

Editor's Note: "From the Archives" is a regular column introduced in SFRA Review, vol. 50, no. 2-3 that reprints noteworthy (broadly defined) content from earlier in the Review's history.



From the Archives: "Texts of Letters about *Nueva Dimensión*," *SFRA Newsletter* #1 (Jan. 1971)

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THIS inaugural entry of "From the Archives" takes a look at two letters published in the very first issue of the *Review* (then *SFRA Newsletter*) written by the just-formed SFRA Executive Committee to address the seizure of an issue of the science fiction magazine *Nueva Dimensión* in Spain by Franco's regime. The letters were sent to the editor of the magazine and to the Spanish ambassador to the U.S. in protest of the seizure. *Nueva Dimensión* was started in 1968 by Domingo Santos, Luis Vigil, and Sebastián Martínez. The publication ran 148 issues between 1968 and 1982.

The topic of the letters sent by the Executive Committee was of international importance to SF fans. Alejandro Mohorte Medina and José Nieto describe the situation in their history of Spanish SF for the British fanzine *The Science Fact & Science Fiction Concatenation*:

[T]he magazine had problems with censorship because of the Press Law. In [the] issue of May 14th 1970, a short story titled in Euskara (Basque language) "Gu ta gutarrak" ["Us and Ours"], by Magdalena Mouján Otaño, told the adventure of a group of Basques travelling with a time machine to locate a paradoxical event. Despite being presented in advance for official administrative approval, a few days later the Public Order Court forced the recall of the entire issue. The prosecutor denounced that the story violated the national unity of Spain. After the seizure of the issue, the pages of this story were substituted by several cartoons strips by Johnny Hart, so it was possible to continue the distribution. The trial against *Nueva Dimensión* never happened, but the case brought ample criticism from international fandom. In the US, a support committee was created and some authors offered his work for token rates.

Below is the text of the letters and their framing by the editor of *SFRA Newsletter*, Fred Lerner. With the exception of adding the accent in “*Dimensión*,” only formatting has been changed to ensure greater clarity.

Works Cited

Lerner, Fred. “Texts of Letters about *Nueva Dimensión*.” *SFRA Newsletter*, no. 1, Jan 1971, pp. 5-6.

Medina, Alejandro Mohorte and José Nieto. “Spanish Science Fiction.” *The Science Fact & Science Fiction Concatenation*, 16 September 2015, http://www.concatenation.org/europe/spanish_science_fiction.html.

Texts of Letters about *Nueva Dimensión*

THE following letters were sent as SFRA’s reaction to the seizure of an issue of the Spanish SF publication *Nueva Dimensión* by the Spanish authorities:

(To Sr Sebastian Martinez):

We have heard with dismay and shock that the issue #14 of *Nueva Dimensión*, the science fiction magazine which you, Domingo Santos, and Luis Vigil have been editing and publishing with such distinction, has been seized by the Spanish Political Police, because it contained a science fiction story set in an imaginary future. We have also read that the future of the magazine and its publishers is in jeopardy because of this. We have found *Nueva Dimensión* to be one of the finest periodicals in the field of science fiction in the world, and it has served as an example of international cooperation and fruitful exchange of information in science fiction. It has been a worthy representative in our field of the great Hispanic literary and artistic tradition. It would be highly regrettable for Spain to be deprived of her voice in the growing international science fiction community.

We hope that the Spanish government will make it possible for you to resume normal publication with no curtailment of the freedom of speculation necessary to all science fiction, i.e. without being subjected to ruinous fines or prison sentences.

We are therefore sending a copy of this letter from our annual general meeting in New York to the Spanish Ambassador in Washington, and we authorise you to use this letter as you see fit, as an expression of our deep sense of sympathy and concern at what *Nueva Dimensión* and you are experiencing.

* * *

(To His Excellency, The Spanish Ambassador in Washington):

We enclose a copy of our letter to Sr Sebastian Martinez. We hope that it will convey to you our high regard for his work, and our hope that *Nueva Dimensión* will be able to resume unimpeded publication in the immediate future.