

FUCK THE TORIES
THREE

Guilty Teeth Have Got No Feeling

Valma Brown

On the way back from Adelaide we stopped over in Ballarat and discovered "El Tacodora" on upmarket Bakery Hill. Whilst dining there I let out a small gasp which brought the waitress to our table immediately. After numerous assurances that the chili sauce wasn't too hot she left us to discuss the sensitivity of my poor old cakehole. It had started to ache during the day and placing food into it, something it usually enjoys immensely, was now a job of skill which required the most careful positioning. The following day it was off to Benalla, but we decided to lunch in downtown Ballarat beforehand. I chose something soft, called soup, but the bread roll that came with it was murder. Even the chocolate, soft squishy something or other I had for desert proved too much and I had to let Leigh finish it off; something he took great delight in, being a staunch believer in two desserts.

The drive to Benalla was pleasant. Leigh and I both love the Australian countryside, i.e. the bush, and it was nightfall by the time we got there. I had bought huge salad sandwiches in Ballarat so that we didn't have to worry about dining out, and Leigh had bought bread and provisions to make lunch for the next day. Being true blue Australians we always travel with our esky and our flask for a cuppa. We finally managed to get into a motel which was off the highway, and marvelled at the spaciousness of it. We had tried to get into this particular motel on other occasions but it had been full. Now we know why. It had a real kitchen, none of this fridge and jug bit, but a real honest to god kitchen with a work bench and all. Plus a dining area and lounge combined so that one could dine or watch telly in comfort without the usual kerplunking around amongst all the luggage. Add to this a huge bathroom complete with washing machine... Now, don't even think for a moment we're going to tell you what the name of this prestigious establishment is. We're not silly. Well, not that silly anyway.

It was just what we needed with me and my aching mouth, so we dined in the dining room and I swallowed yet more pain killers with my hand squeezed orange juice. Unfortunately, the luxury unit did not provide a liquidizer so the idea of combining an ideologically sound salad sandwich with my organic orange juice and drinking it through a straw was out of the question. It did, however, have two bedrooms and we took one each so Leigh at least had a peaceful night. I seemed to be up every two or so hours eating more and more pain killers.

The trip the following day was rather harrowing, even though the scenery was magnificent and we had the most beautiful sunset as we drove through Gundagai. We were pleased to get home and the following day I took myself down to the dentist as soon as I got up.

He poked around in my mouth for a bit and tapped here and there. (I wonder what dentists think about as they poke and prod in that most intimate of places.) Then he found the tender spot and I almost ejected through the roof. "Nothing wrong with the teeth," says he; which I had suspected all along. "You have a gum infection. A course of antibiotics should fix that up and I'll have another look at it on Monday. And there's a little hole we'll have to fill later. You'll have a pretty miserable weekend but, by Monday, it should be a lot better. Just massage it after you eat".

He was right. By Monday I was no longer in screaming agony, just pain. But it was the massaging bit that was mindblowing. I didn't know anything could be so

sore. After each meal I got to do the S and M bit with my gums. You try putting your finger in your mouth and rubbing on the back of the lower right hand tooth, and imagining that ten machine guns are going off every time you touch it. Add a few hand grenades for good measure and you might just catch a glimpse of my suffering.

So it wasn't my guilty teeth that got me, it was the gums. Of course there were other reasons as to why the Australian edition of Fuck The Tories was so late. We can but apologize and promise to try and do much more better next time.

US Imperialism in Action

Russell Parker

A review of Half-Life, directed by Dennis O'Rourke

"The rumors had always been around. There were people telling me, before I made the film, that it was all deliberate. I found that rather hard to accept... On weight of the evidence ... you can come to only one conclusion: they knew what they were doing."

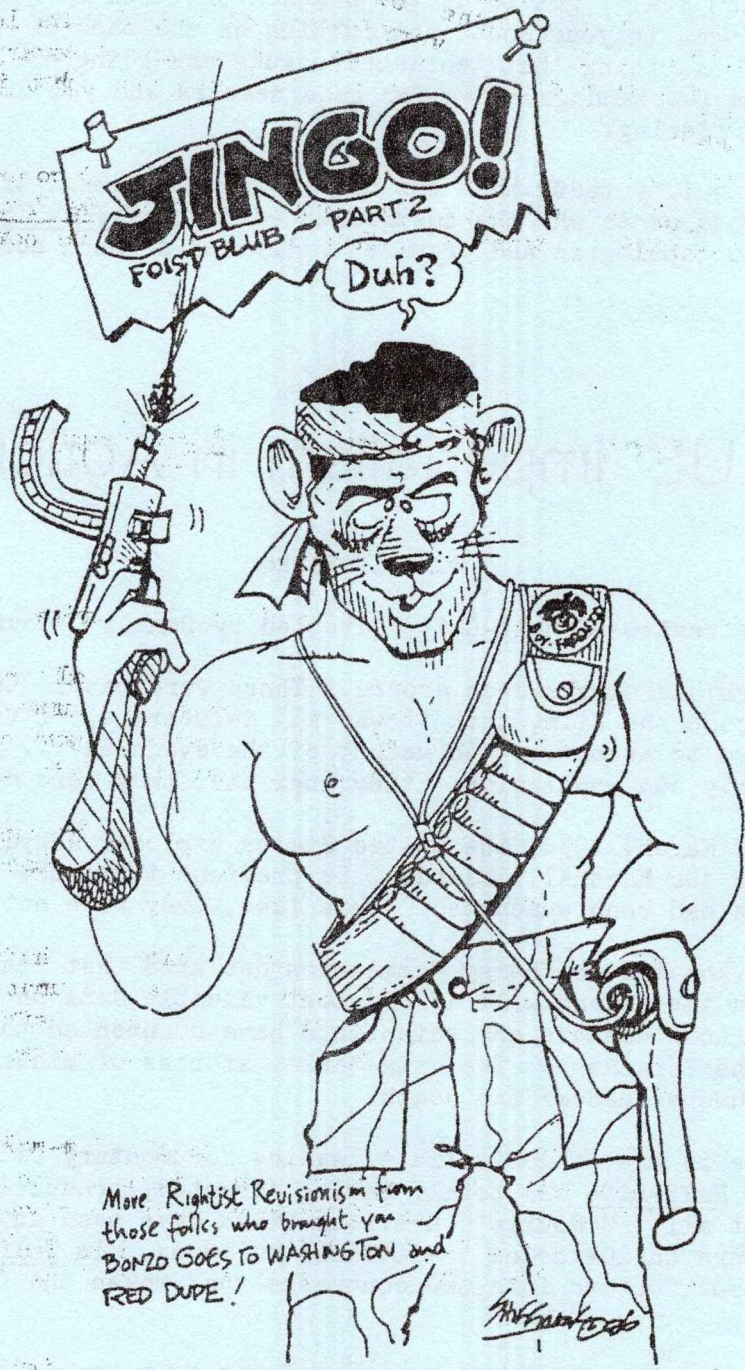
On the first of March, 1954, the United States exploded a hydrogen bomb on Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. In previous tests the Islanders on downwind atolls had been evacuated. This time, they were not.

After the test the Atomic Energy Commission declared that "the habitation of these people on the island will afford most valuable data on human beings." Since 1954 American doctors and scientists have documented the effects of radiation on the Islanders. The data tables stories of miscarriages, deformities, tumors, cancer and death.

Dennis O'Rourke is one of Australia's leading documentary film-makers. His involvement in Half-Life was total, having directed, produced, written and photographed it all. O'Rourke's previous films have been involved with the effect of Western influence on traditional cultures. In Half-Life this conflict develops further into the contrasts that makes the film both moving and shocking.

O'Rourke's deliberate understated direction and lack of narration lays bare the opposing visions that shaped events on the Marshall Islands. "Garden of Eden" tropical settings are blotted by the nuclear mushroom. The Islanders' robust good health precedes shots of their radioactive diseases. A new, terrifying knowledge of cancer, radiation and a doubtful future jars with the incredible propaganda film of the time labelling them as "ignorant savages". The responsibilities assumed by America under the UN granted trusteeship clash with the hypocrisy of Reagan assuring the Islanders "You'll always be family to us".

Denis O'Rourke denies that the film is anti-American. Part of his anger is directed towards the United Nations for watching the US abuse its trusteeship of the Marshall Islands. "My aim was to make a film about what happened to all of us, not just the Marshall Islanders. There are no villains as such, just scientists, soldiers, politicians and bureaucrats who believed that they were and are doing the right thing".



The film Half-Life develops the conclusion that the United States, which held a United Nations trusteeship for the group of tiny mid-Pacific atolls, used the people of the Marshall Islands as nuclear testing material.

The film flicks through the facts as told by a variety of documentaries, from recently declassified Atomic Energy Commission film to interviews with the Islanders today. Evidence against the US Government emerges: after the test a government representative announces that a last minute wind shift had caused the accidental exposure of Islanders, American servicemen and Japanese fishermen. The American servicemen include weathermen. One says "The wind had been blowing straight at us for days before the test... it was blowing straight at us during the test, and straight at us after it. The wind never shifted." An official report from the Defence Nuclear Agency in 1984 confirms this claim. US Navy ships which were in a position to evacuate the Islanders were ordered to sail away.

A weary, expressionless Islander recalls that by midday on the test day the children on Rongelap Atoll were playing in a nuclear "snow" or radioactive coral dust a couple of inches deep. He returned to fishing, but that night everyone became violently sick.

In the four years after "Bravo", the ironic code name for the test, the miscarriage and stillbirth rate on the islands was twice the normal rate. Sixty percent of those who were under ten on test day have had thyroid tumors removed.

Half-Life extends its power beyond the attribution of blame, even beyond nuclear politics, to the worrying and ever topical area where the superpowers decide their responsibilities. Half-Life is, as O'Rourke says, a modern parable. How far can you go when you are sure that you are acting "for the good of mankind", a favourite phrase in superpower rhetoric from any era? Is the future of one entire race less important than such derived propaganda? Will this film be shown in Washington? Who knows, but if it's playing at a cinema near you, see it.

Jif Poisoning

Chris Bailey

To judge by Judith's "Textile Conservation" piece, the Hanna/Nicholas household is not a happy place - all that squabbling and bearing of bitter grudges over such a simple question as the equitable division of household chores. These revolutionaries are all the same, you know. They'll dash you off an instant blueprint for redesigning the world but when it comes down to it they can't decide what side of the pan to put the toilet brush.

Let shining example be their guide in such matters. The division of labour within the Bailey household is as follows:

Leigh cooks and looks after the baby.

I cook on Saturdays and also in serious emergencies. Dreadful catastrophes will also provoke me into looking after the baby. I do the laundry and the ironing. I do the lawn-mowing and the gardening. I do inadequate amounts of house decoration and structural maintenance. I beeswax the table. I change the lightbulbs, plugs and fuses. I put the milk bottles out. I unblock the drains. I clean the car. I overhaul the cat.

(I am also plant-wallah. This was a significant appointment in the days when there were lots of houseplants but now there are only six and I don't give two of them long. Leigh has voiced criticism of the plant-wallah. I have explained to her about the coldest winter since 1682 - she keeps going on about water.)

We do the shopping together. We share doing the bins and the washing-up. We share tidying, which generates friction owing to the different conceptions of the word "tidy". I can think of nothing fairer than a neatly ordered pile of politically instructive fanzines - Leigh of nothing lovelier than a reprehensible scattering of capitalistic mail-order catalogues.

You admirably note that my list is much longer than Leigh's. That isn't the point, though. Even allowing for desperate padding in Leigh's paragraph, an inaccurate impression has been given of the division of labour within the Bailey household. The bottom line should be - does one partner have more "self" time than the other? And I have more me-time than Leigh.

Cleaning is important because anything like balls of cat hair or paper clips left lying on the floor will otherwise be hoovered up by the baby. Yet cleaning has not been mentioned. This is because Mrs Nason does the cleaning.

Shocked silence at FUCK THE TORIES HQ. Gaping mouths and visibly greying hair. Angina clutches at those noble breasts. Surely it is only Tories who employ servants... Only Tories who expect the decent worker to bead his brow and callus his hand in order that they may lead a life of indolence.

It was Leigh's idea, of course, although I was guilty by default in that I did not put up a stiff enough fight. We both go to work and on our return already have an immense load of horrible jobs (see above) to tackle, she reasoned. And anyway, when did you last Hoover?

Yes, well...

Mrs Nason lives a few doors down from us. I don't think the walls are that thin, so it must have been some sixth sense that notified her that there might be a few quid a week begging at number 23. We certainly did not contact her, unless it was both telepathically and misadventantly. She just turned up. "You need a cleaning lady," she advised us. "I like cleaning". She stands very close to you and talks very loud.

Mrs Nason's brief does not reach above floor and skirting board level, with the exception of the toilet, bath and sinks. Even given these limitations, however, she contrives not to Hoover. That job is done by Christopher Nason, who is three years old and who comes cleaning with his mother. He marches up and down with a Mothercare Hoover which is powered by a five volt battery. He seems to do quite a good job.

Thus released from the shackles of vacuuming, Mrs Nason requires new outlets for her energy and ingenuity. The laundry was an early casualty. Mrs Nason believes in pushing through the entire cycle as quickly as possible, and so she will take a basketful of laundry, wash it, somehow semi-dry it and then iron it into curious forms that have nothing to do with seams or the human shape, and all in the space of two hours. She will then leave the finished items in a damp heap somewhere odd. Coming home, we will look for the heap, be unable to ascertain its status, decide to play safe and will wash it again. Mrs Nason has now been prohibited from doing the laundry and so contents herself with stuffing any clothes she finds down the backs of radiators - clean, dirty, wet, dry, it doesn't matter, down the back of a radiator it goes. Whether this is revenge or an indirect attempt to continue being involved with laundry, we are uncertain.

She is a doughty polisher. The table didn't stand a chance. I had bought beeswax from the South Molton Quince Honey Farm and had spent hours rubbing it into the table until the wood gently shone with a warm, honey, Laura Ashley catalogue glow; then Mrs Nason attacked it with New Johnson's Squirt'n'Smear or something and now it dazzles with an unearthly radiance. Still, we had to be grateful that she didn't do the table with Jif, as that seems to be her favourite cleaning agent and suffices for nearly every other task. It is some sort of liquid ammonia preparation - you rub some on the surface to be cleaned and then wash it off with water. If you don't wash it off it dries to a scabrous white crust.

The distinguishing features of Mrs Nason's Jif technique are the lavishness of the initial application and the stinginess with the water. When Mrs Nason has had a morning on the Jif, it is horrible to come home to. It is as if some ghostly vandals with an airbrush have flitted through the house. This is no mere colouration that overlays everything, though. It is an evil ammoniac fallout. You put a saucepan of water on and it boils up into a strange white froth, you get in the bath and the water is opaque and the porcelain gritty, you wonder why the toilet paper is so scratchy and making your piles play up so; why they're sugar-coating Go-Cat nowadays; should milk dry to a hard icing on the baby's beaker?

The trouble is, Mrs Nason is so willing. She has volunteered to do the garden come the summer - I have visions of her Pledging the fence. Yet I can find in her a source of comfort - who else would give her a job? If it wasn't for us then this good woman would have been consigned to the scrap heap of those who cannot or will not conform to the Thatcherite vision of a perpetually upwardly mobile society.

I recall that some while back Leigh gave private school lessons to one of Mrs Nason's children. If the mutual service did not involve money, if there were simply an exchange of labour skills - for an assortment of skills Mrs Nason indubitably has and what right do I have to sound so superior - and if this sort of transaction was then taken up by other households down the street, we would soon have a small unit sufficient unto itself. a neighbourhood sturdily independent of Thatcher's market forces - eventually the whole of Penge would be thus autonomous, a beacon lighting the way for the glorious uprising against the hated dictator...

That doesn't stop Leigh and me lying awake at night worrying about having Mrs Nason in our house when we're not there. She's a menace. Well, perhaps that's a little harsh. She does do the occasional useful thing, like the other day she went to collect the baby from the child minder's...

Globalized Hegemonization at Work

Comrade V Brown

"Countrywide", a local product here in Australia on the problems and achievements of those on the land, shown on ABC Television, had a segment this week on problems faced by spud growers. Spud A, the spud our farmers have been producing, does not make into long thin chippies as it is short and round. Spud B, which MacDonalds researchers have decided is the spud they want because of its wonderful qualities, is difficult to grow here. Now for the interesting capitalist bit - if you use Spud A the consumer gets more, as they squash down in the packet nicely. Spud B, the preferred model, doesn't fit as many in because of its shape. End result - some of our potato farmers are simply going to go out of business because their land can't produce the right shape spud so that MacDonalds can be stingy and make more profits.

The problems the industry faces are complex. Spud B will grow in some places and not in others. The yield is smaller which means the farmers' income is down. New plant is necessary. More something else is vital. And on and on. So a few more farmers bite the dust. The irony is that other potato purchasers are now requesting the same type of spud that MacDonalds use as that is what the consumer wants..... Or do they? Give me a good fish and chip shop any day, but I'm just a lone voice in the Zip Bam Gotcha Dollar Mam Whiz Bang Society that we are told is good and democratic and free and right. Right. So I'm left.

How to Campaign for Withdrawal from NATO

Comrade J Nicholas

Bad writers have a number of cliches to which they resort when they wish to describe someone's reactions without the bother of having to work out what the character might really be feeling. "Shaking with rage" and "frothing at the mouth" are two of them - and, like all the others, you can never bring yourself to believe that real people may actually behave like this. Until I saw someone quite literally shaking with rage and frothing at the mouth. And at something I said, to boot.

It was the January meeting of the London Region CND Council - an assembly to which all the various CND groups in London send representatives for the purpose of discussing London-wide activities, taking decisions on them for implementation by the Region's Executive, and electing and mandating the Council's delegates to the National CND Council. A desperately hierarchical structure, but also a pretty democratic one; everyone has an input, everyone can make their voice heard at one level or another. As you'd expect, a wide and sometimes very dissonant range of opinions are thereby expressed - from Stalinists who concentrate on the formal business of passing resolutions to direct action supporters who want to non-violently blockade the US Embassy or whatever, to pragmatists like myself who keep a close eye on public opinion... to fundamentalists who won't be satisfied until we campaign on everything, all at once (and usually with the impossible object of achieving everything all at once).

One hotbed of fundamentalism is Labour CND, a specialist section of the Campaign largely funded by the National office, which promotes CND policies in the Labour Party. Although the Party has formally committed itself to the unilateral nuclear disarmament of the UK and the development of a non-nuclear defence posture (and might thus be said to have embraced CND policies anyway) it wants to do this while keeping the UK in NATO. As NATO is a nuclear-armed alliance, dominated by a nuclear superpower and maintaining an option to be the first to use nuclear weapons in the event of war, it is naturally opposed by CND. It should come as no surprise, therefore, to learn that Labour CND has committed itself to persuading the Party to give up its attachment to NATO as well. Passionately committed, as a matter of fact, and in total defiance of innumerable opinion polls which have conclusively shown that while most of the British people don't like the idea of using nuclear weapons first they do actually feel defended by NATO. Hardly surprising, given the propaganda about the Soviet "threat" with which we've been bombarded for the past forty years; but until we've overcome those fears people will remain convinced of the need for NATO, or something like it, to defend Western Europe. (The bombing of Tripoli by F-111s based in Britain notwithstanding - such a "misuse" of those bases has certainly raised people's fears about the lack of British control of the US military presence here, but a desire to establish ascendancy over that presence is a very long way from a desire to do away with it altogether.)

Thus, not surprisingly, the eventual calling into question of the worth of Labour CND - why bother giving it money when all it did was bang on about the need for immediate withdrawal from NATO? Couldn't it more usefully devote its budget to, say, educating Labour MPs on defence and disarmament issues generally? That, at any rate, was the thinking behind National CND's decision

to cut its funds in half for this year, as a warning to it to think harder about how it could best promote those issues that would have the most beneficial effect on the overall success of the Campaign.

Thus to the January meeting of the London Region Council, at the end of which - under the rubric of "Any Other Business" - we were invited to consider a resolution that would mandate the Region's delegates to National Council to request that the budget cut be referred back to National office with a view to having it rescinded altogether... proposed, you'll have guessed, by a representative of Labour CND as well as his own group, one Walter Wolfgang - ex-Trot, ex-German, and quite clued up about such esoteric NATO strategies as Follow-On Force Attack and CounterAir 90. I raised my hand to reply.

"As the husband of the person who takes the minutes at National Council and National Executive," I said, "I know as much as Walter of the reasons why Labour CND has had its budget cut for this year. But I oppose this resolution on the basis of what I, as a member of the Labour Party, have actually experienced of Labour CND over the past year - which is that for most of the time it's been invisible, and when it's done anything at all it's been of no help to us whatsoever."

A shout of rage from Walter. "No, no!" His face turned purple, his fist hammered the table - but before he could say anything more another group's representative intervened with the suggestion that since no one else present knew the reasons for the budget cut we couldn't possibly vote on the resolution as it stood and that our delegates to National Council should make a decision on the basis of what they were told there. This was accepted, with only Walter voting against, and his resolution fell.

The meeting ended a few minutes later, and as I was gathering my papers Walter came around the table to remonstrate with me face-to-face. "How can you say Labour CND has been invisible?" he demanded. "We were more active last year than ever before!" I remarked that if this was so then news of this activity had still to reach me - and added that "from the point of view of my Constituency Labour Party, you've done nothing for Labour's defence policy except undermine it. Whenever you do say anything it's always about NATO and nothing but NATO. How does that help sell nuclear disarmament to a sceptical public?" And as I said this I noticed that he had begun to shake with rage - his arms rigid at his sides, his head twitching, his eyes wide, his lips white, a glob of spittle gathering at one corner of his mouth. For a moment, I thought he was going to hit me.

"No, no!" he cried - or, rather, spat. "We have been campaigning in the Labour Party to get it to honour its defence policy, to campaign on that policy -"

"Yes," I said, "but doesn't that policy say that a Labour government will remain in NATO?"

"But the party refuses to campaign on its defence policy! That's why we put a resolution to the CLPs to urge last year's Conference to take up the issue!"

This seemed to me completely irrelevant to the point I was making, and said so. "In any case," I went on, "as the person who put that resolution through my CLP I know damn well that it doesn't say anything at all about NATO. All it asks is that the Party campaign on its policy of non-nuclear defence. Full stop."

He was once again shaking with rage, with the other corner of his mouth now filling up with spittle. I found the process fascinating - especially the way he stopped shaking as quickly as he started. And now his tone changed, from the argumentative to the conspiratorial, attempting to win me over by

vouchsafing me an insight into what he suspected was the real reason for the budget cut. "We've been too successful," he said, "and National CND doesn't like that."

"But that makes no sense at all. If you were successful you'd have your budget increased, not cut in half."

"Ah," he said, shaking his finger, "but there are people on National Council who don't want to change the status quo. They don't want to get rid of nuclear weapons because then they'll have nothing left to campaign about!"

At which juncture I realised that there was little point continuing the argument, made my excuses, and left. Later, in the pub, when I expressed amazement to other groups' representatives at his loss of temper, I was told that it was nothing new. On one occasion, apparently, he had been invited to address a conference of anti-apartheid activists on the topic of South African nuclear weapons - and in the first five minutes of his speech had managed to completely alienate a basically sympathetic audience by shouting with rage, banging his fist on the table, and covering the front row with spittle.

Up Against the Wall Wobbly Bits

Comrade J Hanna

As of this morning (16 June 1986) I am adopting the following policy: if fanzines arrive addressed to "Joseph Nicholas" only, I will not read them.

After all, if they were meant for me too, they'd have my name on them, wouldn't they? I may make rare exceptions for new fans and foreign fans who have as much excuse for not having heard of me as I have for not having heard of them. But if zines that ignore me come from people who know me, I'm taking it as a deliberate insult.

Mere oversight, a slip-up in the mailing-list department, you murmur, just typical lovable fannish casualness? Pah! I've been at this address four years now, I've dropped more than enough tactful reminders around. There's been more than enough time for people to notice my existence.

If I sound a bit miffed, it's because I'm FUCKING FURIOUS!

After all, I've been in fandom since 1976 (my God, that's ten years!). During that time I've written more than a few articles and locs, made a fool of myself on I dunnamany panels at cons, generally been pretty active, right? A surprising number of people even voted for me for TAFF (and my thanks to all of you).

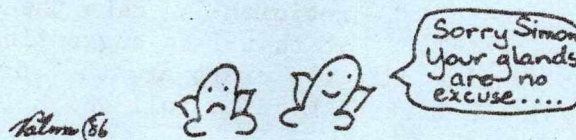
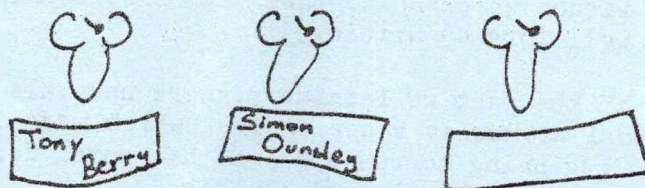
So why should living with a man make me invisible? Not so much an appendage even as an embodiment of the grammatical rule "The male is assumed to include the female". A few years ago various wobbly-bits in zines like Pong and Holier Than Thou were using phrases like "Joseph Nicholas's mind-slave" and complaining that I was not putting Joseph Nicholas's argument very well - which was hardly surprising as I was arguing along entirely different lines. I shouldn't need to state that I don't necessarily agree with what Joseph thinks or says, that even when he uses the dictatorial "we" (the proletarian alternative to the royal "we") this does not necessarily include me. Mind you,

I do not necessarily disagree with what he means, even if I take issue with how he says it. Occasionally we even agree.

Nor am I the only woman active in fandom with this problem, right Valma? There is a lot of it about, too bloody much of it. No more Ms Nice Guy. That's right, we said we'd name names, didn't we Valma? What a shame I haven't been keeping a list (breathe easy, Martyn Taylor...).

So stand forth in solitary dishonour the faned whose zine bounced onto our doorstep this morning.

Up against the wall, Tony Berry!



Fanzines of the Leaden Age

Part 3 - The Alchemist's Work

Comrade L Edmonds

It has to be said, and plainly, that this age is not one in which great fanzines flourish. No doubt there are reasons why this is so, but most fannish writing does not discuss the problem front on. Perhaps we are lucky that there are still some fairly good fanzines, but if there is any gold in them, it is often lavishly gilded with petals of base lead. And another thing, fanzines are now not the voice of young and enthusiastic fans in the way, so it seems to me, that they used to be. Here in Australia the fanzines which youngsters are producing are almost always about tv shows or about well known actors. (This may also be the case in other parts of the fannish globe, but most media fanzines seem to have a much more tightly controlled distribution than what they call "mainstream" fanzines, so I don't see them.) While much that they

produce is interesting and well written, it is strictly bound by its source material. There's nothing really wrong with that, it just excludes the possibility of a fanzine developing for itself, or its editors, a more extended world view - and that is the kind of fanzine that I am writing about.

Perhaps it is also worth noting that if fanzine production ever was a cheap hobby, it certainly is no longer. This means that only those who have secure incomes can afford to undertake regular publication of general circulation fanzines. And it is certainly not the young who have that kind of employment and financial security. All the same, this does not explain why most of the fans we see reproduced in a letter column are the same ones we are liable to see in the letter column of the next fanzine to arrive. Perhaps an explanation presents itself in an analogy of sorts: in an age of apas the general circulation fanzine has become the product of a very large and informal apa which only a few discover or wish to join. It is too much to suggest that one of the major problems with all current general circulation fanzines is that they are only partly produced for the love of the medium, and partly produced because, if the issue is not posted, the editor will find herself dropped, by degrees, from the apa. (Or perhaps the lack of much good fan writing at the moment is because the generation which is mainly involved is starting to slow down a little, is starting to find that the pressures of real-world interests take up more time, and because they have lost something in enthusiasm and gained something in wisdom which holds them back from boundless pages of white hot (and not always well forged) writing.)

It is possible that in the past we fanzine readers have also seen fannish writing through magical alchemist's spectacles, which made lead seem as gold? And maybe we are now beginning to see some of that metal for what it was and what it is. Or are standards simply set too high?

This appears to take us some distance from the theory of the Left, but don't despair because the resourceful theoretician can make the best of even the least promising source material. (Not that I am suggesting that the following examples of the current fanzine editor's craft are the worst, but they are such a mixture of lead and gold that it is hard to tell which is the greater part.)

In writing about the following fanzines it will become clear that once again I am to return to the concept of class unconsciousness. This is partly because the more fanzines I read, the more it becomes clear to me that the small culture of which we are all part holds in common great assumptions about economic and social class which betrays our bourgeois backgrounds, education and inclinations - all three, or but one or two separately - which make it very difficult for us to write and think in any less rigid way. Even if fans are able to break out of the stfnal ghetto, they still find themselves in the bourgeois ghetto where certain truths are held to be self evident. But more of this at some other time.

One of the things which both the latest issues of Metaphysical Review and Whimsey have in common is that they extoll the virtues of Garrison Keillor, the anchor man of the "Prairie Home Companion". It seems that both Bruce Gillespie and Jeanne Gomoll are entertained and moved by this man because of the introspective way he deals with the great, and small, problems of life. His descriptions manage to combine a full love of life, a feeling for human dignity and also humility. Perhaps a better description for the sentiment which both of them express in writing about Keillor is virtue. (This could lead us back to a discussion of fanzines as an expression of the protestant work ethic - stand up all those fanzine editors who are or were Catholics, an interesting sociological observation which we will also store up for later use.) And in their fanzines Bruce and Jeanne are also expressing their own brands of virtue.

Jeanne first. Whimsey 5 is an expression of the dignity and worthiness of fankind. Its composition is informal, and mixes a couple of articles and letters with Jeanne's own comments. The eighteen pages encompass most of the current topics of fannish conversation in the format of parts of letters of comment followed by editorial response; the reply often being much longer than the inspiration for it. In this way Jeanne is able to run happily from one topic to another, sometimes pausing only briefly to make an observation but on other occasions stopping for a much longer exposition of her ideas. The advantage of this style of writing is that it allows an almost completely unselfconscious discourse to take place between the writer of the original letter, the editor, and the reader. The result is a semblance of unity between everyone who finds their words in this fanzine and a sort of corporate identity which becomes, for a time, a definition of fandom. Whimsey feels fannish, so if you are included in it or become involved by reading it, you become a part of that fandom. And since Whimsey contains the names of most currently active fanzine fans, the reader finds herself at the heart of fandom. It is a magnificent illusion and Jeanne directs it very well.

But the illusion has a couple of problems. The less complex but more difficult is that a fanzine like this depends totally on its editor's energy in keeping the feeling alive, and in her ability to find new things to say, or new ways to say old things. I wish her luck in overcoming this obstacle.

The other problem with the illusion is that it is a bubble of shared beliefs and experiences. To become fully a part of it you have to know about the world view which it expresses, and if you have not learned that view it becomes incomprehensible, so that its discussions and its toying with words and ideas baffles. But perhaps this is inevitable because Whimsey has become one of the current expression of the fannish class consciousness - those who do not share the similar consciousness have trouble. While its writers and readers might be blind to larger issues, they certainly know where fandom is at, and their expression serves to keep the consciousness alive.

Unfortunately the sense of completeness which this fanzine has means that it seems closed in on itself, self contained and self-fulfilling. True, it contains some thoughtful (but theoretically unsound) comments on my first column here, but the final feeling is that it invites a response which will only continue the same illusion in the next issue. It does not lead on to similar expectations of the next fanzine to arrive or contribute significantly to an overall fannish gestalt. That is the stopper that holds in some of the fannish enthusiasm which might otherwise spill out into the rest of fandom, to our greater benefit. (But don't ask me how to become open ended, I only read and write about fanzines; somebody else might have the magic formula.)

For Bruce Gillespie, enthusiasm seems no great problem. In some ways it is a positive handicap when he lets himself become overcome with the excitement of producing an issue of Metaphysical Review (perhaps this is the natural psychological result of Bruce's habitual lugubriousness). But unlike Jeanne, who holds fannish virtue high, Bruce is more intent upon a kind of personal virtue which is similar to dogged protestant belief in virtue and sobriety.

Like Jeanne, Bruce is the centre of his fanzine and, like her, the letter column revolves around him. But instead of the fannish maypole or circus big-top which is woven in Whimsey, Bruce builds a more worldly, more self consciously relevant web, which might actually be more substantial than the fannish illusion. The trouble is that the flecks of honest gold are all too often overlaid by leaden attempts to express some kind of inner truth, which rarely works. Which is more important, the delight of a lovely and witty game, or sober self knowledge? Bruce would probably go for the latter - because he

knows his own strengths and ability, and works in the way he knows does best for him (which is a good thing).

Bruce and his correspondents do not play games to entertain each other, they go straight for the heavy stuff. At times this can be quite educational but at others it can be truly dull. Of course Bruce is a good enough editor that he can easily keep us interested in what he is doing, but often the fanzine lacks the sense of vitality which I could really wish for. Which is one of the things I mean by the term "leaden".

I don't know if Bruce is even aware of the fannish milieu in which Jeanne is operating; if not then I might be over harsh in blaming him for a total lack of fannish class consciousness. Although he often uses words and ideas from fannish fandom, he is too well grounded in the sercon school to be able to express them in a way which shows he has an Enchanted Duplicator. Or perhaps Bruce is too well ensnared in the current malaise of Australian fandom - which is generally lacking in style, ability, life or the fannish sensibilities - to break free. But all the same, his honest and sober toils are well appreciated by all but the most impatient fanzine fans.

The other thing I have to say about Bruce is that he doesn't know when to stop. Fortunately his enthusiasm knew some limits with the most recent issue of The Metaphysical Review which has merely eighty-two pages of tiny type. But when he goes much beyond that, as in some of his issues, he is likely to tax beyond limit the most dedicated and admiring of Bruce Gillespie watchers.

It used to be the task of the alchemist to turn lead into gold, and apparently such attempts were not too successful. If it is the task of the commentator on fanzines to turn the dull and boring into the good and bright, that is also difficult. But in the case of Whimsey and The Metaphysical Review, all that is needed is a trusty wire brush to knock off some of the rough spots and areas of lead plating which attend them. These are worthy fanzines, but like all the products of human activity, they have their flaws.

Whimsey 5 (actually it isn't spelled like that, but the correct form is beyond the capabilities of this mere computer) is produced and edited by Jeanne Gomoll, Box 1443, Madison, WI 537-1443, USA.

The Metaphysical Review 7/8 comes from Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALIA.

Is a Mouse an Inanimate Object?

Comrade J Hanna

We are currently basking in glorious sunny weather, almost as if it's realised that this is supposed to be summer. It could almost be Australia - say, Sydney on one of its cooler days. Even warm enough to tempt me to wear shorts and sleeveless vest when I went for a walk this morning, taking our mouse to new quarters. I had planned to relocate him in St James Park, with a choice of heading for Whitehall or Buckingham Palace. But in the event I decided to let him out in a square of greenery next to Scotland Yard, with Mobil House (I think it is) on the other side.

Yes, for the past few weeks, we have had A Mouse. Joseph has not been pleased. As you can imagine.

It all started sometime past midnight. I'd retired to beddy-bye and was just kind of drifting off, when I heard this shouting down in the kitchen. Joseph has found some Mess, I thought to myself, fancy that. Did I leave my mug unwashed? Have I spilt some water? Have I scattered crumbs? Well, no doubt he'll tell me All About It when he comes upstairs... The shouting continued, and went on, and showed no sign of dying down. I wonder if he's hurt himself, I thought, perhaps I should go down and check. So I pulled on clothes and went downstairs.

"Good God!" said Joseph, "Good God! There's a fucking MOUSE in this kitchen! I saw it! It went down there." He began exploring under the hot water tank in the corner.

The way I remember it is more like:

"MOUSE!" roars Joseph, "MOUSE! I SAW THE LITTLE BUGGER! MOUSE! I'LL KILL IT! MOUSE! KNIFE! GIVE CARVING KNIFE! FETCH HAMMER! I'LL KILL THE LITTLE BUGGER! I'LL SMASH ITS FUCKING HEAD IN! MOUSE! BLOOD! GUTS! MOUSE! MOUSE!"

It didn't seem like a good idea to laugh. We worked out that it must have come from the hole where the hot water pipes passed through the wall. I refused to get him the hammer from upstairs so he could smash it to smithereens next time it poked its nose out and persuaded him to come to bed. After all, now we had A Mouse, it probably wouldn't go away overnight.

It appeared unto Joseph again next evening, leaping startled across the kitchen and disappearing under a cupboard. And we started to find evidence of his presence. I was inclined to be fairly tolerant of sharing our kitchen with a small cute furry creature. I didn't mind it harvesting crumbs from the floor and bench-tops. I could even put up with little black pellets left lying about. All we had to do was put away or seal what we didn't want him to get at. I wasn't too keen on it scratching in my flower-pots, but as long as it didn't eat any of my plants, I could live with it. Joseph wanted to break the arch-dwarf CIA bandit's neck and bought two steel spring mouse traps to do it. Joseph baited them with bread and left them enticingly about. The bread disappeared. "Clever Mouse," I said. Joseph snarled and beat up the delinquent traps with a hammer. Which made them a bit more hair-trigger. Joseph baited them with more bread, which disappeared. Then the little bugger ate my lobelia seedling.

"Right, Mouse. You're for it!" I said, and put the lobelia pot outside the window where The Mouse couldn't get at it. I went and bought a humane trap, baited it with pumpkin seeds and lettuce leaf, and placed it among the pot-plant clutter on the window-sill. Joseph squashed nuclear-free New Zealand cheddar onto his killer traps, so The Mouse couldn't steal it without setting off the trap. The Mouse appeared in the sitting-room upstairs. Joseph danced about with fury. I persuaded him not to launch the helicopter gunships to napalm the terrorist. We renamed the mouse Victor Charles. I rebaited my trap. Victor Charles did not touch the cheese. My lobelia put out new shoots.

This weekend, Joseph's been up in Barrow-in-Furness, the town where the Trident submarines are to be built, a few miles from Sellafield, for a conference on "The Health Effects of Low-Level Radiation". And I've been having a wonderfully relaxed weekend. All on my own, complete liberty to make as much mess as I like. A bit lonely at night - funny how many noises you hear when you're on your own... Last night I thought I heard Mouse somewhere in the

bedroom. Nonsense, I told myself... Okay, I told myself, switch on light and you can see there's nothing there. So I switched on bedside light. Sure enough, nothing out of the ordinary visible. Turn off light. Mouse noises start up again. Switch on light. Little bugger is sitting on Joseph's neatly folded jumper, staring back at me. "Now really, Mouse," I tell it. It skitters into my clothes pile on chest of drawers in corner of room. This is too much! I get up, put on clothes - one feels the need to be properly dressed when tackling a Mouse - and started shifting my clothes pile, shaking out each garment as I move it to new pile on bed. No Mouse. Humph!

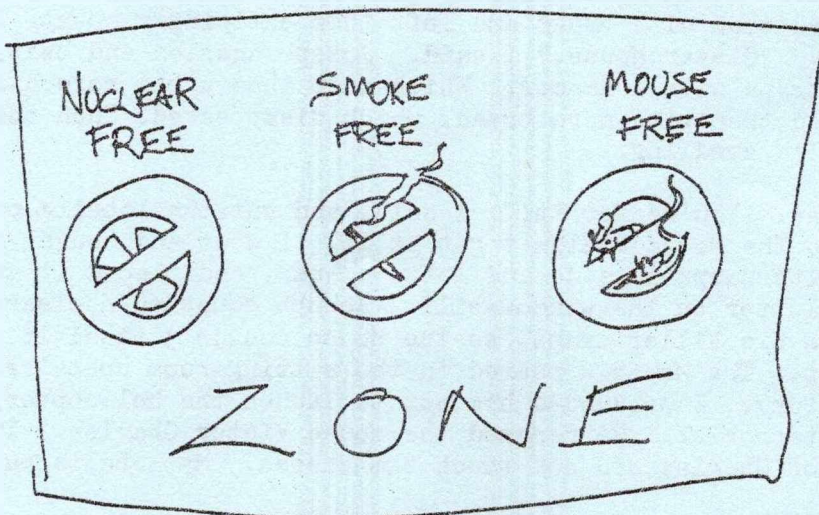
I open door - don't want to spend night locked in with Mouse. Return to chest of drawers and examine what can be seen of corner. Can see that there is a hole with hot water pipe emerging from hot-water tank going up to bathroom. Mouse may possibly have gone out that way. Just the same, beat on chest of drawers and environs shouting "Bloody Mouse! Out! Out! Get back to kitchen where you belong!" No sign of Mouse. Get undressed and go back to bed. Next thing I know it is morning.

Finally stop thinking about getting up, and manage to actually get out of bed. Sleepwalk down to kitchen for morning cup of tea. Strong smell of mouse around sink. Poke at my humane trap. Feels a bit funny, sort of heavy. Peer at it. Through smoky brown plastic make out glint of mouse eye, whiffle of mouse nose. "Oho Mouse," I tell it. Mouse gazes back. Seems to be taking situation much more calmly than I would in its position. "You and I are going for a little walk, Mouse."

I hope it finds a good home, infiltrating the Metropolitan police.

"Humph! I wage war on it, but you win," says Joseph when he returns.

Our downstairs neighbour (who shares our kitchen) suggests that The Mouse, upon discovering that the ferocious Joseph was away, took the opportunity to give itself up. That would explain Mouse's calmness. If Joseph had got his hands on the mouse, it would have become a very inanimate object...



The Future of Imperialism

or

Comrade Nicholas Undertheorised Again

Comrade L Edmonds

No doubt you all recall the item in the previous issue of Fuck The Tories by Comrade Nicholas about the Challenger accident. Some of our gentle readers (probably fellow travelling renegade bandits of petite bourgeoisie imperialism) were a bit upset by it and one person asked to be removed from our mailing list because they disliked it so much. So much for classic class unconsciousness!

Of course the real trouble with Comrade Nicholas's article was that it was written in the heat of the moment, with the wreckage of the shuttle still barely cold, and the implications of the accident just starting to be appreciated. Thus he has an excuse for shooting from the hip and, as usually happens in such circumstances unless you are Rambo, missing the point. As a result it falls to me to correct this theoretical failing in our second issue and to call upon the workers of the world to assist Comrade Nicholas in beating himself up.

Comrade Nicholas was, of course, quite correct in pointing out that the US Space Shuttle is nothing more than an instrument of US military expansion. He further points out (and this is understandable since he lives just off the coast of Europe where the most damage is likely to take place in a next world war - leaving aside nuclear winters of course) the destabilising nature of the kinds of things that the US military establishment intend to do with the Shuttle. As a result of these points he correctly warns that the Shuttle is a very bad thing indeed. But he goes no further when even a passing knowledge of Marxist theory should drive his analysis on to the even greater threat.

If Joseph's fingers had typed "US imperialist expansion" instead of just "military expansion", he would have been on the verge of an important analysis of what is surely to come.

Put simply, and leaving the prospect of war aside, the Shuttle serves two purposes to the military/capitalist class which planned and built it. The short term goal is the transfer of vast amounts of public money, raised from the US population as a whole, to the vast repositories of monopoly capital which build, service and provide support for the thing. The longer term goal is to export capitalism (and its refined form of monopoly capitalism) to outer space.

The shorter term goal is self evident and need not detain us. The longer term objective is given full support by a few well known sf writers (and an even larger number of sf fans) who see the militarization of space as only a stepping stone to the industrialization and colonization of space. This, it is generally claimed, is a good thing. But why is it a good thing? The answer is often that it is "a dream" got from somewhere, or that it is progress, and progress is always a good thing.

Perhaps dreams of progress and travel to far off places were the same kinds of inspiration which led the Portugese to become a great exploring nation and

develop the means of navigation which made possible European colonization of the globe half a millennium ago. You can easily see the result of that dream in the oppression and exploitation which remains even today in all corners of the world from the blacks in South Africa to the coal miners in the UK, the US support of the Contras in Central America and the travesty of Land Rights in Australia - to name but a small part.

Is there an sf writer who has postulated the future of factory conditions in orbit; the same as those in Birmingham and Manchester a century and a half ago?

Or do we read Larry Niven stories praising the liberty of the individual to go streaking through the starry void in search of new wealth and aggrandizement (generally of the self). We read of the men who live lonely but heroic existences out hunting for valuable metals, but how much about the people who are forced by circumstances to work in the factories which convert these metals into marketable products? Or perhaps the prospect of writing about the dangers of smelting and casting metals in zero gravity is just too grubby to deal with. Are they part of the "dream" which space conquerors have?

Given that the US and its capitalist lackeys are currently in combat with socialism for control of the last few scraps of territory on the globe, and that there will be nowhere for capitalism to expand when the remaining few little wars are fought, it is a wonder that the US is not expending a great deal more time and effort on getting itself into space. Since capitalism can only grow and thrive on expansion (a point which most analysts agree on, apologists and critics alike), it is wasting time in not getting its act together so that it can expand into space. While a lot of the old imperialism was based on dominating the indigenous populations, the example of white settler colonies such as Australia show that it is quite possible to send your own people to far off places and exploit them as efficiently as any brown skinned natives.

Perhaps some of our readers would like to imagine themselves living happy and useful lives in space, but what would the cost of that life be, both in personal terms and to the society which could make it possible. Migrants paid Thirty Pounds each to travel steerage out to Australia, and starved on the docks when they got here, went to live lonely and dangerous lives as hands on large tracts of land owned by pastoralists, or could live in the cities in conditions barely better than the ones that they left. There were lucky ones who managed to improve their station in life, but more often they found themselves confronted by the same kinds of class and economic barriers which had imprisoned them in their home countries.

There is no guarantee and every likelihood that migrants to a future colony in the sky will find themselves confronted by the same monopoly capital which dominates them here on earth, ensures that payment for their labour barely keeps them alive, and promises them no better deal in the future. I wonder if the thrill of being able to gaze out some grimy porthole at an earth floating below will be any consolation to them.

If the US Government gets its act together quickly enough, that is the kind of future most people could look forward to in space. If the US doesn't, the socialist governments will be there before them. That might present its own problems for humanity, but it means even greater problems for the capitalist world since it chokes off the one remaining avenue of growth. That would lead to the final and irrevocable stagnation of capitalism and perhaps the vindication of Marx's original theories.

I'm glad that I didn't see Manchester in 1830, and glad I won't live to see the L5 factories in a century and a half.

Letters of Comment

It seems that most of you are having some trouble thinking about and responding to this fanzine. Comrade Hanna makes the following observation which the rest of us support: the responses had "a distinct lack of scintillating insight". There was also "a certain irritation that so many seemed to think that Left-wing had to be hard, table-thumping, slogan-shouting and dead serious - and they either criticized us for being like that, or criticized us (especially me) for not being like that. But there seemed to be a certain absence of actually commenting on what we were saying, rather than on stating reaction to perceived ideological frame".

So, let's start with somebody who has a political observation or two...

SHOVELLING SHIT

Here is a gem from Richard Faulder who has left us all a bit ga ga with his political naivety.

I note with interest that there are still people in fandom devoted to the perpetuation of concepts which I would have thought needed to be scrapped in order to achieve a new and more equitable world order. These include quaint notions such as capitalism, socialism and class struggle. (One of the ironies of the last is that it is most eloquently expounded by people who would be sent to the wall by the Proletariat in the event of the latter's' victory, seen by the expounders as desirable. In the present case all the editors, except possibly Comrade Hughes (of whom I know naught - perhaps he is a genuine member of the Proletariat) have membership of the bourgeoisie, by acquisition, if not by birth. If the noble savages of their idealized Proletariat actually win the Class Struggle, they would be wise to send such people to the wall as quickly as possible. Who could trust someone who deserts their own kind? This is certainly something that previous victors have not forgotten: "The revolution has no need of savants" - not to mention the actions of the representatives of the peasant class in Lon Nol's Kampuchea. If a Neanderthal is going to string me up anyway, I might as well be honest enough to admit I'm a Cro-magnon, rather than pretend I'm another Neanderthal.)

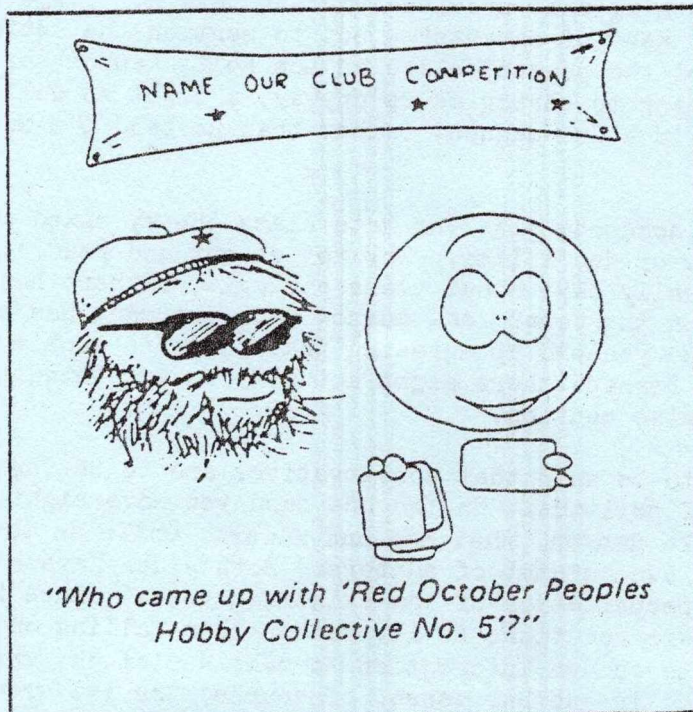
Well there you are, somebody else who gets class theory mixed up with a fear of what they don't know or don't like. Why not go out and read some class theory and see what it actually says about class struggle, rather than putting your own interpretation on the term? And anyhow your argument has an internal contradiction because you end up agreeing that there is such a "quaint notion" as class struggle. Perhaps there might actually be something to the other quaint notions you also mention.

It hardly needs to be said that conservatives are to be found on both the Right and Left of politics. On the one hand you have right-wing conservatives like Reagan, Thatcher and Howard, while on the left you have the likes of our own quintet of editors. Both sides have a vested interest in the perpetuation of the existing system, since it simplifies the world and their reactions to it, rather than calling on them to quietly accumulate enough information to make decisions, while keeping quiet until then. In another sense, of course, the two groups of conservatives are in fact radicals, since the ideal worlds they would

like to see set up are not returns to the real societies of the past, but to idealized ones which have never existed. Radicals, then, in that they wish to artificially set up societies which our species has never developed on its own.

So what you are saying is that radicals are conservatives who want to force the human race into new modes of existence which it is naturally unsuited to because it hasn't tried them before - such radical/conservative forms of government as social democracy which, no doubt, had to be introduced for the first time somewhere. While you don't give your own opinion, the sense of your statement is that it is not a good thing to contemplate changing human society into forms which it has not already experienced. That is the essence of conservatism, and its adherents are Tories. You know what we think about Tories.

Predictably, our little bunch of left wing Tories is against something called nuclear power, without offering any alternative, either by suggestion or example. The only alternative to a power source which produces some form of environmental pollution is to reduce the requirement of society as a whole for power, and that means reducing the number of people. (To be fair, at least none of the editors I know about has added to the population problem, unless Comrade Hughes is a father several times over.) All of the editors are urban dwellers, so that they can hardly claim to be leading a low-energy lifestyle close to the land, running their generators with methane or alcohol, printing their fanzines with recycled paper using vegetable dyes. No, their lifestyle demands electricity, and lots of it, and they are thus producing pollution. It doesn't matter whether this pollution is in the form of toxic gases or carbon dioxide from power stations fired by fossil organics, radioactive wastes from nuclear power stations, or industrial pollution required to mine and fabricate the large number of small units needed to extract solar energy from the environment in the diluted form in which it is present there, either as light or wind.



Once again, the point of your argument is unclear. You accuse we five of being against nuclear power and yet of needing electricity just as much as any other urbanised folk, but do not suggest that perhaps we appreciate the contradiction of our position and deal with it (in part) by looking to root causes rather than wasting our time making our own duplicating paper. You suggest, though are not bold enough to say outright, that coal or oil fired electricity generation is more dangerous than nuclear power - but sadly that position is no longer one to argue from now that the USSR has had its atomic power plant problems.

Your trouble is that your own political position, which links fairly conservative ideas about the glory of progress and the forward march of human dignity with the development of monopoly capital (no matter how you choose to hide from it behind a barricade of liberal rhetoric), is based on cosy feelings about individual liberty, an inclination which only serves to bolster your lack of class consciousness. You are probably quite happy to feel right at home with the capitalists who extract profits from the labour of workers, and to agree with their policies for development because you think they are on your side. But instead you are simply cannon fodder in the battles which they are fighting against forces which want to overthrow them. And if you think this a bit strong for a fine fannish fanzine, it is only because we have suddenly found ourselves in a slight skirmish which is a part of the class struggle. Your trouble is that you do not know or fail to realize the cause for which you stand and your lowly position in the ranks of the capitalist forces; we at least know where we stand.

When did you lot last, if ever, shovel shit in the fields? After shovelling up fresh pig manure and digging it into my vegetable garden, I can assure you that there is nothing ennobling about doing so - all it does is use up time and energy that could be devoted to LoCing fanzines. Similarly, I'm not given much to chasing sheep these days, but goat herding doesn't have very much to recommend it, either.

This may be tongue in cheek, but Richard is a self confessed democrat and has a very funny overview of politics. We recall nowhere that any of us have said we want a revolution that is going to level society and make us all peasants. But we are all concerned with the failure of capitalism and the failure of our respective governments to admit that it has failed, and the need for a lot of changes to be made to deal with the problems our world is having. And as for shovelling shit, the working class shit of yesteryear is the paperwork of today. The problem is that because many people have nice clean jobs that help make their world go round they don't perceive themselves as shovelling the said dung.

SO MUCH FOR SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

On the other hand, Jay Kinney either has his heart in the right theoretical place or at least has the jargon right...

FTT continues to amuse this recipient with its blend of political ideology and tongue-in-cheek mockery of political ideology. Now, if only I could tell which is which!

Certainly it comes as no surprise that during this extended season of political entrenchment of the Left the brighter lights among the international working class (who have no country to call their own) should find solace in fashioning amateur publications for distribution among the international "petite" bourgeoisie (slans). This only makes good business sense. Even recalcitrant socialists will be the first to

admit that a proper recognition of the feedback mechanism that is embedded in the Market is essential to avoid the true wishes of the international consuming class (customers) from becoming lost in the preachments and coercive moralisms of a bureaucratic "new Class" who rapidly monopolize its position of power through the squelching of genuinely democratic elections and the organization of police-state neighbourhood committees and secret police. And whatever else might be in question, it is clear that slans and/or customers want (dare I say, "Need"?) fanzines such as FTT.

A fan of fine taste and high intellect - your "Hero of Scientific Socialism" Medal is in the mail.

In view of this I was appalled that Joseph failed to include the International Communist Current, not to mention the External Fraction of the International Communist Current, and the Communist Workers Organization in his otherwise penetrating rundown on the British sectarian left. I fail to see how comrade Nicholas expects the workers to choose the correct vanguard from among the many proto-vehicles if the shopping-list which he provides is incomplete. Perhaps this would be a good topic for the comrade to discuss at your next Criticism-Self Criticism session later this week?

Well, enough of this frivolity. I must return to my work of constructing a new idealist metaphysic with which to combat the pernicious hold that dialectical and historical materialism have on the minds of our brighter intellectuals. Only the proper acknowledgement that all consciousness proceeds from the inscrutable realms of the Ain Soph Aur, is semi-tragically coagulated into matter, and is later repatriated back to the Pleroma (and none too soon, believe you me!) will suffice for the necessary philosophical underpinnings of a New World Order to come.

THE VOICE OF SOCIALISM

A guaranteed staple free Russell Parker states:

For too long the voice of socialism has remained stifled under the prevailing conservative mediocrity of most currently produced fanzines.

We, of course, naturally agree and hope that other fans will write on topics that concern our world and focus on the problems and atrocities that are happening now, here, and that should be concerning us as human beings. It seems that some fans, we hesitate to guess at how many, are more concerned with the worlds that their writers have created and the problems these worlds are having than with our own. Many writers, whether science fiction or mainstream, hope that through their writing readers will gain more understanding about their own world, themselves and the feelings of others. Is this really happening in science fiction and fantasy? Stay tuned, or tune in, and have your say with our Glorious Proletarian No Nonsense Fanzine.

STICK IT IN YOUR EAR

Ellen Pedersen of Denmark demonstrates that the "wobbly bit" phenomenon is worldwide. She has a reaction similar to some of our other readers to Atom's amazing statement recorded in the previous issue.

So, Judith and Avedon are told they don't write like women? You are at least lucky there is a word "bullshit" for that attitude where you are.

Women involved in research here are expected to pledge allegiance to a separate female universe, complete with language and police. "Cowshit" seems an appropriate response to me.

Atom's now famous compliment, that Judith and Avedon write like people, not like women, caused Terry Garey to wonder if he doesn't have his wobbly bit stuck in his earhole. Would someone have a look for us the next time they see Atom, just in case.

JAMES BLISH SPINDIZZIES

Chris Bailey tells us that he shares Joseph's opinions on the Challenger explosion, though for slightly different reasons.

I'll expand on his views to the extent of maintaining that it was not a tragedy - in global terms. It was a blessing in murky disguise.

And don't get sanctimonious with me and tell me that seven people died up there. Very likely seven people also died that day in a bus crash in Bangladesh - did they get a first thought, let alone a second? When I think of the thousands and thousands of people all over the world who every day die degrading and undignified deaths, I cannot find it in my heart of hearts to fret over the 'tragedy' of seven privileged people dying in such a pointless fashion - and in a vehicle the covert purpose of which is, as Joseph says, to assist in maintaining the cycle of terror and violence.

I am in fact a secret space-escapism fan but long ago rejected spaceflight as presently being offered to the world. I'll tell you about real spaceflight. Economically independent household units a la Hanna are equipped with little James Blish spindizzies and then, one day, when the urge bites, the whole unit - house, garden mum, dad, kids, cat - says goodbye to the neighbours and heads off into the void. That's spaceflight. Accept no imitations.

Let us know when the James Blish Spindizzie Units are out. But in the meantime we have this murky, scary Reagan "Star Wars" to contend with and the fact that our wonderful capitalist system blew it at a very high level and caused the Space Shuttle accident to happen. I don't know what coverage or reports have been done in the US or the UK and elsewhere to expose what happened, but we had a pretty good documentary here that was mind boggling, to say the least. While one has to be wary of any "witch hunt", it did show that bureaucratic bungling, "it goes up because it has to", inappropriate design because of defence force needs, and other equally amazing facts, meant that the "disaster" was inevitable and people knew it was going to happen but did not heed or could not heed the warnings. I think most of us, that is fans in general, think space flight is something fantastic. And it is, but at what cost do we want it? That is the real question. And, at what cost are we getting it?

LOST IN SPACE

Despite what Comrade Bailey has to say, Jack Herman is one of the many correspondents who did not take too kindly to what Joseph had to say about the Challenger accident.

The best thing in FTT 2 was Judith's first article - quite the best bit of fanwriting she has done in any medium, and close to the best article I have seen in a couple of years. It doesn't inspire me with detailed

response but I read it with pleasure and reread it now with just as much enjoyment.

The same cannot be said of Joseph's polemic against the Space Programme (capitalization optional) and those who, in fandom, find something inspiring about it. Certainly, the tendency has been for greater and greater military involvement in the civilian space programme. He should recall that the military had its own rocket programme in the 50s and it saw the PR success that NASA was gaining and hitched itself to that programme as well. This was convenient for NASA who were better able to fund their civilian programmes, like Voyager and Mariner, by using aspects of the military budget to supplement what might have been otherwise meagre allocations. While this marriage of convenience worked for a while, it has resulted in the military wanting more and more of the Programme, especially when the Shuttle became, de facto, the full programme. The fact that one Shuttle went out of commission exacerbated the problems caused by increasing military demands for use of the Shuttle flights and this was a chief contributory cause of the careless launching which resulted in the death of the seven. It should be obvious to all space enthusiasts that the military attachment to the space programme has become a liability and needs to be severed. The method of doing this is not the Nicholas baby-and-bath-water method of abandoning the whole idea. There needs to be a push for the peaceful use of outer space and demilitarization of the space programme. Both space advocates and peace activists need to act in common cause: to develop peaceful, non-military uses of space. Joseph's polemic is based on the assumption that we might as well write-off space because the US military has become involved - but like everything else tainted by SDI, we need to fight to get a decent programme.

If Comrade Nicholas were here he would no doubt point out, in his own happy way and following the enlightenment he will receive upon reading the criticism of his article in this issue, that it is a fine and noble thing to suggest that NASA and the military should be separated, but that it is not going to happen. You mentioned that some NASA experiments were conducted on military coat-tails; how do you expect that the organization would manage to fund today's amazingly expensive space efforts without military support? With monetarists currently holding the centre stage of economic debate, space enthusiasts are going to find it impossible to get the US government (of all, almost the most free-market inclined) to spend a lot of money on something which gives no return on investment. But of course the main reason why separation between NASA and the military is not on is because the civilian and the military are both employed by monopoly capital to open new areas - the high-ground for the military and new sources of raw materials and markets for capital. To these people their objectives are the same and will continue to be so - if you put factories in space then it only stands to reason that you are going to have to protect them, which will mean military bases. (I doubt that the strategically important work which would go on in such factories would be left undefended against the possibility of a Soviet raid to either steal technological secrets or simply take over the factory.) Consequently, it will not be possible to demilitarize space, even if the military were forced to move out of NASA.

RECYCLED FANZINES

Susan Francis asks us why our fanzine isn't printed on recycled paper. Well, er, um... Have you ever tried using recycled paper in a duplicator? All that soggy black stuff! However, she does have a point and we acknowledge it. And we are concerned about waste in our society. So, we do what little we can at a personal level - all scraps go into the scrap bucket for the compost, as little

processed food as possible is bought, bottles are taken to the dump for recycling, paper used to be put out to be recycled but these days is used to start the pot belly stove. The personal is political and the political is personal, eh Judith? Perhaps if we just did one copy of each issue per country and everyone posted it on... Now that idea has possibilities. Just think of the postage saved.

RIGHT SELF JUSTIFICATION

Marty Cantor is not too sure whether he approves of the review of Holier Than Thou in our previous issue, In the end it seems that he comes down in the middle; "having a bob both ways" is what we call it in the colonies.

I both agree and disagree with Leigh Edmonds' review of HTT. My disagreement is simple: I believe, unlike Leigh, that there is a place in fandom for a large, multi-faceted genzine, with said zine(s) trying to present a varied menu for the delectation of a large variety of fans. Such a fanzine was HTT; and in some respects, it still is that way (insofar as it continues to pub the work of a large number of disparate writers. But HTT is no longer exactly that type of zine even though I am using the same contributors.

I agree that such a zine in its usual format tends towards blandness and I agree that HTT has been bland - and I am tired of producing that sort of zine. HTT 24 is different - it is more focused. Changing its conception was easy in theory but quite difficult in practise. The contributions are now ordered in a way more coherent than before and are tied together by continuing threads of personal writing by me.

Before the change we used a system preferred by Robbie - alternating article lengths and varying the types of material (eg, shorter humor, long and serious, etc) to break up the pace. Now that I am sole editor I prefer to strive for a specific effect in each issue and, therefore, pay more attention to how what an article says ties in with the preceding and following articles. Robert Bloch says that it reminds him a lot of the fanzines of the 50s and 60s, something I am not unhappy to hear. I think that Leigh will revise upwards his assessment of my editing skills when he gets his copy of 24.

So. I agree with Leigh that HTT did not flow - but it does now. Any chaos in it is now controlled.

But I disagree that HTT is like The Mentor. Whatever its past faults, HTT has always been a fannish zine whilst The Mentor seems to be, primarily, a serconish zine, a difference of approach which should be apparent to the discerning fan. But then, I guess, a dull proletarian like Leigh cannot be expected to appreciate the finer thing the way which we aristocrats can.

The old and creaking class system doesn't impress us any, sport. The glorious socialist revolution will blast away for all time such antiquated etc, etc! All the same, poor Comrade Edmonds is obviously labouring under some kind of mental handicap because he doesn't recall saying anything about large genzines being bad things. They may be very difficult to do well, but that is not an outright denial of their worth.

We also heard from: Mal Ashworth, Steve Bieler, Sheryl Birkhead, Brian Earl Brown, Angus Caffrey (who claims to have a triangle as well as wobbly bits - he

sent us a picture to prove it, and a copy can be yours in a plain brown envelope if you send us proof of a donation to your nearest branch of the IWW), Gary Deindorfer, Michael DuCharme, Alexis A Gilliland, Mike Glicksohn, Jeanne Gomoll, Craig Hilton, Irwin Hirsh, E B Klassen, Debbie Notkin (who admits to having Spartacists for friends...), Marc Ortlieb, Tom Perry, Jeff Schalles, Nick Shears, Garth Spencer, Bruce Sterling, Rick Stoker, Martyn Taylor, Dave Travis, Karen Trego (who wants to know what a "chook" is - you might eat one, but Comrade Edmonds wouldn't), Sam Wagar, Harry Warner Jr ("Has Joseph considered the possibility that Claude Degler is the British Left? The splinter groups he lists sound remarkably like the assemblage of Cosmic-Circle-related organizers whose periodicals Claude used to publish"), Walt Willis and Lucy Zinkiewicz.

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FUCK THE TORIES is a tri-continental fanzine which is brought to you from the capital cities of three of the world's most interesting countries - one has a great past, one has a great line in invading small countries, and the other has a great number of sheep to fill up the otherwise unused spaces. (Or to put it another way: one invented imperialism, another is doing a good job of keeping it going, and the other is still under the yoke.) This world-straddling expression of international good will and harmony is brought to you by Terry Hughes (6205 Wilson Blvd., #102 Falls Church, VA 22044, UNITED STATES), Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas (22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2ER, UNITED KINGDOM) and Valma Brown & Leigh Edmonds (PO Box 433, Civic Square, ACT 2608, AUSTRALIA). Issues are edited under the strict guidance of the principles of scientific socialism in an order guaranteed to ensure an equitable and long lasting distribution of egoboo across the face of the globe. The next issue will be produced from the heartland of monetarism and other reactionary concepts; by Terry Hughes. Get your contributions in quickly so that you can partake in this wonderful expression of international solidarity - since the Editorial collective uses photocopiers to send copies of letters and contributions to each other you need only send your offering to the editorial office in your region, and the rest will be taken care of for you. Copies of this glorious proletarian fanzine are available for "the usual" (please send copies of fanzines to all three continents). We want the letter column to be short and punchy, but that doesn't mean you can't write us long letters - we'll shorten them for you.

THIS FANZINE SUPPORTS VALMA BROWN FOR GUFF!