

RUR 5

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this is put out by David Rike, with the occasional assistance of Carl Brandon, when he's around, We both are from 2431 Dwight Way, Berkeley 4, California and is sent out to correspondents, faneds I trade with, friends & likable stzangers.

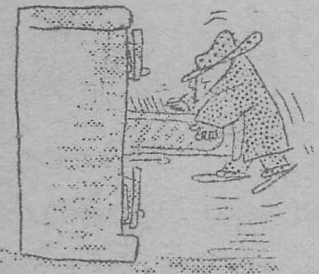


SECRET SERVICE DISCOVERS FANDOM

Investigators for Army Intelligence have been visiting various fans, ostensibly doing a routine security check on me for a government job, but for some odd reason or another dropping in on fans who know me very, very slightly. There are the usual questions asking all about David Rike and then how did you meet him.

Thru a stf club: FAPA, SAPS, the Cult . . . fanzines? Hmmm, tell me more about this . . . Do you have any of those . . . "fanzines?" Can I have some?

One investigator said he had a friend who had been reading stf for 15 years and was interested in science fiction fanzines, wanted to find out what was going on, etc. The claim that most fmz didn't have anything to do with stf no doubt impressed the government agent as significant, but also being at the same time an attempted evasion. The agent persisted and finally came away triumphant, with a fanzine: a copy of ST Times. The tactics were improved, however, on the next fan visited. This time two of them came, with one posing as a semi-gafiated fan. Besides pumping the poor fan (who was scared to death at the sight of the secret police) dry of any information, they came away with a few more fanzines, in which were copies of the membership rosters of the Cult and FAPA.



This all started, I guess, when it was decided that my talents might be put to better use helping the United States in its race-to-space with Russia, or some such thing, instead of taking 20 mile hikes and otherwise goofing off in the Army. Naturally, preparatory to making any definite move, a security investigation had to be made. So, they questioned the usual people like friends-of-the-family and long-time-acquaintances like Terry Carr, Pete Graham, and Bob Stewart. Perhaps the friends-of-the-family didn't tell them something, but lo! and behole: Davidhas been, they discovered, actively involved

one way or another in fandom for the last eight years. He has held membership in some mysterious, semi-secret, closed organizations, tho these were oftentimes obscured in a fog of hoaxes, #hoax organizations, and hoax persons. False fronts which fans seem to delight in erecting all over the landscape. They detected what they thot was smoke; and, where there's smoke, there's fire. So, they shelved the case of David Rike for the moment and commenced peering thru the manifold ramifications of Fandom.



While the agents are not adverse to picking up any li'l bits of dirt on me (something they apparently haven't been too successful at), this looks mainly like an opening tactic, with the primary point of interest being fandom, fans, and fanzines: the more names and addresses they can get from a guy, the better!

What their exact aim and purpose is, I don't know. Terry got word of one of the visits before I did and came up to tell me about it. They've only hit, as far as we know, fans in the L.A. area, and those fans who Ron, Terry and myself dropped in on while we were down there last November to see Burbee. "I wonder if they went to Burb . . ." Carr thot out loud, ". . . boy!, he'd sure give them an earful about fandom! I can just see him sitting those agents down at a table of home brew and chili, and telling 'em all about the LASFS, Laney, Dirty Ol'Kepner, Elmer Perdue, and the person who defecated from an oil derrick."

"Yeah, but flips me is how in the hell did they know who we visited down there and where they lived? And why are they seeing them when, if they wanted to see any fmz I put out or anything about fandom or stf, they could've asked you, Pete, or Bob?" The whole thing puzzles us. About the only conclusion we arrived at is that the State is a huge, corpulent creature lacking any central direction to its nervous system, ie: a brain, so that it probably doesn't even know why its own agents are looking into fandom.

From what has been told me, the methods of the questioning agents are of a curiously repulsive nature, tho heavily sugar coated all over on top . . . they don't have as many the mannerisms of a third-degree cop as the F.B.I. agents do. Their grilling method generally consists of a brutal (like playing volleyball with



your mind) verbal brain-wash, along with an aura of intimidation that they have because they're disciples of the Holy of Hollies: the state police. When they can't be alone with and be free to pump the person they're questioning, they drop their inquiry and go on to someone else. For instance: Carl and myself rent rooms from this guy who's a socialist. They came to him and asked him something on the order of, "Is he honest?" He refused to answer any questions unless

they were put in/^{to}writing. They tried to push'im, but he wouldn't budge. "Ok," they said, "we'll be back with questions." and left. They haven't returned yet.

If they were really after information of any accuracy and in detail, it would seem that they wouldn't refuse a legitimate stand like having questions submitted in writing, since this would give the informer time for careful consideration of his answers. Besides, very few persons have such a perfect recall that they can really bring memories into immediate use, transmitting it coherently.

Oh well, I guess the price for State Power is Eternal Vigilance. Like Germany had its Gestapo, Russia with its G.P.U. and M.V.D., the United States must have its F.B.I., C.I.D., and C.I.A.

5

RUR 6

This is put out by David Rike, with some help from Carl Brandon. We both reside at 2431 Dwight Way, Berkeley 4, California. It is sent out to correspondents, faneds I trade with, friends and likable strangers.

Jim, the guy who Carl and I pay our rent to, came up to my room the other day and asked if he could borrow my copy of Parkinson's Law. He said that he read a review of it in the April issue of aSF and it intrigued him. Jim has been getting aSF every month since '45 and Galaxy ever since it started coming out. I bought Prof. C. Northcote Parkinson's little gem last year when it came out, after digging a short tid-bit of it that was pubbed in the Reporter.

(The Reporter is, as all readers of G.M.Carr know, "pernicious propoganda" which, if it was the type of stuff that "gave rise to the alerting of the State Department with its subsequent much-publicized 'Book burning' campaign," Mrs. Carr "can well understand why such a campaign was justified!" Which is to say that it is a liberal magazine, coming out an average of twice a month.)

The Parkinson paints upon a broad canvas and discourses about the governing elite of mighty nations and the make-up of the controlling boards of billion - dollar coporations, the basic theorems and laws expounded by him are nevertheless viable down to even a microscopic level. Like fandom.

I urge all of you, if you haven't done so already, to go out and get a copy of Parkinson's Law, (Cambridge, Mass.; 113 pp., \$3). Now, I will admit that \$3 is alot to shell out for a thin tome like this, even it it is illoed by Robert Osborn, but it should be available in used book shops for a more reasonable sum. I purchased my copy, for instance, at half-price from Farrell's, an used book store which is around the corner and across the street from 2431 Dwight, right after it came out.

With the contents of this book under your belt (unfortunately, the Message is unable to be dug out of the context of the book in its entirety, so illustrative quotations are not possible), you will be able to read over the factual reports of the current convention committee with a mature and reasoned outlook. No more will you get hot under the collar when a Crusading Faned reveals Once Again some hideous action made by the con committee. For, you say, what else can you expect from a con committee but Utter Inefficiency? It is all so Very Clear now: by its innate nature, the bureaucratic regime of a con committee is doomed to be xbogged down. And, the addition of more persons to the committee will not lessen the work load, but will rather intensify it so that persons will find themselves ensnarled in petty details, which were previously overlooked or not bothered with. Thus, no matter what is done, everyone will still be dashing around and still be getting very little accomplished.

I've talked with fans and pros who have been on committees — about five different cons — and the story they've told me has always been the same: everything was fouldd up; with naturally more petty scheming and convention-fan politics the larger the committee was.

Now, most of the pre-convention quibble and manuvering have a direct effect on only a relatively small number of people. However, when the sum total of all of this is carried over to the con itself, it puts a wet blanket on the fires of fannish enthsiasm and depresses the atmosphere of the gathering, besides further confusing the organized chaos that is called the Officâal Program. By just the sheer inertia of habit, the Basic Things get done: a hotel or meeting place; the arrangements for the con to be held on a certain date; the con generally gets publicized, even if it does consist of reports in fanzines telling about how the con is going to hell; and people come to a con.

These are the essentials.

When all of these items are taken care of, things can pretty well continue on their own, especially when the old con-goers crawl out of their dirt-lined coffins and do what they've been doing once or twice a year for the last 10 or 15 years. With them around, there'll always be the poker games, the smoked-filled rooms, the all-night parties, the huxters' tables, the perpetually packed bar, and auction. Should we disturb this joyous mob with the disruptive acts of con committee people, who even go around and tell fans where they can and can't sit? Certainly not! Instead, let us quietly put the con committee and similar types away for the duration of the con. Those who really did the work will appreciate the deserved rest, while the Disruptors will not be able to pester convention attendees.

In this way, the spread of that foul disease, Bumbling Bureaucracy, will be checked and it won't infect the fannish masses.

The other day I saw Sedner Fin, one of Berkeley's "beat generation" types who claims to be an anarchist. "Wow!" I said to him, "what's happening, maaann?"

"Well dad," he said, "the Latest is having your toilet paper decorated with phrases like 'In God We Trust,' 'Join the American Legion,' and other Religious, Patriotic, and Right-Thinking slogans."

"Cuh-razzy, maaann . . ."

"These boys think of me as an imaginative writer."

The Gates of Ivory, the Gates of Horn, Thomas McGrath (New York, 1958; pb., \$1.00)

Not only does a recent issue of USSR (#18)

come out with a stf story in it, but Mainstream, one of the still-existing Communist party publishing houses in the U.S., comes out with one by a Los Angeles stevedore and poet. If one could consider that 1984 referred exclusively to Russia, then The Gates of Ivory, the Gates of Horn might be termed as the CP's "reply" to it, detailing the end product of American capitalism and its side facets like the security investigations, the investigators, stool pigeons, etc. It's a quaint li'l story (only around a hundred pages) that you should be able to find in any CP book store.

The thing that interests me the most is not the book itself but rather the last paragraph of a review of it in the People's World:

Science-fiction has recently been the vehicle for more progressive ideas than we generally find in a total year's product of our "best" writers. And these who enjoyed "The Space Merchants" and such of Ray Bradbury's books as "Fahrenheit 451," will find "The Gates of Ivory, the Gates of Horn" even more pointed in its satire and even more grisly in its implications.

This back patting appeal for stf readers/fans to go out and get McGrath's book can imply two different things: (a) a number of CPers and/or "progressive-minded" sympathizers read stf, and (b) the CP membership has dwindled down to such a degree that they're going out after anything two legs — even persons who read pmz every month! — for recruits. And, a few months before, the PW even had a sympathetic survey of the local contingent of the "Beat Generation," emphasizing and underscoring the points of agreement. Boy, they're really scraping the bottom of the barrel.

Ronel tells me he's received letters of comment on R.U.R. from some idiot people who apparently don't bother to read fanzine colophons to find out who put it out. Well, I — David Rike — am the person responsible for what appears in HUR and Ron or Terry have nothing to do with it a — tall. And here I even mimeod it on different colored paper so it would be distinctly different from Fanac. sigh

-- March 24, 1958