

*FABULOUSLY
TASTY
TRICERATOPS*



*FTT 12, December 1991
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The twelfth issue -- a little later than we'd have liked, but we hope that the gap between this and the thirteenth won't be as long as that between the eleventh and this. "This" is nominally a science fiction fanzine, which means that we rarely mention science fiction at all (although this issue contains whole paragraphs explicitly discussing nothing else!) and is available for any of the following:

- your own publication in exchange (we trade all-for-all);
 - a letter of comment on issues raised herein;
 - contributions of illustrations or articles for future issues (but please enquire first); or, if you really must
- £1 per single issue.

Since we prefer active response to passive payment, the fourth of these methods should be regarded as the last resort for those who lack time for the first three. Some people have failed to respond at all, and if they continue not responding will find that this is their last issue; the decision lies entirely in their hands.

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The cover was designed by Judith Hanna, based on an illustration from the cover of Adrian Desmond's *The Hot-Blooded Dinosaurs*; the illustrations on pages 4 and 5 are also by Judith. Other illustrations have been taken from *The Guardian* (pages 6, 9 and 29), *New Internationalist* (pages 7 and 29), and *Surveyor* (this page).

THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE INVISIBLE CO-EDITOR

The front cover should make clear that this fanzine has two editors -- although some male readers still have trouble grasping this point, and persist in addressing their responses solely to Joseph. Once again: *all responses should be addressed to both editors!* (Some may recall that a similar reminder appeared on the contents page of the ninth issue -- although one reader subsequently confessed that he didn't read this because in his opinion fanzine contents pages are generally identical.)

Who, you might wonder, are these primitive specimens who seek to deny women's participation in fanzines? Wonder no more -- in a spirit of scientific openness, future issues will document their names in a specially created "Up Against The Wall, Wobbly Bits!" Hall of Shame, *pour encourager les autres*.



THE BUTTERFLY THAT STAMPED, OR REDRAWING THE LINE

Judith Hanna

I was under-theorised last issue. I was right enough to focus on "drawing the line" as a key question that cannot be dodged but must be faced. I started, I remind you, by challenging the fairly common use of "But where would you draw the line?" as if the difficulty of the exercise meant that you should abandon it altogether. My position was that drawing lines was inescapable, so to say "But where do you draw the line?" isn't an argument against censorship, for example, or pornography (or killing, or democracy, or....), but instead that discussion needs to look for what *criteria* most usefully discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable. Leave it to the Moral Majority and by default their definitions have it their own way. But, I have to admit, I was thinking of "the line" in simple terms -- a straightforward division on a simple continuum at some shade of grey where white might be said to change to black.

In June, as we travelled around Italy, I read James Gleick's *Chaos: Making A New Science*. At first I found his "human interest" journalese style annoyingly superficial, particularly as my earlier reading, in Venice, had been Stephen Jay Gould's exemplary *Wonderful Life*. But as Gleick went on, the fascination of his material overwhelmed the irritations. Like anyone vaguely interested in science, I'd come across pretty pictures of Mandelbrot sets, knew the term "fractal", had heard that a butterfly fluttering its wings in Brazil could set off a tornado in Texas, and knew that Chaos Theory had been really hot news last year or maybe the year before and I ought to read up on it.

I planned to write an intricate piece for *FTT* about this new theory of "drawing the line" in relation to censorship, schizophrenia, evolution, congestion and the greenhouse effect. In between meandering through mazes of Venetian canals, admiring the cool green and rose marble candy stripes of Florence's Duomo, and learning the layout of ancient Rome, I scribbled pages of notes which seemed perfectly clear and logical at the time. "Sensitive dependence on initial conditions" no doubt explains why, re-examined in the grey British winter, they have lost all coherence. I sort of know what I meant, but they don't add up to the gloriously intricate castle in the air that grew up in the Italian sun.

Some people, I understand, think holidays are for relaxing. None of that for the Frinton Road Historiography & Birdwatching Collective. Attila the Guidebook sets a ruthless pace through a rigorous itinerary. Pauses are permitted for photographing everything that does not move swiftly out of sight. Breaks for refreshment are grudgingly acknowledged: "*Imbiss* after *imbiss!* Stuff, stuff, stuff, eh Hanna?" declaims the Fuhrer, in fluent Eurish. Occasional pauses for sketching are permitted as educational opportunities for him to tell me that it doesn't look right. Personally, I regard perspective as a plot; impressionistic nature is so much easier to fudge convincingly. In the evenings, we catch up on the Heavy Reading Programme.

Then we come back to real life: towering piles of deadlines leap out at me the moment I meander back to work. Shuffle home in the evening just about able to feed myself and fall asleep. Fail to adhere to Get Up Early And Write regime.

In September, off to Eastern Europe for another brisk holiday. Return to even more frantic heaps of deadlines, all due right now. "*FTT* article, dear," demands Attila the Co-Editor. "And police up this mess. Sty, sty sty! Tidy up, put away, tidy up." Tidying up is easier than thinking, so I tidy up. Knitting is easier than thinking, though deciding that I will make up my own pattern for a waistcoat adds an element of intellectual complication. Knitting displaces work-reading on the daily Tube commute. And from time to time the TV runs tapestry: I colour in, stitch by stitch, *Book Of Kells* motifs in front of *Sounds Of The Sixties* (when The Rolling Stones

looked young and wholesome), *The Second Russian Revolution* (with Ligachev confirming every time he opens his mouth to explain his side of events what a thoroughly nasty piece of Stalinism he is) and other incidental diversions. "Tapestry at 8.30 tonight, dear," says Joseph, who regards unfinished projects as Untidy. "And what about your article for FTT?"

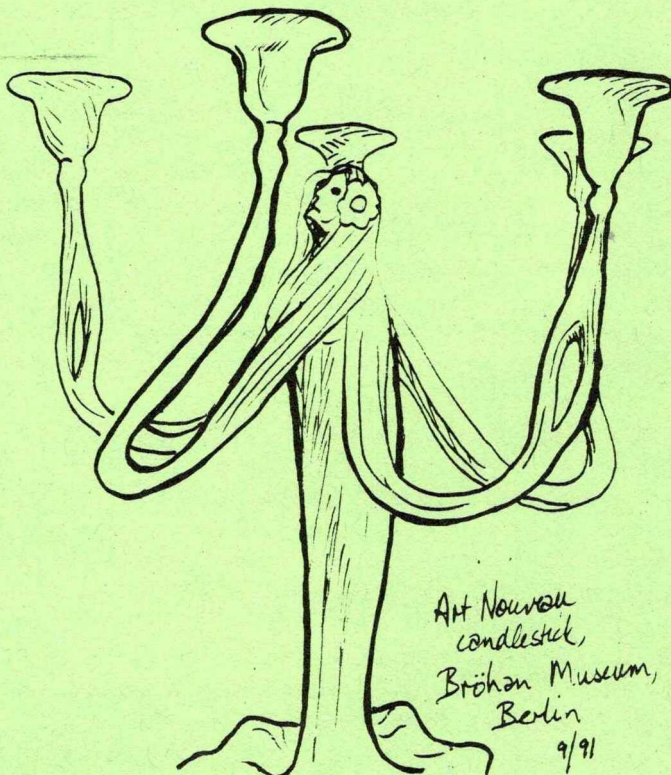
Dutifully attempt to theorise Chaos. The physico-mathematical paradigm shift, that is, rather than the state of life as she is lived. It focuses on transition states between one thing and another, on boundary conditions, my notes remind me: at the boiling point phase change from liquid to gas, for instance, some parts of the liquid are bubbling furiously into steam while others remain tranquil; yet within the bubbling zones will be patches of tranquillity, and within the tranquil zones patches of bubbles, at whatever scale of magnification you look.

Order within chaos, chaos within order. No clear transition, complexity at all scales. At whatever scale you examine a coastline's transition between land and water, or a mountain range's transition between land and air, the line jags and wiggles with the same (mathematically definable) degree of complexity. But complexity isn't always the same at different scales: compare a forest (a complex mass of trees) with a tree (a complex of branches, twigs and leaves) with a branching-veined leaf with the cellular and sub-cellular systems that make it up. At each scale no clear simple outline, but a different complex pattern.

The analogy with life as she is lived and the state of the world is obvious. At my personal scale, placid suburban bird-watching interrupted by the diverse excitements of deadlines, holidays and life with a randomly explosive Joseph. At Joseph's personal level, a continuing engagement at the interface with chaos proclaimed by news headlines and my inherent untidiness. Even in Kuwait or Iraq or what used to be Yugoslavia, people living amid the wreckage of war no doubt still try to pursue the daily routines of clean your teeth, keep the place tidy, mind your manners and defuse tension with a joke. Chaos within order, order within chaos.

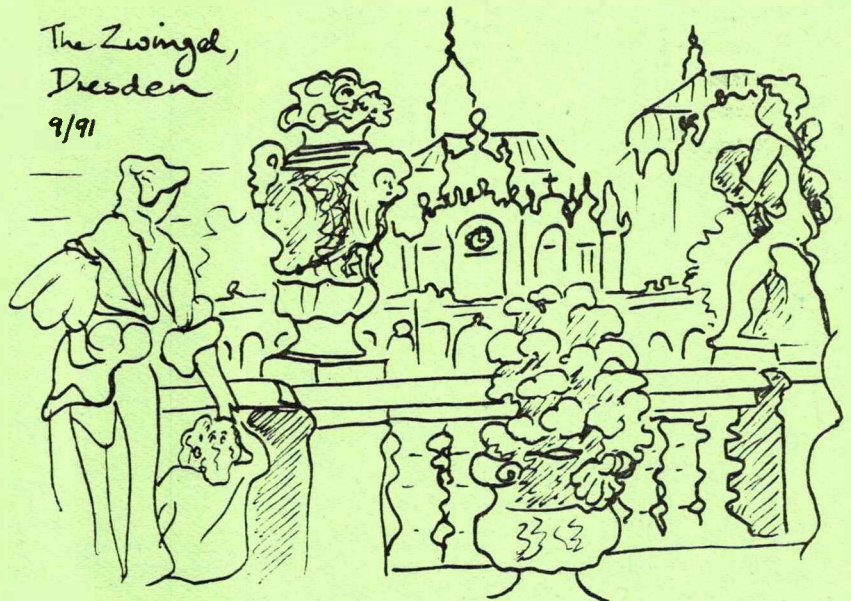
How do you recognise a "paradigm shift"? I don't follow the mathematics of chaos, the mapping of things dubbed logistic difference equations and strange attractors. But the axioms drawn from them provide fascinating new ways of organising all sorts of insights about the way things are. "Patterns appear on different scales at the same time." "The simplest systems behave unpredictably; yet order arises spontaneously in these systems, chaos and order together." "Disorderly behaviour in

simple systems acts as a creative process. It generates complexity -- rich organised patterns, sometimes stable, sometimes unstable, sometimes finite and sometimes infinite, but always with the fascination of living things." "Small perturbations can have long consequences....sensitive dependence on initial conditions." "To call chaos 'non-linear science' is like calling biology 'the study of non-elephant animals'."



The last time I met a paradigm shift was encountering linguistic theory at University, twenty years ago, back when Chomsky's generative syntactical structures were new. That was before structuralism was discovered by the gliterati, to be looted as an instrument of free-ranging cultural bricolage. Its notion that any meaningful assemblage can be described simply as a structure of significant differences set by

patterns of binary opposition could bring a nice reductionist simplicity, or could be used to construct elaborate intellectual castles in the air with no visible foundation in anything concrete at all. It is the feeling of excitement that marks a paradigm shift, as lots of facts and phenomena that had previously rattled around loosely, falling through the gaps in all reliable and ordered theories, ignored as experimental error or not conveniently solvable or captured only by odd folk sayings ("Sod's Law"), latch onto the new explanatory principle and light up like electric bulbs to signal the contact. A new paradigm is a rich source of metaphor, a new way of thinking about things you've always sort of known.



You could compare travelling to a mini paradigm shift. You land in Rome, Venice, Paris, New York or, for that matter, London, with a jumble of blurred expectations, like so many jigsaw pieces: names and landmarks gleaned secondhand from reading, TV, postcards and faint memories from school. Suddenly the landmarks tower all around you in full living colour with added pigeons and, in London, litter. You are within the jigsaw, at real life scales, meandering through streets, plazas, intriguing back alleys at your own pace (set by a determined Joseph, guidebook in hand), exploring what lies inside and beside and beyond. As you walk through the jigsaw, pieces interlock and become living reality around you.

This was most dramatic in Rome. Years of reading about ancient Rome with its Seven Hills and Father Tiber, its empire of decadent tyrants eventually overrun by barbarians, the Popes and heresies of medieval Christendom, and the glorious Renaissance. Now we found ourselves wandering from our hotel just off the newly cleaned Trevi Fountain, along the side of the Quirinal Hill, past the soaring brick of Trajan's market, to the sixty-six acres of Imperial Fora which link the Capitoline Hill with the Palatine Hill where the palaces were. Meandering through back streets, we were ambushed by the Roman Pantheon, where Raphael is buried, and by the baroque fountains of the elliptical Piazza Navona which preserves the lines of Diocletian's hippodrome racetrack. Both lavishly be-pigeoned.

I didn't actually like Rome at the time -- too noisy, too grimy, too much traffic (even with central area car ban), rather warmer than is comfortable. (Joseph in his shorts, t-shirt and *marsupio* pouch laughed at my memsahib lady explorer garb of shady hat, long sleeves, flowing skirt -- contrasting philosophies on keeping cool.) But having wandered through joining up the dots of ancient names, seeing bits of broken column built by obscure emperors now left lying carelessly around amid the detritus of modernity, impelled me to read up on the theory of how the horizontal time-slice we had seen related to the vertical time-strata of history.

So as Maureen and I rode trains from Berlin to Vienna to Budapest to Prague, I was reading my way through Michael Grant's excellent *History Of Rome*. Chapters of legal, administrative and economic analysis alternated with chapters on the emperors, generals and other notable names. I was particularly intrigued by fleeting mention of one Galla Placidia (?390-440? AD), sister of the emperor Honorius, taken from Rome as a hostage by Alaric after the Visigoths three day Roman Ravage Tour, married to his brother Atahaulf who took over as Visigothic leader but handed back by him to Honorius who married her off "against her will" to leading general Constantius who, in his turn, became Emperor. When Constantius died, Galla Placidia, with what seems to have been more than usual competence for those days at the end of the Roman

Empire, ruled as regent for their son Valentinian until he reached adulthood and took over, less competently. That no messy death is mentioned for her suggests she managed to die peacefully. Another source notes that "the tomb of Princess Galla Placidia at Ravenna is one of the mosaic masterpieces of the world". (What a life! No, you can't pinch her for your historical novel -- I spotted her and she's mine.) Focus in on one human figure and her story, and the muddled chaos of the times she lived through comes into focus around her. The broad, confusing sweep of history comes down to human scale.

Chaos within order, complexity at all scales. "What makes buildings and streetscapes interesting is the twiddly bits," Maureen and I decided. There's no charm at all in Dresden's vast windswept Leninplatz flanked by the grey tower blocks of Hotel Moskva and Hotel Leningrad. (The totalitarian inhumanity would be no less were they the Dresden Hilton and Trusthouse Forte, as they may well soon be. Just think of London's Paternoster Square, no less soulless, just as inhuman. Transnational corporate capitalism is totalitarian too.) The Baroque line swoops in opulent curves, festooned with pouting putti and wreathes of foliage. The Art Nouveau line is all flowing curves, as if to impart movement to the solid objects it embodies, at its best in ways that harmonise with and enhance function. Or on the flat canvases of painting, consider the Impressionist line which, the closer you focus on it, the more it dissolves into blobs of different colours; at its most extreme, Pointillism. Complexity, twiddly bits, whatever scale you look at them.

The more we travelled around Europe this summer, the more it was borne upon us that the charm of a scene depends on abundance of twiddly bits. Prague's fairytale bright Old Town Square with its witch's hat Gothic Old Town Hall set amid lolly-painted Baroque and market stalls; the organically flowing balconies of Budapest's Gresham Hotel, crumbling from neglect; Dresden's blackened and surpassingly baroque Zwinger palace.

Buildings are a convenient scale to snap into so many colour prints to be pasted into albums of cues for memories, like so many jigsaw pieces cut adrift from their living context of street maze, people, traffic, noises and smells. Townscape is too big to keep handily in memory; it gets edited down to a sketchy map. But maps can bear surprisingly little resemblance to reality. In Kutna Hora, a medieval German silver-mining town in Bohemia, we stood where half a dozen roads met, Joseph trying to theorise from the map which one led to the old town. "We take that one, dear," said Maureen and I, "the one with cobbles. Cobbles always mean old town." And so it was.

Of course we need maps and guidebooks, timetables and signposts to navigate our way around, to set out the theory of how different parts of the maze of life relate to each other. Though straight lines are needed for the structural plans of the buildings we live in, they are more livable softened by curves, colours and picturesque clutter. Dealing with the twiddly bits of life -- the people, the pace, the pigeons -- calls for improvisation, impressionism. Life doesn't run in straight lines; the complex curves and clusters of chaos picture it better.



THE PARTY WISHES TO DISSOLVE
ITSELF....

THE PARTY IS ALWAYS RIGHT....

(Die Tageszeitung, Berlin)

ROGER & ME

Tim Jones

When, in 1985, I travelled to Melbourne, Australia to attend Aussiecon II, that year's World Science Fiction Convention, I stayed for an extra week and went to the Australian Nuclear Disarmament Conference in the same city. David Lange's Labour government, which came to power in 1984, had recently declared New Zealand nuclear-free and forbidden an American nuclear-armed warship to call here, and it was only a couple of months since French secret-service frogmen had blown up Greenpeace's *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland harbour.

New Zealand, therefore, was about as hot an item as it ever becomes in Australia, and the New Zealanders at the Disarmament Conference had the pleasant experience of Australians coming up to them and asking how we did it. Though it was tempting for the peace movement to claim all the credit, there were a number of factors involved: the ascent to power of a generation which did not have the "Empire first" mentality of previous New Zealand politicians, the effect of nightly news coverage of massive European (and Australian) peace demonstrations in the early eighties on New Zealanders' consciousness, and the efforts of the peace movement. But one crucial factor, Australians and New Zealanders agreed, was that New Zealanders expected their politicians to listen to them, whereas Australians did not. New Zealanders still believed that a letter to their MP, or an in-person visit, could produce some positive result; most Australians were convinced that their MPs listened only to Big Business or Big Labour.

In 1985, I was happy to agree with that conclusion. The New Zealand Labour Party was, of course, sympathetic to the anti-nuclear viewpoint, and the National Party (pale blue Conservatives), although they hadn't been prepared to budge on the nuclear issue, had shown themselves to be persuadable on any issue which didn't violate their fundamental principle: staying in power. David Lange's election campaign contained several hefty planks marked "consultation", and Labour started consulting in all directions almost immediately they came to office. Every sign pointed to a government which would have its ear hard up against the public's mouth -- unhygienic, perhaps, but laudable nevertheless.

Every sign was wrong. The 1984 Labour government returned in 1987 on the basis that they needed time to "finish the job" was booted out by the electorate in 1990, so severely that they were reduced to a rump of 29 seats opposing National's 67. David Lange, whose resignation as Prime Minister a little over a year earlier may have sealed Labour's fate, commented that Labour lost because "they didn't listen".

I experienced this deafness at first hand. My local MP over the previous six years was Stan Rodger, commonly known as "Sideline Stan" for the lengths to which he took non-interventionism as Minister of Labour. ("Stan! The train-drivers, bus-drivers, airline pilots and ship's officers are all out! The country's transport system is paralysed!" "Well, that'll cut the fuel bill, won't it?") The song "Affable, Balding Me", written by Johnny Mercer as a spoof of *Time* magazine's predilection for pithy, two-adjective tags, describes Stan to a tee. Having made an appointment to see him about, say, the idiocy of New Zealand's buying four vastly expensive and sophisticated frigates from Australia to perform duties which could be better undertaken by fisheries protection and patrol craft, you would make your way up the steps to his office (situated directly below a restaurant called "Heaven") to be ushered in to meet the great man. Getting to see him was the easy part; the hard part was getting him to notice you.

Whatever your plea, however great the passion in your voice, Stan would sit on the other side of the desk and stare out of the window at the traffic below, looking at you every five minutes and saying "HMMMMM....yes....I see what you mean". When your tub had been thoroughly thumped, he would rise, promise to look into the matter, and propel you with a handshake back out onto the stairway to Heaven. Stan's peculiar genius was to leave you unsure whether his inscrutability was the result of profound

thought or its profound absence.

Stan wasn't so bad, though -- at least you never knew where you stood with him. With Phil Goff you always knew where you stood -- under his well-shod heel. Phil was the darling and exemplar of a distinctive breed of intellectual turncoat. In the seventies, they were student radicals, Marxist intellectuals out to seize the means of production during term-time and slaughter it at the freezing works during the holidays. Somewhere about 1980, they fell under the spell of Roger Douglas, then an outcast within Labour's ranks but by 1984 Labour's Minister of Finance. Douglas took the monetarist gospel of Milton Friedman and Margaret Thatcher and smuggled it into the heart of the Labour government's economic policy. Labour's 1984 manifesto promised caring 'n' sharing social democratic nostrums, but as soon as they came to power Labour whipped out the monetarist thumbscrews. Goff and his ilk trimmed off their flowing locks, climbed into severe blue suits, and prepared to follow their master down the well-greased slope to monetarist nirvana.

Douglas was aided in his quest to turn the entire economy into, as the metaphor quaintly has it, a "level playing field", by a group of young economists from the University of Canterbury who recruited each other into the Treasury and thus got their hands, pink and unsoiled by any form of practical experience, onto the levers of financial policy. With politician converts installed in key spending ministries such as (in Phil Goff's case) Employment and Education, "Rogernomics" had well-organised friends in the places that mattered to counter disorganised opposition in places that didn't. Labour's much-vaunted economic summit of 1984, in which business and union leaders rubbed shoulders with representatives of Maori and unemployed groups and pronounced them jolly good fellows, turned out to be a smokescreen for real decisions being made elsewhere -- to sell off state enterprises whether or not they made a profit, demolish trade barriers which kept tens of thousands of people in work, remove subsidies from our economy, and then expect much larger competitors to do the same in the name of free market principles.

As the last years of the preceding National administration had been marked by wage, price and interest rate freezes imposed seemingly at whim by Prime Minister Robert "Piggy" Muldoon, some liberalisation of the economy was in order, and the middle classes who usually supported National stayed with Labour in 1987 on the premise that the pain (largely being suffered by Maori and/or working class people who'd been laid off in huge numbers from forestry and mining jobs as the ministries responsible were privatised) was worthwhile. As a lower middle class kiddie myself, I suppose I showed my true colours by voting Labour in 1987. I voted for them in 1990 too -- you've yet to hear about the main alternative.

My loyalty was cruelly repaid by Phil Goff. In March 1989, I started work with the Computer Assisted Learning Programme, an organisation set up by the government but sheltering under the wing of Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin. CALP's task was to produce educational software for use in schools and the "transitional education" area -- training courses for unemployed school leavers and redundant workers. Because commercially-priced New Zealand-sourced software would have been prohibitively expensive for the organisations running these schemes, CALP's salary costs were paid by the government, meaning that we could set our prices at an affordable level and still make enough to buy the hardware and software we needed.

From the time I joined CALP, it was under threat from government educational restructuring, but its future looked reasonably secure by the end of 1989, and I coded contentedly along in my part-time programming job, producing an application which assisted unskilled computer users to prepare a Curriculum Vitae. In 1990, however, the old Department of Education became the new Ministry of Education with its myriad of agencies, and one of these agencies quietly appropriated our \$150,000 salary budget. Once CALP found out, we embarked on a determined lobbying campaign (our boss and several of the workers having been involved in the environmental movement, we had quite a reservoir of experience to draw on). We wrote to our five hundred clients asking them to urge Goff to keep us going; at least a hundred of them did, and the Ministry of Education bureaucrat who had to answer these letters wrote to us to complain about the increase in his workload.

But Goff didn't listen -- the government was philosophically opposed to subsidies, after all, and making an exception might create an unsightly hump or hollow in the level playing field -- and CALP lost its subsidy at the end of June 1990. Even the argument that Britain still subsidised the production of educational software failed to budge him. CALP went from employing the equivalent of four full-time workers to employing one half-time worker to deal with continuing requests for its wares. I went on the dole and have had lots of time to concentrate on my writing (my ambition is to write a novel with "Soon To Be A Minor Motion Picture!" emblazoned on its cover).

Given the chance to finish off the job of restructuring the economy, Labour finished off themselves, ensuring their defeat as unemployment bit into the ranks of their middle class support. Some Labourites were able to recognise the danger: David Lange -- who had stayed largely above the domestic fray while ensuring Labour's popularity by tweaking the noses of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and Jerry Falwell in a manner gratifying to all New Zealanders who had endured decades of sniping about sixty million sheep -- decided that Rogernomics had gone too far. His efforts to return Labour to a more social democratic course met with stern resistance from the hardliners; the split led to the resignation of Douglas from the Cabinet and, subsequently and in the light of Lange's failing health, Lange as well. Lange was replaced by the competent but pompous deputy PM, Geoffrey Palmer; eight weeks before the 1990 general election, the Labour caucus decided that Palmer and his workalike deputy, Helen Clark, would lead them straight down the gurgler and replaced Palmer with rotund, populist Mike Moore (this *Time* style is catching, isn't it?), a rival even to John Major in the flaunting of working class credentials. Moore led Labour straight down the gurgler anyway, and Phil Goff was among those who lost his seat; he's now, ironically enough, been employed by a polytechnic.

Labour's defeat brought National to power. The state-interventionist government of Piggy Muldoon is now no more than a dream of peace; the 1990 National government is determined to out-Roger Roger. New Finance Minister Ruth Richardson, who's no more balding than Margaret Thatcher and far less affable than Norman Tebbit, wished over 250,000 welfare beneficiaries (in a population of 3.5 million) a Happy New Year by announcing substantial cuts in benefits which took effect from April 1991. The axe is falling on everything but "defence" -- the government found \$3 million to send an Army medical team and two Hercules transport planes to the Gulf, admitting that this was unlikely to strike fear into Saddam Hussein but was likely to soften up the Americans.

It appears that the anti-nuclear policy may now die the death of a thousand position papers. The public still support the anti-nuclear policy, but who listens to them any more? If my Australian friends of 1985 were to come to New Zealand now, they would have an all-too-familiar sensation as they talked to our politicians and watched their lips move in meaningless reply while their eyes, ears, hearts and minds stayed serenely closed.



What follows has been put together from two letters written in mid-July and mid-September, and has been "pseudonymised" to protect the identity and location of its author. He's a Croatian fan who recently completed a year's conscription in the Serb-dominated Federal Army of Yugoslavia -- a state which for all practical purposes has now ceased to exist -- and here provides a personal perspective on the Serbo-Croat conflict as it stood earlier this autumn.

EUROPE'S GORDIAN KNOT: A Partial Report from Croatia

Tomislav Kolar

It all started some two years ago, when the Republic of Croatia ventured a whole series of democratic restorations and reforms, including the very first democratic elections after World War Two. Serbia, the largest republic in both area and population, maintained its dogmatic vision of a socialist (i.e., communist) Yugoslav Federation, as before.

Many factors played an important role, but the war started when the Serbian minority in Croatia declared themselves to be an autonomous province which was supposed to be under the direct rule of the government in Belgrade. Naturally, the Croatian government wouldn't permit its territory to be cut up in such a way, and there were also lots of Croats who disagreed with the idea of a Serbian enclave in the middle of Croat territory. So, some Serbs in Croatia claimed that they were imperilled and threatened by the Croatian people, which stimulated the formation of numerous terrorist gangs. Nowadays, all the trouble-making Serbian terrorists come directly from Serbia itself rather than the Serbian enclave in Croatia.

The Federal Army then intervened to impose order. It is supposed to be neutral in conflicts between the republics, since it is (or was) Yugoslav, composed of men of all ethnic groups. The Yugoslav constitution says that the duty of the Army is "to preserve the Yugoslav Federation from all external and internal enemies", but that depends on how you define an internal enemy. Of course, the Serbs will claim that the Republic of Croatia is an enemy of Yugoslavia because it no longer wants to remain in it. It was known a decade ago that a great majority of the Federal Army's officers, particularly high-ranking officers and staff, are Serbs. It has been obvious that the Army is providing support to the Serbian chetnik terrorists -- food, weapons, ammunition, medicines. It even opened fire on Croatian cities and civilians.

About the time I was ending my service in the Federal Army, it was declared an enemy of Croatia by the President of the Republic, Franjo Tudjman. A little earlier this year, in June, the Croatian government decided to form the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, which are now called "The National Guard". The Guard's task is to fight with the Croatian police against the Serbian terrorists and the Federal Army in defence of Croatia.

Both conflicting parties have their advantages and disadvantages. The Croatian forces (the Guard and the police) are not as well-equipped as the Federal Army, and cannot match it in number of men, either. But, unlike the Army, the Guard's morale is at an enviably high level -- because, I believe, they are fighting on *their* territory, for the freedom of *their* country. The regular troops of the Federal Army are composed of young men just like me, conscripted from all over the country, but they are deserting in hundreds every day and there are no more new recruits from any republic but Serbia. So in order to maintain its strength, the Federal Army recruits reservists from (where else?) Serbia, and today they comprise the majority of the Army's troops.

It's all clear now, isn't it?

Well, not really. Things are going crazy and no one really knows what's up. I venture to think that truth does not exist any more, since all sides are manipulating

it for their own benefit. Truth is nowadays a shy young lady who dances as the strings are pulled. There are no criteria you can use to form your own opinion. Everybody uses truth in his own way, to show that he is right. Newspapers and journalists that have tried to be objective were censored and fired. It's a media war as well as a civil war. But I can tell you one thing for sure -- I took one of the last trains from the bloody battlefield.

It would be horrible to be forced to fight at all, not to mention fighting on the other side against your will; to fight against your country, your people, your friends and neighbours who voluntarily signed up for the Croatian Armed Forces.... Most civilians understand this paradox -- they rightly feel enmity towards the Federal Army, but they are aware that their own sons are serving in it, that people fighting in it have been dragged in from all over Yugoslavia, from all six republics, against their will.

I served my first six months in the Army in Bosnia, and spent my second six months in a quiet area of Croatia. I had thought that when I was discharged I would be recruited into the National Guard, since it lacked trained soldiers, but I didn't want to be. I would have had to shoot at guys absolutely guiltless of being in the Army and unwilling to fight. Then, I didn't know what to fight, who to fight, and most of all *why* to fight. I surely don't want Croatia to remain a member of the Yugoslav Federation, but I do not agree with most of Croatia's politicians, particularly not with the Minister of Defence, Sime Djodan, who is also commander-in-chief of the National Guard and a mad bastard with a long tongue and a narrow mind.

But now things are stabilising. The Croatian Armed Forces are functioning on a voluntary basis, probably because there's already enough men -- but not really an abundance of weapons. And I've been able to give it all some good thought. I don't think there's much chance of me being recruited against my will, but I have decided that I'll join the National Guard the moment I hear a single explosion or detonation in my city.

At present, life here goes on almost as usual -- there are plenty of newly-opened fast-food restaurants, boutiques, cafe-bars, shops, and so on. Only reports in the newspapers and on TV would tell you that there's a war going on in certain areas of the Republic of Croatia. Though there is plainly a shadow hovering over the city and haunting its population -- nobody smiles, everybody is stiff and tense, nobody talks about anything else but politics and the situation in the country.

I suppose it sounds very perplexing. Must be, because we're talking of political events that have their roots in 1918, and my story has barely scratched the surface of the subject. Yet it's obvious that hundreds of people who formerly lived in certain critical zones of the Republic are abandoning their homes every day. Many are being killed in the endeavour to defend their villages and estates. I can *feel* the crisis. A global crisis.

During the war with Iraq, the BBC banned from radio airplay a number of songs which it thought might have an adverse effect on civilian morale. Amongst them were the following:

Abba's "Waterloo", The Alarm's "68 Guns", The Animals' "We Gotta Get Out Of This Place", The Bangles' "Walk Like An Egyptian", The Beatles' "Back In The USSR", Blondie's "Atomic", Kate Bush's "Army Dreamers", Eric Clapton's "I Shot The Sherriff", Elvis Costello's "Oliver's Army", Desmond Dekker's "The Israelites", Dire Straits' "Brothers In Arms", Frankie Goes To Hollywood's "Two Tribes", Elton John's "Saturday Night's All Right For Fighting", John Lennon's "Give Peace A Chance" and "Imagine", Jonah Lewie's "Stop The Cavalry", Lulu's "Boom Bang-A-Bang", Bob Marley's "Buffalo Soldier", McGuinness Flint's "When I'm Dead And Gone", Maria Muldaur's "Midnight At The Oasis", Quen's "Killer Queen", Martha Reeves's "Forget Me Not", The Specials' "Ghost Town", Spandau Ballet's "I'll Fly For You", Edwin Starr's "War", Cat Stevens's "I'm Gonna Get Me A Gun", Tears For Fears' "Everybody Wants To Rule The World", 10cc's "Rubber Bullets", and Stevie Wonder's "Heaven Help Us All".

The only question to be asked about this list is whether the gutless cretins who compiled it had ever actually listened to any of these songs all the way through.

WHAT EUROPE MEANS TO ME

Joseph Nicholas

Cyberpunk SF (or "Movement" SF as its practitioners and adherents preferred to call it) could perhaps only have flourished in the eighties, and during the peak years of that decade -- from the US invasion of Grenada in October 1983 to the global stock market crash of October 1987 -- expertly captured and reflected the zeitgeist of the times: the fascination with technology for its own sake, the importance of style as an end in itself, the romance of the city, the decline of collectivism, the rise of the mega-corporation, the eclipse of national identity as a defining characteristic, private violence and public squalor, the sense of capitalism triumphant, and loners looking to cut themselves loose from the system through various illicit deals that would make them piles of moolah so huge they need never work again. The sometimes nightmarish futures depicted in the best cyberpunk SF novels are as much celebrations of the impending post-modernist heat-death of the twentieth century as warnings of what we should try to avoid; but the best cyberpunk SF novels also grasped the transformatory effect of the cheap silicon chip on Western industrialised society, recognising in particular how it has enmeshed us in an Information Revolution as potentially profound and as liberatory as the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions. Although the cyberpunk party is now over, and its key writers have moved on to other things, it has wrought lasting changes on SF at large -- even an apparently traditionalist space opera such as Colin Greenland's *Take Back Plenty* demonstrates, amidst the sort of freewheeling widescreen baroque plotting last seen in Charles Harness's *The Ring Of Ritornel*, a New Romantic fascination with surface appearances; with style, with effect, with *the way things look* that ten years ago was simply unheard-of.

Well, that's one way of looking at the eighties. Another is via the efforts of those who spent a good part of that decade struggling to ensure that there would be a nineties for the world to emerge into -- the peace movement.

We joined it enthusiastically and left it exhausted by several years of continuous activism and -- towards the end -- the bureaucratic infighting that predominated as the agenda drawn up in the early eighties began to be realised, item by item, and the movement in consequence lost its impetus and sense of direction. In retrospect, I sometimes feel that we "lost" the eighties, in that the peace movement took up so much of our time that we fell out of contact with practically everyone and everything else; but if nothing else it provided us with a valuable crash course in contemporary affairs that we wouldn't have got from simply reading the newspapers. We became involved because we were convinced, as we still are, that it was not enough to merely moan ineffectually about the state of the world; the state of the world was so urgent that it required far more. The early and middle eighties were lunatic and dangerous times; the zeitgeist seemed driven by beserk hatred for anything that smacked of modernity and common-sense, mediated by right-wing politicians who talked openly about the imminent Second Coming and of fighting a "limited" nuclear war in Europe that would cleanse it for God and the family. Sometimes, one felt -- as one sometimes feels now -- that if it hadn't been for the peace movement there would have been no opposition at all to this nonsense.

Although it is in fact incorrect to speak of something called "the peace movement", since there were (and are) a number of different organisations subsumed beneath this heading, each with their own goals and programmes: rapprochement between the blocs, nuclear disarmament, the arms trade, debt relief for the Third World, technology transfer, environmentalism.... We were principally active in CND, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which touted itself as the largest and the longest-established mass-based campaign, and achieved a brief moment of glory as the prime movers of a resolution about the Pacific at its 1985 annual conference; and after that almost everything had to be thrown into the battle against the Stalinists, who in the early eighties had attempted to impose their ideas on CND but been marginalised by the strength and vision of the "ordinary" activists but who then surged back, if not acting under the direct instructions of their mentors in the Kremlin then certainly

inspired by what NATO and its hangers-on quickly dubbed the "Soviet peace offensive". An "offensive" led by new broom Mikhail Gorbachev, whose speeches were stuffed full of proposals that had originally been made by Western peace activists in the early eighties but dismissed by NATO as naive and unrealistic -- and to which it now had to respond positively or reveal its hypocrisy to the world. Indeed, it was almost comical to watch NATO spend large parts of 1986 and 1987 struggling not to admit that although it had originally proposed the zero option in 1983 it was never (as the peace movement had argued at the time) intended to be taken *seriously*...

This point came up in conversation at a party at Eva Hauser's house in Prague this September, where Judith and I fell into conversation with a right-wing Czech fan (whose name I regrettably didn't catch) who argued that Soviet disarmament proposals had been inspired not by internal political considerations but because of Western firmness; that, in short, the Soviet Union had "lost" the arms race, and been forced to negotiate for fear of worse. Well, I said, that's your view -- but while I accept that in 1986 Gorbachev probably looked to you like just another Soviet leader, you have to allow for his tremendously different reception in the West; that, after years of septuagenarian apparatchiks mouthing intellectually bankrupt Marxist-Leninist pieties, here was someone who told his Politburo colleagues bluntly that the country was an economic shambles and who made a determined effort to resurrect international relations by *actually meaning what he said*. In short, he made an impact -- and created so favourable an impression on the Western public that he literally embarrassed Western politicians into responding. If the Soviet Union is thereby deemed to have "lost" the arms race it was because Gorbachev recognised the unsustainability of such a high level of military expenditure -- a lesson that it took the West another few years to understand, and which certain Western politicians have still to internalise. Only the military can ever "win" arms races; economies, even the most powerful and sophisticated, will always be damaged to some extent.

And if it hadn't been for Gorbachev, I tried to hint, you and I wouldn't be able to discuss such issues at all....

Perhaps that's to exaggerate the influence of one particular individual (a typical trait in much science fiction, and -- more relevantly -- one that undermines my remarks in previous issues about history from below). Nevertheless, it seems clear that if it hadn't been for Gorbachev the Cold War would still be in train and Europe would still be divided between east and west; but having read innumerable essays and articles by peace movement activists arguing for rapprochement between the two halves of the continent, and having agreed with the END Appeal's exhortation that "we must learn to be loyal not to East or West, but to each other", it was astonishing to realise, in late 1989, just how cautious and conservative we'd all been: how something that few of us thought would happen in our lifetimes in fact left us behind by the speed with which events unfolded. The freedom the citizens of Eastern and Western Europe thereby gained to travel throughout the continent is still so novel that it can leave one feeling slightly euphoric. It is, after all, a mere two years since the fall of the Berlin Wall -- arguably the single most iconic moment in post-war European history, and as much the symbol of the continent's re-unification as the wall's existence had been the symbol of its suppression. Who now can forget where they were on the night of 9 November 1989? And which modern European citizen does not possess their little bit of graffitied concrete chipping from the wall, with a government certificate attesting to its authenticity?

Thus we start to rediscover our identity as citizens of Europe rather than as inhabitants of opposing political blocs; to discuss, indeed, whether there is such a thing as a "European identity" in the first place. Seminars, publications and exhibitions on this theme are these days a growth industry -- when we visited Venice in June, for example, we went to an exhibition at the Palazzo Grassi entitled "I Celti: La Prima Europa" which attempted to explore the Celtic roots of modern Europe via a remarkable collection of over two thousand objects lent by two hundred museums in twenty countries from Bulgaria to Ireland: objects which included not just the obvious torcs and ritual swords but bronze jugs, engraved mirrors, the Battersea Shield from London, and the magnificent Gundestrup Cauldron from Denmark. (Although recent research indicates that it may have been produced by silversmiths who, if not of

Indian origin themselves, were inspired by Indian designs.) But overlaid on this was an attempt to portray the Celts as the first European-wide civilisation in Europe's history and to adopt them as precursors of the modern European Community's drive for federalisation -- when in fact they were not a unified ethnic group and never formed a centrally-run empire, but were divided into many different tribes speaking several different dialects. (Colin Renfrew, in *Archaeology And Language: The Puzzle Of Indo-European Origins*, propounds the thoroughly revisionist argument that the Celts never existed in the first place, and that "Celtic" is the romantic modern name applied to nothing more than a language group notable only for its differentiation from other Indo-European tongues.) This ideological distortion is for the most part concealed in the wording of the explanatory text that introduces each section of the exhibition, but elsewhere is quite blatant -- in, for example, a video presentation of the Celtic origins of some modern European cities, which concludes with the camera pulling back from the map of Europe on which the location of each city is marked with a star... which duly coalesce into the twelve stars of the EC flag. Anyone who'd spent part of the previous decade contributing, in their own small way, to the struggle to realise a time in which the division of the continent could be overcome might be excused for wondering when "Europe" had come to mean only "Western Europe".

An identical distortion is evident in Jean-Baptiste Duroselle's recent *Europe: A History Of Its Peoples*, a lavishly produced five-hundred page hardback in which, oddly for this sort of book, the illustrations are an adjunct to the text rather than vice versa, and the text itself is quite dense and demanding. But the more of it one reads the more uneasy one becomes; there is an excessive concentration on events west of the Elbe, and little attention paid to those elsewhere. Thus the Germanic tribes who undermined and eventually overran the Roman Empire in the West have an entire chapter to themselves, and the contribution of the "barbarian" Goths and Franks to European culture is properly praised; but later waves of invaders who settled further east and who a modern reader might think of as similarly European -- such as the Slavs and the Magyars -- receive only marginal attention. A glimpse of their unwilling role as defenders of Western Europe against the Mongols and the Ottoman Turks can be seen in the outline chronologies that introduce each chapter, but from this skeletal information one would never guess at their more extensive contributions to European history and culture: that, for example, the court of Matthias Corvinus in fifteenth century Hungary bid fair to rival the cultural glories of the Italian city-states, or that Mozart spent more of his life in Prague (and premiered *The Magic Flute* there) than Salzburg. In later chapters, even some of the peoples of Western Europe, whose modern nations are members of NATO and/or the European Community, such as the Scandinavians and the Spanish, are dealt with only intermittently, as they intersect with Franco-German concerns; and the final chapter, purporting to deal with the post-war history of Europe, is little more than a history of the EEC.

(Although of course one shouldn't forget that in recent times the history of Eastern Europe has been subject to similar distortions. The Hungarian National Museum in Budapest has a gallery devoted to the history of the Magyar nation, but interesting though the exhibition is it's obvious, from both the scanty English language captions and the guidebook, how much of it is taken up with the idea of national liberation via insurrectionary struggles against a foreign oppressor. Inasmuch as Hungary was first overrun by the Ottoman Turks, and then by the Austrians who expelled them, this is understandable; but then why does its history stop in 1848, following the failure of the second revolt against the Austrians? Doubtless because, a few years later, the Austrian crown was divided with the Hungarians: an aristocratic sell-out rather difficult to force into the Marxist mould of the heroic Hungarian proletariat striding ever onwards into the glorious socialist future. When I put this point to our host, Judit Halasz, she agreed with a laugh that this was indeed the case -- and that the absence of anything later than 1848 had only made the omission plainer.)

It should go without saying that if there is such a thing as a broader European identity to be rediscovered beneath later political and cultural accumulations, then the search for it must include *all* the peoples of Europe, east and west, if the result is ever to mean anything, and that if it doesn't the whole project will prove as tendentious and as abortive -- and even as tragic -- as previous attempts to construct "a new Europe" based on misreadings of its history. And even then it might

be tendentious and abortive and tragic anyway, like in what used to be Yugoslavia, where people are concerned to create not a new Europe for themselves so much as a new set of nation-states altogether....and on that particular issue I decline further comment. The most apt statement one can make about the struggles which currently convulse the Balkans is that they represent the inevitable (and long delayed) re-emergence of nationalist impulses which were formerly suppressed first by the imperialist rule of either the Ottomans or the Austro-Hungarians and then by the artificial states constructed from those empires by the victors of the First World War, and which won't disappear no matter what the outcome of the present conflict between the Serbs and the Croats. Or perhaps we should call them ethnic impulses rather than nationalist impulses, since the two are not contiguous; indeed, the argument of the nineteenth-century Italian nationalist Guiseppe Mazzini that every nation should form a state and that there should be one state for each nation is in ethnic-linguist terms quite unworkable. All nations contain minorities of some sort, are (in Ralf Dahrendorf's term) "heterogeneous"; and as Vaclav Havel has remarked, the true test of a state is how well it treats its minorities. (The recent Latvian proposal to restrict citizenship to the descendants of those resident there prior to 1940 is simply disgraceful.) Bluntly, the ethnic impulse is dangerous because it contains within it the seeds of racism; its notions of blood and soil, of a "sacred" struggle to create and defend a "homeland", and its vindictive arguments about the apportionment of past guilt, only block progress towards the future.

Nevertheless, one can argue that -- bloody and vicious though the whole thing is -- in some senses the break-up of Yugoslavia points the way towards Europe's future composition: a Europe not of large nation-states but of semi-autonomous regions, of Scotland and Brittany and Euskadi and the Tyrol and Silesia and Ruthenia; an association of self-governing units that surrender certain powers to a larger, supranational organisation which takes responsibility for their defence and foreign policies and ensures a degree of social and judicial commonality but otherwise leaves them free to determine their own economic and political affairs (and whose people will doubtless take it in Monty Pythonish turns to be executive officer for the week -- yes, yes, I know, but if you don't have some goal to aim for how can you plan at all?). As a Europe of the regions, of "states" much smaller than those which exist at present, it might resemble very much the Europe of the past -- not merely mediaeval Europe, but also the Europe of the first millenium BC, which (so recent research on the Gundestrup Cauldron suggests) was equally as heterogeneous, as multi-ethnic and as multi-cultural, as the present.

The handiest -- and perhaps the most glib -- explanation for what's happening in Europe (and possibly the rest of the world as well) lies in the currently trendy discipline of Chaos Theory (as some wits have remarked, the first scientific theory to come equipped with its own promotional gimmicks). Dispensing with the pretty colours of computer-generated fractals, we're left with a set of clear statements concerning sensitivity to initial conditions, a level below which common or garden scientific reductionism fails to apply (engineers in particular seem to hate that part), and the idea that systems in a process of transition from one area of near-equilibrium to another undergo a series of unpredictable bifurcations and oscillations before settling down into their new configuration. This looks to me like a good description of the present state of the world -- and the New World Order promoted in some quarters looks little better than an attempt to determine the configuration into which certain politicians wish global affairs to fall. As though global affairs can be influenced in this fashion anyway....

One aspect of classical Marxism which has passed from the realm of political theory into the realm of ordinary public discourse is the idea of history as a force with its own laws and precepts; something which stands outside human affairs and imposes its grand narrative upon them, entraining us in the fulfilment of its schema whether we desire it or not. In other words, that history is destiny mis-spelled; that whatever individuals might do, the societies of which they are members cannot be diverted from the courses upon which they have been set. It is possible to argue that certain events will happen at certain times because the conditions are right for them -- such as the Industrial Revolution happening in Western Europe at the time it did, because technology and in particular the ability to harness energy had evolved

to a particular level; or the fifteenth century voyages of European exploration commencing when they did because of the coincidence between the design of ship hulls, the presence of surplus wealth, and the urge to discover more about the world -- but it is equally possible to argue from contingency: that if some one thing does not happen (or some one person does not do a particular thing), then all subsequent events will be different. (One is reminded yet again of the way science fiction tends to exaggerate the role of the individual -- perhaps because science fiction is primarily an American cultural form, and American culture tends to fetishise the autonomy of the individual rather than to view them as integral members of their society. Equally, one is reminded that if it not for Gorbachev the revolutions of 1989 might never have happened.) The contingency theory of history is advanced by Stephen Jay Gould in his *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale And The Nature Of History*, which from some angles perhaps resembles Chaos Theory's rule about sensitivity to initial conditions; that if the evolutionary record is erased back to the beginning, then set to replay, there is no guarantee that it will give rise to the human species, or indeed to any intelligent (self-aware) species at all. (Devotees of the anthropic principle understandably hate this as much as engineers loathe Chaos Theory.) Perhaps the principal goal of history and historiography over the next twenty or thirty years (and a task I'm not going to attempt in the space available here) will be to elaborate some synthesis between these two opposing currents of thought rather than to produce yet more elegant monographs on Italy during the *Risorgimento*, or the decline of Spain during the eighteenth century.

And then there are those who talk of the "cycles of history", as though the present is just a modified repetition of the past. Echoes of this can be found in some of the most unlikely places; two years ago, for example, who would have thought that paisley shirts and even flared trousers were set for a comeback? (Although I wouldn't be seen dead in the latter.) Or that a whole raft of British independent label mop-haired guitar-janglers -- James, Chapterhouse, Lush, Ride, The Mock Turtles, Josi Without Colours, The Belltower, House Of Love, Slowdive, Curve, The Heartthrobs, The Charlatans, the list goes on and on -- were set to plunder late sixties psychedelia to such exciting effect? Kill-joys will doubtless respond that this is just another example of the way in which popular culture (and rock music in particular) endlessly recycles its own greatest moments rather than go to the trouble of creating something genuinely new (and perhaps add that rock music in particular is now recycling itself with such speed that before we reach the end of this decade it will have disposed of the seventies and eighties and started again), but they can just bugger off -- got better things to do than listen to their whinging -- put another bunch of guitar-janglers on the turntable -- grow my pony-tail a bit longer -- sneer at designers' attempts to resurrect the hideous fashions of the seventies (a decade rightly derided as one that style forgot) -- try and forget that I'll soon be thirty-eight....

Maybe even read a science fiction novel, if I can find one that addresses itself to the real world instead of gallivanting off around the universe in search of whatever invented pseudo-philosophical MacGuffin the author has temporarily mislaid. Freewheeling widescreen baroque plotting is all very well in small doses, but even in small doses it's not very believable. Glancing over the recent output of titles on my infrequent forays into specialist science fiction bookshops, I begin to wonder whether contemporary SF authors have taken the last gasps of the high capitalist eighties as an excuse to give up writing about the real world altogether, on the grounds that since the world they've grown up with is passing away they might as well make one up out of whole cloth. The closest they seem to get to the (allegedly) near-future are novels about the so-called "industrialisation" of space by the current Great White Hope of Anglo SF, one Allen Steele, who's so in tune with contemporary popular culture that in his world of the twenty-first century people are still listening to (are you ready for this?) The Grateful Dead. Gosh. Terrifically extrapolative, eh?

By comparison with the grittier visions offered by cyberpunk, of course, it's nothing of the kind; but even as cyberpunk held a mirror up to high capitalism it too failed to extrapolate convincingly. In exaggerating aspects of the present to construct a credible-seeming future, cyberpunk failed to grasp not only that such a future would be economically and ecologically unsustainable but that the present is itself equally

unsustainable. The world simply can't afford high capitalism any more; the advanced industrial economies are consuming finite global resources at such a rate that merely to maintain their present standard of living would require them to oppress more and more of the less developed world, in the process distorting their economies to the point where, bloated with military contracts, they will be unable even to feed, clothe and house their own people. As, indeed, several of them are already incapable of doing -- and one inevitably begins to wonder whether, if the eighties were dangerous times, the nineties will be even more so, the lunacy of the born-again Right replaced once again by the calculating hypocrisy of the mainstream Right..

Notions of "sustainable growth" and "sustainable development" are a joke. Writing off Third World debt, curtailing the arms trade, reducing emissions of carbon dioxide, establishing proper extractive reserves in the rainforests -- none of these present attempts by such pressure groups as the World Development Movement and Friends of the Earth to promote a fairer relationship between the overdeveloped and the less-developed worlds goes remotely far enough. The situation requires nothing less than the wholesale reconstruction of the industrial state -- not the post-industrialism of Alvin Toffler and similar utopians, but *de-industrialism*. The post-cyberpunk generation of science fiction writers is perhaps uncomfortably aware of this -- and for that reason writes "near-future" novels about the industrialisation of space in an attempt to pretend to itself that this is the best, the real, the only way around the problem, the only solution to squaring the circle of Western affluence. But the blunt fact is that the space age is over and the industrialisation of space will never happen, because it costs too much. The capitalist economies of the West, having squandered their scientific and industrial efforts on the arms race and having almost bankrupted themselves in the process, now cannot afford any expenditure that is not dedicated to sustaining their existing control of global resources. The multinational corporations, the only other possible players, are as concerned for their profit margins as any other business, and the length of time even the largest MNCs would have to wait for their investments to show a return is an absolute deterrent. In short, the only future we have is here, now and for ever.

If the people of Europe are to build a new Europe then it must be here in Europe, not amongst the stars. The new Europe I'd prefer is one built around the "new politics" of peace, ecology, feminism and human rights; one that in the wake of the collapse of "actually existing socialism" and the environmental bankruptcy of liberal market capitalism helps to open up what Andre Gorz long ago identified as "the third way" between them. Others will doubtless disagree, and offer their own programmes for European reconstruction; but in the present political climate can there be any project more demanding and involving?

"It is very different, I discover, being Prime Minister, from having any other position."

John Major, a Prime Minister

"He stands for nothing, he is grey, he has no ideas. I have been deceived."

The Queen Over The Water, a former Prime Minister

"Amongst my friends I've taken to referring to the government as the B Team."

The Queen Over The Water, a former Prime Minister

"Success in marketing clinical services to 'customers' is more important than the ability to cure them, the head of an NHS Trust has declared.

"Dr Mark Baker is Chief Executive of Bradford Hospital, which disclosed plans for 300 redundancies four weeks after its launch as an independent trust in April 1991. He told a conference of health service managers that they should 'hail successful selling staff as the heroes of the organisation'. 'Whether or not patients get better is a matter of perception that is not always backed by objectivity,' he said. 'The biggest donations to the health service are the relatives of the deceased'."

Quoted in *Commentator*, the monthly magazine of the Health & Social Security section of the National Union of Civil & Public Servants

THE LETTER COLUMN

Edited by Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas

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"Strange to read *FTT* 11, dated March 1991, in May 1991. As far as the USA is concerned, things like censorship and the arts were last month's worry. So is the war against Iraq. The general public has a fifteen-minute attention span at best, and that only for what the TV pushes."

Thus the perennial problem of writing about current events in an occasional publication such as ours -- a week is a long time in politics, as Harold MacMillan said in quite another context, and two months must therefore be like unto a glacial epoch. But of course one has to distinguish between the details of an argument, which are always prone to being overtaken by events, and the core issue around which the debate revolves, which retains its relevance (as we shall see). Parts of the US general public may have changed channels, but some are still tuned in to the exchanges on censorship, the New World Order, and foreign travel:

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"The adventure on the Guadeloupe ('Messing About On The River', in *FTT* 10) will certainly qualify for inclusion if anyone ever publishes a magazine entitled *Weir Tales*. The narration got me all excited even though indirect evidence elsewhere in that issue had reassured me that both of you

survived. Rivers do indeed fascinate some persons, although I've been exempt from this particular temptation. The Potomac River comes within six miles of Hagerstown, so we hear a lot about the mishaps and fatalities that occur on it. The summer before last, nine people drowned in the river where it runs through this county, mostly as a result of carelessness. In one instance, two fat men came down the river in a tub-like metal vessel which had in plain letters on its side a warning that its capacity was two hundred pounds. It sank and the men never came up. Another drowning involved a fellow who decided to float down the river clinging to an inner tube, despite the fact that he had no ability to swim in case of an accident. An accident duly occurred. The Potomac is normally a placid stream which has too little water for easy swimming at many points during a dry summer, but there's a dam where it makes its closest approach to Hagerstown and many people who use it don't heed the prominent warnings about the river's speed, depth and undertow in the vicinity of the dam.

"I thought the account of your visit to Egypt the main virtue of *FTT* 11. There was an item in the newspaper the other day which semi-confirmed the existence of King Tut's Curse: some scientist or other thinks the peculiar nature of the tomb's construction makes it almost impossible for bacteria, once left by visitors, to get out, and he ascribes the illnesses that have befallen many visitors to this specialised type of contagion. The mention of small birds frequenting the gaps in ancient Egyptian structures reminded me of Hendrik van Loon's explanation of eternity: a mile-high rock is visited once every thousand years by a small bird which sharpens its beak on the stone before flying away, and when this friction has worn the rock down to nothingness one second of eternity will have passed. Maybe the remote ancestors of those birds helped start the damage to the Egyptian structures."

A good deal of the damage to ancient Egyptian structures was wrought by the ancient Egyptians themselves, who had a habit of cannibalising each other's funerary monuments to provide the raw materials for their own. The Colossi of Memnon, for example, are all that's left of the Mortuary Temple of Amenophis III, the stones of which were carried off by Merneptah to build his own temple -- which has now completely vanished. Some monuments were constructed in haste, and hence not built very well; innumerable gigantic statues were raised by Ramses II to his own megalomaniac glory, but some were carved from a softer rock that has since crumbled under its own weight. The pharaohs also had a tradition of obliterating the images and cartouches of their predecessors, to deny them a place in eternity: Tuthmosis III vandalised Queen Hatshepsut's temple at Deir El Bahri, for instance, and the priestly counter-revolution under Tutankhamun destroyed almost all traces of Akhenaton.

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"I enjoyed 'Birdwatching At Home And Abroad' very much. I'm intrigued by your backyard robin's time sense -- I wouldn't expect birds to have much awareness of clock time as their activity period is governed by changes in the length of the day. We fed birds here through the winter, and had blue tits, great tits, coal tits, greenfinches,

chaffinches and a dunnock as the most regular visitors, with occasional bad weather calls from blackbirds, thrushes (ordinary and mistle), pied wagtail, wren, starlings, sparrows, rooks and various gulls. We also witnessed the arrival of the main redwing/fieldfare migration -- though we didn't get any in the garden, the mature hawthorn hedge in the field at the back of the house proved a popular staging post. Our garden isn't very bird-friendly at present, but I'm planning some improvements.

"Judith's descriptions of the differentness of Egypt were very vivid. I'd like to travel more myself -- apart from three years in Canada as a small child, the only Foreign Part I've visited is France, which a good number of fans are probably quite blasé about. I still spend the (supposedly boring) coach journeys between airport and ski resort (my holidays have all been skiing trips) with my nose pressed to the window, looking at the different countryside: unhedged fields, vines, pollarded trees in town squares, the limestone landscape of huge flat expanses punctuated by sudden cliffy hills and gorges. French traffic lights are different. Then there are the double-carriage Geneva buses with a bendy pleated bit in the middle.... And speaking a foreign language is exciting, as is the food. And the birds....we had a wonderful time on my 1990 holiday feeding a set of alpine choughs by balancing bits of stale long French loaf on the balcony of our apartment. We saw snow finches and a little brown bird that I took one look at and said 'That's an alpine accentor!' because it looked just as I remembered the picture in the bird book."

"I felt sad reading Eva Hauser's account of why 'feminism' isn't popular among Czechoslovak women. Feminism certainly doesn't say 'all women must marry, have children, and work outside the home'. Feminism is about women following a range of different life patterns, and supporting each other in those different choices and circumstances. Women should be supported in whatever life pattern to which choice or necessity have led them. Women should not be *expected* to get married (some do, others don't), nor to bear children (some do, others don't). What I find frightening is the assumption that 'everyone has their naturally determined role'. We don't live in some pure, 'natural' state, but in an environment shaped by humans, in a man-made (*sic*) society. Not so long ago, the English Establishment were singing hymns in church confirming the 'naturally determined roles' of 'the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high or lowly, and ordered their estate'. Or how about the 'naturally determined roles' of whites and non-whites in South Africa?

"Oh, I can understand how attractive it is, to exhausted and undervalued women fed up of being expected to do three things at once, to be given only *one* thing to do: to be attractive (to men). Well, two things: to be attractive to men and wonderfully nurturing and caring to her children. And keep a beautiful, welcoming home. Three things: attractive to men, nurturing to children, wonderful home-maker, and a truly creative, original, well-balanced and feminine individual (in her spare time). *Nobody expects the sexist inquisition!*"

Lucy Huntzinger
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Tennessee 37212, USA

"I was saddened by Eva Hauser's article. Feminism, to me, is a positive notion and a term which benefits both men and women. It's very difficult for me to understand women rejecting it as too much trouble or 'a fight', as she called it. It's a necessary fight, but it doesn't have to be

manifested as a battle. Feminism is also a sensibility; one can correct or refuse to accept certain attitudes without holding a meeting. I hope Czech women will see through the illusion of the white picket fence soon."

Richard Brandt
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"It's interesting that the Czechs are displaying a yearning for a return to the 'traditional family', since I get the same impression every time I hear our Republican leaders call for a return to 'traditional family values'. I always translate this as 'getting the women back to the house and the childrearing where they belong, so the menfolk can have their jobs', or pretty much what happened when our troops came home in 1945 and the women who had taken

over much of the factory work found themselves suddenly displaced. The problem with this philosophy is that it doesn't recognise that, due to the successful financial policies of this and past administrations, a single person can support his or her own lifestyle a lot easier than an otherwise-unemployed homemaker as well; while a double income is virtually required to be able to afford a house these days, let alone children. It is not all that easy to turn back the clock; although I suspect that Eastern European countries, abandoning the Stalinist position, might prefer to return to pre-Soviet ways rather than adopt radical Western post-fifties ideals.

"Drawing The Line' brings up one of the problems I have with the arguments inevitably used to justify censorship, boycotts or whatever action is deemed necessary to eradicate 'offensive' material. They assume there is some right *not* to be offended; as if giving offence is a crime, and one can legislate away what amounts to, at worst, no more than bad manners. On the other hand, if one is not only offended by sexually exploitative commercial depictions in public places, but feel that they contribute to an unwholesome and fearsome everyday environment, then I don't see why one should avoid boycotting commercial sponsors to change the tone of expressions whose sole purpose is commercial."

Vicki Rosenzweig
33 Indian Road, 6R
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New York 10034, USA

"Boycotts are almost as complicated an issue as censorship. I don't approve of the advertisement, so I don't buy the product -- no problem. The advert is fine, but I dislike the fact that the company also sells cigarettes -- the purpose is different, but the boycott is still against the company whose policies I dislike. Don't buy Domino's Pizza because a chunk of the profits goes to the anti-abortion movement? Well, I can dodge that because I never liked the stuff in the first place, but that's cheating. I think I'd go that far: it's an issue I feel strongly about. Boycott the sweetshop because I don't like the magazines they sell? That's further than I want to go. It doesn't help that the Reagan administration leaned on stores to stop selling magazines it disapproved of. Some friends of mine tried to set up a reverse boycott, by refusing to shop at 7-11 because it gave in to that pressure, but the effort never went very far. It's worth remembering that, as Judith notes, most boycotts aren't attempts to censor (or to redefine what counts as acceptable speech); they're attempts to change the actions of the company being boycotted.

"Judith may be right that absolute freedom of speech is impossible, or at least incompatible with a stable culture, but I'm unhappy with restraints that go beyond good manners. Yes, mother taught me to say 'please' and 'thank you', and I'm glad she did, but that doesn't mean I want people who don't speak politely to be punished by the government. Over here, we've just been told that the First Amendment right to free speech doesn't apply if you're getting money from the government. Either the court didn't think about what it was doing -- almost everyone benefits from tax money, directly or otherwise; this decision would probably enable the courts to forbid anyone who's ever driven on an interstate highway from expressing an opinion on transport policy -- or five judges decided they wanted to eliminate freedom of speech from the US constitution, and an abortion case offered a convenient excuse. Arguing over what it's acceptable to display on newsstands seems somehow beside the point when the law says 'yes, you can perform abortions, but you can't tell women that you're allowed to, even if they ask explicitly'. (Put that baldly, it sounds like something out of *Ionesco*. Welcome to the land of the free and the home of the craven. In Guam, it's against the law to tell women how to contact legal abortion clinics in Hawaii.)"

This seems an appropriate point at which to state that the H & M underwear advert mentioned in the previous issue, as cause for a suggested boycott of the store, and further discussed by several respondents (including Vicki), was later withdrawn as a result of a barrage of complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority. However, the company's explanation of the ad's withdrawal (in advance of a ruling by the ASA) was less than contrite, almost blaming the public for failing to perceive the allegedly humorous qualities of its copyline. A few months later -- showing that it had learned nothing from the experience -- H & M were decorating the Underground with (smaller) posters for its swimwear, depicting a pair of sultry blondes in clinging wet black lycra outfits, standing with their legs prominently apart.

Brian Earl Brown
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Detroit
Michigan 48224, USA

"We've found over here that labelling, whether of records or movies, tends to be the first step towards bans on the material. For all that it seems a simple market-oriented means of preventing people inadvertantly buying offensive material, the reality tends to be that once a product is labelled stores will refuse to deal with it, either on their own or because groups have organised to pressure them into not handling labelled material. Moreover, there remains the question of who determines what gets labelled. That person, whoever it might be, is still a censor.

"The worst part of the censorship issue is that it tends to concentrate on flagrant offences that have little persistent effect while ignoring lower-keyed but more chronic cases. The Supreme Court has busied itself deciding whether nude dancing inside an Indiana bar was public indecency or protected free speech. I have trouble with the idea that a bar where you have to pay money and prove that you're of legal age to enter is a 'public' setting. I've always thought that 'public' was an open area where no effort is made to prevent people seeing what they might not want to. But one bar, or even half a dozen bars, full of naked women is not going to affect the status of women or the moral climate of a medium-sized city nearly as much as some beer commercials featuring 'The Swedish Bikini Team'. These commercials appear on television at all hours of the day, during any programme, on any channel, so there's no way to avoid them. They pander to a sexual fantasy about drinking, which quickly becomes tiresome."

Tom Collins
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USA

"There are valid arguments for keeping some information out of the hands of children and even away from those who don't wish to be confronted by it, but where does labelling stop? Tipper Gore, wife of past and (probable) future Presidential candidate Albert Gore, wants warning labels on record albums not just for swear words but for Satanism, drug references, and I don't know what all. That may not stop a kid from buying something, but it's likely to slow him down even as it whips up his interest. Since censorship is like the Mandelbrot Set in mathematics -- all the interest is in exploring the boundaries -- it's even likely that such labelling will inspire the production of more marginal material as rock musicians leap at the chance to incur the official disapproval that always enhances their status among the disaffected for whom they claim to speak. Labelling is the first step towards culling something from 'mainstream' discourse. Once marginalisation has begun, it's hard to reverse.

"Like taxation, censorship usually starts in a limited way, but once one accepts that someone else should control what one sees, reads, hears or thinks, the greased slide into the pit has begun. Participation in pornography -- the decision to write, make or star in it -- is no more an economic compulsion than anything else one does to put bread on the table. Most pornographers are professionals who are going about their business and trying to get a break into the big time. They may even quite enjoy what they do. Even 'violent' pornography -- portraying a rape fantasy, for example -- may be as much fun for the participants as the making of a gross-out horror movie with everyone giggling over how the bleeding plastic arm will look on film. (I'm not denying that the people in the photos are 'really doing it', but to assume a photo story portrays a real rape or an encounter between a real prostitute and a genuine sailor is just silly. Even S/M scenes can occur with the willing participation of both (or all) parties, after all.)

"James Joyce defined pornography as anything intended to incite desire, and since he meant any desire adverts would fall under the heading of pornography in his book. In contrast, John Mortimer used to argue in court that the explicit depictions in works he was defending were so unpleasant that they could not incite lust and so could not be pornographic under the law.

"To ban works that increase the possibility of violence against people or animals, as Tim Jones proposes, would require suppression of the tax codes, the military manual of arms, and (according to Joseph in another context) the IMF. Not to mention most cookbooks. And the question of what can be done about offensive sexual material inappropriately displayed immediately makes one ask 'what's offensive sexual imagery?'. In July, there was a huge flap here over the cover of *Vanity Fair* magazine, which had a naked picture of actress Demi Moore, her hands discreetly covering her breasts and loins. The problem? She was eight months pregnant.

"We are insulated from the natural process of birth and death in this country. We live almost our entire lives without being present at either event. But then the old and the young no longer mingle much either. The once shocking generation gap is now a simple fact of life that everyone takes for granted and no one bothers even to talk about. The obvious result of being cut off from the birth-love-sex-death cycle is that we're not in touch with those activities which give life meaning, resonance, consequence. Such ignorance leads to neurosis -- and here we all are. Several supermarkets banned display of the offending image, from which it's apparent that they consider Demi Moore showing her belly is a hideous reminder of physicality and mortality that must be suppressed almost as vigorously as if the cover photo showed full frontal nudity. Through ignorance and suppression, both innocent images become arousing to our prurient interest."

Avedon Carol
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London E6 1AB

"I applaud Judith's remarks concerning the polarisation of debate. In the specific porn/censorship debate, I find myself always being asked to defend porn rather than talking about how to make things better for women -- so the issue ceases to be 'What really causes danger for women and how do we deal with it?' and instead becomes 'Is pornography offensive enough to justify censorship?'.

"If some men see women as 'page three girls' the problem isn't really nude models in newspapers so much as the failure of society to encourage the view that what the camera sees doesn't even define the individual woman, let alone women in general. Back in kindergarten feminism we criticised stereotyping, but a lot of people seem to have forgotten what a stereotype is. If you think 'all women' don't like sex, don't like pornography, don't like housekeeping, do like pornography, do like housekeeping -- any way you look at it, you're stereotyping (especially if you think that any one of those things is naturally inclusive or exclusive of any of the others). If the camera shows women enjoying sex, then the camera is just showing a representation of *some* women enjoying sex, and is irrelevant to the actual woman you're with at that moment.

"The fact is that pornography doesn't do much in the way of 'representing women' -- it doesn't play that large a role in telling people what women 'are', whether its content is true or false. The content is indeed true for *some* women, despite what Andrea Dworkin and Catherine Itzin might like to think. But men have plenty of opportunities to see what women are like in real life, and if they aren't paying attention to that message it's pretty foolish to assume they're giving greater credence to what they see in porn. Feminists used to criticise the family; we used to say that sexism begins at home, and we were right -- if you're looking at porn (which most kids don't see until they've already got a pretty good idea of society's sex role expectations) you're starting far too late. So we should go back to looking at how people become sexist, not ask what kind of porn they look at once they are.

"As to messages of violence themselves -- where do we really see them? I've done overview work in pornography, and I can tell you that there aren't many violent messages there. The things society says that encourage violence against women can be heard in pubs and clubs, in courtrooms and classrooms, from the press and the pulpit, and it's often the voices of authority that validate violent attitudes. If 'feminists' and other social architects claim that men are naturally rapists, and if Lionel Tiger, Robin Fox (I love those names), Robert Ardrey and George Gilder are constantly equating male sexuality with violence, then men are getting some pretty screwed-up messages. Porn wastes little time on this sort of nonsense. Porn also doesn't say that men have the right to rape their wives, or that it's reasonable for a man to kill his wife if he catches her in bed with someone else -- so where are those messages really coming from (and why are we blaming porn for the violence?). What happened to all those sensible feminists who knew that the courts, religion and the home all played substantial roles in teaching us sexism? All off censoring porn merchants? Not likely -- from the market figures in other countries, I'd say a lot of them are renting porn videos and reading sex magazines.

"Define pornography -- why? Everyone already knows what it means, and they don't draw fine distinctions about coercion or degradation. This is just a lot of fancy talk so that people who like to think they're politically aware or feminist can pretend they aren't doing exactly what the right wing do when *they* call for restrictions on porn, as they always have (and not without good reason -- let people

start talking and reading and fantasising about sex and next thing they might start questioning gender roles, and the right don't want *that*).

"Part of our problem is that we tell boys from day one that they have nothing in common with girls. Eventually they find out that there's this sex stuff, something (the *only* thing) they can do with women -- but they also know it's dirty, so dirty it can't be talked about or shown in public. That's pretty bad when you consider what we *do* show in public -- war, murder, mugging, you name it. This sex stuff must be pretty disgusting, eh? I mean, we tell boys that their only reason to interact with women *at all* is to do something nasty and violent to them!

"Women are safer on the street than men; statistically, men are far more likely to be the victims of violence in public. The most dangerous person in a woman's life is her husband -- and not for reasons you can find in porn. But a lot of people -- my mother, feminists, etc. -- have told me all my life that it's dangerous out there, that being a woman makes me especially likely to be assaulted, that if I go out there I'm virtually 'asking for it'; that I should be both afraid and ashamed to be seen on the streets. Well, I'm tired of being told I should see myself as a permanent victim who needs to be protected by the state from men thinking about sex. We need more openness about sex, and we got some because censorship got shot down by a lot of libertarians just in time for us to start getting used to sexual language and start talking about it ourselves. Quite a departure from the days when we weren't allowed to talk about sex, didn't dare tell our best friends that we'd been raped, and when all the experts on being female, a lesbian, a prostitute, being raped, were all men because 'ladies' didn't talk about sex. I don't want to go back to that.

"The 'incitement to racial hatred' law may have worked in your schoolyard, but my experience in Britain is that racism has been swept under the carpet. The law hasn't done away with racism, but it has made it a lot easier for white people to ignore by protecting them from having to notice it. I'd rather have it out in the open where it can't be ignored and has to be addressed openly. And that's what I really hate about this kind of censorship -- it means the attitudes are still out there, but the debate is closed. Criticism is the best answer to bad ideas. Niggaz With Attitude call women who seem to be interested in their money 'bitches', and people complain that NWA are 'offensive and degrading to women'. Calling women 'gold-diggers' contains exactly the same message, yet never elicits these calls for censorship. Saying 'That's sexist, let's ban it' doesn't get rid of these attitudes. It doesn't even say what's *wrong* with them!"

Sherry Coldsmith
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"I'm sure I'm not the only person who's grateful for the discussion Judith has generated around pornography, censorship and related issues. I've been particularly heartened by her willingness to explore all aspects of a complex subject, to avoid sweeping simplicities. So I was surprised by her statement: 'Sure, democracy is no easy answer...'. It does seem that this statement was directed at me, so I ought to make it clear that I'm a democratic socialist who takes both halves of that description very seriously. I am a wholehearted and enthusiastic supporter of democracy from the bottom up. That is why, in the final paragraph of my letter in *FTT* 11, I encourage the democratic ideal of collective self-organisation to create an oppositional social and artistic movement, and in the middle paragraphs I express misgivings about the anti-democratic results of most attempts to control porn. Unless I'm misinformed, a law forbidding someone to violate community standards regarding sexual displays can and most likely will be used to keep me, for example, from burning my American flag, or getting a Marge Piercy novel at my local library. If an anti-porn law has this result then my allegiance to democratic ideals must come before my allegiance to feminism.

"Judith came to the statement about democracy via a paragraph on 'Revolution'. I may be misreading here, but she seems to be implying that only two political strategies for social change are available: consumer-driven programmes plus legislative campaigns on the one hand, violent revolution on the other. The fact that I have profound misgivings about the former -- on pragmatic rather than doctrinaire grounds -- does not at all mean that I embrace the latter. (If I've misunderstood this remark no doubt I'm simply not hearing the tenor of Judith's voice.)

"She's quite right to call me out for not clearly saying what I mean about boycotts. I am not for or against them any more than I'm for or against chain-saws. I'd prefer it if the users of this tool tried to avoid walking into *any* of Kali's

knives: corporate domination as well as masculinism and environmental degradation. My 'fine fighting revolutionary rhetoric' was not that; it was the expression of a desire to see a movement that doesn't allow its actions to become mere window-dressing for corporate crime.

"Let's take a look at a particularly egregious example of this window-dressing. Two of the companies which sponsored last year's Earth Day celebrations were Dupont (remember DDT and napalm?) and Ciba-Geigy (remember the syringes washed up on east coast shorelines?). The names of other Fortune 500s, most of them environmental offenders, were there as well. It's hard to believe that the Greens who accepted these endorsements are reformers; they strike me as careerists at best and at worst people who are on the side of the executioners (to borrow from Joseph's borrowing of Camus). The Earth Day organisers will no doubt argue that the money they got was worth it, but what's left in the public's mind is the kindly face of Old Doctor Capital, a bit crotchety and slow to change but basically a homeboy. Who will now undermine this image? You can pick up almost any media-watch magazine and discover that, with few exceptions, no one will.

"Judith's reply to Tim Jones made me wonder if she thinks there's a clear demarcation between radicals and 'ordinary people'. When I lived in London, I was a member of Big Flame, a political group (now quite defunct) to the left of Labour. We believed that extra-parliamentary activity was the best way (in most but not all instances) to change culture and the economy. During the three years that I was a member, I met dozens of members who were devoting most of their political time to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Several of our members were chairs of their CND groups. These people were bringing political skills learned and refined in the sixties and seventies to CND work. I never heard my friends denounce, in fact I often heard them praise, CND's existence as a mass organisation. They believed that CND saw parliament as a tool rather than a goal in its own right.

"I have no doubt that you've met 'purist radicals' who thought CND was littered with sell-outs. But I know that among the ranks of ordinary people who thronged the Campaign there were plenty of radicals. The radicals I know often had mortgages, kids, and steady jobs; the fact that they sometimes had none of these things matters not a jot. I am sorry that, for all my friends' time and effort, not a single missile was destroyed or sent back, that support for the Gulf War in Britain reached 86 percent. But perhaps CND drifted too far from the middle ground? Or appealed to the wrong sort of 'ordinary people'? Perhaps it should have supported multilateral disarmament? Perhaps it should have banned the woolly hats and marmite sandwiches that the pro-war press found so offensive?

"As I read the events at the time, it seemed that many CNDers were inspired by a number of principles, among them internationalism -- the ideal that nations should not resolve their conflicts by violent means. The multilateralists probably thought the unilateralists were victims of idealistic purism; I'd prefer to call it integrity.

"Judith said that the consumer boycott and labelling campaigns that exist in Britain amount to the 'political times' that I mentioned in my original letter. Concern for the environment (speaking for the USA) has indeed been a left-wing urge, but it has also been a right-wing urge: I seem to recall *New Statesman & Society* discussing the ecologism of the Nazis; and I know a very rich, very sincere owner of the environmentally sound Wholefoods chain of grocery stores in the USA who donates money to the Libertarian Party and has thwarted every attempt by his employees to organise. 'Political times' are created when, to continue our earlier metaphor, there is a determination to blunt, even melt and reforge, the bloodiest of Kali's knives. In Britain and the USA, ownership of the media continues to condense into a few hands. The union movement is gasping for air. I'd bet any money that, during the Gulf War, polls would have shown a higher support for dolphins than Iraqis. The Labour Party, always concerned with an 'engagement with the way things are', naturally played the poodle during the war. As long as its quest for respectability and the middle-road remains paramount, it will support the next war and the next.

"I'm not trying to imply that you're pro-war, nor do I think you're now obliged to defend the Labour Party or the Demopublicans. I'm simply pointing out that an 'engagement with the way things are' mustn't forget to offer a vision of the way things ought to be. Without this vision, we become disillusioned and our affection for 'ordinary people' becomes first a romanticisation of them, then a chase for that middle ground, a territory which the Right has pulled steadily in its own direction for the past fifteen years. The Right is absolutely clear about its vision, what

Martha Gelhorn calls the Free Enterprise World. As long as we have no contending vision, as long as we offer nothing but a number of consumer consciousness campaigns backed up by calls for a more responsive state bureaucracy, then we will continue to play their game and they, the better players by far, will continue to win. It is perhaps instructive to remember that the congressmen who authored last year's Clean Air Act are now saying that Big Business has sabotaged it. That's what happens when you have nothing more to offer than the Less Free Enterprise World.

"Finally, those who seek the middle ground may well do so for the noblest of reasons; nonetheless, they would be wise to remember that 'democracy' and 'ordinary people' don't necessarily travel with them. And they'd be wise to remember that not all of those to their left are guilty of purism; like the unilateralists I mentioned earlier, those to the left are often held in their place by their sense of integrity."

This seems less a response to Judith's remarks than a clarification of your political position; let us therefore try to clarify a little of ours. We are non-aligned, ecological, partly socialist, and spent the middle eighties active in CND -- one of us as an employee of the national office and the other as a local activist. We both fought to keep CND independent of any one political party or ideological faction, and so free to act on all shades of public opinion like any other extra-parliamentary pressure group. Like you, we see parliament as a tool rather than an end itself -- not least because the parties' demands that all political action should be channeled through them, and their claim that people's socio-economic aspirations can only be realised through parliamentary legislation, is chiefly responsible for the exclusion of ordinary people from the political process and indeed the suppression of anything resembling a popular, grass roots political culture in this country. (As Ralph Miliband argued in Capitalist Democracy In Britain, the British political establishment is well-versed at conceding just enough, when popular demands from below become too great to ignore, to blunt the pressure for reform without actually surrendering any of its power. The pressure now is for constitutional reform; we wait to see whether the Tories, if re-elected next year, will enact a Bill of Rights that looks good on paper but in fact leaves the executive and the legislature as unaccountable as they are now.) We dissent from this antiquated, unresponsive apology for democracy as we dissent from the exercise of state power in general; because we believe that we too have integrity. (Glimmers of this have surely been evident from previous issues!)

So we're certainly not about to defend the Labour Party (of which one of us was once a member and a candidate in a local government election), which over the past few years has abandoned so many principles in the quest for a parliamentary majority that it's demonstrated only that it's too unprincipled to be given power in the first place. Nowadays, we vote for the Greens -- because even if parts of their programme seem unfocused, and even if some of the steps by which we get from here to there remain unclear, they do offer a definite vision of what the world could be like; not just the Less Free Enterprise World, but the Post- or even De-Industrialised World.

Incidentally, the distinction between "unilateral" and "multilateral" is a semantic sham invented by the right to avoid serious debate about disarmament. The real distinction is between those who actually want disarmament, such as the members of CND, and those who hide their antipathy to it behind a fog of abusive Cold War rhetoric, such as Conservative politicians.

Ian Creasey

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Manchester M20 9EQ

"Rather than respond directly to all the specific issues raised in FTT 11, which would take many pages and overlap with your own generally apposite writing, I'd like to make a wild generalisation and say that most of them boil down to education, or the lack of it. (I use the term 'education' to mean the process whereby children are taught about the world and how to live in it, not as the synonym for schooling which it has become nowadays.)

"Basically, whatever the issue, it's no good arguing over its details when most people have no understanding of the issue itself -- either because they do not have the facts, do not know its history, or (in particular) have never given it any analytical thought. The latter is my main point: when people have never been taught or encouraged to think for themselves or find out for themselves, it is not surprising that misconceptions and blind prejudices arise.

"Throughout history, education for the masses has concentrated on indoctrinating children with a minimum of facts considered necessary for proper functioning in their

social class, and discouraging them from any ambitions outside that class. Children have never been told to find things out for themselves (presumably because people who do their own research tend to discover facts which contradict the official version) or to think for themselves (principally because they might then question the prevailing social order and become a threat to it).

"Unfortunately, it is now clear that this system has become increasingly inadequate for the task of equipping children to live in the modern world, for many reasons: the sheer multiplicity of facts needed nowadays; the tendency for received wisdom to change at an ever-increasing rate as science and society progresses; the inherent inefficiency of teaching facts without teaching methodologies of knowledge; but most of all because it does not give people any framework in which to address new situations not covered in the syllabus of past problems.

"Take sexism, for instance. It is impossible to sensibly discuss sexism without at least comprehending the real biological differences between male and female, knowing sufficient history to understand how our present social institutions arose, and looking at the issue without the distorting lenses of competing ideologies. And while feminists and their opponents argue about censorship, many people don't even realise that much advertising *is* sexist.

"Or take the food we eat. Because the general public is so ill-informed and unwilling to think about environmental issues, debate descends to a ridiculously simplistic level. Yes, people should know how food is produced. Yes, accurate labelling of its ingredients is necessary in principle. But without a knowledge of what the ingredients are for and how to interpret the information given, nutritional labelling is useless -- and it becomes easy for both unscrupulous and well-meaning people to seriously mislead the public. Scares about chemical additives are a case in point. Some additives are indeed unsafe, or over-used, or unnecessary. But they are put in food for a reason, even if the reason is sometimes trivial. To see some of the propaganda emanating from some of the pressure groups, one would think that the food corporations get together to say 'Now what unsafe chemicals can we put in our next useless product?'. This is obviously ridiculous.

"I am perhaps guilty of setting up my own Aunt Sally in order to knock it down. But I do believe that if more people used their own faculties to find out and think about the world around them, many of today's important issues would at least be seen a lot more clearly, and might even be resolved by common consensus. I'd like public debate to rise above the 'four legs good, two legs bad' level, to a reasoned and informed discussion of the merits of different limb arrangements.

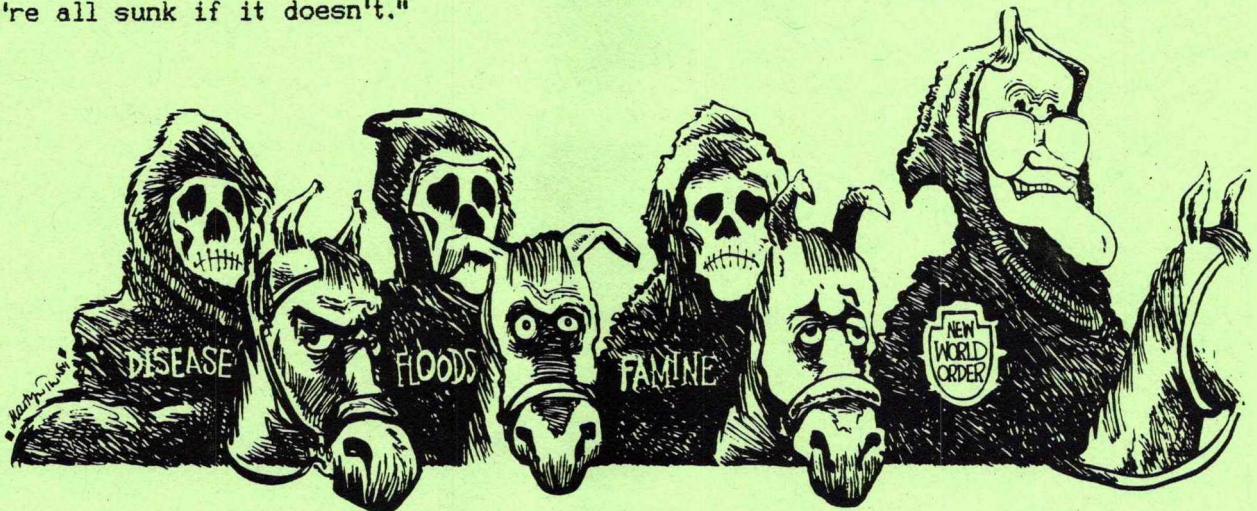
"Once one gets to a certain age, one's thought processes and mental habits are set, for better or for worse. This is why education is so vital, in order to ensure that the next generation is somewhat better equipped than ours to face the world. And as the world becomes ever more complex and dangerous, so must education advance to meet the need. In the words of H. G. Wells, 'Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe'. I hope that education will win, but I am not confident of it."

Vicki Rosenzweig
address as before

"Bush's whole 'New World Order' bit is ridiculous. It's not just that it's a cover-up for imperialism as usual, it's that the lies and the arrogance are so obvious. I don't know what these people define as a 'liberal democracy', but I'm fairly sure they'd say the United States is one. (The most useful thing my dictionary has to say on the subject is to suggest that liberalism, as an economic theory, generally involves free markets and the gold standard. Have you seen either of those lying around in London or Washington recently?) How, then, do they explain the US government overthrowing Chile's elected government and replacing it with a brutal dictatorship? Presumably it's okay to make war on Marxist democracies -- when in doubt, send the troops in, explain that 'it's okay to kill them, they're not democratic', then sell a few million guns to an emir, sultan or general somewhere, until it's time to shoot his subjects and send him into luxurious retirement. While I like E. B. White's formulation that democracy is 'the recurring suspicion that more than half the people are right more than half the time', the reality seems to be closer to Ambrose Bierce: 'a form of government in which it is permitted to wonder aloud what the country could do under first-class management'. I'm no longer surprised by such things -- in fact, I'm occasionally surprised by the reminder that some people actually believe government statements simply because they're from the government, and in the newspaper -- but I

retain the capacity for disgust. But that's the least of the arrogance. Power tends to fall into the hands of people who shouldn't be trusted with it, regardless of the form of government.

"The real arrogance of the 'history is at an end' claim is the assumption that nobody will ever think of anything new, and that the lifestyle of the industrialised West will never change. Without getting into questions of whether it's a good way to live (I think there are good arguments both for and against), the resources simply aren't there to support it in its present form forever. It seems shortsighted, to say the least, to assume that 2100 will look any more like 1990 than 1990 looked like 1880, even in terms of technology. As for the philosophy, a medieval Catholic might similarly have assumed that since all the important questions had been answered, and the proper social structure had been created, Europe would remain Catholic and feudal forever. Even if today's conservatives are right in many of their criticisms of modern ideas and ways of living, that doesn't mean we should go back; it means we should look for something better than either the past (which looks better than it was -- nobody gets nostalgic for polio, and I don't want to talk to those who are nostalgic for lynchings) or the present. It seems hopelessly out of fashion to believe that progress means anything other than bigger and better machines, and that we're all sunk if it doesn't."



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"There was another article by Fukuyama in *The Guardian* in April, as you'll have seen; I don't quite understand what he's on about, since his underlying assumptions seem arrant nonsense and even as deliberate polemic they don't have that controversial bite which stimulates violent disagreement. Either I've missed something vital or he's

just producing bland occasional journalism. It may of course be true, as he implies, that the US is not -- as you suggest -- heading for a period of decline and eclipse but a further period of imperialist expansion; certainly the massive defeat of Saddam Hussein's forces must reinforce the idea that it's possible to bomb an enemy back into the stone age without nuclear weapons, and so increase the confidence of the military lobby. But I suspect that this would be false confidence.

"It's possible to get over-apocalyptic (were we so shocked by what happened to the Kurds rather than by what's been happening to the Cambodians because media coverage of the Gulf is so much better?), but I think we've seen two things which are fundamental to the next two decades. First, war is back on the agenda for at least one major power in settling its difference with powerful (at least on paper) opponents. Second, the mass media has shown the West the effects of what people have been saying a nuclear war would have been like, in terms of mass destruction of property, lives and the environment. Will this have any warning effect whatsoever on people's attitudes? Given that you can now apparently buy footage from the Gulf War as entertainment for your videos, probably not."

Richard Brandt
address as before

"The problem with the War on Drugs, in the context of 'The Beginning Of History', is that it doesn't meet your criteria of 'swift...and casualty-free victories'. This is one reason we no longer hear of Drug Czar William Bennett's plan to make Washington DC a 'model city' for his programme, since drug-related shootings and stabbings there

continue to skyrocket. The ceaseless barrage of anti-drug messages hammering us via every available media may have reduced the casual use of relaxants such as marijuana by the middle and upper classes, but the import and distribution of heroin and crack cocaine among the urban poor proceeds unabated. More dramatic conflicts are required to distract attention from this blight, as well as the Savings & Loans crisis and other domestic horrors. This supplies an answer to the provocative question of why George Bush halted the Gulf War short of actually taking Hussein from power -- as Bush rattled the sabres again over Iraq's opposition to inspection of its nuclear facilities, the cynical might have assumed he saw the need to keep another war on standby."

The reason for Bush's halting the war short of toppling Hussein is even more provocative than that. As reported in New Statesman & Society on 21 June 1991, anonymous Pentagon and White House sources have claimed that the Saudis forced a cessation of operations to prevent the opening up of a power-vacuum that might have allowed the Iranian version of revolutionary Islam to spread to the Shi'ite Iraqis (and the birth of an Iraqi Kurdistan that would have caused additional problems for Syria and Turkey, already struggling to suppress their own Kurdish rebellions). As part of the deal for this early termination of the war, and the preservation of the Iraqi government, units of the Iraqi Republican Guard inside Kuwait and along the Iraq-Kuwait border were allowed to escape with their tanks and other weaponry intact, ready to bloodily do to Iraq's Kurdish and Shi'ite rebels what the allies had failed to do to them -- the allies having instead been too busy slaughtering Kurdish and Shi'ite conscripts by the hundreds of thousands on the road to Basra.

Richard Brandt

"If the East-West conflict really is fading away, then one rationally expects other conflicts to take centre stage.

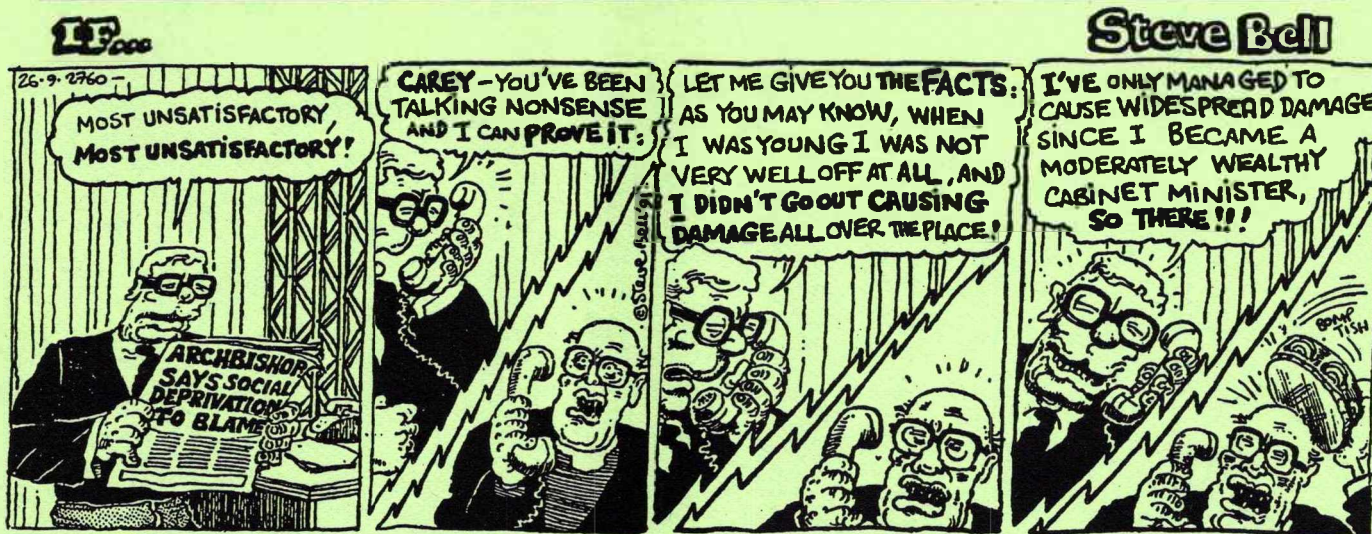
Indeed, I expect to see global conflict characterised more and more in terms of ethnic, national and religious divisions, but predominantly as struggles between haves and have nots. As the Cold War dims in memory, there will be greater awareness that these clashes have been continuing all along -- perhaps even that the global conflicts traditionally represented otherwise may be so described."

The East-West Cold War always was more about dividing and controlling the world than competing for its allegiance; but as the ideological mask drops away and the true nature of global conflict becomes apparent, I fear that people in the rich North are more rather than less likely to support such wars, if only because self-interest tells them that without continued access to their unequal share of world resources their current standard of living will have to go. (As someone remarked during the build-up to the Gulf War, "If Kuwait produced carrots, no one would give a damn".) As far as US armed forces are concerned, The War On Drugs is certainly casualty-free, and from the point of view of the US political establishment -- to whom the urban poor are irrelevant; the greater the murder rate the less need be spent on housing, health, education and welfare -- it's a perfect replacement for The Struggle To Defeat The Communist Hordes because of the pretext it offers for continued US intervention in the Third World (especially Central and South America). In the process, it militarises what is essentially a socio-economic problem in the countries concerned (Bolivia needs debt write-offs and higher prices for its commodity exports; instead it gets \$36 million of military "aid" a year) and thereby creates a military and political elite which, because it lacks indigenous support, can be safely relied upon to do the US's bidding for fear of replacement by an even more pliant faction -- such "bidding" usually consisting of keeping the population in check while selling off the country's assets to Northern multinational corporations for as little as the MNCs can get away with. The "New World Order" thus perpetuates the Old World Order's "Fifth Freedom", as identified by Noam Chomsky: the freedom to rob, to exploit and dominate, to undertake any course of action to ensure that existing privilege is protected and advanced. Only the excuse has changed.

But to end with, here's the list of everyone else who responded to the previous issue. We wanted to quote from several of their letters, but didn't have room -- as the Speaker remarks after a Commons debate in which more backbench MPs wanted to participate than the time allowed, we shall endeavour to give preference next time to those we didn't call this:

Ian Bambro, Sheryl Birkhead, Ken Cheslin, Tom Collins (again), Peter Darby, John

Doucet, Cathy Doyle, Bernard Earp, Gerald England, Alexis Gilliland, Teddy Harvia/David Thayer, Eva Hauser, Elise Krueger, Ken Lake, Mark Manning, Todd Mason, Kev McVeigh, Mark Nelson, Jan Orys, David Redd, John Rickett, Tom Sadler, Pascal Thomas, Alexander Vasilkovsky, and Roger Weddall. Our thanks to you all.



"A little while back, we received issue 11 of *FTT* from Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas," wrote Timothy Lane in his editorial in *Fosfax* 156. He continued: "Looking through one of Nicholas's articles I found myself contemplating a lengthy response, but never got around to writing it. One thing I did get to thinking about, though, is the simple question: Why does capitalism work so much better than socialism?"

The editors spent some time trying to work out which article in *FTT* 11 he could have been referring to, and after prolonged struggle decided that (since it was the only article by Joseph in that issue) he must have meant "The Beginning Of History". But that was primarily concerned to demolish Francis Fukuyama's claim that US liberal democracy had "won" the Cold War, and had nothing to do with the differences between capitalism and socialism.

We must therefore ask whoever is sending Timothy Lane these fraudulent issues of our fanzine to kindly desist forthwith, before the poor chap becomes completely confused.



"I realise that they live, they love, they bleed, they die the same as anyone else, even though for years we have been taught different."

An unknown Texan woman discussing the new perspective on Soviet affairs she gained from the TV coverage of the Soviet coup, quoted in *The Guardian Europe*, 30 August 1991

"Far left, in American terms, (is) someone who thinks Grenada didn't start the war."
John Clute, reviewing Allen Steele's *Clarke County, Space*, in *Foundation* 53, Autumn 1991