

DAGON

#366, APA-Q Distribution #276

13 February 1988

THE CURSE OF THE GREEN CHECKMARK

In about a couple of months President Reagan will present us with the fourth postal rate increase of his administration. He also seems to be deliberately driving down the value of the dollar, thus making foreign goods more expensive. These foreign goods include the timber out of which paper is made, and the petroleum out of which ink is made. So the cost of fanning is about to go up again in all three of its major components.

I have already raised the subscription rates of all my publications, both fanning and war-gaming. Now I am also going to cut down on the number of complimentary and trade copies. Most of these arrangements were made, for reasons that seemed good to me at the time, with people that I have since got out of touch with, or whose trade publications now appear very infrequently or have lost interest for me.

Therefore, if the space at the bottom of this page has a green checkmark on it, I am terminating your complimentary or trade copy of DAGON.

Subscriptions for my publications are:

DAGON (science-fiction, fantasy, comic art, and other items): 12 issues for \$10
GRAUSTARK (postal Diplomacy); For players the game fee is \$25, which includes a subscription for as long as the game lasts; for non-players, 12 issues for \$10

EMPIRE (postal war-games other than Diplomacy; currently running Pax Britannica and En Garde): For Pax Britannica the game fee is \$30 and for En Garde it is a yearly fee of \$20; both include subscriptions. For non-players subscriptions are 12 issues for \$10.

ANAKREON (filksinging): Goes to all people who get DAGON.
Back issues of any of these are 10 issues for \$3 as available. DAGON is published every three weeks, GRAUSTARK and EMPIRE every four weeks, and ANAKREON every three months.

Also originating at this address are two amateur press associations: APA-Q (every three weeks) and APA-Filk (every three months). DAGON circulates through the former, and ANAKREON through the latter. Both APAs are available for postage plus 15¢ for each mailing envelope. This rate includes back issues as available. If you wish to contribute, the copy count is 35 for APA-Q and 60 for APA-Filk. The next three mailings of each are:

APA-Q: 5 March, 26 March, and 16 April 1988

APA-Filk: 1 May, 1 August, and 1 November 1988

If you want to contribute to either or both APAs but do not have printing facilities, I can print anything you send me on stencils that will fit a Gestetner mimeograph, at 2¢ per sheet per copy. Elsewhere in this issue, "The Ministry of Finance" describes the present state of readers' postage and/or printing accounts.

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New York 11226-5302; 718-693-1579 or 718-780-5180.

() - Place for green checkmark, if any.

I'LL SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS

L. The U. S. Constitution: The Illustrated Edition

Larry Gonick, The Cartoon Guide to U. S. History, Volume I (1585-1865),
(\$6, Barnes & Noble, 1987)

Eric Lurio, The Cartoon Guide to the Constitution of the United States,
(\$6, Barnes & Noble, 1987)

The 200th anniversary of the creation and ratification of the U. S. Constitution have elicited the publication of these two books. Larry Gonick needs no introduction to the readers of DAGON, as all seven volumes of his The Cartoon History of the Universe (Rip-Off Press) have been enthusiastically reviewed here. Eric Lurio attends First Saturdays regularly, and despite the poor distribution given to these books by Barnes & Noble is trying to make a career in cartooning.

Both books demolish a number of myths about American history and the Constitution. The events that led to the adoption of the Constitution had a strong whiff of class warfare about them. The poor farmers and workmen whose efforts had assured American independence were just as willing to turn their muskets and rifles against the rich Americans who were foreclosing on their farms or driving down their wages. The "more perfect union" was an attempt to defuse the grievances of the more reasonable members of the lower classes, and to set up a government that could squash the more unreasonable ones.

The darker side of American history is not overlooked by Gonick. The first explorers and settlers were largely animated by sheer greed, and people who had suffered religious persecution in Europe were perfectly willing to practice it in America. The tragic history of America's black population is kept before us, particularly when well-to-do whites are making speeches about liberty. Women's lack of political rights, and the raw deal given the Indians, are also mentioned frequently.

So - is Gonick in favor of anything about our early history? Yes - the colonies slowly groped towards our modern concepts of civil and religious liberty, aided by the promotion of those ideas during and after the English Civil War. And he is decidedly in favor of Benjamin Franklin, America's first "underground journalist". (His first effort, begun when he was 16, was banned in Boston.) As for slavery, it "was in the grand American tradition of opposition to government regulation, especially when you're doing something unspeakable." The contradictions in the character of Thomas Jefferson are analyzed, and Gonick concludes:

"You can say that he founded an enduring political party in his own image - full of contradictions, that is: the party of the white racist and the blacks, the ethnic and the bigot, the factory worker and the yuppie, the socialist and the conservative, the southerner for states' rights and the northerner for big government, the expansionist, the contractionist..."

In school we are seldom taught about the motivations of those who opposed the enactment of the Constitution. It would seem that, as soon as it was submitted to the states, a number of mysterious malignants of obscure motivation came out of the woodwork and nearly prevented its adoption in some states. Gonick and Lurio explain matters. People opposed the Constitution, at first, because it wasn't democratic enough. The fiercest opposition was in Rhode Island, the only state where every adult white male had the right to vote. It was only a promise to add a Bill of Rights that got many states in.

Even that early, it was obvious that slavery was an embarrassment; the Constitution describes it only in circumlocutions, and nobody noticed that the Bill of Rights contained guarantees utterly incompatible with it.

Gonick is not so gentle with Andrew Jackson. "Jacksonian Democracy" had nothing

particularly democratic about it, and Jackson himself is presented as a bloodthirsty thug. "Jackson set the model for the born-on-the-frontier, not-especially-well-educated, military-hero type President."

It was at about this time that that stock feature of American history, the undeclared war against a much weaker enemy, got started. This is very far from the intention of the Constitution. Gonick represents a Federalist as saying, during the ratification debate:

"The President can never send 500,000 troops to a country beginning with 'V' without a congressional declaration of war, not under this Constitution, nuh-uh!"

Mexico was the first; as you were not taught in school, the U. S. never bothered with a declaration of war there, any more than it did in Korea or Vietnam, nor as it seems intent on doing in Central America or the Persian Gulf. Unfortunately, Lurio does not tell us what to do in an event like this, and does not even mention the legal cases on the constitutionality of the "Gulf of Tonkin Resolution".

Other odd corners of U. S. history are mentioned by Gonick: the Mountain Meadows Massacre (in which Mormons and Indians slaughtered an entire wagon train in Utah); the frequent and frequently violated Texas oaths of allegiance to Mexico; the Trail of Tears; the great but neglected work of Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and the founders of the Feminist movement; and the proposal by supporters of slavery to enslave also the free white workers of the north.

This inevitably led to the Civil War, a situation that develops in most countries whose rulers neglect reforms for an unconscionable length of time. Gonick points out the large role that blacks played in their own liberation, though also mentioning Mark Twain's observation that the Rebellion "happened because the south had read too many novels by Sir Walter Scott."* And, of course, William Walker's attempt to conquer Nicaragua and turn it into a slave state is not overlooked by Gonick. We are also told why the new Republican Party was the only successful "third party" in American political history, and why white workingmen in the north supported the abolition of the enslavement of blacks in the south.

Gonick also informs us that, at first, Abraham Lincoln didn't know what to do about slavery. He didn't want it extended, but at the time he took office, he was more concerned with the preservation of the Union than with a solution to the slavery question. It was not until a succession of military disasters convinced the president of the need for black support behind rebel lines that he issued the Emancipation Proclamation. A meeting between Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, at which each greatly impressed the other, led to Lincoln's decision. The war for the Union was impossible to win without also making it a war against slavery. Black troops were a significant factor in turning the tide against the rebellion. Finally,

"After 80,000 perished in one especially long battle, General Lee realized that he was facing a 20th-century general in the 19th century while defending an 18th-century institution. Lacking a time machine, Lee surrendered, and the war was over."

Gonick's book ends, as all first volumes of two-volume American histories, in 1865 with the victory over the slavers. I am particularly curious as to how the second volume treats the impeachment of Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson. For decades, history books have been claiming that Johnson was framed on trumped-up charges, and kept in office only by self-sacrificing patriots who deserted their party to do so. Unfortunately, Lurio repeats this statement without analyzing it too deeply. Johnson was

* - Whoever it was said that "History is written by the winners" never took into account the Jacobites of Great Britain and the secessionists of America.

impeached for violating the Tenure of Office Act, and if you read the 4th section of the 25th Amendment to the Constitution, complete with Lurio's own analysis of the possibilities, you will see that we may well need a law to keep a President from firing members of his cabinet under some circumstances. The failure to remove from office the former slaveholder Johnson sentenced America's black population to another century of discrimination and degradation.

After describing the necessity for the Constitution, and the organization of the 1787 convention, Lurio examines every clause of the original document and takes up the ways in which many of them have been applied. Critical legal cases are described where necessary. When the clause stating the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court is discussed, we get the details of Marbury v. Madison, or "Can truly great men act like demented four-year-olds and get away with it?" The clause requiring that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office" is illustrated by Torcasso v. Maryland (though Lurio misspells the plaintiff's name). Just about all those big constitutional cases that you may remember from 12th-grade civics or first-year law school, and can never identify properly, are explained: McCulloch v. Maryland, Powell v. McCormick, Ex parte Milligan, Schenk v. U. S. ("Fire in a crowded theater..."), Scott v. Emerson (Dred Scott, of course), and two little-known but crucial cases involving the rights of Sino-Americans, Ziang Sunwan v. U. S. and U. S. v. Wong Kim Ark.

Lurio also deals with some situations that most people would like to forget: the wacky decision of Justice Bushrod Washington in Corfield v. Coryell "in which part of the Constitution was declared unconstitutional"; the strange 1877 machinations in which a man rejected by the country's voters still somehow got to be president; the unprecedented violations of civil liberties in the Wilson administration; and the preposterous misinterpretations of the 14th Amendment that went on for a century before it was finally applied to its original purpose of ensuring civil rights.

The 22nd Amendment is described, complete with the fact that it is nothing more than a posthumous attack on the greatest president of the 20th century, and the additional fact that it has accomplished only the forced retirement of two very popular Republican presidents who otherwise might have stood good chances of winning third terms. And the booby-trap in the 25th Amendment is carefully explained, though Lurio does not examine the question of precisely who is included in the rather vague statement "principal officers of the executive departments".*

Lurio closes his book with a pitch for the Equal Rights Amendment. However, everything contained in the "E. R. A." is already contained in the Bill of Rights and in the 14th Amendment. If the courts have not read them this way, it shows that what we need are literate judges, not a new amendment.

Lurio also looks into why some people have objections to the way the courts have interpreted some parts of the Constitution. States have continually tried to muscle in on federal prerogatives - and been consistently rebuffed. The 9th Amendment specifically authorizes something that conservatives say is beyond the Supreme Court's jurisdiction - the creation of "new" rights, such as that right to privacy which Justice Bork says does not exist. Over the centuries, a great deal of the objections to Supreme Court decisions can be shown to be due solely to racism - and Lurio shows it, particularly with regard to the fact that the residents of the District of Columbia (who are mostly black) still do not have the same political rights as the rest of us.

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANITY

Andy Porter reports that Randall Garrett died on New Year's Eve. Randy, whose imaginative and humorous stories have delighted readers for over 30 years, has been in poor health ever since he suffered a bad attack of encephalitis some 10 or 12 years

(continued on p. 10)

* - These are the people who get to say whether or not the president is incompetent to continue in his duties. Does it include the National Security Adviser? The Director of the Budget? The Director of the C. I. A.? I don't know, and I don't know who does.

GETTING CAUGHT UP

DAGON is published every third Saturday by John Boardman, under circumstances described on p. 1. This present issue may be a little late getting into the mail, as I am spending this weekend refereeing games of SPI's Empires of the Middle Ages and Victory Games's Pax Britannica at Penn-Con on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

APA-Cover #275 (Malay): I think I've seen this lady, on a computer art program which Al Nofi downloaded for me.

Quant Suff! #158 (Malay): We seem to be having an unusually cold and severe winter this year. In New York City, at least, the really severe blizzards seem to occur in the 7th or 8th year of a decade, as in 1888, 1958, and 1959. Perhaps some cyclical process may be at work here? (I owe this suggestion to Gayle Wilkins.)

Yes, that's one of the problems with "energy-saving" homes - they have to be custom-tailored to the locality. What is wrong with instead getting energy cheap - like fusion energy, for example.

While re-reading cherished childhood books as an adult is sometimes disillusioning, it can also give you new insights on the books. Much of the political satire in Gulliver's Travels makes the books more fun if you know about the various political and religious controversies of early 18th-century England, and how Swift felt about them.

(In the Fleisher Brothers' animated version of Gulliver's Travels, which was made about 1940, there is one scene in which Gulliver puts out a fire in a building by scooping water from a pond with his hands. I can just imagine the guffaws that went up from people who had read the edition of the book that is not usually given to children.)

I have noticed that the really good detective stories are also sketches of life in the society of the time. The Sherlock Holmes stories are studies of late Victorian and Edwardian London, as the Lord Peter Wimsey stories describe interbellum England, as Fergus O'Brien displays to us pre-war Los Angeles, and as Chester Himes's stories describe the Harlem of the 1950s and 1960s.

I am beginning to suspect that you are right, and that in the computer games Zork III and Leather Goddesses of Phobos I actually am "at an impasse due to a tough riddle".

So the fugitive politician David Friedland is taking pseudonyms from Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land, is he? There's a character in that book named "Gillian Boardman".

There is some cross-breeding between neo-Nazis and religious cults. The Identity Churches believe that only Nordics are descended from Adam and Eve, and that the Christian message is intended only for them. Others are "mud people" who are to be destroyed. The words of Jesus, when he snarls at the Jews in John 8:44, are taken as showing that not all humans are "Children of God"; Jesus is there quoted as saying: "Ye are of your father the devil." This is

As for "convincing the boss you are working on the big proposal" when you are playing computer games at your desk - last Saturday night, Mark Blackman gave me a photostat of a Stan Mack's Real Life Funnies from the Village Voice. In it, a woman is shown playing Leather Goddesses of Phobos at her desk, and is in the middle of the harem scene when an eager beaver comes by with a new marketing plan. I may work this into a collage cover if opportunity presents itself.

Sometime around 75 years ago, one of those eccentric scholarly enthusiasts that flourish in England wrote a book entitled The British Edda. It purported to be a translation of The Elder Edda, on the assumption that this anthology of old Norse verse was really the sacred scriptures of an ancient religion, which had been practiced by an advanced civilization that had once existed in Great Britain and other northern countries.

O At
P Great
E Intervals
R This
A Appears
T To
I Inflamm
O Optic
N Nerves

1477

The character of this book can be inferred from the fact that its author took the name "Arthur" to be "Ar-Thor", and thus the god Thor.

Are you quite sure that your forebears lived in Wethersfield, Massachusetts? According to my records, the first five generations of American Boardmans lived at Wethersfield, Connecticut. Could you give me birth and death dates of your Boardman ancestors?

When the word "sci-fi" comes up from a neo or mundane, I act bewildered: "Sci-fi? Sci-fi?" If this is defined as "science-fiction", I respond, "oh, you mean s-f!"

Blancmange #195 (Blackman): Well, there have been many cases where a person who came here as a child, or as an economic or political refugee, has returned to his or her native country many years later as Ambassador of the United States of America. But, as a people, we are justly condemned throughout the world for having very few language skills.

To see what some people are capable of, consider the case of Tito - admittedly a remarkable man in many respects, and almost the only person who told both Hitler and Stalin where to stuff it, and got away with it. According to his biographer, Vladimir Dedijer, Tito was the son of a Hrvats father and a Slovene mother, and thus spoke both the languages of modern Yugoslavia. (Serbian compares to Hrvats as Mississippian compares with Brooklynese*) As a master machinist in Austrian Bohemia before World War I he learned Czech and German. As a prisoner of war in Russia he learned Russian and Kirghiz. He also had a reading knowledge of English, French, and Italian.

There was a time when many colleges required competence in two languages for admission, let alone what the students learned afterwards. This was not the best way to do it, since the two languages were usually Latin and Attic Greek rather than anything useful, but requiring one modern language for admission might not be a bad idea. I fear that the motive for teaching so much Latin and Greek was not to fit students to operate in the modern world, but the delusion, dominant for so many centuries in western education, that nothing prepared young men for public life so well as intimate knowledge of a civilization founded on slavery, dedicated to conquering everyone who could be made to hold still for it, and destroyed by the justified wrath of its millions of victims. **

"Do Truman or Buckley have as fools or subversives members of their own respective parties?" Yes, they do. At the very beginning of Christopher Buckley's The White House Mess, Ronald Reagan is presented as a senile old fool. And the government employees in Margaret Truman's books, who are villains, are not politicals, but members of the civil service and law enforcement agencies whom we in principle trust to be "above" politics. Murder in Georgetown sounds like a cross between Seven Days in May and Lieutenant Criminal North's testimony.

Actually, only one of the three women involved in the Scandals of 1987 could be properly described as a "bimbo". Fawn Hall was a secretary whose fierce loyalty did her boss more damage than 20 middle eastern con men could have; her remark that "There are times when you have to go above the written law" is going to be quoted to her and North's disgrace while the Republic stands. Depending on whom you believe, Jessica Hahn was either an innocent virgin or an experienced hooker when she met the Rev. Jim Bakker, and neither of these categories fits the definition of "bimbo". Of the three only Donna Rice seems to have been the sort of semi-pro party girl to whom the label apparently attaches.

Considering the speed with which a capitalist will holler for the cops when things aren't going his way, it cannot really be called an Anarchist or, if you will, "Libertarian" form of economics.

The Wake for the Rivendell Bookshop didn't come off, as Eileen was down with a bad asthma attack that day.

* - Rebecca West once observed: "History has made lawyers of the Hrvats, soldiers and poets of the Serbs. It is an unhappy divergence."

** - For details see I. F. Stone's recently published book on the trial of Socrates. Stone neatly demolishes the legend about Socrates as a martyr to injustice.

Did any Attorney General challenge the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution? On the contrary! Under Secretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach, an impeccable liberal Democrat with a record as a civil rights attorney, and a future Attorney General, told this to a congressional committee on 17 August 1967:

"Didn't that resolution authorize the President to use the armed forces of the United States in whatever way was necessary? Didn't it? What could a declaration of war have done that would have given the President more authority and a clearer voice of the Congress than that did?"

Katzenbach went on to tell the members of Congress that even without that resolution the president would have been legally empowered to send U. S. troops into Vietnam. Needless to say, Katzenbach's argument totally contradicted the Constitution in every major point. None of the U. S. troops ordered to Vietnam by Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon had any legal obligation to go there.

The Buttoneer's Den #3 (Holzman): Al Nofi has an interesting and very plausible theory about why there was so much student unrest during the 1960s. It began with the fact that a few U. S. servicemen, taken prisoner in Korea, refused to be repatriated after the war. This caused enormous soul-searching in this country, and it was concluded that they had not, in high school, been sufficiently indoctrinated about the advantages of American democracy. So an emphasis was placed on the operation of our political system. Students were taught about freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association, the right to petition for redress of grievances, equality before the law, and the fact that only Congress can declare war. When these students reached their twenties, they found that the U. S. government was engaged in violating all these laws in pursuing the war in Vietnam. So, instead of docilely going along with authority, they rebelled.

There were other contributing causes, of course, but this certainly contributed to the rejection of the government's position on Vietnam. We can expect more of this sort of thing in 1991 when the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights is noted.

For my comments on the "Crossroads Adventure" book Dzurlord see the next issue. I agree with your assessment of it.

I have heard about Saturday Night Live's number on the U. S. conquest of Grenada. In sober fact, more U. S. casualties were caused by accidents and by "friendly fire" than by enemy action. Don't look for anybody to put their names on a Big Black Slab. In fact, when this country recovers its sanity, the one we've already got will be torn down. The big, elaborate war memorial, slobbered over by politicians on national holidays, is a fertile generator of new corpses for new wars. If you plant turnip seeds, you get turnips.

If you think that we now have evidence of senility in President Reagan, wait until he is out of office. People who are presently keeping quiet for fear of their jobs will come forward with stories about something particularly stupid, inane, or irrelevant which President Reagan said or did. By 1990 it will dawn on the American people that for the last few years of his administration Ronald Reagan was in no shape to conduct the business of ordinary personal life, let alone the presidency. Only a wife and staff willing to prepare him carefully, prop him up in public, and shield him from circumstances where he might say something unrehearsed, are keeping the pretense of his presidency alive now.

For the next 11 months, we are going to have to regard Ronald Reagan as a dead cow in the middle of the road. If he is in the way, steer carefully around him. Otherwise, pay no attention to him.

Personally, I think you give Robert Sacks's comments more rebuttal than they deserve.

I somewhat remember William Whitsell. He was a Carolinian who left Brooklyn College the year after I arrived.

Animal rights activists have, I fear, ceased to be minor nuisances on the order of vegetarians and Swedenborgians, and have begun to become serious menaces to scien-

tific research. Important research projects have been ended when these nuts raided the labs and "liberated" the test animals. This is not the first time there has been such agitation. As soon as he took power in Germany as Minister-President of Prussia, Hermann Göring banned experimentation on animals. Later, of course, humans were substituted. Even in his cell at Nürnberg, Göring bragged to the American psychiatrist who studied him that he considered this to be one of his greatest accomplishments. There can be no compromise with such people.

DAGON #365 (me): We can date precisely the ending of Dorothy L. Sayers's Unnatural Death. On the morning after the murderer's suicide, Lord Peter and Charles emerge into the dawn - to find it still dark. Lord Peter asks what the matter is, and Charles tells him "It is the eclipse."

On Wednesday 29 June 1927 the path of totality of a total solar eclipse passed across England, early in the morning. It was total in the Midlands, but at London it would have been very nearly total, producing the gloom that the men noticed. The tip of Cornwall will be grazed with a total eclipse on 11 August 1999, but aside from that there will not be another total solar eclipse in England for many centuries.

On the 13th day of the siege, the Utah authorities realized that Addam Swapp and the other members of the Singer clan wanted a violent confrontation with police, and were not interested in a peaceful solution. So they stormed the farmhouse, at which act someone, apparently Swapp, shot one of the police dead and was himself wounded, not seriously. All the adults were taken into custody. Swapp says that he does not recognize the authority of the United States of America or of the State of Utah, and that his property was an independent country unto itself. This, of course, is going to make him the same sort of Anarchist hero as are his father-in-law John Singer and the triple murderer Gordon Kahl. Eventually it is going to occur to the federal government that Anarchists/Libertarians are not a pack of gun nuts that will wither away if they are ignored, but are going to have to be rooted out of their armed fastnesses and dealt with as insurrectionists. Unless the federal government is at the same time persecuting other groups of dissidents who might make common cause with the Anarchists, such a program will be both salutary and successful.

I won't be speaking on the "Star Wars" hoax at PennCon after all. My time will be taken up more usefully by refereeing two game tournaments.

I mis-stated the number of Joan Vinge's and Jim Frankel's children in my report of her talk at the January Lunarians meeting; they have two youngsters.

Vaudeville Lines #191 (Lipton): I've always found that the best response to anyone who believes in astral travel is: "Indeed? That must save you a lot in plane fares?" This gets the conversation back on a level of rationality, which is so disconcerting to the "astral traveler" that he or she goes looking for another mark. For ass trologers I have my routine about "the lost thirteenth sign of the Zodiac".

It's a bit late in the day to draw parallels between Reagan and either Harding or Coolidge. I'd rather draw them between Bush and Hoover. Both were men of superior intelligence and education, who had served creditably in a number of high governmental positions under presidents of both parties. Both are the designated successors of the presidents who retired and left them with the bundle on their laps. And both had serious mental limitations that will make them totally incapable of handling the massive economic crises with which they are called on to deal. I would hesitate to say that both will turn out to be rejected massively for a second term, in favor of a liberal Democratic Governor of New York who comes into office by a landslide and enacts a sweeping new program of reforms.

Incredible Amounts of Rubbish about Robert Bork from Reason, a publication I never heard of before (Sacks): In order to understand Sacks's infatuation with Bork, it is necessary to observe the strong similarities between the two. Just as Robert Sacks has his Private English Language, in which words have different meanings from the ones everyone else uses, so Robert Bork has his Private U. S. Constitution, whose interpretation differs widely from the one everyone else uses. Fortunately, it is very easy to deal with people like Bork and Sacks. You simply quote them. They will, of course, regard being quoted as monstrously unfair, but it is a very effective tactic.

234 East 19th Street
Brooklyn, New York 11226-5302
10 February 1988

An Open Letter to Participants in the
Science Fiction Review Debate on the
Desirability of Peace with the USSR:

In DAGON #348 I had a long article on the controversy in the last four issues of Dick Geis's Science Fiction Review, following on John Brunner's revelation of the fact that peace is possible between the United States and the Soviet Union. Many of you opened fire on this unexceptionable sentiment, and flooded SFR's letter column with utterly unwarranted attacks on Brunner's intelligence, policies, and obvious preference for peace over war.

I sent copies of #348 to all the SFR letter-writers who attacked Brunner. In subsequent issues I had further comment, and also printed letters from three of Brunner's attackers who had the insolence to persist in their militaristic fantasies. (Curiously, some of these letters contradicted points made in others!) It had been my intent to send these issues also to Brunner's opponents, and I am now taking this opportunity to do so. They are enclosed with this letter, which is also going to be a part of DAGON #366.

There were some names among Brunner's attackers that I fully expected to see there; the man who wrote an entire book in opposition to the 1962 nuclear test ban treaty cannot be expected to let any suggestion of the desirability of peace go unchallenged. However, I was disappointed to see the names of Philip Jose Farmer, Joel Rosenberg, and William Rotsler among these people. Still, I am gratified to observe that the year in which those letters were written for SFR also seems to have been the high-water mark for Rambo science fiction, and for similar sentiments outside science-fiction. The bookshelves that once held I, Nartha Adams are now featuring Life During Wartime. Rambo III is experiencing "production troubles", and if it ever does stagger into the movie theaters, it will not last long. And last year, before a joint congressional committee, we saw some of the most notorious war-mongers in public life stand up, all covered with flop sweat, and lie and lie and lie.

Nor, as I originally feared, have you gone unchallenged in s-f itself. Joe Haldeman's article in Isaac Asimov's of April 1986 says a number of the things that I do not have the experience to say, and to an audience that needs to hear them. (I refer to it in one of the enclosed issues of DAGON.) To judge from this article and its reception, the field of science-fiction is undergoing the same welcome change that Congress has just experienced in refusing any more funding to those bombers of farms and hospitals whom the senile actor calls "Nicaraguan freedom fighters".

In short, your binge of militarism has about run its course, and nobody is going to believe your fantasies about sinister world-wide conspiracies that are out to get you. Even the senile actor is being dragged, against his own will, into a feeble realization of this necessity.

You may regard the enclosed fanzines, and this letter, as my vaunting over the retreat of your position. Or, if you persist in regarding a nuclear war against the Soviet Union as a thinkable alternative for the future, you may regard the task I am undertaking as comparable to the task of housebreaking a puppy, and with the same methods. I am not interested in the good opinions of the people who could pour that torrent of abuse on John Brunner.

And spare me your comments about sinister international conspiracies, too. Any time I want to hear about them, I will walk through the Herald Square subway station and listen to the homeless mental cases rant. They've come up with some beauts.

PS: I am happy to see that my forebodings about ABC's Amerika have not come to pass. In fact, the total irrelevance and inanity of this series may have helped to turn the tide against you.

Yours for world peace,

John Boardman

THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE

On page 1 is a description of how you can subscribe to APA-Q by sending in post-age money - though we'd prefer if you could contribute as well. Periodically I pub-lish postage-and-printing accounts. As of 11 February 1988, balances in these ac- counts are:

Lee Burwasser	\$7.55	Robert Bryan Lipton*#	\$19.27
Philip M. Cohen	\$13.53	John Malay#	\$15.33
Don Del Grande	\$14.17	Alan Rachlin	\$17.34
John Desmond	\$3.46	Lana Raymond*#	\$5.84
Harold Feld*	\$2.55	Robert Sacks	\$10.94
Robert Hauser	\$13.97	Jane T. Sibley*	\$19.50
Daniel B. Holzman	\$7.36	Elizabeth Willig	92¢

* - Also gets APA-Filk on this account; the 37th Mailing of APA-Filk is enclosed.

- Gets APA-Q by 1st-class mail.

Including postage and printing cost for this present issue, your account now stands at the figure in the blank to the right. Accounts which fall into arrears will be suspended. Presently suspended accounts are:

Vinnie Bartilucci	-76¢	Dana Hudes	-38¢
Andre Bridget	-72¢	Mark Keller	-86¢
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Stacey Davies	-62¢	Joyce Scrivner	-75¢
Liz Ensley	-37¢	Peter G. Trei	-73¢
John Hartzell	-79¢		

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY (continued from p. 5)

ago. People who knew him claim that he has been in a severe decline of his faculties.

I first met Randy when we were both living in poverty in Washington Heights some 25 years ago. He was a pleasant and learned host, with a wide range of interests which he often put into his stories. And, for all his bibulous good nature, there was a religious streak in him too; like that of Dorothy L. Sayers, it was a high-church Anglicanism which often showed up in his stories. It was rumored that every summer he would spend some time in a retreat at an Anglican monastery in upstate New York.

After his move to California, and his withdrawal from fandom, we fell out of touch with him. However, I still read his stories with enjoyment, and regret to hear that he is no longer with us.

*

A long-time fan is gone from among us. Ozzie Train, one of the longest-active fans of New Jersey, did on 22 January. More details may be found in Science-Fiction Chronicle. And, just now, I have learned of the death of Lin Carter last weekend.

*

Lee Burwasser writes that she has a new, and more or less permanent address. It is Apt. 102, 2340 Vermont Ave., Landover, Md. 20785. Hopefully she can now resume contributing to APA-Q.

*

Time has been very short in the preparation of this issue, as I am spending this weekend refereeing two tournaments at PennCon, a war-gaming convention at the University of Pennsylvania. John Desmond is involved in the management of this two-day convention. I'll probably put a report into my gaming 'zine EMPIRE, along with an announcement of postal play of Game Designers' Workshop's En Garde, which I mentioned briefly in my review of Hexacon in DAGON #365. Deadlines for the one-month game turns will be 4 weeks apart, and the postal rules will be announced in EMPIRE #259 on 27 February. The game fee, including a subscription, will be \$20 per year.