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# # # # #

#### LOOKING BACKWARD

"It is the purpose of the MSPS to gather together the fen of Michigan; to organize them into an effective striking force for the interests of fandom; to oppose any and all efforts to retard fandom's progress." --George Young, in Mutant Vol. 2, # 1.

"Elsner: Please don't send any further issues of your -- mess -- to my address. Tho you don't give a damn, I feel compelled to say this to you, in answer to your remark that fandom can hang itself: Elsner can go hang himself, actually, and it won't make me sad. If you hate fandom thus, get out, and stay out. We don't need you." -- postcard from Rex E. Ward.

"You were pretty disgusted with fanry and fannism, I recall. There may have been special incidents to crystallize that attitude, but it is something that should be merely a part of growing up, anyhow, a natural broadening of horizons and reevaluation resulting in a more practical and realistic perspective towards matters micro-cosmic in their relation to the world of reality. Many or most fans, of course, never quite grow up in several significant respects." -- excerpt from a letter from C. B. Stevenson.

Since my statements regarding fandom in the previous issue of Thots were brief and more or less unexplained, I think I should begin this issue where I left off last time.

Probably the easiest way to tell the story is in chronological order. To get the complete picture, we'll have to go 'way back. I was born with a physical handicap, now outgrown, which made it difficult for me to play strenuously and engage in sports with the other children of my own age. Probably because of this, I came to spend most of my out of school time reading. For some reason or other I developed an interest in rockets and space-ships. The first comic I can remember having read was the full page Buck Rogers in the Sunday News. And I clipped and saved those illustrated articles in the American Weekly Sunday supplement. At the time that I was collecting comic magazines, P.E. Gleator's "Rockets Through Space" was a well-thumbed volume on my bookshelves.

All of this interests in rockets, together with my disinterest in the sports and other activities of my schoolmates, caused me to become known as the class "crackpot", and led to much jeering and teasing which for the most part I couldn't take.

About this time I encountered my first science-fiction magazine: a 2nd hand copy of Captain Future. Naturally I was thrilled with the thing, much to the annoyance of my parents. It so happened that in the letter section of this particular issue there was a letter from someone named Fair, the president of a science fiction club. This sounded interesting, so I decided to start a s-f club too, the Society for the Improvement of Science Fiction in America (SISFA). I wrote letters to all the people who had letters in that CF, and also Startling and Thrilling Wonder, which I had by now discovered, and soon received a fanzine, Lionel Innman's Vulcan.

You can imagine how all this affected me. At last I, the "crackpot" had found a group of people with interests similar to mine; people who were interested in rockets and science; who wrote to each other and published magazines and attended conventions.

As I wrote to more and more fans, and the pile of fanzines grew, my goals began to change too. Now my great ambition was to be, not merely a reader and collector, but a fan -- if not one of the "top ten", at least a member of the "inner circle". Fandom was a wonderful world, and to be an accepted member of it was like being admitted to heaven. Letters from Bob Tucker, then #1 on all the polls, were my most prized possessions. I junked the SISFA because it was not a fan club -- we were only a group of correspondents, "letter-hacks" -- strictly "outer circle" stuff.

So I subscribed to more and more fanzines, wrote letters and occasionally articles for their editors. Finally, I felt I was a full-fledged "fan" -- I was in! I had gone to a convention at the Slan Shack; had had articles in fanzines; and was president of a local club which actually had its meetings written up in Fanews just like the LASFS.



Then after a brief period came the Big Disillusion. I realized that all the fans weren't interested in science or even science fiction. All they were interested in was the microcosm of fandom. For a while, before the thrill of being a fan wore off, I was caught up in it too: the feuds in the LASFS were just as real to me as if I were actually a resident of Los Angeles. But when it wore off, I was disgusted at the picture presented by fandom. My dream world of science-fiction fans, literary and technical geniuses, who had created a supposedly unique group of informal friends from coast, brilliant idealists unmarred by the rest of the world, crashed about me. The self-proclaimed "super-men" whom I had spent so much time trying to emulate, suddenly became just a bunch of jerks like everyone else in the outside world from which I was unconsciously trying to escape.

I had gotten over my adoration of fans and fandom, but science-fiction was still "all holy". I thought that science-fiction was the most stimulating and broadening literature in existence. If fandom was not a group of intelligent science-fiction enthusiasts, then I would bring together such a group. For I felt that there must be others like myself, who had become disgusted with fandom, but still retained an active interest in science-fiction itself. Thus was born my fanzine, Scientifictionist.

Putting out 20 pages of Scientifictionist every few months was hard work, but it was fun, and it was gratifying. At last I had met the type of people whom I had expected to find in fandom. Scientifictionist ground on, gaining in popularity and circulation with every issue. But very slowly a realization of the challenging nature of the real, outside world began to dawn upon me. I tried to reconcile this with my still idealistic view of science-fiction, as is brought out by my article, "Escapist or Realist?" in Scientifictionist #4: "We, the scientifictionists, in our literature, scientifiction, have before us an unlimited horizon. Scientifiction is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end. ... We live in an Ivory Tower of fantasy and wishful thinking, reading about the infinity of space and time, yet unable to face reality. ... Scientifiction should, and does, lead not to escapism, but extreme realism."

My change in attitude took a while to develop; Stfist saw four more issues after the one which contained the article from which the foregoing is quoted. Slowly, the work of putting out the magazine became more and more just plain hard work. The letters remained unanswered for longer and longer periods of time. Promags piled up unread on my shelves. Scientifictionist received 4th place in the last poll taken before it folded, and I was rated among the "top ten" fans. But even tho I was glad to receive this acclaim, it didn't seem to change my position. Finally, in a last attempt to sustain my belief in science-fiction, I folded my fanzine, and made a concerted effort to get to reading the pro s-f mags and keep up my correspondence. It didn't work. The letters still went unanswered (and anyhow they did not come in like they used to) and the magazines accumulated, unread. Now I don't even buy the magazines anymore. My subscription to ASF still holds out, and I occasionally read a story in it. I still have a half-dozen or so correspondents, tho we necessarily discuss things other than science-fictional.

So that's the story. I suppose some kind of summarizing statement should wind up all this personal philosophizing. Of course, everything wasn't quite as simply realized as I've mentioned in this article. Most of the time there was no clear cut, conscious attitude at all, but rather a sort of confused idealism and an unconscious desire for escape which progressed through various stages. As I see it now, my experience with science-fiction and fandom has been a part of my growth -- an experience in reorientation and adjustment to the reality of the world in which we all have to live, whether we like it or not.

Where do I stand today? Well, my chief interest is in the social and economic crises facing man today. Several years ago, I thought those people very moronic who said to me: "Why plan and worry about rocketing to other planets when there is so much to do right here on this one?" Yet today I feel nearly the same way myself. Most of my reading today is confined to non-fiction books as well as magazines. Of course I still enjoy a good s-f story occasionally -- when I find the time to read one.

My preoccupation with "socially-significant" stuff does not mean, however, that I have no hobbies or strictly pleasurable pursuits. Now I am collecting photos of electric interurban and city trolley cars. Why, you may ask, did I take up this hobby instead of carrying on with s-f and fandom? Aside from the psychological factors mentioned before, there are several definite reasons. The most prominent of these is that my new hobby gives me all the satisfaction derived from fandom without the unpleasant features. Trolley car fans write to each other, swap photos, publish fanzines, belong to regional and national clubs, just like s-f fans, and fans of other things. But trolley car fandom seems to me to be free of the unhealthy psychotic atmosphere which pervades s-f fandom. Sure, there are screwball trolley car fans -- characters who stand on top of cars during fantrips to get their hair cut by the overhead wire -- but it is obvious that an interest in old streetcars is hardly likely to lead to a mania that you are the savior of the world, the intellectual elite of the U.S., or the conquerors of the Universe.

Finis to this.

(Letters on next page)



## TWO LETTERS

Re semantics: interested to note that Tech'y includes semantic instruction in the Technate's educational program. Me, I'd like to see semantic principles applied to education from kindergarten up, with semantics a required hi school course. For there are few more important subjects than learning how to think sanely and scientifically. The more I learn about general semantics, the more profound the field appears. The spread of semantic methods will have monumental effects on our culture -- particularly with regard to politics and religion, and I imagine there'll be a long and bitter fight, with some highly powerful forces attempting to retain the old two-valued standards of thought. 'Tis significant to note Wollheim, in letters to Fantasy Times, denouncing semantics as reactionary and partizan... possibly because g.s. would tend to invalidate Marxist principles! 'Twill be a happy day when scientific principles of thot become generally recognized and accepted: that all is not either black or white, either good or evil, either "progressive" or "reactionary", either "fascist" or "communist". In regards to Technocracy, I'm inclined to doubt that we'll see a workable scientific state until a major fraction of the population has been trained to think along rational and scientific lines. 'Twill take a long time... but it's worth working for. # My acquaintance with Korzybski's work comes mainly from commentators who have written about his stuff, rather than from the stuff itself; so I can't comment authoritatively on your statement, "Korzybski is regarded ((by Tech'y)) as going off the deep end philosophically, tending to make a cult out of General Semantics, rather than a set of operational concepts." You've probably got something there, tho -- F'rinstance, Wendell Johnson's People in Quandries: The Semantics of Personal Adjustment contains a chapter anent Korzybskian "semantic relaxation", which would seem to consist of a "semantic" method of relieving nervous tension by rubbing one's face in a certain soothing fashion!!! Shades of the green grulzaks of guna!

Saludos, amigo! Another Spike Jones fan! Once, when Gerry de la Ree visited me, I tortured him during the whole afternoon by repeated playings of "Der Fuhrer's Face", "Pass the Biscuits, Mirandy", "Shiek of Araby", and other Jones classics. De la Ree, whose interests in music lean almost entirely toward the long-hair, dubbed the Jones records, "Obscene music!!" Ah well. I still think "Cocktails for Two" and "Laura" are about Jones' best. Wanna argue?

Now to Thots. The excellent letters from Stanley and Boggs seem the backbone of the issue, tho all the other letters were pretty good, too, in my opinion.

Don Wilson's missives are invariably readable, 'twould seem, because DW is a frank and outspoken critic. I'm a naive and unworldly little brat. Who is Big Bill Tilden? # Moskowitz's "Immortal Storm" (part I or II, forget which) contained reference to a Negro fan who was prominent in the very early days.

Boggs' argument that s-f is justified in presenting the possible ill effects of the application of science to society, as well as the happy consequences, rings the bell with me. This would adequately answer the accusations of the old Pro-Scientists League, which argued that fans should boycott movie houses featuring "Frankenstein", because Frankie was "anti-scientific propaganda".

I understand that Australia's color line, preventing immigration of anybody who's not a member of the white race, is primarily intended to exclude -- not the Negro -- but the yellow race. From what I've heard, Australians fear that Mongolians may migrate by the score, offering to work for lower wages, crowd out the whites, and possibly endanger the reportedly high living standards of Australia and New Zealand. 'Tis a similar situation to that of this country some decades back, when Chinese began entering the US en masse: workers squawked for immigration restrictions -- and got 'em. Down Under, I suppose, the "Danger to the standard of living" is far more imminent. Picture the cramped, land-hungry peoples of the Orient gazing speculatively at Australia, separated from Asia by only a brief expanse of ocean, much of its interior sparsely populated and undeveloped. The Asians are anxious to get in -- and who kin blame 'em? How much of Australia's immigration race-line policy can be attributed to economic considerations, and how much to underlying currents of "race hatred", Australians will hafta tell us. And I wonder if some of the Pacificoast fans could throw some light on the present conditions in Calif as to public acceptance of Japanese-Americans, about which racial problem we heard so much during the wah.

Guerry Brown's letter presents a mild puzzler, but I think I am fairly well qualified to answer it, having been forced to sit in college classes of Catholic theology for the past year and a half in order to receive credit for the rest of my studies (and now do you know why I'm planning to transfer to Rutgers?). It was stimulating mental exercise, tho; but the arguments of the theologians crumble rapidly apart when you realize that, never having heard of such a thing as a multi-valued orientation, they are handling high-order abstractions like "Goodness" and "Truth" and "Ultimateness" as if those qualities were as material as salt and pepper. As I see it, Guerry's statements, "We have no laboratory 'proof' of such a Thing as God... But are you going to completely deny that there is no such Thing merely on that basis?" reflect an attitude which can be traced back to Immanuel Kant. Kant's doctrines of transcendentalism proposed the belief that man can acquire knowledge through his intuition alone, without the use of the senses. If you agree with this, Guerry, I can't argue with you because we would have no common basis for agreement.



To me, the acceptance of Kant's idea could lead to anything from a mild form of un-sanity to a raging mania!! For example -- if I believe I can acquire knowledge without employing my senses, I am perfectly justified in proclaiming that Claude Degler is really president of the United States, and not some character from Missouri named Truman; that pigs are green and have twelve feet; that when we die our "souls" reappear on the other side of the moon. These examples are overly simplified, to be sure, but you get the general idea. All my sensory perceptions would tend to deny these conclusions; I cannot "prove" my beliefs by producing material evidence to support them. Neither Kant nor the theologians, of course, would be nutty enuf to risk ridicule by proposing doctrines which would be as obviously contrary to the testimonies of our senses as my proposed theory that pigs are green and have a dozen feet. But in regard to the one about heaven being on the unseen side of the moon -- aha! our senses give us no evidence to contradict this, so if my intuition alone tells me that this is so, I am perfectly within my rights to believe this. The scientifically minded thinker, however, having no sensory evidence, would simply not form any conclusion, and wait until a rocket hits the unseen side of the moon. (A check with the encyclopedia reveals that Kant didn't reject the testimony of the senses, rather believed that experience should be coupled with the knowledge you learn thru "intuition" to enable you to reach a conclusion. So while he wouldn't claim that pigs are green, he might've decided thru intuition that we all go to the spaceward side of luna when we die.) The theologians, however, don't apply the name "intuition" to the process by which they arrive at their foregone conclusions. They may call it "deference to tradition" or "reason" (which is a "reason" divorced from most material considerations). Now the scientific observer believes that what we learn, we learn through our senses; and consequently our conclusions can be clearly proven by demonstration in such a manner as to be perceptible to the senses of others. Therefore we should believe nothing until it is proved -- contrary to the brand of logic which Amazing Stories propounds.

"...Then what do you advocate?" Brown queries of Elsner. "Complete materialism?" I most certainly would advocate complete materialism, but I suspect that the word "materialism" suggests to Guerry a different meaning than it does to me. Materialism to me would mean the use of scientific methods of reasoning in answering all questions, determining all courses of action. Materialism would imply recognition of the fact that everything is material, a form of material (i.e., energy), or a function of material (i.e., thinking, seeing a beautiful painting, listening to a symphony, tasting a hot-dog, touching velvet, smelling a flower, etc.). Materialism would regard reality as a process involving continuous change, not as a static condition. A materialistic orientation would enable the individual to adjust himself to reality, rather than having the individual attempt to adjust reality to himself. Materialism would rule out the asking of questions which have no meaning, thus saving countless hours and incalculable mental energy which thinkers waste in attempting to answer questions like, "Why was I born?"; "What is the purpose of humanity?"; and "How can I attain personal immortality?" I have underlined the words which, functionally speaking, have no meaning. "Whenever one asks a question", says Wendell Johnson in People in Quandries, "he then must question the question by asking, 'What sort of observations, or reported observations, would serve to answer this?' If that cannot be answered, then nothing has been asked."

"Wouldn't you be glad to know that a man's spirit never dies, but goes on, constantly, forever?" I dunno, Guerry. To be sure this idea has accounted for the tremendous popularity of Christianity and Mohammedanism -- for, indeed, who wants to accept the cold reality that when your ticker stops, you stop, when it's much more pleasant to believe that you'll be flittering around pink-rosebud-hued clouds, listening to the music of celestial harps, for the rest of eternity -- while all the people who've ever been nasty to you will be roasting in agony down in some subterranean pit! Yet it is my conviction that the person who is the best adjusted to reality will be the happiest. Mortality can have its good points, too -- as the poet Swinburne so neatly demonstrates in the conclusion of "Proserpine". I rather suspect that living forever would be boring as all hell, and, verily, if you believe that your spirit has countless billions of aeons yet to live, what is your incentive to face reality, conquer obstacles, and make the most of today? Immortality of the race is another thing, of course.

I'm tempted to go on for several dozen more pages, to point out that a fanatical quest after sensual pleasure, alcoholism, etc., are not the consequences of "materialism" (as the preachers would have us believe) but rather other forms of escapism and unreality; and to present my theory that the aesthetic satisfactions of religion could be replaced by showing the populace how to appreciate great art, music, drama, and literature; but something tells me I've gone sufficiently off the deep end already.

Your opening editorial, "Miscellaneous, Et Cetera", was rather puzzling to me. If, as far as you're concerned, fandom can go hang itself, collectively and individually, and it sometimes puzzles you how you ever got connected with such a bunch of weird characters, and your reaction to fanzines ranges from sheer apathy towards the good ones to common disgust at the other kind, why are you wasting good time, money, and paper in publishing a magazine for fans to read? This policy of virtually thumbing one's editorial nose at his readers and greeting them with a lusty, "Nuts to you!" is vaguely reminiscent of Bill Watson and the old diablerie -- only Watson prob-



ably didn't mean it!! You casually inform fans that they can go hang themselves, and then you proceed to publish a neat, intelligent, and absorbing magazine for fans to read, primarily devoted to scientific comment. Frankly, Hank, I don't get it.

Your reference to fans as "weird characters", and, in your letter, the remark, "...while the fans are in their drunken stupors..." coupled with Fran Laney's revelations not so long ago to the effect that the LASFS is rife with queers, set me speculating. I wonder, if it were possible for a survey to be conducted of the 500 most active and interested fans or semi-fans, how high would be the percentage of socially undesirable characters. By "socially undesirable", I'd include all individuals whose maladjustments are of a nature harmful to society: thus including alcoholics, narcotic addicts, chronic perverts, homosexuals, and the insane. My question, Mr. Agony, is: would such a survey of 500 fans indicate that fandom had a higher percentage of socially undesirables than, say a representative cross-section of 500 people with no interests in the fantastic whatsoever?? Such a survey, of course, would be impossible to conduct -- for various rather obvious reasons! But anyway, judging from the acknowledged fact that fandom includes many extreme introverts, out-and-out escapists attracted by the fantastic side of stef, etc., I'd guess that fandom's percentage of socially undesirables would be considerably higher. Possibly as high as 20%. (If the survey were confined to fans of fantasy-weird-supernatural, as opposed to SF, I'd guess the statistics would be still higher than that.) To continue the guesswork, I'd be willing to bet my Speed-o-print that a survey to determine the aggregate I.Q. would also rate fandom considerably higher than average. # From observations of the Philcon, tho, I wouldn't say that there was an excessive amount of drinking. To my knowledge, there were only 2 out of approximately 200 who were full enuf to be obnoxious; but this is hardly more than could be expected for a convention of "normal people"! To counterbalance this, consider the fact that the Philcon featured a speech and a discussion forum on atomic energy, many speeches of a literary nature, a forum on rocketry and space travel with two prominent speakers, an entertainment program which put "St. Louis Blues" on the same bill with Debussy, De Falla, and some serious compositions by young composers, a discussion of life on other worlds; and many other features of an intellectual nature. To my mind, these features more than counterbalanced the hardly-measurable influence of any "socially undesirables". If fandom contains people like Degler, a certain gentleman from Portland, etc., etc., we can also be certain that it contains people like Speer, Rothman, Widner, Tucker, de la Ree, Norm Stanley, Searles, Moskowitz, Tom Gardner, Perry, Paul Carter, Alpaugh, Mullen, Chan Davis, and others really too numerous to mention.

The only conclusion is that the sincerely interested stefnism will have to decide carefully what fan activities he shall participate in, and also choose his fan companions with a measure of care -- which is, after all, hardly more than you'd do in any other social group. Fandom, to me, is still interesting and rewarding enuf to continue keeping in contact with; when it isn't any longer, I'll simply drop out completely without making any fuss about it. --Joe Kennedy, 84 Baker Ave., Dover, NJ.

# # #

No doubt some of the readers of Thots have read Ben Singer's account of the collapse of Detroit's only fan group, the Hyperboreans, in a somewhat recent news bulletin. (The neophytes have formed another, wildly active, organization since then.) Since Elsner won't take it on himself to defend the causes of the break-up and to debunk the account put forth by Singer's strange brain, I feel obliged to save face for the so-called 'old fen' (retired) in Detroit.

Singer is one of the most egotistic persons I have ever encountered. He has his good points, but, sadly, his bad hold a great deal more weight. Once he claimed to have received a rating between genius and homo-superior on an intelligence test. I doubt very much if there is such a rating on any such test given in the U.S. today.

Singer writes as if Elsner were the main person involved in the disintegration of the Hyperboreans; and that the break-up came as the result of his (Singer's) bringing new members into the organization. NUTS!! Elsner, Miller, Thomassen, and I all have lost interest in fandom; we wanted to get away from Singer. He made himself obnoxious on several occasions when the meetings were held at the homes of the various members. It seemed that no matter where the meeting was held, or under what conditions, Singer would always bring up the subject of his atheism. This was a subject of constant embarrassment, to me, at least; though I'm not much for religion myself and didn't care what he said to the group privately. The adults present (the meetings were held in the basement of Detroit's Technocracy meeting hall and members came downstairs every so often -- sometimes he would even take up the argument with them) were the cause of embarrassment. Of course, the embarrassment on my part may have been due to my inherent shyness.

For some time Singer was a neophyte with the usual number of expensive ideas. We four did not want to raise the dues just for a club organ or for other projects which shouldn't be undertaken by such a small group. By the time the group was large enough we had lost our interest.

Singer claims he brought in a lot of fine fellows who didn't come back



after one meeting because we shunned them. Again: NUTS! Here are some examples of the fellows which he brought into the club. One fellow, named Gordon, loved AS (which we detested)((AS that is)) and had not one iota of enthusiasm for club affairs. Another's ultimate goal in life was to acquire a complete collection of Planet Stories. A third walked off with two excellent copies of Wonder Stories Quarterly and never returned them. Still another boasted of being a proficient shop-lifter. Singer mentioned two electrical engineers. I never saw them. Perhaps he was referring to two high school students he wandered in with. They both were taking a course in electrical engineering at a local vocational school. The one nice fellow he introduced into the club never came back because of college work. Even he never returned some fanzines that he borrowed.

Elsner's wordage in regard to fandom seemed a little bit strong to me, or rather, too inclusive. Some of the fellows I met while still fanning (if it could have been called that), I liked very much. Others (such as Singer) can, as Elsner says, go hang themselves for all I care.

On to other topics.

I'd like Elsner to comment on the following paragraph if he will.

Would the large fortunes now in existence in the U.S. be confiscated with the advent of the Technate? If so, what a hell of a battle there would be. If not, it would be hard to convince me that these men and their henchmen would not exert a tremendous influence on the Technate. Some, no doubt, would attempt and succeed in buying positions for themselves or for someone who would work for their interests. This (the above) in regard to Elsner's statement that pressure groups would vanish with the advent of a Technocratic system of government. Also, wouldn't the initial cost of the Technate be prohibitive? Still another thing -- at the one Tech lecture that Elsner was able to drag me to, I assimilated only one of the things the speaker said. It had to do with the energy certificate. The speaker said that one of the numbers on the certificate would tell the owner's rank in regard to the total number of men working in the same department. Such as 22nd out of 3289. He also said that that the fellows listed high in this manner would feel swell. I say, "What about the poor Joe who is 3289th out of 3289, and others, also relatively low". And so for a trivial point which is probably no argument either for or against Technocracy. No doubt the planners of the energy certificate included such a number as somewhat of an incentive.

A strange thing that all of you who read this letter have no doubt noticed, has to do with music. It seems that almost anyone who enjoys long-hair music is also an avid Spike Jones fan. My brother is an example, as are Elsner, Dave Miller, and many others, including myself. This seems very queer to me. I can't for the life of me explain why a person would like two almost exactly opposite types of music. --Kent Bone, 2577 Ferris, Detroit 9, Michigan.

## # ##

It seems that some of the remarks made in the foregoing 2 letters definitely call for some comments on my part.

First of all, Joe asks me why I continue to publish THOTS in view of my apathy and disgust for fandom. Well, Joe, after that last issue I had planned to quit. In fact, I had been considering it for quite a while before I wrote that editorial. The one thing that deterred me was the fact that I was then still following 3 of the s-f magazines rather faithfully, and still enjoyed scientific discussion, both in the form of letters from other fans, and in expressing my own thots.

But as I've mentioned before, my stf reading has declined nearly to zero, and my fan correspondence has already reached that point. However, after the last issue of THOTS, in addition to the 2 letters printed above, I also received one from C.B. Stevenson, in which he commented on my editorial remarks, and suggested that I join FAPA. This I decided to do, for the following reasons: (1) I had been familiar with the content of FAPA mailings for some time, both from reading some of Lynn Bridges' mailings when he was active, and from receiving several of the FAPazines from the individual publishers. I knew that the content was to a large degree non-fannish, and contained some very interesting sociological discussions. (2) I love to write, and express myself on paper. Unfortunately, at present I know few people personally who are interested in the same things I am -- economics, semantics, etc. -- and anyhow I'm a lousy speaker -- one of those people who can't "think on his feet." So here I am.

#

O.K., Kent, here are some offhand answers to your questions on Technocracy. Your word "confiscate" has connotations which cause me to avoid a "yes" or "no" answer to the question. Instead, let's describe what would happen to our money immediately after Technocracy has been installed. It is obvious to anyone that the system of distribution using energy certificates could not be put into operation in a matter of days. During the transition period, all forms of monetary activity would be frozen by the federal government. This would affect debts, taxes, rent, interest, etc. Everyone would receive a basic allotment of food, clothing, and medical care, and be provided with housing. This would all be "free". In addition to this, every person



will receive pay for his work. "The pay will be sufficient to provide for all of such requirements /other consumer goods/ in view of the fact that there will be a moratorium on rent, taxes, mortgages, installments, and dues. For their extra consumer-goods-purchasing the people will use the same money we use today in coinage and bills of one dollar denomination. Checks, bank drafts, etc., will not be used."

--Total Conscription: Your Questions Answered, p. 14.

This type of setup would be in effect until the complete functional alignment of the various sequences has been completed, and the mechanical means built and the personnel trained for distribution with energy certificates. As to the actual selection of the first administrators in the Technate, the method would be as follows. Each particular sequence, (industry or service) would have a 'convention' of the top men in that field, who would select one of their number to serve on the Continental Control Board. These men would then select one of their number to serve as Continental Director-in-Chief. (Contrary to the 'assumption of power' theories of the communists and others, Howard Scott, present head of Technocracy Inc. would not be the first Continental Director-in-Chief, nor would other Technocrats get positions of responsibility greater than those which their specialized training would qualify them for.)

"Wouldn't the initial cost of the Technate be prohibitive?" I really don't get what you mean by that, Kent. In terms of physical cost, the projects undertaken by the Technate -- continental inland waterways system, relocation of cities, modernization of industry, etc., would of course be high, but would be insignificant when compared to the quantity of natural resources which would be conserved thereby. It has been estimated that, evaluated in terms of money, a rather thorough continental 'face-lifting' could be accomplished for less than the amount spent on the last war by the United States alone.

Kent's comments on the markings of 'rank' on the energy certificates open the whole field of industrial human relations. Offhand, in direct answer to the question, I might say that the fellow who is at the bottom of his group would try to rise higher. But if his natural ability won't allow him to rise higher than "3289th out of 3289" I don't think his life would be ruined by that fact. For education in the Technate would emphasize the importance of each individual's contribution to the overall welfare. In a society which is as complex as any industrial state is, it is obvious that no one person's position is more "valuable" than the other person's. Social prestige based on one's position in his or her sequence would doubtless exist, but with the differential in income removed, it would not be as frustrating to the individuals on the bottom of the ladder.

Then, too, very recent studies in industrial relations seem to point to facts that will revolutionize our thinking about "incentives". From what I have read it appears that "cooperation" offers as great, if not greater, stimuli to efficient achievement than "competition". Formerly it has been assumed that a man will do his best if he is forced to compete with other men for a financial reward or social prestige. But now it has been discovered that the sense of belonging to a group, working towards a common objective, realizing one's individual importance in relation to the process as a whole, and recognition of one's ability to make improvements in the process, provide a greater 'incentive' than competition. In factories where these new ideas have been applied, productivity coupled with individual satisfaction in the job has increased amazingly. (The July 12th issue of Life contained some interesting information on this in its forum report, "The Pursuit of Happiness" under the section on Work.)

The changes which will be wrought in our social life by the realization of abundance for all are so profound that we can only speculate on a very few of them today. Technocracy provides the design for liberating man from toil, want, and disease; it is up to man to make a happy adjustment to this new environment.

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#### COMMENTS ON THE 44th FAPA MAILING

An! Sweet Idiocy! Fascinating. Not knowing the people involved personally, I don't feel qualified to comment on the authenticity of the book. It does seem objective, tho, especially when one considers the length of time the author dwelt in the midst of the L.A. supermen. I doubt, tho, if Fran's avowed intention of helping other fans "to see the light" will really accomplish much. I know that when I was a fanatic fan I dismissed anti-fan articles as being written by people who had been soured on fandom by a smear, or a feud, or some other personal influence. However, Laney's memoirs may accomplish more than previous 'debunking' efforts, because of the fact that he presents evidence in an objective manner, rather than indulging in a diatribe of judgement. It is much more effective to present evidence for your case, and let the reader draw his own conclusions, than trying to cram your judgment of a group or situation down his throat.

Time for Union of the Free: I refuse to become hysterical about the atomic bomb. Who was it that coined the phrase, "atom-neurotics"? The keynote of the majority of our "intellectuals" today seems to be FEAR. Fear of science in general, and fear of the atomic bomb specifically. In a recent lecture series, featuring widely diversified speakers, almost all of them either abandoned the announced topic en-



tirely, or warped their speeches around to their fear of science and the atomic bomb.

Personally, I don't think atomic war is inevitable, or even probable. But I'd much rather be sent to oblivion by an A-bomb than lose an arm, leg, or eye for Free Enterprise in a good old-fashioned "friendly" war. No sir, you can "head for the hills" if atomic war seems imminent, but Henry Elsnier will stay right here in good old Detroit -- sure to be one of the first targets.

Stfanatic: I share the reviewer's enthusiasm for Wells' War of the Worlds. In fact, HGW is one of my favorite authors. When I read his Research Magnificent (not stf) 4 years ago, I was more profoundly impressed by it than by anything I had ever read before. I wonder how my subsequent Technocratic conditioning would affect my reactions to it if I re-read it now? I'd like to hear some comments on the book by any others who have read it.

Oracle: Herewith a loud and clear Amen! to Stevenson's "pronunciamento." He has expressed many of the ideas which I have felt, but cannot express in better terms than he has used. I don't necessarily think fannism is incurable, tho. But it does take a pretty big jolt to knock one into the outside world again.

"...I think drastic financial reform must precede any sound and effective economic reform..." Just how do you distinguish between "financial" and "economic", C.B.? An exposition of your economic viewpoints should prove interesting.

I agree wholeheartedly with you on Sturgeon's "Maturity" as the #1 of 1947. I don't recall as the story ever got much recognition, tho. Prism: Phil Rasch's article is the type of thing I hope to see more of in FAPA. Human Destiny rears its head again. At the risk of being thought an ignoramus, I'll say that my reading of the condensed form of the book in Reader's Digest netted exactly zero results. The majority of the author's words had little, if any, meaning for me.

Tho I'm not familiar with Ortega's Revolt of the Masses, I'd like to make a few comments on Phil's comments. If the "qualified minority has been engulfed by the unqualified majority", whose fault is that? Perhaps it could be the fault of the "qualified minority" for failing to provide the necessary leadership for the masses? I wouldn't say that "the mass refuse to recognize its own limitations and imposes its will on all", inasmuch as I don't see how it can be said that the mass has a "will". The mass never originates anything, but follows the "qualified minority." If there is no new leadership to change its path, the mass merely continues on in the previously established pattern until affected by external forces.

In regard to Spengler, perhaps some of you missed this clipping. From the Detroit News of July 8, it's headed: A TIMETABLE FOR THE WORLD GIVES DICTATORS 250 YEARS and continues:

A law of growth of nations, that predicts dictators for the next 250 years, was published today by the Foundation for the Study of Cycles.

This same law indicates that after the dictators there will come a fixed, or "frozen" civilization, probably a happy one, which will slowly deteriorate.

Younger peoples, eager for spoils, will rise to end the reign of enfeebled Western powers. Neither the younger peoples nor the Western powers are identified.

The title of this publication is Cycles in History, and the author, Edwin Franden Dakin.

The late Raymond Pearl, of Johns Hopkins University, found that rats, pumpkins, yeast cells and nations all trace the same kind of curve in their growth.

There are three parts of this curve. One is a slow beginning, second a speed-up in growth, and third a slowed-down, quiet, period. The curve is the letter S laid on its side, with the first end pointing upward, and the whole letter stretched out from left to right. The curve is like a low plain, and a sharp rise to a plateau.

For nations, the middle part, the time of rapid rise, is when the country is expanding and strengthening in power and arts.

The predictions about Western powers that fit this growth are those made by the German, Oswald Spengler, 20 years ago. Dakin says Spengler's ideas were considered almost monstrous, but that now they appear prophetic.

Spengler predicted that one state would survive as supreme victor.

When his ideas are fitted to the growth curve, there was about 1000 years of slow start, when feudalism and chivalry ruled. Then about 300 years of rapid growth, when world states came into existence, along with revolutions.

Then 200 years, just at the top of the curve, of democracy and domination of money.

The dictators are to flourish until the year 2200. After that comes



the "freeze" and Spengler's predictions do not show how long that should last. But on the law of growth curve it should be hundreds of years at least.

Fan-Dango: Fran's opening article on the underlying causes for past and present anti-Palmer feeling seem quite valid to me, tho by no means original. However, I think he is overlooking one "angle" of the question. Aside from any personal anti-RAP motivations he may have, I don't think it can be doubted that men like Jack Speer do have a genuine concern over "'the unending pull back towards superstition'". It concerns me, too. I think the mistake lies in the distorted perspective one has of the affair, due to looking thru "fan-colored" glasses.

Can it really be claimed that the Shaver cult is more harmful to national sanity than the myriads of similar cults existing for years before RS was ever heard of, and from which a goodly portion of Mr. Shaver's followers have been recruited? I don't recall reading many, if any, attacks in the fan press on these groups. Or, is Shaverism any more dangerous than the astrology magazines which one sees stacked on every newsstand, and which certainly influence a greater portion of people not classified as "nuts" than Shaver ever would? For that matter, how about all the common superstitions which everyone seems to take for granted? (Broken mirrors, black cats, walking under ladders, etc.)

It might be argued that believing that walking under a ladder causes 'bad luck' wouldn't affect a person's 'sanity' but that belief in the Deros would. Granted -- but doesn't the person who believes in Deros do so as a result of basic maladjustments which, in the absence of RS, would attract him to some other cult?

The prevalence of superstition of any kind, no matter how silly it may seem to better-oriented people, is delaying the advancement of the scientific method of thinking, and consequently hindering what most of us consider 'progress'. If an attack is to be made at all, it should be on all fronts; not only on one small group of unfortunates who are probably quite happy in their worlds of unreality.

Phanteur: One of the best this time, tho somehow I can't find anything to say about it. Perhaps that's because there's nothing I can find to violently disagree with, and many of the statements which follow my own thots, such as Don's comments on minority groups and the CP, are so well put that I can't improve upon them.

Neophyte: Erik says that those last few pages of drawings are "very Freudian" and he wonders what kind of a character the artist is. But we both just love that one inside the back cover.

Grulzak: As with Vampire, Kennedy comes thru with delightful, if not world-shaking, reading matter. His assorted "corners" are the best parts of his publications. # Millenium I was stacked up at the 10¢ table at the last book sale I went to, and has been appearing on remainder tables in Detroit book departments for about a year.

Solipsist: One of these in every mailing and Stein's activity requirements are satisfied. There are always a few chiselers who can "beat the system" it seems.

Atote: It would be rather fortunate if fans really looked like that picture on the last page. A lot of people might be spared a lot of grief.

Burblings: Something rare these days -- fan humor that is actually funny.

Masque: Ditto -- only uproariously so.

Synapse: That yellow & purple combination is about the worst possible for reading. Maybe I'm getting bored with my attempts to make cute comments, but anyhow I can't find anything in here to take issue with. For Speer to produce something which has that effect on me is remarkable. Either he's slipping or I am.

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The comments above will be seen to cover only a few of the publications in the last mailing. While many of the magazines I haven't remarked upon weren't really bad, they were rather devoid of stimulating material. Frankly, I was rather disappointed in this, my first FAPA mailing.

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Semantics: I recently finished reading Language in Action and also joined the Society for General Semantics. My interest in the subject was aroused by Van Vogt's World of A when it appeared in ASF. Out of curiosity I'd be interested in finding out how many fans belong to the Society or the Institute for GS, and of these, how many were first interested in the subject by vV's story. Anybody know??

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