

PROZINE REVIEW (Worlds of If, June 1974, Vol. 22, Number 5, \$9/year, 235 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.)

Those of you too young or neo to remember the Golden Age of If (if not fandom), mainly the late 1960's may yet get a chance to savour the coming age of Silver. While I started "reading the stuff" in 1961 (high school, which is late for many), it wasn't until 1964 that I picked up a magazine that contained SF. (Actually, I had seen them around before, but except for a Retief story in an early ((for me)) Amazing, I did not consider them worth the bread). What hooked me was the serialization of Farnham's Freehold by the Perfect Master of Prodom, Robert A. (Of course) Heinlein. And, being cheap, I decided to read the rest of the pulp to get My Money's Worth. It turned out that I really did. Leumer's Retief stories, Saberhagen's Berserker stories, McCapp's Gree stories (I am a sucker for series) and Lin Carter's column on fandom was my introduction to that weird underworld which existed mainly down there and to the East and West (I hail from Western Canada). It was Carter's announcement of the Worldcon in St. Louis, 1969, that convinced me to go to a National YAF Con which was being held also on Labour Day weekend in the Same City...but that's another history.

When The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress was announced for the following fall, I had been buying it regularly for six months or more, and I knew that I would be unable to get IF for the summer since I would be working in Beaverlodge (the name says it all, except that there was a real laboratory there that hired first year Honours Chemists). So I subscribed.

And a year later I renewed for two years. And again. I never did subscribe to the companion publication, Galaxy, because they did not publish HEINLEIN (although they eventually did publish I Will Fear No Evil in Galaxy), but it was comparable. Then Frederik Pohl was replaced by Ejler Jacobssen as Editor... and it just wasn't the same. When I found myself not caring that I was not getting If after a move, I just did not bother to renew and eventually just checked it out on the stands or got the word second-hand about what was in it.

For the last year or two, my favorite prozine was Fantastic, mainly because it was publishing Conan by de Camp and Carter and some of the other fantasies were quite good. Amazing had a story or two, but simply did not make it, even with Ted White's Herculean efforts with a low circulation and non-existent funds. F & SF was arty and occasionally even New Wave, anathema to a romantic. Analog was simply dull, and didn't change much with Ben Bova, except that the editorials went from conservative to liberal.

Jacobssen got young Jim Baen as an Editor for If, and finally lost both publications to him. The news interested me a little when I read Locus on the subject, especially when he said that he was looking to Pohl for inspiration rather than Jacobssen. Still, Jacobssen had many nice words for Pohl...

The June issue of If has Robert Silverberg, a new Berserker serial by Fred Saberhagen, a new novelette by Isaac Asimov (who has definitely ended his decade and a half dry spell), a story based on a math theorem (what we Old-Timers called the "Hard Science" type of stories à la Gernsback) by Chris Anvil (which is good, by the way), a humour-mystery staple by James Schmitz, a couple of minor shorts (but then again, I'm not much for short stories), and, as if to rub it in, an account of the old days by...Fred Pohl, bien sûr! On top of that, far better than Carter for fanwriting, Richard Geis, The Alien Critic himself, is doing his Alien Viewpoint, a fannish writing rather than a writing about fandom.

Can Baen possibly keep it up? I don't know, but I sure as hell intend to give him encouragement, free market style (what else?). So I rushed my fiats in for a subscription to both If and Galaxy, rapped a rave 'round them, and swore to cancel should he fail to live up to The Promise. I unsolicitedly suggest that you do the same.

Search The Sky by Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth, Ballantine 1954, p. 148:

"There must be people of normal intelligence around. In the government, is my guess."

"No," said Helena, but she wouldn't say why. She just thought not.

So Kornbluth wasn't anti-statist, Pierce?