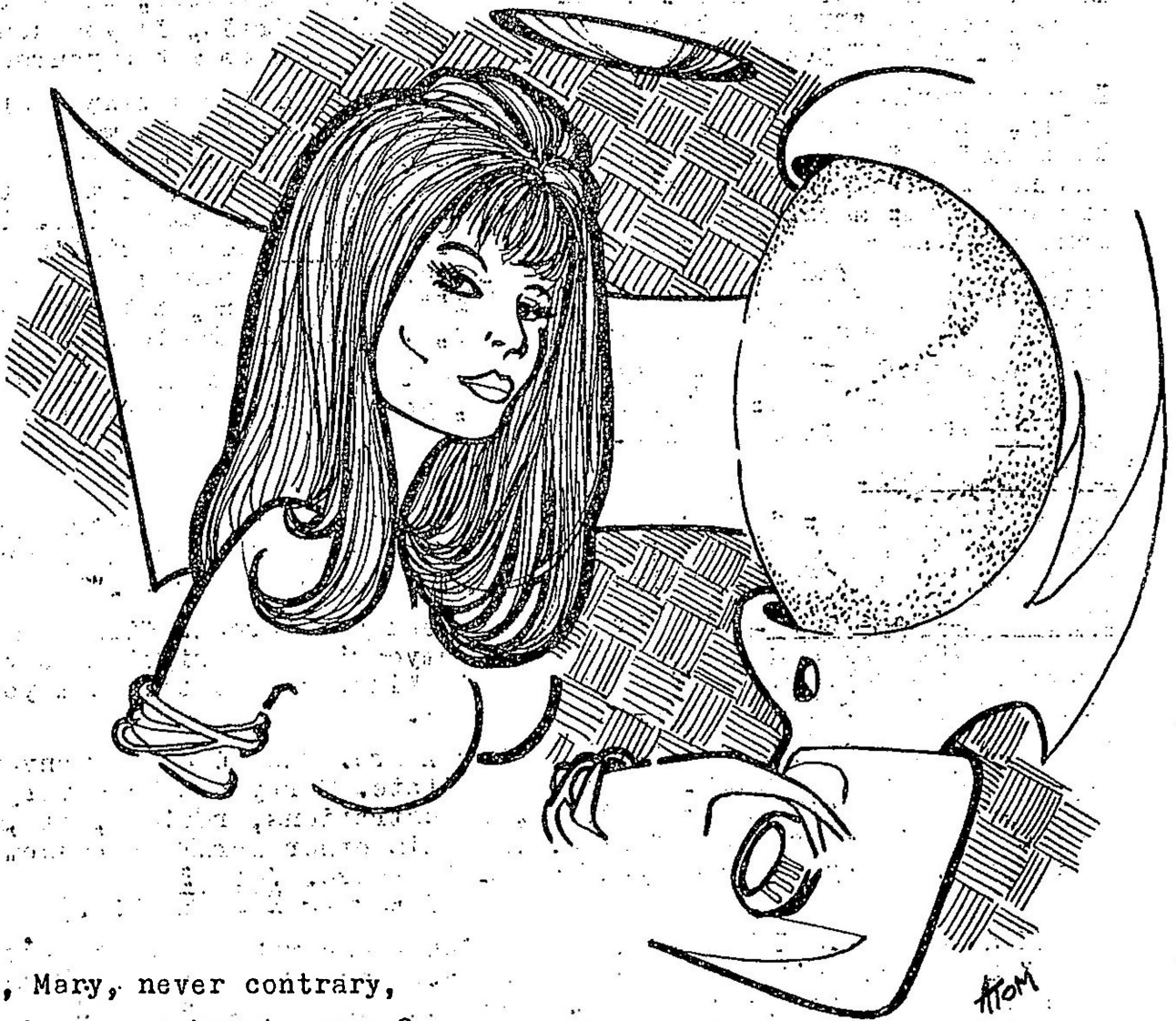


NEXUS



Mary, Mary, never contrary,
Why does your beauty grow?
Big blue eyes, a lovely surprise,
Long black eyelashes, all in a row.

(Anon.)

February 18th.

Brum

Preface Prepared by A Person From Porlock.

Now the rest of the zine is printed, I had better say a few words.

First, thanks to all who contributed to this issue. Doreen and Daphne took on a most unrewarding job when they volunteered to type this issue; there are doubtless a few spelling mistakes &/or typos missed by the three of us. Naturally we don't apologise; these things happen and you'll have to put up with it, I'm afraid, if you don't like it. And if you really object, let's see you do beter yourself.

I was surprised at the size of the issue. Doreen types very tastefully, and leaves wide margins, something I never do. Them, letters kept coming in, and I edited them and sent them up to Peterborough and never realised just how many there were. Next issue I must try and cut down; heck, I've even ordered a litho cover this time. This came about because I've been dealing with a very cheap printing firm (see the next ZENITH) and because Arthur Thomson sent me a lovely illustration of a lovely girl. He didn't say as much, but I'm sure that he drew Mary, from memory. Anyway, I think it looks like her.

(The poor girl will be as embarrassed as I don't know what after this issue is distributed; ne'er mind love, you can have a column to give us your side of it next time.)

A few messages.

To the Brum Group; *You're a lazy lot and if you think you're getting many more issues of this without you doing something, such as writing LoCs, you're mistaken. Exclude from this, Ed, and Charlie.*

To fandom-as-a-whole. The Brum Group need a clubroom. Will you help to pay for it by agreeing to take out anyear's subscription to the group? No money, just write to Charlie Winstone and tell him you will pay (either 5/- or 10/- when asked).

Vote for Terry Jeeves for the Doc Weir Award. The rules say anyone can votem beside Con members, so don't hesitate. Terry has been very ill lately, yet he still sends letters, illustrations, reviews, etc, when asked, usually by return of post. Plus his other work for fandom in past years. Terry deserves your vote. So there. Vote!

(Votæs to Ken Cheslin.)

To NEXUS readers. I have some new friends who want to read back issues of NEXUS (N3 doesn't mean much unless you have read N1 & N2.) So, if you have no use for your copies, will you send them back? And this one, if you don't want it. Ta! I won't print more than 80. Heck, I'm engaged, and supposed to be saving!

I'll wish you all a good time at any Cons or even mundane events. I intend to gafiate until the BrumCon, once this thing is mailed out.

Cheers,

Pete.

POST-MORTEM

I printed NEXUS all in one short session; late at night it was, and I felt sleepy. I must have been more than half dozey not to have realised that the cover needed slipsheeting. Anyway I could have cried when I saw what a mess I'd made on more than half of the copies. It's too late to reprint now, so the things will have to go to OMPA as they are.

Sorry I spoilt a nice cover fans; I do have a few unspoilt front covers left, and if anyone would like one, they can have one for a 3d stamp. First come, first served, of course, and let's hope not many want a copy. For my convenience, and yours, here's the mailing list for NEXUS 3.

50 copies for OMPA

Bill Webb :: haven't heard from you for a while Bill;; comments please ?

Bill Temple:: We know about you, don't reply.

Ivor Latto:: You write good letters, you're OK.

Doreen Parker:: You typed it you fool you. Ta !

Mary Reed :: Guess you'd better see this, faggot.

Al Lewis:: In return for all that APA-L ~~publish~~ literature.

John Boston:: You're OK if you LoC this issue.

Seth Johnson:: Good man, keep it up next time, huh ?

Ed James:: More history, Ed ? (sob)

Chris Priest:: you said nice things about me.

Chas Platt:: You know what I think of your LoCs, but you're keen.

Mic Houghton:: I haven't written for ages mate. Sorry, LoC on this ?

Gray Hall :: in return for your latest f-a-n-t-a-s-t-i-c project ?

Ian Aldridge:: How's your fnz Ian ? LoC this one ?

Tom Perry:: If I can get N1 & N2 for you, you'll get em.

Walt Willis:: Smuggle your typewriter into the office then! LoC ?

~~XXXX~~ Rog Peyton:: Brummie you may be, but you'd better LoC last chance.

John Berry:: Come on John, no-one took up your comments on editors paying for fnz contribs. You had better take it up. Won't you LoC?

There are 12 copies not accounted for; members of PaDs should take many of these when(if) they write in. The remainder go out to any new people I meet, or who I think may be interested. If you're one of them, please help to keep the LoCs coming in. None of this OMPA lot write them. (Sorry, Joe, Beryl.) Hey Terry, funny you didn't LoC N-2 wasn't it ? And Archie; it's no use trying to plead with you. Wonder what Ethel thinks of all this ? She never writes either, do you ?

Here's till the next time.

Pete Weston.

NEXUS

This is NEXUS 3, produced for the 43rd OMPA mailing and for general mailing. There are again a very limited number of copies being printed; If you're not in OMPA you had better LoC or contribute something interesting if you wish to receive the next issue.

NEXUS 3 consists mainly of letters and mailing comments. It is produced and edited by Pete Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham 31; and is typed by Doreen Parker to whom many thanks are due.

Contributions are welcomed but no amateur science fiction is wanted

FROM ME TO YOU

The above title being a 10-second mental effort characterised by its obvious crib from the Beatles. But then, this part of the zine is being composed ad lib (if one can do such a thing then that is what I'm doing), and you should expect such shoddy attempts at informality.

I didn't introduce myself to OMPA with my first issue of NEXUS, and after seeing the self-introductions produced by Dave Hulan and Len Bailes, I feel that I must write something. I'm 21 years old, am presently a technical writer who doesn't do very much technical writing, and I have a marvelous fiancée named Mary Reed who lives in Banbury ('Ride A Cock Horse...'). Since I live in Birmingham, some 50 miles away, this makes life rather difficult. It does however, ensure a never-ending (for the moment) flood of fanzines from the Porlock Press, since, after all, one has to do something during the week. Back to Mary.

Every weekend I hitchhike along our lovely winding, treacherous English Roads to see Mary. I've been doing this for some time, and I pass through all sorts of interesting beauty spots. Stratford-on-Avon, bits of the Cotswolds, Sunrising Hill, etc. I'm usually not in a suitable mood to take very much notice of these however, especially since it is usually very dark and often wet/foggy/cold/ windy (delete one) on a Friday night when I pass through these places.

I had an interesting idea for an SF story at one time, while

"I think you've gone too far in an attempt to be a casual fannish fanzine". C.P.

standing under a tree in a vain attempt to keep the monsoon rains from my person. I was watching the cars ignore my bedraggled thumbing, and I was mentally cursing. In fact, not only mentally; - I was shouting after the cars that didn't stop. What I was shouting I won't repeat. But the idea came just then.

Suppose that when a man was trying to hitchhike, he muttered 'Go Off The Road' to all the cars that didn't stop. Then suppose that a certain policeman became suspicious at the number of cars that were apparently going out of control in certain places, at the same times every week. He investigated and found that this man had psi powers and was unconsciously using them to destroy the cars that wouldn't stop for him.

It might be possible to make a good detective story-cum sf out of the idea. I didn't attempt it, of course, since I know my own limitations.

On to other Matters.

As you've probably discovered, ZENITH is a genzine that was conceived when I was of the opinion that the only worthwhile fnz was one that dealt exclusively with SF. Obviously, I'm no longer so biased, but I get a great deal of fun (and interesting letters) from producing a fairly-formal, fairly-serious fanzine that does deal almost exclusively with SF. Times have been turbulent - policy has been restated a number of times - but ZENITH is pointing in the right direction now, so I've been told by ~~some~~ many people. There are copies of 2-6 in the 43rd OMPA mailing - they were a nuisance around the house and may be of some interest to OMPans. There is a (perhaps regrettable) amount of cross-reference to ZENITH in NEXUS, since NEXUS is something of an airing-ground for ZENITH's problems.

".....it's destination as the TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT of the SF field." GH.

When I'm not publishing fanzines (or reading them); and when I'm not taking it easy in Oxfordshire, I read science fiction. Surprisingly Fandom hasn't interfered with my reading - that takes priority. I'm very hidebound in my reading habits I'm afraid, and don't read much except SF. Lately I've been discovering new treats in the SF-fantasy field - I stumbled on Sword & Sorcery quite by accident, though with some help from Rog Peyton who lent me '3 Hearts and 3 Lions' and 'Broken Sword'. I found the former delightful and the latter absorbing, though morbid. On the same tack I read 'The Incomplete Enchanter' which I found wonderful - this has put me on a deCamp binge and I'm presently looking for everything this author has written. I recently had 'Tower of Zanid' and 'Divide and Rule'.

"I particularly agree with what you say about J.G. Ballard" JP.

I have 'Castle of Iyon' and read 'Solomon's Stone' back in the days before I appreciated UNKNOWN.

With Sword/Hand of Zei and Zanid I think I've read just about all of the Krishna stories. I used to avoid this series like the plague, but I now think the stories are marvelous entertainment. Oh yes, I've also read 'Queen of Zamba.' Does anyone else like these works? And does anyone know if there are any more in the chronology? I believe that AMRAPublished a de Camp Krishna bibliography, but I haven't seen it. While I'm at it, what price are UNKNOWN's fetching today? - and who wants to sell 'Carnelian Cube' and 'Land of Unreason' - ?

I like old-style-SF, though not too old. My favourite stories are those which appeared with gratifying regularity in the old ASF, between about 1945-1958. Galaxy was also good, as was Infinity. Why this latter ever folded I don't know - Larry Shaw was one of the best editors in the business, and his zine had everything. IF was good in the early years, and is surprisingly good today, even though its rates are quite low. It easily beats Galaxy for entertainment (except for Pohl's abysmal Kiefel yarns) and its companion, the financially insecure WORLDS OF TOMORROW is a most promising magazine. ANALOG is so slick it hurts. And I hate DUNE WORLD and its 5-part sequel!

If this issue ever appears at all, it should be in a different and more readable typeface than was issue 2. My old portable has just disintegrated. (Well, not quite, the 'O' key has snapped.) This is being drafted in long-hand and will be passed on to a certain somebody for stencilling.

"The new wave is reactionary rather than radical in its approach to SF". MM.

A few books for sale; I also have most of those which I listed in the last issue.

Bound Time & Stars (Anderson) Gollancz 1964 mint 7/6. Foundation (Asimov) Gnome Press 15/-. The Dunwich Horror (Lovecraft) Arkham House, 25/-. Beyond This Horizon (Heinlein) Crosset & Dunlap 1948 7/6. PBS Podkayne Of Mars, mint, 2/6; Divide & Rule mint 2/6; Fifty Short SF Tales (ed. Conklin & Asimov) 3/6 War With The Newts 2/6; Space Viking (Ace) 2/-; Demons World/I Want The Stars (Ace) 2/-; No Truce With Terra/ The Duplicators (Ace) 2/-; Beyond The Stars by Ray Cummins (Ace) 2/-. Panther at 2/- each; Martian Way, The Darkest Of Nights, The Silent Speakers, After Doomsday. all mint. Doctor To The Stars 2/- Ten Years To Doomsday 2/-, Darker Than You Think 2/-, Out Of Bounds 2/- The Frankenstein Reader 2/-; The Space Barbarians 2/-; Regan's Planet 2/- Way Out (Belmont) 2/-; The Mile-long Spaceship 2/-; New Writings in SF 1, 2/-, Dark Tides 2/-. plus most current PBs. send you want list huh

As before, send your money on receipt of the books-- and you pay the postage, whatever it is. OK ?

" NEXUS is a focal-point fanzine" SJ. (blush)

Pins &
Needles

*Mailing
Comments*

MAILING COMMENTS - The 42nd OMPA MAILING.

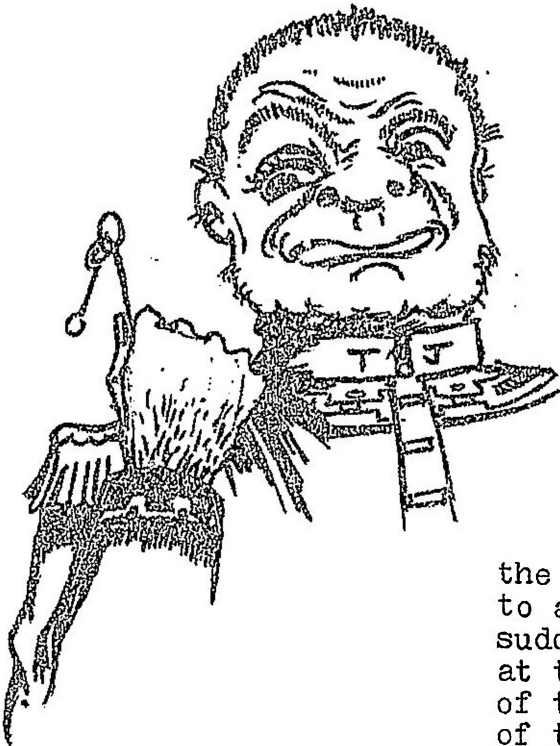
Since I am a newcomer to the APA, I will not attempt to make a detailed comment until I've seen a few more issues of all the Zines in the Mailings. However I can give my own brief opinions, which will doubtless change as I become more familiar with all you OMPA people and your Zines.

BINARY - I printed this and did a poor job; then Ethel didn't credit it in OFF-TRAILS, did she? Anyway, I've probably mentioned to you Joe that I like BINARY a lot- (Incidentally you cannot make a good duper out of a washing machine, although my Ronea does double as a mangle on occasions). TOM CHATS IN THE DARK - nice pictures, sticky cover. UL 16 - who is Vincent A. Smith? What did he do that was so important that he deserved this long tribute? Sorry, no like. SCARR - Ah, this one I enjoyed. Too much diary, but no poetry thank goodness. That's a cute typewriting trick, George, making those goblets. BNF OF 12 - Sorry, this seemed altogether too much like ENCHANTED DUPER (which I read only a month or so ago). I appreciated receiving it, even though the exegesis still left me feeling that I'd missed most of the references. PANTHEON - no comment. Sorry. - HAGGIS I enjoyed this a lot, more, please. LEFNAI - Hey, what lovely girls on the cover (I told Mary they looked like her - the poor girl didn't know whether to feel pleased or annoyed). All interesting stuff and I feel rather familiar with 1825 Greenfield Ave, now, what with ZENITH agent Al. Lewis (A good Man) and Fred to tell the tale. YAXYXP - Had to refer to OFFTRAILS because I could not read your title. Mostly interesting though not the maths. Your paper is a most bilious colour. FENRIS - serious, good reading. I'd like to comment more if had space/time. SCHNORKELSTIL - why do girls always seem fond of drawing girls? Another observed characteristic to group with archie Mercer's comment to me, "Why do females always express themselves in poetry?". Good drawings - lovely coloured paper. WHATSIT - sorry Ken, no comment for now. CRIME STALKS THE FAN WORLD - I liked it, but surely it wasn't really so brilliant that it deserved reprinting more than umpteen other things? ENTROPY - these pieces did deserve reprinting. Marvellous stuff - more please! (I'll LoC anything.....) CHECKLIST TO AUTHENTIC - Well, Part 11 seems complete but I don't have Part 1. BURP - a disappointment. HEX - My God I never realised just how complicated the U.S. system of government was. This brings to mind a comment in SYNDIC "the US constitution in all its finely balanced unworkable Newtonian splendour" - some such.

"Most of my LoC to NEXUS was supposed to be funny" GH.

AMBLE - Sorry Archie - I still wish you'd write a long piece on one or two subjects, instead of a bit of everything. Skip the m/c's for once, and the books, and write ! PHENOTYPE - sensible questions that I wish I had the knowledge to answer. Perhaps the London boys will oblige - I'll gladly tell you all about Brum on request, but I doubt if you'll ask me....SHELTA THARI - like HEX, interesting to onlookers, in a frightening sort of way. ERG - my man Jeeves (as someone called him elsewhere), and here's me agreeing with almost every word he's written except the TAFF plug. (Though I don't appreciate the soggy saga at all) Do you realise that Joe Patrizio and Terry Jeeves have actually agreed! Yes, they both agree in general with my 'HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY' bit in NEXUS 2. And there's a surprise to end on!

"The Berry Article was just superb" EJ.



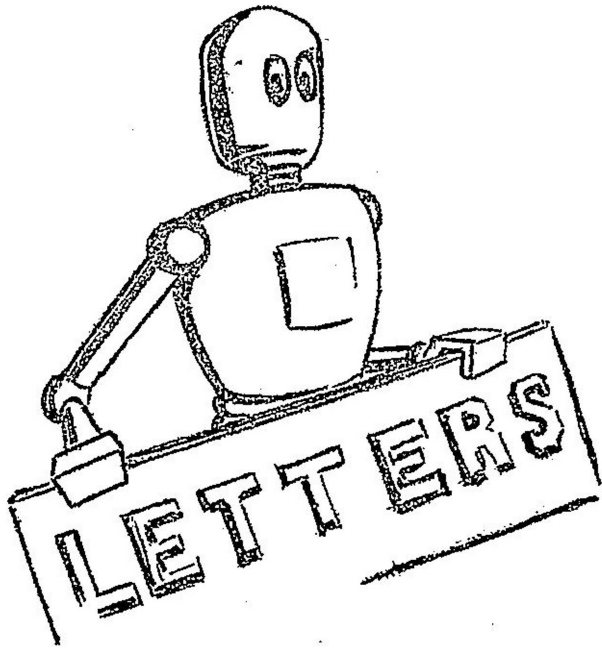
DAMN CLEVER,
THESE TERRANS

Off The Cuff (more ad-libbings)

I think England must be just about the only country in the world where you can sit jammed in a narrow bus seat by a fellow passenger, for up to, and sometimes for even more than, an hour, without acknowledging each other's existence. To speak is a crime, only a disaster, or its aftermath can 'break the ice'. If the bus should bump another vehicle, or the conductor should say something funny, or make a mistake, then everyone relaxes. It doesn't last, everyone shamefacedly sinks back into a pretended ignorance of the outside world. To avoid

the sight of each other, passengers near to a window stare fixedly out of it. I suddenly noticed this when I was sitting at the back of a bus, on the outside part of the seat. Twenty heads, staring out of the windows, nodding fixedly with the bumping of the bus. Daft. And men always seem to go upstairs. And everyone tries to sit on the left hand side of the bus whenever possible. And no one will sit in one half of an already-occupied seat unless there is not a completely empty seat anywhere else in the bus. And there

is always someone on the bus, sitting by or near to me, who coughs. And coughs. And I want to scream. Or complain. But I don't. Why not ?



The 'Iron Fist' article in N-1 was written to draw comment - but it seemed to have failed since only Patrizio took heed in N-2. Then, things brightened, and here we have a spectrum of letters ranging from Piper's worth as an author to the political philosophies of Tom Paine. Such is fan-pubbing. There are also a few other subjects in the pot, with some extremely important comments about the presentation of N-2. Goshwowboyohboy!!!

ooo000ooo

Chris Priest, "Cornerways"
Willow Close, Doddinghurst,
Brentwood, Essex.

"It's very difficult to talk about something you're not interested in. I'm not talking about NEXUS this time...I'm referring to H. Beam Piper's stories. In my days of rank neofandom, not so long gone, I asked somebody who Piper was. I wondered whether it was a pseudonym for another, more-liked, author. The reply was that as far as he knew, Piper was Piper, and was

a writer whose only claim to distinction was that his stories were more popular with editors than with readers, mainly because his stories always managed to fill up an issue. At this time I had read "Naudsonce" and had started, unsuccessfully, "A Slave is a Slave." With this one (slave) I came adrift on about the third or fourth page. "Naudsonce" struck me as being the sort of thing that Robert Sheckley could have ejected out of the rut with a bang. But Piper took it to its horribly logical conclusion. I was streets ahead of him all the way. It was a novелlette of some 15,000 words, and by the time I'd finished it felt like 150,000 words! I'm not in dispute with Piper's actual writing, but his style is so dull and cobweb-bedraggled, that reading his stories is like trying to eat half-a-pound of cheese at one sitting. A story of this length should have some 'natural breaks', should have a few reverses of plot, or unexpected discoveries. Instead of this, the story drones on and on and on.....

I'd have been very interested to have seen how Walt would have treated Link had Beryl been a man" AM.

"ZENITH-7 was a soggy mess". DH.

The next Piper story I read (or at least, started to read.. ...) was "Space Viking". I groaned when I saw that the next 4 Analogs were going to be monopolised with a Piper novel, but took my punishment manfully, and launched into it. (I usually wait until I've got all episodes of a novel before starting it....I did this time.) I think I got about halfway through the second instalment before giving up. I just wasn't interested. It was mainly Piper's fault in his plotting. Right at the start, we are introduced to Trask and his new bride. Immediately, it is telegraphed to the reader that one or other of these two people will have something rotten happen to them. Captured by a villain/murdered/father dies/mother dies/ frightened by a monster....ad nauseam. It's a plot-cliche; both in sf and out of it. The next cliche that will come, even at the stage of the first page this is obvious, is the rescue and/or vengeance. Both of these happen, and many, many more. It is writing like this that gives sf a name for hack-work. I've no idea how "Space Viking" ends up, and I wouldn't be so foolish as to guess, but when I left it Trask had joined up with a gang of Vikings and was starting to scour the Galaxy. How many thousand of words did we have to plough through until he gets his avenger?

To my bloodshot eye, this sort of writing isn't legitimate sf. But it is when Piper introduces elements of politics and future-history into his novels, that statements like that one are rescinded. But to dress up his message, right-wing political satire (is that right?) in a hoary, cliche-ridden, unbearably dull and musty novel, is a case of abuse of sf in the extreme.

I liked Perry's thing (for want of a better, or ~~thing~~ word) about Irish fandom. But why was it written? Didn't say much, I'm afraid. Couple of good puns in it though, even if they were reported ones. The thing reads like an episode from a longer piece.

(Well though I'm naturally sorry that you don't like Piper, Chris, I am glad that you tried his work. I wish you'd kept on with VIKING - the plot was nothing at all like your simplification. Trask went out into space after vengeance (wouldn't you?), but ended up beginning a new Empire/civilisation out of the ruins of the old Federation. His revenge-motive disappears quite rapidly and when he finally kills Dunnan, he 'feels nothing-it was like crushing a poisonous snake with your boot'. In between, we get an(to me) exciting picture of the recovery of a devastated planet - two or three fine space battles and a parallel to Hitler and his take-over of Germany. And of course, Piper's assumed philosophies are brought in. I found VIKING an excellent blending of the old 'action' SF story (perhaps I mean space opera?) with the more thoughtful, moralistic treatment of recent years. Unbearably dull and musty novel? Sorry, I beg to differ.)

"Jeeves has the traditional English distrust of the expert". CP

William F Temple, 7 Elm Road, Fembley, Middlesex.

Almost half of NEXUS appears to have been written by my son-in-law, and is therefore beyond comment from me, i.e. it's unnecessary. His opinions are my opinions, though not because of family solidarity; we just seem to think alike, except on the question of capital punishment, which I'm for and he's agin. And I think the sudden increase in brutal murders and armed robbery in Britain since the recent suspension of it backs my case. On other matters it may be that I've brainwashed him into accepting my opinions as his own -- which is one opinion he'll never share

Ossa heaped upon Pelion, ZENITH heaped upon NEXUS, DOUBLE:BILL Annish heaped upon D:B 10, and fanzines heaped upon fanzines heaped upon my desk... I've always tried to write a LoC on each zine received, but the avalanche grows and is sweeping away every last moment of my very scanty spare time.

So my New Year resolution is forced on me: I must go gafiafe (i.e. gafia-for-ever). The cutting of the umbilical cord is painful after more than a quarter of a century of fandom, but a necessary operation if I'm ever to get any more pro-writing done. So I'm writing all the fan-eds to say; "Thanks for all the entertainment you've given me. I know what blood and sweat it cost -- I've had some myself. Your effort is worthwhile, but please don't waste it on me in future; I can't respond because I'm simply not master of my own time -- I wish to God I were."

This decision has to be final.

/\ Another good man lost; pity, we'll miss you Bill. You're getting this one issue at least, don't dare reply to it. Go and write some more Magnus stories for my young brother to enjoy.

This business of spare time bears investigation. No-one in fandom seems to have spare time for anything. In my own case I have such a job to get two zines out fairly often that I have to neglect some people who write to me. I reply to my 'regulars', and to those people who do something for Z or N, and to BrumGroup people, and my US friends. But some people, like those who write and ask silly questions such as 'How much is a sub to ZENITH ?' after they've had a free copy already, may find their letters have gone astray.

Joe Patridge, 22 Eaton Road, St. Albans, Herts.

You quote me almost word for word in your piece 'Honesty is the Best Policy'; you've been reading my mind again, damn you. Yes, yes! you use some fine words in there, like 'slop', 'nonsense' and 'idiotcy'. I particularly agree with what you say about J.G. Ballard. The only thing of his that I have read, is 'The 4-Dimensional Nightmare' which turned out to be a two dimensional yawn (apart from one story). 'Voices of Time', therein, rates as the worst short story I have ever read; I was completely disgusted with it. I intend reading one of his novels, probably that one Amis raved about, 'The Drowned World' I think it was, but if it's no better than that heap of rubbish mentioned above, then goodbye JGB. The

style of writing that JGB and others in SF try, can be effective, but let's face it, almost all of those who try just haven't the ability to pull it off. The only person who can regularly do so is Ted Sturgeon, and the only piece of good way-out writing which has appeared in any SF mag that I've read, is "Tansient" (by Ward Moore, I think.) However, this is only my opinion, and I know an awful lot of people who think I'm nuts.

Before going further into the discussion on "The Iron Fist" let me point out to you p.11, line 2 of Nexus 2; I'm sure I didn't spell 'arguments' as 'arguements', as you suggest. Now in this same para, you say, later on, that I am in agreement with Piper; THIS JUST ISN'T BLCODY WELL TRUE. Piper and I may be using the same words but we aren't saying the same thing at all, and if you would read what I said instead of what you have been conditioned to believe then you would have realized this. Piper says that a political system must maintain the right to hit out first; I said that I J.P. Patrizio, unique entity, reserve the right to hit first. Nowhere did I equate myself with any social or political system; to have done so would have been to say, in effect, that I thought democracy (or whatever set-up I fancied) was worth the lives of thousands (or millions) of innocent women and children, and at the moment I'm not prepared to say this - are you?

Taking another point, you say that the case of the Pilgrims v the Indians is not typical and therefore inadmissible. Well, I agree that it isn't typical, but it is because of this that it is admissible - and very important. If it was typical, we wouldn't be discussing this, anyway. The Pilgrims landed in America and were welcomed by Massassoit, chief of the Wampanoags who were a hunting tribe, and who could have spread the Pilgrims all down the East Coast without any trouble. Why didn't they? Don't you think that it is an important question? To dismiss it by saying that Indians had a different culture is a gross evasion of the basic question. The fact that the Indian's culture was different to that of the Pilgrims doesn't seem, to me, to have anything to do with it. The Indians saw a non-aggressive people with whom they could live in peace, and they did so until some time later, when more people, who were not followers of Pilgrim (i.e. Quaker) principles, flooded in and then the Indians started a war.

I could say an awful lot about your sly dig at my use of the word 'fact' in my letter about Beryl Henley's article (Ghod, I'm glad to be out of that one) but I will contain myself. However, you imply that I don't admit that such a thing as a fact exists, which isn't true. But Hubbard offers as proof that SandD is the be-all and end-all, 'fact', which are not demonstrable or provable, and if it's going to be a 'fact' then you have got to be able to get hold of it somewhere. By the way, psi does exist. Perhaps not in the completely controllable manner that we read of in the story books, but there is surely enough evidence that something exists which allows some people to foretell the future to some degree, and there is an overwhelming amount of evidence concerning poltergeists (and when one of these is about, look for the virgin).

oooOoOooo

"The U.S. is the greatest single threat to civilisation today" PW. (Not
PRW!)

(Naturally I've been reading your mind again - after all, psi does exist, and I must get inspiration from somewhere.

I'm flattered at the considerable support I've had from you and other people re Ballard. Naturally, you're not agreeing with me the whole hog but I think I may mark you up on the "not impressed" slate. This reaction seems to indicate that Ballard is not quite as popular as certain fans/pros/critics seem to think. I'm looking forward to your finalised views on Ballard - I was uncertain whether or not I was supposed to like his work for quite a while. At this late date, having consumed TERMINAL BEACH, EQUINOX, VICIES OF TIME, WIND FROM NOWHERE, and DROWNED WORLD, and having found only two stories that I liked (Billenium and Manhole 69) I think I have some right to my opinions. That 'Honesty' article was a little simplified and a little more strongly worded than I actually feel. Not much, but enough to make my position appear firmer than it really is, and thus to attract more (pro and con) comment.

More on the IROK FIST - O.K. so I can't spell. Actually I'm pretty good at spelling, except for certain mental "blind spots", which I invariably mis-spell. 'Arguments', definite 'neccessary' - I never miss 'em.

Naturally I can't give an absolute answer to your request re 'The lives of the innocent'. I would merely like to say that the position of 'not hitting first' can backfire in your face and can result in the unnecessary deaths of 'millions of innocent women and children'. If the troops had gone in about 1933 - or 34 - or 35 - look what could have been avoided! And there's probably other examples. Naturally someone like Piper or Heinlein reserves the right to 'hit first' but supposes in their literature that those in power will be wise, benevolent, and right. Thus they will not strike first unless the case is sound and (of course) the correct and proper course of action. This is not going to be the case in real life, as I'm sure you'll be the first to agree. And I agree with you that the right to "strike first" is likely to corrupt those in power so that they strike when it suits their advantage, and not only when threatened by a real or potential aggressor.

Look here - Psi does not exist. There, now you and I have made definite statements in complete opposition to each other. And I doubt whether either of us have adequate verification on our side. Now I'll abandon my temporary position and will return to my usual open-mindedness about the matter. But you cannot, yet, say that psi exists, just like that. Agreed as regards S and D - now over to Beryl hun? (you aren't getting out of that one - not if I can help it!)

ooo000ooo

Charles Platt, 18E, Fitzjohns Avenue, London, N.W.3.

This issue wasn't nearly as good as the last: it had all lastish's bad points, few of the good. There was too much of the 'don't criticise unimportant things like reproduction' reader-command. Presumably you put these bits in after you'd found how bad the typing and duping looked??? Really, I don't like to pick holes, but one would have thought that capital letters out of line, small letters typed instead of capitals, many, many typos, wrinkled stencils, yet, and under-inking were all relatively elementary errors. NEXUS looks rushed-off to me.

Re the contents....I think you've gone too far in an attempt to be a casual fannish fanzine. Thrilled with the prospect of editorial freedom, you threw aside all editorial rules. e.g. letters pop up all over the place. Letters are badly edited. Chris Priest, in his usual way, rambles for three paras before starting to comment... and THEN you cut him short. There is far too much criticism of criticism of criticism, and (generally) too much wild discussion submerged in words for my liking (though fans more fannish than I may like such varied and obscurely expressed arguments). The quote from Roosevelt made me laugh and laugh.....I hope it was meant to be funny. I don't somehow think that the Great Man was referring to LoC's when he spoke of critics, or to faneds when he spoke of the man "...whose face is marred with sweat and blood.... who spends himself in a worthy cause..." You know, we can take ourselves a little too seriously, and when something like this is put in, even though you're parodying yourself, it's going too far.

Your HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY article I refuse to comment on. I can't believe that you're being sincere here, and consequently refuse to spend time refuting stuff you don't wholeheartedly believe in. This little piece is really saying 'let's keep everything nice and simple, lads - let's stay back in the good old days and their familar ways - let's not progress and above all let's not think.' Bah.

The John Berry piece I almost enjoyed; the transcription of Willis's puns is Berry's best-and only-useful function.

I thought his letter to you was a masterpiece of unconscious condescension.

ooo000ooo

(Look here Chas, you're talking sense as regards your comments on presentation of N-2, but can't you get it into your head that I don't care? I work under a number of handicaps (as you know) and I usually take a little trouble to overcome these. In NEXUS I refuse to bother - I run the zine for fun, and refuse to make my fanac a burden by messing about with all sorts of trivialities. NEXUS is and was quite readable and if you'll examine contemporary fnz's, you'll see that it is on a par with most others. Anyway, you're about the only one to bitch - and even you don't apply your own standards to your own fanzines.

Chris Priest's letter was printed complete. Someone may have cut him short. I didn't.

Pity you didn't comment on 'HONESTY....' - I bet it made you mad. As I said to Joe, I'm a little more liberal than I seemed in the article - but it is a fair representation of the broad outline of my views. Agreed, experimentation is a fine thing; but I must admit to regretting the loss of the type of stories that I liked, and to dislike reading trash. Not all experimentation is trash. But an awful lot of it is. And when you pay your money, you want to read something you like. Or maybe I'm old fashioned?)

oooOOCooo

Mic Houghton, 76 Fox Lane, Leyland, Lancs.

On beginning to read your article on Honesty, I applauded. I agree that there is a steady stream of 'stories' in the mags that appear at the least inconsequential, if not intentionally obscure, though I wouldn't say the trend has a stranglehold yet. Anyhow, there I was applauding, with a little reserve, when, Good Peter, you descended on two of my metaphorical toes (these things will crop up in SF discussions) I have numbered Smith and Ballard in my list of favourite authors since I first came across them, but I don't think I'm being too subjective when I say that you couldn't have picked on two less opposite authors to illustrate your gripe. In all of Ballard's work (I've read about 28 shorts and 2 novels) I would say that only the much discussed 'Terminal Beach' would qualify for the category you complain of - but this isn't much of a percentage of his work, even if you add the slightly disappointing 'Storm Wind', which though gripping in the course of reading, rather lacked point as a whole.

As for Smith, I can't admit to his ever having perpetrated a dud; I've read about 90% of his output from "Scanners hire in Vain" to "Drunkbeat" and each one has aroused in me a feeling (maybe a grandson of that elusive Sense of Wonder) that nothing else in SF has quite evoked. I admit that "Alpha Ralpa Boulevard" had me a little perplexed at first reading, but second and third readings made me glad I didn't dismiss it. No I can't agree with you.

I too would miss Analog. but I would miss it only for McIntosh Anderson, Reynold's ideas (though not his god-forsaken writing style), the occasional gem like 'Dune World' and Miller's dept. of course. I would willingly forgo the interminable treatise on how to mend satellites or space-suits, or how to empty the radio-active dustbins, if it meant retreating to the realms of the Underpeople, with lost C'mell as host.

oooOOCooo

(Must confess to being baffled. You agree with my thesis but not with the examples. Odd, I thought Ballard and Smith were the prime examples of that sort of writing. Oh well!)

"I'd have been very interested to have seen how Walt would have treated LINK had Beryl been a man". AM.

Seth Johnson, 339 Stiles St. Vaux Hall, N.J., U.S.A.

Agreed, By all means fanzines should have standards, and the higher the better. Also agreed they shouldn't be set too high. But they should be set just a bit higher than the lastish. Something to strive for and work for in other words and not something readily done or too easy. Like the pro ed I suspect the faned would do well to reject or insist on work being rewritten or revised to meet his standards before publishing, thus raising his own standards and the literary standards of his contributors.

But let's face it. You edit your fanzine to please yourself. You use your best judgment and take everyone's opinions into consideration. But the fact remains the fanzine is an expression of your own personality and no one else's save insofar as individual articles reflect the personality of their writers.

So here is what I feel is the facts of life. As you go on pubbing and expressing yourself in your fanzines you will gradually build up an audience who like and appreciate that particular type fanzine. Chances are you'll never be able to please the others anyway so hat the heck. Please yourself, but be hard to please. And let your fanzine be unique and different from all other fanzines just as you are unique and different from all other humans.

But one point, You and you alone are responsible for poor articles and good ones too. No one else can insert or withhold them and when you accept an article you and you alone are responsible if it isn't up to your standards.

Actually when someone sends you something rubbishy why not return the thing and make suggestions just as how it might be rewritten to meet your standards. Don't tell the guy its rubbishy, but point out the things he should add, the things that could be eliminated and possibly repeat this several times till your contributor comes through with something satisfactory. Your fanzine improves, your contributor improves his ability and both of you gain more ego. That's not the easiest way to do things, but it is the way to build a fine fanzine and a corps of fine writers and contributors who live up to your standards.

And here is something else. If you know some person is knowledgeable about a thing or other or has an interesting attitude towards something, why not encourage him or her to write it up and specify just how many pages and what it should cover. That way you won't have everyone writing in describing one event at Joe Doakes house party or something. I'll grant you this is exaggerated but at the same time I'm sure you have experienced this in other people's fanzines.

And one person I do hope to read again and again in your fanzines is Beryl Henley. Its been so fashionable to scoff at Dianetics and Scientology in fandom over the past ten years that it's refreshing to find a refreshing advocate who knows what she is talking about. More, Much more please.

As for Campbell, you can tell Beryl he is ^awhite haired stocky man with a paunch and serene smiling countenance. Also a very kindly and well beloved old man according to the authors at the Campbell Testimonial Anniversary meeting of Eastern Science Fiction Association a year ago last March.

ooo000ooo

(Beryl has one supporter, then. I didn't think John W. Campbell was old - yet you use the adjective in your letter. Useful hints on fanzine editing, but you miss one point - sending back an Ms for re-writing even once causes bad feeling, strangely enough, and a feeling of "if you don't like it as it is then someone else can have it". or "Who are you to tell me what to write?" Some people can be very difficult about rewriting - since a fnz editor is not appointed by anyone, and obviously does not run a money-making publication, some authors feel that their opinion is easily as good as the editor's. True enough, usually, but as you say, the editor is responsible and he must have a word in what his fnz-material says. In my own case, I have no objection to an item being diametrically opposed to my own view, but I do reserve the right to have my say in how the author tackles the theme. In ZENITH, to save time and where alterations, if necessary at all, are usually minor, I alter the piece myself. My corrections are usually minor spelling or grammatical slips)

ooo000ooo

Gray Hall, 57, Church Street, Tewkesbury Glos.

Gor Blimey ! How badly you type! And I wish you'd get a new machine - the typeface on that one is decrepit - all decent fen have got elite now, not pica (he says, hastily trying to civer up his own typeface).

Despite the fact that I have produced a magazine at least half-way done so, I still write tactless, clumsy and slamming Locs. I guess I always will. Fandom embraces in its narrowness a wide variety of interests, and most fens seem to clash with my own.

However, I do appreciate good writing, etc., even if the theme doesn't appeal to me. It's when an uninteresting to me theme is extremely badly handled, as is often the case, that I tend to go up the wall.

And, as a faned, I'd rather have a slamming Loc than one saying "I liked, and I liked and I liked".

AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF IRISH FANDOM is rather out of place here - one would expect to find it in THE SCARR or maybe HYPHEN or LES SPINGE. Still, I daresay a meagre handful will enjoy,

especially with the power of John Berry's name behind it.

I hear H. Beam Piper is dead...tsk, who showed him all the angry Loos in NEXUS 2???

This issue seems concentrated letters, but still. Thanks for saying DOUBT 1 best in PaDs 1 - the power of the compliment is reduced when one considers the weight, or lack of it, of competition.

ooo000ooo

(You've got a cheek, mate. Your typewriter is notorious in fandom, whereas mine has only deteriorated comparatively recently. That's a poor joke about Piper. Shame on you)

ooo000ooo

Doreen Parker, 38, Millfield Road, Deeping St. James, Peterborough.

What I did disagree with in NEXUS 1 and must air my views on, was the following sentence - I quote -

.....a philosophy of 'hit them before they hit you' is expressed, a self evident truth I would have thought much more obvious than any of Tom Paine's and Jefferson's rubbish..... (my underlining)

When I read that sentence I was utterly taken aback that anyone could call Tom Paine's philosophy rubbish - particularly as he has always been a special 'hero' of mine since I was old enough to read him. I appreciate of course, that you are entitled to your views, but feel that I must write you to defend him.

Paine, (as you probably know), together with Voltaire, was one of the men responsible for the constitution of the French Revolution, and it was their thinking and writing which precipitated the events, which led up to the revolution. I say precipitated, because the revolution was inevitable and it was only the strong armed rule of Louis XIV which prevented it happening earlier. The original despotism resident in the person of the King divided and subdivided itself into a thousand shapes and forms, till the whole of it was acted by deputation. This was the case in France prior to the revolution, and this species of despotism proceeded on through an endless labyrinth of office until the source of it was scarcely perceptible, and there was no mode of redress.

Paine observed this and wrote of it, and it must be remembered that it was not the Peasants who brought about the Revolution, (although famine and taxes made their lives misery), but the Middle Classes who also shouldered excessive taxes whilst the Upper Classes appeared to get off scot free. I know a little about this because I can remember my grandmother telling me about it when I was a small child because her namesake, Rachel Maseurier, was reputed to be an Ancestress of hers, and she was very proud of the fact, and that she had been one of the Revolutionaries.

Paine, observing the terrible poverty and lives of the Peasants, drew up his famous "Rights of Man" and I quote :

"Natural Rights are those which appertain to man in right of his existence. Of these kind are all the intellectual rights or rights of mind, and also all those rights of acting as an individual for his own comfort and happiness (which are not injurious to the natural rights of others) (My underlining).

"Civil rights are those which appertain to man in right of his being a member of society. Every civil right has for its foundation some natural right pre-existing in the individual but to the enjoyment of which, his individual power is not in all cases, sufficiently competent. Of this kind are those which relate to security and protection."

Paine then goes on to qualify and amplify these statements but in no case does he say, as is often construed, that the levelling should be downward. Rather, my interpretation for what it is worth, (and I am sure others share my view), is that Paine was implying that each person should be judged upon his own efforts irrespective of birth, breed, colour or religion and not on what their fathers or grandfathers were. In other words, everyone starts with the same handicap and it is up to the individual to make his own mark.

Paine further states that Governments arise and fall under three heads.

First : Superstition.
Secondly: Power.
Thirdly : Reason.

H. Beam Piper and yourself appear to share the view that Governments should rule by power. Admittedly, you both again appear to agree, right wing power. I think at this stage it is fair to point out that I hold definite left wing tendencies, but for the life of me I cannot see the difference between a left wing dictatorship and a right wing dictatorship. They are both dictatorships and differ only in degree. They both set out to destroy the natural dignity of man, which is the only thing that distinguishes man from the other animals. If man had not tried in each generation to better himself, we should still all be in caves with the strong man at the top ruling by superstition and/or fear. To progress further, we must rule by Reason, which will not probably happen in our lifetime, but I firmly believe one day it will happen.

I also believe that it is not only right for those who are stronger than others, to help the weaker, but that it is also our duty, and that is the fundamental purpose of humanity. If this makes you think that I believe in the principle 'I am my Brother's keeper', you are quite right.

It must also be remembered that the great Thinkers of the 18th century produced the great reformers of the 19th Century, and if the reformers of the 19th Century had not fought for their principles, we today, would not possibly be discussing abstract forms of governments. We would be too busy trying to keep body and soul alive!

oooOOOooo

(Glad you picked up my throw-away line designed to attract attention Doreen. No-one else did. I'm a bit out of my depth here so I refer you to that Old Oxfordian, Ed James)

E.F. James, 923 Warwick Road, Solihull, Warwicks.

On most of the general points that Doreen makes I am in full agreement - though I tend to be right-wing myself, in practice (for in theory of course left-wing ideas have an irresistible attraction). I have an equal abhorrence of right-wing as well as left-wing dictatorships. But on certain points, in the details I must disagree with her.

To start with, it is very doubtful that Tom Paine had any concrete effect on the Revolution at all. Certainly his ideas influenced the ideas of the idealists, but idealists did not have much say in drawing up the 'constitution of the French Government after the French Revolution'; (though this phrase is rather vague; does it refer to the Constitution of 1791, or the Robespierrien Constitution of 1793, or the Thermidorean Constitution of Year LLLIII, to the Bonapartan Constitution of Year VIII, or even to the Bourbon Settlements of 1814 and 1815? All are very different from each other; only the first two acknowledge any political rights or responsibilities to the peasants, those without property. Experience showed the French it only led to anarchy and demagoguery. Voltaire, needless to say, had absolutely no influence on anything except the thoughts of the revolutionaries. He died in 1778; he had become a somewhat misunderstood legend even in his own lifetime; he had a hatred for democracy, having also a conviction of contemporary man's basic corruptness. As far as he did advocate anything at all instead of just brilliant, witty, effective, but completely destructive criticism, he preferred an enlightened despot; thus it was that he corresponded with and advised Frederick the Great of Prussia and Catherine the Great of Russia (though they never followed his advice; it was usually too enlightened, and often, too impractical.)

Secondly, Tom Paine's 'Rights of Man' was not (as Doreen implies) written with the French in mind, 'observing the terrible poverty and lives of the Peasants' but for the Americans, before their Revolution. And there was no near serfdom in America. Their attitude was that the few poor that there were had only themselves to blame for their plight. It was in the most part for the middle class that he wrote, or for the craftsmen, the farmers; they were being deprived of their 'natural and unalienable rights' by the British. The French Third Estate (at least, the middle class element in it) adopted Paine for their hero. He supported them but he sorely misunderstood the Revolution. He saw it, rightly as the Third Estate taking advantage of the split between the Nobles and the Crown over taxes to press their own complaints forward, and gradually to take over the government of the country, to execute eventually the King. Misled by the leaders he saw it also as a bloodless revolution, and as a revolution solely of the middle class. 'Whom

has the National Assembly brought to the scaffold?' The answer is, thousands, and many more driven into exile. Burke is very much more the realist in his "Reflections" which Paine bitterly attacked. Paine is the idealist, the visionary. He did not have much knowledge of the world, he was no politician like Burke; he was embittered against the world for being driven from country to country by the laws of libel. He did not see that the French Revolution imposed a despotism on France more severe than that of Louis XVI's. He was so involved in the high ideals of his end that he did not bother about the doubtful means to that end.

Tom Paine and Jefferson both did realize however that some things are more important than efficiency. Remembering Lord Acton's 'power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely' I am quite willing to forego the chances of an efficient government (which is what a dictatorship is, in the short run) for the rather woolly ideal of freedom or as the British see freedom, rights and privileges. The French and Tom Paine worshipped freedom as an absolute thing, as an abstract thing, leaving the door open for men like Napoleon; as soon as he was in power, under the name of freedom, he reduced the political power of the people to nil, brought in the same strict censorship as had the Louis and the well tried formula of 'execute first' and don't even bother to ask questions afterwards!

As for H. Beam Piper and politics, I will just agree with John Brunner: 'a few years ago it was common to find at least one story about a semi-political event - mostly on rather naive level. (some of the best authors in the field succumbed to this tempting oversimplification!) I do not think that Mr. Piper has yet outgrown this immaturity in politics, nor for that matter has Heinlein and a few others. (Even Aldiss!) To rule by power either means bearing with public opinion and crushing any anti-government opinions, with their authors (like Napoleon) or else, taking the long term view, moulding public opinion by propaganda to fit the government. Either way destroys anything that is noble or worthwhile in Man as a species, equating him with an automaton. It will, moreover, have the effect of destroying any good literature; good literature has from Homer downwards had the unfortunate habit of laughing at authority (Homer made fun of the Gods in an often uproarious way), That would have to end. Anything that smelled of rebellion would go. And Science Fiction would be got rid of before all the rest.

oooCOOooo

(I'm still out of my depth, Ed and Doreen, so I'll make no comment and will merely hope that someone else will pick up this discussion in LEXUS 4. Meanwhile, back to Ed)

oooCOOooo

"I got more ego-boo out of a five-minute one-page fannish one-shot than I do from a whole issue of ZENITH" P.W.

'The Critical Question' was Good - it said something that needed saying and it said it well. Let's quote a bit. 'Of late, a new school of comment seems to have reared its ugly head...."I don't like this, therefore it's BAD, BAD, BAD" seems to be its theme song' and 'Therefore, gentle brickthrower, might it not be wiser to say "I'm afraid Joe Soap's article did not appeal to me"'. This seems to me to be an elementary and basic principle of criticism - one can NEVER (repeat NEVER) say a piece of writing is bad, only that you personally did not like it because.....Likewise, it is wrong to say that a book is Good, without announcing that this is of course only your opinion, and that you hold this opinion because.....And, strictly, your opinion should not be made public until you have read carefully, perhaps twice, the work concerned, compared it to other works by the same author, to other similar work by different authors, and examined the opinions of those critics who come to a different conclusion than you do.

Having read Mr. Jeeves' very fair article on the criticisms of fanzines, we turn back again one page and read 'Honesty is the Best Policy' by (presumably) you. Let's quote again:- 'Authors who will not bother to do a workmanlike job, and whose reputation, to my jaundiced eyes are totally inexplicable.' 'I have never read one story by this man which has meant anything to me.' (Davidson) Such comments are perfectly justifiable - you show that they are your opinions; you do not make judgments or generalisations. But then you make such remarks as 'F&SF has the highest percentage of nonsense per issue than any other SF magazine.' or 'The recent 'Equinox' reached a new depth of idiocy.' Do you define idiocy? Do you define 'nonsense'? You give us an inkling of what you mean. 'The author does not explain his plot. It is left to the reader.....I doubt whether even the author can think of a reason for his story.....not stories.....but ramblings.'

May I remind you that it is NOT the duty of an author to please his public. It is only himself that he has to please. Those authors you approve of towards the end of your article DO write for their public - one can't blame them - they get more money that way. But the only duty the author has is to his Art, to his Muse, or to the White Goddess as Mr. Robert Graves would say. Moreover there is absolutely no reason why an author should not write what you call 'ramblings'. If the author can create a mood or interest and excite us with 'poetic slop', then he has done a good job. There is really no need of a 'Plot', even in SF, not a complex gimmick-ridden one certainly SF writers SHOULD follow any trends that they can find in contemporary literature if they want to - the surest way to kill SF for everyone is to bury their heads in the past and say 'Those were the good old days - why don't they write like then nowadays? I can't understand any of this stuff they're writing now and so it's BAD.'

The rest of Nexus? I rather like the cover, but it should

have the number on really. The berry article was just SUPERB. Letters were very interesting. And I found your filler about the Brumgroup fascinating. I don't know whether I'm glad or sorry that I got out of that van before the 'Greyhound',....

(I'm quite pleased that I very nearly obeyed the criteria for a critic as set out in the last couple of issues.

To be truthful I'm so inconsistent that I didn't take much conscious notice of Terry's article when writing 'HITBP'. Luckily I qualified most of my statements.

I can see that if we write 'in my opinion' before making a comment, life will become tedious in the extreme. Herewith I announce that my opinion in NEXUS, even when not specifically marked as MY OPINIONS, are in fact no more than opinions and should not be taken as absolute judgments.

Wrong, I think. An author does have a duty to please his public - at least as long as that public buy a zine and thus put money in the author's pocket. Put it this way - if he dis-regards what I think of as his duty, then he'll stop selling stories just as soon as the public get sufficiently annoyed)

IAN ALDRIDGE, 13, Eldrick Avenue, Fauldhouse, West Lothian, Scotland.

HITBP I agree with mostly. Ballard's far better on short stories - he seems to realise they must have some sort of basic plot. Equinox was hopelessly involved and had no plot line whatsoever. Cordwainer Smith has brilliant characterisation and a good sense of the conveyance of meanings through the medium of descriptive passages, but he has deplorably little plot level. As T.J. said, he runs through three or four different plots in one story. Have you read Poul Anderson's brilliant 'Three Worlds to Conquer' that appeared in serialised form in IF a short while back? On Budrys I disagree. His Rogue Moon left much to be desired, remaining only half finished. (Who built the artifact on the Moon and why? All he did was have the main character finally pass through its many traps) And the same with his short 'Falling Torch' that was reprinted in VENTURE. Again he starts to develop his plot, then leaves it hanging unfinished.

H. Beam Piper's works haven't interested me unduly, mainly because I go by first impressions. Maybe he just landed unlucky - he was being castigated for his book 'Little Fuzzy' and the only other story I'd read - partly - was 'Ministry of Disturbance' in an old Astounding. (By the way, have you read 'Advise and Consent' by Alan Drury, or '7 Days in May' which runs on more or less the same lines? These I class as fringe sf, and both, although heavily political treatises, are very readable) Going by 'Ministry of Disturbance', I didn't find Piper all that interesting....

Democracy has failings, Communism has failings. Anarchy

has failings, and so does Dictatorship. But all have their good points too, so we shouldn't be surprised if an entirely new political regime springs up as an offshoot, but it will have failings somewhere within itself as well. No government can afford to be perfect - there must be room for friction and discussion or the system will collapse. Take the old saying ; Nobody's perfect. (Why not read 'Spartacus by Howard Fast, for the results of a governmental system that tried to make itself too perfect?)

oobOOOooo

(Sorry Ian, no comment here.)

Ivor Latta, 16 Merryton Avenue, Glasgow, W. 5.

Now, Nexus 1 & 2 : your spelling was awful, your grammar worse, the style was grim and the reproduction abysmal!

Just joking Pete... Heh, heh!

Ahem,

I agreed with practically every word Jeeves said in NEXUS 2, but it would be even more agreeable if he could follow out his own precepts in ZENITH. He's dead right that it isn't enough to say "Jim Crud's work stinks!" because that only gives the reader the critic's impression - which is valueless in itself without some argument to reinforce that impression and give some idea of its validity. I do wish Terry would consider longer, fuller reviews, even if it meant covering fewer mags, because these two-sentence things are really of no help - they hardly scratch the surface.

Do you both have the same opinion on Ballard, Cordwainer Smith, Avram Davidson etc? Or is one of you influencing the other? Whatever it is, to complain that they are ruining sf is daft. The real danger to sf are those writers who keep churning out the same material, in the same manner, as they were doing in nineteen-thirty-whatsit. Ballard & Co. are at least stepping out in a new direction - but it's out of the rut.

To make an analogy: I like music - I know something, - not a lot, about music; I don't like the productions of Schonberg, Webern or Stockhausen. To me this isn't music; but to many others it is. Where does that leave one? These men may be the forerunners of a new golden age in music for all I know - I can't even say whether it is good or bad - because I can't understand it. All I can say is "I don't understand." And, after all, no one twists my arm and makes me listen to it.

Are you still in the market for queries and quotes for the H. Beam Piper? If so -

QUOTE : "Nothing wrong with imperialism in the right time and the right place. Goldwater is just 50 years too late!
P. Weston. NEXUS 1.

QUERY : Can you give me a time and place, 50 years ago, when there

" I haven't been in fandom long," she said, "I'm still a nympho fan,"

would have been 'nothing wrong with Imperialism'? I would have to go back to classical times to stomach that one.

QUOTE : "There's something wrong with democracy" H. BEAM PIPER. 'Space Viking' iv. pp. 155.

QUERY : What? (And don't use the 15 year old Weimar Republic, please).

QUOTE : "Notice the expressed desirability of force at the right time" P. Weston. NEXUS 2.

QUERY : Would you agree that ^(a) Nazi Germany and Japan used force to bring about the best outcome for themselves at the beginning of World War II?

(b) That the Allies, Britain, America and Russia - sorry, the Commies - left the use of force against the Axis until the 'last extremity'?

(c) That, according to the Piper philosophy, the Axis powers were in this instance, acting sensibly and competently?

(d) That, in future, we should act according to the principles of Nazi Germany and Hirohito's Empire?

If, as you say, you are concerned with the future of sf, should you not be worried at the use of the medium as a vehicle for nineteenth-century backwoods Republicanism?

Campbell has a lot to answer for. You missed one Piper story, by the way - "Oomphel in the Sky" - Analog, 1961 March (BRE) That is a beauty! Goldwater reads his kids to sleep with it.

Have you seen JWC's editorial in the February issue of Analog? The latest is that the "War against Poverty" in the States is a waste of time, because the 'poor' (his inverted commas) are just lazy, slovenly slobbs living the life of Reilly on assistance money coming out of your pockets, brother. And I bet they keep coal in the bath too?

With difficulty I refrained from vomiting on the PAN AM ad.

Ah well. Very stimulating - both mags. I must confess I got as much enjoyment from them as I usually do from ZENITH. (Wonder if I should have said that?)

oooOOOooo

(We do seem to have somewhat similar tastes - I don't think we influence each other - our identical likings was the reason for my original request to Terry for his Mag. Reviews, and these I don't alter, apart from cutting them to fill the space available, if necessary.

O.K. so we don't have to read any sf that we don't like. Or do we? If all the prozines are full of it, then it's a choice between no sf or poor sf (our opinion) Naturally, we can't leave the zines alone even

if we can't stand some of the stuff.
Back to Piper huh? Well, it's now common knowledge that I wrote that piece in N-1 somewhat deliberately over-biased - I still think Piper has a small germ of reason behind him - but agreed, his system could be an awful thing in the wrong hands.
If you aren't aware of the failings of democracy, then I certainly won't list them here (evasive, this kid.) But as Joe says, "Democracy is the only system which allows room for correction" or some such.
I would say that the Nazis and Japs used force to help themselves at the start of WW 11. Only trouble was (for them) that they underestimated the opposition. And even so, except for a madman's whims, I think the Nazis would have won. Sure, if you were a Nazi German their country acted for the best.
(What's the point of this bit anyway Ivor?) I certainly would agree that the Allies left the use of force (almost) too late. Any time until about 1937, the Allies could have prevented WW11 (or at least its most terrible disasters) But they didn't, they muddled and hesitated - and that is one failure of democracy - when fast action is called for, democracy can't compete with a dictator's speed. So the democratic system is at a disadvantage.
Can't say I've seen Campbell's latest - but I didn't miss Oomphel in the Sky - there just wasn't room for it.
Don't worry - everyone gets more fun from NEXUS than ZENITH. I do, usually.)

ooo000oooo

Seth. A. Johnson.

I rather enjoyed your discussion on requisites for LoCs. And it seems to me that this would apply even more to a really conscientious faned. I think that a person like you reflects his own personality in the fanzine or at least he certainly should. Look at it this way. If the faned is conscientious and really wants to put out the best possible fanzine he is going to actively solicit articles, essays, poetry or whatever he wants to fill his pages with, from those he considers best able to do the job. Or those who will do the job who are best able at least. And then on top of that he would have his own critical standards and return articles and materials for rewriting and polishing till they met these standards.

In other words you now have maybe twenty fairly good contributors who come somewhere near your own personal standards. If you make these people measure up to those standards then you not only increase the value of your fanzine, but you constantly improve and polish the talents of your stable of writers. They rise in talent along with you and your fanzine.

A long time ago Ted White was editorializing all over VOID about Focal Point fanzines. Or fanzines of faneds who had acquired a following of writers and faneds all of whom more or less

followed the literary lead of this particular faned who then became the focal point of a fairly large number of fans. That is if you consider the readers of his faned followers fanzines as well as his own.

And consciously or not that is just what I think you are doing with NEXUS.

And all this brings to mind a letter I received from a potential neofan. Richard Luc. 49 W 8 St. Bayonne N.J. 07002. This lad had read five fanzines and wanted to know how to get more and how to write a good enough LOC to see it published at least. And believe it or not I practically rewrote the material from NEXUS to explain just what he had to do to get accepted by faneds.

I'm inclined to agree with you on Avram Davidson but think you will note a decided improvement in F&SF for past month or two at least. Also a terrific improvement in Galaxy publications in the months since Pohl took over. But I cannot understand your enthusiasm over ANALOG. Seems to me Campbell has gone so overboard trying to convince his advertisers that all his readers are egg heads, scientists or professors that he has started slanting the contents so no others can understand or appreciate it. And just incidentally there is a rumour to the effect that ANALOG returns to digest size with the April ish. This of course remains to be seen, but I imagine its so. I heard it from some members of HYDRA who would know what they are talking about in this case.

I don't doubt it is more fun to write the articles yourself although I fear this is apt to result in something of a monodiet for your readers no matter how good at writing you might be, and I'll say your pretty darn good at that. But no matter how good it is it will show up much better in contrast with other writers and contributors. So sound off to your heart's content but make an effort to keep on having a variety of writers and artists in your pages.

Tell Joe Patrizzio to read the rest of DIAMETICS and then try reading SCIENCE OF SURVIVAL after which at least he will know what he is talking about. Also tell him to read THE DOOR TO THE FUTURE by Jess Stearn. MacFadden-Bartell Books 75-28 75¢ for some more or less authentic information about psi, clairvoyance, esp and all the stuff science can't explain or understand.

oooOOCooo

(Unless I'm mistaken Seth, this is the second letter of yours that is in this issue. Odd that you never replied to ZENITH, but this 'little offering gets you churning out the airmail letters. The LoC business - I think the people in N-2 said some fairly sensible things. However, you cannot make a 'bad' LoC writer toe the line by merely asking (I've tried). They have to learn gradually - if they don't they tread on so many toes that they become most unpopular. As for Focal Point fanzines - to be one I suspect that a zine would need a far more regular and frequent schedule than NEXUS True, the same people write in each time, and they do have similar

(on the whole) tastes to myself, but the same applies to half a dozen other UK fanzines. Thanks for the nice words, anyway, that was a welcome 'fix' of egoboo.

Interesting info on the prozines. Let's wait and see - we should know by the time this is published. After so long I don't know whether a small Analog is a good thing or not.....

I don't write all my own material because I'm lazy. Also, I'm not competent enough to write a whole zine without boring everyone solid. As for SandD - over to you Joe, and no backing out of it)

oooOOOooo

From Chris Priest (again)

(Not a letter on NEXUS, but general ramblings that amused me and might be worth throwing into the pot for everyone else to kick around).

I've been reminiscing about egoboo- working out a philosophy on it. You see, I don't believe egoboo is the actual receipt of acclaim; but the expectation of it. I get more egoboo out of typing CON stencils than I do out of reading reviews of it - even good ones. When I write a story; such as like I have lately, I get terrific egoboo out of reading and re-reading it. Much more than I do when I read comments on it in a fanzine. I've just sent two Mss to Moorcock - I got almost as much egoboo out of posting them as I will if he accepts them. Like the one-shot. I wrote that the afternoon after I dropped you at Paddington. I went out in the evening to a party, and I sat in a corner all night just wallowing in egoboo - Lynne thought I was sulking. She couldn't have been more wrong - I was in a veritable whirl of egoboo. And at this point, I hadn't even sent it up to you.

Then there's unexpected egoboo. Like Ethel's review. I read Haver when it came, completely unsuspecting she'd reviewed it. I was halfway thru the review, before I realised she was talking about me! Wham! A great fix of egoboo that lasted about a week.

Perhaps I am big-headed or something but this is how it happens. I'm wondering whether it's only me, or whether I have struck a truism.

oooOOOooo

(since the One-shot Chris is on about didn't get a wide circulation (2 dozen, I think) it might be as well to mention that we each wrote one side of a foolscap sheet describing my visit to London just before Xmas. It was a pretty funny (in retrospect) series of muddles - but we didn't expect the thing to draw so much praise. In fact, I personally have had more egoboo from "MY SIDE OF IT" than I have had from any single issue of ZENITH. Which makes me think..... I don't think you are bigheaded, Chris, just being honest with yourself in an attempt at analysing your feelings - and there's nothing wrong in that)

"Let's go home and collate". said Mary Reed. Her companion looked at the shocked faces of the other passengers on the bus and muttered, "Go look it up in a dictionary you dirty-minded lot".

MYSTERIES OF OLDE BIRMINGHAM

(This bit typed by me, Pete, so any mistakes musn't be blamed on Doreen.)

During the Birmingham Group meeting on a Tuesday evening, (Tuesday 9th February,) various assorted Brummies were talking about the coming elections for BSFA Committee posts. A ridiculous 'battle' is raging, to win men's minds for either camp. At the time Rod, Ken and myself had just constructed a fairly reasonable and fairly amiable counter-attack to Graham Hall's outrageously slanted plug for Platt. Ken was supposed to deliver these platforms, (350), so that the assembled might of the BSFG could staple, fold, and post the things. His car broke down so he never arrived (even the elements seem to support Platt; most disheartening.)

While someone was reading the Graham Hall epistle aloud, and other people were jeering at the foolish statements made therein, Charlie Winstone, in his quiet way, produced a grubby envelope and a grubby missive wherein, which was also promptly read aloud. The text was as follows; (complete with grammatical & spelling mistakes)

" VOTE FOR PLATT.

Vote for the most dynamic thing, to enter S.F. circles in many years, or was it weeks, he started his own mag. which was nothing more than a typewritten toilet roll, and became the most laughed at mag. on the British (world) scene.

Platt has made no contribution to the to the B.S.F.A. except upset everyone in the letters section of Vector.

But lets be fair, he did lower the age limit of the committee members from 18 to 21 (or was it the other way round) one never knows with him, and there is also PADS (Patronizing and Distributing Service) I think thats what its called, roughly translated it means far more tat from far more twits at a lower cost. Since Platt arrived on the scene, he has spread the idea that Vector is STAGNATING, ha, it was doing o.k. before he came, must be some kind of nut. He could be of great help on the B.S.F.A. comm. they need someone to clean out the ashtrays for them, but they need him like a dog needs fleas.

I also here he would relinquish Beyond, for a year, if he joined the comm. is this a threat or a promise, also I here, from the same spource, that he has many practical admantages over other candidates, I must stop at this point, one cannot type when one is in fits on the floor.

Goodbye you all,

Till the next time,

THE SPIDER. "

This document produced great howls of laughter. The near-illiterate style, whether authentic or assumed, plus the grain of truth in the text, combined to make a remarkably funny missive. But of course, being earnest men of the world, it could not stop there. Who sent the thing, and why ?

First, postmark. It was a Birmingham frank. No district; that meant Central Brum. Typewriter; not recognisable as any of BSFG machines. Motives; Rod, Ken & myself were felt to be absolved since we'd already published a pro-Roger blurb. Rog & myself fancied Charlie Winstone for a while, but we dropped this idea after a while; it wasn't his style, nor his machine. Besides, he is too conscientious of the rights & wrongs of things to send something like this.

Finally, we admitted to being stumped. None of the BSFG could imagine one of us writing this. It didn't seem to be the sort of thing that anyone one of us would do. Certainly there is some anti-Platt feeling in the City, but this usually finds other outlets. Besides which, we all would sign our name to any circular.

Cliff Teague said suddenly that if we couldn't see whose work it was, we must be blind. I think it was his work, possibly in collaboration with Mike Beard. But since neither Cliff nor the Beard have written anything in particular, we have nothing for comparison.

The only other hypothesis was that someone, probably Graham Hall, would have sent this circular out so that people would be so outraged at the supporters of Rog, for their dirty politics, that they would vote for Platt out of annoyance with the other side. This was dismissed as being too subtle; but there is a very good chance that 'undecideds' might vote Platt after receiving the thing. So far it has reached as far as Beryl Henley & Archie Mercer (who, knowing that Ken, Rod & I had prepared a counter to Gray's original blurb, thought that THE SPIDER was our work; their opinions of us must have dropped to all-time depths.)

Monday the 15th, Feb, another blurb arrived. This in a different envelope, typed by a different typewriter. Also more literate and clever. The typewriter was again unfamiliar, but I think this second plug may have been done by a different person, with or without the first SPIDER's knowledge/co-operation. Read on;

" BULLITIN NO.2.

FROM YOUR 12 LEGGED FRIEND.

PLUG FOR A FANZINE:.....

Go beyond ! Don't stay down there on that earthly paradise, join us up here on cloud 9 where we can worship the great god J.G. and enjoy ourselves breathing breathing the putrefying stench of the drowning world beneath.

Here amongst the bright new stars we can have fun, forget those mortals down there, they don't understand us we are too good for them. Just get out Beyond and have great fun running down those hard working suckers below.

Goodbye you all,

Till the next time,

THE SPIDER. "

This one has a different emphasis. Not so nasty. Also, it has a few interesting references. Where it says 'Go Beyond', it could be a rather clever pun, by someone who has read Jack Vance's STAR KING. And it is obviously someone who dislikes J.G. Ballard. Heck, I qualify on those points, but it wasn't me, really. I thought that these clues pointed straight to Rod Milner's door, but he assures me that it was not his work; besides, he is too busy mailing out anti-Platt circulars from Ken & myself (I think these are in this mailing of OMPA). So the question is still hanging fire; and doubtless there will be more from the SPIDER before this election is over.

You know, this sort of thing gives fandom a bad name, but when someone (like myself) is not directly involved, it is awfully tempting to regard this as great fun, and to wish THE SPIDER all the best. Wrong, of course, I should condemn this wholeheartedly. I don't, and that is Platt's fault. He has made so many enemies by his quite deliberately insulting/irritating letters and comments, plus other little tricks, that he should not complain at reciprocation. And while THE SPIDER's means should be condemned, I cannot help but urge you to vote for Rog for VECTOR Editor.

**You've got it—Corgi—just about
the first name in Science Fiction...
they're publishing 'New Writings
in S.F., I' on December 30th, & just
listen to these other great titles—
there's 'The Golden Apples of the
Sun', Ray Bradbury of course,
(that's 3/6), 'Count Down', Charles
Eric Maine, 3/6, 'The Sleep Eaters',
John Lymington, 3/6 again...**

