

The aim of the project is the analysis of representations of the Soviet regime and European countries of Eastern Block in Italian post-fascist film culture. My principal research objective is to reveal the structure of the cultural and political factors which contributed to the amical rapprochement between Italian film culture and Soviet regime. On a more general scale this research aims at both challenging the simplistic cold war binaries and stereotypes, and at drawing a more nuanced structure of connections and influences across the iron curtain. The timeframe of the research (1943-1964) is determined by both the historic and political events. The former date refers to the fall of fascist regime and to the ideological turn of the Italian nation. The latter year refers to the end of a certain political epoch due to the death of Palmiro Togliatti. When it comes to the cinema, both years refer to the production of two paradigmatic films, similar at the level of narration, however by all means ideologically different. Immediately before the Italian political turn of 1943, Roberto Rossellini directed the film *Uomo dalla croce* [*The Man of the Cross*] based on the history of the Italian armed forces at the Eastern front, glorifying Italian victories in the Soviet Union. It provides a certain image of the Soviet regime, suggesting the evil, barbarity, and atheism. The film closing the timeframe of the research tackles the very same story of the Eastern front. However, this time a triumphant vision is replaced with a traumatic one. Giuseppe De Santis's film *Italiani, brava gente* [*Italians, Brave People*] was the first Italian-Soviet co-production. The film provides a paradoxical and curious image of the front, in which "the Russians are victims as much as most of the Italian soldiers". The tragedy of the film is based on the fact that although Soviets and Italians have a deep sympathy to each other (motives of reciprocal love, friendship, piety), they are constraint by the Germans to fight. The production history of this curious film seems to provide a fascinating case study for my research including a whole variety of phenomena related to the Italian-Soviet relationship. To a certain degree I treat these films as two ends of the paradigmatic shift of the way the Soviet regime was represented in Italian cinema. During the course of the preliminary research I have noticed, that the representation of the soviet regime in the post-fascist Italian cinema is quite limited, mostly idealising and presenting it in a positive light. Thus, I decided to research Italian cinema and film culture thoroughly, and verify whether such a hypothesis refers to a more general tendency of idealising and tabuising the Soviet regime in Italian film culture. In order to answer this problem I have planned queries and surveys on Italian cinema of this period, as well as of the film industry [mostly how the production and distribution were exposed to the political and ideological tensions], film circulation [cine-clubs, cinema audience practices], reception and criticism, paying a particular attention to the press.

The impact of the project will be twofold. On the one hand it will fill the gap in film studies, providing a new perspective on the representation of the Soviet regime in Italian film culture and the cultural exchanges between Italy and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, it will approach the relations between culture, power, propaganda and ideology, which gives it a broader and more general aspect.