

MARTIN WALKER

Perilous Journey

The work, circumstances and influences of an activist writer
in his own and other people's words

This biographical article is almost solely about my writing, its context and its continuity. I realised while I was working on it, just how much is missing about the steps in my life that underlie the writing. Only a much deeper look at my life could account for my campaign involvements, my writing work and my personal life over forty years; this article is, however, a start.

INTRODUCTION by Rose Shepherd

I first met Martin Walker in 2004, when he was in London for a conference on childhood leukaemia. I had come across his seminal *Dirty Medicine* while researching a piece for the *Observer* on the threat to health freedom, and approached him. I found him – like much of his prose – wryly funny, a little challenging, something of an enigma.

I have wondered since we met, how he keeps going – flogging himself through project after project, facing down the taunts and provocation of the opposition, endlessly probing, churning up material, never stinting, never claiming ‘writer’s block’, and meanwhile barely subsisting. Why does he do it? I think, because he has to. It is what he *is!*

This is why he travelled to London to attend the 217 days of the General Medical Council (GMC) ‘fitness to practise’ hearing between 2007 and 2010, which destroyed the career of Dr Andrew Wakefield and Professor John Walker-Smith. Throughout the hearing, the majority of British journalists informed their readers with supreme confidence that the MMR vaccine was perfectly safe. How did they know? Well, they read it in the papers. Andrew Wakefield’s research was, as Wikipedia states, ‘fraudulent’ – *QED*.

Meanwhile, the only member of the press to attend the drawn-out proceedings was Brian Deer a free lance writer for *The Sunday Times* and the main complainant against the three doctors. The newspapers were otherwise unrepresented within the hallowed GMC. Nor did journalists apparently feel the need to talk to the parents of the ‘*Lancet 12*’, children who contracted Inflammatory Bowel Disease and then regressed into autism after being vaccinated and who were the basis of the ill-fated case series review in the medical journal.

None of the parents, bar one — who had thought that she was speaking in defence of Wakefield when called by the prosecution — were called by the prosecution (which

they did not support), or by the defence (which lacked confidence in their ability to give testimony in such stressful circumstances). On the prosecution's part, Walker feels, this was a dereliction; on the part of the defence, probably a mistake.

Martin Walker attended mainly at his own expense, having spent a couple of years gaining the confidence and trust of the embattled protagonists, who saw their struggle as a matter for medical professionals and lawyers, not diehard political activists. He also heard the families' stories, edited and published their personal accounts in two volumes of *Silenced Witnesses*,¹ (Walker (ed) 2008, 2009) believing that participants should themselves write about their struggles, and that the parents' voices must be heard.

The high quality of the parents' writing, and their commitment to the two *Silenced Witnesses* books surpassed even Walker's expectations. With the second volume he also published a DVD of Alan Golding's hour long film, *Selective Hearing*,² (Golding 2010) in which a blustering Brian Deer is confronted by parents outside the GMC, with banners proclaiming 'We're with Wakefield'.

There is something darkly comical about the idea of the cynical, irascible Deer attending the hearing alongside the dogged, idealistic Walker as the hearing played out to its foregone conclusion; *The Odd Couple*, indeed. While Deer used the platform and power of *The Sunday Times* to give his version of the proceedings, Walker turned his hand to reporting the daily hearings on the parents' CryShame web site, reports that are shot through with satirical humour – a device which allowed him to get to the heart of the issues, while entertaining both himself and his readers and escaping the leaden reality of a long three years.

Only later, Walker says, did he come across the works of the acerbic American writer HL Mencken (sample: 'A judge is a law student who marks his own examination papers'), and his accounts of hearings and court cases.³ (They impressed him greatly, but he was glad that he had not discovered them sooner and been influenced by them. Was the satirical tone a mistake? Some people thought so, but most got the point. Anyway, over the period of the GMC hearing, Walker didn't forsake the more serious writing of eight long essays on MMR and related subjects, referenced, peer-reviewed, and published in *Medical Veritas*.⁴

After the Wakefield debacle, Walker's projects had piled up, he got back to more sedentary work to finish his commitments. *Overthrowing the Temple* came first, a book

¹ Written by the Parents, Martin J Walker (ed) *Silenced Witnesses: The Parents' Story*. Slingshot Publications, London 2008. <http://www.slingshotpublications.com>.

Written by the Parents, Martin J Walker (ed) *Silenced Witnesses Vol. 2: The Parents' Story*. Slingshot Publications, London 2009. Including: 'Selective Hearing', Brian Deer and the GMC, a DVD by Alan Golding. <http://www.slingshotpublications.com>.

² This video now has 70,000 hits on you tube. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=id_AxZ3zHAc

³ Henry Louis "H. L." Mencken (September 12, 1880 – January 29, 1956) was an American journalist, essayist, magazine editor, satirist acerbic critic of American life and culture, and a scholar of American English. Mencken, known as the "Sage of Baltimore", is regarded as one of the most influential American writers and prose stylists of the first half of the 20th century. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._L._Mencken)

about the hounding of the brilliant, larger-than-life French forensic scientist Loïc Le Ribault, Walker's homage to a friend.⁵ Unhampered by academic constraints, with this very personal work the writer felt he had produced some of his best writing. He had been close to Loïc, appreciating his creativity, humour and scientific understanding, and has brought the late genius to life.

Within weeks of publishing *Overthrowing the Temple*, Walker also published *Dirty Medicine: The Handbook*,⁶ a distillation of 20 years of painstaking investigation and research. At the same time as he was writing these two books, Walker completed a four-year project editing another, *Secret Ties that Bind*, which looks through the eyes of 15 epidemiologists, researchers, investigators and writers, at the distortion of information on environmental causes of cancer. One way or another, this disease touches all of our lives, and *Secret Ties* should be required reading when it is published.⁷

In many aspects, Walker's career has been thankless, he is unable to call himself 'an award winning writer' as most journalists appear to do today. His books are well regarded by a loyal readership, but are not widely reviewed or well known. He has enemies, of course; he has detractors. Brian Deer – who describes him to camera in *Selective Hearing* as a 'drivelling idiot' – produced a vitriolic piece titled 'Liar for Hire', which sometimes reaches the top of Google searches and can be read on his self-aggrandising website. In this he characterises Walker as a 'sad smearmaster' a 'parasite', a writer of no consequence, a fantasist, and so on.

Well, he would, wouldn't he? Or maybe not — Deer is very personal and out of step with Walker's more persistent and organised detractors. Since the publication of *Dirty Medicine: Science, big business and the assault on natural health care*⁸ (Walker 1993) the pro-pharmaceutical lobby groups together with the corporate media appear to have adopted a strategy of ignoring Walker's work, while spreading rumours that, for instance, he is a fascist, and even, equally ludicrously, that he works for pharmaceutical companies.

These tactics are to be expected. What confounds Walker is the way he is being cold-shouldered by some of those he thought on the same side, for whose work he has had considerable respect. In the course of the parents' campaign in support of Wakefield, Walker approached a campaigner in another field – someone whose work he admired – to ask why he never cited his work or addressed the issues of power growing out of pharmaceutical corporations, 'We have enough trouble ourselves,' came the jokey put-

⁴ Medical Veritas. Volume 6, Issue 1, April 2009. The eight essays in this edition are also available from Slingshot publications. (<http://www.slingshotpublications.com>)

⁵ Martin J Walker. *Overthrowing the Temple: Loïc Le Ribault and his development of organic silica*. Slingshot Publications, London 2011.

⁶ Martin J Walker, *Dirty Medicine: The Handbook*. Slingshot Publications. London 2011. Available from <http://www.slingshotpublications.com>. Information about the book can be found on the facebook Dirty Medicine page.

⁷ *Secret Ties that Bind*, Martin Walker and Lennart Hardell (ed) publication expected 2012.

⁸ Martin J Walker. *Dirty Medicine: Science, big business and the assault on natural health care*. Slingshot Publications, London. 1993 and 1994.

down, ‘without reproducing your unproven allegations.’ The implication was that Walker’s work is made up or simply repeated from unreferenced sources.

This idea seems to have gained legs some years ago, and has been on the march ever since. Never mind that the original *Dirty Medicine*, the new handbook, indeed *all* of Walker’s books are copiously referenced;⁹ the misapprehension – or misrepresentation – persists. Walker rang a writer and campaigner earlier this year to ‘sort out the matter’. In a tense phone conversation he was told that the campaigner and her organisation wanted nothing to do with him – ‘because your work is unreferenced ... we prefer to deal with those who reference their work’.

While he has no problem with perceiving that pro-corporate doctors, scientists, researcher MPs and journalists might be frauds, delusional, self-promoting or on the take, Walker cannot somehow come to terms with the hard truth that there might exist a prima donna tendency among the ‘good guys’, that people are jealous of their fiefdoms, of the campaigning niches they carve out for themselves. And yet, sadly, the health freedom movement, the environmental movement, the anti vivisection movement and the anti-corporate science movement are all shot through with rivalries and disagreements, so it becomes hard to know who your friends are.

Of course, Walker should realise this by now. Way back, after the miners’ strike, working with the Yorkshire miners, while the security services spread a rumour that he had stolen money from the IRA, an ostensibly left-wing group cited him as a ‘thief and splitter’ who had stolen money from the miners. So it went – and so it goes on.

It is touching in a way that Walker, now in his mid sixties, still has the capacity for hurt and disappointment; that he remains keen to share information, to exchange ideas, and will reach out to an author, emailing them or writing to them when he has been impressed by a book. ‘As far as detractors go, I much prefer the rabid onslaught of a Brian Deer to the mealy-mouthed, self-protective competitiveness of the middle-class and NGO-oriented campaigners, who don’t know where the street is and who are now jealously trying to make me invisible. In the course of being involved in a large number of campaigns and writing around twelve books. I have always believed that the best way to mend any problems with my writing was to discuss mistakes with those who felt aggrieved; mistakes can always be rectified. I have adhered to a strict practice throughout my writing life, of showing any draft manuscript, to those I have written about, discussing and changing any of the things they disagreed with. However, those involved in this present ‘friendly fire’ campaign, have shown not the slightest interest in discussing errors, missing references or any other aspect of my work.

One of Deer’s jibes against this ‘failed graphic artist’ (that would be the failed artist with 80 posters in the Victorian and Albert Museum) is that the man who ‘calls himself’ Martin J Walker ‘lives penniless abroad’ and beguiles people, befriends them, tries to palm off his self-published books on them, and ask them for *money* (yes, italics).

⁹ *Dirty Medicine: Science, big business and the assault on natural health care*, has over 2,000 references and the book took four years to research, write and finally publish.

Well, sure he's penniless; all his friends know that. There is something particularly odious about a well healed Murdoch journalist presenting this as a character flaw. But, as Deer also says, 'Walker is 64' and he's entering a reflective period, asking himself where he goes from here and if it has all been worth it. Is his work sustainable? What hope of an agent or publisher, at this time in his life, in a world with no place in the mainstream for writers with such radical perceptions?

As an outsider himself, Walker loves to read the biographies of misfits, of people who live or lived lives of 'unmitigated disaster'. He is attracted to the likes of Alex Higgins, and Malcolm Lowry, the troubled author of *Under the Volcano* - characters perhaps better met within the pages of a book than in the real world. He expresses a fondness for such creative figures as Michael Cimino, the director of *Heaven's Gate*, one of the biggest box-office bombs in history that broke a studio. He respects people who jump from one creative stream to another and is always pointing out individuals who have taken risks in turning from film star to photographer, from playwright to ceramicist. 'It is easy to be safe, but difficult to be even slightly mad, a risk taker and be productive.'

Is Walker mad? Not even slightly. Is he broke? Completely. Is he to be pitied? Not remotely! He can look back on a life of principle and comradeship, stretching from the fountainhead of contemporary radicalism in 1968 to the present, on struggles shared and a contemporary rich creative and intellectual life.

MY SIDE OF THE STORY: Beyond Wikipedia

In 2006, I was approached by an academic at a Northern university who asked if I would like him to organise a page for me on Wikipedia,¹⁰ he'd read my books and liked my work. As a writer and investigator, author at that time of eight books, involved in the campaign on behalf of parents of vaccine-damaged children, I accepted. And so began a long struggle to construct a page that could be agreed with the agents of the pharmaceutical industry who lurk like rats behind the wainscot of Wikipedia. After months of skirmishes, the page was eventually taken down on the grounds that, unlike the many cited writers and journalists who tacitly support corporate causes, I was not 'a person of note'.

The Wikipolice achieved this little victory only by telling the most energetic lies about the scrupulously truthful text submitted by my academic supporter. For example, it was said that I – at one time a political poster artist, with a collection of around 80 posters stored, visited and occasionally exhibited in the V&A – did not have any such posters in the V&A collection.

¹⁰ Contacting this person recently to invite them to a book launch, I found that their contract had not been renewed at their university, after they were interviewed for a BBC programme about Hahneman. A brief reference in the programme had named the University and the department where he taught. The University said that they didn't want to be associated in any way with homeopathy!

I considered at the time that to argue my case with these mentally moribund trolls was not only a waste of time but also demeaning and involving a degree of egotism with which I was unhappy, it was yet another battle against corporatism, this time on my own behalf and I was unwilling to be involved. Besides, it was ultimately so unproductive; even if you won a partial victory the site would be brought down as soon as you turned your back to celebrate. After charting corporate lobby groups over a period of twenty years, the results of the Wikipedia conflict didn't surprise me.¹¹ However, as my role in the Wakefield affair continued over six years between 2004 and 2010, I increasingly encountered attempts to either falsely report, censor, or write my work out of history. Growing concern about these criticisms and misunderstandings led me to consult with others about reworking and adding to the censored Wikipedia Biography.

The biographical outline that follows is based on the original Wikipedia entry, which was written in the third person. It has been enlarged by friends and corrected and added to in parts by myself. Because of this confluence of voices and because what follows is in the main a factual account of my writing history, I decided to leave the whole account, as it was anyway, in the third person — I hope that this doesn't put readers off.

* * *

Martin Walker launched Slingshot Publications in 1993, as an outlet for his own writing, not, as some of his detractors have suggested, because no one else would publish him (he already had work in print), but because in his seminal, 700-page book, *Dirty Medicine: Science, big business and the assault on natural healthcare*¹² (Walker 1993) he wanted to be free to name names, without interference from nervous in-house libel lawyers.

Walker considers himself to be an investigative writer or sociologist, always bristling at the term 'journalist', a group of professionals he considered now, with a few exceptions, mainly blinded by a corporate view of the world. He is, however, something more than a disinterested observer: most usually he has been actively involved in the campaigns and causes about which he has written, a strategy that has grown out of an interest in trying to marry up theory and practice in his own life. The name Slingshot suggests that he sees his imprint as David pitted against a number of Goliaths – latterly the chemical and pharmaceutical industries.

Born in Manchester in 1947, Walker embarked on a DipAD course at Hornsey College of Art in London in 1965. In 1968, his studies were interrupted by the student occupation there. The experience of the occupation in which he played a part and which is still being written about forty years later¹³ (Tickner 2010) began Walker's political

¹¹ I had already had a run-in with Wikipedia which he wrote up in an essay supporting the One Click group, *The Weird World of Wikipedia*. Available from <http://www.slingshotpublications.com>.

¹² (Walker 1993)

¹³ (Tickner 2010) *Hornsey 1968: The art school revolution*. Lisa Tickner. Frances Lincoln Ltd. London 2010. This book hardly mentions either the politics of the surrounding culture — the worker student uprisings in France and Germany or the politics of the occupation. For its cover the book uses a lino cut which I cut and printed (believe me, I'm not proud of it) that is also reproduced inside the book with the

education. His experiences of 1968 have continued to shape his campaigning and his approach to politics and culture. Walker describes himself as an anarchist with leanings towards the theoretical writings particularly of Marx and Engels, and in a more recent period Situationist writers such as Guy Debord¹⁴ (Debord 1972) and Raoul Vaneigem¹⁵ (Vaneigem 1967). He has, he says, a built-in antipathy to parties of all kinds, preferring to get involved with grass-roots campaigns.

The occupation of Hornsey was brought to an end after a commission, chaired by Lord Longford had been set up to identify its causes and produce a framework for the future of art education at the college. One important agreement of the commission's concluding report was that there should be no victimisation of student participants. As a new term began Walker and six other students were expelled from the College for their role in the occupation.

Finding himself without a finished education and unsure of how to pursue the politics of the occupation, Walker first took a job, offered him by Lord Longford setting up a centre for homeless young people, many of whom were drug users, in London's Soho. Walker's account of New Horizon Youth Centre¹⁶ (Walker 1972) written at the age of 25, was the first full length book he tackled and it proved very stressful.

After I submitted the final manuscript to the editor at Sidgwick and Jackson, we had a meeting. Frazer Harrison¹⁷ said to me, 'some of this is great but then after each good bit it tails off into rubbish'. He showed me the pages increasingly scarred with red marks until the words disappeared. I reminded him that the book had already cost me a nervous breakdown and when I began writing after this I could only manage with a bottle of Cinzano next to the typewriter. The first few pages were OK because I was coming to the manuscript anew but as soon as I began encountering problems I began to drink more heavily. After a couple of hours the writing turned to a jumble and I passed out over my typewriter.

After New Horizon, Walker was offered an MRC funded research post with the Institute for Community studies run by Michael Young and Peter Willmot in London's east end. There, using participant observation he helped describe drug using and non-drug using sub cultures. His time at the Institute was marked by two important events, first his meeting with other libertarians who were squatting in east London, second his first foray into writing about militant contemporary politics when he began observing the 1972 dock workers strike. He thought then, as he climbed over or crawled under fences to be a part of meetings and assemblies, that to write about these things you had to be in close with the participants, talking to them and listening to their conversations.

credit: reproduced from the Listener 4th July, 1968. Did Lisa think that someone at The Listener had done the lino cut?

¹⁴ (Debord 1972) Guy Debord. *The Society of the Spectacle*. 1972.

¹⁵ (Vaneigem 1967) Raoul Vaneigem. *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. 1967.

¹⁶ (Walker 1972) *Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief: The story of new horizon youth centre*. Martin Walker 1972. Sidgwick & Jackson, London.

¹⁷ Then a very good and sympathetic editor and now a highly regarded writer and novelist.

After an involvement with the late Dave Robbins and Phil Cohen in a project on a large housing estate off the Caledonian Road in North London, later analysed in *Knuckle Sandwich*¹⁸ (Cohen and Robbins, 1978), Walker found his way back to art, and what he always knew he had wanted to do, political posters.

With Bernadette Brittain, Walker set up the Red Dragon Print Collective, based in North London Polytechnic where they paid for their political poster work by producing two or three posters a week for the students union entertainments. It was during the time of Red Dragon that Walker and Brittain both became involved in the campaign to free George Davis from his 20-year prison term after being approached by Peter Chappell.^{19,20} (Walker and Cameron, 1977).

The book about the George Davis case and campaign fell into difficulties when Ian, my co-writer, found it difficult to finish his part of the book, which was mainly about the robbery itself. Mike Kidron at Pluto would have published my part of the book, but inevitably I felt this would be letting Ian down. After all, he had written a great deal about the robbery and the campaign and had been heavily committed to the campaign itself as a part of *Up Against the Law* to which Peter had also taken George's case.²¹

Walker's contact with Peter Chappell, George Davis, and with many other east end characters,²² (Dean-Davis 2009) gave him an interest in defending people who were wrongfully arrested or convicted, and this work, as well as writing and campaigning, was to occupy him for the next 20 years.²³

In 1974, with Jonathan Miles and others, Walker and Brittain became founding members of The Poster Collective (later the Poster-Film Collective).²⁴ The Poster Collective was based in the upper storeys of two squatted Victorian terraced houses in Tolmers Square, north London. During their time in the Poster Collective, Walker and Brittain, as well as the work of the collective, (ref) designed and printed posters for East London's Half Moon Theatre, then under the directorship of Pam Brighton.

¹⁸ (Cohen and Robbins, 1978) Phil Cohen and Dave Robbins. *Knuckle Sandwich*. Penguin Books Ltd, 1978. Harmondsworth. UK.

¹⁹ Peter Chapple was the almost single handed organiser of the George Davis campaign. When Davis was released from prison, Chapple was in Armley goal having been sentenced for digging up the Headingly test wicket.

²⁰ (Walker and Cameron, 1977) *The Making of a One Man Gang*. Ian Cameron and Martin Walker, unpublished manuscript written for Pluto Press, 1977.

²¹ In March 2011, George Davis was granted an Appeal in the Royal Courts of Justice in London. This decision came 35 years after he had been granted a Queen's pardon following a guilty verdict in a robbery trial and a short imprisonment. It was later revealed what many campaigners had known from the beginning that the police had fixed the identification evidence against him.

²² (Dean-Davis 2009) Rose Dean-Davis. *The Wars of Rosie: Hard knocks, endurance, and the 'George Davis is innocent campaign'*. Pennant Books. London 2009.

²³ Because this essay is mainly about my writing, I haven't discussed the cases in which I became involved.

²⁴ <http://poster-collective.org.uk/>. The Poster-Film collective were the most pre-eminent political poster artists and printers in Britain during the second half of the 1970s. The three History sets they produced are some of the finest political posters of the 20th century.

Walker and Brittain left the collective in 1978 and Walker produced no more posters until 1989, when, working with Hackney Community Defence Association, he designed and produced posters for occasions such as the Blair Peach memorial march.

Collections of his posters from both these periods are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, University of London theatre archive, and the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam (IISH). Walker's posters are referenced and reproduced in Dawn Ades's *Photomontage*²⁵ (Ades 1989), the V&A publication *The Art of Selling Songs*,²⁶ by Kevin Edge (Edge 1991), *The Power of the Poster*, edited by Margaret Timmers²⁷ (Timmers (ed)1998) and *Images of Aspiration* produced and published by the IISH²⁸ (Sanders 2005). Most recently, his work featured in the exhibition and catalogue of Agitpop, mounted by the London Print Studio (2008). The posters of the Poster-Film Collective can be seen at (<http://poster-collective.org.uk>). A few of Walker's posters and some collage work can be seen at the Artmargin site of artist and writer Emma Holister (<http://www.art-margin.com/>). In March of 2012 another V&A book of British posters from 1945 to the present by Catherine Flood, includes some of Walker's work.²⁹ (Flood, 2012).

Posters rather than painting or other art forms, perfectly suited Walker's understanding of the artist whose art *served the people* and his work on the posters usually carried through into his involvement with the campaigns on whose behalf he worked. In complete antithesis to what he had learnt at art college, he now saw that there was a rich history of political art produced by committed artists and activists such as Sylvia Pankhurst and John Hartfield which was rarely discussed at college and constituted an alternative history of art.

WRITER AND ACTIVIST

Walker thinks that many writers as opposed to journalists 'fall into writing' and don't when younger have such serious career moves resolved as those, for instance, who decide at a young age to be engineers or biologists. Although, Walker says, he used to write stories when he was a teenager, it never occurred to him that writing could be an occupation. His first published piece of writing was in *The Hornsey Affair*³⁰ (Students

²⁵ (Ades 1989), Dawn Ades, *Photomontage, 1943-*, Thames and Hudson, London 1986.

²⁶ (Edge 1991), Kevin Edge. *The art of selling songs: Graphics for the music business, 1690-1990 Futures*, London: 1991.

²⁷ (Timmers (ed)1998) Margaret Timmers. *The Power of the Poster*. V & A Publications, London. 1999.

²⁸ (Sanders 2005) Huub Sanders, *Images of Aspiration*. International Institute of Social History. Holland. 2005.

²⁹ (Flood, 2012). Catherine Flood, *British posters from 1945 to the present*. Victoria and Albert Museum in publication due out 2012.

³⁰ (Students and staff of Hornsey College of Art, 1969) *The Hornsey Affair*. Students and staff of Hornsey College of Art, Harmondsworth. UK. 1969

and staff of Hornsey College of Art, 1969), a 'Penguin Special' account of the Hornsey occupation.

Walker's writing and publishing has always been intimately related to his activism. During his time at the Poster Collective, Walker was a member of PROP, the national prisoners movement, and with Geoff Coggan, its committed principal worker, produced a number of posters and publishing projects, such as Doug Wakefield's account of solitary confinement³¹ (Wakefield 1980). This work culminated in the book *Frightened For My Life: An account of deaths in British prisons*,³² with Geoff Coggan (Coggan and Walker, 1982), a book which drew upon both authors' experience of wrongfully convicted prisoners or those who found themselves locked in conflict with the prison authorities. Each chapter told the story of a particular prisoner and Walker became the first person, in 1982, to write a thorough narrative of Gerry and Giuseppe Conlon, the subject of the 1993 film *In the Name of the Father*.

Having left the Poster Collective, Walker and Brittain continued their work with other members of the successful George Davis campaign in an organisation called Justice Against Identification Laws (JAIL). They organised the defence of people wrongly arrested or tried on identification evidence, while also being involved in defence campaigns for a number of high profile cases. From JAIL they submitted evidence to the Committee on Evidence of Identification in Criminal Cases³³ (Walker and Brittain, 1975), published as the **Devlin** Report in 1976. The Committee had been precipitated by a number of prominent cases, including that of George Davis and the arrest and trial of Peter Hain, framed by BOSS (the South African secret service) after his involvement in the young liberals volatile and successful campaign in the UK against apartheid in South Africa. Hain was an active member of JAIL throughout the time of its existence.

During Walker's time at JAIL he was involved in the Persons Unknown case, of five anarchists finally acquitted in one of the longest trials ever held at the old Bailey. After identification law, Walker moved on to set up an organisation to campaign against the rules governing verbal admissions. Fabricated verbal admissions had become a primary technique used by the police to gain convictions in the absence of evidence. Operating in the same way as JAIL, Criminal Research and Action Group (CRAG), in conjunction with other small campaigning groups, PROP and INQUEST, mounted campaigns around high profile cases. The campaign, along with telling cases, proved to be successful when, some years later, cameras and tape recorders became a standard part of the equipment used during questioning in UK police stations.

By this time, Up Against the Law (UPAL), the campaign with a high quality magazine that Ian Cameron had worked on, had folded and Walker and Cameron tried to

³¹ (Wakefield 1980) Doug Wakefield, *A Thousand Days of Solitary*. PROP The National Prisoner's Movement 1980.

³²(Coggan and Walker, 1982) Geoff Coggan, Martin Walker. *Frightened for my Life: An account of deaths in British prisons*. Fontana, London 1982.

³³ (Walker and Brittain, 1975) Martin Walker and Bernadette Brittain. *Identification Evidence*. Published by JAIL, London 1975.

revive something similar on a far smaller scale, titled *Verbal Admissions*; it lasted only two issues.

Walker's commitment to wrongfully convicted or unjustly treated prisoners, led Walker to an involvement in the cases of Irish prisoners in Britain. With the Irish Prisoners Aid Committee (PAC) he edited and laid out their paper the *Irish Prisoner* and designed and publishing books such as *Irish Voices from English Jails: Writings of Irish Political prisoners in English Prisons*³⁴ (PAC 1979) and the booklet *Irish Political Prisoners in English Jails*³⁵ (PAC 1980). The focus on prisoners inevitably flowed over into an interest in police corruption and he worked with various journalists investigating Scotland Yard's Robbery Squad.

Between 1968 and 2008, Walker wrote or co-authored 11 books, and contributed chapters to a number of others, while having articles published in newspapers and magazines. He also contributed subjects and research to a number of television programmes such as *World in Action* and *Out of Court*.

Walker writes passionately in favour of certain social movements, while often discussing the issues of bias and objectivity in politics and reporting. In 1983, using a pseudonym, he contributed a chapter, 'Paper Trials: The case of Michael Morris', to Penguin's *Causes for Concern*, edited by Phil Scraton and Paul Gordon (Scraton and Gordon, 1984). This chapter was written after a long investigation, carried out partly with Nick Davies of the *Guardian*, into the use of Supergrasses by the Metropolitan Police.

In 1984, Walker pressed the NUM to allow him to work in their offices and to write in support of the Miners' during the strike. Together with Susan Miller, he was given an office in Yorkshire NUM's headquarters in Barnsley by the late Owen Briscoe, an executive member of the union. There, he and Miller joined up with a Jim Coulter, a striking miner, to write for the miners their account of the policing of the strike. This book started out as two separate booklets, *A State of Siege*³⁶ (Miller and Walker, May 1984) and *The Iron Fist*³⁷ (Miller and Walker, June 1984), which, with a third, *Agitate! Educate! Organise!* booklet-length section mainly about women during the strike, was published as a single volume: *State of Siege: Miners' strike 1984, Politics and policing in the coal fields*³⁸ (Coulter, Miller, Walker, November 1984). With others, Walker set up Canary Press to publish *State of Siege* and other books written during the miners' strike, from the perspective of the miners' and their families. Canary published eight books

³⁴ *Irish Voices from English Jails: Writings of Irish Political prisoners in English Prisons* PAC. London, 1979

³⁵ *Irish Political Prisoners in English Jails* PAC. London, 1980.

³⁶ (Miller and Walker, May 1984) Martin Walker and Susan Miller. *A State of Siege: Policing the coalfields in the first six weeks of the miners' strike*. A report to the Yorkshire Area NUM. May 1984. London.

³⁷ (Miller and Walker, June 1984) Martin Walker and Susan Miller. *The Iron Fist: Policing the coalfields in the second six weeks of the miners' strike*. A report to the Yorkshire Area NUM. June 1984. London

³⁸ (Coulter, Miller, Walker, November 1984) Coulter, Miller, Walker, *State of Siege: Miners' strike 1984, Politics and policing in the coalfields*. London 1984.

besides *State of Siege* including, *Shifting Horizons*³⁹ (Beaton, 1985), *Hearts and Minds*⁴⁰ (Witham, 1986), *Let Them Eat Coal*⁴¹ (Sutcliffe and Hill, 1985) and *Strike Breaking in Essex*⁴² (Abdel Rahim, 1985).

Thanks to his experience of para-legal work, and his involvement between 1975 and 1984 in a large number of cases as a Mackenzie Friend,⁴³ Walker was able to advise and gain representation for many of the Yorkshire miners arrested during the strike. With Coulter and Miller and the renowned solicitor Gareth Pearce, Walker helped initially to organise the defence of the miners arrested at Orgreave Coking Depot, in what probably remains a unique mass statement-taking.

At the end of the 1984 miners' strike there were over 60 miners held in prison. With others Walker helped set up NOMPAS (National Organisation of Miners in Prison). NOMPAS held demonstrations and actively campaigned for those miners who were being held because of their role in the Union-organised strike. Some of these prisoners were charged and sentenced at the end of the strike, when the police attempted to restore order to the coalfields. Walker felt that this low-key repression that followed the strike had to be written about, as had the situation of those miners who were imprisoned. *In A Turn of the Screw*⁴⁴ (Walker 1985), as well as describing some of the cases of imprisoned miners, Walker wrote up four fictionalised cases. Taken directly from interviews with imprisoned miners, the use of detailed *faction* writing, he thought, had a greater impact than straightforward documented accounts. It was a stylistic strategy that Walker was to employ in future books.

Following the miners' strike, Walker was invited by Manchester City Council to help investigate the harassment of students at Manchester University by police who had been involved in a disturbance that occurred when Leon Brittan, the then Home Secretary had arrived to speak at the students' union.⁴⁵ Use of violent force by the police on the steps of the students union building, which had been closely observed, photographed and filmed, was followed by mysterious threats, break-ins, harassment and covert violent attacks against one male and one female students, in an orchestrated attempt to ensure that no students pursued complaints against the police. Walker wrote up his account of the incidents and his investigation, carried out in part with David Pallister of the *Guardian*, in *With Extreme Prejudice: An Investigation into police vigilantism in Manchester*⁴⁶

³⁹ (Beaton, 1985) *Shifting Horizons*, Lynne Beaton Canary Press, London 1985.

⁴⁰ (Witham, 1986) *Hearts and Minds*, Joan Witham, Canary Press, London 1986.

⁴¹ (Sutcliffe and Hill, 1985) *Let Them Eat Coal*, Lesley Sutcliffe and Brian Hill, Canary Press, London 1985.

⁴² (Abdel Rahim, 1985) *Strike Breaking in Essex*, Moira Abdel Rahim, Canary Press, London.1985.

⁴³ This is a UK legal ruling — a friend who can aid a defendant who represents themselves in court, but the friend cannot speak.

⁴⁴ (Walker 1985) Martin Walker, *A Turn of the Screw: The aftermath of the 1984 - 1985 miners' strike*. Canary Press. London 1985.

⁴⁵ See: Manchester City Council, Leon Brittan's visit to Manchester University Students' Union, March 1st 1985.

⁴⁶ (Walker, 1986) Martin Walker, *With Extreme Prejudice: An investigation into police vigilantism in Manchester*. Canary Press. London 1986.

(Walker, 1986). The book was written in secret and the manuscript kept in a safe overnight.

Walker's books of the pre-1990s are hybrids of sociology, political campaigning, research and reportage. His work has always remained to some extent 'underground', and only *Frightened for my Life*, his book with Geoff Coggan, about deaths in prison was well received by the national press and other media – for reasons, Walker believes, more to do with the parlous state of Britain's prisons in the early 1980s, than with the intelligence or style of the writing. This book sold 8,000 copies in the two years before it was taken out of circulation by Fontana, following a threatened lawsuit by a prison officer.

During this period, Walker had the firm idea that his 'art', his writing and his posters should be in the service of 'the people'; campaigning action and theory of art and writing, he thought, should be intimately related. Taking models such as John Reed's book, *Ten Days that Shook the World*⁴⁷ (Reed, 1917) and his earlier writing which followed the Mexican revolution,⁴⁸ (Reed 1914) Walker worked hard at defining a perspective and a voice for his work. His style in this period was described by a reviewer of *With Extreme Prejudice* in the *Edinburgh Review*.⁴⁹

Walker's method in this book (and his other ones) is to combine field research with searching philosophical critique of the tools at his and our disposal. Unlike many writers of the 'left', though, his concern is with citizens as human beings, not ciphers, which means his work is not only easy and exciting to read, but also full of sudden insights into the way the arm of the state actually thinks.... It would be nice to go on and on quoting extracts from the book. More practically, every reader of ER should buy a copy, read it, then pass it around to as many others as possible. It is quite honestly the most coherent and programmatic analysis of what goes on in this country today, why and what to do about it, ever.

While working as a private investigator, in 1990, Walker was asked to investigate a group of doctors and journalists who had set up the Campaign Against Health Fraud (now HealthWatch). Styling themselves 'quackbusters', these campaigners have since the late 1980s dedicated themselves to the cause of allopathic medicine and to the denigration of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM).

Out of this investigation over three years came his book *Dirty Medicine: Science, big business and the assault on natural health care*.⁵⁰ The book was published by a new imprint set up by Walker: Slingshot Publications.⁵¹ The circumstances surrounding Walker's move to self-publishing and his setting up of Slingshot Publications to publish *Dirty Medicine* are in themselves politically noteworthy, and

⁴⁷ (Reed, 1917) John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World*. New York. Boni and Liveright, 1919.

⁴⁸ (Reed 1914) John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, New York. D. Appleton and Co. 1914.

⁴⁹ Jenny Turner. *Edinburgh Review*, Issue 76. 1987. pp 152 - 153.

⁵⁰ (Walker 1993) Martin J Walker, *Dirty Medicine: Science, big business and the assault on natural health care*. Slingshot publications, London 1993 and 1994.

⁵¹ <http://www.slingshotpublications.com>

explained fully in the few interviews he has given.⁵² On the whole, Slingshot has mainly published Walker's work, with the exception of two anti-vivisection books: *Slaughter of the Innocents*⁵³ (Hans Ruesch, 2003), and *A Cat in Hell's Chance*⁵⁴ (Annie Malle, 2002), about the battle to close down Hillgrove Cattery, which was supplying cats for medical experiment.

Dirty Medicine became instantly notorious when a member of the CAHF stopped it from being retailed in Britain, and threatened Walker with libel proceedings. The book, however, had over 2,000 references, and Walker proved to be a difficult adversary, managing to fight off any legal actions, while distributing the book by mail order and selling over 7,000 copies.

Both the investigation and the book posed serious political and social questions for Walker and came to represent for him, a turning point in some of his political ideas. Like the great majority of British socialists, Walker had always seen the National Health Service (NHS) as a bastion of a welfare society that catered for the poor and the disenfranchised. Increasingly, however, in the post-industrial period, the NHS was to become an undemocratic closed medical shop which rebuffed different modalities, while also being powered and directed not by the people and their taxes but by a medical establishment and multinational drug corporations.

Dirty Medicine quickly became a founding text of the European and US 'Health Freedom' Movement;⁵⁵ its publication more-or-less coincided with that of two other books that focused on the same subject, *Racketeering in Medicine: The Suppression of Alternatives*,⁵⁶ by James P. Carter MD (Carter 1993), and Guylaine Lanctot's *The Medical Mafia: How to Get Out of It Alive and Take Back Our Health and Wealth*⁵⁷ (Lanctot, 1995), although all three of these books came almost ten years after P.J. Lisa's

⁵² The principal of these are: an interview with Martin J Walker by Louise Mclean, Editor, Zeus Information Service. Published in Positive Health Magazine, March 2004.
<http://www.zeusinfoservice.com/Articles/BookReview2.html>

and 'Andrew Wakefield in the dock', Louise Mclean spoke to Martin J Walker in late August 2008 about the GMC trial of Dr Andrew Wakefield. September 2008.
http://www.whale.to/vaccine/without_prejudice.html

⁵³ (Hans Ruesch, 2003) Hans Ruesch *Slaughter of the Innocents*. Slingshot Publications. London 2003.

⁵⁴ (Annie Malle, 2002) The Campaigners and Anny Malle, *A Cat in Hell's Chance: The story of the campaign against Hill Grove cat farm*. Slingshot Publications, London 2002.

⁵⁵ We could define this movement briefly as including all those advocating or campaigning for all those who want freedom of access, with tax funding, for the medical modalities of their choice. This movement is in turn against the monopoly practices of University Medical Schools and their funding by corporations and drug companies and the use of pharmaceutical medicine as the first prescription for all and any ailment. The Health Freedom Movement is made up of different sectors, patients, practitioners and producers.

⁵⁶ (Carter 1993) James P. Carter MD, *Racketeering in Medicine: The Suppression of Alternatives*. Hampton Roads, 1992, 1993.

⁵⁷ (Lanctot, 1995) Guylaine Lanctot, *The Medical Mafia: How to Get Out of It Alive and Take Back Our Health and Wealth*. 1995.

groundbreaking work *Are You a Target for Elimination: An Inside Look at the AMA Conspiracy Against Chiropractic and the Wholistic Healing Arts*.⁵⁸ (Lisa, 1984).

In *Dirty Medicine*, Walker cited a number of campaigns waged against alternative practitioners, including the first detailed reporting of the conspiracy to shut down the Bristol Cancer Help Centre. Reviews of the book came mainly from those who believed in the freedom to choose alternative modalities, while the medical establishment, the upper echelons of academia, book review journals and corporate newspapers tried to ignore it.⁵⁹ Although many commentators and a few reviewers accused Walker of being a conspiracy theorist, and Walker himself admits that *Dirty Medicine* is an undisciplined work, an independent critical review from the Marxist journal *Capital & Class*⁶⁰ (Abrahams 1996), by the respected academic and writer John Abrahams, with his extensive knowledge of the pharmaceutical industry⁶¹ (Abraham, 1995), had the following to say:

Walker's account draws a disturbing picture of how the interests of the food and drug companies and the orthodox medical profession, combined with crusaders against 'quackery', can deter and destroy alternative approaches to medicine while simultaneously distracting attention from the toxic effects of food-processing chemicals and pharmaceuticals. His research offers a thought-provoking exposé of the politics of medicine, which is to be highly recommended to any reader who cares about the future of medical treatment.

During this period, says Walker, it was difficult to seek out examples of writers who were actively involved and wrote essentially about situations of social conflict and even more difficult to focus in on these situations of conflict with respect to corporations and health. Some of the great activists and writers such as Peter Montague⁶² have stayed determinedly in the background. Montague is the founder of the Environmental Research Foundation and editor of the weekly newsletter of the Rachel's Environment Health News, which provides grass-roots community groups with technical information about human health and chemical contamination in an understandable form. Montague was involved in a long legal action brought against him by Bill Gaffey at Monsanto, the man who paid Doll. The action only ended when Gaffey died. Walker says that he found himself easily influenced by Janet Malcolm who wrote early in her career, in a very personal way, about conflict in academic, legal and social psycho analytic situations. Paul Brodeur is perhaps the greatest writer in the post war years about corporate and

⁵⁸ (Lisa, 1984) P.J. Lisa, *Are You a Target for Elimination: An Inside Look at the AMA Conspiracy Against Chiropractic and the Wholistic Healing Arts*. International Institute of Natural Health Sciences, USA 1984.

36. John Abrahams, *Capital and Class*.

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3780/is_199610/ai_n8751139

⁵⁹ Reviews which gave the book a lengthy appraisal included: *The Townsend Letter for Doctors* and *Explore More*.

⁶⁰ John Abraham *Dirty Medicine: Science, Big Business and the Assault on Natural Health Care*, [Capital & Class/ Autumn 1996](#).

⁶¹ (Abraham, 1995) Abraham, J, 1995, *Science, politics and the pharmaceutical industry: controversy and bias in drug regulation*, UCL Press, London.

⁶² <http://www.uvm.edu/giee/ESDA/petermontague.html>

environmental conflicts. His first superbly titled book *Expendable Americans*⁶³ (Brodeur, 1974) should be compulsory reading for all training journalists. His books about electromagnetic fields are full of a quiet academic authority written up in a popular style. Influences are difficult to place exactly but Walker feels that he must inevitably have been influenced by Rachel Carson and her original book *Silent Spring*⁶⁴ (Carson, 1962). The influence of Barbara Seaman was slower arriving and it was not until he wrote his book on HRT⁶⁵ (Walker, 2006) that he fully appreciated the immense scholarship in her first book *Women and the Crisis in Sex Hormones*⁶⁶ (Seaman, 1977). When his book *HRT: Licensed to kill and maim* was published, Walker sent a copy to Seaman who responded very quickly and enthusiastically, suggesting that she would do her best to distribute it. It is one of Walker's great regrets that they were only a short way into a correspondence when she died of lung cancer in 2008.

Shortly after the publication of *Dirty Medicine*, Walker was contacted by Edward Goldsmith, the founder and at that time editor of the *Ecologist*, magazine. For years Goldsmith had been collecting information about Sir Richard Doll, the British epidemiologist credited with finding that smoking caused lung cancer. He now wanted someone to write up 'the case' against Doll whom he saw as a corporate mercenary.⁶⁷ Walker expected to feel a natural antipathy to Goldsmith, given his right-wing reputation and his more than secure financial position. However, he found that over the years, Goldsmith had sided with and given support to many community groups, especially those who had made claims for damages against corporations or the state. In significant cases, claimants had sometimes found themselves and their cases stymied by Richard Doll's suspect 'expert' epidemiological evidence. Goldsmith asked Walker to dig beneath the documents he gave him and write a full analysis of Doll's work — this task was to continue over the next twenty years.⁶⁸ (Walker, 1998) (Walker (ed) 2012).

In 2003, sifting through the documents that Doll had bequeathed to the Wellcome Institute, a few years before his death, Walker found letters that agreed

⁶³ (Brodeur, 1974) Paul Brodeur. *Expendable Americans*. Penguin. Harmondsworth. UK. 1974

⁶⁴ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK. 1965.

⁶⁵ Martin J Walker. *HRT: Licensed to kill and maim*. Slingshot Publications, London 2006.

⁶⁶ Barbara Seaman and Gideon Seaman, *Women and the Crisis in Sex Hormones*. Rawson Associates Publishers. New York, 1977.

⁶⁷ Apart from any other of his views, Teddy was committed to an anti-nuclear stand, principally it seemed because he believed that his brother, James, a billionaire, had died as a consequence of contracting cancer from nuclear radiation. Doll was heavily indebted to the nuclear industry.

⁶⁸ (Walker, 1998) (Walker (ed) 2012). Martin J. Walker, Sir Richard Doll: A questionable pillar of the cancer establishment. *The Ecologist*, Vol 28, No. 2, March/April 1998. (<http://www.familiesagainstcancer.org/?id=129>)

(Walker 2003) Martin J Walker, Sir Richard Doll: Death, Dioxin and PVC. 2003. Published on the internet.

Medical Veritas, April 2009, Volume 6, Issue 1. <http://www.medicalveritas.com/vol6issue1.php>. Available <http://www.slingshotpublications.com>

(Walker, Hardell. possible publication 2012) Hardell et al, 'Secret Ties to Industry and conflicting Interests in Cancer Research', *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 2006.

(Walker, Hardell. possible publication 2012) Martin J Walker, Lennart Hardell (ed), *Secret Ties That Bind*. Chapter 8: Kidding a Kidder, Martin Walker. Expected publication 2012.

consultancy fees between Doll and William Gaffey at Monsanto (Walker 2003) (Walker 2006) to make public statements supporting their products. He finished his reflections on Doll's work with a final account of his intervention in the case of the Spanish Toxic Oil Syndrome (Walker, Hardell. possible publication 2012). During the resultant court case Doll had completely reversed his view, against all the evidence, that the epidemic that killed over 1,000 people during the 1980s in Spain was caused by toxic oil.

In 2001, Walker contributed 'Raising the Past', the only one of his recent pieces of writing that is not about medicine, to a book about the University Settlement movement⁶⁹ (Gilchrist and Jeffs (ed) 2001).

HEALTH FREEDOM

Since *Dirty Medicine*, Walker has written mainly on political aspects of the relationships between health providers, government, the corporate pharmaceuticals sector and lobby groups. His most recent books include: *SKEWED*,⁷⁰ about the battle to establish ME as an organic illness (Walker, 2003); *Brave New World of Zero Risk*,⁷¹ about the new PR and corporate created radicals who play down the environmental health threats (Walker, 2005); and *HRT: Licensed to Kill and Maim*, about the corporate promotion of HRT, which has killed thousands of women⁷² (Walker, 2006).

The Health Freedom Movement is a relatively nebulous grouping, and although Walker can see clearly how his writing joins with this movement, he is at pains to point out that its disparate members have embraced *him*, rather than he them. In his political writing, Walker has been determined to draw on history as the best way of learning from mistakes, or learning of our mistakes *and* successes. To make people aware of what had already been written about Health Freedom, Walker wrote a bibliography of the Movement⁷³ (Walker, 2009). This is a document that he feels needs consistent updating.

In 2000 Walker became involved with individuals campaigning for the recognition of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) as an organic illness with a biological cause. For reasons that are not entirely clear, a campaign originated in the UK with HealthWatch, the pharmaceutical-funded lobby group, promoted the argument that ME was a psychologically caused illness. The main protagonist in this battle that denigrated everyone who had ME, was Professor Simon Wessely, now one of the most influential

⁶⁹ (Gilchrist and Jeffs (ed) 2001) *Settlements, Social Change & Community Action*, edited by Ruth Gilchrist and Tony Jeffs. Published by Jessica Kingsley, London 2001.

⁷⁰ (Walker, 2003) Martin J Walker, *SKEWED: Psychiatric hegemony and the manufacture of mental illness in multiple chemical sensitivity, Gulf War syndrome, myalgic encephalomyelitis and chronic fatigue syndrome*. Slingshot Publications, London 2003.

⁷¹ (Walker, 2003) Martin J Walker, *Brave New World of Zero Risk: Covert strategies in British science policy*.

⁷² (Walker, 2006) Martin J Walker, *HRT: Licensed to Kill and Maim: The unheard voices of women damaged by hormone replacement therapy*. Slingshot Publications, 2006.

⁷³ (Walker, 2009) Martin J Walker, A bibliography of the health freedom movement. Available from <http://www.slingshotpublications.com>

anti environmental illness lobbyist in Britain and North America. The attempt to make invisible between 100,000 and 300,000 sufferers from a serious illness has caused ongoing conflict in British and US society.

Following his research, Walker published *Skewed* (Walker, 2003). Unfortunately, those who had pushed for him to write and publish the book, did very little to help distribute it. Walker had to borrow money for its publication and this began a low-level debt cycle from which neither Slingshot or Walker have ever recovered.

At the same time as publishing *Skewed*, Slingshot published a new edition of Hans Ruesch's book *Slaughter of the Innocent*⁷⁴(Ruesch, 2003) with an introduction by Walker and Marco Mamone Capria. Mamone, a University lecturer and mathematician, was one of the founders in 2001 of a web site and triannual conference titled 'Science and Democracy'.⁷⁵ Mamone became a friend of Ruesch before his death in 2007 and published a new edition of Ruesch's *The Naked Empress*⁷⁶ in Italian with his own introduction in 2006 (Ruesch, *La Figlia dell'Imperatrice*, 2006).

In the triannual Science and Democracy conferences, which wage a continuous academic war against false and corporate science,⁷⁷ Walker found a home of kinds — non-corporate academics and scientists or those who had become dissidents accepted not only his treatise but also his often populist presentation. Walker, always keen to account for his knowledge in any field, says that he has to thank Mamone for introducing him to the writing of the late mathematician, Serge Lang. One of the greatest mathematicians of the modern period, Lang began in the last quarter of his life to write about and keep records of political conflicts, in which he was involved, in academia. In his book *Challenges*⁷⁸ Lang outlined a coherent and effective political strategy that could be used in academic conflicts (Lang, 2005).⁷⁹

Although Walker has had little involvement in writing for television or film, between 2002 and 2007 he acted as an advisor to the legal drama series *Judge John Deed* at the invitation of Gordon Newman, the writer and producer of the series (Gordon Newman, 2002 - 2007). The series ran into problems of censorship when the BBC, in hoc to the corporations, banned world wide two episodes about MMR and vaccine damage. In 2005 Walker also linked up with the filmmaker Alan Golding on a film, still in progress and in search of funding, about a Welsh herbalist who cured cancer⁸⁰ (Golding, 2007). The film

⁷⁴ (Ruesch, 2003) *Slaughter of the Innocent*, Slingshot Publications. London 2003

⁷⁵ Held triannually in Naples, next due around 2013.

⁷⁶ (Ruesch, *La Figlia dell'Imperatrice*, 2006). *La Figlia dell'imperatrice*, Stampa Alternativa. 2006.

⁷⁷ <http://www.dmi.unipg.it/~mamone/sci-dem/sci&dem.htm>

⁷⁸ Serge Lang. *Challenges*. Springer, USA 1997. ISBN-10: 0387948619.
ISBN-13: 978-0387948614.

⁷⁹ For some pithy reviews of this brilliant book, see customer reviews on Amazon.
<http://www.amazon.com/Challenges-Serge-Lang/dp/0387948619>

⁸⁰ (Golding, 2007) *Odd Man Out: Medicine's Darkest Secret*. Seven minute taster produced by Alan Golding to promote and gain funding for a film of the same name. Available from Slingshot publications.

was an outcome of Walker's work on a book of the same subject that he had written between 1994 and 2007⁸¹ (Walker, 2007).

Walker has an 'old fashioned' almost morbid enthusiasm for academia and its qualifications. He used the profit from *Dirty Medicine* to take and gain an MA at Warwick University. Perhaps this represents a desire to relax while writing, it is easy to forget that most of Walker's projects have involved working with damaged people or people in stressful situations. He only narrowly scraped by in qualifying for the MA at Warwick when he submitted a thesis four times longer than the required wordage (Walker, 1995).⁸² One of his tutors complained that Walker had no right to put him to the inconvenience of reading 40,000 words — Walker thought this summed up the standard of tutorial education at contemporary 'factory' Universities.

Despite the critical acclaim for *Frightened for my Life*, the first issue of *Dirty Medicine* is the only book to date that made any money for Walker. Most of his books have, however, run to a second printing, and a second hand copy of *Dirty Medicine* can now cost as much as \$150.

Recently, Walker has been analysing his approach to popular writing and what he terms guerrilla publishing. When the GMC hearing came to an end in 2010 with Dr Wakefield being found guilty on all the charges brought against him, by a panel headed up by a doctor with shares in GlaxoSmithKline,⁸³ (Walker, 2010) Walker considered, as Bob Woffinden⁸⁴ (Woffinden 2001) had before him, at the end of the Spanish Toxic Oil Syndrome (TOS) scandal, that the chemical and pharmaceutical companies, the corporate media and the secret state are in the contemporary period capable of presenting a picture which is a complete reversal of truth.⁸⁵ Today the influence of the powerful is so great that the future for campaigning, democracy and truth, are under serious threat:

The enduring feature of the TOS saga is that it provided a blueprint for the international scientific community. If even a theory as palpably bogus as the 'toxic oil' syndrome can be sustained internationally, then suppressing the truth must be remarkably straightforward. All it takes is a series of epidemiological reports, accredited by scientists of a similar persuasion, and then published in reputable scientific journals. There are, as Disraeli might have said, lies, damned lies and peer-reviewed scientific papers.⁸⁶

⁸¹ (Walker, 2007) This book, finished but not published, took ten years research and was originally titled *The Gatekeepers*.

⁸² (Walker, 1995) Martin J Walker. *Ungovernable Servants: The regulation of Hackney transport workers in London 1800 - 1995*. Unpublished MA thesis.

⁸³ (Walker, 2010) Martin J Walker. *An Interest in Conflict*. 2010. Available from Slingshot publications.

⁸⁴ (Bob Woffin 2001) Woffinden, Cover-up. [The Guardian](#), Saturday 25 August 2001.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2001/aug/25/research.highereducation/print>

⁸⁵ Bob Woffinden wrote and made a film about the fabricated cause of the epidemic that killed over 1,000 people and damaged tens of thousands more.

⁸⁶ Op cit. Cover-up. Woffinden.

Since Woffinden wrote the above in 2001, the scientific model makers of virtual reality have come along in leaps and bounds, and the political class along with corporations have understood that they can create and sell wars and epidemics just as they sell washing powder and lingerie. Walker now feels that writing has become less effective as a tool of organising and campaigning. Perhaps he thinks that little has to be explained about cause anymore — the naked truth is realised by so many — Is it time now to physically effect change, rather than write about situations of conflict?

Generally speaking, in light of the body of work that lies behind him, Walker is surprisingly modest and any discussion with him inevitably ends up analysing how difficult it is to sustain his kind of work on the radical fringe. Writing and publishing today needs the same cosy network of agents and publishers as existed thirty years ago, but Walker says, there is in the contemporary mainstream far less tolerance of writers, except for a noted few, with truly radical perceptions. Walker has spent most of his life frequently taking on difficult and unsafe challenges and, in fact, his writing life itself could be described as a perilous journey.

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Scienza e Democrazia/Science and Democracy
www.dmi.unipg.it/mamone/sci-dem