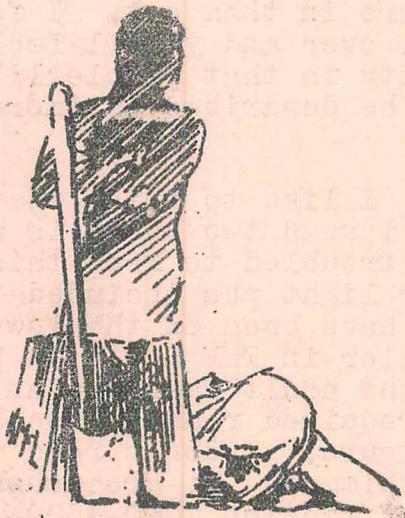


the
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THE FORTUNES OF

MAILING

(Mailing 70)

COMENTS

SPECTATOR 70:0E The relocation of SPECTATOR to the top of the pile, though perhaps contrary to recent tradition, is certainly an improvement. No longer do I have to burrow to the bottom of the pile to discover whether there is anything in the mailing meriting my immediate attention; now I can see straightaway that there isn't. More annoying still was the dilemma of how to bind a mailing, with the index at the back, as is the habit in some continental countries, or with the index at the front and fanzine 37 appearing on top. // For some reason I think of the paper used for this issue as 'Art Rapp' paper.

LOKI 9: Dave Hulan This was interesting enough, but I don't really see the point of Saps distribution. I am fairly sure that there will be little comment. Put it this way - mailing comments may not be well-written, but they usually make some point. So much of this was anecdotal and, as you admit, out of date, as to be pointless.

POT POURRI 36: John Berry Just how are your fotosheets reproduced, John? I am sure you must have revealed all at some time in the past, but some of us missed out.

DINKY BIRD 11: Ruth Berman My liking for T.S. Eliot is restricted in the same way as is my respect for Tennyson: one may admire the control.

DEADWOOD 1: Burnett Toskey As deadwood or not, Tosk, I'd rather you were in than out. I feel that in a few mailings this wound will heal over and you'll feel better about the whole thing. The real pity is that people like yourself are hurt whereas others, who might be described as 'more deserving', apparently are unaffected.

MAINE-IAC 27: Ed Cox Books read. I like to think that a week in which I don't read two books is a week wasted. However I've lately been very much troubled to keep this record going, as work stacks up. No SF or light pbs included in this total. I reckon 100 volumes would have been on the lower side of the truth for last year. Henry Miller in THE BOOKS IN MY LIFE suggests that the average intelligent adult has read an absurdly high number of books - I think it required reading two books a day for 60 year, or some similar figure. I don't read many fanzines and those which are read are only skimmed. No Prozines. My speed varies. For a normal length work of fiction 1000-1500 words per minute seems normal. When I read something of considerable length this goes up over 2000 wpm - the last book read at that rate was ANNA KARENIN. My first reading of REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST was at that speed, but the present one is much slower - around 800wpm.// I eagerly await the next episode of THE SAPSLOGGERS.

KATYA'S KORNER 2: Katya Hulan I can't help feeling that your suggestion that Akhenaten 'forgot the cares of state' goes a little too far. As you subsequently indicate, much effort was made to stamp out the worship of Amon, and the link between church and state was not broken as it is now in the US. In fact, Akhenaten must have been almost at war with the state for his entire reign, despite his deity.

PLEASURE UNITS 9: Gordon Eklund The Air Force has certainly changed YOU. Before you used to write virtually unreadable and pointless little articles; now you write virtually unreadable and pointless and unpleasant little articles.// Brevity may be the soul of wit, old chap, but brevity lends itself to superficiality and often to misstatement. I should not like to evaluate moral argument with sole reference to brevity, wit, or one-upsmanship.

SPY RAY: Dick Eney This longer issue was much appreciated, though I think I would have preferred an Eney Conrep. I still think of your report on the '61 Con as one of the two or three best I have read. I suspect that Pacificonreps must have been difficult to write, because of the various unpleasantnesses involved, and I think George got a little TOO involved.

EXCELSIOR! 2: Arnie Katz I am missing pages 7-8. This never happened in your FIRST year, BEP! Hold that there - the pages are out of order, and I think, now, that I'm missing 3-4. Wusser nor wusser, Bruce.// SAPS would not die even if the next OE were a bad one. A bad OE might go a long way towards reviving the interest of member who are now inclined to let SAPS slide, in the belief that all's well in the world.

STUMPING 11: Jim Webbert I would be able to describe the success or failure of the PSSC course in Victoria rather better if I were teaching it. Unfortunately I am not in that position and only have hearsay opinions. Apparently there is plenty of work for the kids but it isn't too difficult. I hope to snaffle some of the equipment for my Physics class (same old mob - 17 year olds). This year's class don't look too bright, but there is the compensating factor that half of them are girls - care to visit, Toskey?

RETRO 35: FM Busby That there cover is interesting, especially in its source, for just a little while ago it might have been used by Someone Else with the caption - "And NOW they're voting to throw one of their members out - for alleged immorality" - hell, Buz, SAPS was IMPORTANT in those days, wasn't it? // A fanhistorical correction, if you don't mind. I cannot help but feel that the statement "Married couples are considered one membership, but receive activity credit and voting privileges separately" can only be interpreted in one way; as implying that married couples are one membership, whether they like it or not. Many rules in SAPS have been changed during the organization's existence; I'm not so simple as to believe otherwise; but the foregoing was the way Bruce Pelz printed Rule 1 up until the time Dian wanted a separate membership (my quote is actually from the July '63 SPECTATOR, which happened to be handiest). I was setting out, at that time, to show that Pelz had no moral objections to changing rules, for his own benefit (or that of his wife), without regard for the welfare of SAPS, and this was just an example. (Incidentally, the only change seems to be that both husband and wife receive mailings - surely both NancyRapp and Jim Webbert are more qualified than Mrs Pelz, who only just missed out on the Instant SAP appellation). No, SAPS isn't very important Buz, but some people try to make it so.// Your remarks about my skepticism are welcome, but disconcerting. I remember the troubles you and Dergeron got yourselves into. Let me put the matter plainly: I am willing to be skeptical about allegations against a guy, but hardly feel that it is necessary to be skeptical about those who say that the allegations are unproved. I have already said that the antics of

some of Walter's defenders have hardly enhanced their self-portraits as upholders of justice and fairplay. But that's as far as I'm prepared to go on that matter. Hell, I've read much more evidence, and more reliable at that, on the matter of Kennedy's assassination, and I'm still not convinced there. I guess it's just the entirely alien concepts of security and other things that throw me in that case. // Do us all a favour, Buz, and stand for OE next year, regardless of Bruce's activity in that direction.

IGNATZ 37: Nancy Rapp Bob Smith continues to be alive and well, Nan, but I only see him once in three or more months. I broach the subject of a tape to him Real Soon Now. I see you'll be leaving Italy in December '66. Hmm. Gosh, I might just be able to swing things so that I meet genuine US fen. Watch, I'll be meeting Ron Smith one day soon, but the Rapps....hmm again. Just where in Italy are you, and how far from Naples is that?

THE GOLDEN HARP 2: Dian Pelz I suppose that this wasn't as impressive as the first for the most obvious of reasons. But despite the lack of the advantage of surprise, I thought this to be one of the better items in the mailing, whereas SHALAR is generally close to the nadir.

SAPS I have seen photos of: Add D. Pelz. But then I've seen photos of Lichtman and none of McInerney, so that the overall position is unchanged, unless Dian Pelz is regarded as better looking than Bob Lichtman.

THE RIGHT TO BUY WEAPONS

Though Mr. A.E. Van Vogt has not, to my knowledge, been advanced as the leader of any American school of philosophy, this phrase, and its too-well-known conclusion, seems to represent very closely a cornerstone of American belief, at least since 1776. One might dismiss this as of minor importance were not the United States the leader in the "Free" world. But because so many "free" people believe in the concept, if not in the phrase itself, it bears investigation.

Modern weapons, and particularly firearms, cannot be classified with any degree of validity into "offensive" and "defensive". One is reminded of the dialogue in the record, The Establishment:

A: Of course, we do allow defensive bullets in.

B: Oh, and how do you distinguish defensive bullets from offensive ones?

A: I believe they are marked with a 'D'.

Any given weapon may be offensive or defensive, and for any one person to claim that his weapon will only be used defensively is to require a larger amount of gullibility in the listener than has been allotted to most people. Yet citizens of the United States believe that i) The USA would only use nuclear weapons defensively, ii) The USSR would only use nuclear weapons offensively, and iii) Individuals should be allowed to possess weapons for defensive use.

American pragmatism is a wonderful thing. At the individual level, therefore, it may be worthwhile to enquire into the uses to which weapons may be put.

The "defensive" argument has been weakened by the foregoing analogy, but there still remains the possibility that one may need to defend one's home, though this does in itself mean the acceptance of ideas which may not themselves be defensible; that is, primarily, the ownership of property. It is, however, unlikely (except in the cases of blood-feud or gang warfare) that individuals would need weapons to defend themselves. The individuals may like to have weapons; to scare away thieves (who do not threaten their lives) who enter the house; to scare away pesky children who invade the apple-orchard (to choose an example contemporaneous with the time from which this kind of thinking comes). Under no circumstances can one imagine a situation in which the citizen is not taking the law into his own hands. This sort of thing cannot, I believe, be accepted in a free society. The State's main task is to uphold and enforce the law as formulated by the citizenry.

At this point one may argue that the citizens must have the right to defend themselves against an evil government. The answer to this is two-fold. An 'evil' government does not consider the 'rights' of its citizens, particularly those who object to it. And if the citizens do wish to revolt then they are, by that act, breaking the law, and the question of owning or using weapons is a quibbling one.

Now in fact weapons are not possessed for defensive reasons. One may discern just three possible uses. One may possess weapons for the purpose or intent of killing other humans (an attitude not usually smiled upon by the other humans), or one may possess weapons as a collection (which is justifiable, in consideration of the above argument, only if the weapons are incapable of inflicting damage), or one may possess weapons as a part of one's 'sporting' life.

The first is obviously indefensible. Because of this the extremely weak "defensive bullets" argument is produced. This has been shown to be an illegal action, and therefore not fitting under

any government.

The second may be regarded as a peculiarity, perhaps a minor mental disorder, but certainly not as being dangerous to society under normal circumstances.

The third may be further divided into two parts; the use of weapons against living creatures and the use of weapons on inanimate targets. One may immediately see that there exist some minority groups for which possession is not simply justifiable but essential. In the main I would suppose these to consist in the killing of animals for food, in the one part, and the performance of circus tricks, in the other, if one believes the latter to be justifiable in their own right.

The killing of animals, despite the easy dismissal of the previous paragraph, be discussed at greater length. The eradication of pests, though necessary, is best carried out by a government instrumentality. The offering of bounties is often only a half-measure, inefficient, and involving risks of the kind suggested above.

The 'sporting' holiday - huntin', shootin' and fishin' - though doubtless very pleasant cannot be regarded as sport in a civilised society. Animals generally kill only when they need food; those animals which do otherwise are anathemized by humanity. Yet humanity rarely criticizesthis same activity amongst its own members. Fox-hunting is a cruelty which is at last, one hopes, dying out, and so, perhaps, are other blood-sports, of that kind.

But the blood-sports of the 'huntin', shootin' and fishin'' variety continue virtually without dissension, perhaps because of the back-to-nature image invoked by such activity.

(to be continued)

