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X Number 12. Nov. 1945. X
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Still emanating from Dennis Tucker,
at "Wicklow", 87 Oakridge Road, HIGH
WYCOMBE, Bucks., thanks to the support
of a few generous souls....

" I N T E R V E N T I O N " -- James P. Rathbone.

A point which seems to have been missed in the discussion about organisation for government and the 'use' of the masses is that your organisation depends on what you want. I mean simply that there are democratic systems that would probably work, socialistic systems that would definitely work, and at least one anarchist scheme which would, given the conditions, bring about a fairly happy state of things: but what for? What is the aim of any of the organised societies once the completed scheme is in operation? I would suggest that not one of the original perpetrators would go beyond the statement: "Oh, a good time would be had by all," or words to that effect.

Readers of history will bear me out when I point to the Spartan culture, the Egyptian Old and New Kingdoms, to any civilisation worth calling cultured; when things became easier for the people, their civilisation fell. While they were on the up-grade, they flourished.

It seems to me that the reason why they flourished was because they had an aim, taken altogether, which was common -- not by mutual agreement, but by their nature, the type of land in which they lived, hunger, greed, and so on, pressed them upwards and onwards, and incidentally, by necessity, they produced the rudiments and eventually the greater developments, of culture.

Have we any such pressure of necessity? Are we really an 'austere' race? I don't think we are. We love comfort and pleasure and our literature and art are obviously the offspring of a race loving comfort and pleasure. Our ideas are moulded to this, that we are an island race, and it is a very pleasant little island, and we will stick to it, and, spreading out in our Empire, we will make it much like England as possible.

In organisation and federation, therefore, the masses want what will give them most 'happiness', for necessity does not knock often at their door.

Stripped of all ornament, Pain is the master and king of nearly all of us, and we reach high and dig deep, and build, and plough and organise only to escape it.

The individual is valuable in that there is a stage in the development of some men when Pain no longer represents the main factor in their lives, and the difference between such an individual and the masses is that he is no longer ruled by it, but will use it to go on. This is a stage differentiating merely intelligent men from wise men, just as the 'intelligent' stage is a step above merely animal man. In fact, I agree with Roy Johnson in principle, but I can't see that this is a 'superior' attitude in that it is forced by evolution and circumstances, though not by Pain, and is merely an advanced form of Necessity.

IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY HAD YOUR NAME LISTED on one of the rotas for the BFS Edition of BEYOND, then be advised by one who has already seen it, and do so immediately. It's good -- and I mean GOOD.... Contact EFFParker, of 6 Greytiles, Queens Road, Toddington, Middlesex. (free ad.)

"CAPITULATION" -- R. Rowland Johnson.

Here's where I stop this argument. Julian has won. No doubt of that-- I now more or less agree with him on everything, as my article "Concerning Social Obligation" has, I hope, made clear. I won't even attempt to answer Julian's article, except to say one thing: I did, indeed, referring to the USSR, mean 'organised for the social good' when I said 'socially organised'. That deals with Ron Lane, incidentally, which saves more time. I'd like to try to define my just-discarded attitude on this matter. Doug Webster did that once, very succinctly: "Merely the more obnoxious degree of misguided intellectual snobbery"! I'm not ashamed to admit he was correct. I was, intellectually, a snob. That explains my attitude in part, though not completely.

I was a cynic - and for the usual reason: because of something -- no need to mention it here -- I had become embittered against Life and People. Being thus cynical, I lost no chance of taking a poke at people when I had the chance. Moreover, like most fans I suppose, I was and am of the manic depressive type, and most of the things I wrote were composed when I was at 'the bottom of the curve', in an intense fit of depression. For several months I was nearly always in that state, which didn't help any. I took to thinking about silly things like suicide, etc.... Those three things combined -- remember 'the wish is father to the thought' -- accounted for my utterly biased and deplorable attitude.

Of late, I have changed; not merely in my political views, but in practically everything. And I am no longer a cynic. I'm beginning to see that there is good in Life and in Man, a Good that deserves preserving. The Average Man is apathetic, but he should not be despised because of it. No-one should be despised and hated for anything. What would you do with Hitler and gang, Roy? -- Ed.

But I still assert that SOME 99% OF THE HUMAN RACE HAS CONTRIBUTED NOTHING TO CULTURE, AND HAS NOT, INTELLECTUALLY, BEEN IN A POSITION TO DO SO. The difference now is that I don't despise them for it. Perhaps I should answer Julian's article after all, just for the sheer argument, and to prove my point.

"By implying that the desirable society would be composed of two classes....Roy seems to think that there is a clear distinction between the 'intelligent' and 'unintelligent' classes." Not at all. I went out of my way to show that such a society was impossible simply because of the fact that that is not so. There are hundreds of different strata, as I believe I said. But one can, roughly, divide the population into two classes, the 'Intelligentsia', educated and unapathetic, and the masses, uneducated, apathetic, and consequently lacking the powers for logical thought and action in political matters. Fans all, or nearly all, belong to the Intelligentsia; they think, and their thoughts are not biased by what they are told in their newspapers. One thing you seem to forget, Julian, which contradicts your statement that we would be living in huts, etc., if it were not for the labour the masses provide, -- the Intelligentsia could provide labour-power themselves. They could attend to the purely mechanical jobs as well as the next, if necessary.

As to the robot: I don't know for certain, but I believe that a robot is possible with present-day technical knowledge, but that it would be so expensive as to be commercially useless. It is therefore not produced.

I'm inclined to think that my dislike of Russian methods is

just a prejudice which I may get over. But to me it seems, from the not inconsiderable amount I've read on that country, that emotions are taken care of...they are organised and marshalled and catered to, and so forth. I prefer freedom of emotions. In other words, I don't like propaganda. And the Russians are propaganda-mad. The one other thing I dislike about the USSR is the complete equality of sexes. Equality of liberty, votes, etc., yes; but equality in which women do men's work, heavy work, etc., no. I'm willing to argue that point at any time with anyone.... Now for Ron Lane, Russians again. I don't deny that they are imaginative and cultured -- some of 'em. They have produced geniuses, made great contributions to culture -- Tschaikowsky, Rimsky-Korsikov, Tolstoy, etc. But so have the Germans -- Beethoven, Wagner, Planck, Schrödinger, etc., etc. The Russians, on account of their propaganda, are patriotic to an absolutely idiotic degree.

Ron, I do not refer to Man's mechanical progress alone when denying the contributions of the masses. Just the opposite, they do have something to do with that, namely supplying the labour, but in other ways, -- well, how did the masses affect the music of Beethoven, or the painting of Gainsborough, or the philosophy of Aristotle and the mathematics of Leibniz? Very little, I think.

God, have I ever been near the masses! Is Ron being sarcastic, or does he actually think that I could write all this 'from a distance'? You say the Average Man is politically conscious, then say he can't help being swayed by his newspapers. Direct contradiction. If a man is politically conscious, then by definition he is conscious in himself of the political issues and is not given biased views by newspapers or anything else.

And as to whether he can help it or not -- of course he can. He has the same chance as you or I to find out for himself. He may lack secondary or public school education, but he can read, and there are such things as Public Libraries.... Political education is essentially a thing gained through private studies, for the simple reason that it is not taught in schools at all. The reason he is swayed by his newspapers is because he is too apathetic to find out the truth for himself. Fans, however, on the whole, are not. Which is why a Fan would be of more use to a 'Revolution', having a clear and unbiased view of all issues at stake. But, again, that is no reason for despising him, or denying obligation to him.

One thing: Wells himself, in "Phoenix", asserts the fact that any revolution or change of system must be affected by the Intelligentsia -- the masses are the excuse, and are just directed by the others. When they are educated -- well, they become the Intelligentsia!

Bob Gibson makes some interesting comments: - Julian seems to have made a point or so to be answered or classified by Roy. And Ron Lane brings it up sharply, too. You might say that geniuses are cultured on the mass of humanity. They certainly couldn't thrive without them. The multitudes not only are the source of the genius but a lot of stimulus that keeps him operating. If you were an emergent evolutionist you might say that the geniuses were developed by the masses to maintain the latter's advancement. I suspect that a pure culture of genius would be pure anarchy of a mutually destructive type. Cloud-capped towers with no foundations. It may be that the masses will outgrow that condition and be all intellectuals flowering on mechanical foundations -- the robots of Lane -- but they ~~will~~ have to co-operate to maintain it. The geniuses would be the masses!

New Members.

Corbishley, Peter, 59 Howard Street, Leicester (89); Hillman, A. H., The Anchorage, 100 Corporation Road, Newport, Monmouthshire (88); Willmorth, Cpl. William (Gus), No39257330, 1750 Ordnance Supply & Maintenance Depot, APO 637, U.S. Army, (90).

In order to regularise the position of members in the USA, and to extend the mark of our appreciation given to Alden H. Norton for his generosity in supplying us with magazines to others equally deserving of our gratitude, we propose to confer the title of Honorary Member on certain other American fans who we feel merit it. The first two fans to be considered under this scheme are Messrs Forrest J. Ackerman and ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ John M. Cunningham, who are already registered as members No. 4 and 38 respectively, and who in future are to be considered Honorary Members.

There are a number of others who must be granted this title, and we would appreciate the assistance of our members in bringing to our notice instances of the help they have received from American fans. We, the Executive Committee, know, for instance, that Messrs P. ~~F~~ Scarles, Bob Tucker, and Joe Gibson deserve to be recognised in this way, we would appreciate information of others.

It may seem an empty honour that we are giving, and so it is at the moment. But we hope and expect that all British fans will remember this through the years to come - that the fan who is an Honorary Member of the British Fantasy Society was made so because of the very material help which he gave British fandom when that help was badly needed. Should it be possible at any time to help such a fan in any way no British fan will be able to refuse or to shirk without utterly losing his self-respect.

Elections. Everyone seems satisfied with the Executives, so there will be no election for them this year except, possibly, for the President.

An election of some sort for the Advisory Board is definitely necessary. When, some months ago, Edwin Macdonald resigned from the position of Coordinator, difficulty was found in filling the vacancy. The appeal in the last Bulletin for volunteers resulted in an offer from Peter Hawkins which we cannot make immediate use of as there is, officially, no vacancy on the Board for another member, Edwin Mac having decided to continue to take part in the discussions as an ordinary member.

We therefore ask, not for nominations, but for volunteers for positions on the Advisory Board, volunteers to state whether they are prepared to undertake the duties of Coordinator - which involves making a digest of the discussions and reporting to the Executive Committee. It is particularly requested that present members of the Board notify us if they are willing and able to carry on - otherwise we shall assume that they cannot. If the number of volunteers exceeds the required number an election will be held to consider those best fitted for the job.

Applications must be in the hands of the secretary, D.A. Smith, 17 Church Road, Hartshill, Nuneaton, Warks, before the end of the year.

In brief-

It is the opinion of the Executive Committee that, in the absence of any definite support from the members, it is necessary to move with circumspection in the question of our relations with the S.F.A. movement is taking place... It is not thought practicable at present to subscribe to American mags for the library.

D.A. Secretary.