

SCIENCE FICTION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN
BOX 3186
THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER
WOOSTER, OHIO 44691

TREASURER
7 AMSTERDAM AVENUE
TEANECK, NEW JERSEY 07666

SFRA NEWSLETTER #6

25 DECEMBER 1971

The SFRA NEWSLETTER is published irregularly by the Science Fiction Research Association, Inc, a nonprofit scholarly organisation. It is sent to all voting, supporting, student, and institutional members. Address all correspondence to the Editor: Fred Lerner, 7 Amsterdam Avenue, Teaneck, New Jersey 07666 USA. Janet Kagan, Assistant Editor.

REPORT FROM BUDAPEST

A consultative conference of the representatives of science fiction literature from the socialist countries listed below was held between 25-28 October 1971 in Budapest:

BULGARIA: Elka Konstantinova, Natasa Manolova, Peter Neznakomov

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Josef Nesvadba, Marija Valerachova

YUGOSLAVIA: Bozidar Timosijevic, Sasa Veren

HUNGARY: Csernai Zoltán, Fekete Gyula, Kuczka Péter, Zsoldos Péter

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC: Eberhardt del'Antonio, Günther Krupkat

RUMANIA: Ion Hobana, Leonida Neamtu

SOVIET UNION: Boris Kabur, Julij Kagerlickij, Jeremej Parnov, Vladimir Vladko.

The delegations gave accounts of the present state of science fiction literature and the related theoretical work in their respective countries; some theoretical problems and the question of strengthening international connexions were raised and discussed during the consultative conference.

The delegates were led by the common conviction that their experiences could be united, with mutual advantage for all concerned, in the interest of socialist science fiction -- naturally with the specific problems, interests, and needs of each country taken into consideration.

The consultative conference established the fact that science fiction, with the immense momentum given to it by the scientific-technological revolution, is developing greatly both in quantity and quality in our countries and public interest in it is increasing just like in numerous other countries all over the world.

The consultative conference stated the desirability of continuously strengthening the connexions between the organisations of science fiction writers of the socialist countries and of finding appropriate organisational forms, where no such organisations are in existence yet, within the framework of the Writers' Associations.

All participants agreed that consultations like this one in Budapest should be held regularly.

With regard to the permanently increasing interest in the idealism and high artistic level of socialist science fiction on the part of readers, writers, and theoreticians in Europe and the whole world, the participants of the consultative conference

emphasise the importance of finding possibilities to maintain close connexions with the progressive writers in Europe and all the world.

The consultative conference expresses its conviction that the literature and art of science fiction should serve the ideas of friendship between the nations of the world, of peace and social progress.

The participants from abroad express their thanks to the Writers' Association of the Hungarian Peoples' Republic for the kind reception, the hospitality, and the good organisation of the meeting.

-- Final Communique
Budapest, 28 October 1971

(The above communique was sent to us by Peter Kuczka, organiser of the conference, who writes: Our conference was highly successful, useful, and fruitful... We have decided to publish anthologies in common, to take part in the international conferences and congresses, and also that the bulletin of the Work Committee for SF of the Hungarian Writers' Association will be regarded as the common theoretical and critical organ of the socialist countries.)

FUTURES INFORMATION NETWORK

An informal conference was held in Syracuse on 1-2 November 1971 to discuss the work program of the new Futures Information Network. This project is the brainchild of Michael Marien, a member of the Educational Policy Research Center at Syracuse; its purpose is to act as a clearinghouse for the documentation of futures literature. Marien will maintain, and periodically update, a list of those who have expressed a willingness to share their bibliographical information; this will be done thru the World Futures Society. An attempt will be made at encouraging a division of labor along lines of functional interest (SF, economic forecasting, etc). For information, and a list of EPRC publications, write:

Michael Marien
Educational Policy Research Center
1206 Harrison Street
Syracuse NY 12310

-- Dennis Livingston
Case Western Reserve Univ

HOW TO SPEND A NOVEMBER WEEKEND

A Science Fiction Symposium was held at Wesleyan University (Middletown, Connecticut) on 5-6 November 1971. The conference was held under the auspices of the Center for the Humanities, and attracted an audience of about 100.

Samuel R Delany delivered a talk on "The Language of Science Fiction", in which he discussed Zelazny, Russ, and Disch. Frederik Pohl discussed science fiction as a means of predicting the future, citing H G Wells' "The Strange Case of Mr Brownlow's Newspaper" as an example of a predictive story which turned out to be wrong.

Ted Gordon of the Futures Group in Connecticut gave an interesting peek at how a think tank tries to do objective futures research and some of the paradoxes involved. English Professor Richard Ohmann provided a cogent liberal critique of "big futurology", complaining that the future will be run by those who control the present,

since the 1% who run things now have access to the resources, such as think tanks. A lively discussion ensued.

Other speakers included Michael Holmquist, Kit Reed, Adrian Mitchell, Brian Aldiss, and Kevin Cahill.

-- Tom Collins (condensed
from an unpublished report,
courtesy of *Locus*)

The first Mid-Hudson Science-Fiction Conference was held in New Paltz, New York, on 4-6 November 1971. L Sprague de Camp, Don A Wollheim, Hal Clement, and Robert Silverberg were the featured speakers; there were about 100 attendees.

The conference was organised by Sheila Schwartz, Professor of English Education at the State University College, New Paltz, and was well designed for teacher-neophytes. De Camp did an excellent historical survey which left much of the audience saying surprised things about how much of their list of classics was in his list, too. Wollheim did an intelligent survey of the field as it had developed under his eyes over the past forty years; this was based largely on his *The Universe Makers*, naturally, and a lot of teachers were taking notes on books that would fit nicely into their curricula.

Hal Clement did a kind of demonstration lecture showing how to use SF materials in a variety of classroom situations, ending with a plea that teachers leave the fun in SF and use whatever the kids were reading at the time rather than making the whole thing academic. His point, in the circumstances, was a good one; but I doubt that many high school teachers have the courage to let the kids tempt them into free-wheeling without a lesson plan -- and Hal Clement is too good a teacher himself to realise the marching pattern of new or uncertain teachers very easily. Silverberg tried to explain the validity of SF thinking by using drug-trip imagery; like the veriest amateurs, many seemed to have confused the image with the message -- and the image was pretty loaded for that audience. He also did a seminar discussion thing with a small group that was tremendously effective with the audience.

I did a ten-minute description of SeCon IV and definition of SFRA activities; we have been getting memberships as a result. The audience was almost desperate for a line into professional handling of the subject, and reacted with relief to hearing of our existence. I encouraged some of them to present some kind of curriculum project to us -- that was what they seemed to need first -- and assured them that SFRA would be eager to accept and assist with any useful work they came up with. So, I hope there will be some long-term good resulting from that lost weekend.

-- Virginia Carew
Queensborough Comm Coll

NOTES AND NOTICES

The Northeast Modern Language Association is having a section on SF at its April meeting. Professor Veronica Kennedy of St John's University (Jamaica NY) is Chairman. ## A recent issue of *Colloquy* magazine was devoted to SF, doing a much better job of discussing the field intelligently than most religious publications. (May 1971 issue, 50¢ from Division of Publication, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia PA 19102). ## Cornmarket Reprints of London is doing a series of Utopian and predictive stories called "The History of the Future", under the general editorship of Prof I F Clarke of the University of Strathclyde.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Frederick Siemon. *Science Fiction Story Index 1950-1968*. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1971). x, 274p paper. \$3.95

There is no excuse for the publication of so shoddy a piece of bibliography by a professional association. The American Library Association should be ashamed of itself.

This book purports to be an author-title index to science fiction anthologies. It is compiled, according to the introduction, from such publishers' and librarians' aids as the *Cumulative Book Index* and the *Short Story Index*. Mr Siemon admits that these sources are incomplete; he does not give any evidence of using such obvious sources of information as dealers' catalogs or consultation with private collectors. Instead, he dismisses as "products of minor publishers, the quickly out-of-print, the impossible to locate works" those anthologies which his sources do not list, and omits them from consideration.

It is perhaps to atone for this omission that Mr Siemon includes in his index several single-author collections -- and, indeed, the occasional novel, such as Clarke's *Childhood's End*. Or, perhaps, this is simply an indication that Mr Siemon does not know the definition of the term "anthology". Compounding the misdemeanor is the apparent lack of an identifiable criterion for selection of single-author collections to be indexed: of Heinlein's four original "Future History" collections, two are included (*The Man Who Sold the Moon*; *The Green Hills of Earth*) and two are not (*Revolt in 2100*; *Orphans of the Sky*). Of the two that are included, the former is cited in the paperback edition only, and the latter in the original Shasta edition only. From the standpoint of completeness, the Shasta editions are to be preferred; from the standpoint of availability, the paperbacks would be more deserving of inclusion. Why, then, does Mr Siemon cite the abridged paperback of *The Man Who Sold the Moon* in preference to the complete, but out-of-print original, while citing the out-of-print hardcover edition of *The Green Hills of Earth* instead of the easily available unabridged paperback?

The arrangement of the *Index* is in three parts: index by author, "bibliography of indexed anthologies", and index by title. Each book indexed is assigned a code number, to which the reader is referred from entries in the author index. The title index gives only the author (but not the code number) for stories indexed, and only the code number for titles of books indexed. Thus it is always necessary to look up each story twice.

This book is, in almost every possible way, inferior to Walter Cole's *Checklist of Science Fiction Anthologies* (Brooklyn: the author, 1964); its only advantage is its coverage of the period 1964-68. But, rather than purchase Siemon's *Index*, the collector, scholar, or librarian would be well advised to wait for a supplement to Cole's volume or for a new compilation. And the American Library Association would be well advised to raise its standard of publications.

-- Fred Lerner
Research Foundation,
City Univ of New York

MISSING ANY NEWSLETTERS?

If for any reason you haven't received any of the previous issues of the SFRA NEWSLETTER, write and let us know. We have supplies of all back numbers.