

# Cinema as a Political Media. Germany and Italy compared, 1945–1950<sup>s</sup>

International conference  
Rome, 5 – 7 March 2018

The conference aims to reflect the now altered, more complex research situation in both countries, Italy and Germany to contribute to a new way of viewing the political content of postwar cinema. It is about unravelling national narratives in film history writing and contemporary historiography by means of a rigorously applied comparative approach. It will examine the question of whether in the cinema of West Germany there were equivalents to the development of postwar Italian cinema. A further question to be addressed by means of the transnational approach is which works of Italian and German cinema were successful after 1945. The thesis of the conference is that the postwar German film (until the end of the 1950<sup>s</sup>) is in need of a reappraisal. The conference might shed new light on the topic not

only through careful reconsideration but also and especially through a comparative and transnational perspective. Further aspects of interest at the Rome conference, going beyond the sphere of market and taste, are above all the political construction of the postwar film and its potential functions in the politics of remembrance.

In Italian cinema, the myth of a collective Italian resistance figured prominently, and contributed strongly to the popularity of certain neorealist productions. As has been demonstrated many times, the Resistenza was a complex of experiences, which the media willingly communicated. The conference will, finally, set out to examine more closely such filmic episodes, often unnoticed, in which the viewer's implication in the regime is briefly illuminated.

Figs.: Scene from the Film "Die Mörder sind unter uns", directed by Wolfgang Staudte, 1946 (in: Hermann Glaser, Kleine Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945–1989, 1991, S. 121); Scene from the Film "La fiamma che non si spegne", directed by Vittorio Cottafava, 1949; Logo of the Film Production Company O.R.S.A.

Monday, 5 March, 14.15–19.00

- 14.15 Martin Baumeister | Roma  
[Opening Address and Welcome](#)
- Lutz Klinkhammer | Roma,  
Clemens Zimmermann | Saarbrücken  
[Introduction into the Conference Topic](#)

## I - Cinema Audiences and Film (Production) Policies

Chair: Clemens Zimmermann | Saarbrücken

- 15.00 Claudia Dillmann | Frankfurt am Main  
- [The Cinema Audiences in Germany](#)
- 19.00 Marina Nicoli | Milano  
[The Cinema Audiences in Italy](#)
- Christian Kuchler | Aachen  
[The Popular and Catholic Cinema in Germany](#)
- Lutz Klinkhammer | Roma  
[The Popular and Catholic Cinema in Italy](#)
- Discussant: Martin Baumeister | Roma

19.30 Dinner for Participants

Tuesday, 6 March, 9.00–20.00

## II - Traditions and Influences of the Film Genres

Chair: Philippe Cooke | Glasgow

- 9.00 Luca Mazzei | Roma  
- [Italian Genre Cinema](#)
- 11.00 Sarah Kordecki | Babelsberg  
[German Genre Cinema – The Political Side of the Seemingly Unpolitical](#)
- Discussant: Tanja Michalsky | Roma

11.00 Coffee Break

## III - National Self-assurances

Chair: Lutz Klinkhammer | Roma

- 11.30 Damiano Garofalo | Padova  
- [Images of the Germans in Italy](#)
- 13.30 Philippe Cooke | Glasgow  
Gianluca Fantoni | Nottingham  
[Images of Italians as "Brava Gente" in Italian Post-War Cinema \(1945-1955\)](#)
- Discussant: Robert Gordon | Cambridge

## IV - Interpretations of the Past (Fascism, Nazism, World War II)

Chair: Filippo Focardi | Padova

- 14.30 Maurizio Zinni | Roma  
- [Italians and not Italians. Fascism and National Identity in Post-War Italian Cinema](#)
- 16.30 Ina Merkel | Marburg  
[Interpretations of the Past in Germany](#)
- Discussant: Dario Pasquini | Roma

18.00 *Film*

[Anni difficili \(1948\)](#)

Directed by Luigi Zampa  
Introduction: Damiano Garofalo | Padova

Discussion and Drinks

Wednesday, 7 March, 8.30–13.30

## V - National Self-assurances (Part 2)

Chair: Carolin Kosuch | Roma

- 8.30 Daniel Jonah Wolpert | Cambridge  
- [Bodies of Evidence, Burdens of Proof: Reason before the Court of Cinema after the Third Reich](#)

Bernhard Groß | Wien  
[Building Figurations of Contingent and Substantial Communities. Differences between Italian and German Post-War Cinema Aesthetics](#)

Discussant: Robert Gordon | Cambridge

10.30 Coffee Break

## VI - Cinematic Discourses and Transnational Perspectives

Chair: Carolin Kosuch | Roma

- 11.00 Lukas Schaefer | Hamburg  
- [Cinema Nuovo: Exporting Critical Realism and Realist Criticism](#)

Kai Nowak | Leipzig  
[From the \*Hetzfilm\* to New Orientations in Cultural Policy](#)

Discussant: Clemens Zimmermann | Saarbrücken

13.00 Final Comments

Conference venue

Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom  
Istituto Storico Germanico di Roma  
Via Aurelia Antica, 391  
I-00165 Roma – [www.dhi-roma.it](http://www.dhi-roma.it)

Contact  
Lutz Klinkhammer  
[klinkhammer@dhi-roma.it](mailto:klinkhammer@dhi-roma.it)

