

# HALF BAKED

Published by the Revolutionary Socialists

No 2.

The Bakery, 120 Greville St. Prahran

5 Mar 69

## FABULOUS 'FABULA', CHARLIE CHUCKLES AND THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG RANALD

For the past six months Melbourne whiz kid Pete Steedman has been busy - growing Jeff Bate sideburns and getting ready to bring out a new magazine called Broadside. Steedman was formerly editor of the student newspapers Lots Wife and Farrago.

The first issue of Broadside, which appeared this week, is published by the Age newspaper group, which is itself headed by one of the oldest whiz kids in the business, slick, blond and baby-faced Ranald MacDonald, the young Managing Director of David Syme and Co. Ltd.

It's said that Steedman and MacDonald met on the Carlton claret and corduroy circuit about nine months ago and that Steedman talked himself into the job of editor of a "with it" political journal at a later luncheon.

But it seems that Steedman wasn't as convincing as he'd hoped to be - Broadside is running on a shoe-string budget and Steedman says that he's working for peanuts. As editor Steedman is paid the salary of a "B" grade journalist, about half the sum which the Age is said to have offered the Herald's social writer, Claudia, to move over to the Age. He shares a poky little pantry-like office on the eighth floor of the Age building in Collins Street with his blonde secretary, a telephone, a desk, a filing cabinet and a spare chair. This setup doesn't seem to appeal to Steedman whose desire to impress is revealed by his secretary's telephone technique. Speaking to Peter Couchman of "This Day Tonight" the secretary was having some trouble convincing TDT that Broadside was red hot news, so she says: "Look, perhaps it would be better if I switched you through to Mr. Steedman himself". Clasp the microphone of the handset to her bosom she gives the buttons on top of the telephone a couple of clicks and passes the ~~xxxxx~~ handset over the small desk to her boss. He holds it silently for a few seconds and then growls abruptly "Yes, Steedman".

## CHUCKLERS WEEKLY

Perhaps it's unfair to judge a fortnightly magazine by its first issue. Certainly the first issue of Broadside is bewildering enough to make a judgement difficult. The front cover is a direct copy of the New Statesman's but when opened up Broadside looks more like a cross between Nation and Oz. Steedman rejects these comparisons, he says the concept of Broadside is new and quotes from Broadside's advertising promotion sheet to prove it: "Broadside is a national independent magazine - broad and excitingly new in concept - bold in opinion, informative in content and provocative in many fields of discussion and comment." When pressed to be a little more specific about Broadside's editorial policy he described it as "a sort of adult Chucklers Weekly".

## PRIME MISTRESS

Charlie Chuckles has held down his job with Sir Frank Packer's Sunday Telegraph for something like twenty years but if the centre page comic strip spread in the first Broadside lives up to its promise Steedman and young Ranald may very soon come to a parting of the ways.

The centre pages of Broadside No 1. introduce "the newest, wildest, most offbeat comic strip yet ..... FABULA!" Broadside goes on to tell us that "In the great Southern continent - a precarious outpost of civilisation surrounded by enormous numbers of hostile coloreds - the capital, beautiful and serene, is the headquarters of "Operation Panic", the unique form of government practised by this cultured and sophisticated people. Master-minding the operations through

Parliament House is the fantastic, fabulous, FABULA; to the world at large she is merely private secretary to the Prime Minister, Sir Jim Grey, who plucked her from the obscurity of the typing pool and took her into the corridors of power. But to the readers of Broadside she is revealed as the "Grey" eminence, the dynamic patriot putting herself physically and mentally at the disposal of her country, fighting its foes and preserving its cultural way of life."

Of course Steedman will not admit to any similarity between the fantastic, fabulous FABULA and Ainslie Gotto, the 22 year old private secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. John Grey Gorton. Moreover Steedman denied that a future edition of Broadside would reveal how one year after FABULA stepped into her new job she was able to "Whip" up enough support to have her former boss, Mr. Dreary Vermin, promoted into Sir Jim Grey's Cabinet.

Its generally on the visual side that Broadside shines and Tanner's cartoon of the calf carrying Jeff and Zara on their honeymoon groaning: "Wouldn't it give you the aggravated nervous dispepsias" lends some credence to Steedman's claim that Broadside is quite independent from the Age.

In the other pages columnist Arthur Calwell stirs a fortnightly possum and Andrew Rossiter (nee Peacyck) writes a column that could double for an Age editorial. John Playford's piece on the "civilian militarists" (men of the Tom Millar Harry Gelber ilk who want to set up "strategic studies" institutes in Australian universities) is the most carefully researched and worthwhile article in the first issue.

Having read Broadside 1 the question that immediately springs to mind is: Can Broadside continue in this form, or will Charlie eventually be forced to "chuckle under" to the Age management.

ALICE'S BOOKLIST - Some of the books available from Alice's Restaurant Bookshop, 116 Greville Street Prahran.

The Making of the English Working Class ....	E.P. Thompson	Pelican	\$3.05
May Day Manifesto 1968 ....	Ed. Raymond Williams	Penguin	\$0.65
Communist China ...	Ed. Franz Schurmann & Orville Scholl	Penguin	\$1.45
The Dialectics of Liberation	Ed. David Cooper	Pelican	\$0.85
Revolution in the Revolution	Regis Debray		\$0.65
French Revolution 1968 ...	Sealy & McConville		\$1.00
Again Korea ...	Wilfred Burchett		\$2.15
Miami & the Seige of Chicago ...	Norman Mailer		\$4.60
NLF Shopping bags .....			50 cents
Obsolete Communism - The Left Wing Alternative .....	Cohn-Bendit		\$3.25
One Dimensional Man ....	H. Marcuse		\$1.15
Episodes of the Revolutionary War ....	Che Guevara		\$1.85