

- 25th Afternoon Psychodrama workshop. Helen Gillespie, St. Andrews. Contact Roy Dyckoff for details St. Andrews 5944
- 25th Lecture 11.15 a.m. Dr. Tony Chapman "Communicating Attitudes Through Humour". Dept. Psych. UCNW, Bangor
- 27th - 29th Growth Centre (Tyneside) Weekend workshop with Joan Gilbert. See above for phone
- 27th - 29th Sidmouth House, Devon. Residential course on Teilard de Chardin. Mark Braham. Ring Eileen Noakes 03955 3963
- 27th - 29th AHP ANNUAL CONFERENCE, CHICHESTER. "Roads to Freedom". Wide range of speakers. Contact AHP on 01 928 8254

February

- 3rd - 5th Sidmouth House. 2-day Residential Course. "Astrology" Jill Moore. Ring Eileen Noakes 03955 3963
- 3rd Evening lecture. Dr. Tom Cox. "Occupational Stress". Dept. App. Psychology, Llwyn-y-Grant Road, Pen-y-lan, Cardiff
- 10th - 12th Creative Encounter Group, Old Palace Lincoln. Tom & Elli Chamberlain. Ring 0602 51793
- 17 - 18th FPA "Sex Education & Personal Relationships". Sussex. Contact Charles Forster 0273 774075
- 24th - 25th As above. Contact Sheila Fleetwood, Liverpool. 051 709 1938
- 24th Lecture "Psychology & Zen Buddhism". Dr. John Redford, University College Cardiff.

NOTE: For free insertion of **your** event, send details to "Self & Society" by the 12th of the preceding month. Please give a contact phone number. We do not have space for addresses.

Margherita Martini-Brown

Two Weeks in a Factory

Coming from a middle-class family of old stock to go to work in a factory felt like something of an adventure. Moreover my newly-acquired life-partner and I had just moved in in the heart of one of the most derelict areas of the East-end of London - half demolished house, towering council estates, warehouses and factories made a scenery unusual to me and I wanted to become part of it somehow.

It was with this kind of enthusiasm that I went to the Labour-exchange looking for a job in the neighbourhood. I had no skills to offer, so I was given an appointment card for a job as a bench hand - I went to the appointment and started the same day.

This is how I began my first two-week experience of working in a factory that I would like to share with you. It lasted merely two weeks not simply because I was exhausted, but also because the factory itself shut down for the Summer break and I was not going to get holiday money for it.

So I had become a "needle woman", one of many in the area; must be, because when you walk round here you can see many of these factories making clothes of some shape or the other. It is easy to recognise them: they always advertise for machinists. My factory at that time produced artificial fur-coats.

The work was in a big, bright room on the third floor of an old building. The machinists worked in a double row along the wall close to the windows, and dumped their piles of sown pieces either on the table in the middle, forming a big mountain or in heaps on the floor. I was put to work at that table on a tall chair with a middle-aged lady-tailoress. Our job was to sew few stitches by hand to secure the linings firmly in place on the right side of the coats. Having done that we threw each article on to another mountain further back on the table.

This lady was my harsh overseer, but I also have an interesting memory of her. Her view of work was similar to that of the inspired Biblical scribe who wrote about the fall of Adam and Eve: to her, work is God's punishment in the truest sense of the word. I was endeavouring to be as efficient as I could without having to prick my fingers. But that was not enough, I was expected to go on pricking my finger in order to gain the required speed (you should have seen her fingers). Working, having to rush always and the anguish of a big pile in front of you to do to keep up, was all one thing to her. Work implied all that. "What you do at home is not work really, because you can do it in your own time; that's why you are not paid for it. Here you have to work always; you cannot rest: nobody is going to pay you to rest." The radio was on all the time to keep us in good rhythm. Sometimes it was pleasant, but at times, especially towards the end of the day, it became just too much. On a Friday evening, we were all tired out, and, I timidly asked if the radio could be switched off. But that was too much a revolutionary proposal "The radio is good for us. That's why it is on. It is always on" In other words: "we are slaves, that is part of the torture and we are not in control of it".

One thing I found gratifying was that, as I am slow and unable to rush, it probably looked from the outside as if I was not giving in to work pressures, but was always carrying on at my own steady pace.

We had two tea-breaks, apart from the lunch one, which started at the sound of a bell. Everyone stopped instantly, whatever they were doing. I was the only one that pleaded for 10 seconds more to finish the stitch I had just begun. But that was not even conceivable and we could never come to an understanding. I had to give in. Tea breaks were also the time when you



were expected to go to the toilet, and I felt very uneasy when once I had to go during working hours and I had to stay for a while.

Another two machinist helped now and then at our table; one was a young, chatty West Indian lady; the other a Cockney lady in her fifties. I was rather partial to the latter, although she kept on friendly terms with my slave-driver, leaving me on a different level. As she was not too thin nor too fat, her face was calm and pleasant, she looked attractive to me. But when work was finished and she was out in the street, rushing her way home to her council flat, I could see by her slight hunch, her crossed legs, her gait, how she had been disfigured by a lifetime bent over her sewing machine and spent indoors either at home or at work.

As I said, they were going to have two weeks Summer-break, and that was perhaps a reason for the overload of work. One woman fainted over it and my slave-driver was the one who swore at the management for sucking their blood and so on and so forth. She herself was in tears behind her thick glasses because of the dust of the synthetic fibre that made up the coats.

From what I could make out out of things I heard it seemed that every single person around me was either a widow or a divorcee or was involved with serious family problems. Very few had plans for the holiday ahead: some of them were concerned because they did not know what to do.

Yes, Mr. Callaghan has got it right this time with the social contract and Mr Healey got the only possible budget formula for the year, but none of this will help to solve our problems. We are not poor, we don't lack clothing nor food but we still have a lot to learn about how to live and relate to one another.

How can we work hard enough to give ourselves a decent standard of living and do so happily at the same time?

Do twenty people working hard in the same room necessarily have to make a "sweat shop?"

Marcus McCausland

Trends in Health Care

In this country we have a Health Service which is the envy of the world. It is one which has brought enormous comfort and help to many - but changes are needed because it is out-dated - over-centralised - with enormous bureaucracy and a system based on repair instead of prevention.

We are spending £25,000 million a year on the NHS, the Social Services and on Education. What results do we see in exchange for this enormous expenditure? To begin with - dissatisfaction amongst the public, and amongst those in the caring, and the helping and the teaching professions. To go on with - an enormous annual pool of pain and suffering which is not being dealt with under the present system - a sick society. It has been estimated