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**La Classe Operaia
Va In Paradiso**
(The Working Class Goes To
Heaven)
(ITALIAN-COLOR)

Variety
2-9-72

Rome, Jan. 29.

Produced and released by Euro Int'l. Stars Gian Maria Volonte; features Salvo Randone, Mariangela Melato, Mietta Albertini, Gino Pernice, Luigi Diberti. Directed by Elio Petri. Screenplay, by Ugo Pirro, Petri; camera (Eastmancolor), Luigi Kuveiller; art director, Dante Ferretti; music, Ennio Morricone. Reviewed at Cola di Rienzo Cinema, Rome, Jan. 29, '72. Running Time, 120 MINS.

Lulu Massa	.....	Gian Maria Volonte
Militina	.....	Salvo Randone
Lidia	.....	Mariangela Melato
Adalgisa	.....	Mietta Albertini
Sindacalista	.....	Gino Pernice
Bassi	.....	Luigi Diberti

Elio Petri is a filmmaker relentlessly dedicated to toppling social myths. He won the foreign-language Oscar last year for his aggressive probe of police power with "Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion." In another joint script effort with Ugo Pirro, Petri returns with an audacious, provocative film, based on the macabre conviction that factory workers in today's revved-up mechanization are limited to three alternatives: disciplined unionism, resignation as non-humans, or mental breakdown with a one-way trip to the nuthouse. Dramatic extreme plus the versatile performance of Gian Maria Volonte in embodying these alternatives give the film a hallucinating vitality.

Factors enhancing the Euro production as a broad audience entry at home and in many foreign markets, include a proletarian seduction sequence, the muddled home life and personal relationships of the protagonist and the robust euphemisms of factory language—all increasingly popular with local filmgoing masses. Chances for U.S., however, lie in specialized handling of an unusual film with its bare-knuckle psycho study of factory workers, conflict between unions and ultra revolutionaries and a dismal panorama of the human condition in the current industrialized, mass consumption community.

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Film moves through four stages in the life of metal worker Lulu Massa (Gian Maria Volonte): as fastest non-union clutch in the plant and highest paid in over-quota bonuses (though setting back-breaking norms for others); a revolutionary after leaving a finger in his machine; an outsider rejected by management and extremists; and finally, a reintegrated union worker when labor organizers win his reinstatement. It sums up as the slow awakening of a nerve-shattered middle-aged worker haunted by consumer appetites and the fate of his uncle (Salvo Randone), winding a life of machine-tooled toil in a psychiatric ward.

There is nothing mild about Petri's direction. Shock expressionism, intensity of pace and pamphleteering are the devices employed to mirror with brutal realism the workers' squalid state and mental conditioning and political action choices does cramming all this down the worker's throat help him reach the barricades sooner? In his extremism, Petri risks demoralizing those he would incite to revolt.

Volonte again demonstrates an impressive range of thesp quality to stamp him as one of Italy's most competent actors. Excessive length and unsparing close-ups diminish his full effectiveness in the taxing true-to-life portrayal of a factory worker.

Randone has an outstanding cameo as the alienated worker while Mariangela Melato from legit to cinema with a solid performance as Volonte's commonlaw wife. Many bit players and extras come right out of the factory or university. Most get by but a few fail to register either as plant hands or rebel students.

Technical credits are superior, particularly Luigi Kuveiller's lensing.

Werb.