

Woman Deputy Seeks to Uplift Italian Films

ROME (NANA)—A militant women member of the Italian Parliament demanding a major morality uplift for Cinecitta—Hollywood on the Tiber.

Lina Merlin, the legislator, urged that suggestive elements be purged from all pictures with some order simultaneously introduced into Italy's contradictory morality codes.

Rome's film censors permit actresses emoting great passion while dressed in clothes of extraordinary daring to play lengthy love scenes on the screen.

Miss Merlin also charged that the themes of some movie stories themselves represent attacks on public morality.

"Films glamorizing the lives of courtesans and women of lax virtue should be banned in the interest of public morality," she declared. Many Italian films are built around this "glamorizing" theme.

Contradiction

One contradictory factor in the Italian movie industry is that the police rigidly enforce in the theatres laws which many consider just as puritanical as the movies themselves are risqué. Couples who exchange a kiss in the back row are liable—as several recent raids have proven—to be arrested. Fines and even imprisonment are provided for those adjudged violators of the public decency laws—which are being stiffly interpreted during the police force's current morality drive.

Another powerful factor against moral laxness is the Catholic Church system of watching not only movies, but also theatre billboards. If a portrayed actress is

considered too scantily dressed, volunteers use paste and paper atop the offending necklines.

Bikinis for Export

Perhaps the most startling contradiction in Italian policies on how high the public morals should be straitlaced involves Bikini bathing suits.

Bikinis were banned on the beaches—but not in beauty competitions.

Then a group of members of Parliament decided that these contests were not in the best interests of Italian womanhood, and that was the end of the "Miss Italy" competition.

What has happened to the Bikini business now that they are taboo on the beach, and beauty competitions have been abolished? Spokesmen of the industry were asked.

Bikinis are still being produced in Italy—but for export only. Alfredo Botto, a leading Milan swimsuit stylist, had a word to say to me about them:



"Well, if you used gleaming 'Beacon Wax' on the floors as they do, you wouldn't then be ashamed to invite them here!"