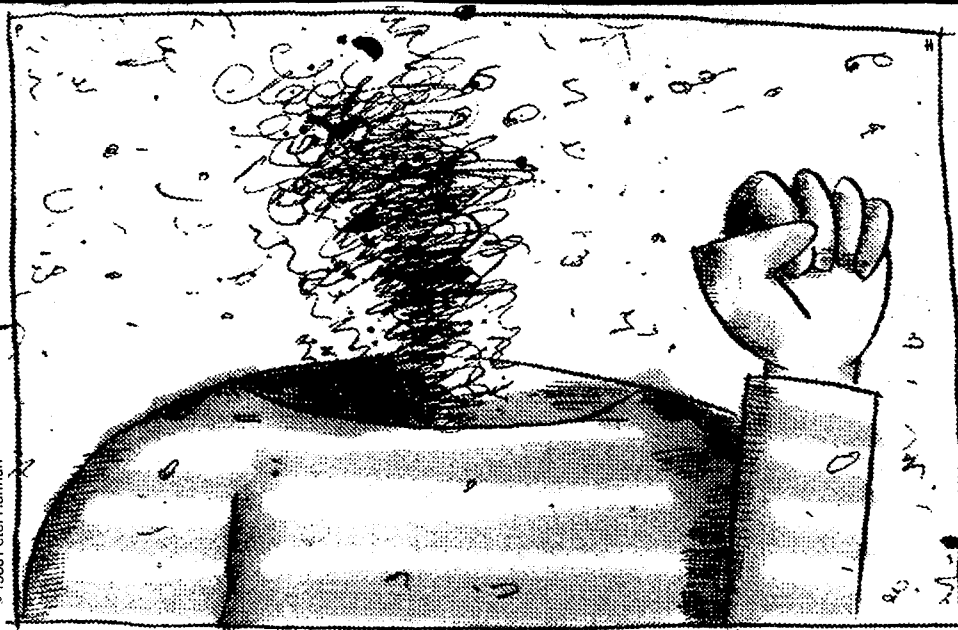


By Stephen Zunes

THE DRUG ISSUE HAS NOT ENDED WITH the presidential campaign. Both liberals and conservatives have exploited the issue for political gain without making a dent in the problem, while the left—except for occasional cries against the hypocrisy of the anti-drug movement—has remained largely silent.

This lack of response is ironic given the American left's strong tradition of opposition to alcohol and drug abuse. From the early feminist movement to the labor struggle, many on the left have maintained that the consumption of mind-altering, unhealthy and addictive substances plays an important role in keeping the working class docile. If oppressed peoples did not numb out their pain through external substances, it was argued, they would be far more likely to take the necessary steps to challenge the system that places them in such miserable circumstances.

Daze of rage: This changed in the '60s with the drug culture and its affiliation with the New Left, which found the Old Left's opposition to substance abuse archaic. Unfortunately, tolerance of drug use made a major contribution to the New Left's downfall, as it sapped the creative energies of organizers, justified legal attacks from authorities and severely damaged the movement's credibility among the general population. Those of the '60s generation who saw drug use as a means of challenging the seriousness and conformity of their elders were not unlike many advocates of the so-



Why has the left abandoned its traditional anti-drug position?

called "sexual revolution," who in the name of overcoming the prudery of the older generation simply increased the exploitation of women.

In addition, many Americans had a hard time understanding why many of those who self-righteously boycotted table grapes and other products had no problems consuming marijuana and cocaine, which leave a trail of exploitation and death from the fields of Latin America to the streets of the U.S.—not to mention liquor and tobacco, which have

been responsible for untold human suffering.

Few people on the left seem to appreciate how alcohol and drugs have become a major factor in the oppression of colonized people. From the Opium War of 1839-1842, when British war ships forced the opium trade on the Chinese, to the introduction of alcohol to the Indians of North America, imperialists have recognized the effectiveness of addictive substances in pacifying an entire population. It is a travesty that St. Patrick's Day is commemorated in the U.S. not as a celebration of the heroic resistance of the Irish people against centuries of foreign occupation and oppression, but as a tiresome re-enactment of the desperate escapism of a colonized people through drunkenness.

Gen. Anastasio Somoza's national guard sold marijuana to Nicaraguan youth as a conscious effort to curb their revolutionary zeal, a major reason for the Sandinistas' tough anti-drug policies and the ease with which the contras have been able to hook up, with apparent U.S. complicity, with the international drug trade. Similarly, the revolutionary government in Laos has been desperately trying to end the connection of

tonio Noriega, who for years remained on the CIA payroll despite his well-known connections with the Medellin drug cartel.

The issue of U.S. complicity is more than simply one of hypocrisy: drugs serve to protect existing institutions from being challenged by popular movements. In one sense, the use of drugs as an escape from reality for a temporary high is simply a logical outgrowth of a capitalist society where we addictively purchase consumer items to temporarily feel better rather than look at what changes in ourselves and in society could bring true meaning to our lives. It is no accident that the U.S., the world's No. 1 consumer society, is the world's No. 1 consumer of drugs.

A broader view: Yet the problem transcends capitalism. Indeed, Eastern European countries have the highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the world. But alcohol purchases in the Gdansk area of Poland declined by an estimated 40 percent during the peak of the Solidarity movement in the early '80s, not just because Solidarity leaders actively discouraged it, but because thousands of Poles, having experienced a total absence of control over their lives in a totalitarian society, were finally able to experience a sense of empowerment.

Similarly, it is no accident that the most disempowered segment of American society—young people—are the heaviest users of alcohol and illicit drugs. Yet despite the proliferation of "drug education" programs, virtually none of them stresses the importance of individuals taking charge of their own lives, since to do so could challenge the very foundations of oppressive society. Without real empowerment, escapism through drugs and alcohol is too tempting for many. As Abbie Hoffman has put it, telling a teenager in this oppressive society to "Just say 'No!'" is like telling a manic depressive to "Just cheer up!" Most young people who can say no, do say no. Yet few people have taken the effort to try to figure out why drugs are so appealing for such a large segment of today's youth.

One revealing episode came in the 1972 TV movie version of *Go Ask Alice*, the published diary of a teenage girl who gets involved in the high school drug culture and eventually dies of an overdose. The original diary noted the oppressive school environment, her authoritarian home situation and the isolation of middle-class life, clearly revealing the escapism that drugs offered. The network movie version sanitized the situation at home and school and made the teenage "drug pushers" the villains.

Taking back the issue: Drug and alcohol abuse is a symptom, not a cause, of society's ills. Punitive laws will not solve the problem. Nothing less than a radical restructuring of society will end the problem. Therefore, only the left is truly capable of addressing the issue in a realistic way. We must reclaim the drug issue, not through self-righteous moralizing, but through articulating the fact that any society in which so many people feel compelled to risk their health and livelihood to escape through alcohol and drugs is a society that is fundamentally flawed. Only in a new society, where people actually have control over their lives, will the drug issue go away.

Stephen Zunes is an assistant professor in the department of politics at Ithaca College.

HOLIDAY

Gift

**GIVE
IN THESE TIMES
OFFER**

In These Times
1912 Debs Ave.
Mt. Morris, IL 61054

MY NAME _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Send my **first** gift to:

NAME _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ \$34.95 one year ☐ \$18.95 for 29 issues☐ New order ☐ RenewalSend my **second** gift to:

NAME _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ \$24.95 one year ☐ \$16.95 for 29 issues☐ New order ☐ RenewalSend my **third** gift to:

NAME _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ \$19.95 one year ☐ \$14.95 for 29 issues☐ New order ☐ Renewal☐ Payment enclosed.☐ Bill me later.☐ Charge my MC/Visa

exp. date _____

Or call our toll free number 1-800-435-0715. In Illinois call 1-800-892-0753.

A gift card will be sent announcing your gift. All gifts will begin with the first issue in January, 1989. Please write any additional gifts on a separate sheet of paper. Each gift being sent to Canada or Mexico, please add \$6.50 postage for 29 issues and \$13.00 for one year. All other foreign orders add \$23.20 for 29 issues or \$33.00 for one year.

Few people on the left in the U.S. seem to appreciate how alcohol and drugs have become a major factor in the oppression of colonized people around the world.

Hmong peasants with the heroin trade, an enterprise set up by the CIA in the '50s.

To this day, there are major political figures and movements in the international drug trade subsidized by the American taxpayer. The U.S. has turned a blind eye toward the alleged involvement of family members of Morocco's King Hassan II and Lebanese President Amin Gemayel, two of the U.S.' strongest allies in the Arab world, in the hashish trade. The U.S.-backed mujahedin in Afghanistan are heavily involved in opium smuggling. And, of course, there is Panamanian leader Gen. Manuel An-

By Martin Oppenheimer

AN IN THESE TIMES EDITORIAL ON NOVEMBER 16 claims that if the socialist mayor of Burlington, Vt., Bernie Sanders, had run in the state's Democratic primary for a U.S. House seat, he would have won it and gone on to be elected to the Congress, without giving up an ounce of his program. Maybe. But to conclude from this pretty unique situation that the Democratic Party "is open to a full range of political views," and that (as the lead editorial of the same date argues) "if there is to be a popular left politics in the United States it will take place within the two-party system" is quite a jump. The recent campaign suggests just the opposite.

It seems that every four years well-intentioned socialists tell us to drop everything and work for some relatively decent candidate for the Democratic nomination, hoping at minimum that the public will get a chance to hear a progressive message. As the primaries go on, the message gets diluted as "our" candidate tries to get more delegates and to develop closer ties to the Democratic machinery. This usually doesn't work and "our" candidate loses anyway. Meanwhile, structures that had been put in place for a longer-term political struggle, like the National Rainbow Coalition, atrophy. Then we are told that no matter how scummy the final nominee is, he's the only chance we have at getting some space to develop left politics in the U.S., and besides, the Democratic Party is where the politically active masses are. By this time "the full range of political views" is long gone, no progressive program at all is under dis-

Forget the Democrats, the left needs its own political structures



Could Jesse Jackson have had more impact as a third-party candidate?

cussion and lots of those "masses" are no longer politically active. Then this candidate loses anyway—and even if he wins, pays no attention to those hard-working socialists who stayed the course. Not since John F. Kennedy read *The Other America*, anyway.

A different game: Now let's play "suppose." Suppose Jesse Jackson, with his Rainbow structure intact, had walked out and run a third-party campaign. He would have gotten pulverized and drawn votes from Michael Dukakis, and George Bush would have won. Probably. However, as we must sadly note, Dukakis, once rid of the black albatross, might have, for all the

wrong reasons, gained some of those white male votes while losing less than half of his black supporters. Lots of people on the left do end up voting for the "lesser evil" of the two major-party candidates. Thousands of Henry Wallace's supporters did just that in 1948 when they cast their votes for Harry Truman. However, fearing the loss of New York, Illinois, etc., Dukakis, like Harry Truman in 1948, would have had to make a serious appeal to left-liberal (including black) voters rather than taking them for granted. His domestic program would have had to become more populist. He might have been able to pull out a repeat of Truman's victory, though that's a long shot.

The Democratic Party is arena offering most hope for the left

By James Weinstein

MARTIN OPPENHEIMER RAISES ISSUES THAT have been debated in the left over the past 40 years, and presumably will continue to be debated for some time to come. We disagree with him on the particulars of his argument, but also, and more importantly, on its framework.

First, the framework. Oppenheimer is correct, in our opinion, in castigating those who every four years immerse themselves in presidential elections by supporting candidates in the Democratic Party. Such an approach naturally leads many frustrated leftists to conclude that since the Democratic Party is not now and never has been "our" party, it would be better to have one of our very own. Then, at least, we could say anything we wanted without regard to the electoral consequences.

Full-time job: But *In These Times* believes that a socialist or generally left politics should not be a quadrennial interlude. It should not focus on the presidency, because a president must govern in a way that does not disrupt the existing system of power and property, namely corporate capitalism. Presidential elections require broad coalitions for success, which—at least for Democrats—means appeals to working people, blacks, women and other traditional constituencies. But there is a clear distinc-

tion between an electoral coalition and the process of governing the nation. As Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington pointed out in 1974, "a broad governing coalition must include key people in Congress, the executive branch and the private establishment." It need "have little relation to the electoral coalition."

Thus, even if the American left helps elect a president through a coalition effort, we can expect little from him unless the left has significant power in the legislative branch of government. No matter how well-intentioned, no president can give much to—or get much for—constituencies that do not have significant numbers of votes in Congress or power in the private institutions of society. The left's private institutions, such as trade unions, environmental groups, consumer advocates and citizen-action groups, cannot come close to matching the power and influence of the corporate establishment, except in the electoral arena. For the left to be effective, therefore, it must be involved in electoral activity on a year-round basis and must participate in a broad movement committed to electing people to legislatures on every level of government.

Oppenheimer's concept of the left is different from *In These Times*'s. He sees the left as "10,000 to 20,000 people trying to educate the American public" about "our"

version of an alternative social system. We see it as a popular movement involved in and concerned with the day-to-day problems of our society.

Dream world: Now some particulars. First, if Jesse Jackson did follow Oppenheimer's advice to run as a third-party (Rainbow) candidate, he would take "less than half his black supporters with him," and certainly less than half his white supporters. How, then, would the Rainbow be able to elect "probably a dozen candidates like Bernie Sanders, most of them black"? Look at the particular districts. Would the Rainbow be able to defeat incumbent black representatives like Ron Dellums (D-CA) or John Conyers (D-MI) or Major Owens (D-NY)—or any of the other 22 black members of Congress? Would it be able to elect a white in any of the left-leaning districts now represented by people like Ted Weiss (D-NY) or Lane Evans (D-IL)? Clearly not.

Second, the Rainbow Coalition was put together by Jackson. Though many of its members have hoped that it would be the basis of a third party, Jackson never had that view. Thus the tension within the Rainbow (see *In These Times*, Dec. 7).

Third, Oppenheimer's implicit premise about why people vote seems wrong to us. He implies that an uncompromising left program is needed to motivate those people who do not bother to vote now. And he correctly characterizes this as an educational effort. But, in general, people do not vote in order to affirm their agreement with their educators. They vote only if they believe there is a reasonable chance of electing someone, even if the odds are against

Finally there would have remained in place a serious national left-oriented, multiracial, third-party structure supported by even a few unions. (That didn't happen in 1948 because it was not intended to happen.) It would have been able to elect to Congress not just one, but probably a dozen candidates like Bernie Sanders, most of them black.

Bad advice: The advice given us by those well-intentioned socialists every four years is, ultimately, pretentious. We are, perhaps, 10,000-20,000 people presumably trying to educate the American public about "the system" and our version(s) of an alternative? That's a tough enough job for that tiny army. Now we're supposed to take on (and, with our liberal friends, take over!) one of the major institutional pillars of the system. In the process, most of our educational agenda goes on the back burner. You can't function as a Democrat and talk socialism, as innumerable radicals in the '30s found out when they joined the New Deal. A Rainbow Party, on the other hand, would be a movement through which socialist ideas might become part of American political discourse once again.

Some socialists have advocated the strategy of trying to "realign" the two-party system so that the Democratic Party will become a quasi-social democratic party. In the frustrating political climate of the past 20 years, many veterans of the New Left have abandoned the streets for the ballot box via the Democratic Party, or the even more modest strategy of voter registration. This is called "realism." I prefer imagination.

Martin Oppenheimer is a sociologist at Rutgers University.

it. We agree, of course, that many people don't vote now because the existing candidates do not represent their interests, and that many more would vote for left candidates who did. But this would be true only if the candidates were participating in an arena in which they had a realistic chance of election. For now, that arena seems to be the Democratic Party.

CAT LOVERS AGAINST THE BOMB



1989
CALENDAR

The purrfect holiday gift idea

A wall calendar combining wit and humor with all the important dates in the struggle for peace and justice.

Reach out to both cat lovers and peace people this year with a unique calendar.

\$6.95 postpaid in USA

NEBRASKANS FOR PEACE
129 NORTH 10TH, #426F
LINCOLN, NE 68508

By Jeremiah Creedon

A YEAR AGO ON NOVEMBER 23, TV viewers around Chicago were taken hostage by a video pirate—an illegal broadcaster of televised images. At different times on two local channels that night, a Max Headroom look-alike interrupted the standard lineup with some oddball antics.

Compared to the original Max—that suave ghost-in-the-machine with a cybernetic stutter—this uninvited wanna-be was rather crude. “Max” mumbled. He pulled down his pants. A hand with a flyswatter reached on camera to spank those anonymous nates (which an FCC investigation has yet to apprehend). Then the picture faded, returning viewers to the sci-fi series *Dr. Who*.

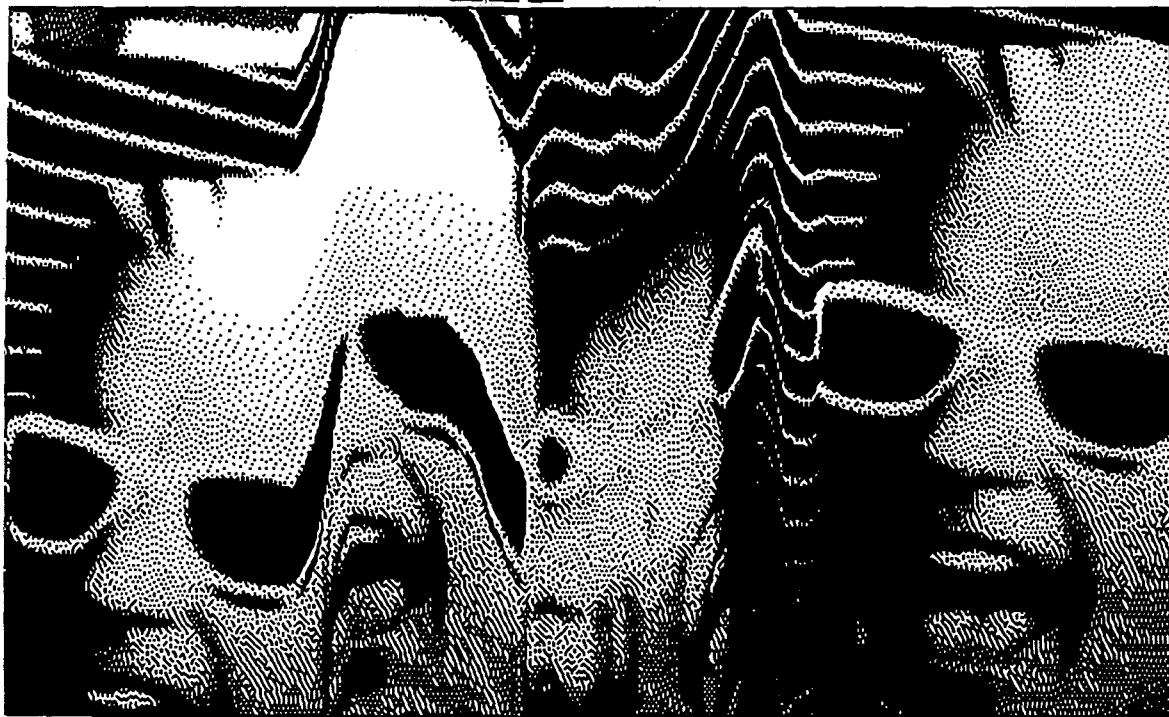
“Max” and company had transmitted their illicit mirages for 116 seconds, bringing the national total for pirated airtime to less than seven minutes. That isn’t much, considering the average TV viewer watches authorized images for seven hours a day, but it has been enough to make an impact on the popular imagination. As a figure whose identity oscillates between folk hero and fringe lunatic, the video pirate reveals something about the American mind—and its relationship to the mass media.

High-tech attacks: Video pirates belong to a wider genus—the technological interloper—that society regards with profound ambivalence. These postmodern renegades include computer hackers and “virus” makers, underground radio operators, phone fraud experts and so forth. They are often just criminals. But as mythic symbols they also triumph over the machines that surveil us, dodging the information nets that entangle most others.

Of all these types, video pirates may be the most intriguing, in part because they are the least likely to be encountered. To succeed, video pirates must beam their signal up to a communications satellite, where it overrides the standard signal and assumes its place on the downlink carom into America’s homes. The Chicago team needed transmitting gear worth maybe half a million dollars to get “Max” inside the system, and he wasn’t there for long. If video pirates ride the beam for more than a minute or so, their hidden transmitters are more easily located.

Judging from the number of actual cases—two—video piracy is barely more than a concept. Even so, it has generated what appears at first to be two contradictory responses: a glorification of video pirates in popular narrative, and a suppression of them in reality. It seems the *idea* of video piracy stirs enough dread and fascination to sustain both impulses, with or without the video pirate’s actual existence.

The official response is quite clear. Social custodians and com-



Pirates sail the American mind

munications executives—who today share overlapping functions—are not amused by these characters. During the ’80s, the country’s growing dependence on satellite networks led many to predict that video piracy could become a major problem. Broadcasters and regulators were quick to define such displays as neither works of prankish American ingenuity nor public art. Video piracy was a serious (even seditious) offense.

By 1985, a year before any act resembling video piracy had occurred, the CIA and others were already regarding the video pirate as a potential “terrorist.” Given the American attitude toward “terrorism,” this wasn’t the semantic company an aspiring pop hero would have chosen to keep.

After midnight: The first *real* video pirate struck in April 1986. The result was a four-and-a-half minute bootleg broadcast on HBO, a written message protesting the cable channel’s decision to start “scrambling” its signal. The 14-word statement was authored by one Captain Midnight, who resented that he could no longer pluck free movies from the air with his home satellite dish. A few months later, after a national manhunt involving the latest surveillance gadgetry, Captain Midnight was brought to justice.

John MacDougall, a part-time technician at a satellite transmitting company in Florida, delivered his gripe over the company’s advanced equipment. MacDougall also ran a home dish dealership that scrambling seemed likely to ruin. HBO’s decision could be seen as an assault of sorts on his business, and most Americans would acknowledge MacDougall’s right to speak out on his own behalf. But to do so where others might actually hear him (and to interrupt *The Falcon and the Snowman* in the process) was more liberty than the courts were willing to allow.

MacDougall pleaded guilty to unauthorized interference, was fined and sentenced to a year of probation. According to *Time* magazine, “Captain Midnight’s much publicized

VIDEO

stunt threw a fright into the communications world. If TV programing could be disrupted, industry executives warned, so could sensitive data transmissions of business, government and the military.”

MacDougall’s property rights, or the theoretical issue of whether anyone really enjoys free speech without access to the modern modes of communication, were not addressed.

The verdict had been swift: the video pirate was a domestic undesirable and a threat to national security. Few entirely believe this, of course—or were expected to. But the rationale at least existed now to look upon the video pirate with new suspicion.

This ambivalence complicated an initial Robin Hood reflex—or empathy for a social type who is officially labeled a deviant. The video pirate was hereafter to be treated like those berserk fans who occasionally dash across the field during a nationally televised ball game. Some sort of mutual agreement had been reached between audience and authority; the camera should look the other way.

It is a strange admission that without the camera certain things in the modern world would not exist.

Prime-time idol: Yet despite these inhibitions—or because of them—video pirates appeared more and more in public fantasy: in cyberpunk science fiction and Hollywood movies and even on television.

The short-lived but highly regarded ABC series *Max Headroom* stylized the video pirate into a prime-time idol. British producer Peter Wagg drew praise from the left for

creating a slick, salable and yet implicitly critical vision of a late-late capitalist dystopia. Wagg’s one stroke of real genius was to set the show “20 minutes into the future.” The distance between acceptable popular fantasy and subversive social criticism could not have been narrowed much more without alienating the conservative American audience.

Banished from the present, video pirates could still thrive in the narrow gap between actuality and the irrelevant future. This conceptual “space” oddly resembled the peculiar “dimension” where fictional video pirates find their haven from a corrupt society. Like *Max Headroom*, these fantasies often start with the premise that television has become a tool for social control, a tool operated by a centralized and deca-

Video pirates epitomize the return of the repressed.

dent political order. But inevitably, a technological interloper turns the medium upon its former masters. Television, the neural network of the social body, also provides sanctuary and avenue for the social pathogen.

For *Max Headroom* and other fictional characters, this ability to live inside the system is the source of their postmodern mystique. But all the talk of cyber-this and cyber-that is a misleading veneer. The video pirate has many antecedents in folklore, as one can see by entertaining a simple idea: modern communications, with its intersecting microwaves and optic fibers, is basically a network of tunnels.

Like tunnels through history, these modern counterparts have acquired more uses than the official ones they were designed for. They convey energy and waste (and now digital

information) but they also take on symbolic importance as the realm of the marginal character. The invisible beam is to the video pirate what the catacombs were to the censored cults in ancient Rome, or what sewers were to the thieves of Paris.

On yet another level, then, the tunnel becomes a storage place for all that a society must repress. Most urban cultures cultivate a mythology of tunnels as a way to vent these potentially explosive vaults, which are filled with the antisocial impulses that prove untenable in reality and yet impossible to fully banish.

The video pirate is the hero of such a myth. Despite the official outcry against them, they will always have sway in the deeper regions of the imagination. Like many mythic figures, the video pirate epitomizes “the return of the repressed,” which always pops up in the strangest places bearing little resemblance to the shunted impulse or desire that generated it.

An economy of flattery: The Freudian analogy could be extended, but enough is enough. The point is, the relationship between the American mass media and their audience is complex—more complex than the anti-authoritarian scenarios of a dozen popular movies would indicate. In popular fantasy, the video pirate’s rebellion against authority is applauded, because his victory is more oedipal than political. In fact, the public identification with this figure may actually shore up the existing order, by resolving certain primal tensions before they can be politically articulated.

The real video pirate is a different matter. As an uninvited participant, an interloper like “Max” in Chicago threatens to upset the ritualized interaction between television and its viewers. This conversation involves many agreements about what should be shown, said, acknowledged, and suppressed. Television is a medium for, among other things, exchanging reassurances, an economy of flattery that the video pirate rudely unbalances.

At a time when this commerce in cultural values seems as shaky as the American economy at large, a few might welcome the video pirate as a symbolic whistle-blower, or even as the agent of wider revolution. But most will never welcome such a figure. It is an odd fact that individual rebellion finds little support in a land that blatantly idealizes individual liberty. Computers and satellites were used in the search for Captain Midnight, an effort that industry executives portrayed as a kind of massive spotlight shined on each American face, one by one. But Captain Midnight’s nemesis turned out to be a regular joe who discovered his identity while eavesdropping in a public area—and turned him in.

Jeremiah Creedon is a writer living in Minneapolis.

By Pat Aufderheide

Living-room screening room: making home video an issue

MORE AND MORE, WE'RE STAYING home to go to the movies. And if kids of all ages are getting their very own cassettes of *E.T.* for Christmas, there's plenty of material out there for grownups.

The challenge is finding it. Don't expect your local video store shelf to showcase the latest evidence that diversity can survive media mega-conglomeration. Video-by-mail catalogues typically shove social-issue, experimental and independently produced videos into a little category called "Other" or "Special Interest." There, you are as likely to find such items as *History of Pornography* and *Lt. Col. Oliver North: His Story* (I draw here from Crystal Music Video's catalogue) as you are *Mother Teresa*.

But increasingly the "special interests" that cover everything that Geraldo Rivera doesn't are getting access to the unusual, the offbeat, and, yes, the left-wing on video. Some video catalogues stretch the boundaries way past the usual fare of action films and safely standard classics. Facets Video (1517 W. Fullerton, Chicago, IL 60614), for instance, will sell or rent by mail such varied work as Andy Warhol films, *Native America Speaks*, experimental video art, fairy tales from Africa and left documentaries on Central America. Media Network offers special guides to videos (as well as films and slideshows) on social issues, such as one on the environment produced with Environmental Action, *Green Gems* (Alternative Media Information Center, 121 Fullerton St., 5th fl., NY, NY 10038).

But video production is far ahead of video distribution. Until distribution discovers a stable national market niche, you're likely to be buying rather than renting videos. And the market is still institutional; few are yet available for home-video prices, at under \$100. Most independent producers are still stuck with the fact that sales don't cover the costs of production. With this issue, *In These Times* begins regular coverage of independently produced video that expands the range of expression on social issues with a sampler of recent works. Check with distributors for rental and purchase terms.

South Africa: California Newsreel's Southern Africa Media Center (630 Natoma St., San Francisco, CA 94103) has recently released three one-hour videos, the first two made in Zimbabwe and marked by poverty of production circumstances but high professional standards. Both offer an angle on Southern Africa unavailable in mainstream media.

Biko: Breaking the Silence is a companion piece to *Cry Freedom*, but stands on its own. It intersperses scenes from the making of Richard Attenborough's florid

epic on the way black activist Steven Biko changed white journalist Donald Woods' life with information on the black struggle against apartheid. The range of organizations, and of opinions about them, can surprise even someone trying to stay informed about the anti-apartheid movement. But the burden is on the viewer to sort out a conclusion in this loosely organized video.

After the Hunger and the Drought provides a fascinating look past the surface of political life, in interviews with a wide variety of authors in Southern Africa today. Not surprisingly, politics shapes the work of literary artists, but it's not always the politics of the moment. Zimbabwean writer Dumbudzo Marechera (*House of Hunger*), now dead, describes the fierce pressures of colonialism that shaped his self-conscious madness as a student at Oxford and then as a returned exile. Women authors talk about the pressures that keep them from writing in the day-to-day and also challenge them to develop new expression. Issues that range from class privilege to how to capture black African heritage without folkloricizing it, and the social obligation of the African writer infuse these interviews. Routine but competent camera work allows us to see the contradictions that surround the writers and inform their work.

The Cry of Reason features Rev. C.F. Beyers Naude, once a religious leader of the Afrikaaner elite and now a staunch supporter of the anti-apartheid movement. The video movingly captures Naude's dramatic change of perspective, beginning when Naude visited a

group of black miners in their barracks and was appalled by the inhuman conditions. Naude on screen recalls grim conversations with his peers ("They told me, 'If you do this, your whole future will be destroyed'" and anxiety-ridden talks

VIDEO

with his wife. Black leaders such as Bishop Desmond Tutu comment on his courage, for moving irrevocably out of his culture without the assurance that blacks would welcome his shift. The video unpretentiously and implicitly makes a call to action on the part of people who have much less to lose than Beyers Naude.

Art: New York artist Leon Golub and Chicago's Kartemquin Educational Films (*Taylor Chain I and II; The Last Pullman Car*) may seem like an odd pair, but they're nicely matched in *Golub*, a profile of a socially conscious artist at work. The hour-long film debuted with success at the New York Film Festival. Golub is known for his awkward, sometimes terrifying, gigantic images of the violence of our times. In intensely accurate portraits of mercenaries, death squads and other agents of state violence, he gives the drama that headlines don't catch—not just a human face but all-too-human bodies.

Kartemquin is noted for its use of *cinéma vérité* as a basis for meticulously structured, probing film essays that address social issues from the viewpoint of those most intimately affected by them. *Golub* balances in-studio interviews with the artist as he works with images from the crises he incarnates on canvas (South Africa, Central America, the Iran-contra

scandal) and interviews with gallery goers. Without narration and backed by a haunting musical score, *Golub* (available in both video and film from New Day Films, 853 Broadway, Suite 1210, NY, NY 10003) captures the unity of political and aesthetic energy in Golub's work, and challenges us to see artwork as a process rather than as a commodity.

Covert Action: In *The Secret World of the CIA*, ex-CIA agent John Stockwell—winner of the CIA's Medal of Merit, officer in charge of Tay Ninh province in Vietnam and National Security Council coordinator of the covert war in Angola under Henry Kissinger—gives the audience an understated and devastating armchair tour (from his own study) of his violent 13-year career. His talk helps you understand not just what happens behind the scenes but why people do it.

Perhaps the most interesting element in Stockwell's frank recounting is his early and enduring commitment to principle. Stockwell joined the CIA not as an adventurer

Local video stores don't showcase the diversity of independent video.

but as a patriot concerned about the threats to American democracy. As he raised doubts, he was told that bigger guys had the "big picture." He finally undertook his Angola assignment, he explains, to get the big picture. And when he got it he blew the whistle.

Insight Video (875 Main St., Cambridge, MA 02139), an educational

video company specializing in producing videotapes on social issues for the classroom (and selling them at under \$100), has also produced an hour-long lecture by Stephen Jay Gould, *Evolution and Human Equality*, challenging racist notions with the analytical tools of biological science. It will soon release a video that features Barry Commoner discussing the relationship between technology and the environment. Production values are excellent and appropriate to the lecture format.

Labor: In 30 minutes, *Hard Choices* (produced by Daniel Kazimierski, Marion Lipschutz and Peggy Weiss, and narrated by Ernest Borgnine) paints a video picture of life in the wake of shutdown. Rustbowl tragedy hit Midland, PA in 1982, when the Crucible Steel Plant put 5,000 people out of work. More, it took the economic heart out of a community. In this low-tech video, working people of Midland make that loss immediate. A cold eye is cast on job retraining programs that net some workers lower wages at temporary jobs, and interviews with young people echo the despair of unemployed workers in their 50s. The video (available from Marion Lipschutz, Westerleigh Rd., Purchase, NY 10577) does not pretend to propose solutions to the problem it boldly delineates. Instead it is a first-person narrative from the site of economic and emotional disaster.

Locked Out!, an hour-long video produced for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (PO Box 2812, Denver, CO 80201) by Organizing Media Project, tells a gripping story, with the widest-ranging implications for public health and the environment, in the style of a video briefing paper. Clearly partisan and fact-filled, it was made as part of the ongoing organizing effort (and is available at a virtual giveaway price). BASF, one of the largest chemical multinationals in the world, inheritor of I.G. Farben (maker of poison gas in WWI, and whose I.G. Auschwitz wrung profits from concentration camp inmates), has locked out union workers at its Geismar, La., plant for more than four years. The lockout is part of a broad union-busting effort. OCAW has mobilized international support and worked closely with environmental groups. (See *ITT*, Dec. 24, 1986, Jan. 14 and Jan. 20, 1987). The video is chastening in its demonstration of the plant's callous disregard for safety, not only of its workers but of the community now afflicted with high cancer and miscarriage rates. The wider social role of unions is made vividly clear, as is the implacable desire of multinationals like BASF to destroy them. OCAW's fruitful collaboration with environmental and community groups is an important lesson for the future. ■

© 1988 Pat Aufderheide

Artist Leon Golub being filmed by Gordon Quinn and Jerry Blumenthal.

