

FUCK THE TORIES



Number Two

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(Illustrations by Steve Bell, Valma Brown, Judith Hanna & Stu Shiffman)

Special Slightly Late Issue, but still as Ideologically Correct as ever, FUCK THE TORIES is edited and published by the Tricontinental Fanzine Collective -- Valma Brown and Leigh Edmonds (P.O. Box 433, Civic Square, ACT 2608, Australia), Terry Hughes (6205 Wilson Boulevard, Apt 102, Falls Church, Virginia 22044, USA), and Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas (22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER, United Kingdom). Editors this issue: Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas. Editors next issue: Valma Brown & Leigh Edmonds. Editor the issue after that: Terry Hughes. And after that...you get the general idea.

FUCK THE TORIES is available largely by editorial whim, which in this case means trades (one copy to each of the three participating households, please), contributions of material, and letters of comment (to any editor you choose -- but keep them short, because this is supposed to be a concise and frequent fanzine). And by donations to the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign (20-21 Compton Terrace, London N1) -- in the USA, write to your Congressperson urging them to strike down Reagan's funding for the ex-Somoza contras.

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THE POLITICS OF TEXTILE CONSERVATION

Comrade J. Hanna

I am ensconced in the beanbag in the bright spot right underneath the light, and deep in thought. Or possibly in meditation, which is that state where you know you are reflecting profoundly but when challenged find there are no words in what you were thinking. The machine-gun takatakataka of Joseph pounding out a friendly note to the Comrades halts, and:

"What are you doing, dear?" he asks.

I am concentrating on inserting the needle between the right set of threads in the brightly striped knitted garment I inherited from my mother and which is now fraying around the sleeves.

"What are you *doing*?" asks Joseph.

I reflect that it would be easy for him to turn around in his seat and see for himself, rather than interrupting what was definitely a deep insight, if not of cosmic significance then at least good for several pages of ideologically and ecologically sound feminist philosophy. If only I'd been able to pin words to it before it scuttled off down a hole in the skirting boards of my mind.

"What are you *doing*?"

"Textile conservation, dear. Stop interrupting."

Joseph turns around to see what I'm doing. Then resumes combat typing.

This time I resolve to keep track of what I am thinking. Or at least to peg enough landmarks for a plausible reconstruction. I am pleased with the term "textile conservation"; it has so much more dignity than "mending" which, as everyone knows, is a tedious and menial chore. In fact, I enjoy doing it. It takes as much skill as any other art or craft -- say, mending a car -- and can offer as much aesthetic satisfaction. Oh, I don't bother darning Joseph's cheap and nasty synthetic socks. The treatment is reserved for garments that are worth repair, clothes I'm fond of, the ones I've had so long they feel more like pets than inanimate objects, so how could I grudge spending a bit of time nursing them back to health. Minor surgery is all it takes. The operation requires a good light, eye-hand co-ordination, fine judgement in matching colour and texture, and skilled deployment of a range of techniques. At the same time, the mind is free for creative wandering.

Ever since I was a little girl dressing up in Mum's old evening frocks and high heels, I've been seduced by clothing as an aesthetic -- and as a sensual -- experience, the most pervasive folk art around. Whether you think about it or not, when you get up in the morning, you don't just put on clothes, you make of yourself a statement in colour, line and texture. There's no opting out -- to go out wearing *nothing*, no clothes at all, is the most radical statement possible. In the British climate, it's also bloody chilly.

It's an art women are more expert at than men. And so for women more problematic. You blokes may envy our greater freedom to choose among the plethora of styles that dress up shop windows and women's magazines. But along with all the razzamatazz comes the message -- the clothes count more

than the person inside them. As long as you Look Right -- like the models in the photos -- what do you need with brains, talent or personality? And if you don't look like a model or a movie-star, then no-one (which means *no man*) will ever notice your brains, talent, etc. Besides, men feel threatened by brainy women. Which is where Women's Lib jumped up shouting "Fuck that!" And refused to dress up. Or to fuck men. These days the casual, easy-cut feminist style, as advertised in Cosmopolitan, is for sale in all trendy boutiques.

Men remain a problem. Particularly when they are convinced that women dress to be sexy to them. Or ought to. Bollocks to that! We dress up for us: self as work of art. Less mess than painting, less hard yakka than sculpture, not left hanging on unwatched wall all day, remade each morning, perhaps as a variation on the same theme (but blue instead of green), perhaps as a whole new image (subtle elegance/bold and baggy). You play for your own pleasure; it's nice if others appreciate the effect.

Image-making is serious multi-mega-bucks manipulation in the fashion marketplace. But dress-making is a game most women can play for themselves. All it takes to empower you to make the handcrafted original you want, for the price of your basic cheap and nasty mass-produced number, is cloth, thread, and a bit of knowhow usually learned from your mother. Paper patterns and sewing machines are labour-saving luxuries but you can manage without them. Of course, you can make an awful balls-up of it -- but the bolder you are, the better it seems to work. Playing it safe makes dullness.

When I was little Mum made all our clothes. When I was twelve she told me I was old enough to make my own. So I did. Not until I moved away to Uni could I indulge in *bought* clothes. Now, having collected more clothes than our small flat has room for, I've resolved that the only new clothes I can permit myself are those I make myself. Creative self-expression, not consumerism. Already I have material for a turquoise cotton dress, a shirt in navy raw silk, and a stripy wool skirt. And wool for three more jumpers. It's the colours I can't resist. When I gave up painting -- lack of time, mainly, and lack of space to be untidy in (it's not possible to be tidy when painting) -- that's when I took up knitting.

Joseph leaps up, crosses room to kick heater on.

"We don't need the heater," I say. "Are you cold?"

"Why else would I turn on the heater?" he snarls.

I, who feel the cold almost as much as Avedon Carol, am wearing a jumper knitted (during cons, CND meetings and commuting to work on the Tube) from the nest of wool that lives under my desk. Joseph is wearing a T-shirt.

Joseph has an ideologically correct awareness of the disproportionate amount of the earth's resources used up by the relatively small populations of developed countries like the US, UK and Australia (f'rinstance the US with 6% of the world's population consumes some 35% of the world's resources). He is indignant about acid rain from British power stations damaging European forests. He supports research into solar and other renewable forms of energy. But his theoretical awareness that we consume too much doesn't translate into the behavioural directive:

When cold, it is more ecologically sound to put on jumper than put on heater.

"You are over-theorised, dear," I tell him. "And you are an oppressor of the Third World."

He resumes combat typing. The heater stays on. I too am an oppressor of the Third World. I am too lazy to get up and turn it off.

Where was I? Independence from marketplace, grow your own clothes...

On the farm we even grow our own wool. So Mum bought a spinning wheel and our black sheep were no longer nuisances to be culled. Mum now has a loom but hasn't got around to carpentering it together, so I didn't learn to weave when we visited Australia a few months ago. On the farm we grow our own just about everything, and recycle almost everything else. Waste not, want not. Plastic bags and containers are rare imports, to be washed out and used over and over. Kitchen scraps are sorted into 'feed for chooks', 'compost heap', 'burn'. Empty tin cans have seedlings planted in them, or become chook feed dispensers or plant or chook watering devices. Broken glass is about the only thing thrown out. Joseph was *horrified* by the untidiness. Clothes certainly aren't thrown out: those that just don't fit any more go into the neighbourhood swap circle, those now too shabby to be seen in are demoted to work clothes which in turn become cleaning rags or, ripped into strips, are made into floor or dishwashing mops.

Every time I look at our kitchen rubbish bin I quiver with guilt. City living is ecological assassination, and no way around it. I even throw out newspapers (excellent mulch for the garden we don't have), cardboard boxes (undercoated, they'd make practice boards for the painting I don't have time or space for), even glass jars and bottles. And why isn't this fanzine printed on recycled paper?

Not that farm life is entirely ecologically sound. Far from it: "broad acres" monoculture is killing the countryside in order to keep the property economically viable. So are all those noxious chemicals we spray around to commit biocide on unwanted species of insect and weed.

What was a hole has become a nicely darned patch. Now I crochet around the frayed edge of the cuff. This darning I am doing is as much a political act, signifying a commitment to the ecological value of recycling in order to conserve resources, as it is an aesthetic exercise. The personal is political.

The farm has this much in common with the Third World -- the men produce the cash crops, the women produce subsistence crops. The cash crops (wheat, sheep) occupy some 3000 acres; Mum's vegetable garden and chook yards occupy half an acre. In London I have five pots of herbs on the kitchen window sill and grow bean sprouts in a jar; all else we buy. Mum models her self-sufficient organic garden not on hippy counter-culture (though we do have a couple of Findhorn books stuffed somewhere in one of the bookcases) but on her grandmother's household where she watched soap and candles being made and helped feed the chooks. Because she grew up with the example of how a household can be an independent economic unit, so have I.

When you lose control of the means of production, you lose power. (See Eleanor Leacock, Myths Of Male Dominance (1981), for the anthropological evidence.) Economic self-sufficiency is difficult in a suburban lot, impossible in an apartment; with urbanisation, women's work became restricted to keeping the house tidy and the kids quiet, and shopping with the money brought in by the male breadwinner. In theory, at least. This was not, in itself, work any less responsible, skilled or demanding than the run of paid jobs. It was (and still is) simply invisible when it came to compiling GDP and GNP. To the men who were monopolising the public sphere, home was a place to relax, flop down in front of the TV and wait to be fed. Patriarchal oppression in inaction.

In fact, around one-third of women (in Britain) always worked for money:

domestic service, farm labour, factories, in chain and nail making forges. I'm not sure whether prostitution is included in that figure. These days only some 20 percent of families fit the nuclear ideal of homebody wife, children, and husband (assumed to be in paid work). Though most women are now working outside the home and bringing in money, men aren't pulling their weight within the home: women do an average of 52 hours/week housework to co-habiting males' average of 10 hours/week. These are statistics to brood on.

In theory, we have a half and half split: I do the cooking and shopping, Joseph does the cleaning and tidying. I enjoy cooking, Joseph is fussy about tidying up. However...dinner needs cooking every bloody day when I stagger home from work, nor can shopping to keep up supplies be neglected. But Joseph finds himself too busy to Hoover the floors more often than once every couple of months -- almost everything is more important than taking time for housework. It is always me who gives in to disgust and scrubs down the bathroom and around the kitchen sink. Joseph learnt from his house-proud suburban mother to be obsessively neat. He has not internalised the essential difference between cosmetic absence of mess and the invisible exigencies of household hygiene. He uses the dishcloth to wipe up the floor. He doesn't realise that his mother washed the floor every day, and scrubbed the bathroom every day. Joseph's idea of tidying up is to nag me to Put Things Away. This does not seem like fair division of labour.

"You are an agent of the patriarchy," I tell him.

He looks cute and confused. This does not save him.

"You are a patriarchal oppressor," I repeat. "You cling to false consciousness. Nagging me about tidyness does not keep the place clean. This floor needs vacuuming."

It has scraps of thread and and darning wool all over it.

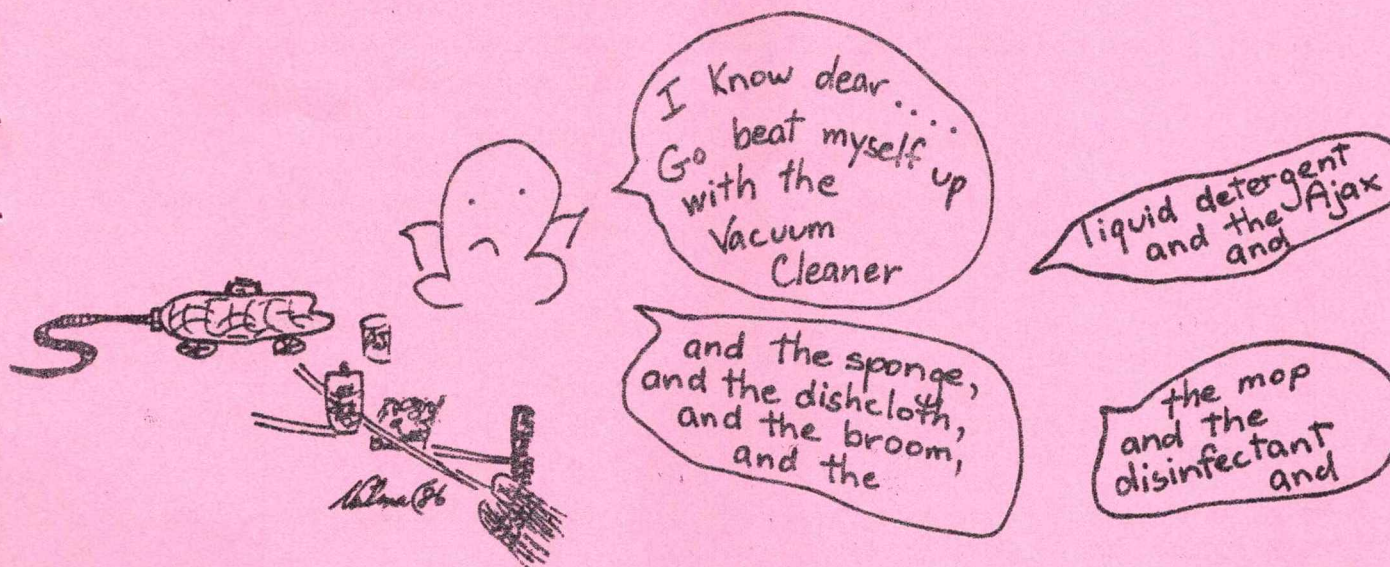
"Er um ah..." says Joseph.

"Fetch tea!" I say.

He takes the two empty mugs and goes downstairs to the kitchen.

"The personal is political," I call after him, "and the political is personal."

And my heirloom jumper is mended, better than new.



"Excuse me, Officer, is this the way to INTERZONE?"

Comrade J. Nicholas

Friday 27 December 1985. 10.00am. Since it's a holiday for us, we're still in bed when the doorbell rings. The postman, presumably, delivering a parcel. I toss aside The Guardian, snatch up my dressing gown and charge downstairs. But when I open the door there's nobody there. Some damn hoax, I think angrily, and make to close it again.

A shout stops me -- and I see, just beyond the passage that connects our front door to the street, a man talking to a police constable. "Interzone?" he calls.

I aver that he has the right address; and, calling thanks over his shoulder to the constable, the man hurries forward, a package held out before him.

It occurs to me that if this caller was really asking a policeman where he could find the Interzone editorial offices he must have been expecting something more imposing than a shabby-looking flat above a newsagent's. The steel and glass facade of some multinational conglomerate, perhaps -- Interzone Enterprises, with interests in banking and computing as well as science fiction publishing. Interzone magazine, the tax write-off for the editorial collective's oil and gas interests in South East Asia.

"Miss Hanna?" he asks, sounding somewhat breathless.

Maybe it's the length of my hair that's fooled him. He himself appears to be in his mid-forties and is fairly non-descript save for a woolly hat pulled down over his forehead and a pair of dark-lensed granny specs rammed into the bridge of his nose. He looks...well, not suspicious, exactly, but definitely not the sort of person that you'd want to spend an evening's convivial drinking with.

"No," I say helpfully.

"But she lives here? Perhaps I can take this up to her."

I remark that since this is all the same house such is not possible.

"Are you associated with Interzone? These are some short stories for it. I thought I'd deliver them by hand and save myself some postage."

This much is obvious. "Have you included return postage?"

"No. I thought I could discuss them with Miss Hanna after she's had a chance to read them. Perhaps I can give her a call when I get back from the country this time next week?"

From which it seems safe to assume that the package contains the most tedious crap imaginable, that he fancies himself as the new Isaac Asimov, and that he's never read a copy of the magazine. And confirms me in my earlier judgement to give away as little as possible -- even to the extent of hiding the fact that I'm married to "Miss" Hanna.

"I don't think I can give out someone else's private phone number without their permission. But I'll tell her you called."

He looks disappointed, but says that he obviously can't keep me standing on the doorstep with bare feet in the middle of winter, thanks me for my time and departs. No doubt thinking of the huge cheque that will soon be his.

Later, we open the package and I glance over the contents. The covering letter eulogises our man's desire to write something he calls "space science futurology", berates publishers in general for their failure to properly consider his work, and instructs "Miss" Hanna to read his stories "carefully". She tries -- but formula space adventure bullshit is formula space adventure bullshit regardless of who writes it.

* * * * *

A fortnight later, responding to Judith's letter of rejection, declining to pay his postage costs for him, he returns to collect his stories.

"I'm sorry, but they're not suitable for us," she tells him as she hands over the hefty bundle. "Have you read the magazine?"

Perhaps he has, now, and has thoroughly detested its contents. Not nearly enough "space science futurology", obviously, and altogether too much cyberpunkdom. Certainly no room for his Asimovine space adventures. Oh, what pain to have had his hopes dashed thus...

"Young lady," he says, drawing himself up to his full 5'2" and quivering with indignation, "I'll have you know that I have many years experience at writing and have published in many more prestigious magazines than yours --"

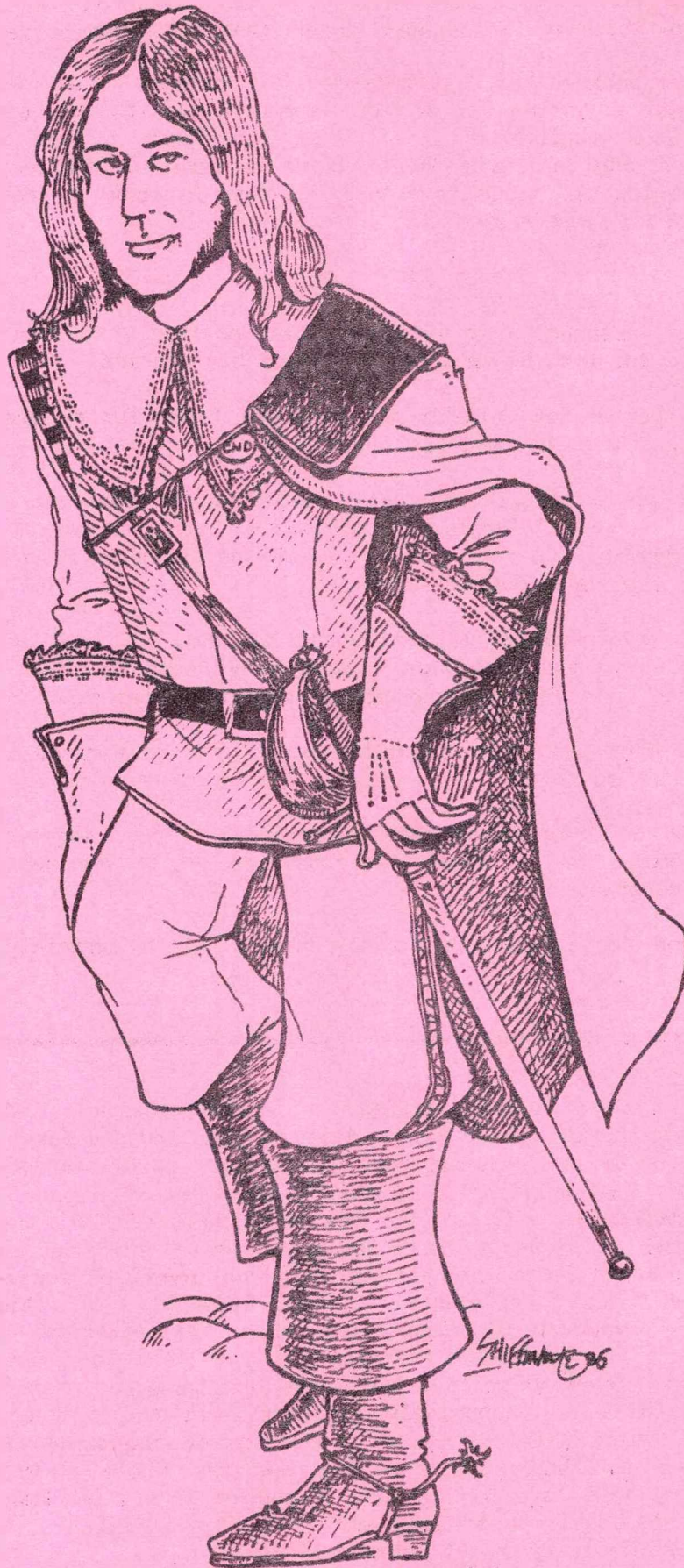
"Then you should know that most magazines won't even look at submissions that don't include return postage."

But he is not to be deterred by this observation. "Your magazine," he says, "will never be more than a shoestring operation while you write such rude letters to your contributors."

As an explanation for *Interzone's* low circulation, this certainly takes some beating.

"I believe that there have been attempts to analyse the political economy of fandom in terms of the production, distribution and exchange of egoboo. However, there can be little doubt that the largely petty-bourgeois nature of fanzine producers (as manifested in their adherence to certain obscure and anachronistic traditions, such as the use of mimeo and Twiltone paper) has seriously distorted these analyses to the point where they they can no longer be said to make a valid contribution to the development of fan-socialism. I have to confess that I detected certain elements of this nostalgic traditionalism in your first issue, but such manifestations are perhaps unavoidable during the preliminary stages of transition to fan-socialism. I trust that your struggle to perfect the norms and forms of post-revolutionary fanzine practice will be unceasingly vigilant. In the prophetic words of Engels: 'Society, which will reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of the Gestetner where it will then belong: into a museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe'."

(Tim Jones, from his letter of comment.)



Joseph Nicolas
the "Leveller Cavalier"
c. 1653

ABOUT AN EDWARDIAN CAKE TRAY

9

Comrade L. Edmonds

Funny, isn't it, how some little phrases stick in the mind. Perhaps it's because they seem appropriate or maybe some stick just because they sound as though they should be appropriate to something? One that keeps coming back to me is the description of the former Australian Labor Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, as "not having a socialist bone in his body". Not being expert in political anatomy I don't know about this, but it leads me to ponder on what sort of political skeleton the current Labor Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, has. In comparison with Hawke, Whitlam looks like Che Guevara.

I once attended a seminar which Gough Whitlam gave when he was associated with the Australian National University. One afternoon he took part in an informal question-and-answer session with us political science students. In an hour-and-a-half he answered only three questions, but each was an inspired, inspiring and erudite outpouring on the subject raised. I have rarely seen such an exhibition of sheer intellect: only John Foyster's detailed analysis of how you choose convention Guests-of-Honour, Dave Langford's occasional Ansible or a book I read recently come close.

On that day I saw two of Australia's great men. In the morning I attended a history lecture given by Manning Clark. Like Whitlam, Clark is one of Australia's great men; but unlike Whitlam he has survived our native talent for levelling tall poppies. Some might argue that Ian Turner or Geoffrey Blainey are Australia's greatest historians, but anybody who has read Clark's History Of Australia or attended any of his lectures knows better.

That morning Clark lectured on Edmund Barton (one of Australia's better non-Labor Prime Ministers). As usual, Clark did not address his audience from behind a lectern; he strode up and down, gesturing for emphasis, indulging in the dramatic pause, scribbling odd words on the blackboard. Calling it a lecture is not enough: it was a virtuoso performance which brought him a standing ovation when he had finished.

Manning Clark's lectures always abounded with asides. One that day was to explain why Edmund Barton almost always appeared in large and bulky coats. It was because he was portly or, as Clark put it, "addicted to the temptations of the Edwardian cake tray". He paused for a moment, surveyed the young and eager audience meaningfully and then commented with a hint of sadness, "But you're too young to have known the delights of the Edwardian cake tray," before continuing with his main point.

That's another of those little phrases that has stuck with me.

He's right: I had not known the delights of such a feast, even though I have pressed my nose against numberless cake shop windows. Since then I have seen one or two photographs of those wonderful celebrations of the proposition that you can never have too much of a good thing, but never been tempted. And then one day I found out what Barton must have experienced. One of the people at work, knowing that I have an interest in Oliver Cromwell, loaned me a history book. It turned out to be an absolute delight, a collection of thirty-four finely written, thoughtful and refreshing Essays in English History by A. J. P. Taylor.

As the Edwardians must have done, I hesitated before taking my first bite. There was just so much to choose from. The essay on Cromwell looked interesting but then, next to it, was another little marvel with the irresistible title of "Tory History". And there, later on, was a more substantial-looking item which called itself "Economic Imperialism"; and what about the enigmatic "We Want Eight, And We Won't Wait", or the intriguing morsel "Spam On A Gold Plate".

What the hell, nobody ever needed to wear heavy overcoats because they read too much. So I leapt in, devouring whatever looked good. I was not disappointed; A. J. P. Taylor combines a good and lively sense of history with an ability to paint clear and and enticingly interesting word-pictures of people and events. The enigmatic Oliver Cromwell is explained better in four pages than some texts manage in two hundred; Taylor's reflections on Hobson's 1902 theory of imperialism, in the essay "Economic Imperialism", clarified in six pages problems which had been annoying me for nine months; and "Spam On A Gold Plate" turned out to be a crisp little description of modern British monarchy and George VI in particular.

After those, indecision set in. I just started nibbling here and there at random, leaving half-finished eyetracks over all sorts of things. Finally I decided to get systematic about my sampling and, having realised that the essays were arranged in more-or-less chronological order, I just went to the first page of the book and started reading my way through it, following a delicately constructed portrait of a historical figure with a dense but easily digested description of an event or historical problem. Reading the book from cover to cover turned out to be a good idea since the essays which make up the volume come from different sources and times; book reviews, lectures, speeches, radio talks, articles written to commemorate events, or any excuse to put words on paper. They tumble out, one after the other, delighting the reading palate with their diversity and their uniformly high literary standard. An Edwardian cake tray could not be more diverse or exciting -- though if I were you I'd leave aside the essay "Prelude To Fashoda: The Question Of The Upper Nile, 1894-5" until you develop a taste for solid diplomatic history or until you feel particularly game, since it's fairly chewy.

A. J. P. Taylor must be a remarkable man, a tall poppy. His knowledge is broad and detailed, and covers a very long time span. Just as importantly, he is politically correct and certainly has more than a few socialist bones in his body. In his essays he makes it clear that there is "them" and there is "us". "Us" includes Roger Casement, Arthur Henderson, Keir Hardy and the British Working Class. "Them" comprises the likes of King George V, Lloyd George, Lord Northcliffe and the hughers of Manchester. Taylor throws in his lot, not with Kings, Prime Ministers or press barons, but with the working man and his class. It is not obtrusive, though it is ever-present, and it adds extra taste to the essays, making them even more enticing.

Taylor also writes things that tend to stick in your mind. In one of his introductions (like Harlan Ellison, Taylor has them too, but not all the time and then, thankfully, limited to about a hundred words), he writes: "NATO, mentioned in the last paragraph, was a military alliance designed to protect western Europe from the supposed danger of Communism. There are reports that it still exists."

There's another sticky thought in the conclusion to his 1961 essay on the rise and fall of Lloyd George, with the forward looking comment that "Lloyd George's success marked the last triumph of individual enterprise. His fall showed that the last days of individual enterprise were over. Combines ruled, in politics as in everything else. Nowadays even historians work in teams."

Of course; and so do the best fanzine editors.

(Essays In English History, A. J. P. Taylor, Pelican Books)

A Neo-Stalinist Critique Of Frank Herbert's DUNE

Sherry Francis

Many minds in SF criticism have struggled with the complex interplay of elements in Frank Herbert's *Dune*, but no one has yet situated the novel in a politico-historical context. Most SF critics, and indeed many fans, lack the political acumen necessary to recognise *Dune* as a fully conceptualised though blundering contribution to Marxist historiography and hermeneutics.

Herbert (that is Frank, not Marcuse) obviously embraces a Trotskyist revision of Marx's classic appraisal of pre-capitalist modes of production. All feudal aristocracies are constituted in the localised control and discretionary parcelisation of land. There is suzerain and there is serf. This position, which has the Bolshevik imprimatur, is culpably ignored by Herbert in favour of the so-called "Asiatic" mode of production. Herbert's voyeuristic attraction to this distortion can be seen in his use of the Chinese model of feudal social relations -- a model which assigns all land to one authority but relies on a *literati* to manage the regulation and distribution of a basic resource. Through their technological prowess, the Harkonnen and Atreides functionaries enable the extraction of spice; Herbert thus inserts an intermediary class between serf and suzerain -- a class which does not act and react as units of labour power but functions as a simple material resource. The technocrats cannot, therefore, provide the Fremen with the class leadership they so desperately need but only with a reinforcement of archaic tribal relations. The brutish and dim Fremen, unable to conceive of any model other than the one used by their imperialist exploiters, reproduce the colonisers' feudal relations in their own tyrannical clan structure which is then legitimated by an ethos of millenarian righteousness. Herbert thus saddles himself with an implausible configuration of class relations in which the stunted revolutionary potential of the Fremen cannot be rescued from the malodorous putrescence which has confounded it.

Not content with the hubris of Fourth Internationalism, Herbert rejects a materialist ontology for the introduction of a messianic figure into the leadership vacuum he creates. The obvious motivation of Paul Atreides, to own the entire universe, is obscured with so much fecal matter about the inevitable evolution of man into psychic *ubermensch*. Herbert's work represents the unsurprising culmination of the Trotskyite political deformity in a pseudo-scientific and crypto-bourgeois idealisation of the individual.

"Don't worry, Valma -- one radical act is worth any amount of rhetoric." Thus Comrade Hughes to Comrade Brown just after the latter had been told off by a museum security guard for leaning on a period table to get a better look at a painting in the Victorian National Gallery.

GOT THE TROTS?

THE JOSEPH NICHOLAS GUIDE TO THE BRITISH SECTARIAN LEFT

For the benefit of those (mostly foreign) readers who may be confused by the tendencies and factions that swarm and cluster on the British Left, we present here the following handy guide.

First up is the good old Communist Party of Great Britain, which is these days split into two wings: the Stalinist hardliners who have control of its daily paper The Morning Star; and the democratic, participative Eurocommunists who have control of everything else (and publish the monthly magazine Marxism Today, which I read myself and recommend highly) and who shouldn't be in this listing anyway, so there. This party is not to be confused with the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) -- which is actually Maoist but would rather you didn't know it, and publishes something called Workers' Weekly, a copy of which no one of my acquaintance has ever seen -- nor should it be confused with the Stalinist-inclined New Communist Party, whose banner I once saw on a CND demo and a copy of whose weekly leaflet The New Worker I have seen.

None of these should be confused with the Revolutionary Communist Party, which is actually Trotskyist. As is the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, which was once a part of the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) but refused to disband when ordered to do so. The Tendency publishes the weekly Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!, which at one time contained instructions for making your own petrol bombs, while the Party -- who used to run the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group until that was ordered to disband by the Anti-Apartheid Movement -- publishes The Next Step, the sellers of which try to entice you by telling you how reading it will help to bring peace to Northern Ireland. Since I have never been enticed, I cannot explain the connection -- except by hazarding a guess that the struggle to wade through its probably turgid prose would use up the energy that would otherwise have gone into the armed struggle against the British.

But the largest groupings on the Left, of course, are Militant and the Socialist Workers Party -- the former of which claims to be only a newspaper despite issuing membership cards to its readers and the latter of which styles itself as "the smallest mass party in the world". SWP philosophy is that the workers are inherently revolutionary and need only the right kind of leaders to awaken that latent zeal; but the workers have first to be persuaded to buy Socialist Worker so that they may learn how to follow. Militant, on the other hand, already has control of the Labour Party Young Socialists, and is famous for suggesting that overnight nationalisation of the banks, the insurance companies and the top 300 industrial concerns is not an impossible proposition.

Below this is the now-defunct Workers Revolutionary Party, which was bankrolled by Vanessa and Corin Redgrave and which last year expelled its 75-year-old founder, Gerry Healy, for diverting the struggle into counter-revolutionary sex with teenage girls; thus the end of Newsline, the only socialist daily to be printed in full colour. Defunct several years ago was the International Marxist Group (the last remnant of the 1938 Fourth International), whose 750 members joined the Labour Party in 1979, renamed themselves Socialist Action, started a weekly paper of the same name, sank to 400 members -- and then lost 150 of them in November 1985 with the founding of a new bimonthly journal, International, whose supporters argue that they have the more correct line on international issues (and also that Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock rather than Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is the main enemy). Care should be taken not to confuse Socialist Action with Socialist

Organiser, published by the even more obscure Socialist League, whose membership records are a secret.

Even more secretive and obscure is the International Leninist Workers Party, which operates from a box number in Clapham and signs with initials only the articles which appear in its weekly leaflet, The Leninist. By contrast, the International Spartacist League at least uses pseudonyms for the stuff it publishes in Workers Hammer, mostly calls to the workers to rise and smash "the fascist-cop state". These two groupings, unlike the WRP *et al*, are not members of the new umbrella group Labour Left Co-ordination -- intended to unite the hard left factions in their hour of abandonment by everyone who's seriously interested in re-electing a Labour government -- mostly because they believe it's too far to the right. The voice of this new umbrella group is Campaign Herald, a merger of two other factions' titles which at least ensures it an existing readership...provided it doesn't refission in its turn.

Still confused? Never mind. As Austin Mitchell put it in Four Years In The Death Of The Labour Party (Methuen 1983), "The sectarian left is characterised by the continuous creation of groupings... All compete to be more Trotsky than thou but since they blossom and die or break up like amoebae any listing is more a seed catalogue than a firm offer". Which does rather complicate the enduring struggle to weld the armies of the proletariat into an unstoppable revolutionary force that will march forward shoulder-to-shoulder and arm-in-arm over the headless corpses of the bourgeois capitalist reactionaries and their running dog CIA lackeys into the glorious new dawn of utopian socialism, etc. etc., but as ideological purity is naturally much more important than winning boring old elections this is clearly what infighting on the hard left should always be about.

MOMENTS AT MEXICON:

Comrade J. Hanna

(1)

"The trouble with sanctions against South Africa is that it's a bulwark against Communism," says Ric Cooper.

God knows how the topic came up - perhaps I'd mentioned Namibian uranium and the British Bomb. "Rubbish," I say. "What about apartheid?"

Ric mumbles something about totalitarianism and human rights. He clearly hasn't been reading the recent headlines about the Philippine elections.

"You mean it's all right to kill people as long as it's done in the name of freedom, democracy and capitalism?"

I am suddenly reminded of what Greg Benford said to me at a One Tun meeting in 1984. "What you've got to understand, Judith, is that, basically, right-wing totalitarian regimes can evolve into democracies, but left wing totalitarian regimes don't."

So perhaps South Africa is peacefully evolving after all -- just like the Somoza dictatorship evolved into the Sandinista revolution, and Marcos is gracefully bowing to the popular will.

(2)

"You and Avedon write like people, not like women," ATom compliments us.

"But we are women, ATom," Avedon tells him. "Of course we write like *women*."

What does ATom think women write like?

FANZINES OF THE LEADEN AGE

Comrade L. Edmonds

In the first issue of this glorious proletarian fanzine, I gave an ideologically sound explanation of why fanzine reviews are necessary. In this issue I would like to indulge a reactionary tendency and give a personal reason for writing fanzine reviews. I trust that the comrades will favour me in this matter just once.

For the most part, fanzines are a form of self-expression. In almost all cases they are produced with the prospect of little or no reward except the good feelings which their editors get from them. Because of this, some fans say that it is unfair to be critical of other people's fanzines; their editors are doing what pleases them, and to offend them would be to put them off producing further issues. Ideologically correct fans might suggest that this is a good thing since it saves trees, but one need only buy a daily newspaper to see where the real waste of paper lies.

In writing fanzine reviews it isn't my intention to blast into submission any fanzine editor who does not please me. I have two objectives, both of which I think of as positive.

The first is to explain to myself what I think about fanzines. I've been publishing them for almost two decades so I must think they are worthwhile, but it's only through trying to explain to others what I consider to be good or bad in them that I come to understand what I really think about them. I imagine that this is true of most forms of criticism.

The second reason I write about fanzines is because I'd like to think that somebody out there will find my thoughts on the subject interesting and helpful. I don't always expect the editor of a fanzine I'm writing about to be moved to change (though that would be nice), but perhaps somebody else will take notice of something I write. Each editor has their own idea about how much time and effort should be put into what they publish, and my comments usually take that into account. Many fanzine editors are also quite satisfied with what they are doing and see no need to improve -- and while it is quite legitimate for them to wish to stay in the same place, I think that is a pity.

It is my inclination to try to do better at whatever I am attempting, and I often naturally assume that others feel the same. It is hard for me to realise that others are quite happy to reach a certain level of achievement and stay there. If those fanzine editors are offended or put off by what I have to say, that is regrettable. But as I develop my thinking on fanzines it is bound to happen on occasions.

Returning to ideology for a moment, I think it would be fair to say that in the past few years I have finally developed a political view of the world which owes more to socialism and the ideas of the left than it does to conservatism and the ideas of the right. I make no apology for this, and only wish that I had woken up to what's going on sooner. If any comments contain my political views which you think might be best discarded, that is something we will have to continue to disagree on. At least you know where I'm coming from, which is often more than you can say about yourselves.

And so, my comrades, take away the soapbox and wheel in the first victim.

Ron Clarke's The Mentor 57 is bland -- and that's the best that can be said

about it. In the editorial, there is one possible explanation for this when Ron writes that "it is noteworthy that these fannish fanzines do not have the distance in them to last more than thirty issues". What Ron sees as a virtue is staying power, the ability to be there long after the rest of the pack has disappeared. For him, the goal is to stay in the race; not for him the high energy expenditure of a hundred metres dash or a high jump; he's a long distance performer and is concerned with stamina and perseverance. On the face of it this might mean that Ron is pacing himself, making sure that he isn't putting too much into each issue so that he can go on to the next one without straining himself. But there might be another reason for it: Ron is making a virtue out of necessity. If you don't have the skill, ability and intelligence to achieve amazing heights of excellence you can at least console yourself that you're better than those who have, at least in one way. And why not? The meek shall, after all, inherit the earth.

Ron appears to take his task as editor to mean that he is a collector and typer of other people's material. The only obvious place where you will find his writing is on the two-thirds of a page titled "Ron's Roost" -- an editorial of sorts and an apt title. It is not unusual for him to raise interesting topics but the pity is that he doesn't give himself the time and space to elaborate on the points he makes. For example, in this issue he draws a distinction between "SF fanzines" and "fannish fanzines" and suggests that the former are more popular than the latter. He doesn't explain his reasoning, but instead falls to using phrases like "It is obvious from the foregoing" and the word "probably" twice in one sentence to escape any certainty in what he is suggesting. This doesn't demonstrate a very high level of clear thinking. I might suggest that this is because Ron feels he has better things to do with his time than ponder on and describe properly the subjects he raises; others may be less charitable. Even so, if you don't have time to deal with a matter properly, why raise it at all?

Ron's attitude to editing is also apparent in the letter column. Although he may exercise his editorial blue pencil in ways that are not obvious, it seems that the complete text of letters is copied out for us to read. This might make life easy for a typist, but in most cases letters of comment are sent to let editors know that their efforts were appreciated and, almost incidentally, to comment on something in the fanzine. Because most letter writers turn out their responses first draft and in a matter of minutes, most are not well written, well considered or even very interesting. For that reason, printing very much of them can only lower the interest level of the fanzine. This is made even worse when the same basic thoughts are expressed by three or four different people in slightly different words at different places in the letter column.

No doubt those who enjoy reading other people's mail might like undigested letter columns. But there is another point of view which holds that a letter column should be as interesting and dynamic as any other part of a good fanzine, and that to achieve it the editor must work on the raw material; choosing, editing and shuffling to achieve a satisfactory progression of thoughts and adding editorial comments in reasonable places to highlight points, continue debates or occasionally perpetrate a pun or two.

The best that can be said for the contributions to The Mentor 57 is that they are interesting: in the sense that they convey information rather than any artistic or aesthetic sense. I enjoyed Boris Zavgorodny's description of a meeting of SF fans in Sverdlosk, but unfortunately the piece leaves unsaid as much as it does say; it gives names, dates and opinions but little of the context, atmosphere and personality of the people involved. It is the kind of thing which one would expect to read in a detailed official report, not in a fanzine. In a similar vein, the reports "Aelita Laureats" by Igor Tolocomicou

and "Soviet SF Chronicle" prepared by Boris Zavgorodny lack most of the personable style which we expect even in Locus and SF Chronicle. Perhaps this is the result of both linguistic and cultural translation. (I also found it odd to read about publishers like "Young Guard Publishing House" and a meeting with an author taking place in "the Palace of Culture of the Automobile Workers". I imagine the local equivalent of the Palace of Culture might be the Mechanics Institute of a few years ago. It is a reminder that in at least one part of the world Marx's and Lenin's ideas are not just social theories.)

The Mentor will probably never move beyond its current state because it is not Ron's intention to achieve more. He has no doubt set his sights on being still around long after the rest of us are broken-down wrecks haunting the halls of conventions and drunkenly reliving our golden ages in endless room parties. But if that's the way he wants it then he's welcome to it.

Marty and Robbie Cantor's Holier Than Thou 22 is a more problematic fanzine. This might be because its editors do little to stop their readers from getting bored and confused as they work their way through its pages.

A major problem with Holier Than Thou is that it is good in parts but a failure as a whole. It is not one work, it doesn't flow together in any way to give you the feeling that there is a controlling influence in there somewhere. It represents, in a way, a world-view which says that things happen because it is in the nature of things to be chaotic. Robbie and Marty appear to grab articles (some of them very good) out of the air and jam them together in whatever order chance dictates. This shouldn't be called editing; it is closer to copy-typing.

In the art of fanzine editing, the objective should be to create form (and beauty) out of chaos by choosing the order of pieces thoughtfully and by using carefully constructed bridge passages. If this were done here, the difference might be between the feeling that this fanzine represents the collected efforts of a few dedicated and gifted fanwriters and the knowledge that one holds a copy of a high quality and well edited fanzine that showcased its contributors' skills rather than tarnished them.

Another disadvantage which Holier Than Thou lumbers along under is its usually unattractive layout. Like many other US fanzines, its editors seem loath to leave any blank space unfilled; instead, they toss in fillo art in a way that will often be completely distracting and irrelevant to what the writer has to say -- causing ideas to clash rather than work together to achieve a harmonious whole. This is really evident when when one of these pieces is on the same page as an article heading; the picture is big, black and bold while the heading is composed of slight black lines that take a while to see. A good idea might be to use letter press headings as well to highlight the most important thing on the page: the words. A better idea might be to discard irrelevant and often junky art entirely.

With these two problems, Holier Than Thou starts to look like a large, jerry-built structure which is held together only by the skill of some of the contributors who reside there from time to time. It is unfortunate that it is the only large fanzine in town these days, because if there were others some fans might not confuse this fanzine for the block of luxury apartments they seem to think it is. Of course, some old and dilapidated buildings can be done up very nicely if their owners take time and trouble over the renovations. All that is needed is the will and the skill to do something about it.

However, I'm not sure that Marty has the skill, despite his efforts. His editorial introduction to this issue concentrates on his exploitation by the capitalist class and how much he enjoys it. This would be fine if his

description of the new shop he's working in and the hours he works had been written with some life or sense of style; in almost any other way than the strictly factual. I kept looking out for a punch-line or a throwaway self-deprecating remark to indicate that it wasn't really that serious, but no, he just ploughed straight on with his boring monologue. But look -- here we have a fanzine which contains some of Mike Glycer's usually excellent fanzine reviews, a trendy little piece by Eric Mayer, an "Entropy Reprint" selected by Terry Carr, and some of Harry Warner's usually lively stuff...almost the cream of current fanzine fandom; and what does Marty put at the front of it but dullness and drudgery. It's almost as if he didn't want us to read any further.

If you flick through our letter column later on you will probably find the bit where Marty says he will have no quibble with what I write if I stick to the facts. So just to make myself clear I must state that all the foregoing comments about Holier Than Thou have been nothing but my personal opinion. There isn't an objective fact except that there is a fanzine edited by Marty and Robbie Cantor with that name. When it comes to discussing something like the art or skill of fanzine production there aren't any objective facts; just opinions on what works or doesn't work and why, just as one cannot categorically prove that Hayden's Surprise Symphony is a better (or worse) piece of music than Stravinski's The Rite Of Spring. But I can put forward some fairly good reasons why one way of doing things is better or more effective than another. If other people don't choose to agree with those reasons, they can suggest other reasons and we can all talk about it from there; but if they don't care to come up with other reasons then the first set carries the day. Marty is perhaps likely to bow out of any such engagement on the grounds that what he does is merely for "fun"; and that might lead us to the very interesting question of why it is that Marty thinks putting together an inadequately edited fanzine is a fun thing to do.

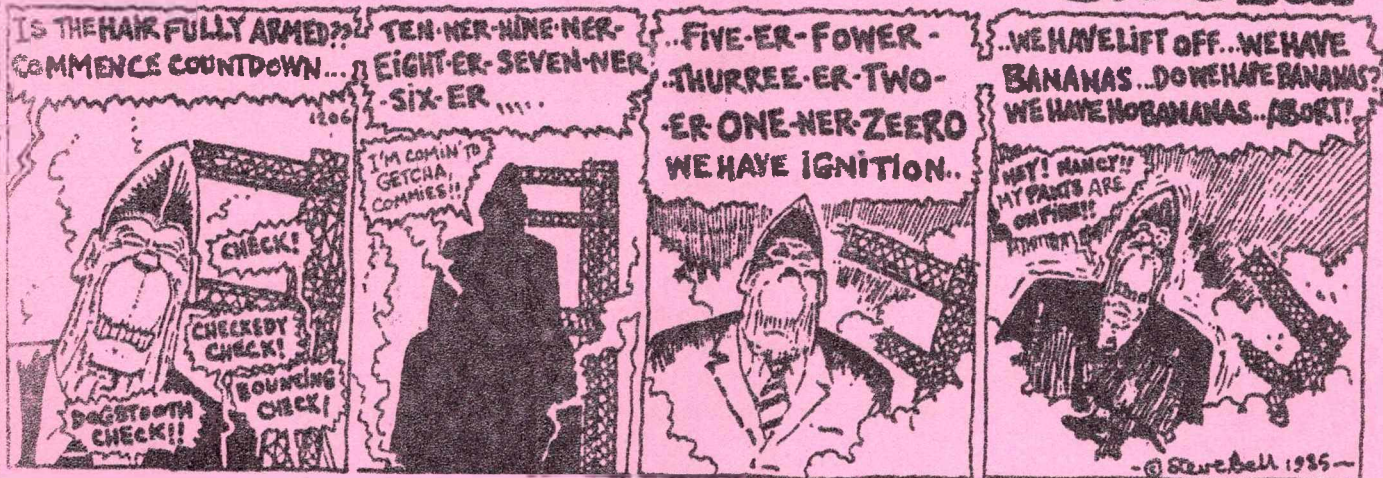
Perhaps The Mentor and Holier Than Thou are more alike than I had at first thought, and Ron and Marty and Robbie would get along famously and agree about the values of fanzine production. Perhaps the difference between them is just the difference between what a fan producing a fanzine in Australia and another publishing a fanzine in the US can expect in the way of support and feedback from their readers.

(The Mentor 57: Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia.)

(Holier Than Thou 22: Marty & Robbie Cantor, 11565 Archwood Street, North Hollywood, California 91606-1703, USA.)

IF...

Steve Bell



A NOTE ON THE CHALLENGER DISASTER

Comrade J. Nicholas

It was enough in itself to make one's jaw drop -- someone quoting Ronald Reagan in a fanzine, *with approval*. But there he was in Rob Hansen's and Ted White's *Crank 5*, eulogising the seven astronauts killed in the explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger* in a way that was, um, almost poetic. "...our hearts have been opened to a profound truth...we learned again that this America was built on heroism and noble sacrifice. It was built by men and women like our seven star voyagers, who answered a call beyond duty." Stirring, if awfully schmaltzy, stuff.

It comes at the end of a piece in which Rob and Ted describe their stunned reactions to the news of the tragedy -- something they knew was statistically likely but never expected to see. If we possessed a television, I might have been stunned by the news, too; but the first I knew about it was when I bought the paper the next morning, when the dramatic impact of the event had worn off. In any case, I was more interested in the Westland Helicopters saga and its attendant governmental embarrassments.

Other fans have also set their reactions down in print -- in *Devil's Clutch*, distributed at *Mexicon 2*, Moira Shearman describes how she was trapped at home by illness, turned on the TV for light relief, and got endless slow-motion replays of the launch and the explosion. Amid some sensible remarks about the tastelessness of both that and the public mourning that followed, she adds "...all we space fans can rest assured that manned exploration of space will continue. Of course, it is just possible that when the cause of the disaster is found it will turn out to something which could have been avoided if Congress had not previously limited the programme's budget." And in *ANZAPA 108*, Dave Lockett says: "For twenty years I have been hoping that I'll live long enough to see the first ships leave for the stars; and I have slowly...come to regard all those who share the same dream as part of my clan. The people aboard *Challenger* were that."

I have to say that I find such attitudes as Moira Shearman's and Dave Lockett's completely incomprehensible.

Before I go any further -- and to prevent the usual crew of half-wits from seizing upon entirely the wrong end of the stick -- I should point out quite firmly that, yes, it was a tragedy that seven people died aboard the *Challenger*. It would have been a tragedy if only one of them had died. But no purpose whatever is served by pretending that they died as brave venturers into the unknown, members of some grand, humanistic drive to explore space for no other reason than that it is there. Whether we like it or not, the prime impetus behind the shuttle programme is and has always been the US Department of Defense. The vehicle's design was heavily influenced by military considerations; the Pentagon's continual interference at every stage of manufacture (rather than a stingy US Congress) was responsible for the programme's endless delays and consequent gargantuan cost overruns; and the vast majority of shuttle missions from this year onwards have been booked by the military -- for no other reason than that the shuttle is integral to the testing, developing and ultimate deployment of the components needed to make up Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative. Without the shuttle, the SDI project comes to a grinding halt; it is for this reason and this reason alone that Reagan is so keen to see shuttle launches resume. Civilian research plays a very minor, almost insignificant part in the whole thing -- it is, literally

(and cynically), something that gets played up to distract public attention from the less "noble", less "pioneering" missions. And, unpalatable though this sounds, it was for this deceit that the schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe died, participating in a PR exercise to rescue the public's fading perceptions of space as something used only for peaceful, humanitarian and internationalist purposes.

"Space fans" like Moira Shearman and Dave Lockett are perhaps well aware of this, but prefer to overlook it -- reasoning, perhaps, that it doesn't matter how great a role the military plays in the "conquest of space", because the primary goal is getting there; and everything else will eventually follow in the military's train. That this owes more to wishful thinking than to anything else should be obvious -- a wishful thinking that equates, albeit at a subconscious level, "getting into space" with "getting into fandom", escaping from the Earth with escaping from "mundania"; a thought-world in which an L-5 colony is fandom's objective correlative. This is hardly surprising when you consider the degree of overlap between "space fans" and SF fans, and still less so when you realise why: from the fan point of view, real-world events like the Apollo 11 Moon-landing and a string of uninterrupted shuttle launches are in some sense a literal concretisation of the gimcrack SF ideas we first encountered at the age of fourteen. The word of Clarke and Asimov made flesh, as it were.

But this is altogether too naive and innocent a formulation. The Apollo programme was a gigantic propaganda stunt, conceived at a time of increasing challenge to US global hegemony and carried through despite its growing irrelevance to serious scientific endeavour. The shuttle programme was initially conceived as a means of reducing the cost of military satellite launches but has now proved so expensive that the Pentagon is seriously considering reverting to expendable boosters. The permanent manned space station that Reagan is beginning to push will be primarily a military observation platform, with precious little room for civilian R & D and probably none at all for the civilian personnel themselves. Yet what attention do the fans -- space and SF -- pay to these grubby political realities? None at all; far better to avoid them altogether, to concentrate on the original SF dream.

Because in the dream it doesn't matter that you may be overweight, may have a heart condition, may simply be too old: you can still voyage into space aboard a shuttle, still take up residence in an L-5 colony, still pretend that you're fulfilling some natural human destiny. And if someone insists on intruding into your dream with awkward questions, you can always fob them off with some claim or other -- that building lots of L-5 colonies will help us all avoid the possibility of being destroyed in a nuclear war, say, or the usual meandering speculation that conquering space will fundamentally transform our mental perspectives. (Both have been prominent in recent mailings of ANZAPA -- stand up and take a bow there, Jack Herman and Gerald Smith.) And if they laugh -- well, you can just change the subject. The USA's ongoing attempt to seize the high ground of military advantage may be a bit of an embarrassment sometimes, but...

But denying grubby political realities won't make them go away. Indeed, to deny them is to hide from them; and to hide from them is to retreat further into the thought-world where space is explored because it is there and people die in shuttle explosions for heroic and noble causes.

HOW TO PRODUCE POTATO PRINT COVERS FOR YOUR FANZINES: A Handy Step-By-Step Guide:

1. Move to Puerto Rico.

SEX INSTRUCTION FOR BEGINNERS

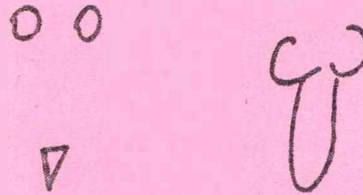
Comrade V. Brown

There are *two* sexes:

One has circles and a triangle

and

the other has a couple of round things and a wobbly bit.



Fuck The Tories has five editors of different sexes. There are two persons who have circles and triangles and three who have round things and a wobbly bit. From the current evidence, it seems that a number of our readers can only relate to and recognise wobbly bits. This deeply concerns our editorial collective.

Judith and I discussed baring our bosoms in the cause of enlightenment, but decided that the majority of fans are intelligent enough to realise that as long as we made it very clear that we are female and have circles and triangles and are editors of Fuck The Tories and that the males have wobbly bits and are also editors of Fuck The Tories then the "Dear Wobbly Bit" and the "I'm really glad you three wobbly bits" syndromes will not keep happening.

Lists of wobbly bits who fail to recognise editors who have circles and triangles will in future be posted at all major conventions and public fanzine flogging will be introduced for the entertainment of the masses. Bruce Gillespie, an Australian wobbly bit, has offered his services here with the latest Metaphysical Review, a dreadful weapon of amazing proportions. It was discussed as to whether 93 pages was too severe, but we decided that the intensity of the discussion contained therein would be good for its victims.

We did however decline an offer of Holier Than Thou as we didn't want it to be too painful.

LETTERS

Not the most overwhelming of responses to our fabulous first issue, which perhaps only goes to show that it was less fabulous than we thought. Foot. Although since the editors of this second issue had no intention of publishing a great long letter column anyway (and in fact find letter columns easily the dullest part of any fanzine) this is probably just as well. Concision, compression, curtailment:

Chuck Harris
32 Lake Crescent
Daventry
Northants NN11 5EB
United Kingdom

"It's an awe-inspiring concept but, honestly, as I sit here on top of my tiny mountain of used Kleenex I don't think I could raise a finger in admonition, let alone anything else. I am very poorly. Fuck The Tories will have to be held over until my next Five Year Plan, and stand up

the man who said he who hesitates is lost.

"So what did I like best? This bit: 'As a guest of this convention he did

not deem it appropriate to engage in debate or controversy'. I do like a nice cutting edge on a typewriter.

"Worst bit? Opera notes, I guess...I always read everything but sometimes I wonder just why I'm bothering. That's my problem, though, not George's.

"All the con reporting was good, but it seems a pity that everyone travelled so far to find a shambles, and that Leanne, Leigh and Valma put in so much work and got fuck all for it. You read through this with a sort of horrified fascination, wondering who is going to dump on them next."

Reaction to George Turner's opera reviews was for the most part disappointingly negative -- must be the prevailing cultural ambience, or something -- with most of the response concentrated on our Aussiecon Two coverage. But here's an opera buff who did enjoy George's reviews:

Harry Warner
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown
Maryland 21740
United States of America

"Some Australian opera productions are becoming available on videocassettes in the US, so I took particular interest in what George Turner had to say about two recent productions. But I don't understand what he says about the fourth act duet of La Boheme. The Italian words are very much in the spirit of "Now her love for me is over" translation he cites. I suspect George has confused this duet with the scene between Marcello and Rodolfo in the third act, when the tenor actually does sing along the lines of "Mimi is a heartless maiden". As for the suggestion at the end of the opera that "Tomorrow will be fun again", it might be an interesting novelty in a stage production but it's out of key with the book on which the opera is based, Murger's Scenes From Bohemian Life. Mimi in the opera is a combination of two females in the book, only one of whom dies, but her death in the book causes the other Bohemians there to realise it's time to grow up and, like it or not, the individuals on whom Murger modelled his characters did turn into stodgy bourgeois prudes after their wild youth."

Another who approved of George's reviews but without commenting on them was:

John D. Berry
525 19th Avenue East
Seattle
Washington 98112
United States of America

"Everything in the issue met with my approval and contributed to my enjoyment while I read it over a *caffè latte* at the cafe up the hill. It kept my fingers nimble folding and refolding the fanzine as I read from page to page, in order to avoid getting unnecessary creases in them but still obscure the black and legible 'Fuck The Tories' on the cover. It's not that I would have been embarrassed to be seen reading something with that title at the Cause Celebre cafe, which is nothing if not ideologically correct (and there have been times when it has been little *but* ideologically correct), but that I didn't want to have to explain to somebody what I was reading."

Tut. Surely the purpose of a sloganeering title like ours is to convey an instantly recognisable message to the masses, to proselytise the proletariat by the most direct and economical means available, and the hand-picked men and women who receive this fanzine should feel it incumbent upon them to engage in such political education at every conceivable opportunity? Shirking your vanguardist duty there, we fear...

ATom
17 Brockham House
Brockham Drive
London SW2 3RU
United Kingdom

"What a horrendous tale Leanne Frahm unfolds of the exploitation of our brother workers in the antipodes. Comrades, my heart went out to her in her lonely fight against a crass and uncaring management. Where was her union representative? Why was she allowed to

struggle on alone under such conditions? Why wasn't an unofficial meeting called of all gophers and other con workers and a duly elected and democratically voted-in spokesperson sent to confront the con bosses with the just demand that Leanne be given thirty more helpers immediately and free access to the photocopier at all times for her and her friends together with a forty percent increase to all working con personnel and the next four days off duty for all or their would be no alternative than a withdrawal of all labour and a twenty-four hour picket of the huckster room?"

Because Leanne comes from a Queensland, a state in which Joh Bjelke-Petersen was long ago elected God and the unions suppressed as inimical to his sublime magnificence; thus she and indeed her entire class have been forcibly and maliciously separated from their basic traditions of popular democratic struggle against their capitalist exploiters, with their history and ideology having been deliberately masked from them and a neo-liberal doctrine of co-operative endeavour and unequal profit-sharing substituted in its stead.

Speaking of liberal capitalists, though, here's the arch-tobacconist himself:

Marty Cantor
11565 Archwood Street
North Hollywood
California 91606-1703
United States of America

"I am of the liberal (both small and capital 'l') democratic (both small and capital 'd') persuasion and always welcome the twitting of conservative pretensions. But I am never much one to hoe to any of that 'politically correct' crap as to me it is just (usually) substituting one type of crap for another. I like to believe that I have more integrity than a person who follows a 'party line', whatever such 'party line' happens to believe. As such I have little use for the political twaddle which comes from both right and left. Fortunately I have met all the editors of Fuck The Tories and know them for the nice people they are -- which enables me to not be bothered on a personal level when I see (as I expect to see in future) immature political twaddle from a certain English editor of this fanzine. I consider myself much more liberal than he (even though I know that he considers me some sort of conservative lout), and in defence of my position I state my belief that my politics allows for more individual freedom than his."

Yes. Well. We have to admit that we laughed a bit at your claim to be more liberal than Joseph (with a capital 'L' too -- you realise that in Australian terms this makes you a *laissez-faire* capitalist), since such statements are entirely relative and hence entirely meaningless. Objectively, however, this is one of the best examples of false class consciousness to see print for a long time -- it's one thing to be oppressed by the capitalist system, but another to actually *boast* about it. That you believe what you say only shows that you can't recognise imperialism when it bites your balls off. The liberal values you've been taught aren't eternal verities, merely those evolved by the imperialists as a means of diverting you from a focus upon the methods and structures by which they transmit and reinforce their power. The idea that you have any influence over or participation in this is simply laughable.

And if that's too complicated for you, try this: a jibe about what you'd like to think is Joseph's political immaturity is pretty damn rich coming from someone who went on record in Holier Than Thou with a claim that US foreign policy is predicated largely on altruism.

But to continue:

"I will have no quibble with what Leigh Edmonds says as long as he sticks to facts and carefully separates (and carefully labels) his opinions. Too often in fanzine reviews, reviewers put forth their subjective opinion as irrefutable fact, generating considerable heat and almost no light. I have no trouble with the *opinion* that Holier Than Thou is a less-than-good fanzine if that is someone's honest opinion, but I get a bit upset when reviewers present their

negative opinions as fannish gospel. Leigh should remember that Holier Than Thou is produced for only one reason -- I enjoy putting it out. If other fans also enjoy it, well and good. If not, sorry."

Is that it? That if you agree with someone's comments about your fanzine they must be statements of objective fact, but if you disagree with them they're merely statements of personal opinion? What self-serving garbage.

Readers who've been paying close attention will recall our earlier remark that most of those who wrote in concentrated on our Aussiecon Two coverage. But while these letters may make interesting reading for both those who were involved and those who were there, we don't propose to quote any of them. For one thing, this letter column has gone on long enough; for another, those who were there and/or were involved are by now fed up to the back teeth with comment on the subject, sick of having to try to synthesise the many conflicting views of what happened in Melbourne, and have reached the stage where they wish the convention had never taken place at all. So fuck all the Aussiecon Two letters -- except this one from a member of the programme sub-committee (edited down from a much longer screed):

Marc Ortlieb
P. O. Box 215
Forest Hill
Victoria 3131
Australia

"Valma is wrong in attributing all the ills of the programme to the sub-committee. By way of background, its members were given the job despite having explained to the central committee that they had never programmed a convention before. They were given no

guidelines by the central committee, and were told to produce a programme. That they did, working up to three nights a week on the thing, for several months. Mandy Herriot jokes that the only reason I volunteered to be the secretary for the sub-committee was so that I could see my wife more often than she did. It wasn't a joke.

"Had the central committee wanted meal breaks built into the programme, the time to say so was before it was finalised, not after. Certainly the Illuminati of fandom like to socialise with their mates. What of the people who come in off the street? They aren't going to know who to be seen with, and with whom to spend two-hour meal breaks. The programme was made as continuous as possible to accommodate those who weren't as convention-wise as Valma -- those who didn't know all those beaut Brit fans. Certainly the programme was presented as a *fait accompli* -- that was what the sub-committee was assigned to do. Naturally there was an emotional reaction to the suggestion that the entire thing be torn down again to fit in meal breaks. Considering the lack of co-operation the programme sub-committee received from the central committee -- with the notable exception of Carey Handfield -- it was a wonder that the central committee didn't have the entire thing dumped back into their laps the moment they made the suggestion."

A few random comments in response. We'd have thought it was obvious that a convention programme needs meal breaks so that the fans, whether they've come in off the street or been attending conventions for years, can eat from time to time. Valma did in fact mention the Aussiecon Two programme only in passing, and you're over-reacting. The programme sub-committee seem to believe they're entirely blameless and that any failings are the responsibility of others. One of the aspects of Aussiecon Two which comes in for some fairly major criticism is the programme -- some just describe it as awful and others go on at even greater length. And if the sub-committee was that uncertain of itself why wasn't it constantly badgering the central committee for advice and feedback?

But, as we said earlier, sod Aussiecon Two. Here's something different:

John Foyster
21 Shakespeare Grove

"Judith's piece about nostalgia and Golden Ages seems modestly accurate, even though the Magic

St Kilda
Victoria 3182
Australia

Pudding Club wasn't really the centre of anything more than the imagination of a few of those people she describes as 'not quite get(ing) the hang of this fanzine game'. I

suspect that one ever-present ingredient of Golden Ages is the disinclination of participants to mope about Golden Ages.

"The leaden age of fanzines is something I'm not sure I understand, however. If Holier Than Thou and The Mentor flourish -- which they seem to -- then surely the target should be the leaden age of fanzine readers? That we already know about from Judith's article..."

Walter A. Willis
32 Warren Road
Donaghadee
Northern Ireland BT21 OPD

"I was very impressed by Judith's article about Golden Ages, and I think her first paragraph on page 17 contains as much sense as half a dozen articles about fandom usually don't."

And finally:

Helen McNabb
The Bower
High Street
Llantwit Major
South Glamorgan CF6 9SS
United Kingdom

"I do like a fanzine that isn't afraid of being definite. The title is succinct and leaves no one in any doubt about its allegiances. Well done. Actually, since the TV series Spitting Image I have the greatest difficulty in seeing any politician as anything except a Fluck and Law puppet. That, combined with the recent

Westland/Heseltine/Brittan furore, reads so much like an episode of Yes, Prime Minister that I keep getting the giggles while watching the news. If I'd seen them before Christmas, I'd have given some "Pet Hates" away for presents -- the local pet shop has these plastic Fluck and Law type heads of Reagan and Thatcher to give your dog to chew."

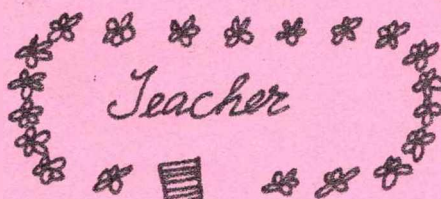
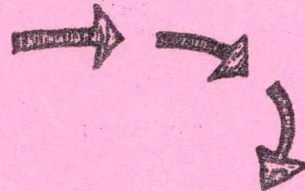
Then buy up their stocks *now* so that you can do the despicable capitalist thing and sell them off at a profit to our Australian and US readers who will shortly be writing in to demand personal examples of these marvels...and we'll have three of each to start with, thank you.

WAHF: Justin Ackroyd, Christine Ashby, Peter Colley, Luk De Vos, Sherry Francis, Bill Gibson (verbally, at Mexicon 2), Mike Glicksohn ("I think you've saddled yourselves with a bit of an albatross by adopting this socialist gimmick and encumbering your natural writing skills with a lot of unnecessary artificiality such as the comrade crap" -- what's gimmicky about socialism?), Patrick Nielsen Hayden (whose letter was written before the first issue had actually appeared, speculating on what it might contain -- wrongly, but interestingly wrongly), John Herbert (with information on the "Nyles's House In 1989" Worldcon bid), Jerry Kaufman ("I liked the mock-Marxist analysis of fanzines, and hope this will be developed further in future issues"), Jay Kinney, Jim Meadows III ("I really have gaffiated, you know"), Simon Ounsley, Yvonne Rousseau, Andy Sawyer, Nick Shears, Garth Spencer ("Venceremos!"), Lucy Sussex, Martyn Taylor (twice -- once to us and once to the Canberra Collective), Michael Tolley, Bruce Townley, Cobi Van Kemmen ("What will you do with ideologically unsound fanzines? Burn them?"), Roger Weddall and Pam Wells.

And Ken Lake, who returned his copy of Fuck The Tories with the following lettered across its front cover: "Rather puerile. Very silly wasting postage sending this to me. I am not your 'Comrade', nor would I choose to be. Still, if wasting your money on this sort of rot keeps you quiet and off the streets I suppose it's better than pushing heroin. A bit. Please don't send me any more treasonable trash like this: I live in Britain because I believe in being British. Well, Cornish to be precise, but not an arselicker of the militant left, the Stalinists, Trots (what an apt abbreviation!) or other anti-democratic trash." Mr Lake is 97.

CLASS For SLOW LEARNERS

Enter Here



Today's lesson is on counting. There are many numbers in counting and to show you how it works we'll use PEOPLE !!!

1



Valma Brown

2



Leigh Edmonds

3



Judith Hanna

4



Terry Hughes

5



Joseph Nicholas



Simple Isn't it



Test Next Issue

Alan P.

YOU KNOW YOU'RE A BACKBENCH TORY MP WHEN:

...you think that trade unions and wages councils are wholly responsible for the current high level of unemployment and the poor performance of British manufacturing industry.

...you believe that human rights in Pakistan and Turkey have never been upheld more staunchly than they are now.

...you're convinced that inner city decay and deprivation in Britain is entirely a consequence of the permissive society of the sixties.

...you think that Chile is making great strides towards the restoration of democracy.

...you believe that any charges of institutionalised racism levelled at the British police force are completely without foundation.

...you're convinced that the pace of reform in South Africa has been astonishing in its breadth and scope.

...you think that unless the present costly social security system is drastically reformed the nuclear deterrent necessary to defend it will have to be sacrificed.

...you believe that Soviet aggression in Central America is the sole cause of the region's troubles.

...you're convinced that the future of strategically important high-technology industries should be determined by market forces rather than government intervention.

YOU KNOW YOU'RE A RIGHT-WING FASCIST LOONY WHEN:

...you're a backbench Tory MP.

This Fanzine Supports:

JUDITH HANNA for TAFF;

VALMA BROWN for GUFF;

LEWIS MORLEY, MARILYN PRIDE & NICK STATHOPOULOS for DUFF; and

ARMED POPULAR INSURRECTION AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE THATCHERITE JUNTA.