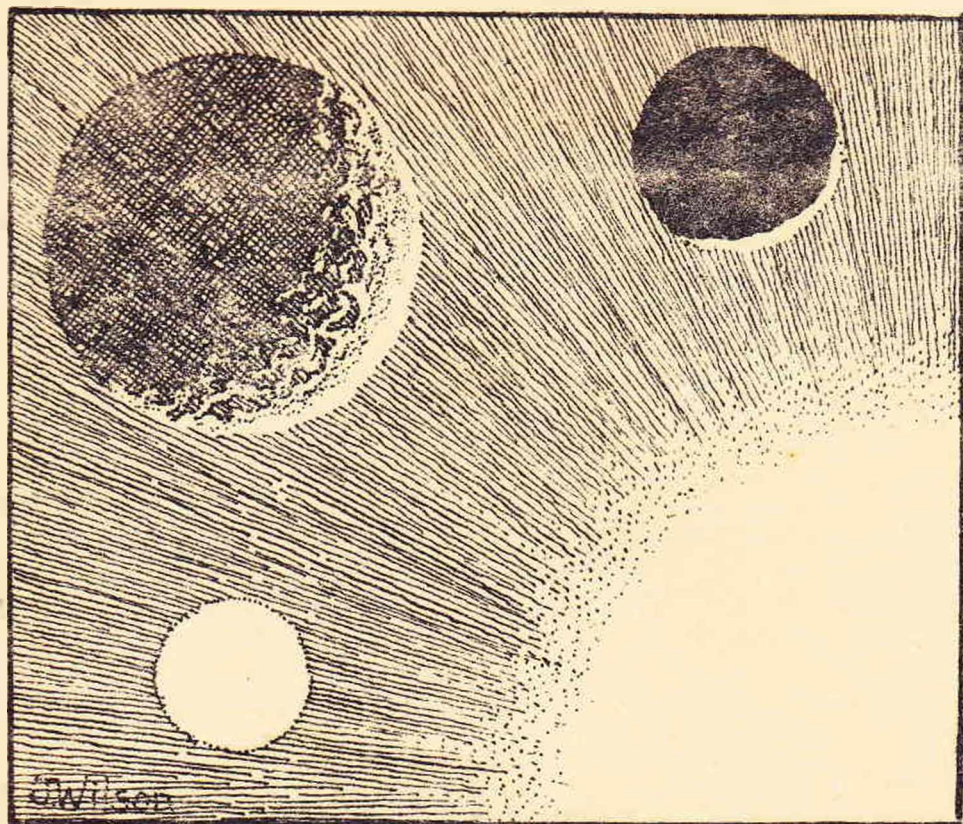


No 42

VECTOR



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EDITORIAL.

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This is the second issue of Vector edited by Doreen and myself and once again a somewhat unbalanced one. This is because we have to rely on what we can obtain from contributors now and without access to the Publication file.

Normally an editor can make some effort to balance the contents of the publication by including material from his back-log to counterweight against the currently topical material which must be included. As we stand, we must include what we obtain to fill the publication. This time we think you will have enough of Slater without General Chunterings so we dropped it for this issue.

The main contributions are a report by Brian Aldiss on the situation of the British sf magazines to which I have to append a footnote which you will find on page 36 and Tony Sudbery's article which would have appeared in one of the British sf magazines but in view of their doubtful future, appears here for the benefit of a small number of readers. We have a selection of reviews by Chris Priest, Archie Mercer and Vic Hallett and a film review and film news also by Vic Hallett. There is a long diatribe by Slater to which your attention is requested and the Mail Response. Doreen will also be filling any other space with something from her own files if she finds the need for it.

With regard to the Mail Response, the first letter has had two words deleted for the general protection from unpleasant consequences. The second letter has also been printed in full apart from details

of material Vic Hallett was proposing to submit for this issue. We have included extracts from all other letters of comment received to date. This, we trust, represents the percentage of agreement and disagreement on the last issue, this issue and probably the next issue.

We still do not have access to the Publications file and we badly need material of interest which we trust YOU will provide not later than 28th February or earlier if possible. We are not specially worried that the material should be grammatical, uridite or coherent, providing it is interesting. You send it, we will read it and if we think it can be used with some re-writing, we will advise you. Please send everything to Doreen at the Secretarial Address, 38, Millfield Road, Deeping St. James, Peterborough.

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We deeply regret to announce the death of Eric Jones of Cheltenham on January 8th. Eric was a founder member of the B.S.F.A., the Grand-Master of St. Fantany and an old-time fan of many years standing. He will be greatly missed.

WITHIN THE REACH OF STORMS

Brian W Aldiss

As I write, the future of British science fiction is in the balance. When you read, it will have been decided.

It is no longer a secret that *IMPULSE* (formerly *SCIENCE FANTASY*) and *NEW WORLDS* have been losing money for some months. This is due largely to distribution troubles and the bankruptcy of the distributors, Thorpe & Porter a shaky edifice whose collapse has brought down other smaller houses, including Roberts & Vinter.

Most of you will recall that *NEW WORLDS* has met and weathered financial storms before. Its publication was held up by World War II; the first issue appeared in April, 1946. After three issues, Pendulum Publications went into liquidation, and the magazine nearly died. Fans and professionals had to club together and float a new company - Nova - which then carried on publications under enormous difficulties.

MacLaren Publications stepped in at (I hope I am correct in saying) Issue 22, when the magazine became monthly. My copy was bought in Abingdon, on the 29th March, 1954, I notice. It

contains stories by Arthur Clarke, John Wyndham, John Christopher, and J. T. McIntosh, and the first part of a serial by Cyril Kornbluth; a fine issue.

By then, SCIENCE FANTASY had established itself. The first issue was dated Summer 1950. By the end of 1954, it was on a regular bi-monthly production. Of the two magazines, it was always my favourite, because it seemed to me less like a copy of an American magazine than its companion; but towards the end of their careers neither magazine had to depend on American contributions, thanks to the successful policies of Ted Carnell, who edited NEW WORLDS from the first issue and SCIENCE FANTASY from Issue 3. Looking back, one can see now that it is this independence which is Ted Carnell's most valuable contribution to sf. I'm very pro-American myself, but it helps nobody if we over here are half-baked copies of them over there; our contributions must be an original one or it is nothing.

About 1960, the Nova magazines began to face dwindling circulations. Both were threatened with closure. NEW WORLDS 141, dated April 1964, breaks the news that both magazines were about to close down entirely when - almost at the twelfth hour - Roberts & Vinter stepped in and bought them. Significantly, the lead story was Donald Malcolm's "Beyond the Reach of Storms".

This marked the end of Carnell's

long and distinguished tenure of the editorial seat. Now that august piece of furniture was lopped in two and handed out to a couple of dark horses, Kyril Bonfiglioli here in Oxford and Michael Moorcock in London.

Bon was always too busy, unfortunately, to make the impression he could have done on SCIENCE FANTASY - the name of which he was, from the first, bent on changing, for preference to CALIBAN, which would at least had had character, and then to IMPULSE. Unfortunately, nobody had thought to look and find that there was already an IMPULSE registered at Stationers' Hall, or wherever they register such solemn matters, and so the title had to be diluted still further to SF IMPULSE.

Over at NEW WORLDS, Moorcock seized his half of the chair and made a wonderful blaze with it. Fandom seemed to think he was (a) revolutionary (b) mad, and (c) wicked to adopt the policy he did, whereas in fact he was merely bringing science fiction within the pale of literacy and the sixties. By paying more attention to what the writer was saying and how he was saying it than to how he worked out the purely theoretical details of purely theoretical hyperdrives, he was doing no more than editors in the larger world by establishing decent literary criteria. However, even sf readers appear not to like new things; and only now, when, unless we have a visitation from on high, there will never be another NEW WORLDS, does the wave of misoneism appear to have largely spent itself.

With sure instinct, Moorhead picked for his spearhead the writings of J. G. Ballard, whose visions, lucid yet mysterious, haggardly solemn yet

with their own metaphysical wit, lend themselves ideally to cult treatment. Most of the row about NEW WORLDS has been about Ballard: perhaps deservedly, although credit should go to newer writers like David Masson who have come along and managed to write in the vein natural to them (rather than copying Ballard, which only Ballard himself can do with any success) and to more established writers who have drawn new life from Mike's liberal policies. With all this, we might soberly recall that Ballard's epoch-making story "The Terminal Beach", appeared in NEW WORLDS while Carnell was editing it.

This is intended to be neither a critique nor a history of the magazines, but it should perhaps be recorded here that from Issue 8 of IMPULSE onwards, my old sparring partner Harry Harrison has been editor-in-chief, with Keith Roberts (who was a useful discovery encouraged by Bob) as managing editor. Harry has never been able to show his paces; he left for America - exile in America, I nearly said - shortly after his appointment, and the shadow of the axe has loomed over the last one or two issues. Though he did discover that unique and fascinating Pohl story, "Day Million".

The unobtrusive but stalwart figure behind Roberts & Vinter has been David Warburton, who has run the magazines at a steady loss for at least half of 1966.

He and his parent company can no longer sustain this loss, and the magazines are to close almost at once. IMPULSE 12 and NEW WORLDS 170 will be the last to appear.

It is not for me to enlarge on the strain that the effort to keep going has been, on David and Mike, in particular. Ordinarily, new publishers (again!) with better distribution outlets might have been found. But the present Government-imposed freeze has hit publishers as much as anyone; they have fewer liquid assets, they are more cautious. Several have been approached, none have nodded.

Some weeks ago, when the Arts Council announced "Four Special Prizes" for contributions to literature, a great controversy arose over merits of the winners, while it became more widely known that the Arts Council had a small amount of money to bestow on various worthy literary causes. It was then that it occurred to me to write to the Arts Council and ask if they would help to save the sf magazines.

Encouraged by David Warburton and Mike Moorcock, I wrote to the Director of the Arts Council on 18th November last. We had picked a very favourable time to write, and The Guardian and The Daily Mail gave us some publicity; but I felt also that we needed the support of people whose names would bear a lot more weight than mine.

Accordingly, I wrote to various distinguished persons whom I believed had an interest in sf, asking them to put in a word if they possibly could. Although some of them, like Katherine

Whitehorn and Kingsley Amis, were too busy to reply, the response was in the main generous and immediate. In particular, stalwart help was forthcoming from J. B. Priestley, Kenneth Allsop, Anthony Burgess, Professor Armytage, and Professor Geoffrey Tillotson and his wife, Professor Kathleen Tillotson. I had the names of the last two from Miss Marghanita Laski, who also wrote a long and persuasive letter to the Council.

We were also extremely lucky with Angus Wilson - whose patronage of sf dates from before that historic SF Competition in The Observer in 1955. Mr. Wilson is actually on the Committee of the Arts Council, and has kindly promised full support when the Council meets to discuss the matter later this month. I have sent him several copies of both magazines at his request. Roy Fuller is also sympathetic and influential. The F.E.N. Club and the Society of Authors (to which I belong) have also given support. The T.L.S. is informed. It is no longer possible to think of sf as a lone voice crying in the wilderness. The wilderness has gone; it is just too bad that the voice may be silenced also.

If the Arts Council does decide it is able to help, the help will presumably arrive in the form of a subsidy. The subsidy will be useless and possibly not forthcoming - unless a new publisher and distributor is also forthcoming. The new publisher is unlikely to be forthcoming unless we get the subsidy. We are working on the problem. More than one publisher is currently con-

sidering the pros and cons.

It is just possible that a "bridging issue" of NEW WORLDS may be produced, to show willing all round. I speak here with only partial knowledge, but I know the project has David Warburton's blessing, and that Mike has offered to edit the issue free of charge, while he, Jim Ballard, John Brunner, Tom Disch, Judy Merrill, and I - and probably others - have offered free material. All that possibly can be done is being done. If anyone else feels like helping, please don't picket the Arts Council, who are sympathetic; please buy a dozen copies of the bridging issue, if it appears!

I don't have to labour the point of how dreary the British scene would be without those two magazines, (though they always manage to carry a fair percentage of nonsense, particularly the wilde-coloured nonsense that Moorcock addictively enjoys). Writers like John Brunner and myself, who are established, can reach more profitable if less congenial markets in the States. Newer writers will have to adapt to a new idiom or go under; and it may be more honourable to go under than adopt a foreign idiom; that each writer will have to decide for himself. But, for potential writers, this is a very black day indeed. I wouldn't think many readers, even Mike's bitterest critics, are very happy either - after all, the right to criticise is precious too.

Oxford, 3rd January 1967

VICE-CHAIR MAN'S REPORT

Amongst other things you will see in this issue that we had an offer from a past editor to take over the post again. (Incidentally, the offer made to him was not made with the knowledge of the pro-tem committee, I fear). This offer was declined, primarily on the basis of the fact that we could not afford to accept it. But the terms of this offer point up one of the subjects I wish to discuss with the membership this time round. The responsibilities of committee members, and the responsibilities of members. Now, there is a certain amount of egoboo (and I shall not apologise to anyone for using fannish slang, or making the occasional and trivial attempt at humour) in being elected to a committee, any committee. But on some committees workers are needed who realise their responsibilities and act accordingly, on others "wheelhorse" members are required who just pull along but take no part in handling the policy.

The B.S.F.A. committee must be one of the former sort, and it must work to implement the policy given it by the membership - or in the event of having no guidance from the membership, it must make its collective policy and implement that. Collective - the folk occupying these invisible seats are committee members, not dictators. The treasurer should not retire into a private Fort Knox and issue funds as

requested - he must keep the other members of the committee informed of the financial position from month to month; particularly at any time when funds are tight. He must request the support of the other members of the committee to oppose any untoward spending on any matter, but at the same time must make available funds that are essential. He must keep accurate and clear records, and must see that all other committee members handling funds in the form of petty cash or imprest accounts do likewise. He has the awkward position of being both the engineer on the ship, and the chap in charge of the count-down, at one and the same time. The secretary is main executive officer, and should know most of everyone else's business, as well as staying on top of the day-to day correspondence. He must keep accurate records and quickly referenced files, he should be in the picture on the financial position, and a multitude of other things fall to his very unenviable lot. The editor (sorry, Publications Officer!) has a somewhat simpler but quite probably more time-taking job.

He should be informed of the publishing policy of the organisation, and should publish material in accord with this policy. He does not have freedom of choice - he has to discover what is available and then he must select from that not what he himself would chose, but that which would be the choice of the "gestalt" of the committee mind. Impossible, of course, but a close approximation can be often performed. In an Association of this nature the editor is even more limited, for he cannot 'purchase' material - he has to rely on voluntary contributions. Hence he must be doubly careful. Add to that he must in cases of ours restrict himself to the very limited funds available for the purpose.....it makes life very difficult. And in our case, it becomes very difficult for any editor to subordinate his personal desires to those of the

'policy' for our policy is so very nebulous - almost non-existent, in fact.

The Chairman must sit on top of this lot, know nearly as much as the secretary of the broad basics, and keep them all from tearing out each others throats. This calls for a strong mind and a firm hand and, now and again, a touch of the lash. Or considerable charm and ingenuity, with a good deal of the quality called 'personality'. Or some similar selection of qualities.

Other committee members should there by any, are of no great import if they have no special function. The Vice-Chairman is there to make the 'drawn' decision less likely, the assistant secretary to lick the stamps, the vice-treasurer to keep the day book and so on.

But the Secretary must keep the Minutes and produce them on call. The Chairman must keep the meetings in order. The Publication Officer must produce the publications on time. The Treasurer must know how much there is in the kitty. These are things the members see....and if the Committee can't or don't do these things, then the membership has every right to suspect that their other activity is not up to standard, either. So, if you are putting up for election, please bear these things in mind....and you members, watch your committee. The Constitution empowers you to take action if you feel that the Committee is falling down on the job, and why the entire of the present committee was not thrown out on its ear by some enterprising group of members is beyond my understanding.....

Obversly the members have a responsibility to the committee. The membership must give the committee some reasonable idea of the policy which the committee is to pursue. I feel that the B.S.F.A. lacks anything like a clear policy. This we must try to settle. What is required is not a policy for this year..but a firm policy for the next ten years.....A policy which each committee must try to implement to the full.....or be put out of office. But first YOU must give them the policy. If we take that rather nebulous section of the Constitution which describes our aims, we find..... the Association exists for the benefit of people interested (in any way) in sf in the widest meaning; it should encourage the art of reading writing and publishing sf, and generally sustain interest in the field.

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One of the things/which the B.S.F.A. is trying to do this is the BRITISH FANTASY AWARD. Now, this was accepted as something which should be done in 1961, but the first award was not made until 1966, and a most unhappy affair that was.But at the moment I can appreciate the then committee's position. At the moment just twelve.....count 'em, twelve...of our members have sufficient interest in science fiction/fantasy to offer nominations. Now, look folks. This award can get us a reasonable (not 'green men from Mars' type) mentions in many of the more literary newspapers. It will give the publishers of books (this year) some concrete example of the existence of the B.S.F.A. But not if you-all down there on the floor of the house couldn't care less.... Incidentally, one of the nominations is for a title which has not yet been published as a book; the nominator suggests that the rules be changed to include this....but if we did this then when it is published in complete form as a book next year, it would have to be eliminated....do you understand? Currently we have limited the award to books only because this simplifies the procedure; a paper should be presented by American

enthusiast David Kyle this year outlining full proposals for a British equivalent to the 'Hugo' awards, for the consideration of the Association. If, of course, the Association is interest...which from where I sit seems to be doubtful.....once more, how does it look down there on the floor of the house.....? Would any of you care to get off your backs and send in nominations? We will accept them up to the 4th of February. Pretty please?

Then there was this suggestion about arranging visits to places of interest. We thought this might be a good idea.....a special organised tour of Whipsnade or a Nuclear power station would afford opportunities for ridding the Association of unpopular Committee members, if nought else. But just two persons are recorded as offering any suggestions, and they were Edmund Crispin and Brian Aldiss. Thank you gentlemen. There used to be a place of interest just off Fleet Street in our younger days, mayhap we could forgather there and weep into our beers? Several members have expressed interest in the 'Essay' competition, and we hope to announce more on that shortly....but you will appreciate Doreen and I have our hands overful, and for the moment the 'AWARD' is urgent and the 'Visits' pressing (so that the Secretary can contact suggested establishments and construct a programme before March). If we here nothing from YOU in the next week we shall assume that YOU (collectively) cannot care less, and shelve the idea.

Now, continuingDoreen and I are making no policy decisions, as we do not constitute much of a quorum, and do not always see eye to eye on things.....and there is no casting vote handy...

but we are doing our best to continue the administration. However, we are bogged down in all sorts of odd queries. Can anyone say with authority who is holding the subscriptions to TANGENT which have not yet been refunded, and which various members have requested? In fact, where is that report on TANGENT? And please, there is a file of contributions to TANGENT someplace....and some of the contributors would like their work back....and we do not have it.....? These and similiar questions are in the secretary's 'open' files, and to us they do not present a pleasant picture. In fact, we view them as ugly looking sores on our body corporate.....and would like them healed. Apart from remedial treatment, steps must be taken to prevent re-infection. More on that in the next VECTOR, when we hope to present some policy suggestion for gum-beating at the A.G.M.

One final comment, We have, thanks be, a sense of humour. Without the ability to raise a grin at our troubles we would be heart-broken at the present time. Even in the Lancet the odd rib is tickled, the actuaries have been known to slip in a sly giggle on the credit side of their journal and some publications of the undertaking industry are a rave. Anytime an organisation gets so serious about itself it cannot an upcurve at the corner of the mouth it has attained the state where it can be but a constant source of amusement to the outsider. Preposterous omposity is the outcome.....preserve us from that!

Kenneth F. Slater.

INDEFINITE PARKER DOREEN ARTICLE

On Tuesday 24th April 1966, Cyril Whitaker telephoned me that the Lincoln Astronomical Society were giving a lecture at Spalding Grammar School on Space Travel and he and Jack Wilson were attending and invited me to go along.

We made a rendezvous at a Pub and had a quiet drink before attending the lecture which took place in the Library. There were not many people present and John East started the lecture with a series of slides. It appeared from what he said, this was the second of two lectures and he stated he was going to show slides of the beginning of space travel until the present day and also show what he considered would happen up to the turn of the century.

As you might guess being a female (and rather dizzy at times) I am not very technically minded. Those of you who have heard about the escapades with my car and who have travelled with me will bear witness of this heartfelty but I found this talk most interesting, with slides of the original V-2 and how they progressed to the present day. John did go a little above my head at times, with talks of power thrust and so forth, but no so as to impair my enjoyment. He talked of the American's difficulty in getting a suitable rocket, the Thor and the Mariner and traced the ascent of man into space back to the 1940's when it was said that if Germany had won the war, they would have immediately proceeded to try and get into space, and about Von Braun,

the Rocket expert.

For the most part, the slides were extremely clear and mostly in colour and showed the first attempts; including the breakdowns. There were also slides of earth from outer space and showing the surface of the moon. White's walk in space was also shown in colour and this was indeed fabulous, watching him gyrating around the rocket. I think every member of the audience envies him at that moment. I know I did and I can't stand heights.

He ended the lecture by showing the slides of the surface of Mars saying what a shock it was to the experts when they saw the craters as this was completely unexpected which was strange bearing in mind how close Mars is to the Asteroid Belt and it seemed reasonable to suggest that even Mars gravitationally slight pull, must attract some of the pieces. He then showed what a base might look at the turn of the century and stated that even today, preparations were being made to turn Cape Kennedy into a Space station and ended with a look at Mars in 100 years time and it was just as Arthur C. Clarke had envisaged in his "Sands of Mars" and John stated it had in fact been based on that.

After the Slide Show, a lively discussion ensued. Members of the audience were concerned with the wasteful way in which space was being approached and quite animated conversation was started when I suggested it was time that a Space Station was put into orbit which would cut costs enormously. John said there were great difficulties with regard to this, the main one being the careful orbital calculations which would be required. Also, with rockets coming to and fro, the blast of takeoff would continually throw it out of the estimated orbit. I wasn't happy about this at the time and upon

reflection I don't agree with it. Surely, blast only occurs when it is resisting air - whereas in space there is no air to resist?

One of John's remarks which was taken up sharply by members of the audience was when he stated that although planets in the solar system would have conditions more adverse than those found on earth, he did not necessarily believe that the life existing on those planets would be primitive. He said that this was a particularly 'bee ' of his. Members of the audience threw cold water saying if this was so, the Sahara desert and Greenland should hold the highest form of life on earth and this just wasn't so. John conceded this point but said he still thought he might be right.

Turning again to the discussion of fuels and rockets, another member was saying that he had read of a graph prepared since the beginning of time taking into account all forms of locomotion and propulsion. From this graph he said in about 1975-80 there would be a complete break-through in different modes of travel and according to the graph, we would be seeking the stars at the turn of the century. This was a very ^{pleasant} thought and we all hoped it would happen but decided it was a pipe dream.

The Meeting then had to close owing to lack of time and I went up to John and introduced myself and asked whether we had a mutual friend (Archie Mercer) whereupon he called over his colleagues and we spent ten minutes or so, talking about mutual friends and science fiction. I exchanged names and addresses with the Secretary, Peter Hammerton and it transpired he was a lapsed member

of the B.S.F.A. I think he was a little surprised at the speed I produced a membership form asking him to look it over and perhaps he would like to rejoin. (Contrary to general belief - I DO NOT - get a 'rake-off' for every member who rejoins the B.S.F.A. but I don't believe in letting potential members slip through my fingers if I can help it) .

Footnote: Pete did in fact re-join later in 1966 and invited me to talk at Lincoln on 5th December. I was very flattered and did in fact attend at Lincoln. Any editor, who would like to hear MY version of what happened is welcome to write me for it - but not before the Annual General Meeting. I just simply haven't the time. The above article was written (and rejected) in April and was in my files and having four pages to fill.....

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FANZINES

As was announced in the Bulletin, we are intending to publish a list of Fanzines received since each publication of Vector with brief details of how to get copies. Anyone interested in having his or her Fanzine put on this list, please contact Dave S. Barber, 1b Walsoken House, Walton Road, Wisbech, Cambs.

Three magazines have been received to date.

ENTROPY ONE. Chas Legg. Editor. Price 1/-d.
Quarterly. Obtainable from 5 Park Close,
Longmeadow, Stevenage, Herts.

SPECULATION. Editor Pete R. Weston. Price 2/-d.
Quarterly. Obtainable from 9 Porlock Crescent,
Northfield Birmingham, 31.

NEMESIS 2. Editors. Brenda Piper and R. GILBERT.
35, Baxendale Street, Bethnal Green, London.

E. 2. Two 4d. stamps. -21-

ANOTHER OPEN MOUTH. tony sudbery.

In his perceptive editorial in *NEW WORLDS* 166 Michael Moorcock throws out the comment that despite its tradition of political dissent, American sf has never produced a story written explicitly in support of modern Communism. I don't really find this very surprising; but he might have generalised his comment by substituting "any form of socialism" for "modern Communism". This observation led me to examine the political views generally expressed in sf from a Marxist standpoint; and though my acquaintance with Marxism is only informal, coming more from soaking up ideas that are in the air than from serious study, and though too a Marxist analysis of a society can usually be expected to have as much, and as little, truth as a Freudian analysis of a personality, nevertheless I felt that the follow reflections might be of some interest. In spite of the diversity of its themes and subjects and the relation of many of them to those handled in other types of fiction, the field of fantasy and science fiction in America this Century has been remarkably isolated and intergrate. The diverse strands of subject matter and story types have been woven together by the tendency of individual authors to work with all of them; thus writers and themes form the warp and woof of an unusually close-knit sub-literature. This has meant that the values appropriate to one topic have been imposed on all other topics of the canon, so that genralisations can be made with gratifying ease and validity.

The subject that is most clearly science fiction's own is that of space flight, and it is not surprising that this should be seen in America as analogous to the opening of the western frontier in the last century. The lessons that modern America has chosen to learn from this adventure are the value of the liberty of the individual, and in general an unreservedly individualist view of man in society. In science fiction this moral is drawn again from the possibilities of extraterrestrial expansion, and then applied to all the other types of situation occurring in sf, finally forming the basic outlook of the genre in its role as a medium of social comment. I think it will be agreed that the liberty of the individual is in fact the political ideal most widely revered by sf writers.

But an individualist theory of politics is not a necessary deduction from the history of the settlement of America. Communal ideals could easily be extracted from the stories of the numerous community settlements, some of them overtly communist in their beliefs and many of them extremely successful. However, it has suited the bourgeoisie to put the stress on individualism because this emphasises the most obvious defect of historical communism, and because more plausible-seeming arguments for capitalism and against socialism can be constructed on this basis. Economic freedom is supposed to be as fundamental as the other freedoms and inseparable from them, although political equality is treated as essentially different from economic equality, which is presented as equivalent to absolute uniformity. Thus is the proletariat frightened into acquiescence in the capitalist system.

(To forestall charges of paranoia, perhaps I should point out that the mechanisms of capitalists propaganda are supposed to operate unconsciously; in a capitalist society everybody is mystified.)

Sf has gained its reputation for dissent by showing that these ideals - which, however, it accepts as paramount - do not in fact govern modern American society. It points out that man there is not free. We may distinguish three ways in which man may be deprived of freedom: (1) as producer, (2) as consumer, (3) politically and intellectually. The first two are directly related to the mechanisms of capitalism; the third arises more indirectly from the use, in ensuring consumer uniformity, of social pressures to conform. The main targets of sf are the second and third types of loss of freedom. Thus liberty is regarded as relevant only in a man's leisure hours - after all, he is paid to work.

An awareness of man's loss of freedom as a worker is found mainly in stories devoted to the problems of mechanisation. These proceed by picturing a fully automated technology operating in a capitalist economy (sometimes disguised as managerialism), and though such pictures show that their authors fully realise the extent of man's alienation in present-day society, the blame is transferred from capitalism to automation. The latter is never seen as the liberating power which it surely should be.

The distrust of machinery shown here is widespread throughout sf generally, together with related attitudes such as a nostalgia for rural life. These involve an actual rejection of some basic capitalist standards unconnected with the ideal of liberty, namely the materialist ones of belief in technical progress and the unmixed value of a constantly rising "standard of living". It is these standards that are attacked by

Frederick Pohl and other critics of overproduction, planned obsolescence and similar capitalist absurdities.

This aspect of sf attitudes illustrates the way in which capitalism promulgates its official ideals separately, assigning to each medium of popular entertainment a different ideal to champion. The conflict between the various ideals is thereby hidden. The myths assigned to sf are the theoretical and idealistic ones, befitting the cerebral nature of its preoccupations - viz, science itself. It is noteworthy that its interest in technology is also cerebral - it is the engineer's interest, not the user's. The distrust of machinery when being used, and the hostility to creature comforts, accord with this outlook, and are also derived from the frontier virtue of self-reliance which we saw as the basis of the politics of sf in its translation into the political ideal of individualism.

Thus sf can be seen as a part of the propaganda machine of American capitalism, accepting the ideals proposed by the boss class and never questioning the capitalist interpretation of them. It is, however, an uncomfortably honest part of the machine, and reveals the discrepancy between the myth and the actuality. Let us hope that it will lead some of its readers to travel further along the same road and see the contradictions of capitalism itself.

For my next trick I will perform an anti-imperialist critique of British sf, showing that the obsession with global catastrophe arises from the persistence of the conviction that the world really belongs to us.

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THE VISUAL SIDE. VIC HALLETT.

FAHRENEIT 451. Directed by FRANCOIS TRUFFAULT.

This is the first film direct^{ed} in English by a talented French director and is taken from what I consider to be an excellent novel and one which would readily translate to the screen. To add to these promises of good things there is the cast, Oskar Werner, Julie Christie, Cyril Cusak and a number of good supporting actors, all of which made me all the more disappointed in the end result, it's not that it's a disaster but it just is not good enough.

It is very difficult at first sign to see why it does not succeed. Truffault has translated Bradbury's book faithfully, even keeping many of the same lines; Oskar Werner is Montag, the fireman whose job it is to burn books but who falls under their spell and turns rebel. His performance is exactly right, he is a thinking man who enjoys setting fire to books but, being a thinking man he starts to wonder, and then to read; all of this is conveyed with the utmost skill and subtlety. Julie Christie is his suburbanite wife, living only for her pills and her television and so lacking in love for him that she cannot remember when or how they first met. Cyril Cusak steals every scene he appears in as the logical fire chief ("Books make people unhappy - burn them!") and by himself is one very good reason for seeing the film.

This makes it all the sadder that at heart^t what

should have been a hard uncompromising film, is soft. There are three reasons for this. The first is that the firemen are the only people to come alive, there is no feeling of anyone else working or even of relaxing, nothing to suggest a community of people. This lack of community is helped by the exterior locations which are disturbingly present day and are at odds with the interiors all of which strike exactly the right balance.

The hunt for Montag at the end is alas muffed horribly. Instead of the mechanical hound of the novel Truffault has tried to use modern equipment like helicopters. This is fine in theory but the whole feeling of menace has vanished and one shot of flying men should not even have disgraced a Flash Gordon serial.

To me however, the biggest flaw is Julie Christie's second performance as the young rebel girl who starts Montag wondering and with whom he falls in love. This is so embarrassingly bad that it seems impossible that she is the same actress. The result is that Montag's rebellion seems to lack reason and the person who should have been the most human in the film is far more of a zombie than anyone else.

The pity of it is that with a little more care this film would have lived up to its promise, as it is, there is enough that is good in it to ensure the money spent will not be wasted. I was impressed with the colour which has a chocolate box gaiety to it that contrasts very well with the events of the foreground. Some of the details, the monorail, the fire engine, the T.V. Programmes, are very good as are some individual scenes; the old lady who burns with her books and the whole of the climax among the "Book people". As entertainment there is much to be

recommended, I just wish I could convince myself that it was going to be liked by a lot of people and was going to enhance everyone's reputation.

NEWS :

John Brunner has scripted Murray Leinster's "Wailing Asteroid" for the screen. It is now filming under the title "The Terronauts".

"Ossians Ride" by Fred Hoyle has been named for production as has been "Money Planet" by Pierre Boule

Coming Soon..... "One Million Years B.C." which advance reports suggest should be seen because of Ray Harryhausen's superb dinosaurs.

"Way, Way Out" a Jerry Lewis comedy set in a weather station on the moon.

Also in Production.

"They Came From Beyond Space" with Robert Hutton. "Jules Verne's Rocket to the Moon" with Burl Ives, Troy Donahue, Gerd Frobe, Terry Thomas, Lionel Jeffries, Dennis Price and (wait for it) Jimmy Clitheroe. A comedy.

REVIEWS

THE FURIES by
Keith Roberts.

(Rupert Hart-Davies. 30/-) Chris Priest

There is a great temptation with this novel to compare it with John Wyndham's "The Day of the Triffids", and leave it at that. The similarities between the two are far from superficial. Both are catastrophe novels, the hero of which is an independent and adaptable young man. In Wyndham's book the ultimate menace, the perambulating and amiably-vicious triffids, has little more than curiosity value before the major upheaval (in the form of universal blindness) arrives. In Roberts' novel the Furies have made their presence known and already present a hazard, but do not become uncommonly beastly until the narrow-thinking Americans explode a 500-megaton bomb on the seabed and start breaking things up. A major part of "Triffids" is devoted to the hero's search for his lost girlfriend - in the "Furies" this is virtually the only quest, other than that of defeating the menace. The style, too, is extremely similar: - a free-wheeling first person narrative that seems to plot itself as it rolls along.

But I think it would be unfair to dismiss this book as a piece of straight pastiche. Roberts has at least taken the trouble to arrive at a legitimate conclusion. Far too many catastrophe novels end on a note of false hope as the mud-spattered survivors build log-cabins in the scilly Isles and express the unlikely hope that one day somebody is going to start cleaning things up.

Apart from a few brief passages about the arrogance of man, there is very little moral or social depth to the book. As a piece of entertainment it would be difficult to criticise; in fact, I wish there were

more books around that were so damnably readable.

After the explosion of the American bomb, things are pretty chaotic as earthquakes race around the globe. Then the Furies strike; yard-long wasp-like insects, armourplated and with stings a foot long. The book follows the progress of Bill Sampson as he comes to terms with the Furies; first accepting them as a menace, then as an enemy and finally as something which is a little less and a little more than both of these.

There is something about a catastrophe novel that has an irresistible attraction for me. In synopsis, one catastrophe is very much like another, yet treatment is often vastly different. I think what holds me is the overriding image of a few chance-picked survivors eking out an existence from the decaying remains of a civilisation. In the particular case of "The Furies", this image is further emphasised by the almost surreal contrast between the normality of the English countryside and the abnormality of the Furies droning through the summer air.

There will be few more entertaining or enjoyable novels published this year than "The Furies". The price of the book is high, and probably sets some kind of perverse record. Do not be discouraged by this; you could spend ten pounds on paperbacks before you find something that gives equal pleasure.

FANTASTIC VOYAGE
by
ISAAC ASIMOV

21 s. Od 211pp
Dobson 1966

Archie
Mercer

The full credits for this work show it as "Based on screenplay by Harry Kleiner, adapted by David Duncan from the original story by Otto Klement and Jay Lewis Bixby." In other words, this is very much The Book of the Film (which, incidentally, I haven't seen). Isaac Asimov was only turned loose upon it after everybody else had been at it - and the result is not really comparable to a genuine all-Asimovel.

The basic gimmick is that it is feasible to reduce things and people to microscopic size without impairing their functions. Both East and West have been working on it, and East is somewhat ahead because of a certain scientist named Jan Benes (rather than, say Eduard Mesaryk) Benes is the only person who knows how to keep the process in continuous operation for more than a strictly limited time.

Some sf fans to whom I've spoken reject the gimmick as in itself too absurdly far-fetched to count in their eyes as true sf. Whilst I'm not qualified to have any informed opinions on the matter, I'd sooner accept it on the grounds that it sounds like fun. Where I would (and do) quibble is over the usage of the word 'miniaturization', which is used repeatedly to denote the shrinking-process. There already is such a word as miniaturization, and it means something else altogether; the construction of a smaller equivalent to something already existing. A wireless-set no bigger than a wrist-watch is an example of the legitimate use of the word, as would be a geiger-counter that could be strapped to the leg of a pigeon or, if you liked a little wheeled cart pulled by a circus-flea. Miniaturization means, in a nutshell (well, what else...?) not to make things smaller, but

to make small things. For a simple(?) reduction in size of one and the same object, some other term should be used.

The story's protagonist is an American secret agent who, having liberated Benes for the benefit of the west, finds he can't get away from him. For Benes has involved in a car-smash (engineered by the East of course) and is lying in a coma. Unless an awkwardly-located clot can be removed in the very near future, his brain will suffer irreparable damage and the secret of indefinitely-prolonged shrinkers will be lost. Therefore the agent is to form one of the hastily-assembled crew of a special experimental submarine which will be submerged in Bene's bloodstream to attempt surgery from within. And if they don't complete the job and get out again before the known time-limit expires, then the result hardly bears thinking about.

For approximately two-fifths of the book's length, nothing much happens - all they are doing is getting long-windedly ready for the big push. I would have thought that, how ever advisable the film-makers found the long preliminaries, it should have been possible to start the book at the actual point of entry leaving such of the background as was necessary to be picked up as one went along. Still, once the voyage itself does start there is no lack of exciting action, and the presence of biochemist Asimov as our guide and narrator guarantees that granting the basic premise, what ensues is as authentically correct as it can be made. This is the book's one great glory.

With the characterisation, however, Hollywood wins through once again, and the characters are not so much celluloid as cardboard. Despite half-hearted attempts to lift at least the protagonist out of the rut, one and all are thoroughly uninteresting. In fact the book's cinematic origin shows only too clearly and is, despite the best that Dr. Asimov can do with what he's been handed, its biggest enemy.

I like to try to visualise a far better story in which the well-known scientist-author Dr. Isaac Asimov, is lying in a coma. They send for his literary agent, to join the crew of a submarine - I nearly said spaceship - to descent into his interior. They become embroiled while there in the wars of Trantor, the machinations of the Foundations, and all the rest of it - and since Dr. Asimov is the only person who knows the end of the story, unless they are successful they'll never know what happens to themselves.....

THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT
by Harry Harrison.

3/6 Four Square Vic
Hallett.

This, I think, ust rate as one of Harrison's best. It is the story of Slippery Jim Di Griz, interstellar con man and his efforts, on the side of law and order to catch Angelina, an even bigger (and much more beautiful) crook than he is. It is continuously fast moving, never forgets that people are fallible and that even the best of us make mistakes. Altogether a very good buy.

THE SILVER EGGHEADS
by Fritz Leiber

5/-d Four Square Vic
Hallett.

Another book geared to maximum enjoyment. This is the publishing world of the future, a world of wood-

mills, wordwooze, animated paperback jackets and characters called Heloise, Ibsen, Gaspard de la Nuit and Zane Gort (a robot author). The writing is crisp, the jokes are funny and the sex is sexy. I liked this book enormously.

DREADFUL SANCTURY
by Eric F. Russell.

5s. 0d.
Four Square

Vic
Hallett.

A novel which was originally written in the forties, it has been revised for this edition. It is the story of John J. Armstrong's attempts to discover why the Mars rockets keep exploding and what he finds behind the facade of the Norman Club. Reading rather like a Raymond Chandler thriller, it keeps constantly on the move. Whilst certainly not top flight Russell (and it's difficult to pinpoint why, I think one reason is that the humour which usually flows easily here seems forced), it/^{is}by no means a waste of time. For those of you who have read the Lancer edition, the two endings are completely different.

AN A.B.C. OF SCIENCE FICTION 3/6 Four Square
Edited by Tom Boardman.

This is an original collection of short stories containing one author per letter of the alphabet (X is sidestepped nicely, I don't think any prizes are offered for guessing who B.T.H.Xerxes is). All of the stories are very short and only four or five of them were ones well known to me. They include a very good Brian Aldiss 'Let's Be Frank' and a very bad John Wyndham 'Close Behind Him'. It is an uneven collection with weak Chad Oliver, Carol Emshwiller, Dan Galouye, rubbing shoulders with the strong; Harrison, Robert Young (the best in the book), Leiber, Avram Davidson (I hasten to add I am

talking about the stories in particular and not the authors in general). It is, however, a collection well worth buying for reading during those moments when you want some thing of ten or so pages to get through quickly.

SPACE PIONEER by
Mack Reynolds.

3s. 6d
Four Square.

Vic
Hallett.

A novel never before published over here outside of the pages of Analog last year, is a publishing venture I approve of. It is a pity I cannot wax enthusiastic as I would wish about it but I found it a little on the slow side. The story of an assassin who stows away on board a colony ship and finds that the dubious methods of the company in charge soon diverts him from his goal, has plenty of incident but very little life. However, as in most Mack Reynolds stories the historial and social background of the society is very well brought out and the action is solid stuff making this good enough reading for a wet afternoon or a train journey.

ooo000ooo

As you can see., all of the above books are published as Four Square paperbacks and I think they demonstrate something which has been building up for some time time and will come to full fruition this Spring, namely that this is a publishing firm with a science fiction policy.

Of the above books, two are originals, two have only been available over here in limited quantities in American paperbacks and one has been out of print for some time prior to this. All of them have had care taken over their production. Three of the covers are the best examples of illustrative S.F. art work I have seen for a long time and were designed for the books in hand. These are the ones for A.B.C. of S.F., Silver Eggheads and Space Pioneer.

As a mark of respect to the customer, on the reverse of the title page a complete printing history is given showing changes of title that may have occurred and whether or not the original serial was abridged. I realise that American paperbacks have been doing this sort of thing for some time but as far as I know this is the first British firm to take care of its sf books in this way and I give my thanks to them. In the Spring, they will be increasing their output per month and as well as the actual books labelled science fiction they also publish such fringe novels as Gore Vidal's "Messiah" and Chapman Pincher's "Not with a Bang".

By the time this appears, Brian Aldiss's "Earthworks" will be published and they also publish his "Male Response". This is not sf at all but is a very funny novel and well worth anyone's time and money.

Keep your eyes on Four Square, their list is already good and it is going to get better.

Vic Hallett.

~~CONFIDENTIAL - NOT TO BE DISCLOSED TO THE PUBLIC~~

Footnote to "Within the reach of Storms".

Brian has informed us that since that was written, Miss Katharine Whithorn has said she will write to the Arts Council and support the case.

Subsequently, Brian has heard that there is a great probability of support forthcoming providing a new publisher can be found and meanwhile the "bridging issue" should materialise maybe early March.

THE MAIL RESPONSE

(Comments by Your Most Hon. Secretary)

Rog Feyton. @ Received VECTOR 41 today. If I told
Birmingham 32 @ you what I really thought of it,
~~RECEIVED 1983~~ you'd probably never speak to me
again. However, considering the
circumstances, I don't think I ought to say too much so
I'll simply say that this issue has put the BSFA back
to square one. I'd always considered the BSFA as a
serious organisation interested in serious writings. The
heading on page 3 scotched any such illusions as far as
this issue is concerned. I sincerely hope this issue
was never sent to anyone on the publishing side.
All this is wasted words now that the damage has been
done. The problem is now to put us back on the right
path. When I heard that the fees were being raised to
30/- I decided that I'd finished with the B.S.F.A. 30/-
for a magazine that was illiterate rubbish was
too much. The BSFA has never held anything else for me,
friendships, fanzines, cons etc exist without the BSFA.
The BSFA can only have one function if it is to survive
at all and that is to provide sf readers (NOT fandom)
with news, etc and provide information when requested
by publishers, etc. Archie Mercer said to me about
three weeks ago that he would be P.O. and deal with
the Bulletin and general committee work if I would edit
VECTOR. I refused. Now, after seeing this latest issue
I can't accept too quickly. So... I hereby offer to
edit VECTOR taking effect immediately until Easter at
the very earliest. I hope that this takes a load off
your minds. I know you can't do anything else but to
accept my offer so I'm starting VECTOR 42 tonight. Can
you please attempt to get the material file off Steve
Oakey over the ^Amas Holiday? Don't bother to send

anything else (except the card file system of course)... keep it until later until something more permanent can be arranged.

Tally ho..here we go again.

P.S. Hey! This offer only stands if I can go back to the printer I used before. He might cost us money but he is reliable, which is more than can be said for a certain other party.

/ Thanks for the offer Rog - but for the reasons stated in my letter in reply - we cannot accept it. For the benefit of others - the main reason being Ken and I are subsidizing both Vector 41 and the current issue and we could not afford to pay printing charges. Regarding your views that the B.S.F.A. is too dear at 30/- per year I find it difficult to believe that a young unmarried man cannot afford 2s. 6d per month. You will have to think again. Also, the B.S.F.A. was not formed solely to print Vector and you will see from other correspondents that Vector is just a part of the B.S.F.A. We do offer other services you know - full details on application to me! /

Vic Hallett @ Well quite frankly (and this is hard
Cambridge. @ opinion not flannel) Vector 41 is the
~~best issue for a long time.~~ best issue for a long time. Alright - so
it looks like a (superior) fanzine; so
what? O.K. so there are typing errors and mis-spellings;
so what? What this issue has which has been lacking
recently, is two fold, people and guts. People have
sat down and written the articles. Rough edged they may
be, readable they certainly are, personal they positively
are. Chris Priest's article about "atherly I found
fascinating noteably in view of Ballard's (whom I like)
obsession with him. Dan Morgan's piece I found hilarious
because he has discovered what I suspected, Ballard has
done so good a job of self parody that anybody trying to
do a parody of him would only succeed in writing a Ballard
story. This reads to me like The Atrocity Exhibition

which I found the nadir of Ballard's series and it doesn't take much to imagine this emerging as a straight Ballard. A lovely job of satire, the only problem is that the person concerned will probably take no notice of it at all. (A footnote here, when I read "The Atrocity Exhibition my flatmate was reading and enjoying The Richest Corpse in Show Business, this didn't stop me laughing louder and longer than he was, who ways there is no humour in S.F.-Elizabeth Raylor?) Bulmer sums up my feelings about Ballard when he says that the potential is great but being channelled in the wrong directions. I like his article, both parts. I haven't read Tubb yet but I will, and all in all you have done with Ken a job you can both feel proud of - I do mean that. Something else I forgot to praise, the news is up-to-date, this is the first time I can ever remember this being so. Cover good too, simple, but good.

/Thank you kind sir and with regard to Ballard - if you can produce his address, I'll send him a copy of V.41/

Keith Freeman@
Germany.

....Incidentally, the Vector Cover

questionnaire - I haven't returned it, for I have no feelings on the subject at all. Quite frankly Vector itself stirs no feelings in me at all (and that's not directed at V41 but at all of them) I couldn't really tell you why I renew my membership of the B.S.F.A. year after year but I can tell you, VECTOR has nothing whatever to do with it!

Ken Luxford @ I must write and thank you for an
Newport, asses. @ excellent VECTOR the best I've read.
~~The Authority with~~ and Dan Morgan's parody on Ballard were
great. I hope you can do it again.
If there is anything I can do to hel don't hesitate to
ask. It would be tragic if the BSFA folded up.

/Thank you Ken, and also for the reviews. As you can
see I ran out of space but will hold them until next time/

I also heard from...

Chris Priest.....Thank you for Vector. Obviously I cannot comment - just that in the time and with the available material you both did a bloody good job.

Bryn Fortey.....By the way congratulations to you and Ken Slater on V. 41. You did a really fine job on it. Now that TANGENT has gone maybe VECTOR could include a short story in each issue as you did with the E.C. Tubb contribution?.

(Interesting reaction to fiction in V41. Anybody else care to comment on this point in Bryn's letter?/

Ed Mackin.....I enjoyed Vector 41 immensely, particularly Dan Morgan's effort which is a very funny "send-up" indeed.

Pete Weston....Thanks very much for the latest Vector. While I know it's a bit of a come-down from the previous immaculate half a dozen issues, I can nevertheless say with complete truth that you did a damned good job; and many thanks from this B.S.F.A. member for keeping the Association afloat.....

/Pete - what HAPPENED to the article you promised.../

Phil Rogers.....By the way - Vector 41 - liked 75% of it. The surprising thing is though, I actually read it.

Audrey Walton..... I think you made a great job of Vector 41. I enjoyed the stories and thought Natural Selection very pleasant but it could have been much shorter. I really admired Ken Bulmer's article, how splendid it must be to be able to present one's opinions so clearly!

Daff Sewell Good Heavens - didn't know you had it in you. The first time I've read Vector right through - you still can't spell and are a lousy typist! But remind me to pay my sub so I don't get fined. (Well thanks - and you are now reminded).

That's all the post I've received and thanks everyone.

