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Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"Order springs from the free activity of all."

—P. J. PROUDHON

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Threepence

White v. Black in Central Africa Job Discrimination

ONE of the more melancholy aspects of the "colonial scene" is the economic division between black and white workers rigidly adhered to by the white man fearful of African economic advancement. Ironically, it is often the employer who recognises the need to satisfy African economic and political aspirations. The reason for his "wise judgment" may be purely materialistic, but African workers are not going to probe too deeply into motives if employers see fit to increase the size of their wage packets commensurate with European workers doing the same job.

Recent televised interviews of white workers in Southern and Northern Rhodesia, produced without exception, the same reaction. A few were "all for" the African but drew the line when it came to mixing socially, and certainly none of them felt that Africans were ready for political responsibility or entitled to higher wages.

The African is accused of being a lazy and indifferent worker, which is hardly surprising since his reward for hard labour is ten times lower than the average white worker, (quite apart from the different cultural background with its traditional slower tempo of life).

But whatever justification the white worker puts forward for the unequal status of the African he cannot conceal the real issue. A handful of skilled and unskilled European workers enjoy a standard of living and a social status far ahead of anything they could achieve back "in the old country". It is therefore in their interests, as they see it, to keep millions of Africans at a depressed economic level, without training facilities for skilled jobs and with the minimum of political rights.

Here and there a concession is made by the organised white workers accompanied by a clause or two compiled to prevent the African get-

ting too many "privileges", as for example the recent proposals accepted by the Northern Rhodesian Mineworkers' Union representing daily paid European workers in the copper mines.

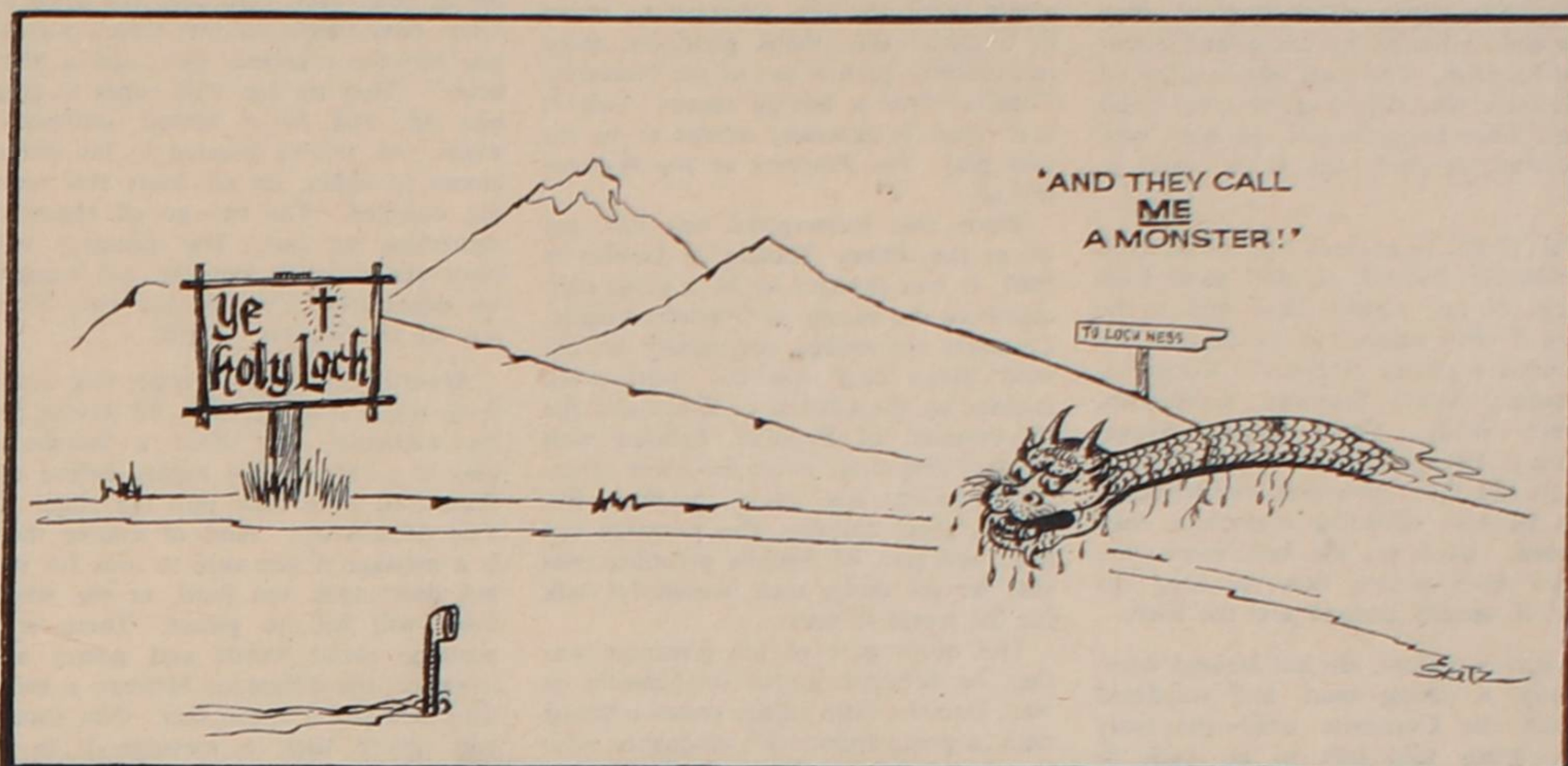
The proposals made after a year's negotiations between the union and the six mining companies in the Mining Joint Industrial Council only affect skilled jobs!

The aim is to set up a single wage structure from labourers starting at 8s. per day plus bonus to operators, so far exclusively European, earning ten times that much.

Europeans in the mines have already been guaranteed that none will be laid off because of African advancement, but the possible lack of employment for their sons has been a remaining fear. To allay this the proposals include a training scheme for youths of any race, preferably the sons of employees. The scheme was carried by 1,868 votes to 1,288. Most of the votes against came from operators and few from artisans whose jobs are not threatened.

In Britain coloured workers are conditionally employed, that is their employment is subject to the numbers of jobs available, and it is understood if not actually stated in writing that white workers "come first", at any rate in industries where the unions are strong. Ostensibly the issue is not racial but is interpreted as a safeguard for "the British working man". Since most coloured workers in jobs are from the West Indies and, therefore, British subjects also, the argument is not very sound.

If the principle of preference for the indigenous subject is accepted then it must apply in Northern Rhodesia and in other colonial territories where the white man is the "foreigner". But in fact of course it



is the white man who demands and is given guarantees in colonial countries where economic and politically deprived Africans live by comparison at a staggeringly low standard.

Here the argument against equality is simply one of preference for the native Briton; in colonial countries the privileged position which the white man holds is justified by the "benefits brought by the white man" argument, with which the African should be satisfied and grateful even if he does get ten times less pay for the same job!

So far, throughout Rhodesia, the white man's policies have paid off but his power is slipping from him, and although we do not agree with the principle that because a man "belongs" to a country by accident of birth he is entitled to greater benefits than the foreigner, the African cannot be blamed if when he gets political power in Rhodesia he disregards the principles of democracy and racial equality, so long denied him.

The Lady Chatterley Trial Sense and Sensuality

SO the verdict was "Not Filthy"—or perhaps it was "Filthy but Eng. Lit."; and after thirty years *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has emerged from the Censor's underworld into the clear light of the bookshops. (It is interesting to note that, like *Lolita* and *Ulysses*, it did so about 18 months after being freed in the USA). But the six-day trial was not a resounding blow for freedom and common-sense—it was in fact (as well as being good business for the lawyers) the most splendid instance of British hypocrisy in years, and well repays examination.

The first thing to note is the recent change in the censorship law. The Obscene Publications Act of 1959 lays down four new principles—an item must be considered as a whole (no conviction for a single dirty word); it must be considered in relation to its likely public (not its possible one); it must be considered in relation to the public good (literary merit, scientific information, etc.); and expert evidence may be given

on both sides.

This is clearly an advance on the previous position, from the points of view of writers, publishers, booksellers and readers alike (though the professional pornographers are probably less happy). But the absurd old legal definition of "obscenity" still stands—that which "depraves or corrupts". This is arrant nonsense, since many things corrupt and deprave without being obscene, and many others are obscene without depraving or corrupting anyone. In fact the test is a sexual one—that which raises sexual interest or excitement—and because this is so difficult to pin down it becomes in practice that which shocks or disgusts. A central point in the issue is that no one will ever admit to being corrupted or depraved—it's always the other fellow—so that any trial for obscenity always becomes a completely unrealistic affair; quite apart from being completely absurd.

Make no mistake about the test being a sexual one. The old law couldn't deal with children's Horror Comics, although they clearly both corrupted and depraved their readers, and a special Act had to be passed to do so in 1955. Similarly books describing or advocating violence or cruelty are not affected. Sensational trash by Mickey Spillane, Peter Cheyney, Hank Janson or Ian Fleming; classics by Smollett, Rider Haggard or Kipling; *Dracula* or *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*; *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* or *Mein Kampf*—books like these are not banned because they "deprave or corrupt". One of the oddest things about our censorship is that it is illegal to stimulate activity that is not itself illegal on the one hand, but not illegal to stimulate other activity that is illegal. Murder may be exciting; fornication may not. It is a very odd business, and the deeper you go into it the odder it becomes—but this is not the place to examine why no one minds the murder at the end of *Lolita* when many people object to the seduction at the beginning.

The second thing to note is the book chosen as the first real test case under the new Act (the *Ladies Directory* doesn't count, since it wasn't a proper book but simply a list of prostitutes). Roy Jenkins, the Labour MP who did most to get the Act through Parliament (it took five years), has expressed surprise that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* should be chosen, he complains that the authorities promised they would get on with their "proper" job of chasing commercial pornography (as the liberal press is always urging them to do), and would leave works of literature alone. At this point we may laugh a hollow laugh—we could have told Mr. Jenkins at the start never to trust a policeman. In a way it serves him right, for reasons I will raise later.

Reflections on Clore, Cotton, Littler & Monopolles THE REAL RULERS

THE take-over bid made by Messrs. Cotton and Clore for the Moss Empires group has been described as a "thoroughly praiseworthy desire to upset the present monopolistic structure of the British entertainment business". The same writer (Peter Wisner in the *Sunday Times*) a week earlier, discussing the Clore-Cotton merger, declared that a decisive step had been taken "to separate the men from the boys in the British property world"

With their combined reputation, drive and financial backing—the £1,600 million assurance triumvirate of Pearl, Prudential, Legal and General being only the largest part—there can be little in the realms of the possible that they cannot afford. If 25 acres are needed, almost anywhere in the world, then 25 acres can now be obtained.

Perhaps we have not understood the meaning of the foregoing, but to us it stinks of monopoly. And we assume that having now separated the "men from the boys" in the property business, there will be more mergers among "the men" and it will be only a question of time before "the boys" go to the wall. Not that mankind will feel their loss!

Messrs. Clore and Cotton in their

Moss Empires bid were made to appear as "monopoly busters" in so far as they were trying to capture one of the two most powerful chains of theatres in this country from the grip of Mr. Prince Littler, a monopolist if ever there was one. In 1942 Mr. Littler got control of the management shares of the Stoll Theatres Corporation. A year later he bought six more theatres owned by Associated Theatre Properties. And according to "Mammon" in the *Observer*

for the rest of the forties there was a string of acquisitions—control or near control of theatres in London and the provinces, suburban music halls, catering firms, breweries, the Hooper Struve soft drink business, H. M. Tennent, the theatrical agents, and a lot more besides.

Littler's position is even stronger than it seems. Not only are some of the ancillary interests—catering, for example—probably more profitable than theatre management, and management usually more profitable than theatre ownership.

And if this were not enough he and his accountant sit on the boards of more than thirty companies

"where they meet all the other great powers of the theatre . . . It is a tight

little world and the Prince was its undisputed ruler—until last week."

That is, until Messrs. Clore and Cotton (we shall henceforth refer to them as Clotton) attacked the Prince's one weak spot: the Stoll group owned only 45 per cent. of the Ordinary Capital and 30 per cent. of the votes, in Moss. Only last year Littler had sought to put this right, for him and the Stoll, by a merger of the two, but was resisted by a substantial minority of the Moss shareholders. But what he could not achieve last year in his empire building, the intervention of the Clotton companies made possible within 48 hours. Now the Prince has acquired a working majority in Moss Empires "and a few thousand" extra votes for good measure. Paying an average of more than £2 for shares which had not risen above 15/3 this year he soon obtained the necessary 330,000 he required in Moss to control a majority of the votes. For a mere £1 million (incidentally Mr. Littler has "close relations" with Eagle Star Insurance) he was able to regain his throne as undisputed ruler, and send the Clotton boys packing.

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Price of a Free Press

THE *OBSERVER* last Sunday drew attention to the fact that for the first time since 1937 it was publishing a 40 page issue.

As a matter of interest we measured the column inches of that issue devoted to advertising. Out of 40 pages, 21½ pages were taken up by advertisements!

Now to the economics of the *Observer*. Assuming that the Trust receives 2d. per copy, the income on the 750,000 copies sold each week is £6,250. But revenue from advertisements at £1,500 a page is £32,250, that is 5 times as much as is received from the sales of the paper.

If the *Observer* dispensed with advertising and produced a 20 page issue (which would contain all the reading matter now published in the 40 page issue) production costs and profits would, we deduce, amount to say £30,000 and therefore with a circulation of 750,000 the "economic price" would be approximately 10d. a copy. A modest price to pay for a free press. But how many of the *Observer's* 750,000 readers would be prepared to buy the paper at that price?

