

See 'Z', NCOMP Advises

Catholic Press Features

New York — "It would be salutary if all sides that are at odds in our badly divided nation were to see this film as an object lesson in dehumanization by ideology."

That comment, by the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, was one of many unanimously enthusiastic responses to a new film about political dissent and violence in a democracy.

Titled simply "Z," the French-made film is set in Greece, and although fictional, is based on the 1963 assassination of Gregorios Lambrakis, a moderate-leftist parliamentary deputy, and the subsequent investigation of the murder by a government magistrate who uncovers more than the ruling government hoped he would.

The assassination, rigged to look like a traffic accident, led to the fall of the center government and, ultimately, to the 1967 military takeover in Greece, where the symbol "Z" — Cretan for "He lives" — is a sign of protest against the junta.

But the film "Z," which stars Yves Montand as the doomed political leader and Jean-Louis Trintignant as the persistent magistrate, has been hailed by critics as an outstanding example of the screen art regardless of one's interest in Greek politics, both for its ability to entertain as an intriguing detective thriller and its ability to make a universal statement about Man's right to justice and freedom of expression.

Typical of the quotes that have greeted the film are: "One of the best examples . . . of great story-telling" ("Newsweek"), "Stands without peer as a document and thriller" (Judith Crist), "A work of art," ("Time").

Nearly all of the people connected with the making of "Z" are in political exile from Greece, including the composer of the musical score, Mikis Theodorakis (who also wrote the music for "Zorba the Greek"), who wrote the music for "Z" and smuggled it to France while under house arrest.

Many commentators have

cited "Z" as an effective object lesson in the dangers of the political party in power attempting to quell dissent on the grounds that such dissent harms the nation's strength in international affairs. One critic claimed "Z" presents a graphic "outline of the method and procedures of those on the Right who use a Leftist scare to undercut democracy."

The Catholic film office, in its commentary on "Z" — presented in the lead review of the latest "Catholic Film Newsletter" — suggested that the film "has a great deal of value for those adolescents who are trying to understand the world behind the headlines."

NCOMP placed "Z" in its "A-2" category (morally unobjectionable for adults and adolescents); remarking: "The film has one sequence, dealing with a demonstration, that is broken up by anti-demonstrators and finally the police, which is as realistic as any that one has watched on television. For this reason, parents may not wish their children to see it . . ."

Praising the film for all



Yves Montand stars in "Z".

other audiences, however, the film office continued:

"It is about a kind of nationalism that justifies the use of criminal acts in attaining its objectives. It is about political corruption and human courage."

"It takes place in Greece but it could be anywhere, in these troubled times, from Czechoslovakia to Spain. Whether we like it or not, politics infringes upon our world, from the taxes we pay for the Cold War to the

general uneasiness that exists in this country, as exemplified by young people demonstrating in the streets against various forms of injustice.

"Z" describes one kind of approach to stifling those with different political goals than one's own. It would be salutary if all sides that are at odds in our badly divided nation were to see this film as an object lesson in dehumanization by ideology."



Courtroom arena set of "The Advocates" TV series.

'Advocates'...a Personal Touch

Catholic Press Features

New York—"The Advocates" — the first major effort to use television to involve the audience as active citizens rather than as passive viewers — is ending its first season on a triumphant pair of notes: a coveted Peabody Award and a renewal for next season.

The Sunday evening series, carried by most of the 190 non-commercial stations of the public television system (includes WXXI), features courtroom-style arguments on major public issues and then invites the viewers to send in their "verdicts."

"The Advocates," whose first 39-week season will end June 28, has been renewed for the 1970-71 season with grants from the Ford Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Shortly after the renewal announcement was made, "The Advocates" was declared a winner of the important Peabody Award given "to recognize the most distinguished and meritorious public service each year by radio and television." The citation described "The Advocates" series as "bold, invigorating debates on crucial issues" and then went on:

"It was the belief of the executive editor, Roger Fisher, that in a courtroom atmosphere such controversial problems as abortion, smog versus the auto, the use of marijuana, or the danger of offshore drilling could be dramatized and

reasonably — if hotly — discussed.

"It was the responsibility of Gregory Harney, the executive producer of 'The Advocates,' to confront the viewer with the contending points of view and rousing to involve the public's participation. Both have succeeded in this altogether worthy program."

Almost 70,000 viewers have written to "The Advocates" in response to various debates, with the results being tabulated and forwarded to Congress, to state legislatures, to mayors and other public officials who may be interested in public reaction to controversial issues.

Broadcast live each Sunday night (10-11 p.m., EST), the series presents two skilled debaters (they are "the advocates" of the title) who present both sides of a public issue.

"The Advocates" program is unrehearsed before a studio audience — whose reactions frequently influence the development of the arguments. Expert witnesses are called, and any and all methods are used by "the advocates" to best present their arguments: film, slides, recorded interviews, etc.

The studio audience is polled during each program, along with another in a "remote" studio situated in a city where the issue has special interest. For example, in the program dealing with banning internal combustion engines, the "remote" city was Detroit. The program

regularly broadcasts from two alternating cities: Boston and Los Angeles.

In its first season, to date, "The Advocates" has dealt with such other topics as withdrawal from Vietnam and Cambodia, televising of criminal trials, offshore oil drilling, legalized gambling on professional football, farm subsidies, and lifting the U.S. embargo on trade with Cuba.

Appearing in "The Advocates" courtroom arena during its first season were such figures as Sens. Barry Goldwater of Arizona and Charles Goodell of New York, newsman Walter Cronkite, Interior Secretary Walter Hickel, anthropologist Margaret Mead and Mayors John Lindsay of New York and Joseph Alioto of San Francisco.

The series was designed, Fisher said, as "a new approach that combines the vivid communications strength of live television with the cool analytical power of people practiced in presenting the best case, for and against."

"Instead of passively viewing yesterday's mistakes or listening to a general discussion of pollution, university dissent, or the population explosion, the viewer here is asked to consider both sides of a specific decidable issue confronting the public in the immediate future. Our aim is to encourage people to make their opinions known where the decisions are made."

COURIER / Entertainment

As I See It

Tour Whets Appetite

By Pat Costa



Tricia Nixon's White House tour on a recent "60 Minutes" production had the effect on this viewer that such tours always have. It left me wanting more. A good deal more.

The older daughter of President and Mrs. Nixon spent a half hour guiding CBS newsmen Harry Reasoner and Mike Wallace through some of the private rooms of the White House.

The Lincoln sitting room, preferred by her father for late night work, the Oval room, the family sitting room, the queen's bedroom and the family dining room were featured.

But with the exception of a gold paperweight in the form of a shamrock found on Mrs. Nixon's desk, a dog bone for the President's Irish setter and Mr. Nixon's favorite chair, the rooms seemed curiously free of personal possessions.

Obviously we are asking too much to be permitted to see one of the family bedrooms but whetting our appetites with the

mentioned rooms naturally leads to that idea.

Miss Nixon, blonde, youthful and vivacious, proved an attractive guide.

Both Reasoner and Wallace impressed as judicious questioners, possibly too judicious.

Are you aware that "Sesame Street" is overwhelmingly and determinedly male-oriented?

A recent in-depth report in the New York Times Sunday magazine says producer Joan Ganz Cooney thinks it may be too much so. Mrs. Cooney concedes the necessity for this bent in the show because the ghetto youngsters, for whom the program is primarily intended, are often from fatherless homes. Thus the three men versus the one permanent female character in the show.

But, says the creator of this hit educational show, the counting sequence used in every program in which a waiter falls down a flight of steps with four strawberry shortcakes or 12 wedding cakes or three apple tarts to demonstrate the number in question is piling it on a bit thick. The prat fall finale appeals to the young male, from age four on. Two-year-olds may think the man is hurt, she fears.

A recent segment on "To Tell the Truth" featured Darla Hood, the woman who once starred as the little girl in the "Our Gang" series and currently works behind scenes now as the "voice" for various commercials.

Listening to Orson Bean rhapsodizing over the "Gang" series, apparently seen regularly in the New York metropolitan area, one couldn't help wishing some Rochester program director might take it upon himself to plug for showing the series here. It would just naturally have to be a hit. What kid could resist it? For that matter what adult?

'New Bible' Best Seller

New York — (RNS) — The New English Bible (NEB) had been on the "best seller" list for eight weeks as of May 24. The full translation, with Apocrypha, was published in Mid-March.

The British edition of the Scripture, issued jointly by Oxford and Cambridge University Press, first appeared in 6th place on the list of best-selling books prepared weekly by The New York Times Book Review.

It had moved up to third on Sunday, May 24. The Times list is compiled from selected book stores. The NEB was also a Special Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club.