

NORSTRILIAN NEWS

JANUARY 1973

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REVIEW FROM THE AGE: The Melbourne AGE's edition for Saturday 6th Jan carried the following review: BREAKFAST IN THE RUINS, by Michael Moorcock (NEL, \$4.95).

'Breakfast in the Ruins is a novel truly about searching. Its strange historical leapfrogs are admirable interrogative catalysts, and the central character, Karl Glocauer, is exemplary in all his age and period manifestations as a man who is lost and found, and lost, again and again.

Karl is seen at 19 different ages, between seven years old and 51, in dexterously sketched locations from the Paris Commune of 1871 to the post-bomb London of 1990. On the way, there are impressions of circumstances in which revolution breeds, from the Cuban revolt against the Spanish (1898) through the anti-Czarist underworld of London in 1905 and the Mau Mau of Kenya in 1959, to the most brilliant and shocking 10 pages which the My Lai massacre has yet produced.

Michael Moorcock, the author, died of lung cancer last year, at the age of 31. BREAKFAST IN THE RUINS is a howl of rage against war and crime and exploitation and spite. Frustration compounds the rage. Moorcock shrewdly weaves into the narrative a leitmotif of homosexual miscegenation in which frustration and rage predominate. To die at 31 years of age is shocking enough; to die needlessly, as Michael Moorcock did, as Karl Glocauer does several times, makes necessary at least a protest at the inevitability of death. BREAKFAST IN THE RUINS is such a protest from a tiny vocal minority. For the rest of the people, one feels that Moorcock might have accepted the words of Galileo: "Damnation, I perceive their divine patience, but where is their divine anger?"

I understand that the book for review came by airmail from the London office of NEL, and was posted just before Christmas. The note enclosed passed on the details of Moorcock's death. The source of the information was James Colvin. For anyone who has penetrated this story thus far who feels he has earned some enlightenment, I'd just mention that Colvin died some years ago, if we are to believe the editor of NEW WORLDS at the time, who happened to be Mike Moorcock. Moorcock was present at the British Novacon in Birmingham in November and the Australian distributors of UK publishers usually handle their own review copies. Still, it got the book a good review: the reviewer was Rod Nicholls.

AGE REVIEWER ILL: Not Rod Nicholls, this refers to George Turner, another regular AGE reviewer, and Guest of Honour at the 1973 Melbourne Eastercon. George was at a party at my flat on Jan 5th, and was driven home by John Bangsund, who noticed he was looking ill. Thinking it was the usual reason, nothing much was thought of it at the time, but during the night the ambulance had to be called to take him to hospital with peritonitis from a burst ulcer. He is now among the walking wounded, and proudly showed me his scars today. Work on his SF novel is on the back burner at present due to more immediately rewarding jobs, he tells me.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

Alex Robb: 154 Mona Road, Darling Point, NSW 2706
Liz George: 30 Raglan St, Sale, Vic 3850 phone Sale 44-3360
Peter House 30 Raglan St, Sale, Vic 3850

TORCON 2's Progress Report 3 is now out. The 31st World Science Fiction Convention is being held at the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, from August 31st to September 3rd 1973, and already has over 900 members. Mailed with the report, which includes the Rules of the World Science Fiction Society, are nomination ballots for the Hugo Awards, which have reverted to only single nominations this year, and the new John W. Campbell Award for the best new writer in the Science Fiction field, first published no earlier than 1971. Also included is a legal opinion from Kenneth M. Smoother, which suggests that lack of minutes at past Business Sessions may invalidate decisions taken at those meetings, and also that the Rules relating to North American S.F. Conventions (Nasfics) are incompatible with the remainder, in particular those laying down the functions of the W.S.F.S. On the strength of this legal opinion, which notably parallels John Foyster's comments of previous years, the Torcon 2 Committee have omitted the Nasfic Rules from their version of the Rules of the W.S.F.S. Nominations for the 1975 World Convention close April 1st, as do those for the Awards: At present, the Australian bid for Melbourne is the only one in. Torcon 2 take the announcement in LOCUS 129 of San Francisco's withdrawal as an official notification. For memberships outside Australia, contact TORCON 2, P.O. Box 4, Station K, Toronto, Ont. Canada: memberships cost \$4 supporting and \$7 attending in Canadian or US funds: I am Australian agent, and the corresponding rates in Australian dollars are now \$3.20 and \$5.60. If it is necessary for a ballot to be held for the site of the 1975 Worldcon, these will be distributed with the next Progress Report early in June. For this ballot, as for the Awards, membership of Torcon 2 will be necessary.

DISCON II have also just published their first Progress Report. The 1974 Worldcon will be held at the Sheraton-Park Hotel, Washington D.C. from Aug 29th to Sep 2nd 1974. Memberships until August '73 are \$3 and \$5, supporting and attending respectively: or in Australia through Bill Wright, 53 Celia St Burwood 3125 for \$A 2.50 and \$A4. Guest of Honour is Roger Zelazny and co-chairmen Jay and Alice Haldeman. An innovation is that members' recommendations for Hugo nominations are to be printed in Progress Reports, so that deserving cases are not passed over in the nominations. This seems a particularly good idea not only for those of us unable to see all the magazines, but in particular with so many stories now appearing in original anthologies that may not be widely available, or such places as non-genre fiction magazines.

TAFF RESULTS! The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund, long-established equivalent of DUFF, has allowed LOCUS to print preliminary figures for votes: no word yet on the amount of money subscribed. Len and June Moffatt of Los Angeles won the competition to choose fans from North America to go to Europe in 1973, over Howard Devore and Frank and Anne Dietz. Of 254 votes received, the Moffatts gained 96 first preferences to the Dietz' 89 and Devore's 62. After reallocation of write-in votes and those for Devore the result was 123 to 108 in favour of the Moffatts. They will visit the British Eastercon at Bristol in April. Notable in the results was the Dietz' high score in Germany, with 49 out of 66 votes cast: probably the result of their good contacts in Europe evidenced in LUNA, the high-quality monthly they publish. (Figs, LOCUS 130)

YEFREMOV DIES: (from LOCUS) Well-known Soviet science fiction writer Ivan A. Yefremov died October 5 in Moscow of a heart attack. He was 65. A paleontologist by profession Yefremov was widely regarded as a science fiction writer. He was the author of at least two novels - ANDROMEDA, an SF novel, and THE LAND OF FOAM, a historical fantasy, as well as several short stories, the most famous of which is 'The Heart of the Serpent', written in response to Leinster's 'First Contact'. (LOCUS 129)

Q-CON II. I've had several reports of Brisbane's New Year Con, all of which stated that it was a success. Unfortunately, my filing system, as I call my bedroom floor, is not a success, and I can't put my hand on Christine McGowan's report. I remember she didn't mention her own speech which others present enjoyed, and that she did mention Dr Ron Bostock's speech on toxins as frighteningly good. Membership was about 40, mostly readers rather fans of science fiction apparently, and Dennis Stocks' programme hit exactly the right note. Apollo films spaced out the German retrospective of fantasy and horror films, but the hit of the con was Jack Wodhams who made his annual emergence from under the palm trees to be the Guest of Honour. The program book was a nice job, too, Dennis.

BYO-CON, on the other hand, was a failure. It seems even floating parties need at least some sort of program, if they are to pretend to the title of Con. The first mistake was to start on the day after Christmas, when everyone was still valiantly trying to digest their roast turkey and plum pudding. The second was not having it at Kyneton that first day. The Foyster farm is about 50 miles from Melbourne, and the second day was held there; but being a working day, not too many people were able to make it. A quite excessively energetic game of cricket was a highlight; while food was barbecued in the barn due to it being a day of total fire ban. As parties go, the best one was given by Lee Harding. I don't remember too much of the evening, but I'm told I provided the floorshow by playing football with a wine-flagon. I do remember bricking up the front staircase, though.

SYDNEY MINICON nevertheless is on the way. This coming weekend, the Australia Day holiday, the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation is planning to hold a minicon in its clubrooms at 128 Hereford St, Glebe. There will be a program, however, and Eric Lindsay, the host of several minicons over the last few months, but who seems to be prevented by Dark Forces from getting the word to me in time for me to do any good with it, has sent me a copy. It includes a debate on population control, and a takeoff of the Paul Stevens Show.

DAMIEN BRODERICK has been showing his face in the Sydney SUNDAY TELEGRAPH recently in connection with an investigation of ESP. Using the Sydney University computer, thousands of entries in a sort of guessing game are to be analyzed in the hope of reading some sort of message in the results.

PAUL STEVENS' fangs were also on display in a CURRENT AFFAIR segment on the vampire boom, alternating with the reporter remarking on the convenient location of Space Age Books near the Melbourne Royal Women's Hospital, and clips of Christopher Lee making threats. Paul did manage to get over, after removing the fangs, that he was of the opinion that the horrors of vampire films are as nothing to the more realistic horrors of such films as STRAW DOGS, and that with the 'R' certificate many more interesting horror films are reaching our screens.

TAKEN TO TASK: I was, after the December issue was published, by two or three local readers for my arrogance in assuming that there would be no more opposition to the Australian bid for the 1975 World SF Convention before the official bidding session in Toronto early in September. The facts are that there is no opposition at the present moment, unless the Sampo Committee in San Francisco decide to renew their bid. I think they withdrew for the good and sufficient reason that they finally canvassed the electorate and found out just how thoroughly we were entrenched in the hearts and minds of fans. I really do not think it is wishful thinking: the possibility of several other bids has been mentioned at various times, but the only one that really worried us was the Swedish one for the following year. This was officially withdrawn at L.A.Con It could have split the interests of the American fans between Melbourne 1975 and Stockholm 1976. I still say we're home and hosed.

THE IN-TRAY: Bruce Gillespie has contributed most to the NN in-tray this month. No less than three issues of Science Fiction Commentary have appeared. No. 30 has a wraparound cover, starring Lesleigh Luttrell, Bruce and Lee Harding holding the 1972 DITMAR Awards given at Syncon. The entire issue is devoted to two Australian conventions, Eastercon and Syncon, and to the entertainment by Lesleigh of the fans around the country. On the back cover Bruce takes a slightly selfmocking dig at Pete Weston. 31 reprints Philip Dick's apotheotic (?) speech at Vancouver, and discusses the visit to Melbourne of Ivan Illyitch: also some pieces of self-dissection by some of Bruce's more interesting friends. No 32 is a John Foyster edition, consisting of part of JOE 6, which may eventually total 120 pages of quotes (!) John is a good editor: it seems a mistake not to publish his own magazine rather than take over Bruce's. 3\$/9 from Box 5195AA, GPO Melbourne: in USA \$4/9 via Brown (see LOCUS). NINI HII? is Helen Hyde's title for the magazine she puts out for the Canberra SF Society. She is beginning to succeed in getting other members of the club to write for the magazine, but it has not lost the personal touch. Show of interest, from CSFS, PO Box 544, Civic Square, ACT 2608.

Ron L. Clarke has put out several things that he appears not to want to sell. Write if you are interested for a sample of WOMBAT 4, full of poetry (and a terrible, and funny, piece of Wodhams doggerel), and a travel report on Cambodia, Christine McGowan on Women's Lib etc; or M31 No 2 - No Spare Copies, it says here! Ron's address is 78 Redgrave Rd, Normanhurst NSW 2076. Sue Smith sent along GOUGH, or Girl's Own Fanzine: she has managed to get an almost all-female first issue (John Bangsund is the honourable, or fairly so, exception) Worth a look, he said male-chauvinistically Sue's address after March 1 is same as Ron Clarke's, above: prior to that, 10 Peter St., Blacktown NSW 2148. Ask for a sample.

John Alderson's CHAO 11 is marred by some disastrous photographs, and a sordid argument with Mike Glicksohn. John finishes off his travels around Europe in this issue and has a completely biased report on Syncon, and at least some of the art was worth the reproduction. 40¢ or contribution, from John Alderson, Havelock Vic 3465.

LOCUS and CHECKPOINT have continued to arrive fairly regularly. They are the news-zines of record in USA and UK respectively, and their editors are my agents. Peter R. Roberts publishes CHECKPOINT from 87 West Town Lane, Bristol BS4 5DZ, England, and sells NN airmail for 50p/5; Charles and Dena Brown charge \$1/5 in USA for the same service. LOCUS 130 was accompanied by this year's Poll form in this country it costs \$8/26 airmail from Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne 3001. CHECKPOINT's Aussie agent is David Grigg, PO Box 100 Carlton South, Vic 3053, who charges \$1/6/

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