


GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

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The *Gatehouse Gazette* is an online magazine in publication since July 2008, dedicated to the speculative fiction genres of steampunk and dieselpunk.

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DEPRESSING TIMES

BY NICK OTTENS

We live in tough times. Some of us are having trouble finding a job. Others have had to give up their homes. Others still worry whether their savings might actually be worth something by the time they retire.

Steampunk can be an escapist genre. It can make the past seem all perfect even if it's a huge deception. Few of us would probably be better off living in the nineteenth century. But it's nice reminiscing about the beauties of a past that wasn't, especially if the present is so depressing.

Dieselpunk, on the other hand, confronts the Depression and all the miseries of its era head on, whether it's totalitarianism, mysticism or the brutal technologies of war that are deployed against the forces of the Free World. There's no time to sit around and dream of a better past. There's also no excuse to wait for a better tomorrow. Dieselpunks roll up their sleeves and start building.

If there is hardship now, it used to be worse. If we could turn the 1930s into victory, surely we're able to make a better life for ourselves now?

We can't all be heroes but we all have the power to shape our destinies. Consider this edition of the *Gatehouse Gazette* a motivational one. There's a lot of bad stuff in it including dirt and grit and Nazi madness. But it's only to remind you what we were up against.

The interwar period was also one of tremendous progress and incredible new ideas. From flying fortresses to Art Deco, the 1930s welcomed new technologies and novelties with open arms. That spirit, too, is part of dieselpunks' *laissez-faire* attitude today. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from. What matters is what you're going to do and where you're going.

Do you like where it seems you're going? If not, know that you're the only one who can turn the course of your life around and start something different. The world of dieselpunk is no place for the faint hearted. Neither is the real world. •

If you like to comment upon something that's written here or are interested in writing for the *Gatehouse Gazette*, please contact the editor at n.ottens@gmail.com.





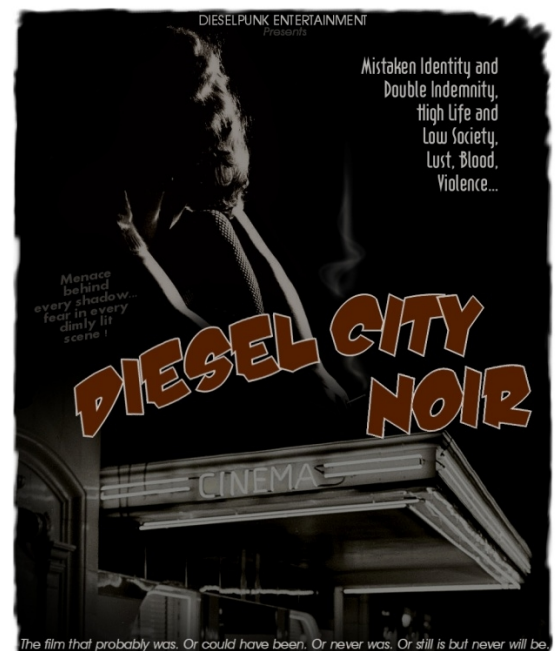
WHEN THE FIRST BULLET SUCKER PUNCHES me in the gut, it barely registers. The second one though, that one crawls through my ribcage and bites a quarter sized hole in my lung, moving my insides to a nicer address across the alleyway. As I start to gargle my words, I tell the man holding the gun “you couldn’t have picked a nicer guy to shoot.” Whether he took it as a statement or as a last request, I can’t remember.

Can’t say I blame him. Diesel City is a place built on ambition, and the bodies of the less ambitious. It’s a black and white kind of town, sepia toned with the blood of the guilty and the tears of the righteous. I even heard Justice still lives here in one of those big towers up on Main Street, but no one’s seen her in years. That’s just the kind of place we’re living in now.

You see, Science promised us all these amazing toys, and when we finally got to take them out of the box, we went about smashing them into one another in our little backyard wars. It hasn’t helped. If anything, all Science did for us is throw our problems into sharper contrast. Inventions like the radio help us keep our distance from other people, and machines churn out faster and faster cars to run away in when those people get too close.

Sure, compared to the war years this place is a damned utopia, but a town like Diesel City is just a bunch of people at its heart; no amount of steel and glass will ever cover that up.

BY TOME WILSON



Artwork by Stefan, stefanparis.deviantart.com
and Craig Sellars, greensockart.com



THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO

BY LARRY AMYETT

BECAUSE OF THE GREAT importance of the radio during the 1930s it's simply not possible to do justice to the subject matter in one magazine article. My goal here is to provide a brief tour of the golden days of yesteryear, primarily from an American perspective, in the hope that the reader will be motivated to go out and learn more.

A study at the beginning of that decade determined that radios were in at least half of all American households and the Federal Radio Commission in 1933 estimated that there were 599 licensed radio stations in the United States. Even though there were many stations in America, there were only two major networks—the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the Columbia Broadcast System (CBS).

The American “press-radio war,” which had begun in the mid-1920s, escalated in the early 1930s. One tactic used by the American press was in 1933 when the three wire services of AP, UP and INS agreed not to provide news to any

radio stations or networks in the hope of starving them and force the public back to the papers for news. In response, CBS and NBC both created their own news services. Ultimately, the war ended that same year when, out of union opposition to radio commercials as well as political pressure, the radio industry signed an agreement to dismantle their own new services and to form an alliance with the newspapers called the Press Radio Bureau. This alliance gave full control over the source of news back to the newspapers while giving unrestricted access to the news to the radio networks. In spite of the importance of this conflict between radio and the newspapers, the American public in the 1930s largely ignored the press-radio war. A popular joke in America was, “What’s the difference between a newspaper and a radio? You can wrap a herring in a newspaper.”

On March 4, 1933 the presidential inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt was broadcasted across the nation in which he uttered his famous line that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself” in response to the pain many Americans were feeling as the world spiraled deeper and deeper into the Great Depression. A few days after his inauguration, on March 12, President Roosevelt returned to his regular practice of the Fireside Chats that he had while Governor of New York yet this time addressing the entire nation. These “chats” set the tradition of the weekly presidential addresses that continue today.

American radio in the 1930s saw the appearance of some of the legendary news reporters of all time. Walter Winchell, a newspaper reporter in the 1920s, became one of the first reporter superstars during

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1944
Courtesy of Life

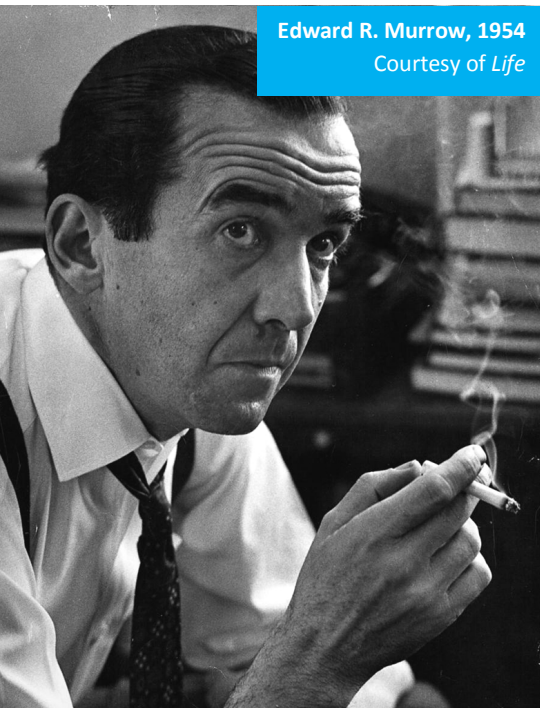


the ‘30s with his coverage of the Lindbergh baby kidnapping and trial. He was also one of the first radio news commentators to criticize publically the rise of Adolf Hitler as well as the American Nazi supporters such as the German-American Bund. His radio broadcasts were highly popular throughout the decade with his trademark opening line, “Good Morning, Mr and Mrs America and all the ships at sea.”

Hans von Kaltenborn was another great reporter of the 1930s. He became famous for reporting so close to the action during the Spanish Civil War, it was said that Americans could hear the bullets flying overhead as he reported from the scenes.

Edward R. Murrow, while best remembered for his radio broadcasts from London in the 1940s during the Blitz as well as his television broadcasts in the 1950s, became a radio news star in the late 1930s. On March 13, 1938, Murrow led the “European News Roundup” in which reporters in the same broadcast across Europe gave their reaction to the German annexation of Austria. Later that year he covered the German invasion of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia.

Possibly one of the most memorable news broadcasts of the 1930s was of the crash of the Hindenburg on May 6, 1937 in Manchester Township, New Jersey. Herbert Morrison, reporter for the Chicago radio station WLS, famous



Edward R. Murrow, 1954
Courtesy of Life



statement "Oh the humanity!" as the massive zeppelin crashed in a dramatic firestorm is forever associated with that disaster.

Radio programming in the 1930s was far more than just news. It set a standard for broadcast entertainment that continues today. Sitcoms appeared in the 1930s with programs such as *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *Burns and Allen*, *Jack Benny*, *Amos 'n Andy* and many more. The 1930s also saw the origin of daytime dramas, which quickly earned the name "Soap Operas" because their sponsors were primarily soap manufacturers.

The 1930s also saw the origin of the game show with programs such as *Dr I.Q.*, which first broadcasted in 1939. The format for *Dr I.Q.* was unique even by modern standards in that it didn't broadcast from a studio but instead traveled around the country broadcasting from different locations each week. In each episode, an announcer would introduce a contestant with, "I have a gentleman in the balcony, Doctor" or "I have a lady in the balcony, Doctor."

There were also adventure and drama radio programs in the 1930s such as *The Green Hornet*, *The Inner Sanctum*, *The Shadow*, *Lone*

Ranger, *Jack Armstrong and the All-American Boy*, *Gang Busters* and many more. Possibly the most famous drama broadcast was the Mercury Theater On The Air's 1938 radio production of the *War of the Worlds*, which was so realistic in its portrayal of a radio news report of a Martian invasion that it started a panic as some listeners who tuned in late believed that it was real.

Radio also brought some of the great sporting events of the 1930s into the living rooms of everyday people. In 1938, thanks to radio, people were able to hear blow by blow broadcasts of great boxing matches such as those between the German Max Schmeling and the African-American Joe Lewis. While Schmeling won the first match, Lewis came back in the second and defeated the German. For many who heard the matches they became symbolic not only of the competition between Fascism as represented by Schmeling and Democracy as represented by Lewis, but also as a victory for black Americans. America's favorite past time was also a part of the radio experience as baseball games were broadcasted by stations around America. Probably the most famous of the baseball related broadcast of the 1930s was on July 4, 1939, was Lou Gehrig's famous farewell speech.

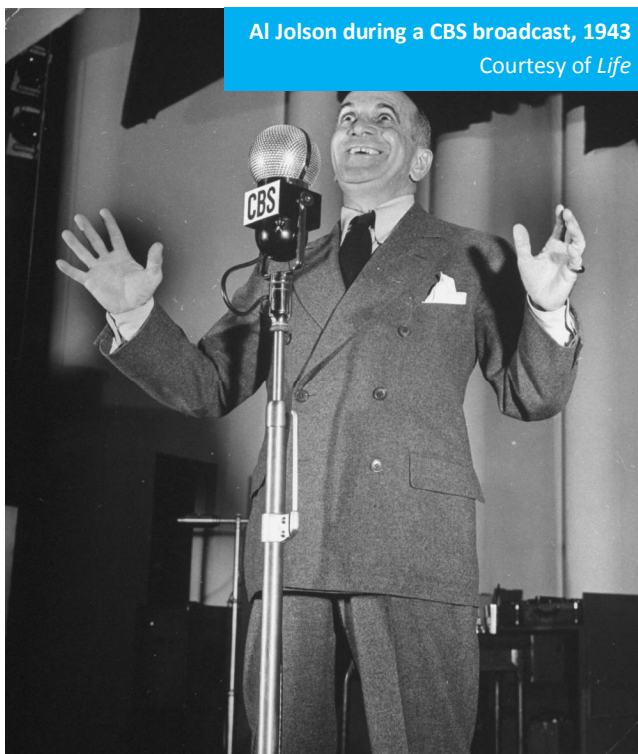
Since radio stations in America

were all privately owned, advertisement became their primary source of revenue. Not everyone approved of radio commercials. As mentioned earlier, there was union pressure to have radio advertisements banned. The comedian Red Skeleton, who first appeared on radio in 1937, expressed the public dislike for commercials when he joked that, "The longest word in the English language is the one that follows, 'now a word from our sponsor.'"

America had started regulation of the radio in the 1920s with the establishment of the Federal Radio Commission. In 1934, Congress passed the Federal Communications Act, which replaced the Federal Radio Commission with the Federal Communications Commission to consolidate the various bureaus and agencies that governed the other forms of media into one. Just prior to the FCA of 1934 there was a movement by some in Congress to dedicate 25 percent of all radio stations to being nonprofit with the mandate that, while they could advertise to be self sufficient, their programming had to be dedicated to education. The proposal was opposed by the industry and by those who already thought there was far too much advertising on radio already. As a result, this proposal never made it out of Congress.

In conclusion, it's important to understand the importance of radio in the 1930s. In America people as far apart as New York, Texas and California could experience the same entertainment, which helped create a more unified American culture. Radio help accelerate globalization as events across the planet could be transmitted nearly instantaneously anywhere in the world.

Because of the Golden Age of Radio, the world would never be the same again. •





New York harbor with its majestic silhouette of skyscrapers looking straight down bustling 42nd Street

Photo by Andreas Feininger, 1946
Courtesy of Life

DIESELPUNK ARCHITECTURE

BY NICK OTTENS

IN STEAMPUNK AS WELL AS DIESELPUNK, WE TEND to exaggerate history. Where by the turn of the century, airships gradually began to enter service, in steampunk, by this time, the skies are congested with dirigibles. And where Nazi scientists performed the most dreadful human experiments, in dieselpunk, their work produces frightening creatures, half man, half machine, striking terror into the hearts of Allied soldiers.

In terms of aesthetics, the exaggeration is more subtle though equally significant. We augment Victorian style with design and technology the Victorians themselves perceived as futuristic in period Scientific

Romances and *Voyages Extraordinaires*. Similarly, dieselpunk exploits the adventure and detective stories serialized in pulp magazines throughout its era, as well as the depictions of the future published in magazines as *Popular Science* and *Modern Mechanix*.

The building styles of the 1920s and 1930s in particular are of influence on the look of the genre. The emergence of the skyscraper, along with the introduction of automobiles and aeroplanes, with petroleum replacing steam as the primary source of energy, define the urban dieselpunk world in which its pulp inspired, neo-noir tales are set.



New York City was very much the center of modern architecture and modern art in general since the Roaring Twenties. Art Deco was one of the most popular design movements of the era, which, because of its lack of political and philosophical roots or intentions, suits the technocratic character of dieselpunk perfectly. The style was at the time considered to be elegant, functional, and modern—in other words, the style of the future.

Unsurprisingly, New York is the center stage of many dieselpunk works of fiction. The quintessential dieselpunk film, *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004), gave us a glimpse of a skyscraper city beautifully lit up at night by enormous floodlights. Frank Miller called the setting of the 2008 film *The Spirit*, “mythic New York” while *Batman* writer and editor Dennis O’Neil compared Gotham City in the afterword to the novel, *Batman: Knightfall* (1994) to, “Manhattan below Fourteenth Street at eleven minutes past midnight on the coldest night in November.”

The neon madness of Times Square must be one of the most recognizable urban jungles in the world—and one that probably appears most in series and films set in New York. The advertisements, the pornography, the floodlights, the taxicabs, the nightclubs and the crime; all form part of a myth associated with the city during the Golden Era. And that, of course, is precisely the myth dieselpunk so gratefully exploits.

Chicago's cityscape is a dazzling conglomeration of many different building styles. Some of the earliest skyscrapers of the Chicago School still stand proudly erect although overshadowed by the monoliths of Modernism. In between we find streets lit up in blazing fury at night. Looking north from the Chicago Board of Trade Observatory, we spot the LaSalle-Wacker Building to the left, its beacon radiating in all directions. To the right stands the Chicago Temple Building, completed in 1924 and still the tallest church in the world. The Chicago Board of Trade Building itself was used by Christopher Nolan in his *Batman* films as the headquarters of the fictional Wayne Enterprises.



Dieselpunk also borrows stylistically from the immediate post-World War II years. According to Piecraft, "The dieselpunk world is a post-atomic dystopian [one] that is still stuck in the 1950s [...] and is usually cast in the future capitalist run world that relies on the nuclear values of an isolationist America." George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and even Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* are novels that may be considered as thematic influences upon this kind of dieselpunk fiction.

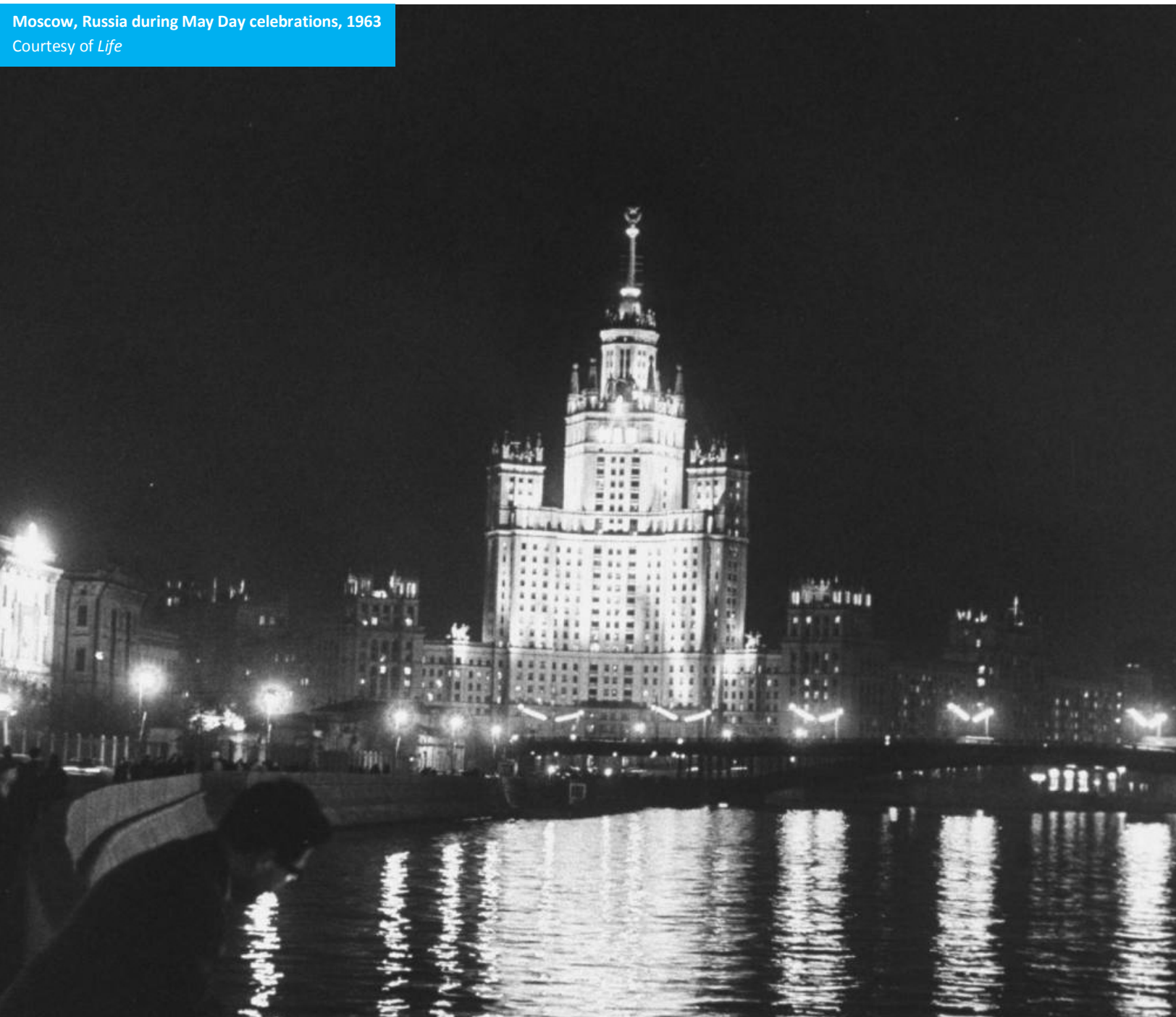
In terms of architecture, this implies the integration of Modernism in the vein of Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, however such is typically restricted to futuristic proposals that were never really built. In dieselpunk, ambitious urban planning and grand building designs do come true, although because of alternate histories in which the Second World War is still being fought as something of a prolonged Cold War, it are not so

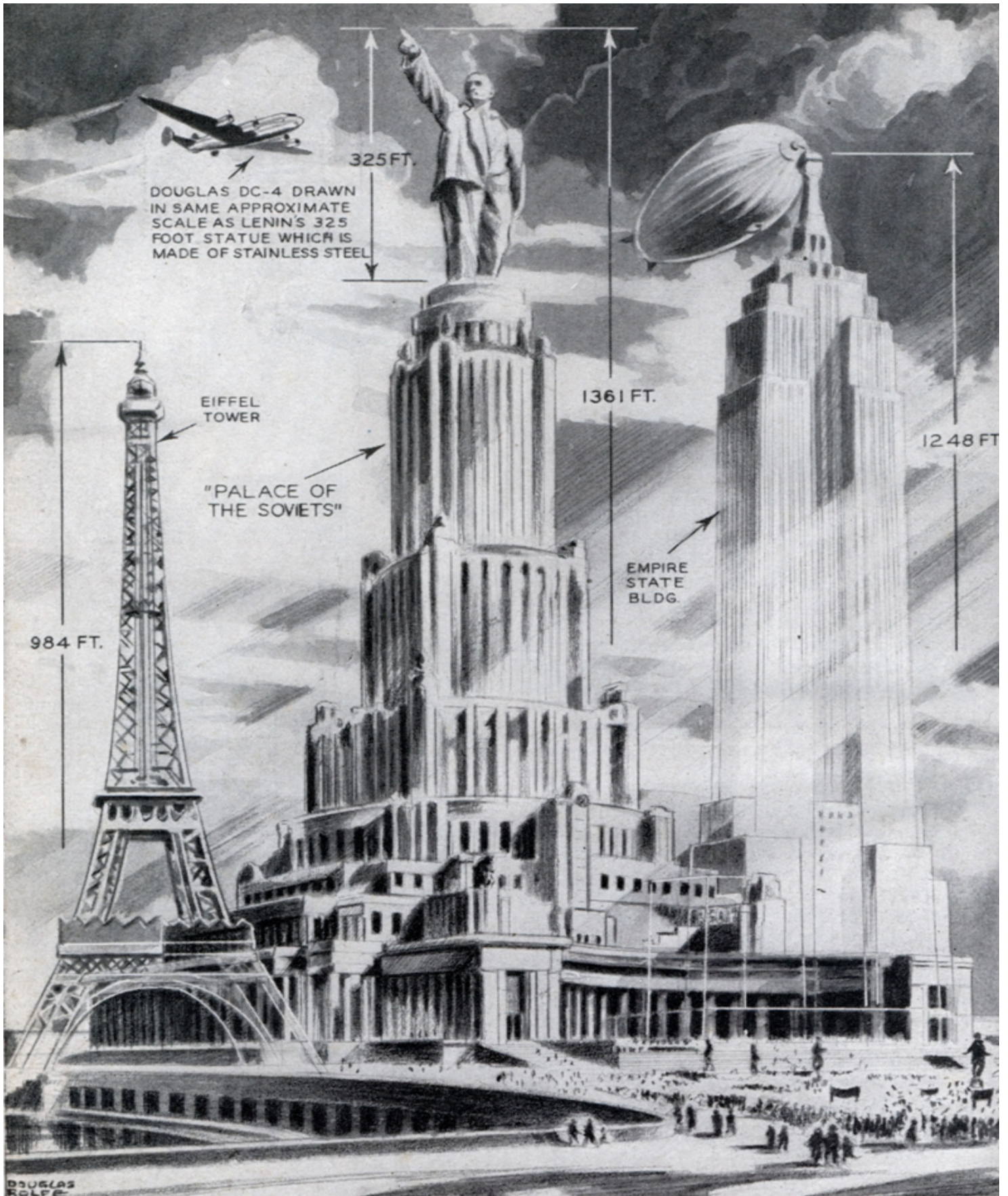
much the skyscrapers of the International Style, rather the monumental architectures of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union which define the dieselpunk landscape of the 1940s and '50s.

Stalinist Architecture originated with Boris Iofan's 1933 draft for the "Palace of Soviets" and remained popular until 1955 when Nikita Khrushchev condemned the excesses of the past decades.

Not a building style per se, characterized by a distinct appearance, it describes instead an architecture that resulted from the manner in which the Soviet State communicated with the masses through construction, considering them an expression of state power. The combination of striking parade monumentalism, patriotic Art Decoration, and traditional motifs has become one of the most vivid examples of the Soviet contribution to architecture. •

Moscow, Russia during May Day celebrations, 1963
Courtesy of Life





In this drawing, the artist has shown how the Palace of the Soviets in Moscow compares in height with the Empire State building in New York City, previously the world's tallest structure, and with Europe's tallest, the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The Palace of the Soviets, including the stainless steel statue of Lenin on top, is the world's tallest and most spacious building. The ceiling of the interior dome is 300 feet high. The building is serviced by 120 elevators, 60 escalators, and contains halls, clubs, galleries, museums, and houses government archives.

THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE



APRIL 25

1934

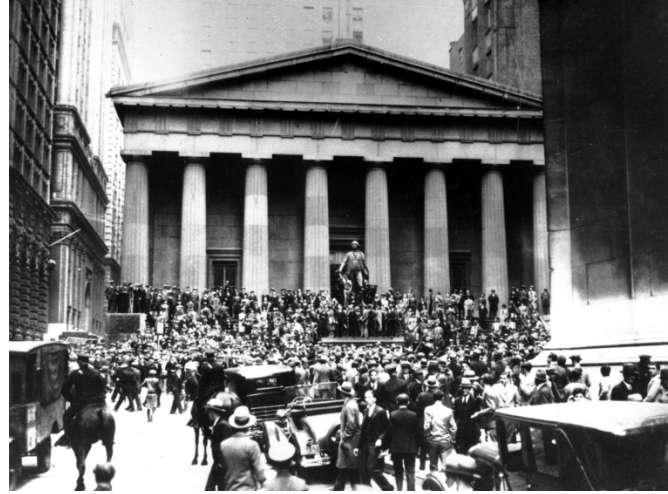


"ADVENTURE
— IS —
OUT THERE"

NEW YORK-NEW YORK

WATCHING THE GREAT CRASH FROM THE GROUND FLOOR

BY TOME WILSON



BEFORE WE MIGHT BE ABLE to understand the changes in American life during the 1930s, we need to know what things were like before this period began—before the Panic which introduced the Great Depression.

Perhaps the most convenient way of doing this is to imagine ourselves reliving a single day in 1929: seeing what things looked like, glancing at the newspapers, noticing the preoccupations and assumptions and expectations in people's minds—and doing this all with the clarity of hindsight.

I have chosen September 3, 1929, as the day to revisit, for that was the day the Big Bull Market reached its peak and the Dow Jones average of stock market prices, which had been rising furiously for months, made its record high. If there was any single day when the wave of prosperity—and of speculation—which characterized the 1920s may be said to have attained its utmost height before it crested, September 3, 1929 was that day.

Let's go back and take a look

It's a very hot day, this first Tuesday in September, 1929. Yesterday was Labor Day; and last night, as the long holiday weekend came to its close, the suburban highways were choked with endless lines of cars full of sunburned and overheated vacationers creeping back into the cities inch by angry inch.

On the New Jersey highways leading to New York, the tie-up was

so complete that people by the thousands, hopeless of reaching the Holland Tunnel, parked their cars in Newark or Hoboken and finished the journey to New York by tube. The railroad stations, too, were jammed with people—not only vacationers, but campers returning to town en masse. Never before had Labor Day traffic been so overwhelming, or the collective discomfort of Labor Day travel been greater. (There were, of course, no air conditioned cars.) After an airless night, the weather prediction in the morning paper offers no relief with all the East Coast cities topping 90° or more. It's time for a bite to eat.

After breakfast we go out on the street. The men you see there don't look so very different from those of a decade later, though more of them are wearing starched collars and waistcoats than in subsequent years, and not nearly so many of them are going hatless, but the women are different indeed. The fashionable figure is straight up-and-down, no breasts, no waist, no hips; and even if very few of the women we see can even approximate this ideal, at least they are visibly making the effort. Not yet have Mae West's curves become a national influence. The waistline—if it can be called one—is around the hips. The skirts are short (for the time), reaching only two or three inches below the knee; shorter than they will be again until 1939. The women's hats are small helmets that fit tightly right down to the nape of the neck and so closely surround the face that a profile view

of a woman shows hardly more than an eye, the nose, mouth, and chin, a lock or two of hair to decorate the cheek—and the helmet. Not all women wear their hair short, but the approved style is to shingle it in the back and draw it forward over the ears.

We can't go far into the cities without hearing the deafening clatter of riveters, for although the Florida Boom went to pieces in 1926, and the boom in suburban developments—which has been filling up the open spaces in the outskirts of the cities—has been lagging a bit since 1927, the boom in apartment house construction and particularly office building construction is still going full tilt. The network of steel girders we can see rising so high above the street is going to be a luxurious cooperative apartment house; that place where the sidewalk is roofed over and the steam shovels are gobbling up an immense excavation is the site for a new skyscraper for brokers' offices and investment trust offices and mortgage bond salesmen.

In New York City, they are tearing down the old Waldorf-Astoria to make room for the skyscraper to end all skyscrapers, Rockefeller's Empire State Building. Most of the other cities of America are doing their best to emulate New York's frenzy for monuments of steel and stone ever loftier, more ambitious, and more expressive of the era of confident speculative finance.

But the event for which September 3 is most famous for won't be in any newspapers we see.



View of New York in the 1920s

No headlines will announce tonight that the Big Bull Market has reached its climax; for no headline writers can see into the dark corners of America's future. The financial reporters will remark, to be sure, that bullish enthusiasm has resulted in "another in the long series of consecutive new high records established by the share market," but the comment will be casual. Men do not whip themselves into frenzies over the usual. At the time, no one was aware they were crossing one of the great divides of national history.

Suppose we go into a broker's office this morning. It's crowded with men and women; every seat is taken, and men are standing against the walls. During the lunch hour, the mass of people will be even tighter as businessmen on their way to lunch stop by to see how their fortunes are faring. All eyes are locked on the translux screen, across which runs an endless procession of letters and figures—the record of sales taking place on the New York Stock Exchange.

The tickers are having a hard time to keep up with the trading today, for the volume of transactions, though not phenomenal for 1929, is large: the day's total will run to nearly four and a half million shares. Probably half the people in this room have bought stocks on margin; in the

whole United States, probably well over a million people are thus speculating with borrowed money, while several millions more are keeping a hopeful eye upon the daily fluctuations of market prices. The financing of all these speculative borrowings has sucked into the stock market a huge amount of credit; at this very moment the total of loans to brokers loans by the banks, and by business corporations acting through the banks—comes to over \$8,000,000,000; yet the demand still exceeds the supply by so much that the interest rate for loans to brokers stands at 9 percent.

In Chicago, Samuel Insull is

now at the summit of his career. He is watching the stock of Insull Utilities Investments—that stock which was delivered to him only a few months ago at less than \$8 a share—reach a high price today of \$115 a share; and he is preparing to launch yet another megacorporation. In Cleveland, men of vision are betting their shirts on those wonderboys of railroading, the brothers Van Sweringen, who have piled so many holding companies onto one another that they now control six railroads and are acquiring control of a seventh. In Detroit, the big bankers and automobile executives, succumbing to the prevalent fever for financial concentration, are discussing a movement to combine dozens of Michigan banks into huge groups. On the Pacific Coast, the current financial sensation is Amadeo Giannini's Bank of America, which seems well on its way to swallow up all California business. The optimism of prosperity is everywhere.

Well, not quite everywhere. The farmers of America are not prospering; hard times have been almost incessant on the farms since the postwar collapse of agricultural price in 1921. The textile towns of New England are also in a bad way. In the deep South and the uplands of the Alleghenies, and in the cutover

The New York Stock Exchange on the eve of the 1929 panic



regions of northern Michigan, there is much privation. Nor can it be denied that there is unemployment. To paraphrase the words of F. C. Mills in his *Economic Tendencies in the United States* (1932), the displacement of men by machines, the turnover of men within industries, and the shifting of men from industry to industry, are making men less secure in their jobs, and especially are making it harder for men past the prime of life to get back into new jobs once they are displaced. The rewards for employed men are often high, but mechanical improvements and a faster pace of work are making it harder to hold on. And it must be admitted, too, that when one uses the word prosperity one is using a relative term.

After September 3, 1929, the stock market dropped sharply, surged up again, dropped again—and

did not surge back. Instead, as September came to an end, it sagged lower and lower.

Even so, there wasn't a lot of uneasiness at first. Again and again during the Big Bull Market of the two preceding years, there had been sharp declines lasting several days, thousands of scammers and unfortunate speculators had been shaken out, yet prices had recovered and climbed on to new heights. Why worry now? Why not take advantage of these bargain prices? And margin traders large and small, who had previously sold out at big profits came floating in again, staking their previous winnings on the chance that Steel would climb back from 230 to 260, or General Electric from 370 to 395, and beyond; and accordingly the volume of brokers' loans rose to a new—and final—peak of over \$8,500,000,000. Meanwhile

the chorus of financial prognosticators assured us all that nothing was amiss, and that prices were only suffering a temporary setback.

Yet still the market sagged. Foreign funds were being withdrawn from it, partly as a result of the collapse of Hatry's speculative bubble in England, partly, perhaps, because speculation in New York had seemed a hazardous business to European investors and many of them were now having qualms. Some American investors, too, were prudently withdrawing as they noticed that the volume of industrial production was declining a little. At the time, as prices ebbed, insecurely margined traders were being forced to sell. As October continued and there was no smart recovery, a note of uncertainty, of urgency, of stridency even, came into the clamor that all was well.

Men outside the New York Stock Exchange after the crash of 1929



Perhaps after all, it was not... The decline became more rapid. Surely this must be the bottom, the last chance to buy cheap. Or was it the beginning of the end?

The short session of Saturday, October 19, was a bad one, such volatile stocks as Auburn and Case losing 25 points and 40 points respectively in two hours of trading, and even General Electric losing $9\frac{1}{4}$. Monday, October 21, was worse, for by this time more and more traders were reaching the end of their resources and being sold out; the volume of trading reached six million shares. Tuesday was a little better, but on Wednesday the storm broke anew and the losses were unprecedented: Adams Express lost 96 points during the day, Auburn lost 77, Westinghouse lost 25, and the stock market page of the late afternoon papers showed a startling procession of minus figures down the column of "net change": $-6\frac{1}{2}$, -3, -14, -7, $-2\frac{1}{2}$, $-16\frac{1}{4}$, -12, and so on. By this time the volume of selling was so great that the supposedly almost "instantaneous" ticker service was left far behind; almost two hours slow because of the flood.

And on Thursday, October 24...

That Thursday morning, the selling came in a roaring and presently incredible deluge. How much of it was short selling will never be known, for no statistical record of the total was kept, but apparently the amount was not very great. Some of it, of course, was frightened selling, even at the outset; already men and women had discovered, to their great alarm, that the slow gains of weeks and months could be swept away in a few precipitous hours. But even in the first hour on Thursday, the greater part of the selling was surely forced selling. In a market so fragile with credit, the beautifully contrived system whereby the stock gambler whose margin was exhausted by a fall in market prices was automatically sold out, became a beautifully

contrived system for wrecking the price structure. Orders by hundreds and thousands surged in; it seemed as if nobody wanted to buy; and as prices melted away, the brokers in the howling melee of the Stock Exchange were fighting to sell before it was too late.

By noon that day, dismayed crowds of men and women in brokers' branch offices everywhere saw the ticker recording unbelievable prices, and realized that it was so hopelessly behind the market as to be useless as a clue to what was actually taking place in the maelstrom of Wall Street, where Montgomery Ward was falling headlong from 83 to 50, Radio from $68\frac{3}{4}$ to $44\frac{1}{2}$, even United States Steel from $205\frac{1}{2}$ to $193\frac{1}{2}$.

Big Money came to the rescue

A few minutes after noon, five of them: Messrs. Lamont of *J.P. Morgan & Co.*, Mitchell of the *National City Bank*, Potter of the *Guaranty Trust*, Wiggin of the *Chase National*, and Prosser of the *Bankers Trust* met at the House of Morgan and formed a pool to support prices. So high was the confidence of the financial world in their sagacity and power that even before they had decided upon anything, when simply the news went about that they were meeting, prices steadied; and by the time Richard Whitney, the representative of the bankers' pool, went on the floor of the Stock Exchange at half past one to bid for stocks, he hardly had to do more than go through the motions: when he offered to buy 10,000 shares of Steel at 205, he found only 200 shares for sale at that price. The gods of Wall Street could calm the stormy waters.

Not till eight minutes past seven that evening,

when night had darkened the windows of the brokers' offices, did the tickers stop chattering out prices from the Exchange floor. Nearly thirteen million shares had changed hands. Wild rumors had been going about all day—that exchanges had been closed, that troops had been called out in New York, that eleven speculators had committed suicide. The panic was in full motion, but the bankers, it was hoped, had saved the day.

But they couldn't stem the tide. For two more days the market nearly held its own while the brokers' clerks struggled to get their records straight and the telegrams calling for more margin went out by the hundreds and thousands. Then the tides crashed again; and this time the bankers could not have stopped it even if they had tried. All they could do was provide bids for stocks where there were no bids at all; to give the panic a semblance of order.

Confusion on Wall Street, 1929

Courtesy of Life



The official statistics of the day gave the volume of trading as 16,410,030 shares, but no one knows how many sales went unrecorded in the yelling scramble to sell. There are those who believe the true volume may have been twenty or even twenty-five million.

Big and small, insiders and outsiders, the high riders of the Big Bull Market were being cleaned out: the erstwhile millionaire and his chauffeur, the chairman of the board with his two thousand share holding and the assistant bookkeeper with his ten share holding, the bank president and his stenographer.

Here are a few of the losses for that single day in individual stocks—and remember that they came on top of a long succession of previous losses: American Telephone and General Electric, 28 points apiece; Westinghouse, 19 points; Allied Chemical, 35 points; North American, 27½ points; Auburn, 60 points; Columbian Carbon, 38¾ points—and all these despite a sharp rally at the close. Said the sober *Commercial & Financial Chronicle* in its issue of November 2, “The present week has witnessed the greatest stock market catastrophe of all the ages.”

At last there came another turn, as old John D. Rockefeller announced that he and his son were buying common stocks, and two big corporations declared extra dividends as a gesture of stubborn confidence. The Exchange declared a holiday and shortened the hours of trading to give the haggard brokers and sleepless clerks a chance to begin to dig themselves out from under the mass of accumulated work. Then prices went down once more and down again. Day after day the retreat continued. It wasn't until two weeks later, on November 13, that prices reached their bottom for 1929.

The disaster which had taken place may be summed up in a single statistic: In a few short weeks, the

Wall Street Panic had evaporated \$30,000,000,000—a sum almost as great as the entire cost to the United States of its participation in the Great War, and nearly twice as great as the entire national debt.

Why, of course everything was all right

After the retreat, everyone caught their breath. Outwardly they became aggressively confident; however they were hollow and gnawed by worry on the inside.

The newspapers and magazines carried advertisements radiating cheer. “Wall Street may sell stock, but Main Street is still buying goods.”

“All right, Mister—now that the headache is over, *let's go to work.*”

But it was useless to declare, as many men did, that nothing more had happened than a gang of gamblers had lost money and a preposterous price structure had been deflated. For in the first place, the individual losses whether sustained by millionaires or clerks, had immediate repercussions.

People began to economize; indeed, during the worst days of the Panic some businesses had come almost to a standstill as buyers waited for the panic to burn itself out. And if the rich, not the poor, had been the chief immediate victims of the crash (it wasn't iron-workers and sharecroppers who were throwing themselves out of windows that autumn), nevertheless trouble spread fast as servants were discharged, as jewelry shops and high priced dress shops and other luxury businesses found their customer base fading, as worried executives decided to abandon unprofitable departments, or to cut down on production until the sales prospects were clearer.

Quickly the ripples of uncertainty and retrenchment widened and unemployment spread. Moreover, the collapse in investment values had undermined the credit system of the country at innumerable points, endangering loans and mortgages and corporate structures

which only a few weeks previously had seemed as safe as bedrock. The Federal Reserve officials reported to the president, “It will take perhaps months before readjustment is accomplished.” Still more serious was the fact—not so apparent then as now—that the smashup of the Big Bull Market had deflated the bellows of inflation which had kept industry roaring when all manner of things were awry with the national economy during the late 1920s. The speculative boom, by continually pouring new funds into the economic bloodstream, had enabled the Roaring Twenties' prosperity to continue long after its natural time.

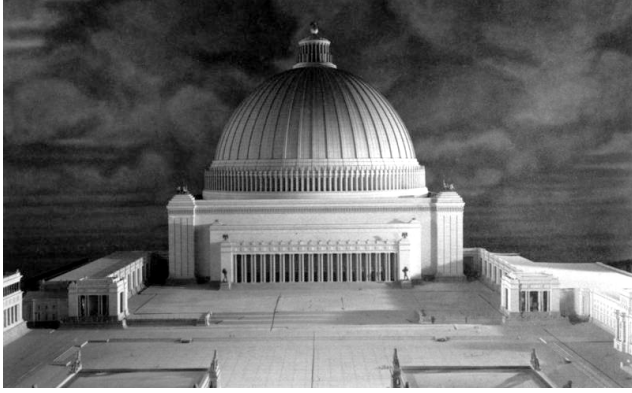
The cold shower cure for a hangover

Finally, the Panic had come as a first shock to the illusion that American capitalism led a charmed life. Like a man of rugged health suffering his first acute illness, the American businessman suddenly realized that he too was on the proverbial chopping block. Nor was the shock confined to the United States; all over the world, America's apparently unbeatable prosperity had served as an advertisement of the advantages of political democracy and financial capitalism. Throughout Europe, where nations were loaded down with war debts and snarling at one another over their respective shares of a trade that would not expand, men looked at the news from New York and thought, “the jig is up.”

In a few short months, the movements of Wall Street drove America and the West into a Depression that would take the majority of the 1930s to finally shake off. Even then, the repercussions could be felt everywhere. America had lost another piece of its youthful innocence, leaving it to charge into the thirties like a teen looking to find its place in the world again. •

This is the fourth in a four part series on the history of the Roaring Twenties. Tome Wilson is founder and administrator of Dieselpunks.org.





HITLER'S NIGHTMARE WORLD CAPITAL

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE projects that the Nazi government tackled, you cannot rid yourself of the feeling that they had a grandiosity fetish.

To put it in more direct terms: Megalomania was an intrinsic feature of the system. World domination, tank-battleships like the *Landkreuzer Ratte*, and the drastic redesign of Berlin into the capital of the world—Germania.

Looking back it is easy to see why this project would have ultimately been doomed to fail but there have also been some fascinating engineering feats along the long and abortive way to its completion which deserve closer scrutiny.

Germania was the vision of Adolf Hitler but it was the genius of Albert Speer who was tasked with making it real. Speer is one of those historic figures who is remembered as a villain because he worked for the wrong people. If Speer's zeal and genius had been put to work by another government, his buildings might still be standing as witnesses to his skill and talent.

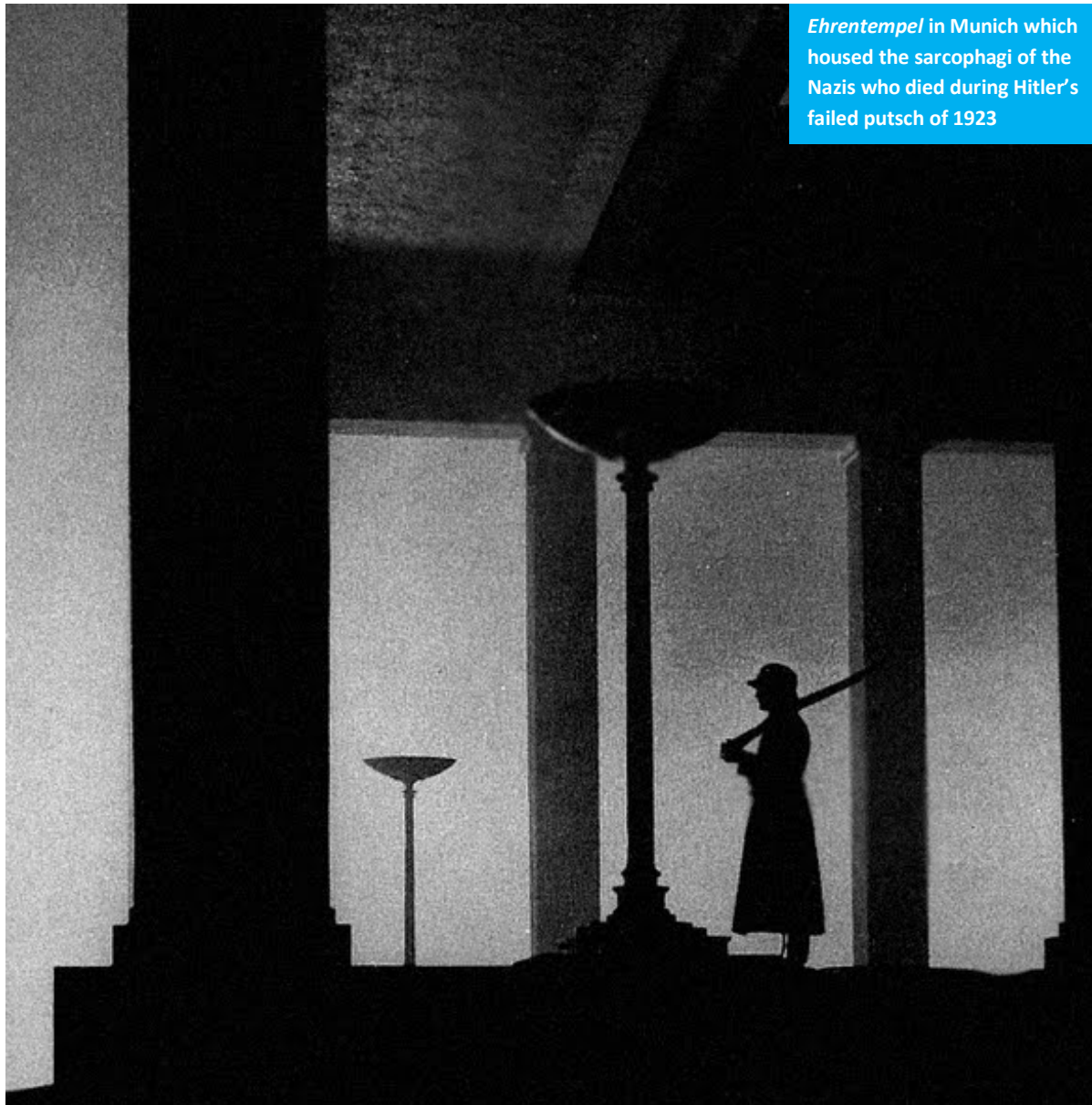
Some of Speer's work foreshadowed what Germania would have been like but the actual project never went very far. Some minor buildings were finished but the monumental architecture

never went beyond some preliminary construction and testing. In 1943 the course of the war brought the project to a halt altogether.

Had Germania been completed, we would now have had the dubious pleasure of seeing the *Volkshalle* dominating the Berlin cityscape. This "People's Hall" would have been a gigantic domed structure, somewhat resembling the Capitol in Washington DC and St Peter's Cathedral in Rome but several times their size.

Fun fact: There would probably have been a constant light rain inside. Yes, the *Volkshalle* would have had its own microclimate, with the moisture from breath and other bodily fluid vapors accumulating under the domed ceiling and returning in downpour.

Then again, most of Germania might well have been impossible to be constructed in Berlin without some major soil work. The German capital was built on drained



Ehrentempel in Munich which housed the sarcophagi of the Nazis who died during Hitler's failed putsch of 1923

Albert Speer and Hitler discuss plans for the reconstruction of Berlin in the architect's Bavarian vacation residence, 1938



(“testing device”). Ironically, it is the sole survivor of Speer’s work in Berlin. The mushroom shaped construction is now classified as a historic landmark and it is still fulfilling its intended purpose—testing weather or not the pressure that the great *Volkshalle* would have put on the soil could have caused it to sink. It would have. The *Prüfkörper* is still sinking a bit every year.

So the *Volkshalle* would have been doomed from the start even if Hitler and his men have gone ahead with its construction anyway. Maybe the eventual collapse of the *Volkshalle* would have been blamed on members of yet another unwanted group or

reconstruction of Berlin would have been far more devastating to the historic cityscape.

The plans involved grandiose avenues leading towards the *Volkshalle* and official party buildings. For these broad streets, huge swathes of Berlin would have had to be torn down, effectively removing all regular housing. Central Berlin would have been turned into a sterile political center, a stage for party rallies and mad politics but devoid of real life.

Hitler and Speer had already planned for this. A new city would have been built in the Grunewald forest on the outskirts of Berlin to accommodate the Berlin citizens displaced by the monumental construction effort.

Today little remains of Germania. Most structures were bombed or razed by the Allies but some of the lesser buildings which would have been pieces of the grand design remain. Among them is Hermann Göring’s *Reichsluftfahrtministerium* (Ministry of Aviation) which was finished in 1935 and now serves as the home of the Ministry of Finance of the Federal Republic of Germany. Quite an ironic twist, I think.

marshland, not the most solid of grounds. Speer was aware of the problem and had an experimental device constructed to test the feasibility of his plans—a *Prüfkörper*

country and used as a pretense for more pogroms and war?

Whatever the ultimate fate of the centerpiece of Speer’s plans, other aspects of the rebuilding and



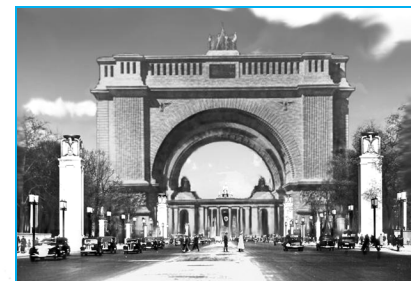
Führer Palast
Hitler’s palace



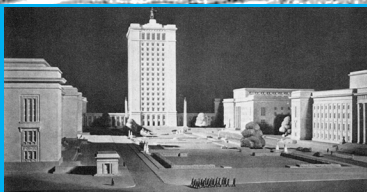
Soldatenhalle Soldiers’ Hall



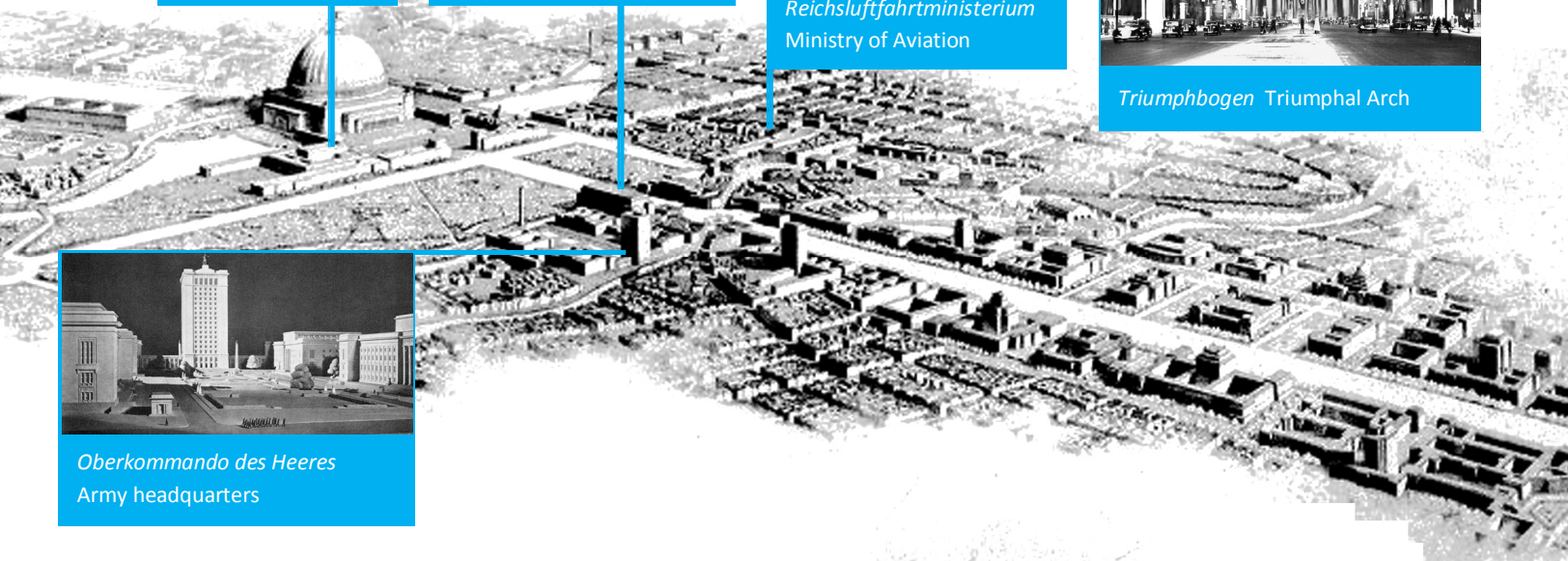
Reichsluftfahrtministerium
Ministry of Aviation



Triumphbogen Triumphal Arch



Oberkommando des Heeres
Army headquarters





NAZIS IN THE ANTARCTIC

BY NICK OTTENS

SOON AFTER THE WAR IN Europe ended, rumors began to circulate that part of Germany's military and scientific establishment had fled the fatherland before Soviet troops could conquer Berlin. Stories of missing U-boats and forbidden aviation technologies fueled wild theories of Nazi redoubts and the imminent resurrection of the Third Reich. A huge United States Navy operation in the Antarctic in 1946 seemed only to confirm the worst of fears—that the Nazis' reign of terror had been able to survive underground near the South Pole.

Operation Highjump was launched a year after war's end to train Navy personnel in the extreme temperatures of the Antarctic and to project American power over the vast, frozen and uninhabited continent. More than a dozen ships, several aircraft and four thousand men participated in the fact finding expedition which ended six months ahead of schedule in February 1947 when terrible weather conditions made it impossible to continue the effort.

That, anyway, is the official account. The conspiracists among us will wonder whether the several fatalities and plane crashes involved in Highjump weren't caused by

something other than snow storms and the lethal cold.

One Chilean newspaper reported in early March 1947, as the fifteen ship fleet was in retreat, that Admiral Richard E. Byrd, a polar expedition veteran and in charge of the mammoth operation, believed that America had to prepare for another deadly war. According to the daily *El Mercurio*, Byrd warned that in the event of renewed hostilities, the United States "would be attacked by flying objects which could fly from pole to pole at incredible speeds."

Whatever the validity of *El Mercurio's* reporting, the phrase "from pole to pole" could imply a permanent German presence in *Neuschwabenland*, or New Swabia, the slice of the Antarctic which the *Kriegsmarine* had surveyed in 1938. Although there is no evidence to suggest that Nazi Germany undertook any more Antarctic expeditions during the war, conspiracy theories abound that claim it did exactly that and built an underground facility near the pole while it was at it.

Part of New Swabia isn't that cold and in fact features a couple of mountain ranges that are ice free the year round. As evidenced by the large *Mittelwerk* missile assembly site, Nazi Germany had ample experience



tunneling and building underground based and factories. Although it would have required quite an effort on the part of the Nazi Government during wartime, it is not altogether impossible that it erected a secret facility in or near the Schirmacher Oasis which the 1938 expedition had discovered. With more than a hundred freshwater lakes and outlets to the sea, it could also have serviced German U-boats.

From that point onward, the myth usually begins to include exotic German aircraft designs, Hollow Earth theories, alien Greys and Reptilians conniving with the Nordic *Herrenvolk* to subjugate the human race, etc. It seems there's a whole lot of trouble waiting to be uncovered beneath the ice of Antarctica!

If the Nazi polar base thesis seems little more than a few curious statements and coincidences, that's because most conspiracy theories are. This one does perfectly set the stage for a dieselpunk story though. •

Artwork by
Josh Nizzi



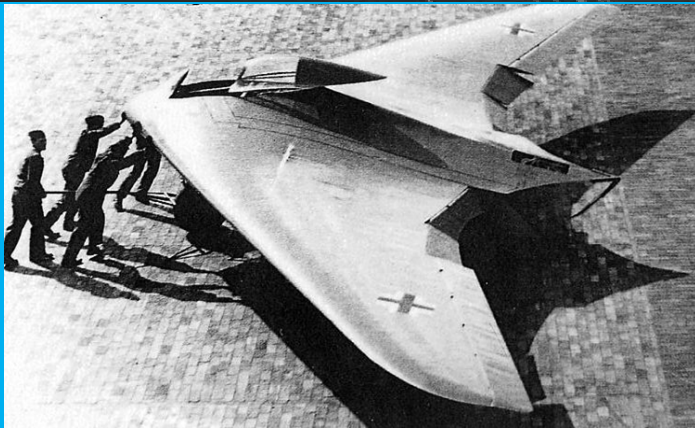
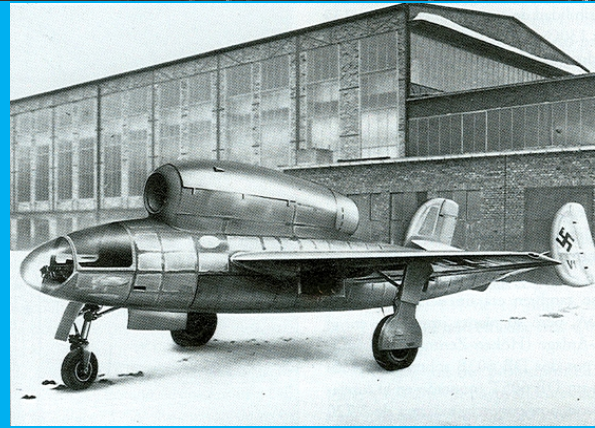


B10

The **Henschel Hs 132** was designed as a dive bomber and interceptor aircraft, however only three prototypes were ever built and the craft never saw active service.

It was designed throughout 1943 and early 1944 as a single seat attack craft to counter the expected Allied invasion of Europe. Its unique design featured a top mounted jet engine and a cockpit completely faired into the fuselage contour, with the pilot in a prone position, bearing a remarkable resemblance to the contemporary Heinkel He 162.

A contract for six prototypes was approved in May 1944 and construction began in March 1945. None was ever completed.



Walter (1913-1998) and **Reimar Horten** (1915-1994), sometimes credited as the **Horten brothers**, were German aircraft pilots and enthusiasts who, in spite of having had practically no formal training in aeronautics, designed some of the most advanced aircraft of their time.

The best known of the brothers' designs was the **Horten Ho IX** (also known as the Gotha Go 229 and the Ho 229) flying wing, built by Gothaer Waggonfabrik. This design, a favorite of *Luftwaffe* chief Hermann Göring, was originally imagined as a bomber, however by order of the *Reichsluftfahrtministerium*, it was augmented with two 30mm cannons. Since the craft's estimated top speed was significantly higher than that of any Allied aircraft, the ministry gathered that it would be useful as a fighter as well.

The first Ho IX flew on March 1, 1944, followed by another flight in December 1944 of an updated version. Göring subsequently ordered a production series of forty aircraft at Gotha. The program was undeterred when the sole Ho IX crashed after an engine caught fire on February 18, 1945 upon but two hours of flight. On March 12, 1945, the craft was included into the *Jägernotprogramm* for accelerated production of inexpensive "wonder weapons."



The **Amerika Bomber** project was one of the most ambitious advanced aviation initiatives of the Third Reich. It sought to obtain a long range bomber for the *Luftwaffe* that could strike the continental United States. The **Messerschmitt Me 264** was submitted as one possible design, and the Horten brothers designed an even more elaborate version of their flying wing, the **Horten Ho XVIII**, powered by six turbojets and able to cross the Atlantic nonstop.

Although prototypes of the Me 264 were built, the **Junkers Ju 390** was ultimately selected for production. Only two prototypes were constructed before the effort was abandoned. It is claimed—and disputed—that early in 1944, the second prototype made a transatlantic flight to within twenty kilometers of the American east coast.

REVIEW «

THE CHRONOSCOPE

BY LORENZO DAVIA

THE CHRONOSCOPE IS A MOCKUMENTARY (A fake documentary) directed by Andrew Legge about the Irish scientist Charlotte Keppel (Serena Brabazon) who in 1938 discovers a type of light that travels at low speed. Notwithstanding the incredulity of the scientific community, she creates the Chronoscope, a device that can see in the past. She wants to utilize it to see the true past but the images that the machine produces contradict established history.

When the Chronoscope shows that a recently proclaimed saint had a worldly lover, it upsets the Church. Then Nazis kidnap her because they want to use her device to show all the world the past glory of the Aryan race. When the Chronoscope shows only villages of

primitives, the Nazis are furious and Charlotte must plot an escape.

The short movie has a brilliant style that is reminiscent of the documentaries and movies of the 1930s to the point that there is no distinction between existing period footage and present day shots; other historical footage was modified in order to add elements coherent with the story.

Legge is not new to this type of film. His previous *The Unusual Inventions of Henry Cavendish*, a tale of a young inventor and his time machine, seamlessly combined scenes of Dublin shot in 1897 with new material shot on a clockwork 16mm Russian 'Krasnogorsk' camera.

The Chronoscope is a very interesting mockumentary with many layers of interpretations. It is about the role of women in science; it is about the responsibilities of the scientist toward society and finally it is a work against the stupidity of nationalism. It is also a good example of how a steampunk idea can be used in a past setting to tell us something about that past and about our present at the same time. •

REPORT «

FLÜSTERPARTY IN MUNICH

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

THE ROARING TWENTIES ARE QUITE IN VOGUE IN Germany at the moment. It is almost as if dieselpunk is going mainstream! One aspect of the times seems to be particularly popular: the *Flüsterparty* or Speakeasy party.

Flüstern means "to whisper." *Flüsterparty* is derived from *Flüsterkneipe* which is the German term for speakeasy, the type of illegal pub popular during prohibition in the United States.

One such speakeasy party was organized in Munich last April. Its location was a very suitable building, the home of one of Munich's oldest musical societies.

Obviously, the hosts enforced a dress code and the guests made quite an effort to look the part. I later found out that there was actually one buffoon who got in wearing a tuxedo and sneakers, but he was the exception.

Doors opened at 20:00 but it was not until about 21:30 that a sizable crowd of well dressed people had gathered for an evening of classy revelry.

The party offered everything you would expect from an illegal event. One room was home to a casino

with tables for roulette, poker and black jack. There was of course a bar and an exquisite live Jazz band was playing in the dance hall.

The first event of the evening was the Lindy Hop course. I skipped that one—I do not dance. I spent the time winning a few chips playing cards and enjoying several drinks. The chips for gambling were handed out at the entrance when you showed your ticket. You played for prizes that were handed out at the end of the party.

There was also another game going on over the entire course of the party: Together with your gambling chips, you were handed a card with your role. Every guest was supposed to be a cast member from a period film. In my case it was Nosferatu. The point was to assemble your entire cast. Whoever was complete first won the prize.

I am not sure a complete cast was ever assembled. After a while people were probably more interested in socializing than hunting for fellow cast members.

The main event was a burlesque dancer. The performer was Stormy Heather, one of Germany's top burlesque dancers and an evangelist of the art form. A real feast for the eyes.

Officially, the party ended at 2:00 on Sunday morning, but due to the quality of the event, a number of guests managed to hold out until past 4:00.

To sum up, I had one great time at the *Flüsterparty*. It was an outstanding event; everybody had fun and contributed to the atmosphere by dressing and behaving in keeping with the times. The music, drinks and food were excellent; there was a very memorable show and I went home wishing for a time machine. It was one great night out! •

REVIEW «

IGNITION CITY

BY LORENZO DAVIA

IN 1930, THREE BOLD ASTRONAUTS REACH SPACE. Fifteen years later, World War II is interrupted by a Martian invasion. As a consequences of those events, humanity starts exploring its solar system and heroic astronauts contact alien species and have incredible adventures.

But that is the past.

The present is the year 1956, when no one cares about alien worlds and the final frontier anymore. Spaceports are being closed down and the only place from which rockets take off is Ignition City, a metropolis located on an artificial island on the equator. Here the last astronauts live in exile.

This is the context of Warren Ellis' *Ignition City* science fiction comic book.

Ellis is a famous and acclaimed author of comics, novels and TV shows, whose works cover many genres and themes. With *Ignition City* he creates a comic with a strong dieselpunk or atomicpunk aesthetic. Thematically, it's rooted in old TV shows like *Flash Gordon*, *Buck Rogers* and *King of the Rocketmen* but don't think it's about the glorious and memorable events of space exploration. What we see in *Ignition City* are dying heroes, worn away

by alcohol and pill foods, whose past glories cast no light on their present misfortune.

Gianluca Pagliarani's illustrations detail the city very well. Many buildings are composed of old rusted rockets and many particulars are reminiscent of 1950s sci-fi movies, if covered by a layer of decay. For example, the "World's End" bar is situated inside an old fuel tank and sometimes giant robots can be found abandoned across the city.

The protagonist is Mary Raven, a former astronaut who visits Ignition City in order to discover who killed his father, a former war hero space pilot, and have his revenge. She is mainly inspired, as Warren Ellis revealed in his blog, by Magdalene Veen, singer and belly dancer of the band *Abney Park*. Mary Raven will have to make her way through the cynicism, the resentment and the corruption of the city inhabitants.

The five issues of *Ignition City* have been published by Avatar Press and were collected in paperback in *Ignition City Volume I*. It is a must read for people who are interested in retrofuturistic comics. The story is also full of references to various classics like *Dune* and the *Lensmen* saga, making it a special travel across decades of science fiction.



SEE «

SCREENIUS FOR IPAD

SCREENIUS IS THE WORLD'S FIRST MOBILE application for video discovery that was specifically designed for steampunk fans. "As aficionados ourselves, we wanted to express the visually distinctive style of the genre to share with other steampunk enthusiasts," says Seth Cohen, cofounder and CEO. "The vision was: Jules Verne meets *YouTube*." The company is dedicated to the notion that enjoying video should be easier, more fun and more social than it is today.

Screenius includes a personalization engine that learns each user's tastes simply through use of the application. As a result, Screenius' recommendation engine is continuously improving the user's experience.

Visit www.screenius.com for more information. •

LISTEN «

RADIO METRONOMIK

RADIO METRONOMIK SHARES WITH YOU WHAT dieselpunk has to offer today and takes you back to the first half of the twentieth century with Jazz, electro-swing and rockability.

Every show covers a topic that should interest dieselpunk enthusiasts. There's more than just information though; the station plays "lies and truth" with their dystopic news space in which, from 1929, they'll update you about news that never happened, including the litigation between Tesla Industries and the United States Armed Forces for the patent of a particle shield.

Radio MetronomiK echoes a glorious past, extracted with the tools of the future. To listen to the station, visit radiometronomik.blogspot.com. •

REVIEW «

CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER

BY BERT VAN DEN WYNGAERT

I MUST ADMIT THAT I'M NOT MUCH OF A *Captain America* fan. I do enjoy the occasional superhero movie but I went into watching this one knowing virtually nothing of the character or the Marvel universe.

Having said that, cinematographically, *Captain America: The First Avenger* was splendid. I really liked the gritty World War II dieselpunk feel of everything—the costumes and way it was filmed in general.

Story wise, there were quite a few plot holes. Although the movie explains how Steve Rogers became Captain America, there is very little in the way of explanations and information about other elements in the film.

As usual the villains, who are rather important in the Marvel universe, if I'm not mistaken, have been completely Hollywoodized into a bunch of mindless thugs. Which is a shame as Hydra as an organization has a lot of potential. As far as villains go, the Red Skull seemed pretty lame in this interpretation.

If you expect this to be a movie about a guy with cool superpowers, you may find yourself disappointed. Yes, Captain America has been engineered to be the best he can be, and he is an ageless being, but he doesn't have any actual superhero powers like the X-Men or Spiderman do.

Fans of dieselpunk that just wish to see a movie set within the style around World War II will probably enjoy this simply because of the graphic portrayal of the film. I'm pretty confident that fans of *Captain America* will be able to enjoy this adaption to the fullest, although, not being one of them, I can't be totally sure. I probably could have enjoyed the film more if I'd known more about the character beforehand, so perhaps it's best that people consult Wikipedia before heading for the cinema. •



FISTFUL OF REEFER

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

DAVID BROWN'S *FISTFUL OF REEFER* WAS MY first contact with fiction concerning the "Old West." Of course I had a certain idea of the Golden Age of Gunslingers but I also knew that this idea was severely flawed.

What first struck me was the intensity of character the first protagonist you encounter displays. Texas Ranger McCutchen is one hard man of strong and firm opinions who knows what is wrong and what is right. And he will shoot you if you disagree too much or get in his way. Interestingly, the Texas Ranger, a staple hero in American literature, is the villain. McCutchen's story could end here. In keeping with pulp literature, he could have just been the Bad Guy, period. It would also be in keeping with 1950s Western flicks. It doesn't end here though. As the story continues, we get a glimpse into McCutchen's mind. He has reasons to be what he is. They are selfish, self righteous reasons and they do not make him any more sympathetic but they make him a real and believable character.

McCutchen's antagonists (or so he believes) are a quasi-family of three marihuana farmers: Nena, a Kickapoo Native American, her husband Chancho, a Mexican, and their friend Muddy, an African American. The three are just normal people trying to make a living in difficult times.

This constellation—a very white and racist Texas Ranger facing off against three ordinary and multiethnic people, each a member of a minority ill treated in the history and present of the United States—is a bit too moralistic and in your face. It wouldn't have hurt the story at all if Muddy had been either Nena's or Chancho's brother. Everything would have been just as believable.

Apart from this one point, there's little to criticize in *Fistful of Reefer*. I have to commend Brown on the chemistry he creates within this patchwork family of sorts. It becomes clear quickly that all three love each other; that they genuinely care for one another and are just decent folk.

The plot is fast. The novella is a page turner. I was particularly impressed with the author's ability to

describe dynamic situations and moments of fear.

Brown's description of the flash flood stands out. It almost made me grab the armrest of my chair. The same goes for landscapes. You really get the feel

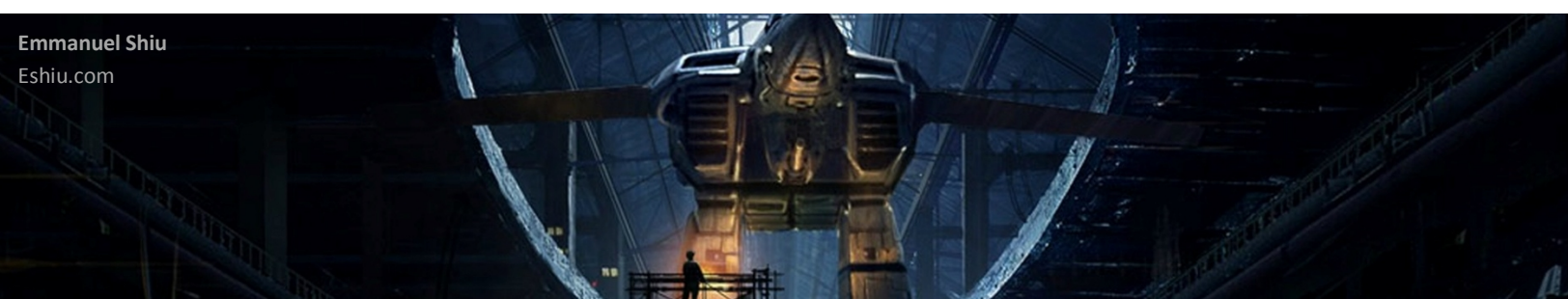
of the land the story is set in. In a way, it feels like you are in the middle of a movie.

Despite the fact that the main story line is about a Texas Ranger chasing a family of farmers who are not quite sure what hit them, *Fistful of Reefer* is not only gunslinging action. Political intrigue fueled by an unstable situation in Mexico and the First World War going on in Europe is mentioned in the margins rather early and becomes a more prominent factor the further the story progresses.

The last thing worth mentioning are the ideas Brown came up with. I have to restrain myself not to put any spoilers in here. From Chancho's bizarre homebuilt marihuana harvester to, well, rather bizarre guard animals employed by unexpected allies, the novella has a few surprising dieselpunk elements to offer. I knew that I would encounter some dieselpunk along the way but I did not expect the ones Brown actually incorporated.

To sum up: *Fistful of Reefer* is a thoroughly enjoyable novella. It has action, intrigue, humor and weird ideas. On the down side, it suffers a bit from stereotypical characters, though the roles are inverted. This is a homage to the original Old West fiction, I suppose, but I found it a bit shallow. Still, this is the only thing I can complain about.

Also published in *El Investigador*, the Spanish language publication of Mercenarios de DIOS.



REVIEW«

UP

BY HILDE HEYVAERT



ELDERLY ADVENTURES, FLYING HOUSES, HUGE zeppelins, oldtimer cars and wild adventures, planned and the kind that sneak up on you from around the bend, or in this case your porch in the shape of a small boy or underneath the bushes in the form of a large colorful tropical bird. *Up* has it all, the spirit of adventure indeed!

Up is without doubt one of the best of the Disney/Pixar staple. The animation is bright, fun and fresh and the story will warm your heart and keep you watching enrapt for the duration of the entire movie.

The story is that of Carl Fredrickson, a retired balloon salesman who, after the demise of his beloved wife Ellie, who shared his adventurous spirit, decides to make good on a promise he made the very first day they met as children: To take their home to Paradise Falls, a mystical place in South America with the aid of hundreds of helium filled balloons.

Of course, not all goes as planned and he acquires a

greatest adventurers of his time and the first to go and explore Paradise Falls in his zeppelin (as long as twelve paddy wagons), *The Spirit of Adventure*. He brought back with him the skeleton of a bird found in the wondrous valley only to be discredited by his fellow adventurers. Decades ago he returned to the Falls with the vow never to return to America without a living specimen.

Coincidence has it that the same bird that had befriended Russell is indeed the very bird that Muntz is after. Muntz rapidly takes the role of the villain of the tale and the story steps up even more in a mad dash to save Kevin and get home escaping the mad Muntz and his huge pack of talking dogs, getting Carl and Ellie's home where it should be and reuniting Kevin safely with her babies.

Up is a movie that can easily be enjoyed by all ages. It is a fun, fast paced adventure movie with clear dieselpunk and steampunk elements mashed together with contemporary themes. It's fun, action filled, moving and plain old good movie making. •

REVIEW«

THE ROCKETEER

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

FORGET WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE DISNEY version of *The Rocketeer*. Yes it's epic, but aside from the main character being called Cliff, who is a down on his luck pilot and accidentally finds a rocket pack to fight bad guys, the movie and the comic that it was based on have little in common.

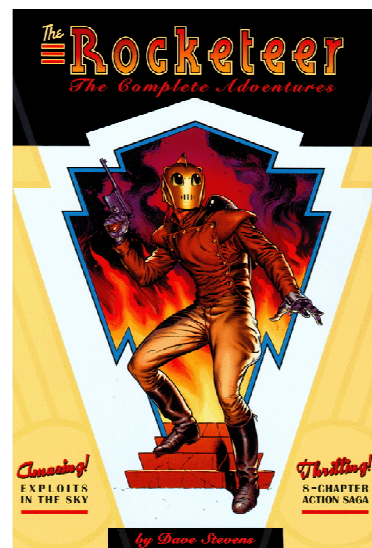
Sadly these days few people seem to know that *The Rocketeer* wasn't a Disney original movie. It debuted as a comic in 1982 as the brain child of the late Dave Stevens. Initially the story of our dashing hero Cliff Secord appeared as a backup feature in the second issue of an independent comic but it was an instant hit causing *The Rocketeer* to become a comic book series in its own right.

Nowadays the comics are reissued (I know it for a fact, I saw one in the reissue section of a local comic book store this month) which is good news for those on the hunt for loose issues but for people that rather have the complete set in one go there's *The Rocketeer: The Complete Adventures* which this review is about.

It's a lovely hard cover book with not only all the issues but also quite a few pages of art, which is a nice bonus.

There's enough variety in the story to keep fans of adventure, romance and even the more dystopian dieselpunk interested. Cliff Secord, a daring pilot in 1938 Los Angeles, is permanently out of luck and looking to earn a quick buck. One day he comes across a stolen rocket pack, dons it, fights evil and takes on the persona of *The Rocketeer*. Throw in his pin-up girl friend Betty (based on the iconic Betty Page), a motley cast of friends and foes and the bulldog named Butch and you know you've got the makings of a tale worth reading.

Dieselpunks that aren't necessarily into comics will be able to enjoy it for the (mis)adventures of Cliff as well as the art and fans of both the genre and comics will probably love it as much as I did. It is a perfect example of the spirit of adventure of the '30s, of epic takes of heroes fighting against all sorts of bad guys and a great homage to unconventional superheroes and the pulp era. •



REVIEW«

UNHALLOWED METROPOLIS

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

UNHALLOWED METROPOLIS IS A ROLE PLAYING game set against the background of a zombie apocalypse having occurred in 1905. The game itself takes place in 2107 London, the eponymous Unhallowed Metropolis. It is a supernatural horror setting, blending a deranged Victorian mindset with supernatural menaces and bizarre technology.

The world is described in fitting and chilling detail and the attention to detail given to the aspects of the Neo-Victorian society in post-apocalyptic Britain is fascinating. The society incorporates the worst features of the period, including the exploitation of the poor, power held by a select few, with industrialism and science gone berserk in the face of a supernatural threat. The Unhallowed Metropolis is a squalid, dangerous and unforgiving place. If you do not like it, don't worry—you probably will not live that long anyway.

For those of you who are familiar with *Warhammer 40,000*—the London of *Unhallowed Metropolis* has some features in common with Necromunda's Hive Primus.

Jason Soles and Nicole Vega have managed to create an internally consistent world. All pieces fit together like clock work. The only point of contention I have with the description of the world is the somewhat repetitive style. Too much is "shrouded in mystery." A few more alternative descriptions would not have hurt at all. Apart from this, the descriptions are effective and from them, some hints are given as to the roles one can assume in the game.

Game mechanics are fairly simple and straightforward. Everything is based on the D10, of which two are needed to play. The system stresses actual role playing and makes an effort to require as little dice rolling (and thus avoiding roll playing) as possible. Most tasks do not need a roll at all. The focus is on narration and player interaction. Tables are kept to a minimum.

Unhallowed Metropolis offers a selection of character classes to quickly start playing but also provides rules for custom character creation.

The combat system is simple and fittingly deadly. Even if you survive a gunshot wound, there may well be complications. If your style is shoot first, ask questions later, you will have a high character attrition rate. Even if you manage to avoid physical harm, in the dark and tainted world of *Unhallowed Metropolis*, there is the

constant threat of corruption. Every character may become corrupted and slowly turn into a monster of one sort or another. For this reason, every character has a trait named, you guessed it, Corruption—nobody is safe from it.

The world of *Unhallowed Metropolis* is dark. There is evil without and evil within. Even if you manage to fend off all the monsters you encounter, you may turn into a monster yourself. Very fitting indeed.

The artwork is somewhat mixed in quality. The drawings and sketches are generally very good and haunting but several of the photographs leave something to be desired. Some appear to have been put in as fillers. There are fitting photographs like "The Alchemist at Work" and the excellent "The Lunatic". Alas, there is also "The Ripper," a painfully staged shot with the victim of what is most likely supposed to be a murder scene looking neither shocked nor terrified but instead directly into the camera with a bland expression.

A little more consistency in photo editing wouldn't have hurt either. Some pictures are manipulated to look aged and faded whereas others are crisp shots, too clean to fit the mood of the game.

All in all I am rather impressed with *Unhallowed Metropolis*. The game offers an unique and exotic take on the popular zombie apocalypse theme, with classic Victorian horror elements and weird science added for extra spice. I am looking forward to running a game. •



REVIEW«

TALES OF THE NIGHTSIDE

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

WHILE THE SERIES SADLY DRAWS TO A CLOSE (apparently the next book will be the last) Simon R. Green continues to thoroughly entertain us with his fantasy *noir* series of tales set in that deep dark secret heart of London: the square mile known as the Nightside, the center of sin and the supernatural. A London within London where Above and Below sets its agents at work and where Gods, Powers That Be and people with extraordinary powers and ability try to make a life for themselves and sometimes just try to survive.

Enter our reluctant hero: John Taylor, who still wears a white trench coat and still possesses the gift to find whatever, whomever, wherever. And who still isn't quite fully human (and thanks to his mother, never will be).

In *Just Another Judgement Day* (book 9) Walker comes knocking on the door of Suzie and John's home asking for help stopping the Walking Man from laying waste to the Nightside. Adrian Saint, the current Walking Man, is the hand of God you see. Judge, Jury and Executioner of Sinners, and impervious to harm as long as he does God's duty as God sees fit.

We meet the new authorities, led by Julien Advent the Victorian Adventurer, and new and old characters we've all come to love and hate. Razor Eddie, Punk God of the Straight Razor makes an appearance like you wouldn't expect, we find out a thing or two about Walker, something big happens to Suzie and we meet a new character (whom I hope will return later): Chandra Singh, an Indian holy man who has dedicated his life to hunting and slaying monsters praying on humanity with his supernatural blade. He insists on accompanying John and Suzie in their task to test himself with the Walking Man. All this and more in an action packed adventure that challenges the set believes of faith to prove that things are never black and white, especially not in the Nightside.

While it was definitely an enjoyable book, I didn't think it was the best in the series. I did love how the author challenges the black and white ideas of religious fanatics and places two holy men opposite each other: one hardcore fanatic and one far more moderate. And adding John Taylor, with his own Biblical background and the quintessential antihero in the midst just adds to a really great story. Sure it wasn't the best but it was still pretty awesome and well worth reading.

The next instalment in the series, *The Good, the Bad and the Uncanny*, focuses more on John personally than any of the novels so far. John is in a rut, to the point where

he will happily walk straight into the fog (which is never what it seems in the Nightside) just to get some excitement. He has everything he wants and he's restless. Then in comes a case: he needs

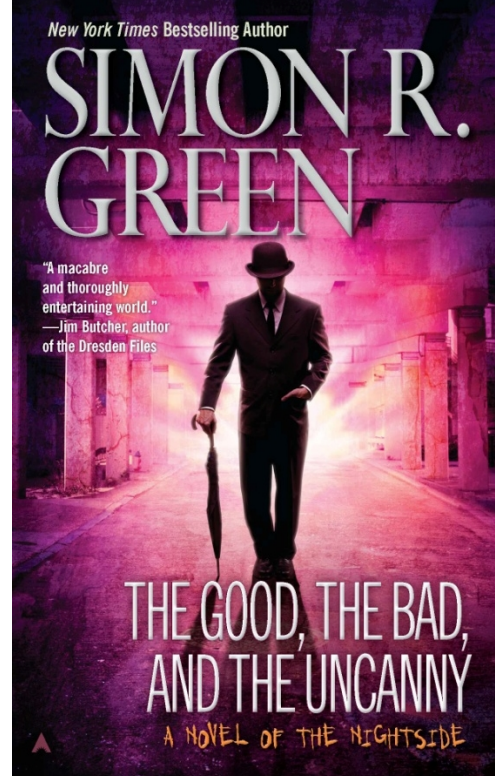
to get an Elf Lord to the passage to Shadows Falls and not just the Elf, but the Elven faction peace treaty preventing a civil war while at it. Now Elves in the Nightside setting aren't the good guys. Don't think they are elves like in *Lord of the Rings* or another setting where they are mighty and glorious. No, Elves in this setting are cruel as they are magnificent, so much larger than all of humanity, with all their virtues and flaws augmented. Elves are not the good guys, they will only tell you the truth when it hurts you more than the lie and they don't give a damn about humanity. In fact, Elf and Man have a long standing feud that dates back centuries ago.

Predictably, Walker isn't too pleased with any of this since it threatens the precious status quo of the Nightside. So off John and his charge go, aided by the superhero in drag Mrs Fate and her Fatemobile, on a wild chase through the Nightside, encountering enemies left and right just to get to their destination.

That's the first part of the book. While I liked seeing how the use of John's gift affects him personally and seeing the interaction between the characters the author threw at the reader, it all felt like a bit much to me. So I was quite pleased that there was a lot more to the book than those starting chapters (which are important for the rest of the story so don't skip them!).

When the mad chase has come to an end, the shit really hits the fan for John on a personal level. Walker is dying and wants John to take his job—which, of course, John declines. To top it off, Larry Oblivion demands John he helps him find his younger brother Tommy (who was lost during the Lilith War, but hasn't died). To make matters worse, the eldest Oblivion sibling Hadleigh decides to get involved as well.

A little background for those unfamiliar with the Oblivion brothers. Hadleigh was Walker's predecessor



but burned out on the job, went to the Deep School to study the truth about Reality and now works as an Agent of Good better known as the Detective Inspectre. He's younger than he should be, at his prime, has dreadful powers and isn't quite as human as he used to be.

Larry, the middle brother, is a zombie. He was betrayed by his partner who killed him and brought him back to life. In return he killed her and left her dead. He's been bitter ever since. He runs a private detective agency and frowns upon John like something fierce. He also has an Elven wand as a weapon, which is a lot more awesome than it sounds.

Tommy Oblivion is the youngest; he won his existential gift during a game of poker and generally gets himself in a spot of trouble at the most inopportune times.

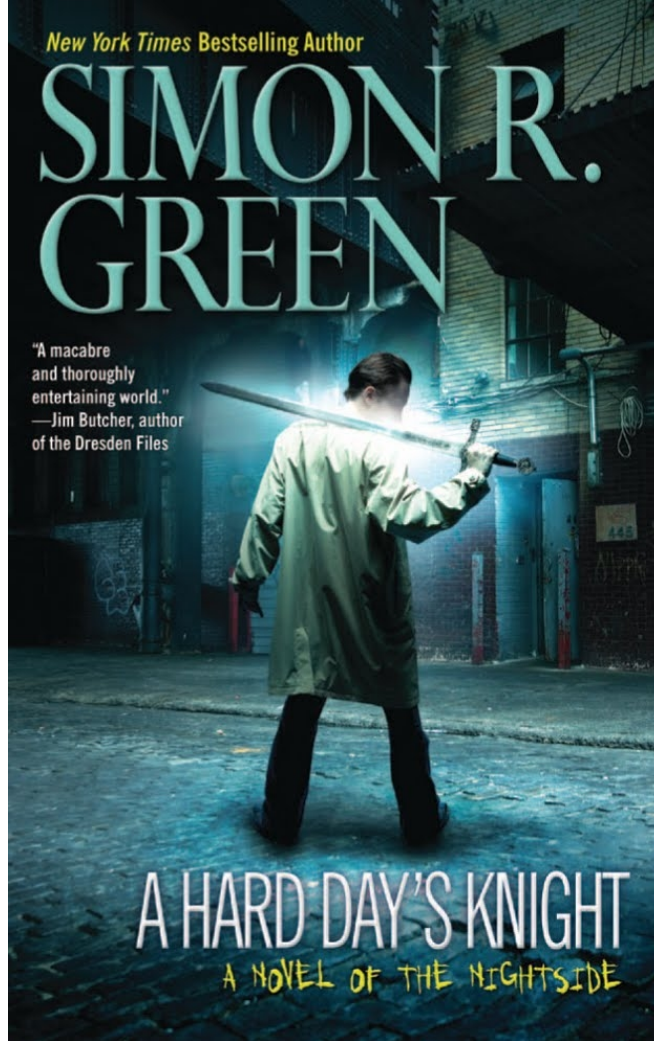
The author does a really fine job of interweaving two quests together. John's to find Tommy and deal with his guilt over not doing a better job protecting him during the Lilith War and Walker's to convince John to become his successor. I also liked that when it comes down to it, they end up at the Collector's place which is something I personally missed from previous novels—need to find something, find the Collector.

The book ends with a final standoff between John and Walker of which I won't spoil too much. Let me just put it this way: it is so incredibly in character it's absolutely fan-fucking-tastic. I loved every bit of it.

The return of the youngest Oblivion was a similarly superb feat of cooperation of several Nightside denizens on it's own, showing just how scary these guys could be if they weren't the good guys and decided to work together.

All in all, I thought this was one of the better books in the series because it deals with our lead in such a personal way and because we find out a lot more of the inner workings of Walker and his organization which is something Green left us wondering about for ten books, so it's nice to see the secrets revealed. Well, some of them at least.

In the final instalment of the series so far (book 11, so fresh it's not even out on paperback yet) *A Hard Day's Knight*, the legendary sword Excalibur comes to the Nightside and ends up on John's kitchen table in brown



wrapping paper thanks to the Elf Puck.

Queue people lining up on his non-lawn demanding the sword or hailing him as King John the First of the Nightside (a dubious honour he's always declined) and Suzie and John forcefully removing them again.

This book is one genius rollercoaster ride filled with Arthurian references and in my opinion the best one yet. It certainly is my personal favourite so far (previously that spot was held by book 2: *Agents of Light and Darkness*).

I adore how he's even brought back Gayle (from his standalone novel *Drinking Midnight Wine*) to play such an important part in the story.

We see the return of Sir Kae (from book 5, *Paths Not Taken*) and meet the London Knights and discover what would have happened if Merlin Satanspawn had

embraced his destiny as the Antichrist rather than decline the honor like he did.

Throw in some Elves, a pregnant vulture, an ever grumpy Alex, King Arthur and you've got a truly epic tale. Oh! And Suzie drops the bombshell right at the end which is making me almost die with anticipation for the next book. Tauthor has already revealed the title, *The Bride Wore Black Leathers*, so I'm pretty sure everyone can guess what that's about.

I understand that for people unfamiliar with this series it could be a bit daunting to pick something up that consists of eleven volumes to date, but let me assure you that it's well worth the purchase and effort. They aren't thick books that you could clobber someone to death with. They read so easily and the stories, my God, the stories, they are just fantastic. It's such a superb mix of *noir*, the best detective tales ever, fantasy, horror and existing myths and legends that it's worth to invest time and money in this series. Plus you don't have to necessarily read them in the right order (it helps but you don't have to) so you can just pick up the one that appeals to you most and give that a go. I did, starting with book 3 (*Nightingale's Lament*) and didn't regret that in the slightest.

If you're looking for a new series to read and you love this mad blend of awesome things, give the Nightside novels a go. There's a good chance you won't regret it. •

HALF FULL, HALF EMPTY: RUSSIAN DIESELPUNK

BY ELI KRICHEVSKY (AKA LORD K)

DID YOU KNOW THAT ONLY one year ago the most populous dieselpunk community on the Web was the Russian one—about one thousand members? It was also among the oldest, established in 2006.

No surprise: starting conditions for the genre were extremely favorable. It was defined relatively early, in an article by Mikhail Popov published in *SF & Fantasy World* monthly in December 2004. Actually, this article helped to promote dieselpunk in the same way as a well known publication in *DarkRoastedBlend* did four years later. So when in the English speaking world, dieselpunk's right to exist was questioned and disputed, in the Russian speaking networks, it was legitimate and widely acceptable. Different communities, from weapon geeks to *noir* freaks, adopted it to label weird devices, retrofuturist art, megalomaniac projects, rare war machines, etc.

Dieselpunk attracted groups as diverse as World War II reenactors, abandoned industrial site researchers, vintage postcard collectors, amateur historians (and althistorians), anime fans, cosplayers and swing music addicts. Many Russian speaking steampunks also joined the diesel crowd.

Besides, Russian dieselpunkdom boasts a great legacy: 1930 sci-fi movies, breathtaking 1920s thrillers, fascinating Interbellum posters (advertisement and propaganda alike), *avant garde* painting, graphics and photography, monumental architecture of the Stalin era, whatever you like (or

hate). All this had been widely used in different genres, from cinema to pop music, long before the term “dieselpunk” was coined.

So it was quite natural for the Russian dieselpunk community to grow fast between 2007 and 2009. It was probably the most active dieselpunk community online and closely monitored by English speaking websites and forums. It was a leader in terms of research, exposing a score or forgotten gems or bravely attributing well known artifacts as “dieselpunk.” The sky was the limit—but the advantages of the community gradually turned against it.

Several of the more “serious” researchers felt that they had outgrown dieselpunk and left for specialized communities; others were unhappy with the strict rules of the community, or decided that the genre was too “heavy”—and went elsewhere; other yet simply lost their interest in dieselpunk altogether. Three additional factors influenced the D-crowd in the most negative way. One was the lack of discussion. With no effort to redefine the genre, present its goals and develop a positive agenda, stagnation was inevitable. The other was the apolitical nature of dieselpunk at a



Kirsty Greenwood
kirstygreenwood.co.uk

time of growing politicization of most Russian language networks. The third and most important factor was the inability to go outside the Web, to manifest the genre in real life. In this, Russian dieselpunks are quite different from their steampunk brothers who frequently organize conventions, meetings, exhibitions and fairs. There are some creative people, a number of talented artists with international fame or young authors who label their writings as dieselpunk, but their efforts are not sufficient to move the genre forward.

Looking back, one can say that in Russia, proto-dieselpunk was much more diverse and creative than the current D-crowd. But it started two decades ago and the acting community is only five years old. I still hope that Russian dieselpunk's (and dieselpunks') vast potential will eventually be realized. •

The author was a moderator of the Russian dieselpunk community on LiveJournal and is currently acting lieutenant of Dieselpunks.org.

LOCAL STEAMPUNK«

PRAGUE

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

THE CZECH CAPITAL IS A modern city, in many ways more modern than some in Western Europe. Yet its many old fashioned details and places make it an appealing destination for traveling steampunks.

Upon leaving the airfield, I was greeted by an enormous billboard across the street advertising zeppelin tours. I didn't actually see any zeppelins while in Prague although I must admit that I didn't spend much time staring at the skies as there was so much going on around me.

Prague has a wealth of *art nouveau* and Jugendstil buildings. For those fortunate enough in the financial department, the possibilities of acquiring pieces from that time are pretty limitless as there are several quaint little antique shops that specialize in the jewellery, home décor and art of those times.

Several hotels are still completely in *art nouveau* style, such as the Europa and Pariz to name but two. There are more, rest assured.

Aside from the hotels, there are the buildings in the style that now make homes and shops. Literary allusions are also few and far between. We came across the Captain Nemo cabaret club and the Baker Street, a shop specializing in all sorts of smoking goods. Of course Prague, being the city of artist Alfons Mucha, is filled with his work as well as a museum dedicated to his art and life. I visited

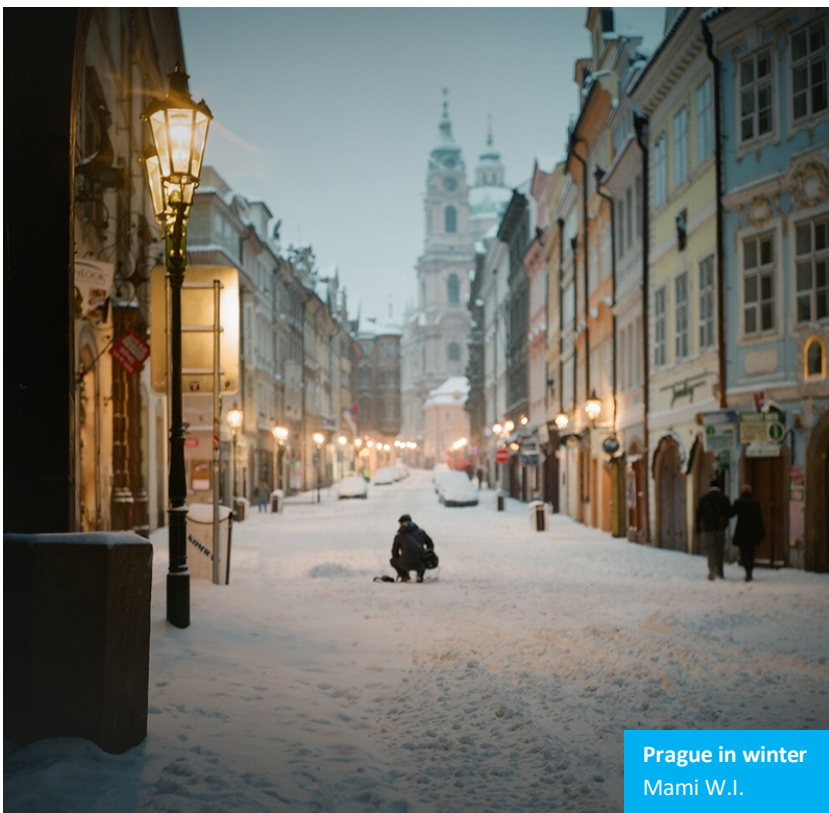
it, it is absolutely worth it. I would advise against buying in the gift shop until you have properly browsed stores in Prague (you can get into the gift shop without having to pay admission so you can always return later) as many of them have entirely different Mucha merchandising and often for better prices too.

Fans of La Fée Verte, that old and often illegal drink better known as absinthe, will drink their hearts out. There's several little cafés entirely dedicated to this infamous green beverage where you can taste literally dozens of absinthes for a more than reasonable price. To top it off, they are beautifully decorated. I would advise to do a little research before leaving for Prague though, as the absinthe for sale is often of more than dubious quality and extortionately priced. You can find some gems, but you have to look for

them. Whatever you do, stay away from the Absinthe Beetle, African stick insects do not belong in beverages. They're poisonous and you may end up quite ill! Vendors will praise King of Spirits into heaven and back but beware: it's the most expensive and possibly also the most rubbish Czech absinthe on the market.

Steampunk is represented in many details: the old motorbikes parked throughout town, oldtimer cars used for private sightseeing tours, the lovely painted advertisements on houses and even the retro style *Coca Cola* signposts hanging outside cafés (some places have Cola, others have Pepsi), the Astronomical clock and much, much more.

Euroless Prague is also cheaper than most European cities (speculation has it that prices will rise next year when the euro is replacing the *kronen*) with a wide variety of places to eat. Any kind of restaurant is present for every kind of budget. It is a safe and friendly city where most people speak English, making it very easy to communicate if you don't speak Czech. If you're looking for a nice holiday destination that includes steampunk bits and pieces, Prague is well worth considering. •



COLUMN « GENTS

BY IAN BRACKLEY

Think of a new idea in bicycle design and someone will have already invented it, probably in the nineteenth century.

John Pinkerton, bicycle historian

ALIVING CONNECTION TO THE SPORTSMEN AND women of the *Belle Époque* is around us, on our streets every day. For some an amusement or a pastime, for many more a crucial means of transport; politicized, fetishized, loved and grudgingly tolerated, the bicycle can not only be a gent's "A to B" convenience; it can be a platform for a sublime blending of past and present.

What had started in the late 1860s as a masculine and high ticket display of conspicuous leisure had, by 1910 become a democratic, gender inclusive, mass produced means of transport. Today the bicycle is so ubiquitous, so familiar a sight that it is easy to forget that in the bike lane alongside the latest models that aim push the technological envelope are machines indistinguishable from those of one hundred years ago.

When one thinks about vintage or quasi-vintage cycling, one of the most iconic images that come to mind is the highwheel, "Ordinary," or Penny Farthing. There is something quintessentially Victorian in these machines; they are at once majestic, of unfamiliar proportion, even slightly absurd. Sadly, they are utterly unsuited to the realities of the modern road and even in the most bike friendly cities, the mounting of a penny farthing for one's daily commute would draw attention to the cyclist in a manner unbecoming a gentleman. As a reviewer by the *nom de plume* "Spiral" wrote in a 1903 edition of *Cycling*, "Riders never like to have anything uncommon about them, to attract the small boy's attention." If anyone desperately wishes to ride a high wheeler on a regular basis, it is suggested they run away and join whatever circus will have them. It is the mission of this column to promote an elegant mode of modern living by tastefully using history as inspiration. Highwheels are too obsolete and simply too dangerous to fit within this parameter. Regardless of how insanely fun I suspect they are.

It is best remembered that the penny farthing was a comparatively brief phase of cycling with a narrow following. It was the arrival of the "safety" bicycle in the 1880s that truly unleashed the potential of human powered transportation and ensured these vehicles a place in the everyday sphere for over a century and counting.

The gent who wishes to get a small taste of what cycling was like during the high Victorian era would do well to consider a fixed gear bicycle. The fixed gear bicycle has been the subject of some derision of late thanks to hipster fashion victims appropriating it in an ironic adoption of proletariat material culture. This

unfortunate association obscures the remarkable fact that this most simple, most basic form of pedal power has had a continued following long after a century of technological innovations should have made it a historical footnote. Bicycle couriers have long appreciated the arrangement for its uncomplicated ruggedness. As a former courier explained to the author, there is very little that can go wrong with a fixed gear that can't be remedied inside of an hour with the most basic of tools, even by the side of the road if need be.

Mounting a fixed gear for the first time this summer, I gained an appreciation that transcended "fixie" proponents' mantra of "more control." The instinct to coast, learned from childhood, was shattered in an instant by a gentle nudge from the pedals and the promise of forward motion. In order to work this ancient mode of bicycle one must move their body *with* the machine. In moving with the machine one moves *as a machine*. Couple this bodily augmentation with speed (what Aldous Huxley called "the only truly modern sensation") and the effect is profound.

As the "safety" configuration helped open the bicycle's liberating potential to a wider range of riders there developed a demand for improvements that would maximize the machine's versatility. As Henry Sturmey wrote in 1901:

"although the human motor possesses far more elasticity than the petrol engine, its limits are very soon reached, and a variable speed gear is the correct thing for the rider who desires to combine the maximum of distance and speed with the minimum of exertion."

Changing gears is something we today take for granted (provided we don't simply opt out of the issue entirely). Often we are overwhelmed with gears as manufacturers engage in one-upmanship. Automotive journalist James May, writing on the trend of car makers adding ever more gears to their transmissions pointed out that the Model T Ford had a mere two speeds and that was enough to mobilize turn of the century America.

By 1907 the Sturmey-Archer company was producing three-speed hubs extremely close in design to hubs made today, the chief difference being the use of more modern, lighter materials. These and similar hubs are the ideal quasi-vintage arrangement for the retrocentric gent's machine. It is the author's opinion that three to five speeds are an ideal number. The cyclists of the early years of the last century seldom had to distract themselves wondering if they were in the right gear.

The epicyclic gear hub, for all its advantages was

lately poised in many New World markets to pass into the domain of specialized vintage parts prior to a sudden renewal of interest in “retro” bicycle designs in the 1990s. Two decades on and happily this rugged and masterfully designed piece of Edwardian technology is in no danger of being forgotten any time soon.

The more commonly seen derailleur system has had a more fitful history. Designs for a system that moved a drive chain from one gear to another had been patented going back to Watt’s steam engine of the late eighteenth century but it was not until the late 1920s to early ‘30s that designs akin to the modern device were widely applied to cycling.

Whatever the gear arrangement it is the frame that, more than anything, will communicate the rider’s sense of style.

There are two broad styles of frame that synch with and proclaim a rider’s retrocentricity. The first and senior of the two is variously termed an English Roadster, a tourer, a city bike or “Dutch” bike by sections of the Anglosphere. This straightforward design, traceable back to the 1890s is a compromise between versatility and comfort. The tires are wide enough to manage everything up to decidedly off-road terrain. The handlebars are primly turned back to engender an upright posture. The author maintains that the only dignified position in which to ride is upright with a straight back. Boy racers and more adventurous types are welcome to ride prone but

I’m quite partial to my comfort and leaning forward never projects the image of effortless every gentleman aspires to. The classic roadster, that most unassuming of vehicles has spread across the globe and woven itself into the fabric of millions of lives; across much of Europe, Asia and Africa, the default bicycle is a roadster that wouldn’t appear out of place at the turn of the century.

If the roadster represents the stability of a design that matured long ago, the next example is a case of a historic style being revised and enjoying a second life beyond being a brief seasonal novelty. The classic American “cruiser” proudly wears the styling and design theories of the 1930s through to the 1950s. These machines are curvaceous, comprised of sweeping lines that disguise its (some would say “overbuilt”) mass with visual streamlining. These bold, forceful lines continue up into the handlebars which are often poised in wide crescent sweeps of chrome. Coupled to this frame are ample “balloon tires” to better shrug off road debris and potholes.

The resurgence of the American cruiser has returned the graceful lines of the Art Deco movement to our streets, while the English roadster quietly announces a comfortable and easy refinement with a cosmopolitan sense of timelessness.

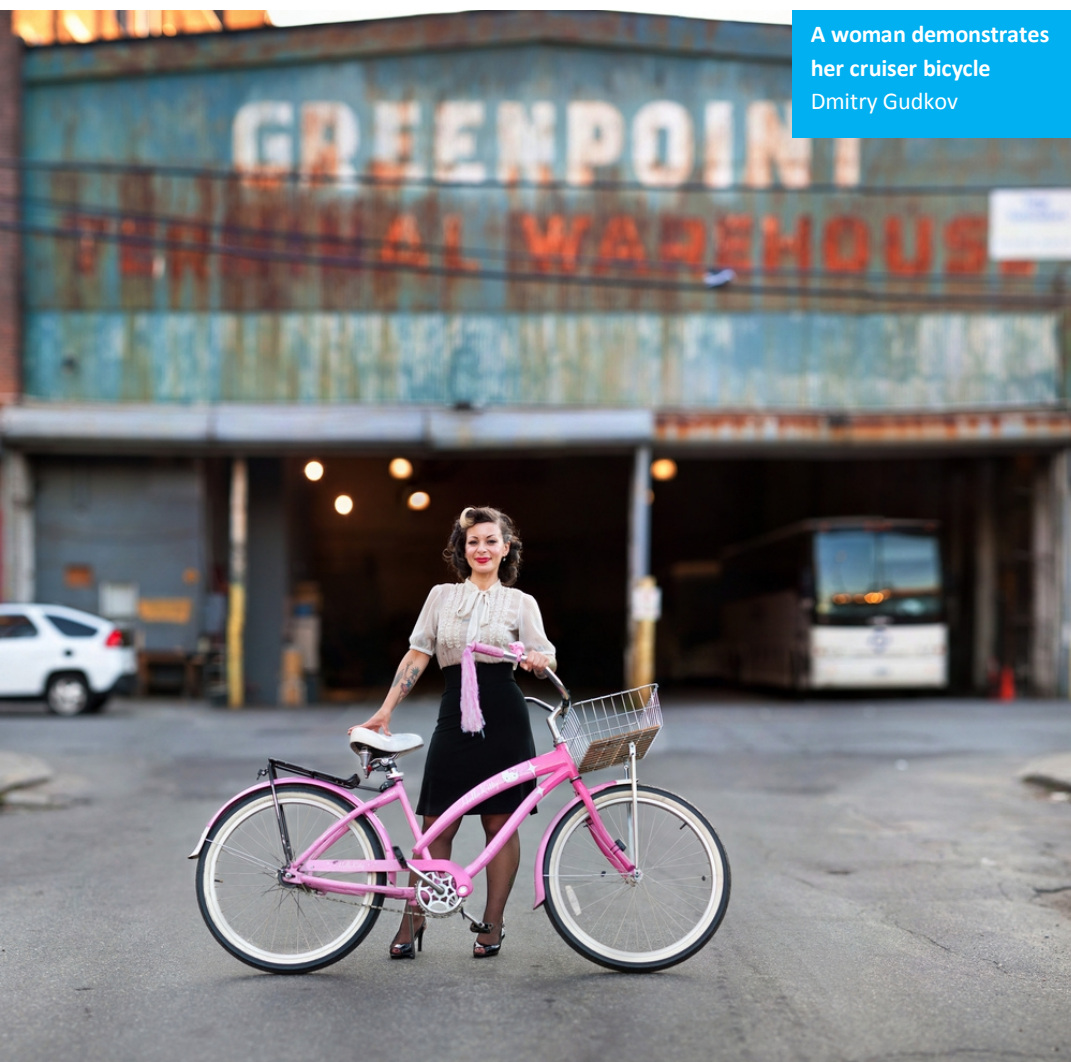
If trends in automobile design resembled the fashions in bicycles, every fourth or fifth car on the road today would be an only slightly updated version of an

Austin 7 or a Chrysler Airflow, and each one personalized in some small but evident way.

A final note of interest to the historically attuned cycling gent is the growing popularity of the “Tweed Runs.” These vintage and quasi-vintage massed bicycle rides have cropped up in cities around the world following the initial Tweed Run in London, England. Tweed Runs typically straddle a middle ground between (encouraged) historical authenticity and more laid back retrocentric play. Seek out contacts within your hometown’s cycling community and clubs and perhaps consider initiating this charming and politely subversive bit of current cycling culture.

So one last time before the onset of winter, bring your bike out of the shed and experience the joy of velocity born of bodily movement. Put foot to pedal and be carried across the face of the earth with the ease of an angel beating its wings.

A woman demonstrates
her cruiser bicycle
Dmitry Gudkov





THE STEAMPUNK WARDROBE

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

AFTER THE FRIVOLOUS FASHIONS OF THE 1920S which included the flapper dresses and short hairstyles for women, fashion found a new middle ground in the 1930s.

Women's hair remained wavy, but the cuts were longer again (unlike the bob cuts of the twenties) and actresses like Jean Harlow set an example for women dying their hair, even though that practice was still considered rather scandalous back in those days.

The dresses and skirts became steadily longer, moving from below the knee in the early thirties to more of an ankle length by 1939. Even though the length changed, they remained slim and elegant in both daily and formal wear. Skirts were combined with lovely shirts, and figure hugging cardigans.

The evening wear was, just like daily wear, an elegant affair. Evening dresses were bias cut and sewn diagonally against the thread grain, thus creating soft, flowing lines in the garments. Back in the day one needed to have a thin figure for this dress to work as it was so figure hugging. Thankfully techniques having been reinvented over the years to make it far more accessible for women of all body types.

If you are uncertain about a '30s garments, you can always replace the traditional styles by an ankle length bell skirt, which is also flowing but less figure hugging.

Another alternative is of course a nice pair of wide legged trousers, an elegant cut that was commonly worn during those times. These trousers had gained popularity



after female factory workers started wearing them during World War I. They were standard part of any resort wardrobe (travel especially to warmer climates during cold winter months had gained popularity during the thirties) but there's no reason you shouldn't be able to wear them with your '30s themed outfit!

These were also the times when the zipper was introduced as a fastener, thanks to the famous designer Elsa Schiaparelli. This makes finding pieces that are period appropriate rather easier.

Accessories largely remained those of the 1920s as cloche hats and fur stoles were still popular. Of course, there is no need to use real fur as there are plenty of

lovely faux fur alternatives, which are easy to find in most high street shops this coming fall and winter season.

Shoes remained elegant high heeled affairs for the most part but you should feel free to replace them with your favorite pair, as long as they're elegant. Elegance is the key word for this time period.

As for men, I'm quite sure that many of the fans of historical

Roman Makhmutov
www.makhmutov.com





The Duke of Windsor
while governor of the
Bahamas, 1943
Courtesy of Life

fashions among them will find the 1930s a period to their liking indeed.

Even more so than in women's fashion, the suits for men were broad shouldered and suit jackets gave the impression of broad chests. It also saw a rising popularity of the double breasted suit. Dark fabrics were popular all year round and pinstripes were added often. In spring these stripes often supplied a spot of color. Plaids also increased in popularity.

Fabrics such as cotton seersucker and gabardine became increasingly popular as the decade advanced, especially for summer wear and specifically the "Palm Beach" suit.

Europe proved a significant inspiration for men's wear of the times, with the Duke of Kent and Prince of Wales as role models. Their style was rapidly taken over by Hollywood actors such as Cary Grant and Fred Astaire. From seeing them wear them on the silver screen they moved on quickly to main stream fashions.

Another significant influence on the style were the zoot suits as worn by gangsters. Mobsters were easily recognizable by taking the styles to the extremes. Stripes were bolder than the average pin stripe and the same went for the colors of their suits and ties. The cut of their suits was more pronounced in the tailoring with narrower waists and broader shoulders. In France, gangsters even went as far as having their initials embroidered on their suit jackets.

Last but not least, fedora hats came in colors that were quite unseen before and unspeakable due to the unconventional shades going from almond to greens and lilac besides the more traditional shades of black, brown and dark grey. This is something to keep in mind when portraying a mobster.

An alternative to the zoot suit is the slightly later dated Broadway suit.

Now you have all the basics of 1930s fashion, you can easily put together a nice period outfit, and steam it up to your own liking with the typical accessories. Or keep it as is of course, which fits in perfectly with the dieselpunk period styles!

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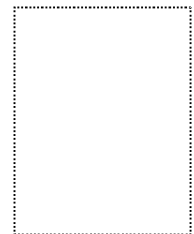


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Happy
Halloween

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Happy Talk Like an Air Pirate Day

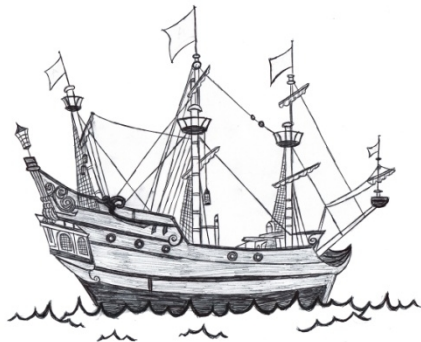
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19	<i>International Talk like a(n) (Air) Pirate Day</i>
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21	<i>H.G. Wells Day</i>
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31	<i>Hallowe'en</i>



This year, Hilde Heyvaert provides two steampunk themed **birthday calendars** with each issue of the *Gatehouse Gazette*.

The calendars for November, December will be attached to our next edition.