

# Bookstore Notes

Fifth Estate Collective

1980

## **FROM PARTISAN PRESS:**

Partisan Press is pleased to announce the long-awaited release of Scottish anarchist Stuart Christie's autobiography *The Christie File*.

British orders can be placed with Cienfuegos Press; all non-U.K. orders can be sent to us (\$9.95). Coming Spring 1981: *Festival and Revolt Italy* anthology, *Heretic* (a new left libertarian journal), and more. Donations needed urgently! Join the Partisan Sustainer fund: \$30/year (all publications for that year), or \$100+ (lifetime). For orders and inquiries, write Partisan Press, P.O. Box 2193, Seattle WA 98111.

We still have quantities of libertarian and anarchist publications in Dutch, Swedish, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish which we will include with book orders that specify what foreign language publications they would like to receive. If you are not ordering books but would like to receive these publications, specify which language and send a buck to cover handling and postage.

**Best recipes from the backs of boxes, bottles, cans and jars**, Ceil Dyer, McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, New York, 1979, \$4.95

Probably the easiest way to dismiss this collection of recipes designed by food conglomerates to encourage you to consume ever more of their nutritionally empty products is on the basis of their inedibility. It would take a pretty-hard-core convenience food consumer to scarf down a dish of Clam Crunch (minced clams, 2 cups Rice Chex, and sour cream [optional]) or Frito Chili Pie Casserole (3 cups Fritos, 1 can chili, and grated American cheese), but this approach ignores the larger social process at work here (ah, yes, even in a cookbook do they find meat for critical theory).

Beyond the fact that the food which sustains us has been transformed from a substance that we were once in intimate contact with through hunting, gathering and farming, into a packaged and mysterious commodity (how, where, when does it grow? what does it look like before it's canned or cut up?, etc.), now its preparation has been appropriated as well by experts. And as usual, the result is less useful to humans both physically and psychologically.

The ability to prepare hearty, tasty meals served in a convivial atmosphere which brings together family and/or friends has been conspicuously lost to prepared foods and franchise restaurants. This may not seem to be the case since within certain small sub-cultures (the new urban gentry, the chic middle-class and even a few of us) the desire for exotic and fine foods, if anything, appears to be on the increase. But for the vast majority of people, the art of cooking and the occasion of festive meal taking gives way to recipe books like this (nothing over five or six ingredients) and increasing trips to the Colonel (RIP) and MacDonalds. This is accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the number of independent restaurants, diners, beaneries, greasy spoons, tea rooms, snack shops, drive-ins, etc. which used to dot each city.

The tradition of breaking bread among family and friends is rapidly suffering the fate of all institutions not linked to the commodity. Most of us use cookbooks in our food preparations, but there is something just a bit too creepy about one that ties you back so directly to your purchase. *Coquilles St. Jacques*

**SOON TO BE A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE** by Abbie Hoffman, with an introduction by Norman Mailer

As one would expect of an autobiography, the author is portrayed in a sympathetic light. To many people, Hoffman and his cronies were publicity-seeking, media freaks who saw their own egos as larger than the entire anti-war movement. Hoffman's own account, though, shows a man who has suffered more than he ever gained, whose sacrifice and wounds more than outweighed his benefits, and who is a person of considerable depth and perhaps even some heroism—he was arrested 47 times and beaten badly on several occasions. Since the events he describes have already receded from the reader's memory, it is difficult to sort out what was the reality and what is only Hoffman's self-conception (deception). In any event, the book is a good flash on what shaped a radical of the '60s, on the events of that period, and finally, Abbie's life underground as a fugitive. Despite the feeling you are being hustled a bit, you come away from the book with a good feeling toward the author and even a vague feeling of admiration for him. After all, he never became a stockbroker, religious nut or politician like his pals. Still, for all the excitement intensity and danger of Hoffman's life, you can't fail to be critical of his defense of media manipulations and the awful politics that often creep through his writing. He does defend, at the end, however, a sense of rebellion and outlaw consciousness which is rare today among many of the participants of the activities in which many of us engaged ten years ago.

Perigree Books, 1980, 304 pp., New York, \$6.95 C.S.J.

**WHERE THE MONEY WAS** by Willie Sutton with Edward Linn, Ballantine Books, \$1.95

Once, while robbing the Manufacturers Trust Company in Queens, New York, Willie "the Actor" Sutton, called by some "the world's greatest bank-robber," reassured the nervous bank employees, "Don't worry folks, it's only money. And it isn't your money." This statement typified the cavalier, humane, tongue-in-cheek manner in which he went about his business—robbing the rich and giving to himself. Sutton never shot anyone (we choose to believe him when he denies having anything to do with the death of Arnold Schuster, who was killed after his identification of Sutton led to the latter's capture), he never stuck any worker up in an alley. In fact his robberies were so free of violence that by the end of his career the New York police would automatically eliminate him from suspicion of any robbery in which it was used. Willie consciously committed his violence against property, not individuals, and he did it in ingenious, creative ways in which he used an ever-changing repertory of disguises and uniforms as well as careful preparations which made it possible for him to know the routine of the bank and its employees, in order to get in and out of the bank with a minimum amount of effort and suspicion from the street.

This meticulousness and daring as well as his reputation for being a "gentleman thief," earned Sutton the admiration of the public, an admiration which, though dimmed by the events surrounding Schuster's murder, continued right up to the bandit's recent death. There was another aspect of his life which also made him attractive—his incessant, tenacious, and several times successful attempts to escape from prison. But a careful reading of his memoirs reveals that he spent the majority of his years behind bars trying to get out. Those who value freedom cannot help but feel the anguish behind his simple aside, "There is—no question about it—a certain happiness in waking up in the morning and realizing that you are not in prison."

Sutton was not a conscious rebel, had no analysis of the system. He was a bit baffled, if flattered, by the respect people on the outside had for him. "Not in my wildest dreams had I ever looked upon bank robbery as a revolutionary act, and busting out of jail had no social significance to me whatsoever. Hell, I was a professional thief. I wasn't trying to make the world better for anybody but myself." But if there was little social significance in his incredible life of crime for Mr. Willie Sutton, there was for us. He was a natural thief and a natural rebel in a society in which a system of institutionalized thievery crushes the natural thief and rebel every day. He respected individuals, not property. He was a member of the devil's party, for whom crime became a form of theatre. He didn't even rob banks for the money; he wasn't sure of his motives, but he must have done it because of all that robbing banks unconsciously implies: "Why did I rob banks?" he reminisces. "Because I enjoyed it. I loved it. I was more alive when I was inside a bank, robbing it, than at any other time in my life."

Read this book. These gutsy, insightful, so human memoirs reveal once more that rebels come in all forms.

— P. Solis

**NOTE TO READERS: BOOKS REVIEWED IN THE "NOTES & NEWS SECTION ARE NOT AVAILABLE THROUGH THE FE BOOKSTORE.**

We recently received a note from Claire Culhane of the Prisoners Rights Group (3965 Pandora Street, Burnaby, BC Canada V5C 2A8) that publication of *Love & Rage: The Prison Diaries of Carl Harp* has been delayed, but that a

new, longer volume will be out some time after the first of the year. Production costs have risen, as is many times the case, and there will be a slightly higher price (\$3.95) on future orders. Royalties will go to the Carl Harp Defense Fund. Claire sends many thanks to those who have supported the project.

We also received her own book, *Barred from Prison: A Personal Account* (Pulp Press, Box 3868 MPO, Vancouver Canada, \$5.95), which tells the story of the uprising which took place in the B.C. Pen in September 1976, and details the conditions which led up to this desperate attempt to receive justice from the Canadian prison authorities. Claire's first-hand account comes from a person who was directly involved, as a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee and the Prisoners Rights Group, whose presence was demanded by the prisoners before they would enter into any negotiations. This book presents a rare opportunity to see things from the inside as few testimonies from non-prisoners do. She concludes,

"I am convinced that it is not possible to remain indifferent to the sight of another human being encaged. You are either responsive to this human degradation, or you are responsible for it ... By trying to abolish the present prison system we challenge a social/ political/economic order which must preserve and expand its prisons to confine anyone who dares resist it ..."

Author's proceeds to this book will go to the Prisoners Rights Group.

**Another of the publications reaching the Fifth Estate in recent months is the "International Blacklist: An Anti-authoritarian Directory,"** available for \$2 from Blacklist Group, 719 Ashbury, San Francisco CA 94117. It's a compilation of anarchist, libertarian and ultra-left groups, publications and individuals around the world. The survey article accompanying the listings excludes the Fifth Estate from even being mentioned due to the prejudice of the author Tom Ward, but our name has been restored thanks to the editors ...

**We also have received the Anarchy Rag** from Circle-A Studio, 1015 Green St. A3, Honolulu HI 96822...

The National No-Nukes Prison Support Newsletter, c/o Allyson Hunter, Box 1221, Eugene, Oregon 97440 reports on those jailed for anti-nuclear activity serving sentences of over a month ...

The Little Free Press, 309 Cedar Avenue, Minneapolis MN 55454 prints broadsides for the abolition of the wage system ...



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