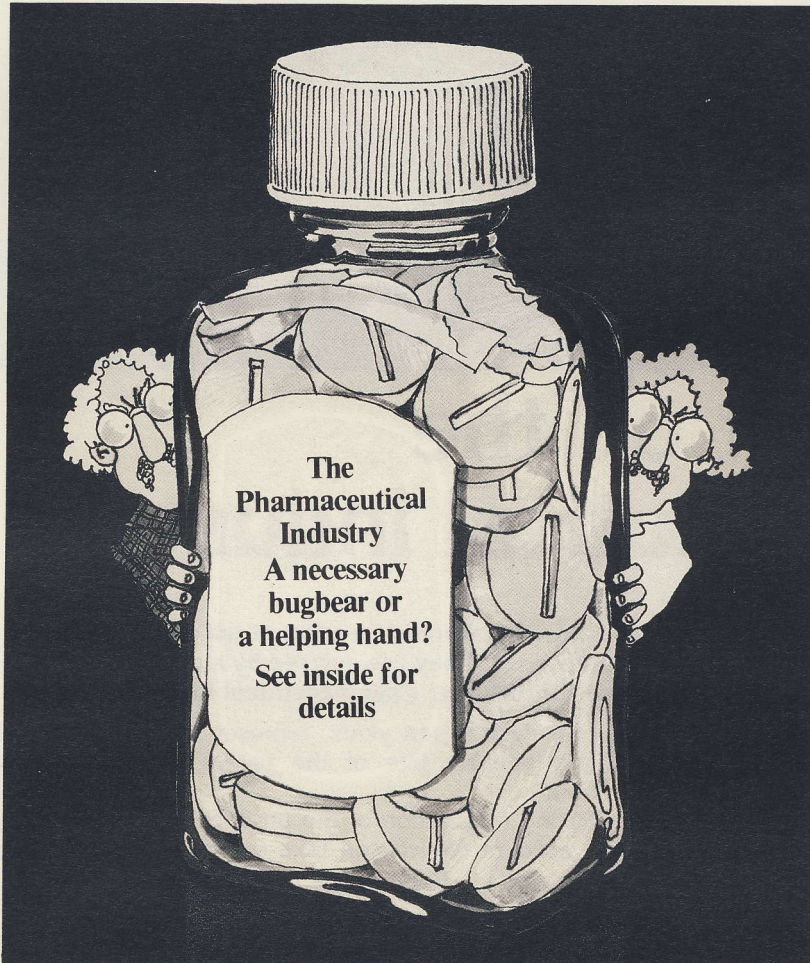


# Comment Komentaar

by Dr. George Davie



**T**he pharmaceutical industry has the dubious honour of marketing products hailed as magnificent research breakthroughs.

No one wants to have to use them, however, and certainly nobody wants to pay for them.

At a recent get-together with the press I was afforded some insight into the problems that beset the directorate of pharmaceutical enterprises.

I realised how the patent expiry haunts them when it takes mounds of documentation and decades of work before registration.

The effect our "free market" situation has on them had many ramifications.

A government tender system run on "democratic" lines could secure products for the state at 20% of the

cost for the man on the street.

All these things were immensely important to them but to me as quasi-consumer of their products, not so pressing. We were all unsure where the state was going.

Again we were assured that the encouragement of private enterprise, to take a hand in the future provision of the care of our population whose number of more affluent members was increasing remarkably, was definite government policy.

There were other things that we never got around to discussing.

How does the industry feel about a marketing situation where it seems epidemics of pseudo-disease will have to be created to satisfy a quickly saturating situation in regard to some drugs?

The lay press and other media already seems to be lending a hand in this direction.

How should the pharmaceutical industry and general practice pool resources to enter effectively into the arena for supplying adequate non socialised medicine to a population that will have to settle for one system or another in the near future?

All propaganda at the moment stems from the state and this could be problematic.

The relationship between various parts of the republic's medical structure is going to require a more imaginative approach than has hitherto been in evidence.

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