

MOVIES

'Black Tie' Offers Rare View of Brazil

By Michael Gallagher
And John Sheehan

New York (NC) — A wildcat strike disrupts the domestic life of a Brazilian working class family in Sao Paulo in "They Don't Wear Black Tie" (New Yorker), a fine Brazilian film directed and co-written by Leon Hirszman.

Otávio, the father of the family, played by Gianfrancesco Guarnieri, Hirszman's collaborator on the script, is a patient, kindly man, pudgy and most unheroic in appearance. But though Otávio loves a quiet life as much as anyone, he nevertheless believes that you must make sacrifices for the sake of your ideals. It is the only way he sees to realize the hope of a better life for his family and the families of his fellow workers in a land where political oppression, though it waxes and wanes, is an ever present fact or life.

Though the climactic strike, which Otávio does not want and which he knows is

doomed to fail but which he nonetheless feels he must support for the sake of solidarity, provides the most obvious dramatic conflict, Hirszman's concern goes beyond politics. Thus what's most important in "Black Tie," the essential drama, is not the external one played out on the streets, but the interior one played out on the family level.

Tiao (Carlos Alberto Ricelli), Otávio's older son, is a supremely decent young man very much in love with his fiancée, Maria (Bete Mendes). Their marriage is soon to take place. Maria's pregnancy has pushed them to set a date, but Tiao's quite happy about everything. He is in good with everyone at the factory, including, it seems, the bosses.

When the crisis of the strikes breaks upon the family, it provokes a tragic clash between father and son. Tiao, not out of cowardice or even out of self-interest, re-

uses to go along with his father, and he defiantly crosses the picket line. It's a free country, more or less, Tiao argues, and so why can't everybody do as he sees best? How does it hurt anybody?

Guarnieri and Ricelli are excellent as the affectionate father and son who suddenly find themselves antagonists. Other standouts among the uniformly excellent cast are Fernanda Montenegro, a woman with a marvelously expressive face, as Otávio's hot-tempered but strong and loving wife, and Bete Mendes as Tiao's fiancée, a woman deeply in love but nonetheless with a mind very much her own.

Much of the context will be lost on someone without at least a general knowledge of Brazilian social conditions, its political turmoil and bouts of savage repression. But even for those who know little or nothing, "Black Tie" should provide many fascinating moments in terms of the incidental and not so incidental insights into Brazilian life.

One occurs at the very beginning when the two young lovers, Maria and Tiao, come out of a downtown movie theater in the rain and then get on a bus

that takes them out to a barrio overlooking Sao Paulo, where they live. And what movie had they seen? "Star Trek."

Another is the matter-of-fact racial integration of Brazil. Not only is one of the most respected labor organizers black, but so is Bete's best friend.

Finally, though the church doesn't figure prominently in the film, it is identified at the end as being behind the workers' struggle for justice.

Hirszman's film is not without flaws. The story line might be a bit too simply laid out, thus mitigating the dramatic impact, but the strength of the characterizations keeps the film compelling. Most of its shortcomings are technical ones, the result of a budget on which the average Hollywood craftsman would be hard put to film his daughter's birthday party.

"Black Tie" is not only an entertaining film but is also one that gives us some priceless insights into the human reality behind the kind of discordant headlines that bewilder us every day. The U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-IV, adults with reservations. There is some nudity and rough language.

Capsule Movie Reviews

"Kral" (Columbia)

Director Peter Yates cannot quite bring the tale of a mythical land, an enchanted weapon and an evil force that conquers and kills into focus. There are too many "characters" (a cyclops, a wizard, a spider-woman, a magician, a seer, etc.); too many unexplained or inexplicable jumps, and it's all been done better before by others. The accompanying musical score always seems to be an overture to a theme that never gets played, so too with the movie — it never really gets anywhere. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG, parental guidance suggested; the U.S. Catholic Conference rating is A-II, adults and adolescents.

"National Lampoon's Vacation" (Warner Bros.)

Chevy Chase stars in this saga of a family's cross-country trip (from Chicago to California) for a vacation at an amusement park. As in any trip, there are moments of fun and humor, and several long stretches of dull, tedious travel. The best parts of the film are the characters; the worst the weakly wandering storyline. There are several scenes of questionable taste. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R, restricted; the U.S. Catholic Conference rating is A-III, adults.

"Jaws 3-D" (Universal)

This third sequel to the big blockbuster only demonstrates there is a world of difference between technology and creativity. The 3-D effects are really rather good — the severed head of a fish floating in space, a severed arm floating in the water, a spear coming at you from the screen are all very effective. The movie itself, however, is slow-moving, talky, and generally dull. The big fish inspires little fear, the plot inspires little excitement, and 3-D alone cannot hold one's interest for long. An altogether mediocre movie. Because of the violence, the U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-III, adults; the industry rating is PG, parental guidance suggested.

TV Notebook

Saturday, Aug. 13, 9 p.m. (CBS) — "The Passage" (1979) — A fiendish SS man (Malcolm McDowell) pursues an escaping scientist (James Mason) and his family across the Pyrenees. Anthony Quinn is on hand as a stalwart Basque guide. A mediocre war film filled with violence and brutality, this is thoroughly reprehensible in its excesses. O, morally offensive; R, restricted.

Sunday, Aug. 14, 7-8 p.m. (NBC) — "NBC Reports: Bataan, the Forgotten Hell." A rebroadcast of the critically acclaimed documentary about the siege of Corregidor and the infamous death march that took the lives of 11,000 Americans.

Sunday, Aug. 14, 8-11 p.m. (NBC) — "A Bridge Too Far" (1977) — This adaptation of Cornelius Ryan's bestseller is a spectacular war drama about the disastrous attempt to seize a crucial bridge in the Dutch town of Arnhem with British airborne troops. Well acted, well directed and unusually sensitive for this kind of film, there are some scenes of violence which might be too strong for younger teen-agers. A-III, adults; PG, parental guidance.

Monday, Aug. 15, 10-11 p.m. (NBC) — "Pump Boys and Dinettes." The pilot for a possible series based on the popular Broadway country-rock musical stars the original cast members who also created and wrote the program which consists of comedy monologues, musical numbers and dramatic vignettes.

Tuesday, Aug. 16, 10-11 p.m. (PBS) — "Dairy Queens." Why the small family farm has become an endangered species is shown in this award-winning documentary about the efforts of three Minnesota women to save their own farms and those of their neighbors from economic ruin.

BOOKS

"A Dove against Death," by Christopher Wood. Viking Press (New York, 1983). 218 pp., \$13.50

Reviewed by
Nancy L. Roberts
NC News Service

World War I raged not only in European battle-grounds, but in the often rugged terrain of the British and German colonies. Isolated pockets of troops clashed intermittently in such arenas as the Cameroons, a vast stretch of desert, swamp and jungle in West Africa. Such is the setting for Christopher Wood's new novel.

In this exotic, remote setting, Wood spins a zesty adventure story. Three English soldiers discover a powerful wireless station tucked inside a crater miles from the African coast that can relay messages from Berlin to the German Atlantic fleet (like a station that actually existed in the bordering colony of Togoland). They embark on a perilous journey to inform British headquarters at Douala, with the relentless Germans never far behind.

The tale's real hero is the Taube, or Dove, an early

Austrian flying machine that the English trio discover packed in crates in a German missionary station. In less than an hour they assemble the gossamer craft with 46-foot-wingspan, and it carries them not only in the air, but over land and across water in a desperate race. (Wood's research revealed a report about the taking of a German post and "two aeroplanes in packing cases" by a small British detachment, a later reference to a Dove that was actually shipped to Southwest Africa for field tests.)

Wood literally fills each

page with intrigue and adventure, and along the way creates some memorable characters. His Germans, for instance, are never one-dimensional villains. Their leader, Maximilian von Graben, is a Prussian nobleman who, it turns out, once was a friend of the English captain at Oxford. Their ambivalence toward each other is part of a fascinating subplot in a fast-paced, satisfying adventure.

(Roberts is an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Minnesota.)

Recent Movie Ratings

New York (NC) — Here is a list of recent films which the U.S. Catholic Conference Department of Communication has rated on the basis of moral suitability.

The first symbol after each title is the USCC rating. The second symbol is the rating of the Motion Picture Association of America.

These are the USCC symbols and their meanings: A-I — general patronage; A-II — adults and adolescents; A-III — adults; A-IV — adults, with reservations (an A-IV classification is for certain films which, while not morally offensive in themselves, require caution and some analysis and explanation as a protection to the uninformed against wrong interpretations and false conclusions); O — morally offensive. The word "recommended" appears in parenthesis behind the titles of those films that merit such a designation.

Here are the Motion Picture Association of America symbols and their meanings: G — general audiences, all ages admitted; PG — parental guidance suggested, some material may not be suitable for children; R — restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; X — no one under age 17 admitted (age limit may vary in certain areas).

B
Baby, It's You, O (R)
Bad Boys, O (R)
Best Friends, A-III (PG)
Betrayal, A-II (R)
The Black Stallion Returns, A-I (PG)
Blue Thunder, O (R)
Breathless, O (R)

Britannia Hospital, O (R)
Bugs Bunny 3rd Movie: 1001 Rabbit Tales, A-I (G)

D
The Dark Crystal, A-I (PG)
Diner, A-III (R)
Diva, A-III (R)
Doctor Detroit, O (R)

E
Exposed, O (R)
E.T., The Extra-Terrestrial, A-I (PG)

F
Fast Times at Ridgemont High, O (R)
First Blood, A-III (R)
Five Days One Summer, A-II (PG)
Flashdance, O (R)
The Flight of the Eagle, A-II
48 Hours, O (R)
Frances, A-IV (R)

G
Gandhi, A-II (PG) (Recommended)

H
Honkytonk Man, O (R)
The Hunger, O (R)

I
Independence Day, A-IV (R)

J
Joni, A-I (G)

K
The King of Comedy, A-II (PG)

L
The Last Unicorn, A-I (G)
Lianna, O (R)
Local Hero, A-II (PG)
Lone Wolf McQuade, A-III (PG)
The Long Good Friday, A-IV (R)

The Lords of Discipline, A-III (R)
Lovesick, A-III (PG)

M
The Man from Snowy River, A-II (PG)
The Man with Two Brains, O (R)
Man, Woman and Child, A-III (PG)
Max Dugan Returns, A-II (PG)
Monsignor, O (R)
Monty Python's The Meaning of Life, O (R)
My Favorite Year, A-III (PG)

N
National Lampoon's Class Reunion, O (R)
Night of the Shooting Star, A-II (R)

O
Octopussy, A-III (R)
An Officer and a Gentleman, O (R)
The Outsiders, A-III (PG)

P
The Pirates of Penzance, A-I (G)
Porky's, O (R)
Porky's II: The Next Day, O (R)
Psycho II, O (R)

Q
"Q," O (R)

R
Return of the Jedi, A-II (PG)
The Road Warrior, O (R)

S
Something Wicked This Way Comes, A-II (PG)

Sophie's Choice, A-III (R)
Space Hunter, A-II (PG)
Split Image, A-II (R)
Spring Fever, A-III (PG)
Starstruck, A-III (PG)
Star Trek II, The Wrath of Khan, A-II (PG)

Still of the Night, A-II (PG)
The Sting II, A-III (R)
Stroker Ace, A-III (PG)
Superman III, A-II (PG)
The Survivors, A-III (R)

T
Table for Five, A-III (PG)
Tempest, A-III (PG)
10 to Midnight, O (R)
Tender Mercies, A-III (PG)
Tex, A-II (PG)
That Championship Season, A-III (R)
Threshold, A-II (PG)
Timerider, A-III (PG)
Tootsie, A-III (PG)

Tough Enough, A-III (R)
The Toy, A-III (PG)
Trading Places, O (R)
The Treasure of the Four Crowns, A-II (PG)

Trenchcoat, A-II (PG)
Tron, A-III (PG)
Twilight Time, A-II (PG)
Twilight Zone: The Movie, A-II (PG)

V
Valley Girl, O (R)
The Verdict, A-II (R)
Videodrome, O (R)

W
War Games, A-II (PG)
Without a Trace, A-II (PG)
The World According to Garp, A-III (R)
Wrong Is Right, A-III (R)

Y
The Year of Living Dangerously, A-III (PG)
Yellowbeard, A-III (PG)

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