group, who is supposed at the end of the film to drop out of the game. But this is largely artificial within Salesman itself—even if Paul did, as reported, drop Bibles and go into roofing-and-siding after the film was shot. (Roofing-and-siding, by the way, hardly constitutes a noble advance for him: it's an even worse racket than Bibles.) Although the ending is appalling enough, with Paul's Irish imitation dying on his lips, its preparation is on the one hand somewhat contrived—his buddy counting sales slips on the motel bed with lines that sound dubbed in his mouth—and on the other hand psychologically insufficient: if Paul really is going through some major change in his life, we would like to see much more of it than is given us on the screen, and we have a natural suspicion that it has something important to do with the shooting of the film. (Only Jean Rouch, it seems to me, has been willing to admit in his films that the shooting of the film itself is a major event in the subjects' lives, and that this importance is a legitimate—indeed perhaps obligatory—part of the film.) Despite its structural limitations, however, Salesman remains that honorable contribution to film, an honest document; it is part of that great effort now going forward among film-makers the world over to capture the human condition so that we may know who and where we are.—E. C.

Shock Troop. Several years ago a young Greek named Costa-Gavras made his first film, a French mystery called The Sleeping Car Murder. Filming his own script, the director achieved a unique balance in his handling of well-known movie people. He did not coyly pretend they were nobodies, neither did he permit grotesque maquillage or gratuitous trademark bits; rather, their entrances and exits were struck like character keynotes in a most complex action score. Such combined force and efficiency would not have been possible without their slightly giddy identifiability, and in turn made possible the speed, density, and wealth of nuance that was achieved in the film. Now Costa-Gavras is back with some of the same players—Michel Piccoli, Jacques Perrin—and a countryside more: Jean-Claude Brialy, Gerard Blain, Bruno Cremer, Charles Vanel, Claude Brasseur, Pierre Clementi, Albert Rémy—too many even to make the credit titles of Shock Troop. Shock Troop begins at a dead run and hardly ever lets down. At a glance it seems a giddy identifiability, and in turn make possible the speed, density, and wealth of nuance that was achieved in the film. Now Costa-Gavras is back with some of the same players—Michel Piccoli, Jacques Perrin—and a countryside more: Jean-Claude Brialy, Gerard Blain, Bruno Cremer, Charles Vanel, Claude Brasseur, Pierre Clementi, Albert Rémy—too many even to make the credit titles of Shock Troop. Shock Troop begins at a dead run and hardly ever lets down. At a glance it seems a min film—as Sleeping Car Murder also seemed, at a glance. A band of resistance fighters play hell with the Nazis in a heavily occupied sector of postcard villages and pastoral landscapes. During a raid on a German stronghold they liberate thirteen prisoners where they expect to find an even dozen. Is the odd man, Piccoli, the apolitical innocent he claims to be, or a planted agent? While the company makes its lightning strikes and hairbreadth escapes down country lanes, the thirteenth man is carried along. The problem of what to do with him becomes the means of exposing a whole political spectrum: Brialy, a rabid Marxist, wants to kill him outright to protect the cause; Blain disagrees, certain of nothing except that he cannot kill a man who may be innocent; Cremer, the leader, finds it disconcertingly hard to make any decision in the matter. Throughout all, Piccoli preserves an increasingly desperate calm, threatened by Germans and partisans both. An ambiguous last shot suggests that, although he has got free, in time of war there can be no political man. Costa-Gavras's characterizations are entirely devoid of the fussiness sometimes found in his earlier film (Montand's games with a menthol inhaler, for example). And when, from an aerial vantage, we watch a truckful of guerrillas wind down a mountain road, while a German convoy approaches on a lower level, the camera plane turns with the truck into a handy cul-de-sac a split second before the convoy rounds the last bend. Few are the viewers who do not hold their breath during the long, lovely, intricate shot that makes us all involuntary partisans. It is a movie of virtually physical involvement. Its warfare is workmanlike—a sense reinforced by that undeviating forward motion. Its images of war as a dirty game are ferocious without being gory. While the camera looks down on a misty valley, a trapped guerrilla moves toward the enemy to surrender, suddenly leaping on one of his captors and destroying both of them with a grenade; the act as witnessed through a telescopic lens is oddly beautiful. Although he works in familiar B-film territory, Costa Gavras is derivative of nobody. All the sadder, then, that his films will be seen by few of the people who might remember them. United Artists is circulating only atrociously dubbed prints of Shock Troop, treating it strictly as second-feature, grind-house stuff. But even if subtitled copies were available, few art houses would be discerning enough to play them. What will happen to Costa-Gavras' new film, Z, remains to be seen. His Cannes award should protect it from mishandling. Probably the best hope for his earlier films is that this fine, unique director will not be overlooked by film-society and 16mm programmers, who should go out of their way to design a schedule with a place for Costa-Gavras's damn good cinema.—RICHARD T. JAMESON