'Good Morning, Pupil!' American Representations of Italianness and the Occupation of Italy, 1943-1945

Andrew Buchanan

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In July 1943, the *Baltimore Sun*’s Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Edmund Duffy drew an editorial cartoon commenting on the Allied invasion of Sicily that had begun 10 days earlier (see illustration). With black smoke and buzzing aircraft indicating continued fighting on the near horizon, a representative of the Allied Military Government (AMGOT) arrives in a small Sicilian village. He is met by a nervous villager: an adult, but a figure barely half his size. The peasant looks apprehensively at the giant American, whose intellectual accomplishments are signified by his nebbish glasses and the books strapped to his knapsack. The slogans ‘democracy’ and ‘three R’s’ emblazoned on his briefcase announce that he has come to teach the natives some important lessons. Grinning, he extends a huge hand towards the terrified villager and offers a hearty ‘Good morning, pupil!’ Yet, for all his obvious superiority, the soldier projects an almost sheepish innocence, as if to suggest that Americans are somehow new to the business of occupation and a little unsure of what it will demand of them.

The cartoon summarizes the liberal ideological framework through which policy-makers and opinion-formers articulated the American-led occupation of Sicily and mainland Italy. Here, as author John Hersey would put it a few months later, is America ‘on its way into Europe’, full of knowledge and enthusiasm and ready to rebuild a shattered world on new foundations. And here, too, is the would-be recipient of American beneficence: bewildered, trembling and literally child-sized, the perfect subject for paternal tutelage. While the cartoon reflects a certain naïveté on the American’s part, and perhaps even a hesitancy to shoulder the tasks ahead, it conveys no sense of an impulse to punish these recent enemies.

These cultural representations conformed to the stated goals of American policy. In July 1943 the State Department sketched out a plan to encourage the
emergence of a prosperous and democratic Italy oriented towards the ‘Anglo-Saxon orbit’ and the United States in particular. It was an approach, as senior administration figure Adolf Berle pointed out, that offered an alternative to the punitive course advocated by the British. Where London threatened, Washington offered ‘hope’; as President Roosevelt announced following the overthrow of Mussolini, America aimed to ‘restore’ the Italian people to the

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From the beginning of the occupation, American policy was presented both to Italians and to the domestic audience within the United States as a fundamentally redemptive project aimed at helping Italy to 'reconstitute herself'.

This article aims to examine both the assumptions about Italianness that helped shape policy and underpin its justification, and the shifting representations and propagandistic images of Italians that unfolded as the war progressed. In doing so it seeks to operate on a number of distinct planes — broad cultural assumption, the development and implementation of concrete policy, and representations of the occupation in films, novels, and other aspects of popular culture — and to discuss the two-way linkages between them. Through these interlinked processes, the occupation of Italy made an important contribution to the formation of the redemptive, muscular and interventionist ideologies that would coalesce in Cold War internationalism. This is not a study of the cultural interaction between occupiers and occupied, although Italian actions and attitudes helped shape the cultural discourse within the United States, but is rather an account of how the American occupation 'played' to American eyes. It is also, because the first Allied occupation of a major Axis power is by far the least studied, necessarily a study that compares representations of Italianness and the occupation of Italy with some of the cultural and ideological dimensions of the subsequent American occupations of Germany and Japan.

Washington’s occupation policy in Italy stood in sharp contrast to the initial thrust of its occupations of both Germany and Japan, where, until modified by the political exigencies of the deepening conflict with the Soviet Union, American military government had an overtly punitive character. Initial plans for postwar Germany, adopted by Allied leaders in September 1944, called for a throughgoing process of deindustrialization that would turn it into an ‘agricultural and pastoral’ country. This perspective, codified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in JCS 1067, guided the initial work of the American Military Government and was only abandoned as deepening conflict with the Soviet Union prompted Washington to underwrite the rebuilding of the German economy. A similar process unfolded in Japan, where, as John Dower shows, America’s ‘arrogant idealism’ produced plans for a ‘root-and-branch’ demilitarization that were only reversed as Cold War pressures mounted.

The divergence between these approaches and that adopted in Italy reflected the fact that American policymakers viewed Italian fascism as something

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5 Ibid.
7 John Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II (New York 2000), 23.
imposed upon a malleable people, whereas nazism and militarism were seen as reflections of the true character of the German and Japanese peoples. The assumption, as Petra Goedde argues, was that ‘all Germans — not just those who were active members of the nazi party — were guilty of Germany’s war crimes’, and that deindustrialization and ‘denazification’ were necessary both as a punishment and to prevent a future resurgence of Teutonic aggression. These notions of collective guilt were incrementally abandoned as American policy shifted from the summer of 1945 onwards, and as American policy-makers began to picture the Germans and Japanese, like the Italians, as victims of National Socialism, militarism and fascism rather than as perpetrators.

The ideological formation of America’s occupation of Italy drew on two broad currents: deep-seated notions of Italian backwardness and confidence in the muscular and beneficent expansion of American power. As Alan Brinkley argues, the idea of the ‘American Century’, championed by Life publisher Henry Luce in his influential 1941 article, expressed a determination to ‘use the nation’s great power actively and often very aggressively to spread the American model to other nations . . . with fervent and active intent.’ Leading liberals, such as Vice President Henry Wallace, powerfully reinforced Luce’s ideas as they campaigned for America to enter the war on behalf of the ‘common man’. With regard to Italy, these ideas dovetailed with the notion that, due to both inherent incapacity and a lack of practical experience, Italians were so woefully unequipped for democratic self-government that ongoing American tutelage was necessary. From the beginning, the projection of American power into Italy would be conducted in the name of reforming Italian society by the promotion of American-style democracy.

Pejorative notions of Italianness had deep roots in the United States. While pseudo-scientific theories that Italians and other ‘Mediterraneans’ formed a distinct — and distinctly inferior — ‘race’ had, by the 1940s, given ground to notions of ‘ethnic’ differences within common ‘Caucasian’ whiteness, America’s élite nevertheless had no doubt that Italians were fundamentally inferior. Mediated through the work of cultural producers, including print and film journalists, movie-makers, novelists, and censors, this discourse shaped the dominant and durable popular representation of Italianness. Italians were pictured as the archetypal negation of virtuous Anglo-Saxon Protestants — that is, as lazy, untrustworthy, superstitious, excitable, and, of course, Catholic. They were represented as displaying an unstable dualism, combining cowardice and military incompetence with the cold-blooded violence attributed to ‘organized’ crime. Elite prejudice was reinforced by the fear

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10 Ibid., 7–10.

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that Italian immigrants arrived in the United States infused with anarchic
radicalism and ready to disturb the carefully crafted collaborationism of the
American trade union movement.12
Hollywood did its part to promote these images of Italianness. Cowardice
and military incompetence, for example, loomed large in the 1932 screen
adaptation of Ernest Hemingway’s A Farewell to Arms, while a penchant for
calculated violence stamped the emerging gangster genre, notably in Under-
world (1927), Little Caesar (1931), and Scarface (1932). Hemingway’s novel
unfolds against the background of the Italian military débâcle at Caporetto in
1917, and the ensuing rout is graphically depicted in the movie. Italian officers,
the film makes clear, are more interested in partying and womanizing than in
military affairs. The stock Italian gangster, on the other hand, was represented
by Edward G. Robinson’s ‘Little Caesar’, described by one critic as a ‘cold,
ignorant, and merciless killer’ and a ‘cheap Italian thug’.13 The Mussolini
government pressured studio heads to moderate these negative representa-
tions, with limited success. Despite securing the inclusion of a scene celebrat-
ing the Italian victory at Vittorio Veneto, for example, Rome still considered A
Farewell to Arms so demeaning that it blocked distribution in Italy.14
In 1942, many of these images of Italianness were amplified and codified in
Frank Capra’s Prelude to War. Commissioned by the War Department and
made in collaboration with the Office of War Information (OWI), the movie
dramatized the administration’s public account of the events leading up to
America’s entry into the war, and put an official imprimatur on a set of repre-
sentations of Italy and Italian fascism. Prelude to War drew a clear and critical
 distinction between Italy on the one hand, and Germany and Japan on the
other, suggesting that while Germans had an ‘inbuilt’ tendency towards mili-
tarism and the Japanese displayed ‘fanatical’ worship of the ‘god-emperor’,
Italians were predisposed to apathy. Italian fascism arose when the Italian
people made the terrible ‘mistake’ of turning to an ‘ambitious rabble-rouser’ to
solve their problems; whereas Hitler and Tojo were authentic products of their
peoples, militarism was not inherent to the Italian people but was imposed
upon them by Mussolini. Italians, Prelude implied, might be naïve and easily
deceived by operatic bombast, but they were not fundamentally evil. Their
‘mistakes’, moreover, pointed to weaknesses that explained their apparent
incapacity for democratic self-government, but at the same time rendered them
eligible for redemption under American guidance.
As John Diggins has shown, Mussolini had enjoyed a remarkably good press
in the United States that began to wane only with the Italian invasion of

12 George De Stefano, An Offer We Can’t Refuse: The Mafia in the Mind of America (New
14 See Stephen Gundle, ‘Hollywood, Italy and the First World War: Italian Reactions to Film
Versions of Ernest Hemingway’s A Farewell to Arms,’ in Guido Bonsaver and Robert S.C. Gordon
Ethiopia in 1935. From the fascist seizure of power in 1922 until the mid-1930s, much of the American élite viewed Mussolini as a bulwark against communism, an image that was reflected in numerous positive references to the Italian dictator in newsreel and newspaper reports. Here, Mussolini was presented as a strong and rational leader striving to impose modernity on a dissolute people: his appeal was his apparent anti-Italianness. As author John Gunther explained in his bestselling travelogue Inside Europe, Mussolini was the ‘creator of modern Italy’ and a man whose ‘cold, analytical, and intensely realist’ mind enabled him to impart ‘spine and starch’ to a people lacking in both. Similar sentiments were commonplace, with New York Times journalist and Roosevelt confidante, Anne O’Hare McCormick, thrilling to Mussolini’s struggle to impose order on a ‘chaotic’ country, and Time proclaiming that he had ‘dignified and tempered’ the Italian people and raised them out of the ‘wop’ class.

As Washington headed towards a confrontation with Axis powers in the late 1930s, cultural producers offered increasingly negative images of Italian fascism. But, even as the march to war quickened, Mussolini was not demonized in the same way as Hitler and Tojo: Il Duce’s descent led not to monster but to buffoon. Traits previously represented as attractive, even seductive, now appeared as their opposite, with demagogy replacing logic; clownish showmanship, the accomplishments of a Renaissance man; and empty posturing, the energy of a modernizing leader. From being the dynamic antidote to Italianness, Mussolini became all too Italian. His character distilled the national character — he was a ‘Sawdust Caesar’ whose ‘greatness’ was a product of trick camera angles reflecting only the ‘lowness’ of the Italian people.

When the OWI urged Hollywood in 1942 to show that America was not fighting individual misleaders but entire ‘military oligarchies’, this injunction did not seem to apply to Italy. Here the problem was reducible to one man imposing his will on an unresisting people. Moreover, if Mussolini could impose fascism so easily, then surely Italians could just as easily be led to democracy under benevolent American rule.

In early 1943, the American military began assembling, at the new School of Military Government in Charlottesville, Virginia, officers whose civilian experience as lawyers, bankers, police officers or other public officials was presumed to fit them for the tasks of military occupation. While classes were supposed to draw on the experience of American military occupations from the Mexican War to the first world war, one former alumnus recalled that they

18 George Seldes, Sawdust Caesar (New York 1935), 369.
actually concentrated heavily on the experience of reconstruction in the defeated Confederacy. Guided by the broad ideological considerations outlined above, the social character and essential structure of the Allied Military Government (AMGOT) planned for Sicily was quickly established. Plans called for Army Civil Affairs Officers, working without the backing of combat troops, to exercise governance in areas cleared of Axis troops. While deriving their ultimate authority from Allied arms, they would rule, in the absence of any administrative or disciplinary forces of their own, through the existing Italian local government structures, including a reconstituted Carabinieri police force. This approach reflected that of the State Department’s special Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations, initiated by President Roosevelt in the winter of 1942–43 and headed by Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles. The Advisory Committee deemed Italian local government suitable for ‘speedy political conversion’ to Allied needs after the purging of the most ‘culpable and intransigent fascists’.22

Acting on these guidelines, Civilian Affairs Officers, arriving in towns and villages vacated by Axis troops, quickly established local coalitions incorporating former government and police officials, business figures, landowners and representatives of the Catholic hierarchy. The ‘epuration’ of those officials most directly associated with fascism allowed these military-led organs of local government to take on a democratic veneer even as they restricted political activity and press freedom.23 As Allied military government spread across Sicily, Chief Civil Affairs Officer Lord Rennel concluded that the ‘gamble’ of governing through unescorted Civil Affairs Officers had paid off. Under the paternal guidance of AMGOT officials, he argued, Sicilians were already being transformed from ‘whipped dogs and fawning puppies’ into ‘thinking, emotional and definite human beings’.24 The official Soldier’s Guide to Italy issued to Allied troops prior to the landings on the Italian mainland summed up the lessons of the Sicilian campaign. Allied policy, it explained, was to ‘treat the Italians differently from the Germans’, so as, by acting with ‘moderation and tact’, to ‘gain the future confidence and support of the Italian people in our effort to restore world order’.25

21 For an account of the work of the Advisory Committee, see James Edward Miller, The United States and Italy, 1940–1950, (Chapel Hill, NC, 1986), 42–5.
25 Soldier’s Guide to Italy, Howard B. Aison papers, Box 5, Folder 10, Old Dominion University.
The transformative possibilities of Allied military rule were highlighted in American newsreel and newspaper reports. Typically, reporters infantilized their Italian subjects: as Life editorialized, this ‘lovable, laughing’ and thoroughly unwarlike people now had a chance to ‘become themselves once more’.26 Newsreels featured Italian civilians expressing childish enthusiasms, offering a fawning welcome to Allied troops, looting the homes of local fascists, poring over AMGOT proclamations, and battling each other for jobs handed out by the military government.27 Author John Steinbeck described civilians ‘going to pieces emotionally’ as Allied troops arrived. Echoing a common theme, he concluded that these ‘little people were never our enemies’.28 Administration figures used similarly condescending language. Addressing the Italian-American Labor Council, Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle hailed the welcome given to Allied troops by the ‘common and kindly folk’ of Sicily.29

Military footage rushed from the front lines and incorporated into newsreel programs frequently presented images of captured Italian soldiers.30 Happy to be out of the fighting, they appeared eager to ingratiate themselves with their American captors. Italian soldiers captured on the island of Pantelleria during the invasion of Sicily, for example, were seen laughing, waving, and flashing the Allied ‘V for Victory’ sign.31 Like children, they were ‘quick to learn’ and eager to mimic and amuse their captors. Twentieth Century Fox boss Darryl Zanuck’s 1943 documentary At the Front in North Africa features similarly infantilized images. Here, smiling Italians in a POW cage turn somersaults (sarcastically termed ‘manoeuvres’) and offer comic salutes to their American guards. Underscoring notions of Italian military incompetence, Zanuck focused on their paratrooper insignia to suggest that these happy prisoners were Italy’s toughest troops. Their demeanor contrasts sharply with a neighboring group of surly Germans: distinguishing between German fanatics and misled Italians, the title explained that ‘Nazis don’t mix with captured Italians.’

Constantly repeated in the American news media — widely syndicated war correspondent Ernie Pyle, for example, filed several reports that precisely echoed the newsreel and movie scenes described above — these images formed a dense ideological substratum that supported the extension of Allied military

26 ‘Mussolini’s End: Rid of the Jackal, the Italian People Have a Chance to Become Themselves Once More’, Editorial, Life, 2 August 1943, 26.
27 Movietone News programs: (greeting Allies) 25/093; (looting fascist homes) 25/102; (reading AMGOT proclamations) 26/009; (in Naples) 26/019, Newsreel Archive, University of South Carolina.
29 Speech, Adolf Berle at Italian-American Labor Council, New York, 12 October 1943, Department of State Bulletin, 16 October 1943, 257.
31 Military Newsreel, 1943, Issue 16; Movietone News program 25/084, June 1943, Newsreel Archive, University of South Carolina.
government into mainland Italy in October 1943. Here the situation was complicated by the establishment of a new Italian government, headed by former Army Chief of Staff Pietro Badoglio following the ouster of Mussolini. Formed under the authority of King Victor Emmanuel III, the new government aimed to avoid a catastrophic Italian defeat by coming to terms with the Allies while at the same time allowing German troops to stifle the popular anti-fascist rebellion developing in northern Italy. On 3 September, with the popular rising crushed and with German troops consolidating their hold on Rome, the Allies accepted the Italian surrender on relatively lenient terms. The Allies effectively recognized the Badoglio government as the legitimate representative of the Italian people and hoped that, as British premier Winston Churchill explained, it would serve as a bulwark against ‘chaos, bolshevization [and] civil war’. In mid-October the Badoglio government declared war on Germany, allowing the Allies to accord Rome the unusual status of ‘co-belligerent’.

This strategic shift, implying a conversion from second-rate enemy to semi-ally, was paralleled by a significant change in filmic imagery. At the beginning of the war, Hollywood had been, as Variety put it, ‘cued on Hitler and Hirohito’ while not ‘bother[ing] with Musso’. Italy, the industry journal concluded, was ‘not considered important enough to matter one way or the other.’ Insofar as Italians did appear in war movies, they were invariably portrayed as vainglorious incompetents. In Casablanca (1942), for example, fawning and immaculately dressed military attaché Captain Tonnelli offers Italian military assistance in the hunt for the murderers of German agents, only to be brushed aside by the evil Major Strasser with a derisory ‘how nice’. In a similar vein, an Italian officer provides comic relief from the deadly struggle against General Rommel in Billy Wilder’s Five Graves to Cairo (1943). The New York Times reviewer, writing on the eve of the invasion of Sicily and the associated shift in screen representations of Italianness, dismissed General Sebastiano as a ‘clown’ and an ‘Italian general of the opéra-bouffe type’. In both films the message was clear: Italian officers, like mini-Mussolinis, were all hot air and self-importance, sputtering ineffectually on the sidelines of the real war against Germany.

The focus changed dramatically with Zoltan Korda’s 1943 Sahara. This earnest story of Allied co-operation made, as one OWI reviewer reported enthusiastically, to ‘[drive] home the United Nations idea’, presented a radically new image of Italianness. An American tank crew in North Africa, led by Humphrey Bogart’s Sergeant Gunn, is cut off by a German attack and sets off to cross the desert to the British lines. Along the way, Gunn picks up a

32 Ernie Pyle, Brave Men (Lincoln, NE, 2001), 33.
33 Telegram, Churchill to Roosevelt, July 31 1943, FRUS 1943 v II p. 339.
34 ‘H’wood Cued on Hitler and Hirohito, But Doesn’t Even Bother with Musso’, Variety, 20 May 1942, 1.
36 Letter, Ulric Bell to Robert Riskin, Chief of the Overseas Branch, Bureau of Motion Pictures, OWI, 8 July 1943, Record Group 208, Entry 567, Box 3524, NARA.
representative band of Allied soldiers and a unified force takes shape. They run into Tambul, a Sudanese soldier who is dragging an Italian prisoner behind him; Giuseppe’s status is signalled by the fact that he is the prisoner of an African soldier in the British imperial army. Giuseppe pleads pathetically to be taken on board and Gunn agrees, although he knows that the extra passenger will dangerously deplete the water ration. This act of American generosity is soon rewarded, and Giuseppe begins a heroic transformation. After making himself useful repairing a captured vehicle, he refuses to help a German prisoner betray Gunn’s men to an advancing German column. Confronting the German — a ‘typical Nazi’ in OWI eyes — Giuseppe launches into an impassioned denunciation of fascism. Mussolini, he cries, could make Italians look like ‘thieves, cheats and murderers’, but he couldn’t erase the knowledge of right and wrong. This operatic rupture of the Axis ends with Giuseppe being — literally — stabbed in the back. But his sacrifice is not in vain. Gunn’s troopers are alerted to the German attack and, despite heavy casualties, beat it back. In death Giuseppe earns the right to join the United Nations.

The allegorical significance of Giuseppe’s transformation from pathetic and defeated enemy to heroic semi-ally would have been hard to miss. No doubt with an eye to Sahara’s commercial success, Columbia Pictures’ B.B. Kahne argued in a letter to the OWI that ‘the treatment we accord the Italian (and symbolically all Italians)’ would make the movie ideal for distribution in occupied Italy. The OWI’s Bureau of Motion Pictures concurred, and a similarly positive assessment was displayed by the Motion Picture Academy when it nominated J. Carrol Naish, the actor playing Giuseppe, for an Oscar. Yet, while Giuseppe offers a very different image of Italianness to that presented by Tonnelli in Casablanca, the two characters have a lot in common. The nazi Strasser views Tonnelli as a worthless nuisance, while Guiseppe’s vocal denunciation of fascism is brave but hardly militarily astute. His volatile persona veers from abject groveling to operatic bravery, giving a heroic spin to the theatrical pomposity of Tonnelli and suggesting that both negative and ostensibly positive representations continued to revolve around pejorative notions of Italianness. Moreover, while the transformative potential evident in Giuseppe was significant, it occurred in a movie specifically about the war, and could not negate the casually derogatory images of Italians that Hollywood continued to propagate. Billy Wilder’s popular 1944 drama Double Indemnity, for example, featured two stock Italian characters in minor roles — a truck driver who bungles burning his own truck to claim the insurance, and a streetwise young tough.

Giuseppe’s transformation mirrored American hopes for the transformation of Italian society, and new opportunities in this direction opened up as the
Italian surrender allowed the Allies to project the kind of coalitions established in Sicily onto the level of national politics. In frontline areas the Allies continued to exercise direct military rule, but, as the troops advanced, governmental authority was handed over to reconstituted Italian authorities. Italian government bodies were soon functioning at national, regional and local levels, purged of small numbers of ‘notorious and ardent’ fascists and staffed by officials who had been fascists only ‘as of necessity’. The region around Brindisi known to the Allies as the ‘King’s Italy’ was never placed under military rule, and other provinces were returned to Italian control as the military situation permitted, beginning with large parts of southern Italy in February 1944. As in Sicily, however, Italian self-rule was purely nominal, with Italian officials at every level working under close Allied supervision. An Allied Control Commission (ACC) operating under Allied military control was established in November 1943 and soon presided over a proliferating bureaucratic structure reaching into every aspect of civil society from food distribution and finance to press censorship and labor policy.

The ideological framework that both informed and justified the American occupation was popularized in John Hersey’s 1944 novel *A Bell for Adano*. This book, together with the Broadway play by Paul Osborn (November 1944) and the Henry King movie (June 1945) that were derived from it, was the most significant cultural product related to the war in Italy. Based on Hersey’s experience as a *Time* correspondent accompanying American troops in Sicily, *A Bell for Adano* appeared barely six months after the events it described. Work on the film version proceeded at an equally frenetic pace, with Twentieth Century Fox securing the film rights within a month of the book’s publication. It enjoyed considerable success in all its incarnations. The novel won a Pulitzer Prize and spent several months on the best-seller list, while the play ran for nearly a year. In January 1945 it received official recognition after being transported to the White House for a performance in honor of Roosevelt’s birthday. Viewed as helping soldiers understand what they were fighting for and how they should comport themselves as occupiers, the novel was certified ‘free of political taint’ by military censors and placed on a short list of contemporary titles cleared for distribution within the armed forces; officers reported heavy demand in army libraries.

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40 Memorandum, Lt. Col. S.H. White to Allied Commission, 27 July 1945, quoted in the official *History of Army Civil Affairs*, 473. White considered the four per cent dismissal rate to be ‘consistent with a reasonable purge’.


A Bell for Adano’s success did not rest on artistic merit. One reviewer acknowledged that the movie addressed problems of ‘national destiny’, but regretted that it failed to engage him, while the New York Times enthusiastically endorsed Hersey’s message but admitted that it was not a ‘great novel’. Hersey’s real achievement lay in rendering a popular account of the American occupation that carried a sense of conviction and moral certainty, showcased in lead character Major Joppolo’s ‘wonderful zeal for spreading democracy’. Here, Hersey’s message conformed closely to the vision of the ‘American Century’ advanced by his employer, Time publisher Henry Luce: ‘It is,’ Time’s reviewer noted, ‘the story of the battle for democracy . . . more important than the military engagement that preceded it.’ Major Joppolo, the Civil Affairs Officer and de facto mayor in the recently occupied town of Adano, is a quintessentially ‘good man’ and a representative of American purpose in Europe. The United States, Hersey argued in a polemical foreword, was ‘on its way into Europe’ and its armies and ‘after-armies’ would be there for a long time. And in this new world of ongoing overseas engagement, it would need its ‘Joppolos’; their sense of moral mission was the foundation of America’s ‘future in the world’.

Major Joppolo, accompanied only by a skeptical sergeant, arrives in Adano hard on the heels of American combat troops and quickly sets about restoring some semblance of normality. In textbook AMGOT fashion he assembles a coalition of local worthies that includes the priest, a local businessman and former placeholders in the fascist administration. Joppolo is the source of all initiative, from organizing fishermen to resume fishing, to clearing rubble, and the locals eagerly follow his lead. They are utterly incapable of organizing anything for themselves, and their childish pleasure in doing Joppolo’s bidding lays the basis for a minor personality cult. Joppolo’s crowning achievement is to find a town bell to replace one hauled off by the fascists after the townspeople convince him (somewhat implausibly) that they consider the bell more essential to the restoration of communal life than the provision of food.

Hersey’s novel was in large part a sustained liberal polemic in favor of ongoing and paternalistic American engagement with Europe and against any resurgence of isolationism. He presented this conflict in the form of a struggle between the enlightened Joppolo and his commanding officer General Marvin, a character unmistakably modeled on General Patton. The general’s bullying
lack of concern for the civilian population continually threatens to undermine Joppolo’s efforts and, in a climactic scene, Marvin has a cart that is blocking a military convoy pushed aside and its recalcitrant mule shot. Joppolo’s attempt to undo the damage pitches him into a conflict with the general that ultimately leads to his reassignment, but not before he has restored the bell and rebuilt confidence in American beneficence. Hersey’s point was clear: in order for US policy to be successful, liberal paternalism had to triumph over more boorish American impulses.

The conflict between Joppolo and Marvin alarmed OWI reviewers studying initial proposals for a film version of *A Bell for Adano*. Censors felt that the ‘profane’, ‘ill-tempered’ and dictatorial General Marvin presented a highly negative view of American rule, and that, with American policy ‘still in the process of formulation’, it might be better not to make the film at all. Censors felt that the ‘profane’, ‘ill-tempered’ and dictatorial General Marvin presented a highly negative view of American rule, and that, with American policy ‘still in the process of formulation’, it might be better not to make the film at all. The conflict between Joppolo and Marvin alarmed OWI reviewers studying initial proposals for a film version of *A Bell for Adano*. Censors felt that the ‘profane’, ‘ill-tempered’ and dictatorial General Marvin presented a highly negative view of American rule, and that, with American policy ‘still in the process of formulation’, it might be better not to make the film at all. Other scenes, including one of GIs vandalizing an art collection, also drew criticism. Twentieth Century Fox responded by excising or heavily modifying the offending scenes and, as OWI officials noted happily, by promising to ‘completely eliminate the character of the General’. In the event, Marvin survived but in a highly diluted form. The OWI’s concern that the unexpurgated film might prompt a negative reaction from foreign audiences, however, was somewhat misplaced. Hersey’s primary aim was to explicate American policy for a domestic audience, and here, if we can judge by *Adano’s* popularity, he was successful. He also, less consciously, illuminated the paternal and racial assumptions of American liberalism upon which that policy was grounded.

With the conflict between Joppolo and Marvin toned down, the film lost the novel’s already limited dramatic tension and, under OWI guidance, Hollywood served up a straightforward paean to American benevolence. Where the novel’s Italian characters were one-dimensional ciphers, their celluloid counterparts became, as *Hollywood Quarterly* admitted, ‘odd and funny people’ performing a veritable Sicilian minstrel show. Joppolo presides over a comic ensemble of Italian bit-players as a benign *pater familias* whose rule owes more to enlightened despotism than to any model of democracy. Reflecting representations of Italian gangsterism familiar to American audiences, fascist rule in Adano appeared as a form of small-town graft, with Mayor Nasta (!) as the ‘number one chiseller’ skimming local revenues. His punishment, decreed by Joppolo, is to undergo a bizarre self-criticism session on the town hall steps. Reflecting Allied practice on the ground, Adano’s police chief and other minor fascist officials are quickly reinstated in their old jobs. In line with notions of fascism as an alien force imposed from the outside,
Adano’s priest laments 20 years spent ‘learning to co-operate with conquerors’; in a challenge even to OWI credulity — reviewers argued for the inclusion of ‘at least one or two Italian Fascists’ — there are no local Blackshirts to be seen, and no fascist party.54

The liberal benevolence of American military government dramatized in A Bell for Adano accurately reflected the main thrust of United States policy. During 1944, this model came into increasing conflict with the perspective advanced by London, which viewed the government of the king and Marshal Badoglio as the ideal long-term arrangement and, hardly coincidentally, as one that would best facilitate the re-establishment of British influence in the Mediterranean. Washington, however, was concerned that the Badoglio government’s conservatism, fascist ties and deep unpopularity would render it an unreliable asset in the struggle to establish a stable, democratic, and pro-American Italy. This was hardly a matter of principle, as initial State Department planners had viewed the monarch as a ‘legitimate authority’ around which an alliance of the ‘upper bourgeoisie’, the army and the church could be built.55 But, faced with both popular opposition to the monarchy within Italy and mounting domestic criticism, Washington concluded that the Victor Emmanuel–Badoglio government could only be a temporary expedient. At best it might serve, as New York Times columnist Arthur Krock put it, as a ‘bridge’ to democracy.56

The problem for Washington was that an arrangement intended as a short-term expedient might quickly become consolidated as a major obstacle: ‘it is very easy to recognize these people,’ cautioned presidential advisor Harry Hopkins, ‘but awfully difficult to throw them out later.’57 Moreover, Archibald MacLeish’s concern, expressed to the State Department’s Advisory Committee, that supporting the Italian monarchy negated ‘what the war is all about’ prefigured a mounting wave of domestic criticism.58 Liberals feared that, having established former Vichy head Admiral Darlan in power in Algiers, the administration now planned to back an equally reactionary regime in Italy. Critical voices ranged from the liberal New Republic and the Nation to the mainstream New York Times.59 Concerned that domestic criticism might undermine the presentation of the war as a crusade for democracy, Roosevelt initiated a long

54 Letter, William S. Cunningham (OWI) to Col. Jason S. Joy, (Twentieth Century Fox), 25 January 1944, Record Group 208, Entry 567, Box 3512, NARA.
57 Memorandum, Hopkins to Roosevelt, 22 September 1943, Hopkins Papers, Box 160, FDRL.
58 Minutes of Political Subcommittee (P Minutes 39), 2 January 1943, Notter Files, Microfiche 551 — P — 39.
and dogged campaign to replace the Italian regime with one that enjoyed a broader social base and more liberal politics. Even as he expressed public support for Badoglio and assured Churchill that he had no truck with those ‘contentious people’ who saw him as an Italian Darlan, Roosevelt was pushing for change.\(^6\) It was, he informed Allied commander Dwight D. Eisenhower, necessary to rapidly establish outward forms of ‘democratic government’, even if the monarchy remained as a ‘figurehead’.\(^6\)

Divisions between London and Washington sharpened as British leaders reacted to American support for Count Carlo Sforza and other prominent Italian liberals. But, as the military campaign deadlocked in the face of German resistance south of Rome, the political situation also congealed. While renewed military efforts sparked fresh American plans for political progress — the Anzio landings in January 1944 led Secretary of State Cordell Hull to demand that the ‘reconstruction of the Italian government on a broad political basis be undertaken without further delay’ — further battlefield setbacks led to their postponement.\(^6\) British policy appeared triumphant. Yet Washington persist-ed, particularly after the formation of a Junta of six liberal and left-wing parties in January 1944 marked the re-emergence of independent Italian political activity and reinforced American fears that popular sentiment in Italy might run out of control. The resolution to the crisis came in June 1944 when, following the occupation of Rome by American troops under General Mark Clark — an action in direct violation of orders from his British superior — Washington moved to force the abdication of the king and the removal of Badoglio. With carefully concealed American support, the monarchical regime was replaced by a liberal administration under Ivanoe Bonomi.

Typically, Washington framed its success in broad democratic terms; when Churchill expressed his anger over the political changes in Rome, Roosevelt disingenuously pointed out that refusing to recognize the new government would violate ‘our announced policy’ of allowing the Italian people to ‘choose their own government’.\(^6\) In a radio ‘fireside chat’, Roosevelt called the capture of Rome ‘an investment for the future’ that promised the ‘salvage’ of an entire people. With American help, he concluded, Italians would ‘learn to walk in a new atmosphere of freedom’.\(^6\) The dominance of American policy within the Alliance was codified in September 1944, when Churchill and Roosevelt announced a series of new initiatives. Hailed as a ‘New Deal’ for Italy — and thereby explicitly linked to American social liberalism — these measures

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\(^6\) Telegram, Roosevelt to Churchill, 30 July 1943, Map Room, Box 34, FDRL.

\(^6\) Telegram, Roosevelt to Eisenhower, 9 November 1943, Map Room Files, Box 34, FDRL.


\(^6\) Telegram, Roosevelt to Churchill, 16 June 1944, PREM 3/242/12. This final sentence is added in Roosevelt’s hand to the draft telegram prepared by the State Department, see Memorandum for the President, 14 June 1944, Map Room Files Box 30, Italy, Civil Affairs, FDRL.

\(^6\) Roosevelt, ‘Fireside Chat’ radio broadcast, 5 June 1944, FDRL.
included extending full diplomatic recognition to the Italian government and promising expanded economic aid. In recognition of Italy’s political ‘rebirth’, and as an expression of the political collaboration with Rome that Washington hoped to develop, the word ‘control’ was dropped from the title of the Allied Commission.65

Policy differences between Britain and the United States over Italy were reflected in divergent representations of Italianness. Anti-Italian prejudice in both countries shared many common features and was, if anything, more vitriolic in the United States, where elite ideologues confronted large-scale Italian immigration. But, whereas London’s political support for the monarchy and its official estimation of the Italian people as hopelessly ‘apathetic’ was invariably reflected in derogatory images of Italianness, American opinion-formers sought to show that, indolent though they might be, Italians were nevertheless capable of redemption.66 There is simply no Hollywood equivalent, for example, to the casual racist observation made by sailors in Noel Coward’s 1942 *In Which We Serve* that the crew of the enemy ship must be Germans because ‘spaghetti eaters’ and ‘eyeties’ had ‘no stomach for a fight’. Office of War Information readers worked hard to remove such slurs from American productions. Censors reviewing an early script for *A Bell for Adano* objected to describing Italian wine as ‘Dago Red’ and lectured the studio that ‘names such as “Dago” and “Wop” [were] insulting to Italians’.67 Twentieth Century Fox removed the offending epithets, and, while, continuing to harbor doubts about referring to the fascist mayor as ‘garlic face’, the OWI approved the script.68

In contrast to these official efforts to excise derogatory references to Italians, OWI injunctions to avoid stereotyping Germans and Japanese were honoured in the breach, and wartime films were full of prejudicial and racial epithets. Moreover, while the ‘good German’ would become a stock character, Hollywood never featured a *bad* Italian in a war film: Italian soldiers, in both documentary and feature films, ranged from the pompous and clownish to the confused, defeated and ultimately endearing. They were, as the platoon philosopher in Lewis Milestone’s 1945 film version of Harry Brown’s *A Walk in the Sun* observed, the ‘slap-happiest people in the world’.

Similar notions of Italianness, overtly aimed at engendering pity and paternalism rather than hatred and antagonism, were officially promoted amongst American troops serving in Italy. In contrast to the occupations of Germany and Japan, where military authorities sought to enforce a strict policy pro-

67 Feature Script Review, OWI Bureau of Motion Pictures, 21 January 1944, Record Group 208, Entry 567, Box 3512, NARA.
68 Feature Script Review, OWI Bureau of Motion Pictures, 31 October 1944, Record Group 208, Entry 567, Box 3512, NARA.
hibiting fraternization with civilians, American soldiers were encouraged to
develop co-operative relations with Italians. Whereas in the former fraterniza-
tion was viewed as a potential security risk, as prejudicial to military discipline
and, in particular, as undermining efforts to impose a sense of collective guilt,
in Italy it was, in the broadest sense, viewed as an instrument for fostering
good relations.69 The army’s Soldier’s Guide to Italy urged the troops to seek
common ground with Italian civilians, to avoid being patronizing, and to be
‘especially kind to children’ in order to foster a ‘feeling of human sympathy’. An
official Pocket Guide to Italian Cities issued in 1944 encouraged GIs to ‘see
as much as you can’ of the country and to view their time in Italy as a ‘major
expenses paid’ sightseeing trip. Some attractions had been ‘bombed and shelled
by us’, but many would be intact and open for inspection. The only ground
rule was that soldiers should behave well and ‘avoid bringing hardship to the
native population’.70

American troops on the ground may not have had such a high-minded
approach. Ernie Pyle caught the contradictory character of relations between
GIs and Italians, noting that:

> Our soldiers were slightly contemptuous of the Italians and didn’t fully trust them; yet with
typical American tender heartedness they felt sorry for them . . . they seemed to us a pathetic
people, not very strong in character but fundamentally kind and friendly.71

Pyle’s widely read articles helped form precisely the image of Italianness he
attributed to the soldiers he was with, picturing Italians as backward and mal-
odorous but nevertheless deserving of help. He passed on the soldiers’ casual
racism, explaining that one gunner’s use of the term ‘gook’ didn’t imply con-
tempt because ‘Muncy loved the Italians and they loved him’.72 ‘Those people
were our enemies,’ Pyle mused, but ‘when we had won, they looked upon us as
their friends.’73

American military authorities assumed that relations between occupying
troops and Italian civilians would include sexual liaisons. The Soldier’s Guide
issued a ritual warning against ‘cohabit[ing] with strange women’ and
cautions that Italian men were ‘by nature jealous’, but recognized that rela-
tionships with ‘warm-looking’ women would occur.74 In fact, as the official
military history noted, the occupation ‘provoked’ an ‘enormous volume of
clandestine prostitution’, particularly in the officially designated ‘leave centers’
of Naples and Rome.75 Concerned by mounting rates of venereal disease, the

69 For American non-fraternization policy in Germany, see Petra Goedde, ‘From Villains to
71 Ernie Pyle, op. cit., 127.
72 Ibid., 233.
73 Ibid., 94.
75 Harris, Allied Military Administration, op. cit., 57, 427.
Allied Control Commission pressed the Bonomi government to establish a ‘V.D. inspectorate’ and to enforce fascist-era legislation outlawing solicitation and restricting prostitution to licensed premises. Nevertheless, unlicensed encounters continued both in reality and in popular representation. A Bell for Adano’s Major Joppolo, a married man, courted the daughter of a local fisherman (much to the annoyance of the real-life officer upon whom the character was based), while Pvt. Dondaro, an Italian American GI in William Wellman’s 1945 The Story of G.I. Joe, was continually disappearing on amorous adventures. Bearing witness to their ubiquitous character, relationships between American soldiers and Italian women featured in postwar novels by authors who served in Italy, including John Horne Burns’ The Gallery (1947), Alfred Hayes’ The Girl on the Via Flaminia (1949), and Joseph Heller’s Catch 22 (1961).

Historians including Petra Goedde and Naoko Shibusawa argue that Americans re-imagined and feminized Germany and Japan as postwar political imperatives, causing them to move the occupied from the category of ‘vilified enemy’ to that of ‘valuable ally’. In both cases feminine images of suffering and victimization — and implied notions of female receptivity to domination — replaced more masculine and military imagery as American policy shifted from punishment to redemption. Military edicts banning fraternization were revoked, beginning with an amendment excluding ‘small children’ from the non-fraternization order in Germany in June 1945, and culminating in the withdrawal of the equivalent order in Japan in September 1949. In both cases, bans on fraternization had been largely honored in the breach well before their formal repeal. As we have already observed, these shifts brought American policy in Germany and Japan more into line with that followed in Italy, where, since the first landings in Sicily in the summer of 1943, paternalism had been the norm and where there was no ban on fraternization to reverse. In many ways, Italy came to be seen as the normative occupation; as Vern Sneider, a former Civil Affairs Officer in Okinawa, recalled, military governors quickly rejected a manual based on the 1917 occupation of the Rhineland and found that it was a ‘piece of fiction that helped us in the villages, among the people — John Hersey’s A Bell for Adano.’

While American images of Germany and Japan were softened as policy shifted, representations of Italianness had always been substantially feminized. Male Italians were widely pictured as lacking characteristically ‘male’ virtues, including bravery, level-headedness, and intellectual clarity, displaying characteristically ‘female’ vices of duplicity, caprice, and vanity instead. Their sexuality identity was often decidedly ambiguous, as in the case of Hollywood

76 See ‘$250,000 Libel Suit Started by Army Officer Against Bell for Adano Author’, New York Times, 14 March 1946.
78 See Goedde, op. cit., 15; Shibusawa, op. cit., 40.
gangsters ‘Little Caesar’ Bandello, an implied homosexual, and ‘Scarface’ Camonte, who pursued an incestuous relationship with his sister. Even when engaged in typically male violence, these Italians act in unmanly ways, gunning down defenseless victims rather than duking it out in a fair fight. As Cosmopolitan pointed out in 1931, contemporary — that is to say Italian — gangsters compared poorly to previous generations of ‘healthy, red-corpuscled . . . and square shooting’ American outlaws. The lavish spending on flashy cars and sharp clothes that marked the successful gangster had an unmistakably feminine aspect. These stereotypes were continually reinforced and renewed. The official Soldier’s Guide, for example, explained that Italians are ‘easily led into mass enthusiasm’ and, in the ‘slipshod way typical of Mediterranean civilization’, lack discipline. They are vain, excitable and prideful, flaring up at the ‘most innocent criticism’.82

These images of Italianness were reinforced by representations of Italian Americans that underscored comfortable liberal notions of the assimilationist melting pot while simultaneously demonstrating how deep the gulf between Italians and Americans really was. In American eyes, Italian Americans demonstrated their superiority over their paesani by the simple fact that, as the New York Daily News editorialized, they had ‘sense enough to come over here’. But coming ‘here’ was only the beginning of a long process of assimilation, and it could be a two-way street; Ernie Pyle’s report that ‘somebody was always popping up from behind every bush . . . who had lived for twelve years in Buffalo or thirty years in Chicago’ offers striking affirmation of the ‘reverse migration’ described by Donna Gabaccia and others. This deep contact between Italy and the United States was seen as easing America’s way; Americans of ‘Italian origin’, the Soldier’s Guide announced, could be ‘sure of a warm welcome’. But it also showed that even after long years in the new country, Italian Americans might still be Italian at heart, with all the backwardness that implied. And if it was hard for an individual to assimilate, how much more difficult would it be to raise an entire people to the level of modern America? Assimilation was thus set up as a steep and difficult gradient from newly arrived to fully assimilated.

Hersey’s Major Joppolo stands near the top of the grade, so fully assimilated into middle-class America — signified by his house, car, and washing machine — that he could serve as a conduit for the export of democracy. His command

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81 Cosmopolitan, quoted in Ruth, op. cit., 91.
of the Italian language and customs is an obvious asset, but above all Joppolo thinks and acts as an American. *Time* underscored the point. Joppolo, ‘razzed as a wop’ in school, now brings ‘a practically realizable vision’ of democracy to Italy.86 In fact, he appeared so well assimilated that OWI reviewers fretted lest he make the gulf appear so deep it might seen to be disparaging Italians as ‘comic and picturesque’.87

Other Italian Americans were less completely assimilated. In *A Walk in the Sun*, Private Rivera is the platoon wise-ass and the ‘bard of Avenue A’.88 Typically Italian, he takes nothing too seriously, and his ironic mantra ‘nobody dies’ offers an ironic counterpoint to the film’s bloody action. But when the shooting starts, Rivera is coldly efficient. Wedded to his machine gun, his military competence is critical to the unit’s survival. In action he becomes all American. Disgusted by Italy — ‘all give and no take’ — Rivera announces that ‘all the [Italians] that surrendered to me are dead.’89 Rivera’s compatriot Tranella, a ‘dark little man’, is less Americanized.90 With his command of two languages — ‘Italian and Brooklyn’ — he is called to interrogate two Italian prisoners and suddenly he’s carried away in a babble of conversation. Much to his commander’s annoyance, he has become as Italian as the men he’s questioning. *GI Joe’s* Dondaro goes a step further, disappearing from the action at critical moments to pursue local women. The respected and understanding Captain Walker eventually calls him to order, assigning him to dig latrines in the rain. American discipline does the trick, and it is Dondaro who brings Walker’s body back from the front. Then, like a typical Italian, or perhaps a woman, he weeps over his dead leader.

In these fictionalized narratives, manly service in the US military — particularly in combat — opens up the assimilationist road to Italian immigrants. News reports echoed the same theme. As Ernie Pyle told it, combat engineer Joseph Campagnone was ‘all American’ despite having lived in the United States for only seven years. He was ready to fight his ‘own people’, arguing that ‘we’ve got to fight somebody and it might as well be them’.91 Typically, John Hersey offered a more political version of the story. Accompanying Lieutenant Ector Bolzoni on a bombing mission over Rome, Hersey reported on how the young Italian immigrant had been entranced by his elder sister’s account of Rome. Now he is looking down on the city through a bombsight. Bolzoni hopes that the civilians below are happy to see the bombs fall, buoyed by the belief that ‘they’ll be free when we take over’. If he were with his family in Italy, he concludes, he’d ‘be glad to see the bombs come down, even if they

86 ‘After Victory’, *Time*, 21 February 1944.
87 Office of War Information, Long Range Motion Picture Review of *A Bell for Adano*, 18 September 1945, Record Group 208, Entry 567, Box 3512, NARA.
89 Ibid., 97.
90 Ibid., 90.
91 Pyle, op. cit., 69.
might hit me'. These Italians are steeled, Americanized, and made masculine in the furnace of war, even to the point of fighting family members still living in the old country. But Italian American troops are still permitted displays of antipathy towards Italy and even, as in Rivera’s boast about shooting surrendering soldiers, a murderous vindictiveness, that are not permitted to other GIs. Perhaps, even in assimilation, Italian caprice will out.

While feminized and infantilized images of Italianess facilitated the redemptive thrust of American policy, other aspects of Italian femininity, including vanity, emotional instability, and a capacity for violent caprice were seen as posing potential dangers to Washington’s project. As the occupation unfolded, and particularly after Washington’s successful installation of the liberal Bonomi government in June 1944, American image-makers began to give these ostensibly negative aspects of Italianess greater attention. Popular actions against former fascist officials received particularly graphic treatment. From the beginning of the occupation, newsreels had carried footage of Italian civilians mocking former fascist officials and looting their homes. In the fall of 1944 this reportage took a less palatable slant, as journalists offered lurid descriptions of violent attacks on fascists and collaborators. In September 1944, for example, newsreel programs showed the killing of a fascist collaborator in Rome, followed by the execution of former police chief Pietro Caruso. Then in May 1945, moviegoers were shown Italian partisans mutilating the bodies of Mussolini and his mistress Clara Petacci in images that included graphic close-ups. The public screening of this material has been cited as an example of loosening censorship, but the images themselves served primarily to reinforce a sense of the gulf between Anglo-Saxon sang froid and Italian caprice and propensity for mob violence. In Bell for Adano John Hersey drew out the obvious conclusion when Major Joppolo intervenes to prevent the summary execution of the fascist mayor and to ensure that his punishment accords to American notions of justice. Left to their own devices, it seems, Italians will inevitably fall into anarchy.

Roosevelt and Churchill pointed to the problem of ‘mob actions’ in their September 1944 statement announcing the ‘new deal’ for Italy and demanded that the Italian government act to prevent further outbursts of violence against former fascist officials. The operative point of this statement, made as Allied troops were beginning to enter areas already liberated from German and Italian fascist control by partisan fighters, was to press Rome to rein in the potentially radical social consequences of the civil war unfolding in northern

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95 See Doherty, op. cit., 247.
Italy. The Italian Communist Party (PCI) had a particularly important role to play in this process. Acting on direct instructions from Moscow, the PCI had already rendered indispensable assistance in the execution of Washington’s plan for the establishment of a broadly based government, and now its well-established influence amongst the northern partisans would enable the government to absorb and contain the massive popular upsurge that greeted Allied troops as they pushed into northern Italy. The ‘wind from the north’ blew fiercely, with the partisans — many led by the PCI — establishing control as the Germans pulled out. But in city after city they then turned over their arms to Allied troops, thus ensuring the preservation of liberal democracy and capitalist social relations: as demanded by the Allies, the Rome government, and the PCI in particular, acted to control dangerous ‘mob’ action.

In the context of sharpening tensions with the Soviet Union, however, Italian communists received little credit for their services. Whereas American journalists had written enthusiastically about the civilian uprisings against the Germans at the start of the Allied invasion — *Life*, for example, carried an extended article on the popular revolt in Naples featuring photographs of youthful guerrillas in action — images of Italians with guns became increasingly menacing. Former fascist ‘strong-arm boys’ were now seen to be working for the communists, and all these ‘hungry Italians with guns’ were presented as emblematic of a ‘profoundly corrupt’ country sliding into chaos. With Soviet influence growing, Italians appeared ‘capable of anything’. The very characteristics that rendered them susceptible to fascism were now seen to offer openings to the communists. In an influential *Life* article written from Rome, former Roosevelt confidant, William Bullitt, argued explicitly that Italian ‘racial traits’ were being deliberately manipulated by Moscow. Italians, Bullitt argued, were ‘gentle people’ who hoped to avoid conflict while still winding up on the winning side. They were, in other words, indolent and easily led, and it was necessary for Washington to pay increasing attention to Italy in the deepening struggle against the ‘hordes of invaders from the East’. In a similarly unsubtle hint that Italians were about to switch one dictator for another, the *Saturday Evening Post* reported that slogans proclaiming ‘Long Live Il Duce’ were being painted over with ‘Viva Stalin’.

The obvious conclusion of these assertions was that, left to their own devices, Italians would be led astray by Moscow as easily as they had been by Mussolini, and that therefore ongoing American tutelage was necessary. It would, as Roosevelt had warned at the capture of Rome, take time for the ‘investment in the future’ to begin to ‘pay dividends’.

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98 Allen Raymond, ‘Bankrupt Italy is Capable of Anything’, *Saturday Evening Post*, 23 September 1944, 10, 42.
100 Allen Raymond, ‘We Run Third in Italy’, *Saturday Evening Post*, 17 June 1944, 16, 88.
101 Roosevelt, ‘Fireside Chat’ radio broadcast, 5 June 1944, FDRL.
wartime occupation of Italy passed seamlessly into a protracted postwar intervention in Italian politics that reached a crescendo with Washington’s all-out effort to block a Communist victory in the 1948 elections. Economic ‘aid’, first organized through the United Nations Rehabilitation and Relief Organization and then through the European Recovery Program, political and financial support for the Christian Democrats, cultural programmes and barely disguised military threats were skilfully combined to ensure both the defeat of the PCI and the ongoing integration of American power into Italian affairs. As John Hersey had argued, America’s ‘armies’ and ‘after-armies’ would indeed be staying on to offer ‘wisdom and justice’.

When, in August 1943, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson told Winston Churchill that, in contrast to the Germans, whom they had been convinced were their most dangerous enemies, and the Japanese, whom they ‘really hated’, the American people ‘did not hate the Italians’ but rather viewed them as a ‘joke’, he pointed to a number of important elements of US policy. Italy, clearly the weakest of the Axis powers, was not seen to present a significant threat to American interests. It was, as Stimson himself noted, recalling the positive opinion he had formed of Mussolini during a visit to Italy in 1931, unfortunate that matters had come to war at all. President Roosevelt and his top advisors certainly shared Stimson’s view on this question; Under Secretary Sumner Welles, for example, had spent a good part of the summer of 1940 in Europe in a vain effort to persuade Mussolini to stay out of the unfolding European war. This appreciation of Italy was, as we have seen, informed by and bound up with longstanding and highly negative images of Italians and Italianness. Whatever their artistic or culinary contributions, they were literally a ‘joke’ when it came to the serious, adult, and male business of government and war.

These negative assumptions of Italianness, woven, popularized, and reinforced by American cultural producers, formed the ideological substratum within which American occupation policy was crafted. American policymakers and opinion-formers, from conservatives like William Bullitt to liberals like John Hersey, were in general agreement that Italians were not ready for democratic self-government. In sharp contrast to the Germans and Japanese, however, the deficiencies of the Italians were seen as rendering them particularly suitable for regeneration under American guidance; from the Allied land-

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104 Hersey, *A Bell for Adano*, op. cit., 2.

ings in Sicily onwards, America’s paternalistic intervention in Italian politics had a fundamentally redemptive rather than punitive thrust. This project generated a new set of representations of Italianness that, as carried on the cinema screen, and in novels and press reports, and in the pages of handbooks issued to occupying troops, emphasized American beneficence and its potentially transformative impact on Italy and Italians. Images arising from the experience of occupation were focused both by cultural producers themselves — John Hersey, for example, was never less than fully conscious of the message he was promoting — and by direct government intervention. Office of War Information reviewers, as we have seen, pored over the nuances of filmic Italianness and worked closely with the studios to ensure that only approved images reached the public. By highlighting and individualizing the transformative possibilities inherent in contact with the United States, representations of Italian Americans played a particularly important part.

In contrast to the occupations of Germany and Japan, where the initially punitive thrust of American policy and the representations of dyed-in-the-wool militarism within which it was framed were reversed only as the slide towards Cold War accelerated, American policy in Italy was redemptive from the beginning. And, as American policy in Germany and Japan shifted, so an ‘Italian model’ came increasingly to the fore. The paternal occupation, moreover, flowed over easily into Washington’s ongoing postwar intervention in Italian politics. New representations of Italian transformability, however, did not eradicate more longstanding images of incapacity. On the contrary, while blunting the most egregiously derogatory expression of the earlier assumptions, the newer representations meshed with them. Many aspects of pre-war ideological construction were carried over into the postwar world. The 1956 edition of the GIs’ Pocket Guide to Italy, for example, welcomed the fact that Italy had ‘thrown in its lot with the United States’, but presented the Italian people as simple-minded and disengaged. Italians, visiting soldiers were informed, were essentially ‘romantics’ whose lives were driven by nothing beyond the ‘sheer joy of living, breathing, sleeping and waking’.

Andrew Buchanan graduated from Balliol College, Oxford, in 1980 and received an M.A. in History from Rutgers. He teaches American history and military history at the University of Vermont, and is a doctoral student at Rutgers. He has published ‘A Friend Indeed? From Tobruk to El Alamein: The American Contribution to Victory in the Desert’, Diplomacy and Statecraft 15(2) (June 2004). He is currently working on Washington’s ‘Mediterranean Strategy’ in the second world war.

106 A Pocket Guide to Italy (Department of Defense 1956), 1–4.