



## ORNITHOPTER FIVE

*Edited and produced by Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 103, Brunswick, Victoria 3056, AUSTRALIA for the 166th mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, the Spectator Amateur Press Society and some others by way of trade or saying hi!*

WHAT'S GOING UP DOWN UP DOWN AT THE FACTORY: The illustration at the top of this page is actually for the previous issue as any picture that we might have for this issue is still tied up by the red tape from the Official Inquiry. The report we have this issue should have gone into the previous issue as I mentioned then so that the news about the proposed OOPS airliner you read in that issue should have been in this issue to go with the lovely pre-publicity artists impression Chris Johnston has done at no expense to us. Next issue the exchange of lawyers letters we will be printing will have its own illustration - we do get things right in the end sometimes.

Now, about the incident we have previously mentioned. You will be astonished to learn that we here at Orrite Ornithopter Production Systems have made a great aeronautical discovery, to rival those of the aerofoil and the sound barrier. This discovery to which we refer coincided with the first flight of our first type to actually achieve extended flight without the wings coming off or something equally annoying. The OOPS 00-004 was to be our first step to taking over the light aeroplane industry and reducing Messers Beech, Cessna and Piper to the state of penury they so rightly deserve. Although preliminary studies and wind-funnel tests suggest that the 00-004 would be twice as heavy and give only about half the speed, capacity and endurance for double the fuel consumption of comparable fixed wing types we were not worried when we stopped to think that such small handicaps have not been limiting in other areas of the consumer

society (such as the breakfast food industry) and therefore we went ahead.

Oh how

we wish you could have seen the prototype 00-004 before its first and final flight, resplendant in its puce and aquamarine livery. In the light of early morning the sunshine sparkled reflections from the dew on the struts and rigging wires and the taut doped fabric over the bamboo spars and stringers reminded us all of those great days before the war in the golden age of aviation when pilots were Men of Iron and the Kaiser was still on the throne. We drew lots and Beryl, having won (or lost depending on your view of later circumstances), was appointed chief OOPS test pilot and strapped into the machine. We all stood back as she fired up the engine and put the wings into gear. Slowly at first they moved and then, gathering speed until their motion was a blurr, the wings did their work. The sound, like a thousand bedsheets flapping on washing day, was almost drowned out by our cries of enthusiasm and excitement as the airplane lifted itself straight up into the air. How short lived was out elation!

The discovery of great aeronautical importance which the events of the next few minutes were to reveal was that:- "Although moving a heavier-than-air craft into the atmospheric environment by means of vertically moving its wing components provides satisfactory control over the vertical flight component it provides no control over the horizontal mode." What this means in laypersons terms is that you can get an ornithopter to fly but you can't make it go anywhere. Let us hasten to add that this is no guarantee that ornithopters will only go up and down, taking off and landing in the same place. Like a hot air or gas balloon, ornithopters tend to drift in the direction the wind is blowing at the time, and that direction may not have much to do with the one in which the pilot has planned to go.

Things could

have been worse, the large doors to the wholesale fabric warehouse which is situated on the second level of the Brunswick Market could have been closed at the time that Beryl and the 00-004 passed through the space they normally fill and broken the huge expanses of glass as well and adding to the following confusion.

The gust of wind that took the 00-004 to disaster didn't spring up until the machine had been in the air for a few moments, this unfortunately allowed the machine to raise itself well into the air without banging into the fence of our backyard test-field and bringing the flight to an early but safe halt. When the wind sprang up it took us a while to realise that it was all the doing of nature and not of our designers - the main clue being that aeroplanes are generally designed to go forward and our machine was definitely going backwards. Almost as strong a clue was the look of horror on the face of our ex-chief-designer.

Our cries of excitement turned to howls of dismay and yelled instructions to Beryl to open her eyes and do something about it. Unfortunately she couldn't hear us above the sound of the flapping and the engines. As the ornithopter drifted off out of control we ran after it but of course, it was not following the street plan of Brunswick while we were. By the time the machine was in the vicinity of the Brunswick market we had been left way behind and only the sound of the crash led us to the spot where the ornithopter came to rest. The sound like flapping sheets was suddenly multiplied tenfold and the flapping became an ear shredding ripping. The engines sounded as though they were trying to run inside a gigantic pillow.

We can only leave the description of the sight we found inside the warehouse to your vivid imaginations. Thousands of meters of multi-coloured cloth had been ripped to shreds and slung around at random in the whirlwind of flapping and your imaginations will have to be vivid to equal that.

The

ornithopter was unfortunately a total write-off. It could have been worse for Beryl and one doctor has claimed that she was only saved by the fact that she was already bandaged from head to foot when we found her.

PERSONAL PARS: For a moment I was going to begin by saying that in the last three months nothing much has happened. Then it occurred to me that most people would be hard put to make a trip to Canberra, a trip to Perth and being GoH at a convention there, a couple of weeks lying around knocked out with virusus and a convention in Melbourne nothing much.

First off the trip to Canberra was made at the expense of the Department of Transport as part of the programme to move all the staff of the Airports Branches up there by the end of this year. Both Valma and I went and the three day trip cost us not a cent and that included the nifty meal allowance which was sometimes difficult to keep up with. The idea was that we drive around and have a look at the city in general to see what we thought of it and then to be more specific and look at areas of the city we'd like to live in and then to be just that bit more specific and look at houses. As luck would have it we had more or less already decided which part of the city we were interested in, partly from advice, partly by the fact that we already know someone living in the area and partly because on the map the area is nice and close to the area in which I will be working. So the rest of the time we spent in Canberra after we'd looked at O'Connor and the houses in it, was more or less tourist stuff. There are some nice things to see up there and on the final day we went for a long drive out into the country to a water storage lake and were enchanted.

One evening we spent with Jean Weber: who already lives in O'Connor and who also likes cats and I get the impression that she is as much looking forward to us moving up there as we are looking forward to getting there. There is as yet no absolute certainty that we will be going up there, but if Valma is assured of a job up there in the Public Service as well then we will be going. Those of you who are concerned because you recall that we've bought a house in Ballarat and are intending to move there too can take heart in the fact that that is still our long range goal. It's just that at the moment Ballarat is suffering from some of the worst unemployment in the state and as much as I would like to be unemployed I'd like to do it with a liberal helping of money in the bank. A few years in Canberra should sort that out for us.

The trip to Perth came about a week after the trip to Canberra and lasted for over a week, beginning at Spencer Street Railway Station on a Friday evening and ending at Melbourne Airport the morning of the Tuesday a week and some days later. Since we felt like doing the trip all the way over to the other side of the continent in style we went by train and would have returned that way too except that the convention we were to attend ran into the beginning of Valmas school year and so it was a quick flight back that ended our holiday.

The trip over was very enjoyable, from Melbourne to Adelaide on the Overland which is an overnight run, then a very enjoyable morning in Adelaide with some of the local fans. A train and bus ride up to Port Augusta and then on the Indian-Pacific all the way to East Perth Interstate Terminal. The trip across the Nullarbor Plain is remarkable mainly because it is so absolutely flat that I still can't believe it. And the veglataion is so sparse and stunted. Anybody getting the chance to take the train trip over should do so as it is something you won't quickly forget seeing.

We were met in Perth by some of the local fans, and anybody who gets up early enough to meet a train that gets in at 0700 has to be enthusiastic, which is one way of describing Perth fans. By and large though they were very nice and left us to our own devices for the four days that were left until the convention (WAYCON) began. On Tuesday night we were invited to a large dinner party which evolved into a convention committee meeting - and while I got the impression that some of them were sure I wouldn't approve it seemed the only natural thing to happen with the con less than a week off. On the Wednesday evening Perth fans met as usual at a place called the Golden Rail which, I guess, serves the same purpose as the late lamented DeGraves Tavern

had served in Melbourne - the meeting place and time that everybody used to keep in touch.

The only other mildly fannish event before the con was on one morning when I presented myself at the studios of the ABC and was interviewed, along with a local fan named Ian Nichols, about sf as a bit of convention publicity.

Non fannish things that Valma and I did included a day just walking around in the centre of the city finding out where everything was, an afternoon out at Fremantle which is the port for Perth and most of WA I guess as well. Another day we went and fed the famous Black Swans and one full day was spent out on Rottnest Island which is a delightful island about ten miles off the coast from Fremantle and readily accessible by ferry. It's a relatively untainted tourist resort and our day visit turned out to also be a fannish event quite by accident when Valma and I bumped into two other non Perth fans who were over for the convention and had decided to go out to Rottnest for the day.

The rest of the time before the convention we spent resting up from all the exciting and exhausting things that we had done.

The convention itself turned out to be a very enjoyable event. Although it was held in a rather run down hotel the facilities were just the right size for the number who turned up and since the convention took over the whole of the hotel - with the exception of the Public Bar - we were free to lounge about wherever we felt inclined. The programme ran fairly well although it was light by standards of most other Australian conventions, and I seemed to be on every second one.

Before WAYCON most Australian fans had heard a little about Perth fandom and didn't really know anybody except Tony Peacy who is in ANZAPA and has been seen at Eastern States Conventions from time to time. Even though there were only six or seven fans that weren't from Perth at the con the Easterners who were there have been and will be spreading the word and telling other fans how enjoyable the convention was and what a nice bunch the Perth fans are.

WAYCON ran from Friday evening to Monday afternoon followed by a dead-dog party which lasted until about midnight when Valma and I and Peter Toluzzi were driven to the airport to catch our different flights back to Melbourne and Sydney. I think that it must have been the most enjoyable week that we have spent for quite a few years and one of the most pleasant conventions that we have been to since AUSSIECON.

After WAYCON the Perth fans have decided that they will bid for the 1980 national convention and I hope that they get it because Valma and I would like a good excuse to get back to Perth again.

There's not much that can be said about spending almost two weeks suffering from a rather nasty virus. After I'd got over the first week I snagged a throat infection which laid me low for another few days and began to clear up just in time for EASTERCON which, naturally enough, took place over Easter.

Although I was on the committee I seemed to escape doing anything but the most undemanding work at the con itself and I must admit that at times I did twinge with guilt as John Foyster tore off with a harried look or Christine sat in a corner and quietly had an attack of the hysterics. I got the impression therefore that the con went quite well and that even though there were rough patches there is not much that you can do away with them completely. The smoothness with which most of the programme went amazed me and the masquerade would have to be about one of the best presented we've yet had in Australia. The hotel was very helpful and hospitable and I wouldn't be too surprised if more conventions were held there as the arrangement with the large room and the smaller room side by side very well separated from the rest of the hotel by the short corridor is very good for security and avoiding nuisance by other partons or to other patrons. The membership got up to over 180 and I think that you wouldn't want to have too

many more on your books of you were going to be using the Sheraton. Although you could fit a lot more people into the main room it wouldn't be half so comfortable.

I'm sure that there is a lot more that could be said about this con but being biased I won't attempt it. Members of the committee who ran the event are no doubt looking forward to reading all the reports of the event that are going to be written. The committee is also looking forward to pages and pages of glowing praise, but since when has a convention committee been looking for anything else.

The following article - just to change the subject - is to appear in the next issue of my genzine RATAPLAN. That it is being printed here may give you an indication of the far distant date on which I expect to print that next issue, the big hold up at the moment being the main contribution which is to be a report of a trip to China that one of the local fans made a year or so ago. When I finally have that article and have managed to drag out of a couple of other fan writers in Australia articles on China to a similar length to the one below I'll be producing the next issue. In the meantime it seemd like a pity to let such an interesting piece gather dust...

## CHINA - A BRIEF HISTORY. C1600 - 1949

*Paul Stokes*

Up until the emergence of Sun Yat-sen, Chinese history is emeshed in the teachings of Confucius. Some fundamental concepts must be understood. The first of these is the concept of the "Middle Kingdom" or the Chinese "Consciousness of Greatness". Until the time of her contact with the West, indeed until the time of the Industrial Revolution, China was undisputably the greatest civilisation on earth. Not only had her power and culture risen higher, but it had been sustained longer than any other. Justifiably then, China felt herself to be far above any other nation and therefore had no desire for social intercourse with lesser nations. Now, until the Industrial Revolution such an attitude cannot be faulted, for the Europeans had little to offer. China's big mistake lay in not realising that with the Industrial Revolution Europe left China far behind, and what Europe could not trade for she was now in a position to take.

The second concept is the "Dynastic Cycle". This was, and perhaps still is, the internal regulating system of China.

1 EMPEROR  
(possessing the Mandate of Heaven)

4 POWER STRUGGLE  
(resulting in the rise  
of one man or family)

2 SOCIAL DISRUPTION/  
NATURAL DISASTER

3 CIVIL WAR/  
EXTERNAL INVASION

A new emperor has ascended the throne (1) after a long struggle. He has seized power by his overwhelming military supremacy. It is because he has done so that he is said to possess the "Mandate of Heaven" or the "Divine Right to Rule". The "gods" have bestowed this right upon him because he has won. The people and the emperor are now bound in a two-way relationship. According to the "Mandate of the Emperor", he must care for his people, in all ways, to the best of his ability. The "Obligation of the People" is a two-edged weapon. If the emperor did his best, the people were obliged to obey without question. However should he fail to do so (a natural disaster - flood, famine - or by failure to keep taxes low, or clear irrigation ditches and land, were all clear signs that the emperor had lost the "Mandate of Heaven"), and it was clear that he had lost his right to rule, then the people were equally strongly obliged to revolt and overthrow him (2). This led to a period of civil war, and possibly a foreign invasion (3). A power struggle would take place and from the chaos (4) one man and his "family" would rise to prominence through his military power. This man would destroy his enemies and go on to found his own Dynasty (1). The cycle would then begin all over again. This functioned until the dominance of the Westerners, who effectively halted its natural progression until the explosion in 1911.

For several centuries (the Portuguese from the 16th Century; the British from 1793; and various other nationalities at various times) the European powers had tried to trade with China but the Chinese could see no value in European goods and wanted no contact with foreigners. Each rebuff hurt European pride more, and more importantly, when they were allowed to purchase goods for bullion, each exchange hurt their pockets more. Britain soon discovered the lever necessary to gain them a strong foothold and a new trade advantage (the money would flow their way this time), OPIUM. It flooded China - well over five million pounds a year. Nothing can really excuse this sickening behaviour on the part of a so-called "civilised" nation. It aroused deep ill-feeling and was part of the basis of hatred of the West which developed up to and after the Communist takeover.

By 1838 the Chinese Emperor acted. Opium was seized and destroyed. However this led almost directly to the Opium War, 1840 - 42. This "war" saw the crushing defeat of China's "forces". As a result of this and later clashes (1885, 1890) China was divided between the "Great Powers". As Sun Yat-sen said of China:

"We are the poorest and weakest state in the world, occupying the lowest position in international affairs; the rest of the world is the carving knife and the serving dish while we are the fish and the meat."

China was continually beaten, humiliated, divided and parcelled out. Her greatest humiliation was after her defeat by Japan, who had accepted all China had rejected.

The force of this was not lost on a young man named Sun Yat-sen. Sun had been educated in Hawaii by his uncle and he soon realised that China could only be victorious if she took the best that the West had to offer. China must change, and the first step was to overthrow the Manchus. This was no easy task. The Manchus were firmly backed by the foreigners. Sun refused to be daunted by this obstacle. His first attempts failed.

Sun left China and travelled Europe and America, and there he found the other side of the Great Western Powers. Poverty had not been solved, nor had unemployment, low wages or unhealthy slums. China, felt Sun, was not to suffer in this way, so he devised "Three Principals of the People". The first principal was "Nationalism"-- the feeling that anything that happened to China was the concern of each individual Chinese man and woman. China had to regain

her national pride. One of the first tasks of a truly national government would be to drive out the foreigners.

The second principal was "Democracy". This would involve educating the people and eventually, after a period as a republic, a full parliamentary democracy. Lastly came "Socialism" or the "People's Livelihood", an answer to the problem of poverty. This involved a policy of "land to the tiller", which would involve the confiscation of landlords farms and the sharing of them among the poor and landless peasants, so that everyone had the means of providing for himself and his family.

Sun's revolt took some years, beginning in 1900 and ending with success in mid-October 1911 while he was in California. The fighting was not over however, for one General Yuan Shi-kai was still independent and in possession of a large private army. Sun compromised, and Yuan became president of the Kuomintang (the National People's Party) and China. Eventually he became dictator. He committed suicide in 1915 and China was once again plunged into chaos. Sun struggled onward again, this time with strong support in materials, education and military training from the newly formed Communist Russia, 1923. With strong encouragement and the aid of both Lenin and Stalin, Sun made impressive headway. At no time did he agree to accept Communism, but always held to his three principles. Just as he was poised to accomplish his final unification he died of cancer, March 12 1925.

It is fortunate that Sun had a successor waiting in the wings, though as events showed one cannot help but wish that Sun had been a little more careful and deliberate in his choice. Chiang Kai-shek was not the man Sun had been. Specifically Chiang cared more for himself, his position and power and aping the West. To this end he was more open to compromise, in certain directions, both in his personal principles and China's future. Chiang was a real product of the West, aping mannerisms, behaviour and social loyalties. He established his own power faction and ruled for himself. To remove opposition he slaughtered the Communists prematurely, as he did the left-wing of his own party when they protested too loudly. China was secondary.

Mao Tse-tung, trite as it may sound, came from poor but honest parents. As a result of this he was far more in touch with the needs of the "people". While Chiang gathered his military training and experience, Mao was gaining his political and social education. So that at the time the two groups under Sun were fighting the Warlords, and later under Chiang, the Communists were trying to implement Sun's policy of "Socialism". This may seem a little premature, especially as the landlords who were losing their land were among the strongest supporters of the Kuomintang. However, as the Shanghai Massacres of 1927 showed, they had planted the seeds of their survival just soon enough.

While Chiang consolidated the power of the Kuomintang, Mao tried to rebuild his shattered Communist forces. This Mao did at the Kiangsi-Hunan Soviet. Here he did much to formulate his own political philosophy and organise the Red Army. Their purpose was twofold:

- 1) To defend against the enemy, and
- 2) to function as a propaganda force in the countryside to win over the people to Communism.

Chiang's attempts to destroy them in his first two encirclement campaigns only supplied the Communists with rifles, ammunition and thousands of new troops. Then came the Japanese.

With the Japanese invasion, one would expect that Chiang and Mao would put aside their differences and present a united front to drive out the

invaders. Such was not the case, much to the disappointment of many Chinese, even those sympathetic to Chaing. Instead Chaing continued his attentions to Mao and his forces, and in 1932 began his fourth encirclement campaign. In this campaign Mao came closer to disaster than ever before and on October 2 1934, he took the momentous decision to evacuate before being crushed. They marched to the north, to the province of Shensi 6 000 miles away. The march was important, for as well as meaning the survival of Communism in China, it spread Communism in the areas through which they marched. It also made secure Mao's own position as the head of the Chinese Communist Party.

Let's pause for a while and look at China in the thirties. Its only fair that we see if Chaing Kai-shek can be considered the true successor to Sun Yat-sen, and the best man for China. It's true that Chaing did institute changes. Cinema and radio appeared. Women of the better off families were freer, girls were educated and education was relevant to the modern world. New factories grew up, communications improved with new roads and railways; airways eased travel into the interior. Chaing was converted to Christianity. The leases giving Europeans extra-territorial rights and control of customs were ended. The struggle for the "Peoples Nationalism" was won; but very little progress was made towards establishing the other two principles.

The greatest social problems had always been the poverty, and the oppression suffered by the Chinese peasant. Chaing did nothing to lessen these evils. Why? He depended too much on the help of the landlords. In fact he did much to help the landlords to regain their lands. For peasant and poor townsmen alike there was no real improvement under the Kuomintang. It failed to provide schools for the poor; nothing was done to care for the sick and the aged. No land was redistributed to the "tillers". Chaing's showplace, Shanghai, possessed the foulest slums in the world. Some twenty thousand poor died each year of starvation, overwork and disease.

No progress was made towards "Deomcracy". The Kuomintang remained in control of all official posts, there was no parliament. Infact China was becoming unhapilly similar to Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany. Chaing admired both these men, and had a copy of Mussolini's biography given to each army officer. Chaing and his family, his class family, ruled China through the Kuomintang. The "People's Livelihood" and the "People's Democracy" were as far away in 1945 as in 1928. Chaing had not proved himself a worthy successor to Sun Yat-sen. Madame Sun refused to have any connection with the Kuomintang and said that Chaing had betrayed the trust that her husband had placed in him. In 1944 Sun Yat-sen's son, Sun Fo said:

"We must frankly admit the fact that in these twenty years the machinery and practise of the Kuomintang have turned in a wrong direction, inconsistent with the Party Constitution drafted by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in 1923 and contrary to the spirit of democracy."

He was then not the man to succeed Sun Yat-sen, nor the best man for China, for in that we must include all China, something Chaing did not do.

However the handful of journalists who visited the Yen-an Border Region and the Communist soviet under Mao Tse-tung were greatly surprised. Cruel, ignorant and incapable of proper government they were not. The area was poor, but it lacked the terror and misery which were common throught the rest of the Chinese countryside. The region was well governed, taxes were low and the peasants contented. The Communists still depended largely upon the farmers, but farmers whose rents were fixed at a reasonable level, and were encouraged to improve their methods and food and cotton production. The landlords were allowed to keep their land (Mao thought it important that the Communists appear moderate reformers during the fight against the Japanese)



but their profits were cut and the first step towards Communism taken.

Yet despite this emphasis on the peaceful transition Mao knew what was to come:

"... a revolution is not the same as inviting people to dinner, or writing an essay or painting a picture or doing fancy needlework; it cannot be anything so refined, so calm and gentle... A revolution is an act of violence whereby one class overthrows another."

To this end Mao taught his followers that they had four main tasks to carry out;

- 1) The Cadres: A cadre is a Communist who thoroughly understood his party's ideas and tactics and could be relied upon to carry them out. He would work among non-communists so his party would gain the support of the masses.
- 2) The Peasants: The raw material of which the revolution would be made. The party must understand their problems if they desire their support.
- 3) The Red Army: There could be no Communist success without a strong army. "Political power," Mao emphasised, "grows out of the barrel of a gun."
- 4) The Japanese War: The Communists must play the major part in resisting the Japanese, and thus show themselves as the true defenders of the Chinese people.

So, while Mao planned and directed his forces in aiding the down trodden peasants, and fighting the Japanese; Chaing still nursed his hatred of the Communists and directed his efforts primarily against them. He chose one Chang Hsueh-liang, the ousted ruler of Manchuria, to lead the fight against the Communists. Chang was not interested. The Japanese, not his own countrymen, were his enemies. The Japanese had killed his father and driven him out. Mao knew this and returned prisoners captured from Chang, and urged him to fight the Japanese, "their true enemy". In October 1936 Chang refused to fight the "bandits". Chaing flew to Sian where he was seized by Chang, who called for a leading Communist to come and negotiate. The man who came was Chou En-lai. Chaing had no choice, he called off his anti-communist orogramme and agreed to fight the Japanese.

At first Chaing's men fought heroically against overwhelming odds and sophisticated machinery, but by 1938 Chaing decided on a sit-and-wait policy. There was bitter fighting back and forward, but Chaing launched no major offensive until 1941 when the U.S. entered the war. China automatically became an ally of America and Britain. General Joseph Stilwell was sent to arrange co-operation between Chinese and American forces in the land war against the Japanese.

Stilwell hoped for a counter-offensive to drive the Japanese land forces from Burma, but he found Chaing unwilling. His only interest seemed to be in getting ever increasing amounts of American supplies. Stilwell blamed him for encouraging a defeatist spirit among his officers:

"Chaing Kai-shek has said on many occasions that a Chinese division did not have the fire-power of a Japanese regiment, and that three Chinese divisions were not a match for one Jap division. Naturally, his commanders eagerly accepted this statement as full excuse for running away."

"He was going to trade space for time, a very catchy way of saying he would never attack."

Chaing's armies disintegrated, rotting from within. Disease everywhere, ten percent had tuberculosis, rations were shocking, no hospitals or doctors. Most of the officers were brutal and corrupt.

The Red Army showed a very different spirit. Trained in guerilla warfare, they were capable of carrying the war into the heart of the Japanese occupied area. By the end of the war it numbered over a million men. They were rarely caught and very effective. They taught the people of occupied areas to play the game of hide and seek by training the peasants, some two million, to defend their villages. In addition Mao planned for the future. Village councils were established by the Communists. They carried out a land programme, giving peasants land and reducing rents to a reasonable level. (While Chaing did nothing for anyone, the Communists fought the Japanese, trained the people, and attempted to institute the two "Principles of the People" that Chaing had no interest in, through the village councils and their moderate land reform programme.) Although the Red Army could not meet the Japanese in an open pitched battle, they could and did work effectively as a guerilla force and gained other important advantages.

When Japan surrendered in 1945, the Kuomintang - after an American airlift - held the towns, while the Communists held the countryside. A major civil war now seemed inevitable. American attempts at negotiation failed. The civil war broke out in 1947 and ended in 1949, with not so much a victory for the Communists - though there can be no denying their winning - as a complete collapse of the Kuomintang. The rot that had risen unchecked during the war now destroyed the Kuomintang. Students and young people generally welcomed the Communists because they were sickened by the brutality and corruption of Chaing's forces. Communist propaganda, and their strict and correct behaviour towards ordinary people, commerce, industry and business brought the majority of people to their cause. Ordinary people were impressed by the Communist behaviour:

"Several times I saw a soldier approaching a knot of bystanders, ... and proffering his paper with a polite bow and a wide smile, asking for directions to the street and house number his group were seeking. These must have been some of the first occasions in Tientsin's history, of uniformed soldiers using all the forms of Chinese courtesy to ordinary civilians. On the civilians, at first astounded, and in the end mightily pleased, the effect was enormous."

The Kuomintang and Chaing Kai-shek evacuated to Formosa. On October 1, 1949 Chairman Mao Tse-tung announced the foundation of the People's Republic of China.

(Preprinted from RATAPLAN 21.)

+ + +

WE DO SO TOO GET LETTERS:

Helen Swift, PO Box 98 Rundle Street, Adelaide, SA 5001: "I must be very dumb, I followed your instructions for the "Ode to Ornithopters" very carefully, and thought I was doing quite well until I came to the part where there are two consecutive "up's" in a row... my fuselage became very unstable at such heights, and my nose bled. Please explain where I went wrong. (see, if you can learn 'didactic', I can learn 'fuselage', so maybe I'm not totally dumb.)" Mr Beetworth, being a smart composer, put an extra beat in his music after the extra "up" that you mention and in that beat you are supposed to sneak your ]

wings down so that they are ready to go up again at the beginning of the next line of the anthem.

Your letter reminds me to say here that the dread Movement Against Ornothopters has now created its own song, music by a certain ancient German master by the name of Hidin. Originally it was his "Surprising Symphony" which didn't have any words at all - the tune is the same and the words go something like this:

"up down up down up down up  
down up down up down up down  
up down up down up down up  
down up down down CRASH!

Naturally enough the Board of Orrite Ornithopters does not approve of this song and thinks that the final CRASH! with the "onrithopter" sprawled across the ground is unseemly, to put it mildly.

"I found it interesting that you say in your review of "The International SF Yearbook" that '... in the US I may never have to put typer to stencil to be a hyperactive fan these days'. I assume you read Chunder!, specifically the most recent one in which Chas Jensen was talking about the problem (as he sees it) of classifying the activity of fans in terms of their written output. I think that you have inadvertantly summed up my feelings about the subject... in the US, one can become a superactive fan, well, well-known and well-loved, by touring the convention circuit and thus finding oneself a DUFF winner like Rusty Hevelin. However, in Australia, there are just not enough conventions, and certainly not many (if any) people go to all of them, to make this sort of fannish activity particularly viable. In Australia, so much of fannish contact occures through the post, so if one refuses to put pen to paper, much less typer to stencil, then one really is less involved in standard fannish activity. See, I can be serious too!"

Helen and I could probably go on and agree with each other all day about this so the equal-time board is about to give equal time to the heretical views of Chas Jensen (PO Box 434, Norwood, Adelaide, SA 5067) himself: "This letter is already long, and I seem to have spent very little time talking about ORNITHOPTER and its contents ((which is one of the reasons for not reprinting them)) so I'd better say now that I thought your comment on Sydney's apa a little unkind perhaps. As you have probably read by now, I don't think that it is only fans who write, or publish, who make an impact on fandom. Sure, they make some impact and provide a cohesion that it would not otherwise have, but they do not make up the bulk of fans, and they do not exert more than a distant effect on any of the local city fandoms, all of which seem to have something of their own personality along with their similarities. By this I am not disparaging the publishing fans, because they do quite a lot for fannish interest and communication, it's just that sometimes the impression comes across they feel they are the only fans. Which is why the size and speed of APPLESAUCE does not surprise me, nor does the upper limit of fifty on its members... I expect that it will be easy to find that many members in a short period of time, particularly as fandom seems to be growing all the time at the moment."

I find the above attitude pretty insular... asif the South Australian SF Association could have even sprung into existance without the influence on Adelaide fans by AUSSIECON which could only have happened as a result of fannish contact with fans in the US and other countries through the mails with letters and fanzines. Fandom simply doesn't come into existence without the mails, clubs once formed may be self regenerating but they soon drift out of fannishness without a continuing plugin to the mainstream of fandom which is only kept alive by publishing fans.

Re-reading my comment which Chas has mentioned I see that he is chastising me for saying that a fan who is only active for a couple of years does not do much to greatly influence the course of fandom. Perhaps there are exceptions but offhand I can't think of

one. If Chas is thinking that the new President of the SASFA has some direct and marked influence on fandom as a whole (or even in Australia) then I hate to disappoint him but it just isn't true.

Much more positive is the note from Jean Weber (13 Myall Street, O'Connor, ACT 2601) who writes: "Arrived home to find "Ornithopter Four" in my letterbox, and must take issue with your comments on "Stardance II". I, too, am no fan of dancing and don't pretend to understand dance as communication. However, I am always pleased to find art of any kind being taken seriously in science fiction. In addition, I thought "Stardance II" was extremely well written, and the fact that the humor really made me giggle helped too. In sum, I thought it was just about the best piece of writing I've read in a year, and confidently predict a Hugo for it. However, my real gripe with you is your comment that "People who read this kind of thing and get off on it are going to lie back letting the world go to hell while they wait for the interstellar goodies to come and save us from ourselves." Sorry, Leigh, but I got off on it, and I am definitely not sitting back letting the world go to hell. I've been involved in a variety of organisations (conservation, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-war) for years, and put most of my convictions to work in my lifestyle. SO THERE."

So There indeed! It just goes once again to show the evils of generalisation. While I still maintain that that particular work is escapist in the real meaning of the word it's obvious that some people, like Jean, appreciate things in it which just turn me right off. Remind me to be more careful in opening my big mouth in future.

I agree with Jean that STARDANCE II is going to give other works a good run for their money for a Hugo this year, I don't think that it deserves it mind you because I did not like the writing style. I will say though that its authors did write perfectly for the market they were aiming at and I have to admire that sort of ability and consistency.

Marc Ortlieb

(8 Melanto Ave, Camden Park, SA 5038) writes - among other things: "Is there a readily available model of the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird? I ask because I saw a nice picture of it in part 19 of "Weapon & Warfare", and it looked really snazzy."

Richard Faulder (PO Box 195, Coonamble, NSW 2829) wrote, the day after: "Half your luck, being able to keep on making model aeroplanes. Had to take almost all of mine to the tip when I was exiled to Coonamble, keeping only three FROG wall-hanging displays and a YF-12A (beautiful aeroplane)."

Two men who obviously have taste. Yes Marc, REVELL produced 1/72 scale models of the Lockheed SR-71 and the YF-12A (the latter being the fighter version of the former) in the late sixties. I'm still slowly working my model of the SR-71 to completion but I can't recall having seen any in the shops in recent years. Perhaps a North American reader who has similar habits to Marc, Richard and I may be able to find a kit over there. If Marc wants one that is, I know that I wouldn't object to having a YF-12A to go with the SR-71 when I have that done. To round off the letter column... it seems that Neville Angove also has similar highly elevated tastes:

"To get to the important part of this letter: Leigh, how the hell can I produce realistic models (re the paint jobs) without investing in airbrushing equipment? I can remove the seams from the kits easily enough, but I find it nearly impossible to apply a smooth enough paint job (with some models I have found that the paint will not adhere to anything except my hands, and the transparent pieces). My Lunar Lander looks like it crashed in the Sea of Storms!"

In answer to the question... you can't. I thought I was doing fairly well until I bought an airbrush, all other methods are inferior.

MAILING COMMENTS: No room for them this time, perhaps a double lot nextish.