G.L.A.S. is a workers co-operative of architects, designers, teachers and activists. Its objectives are to construct a theoretical and practical critique of the capitalist production and use of the built environment and through design activity, graphic works, and writings to question and suggest alternatives to the dominant manner in which our built environments are put together under capitalist conditions. In short building and urban design is already a political event, the point is to change its politics.

As a way of doing this G.L.A.S. consciously draws not just on the history of building but on the history of communities, avant gardes and practical experiments is liberated labour and space, in brief the history of praxis. This includes the classical revolutions of European history, but also looks to learn from the historic struggles of architects, construction workers and tenants to develop a socialist building economy. This inclusive agenda also embraces the concept of the “heterotopia”, the “temporary autonomous zone”, the “independent collective”, the smaller but politically profound attempts to carve in the interstices of capitalism embryonic forms of a new social space, whether it be a sit-in, a protest, march, or a shanty.

Some of these ideas were first explored by the founder members of the co-operative as post graduate students at the Department of Architecture, University of Strathclyde. Over a period of five years a number of attempts were made to develop a practice that sought to develop strategies for interventions and critical frameworks for thinking about them. The effect that a small organisation like G.L.A.S. can have on some of the profound socio-spatial contradictions thrown up by the consequences of neo-libertarian economic regimes and the growing legitimation crisis of western democracies is of course strictly limited. Besides which there is a strong argument to suggest that as long as the production of the built environment is controlled by private capital, there is little chance that the uneven development of the built environment and the continued massive discrepancies in the resources that are deepening social and spatial divisions locally and globally will be arrested.

This makes it all the more important to find ways of making a critique in what appears to be a dour and imaginative political thinking in the popular press and media about how we might make better use of existing buildings and cities and of developing improved ways of making them. G.L.A.S.’ newspaper is hopefully a contribution to that struggle. Below is a declaration of principles, a modest statement of intent. As in all manifestos there is a mixture of romantic idealism and overinflated aspirations. Slogans are in many ways empty vessels, they say everything and nothing. It is after all the practice that counts.

This said, it seems important at an historical moment when there continues to be a strong ideological push to identify capitalist social relations as the natural form of human organisation to remember to differentiate a new ideological agenda. In the same manner that the Art-Capitalist Movement is taking on the institutional power of global finance capital, the idea that the construction of a giant specifically capitalist complex commodity is the only legitimate way of organising the built environment needs to be challenged.

G.L.A.S. are
Rosalind Adams, Alan Atlee, Judith Barber, Jason Bell, Gary Boyd, Jonathan Charley, Alaisir Clements, Tony Duurworst, Florian Kossak, Carole Lacham, Alan Perr, Tatjana Schneider, Adrian Stewart.

Glasgow Letters on Architecture and Space, May 2002

SUBSCRIPTIONS
G.L.A.S. is produced by Glasgow Letters on Architecture + Space Limited. All material in G.L.A.S. may be reproduced in full with the prior consent of G.L.A.S. Ltd. editorial address: Glasgow Letters on Architecture and Space Ltd. 31A Errol Gardens Glasgow G5 0RA phone: 041 4292891 e-mail: info@glas-collective.com www.glas-collective.com ISSN 1476-3206

I want to subscribe
- £16.50 EUR 17 Reduced Rate
- £24.00 EUR 35 Standard
- £55.00 EUR 80 Institutions (3 copies)
- £55/160+ / EUR 80/160+ Friends

Name
Address
City / Postcode
email

Please make cheques payable to Glasgow Letters on Architecture and Space Ltd.

I am a member of a Community Group and would like G.L.A.S. to contact me.

Community Group
Name
Address
City/Postcode
email

print by Scottish County Press Ltd.
GLAS investigates the social and political consequences of the historical production of uneven development.  

GLAS believes that the control of the production and the use of the build environment should be in the hands of all those producing and using it.  

GLAS believes that PFI/PPP is a daft idea.  

GLAS questions the production of selective histories through the global tourist industry.  

GLAS regards the history of the emancipation of construction workers as an important reference for its own work.  

GLAS criticises the ideological use of historical imagery to conceal real power relations.
A used tae stay in wan ae they flats above the Sarry Heid. A few year ago the council moved us aw oot, sayin thit the buildin wiz unsafe or somethin, it wiz gettin knocked doon. Next hing ye fuckin know they've been awdone up an aw these other cunts' ve moved in! New fuckin windaes the lot.
See the trouble was whites happenin',

is that ye've got aw these new

places, openin' up, dead expensive

on that, but at the same time

there's still a loada ordinary

places room here and some

night shitholes fulla idiots.

So at the end as the

night the haves and the

have-nots are bumpin' in each other, and that's

when ye kin get trouble.

Some aw these cunts up can

drugs an' christ knows what. They think

nothin' as skelpin' somebody or the

heid wae a bottle fur. Fuck all.
“HOLD THE FRONT PAGE – BUILDINGS ARE NOT MADE BY MAGIC”

1 The board rooms of multi-national construction firms, the concrete factory managers office, and the debating chambers of politicians and planners, are remote inaccessible places. The camouflaging of the decision making process that occurs in such locations can create the impression that buildings and cities are produced by some sort of extraordinary alchemist’s trick that is beyond our comprehension.

2 However, it is self-evident that everything connected with the built environment, a drawing, a text, a whole building or indeed a city, is produced by the hands and minds of workers. This process, far from being a politically neutral activity is characterised by conflict and competing interest. Here, it is true, that through organised struggle, architects, construction workers and tenants can influence the way in which buildings and cities are produced. But for most of human history their voices and desires alongside those of the politically dispossessed and economically marginalised, have struggled to be heard against the ideas and motivations of the class that owns and controls the land, technology, and capital which are necessary for building production to take place.

3 It follows that historically, the ability to build large scale works and restructure cities has tended to reside in the laps of the rich and powerful, whether the senators of ancient Rome, the Lords and Bishops of feudal Europe, or the state and capitalist bureaucracies of the last two centuries. Not surprisingly then, the production of most urban spectacles from the construction of the first city state of antiquity, to the nineteenth century neo-classical metropolis, and onwards to the twentieth century plans for new cities like Brasilia, Canberra or New Delhi, has been driven by the need to represent and consolidate political and economic power.

4 To try and explain how and why such buildings and cities are produced, it is necessary to explore their broader social and architectural context. In particular this requires us to investigate and reveal the political and economic objectives of the individuals and social organisations that control the labour of architects, technicians and building workers, and which direct the activities of users. Here, there is a crucial difference between building activity in modern capitalist societies and that of earlier epochs. The modern city: its blocks, individual buildings, their parts and contents, along with the labour of architects and building workers are either transformed into, or are produced as, commodities. That is, they become things that are created primarily to be bought and sold in the market place.

5 This produces a fundamental shift in the functional and social objectives of building production. It is not enough for instance that a house should stand up, keep out the bad weather, or even encapsulate the desire of its occupant in terms of projecting an image of status and wealth. It must first and foremost make money for the land development company, the construction firm and the bank supplying the credit. The imperative of maximising profits for these institutions can distort the decisions about what, how and where to build. Capitalist society has frequently produced buildings and urban regeneration projects that are at odds with the social, psychological and physiological needs of workers, tenants and users. Sick building syndrome, energy guzzling offices, poorly built ghettos, increasingly intrusive forms of surveillance and collapsing infrastructure are just a few of the examples.

6 Under such circumstances it can prove very difficult to produce built environments that prioritise human need and happiness and which consciously explore and expand the realm of individual and social freedom. For in the context of an increasingly privatised built environment of ‘fortified’ housing estates, retail parks and city centres, human pleasure, environmental comfort and liberty tend to be defined in terms of monetary value and the defence of property. As a result the ability to choose how and where to live is restricted. First in terms of income level, and second in relation to the prescribed “choices” that are available in the carefully controlled and regulated markets for building products and services.

7 Despite the appearance of the capitalist production of the built environment as a conspiracy or covert operation, it is not the intention of financiers or construction firms to produce a built environment, that despite all efforts to the contrary, continues to be characterised by profound socio-spatial inequality and environmental degradation. Rather this is a natural consequence of the unrelenting pursuit of profit, and of the concentrated private ownership of land and the objects and instruments of building production.

8 But things are not quite so gloomy, for alongside the history of capitalist domination exists another history, that of the individuals, groups and classes that have sought to gain control over the production and use of the built environment. The development of different forms of socialised property in land and buildings. The creation of a fully democratised and accountable programme of urban development. The transformation of the labour of architects and builders into a liberated creative activity over which they have control. The production of hitherto unimaginable new building types and changes of use for existing buildings. These are just some of the projects that exist on the horizons of alternative forms of production. Jonathan Churley
multi-billion pound industry
borrowing
brainchild of last conservative administration
design, build, finance, operate
consortium
facilities management
political
public services
risk
privatisation
developing political responsibility
poor client consultation
complicated leasing arrangements
joint venture companies
capital projects
profit
aviation services
PFI
lowest price
Private

lowest price multi-headed client
private investment in public services
reduced Government balance sheet
banks and investors New Labour

£££
schools
hospitals
drive for profit
low investment in design PFI
contractors and financiers
facilities
management
public purse
low quality
short design life
end users
Finance

cost
architects
political
JVC
private
public purse
bidding
consortium
private finance
short
design
life
privatisation
public services
hospitals
PPP
Initiative
PROFIT BEFORE PEOPLE - THE MISERY OF PFI

PFI stands for the Private Finance Initiative. It is a process conceived by the Conservative administration of the early 1990's as a method of funding public sector projects. The most obvious of these projects are new buildings such as hospitals and schools, but many other services are operated on a PFI basis, for example, library services, IT provision to schools, and aviation services.

New Labour has enthusiastically taken on the PFI mantle handed to them by the Conservatives and relabelled it PPP - Public Private Partnership. The PFI/PPP process is not unlike a mortgage. A private Consortium consisting of a Main Investor, Main Contractor and Facilities Management Company (Maintenance Company) are selected, following a lengthy bidding process including around four consortia, to DESIGN, BUILD, FINANCE and OPERATE a project/building. Buildings are included in a leasing arrangement that includes, for example, cleaning, catering and maintenance services.

The Consortium borrows money from banks to fund the project. This is then leased back for a fixed period of time, usually 25-30 years, to the public sector in yearly installments plus interest. PFI/PPP is attractive to Governments as it spreads the cost of a project over many years giving the impression that the state is not in debt.

However, all it actually does is spread the cost of the project over an extended period with added interest. The Consortium has a guaranteed income from the lease agreement signed up with the Government. It can at any time refresh its loan from the bank, and pocket the difference. In the meantime the state is tied into a long term and expensive leasing arrangement for 25-30 years.

The Weakest Link

Can you spot the weakest link between parties involved in this PFI/PPP setup?

Clue: Good design requires communication between those who design the building and those who will use the building.

Brain Teaser

If Harrowry PFI hospital building cost £67.5 million to build, and is to be leased back to the NHS trust by the private consortium for an estimated fee of £1.2 million per month, what payback would the consortium expect over a 30 year period?

Who said that?

"This announcement will establish confidence in both the NHS and the private sector that PFI is capable of working for the benefit of the patient." £1.50m paid out for each new patient on average daily basis thus far from the private sector.

We are trapped in a PFI web, the problem is a country wide one and secrecy has no place at this stage. The PFI project is causing huge suffering for the people of North Durham for the foreseeable future.

Fuzzy Face

How well do you know your politicians?

See if you can name the Prime Minister on our computer generated fuzzy pictures below.

Clue: The person on the left is the mastermind behind the PFI/PPP initiative. The person on the right, funny enough, has taken PFI on board and championed it under the renamed PPP. Don’t let the left/right issue confuse you!
TRY YOUR LUCK ON THE PROPERTY LADDER

‘There is in this country a deeply ingrained desire for home ownership. The Government believe that this spirit should be fostered. It reflects the wishes of the people, ensures the spread of wealth through society, encourages a personal desire to improve and modernise one’s own home, enables parents to accrue wealth for their children and stimulates the attitudes of independence and self-reliance that are the bedrock of a free society.’
Margaret Thatcher 1981

‘A place to love, a place to laugh, a place to inspire, a place to grow, a place to share.’
Miller Homes

‘The best security for civilisation is the dwelling, and upon proper and becoming dwellings depends more than anything else the improvement of mankind. Such dwellings are the nursery of all domestic virtues, and without a becoming home the exercise of these virtues is impossible.’
Benjamin Disraeli 1874

‘You move in. We splash out.’
Beazer Homes

‘The owner occupied home is visibly better maintained and at less cost in real resources than the rented one.’
Department of the Environment 1971

“All this…and more.”
Taywood Homes

‘Where you live. The way you live.’
Bryant Homes

‘The ideological orientation to a post represents values of seeking to transcend the ambiguities and inconsistencies of present experience, which in turn generate a persistent reference to ideas of authenticity.’
David Chaney
Authenticity and Suburbia

‘Admittedly the architect, the promoter or even the occupier can compensate for the shortcomings of a given location by introducing signs: signs of status, signs of happiness, signs of lifestyle and so on. Such signs are bought and sold despite their abstract nature, despite their concrete insignificance, and despite their over significance in that they proclaim their meaning – namely, compensation.’
Henri Lefebvre
The Production of Space

‘The symbolic status of these private settings will necessarily mean a great deal of financial and emotional investment in styling, furnishing, decorating, equipping, maintaining and defending these sites by their inhabitants. The suburban home is thus intrinsically linked to the spread of consumerism.’
David Chaney
Authenticity and Suburbia

‘Normalising discourses which construct home owners as normal and other housing consumers as abnormal create an outgroup or a ‘shameful (housing) class’ which exists beyond the frontier of abnormal behaviour. This exclusion is, strictly speaking neither exclusively economic nor social. Instead it is cultural, linguistic and psychological.’
Craig Gurney
Pride and Prejudice: Discourses of Normalisation in Public and Private Accounts of Home Ownership

‘Private’ property entails private life – and hence privation.’
Henri Lefebvre
The Production of Space

‘Value does not have it’s description branded on it’s forehead; it rather transforms every product of labour into a social hieroglyphic.’
Karl Marx
Das Kapital
AROUND
THE WORLD
IN TWENTY
MINUTES

There are basically two types of travel. The individual trip, where you arrange everything for yourself. Or the package holiday, where you buy a vacation, which then comes complete with flight, accommodation and extras from a travel agency.

When travelling on your own or in a small group, countless travel guide books provide information about a foreign country or city. They are published by a limited number of companies, state or city governments. But they are basically just a collection of postcard motifs, cartoons, street scenes, classic photo spots, and written information about the sites you can see. Most guides will have three to five classified categories of accommodation and restaurants ranging from budget to affordable to top end or exclusive. Some publications also suggest longer tours for a city, region or country. The short tours of one to three days cover the essentials of a place. If you have got more time available, tours of two to three weeks cover a greater geographical area and a wider cultural and historical background. For many countries, these guide books have become the only source of information about a place when not speaking the native language.

A second option when going abroad is to book a pre-defined tour. These vary from staying at a holiday resort anywhere on the globe to full thematic sightseeing or educational tours or just a stopover for a couple of days on your way to your final destination. Two weeks all-inclusive in Spain, nine days / eleven nights group adventure travel in Nepal, eight days Taiwanese highlights, half day hot air ballooning in four days / three nights stopover in Bangkok, six European countries in ten days, Italy’s Renaissance culture in one week, governments and temples of Japan, America’s Wild West, etc. Here again, somebody else has already taken very precise decisions on behalf of you. You are buying the tour from a brochure which gives details about the type of the trip, the places, the hotels and the flights where you will stay. Your tour guide will speak any language, he or she will also know historical facts of the places visited as well as plenty of stories about each country’s people and culture. Your guide will also deal with any problem that should occur, from helping with authorities to lost property, from assisting when ordering food to buying stamps.

Whether you travel on your own schedule or a package holiday, publications produced for the travel market will attract attention to those sites that have been specifically prepared for the visitor: a city, region or even country is essentially being compressed into a map of attractions filled with a regime of postcard motifs, creating a new order which is superimposed on the existing (urban) fabric. You are not offered a complete image of a place and its history, in all its current developmental and social inequalities, but carefully selected, singulated experiences performed by an industry which trades in cultural resources and experiences. History is not told in its social, political, cultural and geographical context, but as a series of postcard motifs, creating a new order which can be easily experienced and consumed in a clean, attractive, and highly secured environment. Over the last two decades, more and more places have been re-constructed, perfected, or newly created to provide a setting for leisure, pleasure and consumption. Monumental buildings have been reconstructed, historic town centres have been beautifully preserved and a wide range of new “landmark” buildings have been constructed.

One could argue that one of the most extreme forms of this development is represented by the most recent theme parks which have been constructed during the last ten years in Japan. Architectural and cultural elements of various countries had been picked by the park’s creators and its own consortiums and then put together again in order to create a coherent version of Spain, Holland, Germany, Turkey, Canada, Russia, Great Britain or a combination of all of them. These are mainly park’s, theme parks with or without cultural or historical themes, which are often a hybrid between a classical amusement park with rides and other conceptual or histo-geographical overarching themes, and the third draws its motifs from a historical seaside resort.

The first type of parks is built with an educational aspect in mind. They can be described as being very similar to a European opera house, where historic buildings have been rebuilt to tell us about how life and work conditions used to be in earlier centuries. The difference in the Japanese parks is that they do not necessarily show their own country’s historical buildings, but display reconstructions of architectural ensembles from all over the world in conjunction with the exhibition of historical artifacts. These ensembles are one to one copies of buildings which still exist somewhere on the globe. The single building ensembles are arranged along one circular route, but each country will have its own pocket area along the circuit, separated from the other by wood. Within the pockets, trees and flowers but also the general landscaping is meant to resemble the part of the world, where its buildings have been taken from. Each park is assigned a variety of shops that stock country specific merchandise, restaurants sell regional specialties, and local music provides the overall atmosphere. Hence, the entrance fee includes everything apart from your food and some other specialities such as using a native traditional costume and getting your picture taken.

One example for this type is ‘Little World’, which is owned by the private train company Meitetsu. It is situated near Inuyama, half an hour north of Nagoya, about three hours from Tokyo. From Inuyama a special bus brings you to ‘Little World’, another half-hour ride, where you arrive just in time for the entrance which is located next to the exhibition building. The park admission ticket for 1,000 Yen, around £10, gives you a day of unlimited access to the displays in the museum and the ‘open air exhibits’ within the park itself.

While the museum is intended to provide the visitor with a general background knowledge of ethnological themes such as evolution, technology, language, society and values of world cultures, the open air exhibits are supposed to present the way certain cultures live through the displays of their material culture, domestic residence, and original settings. For this purpose, 29 ‘facilities’ with 50 houses have been reconstructed and reproduced from many parts of the world. From the main entrance, the ‘Little World Tour Bus’ leaves every 15 minutes for a 20 minute ‘trip around the world’. Along its route are historic buildings from various Japanese regions, a Farmhouse from Taiwan, Indian Tents and a Navajo House from Northern America, a Afghan House from Alaska, a Peruvian House, a Landlord’s Residence, a Balinese House, a Buddhist Monastery from Nepal, various houses from Thailand and Korea, and a Kerala Village from India. Whatever part of the park – or region of the world – you will visit, music from loud speakers which are hidden somewhere in the landscaping will attune to the respective country on display. Italian canteen, French chansons, German brass music, Indian chants, Peruvian folklore, or African drum.

Another element when approaching a country are the small booths located at the entrance to the buildings, which you can shop your special ‘Little World’ passport with a fictitious motif representing each region or country. The buildings on display are all fitted with furniture and accessories that illustrate how a person would have used and lived in the building in the past. It is the time of its construction, which sometimes dates back as far as the late 19th century. In addition to that you can become a piece of furnishing yourself as you put on a costume that matches the style and time of the buildings. There are costume hire facilities throughout the park, where you can exchange your clothes for a Ryukyu, the traditional dance costume from Okinawa, a traditional Abenian dress an Indian sari, or an Italian costume against extra charge. To end up, let you experience yet another level of the respective country, small restaurants or food stalls will serve local food and drinks such as Indian curry, Peruvian dishes, Okinawan sweet, Taiwanese dumplings, Northern African dishes, Korean pancakes, or you just have a Cappuccino on the terrace of Alberobello. Some of the most popular areas, which include the European part with the Bavarian Village, the Abenian House and the Trulli from Italy, have bigger restaurants and additional stores where the Japanese visitor can buy souvenirs in form of German sausages, Italian wine, French cheese, handmade chocolate, and Italian olive oil.

For further information, the World Plaza and the Museum Shop at the end of the Little World circuit offer a wide range of
Thirteen

facraft and other accessories from around the world, such as Persian rugs, knitted jumpers, ornamented beer steins, Indian fabrics, Franken, Italian and Austrian wine, cookbooks and cooking ingredients. Since the park opened its doors to the public in 1987, more than 28 million people have visited and the owners have continually added new 'countries', with the European part being the latest extension in 1985.

The economic recession that hit Japan in the late 1980s has yet prevented the park from embarking on the construction of further 'countries'. However, an already reserved site between Indoensia, Senegal, and Bavaria, awaits the postponed construction of a Tudor England.

A second type of theme park development combines classical amusement park rides with a thematic environment that acts as a stage set for rollercoasters, boat tours, and shows. Themes range from more conceptual ones such as 'Sea or Future' to those that are based on historical or geographical motifs such as 'Spain' or 'Company'. Here, buildings are constructed to provide a general atmosphere that is achieved through the use of architectural typologies, materiality, treatment of surfaces, signage or advertisements on buildings, all complemented by employees wearing country or regionally specific costumes and performing artist groups. Spatially, the parks are divided into different zones or 'lands' that are reserved for one thematic area only. Although some shortcuts between different 'lands' might be available, rides and other attractions are arranged along one single route. Admission for the conceptual type is generally charged for the whole park, as rides and the thematic setting are inseparable.

Rides and special attractions are free of charge, but sometimes require hours of queuing. For the park that is arranged around historical or geographical themes, there are usually two different entry points available: a ticket for the park, only which allows you to enter, wander about and shop while enjoying the setting, or a 'passport' ticket, which also allows unlimited access to all attractions and rides.

'Shinagawa Station' or 'Parque España', owned by the private train company Kintetsu, is situated within the Shima National Park near Isobe, three hours north of Nagoya. Kintetsu Corporation, which provides the only available train connection to Isobe, also owns several bus companies, travel agencies, major hotel chains, department stores and supermarkets. But, 'Kintetsu's most important commitment is to contribute to the quality of leisure time for its customers.' "Parque España" opened in 1987 and within its first two operating years more that 6 million people visited Spain in the Japanese countryside. Isobe train station, the adjacent hotel, and various other buildings within this small town, are already resembling architectural elements from Spain, such as the white mudstuccoed rough cast and red tiled roofs, although it still takes another fifteen minutes by bus to reach 'Parque España'.

Admission to the park only is available for 2,800 yen or around $18 whereas a 'passport', entrance plus rides, comes to 4,800 yen, almost $32 per adult. Parque España is composed of four main themed areas: Ciudad, Tener, Mar y Fiesta, which forms the basic part: one part recreates Spanish-style urban and rural building ensembles that are combined with special attractions and the other part features a number of fun rides. Located just behind the main entrance gates is 'España Street', a covered restaurant and shopping arcade with two story urban-scale buildings, said to be inspired by Las Ramblas in Barcelona. From 'Cibeles Plaza' you can either take a left turn towards straight to 'Fiesta Plaza', where amusement fair fun rides are arranged around a Gaudíesque centrepiece. Or you continue your way through 'Cibeles Plaza' to the 'Mayor Plaza', resembling Madrid's Plaza Mayor, but on a much smaller scale, and from here on into a scenic arrangement of Spanish rural architecture which provides the setting for restaurants, shops, and special shows. There is a large Roman theatre, a 16th century castle, a Roman ruin, Columbus Plaza and ensembles of single storey village houses forming squares or little streets. While none of the buildings is an exact replica, architectural typologies from the Spanish regions of Andalucia, Seville, and Malaga, are said to have been the force behind these reconstructions. The only place within the park where you can actually actively learn something about Spain, its history and culture, is located within the above mentioned castles. The 'Museo' displays Spanish art and history of various periods and also provides some information about traditional crafts. Apart from the factual material provided by the museum, the Japanese visitor can further experience Spain through consuming the park's numerous restaurants and shops. Throughout the park, 'Theme Restaurants', bars, and cafés offer Spanish style food and drinks such as Paella, Tapas, churros, lemon cakes, Sangría and Spanish coffee. It is also possible to order your meal in Spanish as menus are always bilingual. Shops offer a wide range of merchandise, from fashion souvenirs such as pens and hats, to hand-embroidered ceramics, leather products, furniture and fashion, which also includes flamenco costumes and matching shoes. You can also purchase imported Spanish crockery, pots and pans. The major attraction though is the 'España Carnival', a parade which incorporates the themes of Spanish festivals and traditional culture. Once a day, band wagons featuring classical Spanish dance groups parading down the street. Dali, Picasso, bullfighters, and flamencos tour the park on a fixed route. Spanish and Japanese artists illustrate the respective theme through further dance and theatrical performances.
For a city of its size and antiquity Glasgow is not very rich in objects of architectural or historical interest. (...) Any lack of archaeological showplaces is, however, amply compensated by the industrial and human interest of the Clyde shipbuilding yards that have shaped the world since the momentous day when Henry Bell's Comet introduced steam propulsion. (...) and if in less prosperous years the achievements of Clydeside shipyards have been less spectacular than in the flourishing days just before the 1914-18 War, the influence of the other great Glasgow industries has been potent in many directions.

The stranger who wanders along the quays and wharves of the Brunluci will realize, if he has not done so before, how great is the interdependence between the third most populous city in Britain and the wild country stretching almost from the municipal boundaries to Cape Wrath and the farthest Hebrides. Flocks and herds and the abundant produce of the seas are poured into Glasgow daily, and in return almost every artificial requirement of life is sent to every hamlet in the western Highlands.

from: Jock Davidson; West Lothian Tourist Guide, ca 1938
Sign A Rama - for all your signage needs. Panda House, Star Fish Bar, Chili ‘n’ Cream, inbetween a Chinese and an Indian restaurant the local Chippy, run by an Italian, Diverted Traffic, suburbia, two storey terraces, red sand stone, probably 1910s, back into the city, tenements rhythmically modulated facades, Non surgical face lifts, the promise for beauty without pain, an impressive mansion at the corner of Queens Park, UEFA Champions League Final, PlayStation 2, Battlefield Road, emptied corner of the block lies there like a real battle ground, Melville Car rental, the street full of parked white vans, Hyundai, Manufacture of football kits, UEFA Champions League Final, Mastercard, Minuteman Press - for the job you need yesterday, again 1910s suburbia, Second Avenue - Scottish defeat to the English terraced house, quarter-detached houses, Hampden Park - Scottish Football Museum, the stadium as an alien in an alienated surrounding. Hampden Cars Private Hire, ASDA, sitting in a cleared open field that became a car park, No. 1: Best company to work for, We are open when you need us, Police - Warning: it is an offense to drink alcohol in a public space, no offense to be drunk, Prospect Hill, how much prospect is here in the three 1960s Tower blocks, maybe a good view. Welcome to South Lanarkshire, no more UEFA Champions League Final here in Lanarkshire, 30s detached houses in a dirty white, approaching Rutherglen, Atomic Kitten supports KEEP BRITAIN TIDY, paving stones guiding the blinds lead onto a Halifax Cash Point, Road & Track (closed), Motorworld Jet, Bedrooms, an open field, overgrown with some rudimentary structure on it, “Rent me”, a site with cleared up brick sheds, the stones still laying in piles, overgrowing, crossing the River Clyde, glittering in the sun, colourful circus wagons opposite some petty 80s housing, Sunnybank Street, all windows of the tenements are boarded up, Fuck the Pope, two towerblocks overlooking vacant land, the streets lamps of the housing blocks still lined up, the houses gone, grass instead. Springfield Road, post modern design for the bin areas, the houses in front it empty, ready to be binned, in the background Parkhead Stadium, Don’t live a little, live a LOTTO, next to St. Michael’s Primary School, Barr Soft Drinks, Parkhead Cross - looking towards the site of the former Parkhead Forge works, now just The Forge, glass pyramids containing a shopping centre, opposite Mecca Bingo, behind it nothing, in the distance derelict train tracks, Adele Is Bily, New Life Church, the windows behind heavy metal grilles, to the left pigeon towers and trailer homes, to the right, in the distance the burned down 30s tenements of Haghill, sun shines beautifully on the new green grass, Duke Street, The Loudon Tavern - The greatest pub in the world, painted blue, For Sale, To Let, To Let, To Let, Karaoke Thu, Fri, Sat, For Sale, Discount Zone. At the end or the beginning of Dennistoun villas and former luxurious terraces, Alexander Dennistoun’s failure to attract the bourgeoisie to the east, brutalist architecture for the Glasgow abattoir enriched with some 80s soft yellow, Great Western Hotel (closed), passing the Glasgow Necropolis, last home of the wealthy merchants, Cathedral Square and Castle Street, medieval minicry and a Tourist Information sign, scratching the edge of the official city, in the axis of the cathedral portal a statue of David Livingstone, Royal Infirmary - Danger Demolition in Progress, crossing the M8, Sighthill 1/2 mile, on the embankments of the motorway grows long grass and wild dandelions, Sighthill, ten highrise slabs, 19 stories each, containing 2500 flats, the lowered street cuts through an artificial landscape, no footpaths on both sides of the street. Fountainwell Avenue, CCTV cameras control all zones inbetween the single slabs, St. Rollox Church of Scotland - last reminder of the St. Rollox District, "earth’s nearest suburb to hell" (James Stewart MP 1924), rows of simple gravestones in the Sighthill Cemetery, poor counterpart to the lavish monuments of the merchants on the Glasgow Necropolis, St. Rollox Superstore - turn right, "Rent Me", Barrat Homes, filling the gaps of the formerly industrial fabric, only every fourth parking space is occupied. Springburn Health Centre, the size of it might be reciprocal to the health of the Springburn community, Springburn Possilpark Housing Ass., two high rise towers, triumph of prefabrication, the ground floors decorated with a joyful red, above 24 storeys of infinitive grey, green slopes with no people around, Hawthorne St., 1930s tenements, refurbished some time ago, some flats boarded with metal sheets, an empty old brick shed along the street, romanesque windows like in a place of worship, Gala - free admission, Autoglass, Denmark Street, buildings in a rotten state, Library Bus on the city council car park, Northside Motor Factors - discount car components, Vogue Bingo - For sale, on the right, behind brick walls, new Wimpney Homes, Parkview, Hillgrove Gardens, Showflat Open, on the left Ruchill Hospital - abandoned, Shannon Street, a man with a Republic of Ireland football strip, Ruchill, between the semi detached interwar houses a glimpse of the Campsie fells in the distance, a building site, timber frame houses, some already cladded with bricks, crossing the Forth & Clyde Canal, Chapel Street Industrial Estate, indicating the work ethic?, McDonalds Drive-Thru, opposite Maryhill Shopping Centre, formerly the site of the Maryhill goods station, in-tune - full trained technicians, the remains of wall and gate of the Maryhill Barracks, behind it the Wynford Estate, suddenly: The Westend, red sandstone, glowing in the evening sun, front gardens, flower pots on the window sills, trees in the streets, UEFA Champions League Final, Mastercard, Western Gate Partick X - luxury 2 & 3 bed room apartments, what are normal apartments these days?, Partick Train Station, Nail Enhancement Specialist, the view from Dumbarton Road towards the Granary, "the biggest brick building in the world", the top floors are already gone, the destruction on the waterside still invisible, into the Clyde Tunnel, deeper and deeper, 30 miles max, again on the Southside, simple two storey houses, terraces, semi-detached, two iron goals make it a football ground, a newly built cul de sac estate is fenced off from its 1800s predecessor, a 1930s estate still relating to the public street, the street is a motorway ledor, Southern General Hospital, out patients next entrance, kids throwing stones against the windows of an empty shed, Yauhaul Frontera Sport, turquoise metallic, Fairfield Green - six flexible villas, looking more than garages, in the distance Rangers FC, Football Stadium, Elderpark Workspace, barbed wire metal fences with a dense hedge behind it obstructing intrusive views, JR Scaffold Service, Timber and Building Supply, Govan Cross with Govan Underground Station, a square triangle defined, by ten trees, no benches, Colopops - ideal lunchbox food, observed by a set of large CCTV cameras on high masts, Strathclyde Passenger Transport Broomland Depot, brown brick and barbed wire, ...VA, ...OS, ...0, ...r, signage on the Govan Shopping Centre, Hury Hury Hury Hury, a boarded window, no people around, Power Plant Hire, a shed, brick base, corrugated metal roof, six windows, all shut with roller blinds, around it a tarmac car park, one car and a portacabin, Govan Police Station with a Prison at its rear - closed, Broomland Public School - (closed). Govan Town Hall - nothing to govern any more. Glasgow Science Centre, four cars on a huge car park, three silver aliens without context, BBC Scotland site awaiting construction, The Loudon Tavern - The greatest pub in the world, -this time in Govan, Union Jacks hanging out of the windows, Mohamed Sawar MP, Gordon Jackson MSP, New Labour Paisley Road Surgery, Kinning Park Industrial Estate, the M8 flying over ten meters above ground, Strawberry Garden, Asian children playing in the streets, Yamaha Motorcycles, The Biker Barber, gents £6, OAPs £2.50

Florian Kossak
REMEMBER THE DEAD - FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

On the 28th of April this year like every other year millions of people around the world observed International Workers Memorial Day. It has been celebrated in North America for more than twenty years where it originated to commemorate the introduction of a compensation scheme in Canada for men and women who are killed or injured in the workplace. Spain has officially recognised the day since 1995. This year in the United Kingdom over thirty local events were organised to mark the occasion; many by community groups set up to support those directly affected by work-related death, injury and disease.

Since 1974 three and a half thousand building workers have been killed in the United Kingdom and ten times as many have suffered major injuries. Countless others have had to live with the long-term consequences of poor working conditions - chronic physical and mental illness including respiratory disease, repetitive strain injury and musculo-skeletal problems. The most recent Health and Safety Executive figures for 200/2011 reported a annual 31% rise in the number of construction industry deaths. Fewer people lost their lives in fishing, farming and manufacturing combined. Nor do these faceless figures record the personal stories of tragedy and pain each sufferer and relative carries with them, nor the experiences of the thousands who have lost their lives after lengthy, debilitating illness contracted as a consequence of exposure on building sites to hazardous materials such as asbestos. Despite the disturbing nature of these figures and the grim upward trend of the death toll, a quick survey of the plethora of magazines and websites dedicated to the construction industry, including the mainstream architectural press revealed not a mention of International Workers Memorial Day. The white collar construction press treats the daily tragedies of the building site in an unashamedly white-faced fashion. Inattentive onlookers might conclude that the journalists working for these publications have carelessly missed a good story whilst the cynic could understandably reach rather different conclusions - that the advertising revenue which sustains all trade journals creates a blind spot on their investigative radar which facilitates and sustains this complicit cover-up.

An unwillingness to address the human suffering at the centre of the industry can be traced directly to the boardrooms of the major construction companies, the trading floors of the international markets and the government ministries responsible for regulating the industry. Like all listed companies the big housebuilders and construction giants are legally required to annually report and publish their financial performance. Why then are they not also obliged to publish their safety record? Recent research has shown that workers are twice as safe in unionised workplaces where safety representatives have full consultation rights. (London Hazards Centre). Why isn’t every building site required by law to provide such a worker representative? Central government has repeatedly stated its commitment to reducing the number of workplace accidents and has promised time and again to introduce new defenses to make prosecutions for Corporate Killing easier.

The Labour government’s privatisation of local authority housing through stock transfer (glazing over (1)) has been universally welcomed by the construction industry in general and architects in particular. Despite referenda results that recorded significant resistance to transfer in Glasgow and outright rejection in Birmingham the majority of construction professionals have publicly and privately welcomed the government’s willingness to aid the industry in its bid to accelerate their rates of profit. Mortgage transfer schemes claim these thousand jobs will be created in Glasgow. These will not be created by the local authority whose Direct Labour Organisation offered high standards of training and remuneration; it created at all they will be in small subcontractor firms whose safety and training standards are much more variable and where job security is at a minimum. Once again the architecture profession has found itself chasing the crumbs of a financial settlement which sees the local and national state washing its hands of a social service - in this case housing - and the built environment which supports it. Such cooperation and short-termism has seen the problems of a low-skilled, casualised and non-unionised workforce extend into the white collar professions whose Royal Institutes once protected fee scales, remuneration and recognition.

If architects are to retain their unique role within the construction process; indeed if the architect is to have any future at all then their ability to imagine other and of course better worlds must be placed at the top of their list of responsibilities. This imagining must also be applied with equal gusto to a radical rethinking of the construction industry itself. It is pointless advocating a Lord Rogersque Urban Renaissance of tree lined avenues, high density cities and vibrant communities if these places are built by construction firms endearing the lives of exploited, casualised labour. It is inane to complain about the industries inability to deliver high quality buildings if you are willing to turn a blind eye to the fragmentation of training programmes, the obliteration of apprenticeship schemes and the full frontal assault on the trade union movement. Tiny concessions to design won by the architect during contractual processes like PI or PPP that always demand ‘best value’ will only ever be that - concessions.

Those searching for a new architecture to emerge in Scotland endlessly look for buildings or projects which will signal this arrival. They are right to do so in that others will judge us by what we produce. However they fail entirely to recognise that the quality of design, construction and programme of any building reflects the mode of production and complex social relationships of the industry and society from which it has emerged. Would it not be better to be known for high standards of working conditions, that reflected a highly skilled and generously remunerated workforce that created environments collectively, responding to human needs and desires? Or would it be better to see it as the upstart of a profit driven industry that allows scores of its employees to die unnecessarily each year? If all that seems a little far fetched then at least let’s see the following suggestions implemented without delay.

- **SUPPORT THE PROSECUTION OF COMPANY DIRECTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFETY WHEN AVOIDABLE ACCIDENTS OCCUR**
- **RIGHT ALL FORMS OF PRIVATISATION AND CUMULACIÓN OF LABOUR WITHIN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**
- **DEMAND THE PUBLICATION OF SAFETY PERFORMANCE RECORDS FROM ALL COMPANIES**
- **DEAL ONLY WITH COMPANIES WHICH GRANT FULL RIGHTS TO TRADE UNION RECOGNITION AND ENSURE THAT ALL BUILDING SITES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES**
- **RECOGNISE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY ON APRIL 28TH EACH YEAR AND LOBBY ALL WITHIN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TO DO LIKewise.**
SMITHFIELD MARKET, DUBLIN, FRIDAY NIGHT, 2002

Smithfield Market, Dublin, Friday night, 2002. In a scene redolent of a fusion between the architecture of the Third Reich and a petrochemical plant, a series of oversized lamp-standards strike into the distance. Recently designed by an award-winning architect, each lamp is crowned by a flaming torch which dispatches thousands of kilojoules of burning methane into the night sky. Opposite, the hollowed out shell of a former whiskey distillery accommodates a mixture of luxury apartments, a trendy hotel and bar, sundry boutiques and bistros and, unsurprisingly, a heritage centre dedicated to the history of whiskey. In an ironic reversal, the distillery decades from western societies to the developing world, heavy industry tends to be something which happens elsewhere, beyond the confines of our experience and under circumstances we have no direct knowledge of. The western city, once the workshop of the nation state, has been redefined as a centre of services: tourism, finance and leisure. One of the consequences of this process is an increased emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of its central areas. Indeed, in the international competition for tourist revenue, the production of a marketable image, ensures all sorts of disparate but picturesque phenomena become repackaged as the city’s list of attractions. At the same time, however, it presupposes the exclusion of those groups and phenomena whose presence may disturb the harmony. As the number of homeless people living in Dublin has risen exponentially in the ten years or so of unprecedented boom since the inauguration of Ireland’s "Celtic Tiger" economy, it has been matched proportionally by new measures to prohibit their presence in certain areas of the city.

There are, however, historic echoes to this. Dublin, unlike Manchester or Glasgow, did not owe its development as a city to the large scale industrial complexes of the nineteenth century. Instead, its growth began much earlier. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, when vast tracts of land were transferred, as the seeds of victory, into the hands of the colonising forces of soldiers, mercearies and adventurers. The dissection of the island, however, was also contingent on the colonisers' more radical approach to land and space. They introduced an abstract, rational system of measurement and representation which simultaneously dissolved indigenous Irish social and cultural connections to land and replaced them with imported ideas of land management and property rights. This first act of "disenchantment" was reinforced in the eighteenth century, when the ideology of "improvement" introduced by both Britain and Ireland, a new concern for the productivity of land and more importantly, its potential as a source of profit. The methods used to realise this potential heralded the dawn of the modern, capitalist age: the transition of peasants to wage-labourers, the enclosure of common land and the creation of "economies of scale" vast farms on which new technologies and mechanisation could efficiently reap vast harvests. The result was too contradictory types of surplus. An economic surplus, which for the colouring farmer, manifested itself in a built environment of conspicuous consumption of palatial villas and pleasure gardens. These, whilst deriving from the new and radical agricultural methods, were characterised by an architecture of "antique simplicity": a tran-

Geographical distance from the spaces and agents of industry and the production of goods has always been a luxury of the wealthy. It is only today, however, that this separation is predominantly on a global scale.

Our current lust for nostalgia is only possible because our yesterday's still exist in the working class sectors of the developing world: satanic factories, extensive industrial pollution, widespread industrial accidents, insalubrious shanty housing and the routine and savage suppression of workers' rights and unions.

Here, as the production of goods has given way to the production of information and services, it has simultaneously produced massive opportunities for wealth accumulation for the few, while creating an array of insecure, low paid and often temporary jobs for the many. Indeed, even as the Irish economy edges towards full employment, an already burgeoning underground is swelling. Such polarisation produces even sharper juxtapositions.

Last winter, as the lamp standards of Smithfield shed off surplus energy as flaming spectacular homeless charities were reporting the deaths of surplus population in the streets.

Gary Boyd
GLASGOW-DEMOLITION
no building tough enough

Is there a listed building in your way?
Can't you be bothered with a careful renovation?
Does your investment need more space?

- DEMOLITION -
- OVER-NIGHT EXPLOSIONS -
- LONG-TIME DETERIOATION -
- WASTE PRODUCTION -

GLASGOW-DEMOLITION ltd
the first choice of Glasgow City Council

0141 287 2000 24 Hour
Emergency Service

Done Done Done Doing

Some of our latest references in the city centre of Glasgow
TRADE-IN your old fibre cement panels for new, 50% discount with your old panels being recycled, all panels considered (ref 74001)

BEAUTIFUL GREEN MARBLE for terramix fireplace, newly imported range from Taiwan (ref 23464)

REAL 'SCOTISH SLATE' from China and Morocco, passes Historical Scotland test. (ref. 35-465)

SECOND HAND FIBRE cement panels, require careful treating, must collect, (ref 1562)  
SECOND HAND CONCRETE slabs, from 1160. New Town development in Cumbernauld, must collect, (ref 10017)

KEEP PART OF GLASGOW’S HISTORY IN YOUR GARDEN! Brickwork from former St. Andrews Printworks building, excellent for monoblock driveways, (ref 42198)

BARDINOL-Look shop fittings, used by hairdresser. (ref 21756)

TIMBER STYLE CONCRETE beams plus construction services available. Contact us today for a quote, (ref 07560)

ROMANESQUE COLUMNS, would suit entrance of single detached villa, almost new! (ref 51539)

TRADITIONAL PUB FITTINGS for sale due to conversion to trendy cafe/bar, (ref 02522)

USED BRICKS from the 'World's largest brick building', recently destroyed, sold by the cubicle, mirror, etc., as seen or for your personal building needs, (ref 09002)

16 KILOMETERS OF cable out of bankrupt’s estate. (ref 31709)

SANDSTONE EFFECT fireplaces, buy two and get one porcelain tile free, (ref 62048)

POMPEII FOR EVERYONE - Roman-Style tiles, bacchanalian motifs available. (ref 4126)
The specialisation of images of the world is complete in the world of the autonomous image, where the liar has lied to himself.

Guy Debord

Today, indeed, the principle task of ideological criticism is to do away with the impotent and ineffectual myths, which so often serve as illusions that permit the survival of anachronistic ‘hopes in design’.

Manfredo Tafuri
EARLY VISIONS OF EMANCIPATION

The class consciousness of construction labour like other wage workers evolves through a series of stages - the struggle for existence, the struggle for union recognition, the strike for wage increases, and the formation of political demands. The struggle for political rights, for forms of economic redistribution, for the instigation of a workers' government, ento the syndicalist dreams of society regulated and organised through trade unions, forms one part of this story, in which building workers in the nineteenth century were often in the vanguard. But the possibility of the development of a new social form of labour concerned not only its juridical description in terms of labour's relations to political institutions and organisations but in the concrete, creative character of labour itself, that is the concept of praxis, that liberated form of human activity which exists beyond utilitarian notions of work.

The anarchist tradition that links Bakunin and Kropotkin, to Can, Mackno, Velime, Do Santillan and to the anarchists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has remained as the conscience of many of the 19th and 20th century political movements that have been unable to conquer power without its phoenix like re-emergence as another panoply of discipline and descending bureaucracy. Although the anarchist movement is as complex and diverse as any other political grouping, spanning a spectrum of values that contrasts and links the organisational platform of the Libertarian Communists to the contemporary ideas of Ward or Sennett, to the life style communes of the late twentieth century, they all share in one way or another an unqualified insistence on individual and collective liberty. Historically this has involved the critique of all forms of organisational theory that attempted to give control and power benign apparel, an attack on all forms of authoritarian regulation of which the state and its subordinate agencies remained pivotal. Bakunin had warned of the 'red bourgeois', Proudhon had alerted anarchists to 'harracks' socialism', and Orwell seventy years later would point towards the 'totalitarianism of public opinion', a play on the process of legitimising authority exploited by left and right, that culminated in the implacable opposition of the modern anarchist to the bourgeois state.

The alternative imagination looked to small scale organisations based on collective self management, that should be temporary, voluntary, autonomous, with acknowledged 'apolitical leaders' but no 'followers'. Importantly as some of the programmes of Spanish, Russian and Ukrainsian anarchists indicated, this did not exclude an understanding of the importance of a larger and wider organisational model. There were in fact quite sophisticated ideas on the establishment of a federation of genuinely free associations, a model that libertarian communists shared with the early anarchists. Absolutely central to this model of organisation was the dismantling of structures that not only reinforced class rule but all of the associated forms of patriarchy and gender discrimination. The anarchist model of organisation which implied the full and equal participation of all members in decisions making was to be universal in its applications. Amongst all the other goals of the anarchist movement were the crucial right to free space and labour unencumbered by the legislative arm of the state and capital.

Kropotkin's interests lay not just in the more formal aspects of communal social organisation but on any initiative taken that appeared to reinforce bonds of solidarity. Central to Kropotkin's writings was not only a concept of liberated labour engaged in 'agrosoil work' a contemporary of Morris's 'useful work', but of a liberated space that was to be a space of civilisation of the free movement of labour and the voluntary associations of workers and peasants. Openly rejecting both the visions of Fourier, or the early twentieth century ideas of state socialism, Kropotkin's posthumous events featured everything from the free libraries and museums of municipal socialism, to the forced communism of calamitous events, even to the 'extra ordinary co-ordination of costional railway construction, and the emergence of the red cross and the British life boat association'.

As is well known Kropotkin extended his critique of capitalist society to a call for the direct socialisation of land and buildings. In an essay in which he describes the construction of Paris as a communal exercise forged from the labours of fifty generations of Parisians, he expounds a mantra calling for the expropriation of bourgeois property in land and buildings, its redistribution and conversion to other purposes and the abolition of rents an historical imperative arising from the illegitimacy of private home ownership a series of familiar revolutionary tactics in which the 'fine ladies would find that the palaces are not well adapted to self-help in the kitchen'.

Although anarchies appear to be on the periphery of the political landscape in Britain, anarchist ideas on individual liberty and the anarchist-communist of Kropotkin resided within the development of socialist thought at the end of the nineteenth century, notably in the celebrated 'Soul of Man under Socialism' by Oscar Wilde and the explicit anarchist communism of 'Verse from Nauvoo' by William Morris.

Utopia for Wilde was not so much a place as an expression of the human desire for liberty. Utopia functions as a dream, a memory, a hope, the realisation of which is always historically relative and temporary. It appears in the literary imagination of Morris in the transformation of Dickensian London into an urban garden. With Trafalgar Square has since 1952 in what appears to have been a decisive revolutionary conflict become slowly evergreen, its monuments and statues to empire and church dismanted, destroyed or hidden amongst orchards and "gay little structures of wood". A romantic idyll of a post revolutionary Britain in which Parliament House has become a Ding Market.

Despite this vision of a state that has withered into a cattle yard, Morris, was no Leninit. However he had arrived at his own idiosyncratic version of socialism, that combined a critique of capitalism with a romantic libertarianism. More than anyone else in Britain Morris articulated a critique of labour in "Useful Work versus Useless Toil" that historically connects him to the libertarian wings of the Russian revolution and to the Left libertarian and sixty-eight declaration of the necessity of the transformation of every day life. He had read Marx and Engels and was a close friend of Kropotkin and their combined influence appears clearly in his writings. The tone of righteous indignation at the degradation of labour and life that had emerged in the epoch of capitalism echoes the work of Marx and Hegel on estranged and alienated labour, but it also owes a legacy to Ruskin.

Whilst Ruskin's politics were relative to Morris reactionary, insisting on maintaining the distinction between "noblemen and commoner" his idealised vision of the mediaeval craftsman as one whose "thoughts and affections may be true and deep", on the destruction to craft traditions brought about by the increased use of machinery and of the consequent tragic separation of mental and manual labour were sentiments that were subsequently articulated by Morris. As the embodiment of the devotion to labour of the medieval craftsman, the Gothic for both Pugin and Ruskin, was an expression of what might be called a non-differentiated architectural production. It is a well-worn path that traces the evolution of the arts and crafts tradition in Britain, and constructs a lineage that joins Ruskin, Pugin, Morris, Leithaby, and Webb with the development of modern movement ideas in relation to honesty and truth. In Morris in particular there is a concern with the labour process that historically ties him to the Bauhaus, in which whatever the political motivation there is a shared concern with the 'faithful' craft realised object in which clarity of message and purpose shone through the
work. Morris as is well known spoke at length on ‘the primary beauty of materials’, on the union of mental and manual labour, on the worker as creator, and in relation to his pattern making, in the importance of geometrical structure, cleanness of form, firmness of structure, on the strong recurring line, in the construction of a work in which there is little ambiguity, a list of guidelines that could equally have been excerpts from one of the early modern manifestos on architecture.

On the face of it there would appear little to connect the Villa Savoye to the Midland Hotel at St Pancras. However the motivation behind the Gothic revival that swept Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was that of the quest for an ideal, a deeply Hegelian search for the spirit of truth that Ruskin argued could be found in the structural clarity and bold expression of the Gothic arch and buttress. In other words the Gothic was an expression of the honesty of labour, fully manifest in the honest rationalism of structure as an architecture imbued with ‘the spirit of truth’, which is exactly how Corbusier was later to describe his own motivation, manifest in a different form but driven by the same Hegelian belief.

But it would be wrong to depict Morris’s thought on labour as a simple restatement of Ruskin. Ruskin was unequivocal in his denunciation of the machine and its impact on the building industry. Both Ruskin and Morris were writing within a time frame in which the craft traditions of the building process were being undermined by the introduction of machinery into building material fabrication, and by the rise of the speculatively ‘lorry’ builder. However, Morris was like many of the Luddites not so much anti-machine as anti-capitalist, that is he was a critic of the devastating introduction under capitalist relations of machinery into the labour process.

His famous precepts, that art should be an expression of ‘joy in labour’, that nothing should be made by degraded labour, and that labour should be a happiness for both maker and user, predicts in many ways the words of Gans, Kolintai, and Shlapinkin20. For Morris the corruption of art, of human labour lies in the nature of capitalist exploitation. It is capitalism that obstructs the reconstitution of labour with happiness, and for Morris like Lefebvre socialism is not just about bricks of bricks and steel, it is about happiness. It is capitalism that Morris believes has incured a “degradation of mind and body”21, and a modern civilisation that has bred desires, which she forbids us to satisfy22. A liberated labour is a labour where it's attractiveness emerges through the consciousness of usefulness, that is carried out with intelligent interest, that is varied, exercised in pleasurable surroundings, and is performed over a shortened working day.23 This liberated labour would exist in a liberated factory, that far from being a headquarters of physical coercion becomes a centre of intellectual activity in which science eliminated waste and "dangerous stench", a building that is more like a home than a prison.

Far from being the problem machinery becomes one of the means by which human life can be liberated from toil and want. Morris envisaged the possibility of a quite different role for machinery, imagining as did Marx that under post capitalist property relations such obvious labour saving devices should indeed be employed in such a manner that releases the worker from pain whilst simultaneously opening up at as yet unknown world of desire and leisure. Morris sees in this one of the principle contradictions of capitalism as an absence of pleasure, and it is the "lack of pleasure in daily work which has made our towns and habitations solid and hideous".24 In other words far from the grotesque Stalinist invention of the Volkhovkite shock worker in which heroic paint labour is elevated as the goal of socialism, Morris’s socialism is about pleasure. “In any case, the leisure which socialism above all things aims at obtaining for the worker is also that very thing that breeds desire — desire for beauty, for knowledge, for more abundant life, in short.”

Morris’s socialism then is more akin to the possibilities of a non-reified, non-commodified world imagined by the utopian generation. It is closer to Emma Goldman, “if I can dance it is not my revolution”, than to the technocratic elite of the state capitalist diktatorships who conceived of socialism in terms of statistics and security police. His greatest legacy is in many ways his most ignored. Unwittingly or otherwise he had the subsequent libertarians brushed on the limitation of all revolutionary projects that do not have at their centre some concept of the transition from need defined as biological reproduction to the realm of desire, the imagination and attainment of which is contingent on the transformation of work into pleasure.

Jonathan Charley

NOTES

1. In opposition to the bomb throwing secret agent of Conrad, the anarchist tradition can boast thinkers and writers that stretch from Bakunin and Kropotkin to Chernomy, Bennett and Debrod. In the tumultuous years surrounding the civil rights movement in the USA and the wave of revolutionary sentiment that gripped the imagination of many during the 1960’s anarchism re-emerged on both sides of the Atlantic, consciously drawing on the traditions of popular revolt with a plethora of programmes and manifestos that ranged from the cryptically obscure to the minimalist slogans beloved of both Situationists and American anarchists.

2. Here, there is no attempt to provide any justification of social democracy, the state appears as little more than the armed wing of the executive authority of the bourgeoisie, that reproduces itself by the principle of consensus by diluting specifically bourgeois definitions of justice and rights, so to the maintenance of order and stability, and to the provision of bread and circuses, whether in the form of spectacle, or in terms of welfare programmes designed to soften the edges of a repressive authority. See for instance, De Leon, Anarchism and the State, in Erlich, De Leon, Morris et al in Reinventing Anarchy, Routledge Kegan and Paul, London, 1979, p208

3. Controversial amalgamation of various anarchistic tendencies in order to build a more coherent picture


6. Kropotkin, Peter, Anarchist Communism, in The conquest of Bread and other Writings, CAP, 1995, p40

7. Ibid, Free Agreement, p75f

8. Ibid, Dwellings, p82

9. See Ruskin, John, Architecture and Sculpture, Selections from writings, George Allen, 1893, p398

10. Ibid, p329


12. See Thompson, E. P, The Decorative Arts, op cit, p100.108 for a discussion of Morris’s relationship to the craft tradition.


15. For a summary of these precepts and their emergence in his thinking see Thompson, op cit, p49f


17. Ibid, p123

18. For a summary see, Morris, ibid, p132

19. Morris, W, The Worker’s Share of Art, in Selected writings op cit, p140