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BIOGRAPHY OF GILLO PONTECORVO

Gillo Pontecorvo, the brilliant young Italian director of "The Battle of Algiers," has been making films and winning awards for fifteen years. Born in Pisa, he obtained a degree in chemistry but worked at first for a time as a journalist. From that profession he moved on to the production of documentary films for which his early efforts received wide critical acclaim.

Mr. Pontecorvo's documentary "Porta Portese" (The Portese Gate) drew warm praise and he won various awards for works such as "Pane e Solfo" (Bread and Sulphur) on the life of the Sicilian miners and for the medium-length film "Missione Timiriازهف" on the floods of the Po delta. He was the director of the Italian episode of the film "La Rosa dei Venti" (Giovanna) which he made with Joris Ivens, Cavalcanti and Gherassimov, who directed the other episodes.

The 35 year old director's first full-length feature film, "La Lunga Strada Azzurra" (The Long Blue Road) with Yves Montand and Alida Valli was drawn from "Squaricio" (The Rift), the story by Franco Solinas, co-author of "The Battle of Algiers." The film received the prize for the best direction at the Karlovy Vary Festival in 1959.

Mr. Pontecorvo and Mr. Solinas worked together again on Mr. Solinas' screenplay "Kapo," which starred Susan Strasberg, Laurent Terzieff and Emanuelle Riva, and for which Miss Strasberg won the award for best female performance at the Mar del Plata Festival. The film was presented out of competition with great success at the 1960 Venice Film Festival and later won the San Fidele Prize at Milan. It was also a 1961 Academy Award nominee for best foreign film.

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"The Battle of Algiers" has already received numerous awards, including first prize, The Golden Lion, at the 1966 Venice Film Festival and an Academy Award nomination for best foreign film in 1966. The film was made after extensive preparation and achieves its uniquely documentary-like effect by the use of little artificial lighting, special film stocks and the feeling of actuality obtained by shooting real people in real locations. Among Mr. Pontecorvo's special concerns was the music for the film. As collaborator on the score, he tried to keep the music in mind during the filming of every scene in order to retain the rhythm of the action and often whistled the music during scene rehearsals, to the amusement of the crew.

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