

M I L T E R Y ' S M A G

Milton A. Rothman

Co. A, ASTU 3900, Oregon State College, Corvallis.

Stencilled in the orderly room by courtesy of the CO, and published by some kindly soul, I hope. Acknowledgements will be made after I find out who it will be. We pray that this typewriter makes a legible stencil. It is a noiseless typewriter. Enough said. Also no correction fluid. So bear with me.

Junk thunk up after looking at the last mailing:

Labor Dept.

In FanDango, Francis Laney uses nearly the same words I had intended to use regarding the relations of unions to technological unemployment. As Laney says, the unions are up against tough economic laws. Sometimes they must choose between progress at any cost and the incomes of their members. Normally, the income wins.

When labor saving devices are invented, men are thrown out of work. Those subject to this economic law resent it. As a result, unions are formed for the purpose of protecting incomes?

To forbid the use of new devices is bad because that bucks natural laws of progress. Any regulation, union made or otherwise, which prevents the workings of natural economic laws is no real solution to the basic problem.

The real solution is the recognition by industry that workers are not pieces of property -- to be hired, milked dry, and then discarded as soon as there is a machine to take the worker's place. Someone has the responsibility of seeing that the worker's income is uninterrupted. That the old job is replaced by a new one, with suitable training supplied in between. Industry and labor are gradually recognizing this responsibility, with resulting schools for re-training of workers whose jobs have been destroyed.

War-time has reversed the old picture of scarce jobs and abundant workers. Now, the functions of unions seem undermined, for men no longer seem to need protection. Employers kiss the feet of their employees. (so it says here, anyway.) But good times won't last forever. The unions want their protective measures in force after the war, so that the men won't get screwed. Some of these protective measures, being designed for peace-time leisure, tend to slow up rush war work. It's bad that some unions haven't shown enough flexibility to adjust.

But it is a fact that many other unions have gone out of their way to help production by various schemes. For the ones that have not acted intelligently, I don't apologize. My only point is to argue with Ashley's intimation that organized labor as a whole is a reactionary force preventing technological progress. It ain't true. The truth is that, as always, our economics is a thousand years behind our science.

As a matter of fact, didn't we go over all this about five years ago, when the Futurian Furor was at its height?

Slan Center Dept:

I thought of many problems that arise concerning the Slan Center, but decided I'd only be pipe dreaming if I elaborated on them now. So I'll stick to the problem that concerns me most immediately.

Old folks may speak of the beauties, comforts, quiet, and other attractions of the country, but for people who like to exercise the brain occasionally, the educational, cultural, and amusement advantages of the big city are unique. I like to be near symphony orchestras, theatres, libraries, schools, night clubs, technical society meetings, and other things found only in large cities. Considering this, the only location for a Slan Center that would make me happy would be in the neighborhood of either New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and perhaps Boston. I would include Chicago, but their Symphony Orchestra is a stinker. So is Los Angeles', but they have a nice city there.

So as long as Slan Center remains in Michigan, that lets me out. Which is a shame, since I have the money and the desire to settle down after the war.

Cosmic Circle Dept:

Upon reading the Cosmic Circle Commentator I became aware of a sensation new to my experience. What I was reading was so monstrously evil, so enormously wrong in its concept that I could not think of words sufficiently expressive to state my opinion of it. That is, I could think of words culled from fourteen months life in the army, but the post office would not allow it. So I will bow to T. Bruce Yerke for his brilliant analysis of the Degler of spring, and add my fervent AMEN.

It was sort of fun that we should adopt the term "Slan" for our own uses, especially since it sounded so much like "fan." But it never occurred to me that any fans would ever take it seriously and actually consider themselves as biological mutations. For them to do so is egotism so tremendous that it verges on the psychopathic. Do those miserable sad sacks think that because they read Amazing Stories and chatter about semantics and psychodynamics in a bright jargon of half-understood words that they have any of the real mentality necessary to influence the world of the future?

SLAN DEPT

Nora Stanley presents a nice case for the new trait, "sense of fantasy." Recently I've been in the habit of looking askance at any suggestions that fans were different from ordinary people. No doubt a reaction against my former high state of conceit.

However, after mixing with many people, and finding that I do feel apart from them, I become inclined to think that something in our mental makeup may actually be different. Ghu forbid the term "mutation" though. No more than a sense of absolute musical pitch is a mutation.

A cause of my former doubt was my knowledge of many people who were different from the average and who were not sf fans. There were my Socialist friends, who looked upon society with a hard and clear eye. And my musical friends who preferred Bach and Shostakovitch to commercial popular.

So, it is necessary to discriminate among various ways of being different from the norm. The "fantasy sense" puts the finger on it.

The fantasy sense, however, must be more widespread than the boundaries of fandom. There are the followers of Poe, Dunsany, Cabell, and the many others who never heard of fandom. Still they are different. They have the sense of fantasy. Most children have it too, but lose it, as with eidetic memory.

It still must be explained why it stuck with us as a hobby, and not with the others. There was probably a combination of other suitable traits adding their effects.

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Along this general line of subject, I recommend reading "Look Homeward, Angel," by Thomas Wolfe. It is the story of a boy who felt himself to be different. The description of his infancy is almost another "Odd John." And later, when he becomes fifteen: "He liked all weird fable and wild invention, in prose or verse, from the Golden Ass to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the chief prince of the moon and magic." In general, Eugene Gant was a wild, slightly odd, mentally brilliant boy, described by Thomas Wolfe with penetration that digs deeply. Many science fiction fans will find parts of themselves mirrored there.

Good science fiction stories may be highly interesting and stimulating, but it takes a Thomas Wolfe to give you an intellectual roller-coaster ride and make you feel like you've been knocked down and dragged around a bit.

Paying the Poll Out Dept:

Any doubts as to the ability of fans to handle the trials of life may be dismissed by examining their record in the army. My offhand observation shows that we've done better than the average bunch of Joes. Not one fan I'm familiar with has become a common doughboy.

Ackerman is spending full-time as editor of his camp newspaper. Lynn Bridges is a technical sergeant in Chemical warfare, in charge of training. J.V. Baltakonis (former active Philly Fan) is in the Signal Corps, with a job he wouldn't divulge, but which I guessed. (He's now in Alaska.) Fred Pohl is a weather observer in the Air Force. Kornbluth, Weinberg, and myself are in the ASTP, which is the ultimate height as far as mental work goes, and next thing to OCS in position.

A thorough poll is indicated in order to give complete statistical corroboration to these observations. While chance does play a large part in the advancement of an army man, his ability also counts. Also, a man's ability is not always reflected in his rank. What we are interested in is the kind of job a man has.

A questionnaire designed to show the general position of fans in the army would go as follows:

1. Name. Rank. Organization. Branch of Service.
2. Brief description of present duties.
3. Brief description of any previous jobs held in army.
4. Length of time between induction and first promotion. Time for further promotions.
5. Extent and type of previous schooling.
6. Civilian occupation.
7. Grades on AGCT, Mechanical aptitude, clerical aptitude, and other army tests.
- 8- Do you consider yourself to be properly placed in the army? Name a position which you think you are more suited for.
9. What would be your reaction upon being sent overseas?

Question 8 is mostly to see whether army classification is as screwy as it is supposed to be. Question 9 is an attempt at formulating a key question which would indicate how completely the individual has adjusted to the army. I don't know how good it is.

Hilarious sights Department:

Myself, garbed in red gown, devoutly playing music for the offertory at the Methodist church Sunday morning. I can't keep myself out of religion, can I? This time it's because the glee club, which I accompany on the piano, has a practice of acting as guest choir at various churches. So I go along. And this time got stuck to do a solo. Oh, if they only knew what thoughts went around in my head. Shocking, wouldn't it?

SCHRECKLICHKEIT:

Occasionally he would pause from the ceaseless activity of waging the war, and would recoil, horror crashing through his nerves and brain as there occurred to him the concept of the blazing cities and rotting ruins that leper'd the face of Europe.

BERLINCON IN 1944

REMEMBER MY TRAINING CAMP

GAS IN CHICAGO'S HALL

PARION — JUST A SLIGHT HYSTERIA