F & M INTERVIEW
JACK RADEY
Red Star Rising

by Friedrich Helfferich

Our hobby, especially its California chapter, has always had its share of out-of-the-ordinary personalities. But it was hardly prepared for Jack Radey. Bursting onto the scene seemingly out of nowhere, Jack has made quite a splash with his **Korsun Pocket** *(reviewed in this issue), a game that for a first effort is truly remarkable, and perhaps even more with his, to say the least, unabashed political commentary. I thought Greene was Red, but he pales by comparison with Radical Radey — if radical only with respect to his place in the political spectrum.*

F&M: Jack, it takes but one look at you and your game to see that you are not out of the standard mold. Will you tell us about your background and what made you the man you are?

Jack Radey: An overactive appetite..., oops, I guess that's not what you mean. Born and raised in Chicago, graduated from high school in Merced, California, in 1964. I have worked as a political office manager, journalist, chauffeur and bodyguard, warehouseman, casual longshoreman, political organizer, educator, treasurer, machinist, game designer, developer, researcher, production assistant, small-time farmer, and full-time father.

F&M: For your age that is quite a list. Just to pick out a few of the not so common occupations, for which paper or journal have you written, whom have you educated, and, above all, whose body have you guarded?

JR: I have written for the New York *Worker* in the late '60s and for Berkeley's *The People's World* in the '70s. I have worked for the Education Department of the CPUSA (Communist Party). The "body" was that of Gus Hall — not that he needed a guard: his fist is the size of my head, and in case of trouble my instinct would have been to hide behind him. But he needed a chauffeur because New York State had denied licenses to those who had jumped bail on Smith Act convictions.

F&M: Is there military tradition in your family?

JR: My father was in the U.S. Navy in World War II; my step-father, a mortar platoon leader in Korea. My mother's father was at Verdun, on Kaiser Wilhelm's side, and her stepfather was offered, but rejected, a commission in von Rundstedt's regiment in the Weimar Republic. If that is what you call tradition.

F&M: You must feel very strongly about politics, to judge by your using your game as a vehicle for forceful — and, shall we say, unconventional — political commentary. What experiences have turned you into such a political activist?

JR: Growing up in Chicago's Hyde Park, I lived in a neighborhood where a four-block walk in either direction could take you from the depths of poverty to the lap of luxury. It wasn't too hard to detect that something was amiss. Also, my mother's family were refugees from Nazi Germany, an experience which, at a minimum, is enough to alert one to the fact that politics affects everyone. Moreover, I had the privilege of growing up in a house with no television, but plenty of books. Among the authors were John Reed, Langston Hughes, Howard Fast, and Mikhail Sholokov. The events of my youth that had most effect on me were the Southern Civil Rights Movement and the Cuban Revolution. Both taught me that people who were determined and united could change history.

I went to school at the University of California in Berkeley (on an AFL-CIO scholarship) in the fateful fall of 1964, was an alternate member of the Free Speech Movement Executive Committee, worked in the movement in every conceivable capacity, and was one of the youngest arrested in the great Sproul Hall sit-in. I discovered that political activism appealed to me and was far more educational than an academic career, so my formal higher education consisted of about three classes (not counting two years in a community college machine shop program). When the Vietnam War got going in a big way, I was active in the anti-war movement in every capacity. I refused induction into the Army, but avoided jail because the Army screwed up their paperwork.

F&M: What brought you into wargaming?

JR: I was interested in military history from an early age and played with toy soldiers a lot. In 1960 I saw **Tactics II** and **Gettysburg** for sale at the Museum of Science and Industry and had the good fortune of being accompanied by my grandfather. I've been hooked ever since. Incidentally, it was Milton Friedman's son who taught me to play (we went to the same school).

F&M: What made you decide to try your hand as a wargame designer and producer?

JR: Ever since 1960 I have modified every game I have played. I designed a few games for my own amusement, and after a while I decided my rewrites were comparing quite decently with the originals and, at least to me, seemed more realistic and playable. I used to sit in front of a lathe at work, watching a spade-drill take a long chip out of a hunk of stainless steel, concocting new rules for **Drang Nach Osten.** I knew I'd rather be making wargames than nuclear reactor parts, so when the job gave out I did some checking and decided it might just be possible to make a living in this racket.

F&M: Are you running People's War Games as a full-time job or "on the side"?

JR: On the side, it seems: I have a seven-month old son who doesn't believe in sleeping.

F&M: How do you manage the work load, and who helps you?

JR: We muddle through somehow. My wife handles the artwork and I do the rest. In addition, in my current project I have been getting a lot of help from other people in the hobby.

F&M: Do you have other interests and hobbies besides politics and wargaming?

JR: I raise kids (two sons), ducks, vegetables, and occasional hell.

F&M: Your outstanding research on your topic and the excellent physical quality of your game — and that at a reasonable and competitive price — refute the often-heard argument that the hobby's "Third World" cannot afford such things. How did *you* manage?

JR: The research — translations, photocopying, correspondence, etc. — was actually expensive only in time, and I was determined to know just what it was that I was trying to simulate. It never occurred to me to do a less than complete job. We had no intention of skimping on the physical quality of the game either. My wife, who knows every phase of graphics production from original artwork to running a press, helped us avoid the pitfalls that many small companies run into. (My heart went out to Stephen Newberg after reading his article last summer [in *F&M* #16].) The game was printed and die-cut in union shops, by people who knew what they were doing. Finally, we are probably taking less of a profit than some companies, but I really wouldn't know.

F&M: Apart from time and devotion, it takes a lot of hard cash to get a wargame company started in our capitalist society. How did you finance your venture?

JR: Our own savings, family help, and very reasonable creditors pulled the project through, considerably over budget.

F&M: How has **Korsun Pocket** been doing on the market place? Have the sales met your expectations?

JR: I didn't really know what to expect, this being my first wargame project.

F&M: Are most of your sales by direct mail or through stores?

JR: Through stores, although there has been a substantial amount of mail orders.

F&M: It is a general tenet that the historian and thus, by implication, the designer of a historical simulation should view his topic dispassionately. How do you reconcile this with your openly and passionately siding, in your game, with one of the opponents?

JR: Whose general tenet? As Karl Marx said, "philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point is to change it." Anyone who studies the Second World War and fails to draw passionate conclusions about fascism is lacking, to me, in both humanity and his understanding of his own self-interest. Unfortunately, a great part of our hobby hides an incredible anti-communist bias behind a thin mask of dispassion. I would prefer the general tenet that the historian or game designer should search for truth without *bias,* not without *passion.*

F&M: Command Perspectives, another new company, dedicated their first game, **Sharpsburg,** to "the gallant men, of both sides, who gave the last measure of their devotion to God and country..." while you dedicate yours to "the men and women of the Red Army..." Do you feel Command Perspectives were wrong when honoring also those who, some might say, were upholding slavery?

JR: I very much like the folks at Command Perspectives but we don't see eye to eye on that one. Many poor white farmers died fighting to protect the slave-owning landlords who were oppressing them, but their gallantry is not glorious, it is sad. I do not believe that gallantry in the cause of evil deserves honor. Should I also have dedicated my game to the men of SS *"Wiking"?*

F&M: No game design proceeds exactly as planned. The work brings out facets previously overlooked or underestimated, and playtesting turns up the need to "tune" the design by modifications of the effectiveness or capabilities of units. Have you experienced this with **Korsun Pocket?**

JR: Of course, Murphy's Laws have been working well. One problem in tuning was to make the offense strong enough, but not so strong that the initial Soviet drive would sweep the board clean. Another problem was to provide the proper amount of supply and artillery ammunition. I am still not sure if I solved the latter correctly.

F&M: Has the design work to any extent changed, or sharpened, your perception of the battle?

JR: One of the most exciting aspects of researching and designing the game was the interaction between game and history. When something seemed badly amiss in the way a playtest was going, a careful reexamination of my sources always pointed the way out. Conversely, where the research had left questions open, the game pointed out clear answers that were logically consistent and made sense. The clearest lesson I learned was just how close-run the battle was — despite the way things look on Turn One.

F&M: I have heard you quoted as having had a low opinion of the fighting quality of the SS *"Wiking"* division. Yet, in your game, the division is as sound as your least favored historian, Paul Carell, would have it. Could this be an example of changing perspective as you penetrated your topic?

JR: Actually, I began my work assuming that the division was a first-class unit, but was immediately faced with the puzzle what it was doing up in the swampy ground near the Dnepr when the front south of it was desperately weak. Sources, among them Leon Degrelle's book, revealed that the division was being rebuilt from green *"volksdeutsche"* conscripts, whose skills and enthusiasm were shaky. While other units of the division seem to have been up to par (and its commander, a hot shot), the "Westland" and "Germania" regiments would have received a lower morale rating if I had given all units in the game individual ratings. I decided against that, to avoid further complicating the game, for lack of sufficient information on most of the Soviet divisions, and so as not to crowd the counters with yet another item of information. As a result, the division in the game appears more stead fast.

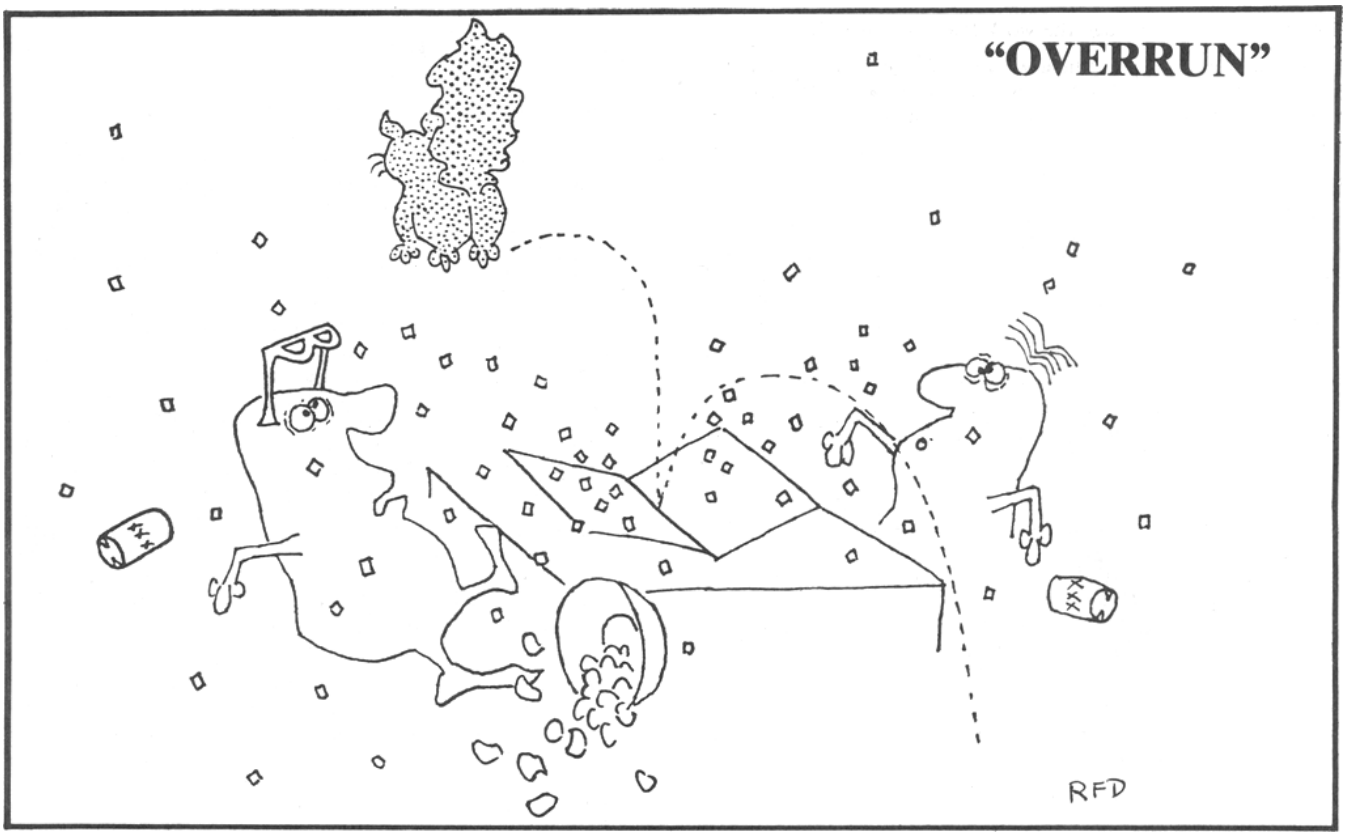
As to Paul Carell, also known as Dr. Paul Schmidt of the Nazi Foreign Ministry's propaganda section, I would classify him as a highly skilled propagandist, not a historian. Using German documents from the archives I caught him in several what appear to be bare-faced lies about the battle.

F&M: As *F&M's* review of your game has brought out, your personal and emotional partisanship has not affected design and balance of your game. This seems a remarkable feat of self-control. Have you found it difficult?

JR: Not in the least. First, designing a game that was not true to history would be a foolish exercise. **I** did not assume *any* account to be completely accurate. Rather, I compared as many useful sources as possible, to obtain a real picture of operational combat in that period. Then a model can be built that will work realistically, and we can *learn* something. In addition, any game based on reality cannot but improve the picture most wargamers have of the Red Army in action; there have been so many games based on German accounts *only,* presenting a badly warped concept of reality. SPI provides the most blatant examples; note how they botched playtesting **Drive on Stalingrad** in their fixation that the Soviets' only hope lay in flight. As to their **Korsun** game, we'd better draw the curtain in silence on one of the worst mutilations of history SPI has committed. The idea of distorting my game to make the Soviets look better than they were — or the Germans, worse — would serve no useful purpose, and I needed no self-control to avoid it.

F&M: The uninformed public often imagines the majority of wargamers to be a bunch of militant militarists and ultra-rightists. Actually, the hobby seems to have attracted more than its share of pacifists and leftists. Do you have an explanation for this paradox?

JR: I was pleasantly surprised when I started attending conventions. Since many of my generation were strongly **influenced** by leftists and pacifist ideas, especially during the



Vietnam War, it should hardly be surprising that there are a lot of us — including a sizable number of anti-war Vietnam veterans. Indeed, the fact is there are more of us in the general population than the capitalist press, and hence the "uninformed public," think.

On the other hand, it is understandable how one could get the wrong impression about the hobby. The visual appearance of so many games and magazines is one of the heroic soldiers of the Third Reich in action, with game names to match. The right wing in the hobby is the most visible, but not half as large as one might think.

F&M: Obviously, you have strong opinions about the historical, political, and social responsibilities of game designers and producers. Would you care to state them?

JR: Briefly, I think the most important question facing the human race is that of war or peace, because our very existence depends on it. Those who know something about military history and science bear a special responsibility in the struggle for peace. Echoing the defense industry's propaganda and whipping up anti-Sovietism at every opportunity, as well as basing every game scenario for conflicts in the near future on Soviet aggression against some country, is to do deliberate damage to the cause of world peace and, hence, to the future of us all. What is worse is designing games for the military to contribute to the accelerating progress toward world war. While the press spokesman for the banking and oil monopolies call for a military intervention in the Middle East, at least one prominent designer has gone to work for the U.S. Marine Corps to design a training game. If our next President rolls an "exchange" on some landing beach in the Arab (Persian) Gulf, there won't be any game designers put into aluminum boxes to be shipped home.

As to history, I think we have covered that point fairly well. Our responsibility as researchers and designers is to teach something real about history. Many games don't, and the worst offenders tend to be those that deal with the Soviet Union. Here, the bias of some designers causes many problems, and usually teaches false lessons.

To sum up, I feel we in the hobby must promote peace, not war; and treat history with the respect it deserves, not play fast and loose with reality in order to model one's own prejudices.

Gee, was that brief?

F&M: I take it recent events in Afghanistan have not shaken your faith in the Soviet Union's non-aggressiveness and in the Red Army's continuing, to quote from **Korsun Pocket's** dedication, to make "the world a better place for [your] children to live in"?

JR: No, they haven't. I think the Soviets have helped Afghanistan preserve its young and fragile revolution from the threats of both a feudal-religious counter-revolution (with generous support from the CIA and China), which would almost certainly have led to a situation like those we have seen in Chile, Indonesia, Guatemala, or Zaire, and with a potential Pol Pot in power in the person of the deposed Hafizullah Amin. Clearly, had the left been stronger in Afghanistan, this situation would not have arisen — but in a bad situation I believe the Soviets acted responsibly.

F&M: How, in your view, have the established companies in our hobby measured up to your standards of responsibility? How about *F&M?*

JR: SPI, which used to reflect relatively progressive views a few years ago, has since become far and away the most irresponsible; GDW is pretty good, and others vary in between. A recent game on the bombing of Vietnam could have done an excellent job, had it included all the kindergartens, hospitals, schools, dikes, and other "military targets" that took such a beating.

F&M has been rightly criticized for an overabundance of pictures of the German Army, but in general, I think, has maintained an editorial policy that is fairly reasonable historically and generally uninvolved in questions of war and peace. The level of responsibility of the reviewers varies, of course. The best thing about *F&M* and its most important service to the hobby is the policy of promoting free discussion.

F&M: Apropos free discussion, did you follow the free-for-all in *l'affaire Reed,* and would you care to state your view?

JR: I think a lot less emphasis on prickly egos and egotistical..., well, never mind. First of all, Randy got unfairly hit in a review on several counts. The fact that his reaction was to throw a tantrum has diverted the discussion to his intemperate remarks instead of the problem of best ensuring a high quality of games and game reviews. There is a way to solve this problem. If a designer has cited his sources (as Randy did in his game) and the

[Continued on Page 56]

FIRING LINE [Continued from Page 6]

Glass Bead Game, to be presented this fall at New York's New School. Its subject? "If matter bends light and time and the fabric of the universe, what becomes of reality? Complex chains of chemical reactions trying to transmogrify into pure thought —matter trying to convert into energy... and disappearing into non-dimensionality."

And Off Broadway: *Barefoot in Park Avenue*

Meanwhile, just off Broadway, James D. Funnigan's celebrated tragicomedy of new quarters, domestic strife, a troubled delivery man (and a Children's Crusade of "barefoot" designers), sustained by Simon R. Edmondson's able art direction, continues its run well into a second year before ever more appreciative audiences — and with no end in sight.

GoingsOn

WV U-CON II — for those who need a translation: the second convention of the Simulation Gaming Society of West Virginia University — will be held May 2-4 at the university's Student Union in Morgantown. There will be over 50 boardgame, miniatures, and role playing tournaments as well as exhibitions, seminars, etc. For information, write to Bryan Bullinger, 240 McLane Ave., Morgantown, WV 26505.

For several years the Central Virginia Wargame Club (6 East Main St., Richmond, VA 23219) has been playing "monster games" between teams of commanders over extended periods of time — "the only way to play," in their opinion. The club is interested in establishing communications with like-minded hobby members, is willing to answer questions about bigger games, and is hoping a weekend game against another group can some day be arranged. Aspiring St. Georges should write to Dick Walker at the above address.

ORCCON NORCCON... For the few who might not already have heard: ORCCON, the "ORIGINS of the West", was cancelled on short notice. Differences between the organizers and the California State University, Fullerton, have been cited as the reason.

As in previous years, The Citadel will organize a ride by chartered bus to ORIGINS from New London, Connecticut. Round trip cost is expected to be between $22 and $35. For information or reservations, send self-addressed stamped enveloped to Pat Flory, The Citadel, Groton, CT 06340.

Meanwhile, ORIGINS '80 itself, originally scheduled for July 18-20 at the University of Delaware, has been shifted to June 27-29 at Widener College in Chester, Pennsylvania, where it was held last year.

NANCON 88-111 will be held July 4-6 at Houston's Holiday Inn (6701 S. Main). On the program are many tournaments, among them **Dungeons & Dragons, Traveller, Kingmaker, Afrika Korps,** and miniatures, as well as open gaming 72 hours, auctions, seminars, and films. Registration $10.00 until June 1, $15.00 thereafter. For information, write to Frank A. Joines, Jr., *Nan's Toys and Games,* 1385 Galleria Mall, 5015 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77056, or call (713)-622-0760 after 4:00 PM Central Time.

The Pacific Northwest will have is STRATACON ONE on June 20-22 in the Kerrisdale Community Center in Vancouver, B.C., featuring ancient, Napoleonic, modern armor, and naval miniatures and **Dungeons & Dragons,** and providing space for board gaming. For information, write to Allan J. Wotherspoon, 326 Greensboro Place, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V5X 4M4, enclosing self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Ooops!

It is not easy to run a magazine when editor and printer are 1300 miles apart time is too precious to allow proofs to be sent back and forth. So, in *F&M* #20 we goofed again and didn't catch it. For the second time we must apologize for the same embarrasing misspelling in the advertisement for *Professional Wrestling,* a slip which, by a wide stretch of imagination, could even be taken as an ethnic slur; of course, it's *Geeks* who needn't apply! And then our advertising lady, no doubt with Iran and Afghanistan on her mind, jumped the gun with the **U. S. Airforce** ad intended for this April 1 issue. (If you didn't before, look now in #20, page 44). Almost needless to add, designer Jim Hind in his letter did *not* misspell Auchinleck!

If this goes on, we'll have to make **Ooops!** a regular column.

The Real Thing

The *Original Vintage Car Store, Inc.,* of Nyack, New York, offers a 1943 Sherman M4A3 tank, fully equipped, at a special discount price of $35,000.00. From the list of suggested uses: ground breaking ceremonies, gate crashing, home wrecking, collecting debts, influencing congressmen, and deterrent for in-laws and outlaws. For more information, call (914)-358-3800.

PLAYER'S NOTES [Continued from Page 53]

rolls for personal interactions between characters:

parent	parent	parent	parent
adult	adult	adult	adult
child	child	child	child

A clash — to be avoided — occurs if the arrows of the phasing and non-phasing players' moves ("stimulus" and "response") cross in this matrix, as they do in the situation at right but not at left. This simplistic system not only lacks the element of chance and unpredictability, but is easily subverted by a player skilled in tick-tack-toe and leads its psychological rationale *ad absurdum.* Your winning strategy: address your partner on a child-to-child basis and you are safe from crossovers (left figure) — *never* as adult to adult, because the arrow through the middle positively invites a clash (right).

What we have here is the first effort of an amateur (Eric is a medical doctor in his mainline job) who shows some talent and imagination but still has a lot to learn about game design. But perhaps not all is lost. If Marshal Enterprises jettisoned their cherished fractured French, there can be hope that Grove might be persuaded to discard bogus psychology, substitute a decent combat system with die rolls, and come out with new edition which, if advertised in *F&M,* would indeed have a chance of becoming a best-seller.

F&M INTERVIEW [Continued from Page 46]

reviewer wishes to question the historical accuracy of the game, the problem can be resolved by *communication,* not shouting. Much controversy could be eliminated if the reviewer and designer were to examine, and understand or expose, questionable items by mail or telephone. Shelby Stanton's and my collaboration on his **Korsun Pocket** review is a good model.

F&M: ...and is *F&M's* standard practice, from which we deviate rarely, and only under pressure of time if a review or designer's response is late in coming. In the particular case of your **Korsun Pocket,** the review in *F&M* has entailed a cooperation of a Communist and anti-war activist with a former *Wehrmacht* officer and a former Captain of the U.S. Army Special Forces. Have you been satisfied with this cooperation? If so, can this be taken as a sign that differences in background and views need not obstruct work for a common goal?

JR: I absolutely agree with you, and could hardly be more satisfied. I think it is because all three of us share a serious interest in history and military simulations that provide for useful learning as well as entertainment. But better watch such talk, it could cost you your security clearance!

F&M: What are your plans for the future?

JR: I am working on a game on Odessa, 1941, with the help of John Prados, Frank Prieskop, and others. There are other projects in the back of my mind, but I wouldn't want to speculate on what will actually get done and when.

F&M: Whatever it is, Jack, we wish you well.