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**John Sayles**  
INTRODUCES

## I Compagni The Organizer Mario Monicelli

ITALY, 1963

130 minutes ■ Black and White/16mm  
Producer: **Franco Cristaldi**  
Screenplay: **Age, Scarpelli, Mario Monicelli**  
Cinematographer: **Giuseppe Rotunno**  
Editor: **Ruggero Mastroianni**  
Costumes: **Piero Tosi**  
Music: **Carlo Rustichelli**  
Principal Cast: **Marcello Mastroianni, Renato Salvatori, Annie Girardot, Gabriella Giorgelli, Bernard Blier, François Périer, Folco Lulli**

"Mario Monicelli's *I Compagni* (released as *The Organizer* in English-speaking territories) is one of the rare movies that is seriously political and deeply humanist at the same time. Set during a textile workers' strike in turn-of-the-century Turin, the masses who stumble toward a united front are divided by regionalism and personality. Just as the Italian Communist Party could be characterized as more Italian than Communist, Marcello Mastroianni and the workers he tries to organize are far too individual to ever hope of becoming the 'New Man' social idealists hoped would emerge from the class struggle. Industrialism itself is a relatively new phenomenon in the period depicted, and the characters retain a kind of peasant awe of their feudal masters. As in his *The Great War*, Monicelli proves himself a master at mixing comedy with painful reality. The performances are stirring and the cinematography, by Giuseppe Rotunno, grounds us in the hard life of the industrial wage-slave. *I Compagni* was an important influence on our own movie, *Matewan*, and some refugees from the textile padrones may well have ended up digging coal in West Virginia mines." – John Sayles

A group of poor factory workers becomes fed up with their miserable working conditions after one of their fellows dies in an industrial accident. They decide to walk out in protest, but the foreman bullies them into remaining. Dejected, the group meets

in a small schoolroom to discuss their next move, and there they encounter Professor Giuseppe Senigallia (Mastroianni), a drifter and political activist. Senigallia offers them the benefit of his experience, and he quickly comes to realize that the workers have a strong enough bond to succeed, if they can hold out long enough.



Born in Schenectady, New York in 1950, **John Sayles** is one of the leading lights of American independent cinema. His first film, *The Return of The Secaucus Seven* (80), about a group of erstwhile radicals, was one of the first independent films to gain widespread distribution and attention. His second feature, *Lianna* (83), was one of the first films to sympathetically (and openly) portray a lesbian love affair. *Matewan* (86) looked at a brutal period in American labour history, and was released at the peak of the Reagan era, when the US government was enacting debilitating legislation. His other films include *Baby It's You* (83), *Brother From Another Planet* (84), *Eight Men Out* (87), *Passion Fish* (92), *The Secret of Roan Inish* (94), and *Lone Star* (96). In addition, he has published three novels, a collection of short stories, and has written several plays and screenplays.

John Sayles was first featured at the Toronto International Film Festival with *The Return of The Secaucus Seven* in 1980. He has attended the Festival on three occasions: in 1984 for the Gala presentation of *Brother From Another Planet*, in 1992 for the Special Presentation of *Passion Fish*, and in 1994 for the Contemporary World Cinema presentation of *The Secret of Roan Inish*. His most recent film is *Men With Guns* (97), a Gala Presentation at this year's Festival.