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The relationship between State and Church in Italy: 1870-1984

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*Ringrazio il Professor Bruni per essere stato
per me una guida nella stesura di questo elaborato.*

*To my Mom, who taught me to face difficulties with a smile on my face.
To my Dad, who never stopped believing in me.
To my brother Alessandro, my rock and my North Star.
To my Grandfather, who should have been here today.
Thank you*

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between Church and State in Italy has always been a controversial issue. The presence and influence of the Vatican on the political life of the country has always been powerful, and the spread of Catholic values in society has always had consequences at the political level in people's choices. However, the relationship between the two institutions has not always been peaceful, and it has been characterized by many tensions even before the unification when the Church also had temporal power. In order to understand the events occurring in the period of time taken into consideration in the following pages, it is necessary to have knowledge of the relationship between State and Church in the previous years.

In Liberal Italy, this relationship is relevant because not only it has shaped Italian politics and society for decades, but also because it shows us a difference between Italy and other countries from a comparative perspective. In fact, in Italy, the Church can be seen as an anti-system force that contrasts the Liberal State on the right side of the political spectrum. Many other states had to face only left-wing anti-system forces, and the Church was one of the pillars of the conservative right within the system. So, while governments in France or Spain had to fight only Socialists or other forces on the left side of the political spectrum, in Italy the main opposition was exercised by the Church itself. The strength of its opposition is due to its stable structure and organization, which allowed it to have a stronghold on society. This characteristic is crucial to understand both how the Church tried to manage the participation of the population in the political life, but also to understand the stance taken by the Italian government in front of the many problems related to public order, one above all transformism.

The tensions started several years before the annexation of Rome to Unified Italy. The contrasts had begun in 1848, with the process of secularization of the State carried out by the Reign of Sardinia which was sharply criticized by the Church. In this period, many were the attempts by the government to overpower the Church and prevail, and several were the efforts to limit the influence of the Church. Of the influential figures in these events, was Cavour. He believed in the principle of free Church in free State, which meant a separation in the sphere of influence of the two institutions. His principles will be crucial also for subsequent interpretations by following governments in the attempts of reconciliation with the Holy See. In 1850 the Minister of Justice, Siccardi, proposed three laws that aimed at the abolition of separate law courts for the clergy, the abolition of the right of criminal offenders to seek asylum in churches and the reduction of the number of religious festivities in order to improve the country's productivity. These laws were openly anticlerical and pursued the secularization of the State. Of course, the Church did not take this proposal well, the pressure put on the government was intense, and the King started worrying about the progressive deputies and the influence that they could have on the decision-making process. The situation worsened when D'Azeglio proposed a law on civil marriage, and the result was his resignation together with his government. One more point of tension between State and Church was the Calabiana crisis. The monarch, together with the government, had to raise funds to participate in the Crimean war and what Cavour proposed was to suppress monastic orders and nationalize their properties. Again, the Church was outraged, and Bishop Calabiana intervened offering the

same sum of money to the government. These are clear examples of the tense relationship between the two institutions and are fundamental when analyzing the processes that led from the beginning of the roman question to the latest agreements.

In the following pages, I will tackle the different steps of the relationship between the Church and the State in Italy in chronological order. In the first chapter, I will talk about the annexation of Rome, and I will analyze the different tensions until the First World War. In the second chapter, I will examine the behaviors of the Church in the two world conflicts and the fascist period in between them, with a focus on the development of the first Catholic party, the Partito Popolare, and on the relationship between the Pope and the fascist regime. In the third and last chapter, I will go over the First Republic and the more recent events that defined the relationship between the two institutions and the role of Catholicism in post-war politics.

CHAPTER I- From the annexation of Rome to the Gentiloni Pact (1870-1913)

1.1 Annexation of Rome to unified Italy

After the unification, the newly born State had to face several issues, among which, the annexation of the territories still belonging to foreign powers: Venice in the north, and the Papal state and Lazio in the center. The attempts of negotiation with Pope Pius IX had been many, but they were never successful. The main aim of the agreements proposed by the Italian government, initially led by Cavour and later by Ricasoli, was to convince the Pope to surrender the temporal power to the Monarch in exchange for a guarantee of independence in the exercise of the spiritual power.¹ The Pope never accepted any compromise, and consistently relied on the support of foreign powers, mainly France, which maintained troops in Rome as a protection of the Papal State.

In the meanwhile, the Italian government pursued its scope, trying to reach an agreement with France, hoping that the Roman question could move towards a resolution with a change in the interlocutor. In the end, the attempt of negotiation with France failed. At the same time, in 1862, an internal movement led by Giuseppe Garibaldi attempted an expedition to Rome, intending to reach it and conquer it, but it was stopped at the Aspromonte. This attempt, officially condemned by the government, caused many internal consequences, eventually leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister Rattazzi in November of the same year.²

At this point, the policy followed by France underwent a radical change due to its commitment in the rest of the region. Napoleon III was in fact in a cumbersome position due to its relationship with Austria, Russia and an unsuccessful expedition to Mexico. For this reason, the emperor was willing to moderate the tensions with Italy and achieve an agreement that could lead to the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome. These events led to the Convention of September, in 1864.³ The convention was based on four main pillars including that Italy would commit not to invade the papal territory, France would gradually retreat the troops within two years from the implementation of the Convention, Italy would negotiate with the Pope the acquisition of the Papal debt and the government would move the capital of the Kingdom to another city. The convention, according to a secret provision, was in place only after the official decision of the King to move the capital to Florence and this initiative had to take place within six months from the signature of the Convention, which occurred on the 15th of September 1864. Its effects did not solve the roman question, which will present itself later and will consistently characterize the life of the Kingdom but is a crucial passage for the life of unified Italy. At the political level the agreement with France led to ideological contrasts between different groups of the moderates, composed by the deputies from Piedmont on one side, and on the other by the deputies from Tuscany and other regions in the center of the peninsula. The Convention disappointed the Papal state, which refused to begin the negotiations with the Italian government for the acquisition of the Papal debt. This event marked the end of the Pope's hope to receive support from the foreign Catholic powers.

¹ G. Candeloro. *Storia Dell'Italia Moderna- La Costruzione Dello Stato Unitario*. Vol. V of XI. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1978.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The response of Pius IX was quite strong. In addition to refusing to recognize the Italian State, on December 8th, 1864 he published the *Syllabus of Errors*, condemning the liberal thinking and declaring the position of the Church on several matters. The Church has never accepted the new doctrines such as liberalism and the secularization of society, and in the years preceding the annexation of Rome has showed strong feelings of disapproval in the regards of the Italian State, as stated in the Syllabus, in which made clear its effort to maintain an active role in civil society and contrast the initiatives of the State. ⁴

On the 20th of September 1870, after the withdrawal of the French troops due to the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war, the Italian army invaded the Church's territories and entered Rome, supported by the population. The public opinion was in favor of the idea of Rome as the capital of the Kingdom. The annexation of Rome was the result of a well-thought and balanced political action strongly supported by Sella within the government. These events and the consequent loss of territories were considered by the Pope as forceful acts done without his consent. Pius IX condemned the annexation of Rome in the Encyclical *Recipientes (1870)*, refusing to reach an agreement with the Italian State.⁵ For the latter, the 20th of September meant the completion of the process of unification but also the end of the temporal power of the Church and the supremacy of State.

On the 2nd of October 1870, less than one month after the intervention of the army, the population was called to express itself in a plebiscite, that resulted in the full annexation of Rome to the reign of Italy with a decree-law on the 9th of October. In art. 1 Rome and the surrounding provinces were declared part of the Reign of Italy, and in art. 2 the Papal state was guaranteed the freedom to carry out its activities in complete independence from the King and the government.⁶ In the meanwhile, the Italian government was considering the implementation of several principles regarding the ‘prerogatives of the Pope and the Holy See’ and ‘the relationship between the Church and the State in Italy’.⁷ This relationship has been characterized by tensions and controversies. Pius IX and his successors maintained the view that Rome was annexed by brute force and the Holy See needed territories in order to exercise its activities independently, which was never entirely accepted by the State.⁸ The next step, for the government, was the movement of the capital to Rome, which took place in May 1871⁹, soon after the extension of the laws in place in the rest of the Reign also to the newly added territories.

⁴ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ A.C. Jemolo. *Chiesa E Stato in Italia Negli Ultimi Cento Anni*. III ed. Torino: Einaudi, 1971.

⁷ G. Verucci. *L'Italia Laica Prima E Dopo L'unità 1848-1876*. Bari: Laterza, 1981

⁸ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015.

⁹ G. Verucci. *L'Italia Laica Prima E Dopo L'unità 1848-1876*. Bari: Laterza, 1981

1.2 The Law of guarantees

On May 13th, Lanza's government proposed a law that was approved and remained in place until the Lateran Pact of 1929. The law of guarantees aimed at setting the boundaries between the prerogatives of the State and the ones of the Church, guaranteeing the Pope independence in the exercise of the spiritual power. The law, even though never approved by the Church, was the first step of a long process of pacification. It was the first attempt by the Italian government to compromise and solve the Roman question. The main provisions established that the person of the Pope was sacred and inviolable, precisely as the King. Hence, insults or injuries to the Pope would be treated on a par with insults or injuries to the King's person. Discussion of religion matters was free, and the Pope had full control of the spiritual power and independence in the exercise of his activities. The Pontiff, who was paid royal honors, in addition to what previously mentioned, was granted an annual endowment of 3,225,000 lire to cover the costs of the needs of the Holy See and owned the Vatican and the Lateran palaces as well as Villa of Castel Gandolfo, that remained in his property to grant him the complete liberty of communication with the Catholic world. Moreover, the clergy was given freedom of assembly, and in spiritual matters, no appeal was allowed against ecclesiastical authority. Lastly, the exequatur was maintained only for the significant benefices and for acts affecting the disposition of ecclesiastical property, in this way the State, namely, the King, needed to "approve" the decisions of the Church with a royal decree, especially for benefices and properties. In the end, we can say that the Pope's sovereignty was personal, not territorial, according to the Italian State.¹⁰ This law, however, was not approved by the Church, that condemned it in the Encyclical *Ubi Nos* in the same year.¹¹

According to the State, the provisions were necessary and sufficient to compensate for the loss of territories and temporal power, but the Church never agreed on the law, which was unilaterally implemented by the State. For this reason, in 1874 the Pope established, for the second time, the *non expedit*, forbidding the Catholic population to participate in the political life of the State neither as electors nor as elected, with specific reference to the general elections occurring that year. At the administrative level, the Church remained very strong, being able to maintain its territorial organization and influence on civil society. The *non expedit* meant that Catholics in the population couldn't participate in the political life, and this had a substantial impact on the political participation of the State since 95% of the population was Catholic, and while at the administrative level they had a dominant role, at the political level could be a problem for the new Kingdom. The Italian government wanted to avoid open conflict with the Church, and that is why it guaranteed the Vatican many privileges. The prohibition of the Church initially was ambiguous and created some controversies for whether it was a total prohibition or not. However, this aspect was cleared in 1886 with a decree of the Holy Office

¹⁰ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015.

¹¹ G. Verucci. *L'Italia Laica Prima E Dopo L'unità 1848-1876*. Bari: Laterza, 1981

that pointed out the “true and proper prohibition” for Catholics to participate in the political life of the Kingdom. The *non expedit* prevented the rise of any national catholic party.¹²

The law of guarantees, in a way, takes from many aspects that were previously discussed and considered by Cavour in his first attempts of conciliation with the Church, ten years before. What the two have in common and can be seen as a strong continuity in the position of the State on the topic, is not only the idea of conciliation and the guarantees granted to the Pope but also, we can observe continuity in the relationship and boundaries between the two institutions. The law of 1871 is persistent in the principle of separation between State and Church previously stated by Cavour.¹³ The governments that succeeded Cavour developed their policies on his main ideas in the several attempts of conciliation with the Church before the annexation of Rome. An example of that is Ricasoli’s attempt of negotiation. In this case, the position of the State remains the same, the principal difference being only the shift in the interlocutor, trying to negotiate with France instead of the Church. Hence, we can conclude that the position of the Kingdom over the Roman question never changed in its main pillars since the unification of Italy in its several attempts of conciliation. It has shown to be a considerable continuity that has characterized the relationship between the Church and the State for almost a decade.

1.3 The Catholic movement and the end of the XIX century

In the second half of the century, the working class started to join the Socialist movement that was developing. At the opposite side of the political spectrum, another tendency was arising: the intransigent Catholicism. This area of the Catholic world set its priority in the obedience to the Pope and his doctrine, condemning the liberal thinking and the secular State. On the opposite side, another faction within the civil society was gaining strength: the anticlericals. This tendency was strongly influenced by positivism and materialism and believed in secular principles both in culture and political life. Both these movements, very present and influential in society, together with the tensions between the Church and the State, slowed down the development of a clerico-moderate movement, which supported the Catholic doctrine on a spiritual level, and liberal principle in politics. They were mainly liberal Catholics that some years later would attempt to form the first Catholic party together with right-wing liberals. The annexation of Rome and the increasing tensions made their hopes fade away and gave impulse to intransigents, with their political abstention, and anticlericals. The effectiveness of the *non expedit* in the following years was due to the ability of the intransigent movement to build Catholic organizations at local level. The Church had expressed its affirmative consent to the participation of Catholics at the administrative and local levels, where they could have a substantial impact on the civil society in Catholic schools and associations. In 1874, for these reasons they founded the *Opera dei congressi e dei Comitati Cattolici*. It was an organization that summoned and coordinated all the Catholic associations and

¹² M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

¹³ G. Candeloro. *Storia Dell'Italia Moderna*. Vol. V of XI, Milano, Feltrinelli 1978

committees. The Opera was directed by a General Committee and was divided into several regional and parish committees.¹⁴ Over the years, the aim of the Opera moved away from education towards more political and economic ends, particularly at the end of the century. It was widely spread in the North of the country, but it was also present in the South, including Sicily and Sardinia.¹⁵ The Opera aimed to support the Papacy and its doctrine and spread it in civil society, preserve the Catholic social structure from the liberal nation-state and shape social and economic opposition to secular institutions. It was mainly composed of intransigents on the Roman question. In the same years, Catholic newspapers gained importance as *L'Unità Cattolica*. In the 1870s and 1880s, the Opera dei congressi was not very powerful but was a crucial element because it showed the determination of the Church to influence civil society in all aspects of the population's life and aimed at preserving the Catholic sub-culture outside the Liberal State.¹⁶ Its action was based on the abstention from political elections and parliamentary activities, to weaken the Italian State and represent what they considered the *paese reale* against the *paese legale*.¹⁷

In the meanwhile, in the political sphere, many were the concerns related to the Church. The government, led by the right, started a process of laicization, with the first attempts during the 1860s and 1870s to set boundaries between religious aspects, and secular aspects. The laws were mainly anticlerical. In 1873, the governments passed the law that expropriated the ecclesiastical estate and sold their lands off at auction, male religious orders with communal life were disbanded, religious life was discouraged or suppressed. The situation did not change with the change in government. In fact, after many years of right-wing governments, in 1876 there is a drastic change and the rise to power of the left. The left had always supported the process of secularization of the State and in the following years passed a series of laws that continued the process started by the right. In 1877, the *Legge Coppino*, under Depretis' government, was approved. Its primary concern was the extension of free elementary education to five years, three of which were mandatory. Catholics strongly criticized this law because it did not include religion as compulsory teaching and abolished the role of spiritual directors in middle schools. 1882 is an important year for Italy because of two main events that influenced the relationship between State and Church. The first significant event was the extension of the right to vote: the voting age was lowered to 21 years old, all males who paid at least 19,80 lire of taxes per year, and the vote for capability was introduced. The result was an enlargement of the franchise to all male over 21 that completed two years of elementary school. By granting the possibility to vote to more shares of the population, the risk of Catholics in parliament could increase. The second crucial event is the Triple Alliance between the central empires signed that year. The government hoped that with the negotiations for the Triple Alliance, it could get the recognition of the power over Rome, which could be a determining factor in the relationship with the

¹⁴ G. Candeloro. *Storia Dell'Italia Moderna*. Vol. VI of XI. Milano, Feltrinelli 1986

¹⁵ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ G. Verucci. *L'Italia Laica Prima E Dopo L'unità 1848-1876*. Bari: Laterza, 1981

Church. This, however, never happened because the central empires wanted to stay away from Italian internal issues and the Roman question.¹⁸

In 1887, during the eighth Depretis' government, there was the resemblance of conciliation between the Papacy and the State. This was for two reasons. On the one hand, the Church was undergoing a rapprochement with Germany because of the development of a German Catholic Party. The latter needed the support of the Church for legitimation, and at the same time the Pope wanted to be more present in the political and social life in Europe. The second factor lays in the conservative policies enacted by Depretis after 1882. His alliance with the right, closer to transient or conciliatorist Catholics, the fight against the strongest wings of anticlericalism and his tendency to look for support in the Catholic electorate, were strong above all in the 1886 elections. All this brought some bishops to allow Catholics to support Catholic candidates, even if the *non expedit* was still in place. This was considered necessary to slow down the extreme left composed by Radicals, Republicans, and Socialists that gained importance after the electoral reform. The conciliation though, never happened because the two institutions were still keen on their revindication of the temporal power over Rome. The attitude of the next government, led by Crispi, was of closure towards the Pope and was strongly disapproved by the Catholics.¹⁹

In 1890 the law on *Opere Pie* represented the end of the process of secularization of the State that had its peak in the 1860s and 1870s. The electoral reform of 1882, together with the following one in 1889 strengthened the position of Catholics and Socialists at the local level since it gave them more autonomy. After the failure of reconciliation, the anticlerical ideology is strengthened, contrasted by the increasing activity of the *Opera dei congressi*.

At the same time, the Church reacted to the events and positions of the government. The Pope, in his encyclicals, expressed his perspectives on social and political matters. In 1878, with the encyclical *Quod apostolici muneris*, he condemned Socialism and Communism for the first time. According to him, it was necessary to intervene to avoid the departure of the working-class from the Church. Besides, in the following publications in 1881, 1885 and 1888, Pope Leone XIII reaffirmed the stance taken in the *Syllabus of errors*, but also emphasize the reciprocal independence of the temporal and spiritual power. The most important Papal document of this time is the *Rerum Novarum*, written in 1891. It is the first document related to social questions. It represented a call to Catholics to organize the working-class movement in opposition to Socialism, but also condemning capitalism. It emphasizes the necessity to protect the fundamental rights of workers, the right to private property, but also to fight Socialism and Communism. Moreover, it invited the State to intervene in social and economic questions.²⁰ With his intervention, Leone XIII encouraged the Catholic population to gather and involve in social questions, creating organizations, and even Catholic trade

¹⁸ A.C. Jemolo. *Chiesa E Stato in Italia Negli Ultimi Cento Anni*. III ed. Torino: Einaudi, 1971.

¹⁹ G. Candeloro. *Storia Dell'Italia Moderna*. Vol. VI of XI. Milano, Feltrinelli 1986

²⁰ G. Verucci. *L'Italia Laica Prima E Dopo L'unità 1848-1876*. Bari: Laterza, 1981

unions.²¹ This engagement in ‘‘Papal Socialism’’ seemed nonsense to liberals, but its real purpose was to fight the threat of Socialism.²² In these years a major actor at the social level was the Opera dei congressi. It was a significant national movement and engaged in more social actions.

In the Opera dei congressi different attitudes coexisted: on the one hand the prevailing intransigent tendency, supported by the Papacy, on the other the clerico-moderate faction, that was in favor of political participation and was willing to create a Catholic party. The intransigent movement prevailed, setting three main objectives at its base: absolute obedience to the Pope, the union of all the Catholics within one organization, and the enlargement of the movement to the masses. At the same time, in the 1896-1897, the moderate Catholics were evolving. They did not have much in common with the previous moderate groups and the term Christian democracy started to spread, not referring to the idea of democracy of Catholics, but as a full social and political movement that aimed at reforming the State.²³ Liberals had contrasting opinions about the movement. On the one hand, they considered clericalism as an enemy of the State; on the other hand, it was considered as a powerful ally against Socialists.

The end of the century was characterized by riots in many Italian cities due to the increase in the price of bread. This crisis started in 1896 and lasted until 1900, and constitutional measures were taken in order to stop the insurgencies and avoid future ones. The government responded to the insurrections with violent repression of the anti-system forces, persecuting the PSI in 1894-95, 1897-98-99, and arresting all the ‘‘subversives’’. In the same years, there is also the dissolution of all Socialist and Catholic associations and press, considered responsible for the public disorder. The Catholic movement was considered a threat for the liberal establishment; for this reason, all meetings were banned, all this even before the bread riot of 1898.²⁴

The issue with the government response is that it did not understand the cause of the insurrections and treated it like regular revolts and demand for revolution rather than the discontent for the rise in the price of bread. At the political level, there were contrasting opinions. According to some, including Sonnino, the only solution to the insurgencies was to absorb the anti-system forces within the political system and return to the statute and the power of the King. According to him, it was strictly necessary to make concessions to Catholics and Socialists to avoid the riots. This strategy will be embraced later on by Giolitti.

1.4 The Gentiloni Pact

The Catholic movement is characterized by an intense debate between 1900 and 1904. After the repression by the State, the Opera dei congressi reorganized quickly, both because the persecution of Catholics was not as strong as the one on Socialists, and because Leone XIII and the directors of the Opera tried to highlight the

²¹ G. Candeloro. *Storia Dell'Italia Moderna*. Vol. VI of XI. Milano, Feltrinelli 1986

²² M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

²³ G. Candeloro. *Storia Dell'Italia Moderna*. Vol. VI of XI. Milano, Feltrinelli 1986

²⁴ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

social conservative attitude of Catholic organizations. At the end of 1898 and during 1899 the Catholic press started publishing again, and organizations were reestablished. However, the repression by the government was not the only problem. The debate between intransigent and Christian Democrats was active. The first had the power of the Opera dei congressi, and for this reason, the latter gathered in other groups. Within these groups, called *Fasci Democratici Cristiani*, two branches were coexisting: the Christian democrats and the moderates. Some of them, in 1900, after the Rome Congress decided that it was time for them to create a Catholic party, and they announced the creation of a Catholic newspaper *Il domani*, an organ of the future party. However, the Pope was concerned about this initiative and condemned it in the encyclical *Graves de communi*, which recognized the Opera as the only recognized Catholic organization. These groups of Catholics that tried to get involved in the political life of the country wanted to propose an alternative to Socialism safeguarding workers and trying to avoid the spread of the red threat.

By November 1903 Italy saw the beginning of a new political era, the Giolittian age which can be considered a period of social reforms, in which prevailed the idea that the Catholics, Radical or Socialists ‘subversives’ could be integrated into the political system.²⁵ His goal was not to grant those groups autonomous power but to achieve a stable majority, and that is why his government started to grant concessions and reforms. The Catholics were one of the most crucial ideological groups outside the system. Giolitti only expressed himself once, describing the Church and the State as two parallel lines that would never meet but he needed their support to counterweight Socialism, and so he did, by making some concessions.

After the general strike of September 1904, Giolitti decided to call for early elections. On this occasion, in the constituencies where Socialists and Radicals were strong, Catholics were allowed to vote, and temporarily suspend the non expedit to support antisocialist candidates.²⁶ It was the first time that involvement in politics was allowed. In 1905, in the encyclical *Il Fermo Proposito*, the Pope explained that the non expedit was still valid, but in some situations, Catholics needed to vote to maintain social order. Christian democrats disapproved the conservative intervention and wanted to involve in politics only after the creation of a Catholic party and the elaboration of a program. The solution adopted by the Pope was clerico-moderate and implied the defense of the established order, antisocialism and antiradicalism. So basically, Catholics could become deputies, but no deputy could claim to represent the Catholic ideology.²⁷ The intervention of the Pope caused ambiguity that characterized the Catholic movement until the foundation of a Catholic party some years later. At the same time, the Catholic movement had become very influential. By 1911 the clerico-moderates were part of local government majorities in many cities.²⁸ However, the Catholic cooperatives, rural banks, and welfare agencies were never recognized neither by the State nor by the Church. The latter did not want Catholics to get too much involved in politics, and this was a way to keep them under its directives.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ G. Candeloro. *Storia Dell'Italia Moderna*. Vol. VII of XI. Milano, Feltrinelli 1986

²⁷ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

²⁸ Ibid.

In the same year the Pope dissolved the Opera dei congressi for three main reasons: he feared the establishment of a Christian Democratic party that would have engaged in the political life of the country, he was not in full control of the Opera dei congressi, and did not want external interventions in this situation because he feared the spread of Socialism. The following year the movement was organized under the Catholic action, in three different associations: one for pious activities and propaganda (*Unione Popolare fra i Cattolici d'Italia*), one for the mobilization of votes (*Unione Elettorale Cattolica Italiana*), and the last one for economic and social matters (*Unione Economico-Sociale dei Cattolici Italiani*). In the electoral field, Catholics adopted the following criteria: direct intervention in constituencies where there was the possibility of electing their candidates, support conservative or moderate candidates in constituencies where the extreme left was powerful and abstain from voting where neither of those situations presented.²⁹ In the 1909 elections, the non expedit was lifted again for 72 constituencies and Catholics were invited to vote for candidates that were in line with conservative ideals. There were 52 Catholic candidates, among which 16 were elected, even though the Holy See was still against the creation of a Catholic party.³⁰ In the elections, the clerico-moderate branch prevailed. It was the same group that controlled the Catholic press and banks.

In the meanwhile, in the socio-economic sector Catholic activity started at the beginning of 1900 by Christian democrats declined due to the crisis within the Catholic movement between 1903-1906, but the unions' activities increased again after 1906.

Also, the Catholic youth movement was reorganized, and in 1908 also the women Catholic movement. The different associations were independent of one another, and they were under the direct control of bishops. The Opera dei congressi had had its day. It was too much of a hybrid, overlapping economic, political, charitable, and religious activities, with the risk of getting involved in politics.³¹ However, the Catholic movement underwent a decline, also due to the concept of "modernism". It referred to a historicist approach to theological issues. In Italy, the movement was mainly political.³²

In September 1911, Italy invaded Libya. This move was strongly supported by Nationalists and also by Catholics, who had interests due to the presence of the Banco di Roma who had founded a branch in Tripoli. The public opinion had a severe impact on the government's decision to invade, together with economic interests and the possibility to absorb and conciliate the opponents for Giolitti. The Pope did not agree with the Catholic public opinion and was against the war. However, this decision caused the government to lose support from the Socialists, who were firmly against the war. Giolitti's attempt to absorb the Catholics,

²⁹ G. Candeloro. *Storia Dell'Italia Moderna*. Vol. VII of XI. Milano, Feltrinelli 1986

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

³² Ibid.

Socialists and, Radicals was never fully accomplished because it was impossible to accommodate such different claims.

In 1912 the government decide it was time to enlarge the franchise. The new electoral reform granted the possibility to vote to all male over 21, but also who completed military service and all male aged 30 whether literate or not. The consequence was that the electorate almost triplicated.

For the elections of 1913, Giolitti's majority was not very strong, and the liberals had to rely on the support of organized Catholicism. A pact was established, named the Gentiloni Pact, after the Count Gentiloni, President of the Catholic electoral union. According to the agreement the Catholics would vote for liberal candidates in exchange for concessions, in order to counterbalance the Socialist threat. The liberals had to guarantee:

1. Defense of the institutions of the Statute, and the guarantee of freedom of conscience and association, including opposition to hatred of religious congregations
2. Private education had to have the same value of public education
3. Guarantee by law the right to fathers to have the possibility of full religious education for their children in public schools
4. Opposition to divorce law
5. Recognition on a pair level for all economic and social organizations, regardless of their social or religious founding principles
6. Reforms of the judiciary to have fair justice in social matters
7. Support of policies that preserve and strengthen the economic and moral efforts of the country for a prominent role in the development of the international scenario.³³

In the 1913 elections, the non expedit was lifted for the majority of constituencies. Giolitti always denied the existence of this agreement and stated that he had nothing to do with it. So, the liberal regime relied on the Catholic support, but due to the Libyan war and some following decisions of the government in the struggle between workers and industrialists, Giolitti had lost the support of his allies. Also, radicals withdrew their support because of the disagreement with Catholics, and Giolitti decided to resign by 1914.

³³ G. Candeloro. *Storia Dell'Italia Moderna*. Vol. VII of XI. Milano, Feltrinelli 1986

CHAPTER II- Church and State in the two world wars (1914-1945)

2.1 The Church and the State during WWI and in the first after-war

Public opinion played an influential role in the decision to intervene in the war. Society was torn apart by many different positions, some of which were in favor of an Italian intervention while others were against it. The Catholic movement was mainly split into three groups. The first branch was on the right side of the political spectrum, and it was the heir of the intransigent movement, which claimed temporal power. On the opposite side, there was a left-wing tradition, which supported antimilitarism and pacifism. The third branch, which was the strongest and most influential one, was at the center and was motivated by strong neutralism. Since the Pope supported a unified movement, he tried to close the gap between the different tendencies, but it was not an easy task. Many Catholics supported the decision of the Pontiff to remain neutral, but Luigi Sturzo, an influential figure for the Catholic world at the time, was an interventionist and many patriotic speeches were made at the executive meeting of Catholic Action in March 1915.³⁴ In the same year, Count Dalla Torre, President of the Popular Union and responsible for the Catholic Action, distinguished between Church's neutrality and Catholics' neutrality. In this way, he opened the possibility for Catholics to participate in the mobilization of the conflict.³⁵ The main groups of interventionists were outside the Catholic area and were driven by strong anticlerical ideas. Hence, during the war, they called for the suspension of clerical immunities granted by the law of guarantees. However, the law was never changed or suspended. Even though Catholics were not in favor of the war, they were obedient citizens, and they fulfilled their obligations on the front. At war, Catholicism played a crucial role: the masses of soldiers were mainly illiterates who did not know the reasons they were fighting for and priests, in this environment, served as chaplains helping the soldiers to write letters for their families, and providing the comfort and the assistance needed.

The Pope always tried to maintain a neutral attitude. The Vatican feared the spread of the conflict outside Austria and avoided to publicly denounce the real causes of the conflict and blame governments for their responsibilities. However, he continued to attack Socialism. The Pope argued against Italy's intervention in the war. He was worried about what would be the role and conditions of the Church in a potential conflict.³⁶ He tried to advocate for compromise and to stop the war, and in 1917, he wrote a note for all the countries participating in it. In the note, he defines the war as "a useless slaughter, without winners nor won".³⁷ He urged the end of the conflict and an agreement for peace to settle the issues and refused to call the war "just". The Pope called for peace of compromise, inviting the Heads of governments to reach an agreement based on the reduction of armaments, freedom of the seas, and restitution of occupied territories.³⁸ The Note written by the Pope in 1917, only convinced the Italian government to keep the Vatican out of the negotiation treaties.

³⁴ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

³⁵ G. Candeloro. *Il Movimento Cattolico in Italia*. Roma: III Ed. Riuniti, 1982

³⁶ A.C. Jemolo. *Chiesa E Stato in Italia Negli Ultimi Cento Anni*. III ed. Torino: Einaudi, 1971.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ G. Candeloro. *Il Movimento Cattolico in Italia*. Roma: III Ed. Riuniti, 1982

During the war, Catholicism had a fundamental role also in politics, even if formally the *non expedit* was still in place. In 1916, Filippo Meda, a Catholic became Finance Minister, and on May 1918 another Catholic deputy, Cesare Nava, became Undersecretary of Arms and Munitions. At the same time, in society, the Catholic Action gained increasing importance and direct political role³⁹. In 1918 it was clear that the main groups that would drive the post-war parliamentary politics were Catholics and Socialists, even if they were the groups considered unwelcome by the Liberal political elites.

After the war, there are some attempts to reach conciliation between Church and State. The Pope was in favor of an easing of the tensions and a solution to the Roman question. In June 1919, negotiations started to reach an agreement between the two institutions, but the attempts were interrupted soon after because of the intervention of the King Vittorio Emanuele III, who was against any modification of the previous ecclesiastical policy adopted by the Italian State.⁴⁰

In the following years, the relationship between Church and State is shaped by a drastic change in the Church's attitude towards Catholic involvement in political life, and by the threat that the October revolution posed. These dynamics pushed the Church to take the role of interpreter of popular masses' needs in order to keep influence over them. It is in this context that the first Catholic party was founded. The history of this party, the *Partito Popolare Italiano*, is closely tied with one of its founders: Luigi Sturzo, who had previously been part of the democratic branch of the Catholic movement.

On the 18th of January 1919, the party led by Sturzo published its first political agenda. The first part of this program accepted the principles of the League of Nations and recognized the underlying ideals, while in the second part it focused on the national issues, stating the necessity of a State that could be a valid alternative to Liberalism and Socialism.⁴¹ The main points are the following:

1. The integrity of the family and safeguard of public morality
2. Freedom of education at any level, fight against illiteracy
3. Recognition of trade unions and freedom of organization, representation of classes in public bodies as in Provinces and at the national level
4. Guarantee of right to work, safeguard of workers, development of cooperation, increase and protection of small rural property
5. Development of agriculture, resolution of the issues in the South, drainage of territories, agrarian viability
6. Autonomy for local bodies
7. Reorganization of charities and public assistance
8. Freedom and independence of the Church
9. General and local fiscal reform

³⁹ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

⁴⁰ G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

⁴¹ G. Candeloro. *Il Movimento Cattolico in Italia*. Roma: III Ed. Riuniti, 1982

10. Electoral reform with the introduction of multi-member constituencies with proportional representation, female suffrage, and elected Senate
11. National defense, safeguard of emigration
12. Support to the League of Nations⁴²

In its political agenda emerges the lack of social and economic initiatives, that is determined by the conservative attitude of the party. The strategy that the party wanted to follow was to take advantage of the crisis of the Liberal ruling class and subtract consensus of the masses from the socialist movement, always trying not to be too involved in the after-war crisis. The party did not want to present itself as a revolutionary party that could solve the social crisis of the country. In order to do so, it presented itself as a non-confessional party, always very careful in its propaganda. In general, the Partito Popolare was vague on the solution of the crucial problems of the time. It managed to attract most of the Catholic population, and this width of support would be part of its weaknesses because it included both left and right supporters.⁴³ However, the ecclesiastical discipline was so influent that for many years there will not be a risk of division. It was a non-confessional party in the sense that it did not have ecclesiastical assistants, it was not part of the Catholic organizations controlled by the Vatican, which theoretically, could not impose any provision. The Holy See declared that this party did not belong to the Church, which was not responsible for the party's actions. In reality, the party called for the support of all faithful and sincere Catholics that believed in Catholic values, and during elections, it could count on the support of bishops.⁴⁴ The party had its first success at the beginning of its life when Nitti's government enacted an electoral reform introducing proportional representation. With the new electoral law, the party was able to win seats and represent its electorate in Parliament. With the establishment of the party, the Pope officially abolished the *non expedit*, allowing Catholics to be part of the Italian political system and dissolving the old Catholic electoral union.⁴⁵ The Church recognized the party as a political organization independent from the Vatican and as an ideological organization dependent on the Vatican.⁴⁶ It was a crucial change, offering the Church's intervention as a valid alternative to State's institutions for civil society.⁴⁷ Since the Catholics founded their own political faction, the Gentiloni pact fell through, which meant they would no longer support the liberals in the 1919 elections.

At the political elections, the Partito Popolare resulted second after the Socialist party. For the Liberals it was a disaster, but for the Catholics it was a success. They won 100 seats, representing the bourgeoisie and the rural classes. Both at the political and administrative elections, the party's electorate was not only composed by Catholics but also by all those citizens disappointed in the Liberal government and in the tensions present

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ A.C. Jemolo. *Chiesa E Stato in Italia Negli Ultimi Cento Anni*. III ed. Torino: Einaudi, 1971.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

⁴⁶ G. Candeloro. *Il Movimento Cattolico in Italia*. Roma: III Ed. Riuniti, 1982

⁴⁷ G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

in society between supporters of Giolitti and the ones of Salandra, and contrasts between interventionists and neutralists. Even though it had broad support, the party was not able to impose any substantial modification of the system nor a mediation between classes.

At the time there was a worsening of the economic situation of the country, and the PPI did not take a clear position on the issue. Despite its vagueness, the development of the party was fast between 1919 and 1926. As we saw, in the 1919 elections the PPI had a fundamental role in the formation of a majority. Nitti's government fell in 1920 and the new prime minister was again Giolitti. He tried to use the old transformist approach, trying to absorb external forces within the political system to reach support, but this was a bit more complicated now. Catholics were no longer bound to support Giolitti, also because of the tensions between the latter and Sturzo, leader of the PPI. The liaison between Giolitti and the PPI was very feeble, and counting on the separation between socialists and communists, he called for new elections, trying to absorb a new movement that was developing in the country: fascism. His plan did not work: the socialists still had a large share of the electorate's support, the PPI remained stable, and this determined the end of the Liberals because it was impossible to form a majority. Giolitti resigned. The proportional system caused main difficulties: it made impossible the creation of a single-party government and not many agreements were possible.

In this phase of transition and instability, the Catholic Action gained a vital function in society, permeating the Italian culture: religious teachings were introduced in schools, there was an active mobilization against divorce, and at the same time many political and trade union initiatives were taking place. In the beginning, the Vatican was cautious, but with time it detached more and more from the Partito Popolare.

In the first after-war, the Italian governments had to face several issues that contributed to the rise of the fascist movement. The first main problem of Italy after the war was the influential presence of the Socialist movement which in 1919-1921 influenced the population. Italy experienced intense strikes and riots, manifestations, and the social conflict between the working class and industrialists. In that period the red threat was considered a central point, and the government feared that the socialists could take the Russian revolution of 1917 as a model and replicate in Italy. For this reason, when the Socialist party started to reach higher numbers of sympathizers and the strikes continued, the ruling class and also the Vatican started to be concerned. The fact that the Fascist movement was carrying out very clear anti-socialist ideals played a fundamental role in its rise to power. Besides, the war had significantly impacted society, both for the violence and for the difficulties of going back to peacetime life and peacetime economy. Another relevant problem for society was the issue of *vittoria mutilata*. In the peace treaties after WWI, Italy did not get all the territories that it asked for, and Fiume and Dalmatia were not in Italy's post-war territorial acquisitions. This event played a substantial role in the lack of consensus of liberal governments in the following years because they were considered weak governments that lacked credibility to the people. It brought great dissatisfaction within the population, that was already dealing with two important economic problems: inflation and unemployment. The Liberals, who were in power at the time, had to face a struggle to maintain a majority, and from 1919 with the foundation of the first Catholic party they could no longer count on the Catholic electorate, they had to deal with proportional

representation and the old strategies were no longer working. In this environment of social conflict and political uncertainty, the *Fasci di combattimento* was starting to rise at a local level. They were characterized by strong antisocialist feelings and violent reactions against socialist organizations. Its primary transformation took place in 1921 when the movement became the *Partito Nazionale Fascista*. Giolitti considered that there were some possibilities to normalize the fascists and an alliance begun between Mussolini and him for the 1921 elections. The old ruling class had been torn apart by the war⁴⁸ and its consequences, by the lack of credibility in the eyes of public opinion, and by the different tensions between factions in society. After Giolitti's resignation, Italy saw a series of short-lived governments led by Bonomi and then by Facta. The turning point was when Mussolini asked to become himself prime minister and threatened to march on Rome, while Facta's government was still in office. The King, who refused to declare martial laws, at the end of October 1922, decided to appoint Mussolini as prime minister.

Mussolini became prime minister constitutionally, approved by the Monarch. Italy has now a coalition government between liberals and fascists, in which there were also exponents of the PPI.

2.2 *The Vatican and fascism*

Once in power, Mussolini tried to obtain the support of the Vatican and the Catholic masses. He understood that the Church could not be ignored⁴⁹ and played an essential role in society. He needed to make concessions to the Pope, hide ideological differences and win tacit endorsement for his regime, but also wanted to limit the Church's influence on society wherever possible.⁵⁰ At the beginning of 1923, the Minister of Education, Gentile, announced the intention to make religious education compulsory in schools, and in the meanwhile, the Vatican was given back a library bought by the State in 1916. Besides, the government decided to allocate three million lire to the reconstruction of the Churches destroyed by the war. Mussolini also decided to save the Banco di Roma from the crisis that would have brought it to the collapse, increased clerical salaries and banned Freemasonry. All the Catholic newspapers accentuated their pro-fascist attitudes and were no longer under the control of the PPI. During these first years of the fascist state, Catholic organizations were targeted by fascist violence. The Vatican will later prefer to support the fascist regime and let the PPI and Catholic organizations sink, strengthening the role of the Catholic Action only. In 1923 an additional issue would arise. The new electoral law proposed by the Fascist Party, the Acerbo Law, was not supported by the PPI. It established a single national constituency, a single list, and the attribution of the two-thirds of the seats to the party that reached a simple majority, without a minimum threshold to reach.⁵¹ This law, in theory, meant a stable majority, in practice, would have granted Mussolini with full powers.⁵² The PPI could not approve this law because it would bring a weakening of their presence in the Chamber of deputies, but at the same time, it

⁴⁸ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ G. Candeloro. *Il Movimento Cattolico in Italia*. Roma: III Ed. Riuniti, 1982

⁵² M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

was aware that a vote against the proposal would be disapproved by the Holy See. This position taken by the Catholic party pushed the fascists to increase the campaign against the PPI that ended with the resignation of Sturzo, suggested by the Pontiff.

During the discussions about the electoral law, the Catholic deputies decided to abstain from voting the proposal. Some of them changed their minds at the last minute and voted in favor, and this lack of strong opposition allowed the Acerbo law to be approved in parliament. The PPI, regardless of the internal tensions and the violence from the Fascist militias, at the 1924 elections presented a list. It proposed a reform of the ecclesiastical legislation, the abolition of the *exequatur* and *placet*. It was the non-fascist party that gained more votes, and this concerned the fascist squads, that in the following weeks increased violence against Catholic organizations and cooperatives. These events, however, did not change the pro-fascist attitude of the Pope nor the pro-Vatican attitude of Mussolini.⁵³ And generally, the clergy and the Catholic movement were in favor of the fascist government. Although, fascism was an antisocialist force against liberal and secular state, and while it had the support of the Church, the Partito Popolare was going through a phase of crisis and tensions. Moreover, when the support of the Vatican for the party faded, the crisis started, which is a sign of dependence from the Church⁵⁴. The latter saw in the regime a powerful instrument not only to defy the opponent but also to rebuild a society based on Christian values, while the fascist regime saw in the Church a possibility of validation and legitimation of its consensus⁵⁵.

Only after Matteotti's murder, the PPI decided to change its approach and move towards a more active and open opposition. The secession of the Aventine, to which the PPI participated, was of great importance because it brought the anti-fascist parties together, even though the PPI continued to use soft tools and legal means, without taking relevant political actions.⁵⁶ After the speech of Mussolini in January 1925 and the dissolution of the opposition parties, the PPI stopped functioning. The abandonment of the party by the Vatican is followed by a reform of the Catholic Action by Pius XI, emphasizing his role of control over the political social and economic actions of the Catholic propaganda, trade unions, press, media, and sports. It also had the task of contributing to the education of the Catholic movement in general.

After the law of the 3rd of April 1926, the Catholic trade unions were dismantled, meaning a step back of the Church in its presence in society. The activities of the Church in society, and more precisely organizations for youth education had always been a source of contrast between the two institutions because it was an important tool to keep power and control over the society for both of them.

In general, excluding youth education, the policy adopted by the Pope was always remissive, trying to avoid open conflict and secretly working its way towards the negotiations for the Lateran Pact of 1929.

Mainly, fascism presented itself as a strong antibolscevist and antisocialist force and attracted many supporters because of the fear caused by the spread of those ideologies. It was anticlerical at the core and used the support

⁵³ G. Candeloro. *Il Movimento Cattolico in Italia*. Roma: III Ed. Riuniti, 1982

⁵⁴ G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ G. Candeloro. *Il Movimento Cattolico in Italia*. Roma: III Ed. Riuniti, 1982

of religion as a tool for legitimation. Mussolini acted as a protector of the Christian values because it was convenient to expose that image of himself⁵⁷.

2.3 *The Lateran Pacts and the end of the roman question*

At the beginning of 1925, a special commission was nominated to study the past ecclesiastical laws and propose a reform to regulate the relationship between State and Church. The two main points on which the commission focused were the recognition of the Holy See as a legal entity, recognition of religious orders as moral entities, and the abolition of the *exequatur*. The negotiations between Church and State to review the law of guarantees ended in 1929, when the Lateran Pacts were signed on the 11th of February. It included a treaty, a financial convention, and a concordat.⁵⁸ The treaty established the mutual recognition between the Reign of Italy and the Holy See and its sovereignty over the Vatican and confirmed the statement of art. 1 of the Statute of 1848, according to which Catholicism is considered the religion of the State. In the financial convention, the State agreed to grant a sum of money to compensate for the damages caused by the loss of temporal power of the Church. The agreement recognized the juridical entity of religious associations, established tax relief for the ecclesiastical property but ensured the control of the State over bishop nominees and prescribed the loyalty oath to the Head of State and to the Government. It also established the limitation on the State prerogatives over marriage, education, equality of citizens before the law. Catholic marriage was deemed legally valid, and the Catholic Action was able to carry out its activities independently from any political party in its task of diffusion of the Catholic principles. Practically, the pact offered the Church sound bases for the Christianization of society.⁵⁹

The concordat signed by Mussolini and Cardinal Gasparri, caused surprise in the public opinion because the negotiations were kept secret and only a limited number of people took part in it.⁶⁰ The population was not aware of the initiative, but it was welcomed as a success for Mussolini according to fascists. He was concluding a process of attempt of conciliation already started in the past⁶¹.

The Lateran Pact can be considered as one of the most significant achievements of the fascist regime. It is the agreement that put an end to the roman question and the final step of reconciliation between the Church and the State after decades of tensions. The Lateran Pact marked the end of the roman question, which had been a weight and a vivid problem in Italian foreign affairs and also in internal politics. The impact it had was not on politics only but also society, causing split in the different classes. For a long time, many were convinced that to adhere to the law of guarantees could be enough to regulate the relationship between the two. Since the beginning of WWI, the strategy adopted by the Vatican had been to keep good diplomatic relations with all

⁵⁷ A.C. Jemolo. *Chiesa E Stato in Italia Negli Ultimi Cento Anni*. III ed. Torino: Einaudi, 1971.

⁵⁸ G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ G. Candeloro. *Il Movimento Cattolico in Italia*. Roma: III Ed. Riuniti, 1982

⁶¹ Ibid.

countries. Now that fascism had destroyed many trade unions and socialist organizations, the Church decided that it could give up on the rest of the bodies, focusing on the Catholic Action only. The reconciliation, together with other policies adopted by the regime, allowed Mussolini to enjoy the support of the Holy See. In fact, between 1929 and 1938, the Church played a major role in strengthening the consensus for the fascist regime among the Catholic masses. However, the economic crisis of 1929 brought the Pontiff to elaborate its position again, expressing his dislike for the centralization of power in the hands of few⁶² and some forms of consumerism that the capitalist system had taken. This position, however, was not a threat to the relationship established between the two institutions.

With the Lateran Pact, the unilateral character of the law of guarantees was overcome. Now the Church was considered as an institution with juridical sovereignty, its relationship with the State was no longer of subordination, it was an international entity.⁶³ The elements of continuity from the past play a crucial role. The pact itself represents a political continuity because fascism brings to an end a situation that was present also with the previous Liberal governments. Another main point of continuity is the aim of giving rise to a juridical entity, and it is possible to see similarities in the guarantees granted to the Church, which are an evolution of the previous law.⁶⁴ There are also elements of difference, considering that the previous government tried to solve the Roman question with an international approach but not as an internal issue: they thought that in order to solve the question they had to reach agreements to recognize the sovereignty and independence of the Church in the international scene, not considering a juridical definition of the Church within Italy itself, an example of this is the attempt of negotiation of the Italian governments with France in the previous century. The reconciliation was possible also because the surrounding context had changed. The ruling class had experienced a shift in priorities and importance of values. While the former ruling class was concerned about the juridical issues, the new one focused more on matters that were contemporary and important for the population, as economic and social issues. For this reason, if it had been a crucial point recognizing the Church as a sovereign legal entity in the past, it was no longer that way for the State. The demands of the Church were no longer conflicting with the ones of the State, and this meant that accommodating the Vatican's need was not incompatible with State priorities.⁶⁵

2.4 The Church during the last years of fascism and WWII

After the Pacts were signed, peaceful coexistence went through different phases: in 1929 soon after the signature, in the summer of 1931 and again in 1938-1939, there was a sort of cold war.⁶⁶

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ G. Della Torre. "Il Paradigma Della Continuità Come Chiave Di Lettura Dei Rapporti Tra Stato E Chiesa in Italia." [Www.statoechiese.it](http://www.statoechiese.it). February 20, 2012.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ A.C. Jemolo. *Chiesa E Stato in Italia Negli Ultimi Cento Anni*. III ed. Torino: Einaudi, 1971.

⁶⁶ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

The first issue was about the interpretation given to the Pact in Mussolini's speech in 1929. He wanted to underline that the agreement would not influence the secular character of the State, and the basis of fascism would not have changed.⁶⁷ The issues raised in 1931 were about youth education and the role of the Catholic Action. The latter was accused of being a tool in the hands of ex-popolari trying to influence politics and taking the place of Catholic trade unions that were banned years before. The Catholic Action could exercise a powerful influence on society, and it was seen with a reserve from the fascist lines. They were accused of overlapping with the fascist tasks on society and of secretly wanting to take control of the population. Even though the Pacts were signed less than two years before, the fascist violently reacted against the Catholic action. Pope Pius XI published an encyclical *Non ne abbiamo bisogno* in which he protested for the violence and calumnies received, denied the ties with the Partito Popolare and criticized the tendency of the regime to the monopoly of youth education.⁶⁸ He also defended the Catholic Action underlying the fact that it was a nonpolitical organization, it was a moral and religious one.⁶⁹

Despite the tensions, the regime's positions and decisions were generally supported by the Catholic world, as the intervention in Ethiopia and the war in Spain. However, while the war in Spain was developing, controversies between Nazism and the Vatican were growing stronger and the regime in Germany was taking an anticlerical stance. In 1937 encyclical, the Pope condemned racism and auspicated for conciliation. With these interventions, the Pope, on the one hand, tried to stop the creation of a robust antifascist movement and on the other hand, to unite people against communism.⁷⁰ The Pope's intervention did not change anything. In 1938 the government started its anti-Jewish campaign that became legislation by November 1938. The Church and the elites of the Italian society were outraged,⁷¹ and the Pope took a position against the racial laws and racism, although it was not an official condemn. The Pontiff considered the laws as a breach to the 1929 concordat because the State was intervening in matters of mixed marriages, which were outside its competences, but not even this event could compromise the relationship between the State and the Church. Although, this had an impact on the consensus given to the regime because the laws had alienated the elites upon which the consensus relied.⁷²

Although the Church participated in creating consensus until 1938, it was also a rival for the fascist regime because it had strength and influence over society, so the regime needed to keep it under control.⁷³ This sort of alliance lasted until the last days of fascism and resulted in a quasi-peaceful coexistence between the two. The Church obtained recognition and favorable legislation, it could increase its influence on society, and in exchange, it recognized and supported the regime.

⁶⁷ G. Candeloro. *Il Movimento Cattolico in Italia*. Roma: III, Ed. Riuniti, 1982

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ A.C. Jemolo. *Chiesa E Stato in Italia Negli Ultimi Cento Anni*. III ed. Torino: Einaudi, 1971

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

During the second world war, the Vatican expressed a strong position of neutrality with several attempts to return to a situation of peace. While the conflict was developing, the attitude moved towards an open condemnation of the atrocities even if he was never openly against the regimes. It can be defined as true neutrality throughout the conflict until 1943. During the war the Holy See was not an entity on foreign territory, it has its State, and this fact favored an active position in protecting the representatives of other countries, always without taking sides in the actual war. Being neutral territory meant a “safe zone”, and in 1944, while the representatives of England, Poland, Belgium, and France left the Vatican where they were protecting themselves, the German representatives entered the neutral territory for shelter. The “safe zone” was used to protect political refugees and Israelites. During the conflict, the clergy and the Catholic world played an important role in taking care of wounded, and in general of the population that needed care and support. The relationship between Church and State was formal and characterized by collaboration from 1929 to 1940. On the 25th of July 1943, when the new government was established, new strong waves of anticlericalism developed.

CHAPTER III- Church and State in the Italian Republic (1945-1984)

3.1 The establishment of the Republic

Between 1943 and 1945, anti-fascist parties gained importance. During 1942-43 many of them were re-founded underground in the whole country and among them, the Christian Democracy. The party was founded in 1942 and included many of the leading figures of the Catholic Action of the previous years, including some ex-popolari. On the 26th of July 1943, the party published a pamphlet in which it affirmed the necessity for the Italian people to deliberate on institutional reform. It proposed a representative democracy by universal suffrage, the separation of power of the State, a National Assembly elected by universal suffrage, and the creation of assembly in which collective interests were represented. This proposal followed the social tradition of the Church. Additional points inspired by the Christian roots were the freedom of conscience, safeguard of morality, safeguard of the integrity of the family, and Catholic education. It was openly against any intolerance or discrimination towards race and religion; it was in favor of maintaining the legal validity of religious marriage, and State guarantee of freedom of education. In the social and economic sphere, they advocated for the reduction of unemployment and proposed a fiscal reform to simplify taxes. These ideas were a combination of the traditional positions of the Church, together with antifascist ideas prominent at the time. This pamphlet aimed at unifying Catholics around a generally acceptable program that could be embraced by the majority of the population. On the remaining issues, it was very vague. On the one hand, DC was a conservative force and included many personalities that were part of the old Catholic Action and the PPI. On the other hand, it was a new party that gave a fundamental contribution to the establishment of the Republic in Italy and meant a strong presence in the Italian political scene for many years. Its most prominent exponent was Alcide De Gasperi, who was already part of the PPI in the past. This new party would include not only already well-known figures but also all those generations educated by the Catholic Action during the years of fascism. The party explicitly wanted to carry out a program of Catholic derivation and in the next years would become the party of the Church, going beyond the non-denominational characteristic of the PPI.⁷⁴ It is easy to identify the pressure of the Holy See in social issues like family, education, relationship with the State, limitations of religious minorities in the positions taken by the party.

However, in the beginning, the Vatican tried not to take positions on this new Catholic Party. Within the Holy See, as a matter of fact, there were different tendencies and interpretations on the possibility of having a Catholic Party and only after the intervention of the United States the Pope took a less neutral position getting closer to the American principles than to the Nazis and Fascist regimes. He has always been very prudential on taking stances. The development of events that led to the establishment of the First Republic was characterized by the constant presence of the anti-fascist parties, including DC. During the following years, it played a crucial role both in politics and society. The Church, to which the party was partly linked, had a stronghold on society, with the presence of the Catholic Action and this represented the basis for the party to

⁷⁴G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

become the party of the mass. De Gasperi would be the first prominent Catholic politician to become Prime Minister and will remain the leader of successive governments until 1953.⁷⁵

On the 2nd of June 1946 a referendum was held, on the same day of the Constitutional Assembly elections, in order to solve the institutional question: whether Italy was to be a Monarchy or a Republic. The Republic won, and in the Constitutional Assembly, the Christian Democrats won 35.2 % of the votes and 207 seats out of 556. They were the largest and most influential party of the newly born Republic, followed by Socialists and Communists. De Gasperi formed a new government in alliance with the other main parties together with the Republicans, who had won 23 seats. The new Republic was composed of anti-fascist parties and based on anti-fascist ideology. The following Republican governments would be all coalition governments. The next issue was the writing of the new constitution, and the question of the relationship with the Church was to emerge again. The new article 7 stated that: *The State and Church are, each in its own sphere, independent and sovereign. Their relationship is based on the Lateran Pacts. Modifications of the Pacts, accepted by the two parties, do not require the procedure for Constitutional amendments.*

It meant that the Church position was protected and established by the Constitution itself, and in this regard, art. 7 was a real success for the Vatican. It is an excellent continuity with the Fascist period because it recognized the solution achieved by Mussolini and included it in the new Constitution of the Republic.

This relationship would not change for many years. In the meanwhile, in 1947 the international scenario was changing due to the Cold War, the beginning of the Marshall Plan, and the rise of the “Party of the average man” that were shaping the panorama. For these reasons, the alliance between the Christian Democrats and the Communists was no longer working, and the Church itself had many doubts about this alliance since the beginning. Besides, the United States were worried about the proximity of the Communist Party to Russia and did not want to grant help to a country that had a Communist Party as part of the government. The Pope himself considered the collaboration with a party that had anticlerical values inadmissible and implied that the DC could have the support of the Holy See only if distanced from the Communists. At the same time, the Party of the average man was gaining support in the South, where people wanted jobs, and were in favor of the American aids to continue and most of all did not support the Communist Party. This new movement was gaining support taking it away from the Christian Democrats, and they could not allow the Southern electorate to shift away from the government. In May 1947, De Gasperi decided to exclude the Communist and Socialist parties from his coalition. This event did not mean that the Communist was not a dominant party, it still had a stronghold on society through trade unions, and there was the risk of insurrection. Now the Christian Democrats were the only mass party that could be in government, and this increased its influence exponentially. At this point, the DC had both the support of the Americans and of the Church, which had a

⁷⁵ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

powerful influence on society through the Catholic Action and the interventions of Bishops at the local level, and soon became the party defender of the western civilization.⁷⁶

At the 1948 political elections, the party reached 48.4% of the votes, which is the highest consensus that a party ever reached in its history, also due to the Church that had provided a mass electorate on the basis. The successive governments, led by De Gasperi, were always coalition governments including Liberals, Republicans, and Social Democrats, and he was always very cautious and unwilling to be dominated by Pope Pius XII.

The new regime established, led mainly by the DC, was a quiet and respectable conservative regime, which practiced patronage and compromise. After the exclusion of the left-wing parties, and the 1948 electoral victory, the DC would be the pivot of any future government, its elite will substitute the liberal elites, and the influence of the Church became stronger and more influential in society and politics.⁷⁷ After some years, Italians started seeing it as respectable, because it had the support of the Church, which brought voters, and legitimacy, but also some corrupted aspects came up. In order to form a government, coalitions were needed. There were three main possibilities of coalition. The first one is the centrist, or center-right governments, which characterized Italy from 1948 around the early 1960s, and consisted of the Christian Democrats, together with Republicans, and Social Democrats and sometimes Liberals. The second option was a center-left government, including the Socialists, mainly between 1963 and 1972. This possibility implies that the Socialist parties have to be detached from the Communists. The third option was a government of national unity, including also the Communists in very exceptional circumstances later at the end of the 1970s, to fight terrorism, violence, and extra-parliamentary forces. This meant that after the exclusion crisis, the Christian Democrats would be forced to include the left-wing parties again.

During the years in which De Gasperi was leading the party, he tried to detach from the Church and be independent in the decisions of the party, but this was unlikely to happen because it was the Church that brought many electors to support the DC. However, this party was very heterogeneous and complex, it included figures from the old PPI, from pre-fascist Catholic unions and cooperatives, and the Catholic Action. This caused internal divisions and coexisting tendencies. In general, the presence of different factions within parties and the lack of a robust characteristic ideology is constant in many parties in Italy, except for the Communist Party. So, it was also for the DC, which was a single Catholic Party in which different tendencies lived together, there were more left-wing Catholics, more right-wing exponents and people like De Gasperi, who was closer to a liberal moderate. For this reason, the allegiance to the party is not very strong, and these different perspectives would create some internal tensions within the party itself. Usually, up to six or nine different factions coexisted within the DC, and this played a crucial role during elections. In fact, voters could express preferences within the party, creating competition and rivalry between candidates of the same party.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

Even though factionalism contributed to a precarious system, DC always ruled and found its way to reward supporters and keep the system under its control. For this reason, *sottogoverno* was the only solution, meaning appointments and a strong presence in society through agencies, directed by close people. This was also a continuity of the Church social doctrine, with charities, and welfare agencies. In this way, the State economy and welfare bodies became overpowered by Christian Democrat faction politics.⁷⁸ The DC was not the only one adopting this strategy, all the main parties adopted the system, but also the DC had traditional interests in charity, local enterprises, and it was a strategy to appoint people that lost their seats in parliament. They almost tried to melt together the State with society.

These decades also saw different changes in the economy and see the uprising of many tensions, created mainly by the Communist movements. The DC did not have any possible ally on this issue, and the strategy adopted was always the same: absorb the problem. With the historical compromise, we mean the rapprochement between the Communists and the Catholics. This alliance was carried out and promoted by two prominent Christian Democrats: Andreotti and Moro. The Communist Party led by Berlinguer accepted these advantages. In September 1973, then, Berlinguer proposed this historical compromise, the strategy aimed at calming down violence and riots and maintain public order, and at the same time, Communists could be granted some reforms and interventions. This is the first time that the exclusion of Communists from the government is suspended. The Communists also promised, in exchange from social reforms and to influence general policy, to respect the Church and civil liberties. In August 1976, the new government led by Andreotti, which was from DC, also saw the support of the PCI in abstention on votes of confidence. However, this plan failed, and one of the reasons was also because the Church strongly disapproved of the presence of Communists in government. The relations between the Communists and the Church also worsened after the implementation of regionalism. The other way around, Communists did not notably support the proximity to the Church and had little sympathy for the Vatican. In 1979 they went back to the opposition. The problem developed with regionalism and the Church is related to spheres of influence of the various areas of the Italian peninsula. The implementation of regionalism implied that the power would be decentralized, and local governments would not have the same role as in the previous century. The Church lost influence locally due to this implementation of the principles decided during the writing of the Italian constitution.

3.2 *The society*

In general, Italy in the decades following the establishment of the Republic experienced radical economic, social, and cultural changes. During the 1950s and 1960s, in a way, Italy undergoes a process of secularization, but in reality the Church maintains a stronghold on society through the Catholic Action, the Christian Association of Italian workers, unions, cooperatives, and mostly because the clergy, bishops and clerical figures had still a crucial political role, detaining power. In 1963 the Pope John XXIII, undertakes a radical

⁷⁸ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

change, inviting in his Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* to pursue political and social progress.⁷⁹ The Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican started the year before and was supposed to last until 1965. The Pope never saw the end of the Council, but he was important because he realized the changes that society was undergoing due to secularization and considered the need for renovation of the Church. The Council was aware of the changing political, social, and cultural conditions of society at the moment and was open to a spirit of renovation and conciliation. However, at the local level, this view was not shared by bishops, and the clergy. The 1968 movements also involved the Church, which was influenced by the increasing tensions created by the uprisings also within the DC and also involved the Catholic Action and other Catholic organizations. They were not immune to social and cultural changes. Cultural changes during the 1970s were striking. Only little more than one-third of the population went to mass weekly compared to very high numbers of the previous years, Church-run institutions were appealing only to a limited majority, and the Catholic religion had become a sub-culture or a private belief.⁸⁰ Secularization had played a significant role, together with migration, urbanization, and the spread of secondary education. Until 1970 divorce did not exist in Italy, and marriage could be invalidated only in exceptional circumstances by the Vatican. The State only granted legal separation, and many people were considered in illicit unions. In 1965, a Socialist deputy, Fortuna, put proposed a law to introduce divorce. This topic divided society and created groups and leagues of people that participated in the debate regardless of the political party of belonging. These groups were anti-clerical, and eventually, the pressure that the public opinion put on the issue, allowed Italy to have a divorce law by December 1970. Certainly this law raised many reactions from the Catholic sides, both from the religious population and from the Church, which was horrified by the law and stated that it was a breach of the 1929 Concordat, according to which the State had agreed to recognize the civil effects of the sacrament of marriage, and Catholic lawyers stated that it was unconstitutional.⁸¹ A referendum was decided. The Church and the Catholics took the task of convincing the remaining political forces and the population that divorce was immoral. With the referendum, the cleavage between secular and Catholic Italy emerged even more.⁸² All the political parties except for the Christian Democrats spoke out in favor of divorce, and even the DC was divided. The result of the referendum was a great victory for the Radicals and the left in general, and a relevant defeat for the Church and the Christian Democrats. It meant the victory of progressive values and secularization in Italy.⁸³ Divorce was a crisis of the family that the Holy See always promoted. The same groups also wanted legal abortion, and after the battle for divorce was won in 1974, abortion became the next step. It was already illegally practiced, and in the eyes of the Catholics, there was no reason to legalize it. It was a very controversial topic, and again, a referendum was held. Almost all Christian Democrats were hostile to abortion, but even the Church was perplexed on the idea of ongoing fighting. For this reason, at the referendum, the Catholic proposal

⁷⁹ G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

⁸⁰ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

⁸³ M. Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015

was to limit abortion to cases in which the women's health could be at danger. The result of the referendum was a sign of how deep-rooted secularization had become.⁸⁴ However, it posed a challenge to the DC regime, personified by the anticlerical radical party. During the years it had lost many pretensions for power and turned her influence less towards the party politics and more towards the social welfare and religious associations, which could count on a relevant number of volunteers. It experienced the effects of secularization and consumerism and changed its focus, enhancing its mission in social solidarity. We can say that the referendum of divorce represented a moment of shift in the approach of religious institutions in Italy: its primary aim was to unify the Catholic world, even though this might sound difficult at the time considering the social and cultural change undergoing after 1968. Following the '68 movements and the referendum, there is a shift towards the left, that allowed the Communist Party to reach higher shares of the electorate in the political elections of 1975, including in Rome where the influence of the Vatican was stronger than the rest of Italy. However, DC was not showing yet signs of decline at the electoral level. During the years 1975-78, until the end of Paul VI's pontificate, on the one hand there was an active process of secularization of society, on the other new issues were rising, including terrorism and violence.

The year 1978 saw many events taking place. On the one hand, there was the law on abortion, strongly condemned by the Church, there was the shift in the pontificate, with now John Paul II. His actions will show continuity with the previous Pope on many aspects, while the presence in the political life will decline. The Church at the time proposed itself as the social solution to a radical change and crisis in ideology and the development of the contemporary society, the message, however, did not take into account the change in people's mentality at the time. The attention of the Pope moves towards the social aspects. Another major event taking place in 1978 is the murder of the President of Christian Democrats and former Prime Minister Aldo Moro. He was a victim of a terrorist attack and was kidnapped by the Red Brigades eventually killed.

3.3 The Concordat of 1984

Throughout the 1980s, the Christian Democrats lost the large share of the electorate's support compared to the past. The historical compromise failed, and the Communist Party in 1979 went back to the opposition. Many Catholics were disappointed by the laws on divorce, and abortion and the party increased its system of patronage even more. During those years, the Socialist Party and other parties became more prominent and in 1981-82 to a non-Christian Democrat, Giovanni Spadolini, was Prime Minister, and in 1983 the Socialist leader Bettino Craxi. An essential step in the relationship between the State and the Holy See was made under this government. In February 1984 a new concordat revisited formal State-Church relations for the first time since 1929.⁸⁵ From now on, Catholicism would no longer be the religion of the State, although its importance is recognized in the Concordat. Religious teachings ceased to be compulsory in State schools; Church property became fully taxable, and the Vatican Bank came under the Italian legal regulation. State stipends for the

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

clergy were substituted by tax-deductible contributions by the Catholics.⁸⁶ Despite the fact that Catholicism was no longer religion of State, the Concordat was favorable for the Church, it recognized its ability to influence society and maintain its role, it kept the relationship between ecclesiastical jurisdiction and State jurisdiction of Catholic marriage, the possibility of religious teachings was maintained, and still ecclesiastical entities were granted fiscal privileges.⁸⁷ The agreements reached brings substantial modifications to the Concordat, leaving untouched the Treaty. On this occasion, the elements of continuity are formally underlined in the premise of the agreement, which states that the Holy See and the Italian Republic recognized the necessity to revise the previous agreements. Continuities are also shown by the fact that the agreements are reached by a religious and a layman, Bettino Craxi, a Socialist,⁸⁸ as in 1929. The revision of the treaty represents an important fact at a historical level; it is also at the juridical level the completion of the constitutional idea of the Constitutional Assembly.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, in this analysis of the events that characterize the relationship between the State and the Church, some constant aspects can be noted. One of them is the fact that despite all the tensions and the attempts to limit the influence of the Church, the Vatican has always maintained a high degree of influence on politics and society and shaped the behavior of the population. All this, through both specific directives, as the *non expedit*, or through its organizations and associations, as the Catholic Action has done during the years. Another constant is the effort of the Liberal governments first, and of the Republic later, to keep the religious sphere limited to its spiritual duties, and not overlap with the competences of the State. This aspect was interrupted during the Fascist regime, in which Mussolini instrumentalized the power that the Church had on the society of his legitimation.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ G. Verucci. *La Chiesa Cattolica in Italia Dall'Unità a Oggi 1861-1998*. Bari: Laterza, 1999

⁸⁸ G. Della Torre. "Il Paradigma Della Continuità Come Chiave Di Lettura Dei Rapporti Tra Stato E Chiesa in Italia." <https://www.statoechiese.it/contributi/il-paradigma-della-continuita-come-chiave-di-lettura-dei-rapporti-tra-stato>

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Riassunto

L'obiettivo che questa tesi si pone è descrivere i passaggi principali del rapporto tra Chiesa e Stato in Italia, nel periodo compreso tra l'annessione di Roma al Regno d'Italia e il Concordato del 1984. Le relazioni fra Stato e Chiesa in Italia sono sempre state fonti di controversie e accesi dibattiti. L'influenza della Santa Sede sulla sfera politica del paese è sempre stata di grande importanza, e la diffusione dei valori cattolici nella popolazione hanno portato il Pontefice ad avere un grande potere sulle masse, e ad influenzare quindi anche le scelte politiche del popolo. Comprendere le dinamiche di questa relazione è rilevante per capire gli sviluppi della società e della politica in Italia.

Il caso dell'Italia richiede particolare attenzione, perché, durante il periodo liberale del paese, presenta delle particolarità rispetto ad altri casi. Infatti, in Italia, la Chiesa può essere considerata come una vera e propria forza antisistema, e sarà causa di non poche problematiche per i governi Liberali, che si ritroveranno a dover combattere da una parte la Chiesa, e dall'altra delle forze antisistema come il socialismo. La forza di questa opposizione è data dal fatto che la Chiesa godeva di una vera e propria struttura e organizzazione, che faceva presa sulle comunità locali e influiva sulle scelte della popolazione. È cruciale comprendere queste caratteristiche per poter analizzare e capire le posizioni prese dai governi italiani di fronte ai numerosi problemi relativi all'ordine pubblico, uno fra tutti il trasformismo.

Le tensioni fra le due istituzioni sono nate parecchi anni prima dell'annessione di Roma al Regno d'Italia. I contrasti infatti, risalgono al 1848 e all'inizio del processo di secolarizzazione dello Stato portata avanti dal Regno di Sardegna, profondamente criticato dalla Chiesa. In questo periodo furono numerosi i tentativi del governo di prevalere sulla Chiesa di limitarne l'influenza sulla società. Una delle figure di spicco di questi eventi, è Cavour. Dobbiamo a lui infatti il principio di *libera Chiesa in libero Stato*, che influenzerà i successivi governi. Nel 1850, il ministro della Giustizia Siccardi, propone tre leggi, con l'obiettivo di abolire le corti religiose, abolire il diritto di asilo nelle Chiese per coloro che avessero commesso reati, e la riduzione del numero delle festività religiose per aumentare la produttività del paese. Queste proposte non furono accolte positivamente dalla Santa Sede, come neanche fu accettata la proposta di un matrimonio civile proposta da D'Azeglio, o la proposta di Cavour di nazionalizzare le proprietà degli ordini monastici minori che sarebbero stati aboliti, per aumentare le entrate dello Stato e far fronte alla guerra in Crimea. Tutti questi eventi sono un chiaro esempio del tentativo di secolarizzazione dello Stato e portarono le due istituzioni a svariate tensioni. Ed è questo il punto di partenza della nostra analisi, passando poi ai periodi successivi. Protagonisti di questo periodo saranno i tentativi di accordo fra Stato e Chiesa successivi alla Breccia di Porta Pia, principalmente da parte dello stato con la Legge delle guarentigie pontificie, e i rapporti tra le due istituzioni durante le due guerre e nel periodo del fascismo. Infine, verranno analizzate le principali caratteristiche del coinvolgimento di partiti cattolici nella vita politica in Italia, dal Partito Popolare, alla Democrazia Cristiana, protagonista della scena politica del secondo dopoguerra, fino ad arrivare al Concordato del 1984 sotto il governo Craxi.

Per concludere, nell'analisi di queste dinamiche possiamo trovare degli elementi di continuità. Uno di questi è il livello di capacità del Pontefice di influenzare la vita politica e la società italiana, inizialmente con un divieto di partecipazione alla politica, successivamente con l'invito alla popolazione cattolica a partecipare nelle varie organizzazioni e associazioni, come l'Azione Cattolica. Un altro elemento di costanza è il tentativo dello Stato, prima dei governi liberali, e poi della Repubblica, di mantenere le due sfere di influenza separate. Questo atteggiamento verrà in un certo senso modificato da Mussolini, che darà importanza alla Chiesa negli anni del Regime Fascista e la strumentalizzerà per ottenere legittimità.