

president of the Anti-Trust Authority between 1994–7. He returned to government as Minister for Institutional Reform under **Prodi** in 1998 and Treasury Minister under **D'Alema** in 1999.

JAMES WALSTON

Amelio, Gianni

b. 20 January 1945, San Pietro Magisano, Catanzaro

Film director

One of the most impressive directors of the 'new' generation, Amelio achieved international acclaim with his 1992 film *Ladro di bambini* (The Stolen Children). He came to be regarded as the leading representative of a cinema committed to a realistic reflection of, and commentary upon, pressing historical, social and political issues.

After being abandoned by his father, who emigrated permanently to South America, Amelio grew up in a poor town of the South. In 1965 he moved to Rome and had the chance to work as an assistant to director Vittorio **De Seta** on his *Un uomo a metà* (A Man in Half) (1966). For several years he collaborated on a wide variety of filmic ventures including spaghetti westerns, musicals and advertising. His first film as director was *La fine del gioco* (The End of the Game), a 1970 low-budget black and white film shown on Italian public television as part of a series titled *Programmi sperimentali* (Experimental Programmes). In 1976, Amelio revealed one of the main influences on his own film-making by shooting a documentary on the making of Bernardo **Bertolucci's** *Novecento* (1900). Indeed, the lesson of the 'masters' of Italian cinematic **neorealism** is filtered through Bertolucci in many of Amelio's films, such as *Colpire al cuore* (Aim at the Heart) (1982), *I ragazzi di Via Panisperna* (The Boys in Panisperna Road) (1988) and *Porte aperte* (Open Doors) (1990). In these films, Amelio freely borrowed images and rhythms from Bertolucci's filmography. It was only with *Ladro di bambini*, a gripping portrayal of the dismal reality of contemporary Italy where children are physically exploited, dispossessed of their innocence, and then abandoned in morally and emotionally deserted territories, that Amelio found his own personal way of retrieving and reactivating the neorealist mandate for a cinema committed to a realistic portrayal and a thorough critique of social and political injustice.

Amelio's films were often powerful premonitions of things to come, as in the case of *Lamerica* (1994), which deals with the devastating situation in Albania at the close of the twentieth century. The project was prompted by the devastating events of 1991, when Italians watched on national television the desperate exodus of thousands of Albanians trying to find a refuge and a home in Italy. After several trips to post-communist Albania, Amelio conceived of a story which draws impressive parallels between contemporary Albania and the Italy of the 1940s, where morally and economically impoverished people nourish the desperate dream of emigrating to a foreign country as the land of plenty (see **emigration**). The conclusion leaves the audience speechless and disturbed as the story

develops a relentless critique of Western culture built on exploitation and imperialism, a disturbing critique of ourselves.

See also: New Italian Cinema

Further reading

Crowdus, G. and Porton, R. (eds) (1995) 'Beyond Neorealism: Preserving a Cinema of Social Conscience/An Interview with Gianni Amelio', *Cineaste* 21(4): 6–13.

MANUELA GIERI

Amendola, Giorgio

b. 21 November 1907, Rome; d. 5 June 1980, Rome

Politician

The son of socialist leader Giovanni Amendola, Giorgio joined the **PCI** in 1929 but was soon arrested and sent into internal exile. He subsequently went to France in 1937 as a representative of the party, and then to Tunisia where he organized the party underground. Expelled from Tunisia, he returned to France and then to Italy in April 1943, becoming a leading member of the CLN (Committee of National Liberation). At war's end he served as undersecretary to the Prime Minister under Parri and **De Gasperi** from June 1945 to June 1946. Elected to the **Constituent Assembly**, he remained a parliamentary deputy from 1946 to his death, and was also elected to the European Parliament in 1975. He was a member of the PCI's Central Committee and party executive from the Fifth Congress. After Palmiro **Togliatti's** death in 1964, Amendola led the PCI's reformist wing which proposed a new type of party of the Left, neither completely Marxist nor completely social democrat.

JAMES WALSTON

American influence

The image of the United States in Italy in 1945 could almost be summed up in three terms: chocolate, chewing gum and boogie-woogie. The fabled destination of so many poor emigrants at the end of the nineteenth century had now also become the instrument of liberation from Nazi occupation. As the initial glow subsided, however, the question arose: would American influence receive cautious acceptance, or would it be regarded as colonization?