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America, the Vatican and the  
Catholic Church sphere of  
activity in Italian post war  
cinema (1945-1960)

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**AMERICA, THE VATICAN AND THE CATHOLIC  
CHURCH SPHERE OF ACTIVITY IN ITALIAN POST  
WAR CINEMA (1945-1960)**

**Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	p. 1
<b>Chapter I: Literature review</b>	p. 6
1.1 The American myth in Italy: birth, development and decline	p. 6
1.2 You can be like us: American intervention in Italian reconstruction, US style consumerism and Italian national identity	p. 12
1.3 Italian cinema industry in the post-war period	p. 21
1.4 Trade follows the film: American cinematic presence in Italy and benefits of the American life shown in American film	p. 25
1.5 The role of the Church in Italian cinema and the relationship between the Vatican and American film industry	p. 37
<b>Chapter II: Americanism and Americanisation: ideology, politics and cultural propaganda</b>	p. 43
2.1 American ideology and its cultural strategy in Italy	p. 44
2.2 The Vatican's ideology in relation to culture and its relationship with America	p. 58
2.3 The Americanisation of Italy and the role of the Vatican: cultural freedom or Catholic colonialism?	p. 78

<p><b>Chapter III: The State, cinema legislation and American interests</b></p> <p>3.1 The Christian Democrats and Giulio Andreotti: their role in the Government, their relationship with the Catholic world and with America</p> <p>3.2 Unblocking foreign films: distributors and exhibitors in a legal battle</p> <p>3.3 State censorship and its role in the rebuilding of Italian national cinema</p> <p>3.4 Film nationality, film production and the role of Italian-American co-productions in relations to Andreotti's 1949 law</p> <p>3.5 The law outside the law: the Italian-American agreements</p>	<p>p. 98</p> <p>p. 101</p> <p>p. 110</p> <p>p. 132</p> <p>p. 142</p> <p>p. 148</p>
<p><b>Chapter IV: Endemic propaganda: Catholic production, exhibition and criticism</b></p> <p>4.1 Exchanging favours: American productions, the Vatican and film distribution</p> <p>    4.1a Catholic production</p> <p>    4.1b Catholic distribution and exhibition</p> <p>    4.1c Catholic censorship</p> <p>4.2 American cinema and Catholic press</p>	<p>p. 165</p> <p>p. 166</p> <p>p. 170</p> <p>p. 178</p> <p>p. 187</p> <p>p. 200</p>
<p><b>Chapter V: Ideology in American films shown in Italy</b></p> <p>5.1 Success of American films in Italy in 1945-1960: genres, styles and stars</p> <p>5.2 US films recommended and cut or excluded by parish cinema circuit</p> <p>5.3 Film analysis of case studies</p>	<p>p. 225</p> <p>p. 226</p> <p>p. 244</p> <p>p. 257</p>
<p><b>Chapter VI: American and Vatican ideology in Italian films</b></p> <p>6.1 Success of Italian films in Italy in 1945-1960: genres, styles and stars</p> <p>6.2 Italian films recommended and cut or excluded by parish cinema circuit</p> <p>6.3 Film analysis of case studies</p>	<p>p. 288</p> <p>p. 289</p> <p>p. 306</p> <p>p. 322</p>



<b>Conclusions</b>	p. 345
<b>Abbreviations</b>	p. 354
<b>Appendices</b> Appendix A: The Vatican's statements on the cinema. Appendix B: The Hays' Code. Appendix C: Cinema legislation in the postwar period. Appendix D: Interview with Giulio Andreotti (29 May 2004). Appendix E: Classification of the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico's Commissione di Revisione. Appendix F: Example of a Scheda di segnalazione by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico. Appendix G: Grafico dell'andamento delle maggiori produzioni europee nel dopoguerra (Anica 1952). Appendix H: Grafico dell'andamento medio del film nazionale sul mercato italiano in confronto a quello del film importato.	p. 355 p. 356 p. 357 p. 368 p. 369 p. 372 p. 373 p. 374 p. 375
<b>Bibliography</b> <b>Primary Sources</b> 1. Parliamentary Bills, Debates and Papers 2. United States Official Documents and Speeches 3. Vatican's Official Documents 4. Articles from <i>A.G.I.S. - Bollettino di informazioni</i> 5. Articles from <i>La Rivista del Cinematografo</i> 6. Other journals' articles 7. Documents from the Archivio ACEC 8. Segnalazioni cinematografiche (CCC) 9. Interviews <b>Secondary sources</b>	p. 376 p. 376 p. 376 p. 377 p. 379 p. 380 p. 387 p. 399 p. 403 p. 404 p. 407 p. 408
<b>Filmography</b>	p. 438

## Abstract

The thesis examines the extent the means and the degree to which the American and the Vatican's common cultural ideology was expressed in the film industry of post-war Italy (1945-1960).

Through a comparative approach of current theories developed on ideology and an analysis of official documents from the Vatican and the United States Department of State, the thesis investigates the decisive role that American production companies played in the development of the Italian film industry and their links to the Vatican. This analysis evaluates how the Italian production and distribution industries satisfied the American political and economic interests.

American political and cultural ideology of the post-1945 era, is compared with the Roman Catholic ideology in order to assess how close their cultural propaganda was. This is followed by studies of the roles played by key individuals, such as Giulio Andreotti and institutions such as ANICA and A.G.I.S. involved in formulating the policies and regulations that affected the production and distribution of American and Italian films in the post-1945 era, as well as the involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in this process. The case studies, which make up the remaining part of the dissertation, illustrate the relationship with the theoretical issues raised in its first part and their ramifications in the relationship between the Catholics and Italian and America cinema.

The operation of the *Centro Cattolico Cinematografico* combined with box-office returns allows for the creation of a new analytical technique to be applied, one that has not been utilized in previous studies of Neorealist films and Italian popular cinema. It makes it possible to highlight the cross-currents that existed across different cinematic genres and styles of those American and Italian post-war movies, which were under the Catholic Church's sphere of activity.

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### **Declaration**

This thesis has not been published and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

## Introduction

This dissertation studies the Italian cinema industry as a medium through which a cultural and ideological influence was pursued during the period 1945-60, with particular reference to the United States, the Vatican, the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, the Italian government, and the Christian Democrat Party.

The Italian film industry of the post-1945 era has already been the subject of several studies; some of them have looked at the relationship with the American film industry, while others have explored in particular the presence of the Catholic Church in relation to film production and distribution. However, no studies have been produced which have linked the Vatican and American influences and their relationship with the Italian film industry under the sphere of activity of the Catholic Church. This thesis will explore the possibility of an influence of close ideological elements common to America and the Vatican on the post-war Italian film industry.

Chapter 1 looks at the American myth and its influence in Italian society; it also traces - through the analysis of secondary sources - the role of the Church in Italian cinema and the relationship between the Vatican and the American film industry. Chapter 2 examines first American political and cultural ideology of the post-1945 era, especially in terms of the concept of escapist entertainment and how Americanism was expressed both in official documents and in contemporary public discourses. The chapter then analyses the Roman Catholic ideology both through documents released by the Vatican and through the examination of public interventions made by leading ecclesiastic figures. This will allow for a comparison with the American cultural ideology, in order to examine whether and how close were common themes in their 'cultural' propaganda. While the theoretical approach will be a vital part especially in relation to Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, where an analysis of American and Italian films shown in the country will be carried out in relation to theoretical issues raised in the first part of the thesis, it is also very revealing to investigate the main directives taken by the Italian government in relation to the American film industry in 1945-60. This will show how the Christian

Democrats' cultural policies reflected to a certain extent the interest of the American film industry and the Vatican ideology. This area is dealt with in Chapter 3, where the decisive role of American production companies and their links with the Vatican in the development of Italian film industry will be examined, in order to evaluate whether and how the Italian production and distribution systems satisfied the American political and economic interests. Although several historians have looked at the cinema legislation of the post war period, none has so far attempted to link the film industry legislation of the post-war Italy with the influence of the United States government, American film production, and the Christian Democrats' cinema policy in relationship to the Vatican. This chapter will set out to do this.

Historians, who have dealt with post-war Italian cinema, have obviously come across and analysed the Catholic production and distribution in parish cinemas. However, in order to understand fully the entanglements between the Vatican on one side, the American and the Italian film industries on the other, it is crucial to undertake a detailed study of the key individuals and institutions involved in making policies and regulations that affected the

production and distribution of American and Italian films in the post-1945 era. This is particularly significant in relation both to the Italian Government and to the Italian State legislation. It is also relevant to assess the involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in this process. Therefore, an examination of Catholic production, distribution and exhibition will be carried out in Chapter 4, where use of official primary sources from the Vatican, the archive of the Associazione Cattolica Esercenti Cinema (ACEC), and several Catholic institutions as well as the most authoritative Catholic journals will be made. An analysis of the role of the Catholic press towards American films will help to explore some of the implications in the relationship between the Catholics and American cinema.

In Chapters 5 and 6 a study of the most successful American and Italian films shown in Italy in 1945-1960 will identify common themes, genres and characters. Moreover, a careful analysis of the response of the Vatican to the same movies will allow a better understanding of the main themes recommended or excluded by parish cinema circuit. The case studies, both of American and Italian films, have been selected according to precise criteria. The films analyzed in the case studies are films which are amongst the



most successful in public cinemas across the country, which were considered by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico either to be suitable for general viewing to all audiences or were barred to all (*per tutti* and *esclusi* or *sconsigliati*). This criterion has allowed a new selection of films, which are neither the commonly researched under the umbrella of Neorealism, nor the most studied amongst those belonging to popular cinema. These films were made in different genres and different styles and help shed new light on the study of Roman Catholic reception of American and Italian post-war movies.

Tracing the tension between economic (film industrial), political (governmental) and religious (The Vatican) pressures, this study intends to explore the American involvement in the area of Italian film industry between 1945 and 1960 which was directly or indirectly affected by the Catholic Church, with the hope of contributing in reconstructing a significant and decisive time in film history.

## Chapter I: Literature Review

### 1.1 The American myth in Italy: birth, development and decline

A myth of America became part of Italian life: by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it was commonplace for Europeans to perceive America as a land of prosperity, opportunity and freedom. This played a large role in the decision that numerous Italians made to emigrate to America. The vision of America 'was kept alive through the letters of over four million immigrants who settled in America between 1880 and 1920' (Liehm 1984: 34).<sup>i</sup> The country conveyed an image of being somewhere where everything was allowed and a place in which people could express themselves in ways that they could not do in Italy. Sergio Pacifici, in his *Guide to Contemporary Italian Literature* (1962: 305), explains this image of America Italians had at the time:

No other country in the world was as instinctively loved as America: no other nation in the world had provided the Italian imagination with a myth whose validity was traceable to its suggestiveness. America and freedom were synonymous in the stark years before World War II and it was to the new continent that Italy looked not merely for understanding and help, but for hope.

Dominique Fernandez (1969) endorses Pacifici's analysis and traces the boundaries of the American myth in Italy. He expresses the view that the early success of the Fascists in taking control of the Italian state had the effect of prompting many Italian intellectuals to take up American literature and culture as an antidote for dictatorship. Fascism had the effect of deepening the absorption of American literature by a large proportion of the Italian intelligentsia in a way that was more intense than the experience of their counterparts in other European countries.

According to Fernandez, the dates of the Italian absorption of the American myth through culture and literature are the years between 1930 and 1950: it is in the thirties that many Italian intellectuals start reading, translating and becoming fascinated by the American authors. Cesare Pavese's essay *Un romanziere americano, Sinclair Lewis* (published in *La Cultura* in November 1930) signals the beginning of the myth, which ends with Pavese's death.<sup>11</sup> Fernandez chooses to ascribe the birth of the myth to the years 1930 to 1935, the period during which many of Pavese's articles were written; the original 1941-2 publication of Elio Vittorini's anthology

*Americana* marked the myth's climax; from 1947 the myth went into a decline that concluded with its demise as a cultural force in 1950. Guido Fink (1980: 62) argues that it ended earlier, citing Pavese again, who in 1947 asked: 'Siamo noi che invecchiamo o è bastata questa poca libertà per distaccarci?'. Luciana Castellina (1980: 46) chooses to argue that the myth endured until the Vietnam War, when many Italians came to perceive what they regarded as a conflict between the interests of American imperialism and those of the Third World.

However, the myth started to be shaken just after the post-war presence of the American military in Italy. Fernandez argues that this is due to American culture having lost its allure through no longer being forbidden as it had been under the Fascist regime, while at the same time the myth's paradox became increasingly apparent - that the Left intellectuals would not have supported capitalist America in any other circumstances than under Fascism (Fernandez 1969: 106). At the beginning of the Cold War, America came to be viewed in a new light, one that Luciana Castellina (1980: 43) terms 'una potenza economico-finanziaria con fini imperialisti'.

Fernandez addresses many different aspects of the American myth in Italy. He compares the older generation of

'Americanists' (Mario Praz, Emilio Cecchi, Carlo Linati) with the younger one (Cesare Pavese, Elio Vittorini); how the individual writers differed from each other and what contribution they made to the myth. He juxtaposes the earlier generation as independent critics of the myth and the later as promoters of an idealised vision of America. Many members of the old generation had reached their views in part through having travelled to the United States, while members of the younger one created their vision of Dream Land without ever having visited the reality. The old generation regarded Europe as being an important factor in the development of American novels, while the new generation believed in American fiction as a new literary form that was devoid of European influence; even if Vittorini himself admits in 1946 that the American culture is 'figlia di genitori dei quali uno solo è ignoto. L'altro è illustre, un gentiluomo, e gliene ha lasciato il segno nel sangue' (quoted in Fernandez 1969: 58). However, the Americanists shared a common ground with regard to the myth. They all referred to America as a young and vibrant land that was full of contrasts: novelty and tradition, wilderness and industry, educated and uneducated people. The perception and interpretation of the contrasts that made up the reality of

the United States were a cause of the differences between the two Italian-based schools of thought.

The importance of the cinema in the development of the American myth in Italy has been widely acknowledged: an example of this is the 1980 collection of essays *Il mito americano - Origine e crisi di un modello culturale*, by cinema historians like Gian Piero Brunetta and Guido Fink. In the book, the experience of American cinema in Italy is regarded as having done more to stabilise the American myth than any other medium. They analyse some of the most popular genres and the American ideology that they carry: historical films are perceived as a denunciation of the hidden sociological problems, noir films as an expression of the 'nightmare' side of the dream and a refusal of the most fundamental values of American society, sci-fi films as a reminder on screen of the menace of the Cold War and the continuing threat of invasion. The power of American cinema lay, at least at the beginning, in its ability - as Brunetta (1980: 21) states - to maintain the optimism that many Italians felt that was needed at the time: even the anomalies were seen as 'escrescenze malate, circoscritte, in un corpo fondamentalmente sano'. Guido Fink (1980: 59) identifies the Italian intellectual crisis with the

American myth as coinciding with the myth's success in spreading to the broader Italian populace: while the intelligentsia were starting to wake up from the American dream, the general population were becoming increasingly fascinated by it, especially through the medium of cinema. The images of the Dream Land were becoming familiar to everyone through the use of dubbing English into Italian, making the stranger into a friendly figure.

Brunetta's and Fink's essays raised the issue of the ideological role of American cinema. The authors establish a relationship between American ideology and the techniques used to shoot films during the 1940s and 1950s. Citing and defining the limits of an article by Barry Salt, Brunetta (1980: 32-34) affirms the importance of certain techniques extensively used from the Forties (reverse angle sequences, long shots, etc.). According to him, these techniques had an ideological meaning that Salt fails to identify and that had scope for analysis in contrast to those that were being used to make Italian movies.

Sangiuliano notes the relationship between cinema and mass consumption. Citing Georges Sadoul, Sangiuliano (1983: 34) expresses the view very clearly: 'La merce segue il film; dovunque penetra il film americano noi vendiamo una maggiore

quantità di prodotti americani'. This statement is an important starting point for this dissertation. It is developed as a means of helping to analyse the role of American government and of its cultural policy from the end of the Second World War. An examination will be made of the cultural, political, and economic influence that the United States exerted on Italy and how the American cultural, and economic predominance affected the development of Italian cinema.

## 1.2 You can be like us: American intervention in Italian reconstruction, US style consumerism and Italian national identity

In September 1943, with the Allies landing in Salerno, the United States military commenced a direct martial-governmental presence in Italy (Clark 1984: 303). At the end of 1945, Allied Military Government transferred to the Italian government control of those northern provinces (these were the last ones to be left under the AMG's authority) while increasing the number of combat groups to six divisions of 9000 men each (Mammarella 1998: 72; Hughes 1953: 124). These years had a profound effect on Italy and Italians.



Molte delle innovazioni sociali e culturali erano strettamente connesse alla presenza di truppe alleate sul territorio italiano. Sin dallo sbarco in Sicilia nel luglio 1943, le forze americane in particolare ebbero un effetto profondo su una popolazione che in molti casi non aveva alcuna conoscenza o esperienza della moderna civiltà industriale. Il dispiegarsi di una vasta ed estremamente complessa macchina bellica al Sud fu un evento sconvolgente paragonabile solo alle invasioni francesi e spagnole tra la fine del Quattrocento e gli inizi del Cinquecento (Gundle 1995: 62-63).

The Allies were often regarded as a liberation from the Germans. However, the distinction between a liberation and an occupation can be a subjective matter (Ellwood 1992: 15). In *Rebuilding Europe*, an analysis of the relationship of America and Europe in the post-war period, Ellwood defines the role taken by the United States government in relation to European economy and to European national identity. The work offers a description of the events that led to the re-establishment of Western Europe as a collection of individual nation states and of how America operated in each individual case.

After the end of the Second World War, informed by memories of the Fascist regime, and in order to try to ensure peace, many European states included a formal recognition in their constitutions that national sovereignty should be limited.

However, this trend prevented the occurrence of a variety of forms of nationalism. In Italy, the identity of which had been undermined by the experience of prolonged Fascist rule, this took the form of 'national unification' (Ellwood 1992: 15-17). The country looked to America not only as a source of economic support, but also as an economic model to be copied. During the Fascist era it had been commonplace for people with low-incomes to regard America as a dreamland of opportunity, but the same people could not 'indulge any consumerist fantasies' (Duggan 1995: 12). After the war, and assisted by American economic intervention, Italians started to rebuild their country's economy and were able to see the prospect of consumerism on the horizon.<sup>iii</sup> David Ellwood stressed the importance of how economic reconstruction was at the heart of American foreign policy and how economic recovery was even more important than military aid. As Hamilton Fish Armstrong - editor of *Foreign Affairs* - stated, the idea was:

First we must give; then we must invest; whenever possible we must buy; and eventually we may hope to begin getting our money back (quoted in Ellwood 1992: 76).

It was important for the American economy to develop in Europe the 'mass production for mass consumption' that was already the basis of the American economy (DeLong 1997: 2). However, large-scale low-cost production, which had worked in America, was taken up more slowly in Europe than had been anticipated. In June 1947 Americans launched the Economic Recovery Program - widely known as the Marshall Plan - which was not simply an economic manoeuvre but which also sought to establish economic stability as the foundation of 'political independence'. The Program - strongly supported by the Vatican (Foreign Relations of the United States 1948: 887) - incorporated the desire to establish in Europe those American ideals that would promote democratic changes. The Plan was an expression of the American commitment to establish a strong presence within Western Europe. The reason for this was understood by many, especially in Italy, as a desire to stop Communism (Foreign Relations of the United States 1948: 850; see also Elwood 1996: 87-92). The massive Christian Democratic propaganda campaign prior the April 1948 Italian general elections, which had the support of the Vatican, achieved its purpose of securing an electoral victory for the forces of conservatism (305 Christian Democrat members of parliament out of 574 in the Camera and 131 out of 237 in the

Senato) (Elwood 1996: 92; Mammarella 1999: 135), which denied the Partito Comunista Italiano a central position on the national stage.

In Ellwood's view, the reason for America's strong presence in Italy was also a way 'to put forward a positive vision based on American own experience: 'A higher standard of living for the entire nation; [...] greater production', as a Marshall Plan propaganda booklet would tell Italians in 1949 (Ellwood 1992: 62). This point is of importance in accounting for the commonplace attitude among Italians towards 'this positive vision' and how the same vision shaped Italian identity. A better standard of living, together with a war against the totalitarianism that sought to threaten the American way of life, were the two objectives that were sought by American foreign policy in Europe. Ellwood feels prompted to write on the prospect of a possible Americanisation of Europe:

An economic United States of Europe would emerge, in which the American Dream could be dreamt without leaving home: 'You Too Can Be Like US' that was the promise of the Marshall Plan'. Strictly linked with this promise of being 'like them', the American plan was also to produce 'a model of investment, production and consumption', where 'productivity was the key concept for getting results' (Ellwood 1992: 88-94).

Productivity, prosperity and mass consumption were the fundamentals of the American economic model that the American government was seeking to export to Europe.

With the arrival of peace, much of western and central Europe came to be characterised by a distinctive feature: 'by the middle of 1946 Catholics had emerged as the strongest party in Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Southern Germany, Italy, France, Austria and Hungary' (Ellwood 1992: 43). In the case of Italy, the country faced a situation that was similar to that which had emerged after the First World War, when a 'single-party state' (then the Fascists, now the Christian Democrats) was at the head of the country. When ruling parties had to face the electorates, the process of Americanisation had the potential to be a political liability. When looking at Italy in this era, the difficult role of the Christian Democrats in their relationship with the Catholic electorate appears evident. While on one hand, the Church's hierarchy was happy to support American opposition to Communism, on the other, it did not appreciate American consumerism, which was promoted in part through the imagery of Hollywood. Duggan has drawn attention to the Catholic Church's own appreciation of the

potential that the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's new mass media had for conveying its own propaganda:

The Church despite its antipathy to so much of modern life, did not balk at using in its campaign such quintessential modern media as radio and film (both of which had shown their value as weapons of totalitarianism in the inter-war years) (Duggan 1995: 21).

Ellwood agrees on the difficulty for the Christian Democratic government in dealing with certain aspects of American life-style, and on the way in which that same life-style was becoming increasingly attractive for Italians. In his attempt to define Americanisation, Ellwood takes into account America's daunting presence on a political, economical and social level. He admits that the European countries affected by this process of Americanisation were not entirely free to refuse it because America was able to draw attention to the Communist threat as a justification for its promotion of spread of consumerism (Ellwood 1992: 236). In Italy, while the Christian Democratic government seemed prepared to accept the process of Americanisation on a consumerist level, on a cultural level - in order to maintain the support of the Catholic Church hierarchy - it had to try to find an alternative. In 1952 Alcide De Gasperi, who served as the

Prime Minister of Italy from July 1946 to July 1953, felt the need to state to a trade union audience that if workers were becoming Americanised as consumers, they still maintained European characteristics, based on history and tradition (Zunino 1979: 364). So, the Christian Democratic government accepted the American economic model but still sought to rebuild Italian national identity in a framework that was determined by European history and culture.

The issue of the post-1945 Americanisation of Italy has developed a secondary literature. David Forgacs (1993: 157-159) chooses to question the association of Americanisation and national identity. He believes that it was necessary to ask whether the two concepts are clearly linked to one another. He thinks that it is important to understand why, in terms of national identity, Italy put 'Americanisation so high on the agenda'. He states that post-war Americanisation was characterised by a wider reach of American culture and by the presence of mass consumption. Moreover, when analysing Americanisation, he believes that it is necessary to bear in mind the differences in class, geographical location, gender and generation. Finally he considers the importance of how

Italy reinvented the American model, a topic of particular relevance in cinema.

In the article "L'americanizzazione del quotidiano. Televisione e consumismo nell'Italia degli anni Cinquanta", Stephen Gundle (1986: 561-594) uses television as an example for investigating how American culture was received and mediated by Italian society. He concludes that during this period Italy was more susceptible to the Americanisation process, than were other European countries, because of the phase of modernisation it was then going through. He concludes that the Catholic Church and the Christian Democrats were important in how the American model was received and then transformed into an Italian one. This dissertation will seek to examine the same process with regard to the cinema.

However in the same year that Gundle's essay appears, Giorgio Bocca poses the most poignant question: *'È un'Italia americanizzata a cagione del suo vitalismo o un'Italia che subisce, non sapendo difendersi, la way of life dei padroni?* (quoted in Gundle 1986: 571).



### 1.3 Italian cinema industry in the post-war period

Cinema was an important factor in post-war Italian society. The significant rise in the number of new cinemas opening in towns and villages from the end of the Second World War provided greater opportunities for cinema-going<sup>iv</sup>. The process of reconstruction needed to happen not only in terms of politics and material goods, but also in terms of cultural activities, which increased with the liberation from the Nazi occupation and reflected a new desire to live again. During the 1950s the country had the highest number of cinemas (11.641 compared to 5.806 of France and 6.885 of Germany) in Western Europe, making the medium the most popular form of entertainment for Italians (Anica 1961: 32).

As everything else, the film industry needed to be rebuilt. The readmission to the Italian film market of movies made by the major American production companies slowed down the development of Italian movie production industry, which proved initially unable to compete with the high number of American films shown in the country. The American movie studios were not keen on allowing a total reconstruction of the film industry because they needed to release in Italy - and

throughout the rest of Europe - all those films which had been forbidden during the 1930s (Brunetta 1991: 11). The different procedures adopted by the Americans, such as block-booking and blind bidding, that forced Italian distributors to accept their conditions without the possibility of competition from national production, made it even more difficult for the domestic industry to flourish in the immediate period. At the war's end there was no extant export market that was primed to receive any films, while the domestic market was dominated by the 'dumping policy' of the Motion Picture Export Association of America.<sup>v</sup>

While Gundle (1995: 17) argues that for the distributors the dumping policy was a sort of a bargain, it must be said that it also represented a hurdle for domestic production, which desperately needed the support from the State. When talking about domestic production in the immediate post-war period, Christopher Wagstaff (1998: 76) asserts that Italian directors responded to the American-made films by adopting a strategy of 'systematic exploitation' of popular genres. Musical, comedies, adventure, dramatic and historical films were the genres that managed to compete with the Hollywood production.<sup>vi</sup> This line of argument suggests some of the key

areas in which the ideology articulated in American films became transferred to the Italian cinema.

In his book *Cinema e pubblico* (1985), Vittorio Spinazzola gives a detailed description of the Italian film industry between 1945 and 1965. He asserts that during the post-war period there were two formulae used by the domestic production industry: films about the people and films for the people, referring for the first group to Neorealism and for the second one to what can be defined as 'popular' cinema. Amongst the films which were made for the people, Spinazzola distinguishes musicals, literary-based movies, films 'in costume', and popular Neorealism, in which actors such as Amedeo Nazzari and Anna Magnani managed to become star symbols of Italian cinema in a way that paralleled their counterparts in Hollywood. One genre that became very popular, mainly thanks to the post-war desire of pure entertainment, was the comic film (Spinazzola 1985: 87).

The history of Italian popular film can be defined between 1948 and 1952, when the *neorealismo rosa* became very popular. Representatives of the *neorealismo rosa* are the series *Pane, amore e...* (1955) and *Poveri ma belli* (1956) together with many others which were extremely successful amongst the audiences [see Chapter 6 for figures]. It is

important to note what Spinazzola (1985: 117) states in relation to the *neorealismo rosa* and to its relationship with Hollywood films:

Il neorealismo rosa fu il trionfo di un particolare tipo di happy ending all'italiana: allegro ma pudicamente commosso. La lezione hollywoodiana si inseriva e si combinava con una tradizione nazionale che, al di là delle esperienze cinematografiche d'anteguerra, risaliva la traccia del teatro borghese su su fino alle origini, addirittura al Goldoni.

In 1956 television broadcasting in Italy started. The new medium created challenges for the film industry. Of the various approaches that were taken for addressing the situation, co-productions came to prove a successful cross-fertilization between the two sectors, together with the first *supercolossi* made in Italy: *Ulisse* (1954) and *Guerra e pace* (1955) were two approaches that production companies adopted in order to try to persuade people to watch movies in cinemas. Major productions, co-productions and comedies were the main options that the industry used to address the crises of Italian cinema. This, in some ways, created a distinct transformation of the notion of quality in cinema. While art films gave Italian film-makers a high international profile, but did not create much profit, the industry, for the sake of its own financial stability and well-being, needed to produce a

popular genre cinema that might enable Italian films to compete with Hollywood in Italy and regain the audience which had been lost.

#### **1.4 Trade Follows the Film: American cinematic presence in Italy and benefits of the American life shown in American films**

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Europe was one of the principal markets for Hollywood films. This success meant that the popularity of American-made films represented a threat to the financial health, and even viability, of national film industries. Different countries used a range of legislative approaches to respond to this phenomenon. A frequently used approach was to exploit the popularity of Hollywood films to support the domestic ones. It is an accepted view amongst critics that Europe opened its doors to American cinema with the First World War, when the slowing down of the European film production created a drop in supply that was filled by the importation of American films (Quaglietti 1991: 7).

During the Second World War, American films were unavailable in some countries of mainland Europe. In summer 1945 Germany was the first European country to allow

Hollywood films back in the cinemas followed by Italy, which had officially prohibited American films from 1938 until the end of the war (Fehrenbach 1995: 54). The ban against the showing of American films in Italy between 1938 and 1945, which has been seen by the critics as a way to protect the Italian film industry, was addressed only at the major American film production companies. As Gian Piero Brunetta (1994: 142) states, 'films of small independent producers continue to be imported until 1942'.

Italy became the largest foreign market for the American film industry, replacing the United Kingdom by 1960, especially when the British government started to impose heavy duties on American films. Both Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (1998: 6) and Christopher Wagstaff (1995: 93) explain that, in the case of Italy, there was a clear plan regarding the national film industry: Admiral Ellery W. Stone, the Chairman of the Allied Italian Film Board set up in 1945 by the Americans in order to 'determine the organisation of the Italian film industry', declared that as the Italian film industry was invented by the fascists, it had to be completely suppressed, together with all the instruments that 'incorporated this invention' (quoted in Wagstaff 1995: 93).

This attitude not only sought to hinder the re-emergence of an anti-democratic film industry but also put major obstacles in the way of the rebirth of any domestic production. Weakening the competition was certainly the best way to maximise the profit, especially for an industry such as the American one, that was seeking to optimise the return on its investments in production.

At this point it is important to clarify how the Italian government dealt with its film industry and with the pressure exerted by the American production companies. A common view has emerged in the English language secondary literature, which has been articulated by scholars like Christopher Wagstaff, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, David W. Ellwood, that the Italian State adopted a defensive attitude towards the American cinematic presence in the country<sup>vii</sup>. By 1947 Italy had already incurred debts with foreign studio owners; Italian domestic production was very low and the American distributors charged extremely high rent to cinemas. At that point an active domestic Italian production industry was desirable to the Italian State on a number of grounds. Its product would provide an alternative to imported fare and so enable Italian cinema owners to secure a reduction in rental

charges; it would meet the demand for indigenous product that large portions of the audience wanted; it would reactivate a section of the economy.

Despite the opposition of the Film Board, the system of the *screen quota* - which had already been adopted in 1927 - was abrogated in 1945 by Admiral Stone, and reintroduced in 1946 (Quaglietti 1991: 14). The number of Italian films to be shown varied throughout the post-war period: in 1949 it was 20 days a quarter (80 days a year, but arranged per quarter so that Italian films were not shown only in the summer period, as audience figures were generally lower during the summer months), while in 1956 it was raised to 100. Another way of dealing with the American presence in Italy, which Wagstaff (1995: 98) defines as a 'remedy against Hollywood', was the application of the *import quotas*, which Americans obviously tried to stop (Wagstaff 1995: 98).

There was also a different aspect of the American cinematic presence in Italy: when the help of the government was not available, 'i registi si trovarono alla mercé di produttori ed imprenditori privati' (Gundle 1995: 139). The opening in 1950s of 'the film-making facilities to American studios and independent producers' and the collaboration between the American and Italian film industries is another aspect of this



complex relationship that has been investigated by critics (Nowell-Smith 1998: 9; Wagstaff 1995: 108). For American production companies there were clear benefits to make films in Italy: low salaries, cheap studio rental, and 'tax advantages for investing abroad', especially when the export of hard currency from Europe was prohibited (Wagstaff 1995: 108). By making films in Italy, American production companies could also invest their blocked money [see Chapter 3 for further details] in films they could afterwards export back to the United States and out into other foreign markets.

In his 1994 analysis of the American cinema in Italy, Gian Piero Brunetta (1994: 145) declares that 'for a long period after the war Italy continued to be the biggest importer of American films in Europe' and 'although the government passed decrees placing limits on imports, in practice it never enforced them'. It is important to establish whether and how the Italian government did actually use the American film industry in relation to its own, an issue which will be looked at in Chapter 3, especially in the light of Reinhold Wagnleitner's strong claim that:

In Italy, the massive pressure of the Department of State not only prevented the introduction of import quotas and the economically necessary centralisation and

nationalisation of the Italian industry. Hollywood also achieved tremendous advantages which allowed the U.S. Embassy in Rome to block any piece of film legislation even *before* it had been introduced to parliament (1994: 202).

The link between Italian national legislation and the role of the government with regard to the development of national film industry is firmly attached to the choice of films shown in the country. The movie director Luigi Comencini states his belief that the American films shown in Italy during the post-war period seemed to be chosen to emphasise optimism and democratic feelings (quoted in Gundle 1995: 65). But which were the films selected? In his *Arrivano i nostri*, Lorenzo Quaglietti states that at the beginning of the 1920s it took Italians a little while before they became used to the narrative and style of American films, having previously been exposed to the rather different models of the national productions. However, after the Second World War, Italian audiences showed a taste for Hollywood-made films, thereby allowing the Americans to dominate the film market. Quaglietti gives a very detailed description of the most successful genres shown in Italy by Americans in the post-war period: westerns, musicals, war films and adventure films had all considerable appeal for the Italian audience, as well as tragic stories and comedies. However, despite being a useful

discursive source on American films shown in Italy during the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Quaglietti's book lacks any real critical analysis of the films themselves, and without such an analysis it is not possible to truly understand the relationship between the American and Italian film industries.

With the Americans, 7,500 reels of entertainment arrived in Italy. The effect of the wide spread of Hollywood films is explained by Duggan in the following passage:

Hundreds of new cinemas sprang up to screen these, 120 in Rome alone in the period of occupation. Films continued after the war to be a key channel for the dissemination of the American myth in Italy, and between 1945 and the late 1950s the United States had a near-monopoly of distribution. By 1953 Italian cinemas were showing over 5,000 films purchased in America, including examples of almost every conceivable genre from musicals and comedies to western and war films. These films were not in any obvious sense propagandistic, but the cumulative effect of scenes showing luxurious interiors, glamorous clothes, large cars, expensive consumer goods and modern offices was bound to be considerable (Duggan 1995: 13).

In a purely commercial way, this concept of 'Trade Follows the Film' - from the title of an article written in the *New Yorker Saturday Evening Post* in November 1925 - seemed to have brought economic benefit to the American industry.<sup>viii</sup> In his book *Movie-Made America*, Robert Sklar (1975: 217)

remembers how trade of American products increased world-wide after Hollywood films would show the same products on the screen. In Brazil, for instance, a particular model of American cars became very popular with an increase of sale of around 35% after it was publicized in a Hollywood film. This phenomenon seemed to become enhanced during the years 1945-54, when Hollywood seemed to support this new concept of 'mass consumption' in order to speed up the social transformation needed in Europe to achieve the 'American way of life'.

Currently, there appears to be a scholastic consensus that there was a close relationship between Hollywood cinema and the promotion of propaganda that endorsed the American 'way of life'. However, as the secondary literature testifies, beyond this accord, a variety of points on the relationship between European and American cinema have proved divisive, while many others have not yet been properly addressed by the academic community. The main issue of selling American products by showing American films is of course strictly related to that concept of 'freedom from want' expressed by Franklin D. Roosevelt as one of the major purposes in America's entry into the Second World War. Citing an article by Walter Wanger, the head of Walter Wanger Pictures Inc.,

David Ellwood (1994: 6) reports how for Wanger the 'film industry represented a Marshall Plan of ideas', where the same concept of free trade and freedom from want could have been expressed through 'the movies' power of penetration' (Wanger quoted in Elwood 1994: 6). In the process of helping the European film industry recovery, the possibility of developing a free market would allow Americans to export their films and to cover therefore their costing which the domestic market could not pay for. This total dominance of the American film industry in Europe seemed to correspond very clearly to the intentions of the Marshall Plan. Not everybody is, though, in favour of this 'Marshall Plan of ideas' supported by Wanger. In his article "The Little State Department", Paul Swann (1994: 179), while accepting the role of 'ambassadors' played by Hollywood production companies, argues against the possibility of a common interest between the American film industry and the United States State Department:

The strategies and tactical aims of the film industry in promoting and selling cultural commodities abroad, specifically in post-war Europe, were by no means synonymous with the policies and interests of the U.S. State Department.

With regard to the role of American cinema in Europe, in his article "The Post-war Economic Foreign Policy of the American Film Industry: Europe 1945-1950" (1994: 157) Ian Jarvie argues that there were two different uses of Hollywood films in two different historical times: in the pre-war period the films - according to him - were used to promote the Americanisation of the world, while in the post-war period they represented a strong help in promoting United States as a 'superpower' able to fight against Communism. These two aspects of American film industry policy - Americanisation and the fight against Communism - are closely linked and represent two key factors in the relationship of Italy and America in the post-war period. It becomes significant to define, in fact, when and how the process of Americanisation started in Italy, how it was used in the fight against Communism, and how much impact the issue of mass consumption had on Italians. As Swann (1994: 186) claims, Hollywood's assertion was that 'movies were 'silent salesmen' for both ideology and American consumer products'. It is possible to build on Swann's viewpoint to assert that, especially in the case of Italy, Hollywood might embody a country which, despite being foreign and far away from a geographical point of view, represented an 'imaginative home'. Gundle (1995: 86) agrees with this position when he

states that 'l'immaginario collettivo era saturo di immagini dell'America quale paradiso terrestre delle opportunità e dell'abbondanza'. Moreover, according to Brunetta (1994: 149-150), Italians never felt, in a cultural way, invaded by American films. On the contrary, they felt more like the explorers of a country to which - through the cinema - they could temporarily emigrate.

The topic of language in post-war Italian cinema has been touched upon by historians from a number of different perspectives but as yet it is a subject that has not been treated in any depth. Wagstaff (1995: 96) refers to the matter of the diversity of the language with regard to the difficulty encountered by Italian distributors when trying to export Italian films to American and British markets. This difficulty is only just mentioned in the article - because of the focus being on the international market - and it is explained by the reluctant attitude of British and American people towards subtitled and dubbed films.

In the collection of essays cited on Hollywood in Europe, the problem encountered by the American distributors is only briefly mentioned in the article on "The International Language Problem", where Maltby and Vasey (1994: 87)

describe how 'by 1930 the major companies were producing foreign language versions' of films, so that the process of exporting to Europe could be carried out without having to make major changes during distribution and exhibition. This approach revealed itself to be very expensive and already by 1931 the best solution seemed to be subtitling and dubbing: Hollywood major production companies set up dubbing studios, to help American films in the Italian movie market. When also this approach proved expensive, the big studios decided to transfer the dubbing process to Italy. Unfortunately, very little is known about what happened in this sector after the fall of the Fascist regime and the end of the Second World War. It would be illuminating to establish how the reluctance towards foreignness changed after the war, and whether and how the use of Italian language made Hollywood even more familiar to Italian people. This is an issue that has importance with regard to the question of cultural 'invasion' because it would increase understanding of how the Italian language changed the perception of the foreign world and if the boundaries of the foreign world were broken by a common language.



## 1.5 The role of the Church in Italian cinema and the relationship between the Vatican and American film industry

That the Italian State frequently intervened in the cultural aspect of the national film industry was acknowledgement of cinema's importance in post-war Italy. Similarly, the Catholic Church promoted initiatives of various kinds that were intended to create a Catholic cinema within a Catholic culture. Scholars like Gundle, Wagstaff, and Forgacs agree on how the Church recognised the significance of the cinema not just as a means of socialisation but also as a medium for the expression of Catholic thought. Gundle expresses the view that the principal interest of the Church towards the cinema was to ensure that industry did not endanger the Church's authority in society and that in some ways the Church even managed to strengthen its own position (1990: 208). Wagstaff implies that the opening of about 5,000 parish cinemas was for the Vatican and the Christian Democrats a 'cultural and

propaganda strategy' (1995: 114). In his *Italian Culture in the Industrial Era 1880-1980* (1990: 121), Forgacs, when referring to the work of the Christian Democrat Giulio Andreotti, at that time Sottosegretario per lo Spettacolo, states that 'he [Andreotti] appears to have been working precisely to make industrial and ideological criteria coincide'. Therefore, it can be reasonably supposed that there was a strong cohesion of interests between the Christian Democratic Government and the Catholic Church, both of which showed in the post war period a significant interest in cinema and worked actively to support or defend a certain type of film industry. However it is still necessary to explore in greater depth how a Catholic ideology was identified in films, and how this may have shaped the Italian film industry at the time. In particular, this entails looking at the many Catholic nominees placed in charge of those governmental institutions that had a significant role in post-war industry. This particular aspect will be looked at in Chapter 3 and 4.

The interest shown towards the cinema by the Vatican can be identified as part of an attempt to develop a Catholic cinema. The production company Orbis was set up in 1945 by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico [further information on

Catholic productions and the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico in Chapter 4], while Universalialia was financed directly by the Vatican.

Several films were produced and distributed by American majors. Quaglietti (1991: 71) recounts the relationship between American majors and the Vatican:

In sostanza, non è che col loro ritorno in Italia le *majors* abbiano modificato la precedente scarsa disponibilità a prendere in distribuzione i prodotti nazionali. Come negli anni trenta accondiscesero a farlo costrettevi dalle pressioni del regime, negli anni quaranta vi si adattarono per non dispiacere al Vaticano, attraverso il quale riuscivano ad esportare la valuta rastrellata nel nostro mercato. Ancora una volta non può essere soltanto un caso se i primi film italiani entrati nei listini della Columbia e della Warner Bros provenivano da case di produzione in un modo o nell'altro in rapporti appunto col Vaticano, come l'*Orbis (Il testimone, Un giorno nella vita)* e l'*Universalialia (Fabiola)*.

The passage illustrates how the American film industry had a close relationship with the Vatican and how the Vatican at times would seek to impose its own conditions in order to diffuse a Catholic cinema. However, in the view of Bruno P. F. Wanrooij (1994: 251), 'the plans to create a Catholic film industry proved to be a failure'.

The Vatican had a different type of relationship with the Italian film industry than it had to the American one. The relationships between the Vatican and the American and

Italian film production is a subject that still has considerable scope for investigation. So far, academics have dwelled upon different aspects of the subject without having tried to give a detailed reconstruction of the relationship itself, and have failed in particular to account for the ways in which the relationships affected the development of Italian film industry. However, they have clarified specific attitudes that the Church held towards the cinema, pointing out the contradiction between what was often a severe form of censorship and yet what, at other times, could be an expression of a pure form of fascination. In the secondary literature, it has frequently been pointed out how often American films had the role of tranquillising Italians, presenting an optimistic view of life that was strongly needed in post war Italy.<sup>x</sup> Calming the spirits was, then, a desired effect, and American films had the right ingredients to achieve this. Moreover, as Christopher Duggan (1995: 13) states, it was, in this way, easier for America to show expensive consumer goods through the cinema, 'less subject to the intrusion of either the Church or the law'.

As yet, the only piece that has attempted to reconstruct the relationship between Italian Catholics and Hollywood is the article mentioned above by Bruno P. F. Wanrooij. In it, he

undertakes an analysis of Catholic reactions to American cinema in order to reconsider issues such as the development of mass culture and what he termed the 'various expressions of anti-Americanism' (1994: 247). Wanrooij examines a number of the official documents that had been issued by the Vatican on issues such as the diffusion of cinema, morality in films, and the role of Catholic organisations openly expressing their opinions on American films. By demonstrating that Catholic observers clearly preferred Hollywood productions to the output of Italian neorealism, Wanrooij identifies a crucial point in the research of the relationship between the Vatican and the American film industry. However, when he refuses to explain the end of Neorealism as a consequence of the agreements between the Americans, the Italians, the Vatican, and the Christian Democrats, he appears to have concentrated only on a 'radical change in the preferences of the public' and to have neglected a closer examination of Vatican and American ideology (1994: 254). Wanrooij's article is a good point for an analysis of the relationship between the American film industry and the Vatican. However, there is still clear scope for the subject to be studied in greater depth.

<sup>i</sup>Del Buono O. and Boatti G. (1998). "Bambini agli incroci per cento dollari", *La Stampa* (27 August 1998): "Nello scorso secolo è verso la metà degli anni Ottanta che l'America diventa la meta della maggioranza degli italiani: prima, ad esempio nel 1876, degli italiani che lasciano la penisola solo ventimila varcano l'Atlantico mentre novantamila vanno verso gli altri paesi europei. Dieci anni dopo invece, l'Europa è la meta - in un anno - di 85.365 emigranti mentre verso l'America ne navigano, sempre nel 1887, 130.302".

<sup>ii</sup> This event marks the end of the myth because "non c'è dubbio che la personalità di Pavese abbia agito in maniera determinante sulla nascita, la vita, l'orientamento, il contenuto del mito" (Fernandez 1969: 12).

<sup>iii</sup> Duggan (1995: 162): "Levels of consumption in Italy rose dramatically in the course of the 1950s, so much so that by the end of the decade it was possible to regard the country as a model American-style consumer society".

<sup>iv</sup>

	1950	1954	1958	1960
Spettatori cinematografici (in milioni)	661	800	730	745

From Anica (1961). *Sommario statistico (1960-1961)*, p.30.

<sup>v</sup> See Bafile P. (1986). "Il 'dumping' cinematografico in Italia", in Magrelli, E. (ed.) (1986), p. 74-75; Wagstaff, C. (1998). "Italian genre films in the world market" in Nowell-Smith, G. and Ricci, S. (eds), (1998), p. 75.

<sup>vi</sup> See also Magrelli, E. (ed.) (1986), p. 126.

<sup>vii</sup> See Wagstaff, C. (1995). "Italy in the Post-War International Cinema Market", in Duggan, C. and Wagstaff, C. (eds) (1995), p. 106; Nowell-Smith, G. and Ricci, S. (eds) (1998), pp. 74, 80.

<sup>viii</sup> Lowry, E. G., "Trade Follows the Film", *Saturday Evening Post*, vol. 198 (November 7, 1925), p. 12; see also Gundle, S. (1995), p. 169.

<sup>ix</sup> Gundle, S. (1995), p. 109; Wagstaff, C. (1995), p. 93; Gundle, S. (1990), p. 209.

## **Chapter II: Americanism and Americanisation: ideology, politics and cultural propaganda**

Ideology and American ideology have been widely explored throughout the last few decades. Several historians have looked at the relationship between low and high culture in the United States and many researchers have juxtaposed the ideas of young and old cultures in Europe and America. However, a close comparative analysis between American cultural ideology and the one expressed by the Vatican during the Cold War period so far has not been clearly made. I will attempt to do so using American and the Vatican official primary sources.

The first section of this chapter examines American political and cultural ideology of the post-1945 era, especially in terms of containment of Soviet power and the suffocation of the left in any country that expressed suggestion of political change towards that direction. The ideology of escapist entertainment will be examined, as will the significance of Americanism and how it was expressed both in official documents and in contemporary public discourses, and what ideas were related to it.

The second part of this chapter will analyse the Catholic ideology both through official documents released by the Vatican and through the examination of public interventions that were made by leading ecclesiastic figures. This will allow for a comparison of it with the American ideology, not just to confirm their alliance in the containment of communism - which would not be a new issue - but principally to explore the presence of common themes in their 'cultural' propaganda.

Finally, the third section will deal with: American intervention on Italian cultural matters; the concept of Americanisation; and how American commercial media was used for circulating American ideology in Italy with the support of the Vatican.

## 2.1 American ideology and its cultural strategy

According to the Fourth Edition of the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ideology is 'a collection of beliefs and values held by an individual or group for other than purely epistemic reasons' (Honderich 1995: 392). However, academic commentators such as Terry Eagleton and Slavoj Žižek are of the view that no one definition of ideology can be found as the term itself has a wide range of meanings, some of which are



not really 'compatible with one another' (Eagleton 1991: 2; Žižek 1994: 3). In his *Ideology as a Cultural System*, Clifford Geertz even accuses the social sciences of not having yet 'developed a genuinely nonevaluative conception of ideology' (Geertz 1996: 1). On the other hand Žižek suggests that the wide variety of notions of ideology can be read as 'the index of different concrete historical situations' (Žižek 1994: 8).

When looking at the many and diverse definitions, though, one element seems to recur: 'the term ideology [...] would seem to make reference not only to belief systems, but to questions of power' (Eagleton 1991: 5). Ideology, continues Eagleton, 'has to do with *legitimizing* the power of a dominant social group or class' (Eagleton 1991: 5). This process of legitimating happens through six different strategies: *promoting* beliefs and values, *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs, *denigrating* or *excluding* adverse ideas and thoughts, and finally *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself (Eagleton 1991: 5-6). In his *Ideology: A Brief Guide*, John Lyle agrees with Eagleton and expands this relationship with power even further. According to him, ideology would refer to 'how the dominant institutions in society work through values, conceptions of the world, and symbol systems, in order to legitimise the current order' (Lyle 1997: 1).

Order and power are important aspects of the concept of ideology. However, in order to understand how order and power are made legitimate in a society, Lyle turns to Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony, which Michèle Barrett explains as 'the organization of consent - the process through which subordinated forms of consciousness are constructed without recourse to violence or coercion' (quoted in Žižek 1994: 238). In the view of Louis Althusser, this process is carried out by the state ideological apparatuses, such as media, culture, religion in order to attract individuals to the ruling power (Althusser 1971: 136-137; see also Lyle 1997: 1; Žižek 1994: 197). Hegemony - in the Gramscian approach - is used without violence and focuses primarily on how culture obtained the masses' participation in the project of the ruling class (Žižek 1994: 238). Althusser (1971: 169) emphasises the unconscious subjection of the individuals to a ruling 'Subject' by affirming that the subjected being 'is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission'. If for Althusser this is part of the ambiguity of the term subject, for Lyle (1997: 1) it becomes simply a means to 'orient people's thinking in such a way that they accept the current way of doing things, the current sense of what is 'natural,' and the current understanding of their roles in society'. Here, it is crucial to acknowledge the role played by the concept of

culture, which - if for Eagleton confines itself to artistic and intellectual work of agreed value (Eagleton 1991: 28) - still represents a fundamental aspect of legitimating the power of a ruling ideology. According to Gramsci, in fact, it was not just the economic force for which one class would rule over another; it would also depend on hegemony, in the sense of cultural and ideological forces (quoted in Eatwell and Wright 1993: 5). When discussing the concept of ideology and the dissemination of it, Gramsci (1975: 238-239) insists on the important role of the 'comunicazione orale' rather than the 'comunicazione scritta'. In fact, he stated that 'la comunicazione parlata è un mezzo di diffusione ideologica che ha una rapidità, un'area d'azione e una simultaneità emotiva enormemente più vaste della comunicazione scritta (il teatro, il cinematografo e la radio, con la diffusione di altoparlanti nelle piazze, battono tutte le forme di comunicazione scritta, dal libro alla rivista, al giornale, al giornale murale)'. The power of the oral communication, which the film was at the time the strongest representative, in order to legitimate the power of the ruling ideology is certainly essential when discussing American ideology. The concept of democracy is central to American ideology. Richard Jay states that 'many authorities are highly sceptical of characterising it [democracy] as a distinct ideology' (quoted in Eccleshall 1994: 119), and Roger

Eatwell (1993: 8) writes that 'democracy is not an ideology', while 'nationalism is'. Yet, in the context of this research, it is of relevance to analyse the ideals and the values behind the concept of 'democracy' in order to understand and identify the same values in American cinema. This becomes even more pertinent when it is borne in mind Francis Fukuyama's theory of the end of the ideology, in which he stated that 'there is only one competitor standing in the ring as an ideology of potential universal validity: liberal democracy' (Fukuyama 1992: 42).

Reading documents from the Harry Truman administration, Presidential Papers, official speeches and the memoirs written by the President Truman himself, the image of American democracy presented to the Americans and to the world during the Cold War period was very clear. The strength of America's democracy was highlighted in many speeches: the most recurrent words and expressions were 'right to freedom of thought' (Truman's message to Congress on civil rights - 2 February 1948 in Truman Papers 1948: 121-126), 'wealth', 'abundance' and 'prosperity' (Truman's message to Congress on civil rights - 2 February 1948 in Truman Papers 1948: 121-126; Truman's annual State of the Union address to Congress - 5 January 1949 in Truman Papers 1949: 1-7), 'opportunity' for everybody (Truman's message to Congress on civil rights - 2

February 1948 in Truman Papers 1948: 121-126), 'freedom from coercion' (Truman's address to Congress - 12 March 1947 in Congressional Record, Eightieth Congress, first session 1947: 1980-1981) and of course war against 'world communism', the 'malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue' (George F. Kennan's cable to the State Department - 22 February 1946). There are also many ideas strictly linked to American democracy: loyalty and patriotism (Truman's speech to the United Nation Conference - 26 June 1945 in Public Papers of the President of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1945, Wash 1961, I 138-145), hope and faith (Truman's speech to the United Nation Conference - 26 June 1945 in Public Papers of the President of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1945, Wash 1961, I 138-145), courage, devotion to duty and concept of liberty (Truman 1956: 228), justice and rightness (Truman's speech to the United Nation Conference - 26 June 1945 in Public Papers of the President of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1945, Wash 1961, I 138-145; Truman's address in New York City's Central Park - 27 October 1945) and friendly partnership (Truman's address in New York City's Central Park - 27 October 1945) to fight the 'tyranny of Communism' (Truman 1956: 105, 119), against which it will be essential to 'develop a vigorous and effective ideological campaign' (Foreign Relations of the United States

1948: 550). All these elements are relevant to identify the boundaries of American ideology, which even if accused by Howard Zinn of being surrounded with the 'rhetoric of democracy and liberty' (Zinn 1990: 22), still represents the main reference point to trace the concept of Americanism in the post-war period. In fact, in a speech delivered to an American Legion convention on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1951, President Truman affirmed that

Real Americanism means that we will protect freedom of speech [...], freedom of religion [...], fair opportunities for all our citizens [...], fair play [...], that liberty is not license and that Americanism is under attack by communism, at home and abroad (Truman's speech to American Legion Convention - 15 August 1951 in Eighty-second Congress, first session, 1951: 10051-10052).

In this context, the relationship between American ideology and American culture is vital. Frances Stonor Saunders' work on the cultural Cold War defines it in terms of United States government control over the arts. In one part of her book, Saunders explains how in the immediate post-war period the American authorities devised a massive theatre programme with a 'hit list of desirable moral lessons under categories such as 'liberty and democracy', 'power of faith', 'equality of man', 'pursuit of happiness' (Saunders 1999: 21). Therefore, it is not a coincidence to find the same expressions in the

political statements as in arts and culture guidelines of the time. The intersections between the Government and the world of arts are also suggested by Howard Zinn. In his work on American ideology he draws attention to a case in 1947 when an art exhibition was cancelled because considered 'un-American and radical' and accused of being 'distorted and ugly', as it did not glorify America, breeding 'dissatisfaction' (Zinn 1990: 261). This position was not applied only to theatre or painting. It also involved the cinema. As during the Second World War, the Office of War Information worked in Hollywood to discourage films that 'offered negative portrayals of American life' (Wagnleitner and Tayler May 2000: 88) and where authors like Ayn Rand produced guidelines on filmmaking (see end of this part - Chapter 2.1).

This aspect of government interference in the arts must be held in mind when comparing it with the influence of the American and Italian governments in post-war Italian culture, and specifically Italian cinema. At this point, it is possible to observe how America legitimated its power through ideological apparatuses, such as culture. Following the Second World War the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) used culture as a form of political propaganda, investing in it millions of dollars and acting almost as 'America's Ministry of Culture', while 'the Department of State [...] scrutinized scripts with great

diligence' (Saunders 1999: 129; Wagnleitner and Tayler May 2000: 87). The Congress for Cultural Freedom, for instance, whose aim was to push European left-wing intellectuals against Communism, was defined as the biggest cultural propaganda effort in directing Western Europe intelligentsia towards the 'American way' (Saunders 1999: 1, 122; Kramer 1999: 305). Culture, therefore, represented a significant element where the American political ideology could be expressed for two main purposes: fighting Communism in the world and creating a stronger relationship with Europe - especially in those countries, such as Italy and France, where mass movement Communist parties had the capacity to exert influence over sections of arts (Kramer 1999: 308). In his 'Melvin Lasky Proposal', the document which drew the lines of the cultural Cold War, Lasky affirmed that 'The substance of the Cold War was cultural in range' and that 'behind the official representative of American democracy lies a great and progressive culture, with a richness of achievements in arts, in literature, in philosophy, in all the aspects of culture which unite the free traditions of Europe and America' (quoted in Saunders 1999: 29, 30). Also Spyros Skouras, President of Twentieth Century Fox, believed that 'no medium can play a greater part than the motion picture in indoctrinating people into the free way of life and instilling in them a compelling



desire for freedom and hope for a brighter future. Therefore we as an industry can play an infinitely important part in the worldwide ideological struggle for the minds of men and confound the Communist propagandists' (quoted in Guback 1986: 251). Culture was an effective means of expressing American ideology. In 1949 Ellis Arnall, President of The Society of Independent Motion Picture Producers, felt able to tell The Motion Picture Industry Council that cinema was the 'best ambassador for American democracy'.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, cinema would engage the audience subliminally without involving what Eagleton defines as a 'reflective consciousness' (Eagleton 1991: 37). In regard to this specific issue, Thomas Guback reiterates the role of cinema for spreading Americanism across the world and indirectly for circulating US propaganda.

Motion picture companies did not continuously draw attention to the overt propaganda characteristics of their products because they preferred to avoid any insinuation that they were manipulating their content to meet government specifications. In a broad way, their co-operation with the state was on the level of erasing undesirable aspects from pictures, rather than intentionally incorporating elements that propaganda concerns would have demanded. The basic assumption was that commercial motion pictures already represented Americanism and no additional steps needed to be taken to enhance their content (Guback 1986: 252; see also Pells 1997: 16).

American producers often denied the close relationship between American ideology and cinema. In an article published

in the autumn of 1950 titled *Donald Duck and Diplomacy*, Walter Wanger, head of the production company Walter Wanger Pictures, Inc., strongly rejected this relationship between production companies and the American State, by which he said they were not 'subsidised'. He stated that the production companies were 'a product of free enterprise', that relied only on their audience for their existence (Wanger 1950: 446). However he finished his article by writing that he believed Hollywood would be the natural capital of the Marshall plan for ideas:

Hollywood with it's array of statesmen and humanitarians like Walt Disney, John Ford, Ethel Barrymore, Bob Hope, Darryl Zanuck, Al Capp, Irving Berlin and Milton Caniff - Donald Duck as World Diplomat! (Wanger 1950: 452).

Cinema was the best example of that culture of mass consumption that characterised America and its ideology. In his *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, Berghahn underlines, in this context, the importance of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835), in which the author 'connected democratic politics with forms of economic production and cultural consumption' (Berghahn 2001: 81). This culture is, therefore, the expression of a political and economic principle and engages 'significantly with genuine wants, needs and desires', becoming the expression of a

successful ruling ideology (Eagleton 1991: 45). Mass culture becomes the manifestation of the egalitarianism which distinguished American culture from the European one and which Victoria De Grazia defines as apparent classlessness of American commercial culture (De Grazia 1989: 54). As Lary May states, 'after 1947 the new 'American' ideology of corporate consensus, class harmony, and abundance' was created and at the same time 'anticommunism rhetoric was now the common currency of Hollywood politics' (May 1989: 127, 143). This made consumption and anticommunism two sides of the same coin, a coin that Hollywood was trying to spread worldwide in order to contribute to America's construction of a new world order. This 'ideological conversion' - as May termed it - was achieved through the use of films that presented an ideal world as opposed to the evil embodied by the Communist countries.<sup>ii</sup> The ideology of escapist entertainment was widely supported by the government. In 1951 Bertrand Russell commented on the phenomenon:

The object is not to produce something that corresponds to fact, but something that makes you happy by corresponding to daydreams (Russell 1951: 13).<sup>iii</sup>

The fundamentally optimistic outlook expressed by American films had been recognised in 1927 by the Flemish poet Marnix

Gijzen when he collected his impressions of America in a travel book. However, in his view it was a form of forced apathy.<sup>iv</sup> It seemed, however, safer spreading optimistic ideas, that 'don't threaten established wealth or power' (Zinn 1990: 3) rather than risking with more dismal representation of reality. In 1948 the novelist and anti-Communist Ayn Rand wrote a pamphlet entitled *A Screen For Americas* that sought to set out a film code. This was distributed amongst Hollywood filmmakers in order to spread the American way in contrast to the threat of Communism. In it, she made a number of significant suggestions in terms of plot and characters which needed to be used or ignored by Hollywood filmmakers and producers in order to help in disseminating the American way and at the same time resisting the Red propaganda. In order to do so, Rand suggested filmmakers not to smear the main principles of Americanism like free enterprise system, industrialism, wealth, profit, success, while they should not to glorify what Rand believed to be the main aspects of Communism, such as failure, depravity, the 'common man' and the collective. Stories that had only sordid characters and sordid plot only 'represent a profoundly insidious attack on all the moral principles and all religious precepts' and current events must not be dealt with carelessly, because they can arouse 'antagonism and

resentment' (Rand 1948: 6, 10). By doing so, according to Rand, one allows Communists

To corrupt our moral premises by corrupting non-political movies - by introducing small casual bits of propaganda into innocent stories - thus making people absorb the basic premises of Collectivism by indirection and implication (Rand 1948: 1).

The author concluded by suggesting that American films should not discredit American political institutions, such as the Congress of the United States, the courts or election, because it would create the condition for criticising a system, which is 'the best ever devised in history' and which represents the political principles of Americanism, which every producer has the moral obligation to present in the best possible way (Rand 1948: 11). Cinema seemed to have precise guidelines on how to portray America and celebrate its identity. In his book *America's world identity: the politics of exclusion*, Neil Renwick argues the importance of American ideology in some post-war films, which carry a message of 'American heroism, honesty, selflessness, neighbourliness, democratic freedom, individual and community goodness and virtue', celebrating Americanism and American values (Renwick 2000: 58). This prompts the question of - whether, and how, the representation of Americanism in Hollywood films was

based on those Christian principles mentioned by Renwick (Renwick 2000: 58). The following section will explore the Vatican's ideology in relation to culture, specifically to cinema and its relationship with America. This will allow for a comparison of American and Vatican ideologies and - at a later stage - an analysis of their presence in American films.

## **2.2 The Vatican's ideology in relation to culture and its relationship with America**

The role of the Catholic Church in the immediate post-war period was visible in several aspects of Italian society. The development of a Catholic political party, the intention from the association *Azione Cattolica* to start up a new Catholic newspaper to divulge the Christian thought across society and the attention the Vatican addressed to culture are just examples of a dominant presence which spread outside churches and parishes. At the end of the Second World War, Italians looked to the Roman Church as a way to liberate themselves from their fears and as a reference point to get back to in the reconstruction of their country and their souls, as Giovagnoli affirms:

In questa crisi, come si è già ricordato, il cattolicesimo rappresentava, anche agli occhi di molti laici, l'unico punto di riferimento valido per l'intera collettività nazionale (Giovagnoli 1991: 222).

On the political front, after the strong affirmation of the Christian Democrats, their leader Alcide De Gasperi worked on the development of the relationship between Catholicism, freedom, and democracy. De Gasperi's political and spiritual doctrine could not forget the fight against Communism, in the attempt to build a new democracy in Italy. In this context, it is important to remember that the ideological influence of the Vatican was widely present on the Italian post-war scene. Politics, economy and culture were in different ways under the sphere of influence of the Catholic Church and Pius XII's plan of 'Christian reconquest' of Italy spread in all different areas of society, as Parisella states:

Dalle istituzioni alla società, dalla politica all'economia, dal diritto alla famiglia, dalla professione alla moda e al costume, oltre che ai numerosi aspetti della vita più propriamente religiosa, l'insegnamento pontificio spazia in ogni campo dell'attività, non solo per incoraggiare ed esortare all'adempimento dei 'doveri del proprio stato', ma per prescrivere fin nei particolari il 'retto uso' dei talenti affidati ad ognuno. [...] Nella particolare situazione del pontificato di Pio XII viene a significare con sempre maggiore frequenza orientamento del papa, in quanto attraverso la radio, i cinegiornali e la stampa si tende a stabilire quasi una specie di rapporto diretto tra il papa e i fedeli (Parisella 2000: 115-116).

This special relationship between the Church and its community was created also through the means of culture, which played a substantial role in the attempt to operate that 'Christian reconquest' desired by Pius XII. In his "Aspects of Catholic Culture", Percy Allum offers a detailed portrait of the Catholic culture in 1950s Italy in its role of hegemonic mass culture, describing the popularity of various Catholic institutions, such as *Azione Cattolica*, the labourers association ACLI, the Trade Union confederation CISL, the Catholic press and their relationship with the party.

Lastly, given that the Christian Democrat Party was permanently in power, the Roman Catholic Church could also count on the cultural apparatuses controlled by the state (schools, radio and television, in particular) to spread the precepts of Catholic culture. (Allum 1990: 85).

The complex relationship between the Vatican and the State, in terms of culture and specifically in relation to the cinema, will be dealt with in Chapter 3 and 4. Here it is important to bear in mind how the widespread and mass penetration of Catholic culture in the post-war period was 'hegemonic by the time of the Liberation, not only within the organised Catholic movement, but also nationally' (Nesti quoted in Baranski and Lumley 1990: 81).



When referring to the attitude of the Roman Church in relation to the cinema, it is noteworthy to observe how the Church's interest towards cinema increased from the 1930s to the end of the 1950s. This is clearly confirmed by the documents issued by the Vatican in preparation to the main speeches on cinema made by the Popes during those years: while the documents issued by the Vatican before the encyclical *Vigilanti Cura* (1936) were only ten, those issued before Pius XII's speeches on the *Film ideale* (1955) were forty-four and those before the encyclical *Miranda Prorsus* (1957) numbered fifty-four (Baragli 1958: 9).

In order to try to understand the Vatican's position with regard to the film industry, it is useful to undertake a brief analysis of the major documents issued by the Popes Pius XI and Pius XII, who provided a significant and complete doctrine on the cinema. *Vigilanti cura*, issued in 1936 and defined by Marco Bongioanni (1962: 12) as the Vatican's 'phase of defensive tolerance', was the first official encyclical on the topic of cinema. Despite being issued ten years before the period here analysed, this encyclical is of major relevance. First of all, it is the first open declaration of the importance and power of cinema, which was to be reaffirmed in subsequent documents. Moreover, it established in a very pragmatic way the attempt to promote Catholic influence over

the film industry (*Vigilanti cura* 1936: 6), which was to be renewed by Pius XII in his encyclical *Miranda prorsus* (*Miranda prorsus* 1957: 25-30). The 1936 encyclical also declared unequivocally the role that the Catholic press was expected to pursue in order to address Catholics towards the 'right films' to watch (*Vigilanti cura* 1936: 7).

The encyclical starts by praising work done in America by the Legion of Decency. This organisation had been set up in 1934 by a Council of Catholic American Bishops with the task of rating films and condemning those that it regarded as being immoral. The Legion published rating lists that were intended to provide 'a moral estimate of current entertainment feature motion pictures'. Films were rated as either unobjectionable (Class A), objectionable (Class B), or condemned (Class C). The "C" was applied to movies that the organisation condemned as 'indecent and immoral and unfit for public entertainment'. The encyclical *Vigilanti cura* referred to this morality of film, stating the importance of making the cinema 'morale, moralizzatore, educatore', and complimenting the Legion for the success that it had achieved:

Ci è di sommo conforto il rilevare il notevole successo della crociata perché il cinematografo, sotto la vostra vigilanza e la pressione esercitata dall'opinione pubblica ha presentato un miglioramento dal lato morale. Delitti e vizi vennero riprodotti meno di frequente; il peccato non venne più così

apertamente approvato ed acclamato; non si presentarono più in maniera così proterva false norme di vita all'animo tanto infiammabile della gioventù (*Vigilanti cura* 1936: 4).

The American example was cited again when the Pope asked his congregation to promise - as they did in United States - not to see 'film che offendano la verità e la morale cristiana' (*Vigilanti cura* 1936: 4, 5). This example- according to Giulio Andreotti, *Sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri* in the immediate post-war period (whose activity will be analysed in Chapter 3.1) - produced excellent results: 'La strada attraverso cui i cattolici americani [...] hanno ottenuto miglioramenti effettivi nella produzione statunitense è stata proprio quella della diffusa abitudine di astenersi dalla frequenza delle sale quando si proiettino film sconsigliabili' (Andreotti, RC 1952: 4).

The importance and power of cinema had been already stressed by the Pope in two significant documents: a speech made to the members of the Motion Picture Executive Committee of Hollywood, who had completed a tour of Europe with a symbolic visit to the Vatican in July 1945 (Discorso: 14 luglio 1945, in Baragli 1958: 88) and a speech addressed to the representatives of the American major production companies a month later (Discorso: 30 agosto 1945 in Baragli 1958: 94). In both addresses, Pius XII had enhanced the social

responsibility of the American film industry both in the United States and the world as whole (Discorso: 14 luglio 1945, in Baragli 1958: 88), and stressed how cinema, if improperly used, could 'propagate the evil spirit of distrust, enmity and hate' (Discorso: 30 agosto 1945 in Baragli 1958: 95). The danger of cinema was again addressed in his following encyclical *Miranda Prorsus* (8 September 1957: 6), in which he explained how the extraordinary power cinema had on people can 'trascinare [l'uomo] nelle tenebre, portare alla depravazione, mettere alla mercè di sfrenati istinti'. The position of the Vatican, in relation to the dangers of the cinema, which in his *Cinema educativo e no* (1953) Carmelo Cottone had questioned widely, did not change much in the following half century. On 9 November 2002 Pope John Paul II made a speech in which he defined media in general as 'strumenti potentissimi che, se usati male, producono effetti devastanti nelle coscienze delle persone e nella vita sociale' (Discorso: 9 novembre 2002 in Giornalisti 2003: 17).

The two speeches on the *Film ideale*, that Pope Pius XII made to representatives of the cinema world, offered a much more sophisticated analysis of the film industry and the role of cinema in modern society. The importance of the medium is again stressed in a very compelling way: the pontiff reminds his audience of the role cinema had in Italy - the country then

being the third place in terms of number of spectators after America and Great Britain (*Il film ideale* 1955: 5) - and then moves on to a very refined analysis of the cinematic medium (*Il film ideale* 1955: 6-10). In the core of *Il film ideale*, and in relation to the dangerous misuse of the cinematic tool, one passage is fundamental when the comparison with the American ideology and its expression in cinema is made. This passage deals with what the Pope defines the ideal film in relation to the spectator and the importance of the respect to be shown towards the human being.

Chiameremo ideale solamente quel film [...] che rafforza ed eleva l'uomo nella coscienza della sua dignità; che gli fa maggiormente conoscere ed amare l'alto grado in cui nella sua natura fu posto dal Creatore; che gli parla della possibilità di accrescere in sè le doti di energia e di virtù di cui dispone; che gli rinalda la persuasione: che egli può vincere ostacoli ed evitare risoluzioni errate; che può sempre rialzarsi dalle cadute e tornare sulla buona strada; che, infine, può progredire dal bene al meglio mediante l'uso delle sue libertà e facoltà (*Il film ideale* 1955: 11-12).

This moral obligation of cinema, where only good should be portrayed and evil shown only if it is finally defeated, presented clearly many similarities with what over twenty years earlier the Hays Code had sought to set out as standards for America film production. William Hays was the President of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (M.P.P.D.A.) from 1922 to 1945. In order to oppose

the threat of censorship coming from outside, Hays - together with a group of Hollywood representatives - instituted in 1930 the Production Code written by the Jesuit priest Daniel Lord, which was a set of guidelines producers had to bear in mind when commissioning a film (Maltby 1995: 62; Black 1994: 6). When reading the text of the Production Code, it is clear that the main issues raised are related mainly to crime and sex. Sex issues are worth mentioning here as in many ways they remind us of what will be later on in a more open way raised by Pius XII in his *Il film ideale*. The Code stated that 'the sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld' and issues such as adultery, seduction or extreme scenes of passion should not be explicitly treated (The Motion Picture Production Code 1930). Amongst the other areas covered, it is here important to note obscenity, vulgarity and dance, which will be aspects strongly condemned by the Vatican and which will be discussed in relation to the films' analysis in Chapter 5 and 6. This self-regulatory code of ethics 'contributed significantly to Hollywood avoidance of contentious subject matter, and was a controlling force on the movies' construction of narrative and character' (Maltby 1995: 60-61). By seeking to establish the moral importance of entertainment, it recognised the responsibility of the cinema

industry to produce films that would influence the public in a positive way.

In 1945 Eitel Monaco, director of Anica, the Italian producers association, was to propose a self-regulatory set of rules that were based on the Hays Code, afterwards replaced by the Government regulations (Argentieri and Cipriani 1961:1529).

In the Hays Code a range of taboo topics were presented (such as illegal drug traffic, sex perversion, miscegenation), while positive attitudes towards marriage, family, home, governments, and religion were encouraged. In a very significant passage of *Il film ideale*, Pius XII dealt with the same topics, underlining the importance of the relationship between the ideal film and the family, the State, and the Church, as main aspects of the community. Pius XII outlined what the role of cinema should be in relation to the family values that the ideal film should portray: a strong man, who knows the importance of his role as husband and father, a mother who is satisfied in her house role, and children who are respectful, generous and happy (*Il film ideale* 1955: 28-29). It is significant to notice the language used in the passage, where the man was associated to expressions such as 'virilmente', 'fermamente', 'fedeltà', 'amore coniugale', and women to 'sposa, madre, condotta irreprensibile, dedita alla casa e alla sua intimità' (*Il film ideale* 1955: 28-29). When looking at the films

analysed in Chapter 5 and 6, these values or the absence of them will come out very clearly.

The importance of how family values should to be portrayed on the screen was re-emphasised by a document, written by the Conferenza episcopale italiana, that was concerned with the evil aspects of cinema, and which was published during March and April 1961 in the official Vatican daily *L'Osservatore romano* and its official journal *La civiltà cattolica*. The document accused many films of desecrating family values, respect for women, and any forms of authority ("La moralità degli spettacoli" - Documento della C.E.I., *L'Osservatore romano*, 1961). Two years later, the first *Guida cinematografica* issued by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico (CCC) raised again the educative responsibility of cinema in relation to family values:

Ora nessuno può negare che il cinema abbia sovente contribuito alla diffusione di modelli di vita insidiosi alla coesione della famiglia, irridenti alla fedeltà, inneggianti al piacere ed al successo raggiunto senza scrupoli (*Guida cinematografica* 1963: X).

According to *Il film ideale*, a strong family was to seek its support from the State, whose authority must be preserved and enhanced through the cinema, which 'può adempiere la sua parte a vantaggio della comunità, rinsaldare il senso della



fedeltà allo Stato e promuoverne il progresso' (*Il film ideale* 1955: 31). This was clearly in line with what was stated in the Production Code, where 'the history, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly' (*The Motion Picture Production Code* 1930). *Il film ideale* (1955: 31) also condemned any political films<sup>v</sup>, which was what in America Ayn Rand had expressed her opinion against: in Rand's view, though, the concept of politics was very much associated with Communism. In her pamphlet, in fact, she suggested that certain issues (such as American political institutions) - which the Communists were trying to 'sneak into pictures intended as non-political' - needed to be left out of scripts. However, she added that 'there is, of course, no reason why you should not make pictures on political themes', as long as these would advocate 'the political principles of Americanism, seriously, consistently and dramatically' (Rand 1948: 11).

A comparison of the Hays Code with Pope Pius XII's two encyclicals on cinema reveals a strong parallelism with regard to an urge to promote an ideal film that promoted truth, goodness and beauty (*Il film ideale* 1955: 19; *Miranda prorsus* 1957: 8) and refused to give a positive representation of wrongdoing, evil or sin (*Il film ideale* 1955: 25; *Miranda*

*prorsus* 1957: 9). This is but one example of a very precise doctrine presented by a Pope, who had strong feelings about the issue of cinema, pronouncing upon it personally at least seventeen times in official speeches and documents (Baragli 1960: 25). With regard to the morality of the cinema, it is productive to mention Mons. Luigi Civardi's book *Il cinema di fronte alla morale* (1940), which was defined at the time as a moral code for the cinema and which issued precise guidelines on how to apply Catholic morality to the film industry. The volume was written with the intention of explaining what the *Centro Cattolico Cinematografico (CCC)*<sup>vi</sup> intended to do when compiling the guidelines that could help to assess the application of the Catholic morality in the cinema industry. The CCC was created in April 1935 with the intention of: classifying films and distributing the classification throughout all Catholic institutions in Italy; publishing *La Rivista del Cinematografo*, official publication of the CCC, with articles, reviews and comments on films; organising *circoli cinematografici cattolici* throughout Italy; setting up courses of history of cinema for priests; producing films and documentaries (*Cine Annuario* 1948: 45; *Guida Cinematografica* 1963: XXX).

Civardi's text was addressed to exhibitors, censors, film critics, and anyone else who might be involved in the delicate exercise of seeking to balance morality and cinema. Civardi explains how the CCC was the office in charge of controlling the films produced (revisione), classifying them according to the Catholic morality (classificazione), and informing the Catholic community of the classification itself (segnalazione) (Civardi 1940: 17). It was a form of private censorship, which however created a strong reaction from the film industry: very soon, producers approached the CCC in order to gain an ecclesiastic consensus for their films, hoping therefore to pass automatically the State censorship, closely linked to the Vatican (Argentieri and Cipriani 1961: 1536).

In his attempt to define morality, art, and their relationship, Civardi gives a significant explanation of immorality, which again resembles what in America was stated by the Hays Code and what then Rand will write a few years later.

Immorale è quindi un film, dove trova una giustificazione, sia pure implicita, il furto, la rapina, l'omicidio, e via dicendo. Immorale un film che mette in cattiva luce l'autorità, sia religiosa che civile; che insinui il principio dell'anarchia, della ribellione, della lotta di classe; che screditi le istituzioni della religione e della patria (Civardi 1940: 26).

It was, therefore, immoral anything which would threaten religious and civic authority, which would encourage rebellion

and anarchy, or which would discredit religion and the country: in the Production Code national and religious feelings were entitled to 'consideration and respectful treatment' and issues such as crimes against the law could not be justified (Black 1994: 306, 308). In his *La Chiesa e il cinema*, Salvatore Canals (1961: 95) reiterates this concept of immorality closely linked to the dangerous power cinema could exercise over people, while also looking closely at important concepts such as family, state, and religion, and at how films should deal with them in order to influence people in a positive manner (Canals 1961: 121-141).

In order to ascertain the ideological presence of the Vatican in the film industry, it is appropriate to examine the role of ecclesiastic censorship that was performed by official Catholic organisations. Alongside the State intervention in applying a form of censorship (see Chapter 3.3), the Vatican played an important role in advising the Catholic community on which films to watch and which films to avoid. The CCC had, amongst its duties the control over which films were shown in church cinemas. Through its weekly publication of the *Segnalazioni cinematografiche*, the CCC sought to pronounce moral judgements on films that were coming out and to advise on those that were suitable to be screened or that could be if

the appropriate cuts were made. In 1948, in order to make this procedure more official, Pius XII set up a special Commission that was charged with assessing films with regard to their morality. As the Statuto of the *Pontificia Commissione per la cinematografia didattica e religiosa* stated:

La Pontificia Commissione per la Cinematografia didattica e religiosa è costituita per l'esame delle opere cinematografiche destinate alla maggiore e migliore conoscenza della dottrina cristiana e agli insegnamenti della Chiesa cattolica, che saranno spontaneamente sottoposte alla revisione della Santa Sede. Il giudizio sarà esteso anche agli aspetti tecnico ed artistico, in quanto questi influiscono sul valore religioso e didattico dell'opera cinematografica (Statuto 17 settembre 1948, quoted in Baragli 1958: 100).

Therefore, there was an attempt to control the film industry not just on the moral aspects, but also on the technical and artistic ones, as they represented important parts of the films analysed. The role of the Commissione, which needed to work in collaboration with the national Enti Cinematografici Cattolici, was broad. In a letter to Don Jean Bernard, the President of the Office Catholique International du Cinematographe (O.C.I.C.), Giovan Battista Montini, from the Segreteria di Stato, clearly explains the role of the Catholic moral judgement over cinema: it had to exert an influence over Catholic audiences, persuading them to attend recommended films for their 'pregi morali ed artistici', and as much as

possible discouraging them from viewing condemned films (Lettera 9 luglio 1949, quoted in Baragli 1958: 106).

The classifications adopted by the CCC were posted on the church door in Italy so that the official Vatican position in relation to every film released was universally known. Gian Piero Brunetta (1975: 63) defines the *Segnalazioni* as the 'normale servizio di orientamento dei cattolici', as a means of imprinting the official position of the Vatican over the population. The *Segnalazioni* had commercial value for the exhibitors of church cinemas but not for the Catholic community (Bongioanni 1962: 25). However, people had to be kept informed and follow the CCC classifications (*Miranda prorsus* 1957: 24-25; Lettera della Segreteria di Stato 22 giugno 1955; Lettera della Segreteria di Stato, 6 giugno 1958). This procedure was strongly articulated also in 1961 in a speech made by Cardinal Giuseppe Siri, who eagerly urged the community to ignore those films, which were not seen by the Church in a positive way. Again the Legion of Decency was praised:

Quando in America è stata istituita dal Vescovo di Indianapolis la famosa legione della decenza, l'impegno sottoscritto non solo dai cattolici, ma anche dai protestanti e dagli ebrei, era questo: Io non andrò a vedere un film che è stato escluso dall'Ufficio competente, e non metterò mai

piede in una sala dove uno di questi film venga proiettato. E con questo è crollata l'opposizione in America. La legione della decenza ha avuto vittoria. Ecco l'autocontrollo (Siri, RC 1961: 154).

The success cheered by the Cardinal is not exactly borne out by Gregory D. Black's research on censorship in Hollywood. He found that the Legion, rather than keeping people away from cinemas, had actually encouraged attendance (Black 1994). However, in Italy things seemed to be different: as Cesari stated, a negative comment from the CCC could 'incidere gravemente sui bilanci dei produttori e dei noleggiatori dei film, perché questi sarebbero stati esclusi dal circuito delle sale parrocchiali' (Cesari 1982: 89). In addition, during this post-war era the number of church cinemas increased rapidly, from about 2,500 in 1948 to around 7,000 in 1953 and therefore the level of 'incidenza sugli incassi per certi film arriva a toccare anche il 25%' (Argentieri and Cipriani 1961: 1536).

During its first six years of operation, the CCC examined 1,560 films (Gori 1980: 12). The morality of films was the discriminant value of the positive or negative judgement on the films and

[i] valori immediatamente accettati sono quelli della patria, dell'esaltazione nazionalistica, del sacrificio, della celebrazione religiosa di tipo oleografico e catechistico (Brunetta 1977: 254-270).

These echo what the Legion of Decency had sought to impose over Catholic America, and what Ayn Rand had urged Hollywood producers and directors to do in her precise guidelines: without referring specifically to religion, Rand (1948: 12) had invited American production companies to present the values of Americanism 'strongly and honestly' in order to spread an image where sacrifice, justice and fairness were at the basis of the American nation.

In 1950 the *Rivista del Cinematografo*<sup>11</sup>, the CCC official cinema magazine which will be looked at in Chapter 4, published an article by "G.P.", titled "Sulla buona strada i rapporti cinematografici tra l'Italia e l'America. La censura cattolica in primo piano nell'esportazione dei film" on the role of Catholic censorship in America. The article stated that American films had to be approved by what was termed a *sigillo*, which if not put on a film, could cause the anger of the Catholic organisations. This illustrates the influence that could be exerted by Catholic institutions in the United States. The *RC* suggested that such a model should be introduced in Italy ("G.P.", *RC* 1950: 20). In a letter to Don Albino Galletto, *Consulente Ecclesiastico* of the CCC, Giulio Andreotti,



*Sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri* responsible for the State intervention in the film industry expressed the need to develop 'una coscienza cinematografica cristiana' (Andreotti, *RC* 1952: 4). This illustrates the latter's vision of how State and Church should to work together in order to improve the moral content of cinema production. This aspiration needed to be balanced by an attempt to respect the escapism of the medium. In an attack against Neorealism published in the *RC* (Lalli 1947: 6), Michele Lalli affirmed how cinema must be elevating of the mind but also remain escapist, which Italian and French Neorealism had failed to do and which, of course, was at the time the slogan of the Hollywood industry: already in 1925, a Paramount advertisement encouraged audience to escape in the two hours of a film screening and 'this product, the experience of escape packed into a two-hour story [...] has constantly provided the basis of Hollywood's appeal to its audiences' (Maltby 1995: 36-37). Numerically, French films were the most forbidden by the CCC (Cesari 1982: 91). American films, often criticised for their portrayal of a luxurious lifestyle (Civardi 1940: 50), or for their persistent representation of divorce as an accepted family value (Andreotti 1952: 3), were not in terms of numbers excluded from the church cinemas circuit. The CCC found some American films to be acceptable for

everybody. An examination of these, and their expression of American ideology will be made in Chapter 5.

### 2.3 The Americanisation of Italy and the role of the Vatican: cultural freedom or Catholic colonialism?

When analysing the spreading of American culture abroad, it is worth bearing in mind the distinction made since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century between high culture, which Europeans regarded themselves as the representatives of, and low culture, which was identified by the Europeans with America and as being 'vulgar and primitive' and to be 'avoided by a self-respecting bourgeois' (Berghahn 2001: 87). This division was interrupted in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, when the development of mass production produced a new form of mass culture. Cinema was a prominent expression of this new phenomenon, as tickets were accessible to everybody 'and "bourgeois" dress codes could be ignored' (Berghahn 2001: 87). Moreover, it was the medium that allowed best the spread of 'American-ness': as Neil Renwick states, 'the healthy heterosexual male', 'machismo' and 'patriotic bravery' were all epitomized in classical Hollywood films and all 'reinforced the values of America's hegemonic cultural discourse: the symbiosis of individual and community,

ethical righteousness and selflessness' (Renwick 2000: 38-39).

These issues are not dissimilar from what Pius XII had expressed in *Il film ideale*, especially when looking at the choice of language. Nationalism, sense of community, and morality were not only the manifestations of a certain strand of Americanism but also the celebration of the image of a country that was to be exported abroad.

Elite Europeans had to accept how quickly American culture became widely popular in their own countries, transforming the idea of culture itself and - according to many - 'Americanizing' Europe. A wide literature about the spread of mass culture in America and abroad has developed, from Roland Barthes' relationship with ideology to C.W.E. Bigsby's analysis of the issue of 'cultural uniformity' up to the implication of national identity and cultural imperialism. For many academics, such as Macdonald, mass culture, which in its modern form has become closely identified with America, has often been taken to represent 'a cancerous growth on High Culture' (quoted in Berghahn 2001: 101) and a threat to Europe: in his book on American and Europe cultural relations, Richard Pells states that the term 'Americanization' - a word first recorded in Britain during the 1830s (Pells 1997: 7) - has, since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, often been associated not only

with its pervasiveness but also with a 'sense of danger' to Europe (Pells 1997: 189, 205).

Pommerin's (1995: 96) definition of Americanization as a 'framework' for the study of Western European history is especially relevant when examining the Cold War period. It was an era during which United States foreign policy and American culture were entwined. As McKay wrote, 'Americanization through culture can be seen as part of the Cold War project' (McKay 1997: 26). Washington sought to promote American values internationally. Examples of this effort include: the establishment in 1946 of the Fulbright programme as 'a sort of cultural Marshall Plan for the intellectual reconstruction of the West' (Pells 1993: 74); the formation in 1950 of the Congress for Cultural Freedom - 'an enterprise secretly subsidised by the CIA, designed to check the symptoms of anti-Americanism among and the possible "neutrality" of Europeans in the Cold War' (Pells 1993: 74) but also 'a campaign of peer pressure to persuade intellectuals to dissociate themselves from Communist fronts' (Stonor Saunders 1999: 98); and the creation in 1953 of the United States Information Agency, which was given responsibility of government for propaganda.

The interest that the United States Government had in spreading American culture abroad was not confined to conveying the 'message of Americanism and Democracy to the rest of the world' (speech of Ellis Arnall, President of the Society of Independent Motion Pictures Producers, quoted in Guback 1986: 249-250). While from the 1940s, the State Department had started to consider Hollywood as their best 'ideological ally', which could help 'in promoting democratic ideals' (Pells 1997: 214; Ellwood 2001: 36), by 'exporting movies that reflected favorably on the United States', American culture also provided an effective means of promoting the American way of life, with its accompanying American-made products, in Europe (Pells 1997: 213-214; Ellwood 1991: 345; Saunders 1999: 286-289). This is borne out by the way in which, when the Marshall Plan was set up, the Truman administration put together not only a package of economic aid, also an 'unlimited supply of American movies' (Pells 1997: 217). As Europeans identified American technology with modernity and glamour, the possession of a car or a refrigerator became synonymous with wealth and social status, which became very significant in the attempt to purchase - together with material items - also the American lifestyle (Whitfield 1991: 69; Ellwood 2001: 44). It was in this

context that Victoria de Grazia (1998: 26) analyses the role of American cinema in Europe:

The Hollywood mission now became something more than promoting a material way of life. [...] The hallmark of the free world won by Allied arms was the free movement of goods, cultural and otherwise. Whatever the commodity's nature - and there was no fine distinction between Coca-Cola, expressionist art exhibits and *Readers' Digest* - movement of goods not only facilitated communications among people, but indeed fostered a real form of cultural progress by exposing stagnant localism to the fresh main current of contemporary mass culture. Henceforth, the US industry regarded it as legitimate on cultural as well as economic grounds to master its vast power (which included US government agencies) to challenge states which denied access to their markets.

Central to de Grazia's idea of 'movement of goods' is the role played by contemporary mass culture, which was closely linked to the economic benefit the movement itself could produce. The essence of de Grazia's statement is the identification under the same category of 'products' as diverse as Coca-Cola, art, or even cinema, which reintroduced the question of cultural progress in relation to economic progress. The idea was that material prosperity, which was portrayed in American films, would become part of the European culture by coexisting with the local one and thus become 'everyone's second culture' (de Grazia 1998: 16). If, as David Forgacs (1996: 273) contends, cultural consumption can be used in a broad sense defining the assimilation process of a product and

of the lifestyle represented by it, such can be applied by the cinema, where by watching American films, Italians would 'appropriate' the symbols and images linked to the American lifestyle.

However, as McKay (1997: 40) points out, 'America exported does not equal America', implying how different the reality was from the idea of America created in the minds of many Europeans. When analysing the relationship between American culture and Europe, Richard Pells' (1993) essay on US culture in Europe, tries to underline how this should be seen not as a process of cultural imperialism but rather as a sort of 'cross-fertilisation', in which 'a one-sided imposition on Europe of American values and life-styles' did not effectively occur (Pells 1993: 67). However, Robert Kroes argues that 'any degree of Americanization implied an equal degree of de-Europeanization' (Kroes 1993: 303). Pells' theory is extended by Victor Roudometof and Roland Robertson, who use the term 'glocalization' defining it as:

The simultaneous adaptation of cultural items in different locales via the appropriation and production of local practices and traditions (1998: 187).

When specifically looking at the relationship between American and Italian cultures and at their 'cross-fertilisation'

process, it is to be noted how, especially in the area of cinema, some distinctive aspects of American film production transferred to Italy adapting themselves to 'those local practices and traditions' that Roudometof and Robertson refer to. David Forgacs (1993: 165) deals with it in terms of a clear distinction between Americanization and 'Italian modernization process': 'between American models in themselves and the reinvention and reworking of those models in Italy'.

The identification of the modernization process with 'the consumption of American cultural items' (Victor Roudometof and Roland Robertson 1998: 189) reveals a different aspect when the manner in which local cultures adapted themselves to modernity is examined (See also Hay 1987). In her essay "Invasion and Counterattack", Giuliana Muscio addresses the issue of what Portelli (1993: 131) defines as the 'Italian counterculture', when she states that Italian cinema 'stole' the secrets of different aspects of American film production and promotion, citing the example of 'star portraits and publicity stunts' (Muscio 2000: 126). This 'adapting to modernization and cultural changes' can be investigated further by the application of Roudometof and Robertson's glocalization theory



to the relationship between American cinema and Italian cinema.

The political and economic relationship between the United States and Italy in the immediate post-war period should be borne in mind when seeking to comprehend the role of American culture and the Italian response to it. Until 1949 unemployment, inflation, shortage of food, and poverty were the first issues to be tackled by European Governments, in order to try to achieve the Rooseveltian *'freedom from want'* America used as a slogan in Europe. However, the United States had its own plan behind its desire to distribute economic well-being in Europe. Franklin D. Roosevelt had stated that the major purpose in America's participation in the war was the spread of the four freedoms: speech, religion, freedom from want and from fear. The third freedom meant the establishment of an economic stability that Europe did not have become the main focus for political stabilisation.

La democrazia, la libertà politica, la liberazione dell'individuo non sono scindibili dal benessere, dalle comodità, dal [...] diritto alla felicità del singolo cittadino (Cavallo 1985: 759).

Italy provided the prospect being an ideal partner for such an enterprise, which, following an initial period of dependence

upon America, would provide its citizens with economic prosperity: Americans were in fact described by President Roosevelt's speech on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1944 'not as conquerors but as liberators' (United States. Department of State 1946: 92). Between April 1948 and January 1952 Italy had received '11% of the total pool which represented the third highest amount awarded to the ERP [European Recovery Programme] countries' (Whelan 2003: 313): Durand Smith in the Department of State Bulletin on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1948, clarified that the 'Aid From America' was actually a 'gift' (United States. Department of State. (1948) Department of State Bulletin. Vol. XVIII, n.467: 755), which was in line with a foreign relations policy aimed at depicting itself as 'motivated by philanthropy and disinterested good will in dealing with other people' (Whitfield 1991: 57).

However, if the plan worked, a better economy in Italy - as in the rest of Europe - would mean that American trade with Europe would benefit from it. 'Prosperity Makes You Free' was the slogan of the Marshall Plan. However, this American way of life had to be adapted to different European cultures, which at times were not ready for the process of Americanization. Despite instances of well-established, large-scale manufacturing plants, such as Fiat's car plant and shipyards in Genoa, Italy's overall economy was still so heavily

weighted towards the small enterprise/artisan tradition it was effectively impossible to transform into one that was centred on mass production (Ellwood 1992: 196; Ellwood 2001: 27; Zamagni 1995: 78). The process of 'imitation' of American productivity - as Zamagni termed it - was therefore difficult to apply.

However, the United States still played a crucial role in Italy's post-war reconstruction: the American economic support gave Italy not only the strength to create a 'new future', but also the strength to fight against Leftism that might have developed greater vitality had conditions of economic poverty continuity for longer (Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948: 775). In Italy the use of economic aid was used to influence the configuration of domestic Italian politics (Forsyth 1998) up to the point that the outcome of Italy's economic miracle (1958-1963) has led some historians to include Italy as among the 'most Americanized of all the Western European countries in these years' (Ellwood 1992 : 231).

The theory of the Americanisation of Italy has been extensively examined by scholars like Forgacs and Gundle, who not only state the need of America that Italians had (Gundle 1995: 151), but also question whether Americanisation might

be simply autochthonous trends wrongly attributed to American influence (Forgacs 1993: 159). In his book on the history of the Communist culture, Gundle (1995: 67, 114-115, 147) refers to how American lifestyle was an ever-present phenomenon in the life of Italians, citing examples, such as magazine articles that dealt with the American 'way of life' that served to promote it, beauty contests in which the idea of beauty needed to be Italian and not American, and Italian comic strips that pretended to be American but which still clearly showed an Italian influence. Cases such as these can be analysed in terms of glocalization theory: Pier Paolo D'Attorre describes such instances as 'adattamenti tutt'altro che passivi ai modelli d'oltreoceano' and Cavallo remembers how 'l'America si italianizzava' (D'Attorre 1991: 31; 130). The Americanization process was modified by what Gundle (1986: 569) terms 'le forze cattoliche'. The contradictions that were intrinsic to the relationship between Americanization and Catholicism in Italy emerged as the two forces started to interact. On the one hand, as America had become the expression of modernity, the Catholics had had to find a way to reconcile themselves to it with regard to their own morality. Angelo Ventrone (1991: 142, 154) imputes that the Italian Catholic and political leaders looked to America as the only possible means by which Italy could be modernised.

[...] la Chiesa e buona parte del mondo cattolico si convinsero che fosse possibile comporre progresso e tradizione [...]. Essi continuarono così a progettare la riconquista cristiana della società, attuando un'apertura selettiva alla modernità [...].

On the other hand, there was still - as Wanrooij (1991: 212) calls it - an identification of Americanization with 'un mutamento negativo dell'ordine morale e sociale'. In Italy, Americanization had become synonymous with individual consumerism and this something that was not easy for the Catholic Church to accept (Gundle 1995: 152; Ventrone 1991: 146). The Americans did not embody that 'Christian civilization' endorsed by Pope Pius XII and they brought with them a 'practical materialism, epitomized by Hollywood, which was hardly better than the theoretical materialism found in the Soviet Union' (Hebblethwaite 1995: 68).

The conflicting relationship between a Catholic ethic and a growing consumerism has been analysed by Michael Novak in his book *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1993), where the author investigates this incongruous relation since the Nineteenth Century in order to establish 'the moral effects on families and individuals of the new ethos of the industrialized age' (Novak 1993: 11). When specifically referring to the time here analysed, Novak states that even

from Leo XIII, who did not seem to take any particular position towards the free market, there still was a clear preference of the market economy and private property in comparison to the any form of authoritarianism which would have compromised not only political freedom but also moral values (Novak 1993: 47; see also Whitfield 1991: 91).

Moreover, the interests towards consumerism were not aimless: as the ERP information guaranteed, productivity 'would result in betterment of living conditions, social progress, ability to defend democratic institutions' (Ellwood 1985: 232; see also Hubblethwaite 1995: 70). By looking at productivity from such a perspective, it became possible for the Catholic Church to reconcile a model that it had not been easy for it to accept. By proposing to achieve, amongst the main post-war objectives, 'nations' prosperity', Pius XII seemed to endorse, together with security and freedom, the drive towards productivity that was the primary expression of Americanism itself (*Atti e discorsi di Pio XII* 1947: 157-169). Moreover, many aspects of American morality were taken as an example in Italy. Italian Catholic leaders frequently praised the repressive measures in the United States that were intended to protect the moral rectitude of the American populace: the Television Code, the Legion of Decency, and the Hays Code.

The conflict against Communism had made America 'l'alfiere - e "gendarme" - della società clericale, conservatrice e "contadina" dell'"Italia democristiana" (Cavallo 1985: 785). From 1867 to 1939 the Vatican and the United States had not had direct diplomatic relations. However, a close relationship was established by Roosevelt and Pope Pius XII, when the former sent Myron Taylor as his personal representative to the pontiff. Taylor met the Pope on a weekly basis; this contrasted with the occasional audiences that granted to other diplomats (Di Nolfo 1978: 13).

The importance of this new 'alliance' with the United States was indicated by the high-level nature of the official American delegation that attended the funeral of Pius XII: a 'departure from previous U.S. diplomatic practices', if one considers that at the death of Pope Pius XI in 1939 'the United States did not send a special emissary or delegation to the funeral' (Foreign Relations 1958-1960, Volume VII, p.882). Upon succeeding to the Presidency of the United States, Truman chose to retain Taylor as his Personal Representative in the Vatican - as Galante (1978: 116) affirms - because of his awareness of the strategic importance of the Christian values in the political asset of the post-war period (see also Confessore 1984: 27):

Tra la fine del '45 e i primi mesi del '46 prese sempre più corpo il disegno della *pax americana* e l'acuta sensibilità di Truman per l'aspetto moralistico dei problemi politici lo portò a cogliere con estrema chiarezza l'importanza della copertura dei "principi cristiani" di cui era depositaria la Santa Sede. Il terreno "ideologico" dell'alleanza era così definito almeno nelle linee essenziali: toccava alla DC di De Gasperi, in Italia, trattarne e gestirne gli aspetti pratici.

The main foundation of Western capitalism seemed to coincide with the Roman Catholic strain of Christianity, whose principles would ensure the Truman Doctrine a degree of authority (Galante 1978: 158). In his correspondence with Pius XII, Truman expressed an interest in contributing 'to a consent of all the forces striving for a moral world' (Truman in Department of State Bulletin 1947: 478, Vol. XVII n.427). This was an outstanding position from a country which had seen Catholicism spreading vastly from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which 'during the height of the Cold War [...] discovered how useful the invocation of the highest hosanna could be' (Saunders 1999: 279). However, the special relationship between the Vatican and the American government was not only limited to common ethical principles, but also had distinct political and economic aspects. From the Vatican's point of view, by strengthening its relation with the United States Government, it also had the prospect of intervening more effectively in Italian domestic politics (Carretto 1996: 114; Gatti 1991: 23). From the American



perspective, the relationship presented with a means of bypassing the Italian Government; when, at the war's end, the United States started sending economic aid to Italy, they preferred to do so through the medium of the Vatican and the *Pontificia Commissione Assistenza*: 'consistenti aiuti donati dal governo americano ai cattolici di quel paese [l'Italia] perché li facessero prevenire, tramite i loro canali alla PCA, evitando così di passare attraverso il governo italiano' (Giovagnoli 1978: 1083).

As 'Hollywood cinema was one of the most efficient channels of Americanization' (Muscio 2000: 119), the relationship between the Catholic Church and America played a role in the spread of Americanism through American movies. Gundle (1991: 249) defines the 'other' America that Catholics referred to: one that included Catholic actors and actresses, such as Bing Crosby and Loretta Young, who proved how Hollywood was not always the expression of evil that many people believed it to be. Many film stars, in fact, helped significantly in the process of the modernization of Italy more in their publicity campaigns on popular magazines than in their movie roles: actors portrayed in their beautiful homes with their spouse and children gave a different image of Hollywood lifestyle, which suited the Church and the current Italian

government and was one of the many appeals to Italian audiences of what Dyer (1998: 35) defines the 'fabulousness' of Hollywood.

The images of American actresses in a domestic environment served several functions: to give a positive response to this ideologic tension, to promote consumption in the modern home, and, last but not least, to side with the prevailing political forces after 1948, the Democratic Christians (Muscio 2000: 124).

Some American film stars were used in Christian Democrat political propaganda, almost as evidence that the Hollywood lifestyle was compatible with the dominant ideology (Barbanti 1991: 182). In an interview in relation to the attitude of the Church towards Hollywood stars, the movie actor - and President of the United States Ronald Reagan stated not only that the 'post-war consumer culture provided the foundation for happy marriages and healthy children' but also that actors, who 'settle in one place, build homes, raise their children, attend school and churches and become part of the community' were now somehow approved by the Church (quoted in May 1989: 146). Therefore, the consumer culture did not seem to represent a problem for the Catholic world so as long as the image that came with it defended and promoted Christian values. Who had to supervise and keep under surveillance the moral interests of the people?

A chi - ci domandiamo - spetterà la difesa di questi altissimi interessi dell'uomo; a chi toccherà la vigilanza su questo grande e potente mezzo perché venga sempre usato secondo la sua retta natura? Alla Chiesa e allo Stato, cui per mandato divino e di natura è commessa la cura della salvezza delle anime e del bene comune, appartiene il diritto e il dovere di vigilare perché il film nocivo non sia prodotto, o, se prodotto, non circoli incontrollato, e, qualora circolasse, affinché i singoli, che non volessero subire danno, siano tempestivamente difesi dai suoi negativi influssi (Canals 1961: 23-24).

It was the responsibility of the Church and the Italian State to defend and supervise a strong medium such as cinema, in order to ensure no damage would be done.

This Chapter has not only confirmed that the strong American attempt in terms of containment of Soviet power and the suffocation of the left in any country that expressed suggestion of political change towards that direction was clearly shared by the Vatican. Moreover, it has explored the presence of common themes in their 'cultural' propaganda, by looking at American and the Vatican official primary sources. This has allowed to reveal a strong similarity in the importance of the moral obligation of cinema which both the Vatican and some representatives of the M.P.P.D.A. felt necessary to preserve.

While the third section of the Chapter has dealt with American intervention on Italian cultural matters and the concept of Americanisation, it is still crucial to unveil the attitude of the Italian State towards the relationship between national film industry and America. This will be offered in the next Chapter, while Chapter 4 will address the role of the Church in relation to American and Italian cinema.

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<sup>i</sup> 'While the government is spending [...] millions of dollars for the Voice of America and programs designed to sell Democracy to the rest of the world, our government is leaving unused the most effective medium at its disposal - quality American pictures [...] in carrying the message of Americanism and Democracy to the rest of the world' (Copy of speech, 15 June 1949, quoted in Guback 1986: 250).

<sup>ii</sup> Noam Chomsky presented this opposition in a very 'cinematic' way: 'The basic structure of the argument has the childlike simplicity of a fairy tale. There are two forces in the world, at "opposite poles". In one corner we have absolute evil; in the other sublimity. There can be no compromise between them. The diabolical force, by its very nature, must seek total domination of the world. Therefore it must be overcome, uprooted, and eliminated so that the virtuous champion of all that is good may survive to perform his exalted works' (Chomsky 1991: 10).

<sup>iii</sup> In the same volume, Russell describes the values promoted by the American cinema: 'When we see an American film we know beforehand that virtue will be rewarded, that crime will be shown not to pay, and that the heroine, always faultlessly

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dressed in spite of incredible tribulations, will emerge happily to life-long bliss with the hero' (Russell 1951: 13).

<sup>iv</sup> 'Yet the American film exerts its influence on our thinking and behaviour: by 'sistematically ignoring anything problematic it creates an atmosphere of intellectual indifference' (quoted in Kroes 1996: 23).

<sup>v</sup> 'film politici, di partito, di classe ed altri simili, che con intento propagandistico od anche di lotta servono ad una determinata politica, ad un partito, ad una classe, ad un sistema'.

<sup>vi</sup> From now on CCC.

<sup>vii</sup> From now on RC.

### **Chapter III: The State, cinema legislation and American interests**

This chapter is a study of the principal cinema directives adopted by the Italian government during the period 1945-60 with relation to the American film industry. The purpose of this is to investigate how, and to what extent, the Christian Democrats' cultural policy favoured the interests of the American film industry and reflected the American and Vatican cultural ideologies. It will examine the Dipartimento dello Spettacolo<sup>i</sup> both in the role of financial supporter of national film productions while also acting as the censor of national and international films. This will make possible an assessment of the extent to which the Dipartimento dello Spettacolo<sup>ii</sup> acted in correspondence with a precise strategy that had been formulated by the United States Department of State and the Vatican.

Several academics have examined the Italian cinema legislation of the post-war period. Bizzarri and Solaroli (1958) published a structured analysis of it, while Quaglietti (1980) sought to place it the context of an historical reconstruction of the cinema legislation that stretched from the Fascist

period to the 1980s. Brunetta (1982) used the archive documentation to provide a complete work on post-war Italian cinema. However, as yet no attempt has been made to link Italian film industry legislation of the immediate post war period to the influence of the American government, American film production, and Christian Democrats' cinema policy with regard to the Vatican. This chapter seeks to address the subject.

The argument that follows has five parts. First, a section that examines the role of the Christian Democrats with particular regard to Giulio Andreotti's career as a Christian Democrat representative. He served as a close link between the Italian State and the Vatican. From 31<sup>st</sup> May 1947 until the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1954 he served as the Sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri. This made explicit his very significant influence within the development of the Italian film industry. Andreotti 's role within the Christian Democrat party and successive Christian Democrat governments made him the foremost State figure in post-war Italian cinema. His role needs to be studied with particular attention in order to provide a clear reconstruction of the period's events.

The second part will analyse how the 'unblocking'<sup>iii</sup> policy towards foreign films adopted from 1945 by the Italian government restricted the development of Italian films and enabled American films to flood Italian cinema market. The issue of dubbing will be investigated in this context because it represented an important aspect of cinema legislation and better defined the relationship between American and Italian producers when the law on dubbing was approved.

The third section will deal with the issue of State censorship and its role in the rebuilding of Italian national cinema. The fourth section will look at the nationality of films in relation to the current legislation of the time and it will also examine American and Italian co-productions. The fifth and final part will address the 1951 agreements between Italian and American producers, that enforced the distribution of American films in Italy with the support of the DS<sup>iv</sup> and the Italian film industry. This section will include an investigation into how the agreements affected the development of Italian cinema and substantially helped American production companies to establish a manufacturing presence in Italy.



### 3.1 The Christian Democrats and Giulio Andreotti: their role in the Government, their relationship with the Catholic world and with America.

Italy emerged from the Second World War torn by internal conflict and materially exhausted. The only strong focal point was support for the Catholic Church, which had a wide presence in Italian society. This was to prove an important factor in the development of the Christian Democratic Party and in its total political and governmental hegemony (Parisella 2000: 38-39; D'Attorre 1991: 142; Giovagnoli 1991: 221). During the immediate post-conflict period Italian Catholics sought to distance themselves from the disgraced Fascist regime and to build a new party, whose democracy, as Alcide De Gasperi told Palmiro Togliatti, would be characterised by the epithet 'Christian' (Andreotti 1975: 33). The Christian Democrats sought to create a mass party, an expression of the Resistance, and a strong bulwark to any forms of totalitarianism. The party tried to be inspired by the central principles of Christianity, without exploiting, though, Catholicism as a government tool (De Gasperi 1974: 17-19). This aim was somewhat contradicted by reality. According to Pietro Scoppola, the idea of separating the Catholic Church

from the political arena did not seem to be exactly what most Italian Catholics wanted. In his essay "I cattolici nello sviluppo culturale del secondo dopoguerra: la cultura storico-politica", Scoppola (1975: 41-42) states that the concept of 'ecclesiologia' (authority of the Church) that was fostered by Pope Pius XII, who forcefully condemned all those who wanted to keep the Church away from public life, was supported by most Italian Catholics who were impatient to get back into politics. This attempt to restore a Christian society through the use of the State, which had already started with Pius XI and his alliance with the Fascist regime, became with Pius XII a desire to identify the Christian society with a Catholic party (Parisella 2000: 101). Francesco Malgeri (1987: 8), the first historian to publish a complete work on the history of the Christian Democratic Party, states that 'Pio XII riteneva diritto della Santa sede intervenire e guidare le forze politiche, soprattutto se queste dicevano di ispirarsi ai principi del Cristianesimo. Per il Papa la politica dei cattolici doveva essere prima di tutto al servizio dei valori della Chiesa'. Therefore, it is certain that the difficult task the party had to tackle was the attempt to balance its interest in becoming the expression of Catholic forces while at the same time maintaining its independence and freedom from the influence

of the Catholic Church. However it was De Gasperi himself who felt it necessary for the success of the new party to draw the Church, the Pope, and his close collaborators directly into the political arena, even if this meant withdrawing from the Popular Party principles, which had been the starting point of the Christian Democrats.<sup>y</sup>

It was during this time that the 'second' generation of Christian Democrat leaders started to emerge, first by supporting the 'ex popolari' and then by replacing them in the development of the Catholic Party (Giovagnoli 1991: 187). Agostino Giovagnoli (1991: 187) portrays this second generation as being dominated by strong religious feelings. This was particularly true in the cases of those coming from the Catholic Universities or from the Fuci (Federazione degli universitari cattolici italiani):

*L'origine del loro itinerario politico aveva in genere una connotazione ecclesiastica, rappresentata da un'influenza clericale quando non da un vero e proprio 'mandato' del vescovo, come nel caso di Moro.*

It was amongst this young generation of Catholics belonging to the Fuci that Giulio Andreotti developed his passion for politics. The organisation provided him with the opportunity to come into contact with those who would prove to be his

political colleagues and collaborators, from Adriano Ossicini to Aldo Moro, and it was there that he started his political career in 1940, replacing Aldo Moro, who decided to leave the organization.

As yet, little has been written by academics on Giulio Andreotti: two biographies have provided a superficial analysis of his political life and his role in the Christian Democratic Party but unfortunately both lack depth in their reconstruction of his role in the development of Italian cinema in the post war period. What emerges from these books is principally Andreotti's link with the Vatican: he became known as 'il papalino' or 'la pupilla del Papa' because of the close relationship he managed to develop with Pius XII and for the respect that that Pope came to have for him (Franco 1993: 20, 29). Andreotti was also one of the closest collaborators of Alcide De Gasperi in the crucial years between the end of the war and the establishment of the first Republic in 1946. De Gasperi became Prime Minister in December 1945 and two years later he called Andreotti to a leading role in the Government, the *Sottosegretario di Stato alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*, a role he kept for seven years. In his biography, Massimo Franco (1993: 44) describes the

importance of Andreotti's role in the decisive years of the Italian Republic:

A ventotto anni sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri: un posto di potere, oltre che di prestigio e di vetrina. E che potere. [...] Ma il sottosegretario di Palazzo Chigi godeva ed avrebbe goduto di uno status particolare, era di fatto il braccio destro del capo del governo. [...] Di fatto svolgeva il ruolo di supplente di De Gasperi nelle relazioni internazionali. A lui toccavano i contatti riservati, di fiducia, come si dice. Era l'ambasciatore personale del presidente del Consiglio presso il Vaticano.

This close relationship with the Vatican, together with the warm regard in which the Pope held him, acted as major factor in Andreotti's political career. He kept the pontiff informed about what dangers the Christian Democrats believed that the Communists posed to Italian society, an issue that was of particular concern to the Pope. In the view of Malgeri (1987: 240), 'Andreotti giudicò 'la lotta anticomunista' come l'atto preminente se non esclusivo del partito democristiano, da proseguire anche attraverso alleanze d'ordine tattico'. In an article in the newspaper *Il Popolo* in May 1947, Andreotti stated the three-party alliance between the Christian Democrats, the Communists (Partito Comunista Italiano) and the Socialists (Partito Socialista Italiano) had ended. This development is believed to have stemmed from pressure that

was applied on the Christians Democrats by the American State Department and the Vatican. De Gasperi is believed to have had a meeting with a Vatican representative, who had suggested that his party would not receive any support from the Vatican if it retained any form of working relationship with 'i partiti anticlericali' (Orfei 1975: 46).<sup>vi</sup> Ruggero Orfei (1975: 48) asserts that not only did the Christian Democrat Party represent the interests of the Vatican but also those of America: 'E' dati i rapporti internazionali e dato il 'successo' degasperiano con gli Stati Uniti, la DC diventava esplicitamente il 'partito americano'. The close relationship that existed between the United States and the Christian Democrat party in the immediate post-war period has been the subject of considerable academic scrutiny; De Gasperi's foreign policy, his 1947 journey to the United States to establish the main principles of the alliance with America, and at the effects of the Marshall Plan in Italy have been the subject of extensive study. However, as Angelo Ventrone (1991, 142) affirms, it is no longer possible to see the Christian Democrats as the 'partito dell'America, poiché il partito cattolico dovette conquistarsi nel tempo la fiducia della classe politica americana, vincendo sia le diffidenze di quest'ultima, che le resistenze interne al mondo cattolico stesso'. Many were

suspicious of those in the CD party who opposed the United States government's influence, especially with regard to the military issues. However when faced with the political threat that Communism posed in Italy, a common line was taken by the party. Severino Galante's essay "La scelta americana della DC" argues such. Galante (1978: 113-115) describes how the close relationship between the United States and the CD developed both through attempts to alienate left wing parties from participating in the government alliance and through also seeking to promote American influence in the Mediterranean region. In this context, the pressure exerted by the Vatican proved a decisive factor. What the Pope asked for was 'ordine' and 'anticomunismo', demands that the Americans were willing to endorse (Galante 1978: 114; see also Ventrone 1991: 147). According to Galante (1978: 147), during the immediate post-war years there was a slight shift in the nature of the relationship between the Italian and American governments:

E si può aggiungere, per concludere, che se all'inizio del 1947 ci si poteva legittimamente chiedere quale delle due parti - gli USA o la DC - si servisse maggiormente dell'altra, nella primavera del 1948 la domanda aveva una sola ed inequivocabile risposta: la danza era ormai guidata dagli Stati Uniti: il ruolo dei democristiani nel rapporto diveniva ogni giorno più sbiadito: l'Italia aveva assunto il rango che la DC le aveva conquistato per gli interessi propri e delle forze

che intendeva esprimere: quello di una 'colonia' del disegno imperiale americano.

The close link between the Vatican and America emerges very strongly when looking at the reconstruction of the CD party and the development of its representatives. These two aspects are also relevant to Andreotti's political career, which from the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1947 until the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1954, consisted of a leading role in the Government, as Sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri.

It was in this office, in conjunction with other responsibilities that he exercised, that Andreotti came to exert the foremost role in the reconstruction of Italian cinema in the post-Fascist era. In an official capacity, he supervised cinema legislation, while also overseeing policy areas such as censorship of national and international films and funding of national productions.

For the first time since 1944, it was the Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri which started in 1947 to authorise films to be released in Italian cinemas. Gian Piero Brunetta (1982, 52) ascribes this structural arrangement to Andreotti. As Lorenzo Quaglietti (1980: 50) states: 'Il secondo articolo [of the new law] istituiva 'alle dirette dipendenze della Presidenza del Consiglio un ufficio per la cinematografia' con attribuzioni



che più vaste di così non potrebbero essere'. The Decreto Legge sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana (AC, seduta del 17/3/1947) stated about the tasks entrusted by the Government to the Ufficio per la cinematografia:

Tale ufficio infatti: a) attua le provvidenze stabilite a favore della cinematografia nazionale; b) accerta la nazionalità dei film; c) promuove e cura i rapporti concernenti gli scambi cinematografici con l'estero; d) esercita le attribuzioni demandate allo Stato dalle disposizioni concernenti la vigilanza governativa sulle pellicole cinematografiche; e) esercita la vigilanza sugli enti, le attività e le attribuzioni demandate dalla presente legge e da altri (DI sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana. AC, seduta del 17/3/1947, p. 3).

It was intended clearly that the Sottosegretario allo spettacolo should completely control the character of the film industry of the time, having under his control the Ufficio per la cinematografia. Andreotti shaped the rebirth of the Italian cinema industry, even if, at times, he chose to exercise his influence in a latent manner, which labelled him as 'il grande Invisibile' (Chiarini 1954: 84) and led him at times to be accused of total inertia, rather than a pro-active style (Quaglietti 1980: 57). Libero Bizzarri (1987: 50) states that 'il pupillo dell'Azione cattolica e il prediletto di De Gasperi si guardò bene, del resto, anche dal potenziare l'industria per l'industria: il prodotto di un cinema forte e libero lo

spaventava. Andreotti è stato il più abile e accanito nemico di un cinema italiano nuovo e vitale'. It is very important at this point to establish Andreotti's cinema policy in relation to his ideology and his close links with the Vatican. This aspect will be dealt with in the following paragraphs in the context of the American film industry.

### **3.2 Unblocking foreign films: distributors and exhibitors in a legal battle**

From 1938 until 1945 American films were officially prohibited in Italy by the creation of the Monopolio statale dell'acquisto di film esteri that the Fascist regime issued. Before that time Italy had been flooded with American films and the popular taste for Hollywood's output returned as soon as it was made available again.

Italy represented a major market for Hollywood films (Wagstaff 1995: 96), especially at a time when the 1948 Paramount decree separated the studios' production and distribution from the exhibition. This meant that the

European market assumed a greater importance for the American film production companies than it had previously occupied, as Lev (1993: 18) writes:

This Supreme Court decision made it more difficult for the studios to plan and control all aspects of the American film business and therefore led to a drop in the number of films produced. In the new, uncertain business climate thus created, the export market became increasingly important.

This growing importance of the export market was also reflected in the content of many American films, which were made with the precise intention of pleasing foreign audiences (Guback 1969: 11) (See Chapter 5.3). When considering the success of cinema in Italy, it was important to the American production companies that their films should penetrate and succeed in the Italian market. In fact, in their narrative of the post-war Italian film industry, Solaroli and Bizzarri (1958: 84) state that 'l'Italia è tra i primissimi posti nella scala mondiale per la espansione dell'esercizio cinematografico; ha difatti il più basso rapporto posti cinema-abitanti: un posto cinema per ogni 9 abitanti'.

The American restoration of the European film industry had a series of distinct phases. During the period of the Occupation

the Americans needed to check the working condition of all the equipment; after the war, in the period of 'military government', they would ensure that 'stocks of films available would have been screened'; and once the 'stable national regimes were in place', the American motion picture companies would deal directly with the new governments (Jarvie 1992: 373-374). During this period, thousands of prints were distributed by the Allied Military Government through the Psychological Welfare Branch (which was a *de facto* propaganda military office) (Muscio 1989: 92) and the Film Board, which was 'un'associazione professionale delle case di noleggio il cui scopo sarà quella della tutela collettiva degli interessi di categoria e della rappresentanza legale nei confronti delle autorità e delle altre organizzazioni' (Bizzarri 1979: 41).<sup>vii</sup> The activity of the Board was defined by Bizzarri and Solaroli (1958: 203) as completely and utterly deleterious because by flooding the market with American films without any 'permesso di censura', this hindered national production and prevented it flourishing.

In 1945 the *Commissione temporanea per la cinematografia* was established in Rome. It gathered representatives from the Italian producers, distributors, exhibitors, the American

production companies, as well of officials from the United States and British embassies in the city. In the *Commissione's* sessions it became apparent that the organisations that were represented on it had conflicting interests. Lorenzo Quaglietti (1980: 39) draws attention to the strong alliance between the American production companies and the Italian exhibitors. Pierre Sorlin (1996: 84), in his book on Italian cinema, argues that this relationship derived from the interests of the distributors in the American hits and the desire to satisfy the US government:

The Italian distributors were keen on getting American hits, since there was no other way to fill their lists and since American movies, already paid for thanks to the national market, were cheaper than any others. Similarly, American companies wanted to sell their products and urged the American State Department to back their efforts. Anxious to please Washington, Rome gave way to pressure of Italian distributors.

The relationship between the American production houses and the Italian exhibitors was not always easy and forthright. In October 1945 the A.G.I.S. launched its journal *Bollettino di informazioni*<sup>viii</sup>. The journal reveals that the exhibitors resented those decisions made by the American production companies that they felt went against their own interests. In an open letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 1945, the A.G.I.S. attacked

the system of 'noleggio a percentuale col minimo garantito', enforced by the American picture houses:

Gli Americani tornano tra noi, ma non rinnovano con noi il contratto semplice ed onesto di associazione in partecipazione nell'espletamento dei loro preziosi prodotti; no, diffidano, vogliono garantirsi un utile certo, senza però praticare il prezzo fisso, ma volendo i due vantaggi: la sicurezza dell'utile e l'alea del maggior guadagno; non società con l'esercente, ma sfruttamento antiggiuridico, illogico, immorale.<sup>ix</sup>

These discontented sentiments were to recur on several occasions. The following year the situation had not changed and the system of the 'minimo garantito' was defined as 'barbarian' in another denunciation (1/3/1946) and the procedure not appreciated by the exhibitors.<sup>x</sup> The representatives of the American production companies strongly defended their positions. In a series of letters to the *Bollettino*, directors of Metro Goldwyn Mayer and Fox called for agreement in the mutual interest of both parties.<sup>xi</sup>

These spats occurred within a broader co-operative relationship that existed between the Italian exhibitors and the American production companies, one that had a shared aim of eliminating any law that sought to restrict the import of American films in Italy. Together they lobbied the

Government, which met their demands by issuing the liberal decree (Decreto legislativo Luogotenenziale 678, 5 November 1945). While this development was not welcomed by the Italian producers, who would have preferred protection for their activities, it was welcomed by the American production companies who had in mind a clear political strategy, the economic aspect of which is described as 'dumping' by Paolo Bafile (1986, 75) in his essay "Il 'dumping cinematografico in Italia":

Il concetto di 'dumping' richiama, in economia, quello di una vendita sotto-costo o, comunque, a prezzi particolarmente bassi. Nel commercio internazionale il dumping è una particolare *politica di discriminazione dei prezzi*, che consiste nell'esportare in un certo mercato estero a condizioni così favorevoli per gli importatori locali, da sbarrare ogni possibile concorrenza e da rendere difficile la nascita o l'affermazione di un'industria di produzione nazionale.

The main outcome of the *Commissione per la cinematografia* was the October 1945 total repeal of restrictions on cinema production and distribution. The discussions held at the *Commissione* had been directed by the American companies, who refused any form of quota in the screening of Italian-made films in Italian cinemas. In his essay "L'industria cinematografica italiana nel primo dopoguerra", Claudio Zanchi

(1999, 51) describes the influence that American production companies were able to exert over the Italian film industry at this time:

Il tentativo, già avanzato nel 1945, di stabilire per legge l'obbligo di destinare alla proiezione di film italiani un numero minimo di giornate di spettacolo per ogni sala cinematografica è fallito per la decisa opposizione degli americani che esercitano ancora un peso determinante nelle scelte politiche ed economiche del governo italiano.

The power to enforce certain decisions in the interests of US production companies was effectively in the hands of the Americans who would in 1947 succeed in getting a law (Legge n.379, 16 May 1947) approved, which would protect their economic interests (Brunetta 1982: 50).

Francesco Libonati, the first Sottosegretario di Stato per la stampa, lo spettacolo e il turismo, tried in 1945 to obtain the approval of the Americans on the requirement of screening national films (Quaglietti 1980: 40-43). However, the American production companies felt any such systems might adversely affect their interests in Italy. The exhibitors gave their clear support for the deregulation of foreign film distribution in the country and suggestions from Americans acted as the basis for of the Decreto legislativo



Luogotenenziale (n. 678), which was approved on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1945. The decree established the framework of the Italian cinema industry, creating an environment that the American production companies were able to dominate. In 1961, Lorenzo Favilli (1961: 19) describes the importance of the measure: 'con il decreto sopra citato venne improvvisamente smantellato tutto l'apparato protezionistico fino allora in vigore'. The decree repealed the protective system that the Fascist regime had created for the Italian cinema industry by abrogating all the monopoly laws with regards to: the importation and distribution of foreign films; the obligatory screening of Italian films; and the dubbing law.

The Monopolio-Enic, a decree introduced by the Fascist regime in April 1939 to control the entry into Italy of foreign films, had produced, together with the forced withdrawal of the major American production companies from Italy, a substantial expansion of national production: during the period 1930-1937 the number of films produced annually ranged between 20 and 40, while after 1939 between 60 and 120 were made each year (see table in endnote).<sup>xii</sup> This successful attempt to stimulate national production was certainly an

unrepeatable phenomenon, that was superseded by the invasion of American films and the development of a certain kind of national production (Bizzarri 1987: 48).

Favilli (1961: 20) calls the new Decreto legislativo Luogotenenziale 'la repentina trasformazione della struttura del sistema cinematografico dalla economia diretta dal centro all'economia di mercato libero', perhaps paraphrasing what Libonati had previously suggested in a note discussed at the *Commissione per la cinematografia*: 'una legge che si ispirasse a simili concetti sarebbe oltremodo liberista e favorevole all'industria cinematografica alleata. Si passerebbe da un regime di stretto monopolio e di indiscriminata sovvenzione all'industria nazionale ad un sistema invece che attuerebbe di fatto i principi della libera concorrenza' (quoted in Quaglietti 1980: 41).

In a Parliamentary debate (6/5/1947), the approval of the Decreto legislativo Luogotenenziale was strongly criticised by the MP Olindo Vernocchi, who made known his views on the way American production companies had interfered in the shaping of the decree.<sup>xiii</sup> However, for the exhibitors the situation was far from satisfactory. The Italian exhibitors called on the Italian producers to ensure that their output was of a high

enough quality to compete with of the American production industry. They also requested the Government to raise the number of films needed for the industry to more than 300, which was the average of films shown in 1938, before the beginning of the Fascist monopoly.<sup>xiv</sup> The Government accepted their request:

In seguito alle nostre continue pressioni, il Governo è venuto nella determinazione di accordare alle otto Case Americane l'importazione di 16 films per ciascuna per l'anno in corso, fissando il contingentamento totale di films di provenienza degli Stati Uniti per il 1946 a 140 soggetti. [...] L'A.G.I.S. ha chiesto di portare il contingentamento dei films americani pari a quello concesso nel 1938, cioè: 180 films ("Sblocco film esteri". BI 15/3/46: 1).

Therefore, for the year 1946 eight major American production companies - Metro Goldwyn, Paramount, Warner Brothers, Fox, Columbia, Universal, United Artists and R.K.O. - were each allowed sixteen films. Independent productions were assigned an allowance of 12. This meant that 140 American films could be screened in Italy. This decision, according to a view among the exhibitors, would not compromise the development of the Italian film industry. The *Bollettino di informazioni* reminded, in fact, that

la produzione italiana è sufficientemente protetta dall'accordo stipulato in Roma fra l'ANICA e l'A.G.I.S. per la programmazione di un minimo di 60 giorni all'anno in ogni cinema italiano ed il contingentamento della importazione della produzione estera non solo costituirebbe un doppione della protezione di cui sopra, ma tenderebbe a rendere permanente l'attuale anomala situazione degli altissimi costi di noleggio ("La situazione del mercato dei film". BI 1/4/1946: 1).

This agreement between the Associazione Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche e Affini (ANICA) (the producers' association) and the A.G.I.S. was signed on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 1946, giving the impression that the Italian film industry would enjoy a degree of protection. The A.G.I.S. regarded the agreement as a 'contropartita allo sblocco dei film esteri' and as a response to the formula adopted by the ministries of 'libera importazione, salva la questione valutaria e ferma restando la protezione del film nazionale' ("Lo sblocco dei film esteri". BI 1/5/1946: 1).

However, on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1946 the exhibitors still felt 'in alto mare' with the agreements, because while they felt they had been applying the ANICA-A.G.I.S. arrangement allowing a certain number of national films to be shown, they were still waiting for 'la contropartita nello sblocco dei film esteri' (Lo sblocco dei film esteri. (1/5/1946) *Bollettino di informazioni*).

The exhibitors' association made it clear that if the *Ministero*

*del Commercio estero* and the ANICA would not respect the condition of the free import of foreign films, 'non le sarà più possibile osservare la convenzione per la protezione del film italiano sottoscritta il 10 Gennaio' ("Lo sblocco dei film esteri". BI 1/5/1946: 1).

Quaglietti (1980: 45) describes what the producers and the administrators had done up until then: 'I lavoratori e i produttori concordarono un espediente amministrativo consistente nel ritardare il rilascio ai film americani del "nullaosta" di circolazione'. The exhibitors' threat had its intended effect. In July of the same year the Government told them that their freedom to import foreign films could be exercised without their having to operate under any restraints.<sup>xv</sup>

In March 1947 the approval of Cappa's law (Legge n.379) gave a semblance of protection for national production. It was with the implementation of this new legislation that, according to Quaglietti (1980: 12), the Christian Democrats started to involve themselves in the film industry again. Paolo Cappa was a Christian Democrat member of Parliament, elected for the *Assemblea Costituente*<sup>xvi</sup> as a party representative, who was appointed *Sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri* in July 1946 and kept his position until the arrival of

Giulio Andreotti the following year. He defined himself as a 'laico in materia cinematografica' but he defended his law because it was not the result of an 'improvvisazione di laici'.<sup>xvii</sup>

The law was debated at length by the *Assemblea Costituente*.

The three main features of the measure were: the creation of an office directly dependent from the *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*, that would deal with the film industry; the compulsory screening of Italian films in Italian cinemas; and the increase in funding for film production within Italy. The first of the three was seen by the opposition to the CD as a way of placing the film industry under the direct control of a Christian Democrats nominee.<sup>xviii</sup> Giovanna Grignaffini (1989: 41) affirms that this measure had 'implicazioni di ordine politico-ideologico'. This was proven right when Giulio Andreotti became *Sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri* and exerted his power on Italian cinema, especially following the outcome of the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1948 political elections, which gave the Christian Democrats a strong hold over the Italian Parliament (Grignaffini 1989: 41). Mammarella defined the CD victory in the 1948 election as 'schiacciante', where 'dagli otto milioni circa di voti del '46 essa passava a 12.741.299, pari ad una percentuale del 48,5 del totale dei votanti' (Mammarella 1974: 133).

The aspect of the proposed cinema law on which most of the parliamentary debates focused and the CDs could exert their power was the proposal to increase the funding for national film production. This relegated the crucial aspect of the compulsory screening to a secondary position. Many of the Socialist and Communist MPs were strongly against the further increase of 2% State subsidies to national film production compared to the 10% funding already accepted by the 1945 decree. They argued that this did not happen in any other country and that in Italy such a measure would not help the general economic situation. They termed this policy a form of 'protectionism', which was not being applied to any other national industries.<sup>xxix</sup> They also accused the producers of being the ones behind this article of the law because it would only benefit their sectional interests and not those of the national film industry as a whole.<sup>xxx</sup> This was supported at that time by Ernesto Rossi (1960: 5), who in his *Lo Stato cinematografaro*, accuses the Government of wasting their money without really helping the national film industry.<sup>xxxi</sup> It was the Socialist MP Giambattista Pera, who linked this aspect of the legislation to an attempt from the Christian Democrats to control totally the film industry.<sup>xxxii</sup> In this regard, the

composition of the membership of the *Commissione consultiva* becomes relevant since its members were to vote on Articles 4, 5 and 7, which dealt with funding of artistic films and compulsory screening. It does not come as a surprise that, in a document written by A.G.I.S., several members of the *Commissione consultiva* were also members of the Christian Democrat Party.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Cappa, who was a supporter of the importance of the State funding of national films, allowed himself to be persuaded to endorse a proposal to eliminate the 2% previously proposed.<sup>xxiv</sup> He justified this change of stance by showing how much the main focus remained on keeping the compulsory screening to its minimum: 'io mi sono quindi opposto in passato all'obbligatorietà per un periodo superiore ai sessanta giorni. Per quanto infatti io sia convinto che abbia costituito un errore negare l'aumento del due per cento al contributo alla produzione, ritengo però non sia il caso di compensare questo mancato aumento con una obbligatorietà di programmazione dei film italiani, in quanto un protezionismo di questo genere indurrebbe i produttori italiani ad adagiarsi nella comoda situazione e a non migliorare la loro produzione'.<sup>xxv</sup> Moreover, he was aware that acceptance of the abrogation of the



increase of the subsidy would cause far greater damage to the independent production businesses, rather than the large production companies, which had less need of State funds since they had the scale to work in collaboration with foreign companies.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Cappa also agreed on the extension of compulsory screening from fifteen per term to twenty per term, despite the fact that the majority of the opposition had on several occasions suggested that only by enforcing the screening of at least 100 Italian films a year could the national film industry be helped.<sup>xxvii</sup> The result, eighty films a year, kept the Italian producers relatively happy but was not well accepted by either the American production companies or the Italian exhibitors who felt this legislation threatened or at least compromised the primacy of American films in Italy. The exhibitors defined the new legislation as 'la legge dei nababbi della produzione' and accused the decision of the 80 days compulsory screening by affirming:

E eseguire la legge? E come, se l'attuale produzione edita una quarantina di film all'anno, mentre per coprire gli 80 giorni di programmazione obbligatoria ci vogliono almeno 100 films che tengano lo schermo di domenica? [...] Intanto come faremo capire al giudice penale che la produzione italiana è insufficiente?.<sup>xxviii</sup>

While the long delay in discussing the law could have been a consequence of the pressure exerted by the major American production companies, when Andreotti became Sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, he re-established his relationship with the exhibitors who defined his activity 'coraggiosa, attiva ed intelligentissima'.<sup>xxix</sup> What had Andreotti done to deserve such laudatory words? According to Gian Piero Brunetta (1982: 52), he had allowed the exhibitors to ignore the 80 days compulsory screening Article of the law. Using a Circolare ministeriale dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 1947, Andreotti had transferred control of the cinemas from the police to the DS, thereby creating conditions in which the rules could be transgressed with less worry of there being an adverse reaction from officialdom.<sup>xxx</sup> Quaglietti (1980: 55) details the consequences of this shift:

Negli scaffali di Via Veneto i verbali delle contravvenzioni elevate nei confronti di esercenti inadempienti alla programmazione obbligatoria aumentavano. Si parlò, ad un certo punto, di 6.000 e passa pratiche, per ciascuna delle quali gli uffici preposti avrebbero dovuto disporre accertamenti mai espletati.

Andreotti had demonstrated the power of his Via Veneto office: according to Claudio Zanchi, the accommodation that Andreotti had reached with the exhibitors forced the left

wing parties to fight a 'defensive' battle to try to secure the survival of Italian national cinema (1999: 87-88).<sup>xxxii</sup> The State had exercised its control of the film industry, many of the employees of the public administration came from a CD background and those who did not fit within the plan had to leave (Brunetta 1982: 47). Andreotti and his fellow members of the second generation of Christian Democrat leaders believed in a strong relationship between the political party and the State and at the same time they also had to respond to a clear request from the Catholic world (Giovagnoli 1991: 190).<sup>xxxiii</sup> Andreotti's control over the film industry would become even clearer in December 1949 when a new law was passed which became known as Andreotti's law. This law will be discussed in detail in the next section.

In July 1949 Andreotti approved the reintroduction of the 'leggina' or 'Tassa sul doppiaggio'. Dubbing was central to the relationship between American and Italian producers. After an expensive and unsuccessful attempt to produce American films in different languages, Hollywood tried by 1931 to dub its output in the United States. This too was unsuccessful. Lorenzo Quaglietti (1991: 55) recounts how Hollywood dubbing studios employed Italians who had strong Californian accents.

In October 1933 a law (Regio Decreto Legge 5<sup>th</sup> October 1933, n.1414) was passed in Italy that established that a tax of £2.500.000 (Italian lira) had to be paid on any dubbed film and that films dubbed abroad could not be shown in Italy (Quaglietti 1980: 17). This law was abrogated in October 1945 and by 1946 an industry that dubbed foreign films into Italian had emerged in Italy, as the BI by A.G.I.S. stated:

La rivista di cinema e teatro 'Cine' annuncia che il doppiaggio della produzione americana tornerà ad essere eseguito negli stabilimenti romani. Infatti è solo per ragioni di forza maggiore che i film finora distribuiti dal cessato P.W.B. sono stati tradotti in italiano ad Hollywood, con risultati che pubblico, esercenti e critica non hanno mancato di giustamente vituperare. Quei film giunsero doppiati perché sarebbe stato difficile, per la penuria di pellicola ed altre difficoltà, doppiarli in Italia.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Quaglietti, Bizzarri and Solaroli have studied the events that preceded Andreotti's decision to reintroduce the 'buoni doppiaggio' in July 1949. The trio attribute this decision not to the pressure of the cinema artists, who gathered in Piazza del Popolo in Rome in February 1949, to ask the Government to defend the national film industry. Rather, they believe that the decision was made because of the pressure exerted on the Government by the producers. With this law, those who wanted to import foreign films needed to pay into a special

fund in the *Sezione per il credito cinematografico* at the *Banca nazionale del lavoro* the sum of £2.500.000 (Italian lira). This money was expressly to be used for subsidising national films. This law was defined by Bizzarri and Solaroli (1958: 204) as having been even weaker than the one that had been approved prior to the Second World War. In law the 'buono doppiaggio' was not a tax *per se* but rather a 'forced loan', which was according to Quaglietti (1980: 62), Andreotti's winning point because it meant that the money could be taken back by the company that had paid it in the first place. This was strongly questioned in Parliament by the left wing opposition, concerned at whether foreign companies would be able to release their frozen money. The Communist MPs Bruno Corbi and Giulio Turchi stated that the introduction of the 'buoni doppiaggio' was a means to assist American companies to transfer their Italian-derived money back to the United States.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Ernesto Rossi (1960: 101) accuses the ANICA of using the 'leggina' to take advantage of the 'buoni doppiaggio':

Per speculare sui 'buoni di doppiaggio', l'ANICA (con la collaborazione dei funzionari competenti della Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri e del Ministero del Commercio estero) ha costituito una misteriosissima società ACI (Attività Cinematografiche Italiane). Mi dicono che questa società riesce ad acquistare i buoni a prezzi di vera liquidazione, facendo ottenere in cambio, ai produttori

americani, lo sblocco dei fondi, che hanno congelati in Italia.<sup>xxxv</sup>

It is possible to build on this view to argue that, while Andreotti was trying to please the producers with the 'buoni doppiaggio', at the same time he was able to not upset the American production companies, who could easily get hold of their money, while also managing to keep the exhibitors happy by declaring in an Article of the law (Article 10) that the percentage of national and foreign films shown in Italy would be decided on an annual basis.<sup>xxxvi</sup> This attempt to create a serene atmosphere among all the categories of the film industry was admitted by Andreotti himself in an interview with the author. When asked whether the Government felt the pressure of the US production companies and the Italian exhibitors, Andreotti (2004) states that he managed to create a great collaboration between production, distribution and exhibition which was not only of fundamental importance but also a way to increase the value of national production (see Appendix D for the complete text of the interview).

In the parliamentary debates that accompanied the measure's passage through the *Camera dei Deputati*, the lower parliamentary chamber, it was actively championed by Andreotti. When it was discussed in the Senate, Andreotti

was the subject of hostile criticism with regard to his relationship with American companies. Umberto Terracini, a Communist senator, questioned him about the unblocking of foreign frozen money.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Andreotti's reply throws light on the relationship between American and Italian production companies. He states that

Tutto il ricavato di questi film americani importati deve andare su un conto corrente della Banca d'America e d'Italia e per essere autorizzato lo sblocco occorre il permesso volta per volta del Ministero per il commercio con l'estero. [...] Nelle norme è stabilito che il primo motivo per cui può essere concesso questo sblocco è l'utilizzo in campo cinematografico e questo fa in modo che noi abbiamo alcune case americane (tipica la Columbia) che tutto ciò che incassano dallo sfruttamento dei propri film in Italia lo destinano alla produzione dei film nel nostro paese.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

It is through this form of investment that the Italian production company Film Costellazione was constituted. The company- according to Franco (1993: 51) - was organised by Andreotti in a very CD way: 'La fece dirigere da Mario Melloni, che era ancora democristiano; e accanto a lui mise Diego Fabbri e Turi Vasile, tutti cattolici doc'.

In the interview with the author mentioned above (2004), Andreotti reiterates this concept, giving the example of how the money earned by a film production had to be invested 'nel fare produzione', but at times could also be used 'in opere di

assistenza'. Andreotti gives the example of how, 'per un accordo che fecero i produttori , il grande Collegio Americano del Nord sul Gianicolo fu costruito con denaro della proiezione dei film americani in Italia'. What Andreotti omits to say was that that investment was forced to be made when he discovered an illegal deal between some religious institutes and the American producers in order to transfer the US money back to America.

### **3.3 State censorship and its role in the rebuilding of Italian national cinema**

Andreotti's cinema law, approved on the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1949, created strong centralisation of power that Christian Democrat politicians were able to exercise. This State of affairs was in line with the wishes of the Vatican, which offered Andreotti and his government a clear commandment: 'vigilare e selezionare'. This instruction characterised Andreotti's work as Sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri. He executed a cinema policy that



sought both to respect Catholic morality and to favour the American film production industry (Franco 1993: 50).

Andreotti's law and the parliamentary debates that had accompanied its passage reveal the opposition's principal concerns were with regard to the national film industry. The measure had to be approved urgently since Cappa's law (1947) was due to expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1949. Parliamentary interventions imply that the draft form of the measure was circulated only a short time before it was due to be considered by the legislature: 'Sta di fatto che noi, deputati, sindacalisti e tecnici abbiamo dinanzi a noi pochi giorni per esaminare una legge, che comporta impegni di così grande importanza'.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The first controversial issue raised in the *Camera dei Deputati's* deliberations was the composition of the *Commissione tecnica*, which was given the power of judging the quality of Italian-made films. The measure proposed a 'bonus of 8% of their box-office gross to films of 'artistic quality' - this 'quality' being determined by a board of officials' (Sorlin 1996: 87-88). The opposition took exception to the way in which appeared that the Board's membership would be made up principally of 'funzionari ministeriali' and not of representatives from the artistic world.<sup>xl</sup>

A comparison of Italian and American film industries reveals that the presence of 'funzionari pubblici'-style persons was paralleled in the United States, although in a different way:

È la consapevolezza originaria dell'importanza strategica di questo campo d'affari che ci fa trovare il fratello del presidente William McKinley nel consiglio di amministrazione della Biograph oppure l'ex-ministro delle Poste, William Hays a capo della maggiore associazione di società cinematografiche (Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors Association) e poi ex-governatori, ex-consiglieri della Casa Bianca e via dicendo nel ruolo di dirigenti delle maggiori aziende. Dunque, anche senza alcuna erogazione di fondi questa industria è stata sempre al centro degli interessi nazionali ed internazionali statunitensi. Proprio il contrario che in Italia, dove l'intervento di carattere finanziario da parte dello stato esibisce apparentemente un interesse maggiore, mentre in realtà a questa forma di supino assistenzialismo fa da contraltare la mancanza di una reale politica di incentivazione dell'industria e di difesa degli interessi nazionali del settore (Contaldo and Fanelli 1986: 25-26).

The involvement of State funding in the Italian national film industry was at times characterised by some as being a complete waste of money with regard to production (Rossi 1960: 82-83) and frequently stigmatised as being a form of pure 'assistenzialismo' that did nothing to foster the industry. The launch of the system triggered a blooming into existence of production companies that sought to utilise State subsidies. However, most of these made only one or two films and ultimately did not foster the development of a substantive

industry. During 1946 65 Italian films were made by 48 different production companies, only eight of which made more than one movie. During 1947 46 films were made by 47 production companies and during 1948 the film number was still low (49) and only three production companies made more than one film (Pellizzari 1986: 242-244)<sup>xli</sup>.

Sorlin (1996: 85) states that 'it is not by chance, or because public controllers were inefficient, that redundant firms were supported by the government well into the 50s. These companies were entirely dependent upon official help which enabled the authorities to control them closely and at the same time to satisfy, at least indirectly, the American studios'.

Under the State funding regime established by Andreotti's law (1947, n.379), films could only qualify for a contribution equal to the 10 per cent of the gross revenue from public showings, in the four years following their national premieres', if their scripts had been pre-approved by the Cinema Bureau (Vitti 1996: 98). This system - which is also analysed by Bizzarri and Solaroli (1958: 46) - has been deemed a *de facto* restoration of State policy under the Fascists implemented in 1923 (Argentieri and Cipriani 1961: 1529). The policy was 'an incentive to make films that attracted the domestic public'

(Wagstaff 1998: 75). When passed into the law, the 1947 measure had the effect of reinforcing the government's existing powers of censorship in the process of assessing new Italian films and guiding the domestic production to accord with precise ideological objectives. The nature of the procedure was articulated by Giulio Andreotti in an interview given to Alberto Farassino (1989: 76):

F: La legge del 1947 reintroduceva una sorta di censura preventiva volontaria, cioè la possibilità che i produttori sottomettessero al suo ufficio le sceneggiature dei film che intendevano realizzare per ottenere un primo giudizio di opportunità. Considerava positivamente questa prassi? Fu molto seguita dai produttori? Ricorda casi di film probabilmente importanti (per nome del regista o impegno produttivo) non realizzati perché sconsigliati dal suo ufficio?

A: Essendo in vigore la regola del 'visto' delle commissioni (composte da un magistrato, uno degli interni e uno della Presidenza) era normale che qualcuno andasse prima a chiedere se si presentassero difficoltà, evitando di buttare all'aria cifre non irrilevanti. Nicola De Pirro curava questi contatti, con intelligenza e correttezza assolute. Non credo che vi siano state davvero dissuasioni. Penso che qualche produttore non volendo fare un film si trincerasse dietro gli uffici di via Veneto.<sup>xiii</sup>

This form of 'censura preventiva', introduced in 1947, exercised by the Commissione per la revisione cinematografica at the Ufficio per la cinematografia, did not change when the new cinema law (n.958) was approved two years later (22 December 1949). This precautionary form of censorship, which

remained the same throughout all the 1950s and was only softened by the new legislation approved in 1962, is defined by Vittorio Caldiron (1961: 1517) as 'uno sbarramento indeclinabile, una pesante strozzatura [...] del nostro cinema'. The Commissione per la revisione cinematografica had the power to exclude certain films from being screened, it could determine the nationality of the films, as well as being able to award the 8% artistic quality bonus (Brunetta 1982: 55). In his volume on the Italian film industry Quaglietti (1980: 84) explains how State funding was available for everybody and that it was denied in very few cases - even if Andreotti stated in Parliament that the novelty of the new law was the possibility of raising the quality of the national production by refusing to give the 8% bonus based on artistic quality.<sup>xliii</sup> This can be argued to be as further evidence of how mass film production complied with the guidelines that the government set out for it. If a screenplay was not approved the finished film would not be given the permission to be screened: this was a means by which the government sought to determine the character of film directors' artistic output (Brunetta 1991: 14-15). This aspect of the law was strongly criticised both by Italian exhibitors and by the opposition MPs. The former did not approve of a system in which State funding was partly

determined by a bureaucratic committee and not by the audience. While the latter were of the view that too much power was being placed in the hands of the 'funzionari pubblici', a development that might jeopardise the freedom of the film industry:

Chi farà il film? Il regista? Il produttore? O non lo farà, piuttosto, il funzionario preposto a tale compito? È evidente che il film così prodotto farà piacere al funzionario o alla Commissione.<sup>xliv</sup>

The case of Pietro Germi's film *Il cammino della speranza* (1950), which was denied the State contribution by the Commissione tecnica because it contained some scenes that were considered to be too offensive, can be seen - as Quaglietti (1980: 81) chooses to - as a 'caso significativo [...] per la prima volta oltre a quella della censura si usò l'arma del negato contributo governativo o della sua concessione nella misura inferiore'. This was considered by Chiarini (1954: 57) even more surprising, if one compares this film with the ones which actually received the further 8% for special artistic qualities: *Attanasio cavallo vanesio* (1950) and *Bellezze in motoscooter* (1950). Two years earlier, Germi's *Gioventù perduta* (1948) was temporarily opposed by the Commissione because it presented a pessimistic portrayal of post-war

Italian youngsters and then cut in order to be screened in public cinemas (Cesari 1982: 85; Argentieri and Cipriani 1957: 1341). Mario Mattoli's comedy *Adamo ed Eva* (1950) was blocked by the Commissione di revisione because 'il vescovo di Bergamo aveva protestato contro certe battute a suo modo di vedere irrispettose verso la religione' (Quaglietti 1980: 79)<sup>xlv</sup>. It is important here to remember that this case was quite atypical, not because the State was supporting the entire national production, but because of the way producers operated. If one only looks at the figures - for example - of 1951-52, these are the results:

'dei film spettacolari a lungo metraggio, il *cinque per cento* è stato escluso dalla proiezione obbligatoria, il *quindici per cento* ha ottenuto soltanto il contributo del *dieci per cento*, e l'ottanta per cento ha ottenuto il contributo più *elevato del diciotto per cento*' (L'Attività dell'ANICA 1951-1952: 39).

In comparison, in 1950 only one film was excluded by the government financial support, 19 received the 10% agreed and 69 the 18%; in 1953 the films excluded were 6, those granted the 10% were 37 and those granted the 18% were 80. In four years (1950-1954) out of 425 films produced, 299 were considered excellent for their artistic qualities, 108 good enough to receive the 10% and only 18 'non digeribili nemmeno

da uno stomaco di struzzo' (Chiarini 1954: 52-54). However, this should not be read in such a way that all the films made by Italian producers were supported by the Government, but that - as Andreotti himself states in his interview with Farassino (1989) mentioned above - those producers seeking the approval of the Ufficio di Via Veneto would discuss their scripts beforehand, in order to avoid useless waste of money (Rossi 1960: 116).

The governmental form of censorship needed to take into account - as it did for the case of *Adamo ed Eva* (1950) and of many others - also the opinion of the Catholic establishment and religion was certainly one of the topics which Argentieri and Cipriani (1957: 1343-1345) identify as forbidden on the screen or only acceptable if portrayed with great care and supported by the Article 21 of the Constitution which would forbid 'spettacoli contrari al buon costume' (Barile 1961: 1492). Argentieri and Cipriani (1961: 1535) describe in this way the main forbidden topics:

I tabù, ovverosia gli argomenti che i cineasti non debbono toccare, cominciano ad essere estremamente precisi: non si vogliono film che comunque diano una rappresentazione realistica della situazione sociale italiana ed in particolare delle classi meno abbienti; non debbono essere



rappresentati preti e poliziotti a meno che la loro rappresentazione non serva all'esaltazione della loro attività; si respinge decisamente ogni film sulla guerra - a meno che non si tratti di film di esaltazione della guerra fascista - ed in particolare si ostacolano quelli della guerra partigiana e sulla lotta di Liberazione'.

According to Argentieri and Cipriani, therefore, this censorship which protected the 'buon costume' only seemed to operate in a 'political way': 'politiche sono le sue massime preoccupazioni, politica è la sua 'morale' e politici i suoi obiettivi' (Argentieri and Cipriani 1961: 1535). However, the State censorship was also echoed by a Catholic Church censorship that was implemented by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, whose members were also part of the 'State board of censors, thus bringing about an interlocking of State and private Catholic interests' (Forgacs 1990: 121; see also Caldiron 1961: 1513-1514). It was not a surprise that already in 1946 in an article titled "Il problema morale del cinema e lo Stato" published in *La Rivista del Cinematografo*, the official cinema magazine of the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, Mons. Luigi Civardi clearly explained the role of the State in relation to the film industry:

Gli Stati hanno due compiti generali nei riguardi del cinema: impedire che questo faccia del male e procurare che faccia

del bene. Ciò vuol dire: vietare il cinema immorale e favorire il cinema morale e moralizzatore.

It will be important to analyse specifically what the meaning of moral was for Mons. Civardi, especially when the intervention by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico in terms of censorship seemed much more focused on those issues of 'buon costume' interpreted by Roberto Rossellini (1961) as regarding 'solamente la materia sessuale e gli atti osceni' (quoted in Sanguineti (ed.) 1999: 45). These aspects of 'buon costume' more strictly related to obscenity and sexuality will be analysed in details within the role of Catholic censorship in Chapter 4, 5 and 6.

### **3.4 Film nationality, film production and the role of Italian-American co-productions in relation to Andreotti's 1949 law.**

At the war's end the Italian film production industry was in a ruined condition. The studios were inactive, Cinecittà had been transformed into a refugee camp and all its equipment had been destroyed. The centralization of power carried out

by the government by the 1947 creation of the *Ufficio per la cinematografia* imposed rigid control over national production, funding and censorship. What was the result of this cinema policy? From a quantitative perspective, there was an overall marked rise in the number of national films produced between 1945 and 1955. It is an accepted truism that this was not paralleled by an improvement in the quality of those films; Brunetta (1982: 11-13) concludes that 'il livello qualitativo degrada' and that Italian audiences were given a production, which became an alternative to Neorealism, the message of which was considered by the government to be too dangerous at the time.<sup>xlvi</sup> Spinazzola (1985: 7) terms the domestic production of this era as having been predominantly 'film per il popolo', in contrast with the 'film sul popolo', which by 1950-51 had disappeared from the list of top ten revenue earning films. Emanuela Martini (1986: 103) states that this 'omologazione verso il basso del cinema italiano' derived from a clear strategic policy that sought to encourage a particular type of film production, while hindering another. As Wagstaff (1998: 75-76) affirms, the notion of quality shifted from having a 'cultural' connotation, to being defined in terms of production values, international stars, exotic locations and spectacle.

As a result, Neorealism was edged out of the cultural mainstream by different variations of popular cinema, ones that overall had a strong link with the Catholic tradition:

Intimamente cattolico, retto da un forte senso del peccato e dal convincimento dell'ineluttabile fragilità della natura umana, il film popolare italiano vuole avere un esplicito valore edificante - anche per questo contrapponeendosi alla più riposta e complessa moralità dei neorealisti (Spinazzola 1985: 62).

This edifying vision of the domestic cinema production was one that the Vatican sought to promote and one that Andreotti and the Christian Democrats sought to achieve by using finance as means of trying to foster a particular type of industry, one that would abandon experimental forms and that would adopt safer, more conservative styles that were in line with the Catholic ideology: it needed to be a cinema emptied by 'ogni *virus* polemico e critico' (Chiarini 1954: 47). This vision was openly articulated by Andreotti in a statement that he made to the Senate, during its deliberations of his proposed cinema law: 'Credo che in questo campo, come in tutti, il migliore modo di difenderci da un'influenza negativa sia quello di fare molte pellicole che abbiano un contenuto positivo, perché, sinceramente, io non credo troppo alla censura'.<sup>xlvii</sup> It is fairly clear from his cinema policy that Andreotti did believe

in censorship but in what was defined in the previous part as 'censura preventiva', which his office managed to apply with success.

However, as well as defining the procedures for State funding and censorship, confirming the compulsory screening of Italian films, Andreotti's law also raised the issue of film nationality by assigning it to the *Commission* as one of its duties.<sup>xlviii</sup> This arrangement was presented as a means of protecting the domestic production and increasing the number of Italian films that were made. However, as Wagstaff (1998: 75-76) observes:

For a film to be admitted to screen quotas and to receive State credit and tax rebates, it had only to dress itself up as Italian, even if the money used to produce it came from American profit (blocked in Italy by currency exchange restrictions) earned by Hollywood films distributed in Italy.

Lev (1993: 19-20) defines a co-production as a 'collaboration between producing companies from two or more nations, under terms defined by formal agreements between the countries involved'. However, in Italy, under the regulatory regime created by Andreotti's law, when there was a collaboration between an American and a European company, a formal

agreement was not stipulated and the crucial point of 'accordo bilaterale di produzione' (Bizzarri and Solaroli 1958: 108) did not exist.<sup>xlix</sup> Therefore, the collaboration could not be termed a co-production. American companies sought to benefit 'from the double or triple subsidies of European co-productions, either by working through a European subsidiary or by investing in a film produced by European companies' (Lev 1993: 19-20, 23). Moreover, as Lev (1993: 22) states, as the European market had become more important to the major American production companies, in the wake of the United States Supreme Court's Paramount Decree mentioned above, to attract larger audiences, it became financially more attractive for them to make films that appealed to European audiences, ones that used European stars and that were released with locally targeted publicity.<sup>1</sup> That is why many of the 1950s and 1960s American movies starred European actors and especially actresses, such as Brigitte Bardot, Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, Anna Magnani, and Jeanne Moreau.

This was certainly the case in Italy, where the presence of Americans in the film industry was felt even more strongly in the so called 'produzioni per conto' as Bizzarri (1987: 32-33) explains:

In questa situazione di estrema incertezza, di confusione, di debolezza industriale e commerciale della nostra cinematografia, incomincia il giuoco delle *produzioni per conto*: alcuni produttori italiani, purtroppo a volte fra i più prestigiosi, quelli che avrebbero potuto fare qualcosa di serio per il nostro cinema, si mettono a fare i *producers* per conto delle grandi case americane, realizzando film italiani di nome, americani di fatto. E spesso si tratta di *kolossal*, con i quali gli americani riprendono la loro collaudata politica del rialzo dei costi in loco per mettere in difficoltà la nostra cinematografia. Ricordiamo alcuni di questi film: un ennesimo *Quo Vadis?*, *Elena di Troia*, *Guerra e Pace*, ecc.

The 'produzioni per conto' provided an opportunity to the Americans for investing the 'frozen money' that they could not transfer to the United States (Rossi 1960: 89).<sup>li</sup> However, this had the effect of creating further difficulties for Italian national production. American major production companies were able to pass off their films as coproductions and employ Italian producers as fronts for their own interests (Bizzarri 1987: 33). Additionally, by passing off American films for Italian, the compulsory screening of national films would be affected as well and many American productions would be screened as 'national Italian' products (Rossi 1960: 121).<sup>lii</sup>

### 3.5 The law outside the law: the Italian-American agreements.

The decision of the Italian Government not to establish a legislative regime that provided the domestic film industry with a measure of protection meant that the American industry - subject to the issue of 'frozen capital' - achieved freedom of action in what was to become its principal export market. The one matter on which the Hollywood production companies did not have the scope was that of frozen capital. Despite the high levels of profit that were to be generated in Italy, the major American companies theoretically could not transfer these earnings to the United States. Paradoxically, this was to help the American film industry's domination of its Italian counterpart.

While through the dubbing law, American production companies could already get back some of their profits, there were other ways from which the Italian government seemed to allow US film to benefit. As Rossi (1960: 67) states, 'altri doni vengono distribuiti con l'utilizzo dei 'conti speciali', in cui sono registrati i fondi bloccati dei produttori americani, che - in base alle nostre leggi - non possono esportare più del 15% dei proventi netti ottenuti dai loro film in Italia'. This law was not



always strictly enforced: the *Ministero per il commercio estero* would look at every single case in order to issue a special permit for money to be exported to America and there were several instances in which the unblocking of frozen money was authorized. Members of Parliament raised their concern about this arbitrariness but nothing was done to formulate specific rules to govern the matter.

If such authorization was not forthcoming, the American companies then had to find means of re-investing their money in Italy. Options that were exercised in this respect included: participating in productions and co-productions with Italian companies, purchasing cinemas, and acquiring distribution businesses (Brunetta 1979: 67-68). Sometimes, they used religious institutes and charities as means of channelling funds to the United States (Quaglietti 1980: 98-99).

After a series of visits from representatives in Europe of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), a need for clarification of the film industry relationship between the two countries was felt. As a result, in April 1951 a group of cinema representatives from the central trade association for the Italian industry travelled to New York in order to hold discussions with American producers about such. The trip was described by the BI as a means of trying to regulate the

financial problems that the American majors had in Italy and to establish a better relationship between the two nations' film industries.<sup>liii</sup> The importance of the agreement was reflected by the warm welcome the Italian delegation received at the Radio City Music Hall in New York: "Il trofeo di bandiere, tricolore e stellata, sullo sfondo del gruppo simbolizza nella circostanza l'affratellamento degli animi come conseguenza diretta di un accordo in via di massima raggiunto".<sup>liv</sup> Bizzarri and Solaroli (1958) conducted the first academic analysis of the agreement. They published the text of the documents in their volume on cinema industry. Subsequently, Quaglietti (1980) added some more elements to the story. However, his focus of study is different from theirs. Bizzarri and Solaroli include the agreement as part of a contemporary study of the Italian film industry, with special attention to its relationship to legislation and the role of the State. Whereas, Quaglietti tries to write a history of national film industry from the 1930s to the 1980s.

What has yet gone unstressed in the literature is how the agreement affected the development of Italian cinema, providing as it did, conditions in which American production companies developed production capacity in Italy with the help of the Italian government.

The Italian representatives who went to New York on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1951 were: Eitel Monaco, the president of the ANICA, Renato Gualino, the president of the *Unione nazionale produttori film*, Franco Penotti, the president of the *Unione nazionale distributori film*, and Italo Germini, the president of AGIS. The party did not include any representatives of the Italian Government. This is of particular significance as some of the issues discussed were to be enacted in legislation, legislation that would in some cases even limit the freedom of Parliament to renew specific laws (Brunetta 1982: 16).<sup>iv</sup> The delegation's members did not inform Parliament about their trip and in the parliamentary debates of the years that followed there was never any mention of the agreement.

While theoretically the agreement 'created Italian Film Export (IFE) for the purpose of promoting and distributing Italian pictures in the United States' (Guback 1969: 13), in practice the outcome of the meetings was strongly in favour of the American film industry with very little concession to the Italian one. Quaglietti (1980: 101-102) summarises them very clearly and it is important here to report it fully:

Il governo italiano consentiva il trasferimento in America del 50% degli introiti delle compagnie americane in Italia; la Mpa si impegnavo a versare il 12,50% delle somme predette

trasformate in dollari ad una costituenda società italiana (la futura Ife) avente il compito di diffondere in America il film italiano; la Mpa a impegnava le compagnie aderenti ad utilizzare il 40% degli introiti conseguiti sul mercato italiano e non svincolati in investimenti nella produzione di film italiani e nella distribuzione di essi; il restante 60% in investimenti di altro genere; le compagnie americane consentivano ad autocontingentare le importazioni dei loro film in Italia nella misura di 225 film all'anno [...]; le compagnie americane in Italia avrebbero aderito all'Anica.

The result of these agreements would be very clear in a few years: the Ife would distribute a minimum number of Italian films abroad, this was to prove to be a small fraction of the number of Hollywood films that were flooding Italy. Guback (1969: 80) remembers that while Ife 'did make an effort to penetrate the market, it was never particularly successful in generating big box offices for Italian films. On the contrary, what was defined as 'autocontingentamento' of American films in Italy did not prove to be a means of self-regulation for the cinematic deluge. By the beginning of the 1950s, the American film industry had exhausted its warehoused stock of films that had not been previously been released in Italy, so the number of 220 agreed in New York was more than enough for their production. Moreover, as Paolo Bafile (1986: 81) pronounces in his essay on US 'film dumping' in Italy, the acceptance of the 'autocontingentamento' by the Americans

represented a shrewd policy on their part rather than a bowing before Italian strength.<sup>lvi</sup>

The volume of American films allowed into the country meant that the Italian exhibitors had a steady supply product to mount also because of the use of new technology very much appreciated by Italians.<sup>lvii</sup> The exploitation of new forms of technology by the US film industry is defined by Paolo Bafile as a form of 'indirect dumping' because very often American production companies would provide the exhibitors, free of charge, the first lenses needed to show a film in cinemascope, of which they had the exclusive right (1986: 77).

In an August 1951 article in the *Bollettino di informazioni*, the necessity to open even more the doors to American cinema was clearly stated. It affirmed that the number of cinemas in Italy had increased from 4,000 to 12,000 and that Italy was the American film industry's second most important market after the United States itself.<sup>lviii</sup> Moreover, the New York agreement gave total freedom not only to American films to circulate in Italy but also to what Quaglietti (1980: 103) defines as 'immissione diretta di capitali americani nella produzione italiana'. In this way, the American film industry

came to control its Italian counterpart both in terms of production and distribution.

The ANICA-MPEA agreement was renewed on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1953 and a new agreement came out on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1954, in which the Italian representatives committed themselves not to raise the amount to be spent on dubbed films, while the percentage invested in the Ife was to be diminished gradually until eventually it would cease. However, Eitel Monaco, president of ANICA, felt extremely pleased with the results of the agreement and expressed his satisfaction during a press conference that was held in New York on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1954. He stated that between 1950 and 1954 the number of Italian films that had been made annually had increased from 60 to 140, with an accompanying quadrupling of profit that had been generated from the Italian domestic market (a rise from U.S.\$15,000,000 to U.S.\$60,000,000). Monaco also affirmed that American companies in Italy distributed less films (220 rather than 280) and had increased their net profit from U.S.\$10,000,000 to U.S.\$15,000,000.

The reasons for what Monaco defined a satisfactory result for both the American and Italian film industries was, according to the president of ANICA, to be located mainly in a

'saggia politica dell'ANICA seguita ed apprezzata dal Governo, per la quale l'appoggio all'industria è dato non attraverso restrizioni o gravami a carico del film straniero, ma attraverso agevolazioni creditizie e finanziarie all'industria nazionale. Infatti oggi l'Italia è il solo paese grande produttore che accetta praticamente una illimitata importazione del film americano'.<sup>lix</sup> These words, however, confirm the freedom of action that American films had established in the Italian market and the difficulty - not mentioned here by Monaco - that Italian national films would face in trying to compete with the foreign competition.

The agreement was renewed on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1956 although this was preceded by short disagreement that was sparked off when the Italian government tried to increase the dubbing tax. However, the move was firmly vetoed by Washington.<sup>lx</sup> The Italian producers tried to resurrect the suggestion made that there should be an increase in the compulsory screening of national films, which was quashed by the Italian exhibitors, who again accused the producers of making low quality films - and ironically suggested - together with a compulsory screening - the need of a compulsory attendance from the spectators.<sup>lxi</sup> The agreements renewed in 1956 had very little

changes from the previous ones and were approved again on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1959.

In conclusion, it is important to refer to what Paolo Bafile (1986: 74) states which sums up the general attitude of the Italian government towards the national film industry and clarifies the importance of the American presence:

Questo dominio quasi assoluto delle Case U.S.A. fu esercitato in Italia (come, del resto, in altri Paesi) attraverso una politica commerciale - va riconosciuto sportivamente - assai efficace ed avveduta, che aveva di mira, più ancora che il profitto immediato, il raggiungimento di una posizione 'dominante' nel mercato, che avesse carattere duraturo, se non proprio permanente. [...] In quel periodo la 'politica' delle grandi Case americane nel nostro mercato è forse il solo fenomeno che vale la pena di studiare, essendo stata la 'politica' delle categorie industriali del cinema italiano (produzione e distribuzione) quella di *non avere alcuna politica*. Alla potente ed efficientissima Motion Picture Export Association of America (M.P.E.A.A.) il nostro cinema non contrappose, infatti, nulla di simile o di paragonabile, ma solo discordie, disorganizzazione, contrasti di interessi (basti pensare a quelli, abbastanza ovvii, fra produttori e distributori), rivalità (fra gli stessi produttori) e via dicendo.

This concept of 'non avere alcuna politica' could not be applied to the Christian Democrat government of the day. Andreotti promoted his overall strategic film industry policy through the use of 'delay'. He was tardy in laying proposed legislation before Parliament, when he did finally do so the process of deliberation and approval proved protracted. This use of



inertia with regard to the industry allowed the Christian Democrats to build a strong coalescence of interests with all if the industry's constituent parts - the producers, the distributors, and the exhibitors. At the same time, this exercise of purposeful lethargy, with regard to Italian film legislation, enabled the Christian Democrats both to satisfy many of the interests of American film production companies, while also reflecting the cultural strategy promoted by the Vatican.

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<sup>i</sup> Body responsible for the performance, arts and entertainment.

<sup>ii</sup> From now on DS.

<sup>iii</sup> Unblocking: the possibility foreign films had - after WWII - to be shown again in Italy after the period 1938-1945.

<sup>iv</sup> Dipartimento dello Spettacolo.

<sup>v</sup> CD: Christian Democrats.

<sup>vi</sup> See also Franco, M. (1989: 43) and Parisella, A. (2000: 25).

<sup>vii</sup> See also "Si costituisce il 'Film Board'". (1946). *Bollettino di informazioni* 1/6/1946.

<sup>viii</sup> From now on quoted as BI.

<sup>ix</sup> "Un saluto alle case americane". (BI 1/12/1945: 1). There were three different types of 'noleggio': *noleggio a percentuale*, where the distributor and the exhibitor would share all the profit and all the payments; *noleggio a prezzo fisso*, where the distributor, once he had received his lump sum, would not be involved in the advantages and in the risks of the exhibitor; *noleggio a percentuale con minimo garantito*, where the exhibitor had to guarantee the distributor a fixed minimum profit.

<sup>x</sup> "Le case americane si mettono in cattiva luce". (BI 1/3/1946: 6).

<sup>xi</sup> "Il minimo garantito". (BI 15/3/194: 2); "Ancora del minimo garantito (...ma è l'ultima volta)". (BI 15/3/1946: 2).

<sup>xii</sup>

Year	Film	Year	Film	Year	Film	Year	Film
1931	12	1934	35	1937	32	1940	85
1932	19	1935	21	1938	68	1941	89
1933	34	1936	37	1939	79	1942	117

Quaglietti (1980: 245).

<sup>xiii</sup> 'Ma un bel giorno, dopo una lunga riunione - era sottosegretario, amico Cappa, il tuo predecessore, Arpesani - riuscimmo a mettere insieme un progetto di legge che garantiva l'obbligatorietà per 84 giorni all'anno del film italiano nei cinematografi italiani. Arpesani, d'accordo con noi; gli uffici centrali della cinematografi, concordi. Il giorno dopo vi fu il Consiglio dei Ministri: ebbene, invece della legge preparata dalla Commissione paritetica, venne fuori il decreto del 1945, n. 678, che noi tutti conosciamo, sostanzialmente modificato, perché, da quel decreto, era sparita tutta la parte che si riferiva al contingente dello schermo. Che cosa era avvenuto, onorevoli colleghi? Era avvenuto che nella sera, nella notte, forse, l'ammiraglio Stone aveva presentato una nota particolare del suo Governo per impedire che quella legge, che stabiliva l'obbligatorietà del film italiano sugli schermi italiani fosse approvata dal Governo italiano.' DI sull'ordinamento

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dell'industria cinematografica italiana (AC, seduta del 6/5/1947), p.3598.

<sup>xiv</sup> "Note". (BI 15/11/1945); "Il noleggio a percentuale col minimo garantito". (BI 15/2/1946: 3); "Il mercato dei film". (BI 1/3/1946: 3).

<sup>xv</sup> "Libertà di importazione dei film stranieri". (BI 1/7/1946: 2).

<sup>xvi</sup> An assembly elected on 2 June 1946 and comprised of 556 MPs with the intention of draquing up the Italian Constitution, which was first active on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1948.

<sup>xvii</sup> DI sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana (AC, sedute del 3/5/1947, 6/5/1947), pp. 3493, 3600.

<sup>xviii</sup> In the Parliamentary debates for the DI sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana the Socialist MP Giovanbattista Pera affirms: 'L'altro tentativo è di carattere politico, volendosi con questa legge porre l'arma potente (su questa potenza tutti i settori erano d'accordo) della cinematografia al servizio del partito al potere' (AC, seduta del 3/5/1947), p. 3480; 'Il giuoco delle sovvenzioni è posto alla discrezione di un comitato tecnico che è composto nella sua schiacciante maggioranza di funzionari ministeriali [...] Il loro giudizio sarebbe gravato di sospetto per l'inevitabile inframmettenza politica [...] La cinematografia italiana viene così messa alla mercè del partito al Governo' (AC, seduta del 3/5/1947), p. 3483.

<sup>xix</sup> DI sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana (AC, seduta del 3/5/1947), p. 3481.

<sup>xx</sup> DI sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana (AC, seduta del 3/5/1947), pp. 3482, 3488. We also must remember that Alfredo Proia, CD MP, who was strongly in favour of State funding, was also the President of ANICA.

<sup>xxi</sup> 'Con la legge 16 maggio 1947, n. 379, cominciò la pioggia di miliardi sul cinema nazionale; ma produttori, registi, scrittori, tecnici, lavoratori del cinema non se ne accontentarono'.

<sup>xxii</sup> Pera, G. (1947). "Nostalgie cinematografiche". (BI 1-15/5/1947): 'La progettata legge con il meccanismo delle sovvenzioni e dei premi, collegato a valutazioni di ordine così detto artistico e culturale, permetterà in fatto l'attuazione da parte dei partiti al Potere del controllo politico del cinematografo di infausta memoria'.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Disposizioni sulla cinematografia (1962) (A.G.I.S.); see also Quaglietti 1980: 50.

<sup>xxiv</sup> DI sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana (AC, seduta del 7/5/1947), p. 3660.

- <sup>xxv</sup> DI sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana (AC, seduta del 9/5/1947), p. 3748.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> DI sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana (AC, sedute del 3/5/1947, 7/5/1947), pp. 3485, 3664.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> DI sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana (AC, seduta del 19/4/1947), p. 3076.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> M.V. (1947). "Norme per la proiezione dei film". (BI 15-31/5/1947).
- <sup>xxix</sup> "Chi minaccia la cinematografia italiana?". (BI 15/3/1948: 1).
- <sup>xxx</sup> See also Quaglietti 1980: 52, 55; and Zanchi 1999: 87.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> 'Non e' senza significato, infatti che l'azione parlamentare del PCI e del PSI in quegli anni non rechi la minima traccia di una prospettiva in positivo volta alla richiesta di un potenziamento qualitativo della produzione od ad affrontare il vero nodo del problema, che era, e rimane, quello dell'esercizio'.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> See also Brunetta 1978: 426; Rossi 1960: 22-23; Forgacs 1990: 121.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> "Il doppiaggio dei film". (BI 1/2/1946: 4).
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> DI sulla costituzione di un fondo speciale per il credito cinematografico e disciplina della circolazione dei films esteri parlati in lingua italiana (CdD, seduta del 12/7/1949). Turchi: 'Il disegno di legge prevede la costituzione del fondo, mediante il versamento di 2 milioni e mezzo per ogni film doppiato ed il rilascio di titoli infruttiferi che però, pur essendo infruttiferi, sono trasferibili: normalmente un titolo non fruttifero non dovrebbe invogliare nessuno ad acquistarlo e l'aver inserito nella legge la trasferibilità del titolo apre quanto meno la strada al sospetto che, pur non essendo fruttifero, esso possa egualmente essere appetibile e servire a qualche scopo. Questo dubbio è suffragato dalla notizia, non ufficiale, ma ripetuta, di un accordo che sarebbe intervenuto, prima ancora che la legge sia stata approvata, tra il Ministero del commercio con l'estero e non so quale rappresentanza americana, in virtù del quale accordo coloro (cioè le Case cinematografiche) che, ad un certo momento, si trovassero a possedere dei titoli sarebbero autorizzati a trasferire in America una parte dei crediti attualmente congelati e che costituiscono il provento di operazioni di importazione di film'. p. 110; Corbi: 'Il principio della trasferibilità dei buoni determinerà il concentrarsi di questi buoni nelle mani di pochi. Ora, chi è che va a comprare questi buoni infruttiferi? Possono essere soltanto gli importatori stranieri. Perché? Perché se è vero che sarebbe data questa facoltà agli importatori stranieri, di scongelare

per ogni buono in loro possesso il corrispettivo, essi avrebbero indubbiamente un considerevole interesse: ma allora salta in aria tutto il principio del congelamento'. p. 125.

<sup>xxxv</sup> See also Zanchi 1999: 88.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> *Disposizioni sulla cinematografia* (1962) (AGIS). 'Legge 26 luglio 1949, n. 448 (G.U. n. 173 del 30 Luglio 1949) Art.10: Con decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, previo il parere della Commissione consultiva per la cinematografia, potranno essere determinate annualmente le modalità e le percentuali per il noleggio dei film nazionali e di quelli non nazionali autorizzati a circolare nella versione italiana, a norma delle disposizioni vigenti'. p. 35.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> DI sulla costituzione di un fondo speciale per il credito cinematografico e disciplina della circolazione dei films esteri parlati in lingua italiana (SdR, seduta del 22/7/1956), p. 143.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> DI sulla costituzione di un fondo speciale per il credito cinematografico e disciplina della circolazione dei films esteri parlati in lingua italiana (SdR, seduta del 22/7/1956), p. 144.

<sup>xxxix</sup> DI sulle disposizioni sulla cinematografia (CdD, seduta del 14/12/1949), p. 11; See also Zanchi 1999 and Miccichè 1999: 88.

<sup>xi</sup> DI sulle disposizioni sulla cinematografia (CdD, seduta del 14/12/1949), p. 7.

<sup>xii</sup> The situation had not changed in 1951-1952: a booklet published by ANICA on its activity refers that:

Cinque ditte hanno prodotto quattro film	20 film
Quattro ditte hanno prodotto tre film	12 film
Otto ditte hanno prodotto due film	16 film
Ottanta ditte hanno prodotto un film	80 film
Totale	128 film

*L'Attività dell'ANICA 1951-1952* (1952: 34).

<sup>xlii</sup> In the article "Andreotti al Senato: notevole sviluppo bilancio attivo nuove prospettive" (BI 15/6/1952: 1), Andreotti's position regarding the application of the *censura preventiva* had been already made clear and underlined by the exhibitors: 'Lo Stato - ha dichiarato il sottosegretario - continuerà a seguire e a sostenere questo crescente sviluppo. A proposito della censura, ha quindi rilevato che le Commissioni applicano la Costituzione e le leggi vigenti non infierendo sulla produzione. È ovvio - ha proseguito - che si cerchino anche contatti preventivi, perché è assai doloroso e spesso difficile inibire la circolazione di un film quando questo sia già prodotto, con tutto il meccanismo di cambiali noto ed usuale'.

<sup>xliii</sup> DI sulle disposizioni sulla cinematografia (CdD, seduta del 14/12/1949), p. 12: 'Esiste nella legge una novità importante: la possibilità di escludere dai premi. Fino ad oggi esisteva soltanto la possibilità di escludere dalla programmazione obbligatoria; ma il 10 per cento si dava sempre, per il solo fatto di aver immesso un film nazionale in un circuito nazionale. Questa sanzione dell'esclusione dalla programmazione obbligatoria era una sanzione di natura più che altro morale: perché se il film ha determinati requisiti commerciali troverà sempre degli esercenti che lo proietteranno. Il comitato tecnico ha però opportunamente (mentre cresceva notevolmente il numero dei film prodotti) tirato i freni di questa valutazione; ed ha escluso ben sette film dalla programmazione obbligatoria. [...] Quando il comitato tecnico esclude [...] dalla programmazione obbligatoria, viene meno anche il premio. È assolutamente immorale, infatti, che si facciano dei film senza un minimo di requisiti artistici e tecnici'.

<sup>xliv</sup> DI sulle disposizioni sulla cinematografia (CdD, seduta del 14/12/1949), p. 9; regarding the opposition of the exhibitors see Villa (1950). "Il Presidente della Repubblica ci dà ragione". (BI 1-15/3/1950: 1).

<sup>xlv</sup> For a complete summary of the several cuts imposed on post-war Italian cinema see Argentieri 1999: 252- 268 in Sanguineti (ed.) (1999).

<sup>xlvi</sup> Brunetta (1982: 13) gives us the figures of the expansion of national film production:

1945 (25), 1946 (62), 1947 (67), 1948 (54), 1949 (94), 1950 (104), 1951 (107), 1952 (148), 1953 (161), 1954 (201), 1955 (133), 1956 (105).

<sup>xlvii</sup> DI sulla costituzione di un fondo speciale per il credito cinematografico e disciplina della circolazione dei films esteri parlati in lingua italiana (SdR, seduta del 22/7/1956). p. 150.

<sup>xlviii</sup> *Leggi e decreti* (1949), num. 958, pp. 3125-3126: 'È considerato nazionale agli effetti della presente legge, il film prodotto in versione originale italiana, che sia stato girato, prevalentemente in Italia, da imprese appartenenti a cittadini italiani, e se trattasi di società, quando queste abbiano sede legale in Italia, capitali ed amministratori in prevalenza italiani e svolgano in Italia la maggior parte della loro attività; semprechè concorrano i seguenti requisiti: a) che il soggetto sia di autore italiano, o sia stato ridotto e adattato per la lavorazione in Italia da autore o autori italiani; b) che gli elementi tecnico-artistici (regista, aiuto regista, scenografo,

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musicista, direttore di produzione e fonico) e gli attori principali siano in larga maggioranza italiani; c) che il restante personale tecnico ed esecutivo e dei ruoli artistici minori impiegati nel film, sia almeno per tre quarti italiano; che le maestranze siano interamente italiane per la parte girata in Italia'.

<sup>xlix</sup> Bizzarri and Solaroli 1958: 106-108: 'I film realizzati in coproduzione tra due paesi usufruiscono di tutte le provvidenze governative che ciascun paese riconosce ai propri film nazionali. [...] In linea generale il sistema seguito è la 'produzione gemellare' di due film di coproduzione: ad un film *italo-francese girato in Italia* deve far seguito, entro un determinato periodo, un film - teoricamente prodotto dalle stesse Case - *franco-italiano girato in Francia*. [...] Sono senz'altro da condannare, invece, le pseudocoproduzioni (come quelle italo-americane) fatte con paesi coi quali (come gli USA) non solo *non vige alcun accordo bilaterale di coproduzione* (un film americano-italiano girato negli USA con attori italiani è impensabile) ma nemmeno *vige alcun accordo di pagamento*'.

<sup>i</sup> In an article by Forno (1955) "Dichiarazioni di Guglielmo sui rapporti italo-americani" (BI 17/12/1955: 1) the importance of the relationship between American and Italian producers had been explained by the CD senator Teresio Guglielmoni.

<sup>ii</sup> See also Bizzarri and Solaroli 1958: 127-128.

<sup>iii</sup> In a parliamentary debate, this issue was raised very clearly by the MP Alberto Fogagnolo even in relationship to the ENIC, 'un ente di proprietà dello Stato': ' Si è tentato di portare da parte di una società americana, credo la Fox, 75 milioni nelle attività dell'ENIC, per fare dei film, in collaborazione, il che praticamente voleva dire che nelle sale di proiezione dell'ENIC non sarebbero mai State a disposizione dei film italiani'. (Di sull'ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana, AC, seduta del 6/5/1947). p. 3593.

<sup>liii</sup> "In porto le trattative italo-americane". (BI 15/4/1951: 3).

<sup>liii</sup> "Se son rose...". (BI 15/5/1951: 1).

<sup>lv</sup> See also Solaroli and Bizzarri 1958: 137, 228: accordo 12/4/1951, art. 10.

<sup>lvi</sup> 'Bisogna subito precisare che l'accettazione di tale 'auto-contingentamento' da parte americana costituì, più che un successo 'diplomatico' della cinematografia italiana e dei suoi rappresentanti di allora, un'ennesima prova della saggezza, della lungimiranza e della chiara visione dei propri interessi da parte delle grandi Case USA associate nella MPEAA. Quando, infatti, l'oligopolista non è del tutto digiuno di economia, sa

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bene che *non conviene* nemmeno a lui spingere la propria presenza sul mercato al di là di certi limiti, in quanto il rendimento ad esempio del duecentesimo film esportato non fa aumentare di molto gli incassi *complessivi* dell'intera produzione - nella specie, i film americani cominciano a farsi concorrenza e a 'rubarsi' gli spettatori *anche fra di loro* - e potrebbero coprire a stento (o non coprire neppure) le spese di edizione, doppiaggio, stampa delle copie e lancio pubblicitario: di qui la convenienza a 'fermarsi' ad un certo punto ed ad autolimitare le proprie esportazioni esattamente al numero di film giudicato ottimale e *globalmente* più proficuo. [...] Questa è in sostanza, la 'vera storia' dell'auto-contingentamento USA, spesso esibito come una quasi vittoria della forza di persuasione e dell'abilità contrattuale delle delegazioni industriali italiane'.

<sup>lvii</sup> See Solaroli and Bizzarri (1958: 139-141) for the comparison of figures about the release of Italian films in America and of American films in Italy; Bizzarri (1987: 33): 'E si tratta ormai di film ben selezionati commercialmente e tra di essi molti sono quelli che nello stesso anno e negli anni che seguiranno hanno il successo assicurato dalle nuove tecniche del colore, del grande schermo, del visavision, ecc.'.

<sup>lviii</sup> "Collaborazione". (BI 1-31/8/1951: 3). See also L'attività dell'A.N.I.C.A. 1951-1952: 70.

<sup>lix</sup> "Dichiarazioni di Monaco alla stampa americana". (BI 10/10/1954).

<sup>lx</sup> "Verso la rottura tra ANICA e M.P.A.A.?". (BI 26/11/1955: 1).

<sup>lxi</sup> "Verso la rottura tra ANICA e M.P.A.A.?". (BI 26/11/1955: 1).



## Chapter IV: Endemic propaganda: Catholic production, exhibition and criticism

The central question of this chapter is whether one can identify the existence of a Catholic cinema in post-war Italy and, if there was, what was its relationship with the American film industry. It will start with an examination of 'Catholic' productions, both those directly funded by the Vatican and those that were supported by it indirectly. This will be followed by an analysis of the role of the parish cinemas and the choice of films shown there, which - during the period 1945-60 - represented a third of the national exhibition in terms of seats. This will be done with reference to the part played by the Vatican in the distribution of American films in order both to investigate the use of American cinema to spread moral values and to promote anti-Communist positions. The chapter's latter section will examine the role of the Italian Catholic press with regards to American films, which illuminate some of the nature of relationship between the Catholics and America cinema.

#### 4.1 Exchanging favours: America, the Vatican and film production and distribution

The influence of the Catholic Church on Italian society can be seen in the relationship between the Church and post-war Italian cinema. In his book on the alliance between the Catholic Church and the Christian Democratic Party, Antonio Parisella traces the extensive network that he termed 'la presenza cattolica nella società italiana' (Parisella 2000: 38-39). This was composed of organisations that, according to Pius XII, had to be strictly controlled by the church hierarchy, as 'the Catholics were an army to be disciplined and directed into every corner of Italian society' (Ginsborg 1990: 170). Therefore, there were links between the Vatican and the diverse forms of Catholic association that were to be found across Italian society. The Azione Cattolica Italiana, for instance, whose members increased from 1,772,265 in 1946 to 2,784,734 in 1959 (Marzano 1996: 103), organised different religious and social activities. These 'included prayer meetings, Bible classes, summer camps and sporting associations', with a particular attention being given towards 'the defence of the family and the public morality' (Ginsborg

1990: 169). In the post-war period, 'la Mostra di Venezia e il Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia - così come d'altronde le associazioni di categoria dei produttori e dei distributori - sono saldamente in mano cattolica' (Cereda 1974: 136; see also Baragli in *La civiltà cattolica* 1956 Vol. IV quad. 2551: 51). Other examples of the widespread form of Catholic associationism are the Associazioni cristiane dei lavoratori italiani (Acli), which brought together Catholic workers both from the industry and the agricultural sector; the Coldiretti, which represented by 1956 over 1.600.000 families of peasant proprietors; and Comunione e liberazione (CL), an association born in 1950s which over the years has achieved a very prominent role in Italian society (Ginsborg 1990: 171; Marzano 1996: 184). These organisations, together with many other smaller Catholic groups, extended over large ranges of national cultural, economic, and social life in Italy, covering areas as diverse as education, charity, female movements, and the media.

Catholic intervention in the film industry was not unparalleled. The Italian Communist Party was - as Argentieri (2001: 74) states - 'the first political party in Italy to set up a film division'. This made documentaries, appointed film critics, had

cine-club movements and ran a film production and distribution company. However, the Vatican had understood well from much earlier on the importance of the cinematic medium, as Roberto Busti remembers (2003: 15):

Nel 1904 (non erano passati neppure dieci anni dalla prima proiezione avvenuta a Parigi, in Boulevard des Capucines e si può bene immaginare la precarietà tecnologica dell'invenzione!) un sacerdote milanese scrive una lettera all'Arcivescovo Andrea Carlo Ferrari, per sottoporre alla sua attenzione pastorale il fatto che *il cinema avrà da subito un forte ascendente sulla gioventù milanese.*

It is though only in the immediate period after the Second World War that the Catholic Church became entirely involved in the film industry mirroring, if not excelling, what the Communist Party had tried to do in order to gain control of the cinematic world. The Belgium Jesuit Félix A. Morlion, who during this time was heavily involved in Italian cinema - both by contributing to the creation of the Cineforum (see Chapter 4.2) and in the actual collaboration with film directors, such as Roberto Rossellini - in an article published in 1954 in *La Rivista del Cinematografo* (published by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico) clarified the Catholic awareness of the power of cinema and the battle to fight Communists in the film industry: Morlion's article (RC 1954: 5) not only listed all the

Communist cinema initiatives - such as the creation of the 'cinebrigade di informazione', which had the responsibility of strengthening the party by distributing in big and small centres audiovisual propaganda documents - but also insisted on the spreading of those Christian values through the medium of cinema, as "le forze cristiane hanno preso coscienza dell'eccezionale potenzialità psicologica del film nell'attirare le masse' (Morlion 1954: 7). Gian Piero Brunetta (1978: 431) confirms how the cinema was regarded as means of hegemonizing mass entertainment and a plan to this effect was created that addressed different areas of the film industry (see also Gundle 1995: 107). In his *La Chiesa e il cinema* (1961), which was published by the Catholic Ente dello Spettacolo, Mons. Salvatore Canals gives a distinct picture of the Vatican presence in the industry:

[...] la Chiesa ha dettato e compilato i principi e gli indirizzi per una organizzazione ecclesiastica nel settore del cinematografo: questa organizzazione va dalla creazione di un organo tecnico e amministrativo della Santa Sede per lo studio dei problemi delle tecniche audio-visive attinenti alla fede e alla morale (la Pontificia Commissione per la Cinematografia, Radio e Televisione), alla promozione, ad opera dell'Episcopato, dei Centri Cattolici Cinematografici Nazionali, e all'organizzazione - a cura dei predetti Centri - delle sale cinematografiche dipendenti dall'Autorità Ecclesiastica onde poter offrire ai fedeli, soprattutto ai giovani, spettacoli sani ed educativi in un ambiente sicuro (Canals 1961: 33).

Canals's words reflect precisely what Pius XI had requested in his *Vigilanti Cura* (1936: 7): a carefully organised structure that was able to operate a strict guidance over the film industry. This needed to be achieved by not only controlling the distribution of good quality films in parish cinemas, but also directing the production industry towards films which would reflect Catholic principles, given the high number of parish cinemas available. Distribution and production were, therefore, carefully monitored by the Vatican throughout a scrupulously planned network that had contacts in every area of the film industry.

#### **4.1a Catholic production**

This ambitious plan of gaining control over the film industry, however, did not seem to succeed as well as had been hoped when one concentrates on what was often defined as Catholic production. In order to understand fully the Vatican's attempt to become involved in the production, one has to consider the negative judgements by the Catholic establishment towards a high percentage of post war films: in his volume *La Chiesa e il cinema*, Mons. Galletto (1955: 15-16) defined post-war production as commercial films where sex and violence replace

morality and respect for God. This strong denunciation of post-war production not only will allow us to comprehend better the concern of the Vatican on the morality of the cinema, but explains the consequent interest in the possibility of intervening in the production itself. In a document found at the Archivio ACEC, the Società Salesiana had already made a strong accusation of the current situation:

[...] allora dobbiamo solidamente boicottare ogni spettacolo che piace al mondo e che è scuola di peccato, che esalta il vizio, non tiene conto di Dio e dei suoi comandamenti, mescola la procacità della moda del comportamento anche alle vite dei santi, insegna a rubare, a uccidere, a far violenza d'ogni specie, ad amoreggiare, a profanare il sacrario familiare, a far della vita un'avventura galante e via via di questo passo, che è il passo del 90 per cento dei films (Atti del Capitolo Superiore della Società Salesiana - Gennaio - Febbraio 1953: 3).

If, therefore, 90% of the production is to be considered immoral and unsuitable for screening in parish cinemas, one can understand the pressure from the Vatican towards a possible intervention in the creation of a proper Catholic production. The Catholic commitment towards a production which could reflect Christian values is expressed through the creation of Catholic production companies, such as Orbis, Universalialia and Film Costellazione, and the attempt to prompt Catholic scriptwriters to produce valuable material to be screened<sup>1</sup>.

This intervention - widely discussed in 1940s and 1950s on the pages of the Catholic press up to the point that *La Rivista del Cinematografo* received a wide selection of what were defined as Catholic scripts as a consequence of the animated debate - was defined as 'limited' (Gori 1981: 13), leaving commentators to draw the conclusion that a Catholic cinema as such did not really exist (Gori 1981: 15; Chiarini 1954: 39). In 2001, the Jesuit Nazareno Taddei (2002: 13), speaking at a Conference called *Benedetta celluloid* on the role of Catholic cinema, reminds the audience of how in the immediate post-war period he had often opposed the idea of creating a Catholic production as such, as it had to compete with other forms of cinemas, especially the American one, which for the need of having a global distribution, 'non toccava mai i veri problemi di fondo religiosi, cristiani e cattolici'. Taddei believes that the problem of morality in cinema could be solved more by educating Catholic audiences rather than operating on the production, which was strongly supported by the Vatican and by the CCC.

However, it is worth mentioning the attempts made in order to create a Catholic production. The production company Orbis



was set up in 1945 by the CCC. It made films such as Vittorio De Sica's *La porta del cielo* (1944), Pietro Germi's *Il testimone* (1945), Alessandro Blasetti's *Un giorno nella vita* (1946) praised by *La Rivista del Cinematografo* as an extraordinary portrayal of monastic life ("P.S.", RC 1946: 13), and Romolo Marcellini's *Guerra alla guerra* (1946) which was a celebration of peace against the cruelty of war (Vasile, RC 1947: 8-9), together with thirty short films which were intended to be made for Catholic schools around the world, some of which unfortunately not completed. Amongst these, the short film *Chi è Dio?*, which represented the example to be followed, was written by Diego Fabbri, 'commediografo cattolico' (D'Amico 1996: 103), Mario Soldati and Cesare Zavattini and awarded il Primo Premio del Festival di Salerno.

In 1946 a group of Catholics headed by the Sicilian architect Salvo D'Angelo founded Universalia, which produced - amongst others - Mario Soldati's *Daniele Cortis* (1947), Alessandro Blasetti's *Fabiola* (1948), which had an extraordinary box office intake of 572 million lira, and *Prima Comunione* (1950), and Luchino Visconti's *La terra trema* (1948)<sup>ii</sup>. Despite his strong affiliations with the Vatican (his company was based in Castel Sant'Angelo and the artistic director was Dalla Torre, also editor of the official Catholic newspaper *L'Osservatore*

Romano) Salvo D'Angelo was defined as a 'scheggia impazzita rispetto alle direttive del CCC' (*Benedetta celluloid!* 2002: 113), mainly because of the type of films he decided to produce in the four years (1946-1950) of the life of Universalia. It is difficult, in fact, to define some of these films as Catholic: some of them either were not classified positively by the CCC or had political implications not favoured by the Vatican (*Benedetta celluloid!* 2002: 113). Amongst the films not praised by the CCC and classified only for adults were *Daniele Cortis* (1947), *Guarany* (1948), *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei* (1950), and *Fabiola* (1948), some scenes of which were defined by Mons. Albino Galletto (RC 1949: 6) - Presidente della Commissione di Revisione - 'moralmente inammissibili'. Visconti's *La terra trema* (1948), despite being praised for its artistic qualities, was classified again only for adults mainly for its political affiliation with the Communists and for its compromise between Catholic and Communist funds. The film was - in fact - initially financed by the Communist Party but just before the PCI's defeat at the 1948 general elections, Visconti was forced to accept new funds by Universalia, in order to be able to complete his film (Zeffirelli quoted in *Benedetta Celluloide!* 2002: 118). However, it is worth remembering here that the films produced by Orbis and

Universalialia were also the first films in the distribution list of Columbia or Warner Bros, which apparently - in order to please the Vatican - were quite happy to distribute the Catholic produced films in America (Quaglietti 1991: 71).

Apart from these two companies, expressly Catholic motivated film production was limited to the works of smaller Catholic groups and the commercial producers' involvement in educational films: in the first regional conference of ACEC (Associazione Cattolica Esercenti Cinema) in Milan, Titanus is thanked for the effort 'nel campo della cinematografia per la gioventù' (1956: *Gli esercenti cattolici lombardi prendono coscienza della loro forza - Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore 18-20 giugno 1956. p. 15. Archivio ACEC*). Small production companies such as Film Costellazione - which was started with the help of Azione Cattolica Italiana and the funds from the Americans (Mereghetti 2003: 33) - San Paolo Film and Golden Star either had a short life or did not make much of a contribution to Catholic production. Moreover, as Ciaccio states, some of the so-called 'Catholic' production companies did not entirely respond to that 'spirito cristiano' which was needed to be defined as such (Ciaccio 1962: 135). It was, in fact, often emphasized by Catholic commentators that

it was not enough to present biblical themes or general religious issues to classify a film as Catholic. Diego Fabbri (RC 1946: 2) himself referred to the 'cinematografia spirituale' as 'un'etichetta generosamente comprensiva': according to Fabbri, this kind of cinema should embrace a deep spiritual awareness together with an artistic creativity which would be able to express 'la universalità, che significa umanità, concretezza, esemplarità, popolarità'. This is what three years earlier Remo Branca (RC 1943: 3) had probably referred to when discussing the development of a Catholic cinema: not just a religious cinema, but a cinema 'che tratta qualsiasi soggetto ispirandosi ai principi della morale cattolica'. These elements seemed to be often absent in the Catholic production analysed above.

However, the first attempt to create a proper Catholic film was made in 1942 by the CCC and the ACI with *Pastor Angelicus*, a documentary on the life of Pius XII, which was defined by Luigi Gedda (President of the CCC) as the first real significant Catholic commitment in the film industry and by Mons. Civardi as 'un mezzo di propaganda cattolica' for its spiritual message (RC 1943: 27). The film was judged by the CCC as superior for its artistic qualities and for its educational and spiritual aims (*Segnalazioni cinematografiche* XII, Jan

1943) and generally acclaimed by film critics both in Italy (Vanzin, RC 1942: 33 and Moresco, RC 1942: 128-129) and abroad (see "Luci di amore nel mondo", RC 1942: 130-131; "Il Pastor Angelicus in America", RC 1947: 5 and "Pastor Angelicus a Parigi", RC 1948: 3).

The film 'gode di particolari privilegi e di una penetrazione capillare in tutto l'esercizio della penisola' and had a very strong support in the distribution process by being imposed on all the parish and commercial cinemas (Gedda, RC 1956: 4; Brunetta 1981: 30). Moreover, the film, distributed by Enic, was accompanied by a letter written by Enic's director Armando Roncaglia and by Gedda himself, which prevented the screening of the film together with any other film, as it needed to be shown in the right spiritual atmosphere (Chinnici 2003: 89). It is also worth bearing what Carlo Falconi, in his book on the Church and on Catholic organisations, writes about the political aim of *Pastor Angelicus* when in 1948 'l'Italia meridionale fu cauterizzata dal 'microbo comunista' per mezzo di decine di autocinema spedite dai comitati civici, persino nei paesi dove mai era arrivato il cinematografo, a proiettare *Pastor Angelicus*' (Falconi 1956: 268). This statement not only stresses the control the Church could exert over the film

medium but also elicits the Vatican's post-war appreciation of the potential of cinema for mass manipulation.

#### 4.1b Catholic distribution and exhibition

Despite various attempts to provide a production, which could fight against the immorality of commercial cinema, the Catholics had another idea in mind, which Bonetti had already assessed in the early 1960s:

Non potendo contare in modo decisivo sulla sensibilità degli spettatori cattolici, impossibilitati a creare un prodotto filmico corrispondente ai principi della morale cristiana, restava aperta un'altra strada: riuscire ad esercitare un'influenza positiva sui produttori dei films. Questo era possibile in un solo modo, creando un mercato in cui il prodotto avesse potuto trovare un assorbimento (Bonetti 1962: 77).

It came to be perceived as critical to develop an extensive network of parish cinemas that could provide a market that could prove the difference between success and failure for producers whom the Church regarded as sympathetic. While from a religious point of view, they represented a means of spreading the evangelical message as 'i cinema ecclesiastici [...] possono vincere in efficacia apostolica i pulpiti delle chiese' (*Sala cinematografica impegno pastorale* 1966: 6; Baragli, *La civiltà cattolica* 1956: 35), from a pure commercial

perspective, they appeared to be the only effective means of influencing production. This distribution system, with its vast network of parish cinemas provided the Vatican with a means of exerting pressure on the Italian film production industry. The number of parish cinemas rose from 450 in 1938 to around 7,000 in 1953 (which meant more than a million seats), when the total number of cinemas (commercial and parish ones) was 17.000 and the total number of seats over five million (Argentieri and Cipriani 1961: 1536; Baragli, *La civiltà cattolica* 1956: 31). The figures are even more significant when one bears in mind the fact that in some cases - especially in small villages where commercial cinemas were not available - parish cinemas could act as pioneer, 'precedendo iniziative industriali' ("Tendenze dell'esercizio cinematografico cattolico", *RC* 1952: 8).

How was this growth achieved? The Vatican played a part in the development of the parish cinemas. However, the Italian government with the law 29-12-1949, n. 958 also helped in the construction or reconstruction of churches, which often had a cinema attached to them. Despite no distinction being made between commercial and parish cinemas, in the immediate post-war period priority was given to primary need buildings, which commercial cinemas could certainly not be defined.

Parish cinemas, on the other hand, belonged automatically to the churches to which they were attached and their construction was easier to be authorised (Quaglietti 1981: 43-44). Moreover the law 29-12-1949, n. 958 did not allow new cinemas to be built without a 'nulla-osta ministeriale', which included a fixed ratio of seats for number of people in each village or town (one seat for every 20-30 people). This regulation would still omit a clear distinction between parish and commercial cinemas, for which the exhibitors Association AGIS felt the need:

L'esercizio di quest'ultima licenza [parrocchiale] sia subordinato all'osservanza di precise norme su di essa trascritte, che contengano l'attività delle sale parrocchiali entro gli argini dei criteri che ne hanno ispirata la concessione non permettendo l'inganno quindi di un cinema che, per ottenere una licenza, si camuffa da sala parrocchiale e si apre ed agisce poi come sala industriale, nè la speculazione di chi, dietro la facciata della canonica, espleta un esercizio di pura concorrenza a quello industriale ("Vecchi e nuovi problemi dell'esercizio". BI 15-31/1/1950: 1).

Mons. Albino Galletto (RC 1950: 3) had tried to explain the presence of non religious people in the management of many parish cinemas (at least the ones in bigger towns and cities and therefore more appealing from a financial point of view) as way to avoid financial debts because of the lack of morality of



films available. In fact, 'il programmatista' (the non religious person in charge of a parish cinema) 'preoccupato unicamente del lato finanziario, fa proiettare nella sala cattolica delle pellicole non del tutto ortodosse, limitandosi (e non sempre) a qualche taglio, onde salvare, unicamente le apparenze' (Sale cinematografiche cattoliche - Documenti ACEC 1953: 102).

However, the result of the dispute, which came as a ministerial circular (n. 9419/A.G. 37 - 23 Maggio 1950) and was well received by the national exhibitors, requested the total responsibility of the priest to apply for a permission and the refusal to give control of the parish cinema to a private organisation or people external to the parish, the limitation of publicity only in the area of the church and the screening of films only on holidays and three normal days per week, according to the approval of the CCC ("Conclusione di un annoso problema". BI 15-31/3/50: 1; "Definita la disciplina per l'esercizio di sale cinematografiche parrocchiali". BI 1-15/6/1950: 1).

Moreover, on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1951 the Interior Ministry (Direzione Generale della Pubblica Sicurezza) distributed a circular that clarified the role of the parish cinemas as 'locali

in cui il parroco svolge la propria attività di apostolato religioso, di educazione e ricreazione' and the use of cinema represented 'uno dei mezzi, fra i più idonei, per conseguire quelle finalità spirituali che sono proprie dell'istituzione' (Ministero dell'Interno - Direzione Generale della Pubblica Sicurezza - Divisione Polizia. Prot.N.10.15396/135000.1: 11 Aprile 1951. Archivio ACEC). The criteria to allow the construction of parish cinemas were then established by a Commissione Consultiva per la Cinematografia at the Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, which included Giulio Andreotti together with exhibitors, distributors, and film journalists.

The clarification, however, if it was not beneficial for industrial cinemas, allowed parish cinemas to flourish. In fact, Monsignor Alfonso Bonetti (1962: 81), key figure of the Associazione Cattolica Esercenti Cinema (ACEC), compared the figures of the parish and commercial cinemas being built after these guidelines were released, admitting a substantial increase of parish cinemas:

Years	Sale a licenza commerciale	Sale a licenza parrocchiale
1950	671	596
1951	729	594
1952	553	555
1953	397	458
1954	654	539
1955	423	460
1956	398	235
1957	270	251
1958	186	133
1959	139	172
1960	339	191

Mons. Francesco Dalla Zuanna, president of ACEC, in an article published by RC in 1956 titled "L'esercizio cattolico", admitted that the substantial increase of parish cinemas was only possibile thanks to the intervention of the Presidente del Consiglio, by defining the distinction between commercial and parish cinemas, which allowed the parish cinemas to have their own defined characteristics and therefore expand on their own strength.

When looking at these strict criteria, one can easily affirm that the guidelines were very loose, because of the type of constraints they imposed: if one simply looks at the limitation of publicity to the area of the church, it is easy to understand that in many small towns and villages the churches were in central positions which assisted the effectiveness of their advertising activities. Moreover, the criteria set by the Government were not often strictly followed as one expected. In his book on the relationship between the Government and the cinema, Ernesto Rossi (1960: 124) states that:

I cinema parrocchiali sono aziende commerciali come tutte le altre; proiettano film di tutti i generi; fanno la réclame sui giornali e con i manifesti murali; sono spesso gestiti da laici per conto dei parroci; ma ottengono senza alcuna difficoltà le licenze d'esercizio al di là del rapporto limite dei posti in confronto degli abitanti (licenze che gli altri imprenditori riescono ad avere soltanto dopo aver unte abbondantemente le ruote della direzione generale dello Spettacolo), godono di notevoli riduzioni ed esenzioni fiscali e di condizioni creditizie di particolare favore.

This denunciation seems to identify a coalescence of interests between the Government and the Vatican in an attempt to favour Catholic cinema (Brunetta 1981: 32-33). An article in *Paese Sera* (3 May 1952), defined by RC - which summarised it - as 'giornale comunista' ('Le sale parrocchiali e l'industria

proletaria di *Paese Serd'*, RC 1952), strongly accused the biased attitude of the Government in favouring parish cinemas by not forcing them to comply to the regulations imposed. The breach of the rules denounced in the articles includes the decision to use some parish cinemas in Rome also for shows by 'compagnie d'avanspettacolo', as well as the number of seats per cinemas allowed, which should not exceed 600, and which in parish cinemas goes over 1,600. This attitude of ignoring the imposed regulations is also proved when any stricter limitation was put and the Government would intervene promptly: when the Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri found out that 'in alcune località viene imposto ai cinema parrocchiali di limitare l'ingresso agli spettacoli soli iscritti alle organizzazioni cattoliche', immediately produced a circular which clarified that 'per l'afflusso degli spettatori nei cinema parrocchiali non è prevista alcuna limitazione del genere' (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri - Direzione Generale per lo Spettacolo - Divisione Revisione Esercizio e Formato Ridotto. Prot.n. 6184/Ag.37: 3 Maggio 1949. Archivio ACEC).

When it became apparent that the number of parish cinemas was increasing markedly, it was felt by the Vatican that they should operate within a structured framework. Therefore, on

the 18<sup>th</sup> May 1949, the ACEC was founded. This association - if for Busti (2003: 16) represented a means of co-ordinating an extant phenomenon, for Luigi Cipriani, the current president of the ACEC, meant

Una risposta efficace alla esigenza di realizzare sul territorio una presenza capillare e qualificata sul piano educativo e morale (1999: 5).

This 'presenza capillare' reflected the commitment the Catholic Church had expressed towards the cinema and its desire to exert influence over every aspect of the film industry. The establishment of the ACEC also responded to a specific request Pius XI had already made in the *Vigilanti Cura* (29 June 1936) encyclical, which was made in order to guarantee if not a presence in, at least a pressure over, the production and distribution systems:

Mediante l'organizzazione di tali sale, che per l'industria rappresentano spesso dei buoni clienti si può rivendicare un nuovo diritto, quello cioè che la stessa industria produca delle pellicole corrispondenti pienamente ai nostri principi, le quali saranno poi facilmente proiettate non soltanto nelle sale cattoliche, ma anche nelle altre.

The existence of an organised association of parish cinemas was not only of concern to the commercial exhibitors, who

believed a further increase in number of parish cinemas would produce 'un influsso indubbiamente deleterio' ("Censura", *Cinema nuovo* 15/3/1958: 182). It also raised the prospect of such an organisation exerting pressure on the producers, who might then feel that they had to adapt their films in order to please parish cinemas (Rossi 1960: 127).

#### **4.1c Catholic censorship**

While the Government's role in relation to censorship has been discussed in Chapter 3 in order to evaluate the position of the State towards the film industry and the consequences on national production, it is here important to remember that often the censorship legislation was not considered to be sufficient by the Catholic establishment (Baragli, RC 1961: 115) and therefore needed to be complemented with the initiatives taken by the Vatican ("Revisioni cinematografiche", RC 1942: 109; Andreotti, RC 1952: 3). Whereas it is difficult to assess accurately what degree of influence the Vatican exerted over the production of films in the post-war period, it is certain that - as Giulio Andreotti admitted - 'il peso delle mille, duemila, quattromila sale parrocchiali veniva man mano ad influire con sensibilità determinante sul bilancio attivo della distribuzione e conseguentemente della produzione'

(Andreotti, RC 1956: 7). This degree of influence, if difficult to measure, was still under scrutiny by left wing intellectuals, who compiled a special edition of *Cinema Nuovo* with the title of *La porpora e il nero. Con quali mezzi e in quale misura governo e chiesa controllano il cinema italiano? Una cronistoria degli ultimi due anni* (1961). The document is a captivating reconstruction of State and Church intervention in terms of censorship, with the specific request of a total abolition of censorship itself, in order to avoid condemning films which had been classified by national and international critics as pure works of art. According to Mario Berutti, author of the article "I rapporti fra Stato e Chiesa", the difficulty in Italy depended on a political climate, where 'lo Stato, che la Costituzione dichiara *indipendente e sovrano*, riconosce di fatto la supremazia della Chiesa' (Berutti 1961: 60). This issue of dependence of the State to the power of the Catholic Church needs, according to Berutti, to be resolved before any improvement can be seen in terms of censorship.

At this point an analysis of what type of films were shown in parish cinemas might help us to identify common principles which made films acceptable or unacceptable and therefore the relationship between the Church, the State and the commercial production. Amongst the guidelines given in



relation to parish cinemas in the ministerial circular n. 9419/A.G. 37 (3 Maggio 1950), there was the clear imposition that 'le sale cinematografiche parrocchiali possono programmare esclusivamente i film ammessi dall'organizzazione a ciò proposta dall'Autorità ecclesiastica'.

The agreement was that the parish cinemas could only show films that the CCC had defined as 'per tutti' and 'per tutti con riserva'. This limitation was often felt as a real difficulty, especially if one considers the numbers of films which each year were classified for everybody:

Year	Tutti e tutti con riserva	Adulti	Adulti con riserva	Sconsigliati	Esclusi	Totale
1953	88	127	146	79	46	486
1954	59	157	142	77	34	469
1955	63	158	148	69	22	460
1956	80	189	170	56	12	507
1957	62	173	163	58	33	489

(Quaglietti 1981: 51)

This was not an issue limited to the post-war period and it had already started much earlier. In the season 1936-37, out of a total of 143 film examined at in the *Segnalazioni*

*cinematografiche* only fourteen were allowed to be screened in parish cinemas: three cartoons, four documentaries made by the Istituto Luce, six American films and Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) (Gianfranco Gori 1980: 12; see also "Revisioni cinematografiche", RC 1942: 109). Ildo Avetta, in an article in RC (1950: 14) compared the number of films allowed in parish cinemas in 1934 (24%) with those in 1949 (25%), underlining how the situation had not improved at all. The Archivio ACEC contains numerous complaints with regard to the lack of films 'moralmente sani' available for the screening (Sacra Congregazione dei Religiosi - Istruzione della Sacra Congregazione dei Religiosi circa l'apostolato Cinematografico - 11 Maggio 1953 - Prot. N. 01666/53: 22. Archivio ACEC; see also Viganò 1997: 35-37). At times, the blame was laid upon the distributors, who imposed on the priest in charge of the local cinemas deals for films that were not acceptable by the Vatican (Lettera da Monsignor Albino Galletto e Monsignor Francesco Dalla Zuanna al Film Board. Associazione importatori e noleggiatori pellicole cinematografiche estere - 2 Dicembre 1952). The CCC had published in 1943 an article in RC ("Istruzioni allo spettatore") addressing directly to cinema spectators and giving precise indications on how to behave in relations to films: by consulting the Disco Rosso, the

publication where each film coming out would be classified by the CCC's Commissione di Revisione, the spectator would be sure to comply with the directives of the Vatican in terms of what was allowed or not to be seen. The article is particularly significant because it explains clearly the connotation of each category, from the O (for Oratori, Collegi and Scuole), and P (for Sale Parrocchiali) groups, which despite being the most praised by the CCC were unfortunately the lowest in numbers, to the Tutti, which - despite its title - is recommended for audiences accustomed to cinema, while the younger generation (il giovane spettatore) should still only consider the categories O and P. Amongst the least appreciated by the CCC, the visibili per adulti is the widest category (which also presents the adulti con riserva) and the sconsigliati per tutti, which is referred to films totally forbidden if the spectator wants to be 'un buon cristiano' ("C.C.C.", RC 1943: 66). In fact, it is the spectator's responsibility to be informed on the CCC's classification in order not to commit an unacceptable mistake (Bongioanni 1962: 34). The categories were changed slightly when the differentiation between esclusi and sconsigliati was introduced in 1952 and the new classification was in place until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1968 (see Appendix E for a complete list of the classification).

Despite the CCC's great care in establishing the categories and ensuring as much as possible they would be spread across the Catholic community, the accusation of not paying enough attention to the criteria imposed by the Government and the Vatican was not rare. In an article that was first published by the RC and subsequently republished by the BI ("Diritti e doveri delle sale cattoliche", RC 1950: 3), Mons. Albino Galletto, the Consulente Ecclesiastico of the Ente dello Spettacolo, accused the parish cinemas of showing - in order to compete with commercial ones - 'film di cassetta senza curarsi troppo del giudizio morale'. This makes clear that parish cinemas were screening films other than those that had been endorsed by the CCC. This difficult situation led to the creation of small commissions and sub-commissions, that could better control local parish cinema related activities. From its headquarters in Turin, the Opere Don Bosco set up in 1953 a Commissione Diocesana di vigilanza which would look at the licences for the opening of new parish cinemas, as well steering priests towards what it regarded as the best choice of films to show (Circolare della Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco - 24 Luglio 1953: 3-4). In the Milanese area, the foundation of the ESCO (Ente Sale Cattoliche Organizzate)

represented an attempt to 'concentrare tutto ciò che sta a cuore all'Autorità Ecclesiastica - in una parola, la sicurezza della moralità degli spettacoli tenuti nelle sale parrocchiali - in un unico organismo di controllo' (Viganò 1997: 87). However, the organisation was wound up in 1951. In 1952 it was succeeded by the SCAEC (Società Cattolica Assistenza Esercizi Cinema), which established itself as the principal moral arbiter for the parish cinemas of Lombardy with regard to the films that they were considering screening. The Commissione Regionale Spettacolo per le Diocesi Lombarde acted as a censor for those films that the CCC had already categorised: every film approved by the CCC as 'per tutti' was re-screened at the regional level before being granted a final approval to be shown locally. Moreover a weekly 'Notiziario' was compiled by the SCAEC that gave information of the films seen, as well as a 'scheda' that gave detailed descriptions of individual films, comments on their moral content, and indicated 'gli emendamenti necessari' (Relazione sull'attività delle Commissione Regionale Spettacolo e Delegazione Regionale A.C.E.C. 1 dicembre 1959: 2). These new criteria were officially accepted by Piedmont, Lazio, Liguria, Tuscany, and Umbria and also used in Calabria, Campania, and Sardinia. The decision in 1954 by the Emilia Romagna bishops of setting

up a Ufficio Regionale di revisione was defended by the President of ACEC Mons. Francesco Dalla Zuanna, who, in a letter to Mons. Albino Galletto (Consulente Ecclesiatico ACEC), defined the area as 'paesi e diocesi ove ferve la lotta politica, sociale e religiosa con i 'rossi' (Lettera a Mons. Albino Galletto - Padova 17 Febbraio 1954). The socio-political threat posed by Communism was regarded as having a cinematic dimension. The menace that was felt was testified to in a circular sent by Monsignor Francesco Dalla Zuanna. The letter, the subject of which was 'Film sovietici e comunisti', was sent in 1956 to all the Servizi di Assistenza alle Sale (SAS), an association that provided organisational support to parish cinemas, mainly with regard to the programming of films to be shown. In the letter, despite trying to show objectivity towards those films, especially those that the CCC found acceptable for screening in parish cinemas, Mons. Dalla Zuanna still felt prompted to write:

D'altra parte, però mi permetto farLe presente l'opportunità che si eviti la contrattazione dei film in oggetto per il nostro esercizio poichè, programmandoli, si contribuirebbe, anche se in misura modesta, ad alimentare finanziariamente partiti ed iniziative ostili all'opera di Santa Madre Chiesa e dei cattolici. Non vanno inoltre dimenticate le perplessità che la programmazione dei film in questione susciterebbe nel pubblico delle nostre sale (Lettera circolare n. 36 ai

Direttori dei Servizi Assistenza - Prot.n. 12770/SB/gc. 18  
Aprile 1956).

The document represents an example of how individuals within the Church hierarchy were trying to control what was seen by Italian audiences. By forbidding the screening of any Soviet films in parish cinemas, the Church sought to exercise a firm political form of censorship. The letter is proof of how an attitude favoured one type of film and censored another. In a letter sent by the Segretario Generale ACEC, Silvano Battisti, to the SAS, there was the offer of a free screening of the short film 'Il messaggio del Cremlino', 'realizzato con pupazzi animati e a colori' and defined as a film with 'carattere politico', that would have interested the exhibitors (Lettera circolare n. 6/UNS ai responsabili dei Servizi Assistenza Sale - 11 Dicembre 1957). Again, this letter makes us aware of the drive to operate a form of control over what was defined as 'political' yet which at the same time was also acceptable. This contrasts with Dalla Zuanna's letter, which had disregarded the possibility that a Soviet film might be of any artistic merit.

Of itself, the CCC list of films and their classification provides material to illustrate the trends and directions in

post-war Catholic cinema. Over the period 1947-1960 the CCC considered far more American films than Italian ones (see table below). However, it classified 256 Italian ones as *Esclusi* as opposed to 313 American ones, a high ratio of Italian films not receiving the seal of approval by the CCC, which might come as a surprise considering the higher number of US films looked at (See also "Censura e morale nel cinema". BI 20/1/1954).

	Italia					Stati Uniti				
	T	Tr	A	Ar	E	T	Tr	A	Ar	E
1947	13	1	18	6	7	90	1	123	12	35
1948	9	3	18	15	16	42	19	122	57	63
1949	14	-	14	12	15	79	36	173	64	70
1950	8	1	38	22	39	53	32	127	75	44
1951	8	1	28	30	28	45	31	146	72	32
1952	7	5	34	41	22	30	36	116	70	11
1953	6	4	28	52	20	24	30	83	66	5
1954	9	4	48	33	9	12	19	77	77	8
1955	15	4	48	35	7	16	14	81	88	4
1956	12	4	45	27	2	26	15	99	100	3
1957	7	6	38	21	8	20	8	95	91	7
1958	12	4	32	22	14	13	10	99	78	9
1959	9	3	31	33	19	11	2	91	79	10



1960	4	2	17	13	50	12	10	63	46	12
Tot.	133	42	437	362	256	473	263	1495	975	313

(extract from *Guida cinematografica* 1963: XLIX-LXIV)

This is significant information because it shows a clear favouring of American films in comparison with national ones. In fact, if one takes as an example the productions of the years 1951 and 1952, it is possible to see how American films were considered the most suitable from a moral point of view by the Catholics: in 1951 'la più alta percentuale dei films 'per tutti' spetta all'America (23%) e la più bassa all'Italia (8%)', while in 1952 'la produzione americana [...] è dal lato morale - soprattutto nella presentazione scenica - la più corretta' (Galletto, RC 1952: 3; Galletto, RC 1953: 3).

Gian Piero Brunetta (1978: 430-431; 2000: 108) reads this attitude as a way to stop Italian neorealism by favouring, a great deal of US production, and this issue will be again raised in Chapter 6, when looking specifically at the Italian films preferred by the CCC. This position becomes even more evident, when the number of films that were accepted for screening in parish cinemas is examined: when the *tutti* and *tutti con riserve* categories failed to furnish enough films, the

parish cinemas would draw on the *Adulti* and *Adulti con riserva* groups, which would make up a total only 974 Italian films to 3,206 American ones. Regarding this acceptance of American film production, Stephen Gundle (1995: 109) states that

Anche se questi, pur avendo l'approvazione del Codice Hays, non sempre rispecchiavano i rigidi precetti morali dei cattolici, le commedie e i western hollywoodiani venivano considerati adatti alle famiglie che costituivano il grosso pubblico dei cinema parrocchiali. [...] Questi film ottimistici e di pura evasione non contenevano spinte sovversive avevano la funzione di cancellare dalla memoria il passato recente, ricostruendo quel modello di pura fantasia simile a quello prevalente prima della guerra.

This reflects what was often requested by Catholics: 'un cinematografo sano di costumi, gaio ottimista e riposante, che superi dal punto di vista tecnico artistico quello malsano e negativo [...]. (Prosperini, RC 1946: 1). And this again is what Gori (1981: 14) finds out when examining the 295 films that were categorised between 1934 and 1955 as being acceptable for the screening in parish cinemas: they were all films 'di carattere evasivo: appena una trentina tra questi sono privi di happy end (tra i trenta la maggior parte prevede la punizione finale del reo), e una ventina sono di argomento religioso'. This form of harmless entertainment, provided by happy end and light hearted films, which would delete the memory of the

immediate wartime and promote a fantasy world of which everybody could dream, was, however, at times not entirely supported by some within the Catholic establishment. In 1956, for example, the issue of the 'happy end' was criticised by Padre Baragli in an article that the authoritative *La civiltà cattolica* (1956: 40) published:

E fa di tutto coi suoi happy ends regolamentari, perché gli uomini si sentano defraudati nel loro diritto e perseguitati dalla sfortuna alla prima sventura, o semplicemente se la loro vita trascorre monotona, senza le strardinarie avventure che variano l'esistenza dei divi dello schermo.

Baragli's attack to the Hollywood star model is an example of how within the Catholic Church there was a strand of thought that viewed negatively the typical Hollywood formula. It was not be an isolated case. Negative criticism of a luxurious lifestyle available only to few had already been made indirectly by Monsignor Civardi in his *Il cinema di fronte alla morale* (1940: 50). However, as censorship is a key element to comprehend the content of films acceptable or refused by the CCC and their ideological roles, an in-depth analysis of American films shown in Italy will be undertaken in Chapter 5 with the intention to raise again the diversity of approaches

dealt with by the Vatican in relation to the US film industry in the immediate post-war period.

#### 4.2 American cinema and Catholic press

In the post-war period the Italian Catholic press was composed of about 1,800 newspapers and magazines that covered not only the news and current affairs, but also the arts: according to Percy Allum, the Catholic press had an 'an overall circulation of 16 million copies' (1990: 85). Amongst these, there were a number of newspapers and magazines, such as *L'Osservatore romano*, *La civiltà cattolica*, *Il Quotidiano*, *L'Italia*, *L'Avvenire d'Italia*, that Parisella (2000: 70) chooses to define as 'destinate a 'fare opinione' anche all'esterno del mondo cattolico, cioè a rappresentarne gli orientamenti nei riguardi della più vasta opinione pubblica' together with 'giornali cattolici dipendenti dalla autorità ecclesiastica, 120 settimanali diocesani' and the popular and nationally-read weekly *Famiglia cristiana*, which in the immediate post-war period 'raggiungeva una tiratura che si aggirava sulle duecentomila copie' (Parisella 2000: 72).

When we specifically look at how the Catholic press dealt with the film industry in those years, one must acknowledge the eldest publication in film Catholic criticism, *La Rivista del Cinematografo*, 'l'organo ufficiale del Segretariato Centrale per il Cinematografo in seno all'Azione Cattolica Italiana' (Ciaccio 1962: 106). *La Rivista del Cinematografo*, born in 1927 in Milan with the purpose of spreading the Catholic morality in relation to cinema, would later on move to Rome and become the official film magazine of the CCC (Filizzola, RC 1956a: 32). *La Rivista del Cinematografo* reflected the views of the Vatican towards the cinema. The journal gives considerable space to covering of the film industry and provides a resource for trying to understand the position of the Vatican in relation to various aspects of American cinema. Ugo Sciascia, who in 1947 became Segretario Generale dell'Ente dello Spettacolo, explained the role of the monthly magazine:

Attraverso la "Rivista del Cinematografo" passata fin dal 1938 alle dirette dipendenze del C.C.C., non ci si limitava al servizio di segnalazione, ma si divulgavano nei nostri ambienti la conoscenza estetica e tecnica del nuovo mezzo di espressione e si approfondivano i problemi morali che esso sollevava (Sciascia, RC 1956: 15).

The other publications linked to the CCC were 'la 'collana' dei 'Quaderni della Rivista del Cinematografo' published from 1951

by the Ente dello Spettacolo, as well as the publication from 1940 of four very important volumes: Mons. Luigi Civardi's *I cattolici e il cinematografo* and *Cinema e morale*, G.M. Scotese's *La settima arte (Introduzione al cinema)* and Anastasio Mariani's *Che cos'è questo cinema?* (Ciaccio 1962: 108). Other publications came out between 1940 and 1943: Civardi, Gedda, Gavagna and Beretta's *Coscienza cinematografica*, Gnocchi's *Il problema del cinema*, and Scotese's *Il volto del cinema* (Argentieri 1998: 234). Catholic newspapers and journals were all involved in rigorously controlling the morality of films by condemning too liberal productions and by advising their readers on the best cinematic choices to make (Argentieri 1998: 250). Several articles published in the RC throughout 1940s and 1950s refer to the aim of educating audiences to the cinema (a regular contribution published in 1953 and titled "Per un'educazione cinematografica" collects opinions and interviews with film representatives and experts in order to establish the criteria of promoting and disseminating a valuable cinematic education) and identify the press as responsible in its role both 'informativa and 'formativa' (Civardi, RC 1940: 57).

The Catholic hierarchy position in relation to the film industry was not just supported by official publications issued by the CCC. Prominent print critics who backed the Vatican's opinion included Nino Ghelli in *Bianco e Nero*, Gian Luigi Rondi in *Il Tempo*, and Padre Baragli in *La civiltà cattolica*, defined as 'il più fedele 'interprete' dei testi pontifici' (Ciaccio 1962: 139). Padre Nazareno Taddei, who was the official film critic of the journal *Letture*, represents a different case in the relationship between the press and the Catholic establishment. In 1957 this Jesuit literary journal<sup>iii</sup> began to publish a series of significant film reviews, interrupted in 1961 after a supportive review on Federico Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960), which had forced the intervention of Cardinal Montini 'pesantemente contro i responsabili di una recensione elogiativa del film di Fellini' which occasion 'ordinò alla redazione di condannare il film [...] e punì severamente due redattori meno solleciti ad obbedire' (Bernardini 1985: 73-75; Scurani Alessandro 1994: 1; Scurani, *Letture* 1995). This episode reveals the power exerted on the film critic and the literary journal in relation to the official position to take regarding a particular film, which had not been seen favourably by the Vatican.

In the magazine *Letture*, which, as it has just been mentioned, at times contained expressions of the controversial side of Catholic cinema print criticism, the acknowledgement of American films was relatively brief and present often only in the sections on International Festivals, such as Berlin (Taddei 1959: 708, 710), San Sebastian (Taddei 1959: 768-769) and Venice (Taddei 1958: 695-696; Taddei 1959: 698); an example of this attitude was Nazareno Taddei's attack on Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* (1959: 705-706) for its 'faciloneria and banalità'. The other area under which Hollywood films usually appeared in the publication was the individual reviews of films such as Martin Ritt's *The Long Hot Summer* (1958) (Taddei 1958: 535-536), David Lean's *The Bridge Over The River Kwai* (1957) (Taddei 1958: 445-447), Billy Wilder's *Witness For The Prosecution* (1957) (Taddei 1958: 447-448), Edward Dmytryk's *The Young Lions* (1958) (Taddei 1958: 369-371); Anthony Mann's *God's Little Acre* (1958), Charles Saunders's *The Black Orchid* (1953) (Taddei 1958: 784-786), and Vincente Minnelli's *Lust For Life* (1956) (Taddei 1957: 377-379). Taddei's comments were at times severe towards some of the US films mentioned above: *The Long Hot Summer* had an ending which was 'imposto, trito e scipito' (1958:536), *Lust For Life* was criticised for being detached from reality



(Taddei 1957: 379), *The Black Orchid*'s ending destroyed the whole film, despite a positive comment on Anthony Quinn and Sophia Loren's acting abilities (Taddei 1958: 784-786) and *God's Little Acre* became a 'macedonia al maraschino di tutti gli ingredienti che dovrebbero fare cassetta' (Taddei 1958: 784). These comments, despite not being based on any specific form of Catholic criticism, were certainly controversial compared to a general tendency of support given by Catholic official newspapers and magazines towards American cinema. An interesting example of the position taken by the Church towards American production is the publication in 1947 by the Catholic Edizioni AVE (Anonima Veritas Editrice) of Sergio Sollima's book *Il cinema in U.S.A.*. In its first part, it presented an historical analysis of the American cinema from the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, while the second portion concentrated on a representation in American films of certain stock characters, such as the 'pioneer', the 'gentleman', the 'sophisticated lady', the 'vamp', and the 'youth'. The book also examined topics such as the family in American cinema, concentrating on areas like sex, marriage, children, family life and divorce, as well as work, social classes, law, race, culture and religion. Despite acknowledging the presence of important directors and actors in American cinema, as a whole the book

is very critical towards the American film industry, defining it as 'una produzione *in serie*' (Sollima 1947: 97) in which a film of artistic value was the exception that was isolated from any broader artistic movement (Sollima 1947: 85). According to Sollima (1947: 229) the motivation for production in Hollywood was the desire to reach mass audience rather than to try to create artistic masterpieces:

Tutto, ripeto, nella produzione media americana (che, come abbiamo visto, presenta solo rarissime eccezioni) è fatto per lo spettatore-biglietto d'ingresso: i soggetti: amore, lieto fine obbligatorio, ecc.; la scelta degli attori: tutti bellissimi, pubblicizzati al massimo affinché chi li ha visti una volta torni a vederli; le sceneggiature e i dialoghi, che puntano esclusivamente sull'interesse superficiale e sul divertimento epidermico; la fotografia, la scenografia e gli abiti che diano sempre la sensazione del ben messo, del piacevole, del ben visibile, o dello stirato da poco (Sollima 1947: 229).

American cinema of this kind - with the happy ending, the beautiful stars, and the superficial dialogues that was created to reach audiences - apparently did not jar with the Vatican. Rather, the optimistic and positive cinema made in Hollywood represented safer, more anodyne option for the Catholic hierarchy than did some Italian national productions. Sollima's book was out of accord with these attitudes and soon after its publication in 1947 its publisher withdrew it. The Catholic

newspaper film critic Renato Filizzola, in an interview given to the author in April 2003, explains the reason of the withdrawal as being that the book was 'troppo spregiudicato'. However, there is room for speculation about whether this was the true reason, or whether the harshness of the author's attack on American cinema, the products of which the Vatican was prepared to be supportive, had prompted the publishing house to remove the title from its list.

In order to complete the panorama of the Catholic press in relation to cinema, it is worth remembering the journal *Cineforum*, which was first published in 1961 and despite not being part of the years here analysed, becomes significant because it establishes and legitimises the joint effort from the ecclesiastic hierarchy and the Catholic organisations with regard to their promotion of a common cultural agenda.

The cineforum, defined by Brunetta (1981: 34) as a desire to originate 'un tipo di spettacolo per le famiglie, senza far sentire la distanza fra il pubblico e i critici chiamati a fare da mediatori', had come into being during immediate post-war period. The first cineforum had been organised in Milan in July 1948 with the intention of combining 'proiezione e commento di alcune serie di film' (Viganò 1997: 116), but already in 1947

Mario Verdone discussed the idea of an organised viewing of a film, with the aim of achieving 'una difesa cattolica' against the immoralità of certain productions (Verdone, RC 1947: 9). However, it was the First Congresso Nazionale dei Cineforum organised in June 1953 which ratified the 'nascita ufficiale dell'organizzazione italiana dei Cineforum' (May, RC 1956: 102). In that year there were 22 Cineforum 'regolarmente inquadrati, con un totale di 18.264 iscritti', over 60 'circoli cineforum che svolgono un'attività sotto forma non associativa' and almost 6.000 screenings in less than ten years and fifteen courses of film studies organised (May, RC 1956: 102). Moreover, in an article signed by - amongst others - Mons. Galletto, Padre Morlion, Dr. Rondi, and Prof. May, the need to clarify the role of Catholic cultural activities was expressed and the Cineforum was defined as the organisation which 'ha lo scopo di promuovere un movimento culturale cinematografico che operi in profondità nell'opinione pubblica italiana' ("Cineforum e film-forum", RC 1953: 9). By 1952 the phenomenon of the cineforum had spread outside Italy and had arrived in countries such as Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Canada and Australia (Ruzskowski, RC 1952: 6).

It has been argued that the cineforum movement arose principally from a political context. In his *Come sono nati i*

*cineforum* (1995), Enzo Natta states that in 1944 Padre Felix Morlion, a Belgian Dominican, who had been working for the United States's Office of Strategic Service (the American secret service that was to evolve into The Central Intelligence Agency (the CIA)), arrived in Rome with the intention of founding the Università Pro Deo, an organisation that was to be defined by Giancarlo Zizola as 'una centrale ideologica dell'anticomunismo cattolico' (quoted in Natta 1995). It is within this structure that Padre Morlion developed the idea of the Cineforum, 'uno strumento che unendo l'immagine (il film) alla parola (il dibattito) consente allo spettatore di non subire passivamente il messaggio proveniente dallo schermo ma di diventare parte attiva del rapporto di comunicazione che si instaura fra schermo e platea' (Natta 1995: [web.tiscalinet.it/ofslombardia](http://web.tiscalinet.it/ofslombardia)). In his article, Natta defined the cineforum as a powerful political device, citing Padre Morlion's own words:

Lo spettacolo in quanto divertimento è il più forte mezzo di attrazione. Moltissimi che non andrebbero mai alle prediche e alle riunioni dell'Azione Cattolica, accolgono facilmente l'invito ad assistere a uno spettacolo da noi organizzato anche se seguito dalla discussione... L'apostolato dello spettacolo si delinea come apostolato di penetrazione sociale (quoted in Natta 1995).

Therefore, the cineforum provided a good means of enabling issues that were facing contemporary Italian society to be discussed and analysed by addressing the way in which they were being presented in cinema. This allowed for what Morlion defined as 'social penetration' that was not possible in any other way. The cineforum was defined by Tosi (1999: 190), 'la versione confessionale dei cineclub', an established organisation which counted in the spring of 1950 already 80 groups (circoli del cinema) across Italy and which was considered as a means by which the left wing political parties were seeking to promote their propaganda ("La Redazione", RC 1953: 3; Tosi 1979: 329). The article illustrated that there was a contemporary struggle raging between the so called 'uomini di sinistra' and the Catholic establishment to try to influence cinema and its audiences. According to La Redazione, left wing intellectuals had been among the founders of the main Circoli di Cinema and had spread Soviet films - 'con evidente travisamento dei primitivi scopi culturali con cui i Circoli erano sorti' - to its numerous members, 'reclutati tra operai e contadini' ("La Redazione", RC 1953: 3). The following excerpt from the article illustrates the relationship between the *Associazionismo cattolico* and the *Associazionismo laico*:

Le attività degli uomini di sinistra nei Circoli divennero in breve tempo sempre più frequenti e scoperte. Lo dimostrarono gli accordi con i rappresentanti delle cinematografie d'oltre cortina (cinematografie nazionalizzate) per avere film che erano sempre di propaganda e non sempre di valore artistico: i film più illustri di questo genere possiamo identificarli nel Michurin, pellicola dove si esalta il mondo sovietico, e che finisce con le immancabili parate, il discorso, la lettera o la medaglia di Stalin, e via dicendo. E lo dimostrarono anche le pubblicazioni, e le schede della FICC, gli atteggiamenti antigovernativi, i vari pretesti per 'difendere il cinema italiano', che si ricollegano al solito pretesto di 'difendere la pace'. Con questi sistemi si mirava a convincere l'opinione pubblica che il cinema italiano, e la pace, sono difesi soltanto dai comunisti (La Redazione, RC 1953: 3).

This passage explains the influential role of the Circoli di Cinema and the awareness of their power both by the leftist parties and by the Catholic organisations. The argument was discussed further in the RC by the Editor of the magazine, who was forced to reply to two letters (one of which written by the director Alessandro Blasetti). The Editor's responses specifically referred to the Government's ban on screening of the film *La vittoria del popolo cinese*<sup>v</sup> (Studio Documentaristico di Pechino, 1951) at the Circolo Charlie Chaplin in Rome, asserting that the decision had been right because 'i sovietici cercano di far passare i loro film attraverso società apparentemente commerciali e direttamente controllate' (Rossetti, RC 1953: 2). This form of 'contraband' aimed - according to the RC's Editor - at

spreading films 'di propaganda bellica e politica' (Blasetti, RC 1953: 7) was stopped by the Government with the approval of the Catholic establishment (Rossetti, RC 1953: 2) It is worth underlining this cohesion of interests between the Italian Government and the Catholic institutions, both concerned about any attempt in spreading what they considered to be 'subversive ideas', especially when coming from any Communist country. The Government had become aware of the political affiliation of the Circoli di Cinema and tried to control their screening activity, which had certainly not happened in the case of the cineforum. As the Circoli did often avoid the censorship imposed by the Government and still screen films not permitted in public cinemas, Giulio Andreotti felt the pressure of the Parliament to intervene in this direction: on 23 June 1953 he wrote a 'circolare ufficiale' (prot. 11994/Co. 490 - Oggetto: Funzionamento circoli del cinema) which, while it seemed to allow the Circoli to carry on screening 'pellicole sprovviste di nulla osta di revisione cinematografica', it clearly gave a warning on how local authorities could get involved in stopping any of these activities in case they became public events. The immediate reaction of the State to control any dangerous screenings and the strong support given by the Vatican are examples of an effort promoted to minimise the



political propaganda conveyed by the Circoli del Cinema, while still not operating the same intervention on Catholic cineforum (For further information on Circoli del Cinema see Tosi 1999).

The importance of the intervention of the Catholic establishment in the development of the film industry in post-war Italy was also marked by the foundation of the Associazione Cattolica Critici Cinematografici (ACCC). The organisation founded by the Ente dello Spettacolo and constituted within the Unione Cattolica della Stampa Italiana (UCSI) on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1961 (*Guida cinematografica* 1963: XXXVI). The Vatican itself felt the need to comment directly the importance of film criticism. In his *Miranda Prorsus* (1957) Pope Pius XII addressed the issue of morality of films, calling on film critics to consider when writing about cinema. Salvatore Canals described the principal facets of being a film critic as: knowledge of the cinematic medium, strong religious culture and familiarity with the main principles of morality and Christian spirituality (Canals 1961: 71). RC (Bruno 1950: 14-15; Verdone 1953: 23; 1956: 3, 11-12) published several articles that tried to define 'una critica cattolica' both by distinguishing the artistic value from the ethical one and by alerting the magazine's readership of the

possible dangers of the cinema. These potential perils were often associated by the Catholic Church with Italian Neorealism:

la tendenza ad identificare non nelle produzioni cinematografiche americane, ma in quelle del neorealismo italiano il pericolo più grave (Barbanti 1991: 182).

The attitudes of the Catholic Church and the Italian State Government towards Italian Neorealism is a thoroughly researched field. Several Italian neorealist films posed a real dilemma for the Catholic establishment: Fellini's *La dolce vita* created an extensive mobilisation of the Catholic Church organisation, with one Jesuit asking his congregation for mass expiation for the sins committed by those who had seen the film; Luchino Visconti's *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (1960) was defined as 'il limite di perversione etica ed estetica' (Argentieri and Cipriani 1961: 1551). Brunetta (1982: 103) defines this Catholic attitude as 'un intervento repressivo (a partire dall'*Osservatore romano*, fino al più periferico foglio di parrocchia) nei confronti del nuovo cinema italiano'. The topic will be discussed again in Chapter 6. In 1951 *RC* (Ammannati, *RC* 1951: 7) published an article written by Ammannati who stated that the role of the cinema was meant to be

'Incoraggiare, non deprimere': the encouragement to find in cinema 'un aiuto a sperare' and to produce more films such as 'l'americano *I migliori anni della nostra vita*' is a clear confirmation of the type of movie desired by the Catholic establishment. Optimism and positive-ness were the key elements that the Catholic press emphasised in order to protect those family values that might be endangered by a certain type of entertainment (Brunetta 1978: 426). The upbeat articles published in *RC* often regarded a certain type of film, which in many cases is American: "Frank Capra, o dell'ottimismo" is the title of a review by the critic Gian Luigi Rondi, who praised the American director for being 'consolante e sereno' and for promoting a reassuring optimism that Rondi explained as

Non un facile abbandonarsi a schemi prestabiliti di felicità e di allegrezza, ma una ferma e grande speranza nelle fondamentali virtù dell'uomo, nel suo coraggioso resistere ad ogni ingiustizia, non per odio contro qualcuno, ma per infinito amore di tutti gli altri (RC 1952: 25).

A faith that becomes religious belief, total love for human beings, and hope for a better life. This message of hope and justice appeared in common in several Hollywood films, that Giuliana Muscio reads as being so 'transparent' and apparently

'nonideological' as they did not seem to 'transmit an explicit political message' (Muscio 2000: 123). This must have been a very strong point in favour of Hollywood films, which flooded not only commercial cinemas but also parish ones. When the ACEC was founded in 1949 it was defined by some as 'un tentativo di asservire le sale alla produzione d'oltre oceano, come manovra sabotatrice della industria italiana' ("Esercizio cinematografico forza dei Cattolici", RC 1951: 22) and RC offered a wide range of articles on American cinema. There were general articles on the state of the Hollywood industry in America, as well as reports on the Oscar ceremonies, together with an extensive choice of articles on popular American genres (westerns, musicals, comedies, gangster films, etc.) and in-depth profiles of directors and stars.

Many of the topics presented religious dimensions discussed by journalists in relation to American cinema: film advertising campaigns (Arra, RC 1946: 8-9) praising the intervention of some American Catholic journalists who complained about the wrong use of film adverts; American Catholic production (Arra, RC 1946: 3); American religious cinema, defined as the best in the world, 'ottenendo grande successo artistico e popolare' and gaining 'un'incalcolabile importanza' but also the expression of individual intuition rather than a collective movement ("A.R.",

RC 1946: 2; Damiani, RC 1960: 113); the reaction of Protestants who did not feel represented by Hollywood ("A.R.", RC 1946: 2; 16); the monopoly of Hollywood major studios and the role of independent productions (Debel, RC 1940: 100-103; "A.R.", RC 1946: 15); the reaction of Europe to the flooding of American cinema (Debel, RC 1940: 145-148); possible changes in American film production (Debel, RC 1940: 100-103); American films present at Venice Film Festival (Conti, RC 1952: 17-19); the development and the success of cartoons in America (Vazio, RC 1946a: 10-11; Verdone, RC 1953: 22-23); antiracism and black characters in American films (Dorigo, RC 1959: 133-134; Bruno, RC 1950a: 22-23); violence in US films from an early age (Saladini, RC 1955: 57-59; Ghelli, RC 1953: 8-11; Ghelli, RC 1957: 154-155) and the role of the Legion of Decency (Lucioli, RC 1949: 7; Ruzskowski, RC 1952: 7); as well as a regular section called 'Divagazioni sull'America', where in the 1950s Carlo Baima described various aspects of American cinema (from screening solutions to audiences' preferences and reactions to specific films).

When looking at the articles which discuss the most popular genres, despite criticism made in relation to specific aspects such as disrespectful eroticism and violence in gangster films (Castellani, RC 1960a: 367) or some form of superficiality in

epic films (Castellani, RC 1961: 91), or lack of intrinsic morality in science-fiction movies (Mazzara, RC 1957: 59), a general positive portrait of American cinema emerges vividly. The western movie is clearly associated with the idea of Americanness, where the American flag is the enthusiastic expression

*di un popolo giovane e semplice che ha fiducia all'avvenire, che prende sempre più coscienza di sé e che sente di amare ogni giorno di più quella sconcertante eppure meravigliosa America, definita da un poeta 'gaia terrazza aperta sul fronte dei continenti' (Baima, RC 1954:22).*

The positive-ness expressed in this passage, despite not being a unique characteristic of Roman Catholicism, is still appreciated by a Catholic audience especially when western films acquired a more human approach under the direction of John Ford. John Ford and Frank Capra were extensively discussed and praised in the RC ("G.C.", RC 1949: 12; Ciaccio, RC 1960: 48-51; Natta, RC 1963: 100-102; Cecchi, RC 1977: 228-231; Santarelli, RC 1953: 5-9). Ford's values were - according to Mast (1981: 240) - 'traditional and sentimental: the pure woman, the home, the family, decency, democracy'. These could not have been more appreciated by Catholic critics, who found a Christian message in Ford's western films,

where 'sin, guilt and forgiveness' represented fundamental aspects of the director's spiritual belief and ethnic origins (Lourdeaux 1990: 109) and his characters 'saranno pronti ad intraprendere una vita più degna' (Castellani, RC 1960: 192). The Hollywood director, praised by the RC (La Redazione, RC 1953: 5) when in 1953, during a visit in Rome, he visited the headquarters of the CCC, as Frank Capra did, is defined 'il poeta della coralità' and 'l'espressione più decisa che la coralità cristiana abbia mai raggiunto nel cinema' (Rondi, RC 1953: 12). This concept of collectiveness was also the thematic centre of Rossellini's most spiritual films, where salvation could only be achieved in the context of a group (Brunette 1987: 28-29). However, as Brunette remembers (1987: 29), with some of his neorealist films, 'Rossellini was accused of betraying [...] *coralità* in favour of the petty concern of the individual'.

The gangster film and the film *noir*, while offering a negative hero with whom the spectator could identify (Castellani, RC 1960a: 367), still presented in their best examples (John Huston, Billy Wilder and Edward Dmytryck) a meditation on existence and life:

E da tali opere emana un'ansia che è anelito disperato verso una necessità di affermazione di quei valori spirituali che sono gli unici a consentire di sottrarre l'uomo alla casualità di un cieco fatalismo (Ghelli, RC 1956: 19).

Epic and even science-fiction films could be held to 'moral' in their own way (Castellani, RC 1961: 93; Mazzara, RC 1957: 59), the American comedies are 'all'avanguardia' and were regarded as being able to help people to face problems more easily, hoping for a happy ending in life as well as on the screen (Castellani, RC 1960b: 323) and in the musical 'la cooperazione tra musica e immagine fornisce una formula validissima per avvicinare l'uomo al mondo di Dio' (Da Vià, RC 1950: 2).

Hollywood directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Billy Wilder, Elia Kazan, and B. Cecil De Mille were also praised either because they would offer a positive image of America, or because of their morality and spirituality that allowed them to be admitted in the sphere of the best in the world. De Mille regained his standing - following a series that were too erotic and spectacular - with *The Ten Commandments* (1956), in which he reached 'una maestria suggestiva e corale' never grasped before (Vincent, RC 1959: 56-57). Kazan was praised for the 'intensa concitata e commossa umanità' he achieved in *On The Waterfront* (1954) ("N.G.", RC 1955: 12), which was



already praised in the Segnalazioni cinematografiche (XXXVI-Disp.15 1954: 115) of the CCC:

Il film imposta il problema sociale con rigoroso impegno poetico, rivelando una forza drammatica, un'impetuosità narrativa e un'acutezza di indagine psicologica davvero esemplari. È certo una delle testimonianze più vive del cinema realista americano.

A work such as *East of Eden* (1955) was also praised:

Per la prima volta la legge dell'Amore, elemento determinante nel giorno del Giudizio, assume una concretezza e una sostanza drammatica nel cinema: e con assoluta autenticità il mondo di Kazan trova compiuta e perfetta espressione ("N.G.", RC 1955: 12).

The selection of actors portrayed by the *RC* is either very closely linked to their religious faith or the morality of their roles. Gregory Peck's best interpretation was considered by Ettore Giglio (RC 1950: 4) 'il sacerdote missionario ne 'Le chiavi del Paradiso', while the journalist felt very disappointed by the actor's character in King Vidor's *Duel In The Sun* (1946): 'un delinquente, di un istintivo, di un violento senza coscienza e senza morale'. During a visit to Rome in 1953, Gary Cooper was interviewed by Massimo Chiodini solely on the role of Catholic Cineforum and the American actor gave a very supportive response:

I Cineforum cattolici sono molto utili perché possono agire come remora da un punto di vista antimaterialistico, il che si rivela molto utile al giorno d'oggi, ed ha un'ottima influenza. Posso dire che dei Cineforum cattolici esistono anche in America e sono tenuti in grande considerazione. [...] Ma quello per cui secondo me l'attività dei Cineforum è particolarmente importante è che essi possono orientare in un senso giusto e positivo la produzione cinematografica di un paese; per esempio in America ci fu un periodo in cui si producevano esclusivamente film di gangsters, tanto che tutto il mondo credeva che in America ci fossero soltanto gangsters. Questo - secondo me - non è bene, e pertanto un movimento che orienti l'opinione pubblica rappresenta indubbiamente un fattore altamente positivo, soprattutto dal punto di vista morale (Chiodini, RC 1953: 11).

The importance of the Cineforums and the significance they had not just in Italy is a confirmation of what was already stated before in this section: the role of this kind of association was not only to address audiences towards what the Catholic institutions felt were the best films, but also to put pressure on production companies in order to generate a form of entertainment which would respond to moral and social codes. In Chapter 5, this issue will be raised again when looking at the Segnalazioni Cinematografiche, which were compiled by the CCC in order to give guidelines to parish and non-parish cinemas towards the most suitable film to watch.

This Chapter has shown that a Catholic cinema in post-war Italy was difficult to define, as the number and influence of 'Catholic' productions - both those directly funded by the Vatican and those that were supported by it indirectly - was very limited. However, the part played by the Vatican in the distribution of American films has proved to be significant as on one hand parish cinemas represented a third of the national exhibition in terms of seats and on the other the Italian Catholic press seemed to favour particularly certain American film productions. The role of Catholic censorship is once again elicited in this Chapter and will be the connecting element with the case studies, which are the central aspects of Chapter 5 and 6.

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<sup>i</sup> The films made by the Catholic organisation Unitas in the years 1909 must be also remembered - 11 (three films in 1909; seven films in 1910; eight films in 1911) (Ciaccio 1962: 98-99).

<sup>ii</sup> For a complete list of Universalialia's films see Ciaccio 1962: 135.

<sup>iii</sup> The journal came out in 1946 on the basis of *Rivista di Lettere* founded in 1904 with the aim of giving moral indication on books to Catholic readers and had already started from 1924 to include a cinema section.

<sup>iv</sup> No further information has been found on this film.

America, the Vatican and the  
Catholic Church sphere of  
activity in Italian post war  
cinema (1945-1960)

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## Chapter V: Ideology in American films shown in Italy

The aim of this chapter is to explore how American ideology was expressed in American films exported to Italy in the post-war period and comprehend to what extent it corresponded to the ideology also promoted by the Vatican.

In order to do so, I will give an overview of the most successful American films shown in Italy between 1945 and 1960, analysing their portrayal of America and of its values and identifying common themes, genres and characters.

In the second part I will analyse whether the same films were accepted in the parish cinemas and which ones were the most recommended by the Vatican and cut or excluded by the parish cinema circuit: I will do that by looking at the *Segnalazioni cinematografiche* written by the *Centro Cattolico Cinematografico*, which represented the most authoritative institution under the control of the Vatican to direct film production and distribution.

The third and last part of the chapter will examine a few case studies in order to determine how American ideology was spread and received in Italy through America's most popular films. In this last part I will look at the most successful films, the most recommended by the Church and the ones the Vatican excluded from the parish cinema circuit.

### **5.1 Success of American films in Italy in 1945-1960: genres, styles and stars**

How many people saw a film in Rome, Milan or Turin in 1953? And how many spectators are needed to define a film successful? Starting in October 1945 the *Bollettino d'Informazione*, edited by Agis (Agenzia Generale Italiana Spettacolo) took to addressing the quantitative aspects of audience and attempted an analysis and a comment on the figures of the film industry in Italy. The outcome is an interesting examination of films, which is very relevant for this research and to which I will refer in the following two chapters. While - unless providing a very significant

feature - how differently the main cities and towns reacted to specific films will not be analysed in details, the success certain films had in Rome and Milan will be borne in mind, as they certainly represented the two major cities for 'volumi d'incassi'. This signifies a particular interest from the capital and the major Northern city into the cinematic world but also a different way of assessing films from other towns and cities across the country (Ferraù. "La frequenza del pubblico alle prime visioni è determinante nel successo di un film?". BI 10/3/1955).

Just as an example, if one looks at 1955, Italian and American films are - as expected - at the top as shown:

<b>Anno 1955</b>	<b>Numero</b>	<b>Incasso</b>
Film italiani	84	£3,405,760,000
Film americani per schermo normale	128	£3,972,642,000
Film americani in CinemaScope	19	£1,977,383,000
Film francesi e di coproduzioni girati in Francia	11	£ 219,067,000
Film inglesi	7	£ 167,265,000

(Ferraù. "Italia e America prime nelle graduatorie degli incassi". BI 14/4/1955: 1)



This does not come as a surprise and it explains even further the rationale for concentrating on these two categories of films. Lorenzo Quaglietti (1995: 314) gives, though, a very practical reason for the success of US films in Italy: the author believes that it was only a matter of quantity, as the Italian market was totally dominated by American movies and Italian audiences had little choice when going to the cinema. However, the comparison in profit between American and Italian productions differs significantly and shows quite clearly how Italians' decisions were not just influenced by the distribution, but were also the expression of their feeling and preferences when going to the cinema. The information in the BI is very valuable because the magazine registers a shift in trends in the success of certain productions. In 1958, for example, American productions started to show some problems with an average daily profit of around £275,000 Italian lira against £345,000 Italian lira earned by the Italian films. This is highly revealing if compared with the previous year, when the Italians earned only £305,000 compared with £360,000 for the Americans. However, if one looks at the

figures, already in 1955 Italian films for the normal screen<sup>i</sup> had a profit of an average of over £40,5 million lira per film, which was notably higher than the American counterpart (£31 million lira), representing 25% less than the Italian films, as Ferraù confirmed in his analysis:

Praticamente il film americano per "schermo normale" non riesce a trovare negli schermi delle "prime visioni" delle città capozona (Ancona, Bari, Bologna, Cagliari, Catania, Messina, Palermo, Firenze, Genova, Milano, Napoli, Padova, Venezia, Roma, Torino, Trieste) il successo che fino a qualche anno prima gli arrideva (Ferraù. "Bilancio di fine anno". BI 7/1/1956: 3).

CinemaScope technology<sup>ii</sup> - created in 1953 - was a factor in maintaining the popularity of American films in Italy: in 1955 45% of films 'per grande schermo' had a profit of over 50 million lira against 3% of American films 'per schermo normale' and against only seven Italian films out of 44 produced in this year. The production company Fox Film, in fact, which in 1955 only had made nine films in Italy (*Gente di notte*, *I gladiatori*, *Lancia che uccide*, *Magnifica preda*, *Operazione Mistero*, *Prigioniero della Miniera*, *Principe coraggioso*, *Sinuhe l'Egiziano*, *Tre soldi nella fontana*) appreciated the impact of the new

technology on the marketplace and obtained a total of £1,221,524,000. In 1956 almost half of the profit of 'prime visioni' was generated by the 98 American films, meaning that 24% of the total releases (American films 'per grande schermo') had generated over 50% of the total proceeds (Ferraù. "A nove mesi data". BI 19/6/1956: 3).

The impact of CinemaScope was not just limited to the larger screens. The technology was also used to show better special effects on smaller screens as well as a way to utilise technology in order to improve the narrative (Ferraù. "Tirando le somme". BI 27/1/1955: 2; Ferraù. "Italia e America prime nelle graduatorie degli incassi". BI 14/4/1955: 1). This is what Colombo (1999: 233) defines as 'un cinema commerciale, o nella versione americana, spettacolare'. In fact, if one still concentrates on 1956, one will see that:

In merito alla 'qualità' dei film, notiamo che, ai primi posti, si trovano film esclusivamente spettacolari ('20.000 leghe sotto i mari', 'Vera Cruz', 'Fuoco Verde', 'L'avventuriero di Hong Kong'), commedie brillanti ('Caccia al ladro', 'Quando la moglie è in vacanza'), drammi ('L'ultima volta che vidi Parigi', 'L'amore è una cosa meravigliosa') film biografici ('Lord Brummell') e un film di autentico impegno artistico ('La valle

dell'Eden') (Ferraù. "Nel mezzo del cammin...". BI 10/3/1956: 6).

Therefore, at times American films had to do a bit more than just being American in order to gain audiences' interest. While Italians were receptive to American films, their consumption of them was firmly rooted in Italian society and culture. The varying receptions that the principal Hollywood genres experienced in Italy provides a degree of illumination on both American ideology and Italian culture. It facilitates an assessment of how the reception of certain films helped influence contemporary Italian life and also shaped the Italian film industry itself. Resonant to this is Douglas Kellner's statement, in his essay on "Hollywood Film and Society" (1998: 357), that:

In order to resonate to audience fears, fantasies, and experiences, the Hollywood genres had to deal with the central conflicts and problems in US society, and had to offer soothing resolutions, assuring its audiences that all problems could be solved within existing institutions.

This is not very far away from what Christian Democrats wanted to promote in their cultural ideology: they were keen on stopping national cinema from spreading

'inquietudini e motivi liberatori', and instead favoured proclaiming reassuring life styles and traditional values. This desire was in accord with the Vatican's ideology (*La città del cinema (produzione e lavoro nel cinema italiano 1930-1970)* 1979: 41). Bizzarri (1987: 24) links the Italian Government's support of American production to this precise ideological strategy: American cinema provided a form of escapism for which there was a strong contemporary demand in Italy. It is vital to analyse what effect the 'soothing resolutions' offered to the American audiences had on the Italian ones and compare Kellner's descriptive definition of American ideology to what the Vatican - and the Christian Democratic Government - was interested in promoting through the cinematic medium. This will allow us to have a picture of an industry which was so significant at the time that it would be obviously called political in Kellner's definition as 'it tends to support dominant American values and institutions' (Kellner 1998: 359). It would also help defining the audiences receptive to what Tom Ryall defines the ideological system, where

'the genre system, or, at least, certain genres, impose beliefs and values to some degree' (Ryall 1998: 330).

In his book *Ecco i nostri* (1991), Lorenzo Quaglietti describes the most successful genres in Italy. Westerns were one of the most popular, with an average of 35 films per year from 1945 until the end of the Fifties. Amongst the factors that caused the decline of the western after 1958 were - according to Quaglietti (1991: 97-98) - the fact that some of the minor companies that had been focused on this type of production closed down and some of the leading directors who had been associated with the genre (Cecil B. De Mille, John Ford, Henry Hathaway, King Vidor, and Raoul Walsh, for instance) died. Western films had in many ways come to represent America, its myth, and its landscape (Lourdeaux 1990: 117). Hollywood stars, such as like Gary Cooper, Kirk Douglas, Henry Fonda, Gregory Peck, and James Stewart starred in many of the best known post-war offerings, and Italians keenly attended the release of any new American western (Quaglietti 1991: 97-100). Those which were the most successful were: John

Ford's *Ombre rosse* (*Stagecoach*) (1939) in 1940, William A. Wellman's *Buffalo Bill* (1944) in 1947/48, Cecil B. DeMille's *Gli invincibili* (*Unconquered*) (1947) in 1949/50 and Vidor's *Duello al sole* (*Duel In The Sun*) in 1948/49 which was the most successful of them all. The success of the western in Italy could be ascribed on one side to its fairly consistent iconography, which would allow Italian audiences to identify recurrent symbols and visual motifs more easily in comparison to other genres, such as crime films, and have a similar experience every time (Maltby 1995: 86; Wagstaff 1992: 254). On the other hand, western films also presented America as a land full of contrasts, where novelty and tradition, wilderness and civilization would coexist and be the foundation of that American myth so endemic in post-war Italy. Moreover, in western films, women embodied the values of family so desired by a Catholic society like the Italian one (Belton 1990: 257). It is important also not to forget that a male dominated audience, like the Italian, was certainly more interested in adventure formulas than other genres (Wagstaff 1992: 260).

While the other most successful genres in Italy were war films, with David Lean's *Il ponte sul fiume Kwai* (*The Bridge Over The River Kwai*) at the top for proceeds in 1957 and Fred Zinnemann's *Da qui all'eternità* (*From Here to Eternity*) (1953) with a profit of over 100 million lire in 1955, the gangster and musical genres did not repeat the same degree of success in Italy that they enjoyed in the United States. Fred Astaire and Ginger Roger's films succeeded in attracting a large following while most of the others were not as popular as they had been in the United States, perhaps because at that time Italian audiences could choose their own musicals (film operistici and regional music films). The ones that attracted the largest audiences were: George Sidney's *Bellezze al bagno* (*Bathing Beauty*) (1944) in 1948, Vincente Minnelli's *Un americano a Parigi* (*An American In Paris*) (1951) which was one of the top ten in September/October 1952, Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly's *Cantando sotto la pioggia* (*Singin' In The Rain*) (1952) in 1953, Stanley Donen's *Sette spose per sette fratelli* (*Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*) (1954) in 1955,



and Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Bulli e pupe (Guys And Dolls)* (1955) in 1956.

During the Fascist era the gangster genre had run into considerable opposition from officialdom. In large part because its movies tried to make anti-heroes out of criminals but also because of the fact that many of the worst villains had Italian names (Quaglietti 1991: 103). During the post-war period gangster movies did experience a clear rise in their popularity but the genre did not repeat the degree of popularity that it had enjoyed in the United States (Quaglietti 1991: 100-104). The same cold reception given to gangster films was also given to thrillers, which were not particularly loved by Italian audiences. The only exception were Alfred Hitchcock's films, all very popular, starting with *Rebecca* (1940) 'che realizzò incassi formidabili, ripetendoli certamente non nella stessa misura, nelle successive riedizioni' and carrying on with all the others which were often amongst the top ten films: *La donna che visse due volte (Vertigo)* in 1958 was at the eighth place for proceeds, *Intrigo internazionale (North*

by *Northwest*) was fifth the following year and *Psycho* was seventh in 1960 (Quaglietti 1991: 106).

However, the momentum of the Italian image of America became a problem for those Hollywood filmmakers who wished to make movies that bore witness to the more problematic aspects of their homeland. For many Italians, whose principal experience of United States was through the prism of Hollywood escapism, such a depiction of America was unsettling. In 1955 the American Ambassador in Italy, Clare Booth Luce, refused to participate in the Mostra del Cinema di Venezia because it was due to include a screening of Richard Brooks's *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955), which portrayed American juvenile delinquency she disapproved of and which was also attacked by the Catholic establishment (Swann 1994: 190; Ghelli, RC 1957: 154). What the CIA labelled as the Hollywood formula was a way to eliminate 'the negative stereotypes' - such as drunks - and bring in the 'characterizations which represented a healthy America', in conjunction with pleasing the Vatican (Saunders 1999:

293). This issue is certainly related to what Kellner describes in his essay "Hollywood Film and Society" as American ideology promoted by Hollywood films:

The Hollywood genres taught that money and success were important values; that heterosexual romance, marriage, and family were the proper social forms; that the state, police, and legal system were legitimate sources of power and authority; that violence was justified to destroy any threats to the system; and that American values and institutions were basically sound, benevolent, and beneficial to society as a whole (Kellner 1998: 359).

Family values, law and institutions were the main principles on which American society was based and the same principles that the Catholic establishment was happy to promote. A portrait of a healthy America was the best way to spread Americanism abroad. However, and this will be analysed further on in the chapter, violence and to a certain extent materialism were still two issues the Vatican found it difficult to accept when it came to assessing American film production.

Dramas and comedies had considerable appeal for the Italian audience. Many comic actors became immediately

popular in Italy and stars such as Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton were able to guarantee the success of their films. Chaplin's *Luci della ribalta* (*Limelight*) (1952) had an extraordinary success in 1952/53 (in Turin alone the film took over £5 million lira). Other successful films were Victor Fleming's *Via col vento* (*Gone With The Wind*) (1939) in 1949 and Henry King's *L'amore è una cosa meravigliosa* (*Love Is A Many-Splendored Thing*) (1955) in 1955, and amongst the comedies: Ernst Lubitsch's *Ninotchka* (1939) in 1948, Michael Curtiz's *Vita col padre* (*Life with Father*) (1947) in 1947, Vincente Minnelli's *Il padre della sposa* (*Father of the Bride*) (1950) in 1950, Ford's *Un uomo tranquillo* (*The Quiet Man*) (1952) which was one of the top ten in 1952, Billy Wilder's *Sabrina* (1954), which in 1955 had a profit of over 100 million lira and his *A qualcuno piace caldo* (*Some Like It Hot*) (1959) which was amongst the top films in the 'città capozone'. It is here important to remember that Lubitsch's anti-Communist *Ninotchka* was sent to Italy on the proposal of the United States Department of State after the war and seemed to have helped to change the result of the

elections in 1948 when there was a fear of a communist victory (Muscio 1977: 163). In an article by Callisto Cosulich in *Paese Sera*, the author reminds that when the film was circulated in Europe during the Cold War, its slogan was not 'la Garbo ride' (as it was in America in 1939) but 'anch'essa ha scelto la libertà' (Cosulich 1982: 23). In his volume (1947: 222) on American cinema, Sergio Sollima - while strongly criticising various aspects of US film production - gave a very positive comment on what the Americans had done for *Ninotchka*, a film appreciated for its satire of Soviet society. The potential influence of an American film on the political elections was not an isolated case in *Ninotchka*. A few years later the distribution of John Ford's *Furore* (*The Grapes of Wrath*) (1939) was interrupted just before the 1952 local elections and the film released again only after the elections, in the month of June, when normally only B films<sup>iii</sup> would be screened, despite its famous director and the presence of a actor like Henry Fonda, very popular in Italy (Quaglietti 1991: 73-74).

While American sophisticated comedies were generally appreciated by Italian audiences, Italian comedies would definitely attract more spectators (Ferraù. "I "Mattatori" degli incassi per la stagione 1958-1959". BI 12/9/1959: 3). In 1955 the two Italian films that managed to out-perform the year's two leading American films - Delmer Daves's *I gladiatori* (*Demetrius and the Gladiators*) (1954) and Richard Thorpe's *I cavalieri della tavola rotonda* (*Knights of the Round Table*) (1953) - at the box office were the comedies: Luigi Comencini's *Pane, amore e gelosia* (1954) and Vittorio De Sica's *L'oro di Napoli* (1954) (Ferraù. "Tirando le somme". BI 27/1/1955: 2). This outcome was not replicated in any of the major urban markets in northern cities, where other movies generated higher returns. (Ferraù. "Tirando le somme". BI 3/3/1955: 2).

There was one winning element that Hollywood appreciated could virtually guarantee success:

[...] nel novembre del '43, a sbarco da poco avvenuto, all'attonito e sbigottito cronista di *The Stars and Stripes* i marinai di un'unità della marina italiana rispondevano di rendersi a malapena conto delle vicissitudini politiche del

nostro paese, ma di conoscere benissimo le vicende delle *stars* di Hollywood. Clark Gable, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich - per citarne solo alcuni - costituivano anche per gli Italiani, molto più degli attori nostrani, i personaggi-simbolo, i modelli cui riferirsi nei comportamenti quotidiani (Cavallo 1991: 125).

As the American myth had become accessible to everybody, according to Wagstaff (1995: 93) Italians were tranquillized in the evenings 'with the wholesome American values of Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman and Gary Cooper', which represented that 'soothing resolution' requested by the government and supported by the Vatican. The top 'best-sellers' of American productions were films with well-known actors and actresses (Burt Lancaster, William Holden, James Dean, Ingrid Bergman, Ava Gardner, Stewart Granger), which confirmed the strength and the need for 'divismo' in order to guarantee an exceptional profit (Ferraù. "Qualche anticipazione sul consuntivo '56-'57". BI 29/6/1957: 3). Moreover, when possible, the American star would be accompanied by a local celebrity:

Producing films in Europe, with local as well as American stars, and with publicity directed to European as well as American media, could help to attract a European audience. The 1950s and 1960s were the great years of European

stars, especially women, in American-produced films: Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, Anna Magnani, Brigitte Bardot, Jeanne Moreau (Lev 1993: 22).

It would not come as a surprise to find that the film critic Giuseppe Marotta in 1959 wrote for the magazine *L'Europeo* the portrait of three popular stars: Marilyn Monroe, Brigitte Bardot and Sophia Loren, pretending to interview people and gather opinions on three of the most successful actresses in post-war Italy. Despite RC's accusation of American stars being used to promote 'lo scandalo, il divorzio, la volubilità, i guadagni facili [...], la vita corrotta o anormale' ("G.S.Ch.", RC 1942: 77; see also Carancini, RC 1956: 18), it was difficult to fight against a stardom system already established in American cinema, which had become very successful in Italy and had created a wide interest over Hollywood stars' personal and public lives, constants of the image of stardom (Dyer 1998: 35).



## 5.2 US films recommended and cut or excluded by parish cinema circuit

In a small advert in the *CCC*, the *Segnalazioni cinematografiche* are described in this way:

Fascicoli settimanali contenenti l'esame dei films di nuova visione. Rappresentano per l'Italia, secondo l'Enciclica Vigilanti Cura, la "lista nazionale di classificazione morale delle pellicole". Le Segnalazioni sono spedite ogni settimana agli abbonati in dispense che comprendono i dati segnaletici, il sunto della trama, una nota estetica e una approfondita valutazione morale dei films (RC 1950: 13).

The quotation is interesting not just because it establishes the criteria of the *Segnalazioni*, but also because of the repetition of the word 'morale', which clarifies the main aim of the meticulous and systematic activity of the *CCC*. This moral classification did not only give general guidelines on the films released, but first and foremost outlined their moral value, this being of great importance for Catholic establishment and audiences. It was a national list that sought to convey precise information with the intention of advising Catholics on what were the best films for them to watch: what Nazareno Taddei defined as

'un'esigenza pastorale insieme un forte mezzo d'apostolato', referring therefore to the educational aim of the *Segnalazioni* and their intention to spread moral values through cinema (RC 1952: 3). The principles of the *Segnalazioni* had already been expounded in an article by Monsignor Civardi that the RC had published in 1940. The *Segnalazioni* acknowledged that the difference between what was allowed to be shown in parish and public cinemas should be taken into account when a moral judgement was expressed and that a film that was considered to be suitable for a public cinema might often be considered inappropriate for the expressly Catholic audience of a parish cinema. As the *Segnalazioni cinematografiche* sought to draw attention to what its authors regarded as the capacity of certain films to influence their audiences in a negative manner (the word 'influenzabili' was often used) and to 'damage' them spiritually, the distinction between parish and public cinemas was made perhaps with the intention of safeguarding small towns and villages' audiences, whose only contact with film was through church screenings. Mons. Civardi explained in his article

(RC 1940: 180) that - as the films considered to be 'visibili per tutti in sala cattolica' had to be approved by the Vatican, and as the audience was significantly different from the public cinemas - a clear distinction had to be made.

In January 1952 the category *Sconsigliati* was introduced and intended for 'films che, pur non raggiungendo i limiti dell'esclusione, contengono elementi negativi e pericolosi' (Galletto, RC 1952: 3). The distinction between *Sconsigliati* and *Esclusi* is further explained by the Catholic film critic Renato Filizzola (2004)<sup>v</sup>: a film was classified as *Escluso* when 'teoricamente andava contro i principi della morale cattolica', and as *Sconsigliato* if 'solamente adombrava posizioni morali e cattoliche'. This distinction will be difficult to single out when looking at specific films, but it elicits a significant feature the Catholic establishment felt the need to introduce to broaden the areas of analysis in the film classifications. In an article in RC in 1952 Nazareno Taddei, despite stating that the moral judgements of the CCC were applied

to films without really giving audiences the opportunity to choose for themselves, praised the introduction of the *Sconsigliati* category, as it did complement - according to the Jesuit - the other categories of the *Segnalazioni* (consigliabile, ammesso, escluso), covering 'tutto il campo dell'opportunità di visione' (Taddei, RC 1952: 4).

When examining individual *Segnalazioni*, it should be kept in mind that the films analysed in this thesis are only the ones with the highest box-office returns. In particular - amongst the categories *Esclusi* and *Sconsigliati* most of the films (Fred Zinnemann's *Da qui all'eternità* (*From Here to Eternity*) (1953) Henry King's *Il sole sorgerà ancora* (*The sun also rises*) (1957), Charles Vidor's *Addio alle armi* (*A Farewell to Arms*) (1957), Billy Wilder's *Quando la moglie è in vacanza* (*The Seven Year Itch*) (1955), George Sidney's *Pal Joey* (1957), John Sturges's *Sfida all'O.K. Corral* (*Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*) (1957), Edward Dmytryk's *L'avventuriero di Hong-Kong* (*Soldier of Fortune*) (1955)) grossed over 100 million lira di incasso lordo in their year, while *A qualcuno piace caldo* (*Some Like*

*It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) was the film 'di maggiore incasso nelle città capozona'.

Amongst the most successful US films in the years 1945-1960, the *Sconsigliati* and *Esclusi* categories present only 15 films. Two are the main reasons in the *Segnalazioni* which determine the exclusion of certain films from viewing: sex and violence, which were considered the main hindrances in a film, together with of course lack of morality and of religious ideals. In an article in *L'Unità* titled "Arte, morale e cattolici", Mario Alicata (1961), responsible for cultural activities in the Communist Party defined 'l'ossessione del sesso' the inflated concern expressed by the Catholic establishment towards what they perceived as 'il disfrearsi di un erotismo morboso e incontrollato'. Alicata's claim is extremely poignant because from the analysis of both the American and the Italian films made in this Chapter and in the following one, a reflection of his allegation emerges. Alicata accused the Catholics of identifying as corruption 'l'acquisizione da parte delle grandi masse popolari italiane di una mentalità

più libera da certi ipocriti e immorali tabù tradizionali nei confronti di numerosi fatti di costume'. This point of view elicits an attempt - according to the communist leader - from the Catholic Church to eliminate depiction of changing moral standards deemed as dangerous. This, in some ways, explained even the contradictory positions towards films such as *La dolce vita*, which not just Alicata, but even members of the Catholic community, praised for its Catholic ideology. What Alicata defined as an ideological form of terrorism exerted from the Catholic establishment on public opinion against sexual issues appear quite unmistakably from the comments of the *Segnalazioni*. The films that were to be most definitely avoided were accused of 'scene con costumi succinti [...] ed altre eccessivamente brutali' (*La magnifica preda*, XXXVI-Disp.24 1954: 188); 'morboso orrore', contrasting however with the general comment that the film was 'ben sceneggiato e ben diretto, animato dalla magistrale interpretazione della Crawford' (*So che mi ucciderai*, XXXII/20 1952: 160); 'illegittimo connubio' between two characters, together with violence and legitimate gambling

(*Sfida all'O.K. Corral*, XLII/19 1957: 204); lack of moral principles (*Il sole sorgerà ancora*, XLIV/9 1958: 79); 'argomento scabroso, numerose situazioni presentate con intenti maliziosi, varie scene piccanti, alcuni abbigliamenti sconvenienti' (*Quando la moglie è in vacanza*, XXXIX/2 1956: 14); illicit relationship and lack of religious ideals (*Addio alle armi*, XLIV/12 1958: 108); violence and 'costumi succinti' (*L'avventuriero di Hong-Kong*, XXXVIII/23 1955: 183); danze sensuali e scomposte, gli abbigliamenti, le frasi a doppio senso, il cinismo con cui sono presentate le relazioni [...] e la satira su concetti e problemi religiosi' (*Bulli e pupe*, XL/33 1956: 263); 'l'amoralità dei personaggi, il modo in cui vengono presentati l'adulterio e il divorzio, scene di brutale violenza' (*Da qui all'eternità*, XXXVI-Disp.28 1954: 222).

The films that came under the category of *Esclusi* are *Pal Joey* for 'l'amoralità del protagonista, cui si aggiungono esibizionismi, numerosi abbigliamenti succinti, parecchie frasi equivoche e di cattivo gusto' (XLIII/12 1958: 120); *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde*, for the 'frivolezza della trama, i principi ostentati delle protagoniste, il loro

contegno, il loro abbigliamento spesso sconveniente, le scene e le canzoni scabrose' (XXXV-Disp.2 1954: 16); and *A qualcuno piace caldo*, for the 'scene sensuali, le battute equivoche, i costumi molto succinti' (XLVI/15 1959: 159), despite the film having been described as: 'il film non manca di movimento ed ha un certo valore spettacolare'. When looking at the example of *A qualcuno piace caldo*, the position taken by the reviewer on the pro-government newspaper *Il Tempo* in relation to the recommendations of the Vatican, it is noticeable that the review, while defining the sense of humour as clever and malicious, it still condemns the 'doppi sensi' of the film (Rondi 1959). It seemed that the main concern for categorising films as *Esclusi* would be sex much more than violence, and sensual behaviours would set the criteria to decide which films to show in parish circuit. However, when the political interest was stronger, the Vatican was prepared to make an exception: a successful film which was appreciated by the CCC was Henry Hathaway's *Corriere diplomatico* (*Diplomatic courier*) (1952), defined by Mario Guidorizzi (2001: 49) in his volume *Caccia alla streghe a Hollywood*



'una pellicola dai trasparenti intenti anticomunisti'. Despite a reference to violence and 'qualche scollatura accentuata', the CCC still put the film in the category 'Per tutti con riserva' (XXXII/17 - 1952: 132).

However, if 'Hollywood was in the business of selling sex, glamour, and entertainment' - as Gregory D. Black (1994: 57) affirms - the issue of sex was certainly the least appreciated by the Vatican. *The diffusion of supposed American manners, mores and morals through the medium of Hollywood movies was a concern throughout much of Western Europe.* In writing on the free trade of American film in the post-war period, Ian Jarvie (1992) drew attention to how elite social groups in the UK were concerned that American films would change - amongst other things - the British accent. In Italy the concern was of a different kind: there was a widespread belief amongst the Catholic establishment that the loosening of morals was linked to American films (Jarvie 1998: 43). A letter written in December 1952 by Giulio Andreotti, Sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

to Monsignor Albino Galletto, Consulente Ecclesiastico of the CCC and published in RC shows how strong the relationship between relaxation of morals and American cinema was supposed to be. In an attempt to justify his role of censor within the distribution of national and international films, Andreotti explained that the danger of cinema lay not only in what he defined 'qualche gamba scoperta', but also and especially in a portrayal of a society which legitimates immorality. Andreotti explained this by giving the example of some American films, which did not condemn the issue of divorce and even worse showed it as something within the norm. Of a similar kind, and of similar danger, was the case of gangster films, where the main protagonists, according to Andreotti, were - despite being villain - still pleasant and likeable to audiences. Andreotti concluded by asking whether the images of a film or its thesis was more dangerous and by not giving a definite answer. What is significant here is not only the link between the loosening of morals and American films, but also the insistence not just by the Catholic establishment, but also by Catholic audiences on 'l'influenza nefasta di

certe scene scollacciate', which Andreotti affirmed to be in total agreement. When specifically looking at the individual films, it will be easy to realise that immorality of costumes and provocative female characters were the major concern for the Catholics.

While, on one hand, it is true that such apprehension seemed to be felt particularly by the Catholic establishment, it is not at the same time truthful what Filizzola (2002) states: that 'appena un film spiccava per la sua spregiudicatezza, scattava il divieto di vederlo' . An examination of the *Segnalazioni* reveals that films listed - for example - as *Adulti con riserva* or *Adulti*, were still appreciated and so were not excluded from being seen on the public circuit. It is worth re-stressing that parish cinemas did not only show films that had been categorised as *Tutti* category, but would instead select movies from the other groups. This practice did not prompt an expression of great concern by the Vatican. However, on one hand, Catholics seem to have associated this form of

relaxation of morals with American culture. As Wanrooij writes:

Vale la pena ricordare subito che per alcuni dei fenomeni sovraccennati - divorzio, flirt, rifiuto dell'autorità maritale, lotta generazionale - gli Stati Uniti erano visti come la principale fonte di contagio. [...] Dato che la dottrina cattolica considerava la famiglia pietra angolare di ogni costruzione sociale [...] si venne a stabilire uno stretto legame tra la lotta contro l'immoralità e la rivendicazione del senso nazionale: così, contro i fautori del divorzio, il gesuita Oddone invocò i valori della famiglia, della patria e della religione riuniti in una lotta *pro aris et focis* (Wanrooij 1991: 205).

Wanrooij's quotation is significant for its reference to some of the issues strongly criticised by the Catholic Church: divorce, flirting, and irreverence toward the husband's authority are examples of threats to the institution of the family, which the Vatican could not permit. Marriage was a sacrament which - as Andreotti underlined - could not be broken and any attempt to undermine its authority was seen as a real concern from the Catholic establishment. While, however, as Andreotti asked, the question was whether the images of a film or its thesis was more dangerous, it seems from a thorough analysis of the main excluded films, that the visual aspects

were at times as important as the thesis of the films. It is interesting here to report what Goffredo Fofi declares in an interview to Tatti Sanguineti in 1992 (and then published in the collection of articles on censorship titled *Italia taglia*) (1999: 81): remembering his past experience as an altar boy, Fofi referred to the censorship imposed by priests when pre-viewing films before parish screenings following the criteria of the CCC (a practice remarkably portrayed by Giuseppe Tornatore in *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* (1989)) and gave this account:

I baci non dovevano mai essere carnali. I baci carnali erano vietati. I baci del cinema italiano e del cinema francese erano sempre carnali, mentre nel cinema americano erano rarissimi, molto casti, mai con la lingua in bocca (quoted in Sanguineti 1999: 81).

This extraordinary statement points out what probably the real issue was: the concern was very much on the images of a film, more than its thesis, and anything that would go over the limit of what was defined as decent would immediately be banned by the Catholic establishment. The analysis of the individual films in the following section will confirm this point and emphasise further the main

relationship between immorality of costumes and provocative female characters.

### 5.3 Film analysis of case studies

This section examines the most successful American films in Italy in terms of box-office intakes between the years 1945-1960 (according to figures from the Borsa Film<sup>9</sup>), which were either recommended by the Vatican through the *Segnalazioni* of the CCC, or not approved by it and therefore excluded from the circuit of parish cinemas. The most successful *Esclusi* Hollywood films were *A qualcuno piace caldo* (*Some like it hot*) (1959) by Billy Wilder, *Pal Joey* (1957) by George Sidney and *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* (*Gentlemen prefer blondes*) (1953) by Howard Hawks. *Pal Joey* was classified amongst the films which in the season 1957/1958 grossed over 100 million lire (BI 21/6/1958: 2), *A qualcuno piace caldo* was in 1959 amongst the films 'di maggior incasso nelle città capozona' (BI

24/12/1959: 2), while *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* was one of the most successful films in Milan in the season 1953-1954 (BI 5/2/1954: 1). The two films which will be analysed here are amongst the most successful and the most recommended by the CCC, they are: *Incantesimo (Holiday)* (1938) by George Cukor and *La regina d'Africa (The African Queen)* (1951) by John Huston. The films mentioned above, which will be the focus of an analysis of this section, have been studied in the Italian version to make sure aspects of translation would be taken into consideration.

As Sangiuliano (1983: 35) writes, the musical was 'il filone più tipico, insieme al Western, dell'intera espressione hollywoodiana, il più direttamente illustrativo del mito della felicità e del benessere, con l'immediata rappresentazione della vita dei divi, scene grandiose piene di sorrisi e gambe levigate di ballerine'. While the three US films in the category *Esclusi* are all classified as comedies, the definitions given by Sangiuliano can be applied to all of them. If on one hand these films could be categorised as

unusual musicals, as they all offer a cynical portrayal of reality, on the other hand happiness, smiles and 'gambe levigate' of the female dancers were some of the most significant aspects of the films. The happy ending, where 'men find, fall in love with, and win the women of their dreams, and women find their dream lovers in similar fashion' (Belton 1990: 166), is still strongly present in all the films analysed. Moreover, the main female actresses were certainly two real stars of American cinema. Both *A qualcuno piace caldo* and *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* have protagonists who were played by Marilyn Monroe. She was also the main actress in Henry Hathaway's *Niagara* (1953) and Billy Wilder's *Quando la moglie è in vacanza* (*The Seven Year Itch*)<sup>vi</sup> (1955), both of which were included in the category *Sconsigliati*. In contrast to this, the two movies that were most heartily endorsed by the CCC both had Katharine Hepburn as the main actress (*Incantesimo* and *La regina d'Africa*). The physical representation of the female stars and the portrayal of the female characters are leading aspects of the analysis that follows below.



Both stars were extremely popular in Italy. By the mid fifties Marilyn Monroe was already on the covers of many popular Italian magazines, such as *Epoca* and *L'Europeo* (Gundle 1995: 149), while Katharine Hepburn was defined in a survey carried out in Rome by Enrico Giannelli (1953: 10), as one of the most popular foreign celebrities in the capital. However, their physical appearance and their dramatic roles were extremely different, especially in the films that are being considered here. The identification of Marilyn Monroe with sexuality (Dyer 1986: 18) is evident in the two movies through several aspects of mise-en-scène and cinematography. Marilyn Monroe's costumes were all tightly shaped to her sensual body, presenting her as a clear symbol of female sexuality. However, the paradox she impersonates is whether the sexuality she represented was innocent or promiscuous. The Catholic establishment had no doubts: all the tight and diaphanous costumes she wore in *A qualcuno piace caldo* were defined by the CCC's *Schede* 'molto succinti' (XLVI/15 - 1959: 159), one of the aspects which classified the film as 'moralmente

inaccettabile' (XLVI/15 - 1959: 159). In *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde*, one of Marilyn Monroe's first successes, the more demure but yet clearly sexualised costumes were still defined by the *Schede* as often not suitable (Vol.XXXV - Disp. 2 - 1954: 16). This issue of women reduced to pure objectified bodies - discussed by Maureen Turim (1990) in her analysis of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and generally condemned by feminist criticism - was disapproved by the Catholic Church not certainly for the final extolling of heterosexual monogamy (Turim 1990: 106). It was more the danger of identifying female body as spectacle: in fact, as Richard Maltby states about the opening scene of the film, 'the primary source of audience enjoyment in the scene is the pleasure we gain from watching Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell perform for an off screen audience; our reward is spectacular, rather than narrational' (Maltby 1995: 418). The spectacular aspect may not in itself constitute an issue for the Catholic Church. However, in the specific case of Marilyn Monroe, it would lead to legitimating the idea of taking pleasure by watching a sexual icon, whose glamorous and

provocative costumes would also complement attention from a narrative, defined by the *Schede* as frivolous (Vol. XXXV - Disp. 2 - 1954: 16).

The immorality of the costumes was an issue also in the third and last banned film, *Pal Joey*, condemned for presenting 'numerosi abbigliamenti succinti' (XLIII/12 - 1958: 120). The movie is set in a nightclub and therefore included chorus girls, who were often shown wearing revealing outfits, which appealed to the male audience of the club. This element was reinforced by the statement of one of the nightclubs' managers: 'Sapete cosa vuole la gente? Gamba!'. This eroticisation of women stood in contrast to the role played by the main two actresses of the film: the sophisticated Rita Hayworth, whose sober costumes were intended to deflect from her own past as a chorus girl; and the austere Kim Novak, one of the chorus girls, whose poor social background is shown by her sombre outfits, worn outside the nightclub. Novak's character's uneasiness about her profession and her illegitimate relationship with Frank Sinatra, is still not enough for the CCC to judge the film differently. Linda (Kim Novak), in

fact, is still a cabaret star, and therefore not moral enough to be approved by the Vatican: she is still somehow using her femininity to attract a male audience and encouraging their voyeurism.

The positive reception of the ecclesiastic establishment towards films such as *Incantesimo* and *La regina d'Africa* do not come as a surprise when comparing the depiction of the female characters in these two films with that mentioned above for the films banned by the CCC. Wide coats, long shapeless skirts, masculine shoes and covering blouses highlighted Katharine Hepburn's face in *Incantesimo*, while her body was completely hidden by her clothes. Even on New Year's Eve at her sister's engagement party, Julia's (Doris Nolan) gold shoestring strap dress is certainly in contrast with Linda's (Katharine Hepburn) long black sexless outfit. Despite never reaching the degree of overt sexuality portrayed by Marilyn Monroe's outfits, Julia's costumes were presented as the expression of a certain type of woman, which in many ways resembles the characters played by Marilyn Monroe in the films mentioned above. High standard of life, social status and

economic security are values strongly regarded by both Julia's character, Zuccherò Kandiski (Marilyn Monroe in *A qualcuno piace caldo*) and Lorelei Lee (Marilyn Monroe in *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde*). When Julia gets rid of Johnny (Cary Grant) - becoming an impediment to her high standard of life - she is dressed in a black chiffon dress with a wide low cut, not very different from the black but transparent and very sensual dress Marilyn Monroe wears in the final scene of *A qualcuno piace caldo*. On the contrary, her sister Linda, whose outfit is a wide masculine coat, which completely covers her feminine body, is the character who refuses economic stability and social status in order to gain sincere love.

If *Incantesimo* had shown a very sexless portrayal of the main female character, *La regina d'Africa* presented an even more chaste image of Katharine Hepburn. In it, her pale and dowdy costumes are appropriate to her role as the minister's sister. In the film, she is not presented at all as a sexual character. Her brother defined her as being 'not beautiful', admitting that only God found her a place by his side. Her prudish clothes do not attract the

attention of the audience to her body and even when she is forced to undress herself, she does not come across as a sexual character, as the camera only reveals her bare arms, or nothing at all, leaving her completely out of shot. Camera movements here are an important aspect of the portrayal of the female character, which were very different from the way in which Marilyn Monroe was presented to the audience. The 'side-on tits and arse positioning' obsessively repeated in Marilyn Monroe films (Dyer 1986: 20) identified her as an object of desire for men, while many shots are also taken to show her back, as when in *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* she is dressed in gold and is dancing with the elderly owner of a diamond mine, in her famous opening scene walking along the station platform in *A qualcuno piace caldo*, or on the yacht when she is trying to seduce Junior, the heir to the Shell Oil fortune, who is played by Tony Curtis.

In May's *The Big Tomorrow. Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way* (2000), a section of the volume is dedicated to the Trends in Film Plots and the Changing

Face of American ideology. Amongst the various areas analysed there, May notes a category that re-emerges after a total absence in 1940s, namely films that featured 'a sexually empowered woman' who has the ability to seduce men to her advantage, creating a threat to the social order (May 2000: 282). This corresponds to a certain extent to what Marilyn Monroe's characters seek to do in the films that are analysed here. In them, she plays sexy characters, who use their sexuality to try to gain power and control over men. She is blond, she corresponds to the Italian definition of 'maggiorate fisiche'<sup>vii</sup>, and she becomes the embodiment of sexuality criticised by the Church. However, what makes her characters even more difficult and more dangerous is that Marilyn Monroe seems to combine 'naturalness *and* overt sexuality' (Dyer 1986: 33) which makes sex become innocent, aspect this one which is perhaps what the Church finds most difficult to accept. Making sex appear as innocent is certainly what the Church did not want to see in cinemas and the *Schede* of the CCC are a clear confirmation of this. What might be alarming for the Catholic establishment is that the desirability of

Marilyn Monroe's characters could be used to legitimate sexuality and deprive sex of its sense of guilt. The actress's power lay in her vulnerability and in her innocent sexuality, which enable her to exert control over those men who were susceptible to them. What became even more extraordinary was the interface of innocence and stupidity that Monroe seemed to perch on in her films and which the Italian version of *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* underline additionally up to the point of almost justifying the detective's definition of Lorelei Lee (Marilyn's character in the film) as 'un'oca mercenaria'. Not only does Lorelei come up with questions such as 'per di qua per l'Europa in Francia?', but also the Italian dubbed version of the film has her making several grammatical errors, such as 'una ragazza come io', or 'se avrebbe una figlia sarebbe contento che sposerebbe una persona ricca', which are part of a character defined by herself in the same film as someone who becomes intelligent only when she needs it. The same dumbness is evident in *A qualcuno piace caldo*, when - for example - she tries to impress the millionaire Junior (Tony Curtis) by copying what Josephine



(Tony Curtis) and Daphne (Jack Lemmon) stated about their intellectual and sophisticated origins. However 'il conservatorio di Santa Cecilia' becomes 'il conservatorio di Donna Cecilia', giving her character a comic but sweet twist.

Marilyn Monroe's characters are very different from those that Katharine Hepburn portrayed in the two films that are analysed here. *Incantesimo* presents her as a reassuring character, Linda, who is almost male in her physical attributes and behaviour: she is extremely thin, without any showing curves and her sexless costumes not only flatten her femininity but at times also make her look slightly masculine. Linda is neither using nor showing her sexuality in order to win her male partner. In fact, she only becomes sentimentally involved at the very end of the film, when her sister reassures her that she is not interested in Johnny. Only at this point she will reveal openly her feeling for Johnny, without risking of jeopardising any possible relationship between him and her sister.

In *La regina d'Africa*, she plays Rosa, who is foremost the sister of a missionary. She is dependent on her brother, cinematically shown by her positioning almost always by the side or behind him. Yet the character is also a strong woman with solid moral values and a determined personality. Her spiritual and religious beliefs are constant in the film and she is always at the service of others. These moral qualities are certainly very different from the values embodied by Marilyn Monroe's characters in the two films analysed here. One aspect of *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* criticised in the *Schede* by the CCC is the 'principi ostentati delle protagoniste' and 'il loro contegno' (XXXV - Disp. 2 - 1954: 16). This accusation raises another issue common to the other banned films and is in clear contrast to the most recommended ones. Both characters portrayed by Marilyn Monroe in the two films 'banned' by the Church are nightclub entertainers (a chorus girl in *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* and a musician in *A qualcuno piace caldo*) which is the same occupation of Linda (Kim Novak) and Vera Simpson's (Rita Hayworth) former employment in *Pal Joey*. These are jobs

'traditionally (or cinematically) thought of as being one where the woman is on show, there for the pleasure of men' (Dyer 1986: 18-19; see also Humm 1997: 39) and the antithesis of the role impersonated by Hepburn in *Incantesimo* and even more in *La regina d'Africa*.

It does not come as a surprise, that Katharine Hepburn's role in *Incantesimo*, for example, is certainly seen more favourably by the Catholic establishment than any of Marilyn Monroe's roles. Linda (Katharine Hepburn) is a rich woman, who does not need to work (as opposed to Marilyn Monroe who works in both her films) but is also very aware of the dangers of money. She prefers spending her time in the cosy playroom rather than in one of the sumptuous rooms of her elegant palace. She likes Johnny Case (Cary Grant) because he has not been infected by 'il rispetto per la ricchezza' and she satirically reminds him that 'i soldi sono il nostro Dio'. This identification of money with God is obviously a criticism she makes of her family life but is also the criterion on which Marilyn Monroe's characters base their lives. In *Incantesimo* Linda (Katharine Hepburn) presented the image of a different kind of independent

woman from Lorelei Lee (Marilyn Monroe): she does not need to exploit her femininity in order to win a man, but 'adopts male characteristics in order to enjoy male prerogatives' (Haskell quoted in Dyer 1998: 54). Hepburn's portrayal of as Linda could not have been more different from Monroe's characters. Linda bonds with men in a very masculine way, using her body for acrobatic shows with Cary Grant rather than to try to attract sexually his attention; she is in control of her life, she is the '*idealtypus della donna emancipata*', which contrasts clearly with the *super-sexy image* imposed by the system on Marilyn Monroe (De Marchi 1996: 61).

A clear contrast between the films classified by the CCC as *Per Tutti* or *Esclusi* is the presence of spiritual and religious beliefs in *Incantesimo* and *La regina d'Africa* and a total or partial absence of them in *A qualcuno piace caldo*, *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* and *Pal Joey*. In Monroe's films, as well as in *Pal Joey*, the characters were in search of raised social status gained through marriage into higher social classes. Money seemed to be the main

asset in a man: Lorelei Lee in *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* is 'a manipulative gold-digger' (Maltby 1995: 386) who affirmed that 'innamorarsi dei ricchi è facile come innamorarsi dei disperati', and who was defined by her best friend as someone so interested in money that for her 'i soldi sono un dopolavoro'. Zuccherò in *A qualcuno piace caldo* dreams of meeting a man rich enough to have 'uno yacht, il suo treno privato e il suo dentifricio personale'. In *Pal Joey*, Vera Simpson (Rita Hayworth), despite becoming a sophisticated, millionairess widow, whose charitable activities could be praised, still found herself unable to forget her past as a chorus girl. Despite the fact that women's desire to improve their social conditions rather than to raise big families was a general trend in post-war Italy (Piccone Stella 1991: 270), this was certainly not what the Church wanted to promote. Women had to return to their family values and forget that social mobility guaranteed by the marriage to a rich man (Piccone Stella 1991: 273-274). This is certainly very different - for instance - from what was Howard Hawks' idea for *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde*.

It was simply a joke. In other films, you have two men who go out and try to find pretty girls for fun. We imagined the opposite and took two girls who go out and find a few men for fun: a perfectly modern story; it pleased me a lot; it was funny (Becker, Truffaut and Rivette 1956:14).

This role of empowered women, who take control over men, was the expression of a modernity which seems to collide with the Catholic principles in relation to women: the role of women was to look after their family, whose primacy in Italian society had to be preserved (Ginsborg 1990: 174). *Incantesimo* and *La regina d'Africa* promoted such values. Family principles were clearly endorsed in *Incantesimo* by all of the characters portrayed. Despite the fact that the father of the bride seems mainly interested in his future son-in-law's social background, he states that 'sposarsi è un passo molto importante per una ragazza' and finally accepts that his daughter Julia wishes to marry someone from a different social status; the family's internal conflicts seem to be partially forgotten when the happiness of one daughter is discussed; and Linda's concern about her sister's future is shown by her effort in keeping the couple together and by her joy of discovering that the father has

finally given his approval (when she finds out her father has done so she exclaims 'come sarebbe orgogliosa la mamma!', referring to the only family member not present to the important event). Linda is loyal and faithful to her family until the very end of the film and will only reveal her interest in Johnny (Cary Grant) when she has ensured that by doing so she will not hurt her sister Julia.

In *La regina d'Africa*, family values are expressed by the close relationship between Rosa and her brother, by the decision of Charlie and Rosa to make their relationship legal by getting married just before they are executed and by their reference to their wish to have children (Charlie states that 'Non ci mancheranno i racconti da fare ai nostri nipoti').

The family present in both films are supported by a strong Christianity: in *Incantesimo*, the first conversation about Julia's wedding takes place in church, which the family (even the alcoholic son) regularly attend, while in *La regina d'Africa* the opening scene takes place in the Methodist church that has been built in the African village, where Rosa's brother is celebrating mass. There are many

religious references in the film's Italian version: Rosa's brother's name is Samuele, which in the English-language version he is only 'her brother', with no first name; at the beginning of the film Rosa has a conversation with him about a friend who has become a bishop; Rosa reminds Charlie that 'Dio non ha dimenticato questo posto come la presenza di mio fratello dimostra'; Samuele decides to risk his life when the Germans invade the village because 'un buon pastore non diserta il suo gregge'; Rosa thanks God for Charlie's courage; and even Charlie, the more apparently immoral character, who smokes heavily and drinks gin, is redeemed by Rosa and asks for God's protection towards the end of the film. Not only Christianity and family values but also self-sufficiency and social obligation are shown in *La regina d'Africa* by the strong will power of the two characters, when they decide to blow up a German boat against all odds and in a more individual way in *Incantesimo* when Linda decides to help her sister to be happy. In this way, both films were the expression of what Americans were supposed to be like:



Traditionally, the citizen has been an optimistic, problem-solving, responsible participant in a culture, with a sense of both social responsibility and individual self-reliance (Susman 1989: 26).

The portrayal of Americans as being optimistic, problem-solving, responsible, and self-sufficient becomes even more evident when comparing the male protagonists in *Incantesimo* and *Pal Joey*. Frank Sinatra in *Pal Joey* is different from the portrayal of the good American fellow Johnny Case (Cary Grant) in *Incantesimo*. Sinatra is a singer, an occupation that in the film puts him in contact with women, his main interest in life. He is called 'pappagallo', 'farfallone', 'sfacciato' by men and old women; and 'uno schianto' and 'micetto' by young girls, completely overwhelmed by him when he is on stage. He is defined as dangerous for women and whenever he can, he tells stories about his amorous adventures. He is also full of those 'frasi equivoche e di cattivo gusto' (*Pal Joey* XLIII/12 - 1958:120) that prompted the Vatican to ban the film: when he sees Linda (Kim Novak) going to bed with the hot water bottle he proudly affirms that 'la mia ragazza non ha bisogno di questo per scaldarsi'; when the piano player tells

him that when he can, he gives Kim Novak a hand, he says that 'io gliene darei anche due di mani!'; when he wants to entrap Vera Simpson (Rita Hayworth) to convince her to open a nightclub for him, he tells his manager that 'c'è chi ha un sistema con i cavalli, io ho il mio sistema con le donne: devi solo ricordargli che sei un maschio e che sei nato per dominarle'; when Linda (Kim Novak) wakes up after spending the night drunk on his yacht, he says that he is ashamed of himself because he has not done anything with her (a clear reference to sex); and when Linda (Kim Novak) asks him why he is ashamed of his good actions, he replies that it is 'perché ne ho fatte sempre molto poche'. Such remarks are not very dissimilar to Marilyn Monroe's characters in both of her films that are analysed here. In *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* Lorelei Lee affirms that 'di notte il signor Esmond trova molto difficile dire di no a me' and when she has to steal some compromising photographs from the private detective she counts on her sexuality to be able to succeed: 'le foto le prendo io: è un uomo o no?', referring to that 'magnetismo animale' which even the youngest of the rich participants of the cruise

seems to find in her. In *A qualcuno piace caldo*, 'le battute equivoche' criticised in the Schede (XLVI/15 - 1959: 159), are not just part of Zuccherò's lines but also part of the two men (Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon) who are now women (they will on one side admit to know that men only want one thing and that on the other will refer to women purely as objects of desire). Pal Joey (Frank Sinatra) was almost the male counterpart to what Lorelei Lee and Zuccherò represent in the female world. This is even more underlined by the fact that Pal Joey is called by Vera Simpson (Rita Hayworth) 'biondo', with all the female cinematic association with desirability and therefore a danger from a moral point of view.

This negative role of female and male characters is present even when one looks at the narrative aspects of the film. Sinatra arrives in San Francisco because the police are after him, as he has been with an under age girl, he is after sex and uses women for his own interests, he has a honest girl, Linda (Kim Novak), who is in love with him, but up until the end of the film he shows a preference for Vera Simpson (Rita Hayworth), because she is

potentially more useful for his financial future. He is a wholly immoral character who is in marked contrast to Grant's Johnny Case in *Incantesimo*. Case is the epitome of what Klapp (quoted in Dyer 1998: 47-48) in *Heroes, Villains and Fools*, defined as the good fellow: 'the central theme of American ethos' as 'friendly and easy going; he fits in and likes people; he never sets himself above others but goes along with the majority'. Case is the opposite of both Pal Joey and Lorelei Lee and Zuccherò. In *Incantesimo*, Johnny falls in love with a woman without knowing that she is a millionairess (as does Lorelei Lee in *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* and Zuccherò in *A qualcuno piace caldo*); Johnny defines himself 'un semplice uomo del popolo', whose humble origins (his father was the owner of a grocery shop) make him say that he does not need too much money and wants to retire at the age of thirty after a long working life. Johnny Case's detachment from money and success makes his future father-in-law define him as an 'anti-American' because he does not fit with the idea of the self-made man, as Johnny, a 'sognatore', refuses to climb the social ladder. However, he

fits perfectly not just with the good fellow's attributes, but also with some of the spiritual values promoted by the Roman Catholic Church: honesty, integral behaviour, only interested in his feelings (he asks his future wife: 'Io ti amo. È quello che conta, vero?'), and his close friends. This American type is extraordinarily played not just by Grant's Case but also by the character's close friends, the university professor Nick Potter and his wife Susan. The three characters are the expression of those social values such as family, friendship and a simple life, which contrasts with what Julia, Johnny's future wife, embodies. Julia, in fact, can be defined closer to the female character portrayed by Monroe: she is blond and her costumes are more alluring than those of her sister Linda (Katharine Hepburn), and her main interest is but in her social status rather than in her emotions. In a striking golden dress, she proclaims that 'fare soldi è la cosa più bella del mondo', she prefers a sumptuous engagement party to a cosy family gathering in her sister's playroom and she is glad that her rich father has already arranged her and her husband's future. Money was the principal

motivation for the characters in Pal Joey, *A qualcuno piace caldo* and *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde*, and it was this that the *Schede* found morally unacceptable. In contrast, it played an insignificant role for those characters who were applauded by the CCC.

Corruption, social climbing and material interests were all features associated with a different aspect of mise-en-scène, which played a distinctive role in the films analysed here: the role of the city as the common setting for these stories. Despite the decision of setting a film like *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* in Paris as part of a wider project established by Hollywood to secure foreign markets by constructing a specific European identity which would attract European audiences (Guback 1969: 11; Handyside 2004: 77), the symbolic significance of the city is clearly expressed in this passage written by Roberto Campari in 1991:

Sartre aveva scritto a vent'anni un testo in cui vedeva proprio i grattacieli, insieme al cinema e al jazz, come le forme della civiltà futura [...] e infatti troviamo, circa negli stessi anni la serie busta di due fortunate commedie con

Marilyn Monroe, *Come sposare un millionario* (*How to Marry a Millionaire*, 1953) e *Quando la moglie è in vacanza* (*The Seven Year Itch*, 1955), in cui la distribuzione italiana della 20th Century-Fox inserisce un molto simile tratteggio di grattacieli nella cornice (in un caso giallo nell'altro rosa), che inquadra la foto di scena a colori, il cui significato non può certo limitarsi all'ambientazione newyorkese dei due film, ma anche certamente all'accostamento tra mito americano e immagine di Marilyn, allora trionfante (Campari 1991: 364-365).

This passage underlines how several factors co-exist in certain Hollywood films: the American myth - embodied for Italians by some American actresses on one side and by a futuristic civilisation (exemplified by the skyscrapers) on the other - could not be more poignant in some of the movies analysed in this dissertation. In post-war Italy, the city was an attraction 'per le opportunità di vita, per la densità sociale delle attività e gli intrecci di esperienze che offre' (Piccone Stella 1991: 271). At the same time, though, it meant greater level of corruption and degradation from which the Church was desperate to defend its flock. In *Pal Joey* a long take of San Francisco's skyscrapers is associated with the dissoluteness of the city's nightclub district, and Linda's (Kim Novak) attempt to retain her moral integrity is

related to her small town origins (she says that 'al mio paese le ragazze non osano passare le notti in uno yacht di un uomo'). In contrast to this, New York, 'luogo dell'ascesa sociale, della scalata al successo, la vetta del mondo' (Muscio 1980: 95) was presented in *Incantesimo* only through the financial conversations that took place at the engagement party and therefore the dangerous role of the city is not exploited in the same way. In *A qualcuno piace caldo*, Chicago was represented as the city of gangsters and crime (both issues criticised in films by the Italian Catholic press, as in Ghelli, RC 1953: 10) also because the association between crime and Italy was commonplace: the gangsters gather in Florida under the disguise of the Decimo congresso degli amici dell'opera, and define themselves as those who don't pay taxes and are self-elected rather than democratically voted.

The representation of the city involves the binaries of futurism and civilization, abundance and corruption, privileging one over another and silencing to a certain extent that wilderness that was often associated with America and expressed in Western films through 'the



frontier, equality, agrarianism, tradition and the past' (Maltby 1995: 91). Tradition in a more primitive culture was linked with wilderness, innocence and purity. Such a setting tended to be a feature of one of the films approved of by the Vatican. In *La regina d'Africa*, in fact, the issue of race relations - which 'left many Europeans uneasy about America's ability to practise the democracy that she was claiming to be offering the world' (Saunders 1999: 20) and which was often noted in the Roman Catholic press (Bruno, RC 1950a: 23<sup>viii</sup>; Dorigo, RC 1959: 133-134) - was dealt with by the indigenous people being brought into Christianity by the minister and his sister, restoring those values that were significant and which would 'porre il rapporto della convivenza su basi di tolleranza umana' (Bruno, RC 1950a: 23). However, as in the 1950s 'America remained reassuringly white' (Engelhardt 1992: 108), the black - as it happened in *La regina d'Africa* - remained often as less important characters, leaving the relationship between races as a side issue rather than as the film's principal theme. In a wider sense, Handyside (2004: 85) claims that in *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* Marilyn

Monroe was the icon of the white American values, which triumph against the darker French population. In this context, though, 'the conventional happy ending of the marriage scene' which manages to cancel 'the problematic of difference' (Handyside 2004: 85) still does not succeed in winning the approval of the CCC, while a different solution of the problematic of difference in *La regina d'Africa* - the reference to the mission of getting the Africans involved in religion - was definitely part of those 'migliori sentimenti', which the *Schede* praise about the film (XXXII/34 - 1952: 265).

If the aim of this chapter was to explore how American ideology was expressed in American films exported to Italy in the post-war period and comprehend to what extent it corresponded to the ideology also promoted by the Vatican, the hostile reaction of the Vatican to certain specific American films sheds an interesting light on the difficulty of the Catholic Church to work with certain aspects of cinema, and with the representation of values,

whose dissemination the Catholic establishment was fighting against. However, when looking at the most successful American films shown in Italy between 1945 and 1960, it was crucial to see how the reception of certain American films helped influence contemporary Italian life by offering those soothing resolutions, which the Italian Government could not find in Italian Neorealism. This seemed very similar to the position of the Vatican, which was able to direct film production and distribution by the power of its *Segnalazioni cinematografiche*. If sex was certainly the issue least appreciated by the Vatican in American films, there were however other conflicting aspects of society - such as divorce and any threats to the institution of the family - of which the Vatican feared the spread through cinema. The examination of a few case studies offers though an interesting indication of the role of American cinema in Italian society and the consequent reaction of the Catholic establishment. The following chapter will look at how the CCC reacted to Italian film production and the values it represented.

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- <sup>i</sup> Normal screen (aspect ratio of 1:33:1) as opposite to the widescreen (aspect ratio from 1:66:1 to 1:85:1).
- <sup>ii</sup> 'Widescreen image together with its stereo soundtrack on a single filmstrip' (Cook and Bernink 1985: 57).
- <sup>iii</sup> 'Quickly made motion pictures, usually produced to fill the second half of a double bill' (Belton 1990: 415).
- <sup>iv</sup> Interview with the author.
- <sup>v</sup> A weekly section of the BI, which gave figures of box office intakes for the major Italian cities.
- <sup>vi</sup> The Italian title makes the reference to that degree of freedom gained by husbands when their wives are on holiday. The Italian film *Le olimpiadi dei mariti* (1960) by Giorgio Bianchi is based on the same principle (Melanco 1996: 286).
- <sup>vii</sup> Term adopted in the Fifties for actresses such as Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida, whose films - as we will see in Chapter 6 - were again criticised by the Church.
- <sup>viii</sup> 'un problema che, da più di un secolo, aveva travagliato la vita democratica negli Stati Uniti ponendosi come un controsenso ai principi di libertà e di uguaglianza sanciti dalla Costituzione'.

## Chapter VI: American and Vatican ideology in Italian films

The aim of this chapter is to explore how American and Vatican ideologies were expressed in post-war Italian films. In order to do so, I will give an overview of the most successful Italian films shown in the country between 1945 and 1960, identifying common themes, genres and characters.

In the second part I will analyse whether the same films were accepted in the parish cinemas and which ones were the most recommended by the Vatican and cut or excluded by parish cinemas' circuit: I will do that by looking at the *Segnalazioni cinematografiche* written by the *Centro Cattolico Cinematografico*.

The third part of the chapter will examine a few case studies in order to determine how American influence was spread and received in Italy through Italian most popular films. In this last part I will look at the most successful films, the most recommended by the Church and the ones the Vatican excluded from the parish cinema circuit.

## 6.1 Success of Italian films in Italy in 1945-1960: genres, styles and stars

The box office receipts of American films in Italy provided a means of discerning what the interest of the Italian audience towards different types of Hollywood cinema was (see Chapter 5.1). When examining the related figures for Italian films, it should be borne in mind that the Italian production system was divided into numerous medium and small-sized companies, that were dependent on the financial success of their current film in order to have the pecuniary means to go on to make their next. The De Laurentiis company, founded in 1957, was one of the few production houses that worked in the American manner, planning its productions several years in advance and placing actors, such as Alberto Sordi or Silvana Mangano, under exclusive contract. The difference in structure that characterised all the other production companies - reflected upon in this extract from Ernesto G. Laura's article (RC 1964: 561-562) - draws an important conclusion, which is noteworthy for this Chapter:

Si può dunque affermare che in Italia acquistare un biglietto di cinematografo equivale più che in ogni altro paese, a votare a favore d'un tipo di produzione: l'orientamento del grande pubblico si tradurrà immediatamente in un "sì" o in un "no" al proseguimento di quel filone, di quella tematica, di quella tendenza o anche solo al proseguimento della carriera di quel regista o di quell'interprete.

For the Italian cinema industry, success or failure at the box-office could be crucial to the continuation of a certain genre of film, the career of a star, or that of a specific director. The use of the word 'immediatamente' emphasises the strength of audience reaction to certain films and the consequences of that reaction (see also Monaco 1958: 9).

In 1953 a cinema audience survey was carried out in Rome. Seven hundred people coming out of cinemas (*prima, seconda visione* and *cinema di periferia*) were interviewed on a variety of cinematic matters (favourite film, favourite star, interest towards Italian cinema, etc.). Among the findings was the fact that while the names of the stars were known, and seemed to affect people's cinematic choices, the nationality of the films did not constitute a conscious form of attraction and was - especially in the outskirts of the city - more difficult to establish. Therefore, the decision of the audience was often not related to the nationality of a film but more specifically to the presence of a star (Giannelli 1953: 28). However, the

survey also revealed that the audiences - when directly asked - expressed their faith in Italian cinema (74%) (Giannelli 1953: 40). When interviewed about favourite genres, the outcome was: drammatico 18%, sentimentale 16%, passionale 10,5%, avventuroso 9,5%, comico 8,5%, brillante 6%, storico 3,7%, operistico 0,4% (Giannelli 1953: 39): this result will reflect the box-office intake which will be analysed below.

In 1957 Callisto Cosulich argued in an article in *Cinema nuovo* ("La battaglia sulle cifre" 1957: 18) that it was in the numerous popular films that the substantive real success of Italian cinema during these years was to be found rather than the ten or fifteen neorealist 'classics'. Vittorio Spinazzola's book *Cinema e pubblico* gives a detailed analysis of the Italian film production during the period 1945-1965, as well as an analysis of the most successful genres in Italy at that era. He chooses to draw a distinction between 'i film sul popolo' and 'i film per il popolo' (1985: 7) that seemed to correspond to the distinction between the most successful films (per il popolo) and the least ones (sul popolo). The only exceptions were Roberto Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* (1945) (first in terms of box-office intake in its year), Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* (1948) (eleventh) and Roberto Rossellini's *Paisà* (1946) (ninth),



which were very successful in their years but at the same time considered to be more film 'sul popolo' than 'per il popolo'.

The figures from Quaglietti's volume reveal that the Italian cinema was in healthy, vibrant condition. Lorenzo Quaglietti endorses the victory of the indigenous cinema over Hollywood, which, starting from the years before the Second World War, continued after the end of the conflict: in 1949, for example, the average box-office take for an Italian film was 53,583,610 Italian lire, compared to 43,756,248 for the American counterpart, in 1950 it was 70,202,208 to 50,853,005, and in 1951 it was 73,997,665 compared to 60,204,461 (Quaglietti 1995: 311). This does not seem to correspond to the figures given in a report by Eitel Monaco, President of Anica, where when looking at the category *Suddivisione degli incassi lordi secondo la nazionalità dei film*, the Italians managed to overtake the Americans only after 1960'.

The expression *altalena degli incassi* used by Alessandro Ferrà in his year-by-year analysis of the box-office takes in the BI, is applicable to this variability, and also pertinent to the relationship between American and Italian film successes,

which were very different when looking at each year and also at each geographical area (Ferraù. "L'altalena degli incassi". BI 1957: 3).

In the season 1951-1952 a report on the activity of the ANICA (the producers' association) affirmed that 'le accoglienze del mercato interno al film italiano sono state brillantissime' ("L'Attività dell'Anica (1951-1952)", ANICA 1952: 61), reminding how the success of Italian films in the *prime visioni* of the first 16 cities had significantly increased in comparison with American and French films (see also Appendix G and Appendix H; Avetta, RC 1952: 22). In 1955 two Italian films (Luigi Comencini's *Pane, amore e gelosia* and Vittorio De Sica's *L'oro di Napoli*) were so popular to be able to beat the first two most successful American films (*I gladiatori* and *I cavalieri della tavola rotonda*) (see Chapter 5.1); in 1956 the Italian production was doing so well that the US films only reached the third place in the top ten (Robert Z. Leonard's *La donna più bella del mondo* and Dino Risi's *Pane, amore e...* managed to beat Richard Fleischer's *20.000 leghe sotto i mari*, first US film in the chart), phenomenon this one repeated in the first semester of 1958, where amongst films which earned over 200 millions half of them are Italian and two (Dino Risi's *Belle ma povere* with 645 millions and Mario

Camerini's *Vacanze ad Ischia* with 523 millions) of them came third and fourth after - with no great distance - two American films ("1959: Non volano cicogne per il cinema italiano", RC 1959: 18). Moreover in 1960 not only the audience showed a real interest towards national films, but also some Italian films became surprisingly successful in Southern regions, which had always been fairly insensitive to indigenous productions and much more inclined towards Hollywood (Ferraù. "Tirando le somme". BI 1955: 2; Ferraù. "A nove mesi data". BI 1956: 3; Ferraù. "Le prime visioni a raffronto con l'intero mercato nazionale". BI 1960: 2).

Wagstaff (1995: 94-95) speculates to what extent the Americans contributed to the success of Italian films: as it was important for Hollywood to keep the Italians interested in cinema, there was no point in making Italian-style movies as the out-put of the domestic Italian production helped encourage Italians to keep on going to the cinema. This 'long term' plan of favouring a strong Italian production industry was not just a result of the legislation that officially encouraged blocked American earnings to be invested in the Italian film industry (in 1952, for example, the Twentieth Century Fox contributed in the creation of the production company Filmcostellazione, which produced several Italian

films, such as Luigi Zampa's *Processo alla città* (1952) and Michelangelo Antonioni's *I vinti* (1952)) (Wagstaff 1995: 107; Andreotti 2004<sup>ii</sup>).

The 1953 Giannelli survey gives a rough indication of the audience's genre preferences in Rome at that time. Ferrau made a general distinction between two types of films (*artistico* and *spettacolare*), without giving precise indications on the distinction, but stating that the second was the more successful one, and also explaining how the artistic film in Italy very rarely managed to overcome its financial difficulties (Ferrau. "I film nazionali da un anno all'altro". BI 1959: 3). In a table compiled by Ernesto Rossi in 1960 on *Incassi lordi fino al 31 Marzo 1959 dei film nazionali di maggior successo e contributi statali ai loro produttori*, there was no film that Rossi felt able to put in the artistic category (Rossi 1960: Tabella VI). Rossi accuses the Italian State of financing the wrong films by declaring that 'sugli ottanta lungometraggi elencati nella tabella forse solo cinque o sei sarebbero stati meritevoli dei contributi dello Stato', compiling a list of films which should have received a fine for 'offesa all'arte, alla decenza o alla verità storica' (Rossi 1960: Tabella VI). This statement underlines the link established by legislation

(Andreotti's law 1947, n.379), between box-office takings and Government funding of the film industry, as well as drawing attention to the issue of quality of national productions. The issue will now be addressed with regard to matters such as audience reception, State censorship and Catholic reactions.

The distinction raised by Ferraù in terms of film *artistici* and *spettacolari* is clearly visible through examining which films, during the years 1945-1954, had the highest box-office takings (Ferraù. "Consuntivo di dieci anni di programmazioni italiane". BI 1955: 1),

Stagione cinematografica	Titolo del film che ha realizzato il maggiore incasso	Incasso reale
1945-1946	Roma città aperta	162,000,000
1946-1947	Come persi la guerra	294,000,000
1947-1948	Rigoletto	224,100,000
1948-1949	Fabiola	572,500,000
1949-1950	Catene	724,500,000
1950-1951	Domani è troppo tardi	777,200,000
1951-1952	Canzoni di mezzo secolo	709,400,000
1952-1953	Don Camillo	1,421,000,000
1953-1954	Pane amore e fantasia	1,102,000,000

In this table not only all the main genres of Italian films successful at the time seem to be represented (operistico and musicale with *Rigoletto* and *Canzoni di mezzo secolo*, neorealista ottimista in *Pane amore e fantasia*, comico in *Don Camillo*, storico in *Fabiola*, and popolare in *Catene*) but also only with *Roma città aperta* there seems to be a correspondance between what is considered to be an artistic production and the audience's interest.

When looking specifically at the individual genres, one can say that the *film musicale* was fairly popular, as it represented a form of escapism from the horrors of the war, and would take audiences 'in una sfera più alta, affascinandolo con l'immagine magniloquente della passione che sublima e acceca, con il ritratto di un'umanità grandiosa sempre, nel bene come nel male' (Spinazzola 1985: 56). Films such as *Rigoletto* (1946-1947), *La signora delle camelie* (1947-1948), *Il trovatore* (1948-1949) and *Puccini* (1952-1953) all gained enormous success in their years. These films were either films based on what Ferraù calls 'una musica operistica' (such as *Caruso*, *Aida*, *Puccini*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Giuseppe Verdi*) or films interpreted by a star such as Luciano Tajoli (*Canzoni per le strade* or *Il romanzo della mia vita*) or as for the year 1951

and 1952 Neapolitan films (*Vedi Napoli e poi mori* and *Città canora*) (Ferraù. "Italia e America prime nelle graduatorie degli incassi". BI 1955: 1).

What was called *melodramma* and defined as not really dissimilar from the *film operistico* was another very successful genre, which had played with the 'schemi narrativi e sentimenti tematici del feuilleton ottocentesco italiano' and was often despised by film critics (Caldiron 2004: 11, 14-15). The genre had its climax with Matarazzo's *Catene* interpreted by Amedeo Nazzari in 1949, succeeded in the following two seasons by other two Matarazzo's films, *Tormento* and *I figli di nessuno*, as well as *Anna* by Alberto Lattuada which gained over a billion lira in 1952. What Ferraù illustrated as 'genere popolare' signified a clear set structure, a dramatic narrative composed of a depressing plot with some comical elements, a musical comment often performed by the star of the time and a set of defined moral values, here clearly described:

lotta del male contro il bene; l'apparente vittoria del prepotente sui deboli e sugli indifesi (vittoria che si trasforma in puntuale sconfitta negli ultimi centocinquanta metri di pellicola); la condanna dei buoni a subire, per tre quarti del film, tutta la vastissima gamma delle miserie e delle disavventure che la vita offre secondo gli sceneggiatori: dal carcere alla fuga, alla miseria, alla perdita di amici cari, alla distruzione dei propri beni provocati da incendi o cataclismi della natura (Ferraù. "Graduatorie dei

film di successo nella stagione cinematografica 1957-58". BI 1958: 2).

The fight against evil, with the final victory of the good which outlined Matarazzo's films - where characters, despite all being victims of social injustices, passions or a cruel destiny, manage to reach a happy ending through hope for a better world - are defined in a Catholic light by Spinazzola: this hope for justice and happiness is at the same time the expression of 'un cattolicesimo [...] intimamente deluso, privo di energia combattiva' (Spinazzola 1985: 70-71). The re-establishment of order (Maltby 1995: 35) described in the passage by Ferrau is not very different from the happy ending of Hollywood films. In fact, despite Matarazzo's characters - in order to be real in post-war Italy - needed to have a certain degree of misfortune and a large amount of grief, it was of vital importance for them to be able to restore their balance, as an artisan interviewed by Carlo Sannita in 1954 (and published in *Cinema* in the article "Al pubblico popolare piacciono i melodrammi") had expressed after the viewing of *Tormento*:

Quel che conta è la vittoria finale dell'innocenza e della giustizia sui ribaldi e sulle stesse avversità della sorte (Sannita 1954).



Sannita commented on how the artisan's observation was not a critical judgement, but more of an ethical consideration, shared by the majority of the 'pubblici popolari', which directors of films such as *Tormento* needed to take into account in order to achieve the extraordinary success they obtained in the Fifties, as a film star was - according to the author - not enough by itself in order to attract a wide audience. This is certainly in contradiction with what Ferrau defined the most popular genre in Italy during this era, and which was in marked contrast to the despairing perspective of popular neorealism, the comic film (Ferrau. "I "Mattatori" degli incassi per la stagione 1958-1959". BI 1959: 3). According to Ferrau, in fact films were guaranteed success as long as the stars acting in them were popular amongst the audiences. This shows how the popularity of comedies was not just the expression of a desire for escapism in post-war Italy, but also a sign of instability of Italian film production, a production regarded as being mediocre by the Catholic RC ("G.S.", RC 1952: 16-17), which accused some comic films of being 'il trionfo di un deterioro commercialismo' and 'una facile spettacolarità' (Ghelli, RC 1956: 10). Moreover, the Italian comedies, despite being commercially very successful within Italy, did not travel abroad very well - if at all - and remained

a production 'di giornata e alla giornata' (Ferraù. "Ogni stagione fa storia a se". BI 1955: 3; see also Jeancolas 1992: 141). As it had happened for the melodrama, once again a trilogy of films (*Come persi la guerra, L'eroe della strada, Come scopersi l'America*), directed by Carlo Borghesio and interpreted by Macario, was the first comic success of the post-war period (Spinazzola 1986: 83). Spinazzola describes Borghesio's films like this:

I film di Borghesio riprendevano sul piano della critica di costume alcuni motivi di discorso largamente diffusi in quegli anni: il doppiogiochismo, la borsa nera, i rapporti con gli alleati-vincitori, il "modo di vita americano" (Spinazzola 1986: 83).

This initial relationship between the Italians and the Americans and the portrayal of American life-style was, though, immediately replaced by a much more regional character: Totò. The Neapolitan actor not only became the expression of a certain type of Italian-ness, towards which the audiences showed a great appreciation, but also generated a positive response from the Church in a significant article by Giorgio Santarelli published in RC in July/August 1950 (Santarelli 1950: 14-15). At that time Totò had just started to become very popular in Italy and his films were already

being adversely criticised by left-wing intellectuals, like the film critic and historian Guido Aristarco (Aristarco 1984: 206). Santarelli, however, seemed to defend the actor and his artistic abilities, limiting his criticism only to the lack of directorial skills in some of Totò's films. Totò's films were always in the annual box-office top ten until the end of the 1950s: *Totò cerca casa* was second after *Catene* in 1949, *Totò a colori* had takings of 774 million lire, while most of the others (*Totò le Mokò*, *Totò sceicco*, *Totò*, *Peppino e la malafemmina*, *47 morto che parla*, *Figaro qua*, *Figaro là*, *Napoli milionaria*) had receipts of between 400 and 500 million lire (Spinazzola 1986: 85; Carpi 1958: 81-83). Although the Neapolitan comedian's films attracted much of their large audiences in the *seconde visioni*, he still out-earned all of his rivals in terms of box-office takings.

Alberto Sordi, the Roman comic actor, was more popular than Totò' amongst audiences in the *prime visioni*, however, none of his films were able to generate the 754.200.000 lire *Totò a colori* could in 1952 (Ferraù. "Un mese e mezzo di programmazioni". BI 1956: 3). Sordi's films rested on the types of character that he could impersonate. Mariotti (1995: 9) affirmed that only Sordi managed to portray the average Italian man, 'insolente e pusillanime, furbo e ipocrita,

qualunquista e finto cattolico, capace, però, talvolta, di brusche impennate di coraggio e di risoluzioni, tali da riscattare un'intera vita'. This satirical version of popular neorealism was the expression of what Sordi's characters represented for Italians: the image of what - according to the director Ettore Scola - average Italians either were or would want to become, even without openly confessing it (Borelli 1995: 25).

A variation of this kind of comedy - defined as *neorealismo ottimista* or *rosa*, and depicted by Spinazzola (1986: 102) as *deideologizzate* - produced many successful films, such as Luigi Comencini's *Pane, amore e fantasia* (1953) and *Pane, amore e gelosia* (1954) (which gained 1.418 billions and in 1954 was only second to Camerini's *Ulisse*), Vittorio De Sica's *L'oro di Napoli*, Alessandro Blasetti's *Peccato che sia una canaglia*, Steno's *Un americano a Roma*, Dino Risi's *Il segno di Venere* and Dino Risi's *Poveri ma belli*. Here once again the Hollywood formula of the happy ending was - according to Spinazzola - adapted to Italian taste, which Vittorio Gassmann's lines from Mauro Morassi's film *Il successo* (1963) seem to summarise in an extraordinary way:

Nei film americani c'è sempre la coscia di pollo, a casa mia mezzo limone mummificato (Giacovelli 1990: 11).

The portrait of poverty and of pathetic characters, which were the expression of a country still distressed by the conflict and its financial consequences, was in stark contradiction with the images of abundance coming from America. However, the Hollywood comedies were still used - as Spinazzola admits - as a guide to decode Italian reality:

È la tecnica della commedia di costume hollywoodiana, forse per la prima volta applicata in Italia con tanta redditizia accortezza (Spinazzola 1986: 104).

The adaptation of the structure of American comedies to the experience of current Italian society produced numerous successful films.

The genre that attracted smaller audiences than comedies, musicals and the historical genre was the dramatic genre. The form only seemed to draw wide appeal if it presented 'la bellezza di turno' who seemed to determine the success or the failure of non just comic films (Ferraù. "Graduatorie dei film di successo nella stagione cinematografica 1957-58". BI 1958: 2; Ferraù. "Un mese e mezzo di programmazioni". BI 1956: 3; Carpi 1958: 86). Sophia Loren, Silvana Mangano, Gina Lollobrigida, Silvana Pampanini, Anna Magnani were among the actresses who could make a major contribution to a film's

performance at the box-office. Vittorio De Sica, Alberto Sordi, Marcello Mastroianni, Amedeo Nazzari, Totò, Gino Cervi, Aldo Fabrizi, Raf Vallone, Walter Chiari, Renato Rascel were the most successful actors of the time; several of them being specialist in comedy (Ferraù. "Qualche anticipazione sul consuntivo '56-'57". BI 1957: 3; see also Ferraù. "A nove mesi data". BI 1956: 3; Ferraù. "Consuntivo di dieci anni di programmazioni italiane". BI 1955: 1). Italian stars had to compete with their foreign counterparts, amongst whom Ingrid Bergman, Greer Garson, Rita Hayworth, Lana Turner, Gary Cooper, Gregory Peck, Spencer Tracy and Errol Flynn were the most popular ones, according to the survey mentioned at the beginning of the chapter (Giannelli 1953: 41-42). The portrayal of male heroes and the transformation of female beauty queens into real protagonists of the cinematic scene was a means of developing a star system based on the American model that had already shown its popularity with Italian audiences (Wagstaff 1995: 110). The next two sections will try to determine to what extent the relationship between the two countries shaped Italian film industry in the post-war period.

## 6.2 Italian films recommended and cut or excluded by parish cinema circuit

In 1945 the *Codice per la cinematografia* was published by the Anica. It gave clear guidelines on what was acceptable in films. It was designed exclusively for the 'film spettacolari destinati alla proiezione in pubblico' (*Codice per la cinematografia* 1945: 8). It covered areas such as: obscenity, sexual relationships, vulgarity, religion and national feelings. Its content had a very Catholic imprint: suicide and any other disrespect to life needed to be abolished, 'la santità dell'istituto matrimoniale e della famiglia' had to be preserved; a healthy moral education needed to be the first element to be borne in mind when making a film and anything obscene, indecent or vulgar portrayed in as limited a manner as possible (*Codice per la cinematografia* 1945: 5-8). In its section dedicated to the "Necessità di norme per la difesa della morale nella cinematografia" the document reminded the reader of the widespread reception of cinema, as it reached different people, and different social classes (*Codice per la cinematografia* 1945: 11). Therefore, producers felt and expressed in this document that their moral role and their responsibility in the choice of topics and in the representation

of those topics was extremely delicate (*Codice per la cinematografia* 1945: 12). According to the *Codice* it was necessary to depict virtue, goodness, and honesty as appealing values, as well as vice and badness as repulsive ones: this would contribute to the spread of 'sani principi di condotta morale' so important for the Catholic world (*Codice per la cinematografia* 1945: 13-14). For instance, in the case of sexual relations, in order to respect the sanctity of family and marriage, any deviation to this would have to be dealt with cautiously and divorce - as not being accepted by 'alcune religioni' - would have to be used as an extreme measure and not treated with thoughtlessness (*Codice per la cinematografia* 1945: 15-16). The principles presented in the document do not seem to differ very much from the guidelines introduced by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico: in an article published by *RC* in 1941 with the title *Norme del Centro Cattolico Cinematografico*, the tone and the content of the document was very similar. The films excluded by the CCC were films which:

- a) contengono e giustificano, almeno implicitamente, errori dogmatici e colpe morali, come il divorzio, il duello, il suicidio, l'infanticidio, la maternità illegittima, ecc.;
- b) mettono in cattiva luce, seppur non deridono, persone, istituzioni, cerimonie e cose sacre e religiose;
- c) accreditano principi antisociali o comunque dannosi alla civile convivenza;
- d) contengono scene immorali gravemente provocanti - come



scene di seduzione prolungata e suggestive - oppure nudità complete o quasi, anche se presentate in silhouette, oppure danze che eccitano passioni e mettono in rilievo movimenti indecenti, ecc. ("Norme del Centro Cattolico Cinematografico", RC 1941: 7).

When comparing the two documents, it becomes evident that not only there is a similarity in the structure and form but also in the content: the importance of condemning 'moral sins', such as suicide, divorce and illegitimate maternity was an obvious concern for a Catholic institution but it did not necessarily need to be for an organization such as Anica. Even, for example, the reference to the danger of dancing is used in the Anica's *Codice per la cinematografia* in a very similar way to the Catholic one: 'sono proibite le danze che eccitano o rappresentano azioni sessuali. Le danze che esaltano movimenti indecenti debbono considerarsi oscene' (*Codice per la cinematografia* 1945: 7). This will prove to be very significant when looking in details at the Italian films condemned by the CCC later on in this Chapter (6.3).

The trade organisation of Italian production companies felt the need to endorse a certain morality, which should be portrayed in films made by its members. When looking at the totality of Italian film examined by the CCC in the years

following the publication of the *Codice per la cinematografia*, one would imagine hence a positive response, considering the resemblance in their attitude towards morality and its application to film production. However a different result appears. Out of 296 films considered 'visibili in sale parrocchiali' in the years 1934-1955 only 53 were Italian, and this number included documentaries produced by the Istituto Luce, religious films and films produced by the overtly Catholic production companies Orbis and Universalia (Gori 1980: 37-42). The situation becomes even more evident in the last years of the 1950s, when according to Monsignor Galletto, Consulente Ecclesiastico of the CCC, the number of films produced in Italy in the years 1956-1960 were higher in the categories *Esclusi* and *Sconsigliati*:

Per quanto riguarda l'Italia nel 1960 sono stati esaminati dalla commissione del CCC 136 films italiani una cinquantina dei quali di co-produzione (soprattutto con la Francia). Ed ecco i dati: su 136 films appena 7 sono stati ritenuti accettabili per tutti e 23 per gli adulti, con una percentuale del 22%. I films esclusi e sconsigliati sono invece saliti a 83. Oltre il 61% della produzione italiana ha conseguito quindi un giudizio morale negativo (Galletto, RC 1961: 3).

Eleven years earlier, Galletto himself had addressed the producers on the same issue, asking them to consult the CCC before making a film and therefore gaining invaluable advice on

how to modify scenes and dialogues that might otherwise disturb the young or the immature (Galletto, RC 1950: 5). Two years later (1952), Giulio Andreotti had written to Galletto regarding the difficulty of censorship in film. The Christian Democrat politician Andreotti seemed in total agreement with what was stated in the *Codice per la cinematografia*, especially regarding the necessity to portray immoral values in a very negative way, that could not be misunderstood. In the letter to Monsignor Galletto, published in RC ("Censura e censure", RC 1952: 2-4), Andreotti addressed the way in which some American films dealt for example with the issue of divorce, which despite not showing anything particularly obscene, very often portrayed the two people involved in a positive way, forgetting to underline their indifference to their children's future. Andreotti stated that - despite the fact that this did not reflect what happened in the majority of American families - there was still the danger of spreading 'un giudizio simpatico del divorzio', especially 'in una concezione generalizzata della grandezza e della bontà dell'America' (Andreotti, RC 1952: 3). Andreotti's conclusion of this epistle can effectively be taken to have been a summary of the Government's attitude towards national production: 'non uccidiamo la nostra produzione con l'intento di moralizzarla', as

the alternative would be either to subject a film to scrutiny by the Commissione revisione (even with significant cuts) or decline it and therefore contribute towards the bankruptcy of several production companies (Andreotti, RC 1952: 4). However, despite this awareness by the State to support national cinema, and despite the self-censorship imposed by the producers on their own works (which Argentieri and Cipriani (1961: 1537) define as a sort of 'autocastrazione'), the outcome of the CCC on the morality of the films is interesting to analyse. If one could say that the censorship criteria of the Government were very similar to the Catholic ones, and that several authors would decide even before the script was seen by the censorship committee, what would be approved or not, the high number of Italian films which are still considered to be *Esclusi* or *Sconsigliati* is astonishing. This becomes more surprising if one bears in mind that several Catholic 'commissari' used to take part to the meetings of the State censorship committee and therefore, 'i loro giudizi hanno un peso, almeno orientativo, per i funzionari di via Veneto' (Argentieri and Cipriani 1961: 1536). Therefore, it seems that - despite the encouragements from the ecclesiastic hierarchy to create collaboration between the production industry and Catholic establishment - the films that were made in Italy still

did not conform to the criteria suggested by both the Vatican and the Italian State. It is not a surprise then, to discover the extent to which Catholic and State controls were present in relation to national production, as indicated in this passage from an article by Argentieri and Cipriani:

Un soggetto è sottoposto all'approvazione dei funzionari di Via della Ferratella che debbono decidere se può essere ammesso, se può ricevere il Credito della Banca del Lavoro ed eventualmente il visto di coproduzione; nel corso della lavorazione i funzionari intervengono con 'consigli'; realizzato il film, questo viene sottoposto alla censura (di primo e secondo grado), ma non è tutto, il ministro a questo punto può ancora bocciarlo; e al film, in ultima istanza, possono essere negati i visti di esportazione. Questo prima di uscire. Appena uscito, il film è quindi sottoposto al giudizio del Centro Cattolico Cinematografico e tale giudizio è esposto nelle chiese e pubblicato sui giornali cattolici. Comunque da questo momento in poi il film può essere: richiamato in censura per sollecitazione di un privato o di un pubblico ufficiale; ritirato per ragioni di ordine pubblico; sequestrato da un magistrato; censurato *direttamente* da un parroco, da un questore, da un commissario di PS, da un agente di PS, da un prefetto. Già perché ci eravamo dimenticati di dire che anche tutti questi personaggi sono più volte intervenuti personalmente, senza alcun diritto o autorizzazione, a dare una mano alla censura ufficiale. E siamo praticamente certi di aver involontariamente omesso qualche altro ostacolo alla libera circolazione di un film nel nostro paese (Argentieri and Cipriani 1961: 1552).

An approach is required that goes beyond an examination of direct intervention of the State or the Catholic reviews of the CCC when looking at the various forms of Government and Church censorship; there were other 'interferences' that took

place at all levels of the distribution. As Brunetta (1979: 314) affirms, it can be easy to focus only on the attitude of the 'vertice ecclesiastico' and forget 'l'enorme attività delle censure locali attivate e organizzate secondo rigide norme'. However, the official establishments - in this specific case the CCC, which drew up the Schede cinematografiche - can be used as a starting point for assessing the attitude of the Vatican towards national and international productions that the different institutions (parish cinemas, cineforum, etc.), had to decide to adopt or modify with different degrees of control from the ecclesiastic hierarchy. The CCC, defined by Brunetta (1979: 314) as the 'barometro ideologico, sensibile a tutte le variazioni minime di pressione' is a useful source of information regarding the relationship between the Vatican and the national cinema production. From this national institution, it would be possible to progress towards that form of local control explained by Brunetta (1978: 433) as 'disciplinare vuol dire incanalare, aggiungere e moltiplicare le forme di controllo locale che costituiscono ulteriori filtri rispetto alla politica nazionale'.

When examining individual Schede that were prepared by the CCC, the most interesting categories - and the ones which will be analysed in more detail - are the *Esclusi*, *Sconsigliati* and the *Per Tutti*, as they indicated the boundaries of what was acceptable and unacceptable for a Catholic audience. The *Esclusi* category of Italian films presented similar remarks made for the American counterparts: here again it was the immorality of the scenes, the scanty dresses and obscene gestures (*Un turco napoletano*, XXXIV/14 1953: 112; *Vacanze ad Ischia* XLIII/5 1958: 48) that provoked the attack of the Church, as well as unacceptable portrayal of concubinage (*Mambo* XXXVII/8 1955: 64; *La tratta delle bianche* XXXII/22 1952: 176) and indecent and sensual dances (*Mambo* XXXVII/8 1955: 64). The title of an article published by the RC - Puntiamo dunque l'indice accusatore contro la leggerezza, contro il malcostume e contro il cattivo gusto di certa produzione nazionale ("A.L.M.", RC 1950: 14-15) - reinforced this form of dissatisfaction towards a certain type of indigenous cinema. However, when analysing also the aesthetic comments provided by the Schede, it seems that often not only was the morality of the Italian films questioned but also their artistic value was doubted: *Un turco napoletano* is considered nothing more than a 'farsa volgare', *Vacanze ad*

*Ischia* is only praised for the use of colour, and *Mambo* is considered a totally mediocre film. This disapproving attitude towards national cinema should be borne in mind, especially when one considers how some American productions were held by the Catholic establishment to be more worthwhile than national ones. For example, a strong defence of the American comic films in comparison with the Italian ones was made on the basis of the absence in the US comedies of what were considered 'immoral' factors:

Creati dunque [i film comici americani] per l'unico scopo di distrarre lo spettatore, per fargli scordare la realtà di tutti i giorni, per farlo ridere, tali film non hanno altre mete, altre pretese, oltre a queste. E se, da un lato, dobbiamo rilevare come spesso un film comico potrebbe essere motivo e occasione per coinvolgere argomenti e problemi di maggior respiro, pure, d'altro canto, l'assenza da queste pellicole (almeno dalla maggior parte di esse), di motivi e spunti censurabili in sede morale, il cercare di far ridere gli americani dei loro stessi difetti, delle loro stesse abitudini, sono due fattori che non possiamo, in questo nostro breve esame, non ritenere positivi. Positivi ed istruttivi perché significano che si può fare un film comico che incassi soldi, che faccia ridere e che diverta il pubblico, senza ricorrere ad elementi e a motivi cui troppo spesso il film comico italiano ama ricorrere (Valmarana, RC 1951: 25).

This passage both demonstrates the effect that official Catholic opinions had on Catholic audiences and explains what was better for the general audience - a film which would make them laugh, without any other pretence but also without using



any elements which would devalue the morality of the film and which the Vatican would therefore have to condemn. This kind of film was the expression of that form of escapism completely 'de-ideologized' - the term used by Spinazzola for some Italian comedies (Chapter 6.1) - where the main intent of the film was to make money and entertain its audience. This desire of escapism, which still in 1950 was considered by some critics the main reason for the crisis of Neorealism (Vales, RC 1950: 10), needed therefore to be cleansed of all the impurities which were present in the national production and which unmistakably emerge from the Schede cinematografiche. In the category *Sconsigliati*, for example, the elements to which the article referred were pointed out constantly: the word licenziosità appeared in two of the moral comments (*Canzoni di mezzo secolo*, XXXIII/2 1953: 15; *Altri tempi* XXXII/18 1952: 143). The others were accused of being generally immoral for supporting criminality (*L'oro di Napoli*, XXXVI - Disp. 29 1954: 231), for presenting indecent scenes (*Ragazze da marito*, XXXII/31 1952: 247; *Siamo uomini o caporali*, XXXVIII/10 1955: 78; *La donna più bella del mondo*, XXXIX/23 1956: 179; *Il più comico spettacolo del mondo*, XXXIV/23 1953: 183; *Belle ma povere*, XLIII/3 1958: 30; *La diga sul Pacifico*, XLII/21 1957: 228) as well as an indirect

praise of divorce (*Vacanze d'inverno*, XLVI/17 1959: 178) and an illicit relationship not openly condemned (*Stazione Termini*, XXXIII/23 1953: 182). The *Adulti con riserva* category still presented similar problems and the films included in it were still charged with indecent scenes (*Anna*, XXXI - Disp. 1 1952: 7; *Pane, amore e gelosia*, XXXVII/1 1955: 6; *Totò e i re di Roma*, XXXII/22 1952: 173; *Totò e le donne*, XXXIII/1 1953: 6; *I vitelloni*, XXXIV/17 1953: 132), unacceptable issues, such as suicide and concubinage (*Puccini*, XXXIII/24 1953: 189) as well as a tolerant attitude towards dishonesty (*Racconti romani*, XXXVIII/27 1955: 209) and verbal vulgarity (*La grande guerra*, XLVI/21 1959: 210).

If it is borne in mind that only films *Per Tutti* and in exceptional circumstances, those *Per Adulti* with the appropriate modifications, were acceptable to be shown in parish cinemas (Lettera della Pontificia Commissione per la Cinematografia: 1 giugno 1953, quoted in Baragli 1958: 123), it becomes apparent that amongst the most successful Italian productions in the years 1934-1955 in those two categories, only three films were classified *Per Tutti*, out of 46, which was the total together with the other categories (*Esclusi*, *Sconsigliati*, *Adulti con riserva*, *Adulti*). This can be taken to

be quite a small number, especially in view of the self-censorship producers would have exercised after the introduction of the *Codice per la cinematografia* in 1945. The small category *Per Tutti* includes the scientific documentary *Sesto continente* (XXXVI - Disp. 15 1954: 117) and two films of the series *Don Camillo*, the original *Don Camillo* (XXXI - Disp. 23 1952: 179) and *Il ritorno di Don Camillo* (XXXIV/4 1953: 26), while the third film of the same series, *Don Camillo e l'onorevole Peppone* (XXXVIII/16 1955: 124) was classified *Per Adulti* because 'l'accostare il sacro e il profano (come fa Don Camillo nei colloqui con il Cristo) può ingegnare confusione nei giovani'. These films will be analysed in the following section (Chapter 6.3).

The category *Per Adulti*, while presenting similar remarks on the indecency of scenes as the main reason to recommend the films to a mature audience (*Giuseppe Verdi*, XXXV - Disp. 1 1954: 4; *Carosello napoletano*, XXXV - Disp. 22 1954: 170; *Africa sotto i mari*, XXXIII/20 1953: 156; *Ulisse*, XXXVI - Disp. 25 1954: 193; *Pane, amore e fantasia*, XXXIV/29 1953: 229) as well as again 'l'assenza di freni morali' (*La strada*, XXXVI - Disp. 15 1954: 119), presents, however, an important comment on Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* (1945), which gives a clear indication of the Vatican's response to Italian

Neorealism at that specific time. The film was considered to be generally positive for the praise of heroic sacrifice of the protagonists and their optimum interpretation, as well as for the rhythm of the narrative, which often reached perfection. Yet, it was still not suitable for all because of the 'rappresentazione eccessivamente veristica di talune scene' (1945: 122). Another film by Rossellini, *Europa '51* (1952), appears amongst the *Adulti con riserva* category, and is praised for the 'atto d'accusa contro la società moderna, incapace di risolvere, con l'applicazione dei principi evangelici il problema sociale', but considered to be presenting the Christian principles in a doubtful way, and therefore only suitable for Adults with full moral maturity (XXXII/36 1952: 282). The diversity of these comments raises the issue of the attitude of the Vatican towards neorealist films, which is of relevance in this context not only as part of a general disregard towards national production but also as an instance of how the attitude of the Vatican changed radically with regard to neorealist films. During 1947 and 1948, the Catholic attack against neorealism was very strong, this attitude afterwards defined by Bernardini 'un errore storico' (Brunetta 1978: 430; Brunetta 1979: 307; Bernardini 1981: 62; Ciaccio 1962: 112). This strong criticism towards neorealism

changed after the April 1948 Italian general elections and the subsequent political stability that was established by the Christian Democrat Government. Catholic intellectuals, such as Mario Verdone or Felix Morlion, as well as Catholic writers such as Diego Fabbri and Turi Vasile, started reassessing this important aspect of Italian cinema. In the early 1950s a new approach towards some of the most important representative neorealist film emerged: Italian neorealism was then passing through its final stages and there was no longer a need for Catholic representatives to counter its ideology and the time for a different analysis of some of the neorealist films seemed to emerge (Brunetta 1979: 309). That is why articles such as Rondi's "Neorealismo, arte cristiana" (RC 1954: 12-13), Covi's "È possibile un neorealismo cristiano?" (RC 1955: 5-6), Morlion's "Presupposti cristiani nel neorealismo italiano" (Sequenze 1950: 27) and "Crisi e prospettive del neorealismo cinematografico" (Bianco e Nero 1949: 3-10), Fabbri's "Neorealismo italiano segno di contraddizione" (RC 1949:10-12) and "Le basi filosofiche del neorealismo cinematografico italiano" (Bianco e Nero, IX 4, Giugno 1948) are published in various Catholic and non Catholic journals. In these pieces, the movement was assessed with regard to Christian content (Rondi 1954: 12), its faith in God, (Covi 1955: 6) and its

detachment from that laicism that was condemned by Catholic establishment (Galletto, "Il cinema ha paura di Cristo?", RC 1949: 6). However, there were still expressions of a certain degree of insecurity towards a form of art the aim of which wanted to 'demolire, ma non ricostruire', and in which 'la miseria fotografata e rappresentata non era un documento per risanare, ma un cartello per sconvolgere' ("Socialità e moralità del cinema italiano", RC 1954: 2). This sort of dichotomy between some Catholic representatives, who could read Christian values in some neorealist films, and others, who still felt that the neo-realist school would depict a country abandoned by God ("Socialità e moralità del cinema italiano", RC 1954: 3), is however a major issue that does not seem to have been solved. The filmmaker Carlo Lizzani expresses this dichotomy as a consequence of those Italian Catholics who could not understand the Christian aspects of neorealism and ended up labelling it as communist: 'fu regalato alle sinistre un cinema che in realtà non era di sinistra' (quoted in Chinnici 2003: 109).

### 6.3 Film analysis of case studies

This section will examine the most successful Italian films, which were either recommended or banned by the Catholic Church through the Schede of the CCC. The most recommended and successful films in the years 1945-1960 here analysed are: Julien Duvivier's *Don Camillo* (1952) which gained 'un miliardo e mezzo d'incasso e il primo posto assoluto nella graduatoria generale per il 1951-52, con un distacco di 500 milioni dal secondo classificato, *Anna di Lattuada*' (Spinazzola 1985: 197); *Il ritorno di Don Camillo* (1953) again directed by Duvivier, with a box-office intake of over 900 million and the third place in the chart (Spinazzola 1985: 200); and *Marcellino pane e vino* (1955)<sup>iii</sup> by Ladislao Vajda. Amongst the Italian films which were not recommended by the CCC, and therefore included either in the categories *Esclusi* or *Sconsigliati*, this section will look at *La donna più bella del mondo* (1956) by Robert Z. Leonard (S), De Sica's *L'oro di Napoli* (1954) (S) and *Stazione Termini* (1953) (S), Mario Mattoli's *Un turco napoletano* (1953) (E) and Robert Rossen's *Mambo* (1955) (E), this last as one of the Italian films 'sopra i cento milioni di incasso lordo'.

As Hollywood cinema was extremely successful in Italy, Brunetta (1994: 142) affirms that 'there was even an indirect attempt to offer an Italian product which could function as a surrogate for the American cinema'. When studying the Italian films mentioned above, reference will be made to their American counterparts, in order to identify common themes and elements present in both groups of films and how different issues were interpreted by the Roman Catholic establishment.

Family and the house, Italian landscape, music, sport and young people are what Brunetta (Brunetta 1996: 20) defines as the 'fattori coagulanti e gli spazi topologici che aiutano a far nascere, o dentro cui vediamo formarsi il nuovo ritratto dell'italiano'. In the Italian films mentioned above, these elements are not only always present, but become the expression of those values that the Church wanted either to promote or to hinder. The identification of those values with the new identity Italy was trying to rebuild in the wake of the Fascist regime is a clear indication of the role of certain aspects of society, and therefore is important to analyse. This section will refer to some of the aspects identified by Brunetta as the main themes for an in-depth analysis of the films.



When discussing family and home, one should refer to the representation of the woman, as a fundamental point of reference in the family setting, whose role was 'the subordinate one of mother and husband's helpmate, with its attendant virtues of modesty, submission and sacrifice' (Allum 1990: 83). The actresses in two of the films included in the category *Sconsigliati* by the CCC are Gina Lollobrigida (*La donna più bella del mondo*) and Sophia Loren (*L'oro di Napoli*), both were the expression of a different kind of woman. They had a beauty that enjoyed a particular vogue in 1950s Italy: Lollobrigida was both the first expression of the national star-system and the actress for whom Blasetti invented the word "maggiorata" (Brunetta 1991: 103). Loren had a similar level of international success, despite keeping a charm 'squisitamente regionale' which was utilised in *L'oro di Napoli* (Grignaffini in Brunetta 1996: 384). Neither Sophia Loren nor Gina Lollobrigida could be defined as the icon of the woman deemed by the Catholic establishment: very little modesty, submission or dedication to family values could be found in the characters they played in the films analysed here or in their general role within Italian cinema.

In the Schede by the CCC, Loren's episode of De Sica's *L'oro di Napoli* was condemned despite a wrong summary of the plot which reduces the guilt of the main protagonist: in it the actress plays the adulterous wife of a pizza maker, which in the plot becomes the daughter. Despite this mistake, the film is still negatively criticised and included in the *Sconsigliati* category for the 'abbigliamento' and 'gli atteggiamenti della protagonista' (XXXVI - Disp. 29 - 1954: 231), criticisms which were not very dissimilar from 'i costumi sconvenienti' and 'le scene scabrose' attributed to *La donna più bella del mondo* (XXXIX/23 - 1956: 179) and 'i costumi succinti' of *Mambo* (XXXVII/8 - 1955: 64). The three actresses (Gina Lollobrigida, Sophia Loren and Silvana Mangano) are presented once again - as it had happened in the movies of Marilyn Monroe - as the object of male desire and the expression of a sexuality so feared by the Church. The three Italian actresses had all emerged from beauty contests, where the silent promise to become an actress was always implied in the final prize (Farassino 1989: 141) and their physical appearance was what had lead their life into the film industry. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise to notice in the film analysed here how once again *mise-en-scène* and cinematography are used to highlight that sexuality by use of costumes tightly fitted to

their voluptuous bodies and in conjunction with camera movements that emphasized curves and body parts, as had happened with Marilyn Monroe's films. In the opening scene of *Pizze a credito* (Sophia Loren's episode of *L'oro di Napoli*), Loren is introduced to the audience while she is kissing her screen lover while she is wearing a sexy tight white blouse, while in the final scene she is followed from behind by the camera, showing her curvaceousness amongst groups of men. It is, however, Gina Lollobrigida in Leonard's *La donna più bella del mondo*, who echoes more closely the characters played by Marilyn Monroe in *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* (1953) and *A qualcuno piace caldo* (1959). She is a singer, Lina Cavalieri, who started her singing career in small and somewhat seedy local theatres, where dancers are openly approached by the male audience and performers coquettishly reveal their bottoms at the end of the show, and then she progresses to a better class of theatre, where she becomes very successful performing in cabaret. Her costumes are the expression of her artistic development: at the beginning she sings in a shabby creamy dress with a slight cut on one side, showing partially her leg. Later on, once she has become a successful singer, her clothes become more sophisticated and at the same time more revealing. When she sings *La francese* in Paris

she wears a very tight violet low cut dress with a wide opening at the front, which reveals her legs and suspender belts. As the movie progresses, her costumes not only become more provocative but they also have brighter and stronger colours, such as the red and black tight outfit she wears in the duel scene. During this first phase of her character's success, though, when she is defined as a 'lavandaia', she is rough, tough and she lacks those feminine behaviours so well portrayed in Marilyn Monroe's characters. Once she is an acclaimed star, she also becomes more sophisticated and refined. She wears more delicately coloured costumes that show her 'portamento regale', and during her visit to Russia, she is dressed in cream and gold, which resonates the outfits that Marilyn Monroe tended to wear on-screen. When looking at *Mambo* (1955), the costumes worn by Silvana Mangano, after she becomes a successful dancer, are the expression of that refinement achieved by her character: when she is invited to a nightclub, after her performance, Giovanna Blasetti (Silvana Mangano) wears a tight cream top with gemstones, which is not dissimilar from Marilyn Monroe's outfit in one of the final scenes of *A qualcuno piace caldo* (1959). It is not just the resemblance of the costumes which links the American star with the Italian actresses. Gina Lollobrigida's persona in

Leonard's *La donna più bella del mondo* (1956), is the embodiment of a type of sexuality, which is described by Grignaffini in a way that resembles Marilyn Monroe's characters:

Un modo d'essere per cui la sessualità è un'arma inoffensiva, racchiusa nello scrigno di una disarmante innocenza; per cui la vitalità è una pura superficie di gesti, attitudini, forme procaci e la bellezza una promessa di riconciliazione; per cui il cuore, l'istinto e il buon senso debordano incontenibili dal corpo, a fronte di una socialità che si rinchiude a formato famiglia-paese. [...] Caratteri immediatamente riconoscibili e afferrabili, veri e propri stereotipi, nell'accezione di indicatori rapidi ed efficaci di informazioni (Grignaffini 1996: 384).

This innocent sexuality, in which one can easily identify not only Gina Lollobrigida and Marilyn Monroe, but also Silvana Mangano, is perhaps the most 'dangerous' aspect of the films for the Catholic establishment. However, the physical appearance and the costumes of Lina Cavalieri and of Giovanna Blasetti are not the only expression of that immorality which the Church condemned in Marilyn Monroe's *A qualcuno piace caldo* and *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde*. Lina Cavalieri is a woman with 'un unico difetto: è onestissima'. She is not fascinated by diamonds - as Marilyn Monroe's characters were in her films. On the contrary, when she receives a jewel as a present she returns it, saying 'era troppo bello per me'. She

has had many admirers but refuses them all and she falls in love with a prince without being aware of his financial wealth. She is loyal to her mother Olimpia up to the point that she starts a fight to protect her; despite being in great need she wants to return money given by the prince, and when she is forced to keep it she uses it to improve her singing voice. All this is not however praised in the Schede of the CCC, while what is said is that the film 'si svolge in un ambiente frivolo e immorale' (XXXIX/23 - 1956: 179), which is the entertainment world, that world from which her mother Olimpia wants to protect her by saying 'quante volte te lo devo dire che non è posto per te'. It is the same corrupted world of *Pal Joey* (1957), *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* (1953) and *A qualcuno piace caldo* (1959) all of which were condemned by the Church. Giovanna Blasetti in *Mambo* (1955) belongs to the same world: she is a simple girl, who struggles to survive by working as a shop assistant and then becomes a dancer. Dancing brings her success, money and power over the men who had in the past made her suffer: Giovanna will say: 'ero arrivata, il denaro me l'ero guadagnato e loro erano in ginocchio'. However, it is the use of her power that the Schede condemned and defined as being not just immoral from a Christian perspective but also from the point of view of the 'morale naturale' (XXXVII/8 -

1955: 64): she decides to marry the conte Marisoni (Michael Rennie) only when she finds out that he is seriously ill, transforming the marriage into a 'cinica speculazione sulla sventura del coniuge'. The positive feelings, which emerge in the ending of the film, do not manage - according to the Schede - to balance the negative elements of the story.

While *Mambo* (1955) was included in the *Esclusi* category, as Monroe's films, Lollobrigida's film was not amongst the *Sconsigliati*, which were marginally less condemned by the Vatican, but were still in a category that would not allow them to be screened in parish cinemas. The Catholic journalist Renato Filizzola (2004)<sup>iv</sup>'s clarification of the distinction between a film classified as *Escluso* ('che teoricamente andava contro i principi della morale cattolica') and one deemed to be *Sconsigliato* ('che solamente adombrava posizioni morali e cattoliche') still does not seem to account for some of the final decisions of the CCC. If, for Filizzola, a film was to be in the *Esclusi* only when it supported a thesis which was completely against the Catholic Church - as *Mambo* did about the 'convivenza illecita' (XXXVII/8 - 1955: 64) - such as double marriage, abortion, murder, then there was no rigorous

justification for a film such as Mattoli's *Un turco napoletano* (1953) being included in the category. The movie, based on a play by Eduardo Scarpetta, presented - according to the CCC - 'numerosa scene con donne in costumi succinti, battute e gesti equivoci e scurrili' (XXXIV/14 - 1953: 112), which by watching the film are very difficult to find.

Totò's character, a 'donnaiolo', a man only interested in women, is allowed to spend time with the wife and the daughter of a very jealous man because of the man's belief that Totò is a 'eunuco'. There is, though, very little open showing of immoral behaviour, apart from Totò's attempts to seduce some of the female characters, which culminates in only a few hugs and kisses. However, the moral judgement given here by the CCC - compared to that of *La donna più bella del mondo*, where these accusations could have been more pertinent - raises what seems to be the main concern of the Catholic Church: 'il tarlo del sesso, l'ossessione dell'erotismo, un animale da addomesticare, tollerabile purché mitigato da sapori casarecci e caramellosi' (Argentieri 1999: 264). It was perhaps the 'sapori casarecci' attributed to Lollobrigida and Loren's characters that resulted in these films receiving a strong but not absolute denunciation by the Church. The latter's 'regional' role in Italian cinema is obviously more evident in *L'oro di*



*Napoli* than the former's in *La donna più bella del mondo*. This is clarified by Landy's description, in which the importance of national identity in comparison with the Americanism is identified in Loren's association with Mediterranean life and culture:

Loren also demonstrates how "Americanism" was no longer the property of the United States but closely tied to the globalization of culture, where national commodities like stardom are packaged for the international market. In her persona, Loren remains "Italian" by virtue of her identification in films and publicity with the Italian milieu and in her physical appearance, her uses of her body, gesture, Italian accent, and her association with Mediterranean life (Landy 2000: 289).

The international 'package', as Landy describes it, managed to keep the fascination of the identification of Loren with Italian-ness: her physical appearance and her gestures are a way to keep the international star-system local and make it more possible for local people to relate to it. Loren, as well as Lollobrigida and Mangano, is not blond as Marilyn Monroe was, and her typically Mediterranean beauty is closer to Italian women than Marilyn would ever be. However, accusing the Roman Catholic establishment of having contributed to the 'l'avvento del cinema insulso delle "maggiorate fisiche"', was defined as 'gratuito e risibile' by Ciaccio (Ciaccio 1962: 119).

The three Italian stars not only embodied a form of sexuality that the Vatican dreaded, they also challenged the image of womanhood that the Catholic Church was eager to restore in post-war Italy: a woman totally dedicated to her family and children. Looking at women's role during the 1950s, Portaccio (1982: 113) affirmed that 'se la donna può scegliere diversamente, può esprimersi nel sociale, nel lavoro, i ruoli perdono la loro aura di missione da svolgere per mandato divino'. Women had become more open in terms of their roles in society and the image of the mother whose only responsibility was to look after her family was challenged by a type of woman who works, is more independent and decides the path of her own life. It is not a coincidence that the only episode of *L'oro di Napoli* praised by an article in *RC* was called *Il funeralino* (Ojetti, *RC* 1955: 11-12), which was cut out from the film because of the length of its final version. It was considered to be by Ojetti as 'un'interpretazione sublime di tutti i sentimenti umani' (*RC* 1955: 11), as it showed the suffering of a mother for the loss of her son. Loren's character in the same film - as well as Mangano's character in *Mambo* (1955) - is, however, a strong woman who works and is independent. She portrays the image of a star as 'a range of meanings that impact on conceptions of traditional sexual

mores, involving greater freedom in sexual behaviour, challenges to Catholicism (with its emphasis on familism, reproduction, maternity) increased physical mobility (changes in domicile, tourism), youthful rebellion, dress codes and fashion' (Landy 2000: 292-293). These types of female freedom were a challenge to traditional female values. They were even more evident in the other film by Vittorio De Sica, which was considered to be in the category of the *Sconsigliati*, *Stazione Termini* (1953). De Sica's film, despite showing an international cast (Jennifer Jones and Montgomery Clift), still has a very Italian setting 'per non perdere del tutto il contatto con la realtà del proprio paese, senza la quale probabilmente [il regista] non potrebbe esprimersi' (Lizzani 1992: 132-133; see also Chiarini 1954: 107). In this film, while Giovanni (Montgomery Clift) says that he prefers to consider himself Italian 'perché in Italia gli uomini contano di più', Jennifer Jones's character, Maria, his American lover, is accused by Giovanni of being too modern and free: 'voi donne americane siete un pò troppo emancipate', referring to a change in habits which Campari clearly notes in his analysis:

Il riferimento all'America significa anche, soprattutto nei film della fine degli anni cinquanta, una serie di cambiamenti nel costume nazionale di cui si prende progressivamente

coscienza. Ciò emerge soprattutto dalla rappresentazione dei personaggi femminili (Campari 1996: 212).

The American woman, who leaves her husband in the United States and spends time by herself in Italy, is using her independence for an immoral purpose. In her letter to Giovanni, Maria says that 'accanto a te ho dimenticato tutto, mio marito, la mia coscienza, persino la mia bambina'. Despite the ending, in which Maria leaves her lover in order to return to her family, the film is still considered to be immoral as the decision is taken because of the concern for a scandal and Maria still promises Giovanni to love him, 'venendo meno al suo dovere' (XXXVIII/23 - 1953: 182).

All of the female characters of the films banned by the CCC are to a certain extent the image of that immorality from which the Roman Catholic Church wanted to free the cinema: working women, prostitutes (Silvana Mangano in the episode of Teresa of *L'oro di Napoli* (1954)), singers and dancers, or wives who are tempted to betray their husbands (as in *Un turco napoletano* (1953)). It is not a co-incidence that the three films included in the *Tutti* category by the CCC here analysed (*Don Camillo* (1952), *Il ritorno di Don Camillo* (1953)

as their main protagonist and the female characters in the films are wives loyal to their husbands who live in their shadows and are mainly occupied in looking after their children.

While 'the family has played a key role in the configuration of Italian national identity' (Landy 2000: 205), there was another aspect that linked family life with the community and which became the theme of one of the most successful Italian films of those years. Politics was the real passion that excited Italians and which made *Don Camillo* a very successful movie, especially because - as Spinazzola (1985: 197) stated - *Don Camillo* was a film which for the first time 'parlava di politica' but without using 'un linguaggio davvero politico'. Vittorio De Sica had the opportunity to direct the film but, as he was involved in making *Umberto D.* (1952), he declined the offer. It is worth to remember here that '*Umberto D.* ottenne un contributo di 16 milioni, mentre il contemporaneo *Don Camillo* 216' (Orfei 1975: 79). This information indicates how much support the film received from the Italian Government and confirms the degree to which pressure was exerted by the Catholic Church on filmmakers in order to try to make them adhere 'to the traditional values of religion, family and respect

for those in position of authority' (Jäckel 2003: 236). The *Don Camillo* series is the story of the contrasting relationship between a Catholic priest, Don Camillo, and a Communist mayor, Peppone, and their life in a village in the Emilia Romagna region<sup>v</sup>. The film was a Franco-Italian co-production, a practice, which by 1957 had already created over 230 movies (Jäckel 2003: 233). In *Don Camillo*, 'l'idillio politico aveva preso il posto all'idillio amoroso: la nota erotica era del tutto assente dal primo Don Camillo' (Spinazzola 1985: 199)<sup>vi</sup> and this was certainly an aspect that pleased the Catholic Church. However, it was the social context of the film and the 'sentimento di umana bontà', that was praised in the Schede (XXXI - Disp. 23 - 1952: 179). Don Camillo is a priest, not a saint, as Buzzonetti reminded the Catholic readers (Buzzonetti, RC 1952: 19). He has a special relationship with Christ, with whom he talks about his flock and his differences with Peppone. This device - used again in the other film praised by the CCC, *Marcellino pane e vino* - enables his discussions with Jesus to be a sort of 'contrappunto interiore dei suoi scontri quotidiani col rivale, del suo apprezzabile desiderio di fare di quella singolare umana cittadella la cittadella di Dio' (Castellani 1994: 73). This strong desire to spread Catholic values amongst a traditionally 'Red' province

was of course hindered by Peppone, whose 'baffi vagamente staliniani non bastano ad alterare i connotati interiori di una anima fundamentalmente cristiana' (Buzzonetti, RC 1952: 20). It was the Christian aspects of Peppone and his Communist associates, that made the film so acceptable to a Catholic point of view. Peppone is a fervent Communist but he wants his son to be baptised by Don Camillo; he asks the priest to confess him; he calls Don Camillo to bless the opening of the construction of the Casa del Popolo and the Bishop to visit it at the end of the works; he shows his respect before the crucifix, he goes to mass, and he relies on Don Camillo when he thinks he has committed a crime or when he has troubles educating his son. In this passage, Giacovelli explains the significant role Don Camillo played regarding this particular issue:

Per questo si è detto che i *Don Camillo*, anche in virtù del grande successo commerciale, favorirono l'avvicinamento delle classi medie alle sinistre e anticiparono il compromesso storico innaffiandolo di lambrusco. Se anche il parroco Don Camillo ha sempre qualche carta in più da giocare rispetto al comunista Peppone, se gli dà sempre un briciolo di ragione in più, se è sempre un tantino più sensato e leale, tuttavia Peppone non è uno sprovveduto, non risulta né antipatico né cattivo, non ha mai torto marcio. Insomma, questi comunisti di campagna non saranno proprio degli stinchi di santo, ma non sono nemmeno il diavolo (Giacovelli 1990: 32).

Peppone and the Communists are not that bad, but Don Camillo always ends up winning: he always wins the fights with Peppone, he succeeds in having one of Peppone's sons baptised with his name, he offers his help to correct a political speech by Peppone which is full of grammatical mistakes, he agrees to wait for Peppone's Casa del Popolo to be ready before he can launch the Villaggio del Fanciullo, and by the end of *Il ritorno di Don Camillo*, for the first time the two clocks of the town strike together, as a sign of a restored harmony. It is the expression of that *filone della commedia paesana* defined by Giacobelli (1990: 32) as a genre where

la bonarietà dei rapporti fra i personaggi, la fiducia di fondo nel compromesso e nella possibilità che ogni cosa possa sempre aggiustarsi per il meglio, basta un po' di buona volontà da parte degli individui e se è il caso una sana scazzottata alla John Wayne conclusa da una stretta di mano (tanto ottimismo spiega perché Frank Capra dichiarò che avrebbe diretto volentieri qualche episodio della serie).

The same level of optimism is present in the other masculine-centred film praised by the Church, *Marcellino pane e vino*. Marcellino is a young boy who is found by a group of Franciscan friars, who, after a brief attempt to find his family, decide to keep him in the monastery. The film was praised in the Schede for its 'religiosità' and for the 'presenza e l'inserirsi del



soprannaturale nella vita degli uomini' (XXXVIII/27 - 1955: 216). The movie presented several elements in common with Don Camillo films: the strong presence of religion, the character's discussion with Christ on the crucifix, the character of the mayor, who in *Marcellino pane e vino* becomes an evil figure who threatens the friars, and the presence of children, which in both films are the expression of joy, innocence and purity. The Schede found important both *Marcellino pane e vino's* educational scope as well as the ability of the film to transmit those spiritual elements that were, according to the Church, so difficult to find in a film.

A rural setting links *Marcellino pane e vino* to the two Don Camillo's films. All of the films included in the category Esclusi or Sconsigliati were set in big cities: Naples for *L'oro di Napoli* and *Un turco napoletano*, Venice for *Mambo*, and Paris for a large part of *La donna più bella del mondo*. Cities are represented in a very distinctive way: Naples is portrayed as a place the interiors of which reveal hypocrisy and desperation (Landy 2000: 130-131). The same can be stated of Paris, as Melanco affirms:

Parigi, città che rappresenta per l'italiano la quintessenza dell'estero. E' la città per eccellenza, il luogo dove si respira la trasgressione, dove si possono varcare le porte del proibito. Per buona parte degli anni cinquanta, Parigi è la meta del desiderio collettivo (Melancon 1996: 239).

This setting is not dissimilar from the Venice in *Mambo*, where the city is the expression of that transgression portrayed in the sensual, neo-Dionysian dances that are held in the palazzi during Carnival. It is a Venice in which the social structure bears moral and material wounds, one where the male protagonists have failed in their roles of procreators and providers, and where the women have broken their ties with traditional marriage and family life.

The immediate settings in the *Don Camillo* movies and in *Marcellino pane e vino* are very different: a village of the Bassa Padana and a Spanish rural community. In both settings life has preserved the fascination of the traditional values, where family structures survive and where community life is still strongly part of the village. The close relationship between characters and their own environment is expressed in both films in many ways: Peppone and Don Camillo both help to protect the village's agriculture when flooding devastates the area, both characters are ready to support and organise the

subsequent reconstruction, all filmed with a smooth film stock which portrays reality and poverty very differently from several of the Neorealist films. It is a misery depicted 'in rosa', where rather than capturing a devastating reality, highlights the fraternity that kept the village united. *Marcellino pane e vino's* setting is very similar: it is set in Spain but it is a countryside that resembles many areas of Italy. Here again, the community life is brought to light not just by the relationship established within the friary, but also with the outside community.

Traditional values, fraternal ideals and a strong spiritual belief are perceived in all films as the driving forces that allow positive feelings to survive. Rural life is not - as in the many cities of the other films analysed in this section - corrupted and spoilt. On the contrary, it is a unifying context, in which Christian values can flourish and strive.

This Chapter has shown a few interesting issues in relation to Italian cinema in the post-war period. First of all it has revealed that the national cinema - in terms of figures - was in vibrant condition and that indigenous films often managed to attract wider audiences than American ones. Moreover, when

looking at Italian films either recommended by the Vatican and accepted in the parish cinemas or excluded by the same circuit, it seems that, despite various attempts by the same production companies to comply with the moral rules enforced by the Vatican, a wide number of national films were still considered to be inappropriate to be shown in parish cinemas. The analysis of the case studies not only presents many similarities with the American counterparts, but also strengthens the case of a Catholic establishment so uneasy with some aspects of modernity which Italian society was clearly showing.

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i (Monaco 1965: 2)

Anni	Italiani	Americani
1950	24%	67,3%
1951	28,1%	63,3%
1952	33,1%	58,1%
1953	35%	57,3%
1954	36,2%	56%
1955	34,8%	58%
1956	28,4%	62,9%
1957	30%	58,9%
1958	32,6%	55,2%
1959	36%	50,7%
1960	41,2%	45,6%

ii Interview with the author.

iii The film, despite being a Spanish production, was sold and considered to be an Italian film (Lizzani 1992: 201).

iv Interview with the author.

v Emilia Romagna was traditionally a left-voting region.

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<sup>vi</sup> Spinazzola reminds the reader that in another *Don Camillo* film there will be a 'maggiorata fisica', but only as a contrast to the real role women had to have in society: 'In *Don Camillo e l'onorevole Peppone* sarà di scena una "maggiorata fisica" nelle vesti dell'attivista cittadina', depicted in the film as a "passionaria" da strapazzo, una ochetta presuntuosa dalla testa piena di slogan mandati a memoria: gli uomini affollano il suo comizio per divorarsela con gli occhi, ma si guardano bene dal prenderla sul serio; le donne, per parte loro, se ne stanno giudiziosamente in casa a fare la calza' (Spinazzola 1985: 199).

## Conclusions

The involvement of the United States and the Vatican in the area of the Italian film industry under the Catholic Church's sphere of activity in the years 1945-1960 is the focus of this research, which aims at tracing the tensions between economic (film industrial), political (governmental) and ideological pressures.

In order to outline a full picture of the relationship between the United States, the Vatican, the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, the Italian government, and the Christian Democrat Party, the thesis has been divided into different areas, which have each of them examined as a specific aspect of this complex report.

The analysis of the role of the myth of America and the process of Americanization which took place in Italy is vital in order to understand how the myth itself has changed from being an innovative element in Italian life during the Fascist regime, to become in the post-war

period a reassuring presence linked to stability and the preservation of a social system which was being shaped after the Second World War. Italy's reconstruction of its national identity after 1945 was subjected to a concerted effort by both the United States of America and the Vatican to oppose any developments that seemed as though they might favour the political left. Issues such as the elimination of restrictions on international trade and the strengthening of private enterprise had an import in American foreign policy that was not paralleled in that of the Vatican, however, the two states shared a belief in the necessity of containing Soviet imperialism. This ideological approach was not the only common aspect shared by the Vatican and the United States. The presence of common themes in their cultural propaganda is evident from the analysis of American Congressional records, Department of State bulletins and the Vatican's official primary sources. These sources testify to their shared interests especially in relation to the role of entertainment and in particular the responsibility of cinema in relation to morality.

The American production companies, favoured by the Catholic establishment, benefited also from the Italian government's overall strategic film industry policy, particularly the inertia that was present in the process of deliberation and approval of any cinema legislation. This form of 'purposeful lethargy', enabled the Christian Democrats to build a strong coalescence of interests with producers, distributors, and exhibitors. It also helped provide the Vatican with an environment in which it could apply its cultural strategy more effectively within Italy. State censorship boards were supported by Roman Catholic organisations throughout the country. Such church bodies sought to keep under surveillance the loosening of a morality, an unsought development that was associated with some strands of American cinema. On the one hand it is not surprising that the ecclesiastic censorship exercised by official Catholic organisations resembles in many ways the principles of the American Legion of Decency. However, on the other hand, the Vatican and some of the representatives of the main Hollywood film production companies disliked open political



propaganda in movies; this implied a common awareness of the power of cinema, where people believed entertainment more than any obvious political or religious intervention. Therefore, production companies - as well as the Italian Catholic establishment - preferred a non-overt, yet ultimately political approach of not using films as a means of communicating explicit political messages. It is necessary to say here that, while Hollywood in America did not mean only happy ending and optimism - as genres such as film noir presented a more complex portrayal of reality - what was Hollywood in Italy still offered a predominantly positive and reassuring form of entertainment.

For the United States the ideology of escapist entertainment enabled a return of investment. For the Vatican the consumer culture did not represent a problem as long as the image, which came with it, defended and promoted Christian values; this was because optimism and positive-ness were seen as key elements in the protection of family ideals endangered by a certain type of entertainment. When it felt the need to, the Vatican

expressed adverse critical reactions to individual American films. However, this had little impact on the overall widespread screening of Hollywood films in parish cinemas and the Italian Catholic press from favouring particularly American movies, whose reception helped influence contemporary Italian society by offering soothing resolutions that were not to be found in the output of the Italian Neorealism movement. An analysis of the films accepted in the parish cinemas or excluded by the same circuit, reveals that, despite various attempts by mainstream Italian commercial producers to comply with the moral rules laid out by the Vatican, a wide number of Italian films were considered to be inappropriate to be shown to Catholic audiences.

The analysis of films carried out in the last two chapters demonstrates the value of a comparative strategy, which aims to highlight the occurrence of themes and issues common to certain American and Italian productions.

Different kinds of generalised conclusions emerge here. The belief that the only significant contemporary Italian-made movies in the post-war period were films such as *Ladri di biciclette* or *Roma città aperta*, is false, a misperception that derives from their being internationally recognised works of art. When looking at the box office receipts and at the moral literature, other films emerge and the obvious distinction between auteur versus mainstream cinema, which has often been a strong point of secondary literature, is no longer valid. The existence of a church-based system of assessing the moral content of movies provides an analytical tool that allows popular movies that were screened in post-war Italy to be categorised as either allowed or forbidden. This means that it is possible to compare what the Italian people enjoyed to be compared with what the Catholic Church felt that they should see.

It is clear that the Italian Catholic establishment's main interest in Italian cinema was to shape the reception of films rather than to determine the character of Italian-made films. While, the Vatican aimed at advising film

directors to bear in mind a Christian reality when making a film, they applied their principal efforts to trying to influence the reception of films, irrespective of where they had been made.

It is precisely in this framework that another aspect emerges very clearly. The case studies reveal that the portrayal of women in film was an important issue for the Catholics. When pleasure in film viewing corresponded with female appreciation on the screen, the Vatican would firmly intervene. What the Catholic establishment did not want was for cinema to challenge the *status quo* of women and to subvert their role in society. Therefore any level of suggestion of sexuality and female empowered position was considered to be a threat to the stability of the Catholic family and any representation in films of traditional family settings was welcome by the ecclesiastic establishment. Films such as *A qualcuno piace caldo*, *Gli uomini preferiscono le bionde* as well as *La donna più bella del mondo* and *Mambo* were subjected to adverse criticism by the Vatican. The association of female sexual

transgression and power and the consequent male subordination to female pleasure represented a clear challenge to Catholic moral values, which could not be ignored by the Vatican.

This also leads to my final point on the relationship between the Italian and American films here studied. While it might be tempting to infer that the kind of popular Italian cinema analysed here can be seen as 'Hollywood in foreign dress' (Dyer and Vincendeau 1992: 11), the reality was to some extent different. Some of the Italian films were the expression of that process of glocalization, where the use of local practices and tradition was used to create an Italian movie that both derived from, and yet also acted as a response to, an American-made film, as in the case of films such as *La donna più bella del mondo* and *Mambo*. The use of the term glocalization in relation to national production is, in fact, a way to define more a cross-fertilisation process between the United States and Italy in terms of cinema and a strong desire to foster a sense of national identity through a cinematic

tradition that was able to assert a degree of independence from American influence. On the other hand, works such as *Don Camillo* found a new critical collocation as uncontaminated autochthonous productions, that not only reflected the current social situation in Italy but also complied with the cinematic prejudices of the Vatican, the Italian government, and the Christian Democrat Party.

The thesis provides a model for understanding the strands that are in play when the popular ideological content of a popular cultural medium is of concern to parties that have allied but separate agendas of their own.

## Abbreviations

AC	Assemblea Costituente
ACEC	Associazione Cattolica Esercenti Cinema
Agis	Agenzia generale italiana spettacoli
ANICA	Associazione Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche e Affini
AP	Atto Parlamentare
CCC	Centro Cattolico Cinematografico
CD	Christian Democrats
CdD	Camera dei Deputati
CS	Commissione Speciale
DI	Disegno di legge
DS	Dipartimento dello Spettacolo
ERP	Economic Recovery Program (known as the Marshall Plan)
FUCI	Federazione degli Universitari Cattolici Italiani
GU	Gazzetta Ufficiale
IP	Interrogazione Parlamentare
L	Legge
PI	Proposta di legge
RDL	Regio Decreto Legge
RC	La Rivista del Cinematografo
SAS	Servizio Assistenza Sale
SdR	Senato della Repubblica

# Appendices



## Appendix A: The Vatican's statements on the cinema

29 June 1936: Lettera Enciclica *Vigilanti cura*.

16 December 1954: Approvazione dei nuovi statuti e trasformazione in Pontificia Commissione per il cinema, la radio e la televisione.

21 June 1955 - 25 October 1955: Il film ideale.  
Esortazione di Pio XII ai rappresentanti del mondo cinematografico.

8 September 1957: Lettera Enciclica *Miranda Prorsus*.

22 February 1959: Lettera Apostolica *Boni Pastoris*.

4 December 1963: Decreto Conciliaria *Inter Mirifica*.

**Appendix B: The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 (Hays Code) (Available from: <URL: <http://www.artsreformation.com/a001/hays-code.html>>)**

A Code to Govern the Making of Talking, Synchronized and Silent Motion Pictures. Formulated and formally adopted by The Association of Motion Picture Producers, Inc. and The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc. in March 1930. Motion picture producers recognize the high trust and confidence which have been placed in them by the people of the world and which have made motion pictures a universal form of entertainment.

They recognize their responsibility to the public because of this trust and because entertainment and art are important influences in the life of a nation. Hence, though regarding motion pictures primarily as entertainment without any explicit purpose of teaching or propaganda, they know that the motion picture within its own field of entertainment may be directly responsible for spiritual or moral progress, for higher types of social life, and for much correct thinking.

During the rapid transition from silent to talking pictures they have realized the necessity and the opportunity of subscribing to a Code to govern the production of talking pictures and of re-acknowledging this responsibility.

On their part, they ask from the public and from public leaders a sympathetic understanding of their purposes and problems and a spirit of cooperation that will allow them the freedom and opportunity necessary to bring the motion picture to a still higher level of wholesome entertainment for all the people.

**General Principles**

1. No picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.
2. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.
3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

**Particular Applications**

**I. Crimes Against the Law.** These shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation.

*1. Murder*

a. The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.

b. Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.

c. Revenge in modern times shall not be justified.

*2. Methods of Crime should not be explicitly presented.*

a. Theft, robbery, safe-cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc., should not be detailed in method.

b. Arson must subject to the same safeguards.

c. The use of firearms should be restricted to the essentials.

d. Methods of smuggling should not be presented.

*3. Illegal drug traffic must never be presented.*

4. The use of liquor in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown.

**II. Sex.** The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

*1. Adultery, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively.*

*2. Scenes of Passion*

a. They should not be introduced when not essential to the plot.

b. Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown.

c. In general passion should so be treated that these scenes do not stimulate the lower and baser element.

*3. Seduction or Rape*

a. They should never be more than suggested, and only when essential for the plot, and even then never shown by explicit method.

b. They are never the proper subject for comedy.

*4. Sex perversion or any inference to it is forbidden.*

*5. White slavery shall not be treated.*

6. *Miscegenation (sex relationships between the white and black races) is forbidden.*

7. *Sex hygiene and venereal diseases are not subjects for motion pictures.*

8. *Scenes of actual child birth, in fact or in silhouette, are never to be presented.*

9. *Children's sex organs are never to be exposed.*

**III. Vulgarity.** The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil, subjects should always be subject to the dictates of good taste and a regard for the sensibilities of the audience.

**IV. Obscenity.** Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke, or by suggestion (even when likely to be understood only by part of the audience) is forbidden.

**V. Profanity.** Pointed profanity (this includes the words, God, Lord, Jesus, Christ - unless used reverently - Hell, S.O.B., damn, Gawd), or every other profane or vulgar expression however used, is forbidden.

**VI. Costume.**

1. *Complete nudity is never permitted.* This includes nudity in fact or in silhouette, or any lecherous or licentious notice thereof by other characters in the picture.

2. *Undressing scenes should be avoided, and never used save where essential to the plot.*

3. *Indecent or undue exposure is forbidden.*

4. *Dancing or costumes intended to permit undue exposure or indecent movements in the dance are forbidden.*

**VII. Dances.**

1. Dances suggesting or representing sexual actions or indecent passions are forbidden.

2. Dances which emphasize indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

**VIII. Religion.**

1. *No film or episode may throw ridicule on any religious faith.*

2. *Ministers of religion in their character as ministers of religion should not be used as comic characters or as villains.*

3. *Ceremonies of any definite religion should be carefully and respectfully handled.*

**IX. Locations.** The treatment of bedrooms must be governed by good taste and delicacy.

**X. National Feelings.**

1. *The use of the Flag shall be consistently respectful.*

2. *The history, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly.*

**XI. Titles.** Salacious, indecent, or obscene titles shall not be used.

**XII. Repellent Subjects.** The following subjects must be treated within the careful limits of good taste:

1. Actual hangings or electrocutions as legal punishments for crime.
2. Third degree methods.
3. Brutality and possible gruesomeness.
4. Branding of people or animals.
5. Apparent cruelty to children or animals.
6. The sale of women, or a woman selling her virtue.
7. Surgical operations.

#### **Reasons Supporting the Preamble of the Code**

*I. Theatrical motion pictures, that is, pictures intended for the theatre as distinct from pictures intended for churches, schools, lecture halls, educational movements, social reform movements, etc., are primarily to be regarded as ENTERTAINMENT.*

Mankind has always recognized the importance of entertainment and its value in rebuilding the bodies and souls of human beings.

But it has always recognized that entertainment can be a character either HELPFUL or HARMFUL to the human race, and in consequence has clearly distinguished between:

- a. Entertainment which tends to improve the race, or at least to re-create and rebuild human beings exhausted with the realities of life; and
- b. Entertainment which tends to degrade human beings, or to lower their standards of life and living.

Hence the **MORAL IMPORTANCE** of entertainment is something which has been universally recognized. It enters intimately into the lives of men and women and affects them closely; it occupies their minds and affections during leisure hours; and ultimately touches the whole of their lives. A man may be judged by his standard of entertainment as easily as by the standard of his work.

So correct entertainment raises the whole standard of a nation.

Wrong entertainment lowers the whole living conditions and moral ideals of a race.

Note, for example, the healthy reactions to healthful sports, like baseball, golf; the unhealthy reactions to sports like cockfighting, bullfighting, bear baiting, etc.

Note, too, the effect on ancient nations of gladiatorial combats, the obscene plays of Roman times, etc.

### *II. Motion pictures are very important as ART.*

Though a new art, possibly a combination art, it has the same object as the other arts, the presentation of human thought, emotion, and experience, in terms of an appeal to the soul through the senses.

Here, as in entertainment,

Art enters intimately into the lives of human beings.

Art can be morally good, lifting men to higher levels. This has been done through good music, great painting, authentic fiction, poetry, drama.

Art can be morally evil in its effects. This is the case clearly enough with unclean art, indecent books, suggestive drama. The effect on the lives of men and women are obvious.

Note: It has often been argued that art itself is unmoral, neither good nor bad. This is true of the **THING** which is music, painting, poetry, etc. But the **THING** is the **PRODUCT** of some person's mind, and the intention of that mind was either good or bad morally when it produced the thing. Besides, the thing has its **EFFECT** upon those who come into contact with it. In both these ways, that is, as a product of a mind and as the cause of definite effects, it has a deep moral significance and unmistakable moral quality.

Hence: The motion pictures, which are the most popular of modern arts for the masses, have their moral quality from the intention of the minds which produce them and from their effects on the moral lives and reactions of their audiences. This gives them a most important morality.

1. They reproduce the morality of the men who use the pictures as a medium for the expression of their ideas and ideals.

2. They affect the moral standards of those who, through the screen, take in these ideas and ideals.

In the case of motion pictures, the effect may be particularly emphasized because no art has so quick and so widespread an appeal to the masses. It has become in an incredibly short period the art of the multitudes.

*III. The motion picture, because of its importance as entertainment and because of the trust placed in it by the peoples of the world, has special MORAL OBLIGATIONS:*

A. Most arts appeal to the mature. This art appeals at once to every class, mature, immature, developed, undeveloped, law abiding, criminal. Music has its grades for different classes; so has literature and drama. This art of the motion picture, combining as it does the two fundamental appeals of looking at a picture and listening to a story, at once reaches every class of society.

B. By reason of the mobility of film and the ease of picture distribution, and because the possibility of duplicating positives in large quantities, this art reaches places unpenetrated by other forms of art.

C. Because of these two facts, it is difficult to produce films intended for only certain classes of people. The exhibitors' theatres are built for the masses, for the cultivated and the rude, the mature and the immature, the self-respecting and the criminal. Films, unlike books and music, can with difficulty be confined to certain selected groups.

D. The latitude given to film material cannot, in consequence, be as wide as the latitude given to book material. In addition:

a. A book describes; a film vividly presents. One presents on a cold page; the other by apparently living people.

b. A book reaches the mind through words merely; a film reaches the eyes and ears through the reproduction of actual events.

c. The reaction of a reader to a book depends largely on the keenness of the reader's imagination; the reaction to a film depends on the vividness of presentation.

Hence many things which might be described or suggested in a book could not possibly be presented in a film.

E. This is also true when comparing the film with the newspaper.

a. Newspapers present by description, films by actual presentation.

b. Newspapers are after the fact and present things as having taken place; the film gives the events in the process of enactment and with apparent reality of life.

F. Everything possible in a play is not possible in a film:

a. Because of the larger audience of the film, and its consequential mixed character. Psychologically, the larger the audience, the lower the moral mass resistance to suggestion. b. Because through light, enlargement of character, presentation, scenic emphasis, etc., the screen story is brought closer to the audience than the play.

c. The enthusiasm for and interest in the film actors and actresses, developed beyond anything of the sort in history, makes the audience largely sympathetic toward the characters they portray and the stories in which they figure. Hence the audience is more ready to confuse actor and actress and the characters they portray, and it is most receptive of the emotions and ideals presented by the favourite stars.

G. Small communities, remote from sophistication and from the hardening process which often takes place in the ethical and moral standards of larger cities, are easily and readily reached by any sort of film.

H. The grandeur of mass settings, large action, spectacular features, etc., affects and arouses more intensely the emotional side of the audience.

In general, the mobility, popularity, accessibility, emotional appeal, vividness, straightforward presentation of fact in the film make for more intimate contact with a larger audience and for greater emotional appeal.

Hence the larger moral responsibilities of the motion pictures.

#### **Reasons Underlying the General Principles**

I. No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrong-doing, evil or sin.

This is done:

1. When evil is made to appear attractive and alluring, and good is made to appear unattractive.

2. When the sympathy of the audience is thrown on the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil, sin. The same is true of a film that would throw sympathy against goodness, honor, innocence, purity or honesty.

Note: Sympathy with a person who sins is not the same as sympathy with the sin or crime of which he is guilty. We may feel sorry for



the plight of the murderer or even understand the circumstances which led him to his crime: we may not feel sympathy with the wrong which he has done. The presentation of evil is often essential for art or fiction or drama. This in itself is not wrong provided:

a. That evil is not presented alluringly. Even if later in the film the evil is condemned or punished, it must not be allowed to appear so attractive that the audience's emotions are drawn to desire or approve so strongly that later the condemnation is forgotten and only the apparent joy of sin is remembered.

b. That throughout, the audience feels sure that evil is wrong and good is right.

II. Correct standards of life shall, as far as possible, be presented.

A wide knowledge of life and of living is made possible through the film. When right standards are consistently presented, the motion picture exercises the most powerful influences. It builds character, develops right ideals, inculcates correct principles, and all this in attractive story form.

If motion pictures consistently hold up for admiration high types of characters and present stories that will affect lives for the better, they can become the most powerful force for the improvement of mankind.

III. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

By natural law is understood the law which is written in the hearts of all mankind, the greater underlying principles of right and justice dictated by conscience.

By human law is understood the law written by civilized nations.

1. The presentation of crimes against the law is often necessary for the carrying out of the plot. But the presentation must not throw sympathy with the crime as against the law nor with the criminal as against those who punish him.

2. The courts of the land should not be presented as unjust. This does not mean that a single court may not be presented as unjust, much less that a single court official must not be presented this way. But the court system of the country must not suffer as a result of this presentation.

#### **Reasons Underlying the Particular Applications**

I. Sin and evil enter into the story of human beings and hence in themselves are valid dramatic material.

II. In the use of this material, it must be distinguished between sin which repels by its very nature, and sins which often attract.

a. In the first class come murder, most theft, many legal crimes, lying, hypocrisy, cruelty, etc.

b. In the second class come sex sins, sins and crimes of apparent heroism, such as banditry, daring thefts, leadership in evil, organized crime, revenge, etc.

The first class needs less care in treatment, as sins and crimes of this class are naturally unattractive. The audience instinctively condemns all such and is repelled.

Hence the important objective must be to avoid the hardening of the audience, especially of those who are young and impressionable, to the thought and fact of crime. People can become accustomed even to murder, cruelty, brutality, and repellent crimes, if these are too frequently repeated.

The second class needs great care in handling, as the response of human nature to their appeal is obvious. This is treated more fully below.

III. A careful distinction can be made between films intended for general distribution, and films intended for use in theatres restricted to a limited audience. Themes and plots quite appropriate for the latter would be altogether out of place and dangerous in the former.

Note: The practice of using a general theatre and limiting its patronage to "Adults Only" is not completely satisfactory and is only partially effective.

However, maturer minds may easily understand and accept without harm subject matter in plots which do younger people positive harm.

Hence: If there should be created a special type of theatre, catering exclusively to an adult audience, for plays of this character (plays with problem themes, difficult discussions and maturer treatment) it would seem to afford an outlet, which does not now exist, for pictures unsuitable for general distribution but permissible for exhibitions to a restricted audience.

#### I. Crimes Against the Law

The treatment of crimes against the law must not:

1. Teach methods of crime.
2. Inspire potential criminals with a desire for imitation.
3. Make criminals seem heroic and justified.

Revenge in modern times shall not be justified. In lands and ages of less developed civilization and moral principles, revenge may sometimes be presented. This would be the case especially in places where no law exists to cover the crime because of which revenge is committed.

Because of its evil consequences, the drug traffic should not be presented in any form. The existence of the trade should not be brought to the attention of audiences.

The use of liquor should never be excessively presented. In scenes from American life, the necessities of plot and proper characterization alone justify its use. And in this case, it should be shown with moderation.

## II. Sex.

Out of a regard for the sanctity of marriage and the home, the triangle, that is, the love of a third party for one already married, needs careful handling. The treatment should not throw sympathy against marriage as an institution.

Scenes of passion must be treated with an honest acknowledgement of human nature and its normal reactions. Many scenes cannot be presented without arousing dangerous emotions on the part of the immature, the young or the criminal classes.

Even within the limits of pure love, certain facts have been universally regarded by lawmakers as outside the limits of safe presentation.

In the case of impure love, the love which society has always regarded as wrong and which has been banned by divine law, the following are important:

1. Impure love must not be presented as attractive and beautiful.
2. It must not be the subject of comedy or farce, or treated as material for laughter.
3. It must not be presented in such a way to arouse passion or morbid curiosity on the part of the audience.
4. It must not be made to seem right and permissible.
5. In general, it must not be detailed in method and manner.

III. Vulgarity; IV. Obscenity; V. Profanity; hardly need further explanation than is contained in the Code.

## VI. Costume.

General Principles:

1. The effect of nudity or semi-nudity upon the normal man or woman, and much more upon the young and upon immature persons, has been honestly recognized by all lawmakers and moralists.

2. Hence the fact that the nude or semi-nude body may be beautiful does not make its use in the films moral. For, in addition to its beauty, the effect of the nude or semi-nude body on the normal individual must be taken into consideration.

3. Nudity or semi-nudity used simply to put a "punch" into a picture comes under the head of immoral actions. It is immoral in its effect on the average audience.

4. Nudity can never be permitted as being necessary for the plot. Semi-nudity must not result in undue or indecent exposures.

5. Transparent or translucent materials and silhouette are frequently more suggestive than actual exposure.

#### VII. Dances.

Dancing in general is recognized as an art and as a beautiful form of expressing human emotions. But dances which suggest or represent sexual actions, whether performed solo or with two or more; dances intended to excite the emotional reaction of an audience; dances with movement of the breasts, excessive body movements while the feet are stationary, violate decency and are wrong.

#### VIII. Religion

The reason why ministers of religion may not be comic characters or villains is simply because the attitude taken toward them may easily become the attitude taken toward religion in general. Religion is lowered in the minds of the audience because of the lowering of the audience's respect for a minister.

#### IX. Locations

Certain places are so closely and thoroughly associated with sexual life or with sexual sin that their use must be carefully limited.

#### X. National Feelings

The just rights, history, and feelings of any nation are entitled to most careful consideration and respectful treatment.

#### XI. Titles

As the title of a picture is the brand on that particular type of goods, it must conform to the ethical practices of all such honest business.

#### XII. Repellent Subjects

Such subjects are occasionally necessary for the plot. Their treatment must never offend good taste nor injure the sensibilities of an audience.

**Appendix C: Cinema legislation in the post-war period.**

Disegno di legge = DI  
Gazzetta Ufficiale = GU  
Legge = L  
Regio Decreto Legge = RDL

RDL 4 September 1938, n. 1389:  
*Monopolio statale all'acquisto di film esteri.*

DI 5 October 1945, n. 678 (GU n. 132, 3 November 1945)  
*Nuovo ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana.*

L 16 May 1947, n. 379 (GU n. 122, 30 May 1947)  
*Ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica italiana.*

L 26 July 1949, n. 448 (GU n. 173, 30 July 1949)  
*Costituzione di un fondo speciale per il credito cinematografico e disciplina della circolazione dei films esteri parlati in lingua italiana.*

L 29 December 1949, n. 958 (GU n. 301, 31 December 1949)  
*Disposizioni per la cinematografia.*

L 31 March 1955, n. 174 (GU n. 79, 6 April 1955)  
*Proroga delle provvidenze stabilite per l'industria cinematografica nazionale.*

L 31 July 1956, n. 897 (GU n. 206, 18 August 1956)  
*Modificazioni ed aggiunte alle disposizioni sulla cinematografia.*

L 22 December 1959, n. 1097 (GU n. 313, 29 December 1959)  
*Provvedimenti per la cinematografia.*

L 22 December 1960, n. 1565 (GU n. 318, 29 December 1960)  
*Proroga, con modificazioni ed aggiunte, delle disposizioni contenute nella legge 31 luglio 1956 n. 897, modificate e integrate con la legge 22 dicembre 1959, n. 1097, sulla cinematografia.*

**Appendix D: Interview with Giulio Andreotti, sottosegretario alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri in the years 1947-1954. (29 may 2004)**

**DTG:** Vorrei partire dalla decisione di istituire presso la Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri un ufficio per la cinematografia. Brunetta l'ha definito come una forma di controllo e di centralizzazione del potere e la sinistra lo come un modo per mettere il cinema totalmente nelle mani della DC. Quale è stata la ragione di questa decisione?

**GA:** Non era una creazione, era una risistemazione degli uffici, perché si era abolito il Ministero della Cultura popolare e gli uffici erano passati alla Presidenza del Consiglio. Uno degli uffici era la Direzione generale della cinematografia e quindi non era una innovazione in assoluto. I problemi erano di due tipi: uno era quello che spetta allo Stato sovrano, chiamiamolo pure la censura, la revisione. Questo c'era con leggi precedenti: nella Costituzione della Repubblica è previsto all'articolo 21 che per tutela del buocostume possono essere adottate misure anche preventive, quindi proprio salva la censura come norma costituzionale. Dirò di più che la Costituente fece anche una legge speciale atta a riconoscere come stampa oscena la stampa che poteva turbare in modo particolare gli adolescenti e la stampa raccapricciante. Questa è una legge del febbraio del 1948, prima di sciogliersi l'Assemblea Costituente. Questa è la parte che riguarda direi il controllo. Ma c'era la parte che riguardava la produzione perché Cinecittà era stata chiusa ed era occupata dagli sfollati e allora si trattava di rimettere in piedi l'industria cinematografica. Agli italiani e ai proprietari di sale non interessava niente questo perché siccome prima arrivavano con molta difficoltà i film americani e dopo la guerra arrivavano i film americani e c'era tutto l'arretrato da poter mettere in circuito, quindi agli interessati delle sale cinematografiche non importava niente. Allora si fecero due cose: primo, si riaprì Cinecittà e si riaprì anche in modo solenne girando una grossa pellicola americana, il Quo Vadis, che era molto utile sia perché ridava notorietà a Cinecittà, sia perché occupava le masse che in quel momento avevano una necessità di lavoro straordinaria. E poi si fece una legge nella quale si stabiliva che si dava per le produzioni nazionali un rimborso dell'imposta erariale sul biglietto di ingresso degli spettacoli, di due gradi (10 o 18%) a seconda se erano pellicole cosiddette di qualità o pellicole non di qualità. In più si stabiliva che ogni trimestre un certo numero di giornate dovevano essere riservate ai film nazionali o di coproduzione. Non riuscimmo mai a poter avere in America il doppiaggio dei film italiani. L'America è contro i doppiaggi per ragioni dicono culturali ma forse anche mercantili. I film che potevano andare in America erano con i sottotitoli. Però mettemmo che non era una vera e propria tassa ma un diritto di due milioni e mezzo ogni film americano che si doppiava in italiano e questo costituiva un fondo per far propaganda ai film italiani all'estero.

**DTG:** A proposito della percentuale assegnata ai film italiani, come veniva definita la qualità? C'era ovviamente una commissione tecnica, ma come era composta?

**GA:** C'era una commissione tecnica che inizialmente era composta solo da funzionari, ma uno dei funzionari rappresentava per esempio l'Accademia, quindi era un rapporto culturale e non burocratico. Successivamente si allargò alla commissione anche i rappresentanti delle categorie produttrici.

**DTG:** Per quanto riguarda invece la legge sui buoni doppiaggio di cui ha parlato prima, Lei dichiarò anche che era un modo per favorire e fare in modo che alcune case americane, come per esempio la Columbia, potessero produrre in Italia con gli introiti acquisiti dai film.

**GA:** Questa era una cosa diversa. Quello dei due milioni e mezzo era per il doppiaggio. Mentre, invece, se loro producevano un film potevano adoperare con agevolazioni quello che loro incassavano con i film, perché l'incasso dei film - adesso cito di massima - metà loro lo potevano portare, metà lo dovevano investire in Italia. Come lo dovevano investire? Noi incoraggiavamo che lo investissero nel fare produzione, però lo potevano investire anche in opere di assistenza. Per esempio, per un accordo che fecero i produttori, il grande Collegio americano del nord sul Gianicolo fu costruito con denaro della proiezione di film americani in Italia.

**DTG:** I produttori americani e gli esercenti italiani avevano come obiettivo comune l'eliminazione di qualsiasi restrizione contro l'importazione dei film stranieri in Italia. Che tipo di pressione ci fu da parte loro sul governo per ottenere questo?

**GA:** Noi riuscimmo a creare una notevole collaborazione tra le tre categorie italiane, produzione, noleggio ed esercizio. Proprio fui fortunato, le tre persone che dirigevano questo, la produzione Eitel Monaco, che era stato un grande personaggio, era stato direttore generale del cinema sotto il fascismo; gli esercenti, Italo Gemini, persona molto a modo, e i noleggiatori Franco Penotti. Tra di loro erano molto amici e quindi si creò anche un clima, sia tra di loro, e sia tra di loro e me di grande collaborazione e questo fu molto importante perché questo all'inizio non c'era, all'inizio in fondo agli esercenti in modo particolare non interessava niente perché anche se riempivano le sale con film americani loro erano altrettanto contenti. Anzi c'erano anche dei dubbi che si facessero film nazionali che attraessero egualmente.

**DTG:** Solaroli, che ha ricostruito il periodo soprattutto dal punto di vista legislativo, diceva che il sostegno del governo all'industria cinematografica americana era parte di una sorta di strategia ideologica perché il cinema americano rappresentava quella evasione dalla realtà di cui l'Italia del periodo aveva fortemente bisogno. Solaroli affermava che il governo frenava una produzione che diffondesse 'inquietudini e motivi liberatori' e al contrario la produzione americana offriva uno stile di vita più rassicurante. Cosa ne pensa?

**GA:** Ci furono alcune polemiche sul tipo di produzioni italiane sotto due aspetti: questo mondo della produzione era in parte notevole di sinistra. C'era una critica molto feroce che ne faceva Alberto Sordi. Diceva: questi vanno nei cortei insieme ai metalmeccanici però se il produttore non li paga in nero e in Svizzera, loro il film non lo fanno.

Quindi c'era un po' questa specie di civetteria di fare un po' di sinistrismo. E ci fu poi anche vero un certo intervento, io stesso lo feci, dicendo che il neorealismo era giusto però che l'Italia non era fatta solo di pensionati che morivano di fame o di ladri di biciclette. L'Italia era fatta pure di Don Bosco, di Forlanini che scopriva la cura della tubercolosi. Io ero un po' l'asino tra i suoni, perché in Parlamento non c'era molto favore di dare dei soldi al cinema, perché si diceva ma in fondo ci sono tante cose da ricostruire. Poi perché allora non si danno ai libri. Però, siccome io ero convinto che fosse una cosa importante anche economicamente, ma non solo economicamente. Questo discorso dell'evasione...del resto avemmo delle proteste, ne faccio una specifica, proprio una protesta americana su Ladri di biciclette venuta tramite Ambasciata da un comitato di donne del Maryland - se non mi sbaglio - che protestavano primo perché nel film si parlava delle case di tolleranza e in America c'era la Legione della Decenza che fa delle valutazioni molto rigorose. Si parlava delle case di tolleranza e un bambino faceva la pipì su un muro. Quando si dice che noi eravamo bacchettoni...in questo caso c'era un bacchettonismo... ci fu proprio uno scambio di lettere tramite Ministero degli Esteri, dovvemmo chiarire. Però la cinematografia italiana ebbe un momento di grande successo, avemmo in molti festival delle buone valutazioni, si riprese anche la Mostra del Cinema di Venezia.

**DTG:** Qualche produzione la fece anche l'Ente dello Spettacolo...

**GA:** Sì, perché loro avevano creato tre persone, Diego Fabbri, Turi Vasile e Mario Melloni, che poi dopo diventò comunista ma era allora direttore del Popolo, crearono la Costellazione Film, che però non riuscì a sfondare purtroppo anche per le idee, non riuscirono a fare qualcosa che rimase nella storia del cinema.

**DTG:** Quanto era importante il giudizio della Chiesa sulle decisioni della cinematografia?

**GA:** La Chiesa aveva formato il Centro Cattolico Cinematografico che dava le sue valutazioni, tipo la Legione della Decenza. Il sacerdote che se ne occupava, il piemontese don Albino Galletto, aveva acquistato molto prestigio. C'era anche un interesse perché avere una classifica per tutti significava anche avere degli incassi maggiori. Quindi anche indipendentemente da quelle che erano le attività ministeriali, molti produttori avevano contatti con l'Ente dello Spettacolo e con il Centro Cattolico Cinematografico. E poi c'era la rete di sale parrocchiali, perché i film visibili per tutti andavano automaticamente nelle sale parrocchiali ed aveva quindi anche questo circuito fuori dal circuito commerciale.



**Appendix E: Classification of the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico's Commissione di Revisione.**

**Norme per la classificazione morale dei film adottate fino al 31 dicembre 1968.**

(from Sorgi, C. (n.d.). *Valutazione morale dei film*. Roma: Edizioni Paoline)

**FILM POSITIVI O AMMESSI:**

**T (Tutti)** - È il film adatto per un pubblico familiare e di giovanissimi - perché non contiene nella vicenda, nelle sequenze o nei dialoghi, elementi pedagogicamente e moralmente negativi.

**Tr (Tutti con riserva)** - È il film meno adatto per i giovani - che si distinguee dalla precedente categoria per qualche particolare meno conveniente.

**A (Adulti)** - È il film che richiede la preparazione e la mentalità di un adulto - sia per l'argomento o il modo di presentarlo, sia per sequenze o dialoghi.

**Am (Adulti maturi)** - È il film che esige una completa maturità di giudizio morale - sia per la delicatezza degli argomenti trattati che per la difficoltà di interpretazione.

**FILM RICHIEDENTI CAUTELE:**

**Ar (Adulti con riserva)** - È il film che, pur non essendo negativo, presenta elementi pericolosi anche per un adulto o merita obiettive riserve morali - tanto per l'ambiguità dell'argomento o per la obiettiva difficoltà di interpretazione della tesi, quanto per la scabrosità, gratuita o compiaciuta, di sequenze o battute del dialogo.

**FILM NEGATIVI:**

**S (Sconsigliato)** - È il film che costituisce un obiettivo pericolo per ogni categoria di spettatori - sia per la falsità o equivocità della tesi, che per la presentazione suasiva di sequenze di sensualità, di violenza o comunque riprovevoli.

**E (Escluso)** - È il film gravemente immorale e nocivo per ogni pubblico - perché presenta, in forma suasiva, una tesi contraria alla dottrina cattolica, oppure contiene sequenze o dialoghi immorali, carichi di forte suggestione.



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## DON CAMILLO E L'ONOREVOLE PEPPONE

A

**Origine:** Italiano — **Genere:** Commedia — **Produr.:** Rizzoli Film — **Lunghezza:** m. 2750 — **Regia:** C. Gallone — **Sogg. e Scenegg.:** G. Guareschi — **Musica:** A. Cicognini — **Fotogr.:** A. Brizzi — **Interpr.:** Fernandel, G. Cervi, C. Silvain, L. Gloria — **Distrib.:** Dear Film.

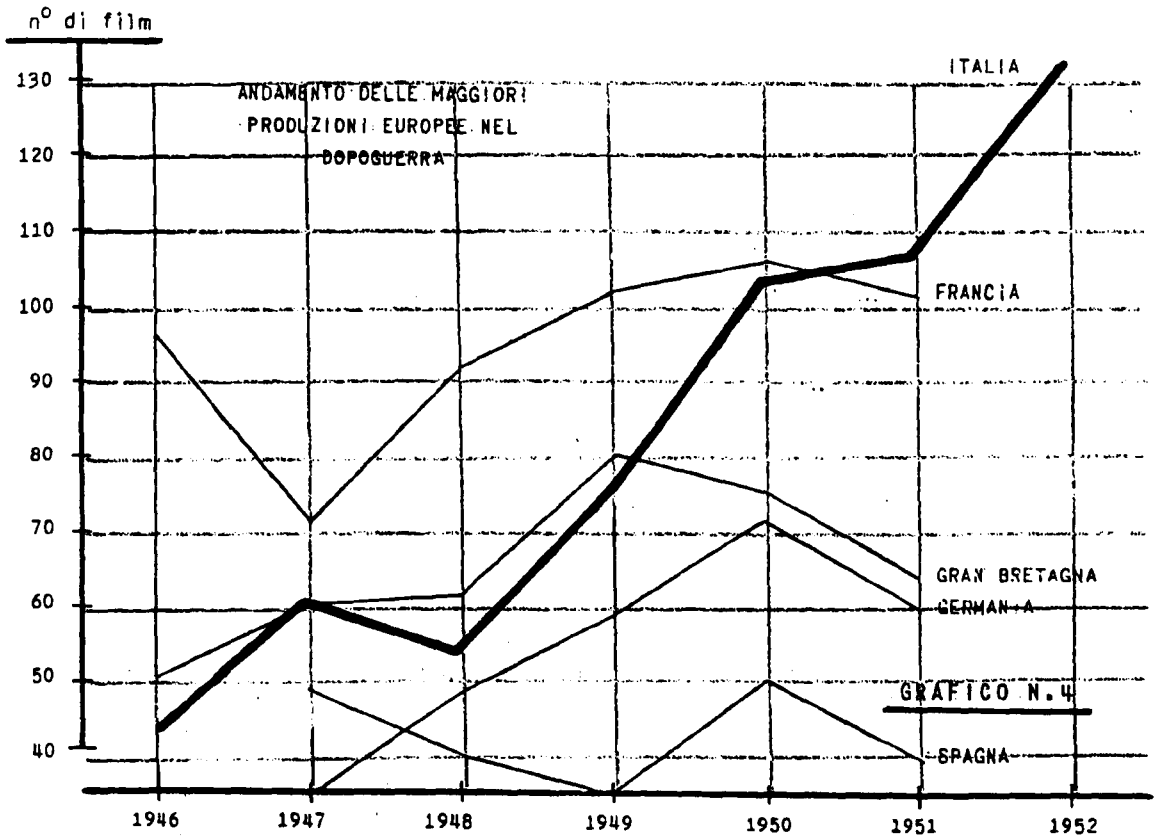
**Soggetto.** — In un paesino della bassa emilliana il sindaco comunista Peppone si trova costantemente in conflitto col parroco Don Camillo, benchè un segreto sentimento di reciproca simpatia e comprensione tenga avvinti i due, pur divisi dalle quotidiane battaglie. Le quali divengono più violente durante il periodo elettorale, dacchè Peppone è stato incluso nella lista del fronte popolare. Per dare al sindaco-candidato un appoggio durante la campagna elettorale, la Federazione invia una compagna energica sì, ma non priva di attrattive personali, alle quali Peppone non si mostra insensibile. L'episodio potrebbe riuscire fatale alla tranquillità domestica del sindaco, se Don Camillo non intervenisse tempestivamente per ricondurre la pace nella famiglia. Per poter aspirare alla deputazione Peppone si prepara coscienziosamente a sostenere l'esame di quinta elementare, ma non riuscirebbe a superarlo senza l'aiuto di Don Camillo, aiuto non del tutto disinteressato, giacchè in compenso il sindaco deve mettere la sua firma sotto il progetto di costruzione di una cappella. Altri episodi mettono uno di fronte all'altro i due eterni avversari, sempre in sospetto, sempre in cerca di una rivincita. Per la chiusura della campagna elettorale Peppone tiene un discorso pieno di bolsa retorica comunista, che Don Camillo, facendo suonare l'inno del Piave, trasforma in un'affermazione di patriottismo. Peppone viene eletto, rinuncia all'ufficio di sindaco e si prepara a partire. Ma non è soddisfatto: preferisce rimanere al suo paese, continuare a fare il sindaco. Ci ripensa quando è in treno, e in seguito alle parole di Don Camillo, andato a salutarlo, rinuncia al mandato e se ne torna al paese.

*Il film si riallaccia ai due precedenti lavori, che mettono in scena gli stessi ormai ben definiti personaggi. Il lavoro ripete situazioni note, ma non manca di qualche felice trovata. Buone la regia e la recitazione.*

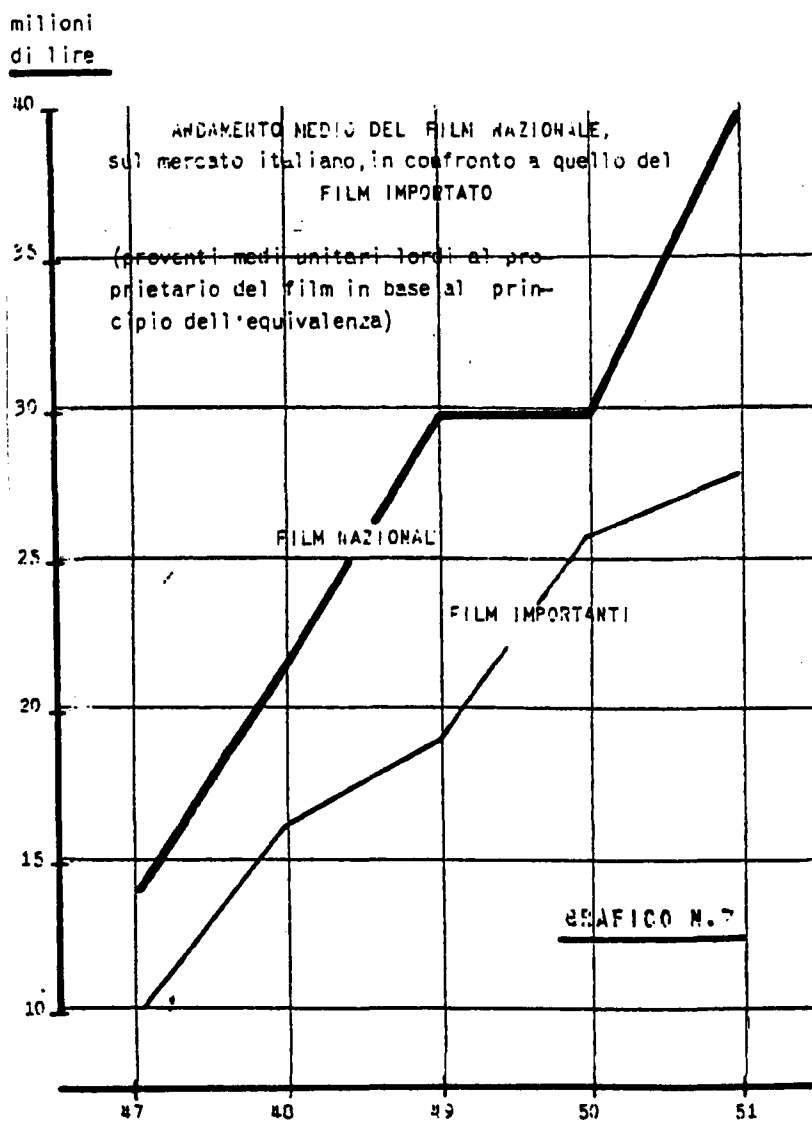
**Giudizio morale.** — ~~Nelle lotte tra i due avversari, trionfa sempre Don Camillo.~~ Il film si limita a presentare un piccolo, ristretto mondo, diviso da diverse ideologie, ma dominato in fondo dal buon senso e da sentimenti amichevoli di umana comprensione. L'accostare il sacro al profano (come fa Don Camillo nei colloqui con il Cristo) può ingenerare confusione nei giovani: la visione del film viene quindi riservata agli adulti.

Appendix F: Example of a Scheda di segnalazione  
by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico.

Appendix G: Grafico dell'andamento delle maggiori produzioni europee nel dopoguerra (Anica 1952).



Appendix H: Grafico dell'andamento medio del film nazionale sul mercato italiano in confronto a quello del film importato.



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Atto Parlamentare = AP

Camera dei Deputati = CdD

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Disegno di legge = DI

Interrogazione Parlamentare = IP

Proposta di legge = PI

Senato della Repubblica = SdR

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## Filmography

*L'amore è una cosa meravigliosa. See Love is a Many Splendored Thing.*

*A qualcuno piace caldo. See Some Like It Hot.*

*Adamo ed Eva. Dir. Mario Mattoli, Italy, 1950.*

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*A Farewell to Arms. Dir. Charles Vidor, USA, 1957.*

*Africa sotto i mari. Dir. Giovanni Roccardi, Italy, 1953.*

*The African Queen. Dir. John Huston, USA, 1951*

*Altri tempi. Dir. Alessandro Blasetti, Italy, 1951.*

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*Un americano a Parigi. See An American In Paris.*

*Un americano a Roma. Dir. Steno, Italy, 1954.*

*L'amore è una cosa meravigliosa. See Love Is A Many-Splendored Thing.*

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*Attanasio cavallo vanesio. Dir. Camillo Mastrocinque, Italy, 1950.*

*L'avventuriero di Hong-Kong. See Soldier of Fortune.*

*Bathing Beauty. Dir. George Sidney, USA, 1944.*

*Beau Brummel*. Dir. Curtis Bernhardt, USA/GB, 1954.

*Belle ma povere*. Dir. Dino Risi, Italy, 1957.

*Bellezze al bagno*. See *Bathing Beauty*.

*Bellezze in motoscooter*. Dir. Carlo Campogalliani, Italy, 1950.

*Broken Lance*. Dir. Edward Dmytryk, USA, 1954.

*Buffalo Bill*. Dir. William A. Wellman, USA, 1944.

*Bulli e pupe*. See *Guys And Dolls*.

*Caccia al ladro*. See *To Catch a Thief*.

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*Carosello napoletano*. Dir. Ettore Giannini, Italy, 1953.

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*La diga sul Pacifico*. Dir. René Clément, Italy, 1957.

*La dolce vita*. Dir. Federico Fellini, Italy, 1960.

*La donna che visse due volte*. See *Vertigo*.

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*Don Camillo*. Dir. Julien Duvivier, Italy/France, 1952.

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*The Egyptian*. Dir. Michael Curtiz, USA, 1954.

*Europa '51*. Dir. Roberto Rossellini, Italy, 1952.

*Fabiola*. Dir. Alessandro Blasetti, Italy, 1947.

*Father of the Bride*. Dir. Vincent Minnelli, USA, 1950.

*Figaro qua, Figaro là*. Dir. Carlo L. Bragaglia, Italy, 1950.

*From Here to Eternity*. Dir. Fred Zinnemann, USA, 1953.

*Fuoco Verde*. See *Green Fire*.

*Furore. See The Grapes of Wrath.*

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*Gente di notte. See Night People.*

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*Gioventù perduta.* Dir. Pietro Germi, Italy, 1947.

*Giuseppe Verdi.* Dir. Raffaello Matarazzo, Italy, 1953.

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*Gone With The Wind.* Dir. Victor Fleming, USA, 1939.

*La grande guerra.* Dir. Mario Monicelli, Italy/France, 1959.

*The Grapes of Wrath.* Dir. John Ford, USA, 1939.

*Green Fire.* Dir. Andrew Marton, USA, 1954.

*Guarany.* Dir. Riccardo Freda, Italy, 1948.

*Guerra alla guerra.* Dir. Romolo Marcellini, Italy, 1946.

*Guerra e pace.* Dir. King Vidor, Italy, 1956.

*Gunfight at the O.K. Corral.* Dir. John Sturges, USA, 1957.

*Guys And Dolls.* Dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz, USA, 1955.

*Hell and High Water.* Dir. Samuel Fuller, USA, 1954.

*Holiday.* Dir. George Cukor, USA, 1938.

*Incantesimo. See Holiday.*

*Intrigo internazionale. See North by Northwest.*

*Gli invincibili. See Unconquered.*

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*Knights of the Round Table.* Dir. Richard Thorpe, USA,  
1953.

*Ladri di biciclette.* Dir. Vittorio De Sica, Italy, 1948.

*Lancia che uccide. See Broken Lance.*

*Last Time I Saw Paris.* Dir. Richard Brooks, USA, 1954.

*Life with Father.* Dir. Michael Curtiz, USA, 1947.

*Limelight.* Dir. Charlie Chaplin, USA, 1952.

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1955.

*Luci della ribalta. See Limelight.*

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*Marcellino pane e vino. See Marcelino pan y vino.*

*I migliori anni della nostra vita. See The Best Years of Our  
Lives.*

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*Niagara*. Dir. Henry Hathaway, USA, 1953.

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*North by Northwest*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1959.

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*47 morto che parla.* Dir. Carlo Ludovico Baraglia, Italy, 1950.

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*Ragazze da marito.* Dir. Eduardo De Filippo, Italy, 1952.

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*River of No Return.* Dir. Otto Preminger, USA, 1954.

*Rocco e i suoi fratelli.* Dir. Luchino Visconti, Italy, 1960.

*Roma città aperta.* Dir. Roberto Rossellini, Italy, 1945.

*Sabrina*. Dir. Billy Wilder, USA, 1954.

*Sciuscià*. Dir. Vittorio De Sica, Italy, 1946.

*Il segno di Venere*. Dir. Dino Risi, Italy, 1955.

*Sesto continente*. Dir. Folco Quilici, Italy, 1954.

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*The Bridge Over The River Kwai.* Dir. David Leans, USA, 1957.

*The Long Hot Summer.* Dir. Martin Ritt, USA, 1958.

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*The Seven Year Itch.* Dir. Billy Wilder, USA, 1955.

*Soldier of Fortune.* Dir. Edward Dmytryk, USA, 1955.

*The sun also rises.* Dir. Henry King, USA, 1957.

*The Ten Commandments.* Dir. Cecil B. DeMille, USA, 1956.

*The Young Lions.* Dir. Edward Dmytryk, USA, 1958.

*La terra trema.* Dir. Luchino Visconti, Italy, 1948.

*Three Coins in the Fountain.* Dir. Jean Negulesco, USA, 1954.

*To Catch a Thief.* Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1955.

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*Vita col padre. See Life with Father.*

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