

February 9, 1945

Ex-Fascists Control Government's Film Policy

A group of ex-Fascists and close collaborators with Fascists is in control of the new Italian Government's film planning. These individuals were active in formulating and administering Fascist laws which made the motion picture in Italy an instrument of propaganda.

The most important figure now influencing the Italian Government in matters relating to films is Alfredo Proia, head of Generalcine, an Italian film producing and distributing firm which handles also pictures made by RKO Radio in America. Proia denies that he was a Fascist, but beyond being a party-member he was on close personal terms with a number of important Fascists who interested themselves with films. Proia is said to have been friendly with Ciano and many of the other leading Fascists.

Proia is said to have been a member of the Partito Popolare before the advent of Fascism. But his power today springs from the alleged fact that he loaned or gave to the Christian Democrats several million lire shortly before the fall of Mussolini, and from the fact that Giuseppe Spataro formerly worked for Proia.

There is some doubt whether the alleged money presented to the Christian Democrat party was actually Proia's to give as he owes a large sum to Cinecitta and another large sum to RKO. He claims now that he only can make very small payments on the money owed to RKO. It is further reported that Proia has arranged to have the notes due Cinecitta postponed indefinitely by having one of his lawyers named trustee of Cinecitta.

The ex-Fascist best known for his film activity and a leading adviser of the new Government on film matters is Eitel Monaco. Monaco in 1942 and 43 was director general for cinematography at the ministry of popular culture. Prior to that he was director of the National Fascist Federation of the industries of spectacle, which included the cinema.

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Monaco, as Proia, today is a member of the Christian Democrats. He does not hold any official position with the Government but states he has been offered the post of head of the cinema department. Monaco is said to have been a faithful servant of the Fascists and a special tool of Freddi, top Fascist in films (now in the North of Italy).

Other ex-Fascists still exerting powerful influence in film matters are: Vincenzo Galvino who was head of one of the four film divisions in the cinema branch of the ministry of popular culture--he continues as film head under Libanati, undersecretary for the press, the spectacle (including cinema) and tourism; Roberto Dandi, alleged to be a pre-march-on-Rome Fascist who gained control of the distributing company Ici, later became a producer and in 1942-43 took over two French studios at Nice as Italian representative in a joint Fascist-Vichy French deal; Dr. Oliva, former head of Cinecitta under Luigi Freddi, is now director of E.N.I.C., the government-owned distributing and cinema-owning corporation; Dr. Papi, a high official of E.N.I.C. and member of the boards of directors of numerous film enterprises under the Fascists, remains as general manager of E.N.I.C. under the trustee, (lawyer of Proia, mentioned above-- name = Fabri (? on spelling)).

Sources: Personal observations and entire list of film contacts.

PWB Pressure on Russian Film Activity

The PWB Film Section is exerting a mounting pressure on the Russian film distribution in Italy in an effort to win concessions for Anglo-American government film distribution in the Balkans. The PWB controls practically all the cinema bookings and has granted to the Italian distributors one playdate in each cinema out of each three playdates. The PWB insists that the playing of Russian films count against the "quota" for Italian pictures. The PWB tries to force the showing of an Anglo-American never-reel when a Russian picture is exhibited.

Sources: Mizen and Jib.

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Vatican Fear of Communist Use of Epuration

Some Vatican circles fear that the Communists will use the purge in Italy not only to get rid of men they do not wish in office who otherwise might be all right but also to keep in office--but hold a club over and dominate-- ex-fascists. It was pointed out that the purge can be used two ways. Also it was said that the Communist head of the epuration committee in Italy is a more thoroughly trained Communist than Taglietti, having spent more time in Russia, and may be potentially more dangerous.

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Russians Force Ban on Book

Sale of the book "Il Bolscevismo e la Religione" by Ladislao Kania (a pseudonym) and published by Magi-Spinetti, Roma 1945 has been banned by the Italian Government following protests made by the Russian Ambassador to De Gasperi, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The publishing company was especially set up to publish this book. It is headed by an executive of the plant where La Civiltà Cattolica, Jesuit magazine, is printed. It was feared that there might be reprisals so it was not published by a previously established firm.

The head (or one of the heads) of the Polish armed forces in Italy has ordered an edition of 2,000 copies.

While public sale was not permitted, copies are being sold or lent to known friendly customers of various book stores etc.

The book consists of a four page extract from the Encyclopa of Pius XI on Atheistic Communism; an introduction and two main parts. The first of the main sections contains eight chapters on Soviet Laws and Theories and the second, four chapters on "La realtà sovietica".

Sources: Deck, and the book "Il Bolscevismo e la Religione", see copy in separate package.

Comment: The material in the book seems to be carefully documented. It is all from Polish sources.

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Irish Representation at the Vatican

The Irish representative at the Vatican officially is only a charge d'affairs though he has the personal rank of minister. The Vatican is not supposed to be pleased with the situation because they have a Papal Nuncio in Dublin and that means Ireland should have a Minister or an Ambassador at the Vatican.

The explanation of the state of affairs is that Mr. de Valera, Irish Prime Minister, wished to be so neutral in the present war that he would not even ask the King of England to sign the letters of credence naming Dr. Kiernan Irish Minister to the Holy See.

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Albanian-U.S. Film Difficulty

This week the OWI in Italy received word by cable from Albania that the new Albania Government declines to agree to have American films handled there by a private company and insists that the films be sold to the newly-established government film monopoly. It was suggested that the film monopoly be regarded as an emergency war-time institution and not a precedent for the future.

Source: OWI representative concerned.