

THE MILLS OF THE GODS

THE MILLS OF THE GODS is another fabulously fannish one-shot from the frozen fields of Saskatchewan. In just a few short lines, you'll see Eli Cohen fight his way through jungles of red tape, you'll thrill to the saga of his battle against the evil forces of the Canadian Dept. of Manpower and Immigration, you'll gasp at the terror of a visit to New York City, you'll be touched by the warmly human story of a Regina civil servant's struggle to carry on a normal life in a province where all the liquor stores are shut down, and you'll chuckle at the idiocy of publishing a one-shot in the middle of a postal strike. But first a word from our sponsor: "Friends, do you suffer from the embarrassment of incipient gafia? Did you ever wonder what you could accomplish if you could just cover up that telltale minac? Then friends, why not **CLICK!**

⊕⊕
(o)

⊕⊕
(o)

⊕⊕
(o)

⊕⊕
(o)

⊕⊕ why am I
(=) / always the
straight man?

Despite the title, this is not a Von Daniken fanzine. The reference is of course to the quote (pardon me, Susan) to the quotation "The mills of the gods grind slow." I am naturally referring to my continuing battle for landed immigrant status in Canada. You'll all recall that by the end of August I had been granted permission to apply for this status from within Canada (this seemingly harmless request having taken 4 months of processing). I did so apply on Sept. 5th, at which point they immediately confiscated my temporary work permit.

Actually, they replaced it right away with a lovely Minister's Permit, allowing me to live and work in Canada until Sept. 5, 1976, while processing continued on my application. You must understand, they don't really expect it to take that long -- they were just making sure. In fact, I was explicitly told it couldn't possibly take a whole year, an assurance which was repeated after they mentioned that the permit could be extended if necessary.

The permit itself is very impressive, complete with a big red seal -- I showed it to everybody in NY when I was back there; I also unfortunately showed it to the Customs clerk at Toronto International Airport, which held me up for 15 minutes because she had never seen a Minister's Permit and had no idea what to do with it.

With the Permit granted (and my medical clearance, which finally came through), there was nothing to hinder the rest of the processing, just as soon as I showed my US passport to prove I was a US citizen.

Oh. I need my US passport.

Well, you see, it was this way: By one of those coincidences that you know can't possibly happen in real life, on July 7, 1975, just 5 years after HEICON (that's very relevant), you'll never guess what official document had just expired. Right the first time. Would you believe that by Sept. 5 I was embroiled in a fight with the US Passport Agency? The various regulations involved, the resulting correspondence and machinations, would take another book to describe. Suffice it to say that they (this is another they, unless you believe "they" are a multinational conspiracy) wanted to know precisely what I was doing for that foreign (and Socialist!) government of Saskatchewan.

I did finally manage to get my passport renewed before I came back from my trip to NY, though I had to sign an affidavit swearing that I was not now nor had I ever. (This is all perfectly true, though I admit it might create a false impression.)

Anyway, I showed Canadian Immigration my passport, and they said everything was now all set, except for one little formality.... (It's OK -- you get used to this sort of thing after a while.) See, you can't become a Canadian landed immigrant without you got a visa signed outside of Canada. That's the law. And, in order to "break the law", as the Immigration official so delicately put it, you need a special waiver from the Cabinet. A pure formality which should only take, oh, three or four months.

Barring a postal strike.

A technical note for Jon Singer: The preceding page was typed on a Remington 700 portable electric typewriter set at a pressure of 7½, on a Kores stencil, with pliofilm but no carbon or typing plate. This is the same, except for a carbon. And the type is still not printing evenly, dammit, though it seems to be random rather than particular letters. I wonder if there are depressions in the roller? (Friends, does your typewriter have a depressed roller? Then why not feed it ...)

The last page should have had an AAARRRGH!!!! at the end of it, but I ran out of room.

AAARRRGH!!!!

In case you don't know, Canada is in the midst of another postal strike. Now, you might think it's awfully silly to publish under the circumstances. However, I'm going to visit Susan in Vancouver this weekend, and she assures me she'll be making a mail run to Seattle, so at least all you bleedin' foreigners will see this, even if my fellow Canadians must do without. (I'm just practicing.)

On the other hand, maybe they'll settle the strike this week. (Maybe the moon will fall out of the sky.)

As if no mail weren't bad enough, the liquor board employees have been on strike for four weeks, and since liquor is a government monopoly, there's been no booze. The situation is getting serious -- yesterday on the news they said that people at parties are actually talking to each other, rather than drinking. I expect civil war any day.

I should mention that aside from fighting bureaucracy, and writing manuals for the new Corrections Information System so the cretins in the field will fill out the forms properly, which is what I'm currently doing at work (no, I didn't notice any contradiction. What do you mean?), I've also taken a step that will raise me from the ranks of pedestrian civil servants: I'm taking driving lessons.

I've always held to the opinion expressed by a character in Silverberg's BOOK OF SKULLS (a character named, coincidentally enough, Eli), that the world was divided into two classes -- an elite who did not drive, and the class of drivers, who were fit only for manual labor. This didn't prevent me from getting a license in New York, which I have conscientiously renewed even though I haven't driven a car in 9 years. In fact, my total driving experience consists of 21 hours behind the wheel, and that includes my test! Nevertheless, Saskatchewan, in an attitude that I can only describe as provincial, refuses to accept my New York license as proof that I can drive. They want me to take a road test! And until I do, I can't get a Saskatchewan license, which means I can't use any of the Government cars that are lavishly placed at our disposal (for government business only, to be sure, but you know how these things are). Well, considering all the dummies that have apparently passed the test, it should be within the realm of possibility. At least as possible as becoming a landed immigrant.

OK, gang. In case I don't get KRAT out by then, have a merry Season of whatever denomination, and a happy New Year.

This has been Gobrin Press Publication #11. November 4, 1975.

Eli Cohen
2920 Victoria Ave., Apt. 12
Regina, Sask. S4T 1K7
Canada