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The Mail



ON SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 2, 2014 £1.50

SUNDAY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

62p AN HOUR



That's what the women sleeping 16 to a room get paid... to make Ed and Harriet's £45 'This Is What A Feminist Looks Like' T-shirts

POSTURING: Ed Miliband and Harriet Harman wear slogan T-shirts

FEMINIST T-shirts proudly worn by Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg and Harriet Harman are made in 'sweatshop' conditions by migrant women paid just 62p an hour, a Mail on Sunday investigation has revealed.

The women machinists on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius sleep 16 to a room - and earn much less than the average wage on the island.

The £45 T-shirts carry the defiant slogan

MoS INVESTIGATION

From **Ben Ellery** IN MAURITIUS

'This is what a feminist looks like'. But one of the thousands of machinists declared: 'We do not see ourselves as feminists. We see ourselves as trapped.'

FULL REPORT: PAGES 6, 7



REALITY: Migrant worker Primerose Marcelin, 37, at one of the T-shirt firm's factories

Bitter attack on MPs posturing in sloganeering £45 tops –



SPECIAL REPORT

from Ben Ellery IN MAURITIUS

THEY are the T-shirts designed to make a political statement about women's rights – but the female workers making them are paid just 62p an hour in an Indian Ocean 'sweatshop'.

Between shifts, women making garments emblazoned with the slogan 'This is what a feminist looks like' sleep in spartan dormitories, 16 to a room.

And critics say the low wages and long hours at the Mauritian factories amount to exploitation.

The shirts have been worn by Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg and Harriet Harman, all keen to display their feminist credentials – even though the Deputy Prime Minister last night admitted he had 'no idea' where the garments were made.

But The Mail on Sunday has toured a factory producing the T-shirts, where workers earn just 6,000 rupees a month – equivalent to £120.

The figure is just a quarter of the country's average monthly wage, and around half of what a waiter earns. Each 'feminist' T-shirt costs just £9 to make, but high street chain Whistles sells them for £45 each – a figure it would take the women a week and a half to earn.

The retailer promised an urgent investigation last night in the wake of the Mail on Sunday exposé.

And the charity behind the T-shirt said it would demand that it be withdrawn from shops if it discovered 'concrete evidence' that workers had been mistreated.

At one factory visited by The Mail on Sunday, a female worker told us: 'How can this T-shirt be a symbol of feminism when we do

not see ourselves as feminists? We see ourselves as trapped.'

An official from factory owner Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile (CMT) told us he 'would not be happy' if the women left the work camp during the week in case they turned up for work 'hungover'.

Whistles, whose customers include the Duchess of Cambridge, is selling the T-shirts in aid of women's activism group The Fawcett Society – which receives all profits. The campaign is backed by fashion magazine Elle. Deputy Labour Leader Harriet Harman wore a shirt carrying the slogan on the front bench of the Commons during Prime Minister's Questions last week, while the Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders proudly posed for photographs in Elle's 'feminism issue' in the T-shirts.

Fayzal Ally Beegun, president of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Union said: 'The workers in this factory are treated very poorly and the fact that politicians in England are making a statement using these sweatshop T-shirts is appalling.'

'It would take a woman working in the factory nearly two weeks just to buy one shirt. What is feminist about that? These women have nothing in this world. They are paid a pittance and any

POSING: Clegg in the T-shirt



money they do receive they send back home.

'They work very long hours and have no lives other than their work. They are on four-year contracts that mean they don't get to see their families in that time. What kind of existence is it when you are sharing your bedroom with 15 other women?'

'The women have no careers or even the most basic of opportunities. This is not what feminism is supposed to be.'

Celebrities pictured wearing the feminist T-shirt in Elle magazine include Benedict Cumberbatch, Tinie Tempah, Eddie Izzard, Richard E Grant and Simon Pegg.

Yesterday a reporter and a photographer from The Mail on Sunday were given a guided tour of CMT's factory in La Tour Koenig, north Mauritius. As managing director Francois Woo showed us around the sleeping quarters he said: 'All of our dormitories are identical. There are 16 beds in each room. They are based on university dormitories in China. They don't need a lot of room because they only use them for sleep.'

He told us that the plant is one of six across the island where living conditions and wages are identical.

He could not say at which factory the Whistles T-shirts were made, but confirmed they made 300 at a cost of £9.

'The machinists at our factories made the feminist T-shirt for Whistles,' he said, adding: 'All the machinists earn 6,000 rupees.'

Mr Woo instructed workers to smile as our photographer took pictures of them on the shop floor. The tour was

delayed when we asked to view the accommodation block.

Staff made several phone calls and 30 minutes later we were allowed to view the bedrooms. The 20ft square rooms are home to eight sets of bunk beds, each with a thin mattress and a pillow. Shelving on the far wall houses the workers' meagre belongings. The women – who we could not talk to – work 45 hours a week basic and can earn more if they work overtime.

After the tour and without the company's senior staff, we visited another of the company's factories, in Curepipe. Outside we spoke to one 30-year-old worker. She told us: 'I have worked here for four years and I have not been able to see my son or husband in Bangladesh during all that time. We work very hard, sometimes 12-hour days, for not much money. I send all my money home and could not afford to fly back and see my family.'

'It is awful but we have no choice. In my country, the rupees I earn here are worth three times as much as they are in Mauritius. How can this T-shirt be a symbol of feminism? These politicians say that they support equality for all, but we are not equal.'

CMT has an annual turnover of £125 million. It produces 40 million T-shirts a year for clients including Topshop, Next and Urban Outfitters. It employs 13,000 staff at

To the British politicians who wear our 'This Is What A Feminist Looks Like' T-shirts: We don't feel like feminists. We don't feel equal. We just feel trapped



ONE OF A spartan room

its factories and about 4,500, all foreign, are housed on site. Migrants come from countries including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Vietnam. There are about 2,800 female machinists. Workers are expected to produce around 50 shirts a day and face discipline if they do not hit their target.

Mr Woo said: 'The Mauritian government has set out a minimum wage that we must pay and we abide by their rules. I am like a parent to the workers. They are free to come and go as they please but if they go out on a weeknight I will not be happy

because then they will turn up for work the next day hung-over. If people didn't want to work for us then they don't have to.'

The factory was the focus of an exposé in 2007 when it was revealed that workers were being paid just £4 a day to make clothes for Sir Philip Green's Kate Moss range at Topshop. At the time, the factory employed agents who promised migrant workers good wages but when they moved to Mauritius they were told they would earn a pittance. The factory was also criti-

cised for paying workers of different nationalities different wages.

Mr Woo added: 'A lot has changed since then. The workers know exactly how much they will make when they start working here and people are paid the same, regardless of their race or sex.'

Last night Dr Eva Neitzert, deputy chief executive at the Fawcett Society, said they had originally been assured the garments would be produced ethically in the UK, and when they received samples in early October they noted they had in fact been

by machinists on lowest pay in Mauritius who make them



CRAIG HIBBERT



THE WORKERS PAID JUST 62p AN HOUR

Machinists at the CMT factory in Mauritius with one of the 'feminist' shirts it would take nearly two weeks of their wages to buy



THE DORMS THEY SLEEP IN

with thin mattresses and a few shelves for their meagre belongings

BOSS WHO SAYS: 'I DON'T LIKE THEM TO GO OUT'

Managing director Francois Woo fears his immigrant staff would come in 'hung-over' if they left the factory in the evening

made in Mauritius. They were assured by Whistles that the factory was 'fully audited, socially and ethically compliant' and decided to continue with the collaboration.

Dr Neitzert said: 'We have been very disappointed to hear the allegations that conditions in the Mauritius factory may not adhere to the ethical standards that we, as the Fawcett Society, would require of any product that bears our name.

'We take these allegations extremely seriously and will do our utmost to investigate them. If any concrete and

verifiable evidence of mistreatment of the garment producers emerges, we will require Whistles to withdraw the range with immediate effect and donate part of the profits to an ethical trading campaigning body.'

Whistles refused to say how many of the T-shirts had been made, or indeed where. The chain initially said they did not feel they had been given adequate time to respond to our questions. But a spokesman later promised: 'We place a high priority on environmental, social and ethical issues. The allegations regarding the

production of T-shirts in the CMT factory in Mauritius are extremely serious and we are investigating them as a matter of urgency.

'CMT has OekoTex accreditation, [an independent certificate for the supply chain] which fully conforms to the highest standards in quality and environmental policy, while having world-class policies for sustainable development, social, ethical and environmental compliance.

'We carry out regular audits of our suppliers in line with our high corporate social responsibility stand-

ards and can share the following information regarding the CMT factory in Mauritius.'

However the company acknowledged: 'We will require time to thoroughly investigate the allegations with the factory and our lawyers in great detail. CMT is one of the largest suppliers to many high street brands, including the Arcadia group [owner of Topshop and Burton].'

Last night, a spokesman for Nick Clegg said he had not known where the shirts were made. He said: 'Nick Clegg had no idea where these

T-shirts were being made and can only assume that the Fawcett Society were unaware of the origins, or they would not have asked him to wear it. He remains entirely supportive of efforts to ensure all women are treated as equals in this country and the world over.'

A spokesman for Ed Miliband and Harriet Harman said: 'This was a campaign run by Elle and the Fawcett Society to promote feminism and we were happy to support it.'

As Ed faces up to disaster north of the border...

JUDGING by appearances, Jim Murphy, the MP for East Renfrewshire, would not be your first choice to carry a big weight. Normally, Scotland's male politicians pack some heft, but Slim Jim wears the hollow look of a long-distance runner – no surprise that he completed his first London Marathon last year in three and a half hours.

But when the teetotaler put his name forward to take over the Scottish Labour Party this week, he took on his narrow shoulders the futures of Ed Miliband, David Cameron, British politics, and the very Union itself.

Labour is paying a heavy price for leading the recent campaign against independence, and persuading the Scottish people they'd be better off voting 'No'. Its core voters in cities such as Glasgow and Dundee felt betrayed by the party standing on a platform with the hated Tories.

Having done so, Labour is now held accountable for delivering the cross-party promises of further devolution made in that frantic fortnight before the vote.

Every day those promises remain undelivered, the clamour grows that Miliband's party has deceived Scotland into rejecting independence.

Accusations of treachery and trickery have a special potency in Scottish history, from the betrayal of William Wallace to the massacre at Glencoe. Now, however unfairly, Scottish Labour finds itself cast as the perfidious enemy within, and its poll ratings have plummeted.

On the latest projections, at least three-quarters of Labour MPs in Scotland would lose their Westminster seats to the SNP if the Election were held tomorrow – the equivalent of the Conservatives losing every one of their MPs in Essex and Kent.

That would eliminate any chance of a Labour majority, and – one way or another – it would guarantee a second referendum on Scottish independence, which next time the SNP would comfortably win. Goodbye Union. Good luck, Scotland. And goodnight Labour.

How is Scottish Labour responding to this doomsday scenario? Do they stand united, calm and strong, resolved to turn opinion around? Of course not. In traditional fashion, the events of recent weeks have triggered a furious orgy of internal backstabbing that makes Shakespeare's Macbeth look like an episode of Mrs Brown's Boys.

The hapless outgoing leader Johann Lamont accuses Miliband of treating Scottish Labour like a branch office; her equally hapless predecessors rush to agree and – as with any divided party and leader under attack – the poll ratings for Labour and Miliband personally get worse.

In panic, Scottish Labour is also proposing to go along slavishly with any demands from the SNP on further devolution, including full control of fiscal and tax policy, which would effectively render the Union void without even the fuss of a referendum.

After all, it has been political orthodoxy for the past 40 years that to cede control of fiscal policy to Brussels would be to surrender Britain's sovereignty, so why would it mean any less to hand the same powers to Holyrood?

Many Labour figures have tried to persuade Gordon Brown to take the helm again, in the naive hope his paternal presence could bring order to the squabbling children. The trouble is, he knows from years of experience

Labour's mafioso back-stabbing in Scotland makes Macbeth look like Mrs Brown's Boys ...and could be the death of the Union

LES WILSON



By
DAMIAN MCBRIDE

GORDON BROWN'S FORMER SPIN DOCTOR

that the cracks in the Scottish Left run so deep, no one can just paint them over. The big divisions are clear: Glasgow versus Edinburgh. Catholic versus Protestant. Westminster MPs versus Holyrood MSPs. Beneath those are thousands of tiny but bitter feuds, built up over decades.

Managing the intricacies of that infighting is like working out the seating plan at a mafia wedding. That's why the six different people to serve as Scottish Labour leader over the past 15 years have done so with ever decreasing impact.

SO IF Gordon Brown has reluctantly said no, why on earth does Jim Murphy want the job?

His critics, myself included, have accused him of being more interested in advancing himself than any cause or principle.

But to be fair, he is just that rare thing in politics – his own man – and that leads to suggestions he's not a team player or a true believer.

Sometimes in politics, we unfairly project our own cynicism on to others. When Murphy travelled to the Philippines last December to see the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan with my old

employers, the aid agency Cafod, the staff he met spoke glowingly about how he'd helped the relief work. I smiled cynically that the pictures of him mucking in must look great. 'No,' they replied, 'there weren't any cameras.'

My first encounter with Murphy was equally illuminating. When I was Gordon Brown's media adviser in September 2008, I approached Murphy at a dinner, warned him there was a rumour that he was planning to resign, and he should get out and deny it. It was a standard tactic to intimidate a potentially wobbly minister by making them think we had eyes everywhere. He looked at me with a contemptuous smile and snorted: 'Away and eat your chicken, you.'

Similarly, when Labour's referendum bosses saw him taking on hecklers in town centres across Scotland from the top of an Irn Bru crate, and asked to manage his schedule and messaging, he told them where to go.

It's not the way to build political alliances, but Murphy doesn't seem too interested in that.

After the marathon last year, he observed that when you reach 17 miles you don't notice the crowds, you just focus on putting one foot in front of the other, and getting the job done.

A leader with that single-minded concentration, who doesn't pay any heed to the noise around him, may be exactly what Scottish Labour needs: someone who'll ignore all the internal bickering, run things the way he wants, and focus on winning back Scotland's trust.

All the signs are that, if he wins the leadership contest, he'll carve himself off from the Labour's Westminster HQ and Miliband's leadership.

HIS message to Miliband is simple: my job is winning seats for Scottish Labour MPs next May and winning back the Scottish Assembly in 2016. I'll do whatever it takes to achieve that. You worry about your end.

It's been a long while since Scottish Labour had a leader with that authority. If Murphy succeeds, Ed Miliband could yet be Prime Minister next May, albeit with little say over what happens north of the border.

If he fails, Cameron can start planning his second term.

If he succeeds, you can bet on major changes to Scotland's powers within the Union, and – by extension – for the powers held by Wales, London and the English regions. If he fails, the Union will simply break up.

With all that hanging on the job it's easier to see why he wants it and, perhaps, there is a further prize in his sights.

If he can run Scotland without Miliband's help, why not the rest of the country, too? 'When I came round Buckingham Palace,' Murphy said of his marathon run, 'there was no sign saying finish: so I just kept running.'

With his single-minded determination, who knows where Slim Jim's race will end?

The  Mail
ON SUNDAY

Cheap labour can never be fashionable

ED MILIBAND and Harriet Harman looked ridiculous when they sported their 'this is what a feminist looks like' T-shirts last week.

It came across as cheap gesture politics – and now we know just how cheap.

The garments are being made by migrant labourers toiling for 62p an hour at factories in Mauritius.

The 2,800 female machinist workers live permanently on site, crammed into bare dormitories where they sleep 16 people to a tiny room.

They work 12-hour days for one quarter of the country's average wage – the equivalent of earning a little over £6,000 a year in the UK – and they are subject to a curfew on weekdays. Most of their wages are sent back to the families they have left at home in countries such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

No wonder critics have described the factories as 'sweatshops'.

This stunt, from a man who is so ready to brandish his socialist credentials, is what hypocrisy looks like.

He is, after all, a politician who has tried to fashion a distinctive anti-capitalist credo with attacks on aggressive 'predator' companies.

Meanwhile, Mr Miliband has squashed one of the few genuinely radical and popular policy proposals to emerge from his front bench – health spokesman Andy Burnham's plan to crack down on the drunks who clog up our hospital emergency departments.

If Mr Miliband is ever to be taken seriously as a potential Prime Minister he would be advised to ditch the gimmicks and embrace more such reforming ideas.

Put public safety first

OUR prison system is porous and overcrowded. The number of people greeting yesterday's dawn behind bars was 85,786 in England and Wales – just 2,218 short of full capacity.

Jailing people is expensive. The bill to the taxpayer for each convict is running at more than £40,000 a year: and it costs three times that amount for each new prison place created.

Justice Secretary Chris Grayling is therefore under pressure to come up with innovative and affordable solutions in response to the problem.

With this in mind, there is much to commend Mr Grayling's idea of satellite-tracking serious offenders at the end of their sentences using special new tags.

For the first time, if a prisoner absconds while on day release, the police can head to his exact location when he fails to return to base.

But worryingly, under the new GPS system, offenders will not be monitored in 'real time' as they move about – the system simply makes it easier for the police to track them down should they go AWOL. That still gives them the time to commit violent offences.

Mr Grayling needs to offer reassurance that the new tags do not amount to a form of justice on the cheap, with the public paying the price with their safety.

Buckets of sexism

EVEN the cosy, campfire world of the Scouts and Guides is not immune to the cold blast of modern commerce.

The insurers who hover behind all of our activities these days do not trust the girls to wash cars for pocket money without leaving scratches.

Be prepared for an almighty row at the next Jamboree.

Jim Murphy may be exactly what Scottish Labour needs

Feminist T-shirt women

After our exposé of £45 Miliband top, we reveal truth behind feminists' shameless defence of 'sweatshops'



EXCLUSIVE: How we revealed the truth about the T-shirts

THE women paid 62p an hour in Mauritius making £45 'feminist' T-shirts earn less than the 'living wage' set by the government of the Indian Ocean island.

After our revelations last week about the 'sweatshop' conditions endured by workers producing the garments, The Mail on Sunday has discovered that the women's pay falls far short of the £1.47 an hour set by the official statistics office, and designed to provide a decent, basic level of income.

Unions and campaigners last night condemned high street chain Whistles and Left-wing women's rights group The Fawcett Society for refusing to withdraw the T-shirt, made by women living 16 to a room.

Whistles was described as 'sticking its head in the sand' by one major union following The Mail on Sunday's revelations about the conditions in which the 'This Is What A Feminist Looks Like' T-shirts are made at the Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile [CMT] workcamp.

The new revelations came as:
 ● Whistles announced that the women earn more than the Mauritian minimum wage – 44p an hour – but the government admits this has not been reviewed since 1984 and is 'outdated'.
 ● We established that fewer than eight per cent of the workforce

'Whistles is sticking its head in the sand'

belong to a union, despite Whistles and The Fawcett Society claiming the women had union representation.

● Our journalists were followed and spied upon by guards from CMT as they travelled around Mauritius.
 ● Rosie Boycott, founder of feminist magazine Spare Rib, writes in today's MoS that The Fawcett Society should be 'ashamed' and has 'betrayed the cause of feminism'.
 ● The story divided opinion on the Left, with one reader on The Guardian's website saying: 'I hate the Mail as much as the next Guardian reader... but they are right about this.'

Labour leader Ed Miliband, his deputy Harriet Harman, and Nick Clegg were all photographed for Elle magazine in the shirts.

After our exclusive story last week, the shirts were withdrawn from sale in Whistles while it conducted an investigation. Two days later, the shirts were back on shelves when the store, the charity and the magazine all declared they were satisfied the factory conditions at CMT conformed to 'ethical standards'.

Significantly, the statement did not contradict the women's rate of pay or living conditions, it merely said they are paid above the minimum wage

MoS INVESTIGATION

Words **BEN ELLERY** and **NICK CRAVEN**
 Pictures **CRAIG HIBBERT**



'SATISFIED': Whistles say they are happy with conditions at the CMT factory, above, despite the poverty wages

and had union representation. But even the Mauritian government's director of labour, Edley Armoogum, admitted: 'The minimum wage has not been reviewed since 1984, it has only received small increases in line with inflation. Wages need to increase, they are outdated.'

Yet The Fawcett Society – which vows to fight against low and unequal pay for women – triumphantly tweeted: 'Latest T-shirt update: evidence we have seen categorically refutes assertion they were produced in a sweatshop.' Later they added: 'Oh well, guess we'll have to get by without those 11 million Daily Mail readers, aww shucks!'

The Mail on Sunday understands that no one from Whistles, Elle or The Fawcett Society has travelled to Mauritius to investigate our story, although Whistles indicated yesterday that an inspection is planned by a 'senior member' of its team. Instead, the company relied on an audit of conditions, carried out last month.

The Fawcett Society said they were initially assured that the 300 T-shirts would be produced in the UK and were 'surprised' to discover they were produced in Mauritius.

International trade union IndustriALL added: 'Whistles is sticking its head in the sand. The government-mandated minimum wage has not been revised for 30 years. It's currently 4,300 rupees a month [£86]

which is below the poverty line. It is no surprise that women work enormous extra hours to supplement their poverty wages. A company sourcing from a factory with any indication of exploitation should not try to hide behind a smokescreen.'

CMT boss Francois Woo last week confirmed that the migrant women from Bangladesh, India and Vietnam were paid £120 a month basic wage – equivalent to 62p an hour.

The company claims that the dormitory accommodation and three meals a day they provide effectively brings the women's salaries up to £210, but even that falls far short of

Dorms are 'a prison' and few workers are in union

the £290 voluntary living wage set by the Mauritian government. To achieve that, the women should be paid £1.47 an hour – not 62p.

The claim by Whistles – whose chief executive Jane Shepherdson is believed to earn £300,000 a year – that the workers had union representation was also questioned by Jane Ragoo, president of the island's Trade Unions Consultative Congress.

The only union within CMT is the Textile Manufacturing and Allied

This is what two goons look like: Whistles clothes factory's Mr Woo puts a tail on the MoS in Mauritius

By **Nick Craven**

THE Mail on Sunday's T-shirt investigation took a sinister twist last week as our journalists were spied on and followed by security guards from the CMT factory.

The men, among them drivers for factory boss Francois Woo, tailed our reporter Ben Ellery and photographer Craig Hibbert for hours along the island's palm-fringed roads. At one point they were even lying in wait when the journalists arrived at a secluded riverside hotel they had checked in to only hours before.

Though the burly guards made no approach to our journalists, it was clear their aim was to monitor their movements and to intimidate any factory workers who may have wanted to speak out.

Ellery and Hibbert first became aware they were the subject of unwelcome attention on Thursday when they visited a CMT factory in a sprawling industrial estate in Phoenix, just outside the island's capital Port Louis, at noon. They had planned to speak to more of the migrant workers about their working conditions at the plant.

Seeing four guards on the razor wire-topped gate, the pair waited at nearby food stalls, hoping the workers would go there for lunch. However, they were told by a local shopkeeper that the

only workers who leave the complex at lunchtime were Mauritians, rather than their colleagues from Bangladesh, Vietnam and India.

The journalists began talking to the Mauritian factory workers and within minutes a team of security officers began to station themselves around the stalls, setting an intimidating atmosphere sure to keep workers from talking to our journalists.

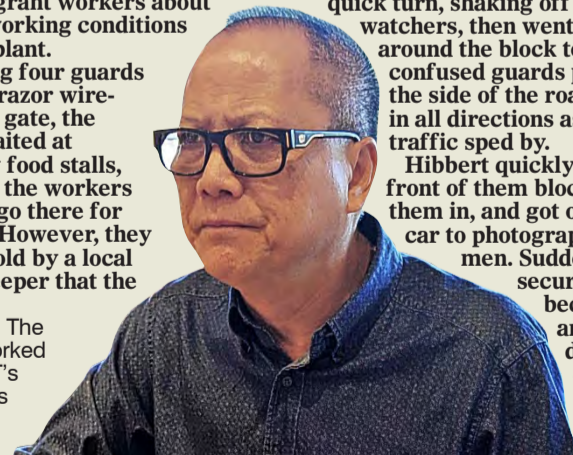
Ellery and Hibbert got back in their car and drove away while the guards looked on.

The MoS team visited a union office in Port Louis. Afterwards, when they got back in their car, they spotted a grey BMW parked further up the street with two of the guards sitting in it.

The car started following the journalists, sticking close though several turns in busy traffic. At one point the MoS car made a quick turn, shaking off the watchers, then went back around the block to find the confused guards parked at the side of the road, looking in all directions as the traffic sped by.

Hibbert quickly pulled in front of them blocking them in, and got out of the car to photograph the men. Suddenly the security team became shy and pulled down the car's sun visors to obscure

BOSS: The men worked for CMT's Francois Woo



Industries Workers Union, which official figures show has 1,052 members in the whole of Mauritius. That is just eight per cent of the 13,000 CMT workers, even if it had no other members elsewhere. Legally a union can only demand collective bargaining power if it represents 30 per cent of staff, but companies can grant the same right to smaller unions.

The union is led by Fayzal Ally Beegun, who accompanied the MoS on our tour of the factory last week. At that time, he described the conditions as a 'sweatshop' and condemned the pay and conditions. Since then,

our efforts to contact him have been in vain, but CMT issued a letter he wrote claiming the quotes attributed to him were 'totally false'.

Jane Ragoo said the CMT has stopped her approaching foreign workers about joining an independent union. She described the accommodation complex as 'like a prison'.

In a statement last week, Mr Woo denied the factory was a 'sweatshop', and claimed the women who represent 80 per cent of his workforce had access to leisure facilities.

But on our tour, it was only in the men's block that we saw a gym,

paid below 'living wage'

T-shirt executives refuse to put on their own top (but WILL sell you one)

By Sanchez Manning

DAVID CAMERON was mocked for refusing five requests from women's magazine Elle to pose for a photograph in the 'This Is What A Feminist Looks Like' T-shirt.

Yet last week, The Mail on Sunday found leading figures from Whistles, The Fawcett Society and Elle were just as reluctant to be photographed in their own T-shirt - despite continuing to sell them.

We, too, made five requests each to Whistles chief executive Jane Shepherdson, Elle editor-in-chief Lorraine Candy, the Fawcett Society's chief executive Miranda Seymour-Smith and her deputy Eva Neitzert.

Ms Candy refused to pose, while the others ignored our requests.

We also called at Ms Shepherdson's and Ms Candy's North London homes, taking a T-shirt along with us, but the answer was still no.

Emerging from her smart townhouse with her husband, Ms Shepherdson refused to answer any questions about the issue, or acknowledge our reporter.

SHIRTY: Lorraine Candy, right, refused to pose. Dr Eva Neitzert, far right, ignored our requests



BLANKED: Ms Shepherdson, with her husband, ignores our reporter



...and the questions they won't answer

AFTER The Mail on Sunday report last week, The Fawcett Society, Elle and Whistles issued statements saying they had seen evidence that stated the 'This Is What A Feminist Looks Like' T-shirts were made in ethical conditions. A further statement came from Whistles yesterday. Pointedly, however, there was no mention anywhere of the 62p-an-hour pay rate - or the fact the workers sleep 16 to a dorm.

Here, we print crucial questions we put to The Fawcett Society, Whistles and Elle magazine following that statement, with their responses:

Do you think it is ethical to pay workers 62p an hour to make a £45 T-shirt?

Whistles: 'All employees are paid above the government-mandated minimum wage.'

Do you think it is ethical that the women must sleep 16 to a room?

NO COMMENT

Do you think it is ethical that the woman are encouraged not to leave the site between shifts, as factory boss Mr Woo told us?

NO COMMENT

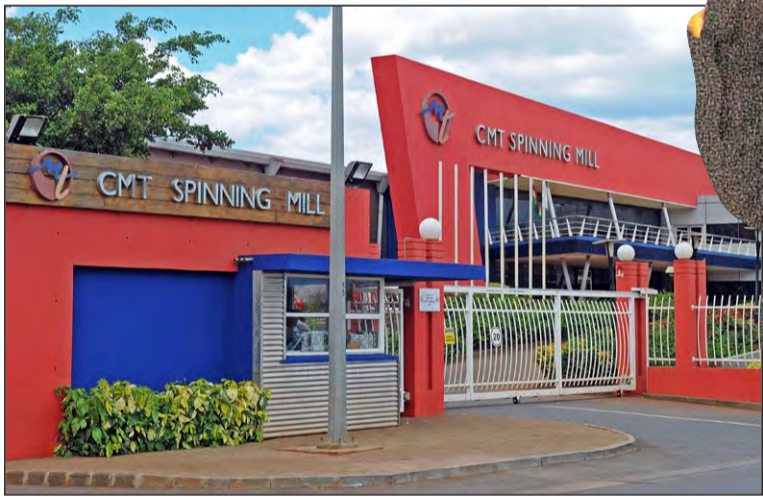
The Mauritius government has set a 'living wage' of £1.47 an hour. The workers are paid less than half this. Is this ethical?

NO COMMENT

After the MoS report, The Fawcett Society and Whistles implied that conditions are acceptable. Did any of your representatives go to Mauritius in the past week to gain this information first hand?
Whistles: 'We are undertaking a further independent review and a senior member of the Whistles team will conduct a detailed site inspection and talk to employees at the factory.'



CAMERA SHY: Hibbert's shot of the henchmen following him and Ellery



LOCKDOWN: CMT plant near Port Louis. Right: One of the guards lurking in shadows

their faces, then unhooked the visors to shield themselves.

One of them attempted to take a photograph of the journalists using his mobile phone before reversing the car out of the tight spot and driving off.

Five minutes later, the journalists realised the same car was behind them again. Once again, they made a few quick turns, confirming they were being tailed, before losing them down an alleyway.

That evening the journalists returned to Port Louis only to find one of the men who had been

following them earlier standing in the shadows outside the hotel with another man.

Ellery said: 'We were particularly shocked as we had only changed hotels hours before and made sure we hadn't been followed. By this time we started to feel uneasy and asked the parking attendant about the men. He told us that they were drivers for Francois Woo.'

However there was no sign of Mr Woo in the hotel, and reception staff confirmed he was not a guest nor having a meeting there.

The men lurked outside the hotel

until 11pm. The following day when the MoS team returned to the factory in Phoenix, one of the men was waiting inside the compound. When asked, he denied following them the previous day.

According to global union IndustriALL, such sinister activity is not uncommon in Mauritius.

A spokesman said: 'Union leaders have their phones tapped and are followed by the secret police.'

'It is not uncommon for factory managements to establish unions that they control in order to mask their poor labour practices.'

library, TV room and sports pitches. Security guards at a CMT factory in Curepipe yesterday herded workers inside their dormitories to stop them from talking to our reporters.

Neighbour Lallman Lutch, 62, told us: 'Normally the women are allowed outside on Saturday but my friend told me they were locking them in to stop them talking to journalists. They say it is like a prison.'

CMT has a chequered history, but says it has improved conditions in recent years. In 2005, riot police fired tear gas as 300 Chinese workers protested that a colleague had

been effectively worked to death. Whistles said it had nothing to add to its statement last week insisting it was 'committed to ethical sourcing' adding that an audit last month found that 'all employees are paid above the government-mandated minimum wage; employees are paid according

to their skills and period of service; there is no forced labour; there is a policy for freedom of association and collective bargaining; there are regular workers' meetings.'

The Fawcett Society and Elle refused to answer our questions.

Comment: Page 27

ROSIE BOYCOTT: THIS BETRAYAL OF FEMINISM



SHOCK: How we reported workers' plight

By Sarah Duguid and Ben Ellery

THE Fawcett Society has for the first time conceded it is 'very concerned' that women in Mauritius making its 'This Is What A Feminist Looks Like' T-shirts are paid just 62p an hour.

The Left-wing feminist organisation has for weeks rejected accusations of an ethical blunder after The Mail on Sunday revealed the conditions under which the workers are employed. But the Society has now sent an inquiry team to the island to investigate.

Fawcett chairwoman Belinda Phipps made the climbdown yesterday, saying: 'Obviously we're very concerned about what's been brought to our attention. It's in complete contradiction to our own ethical policy.'

Ms Phipps said that clothing retailer Whistles, which sold the £45 T-shirts – worn by Labour's Harriet Harman and Ed Miliband, and Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg – was conducting the investigation with Made-By, a charity dedicated to ethical standards in fashion.

'Whistles are concerned and the government of Mauritius is concerned. What matters to us now is that there is a full and thorough investigation. Whistles are in Mauritius. We expect to have a report from them in about two weeks.'

But the news came after the charity was again accused of 'shameless hypocrisy'

CLIMBDOWN: Fawcett Society's Belinda Phipps



At last... feminists in storm over '62p an hour' T-shirt admit: It's against our ethics



BACKING: Ed Miliband in the T-shirt

over its new campaign for a 'living wage' in the UK, despite the fact the migrant workers in Mauritius are paid far below the official 'living wage' there, and were living 16 to a room in dormitories. Yet When The Mail on Sunday asked the Society whether it supported the living wage in Mauritius – which would represent a significant pay rise for workers producing their T-shirts at the Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile (CMT) factory – we received no comment.

The official Mauritian living wage is £1.47 an hour, though the workers making the T-shirts do receive free board and lodging, however basic.

Whistles and the Fawcett Society chose to ignore the living wage – an official Mauritius government benchmark of a basic salary in the country – and instead pointed out the women were being paid above the minimum wage, a figure even the government accepted needs to be reviewed.

In a press release last week, the Fawcett Society gave its full backing to the concept of a living wage, at least in the UK.

Commenting on figures showing the disparity between wages paid to men and

women had closed only a little in the past year, it said more needed to be done to reduce the gender pay gap, and called on the Government to sign up to the living wage in this country by paying it to civil servants and encouraging local

authorities to do the same. Fawcett's deputy chief executive Dr Eva Neitzert said: 'We urgently need to tackle the unacceptably low wages paid to women.'

'Government should take the lead in supporting the take-up of the liv-

ing wage.' Jane Rago, a Mauritius union leader, last night condemned the Society over its UK living wage comments, saying: 'It seems to think it is OK to exploit workers in Mauritius, but not in the UK. It is guilty of shameful hypocrisy.'

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