

# Fantasy-Times

SECTION 1

"The World Of Tomorrow Today!"

Vol. 10 - No. 221

SECOND APRIL 1955 ISSUE

Ten Cents

## GERMAN S-F MAGAZINES FACE BANNING BY BAVARIAN GOVERNMENT

### EDITOR ASKS ACKERMAN TO HELP!

Germany, 29 March, (CNS) - The two science-fiction magazines published in Germany faced discontinuance under a attack by the Bavarian Government. Editor Walter Emsting, in a letter to Forrest J Ackerman, explained that the Bavarian government had objected to some of the "atomic war" stories published by the two magazines and was seeking to ban the magazines. He further asked Ackerman to write a strong article on behalf of science-fiction, so that he could use it in an appeal to the Bonn Government in a effort to save the magazines.

The two science-fiction magazines are UTOPIA, Jim Parkers Abenteuer Im Weltraum, a magazine similar (in type) to Doc Savage and Captain Future, and UTOPIA - Grossband, a regular science-fiction magazine. (For more details, see Ackerman's column, "German NewsFax" in this issue.)

In the letter to Ackerman, Walter Emsting stated in part: "The Bavarian Gouvernement started an attack against UTOPIA, specially against Nr. 7, 12 and 13 to begin with. Sure, these novels are what we call "Pulps", but they are not as bad as some of the other stories I know. They want them forbidden! The novels are asserted to be 'cruel, sinister, too realistic with atomic wea-

pons, adventurous and full of terrible acts. And they glorify the use of atomic war'. ... I am alone in a difficult fight against these people, who do not understand, why some of these SF-novels are so realistic and sometimes 'horrible'. They do not see, that only the realistic description is able, to prevent people ever to use such weapons in the future. The development of Science Fiction series is in serious danger, when I do not success, to convince everybody of this fact. And I am sure, Porry, that you are willing to help me. ... What can you do? Well, you are a well known personality in America, and I have done my best, to get you well known in Germany too. Your word is important and would be of great help. Give me an article! Do write the fact, that venom has to be cancelled only by an other venom - that is the deep reason of SF in this special case. The horrible future is only to prevent by the realistic picture of this horrible future. ... In three weeks I have to go to Bonn - I want to bring your article with me. With your words with me I am not alone and I will be able, to stand against the whole bunch of biggery! Remember....it is your fight too! UTOPIA are English and American novels! And they are Science Fiction!"

If the magazines are continued, it will begin to publish American novels (continued on page 5, column 2)



by Forrest J Ackerman

Problem: Take off work and try to save science-fiction in Germany in a day. An SOB came from Mexico once, as I recall - and Jimmy and I tried to save s-f there. We stalled off its demise for a year or two, and the thanks I got was that two good friends criticized me about it, some others took a dim view, & others did the disservice of telling people I made money out of the deal. (Which I categorically deny.)

The problem in Germany is not financial, not lack of support, but outright attack on content. The editors have had their reasons for leading off with some hack, and perhaps their choices have been unfortunate in several cases, but just now as they're about to make their move to introduce van Vogt, Asimov, Norton, Neville and all sorts of good people, the whole project (as you see) is in peril of prohibition.

What would Sam Moskowitz have done, I wonder, if the gauntlet had been tossed to him? What if Ray Bradbury had been appealed to to save stf in Deutschland? Or Gernsback or Campbell or Gold put on the spot? Who knows. I suspect Kuttner or Sturgeon might have been our shrewdest lawyer for the defense. However, absolutely no prozes offered from this weary individual for hindsight, second-guessing or a thousand word essay on "How I Could Have Done It (Much) Better Than Ackerman". I drew all the words out of me, that I had, that I hoped would help; if I was the wrong guy for the job, I regret it. And - before anybody starts any ugly rumors about me profiteering in Germany, I confess. It wasn't true about Mexico, but I admit, I have made money out of placing sci-fi in Deutschland: \$10, or \$15 to date, I should imagine.

There are two German UTOPIAS, both published by Erich Pabel Verlag, Rastatt, Baden. The lesser Utopia is called UTOPIA - Kleinband ("Small Volume") and BEARS THE SUBTITLE Jim Parkers Abenteuer im Weltraum (Jim Parker's Adventures in the Universe). This is a single character magazine, a la Doc Savage or Captain Future, authorship credited to

conducted by J. Harry Vincent

Reading over the news and news-items of the attempted banning of science-fiction in Germany strikes me as how close to home censorship is these days. Here in the United States, comic magazines are under attack. The self-censorship by the comic magazine industry is a sad case indeed. We have had the opportunity to look over some of the scripts censored by the code board and what they take out would make a fairy tale seem sinister and bold. They even object to the word "weird" being used as a magazine title. With their watered-down results, the comic field will soon be no more. In fact the sales are so poor these days that with some companies only the use of reprints keep them going. But this does not satisfy our "blue-nosed" politicians; in New York State there is wild talk of new State laws for "real censorship". With this open door to the publishing world, if not stopped by level-headed persons soon, it will be, but a matter of time, before, like in Germany, science-fiction (and all printed matter) will be either banned or so censored that it'll be worthless.

The Free Press, be it comics, magazines, or newspapers, must be preserved, or all we live for, in the free portion of the world, will die with it. Censorship of the press is the first step towards distatorship, be it the red or black variety.

Alf Tjomsen. Size 6" x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", published monthly, price 50 pfennigs, and about 40 issues to date. Full color action covers, about half a dozen small b-&w interiors.

The important one is UTOPIA-Grossband ("Big Volume"), subtitled "Science Fiction in German", and with the info on the inside that these are "the best science fiction stories of the world". So far, to date, for economic reasons - and publishers' opinion of what sort of stf is best suited to establish a new market in Germany, the stories have been all British and selected from the lesser ubiquitous soft cover jobs there

(continued on page 5, column 2)



# SCIENCE-FICTION

## MESSENGER OF LIGHT

by Forrest J Ackerman

THIS is the article that Forry wrote to help Walter Ernsting, editor of the German science-fiction magazines, UTOPIA, save his magazines from being banned.

WE sincerely hope that the battle will be won! -eds

I AM an American of German extraction. As long as I can remember—and I am now nearly 40—I have admired the Germans, especially their scientific advancements. I married a German, who has read science-fiction all her life. Whose elder brother reads science-fiction to this day. Whose 14 year old son has just had his first science-fiction story professionally published, and sold a second.

THE Germans killed my own, and only, brother, in battle, Belgium, 1 January 1945. And still I wish them well.

I CAN wish them no better than that their maturing youth should have the benefit of reading science-fiction. As I had the benefit. As the Italians and the Swedes and the British and the French and, most recently, the Japanese, are having the benefit, with their flourishing science-fiction books and magazines. The French have two science fiction magazines—Fiction and Galaxie—and the Italian Urania appears three times a month and has reached its 70th issue.

I STARTED reading science-fiction in 1926. As a boy of nine I was attracted for childish reasons. I revelled in adventure, action, strange places, exciting sights and sounds. And guns and villains and heroes. But my mental horizons were a little broader than some other boys', and so instead of "cops and robbers" and "cowboys and Indians" my joys were multiplied by amazing stories of invisible men and rockets to the moon and princesses of Mars and invaders from the stars. Sometimes

the world went boom and other times marvelous inventions were made that were a great boon to humanity. But whatever happened, my interest in science was quickened by these stories, my understanding of astronomy and chemistry and physics and biology and anthropology and paleontology all enhanced. And all this through the great gift to the world of the original magazine publisher of science-fiction, the foresighted author and inventor, Hugo Gernsback.

WOULDN'T you know it? Gernsback had his technical training in Germany!

MANY honors have been bestowed upon Gernsback, who still lives, in his life-time, and annually he participates as a judge in voting on the best science-fiction book published in the world during the year. If I am not mistaken, the Queen of Luxembourg (where he was born) herself honored him several years ago for his outstanding contributions to mankind.

AND now I am told the cause of science-fiction in Germany is seriously threatened, and I am profoundly shocked! Shall I never grow so old but what the mistakes made in America in the beginning is being repeated somewhere else in the world? Is there anything I can do to help? I fervently hope so!

HERE I sit in my two-story home, the home that has been honored by visits by Hugo Gernsback, Willy Ley, Lillian Harvey, Ray Bradbury, Fritz Lang, George Pal, Krafft Ehrlicke, Arthur C. Clarke, A. E. van Vogt, Curt Siodmak and other celebrities. I am surrounded by ten thousand science-fiction books and five thousand science-fiction magazines. Behind glass are 150 first issues of science-fiction magazines from the world 'round—including UTOPIA. The fingers that type these words have shaken hands with H. G. Wells and the star of the mighty German utopian romance film, Metropolis\*. Memories of a thousand people convened at the World Science Fiction Convention in Chicago in 1952, and the thousands of science-

\* Brigitte Helm.

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fiction stories I have read, and the articles I have been invited to write, and the lectures I have been solicited to give. All this—and is it possible that somewhere in the world today the right of science-fiction to exist is being challenged?

IN GERMANY?

UNBELIEVABLE!

WHY?

WHEN science-fiction was new in America it was not well understood by many. Educators were suspicious of it (while other educators and scientists were writing it under pseudonyms!) I can still remember the time when school teachers would not permit me to write book reviews about science-fiction novels. It was my signal triumph, as an adult, to return to the high school of my youth, to be introduced by the principal as a guest of honor and to speak to the students of a new generation about the merits of science-fiction! Proudly I returned to my university to address the science-fiction club now established on the campus! Here in Los Angeles, third largest city in the United States, the main Public Library, besieged by its readers for new science fiction books, telephones to ask my recommendation of what titles to add. I am interviewed on radio and television about science-fiction.

AND yet—there is a voice in Germany that says science-fiction is not good, or is not good for Germans? That science-fiction should 'go', instead of going on? I am alarmed. I am concerned... I wish I could express my thoughts directly in German rather than having them translated, or that my hearers or readers might understand Esperanto, as I do, so that I could more freely communicate.

I HAVE set everything aside to do this job. Leaving off my work, it will probably cost me \$100. But it will be worth a hundred or a thousand or a hundred thousand times that to me if I can "save the day", as we say, (I hope that is translatable), in German. I feel I owe it to Germany to try, because:

I AM indebted to Germany. I am indebted to the German science-fiction storytellers who opened my eyes to the wonders of the universe, to the value of human understanding, to the treasures of peace and cooperation and progress.

Thank you, Otto Willi Gail, Offrid von Hanstein, Friedrich Freska, Thea von Harbou, Hans Dominik, and all the rest of you! My eternal gratitude, men like Fritz Lang and Curt Siodmak, for films like METROPOLIS and FRAU IM MOND and R.1 AND DORTER NACHT.

MAKE no mistake about it, there are great American writers too, expressing great philosophies, and English authors of note, bombarding the human brain with thoughts and ideals, ways and means of achieving the utopian civilization for which all sane men yearn. If sometimes they dip their pens in acid and blood and paint pain-pictures of ghastly atomic horror, it is to crystallize for their perhaps less imaginative brethren the disastrous results of unholy ambition, twisted reasoning, misapplied science. For every bomb that drops in science-fiction, an explosion takes place in the mind of the reader that blows away misconception. For every tower of lies that is toppled, a skyscraper of truth is erected. Better bitten by a snake on paper than in reality! And if we are shown the snake on paper, we learn to recognize and avoid it in reality.

I AM not naive. I make no claim that science-fiction is the panacea for all the ills of humanity! I do not wildly claim that every science-fiction story is a masterpiece of imagination, morality and inspiration. Some, I regret to say, are very poor indeed. Yes, there are some bad—some mighty bad!—science-fiction stories. Did you think I would not admit it? But rarely "bad" in the moralistic or philosophical sense of the word. I am inclined to think, and thinking people to agree with me, that even a poor science-fiction story is preferable to a good western, mystery or romance. It gives one more to think about.

FINALLY, let me tell you one little story, and then I will let you go. Ten years ago, we (meaning the United States) were at war with Japan. I myself served in the Army three and a half years. In Japan, after the Armistice, a young Japanese boy who had liked the war no more than I, came home to find he had no home: it had been totally destroyed. Night after night he slept on the open earth, underneath the stars. For the first time in his life

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he realized there were other planets in our solar system, began to speculate: could there be life upon them? For this young Japanese, at that time, a trip to California, in the distant United States, was a remote and unthinkable as a trip to the farthest star. And yet---through science-fiction---it came to pass one day, not in imagination but in reality, that Tetsu Yano of Kobe, Japan, after 29 days at sea, stepped off a steamer at Los Angeles' harbor and was greeted by my wife and myself, who took him into our home as a member of our family for the next five months. Our sole common interest: science-fiction. Tetsu Yano's enforced interest in the stars had led to an astronomical curiosity about the world about us, and from scientific textbooks to imaginative fiction. (And sometimes it is the other way around: from imaginative science-fiction to instructive textbooks.) One burning desire sustained him through almost insurmountable difficulties: to get to America and learn all he could about science-fiction. Then return to his own country and introduce science-fiction to his own people. This he has successfully done. There has been no necessity, thank God!, for me to have to address the Japanese as I am addressing you Germans.

IRONICALLY, this is composed on April first, a day also known to you in Europe, I believe---if, indeed, it may not have originated there!-- a day traditionally devoted to jokes and deceptions. But I have seldom thought or written as seriously as I do today. I did when I learned my brother had been killed, and when at last in 1951 in Luxembourg I stood by his grave; and when my beloved grandparents, with whom I had been raised and who, indeed, encouraged me in the reading of science-fiction, died. I will not go so far as to say Science Fiction Uber Alles, but I do sincerely believe that there should be science-fiction fur Alles. It is too bad, but not too late, that it is coming so late to Germany in a regular, recognized form. I do not doubt for an instant that it is crude and unformed as yet, but you have countrymen capable of quickly remedying that, and certainly I stand willing to assist in any way possible.

I TITLED this "Science Fiction: Messenger Of Light", and I truthfully believe it is just that. To the concerned parties, I trust I have shed a ray of light in an hour of dark decision. Don't turn your back on science-fiction, don't kill the opportunity for a literature that has proven its value elsewhere in the world to live and grow and demonstrate its worth to you. Germany has given much to science-fiction---God grant you will now have the vision to get from science-fiction the wisdom, strength and courageous, constructive imagination that are the basic ingredients of this "escape" literature. Yes, in dreams today that will be built into realities tomorrow, with Science Fiction lighting the pitfalls to be avoided and beckoning its readers on to glowing goals and greater glories; a beacon, Ever burning brightly!

*Robert J. Ackerman*

#### GERMAN SF MAGS FACE BANNING (concluded from page 1, column 2)

els and use some American artists. Up to now it has used mostly stories and novels from the British s-f magazines and British paper backed novels.

Mr. Ackerman's article is reprinted on page 3 of this issue.

#### WORLD NEWSPAX (concluded from page 2, column 2)

Mainly pseudonyms like Randle Page and Bert Cameron (Herbert J. Campbell?), with an occasional recognizable name like ACClarke, HKBulmer and H.J.(Bert) Campbell. Ninety-eight pages, same size as the smaller Utopia, twice the price of the latter (one mark), full color covers (often based on the British covers), no interiors.

If allowed to continue, they are about to present American drawn covers by Paul Blaisdell, Rod Duke, Alfred Nuetzel and Ron Cobb, fiction by Andre Norton, van Vogt, Kris Neville, Don Wollheim, Curt Siodmak and others.

Editor: Walter Ernsting, a long time fan, Unofficial helper: 20-year-old enthusiast Walter Spiegl, considered German Fan #1.

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Two of the titles under attack, WAR BETWEEN THE WORLDS presented in two parts in issues 12 & 13, is actually the British juvenovel MARINERS OF SPACE by Errol Collins, published in England in 1944. Woodayne, who has read a part of the German translation, says the story strikes her as very much like an Edgar Rice Burroughs adventure.

#### FANTASY FORECASTS

Coming Up Next In The Pros

#### THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION

July 1955, Volume 9, Number 1  
"Father" (short novel) by Philip Jose Farmer, "A Tale Of The Thirteenth Floor" by Ogden Nash, "Gemini" by G. B. Stern, "The Wind's Will" by Thomas A. Meehan, "Walking Aunt Daid" by Zenna Henderson, "Recommended Reading" (a department) by Anthony Boucher, "Psychotomy" by Kurt Lasswitz translated by Willy Ley, "The All-Purpose Ghost Story" by Charles W. Morton, "2" by Arthur C. Clarke, and "The Sealman" by John Masfield.

The August issue of Science Fiction Quarterly will sport a new logo, this time something really different. This issue should be on the stands sometime in mid-May. Still pulp-size, and still 25¢.

Robert W. Lowndes reports that a letter department will be started with the July issue of Science Fiction Stories. Bob wants interesting letters on his magazines or science-fiction in general and will print as many as he deems to be the most interesting. Actually the number of pages donated to this department will be judged by the number of interesting letters he gets in.

Sam Merwin has a fantasy story in the September issue of Lowndes' Smashing Detective, "A Sense For Crime"; while Lowndes' Ten Story Sports, July issue, has a science-fiction baseball story, "In Relief From Yesterday" by Mel Colton. Well-known fan, Bob Madle runs a regular Sport department in this magazine and in the 1955 issue of Super Sports.

#### FANTASY - TIMES "The World Of Tomorrow Today!" Incorporating Science Fiction News and Fantasy-C

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James V. Taurasi, Sr. & Ray Van Houten,  
Editors and Publishers.

A FANDOM HOUSE PUBLICATION!

(We have been informed, as this issue goes to press, that the Ackerman's article on the German science-fiction magazines, "Science Fiction: Messenger Of Light" may be printed in some of Germany's leading slick magazines. -eds)

AUSTRALIAN READERS ATTENTION: Please note that our Australian Representative has recently moved. In the future all subscriptions for Fantasy-Times in the Australian area should be mailed to ROGER DARD, 22 Arlington Ave., PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

MILCROSS can supply you with any current British science-fiction magazines or books, and also with some back issues of British magazines or books, at British prices. MILCROSS keeps Fantasy Times' files up-to-date with the latest from Great Britain. Write for their latest catalog. MILCROSS BOOK SERVICE, 68 Victoria St., LIVERPOOL 1, ENGLAND.

WANTED for the Fantasy-Times' files: #10 issue of Scoops and the AMAZING ANNUAL. FANDOM HOUSE, P. O. Box #2331, Paterson 23, New Jersey. Must be in good untorn condition.



# Fantasy Times

## BOOK REVIEWS

SECTION

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Vol. 1 - No. 2

THE DELUGE, by "Leonardo de Vinci", "edited" by Robert Payne, Lion Books, 1955, 124pp., 25¢.

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Completists may want this literary abortion on their science-fiction shelves, as a grisly specimen of genre curious. Somebody named Robert Payne claims to have found "notes for a short novel" among the posthumous papers of Leonardo da Vinci. These notes have apparently never before been published or commented on in print, but Payne appears to have found fourteen lines of them imaginatively adequate for his purpose -- which seems to have been the hitching of his literary wagon to a presumably profitable star. After all, the name of da Vinci on a book should sell more copies than that of Robert Payne, and the whole thing should make a clever gimmick to catch a publisher's eye. It certainly is unlikely Payne could have made it on his own -- his novel (entirely his own work, of course) is about the dullest and most inane dash of pure balder to shame the pocketbook racks in months. Never have 124 pages seemed to comprise so onerous and unending a task of reading. The cover, appropriately, is unspeakable. Buy it for laughs, if you bother with it at all.

-Bill Blackbeard

THE MAD READER, by Harvey Kurtzman, Jack Davis, Bill Elder, and Wallace Wood, Introduction by Roger Price, Ballantine Books, 1954, 4pp of text, 182pp of cartoons, 35¢.

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Most readers of Fantasy Times are probably familiar by now with the companion-magazines, MAD and Panic, and have reacted to them in accordance with their temperaments. The magazines seem either to alienate or make ardent devotees of those who encounter them. The two periodicals are printed on the same

paper stock and trimmed to the same size as the comic magazines among which they are to be found on the newsstands, but any further resemblance between them and other "comics" is as remote as the editor and staff of cartoonists who produce them can contrive. Insofar as their unique content can be classified, it seems to be satire as contrived as to serve as a vehicle for unadulterated sadism and the debasement of contemporary standards of decency and propriety. Comic strips and popular movies are frequently targets for this "satire", and its point seems to be that if the creators of these works really let their pants down and follow the implications of their works to a conceivable madir, they would resemble the presentation in MAD and Panic. What is actually done, however, is to enlarge grotesquely upon the elements of sadism, violence, and -- with reservations -- sex to be discerned in the material satirized. Frequently other elements obviously called for parody are seized upon and exaggerated, but the three named are the staples in these "satirical" excursions.

The result seems to have proven immensely popular, particularly among adolescents, whose general outlook reflects much of the social anarchy emphasized and eulogized by inference in MAD and Panic. Young fans at science-fiction conventions are especially apt to present themselves as eager exponents of the magazines, and many of their elders in fandom read and exult over the two periodicals with almost as much enthusiasm. The same individuals, almost to a man (there don't seem to be many girls among them), are equally enthusiastic over Al Capp's "Li'l Abner", in which comic strip the "Fearless Fosdick" take-off on "Dick Tracy" anticipated much of the satirical approach presently to be found in MAD and Panic.



These fundamental observations scarcely present the two magazines in a prepossessing light. However, anyone able to stomach some of the more tasteless aspects of the material in them must admit that there is a great deal of very funny reading -- or looking -- to be encountered in their pages. The skill of the three leading cartoonists on the magazines' staff as artists and funnymen cannot be overlooked, and scripter Harvey Kurtzman has frequent inspirations that approach genuine comedy. The contents of the magazines, in any event, certainly represents a minor but striking phenomenon in our contemporary culture, and as such it deserves the recognition recently given it by Ballentine Books.

This enterprising and adventurous publishing house has collected thirteen (ofcourse!) of the best items from Mad and published them in pocketbook format as The Mad Reader. The selections represent about the cream of the material in the one magazine so far, and should afford an evening as hilarious as it may be distasteful to the curious purchaser. The balance of reaction may lie in hilarity, for the more tasteless of the Mad satires have been passed over for this collection.

If you aren't familiar with Mad or Panic, this collection should tell you all you want to know about the magazines. If you are, it is, possibly, a "must" for your permanent shelves.

-Bill Blackbeard

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THE BODY SNATCHERS by Jack Finney, Dell  
First Editions, 1955, 191pp., 25¢.

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This "First Edition" science-fiction novel first appeared in Collier's in 1954 and certainly must take part of the blame in that magazine's continuing economic difficulties. Collier's editors no longer seem to have the expert touch in selecting fiction that characterized the work of their predecessors in the days of the Fu Manchu stories. And it is not that the fiction or the writers who can create it are no longer available -- it is simply that Collier's editors -- like those of many other failing popular magazines -- have come to accept en toto the old and largely invalid contentions of literary critics and editors of writer's magazines that popular fiction is formula fiction, and that a story with certain fundamental ingredients whipped into a passably readable froth will be a success with the mass public. 'Tain't so, but it seems unlikely that a lot of editors will find that out before it's too late.

The Body Snatchers? A largely unreadable hodge-podge of poor writing, poor characterization, and poor imagination that is nothing more than what it is -- a hefty chunk of contemporary Collier's fiction carved out of a magazine and served up in the guise of a "new" science-fiction novel. It is hard to say how much of the fault is the author's -- his earlier Five Against The House was a rather worthwhile novel (though not science-fiction). Don't bother with this one. -Bill Blackbeard.



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