

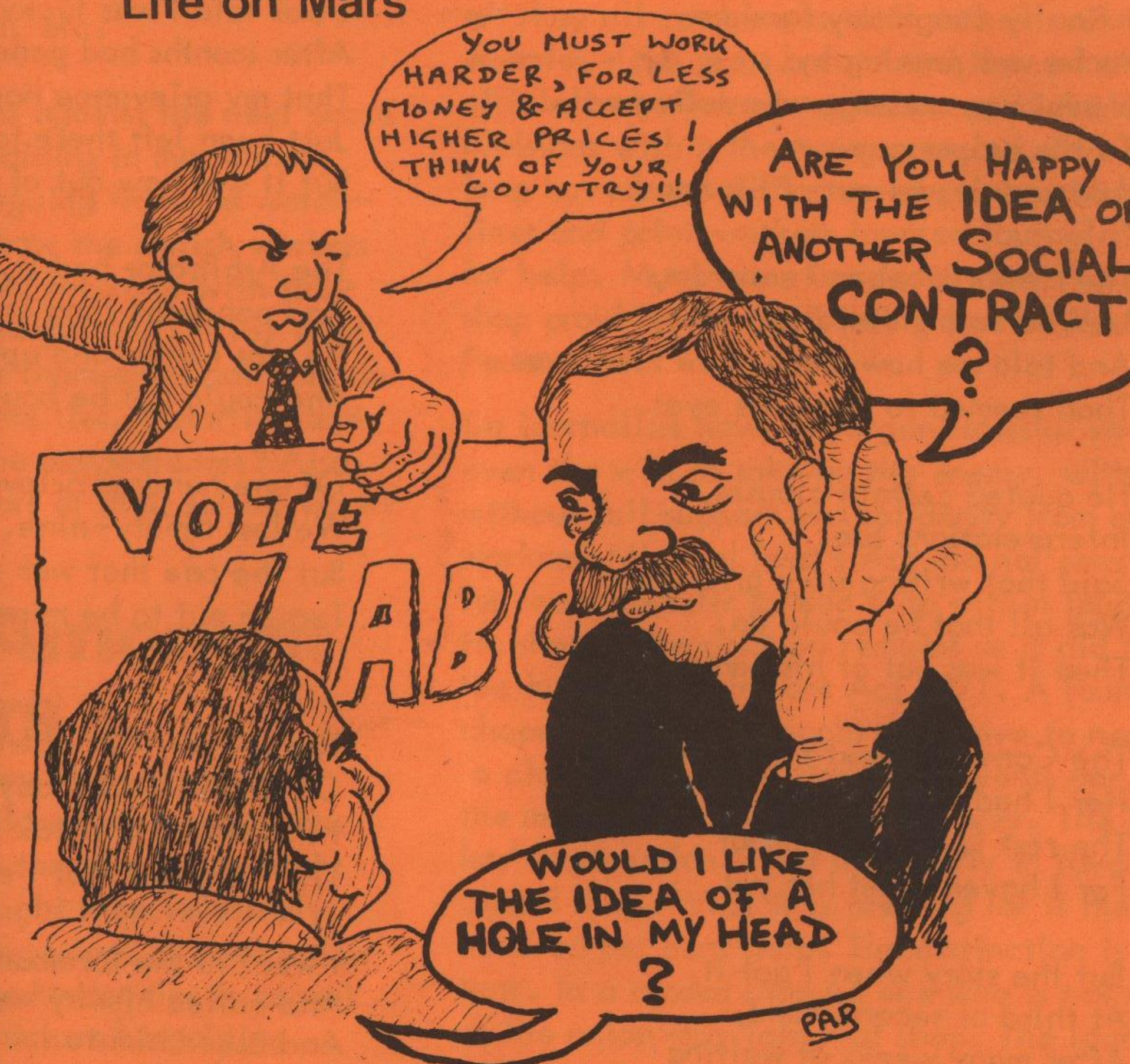


# The INDUSTRIAL UNIONIST



No. 5. 15p

Joe Hill Meets  
the Archbishop  
It's Out of My Hands  
Whose Press Freedom?  
Walls & Bars  
Whose Security?  
Sound of a Distant Drum  
Claimants Unions  
Sunshine  
Life on Mars





# IT'S OUT OF MY HANDS

The shop was like a sweat box,  
The heat was ninety-three.  
I had a little grievance  
As anyone could see.

I went to see the foreman  
And called to him by name.  
I asked him could he open up  
That nailed-down window pane?  
But my boss said, "It's out of my hands."

I asked to see my steward,  
And the boss he did agree.  
But for two more days, no hide or hair  
Of either did I see.

I finally caught my foreman  
As he was running by.  
He said my message was delivered  
To the proper guy.  
And now it was out of his hands.

The steward, when I saw him,  
Looked both shrewd and wise,  
And told me how much more there was  
Than seemed to meet the eyes.

He quoted certain clauses,  
Interpretations too.  
Said that writing up a grievance  
Was all that he could do.  
Then it was out of his hands.

The Convenor next came round,  
Her I had never met.  
The rest is strictly rumour  
For I haven't met her yet.

But the story when I got it,  
At third or second hand,  
After many weeks of waiting  
I was made to understand --  
It was out of her hands.

The next thing that I heard of,  
Through the grapevine, tried and true,  
It had reached the work's committee,  
They'd see what they could do.

The days were getting shorter,  
And autumn was drawing near,  
When their long-delayed decision  
I finally got to hear.  
It was out of their hands.

I wish I could say  
That this ended my ditty  
But my case was referred  
To the Participation Committee.

I was told I was lucky,  
After months had gone by  
That my grievance had not  
Just been left there to die.  
But it was now out of their hands.

The Arbitrator had it,  
And pondered long and thought.  
He was honest and upright  
And could not be bought.

Of one hundred grievances  
We lost ninety-nine.  
But the one that was salvaged  
Turned out to be mine.

The window was opened  
On a cold wintry day.  
I shivered and shook  
Till I thought that I'd give way.

I went to the foreman  
And called him by name,  
And asked him to shut  
That damned window pane.  
But he said, "It's out of my hands."

# WHOSE PRESS FREEDOM?

It has been said that the 'freedom of the press' is the privilege of a few men to have their views on every breakfast table in the country.

The hysterical campaign mounted by the newspaper industry seems to have died down of late. Remember the screaming headlines not so long ago about how the journalists' closed shop would destroy editorial freedom. Words are written and words are read. They also create images. Remember the images they imprinted on our minds: the editor roped in his chair and a group of journalists squabbling and deleting copy with red marker pens, etc.

But now that the movement against the next phase of the social contract is gaining in momentum, can we expect more haranguing from the watchdogs of our liberty about how the selfish workers will ruin Britain's economic recovery with their return to free collective bargaining? If so, what are the newspaper workers themselves going to do in the way of correcting the lies, distortion and calumny perpetrated by the masqueraders? Also, what can they do in support of their fellow workers in other industries?

## Divisions Amongst the Workers

For many years printworkers in the newspaper industry have enjoyed a closed shop. What has it achieved for them? As compared with most other industries it has brought them relatively high money wages, the lingerings of craft union mentality and a spate of redundancies in recent years. So many that their future bargaining strength will be drastically reduced unless they fully recognise that their struggle is the



**LORD THOMSON** owns not only a large slice of the British newspaper scene. His organisation has interests in oil, tourism, advertising, and the celebrated yellow pages telephone directories.

same as the journalists and that as fellow workers they all combine to defeat their common enemies - the press barons and the unions' top officials who have long encouraged the existing divisions within the newspaper industry. For too long have journalists crossed print-workers picket lines and print-workers ignored journalists' calls for help. Much more is needed than the talking shop provided by the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation.

Do journalists have the organisational strength or even the will to take on the enemy, with or without full support and solidarity from other workers? Michael Foot's Act did not provide for the automatic closed shop within journalistic shops. The position remains as it did prior to the Industrial Relations Act 1971. A journalists' chapel (job/shop branch) will have to negotiate a closed shop, if it decides it wants one, with the management in the normal way. The journalists' trade union is not nationally in favour of a closed shop. What it is pressing for is the one hundred per cent shop. The distinction is important. In a closed shop no one who is not a member of the union may join that shop. The journalists' union prefers an agreement whereby anyone joining an editorial staff does so on the under-



standing that they will join the union if they are not already a member. This is contrary to what the press monopoly would have us believe.

Neither does a chapel wish to dictate to an editor what can or cannot be published. The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) Code of Conduct states clearly that all journalists should fight for the freedom to publish and comment fairly.

### BOSSES ORGANISED

So here we have workers equipped, ready, and willing to fight the enemy boss class. Sick joke. What of the editor? That most-respected (in the public eye) of persons. The bosses would have us believe that editors are independent. They are independent of the NUJ, but not independent of the newspaper proprietors who employ them. The Guild of Editors, to which many provincial editors belong, is not an independent body. Its London headquarters are the home of the Newspaper Society (Bosses Union) which with producing the copy ('news and fiction') that goes to form our daily diet of propaganda output from Britain's free press. But the lesson is clear. If they are aware of their role as workers and tools of the bosses, do they want radical change? If so, are they equipped along with their fellow workers in the newspaper industry to effect this change? As will be seen shortly, most newspaper proprietors have financial interests well beyond and unrelated to the production of newspapers. In any attempt to run newspapers in the interest of all, newspaper workers must necessarily gain the support of, and enlist aid from, these other workers.

What of the enemy -- the boss class, the newspaper proprietors? In Britain 90% of the press is owned by several large companies, often themselves subsidiaries of huge

international conglomerates. The workers have to smash the charmed circle of ownership and control exercised by Lord Thompson, Lord Cowdray, Sir Max Aitken, Rupert Murdoch, the Berry family, etc. As will be shown, this is no easy task, even when the enemy is clearly indentified.

### A STAR IS SHOT DOWN

It would seem reasonable to believe that with a free press in existence, all shades of opinion would be represented and new papers welcomed. Not so. Why? Because new national papers mean that advertising revenue is spread more thinly. In June, 1956, Hulton Press, owners of Picture Post and other periodicals had completed plans for the first full colour Sunday newspaper in Britain and very possibly in the world. Instead the project foundered before the opposition of the Newspaper Proprietors Association (NPA) and the National Federation of Retail Newsagents -- both bodies much concerned in the advantages offered by a rigidly-controlled newspaper industry. From the NPA Hultons received an ultimatum. The new paper would not be allowed to share in NPA distribution facilities or be carried by the newspaper trains which are essential for speedy overnight delivery unless it were handled by newsagents on exactly the same discount terms as existing Sunday newspapers.

From the Federation of Retail Newsagents came a second ultimatum. The two were mutually exclusive. For the Federation demanded better terms than newsagents were getting from NPA members and informed Hultons that unless these improved terms were given newsagents would be instructed not to handle the Sunday Star. Hultons thus found themselves in a wholly impossible situation. Unless they accepted the Federation's demands the paper would not be sold by the majority of newsagents. If they did the NPA would refuse to allow it on the newspaper trains.

So it seems we will have to rely on the working class to bring freedom to the British press. At present Britain has a silenced majority -- the vast body of working people whose ideas, aims and aspirations are never heard or discussed in the press. Truth resides with that most unrepresentative and SUBVERSIVE minority -- the seven newspaper combines.

Control of the newspaper corporations must be seized from the capitalist boss class. This is extremely difficult when these corporations are themselves subsidiaries of other huge conglomerates having multifarious interests. Thus newspaper workers cannot and should not gain control, except in unison with the whole of the working class, acting as one body with one aim: revolutionary self-management and abolition of wage slavery.

Do newspaper workers and especially those who are aware of the urgent need to transform the relations of production understand their situation? I think so, but let us look at what they must overcome before they can start building solidarity with other sectors of the working class and before any measure of revolutionary industrial unionism is attained. This assumes that the existing handicap of trade unions and craft mentality is eroded in the process of extending the fight with the immediate boss to include the parent corporations.

Today's newspaper corporations are profitable -- many of them immensely so -- in spite of their newspapers -- and because of their heavy investments in other sectors of the economy. Yet paradoxically it is these investments that determine that today's papers are just as much propaganda machines as their forerunners of the 1930's.



What WE can do about it



## Private Enterprise Propaganda

The major areas of newspaper investment are oil, banks, road and air transport, television, docks and hotels and increasingly, property. The press acts as a seismograph for capitalism. Its own interests are inextricably linked with the interests of the system as a whole. So that if any section of the system is under attack then the press reacts with furious hysteria. The Daily Mail for example could hardly be expected to look favourably upon a strike by London dockers because of its substantial interests in a London wharfage company. These interests would also determine its attitude towards a Labour government's plans to extend nationalisation of the docks.

Lord Cowdray's Financial Times, Westminster Press group, which owns Lazards, a leading merchant bank, would react predictably to any move to curb the enormous profits of the banks or to make them socially accountable. The same group would certainly prefer the stability afforded by the recent Greek colonels' regime to any lurch to the left because of its Greek holding company, the Societe Generale Hellenique. Through its investments the press has developed a convenient reach-me-down stock of responses to meet any situation. Profits are a good thing, made possible by the private ownership of the means of production. Employers are urbane, civilised men who always make generous offers. Strikes, on the other hand, are bad things that hold the country to ransom and are organised by small groups of politically-motivated men. Union leaders are rough diamonds who demand and threaten and bully. Wish they did more of it then !!

It seems that the benefits of private ownership are so powerful that scarcely any attention is paid to the fact that in reality it does not exist any more and that modern society is more and more dominated by a few giant cartels. Public ownership, on the other hand, they say is 'inefficient' and 'unprofitable'. No mention of the £5m. plus of taxpayers' money given daily to private industry. Any extension of state

ownership is seen as a state grab in blaring headlines. The government's bailing out of British Leyland was portrayed as a sinister plot by Benn to 'take over' the firm, ignoring the fact that British Leyland had gone to the government in the first place.

Over the past 20 years the following major newspapers have fallen victim to the system of a press run for profits. The list is by no means exhaustive and does not include hundreds of weekly titles which have disappeared in that period:

Daily Recorder	London	1954
Sunday Chronicle	National	1955
Daily Dispatch	Manchester	1955
Daily News	Brighton	1955
Yorks Observer	Bradford	1956
Gazette	Birmingham	1956
Evening News	Glasgow	1957
Evening News	Liverpool	1958
Evening News	Tyneside	1959
Bulletin	Glasgow	1960
Sunday Graphic	National	1960
Empire News	National	1960
News Chronicle	National	1960
Star	London	1960
Sunday Dispatch	National	1961
Evening World	Bristol	1962
Evening News	Nottingham	1963
Evening News	Leeds	1963
Evening Chronicle	Manchester	1963
Evening Mail	Leicester	1963
Evening Dispatch	Birmingham	1963
Evening Dispatch	Edinburgh	1963
Evening News	Hereford	1966
Evening News	Carlisle	1967
Sunday Citizen	National	1967
Scottish Daily Mail	Edinburgh	1968
Evening Mail	Chatham	1969
Daily Sketch	National	1971
Guardian Journal	Nottingham	1973
Evening Citizen	Glasgow	1974
Scottish Sunday Express	Glasgow	1974
Scottish Daily Express	Glasgow	1974

Look how excited backbench headline writers become when they unearth a militant involved in a wage claim. Newspaper style is devined and refined to get the readers to accept that the current social system, despite its imperfections, is basically sound, fair and increasingly egalitarian. Did somebody say something about 7% of the population owning 84% of the wealth? Sorry, that's just propaganda! Groups or individuals who challenge the existing set-up are dismissed as mindless militants, extremists, subversives and wreckers. There is no debate about it. The ideas of the opponents of the system are never discussed - just dismissed with a volley of crude cliches, battering headlines and the occasional witch-hunt.

## Workers Opportunities

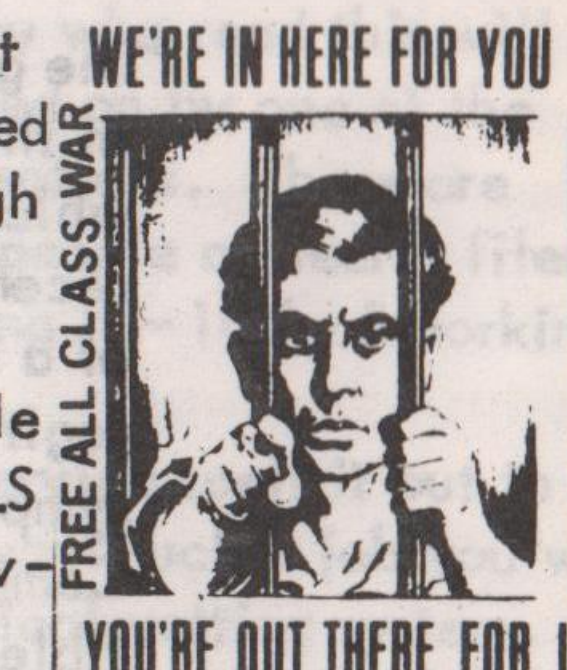
In his book, Pressures on the Press, Charles Wintour cites as two examples of working class attempts to undermine the freedom of the press the action of electricians on the London Evening Standard to put the case for the power workers during their dispute in 1970. Secondly he quotes the refusal of the National Graphical Association (NGA) members on the Southend Standard to print an edition with a ballot paper calling on striking Ford workers to vote for a return to work.

Unlike Wintour I see these actions as extending press freedom where print workers use their industrial strength to put the case of other workers who are denied access to the media. We will need much more of this kind of action in the times ahead, as the struggle intensifies, and we need to destroy that version of the truth trumpeted by the press moguls from the comfort of their investment portfolios.

Joe Dace

## WALLS & BARS

Eugene V. Debs, the great American socialist who died 51 years ago, spent enough of his life behind bars to form some firm judgments about the penal system. He wrote a book called WALLS & BARS and in it he observed, "I would not confine my worst enemy into any American prison or jail; they are unfit for human habitation."



Alvin Stalcup, an IWW member from Santa Rosa, California, thought Debs's book might make instructive reading for some of today's prison inmates and so he donated a copy to the library at San Quentin prison -- or rather, he tried to, but his gift was refused.

An inquiry to Governor Brown elicited a response from an officer in the California Department of Correction, who cited Section 2600.4 of the California Penal Code which authorizes prison authorities to bar writings which tend to "incite murder, arson, riot, violent racism, or any other form of violence."

"From the samples of Mr. Debs's writings which you enclosed with your letter," the officer wrote, "I must agree with the prison librarian that such writings could tend to incite certain of our inmates to violence. They therefore would not be appropriate in the prison library."

Gene Debs would be so pleased to know that he is still a subversive force after fifty years -- and so sad to see how little change there has been in America.

(WALLS & BARS by Eugene Debs, 288pp., illus., bibliography, is available from

Elaine Godina  
116 Chaddernton Way  
Oldham, Lancs.



# WHOSE SECURITY?

"The government have decided that no one may be employed in the Civil Service in connection with work the nature of which is vital to the security of the State if he is or has recently been a member of the British Communist Party or of a fascist organisation -- or if, in such a way as to raise legitimate doubts about his reliability he is or has been sympathetic to Communism or Fascism, or associated with Communists or Fascists or their sympathisers, or is susceptible to Communist or Fascist pressure."

Now, if like me, you had only just come across this statement you would have thought that it was more appropriate to anyone wanting to join M.I.5 or some State counter-espionage group. But no, it forms part of advice to applicants to the Home Civil Service.

## Desperation

So, there I was, desperate for work and having been on the dole for too long I thought that working at the Department of Health and Social Security as a clerical assistant would at least be a way of getting some money together. But then I read this. I thought that maybe I would be guarding classified information of some kind, information that must not fall into the hands of Joe Public. But no, the application was for a clerical (or in other words, counter assistant) position. No top secrets to look after. So why all this guff on security? All right, so I'm not a Fascist and I'm not a member of the Communist Party. But perhaps I'm sympathetic to communism of a libertarian nature, not the hackneyed CP variety. As a libertarian, that makes me, in the State's view, both "susceptible to Communism" and "sympathetic to Communism" and therefore "unreliable" for this type of work. So no job, in fact no point in applying. I mean, the only classified information that the DHSS has is what's called the "A" Code. This is the actual work

manual which governs the putting into practice of the 1966 Social Security Act. So in the wrong hands (presumably commies and fascists) this is vital information for anyone who is on the dole, squatting, or part of a Claimants Union. In fact, anyone who has to claim anything from the State--pensions, attendance allowance, or most any kind of benefit.

So that little paragraph might stop a lot of people proceeding any further in their application. But what does it mean? Do we as a nation have any secrets which are unknown to the "superpowers"? Of course the Home Civil Service covers most, if not all government departments where civil servants are supposedly thinking up policies to put the "state of the State" in order. And according to the government of the day, there are many matters of national security which must not be allowed to get into "enemy" hands.

## State of the Nation

But I reckon that they simply mean that they ain't going to tell the truth about the real state of the nation. They misinform and lie rather than spell it out simply to people. They don't want the mass of British working people to have enough information to be able to work out that something is drastically wrong. And that's a whole new point of discussion.

And if you are not put off by all this and continue with your application you come up against the "State spies". To quote again from the paragraph on Security:

"You are therefore advised that certain Departments and certain parts in other Departments will not be open to persons who are thought to fall within the above categories. In order to ensure the reliability of persons to be employed in exceptionally secret work, Departments make special enquiries known as 'positive vetting'. These entail completion by the person of a security questionnaire and certain background enquiries by special investigating officers. These enquiries are concerned not only with political sympathies or associations of the kind previously mentioned but also with revealing any character defects which might be a potential risk to security."

## Industrial Espionage

Now this type of investigation into the background of the person applying for work is not new. Part of so-called "industrial espionage" involves checking up on the background of not only all potential applicants, but also those members of the working class who have been involved in any kind of industrial dispute. The so-called "militants". It's not only the workers who get this behind-the-scenes investigation. Remember the accusations of many students from various universities that secret files were being kept on them and in fact the subse-

quent finding of such secret files revealed these accusations to be true.

## Feeling Secure?

Let there be no doubt that this type of underhand investigation of a purely political nature goes on all around us. Some of you who read this will probably have been checked on by one of the State's little secret organisations. There are supposedly over 2 million people on secret files in this country, representing 8 - 10% of working people.

At least the Home Civil Service spell it out to you. They tell you that if you want such a job you will have to go through a political vetting system. The situation then becomes clearer to the applicant and you can make a choice more or less aware of what will happen later on. What working people should be aware of is that this type of investigation happens in many industries in this country without our knowledge. So-called militant workers are singled out and blacklisted. Some find it increasingly difficult to obtain work of a similar nature to the job they've left.

So ask yourself whose security is being looked after and by whom. Certainly not security of employment for the working class, but definitely the security of the State. Big Brother is watching us and we must become ever-increasingly aware of this intrusion into our lives.

MADGE SMYTHE

## SOUND OF A DISTANT DRUM

GILBERT MERS

You know, when you write here in the USA for a British journal, you are aware of that very fact -- that you are writing for a British journal. And I find myself hoping that if I get too far into "Americanese" to be understood, the editors will edit it into something comprehensible. At any rate I'll not presume to attempt any idiom other than the one with which I'm familiar, and always shall write with the aim and hope of addressing humanity, whenever and wherever.



I do claim a certain relationship with the British people, however. I spent my 11th through 21st birthdays in Bisbee, Arizona, a copper mining centre. Bisbee acquired a certain infamy in labour circles through the deportation of some 1200 IWW strikers in 1917. But we won't go into that here. What I wish to mention is there were a goodly number of miners from Cornwall settled there. We called them "Cousin Jacks". (a female was "Cousin Jenny") To this day I don't know the origin of the appellation. I would guess that it comes in as an offshoot of the common expression "our English cousins".

Anyway, some bit of Cornwall rubbed off on me (I claim -- for what conscious thought does a hare-brained kid give to those things?) I remember that I used to love to listen to the vernacular, the articulation and the inflections of their speech. After the winds of fortune blew me from the Arizona mountains to the Gulf of Mexico flatlands in 1929, hence to spend the rest of my working career as a dock-walloper in a couple of Texas ports, I always felt a certain kinship when a British crew would dock. Listening to them talk was like "back home". But I have to believe that we never full assimilate a culture unless we're born into it or enter it at a very early age. As an example, I have never been able to bring to my mind what the word "bloody" conveys to the English mind. Well, I'll leave this and get to something else with this thought:

Them there Cousin Jacks well knew what they were about when it came to hard-rock mining!

## Chrysler Corporation

Well, shucks! Seems like I've got England on my mind this trip out. I should think that Chrysler's rip-off of the British government would still be well-remembered by the time this reaches print. This is not unique, but universal. The multinationals are challenging national governments around the world, the theme: "Lay a subsidy on us or we'll shut down and where will your economy be?" And the governments are knuckling under.

This brings to mind more of what used to be. A British subject could and would give the Royal

Family old Billy Hell. But were I (or any outlander) to add on a chorus, I'd be in danger of getting my head knocked off. I wonder if it's still like that? And does that kind of loyalty extend to the Labour Government? Not knowing, I'll just sort of hedge and tell it as nearly as I can remember in the words of a deck officer on a British ship whom I met shortly before I retired. He said:

"The Labour Party is the greatest thing that ever happened to the Conservatives. A proposition, that if it came from the Tories the working class would reject summarily, the people will say, 'Well, I don't like it but it's coming from our own party, so it must be really necessary for the country.'"

"So what the Tories couldn't do in a hundred years the Labour Party does for them in a few days. It's a partnership. The only difference is rhetoric. They are both defending the same System."

So there. A subject of the realm said it, I didn't. But hell's bells, English cousins, doesn't it register that any -- every -- attempt to evaluate Chrysler Corporations, Labour Parties, Tories or any of the other beneficiaries of the profit system is simply a distraction from the real problem? The real problem is: How do we provide the good things of life to all alike? How do we replace multinational corporation ultimatums and government edicts with worker-management of our own resources? Production for use instead of for profit?

## Collectives

Here Stateside there appears to be a healthy movement towards collective efforts at production and distribution consciously aimed at challenging the capitalist system. Efforts at co-ops and collectives heretofore -- correct me if I'm wrong -- had been aimed more at escaping or evading the System, rather than challenging it. I see the present trend as coming to grips with reality. I have to hope that these collective trends and the IWW find compatibility. For there is really small chance of collectivizing to challenge Chrysler and General Motors from the outside. So the One Big Union idea is still a necessary force.

## INTEGRATION

It means integration, good people, integration of efforts between and among all producers. Especially do we need to look to the land. And arable land in the USA is disappearing at the rate of more than a million acres annually, into super highways and super shopping centres and super housing estates, as the show goes on and the music goes round and around, to the tune of a fast buck.

Yes, we had better look to the land, for the land is a prime renewable resource. Land, crops, mean survival. Now the spouters of the Conventional Wisdom tell us that Britain could never achieve socialism on her own because she must import her foodstuffs. Who says this is so? The very same who are pouring concrete over the farm lands of the United States and calling it progress.

How about letting this here non-expert suggest? That if you make sensible use of your land resources in the British Isles, with your goal the sustaining of your population, you can feed your entire population and have a surplus over. (Did I hear somebody whisper, "Russia couldn't." Friend, I said sensible use of the land.) Integrated effort, self-management, you could say, is the progenitor of self-sufficiency.

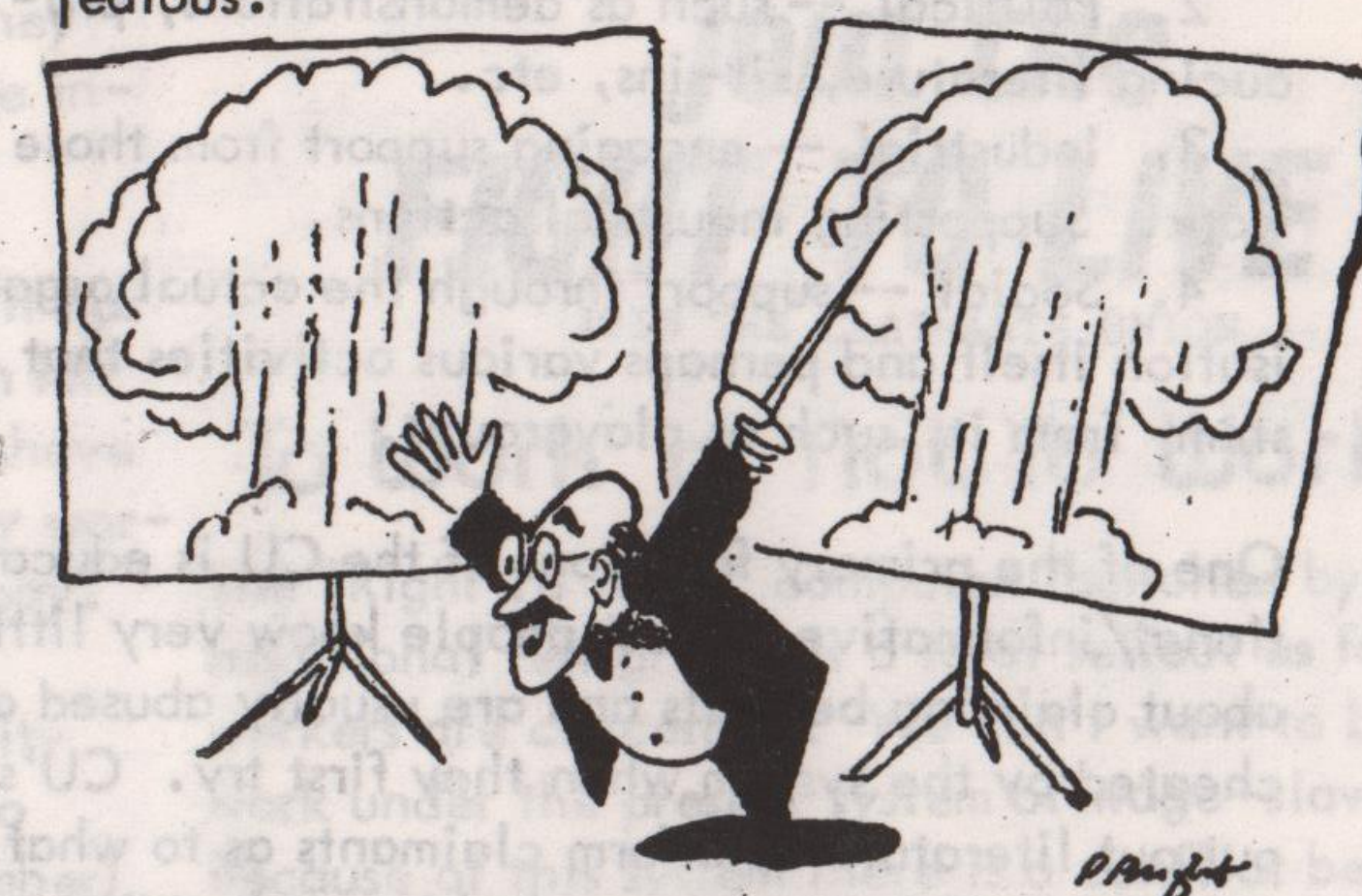
## Strange Love

Here in the US Senator Proxmire has made it public that an "arm" of "our" government has constructed a commodious underground vault at a cost of millions of dollars and has stocked it with billions of dollars of fiat currency. This is so that "business as usual" will resume after "we" and the Soviets have had our little joust at nuclear annihilation. Down here in Texas, it is said, big financial houses have buried reels and reels of microfilm in an old salt mine -- the mortgage against the Mers homestead among 'em, I'm sure, against the same eventuality. A salt mine? I should think that the geological structure in a salt mine would be subject to cave-ins. But I really don't know, and that's what they said it was. Besides, who am I to challenge the financial community's wisdom?



Your mortgage payments terminate in 2004 or the end of the world, whichever is first.

So these entrepreneurs, in a world laid to rubble, irradiated for who knows how long, with population, if any surviving, poisoned with radiation, are going to themselves survive and go right on with titles and deeds and interest rates and Cadillac and Rolls-Royces and business as usual. Because theirs is the best of all possible systems and they just know it will survive. Such is their faith. The unshakeable faith. The ultimate faith. God in His Heavens must surely be jealous.



And here we have a peaceful nuclear explosion. Please, notice the peaceful posture of this device, not like this warlike device on my right.



# Claimants Unions

Claimants Unions (CU) have been set up to give support to those outside the regular trade union movement, i.e., to low-paid workers, the unemployed, the old, the sick, one-parent families and so on. The idea is for an autonomous self-help group to confront the Social Security bureaucracy on the principle that there is strength in numbers.

They are organised on a federated basis -- local CU's run their own union in different ways but are organised nationally around the 4 basic aims of the Claimants Charter:

1. The right to an adequate income without a Means Test.
2. A socialist society in which all necessities are provided free and which is managed and controlled by the people.
3. No secrets and the right to full information.
4. No distinction between the so-called deserving and undeserving poor.

There are 4 main aspects of CU activity:

1. Fighting claims.
2. Political -- such as demonstrations, producing literature, sit-ins, etc.
3. Industrial -- engaging support from those in work. Supporting industrial actions.
4. Social -- support through the actual organisation itself and perhaps various activities that stem from it, such as playgroups.

One of the primary functions of the CU is educational/informative. Most people know very little about claiming benefits and are usually abused and cheated by the system when they first try. CU's put out literature to inform claimants as to what they are entitled, such as clothing or bedding allowances, help with payment of bills, etc. Initially these demands are made to the local SS

office who will then send one of their officers to investigate and determine whether, in their eyes, there is any need. Because of the well-noted attitude of SS officers that the money they give out they virtually regard as their own, they are extremely reluctant to grant these needs payments. If your claim is refused you are allowed to appeal to a Tribunal but although they are said to be independent, they are in fact just part of the same system. Their decisions are made on a discretionary basis. They have no legal status and are not, therefore, bound to recognise precedents. In most cases they back up the decisions of the SS officers.

## Discretion & Discrimination

Despite what most people may imagine, supplementary benefit is NOT an automatic legal right for all. Only old-age pensioners have a legal right to a minimum level of income -- all other payments are discretionary. Schedule 2 Paragraph 4(1)(b) of the 1966 Supplementary Benefit Act states:

"Supplementary Allowance can be reduced below the amount so calculated or may be withdrawn."

While all claimants realise that their benefit may be reduced or terminated, they are never informed that emergency payments, lump sum grants, and special weekly additions are available. This is where CU's can help with information.

Governments are always saying that we (the workers) are to blame for rising prices and unemployment because of continuous pay rise demands: "One man's pay rise is another's price rise". But this is not true. Bosses are trying to regain their

once-high profit shares in relation to the total national income. Wage rises were, in the capitalists' terms, "threatening" and so unemployment and economic recession are deliberately created, money wages are held more or less constant, but prices rise, so real wages fall, and so on. (See National Income and Expenditure figures, O.E.C.D. Report: INFLATION, THE PRESENT PROBLEM. There is no economic slump. That's a fantasy of the media to frighten us into being submissive.

## Devious Ways & Means

The whole Social Security system is designed to make it difficult to claim what miserable pit-tances there are in an effort to force us back to work as quickly as possible, and to this end they employ various devices such as the Means Test and "Retraining Centres".

The use of the Means Test means that before you can claim any benefit you must provide a great deal of evidence and information about your income, expenditure, and personal details of family circumstances. The information you provide is NOT treated as confidential. SS officers contact other agencies behind your back -- police, doctors, probation officers, neighbours, etc. Hundreds of special investigators are paid to spy on us -- they question neighbours, watch the house and follow people who come and go.

Secret codes govern the payment of Supplementary Benefit and neither the claimants nor other members of the public are allowed to see these since they are covered by the Official Secrets Act -- the infamous "A Code" is 900 pages long!

Moreover, written explanations of how benefit has been calculated are not normally available which makes it impossible to check what deductions have been made and for what reasons. Imagine any working person not getting a wage slip with her pay!

If the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) think that you've been out of work too long, or if you're a "trouble maker" (CU member) they can send you to a "Rehabilitation and Retraining Centre". A nice name for a modern ver-

sion of the workhouse. You can be forced to attend (under Section 12 of the 1966 Act) and if you refuse, they will cut off your benefit.

The "Industrial Misconduct Rule" is another way to reduce payments. Virtually anyone who is sacked or leaves a job "without just cause" is refused unemployment benefit for 6 weeks. If the person tries to claim supplementary benefit then a deduction of approximately 40% is made which ensures that claimants (and their family) are forced to live well below subsistence level. Many people are refused benefit -- those with no fixed address are usually turned away. If they live in a doss house their money is normally given to the warden to take care of. People under 16 are not allowed to claim, even if they have a child to look after. Strikers cannot claim a full allowance (only for their family, if any), thus the SS also act as strike-breakers.



## To Work or Not To Work

The "Right To Work" campaign launched by the traditional left groups is a total sellout as far as workers are concerned. We don't want to beg for work under the present system of wage-slavery. Because of this system there is a conflict between what is produced and what is needed, that is, there is a great need for more housing and public trans-



port, but these things aren't profitable so they're not produced. Instead we have to work in armaments factories or in building office blocks which make money by standing empty.

The belief in the "Work Ethic" (that it is morally better to work than not to, on which the Right To Work campaign is based) is a very useful weapon for the bosses. They use it, along with the very real fear of the hardships of unemployment, to keep us in unhealthy, low-paid, useless labour. And also to keep us from questioning the way society -- and in particular the way work in that society -- is organised.

Malemployment, arising out of the capitalist economic system, now dwarfs the problem of unemployment. Millions of people are engaged in useless or even harmful work -- the arms industry, space program, advertising, etc. Why is it that

top DJ's can earn £50,000 per year when hospital workers are low paid? The CU movement tries to challenge the whole nature and purpose of "work" in this society with their demand for "A Living Income -- Job Or No Job". A demand for a minimum income for all with no differentiation on any grounds, whether race, sex, or age.

#### ONCE AGAIN -- ORGANISE

The most important task of the movement is organisation. In trying to get people together to stand up and fight for themselves. There is no way that these demands can be met in this system, but only in an egalitarian society, as defined in the CU charter.

#### IRIS MILLS

## Where the Sun Always Shone

According to the daily press and news broadcasts, Africa is either nationalist struggles or Idi Amin. But apart from the guerillas and generals, what of the millions of people who appear to be invisible to the media? Here we present a ground-floor view from an IWW member who recently spent a few months in West Africa. The view is obviously not the one you get from the establishment.

The first thing that hits you is the heat, and depending exactly where you land, it is either extremely humid or dry. Africa is such a large continent that the Sahara Desert, which is 3½ million square miles of sand, forms only a small part of the continent.

It is also an area which seems to be constantly in turmoil and at the moment can be divided into three categories:

1. Those countries which have already achieved their independence, such as Morocco, Ghana, and Nigeria;

2. Those countries which are fighting for their independence such as Mauritania and Rhodesia;

3. Those countries still under white colonial rule, such as South Africa and the Spanish Sahara.

Although the latter category consists of a minority of countries, I won't deal with them now, but what is interesting to look at is those independent black African countries and what is happening there.

Ghana was one of the first countries to achieve political independence (1957). It lies between 2 and 5 degrees above the Equator in the Tropic of Cancer. It has a population the size of the Greater London area, yet has approximately the same land area as all of Britain and was one of the places that I recently visited.

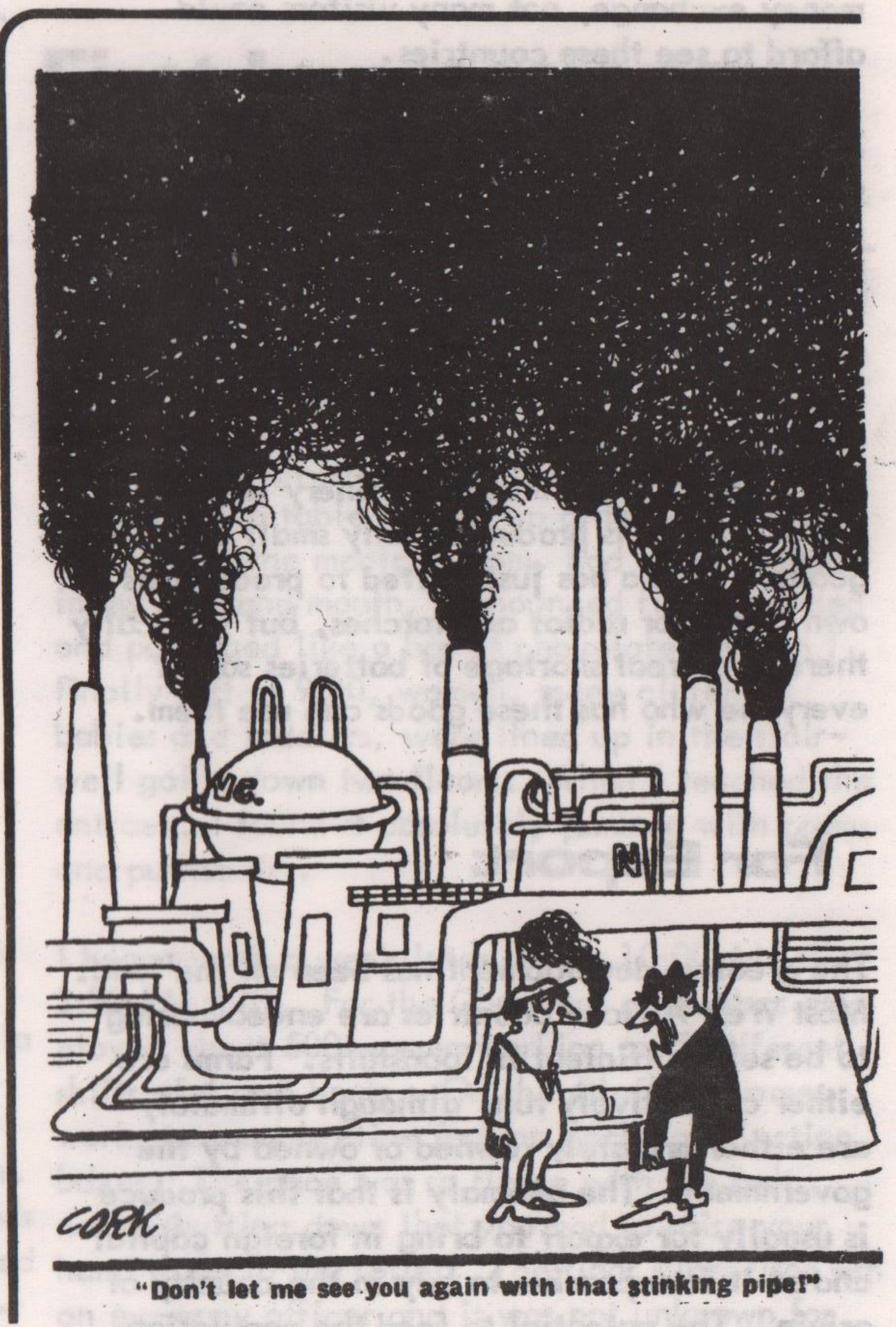
Imagine a country full of Portobello Roads and Covent Gardens. A country of street traders. Everything is out on the streets. There are few modern stores unless you are in the capital city. Economically, this country is one of the poorest of the West African nations. It has only one or two English-speaking counterparts, the rest being French-speaking. The French economy boosts up these countries somewhat, but the British economy doesn't or can't boost up the English-speaking nations. Of course, Nigeria has oil and there are an increasing number of rich Nigerians. But the working people who form the mass of people in all these countries have been living the same way for many years. Picture a family of five or six living in two rooms held together by mud walls and corrugated iron for the roof. Work begins when the sun comes up and finishes when the sun goes down. Only some office and white collar workers in the cities now have better working hours.

The western industrial bureaucratic way of doing things is very much in evidence. Try getting a re-entry visa or a visa for another country and inevitably you come up against the nation's number one racket -- bribery and corruption. It could take several weeks and a lot of your money to get anything done. This doesn't apply only to whites as everyone is subject to the same pressures.

Ever tried digging a road for 12 hours a day in temperatures over 100 degrees F.? It seems that no-where is labour so cheap as in the African states. It is cheap despite the influence of what have been called strong labour unions because the ultimate power of most independent nations is in the hands of a military dictatorship. And the generals and colonels are well off with nice houses and servants. The most

popular car in Africa is -- not the Renault -- but the Mercedes 220S. Of course, it is not working people who have them. They have to use public transport which means about one bus in two hours -- if any comes at all. Every thing gets on that bus and they usually travel dangerously overloaded. Of course you can always travel by tro-tro (the name "wagons") and most working people do -- a sort of cheap taxi service.

Bearing in mind that consumer goods are fairly limited, you must realise that the average annual wage is about £300 and some people earn even less, others slightly more. Bear in mind also that certain foodstuffs are very expensive (meat, beef and chicken, in particular). Most people live on a basic





diet of yams, rice, and fish, plus the local village dishes. Most of the population of Africa lives in villages and not the larger urban areas.

You don't have to be in Africa long before you realise that most people think you must be rich in order to get out there. Consequently, you usually pay more for most things. There is a very high rate of inflation there and this makes survival very expensive for everyone -- even tourists! Inflation in Nigeria at the end of 1975 was supposed to have reached 80% with the consequence that the cost of living was more than that in England. In Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, the cost of living is about the same as in New York! If it wasn't for the black market in money exchange, not many visitors could afford to see these countries.

So, how is this affecting the working people of these countries? Considering that most people live in the rural areas, they inevitably work on the land. Few work in factories because the building of industry cannot be financed at this time by the black countries themselves. Most industry began with colonisation by the British, French, Dutch, and Germans, and much machinery is either out of date or is producing only small consumer goods. Ghana has just started to produce its own transistor radios and torches, but ironically there is a great shortage of batteries so not everyone who has these goods can use them.

## For Export

The greatest development has been on the land. Most West African countries are endeavouring to be self-sufficient in foodstuffs. Farms are either collectively run, although ultimately are either privately-owned or owned by the government. The anomaly is that this produce is usually for export to bring in foreign capital and so it is expensive to buy in the country of origin. The potential to feed the population

with cheap wholesome food is there, though. It's just that the interests of working people do not seem to be at the top of the government's agenda.

Under the military dictatorships colonels and generals are ultimately in charge of all modes of production, even though they haven't the basic knowledge of how things are run. There are massive propaganda programs. Of course, you need a radio to hear them, but the media seems to be quite effective in promoting "black nationalism". The consequence is that although strikes (which are not permissible) do occur, they are broken very quickly. Workers are sacked and just not re-employed. If you criticize government policy you are likely to be thrown into prison. So-called "justice" involves the handing out of severe penalties for the most insignificant of "crimes". Working people are kept in their place by repression of a Spanish or South African variety. In other words, it is unhealthy to open your mouth if you are going to be critical.

## Boss Swap

So where does Africa go from here? The political and economic situation in most countries is such that they are trying to be totally independent on the one hand, but must rely on outside economic help, mostly from the Western and Eastern bloc countries. Their strides towards black nationalism are inevitably becoming repression of their own people, but that only illustrates the fact that under imposed government working people can never be free. The absence of colonial rule has meant only that, for the most part, a black ruling class has been able to take the place of a white ruling class. And as long as economic help must be sought from other countries, the black nationalists must be able to keep the working class in line. The truth is that under capitalism -- no matter what colour the bosses might be -- working people will be tied to wage slavery.

**PAUL SHELLARD**

# LIFE ON MARS

This is an account of my experiences as a temporary employee of Mars Ltd. during the summers of 1975 and 1976. Since I don't have ready answers to the problems of temporary workers, this article will be more of a narrative than an in-depth analysis. Temporary work -- especially seasonal work -- is usually performed by students and women with families, people whose commitments don't allow them to seek regular employment for the money they need. Whether or not their families will have a holiday or a good Christmas depends on their annual short-term employment. And because many of the women have a definite goal in mind, this usually helps them to endure poor working conditions and low pay. They think to themselves that it will be over in so many weeks and if they don't stick it out their children won't get the bicycles they've been dreaming about, the house won't get the new windows it needs, and so on.

Mars Ltd. is based on the Slough Trading Estate in Buckinghamshire, but for the past ten years they have leased the Bay Tree Mill in Middleton, Lancashire, for the packing of its Christmas lines. The Confectionary Division is one of the three largest confectionary manufacturers in the UK (along with Cadbury-Schweppes and Rowntree-Macintosh). Mars is also a multinational company which began in the United States and it now has operations in France, Germany, Holland, Australia and connections in other countries as well. For instance, some of the pet products packaged at their Halifax subsidiary are manufactured in Spain. They produce many different lines of prepared foods such as Uncle Ben's Rice and Yeoman Brand Mashed Potatoes and also have pet food lines such as Kal-

Kan. A few of their other operations in the UK are Pet Foods, Melton Mowbray, Dornay Foods, Kings Lynn, and Thomas's, Halifax. Their plants are serviced by 4-Square Vending, a catering concern owned by Mars as well. But now to the story of "LIFE ON MARS".

## First Impressions

In July, 1975 I saw a large ad in the local paper for temporary help to pack chocolates for Christmas. The ad said to apply after 9:00 AM on certain days the following week. On the scheduled day I arrived at the mill at 8:50 AM, but was already 35th in line for an interview! After filling out an application and moving up 35 places, I was finally given a short interview, shunted from table to table to pick up different forms, directed to the medical room, had things poked in my ears and mouth, pronounced fit, processed and packaged like a bar of chocolate. When I finally left at 9:30, women, many clutching babies and toddlers, were lined up in the stairwell going down two floors. When I reached the entrance, I found it absolutely jammed with prams and pushchairs.

I began work a week later on the 10:00 AM til 2:00 PM shift. For the Christmas pack Mars employed about 500 women working on 5 different shifts of 4 or 8 hours. On the 4th floor women worked assembly-line fashion packing selection boxes. The pace was so fierce with the belt never shutting down that you had to raise your hand to go to the toilet. The floor supervisor was an ex-army officer and it was not unknown for



young girls to be reduced to tears by her commands.

On the 5th floor there were 6 lines for the assembly of Christmas stockings. Each line had 20 packers, 4 servicers to put up the boxes of chocolates for the packers, and several women working at the end of the belt passing the stockings, redoing the rejects, and packing the products into cases.

There is a whole hierarchy of supervisors at Mars, distinguishable by their uniforms. Supervisors (female) wore overalls and turbans. Floor supervisors had red stripes and line supervisors had green stripes. There was also a quality control supervisor with blue stripes. The plant managers wore white shirts and trousers. All the managers -- including the "big boys" who occasionally came up from Slough -- had their Christian names sewn onto their uniforms as it is Mars' friendly policy that all personnel are on a first-name basis. We workers wore white overalls and white caps.

On the first day of work we were herded into the canteen to get a pep talk and hear how good it is to work for Mars. We were told that tea would be 1 pence dearer this year because the company had paid out £10,000 in subsidised tea the previous year and could no longer afford it. Part-time employees were told they couldn't get dinners in the canteen as the company could not afford subsidised dinners for everyone. As if we could get a dinner finished in our ten-minute tea break! We were reminded that "our efforts can contribute to the pleasures of many children at Christmas" and urged by the manager to "make this year's pack the most successful ever" and sent out to the trenches -- I mean, benches.

## Christmas in July

I was given a position on the No. 1 Small Stocking Line and set to work. The operation involved stuffing 7 different items into a net stocking, folding a "header card" and stapling it onto the stocking and throwing the finished stocking onto the belt. We would need to do more than two a minute to reach the production quota. We were given a

gauze sleeve for our arm and a nylon glove for the hand used to stuff the stockings. My god, I thought, isn't this carrying health precautions a bit far, considering the chocolates are already wrapped, but I soon discovered that the sleeve and glove were to protect us from the scratchy net of the stockings. However, it's near impossible to handle the glossy wrappers of the product with nylon fingertips, so we had to snip the tips off the gloves. This meant that torn and bleeding cuticles were an occupational hazard.

The production target was 1000 stockings per day for full-time and 450 to 500 for part-time packers. Of course we weren't expected to do the full quota right off. For the first week our supervisor came by at the close of the shift, telling us how many we packed, what an improvement over the previous day's work, and smilingly urged us on. All the supervisors were nice and friendly in the beginning . . .

At the end of the shift, as the minute hand approached 2:00 PM we were all prancing nervously at our positions, like race horses at the starting gate, waiting for the OK to leave from Big Bertha, the floor supervisor. We didn't dare leave our places until she bellowed out, "ALL RIGHT, GIRLS" and then all hell broke loose as we rushed into the locker room, tore off our overalls, and rushed down the steps and out. Most of us had to get home before school finished to collect our children, get some shopping in before that for tea, and so on.

As the pack continued, there was a fairly high turnover of personnel. Only a few women were actually sacked for not producing enough, most quit first. Sometimes the faster packers would help out the women next to them.

1975 was supposed to have been a bad year for Mars. First, the faltering economy had caused many of their customers to reduce orders, then they couldn't get certain shipments on time, and in August, a heat wave swept across England. Needless to say, if it's hot outside it's even hotter on the 5th floor of an old mill and those Mars Bars got softer and softer as the temperature

rose. Our fingers sank into every chocolate bar we touched and the bags of Treets were sweating worse than we were. (This refers to the coconut oil condensing on the surface of the sweet and this condition is ideal for maggots.) The Quality Control supervisor ran around with her thermometer and the supervisors assured us that it wasn't really as hot as we thought. Finally, the line was shut down and we were sent home. This happened on the following two days until the weather cooled off a bit. Incidentally, this situation did not develop in 1976 although that summer was even hotter. During the winter the company had extra ventilation installed to keep the chocolates cool.

We were made to pay for our time off, though. The Christmas pack works to a very close schedule and after that management took a hard line on turning out work and shouts from the supervisors of "GET ON WITH YOUR PACKING" were frequently heard.

## Working Without Really Trying

In the face of the ever-increasing speed-up many packers were forced to find other ways to turn out the necessary quota of work. Our work was counted by the number of header cards signed out to us each day. At the shift's end, the supervisor collected any unused cards, so women found other ways of getting rid of the cards besides stapling them onto stockings. About mid-September, we noticed that the belt seemed to be moving slower and slower until one day it actually came to a halt. The charge-hand ran over, took apart the top end of the belt and discovered scores of header cards chewed up by the belt's mechanism. So many had been dropped underneath the belt they had actually clogged the mechanism.

Several women pushed bins around all day collecting our empty boxes. On particularly hectic days some of our cards accidentally got thrown out with the rubbish. Somehow the supervisor saw a number of cards being baled with the boxes and asked the woman doing the bins to watch for

packers throwing away cards. She assured the supervisor that she'd never seen anyone doing such a thing and then came over to warn us. "I'm not going to do their dirty work for them," she told us, "Let them find out themselves."

As management continued to speed up the work, the full-time packers were told that anyone not producing at least 1000 stockings per day would be out the door. Since a somewhat lower hourly production rate was accepted from the part-time packers, the full-timers demanded more money and began a slow-down. Those 1000 stockings represented (in 1975) a retail value of £450.00. The women earned £5.41 per day, or just over ½p a stocking. The plant manager was scared and met with them, but when a manager came up from Slough, the women weren't organised to press through their demands. Their biggest mistake was in not trying to involve the rest of us.

But management really was scared. All the work done is for orders already sold and in the highly-competitive food industry, especially in seasonal work -- any delay can mean a big loss in profit.

So, as if by magic, management suddenly decided that staff sales would be free (previously, we were able to purchase bags of rejected chocolates. What wasn't sold to us went for hog slop.) and we even got free dog and cat food from one of their subsidiaries.

But no real organisation developed from the full-time packers attempt at winning a wage increase. The season was nearing completion and after this management became very solicitous of our welfare, regularly strolling along the lines to exchange pleasantries with the packers. At the end of each season all employees have a short interview with a member of staff. Our work is appraised by our immediate supervisor and we are asked to make any criticisms or suggestions to improve our jobs. No one has ever known of any of the suggestions being acted upon, though. It is mainly a public relations play by management to have us leave the season's work with a friendly attitude towards the company.



In May of the following year I received a letter warning me that "Christmas Is Coming" and that Mars would be contacting me about working in the summer. Early in July I received a second letter with the hours and wages of this year's pack and told when to come for an interview. So, the next summer found me again at Mars, this time working the evening shift.

The deteriorating economic condition was reflected in this year's workforce being reduced by almost one-half, and the attitude of management had hardened. Our line began with four servicers to put up chocolates for twenty packers and ended with two, and these were expected to sweep up at night as well. When one of the women complained, she was reminded that there were others outside waiting for her job.

A few of us decided to write an information leaflet, recalling the events of last year and outlining some of our problems. The leaflet read:

"We're now well into the Christmas pack and management has begun to tighten the screws. When we started work, John Owen mentioned that Mars had to tighten up because of a drop in sales. . . and of course, our higher wages must be countered by an increase in productivity. . .

"All the work we do is for orders already sold, and in the highly-competitive food industry, and especially in this type of seasonal work, any delay may mean a big loss in profit. . .

"And just like last year we get the same speed-up week after week. Some of us have been warned to double production or get out. We've got to flog ourselves to make more profit for Mars -- we get the same pay if we pack 200 stockings or 600 . . .

"If we complain we're reminded that there are more outside waiting for our job. Management comes round and asks, "How are you getting on?" but they don't really want to know. They assume the image of satisfaction is reality.

"If we all act together we can get better conditions for ourselves. Resist speed-up. Don't pack even one stocking over the target -- it only makes more work for those of us who are servicers and checkers,

and we get no more money for it. Every time we reach the production target, management's thanks is to raise it. If they want more production, they'll have to pay for it. We should get more in staff sales, and free, like last year. They're only rejects the company can't sell anyway. Why should they take even 20p of our wage for what would otherwise be pig food?

"There are plenty of other things we should aim at improving and we would benefit greatly by acting together. There needs to be a decent union for food workers -- help us to form it by contacting the committee to organise Foodstuff Workers Industrial Union at The One Big Union Centre. . ."

The leaflet was distributed by some sympathetic friends, and there was quite a reaction. Most of the comments were favourable, but of course, there are always a few who think they have something in common with their bosses. At break-time the leaflets were very much in evidence as women took them out to read and discuss them. And, management suddenly became very concerned about our comfort, and fearing that the evening might be a trifle too hot for us, provided free cold drinks for us.

Later that night one of the managers from Slough came in, trying to look casual as he walked up and down the rows to assess the situation. What a laugh we had about that, thinking of him getting the first train north, a limousine full of Mars bars waiting at the station to rush him over to Middleton where there's trouble at the mill.

The next day several women telephoned the number on the leaflet to make inquiries and one actually visited The OBU Centre to get more information. So, we decided to write another leaflet advertising a meeting. The second leaflet read:

"We've all had time to think about the leaflet distributed on Tuesday. Many women agreed with the contents of the leaflet, others did not, but we're sure everyone has some suggestion to make about improving our jobs. And management certainly took notice -- thanks for the free orange

drink, Roger and Les. Speaking of management, wasn't it nice of John Owen to rush up and see us on Tuesday night?

"Now, we're all thinking, 'What can we do on a temporary job like this?' but many of us find ourselves back at Mars year after year, so isn't it about time we take action?"

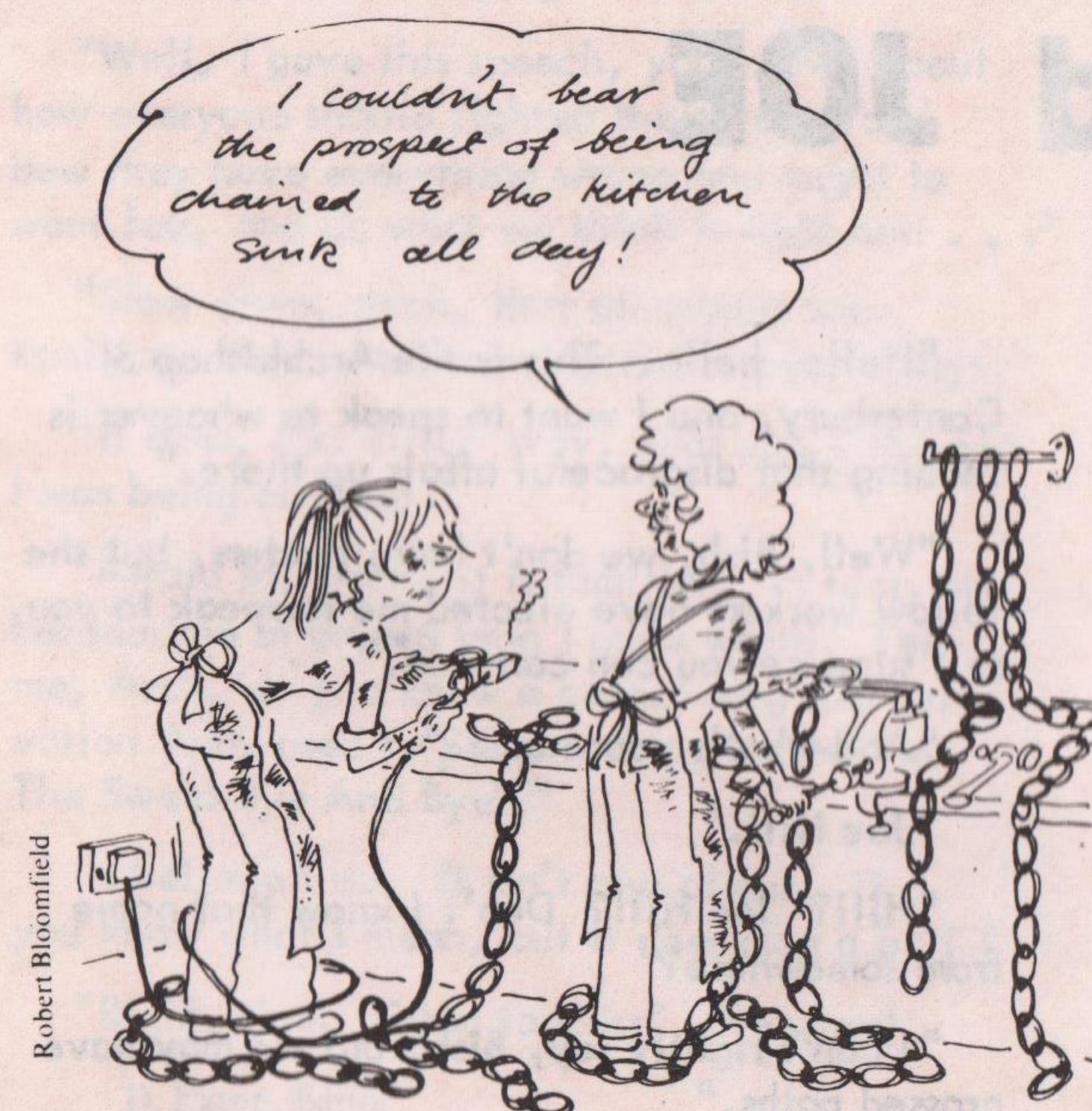
On Saturday, the day of the meeting, sadly, only a handful of women turned up and they were clearly disappointed and discouraged at the attendance. They all thought the place would be packed out, and felt that in the short time left to us, so few of

us could not possibly get anything organised. So fed-up was one woman, in fact, that she quit the job the following week. After talking for an hour or so, we decided to try to spread the idea of each line choosing a delegate to go in to management, and if this did not actually come about, to try at least to keep up interest as much as possible. Two of the women thought it would be worthwhile to lay some groundwork for the following year, and we exchanged names and addresses.

So, no organisation developed from the leaflets and meeting. The pack continued for a few more weeks and then was over. And that's how things have been going on for a long time. 1976 was the 11th year Mars had run a Christmas pack at Middleton. By way of a postscript, 1977 has seen even more drastic reductions in the Middleton pack. The company has opened only one floor for this year's production and have not even bothered to advertise in the local papers for help, but have instead only contacted employees of previous years. In addition, the pack has started up almost a month later than previous years.

Anticipating a drop in sales, however, Mars confectionary division has diversified into the toy market. If you've noticed the new Remus pack kits in supermarkets and newsagents, they are being produced by Mars. And The Guardian put it very nicely in an article last August:

"The Remus display stand could become as tempting to the shopping mother as the sweet display at the supermarket check-out but with prices from 29p to 79p she can at least come away happy in the thought that her purchase won't lead to extra visits to the dentist."



SUBSCRIPTIONS : Please send £1 to:  
The Industrial Unionist,  
116 Chadderton Way,  
Oldham,  
Lancs.



## DayTripper

A few weeks after the Christmas pack ended, some of us went on a company-sponsored coach trip to the factory at Slough. The manager gave us a tour of the works and proudly showed us their new offices being constructed at a cost of £1½ million. Their old offices were far from satisfactory since being near the actual factory, they were far too noisy.



We then went into the works and were nearly deafened by the noise of machinery. When settled in their comfortable new offices, I wonder if they'll give a thought to those left behind?

I had heard that all workers at Slough received "equal pay". While touring the factory I was surprised to see men doing the jobs normally associated with women, such as lightweight packing. Sometimes when firms are forced to pay women the same wages as men, they just stop hiring women. . .

ELAINE MIDDLEWEEK

## ARCHIE and JOE

It is widely rumoured that the Archbishop of Canterbury has a direct line to that glorious land in the sky. However, during a recent call, there seemed to be a problem in getting through, and the Archbishop eventually discovered that the workers were on strike. He was finally connected to an emergency service manned by some of the strikers after insisting that his was a priority call. The following exchange is a transcript of the ensuing conversation:

"Hello, hello. This is the Archbishop of Canterbury, and I want to speak to whoever is leading that disgraceful affair up there."

"Well, Bish, we don't have leaders, but the fellow workers have elected me to speak to you, so I suppose you can carry on."

"And what's your name?"

"Joe Hill."

"Hill? Joe Hill? Don't I know that name from somewhere?"

"I can't rightly say, Bish, but we may have crossed paths."

"Oh, well, never mind. But I wish you wouldn't call me Bish. I mean, it's not very nice, is it?"

"OK, Arch, so what's your problem?"

"I've been trying to get through to HIM. It's essential I hand in my report."

"I'll tell you what, Arch, give it to us and when this little tussle is over, we'll pass it on."

"I don't know about that. After all, it's a bit irregular. In any case, what is all the trouble about?"

"Oh, it's an argument about rates in the wing shop, Arch. The bosses have been trying to cut them so we're standing firm with our fellow workers."

"I see. In the circumstances I suppose I'll have to leave the report with you. I just wanted to report that I've been laying it on them here and that it seems to have gone down well. At least the papers think so."

"Hold on a minute, Arch, just to keep us in the picture, and so we'll get the report right, what have you been laying on them?"

"Well, I gave this speech, you know, about how everyone should tighten their belts, and how they have everything wrong and ought to want less, and do what we think is right and . . ."

"Slow down, Arch, that all sounds very familiar. Sort of takes me back to the old days."

"It does, Mr. Hill? Why, dear me, I thought I was being original."

"Afraid so, Arch, it is familiar. In fact, it reminds me of an old song I once wrote. Tell me, Arch, do you know a gospel song the Salvation Army used to play, a thing called "In The Sweet Bye And Bye"?"

"I believe I do. It isn't one of ours, if you know what I mean, but it does ring a bell."

"Right, then, listen to this:" (He sings)

D. Exton, Editor  
4 Upper Lane  
Northowram, Halifax

Long-haired preachers come out every night,  
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right;  
But when asked about something to eat  
They will answer with voices so sweet:

You will eat, bye and bye,  
In that glorious land in the sky.  
Work and Pray, live on hay,  
You'll get pie in the sky when you die.

"See what I mean about that familiar message, Arch?"

"Mr. Hill, you're being a little unfair. I think we better forget the report. I'll check it in later, when things are back to normal."

"Suit yourself, Arch. Sorry to have disappointed you."

"Yes, it was a little upsetting. Anyway, good-bye, Mr. Hill. Perhaps we'll come across each other again someday?"

"Could be, Arch, could be. And do me a favour, will you? Try laying a real message on them down there."

"And what's that, Mr. Hill?"

"ORGANISE! Signing off now, Arch. Yours for the works."

The transcript ends at this point. I have it on good authority that it's completely authentic. The last report on the dispute up there was that the bosses had backed down and rates in the wing shop were being increased rather than reduced. Which just goes to show what a little organisation (into ONE BIG UNION) can do.

JIM BURNS

THE HISTORY OF THE IWW IN CANADA

New, illustrated, pamphlet edition;  
35p, including post, from:

Elaine Godina  
116 Chaddernton Way  
Oldham, Lancs.