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Tuesday, October 23, PFA-UAM Theatre
7:30, 9:45 PM

PAISAN (1946, 124 mins, 35mm)

PAISA (original title)

Production: Roberto Rossellini, OFI, Foreign Film Production Inc., Capitani Film. Written by Federico Fellini and Roberto Rossellini from stories by Victor Haines, Marcello Pagliero, Sergio Amidei, Federico Fellini, Roberto Rossellini, and in the Florence episode, Vasco Pratolini (uncredited); English dialogue by Anna Limentani. Photographed by Otello Martelli. Edited by Eraldo Da Roma. Music by Renzo Rossellini.

With-I. Sicily Carmela Sazio (Carmela), Robert Van Loon (Robert), Carlo Pisacane (a peasant); II. Naples, Dots M. Johnson (the black soldier), Alfonsino Pasca (the little boy); III. Rome, Maria Michi (Maria), Gar Moore (Gar); IV. Florence Harriet White (Harriet), Renzo Avanzo (Massimo), Gigi Gori (a partisan); V. Romagna Bill Tubbs (American priest); VI. Po Dale Edmonds (Dale), Cigolani (the partisan), Benjamin Emmanuel, Allan Dan, Leonard Parrish, and Mats Carlson.

PAISA is a six-episode chronicle of wartime Italy, recreating incidents in different locales, from Sicily at the time of the Allied invasion to the marshes of the Po Valley in the last months of the war. A triumph of neorealist method, PAISA incorporates fictional anecdotes into semi-documentary scenes of astonishing verisimilitude. The episodic structure leaves no time for illusions of completeness, or drawn-out sentimentality. Rossellini cuts to the essential human qualities of the events he pictures, always with an eye for the extraordinary aspects of "ordinary" individual acts. There is much humour and irony in several vignettes dealing with the relations (even at the level of language) between the Italian citizens and the foreign (British and American) soldiery. The last sequence, however, is stark tragedy depicting a band of partisans and O.S.S. men waging a hopeless, lonely battle in the desolate swamps of the Po delta: it is one of the most moving sequences in all cinema.