Placed near the pavilions of the two major European states that were militarily engaged on opposite fronts of the Civil War, its ideological challenge was hard to overlook. The Pavilion was a government priority. Under the oversight of Prime Minister Francisco Largo Caballero's office, an inter-ministerial committee worked on the planning. Largo Caballero's successor, Juan Negrín, even assumed personal oversight. Director of Fine Arts Josep Renau moved to Paris to direct the construction of the building and the installation of the exhibits. The propaganda task required a political balancing act. On the one hand, the Expo's diplomatic code of conduct forbade an open challenge to Germany and Italy, invaders in the Civil War. On the other hand, the government wished to play down the appearance of political affinity to the Soviet Union, its foreign backer. As a result, the pavilion presented the Civil War as the self-defense of a democratic state.

Most of the exhibition program was devoted to this theme. Large, exchangeable photo panels over the entrance—attached less than two weeks before the opening—boasted steel-helmeted soldiers in parade formation. Documents, graphs, and

art works extolled a people's war against unspecified aggressors and denounced generic war crimes against the civilian population. When on May 1, 1937, the government demanded an international inquiry into the German bombing of the Basque town of Guernica five days earlier, photographs and text panels backing up the charge were installed on short notice. From one day to the next, Pablo Picasso changed the theme of the mural for the auditorium he was working on into an outcry against the bombing. After the Guernica bombing pulled the stops out of diplomatic restraint, the Spanish Pavilion shattered the pacifist façade of the World Exposition, monumentalized in Laprade's peace column, called the bluff on the official creed of a peaceful coexistence between antagonistic political systems, and denounced the humanitarian brutality of contemporary warfare as a warning for the future.

One theme of the war imagery pervading the pavilion was the heroic defeat of voluntary militias assembled of armed civilians, whose strategic bumbling in the battle of Málaga a year before had prompted the government to launch its 'militarization' program, a policy to forge the disparate volunteer units into a professional army, complete with a re-fashioned general staff. An equally important propaganda theme was the plight of civilian victims under the German and Italian bombings of Madrid and other cities, and the repressive cruelty of the advancing Nationalists. It combined the political will to engage in a people's war, the trust in the strength of the Republican military, and the heroic defiance of the civilian populace. Picasso's *Guernica*, which featured a dead soldier amid terrorized women, summed up this new mesh of soldiers and civilians in contemporary warfare, albeit in such a defeatist manner that it incurred objections from some officials of the Pavilion.

/3.2.3 CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

For its pictorial war propaganda abroad, the Spanish government was able to rely on a small, international group of leftist photographers residing in France, who cultivated an argumentative concept of documentary photography and attached themselves to the International Brigades in Catalonia for access to the battlefield. Their most famous member was Robert Capa. Soon the government recruited these photographers, who conceived of their work as an act of partisan support. Prime Minister Juan Negrín befriended Capa. In December 1937, Defense Minister Indalecio Prieto invited the group, along with several other foreign photographers, to accompany him on his trip to oversee the expected Republican victory at Teruel. Catalan and national propaganda agencies featured the work of Capa and his friends in journals and special publications, most notably the album *Madrid*, published in 1937 to commemorate the capital's successful defense. They furnished the photographs of Republican regulars in parade formation of which enlargements were affixed above the entrance of the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris Expo.

In France, two communist-directed mass publications regularly featured photographs of the Civil War by Capa, 'Chim' and Gerda Taro as part of the PCF's campaign for a French intervention: the weekly *Regards*, issued since 1932 by the Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires, and the PCF daily *Ce Soir,* launched in the spring of 1937 under the editorship of Aragon. *Regards* consistently inserted its pictorial coverage of the Spanish Civil War into pleas for a Europe-wide struggle against 'fascism,' to be joined immediately rather than postponed until the conflict would engulf all Europe. In token of Popular Front solidarity, the journal juxtaposed the work of Capa and his colleagues with photographs by anonymous workers. Beyond the leftist press, Capa's war photographs appeared worldwide in journals that sympathized with the defense of the Spanish Republic, while the conservative press shunned them for the reverse reason. Since the nationalist insurgents launched no photographic propaganda to match it, the Republican perspective on the Civil War came to prevail.

Capa and his colleagues highlighted popular enthusiasm for participating in the war. In his photographs, the enlistment of laughing militiamen seemed to follow from their lifestyle, cheered on by family and friends. Although at odds with the government's militarization program, such a take suited the presentation of the internecine conflict as a people's war. A portrait photograph of Capa on the cover of the *Picture Post* of December 3, 1938, was captioned "the greatest war-photographer in the World." His widely-published snapshot of a white-shirted, helmet-less militiaman mortally hit while storming forward—a first in close-up war photography—had become an icon of self-sacrifice, more upbeat than the dismembered warrior of Picasso's *Guernica.* The snapshot was reportedly taken at Cerro Muriano on September 5, 1936, but its authenticity has been questioned. It was first printed on September 23, 1936, in the illustrated weekly *Vue* with the triumphant caption "How they fell. [...] Suddenly their ascent is cut short, a bullet has whizzed—a fratricide bullet—and their blood is being drunk by their native soil."(215)

/ 3.3 FROM DEFIANCE TO DESPONDENCY

/ 3.3.1 WAR POLICY VERSUS SOCIAL POLICY

The Popular Front government of France, pacifist to the point of disengaging from the Spanish Civil War, and weary of the militarism espoused by its domestic right-wing opposition, never sponsored any art policy related to war policy. To acknowledge that its growing defense budgets posed a risk to its ambitious social programs, the bedrock of its popular appeal, would have alienated its constituency. In 1938, less than a year after Le Corbusier had his schemes for the Paris World Exposition sidelined to a minimally-funded makeshift 'Pavilion of Modern Times' at the outskirts of the exhibition grounds (see Chapter 2.3/2.3.3), he advanced his unconventional housing

[schemes] as a challenge to the tenuous budget situation with a book-length pamphlet entitled *Cannon? Ordnance? No Thanks! Housing, Please!* The political culture fomented by the Popular Front's supporting cultural agencies, where Communists predominated, was anti-militarist. Perceiving war as the ultimate 'fascist' threat, it kept a polemical distance from the culture of the military establishment, which remained the domain of the Right, and which was the driving force behind the monumental war art of the time.

The Spanish Republic's war effort was constrained by the simultaneous goals of social revolution and defense of the democratic state. This tensions between the two impaired the authority of its central government and its general staff. Eventually, the government felt compelled to suppress anarchist movements who insisted on social revolution in disregard of strategy. Since trade unions and other social organizations promoted voluntary military service along with the reform of agricultural and industrial production, the government's call for 'discipline' pertained not only to its 'militarization' program, most strongly supported by the Communist Party, but, more generally, to the alignment of fighting force and working society. For this reason, the artistic flourish of Republican poster production, by contrast to its meager, artistically insignificant nationalist counterpart, covers a full range of themes pertaining to a working society at war, presented in argumentative terms. Its diversified imagery heralds the all-embracing 'total war' to come, which drew upon the entire populace at its peril.

With regard to the arts, the Spanish Civil War became the determinant event of political divergence between the Popular Front governments of France and Spain. While the Spanish government had no choice but to install a vigorous war art program, the French government was entangled in the contradictions between its long-term anti-German rearmament drive and its non-intervention policy. While government-sponsored artistic culture in Spain presented the panorama of a people's war fought with a fierce defiance against all odds, that of France was split between a patriotic resolve to stop another German aggression and a plaintive anti-war sentiment vis-à-vis the losing Civil War in Spain, polarized between traditional and modern art. As a result, traditional art came to prevail in the artistic culture of the Spanish Republic, rooted as it was in both Soviet agitational realism and home-made Baroque pathos. Its propaganda purpose would not have allowed for modernist obscurity. In France, on the other hand, it fell to modern artists to bewail the unfolding loss of the Spanish Civil War beyond the border.

/ 3.3.2 THE NUMANCIA SYNDROME

During the First World War, patriotic claims by some modern artists to produce a topical war art—most notably by the Futurists in Italy—had largely failed to be fulfilled, even by those artists who served at the fronts. Modern-minded critics who

upheld such claims did so in vain. The abundant war art produced in all participating states was of traditional observance. Since the end of World War I, which had imperiled the pre-war international communities of modern artists, modern artistic cultures in the democratic states of Germany and France, but not in Italy and the Soviet Union, turned resolutely pacifist. Their international business networks and their newly established institutional strongholds did not allow for confrontational postures. As a result, for better or worse, the culture of modern art in France, still a minority within the national artistic culture, and shortchanged by all governments from 1932 to 1936, was unsuited for fielding any ideological response to the growing European war threat. When that threat intensified in 1936, the incoming Popular Front embraced modern art on its internationalist peace platform.

The Spanish Civil War was the only war that attracted modern artists as a theme, but it was a losing war. Starting in the summer of 1937, when the Republic's eventual defeat looked ever more likely, they were unable to muster any optimism. With their monstrous transfigurations of mythical combat, they wallowed in pessimistic allegories, first and foremost bullfight scenes. Surrealists had been especially incensed by the suppression of the anarchists' revolutionary ambitions on the part of the republican government, culminating in their bloody defeat by government troops at Barcelona in June 1937. They did not share the sham defiance displayed in Robert Capa's photo reportage from the disbanding of the International Brigades at Barcelona on October 25, 1938. Modern artists' despondent view of the Civil War found a representative expression in the Paris production of Cervantes' *Numancia* in the spring of 1937 (see Chapter 2.2 / 3.2.2). The "Numancia syndrome of the beaten," as it has been called,[216] may also have made Picasso change the heroic resistance sentiment in his initial version of *Guernica* into the defeatist lament in the final version.

It was Max Ernst who, in his painting *Angel of the Home* of 1937, put forth the most trenchant surrealist image of the Spanish Civil War. Its title parodies the Spanish term for women's domestic work. Derived from Aragon's and Breton's short treatise "The Demon of the Home"[217] of 1920, a call for women to break the bonds of family life, it was a grim accolade on women fighting as militia members. It was as a confirmation of Aragon's and Breton's call that Ernst first exhibited the painting in 1938 at the International Exposition of Surrealism under the title *Triumph of Surrealism* before he changed the title to the current one at another show the following year. His retrospective statement of 1965, where he related it to the Spanish Civil War in general, obfuscates the original significance. The figure's one foot with a horseshoe identifies it as a devil in Baudelaire's understanding as patron of outcasts and rebels, in accord with the designation "demon" in Aragon's and Breton's text. In an earlier version, the figure leaves her child behind as she is storming forward. In the later one, the child has caught up and merged with her, vainly trying to hold her back.

/3.3.3 DEMOCRATIC VERSUS TOTALITARIAN WAR ART

The democratic states of France and Spain promoted a defiant, defensive war art of traditional form and conventional symbolism; a war art that was expressly or implicitly directed against Germany—entirely and emphatically in France, and to a limited extent in Spain. Considering France's failed appeasement policy and the Spanish Republic's inexorable defeat, both variants amounted to a losers' war art. In 1937, Paul Landowski's enormous bronze monument for Field Marshal Foch, consisting of six common soldiers carrying an open bier with the marshal's body on their shoulders, was installed in the St. Ambrose chapel of Invalides Cathedral. Its long drawn-out completion, eight years after its commission in 1929, attests to the obsessive topicality of the defense theme. In the same year, Ricardo Boix' stone relief *Think of Spain's Pain,* featuring the head of a mother clutching her child and looking up in terror from behind the hand that shields her face, was shown in the art exhibition of the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris Expo. Its irregular edges made it look as if it were the fragment of a monumental sculpture destroyed by the air raid it evokes.

By contrast to the coherent, though different, war art of the three totalitarian states, the war art of the two democracies was addressed to the ideological sentiments, or even the political aspirations, of mutually antagonistic constituencies. In France, these constituencies clashed in parliament and in the public sphere, in Spain they held together for the defense of a common cause. French war art was split between the Maginot Mentality and the Numancia Syndrome, between a conservative nationalism with its pride in the military and a leftist anti-fascism with its anti-war proclivity. In Spain, it was only in the Republic that a war art was developed from the ground up, while the nationalist insurgents produced none of public significance or historic relevance. As a result, the war art of democracy fell short of representing a cohesive political posture to match the German correlation between art policy and war policy, enforced as it was by totalitarian suppression of ideological diversity, subject as it was to short-term tactical adjustments from above, and, most of all, flanking a winning strategy against first Spain and later France.

Compared to the propagandistic purpose that distorted the war art of the three totalitarian states with their different agendas, the war art of democracy was forthright by default. In France, it was focused on the anticipation of a German attack, which eventually did occur. In Spain, it was tailor-made to serve the policies for a war in progress. In both states, it argued against eventual defeat. Between French monumental pathos and Spanish agitational expression, this forthright war art of democracy contrasted with its aggressive counterparts in Germany and Italy. These were driven by deceptive strategies of a simultaneous readiness for war and peace, depending on different political calculations of the short-term trajectory on which war would unfold.

In the Soviet Union, with its lagging armament drive, the art produced during the latter part of the decade would have let on nothing about the anticipation of a German attack. Italian art gave the impression that the Fascist 'empire' of 1936 was henceforth to be at peace. And German art, bristling with military resolve, gave no inkling about how the Third Reich might proceed to strike.