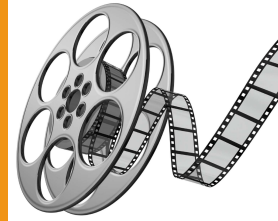


Films of the Anti-Nazi Resistance



OLLI Winter 2024
*Week 4: **France (part 2)***

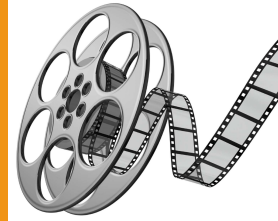
Today's Film: Army of Shadows



Army of Shadows (France, 1969)

- Writer and Director: Jean-Pierre Melville
- Adapted from Joseph Kessel's 1943 book
- Principle Cast
 - Lino Ventura
 - Paul Meurisse
 - Jean-Pierre Cassel
 - Simone Signoret

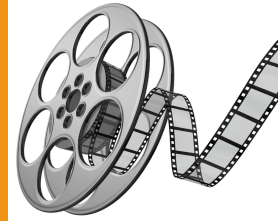
Today's Film: Army of Shadows



Novelist Joseph Kessel

- Born 1898. French Journalist and novelist.
 - Thirteen novel published before WW2, including *Belle de Jour*, upon which the 1967 film is based.
- Fought as an aviator in the First World War.
- Fought as an aviator with the Free French *Escadrille Lorraine* in the Second World War.
- His 1943 novel *Army of Shadows* is based on his own experiences with the Resistance as well as experiences told him by other Resistance fighters.

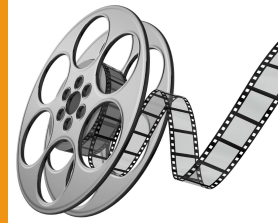
Today's Film: Army of Shadows



Writer/Director Jean-Pierre Melville

- Born 1917 as Jean-Pierre Grumbach.
- French soldier in 1940, evacuated from Dunkirch to Britain.
- Returned to France to join the Resistance. Took “Melville” as his *nom de guerre* to protect his family. (*Herman Melville was an author he greatly admired.*)
- Retained Melville as his professional name after the war.

Today's Film: Army of Shadows



Reception

- Very negative in France due to the timing of its release. Accused of glorifying de Gaulle (*it does*) while the memory of de Gaulle's violent suppression of the May 1968 French national demonstrations was still too fresh.
- The rest of the world followed the lead of the French film critics (*at first*).
- Not released in the US until a restored version was produced by Criterion in 2006.
- Reassessment of the film has brought it universal praise.
- It is now considered one of the finest films about the Resistance, one of the finest films about war, and among the finest French films ever made.