

Combining analyses of primary documents housed at American, Russian and Czech archives, and employing industrial analysis, market analysis, and analytical tools developed in reception studies, this thesis examines Hollywood's post-war operations in Eastern Europe, the strategies that were employed to advance them, and the responses of the indigenous film industries of Eastern Europe to them. While scholars examining Hollywood's post-war international activities have focused on western European markets, arguing that they were of supreme importance to Hollywood, this thesis shows that Eastern Europe was also central to Hollywood's post-war economic agenda. The major Hollywood studios, I argue, were, as early as 1944, drawing up highly ambitious plans to become the dominant player on Eastern European markets, including the Soviet market, and were working to prevent the Soviet film industry from expanding into Western Europe. Sitting at the border of East and West, the small country of Czechoslovakia played a key role in what this thesis calls Hollywood's Soviet Sphere Project.

By revealing the extent to which expansion into Eastern Europe was central to Hollywood's short-, medium- and long-term economic objectives, this thesis offers new insight into Hollywood's domestic and international conduct during the early stages of the Cold War and reorients understandings of the relationships between Hollywood and communism. To date, scholars have focused considerable attention on the lengths to which Hollywood went to position itself as an anti-communist institution by distancing itself from, and demonizing, Communists and communism across the late 1940s and 1950s. However, this thesis shows that Hollywood's relationships to communism and Communists were more pragmatic, opportunistic, and ambivalent than previously thought. And, by revealing how Hollywood's Soviet Sphere Project clashed with global agenda of the Soviet government and film industry, this thesis complicates notions of Hollywood's worldwide dominance, and contributes to our understanding of mid-twentieth-century globalization.