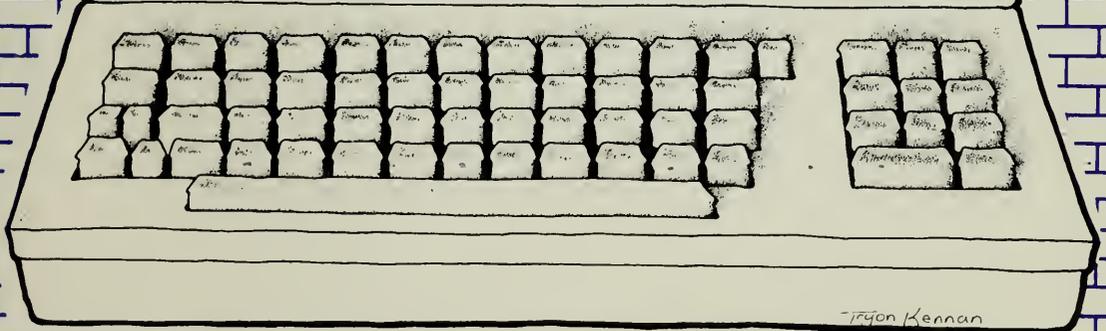
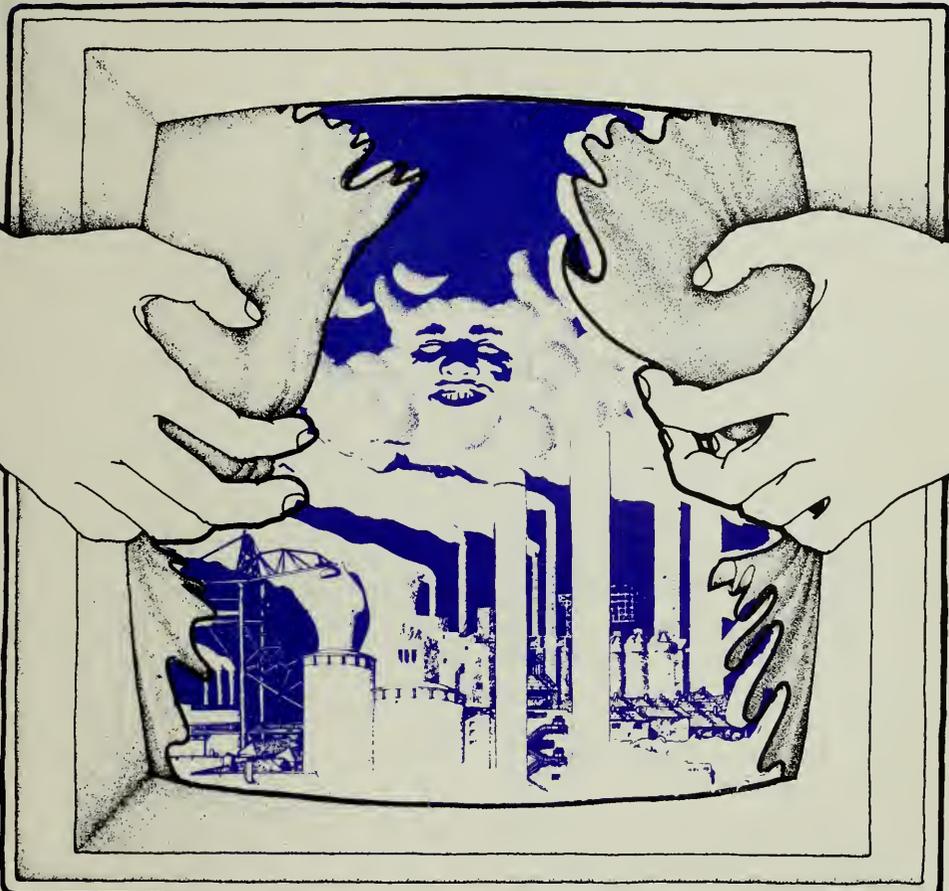


PROCESSED WORLD 3



Tyjon Kennan

\$1.50 CHEAP

PROCESSED WORLD

WINTER 81/82, ISSUE 3

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All of the articles in *Processed World* reflect the views of the author and not necessarily the views of other contributors or editors.

TALKING

HEADS



In the U.S. today, the vast majority of office jobs are still held by women. Even as heavy industry with its traditionally male workforce continues to lay off hundreds of thousands, the proportion of women in the workforce at large goes on rising. Why has the Christian New Right chosen this moment to campaign against married women holding jobs?

This issue's lead article, "Female Troubles: Wamework, Housework", looks behind the New Right's current offensive against women's rights at the complex relationship between "housework" and wamework, and at how changes in this relationship over the last century have transformed women's social role. Despite these transformations, women are being forced to bear the brunt of the continuing economic decline. "Female Troubles" discusses the possibilities for resistance — and for a society in which women and men would enjoy real freedom.

Many have hailed the recent strike by San Jose city workers for women's wage parity as a real step towards equality. Certainly, it was a historic occasion - the first time in America that men have walked the picket line to support the goals of women co-workers. Yet the formula of "comparable worth" on which the San Jose strikers based their demands, has serious flaws. "Compared to What?" in this issue reviews the strike and concludes that the strategy of demanding "comparable work" leaves open the possibility of new, non-gender based divisions in the workforce for management to exploit.

In fact, the division between skilled and less skilled has always plagued workers' organizing. The fate of the PATCO air-traffic controllers' strike which dominated the

headlines through much of August and September, is only the most recent of the countless defeats such divisions have caused. "Under Control", an account of the PATCO walkout, shows how the union system helped Reagan and the Federal authorities to break the strike and analyzes the consequences for the aviation industry and for other American workers.

Is there a more effective alternative to unions? Our Letters column continues the debate about unionization with an exchange between the author of last issue's article on the Stanford clerical workers' unsuccessful unionization drive, and one of its organizers.

In PW#'s 1 and 2 we solicited first-hand accounts of work life from our readers. In this issue we inaugurate such accounts as a regular feature, "Tales of Toil". The "Horrors of Pooperscooper U" is a bitterly hilarious description of a receptionist's experience in a pet hospital, while "It Reached Out and Touched Me" takes a sardonic look at clerical work for Pacific Telephone. Our series of office worker fiction and fantasy continues with "Jack and the Beanstalk," an updated version of an old fairy tale.

For many of us who spend most of our daylight hours tapping away at keyboards, the office tends to become a sort of dreamworld. The Memorandum, a play by the Czech author Vaclav Havel, inverts this

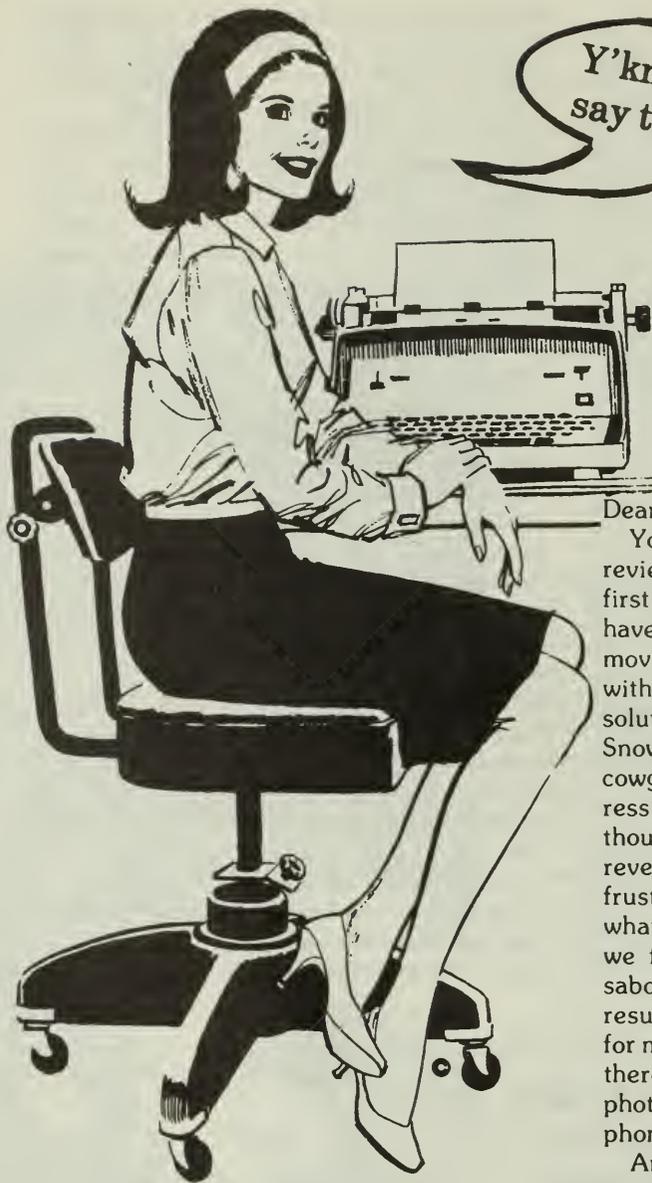
process by showing how life in a single cell of the bureaucracy is a perfect miniature of the whole of modern society. The Memorandum is reviewed in this issue.

For most of a century, clerical workers have tended to consider themselves privileged, even superior, to blue collar workers. This deep-seated attitude has only recently been changing, with the increasing strain imposed by office automation and the growing awareness that the office, too, has its health hazards. "Oops! Notes on an Unnatural Disaster" and "Chills and Drills From Toxic Spills" in Downtime show how much the situation of office workers has come to resemble blue collar work.

Modern industry has converted the U.S. into a single social factory where all of life increasingly resembles the automated assembly line. Whether their collars are white, pink or blue, their pay high or low, most workers in the social factory spend their time coordinating and modifying flows - of information, money, energy and goods. As these flows get faster, more complicated and more mechanized in the frantic rush for profit and power, the number of disastrous "spills" of all kinds is ever greater, and their effects more deadly.

Most of us at P.W. still work in offices. But we are anxious to hear from people in other departments of the social factory. Keep those cards, letters, articles and graphix coming!

* Processed World, not want- *
* ing to get left out of the *
* current bonanza of military *
* procurement contracts, is *
* including in this issue sever- *
* al suggestions for new wea- *
* pons systems. We will ac- *
* cept any amount of money *
* for these ideas, and take *
* traveller's checks, foreign *
* currency, and major credit *
* cards. Look for the star- *
* boxes like the one around *
* this announcement. *



Y'know, office workers
say the darndest things.

FANTASY ISLAND

Dear *Processed World* Readers:

You may have read Caitlin Manning's review of the movie "Nine to Five" in the first issue of *Processed World*. You may not have. At any rate, one of the criticisms of the movie pointed to the inadequacy of dealing with such oppressive conditions with fantasy solutions, such as the three vignettes of Snow White (Lily Tomlin), the round-em-up cowgirl (Dolly Parton) and the safari huntress (me—Jane Fonda). The sad reality for thousands of us is, though, that fantasies of revenge are about the only outlet for our frustration and resentment on the job. For whatever reasons, "real" or "perceived," we feel we need these jobs. Sure, there's sabotage, often a limited option with minor results (not all of us key in the *vital* statistics for mega-corporations and world banks), and there's liberation of certain office supplies, photocopy subsidies, relief from high telephone bills... you get the idea, I'm sure.

And there's fantasy. Fantasy provides, quite literally, an escape valve from office drear and ennui. The people of *PW* obviously recognize this value, and choose to print imaginary office adventures. I feel better for having one. Don't you?

So my idea was that we could have a fantasy festival, a carnival of revenge — on the pages of *Processed World*, that is. Send in your favorite scenario of liberation, your visions of revenge, rebellion and resistance, actual and imagined. I'd love to see what other conspiring minds are cooking up behind all those typewriters and terminals. What d'ya say folks?

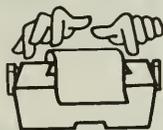
Yours in the imagination,
Pandora Pennyroyal
67 Penny Lane
Lavendar Leaf, QR
10987654

SPECIAL OFFER

Do you ever feel like saying something to the people at work, but don't know how to go about it? Well the folks at *Processed World* have an offer: we will help anyone who wants to create a leaflet for distribution (anonymously or not) at their workplace. We have typesetting, camera/darkroom, and printing facilities available, as well as sympathetic helpers. If you are interested, drop us a line at:

Processed World
55 Sutter St. #829
San Francisco, CA 94104

Ed. Note — The point of the review was not to criticize fantasy per se, but to point out how the particular fantasies in this Hollywood movie were used in the context of the reality of office worker organizing. Of course, fantasy is not inherently a good thing either — imagine the perverse fantasies of Jerry Falwell or Phyllis Schlafly for instance. Anyway, we love the idea of a carnival of revenge and we'd be delighted to help publicize the fantasies of our readers... Send 'em in!



Dear PW people:

Huddled secretly over my non-private desk, not in the mood to try to look busy, I put aside my copy of *Processed World* to reverse the communication flow. Hi!

But my brain is fried and I can't concentrate. The beginning of my third week of legal secretary-ism (not my favorite ism, to say the least), marked, like all the weeks, with fresh cut flowers, also marked by my beginning to take drugs at lunch. Yesterday it was only a glass of wine, much less than the 3-martini crowd consumes; today it was (how do You spell relief?) m-a-r-i-j-u-a-n-a. Gidget forgot the cost of coping in her quick calculation of job-related expenses on her way to the interview. By the way, my small triumph is that I've only spent \$1.50 on "acceptable" office clothes, and zip on pantyhose, and we have to dress up. Otherwise Gidget had the whole trip right on, down to the nausea you feel when you discover your work is directly or indirectly contributing to the military. In my case, my last temp job had a connection to nukes and the NRC. I took it, and with a few acts of sabotage against my favorite nukes, probably had more effect than in six months of anti-nuclear activism.

I've been wandering... what I was getting at is that between the lunch-time relief and the word-processor simulation my brain has been performing, as I said, my circuits are smoking.

Surreptitiously slipping in and about the cubicles of the most likely of my co-workers, I have distributed the *Processed Worlds* I got from your literature table on Market Street last Thursday. I hope they start some wheels

spinning.

Processed World clarifies and enhances an already acute awareness of the nature of the work I have sold myself into for the next four months, and lets me identify with a group of people around the common experience of alienation. I like PW's sardonic tone, its prank and sabotage orientation, and appreciate the inclusion of positive alternatives at the close of almost every article.

Oh yeah, one good outcome of this particular job interlude... my slumbering political activism has become wide awake; in the face of these 7 hours of non-productive time spent here, it is all the more imperative to spend the "free" time effectively.

Yours truly,
Ilios Aditya

Wage Slavery Type I and Type II, sort of like Herpes simplex. Sure, they're both capitalist wage slavery, i.e., the product of your labor benefits only a privileged class. I planted flowers in the garden of a mansion, with over 100 rooms (over 13 bathrooms, they bragged), so other rich pigs could come get their new home drekorating ideas. Subject-verb-object-subordinate clause... forget the subordinate clause for a change... I planted flowers. That's Type I. Type II — I type contracts, to enable shopping center and condominium "developers" (the "Owner" in legalese) to maintain control over "their land" while extracting rent from their tenants, to enable them to steal land they covet through "condemnation proceedings." OK, so in this case, it's basically the super-rich accumulating capital from the rich, but they got theirs from the not-so-rich, who got theirs from the poor, the wage slaves, the tenants. Oh, and my boss is getting his cut; you can be sure he always includes a clause providing for attorney's fees in case of any suit or "legal" action. And oh yeah, we (we secretaries) get cut flowers once a week, the office is just full of flowers, but they can't fool me, those lights are fluorescent and they're robbing me of vitamins, that's not the sun, that's not fresh air, that's not dirt on my hands, it's typewriter ribbon — wage slavery Type II, type 3, type 7 hours a day and your body rebels, says move, don't bind me up like this. Is that a faint, despairing voice inside my brain saying the same?

When I garden, the exchange is between me and the employer. When I type, the government has its hands all over me, my paycheck, my address in its computer, state,

federal, and of course the whole corporate bureaucratic apparatus as well.

And the court has granted me a 4½ month continuance — thank goodness for the finite nature of this interlude. And how did I, a subversive, a rad, a red, get where I am today, asked the interviewer from *Processed World*. An agency sold me. I needed money for noble pursuits (is that a contradiction?), so I went to an agency and asked the sugary paper woman to sell me, just like Gidget. And I don't even know how much she got — \$150 - 200 I would guess, for a couple of phone calls and me. How smoothly I fibbed to cover for my job record, maximum length of employment: 4 months; how smoothly she fed me the words she wanted to hear, reassuring her that now I was ready to settle down for a year or two. The personnel worker and my prospective boss asked me more about my "fiance" (part of the cover story) than they did about me, except, of course, was I going to quit work and have babies soon.

Hired immediately, starting salary \$1300, more than I've ever earned. I'm good, I know I'm good and that knowledge is going for me strong — only in the long run I've GOT to know that I'm good for more than this inane, insane secretarial stupor. What does it do to a person's self-esteem to do this all one's life? Ask my mother. She won't tell you, but talk to this clever, quick-thinking woman about doing something independent and she just doesn't believe it's possible. Subordination to men all her life, husband and bosses. The next generation can provide the antithesis:

INSUBORDINATION!

Yeah.



Dear PW:

Hi!

Enjoyed your magazine very much. One of your operators was kind enough to front me a copy as it was one day before payday (exchange-day) — someone gives it to me, and I turn around and give it to someone else.

I am a temporary worker and was drawn to your article on temps. It pretty well outlined my experiences of being a secretary's slave, and more recently, a word processor. After attempting permanent employment in some

lucrative field for several years, I decided on the temp circuit because it's... well, all so temporary anyway.

Your left-wing stance is interesting, however, I feel you're not getting at the crux of the matter. There is a direct parallel to the rise of technology and the strength of the patriarchy. Until the alpha-males with their war-like aggressive tendencies (right or left) are dethroned, the same old thing is bound to occur.

Good luck on your next publication and thanks for the good reading.

K. SF

Dear K,

Thank you for your letter and your appreciative comments on the magazine. At the risk of sounding unduly concerned with semantics, I want to make a few comments on your description of PW's stance as "left-wing." *Processed World* was conceived as an antidote to the left's traditionally sterile, unimaginative ideas and actions. If being "left-wing" means being anti-capitalist, then we're left-wing, but unlike so much of the Left, whether New or Old, Blue or Borrowed, we would also call ourselves anti-authoritarians. We believe that social conditions in both Soviet and Western blocs need to be revolutionized, and that such a transformation will be brought about by the organized spontaneity of those whom leftists refer to disdainfully as the "masses."

I sympathize with your impatience with pat left-wing solutions, but I am hesitant to ascribe social injustice to genetic accident, as you do. I don't know who or what an alpha-male is nor how you dethrone this strange beast — through genetic engineering? psycho-surgery of all male children? I think we should realize that despite, and even because of, the [revolting] privileges men have reaped from patriarchy, they are nonetheless oppressed as workers and as human beings. Hence, they have a necessary role in transforming social life [and, by extension, themselves].

I also don't think that the evolutions of patriarchy and technology are mutually conditioned. One need only look at the mutilation of women practiced by various tribes around the world, or the domination of non-technological social groupings by male "elders," to see that the issue is not as simple as it seems. The struggle for women's emancipation cuts across social and technological differences, and its victory will put an

end to the unceasing parade of "same old things."

I'd be interested to hear what you think about all this and other matters. Good luck to you, and here's hoping that present conditions are as temporary as our employment status.

Best wishes,
Chris Winks



Folks—

Thanks for the information about the PG&E gas/PCB leak at Embarcadero [See "Oops! Notes on an Unnatural Disaster" in this issue]. I had no idea that in a disaster the "authorities and bosses" would think first of money and only later of their public image.. oops, I mean the health of their workers. Naive! I should've known from the way people are used in nuclear power plants clean-ups like old rags.

Anyway, send me more information about what we can do. Also, please mark envelope *personal* so they won't open if for me.

Thanks,
R.S.
San Francisco



Dear Processed World,

I've read both numbers 1 & 2 of *Processed World* with much interest and sympathy. I do feel that I must comment on the article titled "Stanford Office Workers Reject Union" in issue #2, as I was involved in the organizing effort. I will keep my comments brief.

First, I think it should be noted that Stanford clericals voted 2-to-1 to reject affiliation with United Stanford Workers (U.S.W.), not United Stanford Employees (U.S.E.) as indicated in your article. U.S.E. became U.S.W. in April, 1981.

Secondly, the Office Staff Organizing Committee (O.S.O.C.) did not ask for University recognition as a bargaining agent in August, 1979. True, a large public meeting was held then. A majority of those

attending that event signed authorization, or as they became known "Blue Cards". Signing these cards was an indication of support for the then U.S.E. Local 680, because they meant that clericals were beginning a petitioning effort that would allow them to form a separate bargaining unit within 680 to haggle their price with the University.

Thirdly, S.E.I.U. may or may not have made exaggerated claims about, "the prospect of improving wages and working conditions at Stanford through collective bargaining." This was not proven to my satisfaction in the article. Bartering over the price of the skills you have to sell is easier when you're more powerful, i.e. organized. Neither being in the actual struggle nor reading *P.W.*, has suggested to me that the clericals at Stanford would have been able to achieve more collective power than they would have, had they unionized. Further, "many" may indeed have been "skeptical about the extent to which a union would improve their overall job satisfaction" but these "many" were not those whose present mentality would embrace a goal of classless, self-managed production for use. The "many" who voted against the union were those who would for example most likely see the E.R.A. as a threat to all true ladies and gentlemen.

So, to my mind, the question of office workers having been right "in believing that the union wouldn't have been able to deliver on promises made during the campaign" falsely assumes that any such workers believed so because they were too advanced for trade unionism. Although I wish I had, I never once met such a clerical during the organizing campaign. Anti-unionists are almost without exception coming from a perspective dominated by a traditional, narrowly individualistic ideology.

Maybe it is time to raise the stakes. I hope we find a way. There are many relevant observations and criticisms in *PW* which shed light on the direction we need to go. The dialogue you encourage should help us all learn from each other.

for the end of sold time,
Y

Dear Y,

I regret having made factual errors in the SEIU/Stanford article. I got my information from union and university publications. For example, in the Stanford Daily, many articles

on the election indicated the voting was on whether or not clericals would have USE Local 715 as their bargaining agent (c.f. April 23rd issue).

The union implied that a contract could win for Stanford workers economic benefits such as 90 days a year sick leave, three weeks vacation, and other gains they claimed had been won by clericals in SEIU Local 925. Union publications insisted that a contract would guarantee the rights and dignity of clericals on the job. (They compared it to the Bill of Rights... Since when has the Bill of Rights protected workers from managers?) But no reference was ever made to the leverage workers could use to gain these ends. The implication was that a good contract could be won without a strike or any other form of pressure that could be brought to bear on the Administration. Maybe I'm overly pessimistic, but I doubt the Administration would bend so easily at the bargaining table, especially given the current anti-labor climate in this country. The examples of Blue Shield in S.F. and PATCO reinforce my doubts.

Finally, I didn't at all mean to imply that workers who rejected the union were "too advanced for trade unionism." To the contrary, I noted "the apparent reluctance of workers at Stanford to stand up to management as an organized group with collective demands and common interests is a serious obstacle to any attempts to improve their conditions." It's just that I'm not sure that a union which you yourself characterize as 'totalitarian' and 'authoritarian' is the best way to encourage people to seek common cause with their coworkers.

M.H.



Dear Maxine,

You make an astute observation when you say, "But no reference was ever made to the leverage workers could use to gain these ends" (referring to economic gains). There was debate among people in OSOC on whether to or not to soft sell the strike aspects of unionizing. I was in favor of bringing it out in the open, but others

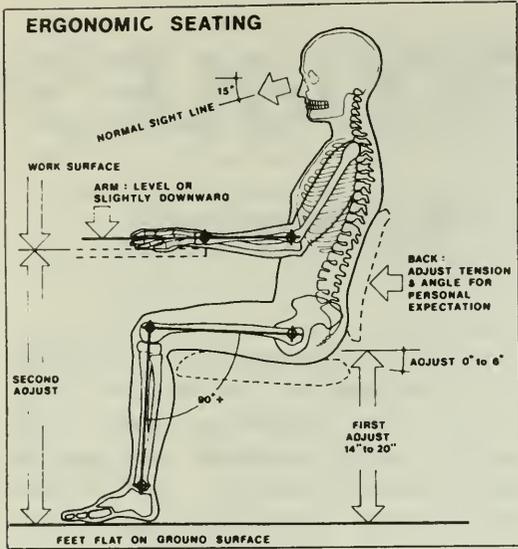
thought differently. I think that tactically they were right, but I still have my doubts. The University made much of the possibility of a strike and the confrontational aspects of unions. Perhaps we played into their hands by avoiding the issue. I thought so at the time. But then again, I do see the other side of this question. We may have scared even more people away from us. It is a delicate point that can't be solved through forms of pure honesty or pure and simple political opportunism.

Unfortunately, I disagree again with your comment on the Bill of Rights. I do think that the Bill of Rights protects many workers from many employers, who if they had their way would impose restrictions on many activities that they don't now, for fear of bringing law suits down on their heads. Besides the real point of all that propaganda was to emphasize that employers are *much* less apt to step all over workers, if they face legal sanctions involved with breaking a contract. I agree that the Union's propaganda was a little too optimistic here. But I'm a communist and most unionists don't share my perspective in dealing with capitalists. By the way, most clericals at Stanford already get 3 weeks of vacation a year.

As to what we could actually win from the University, that's an entirely different bag of tricks. I think you may be overly pessimistic here. What we could win would depend largely on the balance of forces at the time. But no one could predict in advance, at least this far in advance, how much we could get. Again, the Union was being too optimistic. History is more fluid than either position allows. I think it is well to point out to workers that a strike may fail and that take-aways might happen. A group has to feel out the situation and not rely on blind optimism or resign themselves to automatic defeat.

Finally, my characterization of the union as "authoritarian" and "totalitarian" were rather poor attempts at sarcasm on my part. I'm glad that you don't believe that workers are beyond trade union consciousness at the moment. Of course things can change, the history of the 1905 aborted revolution in Russia and the Paris Commune demonstrate that. I really don't know how workers could combine more effectively at the moment than in trade unions; they have too many illusions about the rule of capital. Maybe you do have that answer.

Y



in any job I've had. The one time I told a boss what I thought about how he treated the secretaries in the office I was fired on the spot.

Sure, contracts have allowed a modicum of security for some unionized workers. But most contracts also contain clauses guaranteeing management's "right" to make decisions on any issues of substance that may come up during the contract period, as well as commitments not to strike. Thus the legal sanctions involved in contracts also present a real hindrance for workers ready to fight for what they want (By the way, did you know that in the whole U.S., the NLRB has at its disposal two lawyers to handle contempt of court cases against employers found guilty in court of having unfair labor practices?)

Unionization drives tend to be most effective when they are backed up by direct action against management's prerogatives, but once the union is securely established, it defines the terms of any subsequent actions. Given the present situation, where most office workers (and indeed, most of the work force) do not belong to unions, it would seem more sensible at this late hour to encourage the direct action and forget the "acceptable" (if convenient) solution of unions. If people gain the confidence that direct action can provide, they can and should withstand the temptation to "let the steward/delegate handle it" and instead create informal groups put pressure on management and its allies. In many workplaces, whenever people share their grievances and problems, the nucleus of such groupings already exists. The same people who get together on breaks to complain about their bosses are just as capable of mounting a challenge to all workplace hierarchy. Of course, we don't know how this can be done — but we're trying everyday to find out, from ourselves and from others. That's why we created PW in the first place.

Dear Y,

I understand that the prospect of strikes, or any other direct confrontation with management, could have made Stanford clericals even more reluctant to join the union. But I think there is something fundamentally wrong with concealing the fact that militant actions by workers themselves are necessary to make substantial gains at the workplace. It leads people to believe that all they have to do is vote for representation, pay dues and the union will take care of the rest. Once installed, the structure of the unions and the terms of contracts with management further reinforce workers' passivity. In my opinion this passivity is one of the greatest obstacles we face in getting people to think and act in ways that will lead to the kinds of changes in society that have been discussed in the pages of Processed World.

As for the Bill of Rights: Do workers have freedom of speech on the job? Are they permitted to assemble freely? Certainly not

M.H.

XEROX ART AWARD

You too can transform an ordinary office copier into a Machine D'Art. No need to dull your mind and increase your radiation level by cranking out x-hundred copies of your boss' endlessly boring drivel. Instead, pick up a stray cat, a leftover sandwich, or whatever turns on your creative juices, arrange them on the xerox platter, and fire away. Send us your creations (no originals please) and PW will print the copy we like best in the next issue.

FEMALE TROUBLES:

Wage Work & Housework

"There is nothing more beautiful than a mother...it is important that we uphold the family or our nation will crumble," say the Senators (Jepsen from Iowa, Laxalt from Nevada and Albert Lee Smith from Alabama) who are sponsoring the Family Protection Bill.

The revised Family Protection Bill now before congress is designed to "uphold the American family" and restore the "historical role" of women in the home. Among other measures, the Bill would "prevent federal funds from being used to promote educational material that "denigrates the role of women as it has been historically understood," prohibit the Legal Services Corporation from using any funds for cases involving abortion, divorce and homosexual rights, and give *married* couples a \$1000 tax break for the year a child is born.

HOME SWEET HOME

The conditions of family life in the U.S. and the role of women within it have changed more than once since the Declaration of Independence. We might well ask how idyllic is the past conjured up by the New Right's vague appeals to "history and tradition." What are the destructive forces that have led women from the beauty of motherhood and housewifery and to what kind of home and family should she return?

From Colonial times right up into the mid 1920's women in rural America were almost exclusively *homemakers*. Largely self-sufficient

farming families comprised a majority of the population, and women's work consisted of gardening, raising livestock, baking, cooking, and making and cleaning clothes. Male and female roles within the family often overlapped -- though less so as time went on, and never to the extent of making women equal. The need to work together in order to survive cemented the family as prayer and marriage counselors could never have done.

For the New Right, free enterprise is a bastion of freedom alongside "the family." Yet it was the logical development of free enterprise -- the growth of industrial capitalism and its cheap mass-produced goods -- that wiped out the family farm. "Robber barons" turned farming into big business, driving homesteaders into debt and off their land, while the ever-growing demand for labor in the mills, workshops, canneries and slaughterhouses was met by one-time farmers. Companies like Sears Roebuck made it cheaper to buy factory products than to make them in the home. By the early 1900's most goods that families needed were produced in factories, and by the end of the 1920's, purchases at retail stores accounted for 2/3 of the national income.

Proponents of the "Family Protection Bill" would be unlikely to welcome the end of capitalist industry and a return to family-based agriculture. The industrialization of the nation, after all, was the foundation of the corporate wealth of which they are the spokesmen and heirs. (Still, it is

pleasant to picture Senator Laxalt slopping the hogs, or Phyllis Schlafly scrubbing diapers on the washboard.)

What the framers of the Family Protection Bill probably have in mind is a much more recent and short-lived version of True Womanhood -- the middle-class suburban housewife of the 'fifties. In fact, domestic life for most people in the 50's was much more like "The Honeymooners" than "Father Knows Best." The majority of wives stayed home all right -- but in tacky tract houses and cramped apartments. And they *worked* -- mending, washing, cleaning, nursing,

MOM'S THE WORD?

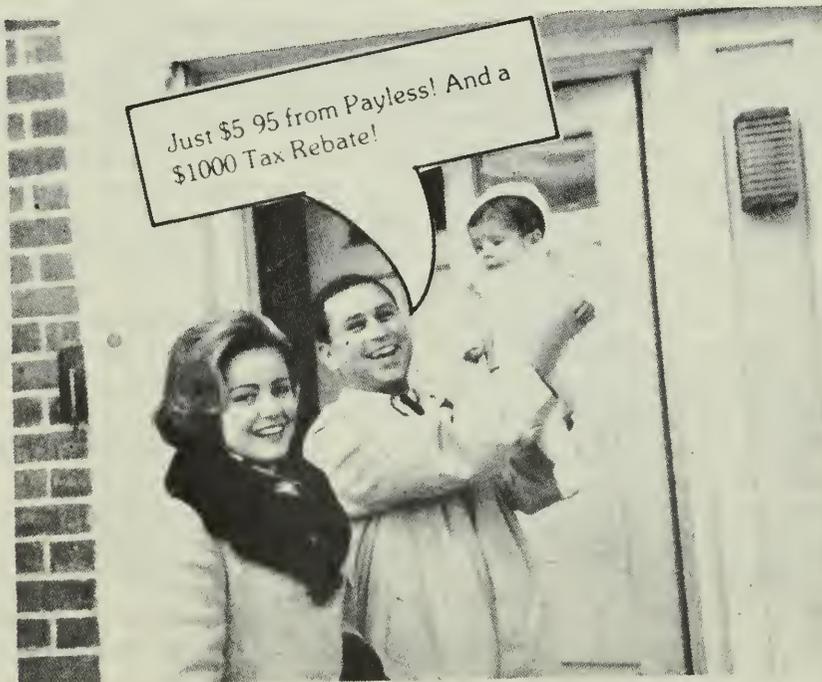
By the 50's many women already failed to fit the stereotype of the stay-at-home housewife. One third of the female population, representing 21% of the labor force, worked outside the home in 1950. 25% of them were married. Men returning from WWII had replaced thousands of Rosie Riveters in the better-paid industrial jobs. For women who were unable or unwilling to resume full-time work in their homes, the burgeoning clerical and service sectors offered jobs -- but at a fraction of the

“... it is pleasant to picture Senator Laxalt slopping the hogs, or Phyllis Schlafly scrubbing diapers on a washboard.”

cooking. The “family wage” their husbands earned stretched to the end of the month, if at all, because women scrimped, substituted, bargainhunted and *made do*.

pay they had earned in heavy industry.

Meanwhile, the huge growth in the production of consumer durables -- cars and home appliances -- encouraged the shift of “women’s work”





*"Sure, here in my castle I'm king, but out there,
where everything counts, what am I?"*

from the home to the marketplace. Blenders and cake batter enabled women to spend less time in the kitchen — but it was women who worked in cafeterias, canned tuna, and assembled TV dinners. Women “saved time” by buying readymade clothes and sta-prest shirts, but they worked eight hours a day as clerks in the new department stores or as seamstresses in sweatshops in the inner cities. Women got vacuum-cleaners to replace their brooms and TV’s to keep the children quiet — but it was often women who put the TV’s and vacuum-cleaners together.

Even with all these modern conveniences housework took just about as long as it always had. Between 1926 and 1966, the average full-time housewife spent about 50 hours a week on it.

In part, this can be explained by

higher standards of housekeeping and family care, fostered and sometimes concocted by advertising agencies. Housewives were encouraged to show their devotion by ensuring the whiteness of their husband’s shirts and children’s teeth and the shine on the coffee table and the kitchen floor. Much of the time saved by the mechanization of household tasks was spent shopping for and using the array of new products that were now deemed necessary for a happy, healthy family life.

SHE’S LEAVING HOME...

Throughout the sixties and seventies, women entered the waged workforce in greater numbers than ever before. Between roughly 1950 and 1965, living standards for the majority of American families had

increased at least enough to create a widespread expectation that they would go on rising. But when the Johnson administration decided to escalate the war in Southeast Asia, it also escalated the rate of inflation.

Meanwhile, a huge expansion in personal credit had allowed millions to enter the market for consumer durables. By the mid-60's, however, the combination of debt and inflation meant that for many families one income alone was not enough to cover the food and medical bills and the payments due on the mortgage, the car and the TV. Wives went to work to make ends meet and their wages acted as a buffer against poverty and default.

For many of these women, as for others whose families could have gotten by on their husbands' wages, a job was also an *escape*. It meant getting away from boredom, isolation, and subordination to the needs of hubbie and the kids. It meant some respite from the authority of husbands who acted like bosses at home to compensate for being treated like slaves at work.

The routine of the office or the factory often turned out to be as

dreary and tyrannical as the routine at home. Nevertheless, going to work did mean a chance to meet people again, and gain a sense of independence and self-esteem. Women acquired money and friends of their own, and a life that was more than a subset of their husband's. The counterculture and the women's movement of the late 60's and early 70's sought alternatives to the nuclear family, and encouraged many women to leave the domestic ghettos.

Most affected by these changes were married women with children in the home. In 1978, 70% of all working women between the ages of 25 and 34 were in that category. By 1979, 51% of all women over 16 were working for wages outside the home. As of 1980 only 17% of all American families corresponded to the 50's Dagwood-and-Blondie stereotype.

As the myth of the happy housewife collapsed, advertising and the mass media scrambled for a new image with which to entice women. By the mid-70's, the Virginia Slim Girl and the Career-Woman-in-a-Tweed-Suit-Climbing-the-Executive-Ladder began replacing the Mom-the-Homemaker in billboards and soap operas.



Ladies Against Women

~~Demands~~

Requests



1. Make America a Man Again: Invade Abroad!
2. Protect the Rights of the Unconceived: sperms and eggs are people, too, yet billions are murdered daily!
3. Restore Virginity as a High School Graduation Requirement.
4. Suffering—Not Suffrage: Out of the voting booth and into the maternity ward!
5. 59 cents is too much: it is Unladylike to accept money for work.
6. Burn Faggots: (this term used to refer to firewood, now it means them.) what was good enough for the Dark Ages is good enough for the Reagan Years!
7. Procreation, Not Recreation: recriminalize sex; close your eyes and do your duty!

YES! We *Ladies Against Women* should be seen and not heard — I want to be seen with you, in proper polyester attire, at urgent unladylike events, to uphold the *L.A.W.*! Tell me more!

My Name:

Husband's permission?

Address:

Zip:

(Mail to *L.A.W.* in care of the *Reagan for Shah Committee*; 1600 Woolsey #7; Berkeley, CA. 94703. Donations — including Krugerrands or checks from your husband or father — are always welcome.) Misterhood IS Powerful! Have *Him* join our men's auxilliary.

L.A.W. Supports the Moral Monopoly

We have a Monopoly on Morality. God, Inc., is on Our side! ©81L.A.W.

In fact, few women ever earn enough to afford the fancy wardrobes and elegant homes that fill the pages of magazines like *Ms.* or *Working Women*. Four out of five employed women work in repetitive, boring jobs at low wages. The average wage for women is 59% of that for men, and despite the growing proportion of women in the workforce, this gap actually widened between the mid-50's and the mid-70's.

THE INVISIBLE JOB

Even when they have full-time jobs, women with families still do most of the housework and childcare. A recent survey in *Working Mothers* magazine found that two-thirds of the respondents got little or no help from

with the role of servant, of inferior. It is not laziness alone that makes men resist doing 'housework' -- it is also a deep-seated sense that it would be humiliating for them.

This feeling is reinforced by 'housework's' economic status, or rather non-status. Despite the phony aura of respect and even sanctity that surrounds women's role in the home, it is still seen as "marginal" and unproductive. Official statistics detailing "economic activity" ignore housework. It is not included in the GNP, because it is not paid.

Money is the primary source of status and power in this society, and accumulating it as "capital" is this society's primary goal. Consequently, no matter how useful an activity may be, it is not really considered work

“For many of these women... a job was also an escape.”

their husbands with household tasks. The one out of three husbands who did share in domestic tasks mostly acted as though they were doing their wives a favor.

Why is it that most men still won't do housework? The obvious answer is that they'll avoid *any* extra work as long as they can pressure their wives, lovers or mothers into doing it. Also, of course, nearly all women are still conditioned from childhood to look on housework as their responsibility.

But the problem goes deeper. The majority of men will do a range of necessary household tasks -- repairs, painting, mowing, and so on. What distinguishes such 'work around the house' from 'housework?' To begin with, these are tasks men have traditionally done for money outside the home, whether as skilled craftsmen or as laborers. By contrast, the tasks that now make up 'housework' -- cleaning, laundering, cooking, shopping and childcare -- are all associated

unless it is exchanged for money. The labor a woman expends mopping the floor or bottle-feeding her baby is economically visible only as the tools and materials she buys to do it with, while the work of the sales clerk who takes her money shows up as "productive." (This is not to say that sales clerks don't work hard. They do, but like so many modern jobs, theirs is "useful" only to business.)

The housewife's labor is by far the biggest category of "invisible" work. Yet this labor is indispensable to the functioning of the officially-recognized economy in more ways than one. Physical care for the home and its occupants is only the beginning.

Virtually all major schools of psychology agree that the discipline a child gets in the first five years of life is crucial to shaping its personality. This discipline is most effective when based not so much on scoldings and spankings as on affection and approval in return for "appropriate" be-



havior. The desire for approval from those in power is arguably as important as the fear of punishment. And it is overwhelmingly mothers who give approval and withhold it from small children.

“Womanly” care not only disciplines future workers, it supports present ones. The majority of wives continue to mother their husbands -- preparing their food, looking after their clothes, cleaning up after them, giving them the unconditional affection and “understanding” that in our society comes otherwise only from parents. In our culture, wives are still meant to be responsible for making the home into a haven of comfort and security protected from the increas-

ingly cold, dirty and dangerous outside world.

Traditional women’s jobs outside the home extend this nurturing/servant role. Even the most virulent anti-feminists have no objection to *unmarried* women serving as elementary school teachers, nurses and secretaries. In its more diffuse form, “women’s work” buffers the otherwise harsh and impersonal *transactions* that make up the bulk of everyday social contact in a money-based society. This is a vital task of receptionists, checkers and sales ladies in particular, but it also makes up much of the real work of waitresses, telephone operators, flight attendants and other “service providers.”

The modern women's movement has been from the beginning a revolt against this role. In a way, the anti-feminists are correct -- women really *are* contributing to the breakdown of the family and "traditional"

point to Mom's tender care. Without a job, Mom would be isolated in the home, unable to choose whether or not she wants a child since abortion would be outlawed and female contraceptives hard to obtain. Besides,

“Work, in its present sense, is ripe for abolition, along with the whole system built around it.”

morality by refusing to play the roles assigned to them at home and at work. And contraception, abortion and divorce really do allow women to separate tenderness and sexuality from the rigid channels of monogamy, marriage and childrearing.

YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN...

The New Right's obsession with "the family" thus covers an intricate complex of problems -- the breakdown of authority, the instability of institutions and the general lack of "caring" and community. The main support for the New Right's sexual politics comes mostly from vague fears and resentments -- if women become like men, if they won't be the soft, passive mattress for society to rest on, life will become even more of a nightmare of coldness and chaos.

The more pragmatic neo-conservatives clearly recognize the importance of women in adapting children to capitalist society and making it bearable for adults. They see the restoration of women's role in the nuclear family as crucial to repairing the chain of command that stretches from the heights of business and government, down through the layers of bureaucracy, corporate and church hierarchy, to the husband, and thence to his wife and children.

In the New Right's fantasy, Dad's role at home would once again be that of ultimate authority, stern counter-

with the restoration of patriarchal sex morality, she would never have known other lovers. Meanwhile, unmarried widows and spinsters would continue to do "women's work" outside the home.

Fortunately, this dismal dream is unattainable. The vast majority of women cannot go back to the "full-time housewife and mother" role even if they want to. The old style housewife had invisible means of support which no longer exist.

From the decaying, noisy inner-city neighborhoods most working-class families still inhabited in the '50's, a suburban tract home looked like paradise. But the old neighborhood turned out to have had one advantage many women had taken for granted -- community. Aunts, grandmothers and cousins shared with mothers the tasks of childrearing. And each of these women was herself also nurtured and supported by a network of others -- neighbors and co-workers as well as relatives.

This women's support network was only the most crucial of any number of formal and informal associations that made traditional marriage viable. The industrial market economy has destroyed such community, not all at once but gradually, over and over again. Some people move because they have to follow the jobs, others to escape small-town boredom or urban pollution and crime, still others because their neighborhoods became

industrial parks, shopping centers or homes for the wealthy.

In any case, the result is the same. Community re-establishes itself as new suburbs are built and neighborhoods change hands, but each time it is a little weaker, a little more artificial. The pathetic remnant called the nuclear family is being forced to carry on the nurturing and support functions once shared by dozens of people.

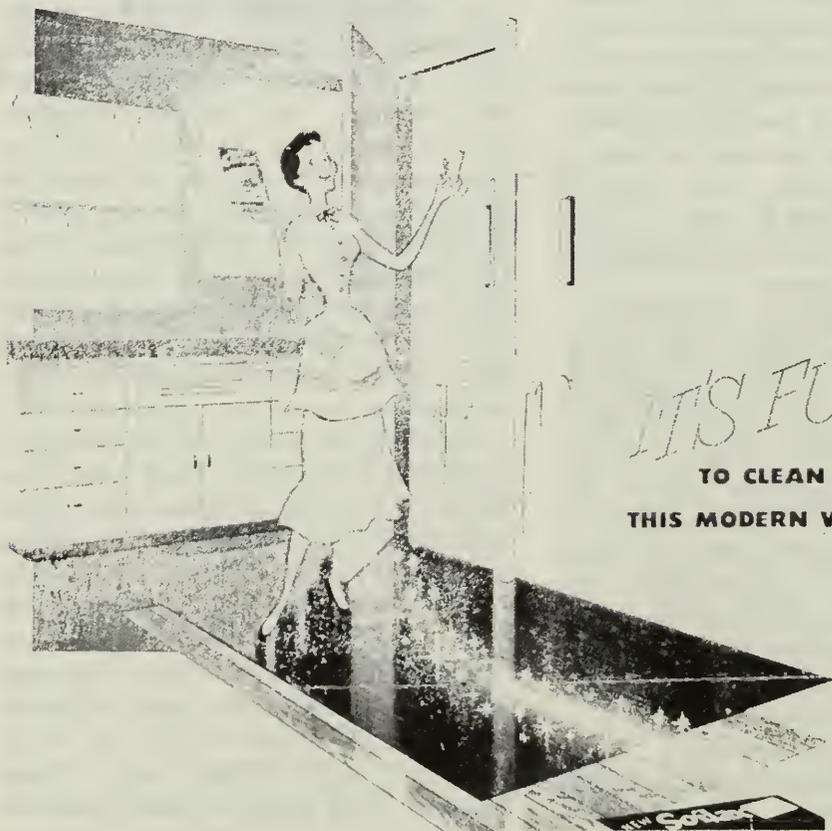
*...BUT WE'LL MAKE YOU
FEEL YOU SHOULD*

In the sixties and seventies, government stepped in to bolster the family and take on some of its previous functions via social work, psychiatry, childcare facilities, schools and juvenile authorities. But as the Reagan forces never tire of pointing out, government has failed in these tasks.

The Reaganite response has been the elimination of much of the direct Federal backup for the family and the substitution of a mixture of selective tax cuts, sermons from the Presidential pulpit and repressive legislation like the Family Protection Bill. These tactics are typical of their whole social and economic program which is bound to backfire in view of the current global economic downturn.

Already, in the depressed industrial zones of the Midwest and Northeast, massive layoffs in auto, rubber and steel have forced millions of families to depend on women's wages. Also, more single women must work to support their children. In 1978, 14% of all families were maintained by single women as compared with 9% in 1950 and Reagan's cuts in welfare will sharply increase their percentage.

Likewise, the slashing of social services such as the school lunch,



Go farther with Father!

For June 20th, the day when Dad counts most of all, remember him with a gift that he'll receive with pleasure and wear with pride. Wrinkles will always "hang out" overnight. At good dealers everywhere.



childcare and Medicaid creates still more pressure on women to earn money at the same time as it increases the amount of domestic work. Unless husbands begin earning more to compensate, women must hold on to their jobs or accept severe cuts in living standards. In fact, a growing percentage of families are barely scraping by on *two* incomes.

Except for the Pope, who in this case is more consistent in his views, advocates of the one-income nuclear family are not calling for a restoration of the "family wage" — quite the contrary. The Reagan administration, following the Carter administration in

this as in so many other ways, is calling for "wage restraint" even though real wages have been falling since 1978 and are now lower than they were in 1965. Reagan has backed up this call with the exemplary thrashing he gave the air-traffic controllers which was clearly intended both to intimidate other workers and serve as an example to private-sector employees.

While liberals and right-wingers agree on the need to hold down wages, the New Right program for women and the family is being attacked even by traditional conservative Republicans like Barry Gold-

The New Right sez...

...quit your job!



water. Such critics recognize that women are no more likely to quit their jobs voluntarily than they are to stop having abortions. But a sufficiently massive anti-feminist, "pro-family" campaign in the media and the churches could nonetheless serve the common aims of America's ruling elite. TV shows are already beginning to appear which portray working mothers as selfish egotists who neglect their children. Along with the Family Protection Bill, such efforts may create a climate of guilt and intimidation among women workers which could reinforce the subtle ways that employers discriminate against them. It could also help to justify the further layoffs that are sure to come as the economy is "restructured."

HOME FREE?

For decades women have struggled to forge individual identities separate from "their" men. In the existing world, working for money is the only obvious way of doing this. Most women's groups therefore tend to view the question of work in terms of "equality" with men. This perspective is especially tempting given the current attack on women's rights, which has put feminists on the defensive.

At its most conservative, the fight for "Equality" means individually climbing the corporate and governmental hierarchies. Since they must

compete fiercely with other women as well as men, the few women who do make it as executives and politicians become as ruthless and authoritarian as their male counterparts. Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher promotes layoffs and social service cuts with the same vigor as Ronald Reagan, while San Francisco's female supervisors voted with their male colleagues against wage parity for women city workers. Putting on the boot of authority is no more a solution for women than licking it.

More progressive groups, like Working Women, fight for improved pay and conditions, but try to justify this by raising the social status of the jobs most women do (see "Raises, Rights, Respect...Alienation" in *Processed World* #2). Unfortunately, these jobs are generally boring and repetitious however you dress them up. There is little space for pleasure and creativity in waiting tables, entering data on a VDT, or running the same seams through a sewing machine over and over again.

Moreover, the primary aim of the

The Bible teaches
us that
extra-marital interface
is a
sin.



Sorry I have to do this to you, Rosie, but I didn't get promoted to National District Manager by being soft on my subordinates!

bulk of clerical and "service" work, where most women workers are concentrated, is to ensure the orderly circulation of money for business. A very large proportion of industrial production, too, is either deliberately shoddy or pure rubbish. And even most so-called "helping" jobs, like health care and social work, are only necessary because this society makes so many people poor, sick and miserable. To glorify almost any job today is to glorify slavery and waste. In fact, technology has developed to the point that the system cannot generate even useless jobs fast enough anymore. "Work" in its present sense is ripe for abolition along with the whole society built around it (see "New Information Technology: For What?" in *Processed World* #1). To create a world where human relationships are no longer constrained by economic forces at all, "the economy" would have to cease to exist.

In its place, we could organize the cooperative production of goods and services, and distribute them freely. Most "work" could be done by people who actually enjoyed it, and the remaining inherently boring or unpleasant tasks divided up so that no-one would have to do them for more than a few hours a month. The same principle would apply to housing: people would not have to live together for any reason other than mutual attraction.

The consequences for women in particular would be momentous. They would be as free as anyone else to



choose the tasks they did and the company they kept. No longer would they be forced to provide nurturing in exchange for material and emotional security. Men themselves, finally relieved of the puritan-macho ethic of "earning a living," would be far readier to share such nurturing. Childcare would cease to be the exclusive duty of the biological parents and become once again the responsibility of the surrounding community as well. Children, cared for and loved to varying degrees by neighbors and co-"workers," would be freed from total emotional dependence on one or two adults and from the resultant anxiety and neurosis. Nor would children any longer be used by parents as a butt for their frustrations, as a repository for their unfulfilled desires and ambitions, or as cement for their fractured marriages.

Sexuality would change too, in

ways hard to foresee. Certainly, though, no one would have to use sex as a means to obtain power, let alone money or property. With people once again free to use their bodies in a wide variety of productive and playful ways, with their imaginations and senses released from nine-to-five jail, sex would cease to be the privileged refuge of sensuality and tenderness it is today. Like work and "art" it would be woven back into the texture of everyday life as part of a rich, complex continuum of efforts and pleasures. Of course there would still be long-lasting, even exclusive attachments, just as there would still be the pains of one-sided longing, jealousy and loss. But joys and griefs alike would be shared for the first time by *equals*.

A truly free society is still far away — not because we lack the technical means to make it real, but because the way we have to live makes it



Authoritarianism Begins at Home

almost impossible to *imagine* anything different, let alone work towards it. It's hard to believe in a vision of a world based on free cooperation and sharing when our daily experience tells us that most people are either competitive and power-hungry or else submissive and flakey.

But nothing changes people like fighting together for common ends against the powers that be. Collaborating and thinking for one's own purposes, standing up to authority, can overcome the habits of a lifetime.

Until wagework and money can be retired altogether, women — and men — can go on fighting for more money and less work, and beyond that, for the time and space to develop their own skills, creativity and perceptions of the world.

to be broken down. Women living with men can simply refuse to do more than a fair share of housework, even if it means, say, a dirty bathroom for a few weeks. At the beginning this increases tension no more than working women's growing exasperation at being stuck with the whole job.

Unemployed women can also organize in their neighborhoods. In Italy, housewives have led rent and strike, blocked evictions, and have also practiced "self-reduction" as a weapon against inflation — going into stores in groups of fifty to a hundred, taking what they need and paying what they think it's really worth, or whatever they can reasonably afford.

The development of this society itself has done much to undermine the

Women can only defend the limited freedom they already have by going on the offensive...

In particular, women can organize on the job to resist layoffs and takeaways. It is useful to oppose *all* wage hierarchies, not just those based on gender, since all of them are used to divide us. "Comparable worth" formulas, although they help raise some women's pay, tend to recreate wage hierarchies along different lines (see "Compared To What?" in this issue).

Childcare especially needs to be fought for. Working women — and fathers — can demand day-care centers for their children, using tactics like the "child-in" — bringing their kids to work anyway until the need is met. Standing behind the demands of mothers already on welfare is also essential. A great many female office workers with children may be needing welfare themselves before too long.

At home, the old roles can continue

old role of women, just as it has undermined the old meaning of work — and for many of the same reasons. Yet this society artificially prolongs the subservience of most women, and the stupidity and pointlessness of most work, just to keep itself going. Women will gain nothing by copping to any of the "progressive" versions of family worship and sexual repression that liberals and radicals are offering as a sop to "the new conservatism." Nor will workers in general gain anything by demanding "jobs." Women can only defend the limited freedom they have already won by going on the offensive — against a world that no one but the few who control it can really be at home in.

—By Maxine Holz
& Louis Michaelson

TALES OF TOIL

Horrors of

POOPER- SCOOPER U.

Pooperscooper U. — a pet hospital stuck like a hairball in the throat of one of San Francisco's poshest enclaves. I got myself hired as a receptionist there in a moment of economic panic.

Three months later, the obsessive cocker-suckers and poodle-diddlers that stump and stagger through P.U.'s piddle-varnished portals have me baring my teeth. So has my supervisor, an obese Sha-Na-Na fan and neo-Nazi known to the rest of us "girls" as the Elephant Woman. Not to mention the stunningly meager pay rate (\$3.75/hr.) or the exalted status I enjoy as one of the kickballs on the front desk. But the best part of this nine-to-six stint is that it offers no opportunity for advancement, let alone for taking a creative five minutes on the crapper.

The duties assigned to us, the under-underdogs, are varied and colorful. First, there is check-in. Say a cluster of German-speaking ladies comes hurtling in — mother, grandmother and three teenage daughters, all dressed in tight skirts and tennis

shoes. They are moaning up a storm — something about a fluffy my own has been hit! A big black limousine has crushed his tiny bones. I whip out a registration form. With a confident flourish, I indicate to the larger of the two matrons which sections she must fill out.

"But my address — who can remember? What is a Sip Code? Fuffy — he is a male — could you not tell?" (Sure, lady, with a microscope.)

"Okay, now what exactly happened to (guk) Fifi?" The moaning starts again in five-part harmony. Just then a tired-looking bald guy emerges from an equally tired-looking black Volkswagen outside and tries to explain, while the women go into a huddle. "Look, this little fuzzy thing took a hike across the street just as the light turns green. I'm sorry — I thought it was a piece of laundry." Nice try, but they don't let him go until he's proved he can't finance a week's vacation for five at the Mark Hopkins. Poor Mr. VW ends up being allowed to pay for Foofy's body-lift and a bonus full-length sweater. whether sleeved or

sleeveless to be determined at a late date. Mein Gott!

The (very) personal habits of the doctors must also be considered at all times. One never snarls: "Young Doctor Doctor is having a bowel movement, and if everything comes out all right, he'll call you back." Rather, one chirps: "Doctor Doctor is presently in long-distance consultation with the Philippines. When he is through, he will be most happy to guide your beloved Doberman through the miraculous journey of her first natural birthing."

Nor does one mention that nice old Doc Rictus has a tendency to *fight back* when Kitty won't sit still for a shave-'n'-shot. "What's that slam-

ming noise?" Kitty's mom may ask. "Why, didn't you know? We have a handball court between the lunchroom and the back office." Beaming, the Doc comes out holding a limp Bobo or Noodles in her claw-torn hand. "He's just a bit groggy from the sedative — don't mind the drooling. He may bleed an eensy bit when he wakes up. Don't hesitate to call, Monday through Saturday, between nine and six —" And they don't.

Yes, P.U.'s receptionists must know their stuff, especially over the phone. Suppose a young interior decorator wants to have his cat declawed *and* dyed violet within three days. Never mind the cat's feelings —



will it be detrimental to the orange-focussed bedroom scheme? And telephone procedure is inflexible. When a pug plummets from a seventh-story window and the owner inquires: "Juno's listless — do you think it's due to the fall?", you must go through the catechism with the demure calm of a nun on valium: "Has he seen a doctor since the accident/Is he bleeding/Is his stool abnormal/Is he vomiting/Is he eating? (Amen)."

"Well he hasn't really moved much — he just lies on his back and he's sort of stiff when I pet him." Then, and only then, you coo: "Sir — here is the number of Bubbling Wells Pet Cemetery, located in picturesque Sonoma."

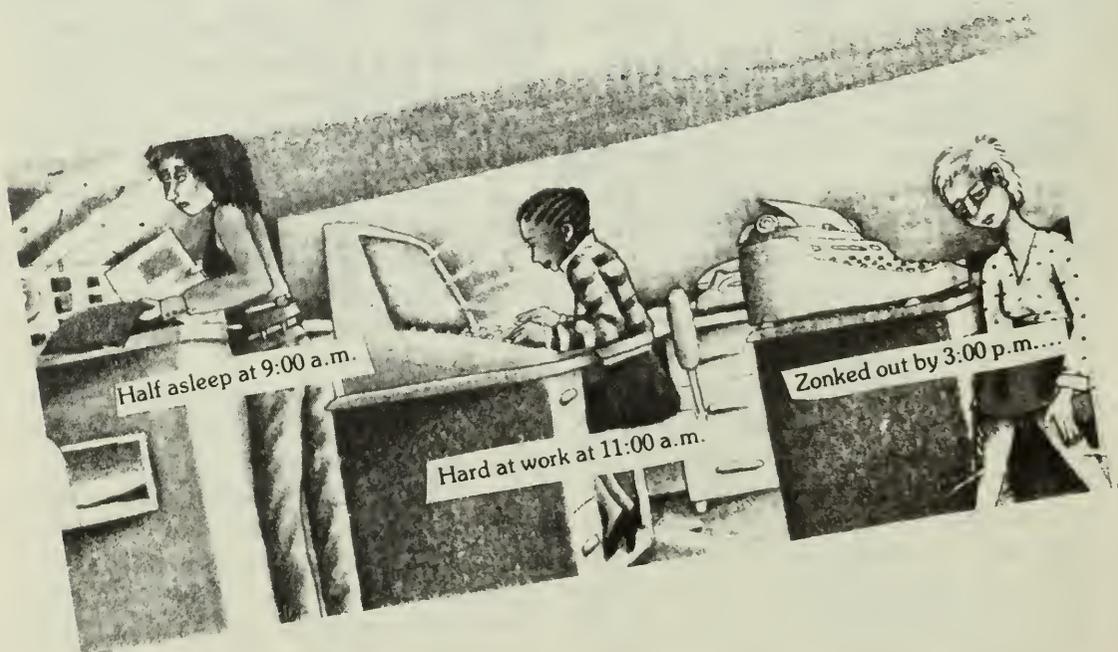
Most traditional feminine occupations exploit our maternal impulses — the teacher's aid cleaning up after brutish children and the secretary after childish brutes. P.U. expects its desk-jockeys to extend this motherly attitude not only to the furry parasites which are its patients but to their owners and the doctors as well.

Just let some unruly, unloving female at the front desk ask for a raise, let alone gag when a fresh fecal sample wiggling with worms is

shoved under her nose, let alone scream back at one of the stethoscope-toting prima donnas in the surgery, *let alone* lose her cool with even one of the spoiled, peevish or penultimately stupid clients or their drooling, scabrous, psychotic mammals. Instantly her decades of training are played upon to make her feel like a monster, unfit to be a member of the U.S. Feminine Love-of-Babies-and-Fuzzy-Cripples Institute.

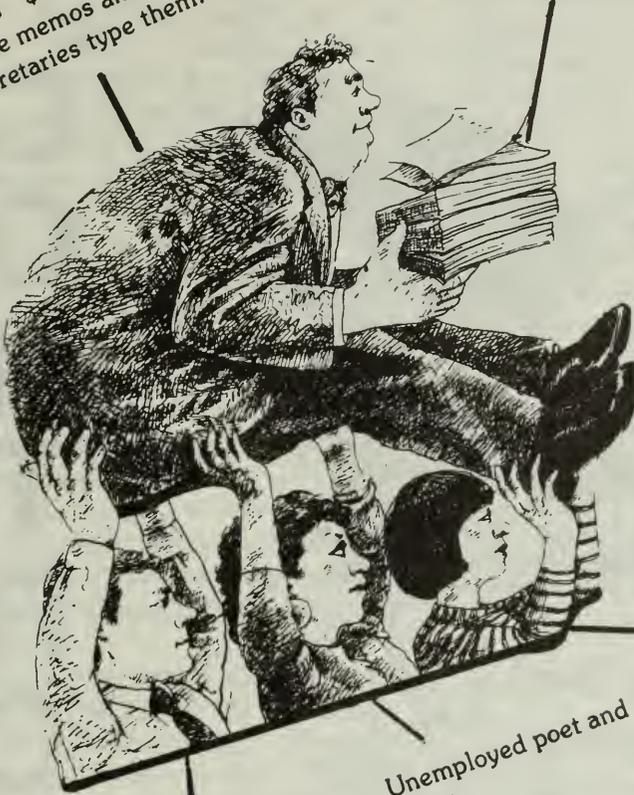
No one but a congenital idiot would pursue a clerical "career" at P.U. Even the pink-collar hoboes, the temp-worker types who change jobs the way richer women change hairstyles, don't stop here much. They choke on the mingled stench of piss, puke and panic even before they hear about the pay.

The rest? Like the patients, they come in combinations of four basic shades: newborn, desperate, decrepit, and anesthetized. Girls fresh out of high school grabbing for the bottom rung; shellshocked divorces tiptoeing timidly into the labor market; weary spinsters whom inflation has elbowed out of early retirement; aging "young ladies" still listening for the hoofbeats of Prince Charming's charger...



Earns \$38,000 to write
inane memos and make his
secretaries type them.

Unusually futile report: 209
collated, stapled copies.



Wonders if supervisor no-
ticed her 2-hr. lunch break.

Is considering sabotaging
the company computer.

Unemployed poet and clerk
typist.

“Solidarity” might as well be a brand of margarine to most of them, especially Miz Fink whose favorite trick is to yell at her colleagues for making filing errors just as the Elephant Woman lumbers by. Some even join in the Guilting Bee, like prim little Jersey-‘n’-Pearls who never tire of asking: “But isn’t it the *animals* we’re here for?” Only the real basket cases can stand it for long. P.U.’s door doesn’t just revolve, it spins like a centrifuge.

So goodbye to Pooperscooper U. Goodbye to the Puppy Paramedic Corps and its pissing and moaning, yapping and scratching clientele. Goodbye too to the Kat Kare Klub where tortoise shell curry-combs and French satin ribbons decorate lumps

of hairy fat that can hardly waddle from bowl to box to bed. Goodbye to being ranked lower in the scheme of things than Persians and their fleas, Pit-bulls and their diarrhea. Goodbye to all the mental cases who hallucinate an intimate world of love and understanding around retarded mutant carnivores like Elmo the Basset Hound, known to his owner as “the only man in my life.”

My case is closed. But there will be many more to follow in my footsteps on this particular hamster-wheel. A world which mass-produces loneliness and boredom, always a little faster than it mass-produces the merchandise meant to make up for them, will see to that.

—By Melinda Gebbie

UNDER

CONTROL



Few groups were less likely to challenge the Reagan administration than the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. Their strike was a surprising turn of events given the history of the group and the context in which the dispute developed.

When it was formed in the summer of 1968, PATCO saw itself more as a special interest group than a union. In fact, the controllers did not join the National Association of Government Employees because it was too militant and represented too many different kinds of government workers. Rejecting strikes as a tactic, PATCO's

founding charter stated that the union would win its demands by publicizing its members' complaints and pressuring Congress.

Nonetheless, PATCO has staged several work-to-rule strikes and sick-outs over the years. While they succeeded in creating chaos at airports, they failed to get the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA — the government agency which employs the air traffic controllers) to lighten heavy work loads or to increase wages. The air traffic controllers' demands are the same today as they were 13 years ago.

PROMISES, PROMISES

The pre-strike maneuvers began well before this year's contract negotiations. Even during the Carter administration, the government was making contingency plans for an eventual PATCO strike, which the members had in fact threatened. Although the more militant Robert Poli was elected as president at their 1980 convention, this did not prevent the union from endorsing Reagan for president in hopes that, in return for a few votes, he would live up to his campaign promise to "provide our air traffic controllers with the most modern equipment...and adjust staff levels and work days so that they are commensurate with achieving a maximum degree of public safety." After Reagan took office, it became clear that he had no intention of fulfilling those promises beyond appointing a new, more "sympathetic," secretary to the FAA.

The usual blustering on both sides marked the beginning of the negotiations for a new contract. The May strike deadline passed with the controllers still on the job. A large majority had voted to go out but the tally was short of the 80% necessary to ratify a strike. The second deadline in early August approached as United Airlines pilots accepted major compromises and post office workers settled only hours away from a strike. It seemed unlikely that PATCO, a relatively small union, would be the first to do battle with the budget-cutting Reagan administration.

But this time even more members voted to walk out. The immediate results were impressive. Up to 60% of all commercial flights were cancelled, incurring hundred million dollar losses for the airlines. The disruptions spread beyond national boundaries when Canadian and European controllers began boycotting U.S. flights. Despite the dismissal notices and heavy fines, it was hard to imagine how the FAA could leave air traffic in

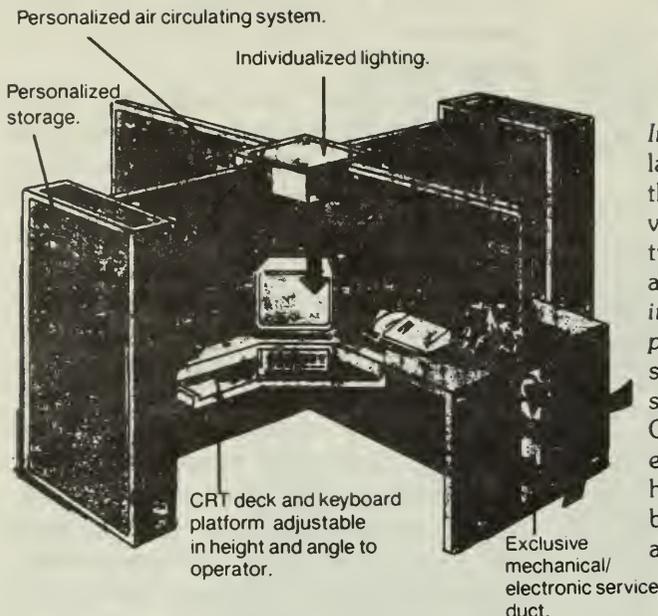
the hands of supervisors and inexperienced military controllers for much longer.

At that point the controllers held some potential advantages. First of all their demand for better working conditions, which would have made flights safer, should have naturally evoked public support. Second, withholding the technical skills necessary to do the job gave the air controllers the real possibility of stopping a significant amount of air traffic. Third, many other unions (postal workers, pilots) had been negotiating new contracts in the same period. Coordinated strikes or job actions could have enhanced their respective bargaining power. Fourth, the brief but impressive solidarity on the part of Canadian and European controllers revealed an international dimension - one which could have been extremely effective had it been explored.

AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY

On the national level, support from other unions was slow in coming. AFL-CIO leaders had to have a meeting before even suggesting that union members boycott air travel. "Socialist" William Winpisinger president of the powerful International Association of Machinists (with thousands of airport workers as members), lived up to his nickname "Wimpy" by whining to the press that he was so angry he could scream. Indeed, other airport unions respected the picket lines only on a few occasions.

PATCO was partly to blame here. For one thing, during its 13 year existence PATCO has seldom honored other unions' picket lines. For another, they foresaw the heavy-handed response of Reagan and the FAA in a fifty page strike planning bulletin, published well before the strike, detailing what to expect - court orders, firings and arrests. Even so, PATCO did not ask for support from other unions until they were four days



A FRESH APPROACH TO THE PERSONALIZED OFFICE

Individually adjustable air circulating vents are a major feature of the personalized concept of Environmental Electronic office furniture. A circulating unit distributes air through a duct system into individual vents. In addition to personalized operator comfort, the system saves energy and dissipates electronic equipment heat. Other features of this personalized environment include adjustable height and angle for deck and keyboard platform, personal storage and individualized lighting.

into the strike.

True, many members of other unions did join picket lines during the peak of the strike, and this was probably the most significant support from U.S. labor organizations. But here again, the effort was only symbolic, aimed more at demonstrating moral support than actually stopping business at airports.

SPORADIC INTERNATIONAL AID

More concrete support came from foreign air traffic controllers. Members of the Canadian Air Traffic Controllers Association effectively stopped 75% of the flights between the U.S. and Europe for two days. The Canadian controllers, who for safety reasons refused to handle flights going through U.S. air space, gave up their boycott when union officials and the Canadian government agreed to set up a fact finding committee on the safety of the air traffic control system in the U.S. Later, when the FAA invited the Canadian union to tour U.S. facilities, rank and file members were barred from the trip.

French and Portuguese controllers also boycotted U.S. flights early in the strike. The French action was spor-

adic and short-lived. The major French unions refused to handle any flights from the U.S. Apparently, the boycott was called off after the union leaders met with France's Minister of Transportation, a Communist Party member.

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers sent a protest telegram to Reagan, but advised air controllers in 61 nations not to join the boycotts going on elsewhere until a resolution supporting PATCO was drawn up at an international meeting. When they finally did meet, no such resolution was made.

THE IMPACT OF THE STRIKE

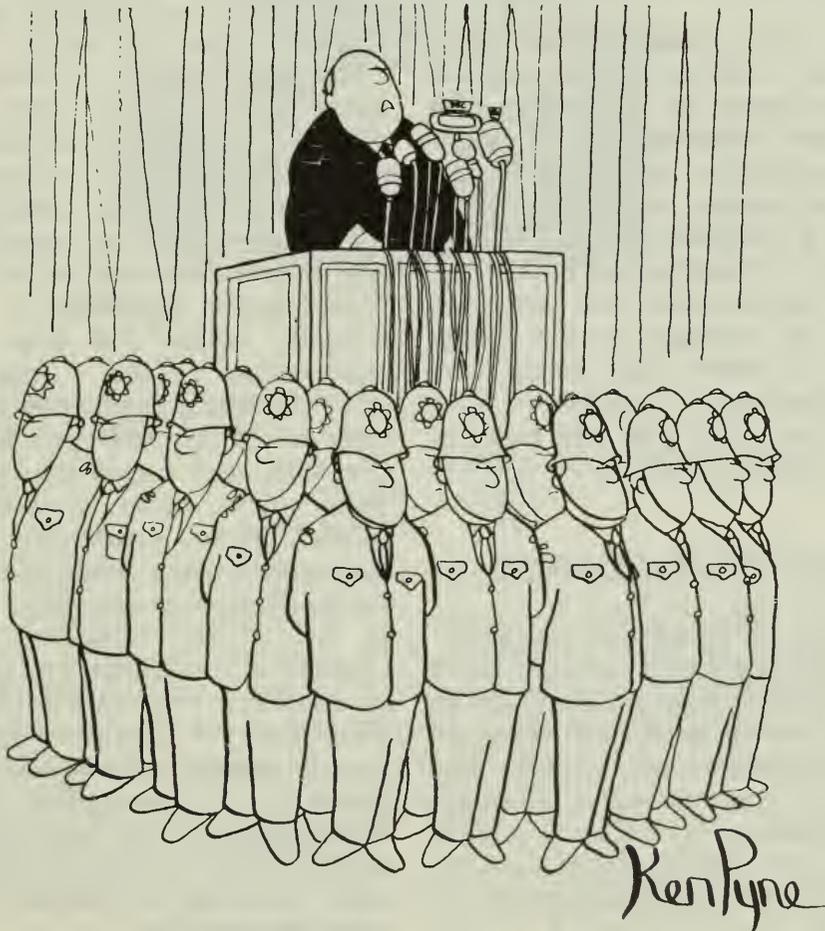
Throughout the strike the FAA has been able to keep the control towers open. Many flights were delayed or cancelled during August, but by the fifth week of the strike air traffic was at 75% of its normal level and most airlines were able to publish flight schedules. To be sure, the FAA has incurred large losses from the strike, but, in the long run, it will try to use the strike/firings to reduce labor costs and revamp the air traffic control system.

Over the next 21 months the FAA plans to train only 6500 new controllers to replace the 13,000 who were fired. Through a combination of upgrading people already working for the FAA, calling back retirees, and eliminating 1000 controller positions by closing down 60 low volume towers, the government will replace only half of the fired controllers. They may also be counting on many striking controllers coming back (under discipline, of course) to their old jobs now that the union has been de-certified. Plans to install a new computer system over the next decade (AERA — Automated En Route Air Traffic Control) will further reduce the number of posts available. The new air traffic controllers, whom the government hopes to have trained in two years, will probably receive lower wages if they remain unorgan-

ized.

THE STRIKE AND THE AIRLINES

Beyond the initial chaos, which cost up to \$300 million a day, the strike may enable a partial “shake-out” of the industry. The airline industry has become highly competitive since it underwent “deregulation” in 1978. Prior to that time the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) granted access to air routes and set prices. In 1978 the CAB introduced the first phase of deregulation, relaxing price and route controls. They had hoped this would increase competition, lower air fares and revitalize the system. While competition did increase, this merely made a bad situation worse for the largest commercial airlines. Smaller airlines, like NY Air, with non-unionized pilots and flight staff and



“Friends . . .”

more modern, efficient fleets, encroached on routes that were once the domain of the larger companies. Mergers and diversification (e.g. Pan Am/National, Hughes Airwest/Republic, Texas International/Continental, have resulted from the substantial losses suffered by many airlines in the past two years.

In response to the strike, the CAB has restricted commercial air traffic to 75% of normal. This will allow the larger airlines to purge their fleets of older, less efficient planes and reduce their staffs without any impact on their ability to compete. With less flights, each flight will carry more passengers, and hence increases company revenues. Many airlines have cut prices to counteract the widespread "fear of flying" as a result of the strike. (In August, 100,000 to 150,000 fewer passengers flew than normal.)

Some of the smaller airlines were unable to withstand the drop in revenues caused by the strike. The routes most affected by the emergency regulations are short hops, where the smaller companies normally have a competitive edge. At least two smaller companies, both "upstarts" — companies that enter the industry by horning in on a larger company's routes and luring customers away with lower fares — have gone under in the past two months, due to at least partially to the PATCO strike.

SHORT TERM SOLUTIONS

After the initial adjustment period, which has temporarily brought lower fares, air travel costs are likely to rise again. As during the 1974 oil embargo, the reintroduction of controls and lessening of competition will allow the larger airlines to rake in large profits. Investors are already bidding up the stock prices of certain strong airlines like Delta.

But this is likely to be only

temporary as the problems (e.g. rising fuel costs) of the airline industry still exist. Likewise the FAA has "solved" its labor problem only in the short run. Without improvements in working conditions, PATCO members' replacements are not apt to be any more satisfied with their jobs. And, it's still not clear that the government's grandiose plan to rebuild the ATC system will work. In October, delays and cancellations were triple that of September, when the situation at the airports seemed to be getting less chaotic.

CONCLUSION

The PATCO strike was a huge defeat for organized labor. Thirteen thousand people have lost their jobs and the National Labor Relations Board has decertified the union for staging an illegal strike. This sorry situation can be taken as an indictment of unions as a whole.

No longer merely workers' organizations, the unions now serve a complex function of mediating and controlling conflicts between labor and capital. They offer many services to employers such as ensuring labor peace for the duration of the contract. This function generates a separate stratum, namely the labor bureaucracy who, as the "middlemen," must constantly juggle the conflicting interests of the rank and file on the one hand and employers and politicians on the other. If they do not balance these conflicting interests successfully their usefulness to capital becomes tenuous. Their existence is not wholly dependent on the largesse of capitalists, but in periods of recession the ruling class may simply try to dump certain labor functionaries in order to adopt a more repressive approach. This is clearly the intention of the Reagan administration in its handling of the PATCO strike and its successful effort to decertify the union.

PATCO is, of course, planning to

appeal the decision. The FAA has already announced that it will "appeal the appeal" if it has to. This will take months. Many members will be forced to seek work elsewhere. Those still walking the picket line will not be consulted on decisions vitally affecting their lives. The outcome will become another precedent to be used against workers in a future strike.

The total failure of the air controllers strike is in many ways due to

the inherent sectionalism of the traditional trade union approach. There was a surprisingly large potential for solidarity in this strike. Instead of encouraging this potential PATCO officials relied on the wisdom of the courts and on withholding only *their* members labor. What could have been a successful strike, more, the beginning of a movement based on solidarity, will become merely another statistic of labor history.

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present

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Helping business keep its place in the sun.

L.T.S. '82

The bulwark of our nation's defense policy for the 80's and 90's, **Le Tank Solaire** is designed to fill only half of the average American's two-car garage. This beautiful mini-tank will let thousands participate directly in the defense of America against foreign and domestic troublemakers. **Le Tank Solaire** can make sorties through your neighborhood and to the supermarket at up to 65 mph on a bright sunny day. And wait til you test its versatility on city streets for crowd control!

Join your local National Guard, police department or military unit and sign up for **Le Tank Solaire**. There's a **free** two-year training course included!

Hark

THE K-MART ANGELS SING

Hark the K-Mart angels sing
Price tags here on everything
Don't think twice, the cashier smiled
Debt and credit reconciled.

From Bart holes consumers rise
Cashing in on Christmas buys
Now advertisements proclaim
Christmas joy is here again.

Hark the K-Mart angels
Now commodities are ki
Counting out how much
To see a smile on Chris

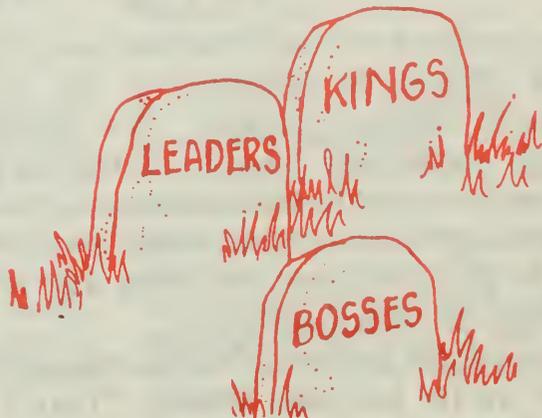
Angry now the shoppers
Black smoke billows in
Stores and gifts are up
Christmas joy is here ag

Joy

TO THE WORLD

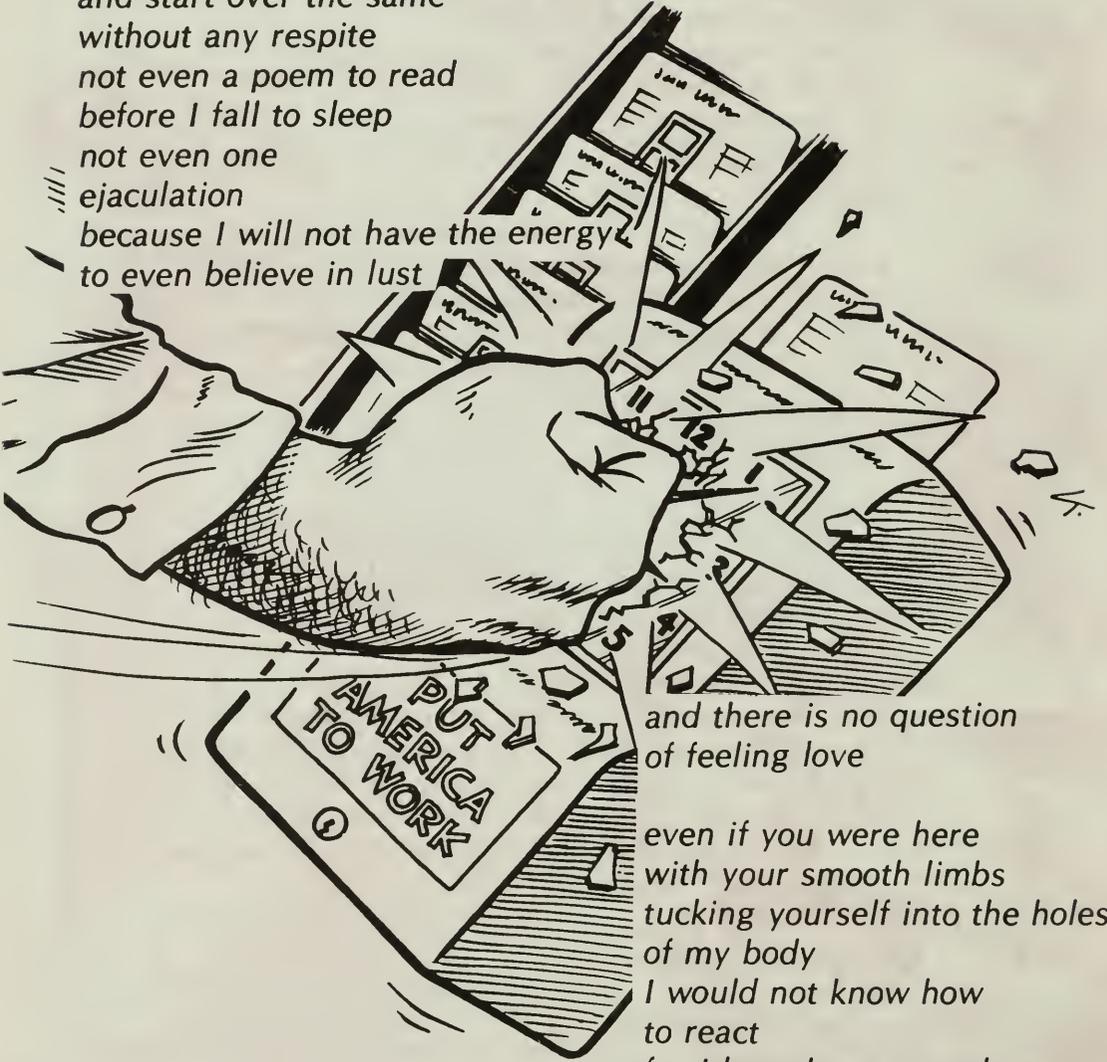
Joy to the world
The time has come
Let earth receive all kings!
Let worthless bosses of all types
Find rest with worms and parasites
Six feet below the ground
Six feet below the ground
Six feet, six feet
Below the ground.

They rule the world
With fear and hate
And take what we create!
The time has come to celebrate
It's them we're going to relocate
Six feet below the ground
Six feet below the ground
Six feet, six feet
Below the ground!



OVERTIME

what I am thinking is
how I will work all the day
and half the night here
go to the gym
and go home to bed
only to get up
in the morning
and start over the same
without any respite
not even a poem to read
before I fall to sleep
not even one
ejaculation
because I will not have the energy
to even believe in lust



and there is no question
of feeling love

even if you were here
with your smooth limbs
tucking yourself into the holes
of my body
I would not know how
to react
for I have been gutted out
like a burning house
by another
empty job

Mark Hensley

TALES OF TOLL

It Reached
Out
And
Touched
Me



Five Weeks At PacTel

a true story

I hadn't really ever intended to work for the phone company, really I hadn't. The Employment Development Department sent me on an interview and when I got there I found out it was the phone company. Having spent a great deal of time and energy getting to the interview, I decided to go through with it, and take the battery of tests being given. There were spelling and grammar tests, matching and logic tests, and arithmetic tests, and of course the oblig-

atory typing test. After the typing test the first funny thing happened. They wouldn't tell me how fast I typed, or for that matter, how I scored on any of the other tests. That's classified information, I was informed. Right, I'm sure that the FBI is dying to know how fast I type.

Two months passed, and I forgot about the phone company. I found a nice little off-the-books job which allowed me to collect unemployment. One gray June morning the phone

rang at 8:00 a.m. sharp. It was the phone company calling me. A job was available, if I wanted it. I considered. My unemployment was about to run out, and I couldn't live off the income from my part-time, off-the-books job. So I accepted the offer and told them I would start in two weeks.

I decided to start off right by calling in sick the very first day (I actually had a very good reason). They weren't real pleased about that, and I almost got myself fired before even starting. They wanted to know why I couldn't come in. This was to become a recurrent theme, supervisors always wanting to know why.

The next day, a Thursday, I arrived at least twenty minutes early, and went to look for Wilma, my snooper-supervisor. She impressed upon me the importance of being on time for work, everyday, and never being absent, ever, ever, ever. I was amazed but not impressed. I would later find out just how serious this issue of attendance and tardiness was for phone company employees.

She took me over to "my desk," noting that Jane, one of the other secretaries on the floor, arrived about six minutes after 8:00. She wrote it down on a piece of paper to be filed somewhere with nasty red pen marks all over it. She introduced me to Bill, a temporary worker who would be training me to replace him. Then she introduced me to about fifty people, all of whose names I forgot instantly. I noticed that almost every clerical worker to whom I was introduced was either temporary or had just been hired yesterday or last week. Nobody knew what they were doing. Some so-called temporary workers had been there eight months or more.

Then she left with Bill. Bill had long hair and a scroungy beard and raggedy blue jeans. I was a little surprised to see him in this attire. In fact, dress style fluctuated wildly, from jeans, sweatpants and T-shirts to three piece suits and thigh-slit

skirts and plunging necklines; from punk haircuts (but not colors — no blue or green hair here) to crewcuts and shags and John Travolta cuts.

Bill offered to buy me a cup of coffee and I learned that employees were expected to pay twenty five cents per cup of lukewarm, weak instant coffee with powdered "non-dairy creamer." This on the honor system, of course. There were signs everywhere urging people to join the Caffeine Club — seven dollars per month for unlimited coffee drinking privileges. I remarked to Bill that I was surprised that a company the size of AT&T was unable to provide free coffee for employees, but he pointed out that they did not get that way by providing employees with the little niceties of life.

We went downstairs to the employees' cafeteria — chillingly air conditioned on a damp, foggy, summer day — and talked for two hours about who to trust (no one) and how to break while working. Bill told me the best way to avoid being harassed by Wilma was to stay out of the office; no one would ever ask where I was and I would never be missed.

Back upstairs, Wilma gave me a key to the supply cabinet. It was sort of like *carte blanche* to steal — a veritable gold mine of pens, papers, staplers, scissors, stamp pads, file folders, stacking baskets, graph paper, tracing paper, bond paper, etc. I lost no time in taking six pens and two note pads and continued to take a little something as a reward to myself for getting through each working day.

There actually was no work for me to do, so Bill suggested I just look busy when Wilma came around, which she did about every half hour. She always asked if I was learning "everything" and if I liked the job. She asked me at least three times the first day, and several times each day thereafter. At first I tried to say that I loved the job, I adored filing, and couldn't wait to answer the phone,

but I finally decided this was just another subtle form of harassment. I eventually told her that I was a creative person, and there were very few outlets for creativity in this type of work, but it did keep the rent paid. She wrote this all down in her ever-present book of nasty notes about workers but left me alone after that, at least on the issue of employee happiness.

Bill was absent the next day, Friday. I didn't feel comfortable

enough with Wilma to ask her what I was supposed to be doing, so I passed a most pleasant day writing letters, making phone calls, compiling a list of office supplies that could be removed from the supply cabinet, and playing with the typewriter. Wilma interrupted me twice via the telephone, insisting that I meet with her immediately to answer very important questions. The first question was what was my middle initial. The second question involved the office

The real trick to modern office management?... 1) Have a record of everything 2) Continually think up new ways to record the same information.

3) Keep the office staff busy with data creation, storage, and retrieval. 4) Never talk about how meaningless it all is

My eyes are getting worse. Two new prescriptions for glasses in a year!



Christmas party (this was July). Should we have it the 23rd or the 24th, should it be catered, should it be all day, or just in the afternoon — yes, my input into these important decisions was needed immediately. I answered her questions with the careful consideration I thought they deserved and raced back to my desk where I could sit blissfully staring out the permaseal windows at other permaseal windows across the street.

The following Thursday I was to report to Oakland for “induction” and, indeed, it was a lot like being drafted. It was an intensive eight hour orientation process for twelve new recruits. We were shown numerous films on such diverse subjects as how stealing even one pen or paper clip could lead to the downfall of AT&T and how the Bell System got to be the way it is. We filled out a dozen forms for health insurance, life insurance, holiday pay, employee rules and regulations, credit unions, savings plans, on and on and on. During the discussion of benefits and vacation/sick days I learned that there are in fact no sick days at AT&T ever, ever. Not after six months or ten years. I would eventually hear much more about this subject than I cared to know, but for now I understood that if I was absent I wasn’t going to be paid for it. We were told that our attendance wasn’t expected to be perfect, just very good. “Very good attendance” was not elaborated on. Later, I learned that it meant never being absent during the first twelve months of employment, and not more than two days during any subsequent years, should one remain with the company that long. These rules applied only to non-management. Supervisors, managers, and executives could be absent as often as they wished. Unfortunately for non-management, they seemed to be in all the time.

After induction, I decided I did not

want to go in on the next day, Friday, because it was my birthday. I suspected it was foolhardy to take a day off so soon into my employment at the phone company, but I felt very strongly about not working on what should be a day of pleasure and good times. So I called in “sick” from my friend’s house at about eight in the morning. Wilma wanted to know what was wrong with me. I told her that I had had a rough night and hung up. Around two hours later, I went back to my own apartment, and as I walked in the door the phone was ringing. It was, of course, Wilma. She wanted to read me the rules and regulations about being absent. “Sure, go ahead” I said, and she proceeded to read a long involved document which said I had better not plan on being absent again in the near future (the next twelve months). “Fine, can I go back to sleep now?” She apologized for waking me up, and I took a shower and went to play.

The next Monday I learned that I was going to be working for a new set of people. But first, would I do some xeroxing for Mr. Smith? It turned out to be something like a thousand pages of xeroxing, obviously more than I could churn out myself in the course of a working day — not to mention the danger of exposing oneself to a xerox machine all day. I did some and sent the rest to the multiple copying service downstairs.

Then I was sent over to my new desk. In the middle of the day, Wilma called me over to tell me the rules and regulations regarding employee absence again. Actually, I still remembered them from Friday, but I didn’t say anything.

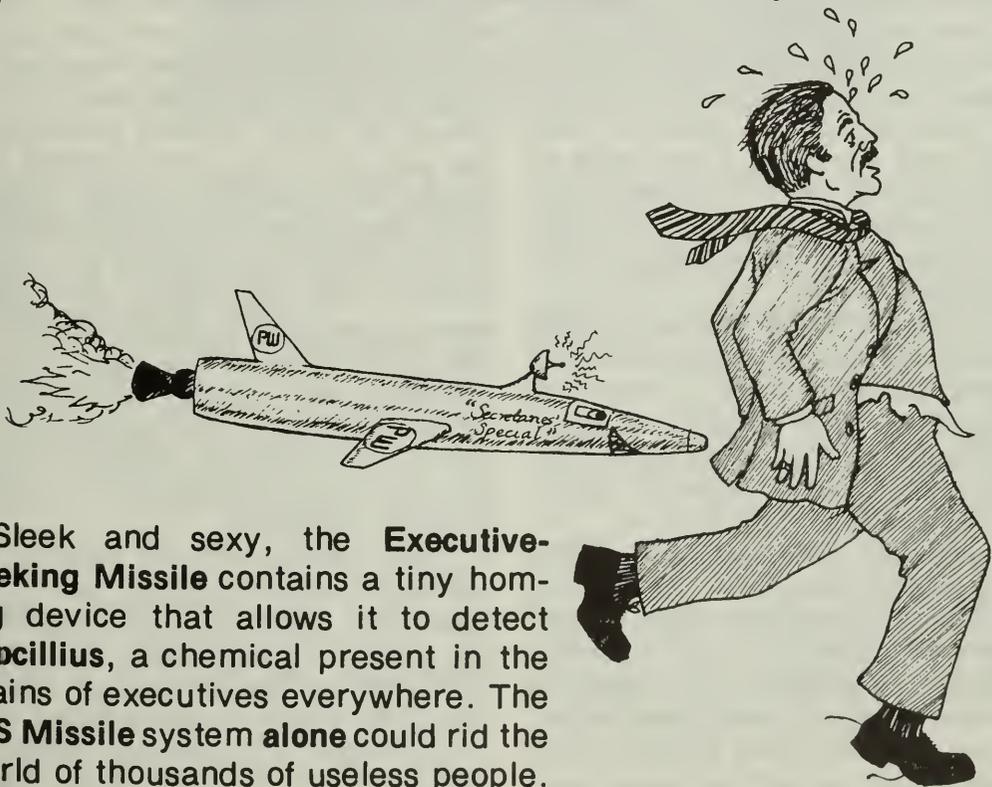
On Tuesday, Wilma came over to me in the morning, and asked why I was out on Friday. I told her that I was sick. What, she wanted to know, exactly was wrong with me. I told her that I was too sick to come to work. She said she needed to know exactly what was wrong with me. I told her

again I had simply been too ill to come in. She said she needed to know what illness I had. I asked her why. She said it was because the company was concerned about my health and well-being. I told her that while I found that really hard to believe, she could tell them I was feeling fine now, and probably wouldn't experience a relapse. She asked me if I was going to tell her what was wrong with me, and I said no, I wasn't going to tell her, and I didn't see why I needed to describe my illness. She wrote all this down. Later that day, she called me over to her again. Mr. Smith had told her that I refused to do some work for him. That, I said, is an out and out lie, and why didn't he say something to me about it? Well, she said, Mr. Smith says you refused, and that is insubordination and grounds for dismissal. I told her then and there that if she wanted to fire me, that was fine, but she had better find a legitimate

reason and not some trumped up excuse, or I would bring them to court. She wrote it all down, and slipped it, I'm sure, into my ever growing file.

Wednesday she came over to me with some papers she wanted me to sign. They said in effect that I refused to tell her why I was ill and that I knew it was a naughty thing to do. This was my first insubordination report, and there would be many more. "I'm not signing this," I told her. "You're refusing to sign it?" "I really wish you'd stop using that word," I answered and launched into a five minute monologue on corporate politics, forced subjugation and employee alienation. I don't think she understood a word I said, but she wrote it all down, and marked in red on my insubordination report that I had refused to sign it. As revenge, I stole a dozen boxes of pens, a typewriter element, and a stapler.

† EXECUTIVE-SEEKING MISSILE †



Sleek and sexy, the **Executive-Seeking Missile** contains a tiny homing device that allows it to detect **egocillius**, a chemical present in the brains of executives everywhere. The **E-S Missile system alone** could rid the world of thousands of useless people.

On Thursday, she came over to me and started in about being absent and tardy again. I told her point-blank that I was tired of her harassing me about this — that I understood it the first five times, and it wasn't necessary to explain it to me everyday. I later found out that she harangued other employees in an identical fashion. She continued to do it despite my insistence that I really did understand.

Later that day, she came over to me with a sealed envelope with my name written on it. I was certain they were my dismissal papers. I was rather surprised to find it was my paycheck. I had become so thoroughly caught up in the drama of it that I had actually forgotten they were going to pay me. I noticed that the payroll office had me down for the wrong number of exemptions, so I asked Wilma for payroll's telephone number so I could straighten it out. She asked me what the problem was, and told me that she would take care of it for me. I said I thought I could handle it. I was informed that I would not be allowed to do so, because what would happen if everybody wanted to call payroll? I couldn't possibly imagine, I told her. She assured me it would be utter chaos, and I told her I was tired of being treated like a kindergarten child. She told me she was only there to help me, and to always bring all my problems to her.

On Friday, I saw Wilma heading my way again, with what seemed at first to be good news — she was taking a two week vacation. At first I was delighted to hear this, but her replacement was so horrible, that I actually began to *miss* her!

I was even relieved when Wilma came back in the middle of August. The first thing I did was ask her, over three weeks in advance, if I would be able to take off Tuesday afternoons to attend a college course. I was willing to make up the time. She said she would have to consult her supervisor.

I told her I needed to know the next day.

Near the end of the following day, I asked her if she had spoken to her supervisor about 'my Tuesday afternoons.' What Tuesday afternoons? she asked. For school. School? My college course. College course? Wilma, I talked to you about this for twenty minutes yesterday. She said she didn't remember it at all. I patiently explained it to her again, wrote it down, and told her I really needed to know the next day.

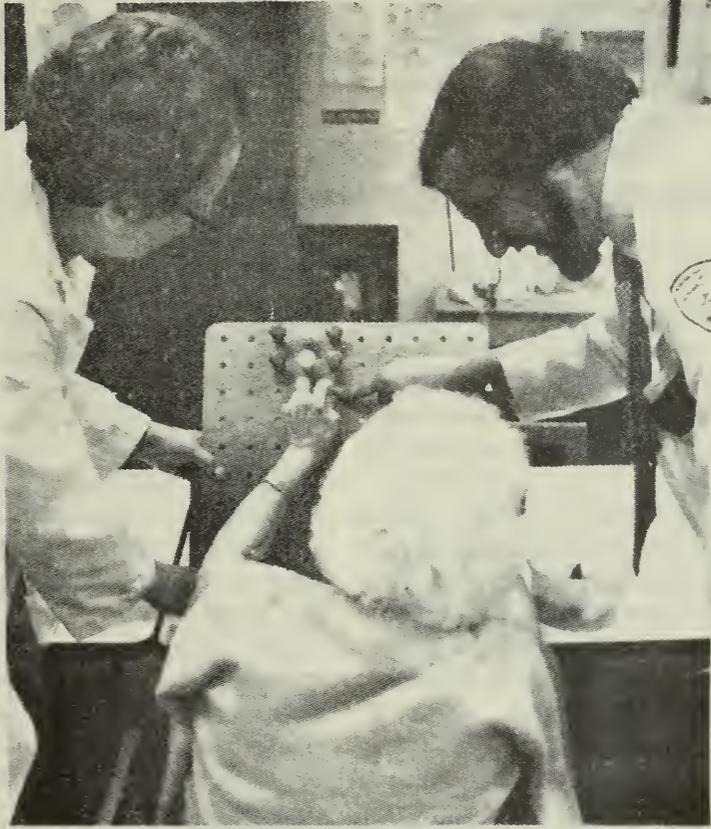
The next day, as closing time drew near, she still hadn't spoken to me about it, so I went to talk to her. I asked if she had spoken to her supervisor about my class. Yes, she said. And? She said she'd tell me Monday. I told her a simple yes or no would do. Yes or no, she answered. Wilma! That is not a sufficient answer. I will discuss it with you Monday. I have to know today, I told her. Finally she said she'd talk to me at 4 p.m. At 4 p.m. she came over to my desk, clutching a file. Your attitude has not been good, she said. Wilma, all I want to know is whether I will be able to take the time off to attend my class. Special privileges, she said, are only to be granted to people with perfect records. Your attendance has not been good. Wilma I was absent once! I do all my work quickly and efficiently. Are you saying I can't take my class? We don't like your attitude, she said. What you don't like, I said, is that I'm really efficient but I don't love the company, and don't pretend to, and there's no legitimate way you can fire me. She wrote all this down.

I called her supervisor, and said I wanted to speak to her about my class, since I assumed it was she who had denied me permission. Fine, she said. Shall we invite Wilma too? Well, I said, if you're giving me a choice, I'd just as soon not have her there. I really think we should invite her,

That's good! You're getting much better!

Where's my oatmeal?

Soon we'll be able to put her to work at BofA



Barbara said. I'd really rather not. I'd rather just talk to you. Well, Barbara said, let's invite her, and then if you still want to talk to me alone, we can arrange it. Some choice!

As it turned out, I needed to take Monday off. I knew that I couldn't take it off without getting myself fired, and that I probably wouldn't be able to get unemployment due to my 'excessive absences.' So I called in and quit. Fine, said Wilma. We'll be holding your paycheck for two weeks. Send it to me right away, I said, or I will come down there and get it. I'll call you back, she said. She called back and said I could have my paycheck as soon as it came out. I thanked her and hung up. A half hour later she called back. Why are you

quitting, she wanted to know. Why do you want to know? I asked, knowing full well why she wanted to know. I have to fill out a form. Well, I said, why don't you write down that I hated the fucking place? I could hear her wince over the phone and I hung up on her. Fifteen minutes later she called me back again. Now what, Wilma? We need your ID card. I told her I lost it. She didn't believe it, but couldn't argue. I later learned, in a final stroke of irony, that I had been banned from entering the building, that my name had been given to the security guards downstairs, and that, if caught entering the building I was to be escorted out bodily.

—By Nomda Plume



DOWN TIME!

Keep On Calling!

A legal researcher's friends phone her "free" on her employer's WATS line. A bookkeeper starts each working day by dialing for his horoscope. An accountant calls Florida during his lunch hour.

"It's simply the old routine of dial nine and dial the world," said Harry Newton, a telecommunications consultant and president of Telecom Library in New York.

One of the most rampant forms of abuse involves the more than 20 Dial-It services, such as Dial-a-Sport, Dial-a-Joke, Dial-Your-Horoscope. During 1980, the New York Telephone Company handled 299 million calls in the New York City area alone on such services. Significantly, two-thirds of those calls were made between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M.

Another reason for phone abuse is tied to what has been called the WATS myth, which holds that calls made on Wide Area Telephone Service lines are free, once a flat rate is paid by the company. This was once true, but today WATS calls are billed exactly like regular interstate toll calls, then discounted 20 percent to 30 percent. "I half knew WATS wasn't

free," said one woman who made several long-distance calls a week on her company WATS line, "but I just chose not to find out."

"The concern is not so much with the cost of a phone call," said William L. Hegge, telecommunications administrator for Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, "as with lost productivity."

[As a result] more and more companies are investing in systematic approaches from computer software that does the detective work for them, to the less expensive rotary telephone lock and, somewhat newer, the Over-talk lock for pushbutton phones.

The problem of phone abuse is costing American business \$4 billion a year in lost work time and actual telephone charges. Telecom Library's president Harry Newton contends that the abuse and misuse of phones can account for 20-40% of a company's phone bill.

Kevin V. Shannon, telecommunications project analyst at Corning Glass Works, estimates that 15-30% of his company's bill could be attributed to phone abuse.

—N. Y. Times 10/12/81



O O P S ! Notes on an Unnatural Disaster

"People began leaving with the first smell of gas, although the first announcement on the loudspeaker said it wasn't necessary. Half of the people were out even before they called the evacuation." (an Embarcadero Center lawyer quoted in S.F. Chronicle 8/26/81).

While common sense prevailed among thousands of self-evacuating office workers, PG&E was busy trying to "minimize inconvenience to customers." Hence the incredible delay in shutting off the leak (over two hours!). Instead of shutting off a central gas main, PG&E decided to search out and shut five localized valves so "business as usual" could continue at as many downtown establishments as possible.

Meanwhile PCB-laden gas was poisoning 40,000+ workers, a fact known to PG&E executives well before it was announced to the public. In February PG&E found that PCB levels were high on or near the ruptured gas main.

The response of authority to disaster is nearly always the same — "Keep Working!" In this case management security personnel in several buildings dutifully advised workers to stay on the job, even while thousands were hurriedly leaving. Like PG&E many managers were mostly concerned with maintaining an orderly work process. Similarly in the huge Tishman building fire in mid-June (apparently started by a rebellious employee trying to burn up Wells Fargo's computer records) security advised the 2,000 people in the building to stay where they were, or to move a few floors down. They hoped to maintain "normalcy" on as many floors as possible in order to keep the information flowing and the capital circulating.

Despite the horrible reality of PCB-laden gas leaks, many people are taking it in stride, shrugging it off as some kind of natural disaster. But there was *nothing* "natural" about this one nor can it be dismissed as an honest mistake. It was a consequence of the priorities that rule this city and the rest of the world:

- Priorities of contractors and realtors who are throwing caution to the wind in the rush to build ever-more office buildings.

- Priorities of PG&E to constantly minimize the extent of public danger resulting from toxic or radioactive exposure in order to protect their monopoly on the energy grid and avoid clean-up costs.
- Priorities of office management in keeping people on the job at all costs to maintain productivity and output levels.

These priorities are based on a system where the search for money and profits underlies all important decisions that affect our lives.

In fact, we are forced to make money a central concern of our daily lives just to survive — first selling our working time and then using the money to get what we need. With so much of our time taken up by the money system, it seems we have little time to think about the important decisions that confront society. And yet by allowing these decisions to be made by the "authorities," we contribute to the continuation of our own victimization.

There is not much we can do about this particular disaster except demonstrate our anger. But we can begin to challenge the relationships of hierarchy and authority around us and by doing so subvert the priorities that govern society today. For those of us who work in offices, we can begin by asking some basic questions: At what point are conditions hazardous enough to take action? How can office workers exert control over their working conditions? How can people begin to resist their subjection to the priorities of the money economy?

If these questions interest you, contact us:

Dissident Office Workers
c/o Processed World
55 Sutter St. #829
San Francisco, CA. 94104



THIS LEAFLET WAS POSTED AROUND THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT A FEW DAYS AFTER THE PCB SPILL.

WHAT ARE PCB'S

PCB stands for Poly Chlorinated Biphenols. PCB was originally used as an industrial strength lubricant and cleanser in gas compressors. Batches of PCB's with the same chlorine content may vary in composition and toxicity even when produced by the same manufacturer. Director of Public Health Mervyn Silverman likened the exposure to PCB's to medical x-rays. Both radiation and PCB's accumulate in the body.

Congress banned further production of PCB's in 1979. Companies have been given until 1984 to remove PCB from existing equipment and products. "The new Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), Public law 94-469, specifically prohibits production of PCB's within the U.S., regulates disposal of materials contaminated by PCB's, and restricts the use of any such materials already in service."

"Some of the nonspecific effects on health that may be attributed to low-level exposure to PCB's are abnormal fatigue, abdominal pain, numbness of limbs, swelling of joints, chronic cough, menstrual irregularity, and headache. Abnormal tooth development, hyperpigmentation, and low weight in newborn children also may be complications resulting from PCB exposure."

In addition, there have been suggestions of increased incidence of cancer in some of the Japanese who were exposed to PCB through contamination of cooking oil.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

- 1) IS WASHING OFF CONTAMINATED AREAS EFFECTIVE? WE KNOW PCB'S ARE NOT WATER-SOLUBLE AND ARE A PERMANENT SUBSTANCE AND THE EFFECTS ARE CUMULATIVE.
DIDN'T PCB'S CONTAMINATE THE AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM? HOW ARE THE INTERIORS OF THE BUILDINGS GOING TO BE CLEANED? IS THE AIR VENTILATION SYSTEM BEING MONITORED FOR PCB'S?
- 2) CAN EMPLOYEES AND SHOPPERS IN THE EMBARCADERO CENTER BE CONTAMINATED BY BREATHING AIR WITH PCB'S IN IT? ARE PCB'S AIRBORNE?
- 3) ARE WORKERS CARRYING PCB'S ON THEIR SHOES AND CLOTHES HOME WITH THEM OR TO OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY?
- 4) WHAT IS BEING DONE WITH THE CONTAMINATED WATER AND SAND USED IN THE SUPPOSED CLEAN UP?
- 5) WHY WAS TRAFFIC CORDONED OFF FROM THE CONTAMINATED AREA AND PEOPLE WERE ALLOWED IN?
- 6) HOW POISONOUS IS THIS PARTICULAR BATCH OF PCB THAT WE WERE EXPOSED TO?
- 7) IS IT SAFE FOR WORKERS TO RETURN TO WORK? WHAT ASSURANCES OR JUSTIFICATIONS ARE EMPLOYERS OFFERING?

DEMANDS

- 1) BLOOD TESTS TO DETERMINE LEVEL OF PCB SHOULD BE AVAILABLE WITHOUT CHARGE TO ANYONE WHO REQUESTS IT.
- 2) SUFFICIENT DOCUMENTATION SHOULD BE SUPPLIED TO EMPLOYEES BY THEIR EMPLOYERS VERIFYING THEY WERE IN THE AFFECTED AREA ON AUGUST 25 FOR PURPOSES OF POSSIBLE HEALTH CLAIMS.
- 3) EMPLOYEES SHOULD NOT BE FINANCIALLY OR OTHERWISE PENALIZED FOR DAYS MISSED.
- 4) FINDINGS OF THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

WE ARE HOPING FOR A PUBLIC MEETING. TIME AND PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED.

Chills & Drills From Toxic Spills

Tension grips hundreds of grade-school children as police officers in gas masks tersely order them out of their classrooms and into the streets. The students, marching two by two, are escorted by the police past rows of nearly identical suburban tract homes. Unwittingly, the cops are leading the children directly toward a noxious cloud of acids and heavy metals — the very same cloud that the cops thought they were evacuating the children away from.†

The poisonous cloud's origins? A toxic waste transport truck sprung a leak shortly after it pulled away from a Medfly checkpoint on a nearby freeway — an inspection checkpoint to confiscate fruit and vegetables in an attempt to control the spread of the feared Medfly.

Covering the adjacent 1,300 square miles to this accident is a three-county quarantined zone undergoing aerial spraying of the poisonous pesticide Malathion. Well over a million people

live and work beneath regular bombardments from nightly helicopter sorties. On October 22, one suburban Fremont family had the misfortune of being bombarded by a helicopter itself when it crashed into their house in dense fog.

At the outset, public outrage over aerial spraying of Malathion was met with bland assurances by government officials that everything would be OK. Simultaneously, TV newscasters urged people to stay indoors, close windows and doors, and to contact physicians and/or hospitals if they experienced any direct contact with Malathion. The grim specter of lying public officials juxtaposed to the massive poisoning of the population has led to some angry responses (several helicopters have been shot at as they sprayed rural valleys) and widespread bitterness. Thousands of dead fish in the south Bay provide a

† As reported on the KPIX-TV 6 p.m. News, September 8, 1981.



Hey, we've only been gassed six times in the last year, and I feel great!! — Burp!!

daily reminder of the ongoing poisoning.

The preceding examples are but two among many instances of toxic exposure in this state during the past several months. In the first six months of 1981 there were 177 toxic chemical spills in the state of California, nearly as many as occurred in all of 1980. Thousands of Bay Area residents have been forced to evacuate their homes and workplaces at least three times:

- August 22, 1981: 70,000 are evacuated when a noxious cloud of silicon tetrachloride leaks from a South San Francisco chemical company's storage yard.

- August 25, 1981: 30,000 are evacuated when a gas main is punctured by a construction crew in SF's Financial District. The natural gas is found to contain the carcinogenic substance PCB.

- September 8, 1981: 4,000 are evacuated when a cloud of acids and heavy metals leaks from a toxic waste transport truck near Pleasanton, a Bay Area suburb.

The most dramatically reported invasion of toxic chemicals into our lives was the August 25 leak of natural gas and PCB in San Francisco (for more details, see "Oops! Notes on an Unnatural Disaster," in this issue).

For three days after the accident, clean-up crews attempted to remove the oily traces of highly toxic PCB that had accumulated on downtown sidewalks, shrubs, and office buildings. Since the area was not tested for safety and compliance after the clean-up, we will never know if the Financial District is free of PCB. The only response from the City government was Supervisor Nancy Walker's proposal for hearings on an "effective" evacuation plan for future disasters.

But unnerving incidents such as these aren't simply random accidents

If PCB is loose in the gas main...

Oh, don't be such worry-warts. We made PCB casserole last night, it was delicious!

...don't we get PCB when we use our gas stoves?



that can be "handled" by evacuating the exposed population. They increasingly make up the *regular routine* of living in the Bay Area. Evacuation plans only to serve to normalize a thoroughly unnatural social problem. Furthermore, they tend to obscure the underlying cause of toxic accidents: namely, such accidents are an *unavoidable* component of using ever increasing quantities of toxic substances.

Even where there is no spectacular accident to attract our attention, the problems persist. For instance, an alarming increase in the incidence of cancer has been reported in the predominantly working-class neighborhoods of northern Contra Costa county, site of the massive Chevron oil refineries and related industries. Residents in that area currently have the highest reported cancer rate in the nation, 40% above average.

There are 77 hazardous waste dump sites surrounding that same area. Sixty sites have simply been abandoned, nine others in the city of

Richmond qualify for money from Washington's recently enacted "Super Fund" (a \$1.6 billion fund allocated by the Federal Gov't. to clean up abandoned toxic dumps — in effect, a massive subsidy to the oil/chemical industries).

The existence of a polluting industrial infrastructure, combined with the daily production, distribution and utilization of toxic chemicals, provide

the ingredients for both quick disasters and gradual catastrophes. Fortright action is needed to remove these substances from use as quickly and thoroughly as possible. Such action and change will not be forthcoming from the omnipresent bureaucracies of daily life... it is up to us.

—By Mr. Wizard & Lucius Cabins



Hate Your Job?

Your unhappiness about your job has now reached alarming peaks, with the Bureau of Labor Statistics reporting that as many as 24 million Americans — a full quarter of our work force — are dissatisfied with their work.

The cost to employers runs into billions of dollars a year in absenteeism, reduced output, poor workmanship. The cost to our nation is incalculable, for this attitude is deeply eroding our ability to compete suc-

cessfully in world markets.

Why? Are you turned off by your working environment, supervision and company policies or the *actual nature of the job* you hold? Is the reason that you feel your job should be more than a way to pay your bills? Are we witnessing a fundamental change in the attitude of American men and women toward working itself?

—S.F. Chronicle 9/22/81

Printed in U.S.A.		INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION		ENTRY FOR
TO	SAN FRANCISCO	OFFICE	FROM SAN FRANCISCO	<u>MEMO OF THE MONTH AWARD</u>
FOR	ALL TAX PARTNERS		FROM	CONTEST
DATE	SEPTEMBER 23, 1981		JOB OR ACCOUNT NO.	
SUBJECT	STAFF SCHEDULING PROJECT			
<p>In order to avoid having two reports filled out on the same client for staffing purposes, the partners should be using only those practice management reports which show them as the manager, and ignore the partner reports.</p>				

NO! NOOO! Not one more "Memo to Files"!!



CHALLENGE A CO-WORKER WITH A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

Help out your co-workers who have let their office discipline lag. Create a break in the old office routine with a stiff challenge that gets them back on the track with zest.

Reason: A new task creates a first-day-on-the-job feeling. The challenge and the novelty forces the worker to concentrate harder than she or he does on routine duties.

CREATIVE ACTION: Take a hint from the two supervisors below, who used special assignments to put workers in line.

The slow-poke. For a worker who was starting to fall behind—a few minutes here, an hour or a day there—Judy Sanchez, an administrative assistant in Peoria, Ill., found the special project approach helpful.

IDEA IN ACTION: "I gave this worker a rush project to handle independently. The deadline was reachable but only by going all-out," Judy reports.

Profit result: The employee really had to step on the gas to get the work done. And when he was finished, he realized he *could* work faster—and knew that his supervisor was aware of it.

Judy followed this assignment with several

others until the workers had mastered greater speed without such prompting from her.

The chatterbox. Workers with this malady not only hold up their own tasks, but they prevent others from working steadily also. Bill Jerwyn, a Spokane supervisor, solved this problem recently with an—

IDEA IN ACTION: "One worker with this bad habit had a lot of talent and ability. I bet that she had ambition, also. So I put her in charge of a group project with a deadline to meet. But, the group I gave her also had talkers in it, who held her up."

Result: The more the others talked, the more frustrated this leader became. Finally, she told Bill she was worried that they would not meet the deadline. Laughing, Bill told her that he knew how she felt, and this opened the door for a heart-to-heart discussion of her own gab sessions. Then she and Bill redistributed the remaining work so that the deadline could be met.

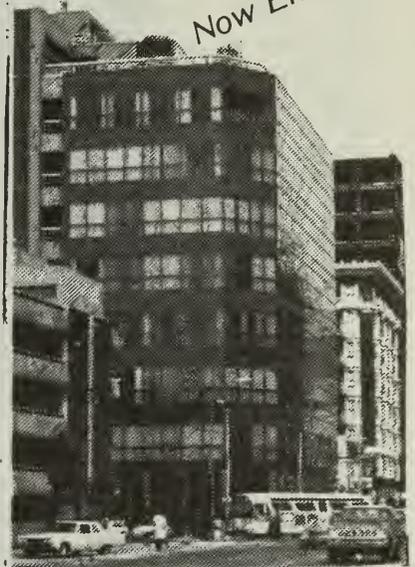
Payoff: The taste of her own medicine spurred this worker on to fulfill the supervisory potential she had. Until Bill had devised this way of showing her the damage her gab sessions did, she never understood why she had not progressed.

HEEL BUSINESS SCHOOL

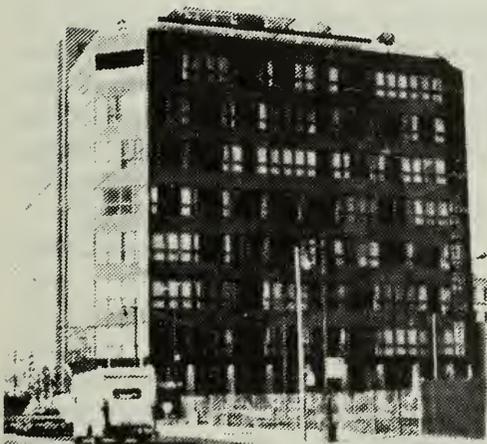
“Training Institute for the Clerical Working-Class”

Learn to:

- **Type Meaningless Letters**
- **Manage Superfluous Records**
- **Process Insignificant Words**
- **Work Quietly and Obediently**
- **Follow Arbitrary Rules and Regulations**
- **Think of your own Ideas as Stupid and the Ideas of your Boss/Teacher as Better than your own**
- **Think of “Profits” as Necessary and Important (Even when the Only thing you Know about “Profits” is that you Never Get Them)**
- **Enjoy Selling your Life so that you can Buy Back the things you Need/Want to Live**
- **Think Less and Work More**



Physical Layout Of The Plant



This beautiful, shiny mini-skyscraper has been carefully designed to simulate a real work environment. Sterile cement and metal decor will help you to feel more like a working cog in a machine than a human being.

Report to your assigned classroom, where bright flourescent lights will soothe your mind as you follow instructions from your teacher/boss.

A message from the director

I'd like to welcome all you new and returning students with a few brief remarks. I realize you will be terribly bored learning how to type, do accounting, “manage” records, process words, and all the other repetitive, mindless tasks that are yours as the aspiring white-collar working class. But you must learn to look as busy and alert as possible, even when inside you want to scream at the monotony and meaninglessness of what you are being taught (or are already doing for a living). It is only when you pretend to enjoy your misery that managers like me will promote you to better salaries and positions of power over other people.

Don't let it worry you that the world economy is on the verge of a massive depression, or that the skills you are learning will soon be computerized (leaving you unemployed). As economic activity contracts, and recession turns into depression, don't ask yourself why this system demands austerity and hardship from average people like yourselves (while owners and managers like me continue to live in material comfort). Don't hold any illusions that you can take over by getting together with other students and people you work with, and create a new society without bureaucrats, managers, governments, or wage-labor. This school's curriculum has been carefully developed to prevent your imagination from exploring any ideas about a world without bosses and without long hours of boring work. If you learn nothing else here, you must learn not to think!

Have a nice passive semester... Please!

Scornfully Yours, Dr. Z. Rocks



JACK AND THE BEAN STALK

This is the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Jack was your average, not-so-hard working clerk/typist. When he needed the money, he worked as a temporary in downtown San Francisco.

One dreary Monday morning Jack was dispatched to Frunk & Strunk Commodities Brokerage to help on a special assignment. Frunk & Strunk were in a funk because the bean trade was not booming. They'd started buying bean 'futures' months ago but still hadn't cornered the market. And to top it all off, the telex had just reported record harvests in Mexico... naturally this put both Frunk and Strunk in a pretty foul mood. This in turn created ill winds in the F&S offices high over Market Street. Some have irresponsibly asserted that the ill winds had more to do with the beans than the news.

Jack made his way downtown to the gleaming silver tower and the type-

writer that would keep him busy for approximately 6.5 hours each day. The receptionist greeted him with a look of relief. "Now they won't make me do so much typing" she thought.

"Hi, glad to meet you, where do I sit?"

"Oh, Mr. Strunk will show you and explain your job" she said.

"Explain my job?!?" thought Jack, "that can't take too long."

Hye Strunk, a nervous 49-year-old Russian emigré, emerged from his glass booth, extending his hand and exhaling cigar smoke all over Jack. "Welcome aboard, Jack, we're glad to haf you." He led Jack down the corridor to a desk in a partitioned cubicle. "Here is your berth — oops, I mean desk — ha, ha. You are goink to be assistant to bean specialist, Jim Gordon. Make yourself at home, coffee is there. Jim will be here to explain duties in minute."

As Hye Strunk disappeared down

the hall, Jack yawned and glanced around the all-too-familiar landscape: metal walls painted a soothing institutional beige, fluorescent lights, and empty bulletin boards so that he could personalize "his" space, and the inevitable typewriter and dictaphone. On the corner of his desk he noticed a small dish full of beans. He reached over and tried to pick one up. To his amazement, the beans were solidly glued into the dish.

Jim Gordon appeared at his side. Pale and pudgy, conservatively dressed in a white shirt and black tie, Gordon extended a limp, sweaty hand to Jack and said: "Uh,.. um.., I.. uh, am Jim, uh.. welcome aboard."

"Well, glad to meet you Jim, I'm your new assistant, Jack."

Gordon stared glassily into the distance over Jack's left shoulder. "Did Mr. Strunk explain our... uh... project?"

"Something about beans?"

"Uh, yeah, um, that's... uh... right. Have you had any... uh... experience with... uh... beans?"

"Only in the kitchen" grinned Jack, but Gordon didn't smile. He had long ago ceased to find anything amusing about beans.

"Oh by the way, is that dish just an ornament?" asked Jack.

"Oh... that." Gordon looked somewhat disconcerted as he slowly replied. "When Frunk & Strunk started to get into uh... beans, the... uh... American Bean Association sent... uh.. um... 150 of those... uh... commemorative dishes to the company. If you turn them over you can see that they were done for the... uh... Bicentennial."

"I see" said Jack. He switched into his "automatic pilot" blandness to avoid taxing Gordon's limited communicative abilities any further. Gordon gave Jack a stack of papers with drafts of memos and reports that had been piling up for the six days that Gordon had been without a secretary.

For the next three hours Jack typed

steadily, trying to see through the glare of the fluorescent lights and the blurry vision caused by his continual yawning. Three cups of coffee had managed only to give him a stomach ache. "Maybe I should try speed?" thought Jack as he finished the fifth memo on the intimate details of drought and crop loss in outer Yogotopia and its impact on beans per can per case per factory in Runnah-weighshape, USA.

"Typing this stuff is awful but I'd sure hate to have to *write* this gibberish. That would really be humiliating."

Jack soon became one of the most productive typists Frunk & Strunk ever had. The days crawled by, one by one, with an absolute absence of variation in his routine. In the middle of his second week Jack came in, threw his jacket around the back of his chair as usual, and began reading the paper with his first morning coffee. Out of the corner of his eye, just as he turned to the sports pages, Jack caught a glimmer of color. Glancing over the top of the paper he noticed that one of the beans in his Bicentennial commemorative dish had sprouted.

Peering at the dish, he touched the green sprout and wondered how this was possible in the midst of all this metal and fluorescence. He went to the water cooler, filled a cup with water, and carefully dribbled a little of it into the bean dish. "Surely it will die, but what the hell?... I might as well as give it a chance."

Every so often during the morning he looked at the sprout. It seemed to be getting larger before his very eyes. By the time he went to lunch it must've been at least eight inches tall. And when he returned from lunch, lo and behold the tiny sprout had grown to a full three feet!

Jim Gordon came up with more bean work for Jack. When he saw the burgeoning stalk he started, and then hesitantly inquired "Where didja get

the... uh... plant?"

"It just started growing. This morning it was a tiny sprout... I gave it a bit of water and boom! Amazing isn't it? It hasn't stopped yet! I've never seen anything like it, have you?"

"Uh... um... no... don't you.. ah... think you should... uh.. throw it... um.. away?"

"Why? I like the little devil, I'm keeping it."

No sooner had Jack finished speaking when the stalk quivered and grew a full 12 inches right before their unbelieving eyes.

Jack poured the remaining water into the dish, his astonishment growing with the rapidly ascending stalk. Gordon turned away and pattered back to his cubicle, apparently deciding to ignore the whole episode.

By the end of the day, the stalk had reached the ceiling. Its green leaves caressed the abstract crevices in the panels, as it avoided the fluorescent squares. The other people in the office didn't seem to notice anything, leaving Jack alone in his amazement and curiosity. He waited until most of the others had gone home. Then Jack absconded with several potted plants on the other side of the floor, and emptied the dirt into his garbagecan, making a sizable new home for his stalk.

The next morning his desk was covered with plaster from the ceiling where the stalk had broken through to the next floor. He went up to the next floor to visit the top of his stalk. Leaping two stairs at a time, he burst into the office of Digital Stimulation Accountants (specializing in tax eva-



THE AVERAGE DAY

- 1 hour of TV with breakfast
- 4 hours on VDT at work
- 45 minutes of Tele-shopping during lunchbreak
- 4 hours on VDT at work
- 1 hour dinner preparation — TV in background
- 5 hours TV during and after dinner
- 8¼ hours sleep



† Slime 'Q' †

Slime 'Q' is the first of a long line of recombinant DNA-based weapons systems. Originally discovered by Stanford University researchers, but discarded as "useless" when they found it to be non-carcinogenic, **Slime 'Q'** was created through a genetic alteration of velveeta cheese. **Slime 'Q'** has a voracious appetite for office decor (especially pastel colored objects and "Bank art") and will disrupt any bureaucracy to which it is introduced.

sion and massage). The startled receptionist looked up as he briskly walked by her desk. "Excuse me sir, but can I help you?"

"No thanks, I'm just here to see about modern horticulture and accounting procedures."

"Oh, you should see Mr. Chlorofingers about that — he's an expert!"

"Thanks, he's this way isn't he?.." gesturing down the hall to where he expected to find the remarkable stalk.

"Yes, third booth on the left," she said with a knowing look.

Jack scurried down the hallway and past the five booths on the left in search of the green tower. Suddenly he spotted it, but oddly it was in a corner of the floor nowhere near the location of his desk downstairs. The recently graduated business students weren't paying either him or the stalk any attention, as they busily attacked stacks of papers and numbers while they massaged each others' feet.

As Jack approached the stalk, it leaned toward him, as if it recognized him. Irresistably, Jack stroked its

firm, green fibrous body. It quivered with delight. Furtively glancing around the room at the mesmerized accountants, Jack decided to take a chance. He slowly mounted the plant, and wrapped his legs around its thick trunk. It was easy to climb. The plant responded to his ascent with the timely growth of nodules and branches just where he needed some support.

The top was nowhere in sight, curling around the corner and back into the air conditioning system in the ceiling. Jack disappeared through the hole in the top of the office. He felt that he would follow the stalk wherever it might take him.

By this time Jack had discarded his shirt, tie, jacket, shoes, and socks, retaining only his slacks to protect his private parts from the numerous wires, valves, sockets, etc. that impeded his travels through the duct system. An unmistakably erogenous sensation accompanied every contact between his bare skin and the strong green body of the stalk.

Gee, I just love these new motorized files, don't you Doris?

Yes, they've changed my whole life!



The attractive wood-grain pattern of the motorized files makes a harmonious addition to the offices at Continental Telephone.

The stalk twisted and turned through the building's assorted ducts. Jack followed the lead of the plant, neither knowing nor caring where it was leading him. On the next floor the stalk came out into the employee lounge, right next to a floor-to-ceiling diffenbachia. Jack's head popped up between the plants, not far from the couch where a corpulent, middle-aged fellow in a drab business suit was nervously touching the nylon-clad knee of a young woman. She was heavily made-up with a rubbery complexion and a low-cut neckline.

Carefully, Jack tried to climb up the backside of the stalk between the wall and the leafy protection of the diffenbachia, hugging the trunk of the stalk

tightly. He heard the nervous wheezes of the man trying to impress the young woman with his accomplishments in the statistical manipulation of Kitchen Motor Marketing techniques. Jack couldn't tell whether the woman was impressed or even interested, since she said nothing and he couldn't see her. Once he had cleared the ceiling on this the 23rd floor, he peeked back into the lounge and saw that the woman still sat passively under the man's anxious assertion of his masculinity. Just as he was about to go on to higher levels, the man's cigarette ashes dropped on the woman's other leg. Within a moment she exploded, her plastic cleavage collapsing as parts of her body

scattered around the room, one piece sticking to Jack's cheek. He pulled it off and read *Plastic Passion Playmate* — 100% Genuine Petrochemical By-product — Made In USA.

Jack continued climbing, his attention once again absorbed by the friction between his body and the stalk. The plant seemed to be growing even faster, throbbing through the building's orifices, its ever-widening trunk and its new branches filled more and more of the passageway. Suddenly before Jack could get within 10 feet of the next floor opening, he was pinned against the wall by the leaves and branches. Jack's sensual preoccupation quickly gave way to panic.

"Oh my god!... HELP!"

"HEEEEEELLPP!!"

The stalk began twisting, slowly turning upward. Jack found himself propelled by the branches under his feet. Two times around and Jack twisted and lunged toward the hole in the floor.

"Made it! — EEOOOWWW! My Foot!"

Jack's foot was caught on a branch.

With a momentous tug he pulled it free, not broken, but sprained.

After nursing his foot for a moment, Jack looked around. There were no windows in the conference room, the walls were covered by gray drapes. On a table in the middle of the room, his ankles and wrists bound underneath the table, was a naked elderly man. Requiring more urgent attention was another elderly man with a large pink belly, nude except for a polka dot tie with an ITT tie clasp and a gray suit jacket, sweating profusely, and moving towards Jack with a large carving knife.

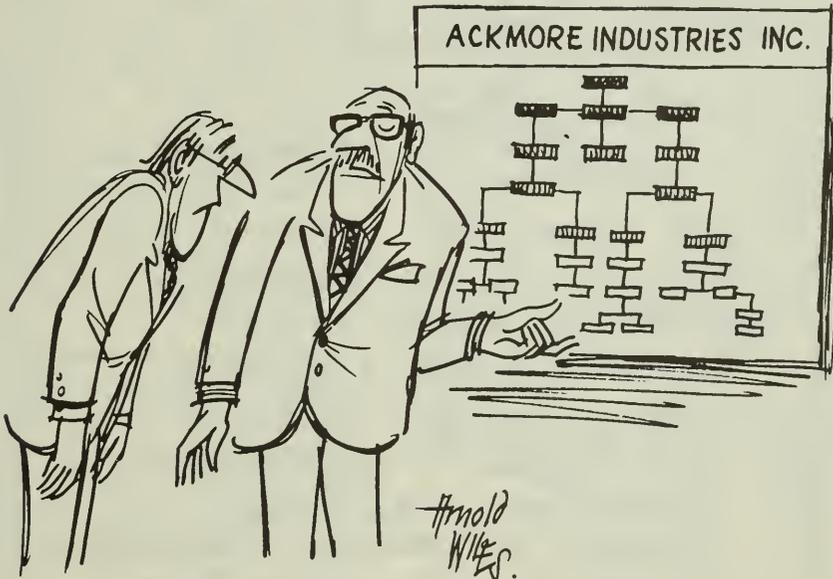
"Hey, whaddya doin'? Hey, put that knife down! C'mon man — I don't mean you any harm — let me explain!"

Jack tried to scramble backwards, away from the approaching cold steel, but ran into the wall, bumping his head. He passed out.

* * * * *

"Hey, uh, Jack wake up! Are you on drugs? Whatsamatter?? Wake Up!! You sick or something?"

Mr. Strunk and Jim Gordon had



"I haven't yet finalised the details but you're going to be something very big down here somewhere."

been shaking Jack for five minutes before he finally started to come around. Groggily, Jack peered up at the beet-red Strunk, cigar smoke swirling around his head.

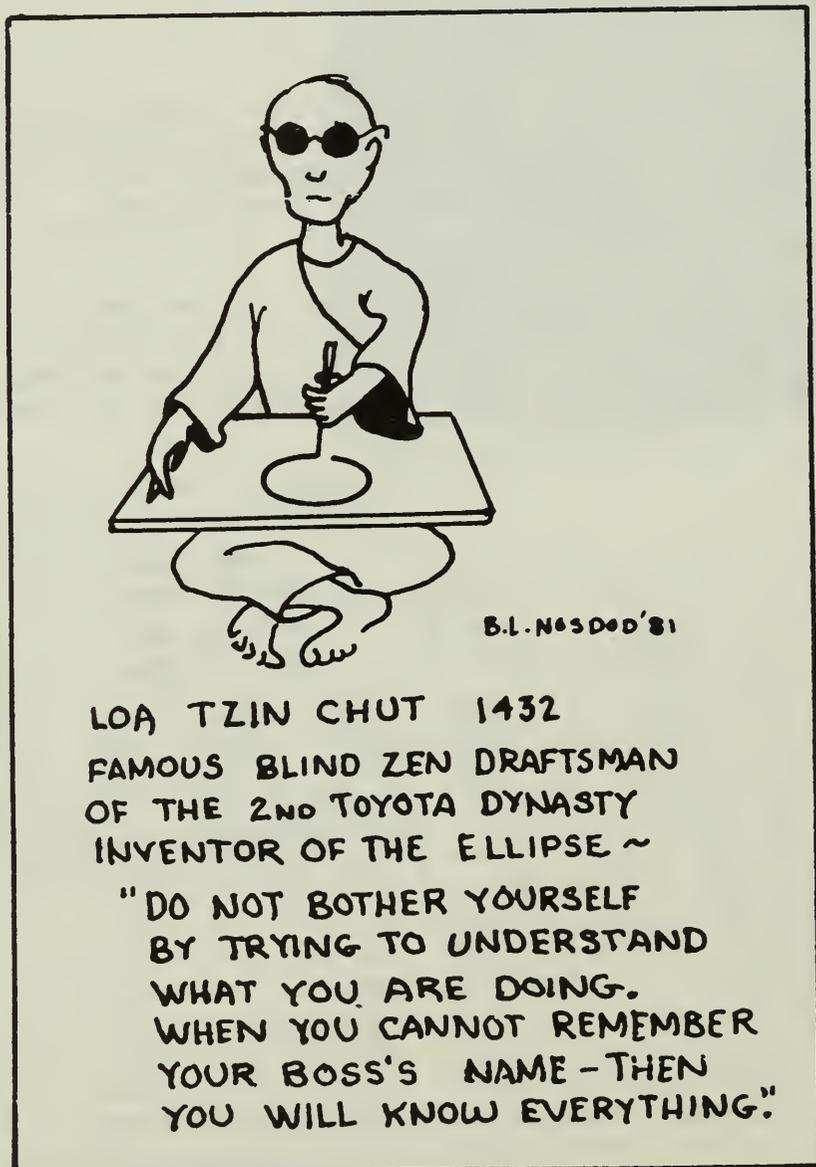
"You hafen't efen been here vun month and already you fall asleep on job! And you are sixth typist ve hire in past fife veeks!" Strunk was fuming. "America is as bad as Russia! No vun wants to vork!"

"You might as well... uh... gather your um... things and... uh... um.. leave" sputtered Gordon.

His grogginess shaken off by the

hostility of the two brokers, Jack slowly put on his jacket and made his way to the elevators. His stomach filled with the familiar combination of dread and relief — relief for having the rest of the day off — dread because he would soon have to find another job. He was thinking about the things he would do that afternoon when he found himself stroking the commemorative Bicentennial dish from the American Bean Association in his pocket.

By Luscious Cabbage



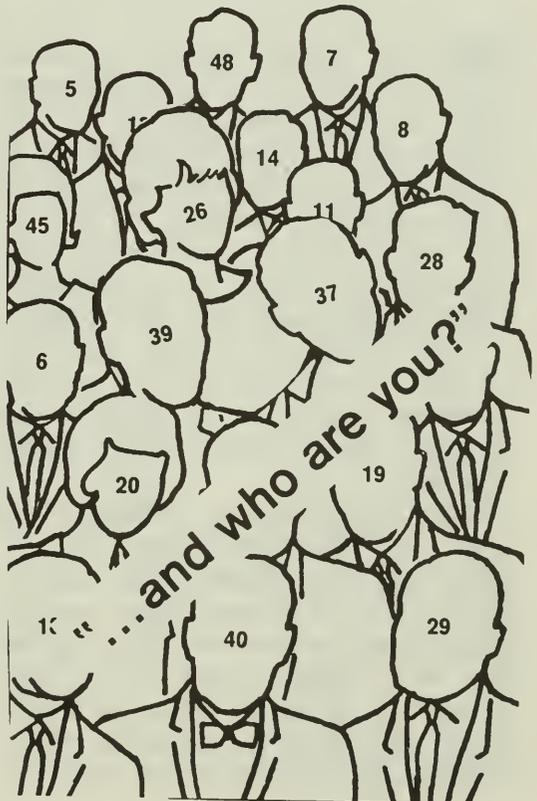
Compared To What?

Throughout the past decade, feminists have demanded "equal pay for equal work." Since this demand applies only to wage discrimination within the same job category, it does not address the majority of women workers who are in predominantly female occupations where wages are low across the board. A different approach to the problem of wage discrimination made headlines in June, 1981, when San Jose, California municipal workers struck for 10 days demanding "comparable pay for comparable worth."

Under plans for comparable worth, consultants are hired to rate certain elements of a job numerically and to rank the job against other jobs. Occupations as diverse as ambulance driving and secretarial work can be compared on the basis of similarities in required skills, training, and decision-making. Pay scales are supposed to follow the ranking system, and when "male" and "female" jobs are compared, studies usually recommend significant increases in women's wages. As San Jose city workers and others have discovered, the next step in comparable worth — getting employers to institute the recommended pay scales — usually requires a concerted effort on the part of workers.

There are numerous practical problems with job evaluations. Many of the job characteristics that are taken into account, such as stress and accountability, are quite subjective and allow for a wide variation in results depending on which consultant is hired and the way they carry out the study. Also, there are no clear boundaries to distinguish when jobs are too dissimilar to be compared.

The stage was set in 1978 for San Jose's comparable worth demands when the union, local 101 of AFSCME, pressured the city to hire the consulting firm Hay Associates to evaluate and rank city jobs. Hay Associates are reputed to be friendly towards management and their findings frequently validate existing pay scales. In this case, the active participation of clerical workers in all stages of job evaluations led to recommended pay raises of up to 38% for some women workers. Pay increases for 330 managerial positions were swiftly implemented. But when it came to raises for typists, librarians, etc. the city government pleaded poverty, claiming they couldn't possibly afford the recommended salary levels. This decision from a largely





female city council and the woman mayor, prompted the first “feminist strike” in recent memory.

The union initially demanded a \$3.2 million budget allocation for parity increases over a four year period, in addition to a 10% cost of living raise. They finally settled for a two-year contract which provided \$1.4 million towards comparable worth, plus an 8% cost of living raise. Average pay increases amounted to 17.6%, including the comparable worth monies.

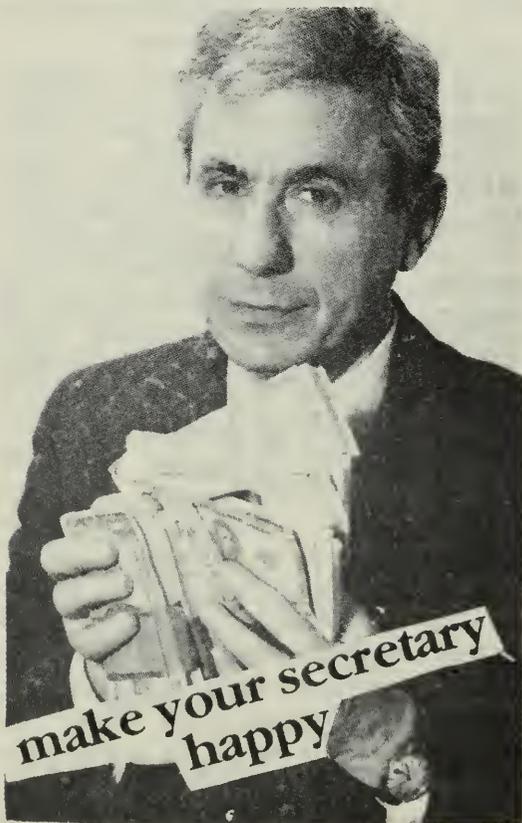
The settlement was hailed as a victory by comparable worth proponents and it has fueled their nationwide attempts to win wage parity. Striking San Jose workers got more or less what they wanted — a rare occurrence in these times of fiscal crises and budget cutbacks. Fortunately for the municipal workers,

the city of San Jose cannot pack up and take its business elsewhere like Blue Shield did when it was struck earlier this year. And fortunately for the “feminist” city government, San Jose is one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. and is right in the heart of the prosperous Silicon Valley. Unlike other cities, San Jose can draw revenues from the electronics industry to pay for wage increases.

Other attempts to establish the comparable worth principle have focused on the legal system. A bout of excruciatingly time consuming lawsuits have been launched to create a legal mandate for comparable worth. But judges are reluctant to hand down sweeping decisions since, in the words of a U.S. District Court judge in Denver who recently dismissed a comparability lawsuit, “I’m not going to restructure the entire economy of



"One day, my boy, all this will be yours . . . how about tomorrow?"



is not just that so many workers don't get paid enough, but that the imperative of making money in boring, tedious jobs robs us of the time and energy to do things which are truly valuable to ourselves and others.

Nevertheless, demands for comparable worth may prove to be a useful short-term strategy to increase wages for women and minority workers who are victims of wage discrimination. Since much of the oppression suffered by women and minorities hinges on economic discrimination, winning pay increases could be a significant advance. Unfortunately, the comparable worth strategy relies heavily on the use of "experts" — lawyers, union negotiators, statisticians and consultants — which makes real income gains unlikely. When the fight for wage gains is not in the hands of the people most directly affected, the likely result is that cosmetic changes will take the place of cold, hard cash.

—By Helen Highwater

The Office as Metaphor for Totalitarianism

Vaclav Havel's "The Memorandum" — A Review

The Czech playwright Vaclav Havel is known in the West less for his writing than for his status as the most prominent Czech political prisoner. Since 1968, when the Husak government came to power on the backs of invading Soviet tanks, Havel has continually spoken out against repression, conformity, and bureaucratic pseudo-rationality. The loss of his job as *dramaturg* of Prague's Balustrade Theater and the banning of public performances of his plays did not prevent him from continuing to write.

In 1977, he received a 14-month suspended sentence for belonging to the Charter 77 group, whose declared purpose was merely to pressure the Czech government to adhere to its own laws. Refusing to be intimidated, Havel eventually became the *de facto* spokesman not only for intellectual dissidents but for the Czech opposition movement as a whole; the notorious anti-authoritarian rock group *The Plastic People of the Universe* recorded their first underground album at his country home. Needless to say, the Husak regime could not tolerate such "subversive" activity for long. As a result of his participation in the dissident group VONS (whose acronym translates as the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted), Havel was sentenced in 1979 to four and half years in prison, where he remains to this day.

Since the capitalist West is always quick to point to individuals like Havel as proof of the alleged superiority of the free world's democratic way of life, one would expect that Havel's work would be easily obtainable, even performed, in the United States. In

fact, only one of his plays is currently available in this country, an early work from 1965 called *The Memorandum*, which despite winning an Obie Award in 1968 for Best Foreign Play was not published until last year. As if this were not enough to prevent the play from gaining the public it deserves, the American publisher, Grove Press, has slapped a prohibitive \$5.95 price tag on the 90-page text, thereby virtually ensuring its absence from bookstores and libraries.

It is entirely possible that if Havel had written a play specifically about life under a totalitarian Communist regime, he would have enjoyed at least a fraction of the attention and acclaim granted his counterparts in the Soviet Union. But upon reading *The Memorandum* (incidentally one of the few Havel plays to be performed in his native country), one is struck by how applicable its subject matter is to bureaucracies all over the world. By successfully universalizing his parable of power politics, Havel has placed himself in the line of his three great compatriots and fellow dissectors of bureaucratic mores: Karel Capek, Jaroslav Hasek, and Franz Kafka. Beneath the comic, innocuously "absurdist" style of *The Memorandum*, a penetratingly satirical mind is at work, pessimistic without being gloomy, accurate without being preachy.

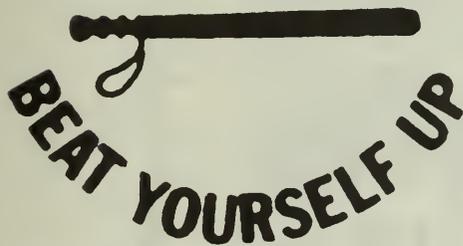
Havel has chosen an office as the backdrop for his play. This is doubly significant, not only because bureaucracy's home is in the office, but because in its organization, its rationale, and the behavior required of its functionaries, the office is essentially totalitarian. Havel depicts a nameless, purposeless organization



PRAGUE
1968

whose human cogs are fanatically dedicated to an "efficiency" that somehow eludes them at every turn. A new language is introduced into the office expressly to promote such efficiency. Although nobody knows or is willing to admit the source of the

HELP THE POLICE



management directive ordering the implementation of "*Ptydepe*" in all inter-office communications, the office staff is more than willing to learn it. Based on a seemingly logical principle — since ordinary human speech, susceptible as it is to contrary interpretations, tends to obscure the infinite variety and precision of bureaucratic protocol, a language capable of emphasizing semantic differences must be devised — *Ptydepe* turns out to be useless and unlearnable. The office is plunged into turmoil: inefficiency is rampant, power plays ensue, and, at the play's ending, everything is back to normal, or so it seems. Since the problem of linguistic inefficiency remains, yet another meta-language is pressed into service, this time based on opposite premises from *Ptydepe*. The vicious circle begins anew.

If the eminently satirizable subject of bureaucratese were all that Havel is concerned with, *The Memorandum* would be a pleasant enough diversion, easily assimilated and just as easily forgotten. But the comic plight of the hapless bureaucrats caught in

their eternal double-binds is merely an adjunct to the fundamental problem Havel poses: within a system of total bureaucratic control, what choices can people make? and what choices do they make?

The two principal characters — Managing Director Gross and his Deputy Director Ballas — engage in an incessant war of nerves throughout the play, with the Deputy somehow managing to win out every time. The authority of Gross, the ostensible head of the organization, is constantly ignored and flouted by Ballas, an unctuously manipulative, scheming, authoritarian type, well-schooled in the art of infighting. Within the course of the play, the unfortunate Gross is demoted, forced to humiliate himself in front of his staff by confessing minor infractions of protocol, temporarily appointed to spy on the employees, and finally allowed to win back his (by-now-meaningless) job.

By depicting this manager's trials and tribulations, Havel ironically inverts the age-old theme of the plight of the "little man" trapped in a hostile bureaucracy. Initially an exemplary functionary who prides himself on his "humanist" philosophy of work — "every single member of the staff is human and must become more and more human" — Gross is reduced to plaintively wondering "Why can't I be a little boy again? I'd do everything differently from the beginning." (To which Ballas brutally and accurately responds "You might begin differently, but you'd end up exactly the same — so relax!") When a young secretary encourages him to take a stand against his adversaries, he can only spout philosophical clichés to excuse his inaction. In order to help him, the secretary breaks a bureaucratic rule. As a result of her unselfish gesture, Gross regains his position, but she is fired when the company spy informs on her. When she turns to Gross for help, he

AUDIENS Vernissage

TJECKISKT DRAMA

Fyra enaktare i samarbete mellan Dramaten och Fria Proteatern
av Pavel Kohout och Vaclav Havel



PROTEST ATTEST

DRAMATEN

Biljetpris 30 - Pensionärer, stud och ungdom
under 21 år 20 - Sista minutenbiljetter 10 -
Biljetteställning tfn 670 680 dygnet runt
långsörens 08 63 60 63

Gruppbeställning
vardags 9-12 & 13 30-15 tfn 63 14 00 147

Fria Proteatern på Scala

Wallingatan 34. Biljetteställning 14 35 75

Ordbank Stockholm 1988

*Swedish poster announcing
the performance of a Vaclav
Havel play in Stockholm.*

pompously proclaims in pseudo-existential language that he can do nothing for her "because I am in fact totally alienated from myself" and because "Man's humanity," whose interests he claims to represent, is best served by complying unprotestingly with the organizational status quo. At the end of the play, he joins his erstwhile tormentors for lunch, exhorting the young woman not to lose faith in people.

Given the socio-political conditions prevailing in Czechoslovakia during the mid-Sixties, the implications of Havel's play for his audience are clear. With remarkable prescience, he delineates the essentially false opposition between the old-line Stalinists (represented by Ballas) who had been temporarily displaced at the upper levels of the government hierarchy by the more reform-minded "liberal" bureaucrats (represented

by Gross). He shows that the much-vaunted "socialism with a human face" which at that time was just beginning to make itself felt in Czech society would remain empty rhetoric as long as it coexisted with the Stalinist governmental machine. Sadly, the events of three years later were to prove Havel correct. But if there is a positive side to his play, it surely consists in the recognition that although totalitarian systems cannot tolerate even the slightest gesture of discontent, individuals can still make choices. It is hinted broadly that the disruption caused by the introduction of *Ptydepe* was deliberately planned by a mute, seemingly loyal functionary as a means of sabotaging the bureaucracy.

But Havel's characters, far from being merely types on which to hang a political argument, are recognizable to anyone who has worked in an office. There is the briskly officious chairman, who when asked what she is chairman of replies "Don't know... just yet. As a matter of fact we're having a meeting about that very thing this afternoon," and who constantly sends her secretary off on personal errands, only to jump at the first order her male supervisor barks at her. There are the two high-level professionals who do nothing all day but sit around, eat, smoke, and make characteristically gross comments about the attractive young department secretary. There is the low-level clerk who always comes out with the "right" answer in his training courses. There is the pedantic, verbose class instructor who retains his missionary zeal no matter what language he teaches. And finally, there is the hired informer and spy (euphemistically called the "Staff Watcher"), who maintains his dignity by filching expensive cigars from his boss.

Office workers will also recognize — and empathize with — the deeper

points that Havel is making. *Ptydepe* may seem ridiculously cumbersome, but no more so than the average computer language and bureaucratized memo-ese. The obsession with efficiency that somehow always manages to create huge messes, the constant contradictory changes in procedure, the superficial "equality" that masks the most oppressive hierarchy, the ruthless subordination of individuals to the "good of the organization" and management's manipulation of this slogan for its own venal ends, the spying and backbiting, and the summary dismissal or ostracism of anybody who breaks even the most insignificant rule — all of these qualities, which can only be described as totalitarian in scope and effect, prevail in workplaces everywhere, including the most self-avowedly democratic societies.

To be sure, we who live in "pluralist" Western systems are allowed the civil liberties that people like Vaclav Havel cannot enjoy. But these liberties cease the moment we enter the workplace. One may well imagine the fate of an office worker in America who tried to emulate Vaclav Havel and expose the totalitarian mechanisms of wage-labor while *on the job*. At best, she would be forced to live under the cloud of an "attitude problem" and undergo the humiliation of a reprimand by her boss or bosses. And if she did not recant her action, she would be fired and most likely black-listed as a "dangerous malcontent" from future employment opportunities. No doubt about it, she would be free — to starve or suffer through an even worse job than before — and of course it would be out of the question to jail her for her beliefs. But order must be preserved, there is no excuse for unprofessional conduct in the line of duty, and job descriptions being what they are... In short, we are all too aware of what will happen if we break a rule, so we are

Man inside the Ferrissian Void, the womb of Manhattanism — By Hugh Ferriss

