

- > that a similar confession may be forthcoming from William Gates
- > concerning the MS-DOS and Windows operating environments. And IBM
- > spokesman have begun denying that the Virtual Machine (VM) product is
- > an internal prank gone awry.

NOTES :

The Usenet message is reproduced above as received. It seems likely that the "-" signs in the C instruction quoted should be "--"; if nothing else, this illustrates what is one of probably the two most prolific sources of mistakes in C. (The other is the use of == as the equality operator.)

Professor Wirth's first name is "Niklaus"; we met him, and Oberon, in the chapter *LANGUAGES FOR WRITING OPERATING SYSTEMS*. He has some interesting views on C, expressed forthrightly in the paper quoted in that chapter. Just in case any doubt remains, we remark that we think he's right.

"Soviets" are committees which formed the basis of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), a historical Marxist state centred on Russia. After extensive misuse in military circles by people who obviously had no idea what it meant, a "Soviet", in some circles in the USA, came to mean any citizen of the USSR. The illusion that every resident of the USSR was in fact a committee could go far towards explaining the ridiculous persistence of the cold war; it is difficult to think of any more persuasive reason.

P.T. Barnum is reputed to have said^{IMP16} : "There's a sucker born every minute".

The reference to "Pascal on the Apple Macintosh" will be specially piquant to anyone who has tried to develop system software in Pascal for a Macintosh. Our comments on the complicated APIs characteristic of operating systems written using conventional languages (*LANGUAGES FOR WRITING OPERATING SYSTEMS*) were not merely hypothetical. The inventors of C might well feel quite at home. It is also interesting that the Macintosh system, originally written in assembly language and Pascal, is now in C. The API has not improved.

REFERENCE.

IMP16 : *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* (Little, Brown, 15th ed., 1980), page 536.
