

SHAW BLISH ZISSMAN KNIGHT COHEN EMDEN LOWNDES

issue number one

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FUTURIAN SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

On this date of September 19, 1945, we the members of the Futurian Society of New York, meeting in full and open democratic assembly, have declared that John Michel and Donald and Elsie Wollheim have shown themselves unfit for membership in a group whose primary basis is friendship. We are therefore in unanimous agreement that these three shall be declared no longer members of the FSNY; and that the FSNY is no longer necessarily in accord with any statements they may make.

The center of infection among the Futurians has always been Donald A. Wollheim-- Wollheim's paternalism, aided and abetted by the voderisms of equerry John Michel and the eager acquiescence of handmaiden Elsie Wollheim. The quarrels and strifes precipitated in fandom by the FSNY are well-known; the far greater dissidence within the FSNY has been kept a carefully-guarded secret. The events of the last few days have made it advisable that we now submit to fandom a candid accounting.

Because of the fanatical nature of their convictions, because of a morbid fear of any opposing political viewpoint, these people have:

- a) abruptly and coldbloodedly terminated all personal relationships with four members of their group, among them three of their oldest and/or most intimate friends-- Lowndes, Blish, and Zissman;
- b) automatically alienated every remaining Futurian, many of whom had no strong political adherences, and most of whom were equally close friends.

We are angry, but not surprised. It is the Wollheim-Michel method, and we have seen it only too often before.

Cyril Kornbluth, the FSNY's most brilliant writer, having come into conflict with the Wollheim standard of morals, was ordered by these three to conduct his life along strict lines laid down by them. Naturally, he chose to leave instead.

Harry Dockweiler was suspended by the Wollheim-controlled Executive Committee, because his vote might have brought the FSNY under Fred Pohl's leadership. Dick Wilson was not formally dropped from the roles, but was ostracized in exactly the same manner that the recent action was carried out against the four members, Blish, Lowndes, Emdon, and Zissman, on the accusation that he was an 'untrustworthy character'-- that is, he was obviously more attached to Pohl than to Wollheim.

In more recent times, Wollheim has had to use only the threat of ostracism: that sufficed to prevent the V.A.P.A. Board of Advisors from inviting Fran Laney to become a member of that organization. The same threat was applied, with a conspicuous lack of success, to Zissman, Blish, and those who were considered to be their 'followers.'

The threat has worn thin. We who have heard it so often are tired of it. We are tired of being 'handled' and of handling other people. We are an 'amorphous collection of individuals bound together by ties of varying magnitudes of social, literary, artistic, or science-fiction and fantasy implications.'*

We make no further claims to leadership, nor do we put our faith in leaders. No one person wrote or dictated this document. It was composed in democratic assembly, each person having full and equal voice. We have disposed of one Wollheim, and we will not tolerate another.

(LARRY SHAW

Larry Shaw

Executive Board: (JAMES BLISH

James Blish

(JUDY ZISSMAN

Judy Zissman

DAMON KNIGHT

Damon Knight

CHESTER COHEN

Chester Cohen

VIRGINIA K. EMDEN

Virginia K. Emden

**ROBERT W. LOWNDES

Robert W. Lowndes

* From the Constitution of the FSNY, as approved by all of its then members, and published in October 1941 by the then Executive Committee, consisting of D. A. Wollheim, John B. Michel, Robert W. Lowndes, and Cyril Kornbluth.

** Reconsidering previously tendered resignation.

CONSTITUTION OF THE FSNY

As revised and unanimously adopted by the meeting of Sept. '45.

The Futurian Society of New York is an amorphous collection of individuals, bound together by ties of varying magnitudes of social, literary, artistic, or science-fiction and fantasy implications.

When pressed for a definition of the term 'Futurian,' members shall define it as 'one who holds a dynamic concept of the future,' or in any other way that may best serve to describe whatever beliefs are held in common by the members of the society at the time.

Futurians are expected to be personally loyal to each other, and to help each other, collectively and individually, for the mutual advancement and advantage of each and all, and of any ideals and progressive viewpoints that may be held by any reasonable number of members.

The Futurian Society shall be considered to be in permanent session, broken only by periods of recess at such times as there is no sizeable number of Futurians in the same place at the same time. Whenever there is a reasonably representative number of Futurians together, the work they are doing may be represented as the work of the society.

A formal meeting of the society may be called whenever a majority of its active members are present. Such a meeting may consider any valid business of the society as a whole, and may make decisions which may not be counteracted save by another meeting. An active member shall be defined as one in good standing who is in current residence in the City of New York.

The formal governing body of the society shall be an executive board consisting of three members elected by a plurality, in open vote, at least once a year. Duties of the Executive Board shall be secretarial, financial, editorial, and parliamentary in nature, and shall be divided as equally as possible, in accordance with the convenience of the moment.

New members may be admitted to the society, old members disciplined, rewarded, suspended, or expelled, and this constitution amended, only by a majority decision of all active members submitted in writing.