

**9:00 a.m.:** A Wertz for Senate representative reported that in San Diego County, ballots were delivered to computer counting sites by members of the Youth Conservation Corps wearing Brown teeshirts.

**12:30 p.m.:** The home edition of the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Wertz received 6 percent of the vote with 18 percent of the precincts reporting. The late morning edition of the *Times* said that Wertz secured only 1 percent of the vote with 68 percent of the precincts reporting. Between the first and second editions, Wertz's total vote count dropped from 28,805 to 15,665.

**1:00 p.m.:** After hearing the *Los Angeles Times* report that Wertz had 6 percent of the vote with 18 percent of the precincts counted, the Wertz representative who had been in Sacramento reported to campaign headquarters that the Secretary of State's central computer had produced one printout at 11:27, with about 12 percent of the precincts in, and another printout at 11:47 with about 20 percent of the precincts in. There were no printouts in between. The vote counting process, however, is continuous and can be assessed at any time by the major media—such as the *Los Angeles Times*—which have terminals hooked into the state computer. The Wertz representative said that during this time-frame, when Wertz had the 6 percent, there was a huge leap in the number of votes being counted.

**2:30 p.m.:** A Wertz supporter in Sacramento County reported that in the Rio Linda Alverta area at 11:24 p.m. election eve, the computer printout with 37 percent of the vote counted showed a voting turnout of 11.05 percent. However, he noted, the printer also showed 1,305 voters had been in out of the 2,987 registered voters in the area. He also noted an unusually high number of blank votes in the Democratic U.S. Senate race; 7.5 percent blank votes in that race compared to 3.2 percent blank in the Republican race, and 2.9 percent in the gubernatorial race.

**3:30 p.m.:** Brian Abas from the registrar's office reported that at least one precinct had to be recounted because of computer problems in Orange County.

**4:00 p.m.:** Mike Keofer, a Democratic candidate for Congress running against Bosco, a crony of State House Speaker Willie Brown who is one of Jerry Brown's close associates, reported that at 8:20 p.m. on election eve his lead was reported 2:1; later it was reported to be 3:1. However, at 11:43 p.m. when it was announced the computers had broken down in Sonoma County the trend changed. Prior to the breakdown, Keofer led in Sonoma County, 15,377 to 12,273. After the breakdown he lost his lead and was finally outpolled by a third. The Sonoma County registrar had told him that his earlier count was erroneous because the computer had been "misprogrammed."

**4:15 p.m.:** Stanislaus County which did not use computers, reported that Wertz received 6.3 percent of the vote.

---

## U.S. Television

---

# Speer documentary: an evil soap opera

by Molly Kronberg

Cynical manipulations and lying recasting of history: That accurately describes ABC television's five-hour "docudrama" *Inside the Third Reich*, broadcast in prime-time at the beginning of last month. *Inside the Third Reich* is the worst example yet of history-as-soap-opera, by which American television deprives this population of any understanding of its own or world history. For distortion it surpassed last year's CBS *The Bunker*, another docudrama-format soap opera which depicted Hitler's last days in the bunker beneath Berlin.

Directed by Marvin Chomsky—the man responsible for the docusoap *Holocaust—Inside the Third Reich* presents itself as the "true story" of Albert Speer, Hitler's Minister of War Production and the man who was convicted at Nuremberg of crimes against humanity and war crimes for running the Nazi slave-labor system. Speer himself served ABC as "technical consultant" on the program until his death last summer.

### The Nazi war criminal made hero

Three levels of fraud combine in the final product. First, the basis of the program, Speer's book *Inside the Third Reich*, is a fraud. In that book, a 1970 bestseller here and abroad, Albert Speer launched the Big Lie to which he devoted the rest of his life: that he, as a nonpolitical architect, was seduced into committing crimes on an unparalleled scale by his "Mephistopheles," a Hitler who bewitched him; that, when he finally "realized" what he had done (a revelation that conveniently came to him in the dock at Nuremberg in 1946), his guilty plea there absolved him from outside criticism and opened up for him a life, for the next 35 years, of wrestling with his newly active conscience; that the greatest demon in the drama was not the racist depopulation drive Hitler represented, but the "unbridled technology" Speer applied to his assignment—a technology against which he passionately warned the judges at Nuremberg and against which he organized for the rest of his days. The result: while Speer's subordinates were hanged at Nuremberg for following his orders, he was sentenced to 20 years, because his charm, his sang-froid, and his campaign against technology made him a useful spokesman for the anti-technology Anglo-Americans.

The second level of lies in the program is true to the

“spirit of Speer” but extends beyond what even he dared lie about. Director Chomsky, producer E. Jack Newman, and stars Rutger Hauer (playing Speer) and Derek Jacobi (playing Hitler) report fundamental agreement: a soap opera must have a hero. Clearly Speer must be played as that hero, whose greatest failing will therefore have to be shown, not as having been a committed Nazi adhering to Hitler’s program of depopulation and desolation (which is the truth of the matter), but as a confused young man who suffers, yet suppresses, the pangs of conscience. So Rutger Hauer, a young, wide-eyed Dutch actor, plays Nazi war criminal Albert Speer with ever a surprised, pained look on his face as Nazi excesses and atrocities come to his attention!

Because the “hero” must have a battle of conscience to fight, the producers find it necessary to invent a series of totally false subplots which even Speer does not report in his memoirs. Thus in this program, Speer’s father and wife (played by character actress Blythe Danner) were committed anti-Nazis from the outset, distressed by their loved one’s inability to see the evil he consorted with. For this version there is not one shred of historical evidence. The television viewer is asked to believe that Mrs. Speer spent her life with the Nazi high command, sharing confidences with Hitler’s mistress Eva Braun, while secretly detesting the Nazi world of which her husband was a principal. Thus Speer is portrayed as the beloved, albeit confused, son and husband of the anti-Nazi resistance. In fact, the real resistance had a very special hatred for this amoral man.

The film cannot show Speer collaborating with the real German resistance (since such a portrayal is so provably false), so it is forced to invent a fake resistance, one which never existed, with which Speer can be identified. Thus, Hitler’s first foreign press secretary, the Harvard-educated American Putzi Hanfstaengl, is made into a secret anti-Nazi and close friend of Speer—two absolute falsifications. Dr. Fritz Todt, the man originally in charge of war-related fortification construction, is made into an anti-Hitler conspirator to confer the same mantle on his successor, Albert Speer. Erhard Milch, the second-in-command of the Luftwaffe and a protégé of Goering’s, is made into a part of the anti-Hitler conspiracy of July 20, 1944—a distinction neither he nor Speer actually possessed.

But the most fundamental level of fraud is this. To present the story of the Third Reich, and Albert Speer, as a soap-opera, is to kill history for any population who watches it. The romanticization, the insistence on reporting history as if it were a personalized contest between “good guys” (like Speer) and “bad guys” (but with redeeming “human” features, as Derek Jacobi plays Hitler), is an attack on the moral, intellectual, and political powers of the population. This soap-opera

trash tells Americans, whose last strong moment of national purpose came precisely in their fight to destroy Hitler and Speer in World War II, that in fact the *real* history of the 1930s and 1940s was not as these Americans lived and created it, but a bathetic tale of ahistorical, *uncaused* villains (Hitler) and heroes (Speer). It is a crime not only against those men and women who fought Speer, but against future generations who will have to fight again against the Dark Ages for human development.

Two examples, out of five long hours, make this point. Throughout the film, Speer is portrayed as a blocked young man who does not understand what he is doing. His spurious “emotions” are made to burst out finally towards the film’s end, to wrench the audience into sympathy.

Speer is shown visiting a slave labor camp—the work of his own hands. He is portrayed as shocked at the conditions. What does Albert Speer do, in this soap opera? He orders his subordinates to attend to the slave laborers’ needs, to feed them more, to work them less hard. This never happened, period. Yet there it is, large as life, in “living color” on the television screens of millions of American viewers.

And then the most amoral moments in the film. April, 1945: The blocked Speer must finally say goodbye to his “Mephistopheles.” The background music is meant to be heart-wrenching, the glimpse of Hitler’s mistress Eva Braun bravely saying farewell to her friend Speer before her suicide is meant to be affecting. Speer goes into the inner sanctum, and stammeringly bids goodbye to Hitler, who responds almost soothingly. The next scene: Albert Speer is packing his valise. His butler comes to the doorway to report, “The Führer died this afternoon at 1500 hours.” And Albert Speer, the blocked but basically heroic young man with whom the TV audience has been made to identify, sits down on his valise and sobs.

While the Speer on the screen sobbed and sobbed for Adolf Hitler, and the movie-music swelled, I thought to myself: The television audience is supposed to be crying now too. Are millions of Americans watching this outrage, and also crying, or blinking back tears—for Adolf Hitler?

There was no other way to interpret the climax of this five-hour brainwashing. All the elements of a classic Hollywood tear-jerker were there. By 1982, American memories of the Second World War are growing dim. Those who fought the battle are growing older, dying out. Today’s teenagers, immersed in the rock-drug counterculture, are being so morally destroyed that for them the Nazis can be made into superstars. The transformation of Hitler from the paramount symbol of evil in the 20th century into a kind of “anti-hero” has begun.