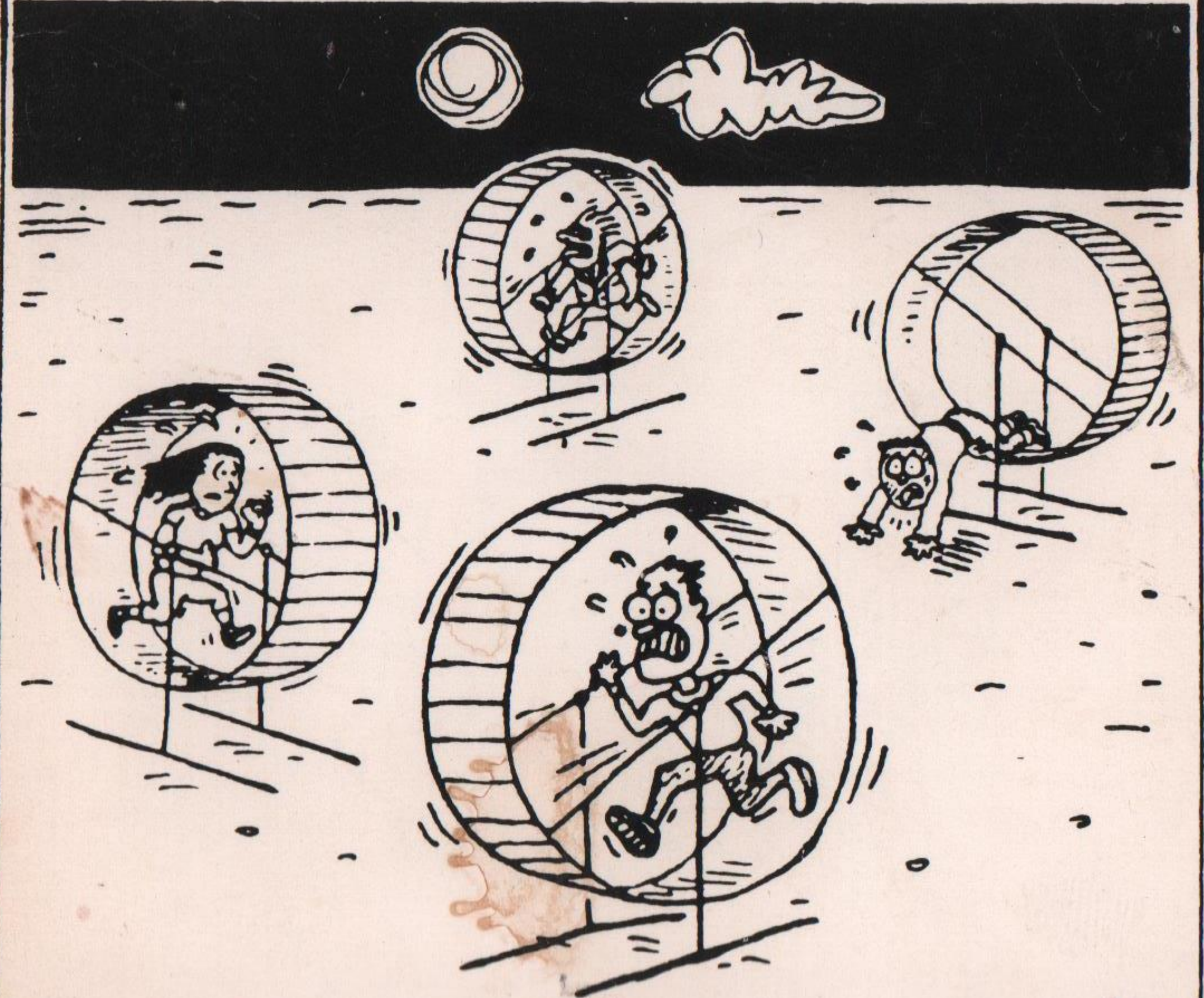


READER'S INDIGESTION

NEVER WORK!



How would you react if told that you were going to be put to sleep at the age of sixteen and woken up at the age of sixty-five ?

Your time is your life, to have some of your time taken away is to have some of your life stolen. Yet we are all robbed, and the thief is work. Our lives are dominated by work, we are either working, travelling to work, or recovering from work. How can we talk about the "free world" and its inhabitants being "free" when almost all our time is wasted by work. We are bound by landlords and mortgages as surely as any slave is bound by chains.

You may say that if we didn't work then we would all have nothing to eat and there would not be enough caves to go round. But there is a vast difference between people doing the things that need to be done and the monstrous institution that is work.

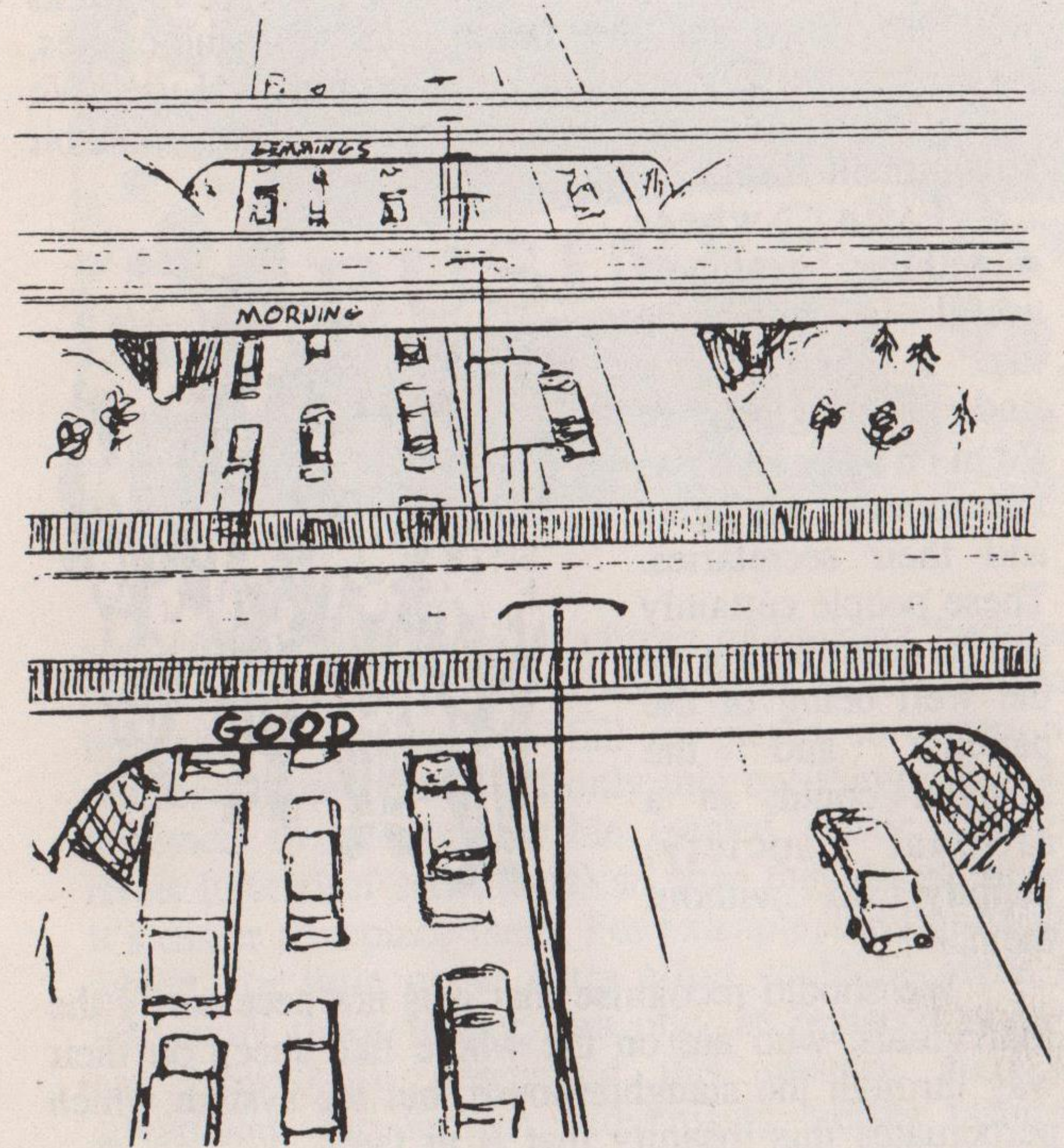


What is a pleasant pastime to one person may be a hard day's work to another, the difference being that the first has freely chosen it and does it at leisure, whereas the second must work to eat and has no choice how it is done. Very few people could honestly



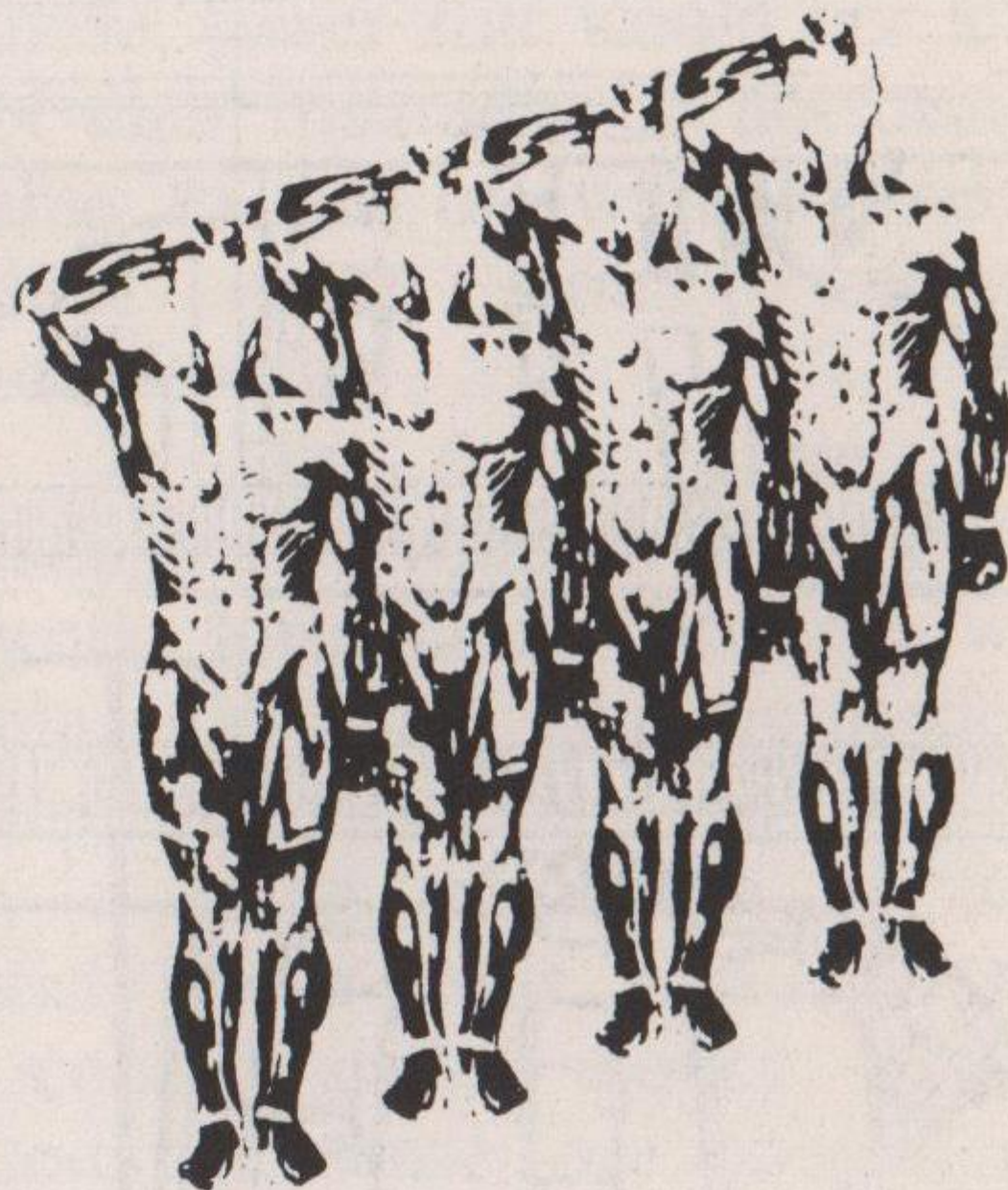
tell you that the work they are doing is what they would actually want to do were they not forced to sell their lives in return for food and somewhere to live; and of those, fewer still would not tell of their frustration in not being able to get on with it under their own terms without interference.

In the days before the industrial revolution we had to work long hours because we had no machinery to help us produce what we needed to live. Now we have, and that machinery has become so efficient that only a small proportion of the population works to satisfy those needs. And the rest, thanks to an abstract concept called money, which bears no relation to common sense, are obliged to waste their days in offices, banks and shops.



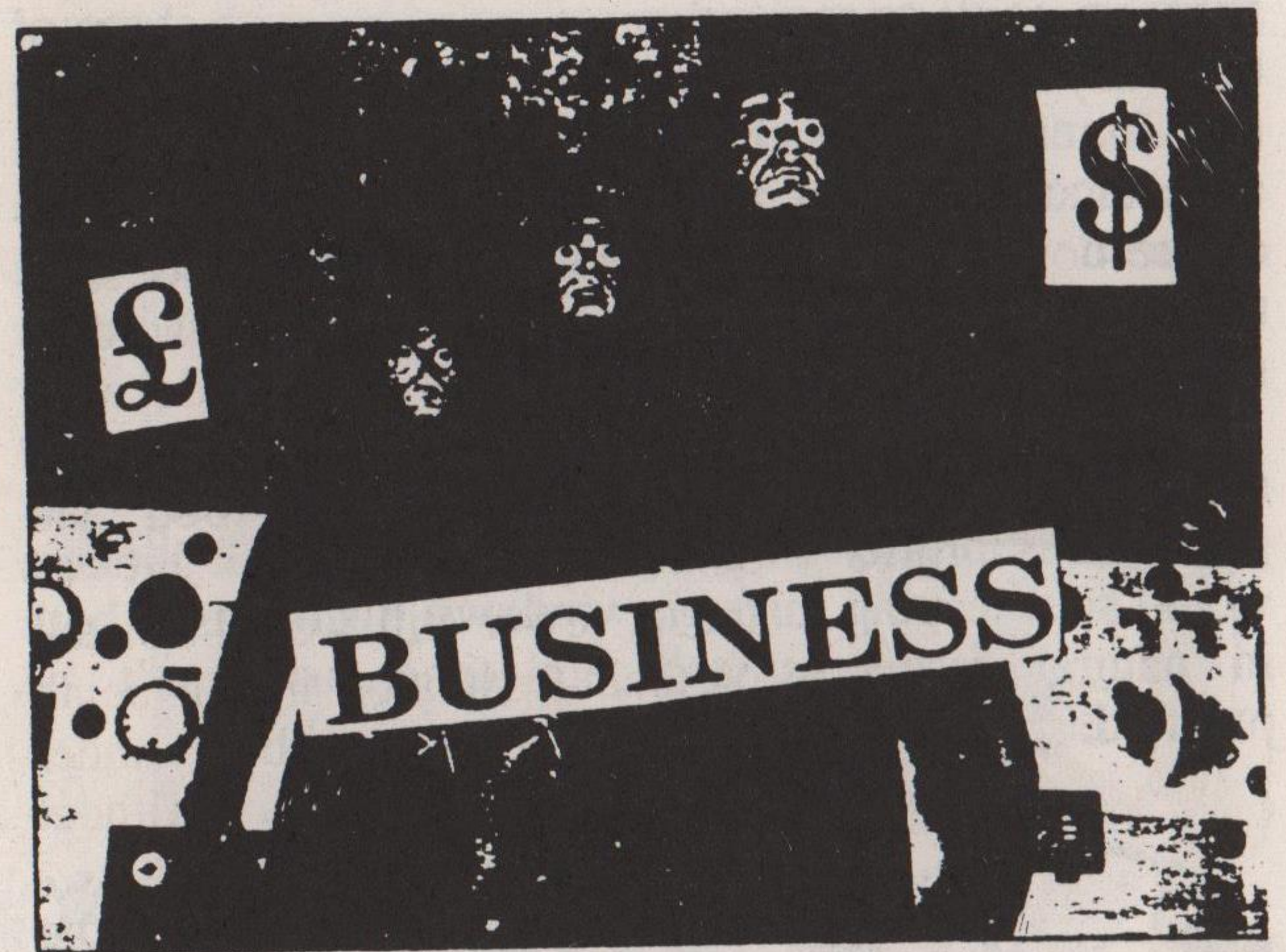
These places are undoubtedly hives of activity, people scurry about carrying piles of paper, typewriters clatter, phones ring and biros scribble. But when looked at objectively, all that is actually going on is a vast paper chase. Of course this makes sense in terms of the money system, but the people involved might as well be down on the beach making sand-castles, because what they are doing has no practical use. We can't eat invoices, wear receipts and inhabit government forms.

Even where something genuinely useful is going on like a hospital, we find a legion of administrators, bureaucrats, managers and their secretaries. These people certainly aren't contributing to the well being of the patients and the hospital could, in a rational society, happily do without them.



We should recognise that it is not necessarily the individuals, who are on the whole like sheep on their way through the slaughterhouse, but the system which perpetuates this insanity that is at fault.

Much effort is also wasted in manufacturing,



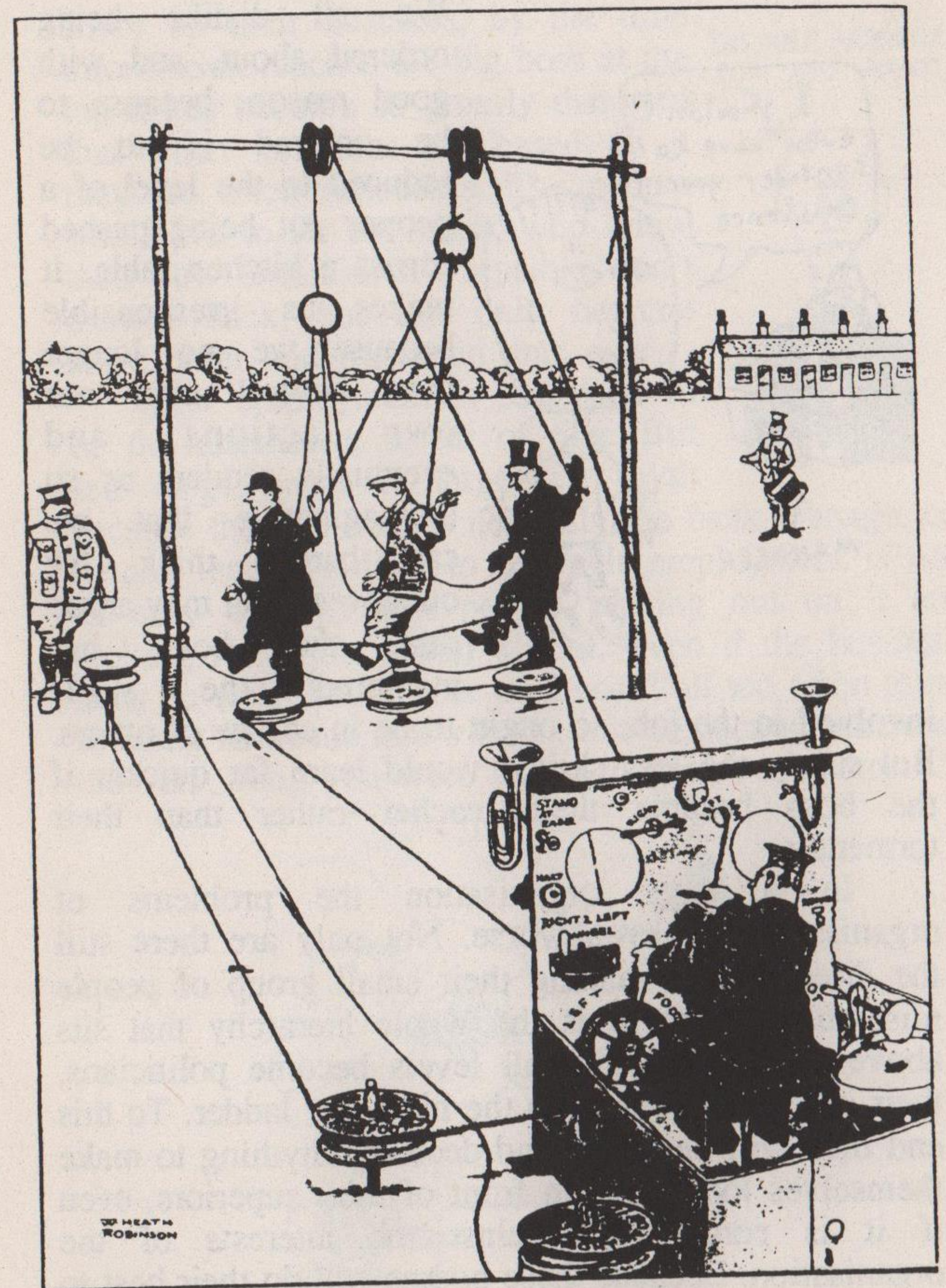
apart from the obvious examples of builders building office blocks and people making arms, much of what is made is designed to fall to pieces so as to be replaced more often. Not only this but things are also designed to be unrepairable (sealed plastic casings, rivets instead of screws etc) so once they do go wrong it's easier to replace them. For example, the light bulb, which, for little or no extra effort could be made to last many times longer, can only be replaced once it has blown. To compound this wastage there is advertising and fashion. Advertising creates fashions and fashion, apart from ensuring that all our walls are painted the same sickly hue of pastel green, puts

pressure on us to replace our possessions with those of the latest fad. In Japan it's reached such proportions that items such as bicycles, hi-fis etc have a life expectancy of only a few months before they are replaced with the latest model. This has led to a considerable island of nearly new household items growing in Tokyo bay.

Again, this all makes perfect sense to the money system. Were we not continually replacing our possessions profits would plummet and stock brokers would start leaping through windows. Such waste, both in natural resources and our time just can't be justified.



Apart from wasting, in one way or another, almost every minute of our lives, one of works most obnoxious features is the way it is organised. The current organisation of work can only be described as fascist, a dictatorship of the boss, where the person doing the work has little or no say in how it's done.





We all dislike being ordered about, and with good reason, because to be ordered is to be reduced to the level of a pepper pot being pushed across a kitchen table. It makes us irresponsible because we no longer have control over our own actions, and eventually renders us so unimaginative that we can barely think for ourselves. You may argue that the boss has mastered the skills

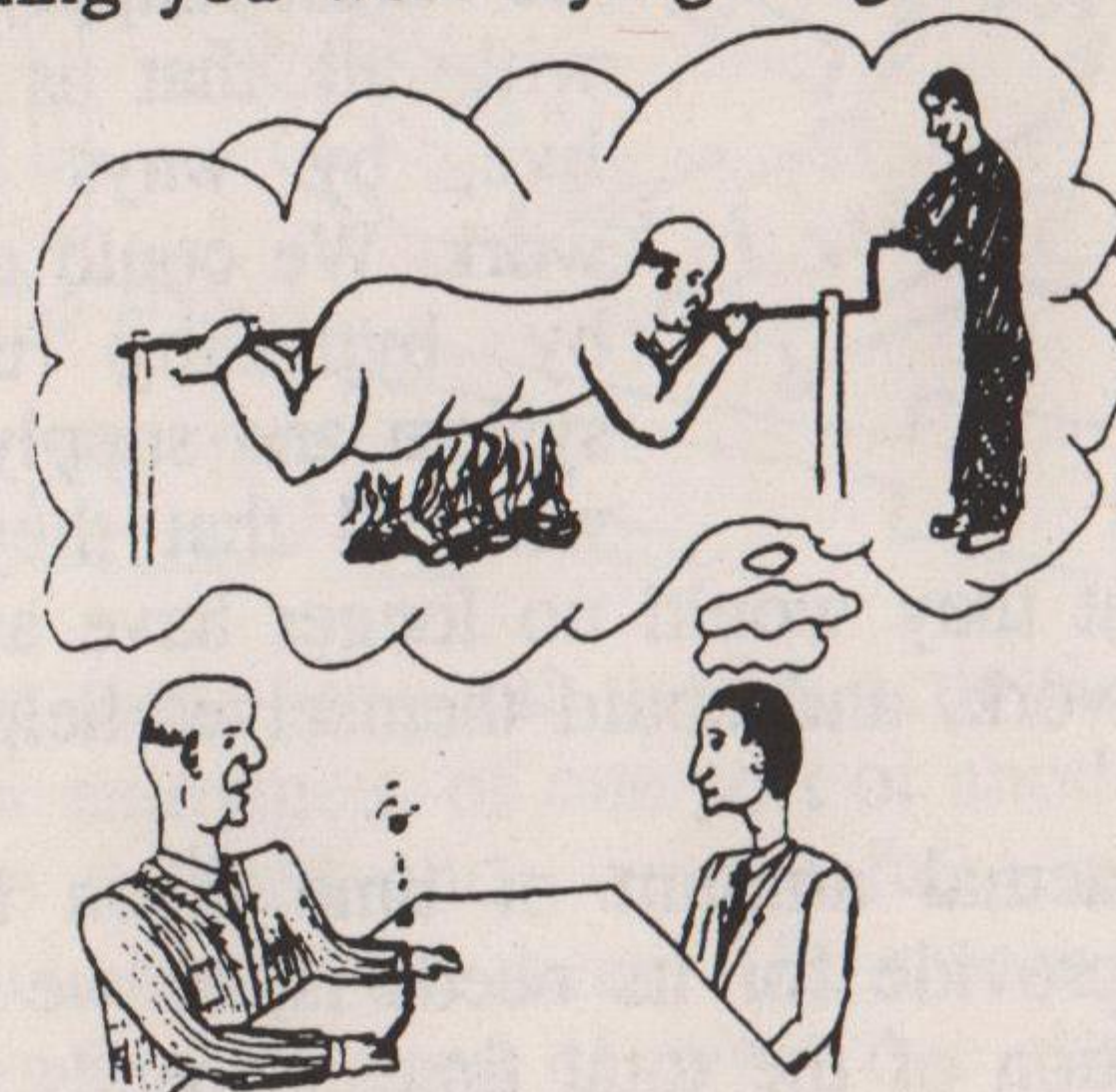
involved in the job, so ought to be in charge of others. But surely the less skilled would learn far quicker if the boss became their teacher rather than their tormentor.

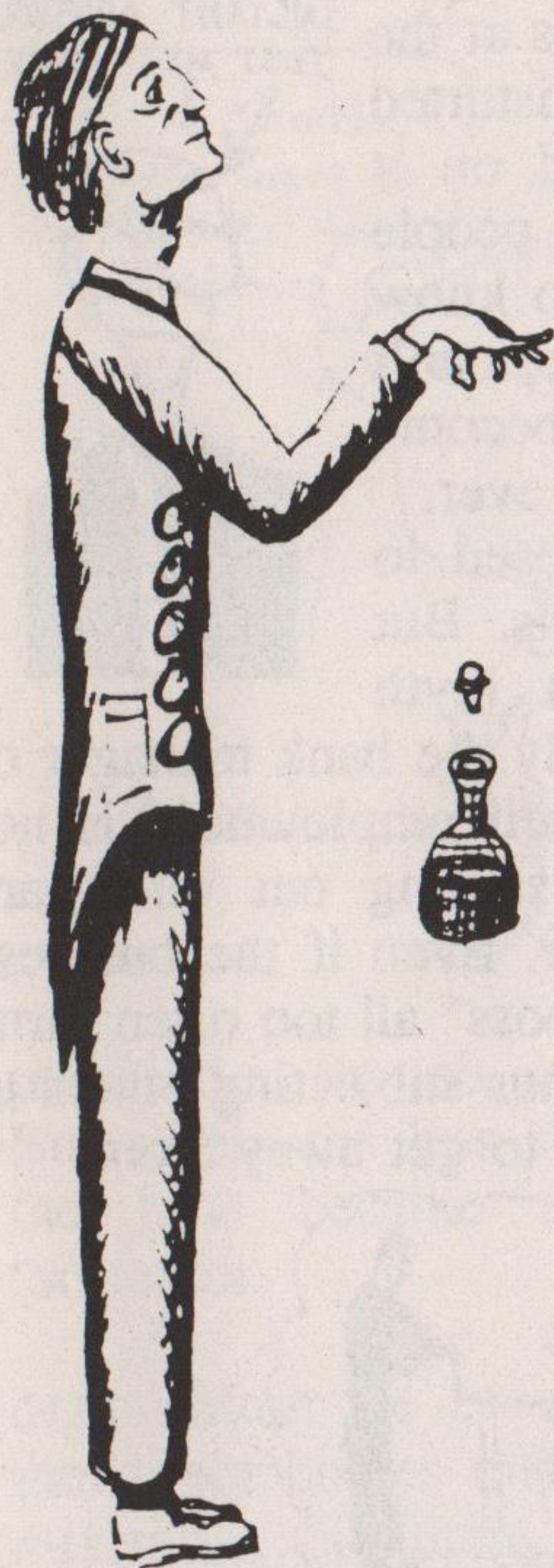
In a large organisation the problems of organisation are even worse. Not only are there still the direct bosses making their small group of people miserable, but there is the whole hierarchy that sits above them. Bosses at all levels become politicians, their one aim to climb up the hierarchy ladder. To this end they will lie, cheat and deceive, anything to make themselves look good in front of their superiors, even if it is completely against the interests of the organisation. Because these bosses will do their best to

cover up their mistakes, by the time information reaches the big boss at the top it has become so grossly distorted that when decisions are based on it they are often ridiculous. The people who have to do the work, who know their new orders aren't sensible, can't answer back, but can only become more bitter and frustrated than ever.

Self employment is supposed to be the alternative to all of this. But self employment is largely a myth because the real boss is normally the bank manager or money lender. Added to this self employment is not an easy option, most people starting out on it are looking for a job within a year. Even if the business does go well "being your own boss" all too often turns to being someone else's boss, thus subjecting others to the very thing you were trying to get away from.

INSTANT ARSEHOLE,
JUST ADD POWER





If we are not to be held in its grasp forever, we must end work and banish it to the history books alongside witch hunting and human sacrifice. By forgetting the useless activities of today and organising what needs to be done in a completely different way we could not only achieve freedom from work but a much higher standard of living.

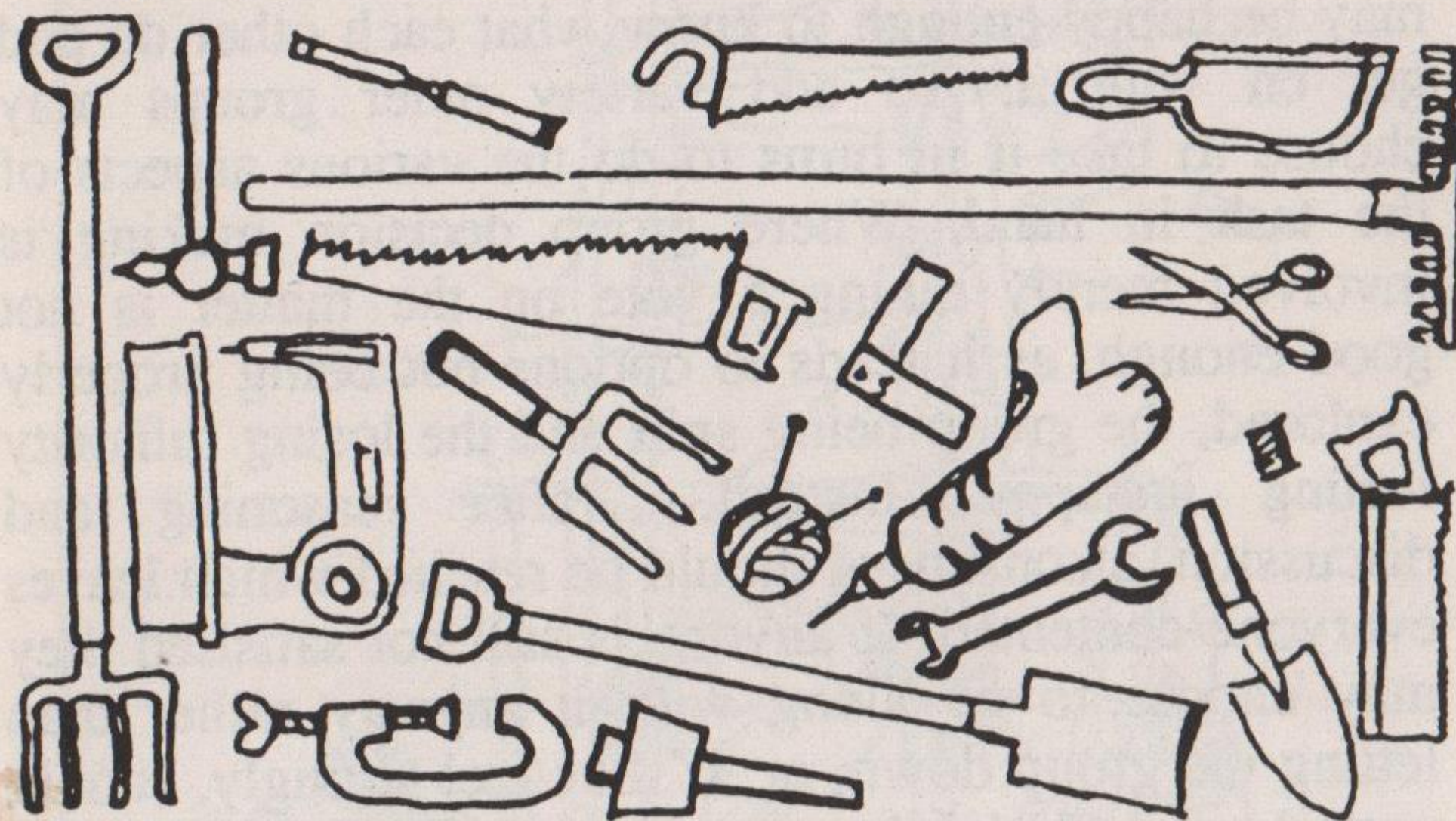
Work is done in exchange for the means to live, money. Therefore to end work we must first eliminate the need to be paid, in other words we must supply ourselves with all that is needed to live, by ways other than work. We could achieve this by bypassing the money system and supplying people with all that they need for

free, so that they would no longer have any need of money or work, and could themselves help to supply others.

The actual amount of time taken by modern society to provide for its needs is, as we have seen, only a fraction of the total time it spends at work. If

the useless activities of today were forgotten and the essential activities shared out, each person would have only to voluntarily contribute a little of their time towards providing for societies needs.

At present many people engage for pleasure, in their pathetic slice of "free" time, in occupations that under different circumstances could be described as work. Activities such as gardening, diving, boating and woodworking are all potentially miserable jobs if done for normal (long) hours under orders from a boss. But once we are completely in control of what we are doing, how we do it and when it's done, these occupations suddenly become cherished hobbies.



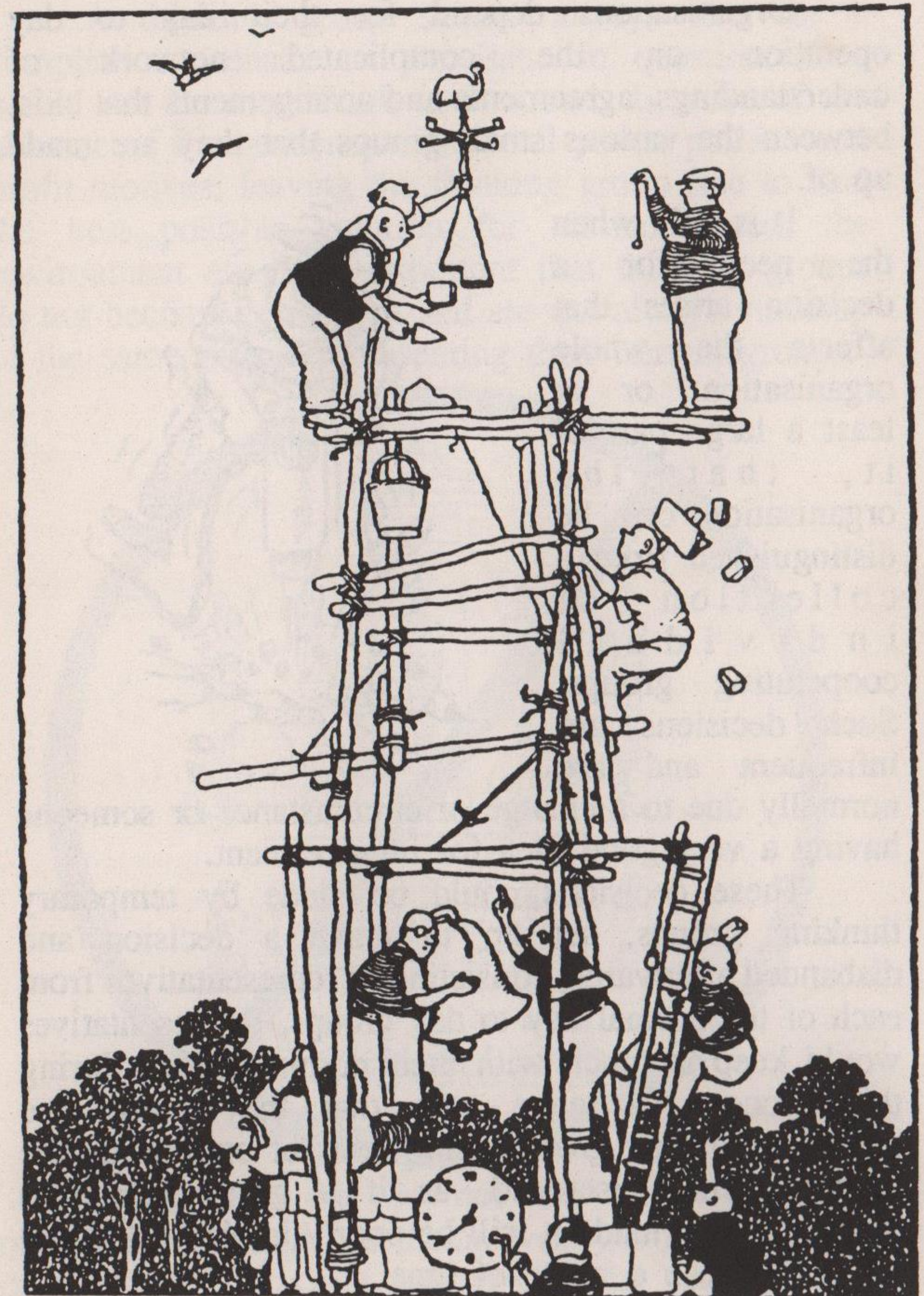
In the same way all useful activities have the potential for enjoyment of one sort or another, but this can only be realised once we are fully in control of how and when we do them. Ultimately time spent doing things for the good of every one should be fun,

a form of adult play, much looked forward to and much talked about afterwards.

It's quite easy to see how this would be alright for people who do things on their own. But because we are so used to the way things are it is harder to imagine the many ways in which group activities or large organisations, like railway networks, could be run without bosses in a way that gives the people involved the same freedom and enjoyment.

Depending on the nature of what is being done and the people doing it, different groups may choose to organise themselves in different ways. Groups of people doing something that involves few decisions may be happy enough to know what each other do and get on with it. To add variety other groups may choose to take it in turns to do the various aspects of the task in hand. Where group decision making is involved merely taking a vote on the matter is not good enough, as it leads to options not being properly explored, the group being split and the losing minority feeling unhappy. Instead, after reasoning and discussion, a consensus should be reached which leaves everyone contented. If anyone is still not satisfied they may choose to go along with it anyway rather than letting the group down, or, if they feel strongly, should not take part in implementing that particular decision.

However groups choose to organise themselves, the important thing is that every one within the group should respect each other's freedom and that no person, or persons, should be allowed to become permanently in charge.



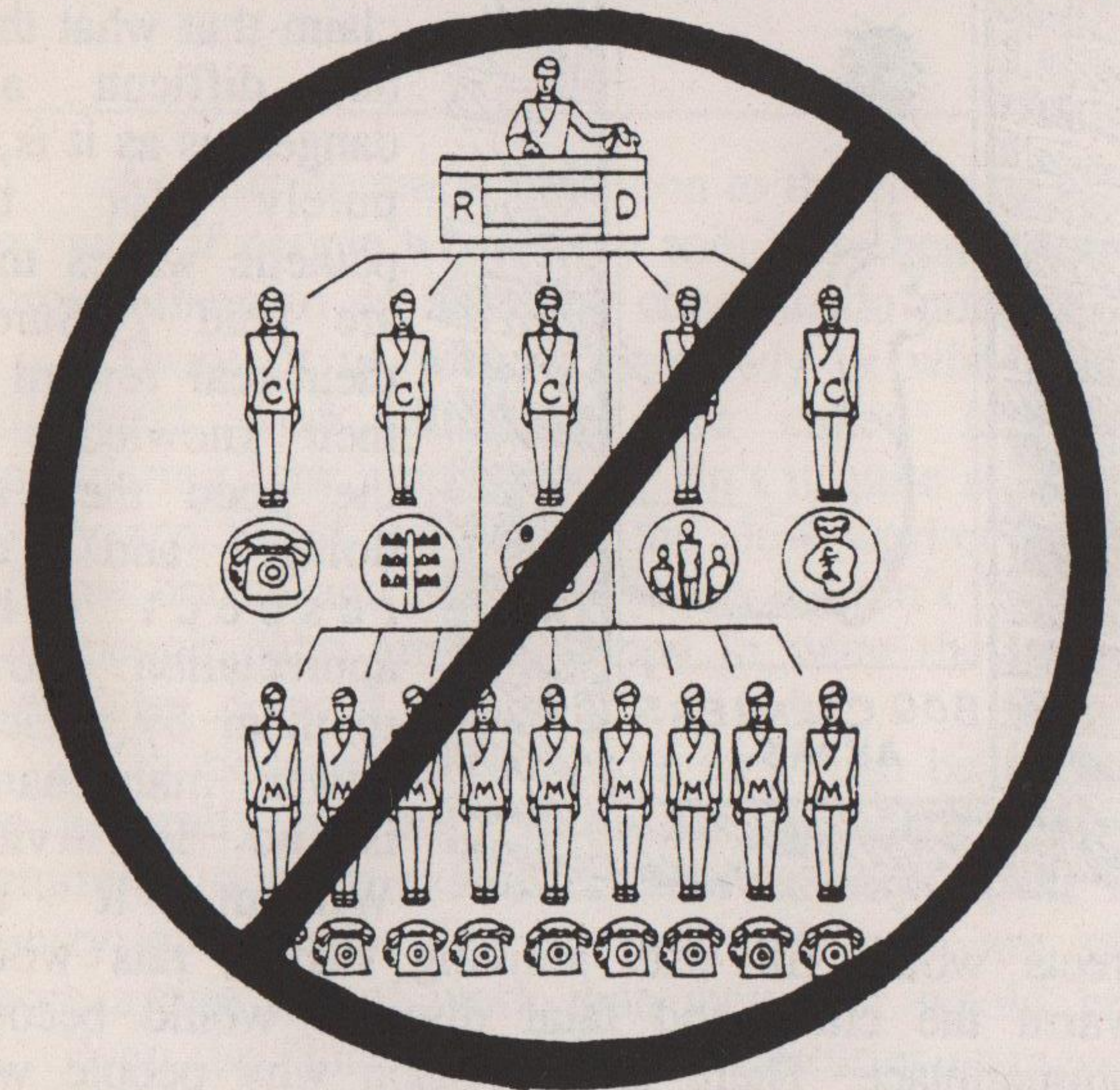
Organisations depend for their day to day operation on the complicated network of understandings, agreements and arrangements that exist between the various small groups that they are made up of.

It is only when the need for a decision arises that affects the whole organisation, or at least a large part of it, that the organisation can be distinguished from a collection of individual cooperating groups. Such decisions are infrequent and are normally due to a change of circumstance or someone having a very good idea for improvement.



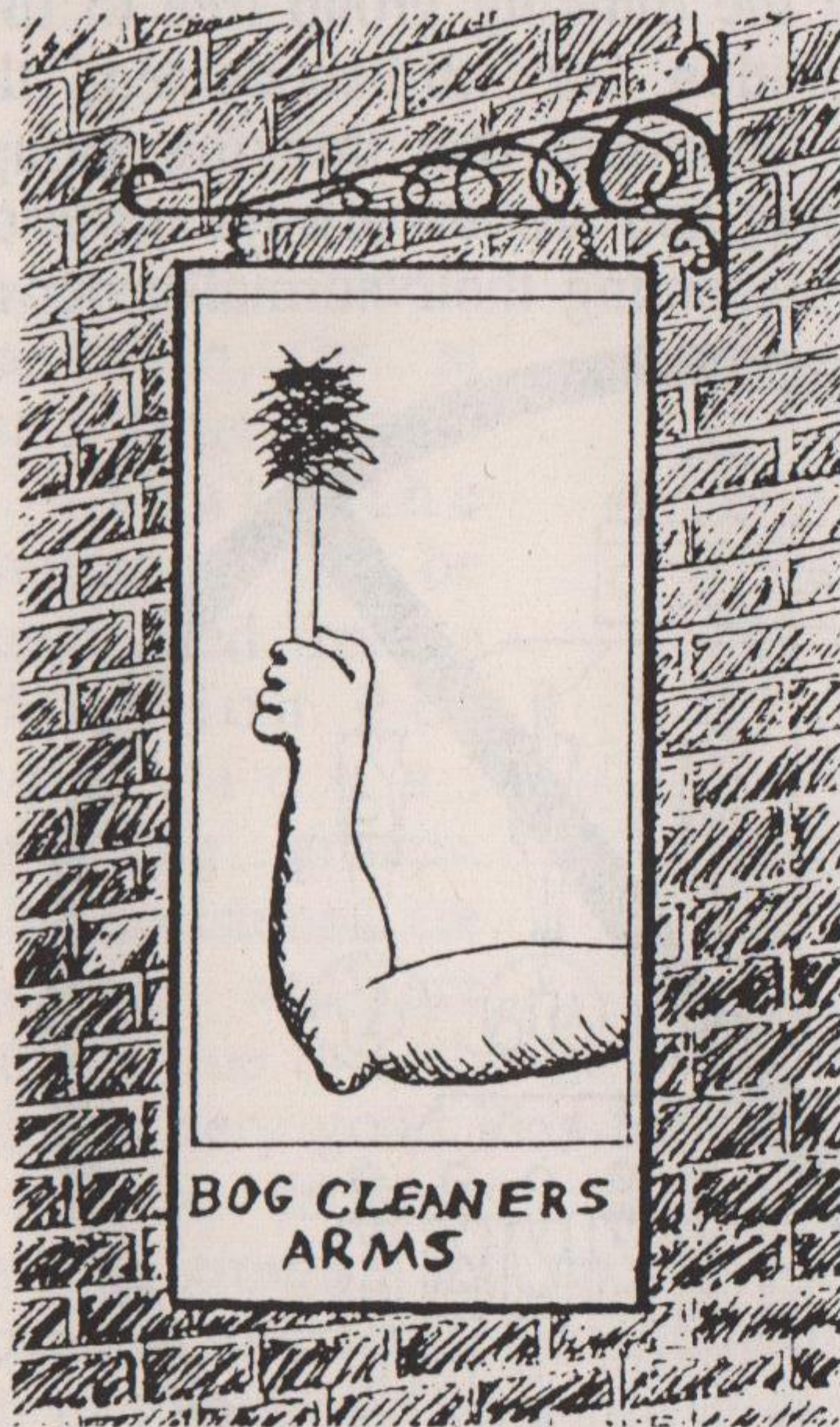
These decisions could be made by temporary thinking groups, set up to make a decision and disbanded afterwards, consisting of representatives from each of the normal day to day groups. Representatives would keep in touch with their normal groups during this process to make sure that they really are representing their group's consensus of opinion on the matters being discussed, as if a group rejects a decision being made it will be poorly implemented and will have been a waste of time.

A thinking group should always aim for a complete consensus on the issue in question. This would not be as difficult as it sounds because of the absence of the nonsense of internal power politics and profit motives, leaving the thinking group free to find the best possible solution for all concerned, the environment etc. It is important that thinking groups do not become permanent and are not always made up of the same people representing their normal groups.



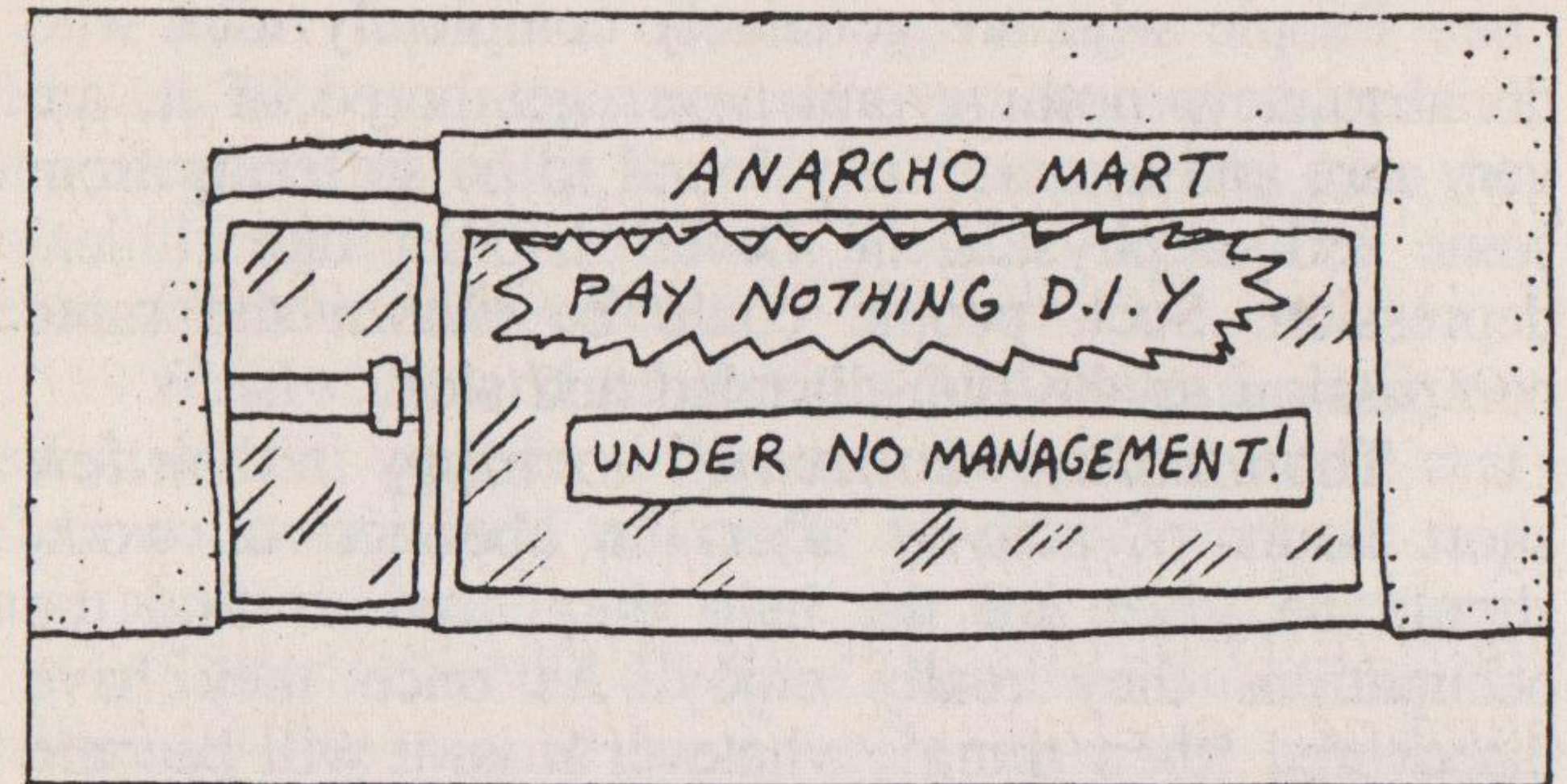
Of course this is not the only way that organisations could run themselves, but however they do it, it should be done without coercion and authority.

One question that is often asked of a society in which no one is forced to do anything is who would do the unpleasant tasks?... who would look after the sewers?



streets would fill with stinking sludge, rats would swarm the cities and fatal diseases would become commonplace. There is no reason why people who choose to maintain the sewers shouldn't enjoy just the same satisfaction and social standing as nurses, firemen and the like.

We all know how vital firemen, nurses and ambulance drivers are. But can anyone honestly claim that what they do, difficult and dangerous as it is, is purely for the pathetic wages they are paid? Surely their real reward is their knowledge of the good they are doing and the respect and appreciation shown to them by society. Sewer maintenance is no less vital. Without it the



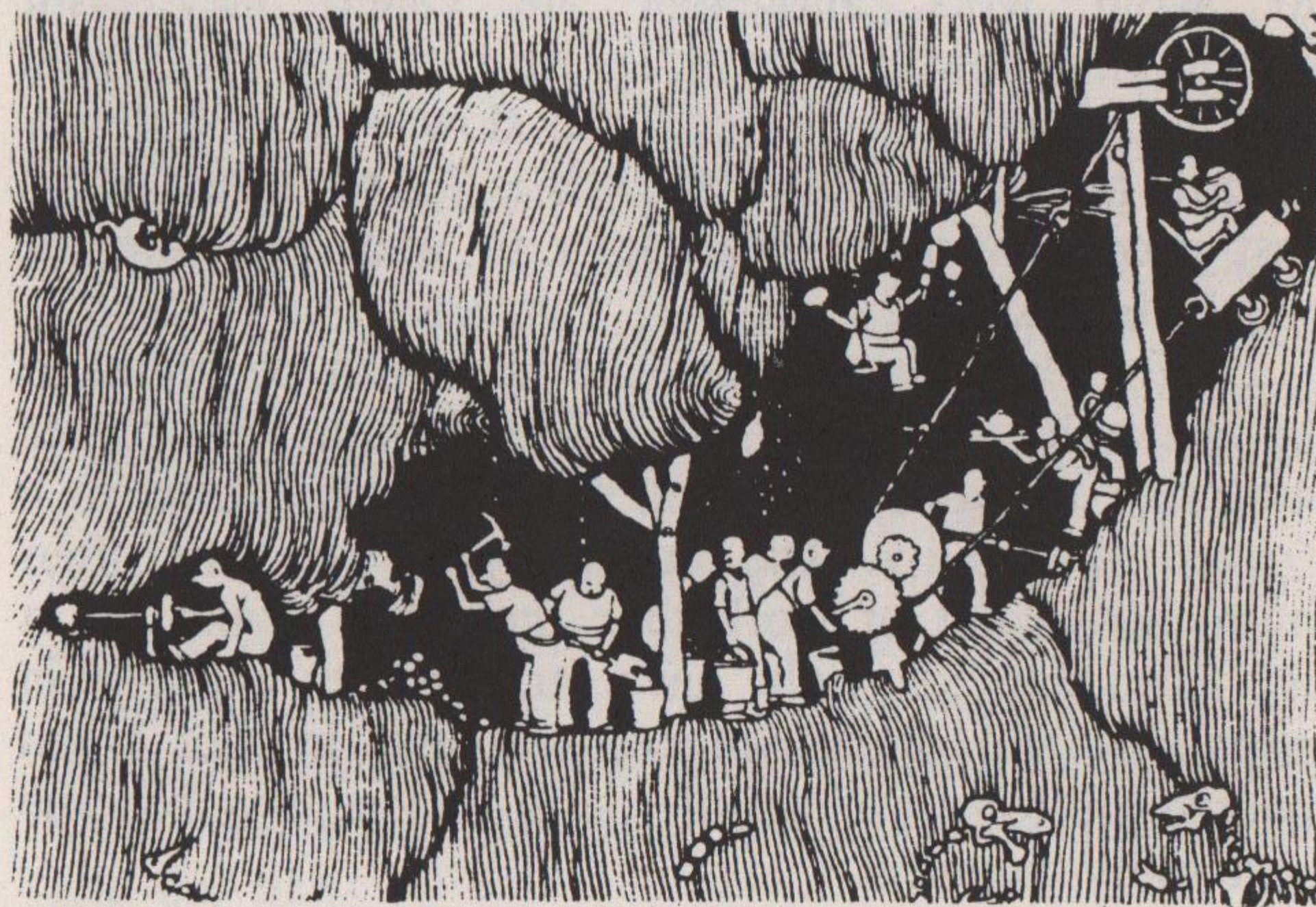
Another common objection to this state of affairs is: what if people were lazy and, there being nothing forcing them to do anything chose to do nothing?

Those of us who work slowly or who manage to avoid work altogether are called lazy. But considering how crap work is, isn't it quite reasonable to try and avoid it? Won't the slow worker tell you of how boring and hated the job is? Aren't "the lazy" just people who are not happy in what they are, or would be, doing?

On closer inspection "the lazy" can be found to be generally far from idle. The dissatisfied worker returning to work exhausted after holidays spent in a frenzy of activity. The unemployed, who are often more active out of work than they ever would be in it. Even the "idle rich" have for centuries engaged in strenuous and often dangerous sports. In fact when people are forced to be idle, ie in prison, they become extremely resentful.

People who are genuinely completely idle, who do absolutely nothing and never get bored of it, are very rare and are normally found to be suffering from some serious physical or mental disorder like clinical depression. Such people could be shown the same compassion as the old, disabled and sick.

Those others who are still not happy in their few short hours of activity after the abolition of work, should be given all the help they need to find the occupations they really enjoy. As once they have discovered "their thing", whatever it is, it will become a source of pleasure to them and it will be guaranteed to be done in the best way possible. It would be a great mistake to attempt to compel them into doing something against their will as this would lead to resentment and ultimately the re-introduction of work.



Apart from the obvious advantages to the end of work like giving us control over our own lives and the freedom to fulfil ourselves, there would also be many important positive social, economic and environmental side effects.

Firstly the end of work would have a profound effect on the majority of women with children. In that their partners would no longer be out at work all day and so would be able to share the task of childrearing.

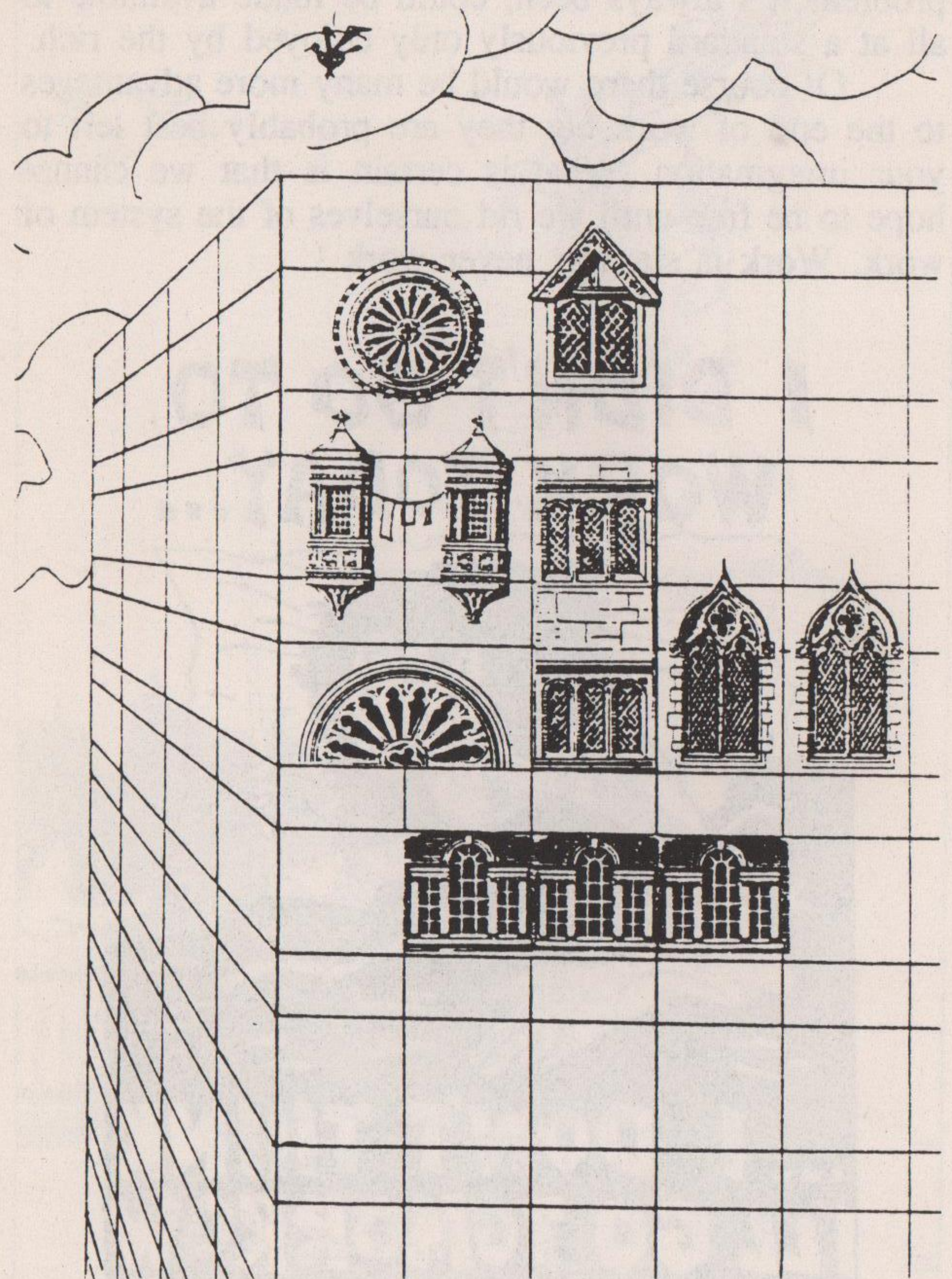
Since we would all have more time on our hands hopefully we would have more time for children. Rather than regarding them as baggage, to be taken to school and put to bed, to be seen and not heard, we could at last realise that our part in their development is one of the most important functions we have, and act accordingly. This could, at the very least, lead to drastic changes in education, which, instead of a mind numbing exercise in mind control entrusted to a hopeless handful of failed academics, could become one of the most thoughtful and tender fields of activity, in which no expense in human effort is spared to ensure the happy progress of children.

There would also be a dramatic effect on the character of the objects and buildings that surround us. As we know, the only reason, at present, for producing anything is to make money and it really doesn't matter about the safety, quality or look of what is being produced as long as it is profitable. As well as the bland plastic nature of the personal objects available to most of us this has led to mass pollution, machines designed to fall to pieces and nightmare concrete

towns. After the end of work things would be made because people would actually want to make them, and so instead of asking themselves how to make a product profitable would ask themselves whether it was safe, good to look at, and going to last a long time. This in general would mean that things were of a much better quality and so would need replacing less often. It would also mean that as things were no longer being designed to sell to a perceived market, and so all look roughly alike, they would reflect the imagination of their makers and be available in incredible variety. Apart from making producing things much more fun such diversity could quite possibly put an end to the waste of fads and fashions, which rely on everything looking the same.

Transport would be affected as the volume of traffic on the roads would greatly decrease due to large numbers of people no longer driving twice daily to and from work. This would lead to there being fewer road accidents, less road maintenance, less car maintenance, fewer cars being made and consequently less pollution.

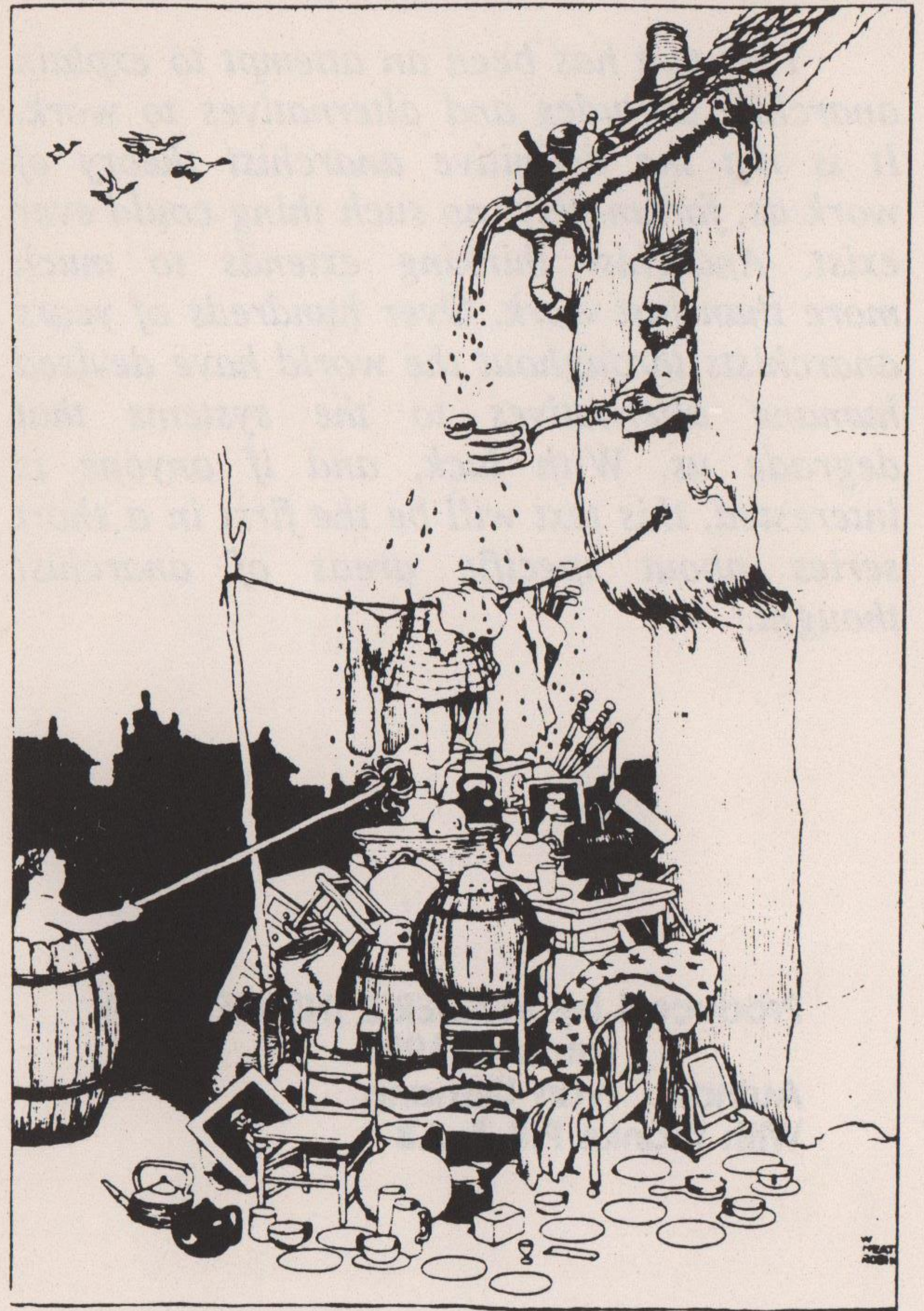
The end of work would also have a profound effect on housing. Builders would no longer have to waste their time building offices as offices, in general, would no longer be needed, leaving huge amounts of space in our towns and cities to be put to good use. This could enable us to spread out and on average each occupy a bigger home. Many people, no longer having to live in towns for work, may choose to move to the countryside leaving even more space for those remaining. Added to this that builders would have



more time to build houses, and housing, instead of the problem it's always been, could be made available to all at a standard previously only enjoyed by the rich.

Of course there would be many more advantages to the end of work but they are probably best left to your imagination. What is certain is that we cannot hope to be free until we rid ourselves of the system of work. Work is slavery, never work !

**I DIDN'T GO TO
WORK TODAY...**



This text has been an attempt to explain anarchist attitudes and alternatives to work. It is not the definitive anarchist theory of work as, fortunately, no such thing could ever exist. Anarchist thinking extends to much more than just work. Over hundreds of years anarchists throughout the world have devised humane alternatives to the systems that degrade us. With luck, and if anyone is interested, this text will be the first in a short series about specific areas of anarchist thought.

**Produced by READER'S INDIGESTION
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Author Ivan Ullmann
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