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**'Capturing Anarchists Across Borders': The Transnational Dimensions of Italian antimilitarist campaigns, 1911-1914.**

*Stornelli d'esilio (Nostra patria è il mondo intero)*

*O profughi d'Italia  
alla ventura  
si va senza rimpianti  
né paura.*

*Nostra patria è il mondo intero  
Nostra legge è la libertà  
[...]  
Dovunque uno sfruttato si ribelli  
noi troveremo schiere di fratelli.  
[...]  
Ma torneranno Italia i tuoi proscritti  
ad agitar la face dei diritti.<sup>i</sup>*

*Stornelli d'esilio* ('The whole world is our motherland') was composed by the anarchist poet Pietro Gori during his exile in the USA in 1895 and quickly became a hymn of the Italian labour movement. Its lyrics articulate two prominent features of Italian anarchism: the experience of exile and a plea for international solidarity, yet also a final pledge, 'but Italy, your outlaws will return to brandish the torch of rights', which reveals the unceasing connection exiles felt for their homeland.

In recent years, scholars of anarchism have focused their attention on the movement's transnational dimensions, which have been long neglected. This new research has raised a number of questions regarding the relationship between different analytical scales - transnational, national and local - and has outlined the necessity of integrating these perspectives. Bantam and Altena argue that 'considering anarchist transnationalism in complete isolation from the history of the national state and the various forms of transnationalisation affecting it means discounting a prime determinant in the history of anarchist transnationalism'.<sup>ii</sup> The relevance of maintaining a 'national' paradigm in the study of Italian anarchist exiles is of particular significance because of the complex, and at times contradictory, relationship between the 'internationalism' proclaimed and practised by the anarchists and the concurrent close relations they maintained with their homeland, as underlined in Gori's song. If anarchist expatriates' political horizon remained their native land, it is essential to investigate not only the nodes of the transnational networks they established across continents, but also to consider this experience from the point of view of the 'motherland', analysing how 'exile' and 'motherland' related to one another., and the influences exerted by

exiles over the domestic movement in terms of organisation, contacts with groups of other nationalities, and the enrichment of theoretical thought and militant practices. To accomplish this investigation it is therefore necessary to shift between a transnational perspective and the national, and trans-local, dimensions.

This article intends to address some of these issues by reverting the focus from the communities abroad back to the homeland. In doing so, it examines the contributions made by anarchist exiles to the antimilitarist campaign in Italy that began with opposition to the 1911 colonial invasion of Libya and intensified in 1913-1914 with the movement to free the soldiers Augusto Masetti and Antonio Moroni, and to abolish disciplinary battalions. This protest reached its peak with the insurrectionary outbreak that brought Italy to the verge of revolution, the so-called 'red week' of 8-15 June 1914, when more than 100,000 troops were deployed to crush the uprising that spread from Ancona to central and northern Italy.

### **Anarchism in exile and transnationalism**

From the second half of the nineteenth century until the Second World War, exile played a notable part in the history of the Italian anarchist movement. It guaranteed survival during cyclical waves of governmental repression and provided space for the construction of a diasporic network-based organisation that became a cause of great concern for the Italian authorities. In 1912, the Italian ambassador in Berne remarked that 'the Italian anarchist abroad is to be feared much more than one in the motherland for his freedom of action and his detached observation.'<sup>iii</sup> Anarchist exiles spread their activities across continents following the routes taken by economic migrants. They contributed to the radicalisation of Italian communities abroad and made a crucial contribution to the dissemination of revolutionary ideas.<sup>iv</sup> Socialist and anarchist exiles 'mediated between Italian migrant workers and nativist labour movements in receiving countries.'<sup>v</sup> Italian migrants displayed a high level of combativeness and spontaneity and were often the initiators of labour struggles in France and Argentina, and in North America they established their own organizations when discriminated against by unions of native skilled workers. Italy's migrants eagerly embraced socialist and anarchist internationalist ideals and exiled labour leaders prompted their integration into working class organizations.

At the same time, Italy and the domestic movement remained the primary focal point for communities of Italian anarchists abroad.<sup>vi</sup> In 1899, Errico Malatesta, probably the most well-known Italian anarchist, promoted the constitution of a federation of Italian anarchists in North America 'to build up a strength that [...] can come to the aid of our cause where the

opportunity arises, especially in Italy, which is the country we come from, whose language we speak, and where consequently we can exert our influence more effectively.<sup>vii</sup> Calls for the necessity of carrying out effective propaganda from abroad, and the limits and difficulties of doing so, appeared in the circular that launched the newspaper *L'Internazionale* in London in 1901.<sup>viii</sup> The anarchist press is an important indicator of the movement's transnationalism and its close connections with the homeland. From the 1890s, an 'impressive quantity of the anarchist newspapers in Italy arrived from anarchist circles abroad.'<sup>ix</sup>

Recent studies have highlighted the significance of exile in the history of the Italian anarchist movement and scrutinized the political, cultural and social features of this phenomenon.<sup>x</sup> This new focus has challenged the view of Italian anarchism as a millenarian movement which alternated between eruptions of abrupt riots and long periods of quiescence; an interpretation that has long been highly influential. In fact, a transnational approach reveals a clear continuity in term of organisation, ideological debate and political activities.<sup>xi</sup> Informal and flexible international groups were the salient feature of these networks, which constituted the 'true basis of anarchist organisation'.<sup>xii</sup> The analysis of the mechanisms through which these informal organizations connected with the motherland and how this system shaped militant strategies is therefore of primary significance in understanding the transnationalism of the movement. Opposition to the invasion of Libya and the subsequent campaign for Masetti's liberation provides us with an ideal case study to unveil these mechanisms.

### **Opposition to the invasion of Libya**

In September 1911, the Italian government presented the Ottoman Empire with an ultimatum to concede Cyrenaica and Tripoli on the Libyan coastal region. The following day an Italian expeditionary force of 45,000 men left for Tripoli, starting the Turco-Italian war. Opposition to the colonial expedition united the rank and file of the Left, including republicans, socialists, anarchists and *Camere del Lavoro*.<sup>xiii</sup> The anarchists joined the protests from the beginning: antimilitarism had been a central area of their activity since the turn of the century.<sup>xiv</sup> Articles denouncing the imperialist war appeared on the front pages of anarchist newspapers in Italy and abroad.<sup>xv</sup> Mobilisations and meetings were promptly organised. In Switzerland large demonstrations took place outside Italian consulate offices in Berne, Geneva, Basle, Locarno, and Zurich. In Zurich, demonstrators smashed windows and almost succeeded in removing the royal coat of arms from the building.<sup>xvi</sup> In London, when Malatesta spoke against the war at the Communist Club in October 1911, police surrounded the building and reinforced security at the Italian Embassy.<sup>xvii</sup> At the end of November the

*Gruppo anarchico italiano di Parigi* met to organise a rally against the war and the French syndicalists Georges Yvetot and Victor Méric, representatives of the newspaper *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, offered to promote it to avoid reprisals against Italian refugees who could face deportation.<sup>xviii</sup> A proposal to march on the Italian Embassy after the demonstration was rejected, allegedly due to the intervention of some police informers who managed to discourage the group.<sup>xix</sup> Two weeks later, more than 100 militants in Paris attended a rally against the Libyan war.<sup>xx</sup> In Argentina, Italian anarchists had been forced underground by harsh repression following the promulgation of special laws against them, and were unable to stage public protests.<sup>xxi</sup>

From the start of the conflict, the Italian government made every effort to silence opposition to the war and anarchists abroad assisted comrades at home by smuggling large amounts of propaganda materials into Italy. Examining the flows of these materials highlights the connections between centres of exile and militant groups in Italy. The American secret services alerted the Ministry of the Interior that anarchists in Seattle, Washington had collected over \$120 to fund the publication of a leaflet condemning the conflict against Turkey that was ‘to be distributed in Italy among the working class’ with ‘the hope to inaugurate a general strike’.<sup>xxii</sup>

Civil and military authorities in Italy were considerably alarmed when, on the day of the call-up, one infantry lieutenant’s orderly brought antimilitarist leaflets he had picked up on the street, allegedly mistaking them for cinema advertisements, into an official’s house in Fano. The town’s general headquarters ordered a search of the barracks and all leaflets were destroyed. Police investigations established that the flyers had been published in Lugano, Switzerland and smuggled into Italy. Prime Minister Giolitti instructed the prefect of Como to liaise with custom officers and post-office authorities to prevent the further introduction of such materials.<sup>xxiii</sup>

In December 1911, eighteen-year-old Giannini Gino was arrested in Pistoia. Three days earlier he had posted in the city centre fifty leaflets printed on coloured paper (green, white and red, the colours of the Italian flag) with an epitaph to the young soldiers that had fallen in Tripoli: ‘thousands of young lives taken away from the honest work on the fields and in the factories, from the tender affections of mothers and the kisses of lovers, were sent to destroy and put to the sword somebody else’s fatherland in the name of their own and cowardly sacrificed to the interests of mafioso jingoism’.<sup>xxiv</sup> Giannini confessed to having composed the manifesto following instructions found in the anarchist newspaper *La Battaglia*, published in San Paulo in Brazil.<sup>xxv</sup>

A couple of months later, in March 1912, 1,000 leaflets carrying the same poem were found in the hold of the Austrian steamer *Indeficiente* when anchored in Tripoli harbour. The sailors who discovered them burned all the copies to avoid trouble once they realised they were handing antimilitarist material. Investigations established that the steamer had reached Tripoli after anchoring in Fiume in the Austro-Hungarian Empire the previous December. While the *Indeficiente* had been loading a shipment of timber for Tripoli, a local labourer was arrested and found to be in possession of an issue of *La Battaglia* that had on its front page the same proclamation against the monarchy and the colonial expedition as the leaflets. A few weeks after that arrest, a large number of the same leaflet had been posted on walls and circulated in pubs, cinemas and in the municipal theatre in Fiume. The police were unable to find out whether the leaflets had been smuggled from Argentina or had been printed in Pola or Trieste. According to the Italian consul in Fiume, it was highly possible that someone had managed to hide the leaflets in the *Indeficiente*'s hold, with or without the crew's complicity, hoping they would be distributed in the occupied territories.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Authorities intercepted all forms of antimilitarist propaganda, including songs and theatrical plays. Post Offices in Novara, Como, Turin and Milan were instructed to seize prints of the song 'Aux Pacifistes' composed by the French anarchist Lucrèce Loyola.<sup>xxvii</sup> Similar instructions were given to the prefects in major towns to stop the dissemination of the *Almanach du Travailleur 1913*, published by the Swiss-based anarchist Luigi Bertoni and *La Voix du Peuple*, and the theatrical drama *Suna l'Araba di Tripoli* by Francesco Grippiola, that was allegedly distributed by socialist revolutionaries in Lausanne to conscripts returning to Italy for military service.<sup>xxviii</sup> The play was performed at an antimilitarist soirée organised in support of the newspapers *Il Risveglio* and *La Voix du Peuple* in Geneva.<sup>xxix</sup>

Women - in their roles as mothers and wives - were a central target of antimilitarist propaganda. Articles and leaflets reiterated that women, regardless of class distinctions, were the first victims of militarism and wars. They were left without means of subsistence while their sons, husbands and fiancées were sacrificed to a false ideal of fatherland for the financial and military interests of a minority. Women's importance in educating children according to antimilitarist and egalitarian ideals was also underlined. The Chicago-based *Germinal* encouraged mothers to stop their sons from going to the front:

Do not become a murderer! Do not get murdered! I gave you life and I, I alone, have the right to take it away [...] All men are brothers [...] there are not Italians, nor French, nor Russians, nor Chinese [...] you must not kill other young people

who you do not even know, who have an anxious mother crying and waiting for them.<sup>xxx</sup>

The same piece was republished in *La Battaglia* in Brazil with a final exhortation: ‘the only war that you should fight is the one for freedom and for good. In this war, be the heroic volunteer and sacrifice the life I gave you’.<sup>xxx</sup> Luigi Galleani’s article *Alle Madri d’Italia! (To Italian mothers!)*, first published in *La Cronaca Sovversiva* (Lynn, Massachusetts) was later reprinted as a pamphlet and widely distributed in Italy.<sup>xxxii</sup>

The colonial expedition and the overwhelmingly jingoistic propaganda associated with it prompted anarchists to reflect on the concept of nationalism and the distinction between affection for one’s native country - an affection strongly felt in migrant communities - and the construction of a false idea of *patria* by the government, nationalists and all supporters of colonialism to further economic and military interests. In April 1912, when the conflict was at its most intense, Italian anarchist exiles in London published 5,000 copies of a one-off issue entitled *La Guerra Tripolina*, the outcome of several meetings organised in the city.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Malatesta wrote the leading article, ‘La guerra e gli anarchici’, in which he attacked the idea of ‘patriotism’ and challenged the moral arguments presented to justify the invasion. Against the claim that supporting the invasion was a genuine expression of patriotism, Malatesta argued that true patriotism was a mixture of positive feelings that reinforced solidarity in human groups: attachment to the native village, preference for one’s own language, moral ties, memories and affection for the country. He argued that, as internationalists, anarchists called for a fight against the dominant classes, but in the case of war anarchists supported those who were fighting for their independence. Therefore, concluded Malatesta, ‘for the honor of Italy we hope that the Italian people come to their senses and force the government to withdraw from Africa; if not, we hope the Arabs will be able to drive the Italians out’.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Malatesta’s article reappeared a month later in the Massachusetts-based *La Cronaca Sovversiva*, which was widely distributed in Italy.<sup>xxxv</sup>

References to the Italian Risorgimento and other struggles for national independence recurred often in writings opposed to the invasion. Anarchists in San Paolo remembered that:

To drive foreign tyrants out of Italy, Italians conjured, conspired against princes and emperors, stabbed enemies, attempted regicides, incited plebs to revolt, threw bombs [...] Garibaldi and Mazzini were sentenced to death [...] for leading the bold youth who at the cost of their blood accomplished [...] the unification of Italy. All over the world Italian patriots fought for freedom: against the Russians for the freedom of Poland, against the Turks for the freedom of Greece. Those heroic

times are now far away [...] The slaves of yesterday have forgotten their pain, their struggles, their heroism; today they are execrable and execrated tyrants.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Propaganda writings also stressed aspects more directly linked with the migrants' experience. In particular they highlighted the contradiction within the nationalists' rhetorical claims about the greatness of a 'motherland' which had forced thousands of people to migrate and subsist in appalling conditions in other countries.

The authorities were well aware of the dangers posed by the circulation of these publications in Italy. In the rigid controls over antimilitarist propaganda, particular attention was paid 'to eliminating the contribution of subversive newspapers from abroad and to avoid their entry into the kingdom by seizing at border post offices newspapers such as *Il Risveglio* published in Geneva or *L'Avvenire del Lavoratore* published in Lugano'. Attention was also paid to anarchists returning from abroad. In Rome, the police searched third-rate hotels and inns in the hunt for suspicious individuals.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Anarchist exiles were also involved in the establishment of newspapers in Italy. Between 1913 and 1915 a leading organ of the Italian anarchist movement was the weekly *Volontà*, first published in June 1913 in Ancona. The organisational planning and theoretical discussions about the newspaper's political direction were undertaken by Malatesta and other refugees in London.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Most of the funds that guaranteed the paper a financially sound start came from communities of anarchists abroad: some from London and a more substantial sum, about 3,000 lire, from Italian anarchists living in the USA (particularly in New York, Boston and Taylorville, Illinois) who pledged ongoing aid.<sup>xxxix</sup> Malatesta, although unable to travel to Italy, was nevertheless determined 'to do everything' he could for *Volontà* 'from a distance'.<sup>xl</sup>

Collecting money for newspapers published in Italy was a constant activity for anarchist refugee communities. *L'Agitatore*, published in Bologna, was one of the principal mouthpieces of the antimilitarist campaign and several of its editors, including Maria Rygier and Armando Borghi, were arrested and imprisoned several times. Two fundraising soirées were organised in March and June 1912 at *La Maison du Peuple* in Geneva to finance it. Apparently, the leaflets advertising the event were printed in Bologna.<sup>xli</sup> Collections were also organised for the Pisa-based *L'Avvenire Anarchico*, in response to an appeal to raise 4,000 lire to avoid the paper's closure.<sup>xlii</sup>

Italians organised fundraising for foreign newspapers as well. In Paris, the *Gruppo Rivoluzionario Italiano* launched an event to support the organ of the Confédération Générale du Travail, *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, in March 1912. Three hundred people, including a large number of Italian anarchists, enjoyed speeches, revolutionary music and songs, the

staging of Gori's drama *Senza Patria (Without a Country)*, and dancing sessions until six in the morning.<sup>xliii</sup> Social evenings were also arranged to help deserters and military absentees who had reached Switzerland after absconding from Italy. At the beginning of 1912, four committees to support deserters were established in Switzerland: two by syndicalists in Lugano and Lausanne and two by anarchists in Geneva and Zurich.<sup>xliv</sup> These committees provided deserters and militants convicted for antimilitarist activities with papers, documents and financial help until they could find an occupation.<sup>xlv</sup> These activities were financed by subscriptions and fundraising at social events, like that in Geneva in January 1912 which was attended by more than 200 people.<sup>xlvi</sup>

### **Pro-Masetti campaign.**

An unexpected accident acted as a catalyst for the protests against the war in Libya and provided a focus for the antimilitarist campaign after the conclusion of the conflict in October 1912. A month after the beginning of the war, in the early morning of 30 October 1911, conscript Augusto Masetti, while shouting 'Long live anarchy!', shot his commanding colonel whilst he addressed troops awaiting transport to Libya. Masetti's act had a worldwide resonance, and news of it appeared in both the nationalist and the radical press. According to the military code, Masetti should have been court martialled and possibly sentenced to death, but to avoid the creation of an anti-war martyr, he was placed in a criminal lunatic asylum. After two months of examinations, psychiatrists diagnosed Masetti as suffering from 'psychic degeneration'. As a consequence, the military inquest found him not to be responsible for his actions. It was ruled that when Masetti shot the colonel he was mentally incompetent because he was in 'a moment of morbid fury', which downplayed any political motivations. Masetti was transferred to a criminal asylum, although his detention there was technically unlawful and he should have been placed in a civil asylum.<sup>xlvii</sup>

Almost immediately Italian anarchists started a campaign and those living in diaspora centres were prompt in giving their support. Only ten days after Masetti's deed, the consul in Berne reported that the anarchists in Zurich had opened a subscription for him. In a few weeks 200 lire had been collected (this was not a negligible sum: the monthly wage of a highly skilled worker in Italy at that time amounted to roughly 120 lire) and some further 70 lire was collected the following month in the other Swiss locations of Geneva, Zurich, San Gallo, Lugano, Lausanne, and Rorschach.<sup>xlviii</sup> Meetings took place in Swiss industrial centres and, on 23 November, the police broke up a demonstration in front of the Italian consulate in Geneva.<sup>xlix</sup> Collections were also organised elsewhere: the Italian consul in New York notified the Ministry of the Interior that the newspaper *Era Nuova*, edited in Paterson, as well as

other American anarchist groups were fundraising in support of Masetti.<sup>l</sup> In Italy, pro-Masetti campaigners faced severe repression that targeted any form of dissent against the war.<sup>li</sup> The editors of *L'Agitatore* were convicted for celebrating Masetti's act. Maria Rygier, author of the incriminating article and a leading figure in the antimilitarist camp, was sentenced to three years imprisonment. Her companion, Armando Borghi, managed to evade arrest and took refuge in Paris.<sup>lii</sup>

The pro-Masetti campaign waned as a consequence of these arrests and the end of the Libyan conflict in October 1912, but it regained its impetus the following summer. The stimulus for the remobilisation came from the United States, specifically the libertarian group in Plainsville, Pennsylvania and the editorial committee of *La Cronaca Sovversiva* in Lynn published a circular urging the resumption of the campaign. A month later, Malatesta published a similar appeal on the front page of *Volontà*, exhorting readers to create a popular mass movement.<sup>liii</sup> Several groups and organisations responded to the appeal; one of the first was *Il Risveglio*, published in Geneva by Luigi Bertoni.<sup>liv</sup> The consul in New York reported that the American groups were ready to raise funds and start campaigning.<sup>lv</sup> In Philadelphia the group of *Circolo di Studi Sociali* organised a meeting with several speakers.<sup>lvi</sup> To put pressure on the authorities, the pro-Masetti committee in Bologna launched a petition demanding Masetti's release on the grounds he was no longer mentally dangerous, to be submitted to the tribunal in Venice. The committee intended to gather signatures from Italian migrants living abroad, particularly in France, England and the United States.<sup>lvii</sup> The consul in New York received signed petitions from Saint Louis in Missouri and a petition with 120 signatures from Hamilton, Ontario.<sup>lviii</sup> During May Day celebrations, a number of Italians went to the consulate to protest against Masetti's detention, shouting slogans against the Royal Family. While they were passing in front of the building, a fire started on a stairs that led to the military recruitment office.<sup>lix</sup> The protests also spread in Switzerland, France and England thanks in part to the propaganda tour undertaken by Maria Rygier between July and August 1913.<sup>lx</sup> In September, an article on Masetti was published in *The Syndicalist*, edited by Guy Bowman in London. Masetti's case was reported in several French newspapers: *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, *Le Libertaire*, *Les Temps Nouveaux* and *La Voix du Peuple*.<sup>lxi</sup> The Prefect of Bologna reported that the 'pro-Masetti protest had taken root not only in Paris, but also in Berne, Geneva and, thanks to *Il Risveglio*, in all the Helvetic territory'.<sup>lxii</sup> The consul in Berne reported that the protests were growing: 'In Berne, Geneva, Lucerne, Basle, San Gallo, Rorschach, Arbon and Kreulingen social events are organised and proceeds will be paid into a fund to establish a *Comitato di Agitazione*.' Anarchists' propaganda targeted seasonal workers with the aim to prepare 'the working masses who return to Italy during the

winter season to enthusiastically support the pro-Masetti initiatives organised by the main anarchist groups in the kingdom'.<sup>lxiii</sup> A 'Pro-Augusto Masetti' committee was established in Berne at the end of the year.<sup>lxiv</sup>

In France, the Masetti campaign quickly took root and involved the participation of the domestic labour movement. Carlo Frigerio, a charismatic figure of the international anarchist community in Paris, notified comrades in Italy that a committee to obtain Masetti's freedom had been established in the French capital.<sup>lxv</sup> More than 500 people attended an event in which Charles Malato glorified Masetti who 'instead of killing the poor Bedouins had shot the colonel Stoppa'.<sup>lxvi</sup> Present in the audience were Italian, French, Spanish and Russian revolutionaries.<sup>lxvii</sup> A considerable boost to the campaign in France was given by the *Comité de Défense Sociale* (CDS) which took on Masetti's cause in July 1913 following discussions with Marie Rygier.<sup>lxviii</sup> The anarchist Frigerio was in charge of keeping contact between the *Gruppo Rivoluzionario Italiano* and the CDS - a 'body of defence against the enterprises of power and the machinations of the police' that in previous years had been at the forefront of vigorous campaigns to free victims of government repression.<sup>lxix</sup> The CDS was particularly active; it helped to make Masetti's case known to the French public by linking it to a campaign to free the Jewish anarchist Jacob Law and the soldier Francois Péau.<sup>lxx</sup> At the beginning of January 1914, the members of the *Gruppo Rivoluzionario Italiano* distributed some 2,000 bilingual leaflets throughout Paris and its suburbs entitled 'Liberté entière pour Masetti!', which promoted a meeting organised with the CDS.<sup>lxxi</sup> More than 500 people attended it, and speakers included representatives of the CDS, the *Ligue des Droits des Hommes*, and journalists, trade unionists and lawyers.<sup>lxxii</sup> Yvetot declared that Masetti's deed 'could be regarded, to some extent, as the "illustration" of antimilitarist propaganda', although he regretted that, 'the heroic act had not been followed by collective action'.<sup>lxxiii</sup> In May 1914, the Italian ambassador in Paris informed the Ministry of the Interior that the CDS was actively continuing the campaign.<sup>lxxiv</sup> At one of their many meetings, the secretary Thuillier argued that, for Masetti, 'French people should demonstrate their internationalism not only in theory but also in practice'.<sup>lxxv</sup> In Marseille, the mobilisation involved collaboration between French, Spanish and Italian radicals. Italian anarchists collaborated in particular with Spanish refugees to campaign for Masetti, but also for political prisoners in Spain and Catalonia.<sup>lxxvi</sup> In London, 150 people attended a meeting that had been advertised in both French and Italian, where a resolution was passed that was later published in *Volontà* and resulted in Malatesta and the editor Cinti Ercolano being prosecuted for incitement to criminal action.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

Fundraising was one of the most common activities organised to help the *Liberiamo Masetti* campaign, with collections sent either to Masetti's family or to the defence committee in Bologna. Collections were held at meetings, demonstrations, social events and, at times, theatrical plays were written specifically for the occasion. In one of these plays, *Sangue Fecondo*, the protagonist was murdered (an alleged suicide) in prison - a clear reference to Gaetano Bresci, the anarchist who killed the king of Italy, Umberto I in 1900 and was later found dead in his cell. Masetti postcards were sold as another way of raising funds, and a full-length picture was produced by the *Gruppo Autonomo* of East Boston in Massachusetts.<sup>lxxviii</sup> A half-length portrait was printed in Geneva and 300 copies were sent to Paris to be sold at antimilitarist rallies. The *Gruppo Rivoluzionario Italiano* there forwarded some to the editorial offices of anarchist newspapers in Italy to promote a forthcoming single issue entitled *Liberiamo Masetti* (which became one of the most widely read publications of the campaign).<sup>lxxix</sup> To finance the issue, pre-order forms were sent to militants and sympathetic organisations, requests for funds appeared in *La Cronaca Sovversiva* in Massachusetts, and collections were raised in Paris, London, Berne, Zurich, Geneva, Basel and Italy itself.<sup>lxxx</sup> The Paris-based Frigerio and Felice Vezzani, another leading figure among anarchist exiles, led the enterprise and utilized their networks of personal relations to encourage a number of the CDS's leading figures to contribute to the single issue.<sup>lxxxii</sup> When it appeared in November 1913, high demand led to 4,000 additional copies being printed on top of the scheduled 6,000. Italian anarchists in Paris organised its distribution. Each member received thirty copies to send to acquaintances; 500 copies were dispatched to Lugano to be smuggled into Italy by train; 100 to Lyon; 200 to Merli Paolo in Lausanne; 200 were sent to Geneva; and more to Nice, St. Claude (Jura), Marseille, Fiume and Trieste. Large bundles were dispatched to the United States and to Tombolesi Romeo in London.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Copies were also delivered to the editorial offices of the main Italian newspapers. A few days after publication, when there was no confirmation of the Lugano delivery being received, copies were shipped directly from Paris to militants across Italy and to all Chambers of Labour.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> To be sure, *Liberiamo Masetti* made a great impression among the anarchists in Italy.

### **The Red Week**

Along with the campaign to free Masetti, from the beginning of 1914 the antimilitarists targeted disciplinary companies where soldiers were kept in dreadful physical and moral conditions.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> A soldier named Antonio Moroni, who had been sent to a disciplinary company for denouncing to the press the inhumane treatment he was subjected to for his radical ideas, became another symbol of the antimilitarist campaign. The CDS, the *Gruppo Rivoluzionario*

*Italiano* and the Chamber of Labour in Paris again took an interest. Support and financial help was provided from England, Switzerland, and from the Italian communities in the USA, particularly the newspaper *Il Proletario*, edited in New York by Giovannetti and Rossoni.<sup>lxxxv</sup>

In May 1914, a day of national mobilisation against militarism was launched in Italy in opposition to the official celebration of the *Statuto* on 7 June. The Government forbade all public demonstrations and the repression led to the deaths of three demonstrators in Ancona, which then resulted in the proclamation of a general strike and the start of riots that spread across Italy for a week until the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro* called off the strike and a wave of harsh repression hit the labour movement.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Many anarchists took the path of exile and joined the communities of expatriates abroad who organised protests against the Ancona killings and established ‘*pro vittime politiche*’ committees in support of political detainees. Anarchists in New York issued a manifesto urging all anarchists in the USA to raise funds to support political detainees in Italy.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> In Buenos Aires around 1,500 people attended a rally and, when it concluded, mounted police charged and dispersed the demonstrators who were attempting to reach the Italian consulate.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> In Geneva, police charged a few hundred demonstrators in front of the consulate and a number of arrests were made. In the days that followed, six anarchists were deported to Italy.<sup>lxxxix</sup> In Lausanne, a mass meeting was organised for 12 June and a strike called for the following day, and around 1,500 people marched through the streets of the town. In Marseille, manifestos against the monarchy were affixed on the walls of the consulate and the Savoy coat of arms was vandalised. The consul urged local authorities to extend police surveillance overnight.<sup>xc</sup> In Berne, a number of nationalist associations organised a patriotic commemoration for the Festa dello Statuto in the village of MuttENZ. Anarchists, socialists and republicans assaulted participants outside the rail station, tearing off their banners and forcing the music band to return to Berne.<sup>xc1</sup> On 14 June a bomb with a partially burned fuse was found inside the Italian consulate in New York. Two weeks later, 300 anarchists disrupted a patriotic commemoration at the Garibaldi Museum in Staten Island at which the Italian consul was supposed to speak.<sup>xcii</sup> In July, Maria Rygier spoke in front of 300 people in Marseille and argued that another insurrectional movement was about to explode, but that ‘its organisation must be carried out by the Italian revolutionaries abroad because it is not possible to prepare it in Italy’.<sup>xciii</sup> Circumstances soon changed, however, and the outbreak of the First World War completely transformed the movement’s momentum. Revolutionary activities were brought to a standstill, differing political stances regarding the war emerged, and international solidarity that had been so evident began to collapse.

The Italian-Turkish war prompted the anarchists to elaborate alternative values to patriotism and loyalty to the homeland promoted by the state and the nationalists. Anarchists' support for the struggle of the 'Arabs' and their independence, and the many references in the campaign to the Italian *Risorgimento* as a fight for liberation from foreign powers and the praise for its heroes (Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Pisacane), suggest some persistence of 'nationalist' values in the anarchist movement. In some of their writings, the fight for the 'national' question was even given priority over the struggle for 'social' liberation. This element is significant for the bitter debate that divided the anarchist movement between interventionists and anti-interventionists at the outbreak of the First World War. The permanence of these nationalist ideals can contribute to explain the motivations of those militants who, despite being part of an eminently 'internationalist' movement, advocated Italy's entry into the conflict.

The extension and intensity of antimilitarist opposition to the Italian invasion of Libya, the transnational character of the campaign in support of Masetti and Moroni, and the responses to the repression that followed the Red Week represent a valuable case study for understanding and reconstructing the radical networks built by anarchist exiles across continents and permit a closer evaluation of the contributions that exiles made to the movement in Italy. Connections with the motherland remained crucial for anarchist exiles, both for maintaining links with the movement at home and for informing their political activities within communities of economic migrants. Exiles' propaganda, particularly in France and Switzerland, targeted seasonal migrants or conscripts as vectors for disseminating anarchist and antimilitarist ideas in the homeland, and making them more receptive to propaganda messages sent by their comrades in Italy. Support was not restricted to financial contributions. Between the motherland and the communities abroad there was a continuous flow of a broad range of propaganda materials that was, at times, produced specifically in response to requests from militants in Italy. The anti-war and pro-Masetti campaigns are good indicators of the significance of informal internationalism in the anarchist movement and its effectiveness in keeping anarchist transnational networks alive.<sup>xciiv</sup> The organization of these campaigns involved not just the militant elites but a considerable number of grassroots militants as it emerges from launches of fundraising events, their attendance at meetings and rallies, and the large number of pro-Masetti committees that were established across continents. A web of personal relationships guaranteed the wide dissemination of publications and propaganda materials which also reached remote localities or places with only a small presence of anarchists. Rank-and-file militants often invited leading figures of the movement to visit their circles and were key in planning and coordinating these propaganda tours by contacting the

comrades in other localities and by raising required funds, as it happened for Galleani's and Rygier's journeys in 1912 and 1913. At the same time, these webs of personal relations facilitated the involvement in the antimilitarist campaign of non-Italian militants from the host countries. This highlights the complexity and significance of the exiles' relationships with the homeland and hostland labour movements; the close collaboration between the Italian anarchist exiles in France and the *Comité de Défense Sociale* to free Masetti is a case in point. In recent years, transnational studies on radicalism have investigated the 'supranational connections and multidirectional flows of the ideas, people, finances, and organisational structures that gave rise' to anarchist and syndicalist movements.<sup>xcv</sup> Much less attention has been paid to the antimilitarist movement and its transnational connections. The anarchists' opposition to the invasion of Libya shows that the examination of the antimilitarist movement and its transnational connections, which have received so far only limited attention, can provide a significant contribution to labour history and its reconsideration 'in the light of cross-borders interactions, international exchanges and political transfers'.<sup>xcvi</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> 'Stornelli d'esilio', International Institute of Social History (IISH), Nettlau papers, mf. 2796. *Stornello* is a kind of folk song. (Oh Italian fugitives/we trust to luck/with neither regrets nor fear/the whole word is our fatherland/liberty is our law/wherever the exploited rebels/we will find ranks of brothers/but Italy, your outlaws will return to brandish the torch of rights).

<sup>ii</sup> Bantam and Altena, eds., *Reassessing the Transnational Turn*, 8.

<sup>iii</sup> Ambassador in Berne to Minister of Interior, 11 January 1912, Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Divisione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza (DGPS), 1912, b. 36, f. Zurigo.

<sup>iv</sup> Moya, 'Anarchism', 40; Di Paola, *The Knights Errant*, 3.

<sup>v</sup> Gabaccia et al., "Laboring Across National Borders", 62-63.

<sup>vi</sup> Gabaccia and Ottanelli, eds., *Italian Workers of the World*, 3.

<sup>vii</sup> 'Federazione Socialista Anarchica', *La Questione Sociale*, 23 September 1899, in Turcato, *Making Sense of Anarchism*, 206.

<sup>viii</sup> 'Circolare, *L'Internazionale*', 1901, IISH, Fabbri papers, b. 29.

<sup>ix</sup> Fiori, *La stampa italiana nella serie F1 (1894-1926)*, 11.

<sup>x</sup> Di Paola, 'The Game of the Goose', 118-135.

<sup>xi</sup> Turcato, 'Italian Anarchism', 407-444.

<sup>xii</sup> Bantman, 'Internationalism without an International?'

<sup>xiii</sup> Degl'Innocenti, *Il Socialismo Italiano*.

<sup>xiv</sup> Cerrito, *L'Antimilitarismo anarchico*, 10-11; Davranche, *Trop Jeunes pour mourir*.

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- <sup>lxxix</sup> Italian Embassy in Paris to Ministry of Interior, 10 November 1913, ACS, DGPS, 1914, b. 22, f. Parigi.
- <sup>lxxx</sup> Orders were sent to M.me Thérèse Tanguardeau in Paris. 'Per Augusto Masetti', *Volontà* 30 August 1913; Police Inspector in Paris to Ministry of Interior, 18 November 1913, 1914, b. 22, f. Parigi. Embassy in Berne to Ministry of Interior, 20 November 1913, ACS, DGPS, 1914, b. 22.
- <sup>lxxxi</sup> *Liberiamo Masetti*, November 1913. Contributors included the Italians Malatesta, Bertoni, Galleani, Giuseppe De Falco, Vezzani and Merlino; the French Martin, Malato, Grave, Reclus, Yves Bidamant, Hamon, Yvetot and Faure; Thuilier, the secretary of the CDS; the Dutch Nieuwenhuis and Cornelissen.
- <sup>lxxxii</sup> Police Inspector in Paris to Ministry of Interior, 25 and 26 November 1913, ACS, DGPS, 1914, b. 22, f. Parigi. Inspector Frosali to Ministry of Interior, London 8 January 1914, ACS, DGPS, 1914, b. 22, f. Londra.
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