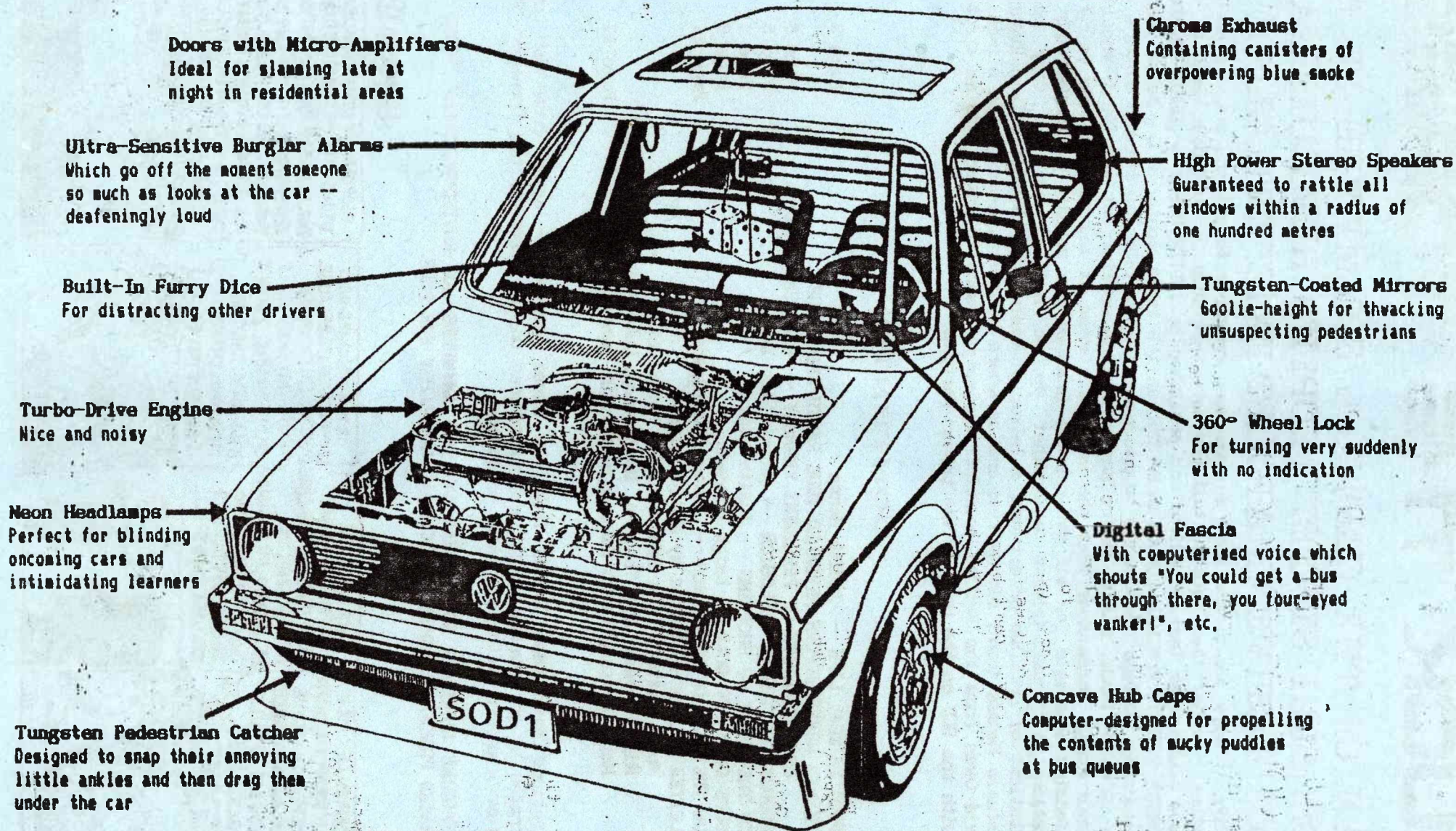


**ANNOUNCING THE NEW VOLKSWAGEN GTsod
-- FOR THE DRIVER WHO OWNS THE ROAD**



DISCOVER THE JOY OF SELFISH MOTORING

FUCK THE TORIES

ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE 22 DENBIGH STREET PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY COLLECTIVE (MARXIST-EXISTENTIALIST)

Just like it says above; and some day we must remember to put the numbers on with our latreset rather than have to tell you here that this is the sixth issue of this wondrous proletarian fanzine, edited and published by JUDITH HANNA & JOSEPH NICHOLAS, 22 DENBIGH STREET, PIMLICO, LONDON SW1V 2ER, in the tenth month of the tenth year of the seemingly endless Thatcherite nightmare. (March 1989 to blessed mortals who reside in other lands, and if you're having trouble working out why March should be the tenth month, remember that she was not elected at the start of the year.) It is a fanzine available for all the reasons fanzines are usually available: your own publication in trade (please note that we do not require one copy each!), contributions of articles or artwork, a letter of comment, a copy of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (can't bloody find one anywhere in London, dammit), the elimination of David Owen from the British political landscape, sense to enter into an electoral pact with the SLD on the part of the Labour Party...

CONTENTS

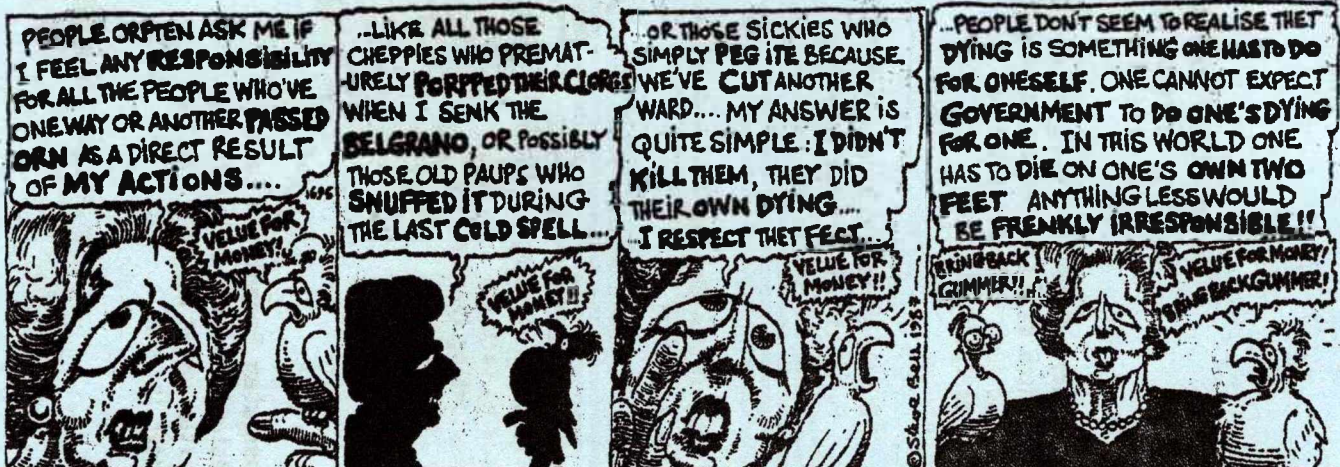
FOOD IN REAL LIFE — Judith Hanna	Page 3
TWENTY NEVER BEFORE REVEALED TRUE FACTS ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY — Mike Shearing	Page 5
GOODBYE TO THE CD EXPLOSION — Joseph Nicholas	Page 6
IN THE MIDST OF SHOPPING — Judith Hanna	Page 8
OO'S GOES FOR GOLD — Leigh Edmonds	Page 9
ON THE MALL OF MEMORIALS — Joseph Nicholas	Page 11
LETTER COLUMN — edited by Judith Hanna (with letters from Paul Skelton, Peter Colley, Milt Stevens, Amy Thomson, Ian Watson, Luke McGuff, Mark Manning, Leigh Edmonds and Colin Greenland)	Page 17

Illustrations have been looted from the usual sources — apart from the cover, perpetrated by an unknown artist and discovered on the floor of the Transport 2000 office as a grotty fifth-generation photocopy.

THIS FANZINE SUPPORTS NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS ANYWHERE; AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT POLICY; AND GORBACHEV FOR POPE.

IP...

Steve Bell



FOOD IN REAL LIFE

Judith Hanna

See *The Guardian Food* page; get annoyed with *The Guardian Food* page. (And, for that matter, with *The Guardian Style* page with its snazzy little £200 jackets). Four frightfully clever things to do with a handful of truffles or fresh oysters, whipped up in the odd spare three or four hours before a clever little supper party. No doubt there is someone out there whose local vege counter stocks truffles in season, who is perfectly happy to take out a second mortgage to stock up on oysters, and who has a whole day to spend on throwing together a relaxed yet recherche menu for the delectation of their social circle. And, let us not forget, has laid in exactly the right wines to complement the gastronomic sensations. I hope, if I ever meet them, they will invite me to dinner.

But I doubt they are *Guardian* readers, who are well known to be earnest about ideological, as well as ecological, correctitude. Does *The Guardian* not realise that all its readers are seriously concerned about nutrition, compassion in world farming, health foods, sustainable development, radical post-feminist feminism, and the scruffy Posy Simmonds life-style? Surely no *Guardian* reader would touch with a barge-pole that sort of hopelessly indulgent bourgeois consumerist fantasy.

Contrast real life...

Arrive home from normal working day of expounding to hysterical phones the intricacies of London road and public transport congestion, the plethora of major capital development proposals being mooted in separate discussions without reference to each other, and the need for overall strategic planning; the potential of Channel Tunnel rail services for regional economic development and for removing 4000 lorries a day from South East roads; the contribution of motor vehicle exhausts to the greenhouse effect (some 20% of man-made greenhouse gases); the economic and environmental benefits of the town centre "traffic-calming" and pedestrianisation initiatives long since proven in Europe; and that Transport 2000 is an environmental pressure group focusing on national transport policy, not a furniture removal firm. Also the geriatric photocopier has had its fifth nervous breakdown this week. Stand in packed carriage with nose in large male armpit from Euston to Victoria where the train terminates. Depressing traffic-packed walk from Victoria instead of scenic walk from Piccadilly station.

As we approach our front door, are we flipping through the recipe cards of our mind, eagerly anticipating the opportunity to blend nutrition, taste and visual appeal into a tempting morsel or two? We are not.

We pick up the mail from the doorstep: two mail order catalogues, a Special Once-in-a-Lifetime Offer for "yes, you, Mr Hanna", and a glossy real estate magazine offering modest studio apartments in this area for a mere quarter million. We trudge up the stairs, drop the mail in the wastepaper basket, and collapse into our wonky blue easy chair.

Dear arrives home, an energetic eruption, and falls into his word-processor. Dear is not normal. Contemplating all that energy is even more exhausting. Dear interrupts himself to nag. "What are your bag and jacket doing there?" he asks. They are quite obviously just lying where we dropped them as we collapsed. But Dear does not accept entropy. "What are your things doing there?" he repeats.

"They prefer the view out here," you explain, "they get bored in that dark cupboard." Dear is unsympathetic.

"Put them away," he nags. "Put away! Tidy up! Put away!"

You have come to realise that it is less exhausting to struggle out of the comfy chair and put them away than to cower under the torrent of nagging which abolishes

all chance of peace and quiet. Once you have managed to muster the energy to struggle to your feet and fling the things in the dark cupboard, you might as well go down to the kitchen and fix something to eat. But you do not feel up to anything amounting to actual cooking.

Down in the kitchen, there is indeed food. It is all a) boring, b) too much trouble, or c) both. In the fridge are: carrots (c), brussels sprouts (c), aubergine (b), mince (b) and limp celery (a). Chops or steak you could just bung under the grill, but you used up them and the lettuce yesterday. There is some cheese. If the cute little freezer compartment had room for more than just two iceblock trays and a packet of frozen peas, you could lay in frozen meals, but it hasn't so you can't. The row of jars along the top of the cupboards contains a range of dried beans, pasta, and Chinese dried things (all b). In the store cupboard are some cardboard packets of health food mixes (all c) and tins of soup. It is all food, you suppose, but there is nothing you want to eat.

The *Guardian* Food page is no more help than your array of nineteen different recipe books (Indian, Chinese, Caribbean, Greek, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, vegetarian...) or than your three recipe clippings files ("meat meals", "vege meals", "etceteras"). They all assume you will put at least some, if not a lot of, time and effort into processing proper ingredients beyond mere edibility. Merely thinking of it makes you feel oppressed by domesticity.

You settle for the normal boring but quick'n'easy end of week menu of heating up tin of soup (add that element of surprise by selecting can at random) with toasted cheese. You eat. Dear does the washing up. You fall into your comfy chair again.

Now that eating is out of the way, you contemplate the possibilities for occupying the rest of the evening. You could read, but that would mean turning your brain on. Your brain votes against this. It could just about manage flipping through the frivolous bits of *New Scientist*, but Dear is reading *New Scientist*. There is your stock of Georgette Heyers and nice quiet murders, laid in from the local Oxfam shop just for evenings like this. But during other evenings like this you have read all the Georgette Heyers already, and that narcotic has worn out its charm. Besides, the Georgette Heyers and nice quiet murders are filed in the other room. Your legs vote against anything that involves getting up. This also rules out your knitting which is on the other side of the room. And it rules out putting on a record as too much trouble. You sink back exhausted. You realise that owning a TV with a remote control device giving effortless access to hours of soap opera could fill this gaping hole in your lifestyle. In its absence, the only thing left to do is fall asleep. Which is about all you feel up to.

Sometime later you muster enough energy to put yourself to bed.

Sometime later the alarm rings. Do you leap up, crying in glad tones "What-ho for another action-packed exciting day?". You do not. Not even Dear is that abnormal.

Getting Up The Joseph Nicholas Way

6.45 am: Joseph's alarm clock rings. He switches it off and gets out of bed to turn on the hot water. He gets back into bed and falls back to sleep.

7.15am: My alarm clock rings. I grunt, thump it and fall back to sleep. Joseph gets up, turns on the fan heater, and has his shower.

7.27am: Freshly-showered and towel-wrapped Joseph bounds in, turns on the light and the radio, blow-dries his hair, shaves and gets dressed. I huddle under the blankets trying to ignore Radio 4 "Today" programme Sports Round-up. The News Headlines drift in one ear and out the other. Various talking heads talk about things. More News Headlines. Then "What the Papers Say" drifts in one ear and out the other.

7.47am: "Are you awakes?" asks Joseph. "Are you in there, dear?" I grunt and try to stay asleep. I would much prefer not to be there, but it is hard to stay submerged in oblivion with Dear shaking me and hauling the nice warm blankets off. He smiles a

cute smile. "Hmph," I grunt, "I do not like this getting up game. Take it away." He is not only unsympathetic, but repellently cheerful. He goes downstairs to make breakfast. I decide I had better trail into the shower and immerse myself in hot water and steam.

7.58am: "Fertig!" shouts Joseph. This is German for "Ready", and means he has made breakfast. I turn off the nice warm shower, pull on some clothes, and go down to breakfast. Joseph is immersed in *The Guardian* front page. "Give me my paper," I demand. He keeps the front and back pages, and gives me the rest of the paper.

We eat: Boiled egg. Muesli (Holland & Barrett own brand). He eats his toast with marmalade. I decide I do not want toast. He eats my toast with marmalade. He drinks coffee, Nicaraguan instant, black, two sugars. I drink tea, WDM Tanzanian blend, weak, no milk, no sugar. He finishes reading his front and back page, clears the dishes and starts washing up. I continue reading the middle pages, the Arts and ads section, and the comics.

Joseph goes upstairs and makes the bed. He packs his briefcase. He takes my paper and packs it in his briefcase. He picks up mail to be posted. He puckers up for the ritual kiss. He leaves for work.

I pack my bag. I put on watch, jacket, woolly beret, scarf and gloves, check for tube pass, keys and hearing aid, and leave for work.

Heigh-ho...another action-packed exciting day...

**EXCLUSIVE EXPOSE! TWENTY NEVER BEFORE
REVEALED TRUE FACTS ABOUT THE
ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY!**

Mike Shearing

1. Kennedy was killed by Aristotle Onassis so that he could marry Jackie Kennedy.
2. Christina Onassis committed suicide because of the shame she had carried for 25 years about her father's crime.
3. The man on the grassy knoll was Lord Lucan.
4. The President's brain was eaten by Freddie Starr.
5. The so-called "Magic Bullet" not only hit Kennedy and Governor Connolly, but also flew around the world for 23 years before hitting Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme.
6. The man on the grassy knoll was Jack the Ripper.
7. The President's body was wrapped in the Turin Shroud.
8. The bullet wound in President Kennedy's chest was identical to that allegedly sustained by Rudolph Hess.
9. The man on the grassy knoll was Glenn Miller.
10. The President's brain is hidden with the log from *HMS Conqueror*.
11. Lee Harvey Oswald was the great grandson of the captain of the *Marie Celeste*.
12. The man on the grassy knoll was Captain Oates.
13. Jack Ruby shot Lee Harvey Oswald to try and avoid paying the fine on an overdue library book.
14. The President's brain was lost somewhere in the Bermuda Triangle.
15. The man on the grassy knoll was John Stonehouse.
16. The whole affair was covered up by Richard Nixon as practice for Watergate.
17. The man who performed the autopsy on Kennedy's body was the same one who examined Marilyn Monroe after her death.
18. Governor Wallace claimed to be descended from one of the Princes in the Tower.
19. Paul Daniels will make the President's brain miraculously reappear in his Christmas Show next year.
20. President Kennedy is not dead at all, but living with Elvis at Gracelands.

GOODBYE TO THE CD EXPLOSION

Joseph Nicholas

Everyone has their current favourite albums; but publishing such a list so close to the beginning of the year means it can be combined with a summary of what we liked most of 1988's output. It's inevitably partial and partisan: we have our own tastes and prejudices, couldn't possibly buy or hear everything anyway, and in a fanzine like this anything included in such a list must be there for some ulterior purpose, what?

In alphabetical order, then, the top fifteen are:

Battlefield Band — *Celtic Hotel*. Musicians first and social commentators second, but on this album their political inclinations are closer to the surface; songs about those marginalised by normal society, their passion clearly motivated by Scotland's position on the edge of Europe. Their version of Sting's "We Work The Black Seam" completely finesses his own, putting back the anger his voice left out. Curiously, the cover photo that supplies the title was taken not in Glasgow, as one might have thought, but Bloomsbury.

The Church — *Starfish*. An Australian group of long standing, this was their first UK release and their best album yet. Songs whose meaning seems just beyond reach, backed by deft, memorable guitar work. The title track appears only on the inner sleeve; to actually record it would presumably have violated the conceptual Zen-ness it represents. "Under The Milky Way Tonight" was released as a single in the UK, and predictably ignored by most of the people who buy singles.

Andrew Cronshaw — *'Til The Beast's Returning*. Spiritual godfather to just about everyone in the folk roots boom, but also practically invisible until very recently. Looks like an archetypal aging hippy, plays an electric zither, takes his inspiration and his tunes from all over, and is one of the most eclectic, talented and accomplished musicians today. Awe-inspiring when listened to on the headphones. Who needs symphony orchestras when you can have Cronshaw?

The Divinyls — *Temperamental*. Probably the only Australian group led by someone who actually sings with an Australian accent. I remember a TV appearance by her in Perth in 1985 where she told off her interviewer for not being intellectual enough. On record, they come on like classic mid-period punks: loud, aggressive, uncompromising, yet with a core of great seriousness and intelligence. Would that there were more like Christine Amphlett.

The Pogues — *If I Should Fall From Grace With God*. I was calling this the best album of 1988 mere weeks after its release in February; it took *The Guardian's* Adam Sweeting until December to agree. Briefly notorious for having two of its songs banned from the radio because they might be thought to support the IRA, this album confirms that their brilliant musicianship belies their boozy, aggressive image. Shane MacGowan is still the unlikeliest rock star ever; but God can they play!

The Primitives — *Lovely*. The archetypal late eighties guitar pop exponents fronted by a blonde female singer. Single-handed rediscoverers of the three-minute pop single, they perform with great drive and energy. Jangling guitars and pounding drums predominate, but their stylistic range is wider still: "Through The Flowers" is straight out of 1967, psychedelia and all. Great fun.

R. E. M. — *Green*. Songs dense with political allusions and ecological undercurrents, yet produced and played in a way that makes them seem less heavy than they actually are — a reversal of the usual trend to portentousness that in this case lodges their meaning even more firmly in your mind. "Orange Crush", with its Vietnam War overtones, was the obvious single cut; but "World Leader Pretend" has a steelier and more sombre vision.

Run Rig — *The Cutter And The Clan*. Rumoured to outsell everyone in Scotland bar Michael Jackson, and it's not difficult to see why. Urgent, angry songs

about Scottish identity and Scottish freedom; as political as The Proclaimers, but more roots than rock (and the skirl of the pipes on at least one track). Objections that the opening song is incomprehensible because it's sung in Gaelic miss the point that to sing in Gaelic is a message in itself.

The Sisters Of Mercy — *Floodland*. Impossible to omit from a list like this; sooner or later they find their way back onto the turntable. This isn't the original group — most members left to form The Mission, taking the original's particular guitar sound with them — but Andrew Eldritch remains as unique as ever. Songs which march from the speakers like conquering legions, lyrics which hint at things unknown and unknowable, a voice that resonates like the inside of a tomb. Terrific.

June Tabor — *Aqaba*. Ignored by those who follow the charts, adored by everyone else, June Tabor is simply the best female singer in Britain today, with a voice of remarkable tonal range and purity. *Abyssinians* ought to have been the breakthrough to popular acclaim; so should this; yet again it probably won't be. The songs are chiefly memorable for their quietness — sometimes so quiet you'd think there was no musical backing at all. But then does she need one?

Throwing Muses — *Hunkpapa*. Supposedly less tortuous than *House Tornado*, but still displaying the Muses at their best: weird key shifts, unexpected changes of tempo, slithering countermelodies and Kristin Hersh's strange, scratchy, banshee-like voice. Listening to them is like enjoying Sanskrit poetry without actually knowing the language. "Dizzy", the single cut, is certainly the most accessible song. Will have been seen live by the time you read this, and we're looking forward to it.

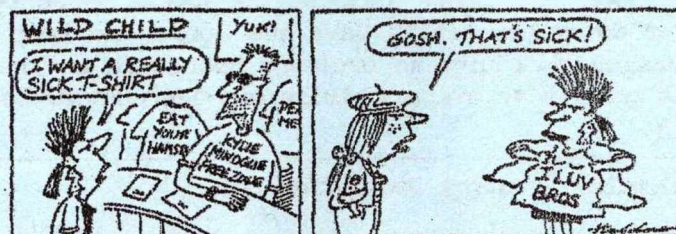
Transvision Vamp — *Pop Art*. Another bunch of guitar pop exponents fronted by a blonde female singer, in this case the extrovert but contradictory Wendy James, who loudly protests the sexism of most rock PR but then appeared on the cover of *The Tatler* naked but for a strategically placed copy of the album. She makes up for it with clever, witty, driving songs owing not a little to SF imagery; Halo Jones appears in one, and Judge Dredd in another.

Voice Of The Beehive — *Let It Bee*. Yet another collection of guitar pop etc. etc., but in this case the blonde female singer plays guitar as well. Look and sound like sixties kitsch revivalists, but deliberately so; they know what they're doing, and do it well. "I Walk The Earth" exemplifies their style: song lyrics that are knowing and allusive, tunes with great drive and rhythmic power.

The Waterboys — *Fisherman's Blues*. Mike Scott still sounds like Dylan, but has dropped the earlier musical bombast for traditional-sounding violin rhythms that suit him better. (And in retrospect you can identify the folk influences starting to break through on *This Is The Sea*.) The inner sleeve thanks approximately half of Eire for inspiration, and half of De Danann turn up to play backing tracks. If listened to on the headphones, "Stolen Child" can send a shiver down your spine.

Judith Hanna — *I'd Like Some Peace And Quiet Now, Please, Dear*. Usually condemned as boring by the author of this piece, but apparently just the soundtrack to semiotologically deconstruct Georgette Hoyer by. Or make a helicopter gunship model.

The Next Five: Those albums which didn't quite make the cut but ought to be mentioned anyway. Do Re Mi — *The Happiest Place In Town*. INXS — *Kick*. Jesus & Mary Chain — *Barbed Wire Kisses: B Sides And Others*. Midnight Oil — *Diesel And Dust*. The Rainmakers — *Tornado*. The Travelling Wilburys — *The Travelling Wilburys*.



IN THE MIDST OF SHOPPING

Judith Hanna

Death-defying! Additive-packed! The fate of millions is in her wallet!

Is there no safe choice? Can she preserve her integrity amidst the traps, deceptions and temptations laid by the transnational corporations?

"It looked innocent enough. A shopping list scribbled on a scrap of paper. The back of an old Interzone compliments slip. But in the hands of the IESDU* trained scientists, it revealed a far-reaching web of robbery, swindling, biological and chemical warfare. Even genocide."

Is she the innocent patsy she seems, an unwitting stooge? Or is she a willing accomplice, living high on the misery of millions?

MS PIMLICO GOES SHOPPING

Shopping List

Pesticide residues: potato, carrots (fungicide); lettuce, tomatoes, etc.

Ozone-destroying CFCs: plastic foam packs (eggs, meat); aerosol sprays.

Salmonella: eggs, chickens, pork.

Battery-farming: eggs, chicken, pork.

Supporting odious regimes: oranges (South Africa), avocados (Israel), bananas (Guatemala); tinned fish (Chile — Peru is okay.).

Arms trade: most high street banks.

Oppressing Third World peasants: tea, coffee, sugar, bananas... Transnational corporations take land for cash crop, workers paid pittance and lose plots and labour needed for subsistence crops. Intimidation of "trouble-makers" who want unions, health-care, education and similar luxuries. What do they think they are? White?

Destroying tropical rainforest: plywood, chipboard, mahogany toilet seat.

Fashionable Rhetorical Device: your choice of alternative endings...

ENDING 1

"What nonsense!" shrugged Ms Pimlico. "All too far-fetched, to suggest it's a conspiracy. Besides, I have to live, I need these things, they're my life-style. Anyway, what do you expect me to do about it? Silly to think what I do could make a difference. I just don't want to know, thank you, it's all too depressing to think about..."

OR ENDING 2

So Ms Pimlico flexed her economic muscle and joined the Green Consumer movement. She boycotted dubious products, she wrote letters to the heads of nasty companies and noxious regimes. And after doing her bit to Save the World, and keep the Post Office in profit, SuperShopper changed back into an ordinary housewife and relaxed in a long hot bubble (tested without cruelty to animals, fully bio-degradable) bath.

* IESDU: Ideological & Ecological Scrutiny Decryption Unit.

OOPS GOES FOR GOLD

Leigh Edwards

Some of you may have noticed that Orrite Ornithopter Production Systems has been keeping a low profile for the past few years. There is a reason for this but the US Defense Department contract stated that all work done was to remain completely Top Secret and so we can reveal little.

What I can tell you is that we here at OOPS were looking into a sort of Stealth Ornithopter. After about four years of intensive (and expensive) research in such diverse locations as the Gold Coast, Honolulu, New York, London and a delightful little chalet in the Italian Alps, we came up with a marvellous machine. Just to look at you wouldn't think that it was any different from our standard ornithopter design, but if you were to examine it in detail you would find that there are many subtle modifications to lower its radar signature, reduce noise emissions and so on.

Our major problem was in overcoming the radar returns of the flapping wings, but after some lateral thought we decided to turn that to our advantage. You see, with conventional Stealth aeroplanes the objective is to make the machine as undetectable as possible and hope that enemy radar will miss the little bit of radar return that does reflect from the aeroplane. (At one stage we hoped that the number of rivets popping out of the wings as it flew might confuse enemy radar with lots of extraneous returns, but that substantially reduced the life of the airframe.) What we decided to do was sculpt the radar return to take advantage of the flapping wings, thus ensuring that any radar reflection the enemy might detect would simulate a fairly large bird in flight. In fact, our computer modelling of this new feature showed that the radar return on the typical enemy radar screen would duplicate exactly the radar signature of a slightly overweight emu in flight. At that time we did not employ an ornithologist on our design staff, but the Department of Defense did...

So when that source of income fell through we looked around the aerospace industry to find another niche in which we might locate ourselves. We noticed that in the period we had been working for the Department of Defence ultra-light aeroplanes had become very popular. In case you have not been keeping up to date with these developments I can tell you that these are tiny little aeroplanes which normally carry only one person aloft on the flimsiest of airframes powered by something ridiculous like a motor-mower engine. After a detailed (and expensive) feasibility study conducted in California and Bali, among other places, we arrived at a design which owes a great deal to those cut out and glue together things often to be found on the back of cereal packets. You know the ones: "Insert tab A into slot B and attach to widget C using tabs D and E inserted into slot F..."

We also noticed that while it is possible to buy these ultra-light aeroplanes made up, or even in kit form, the dedicated enthusiast can save a lot of money by buying just the plans of the machine and doing all the rest himself. The detailed plans might cost a couple of thousand dollars, but on top of that the builder then has to go out and buy all the materials to make the aeroplane, and that could add another five or six thousand dollars to the total cost of the completed machine. Our research showed that there were a lot of eager clients who could afford the money for the plans but who could not afford the materials for the aeroplane itself, and we saw a way to make ultra-lights available to all for under two thousand dollars.

We created the whole package from scratch, using only our ingenuity and imagination. We proudly named it the Origami Ornithopter and called the first model we put on the market the "007" in the hope of gaining some popular appeal. For a mere \$1999.99 we delivered a large roll of plans on glossy thick art paper and, as a bonus to approved customers, we also threw in a pair of large scissors, a tube of glue and the "U-power" power unit -- a large rubber band capable of giving at least ten minutes sustained flight, or maybe less depending on how much you wound it up. To our first ten customers we also offered a set of large felt-tipped pens so that they could

colour their aeroplane the hue of their choice before they cut it out and glued it together.

Our advertisements in the trade press brought an immediate response, and the orders came rolling in. For a while there our specially employed team of little migrant workers were doing double time drawing the outlines of the various components onto the large sheets of paper, but by offering to pay them another ten cents an hour we managed to get their co-operation and fill all the orders on time. We were looking forward to life on easy street when the first law suit arrived.

No doubt you have heard of product liability litigation, the latest fad of the legal profession in the United States. What it means is that if you should happen to choke on a piece of toast in the morning your dependants can sue the company that made the toaster because their product was faulty in not making the toast dark enough (or lightly browned enough) to avoid that terrible accident. In the aviation field it means that if the pilot of an aeroplane only happens to notice the mountain he is about to crash into moments before the fatal event, you can sue the people who made the aeroplane because it was not designed to deal with such an emergency.

In the case of OOPS 007 we were sued because the wings of the ornithopter had torn off and some poor aviator had fallen from two hundred feet, the operational ceiling of the machine. He had been severely injured, badly enough to require burial. For several days we worried about what to do; finally we hired our own lawyer who earned his six digit fee by suggesting that we in turn sue the paper manufacturer for negligence. It came out at the trial that the company we had bought the paper from had never even bothered to test its strength and fatigue characteristics -- and you can't get much more negligent than that.

Of course we were again without a product, but at least the small profit we made from the settlement with the paper company meant that we could afford to set up a think-tank situation to decide the future of OOPS. We found this fantastic but discreet little house which specialises in massage and stress relief techniques for the weary and frustrated business executive -- in Hong Kong -- and booked in for a week. It was towards the end of a hard all-night encounter session that the OOPS Chief Executive leaped up to announce, "Gentlemen, I've got it!" and several of his colleagues looked concerned. What he meant was that he had discerned the problem in the OOPS marketing strategy to date.

"The problem with Orrite Ornithopter Production Systems," our Chief Executive announced, "is that it has been attempting to make ornithopters. From this moment forward OOPS must be in the business of making money!"

That is why Orrite Ornithopter Production Systems has moved to Western Australia. It is the home of some of Australia's largest and most notorious capitalists, the gentlemen whom we intend to encourage to invest heavily in our proposals. We have set up a subsidiary company in a prestigious office building on St George's Terrace, taking much more care to establish ourselves in just the right location than we would ever have taken in lift/drag calculations. We have had expensive and lavishly illustrated brochures printed up with the name of the company, "Australian Transport -- Ornithopter Design and Development Services" and the logo emblazoned across the cover with that impressive gold embossing. We have spared no cost in taking the right people out to expensive business lunches and filling them up with wines specially chosen to show that they are dealing with people who know quality and are not afraid to acknowledge it. We are in the process of hiring publicists, lobbyists, economists, graphic-artists, conceptualists and rumour-mongers. In closed and confidential meetings we discreetly mention that the parent company, OOPS, has hush-hush dealings with the US Department of Defence and, to demonstrate our legal prowess, also modestly mention our success in product litigation.

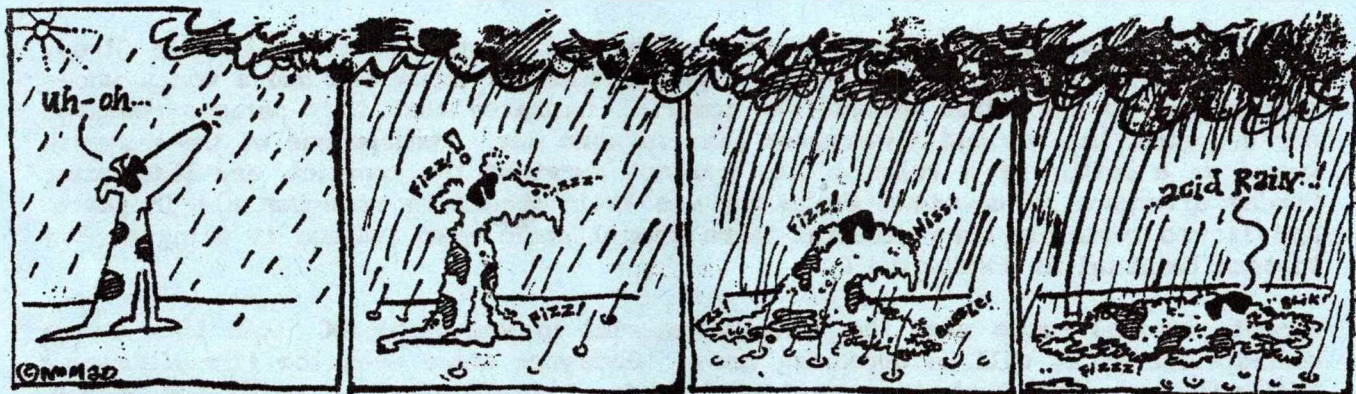
In a month or so AT-ODDS will be listed on the stock exchange and some very persuasive names will appear amongst its initial shareholders. The money is flowing in quite satisfactorily right now, but when the company is listed the money will come flooding in. At the moment we are gearing up to deal with the surge in our money

flow and are planning to hold some seminars and training workshops in diverse locations such as San Francisco, Paris and a vibrant and exotic resort in the West Indies that the trendies haven't discovered yet.

Our optimism is indicated by the company motto which appears at the entrance to our offices, engraved in gold on a black obsidian plaque. It reads "The sky's the limit". Hopefully none of our clients have heard that we had to fire the ungrateful staff member who added "By Boeing" to the original plaque.

Marlon

by Nomad



ON THE MALL OF MEMORIALS

Joseph Nicholas

"This is my favourite memorial in the whole of New York," said Stu Shiffman.

We had just got off the last boat back from the Statue of Liberty, he and Judith and Moshe Feder and I, and were standing in Battery Park before the memorial to the US merchant seamen killed during World War Two — a set of tall black monoliths facing out towards Liberty Island, the names of the dead carved into their fronts and backs. The monoliths were grouped into four short ranks, two to the left and two to the right, with at the centre a monumental stone eagle with partly outstretched wings. It certainly looked impressive.

We walked slowly around it, looking at it in the way that tourists usually do: seeing it, but not in detail; taking it in, but more in the sense of ticking it off a mental list of Sights Seen. And then, with time running out on us, we moved off towards South Street Seaport, looking to tick that off the mental list before evening became night and we had to meet Patrick and Teresa Neilsen Hayden at the Second Avenue Jewish Deli. But on the way we had time to stop to look at another memorial: the Vietnam Memorial, New York's own, much less famous than the one in Washington DC. So much less famous, in fact, that I hadn't known it existed: it wasn't marked on our map, and I can't now find it in our guide book. Despite which, it impressed me rather more — and I remember it rather better — than the merchant seamen's memorial.

It took the form of a short wall, some seven or eight feet high and perhaps twenty to twenty-five feet long, made mostly of translucent green glass bricks. On the surface, in raised lettering, appeared excerpts from letters written by soldiers in the field — some of the excerpts highlighted by the simple expedient of using white rather than green glass for the bricks. This highlighting was not to draw attention to the literary brilliance of the excerpts in question, or to the heroism of the events they described, but to demonstrate simultaneously how ordinary and how

pointless the war was — the transient pleasure of a cold beer after a long day's patrol, the boredom of sitting around in camp waiting for something to happen, or sad little vignettes of watching best friends going home in body bags; and to preserve equality and anonymity none of the authors were identified. This had apparently been a condition for the selection of excerpts when the memorial was being planned; and thousands of letters had been submitted to the organising committee.

"What a waste," said Stu. He wasn't talking about the memorial, but about what it represented.

Moshe admitted, in an unusually quiet voice, that he had only just escaped the draft; that if the war had continued for another six months he would have been called down to the recruiting station and sent off to fight in Vietnam.

We read the excerpts, we looked at each other, and we went on towards South Street Seaport. There had been only two other people there, a young man and a woman whose expressions as we walked around the memorial indicated that they perhaps resented our presence, that we had interrupted them in some way. Perhaps one of the excerpts was from a letter by a relative who had not survived the conflict, and this quiet Sunday afternoon in downtown Manhattan was their chance to remember him in peace. And it was certainly more peaceful there than I could ever imagine it being at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC.

Almost everyone knows what the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC looks like, so no descriptions of it will be appearing here. (Everyone who's seen the film *Hamburger Hill* will remember that the opening shot is a track along it with the sunset reflecting back into the camera lens.) "Did you like it?" seems to be the question everyone asks you; and it's difficult not to admit that, yes, it's really rather well done: less a war memorial, a thrusting tribute to those who gave for the cause, than a liturgy for the lost, sombre and downbeat. Although, as everyone said when it was first installed, you can't actually see it until you're practically on top of it: dug down into the ground rather than erected on the surface, it is invisible from the road; and even from the top of the Washington Monument, in the centre of the Mall, it's hidden by the trees which surround it. So it's not surprising that, a few years after it was completed, a small sculpture of three GIs was erected before it: the only part of the Memorial, apart from the lists which tell visitors on which panel the names appear, that does show above the ground.

Then there are the right-wing causes that have accreted around it, attempting to subvert its purpose to assist their own. Here, after all, is a memorial to loss and failure. And there are the stalls run by people who believe that after all this time there are "Missing In Action" prisoners still alive in Vietnam: collecting signatures on petitions, selling "Nuke 'Em Now" badges, and exhibiting posters demanding that Hanoi immediately release the remaining MIAs and offering a billion dollars for the first Communist defector to make it to freedom (*sic*) with one in tow. *A billion dollars!* Apart from wondering where they'd get that sort of money in the first place, it was clear that the basic economics of such an operation were simply crazy. What would they do if two defectors escaped to "freedom", each with an MIA in tow? Or three, or four? And if the people running such stalls really believed their own rhetoric about poverty-stricken peasants ground down by the iron heel of etc. etc., wouldn't a few thousand dollars have been equally as tempting? (Which still left aside the problem of how such a peasant would come to read the posters in the first place....)

We walked along the Memorial, looking at it with those tourist eyes, taking in the totality of it rather than the detail. Although it was a bright sunny day, and the temperature was nudging 80°F, the atmosphere around it seemed somehow different: cooler and off-putting. I felt the mood physically lift the moment I stepped back onto the Mall proper, back towards the things it seemed intended to celebrate.

We had previously been in the Lincoln Memorial, constructed to commemorate the president who had fought a war over (among other things) the principle that no man had the right to enslave another. We were on our way to the Jefferson Memorial, constructed to commemorate one of the nation's founders, on one of the interior walls

of which was a quote from the Declaration of Independence concerning the right of the USA to determine its own government. On a previous day, we had been to the Washington Monument, constructed to commemorate the man who had led the nation to victory over the British. All tributes, in their way, to the hopes and ideals of the republic's founders and leaders. And if the Vietnam Memorial seemed to represent anything, then it was a betrayal of those hopes and ideals by the founders' latter-day successors: people who had substituted military force for political wisdom, who had retreated from rationality and maturity into Cold War-derived dogma.

A shadow of this seemed to underlie the activities around the MIA stalls. *We can't bomb you flat, but we can offer you a billion dollars!* One began to wonder if the USA, as a nation, had learned anything from the collective trauma it had experienced in Vietnam.

Echo answers: well, at least Reagan didn't invade Nicaragua. Indeed, it's interesting to note that — despite being so obviously desperate to provoke an equivalent of the Tonkin Gulf Incident that allowed Johnson to send the Marines into Vietnam — Reagan had great difficulty persuading anyone but the CIA and a handful of far-right anti-communist zealots to match his support for and adulation of the contras. Congress might have funded them for a time, but manifestly didn't like them — and opinion polls have indicated consistent popular opposition to direct US military involvement in Central America. The most Reagan could get away with was rattling sabres on manoeuvre in neighbouring Honduras and conquering Grenada with an invasion force slightly larger than the population of the island itself. Hardly a ringing endorsement of his oft-stated intention to "make America great again". The reason being, of course, "the Vietnam syndrome": once bitten, twice shy.

But at this point one has to ask whether this is because the US government has finally recognised the limits to global power — both to its actual physical extent, and the extent to which it may permissibly be wielded — or whether it's because the US public doesn't want any more of its sons killed in overseas adventures in support of the Pentagon's geo-strategic interests.

The nineteen-eighties have seen a small spate of films about the Vietnam War — *Platoon*, *Gardens Of Stone*, the already-mentioned *Hamburger Hill*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *BAT-21*, the forthcoming *In Country*, and most recently *Good Morning Vietnam* and *Saigon* (the latter of which is not so much a war film as a police thriller which happens to be set in wartime Vietnam: the ultimate reduction of a once so divisive issue to just another scenic backdrop). One ought to be grateful for such films because, whatever their individual political stance, they do at least represent some attempt by the USA to come to terms with the Vietnam experience. But only some attempt, because their view of that experience is actually rather limited; one seen almost entirely from the point of view of the soldiers in the field, slogging on under pressure from both the guerillas and the military brass, doing what they were told to do and suffering enormous losses in consequence. While this both ennoblees their efforts and demonstrates how cynically they were often used, it avoids directly confronting the causes of the war, the misuse of power that it entailed, and its effect on the Vietnamese themselves — indeed, the Vietnamese hardly ever appear in any of these films, and when they do they are either the enemy (*Hamburger Hill*, *Full Metal Jacket*), peasants who get in the way (*Platoon*), or innocent children who have to be taught how to behave like Westerners before they can be accepted as real people (*Good Morning Vietnam*, and I'm sure I don't have to point out how thoroughly patronising and offensive that depiction of them is).

(The same is true, incidentally, of *In The Field Of Fire*, the SF anthology of Vietnam stories edited by Jeanne Van Buren Dann and Jack Dann. Over two-thirds of its six-page introduction are devoted to discussing the post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, from which Vietnam veterans suffer; one might be forgiven for thinking from this that US soldiers were the war's only victims. Not a single word is said about the colossal environmental, economic and social destruction visited upon the Vietnamese; and when they appear in the stories at all they do so mostly as bit players. The only one which attempts to view the conflict from their point of view, and to express their feelings, is that by Craig Strete — himself an American Indian, and thus an ethnic minority in his own land.)

"As a movie subject," wrote Robert O'Connor in *Out Of The Meatgrinder* (*The Guardian*, 8 December 1988), "Vietnam offers a special marketing challenge. The film-maker must reach an audience harbouring disparate memories of the actual event. The goal is to sell tickets equally to those who fought in the war and to those who marched against it." And he concluded: "One of the continuing problems of Vietnam is the failure of the American public to confront the war fully. Hollywood's decision to semi-confront it — based on the best of marketing principles — is compounding that problem." And in the course of his article, O'Connor quoted Vietnam veteran and university academic William Adams, who had earlier remarked in *Mother Jones* that "our future images of the war will...owe more to our film-makers than our historians".

Ultimately, it is only historians who can explain the causes of wars; film-makers can only show their effects. As the old saw has it, one has to learn from the mistakes of history in order not to repeat them; but if that history is being written by film-makers what, if anything, are we likely to learn from it? That shooting people makes them bleed? Hardly a very original insight — but one that, because it is presented in a popular and readily assimilable form (i.e., film), tends to have the edge over those offered by less accessible and more cerebral means (i.e., history books). And all around, I fear, are signs that the USA, as a nation, has not learned the lessons of Vietnam: is still prepared to use force where rational argument would suffice — to attempt to win outright and thereby impose its order and values on everyone else rather than settle for the trade-offs and compromises that are a necessary part of smooth international relations.

This is not to suggest, I hasten to add, that the US government is raring to invade anyone who disagrees with them. Force comes in various kinds, and where direct military confrontation isn't suitable a number of alternatives are available — all the way from paying someone else to do the shooting for you (the contras, the Afghan mujahedin) to undermining their economies via the IMF and ruining their indigenous culture by flooding it with Michael Jackson tapes and TV soap operas. There are, in other words, many different means of continuing the struggle for global domination; and defeat in Vietnam does not appear to have weaned the USA away from that goal.

One obvious example is the new Bush administration's attitude towards Gorbachev and the Soviet Union. All through Western Europe, people are welcoming his disarmament initiatives and wondering whether, without political support from outside, he can survive the conservative forces ranged against him from within; but in Washington DC the new Bush administration has publicly stated that it intends to blunt the so-called "Soviet peace offensive" by putting relations with the Soviet Union on the back burner and leaving Gorbachev to "twist in the wind". The theory here, according to Secretary of State James Baker, is to see whether more concessions can be forced out of him; but one would have thought that there was nothing more calculated to ensure his downfall and replacement by some Brezhnevite hard-liner who can be counted on to resume the Cold War where it left off in 1983. Conspiracy theories aside, it seems clear that an ex-CIA functionary like Bush, and the defence contractors looking to maintain their order books, would prefer that scenario to one in which disarmament continues and international compromises have to be made. With Gorbachev, there is little if any political rationale for the "modernisation" of NATO's battlefield nuclear weapons to replace those removed by the INF Treaty; without him, it becomes much easier. (Although I think that in truth Bush has made a huge political mistake; Gorbachev will survive, and NATO's attempt to "modernise" will only repeat the blunders and insensitivities that marked the earlier deployment of cruise missiles, thus further widening the political rift between the USA and Western Europe.)

Without Gorbachev, in short, the Cold War can continue. And never mind (further evidence of Bush's misjudgement) that the rest of the world doesn't care for it any more and wishes it was over. As *South* phrased it in an article about him in its January 1989 issue: "One aspect of the new administration can be predicted with confidence: its frame of reference remains 'the American century'. The US will continue to deny the reality of its economic decline, the importance of *perestroika* in ending the Cold War, and the primacy of environmental and economic threats over those of Soviet world domination".

The past eight years have been marked by attempts to overcome "the Vietnam syndrome"

by engendering a climate in which armed combat is no longer so stigmatised. One has only to look, for example, at the treatment given to it at the lower levels of popular culture to realise how glossy and wonderful it can be made to seem — and on the sociological theory that it is at precisely this level that a culture reveals its deepest hopes and fears, it is important not to overlook or dismiss what happens here. Missing from the previous list of films, for example, was the Rambo trilogy: a straightforward attempt to rewrite the history of the Vietnam War to transform the loser into, if not a winner, then at least someone who'd managed an honorable draw. Never mind the host of *Rambo II: Missing In Action* clones (most of them seeming to star Chuck Norris) which never achieved a cinema release (or were ever intended to) but went straight onto the shelves of the video rental merchants — *No Surrender*, *Force Of One*, *Death Before Dishonour*, and other titles that mercifully escape my recollection — and which will probably be seen by more people than will ever see *Platoon* or *Full Metal Jacket*, and be commensurately more influential. After all, they are full of action. They have people solving their problems by blowing them up or shooting them dead. The bad guys always lose. How could anything be more popular?

Those who can read without moving their lips have probably graduated to the kind of books advertised in the pages of *Locus* as "mercenary science fiction" (a sub-genre that is almost exclusively a product of the eighties). *The Fleet: Counterattack*, edited by David Drake and Bill Fawcett, features a bunch of brave Earthmen versus "the savage Khalian invaders", who in the illustration resemble insects (doubtless with a monolithic hive-mind), with a blurb which claims *The Fleet* as "still the best defence". *Crisis Of Empire: Cluster Command*, by David Drake and Bill Dietz, tells us that "nobody believes in anything beyond the boundaries of self" and that an exceptional few have "the duty of maintaining a military-civil order that is corrupt, despotic, and infinitely preferable to the barbarous chaos that will accompany its fall". *Beamriders*, by Martin Caidin, has various SDI gimmicks and "the rescue of a US scientist from a cell beneath the Kremlin". There's another volume in the series *There Will Be War*, edited by Jerry Pournelle. And on, and on — just as Chuck Norris seems to dominate the video war market, so Been Books seems to dominate this field; and the sub-texts of their publications hardly need stating. Everyone's grown soft and complacent; politicians are venal; vigilance is paramount; and only the military can save us. (And the insectoid hive-minds of the savage Khalian invaders will turn out to have been a metaphor for the Soviet Union all along. Goesh, how surprising.) Truly, this is pitiful rubbish — yet it presumably sells by the tens of thousands.

One might just be able to overlook this Cold War adventurism did echoes of it not surface in more sophisticated science fiction novels. For example — and for all the excellence of its writing — Lucius Shepard's *Life During Wartime* conveys an air of weary inevitability about its imagined war in Central America: it won't be quite as he describes, but that it will happen sooner or later, he seems to say, is undoubted. And do not intimations of other US military involvements appear in other works by various other contemporary SF authors, such as William Gibson and Bruce Sterling? And does not this assumption that such involvements will happen itself help to reduce the likely public opposition to them?

Echo answers: but writers are products of their times, and the times in question are the eighties; and military intervention is a constant of the global picture. Are you suggesting, says echo, that writers should ignore this, and write utopias instead? To which I reply: no; but I'd rather they questioned it more openly rather than appeared so ready to accept it as given. Thus it is that we hit the matter of the role of art in raising public consciousness about political and social trends; about the extent to which the artist provokes their audience to question what they see and hear, or to accept the arguments they propound.

It's undeniable that David Drake and Chuck Norris are part of the right-wing's attempt — albeit piecemeal and disorganised — to make it possible for the USA to once again resort to direct military force where it feels the circumstances warrant. Not just to shoot down Libyan MIGs or invade tiny Caribbean islands, but to engage its perceived opponents in very large numbers in defence of its economic and strategic interests. The next such locus of conflict, I think, is likely to be the Philippines; and in that the USA will apply all the military lessons it learned in Vietnam to fight the war in a manner intended to at least avoid defeat. The only question then

is whether the American public will actually support such a war — whether, in fact, the experience of Vietnam has decisively turned the public against overseas military adventures, or whether this was just a temporary blip in their general support for South's "American century".

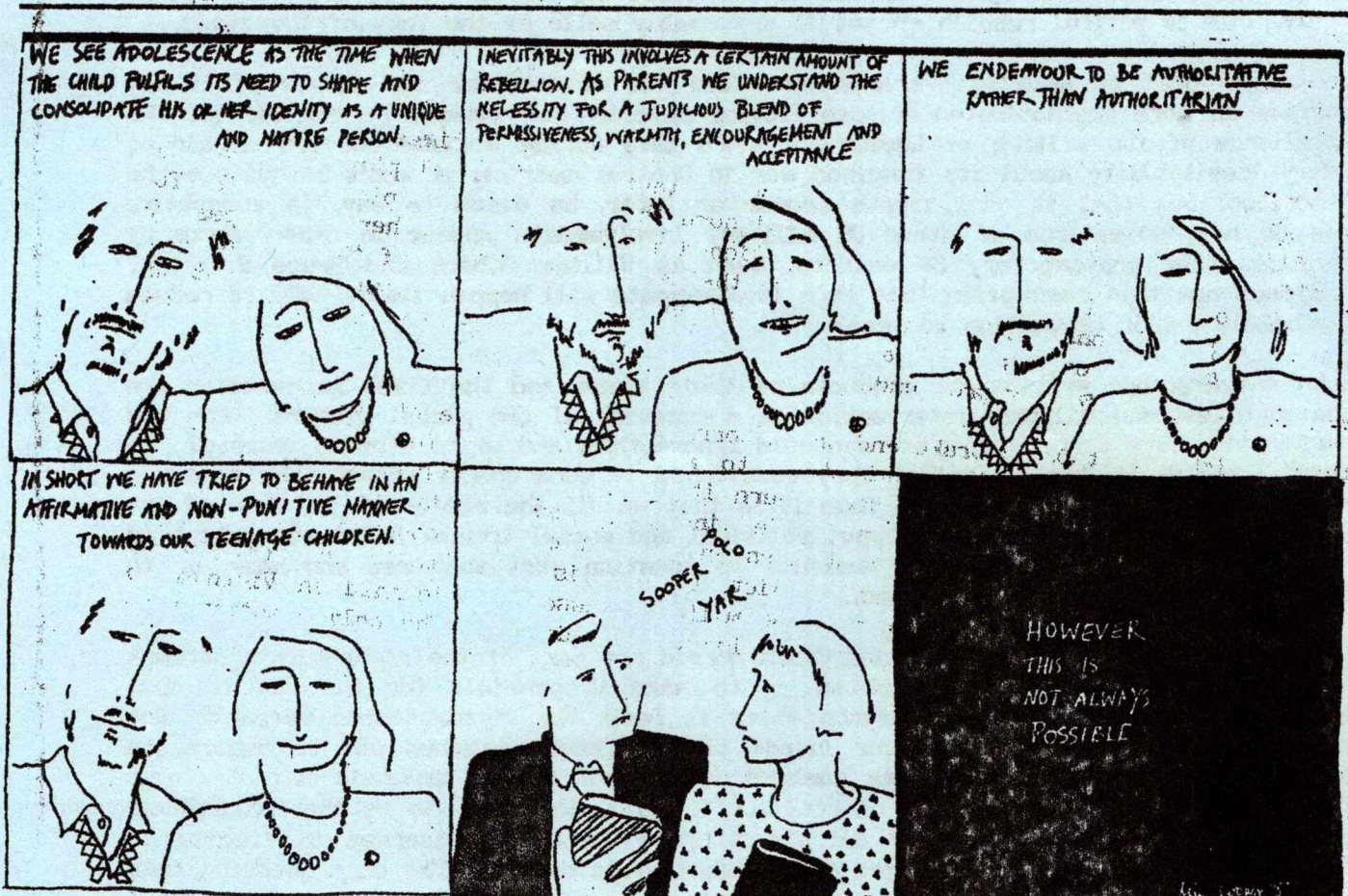
Visiting the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC, and examining the MIA stalls that have grown up around it, I found it difficult to avoid the conclusion that while its builders intended it to be (as I said earlier) a liturgy for the lost, others had managed to subvert it to their own purposes — to transform it from a memorial to military folly and foreign policy failure to a memorial to failing to do the job properly. After all, had not Richard Nixon seriously considered the use of battlefield nuclear weapons against North Vietnam? And did not the MIA stalls, in their expressions of clear hatred for the Vietnamese, suggest that next time there wouldn't be any MIAs because there wouldn't be an enemy left to take them prisoner?

One final image remains with me from our trip to the Vietnam Memorial. As I walked along it, I became separated from Judith and caught up, for just a few seconds, in a group of people whose dress and badges clearly connected them with the MIA stalls. With them was a shorter, portlier man in a dark suit, to whom they were pointing out aspects of the Memorial and their operations. He looked every inch a typical US Senator. For a moment, our eyes met; and he probably noticed the peace badge that I was wearing, with the classic downward-pointing trident symbol of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Then he looked away, and I went on past. I didn't recognise him then, but I remember his face: one which at the time of writing has been appearing in the news rather a lot.

It was John Tower, George Bush's proposed Defence Secretary and the man of whom it has been said that he never saw a weapons system he didn't like.

"Yes," he was saying, "I'll try to work with you on this as much as I can."

He clearly had not learned from the Vietnam experience; but I can only hope that enough of his fellow citizens have.



LETTER COLUMN

Edited by Judith Hanna

BODY POLITIC

Skal
25 Bowland Close
Offerton, Stockport
Cheshire SK2 5NW

"Joseph's 'Apologies from the Deep End'.... I too have been guilty of blurring the distinction that he so precisely makes. Not that I see it as being quite that simple, nor that you yourselves don't sometimes blur the picture. For example, your "body politic" illo (page 2) makes a biased political statement. The extremity of the right wing is depicted as Nazi; the symbol at the extreme left which is chosen to contrast with it, to be equivalent and opposite, is the CND symbol. For any purpose other than propoganda, this is simply not on. Extremist governments of either persuasion have done evil things, and any implication that the two extremes of political thought are reasonably represented by the juxtaposition of these two symbols, or that if they are (for there is a very real though non party political sense in which they are) then that this dichotomy equates with a right-wing/left-wing bias, is nonsense.

"It seems to me there is a political biosphere -- as you move out to either extreme it becomes unable to support a reasonable society, but unfortunately only the extremes exert influence. There seems to be no stable midpoint, you have to be moving towards one extreme or another. At the moment we've moved too far to the right and I think we need a socialist government to start pulling us back. Given time it will pull us too far to the left, and then we'll need a Tory Government to start swinging us back right again. It seems a bizarre way of doing things, spending all your energies swinging pendulum-like from side to side and moving forward only by accident, if at all. But the politics of extremism are all we seem to have in any credible manner. Which is in itself fucking incredible."

Alexis Gilliland and David Palter also noticed the illo, to point out that the sweetika was back to front.

Peter Colley
7 Sumatra Road
West Hempstead
London NW6 1PS

"I'm surprised at the lack of ability to appreciate the mix of political and fanish topics in one fanzine, though one of many fanzines for me is the very narrow limits within which they operate. Perhaps it's the style of a piece of work that is in question. Certainly, I get the feeling all too often that unless an article mentions well-known fans, recent conventions, or some fan group escapade then it is excluded from the realm of fanzine writing. I prefer to read things which are attractive in themselves, for their quality of writing rather than just a familiar content or viewpoint. Whilst this does not exclude the cliquish nature of discussion of fans and fandom, it does not set that as the main priority. I hold an ambivalent attitude to fanzines, on one side liking the informality, on the other sometimes rebuffed by their cosy insularity.

"Long may you kick down the senseless plywood fences!"

FEET OF APATHY

Milt Stevens
7234 Cappe Avenue
Reeds
CA 91335, USA

"Interesting terminology, describing FTI as a 'politically aware' fanzine. I'm aware of all sorts of things, however I really don't give a damn about most of them. It occurs to me that political ideology has the same relationship to politics that fantasy has to science fiction. With both science fiction and politics, possibility is a major consideration and lack of it is a serious criticism. With political ideology and fantasy, consistency is the major consideration, and possibility doesn't really matter at all.

"Evaluating the global socio-ecological impact of lunch before eating it is an idea which tweeks my sense of wonder. It sounds like the sort of thing that could lead to starvation. It also implies that you have absolute knowledge. After all, you really don't know what the international pizza conspiracy may be doing in Albania at this very moment. It's a safe bet that everything causes something.

"One of our local breweries was inadvertently fouling-up the ecology all the way to Central America. What they did was establish a bird park. That doesn't sound too heinous on the face of it. However, given a constant supply of food in California, the birds decided to forget about any of that migration nonsense. Since the birds weren't coming for dinner, the Mexican insects were having a fiesta all over the countryside. The Mexican government complained, and the brewery eventually had to truck the birds to the border and throw them across. (I have this image of Daffy Duck sneaking into the country in the back of a truck).

"Back on the subject of lunch, Joseph should realize that you can't create a cattle ranch out of a rain forest. One steer requires several acres of grazing land to support it. The amount of work/energy required to clear that much rain forest (and keep it cleared) would make the steer highly uneconomic. I strongly suspect the rain forest is being depleted because population pressure is causing the natives to use slash and burn methods in an effort to produce more food by even the most labour intensive methods."

Joseph himself replies: "I agree entirely that the inputs required to clear land for cattle are highly uneconomic — but the multinational corporations, global banking operations and various governments who are actually ripping up the tropical rain forests think differently.

"Admittedly, much of the logging is to feed the demand for hardwood furniture in the developed West (and, in Japan, the demand for disposable chopsticks). Roughly speaking, Amazonia loses an area the size of Belgium or El Salvador every week — which the ranchers then exploit by moving their cattle in to feed another of the developed West's consumer demands: hamburgers. Nor does it take much effort to keep the trees from growing back for all the apparent lushness of the vegetation they support, tropical soils are actually very poor in essential minerals, and after a couple of years of average rainfall (falling, remember, on exposed ex-forest floor) what minerals they do have are entirely leached out. Which means not only no trees growing back but pressure on the ranchers to keep their cattle fed by moving them on to new pastures — which in turn helps drive the logging of new areas of forest.

"It's quite untrue to suggest that the slash-and-burn techniques used by native peoples are responsible for the same damage — after all, those techniques were evolved specifically to allow the forest to regenerate before the same piece of land was cleared again. It is true to say that the population level was once much lower than it is now, but fact current population pressures in the Third World are an urban rather than a rural problem — because agribusiness has taken over the farming sector and work (although not necessarily homes) can only be found in the cities. The Brazilian government is cynically using these urban pressures as an excuse to transport large numbers of people from the southern coastal plains to the sparsely populated north-west; but the north-west is sparsely populated precisely because its soils are too poor for agriculture of the scale required to support the numbers the Brazilian government wants. And this resettlement scheme is only borrowed from the Indonesians, whose transmigration programme was also designed to move people from the heavily populated islands of Java and Sumatra to the less populous islands of Kalimantan and Sulawesi; and that programme failed for exactly the same reasons. The soils aren't fertile enough; and once the forest cover has been removed total environmental degradation inevitably follows."

LEP

Steve Bell



NOBODY FOR PRESIDENT

Yup, this time he got in. Who was it told us that Bush refuses to look at the Doonesbury cartoons which depict him as a blank, a nothing? Can't stand them, throws a tantrum at the mention of them. And that Trudeau and Bush went to the same college. Though presumably not at the same time?

Amy Thomson
4014 Latona Ave NE
Seattle
WA 98105, USA

"First of all, I wish to apologise for my country's bad taste in electing that rat-bastard Bush and that excrable piece of toxic waste, J. Danforth Quayle. I did my best, knocking on all the doors of my precinct several times to get out the vote, registering about 100 voters, and stuffing envelopes at the campaign headquarters of my favourite Senate candidate. It had some results: we had a 70% voter turn-out in my precinct (more than 10% higher than usual) and Washington State carried Dukakis. Still, it just wasn't enough. It's so disheartening living in the States these days, and seeing politics turned into intellectual mud-wrestling. Particularly when the winner is lying through his teeth on just about everything. *Sigh* Just remember, the Folly Manor Collective did its level best to contribute towards the revolution.

"I do hope you are practising safe sex when fucking the Tories. Just hosing them off isn't enough. Remember, there's no proof that fascism *isn't* a sexually transmitted disease. Wear a Jiffi, Smash the State, Have a nice day."

Ian Watson
Bay House
Moreton Pinkney
near Daventry
NN11 6SQ

"As the hunt thunders past — the Tories in uniform — so paradoxes abound. I'll bet that the meeting of Towcester & District Labour Party held in Moreton Pinkney village hall the other week was the only rural branch to have an eye-witness account of George Bush's acceptance speech, since our treasurer stopped off in Dallas en route back from Mexico. And the other day we had not one but two visits from job creation people trying to sell dusters and oven gloves; but we were already stocked up after a similar visit last month. One of the sellers (from Nottinghamshire) explained how rich the pickings were for Northerners in Northants villages, not least at the council house end."

Luke McGuff
PO Box 3680
Minneapolis
MN 55403, USA

"The shadow government is in charge of the USA now. Bush ran on a firm pledge not to raise taxes. Today the local paper carried a headline 'GAO rebukes Bush's plan'. The General Accounting Office is flat out rejecting Bush's plans to not to raise taxes, not cut defence, not cut social security. And Bush is right. He will not cut defense spending. He will not cut social security. The evil Democratic Congress will. This will (a) further erode the power of the presidency while keeping the man himself popular, and (b) further politicise party lines, not 'best interests'. It would be nice if we had issue parties, I think, a green party, perhaps, or a women's party.

"Oh well, I feel like it's all over. Every now and then someone makes a joke about Quayle being Bush's insurance policy, that no matter how much bad shit comes out about his drug-running CIA days, or his involvement in Iran-Contra, or whatever in his past, no one will dare impeach him because that would mean President Quayle. Perhaps that was why Reagan wasn't impeached, because that would have meant President Bush. Well, we have President Bush, and he managed to get the only person with less personality than himself to be Vice President...

"I saw Warren Zevon the other day and the Vee-Jay played The Pogues' 'Dirty Old Town' as the post-concert file-out song. People started singing along, standing there in the grey fluorescent hall of a brightly lit club, all the neon dead, people pale, glass on the floor, puddles on the floor, everything that's so romantically black now just scummy and dirty. No more special effects, and that guy singing "I kissed my girl by the factory wall... dirty old town..." and there was almost a chorus of people blearily singing along. And me thinking wouldn't it be great to see those guys. Yeah, so if I win TAPP, let's go see the Pogues, okay?"

Okay, yeah, it's a date! The Pogues on stage are worth seeing, they have a fine time, as if they really enjoy playing. It's just a pity (says Judith) that at live gigs the

mega-amplification is so loud you can't actually hear what they're singing. Or we could try to catch Battlefield Band again, or Andrew Cronshaw and June Tabor... (Or Throwing Nuses or Jesus & Mary Chain, adds Joseph.)

Mark Manning
1400 East Mercer #19
Seattle
WA 98112, USA

"Your joke about Richard Bergeron had a distinctly British cast to it, because over here it's more common on the left to laugh at the Maoists (those few who are left). One infinitesimal Maoist grouplet actually published a sort of flow chart of Maoist splits. The result looked rather like a plate of spaghetti, with a few scruffy meatballs representing the largest groups. Ah well, American Trotskyism never had Vanessa Redgrave. Instead, perhaps the most important American Trotskyist leader, Jack Barnes, made a speech a few years ago that began: 'Ninety percent of the people around the world who call themselves Trotskyist are hopeless sectarians'.

"Judith (page 21) misunderstands the Hegel-to-Marx trajectory. Marx's critique of Hegel's dialectic began with the observation that Hegel made Thought the Subject of reality, instead of its Predicate. New theories, for Marx, didn't actually arise out of old ones (although continuities of terminology sometimes make it easy to believe that they do); instead, both new and old theories arise in reaction to changing material conditions. I won't footnote this, but believe that the relevant texts are the Postface to *Das Kapital* and the early *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. In short, Marx argued that an idea doesn't have its own history.

"Hey, did I guess here why fan history necessarily lacks a theory? Do I win a gold chernovets? "

Several asked after our erstwhile co-editors. No word from Cde Hughes, presumably still too busy, or too depressed by domestic politics, to write. Cdes Brown and Edmonds are now proud owners of a mortgage on a sprawling mansion with a large garden, uncountable rooms, lots of potential, and warm enough weather for Valma to shed her Eskimo gear.

Leigh Edmonds
6 Elvira Street
Palmyra
West Australia 6157

"By the way, Cde Joseph's deliberate typo in his article on fear of falling off things was duly noted. B-49 indeed! So what's the prize? A plastic nodal aeroplane, no doubt, though hopefully not a helicopter gunship. How tedious. No, the US Navy is more my line — and they never blew up anybody that didn't need blowing up. You just ask Richard Bergeron about that."

You can tell he's an Airfix Kid.

FOOTNOTES

Colin Greenland
Flat 2A, Ortygia House
6 Lower Road
South Harrow
Middlesex HA2 ODA

"Thomas de Quincey, recalling the druggist who first sold him opium, and whose establishment he was ever after unable to find again (too stoned, one surmises) observes: 'I believe him to have evanesced'."

"*Evanesced* This way of going off the stage of life appears to have been well known in the seventeenth century, but at that time to have been considered a peculiar privilege of royalty, and by no means open to the use of druggists. For, about the year 1686, a poet of rather ominous name (and who, apparently, did justice to his name) — viz, Mr Flatman — in speaking of the death of Charles II, expresses his surprise that any prince should commit so vulgar an act as dying: because, says he,

"Kings should disdain to die, and only *disappear*."

David Bratman recommends "*From The Jaws Of Victory*, Charles Fair (1971), a history of military stupidity, for some excellent and (purposely) amusing footnotes. Also text. And I agree emphatically with Megsrs Trippett and Fair that the proper place for footnotes is the bottom of the page, not the end of the book."

So does Stephen Jay Gould, in the foreword to his The Mismeasure Of Man, his witty and thorough demolition of the biological determinist assumptions behind intelligence testing.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM

Andy Andruschak ("The fastest route between home and work is through a negro slum. Even in a car a white person can get in trouble riding through Hawthorne..." Even tougher for the blacks who live there, one imagines); *Hazel Ashworth*; *Sheryl Birkhead* (for the Vertiginous Apathy party); *Terry Broome*; *Brian Earl Brown* ("While it is a cute political dabble to compare Trotskyism with Richard Bergeron's dogged refusal to let go of the great TAFF scandal, you, of course, reveal yourselves as closet Trotskyites for being so obsessed with Bergeron's obsession" — Err-umm-ahh...).

Also *Bernard Earp* (a self-confessed "card-carrying member of the Conservative Party"); *Brad Foster*; *Alexis Gilliland* (who quotes Lenin); *Craig Hilton* ("What scale was it?"); *Matthias Hoffman*; *Jim Hol*; *Stewart Jackson*; *Robert Lichtman*; *Janice Murray*; *Marc Ortlieb* (suggesting an experimental approach to fan history: "Perhaps Aussiecon 2 was simply part of John Foyster's experiment into the strength of social bonds in Melbourne fandom — testing to destruction is a useful technique"); *Phil Palmer* (quoting Benazir Bhutto: "We have a mandate for freedom, for dignity, for hope, for entering the twenty-first century with science and technology"); *David Paiter* (who took exception to our dig at Richard Buggeron: "I do not think that you are exerting a beneficial effect in fandom").

And more: "Puzzled of Haverfordwest" aka *David Redd* ("One of life's little ironies is that old *Analog* is actually the most politically aware magazine of all, with its eternal studies of the American constitution"); *Yvonne Rousseau* ("The grapes and figs are swelling, the orange trees in the garden supply oranges all year round, and the city of Benloh Park is so poor that street lights are found (somewhat distant from one another) on only one side of the street"); *Andy Sawyer* ("Is the conventionally fanish material in FIT-6 a devious attempt to confuse those who are confused by FIT's alleged political bias even more?"); *Renee Sieber*; *Steve & Elaine Stiles*; *Alan Sullivan*; *Jeff Suter*; *Pascal Thomas & Christine* (who confess to "joining the ranks of the land-owning bourgeoisie" at 7 Rue des Saules, 31400 Toulouse, France).

Plus *Jean Weber*; *Roger Weddall* ("Having seen you together in a domestic setting I can attest that Joseph is the very word 'calm' personified in his dealings with inanimate objects". Thank you, Roger); *Lesley Ward* (who said it was "nice to see the Irish John Berry's dreadful drivel put down with such crushing and sarcastic brevity" and, added that she liked Lucy Sussex's skunk defence system: "If rape is inevitable, piss all over the bastard!"); *D. West* ("Life is hard"); and *Walt Willis* (who leaps to the defence of his old mate (Anglo-Irish) John Berry and accuses us of ageism).

