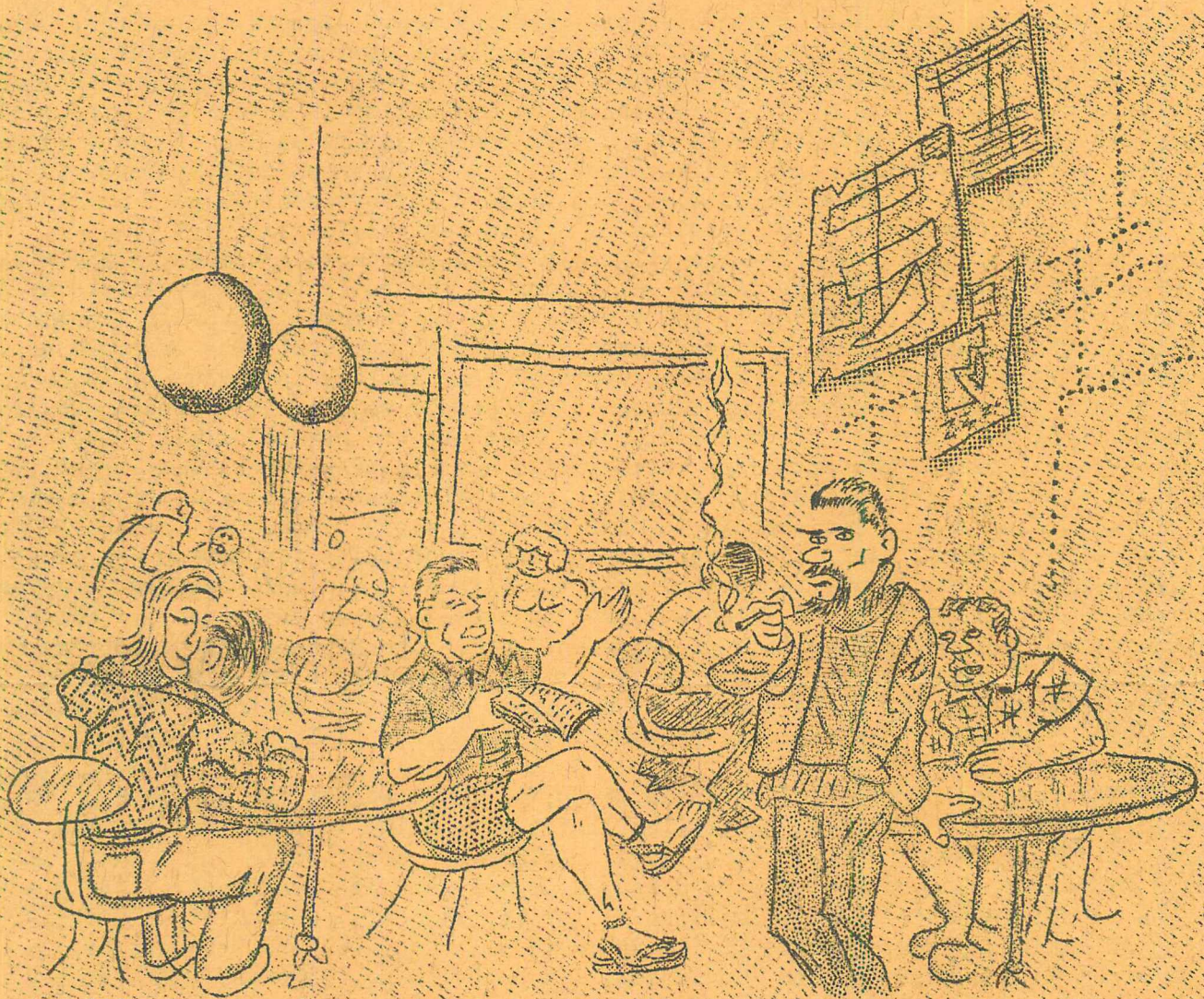


# RUR 14

this is put out by David Rike, 2431  
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Visiting fans can contact me at Thorn-  
wal 5-3011. Security agents not invited.  
Drawing below by George Metzger.



## DEAR SON, *by Fritz Leiber*

As one who predicted and whose subconscious mind did its strange bit to shape the Beat Generation ("Coming Attraction," Galaxy, Nov., 1950; "The Foxholes of Mars," Thrilling Wonder Stories, June, 1952; The Green Millennium, Abelard, 1953; "The Silence Game," Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, April, 1954) I'm adding some footnotes to RUR 10.

This isn't boasting. The next generation is forever doing what the last generation had in mind. Daddy plays with an idea, trying it out in his mind, using it for secret gratification and solace and as a take-off point for dreaming; Sonny drags it out into the open (sometimes to Daddy's horror) and lives by it. This aspect of generations-behavior cuts deeper than the more obvious disillusionment and revolt. The ideas involved may be of all sorts: utopian, adventurous, indignant, cynical. Please note that this interpretation involves the possibility that Son is being played for a sucker -- trying to live by an idea that Daddy never had the nerve to test himself. Dreams always come from somewhere, you know, and it's the

responsibility of the person who buys or steals the dream to inspect it, so he knows at least what he's getting.

"The cats who've really beat the drums aren't of this generation, they're old, did." Well, naturally. An idea is around for quite a while before it gets stated or acted on. The aforementioned cats got in on Beat-ness when it was first around, before it was being lived much.

"The feeling of being 'Beat,' is not something new." Agreed, of course, I'd go further than the Steppenwolfe and the gang children of the early Soviet days. It has about it something medieval, mystical, religious, revivalistic. Just consider: "Blowing pot" -- the use of drugs to produce an exaltation in which the user becomes possessed by the god, gets frenzied and utters prophecies is as old as man (and may be done very coolly rather than movie-vodoo style -- "Oh those native drums, they're driving me maaadd!"); remember that at such times a lot of assorted guff comes out of the unconscious along with, possibly, a little semi-accidental poetry.

"Mad, aimless wanderlusting" -- the pilgrimages and impromptu crusades of the Middle Ages. "Deep Down, they're Waiting." -- I think of the religious revivals of the American Midwest: Let us gather by the riverbank in white robes and await the Second Coming next Wednesday; 1000 A.D. was another year when the world was supposed to end. I mention this not chiefly for kidding purposes (the analogy is obviously incomplete) but because there is a psychology common to all people waiting for inspired revelation and/or an opportunity for action, just as there are psychological patterns common to all people who withdraw, whether into a world of private ideation or into a group that feels alienated from society. Possibilities: waiting becomes a way of life, no insight is good enough to satisfy them, every picture of the Inner Meaning of Life is Sick, Sick, Sick; conversely, any opportunity for action may eventually seem good enough if the boredom gets too intense. Minimal warning: a person or group that is waiting and withdrawn must be especially on the watch for false inspiration, perfectionism, loss of judgement, etc. The Silence Game is a very difficult one to play. There may be very important judgements about life which cannot be put into words, but it is inevitably extremely easy to be mistaken about such; the false prophet with a magnetic personality can have a field day under such conditions.

"Waiting for something like Sapin, 1936;" -- here we get the converse of an earlier statement: the next generation is forever having in mind what the last generation did. Lost causes can have terrific glamor -- after World War I there was even something glamorous about the defeated Germany and its Wehrmacht, this by way of an extreme example. A few American liberals, radicals, Communists and Socialists of various persuasions fought in Spain (I even know one who went over and fought for Franco!) and most of them (including, I'm happy to say, the one who fought for Franco) were deeply disillusioned -- in many cases by behind-the-scenes Communist manipulations. I sympathize with the urge to do something for humanity when the chips are down. I also recognize that in the twenties and thirties a young liberal could protest satisfyingly by joining the Communist Party or one of the Socialist splinters, while today that means of protest is hardly available -- which can be tough on the vigorous young critic of society. To act effectively in politics takes lots of shrewdness and knowledge (it's so easy to find yourself on the wrong side) and what you describe of the Beat attitude in this area sounds more like infatuation with glamorous phrases like "Workers' Councils" . . . the thought of embattled cities . . . good riots . . . a chance to take a healthy poke at society . . . deserted streets at dawn, then a few figures in leather jackets, striding swiftly. . .

"This world is out to smash them . . . each and every individual one." Any one who puts himself in the position of the mysterious stranger loitering around gets suspicious looks and routine police attention, and from time to time he feels real persecuted. The danger is in encouraging this sort of thing by looking for persecution. I thought this feeling was very strong in your account of the protest gathering at Oakland on Easter Sunday -- the feeling of "Why don't the police get going and rush us, why don't people start throwing rocks at us or at least calling us names?" I abhor the psychology of "Let's get it over with" -- which can even lead toward such viewpoints as "If they're going to drop atomic bombs, let 'em drop 'em now."

mé, friends, is the idea of a person getting involved in a political party and going around reading newspapers (wisely smirking at this and that supression of truth, at these and those misrepresentations, giggling at suavely being uninfluenced by the insidious propaganda. . .) and attending Meetings and dísistributing Leaflets and being spit on by Sneerers -- all this not to mention reading, buying and Collecting pamphlets and publications and . . . Anyhow, I boggle. I boggle just exactly as much when I try to visualize a Democrat . . . or a Republican. It all seems somehow indecent, exposed, and childish. How can anyone adhere to a faction, whether or not he believes in their principles, without wondering not so much "What if I am wrong?" as, "How would I look if I were wrong?" Implicit in this last, of course, the nov-eau-riche's terror of cognoscentian laughter at a misstep; the fashionable woman caught out of doors in a dress inexcusably too long or short; the he-man suddenly finding he has been painting his fingernails. Possibly everybody is more of an ego-tist than I am willing to, able to, believe. Possibly they all are positive they have no friends who happen to be smarter or better-informed than they. Possibly. But me, friends, I quail. I shrink within at the thought, or thoughts. And this is funny. What is especially funny is that I consider myself well above the well-above-the-average-in-intelligence. I think I'm keen. I read (or used to read) quite a lot. I take pleasure in laying on my back for hours, just thinking. I'd rather lay and think than sleep. Yet somehow I can't go around just deciding that so-and-so is a commie (and bad) and whosis is a Leftwinger (is that good?) and I am a, am a..... am an anti-anti-transvestite. Anyhow what all this babbling was trying to say is, I am non-political. I am naiver than G.M. Carr, if not one white more ashamed of it. When the Russians invade us I shall hide in the woods and hoot them with aluminum arrows, and when we invade them I shall work in a defense-factory and get rich. Only, when I let slip the bowstring I shall not think, "Die, you commie pervert!" , but, "Gee dad, live game!" and when I solder the widget to the frammis, I shan't think as how I am doing my bit to stamp out Totalitarian Opression, but rather shall dwell lovingly on the numbers of sportscars and aqualungs and womb-surrogates my paycheck will make blissfully mine.

If you came up to me and asked me to sign a petition advocating the castration of sterilisation of all with I.Q.'s under 110, I'd sign it with a vindicative laugh. (If my I.Q. happened to be 109, I would smash you in the face) But if you came up to me saying as how Jones, Smith and Robinsom (and Taliaferro, and Cholmondeley) were Wrong Thinkers on account of favoring paternal distribution of necessities according to consumption-capacity, whereas we favor allotment of socialis indices on aggressive proof of merit, I would NOT help you tar and feather Robinsom's children, or rape the wife of Jones. I would be embarrassed, and later among friends I would laugh and laugh and laugh.

When next I see Dick Ellington, I'm going to tell him I'm ashamed of him. Not, really, for leaping on G.M.Carr (who probably Didn't Mean Any Harm), but for so mercilessly sparing her feelings, and for being so goddamp stupidly stentimental. By what right, I ask, by what god-given right does a slinking, bomb-not-quite-throwing embassy-picketing long-viewing whatever-he-is dare to get so sickeningly sentimental? Little white-haired old russians, poor as church-mice. Young Bolsheviks. I imagine them spending their last demiruble for the match-girl's next-to-last match, or striding with innocent handsomeness through the farmlands, barearmed, unbowed beneath the corrupt aristocrats whip. I bet they all have the gentlest eyes imaginable, except when they flash. I really do.

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His name is George Arliss, the same as an actor. He always carries around a small dead mole which he fondles with his thumb in a dreamy way. . . . He turned the mole over and seemed to be studying its stomach. . . . "Put it all on the tray, Skujellifeddy," George Arliss said, "I've got to go out and look up a fresh one." His mole did look pretty frayed-like now. . . . "\*\*\*\*," George Arliss said, sliding his used - up mole into the magazine rack . . . . Just then an old lady reached down for a magazine, and she must have toughed the mole because she gave a little shriek. "Help yourself, sister," George Arliss said, "The thrill's all gone out of that one for me."

But I don't think of those who protest nuclear tests as being thereby the dupes of the Communists. (Some of the people who argue that way end up by proving that anyone in favor of the graduated income tax is a pawn of the Reds.) There are certainly reasons short of fellow traveling for supporting the limitation or cessation of nuclear tests.

"They're silent, sullen, and waiting; frittering away their lives in trivialities." This is a remarkably sinister description. (Your readiness to make statements like that is one of the things that makes your article honest and impressive.) I think it's natural to be apprehensive about the individual or group that has a big problem and is not doing anything about it, just waiting or marking time (but without temporarily putting the problem aside). The psychology is shared by all people "in moods." Experience really does seem to show that under such circumstances no satisfying solution to the big problem can be expected. Much more likely is that waiting and drifting will become a way of life, that there will be mild or severe psychotic episodes, or that the individual will gradually lose his sense of alienation, but with even less understanding of why he stopped waiting than why he started. It is practically folk wisdom to suspect the person who stewes in his problem and has no plan.

But the Beat-ers you describe do seem to have a plan: to draw apart from society, rejecting its manners and language (because they may hamper the mind), and to meditate (while blowing pot and digging cool sounds) until some essential new insight on the Inner Meaning of Life is achieved. This is an age-old plan of action with religious folk seeking a new understanding of God, and associating oneself with the despised and rejected is an essential part of the process. But there is in this plan of action a danger against which the person who withdraws has to be constantly on guard: that in his highly suggestible state (silence, drugs, music) he will latch onto a false intuition or a false prophet, or in bored desperation leap at the first opportunity for violent action that comes along. It would be truly tragic if the Beat-ers, in trying not to be mass men, become them. A plan that can be put into words may not always be possible, but it is terrific insurance against this sort of catastrophe.

I hope things work out for the Beat-ers. "Pachucos who read books, have social consciousness, and don't resort to violence so readily" sound like pretty fine sort of people.

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"Jeez, Mae, don't you have sense enough to come in out of the bombs?"  
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*Alex-Rich Kirs*

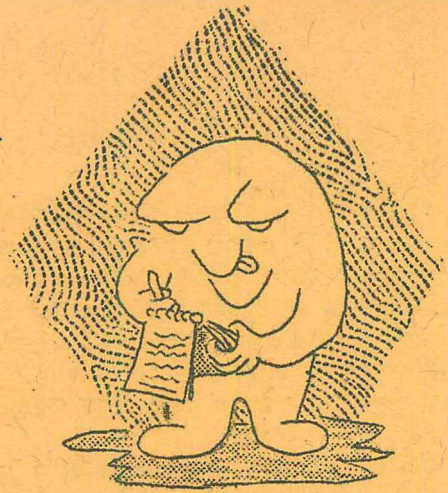
I though I would write you to deplore and condemn the political trend. People shouting "Commie" (even when in the accents of a respectable grandma) at other people who promptly shout back, "Ignoramus!", isn't my idea of interesting reading. Of course, nobody did call G.M. Carr an ignoramus -- but I'm sure that was an oversight. Anyhow I damn well do deplore the political trend. Any political trend. I lived with Dick and Pat Ellington for a while, once, and thought they didn't really try to convert me to Anarchy or whatever, they also didn't seem to be having too much fun. There was this sort of loft, sort of like in a gangster movies, with dust and odd characters and people who rushed past one at parties, giving one in the process fanatical looks. . . Anyhow it was rather depressing. In fact, it was an Unsuitable Environment. Now that I think about it, it was probably communistic.

Actually I wonder: I concede it possible that a person might just down and after careful consideration of all the facts, data and whatever, decide forthrightly that this or that political party was the one for him. I also see it possible for a person to make a decision and then sit around on his hands for years and years and years, dutifully juggling the appropriate levers in each cyclic voting booth. I mean, without going out and throwing bombs or mud or walking in protest to transylvania. But what I am saying is, I can imagine the two above with no effort whatsoever. They are normal and logical and slightly improbable. What boggles

# WITH NOTEBOOK & PENCIL

## THROUGH THE DARKEST ARVA

by Dick Ellington



"Stop at the first Howard Johnson's for coffee." ## "Damn the maps, ask somebody." ##  
"Go straight!" "On the grass?" ## "Arva, Schmarva, where the hell is Washington?" #  
"I see people with bottles on the balcony -- this must be the place." # "Ghu! It's  
alive with New Yorkers -- might as well have stayed home." # "Never mind the Safety  
Patrol Convention, I want my room." # "We're upstairs, they're downstairs - how con-  
venient." # "Room 40 is Sanctuary - you can hardly hear the banjo thru the walls." #  
"He shaved his beard off - not much of an improvement." # "They wouldn't dare come  
in here." # "Quick! Hide under the bed." # "...and there he sat with that hurt look  
on his face and RUR ll sticking out of his shirt pocket." # "He started reading  
'Clayfeet Country' and his face turned purple, clear to the top of his shirt." #  
"That's a very nice mimeo job, Dick." "I think so too." "We'd like six more copies  
for some friends in England." # "I think Silverberg caught it from White." # "You  
can't get J.D. in Washington - some government." # Hey! the drugstore sells cold  
bheer and they give you green stamps with it." # "Moshi, moshi!" # George trapped  
us for half an hour on the balcony." # "I'm voting for Detroit - just another victim  
of the hidden persuaders." "Me too - one of them gave me a drink." # "Kyles in one  
corner, Dietzes in the other and a tundra in between." # "Anybody seen Shaw?" "Did  
you look in the fishpond?" "He went down to his room to go to bed but came back  
with two more bottles." # "I got nothing to say to England." # "I bet that tape  
will set Anglo-American fan relations back 10 years." # "I'm Jack Harness, of Wash-  
ington fandom." # "...and don't forget to save the green stamps for Ruth." # "Wadda-  
ya mean, the room's not ready? I got a reservation." # "I don't think this place  
even has a house detective." # "...I tell you, you got to DNQ like made with Berk-  
eley or they'll hang you with your own words." # "The boxes were so big they had  
to tie rope around them." "...pages hell! 94 pounds!" # "They were folkng in one  
room and we were f--king in the other one." # "Pardon me, but aren't you Bob Silver-  
berg?" # "I'm Dick Studebaker." "Mmmmm-hmmmm, and do you write yourself?" "Oh yes,  
I'm not good but I'm very cheap." "Well, that isn't exactly what I was looking for."  
# "I dunno who she is but they just got back from Africa - do we know any fans in  
Africa?" "I understand Wetzels emigrating there." # "Where in the hell did this  
Rhine Wine come from?" "I dunno but leave it there - Freudenthal will drink it." #  
"You know Tom Condit - he's a D.P. from Berkeley fandom." # "I think Saha is a shade  
drunker than Shaw." # "We'd go out for something to eat but nobody's sober enough  
to drive." # "Why shouldn't we sing folk-songs - we're folk ain't we?" # "I don't  
think this place even has a house detective." # "I walked downstairs, across the  
court and up some more stairs and ended up right back where I started from. I just  
don' unnastan it." # "See, all you need for a good party is a small room and too  
many fans." # "Don't you people know any more clean songs?" "Give him a chorus of  
'Arson, Rape and Bloody Murder.'" # "You don't even notice her when she's sober,  
but she's a damn pest when she's drunk." # "Get some more bheer and we'll leave." #  
"They forgot to wake up William Merrill and he slept through the whole convention -  
what a shame." "Yeah."

(the above is selections from 40,000 feet of tape recordings made at the Disclave  
fan festival, 1958. It will soon be out in lps by Norman Granz, in 12 volumes.)

a letter to G. M. Carr from Miriam Dyches, South Pasadena, Cal.

Dear Mrs. Carr:

Since I have not been active in science-fiction fandom very long, RUR#8 was the first time I'd ever read anything by Dave Rike. I was so take-aback by the anti-bomb test story, that I too was moved to write to Dave. Our letters, however differed considerably in content. In fact, so much so that I asked him not to quote me. I was afraid of government agents. That same fear of our almost police-state government was my concern in respect to Dave's article. I thought that he was heading for trouble. He may be. But Dave and Tom Condit and Dick Ellington are a lot less afraid of trouble than I.

Your letters in the RUR's lately have been interesting, to say the least. You, Mrs. Carr, are typical of so many nonthinking people today, I don't think you are ignorant, just unbelievably narrow-minded. (I think anti-intellectual would be a better word than nonthinking, for expressing Mrs. Carr's state of mind.)

How can you possibly say that things which are for the common good are traitorous? No matter what you say about the "radical" ideas of civil liberties, labor unions, and pacifism - that does not make me or anybody else who is for them a Communist. How can you say things like that?

You tried to explain away your narrow-mindedness, but this does not satisfy me in the least. Don't you want to try to see anyone else's viewpoint? I wish you would read John Stuart Mill's On Liberty. Not only would you see where some of these crazy "eggheaded" notions come from, but also you might gain some open-mindedness.

The thing about your letters to RUR which made me really angry was the way you said what you did, even more than what you did say. Tom Condit's letter was an impassioned plea for reason and right. Your answer was flippant and silly. Let me remind you, please, that this ("crackpot" to you) radicalism that you scorn is what people like us (idealists) are living for. WE want to see the world a fit place to live in now. We aren't satisfied in waiting for the "pie in the sky," we want peace. Is that so very funny? We would like to see jobs for all and a fair economic system. Even if that does necessitate socialism, is it really a laughing matter? We want equal rights in the world, now. Are you giggling?

Can't you see the need, Mrs. Carr? Thousands of people do. Socialism is the only hope to save the world from total destruction. With greed and fear motivating the political actions of the people in power these days we are headed for the end. If we don't blow humanity off the earth with the "wonders of modern chemistry and physics," we shall end up ruled by despots of one type or the other. Since so few Americans are thinking any more than you seem to be doing, I feel that us pacifists and our pleas won't win.

Well no matter whether it is the Communists or the Fascists that win, us crackpot idealists will be the first to go, just like Dick said. People who think are dangerous. You will be safe.

In your bland clinging to the beautiful "American Way of Life" do you realize that this now meaningless term has its origin in revolution and freedom of expression? Think it over before you call someone subversive again, please.

And do me another favor, OK? Take a good look around Seattle. This summer I traveled the west coast and I have never seen as wealthy a town as Seattle. The workers didn't get this good pay, without a voice. The bosses don't pay well out of the goodness of their hearts. This is a small example of the "evils of Radicalism." Wow.

Oh dear, I may as well give up. I'm only telling you things you have heard thousands of times and don't care about anyway. I really do feel so very sorry for you, Mrs. Carr.

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"He takes 3 or 4 women at a time - which sounds rather awkward."  
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published on the birthdays of Mikhail Bakunin and Randolph Bourne, and the 21st anniversary of the Republic Steel Massacre in which 10 workers were killed and 40 injured in Chicago, Illinois, by the police.

May 30, 1958