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# RUR 6

This is put out by David Rike, with some help from Carl Brandon. We both reside at 2431 Dwight Way, Berkeley 4, California. It is sent out to correspondents, faneds I trade with, friends and likable strangers.

Jim, the guy who Carl and I pay our rent to, came up to my room the other day and asked if he could borrow my copy of Parkinson's Law. He said that he read a review of it in the April issue of aSF and it intrigued him. Jim has been getting aSF every month since '45 and Galaxy ever since it started coming out. I bought Prof. C. Northcote Parkinson's little gem last year when it came out, after digging a short tid-bit of it that was pubbed in the Reporter.

(The Reporter is, as all readers of G.M.Carr know, "pernicious propoganda" which, if it was the type of stuff that "gave rise to the alerting of the State Department with its subsequent much-publicized 'Book burning' campaign," Mrs. Carr "can well understand why such a campaign was justified!" Which is to say that it is a liberal magazine, coming out an average of twice a month.)

The Parkinson paints upon a broad canvas and discourses about the governing elite of mighty nations and the make-up of the controlling boards of billion - dollar coporations, the basic theorems and laws expounded by him are nevertheless viable down to even a microscopic level. Like fandom.

I urge all of you, if you haven't done so already, to go out and get a copy of Parkinson's Law, (Cambridge, Mass.; 113 pp., \$3). Now, I will admit that \$3 is alot to shell out for a thin tome like this, even it it is illoed by Robert Osborn, but it should be available in used book shops for a more reasonable sum. I purchased my copy, for instance, at half-price from Farrell's, an used book store which is around the corner and across the street from 2431 Dwight, right after it came out.

With the contents of this book under your belt (unfortunately, the Message is unable to be dug out of the context of the book in its entirety, so illustrative quotations are not possible), you will be able to read over the factual reports of the current convention committee with a mature and reasoned outlook. No more will you get hot under the collar when a Crusading Faned reveals Once Again some hideous action made by the con committee. For, you say, what else can you expect from a con committee but Utter Inefficiency? It is all so Very Clear now: by its innate nature, the bureaucratic regime of a con committee is doomed to be xbogged down. And, the addition of more persons to the committee will not lessen the work load, but will rather intensify it so that persons will find themselves ensnarled in petty details, which were previously overlooked or not bothered with. Thus, no matter what is done, everyone will still be dashing around and still be getting very little accomplished.

I've talked with fans and pros who have been on committees — about five different cons — and the story they've told me has always been the same: everything was fouled up; with naturally more petty scheming and convention-fan politics the larger the committee was.

Now, most of the pre-convention quibble and maneuvering have a direct effect on only a relatively small number of people. However, when the sum total of all of this is carried over to the con itself, it puts a wet blanket on the fires of fannish enthusiasm and depresses the atmosphere of the gathering, besides further confusing the organized chaos that is called the Officâal Program. By just the sheer inertia of habit, the Basic Things get done: a hotel or meeting place; the arrangements for the con to be held on a certain date; the con generally gets publicized, even if it does consist of reports in fanzines telling about how the con is going to hell; and people come to a con.

These are the essentials.

When all of these items are taken care of, things can pretty well continue on their own, especially when the old con-goers crawl out of their dirt-lined coffins and do what they've been doing once or twice a year for the last 10 or 15 years. With them around, there'll always be the poker games, the smoked-filled rooms, the all-night parties, the huxters' tables, the perpetually packed bar, and auction. Should we disturb this joyous mob with the disruptive acts of con committee people, who even go around and tell fans where they can and can't sit? Certainly not! Instead, let us quietly put the con committee and similar types away for the duration of the con. Those who really did the work will appreciate the deserved rest, while the Disruptors will not be able to pester convention attendees.

In this way, the spread of that foul disease, Bumbling Bureaucracy, will be checked and it won't infect the fannish masses.

The other day I saw Sedner Fin, one of Berkeley's "beat generation" types who claims to be an anarchist. "Wow!" I said to him, "what's happening, maaann?"

"Well dad," he said, "the Latest is having your toliet paper decorated with phrases like 'In God We Trust,' 'Join the American Legion,' and other Religious, Patriotic, and Right-Thinking slogans."

"Cuh-razzy, maaann . . ."

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"These boys think of me as an imaginative writer."  
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The Gates of Ivory, the Gates of Horn, Thomas McGrath (New York, 1958; pb., \$1.00)

Not only does a recent issue of USSR (#18) come out with a stf story in it, but Mainstream, one of the still-existing Communist party publishing houses in the U.S., comes out with one by a Los Angeles stevedore and poet. If one could consider that 1984 referred exclusively to Russia, then The Gates of Ivory, the Gates of Horn might be termed as the CP's "reply" to it, detailing the end product of American capitalism and its side facets like the security investigations, the investigators, stool pigeons, etc. It's a quaint lil' story (only around a hundred pages) that you should be able to find in any CP book store.

The thing that interests me the most is not the book itself but rather the last paragraph of a review of it in the People's World:

Science-fiction has recently been the vehicle for more progressive ideas than we generally find in a total year's product of our "best" writers. And these who enjoyed "The Space Merchants" and such of Ray Bradbury's books as "Fahrenheit 451," will find "The Gates of Ivory, the Gates of Horn" even more pointed in its satire and even more grisly in its implications.

This back patting appeal for stf readers/fans to go out and get McGrath's book can imply two different things: (a) a number of CPers and/or "progressive-minded" sympathizers read stf, and (b) the CP membership has dwindled down to such a degree that they're going out after anything two legs — even persons who read pmz every month! — for recruits. And, a few months before, the PW even had a sympathetic survey of the local contingent of the "Beat Generation," emphasizing and underscoring the points of agreement. Boy, they're really scraping the bottom of the barrell.

Ronel tells me he's received letters of comment on R.U.R. from some idiot people who apparently don't bother to read fanzine colophons to find out who put it out. Well, I — David Rike — am the person responsible for what appears in HUR and Ron or Terry have nothing to do with it a — tall. And here I even mimeoed it on different colored paper so it would be distinctly different from Fanac. sigh

-- March 24, 1958