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'VENICE DAYS'

IL DELITTO MATTEOTTI

(The Assassination of Matteotti)
(ITALIAN — COLOR)

Variety

9-5-73
Venice, Aug. 30.

An Italnoleggio release produced by Gino Mordini for Claudia Cinematografica. Features Franco Nero, Mario Adorf, Riccardo Cucciolla, Damiano Damiani, Vittorio De Sica, Giulio Girola, Manuela Kustermann, Renzo Montagnani, Gastone Moschin, Umberto Orsini. Directed by Florestano Vancini. Screenplay by Lucio Battistrada and Florestano Vancini. Camera (Eastmancolor), Dario Di Palma; art director, Umberto Turco; editor, Nino Baragli; music, Egisto Macchi. Reviewed at Venice Days of Italian Cinema. Running time: 117 MINS.

Giacomo Matteotti	Franco Nero
Benito Mussolini	Mario Adorf
Antonio Gramsci	Riccardo Cucciolla
Giovanni Amendola	Damiano Damiani
Judge Mauro del Giudice	Vittorio De Sica
Vittorio Emanuele III	Giulio Girola
Ada Gobetti	Manuela Kustermann
Guglielmo Tancredi	Renzo Montagnani
Filippo Turati	Gastone Moschin
Amerigo Dumini	Umberto Orsini

So many politically dirty tricks have been uncovered since "Z" and Watergate that the dramatic reconstruction of Giacomo Matteotti's assassination in 1924 will be remembered less for its chilling expose than it will be as a better than average political entry painstakingly reconstructing the birth of Fascism in Italy.

Focusing on Mussolini as the central figure in the murder of a topranking rival Socialist leader in the crucial year of 1924 — a transitional period from constitutional government to outright dictatorship — the Italnoleggio entry enters the market ahead of other projects dealing with the Italian dictator. It should have fair to good commercial prospects as the first of its kind since it is also a solidly-fashioned feature backed by many fine principal and supporting performances, brisk helming, and all the colorful replica ingredients of the period.

The murder of Matteotti in 1924 (two years after the march on Rome) stiffened resistance to Fascism and threatened to upset the then Prime Minister Benito Mussolini. This threat is dramatically developed through Judge Mauro del Giudice (Vittorio De Sica) who carries his investigation from the squad hoodlums involved in the Matteotti killing to higher responsibility all the way to Mussolini himself. Crime plot is never isolated from the political leaders and conflicts surrounding it. Rather, the political crime is shrewdly shown as developing into an intense political drama.

Mario Adorf bears a surprising resemblance to Mussolini and convinces in this key role — as he underplays a few stylized gestures and tick or two. All other roles are played straight with skilled thesping by Franco Nero in a guest stint as Matteotti, Vittorio De Sica, Renzo Montagnani as the federal prosecutor, Riccardo Cucciolla as Antonio Gramsci, and particularly Umberto Orsini as the squad leader who gets Matteotti and who is later sacrificed for political expediency.

A prime credit goes to Vancini for resurrecting this political drama, recreating it with elegance and dignity as a significant entry. Helmer over-emphasizes documentation and utilizes political footnotes (some extensive) in anticipation of some home polemic. Cutting down on insert evidence (papers of the times) and tightening explicit political verbiage would help abroad. Definitely contributing to rich production look are cinematographer Dario Di Palma, art director Umberto Turco, editor Nino Baragli and composer Egisto Macchi.

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