

TELEVISION

CBS to Air Drama on Pontiff's Life

By Henry Herz
And Michael Gallagher
New York (NC) — "Pope John Paul II," a CBS Easter special, will be broadcast Sunday, April 22, 8-11 p.m. EST. It stars Albert Finney as the mature Karol Wojtyla and takes up the pontiff's life from his youth to his election to the papal throne.

The program begins in September 1978 with the sudden death of Pope John Paul I, who occupied the papal throne for only 33 days. As the shocked and saddened Archbishop Wojtyla of Cracow prepares to leave for Rome for the conclave, he sees some boys playing soccer outside his window and thinks of his own youth on the eve of World War II.

In one sense there was nothing especially dramatic about Karol Wojtyla's life before he ascended the papal throne. The times that the pope-to-be lived through however — as a youth, as a seminarian, as a young priest, and as the archbishop of Cracow — were extraordinary ones: a time of great tragedy for his native land and for all of Europe. It was also a time of spiritual triumph in the face of the harshest oppression known to modern history.

Thus, in the flashbacks that director Herbert Wise weaves into the main narration — the events leading immediately to the papal election — we see the young Karol Wojtyla, played by Michael Crompton, as a student intensely interested in dramatics but drawn toward the priesthood.

In the midst of the terror of the occupation, he works in a quarry and helps in the perilous work of saving Jews from

the Nazis. It is at this time that he makes his decision to become a priest and begins his seminary studies under conditions of great hardship.

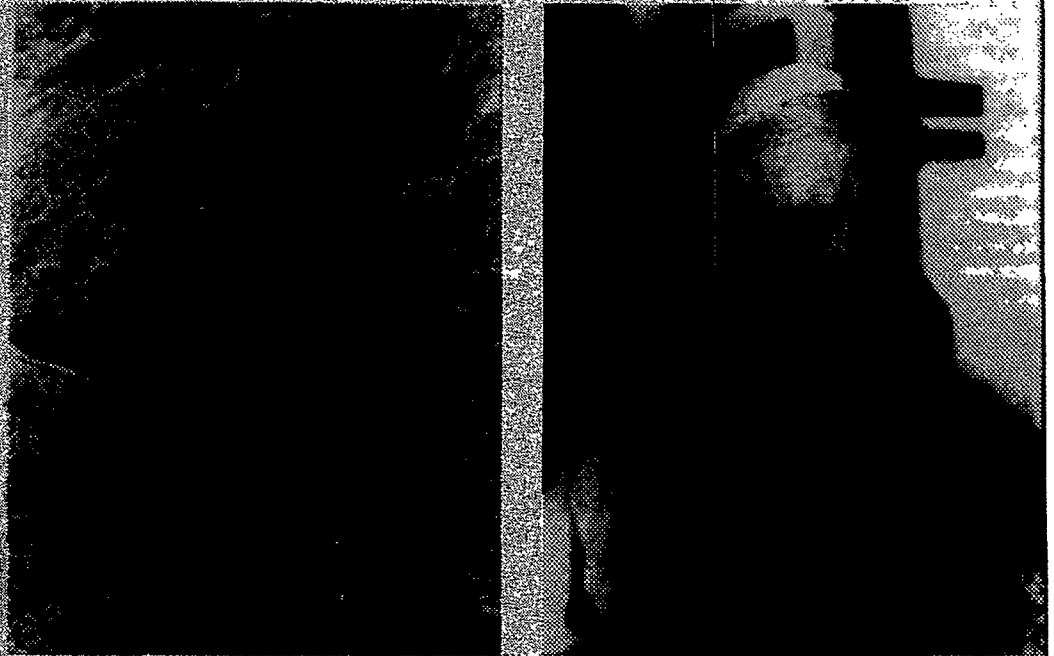
Not does real peace come with the collapse of the Germans. The liberators of Poland turn out to be the Russians, and a new and different struggle begins — one between the Church and a militant atheism triumphant.

But the Church in Poland is not without power of its own, and Karol Wojtyla, as he rises in authority, plays a larger and larger role in this drama in which the soul of a nation is at stake.

The climax of this period is Archbishop Wojtyla's triumphant journey to Nowa Huta, the government-built city that was to have no churches. There he preaches before an ecstatic crowd and offers Mass at the altar of the forbidden church being built by the people themselves.

Not everything works equally well in "Pope John Paul II." The portions of the story closer to the present are the more effective ones, helped greatly by Finney's presence and by the fact that more is on record and less is left to the imagination of writer Christopher Knopf.

I'm really inclined to doubt that the pope ever played Petruchio in "The Taming of the Shrew" (though there are those who might readily accept it), and I really wonder if any young Marxist was ever as glib and humorless as the boy who, when asked by Father Wojtyla what he was interested in, replied "Coal. Because it serves the objective interest of the people."



British actor Michael Crompton, left, plays Karol Wojtyla as a youth in Poland in the movie "Pope John Paul II," airing Easter Sunday, April 22, on CBS. Albert Finney, right, plays Wojtyla in later years as a cardinal and eventually pope. (NC Photos)

Wise's direction, however, and some excellent acting make up for the incidental flaws. Besides Finney, Nigel Hawthorne is outstanding as the austere and courageous Archbishop Sapieha, Wojtyla's predecessor as archbishop of Cracow. So is Jonathan Newth, as the aristocratic primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who sometimes did not see eye to eye with the future pope on

the strategy to be pursued against the common enemy.

This television film is something not to be missed. It's especially worthwhile fare for young people and for those of us who might be less familiar than we should be with the momentous historical events that have had such an effect upon the man who now sits on the throne of St. Peter.

BOOKS

'O Vatican:' Juicy Gossip with a Darker Theme

"O Vatican, a Slightly Wicked View of the Holy See," by Paul Hoffman. Congdon and Weed (New York, 1984). 306 pp., \$18.98.

Reviewed by James C. O'Neill
NC News Service
Paul Hoffman, a former Rome correspondent and Rome bureau chief for The New York Times, writes about the Vatican almost exclusively in terms of power, both ecclesiastical and political.

His style is easy to read and his text, supporting its jaunty subtitle, is chock-full of gossipy anecdotes about popes, cardinals, bankers, nuncios, papal princes and what-have-you.

Most of the stories seem to have been culled from news clippings of the past 40 years. They serve to brighten the book and relieve the tedium

of writing (and reading) still another 300-page book on how-the-Vatican-works — or doesn't.

But behind the juicy tidbits and underscoring the clerical and journalistic gossip there is a darker theme: that of power, its use and abuse in the highest circles of church government.

Chapter 1 is titled "Powerhouse at St. Peter's." Other chapters have similarly catchy names: "Cardinal Power," "The Church's Mandarins," "Mammon at the Holy See," and "Lobbying in the Sacred Palaces."

As can be expected the chapter dealing with "Mammon" covers all that is known publicly about the

Vatican bank scandals as well as what's known of Vatican finances in general.

As examples of the abuses of papal power, Hoffman cites the autocracy of the last years of Pope Pius XII. He recalls the stories about the power Mother Pasqualina, the nun-housekeeper of Pius, exercised over the aging pope. The power gained by the so-called Milan Mafia, the inner circle of associates around Paul VI, is re-examined. The waning power of the Jesuits and the growing influence of Opus Dei — an ominous influence, according to the author — is given lengthy treatment.

In "Pitfalls of Vaticanology," Hoffman says that the Vatican press office holds downright can-tankerous contempt of the

working press. The pot shots he takes are easy, although often justified. The author also gives an example of reading between the lines, a favorite practice of newsmen assigned to cover the Vatican. Practiced mostly on dead news days, it can at times be useful to scan a Vatican publication to see what it says and what it doesn't say.

In the instance cited by Hoffman, L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican daily, ran a long review of a book by a conservative, 88-year-old cardinal attacking the theology of Father Karl Rahner and Father Hans Kung. A couple of weeks later, Father Kung was stripped of his title as a "Catholic theologian." No one should have been sur-

prised, says Hoffman.

Well, maybe yes, maybe no. Rome abounds in retired cardinals who have little trouble getting long reviews of their books in Vatican publications. Father Kung has been on the griddle for years, so the action was not unexpected, cardinal's book or no cardinal's book.

There is a lot of interesting, if not necessarily new, material in "O Vatican," not all of it completely fair to its subjects. For anyone relatively well-informed about the Vatican during the past 30 years, \$18.98 may seem a stiff price to pay for a review of the familiar. For anyone not familiar with the Vatican, the book is a somewhat limited, even myopic vision of the central offices of the Catholic Church and the

people who run them.

Like spending too much time reading between the lines, writing about the Vatican solely in terms of the pursuit, attainment and exercise of power doesn't really tell the whole story. The papacy and its bureaucracy have not survived because of man's lust for power. As a priest I once knew in Rome remarked, paraphrasing a former New York City mayor: "The Vatican is honey-combed with holy men."

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MOVIES

'Greystoke:' a Tarzan For Adults — at Last

By Michael Gallagher
New York (NC) — "Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes" (Warners) is the first adult movie interpretation of the Edgar Rice Burroughs story so popular over the years that it has, for all practical purposes, become part of the folk consciousness. (I use the much-abused word "adult" in its original sense of mature and serious.)

Besides the innumerable Hollywood versions, there was a Czech version in the '60s called "The Death of Tarzan" which focused on the hero's adjustment to civilization rather than on jungle theatrics.

This may, in fact, have influenced this latest version directed by Hugh Hudson, who did "Chariots of Fire."

The film opens in 1885 with the departure of Lord Jack Clayton (Paul Geoffrey) and his wife, Alice (Ceryl Campbell) for a year's stay in Africa. His father, the Earl of Greystoke (Ralph Richardson), is sad to see them go because he has a premonition of disaster which is swiftly fulfilled.

Lord Jack and his wife are shipwrecked

off the coast of Equatorial Africa. They survive for a time in a shelter made from salvaged material, and Lady Alice gives birth to a son. When the baby's parents perish, a female ape, whose own baby has died, takes him as her own.

The young lord proves that he has the right stuff not only by surviving but, when he reaches manhood, by becoming the ruler of the ape band which raised him. He kills the dominant male who years before, unknown to him, killed his father.

Portrayed by Christopher Lambert, the adult Tarzan — although that name never actually occurs in Hudson's film — sees his first white man when pygmies attack and decimate an English scientific expedition, and he rescues Philippe D'Arnot (Ian Holm), the expedition's Belgian guide.

D'Arnot is aware of his rescuer's identity because the expedition had come upon the shelter built by Tarzan's ill-fated parents. He teaches Tarzan English and brings him back to civilization, which in this case is his family's magnificent estate in Scotland. The actual setting is a combination of Floors Castle and Blenheim Palace, locales

as sumptuous as one could imagine.

The portion that follows deals with John Clayton's attempt to adjust to quite a different environment and quite different modes of conduct. Making the transition much easier is the warm and loving support of his grandfather, the earl, and of his grandfather's ward, Jane Porter (Andi MacDowell).

The death of his grandfather, however, and a wrenching encounter with an ape, an elder of the band held captive at the British Museum for experimental purposes, have so severe an effect on him that he decides he must return to Africa, the only place where he feels he really belongs.

"Greystoke" has a magnificent look. The settings, whether the equatorial rain forest teeming with life and with menace — no sanitized Hollywood jungle here — or the lovely green English countryside, are stunningly captured by John Alcott's cameras. Rick Baker's costumes for the ape band also contribute immensely to the impact of the film.

Spectacle aside, however, the most affecting element of the film is Richardson's marvelous performance in what was to be his last role. The acting as a whole is excellent, with Lambert altogether believable in a role in which credibility is constantly at stake. Holm and Miss MacDowell are fine in the key roles of D'Arnot and Jane.



Ape mother Kala lovingly cuddles the infant Tarzan in "Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes."

The violence in the jungle sequences is very strong stuff, and this, together with a brief bedroom sequence — all the more erotic for its skillful restraint — make "Greystoke" mature fare. The U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.