

AD INFINITUM

CIENCIA - FICCION, FANTASIA Y COMIC

FANZINE DEL
CIRCULO DE LECTORES DE ANTICIPACION
BARCELONA

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CIRCULO DE LECTORES DE ANTICIPACION

C. L. A.

BARCELONA

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After reading the five foregoing editorials, I observe that four of them are written in the impersonal form, if the "we" can be defined like that, while the last is in singular and about something as impersonal as the fandom.

Through this editorial, however, a single entity wants to speak to you, an entity unknown to many, and something inanimate to others, who think it exists only in the feverish imagination of several.

But, my friends, it is a fact that I exist, live, think and feel (although I can't write correctly). My name? CIRCULO DE LECTORES DE ANTICIPACION. A trifle long, isn't it? but my friends call me CLA.

In one of our last informal meetings, while some of my members were discoursing in high-sounding phrases about the hero who would be chosen to write the next editorial, I became visible to their human eyes and I asked, or better, exacted from them that I be conferred the honour. Some of the mustaches twisted ironically, perhaps imagining the stuff taking shape from the stammerings of a six-month-old baby monster.

All right; but this is a side issue. It is immaterial to me that you think I cannot write. As long as you understand what I want to tell you. And I shall be the happiest among the immortals if you comply with my wishes.

Now that you know the identity of the speaker, it is time that we come to the point.

Some apostles of the Circle, in their task of capturing adepts, stumbled against this remark: "Fifty pesetas a month is too much money for fifteen cyclostyled sheets." Other, luckier, apostles heard: "You fell rather short about the fee. With fifty pesetas you can't get things going."

Let's not embark now in a discussion about the real fan's opinion or about the level of the national rent per cápita. I just want you to send your sincere views on the matter.

Do you consider too much money the sum with which you contribute to the task of reaching all our goals?

You must forgive me. Maybe nobody has yet said which are our goals. It is worth a try doing it. Although it is not easy to put such glorious ambitions in just words.

We want AD INFINITUM to be a high-class magazine, in quality and bulk, able to satisfy every science fiction fan.

We want the CLA to have active members in the whole of Spain, so that any Spanish fan who is a solitary bird can never blame for it the lack of a community of members sharing his own ideas.

We want to organize meetings and conventions on a provincial, regional and national level.

We want to make ourselves known to all foreign circles.
We want to furnish all information about every science fiction publication, and supply you with them, free when possible.

We want to edit our own books.

We want to produce films.

We want central premises and also provincial delegations.

We want our own libraries.

We want to furnish the necessary means to all those wishing to write, draw or practise any other activity concerning S.F. We want to dignify S.F., placing it where it belongs.

I remember that in the editorial of AD INFINITUM nº2 you called me your vessel. Well then, all these ambitions, and many others, are just the energy needed to keep it going.

AND THEY KEEP IGNORING ME!

An excerpt from the most secret history of humanity...

by Dr. José Luis Barceló

These Earth men are the most naive of the peoples we, the Whites, have seen in the Galaxies; so much so in fact that my first reports to the Central Control were handled by the Computers with the most extreme caution. It was indeed a matter deserving consideration, taking into account the huge facilities I have given the Earth men to help them discover my personality and "guess" my origin...

Neither in the East nor in the West; neither Egyptians nor Germans, Italians or Chinese have ever had an inkling of my long and persistent contact with this human race of the Third Planet all along the centuries. Any amazing feat I have accomplished for their sake — always following orders from the Central Control for Developing Planets — any invention, any change in their monotonous lives, no matter how surprising or extraordinary, they have always ascribed to the, oh, "illustrious human intelligence". This is how they consider their rise from the cave to the rocket, like a splendent progress due to their limited cranial capacity. If only they knew the Great Truth! How their absurd conceit would stagger!...

I still remember how simple it was for me — when I was called Ank—es—Amhon — to use the vertical ultra—sound in the lifting of the stones that went to form the Pyramids; even today, when many thousands of years have passed, the most famous "brains" of this singular planet show an unusual prudence while speaking of the Egyptians' system to build the said structures. Luckily, my name only appears in some papyrus that have not yet been discovered—in which that "work" is roughly featured — and this fact has spared many a headache to the "great human talents" of this twentieth century.

Further ahead in time I can remember perfectly that urgent space-gram from the Central Control about the monstruous backwardness darkening the Third Planet during the Middle Ages; really, "men", in spite of the means I had been giving them gradually, at the normal pace, had hardly made any progress, and the foul Middle Ages of the Earth constituted an exception of death and poverty in the ensemble of the Developing Planets Plan.

It was then that I adopted a singular personality, rather to the amazement of my then contemporaries, painting, sculpting, inventing and creating, in order to make up for so much lost time. My accomplishments must have been many since even now, in the middle of this Era of Arrogance and Technique, people go on talking about Leonardo da Vinci; specially about one of my paintings.

They have almost forgotten that I presented them with schemes of the human body, of its skeleton, of its circulation; diagrams of tanks, submarines, machine-guns, etc; medical formulae able to combat the diseases human beings were suffering then; and I also improved the sculpturing system. It seems incredible that they suspected nothing when ONE MAN ALONE (could I be a man?) squandered over them such a varied and complex series of improvements.

Centuries went by and no spark kindled the intolerable intellectual laziness of this race, forgotten by the Holy Grail. I went on helping them, giving to an Englishman the scheme of a steam engine and to a Swedish the formula of dynamite. But still they went on burning and destroying everything; they only knew how to obtain energy at the cost of destroying matter; if they persisted their planet would soon disappear. So once more I had to adopt a personality in order to provide them, without betraying the secret of the Great Protection, with the means for obtaining energy from the atom, besides giving them a slight hint of the Fourth Dimension. This time my name was simpler and less pompous so as not to attract too much attention: Albert Einstein. However, they hardly understood me, although they did get something out of atomic energy.

Now...I shall have to adopt another personality in order to prevent what this absurd race is plotting to do withhits insignificant power...destroy the planet. What name shall I use now? Will they keep on ignoring me?

The flying saucer had landed in front of the UNO building in New York. It was the first real proof of the existence of men in another planet. The Police, the National Guards and the FBI surrounded the area.

A little farther away, soldiers from the Army and Infantry of the Navy were on permanent duty, while the Navy kept watch over the sea and the Air Force surveyed the air.

A hatch was gliding silently, leaving an aperture on the till then jointless surface of the vessel. Tense expectancy.

Something indescribable came out from the vessel, a horrible being, half angel, half demon, partly human, partly -- a beast.

Upon advancing it raised, an arm? a tentacle? a pseudopod? and a hoarse metallic voice, like a rasping tape recorder, thundered above the circle formed by the armies on guard.

"Earth men! As a representative of the Supreme Power of Mars, I must..."

A lightning crossed the sky. Before long the thunderclap was heard...large drops were already beginning to fall from the dark clouds which had been shrouding the sky all day long.

"What a bore!" said one of the TV-cameramen.

Everybody looked towards the alien being. An amazing phenomenon was taking place before their eyes, owing to the rain. The alien being was...melting!

Just because Jupiter is a jocular god, and in order to tease Mars, the war god, he populated the planet named after him with beings made of...SUGAR.

- Get it off the way!
- ... I don't feel quite well...
- Get it off the way or we are lost!
- ...think I drank too much yesterday. I feel awful. I can't un-derstand...
- If you don't feel well, give me the control rudder.
- ... I'm afraid I must throw up...
- Get up, novice! We are already out of orbit, you stupid!
- ... I'm dizzy...
- These damned novices. Now thanks to you I'll have to dress up and creep out of this shell.

He got up feeling really angry. He took one of the overalls out of a cupboard, slowly zippered himself into it, adjusted his scaphander and put on his magnetic boots. He threw a furtive glance at his companion who was strapped to his armchair still murmuring incoherently. In the narrow corridor leading to the decompression chamber he stopped before the control board to procure himself a cablesounder of some thickness. Then he shut the interior door. He was now in the chamber as so many times before. He pressed the button, and the hatch started opening with that characteristic buzzing he had heard so many times as a farewell song. He fastened one end of the cable-sounder to the connecting-link of the expulsion tube, checked the mechanism of the automatic regress and then connected the emergency anchor. The hatch was wide open now. Before him the blackness of space was waiting.

And now the routine. Thanks to that novice, a simple job requiring barely fifteen minutes had become a long tedious task to be performed by him alone.

Two hours went by. During this time he had to return twice to the spaceship in order to work the control gear by hand. Then, when he realised the uselessness of his efforts he had to make the decision he considered most dangerous. The small asteroid exploded.

- ... drank too much yesterday ...
- Shut up!
- ... want to throw up...
- Shut up!
- ...won't ever drink again. I swear it, Mom ...
- And now he takes me for his mother, it's the last straw!

- ... Mom! Mom, I swear I... I'm dizzy...
- These damned novices!
- I want to go home ...
- Yeah, we're going home, but after daddy McGregor did both parts of the work, wasn't it fun, old boy?

When they had reached the Patrol base McGregor went as usual to submit his report to the officer on duty.

- Anything the matter, McGregor?
- Same as usual, lieutenant. These robot-pilots of the last delivery are not working as they should...

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He broke out laughing at the thought of how easy it was now to understand the mystery of the Fourth Dimension, something constituting a permanent headache for the physicists of the 20th century.

It was difficult to grasp that a thing having always been at arm's length could have slipped unnoticed by the most developed and qualified minds. Musing about this, he was conscious of the new beatings of his heart, which now was placed in the right half of his body, and he could touch with his finger the false molar on the left of his mouth, when it had always been on the right. He was aware that his whole body system had experienced the same change...

All of a sudden his smile vanished and his face darkened. He had never realized that! If his whole system had suffered that same radical change, which probably would not interfere with the biological process, to what extent would the molecules and cells of his brain remain uninjured?

Would his thoughts and his mentality be the same from now on? or, on the contrary, would be turn mad, or a murderer, or what unknown mental personality was going to be his?

He knew he would have to wait a long time before he could go back to the THIRD DIMENSION. What looked like a joke a moment ago, was now filling him with awe.

Why the deuce had he been compelled to cross the threshold of that mirror?!

- Allow me in the first place to express my warmest gratitude and that of the Supreme Court I represent. - The Arxes Sup-1, Matt, was utterly satisfied. Representatives from 40 galaxies had come to listen to him. - I hope that your visit to our star will deepen your conviction that our society occupies a preponderant place in what concerns functioning and organization.

The representatives expressed their agreement.

- Well, then. Let us begin. Our organization is based on the supreme spiritual and material happiness reached by the Great Mansha. Towards it aspire all the wongs. Guided by the Holy Books of Proverbs and Advices, written by the Great Mansha, we attain happiness after mastering different degrees.
- There is no doubt the Arxés smiled cynically that Ithis is pure theory. During the childhood period they are so conditioned that their ascent is reduced to 2 or 3 degrees at the utmost. Of course one can always meet an exceptional instance, programmed by us, and intended to maintain hope. They live in gotzs, semi-autonomous entities formed by wongs of all categories. We had already an unpleasant experience due to keeping the different classes apart. There was a riot in the subs category. Now, in the gotz, those in the same category despise one another because they all expect to be promoted to the next superior category.

With the aid of brain waves we get a daily report of each wong's subconscience. Thus we can avoid the danger of contradictory actions and desires. Those who are not faithful to the rules of the Holy Books can be sent to the Psychosomatic Centre for rehabilitation. They disappear only to come back with another personality, another name, etc. Generally, after an effective re-education they become the most faithful guardians of the System. In the cases when this solution is not advisable, they are sent to the Black Point, where they are destroyed. We act according to the detailed report issued by the corresponding Ram (reader-assessor of Minds)...

The Ram Sup-3, Perz, is nervous. Very nervous. He cannot help being uneasy on the eve of a new cast-off. The sudden thud of something falling startles him. He smiles feebly: nerves again.

Everything began with Bell, the Technos Sup-4. He was an architect. His subconsciousness emitted a contradictory and chaotic re-

port. He had summoned him and they had been talking. Bell was not afraid of him. After several days Perz could prepare his first report. Bell's father had also been an architect. Once, while he was building the subs' underground dwellings of a new gotz, there was an accident. The machine compressing the building material exploded, filling the gap and burying all the subs workers who were digging there. His father had committed suicide, a fact influencing Bell's mentality. He was unable to build underground dwellings. He discarded one drawing after another. He was incapable of doing it.

Listening to him, Perz had experienced an infinite distaste for many things. What should he do with Bell? Should he send him to the Psychosomatic Centre or...or what? It seemed preposterous. He needed somebody, yes, somebody else. Toc, for instance...

Tocagreeted the incomera

- -"Perz.
- Happy world.
- Welcome, my friend. I am Toc. Come with me and meet the others. What do you know about Happy World?
 - Very little. The Ram said you would inform me better.
- All right. But remember our first rule: drop our star's vocabulary. Call him Perz, not Ram. I am, let us say, the first Accidental President of our world. Perz chose me to organize our group. It already had two future inhabitants: Bell, the architect, and Sem, the physicist. But he wanted a world of friendship, not of technique.

I made toys. Above the hard and dry sociological ideas of the Court of Arxés, I created toys for our children. One day a chemist came to me with his son. He had behaved extremely well and the Court wanted to reward him. I went with them to the shelves of toys for the Sup3, there I had a wonderful toy of Chemical Mixtures. When we passed the door to the Subs'toys department I noticed that I had left it ajar. I kicked it shut and I looked at the child. It's funny, I saw a special gleam in his eyes, he enjoyed looking at the toys. When he saw me closing the door and walking past it, he lowered his eyes. After that day I could not work. I could only make gay, simple, colourful toys...

But don't look sad, my brother. Now I shall be able to make lovely toys for our children. Smile, you are inhabitant number seven...

... Seven, Six, Five, Four, Three, Two, One, ZERO.

The small vessel began its vertiginous ascent towards its destination: the Black Point. Inside a blubbering laughter could be heard.

- Ba...ba...ba...ba...

The head of that wong had an oblong shape. I am sure that if you knocked on it it would sound hollow.

It is the price of rebellion, isn't it, Ram Perz?

TINTIMATE DIARY

Jaime Rosal del Castillo

The day has gone by in absolute normality, we can say it has been just another day in the life of our strange world. The usual strikes in the Atomic Central of New Cartago, the massacre of the exiled Chinese in the Federation of Palestine, thousands of children starving to death in Sweden, rebellion of the white population in Alabama, murder of the Emperor of the Sovietic Republics...a day gone by in absolute normality...It has also been the first day of the spring.

"Oh God of the Lost Souls, you who are lost among the gods, listen to me:

Oh Sweet Destiny keeping watch over us, and you, insane people, roaming spirits, hear me:

I live in the midst of a perfect race, I, the most imperfect.

I, a human chaos, a nebula of confused elements, live in the midst of finished worlds, peoples of completed codes, of pure order, whose thoughts are settled and whose visions are registered in the pages of the parchments.

Their virtues, oh God, are measured, their sins placed on the scales, and even the numberless things happening in the darkness of dusk, though they be not virtue or sin, are registered and catalogued.

Here the days and the nights are divided in seasons of conduct and are governed by rules of flawless exactitude.

Eating, drinking, sleeping, covering one's nakedness, and then feeling tired at the prescribed moment.

Working, playing, singing, dancing, and then lying down when the clock shows the hour for it.

Thinking this, feeling strongly that, and then ceasing to think and to feel when a certain star soars above the horizon.

Stealing from the neighbour with a smile, offering gifts with a graceful gesture, praising with measure, blaming with care, destroying a soul with one word, burning a body with one breath, and then washing one's hands when the daily tasks are finished.

Loving after an established order, enjoying oneself in the foreseen way, adoring the gods with decorum, tempting the devils with mastery, and then forgetting everything, as if memory had been wiped out.

Dreaming with a goal, watching with serenity, being sweetly happy, suffering with nobility, and then emptying one's glass so that it may be refilled on the morrow.

All these things, oh God, are conceived with prescience, born with determination, bred with exactitude, governed by laws, led by reason and then murdered and burned following a precise method. And even their silent tombs lying inside the human soul are marked and numbered.

It is a perfect world, a world of accomplished excellence, a world of supreme wonders, the ripest fruit in the garden of God, the loftiest thought in the Universe.

But, why should I be here, oh God, I, the green seed of a dissatisfied passion, a wild storm not seeking east or west, a wandering fragment in a flaming planet?

Why am I here, oh God of the lost souls, you who are lost among the gods?" (1)

"The Chief" was finishing his communicating task. For Jim, the darkness seemed to have no end.

A mass of stimuli reached his brain and it began sorting them out.

- -"Why didn't you take that weapon from him?" Jim heard a tired voice say. A feminine voice replied in the same tone:
- His hands are stiff, they won't loose their hold and Jim felt in his hands the now dead-cold M-16. Jim felt dead also.
- We gave him several transfusions added the same voice almost immediately, in a more hurried tone.
 - I think he will not live .- the feminine voice spoke again.
 - I believe you are right. said the slow-tired masculine voice.
- I'm afraid very little remains to be done for him. Anyway, we shall see...
 - Do you know who he is, had he still his identification card?
 - Yes, Doctor, here it is: I found this in his pockets.
 - How strange! It seems he didn't touch the morphi...
 - But this is not...
 - Get everything ready for an operation!
 - He must live! We must find out where he got this from!

The voice Jim heard was full of energy now, very different from the first.

He paid no attention to it. The new results being processed by his brain were reaching him:

New voices, accompanied by the distant rumour of explosions, mitraille-shots, the whistle of bombs and the supersonic aircraft: "WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO THE EARTH?"

- We shall quiet them down with intensive fire at sea and from the air, in order to protect the landing - Jim heard an energetic-commanding voice say.

"WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO OUR FAIR SISTER?"

- You shall await my orders for landing. General Walt will be the first on the south beach...
 - "RAVAGED AND PLUNDERED"
- General Koller will follow, straight from the eastern shore; we and General Walt will cover him...

"AND RIPPED HER AND BIT HER"

- As soon as you have taken your respective positions, the landing of the armoured units and the heavy equipment will take place...
 - "STUCK HER WITH KNIVES"
- There will be three columns: General Wright, proceed immediately towards the scutheast...
 - "IN THE SIDE OF THE DOWN"
 - General Schaller, towards the northeast. Wait for new orders... "AND TIED HER WITH FENCES"
 - And you, General Moore, go straight to hill 745, and take it!
 - -The columns will be protected by the air force...
 - "I HEAR A VERY GENTLE SOUND"
- You in particular, General Moore; the infantry will sustain you, understood?

"WITH YOUR EAR LOWN TO THE GROUND"

- General Koller? General Walt?
- "WE WANT THE WORLD AND"
- Any questions?
- "WE WANT IT"
- Speak, General Moore ...
- "NOW?"
- What shall I do with the population of Tuy-Hoa. There are more than five hundred civilians, woman, children...
 - "NOW?"
- Very easy, General Moore, destroy Tuy-Hoa. Some more dead won't matter much, on the contrary, it suits us. Destroy them!
 - "NOW!"
 - -Understood, General Westside ...
 - "NOW!" (2)

Jim's mind was on the point of exploding. The stimuli were too powerful; now he remembered:

The rice fields, the swamps, the jungles, and the main thing: the inhabitants, thin creatures with eyes like slits, and the bees and all other beasts against which the computers and the Western reasonings had been to no avail.

He remembered the moans of the wounded, the concentration camps for the prisoners, the tortures, the executions, the burning ovens.

He remembered ships, planes, tanks and many, many weapons, all of them effectively death-dealing, some of them being tried for the first time in that battle-experiment-field country.

"DESTROY THEM!"

"DESTROY THEM!"

"WE WANT THE WORLD AND WE WANT IT NOW!"

"NOW!"

"NOW!"

Word-memories reverberated in Jim's mind.

And Jim felt between his hands his now dead-cold M-16.

Jim felt dead, too.

He raised the barrel, aiming auditively. He pressed the trigger. He felt the rattling noise until it ceased.

The voices had also ceased.

A strange gladness invaded him; he was sure his twenty shots had hit the desired targets.

He lowered his M-16. It was alive-warm. Both were alive now. Orders, shouts, people running.

The darkness fell like a shroud for Jim.

- "In this way Mr. K. will challenge the world!" (3)

He woke up in alarm. He thought he was living a nightmare. He could not move. His chest was hurting horribly.

He looked around him; he was in a small white room, windowless, with a door that was barred.

- A prison-hospital - Jim thought.

The cot, the chair, the door, everything was white.

Before long, somebody entered his room.

It was a tall, strong man, in a showy green uniform, carrying a black portfolio.

- Why did you do it? - were the first words he threw at him on entering.

Jim did not answer, he just smiled.

- All right, - the man went on without waiting for a reply - I shall defend you in the court-martial. I'll be seeing you - he added, and left without another word.

-Ha, ha, ha! - was all the visitor heard from Jim when he was closing the door.

.........

And one day they came to fetch him when he could hardly stand. Strong armed men of the MP took him away, half hanging from their arms.

Jim knew where they were going.

And he smiled.

- You mean, doctor, that soldier Morgan was drugged when he did it? - the judge-advocate asked, he was a man of energetic gestures and a powerful voice.

- Yes, I mean just that. The jury has the results of the blood test I took. There you can see the considerable amount tof lysergic acid he had swallowed. Moreover, in the capsule where the morphine should have been, he had tiny sugar lumps and tablets containing a high percentage of LSD. However, Sir, as a physician I must add that soldier Morgan was dying and only half conscious. He can hardly account for his actions in such a state. If to all that you add the drug...
- You can go now, doctor, that will be enough! I have no more questions for you the judge-advocate interrupted him, knocking hard on the railings of the witness box.
 - Soldier Morgan, where did you get the drug?

.........

- How did you get the drug?
- Ha, ha, ha!
- Answer the question of the judge-advocate, soldier Morgan!
- Who gave you the drugs?
- Ha, ha, ha, ha!
- They are stupid!
- Don't they realize?
- "We want the world!"
- "We want it now!"
- "NOW, NOW!
- Ha, ha, ha!

The darkness descended again upon him.

From afar, from very far away, Jim could hear a voice:

- This man is insane.

The motion awakened him. He tried to budge but could not: he was into one of those strait-jackets for madmen. He remembered the words he had heard. He smiled.

Then he heard a hoarse voice that seemed to come from nowhere:

- You woke up at last.
- I was waiting for you.

Jim realized then that the man he had called strong was really fat; his uniform was that of a soldier in the Special Forces. In his arms he carried an M-14.

- Where are we? Jim asked.
- In a truck in the middle of the desert the fat man replied hoarsely.

Then Jim felt the terrible heat. Inside that jacket he was swimming in his own sweat.

- Where are you taking me?
- It's a secret, or at least I've been forbidden to tell you. Are you thirsty?

Not waiting for Jim's reply he went to him and almost by sheer force put the water-cooler into his mouth.

- You'd better sleep some more, it's still a long way to your destination...Come on, rest!...I promise to take care of your happy dreams!

Jim could just see the butt-end of the fat man's weapon getting swiftly closer to his face.

It was a small room, very cold, the walls were very high.

A rickety cot on which he was lying. A small, high barred window.

A metallic door with no visible latch.

Then came the painful prickling in his face. He remembered the fat man and he cursed him. The pain was intense.

He noticed also that he was no longer wearing that jacket.

He heard noises outside. A small hatch slided open, letting in a double tray. The chink disappeared.

There was some water and a filthy stuff Jim supposed would be his meal. He soaked part of his shirt and covered his beard with it. He ate, or better, sipped, since he could hardly make his jawbones work.

And time went by. Nobody spoke to him. Not even when his "meals" were brought in.

Jim felt the loneliness.

He twisted, shouted, kicked violently.

No one answered. Always silence, only silence.

He was twisted into a knot in a corner. He had forgotten he had a cot. Dirt-hair-tousled-beard.

The room smelled terribly but already Jim did not notice: urine-sweat-excrements.

Then came the noises. They were different from those he heard at meal-time. He pressed his ear against the door:

Running-shouting-running.

It lasted some minutes, then silence came again. Jim shouted louder than ever.

The silence answered him with characteristic calm.

MPRAIS.

A new noise could be heard in the distance.

He recognized it: jet planes. In a prodigious leap he managed to seize and stay suspended from the bars of his small window.

The noise was getting louder.

He saw them, they were flying rather low, in an ordered group. One of them was diving straight towards the spot where he was.

He saw the red star: they were Tupolevs!

The fuselages opened....and destruction burst out from their entrails.

Explosions-fire-crumblings down, and they were rapidly coming towards him.

He asked himself whether the Boeings would now be doing the same thing on communist ground. He thought about the ICBM, the atomic mushroom-cities, the incontrollable radioactivity, the virus.

The watchword was War-Death-Destruction.

Will human creatures be alive for the next cycle?

He had no time to think further.

A Tupolev was flying over him.

Jim jumped towards a corner of the room.

Deafening noise-crumbling down-fire-smoke-dust.

He felt a hard blow on his head, but he did not lose conscious-ness.

The planes disappeared in the distance, in an ordered group, leaving their message behind them.

Jim and his corner were still intact. He looked up, his sight was blurred by the blood running from the wound.

He took his hand to his head. It was not a dangerous wound, but plenty of blood flowed from it.

With an effort he jumped over what had been a strong wall.

He walked staggering away from the small town, hidden behind
the flames of a raging fire.

He heard more explosions.

They came from the same direction the planes had taken.

He started walking towards them.

The blood was now trickling thinly down over the dry blood.

He never knew how far he walked, or for how long. From a hill he saw it:

It was a city, not very big, also buried in flames.

He fell on his knees before the destruction. Sleep overcame him while he was watching the flames, and the sky turned black suddenly, very black, as if it were already night.

He was awakened by a pouring rain. He did not know if it was day or night. The sky was as black as before.

The raindrops pricked his face as if they were needles, many needles. He resolved walking towards the smoke.

He reached the outskirts of the city, where he found a little house still standing. He went towards it.

It was dark, but Jim was already used to the darkness. He went to an armchair and he sank into it.

The drops went on pricking as a thousand needles. He felt as if he had no hair left. Little by little the pain became so acute that his whole body ached, and Jim cried and twisted.

It was almost noon when he woke. He did not know how long he had been there and he did not care. He had lost all sense of time by now, and so had his body.

He was terribly tired, he did not even try to move.

He sat there, in a semi-oneiric state, until the sun was getting low above the horizon. It was funny, but the lower the sun got, the better Jim felt.

"Blackbird singing in the dead of night take these broken wings and learn to fly; all your life you were only waiting for this moment to arise. Blackbird singing in the dead of night take these sunken eyes and learn to see; all your life you were only waiting for this moment to be free. Blackbird fly blackbird fly into the light of the dark black night." (4)

When the sun disappeared at last, Jim was already standing.

He went out. It was wonderful, his sight in the darkness.

He walked at random at first, over mud, puddles-small streams, rubble-litter.

He felt something. He walked cautiously towards it.

It was the entrance to an underground: ATOMIC REFUGE, read a sign.

He hid himself and waited.

He saw-heard-felt-perceived a strange figure coming out.

It was a man in a strange uniform, like that of a pilot, with a pistol in one hand and a flashlight in the other, lighting his steps.

Jim waited for him to get near, and then jumped.

The man turned, frightened, and raised the flashlight.

Jim felt a sharp pain when the artificial light hit his face. He shrieked.

The men was frightened and tried to run but he slipped, thus losing hold on his fire-weapon.

Jim availed himself of it, leaped, seized the pistol and raised it at the same time as the man raised his light.

He shot auditively.

The artificial-light-man attacked him no more.

He approached the man and shot at the flashlight.

Then he felt the attraction, stronger than the first time.

He watched the blood shooting from the holes made by the shots, trickling down the man's uniform.

He knelt down and softly pressed his lips against the wound from which the blood poured more abundantly.

He sucked, he sucked with all his might.

It was extraordinary, the rapture.

When the blood went down his throat, Jim thought that now he would be twice as strong and twice as intelligent.

He felt how that warm and gently salted liquid was flowing into his entrails.

He felt his own blood mingling with the new. It was blood of his blood.

"With the High Tide of the Night, when the first breeze of dawn came with the wings of the wind, the Precursor, the one who calls himself the echo of voices not yet heard, came out of his chamber and climbed to the highest roof. He watched the city asleep.

Then he raised his head; it was as if the spirits awake of those who sleep were around him, and opening his lips, he uttered:

"My friends and neighbours, and all those who daily pass my door, I want to talk to you in your sleep, and walk naked and unhindered through the valley of your dreams. Your hours of wakefulness are too careless and your ears deaf."

"I am like you, oh Night!: dark and naked. I walk along the flaming path laid over the dreams of my life, and wherever my foot touches the earth grows a gigantic evergreen oak."

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"I am like you, oh Night!: silent and deep in the heart of my solitude there is a goddess in labour, and he who is being born is a mixture of Heaven and Hell."

"I am like you, oh Night!: savage and terrible, because my ears are full of the moans of conquered nations and the sighs of forgotten realms."

"I am like you, oh Night!: cruel and terrible, because my chest is kindled by vessels burning at sea and my lips are wet with the blood of the dead warriors."

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"Afterwards he raised his head, and as if awakening from a dream, he extended his arms and said: "The night has ended; and we, the children of the night, must die when the dawn comes jumping over the mountains; and from our ashes will rise another love, more powerful, which will laugh before the Sun and be immortal."

Jim got up and started walking. He felt the fire-weapon in his hand.

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(5)

He cleaned it with his rags-clothes and the magic letters appeared: COMMANDER MODEL-COLT-AUTOMATIC-CALIBRE 45.

Jim saw himself there, reflected in the night. It was beautiful. The black sheen of the weapon was fantastic.

When he looked up he saw the new black sheen.

He ran madly towards it, and he saw-found it:

First the gleam-suppressor, the grenade-thrower.

It was an M-16 Al with complete equipment.

It meant life for Jim and his companion.

And now Jim roams about, in the midst of darkness, gay, very gay with his stick-weapon, surrounded by a blue halo

"And the dreamer raised his face,
his eyes were submerged in light." (6)

THE END

- (1) "The perfect world" by Gibran Jalil Gibran
- (2) "When the music's over" Jim Morrison, THE DOORS
- (3) "Being for the benefit of Mr. Kite!" John Lennon & Paul Mo-Cartney, THE BEATLES
- (4) "Blackbird" John Lennon & Paul McCartney, THE BEATLES
- (5) "The Night and the Madman" & "The last Awakening" Gibran Jalil Gibran
- (6) "The dreamer" Gibran Jalil Gibran

IN THE COSMOS

It is always night. This planet unknown, where you and I have long been living, knows neither summer, winter or spring but in autumn I compare it to the Earth.

As in the Earth there are birches and willows with shining leaves in a silvery haze, but it is always night and free flow my tears like a bitter rain on the tranquil lakes.

No sun and no stars. A pale moonlight everywhere; then your smile and your eyes; no one else around in the great loneliness while madness slowly creeps into our minds.

Pilar Giralt, 1969

The man gazed at the ruins of the city from the summit of the hill.

It was dangerous getting near the cities (the big cities in particular) since, as they had suffered the worst attacks during the Great Thermonuclear War, there was still a great deal of radioactivity around them.

It was better to keep to small villages in out-of-the-way areas. In them radiation was not so powerful and, in some zones, there was none at all. There you still might stumble on cans of precious food or some useful tool or weapon. This was why all the Survivors were searching in these places. Sometimes they fought to death for a single can.

The man, in spite of radiation, preferred the cities. There was less competition in them. And, after all, radiation did not seem to harm him too much. His mother had been born one year after the Great War, himself twenty years later. Maybe the fact of having been engendered, his mother as well as himself, in a world poisoned by radiation had brought about a mutation of cells rending them almost immune. It looked as if after all the human race were not ready to disappear from the earth. He knew other people like himself, although of course they all suffered the same death in the end and never reached the old age that had been normal before the Great War, but nevertheless they lived longer than the rest.

He sat down on a stone to rest a little and began munching a piece of meat he took out of the pouch hanging from his shoulder. He started remembering the events in these last years. How he had met Inés and how they had fallen in love with each other. A boy had been born to them. He was blond and strong; he would be resistent and would live to a great age. It was when the baby boy was born, about a year ago, that he thought about looking for a region free from radiation in which to settle with his family. While he had been alone it had not mattered too much if he had to live in perpetual fight, hiding and killing; but now he wanted something better for his son. This was the reason for the incredible wanderings that had brought him here.

It had been a terrible journey, full of difficulties and dangers and the worst of all was that it had been to no avail. Ines and the baby had died two months ago. And now he was here, looking indifferently upon the ruins of the big city.

He got up and started walking. The old road could still be traced, it had been wide and straight.

About two kilometres ahead he saw, lying by the road, a metallic object gleaming in the sun. He approached it. He was curious by nature and he liked finding out all he could about the men who had lived before the Great War.

It was a metallic cylinder about the size of a man. It had probably lain buried but, owing perhaps to an explosion, or the rain, or the wind, it had come to the surface. Fallen near by was a small stone monolith with an inscription.

He stooped to look at the cylinder and discovered a small door with a simple latch. He opened it. Inside there were several objects and he proceeded carefully to take them out. A number of books full of images of smiling people and gardens in bloom. Some spools of film carefully kept in metal cylinders. He took out a machine the name of which he ignored but which he had already seen on several occasions during his visits to the cities. This one would probably be in working condition. It had two spools of tape and several buttons. He pressed them softly one after the other and suddenly there was a voice.

The voice was suave and energetic at the same time. It was full of confidence and strength. The owner of that voice could surely face any danger, sure of himself, and always come out of it unharmed. He felt comforted just listening to it. Lulled by that voice he considered his sufferings less terrible. Perhaps it was still possible to go on looking for the proper place and begin anew.

It was a pity not to be able to understand the words. It was speaking in a language different from the one his mother had taught him. It said:

"Future citizens of the world: this is the year 1949. We have kept in this cylinder the documents that will show future generations our way of life and the progresses attained in this first half of the XXth century. We have reached supersonic speed. We have conquered the atcm..."

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Did you ever wonder about those childish dreams which, sometimes in sleepless nights, come back to your mind as vague memories of a past wavering between delusion and reality?

Maybe you have wondered. You don't have to tell me, if you prefer to be silent. You do not know the answer, and neither do I.

What I do know is that there are things in my life telling me about the past. Not about the immediate past. They refer to remote times, to ages already forgotten in the annals of history. I think that very often the mixed blood in my veins acquires a private life, and shaking off the yoke my modern mind imposes on it, returns to channels where a primitive landscape offers a magnificent and gloomy design.

I ignore, my dear friend, whether the hard battle of life has allowed you to despise a moment of action or of compulsory rest to consider these things carefully. I believe you have done so, you are like me, like all of us. And we all must pay our tribute to those ancestors who have been seed, earth and fertilizer to our civilization.

Forgive me for these digressions of which you know I am so fond. All I really try to do with them is getting a little closer to my own blood. With the voice it uses to explain its visions in those forgotten landscapes which I just mentioned to you.

The reason I summoned you is telling you a story. Yes, do not smile. I know you like my stories, especially when we are sitting like this, by the old fireplace. Do you hear the friendly sputtering of the fire on the dry logs? Take a mug of the beer you like so much and light your pipe. That's it. I'll begin now.

That night was like this one: cold, rainy and pitch-black. I was young then and had constant dreams about making something big of my life, all the goals seemed inadequate for my ambition. You know how much I made my poor parents suffer. I only became aware of my thoughtlessness later.

As I was telling you, that gloomy night was also Black Friday night, and we all had gathered at a friend's house with the only purpose of making fun of what we considered to be mere superstitions. During the Holy Week the streets appear sad and deserted, there is an indefinable taste of death about them, as if a shroud of profound lethargy were spreading over the city.

But we were just callow, vain young men, believing ourselves the masters of the world. Everything looked to us bright and easy, and we would not consent on having that melancholy shroud over us. We had been drinking a lot, some of us too much, and the conversation, which at first had been gay and daring, was taking rougher courses, eventually getting indecorous and even obscene. I do not wish to be reminded of what was said then, nor offend your ears and my conscience with such unpleasant memories. It will be enough to say that the blasphemous tone of the spree descended to such a low level that, ashamed of ourselves, we suddenly and all of us at once stopped speaking, and silence reigned in the room.

I told you we had drunk too much; but it was I who had abused of Bacchus' pleasures more than the others. The outcome, shameful to my memory, was that, in trying to revive the embers of the already stifled gaiety, I disgracefully pronounced the most indecorous sen-

tences and the most awful oaths.

I hope that if God exists He has forgiven me, since the day is not far when I shall have to render an account of my actions in this sorrowful world.

To go on with my sad story, I remember as if it had been yester-day that Andrés made me stop. My dear good Andrés! What must have become of him? At last, the gathering could not be prolonged and the guests went, one by one. The large drawing-room was left almost empty and only the light smell of the smoked tobacco and the drunk spirits remained in the air as token of an evening which had been more sad than gay and more miserable than happy. Andrés and myself were the last to leave and we felt as if we took with us something of the sweet but unhealthy atmosphere of the house.

The rain was less intense now, and the drops were like thin needles breaking on the pavement and giving it the sheen of varnish. It was very cold and the vapours of alcohol were soon dispelled from my dull brain, being promptly substituted by a strange sensation of anguish caused by all I had said and done.

Andrés wanted to see me home, which was not far; but I would not have it. It was not too late and I felt like taking a stroll by myself, giving vent to my thoughts and clearing my head completely. He went then, and I was left alone with the night and under the soft but steady rain. I wrapped my cape tighter around me and put on my hat. Then I started walking in no definite direction.

And I found something. I ignore exactly where I went or for how long I roamed. I stopped without thinking before an old building, a heavy simple structure made of grey stone, characteristic of the architecture in the second half of the last century.

Do not ask what wicked power or what uncontrollable instinct pushed me to do it; as if hypnotized I stepped into the house and found myself before a sumptuous, carpeted staircase. I could hear the sound of the falling rain outside, in the street, and this added to the feeling of loneliness and mystery in that fateful night.

That was not my house, nor had I ever been in it that I remembered. And yet it seemed as if I knew the place beforehand. It was a feeling of familiarity that guided my steps in the darkness. Like an automaton I went up the stairs, my mind a blank, aware at each step of an indefinable danger, but an impending one.

I climbed the stairs, landing after landing, as if I knew where I was going or what I could find. Even today, at such a distant point from that episode in my life, I shudder at the memory of what happened. On reaching the last storey my mind wavered, trying to go back and make me retrace my steps and fly from that horrible place; but I was unequal to it. The powers leading me were stronger than myself, and trambling with fear I pushed the heavy wooden door which, try to understand, I knew was open!

Inside it was even darker than the stairs, and I had to light a match to find out where I was. It would have been much better to severe the hand that lighted the match, holding high the flickering flame in the middle of that gloomy drawing-room. Because it was a drawing-room. What is worse, it was an identical drawing-room to that where hardly an hour before I had uttered my blasphemous words!

But what made it really terrifying, what caused a cry of unquenchable anguish to leave my throat was the vision I had of all my friends sitting exactly where they had been during the party. That is to say, not of my friends, but of their corpses. Yes, the brief instant it took for the match to drop from my stiff fingers to the floor was enough to show me the most macabre picture I could have imagined. I believe I ran like a madman, like a chased, tormented soul.

In my insane flight I stumbled against something which made me fall down, something cold and clammy as Death itself. I could not do more than grope for the corpse's face. That known, icy face under my hands. I knew it even in darkness, since otherwise my heart would not have been able to bear it; that something beside my body, making me share its sepulchral coldness, was my own corpse.

I cannot explain how I got to my house. Running, shouting, dripping with rain and terror. From that night on my life changed.

A long time has passed, my friend, and all has remained behind, windswept and rainwashed in all these years; but, I cannot help it, on a night like this my memories come back as fresh as if they were from yesterday.

I have not told you that on the following day I could not help looking at my friends as if they were ghosts. Before long they avoided me and I am totally ignorant of their fates. I hope they have been

as lucky as myself. During months I searched for the scene of my horrifying experience; but I could not find it. This is the story I promised you. Did you like it?

Dreams, hallucinations, the sequel of drunkenness, you'll say; but who can tell where I was that night?

Please stir the fire. It is cold and I am getting old al-/ready. Deep, very deep inside, in a zone difficult to delimit, I can still perceive the light rumour of the shot. The echo causes the acoustic wave to rebound from one side to the other, multiplying it. That this process could go on forever is the idea tormenting me. I have always hated noises.

On the right, ordered as books on the shelves of a bookcase, appears a collection of memories: my childhood, my friends, my parents, Elsa...I see Elsa very distant, she's standing by the railing of a strange bridge which I'm unable to recognise. Now she's waving a tiny handkerchief in the air, she seems to be saying goodbye to me...she is crying, dries her eyes with the hand-kerchief. Goodbye, Elsa, goodbye!

Towards the left there is a black stain. Some red points intermittently appear on it, the red is so intense that it injures the reticular tissue. These points get more and more precise till they stand symmetrically and systematically ordered like the squares of an infinite chessboard. Under this black stain gradually becoming red there is an air-tight compartment: that of bad deeds. In it are stored the memories of all the scoundrel acts I performed in my life, but on going through them I feel no sorrow or repentance since I presume that from now on I shall have no use for a moral code.

All of a sudden the echo of the shot is becoming rhythmical as the ticking of a clock, it may come from my own heartbeats. To my mind come sentences the meaning of which is long since lost: "love is nice, but incest is best"..."les cris qui se savent inécutés développent un terrible silence"..."Wer ist euer Kapitän?"... Stubbornly the words begin intermingling: "love...savent...best... euer...cris...Kapitän...silence..." until they lose all meaning.

At some point I cannot determine with precision I feel as if there loomed a conglomerate of all my empirical knowledge. This tangle contains from the most elementary mathematical axioms to the most complex psychohistorical lucubrations, and they all leap in a throng, amalgamating until they form a compact mass pressing down against the bottom of the soul.

And lastly, right in front, in the centre of my head, there is the hole, this window opened by a lost shot and through which my life is slowly but surely flowing away.

CORRESPONDENCE

I have been chosen for the very pleasant task of commenting for you the letters received by the C.L.A. From here I ask you all to write; all letters will be answered and most of them commented on on this page. Please write criticizing (constructively), and praising (the way you prefer), and above all write asking to belong to the C.L.A.

And let us begin with André Carneiro, from Brazil, a writer and a poet from whom some months ago we received four wonderful poems in Portuguese and which we are going to publish soon translated into Spanish; now he writes again to ask that we translate them into English and include them in our English edition. We shall do so in our next issue. He says too that he's sending us three books of his, one of them with the title "Introduction to the study of Science-Fiction". Thanks very much, André.

From England come two fanzines, thanks to our friend Jean Muggoch who gave copies of Ad Infinitum to some of her friends, among whom are two kind editors, Peter Weston and Ethel Lindsay, who send their fanzines: "Speculation", with articles that are an example of readability and good literary style, and "Haverings", en excellent source of information on all fanzines edited in Europe, America and Australia; in number 39 we read the following on Ad Infinitum: "It comes in two parts, one in Spanish, the other in English; which means a lot of translation work and which we hope will be the beginning of a new trend on the continent. So far it is all fiction, maybe later they will tell us more about themselves. The stories are of interest and written with competence." Thanks, Ethel, next issue will contain the translation of "The Trantor Gazette" and the editorial so that you can learn about us and our plans.

From Mexico writes Luis Vázquez León, our friend and collaborator, sending us additional parts of his story "Nightmare in black"; also he sends the addresses of two friends of his so that they can receive a sample of A.I. He mentions his plans about editing his own fanzine and asks for stories from us all.

And before I turn to the letters from our countrymen, I want to introduce a Roumanian friend who lives in Bucharest. His name is Ion Hobana and we write to him in Roumanian boasting of our scarce knowledge of his lovely tongue, sister to our own. As he loves writing we shall soon be able to publish something his. He begins by sending an essay: "Les images du possible".

Dr. José Luis Barceló writes from Madrid. He's the editor of the magazine "Mundo Financiero" ("Financial World") and the author of many books on economics. In spite of his being very busy he writes science fiction stories and we are proud to publish one of them in this issue; you will be surprised by a new idea on the development of human progress...

Eduardo Miller, from Jerez de la Frontera, writes about his interest in science fiction and puts at our disposal his extensive library on the subject. We thank him and are glad to count him among our new members.

Another new member, Luis Mayoral Cancer, from Zaragoza, sends a work of his: "Essay on a lyric homage", very good, and promises to send something every month. We hope all members will follow your example, Luis!

We have two letters from the Islas Afortunadas which, according to Jorge Fuentes, are not so lucky in what concerns S.F. since it is not easy to find fanzines. Jorge sends the admission test, duly filled in, and with enviable perception receives his automatic admission by telepathic communication. Bravo! though you will receive your member card through the normal way.

And from Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Fernando Sáenz, a fan from the youngest generation, applies for his admission in the C.L.A. and proposes to be our delegate in his province...

...the same as Ramón Vidal, from Tarrasa, also future member and delegate. You must both excuse the delay, you will soon hear from us.

Pedro Tabernero, from Sevilla, a good friend and a lover of comics, writes giving us the constructive advice we like so much, besides proposing two new members, both friends of his: Vicente Personat Roca and Francisco Mascaros Amador, both from Valencia.

And I shall end with J.Suñé (excuse me, I don't know your Christian name!), who lives in Barcelona, has read nº5 of Ad Infinitum, wants all the other issues and sends the admission test so that he may belong to the C.L.A.

And now until next month, do not forget: I am here to read your letters and give you our welcome.

Pilar Giralt

THE TRANTOR GAZETTE

We shall refer to the most interesting news inside the Circle.

& For some time now, in our last gatherings, we were studying the convenience and the possibility of naming "Provincial Coordinators", in order that the increasing number of members not living in Barcelona can rely on a delegate to organize meetings and any other kind of contact among the members living in the same city. The idea was heartily approved, and now we are waiting for you to volunteer for the job, just as one member who already did: GABRIEL BERMUDEZ CASTILLO, from Zaragoza.

We are glad to have Bermúdez as CLA Coordinator in Zaragoza.

By the way, it will be interesting for Zaragoza members to know his address:

c/ Almagro 7, entlo. dcha. Tel. 21 78 74 Zaragoza

- & We are pleased to announce the production by the CLA of a short motion picture already being filmed. You remember "Tom and the flies"? It appeared in nº2 of our fanzine, signed by Angel Rodríguez. We hope to present it during the Fantastic Cinema International Week in Sitges. Thus we are beginning to realize one of our goals.
- & In order to maintain personal contact with our members in other cities, we have programmed a series of trips, similar to the fruitful one undertaken a short time ago by our president and our secretary to Madrid.

The writer of this Gazette had an interview in Zaragoza with our friend Bermúdez who spoke about his plans and anxieties concerning the CLA. As we said already he has been elected our Coordinator in Zaragoza. His great enthusiasm is such an asset in his personal task of winning over to us all the true fans who roam about in solitude in his city. Go ahead, Gabriel, you may count with our support!

Shortly, the president of the CLA, LUIS GIRALT, will go to Sevilla and meet the fans living there. In our next Gazette I'll comment on it.

And now to the news outside the Circle:

- Laime Rosal has come for a fruitful permission from his military service. He has surprised us with his "Minifundación", and not only be cause of the ingenuity of his idea. Almost simultaneously, his Fifth Foundation has appeared, following the progressing line of the preceding ones. From here we want to answer the question he formulates in his editorial: "Is it worthwhile to continue with "FUNDACION"? Jaime asks. "By all means, our friend; it is worthwhile. And don't you dare give up! We are ready to bet that this will be the unanimous answer you will get from everybody."
- & NUEVA DIMENSION has just published no 9. Once subsided the polemics, or rather, the reaction provoked by no 8, it returns to previous channels. As always, we must commend the readability and usefulness of its green pages. Remarkable also its front page, differing considerably

from the last ones.

By the way, we are grateful as ever for all flattering words on the CLA.

& We would like to clarify some news given by Jaime Rosal in his MINIFUNDACION. He mentions some rumours about DELTA 99 being on the point of disappearing. Later information states that it will not disappear. 5 x Infinite will go on as before; not so the character of DELTA 99, which will possibly suffer some modification.

As advance information only, we want to announce that before the end of the current year we may celebrate a National Science Fiction Convention. Organized, evidently, by the CLA. It is impossible at present to give any details, which will be specified later on.

RAMON CORDON

From 27 September to 3 October will be celebrated the II International Fantastic Cinema Week in Sitges. The first edition of this event took place last year on the same dates, and it constituted a good exponent of what this international competition can mean to the Spanish fan. The field covered by the Sitges Week is notably wide, since it includes terror, science fiction and fantasy films in their different aspects. It must be noted that no other such Festival exists in the world, the most similar taking place in Trieste, but it confines itself to science fiction films exclusively.

The Committee for the selection of films, though it is too early to confirm all the titles, has agreed with the respective countries the presentation of films of the importance of: "Two musketeers", "End of august at Ozono Hotel", "Prague nights", "The mists of Andromeda", "The Queen of the snows", "Le rêve", "Pjescani Zamak", "Vip, mio fratello superuomo", "The projected man", "Peeping Tom", etc.

For any kind of information, please contact:

II International Fantastic Cinema Week
c/ San Isidro, 12
SITGES (Barcelona)

JOSE LUIS MARTINEZ MONTALBAN - Madrid