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Cinema as a Political Media. Germany and Italy Compared, 1945–1950s

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Introduction: Cinema as a Political Medium — Germany and Italy Compared from 1945 to the 1950s

The Aims of this Volume

Abstract

This introductory chapter, firstly, aims at an understanding of the cinematic landscapes of both involved countries and discusses key features of the after-war period. In both countries the cinema was highly relevant in the popular culture of the time. In Italy, explicit political films attracted huge audiences, in a lesser degree in the four zones of the besieged Germany under allied control. But genre-productions like the Heimatfilm were not as un-political as they appeared. Like in Italy, competition by American productions was very strong, and in the American Zone these productions enjoyed political support. The German film industry was weak and fractured, whereas the Italian production recovered in astonishing speed. In both countries Church and bourgeois milieus met the growth of the sphere of the popular, not at last American film, with reservations and resistance. Although in Italy film censorship was abandoned after 1945, productions were increasingly under the pressure of relevant authorities which made use of financing tools, and also the directors were under pressure of moral control. In Germany, the film production was practically completely controlled by the respective Allied Powers. Neither German film in Italy nor Italian film in Germany played, until the beginning 1950s, any role in the cinema landscapes nor film markets of both countries. Secondly, the contribution discusses issues of German film-genres as the "rubble-film". It is argued that the negative image of post-war German cinema has now begun to change fundamentally. In Italy, post-war film and neorealism cannot be equated. Apart from the canonized productions, historicising dramas, also musical films and Vaudeville films as well as purely classical domestic dramas were successful. Regarding the explicitly political productions, the myth of a collective Italian resistance figured prominently, indeed this was decisive to the popularity of certain neorealist productions. Silences in Italian cinema were to some degree the result of a growing reluctance to engage in any deeper reflection, as the Christian Democracy party became the dominant force (in cultural policy) and investigation into the involvement of Catholic milieus in the Fascist regime was certainly undesir-

able. Ultimately, censorship "cooperated" with a shift in public taste towards a cinema of entertainment (which brought an embattled film industry much-needed capital in the face of US imports). Thirdly, the article elucidates the main interests in this volume: the political construction of the post-war film and its potential functions in the politics of remembrance, the treatment of the political burdens of the Nazi / Fascist regimes, the treatment of anti-Semitism, the awareness of the Holocaust and the role of anti-Fascist films in a transnational perspective. Furthermore, aesthetic issues of post-war films are explored, as well as questions of 'quality'.

1 Comparative Approaches and Cinema as a Popular-Cultural Practice

Comparative approaches have until recently been a very rare occurrence in studies of the history of film.[1] As yet there has been no comparison of post-war cinema in Germany and Italy, especially not of the emerging historical narratives in the cinematic landscapes of both countries. This volume seeks to take a step in this direction.

In both Germany and Italy between 1945 and the early 1950s, cinema was highly relevant to popular culture. The number of cinemas in Italy rose from 6 551 (1944 / 1945), peaking at 10 629 in 1956. Smaller cities especially profited from the expansion of cinema-going, including in the south, a development that was only possible due to modest ticket prices.[2]

In Germany, the cinema industry was restarted at an early stage. Entrance fees were low, and in the western zones already by 1947 there were 460 million cinema-goers.[3] A rapid boom followed: audiences in West Germany grew until 1950 to 487 million cinema-goers annually, with 4 000 cinemas at their disposal.[4] Despite the different intervening film policies of the occupying powers, there was a film market with impressive rates of attendance and, equally, a discursive horizon across the whole of Germany.

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1 On the divergent aesthetic potential of the film industries in Germany, Austria, France, and Italy, cf. Hermann Kappelhoff / Bernhard Groß / Daniel Illger (Eds.), Demokratisierung der Wahrnehmung? Das westeuropäische Nachkriegskino, Berlin 2010.

2 Domenico De Gregorio, Cinema and Television Audiences in Italy, in: Gazette 11,1 (1965), pp. 68–81, at pp. 68–70.

3 Johannes Hauser, Neuaufbau der westdeutschen Filmwirtschaft 1945–1955 und der Einfluss der US- amerikanischen Filmpolitik, Pfaffenweiler 1989, p. 376.

4 Hauptverband deutscher Filmtheater (Ed.), 50 Jahre Kino in Deutschland, Berlin 2000, p. 17.

Like in Italy, competition from American productions was very strong and, in the American Zone, enjoyed political support.[5] The German film industry was weak and fragmented – among other reasons because of political orders for its demerging. On the one hand the studios had to be rebuilt, while on the other the production budgets were so low that it was difficult to catch up with American productions.[6] After the end of the occupation period, attendance in West Germany grew constantly until 1957 to 800 million (equivalent to 12 attendances per inhabitant). Going to the cinema was a staple part of leisure culture, and big-name stars and cinematic events were celebrated in a variety of media. Through reviews, film was present in the daily newspapers, and the collective imagination was much supported by the "Wochenschau" (weekly newsreels). Altogether the preferences of audiences for certain genres changed little until the 1960s, and film ranking lists show a remarkable continuity regarding style and certain star actors. On the one hand, in only a few cases did American and other foreign productions find a place among the chart toppers.[7] At the same time, German productions could not compete with their lavishly financed American counterparts. Although German films were both cheaper and more popular, US productions, according to Ina Merkel, still found a large market. Merkel, in her most recent book, has underlined the diverse situation of cinematic culture after the war: while cinema-goers continued to prefer German films with their shared style, audiences were also (productively) confronted with the concerns and style of the allies' film productions. Merkel also evaluates the preferences and (possible) modes of reception of German audiences, watching, for example, home-front tales from the perspective of rural America. Allied film inscribed itself "in an intuitive way ... into the perception of the audience".[8] The relation of the "popular" and the "political" (understood broadly) was also clear:

5   Cf. Thomas Brandmeier, Kampf ums Nachkriegsprogramm. Überläufer, alte deutsche Tonfilme und alliierte Filme im deutschen Kino nach 1945, in: Hans-Michael Bock / Jan Distelmeyer / Jörg Schöning (Eds.), Träume in Trümmern. Film-Produktion und Propaganda in Europa 1940–1950, München 2009, pp. 56–202.

6   Hauser, Neuaufbau (see note 3), p. 353.

7   Anna Sarah Vielhaber, Der populäre deutsche Film 1930–1970, Norderstedt 2012. Cf. also Heide Fehrenbach, Cinema in Democratizing Germany. Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler, Chapel Hill-London 1995, pp. 48–168, who, however, too reductively identifies the "popular" with the "Heimat" film.

8   Ina Merkel, Kapitulation im Kino. Zur Kultur der Besatzung im Jahr 1945, Berlin 2016, pp. 276–282, 340.

> "Post-war cinema ... not only provided a forum for the articulation of collective iden-
> tities; more than this ... it acted as a symbolic vehicle for new models of consuming
> femininity. This was especially true of the so-called women's genres: romantic, do-
> mestic, and musical melodramas that, alongside the *Heimatfilm*, war films, comedies,
> and the historical epic, were the stuff of home-produced popular cinema through the
> 1950s."[9]

Taken as a whole, post-war German film (that is, to the end of the 1950s) is in need
of reappraisal. It is to be anticipated that new light may be shed on the topic not only
through careful revaluation but also, and especially, by taking a comparative and transna-
tional perspective. An obvious candidate for comparison with (West) Germany is Italy.
Not only did Italy become internationally recognised for its cinema post 1945, but despite
financial and political difficulties, it developed an independent film industry of much
broader scope in terms of content and aesthetics than did Germany. In neorealism it
created a movement that, though limited in its market share, was highly influential in-
ternationally, and whose successful cinematic innovations and contemporary, frequently
socially critical focus, remain impressive today. By comparison, the *Trümmerfilm* ("rub-
ble film") could not reach such a degree of effectiveness; all the same, the constructive
contribution it made to reflecting present-day realities must be acknowledged. The loss
of existing structures and the depiction of war-related trauma – often cited as motifs of
the *Trümmerfilm* – is also present in many neorealist works. A further line of enquiry
to be pursued for both countries is the extent to which cinematic content and forms of
representation were affected by political influence, and what continuities are apparent
with regard to content, genre, and film-makers.[10]

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9   Erica Carter, How German Is She? Post War West German Reconstruction and the Consuming
Woman, Ann Arbor 1997, pp. 175–176.

10   Cf. the pioneering collection by Claudia Dillmann / Olaf Möller (Eds.), Geliebt und Verdrängt.
Das Kino der jungen Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1949 bis 1963, Frankfurt a. M. 2016; English
version: Beloved and Rejected. Cinema in the Young Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to
1963, Frankfurt a. M. 2016. The range of this volume reaches from "The Pact with the Audience.
The Production Conditions of the Adenauer Cinema" (Claudia Dillmann, pp. 26–37) to "The
Professor, the Tourist, and the Bombshell. The Young Federal Republic of Germany in Italian
Cinema" (Marco Grosoli, pp. 304–313). Cf. also Johannes Hürter / Tobias Hof (Eds.), Verfilmte
Trümmerlandschaften. Nachkriegserzählungen im internationalen Kino 1945–1949, Berlin-Boston
2019 (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 119).

In both countries the Church and conservative middle-class milieus met the growth of the popular sphere, not least American film, with reservation and resistance.[11] Although in Italy film censorship was officially abandoned after 1945, productions continued to be under increasing pressure from the relevant authorities with access to funding tools. Directors were also controlled by means of moral pressure and sometimes direct legal control. In Germany, film production, which was growing only slowly, was in practice completely controlled by the respective Allied Power, in particular in the Soviet Zone, and with less regard to moral than political issues.[12]

One profound difference between the political cultures of the two countries was that after 1943 / 1945 Italy regained its national independence. Italian audiences obviously appreciated engaging with national events of the most recent past. This conformed to the developing political master narratives, and cinematic events were a vehicle for political identity formation, placing the Italians on the side of the victorious powers. Furthermore, they appealed to the audience through realistic dialogue and their comic or melodramatic elements. Politically relevant film-making thus occurred within very different cultural-political contexts, increasingly so in Germany with the emerging Cold War, during which enemy stereotypes and the country's division increased. On the whole, in the political and culture-political field, polarisation in Italy was much more pronounced than in the western zones of Germany, where the moderate shape of the three-party system soon became apparent, notwithstanding the renewed intrusion of National Socialist functionaries into the state apparatus that occurred increasingly after 1950.

It is necessary to broaden the perspective to transnational relations and intersecting perceptions. Before and after 1945, Italian cinema was barely present in Germany for economic and film-cultural reasons. It was not until the beginning of the 1950s that either German or Italian film played any role in the cinematic landscapes or film markets of the other country. After 1950, however, they captured a not inconsiderable share of the foreign market and interest increased, especially among cineaste circles. The first co-productions arose only around 1960. Left-wing film reviews initially considered Wolfgang Staudte and the DEFA productions a renewal of German film culture. Some of these works were

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11   Daniela Treveri Gennari, Post-War Italian Cinema. American Intervention, Vatican Interests, New York 2010, pp. 15–37.

12   Cf. Gabriele Clemens, Umerziehung durch Film. Britische und amerikanische Filmpolitik in Deutschland 1945–1949, in: Harro Segeberg, Mediale Mobilmachung, vol. 2: Hollywood, Exil und Nachkrieg, München 2006, pp. 243–271, at p.°244; Peter Pleyer, Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946–1948, Münster 1965, pp. 24–25, 31, 196.

presented in Venice. By 1950 at the latest there was great disappointment in the level of cinema in the Federal Republic of Germany, as has been shown by Francesco Bono.[13]

It is consequently necessary to establish how Italian and German films were each generally perceived in Germany and Italy, respectively. Reception was certainly more widespread than has until now been assumed, for instance in the quality press. While some of the 1960s wave of Italian *resistenza* films were released – sometimes abridged – in the Federal Republic, arousing considerable controversy,[14] almost all of the productions of the 1940s and 1950s were relegated to film clubs and were presumably known only to initiates.[15]

Another common feature of both the West-German and the Italian film markets is the competition from American films. In Italy in 1950, the market share of American films was 63.7 %, so broad audiences were welcoming American genres and actors.[16] To a lesser degree this may also been said about German audiences of the 1930s until the early 1950s.

2 German Post-war Cinema

Research on post-war cinema, which in this collection will be considered up to the end of the 1950s, has long had among its postulates that the specifically German genre of the *Trümmerfilm* ("rubble film") enjoyed little public success and failed to break away from the melodrama and the visual language of the UFA era. In addition, it avoided taking a

13   Francesco Bono, Der (west)deutsche Film der 1950er Jahre aus italienischer Perspektive, in: Irmbert Schenk (Ed.), Medien der 1950er Jahre (BRD und DDR), Marburg 2012 (Marburger Hefte zur Medienwissenschaft 54/55), pp. 47–61.

14   Cf. Johannes Lill, Völkerfreundschaft im Kalten Krieg? Die politischen, kulturellen und ökonomischen Beziehungen der DDR zu Italien 1949–1973, Frankfurt a. M. 2001; Andrea Hindrichs, "Teutonen" in Arkadien. Deutsche auswärtige Kulturpolitik in Italien von 1949–1970 zwischen Steuerungsversuch und dem Wunsch nach Anerkennung, München 2010.

15   Cf. Anne Paech, Die Schule der Zuschauer. Zur Geschichte der Filmclub-Bewegung, in: Hilmar Hoffmann / Walter Schobert (Eds.), Zwischen gestern und Morgen. Westdeutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946–1962, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, pp. 226–245; Fehrenbach, Cinema (see note 7), pp. 169–210.

16   David Forgacz / Stephen Gundle, Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War, Bloomington-Indianapolis 2007, p. 126, on the relation of Italian and American productions ibid., pp. 127–140; cf. also Daniela Treveri-Gennari / Catherine O'Rawe / Danielle Hopkins, In Search of Italian Cinema Audiences in the 1940s and 1950s. Gender, Genre and National Identity, in: Participations 8,2 (2011), pp. 539–553, and the subsequent publications from this research project.

position with regard to the causes of the war and the violence of the National Socialist regime, and chose to focus instead on the question of individual culpability, even in such remarkable and internationally recognised films as "Die Mörder sind unter uns" ("The Murderers Are Among Us", 1946) by Wolfgang Staudte.[17] It has been posited as fact that, into the 1950s, West-German film-makers, unlike their Italian counterparts, generally lacked any "oppositional impetus" and there was no reflection on war crimes committed by the Wehrmacht and the SS, so that the Italian context did not even figure. As the years went on, escapist and artistically meaningless productions with no international resonance are said to have predominated by a wide margin, especially as films of this type were evidently popular with audiences – the film industry as a whole experienced a boom. In this evaluation, film-history research has in effect subscribed to the radically rejectionist stance of New German Cinema and the Oberhausen signatories from the early 1960s, adopting their point of view that it was only with the change of generation that (West-)German film once again acquired a character of its own. Reservations about this narrative are justified, however. Firstly, there are always notable counter-examples to described tendencies. Secondly, films intended for entertainment made up the bulk of domestic production and consumption in other countries, too,[18] not the outstanding works that are later canonised as significant for the period. Thirdly, attention should be given to the question of whether concentration on the realistic depiction of contemporary problems, as well as the motifs of "reconstruction" and aesthetic renewal, led to a losing sight of the past – or if one should rather consider exemplary, critical films such as "In jenen Tagen" or the "Berliner Ballade", in which anti-Semitism, the presence of death and destruction, the atmosphere of angst in the Nazi era, the conditions of survival after the war were clearly deplored. Or is it not useful to keep in mind the "Film ohne Titel" with its play on genre and satirical view of the post-war situation?[19]

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17   Cf. Hester Bear, Dismantling the Dream Factory. Gender, German Cinema, and the Postwar Quest for a New Film Language, New York-Oxford 2009, pp. 21–48; Eckhard Papst, "Die Mörder sind unter uns". Filmische Selbstfindung und Auftakt für den Trümmerfilm, in: Martin Nies (Ed.), Deutsche Selbstbilder in den Medien. Film – 1945 bis zur Gegenwart, Marburg 2012, pp. 25–51, at pp. 30–31, 45.

18   Pierre Sorlin, People's Choice – sie haben die Wahl. Warum gingen britische, französische und italienische Zuschauer in den 50er Jahren ins Kino?, in: Irmbert Schenk (Ed.), Erlebnisort Kino, Marburg 2000, pp. 95–111.

19   Cf. Hester Baer, When Fantasy Meets Reality. Authorship and Stardom in Rudolf Jugert's "Film without a Title" (1948), in: Baer, Dismantling (see note 17), pp. 49–72. This film was positively received by leading film critics: Drei Personen suchen einen Film. 3 000 Mark für einen Titel, in: Der Spiegel, no. 5, 31. 1. 1948 (URL: http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-44415666.html; 2. 11.

The negative image of post-war German cinema has begun to change fundamentally and there is urgent need of a differentiated appraisal of the topic.[20] On the one hand this means a revision in the interpretation of individual examples of *Trümmerfilm*. On the other hand, it is becoming clearer that cinema needs to be viewed within the overall context of its epoch's signature character, as well as within the framework of the "history of modernisation" of the Federal Republic and, consequently, in a "new integrated historiography of the media"[21] , which attaches a higher priority to questions of discourse, the international framework, and concrete conditions of film production, including the dimension of media policy.

Post-war German film (which comprised far more than the *Trümmerfilm* even before the genre was superseded) should therefore be treated more discriminatingly, with a realisation that they originated in a context of limited logistic, personnel, and funding possibilities. The issues they dealt included coming to terms with the Nazi past, anti-Semitism, social criticism (in the DEFA films), the difficulties of the immediate post-war period, and retaining an optimistic attitude to life. Even though a peculiar ambivalence seems to typify the *Trümmerfilm*, above all – as Bernhard Groß has demonstrated – at the aesthetic level, the potential for "original realism" is recognisable in the heterogeneity of early post-war German cinema. One's research perspective should accordingly not be limited to inadequacies in content, but should instead look into the films' actual functioning in terms of mediating meaning, and into the audio-visual, that is, the aesthetic aspects of their experience.[22]

2020); Trümmer, Storys und Legenden. Zur Situation des deutschen Films, in: Die Zeit, no. 12, 14. 3. 1948 (URL: http://www.zeit.de/1948/12/truemmer-storys-und-legenden; 2. 11. 2020). Regarding "Berliner Ballade" cf. Hesters Baer's chapter "'Kampf dem Kampf'. Aesthetic Experimentation and Social Satire in the Ballad of Berlin", in: Baer, Dismantling (see note 17), pp. 157–174.

20   Cf. Bastian Blachut / Imme Klages / Sebastian Kuhn, Deutsches Nachkriegskino 1945–1962: Ort der Reflexion? Zur Einleitung, in Bastian Blachut / Imme Klages / Sebastian Kuhn (Eds.), Reflexionen des beschädigten Lebens? Nachkriegskino in Deutschland zwischen 1945 und 1962, Konstanz 2015, pp. 15–37. Bernhard Groß, Morituri te salutant – Der frühe deutsche Nachkriegsfilm und seine Politik des Gemeinplatzes, in: ibid., pp. 89–118, stresses the ambivalence of the interpretation of the past in German post-war film. For a critical view cf. also Daniel Jonah Wolpert, Opfer der Zeit. Freitod und Neubeginn in den deutschen Filmen der unmittelbaren Nachkriegsjahre, in: ibid., pp. 57–73.

21   Knuth Hickethier, Medien-Modernisierung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in den 1950 er Jahren, in: Schenk (Ed.), Medien der 1950 er Jahre (see note 13), pp. 12–23, at p. 18.

22   Bernhard Groß, Die Filme sind unter uns. Zur Geschichtlichkeit des frühen deutschen Nachkriegskinos: Trümmer-, Genre-, Dokumentarfilm, Berlin 2015, pp. 13–15, 376–77; cf. also Robert R. Shandley, Trümmerfilme. Das deutsche Kino der Nachkriegszeit, Berlin 2010, p. 81, p. 281; Thomas

In Germany and Italy, film-history research is becoming aware that the *Trümmerfilm* had to improvise just as much as neorealist cinema did (although the latter was both much more strongly politicised and more explicit). It is, additionally, aware that *Trümmerfilm* showed people in the process of starting again from scratch, and presented the openness of the social circumstances (though not the *Stunde Null* or "Zero Hour"). Occasionally they sought to apportion responsibility for the situation, mostly in terms of individual moral categories, for which the genre has always found criticism.

In Italy, post-war film and neorealism cannot simply be equated. The market share of neorealist films is estimated to have been ten per cent, varying according to how generous the definition is. Besides those productions that have since been canonised, historical dramas, musicals, and Vaudeville films, as well as purely classical domestic dramas such as "La vita ricomincia" ("Life Begins Anew", 1945), achieved success. Other examples are "Aquila nera" ("Black Eagle", 1945/1946) by Riccardo Freda, an adaptation of a novel by Pushkin, and "I miserabili" ("Les Misérables", 1948), again by Freda, after the novel by Victor Hugo.[23] Accordingly, recent research has aimed at a much broader range of the film market, which is not to say that further research into iconic productions is not worth the effort – as has recently been shown by Bernhard Groß in his poetological work emphasising de-heroising trends in German post-war film – including a wide range of political documentaries.[24]

3   Post-war Italian Cinema in Perspective

The myth of a collective Italian resistance figured prominently in Italian cinema and indeed was decisive to the popularity of certain neorealist productions. As has been frequently demonstrated, the *Resistenza* was a complex of experiences in which the media played a large communicative role. The same is true of the corresponding belief that the Italians *per se* were (politically) "good", giving the impression that the issue of Italian popular involvement in Fascism was addressed in very few films – for instance Zampa's

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Christen, Der deutsche Trümmerfilm, in: id. (Ed.), Einführung in die Filmgeschichte, vol. 2, Marburg 2016, pp. 59–74, at p. 64.

23   A comedy about everyday life starring Totò, "Fifa e arena", by Mario Mattòli, attracted an audience of five million and ranked no. 1 in 1948. "Totò cerca casa" dealt comically with the subject of housing shortage, ridiculed bureaucracy and clientelism, and ranked no. 3 in 1949; Mathias Sabourdin (Ed.), Dictionnaire du Cinéma Italien. Ses créateurs de 1943 à nos jours, Paris 2014, pp. 1137–1139.

24   Groß, Die Filme sind unter uns (see note 22).

"Anni difficili" ("Difficult Years", 1948), disparaged on both the left and the right – or otherwise only episodically. The necessity of examining such episodes more closely has become clear, especially those often unnoticed examples, in which the viewer's implication in the regime is briefly illuminated. Such examination should, therefore, not only focus on representations of the enemy supplied by the *Resistenza*. It is beyond doubt that in many post-war Italian films, Fascism appears as something alien, something not intrinsically Italian, and that Fascists are represented as henchmen of the Germans, or even as figures of ridicule.[25]

It turns out that, in Italy, politically committed films discussing recent history and the present, such as "Roma città aperta", were often also publicly successful, at least until 1948. Other examples are "Due lettere anonime" ("Two Anonymous Letters", 1945) by Mario Camerini, "Avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma" ("Before him all Rome trembled", 1946) by Carmine Gallone, which reached fifth position in the cinema charts in 1946,[26] and "Come persi la Guerra" ("How I Lost the War", 1947) by Carlo Borghesio, a slapstick comedy, which demonstrated through surrealistic turns that the Italians were thoroughly unwarlike and, in fact, a pawn in the hands of foreign powers. In 1947 this film ranked second among the audiences. "Anni difficili" by Luigi Zampa, where – completely uniquely – the Fascist past of the average Italian was represented, ranked third among audiences. In 1946, "Il bandito" ("The Bandit") by Lattuada also ranked third. Here it should be noted that, although the film is clearly political, it also displays elements of crime and action film, which helped to contribute to its success. Maurizio Zinni identifies four phases in the reception of Fascism, two relevant to the period considered here. In the first, neorealistic phase, Fascism is portrayed as alien and as having taken the

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25   On the portrayal of the enemy: Filippo Focardi, Il cattivo tedesco e il bravo italiano, Roma 2013 (German edition: Falsche Freunde? Italiens Geschichtspolitik und die Frage der Mitschuld am zweiten Weltkrieg, Paderborn 2015). Cf. for a critical view of attempts to marginalise the Italian resistance in historiography, and on the persistence of the self-perception of Italians in terms of the "good Italian": Lutz Klinkhammer, Der Resistenza-Mythos und Italiens faschistische Vergangenheit, in: Holger Afflerbach / Christoph Cornelissen (Eds.), Sieger und Besiegte. Materielle und ideelle Neuorientierungen nach 1945, Tübingen-Basel 1997, pp. 119–139. Cf. also: La Resistenza nel cinema italiano 1945/1995, Genova 1995; this commented bibliography lists 24 *Resistenza* films for 1945–1950, 21 for 1951–1960, and 33 for 1961–1970. In none of the film descriptions contained in this documentation, and none of the cited reviews, is the representation of the *Resistenza* coupled with reflection on the fascist system of rule, with the sole exception of "Anni difficili" from 1948, whose subject matter was "explosive" in the words of one reviewer. Cf. also Vito Zagarrio, Cinema e antifascismo. Alla ricerca di un epos nazionale, Soveria Mannelli 2015.

26   The following figures according to Sabourdin, Dictionnaire du Cinéma italien (see note 23), pp. 1137–1140; Roberto Poppi, I Film. Tutti i Film italiani dal 1945 al 1959, vol. 2, Roma ²2007.

Italians by surprise, thus leaving them innocent; the second phase of denial, lasting into the second half of the 1950s, ends in the climate of the Cold War. Social fulfilment is embodied in the Don Camillo series.[27]

Metaphorical silences and lacunae in Italian cinema were to some degree the result of a growing reluctance to engage in any deeper reflection. Once the Christian Democracy party became the dominant force (in cultural policy), investigation into the involvement of Catholic milieus in the Fascist regime certainly became undesirable. Ultimately censorship "cooperated" with a shift in public taste towards a cinema of entertainment (bringing an embattled film industry much-needed capital in the face of US imports).

4 Aims and Themes of this Volume

1) The first important focus of this volume is the political construction of post-war film and its potential functioning in the politics of remembrance. This volume's transnational, comparative approach seeks to open up a fresh perspective on self-interpretations of the past in film, as well as on the relationship between Italian and German cinema.[28] This approach hopes to achieve more than the usual presentation of results (the outcome, generally, of an interpretation of individual films and auteurs). The aim is to regard both plot and narrative in significant single productions, as well as the contexts in which contemporary discussion of the horrors of the past took place.[29]

27　Maurizio Zinni, Fascisti di celluloide. La memoria del ventennio nel cinema italiano (1945–2000), Venezia 2010, esp. pp. 14–44; compare also with Giacomo Lichtner, Fascism in Italian Cinema since 1945. The Politics and Aesthetics of Memory, Basingstoke 2013, esp. pp. 63, 69, 72–73; Fehrenbach, Cinema (see note 7), pp. 118–147.

28　Cf. Valentina Leonhard, Völkerfreundschaft vor der Leinwand? Die deutsch-italienische Kino-Achse 1938–1943, in: Francesco Bono / Johannes Roschlau (Eds.), Tenöre, Touristen, Gastarbeiter. Deutsch-italienische Filmbeziehungen, München 2011, pp. 44–56; Alfons Maria Arns, Das Trauma des "Nazismo". Roberto Rossellini und Deutschland, in: ibid., pp. 93–106 regarding "La paura" (1954), "Il generale della Rovere" (1959), "Era notte in Roma" (1960) and "Anno uno" (1974); Chris Wahl, Man spricht "italienish". Italien im bundesdeutschen Film der 1950er Jahre, in: ibid., pp. 132–168; Lukas Schaefer, Kritik ohne Grenzen. Nonkonformistische Filmkultur in Italien und Westdeutschland nach 1945 in transnationaler Perspektive, Stuttgart 2018; Lukas Schaefer, "Sie nennen es Realismus". Die Zeitschrift Filmkritik und der internationale Film der 1950er Jahre, in: Blachut / Klages / Kuhn (Eds.), Reflexionen (see note 20), pp. 314–332.

29　Heinz-B. Heller, Verstümmelt, verboten, verdrängt. Rezeptionsaspekte des internationalen Films im westdeutschen Kino der 1950er Jahre, in: Schenk, Medien der 1950er Jahre (see note 13), pp. 34–46.

This collection therefore aims to reflect the now altered, more complex research situation in both countries, to contribute to a new way of viewing the political content of post-war film, and to unravel a little the national narratives in film-history writing and contemporary historiography. To what extent did treatment of the past, specifically the political burdens of the Nazi and Fascist regimes, reflect general tendencies of the period, as manifested in other media? Was social criticism, common in early neorealism, also practised later? And did the *Trümmerfilm* avoid it altogether from the start? Just how strongly the Fascist regime was supported and maintained by the Italians themselves was apparently only alluded to indirectly if at all in cinema. We should therefore consider how far critical reflection could be said to have taken place in rudimentary form in *Resistenza* film. Another question is how far critical reflection on occupying regimes, the causes of the war, and the involvement of the population in the crimes of the Nazi and Fascist systems was possible both in Italy and in Germany. What traces of such critical reflection are to be found in the relevant films (including those films produced in war time in the Soviet Union and the USA)?

Here, Ina Merkel, in her "Decency and resistance. Narrative patterns in anti-Fascist American, Soviet, and European Films (1940–1950)" offers a far-reaching comparison of anti-Fascist film, going back to the war. Considerable national differences in film-making are here identified. It is indeed regrettable that most of the relevant films made in the USA and in the Soviet Union were never shown to German audiences. When that did occur, as in the case of "Zhdi menya" ("Wait for Me", 1943/1945), German women were "moved to tears". The author demonstrates the different perspectives of individual film productions on Nazi Germany and the range of "occupation films" shot between 1942 to 1950 in Eastern and Western Europe, and concludes that the *dispositif* of violence and resistance is present in all the productions discussed. The films, furthermore, "showed the effort and courage that it had meant to defend oneself or even just to stay decent" which, one may add, surfaces in only a few German productions, such as in Helmut Käutner's "In jenen Tagen" ("In Those Days", 1947).

Bernhard Groß, in his comparative contribution "Building configurations of contingent and substantial communities. Differences between Italian and German post-war cinema aesthetics" firstly underlines some German examples of convergence to Italian neorealist cinema. Secondly, in the course of his basic research approach, he seeks to relate the historicity of individual experience and filmic constructions, especially the tensions inherent in gaps between the "image" and the "audio-visual" spaces. Thirdly, at the level of content, he analyses different concepts of "community" in relevant films from the two countries – such as "the analogy between murder and suicide" in "Germania anno zero" ("Germany, Year Zero", 1948) and "Irgendwo in Berlin" ("Somewhere in Berlin", 1946) – and underlines the rejection of films emphasising the atrocities of the Nazi past.

In the latter film, the author sees a revival of organicist or "substantial" concepts of "community" and reveals striking similarities between its imagery and that of previous Nazi films. In this rather pessimistic view of a contingent and fragile mode of community building, one has to conclude that German post-war film was unable to offer a truly constructive and pluralistic conception of a new society.

2) A second important focus of this volume is the image complex of the "other". It would seem that "(the) Italian", as person or national character, is hardly to be found in German film, although future research may gain more differentiated insight. One thing is clear: where "image" relates to an image of the enemy, here the Germans appear as such, as the "other", as anti-Christ, and as the barbarian revisited. In "Roma città aperta" ("Rome Open City", 1945) by Roberto Rossellini this becomes obvious, at the latest, in the torture scenes, where all the Germans featuring in the film are equated with the SS.[30] In "Achtung! Banditi!" ("Attention! Bandits!", 1951) by Carlo Lizzani, the Germans are portrayed, simplistically, as mindless perpetrators "characterised by sexual perversion, sadism, psychic disorders, and drug addiction".[31] This should not simply be understood as a "construct" by a director who had himself actively contributed to Fascist cinema, but as a result of the harsh, lived experiences of German occupation with its shootings, deportations, and humiliations, which were now being referred to ever more strongly. Obviously, in retrospect, this contributed to the understanding of oneself in Italy as "victims" and as a *brava gente* which, by way of its *resistenza*, had regained national sovereignty and dignity.[32] A related theme is that of which past[33] it is that is to be remembered in film. Is there such a thing as the envisaging of a democratised, more socially just society in the

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30   Ulrich Döge, Barbaren mit humanen Zügen. Bilder des Deutschen in Filmen Roberto Rossellinis, Trier 2009, p. 1. Cf. also Peter Bondanella, The Films of Roberto Rossellini, Cambridge 1993, pp. 45–63.

31   Massimo Perinelli, Fluchtlinien des Neorealismus. Der organlose Körper der italienischen Nachkriegszeit, 1943–1949, Bielefeld 2009, p. 191; cf. also Massimo Perinelli, Achtung! Tedesci! Trümmerfilm, Neorealismus und das Bild der Deutschen im italienischen Nachkriegsfilm, in: Blachut/Klages/Kuhn (Eds.), Reflexionen (see note 20), pp. 271–296; Stefania Parigi, L'immagine di guerra. La resistenza nel cinema italiano dell'immediato dopoguerra, in: Vito Zagarrio (Ed.), Cinema e antifascismo. Alla ricerca di un epos nazionale, Soveria Manelli 2015, pp. 35–50; cf. also the documentary work: Comitato Regionale per il 50° Anniversario delle Lotta di Liberazione (Ed.), La resistenza del Cinema Italiano, Genova 1995; Monique Hofmann, Die Deutschen im italienischen Spielfilm nach 1945. Die filmische Darstellung der Deutschen und des Nationalsozialismus, Hamburg 2014.

32   Sara Pesce, Memoria e immaginario. La seconda guerra mondiale nel cinema italiano, Recco 2008, pp. 65–75.

33   In discussion of how the past was represented in film and, consequently, what constructs of national self-image were elaborated, it is important to differentiate strictly between depictions of

future? What forms of victimisation were presented in cinema, and to what extent did they correlate with other media such as political satire (in magazines and newspapers) and historiographical interpretation? As regards remembrance of the war, what themes and constellations (such as the combatant returning from Russia in "Il bandito") became filmic ciphers that were used to produce interpretations of the past? And how did directors deal with the reluctantly addressed issue of guilt and responsibility for the genocide of European Jews?

Daniel Wolpert's "Bodies of Evidence, Burdens of Proof. Reason before the Court of Cinema after the Third Reich" compares three significant dramas of post-war film production, Eugen Yorck's universalistic "Morituri" (1948), Georg Wilhelm Pabst's "Der Prozess" ("The Trial", 1948), and Erich Engel's "Affaire Blum" ("The Blum Affair", 1948), which saw the Jews as Cassandra figures, and anti-Semitism as a side effect of social conflicts. Wolpert also hints at the background of all three, the "visual totality" of Veit Harlan's "Jud Süß" (1940). As the author shows, the three films discussed offered "a lens through which post-war narratives about moral legitimacy might be framed". If effective enough, the Nazi period would then not appear to have occurred as an "accident" in the otherwise humanistic development of German history, but arose as an outcome of earlier concepts of the racially constructed *Volksgemeinschaft*.

Robert S. C. Gordon in "Production, Myth and Misprision in Early Holocaust Cinema. 'L'ebreo errante'" looks at a largely unknown film from 1948, the multi-faceted "L'ebreo errante" (Italian for "the Wandering Jew"), "as a powerful example" of the relation of Italian cinema to war and fascism. Through this example, Gordon provides a complementary view to the until-now dominant leftist perspective in this field, and stresses the argument that it was this film that "proved capable or willing" to address the genocide directly and centrally. The author makes clear to what extent the film transgressed rules of decency and links it to numerous other productions. Finally, in an example of his multi-disciplinary approach, he traces evidence for a state of awareness of the Holocaust among the greater public and in personal memory.

Damiano Garofalo in "Images of the Germans in Post-war Italian cinema" gives an overview of representation of Nazis in Italian post-war audio-visual culture, including in *Resistenza* films such as "Achtung! Banditi!" (1951) and the holocaust film "Kapò" (1959), which develops a more differentiated, ambiguous picture of villainous German characters. He does so by not only placing the films in their political context, but also categorising them within the principal periods of representative history: The post-war

the Republic of Salò, with its war of liberation or civil war on the one hand, and depictions of the 20 years of fascist rule preceding it, on the other.

period being followed by a period of transition and, from around 1979, of psycho-sexually discursive works.

Maurizio Zinni in "Italians and not Italians. Fascism and national identity in post-war Italian cinema" explores the desire within society and in the national political parties to remove fascism from among the significant component of the national identity, and explains how cinema was to become one of the points of reference in the fabrication of a public narration, presenting a population without guilt for the Fascist past. Those to blame (a small group of Fascists) were depicted as a minority easily recognisable through their behaviour. Even if critical directors tried to reintroduce Fascists as a kind of "national" protagonist in order to criticise Fascist tendencies of past and present times, commercial cinema was calling time on fascism as painlessly as possible, with the effect that Fascist characters were effectively re-included into the community and into the nation's historical narrative.

In order to better understand the relationship between Italian cinema and the Second World War, Philip Cooke and Gianluca Fantoni offer in "Where Do We Go from Here. The Moral and Material Reconstruction of Italian Cinema after World War II (1945–1955)" an analysis of the difficulties that post-war film-makers encountered during this troubled decade. The issues the producers and authors had to deal with included the material constraints of the early post-war years, censorship and the political climate of the Cold War, and the need to establish new political relations, particularly with the aim of obtaining a protectionistic legislation for cinema.

3) The chapters of this book present more than a selection of (indeed important) iconic films. They instead discuss a fairly wide selection of films and – going beyond discourse-historical approaches – illuminate their backgrounds in terms of film-production policy, censorship practices,[34] and the question of addressing broader audiences. For Germany, all four occupation zones (and their conditioning by the respective occupying powers) are included, and for analyses beyond 1949 / 1950 in particular, international contexts and direct influences (censorship regulations, film-subsidy systems) are considered. Alternative models of film distribution, such as the internationally active and coordinated Catholic parish cinemas, analogous distribution channels in the western allied zones, and later the Federal Republic of Germany, will be dealt with, including the

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34   Cf. Jürgen Berger, Bürgen heißt zahlen – und manchmal auch zensieren. Die Filmbürgschaften des Bundes 1950–1955, in: Hoffmann / Schobert (Eds.), Zwischen gestern und morgen (see note 15), pp. 80–97.

role of the FSK (Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft) rating system and the Catholic Film-Dienst (Film Service).[35]

Claudia Dillmann in "Film policies and cinema audiences in Germany" sheds a noticeably critical light on the quality of the West-German post-war film industry, as well as the wide-ranging censorship practices (including via film funding) of the authorities, not least in preventing the screening of East-German films. This is a point that has to date been insufficiently explored. Dillmann analyses the choice of films with which audiences were presented and hints at the importance of reappraisal of the Nazi period, explaining why *Trümmerfilm* had little chance in the context of audiences' "traditionalism".

Christian Kuchler, in his contribution on "Politics, morals, and cinema: Catholic film work in post-war Germany", discusses the extensive activities of the Catholic film movement. Besides demonstrating examples of ideological concealment and the difficulties of censorship in the Adenauer Republic, the author also provides insights into the cinematic landscape in general. The treatment of the film "Die Sünderin" ("The Sinner", 1951) especially shows the difficulties of the intended project of "rechristianisation" of post-war society, which was effective to a certain degree only in rural regions where no other moral alternatives existed and the supply of community events was rather scarce. The activity of the Catholic Church was much more influential in the Italian case, as Lutz Klinkhammer describes in his "Popular and Catholic cinema in Italy, 1944–1954: What lessons about the past did the 'morally sane' and educative film communicate to Italian audiences?". From 1948 to 1955, neorealism had a problematic standing, and films dealing with the resistance against "nazifascism" appeared less and less on the screens. Christian Democratic leaders and the Vatican hierarchy aimed to moralise society through cinema by trying to promote "morally good" films with the aid of state intervention. Even if, for reasons of economic and audience preference, the parish cinema system failed to reach the standards given by Vatican authorities, popular Catholic cinema contributed in orienting Italian society favourably towards the predominant Christian Democrats.

4) Last by not least: What reciprocal influence was there between the two countries? What role did censorship and self-censorship on the part of the film-makers play? What films from one country were screened in the other? What *fora* and *loci* of film-policy and film-aesthetic discourse can be identified (up to the 1950s)? And which convergent

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35   Cf. Ruggero Eugeni / Dario Edoardo Vigano (Eds.), Attraverso lo schermo. Cinema e cultura cattolica in Italia, vol. 2, Roma 2006; Daniel Biltereyst / Daniela Treveri Gennari (Eds.), Moralizing Cinema. Film, Catholicism, and Power, New York 2015; Christian Kuchler, Kirche und Kino. Katholische Filmarbeit in Bayern (1945–1965), Paderborn 2006; Jürgen Kniep, "Keine Jugendfreigabe". Filmzensur in Westdeutschland 1949–1990, Göttingen 2010, pp. 25–86.

and / or divergent tendencies existed in relation to entertainment films?[36] How did the "critical" cinematic discourse of a *cinema nuovo* develop – earlier and more vigorously in Italy – in respected film periodicals and academic-style film clubs, as a forerunner of political change in cinematic discourse, and in an incipient, though widely noticed, reorientation of film production (the New German Cinema)?

Lukas Schaefer, in "European critical film culture: Italian and West-German film magazines in an international context" shows that, at least in small (but soon hegemonic) intellectual milieus, there was wide-ranging and intense contact between the makers of a European critical film culture. Since the formation of the critical journals "Cinema Nuovo" and "Filmkritik", both sides, but especially in Germany, profited from the experience of the discourses and productions of their counterparts. Transnationality manifested itself not only "in reading and imitating foreign film auteurs" but in developing common categories of political conscientiousness and cultural critique. In the view of "Filmkritik", Italian realism was a tool to "refresh the German 'wasteland'". Contact with Eastern Europe was also important in this intellectual movement, coinciding with the beginnings of a new left in the FRG. Finally, German left-wing film-makers would proclaim their emancipation from the seemingly corrupt state of the German film scene and industry in the early 1960s.

5 Outlook

After the war the Italian film industry recovered much more quickly and sustainably than the fragmented German film industry. In each case popular genres clearly met with the most positive response. Iconic political productions were unsuccessful in both countries, but especially in Germany, as the example of "Ehe im Schatten" ("Marriage in the Shadows", 1947) shows. However, until 1949 Italian audiences clearly had a more positive attitude towards political-national stories born out of the *Resistenza* than the German audience did towards the rather circumspect, tragic, intellectual, and critical *Trümmerfilm*. In Italy it was easier to identify with the content and protagonists of political films, and the attitude was largely one of self-assurance.

For both countries it is obvious that cinema is a relevant medium for political discourse. This is, after all, what this book analyses first of all: what topics appear; in what way film works as a medium of remembrance and of current culture-political issues

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36 Cf. Antje Dechert, Stars all'Italiana. Kino und Körperdiskurse in Italien 1930–1965, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2014.

and conflicts; how politicised were the high-quality films; and how dependent on power relations is the cinematographic discourse, including among those acting as film critics?

Despite the continuity of its actors, Italian cinema was clearly more progressive. In Germany there were few first-class achievements, among them the reflective and extremely modern satire "Film ohne Titel" ("Film Without a Title", 1947), mentioned above.

Italian post-war film contributed directly to the issue of social progress and to the building of the avowed anti-Fascist nation, while German films reflected on the disaster that had taken place. Their film markets, however, showed remarkable parallels. Until the 1950s, knowledge of productions in the counterpart nation was minimal. It becomes clear that the immediate post-war era, until the early 1950s, can ultimately only be understood not only in the light of what had happened, but also by considering what was to come: that is, against the background of medial and socio-cultural "modernisation narrations".[37]

Already in 1948/1949 the market share of popular, apolitical cinema had clearly risen in both countries.[38] The time of polarising debates, in particular of the *epurazioni*, was already coming to an end. In 1949, "Catene" ranked in first place when it came to market success. Here was a sentimental drama about women which, however, also included some elements of realistic depiction of everyday life. Tellingly, though, in 1950 the historical drama "Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei" ("The Last Days of Pompeii") by Paolo Moffa reached the number one position in the cinema charts. Around 1950, one can say there was a degree of de-politicisation and banalisation of the national film in both countries due to audience taste (always an independent variable in the history of cinema), the film policy of the Christian Democrats, and increasing censorship,[39] as well as, in Italy, the Communists' loss of political influence and opposition from the newly powerful Church to neorealism.[40]

37   Hickethier, Medien-Modernisierung (see note 21), at p. 18.

38   Sabourdin, Dictionnaire (see note 23), pp. 1129–1140.

39   "Anni facili" ("Easy Years", 1953) by Zampa was blocked by censorship, and war criminal Rodolfo Graziani filed a charge against the director; Zinni, Fascisti (see note 27), p. 61.

40   Ibid., pp. 43–44, 53–54. In the view of David Forgacz, neorealism, understood as "a set of cultural practices and products" was "effectively finished at least by the mid 1950s, if not earlier …" due to the Cold War, Catholic censorship, and increasing self-critique in the left cultural milieu; David Forgacz, The Making and Unmaking of Neorealism in Postwar Italy, in: Nicholas Hewitt (Ed.), The Culture of Reconstruction. European Literature, Thought and Film, 1945–1950, New York 1989, pp. 50–60, at pp. 51, 55–57. Cf. also Stephen Gundle, Between Hollywood and Moscow. The Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture, 1943–1991, Durham-London 2000, pp. 42–105.

Claudia Dillmann

Film Policies and Cinema Audiences in Germany

Abstract

After the war German cinema was by no means free, neither during the period of military occupation nor after the foundation of the two German states in 1949. While the Soviet Union's film policy in Eastern Germany had set the course for the monopolization of film production, the Western Allies under the leadership of the USA had insisted on the destruction of the former Nazi film monopoly structures. With the beginning of the Cold War, the Federal Republic sought to exert a direct but hidden influence on the mass media, even though the constitution of the young democracy prohibited censorship: the state brought the most important newsreel under its control, exercised censorship, intervened in the film market and tried to re-establish cartels. As in Eastern Germany, the medium was to be ideologically rearmed which led to a complex network determined by political, ideological, economic and socio-cultural factors. This overview aims at putting the individual influencing factors in relation to one another. In doing so, a context is presented and analyzed that can shed light on the much-discussed continuities between the Nazi and the West-German cinema. There was indeed a "zero hour": in the structure of the industry and the system of financing film production, in a new aesthetic and a new attitude. But there also have been continuities: in the political view on the propagandistic effect of film and the suggestibility of the masses, and also in reception when these masses pushed through their favor for pre-1945 films, with far-reaching consequences.

1 Introduction

The retrospective, extremely critical examination of post-war West German cinema has often been concentrated on the films themselves – their themes, tendencies, ideological aspects, aesthetics – thus neglecting to some degree the historical conditions of production, distribution, consumption and the important role of the audience, and not least the politics. Based on the widespread assumption of cinema's propagandistic powers, shared internationally throughout the first half of the 20th century, and nurtured by the conviction of the suggestibility of the masses, post-war German film politics was aiming at control – be it through the Allies or in succession through the two newly founded

states of the divided Germany after 1949. Constitutionally forbidden and hidden censorship, stately acquisitions of newsreel companies, interventions in the film market by funding actions were i.a. measures in West German film policies during the Cold War. They not only defined the existential framework conditions, but their direct impact can also be proven right down to the individual work. This cinema stood under considerable pressure, it couldn't develop freely and independently. It had to be resilient. Entangled in a network of mutually influencing factors the West German film 'scene', hardly to be called an industry, produced films trying to serve the masses and being near to them. And the audience knew its power and used it. In the middle of the 1950s this popular cinema reached its high peak, not only in Germany but in all European Countries and the US. Never before and never again would it be so internationally wide-ranging, so versatile in genres and style, so perfectly addressing all the diversified groups that made up the audience.

2 Film Policy of the Allies 1945–1949

For about 20 years after the war, German film production was seldom free of significant political influence. First and foremost steered by the Allied occupying powers (USA, Great Britain, France in the West, the Soviet Union in the East), the film political switches in East and West Germany were set in such a way that they would determine film industrial and cultural developments for decades: with Deutsche Film AG (DEFA) the Soviet Union would build a monopoly-like enterprise in their sector and Berlin zone, whereas the Western Allies, led by the United States, on the contrary smashed the monopoly structures of the Nazi film industry, thus also destroying any industrial film basis for the future. Subsequently, the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, Bundesrepublik Deutschland) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR, Deutsche Demokratische Republik) further exercised direct state influence, openly in the GDR, hidden in the FRG.

During the early post-war years, the Soviet cultural policy was less restrictive and more lenient than the West Allies' one.[1] Directors, scriptwriters, cinematographers, actors and actresses, all kinds of professionals, were welcomed in the Soviet zone and the Berlin sector with their still functioning, famous studios of Babelsberg and Johannisthal,

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1 Juliane Scholz, Die "doppelte Bewältigung" des Nationalsozialismus in BRD und DDR. Spielfilme der Nachkriegszeit als Mittel zur Konstruktion des kollektiven Gedächtnisses, München-Ravensburg 2009, pp. 18–19.

although the Soviet Military Administration was fully aware of these peoples' involvement in the Nazi film industry. But since the fast re-building of a well-functioning film production and distribution in a monopoly-like enterprise was prioritized and a new beginning in artistic and social terms urgently desired compromises had to be made.

In the Western zones, especially the US one, other ideological and economic priorities proved to be relevant: immediate prohibition of all media, their production and distribution, full control through clearing procedures (de-Nazification), slow granting of licenses firstly to cinema owners based on antitrust regulations (no more than 2 cinemas in one town, no more than 10 in a zone), secondly to some private producers in Berlin and Munich, but mainly to people who were sitting in regional cities like Wiesbaden, Göttingen, Bentesdorf near Hannover or Baden-Baden where they would start to build up primitive studios (Decentralization); another priority was freezing the funds and the assets (studios, synchronization facilities, theatres, films etc.) of the former NS film trust Ufa-Film GmbH (UFI) in order to sell them in the future (Re-privatization) and finally to open up the market for the Allies' own productions, aiming at re-orientation, re-education, and big business.

At the time when both German states were founded in 1949, contrasting pictures of the state of film production existed in East and West: in the GDR the monopoly like DEFA was now steered by the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED), the governing Marxist-Leninist political party, which determined the production and distribution, and exercised a far-reaching censorship. Whereas in the FRG, 32 small and vulnerable private production companies were registered, scattered to all parts of the country, most of them not even capable of producing more than two films per year, while the vast assets of the former Nazi monopoly trust UFI remained frozen by the Allies.[2]

3 Film Policy of the New Federal Republic

On the day of the constituent assembly of the new West German Parliament (7. 9. 1949), the Western Allies passed a law that aimed at forcing the new Federal Government to finally demerge and decentralize the UFI trust through selling its assets by auction to the private sector. Yet, the new Christian Democrat-led Federal Government under

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2 Spitzenorganisation der Filmwirtschaft (SPIO), Filmstatistisches Taschenbuch 1959, zusammengestellt und bearbeitet von Götz von Pestalozza, Verlag für Filmwirtschaft und Filmkunde, Wiesbaden, p. 4 (URL: https://www.spio-fsk.de/media_content/3167.pdf; 2. 11. 2020).

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (1949–1963) did not have the slightest interest in this privatization. On the contrary, from now on, the government did everything to not only undermine the UFI law but to turn it into its opposite.

At that point one of the most remarkable continuities can be observed, extending from Nazi film politics via the Allies' to the two German states: the one-dimensional picture of the media, and especially film, as a manageable propaganda instrument for influencing the masses, and the equally one-dimensional image of 'the masses' and their suggestibility.[3]

Indeed, the two German states were about to convey a lot of messages via film after the Berlin Blockade (1948–1949) carried out by the Soviet Union and during the Cold War: in the East the triumph over Fascism, Capitalism, and the bourgeoisie, the celebration of a first German "Workers' and Peasants' State", the German-Soviet-friendship; in the West the cinematic promotion of Anti-Communism, social market economy, alignment with the West, re-armament; social cohesion, protection of marriage and the family plus other conservative values; advertising the FRG as new, modern and democratic, severing the connections with the past.

One can assume that everything which followed in the West German film policy happened with the knowledge and approval of the Allied High Commission, established by the Western Allies to regulate and supervise the development of the new, only partially sovereign FRG. Especially in the case of the UFI dissolution, however, considerable conflicts seem to have occurred which concerned the fundamental dispute between the demanded privatization and the new monopoly formation of the film industry under state influence, which the Adenauer government was striving for. In the end the Allies yielded.

None of these governmental schemes to clandestinely take over newsreel companies, establish anti-constitutional censorship measures, to secure state influence by restructuring the film industry and other means of interference have been officially discussed.

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3 The impact of films on society happened to be the core of a general debate in the federal parliament on 2nd April 1954. All parties were debating for hours about the political, socio-economic, historical, moral, ethical factors of the mass medium, about open or hidden censorship, and the structure of the German film industry; cf. 2. Deutscher Bundestag, Beratung der Großen Anfrage der Fraktion der SPD betr. Äußerungen des Bundesministers Dr. Wuermeling über das Filmwesen (Drucksache 234), Bonn 1954 (URL: http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/02/02022.pdf; 2. 11. 2020).

4 "Neue Deutsche Wochenschau": A Stately Enterprise

First of all in 1950, after careful plotting, the conservative Federal Government invested behind the scenes in the privatized "Neue Deutsche Wochenschau" (New German Newsreel), which one year before had emerged from the former British newsreel and now was displayed in 1000 cinemas in the formerly British zone. Soon the merger with "Welt im Bild" (The World in Pictures) followed, the newsreel of the formerly American zone, distributed in 2300 cinemas. On 27. 1. 1951 all shares of the company passed secretly to the Federal Government which is why "the state-owned productions had a two-thirds majority of the entire newsreel distribution".[4]

In the framework of the '50s leading convictions, opinion forming and propaganda purposes were the reasons for an engagement far beyond a reasonable scale. Not only did the federal government as the owner financed the Neue Deutsche Wochenschau production throughout the 1950s.[5] An advisory board, made up of representatives of various ministries, "'advised' and also controlled content and political orientation".[6]

5 The So Called UFI-Decartelization

Since 1952 and again behind the scenes, the Federal Government was operating against the UFI-law to re-establish the two big, vertically structured film enterprises Ufa and Bavaria in order to build up a stronger West German film industry, which would also facilitate a direct state influence. In 1953 the total assets of UFI in Liquidation had been stated with 85 million D-Mark. When the studios in Berlin and Munich were finally sold in 1956 to three more or less identical consortia under the leadership of Deutsche Bank a "political price" of only 18.3 Million D-Mark had to be paid. Taking the identity of the three consortia into consideration building again Europe's biggest film enterprise, the question occurred not only to the inferior German film industry, which had participated

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4   Uta Schwarz, Wochenschau, westdeutsche Identität und Geschlecht in den fünfziger Jahren, Frankfurt a. M. 2001, p. 415.

5   "Der Spiegel" reports, for example, that "only recently" the budget committee had approved "the second subsidy million". N. A., newsreel, serve mouth-friendly, in: Der Spiegel, no. 12, 19. 3. 1952, pp. 30–32, at p. 32.

6   Knut Hickethier, Ein staatliches Informationsorgan? Zur Organisation der Wochenschau nach 1945, in: Ludwig Fischer / Knut Hickethier / Johann N. Schmidt / Wolfgang Settekorn (Eds.), "Wir hatten einen Lacher". Die Geschichte der deutschen Wochenschauen. Hamburger Hefte zur Medienkultur, Hamburg 2003, pp. 21–24, at p. 23.

in the bidding process and had lost: behind the companies stand the banks. But who stands behind the banks?[7]

6 Film Funding as a Political Measure

Linked to these attempts of re-structuring and re-building leading production companies the government was launching federal film funding programs aiming at the rise of production figures but also at a "market adjustment" among the small, vulnerable West German production and distribution companies. The funding was combined with drastic censorship measures, for which an inter-ministerial committee with the participation of the Ministries of Economy, Finance, of the Interior and the governmental Press and Information Office took responsibility.

In two so-called "actions", carried out between 1950 and 1955, the FRG took over guarantees ("Bürgschaften") of 80 million D-Mark against banks to enable the production of altogether 158 films, which in the end led to stately losses of 31.2 million D-Mark. For producers as well as for distributors the price for benefitting from that program proved to be high. Firstly, because of the complicated application process, secondly because they were confronted with political pre-censorship: the Inter-ministerial Committee examined scripts and checked film casts and crews with the help of the Domestic Intelligence Service ("Verfassungsschutz") to find out whether there were members of the German Communist Party or whether somebody had worked for DEFA; the officials, supported by some experts, imposed restraints, demanded changes in scripts, shortened budgets, monitored the production process, claimed the right for re-editing when they suspected disparagement of the military or the democracy. In fact, this huge effort was applied to the average, sometimes upscale entertainment films, musicals, melodramas, dramas or comedies, and therefore proves how seriously this mass entertainment was taken and how detailed the censorship was handled. To present some summarized decisions out of the files:

"R. A. Stemmle has to be exchanged as director unless he promises to never work for Defa again" … "the script has to drop the refugee background" … "the comedy shouldn't

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7 The journalist Reinhold E. Thiel was one of the first to examine the entire process in 1970 for a television film by Westdeutscher Rundfunk and to find interview partners among those formerly involved. A summary of the research results and written excerpts from the interviews can be found in Reinhold E. Thiel, Was wurde aus Goebbels Ufa?, in: Film aktuell, Mitteilungen der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Filmjournalisten e.V., no. 3, 10. 12. 1970.

mention the atomic bomb but a fantasy weapon" ... "the script about white slavery should additionally be checked by the churches" ... "the emigrant Adolf Wohlbrück shouldn't get the leading part in that melodrama".[8]

Those were the framework conditions for around half of the West German feature films produced between 1950 and 1955: strict pre-censorship of content and attitude and post-censorship of the results. The vast majority of these films is long forgotten, among the rejected ones some famous or at least intriguing titles can be found: "Der Verlorene" (1951) by Peter Lorre, "Solange Du da bist" (1953) by Harald Braun, "Alibi" (1955) by Alfred Weidenmann, "Rose Bernd" (1956) by Wolfgang Staudte.

With this ambivalent support, the funding program also aimed at an additional "Market adjustment" by supporting certain companies and by rejecting about 100 film projects of others. In the Nazi's use of language "Cleaning of production and distribution from unwanted elements" the director of the stately funding program described the anticipated result: "It will effectuate a selection by itself".[9]

7 Behind the Screen: East-West Issues

The instruments of direct governmental intervention outside the law were thus not exhausted. Another inter-ministerial committee, this time on East-West issues, regulated between 1953 and 1966 the import of films from the East Block, secretly and without any legal basis. The committee was responsible for import and screening bans in cinemas but also at film festivals and in film clubs, for the prevention of West-East German co-productions and should specifically prevent contacts between filmmakers from East and West.[10] Until 1966 the committee examined 3200 films, around 130 were banned, including the significant productions "Der Untertan" (1951), "Rat der Götter"(1950) and "Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser" (1957).[11]

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8   Jürgen Berger lists a whole series of further examples, which he took from minutes and correspondence. Cf. Jürgen Berger, Bürgen heißt zahlen – und manchmal auch zensieren. Hilmar Hoffmann / Walter Schobert (Eds.), Die Filmbürgschaften des Bundes 1950–1955, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, pp. 80–99, at pp. 84–85.

9   Ibid., p. 86.

10   Cf. Ralf Schenk, Between Worlds. Attempts at Inter-German Co-Production in the Midst of the Cold War, in: Claudia Dillmann / Olaf Möller (Eds.), Beloved and Rejected. Cinema in the Young Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 1963, Frankfurt a. M. 2016, pp. 326–339.

11   Andreas Kötzing quotes the text of the censure-protocol regarding "Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser: ... Its communist tendency ... it despises institutions of the Federal Republic (e. g. the emer-

Last but not least the Federal Government also used the Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft (FSK, Voluntary Self-Control of the Film Industry), founded in 1949, as a censorship instrument. In 1953 alone, "479 films were examined, 9 forbidden, 117 films were released only after cuts, re-workings and other constraints, partly of considerable extent ... The standards that were set during these examinations were stricter than abroad" stated MoP Erich Mende (FDP, Liberal Democrats) in the general debate of the Deutscher Bundestag about film-related issues on 2nd April 1954.[12] And in this context, Mende warned against a "side censorship" ("Nebenzensur") by the churches which indeed played a decisive role in influencing church members / cinemagoers from the pulpit and through their own film magazines.

Like in a burning glass this general debate illustrates the political backgrounds, broadly shared convictions, hopes and illusions not only of the government but of the parliament, too: across the parties there was agreement that for the benefit of the country's international reputation German cinema should return to the "world stage", and the brand Ufa was credited as being still internationally recognized as a seal of quality – as if there could have been a way back into the Weimar Republic before the Nazi's takeover and the repulsion of the Jewish film people.

But also under national political and socio-cultural aspects parliament and government were debating the fundamental criticism of the popular cinema, triggered by a speech Family Minister Wuermeling (Christ-democratic) had held publicly, and in which he was reported to have threatened with a kind of "people censorship" ("Volkszensur") according to his and the churches' opinion: "Above all, it's the film that we have to blame for the destruction of marriage and family."[13] Deeply entangled in their ideas of the medium's dangerous impact on the public, the parliament debated for several hours on direct or secondary censorship (both illegal), on federal film guarantees, which should

gency reception camps) and does not truthfully describe the circumstances". In addition, "deprivations of liberty ... are depicted as crimes customary in the West". Therefore, "almost all members" of the committee had spoken out in favor of not releasing the film. While the participants of the meeting disagreed as to whether legal objections could be raised against the film, it was "for political reasons ... to be rejected in any case". The committee was called upon by the government "to apply stricter standards in the interpretation of the legal provisions in future cases in order to safeguard the political interests of the state when releasing films from Eastern Bloc countries". Cf. Andreas Kötzing, Zensur von DEFA-Filmen in der Bundesrepublik, in: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Ed.), Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, 1–2/2009, Bonn 2008, pp. 33–39.

12 MdB Erich Mende, quoted after Deutscher Bundestag, Beratung der Großen Anfrage (see note 3), p. 778.

13 Der Familienminister Franz-Josef Wuermeling, cited after: ibid., p. 748.

be awarded not only according to economic criteria, but also to state political criteria, on the restructure of a non-existing "film industry".

All those debates and actions indicate the importance that the government, the parliament, and other political or social groups and namely the churches were attributing to the medium because of its significance in the leisure behaviour of the masses. Cinema at that time happened to be the only easily accessible, comparably cheap entertainment for the public. In 1956, more than 817 million visitors went to film theatres in West Germany and West Berlin: hence the role of "opinion-forming", not least in the Cold War, which politics and churches attributed to film (and not only in West Germany) and as well the desire for controlling the propaganda function of the medium and for covert censorship which only shows how deeply the new state mistrusted the audience and how little judgment audiences were credited with.

Nevertheless, there was uncertainty about the actual nature of the relationship between cinema and audience, as one member of the Bundestag put it in a nutshell: "It is a question that cannot be answered unequivocally who is more to blame for bad films, whether the producers who make them or the cinema-goers who admire them ... The enormous influence of the cinema-goers on the shaping of the films cannot be seriously denied."[14]

8   Audience and the Dominance of the Nazi Film Heritage: Reprises

Already in the first years after the war the taste and preferences of the audience had proved to be extremely assertive. The hesitant allocation of licenses by the Western Allies and the prevailing supply problems had provoked a one-and-a-half year gap between the end of the war and the premiere of the first "new" German films "Die Mörder sind unter uns", East Berlin in October 1946, followed two months later by the comedy "Sag die Wahrheit" (West Berlin). All in all, in the four years of occupation only 55 films were produced in the Western zones and the Western sectors of Berlin and 22 in the East (for comparison: in the year 1944 alone there had still been 64).

So what was shown at the cinemas amidst the ruins? Already in 1945 the Hollywood majors selected 32 recently exploited US-feature films for about 350 re-opened theatres in the US zone and Berlin sector. A lucrative business could be established as long as they provided the German audience with Comedy, Musical, Romance, uplifting bio pictures

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14   MdB Paul Bausch (CDU), cited after: ibid., p. 773.

or film classics. [15] An almost similar picture could be found in the two other Western zones, while in the East zone the Soviets imported more serious films and set a stronger focus on heroic figures.

Throughout twelve years of Nazi cinema, the German audience had been used to a certain mode of consumption in a cinema of conciliation, distraction, self-affirmation, a cinema they now were yearning for. Facing the demands, the Western Allies reacted with the examination of about 850 films from the Nazi era, of which they successively cleared several hundreds of films to be re-released in their zones and sectors, so-called reprises. [16] Already in the second half of 1945, ten of those films were in distribution, their number increasing up to 212 in 1950. [17] Well known, favored operettas from the '30s and '40s reappeared on the post-war screens, revue films, music comedies, Heimatfilme, exotic adventure films, even (after 1949) Veit Harlan melodramas – almost all of which

15   Juliane Scholz summarizes the criteria for selection by the US occupying forces: "Mostly those that had been produced during the war had a high entertainment value and yet staged American culture positively. The issues of guilt or a clear political statement were not addressed. Rather, the aim was to secure Hollywood's influence on the German market and to accustom German viewers to the classic 'Hollywood style' of film." Cf. Juliane Scholz, Die "doppelte Bewältigung" (see note 1), pp. 14–15. A document in the Bundesarchiv provides information about the most popular films in this period based on box-office results (OMGUS-files: Declassified E.O. 12065 Section 3–402/NNDG no. 775037, Fiscal Section, Annex 1, Receipts from Distribution of films for 21 weeks ending 27 December 1945, dated 26.1.1946). According to this document "It Started with Eve" (USA 1941, director Henry Koster) was the favorite title in those 21 weeks until the end of the year 1945, followed by "Young Tom Edison" (USA 1940, director Norman Taurog), or Chaplin's masterpiece "The Gold Rush" (USA 1925) and, strange enough Hitchcock's "Shadow of a Doubt" (USA 1943) whereas John Huston's film noir "The Maltese Falcon" (USA 1941) was one of the least successful.

16   The complete list of "Prüfentscheide der amerikanischen, britischen und französischen Militärregierung für lange Filme 1945–1949" (Review Decisions of the American, British and French Military Governments for Long Films 1945–1949) concerning German production before 1945 can be found in Peter Pleyer, Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm, Münster 1965, pp. 427–476.

17   May 1945 – August 1945: 10 German Reprises. Films offered: 98, all Allied resp. 7 "others"; 1945/1946: 30 Reprises, total number of Films offered: 138 (= 108 Allied and 4 others); 1946/1947: 32 Reprises, total offer: 173 (= 4 new German productions, 141 foreign including Austria, 5 others); 1947/1948: 52 Reprises, total offer 239 (= 12 new German, 175 foreign) 1948/1949: 125 Reprises, total offer 340 (33 FRG, 182 foreign productions); 1949/1950: 174 Reprises, total offer 506 (65 FRG, 309 foreign countries); 1950: 212 Reprises, then their numbers were decreasing quickly (Georg Roeber/Gerhard Jacoby, Handbuch der filmwirtschaftlichen Medienbereiche. Die wirtschaftlichen Erscheinungsformen des Films auf den Gebieten der Unterhaltung, der Werbung, der Bildung und des Fernsehens, Pullach 1973, p. 282; SPIO Filmstatistisches Jahrbuch 1954–1955, p. 86.

would re-return as "new" remakes of the '50s.[18] In the distribution season of 1948/1949, which happened to be the last one under the direct influence of the Allies, altogether 340 films were distributed in West Germany, of which 175 were imported ones, 125 were German reprises, and the remaining 33 were new German films, accounting for less than 10 % of the total.[19]

9 A Zero Hour?

Thus, a remarkable continuation in supply, demand and hidden politics can be stated whereas the production, however, had to face a break. Taking into account the endless later discussions about whether there had been a Zero hour in the German film production or not, it's quite obvious, that firstly such a relatively long pause of almost 20 months of no new films, secondly the destruction of the German film industry in the US zone and sector, and thirdly the growing awareness in daily life of the complete defeat, the loss of sovereignty, the disastrous working situation can be seen as a caesura.

In late 1946, not only due to economic conditions, a new era of modesty ("Bescheidenheit") began as it would, at least outwardly, characterize the future Federal Republic. Looking back on 75 years of UFA in 1992, Klaus Kreimeier named some differences between NS- and post-war-cinema while integrating them in the UFA tradition: "On the one hand, the film of the early post-war years denied itself all heroic representations; instead, it continued the tradition of those Ufa films that had declared happiness in an angle, the friendly idyll, and a quiet self-restraint to be a perspective."[20] On the other hand Kreimeier emphasized the "spiritual and emotional" needs of a mass audience, for which continuity in German cinema was the appropriate response to spiritual distress.[21] For Bernhard Groß withdrawal into the private sphere "contains the undoubtedly polit-

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18   A total of 139 films produced in Germany and Austria during the Nazi era were filmed again between 1949 and 1963. Cf. Stefanie Mathilde Frank, Strange Continuities? Remakes of Interwar Feature Films in the Late 1950s, in: Claudia Dillmann / Olaf Möller (Eds.), Beloved and Rejected. Cinema in the Young Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 1963, Frankfurt a. M. 2016, p. 205; cf. also Stefanie Mathilde Frank, Wiedersehen im Wirtschaftswunder. Remakes von Filmen aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus in der Bundesrepublik 1949–1963, Göttingen 2017.

19   See note 17.

20   Klaus Kreimeier, Die Ufa-Story, Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns, München-Wien 1992, p. 443.

21   Ibid., pp. 443–444.

ical moment that something can be lived that no longer exists in the dictatorship: the separation of the public from the private."[22]

So, indeed, the "new" German black&white films were different in comparison to the pre-1945 production.[23] They, therefore, had a problematic stand against the massive entertainment offer from the NS-era with its well-known genres and familiar stars, its elaborate Ufa aesthetics, the lavishly demonstrated production values, the colours, glamour, grandeur.

The majority of the audience despised the new productions, from the "rubble films", due to their references to current times, their new, poor style influenced by Italian Neorealism, and their quest for honesty to other new films on the market. Especially the rubble films simply were too close to an everyday life that was, in any case, difficult to endure. Although only a few visitor numbers from this period have been passed down, a clear picture emerges: even the unloved imported films of the occupying powers were to attract 3 to 4 times more visitors than the new native ones.[24]

After the founding of the German states some films were continuing this realistic, sometimes expressionistic, aesthetically ambitious line; they worked in and with genre conventions of social drama and thriller or invented new genres like the *Straßenfilm* around neglected youth and crime, and they found their special audience, but never made it to the top of the box office and seldom into film history. Whereas the mainstream films took off after 1949 which would be the starting point of another long and winding debate, this time about the quality or rather: non-quality of West German post-war

22 Bernhard Groß, Die Filme sind unter uns. Zur Geschichtlichkeit des frühen deutschen Nachkriegskinos: Trümmer-, Genre-, Dokumentarfilm, Berlin 2015, p. 273.

23 Based on his criteria, Pleyer puts the proportion of films that refer to the time of their creation at 87.5 %. Accordingly 75 % of all post-war films, produced between 1946 and 1948, showed the effects and destruction of war in some way; Pleyer, Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm (see note 16), p. 150.

24 For his dissertation, published in 1965, thus less than 20 years after the period he was studying, Pleyer was still able to obtain figures directly from distribution companies, in this case the German Schorcht-Film distributor and the British J. Arthur Rank Corporation. According to his research results, "Das verlorene Gesicht" ("The Lost Face", West Germany 1948, Director: Kurt Hoffmann), a timeless mystery story released by Schorcht, had 3.7 million visitors, followed by "Menschen in Gottes Hand" ("Men in God's Hand", West Germany 1947/1948, Director: Rolf Meyer), which, as the title already reveals, sees higher powers at rule in the misery of the post-war era and attracted 3.2 million visitors. The high number of visitors by today's standards that these films achieved is relativized by the results of Rank's, for example of the Stewart Granger vehicle "The Magic Bow" (GB 1946, German distribution title "Paganini"), which had more than 10 million visitors. Not to mention real big US titles for which exact figures are missing. Cf. Pleyer, Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm (see note 16), pp. 155–156.

cinema – a popular cinema close to the changing interests of the audience's majority. Not only the visitors were overwhelmed by the first West-German color film after 1945, the *Heimatfilm* "Schwarzwaldmädel" in 1950, but also, in a negative sense, the critics and later film historians who despised exactly this popular cinema, recognizing it as filmic results of a determined escapism and the typical refusal of the West German society to deal with the past.

For about 40 years this critical attitude, manifesting itself in numerous articles, essays, books, has been perpetuated to the point of complete boredom. Not only was popular cinema harshly condemned, but the other one, the harder, and the more realistic or experimental West-German cinema happened to be neglected or ignored, may it be out of political calculation or simple unawareness. As a result a widely declined or disregarded cultural territory in all its aspects is still worth to be (re-)discovered till this day. [25] But of course it's true, that after 1945 the "demanding" film remained a risk (at least in times without secure film funding, at present 330 m. Euro per year in Germany). Thus in the first 15 years of FRG, this kind of films had to prevail caution in naming and showing the past or the current misery of unemployment, housing shortage, the problems with the integration of millions of German refugees from the East, the mass destruction of families. Melodramas warily referred to combative women, their unexpectedly returning war-disabled men, to all those, in reality, existing private triangles; 'problem films' implied the massive social and emotional neglect of children and adolescents; crime movies themed the omnipresent forms of pushing, corruption and violence; even harmless music films showed a German youth breaking with traditions and preferring US-American jazz and rock culture; the "refugee question" and unprocessed experiences of loss emerged in Heimatfilmen; the extremely ambivalent relationship to military resistance against the Nazi regime re-appeared in "officers' films" etc. With all these conflicts contemporary commercial cinema has been dealing with, albeit frequently through blanks, allusions, improper speech – and always reconciling openly revealed contradictions in the end. [26]

25   The discoveries that are possible in the field, including the diversity of West German post-war genres and their differing interpretations as well as the analyses of an extremely lively film culture, were carried out in 2016 on behalf of the Locarno Film Festival which dedicated its retrospective and the accompanying catalogue to the German post-war cinema. The retrospective, curated and tailored by Olaf Möller to the special needs of each station, got an extraordinary successful tour through Europe and the USA. Cf. Dillmann / Möller (Eds.), Beloved (see note 10).

26   The assessment that the 1950s in general were "fundamentally contradictory" in an extraordinarily strong modernization push is becoming more and more accepted. For Stephen Lowry it is also valid for the cinema whose stars he analyses. Cf. Stephen Lowry, Lieber hausgemacht als Hollywood? Stars im westdeutschen Nachkriegskino, in: Bastian Blachut / Imme Klages / Sebastian

10 Audience and Cinema Culture

It was essential for the entire film sector to know the moods and preferences of the audience and to gain knowledge about its increasing diversification. The German film distribution sector had financially benefited most from the largely risk-free business with the Nazi film heritage. Secured by their reserve funds the distributors were capable throughout the '50s to function as pre-financiers for the weakened producers by renting non-existent films to the cinemas in which the cinemas only agreed if the star names and genres promised reliable revenues, i. e. if the audience very probably wanted to see the film. This bet on the future preferences of the spectators essentially determined production decisions, but it also short-circuited social discourses, the reality of life, audience expectations and film production.

While opinion research institutes first determined and analyzed the composition of the spectatorship in the mid-1950s, some cinema owners had already decided at the beginning of 1950 to exchange experiences internally, providing information on visitor reactions twice a week via the "Film Special Service" in Heidelberg.[27] In the internal exchange, the anonymous cinema owners did not have to mince their words: which old

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Kuhn (Eds.), Reflexionen des beschädigten Lebens? Nachkriegskino in Deutschland zwischen 1945 und 1962, Stuttgart 2015, p. 240.

27 Film-Sonderdienst (Special film service), edited by W. H. Ott, a "confidential exchange of experience between film theatres", Heidelberg, started on 2. 1. 1950 and was published every Monday and Thursday. Also called "Ott's Dienst" ("service"). This obviously rarely preserved series is archived and can be examined at the text archive of Deutsches Filminstitut und Filmmuseum, Frankfurt a. M. Some examples: Since reprises played an important role in the programming of German cinemas, they also did so in the exchange of information: About "Es war eine rauschende Ballnacht", the 1939 Zarah Leander vehicle (director Carl Froelich), a cinema owner (West German middle town) had played the film for seven days with an occupancy of 70 % and stated: "endlich wieder ein gutes Geschäft. Allen Kollegen zu empfehlen." (transl.: finally a good deal again. Recommend to all colleagues; Special film service, no. 2, 9. 1. 1950). On the other hand, "Mädchen in Uniform" (director Leontine Sagan, D 1931), one of the famous films of the Weimar Republic, did not work well at all in a southern German country town with 300 cinema seats in two screenings: "Neue Generation hat hierfür kein Verständnis mehr" (transl.: "New Generation no longer has understanding for this"; Film Special Service 14 [1950]) while Richard Eichberg's remake "Der Tiger von Eschnapur / Das indische Grabmal" (D 1937/1938) successfully filled the halls in numerous small towns (cf. Film-Sonderdienst 9 [1950] and 10 [1950]). The outstanding successes of the year in all forms of cinema were the new German productions "Nachtwache" (FRG 1949, director Harald Braun) and "Schwarzwaldmädel" (FRG 1950, director Hans Deppe) as well as the US-reprise "Gilda" (USA 1946, director Charles Vidor) and the current "The Third Man" (GB 1949, director Carol Reed). Concerning the latter and its huge success cf. Anne-Marie Scholz, From Fidelity to History. Film Adaptations as Cultural Events in the Twentieth Century. Transatlantic perspectives, New York-Oxford ²2016, p. 29.

Ufa stars in the reprises still or no longer attracted the audience, how spectators reacted to familiar genres or unfamiliar themes from Hollywood, how they judged color films from Great Britain, the USA or the Nazi era, which Hollywood customs frightened audience, whether a film attracted older people, women, the youth, the uneducated, intellectuals, "interested circles" etc. In northern, western or southern Germany, in villages, small towns or big cities, cinemas with 240 or 2 500 seats cabled what the copy quality looked like, whether the dubbing was good, how many days a film had been shown, with how many screenings and in what capacity – all this vital information, recommendations or warnings were passed on in telegram style within the cinemas involved.

In the mid-1950s the wishes and demands of the audience represented a market factor more powerful than ever. The main visitor group of 16- to 29-year-olds, who had been young children and youth at the end of the war, went to cinema almost every week. Together with the second most important group, the 30-to-44-year-old urban upward climbers, they proved to be more curious and knowledgeable about films, more open and internationally orientated than previous audiences, while accordingly the theaters offered a wider range of all kinds of cinematic works than before (or ever after). Although the US cinema dominated West German screens by titles, the decisive business volume proved that the domestic production surpassed the Hollywood competition by a rate of about 50:30 %.[28] And Italian, French, English, and Swedish films also achieved market shares of about 20 % in the second half of the '50s – European films that were different, possibly more free-flowing, more exciting, more challenging in their approach to genre conventions and yet nonetheless familiar. Based on the annual results of selected cinemas in several key West German cities between 1950 and 1956, some of the most successful foreign films were "The Third Man" (GB 1949), "Rebecca" (USA 1940), "Don Camillo" (IT / FR 1952), "Hon Dansade en Sommar" (SE 1951, "One Summer of Happiness"), "From here to Eternity" (USA 1953), "On the Waterfront" (USA 1954), "Du Rififi chez les Hommes" (FR 1955, "Rififi") and "East of Eden" (USA 1955).[29] Even when domestic productions as a whole lay far ahead in the public's favor, this international cinema was a wide-ranging, manifold school of viewing.

28 Cf. Lowry, Lieber hausgemacht (see note 27), p. 234, note 1, with the figures Irmela Schneider had collected.

29 Cf. Filmblätter, Fachorgan der deutschen Filmwirtschaft, Berlin, since 1950 organized the so called "Filmrennen" ("film race") at the end of each year, asking which film in the cinemas of selected cities (Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt a. M., Hamburg, Hannover, Köln, München, Stuttgart) had been most frequently scheduled. The magazine can be consulted in the text archive of the Deutsches Filminstitut und Filmmuseum, Frankfurt a. M.

This internationality, which was never attained again in Europe and is unattainable through EU funding today, conversely also showed interest in the West German "sophisticated entertainment film". With its customized roles and dialogues, the excellent camera work, its famous close-ups and ample space for acting out moods and emotions in drama, melodrama and the war film, it was not only popular with the domestic audience. West German films could also be exported.

Shortly after, cinema lost its dominant rank in the leisure behavior of the masses in Europe and the US. Accordingly, the Federal Government trusted on television as the future propaganda agent in the media. Plans to install a governmental second TV program ("Adenauer television") were banned in 1961 by the Federal Constitutional Court. The 1950s were over, indeed.

Ina Merkel

Narrative Patterns in Anti-Fascist American, Soviet and European Films (1940 – 1950)

Abstract

After a brief period of confrontation in cinemas of post-war Germany, neither the German war crimes nor the Holocaust committed against European Jews nor the Nazi terror against politically dissenting people were present in a notable way. This concerned not only German movies, but also the cinematic interpretations of war and National Socialism by the Allies and other European countries, which could only be seen on German screens very sparsely, with a long delay or in their statement defused. Going out from this systematic de-thematizing of German cruelties the presentation will focus on the question which cinematic interpretations of Nazism circulated in the realm of the US, the Soviet Union and Europe's liberated countries, and to work out general narrative patterns. Surprisingly, despite the ideological differences and different war experiences of the producing countries, the narratives of decency and resistance are similar. They form – so the thesis presented here – a dispositif whose strategic function it was to secure the alliance against National Socialism.

1 Introduction

1945 was a year of shocking discoveries. A trace of violence led from the liberated European countries, from the borders of the Third Reich deep into the interior of the country and into the direct neighborhoods of the German population. Indescribable brutality and incomprehensible murderousness of the Germans came to light. An entire country was littered with hundreds of small and large camps, behind whose barbed wire fences millions starved, suffered and died. The allied armies liberated thousands of wavering skeletons, famished men, women, and children in agony. They discovered mountains of bodies, mass graves, ash fields. The troops were horrified and shocked by the scale of the crimes that were appearing before them. The two breachs of taboo, the mass murder of civilians and prisoners of war and the desecration of the corpses, was as unbelievable as inexplicable, at least these were two terms that determined public discourse.

Crimes were a frequent topic in the first daily newspapers published by the occupying powers after the end of the war. Survivors reported on torture and murder in radio broadcasts, and corresponding subjects appeared again and again in the Allied newsreels, even though for minutes only. The first literary attempts were made as early as the 1933 in exile and were reissued in Germany shortly after the war. The occupying powers sought to shed light on the matter and fought against the wall of silence with detailed reports and photographic evidence.[1]

In contrast to the print media, radio, and literature, in post-war German cinema neither the German war crimes nor the Holocaust against European Jews nor the National Socialist terror against political dissidents, were really present after a brief phase of confrontation. This concerned not only German film, but also the cinematic interpretations of war and National Socialism of the Allies and other European countries, which could only be seen on German screens very sparsely, with a long delay or softened in their statement. Most of the films made in the USA and the Soviet Union before 1945 on Nazi Germany were not shown to German audiences. Only a few films from the liberated European countries, which were made after 1945 on the German occupation, ever reached German cinema. Films on anti-Semitism and the genocide of European Jews played hardly any role in German cinema's programme.[2] In addition, German-German differences emerge: the general absence of communist political struggle and Eastern European occupation in West German cinema and of civic resistance and conduct of war in Western Europe in the cinema of the Soviet Occupation Zone (SBZ) and later GDR. In other words: the anti-Fascist films of the Allies and the occupation films from the liberated European nations were hardly present in the German post-war cinema programme.

1   For example in using newspapers: Die Neue Zeitung (Amerikanische Militärregierung); Tägliche Rundschau (Sowjetische Militärregierung) and Hamburger Nachrichtenblatt (Britische Militärregierung) – newsreels: "Welt im Film" (USA / GB); "Nowosti Dnja" (USSR) – literature: Hans Beimler, Ein Leben für die Freiheit, Moskau und London 1933, München 1947; Willi Bredel, Die Prüfung, Moskau 1933, Berlin 1946; Wolfgang Langhoff, Die Moorsoldaten. 13 Monate Konzentrationslager, Zürich 1935, München 1946; Eugen Kogon, Der SS-Staat, München 1946.

2   A search on www.filmdienst.de resulted in the following: Between 1945 and 1960 about 8 000 of the films produced worldwide were screened in German cinemas in East and West, of which 242 were classified as war films. These were examined according to the table of contents. Films with a merely military connection (war events, battles, military milieu, captivity of war, etc.) were excluded from the examination. 60 films from this sample can be assigned to the topic dealt with here, that is 3 %. Of these 13 films deal with interiors of Nazi Germany, 16 with the German occupation regime and 16 are dedicated to anti-Semitism, 10 of which deal decisively with the genocide of European Jews. This statistical overview, even if it is not one hundred percent reliable, proves the marginality of the topic in German cinema.

And even only a few of the German post-war films that dealt with the subject at all were successful at that time. Therefore, it can be assumed that the immediate German past was more or less systematically de-thematized in post-war cinema.

For many years, cinema and film policy were not in German hands, but under the control of the occupying powers. Even before the end of the war, they developed strategies and made decisions about which films should be shown in Germany. Cinema was a central element of the Allied reeducation policy. After a short phase of confrontation, in which so-called atrocity films[3] were shown to the German audience, documentaries with which the Allies wanted to shed light on the crimes of the Nazi era, the extermination of the Jews, the war, the dictatorship, and their backgrounds, they changed their policies. The atrocity films and war documentaries were not having the desired effect. The audience reacted in a reserved, bored, disbelieving and negative way. The public's indifference also affected the first German films, which were more about "quiet heroes" ("In jenen Tagen", Western Germany 1946/1947, SBZ 1947) and about the effort to preserve decency and a little humanity under the conditions of the dictatorship ("Rotation", DEFA[4] 1949, FRG 1957). Only a few of the German films on the subject were successful ("Die Mörder sind unter uns", DEFA 1946; "Ehe im Schatten", DEFA 1947). Cinema functioned first and foremost as entertainment and not as an educational institution.[5]

3   This meant documentary films about concentration camps that had been taken by the Allies after the liberation of the camps to document the crimes. Among others: "Auschwitz" (USSR 1945), "Les Camps de la mort" (FR 1945) and "Death Mills" (USA 1945), in detail: Ulrike Weckel, Zeichen der Scham. Reaktionen auf alliierte atrocity-Filme im Nachkriegsdeutschland, in: Mittelweg 36,1 (2014), pp. 15–25.

4   German Film Corporation, founded 1946 on the initiative of the Soviet Military Administration together with German anti-fascists.

5   This topic is dealt with in depth by Ina Merkel, Kapitulation im Kino. Zur Kulturpolitik der Besatzungsmächte, Berlin 2016. Cf. also on general issues and mentality: Stephan Buchloh, Zwischen Demokratisierungsbemühungen und Wirtschaftsinteressen. Der Film unter der Besatzung der westlichen Alliierten, in: Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte 8 (2006), pp. 162–193; Brewster S. Chamberlin, Kultur auf Trümmern. Berliner Berichte der amerikanischen Information Control Section Juli-Dezember 1945, Stuttgart 1979; Gabriele Clemens (Ed.), Kulturpolitik im besetzten Deutschland 1945–1949, Stuttgart 1994; Jennifer Fay, Theaters of Occupation. Hollywood and the Reeducation of Postwar Germany, Minneapolis-London 2008; Michael Hanisch, "Um 6 Uhr abends nach Kriegsende" bis "High Noon". Kino und Film im Berlin der Nachkriegszeit (1945–1953), Berlin 2004; Horst Möller/Jan Foitzik (Eds.), Die Politik der Sowjetischen Militäradministration in Deutschland. Kultur, Wissenschaft und Bildung 1945–1949, München 2005; Reinhard Rürup (Ed.), Triumph und Trauma. Sowjetische und postsowjetische Erinnerungen an den Krieg 1941–1945, Berlin 2005.

In the Western zones, therefore, the original re-education project was soon abandoned or modified, with the focus no longer on films that showed the National Socialist past, but rather on films that focused on the attractive American present. In the Soviet-occupied zone, the occupying power acted more offensively and continued to insist on the screening of war and occupation films, with limited success. This leads to the conclusion that the American, Soviet and European filmmaking on this topic of the war and post-war period was only partially perceived in Germany and is still only partially known today. Moreover, the audience in East and West was influenced very differently: while in the East mainly Soviet and Eastern European films were present, American and Western European productions dominated in the West. This division of cinema not only reflects the different social systems and their ideologies but also affected that the unequal German warfare – the extraordinarily violent war of extermination in the East and the 'normal' war of conquest in the West – has inscribed itself unevenly in the collective memory.

The fact that post-war German-German cinema – with certain differences between East and West – was primarily characterised by a de-thematisation of German crimes, internal terror and the extermination of the Jews well into the 1950s is certainly decisively due to the much-described suppression of the immediate past. But not all films have been rejected. For example, the Soviet war film "Zhdi Menya" (USSR 1943, SBZ 1945), which reports about a young woman whose husband is missing at the front, was a surprising success and moved the German women to tears. There is – so my thesis – a reason for the rejection beyond the dismissal of the confrontation with the German crimes, and it has something to do with the narratives in which it was told.

The following analysis of films from the 1940s and 1950s aims to work out general narrative patterns and to ask about their aspiration to interpretation and explanation. A sample of films[6] was processed in which the dictatorship of the Third Reich and its occupation policy were addressed from the different perspectives of the nations participating in the war, the occupied and the liberated. The films were treated here essentially as a serial source, i. e. no close reading using paratexts was undertaken. The aim was to include as many different national perspectives as possible. War films were left out of consideration; only films that took place inside Germany and films about the German occupation were included. Films dealing with anti-Semitism and the genocide of Euro-

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6   Based on the research on filmdienst.de (see note 2) all available films were included into the sample but not all of them could be discussed here because it would go beyond the scope. However, their availability on DVD or Internet platforms speaks volumes to their importance as historical documents and testifies their continuing popularity. See also the filmography index of this volume.

pean Jews play a small role in both categories. The selection dealt with here represents a discursive field that was only presented in this multifaceted form at international film festivals. The screening of most of the films remained limited to the respective national audience. Nevertheless, the different narratives are interrelated and interwoven. How these interdependencies and transnational transgressions are reflected in the narrations is of particular interest.

2 Insights of Nazi Germany

The first anti-Fascist films that tried to give an insight into life in the Third Reich were driven by the motives of describing the catastrophic effects of political and racist terror on the everyday lives of Germans and mobilizing the public against National Socialism. Emigrants wrote most of the scripts or book templates. Some of the Soviet and American films will be treated here as examples.

The dramatic stories focus on victims of the dictatorship, friendly, good-natured people who – sometimes against their will – become heroes and begin to resist offensively, even if it can cost them their lives. They are at least morally supported, sometimes also actively, by acquaintances, friends, neighbours; people who have kept their decency, "the good Germans" as they were called in the contemporary press. In this basic constellation, the anti-Fascist, humanist counter-world, and the ideals they represent gain considerable representation in the portrayal of German circumstances. The opponents are often roughly drawn as representatives of power, as sadists, fanatics, and careerists or brainless followers, as people who have lost the ability to empathy. In this constellation of figures, a decisive moment of National Socialist rule is sometimes missed: the enthusiastic approval of broad masses, their willing participation and joyful denunciation. Rather, National Socialist Germany appears as a country in which an entire population is oppressed by a horde of militant and violent terrorists. For a long time, neither the Americans nor the Soviets could have imagined that masses of Germans supported the regime without compulsion and accepted and even supported the dissolution of democratic institutions, the suppression of the law, the discrimination and finally the extermination of the Jewish population. In effect, the films with their emphasis on inner-German resistance do not dramatize the German state of affairs but tend to trivialize them involuntarily. A distinction must be made between Soviet and American interpretative patterns – these are the two film nations from which the few productions originate, even if German and Jewish intellectuals played a decisive role in both film industries.

2.1 From the Soviet Perspective

In 1938 Lenfilm Studio produces the film "Professor Mamlock" (USSR 1938, SBZ 1947) after a successfully performed play by the Jewish communist Friedrich Wolf who emigrated to the Soviet Union in 1933. The film tells the story of a Jewish doctor, a brilliant surgeon and proud war veteran who, despite the increasing anti-Semitism in his immediate environment, abstains from all political statements and expects the same from his family. He believes he can thus escape the attention of the new rulers. But this soon proves to be a fallacy. After the National Socialists came to power, he was harassed by some of his colleagues and finally chased out of the clinic. He is led through the streets of his city in a white doctor's coat, smeared with the capital letter "Jew". When he was later called in as a specialist for a complicated operation on an SS leader, he hoped he would be rehabilitated, but was disappointed. Meanwhile, his son is active in the communist resistance against the will of his father and is expelled from the house. One day he is arrested and brutally interrogated by the Gestapo. He can escape and supported by a large crowd of people standing up to the raiders, he manages to disappear. Mamlock, who is about to kill himself with his old pistol, hears the noise from the street, lets go of his suicide attempt and makes a blazing speech from his balcony in support of his son. In this, he scourges his political apathy as a mistake and calls on the crowd to resist. The SS shots him, his son becomes the leader of the anti-Fascist underground movement. In contrast to the play, in which the son is thrown out of his home by his father and Mamlock takes his own life, in the film the resistance and the professor's turning away from his a-political attitude play a central role.

According to Jeremy Hicks, this is the first film to deal with the persecution of the Jews.[7] Its reception was problematic. In the Soviet Union, the film was initially shown very successfully to more than 16 million viewers; after the German-Soviet non-aggression pact of 1939, it was removed from the cinemas in order to be screened again with the attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941. Then it disappeared again for a short time from the cinemas because the presentation of the Germans seemed too positive. In western countries, it was considered a communist propaganda film. After start-up difficulties with censorship in the UK and the USA, however, it was also very successful in the West. Two days after the *première* in New York, the *Reichskristallnacht* had taken place, so the film was suddenly perceived as a very topical commentary on the events. "Professor Mamlock" won a prize for best foreign film in the USA and was nominated

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7   Jeremy Hicks, First Films of the Holocaust. Soviet Cinema and the Genocide of the Jews, Pittsburgh 2012.

for the New York Critics' Prize, but in other states (Ohio, Massachusetts) it was banned because of communist-Jewish propaganda. When the film was shown in East Germany in 1947, the critics were quite impressed, but criticized the milieu depiction and that the anti-Fascist attitude of the population had been overly benevolent.

A second Soviet film, "Chevolek No. 217" (USSR 1945), deals with the history of the Soviet citizen Tanja, who was captured in 1941 and deported to Germany for forced labor. The immigrant perspective no longer plays a role here; one's own experiences under the conditions of war are to be presented. The focus is on the treatment of Soviet citizens as subhumans, their enslavement, and annihilation.

In a framework story, the protagonist Tanja, who stands in a cordon in Moscow and watches the march of German prisoners of war across the Red Square, tells the bystanders, who look pityingly at the exhausted and ragged figures, full of outrage about her experiences in Germany. After the Germans invaded their city in 1941, she and her friends were deported to Germany. They were then numbered and offered for sale to German businessmen and entrepreneurs in a kind of slave market. Tanja, number 217, is bought by a petit bourgeois family who runs a grocery store for 15 marks only. From now on she will be exploited, humiliated and mistreated by this family. From today's perspective, the representation of the petty-bourgeois milieu seems like a caricature driven to its peak: quarrelsome, envious, intriguing, and greedy people. The housewife trains her like a dog, makes her work very hard, and punishes her with beating and deprivation of food. Son and daughter have to be served; the landlord molests her. After a short time, Tanja is exhausted and desperate. Only the renewed contact with her girlfriend, who has to work in a factory, helps her to get through the torture. In the confusion of a family quarrel in which she is accused of stealing money, she finally reaches for the kitchen knife and kills her landlord and his son in cold blood. She manages to escape back to the Soviet Union under the protection of a bomb attack.

Since forced laborers and prisoners of war were treated as traitors in the Soviet Union after the war and often again disappeared in camps, it is surprising that the film in a way takes sides for these people. Of course in a very pathetic and patriotic way. Despite his pathetic tone, "Chevolek No. 217" met with recognition from the international film public. It was nominated for the Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1946, the director Michail Romm won the International Grand Prize of the Association of Film Authors. In Germany, in 1947 it only performed in special shows for a selected audience.

The German conditions are depicted in this film in a very simplified way; the Germans are convinced of their racial superiority without distinction and present themselves as "master race". The resistance against the Nazi regime here no longer comes from within and is no longer to be expected from there. There are no more good Germans in this narrative. Thus the narrative pattern corresponds more to the genre of the occupation

film, in which individual heroines and heroes defy the German superiority, which behaves extremely brutally towards the population in the occupied territories, at the risk of their lives. The experiences of the Soviet Union with the Germans' war of plundering and extermination against their country are inscribed in this narrative. An experience the Americans don't share. In contrast to Soviet films, American films hold on to ideas of internal German resistance until the end of the war when they deal with insights of Nazi Germany.

2.2 From an American Perspective

According to Ben Urwand's study,[8] the National Socialists succeeded for many years in preventing anti-Fascist films from being produced in Hollywood. He identifies "The Mortal Storm" (USA 1940 – FRG 1957) – after a bestseller by Phyllis Bottom – as the first American film that takes a critical look at what is happening in Germany, a kind of Professor Mamlock in American. However, at the request of censorship, the Jewish theme was disguised. After massive interventions in the script, there is only talk of non-Aryans, and the professor, who in the script initially had to leave university for racial reasons, is now arrested as a defender of scientific truths against ideological stubbornness and interned in the concentration camp where he perishes.

The film is about the dissolution and destruction of a very harmonious German-Jewish academic family living together in a small Bavarian university town on the edge of the Alps. The father is a highly respected professor of natural sciences, his wife a noblewoman. From her first marriage come two grown-up sons, who are lovingly turned towards the stepfather. The family also includes two children, a 19-year-old daughter and a twelve-year-old son, and a housekeeper. They maintain a bourgeois household with many guests, including students and colleagues of the professor. In the course of the seizure of power by the NSDAP, this group differentiates itself: the daughter's fiancé (a student of the father) and the stepsons become strapping Nazis and distance themselves from the father, the housekeeper resigns for fear of reprisals. On the other hand, another friend of the family, one of the students, leaves the university because of the intolerable political atmosphere and retreats to his farm in the mountains, from where he helps the persecuted to leave the country illegally. His mother and a young maid represent a peasant-Christian

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8   Ben Urwand, The Collaboration. Hollywood's Pact with Hitler, Cambridge 2013. Urwand shows very impressively how the Germans successfully intervened in the US film industry to prevent anti-fascist productions.

milieu that remains decent even under political pressure. The professor, who is no longer allowed to teach at the university – not for racial reasons, but because the students boycott his school of thought – is one day picked up and taken to the concentration camp, where he succumbs to the strains. When the mother flees to Austria with the two children, the daughter, who has separated from her Nazi fiancé, is caught on the train with her father's manuscript and placed under police surveillance. On her escape across the green border, she is chased and shot by her former fiancé.

The film, in whose script two emigrants (Hans Rameau and Georg Froeschel) have collaborated, attempts to present German circumstances in a differentiated way. Even straight National Socialists, like the former fiancé and one of the stepsons, ask themselves at some point whether this is still right, what is happening there. Because the racist background of the events is suppressed, the humanistic attitude and the liberal thinking remain as motives for persecution. As the fiancé explains at one point in the film, anyone who is not for the National Socialists is regarded as an enemy. These too were grounds for persecution in the Third Reich, but in contrast to arbitrary discrimination based on racial attribution, they have a weak effect here, because no direct political activity is linked to them.

There is also a narrative of resistance in this American film. In contrast to Soviet film, it is not constructed as a protest or combative confrontation, but very reservedly as individual obstinacy or stubbornness of the peasant milieu. It is not a question of political convictions but of insisting on universal human values and moral categories such as sincerity and decency. To this decency belongs that one does not give up his sense of justice, that one does not deny his attitude (a later persecuted teacher refuses to sing along a Nazi song in the pub), that one fights honestly, man against man, and above all that one helps the weaker. This is a form of resistance that could be called civic courage. Since the Jewish background is disguised and German anti-Semitism, which represented a decisive moment in the ideology of racial superiority, is not named, the drama lacks depth. The actual scandal, the arbitrary discrimination, and extermination of a group of people, the breach of civilization, had not yet been addressed.

This is already distinctly different in the immediately following anti-Fascist films: In "Escape" (USA 1940) an American frees his Jewish mother from a concentration camp; in "The Great Dictator" (USA 1940, FRG 1958[9], GDR-TV 1980) a Jewish barber, who is mistaken for the dictator of a fictitious country, uses the opportunity to end the war; and

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9   Two test screenings organized by American cultural officers in 1946 prompted them not to show the film in the immediate post-war period. The reason for this was the low response rate to the questionnaires, which was interpreted as a rejection of the film.

in "The Man I Married" (USA 1940) a young American woman goes with her German husband and seven-year-old son to Germany, where he quickly mutates into a National Socialist until he discovers that he too is of Jewish descent. From now on, it is impossible to imagine the American narrative about the Third Reich without the Jewish theme, but it rarely becomes the central motif.

Just as the lethal anti-Semitism of the German regime was initially suppressed, American anti-Fascist film avoided naming the political, even communist resistance. The film adaptation of the novel by Anna Seghers "The Seventh Cross" (USA 1944, BRD-TV 1972, GDR-TV 1986) is an example of this. The story deals with the escape of seven prisoners from a concentration camp and describes their flight through Nazi Germany in 1936. The concentration camp commander erects seven crosses on which the prisoners who have been recaptured are to be martyred to death. Only one cross will remain empty at the end. The seven prisoners come from different backgrounds (teacher, writer, acrobat, a Jewish merchant, manufacturer, etc.) and only the survivor Georg Heisler is a communist, which is not told in the film. He can – and this is crucial for his survival – fall back on his comrades who have organized theirselves underground. However, this motif is eliminated from the film. The resistance remains exceptionally vague in its aims and actions, its political convictions. On the other hand, German society is marked in a very differentiated way; there are many decent people who risk their lives for the refugee merely because they feel that the murderous concentration camp regime is inhuman and unjust. While the concentration camp wardens and Gestapo officers are barely distinguishable, the "good Germans" are portrayed as characters with outstanding characteristics. The focus is on Paul, a friend of the a-political type, who takes a somewhat positive view of the regime, because it has provided him with a secure job and financially supports the three children. But he does not hesitate for a second to help his old friend in distress. Above the events lies an atmosphere of fear and mistrust: everyone can be denounced by anyone at any time, even by their children, who appear almost entirely as enthusiastic Hitler Youth. The film provides a moving insight into a society that is authoritarian, even if the potential for resistance in the film may seem disproportionately high.

This expresses a hope for the internal German resistance, which even in the last year of the war – at least in the film studios – seemed to be stable. The last production before the end of the Second World War, which deals with German society, is a prototype of this: "Hotel Berlin" (USA 1945). It is an adaptation of a novella by Vicky Baum, a popular Austrian-Jewish writer who had already emigrated in the USA in 1932 for political reasons. The film presents German society shortly before its downfall as a kind of microcosm. In a fictitious hotel in Berlin an illustrious spectrum of protagonists of the Third Reich gathers: SA and SS officers about to leave the country; a *Wehrmacht*

officer who was involved in an assassination attempt against Hitler; a hostess who spies for the SS; a large number of "little people" who express their despair helplessly with defeatist remarks; a "great" artist popular among the Nazi big ones, who becomes a traitor out of fear; a former opposition activist who was broken by the Gestapo and has become a disillusioned drinker; a refugee from the concentration camp who is to lead the underground movement; a Jewish woman who dares to run around without a star to get the terminally ill husband medication, and a hotel staff who sympathizes with the concentration camp prisoner. Reception, waiters, and bellboys work together with the underground. The hotel even hides three American airmen operating in the hinterland. For the narrative, the existence of an underground movement is central. It wants to overthrow the National Socialist regime from within. In the film, it is presented as well organized, perfectly networked in the population and very capable of action. One prints masses of leaflets, has fake passports and is equipped with weapons. The film not only paints the picture of a broad resistance movement, but it also conveys the idea of a fatalistic, critical to an oppositional attitude of large sections of the population. It provides still a picture of "good Germans". The film thus spreads an optimism that was belied by the fierce war of endurance and the experiences with the German population that American troops have had to make since the invasion in September 1944.[10] The Americans met almost exclusively a-political Germans who rejected all blame and claimed to have known nothing of the crimes of the regime. Not a trace of resistance, no good Germans nowhere. The obviousness with which a widespread German resistance is assumed in the film corresponds to the narrative pattern of the occupation film, which I will refer to in the next chapter.

2.3 From a German Perspective

Of the narratives presented by American and Soviet films, especially the motif of the basic decency of many ordinary people and the figure of the a-political protagonist entangled in events against their will can be found in post-war German films. These are retrospective interpretations of life in the Third Reich that reflect the experiences and attitudes of the directors over the last twelve years.

For example, Helmut Käutner, a director who was able to continue making films in the Nazi era largely undisturbed, varied the motif of decency in seven episodes in

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10   At the time the film was started, there was basically no information from inside Germany. In this respect, the film expresses wishful thinking.

his first post-war film "In jenen Tagen" (Western Germany 1946/1947, SBZ 1947). One episode deals with the tragedy of a German-Jewish couple that constantly quarrels, but then first reconciles in the face of the pogroms and riots against their shop and then commits suicide together. In contrast to the discovery of the mass extermination of Jews in Auschwitz and other concentration camps, which had been carefully hidden from the eyes of the German population, *Reichskristallnacht* took place in public and was still present in the collective memory. Therefore, the presentation of these events in the film after 1945 was unproblematic, as the audience's consent to "Ehe im Schatten" (DEFA 1947) shows.

However, in the closing commentary of the film it says from the perspective of the storyteller, a car:

> "Yes, gentlemen, I have not seen much of those days, no great events, no heroes, only a few fates and only fragments of them. But I've seen a few people ... time was stronger than them, but their humanity was stronger than time. There have been and always will be these people. At all times. And remember that when you get to work."

Decency also plays a central role in Kurt Maetzig's film "Ehe im Schatten" (DEFA 1947, very successful also in the Western Zones), in which a famous actor stands by his Jewish wife despite all hostility and takes his own life together with her after years of loneliness, social exclusion, threat, and fear. Maetzig was banned from filming because of his Jewish mother.

For Wolfgang Staudte, the figure of the a-political becomes the central character of his first post-war films "Die Mörder sind unter uns" (DEFA 1946) and "Rotation" (DEFA 1948/1949, FRG 1957). After the Nazis came to power, Staudte had problems with his work permit for political reasons but was able to work in commercials and as a dubbing artist and even evade being called up for military service. In "Rotation", a father becomes the helper of the Nazi regime despite his beliefs and decent attitude until he decides against it shortly before the end of the war. Kurt Maetzig also dedicates himself to this character in "Die Buntkarierten" (DEFA 1949 – FRG-TV 1975). The book was written by Berta Waterstradt, a Jewish Communist who was imprisoned for illegal work and later had to perform forced labor. It tells a family story from the turn of the century to the post-war period, set in a proletarian Berlin milieu. Here it is the son who, after a long period of unemployment, allows himself to be corrupted by the Fascist ideology in order to perish in the end in the war.

In these German films it is no longer an outsider who stays away from the events and becomes their victim – as with Professors Mamlock and Roth – or someone who realizes in time that he cannot stay out of them – like Paul in "The Seventh Cross" – but it is now

someone who becomes a follower and thus, unwillingly, an accomplice. This character drawing corresponds to a communist pattern of interpretation. In the Soviet occupation zone, the German population was accused of their a-political behaviour. To have stayed out in times of dictatorship was considered inexcusable. And a second element of the film narratives is striking: the resistance potential of the German population is reduced to a small group of particularly brave people, if not even to individuals. The creeping de-solidarization of the population is clearly shown, the gradually growing fear of the terror regime, the omnipresent denunciation and the immediate benefit of Germans from the exclusion of Jewish and politically committed colleagues. The picture drawn after the war by German filmmakers who were exposed to political or racial persecution but did not leave Germany and directly experienced the change in mood and everyday behaviour is significantly more negative than in the American and early Soviet model.

3 Occupation Films

With more than 30 productions from ten countries, shot between 1942 and 1950, occupation films form the largest group of films dealing with the National Socialist regime. Not only do they come from the occupied and then liberated countries, but there is also a multitude of American and British productions on this subject. Produced before the end of the war, they had a propagandistic function: to show American and English audiences what it was like to live in occupied Europe, how beastly the Nazis were and how the occupied nations were resisting them. The occupation films produced after the liberation are about regaining dignity. The focus is on heroic national resistance against the German overpower. The spectators are given a feeling of – national – community and unity with which they can identify, even if they may have stayed still or were not particularly exposed during the occupation. The stories are packed with knowledge, scriptwriters and directors have experienced the occupation first hand.

Rarely did interest in these early films extend beyond the national borders of the country in which they were produced. Few films received international attention, and occupation films reached German-German cinema only in exceptional cases, usually with a significant time lag. Here, too, a refusal to confront the German public with the war crimes can be observed.[11] Films from Eastern Europe were not or much later shown in

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11 More than half of the occupation films never appeared in German cinema (e.g. "Sekretar Raykoma" (USSR 1942); "Commando strikes at Dawn" (USA 1942); "Ona Zashchishchaet Rodinu" (USSR 1943); "Tomorrow we live" (GB 1943); "Paris after Dark" (USA 1943); "Jericho" (FR 1946);

Western Germany, and films from Western Europe were not or much later shown in Eastern Germany. This changed only with the much more differentiated representations from the mid-1950s, which in turn were only allowed to run in the GDR much later (e. g. "Kanal": PL 1956, FRG 1958, GDR-TV 1973).

There is a wide variety of cinematic approaches to the subject, yet a basic narrative pattern can be discerned: At the center of the plot is a population suffering under the occupation, which – in the form of exposed heroines and heroes – defies and resists the German power, which as heavily armed *Wehrmacht*, *SS*, and *Gestapo* is almost overpoweringly present. The oppression, exploitation, and looting of the defeated people is named as the primary German motive for the war. Very prominently the Nazi ideology is depicted. In particular, ideas of the master race, anti-Semitism and the superiority of the Aryan race are discussed.

Despite the different national references of the films, which reflect the different German warfare, the staging strategies are similar. The contempt and brutality of the German occupying forces, which often enough increases into sadism, is naturalistically heightened and painful realistically shown in detail. On the one hand, there is the occupying power, a uniformly acting, soulless German troop, which undoubtedly executes every order and which is commanded by a fanatical officer with sadistic disposition – the antagonist. In the end, he often proves to be a coward – driven into a corner by partisans, resistance fighters or the Allied troops. Only in a few films do Germans get more human traits, doubts; or even human emotions are allowed. On the other hand, they show individual heroes who rebel against the state of affairs and engage in an unequal fight. Resistance often develops out of the situation in which humiliation is no longer endured, and the accumulated rage breaks out uncontrollably. This endangers the plans of the organized resistance, who operate with defined hierarchies and command structures and with support from outside, the Red Army, the British or Americans.

The films show how the occupation generates solidarity across social and political borders and how the occupied population offers the heroes fundamental and profound,

"Odette" (GB 1950) etc.)., also not internationally awarded films like "Muzi Bez Kridel" (CSR 1946, Grand Prix Cannes). A few of the early Soviet and Eastern European films were only shown for a short time in the Soviet Zone and also there; they were not shown at all in the Western zones (e. g. "Raduga", USSR 1944, SBZ 1945); "Soya" (USSR 1945, SBZ 1945); "Nepokoryonnye" (USSR 1945, SBZ 1948). American, French and Italian occupation films – with a few exceptions (like "Paisà", IT 1946, FRG 1949; "Manon", FR 1949, FRG 1950) – are only shown on German screens after a long time (e. g. "Edge of Darkness" (USA 1943, FRG 1977); "Casablanca" (USA 1943, FRG 1958, GDR-TV 1984); "Hangmen also die!" (USA 1943, FRG 1958, GDR-TV 1984); "Roma Città aperta" (IT 1945, FRG 1961, GDR 1968), "De Rode Enge" (Denmark 1945, GDR 1956); "Bataille du Rail" (FR 1946, GDR 1956, FRG 1973).

reliable support. The few exceptions – mostly female collaborators and traitors – confirm the rule. However, because a battle in this constellation of power seems hopeless from the outset, and the protagonists often go to certain death, they are not necessarily guaranteed the approval of the community for which they fight. This leads to interesting dramatic conflicts. On the one hand, actions from the underground endanger non-participants because the Germans take hostages from the population indiscriminately and punish them collectively. Even a successful act will result in the death of more innocent people. Secondly, the oppressed community is not united against the enemy in national unity across class boundaries. Not only because there are collaboration, cowardice, and self-interest of individuals, there are also mental imprints, pacifist attitudes and quite common survival strategies from which resistance seems futile. It is the greatness of some occupation films to show this differentiation – which does not bestow to the national honour – at a very early stage.

Despite the shared general dramatic situation, occupation films tell very different stories and report very individual fates. They cannot be assigned to any genre either, but make use of the conventions of melodrama, adventure and espionage film or intimate chamber play. Occupation films often go with adventure romanticism, even if they end tragically. Love stories are often interwoven, especially in American films they generate the central conflict. Some films apply a documentary style.

3.1 The Image of the Occupation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

The Soviet occupation films are, as American viewers shockingly stated during the war, of a strong realism that leaves nothing out: Torture, hostage-taking, forced labour, rape, the murder of children, theft of food, etc. cold-bloodedly ordered by soulless officers, carried out by murderous soldiers. The Germans in these films enjoy the misery of the occupied; they splurge, celebrate, drink and eat, beat, murder and torture and sometimes become sentimental. This narrative pattern is prototypically found in "Raduga" (USSR 1944, SBZ 1945): In the deepest winter of 1943, a pregnant woman returns to her village in Ukraine to give birth. It is occupied by Germans, who do their dreadful business here: bodies dangle on lampposts, the families are starving, the milk is taken away from small children, farmers' wives have to serve the Germans, and the villagers wear numbers around their necks. The extremely sadistic commander lets the prisoner drift through the snow half-naked for the soldiers' pleasure and tortures her to learn something about the partisans. But she remains silent, even after he snatches the newborn from her and shoots it in front of her eyes. Villagers who give bread to the prisoner are imprisoned for it. The young woman will be executed. Sometime later an attack of the Red Army begins, and

the village is liberated. The commander and his Ukrainian mistress are shot dead, and the German soldiers are beaten by incredibly angry women until the Red Army officer intervenes, arrests them properly and has them taken away.

A similar scenery can be found in other Soviet occupation films. "Soya" (USSR 1944) – a true story – e. g. about a partisan who gets captive, is tortured with glowing cigarettes but betrays nothing and finally is hung publicly on the village square. The young girl is very proud and goes to her execution with her head held high. There she takes the floor and addresses the paralyzed villagers with a call for resistance: "Heda, comrades! Why so sad? Be bolder, fight, beat the Germans, smoke them out … I'm not afraid of death, comrades! Happy is he who gives his life for his people!" Soya is a very heroic character, she is propagandistically built up as a heroine of the Soviet Union, and the film makes a decisive contribution to this. "Nepokoryonnye" (USSR 1944, SBZ 1948) deals with the massacre of over 33 000 Ukrainian Jews in the ravine of Babi Yar. A family hides a Jewish child in great danger. The danger comes not only from the German soldiers but also from the daughter's fiancé, who entered the police force among the Germans. In this film, the Germans are drawn as a randomly beating, constantly shouting mass that indiscriminately arrests, shoots or drives women and old men to work. Not to obey their orders means certain death. Therefore, the resistance takes place entirely in hiding with the partisans, to whom those who are still in some strength are trying to flee. After all, the partisans also save the Jewish child. In these three Soviet occupation films, the heroic protagonists are women. In "Nepokoryonnye", too, the daughter takes the initiative and establishes the connection to the partisans, and she is also caught and executed by the Germans.

Also in the USA films about the resistance struggle in the Soviet Union ("Days of Glory": USA 1944) and in Czechoslovakia ("Hangmen also die!": USA 1943, FRG 1958, GDR-TV 1984) were produced. "Days of Glory" is inspired in detail by Soviet occupation films: a rural setting in the deepest winter, Germans taking their houses, their food and even their winter clothes from the Russians, the hanging of captured partisans, etc. But the story is fundamentally different. It is about an extraordinarily well organized partisan group, a commander who falls in love with a dancer who has gotten behind the front and yet pursues only his fighting goal, and about a consistently determined, self-sacrificing Soviet population. The melodramatic framing and a figure drawing reminiscent of cinematic representations of Russia in the 19th century ("Anna Karenina": USA 1935) make the story seem to have fallen out of time, and the narrative loses its strength.

In contrast, "Hangmen also die!" is staged as a political thriller. It is about the assassination of Heydrich in 1942, the "Hangmen of Prague" and chief architect of the Holocaust. Heydrich was head of the Reich Security Main Office and deputy Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, a radical anti-Semite who, since the beginning of

the war in the occupied territories, pushed forward the ghettoization and annihilation of the Jewish population and ruled with an iron hand. The assassination was one of the most spectacular actions of the Czech resistance coordinated from the UK. The film is loosely based on this event: the assassin hides after the crime in Prague. In revenge, 400 Prague citizens are taken hostages, who are to be killed if the assassin does not turn himself in. Faced with this conflict, he decides to give up his hiding place. But the resistance succeeds in extraditing a traitor to the Germans as the murderer instead, and in ending the executions with which they had already begun. In fact, all the male inhabitants of the village of Lidice were shot in retaliation, the women were sent to the concentration camp, and the place was razed to the ground.

Despite the clear anti-Fascist diction, the effect of American films is not as strong as the strict realism of Soviet films. Their documentary style was aimed at recording the crimes and showing the world how brutally and violently the war was waged by the Germans. The film historian Rob Edelmann assumes that they influenced neo-realist Italian film.[12] A number of Polish and Czech films, as well as French and Italian occupation films made after the liberation can also be classified in this film style.

In contrast to the early Soviet occupation narratives, which focus on individuals who defy the occupying forces, collective heroes are developed after the war. So in "Muzi Bez Kridel" (CSR 1946) and in "Ulica Graniczna" (PL 1948): both films that were not shown in Germany. Here it is children and young people who act out of a naive sense of justice and thus support but also endanger the resistance struggle of adults. They experience the work of the occupying power as a direct intervention in their lives and develop a real hatred for the Germans. In "Muzi Bez Kridel" the boy Jirka lost his family in the Lidice massacre. He lives with his uncle, who works as an engineer at a military airport and is active in a resistance group that systematically carries out acts of sabotage, which the boy does not know. Jirka, who also gets a job there, is full of thoughts of revenge. He gets a grenade, is caught by the Gestapo and shot in front of his neighbour. As a result, the whole structure of resistance is shaken: resistance fighters are uncovered and arrested, traitors are discovered and killed. When the Gestapo arrests any number of people and takes them hostage, the uncle identifies himself as a resistance fighter and is shot.

"Ulica Graniczna" shows how everything changes in a Jewish-Polish-German mixed street by the occupation. The film tells of these changes using young protagonists, their friendships and – anti-Semitically motivated – enmities, their solidarity, and their be-

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12   Cf. Rob Edelmann, Mark Donskoi-Director, in: Film-Reference (URL: http://www.filmreference .com/Directors-Co-Du/Donskoi-Mark.html; 2.11.2020).

trayal. The occupying power is not personified more precisely in the film but forms the background for the increasingly threatening events. The film shows the establishment of the ghetto, the hunger and death there and leads to the uprising in which some of the children participate. In post-war Poland, the thematization of Polish anti-Semitism was perceived as problematic, there were fears that the film might harm Poland's image abroad, and it was therefore hindered from being shown.

3.2 The Image of the Occupation in Western Europe

The first films about the occupation of Western Europe come from the USA and the UK, they deal with the resistance in Norway: "Commandos strike at Dawn" (USA 1942), "Edge of Darkness" (USA 1943, FRG 1977) and in France: "Tomorrow we live" (GB 1943); "Paris after Dark" (USA 1943); "This Land is mine" (USA 1943), and here too a hard realism in the representation of violence prevails. Nevertheless, a decisive difference can be observed, which concerns the staging of the German occupying power: despite the aggressive, martial appearance, a certain civility in contact remains, not all rules of etiquette are suspended. For example, they knock or ring the doorbell and do not simply storm into the homes, the women are courted; the mistresses are kept happy and not treated contemptuously like whores. The German soldiers and officers of the Wehrmacht and even the SS do not behave as degradingly and disrespectfully towards the population as you can see in Soviet and Polish films, where Jews, Ukrainians, Poles, and Russians are treated like cattle.

None of these films do without a melodramatic plot. In times of violence and threat, love is not only passionate and unconventionel, it also holds the occupied society together. It creates cohesion and arouses admiration because it is so noble. Unlike many Soviet films, the population under occupation is portrayed as highly differentiated socially and politically; there are always collaborators and traitors on the one hand and a great deal of patriotism, especially among ordinary people on the other.

"Edge of Darkness" (USA 1943) is about a fishing village in Norway, where an uprising against the occupying forces has just taken place, which ended deadly for most of those involved on both sides. The first scenes show the market square, full of corpses, the destroyed commander's office, houses shot to pieces, from which no sign of life comes. The events that led to this disaster are reported in the flashback: The German occupying forces ruthlessly plunder the place; daily shipments of fish, butter, blankets and winter clothing go to Germany. The inhabitants defend themselves with acts of sabotage and small insubordination, they hide people and wait for weapons from the English to finally strike back. In a meeting of the parish, after a discussion, a democratic vote is taken on

whether or not to oppose armed action. The resistance brings people from different social classes together, paradigmatically here in the form of love between a doctor's daughter and a fisherman. When the doctor's daughter is raped by a soldier, and an old teacher, who rejected his house to the Germans, is publicly humiliated in the market place, the situation escalates. The rage turns into open outrage, and there is an armed uprising. In the end, only a small group, including the lovers, manage to escape to the woods. The resistance, as it is drawn here, lies in the obstinacy and stubbornness of the Norwegians, who do not want to and cannot subordinate to the German commands.

This pattern is also found in the drawing of the French resistance milieu in the British film "Tomorrow we live" (GB 1943), which takes place in a small port city in Brittany. Here, the shooting of an elderly man who refused to make room for a German officer on the sidewalk triggers the armed resistance. Here too, a group of resistance fighters is waiting for the support of the British, and the social milieus mix in love. Here as well, long-term plans are thwarted by the spontaneous outbursts of individuals, and a mass slaughter takes place. Unlike the Norwegian population, which is depicted as very depressed, measured and seriously marked, the atmosphere in France is characterized by lightness, wit and joie de vivre. They enjoy fooling around and tricking Germans. In the middle of the film there is an enchanting cinema scene: during the German newsreel, viewers begin to grunt and squeak under cover of darkness, and shadows form in front of the screen: a V-sign, a fist punching Hitler in the face, and fingers tugging at the *Führer*'s hair.

From the perspective of American and British cinema, the occupation is a ruthless and violent affair, taking on unprecedented proportions and thus going far beyond previous experience. The resistance is correspondingly hard. Germans, traitors, and collaborators are shot in cold blood, and factories and trains are blown up. The German occupying power is very brutal but also somewhat helpless. The presentation has an idealizing effect with regard to the broad participation of all strata of the population in resistance. Also, the good ending love stories in this ensemble seem strangely misplaced.

After the liberation, the occupation period could now be depicted from a separate perspective. The Italian, French and Danish filmmakers use more realistic modes of presentation.

Undoubtedly one of the most famous occupation films is "Roma Città aperta" (IT 1945, FRG 1961, GDR-TV 1968). The focus lies on the effects of the occupying power on everyday life: Hunger and misery, the black market, arbitrary arrests, raids, hostage-taking, torture, and mass executions are omnipresent. As the war draws to an end, the occupying power becomes more dangerous. Against this background, the resistance movement takes action, supported by the inhabitants of a working-class district, priests, businessmen and shopkeepers who transmit messages and hide fighters. Even the children of the district have joined forces and undertake dangerous acts of sabotage; they collect

weapons and build bombs on their own. The milieu also includes women who are endured by Germans. One will eventually betray the man she loves – although she also hates the Germans.

Award-winning and nominated for an Oscar, the performance of "Roma Città aperta", was banned by the FSK in 1950 in the FRG because it showed "the historical truth overdrawn" and "inciting" effects had to be feared. The dubbed version approved in 1961 was still intended to weaken the statement: the communist became a socialist, the torture scene was cut, and the text changed. In the Italian original, a German officer who heads the execution squad says to the SS commander, who boasts of making everyone speak with torture: "We [the Germans] are no more than murdering, murdering, murdering. We have corpses all over Europe. And hatred grows unstoppably out of their graves. Hate, hate, hate everywhere, we become exterminated by hate. Without hope." In the German dubbed version this becomes a much more general question: "Is there nothing else but to murder, murder, murder? …".[13] Because "Roma Città aperta" is one of the few occupation films that has been disputed about its screening, these changes shed light on the atmosphere in post-war Germany. Sixteen years after the end of the war, it was difficult to admit that crime was part of everyday business during the occupation and no exception.

From the extensive French film work on the occupation, which was criticized by André Bazin for cultivating the resistance movement as a legend, two films stand out due to their way of presentation: the docudrama "Bataille du Rail" (FR 1946, GDR 1956, FRG-TV 1973) and the chamber play "Le silence de la mer" (FR 1949, GDR-TV 1983, FRG-TV 1994). "Bataille du Rail" is conceived as a kind of film report documenting how the French railway fought against the occupation regime. With technical understanding and precise knowledge of the lines, signal boxes, stations, and locomotives, it was possible to smuggle people across the border and to disturb the transport of German troops and materials. Scenes recreated with amateur actors testify to the risk that railway workers at all levels up to the top of the administration took. The film also tells of the humour, of team spirit and mutual support, as well as of taking hostages and executing innocent people in order to put moral pressure on the railway workers. Despite the realistic representation and the renunciation of a story, the representation has a heroizing effect.

Quite differently the drama "Le silence de la mer". A German officer is forcibly accommodated in the house of an elderly man and his niece. They do what he asks, but they don't talk to him or look at him. It's like he's not even there. The officer is educated, speaks French and is interested in the culture of the country. Night after night he seeks

13   Bonus material from the DVD version of Zweitausendeins.

the conversation, after politely knocking, he enters their salon, warms his hands at the fireplace and gives the two ever longer speeches about his enthusiasm for art and culture, but they remain silent. One day he drives to Paris, at first, he enjoys the round trip in a carriage like a tourist. But gradually the German occupation catches his eye: German signposts, the lettering, and flagging of buildings, the presence of uniforms and army vehicles. He discovers a notice about the execution of hostages. In the officers' mess he argues with his comrades, while he dreams of a Franco-German brotherhood, they are convinced of the inferiority of French. Back home he tells the uncle and niece about his experience, he is outraged about his comrades and decides to volunteer for the Eastern Front. He asks their forgiveness. For the first time, the uncle looks him in the face, and the niece says quietly: "Goodbye". In this stylistically very puristic form, the overwhelming nature of the occupation and the mentality of the resistance are symbolically summed up without the need for further military confrontation or words. The film was not a great success, although the book, published under the pseudonym in Paris in 1942, was extraordinarily popular.

4 Conclusion

Films about the Third Reich and the occupation period do not form their genre with specific conventions. The stories were staged as melodramas, thrillers, espionage, love or adventure films. The anti-Fascist film also had to work for a broad audience. But this rarely succeeded beyond the respective national audience. Although the outrage at the criminal Nazi regime dominated European discourse across borders, the subtle and gross differences of French, Italian or Danish, Polish, Czech or Soviet occupation regimes that emerged in the films are of importance. The narratives of resistance were also ideologically coloured, and there were considerable differences between Soviet and American patterns of interpretation and explanation for the breach of civilisation.

In the Soviet model of explanation, dictatorship and war were understood as typical forms of imperialism and its extraordinary violence as a characteristic of capitalist greed for profit and imperialist aspiration for expansion – that is, as system-based. Anti-Jewish and anti-Slavic racism was subsumed under anti-Bolshevik ideology, interpreted as part of the struggle against socialism as a world order. That the (intelligent) German workers did not oppose but instead participated was explained by the theory of manipulation: they were deceived, manipulated, seduced, against their own real interests. But how could this be achieved so comprehensively?

In the American discourse, social-psychological explanations were prevalent. They assumed a German social character, which arose from centuries of imprinting on obe-

dience to authority, subservience, and feelings of superiority, which were systematically trimmed into the German people by kings, philosophers, and poets and finally merged into blood and flesh. The Americans were also convinced of the manipulation thesis. The National Socialists' propaganda seemed to have been extremely effective. That something like this was accepted or even shared by the (smart) bourgeois-liberal elites needed explanation.

How can these two, here very roughly characterized patterns of interpretation be recognized in the narratives of the here discussed films? In contrast to documentary films, where explanations of this kind were argued through by a narrative voice from offstage and underpinned with corresponding images, feature films are committed to a dramatic structure and thus inevitably more ambiguous. However, most striking are not the differences but the similarities in mise-en-scène:

Firstly, the element of violence dominates in the representation of the Germans. On the level of the figures, it appears individually motivated, based on personal convictions or pathological sadism. But on the level of the atmospheric violence, it gains a systemic character, is paradigmatically inscribed in the National Socialist regime and is based on the ideology of racial superiority.

Second, similar narratives of resistance are developed. They range from silence and evasion to denial of obedience and disagreement and finally to sabotage, murder and active military action. Any form of resistance is dangerous and can end in death; the protagonists take a high risk. At the same time, the resistance is presented as inevitable. German power is so dominant and repressive, the breach of civilisation so profound and so destructive for one's own life, the National Socialist ideology so unacceptable and intolerable that dignity can only be regained through resistance. From the Soviet perspective, political resistance is emphasized; from the American perspective, national identity is in the foreground. But this seems to be the only difference.

The narratives of violence and resistance can be found in all the films considered here, regardless of where the story takes place, whether in Germany, the Soviet Union or Western Europe, regardless of whether they are German Communists, Ukrainian women, Polish Jews or Italian children and regardless of the perspective from which the films are made. This indicates that they are powerful dispositif within which different discourse positions with limited reach have unfolded. In the Foucaultian sense, which understands a dispositif as a kind of formation whose primary function at a given historical time had been to respond to a state of emergency ("urgence"),[14] the strategic role of the dispositif of

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14 Cf. Michel Foucault, Dispositive der Macht. Über Sexualität, Wissen und Wahrheit, Berlin 1978, pp. 119–120.

violence and resistance consists in securing the alliance against National Socialism across ideological and system boundaries. This was an indispensable prerequisite for winning the war against Germany. And even after the war, the dispositif of violence and resistance was essential, for it ensured moral survival in the post-war period and formed the basis for a new beginning. It offered strategies for many people to deal with their shame about failure, cowardice and timidity. For the films showed the effort and courage that it had meant to defend oneself or even to stay decent.

The films discussed here did something indispensable as an art form in and for the confrontations of their time and in particular for dealing with these horrific experiences of violence: they offered viewers a sounding board for their own experiences and thus survival strategies. They did this primarily for the victims of National Socialism; they helped them to legitimize their survival: the emigrants, the survivors of the concentration camps, the many small people who had somehow fiddled through and also the resistance fighters who had risked not only their own lives but also those of many uninvolved people. But in the land of the perpetrators, the films had no chance. In the dispositif of violence and resistance they took the other side.

Daniel Jonah Wolpert

Bodies of Evidence, Burdens of Proof

Reason before the Court of Cinema after the Third Reich

Abstract

Images of Jews in relation to morality and the conditions of law and justice have been present from the earliest productions in German Cinema. The themes of alterity and the tensions these posed for Jews and Gentiles underwent a radical shift in perspective in German cinema by the time of the Third Reich.[1] At the end of the war, German cinema had been debased by the racial politics of the medium under the Nazis and faced an uncertain future among the physical and spiritual ruins of total defeat. The early post-war Cinema in the former Greater German Reich was placed under Allied control and films required a licence for production and distribution. Just what this entailed and how it was implemented is, however, not the subject of this paper. Rather, I intend to look at how narratives about Jewish figures featured images and tropes of legal discourse and the courtroom space as a means to addressing the Nazi past and specifically the genocidal policies perpetrated against the Jews of Europe.

To this end, I shall examine Artur Brauner's "Morituri" and Georg Wilhelm Pabst's "Der Prozeß", and to a much lesser extent Erich Engel's DEFA production "Affaire Blum".[2] These three films, all made in 1948, are in many ways exceptions to the cinema culture of the time precisely because they directly addressed Anti-Semitism and the law in German Society, a subject which found little popular interest, much less cinematic expression at the time.[3] While "Affaire Blum" was made under Soviet licence by DEFA at what was left of the old UFA studios in Babelsberg, The other two films were produced under Western allied licence in Occupied Austria and Germany, nations that had until 1945 been considered a single entity as 'Greater Germany'. These two Western sector films will form

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1   Cf. author's preface: Siegbert Salomon Prawer, Between Two Worlds. Jewish Presence in German and Austrian Film, 1910–1933, New York 2007, pp. x–xi.

2   Eugen Yorck, Morituri [Morituri] (CCC Film, 1948); Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Der Prozess [The Trial] (Kahla Film [Austria], 1948); Erich Engel, Affaire Blum [The Blum Affair] (DEFA, 1948).

3   Cf. esp. Frank Stern, Im Anfang war Auschwitz. Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus im Deutschen Nachkrieg, Gerlingen 1991, pp. 100–110 for accounts of the time.

the greater part of my analysis as they present interesting counterpoints to the cinema discourse with the Nazi past away from DEFA's increasingly Stalinist diktats. I hope to show how these films, both offered visual rejoinders to images of the Shoah and aimed to play a part in the narratives of recovery of German Cinema as a morally legitimate medium. I shall look specifically at the themes of rationality and justice and how, through the conduits of Jewish characters and their antagonists, these concepts were played out within Enlightenment values of the primacy of reason as a universal truth, beyond the vicissitudes, and thereby also the responsibilities, of accounting for history and ideology of the recent past. It is especially revealing to trace just how prevalent a return to an 'ahistorical' idealism in Kantian models of legitimacy, both in moral and epistemological terms, served to reconstruct restorative national narratives after the collapse of Nazism in film.

Before my analysis of this move, it is necessary to place these films of 1948 into historical cinematic context. The purpose of this is to frame the Cinema space itself as a courtroom. In so doing, an examination of the radically divergent presentations of Jewish figures, Cinema and legal space in both the Anti-Semitic Cinema of Goebbels's Reichs-filmkammer and the documentary films shown at the War Crimes trial in Nuremberg by the Allied prosecution offer a key to the significance of the dramatic appearance of the 'court space' within the post-war films under discussion here.

1 Bodies of Evidence: Image against Narrative

Certainly the most striking and horrific images that made it to the Cinema screens in Europe in the years immediately after 1945 were to be found in the footage shot by the Allied forces of the liberation in the Camps in the aftermath of the Shoah. The films were edited together into documentaries that shocked audiences worldwide. These cinema images revealed the horrors of orchestrated genocide on an industrial scale, where whole populations of, mainly Jews, were reduced to the status of objects, the survivors marked by a starvation that robbed them of any prior recognisability, the dead poured into pits by bulldozers like so many pale and filthy puppets. These Jews, then, became the bodies of evidence on screen for the most damning indictment levelled at the German people in mainly voluntary screenings in the cinemas of the ruined cities and towns of the former Third Reich.[4] In particular, Billy Wilder's production "Die Todesmühlen"

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4 Cf. esp. Ulrike Weckel, Beschämende Bilder. Deutsche Reaktionen auf alliierte Dokumentarfilme über befreite Konzentrationslager, Stuttgart 2012, pp. 329–390.

("Death Mills") became widely known in the Western sectors as a so-called *Gräuelfilm* or 'gruesome film' by Cinema audiences in Germany. It appeared in 1945 in many versions, not only screened for a civilian population throughout Europe and in the US, it was shown in Prisoner of War, and Displaced Persons camps alike, including a version made in Yiddish.[5] The "indelible shadows" as Annette Insdorf has termed them had been irrevocably cast for any future consideration of the Nazi past in film.[6]

It was, however, another film by George C. Stevens that made history by being the first motion picture film specifically made to be entered into evidence at an international Trial. Appearing as Prosecution Exhibit number 230 on the 29th of November 1945, the courtroom seating was rearranged to become a cinema space and those present were duly forewarned about the shocking images that would, in the cautionary introduction by the Allied Chief Prosecutor, Robert H. Jackson, open him up to accusations that "you will say I have robbed you of sleep".[7] The assembled court, now a cinema audience, watched Steven's compilation film "The Nazi Concentration Camps" in total silence.[8] The Prosecution had deliberately not called one single witness from the Allied forces to give testimony about what they saw in the Camps. Exhibit 230 was the only 'witness' to give this evidence. At insistence of the Chief Prosecutor, the sole eyewitness testimony was to be that of a movie camera.[9] Recalling the screening, Goering is said to have remarked: "And then they showed that awful film, and it just spoiled everything".[10]

5   Jean-Paul Goergen / Ronny Loewy, Di toit milen – die jiddische Fassung von Die Todesmühlen (1945), in: Filmblatt, no. 8,21, winter / spring 2003, pp. 63–67.

6   Annette Insdorf, Indelible Shadows Film and the Holocaust, Cambridge 2003, pp. xv–xix.

7   Lawrence Douglas, Film as Witness. Screening Nazi Concentration Camps before the Nuremberg Tribunal, in: The Yale Law Journal 105,2 (1995), pp. 449–481, at p. 450.

8   George Stevens, Nazi Concentration Camps (OMGUS, 1945), US Library of Congress (URL: https://archive.org/details/gov.archives.arc.43452; 2.11.2020). Cf. esp. Yvonne Kozlovsky-Golan, The Shaping of the Holocaust Visual Image by the Nuremberg Trials. The Impact of the Movie "Nazi Concentration Camps", Göttingen 2008, for the afterlife and impact of this film.

9   Telford Taylor, The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials. A Personal Memoir, New York 2013, pp. 146–149.

10   Jack El-Hai, The Nazi and the Psychiatrist. Hermann Göring, Dr. Douglas M. Kelley, and a Fatal Meeting of Minds at the End of WW II, Reprint PublicAffairs 2014, p. 22.

2 "Jud Süß": Foreign Bodies in the *Volkskörper*

What had been so 'spoiled' one might ask, the dream of a 'thousand year Reich'? The dream, if not the nightmare had certainly been dispelled, and the *Traumfabrik* of the German Cinema lay in ruins. So also, seemingly, that golden era of German film that had so eagerly espoused the racialised logics of a national grand narrative of ethnic struggle against such pernicious myths of a controlling 'World Jewry'. Yet in order to place the shock of the documentary footage of the liberated Camps into context, at least for the German viewing public it is instructive to briefly examine the legacy of images of 'the Jew' in the film of the Third Reich.

The state Anti-Semitism that had found voice in the Cinema of Nazi Germany was perhaps best embodied in the appearance of a quintessentially sinister dramatic figure. The villainous caricature of Jud Süss Oppenheimer emerged as a symbol of hate on screen in 1940. What is striking, moreover, is that it is a court case which provides the denouement of Veit Harlan's "Jud Süß". The film and the court case depicted in the narrative bears testament to the nadir of a debased cinema culture under the Nazis, legitimising the perversions of the 1935 Nuremberg race laws and the subsequent murder of the Jewish people in a dramatic appeal to a continuity of malice, validating the historical traditions of persecution via the law in enforcing the oppression and exclusion of Jews from German Society. The sheer brutality of the final celebratory hanging of the eponymous Süß marks the film out as a call to morally legitimised and legally sanctioned murder.

"Jud Süß" had a wide international release in occupied lands, as well as Italy and Spain and was even, tellingly, screened to members of the SS *Einsatzgruppen* as well the general public throughout the war.[11] In the film, Ferdinand Marian plays the film's eponymous character, a manipulative, exploitative and murderous rapist who ascends through social and political hierarchy only to suddenly lose the protection of his vain and avaricious Patron, the Duke of Wüttemberg after he dies unexpectedly of a heart attack. The carefully crafted plot to usurp the Duchy of Württemberg for the nefarious ends of the Jews, by installing his gullible benefactor as an absolute ruler on his behalf fails and Jud Süß Oppenheimer is put on trial. The pivotal and penultimate part of the film sees the 'Court Jew' take the stand at court. Visually striking, dressed in all his rings and finery and sporting a well-kempt beard, he holds forth, employing his talent for sophistry to obscure the truth and frustrate all attempts to hold him to rights (fig. 1).

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11   Cf. Friedrich Knilli, Ich war Jud Süß. Die Geschichte des Filmstars Ferdinand Marian, Berlin 2000, pp. 126–167 for a detailed account of distribution and popular reaction.

Fig. 1: "Jud Süß": The 'Court Jew' in Court (Veit Harlan, 1940).

That he consistently seems to evade all charges put before him, ratchets up the tension up until the dramatic denouement when he is finally caught out – for having forced himself on a Christian woman who was subsequently driven to suicide as a result. The final sequence of the film sees Süß Oppenheimer hanged, pleading and attempting to talk his way out of his fate: he is lifted to the highest gallows yet built in the town in an iron cage for all to see. At the moment of his death, a soft purifying sheet of soft snow silently descends on the townsfolk gathered below. The vain and duplicitous Süß embodies all that Goebbels could muster as hateful in a Jewish figure on screen, intervening personally in the script process to emphasise the maleficence of the character. The film itself was one of the most successful of the Reich. Over twenty million saw it, not only in Germany but also in Cinemas showing foreign language versions across Nazi occupied Europe, to much acclaim receiving the Golden Lion at the 1940 Venice Film Festival.[12]

The evasions and lies of Josef Süß Oppenheimer defending himself at his trial unequivocally situate the Cinema audience at the febrile heights of an emotive all-encom-

12   For a comprehensive account of the film and its legacy cf. Eric Rentschler, The Ministry of Illusion. Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife, Cambridge 1996, pp. 149–179.

passing narrative to great effect: culminating in the great deceiver's comeuppance. The narrative trajectory of "Jud Süß" is clear and presents him as a deceiver from the outset. The audience in position of 'privileged spectator' bears witness to the crimes he commits and watches as he lies, sanctions murder, rapes and opens the gates of the city to a caravan of Jewish invaders to the *Volkskörper*. The litany of crimes is presented as narrative evidence for his guilt throughout the film, presenting a grand oppositional narrative that leaves no room for any interpretive space or ambiguity.[13] Harlan's rationale for the denouement of the film; the judgement at court, when it comes is laid out clearly for the audience in the depiction of his misdeeds before any trial has taken place: the trial itself serving only to showcase the insult added to injury as Josef Süß Oppenheimer attempts to deceive the court. But his fate is long sealed in the minds of the cinema spectators of the time. This *fait accompli* in the narrative unfolding of the film subsumes any engagement with 'Rationality' or the uses of reason. Indeed, reason is presented as yet another tool for the cunning Jew. Therefore ostensibly rational arguments before the court are presented as instruments of deception employed by the master deceiver. The type of spectatorship encouraged by the immersive Cinema of "Dream Factory" of the Reich having offered little by way of interpretive space, replaced introspection with spectacle. Lavish productions such as "Jud Süß" encouraged a visual totality to match the totalising politics of Nazism such that any residual sense of a Kantian aesthetic 'distance' was all but eliminated in a tide of emotion in visual and narrative excess.

"Jud Süß" was placed on the list of forbidden films in 1945 by the SHAEF authorities.[14] It is still banned from general release in Germany and may only be legally screened as part of an educational programme on Anti-Semitism.

3   Cassandra in Court: "Affaire Blum"

Before embarking on more detailed analyses of the two aforementioned Western sector films of 1948, it is important to, however briefly, address the DEFA production of the same year. Erich Engel's "Affaire Blum" had moderate success in the Soviet sector and was given a limited release in the West at a time of great political tension during the Berlin

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13   Cf. Linda Schulte-Sasse, The Jew as Other under National Socialism. Veit Harlan's Jud Süß, in: The German Quarterly 61,1 (1988), pp. 22–49, at pp. 31–33 (URL: https://doi.org/10.2307/407114; 2.11.2020), for further close analysis on this point.

14   For further information to the fate of Harlan's film cf. Friedrich Knilli, "Jud Süss". Filmprotokoll, Programmheft und Einzelanalysen, Berlin 1983.

Blockade. The critical reception was muted but positive and the film did quite well at the box office with a viewership of around 2 million.[15] The DEFA production presents a narrative where the audience and the key protagonist, the eponymous Blum are aware of the fate of the Jews of Germany: the audience in in retrospect, and Blum as a Cassandra figure, with a sense of unspoken foreboding. The story, set pre-war, of a liberal educated Jewish man framed for murder and then acquitted despite the best efforts of Anti-Semites in the Weimar Republic's judiciary sets out some ideological tenets of the future East German Republic on the subject of Fascism. Here, Nazism is seen as a force made possible by the corruptions of Capitalism, undermining everything, even the liberal ideals of the *Rechtsstaat* and the rule of law. The ideological position of the SED,[16] the ruling party of an inchoate state in 1948 chimed in with a position that held the persecution of the Jews was a by-product of the Nazi state rather than one of its *raisons d'être*. Erich Engel's film can be seen as fitting in with this worldview, and was regarded as such at the time.[17]

4 Burdens of Proof: Narrative against Image

Immanuel Kant had famously opened his case for the Enlightenment Revolution by declaring that Reason would stand before itself in the new endeavour to determine just what constituted rational thought and legitimacy; effectively it would test the limits of its remit. This would, in the words of the great Königsberg Philosopher, be a legal determination, a matter of *quid juris*.[18] The German filmmakers of 1948 faced just such a, albeit metaphorical, court. The context and consequence of an era that had produced such unmediated hatreds such as "Jud Süß", was faced with the equally unmediated present in images of the documentary films from the Camps. The screen fantasy of the Reich and the horror of the facts post-war left little room for manoeuvre. This had thrown German film production into a deep crisis of legitimacy, a crisis that extended to an acute crisis for the very existence German cinematic language itself. The task after the horrors of the

15 Cf. Christiane Mückenberger / Günter Jordan, "Sie sehen selbst, Sie hören selbst …". Eine Geschichte der DEFA von ihren Anfängen bis 1949, Marburg 1994, pp. 97–105.

16 SED or Socialist Unity Party, which would become the single ruling party of the German Democratic Republic until 1989.

17 "Hart am Justizmord vorbei" (author unknown), in: Der Spiegel, no. 48, 11. 12. 1948, p. 26 (URL: http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-44421056.html; 2. 11. 2020).

18 Immanuel Kant, Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith, Houndmills ²⁷1995, p. 120 (A84/B117).

Camps was to recover a rational legitimate voice for Germans that would speak beyond the barbarism as witnessed on screens and in photographs after 1945.

For Germans films of the time to approach the theme of Jewish suffering required that the narrative locus and questions of legitimacy it addressed be posed within cinematic questions of a type of Kantian *quid juris* – firmly placed within a realm of and ideal judicial reason and away from what a Kantian method would describe as its opposite in questions of *quid facti* seen the damning images of the Allied documentaries. The following examination of two films made in 1948 will be illustrative of just how tropes of justice and rationality were framed through Jewish characters and narratives of legal argument, restoring the cinema space from a courtroom where the audience were placed in the position of the accused to one where the court, and with it the Jewish body, could be returned to a dramatic trope on screen that would facilitate a set of restorative narratives.

5 The Court of Reason: Brauner's "Morituri"

It is important to note that 1948 was a pivotal year for the burgeoning global tensions that would eventually lead to the Cold War. For Germans and German film in particular, this had direct, local and practical consequences. The unilateral currency reforms in the Western sectors of occupation had forced the Soviets' hand and as a result Berlin had been blockaded, ostensibly to stem the spread of the new currency which threatened to undermine Soviet occupation of Germany.[19] The film industry in the Western sectors also radically changed as a result. The decentralised and inchoate film production houses might now be able to turn a profit, but equally their success or failure as going concerns depended on box office success in an era where films no longer cost a single *Reichsmark* to see.[20]

Artur Brauner's CCC film company had already made its debut with "Herzkönig" a year previously in 1947.[21] His second production, "Morituri" – directed by Eugen Yorck, is perhaps most famous for being a consummate box office and critical disaster.[22] This

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19   Cf. Norman M. Naimark, The Russians in Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949, Cambridge 1995.

20   Cf. Johannes Hauser, Neuaufbau der westdeutschen Filmwirtschaft 1945–1955 und der Einfluss der US-amerikanischen Filmpolitik. Vom reichseigenen Filmmonopolkonzern (UFI) zur privatwirtschaftlichen Konkurrenzwirtschaft, Pfaffenweiler 1989, pp. 443–458.

21   Helmut Weiss, Herzkönig [The King of Hearts] (CCC Film, 1947).

22   Accounts of Refusals to screen the film in Berlin and Hamburg, cf. Claudia Dillmann-Kühn, Artur Brauner und die CCC. Filmgeschäft, Produktionsalltag, Studiogeschichte 1946–1990: Ausstel-

notwithstanding, "Morituri" is notable for being the first all German production to fea-
ture dramatisations of a Concentration Camp and was presented at the Venice Biennale
in 1948, seven months after the completion of principal photography. At the festival,
the reception, although not hostile, described the engagement with the themes of war
crimes and persecution as somewhat cold and reserved given the other fare at the screens
in Venice at the time.[23]

The film chronicles a Polish camp doctor who facilitates the escape of inmates from
a camp in Poland. During the escape he loses his wife but nonetheless manages to get
the freed international band of camp-inmates to the safety of a forest hideout. The film
builds tension with news of that the Russians are approaching and the retreating Ger-
man Army come perilously close to discovering the hideout. Eventually, a young German
Wehrmacht soldier is captured by some escapees and is taken down under the camouflage
netting into the hideout to face the survivors of the camp. The pivotal moral narrative
of "Morituri" plays out in this space. As Bernhard Groß rightly notes, "Morituri" trans-
forms the documentary into narrative in relation to the reeducation films and addresses
pragmatic question in drama that documentary images left little room for; making for
a "quintessential" dramatic unfolding of the questions and moral positions facing the
Post-war German society of 1948.[24]

The boy, frightened and confused in his army uniform is taken down into the
hideout where his presence soon attracts an angry crowd. Although there are Jews present,
Yorck's film places emphasis on the international character of the fellowship of inmates
in the hideout. The crowd initially saves the German boy from strangulation at the hands
of a disturbed woman; who returns to cradling a doll that she believes to be her dead
child. However, the emergence from behind the trees of the figure of the one-legged
Eastern European Jew, speaking with a heavy accent, levels the accusation of collective
guilt at the boy. He declares the boy must die, if not for the danger he poses if he lives
and brings reinforcements, but because – although he might laugh and sing songs he is
not a human for he has done inhuman things (fig. 2).

lung / Filme 28.06.–09.09.1990, Frankfurt a. M. 1990, pp. 36–37; cf. also Peter Reichel, Erfundene
Erinnerung.: Weltkrieg und Judenmord in Film und Theater, München 2004, pp. 180–181, for an
account of the specifically hostile reception to the film in Germany.

23   Dillmann-Kühn, Artur Brauner (see note 22), p. 36.

24   Bernhard Groß, Die Filme sind unter uns. Zur Geschichtlichkeit des frühen deutschen Nach-
kriegskinos: Trümmer-, Genre-, Dokumentarfilm, Berlin 2015 (Traversen 15), p. 379.

Fig. 2: The crippled and vengeful "Ost-Jude" in "Morituri" (Eugen Yorck, 1948); © CCC Filmkunst GmbH "Morituri" (1947/1948).

The intervention of a 'civilised' German Jew, cast both visually and in class terms as his opposite, sets up the moral debate. The assimilated, clean-shaven, bald, bespectacled and well-spoken man proposes to defend the boy. We have been made aware previously that this man is a German Jew, a former public defender, robbed of his profession and status by the Nazis. What follows is a pivotal scene in the form of a transformative and fantastical sequence in the film. As the former lawyer starts to speak and propose his defence, his words serve to transform the forest space into a courtroom: stones become tables and the whole forest glade is eventually transformed into an interior of a court, initially visually overlaid and then replacing the forest setting entirely (fig. 3 and 4).

The cast of international bystanders all agree, in their various languages with his defence of the German in the name of humanity. The agreement is one of mercy, but also one of condemnation. His life is spared, but the boy is sentenced to live in the hardships those who judge him have endured as the vanquished. This judgement locates the moral core of the film as one of moral equivalence. The audience are tasked with accepting

Fig. 3–4: The visual transformation of the forest hideout to courtroom in "Morituri" (Eugen Yorck, 1948); © CCC Filmkunst GmbH "Morituri" (1947/1948).

their defeat as a price for the war, and more explicitly as a price for the persecution of the Jews. In this light, meek might well inherit the earth, but the powerful will have their turn suffering their privations. The threat of old-testament wrath is tempered with enlightenment rationalist equanimity, but not with forgiveness.

"Morituri" then, ostensibly depicts the victory of rational argument over the desire for revenge; the transformative speech of the German Jewish lawyer not only visually transforms the forest hideout into a courtroom it re-establishes the rule of law. However, this is not a national law, instead the unanimity of the 'Jury' of plaintiffs constitutes a form of deontological consensus, effecting a type of democratised categorical imperative. The righteous figure of the educated Jew recreates a trial setting as might be otherwise imagined at Nuremberg, one of a future Germany before the law of international opinion, defended by a member of the most aggrieved. That the argument for sparing the German soldier's death is met with international and near-universal agreement in the scene, serves as a dramatised counter-verdict to that in the documentary images of the Shoah. This moral ascent spoken in all the languages of Europe then, reflects a verdict of a universal law. The single bitter and dissenting voice, that of the '*Ost-Jude*', turns his back and vanishes back into the woods in silence where he is consigned to the past along with his grievances.

Where the trial sequence of "Morituri" offers the film its 'redemptive' conclusion is in the clever reconfiguration of the legal trope on screen: the tables are turned, the condemned become the judges and the jury, and crucially refuse to become the executioners. Mercy, if it is indeed to be read as such, comes with a heavy price. The young German soldier is condemned to live in ignominy and with the shame of defeat, if not the shame of the crimes against humanity. A verdict writ-large on the official film poster of the time:

"Wenn die Mächtigsten der Erde auch die Klügsten wären
dann würde es keine Kriege mehr geben
Einmal werden alle, die leiden, siegreich sein über jene
die die Macht haben.
Dann werden sie und ihre Leidensgefährten das Urteil sprechen
Es wird lauten: Zum Leben verdammt."

In "Morituri", the Christian interpretation of the biblical maxim of an "eye for an eye" is not refuted but instead deftly modified under an appeal to a Kantian universal moral imperative: the acquittal delivered by the victims of Nazism themselves. The promotional poster features a graphic stone tablet rising from the fiery text underscoring the nature of the commandment that the "Film speaks to the World" and reiterating the judgement in the forest hideout, does not shy away from the judgment to be delivered in the drama. This 'condemnation to live' of those surviving Germans who were to identify with the plight of the captured youth will very likely have come across as last straw presented by Brauner's film.

6   The Transcendental Seduction: Georg Wilhelm Pabst's "Der Prozeß"

The final film I wish to discuss was by far the most successful of the three in terms of box office, critical reception and international recognition. "Der Prozeß" was released in 1948 to both considerable controversy and critical acclaim.[25] It won the Silver Lion directors Prize in the Venice Biennale that year for its director the veteran, legendary and controversial director Georg Wilhelm Pabst. Ernst Deutsch won the Volpi prize for best actor for his portrayal of Scharf, a temple elder of the Synagogue.

Pabst had returned from American exile to Austria via France during the Third Reich, making two films, including the ideologically tainted "Paracelsus" in 1943.[26] This among other things earning him a degree of infamy among his peers and ignominy in the

25   Lisa Silverman, Absent Jews and Invisible Antisemitism in Postwar Vienna. Der Prozeß (1948) and The Third Man (1949), in: Journal of Contemporary History 52,2 (2017), pp. 211–228 (URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009417696452; 2.11.2020).

26   Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Paracelsus [Paracelsus] (UFI, 1943).

post-war press, that might well have steered him into the making of the film – a project he had once conceived and abandoned in 1933.[27]

An adaptation of an infamous case of "blood libel" in the Hungarian village of Tiszaeszlár in 1882,[28] "Der Prozeß" was completed in 1948 and given a licence for distribution under the US sector command in Austria. Pabst set out to make a self-consciously Philo-Semitic film of the case. The film opens with the suicide of a young Magyar girl on the eve of Passover, driven to her death by drowning by her relentlessly cruel mother. Her disappearance prompts her mother to hysterically claim the Jews had killed her to make the unleavened bread for Passover using her blood. The townspeople soon descend on the Synagogue. Meanwhile, the Rabbi's assistant, Scharf is having his own domestic crisis: his teenage son Móric no longer wants to be a Jew. Móric cuts off his *peyot* and breaks the Sabbath law. The gathering storm at the village comes to the attention of the local landowner Baron Ónódy, a rabid anti-Semite, and he sees an opportunity to rid his estate of the Jews and soon the case is brought before the district court. After a bitter argument at home Móric runs away from home and into the hands of the Baron's henchmen. The prosecution case has no body to present as *habeas corpus* but has wrung a false witness from the tortured errant son of Scharf, Móric. Móric's desire to not be a Jew is initially pandered to and then manipulated. He is finally tortured and brainwashed.

Once the court comes into session, Móric, now utterly broken, gives testimony, having been groomed for an appearance in court by the town chief of Police. He testifies that he had seen the murder of the girl by the Temple elders, including his father, declaring he witnessed the crime through the keyhole at the Synagogue. He stands before the court and suitably coached, repeats his lie to the Judges and to the incredulity and horror of his father.

Pabst places the court drama within images of the public storm surrounding the case and unequivocally lays out the ideological position of the accusers as the case comes to a close – in the hate-filled words of the Baron to an assembled mob in a type of gathering that is a clear reference to the Nazis and the *Reichspogromnacht* of 1938. The Baron standing in the cold winter air declares to the assembled crowd that: "Judenhass ist keine Frage der Vernunft, sondern eine der blinden Überzeugung" ("The hatred of Jews is not a question of reason, but one of blind conviction") (fig. 5).

27　Cf. Rudolph Joseph, Filmarbeit mit G. W. Pabst in Paris, in: Helmut G. Asper (Ed.), Wenn wir von gestern reden, sprechen wir über heute und morgen. Festschrift für Marta Mierendorff zum 80. Geburtstag, Berlin 1991, pp. 105–117 for a comprehensive account of Pabst's project.

28　Cf. Daniel Véri, The Tiszaeszlár Blood Libel. Image and Propaganda, in: Wissen in Verbindung (URL: https://mws.hypotheses.org/37349; 2. 11. 2020).

Fig. 5: Baron Ónódy addresses an angry crowd outside the court ("Der Prozeß", G. W. Pabst 1948).

With this statement, the explicit Anti-Semitism is placed firmly within the irrational: Baron Ónódy even going so far as to extoll the force of his hatred as one of a primal, "blind" conviction not subject to, and beyond any questions of, reason. The intercutting sequences which frame this section of the film are countered by Károly Eötvös's rational appeal to humanity and reason addressing the chamber of the Hungarian parliament (fig. 6).

The visual juxtapositions of exteriority of the mob and the ordered interiority of the Parliament chamber add purchase and weight to the moral positions they depict. Eötvös's passionate defence of the enlightenment values of reason and rationality in the case against the blood libel cost him dearly as those around him in his personal life turn their backs on him over the case, offering up a narrative of a type of martyrdom for the cause of rational justice and with it the cause of the Jews of Tiszaeszlár slides away from any consideration of the material harm they have suffered at the hands of their persecutors. The moral centre of the film lies firmly with Károly Eötvös. Furthermore, as Lisa Silverman notes, "The depiction of Jews remains its most contentious aspect, and

Fig. 6: Eötvös addresses the elected members inside the houses parliament ("Der Prozeß", G. W. Pabst 1948).

perhaps best reveals how the film perpetuated stereotypes about Jews even as it purported to dismantle them."[29]

The passionate displays of legal and primal oratory aside, it is ultimately dispassionate deduction and logical detective work that proves to be undoing of the blood libel against the Jews of Tiszaeszlár. It is the persistence and conviction of the defence lawyer, Dr. Eötvös that proves to be pivotal in securing an acquittal in court. Although Scharf pleads with his son in open court to come to his senses it is only the intervention of the Catholic defence lawyer who uncovers the conspiracy of lies when the girl is found drowned and not cut with knives and Móric fails to see what he claimed through the keyhole in a reconstruction of the supposed murderous events at the ruins of the Synagogue. The case collapses.

29   Silverman, Absent Jews (see note 25), p. 220.

Eötvös is able to act as he does, precisely because he is not a Jew. He is a Catholic and also man of learning and a champion of enlightenment values, his defence of the Jews of a small village is correspondingly borne out of his of a sense of justice and principle. The case against the Jews is not be resolved by an appeal to Jewish religious law, despite the prosecution's case resting on a motive of an alleged Jewish religious rite. Although the accusations of using blood to make Passover bread are countered by Scharf in court by stating that his faith strictly forbids the use of any blood in food, this falls on deaf ears. He is after all, a Jew. It takes the Catholic defence lawyer to make the case, before a court where the courtroom features a Christian cross prominently on the Judge's bench (fig. 7).

Fig. 7: Scharf pleads with the men behind the cross, while his son watches ("Der Prozeß", G. W. Pabst 1948).

In "Der Prozeß" the Jews appear in this courtroom context as secondary figures that serve first as conduits and later as foils for a process of justice underwritten by a legal process sanctioned by the Church.

The acquittal, when it comes, is a bitter, hollow and pyrrhic victory for the Jews of Tiszaeszlár. Their Synagogue burned, their homes ransacked and driven from their village they have nothing. The final sequence of the film sees the accused Jews freed and those who used him for their ends unceremoniously eject Móric from the court via a side door. He is met with his father and the congregation of temple Elders. The abject son is welcomed back into the arms of his father. This final sequence of the film is especially striking, being both visually distinct and without dialogue and offers a strangely ghostly conclusion to the narrative. The violin refrain that played at the opening titles now returns. The Jews depart in silence into the light, as if they had turned into ghosts. They present, for the audiences of 1948, a visual metaphor for the vanished Jews of Europe, swallowed in a blameless light never to return. In this way, Pabst's film symbolically accounts for the disappearance of the Jews and the malice of their persecutors without once making the cinema audience complicit for their absence (fig. 8).

Fig. 8: The final sequence of "Der Prozeß". The Jews walking into oblivion ("Der Prozeß", G. W. Pabst 1948).

The Jews in "Der Prozeß" ultimately lose all agency, but as the acquitted party under law, their cause has been served, even if it means they must materially vanish from the earth. The final sequence of the film enacts a type of seductive 'transcendental deduction'. In appealing to the rationality of both material facts pertaining to the case and rejecting the hatred of the irrational opinions of those who brought it in the first place a fatalistic sleight of hand absolves the viewership from any feelings of complicity by making them, ultimately, visually abstract. The cause of justice served, the principle of reason duly upheld; the real crime of the pogrom against the Jews blends away into a fatalistic and tragic immanence, their unremarked fate serving as a metaphorical condition for the possibility moral afterlife without them.

7   "Erst kommt das Vergessen, dann die Moral"

In conclusion I wish to touch on how these films might offer a lens through which post-war narratives about moral legitimacy might be framed in the former Third Reich. The tendency in German film, at least in the Western occupied zones of what was to become the Federal Republic, when thematically addressing the Nazi past was to characterise the historical period of the twelve years under Hitler as an anomaly. It was not just filmmakers who took this line, many historians and intellectuals who had stayed in Germany during the war offered a range of explanations which sought to effectively 'de-historise' the past, or at the very least offer narratives of a greater deterministic fatalism of decline which duly absolved the nation and its people of agency and therefore responsibility. Nazism, within this frame of reference, was nothing short of an event without instigation, a period of history that was non-historical, a *Force Majeure*. The metaphysical heights and spiritual depths of the Third Reich might then be duly removed from the fabric of the mortal remainder embodied in the idea of an individual who had survived the ravages of war and defeat and was no longer a member of the *Volkskörper*. It is in the context of this viewership that the films I have discussed must, as much as it is possible, be seen and understood. What Peter Pleyer described as the "Ohnmacht des Individuums"[30] permeated the early post-war era in film and it is in this context that an appeal to an 'ahistorical' moral deontology embodied in a set of universal and therefore untainted enlightenment values would seem appealing for those tasked with creating film narratives.

30   Peter Pleyer, Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946–1948, Münster 1965, p. 159.

The paths undertaken by West Germany and the GDR as well as the Austrian Republic were very different, as were their national narratives about a shared Nazi past.[31] The Soviet influence on both narrative and style after 1948 is clearly recognisable in "Affaire Blum". However unpopular "Morituri" offered a unique rejoinder to both the fear of Jewish vengeance and an appeal to German values of fairness that could be cast as universally reasonable, albeit as a form of inverse Nuremberg Trial. The film was clearly an effort by Artur Brauner to exercise his viewpoint and authorship. But perhaps it is Pabst's film that opens most questions, not least due to his unique career and record during the Third Reich. In his film, reason itself stands before the court, not so much in the figures of the unjustly accused, but as a principle that must be vindicated. The Jews are reasonable people in the film, but they are not accorded the privileged position of judicial agency, they remain powerless throughout. Instead they are foils for a drama that visually, if not narratively marks their departure, acquitted but unwanted. Here, perhaps Pabst unwittingly serves a truly Kantian purpose for the narrative cause of justice in the film. The Jews of Tiszaeszlár might be regarded in the abstract, as conditions for the possibility for the enlightenment values that free them in the eyes of the law, but not the mob, their cause less a moral law or categorical imperative as espoused in "Morituri", or a Soviet critique of such thinking in "Affaire Blum", but as a means by which a legitimate future without Jews might be possible not despite their absence, but because of it.

31 Cf. esp. Jeffrey Herf, Divided Memory. The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys, Cambridge 1997, pp. 161–167.

Bernhard Groß

Building Figurations of Contingent and Substantial Communities

Differences between Italian and German Post-war Cinema Aesthetics

Abstract

In this chapter I will compare the film "Somewhere in Berlin" by Gerhard Lamprecht, which was and is still highly praised in Germany, with Roberto Rossellini's "Germania anno zero" from 1947 and analyze the superficially similar and yet under the surface very different forms of staging community in both films. "Germania anno zero" was initially sharply criticized in Germany, but is now generally regarded as one of the paradigmatic films of Italian neo-realism. My aim is to outline these forms of staging community in a close reading of the films thereby highlighting the differences between German and Italian cinema of the time as differences in the audiovisual understanding of history and historicity. I feel it necessary to clarify the specific approach I take as a film scholar with regards to questions of history and historicity as audiovisual forms of experience. Having outlined my approach, I will analyze the specific mode of address unique to the medium of film using the example of the staging of community in the two films mentioned. My goal is an approach to understanding history, which focuses on the affective mode of address characteristic of cinema; a mode of address which makes the tension between individual historical experience and the historicity of these forms of experience themselves tangible to cinema audiences.

1   Introduction

A small canon of German films made immediately after the Second World War is still considered successful today in the sense that they have led an honest confrontation with the Holocaust, genocide, dictatorship and war crimes.[1] It has been repeatedly pointed

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1   Robert R. Shandley, Rubble Films. German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich, Philadelphia 2001.

out that films such as "The Murderers are Among Us" / "Die Mörder sind unter uns" (D / SBZ 1946), "Somewhere in Berlin" / "Irgendwo in Berlin" (D / SBZ 1946), "And the Heaven Above / … und über uns der Himmel" (D / US-Zone 1947) or "Razzia" (D 1947) were stylistically also oriented towards the features and subjects of Italian neo-realism: i. e. episodic stories of war returnees and the problems of those left behind, especially children and ordinary people; scenes shot mainly in original locations, especially in the cities of rubble in part the use of amateur actors etc. If this similarity in the forms of staging is also considered in relation to the aesthetic representation of their motifs, one comes to quite different results. On the one hand we are able to find a certain continuity with Nazi (propaganda) film in some German post-war films, which have until now been regarded as progressive. The films of Deutsche Film AG (DEFA), founded in the Soviet occupied zone on May 17, 1946, are an especially good example here. The notorious escapist entertainment films on the other hand experimented with quite new aesthetic approaches.

The examination of German post-war cinema begins with contemporary reviews, which, insofar as they have a (cultural) political claim, condemn almost all post-war productions.[2] At the beginning of the 1960s, the first scholarly works in the field of media studies were produced, reconstructing the cultural-political situation of the post-war period.[3] In the following decades, this fundamental work led to a more nuanced debate.[4] From the 1970s onwards, scholars began to critique ideological positions found in the subtexts of German post-war cinema.[5] Since the 1980s, the ideology-critical orientation of the investigations has waned, but the analyzes are mostly limited to the interpretation of plot and narrative patterns.[6]

2 Cf. Wolfdietrich Schnurre, Rettung des deutschen Films. Eine Streitschrift, Stuttgart 1950.

3 Cf. Peter Pleyer, Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946–1948, Münster 1965.

4 Cf. Peter Stettner, Vom Trümmerfilm zur Traumfabrik. Die "Junge Film-Union" 1947–1952, Hildesheim et al. 1992; Christiane Mückenberger / Günther Jordan, "Sie sehen selbst, Sie hören selbst …". Eine Geschichte der DEFA von ihren Anfängen bis 1949, Marburg 1994; Gabriele Clemens, Britische Kulturpolitik in Deutschland 1945–1949, Stuttgart 1997; Jutta Gröschl, Die Deutschland-politik der vier Großmächte in der Berichterstattung der deutschen Wochenschauen 1945–1949, Berlin-New York 1997; Brigitte J. Hahn, Umerziehung durch Dokumentarfilm? Ein Instrument amerikanischer Kulturpolitik im Nachkriegsdeutschland (1945–1953), Münster 1997.

5 Cf. Klaus Kreimeier, Kino und Filmindustrie in der BRD. Ideologieproduktion und Klassen-wirklichkeit nach 1945, Kronberg 1973.

6 Cf. Hilmar Hoffmann / Walter Schobert (Eds.), Zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946–1962, Frankfurt a. M. 1989; Bettina Greffrath, Gesellschaftsbilder der Nach-

Since the turn of the millennium, discourse-analytical attempts to examine the post-war period from specific points of view, such as the social and cultural history of "Fräuleins und GIs", have been increasing.[7] They examine the staging of sexes under feminist or gender-theoretical aspects.[8] Anthologies summarize the kaleidoscopic diversity of the social, political and aesthetic problems facing the media after 1945.[9] Finally, research is increasingly opening up to a transnational perspective.[10]

This development has been noticeable in US and British research on German post-war cinema since the 1990s. While this research had for a long time focused primarily on National Socialist cinema, it was not until the late 1990s that it turned to post-war cinema.[11] Since about the turn of the millennium, some of the most important studies on German post-war cinema have come from international scholars, above all "Rubble Films" by Robert Shandley. For the first time, this study works with precise film analyzes that are oriented towards the logic of the films' plots, and thus it arrives at quite ambivalent results, i. e. it comes to a position which redeems German post-war films to a certain extent from their previous condemnation. These results deal primarily with the basic question of 'coming to terms with the past' in the films. Shandley poses this question to the relatively small corpus of the so-called rubble films.[12] Other investigations

kriegszeit. Deutsche Spielfilme 1945–1949, Pfaffenweiler 1995; Wolfgang Becker / Norbert Schöll, In jenen Tagen. Wie der deutsche Nachkriegsfilm die Vergangenheit bewältigte, Opladen 1995.

7   Annette Brauerhoch examines this from a film-historical perspective: "Fräuleins" und GIs. Geschichte und Filmgeschichte, Frankfurt a. M. 2006; Maria Höhn examines this from a socio-logical perspective: GIs and Fräuleins. The German-American Encounter in 1950s West-Germany, Chapel Hill 2002.

8   Cf. Anja Horbrügger , Aufbruch zur Kontinuität – Kontinuität im Aufbruch. Geschlechterkon-struktionen 1945–1960, Marburg 2007.

9   Cf. Harro Segeberg (Ed.), Mediale Mobilmachung, vol. 3: Das Kino der Bundesrepublik Deutsch-land als Kulturindustrie (1950–1962), München 2009.

10   Cf. Johannes Roschlau (Ed.), Träume in Trümmern. Film – Produktion und Propaganda in Eu-ropa 1940–1950, München 2009; also id. (Ed.), Im Bann der Katastrophe. Innovation und Tradition im europäischen Kino 1940–1950, München 2010.

11   Cf. Heide Fehrenbach, Cinema in Democratizing Germany, Chapel Hill-London 1995.

12   Shandley, Rubble Films (see note 1), in particular the introduction in which Shandley points out this ambivalence and emphasizes the contribution of these films to the awareness of ambivalence. Cf. also Stephen Brockmann, A Critical History of German Film, Rochester NY 2010, who adopts this methodology from Shandley for the whole of German cinema (1895–2010); Jaimey Fisher, Disciplining Germany. Youth, Reeducation and Reconstruction after the Second World War, Detroit 2007; id., Deleuze in a Ruinous Context. German Rubble-Film and Italian Neorealism, in: Iris, no. 23, spring 1997, pp. 53–74.

deal with the performativity of the post-war situation in Germany[13] or examine gender constructions in detailed analyzes and from a transnational perspective.[14]

I discuss this research in relation to my own investigation of image-space in order to examine the specific forms of the experience of historicity in German post-war cinema. So I am not interested in elaborating manifest or latent (sub)texts of cinematic narration; rather, I am interested in asking how post-war films address the viewer.

My main focus here is now on aesthetic stagings and motifs that stand at right angles to the existing canonizations. In the following I will compare the film "Somewhere in Berlin" by Gerhard Lamprecht, which was and is still highly praised in Germany, with Roberto Rossellini's "Germania anno zero" from 1947 and analyze the superficially similar and yet under the surface very different forms of staging community in both films. "Germania anno zero" was initially sharply criticized in Germany, but is now generally regarded as one of the paradigmatic films of Italian neo-realism. My aim is to outline these forms of staging community in a close reading of the films thereby highlighting the differences between German and Italian cinema of the time as differences in the audiovisual understanding of history and historicity.

To begin with I feel it necessary to clarify the specific approach I take as a film scholar with regards to questions of history and historicity as audiovisual forms of experience. Having outlined my approach, I will proceed to analyze the specific mode of address unique to the medium of film using the example of the staging of community in the two films mentioned. My goal here is an approach to understanding history, which focuses on the affective mode of address characteristic of cinema; a mode of address which makes the tension between individual historical experience and the historicity of these forms of experience themselves tangible to cinema audiences.

13   Jennifer Fay, Theaters of Occupation. Hollywood and the Reeducation of Postwar Germany, Minneapolis 2008.

14   Hester Baer, Dismantling the Dream Factory. Gender, German Cinema, and the Postwar Quest for a New Film Language, New York-Oxford 2009. Ulrike Sieglohr (Ed.), Heroines without Heroes. Reconstructing Female and National Identities in European Cinema, 1945–1951, London-New York 2000; Erica Carter, How German is She? Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman, Ann Arbor 1997.

2   Poetics of the Historical: What is Historiography in the Field of Film Studies?

As a film scholar I ask less about which (usually written) sources determine the position of a film in film history, nor about how films represent historical events. Rather, I am interested in how films themselves function as creators of history: How they make history experienceable as a process of organizing time and space – as a tension between the past present and the vivification of the past in the present. The basis for this is the ability of cinema to create a mode of perception that allows us to physically experience our own everyday perception as something that has become historical. This position is a historical one in itself: optical media essentially first made it possible to experience the historical processes of the Twentieth Century. Instead of reproducing a previous reality, photography and film were the first visual media to actually structure access to a reality, which had been hitherto deemed inaccessible, incomprehensible, and indecipherable.

2.1 The History of Historicity

Siegfried Kracauer's project on the entanglement of film theory and the theory of history, which he pursued for more than 40 years, sees the possibility of experiencing the historicity of modes of perception and feeling as the central contribution of technical media to the 20th century. Film and Photography are the counter-draft to 19th century historicism and its manifestations, such as historical representations in film.[15]

In exploring the relationship between history and film, I primarily ask about this historicity of perception. This theoretical focus does not exclude current (film) historiographical methods, but rather seeks to supplement them: what I mean here is the study of written sources on the films,[16] the analysis of the relationship between the films and the historical background they represent; and finally, the consideration of the films as sources of the history of mentalities or as such of material culture. It should be noted, however, that since the beginning of research into digital media (and actually from the

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15   Cf. Siegfried Kracauer, History – The Last Things before the Last [1970], Princeton 1995, pp. 126 – 129.

16   Written sources include reviews, production reports, economic data, etc.; this research method was only established in film studies in the 1980s with the so-called "New Film History".

very beginning of all film theoretical considerations),[17] film studies have rejected the assumption that film depicts reality. Moreover, since the entry of structuralism into film studies, in the 1970s, it has been understood that films cannot be analyzed exclusively through their narrative construction and their content.[18]

With this premise in mind, I see a clear intersection between history and film theory, which can help us find points of contact between both disciplines beyond the interpretation of written sources. It was the historian Reinhart Koselleck in his seminal book "Vergangene Zukunft" ("The Bygone Future")[19] who first suggested that by thinking about the relation between past, present and future we are immediately dealing with history. Koselleck remarks that the comprehension of time in western societies has been seen as transitory and irrevocable from the 18th century onwards. The differentiation between past, present and future includes the possibility of the intertwining, i. e. the simultaneousness of the three forms of time. According to Koselleck time and space have become an agent forming people and circumstances by influencing their feelings. Film historian Philip Rosen argues in his book "Change mummified" that it is this mode of thinking history that is then realized in cinema as a spatio-temporal experience of the historical in the audio and the visual.[20]

With his formula of understanding history as an order of time and space, Koselleck puts forward a model that can also be understood as a fundamental cinematic operation, as the art historian Erwin Panofsky described it in the 1930s with his concept of "dynamization of space" and "spatialization of time".[21] How, then, would the question Koselleck poses to historical research be formulated here, how is the relationship between past, present and future arranged in film? How do films with their specific arrangement of this constellation themselves create an awareness of what is historical or how can history be experienced? Kracauer's invective, which I referred to above, according to which film reveals the historical genesis of everyday experience, forms the basis for this line of enquiry.

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17 Cf. Georg Lukács, Gedanken zu einer Ästhetik des Kino [1913], in: Karsten Witte (Ed.), Theorie des Kinos, Frankfurt a. M. 1972, pp. 142–148.

18 Cf. Stephen Heath, Film and System. Terms of Analysis, Part I–II, in: Screen, no. 16,1–2, springtime and summer 1975, pp. 7–77, 91–113.

19 Reinhart Koselleck, Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten, Frankfurt a. M. 1989.

20 Philip Rosen, Change Mummified. Cinema, Historicity, Theory, Minneapolis 2001, p. 106.

21 Erwin Panofsky, Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures, in: Critique 1,3 (1947), pp. 15–32, at p. 18.

This is exactly the mode of understanding film which the philosopher Jacques Rancière regards as the systematic disposition of twentieth-century film among the arts. Rancière regards film as the dominant medium of the age precisely because it makes a specific experience of history possible. Film allows the spectator to experience the tension between past, present and future as "immediate experience"[22] of historicity and not only as a cognitive process.

The historicity of film deals with a mode of experiencing timeliness because it configures a perception from which the visible and audible appearances of everyday life are emanations of the historical manifestation of this perception and of its change.[23] Seen in this way film does not only represent history but is itself capable of forming history by presenting the historicity of the perception of everyday phenomena.

2.2 The Historicity of Experience

In this sense, film deals with the tense relationship between individual historical experience and the understanding of historical courses of time as unique changes in the historicity of perception.[24] It is precisely this relationship that I systematically, theoretically and analytically seek to grasp in my study of the historicity of German post-war cinema.[25] When I regard films as empirical material that can create a historical consciousness as an immediate audiovisual form of experience, for example as an experience of the abyss between courses of history and personal experiences or as the gruff incompatibil-

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22 Robert Warshow, The Immediate Experience. Movies, Comics, Theatre & Other Aspects of Popular Culture, Cambridge 2001.

23 Cf. Hermann Kappelhoff, The Politics and Poetics of Cinematic Realism, New York 2015.

24 Paul Ricœur fundamentally analyzed this problem as the difference between historiography on the one hand and the historical experience and memory of the individual on the other. It is important to him to mediate between both levels, even to describe them as two sides of a dialectical development that represent a mutual corrective. Ricœur's philosophical derivation does not give art an explicit, individual value that differs from other cultural functions. Nevertheless, his text is one of the fundamental works dealing with the relationship between history and the individual. Cf. Paul Ricœur, Memory, History, Forgetting, Chicago 2004.

25 Bernhard Groß, Die Filme sind unter uns. Zur Geschichtlichkeit des frühen deutschen Nachkriegskinos: Trümmer-, Genre- und Dokumentarfilm, Berlin 2015.

ity of a "simultaneity of times", as Achim Landwehr has described it,[26] I do so from a specifically film-scientific perspective on the relationship between film and history.

Landwehr examines, so to speak, the 'imperial' or 'hegemonic' side of the common and customary formula of the 'simultaneity of the non-simultaneous', which wants social differences to be understood not as stages of development (such as 'medieval fundamentalists' versus 'modern secular bourgeoisie'), but as forms which may be mutually dependent or as principles which are incompatible with one another. Turning to film theory, Gilles Deleuze's cinematographic concept of time, the "crystal image", is contained in Landwehr's formula mentioned above: "The crystal image is constituted by the most fundamental operation of time: since the past is not formed according to the present that it has been, but simultaneously with it, time must be divided into present and past at every moment."[27] In other words, film makes it possible to sensually experience the reversibility of time, as Einstein proposed in 1905 with his "Theory of Relativity" and Henri Bergson in 1896 with his book "Matière et Memoire".

This perspective is inherent in a specific methodical concept, which does not only refer to the cultural hermeneutic interpretation of the film narrative, but directly questions the historically changeable audiovisual construction of film. In terms of film analysis, this means that the vanishing point of audiovisual construction of film is not its narrative, but vice versa, film narration itself only represents a specific case of different modulations of audiovisual construction. Accordingly, there is much more to analyze and theorize about a film than its plot and its statement. The spectator's perception and the historicity of this perception are also shaped by the dramaturgy, figure design and rhythm of a film; perception is determined by the way in which this rhythm produces changes in forms, colors, light, tempos and musical progressions, tonality and silence, emptiness and abundance and their change in the duration of the film. The viewer is thus placed in world conditions that determine him affectively and somatically without him belonging to the film's world itself.

The prerequisite for the understanding of the above is that filmic movement is not only represented movement. Montage, cadrage, re-cadrage and so on, cannot (only) be seen as a function of narration. It is necessary to think audio-visual modulations as forms of aesthetic experience, which create their own rules, their own space and time.

The specific historicity of film, however, depends on the dynamic change in a certain tension between the audio and the visual. This tension can be described by analyzing

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26   Achim Landwehr, Von der 'Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen', in: Historische Zeitschrift 295,1 (2012), pp. 1–34.

27   Gilles Deleuze, Cinema, vol. 2: The Time Image, Minneapolis 1989, p. 111.

audiovisual space or to be more exact image space.[28] Image space is based on the idea of a unique mode of thought made possible by film and its audio-visual composition and modulation, i.e. by its alteration.[29] These audio-visual modulations can be understood, as in music theory, as the transition from one key to another, here transformed to the transition from the visual to the audio and vice versa. This is even the case for audio-visual history because its historicity is precisely the to and fro between the audio and the visual. This is because the afore mentioned oscillation has a certain temporality which can be described as a relation between the past, the present and the future.

This approach is pursued by the analysis of image space; it could be linked to Landwehr's plea for the "superficiality" of critical historiography in relation to the example just described, which here would mean examining the audible and visible in detail.[30] In the best case, such an approach can mean giving historical studies a heuristic impulse for their work from a film studies perspective by analyzing a field that is complementary to the field of historical studies.

This methodological introduction brings together the theoretical, analytical and historical parameters necessary for a new approach to research on the relation between Italian and German post-war cinema. This means understanding cinema as a place where the historical conditions of the individual first become experienceable. This also means that these historical conditions do not have to subordinate themselves to a prescribed meaning or intention or to the concept of a teleological notion of history.

From this viewpoint, I will argue that Italian and German post-war cinema have slightly different uses in the staging of community: The Italian post-war films ask how it is still possible to live or to live together once again after war and holocaust. And if there is a possibility of community who then is this 'we' that the films are talking about.

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28   I understand film image-spaces as distinct from film plot-spaces. While in the understanding of film plot-spaces all cinematographic operations serve as effects of narration, the concept of film image-spaces views narration only as one effect of filmic operations amongst others. The concept of film image-spaces includes complex audiovisual processes, which are realized within the spectator and unfold themselves to him as an experience of aesthetic projections of worlds. The concept of image space is described for the first time by Walter Benjamin and developed into a film analytical concept by Kappelhoff based on Stanley Cavell's work. Cf. Kappelhoff, Politics and Poetics (see note 23); also Stanley Cavell, The World Viewed, Reflections on the Ontology of Film, Enlarged Edition, Cambridge 1979.

29   Cf. Gilles Deleuze, Cinema, vol. 1: The Movement Image, Minneapolis 1986; id., Cinema, vol. 2 (see note 27).

30   To the term "superficiality" cf. Achim Landwehr, Die Kunst, sich nicht allzu sicher zu sein. Möglichkeiten kritischer Geschichtsschreibung, in: Werkstatt Geschichte 61 (2012), pp. 7–14, at pp. 11–12.

German post-war cinema instead asks how people can finally be alone or more precisely how is it possible for an individual to be alone in a community of two, three or four.

I will explain this paradoxical structure by comparing Rossellini's "Germania anno zero" and Lamprecht's "Somewhere in Berlin". Both films refer to the same structure of community, the so called *Volksgemeinschaft*; while Rossellini examines its base by unfolding more and more of its mechanisms, Lamprecht's dramaturgy begins with a new community and ends with the old, the familiar one.

3 The Logic of the *Volksgemeinschaft*: "Germania anno zero"

Edmund Koehler, the twelve year old protagonist of "Germania anno zero", is the youngest child of an 'ordinary' German family in post-war Berlin. He grows up in a world dominated by the theft of coal, the black market and an omnipresent 'brown' mentality. Edmund perceives this world but he can't understand it. He acts like the executive arm of an organism, embodying in his activity the ever present Nazi manner. Finally, Edmund kills his father by poisoning him before committing suicide himself.[31]

On the plot level it is Edmund's former teacher who guides his unarticulated wish to be part of a group towards a Nazi ideology by dividing those who "belong to Germany" and those who don't. Edmund can only 'belong to Germany' if he kills his father who's life is "unworthy of life".

To the question of community, "Germania anno zero" stages its own suicide by making the violation of civilization perpetrated by the Nazi regime, immediately experienceable and appliable to all human contexts.

Here I don't mean the aforementioned analogy between murder and suicide. Rather I want to draw attention to the audiovisual modulation of Edmund's suicide through which the spectator experiences the fundamental change of community from a homogenic, substantial community to a contingent community, a community of deficiency. A community that exists only because of the necessity of community. Here community

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[31] In the context of German post-war cinema, the following authors discuss the film: Brauerhoch, "Fräuleins" und GIs (see note 7), p. 345. Brauerhoch emphasizes the documentary character of the film. Shandley points to the similarity of the death scenes in "Germania anno zero" and "Somewhere in Berlin"; cf. Shandley, Rubble Films, p. 124 (see note 1); Fisher discusses the film in relation to a comparison between Italian neo-realism and German post-war cinema in the light of Deleuze's cinema theory: Fisher, Deleuze in a Ruinous Context (see note 12), pp. 53–74; cf. also Christian Ziewer, Unter der Oberfläche, "Germania anno zero", "Deutschland im Jahre null", in: Hans Helmut Prinzler (Ed.), Das Jahr 1945. Filme aus 15 Ländern, Berlin 1990, pp. 315–318.

can be understood in relation to Jean-Luc Nancy's concept of community as heterogeneous, contingent, and without substance.[32] Since the 1980s Nancy has tried to redefine the term "community" which was discredited in the second half of 20th century. Nancy's maxim of "being singular plural"[33] aims at a thinking of community which does not exceed the individual being taken up into something higher. Nor does the individual remain as substantial, as part of a community of monads. On the contrary Nancy understands community as the essential function of a being-between-the-subjects which forms the individual and the community as a permanently fragile relation. Edmund in "Germania anno zero" embodies a figuration which indicates this contingent, i. e. this "empty" form of community through his suicide.

I'd like to deepen this proposition now by analyzing the audiovisual space of "Germania anno zero": The magnitude of the social destruction in this film is not only conceivable by the frequent illustration of the rubble in the streets. What is experienceable here is the gap between the big city, which allows us to see suddenly so much of the horizon, and the spirit of the people which is as murderous as it had been in any of the previous twelve years. The dilemma unfolds in a closed community that conjures the values of the family and solidarity. Simultaneously a family becomes visible that utilizes its youngest part as a provider receiving nothing in return.

In the rhythmic repetition of the family scenes the spectator experiences their members as isolated. We see many characters who seal themselves from the misery of others. This is what I mean, when I talk about the 'lonely togetherness' of the community. Rossellini's film develops this contradiction of community most pointedly.

However this is only experienceable by watching the film itself. The question of the possibilities of living together only exists for the spectator. This happens through the camera's perspective of the boy's behavior. With his final suicide Edmund opens the spectator's eyes to the aforementioned dilemma. This is not because of Edmund's specific moral conduct but because of the staging of the boy's jump to his death.

The rising and falling of his body suddenly visualizes the fact that the vertical alignment that had been the dominant direction of the big city the previous twelve years is lacking in the world the film portrays. Despite the continuing influence of the Nazi mentality the visual aspects of the film are mostly presented along a horizontal axis (fig. 1). In doing so "Germania anno zero" stages a coincidence of past and present.

32 Cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, The Inoperative Community, Minneapolis 1991.

33 Cf. id., Being Singular Plural, Stanford 2000.
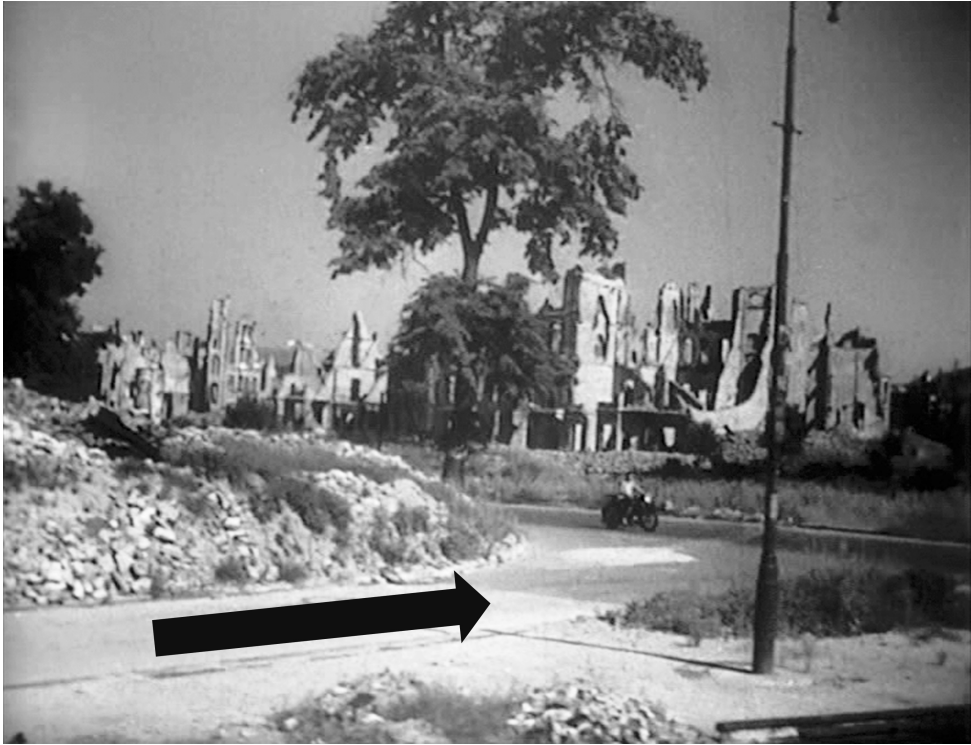
Fig. 1: Horizontal dolly shot: opening scene of "Germania anno zero" (I, D 1947, R. Rossellini).

This staging of the city begins with a horizontal dolly shot down the ruins during the opening credits and their exact repetition with the first introductory words of a voice-over-commentary. Then the camera accompanies Edmund while he searches the town for something to eat. In combination with numerous shots of the town's waste land the horizontal alignment dominates the whole film.

This principle is interrupted only twice in the film: at the beginning with a vertical pan from the ground up (fig. 2) and then in the contrary movement at the end once again with a pan top down: Edmund's sudden jump to death (fig. 3) and the following combination of a horizontal and vertical alignment, i. e. the movement of a tramway and the pan bottom up (fig. 4).

With Edmund's fall the film emphasizes the vertical, i. e. the distance between the horizontal condition of the town and its 'vertical' perception by the inhabitants. The film unfolds this distance from the very beginning by enhancing the difference between the visual and the audio: we see Edmund's 'horizontal' walks on the one hand and on the
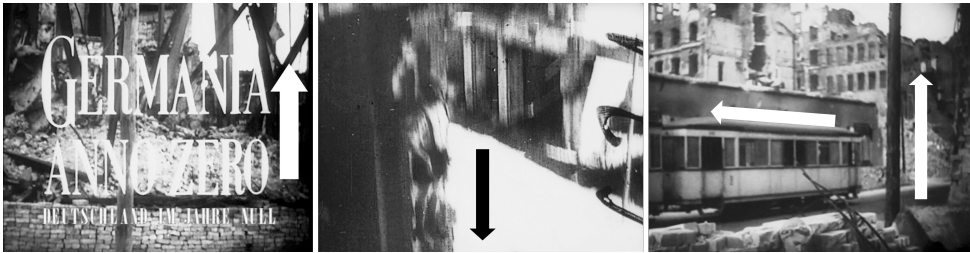
Fig. 2—4: Vertical dolly shot: Opening scene (up), Edmund's fall (down), last scene (up and horizontal): "Germania anno zero".

other we hear the reactionary dialogues especially of his family and his former teacher as if the center of the Nazi world were still standing. This difference first appears as a space-image which connects both of these layers through which it is possible to experience the fundamental contradiction between them, at the end of the film when horizontal and vertical alignment come together.

This jump visualizes the radical disruption of the myth of the *Volksgemeinschaft* which underlies the film. Not only do we see that this myth still exists (hearing the families' dialogues) through the suicide we also see the disruption of it. So the spectator finally experiences the tension between a substantial and a contingent community.

4 Sacrifice for the Community: "Somewhere in Berlin"

There are other films which present forms of substantial communities on the image space level even if they have a progressive plot. Their staging of community doesn't aim at the *Volksgemeinschaft* itself but rather at the experience of a community, based on a sacrifice, in which the individual dissolves. "Somewhere in Berlin" is a very concise example of this kind of continuity, a film that creates the opposite of Rossellini's "Germania anno zero".

"Somewhere in Berlin" tells the story of Gustav who lives with his mother in the ruins of Berlin waiting for his father's return from war imprisonment. Once home the father first suffers from depression and is introverted but after a while starts the reconstruction of his destroyed car service station supported by Gustav and his peer group.

4.1 Comparison of Contemporary Reviews of the Two Films

For film-historians "Somewhere in Berlin" is considered a "well-made film".[34] A key factor in this judgement is surely the opinion of the famous film art researcher Lotte Eisner who saw the film as the only German film between 1945 and 1950 in the tradition of realism and the so called German milieu films of the 1920s and early 1930s. She wrote in her famous book "The Haunted Screen" from 1955: "Despite its technical imperfection because of the economic situation at the time his post-war film 'Somewhere in Berlin' stands far above 'Germania anno zero'. Rossellini's film was handicapped because of the director's ignorance of the German language and the German mentality."[35]

Eisner essentially confirms not only the contemporary affirmation of "Somewhere in Berlin". She repeats the contemporary German critique against "Germania anno zero" as well. The few contemporary German reviews of the film[36] unintentionally describe the threatening nature of the film, which must be fended off; they also vehemently and sometimes polemically defend themselves against Rossellini's "pessimism"[37] or, in addition to the "amateur directing", criticize the imbalance of the presentation of the Germans: "These years were ... also a test of helpful, loyal humanity".[38] This formulation foreshadows the categorical misunderstanding that Hannah Arendt later systematically takes up in her Eichmann report: "The London Statute underlying the Nuremberg Trials has defined 'crimes against humanity' as 'inhuman acts', from which the well-known 'Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit' have emerged in the German translation – as if the Nazis had simply lacked 'humanity' when they sent millions to the gas chambers, truly *the* understatement of the century."[39]

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34 Pleyer, Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm (see note 3), pp. 104–105; cf. also Becker / Schöll (Eds.), In jenen Tagen (see note 6), pp. 66–69; Greffrath, Gesellschaftsbilder der Nachkriegszeit (see note 6), pp. 265–266.

35 Lotte H. Eisner, The Haunted Screen [1955], Oakland 2008, pp. 323–324.

36 The film was first shown at the Locarno Film Festival in July 1948. In Germany it was shown only in April 1952 for a short time and with a few copies, afterwards only again on television, for the first time on October 2nd, 1978 in the third channel of the Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR).

37 The reviews are exemplary of Anonymous, Das Leben steht auf Null, in: Der Spiegel, no. 30, 24. 7. 1948 (URL: https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-44418648.html; 2. 11. 2020); Annette, Durch die schwarz-graue Brille. "Deutschland im Jahre null", in: Berliner Film Blätter, no. 4, 22. 2. 1949; Hilde Spiel, Film im Jahre Null, in: Die Welt, 26. 4. 1949.

38 Ro, Deutschland im Jahre null, in: Film-Dienst, no. 19, 17. 5. 1952.

39 Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil. Epilogue [1963], New York 2006, p. 276.

The Germans as well as the German reviews refused to acknowledge anything that confronted them with the scale of their crimes. Rossellini's film was rejected in Germany, because it shockedly revealed the brutality at the base of Nazi convictions. A contemporary German critique of "Germania anno zero" on the occasion of the film's premiere at the Locarno Film Festival in July 1948 formulates this defense particularly drastically:

> "Germany was not like this in year zero, and I, who was there, can testify to that, while Signor Rossellini 'in year zero' still had a lot of trouble interpreting his recently lost enthusiasm for fascism to the occupying powers and Italy's brave underground fighters. An anti-German-film? By no means. Not at all a film with a tendency ..., only of a frivolity which is worse than all intention. Rossellini does not pick flowers from a nation's grave in this film ..., he vomits into the coffin." [40]

On the one hand, the film is not accused of 'evil intent' ("no film at all with a tendency"), but on the other hand of 'low motives' ("frivolity"). And in this formulation, we can see what is later drastically specified, the impudence, the impertinence of showing nothing but the physical death and the mortal remains of the boy. This senseless death builds the foundation of the afore mentioned form of community. This community is defined by contingency and absence causing the strongest physical reactions ("vomiting"). That Habe is referring to this "threatening ending" in Rossellini's film is revealed in his use of metaphor: When Rossellini "vomits into the coffin", it is to be spatially understood referencing the last scene of "Germania anno zero": The view from above, from a bird's eye view into the grave. And this perspective also frames the film. The first scene after the opening credits shows from this very perspective a graveyard where Edmund is digging a grave; he is expelled from this workplace because he is denounced as a minor. He may not dig a grave, but he is free to commit suicide.

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40   Hans Habe, cited from Thomas Meder, Die Neuerfindung des Kinos fand 1947 statt, der Fluch der Deutschen war ihm sicher. Roberto Rossellini besuchte Berlin im Jahre Null und machte einen Film daraus, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 28. 7. 1998.

4.2 From a Contingent to a Military Community: "Somewhere in Berlin" and Nazi Propaganda Films

I will now concentrate in more depth on the aesthetic ambivalence of the two films[41] referring in further detail to its staging of community. On the plot level "Somewhere in Berlin" and "Germania anno zero" aren't so different: both are staged in the rubble of post-war Berlin, both have children as protagonists and weak fathers, uncles and so on. But on the level of the image space they are very different: In "Germania anno zero" the fascist community cannot be broken before Edmund commits suicide because only his death makes the ruptures of the structure of this fascistic world experienceable and by doing so also enables an experience of contingency. "Somewhere in Berlin" instead begins with the staging of a contingent community and transforms it to a substantial one at the end of the film. Focusing on this will help me to present "Somewhere in Berlin" as a film portraying the complete isolation of the community from everybody who isn't part of it. The film does not need sacrifice to make the isolation itself experienceable (like "Germania anno zero") but rather to establish a kind of military community.

Gustav and his peer group, the boys of his neighborhood are the center of the first half of the film. His friend Willy is an orphan, living with an elderly woman and her boyfriend who accommodated him by chance.

In the first half of the film the kids are playing war with fireworks Willy stole from his "stepfather", a fence. These childish war games are marked by a well-known structure, the Freudian triad: remembering, repeating and working through. The children take the rubble as a marker for the presence of the war, renewed by their game which is staged as a brilliant extravaganza. This brilliance is supported not only by the fireworks themselves but by their vectorial movements which can be seen analogue to the changing hierarchy of the peer group (fig. 5). The "war community" of the kids is not a military but a contingent one. The substantial community of fixed hierarchies, structures the relations between the adults. Their influence remains at the margins of the film in its first half.

At a certain point during this game we see the coincidental beginning of the disruption of this contingent, temporary and aimless community. I call this community contingent and aimless because it is based on nothing other than the rules of the game which can be changed at anytime and without possessing any fundamental structure. Its equilibrium changes when the children destroy a picture belonging to a painter with a misdirected rocket. In the ensuing discussion Willy is marked as an outsider:

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41   See all the references in note 31.

Fig. 5: A contingent community at the beginning of "Somewhere in Berlin" (D/SBZ 1946, Gerhard Lamprecht).

Fig. 6—7: Willy's expulsion as an orphan: "Somewhere in Berlin" (D/SBZ 1946).

Up to that point Willy was presented as a strong and self-conscious child, as worthy as anybody else of a place in his peer group because personal or family background had

never been important. However he becomes stigmatized by the painter's questioning his origin (fig. 6). Crying and unable to answer (the painter's question) himself, he lets his friend Gustav explain that Willy doesn't know where his parents are (fig. 7). Nobody knows whose blood flows through the blond boy. More and more desperately Willy tries to re-establish himself with his former peer group. But in the scene mentioned above the *mise en scène* of the children becomes as static as the previous scenes with the adults, i. e. less camera movement, less montage and less movement of the figures. Willy belongs to nobody and at the end, before he falls from a ruin he is staged as being isolated, something he had never been before in the film.

In a paradigmatic scene Willy looks for the first time at the ruin which he will later climb (fig. 8, 9); here he remains completely isolated because for the first time in the film the audio and the visual are separated. While he stares at the ruin, we hear another boy speaking from off space (fig. 10). From this point Willy's transformation as outsider is complete and so he can die and become a sacrifice.

Fig. 8 – 10: Willy's audiovisual isolation: "Somewhere in Berlin".

With this transformation Willy becomes one of the male film figures incapable of acting and thereby similar to the weak war prisoner coming back to his family. It is this change and the following similarity to the weak adults which turns him into a replacement for their sacrifices.

The dramaturgical development in "Somewhere in Berlin" is quite the opposite of that of "Germania anno zero". In "Somewhere in Berlin" the staged community changes from a contingent to a substantial one which needs a sacrifice as its base; a sacrifice which is the opposite of the new community, a sacrifice without substantial roots, i. e. without parents or without blood bonds.

The staging of this sacrifice as the initiation of a new community also shows us the stylistic ambivalence of German post-war cinema. These scenes are stylistically comparable to the sacrifices staged by the Nazi propaganda films such as "Hans Westmar. Einer

von Vielen" (D 1933, Franz Wenzler) or "Hitlerjunge Quex" (D 1933, Hans Steinhoff) as I will examine in the following.

Willy's agony after the fall is staged in the living room of a mentally unstable soldier's flat. Here he is visited by his (former) friends especially by Gustav and his father who swears on his life to rebuild his garage.

Fig. 11—12: Willy's agony: "Somewhere in Berlin".

The mad soldier keeps watch over the boy's bed and reinforces the aural transformation by saying "soldiers die, soldiers die" in front of the other boys (fig. 11, 12). A complete change of light finally isolates the boy not only from his friends but from the surrounding space as well. This marks the boy's last form of transcendence and the necessity of his physical obliteration in order to attain a frictionlessly pure and permanently stable image of innocence required for the foundation for the new community (fig. 13).

Fig. 13—14: The death scenes of: "Somewhere in Berlin"& "Hans Westmar" (D 1933).

We can find the same change of lighting with the same focus of narration at the end of "Hans Westmar" when the protagonist, harassed by the communists, dies in a similar way in front of his friends and, by doing so, the scene visualizes the myth of the Nazi movement (fig. 14). These Nazi propaganda films refer stylistically to the so-called Weimar Proletarian Cinema but they denounce their reference at the same time through their plot. "Somewhere in Berlin" oscillates instead between the Weimar- and the Nazi-Ufa-style on the one hand and neorealistic scenes on the other.

Because of this oscillation we can not only imagine the presence of the past (as we have seen before with the war games of the children) but also the restitution of a military community, a substantial community which the film creates at the end on the base of the boy's sacrifice. This new community excludes not only orphans but females as well: No woman (except for the mad soldier's mother in the background) is allowed to follow Willy's agony not even his "stepmother"; women increasingly disappear during the course of the film and even in the last sequence when we see the working military community of those who rebuild the garage the last girl remaining is explicitly excluded by the male adults.

Fig. 15–16: The building of a substantial community at the end of "Somewhere in Berlin".

This last sequence of the film shows us a lot of boys working on a mountain of rubble that once was the garage (fig. 15). At the top of this group we see Gustav's father and his son. The ornamental organization of this group builds a substantial community working for the same thing; the individuals disappear; the whole group is one homogenic vertical body (fig. 16). This is quite the opposite to the heterogenic and contingent community we saw at the beginning of the film: during the war game the figures were part of a dis-ordered horizontal movement: Bundles of children were moving chaotically in different

directions. In this movement, there are only individuals and their antagonistic interests. Finally all these differences are flattened, the most different individuals have been excluded and everybody now wants the same things. Seen in this way the individuals of the film are alone together in the end.

5 Conclusion

While "Somewhere in Berlin" guides the spectator from the experience of a heterogenic and contingent community to a homogenic and substantial one.

Fig. 17: A contingent community at the end of "Germania anno zero" (I, D 1947).

"Germania anno zero" shows us the reason for this change and its price: the pietà of Edmund's death shows us the only insubstantial community of the whole film, a com-

munity of those who must die (fig. 17). "Somewhere in Berlin" solves the question of community quite to the contrary.

"Germania anno zero" is a paradigmatic film which is relevant to both Italian and German post-war cinema. Even if its answer in this case is negative, its question is still how can we live together after World War II and the Holocaust, i. e. what can community be in these times? This is the question Italian post-war films ask. German post-war films ask the same question their answers however oscillate between the creation of substantial and contingent communities meaning that in the end they mistrust every form of community. In this way they allow the experience of an all-encompassing loss of innocence within which even friendship and family are no longer left 'unblemished' after a dictatorship has destroyed the difference between the private and the public. German post-war films then examine the possibility of individuals being together but can't imagine a community that doesn't kill itself.

100   The reprint of the filmstills discussed in this chapter is covered by the "right of quotation".

Christian Kuchler

Politics, Moral and Cinema

Catholic Film Work in Post-war Germany

Abstract

The Catholic Church saw itself as the central moral authority in the immediate post-war era and aimed at a political and social "rechristianisation" after the crimes of the Nazi era. As film was supposed to be a central device for this reeducation, the Church already dealt with this medium intensively at an early stage. "Travelling cinema" arose in Germany's Catholic (rural) areas in order to make the presentation of films and subsequent discussions possible – even in the smallest towns. New jobs regarding the work with films were created in all dioceses, even though there was no institutional organization, such as the Italian "Catholic Action". In the political field, the Church intervened mainly with regard to movies perceived as "bad". "Good" and "bad" were determined exclusively by moral criteria rather than cinematic aspects. Politicians were consulted as well as members of the film industry during protests. But basically the strong position of Catholic representatives in the "Voluntary Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry" (Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft) offered the opportunity to establish Catholic arguments in the German film censorship. In support, the "Filmliga" was founded in 1950 and agitated as a mass organisation for the "good" film, following the example set by the "League of Decency" in the US. The peak of the Catholic film work in post-war Germany was the mass protest against the movie "Die Sünderin" which became the biggest film scandal in Federal German history. Neither did the protest achieve the movie's prohibition nor a voluntary dismission, but the public discussion led to a reinforcement of the film work in the ecclesiastical area. Until the 1950s, Catholic film work mainly supported harmonic movie material produced in Federal Germany, whereas Italian movies hardly played a role.

1 Introduction

The Catholic Church saw itself as the central moral authority in the aftermath of the Second World War. In its view and in the positive perception of the Western Allies, it was the only sizeable social group that successfully resisted the "Third Reich". During the

first post-war years, the German Catholic Church liked to understand itself as a winner in rubble.[1] Therefore, especially bishops, as the top of the clerical hierarchy, aimed at a political and social rechristianisation after the crimes of the Nazi era.[2] Hence, the West German post-war society was supposed to follow Christian values.

Of course, bishops used services to teach those values, but this was no longer the only means they relied on. Right after the war, they already started to focus on mass media. Particularly because it was known how successful the National Socialists' propaganda had been between the years 1933 and 1945, the representatives of the Church wanted to have an influence on mass media, too. The top priority of initiatives in this field was cinema. In the Church's opinion, films needed to convey Christian values while violations of moral concepts should not be tolerated any longer. The bishops thought they knew about the political power of films and therefore deliberately decided to engage in this business at a time when Germany faced war destruction.

Only behind this background, it is likely to understand why one of the first conferences of bishops after the war, the Conference of the Bavarian Episcopacy in June 1945, dealt with the idea of church based film work and even decided on shooting its own film. In spite of the hardship right after the end of the war, the spiritual leaders would have approved the high costs of production for shooting a film in order to rechristianise the population. "Jugend im Sturm" / "Youth in Storm", which was the title of the envisioned film, was intended to be used in the Catholic youth work to achieve the reeducation of young Germans.[3] The plan failed because of the highly restrictive US-licensing system. Nevertheless, the intention of the Bavarian episcopacy is significant: In order to convey its values, the Catholic Church was eager to use the medium film, especially in youth work to influence thought and behaviour.

It was largely unknown in Germany until 1945, but the Holy See had already been supporting the film work since the 1930s. Pope Pius XI had commented on cinema in the encyclical *Vigilanti Cura* in June 1936.[4] Even though it only demanded that Catholics

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1   Joachim Köhler / Damian van Melis (Eds.), Siegerin in Trümmern. Die Rolle der katholischen Kirche in der deutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft, Stuttgart 1998 (Konfession und Gesellschaft 15).

2   Wolfgang Löhr, Rechristianisierungsvorstellungen im deutschen Katholizismus 1945–1948, in: Jochen-Christoph Kaiser / Anselm Doering-Manteuffel (Eds.), Christentum und politische Verantwortung. Kirchen im Nachkriegsdeutschland, Stuttgart 1990 (Konfession und Gesellschaft 2), pp. 25–41, at pp. 26–27.

3   Protokoll der Konferenz des bayerischen Episkopats, Eichstätt 26.–27. Juni 1945, in: Ludwig Volk (Ed.), Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhaber 1917–1945, vol. 2: 1935–1945, Mainz 1978, p. 1078.

4   Acta Apostolica Sedis XXVIII (1936), pp. 249–263.

watch nothing but morally and ethically inoffensive films, the existence of an encyclical alone could be interpreted as a general support of this medium. Thus, formerly only a footnote of clerical responsibilities, film (as well as radio broadcast) then became an important aspect of the cultural activities of the Catholic Church.[5]

During the time of the Nazi regime, the encyclical *Vigilanti Cura* of 1936 did not gain a lot of attention in Germany. The Church's media reported about it,[6] but the demand for Catholic film critics and a Catholic organisation on behalf of cinema-goers could not be implemented in the National Socialist state.[7] It was only after 1945 that those ideas could be pursued. As a matter of fact, various dioceses had already addressed film work before the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany. The general crisis and the bombed cities were a pastoral challenge for the Church; still denominational based film departments were founded. The fact that older Catholic departments, which had existed in a few dioceses since the 1920s, had been forbidden to keep their film collections and projectors in 1940/1941, made the film work even harder. Both had been withdrawn to be used at the eastern front in order to entertain the troops.[8] From 1943 onwards, the Bishops Conference of Fulda cancelled all expenses in the domain of film.[9] Hence, the planning of the Catholic film work started from scratch after 1945. To do so, the Kirchliche Hauptstelle für Bild- und Tonarbeit (Churchly Main Department of Visual and Sound Work) was founded on the 1st of May 1946 and was supposed to encourage all the dioceses in West Germany to establish their film departments.[10]

5   Christian Kuchler, Der Heilige Stuhl und die Massenmedien. Film und Rundfunk am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts (1895–1939), in: Jörg Zedler (Ed.), Der Heilige Stuhl in internationalen Beziehungen (1870–1939), München 2010 (Spreti-Studien 2), pp. 361–378.

6   For example, Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung, 19. 7. 1936.

7   Wilhelm Bettecken, Dienst am Film – Dienst am Menschen. 40 Jahre Film-Dienst 1947–1987, Essen 1987, p. 13.

8   Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 5101/23741, Letter Ministerialdirektor Berndt (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda) to Minister für kirchliche Angelegenheiten, 11. 11. 1941.

9   Heiner Schmitt, Kirche und Film. Kirchliche Filmarbeit in Deutschland von ihren Anfängen bis 1945, Boppard a. Rhein 1978 (Schriften des Bundesarchivs 26), p. 190.

10   Archiv Erzbistum Köln / Archiv Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, KHBF, no. 151, Letter Bischof von Osnabrück to Direktor Kochs, 1. 4. 1946.

2   Travelling Cinema Offered by the Catholic Church

Indeed, nearly all Catholic dioceses of the Federal Republic introduced aforesaid film departments in the post-war years, like for instance the archdiocese Bamberg in autumn 1946.[11] Given diocesan film departments were supposed to provide information about the cinema for the Catholic parishes, to answer questions, to decide on films for religious education in school, to organise local church festivities and to offer a range of films for all areas of the dioceses.[12] Notwithstanding these involvements, the performance of the so-called "travelling cinema"[13] was the main focus of the new-born film departments: Full-time employees of the Catholic Church offered screenings in all parts of their dioceses to provide morally and ethically impeccable films for all Catholics. These activities in Germany were no singular trend. Travelling cinemas owned by the Catholic Church as well as immobile theatres were an international phenomenon.[14]

The archdiocese Munich and Freising provided travelling cinema shows from February 1948 onwards, which attracted 123 865 visitors in 1949, with a total of 1 053 shows. At least for the Catholic area of Southern Germany, there is evidence for the widespread establishment of decentralised offices. In the middle of the 1950s there were, for instance, only five offices in the large diocese Regensburg. The most significant amount of offices, however, was reached in the much smaller diocese Augsburg; 14 offices were established here until 1954.[15]

But the heyday of the travelling cinema did not last very long. The triumph of a new formative medium, the television, which spread increasingly over the 1950s and 1960s from the cities to the rural areas, caused economic troubles for all Catholic film activities. So the rise of television prompted most German dioceses to quit their travelling film screenings at the end of the 1950s.

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11   Archiv Erzbistum Bamberg, Rep. 4/3, no. 323, Diözesansynode 1946, pp. 37–38.

12   Bischöfliches Zentralarchiv Regensburg (BZAR) 245.26, Tagungsbericht zur Konferenz der Leiter der Diözesan-Bild- und Filmstellen in Königstein am 21./22. August 1947.

13   For travelling cinema in general cf. Martin Loiperdinger (Ed.), Travelling Cinema in Europa. Sources and Perspectives (KINtop 10), Frankfurt a. M. 2008.

14   Cf. the chapter written by Lutz Klinkhammer in this volume.

15   BZAR, 245.00 Kultureller Bild- und Filmdienst München: Geschäftsjahresbericht 1949; 245.35, Tätigkeitsbericht des Diözesan-Filmwerkes Regensburg vom 6. Oktober 1954; Archiv Bistum Augsburg, GV 1639, Ausstellung. Audiovisuelle Technik im Bildungsbereich, 25. März – 1. April 1977, p. 2.

The relatively short period of travelling film shows between 1948 and the late 1950s has been pointed out as a "decade of success"[16] of the Catholic film engagement. This is definitively true with regards to the audience that had been reached. Especially in the southern and western parts of West Germany millions of Catholics became recipients of the Church's initiative. But this was primarily a phenomenon of the rural areas, a development which could have already been observed in other countries.[17] As many commercial cinemas had opened in the urban area during the post-war years, the temporary alternative of the Catholic Church concentrated on the countryside. The rural audience accepted the rather improvised shows in parish houses, community centres or pubs because commercial cinemas were too far away. Another significant point was the fact that most Catholics in West Germany lived in smaller towns that numbered from 1 000 up to 10 000 inhabitants whereas the proportion of Catholics in urban areas only reached 32.5 %.[18]

Therefore, the biggest success of travelling film shows is highly connected to the rural areas: Eventually, a broad section of the population gained access to a formerly frowned upon medium because of the church based initiatives described above. This intentional involvement in the film business was the opposite of the skeptical and strict censorship carried out by the Adenauer-administration. Until the end of the 1950s, the government's main goal was to protect the population from film productions in general.[19] The Church, however, embraced the popular means of entertainment and rather preferred to support media education. For this purpose, it offered discussions after every film screening focussing mainly on moral aspects but also leaving room for aesthetic questions. Therefore, these discussions can be regarded as a certain attempt of media education for people living in the countryside, at a time when and at places where the audience did not yet understand film as a product of art or a contemporary means of expression.

16   Antonius Liedhegener, Katholische Filmarbeit in Deutschland seit den Anfängen des Films. Probleme der Forschung und der Geschichtsschreibung – Stand der Diskussion. Tagungsrückblick, in: Hermann-Josef Braun / Johannes Horstmann (Eds.), Katholische Filmarbeit in Deutschland seit den Anfängen des Films. Probleme der Forschung und der Geschichtsschreibung, Mainz 1998, pp. 131–143, at p. 142.

17   Daniel Biltereyst / Lies van de Vijver, Cinema in the "Fog City". Film Exhibition and Sociogeography in Flandern, in: Judith Thissen / Clemens Zimmermann (Eds.), Cinema beyond the City. Small-town and Rural Film Culture in Europe, London 2016, pp. 223–236.

18   Karl Gabriel, Christentum zwischen Tradition und Postmoderne, Freiburg-Basel-Wien ⁷2000 (Quaestiones Disputatae 141), p. 105.

19   Stephan Buchloh, "Pervers, jugendgefährdend, staatsfeindlich". Zensur in der Ära Adenauer als Spiegel des gesellschaftlichen Klimas, Frankfurt 2002, pp. 184–185.

3 "Der Film-Dienst": The Impact of Catholic Reviews on the Reception of Commercial Movies

Another part of the Catholic film work aimed at the entire population introducing denominational film criticism. Catholics with different professional backgrounds gathered, even in the later GDR[20] or other European countries,[21] in order to discuss commercial cinema.[22] In West Germany, an interest group was formed right after the visit of the first West German theatrical production "Sag die Wahrheit" (Germany, 1946). Some Catholic students met in Düsseldorf because they were disappointed by the content and style of what they had seen. Under the guidance of Klaus Brüne, they started writing film reviews as part of their Catholic youth activities.[23] This commitment led to the foundation of the magazine "Film-Dienst" and was supported by bishops from 1950 onwards.[24] This print matter easily became the leading medium of the Catholic film work: Every film that was shown in German cinema was being reviewed in the magazine. Certainly, the main focus was on the moral and ethical dimensions of the films. Therefore, all films were evaluated based on a fixed framework which had been developed by the "International Catholic Film Office" (Office Catholique Internationale du Cinéma, short OCIC), an approach in line with the pontifical encyclical *Vigilanti Cura* from June 1936:

1   = Suitable for everyone, even children.
1E = Suitable for everyone, even children, with just a few restrictions.
2J = Suitable for adults and adolescents from the age of 16 up.
2   = Suitable for adults.
2E = Suitable for adults, with restrictions.

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20   Alexander Seibold, Katholische Filmarbeit in der DDR. "Wir haben eine gewisse Pfiffigkeit uns angenommen", Münster 2002, pp. 65–96.

21   For example: Natalie Fritz / Charles Martig / Fabian Perlini-Pfister (Eds.), Nur für Erwachsene. Katholische Filmarbeit in der Schweiz, Zürich 2011.

22   The effort of Catholic reviews in two West-German towns are shown detailed in: Dörthe Gruttmann, Film Culture and the Catholic Milieu in the Münsterland. Billerbeck and Telgte in the 1950s, in: Thissen / Zimmermann (Eds.), Cinema beyond the City (see note 17), pp. 38–51, at pp. 42–48.

23   Klaus Brüne, Damals fing auch der Filmdienst an, in: Bernd Börger / Karin Korthmann (Eds.), Ein Haus für junge Menschen. Jugendhaus Düsseldorf 1954–1994. Beiträge zur Geschichte der katholischen Jugendarbeit, Düsseldorf 1994, pp. 67–71, at p. 70.

24   Protokoll des Konvents der westdeutschen Bischöfe zur Sitzung vom 27.2.–1.3.1950, in: Annette Mertens (Ed.), Akten deutscher Bischöfe seit 1945. Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1950–1955, Paderborn 2017, pp. 88–95, at p. 93.

2EE = Suitable for adults, but with significant restrictions, only for adults with good faculty of judgment.

3 = Not recommended due to ethically or religiously dangerous impact on the average spectator.

4 = Rejected, because the film directly or indirectly antagonises faith and tradition.[25]

This grading system by "Film-Dienst" was supposed to guide all Catholic readers in Germany to watch "good" films and avoid "bad" ones. The magazine's sales figures verify its long-lasting impact on the film industry of post-war Germany. The paper was able to produce a circulation of 13 000 copies in 1952.[26] Furthermore, the reviews also made their way to the non-clerical daily press, since some newspapers could not afford their own editorial department for films. So they used the reviews of "Film-Dienst", but seldom revealed their readers the origin of their texts. Hence, the denominational film criticism acquired broad significance.

The next promising initiative of the Catholic Church had only restricted success due to lack of consistency. In some areas, Catholic priests were pressured by bishops to publicly display the magazine's reviews next to the current cinema programme on notice boards. Believers were able to inform themselves about current productions and the recommendation of the Church. Even though the initiators wished to control the Catholics' visits to the cinema, the aforementioned notice boards were never installed nationwide. In 1952, there were only 2 614 of them in all dioceses of West Germany which is not much considering the total amount of 1 804 Catholic parishes. 413 could be found in the archdiocese Cologne, 273 in Freiburg, 211 in Münster, 177 in Aachen, 139 in Regensburg and 114 in Munich and Freising.[27] The publicly displayed reviews were designed to make people avoid productions which were graded with a "3" or "4" whereas films with a positive review could be supported in all Catholic parishes. Therefore, the chaplaincies were asked to keep the display current at all times.[28] In consequence, laymen were needed to keep up with the controls, like the youth department in the small town Grainau with only 2 250 inhabitants that kept three notice boards current at once.[29] It

25   Bettecken, Dienst (see note 7), p. 12.

26   Protokoll des Konvents der westdeutschen Bischöfe zur Sitzung vom 27.2.–1.3.1950, Mertens, Akten (see note 24), pp. 366–371, at p. 370.

27   Archiv Bistum Passau, OA I/13, Letter Generalsekretariat der katholischen Filmliga Deutschland to Heinz d'Hone, 3.10.1952.

28   Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg, 18.8.1950.

29   Archiv Erzbistum München und Freising, Seelsorgeberichte, Dekanat Werdenfels, Pfarrei Grainau, 1953 (no. 706).

can thus be concluded that the interference of the cinematic programme was not only assigned to bishops and priests but was rather done by a variety of Catholics in order to achieve a 'clean' film industry.

The Catholic film work found its broadest resonance not by encouraging "good" movies, but by fighting "bad" ones. In the immediate post-war era, the focus was solely on national productions. Hence, in 1946, the films "Sag die Wahrheit" / "Tell the Truth" and "Der Apfel ist ab" / "The Apple has Fallen" led to disagreements between representatives of the film industry and Catholic experts. As a result, censorship was discussed but immediately dismissed. Nonetheless, the Protestant, as well as the Catholic Church, urged to be part of the new "Voluntary Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry" (Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft). Not surprisingly, representatives of both Churches were part of this board from the beginning. This engagement was neither questioned by politics nor by the film industry itself because the Church was associated with its official authority concerning ethical questions.[30]

Even though members of the film industry outnumbered those clerical representatives, their positions regarding the content of a film were important,[31] since moral criteria were remarkably relevant to judge any production. This becomes apparent when looking at the approval of film screenings on certain public and clerical holidays: Every film was evaluated not only for age restrictions but also for its suitability for screenings on holy days like Good Friday, All Hallows, Day of Prayer and Repentance or others. Therefore, films with any horror effects or farcical content which did not focus on so-called "real problems" or an "ethical topic" were prohibited to be shown in German cinema at given holy days. This regulation forced the film industry to follow the structure of the Church year,[32] which proved a clear success of the Church's involvement in the film industry. After one year of work, the Church's strong position within the committees of the Voluntary Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry was not questioned. Moreover, both politics and Church were fully aware of the power the Church held to influence the population's approval of cinema programmes.

30 Jürgen Kniep, "Keine Jugendfreigabe!" Filmzensur in Westdeutschland 1949–1990, Göttingen 2010, pp. 45–47.

31 Axel Schwanebeck, Evangelische Kirche und Massenmedien. Eine historische Analyse der Intentionen und Realisationen evangelischer Publizistik, München 1990, p. 420.

32 Buchloh, Pervers (see note 19), p. 207.

4   The Biggest Film Scandal in West German History: "Die Sünderin"

Nonetheless, the situation changed suddenly due to the release of "Die Sünderin" / "The Female Sinner", directed by Willy Forst, in January 1951, a film which is widely known as the perhaps biggest scandal in the history of West German films. For understanding the scandal, the film's plot needs to be outlined: Marina (Hildegard Knef), who has been a victim of abuse by father and brother as a child, works as a prostitute and gets to know the ill artist Alexander – they fall in love. After a surgery cannot help to save Alexander, Marina decides to help him end his life with pills. After doing so, she commits suicide as she refuses to live without him.[33] The director Willy Forst shows the double murder using very romantic and sentimental pictures. It is apparent why this film triggered the Catholic film work's objection. Forst's film did not display Christian values, instead it dealt with prostitution, concubinage, the assisted dying of a sick person and suicide – exactly those topics that the Catholic film work sought to prevent. Therefore, the Church demanded the film's prohibition, referring to prostitution and suicide as gravely immoral. The Voluntary Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry did not follow this request, arguing that it could not determine a corruptive effect. "Die Sünderin" was released, placed under a ban for young people under the age of 16 and was not allowed to be shown on holy days.[34] As a consequence, the Catholic, as well as the Protestant Church, resigned from the committee. Headlines in contemporary newspapers for example in Munich's "Abendzeitung" reading "Sünderin vertreibt Pfarrer aus der Film-Selbstkontrolle" / "'Die Sünderin' banishes priests from the Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry" drew some additional attention to the film.

Subsequently, especially the Catholic Church organised protests against "Die Sünderin". The magazine "Film-Dienst" graded it with "4 – Rejected" and recommended a joint boycott because the film depicted a "ethische Atombombe aus Erotik, Exhibitionismus und Blasphemie", an "ethical atomic bomb of eroticism, exhibitionism, and blasphemy".[35] The apodictic verdict of the "Film-Dienst" was also recognized by the official Voluntary Self-Regulation of the Film Industry.[36] The text which was displayed on over thousand notice boards in Germany caused a scandal and mass protest revolving around the screening. The Catholic boycott led to intense debates concerning "Die Sün-

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33   N. N., Die Sünderin, in: Lexikon des Internationalen Films, p. 3000.

34   Kniep, Keine Jugendfreigabe! (see note 30), pp. 53–68.

35   Film-Dienst, 23. 2. 1951.

36   Kniep, Keine Jugendfreigabe! (see note 30), pp. 49–50.

derin", lasting approximately four months, while the protest peaked from February to April 1951. The vast variety of Catholic people objecting the film is noteworthy because the whole Catholic milieu protested against "Die Sünderin" – ranging from bishops to village priests and from the leading organisations of Catholic associations to the individual Catholic. The main prospect behind all protests was the prohibition of the film release in local cinemas. To mention one example, several thousand people demonstrated in Regensburg. But not all of them wanted the film to be dismissed; instead, they stood up for freedom of art: While 400 people protested against the release of the film, 3 000 tried to achieve the opposite. Finally, the film was shown in local cinemas. In other cities like Aachen in Rheinland, there were no large public discussions on the question, if the movies could be shown in the local cinemas. According to the local newspapers, a rather small talk on an academic level was organised. It discussed standards in German films in general and pointed out, that "Die Sünderin" would not be the only problem.[37] Comparable things happened in all larger towns: almost everywhere the Catholic protests were unsuccessful. The only dismissals of the film took place in small towns in strictly Catholic areas, for the cinema operators did not want to openly challenge the local priests despite financial losses due to the dismissal.

In total, the Catholic protest was not victorious, on the contrary, "Die Sünderin" became the most successful film of 1951. Many of these visitors wanted to form their own opinion about the scandalous film – even if they were members of the Catholic Church.

But did the Catholic protest fail in general? It is hard to tell. The main concern of the Catholic film work was the struggle for moral decency in social life not the prohibition of this precise film alone, it just used the production "Die Sünderin" representatively. Those descriptions of the protest that solely focussed on the very short nude scene of Hildegard Knef fall too short to uncover the roots of the criticism.[38] Instead, the cinematic portrayal of various topics contradicting the Church's idea of morality made "Die Sünderin" unacceptable. The main focus of the professional Catholic film work's protest was the final scene, where both protagonists commit suicide: To display an alleged merciful killing in an almost romantic way appeared highly problematic. Furthermore, the temporal closeness to the crimes of euthanasia committed by National Socialists made this scene highly problematic and aroused recollections to the Nazi-propaganda film "Ich klage an" / "I Accuse" (1941). Thus, the Catholic film work did not want to tolerate the

37   Aachener Volkszeitung, 10. 2. 1951.

38   For example: Axel Schildt, Moderne Zeiten. Freizeit, Massenmedien und "Zeitgeist" in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre, Hamburg 1995, p. 142.

given unchristian representations and decided on a general protest – with the danger of helping advertise "Die Sünderin" in many ways.

The Voluntary Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry needs to be considered as the most important political aim for the implementation of Catholic concerns because the controversies about "Die Sünderin" demonstrated that this was the only committee where decisions about a film's release were effectually made. The Catholic film work needed to strengthen its position from within in order to prevent spectators from watching morally questionable films in the future. In fact, the committee itself was weakened after the resignation of both Christian Churches and tried to restore the co-operation. It is not surprising that both Churches considered a return to the committee only a few days after their departure. Since neither the committee members themselves nor society raised any doubt against a renewed membership, the Churches held a strong position to bring in their own terms: They re-entered the Self-Regulation after it was assured that representatives of the Church could participate in decisions about every production in the future. [39]

Simultaneously to the negotiations about re-entering the Voluntary Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry, the Catholic Church founded its own "Filmliga" / "film league". Catholics were urged to join in order to support the Church's ideas and concerns in the area of film. Although the association had already existed since 1950, it only became popular after the controversies about "Die Sünderin". Members of this film league, Catholics over the age of 16, assured via signature that they would never watch films contradictory to Christian faith and to follow the church based film ratings. Furthermore, they promised to boycott cinemas that showed films which the magazine "Film-Dienst" advised against. At last, members of the Catholic film league guaranteed to support films rated as worthwhile. [40] Starting point for the film league's success was the first "Sonntag des Films" / "Sunday of film": In October 1951 the local priests of all West German parishes publicly read out a pastoral letter of the Bishops Conference answering questions concerning films. Afterwards, more than 1.5 million people signed the film league's pledge within only one year. However impressive this relatively high number of members may be, the film league was not successful. The film industry was barely impressed because most people signing the pledge did not go to the cinema anyway and therefore did not belong to the film-makers target group. On the one hand, the film industry did not care about it and on the other hand the Voluntary Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry already managed to involve the church based initiatives in

39   Kniep, Keine Jugendfreigabe! (see note 30), pp. 69–74.
40   Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising, 17. 10. 1951.

its own programmes. So the "Filmliga" did not achieve what it intended and became just a temporary side-project of Catholic film work.

5 The Outcome of the Catholic Church's Engagement

At the end of this discussion the question arises whether the failure of the "film league" is representative for the failure of Catholic film work in general. Was the church based commitment between the years 1945 and 1955 just a flash in the pan without gaining any long-term significance?

At first sight, this might be true as even large protests did not ensure success, like the example of "Die Sünderin" verifies – but these boycotts have not been the most important aim. At second sight, it needs to be noticed that the intensive discussion triggered by the medium film enabled a wide social stratum to deal with the reception of films and even reached people who showed no interest in any film matters before. People who were primarily socialised with film productions of the "Third Reich" now started to consume media more critically. Especially in rural areas the screenings presented by the Church were the first opportunity to discuss the content of cinematic products. For the first time film was understood as a means of art which makes people ponder about the world. Even if the discussions primarily addressed questions of Catholic moral grounds, the film-work itself catalysed media criticism in all (Catholic) parts of the population. At the beginning of the 1950s, it became highly likely that television would become the key medium in a society which only stresses the societal relevance of the Catholic pioneer work.

The Church used different means to pursue its original goal, the rechristianisation of the people. The film work, including the support of "good" films, is just one example. While the great impact stayed a "chimera",[41] it is important to stress the significant societal impulse given by the Catholic engagement in the film sector. In rural areas the influence of the Catholic initiative was enormous, which could be shown using the example of travelling cinema and film reviews.

Furthermore, the Catholic agenda connected to film was politically successful: The denominational film work could be implemented in all relevant West German committees of censorship. The Catholic position within the Voluntary Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry (FSK) was the most important achievement, which was even

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41 Thomas Großbölting, Der verlorene Himmel. Glaube in Deutschland seit 1945, Göttingen 2012, p. 93.

strengthened after the discussion on "Die Sünderin". So it can be said, that already at the middle of the 1950s the acknowledged position of the Catholic Church in the Federal Republic was mirrored in its influence on the most important mass medium of the time. The German representatives of the Church quickly became an important player in this field. The Church started as the guardian against anything harmful. Plural media industry in Germany was only emerging in the late 1950s. The developments in German film productions can be retraced in accompanying developments in the Catholic film work.[42] In this light even the scandal around "Die Sünderin" was just a loss at first sight. This public conflict helped stabilise and strengthen the position of film in the Church's field of interest in general. Furthermore, it established the membership of churchmen in governmental and half-governmental media institutions. Film history of the early German Federal Republic, therefore, cannot be written without mentioning the engagement of the Catholic Church.

42   Christian Kuchler, Kirche und Kino. Katholische Filmarbeit in Bayern (1945–1965), Paderborn 2006, pp. 242–248; in general: Christina von Hodenberg, Konsens und Krise. Eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienöffentlichkeit 1945–1973, Göttingen 2006.

Lukas Schaefer

European Critical Film Culture

Italian and Western German Film Magazines in an International Context

Abstract

Italian "Cinema Nuovo" (founded in 1952) and West German "Filmkritik" (founded in 1957) were influential, perhaps even the most important film magazines in their respective home countries after the Second World War. With their staunch support of Italian realist cinema and their attacks on the Christian Democrats' film politics and the illiberal political culture in Italy, "Cinema Nuovo" authors had early on become members of a transnational, mostly European network of critical film press, film historians, and film theorists. They also served as a role model for the younger "Filmkritik" authors, who adapted Italian critical realism to the devastated German film culture after 1945. Slowly, "Filmkritik" also grew into the transnational network of critical film culture. The latter worked by exchanging articles and letters, and by regular encounters at larger and smaller film festivals, also in Eastern Europe.

1   Introduction

Film criticism in general, and film magazines in particular, are rich sources not only for film history itself but also, for example, in connection with questions on European social and cultural history after 1945. Film journalism offers an enormous amount of meaningful texts which can be discussed together with documents deriving from other sectors like film politics or the film industry. However, in most of the classic Western European film nations like Italy, Great Britain, or Germany, it has only rarely been the object of thorough historical analysis based on primary sources. France is a slight exception, considering the

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works reconstructing the famous "Cahiers du cinéma"'s history.[1] But especially in Italy and in Germany, film culture in general remains largely unexplored as well.[2]

This chapter will trace how the history of Italian and Western German film criticism is intertwined with larger historical contexts and developments. It outlines some of the results of a research project which revolved around two groups of left-wing film critics and their magazines founded in the 1950s: "Cinema Nuovo" and "Filmkritik".[3] These film magazines were studied along two central questions. Firstly, the project interpreted the critics as early forerunners of a New Left which publicly emerged throughout Western Europe at the beginning of the 1960s. With their social criticism and their nonconformist writing, these authors shaped issues and prepared the rise of the 1968 movement, with regard to popular culture. Secondly, the transnational dimension of this left-wing intellectual film criticism was of interest. The combination of comparative history, transfer history, and entangled history showed that especially the younger German critics created a "Europeanized" film culture, adapted among others from their Italian counterparts. A European network of film criticism and film culture developed as an alternative to the often stated "Americanization" of European popular culture.

This outline sets out with a portrait of the Italian film magazine, "Cinema Nuovo", and its main contributors. Already while presenting its foundation history and their basic and theoretical understanding of film and culture, cinema will appear as a highly politicized media. Hints at other important facets in their journalist activity – for example at their attitude towards the Christian Democratic governments – will underline that film matters and social criticism could not easily be separated in their works. By the following portrait of the "Filmkritik" group, not only their similar social criticism will become obvious, but also their perception and adaption of Italian cinema as one indicator for European film criticism's transnational dimension. But its transnationality did not just manifest itself in reading and imitating foreign film authors. This paper will also describe the European network in terms of its members' visits, direct contacts, and the role of international film festivals. Paying attention to the role which Eastern European film

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1   As one of the more recent studies cf. Emilie Bickerton, A Short History of Cahiers du cinéma, London 2009.

2   With a few exceptions, cf. Paolo Bertetto (Ed.), Storia del cinema italiano. Uno sguardo d'insieme, Venice 2011; Wolfgang Jacobsen / Anton Kaes / Hans Helmut Prinzler (Eds.), Geschichte des deutschen Films, Stuttgart 2004.

3   The project's results were published as Lukas Schaefer, Kritik ohne Grenzen. Nonkonformistische Filmkultur in Italien und Westdeutschland nach 1945 in transnationaler Perspektive, Stuttgart 2018.

culture played in these left-wing critics' thoughts, it will link the transnational dimension to their status as nonconformist intellectuals in the times of the Cold War.

2 "Cinema Nuovo": Critical Realism and Social Criticism

"Cinema Nuovo"'s first issue was published in December 1952. The history of the magazine and this group of critics is closely related to the history of Italian realist cinema. Already in Fascist times, Guido Aristarco, the future editor-in-chief, Renzo Renzi and others had taken their first steps in film culture. Born around 1920, as very young men they started publishing film articles in local newspapers or were members of the "Cineguf". This was the milieu where Aristarco and Renzi met, and here they joined other young critics in their disapproval of the official Fascist cinema.[4] Supported by the journal "Cinema", Italian realist cinema grew under difficult circumstances and finally culminated in post-war neorealism. In 1948, "Cinema" reappeared in Milan and Aristarco became its editor-in-chief. But in the same year, the Christian Democrats gained power in Italy and started to block neorealist film making. Now the attacks on film politics which Aristarco and others published were provocative. Eventually, like other left-wing critics in other magazines, Aristarco was dismissed from "Cinema" in 1952. He quickly gathered some of his former colleagues and managed to start his own magazine – "Cinema Nuovo".[5]

This journal presented itself in the first editorial as a platform for the continued struggle for Italian realism. It aimed to broadly "continuare il discorso" on the "nuova scuola del cinema italiano".[6] That programme was based on a mixture of several theoretical concepts. Italian philosophy and film theory were still dominated by idealism. Most of "Cinema Nuovo"'s contributors criticized the idealist focus on the artist's inspiration and on formal analysis. Instead, they discovered the writings of Antonio Gramsci and Georg Lukács, both then only selectively read and published in Italy.[7] Gramsci taught them

4 Cf. Gian Piero Brunetta, Storia del cinema italiano, vol. 2: Il cinema del regime 1929–1945, Roma 1993, pp. 90–97, 213–230.

5 Cf. Lorenzo Pelizzari, Il cinema pensato. La guerra fredda delle idee, in: Luciano De Giusti (Ed.), Storia del cinema italiano, vol. 8: 1949/1953, Venezia 2003, pp. 514–533, at p. 518.

6 Continuare il discorso, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 1, 15.12.1952, p. 7.

7 Cf. Stephen Gundle, The Legacy of the Prison Notebooks. Gramsci, the PCI and Italian Culture in the Cold War Period, in: Christopher Duggan/Christopher Wagstaff (Eds.), Italy in the Cold War. Politics, Culture and Society 1948–58, Oxford-Washington DC 1995, pp. 131–147; Piero Lucia, Intellettuali italiani del secondo dopoguerra. Impegno, crisi, speranza, Napoli 2003, p. 112.

social commitment by popular intellectuals in a "nuova cultura" – seen as a contrast to, for example, Benedetto Croce's distant position. Lukács formed their Marxist, sociological view on art and culture – seen as tightly linked to capitalist society. His 1930s literary theory had established the dichotomy between "describing" and "narrating", i. e. between naturalist and realist novels. In "Cinema Nuovo", these categories were transferred to film criticism.

That meant, films should not only collect detailed impressions of everyday life in episodes and anecdotes. If so, they remained at the level of naturalism. According to Lukács, however, films were expected to enter deeper into the historical developments and the social mechanisms behind the plots; films should draw "typical" and complex protagonists. If so, they would equal historical novels and reach the level of critical realism. Thus, the "Cinema Nuovo" staff judged films predominantly by their content and their narrative structure. They rejected and ignored most of the cinema which did best at Italian box offices in the 1950s anyway. For example, the magazine's authors did not spend much time nor many lines on American or Italian adventure films, on the western genre, or popular comedies. The "neorealismo rosa" films like "Pane, amore e fantasia" were deemed as superficial, perpetuating the status quo in Italian society. [8]

1940s neorealism itself underwent a revaluation in this journal. Depicting misery and injustice had been a welcome contrast to Fascist film making. But in the 1950s, in the eyes of most of these critics, a further step was necessary to deal with the slowly recovering Italian society. In many articles, it was especially the editor-in-chief who claimed the passage from a "realismo oggettivo" to the already cited "realismo critico". Guido Aristarco summarized it as follows: "La civiltà del nostro cinema è arrivata, nel dopoguerra, tolte le solite eccezioni (Visconti), a una fase oggettiva del realismo: alla cronaca, al documento, alla denuncia. Tutto questo costituisce soltanto la prefazione al vero realismo, il quale, per la sua natura, non può essere che critico, storicistico." [9]

Now, the neorealist pioneers and younger, related directors met severe verdicts. For "Cinema Nuovo", Roberto Rossellini had become a political conformist who shot boring films spoiled by religious reasoning. And for "Cinema Nuovo", Cesare Zavattini's and Vittorio De Sica's "Il tetto" was an old-fashioned attempt without any clear line of action. Finally, Federico Fellini was harshly attacked for "La strada" and its subjectivism, irrationalism, and even mysticism. [10] At least Luchino Visconti met their standards. His

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8   Cf. Guido Aristarco, Pane amore e fantasia, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 13, 15. 6. 1953, pp. 379–380.

9   Id., Amore in città, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 27, 15. 1. 1954, pp. 27–29, at p. 29.

10   Cf. as examples Guido Aristarco, Il tetto, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 2, 15. 10. 1956, p. 217; id., La strada, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 46, 10. 11. 1954, pp. 311–312.

1954's "Senso" was set during the Italian unification and was reviewed as the optimum of a cinematic novel and as a historical film. Visconti perfectly connected the main characters' love affair to the historical incidents, and he touched the latter's causes and essence: "Nasce il rapporto con l'esterno, con gli altri individui, e in questo rapporto, in questo interesse per un determinato periodo della vita nazionale, 'Senso' assume il suo carattere di film storico … non si fermava ai fenomeni ma di essi ricercava le cause, l'essenza".[11] As a consequence of "Cinema Nuovo"'s strict realism, hardly any appreciated director was left by the end of the 1950s.

The "Senso" director leads to another important aspect of "Cinema Nuovo"'s journalist agenda. The critics often attacked the design of Italian film politics. Film control and financing were in the hands of the "sottosegretari dello spettacolo" – along mechanisms which Giulio Andreotti as the first office holder had established and perfected for the Christian Democratic Party.[12] In these polemics, "Cinema Nuovo" regularly documented how secret consultations with functionaries changed or threatened to stop films like Visconti's works. The critics were usually well-informed because of their close ties to critical film-makers. Furthermore, "Cinema Nuovo" attacked the far-reaching influence the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico and the parochial cinemas had on Italian cinema, and the monopolies and the conservative dominance in documentary film and in newsreels.

As mentioned, their critical realist approach and their polemics in film politics were embedded in general social criticism and a nonconformist attitude towards Italian politics and society. In their articles, the staff complained about social inequality and the neglect of southern Italy. Moreover, for "Cinema Nuovo", the still dysfunctional democracy and the restricted cultural and intellectual freedom threatened to turn Italy into a second Spain. The buzzwords were "destinazione Spagna" or "spagnolizzazione".[13] Aristarco and his fellows applied an anti-Fascist Resistenza rhetoric to the young Italian Republic and connected it to the fight for filmic realism.[14] They saw realist film making as a means to criticize the presence of former Fascists in Italian society, politics, and administration, also to further analyse the history of fascism and to destroy myths about Italian warfare alongside Nazi Germany. So "Cinema Nuovo" launched a couple of film proposals re-

11   Id., I leoni fischiati, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 43, 25. 9. 1954, pp. 167–170, at p. 168; id., È realismo, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 55, 25. 3. 1955, pp. 226–228, at p. 226.

12   Cf. Barbara Corsi, Con qualche dollaro in meno. Storia economica del cinema italiano, Roma 2001, pp. 46, 50–51.

13   Cf. among others Destinazione Spagna, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 33, 15. 4. 1954, p. 199.

14   Cf. Il cinema e la Resistenza, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 57, 25. 4. 1955, p. 287.

volving around the recent Italian past. For one of them, in 1953, Guido Aristarco and Renzo Renzi were even accused of vilifying the armed forces, arrested in a fortress near Lake Garda and finally given suspended sentences. Fascist military law still in effect made that possible. The case of this film idea on the Italian occupation in Greece is often referred to as an example of the country's quarrels on the freedom of the press and the arts in that decade. [15] "Cinema Nuovo"'s important involvement in such discussions and in debates on Italian filmic realism has repeatedly been described. Meanwhile, its influence on younger critics abroad seems less known among film historians. The following chapter will, therefore, present some proof from primary sources.

3 "Filmkritik": Critical Theory and Italian Realism to Refresh German "Wasteland"

"Cinema Nuovo" debates mostly revolved around domestic cinema and film theory. Some core inspiration came from abroad – Lukács' critical realism –, but these critics could build on a rich and sophisticated film culture in their home country. For the "Filmkritik" staff, it was quite different. These young men were born around 1930 and spent their adolescence in post-war ruins and reconstruction. After the national socialist grasp and facing the GDR's rivalry, West German film culture was rudimentary, too. Hardly any ambitious film journals and film literature were left. The future "Filmkritik" founders turned to the film club movement which had been initiated among others by the French occupying forces. As students, a couple of them spent some terms in Paris. Here, they further learned about cineaste habitus and the richness of film history and other countries' cinemas. They got to know each other as contributors for the film club magazine or for cultural journals like the "Frankfurter Hefte". In 1957, they started "Filmkritik", their own magazine with a simple title and a simple layout, but with a determined, polemical language. [16]

Film historian and theorist Siegfried Kracauer was the idol of the early "Filmkritik". [17] The young critics adopted his critique of ideology and transferred it to 1950s Federal Republic. Kracauer aimed at deducing collective mentalities and political moods from film plots and from stylistic devices. "Filmkritik" writers fused this critique with

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15   Cf. Nello Ajello, Intellettuali e PCI. 1944–1958, Roma-Bari 1979, pp. 296–302.

16   Cf. Enno Patalas, Vor Schluchsee und danach. Aus dem Leben eines deutschen Cinephilen, in: Filmgeschichte 19 (September 2004), pp. 61–69.

17   Cf. Enno Patalas, Siegfried Kracauer, in: Filmkritik, Nr. 1, 1967, p. 5.

Frankfurt School's concept of cultural industry. It taught them increased awareness of manipulative political influence on entertainment in Western capitalism. Consequently, like their Italian counterparts, they criticized West German film politics and the domestic film industry. "Filmkritik" condemned most of contemporary West German cinema since it spread blind obedience to authority, passive belief in fate, and the related doctrine of political abstinence: "Der deutsche Illustriertenroman und der deutsche Film lieben es, ihre Helden als Getriebene des Schicksals oder ihrer Leidenschaften darzustellen. Die Emotion 'kommt über sie', lähmt ihnen Verstand und Willen und treibt sie hin und her ... jede kritische Reflexion auf das Leben und das eigene Verhalten [wird] verächtlich gemacht". [18]

How, the critics wondered, could such films help the public to become mature and reasonable citizens? They feared the return of a Prussian sense of duty as a threat to the still young German democracy. "Filmkritik" criticized Chancellor Adenauer's authoritarian appearance and that the growing affluence in the German *Wirtschaftswunder* covered unresolved problems with iron conformism and consumerism. As early as in the 1950s, the student authors attacked the smooth integration of even high-ranking Nazis into the Federal Republic and the myth of the innocent *Wehrmacht*. Instead of reducing National Socialism to a criminal clique around Hitler, they urged to discuss the role of petty-bourgeois followers.

Next to this social criticism and to Kracauer's and the Frankfurt School's cultural theories, the "Filmkritik" group had a constructive filmic program and a clear aim: realist cinema. Several showcase reviews or articles from their magazine will now illustrate that "Filmkritik"'s writing was deeply influenced by Italian concepts, especially by "Cinema Nuovo"'s thinking and writing. In 1958, for example, one of "Filmkritik"'s main authors, Ulrich Gregor, published an account of neorealism's history and of Italian debates on cinematic realism. For Gregor, Guido Aristarco's concept had proved to be the most fruitful: advancing from chronicle to narration. [19] Thus, via "Cinema Nuovo" and "Filmkritik", Lukács' terminology emerged in West German film culture. "Filmkritik" readers often found his key terms – "narrating" and "describing" or rather "erzählen" and

18   Wie ein Sturmwind, in: Filmkritik, Nr. 4, 1957, pp. 61–62, at p. 62.

19   According to Gregor "hat sich das von Guido Aristarco ... vorgebrachte theoretische Konzept wohl als das Fruchtbarste erwiesen: es besagt, daß der Neorealismus 'von der Chronik zur Erzählung' gelangen müsse. Damit gemeint ist das Fortschreiten vom bloß beschreibenden, 'objektivistischen' Naturalismus zu einem vertieften Realismus, der sich nicht damit begnügt, bloße 'Blöcke der Wirklichkeit' vor uns hinzustellen, sondern die Widersprüche der objektiven, d.h. historischen Wirklichkeit mit Charakteren und Handlungen verschmilzt, die im Extrem das Typische erfassen." (Ulrich Gregor, Neorealismus – Ende oder Anfang?, in: Filmkritik, Nr. 1, 1958, pp. 89–99, at p. 94).

"beschreiben" – and the dichotomy between realism and naturalism in reviews of films of any provenience and genre.[20]

Italian realism was the standard by which almost every movie was judged and compared in "Filmkritik". Stanley Kubrick was praised for his early films, creating an authentic atmosphere and precisely integrating the characters in their social environment – like the neorealist masters. Ulrich Gregor praised some modern soviet films since they abstained from spectacular plots in favour of depicting every day life's depth – like the neorealist masters.[21] Reviewing the harshly criticized West German cinema, the young authors often raised the question of how neorealist directors would have dealt with the topic, without adding sentimentality. "Filmkritik" also adapted "Cinema Nuovo"'s opinion about the neorealist pioneers' recent works. For them, Rossellini had become conservative and dated; Fellini was reproached for mysticism and subjectivism, as well; and finally, they repeated that Visconti's "Senso" was 1950s realism's masterpiece. Theodor Kotulla praised the picture in more ore less the same words Guido Aristarco had used in "Cinema Nuovo" a couple of years earlier: "das Risorgimento bleibt nicht Hintergrund; private Entscheidung, gesellschaftlicher Zustand und Notwendigkeit des geschichtlichen Augenblicks bedingen einander und verschränken sich zu dichtem Geflecht."[22]

These cultural transfers from Italy to West Germany took place on the level of film theory and cultural theory. But authors and filmmakers from other European countries and their public position also served as role model for the "Filmkritik" circle. Whereas they saw German intellectuals as elitist and isolated, they envied France and Italy since there culture would be widely received and discussed.[23] The following quote shows that the "Filmkritik" staff identified with an international generation of "angry young men", with other nonconformist writers and directors similarly opposed to 1950s affluent society:

20 "Wenn der Film doch weit vor der Endstation 'Realismus' auf der Strecke bleibt, so deshalb, weil er dem Irrtum des Naturalismus verfällt, daß mit der korrekten Oberflächenbeschreibung der Wirklichkeit bereits genügegetan sei und sich die Kunst in Darstellung, Kameraarbeit und Montage erschöpfe."; Enno Patalas, Noch minderjährig, in: Filmkritik, Nr. 12, 1957, p. 190.

21 Cf. Theodor Kotulla, Der Tiger von New York, in: Filmkritik, Nr. 4, 1959, pp. 100–102, at p. 102; Ulrich Gregor, Wenn die Kraniche ziehen, in: Filmkritik, Nr. 7, 1958, pp. 141–143, at p. 143.

22 Theodor Kotulla, Der Geist des Widerstands, in: film 56,3 (1956), pp. 145–146, 149–150, esp. p. 149.

23 Cf. Ulrich Gregor, Der Film und die Intellektuellen, in: magnum, no. 24, June 1959, pp. 56–58.

"Kubrick gehört, wie die jungen englischen Dramatiker, wie die jungen polnischen und ungarischen Lyriker, wie einzelne junge russische Schriftsteller, wie … der Engländer Lindsay Anderson, der Spanier Bardem, der Franzose Alain Resnais, der Pole Andrzey Munk, der Italiener Francesco Maselli (und schließlich wie unsere Freunde aus den Redaktionen von 'Film Culture', 'Sight and Sound', 'Positif' usw.) … zur Generation der 'Angry Young Men', die, aufgewachsen bereits im Angesicht einer restaurierten bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, von einem Gefühl der Malaise erfüllt sind und denen unsere Sympathie gehört".[24]

On another transnational level of film culture, "Filmkritik" scrutinized Italian and West German film politics. The magazine regularly reported about the problems which critical directors had with censorship or export bans in Italy. Furthermore, its contributors noted that only a few of the 1940s neorealist movies had been shown in West German cinemas. Among others, Roberto Rossellini's "Roma, città aperta" and "Paisà" were still missing. "Senso" and other films were decisively changed by additional cuts and their synchronization during import.[25] Learning about such interferences, "Filmkritik" acted as Italian realist cinema's lobbyists in the West German public. Their position as German experts on international cinema correlated with their increasing participation in the transnational network of critical film culture mentioned above.

4   An International Network of Critical Film Culture — and a Turn to the East

As early as the first half of the 1950s, the "Cinema Nuovo" group had become an important part of an international network of film critics. Most of them were of European origin and held left-wing opinions. For this paper's transnational approach, it is of interest how this network operated and how its manifold links were generated. In its early years, "Cinema Nuovo" regularly published reports by "Cahiers du cinéma"'s famous leading critic André Bazin and some of his bilingual colleagues.[26] Due to divergent opinions about Roberto Rossellini's contemporary films or the younger French criticism, their

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24   Preface to Franz-Josef Spieker, Stanley Kubrick. Jahrgang 28, in: Filmkritik, Nr. 1, 1958, pp. 113–114.

25   Cf. Francesco Bono, "Kein berühmter Film, sondern ein Torso". Die Eingriffe westdeutscher Verleiher in das Werk Luchino Viscontis, in: Filmblatt 20,58/59 (2015/2016), pp. 3–21.

26   Cf. Jean-Louis Leutrat/Suzanne Liandrat-Giugues, Il cinema italiano visto della Francia, in: Bertetto (Ed.), Storia (see note 2), pp. 492–504, at p. 493.

cooperation waned over the years, and "Cinema Nuovo" preferred articles by authors of the film club journal "cinéma" or the leftist "Positif". In return, Aristarco and his colleagues appeared in French magazines and spread their version of Italian realism. "Positif" contributors constantly supported "Cinema Nuovo" and its struggle for a critical Italian cinema and so did the group around the British "Sight and Sound".[27] Although hardly conscious of a historian's transnational approach decades later, in a 1956 "Cinema Nuovo" article, "cinéma" critic Pierre Billard already delivered a noteworthy description of European film culture's entanglement:

> "Questa vigilante e simpatica attenzione, il continuo riferirsi alle migliori opere del neorealismo per giudicare i film francesi costituiscono una forma d'influenza indiretta che non è da trascurarsi. Citando ad esempio Zavattini, De Sica, Visconti, De Santis, Fellini o Antonioni, i nostri critici determinano negli artisti nostrani, al di là di un'irritazione passeggera, una riflessione che rende piú profonda l'influenza specifica delle opere stesse. È in questo senso che la critica cinematografica francese ha contribuito – per lo piú inconsciamente – ad una maggior compenetrazione tra i cinema nazionali dei due rispettivi paesi."[28]

The transnational network of nonconformist film culture also included film historians, film theorists, and filmmakers. This became apparent in "Sight and Sound"'s regular polls on film and film history. In 1952, for example, the "Cinema Nuovo" editor-in-chief Guido Aristarco was among the participants, as were André Bazin, Siegfried Kracauer, Rudolf Arnheim, and Paul Rotha.[29] Many of the network's members were involuntary cosmopolitans who had had to flee from National Socialism and the Second World War. Aristarco used the network exchanging letters with emigrated cineasts like Arnheim or Hans Richter. As authors, they often helped each other to introduce their books to the respective markets.

Aristarco's correspondence with another emigrant, Siegfried Kracauer, was typical for this reciprocal help. It lasted for almost 15 years, and some quotes from Kracauer's

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27 Cf. Réalismes, in: Positif 5 (no date), p. 1; Gavin Lambert, The Signs of Predicament, in: Sight and Sound, no. 3, January-March 1955, pp. 147–151 and 166.

28 Pierre Billard, Il cinema italiano, enfant cheri della critica e del pubblico francese, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 80, 10. 4. 1956, p. 206.

29 Cf. As the Critics Like It, in: Sight and Sound, no. 2, October–December 1952, pp. 58–60.

letters will illustrate the close relationship.[30] The first one, from 1953, shows their cooperation in translating and publishing Kracauer's main oeuvre "From Caligari to Hitler" in Italy: "First I wish to thank you for your great kindness in publishing two excerpts from my manuscript and referring to my Caligari book in so extensive and flattering a manner … your magazine is really excellent, full of valuable contributions and a plethora of interesting illustrations … When will Caligari be out? I am anxious to read your introduction." During the German emigré's occasional trips from New York to Europe, Kracauer and Aristarco tried to arrange as many personal reunions as possible, in "Cinema Nuovo"'s office in Milan or at the Venice Film Festival. In 1956, Kracauer referred to one of these visits in a letter to his Italian penfriend: "Throughout we were of the same opinion on films – a fact which I find very comforting. And finally, we recall with the greatest of pleasure the visit we paid to your elegant headquarters where I felt quite at home."

Kracauer also had a correspondence with Georges Sadoul. The French communist critic and film historian was another central figure within the network, with strong links to Italy and "Cinema Nuovo". He was able to organize public, international encouragement for like-minded publicists when they found themselves in dire straits. For instance, the Spanish director Juan Antonio Bardem was arrested in 1956 because he was allegedly involved in student protests in his home country. Sadoul sent missives all over Western Europe; that way, he initiated a letter to the "Times" by "Sight and Sound"'s Lindsay Anderson and a couple of statements by Italian cineasts.[31] "Cinema Nuovo" declared that they "associa alla protesta dei colleghi francesi, esprimendo la propria particolare simpatia a Bardem, con il quale ebbe occasione di avere ripetuti contatti personali".[32] In the same way, in 1953, Aristarco and Renzo Renzi received solidarity from abroad during their arrest for the film proposal on the Italian war in Greece. Sadoul and others sent letters to the fortress, "Cahiers du cinéma" published a plea,[33] and from overseas, Siegfried Kracauer expressed his compassion: "I often thought of you with the most vivid sympathy because of the ordeal you had to undergo."

For the young West German film critics publishing "Filmkritik", Kracauer was an important link to international critical film culture. One of their main authors, Enno

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30 The following quotes from Kracauer's letters are all taken from the Kracauer collection stored in the German Literature Archive in Marbach a. Neckar.

31 Cf. Sadoul's correspondence stored in Cinémathèque française's Bibliothèque du film in Paris.

32 L'arresto di Bardem, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 77, 25. 2. 1956, p. 99.

33 Cf. "Arrêtez-nous tous" (L'Affaire Aristarco-Renzi), in: Cahiers du cinéma, no. 28, November 1953, pp. 2–3.

Patalas, exchanged letters with him. Bearing in mind Kracauer's cited correspondence with Guido Aristarco, he was also one of "Filmkritik"'s links to "Cinema Nuovo" and Italian left-wing film journalism. Thus, it was a triangular relationship, and the letters show that they all met in Venice in 1958. And thus, "Filmkritik" members slowly became a part of the European network of critical film culture. Ulrich Gregor became friends with a couple of French critics and with "Cinema Nuovo"'s Guido Aristarco whom he visited every year after the Venice Film Festival.[34] "Filmkritik" published texts by their new cineast friends, while some of its authors started to write articles as German correspondents for "Cinema Nuovo" or French and British magazines during the 1950s. Of course, these articles were written with a critical impetus towards their domestic film making. Texts by these critics and by critical emigrants confirmed West German cinema's bad reputation at that time. It was Patalas who complained about the current German movies, but also decried the general "conformisme politique", the "mentalità collettiva coerente alla restaurazione sociale e politica", and the "tendency towards scarcely disguised expressions of admiration for Nazism" in his columns for "cinéma", "Cinema Nuovo", and "Sight and Sound".[35]

The "Filmkritik" case shows that the network's contacts and links were not only generated and cultivated by exchanging letters and articles, by reading and promoting each other's texts, but also in personal meetings and conversations. As soon as possible, "Filmkritik" members started to travel to the bigger European festivals. Especially the Venice and Cannes Festivals were common platforms for critics. In Cannes, "Cahiers du cinéma" organized their annual "déjeuner" for critics and filmmakers. "Cinema Nuovo" held a reception at the Venice Festival: The published photographs of their 1956 "cocktail" show the directors Luchino Visconti and John Grierson, publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, and some Soviet filmmakers, all absorbed in eager discussions.[36] Patalas, Gregor and the other German critics around "Filmkritik" were well-known in Venice or Cannes by the end of the 1950s.[37]

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34 These hints are taken from Aristarco's and Kracauer's letters and from an oral history interview with Ulrich Gregor in 2012.

35 Cf. Enno Patalas, A propos du Dernier Pont. Tendances actuelles du cinéma allemand, in: cinéma 55, no. 4, March 1955, pp. 56–59; id., 08/15, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 73, 25.12.1955, pp. 453–454; id., The German Waste Land, in: Sight and Sound, no. 1, summer 1956, pp. 24–27.

36 Cf. Petit Journal du Cinéma, in: Cahiers du cinéma, no. 109, July 1960, pp. 40–42; Il cocktail di Cinema Nuovo, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 90–91, 1.10.1956, pp. 160–161.

37 "Cahiers du cinéma" critic Louis Marcorelles called Enno Patalas a "figure familière des festivaliers" – Louis Marcorelles, Revue des revues, in: Cahiers du cinéma, no. 94, April 1959, p. 58. The Venice festival's sources stored in the Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee show that, for

However, the prominent festivals were not without controversy in the eyes of left-wing film culture. Cannes was reproached for its focus on stardom and film business. Venice often witnessed disputes on the influence of Christian Democratic politicians. Thus, the smaller European festivals were at least equally interesting for critical film experts. They were even more important for the "Filmkritik" circle in its early years since they had less obstacles to full participation and offered more possibilities to meet in quiet. At the international film club meetings in Southern Germany, they got to know French critic Chris Marker and Patalas and Aristarco arranged their first exchange of articles in Locarno, in 1955.[38]

As often as possible, left-wing Western European film journalists tried to meet at Eastern European festivals, too, and they constantly advocated broader Eastern participation at the Western festivals. The general openness towards Eastern European films and culture was a remarkable trait of "Cinema Nuovo"'s and "Filmkritik"'s social criticism and their nonconformist attitude. Some exemplary statements, issues, and encounters at festivals will follow. But before, it is necessary to clarify that both the "Cinema Nuovo" group and the "Filmkritik" group should not be simply understood as obedient apologists of the Soviet sphere. Unlike many critics of the communist "Unità" or "Calendario del popolo", "Cinema Nuovo" authors had also criticized Soviet films for schematism or outright propaganda. In the middle of the Italian left's crisis in 1956, Renzo Renzi started a long debate, readjusting the group's attitude towards Eastern movies.[39] "Filmkritik" attacked some of the few GDR films which made it to FRG cinemas for one-sidedness and their low artistic standards. Such comments lead to harsh polemics by Eastern film magazines and even to police interrogations during their trips to Eastern Berlin.[40]

On the other hand, a certain critically differentiated openness towards Eastern popular culture was sufficiently provocative in the critics' homelands governed by Christian Democrats. In 1951, Renzi lamented the absence of Eastern films at the Venice Festival

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instance in 1958, Patalas and Gregor took part in organized trips to the laguna together with Guido Aristarco, many Italian or French critics and many other internationally well-known cineastes.

38 Cf. Patalas, Schluchsee (see note 16), p. 65, and the correspondence between Kracauer and Patalas.

39 Cf. Renzo Renzi, Sciolti dal "Giuramento", in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 84, 10. 6. 1956, pp. 340–342; Guido Fink, Per una stelletta in più. Mito sovietico e mito americano nella critica cinematografica italiana, in: Pier Paolo D'Attorre (Ed.), Nemici per la pelle. Sogno americano e mito sovietico nell'Italia contemporanea, Milano 1991, pp. 349–361, at pp. 357–359.

40 Cf. Enno Patalas, Karlsbad. Zwei zu eins für die Scharfmacher, in: Filmkritik, Nr. 3, 1958, pp. 320–325, at p. 325.

and in Italian cinemas – his text was one of the reasons for their dismissal at "Cinema".[41] Stefano Pisu has, in fact, found evidence that for example the Italian Ministry of the Interior strictly controlled the Venice schedule to prevent communist influence.[42] When films from the East were admitted from 1953 on, "Cinema Nuovo"'s verdict was clear: "Nessuno che non sia viziato d'oscurantismo potrà negare che, senza la partecipazione che v'è stata dell'Unione Sovietica e dei paesi di nuova democrazia al festival, la Mostra di Venezia sarebbe naufragata.".[43]

"Filmkritik" authors often underlined the qualities of the GDR director Konrad Wolf or of the films which Wolfgang Staudte had shot in Eastern Germany, precisely analyzing the Nazi past and its post-war echoes. In contrast, these films were not appreciated by the major part of the Western German film press.[44] The Western Berlin Film Festival met constant criticism in the "Filmkritik" reports as it excluded pictures from the Soviet Union, the GDR, and other Warsaw Pact countries until the 1970s. The European counterparts of the young left-wing critics shared this view. "Sight and Sound" called the Berlinale "the lame runner among the international festivals" because of "its political discriminations", and "Cinema Nuovo" spoke of a "politica di barriere culturali assurda e dannosa". In the 1950s, and not exclusively in left-wing journals, readers could find a lot of comments attacking the Federal Republic's contribution at international festivals or the Berlin festival, sometimes even combining it with reproaches for Nazi and militaristic nostalgia or West Berlin's ugliness.[45]

Unlike Berlin, Karlovy Vary was favoured in the international network of critical film culture for its relatively liberal atmosphere. In tense Cold War years, attentive participants noticed a changing tone in the speeches or in the seating arrangements, but in general, as "Sight and Sound" put it, the Czech Festival was seen as an "opportunity

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41   Cf. Renzo Renzi, Passaporto per Karlovy Vary, in: Cinema, no. 55, 1. 2. 1951, p. 29.

42   Cf. Stefano Pisu, Stalin a Venezia. L'Urss alla Mostra del cinema fra diplomazia culturale e scontro ideologico (1932–1953), Soveria Mannelli 2013, pp. 191–223.

43   Tommaso Chiaretti, Lo smoking delle coscienze, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 19, 15. 9. 1953, pp. 179–180, at p. 179.

44   For Staudte's reception in Western Germany cf. for instance Ulrike Weckel, Begrenzte Spiel-räume. Wolfgang Staudtes Filme und deren Rezeption im Kalten Krieg, in: Thomas Linden-berger (Ed.), Massenmedien im Kalten Krieg. Akteure, Bilder, Resonanzen, Köln 2006, pp. 25–47.

45   Quotes taken from David Robinson, The festivals. Berlin, in: Sight and Sound, no. 6, autumn 1958, pp. 287–288, at p. 288; Luigi Fossati, 140 chilometri di pellicola, in: Cinema Nuovo, no. 111, 15. 7. 1957, pp. 40–41, at p. 41; cf. also Jean Douchet, Festivals. Berlin, in: Cahiers du cinéma, no. 110, August 1960, pp. 48–51.

for international encounters hardly possible elsewhere". For the French "Positif" clique, it was a festival without vanity and tricks.[46] Guido Aristarco regularly represented the "Cinema Nuovo" staff in Karlovy Vary, where he also met his "Filmkritik" friends. One of them, Enno Patalas, similarly described the festivals benefits, i. e. the lack of privileges or the concentrated debates:

> "Anders als Venedig, Cannes und Berlin, die repräsentationsbeflissenen Film-(kunst-) messen, ist Karlsbad ein Diskussionsfestival. Alle Teilnehmer sind in vier benachbarten Hotels untergebracht; alle speisen gemeinsam, wenn auch an national getrennten Tischen; die alltäglichen Mitternachtsempfänge kennen keine Privilegien: jeder Teilnehmer wird eingeladen. Kein Portier, kein Agent schirmt die Großen ab gegen neugierige Frager. Gelegenheit zu Unterhaltungen bietet sich allenthalben ... Das sind keine Pressekonferenzen, wie man sie von den anderen Festivals kennt ... hier muß sich ein Regisseur vor hundert Zuhörern scharfe Kritik gefallen lassen und seine Arbeit rechtfertigen."[47]

To summarize and to return to this paper's essential questions: Seen from Germany, transnational film culture still was a one-way street, and "Filmkritik" worked on closing the gap on the international network of film critics, film historians, and film theorists. It was "Cinema Nuovo"'s urge to proudly export Italian realism and the related critical writing which next to the precious and nutritious international encounters substantially fueled "Filmkritik"'s dynamic. "Filmkritik"'s early, and dynamic opposition to West German mainstream cinema helped to push it towards the 1960s renewal. And it was one of the early contributions to a general renewal of West German society in this decade. This is what transfer history and entangled history can reveal as an international dimension of German history after 1945.

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46   Cf. John Gillett, The Festivals. Karlovy Vary, in: Sight and Sound, no. 6, autumn 1958, pp. 286–287; Raymond Borde, Karlovy-Vary. Du nouveau à l'Est, in: Positif 25–26 (1957), pp. 27–32, at p. 27.

47   Enno Patalas, Dieses Jahr in Karlsbad, in: Filmkritik, Nr. 7, 1962, pp. 297–299, at p. 297.

Robert S. C. Gordon

Production, Myth and Misprision in Early Holocaust Cinema

"L'ebreo errante" (Goffredo Alessandrini, 1948)

Abstract

This essay examines the production, style and narrative mode of a highly significant, if until recently largely forgotten early Italian Holocaust film, Goffredo Alessandrini's "L'ebreo errante" ("The Wandering Jew", 1948), starring a young Vittorio Gassman and Valentina Cortese. The film is analysed as a hybrid work, through its production history in the disrupted setting of the post-war Roman film industry, through its aesthetics, and through its bold, although often incoherent attempts to address the emerging history of the concentration camps and the genocide of Europe's Jews. Emphasis is placed on its very incoherence, its blindspots, clichés and contradictions, as well as on its occasionally sophisticated genre touches, and confident stylistic and formal tropes. These aspects are read together as powerfully emblematic of Italy's confusions in the 1940s over its recent history and responsibilities for Fascism, the war and the Holocaust, and of the potential for cinema to address these profound historical questions.

In the immediate months and years following liberation and the end of the war in 1945, the Italian film industry went through a period of instability, transition and reconstruction just like the rest of the country, devastated and destabilized as it had been by the wars and civil wars since 1940, not to speak of more than two decades of dictatorship.[1] In parallel with the periodization of national politics, where the transition is conventionally seen as coming to an end with the bitterly fought parliamentary elections of April 1948, the post-war instability of the film industry can be given a *terminus a quo* at the emblematic re-opening of the Cinecittà film studios in Rome in 1948, following several years of

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1 On the post-war film industry, cf. Vito Zagarrio, L'industria italiana tra crisi della produzione e boom dell'esercizio, in: Callisto Cosulich (Ed.), Storia del cinema italiana, vol. 7: 1945/1948, Venezia 2003, pp. 363–387.

use as a displaced persons camp.[2] Between 1945 and 1947, modes of film production as the industry recovered were often improvised and highly localised, not quite artisanal but certainly fluid and fragmented, yet nevertheless showing remarkable signs of vitality and dynamism in the face of both material difficulty and problematic continuities with the heavily Fascistized industry of the 1930s–1940s. In standard accounts of film history, this contingent set of conditions has been understood as laying the basis, almost accidentally, for some of the key practices and aesthetic tenets of neo-realism as it emerged in precisely these years, for example the use of location shooting, rough film-stock, non-professional actors and compelling contemporary narratives subjects. But this was far from the only or even the most representative feature of Italian films made in that period and that committed politicized and broadly leftist cinema was by no means the only template against which to interrogate recent history through film. Indeed, it is something of an anachronism to map back onto the period 1945–1948 critical categories that were only defined and settled *a posteriori* and that at the time were part of a wider and more fluid spectrum of possibility, debate and practice. This essay looks at the production, style and narrative mode of one important, if until recently largely forgotten film from 1948, Goffredo Alessandrini's "L'ebreo errante", starring a young Vittorio Gassman and Valentina Cortese, as a powerful example of that other perspective on Italian film history and its relation to the war and Fascism. "L'ebreo errante" is a film that displays, both in its production conditions and production values, a decidedly disjointed aesthetic that is a long way from neo-realism, but which nevertheless addresses compelling questions about the recent war, and in particular the concentration camps and the genocide of Europe's Jews, questions that no other Italian film of the moment proved capable or willing to address so directly nor so centrally. It is also a film that is heavily symptomatic of the complex lines of international mobility converging on Rome in the immediate post-war years, with actors from across Europe passing through the city, along with refugees, DPs, fleeing Nazis and migrating Jews, as well as many tens of thousands of returning soldiers or former prisoners. "L'ebreo errante" is read here precisely through its strained incoherence, its multiple blindspots, its prejudices, clichés and contradictions, as well as through its often sophisticated, multi-genre touches and varied stylistic and formal tropes, as a powerful emblem of Italy's early confusion or misprisions in processing its recent history and responsibilities, in deciphering the wider meanings of the war and what was later

2   Cf. Noa Steimatsky, The Cinecittà Refugee Camp (1944–1950), in: October, no. 128, Spring 2009, pp. 22–50.

called the Holocaust, and in the potential for film to capture and improvise narrative out of these challenges. [3]

1 Production and Networks

Goffredo Alessandrini was 44 years old in 1948 and had been a major figure in the Fascist-era film industry, directing both light *telefoni bianchi* comedies (e. g. "La segretaria privata", 1931; "Seconda B", 1934) and military, historical and colonial epics, with clear Fascist overtones (e. g. "Luciano Serra pilota", 1938; "Giarabub", 1942; "Noi vivi", 1942). His wide spectrum of experience and striking abilities as a director certainly fed into the unusually varied patchwork of different modes and genres of filmmaking stitched together in "L'ebreo errante", in what looks in retrospect like an unacknowledged symptom of the difficulty in dealing with genocide in 1947 in Italy, but which was also undoubtedly made possible by the sheer verve of this director's filmography and the toolbox at his disposal.

The transition to post-war and to a post-Fascist democracy for figures such as Alessandrini was as complicated and ambivalent as it was for very many figures across vast sectors of the Italian state and civic society. His near contemporary Roberto Rossellini, who had also been a highly active director in the early 1940s working with the military through the structures of the Fascist film industry, swiftly launched himself into a Christian-humanist, anti-Fascist, neo-realist mode that obscured for decades his previous work and made him something of a hero of the new cinema. Alessandrini, in contrast, a far more established and more compromised figure, was never able to reach the same level of success after the war. He was, however, only minimally prevented from working officially because of his associations with the regime: alongside figures such as Augusto Genina and Carmine Gallone, he was banned from filmmaking activity for only

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3   After a long period of neglect, the film has been the subject of a handful of recent studies, which I draw on here: Damiano Garofalo, Deicides, Sacrifices and Other Crucifixions. For a Critical Reinterpretation of Italian Holocaust Cinema, in: Modern Italy 22,2 (2017), pp. 143–153; Alessandro Izzi, Repression and Nightmares. Italian Cinema in the Shadow of the Shoah, in: Trauma and Memory 5,3 (2017), pp. 78–89; Millicent Marcus, Italian Film in the Shadow of Auschwitz, Toronto 2007, pp. 31–32; Emiliano Perra, Conflicts of Memory. The Reception of Holocaust Films and TV Programmes in Italy, 1945 to the Present, Oxford 2010, pp. 33–38.

six months.[4] He returned first with a realist melodrama, "Furia" (1947), before shooting "L'ebreo errante" in 1947. The censor's *nulla osta* for the film was obtained on 17 January 1948, countersigned by *sottosegretario* at the ministry Giulio Andreotti on 22 January, and the film went on general release in February 1948.[5]

The film was produced by a company called Cinematografica Distributori Indipendenti (C.D.I. or DI), as the name suggests more usually associated with distribution than production, and this is in itself symptomatic of the temporary and improvised arrangements that characterized this moment. C.D.I. produced only a handful of Italian films between 1946 and 1952, including comedy vehicles for Totò ("Fifa e arena", 1948; "Totòtarzan", 1950), other comedies and a melodrama, "Aquila nera" (1946), directed by Riccardo Freda who also directed a version of "Les Misérables" for Carlo Ponti in 1948, productions which shared several actors with "L'ebreo errante" including the female lead Valentina Cortese. Some C.D.I. films are credited to the producer Nino Angioletti, a relative of the literary figure Giovanni Battista Angioletti who was responsible with Alessandrini (and a further group of credited writers), for the treatment, adaptation and updating of the Biblical myth of the Wandering Jew that had been elaborated and disseminated since the middle ages and famously reprised in Eugène Sue's vast 19th-century serial novel "Le Juif errant" (1844–1845). Sue's novel was in fact only marginally concerned with the eponymous Jew and is not likely to have been a direct source for Alessandrini's film in any of its detail; generalized features of the myth and interferences from popular culture, imagery and even earlier film versions are more probable sources.[6] Angioletti the writer was a figure associated with the 1920s and 1930s mode of highly stylized, dense and evocative literature known as *prosa d'arte*, and in some of the staged and rhetorical aspects of the script of "L'ebreo errante", we can no doubt see the hand of this figure and his literary formation. In the choice of the text itself, it is possible to see Alessandrini and Angioletti rejecting and remaking Nazi attempts to appropriate the myth for its

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4   On the 'défascistisation manquée' of the film industry, cf. Marie-France Courriol, Cinéma et expérience totalitaire. Le laboratoire du genre du film de guerre dans l'Italie fasciste (1935–1943), PhD dissertation, Université de Lille-III (2015), pp. 478–492.

5   The censor certificate is available at URL: http://www.italiataglia.it/files/visti21000_wm_pdf/3676.pdf (2.11.2020). It indicates that one cut was required (see below p. 147).

6   The earliest elaboration of the myth on film was a striking short by pioneer Georges Méliès, "Le Juif errant" (1904), now at URL: https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xhfcki (2.11.2020). A popular British version, "Wandering Jew" (director M. Elvey, 1933), starred German exile and anti-Nazi actor Conrad Veidt, later to appear as the Nazi Major Straesser in "Casablanca" (director M. Curtiz, 1942). Veidt also starred in a 1934 British version of "Jew Suss" (director L. Mendes), often contrasted to the virulently anti-Semitic Nazi version, "Jud Süss" (1940).

own virulent anti-Semitic campaigns, including in a notorious propaganda film overseen by Goebbels, "Der ewige Jude" (director F. Hippler, 1940), which chronicled the Nazi invasion of Poland and the depravity and vices of the Jews, and appeared in the same year as the widely successful fiction film "Jud Süss" (director V. Harlan, 1940) which shared many of the same profoundly racist stereotypes.[7]

The film was shot on studio sets in the Farnesina area of Rome – and on land behind them in the Grottarossa area[8] – which belonged to the historic Italian production company Titanus. Titanus had its origins in the Lombardo Company, founded by Gustavo Lombardo as far back as 1904 in Naples, and having gone through various renamings, temporary closures and refoundings, it still operates today.[9] Like other producers, indeed like Cinecittà, Titanus was forced to suspend its production activities between 1944 and 1948, although its studios remained available for rental by other producers after the war, as happened with Alessandrini's film. Titanus would re-launch after 1948 with its highly successful wave of new melodramas directed by Raffaele Matarazzo and starring Amedeo Nazzarri, starting with "Catene" (1949).

Several of the crew and actors, both lead and minor, in "L'ebreo errante" allow us to trace multiple lines of connection to contemporary films, producers (Titanus and others) and genres, including classic works of neo-realism, melodrama, historical drama and comedy, all of which underscore the complex webs of intersection sustaining the Italian industry at this moment, and thus also the permeable and hybrid modes in which some of these films addressed contemporary subject-matter such as the war and its legacy. The range of the cast also confirms the distinctly international flavour of Italian film in this late 1940s moment, well before the better-known period of glamorous cosmopolitanism and international co-production of the 1950s–1960s in Rome (Hollywood on the Tiber): "L'ebreo errante" included players from Italy, Germany, Austria, France and Russia, among others.

The lead actor was a young Vittorio Gassman (spelled Gassmann in the credits), later one of the greatest figures of stage and screen in Italy, who was already building a reputation as a stage actor (between 1945 and 1947, he had played in Arthur Miller's "All My Sons" and in "Hamlet" for Luigi Squarzina, as well as in Cocteau for Luchino Visconti), but who had only played in a few unheralded films before "L'ebreo errante". His major breakthrough would come the following year with "Riso amaro" (director

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7   "Jud Süss" was shown at the curtailed wartime Venice film festival in September 1940.

8   Gassman recalled the shooting locations; cf. Giacomo Gambetti, Vittorio Gassman, Roma 1999, p. 88.

9   Aldo Bernardini / Vittorio Martinelli, Un secolo Titanus. Cinema, Roma 2005.

G. De Santis, 1949). Gassman's part-Jewish background possibly explains his intense participation in Alessandrini's project, although this was never a prominent feature of his public profile then or after.[10] (Several other actors on the project were also Jewish, including for example Cesare Polacco, who had worked regularly with Alessandrini in the early 1940s and in other C.D.I. productions.) Gassman worked also with Riccardo Freda in "Il cavaliere misterioso" (1948) along with another minor, but significant player from "L'ebreo errante", Giovanni or Hans Hinrich, an Austrian actor (and director in his own right) who plays the camp commandant Albert Schuster. Hinrich had also appeared in Freda's "I miserabili", noted above, along with Valentina Cortese (and a young Marcello Mastroianni), with script contributions from Mario Monicelli, who is also indicated in some sources as an uncredited writer for "L'ebreo errante". Cortese had already become an established star in the early 1940s, working with a string of major directors including Alessandrini. Shortly after shooting "L'ebreo errante", she signed for 20th-Century Fox and worked between Hollywood and Italy for several years. The elderly Jewish scientist Epstein in Alessandrini's film was played by Pietr Scharoff (sometimes: Petr Sharov), a Russian actor (as well as theatre director and former pupil of Stanislawski and Meyerhold), who also worked several times for Freda and with Cortese on different film projects, including a 1950 film with Cortese, "Donne senza nome" (director G. von Radvanyi), a film which has, remarkably, been recently revealed as containing a small speaking role as an extra played by Nazi refugee and war criminal, former Nazi Governor of Krakow, Galicia and official in Salò, responsible for the murder of more than 100 000 Jews, Otto von Wächter. Wächter died in Rome in 1949, possibly poisoned, whilst waiting to take the ratline route to South America with the help of Vatican figures such as Bishop Alois Hudal.[11] Also appearing in a small role as Cortese's fiancé in "Donne senza nome" was Lamberto Maggiorani, almost exclusively remembered today as the non-professional actor and factory worker plucked from obscurity to play the father in Vittorio De Sica's neo-realist classic "Ladri di biciclette" (1948). The contingent lines of convergence in biography, history and film history that bring Maggiorani, Wächter, Cortese and Scharoff together on the same set are head-spinning, somewhere between farce and tragedy.

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10   Cf. e. g. Roberto Zadik, Gassman era ebreo?, in: Mosaico, 26. 10. 2017 (URL: http://www .mosaico-cem.it/cultura-e-societa/taccuino-di-roberto-zadik/gassman-era-ebreo-a-17-anni-dalla-sua -morte-ricordo-di-uno-dei-piu-grandi-attori-italiani; 2. 11. 2020).

11   Wächter's post-war story is the subject of a BBC podcast by Philippe Sands, Intrigue. The Ratline, BBC Radio 4 (2018); cf. episode 5: "La forza del destino", for his work at Cinecittà. Now also in book form: Philippe Sands, The Ratline, London 2020.

Further minor players and webs of connection link "L'ebreo errante" to high canonical works of neo-realist cinema: for example, the devious servant and Nazi spy in Paris, Hans, is played with vigour by the Austrian-born actor Harry Feist, who is far better known for playing Roberto Rossellini's Nazi officer and torturer Major Bergmann in "Roma città aperta" (1945), for many the first and essential archetype of the corrupt, cruel Nazi in post-war European cinema. (His sinister control over Rome from the comfort of his desk in Rossellini's film is emblematic of precisely the kind of cold Nazi rule over occupied Europe carried out by officials such as Wächter.) If anything, Feist's reprise of a similar role of the heartless Nazi in "L'ebreo errante" is even more devious, as he is disguised in his initial scenes as the loyal servant to his Jewish master Blumenthal (Gassman), before turning on him when Paris is occupied by his Nazi masters. (Feist was also in Freda's "Aquila nera", clearly something of a sister-film in terms of casting and production to "L'ebreo errante".) A minor German in the film, Müller, is played by Carlo Jachino, an established composer and musicologist who, among a handful of other screen appearances, had also played the tramp in "Ladri di biciclette" accosted by Lamberto Maggiorani and his son in their desperate effort to locate the eponymous thief of the bicycle. And finally, the French patriot Deschamps who clashes with the selfish Blumenthal as the Nazis close in was played by Amilcare Pettinelli, one of the voice-over narrators of Visconti's "La terra trema" (although some credits give the alternative name Aristodemo Pettinelli).

There is a kind of gossipy, film-world fascination with all these lines of connection, but they make a more serious point also about the intersecting webs, personal and professional networks, and also fluid interchangeability of people and technical skill that made up the film world at this moment (indeed at any moment, as this is an industry of rapid, rolling convergences and divergences between different projects), as well as the role of Rome in the 1940s as an extraordinary maelstrom of transient figures and groups. In terms of the implications of this for film history, there is clearly no watertight distinction to be made, therefore, between high and low, neo-realist and popular, and indeed Italian and international production; and "L'ebreo errante" confirms this hybridity, as we shall see, not only in its production but also within its complex narrative, formal and stylitic fabric.

After release in February 1948, the reception of "L'ebreo errante" was reasonably positive. It ranked seventh at the box office in the 1947/1948 season and – in an interesting acknowledgement of the need for the Italian cinema industry and the wider culture to tackle such issues as the Holocaust, but also an indication that this was an exceptional attempt to do so – Angioletti was awarded a Special prize at the Nastro d'Argento ceremony for 1948, cited "per il significato morale del Soggetto". Emiliano

Perra has studied in detail the cluster of newspaper and magazine reviews of the film,[12] linking it to a handful of other rare, attempts to say something on screen about the Holocaust in the 1940s; "Il monastero di Santa Chiara" (director M. Sequi, 1949), "Il grido della terra" (director D. Coletti, 1949), and an unmade script project from Vasco Pratolini, "I fidanzati". Perra notes that there were fewer press reviews than might be expected of "L'ebreo errante" simply because as it clashed with the release dates of Chaplin's "Monsieur Verdoux".

Nevertheless, a spectrum of responses pointed, on the one hand, to the clearly Christian, sacrificial thrust of the film and, on the other, to its attempts to capture the reality of the concentration camps. This spectrum derives primarily from different ideological positions in different newspaper organs – "La nuova stampa" (the post-war name for the relaunched "La stampa") emphasized the realism, "L'osservatore romano" the Catholic message – but it is also found within single reviews, which perceive all too clearly the uneven variety of positions within the film itself: as a review in "Il nuovo corriere della sera" review put it, "è uno strano film ... sbanda, curiosamente, tra l'allegoria e il documentario" (8 February 1949). Reviewers were also well aware of the sheer technical virtuosity of Alessandrini's direction, one commenting on "La narrazione ... fluida e ... un ritmo sicuro e avvincente. Abbiamo notato alcune sequenze veramente ben riuscite, valorizzate ancor più da una splendida fotografia" ("Intermezzo", 15 April 1948).

2   Provisional Knowledge: the Holocaust in Italy, 1947–1948

This pullulating, dynamic world of film production rubs up against the profound historical and moral problem of the Holocaust in "L'ebreo errante" and the result is surprising, forced and uncertain in equal measure. How did Angioletti, Alessandrini and the makers of this project begin to confront such a problem and what was the state of awareness and remembrance of what we now call the Holocaust in Italy in 1947–1948? Certainly there was next-to-nothing of a prior film tradition to draw on: as Perra confirms, it was "one of the earliest attempts to represent the concentration camps, not just in Italian cinema but also in European cinema". A clue to the practical measures taken by Alessandrini to address this comes in two unusual on-screen credits:

– Ambientazione ebraica: Alessandro Fersen
– Ambientazione campo concentramento: Aldo Bizzarri

12   Perra, Conflicts of Memory (see note 3), pp. 35–38.

Both these figures are significant. Fersen was born in Lodz in 1911, then in the Russian Empire, grew up in Italy and became a leading figure in Italian-Jewish theatre, as well as in modern Italian theatre more broadly, after the war.[13] He was one of the co-authors, with writer and artist Carlo Levi, of the 1949 film "Il grido della terra", mentioned above, a Zionist drama of emigration from post-war Italy to Palestine and the struggle for statehood against the British, which contains clear echoes of the Holocaust and the persecution of the Jews as the precursor to the struggle for Israel. Fersen played a small role in "Grido" as a rabbi and for both this and "L'ebreo errante", as the credits suggest, he was the source of what is a surprising level of attention to Jewish community and ritual in "L'ebreo errante": for example in group scenes in the Paris synagogue or in the recital of the 'Shema' and 'Kaddish' prayers at poignant moments in the film (although including also at somewhat anomalous moments). For all of its somewhat tone-deaf Christological narrative framework, then, Fersen ensured that in the detail and texture of Jewish life shown on screen, there is a degree of sensitivity and accuracy.

Bizzarri, on the other hand, credited as adviser for the 'concentration camp setting', takes us directly into the historical reality of the Nazi camps and, again, to a surprising, if qualified level of accuracy in the presentation of the camp scenes, which take up the entire second half of the film. Like Angioletti, Bizzarri moved in literary circles in the 1920s and 1930s and was not without Fascist sympathies, writing for the journal "Novecento" and then travelling abroad as a cultural attaché to Chile, France, Portugal and Hungary. In Hungary in 1944, he was arrested for anti-Nazi activities and deported to Mauthausen. Immediately after the war, he published two insightful, if now largely forgotten books about Mauthausen, one analytical and factual and the other narrative and fictional: "Mauthausen città ermetica" (1946) and "Proibito vivere" (1947).[14] The former is an acute sociological analysis of the camp 'system', its structure and rules both

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13   There are other connections in post-war Holocaust culture to Italian-Jewish figures from the theatre, who also worked in film and this is a field that requires further research. Another example is Leopoldo Trieste, later a regular character actor in dozens of films for Fellini, Rossellini, Risi and other *commedia all'italiana* productions, who wrote a play in 1947 called "Cronaca", an intense drama about betrayal, revenge and a kind of redemption, centred on a Jewish concentration camp survivor Daniele. As Perra points out, "Cronaca" was adapted for the screen in 1953 as "Febbre di vivere" (director C. Gora), with all reference to Jewishness and the Holocaust eliminated; Perra, Conflicts of Memory (see note 3), pp. 40–41. On "Cronaca", cf. Charles Leavitt, Italian Neorealism. A Cultural History, Toronto 2020, pp. 118–122.

14   Aldo Bizzarri, Mauthausen città ermetica, Roma 1946; id., Proibito vivere, Milano 1947; cf. Robert S. C. Gordon, An Intellectual at Mauthausen: Aldo Bizzarri Between Essay, Fiction (and Cinema), in: Laboratoire italien, no. 24, 2020 (URL: http://journals.openedition.org.ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/laboratoireitalien/4521; 10. 8. 2020).

written and unwritten; the later a fictionalized account of imprisonment in Mauthausen, which sets storytelling itself at the heart of the representation of the camps. A group of prisoners gather on successive Sundays to tell each other stories and recite poems (a play on Boccaccio's plague stories in the "Decameron"), but each meeting is more precarious and poignant than the last, as one or more of the group are missing, either moved on to other camps or dead from exhaustion, starvation or murder. "L'ebreo errante", too, makes a point of showing its viewers several deaths in the camp, punctuating its central heroic narrative of rebellion and escape.

Bizzarri's experiences at Mauthausen flag up also an ambiguity in "L'ebreo errante". The concentration camp in the film is not named, but it is clearly located in the diegesis in Poland. This and perhaps the later emergence of Auschwitz as the name of the emblematic extermination and concentration camp has led some critics to assume that the setting is indeed Auschwitz. This would possibly be confirmed by the sign at the entrance, 'Arbeit macht frei', a feature of Auschwitz, Dachau and some other camps, but by no means of all Nazi camps. Bizzarri's role, and the central setting within the camp – repeatedly and powerfully evoked in several scenes by Alessandrini – of the quarry, with its steep inclines and back-breaking labour, a notorious feature of the Mauthausen camp, as well as the general look of the camp Appellplatz, suggests that the imagined setting is as much Bizzarri's Mauthausen as Auschwitz, or at least an amalgam of the two. It is of note also that neither gas chambers nor tattooed numbers are evoked in the film at any point, despite the central role of both in the history and the image of Auschwitz as it emerged later in the post-war era.[15]

This blurring in the evocation of the concentration camp site, even with the guiding hand of a camp survivor and even in a film that does a lot of work in its second half – unlike its theatrical and melodramatic first half, and alongside several more implausible and stylised elements in this second half – to document concrete elements of the reality of the Lager, is intensely symptomatic of this moment of partial or incomplete Holocaust awareness in the mid-late 1940s. If the spread of images and basic awareness of Nazi atrocities was wide across Europe and the world thanks to the reportages of the camp liberations in 1944–1945 and aspects of the Nuremberg trials, the details were of-

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15   There was a working gas chamber at Mauthausen, using Zyklon B just as at Auschwitz, but it worked on a smaller scale and is less central to the symbolic memory of the camp. Cf. Bruno Maida, La camera a gas a Mauthausen (URL: http://www.deportati.it/gas_maida-pdf; 2. 11. 2020). Of the major camps, only Auschwitz used tattoos. Mauthausen was more generally prominent in Italy and the Italian press in 1945; cf. e. g. the headline in "Avanti!", "Mauthausen: nome d'eterna infamia. / I 'campi di concentramento' – Uccisi col gas, la benzina e con le sevizie – Mezzo milione di uomini bruciati nei forni" (27. 5. 1945).

ten blurred or shaky, the balance of geography, chronology and quantification frequently skewed, exaggerated or inaccurate. An example with echoes in the script of "L'ebreo errante" is the widely circulating Soviet figure of 4 million victims at Auschwitz alone, only later corrected to the current established figure of around 1 million. "L'ebreo errante" makes a revealing similar mistake in numbers and chronology, when one of its minor characters, in a Parisian synagogue in 1940, laments that "millioni di fratelli sono stati uccisi", although we now know the full force of the genocide, first by bullets and then by gas, only began to produce mass deaths on this scale in 1941, with a rapid acceleration following the Wannsee conference of January 1942.

The state of awareness of the Holocaust, in Italy and more generally, was not only determined by correct or incorrect information, however. "L'ebreo errante" is also part of the first phase of reflection and response, of the first cultural and collective processing of the meanings of the war, Nazism and Fascism, and their crimes, including the persecution of the Jews. Key aspects of this early moment in understanding include a confusion and blurring of victims, such that the specificity of the Jewish genocide was not yet fully crystallized as distinct, in some sense qualitatively and quantitatively different from other seams of murderous Nazi violence. "L'ebreo errante" does focus on the Jews –unusually for this moment – but it does so in ways which struggle to pin down the specificity of their condition and history and which broadly overlays Christian myth and morals onto its specific Jewish narrative. But it would be anachronistic to dismiss this as symptomatic merely of error or wilful misrepresentation, since a universalising and Christianising, or better Christian humanist thrust was a powerful feature of early post-war response. This was most apparent in widespread rhetorical evocations of categories such as 'man', 'mankind', the 'human', thrown into turmoil and crisis by the epochal disaster of Nazism and the camps. We can see this at work in well-known deportation narratives by both Jewish and anti-Fascists victims, from Primo Levi's book-title "If This is a Man" (1947) to Robert Antelme's "The Human Species" (1947); or, in semi-Christianized and semi-mythical form, in the title of a deportation memoir such as Gino Gregori's "Ecce homo Mauthausen"; or in Alberto Moravia's existentialist reflections in his 1946 essay "Uomo come fine".[16] And it is worth noting also another tension, within Italy, between the relative scarcity of early accounts that point to a specifically Italian role in this history, and the more prevalent tendency to adopt the vast scale and universal challenges

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16   Primo Levi, Se questo è un uomo, Turin 1947; Robert Antelme, L'Espèce humaine, Paris 1947; Gino Gregori, Ecce homo Mauthausen, Milano 1946; Alberto Moravia, L'uomo come fine (1946), later published in: id., L'uomo come fine, Milano 1964.

posed by the genocide as a means to set to one side or simply not conceive of an Italian aspect to the Holocaust; to pay attention to stories from elsewhere in this regard, and especially to German, Nazi perpetrators. "L'ebreo errante" certainly fits within this clear trend, one that would last for decades, as its narrative makes not a single reference to Italy or Italians, as it traverses fictional territory from Germany to Palestine, France, and Poland.

An understanding of the state of knowledge and the categories available in the later 1940s to describe the phenomenon of the genocide can help us read "L'ebreo errante" not – or not only – with the facile critical eye of hindsight, through what is 'wrong' or 'inappropriate' in it, but instead as embedded in a specific way of seeing characteristic of its historical moment and of a particular mode and moment in the history of filmmaking.

3   "L'ebreo errante" (1948)

With all the converging lines of people, places and memories of the recent past, in the midst of the difficult transition from Fascism to the Republic, in an unstable but dynamically re-emerging film industry, "L'ebreo errante" emerges, perhaps unsurprisingly, as itself a patchwork. It tells its story, or stories, in two halves of approximately 48 minutes' duration each, the first split across three principal sites and time periods, including one long flashback, and the second staged entirely in and around a Nazi concentration camp in Poland. The film starts in Germany – Frankfurt, we later learn – in 1935 (screentime appx. 8'); we return in flashback to New Testament Palestine (introduced by the superimposed title: "20 secoli fa, a Gerusalemme"; appx. 10'); on completion of the flashback, we return, via a brief time-lapse journey through anti-Semitic medieval Europe (1348 and the Black Death in Germany; Ferdinand and Isabella's Spain in 1492), to 1935 (appx. 3'), before fading forward to Paris in 1940. A segment of sentimental and communal melodrama amongst the Jewish community in Paris (appx. 23') is followed by their arrest, scenes at a Paris train track, cattle-trucks, and finally arrival in the unnamed concentration camp of the second half.

The narrative is somewhat complex and worth tracing in some detail. A destitute vagabond desperate for help ("dovete salvarmi") visits a wise old man whom we later learn is a famous scientist, Epstein, in the Frankfurt Jewish community. On leaving, the vagabond collapses and seems to die, but is reborn the following morning as a young man, although Epstein recognises him by his eyes. In a flashback to Biblical Jerusalem, the young man tells his story: he is Matteo, a rich merchant who mocks Jesus as a "falso profeta" and as complicit with the Romans. He refuses to ask for Jesus's aid when his

son is mortally wounded by a viper, despite his wife's pleas. Seeing Christ at Golgotha, Matteo smashes a water-jar offered to his lips and Christ curses him to become the "wandering Jew": "il mio cammino è breve ormai, ma tu camminerai nei secoli dei secoli, finché la verità non sarà discesa in te". Matteo thus cursed is seen wandering through deserts, unable to die, through the centuries back to the present, 1935. Epstein, his niece Ester looking on, is sympathetic ("è un infelice che soffre"), but he cannot help, science cannot help. Matteo is left hardened with bitterness and hatred of both God and his fellow man.

We move forward five years to Paris in 1940, where Epstein and his niece have taken refuge among the exiled 'Eastern European Jewish Community', now in turmoil with Nazi occupation imminent. They agree to appeal for help to Blumenthal, an immensely rich, hard-hearted Jewish financier. Blumenthal is of course Matteo, the wandering Jew, now with a blond Aryan lover Elena, a devout manservant Hans and a luxurious déco apartment. Matteo argues with and mocks his moneyed French companions, because he will happily work with the Germans; he fobs off Epstein and his niece with a useless cheque. But something in Ester moves him (Elena comments acidly, "preferisci quella piccola sporca ebrea a me") and when the Germans reach Paris, he goes to join the group at the Jewish community. The Gestapo arrives, searching for Epstein, accompanied by Elena as an informant and then Hans, now unmasked in full Nazi uniform. After interrogation and tense searches, Matteo declares "Io sono uno di loro" and he joins Ester and the others under arrest and on the deportation train.

On arrival in the concentration camp, we enter a new world and meet a cluster of new characters as we follow the entry process – the gate, a speech from the Commandant, striped uniforms and numbers, line-ups and identification, work and barrack assignments, beatings and leerings, a woman (Luisa) who rebels, shoots a solider and commits suicide electrocuted on the barbed wire. The film chronicles the camp scene, spending a long time especially – in long-shot and deep-focus – on complex quarry sequences, watching the prisoners at back-breaking labour, overlooked by zealous guards. One prisoner is shot dead and we witness his corpse carried by a railtruck up a hill, arms spread in an echo of Golgotha. Slowly, unevenly, plot reasserts itself: the Nazis try to force Epstein to reprise his neurological experiments on prisoners; he refuses and is executed in the Appellplatz ("Fratelli, io muoio per la giusta causa! Amatevi sempre!"). Matteo and his fellows plan an escape, using dynamite and an elaborate series of steps, including also Ester, now assistant to camp Commandant Schuster. Following a series of explosions, gunfights, rocky mountain and river chases, Matteo and Ester reach a bucolic cottage and find peace. Finally, however, Matteo learns from a local peasant and partisan that one hundred prisoners will be executed if he is not captured: leaving Ester to sleep, he turns himself in and is finally able to die through

his own Christ-like sacrifice, for his people and for justice ("ho un debito da saldare da molto tempo … il mio cammino è finito"). The final rolling title reads: "Il sacrificio fu cosí compiuto nell'amore di tutti gli uomini com'era nella parola del Signore. E una nuova speranza illuminò il cuore di un popolo che un fanatismo implacabile voleva cancellare dalla Terra."

As this summary suggests, the film is a bazaar of modes and genres, focal points and visual-narrative styles, a bricolage. Its movements in time and space are multiple and uneven (Frankfurt in 1935 is only briefly marked as deep in the Nazi period; the grasp of the genocide in 1940 is unsure and the camp loosely located, as noted above). Its genres are many and intersecting: there is a sentimental romance (Matteo and Ester), at times a melodrama of love set against the travails of history, at others a love triangle of betrayal across lines of wealth, class and race (Matteo, Ester and Elena), and finally also a bucolic love idyll in the country cottage after the escape; there is a Nazi spy story, of disguise and secrets, akin to Hitchcock's "Notorious" (1946) (Hans, Elena, the luxury Paris set); there is a Biblical epic or proto-peplum in the flashback sequence; there is a brief scene from a battlefield war film, as we see Paris bombed and in flames using special effects; and in the camp sequences, we find sustained instances of prison, POW and escape movie genres (handsome, heroic prisoners, evil guards, secret plots, bombs, guns and escape), all entirely inappropriate to the historical experience of the Jewish victims of the Final Solution. It is the case, however, that these genres and the mode of Resistance chime clearly both with the genre of partisan or Resistance films, in an Italian context, but also with the image of Jews in rebellion apparent in one strong early mode of Holocaust remembrance in post-1948 Israel and elsewhere, which laid particular emphasis on the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, on Jews as Resisters to combat the stereotype of the Jew as passive victim.[17] Finally, "L'ebreo errante" is also, of course, a historical film and a Holocaust film *avant la lèttre*, with many of what would become stock tropes of the genre.

This modal or generic variety is accompanied by a parallel variety and indeed sophistication in cinematography, although it is also striking that Alessandrini – and his experienced cinematographer Václav Vích and editor Otello Colangeli – create patterns of connection across periods and style by using certain shots and perspectives recurrently, especially medium-long-shot crowd scenes and diagonal, low- or high-angle tracking shots. For example, the market and crowd scenes in Jerusalem, the Jewish community and synagogue interiors in Paris, the train station sequence and the several quarry and

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17   On this dynamic in Israel, cf. e. g. Tom Segev, The Seventh Million. The Israelis and the Holocaust, New York 1991.

Appellplatz sequences in the camp all share a similar economy of frame, shot and editing, which constructs a collective or a crowd setting, navigates it and traces hidden relations, looks, intimate dramas within these public spaces. Alongside these, there are also recurrent modes of filming interior sets, spaces and sequences, centred on only a handful of characters rather than the crowd, shot and edited to build moments of intensity and revelation, using equally complex and sophisticated, expressionist or melodramatic techniques: here, we might point to the study and cloistered courtyard of Epstein's home in Frankfurt; Matteo's grand home in Jerusalem and later his luxury apartment in Paris – especially striking is the geometrical staging of the four- (indeed five-)way sequence when Matteo talks to Epstein in one room, Elena meets Ester in another, and Hans spies on both – or Schuster's quarters in the camps, especially an oddly expressionistic sequence when a Nazi superior visits to meet Epstein, and Ester looks on hidden behind screens and witnesses the dramatic dialogue in silhouette.

There is both misprision and complexity in these rich arrays of genres and techniques. And for our purposes here, both are pertinent and both point to an analogous fluidity in the film in terms of narrative focalization and perspective, and thereby of the historical and moral lenses through which this film attempts to grapple with the perhaps insurmountable central challenge of narrating the Holocaust in Italy in 1947.

The moral focus of the film is heavily weighted towards its eponymous hero, Matteo the Wandering Jew, and this anti-Semitic millennial myth inevitably distorts its perspective on Jewish history, on the genocide and its specific causes and agents, through its apocryphal, Christianizing gauze. But Matteo is interestingly also more multi-faceted than this suggests: he is a 'nationalist' in Biblical Palestine, a wealthy leader who is above all anti-Roman, anti-imperial, and for this reason resents Christ's message of peace. In Paris, although consumed with cynicism, and now the very embodiment of the anti-Semitic stereotype of the greedy, selfish, rich financier, this very darkness nevertheless offers him insight into the deeper realities of power and violence – thus, only he sees that capital and power will happily flow from patriotic France to the new Nazi masters and the rich will stay rich. He has a telling 'Ozymandian' moment with Elena, an illumination won by his centuries of wandering, as he watches the German tanks roll into Paris: "[i tedeschi] credono di stampare le orme sulla pietra ma non si rendono conto di camminare sulla sabbia". And such insight lays the groundwork for his eventual intuition of the power of brotherhood, sacrifice, community, indeed love, once he undergoes his dramatic and emblematic conversion, leading to his ultimate sacrifice. One might argue, in other words, that there is a politics to Matteo's mythical narrative arc that is not exhausted by its undoubtedly inept Christianizing thrust.

Furthermore, the myth of the Wandering Jew, although misjudged and unfortunate as a matrix on which to build any coherent understanding of the Holocaust, is occa-

sionally deployed in the film to raise resonant issues, in particular questions of history and memory. The Biblical legend and Matteo's wanderings link the Nazi genocide to millennial Christian traditions of anti-Semitism, to it history, legends and myths, which are shown as real and lasting. This is by no means self-evident in the historiography: the connection was widely disavowed after the war, not least in certain Church circles. (The modern, eugenic, race-science foundations of Nazi anti-Semitism, by some contrasted to Christian deicidal anti-Semitism, is also hinted at in the film through the Nazi's obsession with Epstein and his scientific genius.) Matteo's despair at his suffering is also framed at the start of the film as explicitly a problem of memory, of the cursed weight of memory, as well as of persecution itself – "voglio perdere la memoria … dimenticare il mio dolore" – thus raising in a discordant key a foundational future problem of the post-Holocaust era. Thus, historical time, the millennial time of myth, and memory are all alluded to through Matteo's story, even if only in snatches, under-developed and submerged by a morass of other seams.

Alongside Matteo, there is at least one further key focal character in the film, Lucas Epstein (to whom we can add Ester, as a third minor focalizer between the two men, making up a kinship and moral triangle). The film opens with Matteo's encounter with Epstein; it pivots as they meet again in Paris (when Ester first talks directly to Matteo); later it turns again with Ester and Matteo's love dialogue on the deportation train (here Epstein is to one side and still hostile to Matteo); and finally, Epstein and Matteo are executed in two closely parallel scenes in the camp square. Epstein is himself a complex figure. He is both the great scientist, and thus a figure of modernity – indeed, Matteo initially comes to him in the forlorn hope that modern science might be able to save him from his ancient curse – but also the embodiment of a humane wisdom of the ages, rabbinical in his moral clarity, with a dose of New Testament preaching of brotherhood ('fratellanza'), all expressed with an equanimity captured by Scharoff's subtle acting style, in contrast to Gassman's histrionics. Epstein is certainly not lacking in courage to criticise: he is deeply hostile to Matteo in Paris, before Ester convinces him of his capacity to love, and to the Nazis in the camp. It is through Epstein also that the same vocabulary of the 'human', of 'man' in crisis, that we saw permeating early post-war responses to the Holocaust, enters the discourse of "L'ebreo errante": for Epstein, Matteo's is 'il dolore di un uomo che sconta un dolore da secoli', he cannot be 'uomo tra gli uomini', because he is incapable of loving them and sharing their suffering. It is precisely this capacity to feel empathy, to feel the suffering of others, that Matteo discovers by the end of the film and which leads to his final gesture: 'si può essere felici quando c'è tanto dolore nel mondo?', he asks Ester, echoing Epstein directly. Finally, Epstein seems literally to take on the voice of Christ cursing Matteo when he curses the Nazi officers in terms of their inhumanity: "state distruggendo voi stessi! Voi non siete più uomini … Sconterete questa bestemmia

con la vostra stessa vita!". As the moral ballast of the film, Epstein's concurrent emanation of Jewish, Christian, communal, scientific and communal-political value motifs, a sort of merged, blurred figure of plural human dignities, is possibly closer to the heart of the film's moral force and flaws than any other figure.

One final dimension of "L'ebreo errante", one surprising misprision or misstep in its representation of the camps that seems tellingly out of place, but also not without its significance for the nascent cultural imaginary of the Holocaust, is the sexualisation and homo-erotic charge that emerges in the camp sequences. For much of the film, sexuality is either absent or constrained: Ester and Matteo's love is chaste and morally pure, in contrast to stock hints of moral and sexual 'Nazi' decadence in Elena's luxuriance and ravenous desire. In the concentration camp arrival scenes, this changes: Ester is stared at lasciviously by a guard; Luisa is consigned to the camp brothel, before her act of rebellion and death. Otherwise the women are separated, to the fore largely as witnesses to executions, as mourners forced to look on by the SS (an interesting staging of the difficulty and necessity of witnessing). It is somewhat surprising, therefore, that a heavily homo-erotic thread emerges in this setting: a Kapò picks out Davide, an artist, and repeatedly tries to seduce him ("un cultore della bellezza … anch'io a mio modo", he says staring at Davide's body). Indeed, this is the point where the censors intervened with the script of "L'ebreo errante", rejecting a line inviting Davide to sleep in the same bed as the Kapò. The same Kapò has Matteo shaved, staring on with a smile at his makeover. Far more pervasively, and a clear historical anomaly with regard to the northern Polish setting of the camp, all the male prisoner-workers in the quarry are shown half bared, their often strikingly beautiful bodies glistening, variously at work, thirsty and starving, beaten and shot, rebelling and fighting.

A French publicity poster for the film (fig.) perhaps captures best the power and strangeness of this conjunction as much as any single frame from the film: erotic male bodies are shown in full rebellion mode, the title motif of the Wandering Jew and thus the genocide relegated to the bottom corner. Once again, as in other ostensibly skewed misprisions in "L'ebreo errante", this eroticized dimension has its own history and context: the Nazi as sexually 'depraved' figure was already a prevalent myth and stereotype, one that "Roma città aperta" has deployed for example with particular force, in its homosexual-Nazi characters (including Feist's Major Bergmann); and one that would continue through the popular fascination with Nazi brothels in the 1950s, for example in the notorious 1955 novel "House of Dolls" by Ka-Tzetnik 135633, and then explode into the wave of Nazi sex and porn films of the 1960s–1970s (e. g. "Pasqualino settebellezze", director L. Wertmüller, 1976; "Il portiere di notte", director L. Cavani, 1974), as well as in more serious historiographical analyses of the homoerotics of Nazi military, party and youth rituals.

Fig.: "L'ebreo errante" (director G. Alessandrini, 1948), French publicity poster.

In other words, here as in many other aspects of this teeming bazaar of a film, Alessandrini seems somehow to capture in fragments certain rather resonant or refractive intuitions and to lay down lines and figures of cultural imagination that will be further developed throughout the history of imagining the Holocaust on screen, well beyond the somewhat anomalous production conditions, the ambivalent mix of relations between the film's creators and its subject-matter, and the transitional historical moment of Italy in 1948.

Maurizio Zinni

"Italians and not Italians"

Fascism and National Identity in Post-war Italian Cinema

Abstract

One of the themes at the heart of the collective debate in the years following the war was the question of responsibility. In Italy a publicly accepted version of past events was soon pieced together. This showed the desire within society and the political parties to remove Fascism as a significant component of the national identity. Cinema was to become one of the points of reference in the fabrication of this public narration. On the screen among 1945 and mid-Fifties a clear picture emerges of a fundamentally guilt-free Italy. Italian cinema pieces together a definition of new identity-creating perimeters, openly ratifying which side was which (the Italians pictured as a community) and who was to blame (the Fascists, an easily recognisable minority given their choices and behaviour). Only during the Sixties, films portrayed Blackshirts as a kind of "national" protagonist in Italy's evolution from dictatorship to the republic. The argument over fascism was brought to light again by leftish directors in an attempt to condemn events in the past, but more importantly those in the present. At the same time, there was an attempt by the commercial cinema of the "economic miracle" to call time on fascism as painlessly as possible, representing this as a collective experience for Italians in their moral journey from dictatorship to democracy. Both strains of thought demonstrate how Fascist characters at least had been definitively included within the nation's history and community.

1   Remembering the Past, Portraying the Present, Imagining the Future

For some years historians have seen cinema as a primary source for a social, cultural and political analysis of post-war Italy.[1] The learning potential of cinema is tied to its national diffusion and the size of its audience. It was not long after the war that cinemas started to

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[1]   Bear in mind Pietro Cavallo's analysis of Second World War and immediate post-war Italy or the volume edited by Elena Dagrada, Anni Cinquanta. Il decennio più lungo del secolo breve, in: Cinema e storia 5 (2016).

fill again in the big cities and throughout the provinces.[2] The big screen continued to exert a profound influence over the individual and collective Italian mind.[3] After Fascism and the war the film audience wanted to find an easy route to their dreams and desires. Their wish was to be caught up in stories that played openly on their secret hopes and fears. Seen like this, the boom in American cinema during those years appears to be a clear sign of a common desire, no matter what social, cultural or political walk of life.[4] In spite of the objective difficulties caused by the tangible passage of the war on Italian soil, national filmmaking tried to take its first steps towards economic reorganisation.[5] The problems it faced included the destruction of several cinemas during the war, economic problems of production companies, a lack of equipment and celluloid and the fact that Cinecittà, the hub of Italian film production, had been seized by the allies and turned into a refugee camp. Of central importance was the need to adapt the language and style of the past to the new historical context. This was especially true for the changes increasingly being felt within society itself and the ongoing cultural debate.[6] The prime topics chosen by this new cinema were dramatic memories from the recent past, photographic documentation of the present and the hopes and fears hidden in a misty future of uncertainties. The plot lines wanted to seal a profound break with the Fascist period. They immersed themselves in a dash of realism that cinema of the previous decade had observed with curiosity while being held back from diving in by the strict iconographic regulations imposed on it.[7] It's with neo-realism in these years and those to come that Italian film, in its most fruitful and inspired productions, highlights an absolute common denominator: a comparison

2   Barbara Corsi, Con qualche dollaro in meno. Storia economica del cinema italiano, Roma 2001, p. 35.

3   Taking cinema as a cultural complexity of its time and the osmosis like relationship between the social cultural and economic environments it creates, while at the same time exploiting that very situation, is elaborated by Maurizio Zinni, Fascisti di celluloide. La memoria del ventennio nel cinema italiano (1945–2000), Venezia 2010, pp. 3–9.

4   On Hollywood's success in Italy both before and after the war cf. Gian Piero Brunetta, Il ruggito del leone. Hollywood alla conquista dell'impero dei sogni nell'Italia di Mussolini, Venezia 2013, and id., Il cinema neorealista italiano. Storia economica, politica e culturale, Roma-Bari 2009, pp. 158–159.

5   Lorenzo Quaglietti, Storia economico-politica del cinema italiano 1945–1980, Roma 1980, pp. 35–73.

6   On the emergence and characteristics of the neorealist movement cf. Niccolò Zapponi, I miti e le ideologie. Storia della cultura italiana 1870–1960, Napoli 1981, pp. 225–234.

7   An eye fitness report of one of the protagonists of that period is by Carlo Lizzani, in: Il cinema italiano. Dalle origini agli anni Ottanta, Roma ³1992, p. 90.

between the cine-camera and surrounding reality. The plotlines are often bitter and not always at one with the problems of the present or reconciliatory with the past. They revolve around individual tales told from the viewpoint of the "everyday man" standing as a benchmark. These were snapshots from the roots of society, maybe better to say from its heart. It was minimalist only in appearance, with the courage (as well as the capacity) to reflect, and in some cases predict, the judgment that many Italians were having of their personal past and that of the country in which they lived.

On this basis, both theoretically and in practice, precise plot lines and genres were chosen. These became implicitly political when they tried to tell of a present that tended to fade into recollections of what had really happened. This meant that there was no clear dividing line between a realistic narrative of events and recollections of the same. The story of the past ended up as a means of taking in hand the present and sowing the seeds of the future. In post-war films about the Resistance and Nazi-Fascism, the metaphor of a hike on foot is often present. It is a perfect expression of a cinema that remembers what it was but is implicitly projecting itself into a future dressed up in social and political garb. Take the final scene of Roberto Rossellini's "Roma città aperta" (1945), or Carlo Lizzani's "Achtung! Banditi!" (1951). Both films finish with a trek towards a tomorrow that's still in the making, out of the ruins of war and the sacrifice of the Resistance. "Roma città aperta" ends beneath a leaden sky over a still occupied Rome, but for the Roman Catholic Rossellini, hope lies in the backdrop of the protective dome of St. Peter's. Lizzani, a Marxist, finishes his film with a group of Partisans marching, shouldered arms, towards dawn and a better future yet to come.[8]

2 The Issue of Responsibility: Political Answers to Historical Questions

If this was the basis, it's no surprise that one of the themes at the heart of the collective debate in the months following the war was also to become one of the arguments that the film industry had to face up to when confronting Italy's recent past: the question of who was to blame.

In the shattered social context of post-war Italy, the main parties that formed the first democratic governments made a precise political decision. They put the evaluation about responsibilities, both individually and collectively, and about the deeply rooted ties

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8   Maurizio Zinni, Liberazione da cosa, Liberazione per cosa. Speranze, riflessioni, delusioni nel cinema italiano dalla ricostruzione alla contestazione, in: Paolo Carusi/Marco De Nicolò (Eds.), Il 25 aprile dopo il 25 aprile. Istituzioni, politica, cultura, Roma 2017, pp. 136–140.

between Italian society and the Fascist regime outside of the public debate. The aim of the newborn Republican politics was to heal past wounds, overcome the traumas of those two years between '43 and '45 and erase any possible cause for division or controversy. In this way, the nation could lift its head again as soon as possible and piece together a new national identity based on fresh premises compared to the previous twenty years.

So it was that after some initial soul-searching, both individual and collective, a publicly accepted version of past events was pieced together. At least up until 1948 this was endorsed by all political camps, and widely diffused on a collective level. It concentrated on a few deep-rooted topics, interpreted in such a way as to carry the country as a whole out of the experience of Fascism and into a new democratic period. It was in these months that the myth of the Resistance began to gather pace. The movement was used to purge the public consciousness, evoking Italians as upstanding citizens. Also the myth of the Italian "brava gente", in their very essence contrary to any form of degeneration and violence, took place.[9] In the same way, by taking on board Benedetto Croce's philosophical way of looking at things, Fascism could be seen as a parenthesis in the nation's evolution, making it possible, with a definitive step, at least formally, to make a clean break between the awkward experience of a totalitarian state and the history of Italy as it had unravelled from the unification onwards. Fascists were considered and depicted a kind of "inner foreigner",[10] an enemy within. This clearly showed the desire within society and the political parties to remove Fascism as a significant component of the national identity.

This new national identity mirrored itself in just the opposite of what the Fascist regime had tried to establish. This approach, both political and cultural, was adopted by the political classes and deeply rooted in society. Cinema was to become one of the points of reference in the fabrication of a public version of what Fascism and Fascists had been in a country ready and willing to turn over a new leaf without having to punish what had been individual or collective choices.

Sixteen films featuring openly Fascist characters were made between 1945 and 1948. This is a significant number, in which the black shirts weren't necessarily always chosen to play the baddy. These films concentrate on the end of the war, the struggle for Liberation and the Italian Social Republic (RSI), or the Republic of Salò. Put simply; they are about

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9   Cfr. Filippo Focardi, La guerra della memoria. La Resistenza nel dibattito politico italiano dal 1945 a oggi, Roma-Bari 2005, and id., Il cattivo tedesco e il bravo italiano. La rimozione delle colpe della Seconda guerra mondiale, Roma-Bari 2013.

10   Leonardo Paggi, Introduzione alle origini del "credo" repubblicano. Storia, memoria, politica, in: id. (Ed.), Le memorie della Repubblica, Scandicci 1999, p. XXVIII.

Fascism dictated to by its Nazi ally. The roots of Fascism, the seizure of power, the twenty years of the regime and the Italy that was willing to go along with it, were erased from the cinematographic mindset of the time. They were replaced with historical set pieces and events more comfortable to use in order to outline where the faults lay, clearly marking a distance between the nation as a whole and the crash course that Fascism had taken in the final period. So Fascism doesn't disappear from Italian screens. Instead, it undergoes the opposite, being overexposed in unexpected plotlines. All of the mistakes of the past were laid at the door of those few and easily recognisable Fascists of the Salò years. Thus Italian cinema managed to be inserted into the new democratic project for that part of a population who, for about twenty years, in different ways and with different degrees of adhesion and consent, had gone along with the regime, before growing apart from the party line during the war and in some cases going so far as to declare themselves anti-Fascist. Post-war Italian cinema reflected a past in which only a few easily identifiable individuals were to "blame". The majority were painted as alien to the regime that they'd lived with for about twenty years.

3   The Partial Memory of a Nearsighted Cinema

The way Fascists are portrayed in Italian cinema in this period highlights how, for a nation wishing to assert its innocence, the RSI was the perfect scapegoat. The primary goal was to seek new absolution. Take Roberto Rossellini's "Roma città aperta", that bulwark of post-war Italian cinema. The director's progress seems indicative of that evolving mindset that took many, via different routes, to abandon their previous beliefs to look to the future from a new and unblinkered point of view. Rossellini's Roman Catholic beliefs combine with his representation of a Nazi-occupied Rome. In a few scenes, the by now clear difference between the two is very evident. On the one hand, there are those few that continue to wear black shirts, subject to Nazi violence and treated like cowardly cutthroat brigands alienated from everyday life. On the other, there is the common mass, personified by Pina, who have by now cut off any links with the previous regime. Unlike Manfredi, the brave attempt of the masses to resist is not so much strictly political. Instead, it is guided by a sense of solidarity and humanity which brings together and bonds relationships between all components of a newly reborn Italy. With its depiction of a poorly organised handful of Fascists, the film underlines the lack of morals and ineptness of the movement. Both defects are highlighted by the scene of the roundup in the block of council flats. The operation falls through because some of the Fascists are distracted by sight, through a grate, of the legs of some of the housewives that have been stopped.

The discussion about past and present in Aldo Vergano's 1945 film "Il sole sorge ancora" (also known as "Outcry") is not that dissimilar. In the film, Fascists are young and silly, unable to fight off the Italian Resistance without Nazi support. The most significant difference is how local landlords are portrayed. They are depicted using every possible Marxist stereotype of the bourgeoisie (selfish, immoral and without a social conscience). In one line of the script, they are described as the most to blame for the takeover of fascism in 1922. They are not Fascists, but they use fascism for their own ends. This is one of the few cinematographic references to the origins of Fascism in those years. The same way of representing Fascists was chosen in other films from the same period, riding on the wave of more or less pronounced neorealism. Examples of this can be found in Giorgio Ferroni's "Pian delle stelle" in 1946, Mario Camerini's "Due lettere anonime" in 1945 and Carmine Gallone's "Avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma" in 1946. In all three the Salò Fascists, be they spies, police officers or young militiamen, are all portrayed as a lonely minority that tends to be despised by the vast majority of the population.

The same approach can also be found in other films with a different cinematographic language. These productions contributed as well to the substantial erasure of the twenty years of the regime, reducing the Fascist experience and all its crimes to those two years between 1943 and '45, laying the blame at the feet of those that had buckled to the invader's will. Here too the intended image is of a country that had fallen victim to the regime. Those few Fascists left to be seen on the big screen, as ever the Salò ones, are alienated from society, bound, inevitably, to disappear. Take Renato Castellani's 1946 film "Mio figlio professore": there's a clear distinction between Fascists before and after the armistice on September 8th. The former can be seen in the figure of the Minister for Education, who, behind all his official rhetoric, comes across as a good father and family man. The latter comes in the shape of a spruced up and scowling minister who's occupied the position of his Badoglio supporting predecessor. In the few seconds, he appears he comes across as menacing, with a penchant for interrogations. There's no getting away from the fact that after the armistice it's not the minister that worked for the twenty-year regime that goes back to his job but his replacement. It's in pictures more than the written word that the fact of whether or not a person joined the RSI is a watershed between guilty and innocent Fascists.

Mario Soldati's "Fuga in Francia" is even more interesting. The lead role is a murderous Fascist boss with no scruples. He attempts to flee a country that has by now alienated him, leaving him no reason to stay. All we know of him is his violent civil war years. The little background, which is narrated, starts with Salò and the previous twenty years are wiped clean. The inevitable destiny of his defeat is summed up in the final scene when even his son turns his back on him, choosing an emotional war veteran instead, left without house and home. This was a perfect metaphor for a country brought to its

knees by fascism but ready for a fresh start, parting from a new base strengthened by a matured public conscience and human solidarity. Subtle lighting and cultivated mind play paint him as a kind of villain worthy of that great tradition of American gangster movies. The figure of Torre the "Boss" rises above everyday baddy to become an out and out personification of evil in the worst sense of the word.

In this comparison between Fascists and non-Fascists, a clear picture emerges of a fundamentally guilt-free Italy, its people having been misled and forced to pay off their backs for the mistakes of the past. But the nation comes across as fired by the values of a new sense of collective identity ready to get up off the mat and look to a new future built on new principals. Paraphrasing the title of one of Elio Vittorini's most famous pieces, Italian cinema pieces together a definition of new identity-creating perimeters, openly ratifying which side was which and who was to blame. Whoever was on the inside was part of a nation defined by its ethical and moral principles; this was even before expressing its values and political stance. These principles appear to be the binding force behind a quest for a new national identity. Those who choose to remain outside (an easily recognisable minority given their choices and behaviour) come across as a kind foreigner on the inside, without roots in their nation's past and with no future role in the new Italy that's emerging. The need to brush under the carpet the origins of fascism, the seizure of power and the following years in which the people went along with the project was fundamental to this process, cinematographic but at the same time political and social and vital to the future of the planned democratic process.

4 A Difficult Film for "Difficult Years"

Neo-realist Italian cinema managed to isolate any mention of Fascism to the years of Salò, and those few films staged during the '30s, as "Mio figlio professore" for example, even managed to avoid the word "Fascism" or showing a black shirt. In 1948 Luigi Zampa's "Anni difficili" ("Difficult years") was the first, and, for a long time, the only film to question this widespread and deeply rooted cinematographic paradigm. It's tricky to slot Zampa into the usual ideological pigeon holes of the time. He, with screenwriter Vitaliano Brancati at his side, was courageous enough to lift his unblinkered gaze and tell of the origins of the relationship between Italians and Fascism at a time when more than one side seemed to want to forget the whole business. The film is based on Brancati's novel "Il vecchio con gli stivali" ("The old man and his boots"). For the first time, Fascism and Fascists are brought to the big screen as an integral part of Italy's recent past. The relationship between the regime and the population isn't depicted as a scam to rip off

the Italians, but instead as a coexistence with mutual interests. It involves deeply rooted ties anything but easy to cut off cleanly, and above all rapidly.

This is the story of a public employee in a small town in Sicily who accepts fascism for his interests between the '30s and the outbreak of war. The director and his screenwriter highlight the relationship between Italian society and the Fascist regime, as well as the acquiescence of the population facing the slow descent of fascism into war and the illusion that the moral and ethic disease politically represented by fascism would finish with the Liberation and the beginning of the new democratic period. A public debate followed the movie and it was released after fierce political opposition in Parliament.[11] Of the many scenes that portray a long and noxious relationship between the Fascist regime and the Italian people, there is the one following the death of the son of the leading role. The son was a soldier who had seen service on the front on and off since 1936. He was shot in the back by a German soldier on 25th July 1943. During the wake, news arrives of Mussolini's downfall. The whole town floods the streets to celebrate, waving Italian flags and singing the national anthem. For the first time, the sudden U-turn by those who had coexisted with the regime for so long without ever opposing it triggers a reaction in the impotent council worker. He heads for the local clubhouse where the district's anti-Fascists are gathered.

They are all big shots who'd preferred to keep quiet so as not to end up on the internment. There he launches into a desperate harangue against both himself and against a country that has lived side by side with fascism for over twenty years: "We're all cowards, both they that applauded and they that muttered in the shadows! It was I that killed my son." Zampa depicts two types of Fascists. On the one hand, there are the party leaders, on the other, ordinary people, Fascists out of necessity. Drawing from the commonest satirical repertory of the regime's hierarchy, his portrayal of the former is a jolly mix of ingenuousness and despotism. For a long time to come, this political class wasn't to get such an extreme and bitter battering as Zampa's. His treatment of the latter, on the other hand, reveals an attitude split between pity for their oppressed future in the hands of destiny, and a discreet, but noticeable moral counterpoint for whoever toed the line of a regime he didn't believe in, with the sole aim of bringing home the bacon. The film concentrates on the external aspects of fascism and its rhetoric, combining it with a moral rigidity that condemns, as well as derides, a whole governing class, in his eyes guilty, but there's also the guilt of those that had left them free to rule. In a similar light, it's no surprise that Zampa's "J'accuse …!" of Italian fascism should leap the confines

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11   Maurizio Zinni, Fascisti di celluloide (see note 3), p. 30.

of time to re-emerge in the first years of the Republic in the 1953 film "Anni facili".[12] The picture that emerges is that of a country whose relationship with the Fascist regime was anything but marginal. The critical and pessimistic evaluation of the regime and its legacy is tinged with Piero Gobetti's interpretation. Unlike the films that preceded it, the Fascists aren't seen as an isolated minority, but instead as a central element of the recent past. Apart from a few specific and recognisable characteristics fascism is lodged in the nation's traditional field of politics.

Over the years the iconographic and thematic paradigm that Zampa pieced together played a seminal role. In the time it evolved, and by the years of the economic boom, it had mutated into a milder and more pacific version, open to accept the Fascists in the national community. In subsequent productions, the "blameless Fascist" was looked upon in ever more understanding light. There's Totò's all-embracing philosophy in films like "Siamo uomini o caporali" (1955) or "Destinazione Piovarolo" (1955). Here "men" and "corporals" face up to each other in that predestined struggle between who has to buckle under and who gets to push people around. Come the early '60s, with comedies like Camillo Mastrocinque's "Il corazziere" (1961) and Giorgio Bianchi's "Il mio amico Benito" (1962) the everyday man was finally absolved. His only crime was to have accepted fascism "for force majeure," as opposed to politicians, condemned for their role as turncoats and two timers willing to give anything to keep a hold on the reins of power.

5 The Evolution of the Cinematographic Memory from the Ruins to the "Economic Boom"

Luigi Zampa's work is the link between the depiction of fascism in the early post-war years and that of the '60s. His iconographic paradigm revolves around two themes. One is popular jovial satire aimed at the demystification of the Fascists putting them face to face with reality, official rhetoric confronted with an individual's simplicity. The other is a harsh criticism of the Fascist power game and its inroads into everyday life. The two strands of thought run side by side in the films of the time, developing and radicalising, in a deeply political and ideological way, the spirit of Zampa's followers' critique.

A series of factors came into contact with this during Italy's boom period. The result is that cinema became a real sponge, absorbing the whims of an evolving society

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12 These two works are the first two of a trilogy on fascism which ends with the 1962 film "Anni ruggenti". The director made two other films set during the Fascist regime: "La romana" e "L'arte di arrangiarsi", both in 1954.

and touching on important aspects of the public debate over Italy's past and present. The Cold War climate was sinking deeply into Italy's political struggles of the early '50 s. With its disappearance at the end of fifties, there followed the gradual removal of any of the strict and rigid censorship restraints that had been placed on possible antigovernment propaganda, including fascism itself.[13] An increasingly widespread economic wellbeing and sense of security felt by the Middle Classes meant that they could look back on the past without fear, ready to definitively turn over a new leaf.[14] Various factors brought the debate about fascism to the fore in the media. There was an increasing likelihood that a reformist government could be formed based on a DC PSI alliance. With the fall of the Tambroni government, the last attempt by the centre parties to block the start of talks with the left was defeated; this followed imposing demonstrations that started in Genoa in July 1960 before spreading throughout the country.[15] After many years, antifascism emerged as a deep-felt opinion in the public mind leading to the definitive official consecration of the Resistance.[16] In everyday life, a substantially post-Fascist generation was born, which questioned their family past and that of the nation as a whole. Once again Fascists found a place at the center of attention, not just in film. Then followed years of what had been, for the most part, silence, coinciding with the political divisions born of the East-West standoff. In this new decade cinema production that concentrated on recent history tended to be a box office success. As a result, some 25 films on the said topic were made, taken from different, sometimes very different, angles. Strident left-wing cinema lay in the hands of Carlo Lizzani, Florestano Vancini, Giuliano Montaldo. They carried an increasingly fierce condemnation of recent events in republican times that had never fully broken its ties with a Fascist past. A series of

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13   Mino Argentieri, La censura nel cinema italiano, Roma 1974, pp. 167–168.

14   Lino Micciché has highlighted this process, in part unconscious, in some of the public, the Lower Middle Class in particular, without hiding a precise criticism of this confrontation with the past via satyrical or farcical films, purpose made to exorcise and reconcile the audience with choices made several years earlier: Lino Micciché, Cinema italiano: gli anni Sessanta e oltre, Venezia ⁴1998, p. 50. Less hard hitting is the position of Gian Piero Brunetta, who emphasises the importance of such a "return to the past", not just for cinema but society as a whole. Gian Piero Brunetta, Cent'anni di cinema italiano, vol. 2: Dal 1945 ai giorni nostri, Roma-Bari 2000, pp. 187–189.

15   Cfr. Pietro Scoppola, La Repubblica dei partiti, Bologna 1991, pp. 334–353.

16   Ernesto Galli della Loggia, La perpetuazione del fascismo e della sua minaccia come elemento strutturale della lotta politica nell'Italia repubblicana, in: Loreto Di Nucci / Ernesto Galli della Loggia (Eds.), Due nazioni. Legittimazione e delegittimazione nella storia dell'Italia contemporanea, Bologna 2003, pp. 227–262, at p. 249.

films revitalised the anti-Fascist spirit of the earliest Italian neo-realism, using it as a present-day propaganda weapon.

Much more significant and influential (at least in the short term[17]) was the return to the past of the popular cinema. Several experienced film directors (Dino Risi, Luigi Comencini, Luciano Salce, as well as Giorgio Bianchi and Camillo Mastrocinque), made a comic or lightweight production that projected a more tolerant and moderate view of the recent past. This was a conclusion to that process of national identification that, in cinema especially, had been put in motion immediately after the war.

Overall, films made during the '60s portrayed fascist Blackshirts as a kind of "national" protagonist in Italy's evolution from dictatorship to the republic. The message these two threads transmitted was contradictory. On the one hand, the argument over fascism was brought to light again in an attempt to condemn events in the past, but more importantly those in the present. On the other, there was an attempt to call time on fascism as painlessly as possible. Both strains of thought demonstrate how Fascist characters had been definitively included within the nation's history and community. The fascism that was now in the spotlight wasn't that of the two years between 1943 and 1945, but instead that of the twenty years leading up to them. Often, unlike in much of the immediate post-war cinema, there is no distinction between the Salò Fascist and that of the previous regime. By lumping together the fascism of its origins with that of its last murky years, left-wing writers shed ever more to light on the fundamental aspects at the roots of a movement. It didn't radicalise on contact with the Germans, instead, it came out into the open. The more "reconciliatory" comedies tended to aim their attention at the errors of those in charge, as opposed to the ordinary people going along with the movement. The latter tend to be depicted as caught up in something against their will, often appreciated for having dared to keep faith with their ideas and the word they gave in times when doing so wasn't just difficult but also inconvenient.

Take Florestano Vancini's 1960 film "La lunga notte del '43". The left-wing director based it on one of the five stories Giorgio Bassani set in and around Ferrara. The film uses its Fascist protagonist, the provincial hierarch Carlo Aretusi (nicknamed "Sciagura", literally "Disaster"), to transmit its message. Vancini condemns both the violent fascism of

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17 It's enough to see Vancini's interpretative line that first comes to the fore in "La lunga notte del '43" before being repeated by Gianfranco De Bosio in "Il terrorista" (1963) and Gianni Puccini in "I sette fratelli Cervi" (1968) in a direct line to the great period of political cinema with an historical plot. This takes foot during the '70s with films like Valentino Orsini's "Corbari" (1969) and Marco Leto's "La villeggiatura" (1974). Cf. Maurizio Zinni, La storia incompiuta. Antifascismo e Resistenza nel cinema politico italiano dal boom agli anni Settanta, in: Vito Zagarrio (Ed.), Cinema e antifascismo. Alla ricerca di un epos nazionale, in: Cinema e storia 4 (2015), pp. 54–81.

Salò and Italy as a whole, for being guilty of going along with twenty years of dictatorship. The nation is seen as irreparably contaminated having let sleeping dogs lie for its own interests and the desire for an easy life. In the long closing scene, the biting winter of 1943 and the carefree summer of 1960 are knitted together. It almost comes across as a footnote to the significant defeat of the anti-Fascism that had animated the years of the Liberation. First, there's the funeral of a Fascist depicted as a triumph; then, the film shows the same town fifteen years later, a place with no recollection of its past, as the son of an anti-Fascist martyr shakes hands with the Fascist who decided to kill his father. The director wants the audience to know that fascism has not been defeated, leaving the connection between the two historical situations plain to see.

In a completely different light are the farcical representations found in Luciano Salce's "Il federale" (1961), Camillo Mastrocinque's "Il corazziere" (1961) and "Gli eroi del doppio gioco" (1962) and Giorgio Bianchi's "Il mio amico Benito" and "Il cambio della guardia" (1962).

These works were often heavily opposed by the critics, especially the more militant ones.[18] Italy had left the war years behind and was booming economically. This meant that it was in a position to look back on its recent past not with a judgemental eye looking for culprits, but in an attempt to understand events and finally erase them forever. At the cinema it wasn't just the Fascists of the *ventennio*, Italy's twenty-year regime, who were depicted. Even those that continued to toe the party line after the armistice of 8th September were depicted as naive protagonists, free of blame in that "minor" series of events that made way for the "major" ones after Liberation Day on 25th April 1945. This rebirth was felt throughout the country and the ideals it embraced, more moral and ethical rather than political. Those same ideals lay at the base of that new republican religion that the early neo-realistic cinema had begun to nurture even before the war ended. These films and their characters enlarged the boundaries of Italy's national identity, strictly tied to the novelty of Italy's "economic miracle." The Republic and its political religion, thanks to the success of its political and economic project, were now so strong that they could include within their borders not only the Italians who had supported the Fascist regime during those twenty years but also those who had remained Fascist in the final two years of civil war. It was no longer a question of when, but of how,

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18   An example is Vice's review of "Gli eroi del doppio gioco", in: L'Unità, 12. 8. 1962: "Not even a torrid August like this can justify 'Gli eroi del doppiogioco' doing the rounds, it's a squalid little film about a local official in a small town in Emilia, caught in the crossfire he tries to wheedle his way between Black Shirts and Germans on one side and partisans on the other … The end result is a glib, botched mess full of rhetoric, but most of all lies ('we too have our honour' shamelessly pronounces one Black Shirt).".

with coherence and loyalty to an ideal at the forefront, be it Fascist or democratic. The historical perspective of these movies is not political but emotional and reflects the point of view of the protagonists, ordinary people who are trying to live during the dictatorship before attempting to survive the war years. In this way, the individual events portrayed on the big screen reflected a collective journey that reabsorbed and ultimately justified past errors. This decidedly moralistic approach shifted the emphasis of any criticism of the recent past from a reasonably ideological stance to a more personal approach. The suffering, difficulties, and emotions portrayed on film replaced a real political maturation of their protagonists. A picture of fascism that was a common denominator in the lives of many came to the fore. An example of this is the line of the leading light in "Il corazziere". When opposing the arrest of a Fascist leader he says: "Here, if you arrest him, you're going have to arrest forty million." The relationship with fascism that comes across is often superficial, and tailor-made for the plot. The protagonist of "Il mio amico Benito", a "Fascist out of necessity," admits, that "beneath this bombastic uniform there's a simple office worker who wants nothing more than to be the administrator! If you think I'm going to be promoted on merit you're in cloud cuckoo land!". The discriminating factor behind any evaluation of how much a person was to blame lay in the moral upstanding of the individual and how much he sticks to his views in his thoughts and deeds. Along these lines, certain characters that would have been unthinkable a few years earlier were conjured up. Take the leading role in "Il federale" for example or even more to the point the hierarchical father of the family in "Gli eroi del doppio gioco". The latter follows his political destiny into the ranks of the Republic of Salò. As part of the National Republican Guard, he rounds up partisans, justifying his actions to his ever more critical daughter with the words "it's a law of honour, respect for certain principles." He stands faithful to the end to his beliefs, firm by his ultimate cause in life.

The plotlines of these films re-evaluated the Fascist role, or at least that of a certain number of Italians that had dressed a black shirt. They had been fully absorbed by Italian society as a whole, and its recent history, in spite of their role at opposite ends from that expressed by militant left-wing filmmakers. While "La lunga notte del '43" did throw some doubts over how effective the anti-Fascist desire had been within the ranks of the new Italian Republic, the films cited just now highlighted the influences on the presence of the period the nation had recently gone through. How Italy clung on to its recent past wasn't seen in a negative light. There was a conviction that it was only by uniting the two sides that had fought so vehemently against each other during two years of civil war would there be true new dawn for the country and its people. It's no surprise then that these films didn't end with the defeat of Fascism and victory of Democracy, but instead with an end to that fratricidal struggle and the beginning of a new season of collaboration, more human than political. Fifteen years on from the end of the conflict the Liberation

was still seen as a collective moral triumph. This was how it had been portrayed in the months immediately following 25th April 1945. There had been a parting of the ways between a distant "black" past and a shadow-free present that by now felt safe. In the post-war years, except for the Salò contingent, nobody was seen as genuinely Fascist so. As a result, nobody was to blame, and all were ready for a fresh start in a new democratic age. In the Sixties, merely to be Fascist didn't necessarily mean to become a social outcast.

In film imagery of the time, the difficult path that left the war behind (more so than the experience of fascism) stood as the beginning of a process of historical re-elaboration of the recent past and identity reconstruction. In an Italy in the midst of an economic "miracle", this will of leaving the past behind was achieved – at least on the big screen.

Damiano Garofalo

Images of Germans in Post-war Italian Cinema

Abstract

This essay aims at tracing the models of representation of the Germans in Italian post-war cinema. Taking into consideration dozens of films produced in Italy between '40s and '50s dealing with the memory of Fascism, Second World War, Holocaust and the Resistance, the essay questions the so-called "bad German" memorial paradigm, attempting to underline the persistences or removals of this mythology in Italian films of the period. The aim is to understand what kind of function the Germans and the Nazis assume in these works, if they have a symbolic, memorial and historiographical value, or they are just functional to the cinematic narration. Moreover, the essay discusses whether these characteristics appear differentiated, or they recall the nationalist stereotypes of those years. Analyzing four cases more deeply ("Roma città aperta", "Anni difficili", "Achtung! Banditi!", and "Kapò"), this essay argues how the German characters reveal their characteristic of persecutors in their relationship with the Italian "victims". As a final accomplishment, this essay inserts these representations into a wider medial and cultural system, trying to understand how these definitions and typologies affect both the local and national public memory.

1 Introduction

The history of Second World War and the relations between Germany and Italy have been central in Italian post-war film culture. This paper aims at understanding how post-war Italian cinema assisted in the construction of a national and stereotypical public image of Germans in Italy. I argue that the film industry strengthened a collective consciousness by presenting Fascism and Italian-German relations in different ways. In the following inquiry, four popular Italian films produced in the years between 1945 and 1959 are examined, and each film is used for an example for a specific genre. Moreover, this research examines the use of several representations of Germans by other media such as the post-war press and television. I will first outline my methodology and provide a brief historical overview of post-war Italian cinema and further analyze the films in detail.

2 Methodology

The analytical approach serves as the main methodological tool to analyze the films. In this systematic approach, the accuracy of facts and characters presented in each film will be neglected. Instead, the article focuses on the stereotypical representation of the "good Italian" and the "bad German". This myth has been deconstructed by Filippo Focardi, whose work has primarily inspired my research focus. Focardi's analysis links the construction of a "codified" image of the German enemy to the image of the memory of war and Fascism. The latter was produced both by an anti-Fascist environment and by the monarchical establishment. Focardi attempts to reconstruct the steps of the affirmation of the German image as "barbaric and oppressor". According to Focardi, the myth of the "bad German" manifested itself as a self-absolutory myth, overshadowing the "shared memories" which had emerged in the context of resistance.[1] The manifestation of the "bad German" in Italian film culture emerged slowly and not immediately after 1945.

3 Italian Post-war Cinema and History

The Italian post-war cinema culture can be divided into three main phases. The first phase (1945–1959) in which the memory of the Nazi occupation was not central, except for a few seminal cases in the immediate aftermath. The second phase (1960–1965) is marked by an increase of war films due to the general rediscovery of the war film genre during the 1960s. During this second phase, the greater diffusion of audiovisual documents like, e. g. newsreel became apparent. The paradigmatic myth of the "bad German" was established during the third phase of Italian post-war cinema culture (1965–1970). In the late beginning of the 1970s, the political myth started to transform into a psychological and sexual issue. For instance, the German representation of domination no longer justifies war but sexual submission. All of these phases are characterized by a relationship between cinema and collective memory. The memory differs from phase to

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1   Cf. Filippo Focardi, Il cattivo tedesco e il bravo italiano, Roma-Bari 2013.

phase, but central and reacquiring themes are Fascism,[2] the Resistance,[3] the Second World War,[4] and the Holocaust[5]. These stimulating studies provide good frameworks to define the historical and cultural context, understanding trends in film genres, and choosing the most significant cases for analyzation. However, none of these studies focuses directly on the "bad German" myth. These origins lay in the first phase of post-war memory, which is often referred to as "the years of silence".

During all the phases of post-war cinema, an explicit condemnation towards Nazism emerged from Italian cinema. This strong anti-Nazism allowed a partial reduction of the indictment of Italian faults in the atrocities of the War and in the advent of Fascism itself. In the post-war period as a whole, the cinema tried to cover a void in collective life. Filmmakers attempted to respond to the need of metabolizing the trauma of war by using nonrealistic political projects.

The post-liberation war films used Christian values to transform the Fascistic period from a traumatic event into a salvific symbol. These post-liberation films were embedded in the genre of Resistance films and they often drew on Christological imaginary, for instance, in the case of the redemption of all Italians during the post-war period, who are consequently absolved from their committed sins. The redemption is reached through a salvific, cathartic and paradigmatic representation of the hero's death, which is built sharply in opposition to the image of the "bad German".[6] Therefore, post-war Italian cinema can also be divided in different genres or corpuses of historical films.

2   Cf. Maurizio Zinni, Fascisti di celluloide. La memoria del ventennio nel cinema italiano (1945–2000), Venezia 2010; Giuliana Minghelli, Landscape and Memory in Post-Fascist Italian Film. Cinema Year Zero, New York 2013, and Giacomo Lichtner, Fascism in Italian Cinema since 1945. The Politics and Aesthetics of Memory, Basingstoke 2013.

3   Cf. Giuseppe Ghigi, La memoria inquieta. Cinema e Resistenza, Cafoscarina, Venezia 2009; Cinema, resistenza, storia. Antifascismo e resistenza nella storia della cinematografia italiana (1944–1985), Milano 1987, and Phil Cooke, The Legacy of the Italian Resistance, Basingstoke 2011.

4   Cf. Sara Pesce, Memoria e immaginario. La seconda guerra mondiale nel cinema, Recco 2008, and Christopher Wagstaff, Italian Neorealist Cinema. An Aesthetic Approach, Toronto 2007.

5   Cf. Millicent Marcus, Italian Film in The Shadow of Auschwitz, Toronto 2007; Emiliano Perra, Conflicts of Memory. The Reception of Holocaust Films and TV Programmes in Italy, 1945 to the Present, Oxford 2010; Giacomo Lichtner, Film and the Shoah in France and Italy, London-Portland 2008, and Robert S. C. Gordon, The Holocaust in Italian Culture, 1944–2010, Stanford 2010.

6   On this topic cf. Damiano Garofalo, Deicides, Sacrifices and Other Crucifixions. For a Critical Reinterpretation of Italian Holocaust Cinema, in: Giacomo Lichtner / Sarah Patricia Hill / Alan O'Leary, History and Memory in Italian Cinema, in: Modern Italy 22,2 (2017), pp. 143–153.

One of them is the so-called "historical Resistance" corpus ("filone storico-resistenziale", which is part of the neorealist genre). According to the film historian Gian Piero Brunetta, Resistance films have a strong Marxist and anti-Fascist ideological basis; he argues that the genre was born around 1959.[7] It needs to be mentioned that even though many Resistance films were released during the 1960s, several origins of this genre appear even earlier between 1945 and 1955. The film critic Lino Micciché pins the origins of the Resistance genre to the immediate post-war productive system and to the political debate coming from this period. Micciché stated, that "the neocapitalist ambitions and the reforming hopes met themselves in the common need to historically liquidate the Fascism".[8] The fact that films like "Un giorno nella vita" (1946, Alessandro Blasetti), "Il sole sorge ancora" (1946, Aldo Vergano), "Achtung! Banditi!" (1951, Carlo Lizzani), "Gli sbandati" (1955, Citto Maselli), and most prominently "Roma città aperta" (1945, Roberto Rossellini) were all released between 1945 and 1955 confirms Micciché's observation. The producers of these films can be seen as important influencers and, due to the successive use of typical representations of Nazis and Germans, forerunners of the discussed sub-genre.

Comedy film is the second genre which deals with the memory of Fascism. Comedy films were also a product of these post-war trends, but are not so closely related to political cinema. Rather they are linked to popular cinema, which becomes especially evident when examining the 1960s of Italian cinema. Moreover, the 1960s are characterized by the so-called "centrist cinema" ("cinema del centrismo").[9] This term goes back to Micciché and allows the integration of Fascism and Resistance films, which did not propose a clear "progressive" political vision, but instead used popular themes like melodrama – "Pian delle stelle" (1946, Giorgio Ferroni), "Due lettere anonime" (1945, Mario Camerini), "Estate violenta" (1959, Valerio Urlini) – comedy – "Anni difficili" (1948, Luigi Zampa) and others – or both – "Penne nere" (1952, Oreste Biancoli). All these films used to be viewed by Marxist film critics as "reactionary" movies.[10]

The third genre deals with the Holocaust and was especially popular in the 1960s and 70s. Movies like "L'ebreo errante" (1948, Goffredo Alessandrini), "Monastero di

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7   Gian Piero Brunetta, Storia del cinema italiano, Roma ⁴2001, p. 192.

8   Lino Micciché, Il cinema italiano degli anni sessanta, Venezia 1978, p. 31 (translation from Italian is mine).

9   Id., Dal neorealismo al cinema del centrism, in: Giorgio Tinazzi (Ed.), Il cinema italiano degli anni '50, Venezia 1979, pp. 21–32.

10   For a reconstruction of this debate, cf. Paolo Noto, Dal bozzetto ai generi. Il cinema italiano dei primi anni cinquanta, Torino 2011.

Santa Chiara" (1949, Mario Sequi) and especially "Kapò" (1959, Gillo Pontecorvo) serve as prime examples. All these Holocaust films were released during the 15 years following the end of the war and can be considered formative agents of a canon that developed in subsequent decades and was not confined to the cinema alone.[11] These films use a strongly christianised imaginary of the Holocaust, which contributed to create a national paradigm that is centered on the recurring themes of the Holocaust as the inevitable historical sacrifice of a people. Victims are here not only the Italian Jews but all Italians. This issue survived during the 60s and 70s and contributed to the formation of national identity due to a juxtaposition between Italians and Germans. The later-examined case studies are paradigmatic for the above-mentioned type of films. But first I will provide an analysis of the main inspirational film for the examined genres, "Roma, città aperta".

4 The Birth of the Modern Gaze: "Roma città aperta" (1945)

Roberto Rossellini used several victim-perpetrator dynamics in "Roma città aperta" to depict social interactions. The relationships between victims (Italians) and perpetrators (Germans) in the movie are fertile ground both for the Resistance and the post-war Holocaust public memory (especially with regards to the cinema and the visual culture). This analogy connects to Ilan Avisar's idea, that all the connections between Nazism and sexual deviances are directly related to "Roma, città aperta".[12] I argue that this suggestion can be enlarged to an analysis of the relationship between Ingrid and Marina, in which several elements of the relationship between victims, perpetrators, and even sadomasochistic paradigm lie. Moreover, Manfredi's torture scene entails the outlined dichotomy of victim and perpetrator, a theme the relationship between Ingrid and Marina is clearly based on. Marina is a spy, which represents a dubious mixture of victim and perpetrator. Ingrid is presented in a deeply manic way: first, through the features of her face and second through her attitudes, which coincides with the control and the power that she uses on Marina. The relationship between them represents the contrast between Ingrid as a "male character", representing the Nazi virility, and Marina as a "feminine

11 Cf. Andrea Minuz, Cinema, società italiana e percezione della Shoah nel primo dopoguerra (1945–1951), in: Andrea Minuz / Guido Vitiello (Eds.), La Shoah nel cinema italiano, in: Cinema e Storia 1 (2018), pp. 33–48.

12 Cf. Ilan Avisar, Screening the Holocaust. Cinema's Images of the Unimaginable, Bloomington-Indianapolis 1988, pp. 157–158.

diva". This devious relationship, which is certainly affected by Marina's drug addiction, is based on a strong sexual lesbian attraction.[13]

Ingrid represents Nazism as a phenomenon that is closely linked to sexual ambiguity and depravation. This interpretation is apparent due to the effeminate characterization of SS officer Bergmann. The representation of two German figures of power, with an undefined sexual identity, but involved in a strange and ambivalent relationship, is strongly characterized by meanness and cruelty, in a sort of double personification of the so-called "absolute evil". According to David Forgacs, all the characters of the film are created on an inner contrast between a male part and a female component.[14] For some characters, this connection opposes their gender identity, for instance in the case of Ingrid and Bergmann (which is a bizarre name coincidence for Rossellini), but also Pina, who has an explicit male identity. Taking into consideration these ambiguous rules, the mirror scene assumes an evoking role: Marina looks through the mirror to find her identity, while at the same time she is touched and violated by Ingrid.

Besides the relationship of Ingrid and Marina, the element of torture is connected to the aesthetic background of Nazism. In all Italian films dealing with Nazism, the representation of torture is often connected to an erotic and sadomasochistic element. These elements are directly linked to what is called "torture porn" movies. To gain more depth in this analysis, it is interesting to interpret Manfredi's torture scene as an erotic impulse, which is negotiated by the distinctive feature of Nazism. Paying specific attention to this sequence, we can note a strong ritualized representation of torture that seems to be free from any sexual or erotic feature.[15] But beside the victim (Manfredi) and perpetrator (Bergmann) dichotomy, we can observe a third element of the staging: the Don Pietro's gaze. Bergmann forces Don Pietro to observe the horrific torture scene which arguably gains the character of voyeuristic acting. Don Pietro cannot look away, and Rossellini represents his gaze through different camera perspectives. By the repetition of the compulsive act, the spectator identifies himself with the priest's perspective, which can be considered a proper "Italian gaze". With regards to this scene, the French critic

13   For an in-depth analysis of the character of Marina, cf. Dom Holdaway / Dalila Missero, Re-reading Marina. Sexuality, Materialism and the Construction of Italy, in: Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies 6,3 (2018), pp. 343–358.

14   For this interpretation, cf. David Forgacs, Rome Open City (British Film Institute), London 2000.

15   For an analysis of this scene, cf. Karl Schoonover, Brutal Vision. The Neorealist Body in Postwar Italian Cinema, London-Minneapolis 2012, pp. 124–132.

Serge Daney talked about the "birth of the modern gaze".[16] By using this voyeuristic identification, Rossellini creates a strong discontinuity with the pre-war classical cinema.

I argue that the torture scene is the forerunner of the depiction of inhuman tortures perpetrated by Nazis in Resistance and Holocaust films. I would like to point out the cross-cutting between the torture room and the living room. In the living room we can see SS officers drinking wine, playing cards, and talking about Aryanism and racist issues while there is piano music playing in the background. This technique creates a setting strongly characterized by decadency and kitsch, which is based on the conflict of a "high culture" and torture perversions. This conflict will be a recurring feature in several Italian films on Nazism.

5   The Centrist Cinema: "Anni difficili" (1948)

The film "Anni difficili" serves as a prime example to describe the "centrist cinema" genre. The film is a comedy-drama, which is starring Umberto Spadaro and Massimo Girotti and was adapted from the 1946 short story "Il Vecchio con gli stivali". It is written by Sergio Amidei and the Sicilian author Vitaliano Brancati (which is commonly known for the novels "Don Giovanni in Sicilia", 1941 and "Il Bell'Antonio", 1949). As mentioned above, the neorealist memory of Fascism was not an all-encompassing orthodoxy and there was indeed some space for alternative reconstruction of the years of Fascism. Luigi Zampa's impressive and fertile body of work (38 titles between 1933 and 1979) provides such alternatives in a stimulating way. Between 1947 and 1962, Zampa made multiple films explicitly concerned with Italy under the Mussolini regime. Unlike the predominant political and ideological anti-Fascism, which is typical for neorealism (liked to social and economic justice), Zampa and Brancati's anti-Fascism is rather of moral character. Compared to Rossellini's Catholic and humanitarian works, Zampa's films appear to be more sensitive to politics and politicians, disillusioned, suspicious of Marxism, and inspired by Christian Democratic values. This conforms to Giacomo Lichtner's observation that "Zampa and Brancati's films invariably condemn the elites as avid, cowardly, and opportunistic, and focus on the common man, often assigning similar traits to him. A judgment however, which is always tinged with compassion and offset by punishment that the elites invariably escape".[17]

16   Serge Daney, La Rampe (bis), in: id., La Rampe. Cahier critique 1970–1982, Paris 1983, p. 171.

17   Giacomo Lichtner, Fascism in Italian cinema (see note 2), p. 65. For a very detailed analysis of these titles, cf. the chapter dedicated to Zampa and Brancati in Lichtner's book (pp. 63–83). For

"Anni difficili" can be considered the first part of a trilogy. It was written by Brancati and directed by Zampa (the other two are "Anni facili", 1953, and "L'arte di arrangiarsi", 1954, both are set in post-war years). This film was presented at the 9th Venice Film Festival, in 1948, together with "La terra trema" (director Luchino Visconti) and "Fuga in Francia" (director Mario Soldati). Aldo Piscitello (Umberto Spadaro) is a municipal employee in the town of Modica, Sicily. With Mussolini's rise to power, Piscitello is forced to join the Fascist party by his boss, if not he will lose his job. Piscitello reluctantly joins the Fascists and even backdates his enrollment to 1921 (aiming to get more state money). He became sort of an unpersuaded Fascist, a friendly and benevolent *camicia nera*. As a member of the Fascist party, he maintains contacts to his anti-Fascist friends who meet at the local pharmacist. The power and the ideology of the Fascists are omnipresent and always ridiculed. There are military drills on weekends, public gatherings and secret agents who control the private life of Italians. Even Bellini's "Norma" is censored by the Fascists, because of its presumed anti-roman message. Piscitello's son, Giovanni (Massimo Girotti), who returns from the military service hopes to take up an ordinary life, but, as Italy allies with Germany, he has to re-join the military. When the war comes to an end, everyone – even former Fascists – celebrate except Piscitello. In the end all former Fascists claim to be anti-Fascists – and the vast majority is successful in doing so.

The film inspired a lively debate in post-war Italy: many influential figures of the post-war political scene were reflected in the Fascist bureaucrats of Zampa's film. At the same time, violent attacks by the right-wing movement arrived, asking the authorities to censor the film for a defamation of the nation.[18] On August 1948 a Commission representative of the Ministry of Justice assessed the film and "judging the film to be offensive of the Italian people, the Commission has resolved not to take a position in its regard".[19] Due to the fact that the film was released before the 1949 Andreotti Law, the film entrenches Christian democratic policy towards cinema, its funding and censorship. However, not only the Fascist "nostalgic", but also many leaders and critics of the Communist Party – some of whom were former members of Fascist university groups – accused Zampa and Brancati of denigrating the Italian people. According to these critics, Italians kept always some anti-Fascistic sentiments. Italo Calvino was a young

a wider look on Zampa's films, cf. Alberto Pezzotta, Ridere civilmente. Il cinema di Luigi Zampa, Bologna 2012.

18   Cf. Marco Bertoldi, Anni difficili, in: Il Giornale di Brescia, 4. 1. 2016.

19   "Revisione Cinematografica Definitiva: Appunto", 18. 8. 1948, Anni Difficili, Ufficio di Revisione Cinematografica, Direzione Generale dello Spettacolo, Ministero dei Beni Culturali, Rome, already mentioned in Lichtner, Fascism in Italian cinema (see note 2), p. 67.

admirer of the film who expressed his favorable opinion on "L'Unità". In contrast to the members of the Communist Party, Palmiro Togliatti (the secretary of the PCI) defended the film. Togliatti praised the quality of the historical-political judgment and the public morality of the protagonist.[20] In addition to Togliatti, Giulio Andreotti surprisingly sponsored the film, admitting that

> "the film is an exposition of common situations and emotions performed with remarkable sense of measure and a light touch. It is the story of a poor devil who pays the price for political developments: unfortunately, this is a scenario that many Italians have known, and it may be a rare occasion in which each of us, be they Fascist, anti-Fascist or a-Fascist can feel part of this experience".[21]

One of the greatest Italian writers, Leonardo Sciascia, wrote about Brancati's importance in post-war Italian culture, observing that

> "Brancati is the Italian writer who best represented the two Italian comedies, the one that regards Fascism and the other one eroticism, in relation to each other and as a mirror of a country where respect for private life and the ideas of each and everyone, as well as the sense of individual liberty, are absolutely unknown. Fascism and eroticism, however, are also tragedies in our country: but Brancati collected the comic events and involved them in comic and tragic situations".[22]

The German version of the film was changed drastically due to the harsh representations of Germans.[23] In West Germany the film was released in 1951 (in East Germany a year later) with the title "Mitgerissen" (meaning in English: "Dragged along"), the producer Fernando Briguglio cut out twenty minutes. The representation of Germans was the primary reason for cutting. I would like to address how Germans are treated well by Italians, with a sort of reverence rather than in opposition. Most of the Italians, in

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20   Cf. Goffredo Fofi, Gli anni difficili di Luigi Zampa, in: L'Internazionale, 11.11.2015.

21   Giulio Andreotti's answer to a Parliamentary question by Senators Giuseppe Magliano, Mario Cingolani, Giovanni Persico and Emilio Battista, 27.11.1948. Atti Parlamentari del Senato della Repubblica. 1948. Discussioni III. 27 ottobre – 21 dicembre 1948, pp. 4020–4023, quoted and translated by Lichtner, Fascism in Italian Cinema (see note 2), p. 69.

22   Leonardo Sciascia, Don Giovanni a Catania, in: La corda pazza. Scrittori e cose della Sicilia, Torino 1970.

23   Cf. the 2015 DVD edition of the film produced by Fondazione Cineteca Italiana.

fact, seem to be "friendly Fascist", not persuaded by the extreme right-wing ideology, just moving in their environment for reasons of convenience. It is not by chance that the Germans use to talk in Italian with a strong German accent, so they are partially humanized by Zampa. Moreover, almost all Germans are represented as blonde. It stands in symbolic juxtaposition with the dark-haired Sicilian people. Italian used to refer to them as "the blonde tall men of the Luftwaffe", or as "big boots people". After the arrival on the isle, some girls exclaimed positively: "what a hell of a race!", making fun, at the same time, of several Sicilian guys of small stature. Here, Germans are primarily introduced by archival footage – we assist to cinema audience looking to a Luce newsreel on Nazism and Hitler – passing through a partial humanization but ending only as ruthless and coward killers.

6 Resistance Films: "Achtung! Banditi!" (1951)

In post-war resistance films, Second World War is commonly and explicitly portrayed as a war of liberation from the Germans. In most post-war resistance films Italian Fascists appear infrequently and are often portrayed as hand puppets of german Fascists. As a consequence, all Italians – with few exceptions – are "good", whether partisans or civilians. Hence the strong political aim becomes especially evident and "Achtung! Banditi!" (1951), the first film directed by the former partisan and Marxist director Carlo Lizzani is no exception. Rather, it can be considered a prime example since Lizzani realizes the film in a political way. The film was realized thanks to a subscription organized by a social cooperative, entirely self-financed by a group of working-class folks. This is because the censorship, during the production of the film, considered the screenplay "harmful both for internal reflection in the current moment, both for external reflexes because it re-proposes, in all its harshness, hatred against the Germans".[24] The plot presents the partisan struggle in Liguria, from the clandestine organizations in the city and the factories of Genoa to the guerrilla warfare in the mountains, during the last phases of the conflict. The film displays a group of partisans coming to Genova in order to get some weapons in a factory; however, the factory is occupied by Germans. The partisans are discovered, but the workers defend them against the Nazis who are about to win, but an Alpine unit (Italians) arrives and makes the Germans flee.

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24   Cf. the folders "Anni difficili" on the virtual exhibition "Cinecensura" (URL: http://cinecensura .com/politica/achtung-banditi/; 2. 11. 2020).

Focusing on the images of the Germans, we can observe that "Achtung! Banditi!" is a very fascinating example, because it contains several paradigms of stereotypical representations. For instance, the discourse between Nazis and Partisans is built on the relationships between visible and invisible. In the first part of the film, even though they feel their presence, Germans and Italians never meet each other. Nazis are often looked at by a Resistance fighter from a distance, through some binoculars; but during this activity, the partisan looks for some seconds inside the house of the civilians. Then the partisans get closer and closer, since they have a contact in the factory. Here, the heroism of the Resistance is interwoven with the working-class pride as opposed to the German cowardice. Moreover, the Alpine hunters join the rebels and so the class struggle takes the form of a national riot against the German occupants. During the whole movie, as well as the majority of the resistance films in general, Germans speak in their language, making any communication with both, the Italian characters and the audience, incomprehensible. This way of portraying the Germans strengthens the image of the foreigner, often regarded as they were aliens. When two Italian partisans manage to replace some German officers, wearing their clothes and impersonating them, one of them complains about the fact that the military helmet weighs too much, while the other jokes that he does not want to die "among the Germans, I won't be carried on the shoulders of the SS!". In this way the gamesome nature of Italians is juxtaposed to the coldness and detachment of the Germans. Even though they are emotional indifferent – they shoot and kill emotionless – Nazis are often mocked by Italians. This motif refers to themes discussed above. They can be found successively in 1960s resistance film and comedies, dealing with Fascism.

7 Holocaust Films: "Kapò" (1959)

The last film within this analysis is "Kapò". The film was produced in 1959 by the Italian director, and former partisan Gillo Pontecorvo. Well-known and extensively analyzed by film historians, the film indirectly revives and absorbs the rhetorical and narrative construction of the Holocaust as a sacrifice, which was first put forward by "L'ebreo errante". Similar to the previous example, there are no Italians in Pontecorvo's film as the events are both set in Paris and Auschwitz Birkenau. Edith, the 13-year old daughter of a Jewish family from Paris, has just finished her piano lesson and is returning home. By her building's front door, she catches sight of a truck the Nazis are loading her parents on, along with other Jewish families, under the impassive gaze of the observers, terrified and indifferent at once. Edith has a chance to escape, but she chooses to follow her fate as a Jew. Hence, she runs towards her parents, who are about to be arrested, and

is loaded onto the truck that will take her, along with the other prisoners, onto a train leaving for the lager, shown during the film's opening credits. As soon as she arrives in Auschwitz, we assist to the typical representation on the screen of Nazis selecting their victims, which deeply influenced the cinematic image of the deportations, both in Italy and abroad. Germans seem to be evil and inhuman: shouting at Jews in German, making fun of them, representing the evil itself who welcomes the deportees in hell.

Edith changes her identity after her selection for the gas chambers. Due to a series of circumstances she takes up the name of a deportee who just died. Having become Nicole, a political prisoner, Edith is sent to a labour camp instead of being murdered. From this moment on Nicole follows a path towards physical and moral degradation: after prostituting herself to the Nazis, she becomes Kapò of one of the Lager's blocks – a victim pushed by the inhuman conditions of the camp to aid the perpetrators, at once tormentor of the deportees and victim of the Nazis. Here, the juxtaposition between "high culture" and sexual perversion becomes apparent. A similar juxtaposition is obvious in "Roma città aperta" since Nazis are involved in ambiguous activities like playing cards and listening to classical music.

The representation of Germans does not only entail the embodiment of evil but also of human values. For instance, the character Karl is a German with a more humane appearance who speaks the same language as Nicole. On the one hand Nicole is corrupted by Nazis in a moral regression ending in the "grey zone", but on the other hand she begins a strong friendship with Karl. Here it becomes clear that the evil is the Nazi ideology and not the German people themselves. The Germans (as the Kapòs) rather seem to be part of the "grey zone". The moral regression of Nicole ends when she meets Sasha, a Red Army soldier who has just arrived at the camp as a prisoner of war and falls in love with him. Sasha offers her in an indirect way a chance for redemption: Nicole has the opportunity to help the deportees by disconnecting the electrification of the barbed wire surrounding the camp, allowing them to stage a mass escape. By choosing to sacrifice herself, Nicole goes back to being Edith, assuming again the Jewish identity that she had lost. Thereby she returns authentically "human" in a certain way. The analogy put forward by Pontecorvo lies entirely in the ambiguity of Edith / Nicole's transformation. This 'grey zone' is a universal human condition, just as the struggle against the oppressor of the subaltern classes is a constant within history. The moral of "Kapò" is essentially based on the ultimate criterion of the collective good.

Thus, in spite of the fact that there were several criticisms of the film for its strong Marxist representation of the conflict within the camp (the analogous role to that of the good Italian here is Sasha, the good Russian, and the Holocaust is interpreted through an European / International vision much more than a national one), this kind of representation is combined with a piety which has strong religious connotations and a distinct

Christian character, a reminiscence of the most traditionalist Catholic interpretations of the Holocaust, which directly recall the final of "Roma città aperta".[25]

8 Conclusion

The Italian post-war cinema of the '40s and the '50s uses issues, topics, and styles, which became predominant in the 60s. Based on this analysis, the year 1959 can be seen as a watershed for the following 15 years. To nominate a few landmarks: the release of "Kapò", the ex-aequo Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival for "Il General della Rovere" (1959, director Vittorio De Sica), and "The Great War" (1959, director Mario Monicelli). The film by De Sica recalls the atmosphere of "Roma città aperta", while Monicelli uses comedy to refer to the First and Second World War. Italian cinema of the '60s, however, does not find a more mature approach to replace the emphasis on the violence inflicted to the Italians by the German occupier, who is always portrayed as a paradigmatic enemy.

This simplification presents Italians and Germans on two archetypal opposing sides, fueling the myths of "bad German" and "good Italian": the latter were the civilians who had resisted and who represented the values of the family, of the religion, love, and solidarity, while the first were the occupying, sadistic and merciless soldiers, who had "imposed" their evil and malice to the Italians, inducing them to the "sin". In this sense, we can affirm that the historiographical tendency to simplify the events of the Fascist years and reduce them to the sole individual decisions of a few was reflected in the process of formal and moral stereotyping in the cinematic field. This stereotype created a new image for a public and shared memory, which was based primarily on the myth of the "bad German". At this stage, we could say that in the resistance films the construction of an image of the "bad German" always goes hand in hand with that of the "good Italian". Without that archetype the other cannot exist. Moreover, directors normally adopted a more internationalist vision of facts in the Holocaust films. We have observed a shift from the "good Italian" to the "good Russian", even if (paradoxically) the German protagonist starts to have an even more complicated characterization. Arguably this increase of complexity is due to the introduction of the "grey zone". The task to overturn this stereotype remains unsolved since many films which are considered as not having a political character continue to carry stereotypical representations.

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25 For a wider analysis of the film, cf. Damiano Garofalo, Coscienza di classe, identità ebraica e zona grigia. Per una rilettura politica di "Kapò", in: Trauma & Memory. European Review of Psychoanalysis and Social Sciences 5,3 (2018), pp. 90–95.

Philip Cooke / Gianluca Fantoni

Where Do We Go from Here?

The Moral and Material Reconstruction of Italian Cinema after
World War II (1945 – 1955)

Abstract

This article offers an analysis of Italian cinema over the years 1945 – 1955, taking into account a number of issues the 'men of cinema', i. e. producers and authors, had to deal with during this troubled decade. These include the material constraints of the early post-war years, censorship and the Cold War political climate, and the need to establish new political relations, particularly with the aim of obtaining a protectionist legislation for cinema. These aspects will be briefly touched upon in the first part of the article, with the aim of providing a framework within which to set the analysis that follows, which discusses a variety of film genres relating to the Second World War.

1   Surviving in the Post-war Cinema Market

How did the post-war Italian cinema industry, deeply compromised by its associations with the Fascist regime and with its fallen leader, mend its relationship with the Italian audience and carve out a market for its products? We argue that film producers and authors achieved such a goal by putting into place a number of strategies. The most important of these was to go beyond mere 'entertainment' in order to take on board a sort of civic duty: Italian cinema aimed to negotiate the relationship between Italians and their recent past; in particular, Italian cinema mediated the legacy of the war, and so acted as a tool, one of many, for opening and then 'closing the books' on the past. Far more than an attempt to reflect recent history (arguably an impossible task in any case), what Italian cinema is doing in the period is reshaping the past in order to meet the demands of the present, in cultural, societal and political terms.

There were a number of questions that had to be answered on behalf of the many former partisans, World War II veterans and ordinary citizens who had lived through that troubled period and were now flocking to Italian cinemas: what exactly did the Italians do during the war? What was their involvement in what had been a war of aggression fought under Fascist banners alongside Nazi Germany? What was left of the Italians after the

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defeat and the extraordinarily divisive civil war which had torn the country apart? These were very big questions and it would not be a straightforward matter to find answers to them. Ultimately, the cinema industry would not offer categorical answers. Cinema neither accomplished, nor even attempted, a moral catharsis of the nation. It offered instead a range of self-exculpatory and reassuring explanations that would morally justify the part Italians had played. In this respect it was not alone, and it is not our intention to 'condemn' Italian cinema for failing in an impossible task. Cinema has its limits and these limits are not confined to the Italian context.

This is, at least in commercial terms, a story of success. The Italian cinema industry skilfully navigated across the perilous seas of post-war Italy. It formed changing alliances and finally sided with the winner, namely the Christian Democrats. It managed to avoid thorny issues such as the Cold War (see below), and it came to terms with censorship. It had to compromise heavily along the road, accepting that it had to conform almost unconditionally with the desiderata of the ruling parties and the Church, but it obtained in return a legislation safeguarding profits. It relied on the reservoir of the 1930s, especially as far as popular actors and professionals were concerned, but it was also able to incorporate into mainstream productions the novelty introduced in the post-war years by neorealism, such as the use of non-professional actors and shooting on location.[1] In the end Italian cinema's adherence to neorealism was more formal than substantial: the political undertone of neorealism, in particular, was soon to be expunged from the productions of the 1950s. However, the aesthetic features of neorealism, that veneer of truth that had made Italian neorealist film famous worldwide, became a trademark of Italian cinema. And the Italian cinema industry eventually succeeded, managing, at the end of the period analysed here, to establish itself as a flourishing industry, a prelude to arguably its golden age, the 1960s.

Italian cinema needed to re-establish itself as the primary popular cultural and recreational activity in the post-war landscape. Italians had embraced cinema as a form of entertainment from its inception, but the audience could be fickle.[2] American films were taking the lion's share of the market in the early post-war years, also due to the

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1 These, however, are features which can be found in some films produced during the Fascist Regime. Films shot in the African colonies, in particular, had presented as many occasions for cameramen, cinematographers and directors to work with non-professional actors and to shoot on location, sometimes challenging ones. Cf. Maurizio Zinni, L'Impero sul grande schermo. Il cinema di finzione fascista e la conquista coloniale (1936–1942), in: Mondo contemporaneo 3 (2011), pp. 5–38.

2 David Forgacs / Steven Gundle, Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War, Bloomington 2007, p. 207.

pressures of the Allied Military government, which was distributing hundreds of films produced by American film studios for both commercial and political purposes.[3] Italian producers and cinema professionals needed to act quickly and work towards the creation of a market for Italian films: for a period the very survival of Italian cinema as an industry seemed at stake.[4]

Tangible problems had to be addressed in order to succeed in this endeavour. There was, of course, the issue of the material losses provoked by the war, namely lack of equipment and venues where to shoot. These problems were drawn into sharp relief by the unavailability of Cinecittà film studios, which had been turned into a refugee camp.[5] However, lack of infrastructure proved to be less of an obstacle to the renaissance of Italian cinema than one might have thought. The new style of filmmaking promoted by neorealism certainly played a part in easing this problem. If films shot on location could meet the approval of the public and be commended by film critics the lack of a highly elaborated scenography was no longer to be regarded as a serious issue. However, the role of neorealism in the resurgence of Italian cinema should not be overemphasised. Although a narrative of almost epic dimensions has been constructed over the years magnifying the ingenuity and artisanal craftsmanship of Italian auteurs vis-à-vis post-war hardship, it was not the minimalist approach to filmmaking, firstly introduced by neorealism, which determined the rebirth of Italian cinema. Rather, the Italian cinema industry could count on the existence of a human advantage that mattered a great deal more: many skilled professionals and experienced film producers who had cut their teeth before the war. In this respect, the Fascist period had been paramount. Having protected national film production to levels of obsessive paternalism (and in fact the American studios had withdrawn in protest from the Italian cinema market at the end of the 1930s), the Fascist regime had provided a generation of professionals with plenty of chances to work and gain experience in all aspects of cinema production. The Italian cinema industry existed, it just had to be resuscitated. Above all, by getting used to

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3   A few figures can illustrate the extent of the American cinematographic invasion: 296 American films distributed in Italy in 1946, 515 in 1948 and 406 in 1949. The figures are quoted in Gian Piero Brunetta, I cattolici e il cinema, in: Giorgio Tinazzi (Ed.), Il cinema italiano degli anni ’50, Venezia 1979, pp. 305–321.

4   Christopher Wagstaff, Italy in the Post-war International Cinema Market, in: Christopher Duggan / Christopher Wagstaff (Eds.), Italy in the Cold War. Politics, Culture and Society 1948–58, Oxford 1995, pp. 89–115.

5   Noa Steimatsky, The Cinecittà Refugee Camp (1944–1950), in: October, no. 128, spring 2009, pp. 22–50.

dealing with Fascist authorities film producers had developed one very valuable skill: the ability to negotiate with politicians.

This proved to be critical in the post-war years, when the Italian cinema industry had to resort to politicians to seek some form of protection against foreign films. American distributors, in particular, were offering films at prices that the Italian producers could not match. The halcyon days of the late 1930s were gone for good, but the post-war coalition governments ("governi di unità antifascista") were not completely insensitive to the pleas of Italian producers, and eventually promulgated the first law protecting Italian cinema, in May 1947.[6] This proved to be insufficient, however. In order to exert more pressure on the government, film producers and authors were happy to form a short-lived alliance with the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which was at the time seeking a more active role in the cinema field, especially after the expulsion of both the PCI and the PSI (Italian Socialist Party) from the post-war coalition governments, also in May 1947.

Up to that moment PCI policy towards cinema had been inadequate, to say the least. During the years of the "governi di unità antifascista", the PCI developed an approach to the problems of national cinema, which implied a risky (rather surprisingly for a Marxist party) underestimation of the industrial and institutional dimensions of cinema, as well as a striking level of political naivety.[7] The Italian Communist Party also showed a lack of interest in the legislative aspects of cinema. This is particularly evident in the failed revision of film censorship regulations inherited from the Fascist regime (Regio Decreto no. 3287 of 24 September 1923), which represents a significant own goal. The members of the censorship boards, which were nominated by the government, retained the power to ban a film because of the presence of scenes that could suggest an incitement to class hatred or were judged as likely to provoke "turbamento dell'ordine pubblico". In all likelihood, the communists believed that the participation in the government of the

6   Law no. 379 of 16.5.1947: Ordinamento dell'industria cinematografica nazionale, established the obligation for cinema owners to reserve a certain number of days to the projection of Italian films. This law, however, was largely disregarded by cinema owners, and the government, ruled by the *Democrazia Cristiana,* made little effort to enforce it.

7   Cf. Angelo Ventrone, La cittadinanza repubblicana. Come cattolici e comunisti hanno costruito la democrazia italiana (1943–1948), Bologna 2008, p. 237. An apt example of Communist disregard for the industrial and organisational, but above all political, aspects of cinema is the fact that the PCI, while being in government, allowed Eitel Monaco, former Direttore generale della cinematografia during the final years of the Fascist dictatorship, to be elected to the presidency of the newly created ANICA, the association of film producers and distributors (Mino Argentieri, La censura nel cinema italiano, Roma 1974, pp. 68–69).

PCI, PSI and DC, that is the political parties representing almost the whole of the Italian working class, would promote, rather automatically, a democratic ethos and foster a national culture which broadly matched the cultural and political values endorsed by the PCI. Great hopes in this respect were placed in the neorealist 'movement', if it can be so described. However, the failed revision of the law governing film censorship was to the considerable detriment of PCI plans in this respect. As a matter of fact, films addressing social and political issues would be systematically targeted by the censor, especially in the early 1950s.

Communist intellectuals became more attentive to feature films' cultural and political influence on society after the election of 1948.[8] From 1949, the PCI began protesting against censorship.[9] It also tried to cast itself as a champion of the national cinema industry against foreign colonisation by American cinematography by launching a political campaign called "Per la difesa del cinema italiano" ("in defence of Italian Cinema").[10] Many professionals in the cinema industry, communist and non communist, participated in a rally which was organized in the streets of Rome on 20 February 1949.[11]

Fearing that national cinema would turn into a mouthpiece of communist propaganda, something they suspected was already happening via the Trojan horse of neorealism, the DC governments eventually decided to intervene, provided that legislation supporting Italian cinema would serve political purposes too. The history of post-war legislation on cinema is too well-known to be addressed here in a detailed fashion.[12] Suffice is to say that the new legislation granted state incentives to commercially profitable film production, making projects for politically engaged films *ipso facto* less attractive

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8   Cf. We shall hit the enemy in the cinema field too, in: Il quaderno dell'attivista, Agosto 1948, pp. 29–30. In that issue prominent party cadre and expert in cinema issues Antonello Trombadori alerted communist militants to the dangerous propaganda contained in American movies, defined as "the new opium of the people". The "Quaderno" was a magazine specifically designed for party propagandists.

9   The head of the Sezione Culturale of the PCI, Emilio Sereni, gave a speech condemning film censorship in the Senato della Repubblica, on 25.5.1949. The speech is published in Emilio Sereni, Per la difesa del cinema italiano. Discorso pronunciato al Senato della Repubblica il 25 Maggio 1949, Roma 1949.

10   Cf. Rinascita 3 (1949), pp. 137–143 with contributors such as directors Alessandro Blasetti, Luchino Visconti and Luigi Zampa, the actor Gino Cervi, and the screenplay writer Cesare Zavattini.

11   See the article by Luciano Quaglietti, La "gente del cinema" non è più il mito dei quartieri di lusso, in: l'Unità, 22.2.1949, p. 3.

12   See Luciano Quaglietti, Storia economico-politica del cinema italiano 1945–1980, Roma 1980, p. 50.

to producers, especially when compared to comedies and melodrama films, whose good performance at the box office was almost guaranteed.

The government added to this an ever growing hostility towards films addressing social or political issues, which reached an almost grotesque level at the beginning of the 1950s, with the exacerbation of Cold War tensions, due to the Korean War, and thanks to the indefatigable actions of Giulio Andreotti, *sottosegretario allo spettacolo*, from June 1947 until August 1953. A cloak of conformity wrapped Italian cinema. These were among the causes of the decline of politically engaged films, and of neorealism in the 1950s, but by no means the only ones.[13]

From a purely financial point of view, however, the legislation on cinema proved effective. The organization of the Italian film industry and cinema market, and the rather eccentric cinema-going habits of the Italians did the rest: in the mid-1950s, the future of Italian cinema was no longer bleak.[14] In the meantime, the Italian cinema industry had succeeded in its most challenging endeavour, without which neither the end of post-war hardship nor a favourable legislation could have saved it from decline: it had recaptured its public. It had done so principally by negotiating the past on behalf of the Italians, but also by carefully avoiding contemporary themes which could be controversial and split the audience. The most striking example of this prudent attitude of the Italian cinema industry can be seen in the cinematic rendering of the Cold War.

2   The Cold War and Italian Cinema

Only a handful of films produced from the late 1940s to the end of the 1950s can be said to make references to the Cold War, and only two addressed it openly and in a dramatic fashion: "La città dolente" (City of Pain, 1949), and "Cuori senza frontiere" (The White Line, 1950). The most famous, and by far most successful films addressing the issue of the effects of the Cold War on Italian society were those of the "Don Camillo" saga (five

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13   There were also commercial reasons behind the eclipse of politically engaged films. Purely entertaining films had always been more popular with the public than the iconic works of neorealism, which were only a part of all Italian cinematographic production: Lino Miccichè, Per una verifica del neorealismo, in: Lino Miccichè (Ed.), Il neorealismo cinematografico italiano, Venezia 1974, pp. 7–28.

14   In 1954, for example, Italian films firmly held around 40% of the Italian market. 206 Italian films were released that year, which represented an all-time record, while only 307 foreign films were distributed in Italy (209 were American), against the 850 of 1946 and 874 in 1948. Cf. Christopher Wagstaff, Italian Neorealist Cinema. An Aesthetic Approach, Toronto 2007, Appendix 3.

comedies released from 1952 to 1965 and based on right wing author Giovanni Guareschi's novels), depicting the daily and rather affectionate quarrels opposing a Catholic priest (Don Camillo) and a communist mayor (Peppone) in a small Italian town.[15] In these films, however, the political tensions produced by the Cold War are invariably presented as the outcome of foreign, imported issues, which the two characters are passionate about purely because of their argumentative spirit. As soon as a pressing matter regarding the community arises, both the communist mayor and the anti-communist priest are ready to put their differences aside for the greater good of their beloved little town.

Such a small number of films addressing the Cold War starkly contrasts with the abundant production of films commenting directly on the Cold War by other Western cinema industries, and particularly by the American and British.[16] The Cold War was a thorny issue in Italy, due to domestic and international factors, the most important of which was the presence of the PCI. It enjoyed mass support from voters who were, at the same time, potential spectators the Italian film industry could not afford to lose. The Government never asked producers for a direct intervention in the anti-communist campaign, or support for Government policies: the DC had its own propaganda film division for that purpose.[17] Therefore, the wisest thing film producers could do was to avoid tackling the Cold War head on, in order not to take political risks of any sort. An exception like "City of Pain", which features a grim portrayal of the life beyond the Iron Curtain, can be explained by the production company's specific political history.[18] As far as "The White Line" is concerned, the film's ethos perfectly exemplifies the Italian

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15   For an overview of the Don Camillo Saga cf. Mira Liehm, Passion and Defiance. Film in Italy from 1942 to the Present, Berkeley 1984, pp. 143–145.

16   Anthony Shaw, Cinematic Propaganda during the Cold War. A Comparison of British and American Movies, in: Mark Connelly / David Welch (Eds.), War and the Media. Reportage and Propaganda 1900–2003, London 2014, pp. 164–165.

17   It was called SPES (Studi di propaganda e stampa) and founded in 1945. A few SPES films are analysed in Paola Bonifazio, Schooling in Modernity. The Politics of Sponsored Films, Toronto 2014.

18   Scalera Film produced the film, and this may account for its strong anti-communist tone. In fact, Scalera Film (founded in 1938) was, of all the film production companies, the one most esteemed by the Fascist Regime. It produced a high number of films during the final years of Fascism, more than any other company, including a few famous propaganda war films such as Roberto Rossellini's "La nave Bianca" ("The White Ship", 1941), and Goffredo Alessandrini's "Giarabub" (1942). Cf. Paolo Lughi, La Scalera Film. Lo studio system all'italiana, in Ernesto G. Laura / Alfredo Baldi (Eds.), Storia del cinema italiano, vol. 6: 1940–1944, Venezia 2010, pp. 392–399. It is worth noting, however, that "City of Pain" was too controversial even for the post-1948 political climate; its release was postponed for almost one year, and it eventually had a very limited distribution.

cinema industry's approach to the Cold War in the 1950s: a purely national perspective on Cold War issues (the Cold War being looked upon exclusively for the effects it has on Italian people); a rather generic pacifism resulting from a decontextualized depiction of historical facts (no mention of the historical problems of the Italian eastern border is made in the film, so the policy of forced Italianization of Slovenians implemented during the Fascist regime is absent); a plot which is clearly aimed at softening political antagonism by presenting the political tensions generated by the division of Europe into two opposing political camps as unnatural, something artificially imposed on ordinary people.[19]

However, it was not just by avoiding comment on divisive current issues that Italian cinema truly made its way into the Italian people's hearts and minds and came back to the centre of the country's cultural stage. The reflection Italian cinema made on Italy's recent past was just as important, if not more, as discussed in the next section.

3 War Film Genres

The Italians were of many kinds, they had different political opinions and various social backgrounds, and their experiences of the war had been diverse and uneven, and even divergent. Italian films, however, had to talk to the many, and ideally appeal to everyone. In order to reach as much of an audience as possible the Italian cinema industry worked with genres which had a long record of success. In broad terms, it can be argued that, in the early post-war years, melodrama depicted the politically indifferent or conservative middle class that large sections of the urban population could identify with. It offered them a conforming justification of their recent past. The short-lived *cinema resistenziale*, made by left-wing directors and promoted by the communist press constituted an apparently new genre, and aimed instead to be the voice of the supposedly progressive working class. These two genres differed, although there are many examples of what we might term

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19   Directed in 1950 by Luigi Zampa, and starring Raf Vallone and Gina Lollobrigida, "The White Line" depicts the vicissitudes of a small community, which is split by the shifting border between Italy and Yugoslavia (the white line of the English title). Italians and Slovenians, who were once fellow villagers, are pushed by the new situation to distrust each other. Mutual hostility grows in a crescendo of provocations, until the point in which the two groups reach the verge of an armed confrontation. Only the children of the village keep their humanity intact, and refuse to be torn apart by the politics of the adults. The sacrifice of one of them, fatally wounded in crossfire while carrying a cross-shaped border sign up a slope (the religious symbolism of the scene is dealt with in a heavy-handed way), reconciles the two communities in the end.

contamination, which can make it difficult to identify to which genre a particular film belongs. Genres are, by their very nature, slippery. An obvious, indeed clamorous example is Carmine Gallone's "Avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma" (1946) which presents bourgeois opera stars / resisters, played by Anna Magnani and Gino Sinimberghi, involved in a tortuous story of Resistance in and around Rome which is played out against the backdrop of a performance of Tosca.[20] The film is, in many ways, a bourgeois reworking of "Roma città aperta", itself a work with many melodramatic elements, with Anna Magnani staging a return to the type of character she had played in the past. "Avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma" thus exploits Magnani's star qualities and range in order to construct a suitable vehicle for a film which depicts the exact opposite of the proletarian Roman Resistance of "Roma città aperta". Equally, although it would be hard to describe "Avanti a lui" as a neorealist film, it certainly contains some recognisable elements commonly associated with this style of film-making, such as contemporary / recent history and a working class element exemplified by the stage hands who contrive to save the protagonists from capture by the Germans. Another Resistance film which depicts a heady mix of class struggle and melodrama is Aldo Vergano's "Il sole sorge ancora" (Outcry, 1946). Funded by the ANPI (the partisans' association), the film depicts the experiences of Cesare, played by Vittorio Duse, a former soldier who returns to his hometown after 8 September 1943. Cesare struggles to cope with the emotional side of his life, torn between the earthy proletarian Laura and the sophisticated, but morally ambiguous, Matilde. Although he makes the right choice in the end, and indeed joins the partisans in their fight against the Nazis, the film does show that choices were not clear cut and that mistakes could be made by all social classes, including the proletariat. The film ends not only with the defeat of the Nazis by the partisans, but with the collapse of the factory chimneys – a symbol of class oppression. "Il sole sorge ancora" is one of the few Resistance films which genuinely engages with the class war dimension of the period, but it does this within a framework of a classic love triangle. Common to all these films and indeed to the genres of melodrama and *cinema resistenziale* was, however, the *topos* of the Italians as 'Brava gente', namely the idea that the Italians, in their majority, had lived through the ordeal of war and behaved as decent human beings throughout.[21]

20   For a highly sophisticated discussion of this film, cf. Catherine O'Rawe, Avanti a Lui Tremava Tutta Roma. Opera, Melodrama and the Resistance, in: Modern Italy 17 (2012), pp. 185–196.

21   Cf. David Bidussa, Il mito del bravo italiano, Milano 1994 and, above all, Filippo Focardi, Il "cattivo tedesco" e il "bravo italiano". La rimozione delle colpe della seconda guerra mondiale, Roma-Bari 2013.

Not all the films produced in the early post-war period, therefore, comfortably fit within a simple generic classification, as we have shown. However, we argue that the partition of post-war films into genres having different target audiences can be useful as an interpretative tool, particularly when analysing audience expectations and the ways in which film makers played around the fringes of these expectations in order to achieve commercial and critical success. Sometimes authors had to stretch the genres to breaking point, if not beyond, in order to be as all-encompassing as possible and to find the right formula to succeed in a difficult cinema market. Another example, Alberto Lattuada's "Il bandito", discussed below, which is one of many films depicting the war veteran, begins as a neorealist film, then turns into an American-style gangster movie, and ends up in melodrama.

The elections of 1948 were a moment of political clarification in the field of cinema as well as for the country as a whole. The national cinema industry fell quickly into line: the ideologically oriented cinema declined and virtually disappeared. A reorganisation of the cinema industry followed in terms of outputs. Producers also realized that they had to produce films according to internationally codified genres which they knew the public would like. For example, there was an attempt to introduce an Italian version of the US combat movies. These were mostly produced in the first half of the 1950s and included such works as "Carica eroica" ("Heroic Charge", 1952), "I sette dell'Orsa Maggiore" ("Hell Raids of the Deep", 1952), "Mizar" (1953), "La pattuglia dell'Amba Alagi" ("The Patrol of Amba Alagi", 1953), "Siluri umani" ("Human Torpedoes", 1954), "La grande speranza" ("Submarine Attack", 1954) and "El Alamein" (1957), along with the above-mentioned "Divisione Folgore" ("Folgore Division", 1954).[22] As far as their stylistic features were concerned, the American "combat films" of the 1940s and 1950s may indeed have been the principal source of inspiration for the directors of Italian war movies, as pointed out by Sara Pesce.[23] This is true for the production of these films too: the collaboration with the respective national armies, which in many cases approved the screenplays of these films and provided technical and material assistance, is a feature these Italian war

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22   For an analysis of these films, cf. Gianluca Fantoni, Brotherhood of Arms. Patriotism, Atlanticism and Sublimation of War in 1950s Italian War Movies, in: Laura A. Salsini / Thomas Cragin (Eds.), Resistance, Heroism, Loss. World War II in Italian Literature and Film (The Fairleigh Dickinson University Press Series in Italian Studies), Lanham 2018, pp. 21–38.

23   Sara Pesce, Memoria e immaginario. La seconda guerra mondiale nel cinema italiano, Recco-Genova 2008, pp. 91–92.

films share with their American counterparts.[24] Politically, however, the Italian combat films of the 1950s seem to be directly inspired by the Fascist war cinema of the 1930s and early 1940s. In contrast to what happened in most of the neorealist films, there are neither visual details nor dialogue revealing the social and political background of the protagonists of these films: the Italian soldiers. These are characterized, rather exclusively, by distinctive features of their geographical origins, overall by their regional accent. This seems to be consistent with a vision of society structured according to moral and religious values, rather than class membership, an ideal shared by both Fascists and Christian Democrats. Virtually all the artists who created the patriotic films of the 1950s had been professionally formed during the Fascist regime, and some had built their reputation as filmmakers working in war film productions. This may also explain aesthetic and thematic resemblances between the war movies of the 1950s and the Fascist war films.[25] The Italian war films of the 1950s were principally aimed at promoting traditional ideals, such as patriotism and obedience to authority, and were ultimately instrumental in the conservative restoration of the mid-1950s. From a political point of view, therefore, the Italian combat movies were a continuation of the early post-war films depicting veterans, in that they shared the same apolitical take on the issue of the Fascist War, as discussed in the next section.

4 Veterans and Ruins

The elaboration of Italy's past made by Italian cinema was, as we have argued, neither deep nor complete. The mass-based adherence to Fascism and to Mussolini's wars, in particular, was mostly left out of the picture, and films ended up focusing on the experiential aspects of war and on its material and moral scares. The character of the veteran was central in this respect. From 1945 to 1955 around thirty films produced by the national cinema

24   The producers of "Divisione Folgore", for example, submitted the screenplay of the film not only to the Censor board, as required by the law, but to the Ministry of Defence too. The latter approved the screenplay and promised the collaboration of the Italian Army for the making of the film (cf. Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero del Turismo e dello Spettacolo, CF 1952, Busta 108, the letter from the Ministry of defence is dated 28 March 1954).

25   On this point cf. Gian Piero Brunetta, Storia del cinema italiano, vol. 3: Dal 1945 agli anni ottanta, Roma 1982, p. 493.

industry featured the character of the veteran.[26] In this article we will discuss three of them: Mario Mattioli's "La vita ricomincia" (Life begins anew, 1945), Alberto Lattuada's "Il bandito" (The bandit, 1946 – the film's working title was "Il reduce" / "The veteran"), and Giorgio Ferroni's "Tombolo paradiso nero" (Tombolo, 1947). "Life begins anew" is a classic melodrama having as protagonists members of the Roman bourgeoisie. Lattuada's film, on the other hand, mixes up quite freely various genres, as mentioned above, and his protagonist, Ernesto, seems to belong to a petit-bourgeois environment. The protagonist of "Tombolo", Andrea (played by Aldo Fabrizi), is a former policeman, and again the film by Ferroni is a melange of melodrama and noir, with an unmistakable touch of neorealism: it depicts the real lives of people living on the margins of society and is shot on location. Paolo, Ernesto and Andrea are veterans, they have all spent a long period as prisoners of war, and they have just returned home.

Ruth Ben-Ghiat has pointed out how the veteran represented an embarrassment for post-war Italian society, a symbol of the military defeat of the Italian Army and of the wrong causes so many Italians had believed in.[27] As far as cinema is concerned, however, the character of the veteran is a true protagonist of the self assuring, self-exculpatory operation undertaken by Italian cinema in the post-war period. The three films discussed here begin by showing ruined roads and bombed buildings. This is what the veteran returning home is forced to witness: ruins, destruction, a country left prostrated by a war nobody seems to have wanted. As pointed out by Silvio Lanaro right at the beginning of his "Storia dell'Italia Repubblicana",[28] the stereotype of Italy as a destroyed country emerged after World War II. Historically speaking it was mostly a myth: Italy was actually spared the much larger devastation suffered by other countries, for example by Germany. It was a myth fuelled by literature, politicians and newspapers, says Lanaro, and, we can add, by cinema too, as can be seen in many post-war films. It can be argued that the myth of Italy as a destroyed country was part of a general tendency to self-absolution on the part of the Italians, a tendency evidently endorsed by the national cinema. In this respect Enrico Rusconi has talked about *patriottismo espiativo*, namely the idea that by having collectively endured suffering and loss the Italians had somehow redeemed themselves as

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26 These include the already mentioned "The White Line". A list of films featuring veterans can be found in Catherine O'Rawe, Back for Good. Melodrama and the Returning Soldier in Post-war Italian Cinema, in: Modern Italy 2 (2017), pp. 123–142.

27 Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Unmaking the Fascist Man. Masculinity, Film and the Transition from Dictatorship, in: Journal of Modern Italian Studies 10,3 (2005), pp. 336–365.

28 Silvio Lanaro, Storia della'Italia repubblicana. Dalla fine della guerra agli anni novanta, Venezia 1992.

a national community.[29] For this reason, people tended to overemphasise the magnitude of the destruction the country had endured, and Italian cinema was ready to second such overestimation.

In these post-war films destroyed buildings often symbolise the moral breakdown caused by the war. It is not just the disheartening vision of their ruined homeland, in fact, that troubles the returning veteran. Much more painful is for him to witness the subversion of gender roles, the collapse of morality, and the shattering of family values in both the society and in his own household. The protagonist of "Life begins anew", the chemist Paolo Martini (played by Fosco Giachetti) comes home after six years as a prisoner of war only to find that his wife Patrizia (played by Alida Valli), once a housewife, has now become an independent woman able to support the family with her job. Adding much to his dismay, he will also find out that at some point she had to prostitute herself to pay for their son's life-saving operation. Ernesto in "Il bandito" follows a prostitute into her room only to realise that she is none other than his sister, whom he believed had died in a bombing. In "Tombolo" Andrea (Aldo Fabrizi) lives in the outskirts of Livorno among prostitutes, smugglers, and US army deserters, and desperately looks for his missing daughter, the only survivor of his family. She, however, has turned into the mistress of an unscrupulous criminal.

Several authors have pointed out that the character of the 'fallen woman' in post-war films produced in Italy as well as in other countries mirrored societal anxieties about the collapse of masculinity and gender roles caused by the war.[30] Whether we can really speak of a collapse is a matter for discussion. However, there is most certainly a strong undercurrent of sexism and a condescending attitude towards women: since their men (husbands, brothers, fathers) were away women, it is suggested, lacked moral guidance and protection, and as a consequence they have sinned. However, the character of the respectable woman turned prostitute (or involved in a love triangle as we see in other films of the same period featuring veterans),[31] is also part of the tendency to self-commiseration and self-absolution Italians displayed after the war, as discussed above. The suffering and humiliation the veteran has to endure when he finds out that, while he was absent, the women in his family have been sexually promiscuous and have shamed his name contribute to the redemption of the veteran for whatever wrongdoings he might have done during the Fascist regime and in the course of the war.

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29   Gian Enrico Rusconi, Patria e Repubblica, Bologna 1997, pp. 22–23.

30   Danielle Hipkins, Italy's Other Women. Gender and Prostitution in Italian Cinema, 1940–1965, Oxford 2016, pp. 69–70.

31   O'Rawe, Back for Good (see note 26), pp. 129–133.

The moral of these films is, essentially, the following: we have all suffered enough, we have all paid a fair price for our sins in one way or another, it is now time to forgive our close relatives, our neighbours as well as ourselves, to forget and move on. Sometimes this message is explicitly stated in these films. In "Life begins anew", for example, a family friend urges Paolo to forgive his wife by explaining to him that everything that has happened, including his wife being unfaithful, is ultimately due to the war, a calamity which had fundamentally shattered and undermined even the most basic human values. The friend, however, does not articulate his reasoning as such, nor does he delve into the causes of the war, nor does he bother to discuss the personal responsibility that he, or his veteran friend, might have for having supported the Fascism regime, even when it was declaring war and thus involving the country in a conflict that proved to be disastrous. This sort of amnesia concerning personal and collective responsibility can be found in all the films discussed here, as well as in several others produced in that period.[32] As a result, in these films the war is presented as a causeless incident, something unrelated to any specific political events, like it was a natural disaster, or a fact of life. This reading of the war, which gave everyone much sought-after relief from personal responsibility, was a characteristic of the 1950s combat films too, as mentioned earlier.

The absolution Italian cinema granted to veterans went as far as depicting them as victims. Veterans are presented as people who have suffered greatly during the war.[33] Not only have they wasted years of their life, they are now vexed by their countrymen's lack of gratitude for the sacrifice they have endured and by the authorities' gross insensitivity to their condition as unemployed and / or homeless. One of the characters of "Life begins anew" bitterly comments: "Once there were flowers, flags, speeches and music to welcome the returning veteran. Nowadays, everything we can do is to tell him, dear veteran, what happened wasn't your fault!". Ernesto witnesses with dismay the contemptuous attitude State bureaucrats display towards former military internees like him. Angered by the mistreatment inflicted on a fellow veteran he stages a vociferous protest and, as a result, he is expelled from the office and loses any entitlement to a subsidy. Andrea, who has lost his job as a policeman probably due to a political purge, although this is not clearly stated in the film, has now to wait for the completion of the long bureaucratic process which

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32   As pointed out by T. Judt, a form of 'collective amnesia' regarding misdeeds, complicities and compromises people had made during the war was essential to the psychological recovery of the populations involved in the war; as such it was not just an Italian phenomenon (Tony Judt, A History of Europe since 1945, London 2010, pp. 61–62).

33   Cf., for example, the lengthy and dramatic description of the 'march of death' the Nazis had forced Ernesto and his fellow prisoners to walk.

might lead to his reinstatement into the force. Society has added injustice to injury in the way it has welcomed the returning veteran.

One further consideration can be made which concerns the choice of the actors for these movies. This was probably due to various, mostly commercial reasons, we would argue. However, it appears symbolic as well. Fosco Giachetti, Alida Valli, Amedeo Nazzari, and to some extent Aldo Fabrizi, were all great stars of Fascist cinema, and actors who had often played in Fascist propaganda films, especially war movies. Giachetti was almost the epitome of the Fascist soldier, having played the part of captain Santelia in "Lo squadrone bianco" (1936). Therefore, we can say that these actors were, in a sense, themselves *veterans*. They shared with their public the same biography: they had been Fascist, they had passed through the war, and they were now in search of redemption (that is they were trying to revitalise their careers in the post-Fascist cinema industry). This reinforced the audience's sense of identification with the protagonists of these films.

The character of the veteran / former prisoner of war was instrumental in the cinematic suppression of yet another issue which could split the audience and thus alienate part of the public: the civil war which had raged in the country from September 1943 to April 1945. The veteran was indeed a perfect protagonist if a film needed to avoid mentioning the civil war, simply because the veteran, quite literally, was not there. He did not walk up into the mountains and join the Resistance because he was not there. He did not join the RSI either, because again he wasn't there. These films thus never answer a fundamental question: which side would these characters have ended up joining if they had been there and in a position to choose between the partisans and the RSI? We cannot know as at no point do these films give us the slightest clue about their protagonists' political views. They seem to have none, apart from a generic distaste for war. Family is the only thing that matters to them.

5 Conclusion

For many years what mattered to historians of Italian cinema was not so much the kaleidoscopic gallery of post-war film production, but the great masterpiece, set off on its own, in a room containing exquisite furniture and a comfortable seat for patient contemplation by a rapt spectator. This was particularly the case with the first two of Rossellini's war trilogy, "Roma città aperta" and "Paisà". In particular, the first film's place in cinema history has meant that it has become the sacred cow of Resistance film – shown to generations of young and old generations, particularly around the 25th April, when it was wheeled out for veneration. Indeed, it was a new print of this film which was shown on state television on the Fiftieth anniversary of the Liberation. While we do not for a

moment seek to question the aesthetic and cultural value of this film, it is our contention that if we really wish to understand the contribution of Italian cinema to post-war recovery then we need to go beyond the individual masterpiece and take a closer look at a large number of other pictures. These include combat movies, veteran films, Resistance films, including those which are not normally categorised as such and – although we have not had the opportunity to discuss them above – the many films about the Unification of Italy which were made in the 1950s and beyond and which are, more or less explicitly, direct references to the Second World War.

Lutz Klinkhammer

Popular and Catholic Cinema in Italy, 1944–1954

What Kind of Lessons about the Past Did the "Morally Sane" and Educating Film Communicate to Italian Audiences?

Abstract

Looking from the 1970s backwards, from the years of the Anti-Fascist consensus in large parts of Italian society, the famous neorealist Italian films overlay completely the vast popular film production of the first decade after World War II. However, during the years between 1948 and 1955, neorealism had a difficult standing in the predominant Italian Catholic-conservative political culture, and the Resistance against "nazifascism" vanished more and more from the screens. Christian democratic leaders and Vatican hierarchy aimed to moralize society by the most popular media of that decade: cinema. State administration tried to promote "morally good" films by using financial grants to lead Italian productions and co-productions towards an auspicable Catholic film, but by applying state censorship to undesirable topics as well. Vatican authorities tried to influence Catholic audiences by communicating film recommendations and by creating a system of Catholic oriented cinemas: commercial ones and especially parish cinemas. For economic and audience reasons the parish cinema system probably "failed" to moralize, at least following the standards given by the Vatican authorities, but popular Catholic cinema, as I suggest, worked quite well politically in organizing Catholic society. It worked still better in terms of forgetting about the Fascist past and believing in a self-exculpatory master narrative created by Italian post-war society.

1 Beyond Neorealism: Looking at the Popular Everyday Film

For later generations, especially those influenced by the subculture of the Communist Party or by the indipendent Left during the 1970s, neorealist movies are dominating completely the vast film production of the first decade after the World War II. A sort of

'classical canon' of neorealism[1] had been created – with a series of film icons that from a retrospective point of view are overshadowing all others: Roberto Rossellini's "Roma città aperta" (1945) and "Paisà" (1946), Aldo Vergano's "Il sole sorge ancora" (1946), Mario Camerini's "Due lettere anonime" (1945), Giacomo Gentilomo's "'O Sole mio" (1945), Giorgio Ferroni's "Pian delle Stelle" (1946), Carmine Gallone's "Davanti a lui tremava tutta Roma" (1946), Mario Soldati's "Fuga in Francia" (1948).[2] But for a contemporary observer, from 1948 onwards neorealism had a difficult standing in the predominant Italian Catholic-conservative political culture. Now, the Resistance vanished from the screens. Only with the anti-Fascist consensus grown with the Centro-Sinistra-Government and further strengthened during the '70s, neorealism became a cineastic and cultural icon, seen by then – in a sort of orthodox interpretation – as "in Pasolini's words, a product of Resistance, and Italy's struggle for reconstruction and its inability to deal with the traumas of the past are best seen through the lens of neorealism".[3] Highlighted were especially those films dealing with the Resistance movement between 1943 and 1945, neglecting the cinema that engaged with the history of the Fascist *ventennio* and – as Ruth Ben-Ghiat has pointed out strongly – creating a model for what would be excluded from post-war cultural memory.[4] For Elena Dagrada it was neorealism that "became the best ambassador of the Italian boot. It acquitted Italians from blame and conveyed resistance

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1   Cf. the catalogue of films contained in: La Resistenza nel cinema italiano 1945–1995. Comitato regionale per il 50° anniversario della Liberazione, Istituto storico della Resistenza in Liguria, Supplemento della rivista "Storia e Memoria", Genova 1995; for an eccellent overview cf. Pietro Cavallo, Cinema e Resistenza nella Prima Repubblica, in: Aldo Agosti / Chiara Colombini (Eds.), Resistenza e autobiografia della nazione. Uso pubblico, rappresentazione, memoria, Torino 2012, pp. 185–207.

2   Maurizio Zinni, Uomini in nero. Il fascismo nel cinema italiano (1945–1962), in: Pietro Cavallo / Luigi Goglia / Paquale Iaccio (Eds.), Cinema a passo romano. Trent'anni di fascismo sullo schermo (1934–1963), Napoli 2012, pp. 290–320, at pp. 298, 319. From 1949 to 1955 only few films are still dealing with the Resistenza: "Un piccolo esercito nelle Langhe" (director Lulli, 1949), 1951 arrives Lizzani's "Achtung Banditen", in 1952 Oreste Biancoli's "Penne nere", and 1955 appears "Gli sbandati" di Maselli. Only 1959 arrives Rossellini's "Il generale Della Rovere". Obviously there were a lot of other topics in neorealist film, like in "Riso amaro"(director De Santis, 1949) or in other films. A deep analysis of the characterization of the twenty years of Fascist regime in neorealist films is offered by Giacomo Lichtner, Fascism in Italian Cinema since 1945. The Politics and Aesthetics of Memory, Basingstoke 2013. As in Carlo Lizzani's "Cronache di poveri amanti", one of the weaknesses in the neorealist analysis of the Fascist period was according to Lichtner "the unwillingness to make the Fascists a majority, or even a significant minority" (ibid., p. 60).

3   Catherine O'Rawe, Back for Good. Melodrama and the Returning Soldier in Post-war Italian Cinema, in: Modern Italy 2 (2017), pp. 123–142, at p. 127.

4   Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Liberation. Film and the Flight from the Italian Past 1945–50, in: Richard Bosworth / Patrizia Dogliani (Eds.), History, Memory, and Representation, London 1999, pp. 83–

by showing the everyday heroism of an innocent, suffering population".[5] However, Italian Catholics did not notice or appreciate this subtle redeeming function of neorealism. They were hostile towards the neorealist style because it was considered politically too close to the left wing parties. Moreover, its final message described a rude reality, which did not leave any place for hope, as Giulio Andreotti clearly pointed out in an article criticizing De Sica's film "Umberto D.".

This paper wants to highlight another aspect: Among the set of films produced from 1945 to 1955 an extensive amount of popular films, comedies, which aimed at entertaining people existed.[6] Nonetheless, they were often equipped with small hints and hidden messages about how to look back to the Italian Fascist and dictatorial past. These messages travelled as small bits of subcutane, but potentially influential opinion making, oriented towards the creation of a popular consensus regarding the past, specifically, because of their seemingly unintentional interpretations of Fascism. What Italians thought about "ordinary Fascism" in their country, I suggest, was subconsciously influenced by popular cinema.[7] This is to my opinion majorly noticeable for films dealing with the years of the socalled Fascist *ventennio* from 1923 and 1943, films that aimed to create a gap between the perception of the twenty years of autoctonous Fascist regime on one hand and the subsequent interpretation of the partisan warfare against "Nazifascism" from 1943 to 1945 on the other. This separation of the past in two different historical and interpretative epochs was reinforced, obviously, not only by cinema, but also by journalism and popular historical writing that often downplayed the bruteness of Italian *ventennio* Fascism, and contributed to create a new master narrative on the Italian Fascist past, "softening" the image of the regime by "forgetting" its repressive and violent aspects.

101; Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Fascism, Writing and Memory. The Realist Aesthetic in Italy, 1930–50, in: The Journal of Modern History 67 (1995), pp. 627–665.

5   Elena Dagrada, A Triple Alliance for a Catholic Neorealism. Roberto Rossellini according to Félix Morlion, Giulio Andreotti and Gian Luigi Rondi, in: Daniel Biltereyst / Daniela Treveri Gennari (Eds.), Moralizing Cinema. Film, Catholicism, and Power, New York 2015, pp. 114–134, at p. 117. Cf. Stephen Gundle, Fame and the Ruins. Italian Film Stardom in the Age of Neorealism, New York and Oxford 2019, pp. 9–10.

6   Film historiography tends to neglect this huge production in favor of a small group of aesthetically important films, as shown by the list of films used by Mariapia Comand, Commedia all'italiana, Milano 2010, which starts with "La grande guerra" (1959) and reaches "C'eravamo tanto amati" (1974).

7   Cf. Catherine O'Rawe, Back for Good (see note 3), p. 127, who underlines that it was principally the mode of melodrama – and not neorealism – which permitted "to enact the conditions of what was sayable about the Fascist past".

How to forget about the dark side of the past and gaining consensus for a new moral post-war order? This was the question Catholic politicians and authorities tried to respond to by a twofold strategy: 1) influencing people in favour of a Catholic and anti-Communist society not only by politics, but by popular media as well; 2) using censorship and/or sponsorship to "moralize" people in the just direction. This paper addresses the way how these aims were planned and realized in using the most popular media of the first post-war decade in Italy: cinema. In this first introductive part I will give one example to show my interpretative approach and summarize the importance of cinema during the first post-war decade, in the second section the efforts to create a specific Catholic cinema system, in part three the production of "morally sane" and "educating" films, as seen by Catholic clerics or authoritative lay persons. My argument is a call to film historians to reflect about the hidden bits of interpretation on Fascism given by popular entertainment films. On this behalf, I suggest, Catholic cinema may have been influential, even if it 'failed' its principal aim to 'moralize' audiences in the way ecclesiastical hierarchies were wishfully thinking about. If we apply not a Protestant, but a Catholic way of thinking about 'failure' (i. e. sin), the moralization campaign was effective – and not only by looking on state censorship, which was very active, indeed.

The mechanism of how to influence people on the interpretation of the past can be illustrated through the example of an unspectacular movie, such as "La domenica della buona gente" (1953; produced during the summer 1952, with important actors as Sofia Loren, Ave Ninchi, Nino Manfredi and others) an entertaining movie, with some social undertone. A Sunday in Rome: A pregnant woman from the South (Salerno), who wants to kill her unfaithful lover, a Roman womanizer (but he himself is at the same time betrayed by his new girlfriend), is hindered in her plan, as she meets a young unemployed man who is about to marry. The post-war welfare society appears massively, not only in the opening scenes, which illustrate the extremely booming construction industry and the motorization in Rome, but even more in the figure of surprisingly fat mothers who are understanding the passions of their men escaping from family life into the stadium for the event of the day, the football game Rome vs. Naples. Fascism is not mentioned in any part of the film, people (the film plays in a Roman neighbourhood called Pigneto) enjoy their Sunday lives (football, bowling, eating, strolling and drinking coffee at Rosati's in Piazza del Popolo or on Via Veneto). And yet, in the figure of the boccia-playing, jovial, family man who runs a writing office (so here is a connection with the film industry) in which his two daughters work for him. A precise message, which is subcutaneously injected, is clearly pointed out: that man was employed for 30 years in the Ministry of Culture, he had seen all the ministers, from Benedetto Croce (1920 Minister) to Giuseppe Bottai, "up to the last

Minister, who sent me at home". That remark refers to the purge of the administration (the Italian version of de-Nazification) by the Italian post-war governments. The fact that the Republican minister – whose name is not quoted, but who must have belonged to the Christian Democrats and not to the Communists, who are completely absent in the film – dismissed the jovial small businessman, signalled to the audience that the latter has been a member of the Fascist party during the regime. The man is portrayed as an opportunist in the course of the film whom nobody can trust a word of what he is saying (the outraged outcry of his two daughters as he swears "on the lives of my daughters" is very meaningful) and yet he is not a bad person, as in the movie fundamentally malignant characters do not occur. The unspoken *basso continuo* is therefore the message that the Italians are not bad people.

The only priest appearing in the film is cleverly characterized as a football fan who sympathetically rushes through Sunday Mass, especially to get to the football stadium on time. He has only one 'defect': as coming from Naples, for the Roman cinema spectator he is cheering on the 'wrong team' and is treated by his Roman parishioners after the defeat of his club with a discreet humor. Enthusiasm for football is another element that links Fascist and Republican Italy in a high degree of continuity. The special trains with fans from Naples are reminiscent of the time before, only the interrupted career of a star footballer from the time of Fascism, who hopes to engage with a career as coach, is a counterpoint and may suggest to the audience that those who were during the time of the regime's overly exposed personalities had a hard time making a career after the war. This film, completely forgotten today, had only a mediocre appeal to the audience at that time, in spite of its famous actors. But if we take the income sum as a comparison, it corresponded (looking at a period of seven years) about that of "Roma Città aperta".[8]

The ordinary entertainment film in the early '50s was completely different from the highly engaged neorealistic masterpieces of the late '40s. Especially from 1948 onwards politics had drastically changed in Italy, allowing the leading Christian Democratic Party to dominate the cultural climate, in particular the cinema. The very rapid growth of an affluent society permitted people to go more often to the cinema compared to the '30s.[9] The number of entrance tickets to the Italian cinemas increased from 416 million

[8] From 1953 to 1959 "La domenica della buona gente" got revenues of sold tickets for about 100 million Lire. "Roma città aperta" reached around 124 million in the same seven-years-period from 1945 to 1952.

[9] One of the leading diplomats in the Italian Foreign Office, Luca Pietromarchi, went very often to the cinema, even during the war, cf. Ruth Nattermann (Ed.), I diari e le agende di Luca Pietromarchi

in 1946 to 819 million in 1955, and the revenues of sold tickets grew from 14 billion to 116 billion Lire,[10] which is quite astonishing not only because of the economic crisis provoking difficulties to US cinemas at the same time,[11] but also because this increase in revenues was several times higher than the inflation rate, so that the average price of a single entrance ticket raised from 33.65 Lire in 1946 to 141.6 Lire in 1955.[12]

According to Isola, in 1962, around two million Italians a day went to the cinemas, and the number of cinema halls reached then 10 500, compared to 1950, when there were around 7 100.[13] The new films were placed in four different distribution cycles: first in the big metropolitan areas, second in the major cities of the provinces, the third round of distribution arrived months later in the smaller towns, and the fourth distribution round was constituted by the parish cinema halls.[14] Before the birth of television in Italy in 1954, cinema was the most important popular media influencing Italian society. Since 1935, the cinema production was financed by state credit (Sezione Autonoma di Credito Cinematografico presso la Banca Nazionale del Lavoro), a system renovated with the law no. 448 of 26 July 1948 promoted by Giulio Andreotti.[15] These promotion activities had

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Diari (1938–1940). Politica estera del fascismo e vita quotidiana di un diplomatico romano del '900, Roma 2009.

10 Simone Isola, Produzione e produttori da commedia, in: Giovanni Spagnoletti / Antonio Spera (Eds.), Risate all'italiana. Il cinema di commedia dal secondo dopoguerra ad oggi, Roma 2014, pp. 137–158, at p. 137.

11 Sergio Liscia, Cinema, TV e next media, Milano 2003, p. 3.

12 The price for an entrance in a cinema in Milan (probably the top level at that in Italy) was oscillating between 200 (third-run-cinema) and 600 Lire (first-run-cinema) in 1953; cf. John Sedgwick / Marina Nicoli, Popular Filmgoing in mid-1950s Milan. Opening up the 'Black Box', in: Daniel Biltereyst / Richard Maltby / Philippe Meers (Eds.), Routledge Companion to New Cinema History, New York 2018, Appendix 1. The "Rivista del cinematografo" in 1954 announced a contract between Associazione cinematografica italiana and SIAE that fixed mximum income revenues for all small cinemas (subdivided in three categories) which had to limit their prices for a cinema entrance at 70 Lire in order to pay less for music royalties ("Notiziario A.C.E.C.: La nuova convenzione A.C.I. – S.I.A.E."; the journal was closely connected to the Catholic world as it offered the "Elenco ufficiale dei films classificati dalla Commissione Nazionale di Revisione sulle norme della *Vigilanti cura*").

13 Isola, Produzione (see note 10), p. 143. In 1950, cinemas were distributed unequally over the country. More than 55 % of the cinemas were located in the North, 20 % in Central Italy, 25 % in the South.

14 Ibid., p. 144. Detailed on the principles of distribution and life cycles of films Sedgwick / Nicoli, Popular Filmgoing (see note 12), Chapter 21.

15 Isola, Produzione (see note 10), p. 144.

been fixed by law for five years and were accompanied by the law no. 958 of 29 December 1949 ("Disposizioni per la cinematografia").[16]

With the introduction of television in 1954, which coincided with the end of the first phase of the Andreotti film promoting law, the Italian cinema entered in its first post-war crisis and the market was characterized by a short recession phase. The Andreotti film-promoting law had facilitated an increasing number of Italian productions (reaching its climax in 1954 with 201 new productions). Since then the Andreotti-law had to be renovated every year and this procedure created instability, increasing costs, and higher interest rates for credits. Some of the major production houses disappeared. The Lux finished its production, Excelsa / Minerva failed; the state driven Cines was closed in 1958. The market concentration in fewer hands – with surviving production houses like Titanus, Cineriz, Dino De Laurentiis – led to a minor number of new produced films (each of them with higher production costs) because they had to attract as many spectators as possible in order to get their share on the market. However, the crisis was only temporarily and the former Andreottian regulation was reinforced by the law no. 897 of 31 July 1956. In the following years the production numbers rose to 213 films in 1961, opening to a very prolific period, which is considered the "Golden Age" of the Italian cinema.[17]

From April 1948 onwards, Italian politics was dominated by the hegemonic Christian Democratic Party, but influenced as well by the Vatican, which traditionally had a strong interest in educating the people, especially the youth, and of moralizing society (or rather re-moralizing it after the effects of an often very savage Second World War). Looking therefore on films in the first post-war decade, and on the high importance of that media not only in entertaining, but as well as an instrument considered valuable by those who tried to moralize and educate Italian audiences, is a very promising object of research. A lot of new sources and new analysis are available on Catholic cinema thanks to the groundbreaking research project on "Catholic cinema in Italy 1940–1970" led by the University of Milan.[18] Studies on Catholic cinema in Italy have been promoted

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16   Fabrizio Natalini, La censura e la commedia all'italiana, in: Spagnoletti / Spera (Eds.), Risate all'italiana (see note 10), pp. 159–192, at p. 164.

17   Isola, Produzione (see note 10), pp. 137, 139.

18   The research group organized several huge conferences on various topics; they collected hundreds of documents in different Italian archives on some hundred films. The documents will soon be accessible online on the website of the Research Project, hosted by the University of Milan. Tomaso Subini and Mariagrazia Fanchi are mainly involved in this important project. I am very grateful to Tomaso Subini for the generous access to the collected archival materials quoted further on as Unimi Collection. A series of articles has been published in the Journal "Schermi", created by the

outside Italy as well, and with important outcomes. Nonetheless, the representation of the (Fascist) past in popular cinema in the first decade after the end of World War II has still to be analyzed in a more thorough way. Even if it is possible to examine the intents of the film creators, it is hard to figure out how ordinary people did perceive the films they had seen.[19] Quantitative studies on Italian audiences[20] consider the economic success of a film; they rarely regard perceptions of the film made by the public. And film historiography often depends on the (mostly biased) aesthetic and political opinions uttered and published by the contemporary film critics when a new film was distributed.

2 Moralizing People: The Catholic Cinema System

How was cinema used in order to diffuse Catholic morality and identity?[21] A twofold strategy was developed by Catholic activists in promoting "good films" and avoiding the production or distribution of "bad" ones through control. The strategy consisted in proposing religious topics via films and control production and / or viewing of non-recommendable films. "Promoting and controlling" was a classical double strategy. Since 1910, with the diffusion of the cinematograph, films were controlled by the Italian State administration. Prime Minister Giolitti invited the State administration to avoid the "representation of bloody deeds, of adultery, robberies and other crimes", to hinder the distribution of films which "depict the public officials and police as negative and create sympathy with criminals".[22] Cinema control remained in use for the next decades: For

Research Group. Cf. Mauro Giori / Tomaso Subini (Eds.), I cattolici, il cinema e il sesso in Italia tra gli anni '40 e gli anni '70, in: Schermi. Storie e culture del cinema e dei media in Italia 1, no. 1, gennaio–giugno 2017; Raffaele De Berti (Ed.), I cattolici nella fabbrica del cinema e dei media. Produzione, opere, protagonisti (1940–1970), in: Schermi. Storie e culture del cinema e dei media in Italia 1, no. 2, luglio–dicembre 2017; Elena Mosconi (Ed.), Davanti allo schermo. I cattolici tra cinema e media, cultura e società (1940–1970), in: Schermi. Storie e culture del cinema e dei media in Italia 2, no. 3, gennaio–giugno 2018.

19 The national-socialist propaganda had similar problems in order to influence audiences in Germany during the years 1933–1945, cf. the important methodological and thematical reflections made by Clemens Zimmermann, Landkino im Nationalsozialismus, in: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 41 (2001), pp. 231–243, especially at pp. 231, 233.

20 For the state of the art, cf. Sedgwick / Nicoli, Popular Filmgoing (see note 12).

21 The important question how cinema was moralized by Catholic organizations has been raised by Biltereyst / Treveri Gennari, Moralizing Cinema (see note 5).

22 Natalini, La censura (see note 16), pp. 159, 163.

the Fascist regime censorship had to accompany the program of creating a "new Fascist man". One of the first steps of the new Italian Republic regarded censorship, as well: With Law no. 379 of 16 May 1947 the Constitutional Assembly established a pre-production-control of films by creating a Central Office for Film at the Prime Minister's Cabinet (that was run from 1947 to 1954 by Giulio Andreotti). Unconstitutional censorship was declared legitimate in the case of films and necessary to "protect public morality".[23] An objective shared by the Catholic Church.

Since the 1920s, the organized Catholic world in Europe had been looking with great attention at the cinema and from the 1930s onwards, the highest authority of the Catholic Church had officially reacted to the new media.[24] With the pope's encyclica *Vigilanti cura* in 1936 the Vatican hierarchy demonstrated to be aware of the importance of cinema as a media of influencing people. At this point, the topic of cinema control had been strongly raised. The cinema "should not be any more a school that corrupts but a precious means of education and human elevation". The pope was especially welcoming censorship commissions and organisms that would give a 'good direction' to this media.[25] In 1934, the Vatican created a new organism, the Centro cattolico cinematografico (CCC) with the objective to catalogue all films distributed in Italy and to deliver judgements about the pastoral appropriateness of films. This structure continued to work under Pope Pius XII as well.

After 1945, every year around 300 new films (mostly US productions, but Italian, French, Mexican and other films as well) were classified in a booklet called "Segnalazioni cinematografiche" that was published twice a year and had a quite wide diffusion. The CCC-Office tried to convince all Parish priests to buy every six months the new version of the collection. In every guidebook all newly released films were reassumed and analyzed from the educational and moral point of view. Each page was dedicated to a different

23   Ibid., p. 163. On censorship cf. also Mino Argentieri, La censura nel cinema italiano, Roma 1974; Domenico Liggeri, Mani di forbice. La censura cinematografica in Italia, Alessandria 1997; Roberto Curti / Alessio Di Rocco, Visioni proibite. I film vietati dalla censura italiana (1947–1968), 2 vols., Torino 2014.

24   Cfr. Guido Convents, Resisting the Lure of the Modern World. Catholics, International Politics, and the Establishment of the International Catholic Office for Cinema (1918–1928), and Dario Edoardo Viganò, The Roman Catholic Church, Cinema and the "Culture of Dialogue". Italian Catholics and the Movies after the Second World War, both in: Biltereyst / Treveri Gennari (Eds.), Moralizing Cinema (see note 5). Viganò highlights the Church's "double pedagogy" regarding cinema, i. e. "to promote good films, classify all the others and communicate the judgment to the priests and the faithful", in order to turn cinema from "a school of corruption into an educational instrument".

25   Natalini, La censura (see note 16), p. 162.

film and the short description of the contents was accompanied by the judgement of the Catholic censor. The overall classification of a film was abbreviated in a capital letter. E meant Excluded; A stood for Adults only (Catholic adults we have to say); Ar for Adults with reserve; that meant those with a very high degree of moral standing. Only films that had a T-Classification (T for Tutti, for all) could be viewed by the Catholic masses, by adults and children (families), without problems of moral suspicion; but there was a further distinction in the family category: the T-Films could be watched only in public (commercial) cinemas, not in the Parish cinema halls. For the latter, the category P had been reserved (for Parish cinema). But there was a further label in use that indicated the morally most innocuous films: that was the O-classification (O like Oratory, that meant church-annexed youth-educating surroundings; schools, colleges and so on). We can ignore this classification, because in the booklets of the CCC for the late 1940 s I could not find any film in the category Oratory / College / School. For both categories, P and O, there was a further distinction between films "visibile senza emendamenti" (O and P) and such viewable only after some modifications ("visibile con emendamenti": Oc and Pc). [26]

Furthermore, the CCC indicated not only the degree of restriction, but the quality seal given by the main critics as well, in classifying productions as "good" or "mediocre". After having read the guidebook, a priest who wanted to choose a new film for his Parish cinema had to look only for the T-category with P-classification and exclude all films with E-, A-, Ar- and Tr-classification. The Tr-Classification ("tutti con riserva") meant that mature Catholics were allowed to see the films in public cinemas only, not in Parish cinemas, and that the youth was not admitted. Such a classification was valid for example in the case of the film "Joan of Arc" (director Victor Fleming, 1948) starring Ingrid Bergman. In 1948, amidst the excluded films we find not only "Riso amaro" directed by Giuseppe De Santis, but also the French production "Fantomas" (director Jean Sacha, 1948) which was considered morally negative, because of scenes with brutal and criminal violence, and without counterbalancing positive elements even if the criminal at the end was punished and the police forces remained victorious. In "Riso amaro" "episodes of disturbing realism are alternating with violent scenes, followed by criminal actions. At the end a suicide. The plot appears morally negative, because based on sentiments and deeds

26   In the "Classifica ufficiale della Commissione di revisione del Centro cattolico cinematografico" we can read that for Oc and Pc "Le correzioni debbono essere indicate esclusivamente dagli Organismi all'uopo autorizzati dagli Ecc.mi Ordinari" (Roma, Archivio ISACEM: Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, Segnalazioni cinematografiche).

which have to be condemned".[27] In "Madame Bovary", a Goldwyn Mayer production of 1950 which was declared "excluded" as well, the censors criticized the "repeted adultery and the suicide".[28]

In 1949, only 10 films received the label P (Parish halls allowed), and other 49 films were allowed for all Catholics (T, youth and adults) in commercial public cinemas. The 2 categories included around 35 % of a year's film production. Quite the same number of films was categorically excluded (56 films). In 1949, we can find the film "The Great Gatsby" produced by Paramount in the category of the excluded, especially because the film "presents plenty of negative elements, it contemplates divorce as a normal and acceptable solution and shows a lot of people without any sense of morality".[29]

The booklets worked, therefore, as an index of forbidden films for Catholic audiences. But did the Catholic masses accept the moral judgements of the CCC or did they go to public cinemas in order to watch the excluded, the forbidden or the mediocre films as well? It is not improbable that the CCC list may have worked as a deterrent only for a small and very obedient part of the Catholic-Italian society, but for the other part it probably raised the interest in what was 'forbidden'.

The guidebooks were dealing only with the public viewing and the distribution chain of newly released national or international films. But Italian Catholic authorities had an interest in promoting ideologically "good films", too. How to realize this objective? The question of how to promote Catholic values through the cinema had been addressed early by Luigi Gedda, key figure in the CCC.[30] As a first step of the new cultural strategy towards a cinematographically mediated popularization of Catholicism, the CCC became an active producer of films with religious topics that aimed to create positive myths and cinematographic icons. Therefore, Luigi Gedda was eager to construct a public image of Pope Pius XII to comunicate the pope's importance and popularity

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27 Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, Segnalazioni cinematografiche, vol. 24, Roma 1948, p. 98, and ibid., vol. 26, Roma 1949, p. 104.

28 Ibid., vol. 27, Roma 1950, p. 216. The film "Amore in città" was excluded, too, with the following motivation: "The film presents some deplorable aspects of social life, but without conclusion. Indicates without pity the problems, but without giving any possible remedies.".

29 Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, Segnalazioni cinematografiche, vol. 26, Roma 1949, p. 176.

30 Simona Ferrantin / Paolo Trionfini, Luigi Gedda, i comitati civici e il cinema di propaganda. Un progetto di conquista politica e di moralizzazione della società (1948–1958), in: Mosconi (Ed.), Davanti allo schermo (see note 18), pp. 25–40.

to the world by addressing huge cinema audiences.[31] After 1945, that strategy could still have been put more easily into action. This representation of the pope as a "public and universal icon", a kind of living saint, bringing relief to the people, reached its peak with the documentary "Anno santo 1950", where the Catholic masses are represented in the film as coming from everywhere to Rome on pilgrimage, emphasizing in this manner the centrality of the Church of Rome.[32]

It is obvious that this attempt of promoting the pope as a universal model was only one element in the wider strategy of catching the attention of Catholic audiences, and cinema was only one of the means used to realize the Catholic desire to re-moralize Italian society. The struggle for the autonomy of Catholic youth education during Fascism had led to the building up of a very strong laic organization, the "Azione Cattolica" (AC), with several branches like the GIAC (Gioventù italiana di Azione Cattolica, the Youth organization of the Catholic Action, separated in young men's and young women's organizations) acting fiercely in order to direct Italian society in the sense of Catholicism. The AC-sub-organizations had special clerical advisors piloting or controlling all activities ran by the Azione Cattolica, as there were youth meetings; schools for "apostolate" and evangelization; contests in religious culture; devotional practices; internal seminars and exercises; conferences; catechism lessons; prayer activities; classes for study; diffusion of Catholic journals and so on. Cinema viewing has to be put in this context as one branch of activities to catch the attention of young Catholics. It is important to remember that in the 1950s a cultural war was ongoing in Italy against the Italian Left, the communist and radical-socialist subculture, a war that had been formalized with the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office in banning communism (1. 7. 1949).

With two million spectators every day cinema was the most important popular media. The Italian audiences had to be attracted every day, and that meant especially by popular films. How to get Italian Catholic spectators into the morally "good" films? In this perspective, the structure of the local Catholic comunities gained high importance

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31   That worked especially in two films: "Pastor Angelicus" of December 1942 and "Guerra alla Guerra" (1946), both directed by Romolo Marcellini and produced by the CCC. Especially the documentary film "Pastor Angelicus" had a wide diffusion in foreign countries. Cf. Federico Ruozzi, Pius XII as Actor and Subject. On the Representation of the Pope in Cinema during the 1940s and 1950s, in: Biltereyst / Treveri Gennari (Eds.), Moralizing Cinema (see note 5), pp. 158–172, at p. 164; Cristina Formenti, Guardando all'America. "Pastor Angelicus" (1942) e la matrice del documentario italiano di produzione cattolica, in: De Berti (Ed.), I cattolici (see note 18), pp. 21–44; Gianluca della Maggiore, "Guerra alla Guerra". Cinema e geopolitica vaticana nalla chiesa di Pio XII, in: ibid., pp. 91–108.

32   Ruozzi, Pius XII (see note 31), pp. 162–163, 166.

and especially the Parish cinema which proposed to the local community the viewing of "good" films, i. e. those evaluated positively by the CCC. The priests had to control the recommendations of the CCC and choose the "proper" films. According to the research on parish cinemas done by Daniela Treveri Gennari the presence and significance of this category of cinemas was quite high. In Rome, for example, during the '50s there were around 58 parish cinemas against a network of around 130 commercial cinemas. Although the parish cinemas had smaller seating capacities (only 6 of them had more than 500 seats), they represented about one-third of the total number of movie theaters available, with a distribution in all areas of the city, and therefore accessible to all different kinds of audiences.[33] These considerations on Rome can be generalized for whole Italy: In 1949 there were about 3 000 parish cinema halls in Italy[34] and in 1956 number 5 449 had been reached.[35] The state controlled the opening of new cinemas by a Committee which had to admit new halls. In 1953, the Committee held 21 meetings and examined 1 472 applications: 1 061 were accepted, 411 refused. Quite a high percentage of new requests were regarding parish cinemas, but even some of those demands were refused.

It is quite obvious that there was often a big time lap between the production of a film and its viewing. The "life cycles" of a film were determined by the distribution channels and by public acceptance. Especially the parish cinemas often used old films (as a "fourth run", after they had passed through the entire distribution system) and in particular American productions.[36] The overwhelming presence of the Hollywood productions and the problem of attracting audiences was a characteristic of commercial cinema as well. According to Sedgwick and Nicoli, in Milan with its 112 commercial

33   Treveri Gennari has analyzed audiences with an approach from below, using 325 questionnaires and 32 video-interviews with people who remembered the time when they went to the parish cinemas in the city of Rome; Daniela Treveri Gennari, Moralizing Cinema While Attracting Audiences. Catholic Film Exhibition in Post-War Rome, in: Biltereyst / Treveri Gennari (Eds.), Moralizing Cinema (see note 5), pp. 272–285, at p. 275.

34   Roma, Archivio ISACEM, Serie Centro cattolico cinematografico, b. 4, fasc. 1: Circolare di Mons. Urbani.

35   Mino Argentieri, Storia del cinema italiano, Roma 2006, p. 83. For the number of parish cinemas in 1954 cf. Treveri Gennari, Attracting Audiences (see note 33), p. 273. The parish cinema sector was organized since 1949 by the ACEC (Azione cattolica esercenti cinema, the Catholic exhibitors' association belonging to the Catholic Action).

36   Between the films that were popular in parish cinemas, we can find films that should attract young boys, such as "The Mark of Zorro" (director Rouben Mamoulian, 1940); "Knights of the Round Table" (director Richard Thorpe, 1953), "Ivanhoe" (director Richard Thorpe, 1952); "The Lone Ranger" (director Stuart Heisler, 1956). Cf. Treveri Gennari, Attracting Audiences (see note 33), p. 278.

cinemas, in January 1954, were screened 598 films. Over half of them had little success and were screened only for 3 days or less. Probably 414 of 598 films were exhibited in fourth-run cinemas only. Looking on the top-20 list of the most successful films in that month, eleven films came from the USA, only seven were Italian productions. Zampa's "Anni facili" was the most popular Italian film at that moment, followed by "Lucrezia Borgia", an Italian-French coproduction.[37]

If the commercial cinemas were vulnerable, the parish cinema halls were still more exposed to economic risks, because the priests needed quite a lot of films in order to make their cinema work. A number of 20–30 films a year can be considered an absolute minimum in order to attract the people belonging to the parish community. How could the priests guarantee this number of films if they ought to show only the few P- and O-Films? The question is therefore, if the parish priests' 'mission' – that is to moralize Catholic audiences while attracting them by cinema – did really work. Did it morally work, did it economically work? The mission was not easy to fulfil, especially considering the cinema viewing conditions of darkness and promiscuity that represented a problem for the Catholic authorities both in terms of decency and morality. The sources contain several complaints, especially from Southern Italy, but according to Treveri Gennari this situation was different in Rome, where the network of parish cinemas worked well as instrument for the Church's purposes and is therefore considered by this author a successful Catholic operation.[38]

The Catholic success consisted especially in reducing the influence of Italian (and French) productions which received much higher amounts of negative classifications like "Not recommended" and "Excluded" as the most successful US-American films.[39]

But the ideas of morality were not always economically sustainable. It seems, therefore, that several parish priests did not apply that form of control that Vatican hierarchy was solliciting. In 1949, for example, in the small city of Campagna, in the province of Salerno in Southern Italy, a Catholic businessman who ran a cinema (the "Cinema comunale") was complaining about the behaviour of a parish priest and his cinema. The commercial cinema owner followed the censorship recommendations in renouncing to screen some films, accepting an economic damage that resulted from not distributing

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37   Sedgwick / Nicoli, Popular Filmgoing (see note 12), Tab. 21.2.

38   Treveri Gennari's interpretation is based on the memories of parish cinema goers collected by for her Oral History Project; cf. Treveri Gennari, Attracting Audiences (see note 33), p. 277.

39   Mariagrazia Fanchi, The 'Ideal Film'. On the Transformation of the Italian Catholic Film and Media Policy in the 1950s and the 1960s, in: Biltereyst / Treveri Gennari (Eds.), Moralizing Cinema (see note 5), pp. 221–236, at p. 229; Treveri Gennari, Attracting Audiences (see note 33), p. 278.

what he called the "scandalous films". Probably he meant with "scandalous" the E-category of CCC-excluded films, like Rossellini's film "L'amore" (Love, 1948) and "Germania Anno Zero" (1948), which were banned from Italian parish cinemas as well. For reasons of obedience to the Church he felt obliged to distribute only the not-excluded films. Obviously, he wanted to show all other categories. But in the local "Seminario", the educative and living place of the young future priests had been opened a cinema called "Sala Azione Cattolica". In this place and in other parish cinema halls Catholic adults were allowed to view Catholic-Adult-Labelled-Films and the youth had been admitted, too. In his protest letter destinated to the Vatican hierarchy at Rome he asked polemically: "is it sufficient that a room is consecrated in order to make disappear all restraints? The parish halls do they have a morally educating function or not? Or do they have commercial objectives that let vanish away all moral limits?"[40]

It was not the first complaint of that cinema owner. As he told in his letter addressed to the pope himself, his first denunciation of this situation had had no effect at all, the local Catholic authorities (the Bishop of Campagna, Monsignore Giuseppe Palatucci) did not intervene, so the Azione-Cattolica-Hall had continued to show to all, to the male and female youth of the Catholic Action as well, films like "I Cavalieri della morte", "Il Ciclone contro Zorro il Bandito", la "Città rubata", "Musica Proibita", "La notte delle Beffe" and "Un uomo ritorna".

The commercial cinema owner raised another point: he critized that in the parish cinema room boys and girls were not seated in separated rows, but admitted to sit close together, hand in hand, in the dark room, obliged to commit "heroic acts of chastity". If this concurrence was to go on in the same way in the future, the cinema owner menaced that he would be "obliged to compete with the priest's Seminar about whom will be more efficient to push towards certain sins".[41] Obviously, he was not at all reassured by the fact that the Azione-Cattolica-Cinema in Campagna did not show films of the E-category which he did not distribute either, but the commercial concurrence with the parish cinema was still regarding the Ar-, A- and T-Films. For example the film directed by Zampa in 1949 "Campane a Martello", classified for morally mature Catholic adults

40   Roma, Archivio ISACEM, Fondo Presidenza Generale XV, Serie Centro cattolico cinematografico, b. 4, fasc. 1: Letter by Raffaele Ceriello to the CCC, to the Secretary of State, to the Commissio of the Consistoryi, the Central Presidency of the Catholic Action, and to Pope Pius XII, 7. 5. 1949. The letter with the same complaints which Ceriello had written to the Bishop of Campagna, Monsignore Palatucci, on the 14. 12. 1948, must have been ignored by Palatucci.

41   Ibid.

only.[42] Who wanted to watch excluded films like "Fantomas" or "Totò cerca casa", had to look for a non-Catholic cinema runner.

If this was the situation in a place in Southern Italy not influenced by the arrival of modernity, then the unners of parish cinemas in Northern Italy must have been still more openminded. What when the excluded films were the most interesting ones? Taking the lists of excluded productions into account, we can find films that became rapidly classics as "Gone with the wind" ("Via col vento", director V. Fleming). The censorial repudiation of successful, but morally too challenging films created a further problem, when convinced catholics as runners of commercial cinemas not only felt morally obliged to adopt the CCC-censorship-criteria, but at the same time had little choice because they were obliged by severe contracts with the distribution companies to use for viewing what was delivered to them.[43]

We can therefore have some doubt about the efficiency of the attempt to moralize audiences, especially when we consider that less than half of the parish priests running a cinema did buy the CCC's film recommendations! There were only around 2'200 subscriptions of the "Segnalazioni" in 1949. And we can suppose that the Catholic youth wanted to watch at least those films reserved by the CCC to Catholic adults (the A-Category). It might seem quite paradoxically, but I would say that it was especially when failing to moralize, that the parish cinema was attracting audiences still better. Therefore, we can consider the parish cinemas as a valid distribution channel for popular films and their hidden messages on the Fascist past (those related to the two decades from 1923 to 1943, the socalled *ventennio*). It is interesting to note that in some cases, films dealing with the *ventennio*, as "Anni difficili" (director Luigi Zampa, 1948), were explicitly allowed by the CCC! The censors concluded in this case, that the film was to be considered as a positive one, "because of its condemnation of the methods used by antidemocratic

42 A comedy around a prostitute who had sent the money gained with the American soldiers at home, in deposit to the priest of her small island. Turning home, she realized that the priest had died and his successor had used the money to build up an institute for orphans. A conflict between local mayor, priest and the former prostitute aroused about the payments still necessary for the orphans, at the end resolved with a donation of her incomes to the orphans and the death of the priest.

43 Cf. the concise analysis of Fanchi: "While parish cinemas often ignored the directives on screening films deemed unsuitable for audiences, small-gauge cinemas could not bypass the directives of the CCC, since 16 mm-films were only distributed by San Paolo Film."; Fanchi, Ideal Film (see note 39), p. 228.

governments and their disastrous consequences". The film was not allowed for parish cinemas halls, but restricted to adults and to commercial cinemas. [44]

In May 1949, Monsignore Urbani, Secretary of the Episcopal Conference for the Catholic Action, in a circular letter to his fellow bishops, was underlining the importance of parish cinema halls, opened in the Parish House or the in Oratory, especially to enable the youth to have access to morally sane films. According to Urbani, the parish cinema ought to be seen as an auxiliary school that accompanied the pastoral activities. Some bishops had already created "Advisory commissions" (*Commissioni di vigilanza*) and consortia for the distribution of valuable films. But the problem of the "scarce number of morally sane films" still created problems, and the financial expenditure was high for several parish priests. However, according to Urbani's advice, the financial questions should never induce to screen films that are "not impeccable". According to Urbani, the film industry should be forced to consider the parish cinema as a new economic force able to demand the 'right' films for their education purposes. Urbani believed that the ACEC could help the already existing Distribution Consortia (and the new ones to be created) to deliver good films to catholic cinemas at a modest price! In order to create a strong organisation, he asked all bishops to oblige their parish priests to associate themselves to the ACEC. [45]

But several bishops did not regard this structure as sufficient to guarantee an adequate control of morality. A new structure was therefore created on diocesan level: the "Secretary of Spectacles" (Segretariato dello Spettacolo) depending from the "Giunta diocesana". The members of this office were designated by the local bishop and assisted by a priest ("Consulente Ecclesiastico"). Their job was to control the parish priests and the morality of the Catholic cinemas, and of the distribution-chain. The main figure of the control apparatus was the President of the "Commissione diocesana di revisione". In the case the local Bishop decided to use more severe criteria as the National Revision Committee (CCC), the moral valuation of the films could be made by the Ecclesiastical Consultant or by a specific Episcopal Delegate for the Cinema. On the national level, in 1949 it was Luigi Gedda acting as President of the "Commissione di revisione dei films" at the CCC. [46] Even if a film was allowed at the national level, the diocesane commissions

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44   Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, Segnalazioni cinematografiche, vol. 24, disp. 24, Roma 1948, p. 187.

45   Roma, Archivio ISACEM, Presidenza Generale XV, Serie Centro cattolico cinematografico, b. 4, fasc. 1: Circolare Monsignor Urbani no. 6, AZ. no. 313/49.

46   On the censorship of the regional commissions, in the case of Lombardy, but for a different period, the years 1962 to 1967, cf. Mariagrazia Fanchi, In nome del padre. Il lavoro delle commissioni

could apply a new control, making judgements still more severe, so that the parish priests at the end had a very limited choice. No wonder that the educative mission did not work very well, as the Regional Delegation for Lombardy was underlining in November 1952: "Maybe for lack of production, maybe for lack of an ideal condition of the films presented on the market, it is a fact that, after the first good choices, the situation is degenerated into an unhappy programmatic commercialism projecting films that even if they are morally acceptable, do not present any positive element".[47]

Parish cinema was not running well. The government had to intervene. In March 1953, Andreotti, Undersecretary in the Prime Ministers Office, and head of the film control and financing branch, wrote in a letter to the ACEC that not all parish cinemas were observing the rules established and comunicated by Andreotti's department in the circular letter 9419/AG 37 from 23 May 1950. That means that after three years of control activity, the parish cinemas were not under control, neither by Andreotti's administration nor by the ACEC. Now, in 1953, the ACEC was authorized to sanction reluctant parish priests by different degrees of punishment.[48] In order to increase its impact, the President of the ACEC, Monsignore Francesco Dalla Zuanna, transmitted the Andreottian order to all "Regional and Diocesan Delegates of the ACEC".

As a longer lasting effect of this control mania, there was – according to Mariagrazia Fanchi – a disaffection of Catholic audiences regarding cinema. For Fanchi it was not so much the appearance of television that influenced the decline of cinema, but mainly a negative approach of the Catholic world to that medium, pushing key segments of the public, especially adult women and, during the 1960s, the lower middle classes, towards the new forms of domestic entertainment, such as television, radio and vinyl records. In the second half of the 1950s the censorial activities of the CCC became increasingly severe, pointing much more on State television.[49] Looking at the failure to attract certain audiences via cinema during the 1960s we should not forget, however, the effects of cinema on the public during an entire decade from 1945 to 1955, effects, which might be

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cattoliche di revisione, fra istanze locali e direttive nazionali, in: Mosconi (Ed.), Davanti allo schermo (see note 18), pp. 121–135.

47 ACEC ("Direttive", del novembre 1952) – Delegazione regionale per la Lombardia.

48 The following forms of punishment had been allowed: "richiamo; diffida; sospensione della licenza di esercizio" from 2 to 15 days, in the case of repeated infraction of the rules; and last but worst: the ACEC could propose to the Undersecretary to deny the authorization to run a cinema (Undersecretary Andreotti to ACEC, 3.3.1953, prot. no. 4802/AG 37).

49 Fanchi, Ideal Film (see note 39), p. 229, 231–232.

caught better by analyzing its film production and distribution mechanisms, in so far as these were influenced by the Catholic authorities.

3   Catholic Film Production, Politics of Censorship and the 'Culture War' against the Left in Italy

The neorealistic films of the years 1945–1948 constituted a big challenge for Catholic politicians and spin doctors. Some Catholic activists who were convinced by the influence of cinema on the masses, were searching for strong antipodes, in order to invade with Catholic messages the communicative space generated by cinema. Therefore, the Catholic world launched various production projects, "short, mid-length and feature-length films, produced by various small companies, which to varying degrees were inspired by religion".[50] The most well-known of the small production companies were Orbis Film, Universalia and San Paolo Film. In 1945, Orbis produced, together with the CCC, a short film entitled "Who is God?" ("Chi è Dio?"), directed by Mario Soldati and written together with Cesare Zavattini and Diego Fabbri. Daniela Treveri Gennari and Marco Vanelli argue that the collaboration between leftist intellectuals and filmmakers on one hand and the Catholic Church on the other hand was very vital in the birth and development of neorealism in Italy, so that the origin of neorealist cinema would have taken place within the context of a Communist-catholic collaboration.[51]

But the success of those production houses was quite short lived. The economic risk of film production projects was high and there was a widespread intolerance towards the compromises required to guarantee the economic success of a film. There was a discrepancy between the defended Christian values that ought to be comunicated to the public and the market mechanisms which had to be observed by Catholic production companies as well, such as the "use of stars, the lack of scruples in choosing subjects, the excessive wealth of technical and advertising means, to ensure the success of their films", as film critic Lacalamita, the Director of the Centro sperimentale di cinematografia, close to the CCC, argued.[52]

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50   Ibid., p. 228.

51   Daniela Treveri Gennari / Marco Vanelli, Did Neorealism Start in Church? Catholicism, Cinema and the Case of Mario Soldati's Chi è Dio?, in: New Review of Film and Television Studies 8 (2010), pp. 198–217.

52   Fanchi, Ideal Film (see note 39), p. 228.

One of the most active and intelligent figures who wanted to use the cinema as a media to launch an ideological 'counteroffensive' against the influence of the political culture of the left, was Father Félix Morlion, a Belgian Dominican with strong anti-Communist background sent in 1944 from the USA to Italy. Morlion, who aimed at a completely new form of Catholic propaganda against communism and the parties on the left, was introduced to Alcide De Gasperi by Luigi Sturzo and soon helped by young Giulio Andreotti who worked as his personal secretary. The Dominican monk was extremely convinced about the power of cineastic images.[53] He made a lot of efforts in order to create a Catholic cinema able to attract the masses. For Gianluca della Maggiore the group consisting of Andreotti the politician, Morlion the director ("always out of control") and the secretary general of the OCIC André Ruszkowski as the international reference point, were part of Gedda's entourage, but contrasted by the strategy of Giovanni Battista Montini and Vittorino Veronese.[54]

With the film promotion law, Giulio Andreotti, undersecretary at the Presidency of the Counsil of Ministers, played suddenly a key role, because he became responsible for financial aids to the Italian film industry from 1947 to 1954. Catholic neorealism should substitute or overshadow the 'ordinary' neorealism considered as too close to the Italian left. Morlion was preparing the (religious) subjects, Andreotti promoting the films, i. e. producing, and Gian Luigi Rondi, a film critic, had to guarantee the success of the new films in the media by positive reviews. It is evident that there was an instrumental and ideological use of cinema with the aim to moralize audiences. Andreottis first 'coup' was that he convinced an important director as Roberto Rossellini to work for a Catholic film production: Rossellini was asked to direct two films for the Catholic Holy Year 1950, "Stromboli" and "Flowers of Saint Francis". A third film realized by Rossellini with the same intent was "Europa '51". Tomaso Subini and Elena Dagrada have brilliantly reconstructed the operation of using Rossellini as "pioneer … of Catholic neorealism, correcting the other [type of neorealism; LK] which did not seem Christ-

53   Dagrada, A Triple Alliance (see note 5), pp. 114–115. There is still lacking a biography on F. Morlion. But now cf. Lorenzo Grilli, Gioacchino Volpe all'università 'Pro Deo' di Félix Morlion negli anni Cinquanta, in: Storiografia. Rivista annuale di storia 23 (2019), pp. 141–183.

54   Gianluca della Maggiore, Vittorino Vereonese e il cinema. Un paragdigma pastorale alternative nell'età della mobilitazione geddiana, in: Mosconi (Ed.), Davanti allo schermo (see note 18), pp. 43–63, esp. pp. 44–45.

ian enough".[55] It seems that Rossellini later on, in 1952, confirmed the importance of a Catholic interpretation of the world.[56]

Giulio Andreotti was not the ideological brain in that operation. The spin doctor was Father Félix Morlion who was the mastermind behind this instrumental use of cinema. Tomaso Subini has pointed out the key role of Morlion to whom Andreotti had been "personal secretary" before being nominated Undersecretary of State.[57] Morlion participated in the Saint Francis film as a scriptwriter,[58] but his entire role was a much more important one, that of a CIA-related activist in a cultural war against communism, as Subini has argued. In 1945 Morlion founded the "International University of Social Studies Pro Deo" which soon became "the reference point for the ideological collaboration between the Vatican and the American government against the influence of Communism in Italy".[59] Andreotti gave lessons in journalism at the Pro Deo University. At the Faculty of Journalism of the Pro Deo had been created a Film Department where film critic Rondi was teaching film analysis since 1948. Rondi was the Head of an International Institute of Cinema operating at the same Faculty with the concrete aim of producing Catholic neorealist films. Pro Deo's film activities were financed by Andreotti's ministry and by northern Italian industrials.[60]

Looking on Rossellini's "Flowers of Saint Francis" ("San Francesco Giullare di Dio"), one can imagine that this film attracted a lot a young audience because of its intrinsic filmic quality. But did it moralize audiences, too? It is quite interesting to have a look

55 The quotation about neorealism is from 1952, expressed by Giovanni Battista Cavallaro (cf. Dagrada, A Triple Alliance [see note 5], p. 118); Tomaso Subini, La doppia vita di Francesco giullare di Dio. Giulio Andreotti, Félix Morlion, Roberto Rossellini, Milano ²2013; id., The Failed Project of a Catholic Neorealism. On Giulio Andreotti, Félix Morlion and Roberto Rossellini, in: Biltereyst / Treveri (Eds.), Moralizing Cinema (see note 5), pp. 173–185.

56 Pietro Cavallo, La vita ricomincia. Comunità ed identità nazionale in alcuni film del biennio 1945–1946, in: Giornale di storia contemporanea 3 (2000), pp. 59–111, at p. 89.

57 Subini, Failed Project (see note 55), p. 176 (referring to Giuseppe Casarrubea).

58 Ibid., p. 177.

59 According to Subini who is quoting an expression used by Ennio Di Nolfo in a conference in 1989.

60 Subini, Failed Project (see note 55), pp. 177–179. Cf. the inauguration speech of Andreotti in November 1948 for the inauguration of the Academic year 1948/1949 at the Pro Deo University (Roma, Archivio Istituto Sturzo, Fondo Andreotti, Discorsi 1948). About the critics made by G. L. Rondi during the '60s cf. Giuseppe Previtali, Uno spettacolo osceno. La critica cattolica di fronte al fenomeno "Mondo Movies", in: Giori / Subini (Eds.), I cattolici, il cinema e il sesso (see note 18), pp. 103–118, and about his importance for the diffusion in Italy of the films directed by Bergman cf. Fabio Pezzetti Tonion, Il cinema di Ingmar Bergman in Italia, in: ibid., pp. 135–148.

at the image of the people communicated by the film. We see barbarous pagans, stupid superstitious people without any kind of education. Suddenly, a theological discourse using Augustinus is introduced by a Catholic priest. The film seems mainly a fairy tale for children combined with religious moralization. The Catholic Church is efficiently depicted as the only moralizing institution in this barbarous world, a useful message for the "Holy Year" 1950 and the contemporary battle against atheist and anti-clerical soviet communism. On the other hand, the figure of St Francis depicted by Rossellini in his story-telling by episodes could hardly be more different from what Catholics were used to hear about the saint in the past three decades before Rossellini's film.

It is quite surprising to find the same image of the ordinary superstitious-barbarous-ignorant people (in this case not placed in medieval times, but related to the Southern Italian peasantry) in his hilarious "Il medico e lo stregone" (1957), but director Mario Monicelli used this image in a completely different manner, because he contrasts ironically the alleged backwardness of the South to an idea of Central-Northern Italian "superiorism". At the beginning of the film, a Southern Italian peasant is characterized as politically completely ignorant, in asking the medical doctor (Marcello Mastroianni) arriving from the North why he is not accompanied by policemen, considering him a banned anti-Fascist ("si vede che di te si fidono"), as if nothing had changed since 1943, as if for the people of the South the Fascist regime was still in power. That seems the only hint to past 20 years of Fascist regime present in that film, so that we can imagine the hidden importance of such a small bit of information.

But getting back to Morlion's activities, it is important to notice that Morlion developed in 1950/1951 a more-years plan (1953–1955) to infiltrate and transform the communist milieu in Italy.[61] As third element, together with the idea to penetrate into families and factories using young socially engaged priests trained during their studies at the Pro Deo University in order to combat communism, Morlion envisaged to use 20 % of the planned budget to finance "a cineforum activity". This format, based on a presentation-discussion-formula, would spread extensively during the following three decades, especially in the industrial cities of Northern Italy like Milan. Subini quotes from an internal Dominican-order document with which Morlion argued: "Whilst communists are not influenced by church prayers, they cannot resist an invitation to a free of charge social film's screening." Morlion proposed therefore the use of "at least three vans equipped for projecting films in small villages and estimate the expenses for making copies of certain social (non political) films avoiding government documentaries, which initially could be counterproductive." In his paper, Morlion added that "no communist branch chief can

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61   Subini, Failed Project (see note 55), p. 175.

prevent his comrades from watching a free of charge screening", and in order to attract even more this cultural offer, Morlion planned to announce "that a surprise film will be screened at the end", so that the curiosity of the public in practice is attracted by two films. Morlion proposed to screen "socially engaged films" like Rossellini's Stromboli, and to avoid political ones or governmental documentaries.

In January 1949, four months before the film-shootings started, Morlion sent his exploitation plan for "Stromboli" to Manuel Suarez, his superior as Dominican General.[62] The problem was, that Catholic critics remained unsatisfied by "Stromboli", it was criticized for its simplistic ending, and especially for the hastily introduced final miracle. Important newspapers like the "Osservatore Romano" and "Il Tempo" were not at all convinced about the film; the CCC published a negative review and classified "Stromboli" as film for only adults.[63] With "Europa 51", the third film directed by Rossellini with Morlion as scriptwriter, according to Dagrada the great director showed his 'subversive' autonomy by producing a film "that deviated substantially from Morlion's writings, Rondi's reviews and Andreotti's expectations".[64] But Catholic intellectuals were already celebrating the victory over leftwing neorealism when they met at the Cinema Convention at Parma in December 1953. In his introductory speech Giancarlo Vigorelli gave an affirmative answer on his rhetorical question if the "Communist monopoly on Neorealism has found its sweet death at Parma?"[65]

We can see, indeed, that Morlions ideas of influencing audiences did work much better in the case of another film that aimed to demonstrate that Catholicism would prevail even in a hostile surrounding. This film was named "Don Camillo" (director J. Duvivier; "The Little World of Don Camillo", IT / FR 1952) and became rapidly the most successful Italian film of the 1950s. Morlion wrote a draft for a subject in October 1950, but although he developed the topic, he did not write the scenography alone, since

62   Ibid. According to Subini, the project of implementing a Catholic neorealism failed, not at least because of the personality of Rossellini itself, whose lifestyle could not at all be used as a model representing Catholic values, although Andreotti did not care a lot about the disappointment of the Vatican (ibid., p. 173) and the life of Rossellini stigmatized in the USA. Cf. Augusto Sainati, Cattolici Doc? Definizioni, etichette, incertezze tra l'Italia e l'estero, in: Mosconi (Ed.), Davanti allo schermo, pp. 15–23, esp. pp. 16–17.

63   Dagrada, A Triple Alliance (see note 5), pp. 121–122.

64   Ibid., p. 128.

65   Giancarlo Vigorelli, Fine di un monopolio?, in: Rivista del Cinematografo 27,1 (1954), pp. 9–11. In another article about the Parma Convention, it was Gian Luigi Rondi who depicted neorealism as "Christian art" ("Neorealismo, arte Cristiana", ibid., pp. 12–13).

an entire staff was collaborating.[66] Morlion was a very intelligent psychologist, aware of how to manipulate better the masses. In an extraordinary description of the central theme behind Don Camillo he describes what he had discovered as the essence of Italian identity and of the psychology of the communist and socialist masses:

> "Behind the violent impulses of rebellion of the simple man who embraces the ideas of the left, is mostly hidden a real, sincere anxiety of justice; when this feeling is stripped of all the unreasonable, preconceived political superstructures and, under the pressure of the dramatic problems of daily life is manifested in its bare simplicity, the man of the left ceases to be such in order to become simply 'man', man of 'good will' who fights in a way that all his fellow men can conquer the 'peace on earth'. This feeling leads him in crucial moments to fight against his own political charlatans, who rely on his good faith and force his conscience to take him to act against his own, real interest."

The film should therefore essentially try to "reveal the hidden truth of Italy, a country where the Christian tradition is still the true source of popular dynamism". Looking from the 21th century back to the dynamics of the Italian Republic during the last decade of the 20th, Morlion seems to have been not so wrong with his analysis. In order to realize his purpose, a director "provided with a special Christian dynamism" and a sense of affectionate and benevolent satire was required: "Blasetti seems to respond with particular attention to these needs", wrote Morlion referring to Blasetti's films "Quattro passi tra le nuvole" e "Prima Comunione" as positive examples.[67]

It was not so easy for Morlion to realize the idea of this film. In a letter of 21 August 1951 written to Guareschi by Amato, the producer let the author of Don Camillo know that during Christmas 1950 he had been travelling in the USA in order to propose the "Don Camillo" to Paramount, using the intermediation of Frank Capra, but Paramount did not accept. Furthermore, there was no famous Italian director available for that kind of subject: Blasetti and De Sica, Castellani and Camerini, everyone declined the invitation to direct the film (even Camerini and Blasetti who had been "registi cardine

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66   Unimi collection AGG (Archivio Giovannino Guareschi): F. Morlion, "Note per una eventuale elaborazione di un soggetto cinematografico tratto dal volume 'Don Camillo' di G. Guareschi", 17. 10. 1950, p. 1: "note … da me redatte con l'ausilio di alcuni collaboratori dell'Istituto Internationale Cinematografico della Università Pro Deo". There were several changes to Morlions early ideas, maybe introduced into the scenography by Duvivier or Barjavel.

67   Ibid., Morlion, note, 17. 10. 1950, p. 2.

dell'industria cinematografica degli anni Trenta"[68]) At the end, only French director Julien Duvivier accepted, but imposed his own scriptwriter, Barjavel, frustrating Morlion who wanted to be scriptwriter by himself.[69]

The state censors ("Revisione cinematografica preventive") gave a quite positive evaluation of the subject, but with a reserve: the fotografy had to be judged later, in order to give a "real and definite judgement". And the kick of Don Camillo into the backside of Peppone after the confession had to be cancelled. The censorial apparatus was asking where in Italy the film was ambienced, it seemed to represent a strange countryside because there was no presence at all of any representative of law and order. The film presented for the censors "an imagined environment and a setting of the story like a fairy tale". But it seems that the critical remarks of the state censors had been largely ignored by their ministerial superiors, as there is an annotation written by an unknown hand (maybe by Andreotti?): "I have spoken with Rizzoli at Venice on behalf of the sequence regarding the confession" ("conferito con Rizzoli a Venezia per la scena della confessione", i. e. the kick into Peppone's bottom).[70] Eliminated this question, the state censors could give their immediate approval. The film was considered sufficiently balanced between Italian and French elements, both from the technical and artistical point of view. The further permissions arrived now rapidly by the State administration, the permit for public presentations of the film in Italian cinemas needed less than five working days.[71] But Guareschi was not at all convinced about the scenography and still less about the actors: "Fernandel might be very able as an actor, but he has a face like a horse". And Gino Cervi is "too nice and too well-fed". Guareschi did not accept the transformation of his story into a "funny village farce".[72]

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68   According to Zinni, Uomini in nero (see note 2), p. 296.

69   Subini, Failed Project (see note 55).

70   Milano, Unimi Collection ACS58 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Fondo Ministero del Turismo e dello Spettacolo, Direzione Generale dello Spettacolo, Divisione Cinema, Concessione certificati di nazionalità): Appunto Roma 4. 8. 1951: "Don Camillo" (authors Guareschi, Duvivier, Barjavel), Trama, Giudizio favorevole.

71   Milano, Unimi Collection DGC23 (Archivio della Direzione Generale per il Cinema), fasc. 1550, correspondence 3. 3. 1952, 15. 5. 1952 and 2. 8. 1952.

72   Milano, Unimi Collection AGG16 (Archivio Giovannino Guareschi): Letter by Giovanni Guareschi to Angelo Rizzoli, Milano 19. 8. 1951 (but in a letter to producer Amato things are depicted in a different manner by Guareschi). The total cost of the production was calcolated with 180 million Lire, subdivided in 41 million fort he artists, 21 million for the director, the reduced version of synchronization was calcolated with 2.2 million Lire (Milano, Unimi Collection, ACS61, fol. 4).

Although Catholic neorealism remained not more than an episode, some Italian leftwing intellectuals were quite convinced of the attracting force of Catholic cinema. Therefore they were denouncing the Catholic attempt to use the cinema for their religious and political purposes. When the French film "Monsieur Vincent" was shown at the Venice Film Festival, the socialist newspaper "Avanti" was criticizing strongly the strategy behind that film (and similar others). Whether you go to church or to cinema, the degree of indoctrination is quite the same; that was suggested by film critic Alfredo Panicucci when he wrote testually:

> "France, which feares for the health of our souls … has thus brought to life the life of St. Vincent, cleverly masked behind a modest and bourgeois title like 'Monsieur Vincent'. Mr. Vincenzo, therefore, and not Saint Vincent … The film is purely religious; perhaps it is the vanguard of the film-crusade that the Vatican is about to unleash on the world to take back souls – at least so they say – from the Marxist sin. America has already produced 'Bernadette' and other minors. France this 'Vincenzo'. In Italy, the Vatican company *Universalia*, rich in millions and perhaps even intelligent, after having purchased the 'Dies irae' that can serve its propaganda against Protestantism, is preparing to produce some boring topic like 'Ignazio di Loyola' and 'Fabiola'. The day is approaching, continuing like this, that instead of going to the Mass we can go to the cinema … The church knows how to do things with its craftiness … Our task is not to discuss the sanctity of Signor Vincenzo: if he is more saintly –he who gives having got from others– or not those who suffer continuously in misery …?"[73]

Panicucci was complaining about the lack of critique on class and social relationships in Italian society. Maybe he was overestimating the influence of popular cinema on political behaviour in general, but he was right in judging the disastrous message given by the so successful "Don Camillo" on behalf of the Fascist past! Although the word Fascism was not spoken out and there was neither a hint on the criminal and liberty-killing attitudes of Mussolini's regime, there were several small bits of meaning remembering

For the correspondence between Guareschi e Rizzoli e Duvivier in 1952 cf. Sainati, Cattolici Doc? (see note 62), p. 18.

73   Roma, Archivio ISACEM, Segretariato Moralità 1947, Relazione no. 14 per l'Archivio del Segretariato Generale: Relazione del Segretariato per la Moralità, no. 66, 15. 9. 1947: extract from L'Avanti, no. 209, 6. 9. 1947, article by Alfredo Panicucci. About "Fabiola" (director Alessandro Blasetti) cf. Paola Palma, Fabiola. Storia di un appuntamento mancato. I cattolici e la coproduzione cinematografica italo-francese, in: De Berti (Ed.), I cattolici (see note 18), pp. 109–130, esp. pp. 117–119 about the review made by Father Morlion.

powerfully the past. Especially, it was pronounced a positive judgement about the Italian monarchy by the only "intellectual", the old school teacher, who on her death bed is generously ("even if you are a Bolshevik") invoking God's blessing for her former pupil Peppone – who appears quite poor in learning at class as a young boy, and with much school education needs as an adult as well, an image not so nice for a communist leader. The teacher's last wish is to be buried and brought to the cemetery with a coffin covered by the flag of the last king ("Kings are never to be sent away!"): a highly provocative question for Peppones followers, resolved by the mayor in a dictatorial way which denounces his pseudo-democratic attitudes. So, the key scene about the past is Peppone mourning and bearing by himself the coffin of his former teacher with a visible piece of the Savoyard flag placed on it! In this manner, the film communicated to the public an ideal continuity between old monarchical Italy and the new post-war one (not taking into account the different treatment of the monarchy choosen by the Italian people via Referendum and by the Italian constitution) and proposed a positive judgement about the gone monarchy which – that is the clear message – ought to be mourned respectfully. Only one more episode in the film might be a hidden reference to the Fascist regime; that is the moment when the spectator discovers that Peppone had bribed the soccer referee in order to win the soccer game between the Catholic and the communist part of the local community. Don Camillo had tried to bribe him, too, but offering less money! Soccer games during Fascism often had had a political outcome and were counterfeit, in games between competing Fascist clubs as well. Even if we do not know whether Italians had taken cognisance of this meccanism, the hidden message in the film is that of continuity with the past and of a community of people with the same passion, i. e. the same identity, trying to bribe each other, but closely connected and staying together, overcoming the ideological differences. Emblematic for this meccanism is the love story of the young Romeo-and-Giulietta-couple.

So, if we look at the enormous success of the "Don Camillo", we have to realize that Panicacci was not completely wrong in his reflections about the political situation, even if he wrote his article five years earlier.

On the opposite side, the Christian Democrats were instead convinced by the strong but negative influence of leftwing cinema, even on other authors. In the columns of the DC-Party-newspaper "Il popolo", Mario Ungaro comments acidly about the films the public could view at the 1947 Film Festival in Venice:

"Almost all the films of this Festival have so far proved to possess something in common: a semblance of morality in the last hundred meters of film, and it does not matter that there are adulterers and crimes in large numbers, or incest, always accompanied by a final 'educational' sequence, deliberately planned, but it never

manages to achieve the true effect and the healthy purpose because it is false in its basis and assumptions. In fact, it is very handy to denigrate the sacred institute of family and then lead adultery on the path of repentance; it is too easy to show how the crime is evil, pleasing itself however in the realistic representation of it. Finally, it is simple to stamp in mourning, in pain, in repentance or other situations outside the law and against morals, just to find an excuse to devote to them a large part of the films … And then: why so many crimes, always war, and always Nazism? People have almost understood that all those things are bad and reminding these to them too often, especially with fictional plots that can teach something to a bad guy more than to a good one, is counterproductive."[74]

The oblivion of the Nazi (and the Fascist) crimes of the past is here depicted as more productive and sane for society than the opposite.

If we try to draw a conclusion, me must say that during the '50s the Christian Democratic authorities aimed much more to repress undesirable films and especially to hinder the production of leftwing neorealistic films than to produce 'positive' popular films. Censorship was still the most important instrument to control the film market. "Don Camillo" remained an exception. In 1950, 30 % of realized Italian films did not receive the approval seal of the censor. The film producer Ponti was criticizing that it would actually be impossible to realize a film like "Roma città aperta" because the censor would answer that the Germans would not like it.[75] Films like "Guardie e ladri" and "Totò e Carolina" had problems with censorship,[76] "Totò cerca casa" (directed by Steno and Monicelli, 1950) was classified as to be excluded for Catholic audiences,[77] and in 1953 Guido Aristarco and Renzo Renzi were shortly thrown into jail because of an article in the review "Cinema Nuovo" proposing a subject on the Italian Armed Forces in Greece during World War II depicting soldiers more as lovers than as warriors. The

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74   Roma, Archivio ISACEM, Segretariato Moralità 1947: Relazione no. 14 per l'Archivio del Segretariato Generale: Relazione del Segretariato per la Moralità, no. 66, 15. 9. 1947: article by Mario Ungaro published in: Il Popolo, no. 206, 3. 9. 1947.

75   Gian Piero Brunetta, Storia del cinema italiano. Dal neorealismo al miracolo economico 1945–1959, Roma 1993, p. 90.

76   Natalini, La censura (see note 16), p. 171.

77   But the film had a great economic success in Italy, cf. Clemens Zimmermann in this volume, at his note 23.

official reaction to the only written subject was a very strong intimidation to filmmakers to avoid unconventional images on the Italian war past.[78]

And in 1952, Giulio Andreotti defended the importance of censorship when demanding from filmmakers like De Sica to not depict only tragic realities, but "give a minimum of advice that helps to make the world of tomorrow a little bit less icy for the multitude of people who are spending themselves in silence, suffering and dying". And do not let the rest of the world think that the film is depicting an Italian reality, because that would be a bad service to the Italian Fatherland, he added.[79]

Although the practice of control was not working so smoothly as Catholic censors were wishing[80] and although there were serious distribution problems that created a lot of economic difficulties for the Parish priests, it is quite obvious that in such a political climate there was no place for deeper reflection on the Fascist past. Aside from the neorealist accusation of Fascism, we can suppose that the hints and small bits of interpretation that were travelling sometimes in the popular films were therefore of a major importance then we might think today and we might therefore conclude that they probably contributed in a subcutaneous but thorough manner to help in creating a self-exculpatory master narrative on the Italian Fascist Past.[81]

78   Cf. Filippo Focardi, Il "cattivo tedesco" e il "bravo italiano". La rimozione delle colpe della Seconda guerra mondiale, Roma-Bari 2013; Filippo Focardi / Lutz Klinkhammer, Die italienische Erinnerung an die Okkupation Griechenlands, in: Chryssoula Kambas / Marilisa Mitsou (Eds.), Die Okkupation Griechenlands im Zweiten Weltkrieg, Wien 2015, pp. 55 – 65, at p. 60. Cf. Lukas Schaefer in this volume, at his note 15.

79   Natalini, La censura (see note 16), p. 169: Andreotti's article was published in the Christian democratic review Libertas, 28. 2. 1952.

80   For example, Journals for the catholic Youth (like "Juniores") were giving different film recommendations than the CCC and labels like "excellent" to productions classified by the CCC as "Ar", that is "for catholic adults with mature morality only" (Archivio ISACEM, PG XV, b. 4, fasc. 1), as in the case of the film "Le avventure di Peter Pan" (1954, "Peter Pan", Disney 1953).

81   On this topic, related to Italian politics and society, cf. Focardi, Il "bravo italiano" (see note 78); Filippo Focardi / Lutz Klinkhammer, The Question of Fascist Italy's War Crimes. The Construction of a Self-acquitting Myth (1943 – 1948), in: Journal of Modern Italian Studies 9 (2004), pp. 330 – 348.

Index of Names

„Umlaute" were not considered for alphabetical sorting. No fictitious persons or film characters were included, neither names of film production companies. Articles, predicates of nobility, or names of authors in bibliographical quotations were not considered for alphabetical sorting.

Index of Film Titles

This volume's transnational, comparative approach seeks to open up a fresh perspective on self-interpretations of the past in Germany and Italy with regards to film production and the cinematographic relationship between the two countries, from 1945 to 1955. In the 12 chapters, the international authors analyse both plot and narrative in significant single film productions, as well as the contexts in which the horrors and traumas of their Nazi and Fascist pasts were discussed in both countries.

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