**Tech notes for trekkies**

Star Trek Technical Manual

Fraz. Joseph

If ever a book was destined to replace The Making of Star Trek as the bible of Star Trek fans, then the Star Trek Technical Manual (TM: 17900) is it.

The book is prefaced with a memo from an army security officer. He explains that the regulations, diagrams, specifications and general information contained in the book were discovered in the form of a printout on an Armed Forces computer terminal. Attempts to trace the information to its point of origin — a radio transmission from "the United Federation of Planets" — failed.

Another glaring problem is the tendency of the Star Trek manual to substitute for every technical term in the primary series with the equivalent technical term in the Milky Way Galaxy. This is not characteristic of a society in which all forms of intelligent life are equal. In this respect the manual poorly reflects some of the goals of the Star Trek television series, since it was written for humans, perhaps some basis for forgiving the book's occasional "humor". However, it is fascinating. Whether the reader is interested in a floor plan for his starship, a copy of the Articles of Federation, or just in hours of interesting reading, the Star Trek Technical Manual is a must for every Trekker's home library.

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**A new kind of silent movie**

Silent Movie
Mel Brooks

Mel Brooks' new film, Silent Movie, although not his best effort, is an entertaining movie that promises an evening of laughter for the entire audience. The movie does drag a bit in spots, but as a whole it moves rather well.

The show is a silent movie within a silent movie. This absence of dialogue in Brooks' production makes the comedy routine just that much more effective. The audience finds itself pulling for the good guys (Mel Brooks, Marty Feldman, and Dom DeLuise), laughing at the bad guys (a const-

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**Story of the Rosenburg case as seen by E.L. Doctorow**

History is a form of fiction, the novelist claims. By its nature, history provides the sense of separation and objectivity needed to make narration believable.

Doctorow proves his thesis with each appearance in print. Each of his works depends on its historical context to give it form and definition.

Told by the young son of a fireworks manufacturer and popped by luminaries such as Coolhouse Porter, a night club pianist turned revolutionary by the loss of his son, Emma Goldman, the feminist anarchist; and Henry Ford, the automobile manufacturer, as well as highbrow immigrants freezing and whoring on the Lower East Side, and middle class manufacturers secure in their Westchester citadels, the novel moves to the syncopeation of Joplins' Maple Leaf and Yippie.

Doctorow's devices seem to work less well in Ragtime than in his earlier works. The novel as cinema, with easily defined scenes, traveling shots, close-up, and few direct statements of the characters' thoughts or emotions, worked very well in Welcome to Hard Times, his Western novel, but is flawed here.

His use of "real" people as characters was successful in The Book of Daniel, the story of the Rosenbros case as seen through the eyes of their son, but fails in Ragtime. While the "made-up" characters in Ragtime are warm and believable, the historical characters (Emma Goldman, Henry Ford), come across as cardboard caricatures and props for the others.

For all its flaws in construction and characterization, however, Ragtime is very readable. Doctorow's phrasing and composition are uniquely masterful.

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**by Kent Pitman**

From the more important information. Fortunately, most of the book is not like this.

Another glaring problem is the tendency for all names and pictures to depict humans as the principal inhabitants of the Milky Way Galaxy. This is not characteristic of a society in which all forms of intelligent life are equal. In this respect the manual poorly reflects some of the goals of the Star Trek television series, since it was written for humans, perhaps some basis for forgiving the book's occasional "humor". However, it is fascinating. Whether the reader is interested in a floor plan for his starship, a copy of the Articles of Federation, or just in hours of interesting reading, the Star Trek Technical Manual is a must for every Trekker's home library.