STUDIO TF1 PRÉSENTE

FESTIVAL DE CANNES
SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE 2026
COMPÉTITION

GILLES LELLOUCHE

LARS EIDINGER

MOULIN

UN FILM DE
LÁSZLÓ NEMES

PRODUIT PAR ALAIN GOLDMAN ÉCRIT PAR OLIVIER DEMANGEL

LOUISE BOURGOIN AVEC MARCIN CZARNIK MAX WARBURTON FÉLIX LEFEBVRE ET HORTENSE DE GROMARD

SCÉNARIO ADAPTATION DIALOGUES OLIVIER DEMANGEL IMAGE MÁTYÁS ERDÉLY ASC, ICS 1ers ASSISTANTS RÉALISATEURS JULIEN DECOIN ET ISTVÁN KOLLÁS MONTAGE PÉTER POLITZER ASE MUSIQUE ORIGINALE LAETITIA PANSANEL-GARRIC DÉCORS STÉPHANE RIZENBAUM COSTUMES ANDREA FLESCH SON TAMÁS ZÁNYI SCRIPTE CHRISTELLE MEAUX CASTING ANTOINETTE BOULAT ÉVA ZABEZSINSZKIJ ET HERMINA FÁYOL MAQUILLAGE THI THANH TU NGUYEN ET BERNADETT RAUSCH COIFFURE SOPHIE ASSE ET JUDIT HALÁSZ CONSEILLER CASCADE BALÁZS KRASZNAHORKAI

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STUDIO TF1 PRESENTS

GILLES LELLOUCHE AND **LARS EIDINGER**

MOULIN

A FILM BY **LÁSZLÓ NEMES**

PRODUCED BY **ALAIN GOLDMAN** WRITTEN BY **OLIVIER DEMANGEL**

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SYNOPSIS

In June 1943, Jean Moulin, leader of the French Resistance, is arrested while attempting to reunite the forces of the “Armée Secrète”. Interrogated by Klaus Barbie, the head of the Gestapo in Lyon, Moulin is drawn into a relentless confrontation.

His final battle against manipulation and brutality begins.

The fate of Free France depends on it.

INTERVIEW WITH LÁSZLÓ NEMES

How did you come on board this project – the first film you ever directed that you didn't write yourself?

I was finishing *Orphan* in 2024 when Alain Goldman called me about a project he said would be a perfect fit for me. He reached out without having spoken to any other director – I was his first choice. When I read the script, written by Olivier Demangel, an incredibly talented screenwriter, I immediately realized it was more than just a film; it felt like a kind of new mission, after *Son of Saul*. And as I began getting immersed in the period and in Jean Moulin's life, beyond the historical figure, I discovered a man with whom I felt an immediate, almost instinctive connection. As Daniel Cordier writes very well in his book, he had a true vision of civilization, of art, of humanity – a deeply committed, profoundly humanist figure – all of which resonated very strongly with me. I have always seen this film as a love letter to France, the country that gave me the chance to live in freedom and to study after we left Hungary with my mother in 1989. I have a very personal attachment to France, to its language and its culture, which I discovered as a teenager. So, the idea of making an immersive film about the final days of Jean Moulin, and his confrontation with Klaus Barbie and the machinery of totalitarianism at the time, felt like a real mission for me.

Jean Moulin is such an iconic figure in French history – did he also resonate with you personally as a Hungarian-born filmmaker?

I studied quite a bit of 19th- and 20th-century history, so I was already familiar with the history of the Resistance. In France, everyone knows Jean Moulin, even if they don't really know the man himself or the details of his tragic fate. To me, he clearly represents something French, but also something that goes beyond France: he embodies a real clash of civilizations between humanism and anti-humanism, and that's what immediately spoke to me. I actually came across an email I had sent years ago to a friend, in which I wrote that I wanted to make a film about Jean Moulin!

There had never been a film about Jean Moulin. Do you think it took a foreign filmmaker's perspective to have enough distance to dare to take on such a mythic figure?

No one is a prophet in their own country – and that's true. As an outsider, you can probably speak more freely about major national subjects, about "places of memory" like the history of the Resistance and the Occupation during World War II. Jean Moulin is, in that sense, a key figure of France's humanist identity in the 20th century. At the same time, I also felt a sense of responsibility, as I had with *Son of Saul* and the

Holocaust. That's probably why Alain came to see me: I know how to draw the line between what can be shaped into cinema and fiction, and what must remain strictly historical fact. It's always interesting to think about how you can introduce a degree of fiction into reality, but it takes a strong sense of responsibility and judgment to do it properly.

Did you feel the need to do a lot of research?

Olivier [Demangel] first carried out the research for the script, with the help of an assistant. On my side, I had a historical advisor on set, whose role was to help us understand how far we could responsibly bend certain historical facts, while still respecting Jean Moulin's story. We don't actually know much about his last ten days, and in particular about his confrontation with Barbie at the Gestapo headquarters on Avenue Berthelot. So, it was important to understand what "tools," so to speak, we could work with within that framework – almost like a musical score we were working within.

You once said you were frustrated with historical recreations. How did you approach portraying 1943?

My philosophy is to keep things on a human scale and avoid attempting a "complete recreation," because in my experience there is something almost totalitarian in the idea of a complete recreation. You can't recreate an entire objective reality. We're not writing a history textbook. What you can recreate is a form of subjectivity – by imagining what Moulin's final days may have been like, and doing so from a deliberately limited point of view. That's what I had already done with *Son of Saul*: trying, through fragments, to bring a larger reality to life in the viewer's mind. It's up to the viewer to connect the dots; as a filmmaker, you don't have to spell everything out or reconstruct everything as if you were writing a history essay. So, what you're really trying to recreate is a fragment of reality – something visceral and immersive. And to do so, you need relatively simple coordinates, without embellishment, while keeping the whole approach deliberately restrained.

One of the film's great strengths is that it moves beyond the heroic figure to reveal the human being beneath. Jean Moulin even asks the fellow prisoner shaving him to cut his throat, because he's afraid he might talk under torture. Was that a key part of your approach?

He's afraid to speak, afraid to die, afraid of suffering – and yet he transcends all of those fears. He's not really a man of action in the field, even though he was parachuted into France in the middle of the war. Above all, he remains a political figure within the Resistance, and he becomes someone who gives his life and his body – through unimaginable suffering – for what is best in civilization. That's what deeply affected me, and I tried to go beyond the image of the hero to present a human being to the

viewer, instead of offering unreachable ideals. Jean Moulin gradually moves beyond his own self and his human dimension to reach something almost anthropological, or civilizational. It's difficult to imagine being in his place, and at the same time I wanted him to remain relatable. In the end, Jean Moulin and Klaus Barbie embody two sides of human nature that exist within all of us, and it was important to me that both good and evil be represented and embodied.

Even when he meets members of his network, you get the sense that the Moulin in the film is a man shaped by solitude, moving through a world of surveillance and constant scrutiny. He even says, "I doubt everyone." Is that how you see him as well?

That's roughly how I saw him, and it's also how he's portrayed in Cordier's book. There's a constant, intense sense of paranoia in him. I wanted to recreate that world in the first part of the film, where everyone is always watching everyone else. Moulin blends into it, gets used to it, but we also show how hard it is to live in that environment. It was key that you feel an ever-present, invisible threat hanging over these spaces and these characters, and it was important to generate that sense of paranoia.

Barbie initially comes across as polite, almost respectful, but there's already a hint of his underlying viciousness. Did you want to portray him as all-powerful, as a man in constant control?

With Barbie, just like with Moulin, I wanted to build a relatively simple character, without turning him into some kind of circus figure. He constantly moves between a kind of simplicity and a form of abyssal evil, and I wanted to avoid making him either a caricature or a bland, purely ordinary figure. He's not an intellectual; he's deeply frustrated socially, and he may also be driven by a kind of sexual tension toward other characters. I wanted him to stay grounded and realistic, with shadows and a certain sophistication, without constantly drawing attention to himself or going too far. He's someone who observes. I've always seen him as a kind of macabre puppeteer, someone who sets situations in motion and stages others. That was my approach to Barbie, and we worked extensively in that direction with Lars [Eidinger].

While the film opens on a vast landscape, you seem to tighten the frame, as if progressively closing in on the protagonist – first in the interrogation room, then in his prison cell, and finally in the torture chamber.

I wanted to create an organic, immersive setup: we stay with the main character, we're trapped with him, and increasingly so. This progression through the film was fairly instinctive. But it's clear that the spaces were designed to create a kind of perspective that gradually narrows and closes in.

The tension grows increasingly suffocating, the atmosphere oppressive, reminiscent in that respect of *Son of Saul*, which also took place in a confined environment, cut off from the outside world and governed by a totalitarian, barbaric order. How did you work to create that suffocating feeling, where the air seems to run out?

That was the whole point. We wanted to recreate Jean Moulin's tragic fate without giving the audience an easy way to distance themselves from it, which is why I didn't want to rely on violence: I preferred to trust the audience to imagine the most terrifying scenes themselves. That's where the use of off-screen space comes in. We recreated the cells of Montluc prison, which are very small, extremely stifling and claustrophobic. In addition, the use of CinemaScope increasingly feels like the frame itself envelops and stifles the protagonist: it conveys the inescapable frame closing in around him and compresses the depth of field. That was the effect we were aiming for.

How did you approach the camerawork? What guided your decisions in terms of direction and space design?

I wanted to create a sense of verticality, particularly between Barbie and Moulin. Barbie increasingly seeks to dominate Moulin through space, and that became a key driver of the direction. In the nihilistic world of the Nazi totalitarian system, Barbie is, in a sense, a god on earth. Nazi officials even presented themselves as gods or demigods, and that ideological – or civilizational – posture is reflected in the spatial composition. Barbie is constantly positioned above. I worked a lot with verticality, with high and low angles, to suggest not only a landscape of labyrinths and walls, but also a kind of transcendence of good and evil that comes through here.

You're working again with your cinematographer Matyas Erdély. How did you approach lighting and color?

He's extremely involved in the project from the writing stage onward, and he's always looking for ways to make the film as coherent as possible and to bring out its key structural lines. He's not interested in purely aesthetic images – he's looking for the metaphysical dimension of the story. So, he's a key collaborator, and we spend a lot of time working from reference images, photographs, and paintings. For *Moulin*, we drew inspiration from photographers such as Saul Leiter, Harry Callahan, Harry Gruyaert, and Ernst Haas. I was drawn to their work, particularly their handling of visual chaos and off-screen space, as well as their color palettes. I'm very attracted to photographic worlds where colors are not desaturated, even if browns, whites, and blacks dominate alongside reds. We shot on film, and it was very important to me that the atmosphere be as hypnotic as possible, as if we were trying to make the past present. We recreated colors that existed in the past, through costume design for example, and even if this world is often monochromatic, the presence of color prevents it from being simplified: we tried to evoke the palette of the 1940s, with strong colors

in a world dominated by greens, browns, and yellows. A world with real skin tones that have both intensity and credibility. We wanted authenticity, along with a chromatic approach that gives the image a subtle sophistication.

Where did you shoot?

We shot in Hungary, on location, except for the interiors of Montluc, which we recreated on a soundstage because the cells are so small. We did location scouting in Lyon, which is a beautiful city, but it no longer looks like Lyon in 1943.

The sound design is stunning, particularly in the prison sequences at night. How did you approach it?

I've been working with the same sound engineer, Tamás Zányi, for a long time. For me, sound design is above all craftsmanship: it helps us to recreate subjectivity and to craft a constant interplay between sound effects and music, as if we were continuously oscillating between reality and subjectivity. Gradually, we move deeper and deeper into the character's psyche, and the shifts between reality and imagination become increasingly frequent as the film progresses. The boundary between music and sound becomes increasingly porous, and we worked extensively on that in the mix. It was important to make the film immersive, to present the character with a subjective reality, and to allow the audience to surrender to the film unconsciously. It is sound effects that, in a subtle way, give us this subjective, organic texture, without relying on the usual tropes of contemporary filmmaking. The film's composer, Laetitia Pansanel-Garric, would bring us music that was almost like sound, while we would bring her sounds that resembled music, in order to build a specific soundscape. But we also worked with Laetitia, to introduce moments of musical intensity where all the strength and richness of the main character could briefly emerge.

Let's talk about the cast. Was Gilles Lellouche an obvious choice?

I chose him, just as he chose us, and it happened very organically. He had heard about the project and had already expressed interest, just as I had in him. His work was extraordinarily powerful – he was entirely dedicated to the film and the character from beginning to end – and I always felt that, for him, the "mission" was key. He understood very early on that I wanted to make a film with an almost Bressonian simplicity, which aligned with his own intentions. It was a challenge, because we had to make sure the audience never grew tired of him, and we introduced a few tonal shifts to the character in a careful, subtle way. We were able to do that because Gilles fully understood the project and my intentions. I asked him to read as much as possible, and then to set it aside as much as possible. He understood that I wasn't offering a commentary on Jean Moulin, but rather trying to flesh him out – and so he had to step aside, let go of Gilles Lellouche, and *become* Jean Moulin. He was on set at all times, humble, involved, engaged, and an integral part of the film from beginning to end. And he allowed me to

work, even though he is himself a director, remaining an actor and completely devoted to the project. At the same time, every morning we would go back over the scene we were about to shoot, studying every word, doing continuous work on the character and its meaning. It was a fascinating process to share with him.

What about Lars Eidinger as Klaus Barbie?

He's an extraordinary actor, and his performance is a tour de force. Coming from the theater, even though he works in film, he had to adapt to this project by building Barbie from the ground up, while stripping away certain mannerisms that contemporary – especially German – actors can fall into when playing Nazis. I wanted him to play Barbie the way Max von Sydow might have. There was a risk of making him too compelling, even seductive, because he still had to feel human – but I wanted him to remain cold in his metaphysical dimension. It was all a question of balance and discipline. Make him purely human, and you risk trivializing him. Turn him into a total monster, and he becomes a satanic figure the audience can easily dismiss. The challenge was to find the right balance.

Two other actors stand out in supporting roles: Louise Bourgoin and Félix Lefebvre.

I really enjoyed working with both of them. Louise is an incredible worker – completely dedicated to the film – with remarkable patience and kindness. She also has something iconic about her, and a kind of humanity the film needed, even though she has relatively few scenes. She had to move between fragility and strength, and she carries a kind of melancholy that reminds me of a poetic figure or something almost pictorial. There's an aura around her that felt very important to me. Félix insisted on sleeping in the prison – a huge, cold, damp building where we had built the cells, on the outskirts of Budapest. I thought, he's taking this seriously. He's also extremely hardworking, constantly inhabited by the character he's playing. We needed someone fragile, whose identity remains slightly elusive. He carries a sense of threat; he's almost Moulin's double inside the prison, and he plays it with real simplicity and humanity.

All the other actors also bring touches of truth and credibility, with a simple presence, without ornament.

Did you have any film references? One thinks of *Army of Shadows*, of course, but also of *A Clockwork Orange* for the scene where Moulin is forced to witness torture.

Kubrick is very close to my heart, and he's always there. So is Melville and *Army of Shadows*, of course – a film that had a huge impact on me. But it operates on a much broader scale, whereas *Moulin* is much more contained. And *Army of Shadows*, which I deeply admire, is also somewhat loose with historical events, whereas I wanted to

stay closer to the actual sequence of events. When Melville has Lino Ventura escape, it's a brilliant sequence, but you can still question its plausibility. With *Moulin*, we wanted to recreate a real fog of war, to show how people couldn't trust one another. When you're immersed in that reality, you never know who might turn you in. But it was definitely a film we all had in mind. In terms of references, I also love Bresson's films.

You shot again on 35mm film stock.

For me, the magic of cinema is tied to celluloid. Younger generations of filmmakers are returning to it as well. Being immersed in darkness and seeing still images turn into movement in your mind – a kind of hypnosis – is part of cinema's magic. It's unmatched and unmatchable. With digital, you're dealing with information, and even black (which is really gray) is still made of light. With film, you get true blacks that plunge you into darkness. We also shot in anamorphic Scope, which gives the film a strong cinematic aura. With film stock, you can't shoot everything – you're forced to make choices upfront, and as a director, you have to mentally construct the film early on. That's also essential for the crew: once rehearsals are done, you're ready to shoot. Time is limited. Film stock has a built-in finitude that digital doesn't, and that constraint changes everything. Digital encourages an inflation of takes and a kind of "coverage" of the scene – which ultimately kills the direction.

What was your approach to the music on this film?

Letitia Pansanel-Garric comes from documentary, and this is more or less her first narrative feature. She was deeply devoted to the film in a very moving way. What I wanted was a classical film score, like the ones you would hear in the 1970s. There isn't music throughout, but rather strong, fully developed themes – a real sonic power that unfolds over time. I also didn't want the music to express emotions that the images themselves weren't already expressing. The score helps carry the film, not draw attention to itself. It had to be economical, restrained, while still being able to expand, the way life sometimes unexpectedly expands within this story. It is constantly present, in the heart of the characters – sometimes contained, sometimes unfolding. It has a cyclical quality. Letitia composed the first version from the screenplay, without seeing the footage, so that she wouldn't be overly influenced by the film or try to over-express anything. She needed to get straight to the core.

INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER DEMANGEL

Screenwriter

How did you come on board this project?

Alain Goldman reached out to me two years ago about writing a biopic on Jean Moulin, but I felt I wouldn't be able to move beyond a "heritage" film. At the same time, I was finishing the series *Class Act*, and there was a lot of talk about the final episode with the prosecutor. Thinking back on that sequence, I suggested to Alain that we focus on the face-offs between Moulin and Barbie. Even if it's a different kind of confrontation, what drew me in was the dynamic of the mythic struggle between good and evil.

You then managed to bring fiction into this real-life material.

Yes, because from the moment of Moulin's arrest, there is very little available material – the Germans kept no record of the interrogation, and almost no one ever crossed paths with Jean Moulin afterward – so I felt this was the ideal setting to bring to life this major French figure while making a work of fiction. It allowed us to explore the question of this confrontation between good and evil, but also the notion of "resistance" as opposed to "Resistance", with a capital R. Because while resistance fighters have always been glorified, we know very little about what they actually experienced, what they endured, what they felt. It's often said that Jean Moulin died under torture, but we don't really know what it means to remain silent. From there, I wanted to create a kind of spiderweb in which Moulin is trapped, and observe all the executioner's attempts to make him speak, while he tries to avoid slipping into madness and paranoia. As in any dialectic, the victim ultimately prevails over the torturer, the oppressed over the oppressor. And in the end, he wins by remaining silent.

Did you find it daunting at the outset to take on such a heroic figure in France's history?

Yes, of course, but I felt comfortable because it's a figure I know well, and because I had worked a lot, when I was younger, on the Resistance and that period of history – even if it was an extraordinary challenge. What interested me was less the historical figure than his inner life and personality: I would have felt more daunted if I had had to write a traditional biopic. Here, we're dealing with the human being, the physical body – the "body of the king," so to speak, meaning the body in its concrete, physical reality rather than its symbolic dimension. Once again, it was the man I was interested in – his determination, his integrity, and his intelligence.

Moulin is also portrayed as a flawed human being, someone who feels he could crack at any moment.

We spent a lot of time working on these moments of humanity, starting with the scene at his landlady's house. It was a dimension of the character that fascinated me, and I reread his book *Premier combat*, published after the war with a foreword by De Gaulle, in that light. In it, he recounts being tortured by the Germans in 1940 for refusing to denounce Senegalese Riflemen. He was thrown into a cell where he tried to slit his throat – that's where his scar comes from. What is most powerful is that you sense, between the lines, that he is aware he might speak under torture if he were arrested again. I find it profoundly moving that this man, who was convinced he would talk, never did. It makes you wonder whether it is precisely this awareness of his own fallibility that makes him even stronger: he holds out, despite all of Barbie's attempts, like a reed that bends but never breaks.

What was it like working with Alain Goldman on this project?

There was a lot of trust between us – he trusted my vision, and I trusted his ability to get the project off the ground. We had to keep things both believable and within budget. We worked out the right scale for the film, and then he brought in the ideal director. I felt a great deal of confidence and support from him, and we very quickly realized we were on the same page about what we wanted the film to be. After that, everything fell into place fairly quickly compared to other projects, since we only began in the spring of 2024! That says a lot about how right our initial intuition was.

Given your knowledge of the subject, did you work with a historian?

I worked with an assistant, but my background meant I didn't need a historian, especially since, as I mentioned, there were no specific sources covering this period of Moulin's life. On the other hand, I went back through a lot of Gestapo archives and documents to understand the kinds of non-physical torture Moulin may have been subjected to, such as false releases or the presence of an informant in the cell. I therefore drew on techniques that were known to have been used at the time, even if we can't be certain he actually experienced them. All of this followed a rule we set from the outset: to build a gradual progression toward physical torture, which is only suggested at the end. László was able to maintain the right distance, as our aim was never to make a torture film.

Did you take liberties with historical facts? For example, is the character of the Countess real?

She is entirely fictional. From the outset, I felt the need not necessarily for a female presence, but for an emotional counterpoint to Moulin's character. I didn't want the film

to feel too austere, driven solely by historical facts, and I was drawn to this figure for her ambiguity: at first, you're not sure whether she is engaged in seduction or espionage, and it is ultimately through her that a sense of grace comes through. It is this relatively simple presence that allows for human connections – however fragile – to be introduced into the script.

Similarly, with the fellow prisoner, a bond forms, but it is never free from paranoia and mistrust, even if, when he dies in Moulin's arms, we are in a space of human intimacy and genuine emotion. By humanizing heroic figures, you ultimately make them even more iconic, because they feel more relatable.

How did you work on the structure of the script?

Very early on, a clear line emerged and never really changed: the dialogue between Barbie and Moulin, rooted in historical fact. Barbie doesn't know who Jean Moulin is, or even whether he belongs to the Resistance, so everything unfolds through gradual discovery. But I quickly realized that for younger audiences, the story of a man who doesn't speak could feel a bit stark. He doesn't speak – but first you need to understand what he might be saying. So, I added a first act, whereas my initial idea had been to begin with the arrest. That's where the scene with the young female resistance fighter comes in, explaining that Moulin knows all the networks, all the maquis, and so on. That opening section was the hardest to shape, finding the right balance between delivering information and avoiding exposition. We tried to be as precise and economical as possible, while still preserving emotion, without tipping into melodrama. From there, the story fell into place quite quickly: at first, Barbie doesn't know who he has in front of him; then he identifies him; then Moulin gives his name; and then Moulin is going to die. What remained was how to navigate the space between suicide and torture. According to Barbie, Moulin made several suicide attempts; according to members of the Resistance, he died under torture. The truth is likely somewhere in between, and it's hard to imagine he didn't try to take his own life in that prison. The film is therefore a race toward death, and I found it interesting to explore this double tension: Moulin trying to end his own life, and Barbie trying to delay that outcome. After that, it was a question of placing the moments of tension at the right moments.

You had already written about real-life figures such as Tapie or the Paris attacks investigators in *November*.

I find it interesting to return to major historical figures once you know how to approach the narrative. It was the writing of *November* that helped me stop feeling daunted by this kind of subject. At first, I had the sense I was approaching something almost sacred, but finding a clear angle and point of view gave me confidence in the intuition that you can take on a major subject once you've found the right entry point.

With *Moulin*, it was the character of Barbie who was actually the most challenging to write, because I find that Nazis in cinema quickly become stereotyped: there is, for example, the unhinged intellectual Nazi in *Inglourious Basterds*, the psychopathic killer in *Schindler's List*, the more cerebral Nazi in *The Pianist*, and so on. With László, we worked extensively on reshaping the character to create a more "contemporary" Nazi, drawing on the figure of a hunter: Barbie has a kind of intuitive intelligence, a detective-like instinct. Of course, he is mad, but he is a Nazi who feels more "ordinary" than those previously depicted in cinema.

Did you already have certain actors in mind while writing the script, particularly for Jean Moulin?

I always knew Gilles Lellouche would play Moulin. We had already worked together on *Dog 51*, and when you write with a specific actor in mind, the character naturally starts to take shape around them. As for Barbie, very early in development I sent Alain a photo of Lars [Eidinger], because I had seen him in *Richard III* and was struck by the sheer intensity of his performance. He eventually auditioned for the role – and ended up getting the part.

How was it working with László Nemes? Did he want to make changes to the script?

László came on board around the third draft, so the script was already fairly far along by then. From that point on, we developed a real sense of mutual trust. It wasn't an obvious role for him to step into, but it was something he genuinely wanted to explore. We had a lot of conversations. I went to see him in Budapest, and we talked through the aspects he felt less connected to, as well as the ideas he was excited by. But he was always very respectful of the material that was already there, without ever trying to radically reinvent it. It wasn't necessarily easy because, between writers, disagreements are inevitable. But we always managed to find the right balance between his vision and the screenplay as it had originally been conceived – he never really questioned its core structure.

Did you work with the actors to help them make the dialogue their own, even rewriting it at times?

No – first of all because the film was shot in Budapest. That said, we did work closely with László to simplify certain lines, especially for Lars, in order to make them more straightforward and impactful. Overall, the shooting script stayed very close to the original screenplay, with very little rewriting. That has a lot to do with László's approach and his talent as a filmmaker: he has a very strong sense of composition, almost operatic in its precision. Because the framing is so carefully designed, the dialogue can't really shift much. And that's actually one of his great strengths.

INTERVIEW WITH ALAIN GOLDMAN

Producer

At what point did the idea for a film about Jean Moulin – one of the great heroes of modern French history – first come to you?

I've always liked the idea of celebrating major historical figures, as I did with Édith Piaf in *La Vie en Rose*, Judge Michel in *The Connection*, and Colonel Picquart in *An Officer and a Spy*. With Moulin, it all started with a conversation I had with Olivier Demangel, as we were discussing the idea of resistance. Naturally, that led us to Jean Moulin.

Did the approach fall into place quickly?

We quickly realized what we *didn't* want to do – a conventional biopic. Instead, we focused on the only question that really mattered to us: What does it mean to resist? How does it take shape? As we explored Moulin's story, we came to feel that the ultimate form of resistance was refusing to speak. That naturally led us to pit the worst and the best of human nature against each other: on one side, Barbie, a monster; on the other, Moulin, who doesn't even realize the outstanding courage he possesses. By remaining silent, he stands up for the values he believes in. At some point, he faces an inner conflict between the temptation to give names and then live with himself, or to remain true to his principles and die for them, even if it means enduring unimaginable suffering. Ultimately, what interested us was telling Moulin's story *through* Barbie.

Through that confrontation, you're also paying tribute to an extraordinary figure.

Yes, because Moulin is one of the greatest heroes of the 20th century. He represents the ultimate form of sacrifice: he accepts suffering and gives his life for freedom. It is extraordinary, and it led me to think about the difference between nationalism and patriotism, because these questions feel very relevant today. We are all wary of nationalism, which is about loving one's nation to the exclusion of others. Patriotism, on the other hand, is about defending one's country for the values it stands for – in this case, liberty, equality, and fraternity, the principles on which France was built. It does not exclude others but instead reflects the desire to define oneself as a human group that shares and seeks to uphold certain values. Moulin is that kind of man: a patriot, not a nationalist. And that was what motivated me: to pay tribute to what he stood for.

Why did you think of screenwriter Olivier Demangel for this project?

We had worked together on *Mercato*, and beyond my respect for and admiration of his culture, we both wanted to collaborate again, and several subjects interested us. He immediately embraced *Moulin*. When I received the first draft, I found it truly masterful: it carried a tension and confrontation equal to both the historical and dramatic stakes

of the story, between good and evil. I was absolutely amazed and thrilled at the prospect of producing this film.

How did you come up with the idea of bringing in László Nemes, the director of *Son of Saul*?

First of all, László is a filmmaker I deeply admire, both as a producer and as a cinephile. I find him incredibly gifted – he has a cinematic language of his own, and you would have to be blind not to see it. What he achieved with *Son of Saul* completely moved me: for me, it is the most important film about the Holocaust. He managed to elevate the drama he depicts while avoiding both fiction and documentary. We are instead in a kind of no man's land, as if plunged into the hell he portrays, while still keeping a certain distance. We come close to it without ever betraying reality. It is a film almost without language, where the Germans shout and the deported prisoners are left without words. I told myself I'd love to work with this filmmaker one day. *Moulin* could be of interest to him as it deals with deprivation of freedom, the world of the Gestapo, and the Nazi relationship to human beings – all themes that resonated with him.

He was also bringing an outsider's perspective to a French heroic figure.

Absolutely. I didn't want to make a purely French film; my ambition was for *Moulin* to become a universal and timeless story – the struggle between good and evil, and how we respond when others try to impose a totalitarian society on us. I wanted to move beyond the framework of the Second World War and treat it as an example. I would like South Africans to watch the film and think, "our Jean Moulin is Mandela." I was aiming for universality rather than a purely period piece, and that subtle balance was exactly what I was looking for. László, being of Hungarian origin and culture while being French, brought that perspective to the project. With him, I knew the film would not be bound by place or time.

Did he have any specific requests?

He wanted to shoot on 35mm, and I agreed because I felt it was important to him. He also wanted to shoot in Hungary. We initially began scouting locations in Lyon, but we realized we wouldn't be able to film there. For example, the building that had housed the Gestapo headquarters on Avenue Berthelot had been completely transformed. Overall, we would have had to rebuild many sets on a soundstage. There were a lot of interior scenes, so I didn't see any issue with shooting in Hungary, especially as it allowed László to work with his own crew. I wasn't stepping into unfamiliar territory, as two films I produced – *The Round Up* and *The Man with the Iron Heart* – had already been shot there.

How challenging was it to put this project together?

The project generated a great deal of interest because Moulin is a French hero. He already has an established reputation, and he represents the potential for a major event film – something that is very much sought after in today's market. And with a strong screenplay, an actor like Gilles Lellouche, and a director like László Nemes, we were able to put the film together.

Did Gilles Lellouche become attached to the project quickly?

Very quickly. He immediately loved the screenplay, and things fell into place fast – no hesitation, no back and forth. I had already worked with Gilles on *The Connection*, and as a producer, it's always a real treat to work again with people you enjoy collaborating with.

What about Lars Eidinger?

Another great find for the film. I was struck by the way he learned his lines phonetically. But I also noticed he often ended up on his own – between takes or at craft services – simply because he was playing Barbie. No one naturally came up to him, just as the actors playing Nazis were kept at a distance as well. So, I quickly realized we had to make sure he was supported and not left isolated.

INTERVIEW WITH GILLES LELLOUCHE

How did this project first come to you?

Alain Goldman reached out to me because he wanted to make a film about Jean Moulin, written by Olivier Demangel and directed by László Nemes. To be honest, I was already drawn to the idea before even reading the script. I knew that with the director of *Son of Saul* at the helm, the film would have a visual language and a radical edge that the subject called for. Then, when I read the script, what I loved was that it wasn't a biopic, but a distillation of the final days of Moulin's life, focusing on his courage, his sacrifice, and his selflessness.

Does the figure of Jean Moulin resonate with you in a particular way?

Yes, it always has, as it does for all French people. Even in junior high school, you understand that he was initially a man destined for a fairly light, worldly life, who then emerges as a hero of unparalleled strength and courage. When I discovered his story as a teenager, I was all the more struck by the fact that he was never meant to have such an outstanding journey. Every French person is affected by his sense of sacrifice.

What kind of research did you do? How did you prepare for the role?

I met with the director of the Jean Moulin museum, who told me that he didn't have a sacrificial relationship to things, which both surprised and interested me, especially considering that in 1940 he attempted to cut his throat when the Germans tortured him to make him turn in Senegalese Riflemen. I read extensively, watched all the available documentaries and films, and did a deep dive into the character through what has been written about him, as well as his own writings, even though in the end there are very few documents. There is a perception that he had a very distinctive way of speaking, but I moved away from what one might imagine his voice sounded like, to give him a more contemporary tone, without betraying his memory. Above all, I wanted the performance to disappear. I was convinced it was key to strip away any form of exaggeration or emphasis, in order to reach something restrained and neutral, and to pay tribute to this man by erasing the actor. The work itself should never be visible.

Portraying such a heroic figure from recent French history can be overwhelming. How do you free yourself from that?

That inhibiting feeling is constant – it never really left me. There's a very heavy responsibility in taking on a role like this, which you're fully aware of, but I also think you have to acknowledge it and not completely set it aside. You have to keep a certain sense of the sacred. It acts as a safeguard, and we were all aware of that on set – László, Olivier Demangel, and Alain Goldman included. Our mission was to disappear

into the film. I was strongly supported by László, who was always pushing for restraint, avoiding clichés and anything too familiar, and trying to minimize what could be shown in terms of suffering or torture, favoring suggestion over explicit depiction.

Moulin's first interrogations by Barbie unfold almost like a fencing match…

Yes – it couldn't be on the nose. We wanted to show conversations that might initially feel almost social or polite, before gradually drifting into something else, so as not to be too direct from the get-go. What's remarkable in Olivier's writing, and what is then elevated by László's direction, is that you get the sense of a verbal duel between two gentlemen. The exchange then shifts, almost imperceptibly, in a ghostly way. One of the great strengths of Olivier's writing is that it avoids the trap of the barking Nazi stereotype. In these scenes, Lars is terrifying precisely because of his elegance, and the confrontation with Moulin feels like the same kind of dance he leads Louise Bourgoin and me through.

How did you work on the character's voice, physicality, and movement?

I worked with a coach, Daniel Marchaudon, whose approach is quite striking: he doesn't want you to learn the text by heart, but instead to circle around what the words say, what they imply, and the echoes they might carry, through repeated readings. What was surprising is that, over time, the script started to feel like an extension of my own thinking rather than an academic exercise. What's particularly interesting in his method is that he would sometimes ask me, while we were walking, to tell him the entire film from memory, to go through the scenes in detail, and to describe what Moulin was feeling while speaking in the first person. By repeating these scenes over and over, I would gradually explore the more hidden aspects of the character, setting the core aside – before it would resurface all the more clearly. From the outset, Daniel challenged me to confront my own desire for restraint and self-effacement. I'm naturally very talkative, so I had to work against myself for a while, until that sense of restraint we were looking for became almost instinctive.

How was it working opposite Lars Eidinger ?

At first, I thought it made sense to keep our interactions to a minimum, without realizing it was difficult for him. I eventually let go of that approach – it's not really how I work – and we got along very well. I helped him as best I could navigate his intentions and his uncertainties in French, even if we were bound to maintain a certain distance. There was a great deal of mutual respect. I understood quite quickly that, for him, it was a painful role – almost as though he felt that German actors are, in a way, destined to play a Nazi at some point in their careers. At the same time, he inhabits the character with such intensity and intelligence that the audience can't imagine the inner turmoil he may have gone through. Ultimately, this is a film that transcended all of us because of its moral mission, its responsibility to memory, and the figure of Moulin himself – but

during production it was also an exhausting and demanding experience that stays with you and leaves a lasting imprint.

You also share some scenes with Louise Bourgoin and Félix Lefebvre.

I had previously worked with Louise on a comedy, *Room (H)ates* – completely the opposite of this film. Here, she portrays the role beautifully, bringing the elegance and refinement of the countess, a fictional character. It was wonderful to see her playing this kind of role. Félix is terrific. I discovered him in *Summer of 85*, and I loved him in *Trial by Fire*. He's a very committed actor – he even wanted to sleep in the prison on the first night. I always find it moving to see that level of dedication, seriousness, and desire to get it right in a young actor. He also turned out to be a remarkable partner, playing a very ambiguous, very specific, and deeply moving role. He embodies these sacrificed young lives, and the scenes with him were deeply affecting. With both him and Louise, those moments were a real relief in what was otherwise a fairly solitary shoot.

What was the experience of shooting in Hungary like?

We would have liked to shoot in Lyon, but contemporary urban development has significantly altered the city's visual identity, which is not the case with Budapest. That said, being away from home, from loved ones, and from the language, along with 12-hour shooting days, László's long-take approach on 35mm, and the demands of his cinematographer – all of it was difficult at the time, but ultimately greatly benefited the film.

What struck you about László Nemes's approach to directing actors?

He is both demanding and firm, yet surprisingly open. His decisiveness never gets in the way of dialogue, and we exchanged a great deal throughout the film – working to avoid certain pitfalls, asking the right questions, and finding the best possible ways to approach it. He has a very radical approach, both in how he conceives his shots and in his direction of actors. At the same time, he was aware of the stakes, aware of my own apprehensions, and very reassuring. There's a paradox in him: both radical and gentle. He was the ideal partner for me.

Do you think this film can help raise awareness?

I hope so, so that we never forget. The film allows us to experience what courage truly is, and to hold onto a clearer sense of good and evil – one that today can sometimes feel blurred. Most importantly, I hope it will be an important work for younger audiences, helping to prevent history from being constantly reinterpreted or distorted, as is too often the case.

INTERVIEW WITH LARS EIDINGER

What drew you to the project to begin with?

I received a call from my agent telling me that László Nemes wanted to speak with me via Zoom. We met, got to know each other, and only afterwards was I sent the script. As a German, I'm always hesitant when I'm offered the role of a Nazi. At the same time, it presents an opportunity to confront the trauma of a nation – and, in my case, my own family history. My father was born during the war, and my grandfather fought in it, so it has had a profound influence on my personality.

However, I initially felt I had explored this territory enough, including recently in the TV series *All the Light We Cannot See*. I didn't want to return to it – it's emotionally intense and requires facing difficult inner truths. But I changed my mind after my conversation with László and after reading the script. Of course, I was familiar with this chapter of World War II history and with Klaus Barbie, but I was struck by how powerful the name "Barbie" still resonates today. That felt like something worth exploring.

How did you first approach the character?

At the beginning, it was very challenging. I didn't want to portray Barbie as a monster or a demon, however brutal, perverse, and sadistic he was. With any character I play, I try to understand what I share with them – and what the audience might share as well. I see the character as a mirror for both myself and the viewer.

It's too easy, when playing someone horrific, to think, "This has nothing to do with me." But Nazis were not aliens or monsters – they unfortunately were human beings, despite their monstrosity. My aim was to go beyond the figure known as the "Butcher of Lyon" and portray him as a human being, without suggesting there was anything singular about him – even though that would have been the easier path.

He is all the more terrifying as he almost never loses his temper.

The dialogue is brilliant in that respect. Barbie is highly perceptive and very difficult to deceive. I was interested in conveying that sensitivity. He possessed a strong social intelligence, which stands in stark contradiction to the way he treated people. Combined with his sadism, it created something deeply unsettling.

His awareness of others' fear and suffering, and his ability to read people so precisely, made him even more perverse. This is particularly evident in the scene where he plays a psychological game with Jean Moulin, asking him to say the first thing that comes to mind. He then follows with a seemingly casual but loaded question: "so you didn't know

anybody at the doctor's house, did you?", expecting to catch him off guard and provoke an unguarded response. This aspect of manipulation was especially compelling to explore.

How challenging was it to perform in a language you don't fully understand?

As an actor, I don't focus on the outward appearance of the character. I concentrate on the situation and the present moment. Everything I do – including the sound of my voice – comes from that focus. Language is therefore essential. The words spoken by my scene partner affect me, and that makes it difficult to perform in a language I've learned purely phonetically. Those words don't resonate with me in the same way they would in German or even English. Not to mention that French actors speak very fast.

Do you enjoy playing real-life characters? How daunting is it?

This isn't the first historical figure I've portrayed. I usually conduct some research – but not too much. At a certain point, research can become overwhelming and even paralyzing. You risk becoming afraid of making mistakes and losing your sense of playfulness. There comes a moment when you have to set the research aside and focus entirely on the script. I believe that whatever knowledge you've absorbed will still inform your performance. I don't work from the outside in – I can't imitate people. I can't speak or move exactly like Klaus Barbie. But if I develop an understanding of who he was and work from the inside out, that inner work will inevitably shape the external portrayal.

At the same time, while there is a responsibility in playing a historical figure, it's important to remember that this is still fiction. That's why I don't subscribe to Method acting or the idea of becoming someone else. I never become somebody else – that's not my goal. I see myself more as a puppeteer. At times, the audience believes they are watching Klaus Barbie, but there are also moments when I can reveal the mechanism and remind them that it is, in fact, a constructed performance. That tension is particularly important with a character like Barbie.

How difficult was it to leave the character behind at the end of each shooting day ?

Playing a character inevitably affects the way I think and even the way I dream during a shoot – it has a strong impact on the subconscious. I don't believe in "getting rid" of a character. I carry all the roles I've played with me, and they enrich and complicate my personality.

Whenever I portray someone like Klaus Barbie, I come to understand something about myself. More importantly, I hope the audience gains a similar insight. I don't think they should reject that experience – they should carry it with them. By finding Klaus Barbie

within myself, I hope to allow the audience to recognize something within themselves. It becomes a mirror reflecting a mirror, revealing the fundamental ambivalence of human nature.

What was it like acting opposite Gilles Lellouche?

I'm not a self-confident actor – I depend greatly on my scene partner. I need that exchange to become aware of myself. Even though Barbie is a dominant character, I often felt, if not weak, at least fragile, and I relied on Gilles to give me a sense of confidence.

I'm very grateful to him. It would have been easy for him to unsettle me or work against me, especially since I didn't always feel strong in my performance. But he was generous, attentive, and collaborative. I believe acting is fundamentally about communication, and in many of our scenes, Gilles is supposed to listen to me. If I had felt he wasn't truly listening, I would have been completely lost.

Interestingly, Gilles made a deliberate choice not to have any personal interaction with me before filming – and he was absolutely right.

What was it like working with László Nemes?

Every director has a different approach, and László's often ran counter to my instincts – which was ultimately very productive. It pushed me out of my comfort zone and prevented me from repeating familiar patterns.

I come from the Brechtian tradition and tend to be a very expressive, playful actor. László encouraged restraint – he wanted something more controlled and inscrutable. That was challenging for me, as my natural tendency is toward a more outward, energetic style. I remember a long sequence we shot on the first day. László was very pleased with it, even though it differed from what I had initially envisioned. In the end, I believe we created something greater than ourselves because we were willing to understand each other's perspectives.

You developed a strong connection with Alain Goldman.

Alain has a remarkable sensitivity to what is happening on set. At a crucial moment, he came to my trailer, asked how I was doing, and showed genuine kindness. That support meant a great deal to me.

I would even say that without him, I might not have made it through the project. He became the most important person to me on set, which was a new experience – I had never before developed such a relationship with a producer.

CASTING

MOULIN	**GILLES LELLOUCHE**
BARBIE	**LARS EIDINGER**
COMTESSE DE FOREZ	**LOUISE BOURGOIN**
AUBRAC	**MARCIN CZARNIK**
ALAIN	**MAX WARBURTON**
MARTIN	**FELIX LEFEBVRE**
COLETTE	**HORTENSE DE GROMARD**
AUBRY/THOMAS	**THÉO COSTA-MARINI**
MATHILDE	**IZABELLA CAUSSANEL**
MOOG	**PIERRE NISSE**
STREINGRITT	**CHRISTIAN HARTING**
THE PARIS GESTAPO OFFICER	**UWE LAUER**

CREW LIST

A FILM BY	**LÁSZLÓ NEMES**
PRODUCED BY	**ALAIN GOLDMAN**
WRITTEN BY	**OLIVIER DEMANGEL**
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	**MÁTYÁS ERDÉLY**
1st ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	**JULIEN DECOIN** AND **ISTVÁN KOLOS**
EDITOR	**PÉTER POLITZER**
ORIGINAL MUSIC	**LAETITIA PANSANEL-GARRIC**
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	**STÉPHANE ROZENBAUM**
COSTUME DESIGNER	**ANDREA FLESCH**
SOUND DESIGNER	**TAMÁS ZÁNYI**
SCRIPT SUPERVISOR	**CHRISTELLE MEAUX**
CASTING DIRECTOR	**ANTOINETTE BOULAT, ÉVA ZABEZSINSZKIJ** AND **HERMINA FÁTYOL**
MAKEUP ARTIST	**THI THANH TU NGUYEN** AND **BERNADETT RAUSCH**
HAIR STYLIST	**SOPHIE ASSE** AND **JUDIT HALÁSZ**
CREATIVE CONSULTANT	**BALÁZS KRASZNAHORKAI**
VISUAL EFFECTS DESIGNER	**GLEN MCGUIGAN**
PRODUCTION MANAGER	**CYRILLE BRAGNIER**
POST-PRODUCTION MANAGER	**ABRAHAM GOLDBLAT**
PRODUCTION	**PITCHIPOÏ PRODUCTIONS**
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH	**STUDIO TF1, TF1 FILMS PRODUCTION** AND **UMEDIA**
IN ASSOCIATION WITH	**CINÉCAP 9, INDÉFILMS 14, UFUND, 193, A LEGENDARY COMPANY** AND **OD FILMS**
WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF	**DISNEY + HBO MAX TF1** AND **TMC**
WITH THE SUPPORT OF	**LA SACEM**
CO-PRODUCER	**BASTIEN SIRODOT** AND **CÉDRIC ILAND**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	**PATRICK WASCHBERGER ORI EISEN** AND **ILDIKÓ KEMÉNY**
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER	**AXEL DÉCIS**
FRANCE DISTRIBUTION	**STUDIO TF1**
INTERNATIONAL SALES	**193, A LEGENDARY COMPANY**