of Nations-style summitry – to become an actor in international affairs, a diplomatic agent in its own right with the authority to converse with nation states on behalf of musicians as a transnational collective.

In the short term, Dent succeeded in resisting Hába and Eisler's campaign: Čolić, Marić and Vučković were released, putting an end to the dispute, without the ISCM issuing a statement.[56] Yet in hindsight, the episode hints that his era of musical internationalism would soon be drawing to a close. In the 1920s, it had been crucial to the ISCM's 'non-political' internationalism that it could emulate the etiquette of statecraft while remaining semi-independent of states themselves.[57] But this independence looked increasingly fragile. Political agents were intervening more directly in the ISCM's internal affairs, as exemplified by the 'strange "Russian" delegation' in Prague. And as a result, the organization was being pushed to move beyond the mere performance of diplomacy and intervene more directly in the affairs of states. There are premonitions here of the years after 1945, the period of the ISCM's so-called 'stagnation'.[58] At mid-century, its multilateral conferences of unofficial musician-diplomats would become largely overshadowed by the activities of governments, which significantly extended their patronage of the arts and, in the cold war context, developed more organized programmes of cultural diplomacy.[59] Situated in the *longue durée*, the ISCM's General Assembly – enacting League of Nations-style internationalism through ambivalent imitation – represents one unstable configuration, distinctive to interwar Europe, of the possibilities emerging from the rapidly transforming relationship between artists and the state.

Worker Internationalism, Local Song and the Politics of Urban Space

HARRIET BOYD-BENNETT

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At the height of the strikes and factory occupations that marked Turin's *biennio rosso* ('two red years', 1919–20) a series of songs circulated among the workers. I will focus on two of these songs – *La guardia rossa* and *Miśeria, miśeria* – to listen to the particular stories they tell about

[56] Marić was released in October 1935; Vučković was probably freed before the appeal was even circulated (Melita Milin, personal communication to the author).

[57] Direct support from private patrons was crucial to the organization in its early years. During the 1920s, the Swiss patron Werner Reinhart covered many of the expenses of the central office and of the jury meetings. See Ulrike Thiele, 'Musikleben und Mäzenatentum im 20. Jahrhundert: Werner Reinhart (1884–1951)' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Zurich, 2016), 22–9.

[58] Haefeli, *IGNM*, 286–344.

[59] Some have recently called into question the narrative that European high-modernist composers were funded by US intelligence agencies during the cold war. See Ian Pace, 'Modernist Fantasias: The Recuperation of a Concept', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 144 (2019), 473–93 (pp. 475–6). But I refer here to the many other cultural activities of the US State Department and other governments, as discussed in the work of Fosler-Lussier and Von Eschen (cited above) or, for example, in Kiril Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War, 1945–1958* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2015).

the experiences of the city's labouring classes: the ways in which the songs functioned as vehicles of political expression and solidarity, and as loci of memories of past labour and strife. Both songs survived in the memories of workers and their families long after the *biennio rosso*, as oral and written testaments to a moment when it seemed that revolution might be possible. The crucial point, however, is that while both were expressions of a local political milieu and neighbourhood-specific, working-class sentiment, they also gestured to a broader network of internationalist solidarity. It is the tensions and convergences between localism and internationalism that I want to explore further – a 'local internationalism', perhaps, that prompts us to pay attention to the broader political potential of small-scale communities, as well as to the situatedness of political ideologies during a period often framed in terms of national retrenchment and transnational exchange.[60]

I use the term 'internationalism' here in tandem with transnationalism. While I am interested in the traversal of people and ideas beyond and through nation states – often seen as the preserve of the transnational – I am also concerned with the specificities of and interactions between national 'delegations' of worker solidarity.[61] Moving beyond the endlessly rehashed slogan of workers of the world uniting, I will construct a more intricate and nuanced picture of a somewhat unofficial and overlooked interwar cultural effort at international collaboration that played out in a particular local context.[62] Internationalist solidarity here was something very different from the 'peace and security' of the League of Nations' founding covenant; rather, this somewhat Marxian solidarity was about the disruptive collectivity of worker activism.

The purpose of this article is to offer contrary shades to the more commonly espoused narratives of internationalism in the interwar years. The story told in workers' songs is one of a leftist Italy on the cusp of the country's political move to the far right – and also a sidelining of nation at the moment when Italy was supposedly obsessed with nationhood;[63] of an internationalism that looked East, to the Soviet Union, rather than to Western Europe and the USA, as was the focus of organizations such as the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) considered elsewhere in this round table; of a vernacular music a world away from the Austro-German, art music repertoire dominating the ISCM festival programmes; and of ad hoc, small-scale and local institutions (workers' clubs and leagues) that also shared larger transnational and international ideals and aspirations. In other words, my focus here is on the local-internationalist tensions played out away from the official banners of a 'musical League of Nations', instead existing in precisely the kind of marginalized activity overlooked by state-sponsored organizations.[64] Homing in on local

[60] This idea of 'local internationalism' chimes with the notion of a 'transnational regional studies' focused on the 'contribution of transnationalism to the rise of regional organisations and identities' that Patricia Clavin forecast as an important area of future work in 'Defining Transnationalism', *Contemporary European History*, 14/4 (2005), 421–39 (p. 432).

[61] Whereas in Italy these worker organizations operated at a remove from state sanction, their Soviet counterparts were part of the official state apparatus, thus fostering a lingering sense of nation; for more on these differentiations between internationalism and transnationalism, see *ibid.*, 425.

[62] For more on the idea of internationalist cultural endeavours, see Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*.

[63] The story of Italy told here is also an alternative one to that of the country as a popular destination for the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) festivals, and of Italy as a long-standing member of the League of Nations.

[64] A 'musical League of Nations' was the unofficial slogan given to the ISCM; see Giles Masters, 'Performing Internationalism: The ISCM as a "musical League of Nations"', earlier in this round table.

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clubs and leagues in one provincial city also sidesteps the usual institutional touchstones in histories of the Left and their musical manifestations – the work of the Comintern's International Music Bureau, socialist festivals and musical olympiads.[65] What I reclaim here is an often-overlooked form of internationalist sensibility, but one seemingly crucial to the lived experience of the interwar years.

Arguing for localism in the spaces and sentiments of proletarian song goes against the usual foregrounding of internationalism in histories of the Left. Conversely, an emphasis on the local has often been seen as reactionary, a gesture to an idealized past in which communities were supposedly fixed and homogeneous, devoid of outsiders. However, as geographer Doreen Massey has noted, '"place" and "community" have only rarely been coterminous', nor has the latter been homogeneous; similarly, the point in what follows is that the local spaces of musical interaction were sites of encounter and exchange, fixed and fluid points in much larger networks.[66] The performance of a song in a particular club or tavern gave a local frame that in no sense denied that the moment might also engage with international political affinities. In other words, I pit the lived, sonic experience of daily political life in one city, Turin, against the more abstract, shared sense of political solidarity across regional and national borders. Ad hoc forms of both local and international sociability – what I call a 'street sociability' – were cultivated by this music-making.[67] The workers were themselves a heterogeneous, ever-shifting body and the city spaces they occupied were constantly changing to accommodate them. Place is always a process.[68]

One branch of Turin's local music culture was anchored in socialist-supported workers' clubs and leagues.[69] Such organizations housed choirs and bands comprised of workers, groups that were grounded in the everyday experiences of a northern Italian industrial city while also fostering a more abstract and international sense of socialist and worker solidarity. Their musical activity spilled out onto the city's streets, with songs sung in *piazze*, in taverns and during strikes. The body of song from which our examples are taken subsequently came to be dubbed 'social song' (*canto sociale*), expressive vehicles for this experience of solidarity.[70] The genre tended to focus both on the hardships of daily life and on moments of insurrection – strikes, demonstrations and labour disputes – that marked the emergence of Italian worker activism, often with reference to proletarian internationalism. Attending to these songs opens up the working-class spaces in which these hardships and insurrections were experienced and shared: factories, streets and neighbourhoods, as well as spaces developed for newly increased

[65] In this sense I am also taking a different tack from the much older notion of a nineteenth-century internationalism as espoused by the official organs of Marxian political movements; see Sluga and Clavin, 'Rethinking the History of Internationalism', *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, 3–16.

[66] Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 147.

[67] The importance of street life for the experience of the city has a long history in urban studies; see, for example, Jane Jacobs's seminal study *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

[68] A similar point is made by Massey in *Space, Place, and Gender*, 155–6.

[69] These contexts for performance give reason in part for the leftist nature of these songs. Focusing on these repertoires of the Left is not to suggest that there were no worker affiliations with the Right: the *biennio rosso* also bore witness to a growing support for the emerging fascists among the working classes.

[70] Gianni Bosio defines 'social songs' (*canti sociali*) as 'the songs of protest, of denouncement, of political and ideological affirmation, of resistance … today they function precisely for the interests of the working classes', Bosio, *L'intellettuale rovesciato* (Milan: Bella Ciao, 1975), 53.

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leisure time – the *osterie* (taverns), *piòle* (roughly equivalent to the British pub), workers' clubs and leagues.[71] The late 1910s and early 1920s were a time when the *corsi* (paths) and *piazze* of Turin's public spaces were still inhabited: they were social and political spaces, not just those for passing through.[72] Places for leisure pursuits were seen as facilitating the birth of a modern, industrial proletariat, allowing for communal drinking, dancing and singing, as well as the sharing of political sentiments. Such was the importance of these meeting places that there came to be a known (even causal) connection at the time between the tavern and the strike, between wine and politics.[73]

The street and the drinking table were stages for the performance and fostering of affinity among the relative strangers who inhabited the recently industrialized city. This was still a time when people lived, worked and pursued leisure within the confines of a single neighbourhood.[74] As Franco Castelli notes, 'In the common perception of its inhabitants, every workers' neighbourhood [*borgo*] comes to be seen as a country, a world of personalized relationships, a "little community" whose memory is often idyllically tinged, both for the characters of a suburban landscape still steeped in rural nature, and for the characteristic solidarity of the collective life in the proletarian neighbourhoods.'[75] The *borgo* became the local realm, the lived experience of the city and a community, even if in reality its population was ever-shifting and its physical boundaries porous. It was the power of the idea of the self-contained district that encouraged sociability, the demarcations of neighbourhoods and social spaces facilitating intimate interaction and solidarity.[76]

Where do *La guardia rossa* and *Miśeria, miśeria* fit into this Turin sonic panorama? Both songs were recorded some decades later by members of Cantacronache, a Turin group of left-wing song collectors, musicians and intellectuals active in the late 1950s and early 1960s.[77] There were two (interconnected) sides to Cantacronache's activities. One was their consolidation of a new type of song which, in its political engagement, distanced itself from the commercial *canzonette* emerging from the Festival di Sanremo and, in its social activism, from the contemporary avant-garde; the other was their recuperation of workers' songs (mainly of a socialist and anarchist inclination) from earlier in the century: reviving old songs was a way of

[71] In addition to the fight for the right to work was the fight for the right to leisure, primarily through the curtailing of the working day.

[72] Richard Sennett argues that the 'fall of public man' is in part due to the emergence in the mid-twentieth century of the idea of city streets as spaces to move through (especially with the rise of the car), rather than spaces to inhabit; Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977; repr. London: Penguin, 2002), 14.

[73] Franco Castelli, in Emilio Jona, Sergio Liberovici, Franco Castelli and Alberto Lovatto, *Le ciminiere non fanno più fumo: Canti e memorie degli operai torinesi* (Rome: Donzelli, 2008), 192.

[74] The relatively late industrialization of Turin meant that workers' experience of the city in the early twentieth century chimed more with nineteenth-century Paris and London; see David Pinckney, *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958), 17.

[75] Castelli, in Jona *et al.*, *Le ciminiere non fanno più fumo*, 166.

[76] As Sennett notes, 'People are more sociable, the more they have some tangible barriers between them'; *The Fall of Public Man*, 15.

[77] Thereafter the group splintered, merging into the newly formed Nuovo Canzoniere Italiano. The core members of Cantacronache were Fausto Amodei, Michele L. Straniero, Sergio Liberovici, Giorgio De Maria, Duilio del Prete, Mario Pogliotti, Lionello Gennero, Emilio Jona, Franca Di Rienzo, Adriano Amedei and Margherita Galante Garrone; they also collaborated with many leading cultural figures of the period, including – among others – Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco, Giulio Einaudi, Franco Fortini, Giacomo Manzoni, Massimo Mila and Piero Santi.

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reconnecting with past politics – of solidarity through oral history. These recuperated songs were not 'destined only for the archive', as they put it, but rather were central to a programme of creativity and productivity.[78] Soon after its formation, members of the group set about interviewing and recording people who had been involved in the singing of proletarian song in Turin in the decades around the turn of the century.[79]

The shoemaker Carlo Sacchetti recalled one such song, *La guardia rossa* ('Ecco s'avanza uno strano soldato'), for two of the central members of Cantacronache, musician Sergio Liberovici and lawyer Emilio Jona.[80] They recorded that the song was written in 1919 by Spartacus Picenus (a pseudonym for Raffaele Offidani), a well-known, Turin-based author of more than 100 political songs that circulated widely in workers' culture between the end of the First World War and the aftermath of the Second. According to Sacchetti, the words of the 1919 version are as follows (the song exists in numerous other incarnations):

Ecco s'avanza uno strano soldato	Here comes a strange soldier
vien dall'Oriente non monta destrier	he comes from the East, not on mounted steed
ha man callose il volto abbronzato	he has calloused hands and a tanned face
è il più glorioso di tutti i guerrier	he is the most glorious of all warriors!
Non ha pennacchi né galloni dorati	He has no feather hat or golden stripes,
ma sul berretto e scolpita nel cuor	but on his cap and carved in his heart
porta una falce e un martello incrociati	he bears a hammer and sickle.
son gli emblemi del lavor	They are the emblems of labour
Viva il lavor!	Long live labour!
È la guardia rossa	He is the red guard
che la marcia alla riscossa	who marches to the rescue
che scuoterà la fossa	and frees from the grave
la schiava umanità	enslaved humanity
Giacque vilmente la plebe in catene	The people lay in chains
sotto il tallone del ricco padrone	under the heel of their rich master,
dopo millenni di strazi e di pene	but after millennia of torture and pain
l'asino alfine si cangia in leon	the donkey finally changes into a lion
E sbrana furente il succhion coronato	He tears into the crowned parasite,
toglie al nababbo l'or che rubò	he strips the nabob of the gold he stole
e lo condanna al lavoro forzato	and condemns him to hard labour
perché mai non lavorò	because he has never worked,
non lavorò!	never worked!
È a guardia rossa …	He is the red guard …

[78] Emilio Jona, in *Canti degli operai torinesi: Dalla fine dell'800 agli anni del fascismo*, ed. Emilio Jona and Sergio Liberovici (Milan: Ricordi, 1990), x.

[79] This work continued up until the early 1970s; see *ibid.* and Jona *et al.*, *Le ciminiere non fanno*.

[80] Sacchetti was interviewed several times by Liberovici and Jona between 1959 and 1960, and in June 1968, in his shoemaker's workshop in Turin. His testimony is recorded in Jona *et al.*, *Le ciminiere non fanno più fumo*, 350–3. The English translation of the song is my own.

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The 'red guard' here refers to two things. First, it suggests the Bolshevik paramilitary volunteer groups that comprised primarily factory workers and peasants, and who helped establish Soviet control in the period between the October Revolution in 1917 and the consolidation of the Red Army in 1918.[81] Second, the term refers to the Italian proletarian protest groups (*guardie rosse*) who led strikes and occupations during the *biennio rosso* in Turin; in 1921 these groups were subsumed into the militant anti-fascist Arditi del Popolo. The song's lyrics thus gesture to both international and local contexts via a utopian story of socialist salvation: the red-guard soldier, hardened by war and toil, has arrived to rescue the 'enslaved' worker.

Using the age-old technique of contrafactum (setting new texts to pre-existing melodies), the text was originally set to a well-known French waltz, *Valse brune*. According to the ethnomusicologist Roberto Leydi, this version was sung by Italian representatives at the First Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in 1919.[82] On hearing the anthem, Lenin supposedly professed surprise at the idea of red guards marching to a waltz. What is noteworthy here is the migration the song had undertaken in such a short time: from the workers' culture of Turin to a Russian congress attended by Lenin himself. The version sung by Sacchetti, however, was set to a different melody, by an unknown composer, and was the setting that became most widely known.[83] In this form, it was to become the official anthem of the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) and an enduring anthem of the Left. From Liberovici and Jona's transcription, it is evident that the lyrics' triumphalism is matched by its musical setting as a political anthem. The simplicity, march-like rhythms and melodic repetition emphasize the music's subservience to its political message and its capacity to be collectively sung – an envoicing of shared political dissent. Indeed, Sacchetti reports that he learnt the song from his father, also a shoemaker, who most likely encountered it through his participation in socialist (later communist) artisan leagues and taverns, or during his imprisonment in the 1930s for anti-fascist activities. In terms of the geographies of its performance, then, the song migrated between informal spaces, such as the shoemaker's workshop and prison cells, to the relatively formal spaces of Turin's socialist leagues and workers' clubs as the song increasingly became an anthem for the Italian Left.

Information about *Miśeria, miśeria* was recounted to Liberovici and Jona by Felice Carando.[84] Carando was a worker and political militant who belonged to the Turin club Circolo Socialista Oltre Po' and had signed up with the Arditi del Popolo in the early 1920s to fight against the fascists. In contrast to *La guardia rossa*, *Miśeria, miśeria* is in Piedmontese dialect and, unusually for the repertoire collected by Cantacronache, was found only in Turin. According to Carando's testimony, the song was widespread in the city during the *biennio rosso*. The text is richly complex

[81] The 'hammer and sickle' refers to the symbol of proletarian solidarity – between peasantry (sickle) and the working class (hammer) – that became ubiquitous during the Russian Revolution and which was quickly taken up by other communist movements.

[82] Leydi's sleeve note to the vinyl EP *Canti comunisti italiani* (1962), I Dischi del Sole, DS 5, according to sleeve notes for vinyl LP *Sventolerai lassù: Antologia della canzone comunista in Italia 2* (1977), I Dischi del Sole, DS 1078/80.

[83] However, a score from 1946 for voice, mandolin and accordion attributes it to a G. Biggini.

[84] Liberovici and Jona interviewed Carando in Turin in February 1959; Jona *et al.*, *Le ciminiere non fanno più fumo*, 390–3. Although both songs here were recounted by men, that is not to say that they were not sung by women: there is much evidence that *La guardia rossa* in particular was sung by women. Moreover, a significant portion of the songs recorded by Cantacronache had been recalled by women whose testimony suggests that both men and women were involved in the musical activities of the clubs and leagues. Earlier in the century, when song was still commonly sung to accompany work, there was a clearer gender demarcation – the substantial repertoire of songs by female rice weeders being a notable example; see *Senti le rane che cantano: Canzoni e vissuti popolari della risaia*, ed. Franco Castelli, Emilio Jona and Alberto Lovatto (Rome: Donzelli, 2005).

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and again exists in numerous versions;[85] Carando recorded the version he was familiar with as follows:[86]

Miśeria, miśeria	Poverty, poverty
la dote ünica che i duma ai nòstri fiöi	the unique gift we give to our children;
a piöu fa frèid a fiòca	it's raining, it's cold, it's snowing,
nui miśeri a l'uma niènte ch'an cuàta	we poor have nothing to cover ourselves
La miśeria a j'è pür sèmpre	Poverty is always there
ch'an guida fin a la mòrt	it guides us through to death
Mal nütrì da lunga data	We the long-term malnourished,
sucialismu völ salvene	socialism wants to save us,
tüti quant iscrit an lega	with everyone enrolled in the league
capital fuma mürì	capital we may destroy!
La culpa l'è nòstra	It's our fault
a l'è nui che ś'lu vuruma	we are the ones who want it
l'è nui chi travajuma	it is we who work
par manten-i al lüssu a lur	to maintain the luxury for them.
Diśimpiegà sensa 'n tòc 'd pan	Unemployed without a piece of bread
anduma anduma	let's go let's go
l'idea an guida	the idea guides us,
cumbate 'l prèivi e 'l capital	to fight the priest and capital
L'àn fam l'àn fam	They are hungry,
e i cit a ciamu	the children ask
'dco lur al pan	for bread,
'dco lur al pan	they ask for bread
Carlu Marx Carlu Marx	Karl Marx, Karl Marx
a l'à dilu	said it,
a l'à dilu al mund inter	he said it to the whole world,
uverié uverié ünivi	workers, workers unite!
la vitòria av suridrà	and victory will smile upon you

[85] A two-verse segment is recorded by Roberto Leydi in 'Osservazioni sulle canzoni della Resistenza Italiana nel quadro della nostra musica popolaresca', *Canti della Resistenza Italiana*, ed. Tito Romano and Giorgio Solza (Milan: Collana del Gallo Grande, 1960), 7–78 (p. 43). Leydi also notes that it was 'un canzone operaia cantata', circulating in Turin between 1919 and 1922. There is also intertextuality: Liberovici and Jona record that the first verse, 'Miśeria, miśeria', is also present in a version of the song *Guarda là 'n pianüra* recalled by Angelo Giorcelli; Jona *et al.*, *Le ciminiere non fanno più fumo*.

[86] Italian translation: 'Miseria, miseria / la dote unica che diamo ai nostri figli / piove, fa freddo, nevica / noi miseri non abbiamo niente per coprirci. // La miseria c'è pur sempre / che ci guida fino alla morte. // Malnutriti da lunga data / socialismo vuole salvarci / tutti quanti iscritti in lega / capitale facciamo morire. // La colpa è nostra / siamo noi che ce lo vogliamo / siamo noi che lavoriamo / per mantenere il lusso a loro. // Disoccupati senza un pezzo di pane / andiamo andiamo / l'idea ci guida / combattere il prete e il capitale. // Hanno fame / i bambini chiedono anche loro il pane. // Carlo Marx / l'ha detto al

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Eviva	Hurray!
anduma anduma	Let's go, let's go
l'idea an guida	the idea guides us
cumbate 'l prèivi e 'l capital	to fight the priest and capital

The lyrics interweave the miserable plight of the workers with a Marxian dialectic on capital, an explicit reference that Liberovici and Jona note as new in the repertoire.[87] They identified *Miśeria, miśeria* as belonging to a corpus of songs they called 'cantate operaie' – a phrase hard to capture adequately in translation; in one sense it means something like 'workers' cantatas', but probably here means something more like 'workers' singalongs'. They recognized this subgenre as a Turin phenomenon: a form of song forged by the city's working classes to give expression to their political experiences in the tumultuous early decades of the century. Melodies were borrowed from a wide range of repertoire, transposing and rearranging snippets of Neapolitan song, operetta, Risorgimento song, political anthem, folk music and even nineteenth-century opera – in some cases, that is, musical cultures far removed from the radical Left and the working classes – as a satirical or parodic accompaniment to socialist and communist content.[88] These songs formed a diverse and fragmented repertoire, but one united in its use of choral forms and in its commitment to ideals of internationalism, workers' pride and solidarity.

We find these features in *Miśeria, miśeria.* The repetitive refrains suggest the possibility of an alternation of soloist and chorus, a pattern also suggested by Carando's mode of performance and the accompanying transcription. In Liberovici and Jona's recording, Carando delivers the verses in a free-flowing, aria-like manner, while the refrains are more fixed and chorale-like.[89] Moreover, his trained voice, with subtle vibrato and even operatic inflections, suggests that he probably belonged to a workers' choir. The song seems geared for performance at cultural events hosted by workers' clubs, although Carando's claim for the song's ubiquity in Turin suggests it was potentially heard beyond the club. Most clubs had their own choirs and often their own political anthems (normally written by workers). The potential for group singing fostered a sense of camaraderie, but also offered a means of self-expression and possibilities for political action: *Miśeria, miśeria* is reflexive, while also suggesting a path forward.

We have, then, two contrasting songs: one has continued to be well known up to the present, the other has enjoyed sporadic resurgence; one is in Italian, the other in dialect; one is more straightforwardly a political anthem, the other a complex assortment of genres. But they share common features: both songs contain suggestions of a route out of worker desperation, a sense of political activism; and both enshrine their political climates for posterity. Building on the anthropologist Ernesto de Martino's notion of 'progressive folklore', that is, of cultural activity among the lower classes energizing them against the political elite (through strikes, occupations

mondo intero / operai unitevi / la vittoria vi sorriderà. // Evviva. / Andiamo, andiamo / l'idea ci guida / combattere il prete e il capitale.' The English translation is my own.

87 Italy developed its own idiosyncratic Marxism in part because Marx was relatively unknown until the twentieth century: the first translation of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), for example, had been published as late as 1891. Marx was thus not necessarily the go-to theorist for the radical Left.

88 Jona *et al.*, *Le ciminiere non fanno più fumo*, 83.

89 CD contained in *ibid.*

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and so on), Liberovici and Jona viewed these songs not as mere decorations of daily life, but rather as crucial instruments of expression and action.[90]

Central to the instilling of political expression and activism in those who sang and listened to these songs was the forging of a collectivity among workers, the recognition of themselves as a political force. In this sense, the shared aesthetic experience of singing and listening to *La guardia rossa* at the tavern table or *Miśeria, miśeria* in a workers' club was a musical counterpart to the factory occupations taking place simultaneously. In February 1919, metalworkers – organized and supported by the Federazione Italiana Operai Metallurgici (FIOM) – had successfully gone on strike for an eight-hour working day. The moment of victory was also marked by the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI) winning its largest ever share of the vote in the general election that year, sending the Liberal government into crisis. The electoral success suggested not only an increasingly powerful working class demanding change, but also demonstrated the ways the PSI had infiltrated worker culture. Unionism was crucial, with most workers belonging to syndicates (*camere del lavoro*) that were controlled by the socialists.[91]

While many on the Left tried to harness the unrest of the *biennio rosso* and to galvanize the workers into more organized units, divisions among the newly empowered socialists thwarted progress. Indeed, the grassroots militancy of these years served only to exacerbate these divisions.[92] Since its founding in 1892, the PSI had been ambivalent about popular militancy. Under the leadership of Filippo Turati and his reformist wing, the party had originally defined itself against the Bakuninian anarchism that was a growing feature of Italian proletarian activity in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The PSI, in a way that rendered it idiosyncratic compared with many other European socialist parties at the time, had parliamentary ambitions, with an attitude of integrationism rather than antagonism towards the Liberal government.[93] The outcome was to create a schism between the party and its worker base, most of the latter supporting the more revolutionary and anarchist factions of the party. These divisions came to a head in the *biennio rosso*, with popular militancy not supported or co-opted by the official leadership of the PSI. The result was an inward-looking party, more preoccupied with its own fractious politics than with trying to forge international connections or combat an emergent fascist threat.

Our two songs register this hesitancy between workers and socialism, between the realities of local conflict and party politics.[94] *La guardia rossa* celebrates the local paramilitary groups crucial to the occupations, putting itself at odds with the official PSI line. *Miśeria, miśeria*, conversely, may be in dialect, but it adopts a more pedagogic and elitist tone in its musical and

[90] Ernesto de Martino, 'Il folklore progressivo emiliano', *Emilia*, 3/21 (1951), 251–4, discussed in Castelli, Jona and Lovatto, *Senti le rane che cantano*, 237.

[91] The *camere del lavoro* were labour institutions that hosted local unions, leagues and savings banks for workers. They were often divided into specific crafts and were established at the end of the nineteenth century following the French syndicalist model. They predominantly used strikes as their weapons against the government and industrialists.

[92] The major outcomes of 1920 were that the maximalist Giacinto Serrati emerged as the leader of the PSI, and the Partito Comunista d'Italia (later renamed the Partito Comunista Italiano, or PCI) was formed in January 1921, out of the Congress of Livorno and under the impetus of Amadeo Bordiga.

[93] This attitude was reciprocated by the prime minister, Giovanni Giolitti, who wanted to incorporate the socialist movement into the parliamentary system and thus, he believed, strengthen the state.

[94] Gavin Williams makes a similar point, noting that whereas Cantacronache tended 'to stress the productive affinities between socialist politics and workers' emancipation, it is equally possible to hear rehearsed in these recordings the cracks and the divisions in the relationship between politicians and workers'; review of Jona *et al.*, *Le ciminiere non fanno più fumo*, *Opera Quarterly*, 29 (2013), 80–5 (p. 83).

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textual complexity: the impression is of urban socialist intellectuals adopting the patois of workers who still bore their rural origins. But both songs are 'sound documents', to borrow Andrea F. Bohlman's term: aural and written traces of using music to voice dissent against the political status quo.[95] The communal listening and singing thus fostered were an affirmative sounding of collectivity, of social and political solidarity among a certain sector of the public; but they were also thoroughly local affirmations that could open up as many divisions within that sector as they sought to overcome.

This localism was also marked by Turin's idiosyncratic socialism. Partly as a consequence of the PSI's failure to build on the workers' momentum, local factions began to take shape, away from the party's Milanese headquarters. In Turin, a group emerged that clustered around the journal *L'ordine nuovo*, launched in May 1919 with Antonio Gramsci as its figurehead.[96] The group also responded to the particular exigencies of the Turin proletariat, centred on the Fiat plant and metalworking factories.[97] The Ordine Nuovo (as they became known) pushed for the creation of factory councils: inspired by the Soviet model, these were populated through worker elections, with the belief that they could become the building blocks of larger political structures.[98] Gramsci believed that the revolution needed to come from the workers themselves, that they needed to unite to realize their own autonomy and potential – and that factory councils afforded a means of organizing this potential. To come to this realization, the people had to be on side, not simply dictated to from above; revolution had to start from the point of production, in the factories and in other workers' spaces. Furthermore, Gramsci argued, cultural activity was also needed to raise worker consciousness, to lift discontent on the factory floor and in the *borgo* into the political arena. Yet Gramsci seemingly overlooked the significance of song, which had emerged as a crucial mode of activist expression and political awareness.[99]

Thus, if the PSI displayed certain idiosyncrasies in the international arena in its pursuit of compromise and political power, the Turin-based Ordine Nuovo bore an individuality in relation to the central Milanese arm of the party. The unstable nexus between party, workers, unions and locally organized councils came to a head in April 1920: half a million Turin workers went on general strike over rights to form factory councils and control of the production process. The government supported the employers, with thousands of troops deployed in the city streets. The strike was quickly quashed, in large part because the PSI

[95] Andrea F. Bohlman, 'Solidarity, Song, and the Sound Document', *Journal of Musicology*, 33 (2016), 232–69.

[96] The Turin movement was founded by Angelo Tasca in 1909 and was quickly joined by Palmiro Togliatti, Umberto Terracini and Antonio Gramsci. It regrouped after the First World War.

[97] Fiat factories, based on Henry Ford's Detroit model, were opened in 1900, and led to an unprecedented expansion of Turin's proletariat. Around the turn of the century, Italian factory environments were especially harsh within Europe, with long days and poor conditions, and with the workers possessing few rights; Castelli, in Jona *et al.*, *Le ciminiere non fanno più fumo*, 180. The PSI rode the crest of a rising humanitarianism: a growing political awareness of these conditions and the need for change.

[98] Gramsci, 'Democrazia operaia', *L'ordine nuovo*, 1/7 (21 June 1919), 47–8. The first factory council was instigated at Fiat in September 1919. The idea quickly caught on in Turin and the surrounding regions, but met with hostility from trade unions as well as the party. The leaders of FIOM espoused legal trade unionism and negotiation, rather than anarcho-revolutionary tendencies, and were wary of the factory council's support of worker democracy, thereby giving voice to the proletarian masses beyond an official organization.

[99] This is an oversight that Giorgina Levi argues is all the stranger as Gramsci repeatedly reiterated the importance of political energy coming from proletarian creative activity; Levi, *Cultura e associazioni operaie in Piemonte: 1890–1975* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1985), 69.

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failed to intervene in support of the workers. The PSI and the trade unions had by this point abandoned the factory councils, something that resulted in further hostility between the party and the Turin group. The disjuncture or antagonism between local, national and international concerns registered in song was thus mirrored in socialist politics of the time.

Continued strike action in Turin in September of that year only served to exacerbate these tensions. The outcome was a series of failed compromises: the government's encouragement of the PSI and union leaders to negotiate a compromise horrified the industrialists, furthering their move to the Right. The PSI met in Milan during the occupations to consider pursuing revolution – a notion that was rejected. The workers' revolutionary ideals were quashed;[100] by early 1922 the Left had been almost entirely eradicated from the political landscape, when only a few years previously it had been the central protagonist. Our songs, as they were sung a few years earlier, are yet to witness this moment of disillusionment for the Turin workers, instead being full of the possibility of revolution. They are nestled at the heart of the insurrectionary moment, an embodiment of the political culture of the Italian labour movement during the high point of the *biennio rosso.* In the political tensions sounded, however, they foretell what was to come, serving as nodes in a larger political flow.[101]

More important still, song served as a popular urban mode of communication on the eve of the dominance of mass communication networks: the late story of 'popular' music before mass media. It was this sense of song as a means of political communication across spaces, creating a sense of worker solidarity and awareness of themselves as a political class, that led Liberovici and Jona to assume that the songs seemingly instilled in their singers and listeners the recipe for a socialist state. They drew a point of comparison between the 'cantata operaia' as a newly formal way of giving musical expression to the workers' plight and socialism's work to manage the proletarian uprisings of these years. However, as one listens to the way local inflections take shape in these songs, the localism of these political expressions starts to suggest a more complex picture, one in which the relationship between song, socialism and workers' culture is more uneasy and unsettled.

The versions of *La guardia rossa* and *Miśeria, miśeria* echoing in Turin's proletarian neighbourhoods during the *biennio rosso* thus encompassed a wide field of cultural reference, but gestured in specific directions: to the growing self-awareness of the labouring masses and their position in northern Italian industrial society; to issues of internal strife within the various factions of the Italian Left; to ideas of international worker solidarity via the Bolshevik Revolution and Marx. The impression that emerges from the songs and the working-class culture they formed a part of is one of linguistic variation, Russian-inspired politics and localism. Focusing on the singularity of the Turin proletariat's musical mediation of interwar politics is not to rehearse the oft-invoked clichés of Italian exceptionalism and regionalism. Rather, every case is both typical and exceptional: an emphasis on the specifics of place is not to close off a nation or region as fixed and homogeneous. The point is instead that these songs are both self-consciously local *and* international, as are the places in which they were sung. Localities, after all, should always be set within larger contexts. The street sociability contained in workers' music-making demonstrates a late,

[100] Historians have subsequently asked whether this really was a revolutionary moment, or whether in fact the turmoil constituted something more 'modest'. See, for example, Paolo Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories: Italy 1920*, trans. Gwyn A. Williams (London: Pluto Press, 1975); originally published as *L'occupazione delle fabbriche. Settembre 1920* (Turin: Einaudi, 1964), 22.

[101] Lovatto captures this sense of multidirectional flow when he calls Turin 'a network of paths, a place of encounter of music and text, a space traversed by song'; Jona *et al.*, *Le ciminiere non fanno più fumo*, 110.

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overlooked flourishing of public life in workers' culture, but also a localized sphere of encounter that could lead to more internationalist political affinities.

This case study of music and political action, on the cusp of fascism and the dominance of mass media, complicates narratives of an inherent rapport between workers' songs and socialism, the Left and international allegiance.[102] Indeed, the songs share affinities with proletarian protests that are at some remove from – perhaps even at odds with – the primary political organizations of the Left.[103] Examining one 'moment' of subaltern song allows us to anchor the sonorous flow and political fidelities of the interwar period, while simultaneously exposing the internationalist ramifications – a moment of song, limited by its sonic duration, floats into the ether but still connects with those uttered elsewhere.

From the History of Jazz in Europe towards a European History of Jazz: The International Federation of Hot Clubs (1935–6) and 'Jazz Internationalism'

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'Hot clubs' proliferated all over Europe and the United States during the 1930s. For a brief period (1935–6), they joined forces in an International Federation of Hot Clubs (IFHC), the main purpose of which was to link together devotees in search of American hot jazz recordings at a time when they were difficult to find and buy in Europe, since that sub-genre was less popular and commercially successful than what was then called 'straight' jazz. The expression 'hot jazz' was coined by jazz musicians at the end of the 1920s and referred to a style based on performance and improvisation rather than on the composition and performance of written parts. A founder of the Hot Club de France (HCF) in 1932, the French jazz critic Hugues Panassié was the first to establish a hierarchy between these two styles:

> *Straight* means […] playing the text as written […] This formula is most often employed in large ensembles led by Paul Whiteman, Jack Hylton and Ray Starita, etc. […] This formula […] is also the least representative of the true physiognomy of jazz. On the contrary, *hot* jazz, which is much less well-known in France, is the true form of jazz. *Hot* jazz consists in performing a tune with fantasy, without paying too much respect to its original melody.[104]

[102] The fascists also recognized the importance of song as a means of propaganda. 'Social song' of a more leftist bent was banned by the regime, with people being arrested for singing subversive material; Mussolini announced the closure of 25,000 taverns in May 1927. See Giacomo De Marzi, *I canti del Fascismo* (Genoa: Frilli, 2004), 28–9.

[103] Leydi and Bosio propose that social song might offer a 'counterpoint' to the public history of the proletarian political organizations. See Roberto Leydi, *Canti sociali italiani*, i (Milan: Edizioni Avanti!, 1963), 10–11.

[104] '*Straight* signifie […] jouer le texte musical tel qu'il a été écrit […] C'est la formule qu'emploient le plus souvent les grands orchestres de Paul Whiteman, Jack Hylton, Ray Starita, etc. […] C'est aussi […] celle qui représente le moins bien la véritable physionomie du jazz. Au contraire, le jazz *hot*, beaucoup moins connu en France, est la forme du vrai jazz. Le jazz *hot* consiste en une interprétation fantaisiste qui s'écarte entièrement de la ligne primitive du morceau.' Hugues Panassié, *Le jazz hot* (Paris: Corrêa, 1934), 25. Author's translation.