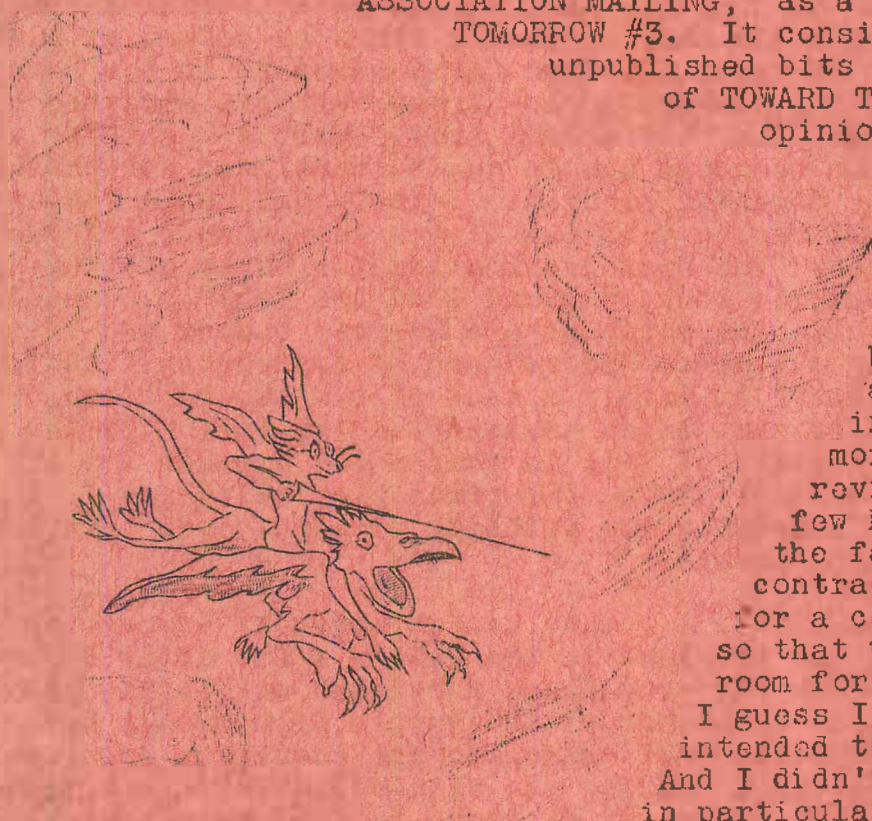


FEN #2

FEN # is published at 628 So. Bixel St., Los Angeles, 14, Calif., by James Kepner. Why, no one knows. When - well, the last time was about a year ago, and the next time isn't very likely. This, is to appear in the December, 1944 FANTASY AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION MAILING, as a suppliment to TOWARD TOMORROW #3. It consists mainly of as yet unpublished bits of stuff from the mailbag of TOWARD TOMORROW #s 1 & 2. All opinions herein expressed are those of the editor unless they are labelled with another name.



I must take a wee bit of space here to account for certain of the inadequacies of Toward Tomorrow. About the book reviews - I'm sorry the last few had to be so crowded, but the fact was that I had already contracted with Walt Daugherty for a certain number of pages, so that was absolutely all I had room for. And that editorial, I guess I just forgot what I had intended to say and started rambling. And I didn't seem to wind up anywhere in particular. At any rate, now you know that I had intended to say something or other.

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I have a few more comments that could well enough be made in regard to the recent ammendments, but they will be in the next SUPERFLUOUS, which will be in the next TOWARD TOMORROW, which, I hope, will be in the next mailing. And if things work out, I hope to have a few other things also in the next TOWARD TOMORROW, but then, I wouldn't count on it if I were you. I'm not particularly dependable. In case you haven't already guessed it, the only reason I am continuing this is in vague hopes that I may reach the bottom of the page someday. And it looks as if I'm just about there. Goodbye.

This first letter is one I received quite some time ago from Charles Mc Nutt:

"...Eric Hopkins analytical letter... opens itself for wide discussion. I'd like to get my two cents in..."

"To begin with, he shows that the collectivization of farms in Russia was part of a long range program agreed upon by the Bolsheviks at their advent to power, but its execution was according to the needs of the moment. Its end result was not only the successful collectivization of farms, but also removal of the most rabid opposition to Stalin's policies viz. the Trotskyites. This of course was necessary for the success of the Socialist experiment, the proof of which we can readily see in Russia's magnificent war effort. Although the 1934 purge which allowed Yekhof and his O.G.P. U. to run rampant and liquidate thousands of innocent citizens, did succeed in eradicating the dangerous fifth column element of Trotskyites, who, with some of the Army "brass-hats" believed that the succession to power could only be accomplished by defeat at the hands of Germany. In fact, the Red Army maneuvers in the Ukraine a few years before the present Russo-German war were directed by General Von Hammerstein of the German Army. What I'm getting at is that no political or economic change can be achieved successfully with any foreign or domestic hindrance. It is difficult for us to see how such methods can be vindicated even though they were used for an admirable purpose. The best explanation for their attitude can be found only in Nietzsche's book, "Beyond Good And Evil". He states therein that all ethics and scruples are Burgeois bushwa and that the college professor who teaches "Sacredness of contracts, fidelity to the pledged word, etc." is merely a tool of the capitalists. His definition of Good is that which hastens the liberation of the proletariat; his definition of Evil is that which impedes the liberation of the Proletariat. Using the preceding criterion it is difficult not to account for the ruthless methods which have been and are being used in Russia.

"...In my opinion... such action is (not) agreeable... to the majority of the populace in the U.S... Day after day we are exposed to the Burgeois propaganda shovelled out by the press and radio. A surprising number of the people with whom I have talked are of the opinion that communism and socialism are identical, and that a communist is a bearded man with a lighted black spherical bomb in one hand, and a book of Nietzsche in the other, standing on a soapbox vigorously advocating overthrow of all the institutions we hold so near and dear. As you know, communism failed in Russia, and the present system, according to Walter Duranty, is State Capitalism, which isn't quite socialism, and certainly isn't communism. The best definition of socialism that I've come across is "distribution according to contribution," and of socialism, "distribution according to Need."

Once the people are enlightened sufficiently to see the gross inadequacies and evils of our semi-individualistic system, plans for the socialization of America will be well received. That, I think is the prerequisite for any drastic economic change. We come now to the nature of the change, i.e., evolution, or revolution. This calls for a brief comparison of conditions in Russia in 1917 and the United States at present. Lenin dealt with the populace, eighty percent of which was peasantry, and only twenty per cent proletarian, an infinitesimal number of which had any education whatsoever. They lived in unimaginable filth and squalor, and

therefore rabidly but justifiably hated the aristocracy. For this reason they were highly susceptible to Marxist philosophy. On the other hand, our workers, because of their political rights, and the admirable endeavors of their labor unions are considered free men, and not wage slaves, as proletarians are theoretically reformed by Karl Marx. Therefore, the communist, socialist labor, and other progressive political parties in this country have only a minor following. So even with a politically educated proletariat, a revolution is impossible under the prevailing conditions. ((But under the prevailing conditions, the so called proletariat is not politically educated. Such education would by nature change the conditions rather considerably. Ed.)) That leaves us the more desirable alternative of evolution. If we continue 'plugging' P.U.D.'s, Co-Ops, and other progressive improvements, we will eventually arrive at 100% socialization, thereby eliminating the metamorphosis of revolution. ((Very neat, indeed. This all presupposes that we will encounter no active opposition, and that our little socializing experiments will gradually sweep the whole world clean. Of course, for us, a complete revolution would hinder more than it would help, besides as you say, being darned hard to stir up. However, you make the evolution sound far too simple. You almost seem to think there are only two alternatives, and that we have to make the choice. One to fight and wreck the old system completely, building our own Utopia out of the ruins, and the other, to passively work for half socialized measures to compete with the Capitalists on their own terms. And you seem to think the latter method would work out rather smoothly. The point is a progressive program won't be, can't be as simple as all that. It has to be six of one and a half dozen of the other. What is this war? Is that part of the process of peaceful evolution? And strikes? And strikebreaking? Race riots? As conditions change, and often are changed by us, it will take a growing and changing program to continue to improve them. It is evolutionary, yes; but on occasion, we will have to prefix an "r" to that. Ed.))

"It is easy to see that in a world of capitalistic states which breed grave inequalities, where immense wealth flaunts itself amid squalor, and poverty breeds hatred and contempt; that war is an inevitable product of this system. "Economic equality" to my mind means not equal distribution, but equal opportunity. Thus in a world in which one's labor benefits not only himself but the entire community, it is not difficult to envisage a world brotherhood of whose watchword would be cooperation and whose very existence would be antagonistic to all thoughts of war. Perhaps this sounds to you like idealism, which it is, but it is practical idealism. The equality of opportunity, regardless of race, color, or sex, brought about with such complete success in Russia suggests perhaps that socialism is the long needed purgative of antiquated and destructive customs and traditions.

"Walter Duranty tells in "The Kremlin and the People" of a man who was sent to Siberia during the Purge in '35 and who, upon his return after establishment of his innocence declared that the Purge was good for Russia, and that, although over one million people were liquidated in some fashion, She could have stood more than a million more.

". . . Hopkin's comment on Connerly's mention of Stalin . . . suggest historical parallel. Thomas Jefferson, in order to conduct

the enforcement of his utilitarian principles, conducted his administration in a like manner, slowing in pace and even retreating when necessary like a sea captain handling his ship in a squall. It is a little known fact that Stalin was a military trouble-shooter in the war of intervention. His brilliant defense of Tsaritsyn from Doniken's White Russian Armies resulted in changing the city's name to Stalingrad. Trotsky spoke of him in his history of the Russian Revolution as being "a very energetic organizer, but with no international intellectual horizon." As you know, Stalin has deviated a good deal from Lenin's principles, mainly that of internationalism. No one knows how successful in engineering a world revolution Trotsky would have been; Perhaps it is for the better that he never had that opportunity. I definitely agree with Hopkin's statement: "...it would appear that some of the U.S. fans have yet to surmount the initial and simplist difficulty, that of establishing principles and objects."

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Following is a long letter from Jack Speer, of which a part is printed. This letter also was received quite some time ago:

"Keith Buchanan says, in effect, that it's well known that a negative correlation exists between great wealth and intelligence. Granting that other factors besides intelligence enter into the acquisition of money, I will still maintain that the correlation is positive, and fairly high. He says that teachers don't have very much intelligence, or they'd prefer to engage in some creative activity. In the first place, he obviously is speaking mainly about grade school teachers. In the second place, his point about creative activity doesn't carry at all. Al Ashloy, H.G. Wells, and a lot of other people believe that the most promising point of attack on the mess the world is in is in the field of mass education. I doubt not that there are plenty of intelligent people in that field as a matter of choice.

"He speaks of a certain childish streak in most men that makes them think that by believing in some mythology they'll be forgiven their sins and sent to heaven. In the first place, this is true only of the ethical religions (primitive religions make no connection between gods and goodness and badness.) In the second place, it applies only to the Judaistic religions, including perhaps Mohammedanism, which have heavens roughly like he describes. In the third place, the machinery of belief is more like this, according to Stephen Pepper, who makes a strong hypothesis for it: In seeking to explain the universe, primitive man naturally tends to personify the forces of nature - - he invents animism. But the weakness of animism as a metaphysics is lack of precision. "What is thunder?" asks Pepper. "It is the angry voice of a great spirit. It is the stamping of the hoofs of the steeds of a great spirit. It is the great spirit clanging his arms. It is the roar of the lightning bolts hurled by a great spirit. It may even be a spirit himself roaring in pursuit of some other spirit to devour." How can man tell which of such explanations is correct? He can't, so to decide the matter, he turns to authority. Some powerful or supposedly wise man gives the answers, which are taken as dogma, and that's how ethical religion with heaven and hell got started, providing the authorities see the usefulness of weaving such doctrines into the mythology they give the people.

"... The process of reasoning by which Hopkins concludes that we must be ruthless and bloody in changing the social order has many weak points. At one place he says, "We must first decide that we will be absolutely ruthless or perfectly pacific, there being no middle course." But he doesn't back up this assertion at all, and I call it in question. The considerations on which he discards the idea of a peaceful change after a socialist government comes into power in England, seem to have been brushed over very rapidly. No doubt the entrenched interests will do everything they can to halt such a change. No doubt they will gain some success. But they will have to make some concessions to prevent a complete revolution; these concessions will prove only temporary blocks to further action; public interest, and conviction that a change is necessary, will grow stronger and solidier. Political revolutions have occurred in England thru such a process; there is no proof that an economic revolution could not. In considering the bloody revolution (with his eye on the Russian example, of course.) he admits that there is no guarantee that the men in power will use their power wisely. I want to stress that. After twenty-five years, we still don't know for sure that the Communist government is following a wise course. In the diplomatic field, there are very great doubts that it is. (The reader must be reminded that this was written almost a year ago. Ed.) Eric gives passing attention to the objection to any type of dictatorship, but I don't think he has considered it as much as it deserves. What I want to emphasize is the much greater desirability of a democratically ruled revolution, the greater certainty that it will remain true to the best interests of the people, the greater stability of the change, once made. It may be that public sentiment is too sluggish a thing to sustain a revolution, and lawless men must take the responsibility for it. But in a revolution like that of 1789 or 1917, anything can happen; there is no guarantee at all that the right side will come out on top - - victory goes to the side that has certain practical virtues having little or no relation to the best interests of the people. You know what came of the French Revolution, with its murderous courts and intriguing assembly - - Napoleon. It may be otherwise in the case of the USSR. There is no guarantee that it would not be otherwise in the next country."

"Connerly's arguments against bloody revolution are familiar. I suppose he realizes that they are not conclusive. As an incurable liberal, I want to draw attention to that, since many readers undoubtedly take sides one way or the other when they hear such arguments, and consider the matter closed. Violence does indeed beget violence - - but maybe that's a stage that will pass. Violence does accomplish many things. Witness the purging of France's social structure in the Revolution, and the destruction of the Ancien Regime by Napoleon. Many institutions that are colossal obstructions to progress may be destroyed by violence, and the compensating gains may outweigh the bad effects of the use of force. We have in the USSR a possible example of this.

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I really owe both of these fellows an apology for having held up these discussions for so long.
Now here is a more recent letter from R. Rowland Johnson. This one was sent in article form - - so turn over the page - -

SLANDER (with due appologies for borrowing the title.)

"For a person who has made up his mind not to set in writing any definite ideas or opinions until the approximate age of 100 years has been reached, it is rather difficult to write in answer to TBY 'Yerke' but I simply must risk having my bob's worth on this, of all matters.

"Are fans slans? May I emulate a certain erudite British philosopher (C.E.M. Joad) by saying, "it all depends on what you mean by - - - " in this case, Slans. In other words, there can be no argument without precise definitions, otherwise we are working at cross purposes.

"If 'Slán' means the superman of A.E. Van Vogt's novel, then the answer is an obvious 'No!' - similarly by any other type of supermen. In any case, the main purpose of the terms 'Slán' and 'Slen' is to abolish the very corny fan.

"Admittedly a good deal of very egotistic blather has been written about the superiority of fans, or slen - I've written a good deal myself - but slen are notoriously egotistic, and few go to the extremes of, for instance, Degler.

"TBY's main fault lies in the basic qualities he demands of what he calls the well balanced person. Having started with false assumptions, he blithely sails on, and the rest is easy. I goute, 'the only traits which manifest themselves in the scientifiction fan field would come under intelligence - - - etc.' Why? Surely he has the sense to realize that an estimate of fan - nature must be formed, not from the general character of all fan writings, but on the impression gained from those actually met, who must be judged as a reasonable cross section of the whole. One of the most striking things about meeting other slen is the difference between the people in person, and the mental picture derived from thair literary output.

"Having dismissed Bruce's first prima facie analysis, which is erroneous in the acceptance of certain present-day standards which are by no means universally agreed upon, we may do a little general analyzing on our own accounts.

"We must ignore, or at least not stress, the fact that slen themselves fall into several groups, more or less overlapping. There is an "intellectual aristocracy" in Slandom as elsewhere, in this case comprising some 20% of the whole - mainly, those known as more or less "acti-slen". These are the real slen - a good many of the others are just fairly interested readers, inactive and comparatively apathetic. It is with the twenty-odd percent of real slen that we are dealing.

"Slen possess in the main, the one quality which seems to be most important: awareness. 'Cogito ergo sum' applies to slen, where to the great majority of people, it does not. See Heinlein's Denvention Speech.

"Tied with this awareness is propaganda immunity - a rare and precious thing in these lie-fibled days.

"The stuff which Bruce is pleased to call Schizophrenic rantings is largely a result of the fact that most slen don't accept present-day mores, and consequently get a kick out of doing something 'just

for the hell of it' - coupled in the U.S.A., with a certain trend towards exhibitionism. (No offense meant, its a fact, and I personally prefer the American character to the British in this respect. We are such damned hypocrites!) And in this connection: is it the same Yerke who produced a certain "Damn Thin" after the Denvention? Slen are very retiring during most of their time, and slandom is a good let-up for them. Psychology, Bruce?

"The last paragraph of TBY's epic is a masterpiece of contradiction. In the first place, he states that slen education is a patchwork quilt covering, in part, a multitude of subjects - and in the rest he accuses them of specialization and lack of knowledge in subjects other than their chosen one! Please, Bruce, we are not to be taken in by sloppy logic of that kind.

"It might be mentioned here by the bye, that the whole trend of modern education in this country at least - is toward a good general education up to a certain point, School Certificate examination here, and specialization from then onwards. Slen seem to follow that plan individually - specializing in the final instance, but always retaining the sound general knowledge which s-f stimulated them to acquire in the first place. A certain (slight) lack of knowledge on some very mundane matters is prompted by a kind of subconscious realization that such things are in any case essentially transient.

"To sum up, therefore: slen are not supermen, nor do they in many ways even equal the top rank of our present generations - our leading musicians, philosophers, and scientists. But they do possess the "awareness" which Wells and Huxley point out is so valuable, and which may or may not be possessed by these "Top rankers". Their education in general is much above average, as is their will to learn; and what right has Bruce to compare us with specialists such as the liberal arts college students, or any college students for that matter. They are not the average, even in a well-educated country such as America ((sic!)) We have already stated that except in this "awareness" slen are not equal to, let alone better than, the top ranking specialists of the day. The comparison should be made with the "average" sub-way or tram-car crowd, and I just refer you to A Merritts excellent description thereof in "Seven Footprints to Satan."

"I admit we must rid ourselves of our intense superiority complex (or rather of an over compensated inferiority complex) but only to replace it with sure knowledge that although we are by no means superior to all, at least we are far superior to the average.

"Deny it Bruce? Then tell me: If you picked by chance on two ordinary people, an average worker at Lockheed, or one in the uniform of a Marine, would you find them capable of carrying of an argument using even such abstract reasoning as our present one? You may pick one exception, but if you tried it fifty - a hundred times?

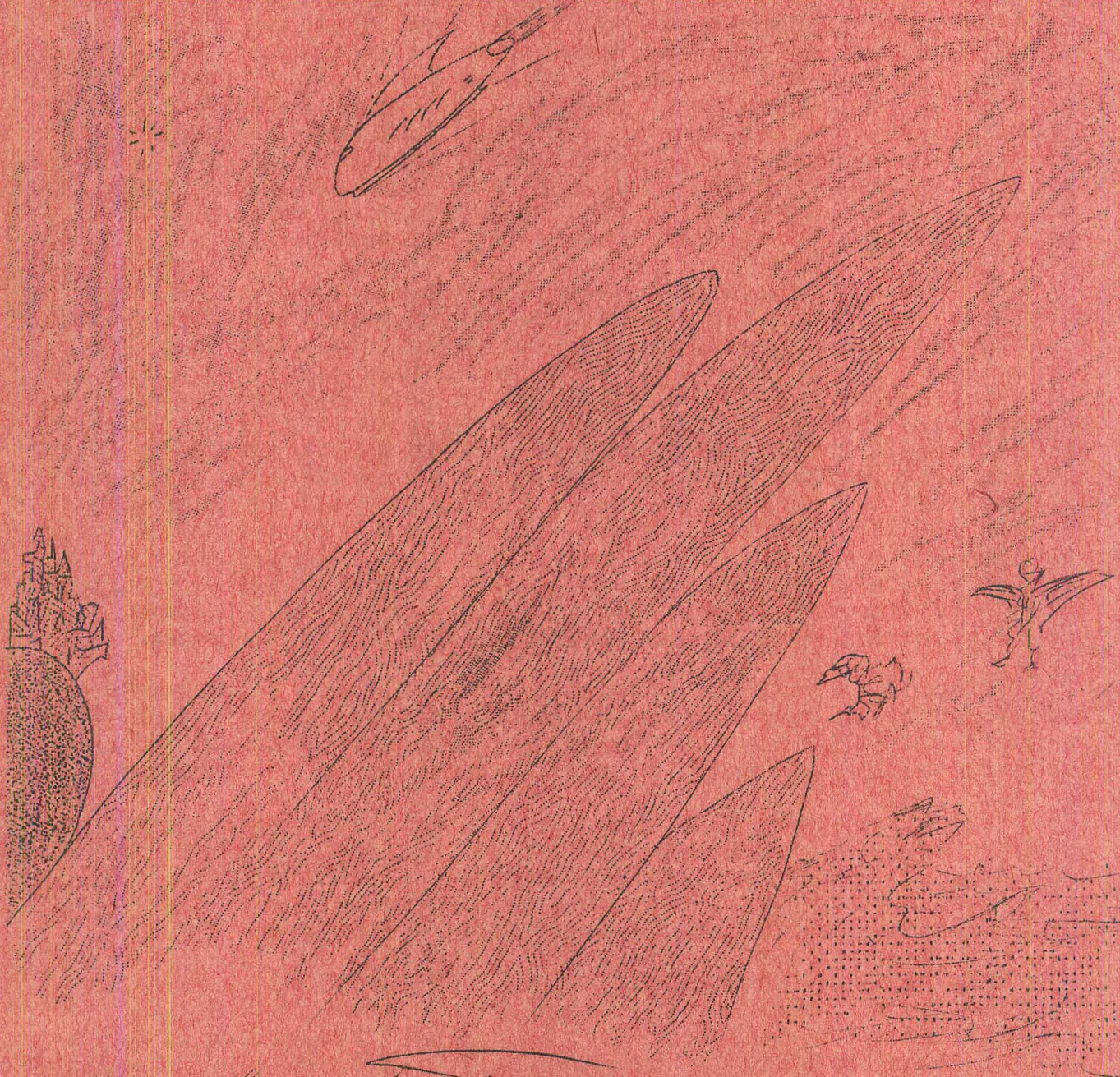
"You may want statistics. Right. At one time, mainly for something to do while waiting to go up to university, I took a temporary job with Leicester City Libraries. Proportion of books approximately as follows: non-fiction 70%; fiction 30%. The daily issue showed that between two and three times as many fiction as non fiction books were taken out, and by some research, I was able to discover that over 80% was of the "cheap novel" type. Few classics. Of the non-fiction, travel, biographies, and conventional histories predominated, with art and music second, the music being mainly of

the SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS variety. Classics were quite well patronized, but by a small group (myself among them) Those are concrete facts. I would say the average slant's reading compares rather favorably with that, aside from the basic trend toward S-F of fantasy.

"At any rate, now is the time for all good slant to come to the aid of their party - and destructive cynicism is not helpful.

End.

Don't tell anyone, but I'm tired.



See, this is funny —
Maybe they'll call me an artist
someday