# SIGNAL:06

A Journal of International Political Graphics & Culture

Edited by Alec Dunn and Josh MacPhee

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Cover image: Detail of housing-related sticker produced by Conselho de Moradores Ajuda/Belém, Portugal, mid-1970s. Frontispiece: Outside image is the ECPM68's drying racks; inset graphic by Jamaa Al-Yad. Background image (this spread): The cover of the AMP pamphlet *When Southern Labor Stirs*. Image on following page spread: Portuguese stickers celebrating International Women's Day, 1970s. From left: March 8—International Women's Day—Woman! Without you, the revolution does not advance/MDM; Out of the Shadows—Tell Us Freedom/Women's Movement for Amnesty in Brazil; March 8—International Women's Day/unknown. Image on contributor page: Detail from a collage by Incite!

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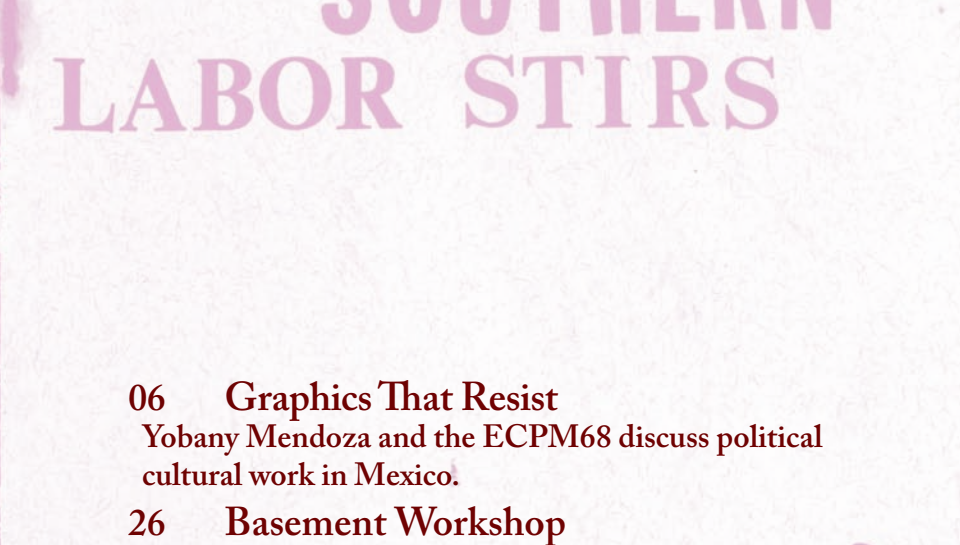


# *SIGNAL* *is an idea in motion.*


The production of art and culture does not happen in a vacuum; it is not a neutral process. We don't ask the question of whether art should be instrumentalized toward political goals; the economic and social conditions we exist under attempt to marshal all material culture toward the maintenance of the way things are. Yet we also understand that cultural production can challenge capitalism, statecraft, patriarchy, and all the systems used to produce the profound inequalities in our world. With *Signal*, we aspire to explore the complex ways that socially engaged cultural production affects us, our communities, our struggles, and our globe.



We welcome the submission of writing and visual cultural production for future issues. We are particularly interested in looking at the intersection of art and politics internationally, and assessments of how this intersection has functioned at various historical and geographical moments.

*Signal* can be reached at: editors@s1gnal.org

# GRAPHICS THAT RESIST

WRITTEN BY YOBANY MENDOZA AND THE ESCUELA DE CULTURA POPULAR DE LOS MÁRTIRES DEL 68

*Below are two histories and case studies of political cultural work in Mexico. The first is a breakdown of the development of the Escuela de Cultura Popular de los Mártires del 68, an autonomous arts school that has become the extremely fertile locus and genesis of dozens of other revolutionary cultural projects in Mexico City and beyond. Regular readers of* Signal *might be interested to know that Felipe Hernandez Moreno—interviewed way back in* Signal:01 *about his role in the art brigades during the protests in Mexico 1968—was a founding member of the Escuela.*

*The second section focuses on the development of the Convergencia Gráfica Malla, a more recent network of different political and art groups that work together to develop graphic campaigns focused on climate justice.—Eds.*

# 1

## The Escuela de Cultura Popular de los Mártires del 68—History, Philosophy, and Activity

The Escuela de Cultura Popular de los Mártires del 68 (the Martyrs of 68 School of Popular Culture, abbreviated as ECPM68 and often shortened to just M68) was founded in the Sala de Arte Público Siquieros, in Mexico City, on January 9, 1988. It developed out of relationships and solidarity between multiple political art groups: El Centro Libre de Experimentación Teatral y Artística (the Center for Free Theatrical and Artistic Experimentation), a rural theater project; the Taller de Arte e Ideología (Art and Ideology Workshop), a group with university roots; and the Organización de Arte y Cultura (Art and Culture Organization), which formed out of various Mexico City art schools. In 1985 these groups took part in the Primer Encuentro Nacional de

Silkscreening at the ECPM68.


The portfolio *Vivas Nos Queremos*, 2014, from the group Mujeres Grabando Resistencias, hanging above a workshop at the ECPM68.

Cultura Popular Revolucionaria (First National Meeting of Revolutionary Popular Culture), and by the end of that same year they helped organize a sit-in and hunger strike against the privatization of the city's Chapultepec Park and for the defense of the Foro Abierto de Casa del Lago (Open Forum at the Casa del Lago)—a contested cultural space at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. They became involved in ongoing discussions and research, the production of images and banners, and other cultural/political acts with social movements. This loose coalition also aided the cultural wing of the Coordinadora Única de Damnificados, a movement composed of neighborhood groups that came to the aid of those affected by the September 1985 earthquake that devastated Mexico City. This ad hoc group demanded dignified housing,

Collaborative printmaking at the ECPM68.

employment, education, the cancellation of foreign debt, democratization, and political regime change in Mexico—all of which would become central components of the ECPM68's political outlook.

The ECPM68 called ourselves a school because we felt that the exchange of knowledge and education was the only way to get involved in the ideological development of the people. We believed that the best way to participate in social change was by creating an organization that could train multidisciplinary cultural workers, with a basis in theory, committed to the revolutionary possibilities of socialism. One of our primary goals was to deepen political consciousness within revolutionary culture and to create an opposition to the imperialist media. The project defends popular experience (i.e., the lives of workers and campesinxs) as an essential

Above: Relief printmaking.
Below: Stencils at the ECPM68.



Above: Collaborative mural in San Jerónimo.
Below: Posters from the portfolio *Ante la Destrucción Ambiental, Organización!*, 2010.


Poster from the portfolio *Con Papeles o sin Papeles todos Tenemos Derechos,* 2011.

part of a revolutionary path. The ECPM68 also organizes around the indigenous tradition of cultural encuentros, gatherings of the people to discuss their lives and struggles, because we recognized in them the impulse to create a better world. We consciously avoided using the term "proletarian," which we felt implied a strict adherence to moribund concepts of the Left and orthodox Marxism—instead we embraced a more flexible and dialectical relationship to politics and organizing. And finally, the name Mártires del 68 was used to honor the popular student movement of the late 1960s in Mexico City and to remember the massacre of protesters on October 2, 1968—the culmination of the government's arbitrary power and repression.

Over the years, the school has had six different locations. During one period we held a planton (an Occupy-style sit-in) for three years in a Tlalpan thruway together with a women's


A poster from a campaign organized by the ECPM68 in support of the people's struggle in San Salvador Atenco, 2006.

garment workers union in order to take back the shared space from which we had been evicted. In each location the actions of the school have been informed by the community in which it exists. We have been in our present location in the Obrera neighborhood in Mexico City since 2002.

In the first years of the organization we offered workshops on the history of Mexico, historical materialism and dialectics, Marxist aesthetics, agitational propaganda, and image production. Later the group adjusted itself according to changing political needs and environments. Activities since then have been diverse, including workshops on theater, music, contemporary dance, nutrition, baking, photography, screen printing, printmaking, tai chi chuan, bookbinding, bicycle mechanics, drawing, and karate, among others. Built from an initial donation in 1989, the school has a growing



Posters from the portfolio *Ante la Destrucción Ambiental, Organización!,* 2010.

library, named after the photographer Tina Modotti. We have promoted events such as the Seminar on Culture and Liberation and have hosted the meetings of the visual arts group Un Grito en la Calle (a Shout in the Street). Members have participated in roundtables, conferences, portfolios, and exhibitions, in a great variety of settings including universities, cultural centers, and large cities as well as in indigenous towns and communities, in the Chamber of Deputies and the Legislative Assembly, in the Aguascalientes of the Zapatistas, not to mention our many exhibitions abroad.

The school has maintained strong relationships with social and popular movements, as well as giving support to street demonstrations, the squatting of physical spaces, and the defense of human rights. The ECPM68 joined the call of the EZLN in



Left: From the portfolio *Vivas Nos Queremos* (2014), from the group Mujeres Grabando Resistencias.
Right: From the portfolio *Ante la Destrucción Ambiental, Organización!*, 2010.

1994. In 2001 it housed the international brigades that came in support of the Zapatista March of the Color of the Earth. It later accompanied La Otra Campaña (the Other Campaign) of the Zapatistas and joined the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle ("La Sexta," a manifesto issued by the Zapatistas in 2005).

Over the course of our history, the graphic work of the ECPM68 has reflected current national and international struggles and movements. We have aligned ourselves with the Zapatistas, the Atenco movement, the Cherán movement, and with the rights of migrants and displaced persons. ECPM68 members have also worked for access to public media, they have fought against the privatization and subordination of public universities, against mining and the exploitation of natural resources, and

A bookmaking class at the ECPM68.



Above: Wheatpasting and posters in Cancún at COP 16 protests, 2010.

with the public school teachers in their struggle to have a voice in national decisions on education and in defense of their labor rights. Graphic works are constantly being created in support of the various struggles for the autonomy of pueblos, for freedom of expression and information, against femicides, and against the repression and criminalization of protest. Through this process, ECPM68 members and others we work with both interpret and participate in our nation and the larger world.

The school is also a place for younger generations, with all the diverse tendencies, energies, and ways of transforming reality that they bring with them. Today there are several collectives that work within the walls of the ECPM68 such as the Sublevarte Colectivo, the Convergencia Gráfica Malla, and Mujeres Grabando Resistencias (Women Printing Resistance).

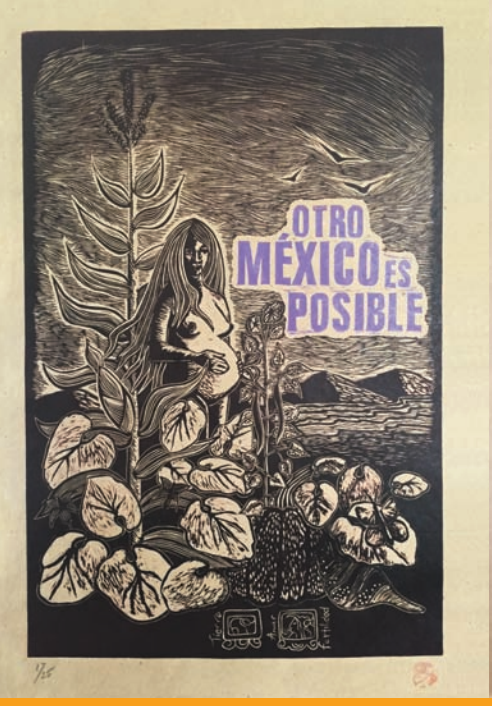
Left: Stencil, artist unknown. Right: ECPM68 and Sublevarte Colectivo members in front of a collaborative mural at La Maxei social space in Querétaro.

## 2

### Convergencia Gráfica Malla—Tactics, Printmaking, and Action

In November 2010, after four months of continuous work to integrate the subject of environmental problems in the country, the first issue of a journal called *Ante la Destrucción Ambiental, Organización* (ADAO, Organization in the Face of Environmental Destruction) was published. It was organized by people individually or collectively involved in the ECPM68, in order to generate graphics capable of advocating for environmental justice in the face of COP 16 (the United Nations Conference on Climate Change), which was held in Cancún in 2010.

Many different groups participated in the first meetings for this campaign: the ECPM68, Casa Naranja, Gráfica de Lucha, Hacklab Autónomo, Cordyceps, Furia de las Calles, Justseeds Artists' Cooperative, and La Otra





Above: Prints from the portfolio *Nuestros Mundos: Carpeta de Grabado Colectiva*, 2014.

Gráfica. The meetings were held in the ECPM68, and this coalition aimed to create images and texts about climate change and environmental destruction. Specifically they made work concerned with consumerism, alienation, the loss of wetlands, the overlogging of forests, the hoarding of water, the use of dirty energies, the construction of dams harmful to indigenous peoples, the looting and destruction of nature for profit, and the collusion of governments with exploitative corporate interests. The unified call of the activists, graphic designers, artists, and cultural workers of ADAO was: "No to climate change! Yes to systemic change! No to environmental destruction! Yes to the destruction of Capital!"

One of the primary strategies of the ADAO was to incorporate the experiences and approaches of affected communities in shaping how we would produce effective work. These comrades reported their day-to-day



Above: Prints from the collaborative book *43 Somos Todos: Gráfico contra el Olvido,* 2015.

difficulties in sit-ins, in courts, and in marches demanding justice and recognized the importance of collective organizing as the only way to resist and fight. These conversations with those on the front lines of struggles grounded the images—it was a way to channel their pain, anger, and need to communicate to others what was happening. The images became a collective construction, impersonal in a certain way, yet also a mirror image of the participants, their battles, and their interconnectedness.

ADAO collectively created a series of images and a fanzine as a result of these meetings, where each member spoke of the necessity for climate justice for all, not just a select few. We proposed that this should be a discussion for all of humanity, that everyone must participate in the analysis and development of what a change in the economic system could and should look like. The portfolio of images articulated how the material gains,




Above: Prints from the portfolio *La Autonomía es la Vida, La Sumisión es la Muerte*, 2012.

knowledge, and spirituality reached by the human species should be accessible to all, and that animals, plants, water, air, and land must be recognized as an integral part of life.

In late 2010 thousands of people came to COP16 in Cancún to face and denounce the hypocrisy of green capitalism and its false solutions. The posters and fanzines of the ADAO accompanied the protests, meetings, and marches. It was at this point that the first stage of ADAO came to an end. After COP16 there was energy to continue working collectively, and it was also clear that the work could grow and broaden to include more people. Knowing that the wheels of capitalism (the exploitation, the plundering, and the contempt) run roughshod over people in different ways, we made the decision to create an international convergence around the various social struggles facing state repression. This began by creating graphic campaigns to build bridges and links between political issues and communities. These campaigns involved not only the creation of imagery, but the organization to do that socially, the support to facilitate community

participation, and the ultimate production and dissemination of the graphics in print. It was at this stage that ADAO evolved into the Graphic Convergence Malla (pronounced "maya" and meaning net or mesh).

The Convergence is made up of members of different groups and organizations, mostly adherents to La Sexta. All involved understand themselves to be part of a broader struggle, and Malla sees itself as an open space where we continually welcome new people and groups and try to raise political self-awareness. Our work is directed not only at the organized Left but towards the unconvinced, the people who have not heard of the different struggles, so they can be informed, get organized, and join the fight.


Sometimes the Convergence is referred to only with the name "Malla," which is also the word in Spanish for the screens used in silkscreening. Malla is a network, where many threads are necessary to make a common fabric. Thus it works in convergence with diverse insights and practices, which collectively bring into being images, which in turn weave into movements.

★ ★ ★

Both the ECPM68 and Malla are examples of the complicated and networked political arts organizations working across multiple disciplines for social justice in Mexico. Both organizations produce work and develop campaigns unique to their organizations while they have also sought to strengthen the ties between Mexican and international political arts organizations and struggles. While the school predates the emergence of the Zapatistas, and Malla is much more directly a product of Zapatismo, all three are interconnected and part of the web of social organization that undergirds Mexican society and social movements. S

*Translation by Sanya Hyland.*

# Basement Workshop

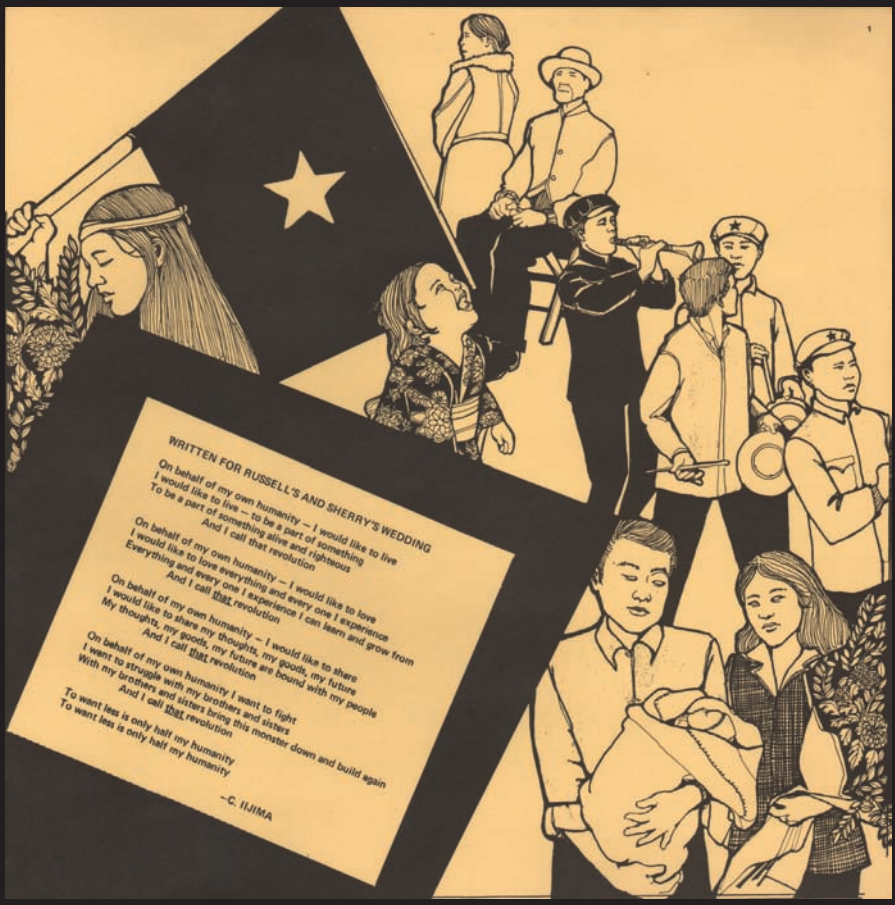
## The Genesis of New York's Asian American Resistance Culture

Ryan Lee Wong

"We have shared ten months of relating—emotionally, politically and artistically. In the process we made efforts to re-examine our own perspectives; and we grew. In trying to project a view of ourselves as Asians in America, we found this best expressed through a clear statement against basic philosophies of exploitation and oppression—of individuals as well as nations."


This plain passage introduces *Yellow Pearl*, an experimental publication collectively produced by members of Basement Workshop in 1972. Despite its understated tone, this third-person plural manifesto put into words a radical experiment. It expressed three lessons that still resonate with arts collectives today: art is a social production, making art demands collective self-examination, and identity can be defined through political stances rather than cultural markers.

*Yellow Pearl* remains a unique object. Some forty offset sheets of paper sit together in a box approximately the size of a 12" record. The folios are printed in black ink on several shades of yellow paper, a visual nod to the idea of different racial groups coming together under "yellow" or "Asian American"—a relatively new concept at the time. It mixes amateur and professional art and poetry; some contributors would go on to make art their whole lives, while others stepped away into other fields. The folios include one of the first Asian American feminist poems, sheet music by Chris Iijima and Nobuko Miyamoto, original arabesques, a comic illustration of a ribs recipe, and images of Third World women holding machine guns.




This page spread: Two illustrated sheets from *Yellow Pearl* (Basement Workshop, 1972). Previous page: Box cover of *Yellow Pearl*; background pattern taken from a page of *Yellow Pearl*. Title page: Peter Pan, Corky Lee, and Arlene Wong during a Basement meeting break, 1973, photograph by Henry Chu.

## CHINATOWN LAMENT

- George T. Chew

Slant - eyed Charlie waiters stroll down
Nigger black streets of Chinatown
Seeking easy times and cheap lays
How simple it is to forgive and forget.

Ching - chong Charlie waiter, you slope head gook!
Open up your fucking slit - eyed minds!

Live in the crumbling tenements of disaster
Amidst the bitter sweet smell of shit and cheap wine.
Watch as your women are raped by men with
Sewing machine hearts and dollar bill cocks
Laugh at your Charlie waiter children clutching
Notebooks filled with shit from empty minds
See the Dragon ladies slither on the Bowery
Looking for dimes and lost dreams.

Charlie Waiter, you don't have a Chinaman's chance
So look, Charlie Waiter, look at the Golden Mountain
Watch it crumble.

Such an eclectic object could only have been produced by an experimental, collective, nonhierarchical group of artists and organizers. Basement Workshop sat at the intersection of both New York countercultural spaces of the 1970s and the Asian American political movement. Now that we are in a situation where federal funding for the arts is in question, where Asian American identity is being remade rapidly by racial politics and immigration patterns, and where new generations of arts collectives are forming, it is worth examining Basement Workshop. The organization is an exceptional case study in collective organizing, art production, and identity formation developed without precedent by young people coming into their own through that work.

• • •

"Asian American" wasn't coined as an identity until 1968, when the Third World student strikes at San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley galvanized students of color to adopt a united front. Asian students—until then separated along national lines—decided to form a coalitional identity in order to join the other coalitions of Chicano, Native American, and African American students. The idea quickly caught fire, spreading through college campuses and community centers. New York, with its large concentration of Asian Americans, especially in Chinatown, and strong lineages of activism and art, became a natural focal point of this Asian American movement.

Chinatown, meanwhile, was witnessing an explosion in population from the newly open policies of the 1965 Immigration Act. Chinatown's economy was booming, but so were organized crime, poverty, and a need for social services. In 1969, the Ford Foundation commissioned a young urban planning student, Danny N.T. Yung, to produce a report on this transformation. At the conclusion of the project, Yung and others he had worked with recognized the need to preserve the research they had done,


A Grain of Sand performing in NYC, 1973, photograph by Henry Chu; Chinatown Street Fair (art: Bob Lee), offset printed poster, 1971.

# INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY CHINATOWN CELEBRATION!!!

**DATE:** SATURDAY MARCH 6, 1976
**PLACE:** J.H.S. 65 AUD. 52 FORSYTH STREET
**TIME:** 1-EXHIBITS 2-5 CULTURAL PROGRAM
**DONATION:** $1-ADULTS 50¢-CHILDREN

**DAYCARE PROVIDED**

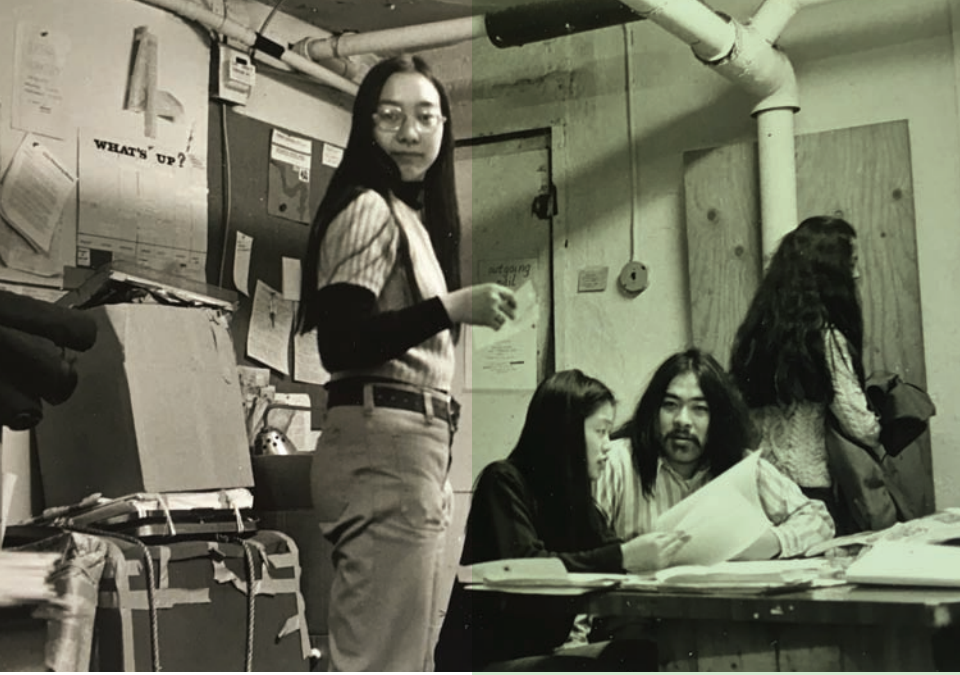
SPONSORED BY THE CHINATOWN COALITION:
ASIAN AMERICANS FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT, COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP, DAYCARE COMMITTEE AGAINST BUDGET CUTS AND STUDENT RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

Left: International Working Women's Day poster designed by Christine Choy. Right: Confucius Plaza Rally poster ca. 1974 produced by Asian Americans for Equal Employment (later AAFE).


and rented a musty basement space on 22 Catherine Street to store their boxes. Inspired by the activism happening in the neighborhood—including the first-ever Chinatown Health Fair—they started to meet in that basement to talk over identity, politics, and art. This was the start of Basement Workshop, and *Yellow Pearl* was their first large undertaking.

By 1974, Basement had grown into a large volunteer force with several distinct areas. *Bridge: The Magazine of Asians in America* was a quarterly blend of criticism, political commentary, poetry, and fiction. The Asian American Resource Center gathered into a small library and archive all the resources available—not many at the time—on Asian American histories, as well as on other organizations from around the country doing similar work. Members of Amerasia Creative Arts produced visual art and performances, and offered art workshops for the community. They mounted exhibitions, silkscreened posters for demonstrations, and held acting classes. Finally, Basement offered ESL education for adults and youth summer programs for high schools students. At its peak, Basement Workshop spread over four rented spaces, including a large loft at 199 Lafayette Street.

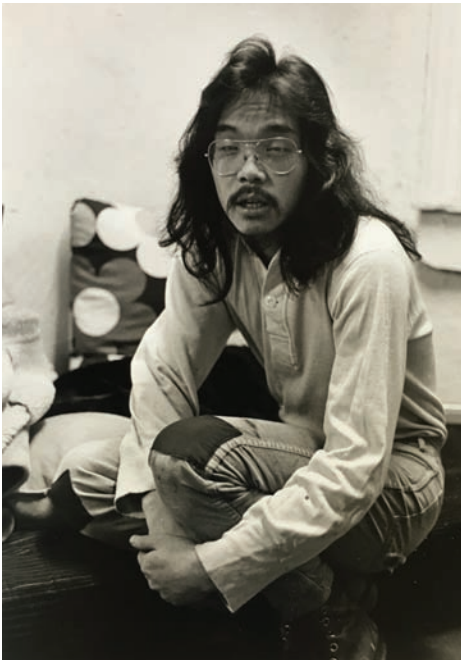
In the 1986 *Basement Workshop Yearbook*, Fay Chiang —for many years the executive director of Basement—states that funding mostly came from government grants: after *Yellow Pearl* was published, the National Endowment for the Arts offered a seed grant, followed by grants from the New


WHAT'S UP?

Members of Basement Workshop at work, early 1970s, photographs by Henry Chu.

York State Council on the Arts, and a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to conduct oral histories. Some revenue came from sales of *Yellow Pearl* and *Bridge* magazine. Basement also became a founding member of Seven Loaves, a coalition of Lower East Side organizations (including Charas, the Lower East Side Print Shop, and Cityarts), which provided needed connections and fundraising opportunities. As Basement acquired grant funding, it also had to professionalize: in the mid-1970s, it formed a board of directors and offered a salary to Chiang for her role (much of which she paid back to keep the organization afloat, while working other jobs).

With a few exceptions, Basement Workshop was never a job. Members would work day jobs or part-time and head there evenings and on weekends. Though Basement Workshop was not a



Page from the *Basement Workshop 1986 Yearbook*.

full cooperative like, for example, East Wind in Los Angeles, several Basement members were roommates in Chinatown or would rotate apartments and jobs as needed.

During the mid-1970s, inspired by both domestic groups like the Black Panthers, and global movements like the Cultural Revolution in China and the revolution in Vietnam, many segments of the Asian American movement turned to Maoism. Believing that revolution was the only way forward, and that trained cadre had to struggle within the community towards the right party line, a variety of groups—such as I Wor Kuen ("Righteous Fists") and Wei Min She ("Organization of the People")—brought their interpretation of Maoism to the streets of Chinatown. Around 1974–75, members of one of these groups, Workers' Viewpoint Organization, criticized Basement Workshop for receiving federal funding and demanded that it focus on revolutionary activity rather than culture. After heated debates, position papers, and physical threats against Chiang, Worker's Viewpoint forced Basement to give up half of its spaces. Basement held on to the loft space and 22 Catherine Street and focused its energy on the Amerasia Creative Arts and Resource Center. Members of Worker's Viewpoint went on to found Asian Americans for Equality, an organization with mass appeal which eventually became a nonprofit with major influence in Chinatown housing and politics.

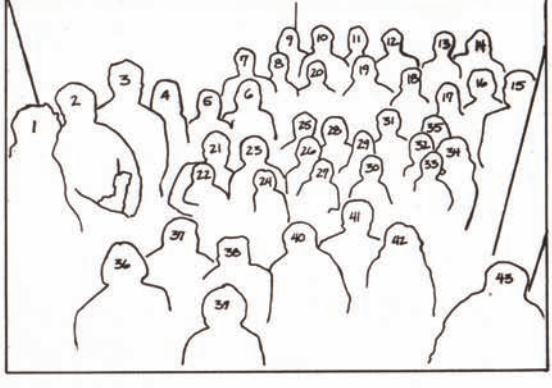
In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Basement faltered financially and organizationally: there was a dispute with the IRS, an accountant went missing, and the result was thousands of dollars in debt. Chiang took a couple of medical leaves, between which the leadership changed. In 1986, the members of Basement felt its work had been done and decided to close doors.

• • •

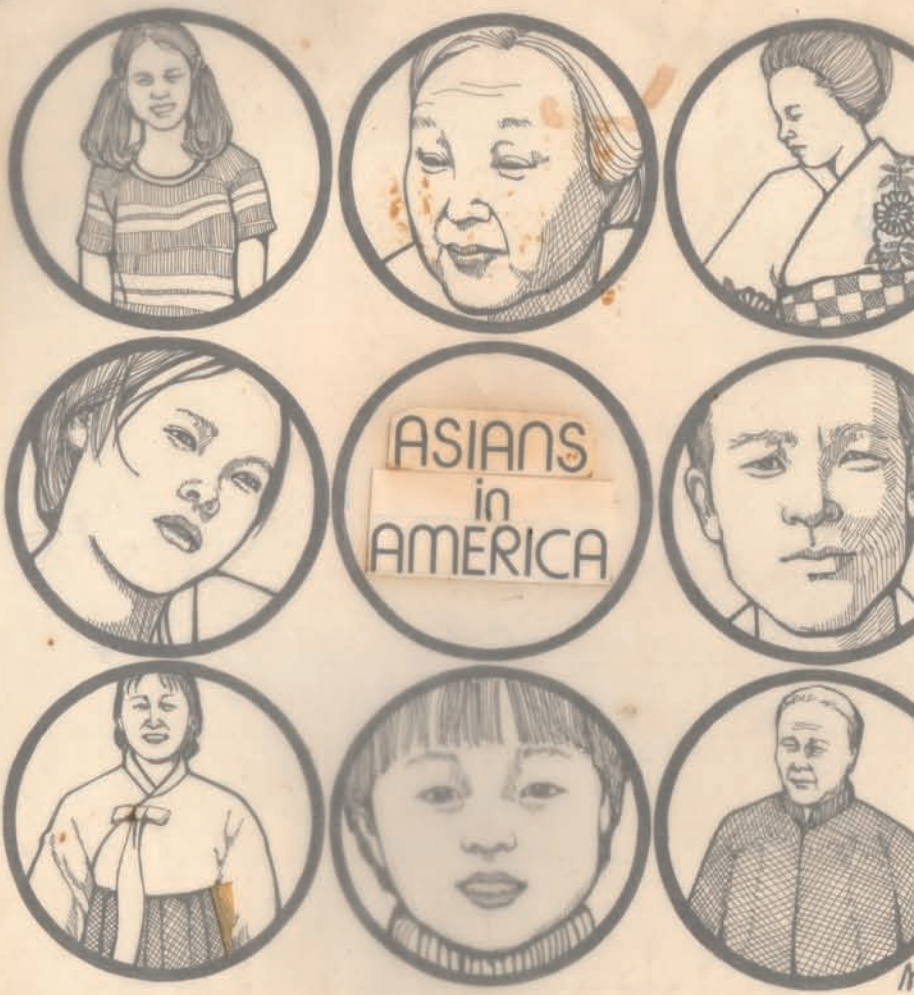
The full activity of Basement Workshop's fifteen-year span, with its many programs and

# 1986

1. Jean Chiang
2. Gene Moy
3. John Allen
4. Lei-Sanne Doo
5. Mine Okubo
6. Margo Machida
7. Andrew Edwards
8. Bennett Ram
9. Kathleen Foster
10. Mary Lum
11. Jason Huang
12. Charlie Chin
13. Charles Yuen
14. Christian Frey
15. George Leong
16. Ming Fay
17. Tomie Arai
18. Larry Hama
19. Chino Garcia
20. Harvey Wang
21. Arlan Huang
22. Ray Huang
23. Lillian Ling Huang
24. Joey Huang
25. Jessica Hagedorn



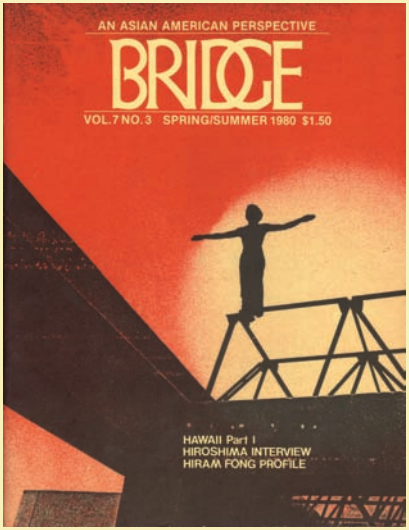
26. Fay Chew Matsuda
27. Amy Matsuda
28. Laurie Carlos
29. Janice Chiang
30. Calvin Louie
31. Deborah Artman
32. Henry Chu
33. Stevie Chu
34. Pat Chu
35. Sheila Hamanaka
36. Fay Chiang
37. Karl Matsuda
38. Jim Whiting
39. Theodora Yoshikami
40. William Jung
41. Colin Lee
42. Kiyo Matsumoto
43. Alex Chin


ASIANS
in
AMERICA





Original artwork and finished cover by Tomie Arai for *UNiC Expression*, Spring 1976.




This page: *Bridge Magazine*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1980; opposing page: *Bridge Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 6, 1972, cover art by Alan Okada.

offshoots, is impossible to capture here. Fifteen years is no short life cycle for nonprofits and arts collectives. Not only did the early members of Basement come of age during this time, but the very nature of Asian American activism went from small, radical, grassroots movements to a national network of organizations and organizers that could mount sophisticated protests (e.g., the justice for Vincent Chin campaign in 1982). A few examples of Basement's activities will help to outline this evolution.

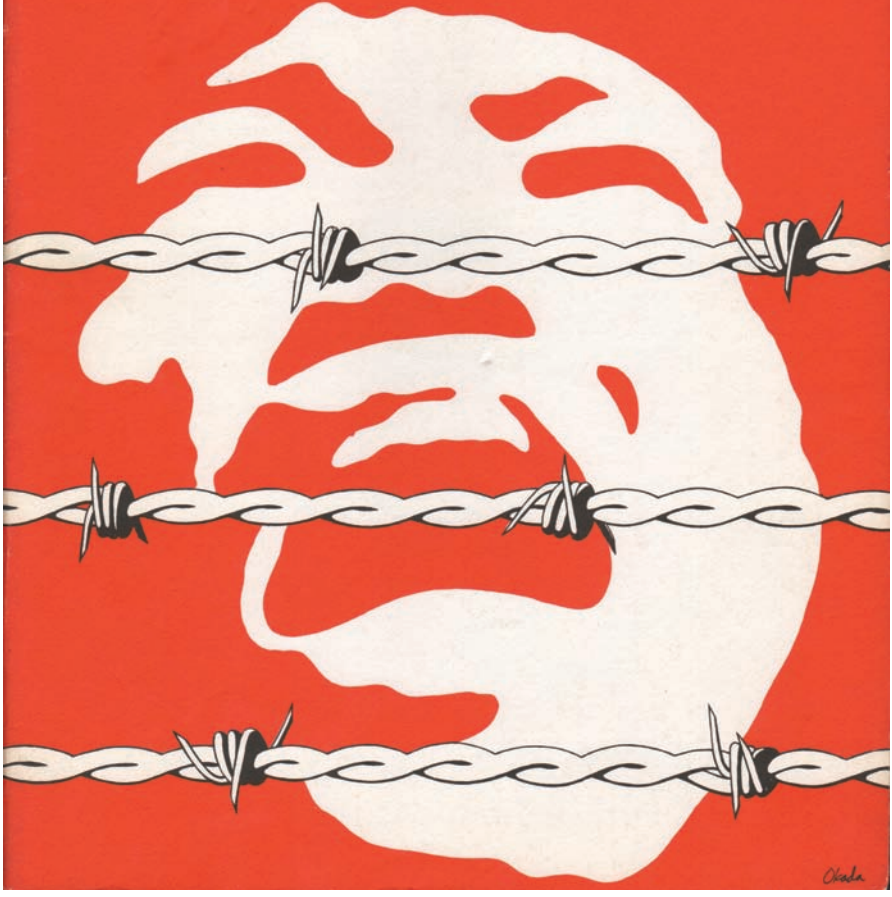
The early days were very much concerned with articulating an Asian American identity. This is apparent in one of the first issues of *Bridge* (vol. 1, no. 6, 1972), edited by Frank Ching and Margarett Loke. An opinion piece in that issue asks, "Where is the slopehead Huey Newton?"; in other words, why hadn't Asian America produced a revolutionary icon? The author wrote, "by being groovy you could transcend the horizontal prejudice and get to be Somebody. . . . The real trouble for Asian-Americans is that they have yet to egest an archetypal hero that fits into the American Myth." Though the author's "Somebody" appears to rely upon dominant notions of success, the piece is a humorous and energetic expression of the desire to create a mythology and radical styling for Asian America.

In the following pages of the same issue, a review of Frank Chin's play *Chickencoop Chinaman*—a deconstructed telling of the Lone Ranger—called it "the first play by an Asian-American that is fashioned out of uniquely

# BRIDGE

THE MAGAZINE OF ASIANS IN AMERICA ONE DOLLAR

Vol. 1 No. 6 Volume 1 Number 6 July/August 1972




N SUPPORT
AL HOTEL

Details from the offset printed poster *Images from a Neglected Past*, which accompanied a mural and exhibition produced by the Asian American Resource Center, part of Basement Workshop, 1978.

Asian-American sensibilities." Chin would coedit the first anthology of Asian American writing, *Aiiiieee!*, a couple years later. He is infamous for his critiques of Maxine Hong Kingston and others for their interpretations of Chinese myth, and he would later criticize *Bridge* itself for a cycle of kung fu stories they published, excoriating the editors to find more authentically Asian American stories. Chin believed those authors' reliance on a mythical Chinese past was misguided and retrograde. Looking back, though Chin's take seems dogmatic, the exchange shows how vital *Bridge* was for such debates and the hunger of those younger writers to engage in cultural politics.

In the late 1970s, Jack Tchen, Susan Yung, John Woo, Don Kao, Gin Woo, and the members of the Asian American Resource Center took a more historical approach to identity. They sought to find a lineage that would make sense of Asian America's contemporary political situation. Rather than write a scholarly paper, they applied their research to an exhibition, *Images from a Neglected Past: The Work and Culture of Chinese in America*. Along with several didactic panels, they painted a monumental, wall-sized mural showing critical scenes from Chinese American history such as the mass lynching of Chinese in Los Angeles in 1871, the detention center at Angel Island, and McCarthyism's targeting of Chinatowns. Tellingly, the mural ends with a banner supporting the International Hotel in San Francisco, a multi-year, coalitional effort to preserve affordable housing and Asian American cultural spaces that was not just Chinese-focused. The mural traveled around several community venues in New York and Boston and was reproduced as a poster promoting the piece. With this historical lens, members of the Resource Center connected the struggles of the Asian American movement to a history of racialized policies and resistance.

The Basement Literature Program, co-coordinated by Jessica Hagedorn, ran from

*Women Working Together* (art: Tomie Arai), screenprint poster, 1973.

1980 until Basement's closing. Organized by a younger generation, the literature program focused not only on Asian American writers but "writers of color, women, and progressive writers"; as Hagedorn explains in the *Basement Yearbook*, they "sought to encompass a broad spectrum of other important and often neglected aspects of contemporary American writing." This turn reflects the new thinking around identity in the 1980s, which shows in the selection of invited artists. In addition to multigenre workshops—performance with Ping Chong, playwriting with David Henry Hwang, dance and poetry with Ntozake Shange—the literature program hosted book parties for June Jordan and Thulani Davis; other notable readers include Amiri Baraka, Shawn Wong, Audre Lorde, Ai, and Kimiko Hahn.

• • •

The most visible legacies of Basement Workshop are the organizations it spawned. The Asian American Resource Center was the seed for the New York Chinatown History Project, which later expanded into the Museum of Chinese in America—a museum with a full staff that presents art and historical exhibitions. Participants in the dance workshops and Amerasia Creative Arts spun off into the Asian American Dance Theater, one of the first spaces dedicated to exhibiting Asian American artists, which later became part of the Asian American Arts Centre. *Bridge* magazine was acquired by Asian Cinevision, a film organization founded by Basement alums that hosts film workshops and an annual festival.

Second, one can point to individual career paths that were fostered, boosted, or encouraged by Basement. *Yellow Pearl* began as an attempt to document the music of Chris Iijima, Nobuko ("Joanne") Miyamoto, and Charlie Chin, who would go on to record *Grain of Sand* in 1973 —considered the first Asian American full-length album [released on Paredon Records, see


WOMEN
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CELEBRATING THE FIRST
ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICAN
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# ASIANS IN AMERICA

## OUR PEOPLE, OUR COMMUNITIES...

FOR THE PERSPECTIVE OF OUR PAST,
PRESENT AND FUTURE:

AMERASIA CREATIVE ARTS
ASIAN AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER
BRIDGE MAGAZINE
CHINATOWN COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP

Basement Workshop, Inc.
22 Catherine Street
New York, N.Y. 10038
(212) 964-6832

*Asians in America* (art: Tomie Arai), offset printed poster, 1970s.

*Signal:03*]. Visual artists Tomie Arai, Arlan Huang, Larry Hama, Alan Okada, Ming Fay, and Corky Lee; writers Jessica Hagedorn, Henry Chang, and David Henry Hwang; curator Margo Machida; actors Tzi Ma and Mako; choreographers Teddy Yoshikami and Ping Chong; and so many others organized, performed, and exhibited at Basement Workshop.

The hardest legacy to measure is how needed Basement Workshop was to so many at that moment in history. To have a collectively organized, open, inviting, and accessible place to experiment with Asian diasporic culture and politics was unthinkable a few years before. It was a space of imagination and experimentation. It is for this reason that so many among the hundreds who went through Basement still recall it fondly.

Basement produced the strongest kind of bonds: when people work not for authorship or prestige but towards a new understanding of collective selves. Many lifelong friendships developed, and for a few years the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU (led by Jack Tchen, a Basement alumnus) hosted reunions. Quite a few of the former members married each other. The life of the artist, and the organizer, is a hard one. Basement offered a reminder that one is not alone in those tasks and that creating culture not only changes society but also oneself.

The closing of Basement Workshop thirty years ago can be read, depending on who one asks, as bittersweet, inevitable, or brought on by mismanagement and ego. The advantage of it closing, in retrospect, is that it gives us a fuller ability to examine the institution's history, to tread a careful line between romanticizing and criticizing. As they said in the introduction to *Yellow Pearl*, "we made efforts to re-examine our own perspectives; and we grew." The seemingly contradictory facets of Basement—cultural politics and historical stewardship, volunteer labor and grant fundraising, collectivism and individual artists—offer us a mirror and model for the work needed today, a precedent to help us re-examine and grow. S

# JAMAA

# AL-YAD


# JAMAA AL-YAD

## AN INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL DRENNAN ELAWAR

BY JOSH MACPHEE

Jamaa Al-Yad (JAY) is an art and design collective founded in 2010 in Beirut by Daniel Drennan ElAwar and a cohort of his students at the American University of Beirut. It has since evolved into an international collaboration creating imagery committed to the creation of a just society in the Arab world and beyond. After spending time with Daniel and other JAY members both in Beirut and the U.S., we held the following conversation.

**Can you give me the basic background to Jamaa Al-Yad? How did you start? When? Where? What is your mission?**

In 2004 I returned to Lebanon, where I was born and adopted from. I had managed to land a job at the American University of Beirut, and I was teaching graphic design and illustration. This gave me the opportunity to research a topic very dear to me, namely artists' collectives—their reasons for existing, but also ceasing to exist. Beyond this, I was hugely critical of the work the department was producing. Like elsewhere in the world of design academia, "activist art" was limited to "awareness campaigns," usually as advertisements for humanitarian imperialist NGOs, as well as foreign monies directed at neoliberal projects in the civil sector. I was at the same time bothered by the "theoretical only" frameworks recommended to students to work within, usually postmodern, which basically stated that change was impossible. Of course we now know such frameworks were supported by the U.S. government and others as a way to subvert and co-opt resistance. [for example, see http://www.newsweek.com/how-cia-funded-arab-art-help-win-cold-war-587218 —Eds.]

I received some research grants, had research assistants working with me, and we started collecting references to the liberation movements of the 1960s and '70s especially within/tangential to the global South, and found this historical reference wholly absent

# MAY 15: THE RETURN TO PALESTINE

الشعب يريد العودة

إلى فلسطين


من الأرض
صنع في فلسطين

Previous page spread: Posters created for the Return to Palestine March, May 15, 2011. The march took participants to the border of Lebanon with Occupied Palestine to commemorate the Nakba (Palestinian dispossession in 1948). Opposing page: Poster designed for Land Day, 2012.

from the academic realm, despite its vestiges still being active locally speaking in terms of collective referential memory. There was a stark class difference between those who were aware of what I was researching and those who chose to ignore it or just were ignorant of it. Given all of this, my aim was to "put my money where my mouth was," as it were, and see if it were possible to establish a truly activist organization based in resistance praxis, with absolutely no "taint" from the neoliberal and capitalist systems we were forced to work within.

To describe the organization is a bit difficult. I like to say that we are an organization without organization, meaning we work openly with communities and groups and we morph and change as we take on work and apply ourselves to various projects. We hark back to the days of communal and collaborative cultural production, whether via community printers, political agitprop produced in basements, or everyday creators of cultural resistance. We believe art and culture to be inherent to sound body and mind, and we attempt to express the idea that "existence is resistance." We believe that cultural production is inherently tied to one's local space, and we always attempt to channel that.

At the same time, if you were to ask everyone in the collective who/what we are, you might end up with quite different answers. Our bylaws explicitly state, for example, that we all may come from different political/religious/sectarian realms (this is Lebanon, sadly, where sectarianism is an intense part of daily life), but we have a core commitment to certain beliefs that allow us to work together. One of the ways of avoiding sectarian gridlock is to focus on the historical movements of liberation in the Lebanese nation-state and region, which often focused more on class than religious affiliation. By doing this we hope to bring awareness to the economic system and the class discrimination such sectarianism imposes.

Opposing page: *Return is but a stone's throw away*, poster designed to commemorate the unarmed civilians killed by Israeli Defense Forces during 2011's Right of Return March. Following page spread: Detail of one of the posters designed for 2010's *Al-Akhbar* Apartheid Week newspaper supplement.

I know that JAY is a collective, and from talking to you in Beirut, the process of becoming legally recognized as such was important. Can you talk about that process, but also about how JAY is organized? You are usually the one that represents the group (at least in English), and your art and design aesthetic seems to play a singular role in the overall output. How does that work in relationship to collectivity?

Because of Lebanon's capitalist economic history, there is a limit to what kind of business you can register there. It's a bit like in the United States, where collectives and cooperatives have different legal and tax status in different states. The category we were allowed was "NGO," and I approached a lawyer to start the process of becoming officially recognized. He gave me a template for bylaws (in English) that must have had a French or American source, and these reflected the usual hierarchy found in corporate structures, with officers, quorum, fifty percent plus one voting, Rules of Order, and the like. I told him that I was interested in setting up a nonhierarchical, consensus-based, collective organization. He chuckled and told me that the easiest route would be to just give the government what it expected.

I persisted, and he told me we would have to write the bylaws ourselves, and that they would have to pass muster with every government ministry which would have to sign off on them. I took it as a challenge. Our bylaws and charter took almost two years to write from scratch, and this was an eye-opening experience in terms of how systems impose ways of thinking and doing on groups in a structural way. In 2009 we received approval from the Lebanese government to exist as a nongovernmental organization, and in record time—given the absence of a functioning government much of that period. Our bylaws and charter in turn set a precedent for other organizations that wished to avoid imposed hierarchies, and many groups have borrowed from them since.

I don't know that my aesthetic predominates. The majority of members are former students of mine, but I never imposed on them a way of thinking or doing; quite the contrary. I did find it necessary in the classroom to bring in historical references of local work


الشعب يريد العودة
إلى فلسطين
والعودة على مرمى حجر



The many uses of the posters for 2011's Return to Palestine March. Photo credits, clockwise from top left: Tarek Faour; Palestinian Poster Projects Archive/Hafez Omar; Tarek Faour;

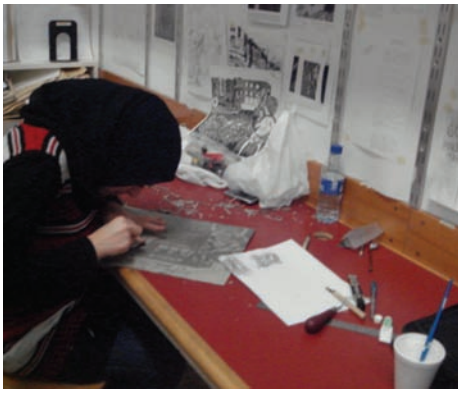
so that students would stop mimicking Western artists, for want of a better term. This carried over into the collective's work, so we are hyper aware of local precedent, especially in terms of poster art, and we take this as a referential cue to tie our work to that of the past. There is also a technical aspect, if you will, such that our use of scratchboard, linoleum and woodblock print, a simple black-and-white color scheme, etc. homogenizes our work a bit. But also to keep in mind is the absolute collective nature of the work. So there are some illustrations for example, drawn by one person and carved by another. There are projects with a variety of designers, illustrators, calligraphers, and the like, so there are bits and pieces of us everywhere. This carries over to public voice: If any of us represents the group, it is only after extensive back-channel communication.

You've talked about the loss in Lebanon of the art of calligraphy, and JAY has used a lot of unique square kufi and other Arabic script. What role does typography play in your work?


Tarek Faour; Palestinian Poster Projects Archive/unknown; Daniel Drennan ElAwar; Tarek Faour.

I think what we are witnessing today in Lebanon and the greater Southwest Asian region in terms of a loss of vernacular typography is quite similar to what has happened in the United States. Lettering and calligraphy, sign painting, and fonts for advertising all used to be in the hands of craftsmen when printing was a trade, and the "graphic arts" had not yet become the rarified and bourgeois domain of graphic design. One of my biggest pet peeves is the way in which graphic design on an academic level pilfers its history from these trades and simply subsumes them. Meanwhile, all of those jobs have been displaced by a white-collar professional class that in turn gives their true history no validity except as vernacular to steal from.

Lebanon has calligraphers but no calligraphy schools as found in other countries that use the Arabic alphabet. These calligraphers have similarly been dismissed by the local academic realm, serving as inspiration but given little role in design "fields." Part of this is sectarian in nature, where many see Arabic calligraphy as intrinsically linked to Islam. So it's interesting to see, for example, a



Above: JAY member at work on a linocut. Opposing page: Poster commemorating Palestinian author and activist Ghassan Kanafani for the Celebrate People's History poster series, 2017.

gradual increase on the street of "Farsi"-style calligraphy, due to Iranian imports and to the lack of local calligraphers. This taint has been brought up to me in terms of our work—people telling me that our square kufi lettering seems religious in nature—or that we shouldn't use Farsi calligraphy because it labels us as "Shi'a." This is both depressing and ridiculous. Part of the problem is that Arabic is not used as a day-to-day language by the middle class in Lebanon, who prefer the colonial languages of French and English. So Arabic takes on their prejudice concerning what is seen pejoratively as Arab/Muslim.

The reception of our work outside of this bourgeois setting was incredibly heartening. Instead of focusing on the work of Lebanese typographers—which is often directed to Gulf business concerns and is incredibly ugly—we would watch the street, and gather our inspiration from banner calligraphers, basement print shops working for political parties, used bookstores and the magazine and book calligraphy from the '50s, '60s, and '70s, and others. Our use of square kufi came from the desire to have a graphic look that was more or less unique to us in the Beirut context; personally it was also a means for me to work within and understand a language that I had not grown up with. Of all the lettering and calligraphic forms, square kufi was the easiest entry point.

You have an interesting and unique place as an outsider/insider within Lebanese society. How did that push or allow JAY to do things that would have been more difficult for more embedded Lebanese identities? And what difficulties and limitations has it placed on JAY?

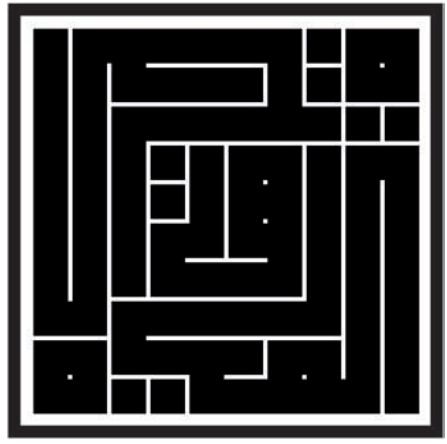
As an adoptee who returned to his place of birth, I had a very particular trajectory that was sometimes quite useful and other


بالدم نكتب لفلسطين
تمجيد تاريخ الشخصيات
غسان كنفاني (١٩٣٦-١٩٧٢) كان صحفي وناقد أدبي وكاتب روايات. كان المتحدث بإسم الجبهة الشعبية لتحرير فلسطين، و كتب على نطاق واسع عن النضال الفلسطيني. مع آني هوفر، تركزت الكثير من جهوده على حقوق الأطفال والتعليم. تم اغتياله في بيروت في عام ١٩٧٢.
celebrate people's history
Ghassan Kanafani (1936–1972) worked as a journalist, a literary critic, and as a fiction writer. He was a spokesman for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and wrote extensively on the Palestinian struggle. With Anni Høver, much of his effort focused on the rights of children and education. He was assassinated in Beirut in 1972.
Art: jamaalyad.org • More posters: justseeds.org/cph • Printer: stumptownprinters.com • October 2016

times hugely exasperating if not distressing. Adoptees often discuss walking a razor's edge in terms of the cultures and societies that they belong to or live within. In my early days in Lebanon, I was seen as an "American" and thus an outsider. This would often allow me access to places that were otherwise restricted for political or sectarian reasons. I would bring my camera everywhere, and depending on how I was perceived, I could often gain access or play with this razor's edge.

For example, in the days of the so-called Cedar Revolution (in truth a reactionary government takeover in 2005), I rather naively would walk around downtown with my camera. Soldiers would ask me if I were saHafe [press] and I would just nod my head—I could barely speak the language, which worked to my advantage. But this could also go in the other direction, for example during the victory rally in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut after the July War in 2006. Foreign reporters were having their cameras confiscated, because it was known that they usually painted the local population in terms of the negative Western imagery concerning Hezbollah and Shi'a Islam. Thankfully I was there with a friend whose family used to live there, and no one bothered us as we took photographs of the event. It was the first time in my life I felt "lost in the crowd" and taken for a local.

Toward the end of my twelve-year stay, as my language improved and I learned the story of my origins, I found myself more and more limited by the strictures of sectarianism that I had not been made explicitly aware of before; I was integrating and therefore needed to conform to the cultural norms. I was more and more accepted as Lebanese and local on the street level, and I would find myself avoiding certain neighborhoods, places, and situations that were now outside of my comfort zone. For most of my years in Lebanon I categorically refused to allow myself the remove that the luxury and privilege of my class position (as a professor not tethered to one of the country's many sectarian groupings) could afford me—so I found myself more or less at the mercy of the day-to-day pressures that the majority of the population lived with.



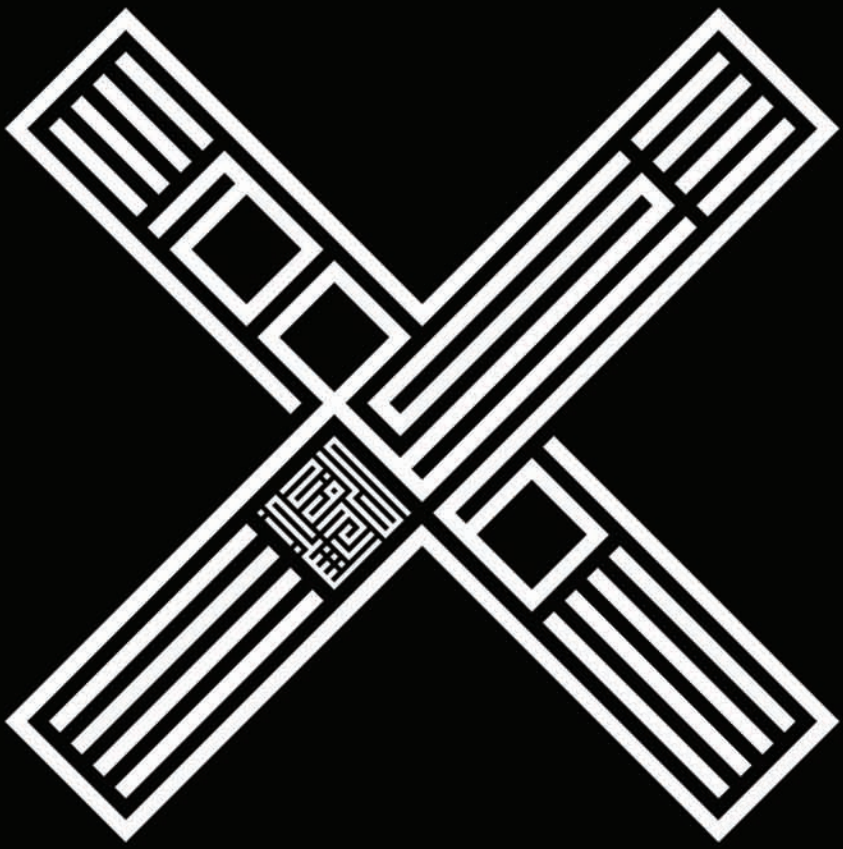
Square kufi rendering of "Water Is Life" in Arabic, for the *Commonwealth: Water for All* exhibition at the Queens Museum, 2017.

Like a design studio, JAY works around projects—what you refer to as briefs—with clearly articulated boundaries and politics. What are some of the most important ones you've carried out? How did they function? What were the effects?

There were many reasons for the briefs we used. Mostly we wanted to avoid finding ourselves in a defensive posture after completing a project, and so we put forth our inspirations, references, and frameworks (usually Marxist but veering into other realms as well) in an effort to clearly spell out where we were coming from, what we were doing, and what we wanted to accomplish. I was also in an academic setting that was quite hostile to Left- and liberation-based frameworks, so rigor was necessary to vet what we were doing, base it in past precedence, and provide a holistic argument to what we were working on.

Our founding project, the newspaper supplement for Israeli Apartheid Week in 2010, was seminal in many ways. The history of Palestinian posters we researched was almost overwhelming—we were working in a rarified territory which was simultaneously a living practice and wanted to live up to what had come before us. Meanwhile a colleague of mine was compiling books that relegated the political poster to the historical past; an artifact with no continuation in the present tense. We chose to focus our posters on the economic basis of apartheid. This allowed us to avoid the political discussion of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and concentrate purely on the economic and political reality of the Palestinian situation at its core.

We refused to engage in the mushy discourse of human rights or the advertising and marketing realm that creates poster children of



Square kufi lettering and poster series designed to commemorate the fifty-year anniversary of Malcolm X's visit to Beirut in 1965.


«هدفنا هو تحقيق العدالة والمساواة بأية وسيلة ممكنة»


«لدينا صراع مشترك ضد عدو مشترك»


NO GO
«لا أرى حلماً لأمريكا أرى كابوساً لأمريكا»


AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT
1866
«كما نزرع نحصد»

التضامن

حجر حبط قماش نار

THE CRIMINALS ARE GLOBAL; THE RESISTANCE IS LOCAL

# آمن بالحجر تحيا

أسبوع الفصل العنصري الإسرائيلي ◆ beirut.apartheidweek.org ◆ www.jamaalyad.org ◆ www.stopthewall.org

Opposite and following page: Posters designed for 2010's *Al-Akhbar* Apartheid Week newspaper supplement.

misery. Finally, most importantly, we refused to translate the posters and the Lebanese proverbs used on them, into English or French. So locals could read the Arabic and fully comprehend its indictment of apartheid; English readers could only read about foreign corporations profiting from the situation in occupied Palestine. This broke with the horrid Lebanese design tradition that treats colonial languages as equal to the national tongue or, worse, avoids Arabic altogether.

At one point I thought to ask local newspapers if they would be willing to swap our plates in at the end of a print run and donate ink and paper to our efforts. We approached Khaled Saghieh, then editor of *Al-Akhbar*, and I remember trying to explain in my broken Arabic what we were hoping to do. He countered with an offer to just print up our supplement and distribute it with the newspaper. It was such an amazing affirmation of our work, and it broke us through to the greater public at large. The newspaper sold out in many locations in the country based on our supplement. Furthermore, many of the members of the collective recounted how their parents finally opened up and spoke of the wheat pasting and other subversive work they engaged in during the Civil War. We awakened two generations in a way, and started a discussion between them.

I think the success of the posters was due, in large part, to our focus on vernacular language, but it is also important to recognize the role of networking within the Lebanese/Southwest Asian context. Graphic design practice in the region, in its effort to be modern, eschews the vernacular except in a derisive way; to reveal class disdain. Furthermore, advertising seeks to "own" catchphrases and slogans as brand extensions. Our decision to use proverbs was a counter to this, where the day-to-day linguistic practice avails itself of common turns of phrase. Coupling the proverbs with images of the apartheid reality in Occupied Palestine gave our work a twist. The images themselves came from documentary photography and journalistic sources, and the research aim of our work was to track down the companies responsible for the iconic, as well as less-known technological, communicative, and construction-based aspects of apartheid.

Getting the word out required us to simply put the work on our website, and then local nonvirtual networks took care of the rest.

Beyond social media are integrated networks of family and community that manage to get the word out in very intriguing ways. Phone communication, word of mouth, text messaging, and social media work differently in a context where community often comes before individuality. Also working to our advantage was an active left-wing press.

The other project that I think was truly groundbreaking was the four-poster banner we put together for the Right of Return March in 2011. The preparatory meetings for the event were amazing. They involved activists and organizations from both the Lebanese and Palestinian sides that had not worked together in many years and there was a lot of time devoted to clearing the air. The "consensus table" model of the meetings was a huge inspiration: everyone sat around a table, with no second row of chairs, and everyone was able to speak on each aspect discussed. I remember the moment when our work was presented and accepted by the aggregated group. It was a proof of concept in terms of our approach that gave us a lot of confidence to move forward.

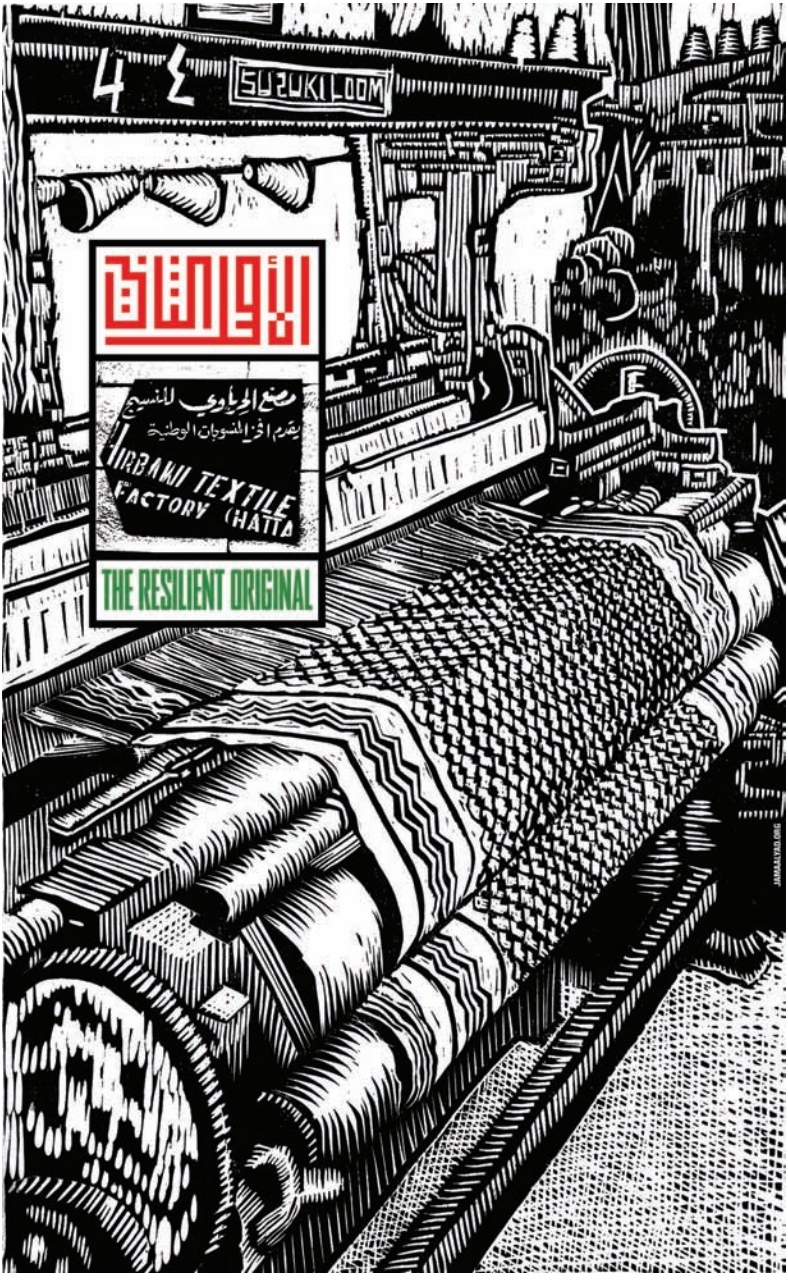
For this event we created freely available PDFs for everything from billboards to bumper stickers, and the response was incredible. The entire highway ride down to the border saw our billboards everywhere; once at the event, we saw how people had taken our base images and had embellished them, colored them, adapted them. News stations took the graphics and made identification/break adverts out of them. Stencils were used everywhere, and to this day you can see the remnants of our posters in most of the refugee camps in the country. The popular response was only surpassed by the dismissal of this work by the bourgeois class, starting with my colleagues at AUB. I took both of these as an affirmation that we were on the right track.

Palestine has played an outsized role in the work of JAY. Are there JAY members that are Palestinian? Why this focus?

There are members who are Palestinian, and contributors to our projects range from across the Southwest Asian/North African region. I don't know that I can get into an entire discussion of the relevance of the Palestinian cause to various groups within the political


كيف ما ضربته بيجي واقف
إقتلاع أشجار الزيتون
VOLVO [Bulldozers | Colonist transport]
Göteborg, Sweden

Process/final image for the *Kufiyyeh: The Resilient Original Project*, 2015; produced to document the last remaining kufiyyeh factory in El-Khalil, Palestine.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SUZUKI LOOM
الأول الخالد
مصنع الرياوي للنسيج
يقدم أفخر المنسوجات الوطنية
HIRBAWI TEXTILE
FACTORY CHATTA
THE RESILIENT ORIGINAL
JAMAALYAD.ORG

spectrum of Lebanon as a nation-state. I can speak of the vestiges of pan-Arab nationalism, the tradition of the Palestinian cause being seen as an exemplar for revolutionary liberation struggles, the pre-colonial conception of the *balid ash-sham*, or Greater Syria (literally, Damascus Country), the still existent counterreactionary forces that fought the war of American hegemony we now call the Civil War. On a more personal note, my conception of self as an adoptee started to change when I found that those who responded most positively to me were in similar ways displaced, dispossessed, and disinherited: Palestinians, Syrian workers, marginalized populations. I saw this as a bridge of sorts and use this framework to connect many disparate actions and efforts that often deleteriously are categorized along lines of identity and not class or migratory status.

You now live in New Jersey, and soon Vancouver. Other JAY members have also scattered across the world. What does that mean for JAY, collectivity, the future?

It's funny, I didn't plan on moving so far away. But after a year of job applications I'm convinced that to have worked on the Palestinian cause in any way is the kiss of death for one's resume within academia in the United States. So I'll be in Canada and will keep in touch with the group as I did while in New Jersey. I remain quite wary of the technologies that are directly functional to globalization and destruction of local communities, as much as they've helped us stay together; I see them as leaning in particular directions that are inherently poisonous to our efforts, by focusing on individuality and binary identities.

To this end I have been working on programming from scratch a content management system that would allow us to communicate and track projects in a variety of ways, while maintaining our vision for consensus and elimination of any divides due to access, or electricity, lack of internet, etc. But here again, the very nature of the internet—which claims to be decentralized and open—is actually quite the opposite, with its traffic controlled by corporations and governments. It reminds me of when a call went out to us from Egypt during the revolution there, looking for someone to

help build ham radio networks after the government shut down the phone networks. We exist online, but only in a virtual sense, and not in a way we have control over.

To be honest, we don't function the same way we used to, when my university office served as the common space for people to gather and collaborate. While I was living in Beirut, I was seeking to establish a common space, but there were a variety of disincentives, not least of which was my lack of familial and monetary capital. I think our establishment there, in a purely capitalist structure and nation-state, was rather remarkable, and had I been allowed to remain, who knows what might have happened?

It's ironic to return to a New Jersey that itself has grown despairingly privatized, contrary to a lot of its history. I am working as a resident artist at the Newark Print Shop, and I am horrified by the legacy of [former mayor] Cory Booker, who privatized education, turned the city over to the corporate sector, and set in motion processes of gentrification and class war. It is dismaying to hear young people introduce themselves as entrepreneurs and to realize they are lacking in the basic knowledge of the city and its history. It reminds me very much of Lebanon, where a war-weary generation decided that their children would be sheltered from the unpleasantness that they experienced.

Recent projects have reinforced our emphasis on finding common cause, and seeking out a positive response in places that often might seem unlikely at first glance. For example, we produced a series of antifascist posters and stickers harking back to the speech Nelson Mandela gave at the funeral of Chris Hani in South Africa. The Up Against the Wall project at Booklyn—in Greenpoint, Brooklyn—had us teamed up with Imaging Apartheid, Iraq Veterans Against the War, and the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative. The print we produced for *Commonwealth: Water for All* at the Queens Museum brought up very interesting parallels between the water wars of today with the displacement and dispossession of the past. Connecting our understanding of present-day reality with historical precedent provides a basis for understanding our current condition in the context of a continuous and global struggle. S

# ADHESI
# UPRISI





**"Silent Agitators": Early Stickerettes from the Industrial Workers of the World**

**Auto-Colantes: Portugal's Most Popular Agitator**

**Sticking with the German Antifa in Berlin**

# Silent Agitators

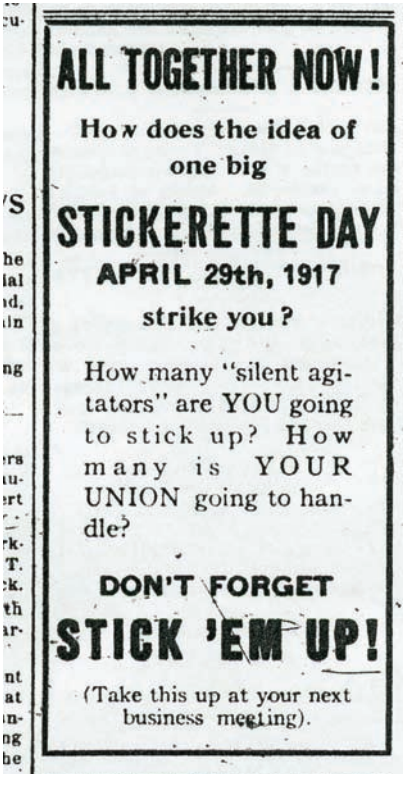
## Early Stickerettes from the Industrial Workers of the World

**Catherine L. Tedford**

Hidden in plain sight, publicly placed stickers with printed images and words have been used for over a century around the world as a form of social protest or to advocate political agendas. In the United States, some of the earliest political stickers were produced by the Industrial Workers of the World (the IWW or "Wobblies") in the early 1910s. Founded in Chicago in 1905, the IWW fought for economic justice for the working class using many tactics, one of which was the widespread use of cartoons, slogans, leaflets, poetry, and songs that appealed to uneducated, immigrant, and itinerant workers. Stickers were used to promote the IWW's vision of "One Big Union," to recruit new members, to oppose unfair working conditions, to intimidate bosses and strikebreakers (or "scabs"), and to condemn capitalism.

Known as "silent agitators," IWW stickerettes were printed in red and black on lightweight gummed paper measuring from 1½" x 2" to 3" x 4". The union's weekly newspaper *Industrial Worker* first advertised "stickers" in 1911, offering a thousand for a dollar. During a more ambitious effort






a few years later, an advertisement in a November 1915 edition of the weekly newspaper *Solidarity* featured a new series of eleven different designs for one dollar per box of eleven hundred. The newly dubbed stickerettes gained popularity quickly; between 1915 and 1916, a million stickerettes were printed by the IWW and distributed across the country, often by workers traveling from job to job. In March 1917, a second series of fifteen stickerettes with four new designs was advertised for the same low price. A million stickerettes sold out within two months.

Union member, poet, and commercial artist Ralph Chaplin created several early stickerette designs. In his 1948 autobiography, *Wobbly: The Rough-and-Tumble Story of an American Radical*, he recounts that during the peak of the IWW propaganda campaigns (1915–1917), stickerettes could be found on "every boxcar in the country," as well as "'skid-road' flophouses, lampposts, and billboards, [and] such minor items as pitchforks, pick handles, shovels, bunkhouses, factory gates, and even jail houses, all of which were generously decorated with I.W.W. colors and ideas." A poem in *Solidarity* called "Stick 'Em Up" even dubbed April 29, 1917, "Stickerette Day."

*Now all the bosses and their stools will*
*think they're out of luck,*
*To see the spots of black and red where*

*Stickerettes are stuck;*
*And after they have scratched them off and shook their fists and swore,*
*They'll turn around to find again another dozen more.*
*Upon the back of every truck, on packages and cards,*
*Upon the boats and in the mines and in the railroad yards,*
*From Maine to California and even further yet,*
*No matter where you look you'll see a little Stickerette!*

Another three million stickerettes were printed for May Day of 1917, with sixty-five thousand in a variety of foreign languages—something to be expected given that the IWW was the only union in the country to welcome immigrants, along with women, black people, Asians, Jews, and other marginalized groups.

Inspired by commercial advertisements, Chaplin's stickerette designs incorporated catchy slogans and striking visual graphics that were both elegant and easy to understand. One of his best-known illustrations, "BEWARE/SABOTAGE," depicts a hissing "sab cat" or "sabo-tabby" with arched back and claws extended, silhouetted by a blood-red moon. Chaplin stated that the black cat was commonly used to represent sabotage on the job as a means to "frighten the boss." Labor folklorist Archie Green further explains that "the black cat is an old symbol for



# YOU

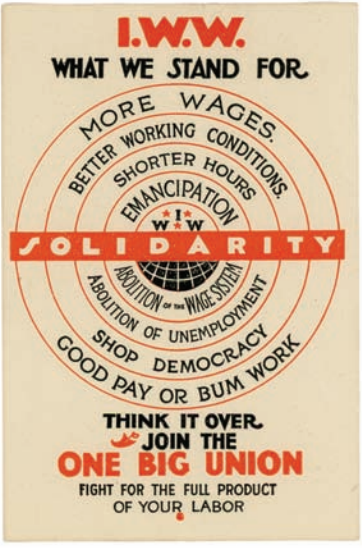
JOIN
THE
# I.W.W.

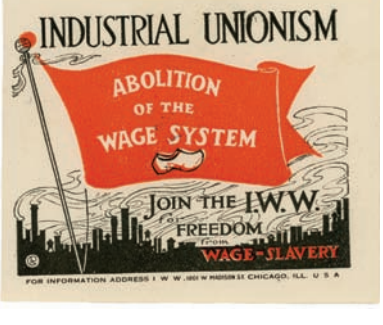
malignant and sinister purposes, foul deeds, bad luck, and witchcraft with countless superstitious connections. Wobblies extended the black-cat figure visually to striking on the job, direct action, and sabotage." Sabotage is also represented in the stickerettes with the image of a large wooden clog or "sabot" crushing a fat capitalist grasping for coins. (*Sabot*, the French word for clog, is the root word for sabotage, as workers during the Industrial Revolution allegedly threw clogs into machines as a way to hinder production.)

And Chaplin wasn't the only artist designing the stickers. The exhibition *Wobbly: 80 Years of Rebel Art,* held at the Labor Archives and Research Center in San Francisco in 1987, identified some additional stickerette artists, such as William Henkelman, a sign painter by profession, and C.E. Setzer, a.k.a. "CES" or "X13," a construction worker on the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

As the United States entered into World War I, many in the IWW considered American involvement to be a capitalist scheme to enrich the elite while sacrificing the working class on foreign soil. Chaplin became editor of *Solidarity* and printed anticonscription and antiwar editorials and cartoons from late 1916 to early 1917, as well as stickerettes like "Why Be a Soldier? Be a MAN—Join the IWW and Fight on the Job for Yourself and Your Class." In September




1917, the federal government simultaneously raided IWW headquarters and meeting halls across the country, leading to the arrests of 184 union members on charges of interfering with the war effort and sedition under the Espionage Act of 1917, passed only a few months beforehand. Chaplin himself was arrested and served five years of a twenty-year sentence at Leavenworth Penitentiary, though he continued to write and draw while behind bars.

It's difficult to imagine how ubiquitous IWW stickerettes were a hundred years ago, given how rare they are today.

IWW stickerettes were an effective means of communicating concepts of political resistance, class struggle, economic justice, and workers' rights at a time of great turbulence in American history a century ago. As one of the most democratic forms of creative expression, stickers today continue to question the status quo, call out injustice, and speak truth to power. S

For more information:

Tony Bubka, "Time to Organize: IWW Stickeretts [*sic*]," *The American West* 5, no. 1 (January 1968): 21–28, 73.

Ralph Chaplin, *Wobbly: The Rough-and-Tumble Story of an American Radical* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).

Jeffory A. Clymer, *America's Culture of Terrorism: Violence, Capitalism, and the Written Word* (Chapel Hill: University of North

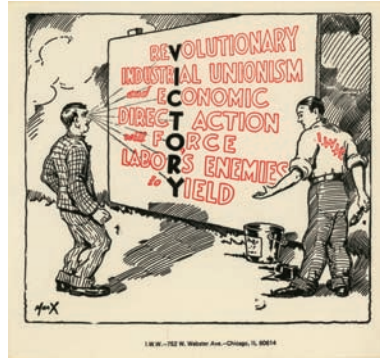
Carolina Press, 2003).

Greg Hall, *Harvest Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World and Agricultural Laborers in the American West, 1905–1930* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001).

Joyce L. Kornbluh, ed., *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology* (Oakland: PM Press, 2011).

Mark W. Van Wienan, *Partisans and Poets: The Political Work of American Poetry in the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Bernard A. Weisberger, "Here Come the Wobblies," *American Heritage* 18, no. 4 (June 1967): 30–35.





# Auto-Colantes

## Portugal's Most Popular Agitator

**Josh MacPhee**

Back in 2012, just as Interference Archive was getting off the ground, we had a great crew of visitors from UK, most involved in the Bristol Radical History Group. They also brought some fellow travelers, including Carlos Guarita, a current member of the Industrial Workers of the World but also an activist who had returned to Portugal (his parents were immigrants to the UK) in 1974–75 in the immediate aftermath of the Portuguese Carnation Revolution. Carlos and I talked about his experiences and the role of culture in the upheaval, and he told me had a lot of posters and stickers that he would gladly donate to the archive. They all returned to the UK, and I didn't think much about the conversation until a year later when a small box showed up in the mail that contained almost a hundred auto-colantes, or stickers, from the revolution!

For some background, Portugal was ruled from 1933 to 1974 by the Estado Nova, the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar. Salazar was an extreme right-wing nationalist and fascist sympathizer who controlled the country and its African colonies with an iron grip. The Estado Nova banned public assembly, there was no press freedom, and opposition to the regime was brutally crushed, in part through a massive system of informants and secret police run by the much-hated PIDE (International and State Defense Police). On April 25, 1974, a left-wing coup was carried out by the MFA, or Armed Forces Movement—a group of military officers who had been organizing to return Portugal to some form of democratic control.

In response to the end of the dictatorship, people transformed their daily lives almost overnight. Workers occupied factories and other workplaces, campesinos took over and collectivized farms, media workers set up pirate radio stations and new publications, and dozens of

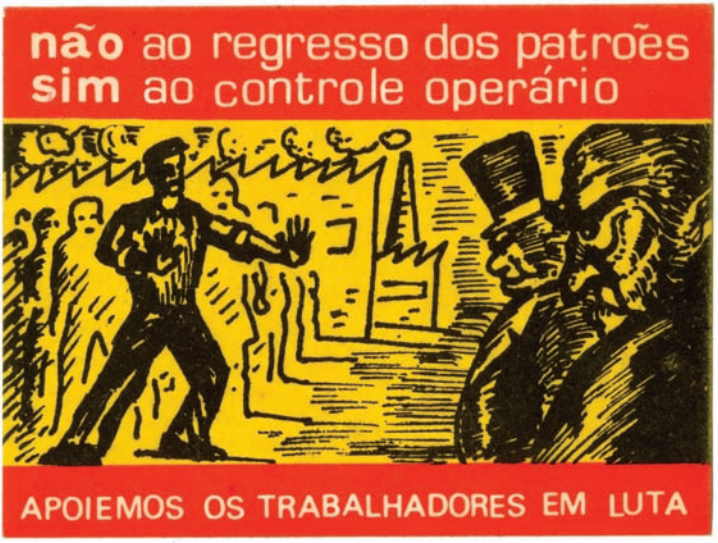

1

1. Unite the People—Crush Fascism/unknown
2. Demonstration for May 1st—Day of Workers' Struggle/Intersindical
3. No to the Return of the Bosses—Yes to Worker Control—Support the Struggling Workers/unknown

**Workers' Struggle**

## Luta dos Trabalhadores


2


não ao regresso dos patrões
sim ao controle operário
APOIEMOS OS TRABALHADORES EM LUTA

3


FIM À
SUSPENSÃO DOS
CONTRATOS COLECTIVOS

4


10 JANEIRO 1976
FIL
ENCONTRO
das organizações de trabalhadores ligados à
CONSTRUÇÃO CIVIL e OBRAS PÚBLICAS

5


CONFERENCIA UNITÁRIA DE TRABALHADORES DE EMPRESAS METALÚRGICAS DO DISTRITO DO PORTO
PORTO JULHO 1975
por uma indústria ao serviço do povo

6


UNIDADE NA ACÇÃO
A FORÇA DOS TRABALHADORES
INTERSINDICAL

7


nunca te esqueças que és um trabalhador
INTERSINDICAL
intersindical

8


9

4. End the Suspension of Collective Bargaining/unknown
5. Meeting of Workers' Organizations Related to Civil Construction and Public Works/FIL
6. Conference of Metallurgical Workers of the Porto District—For an Industry at the Service of the People/unknown
7. Unity in Action is the Strength of the Workers/Intersindical
8. Never Forget That You Are a Worker/Intersindical
9. National Day in Defense of Trade Union Freedoms/Sindicato Vidreiro

new political parties organized. Alongside this political organizing was a sea change in cultural production, with streets turning into galleries for muralists (see Phil Mailer, "Street Murals in the Portuguese Revolution" in *Signal:02*), radio stations being taken over by workers, and the smallest, yet most prolific, intervention: the auto-colante. In a recent exchange with Carlos, he told me that on his return to Portugal, "I became aware of the innumerable quantity of small graphic stickers which adorned everything from telephone kiosks, office doors, lampposts, and cars to people's clothing particularly during demonstrations. I began to collect them without having any clear idea as to the origins of this ubiquitous and colorful means of communication."

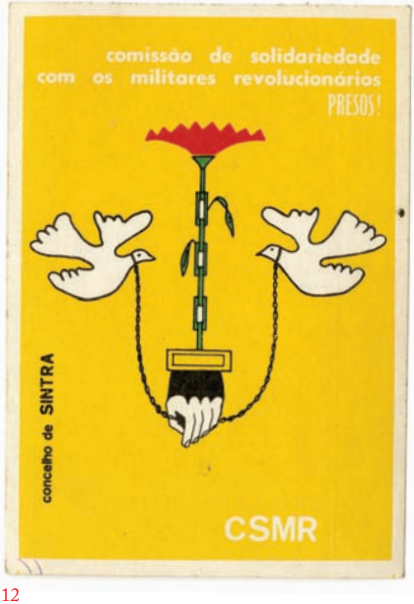
And finding the origins of this medium isn't that easy. There is almost nothing written in English about the stickers, and it's almost as difficult to find anything in Portuguese. In 1976, Phil Spinelli wrote an article in the magazine *Toward Revolutionary Art* entitled "Auto Colantes do Portugal." Spinelli has little to say about the origin of the sticker as a revolutionary form beyond its inexpensiveness and the fact that people and groups had access to a lot of printing presses—in part, I assume, because a number of print shops and newspapers were occupied by those that worked at them. He does discuss being involved in a building occupation in Lisbon, where the group creatively used stickers in their organizing: "Our neighborhood commission decided to keep provocateurs from joining them in marches and disrupting [the marches] by printing stickers in their neighborhood and distributing them to the community. In marches everyone under their banner could then be identified by their auto-colantes." In another anecdote, he states, "When the transmitter of Radio Renaissance was shut down by the government, the station's Worker's Commission printed a sticker that was instrumental in mobilizing the demonstration of eighty thousand people who marched from Lisbon ten miles to the transmitter to re-open it."

# Libertação Revolucionários Presos

## Free the Revolutionary Prisoners


10


11




12


13

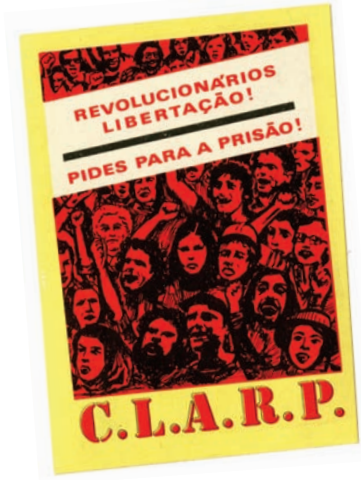

OS ESTUDANTES EXIGEM A IMEDIATA LIBERTAÇÃO
DOS MILITARES REVOLUCIONÁRIOS PRESOS

14


coragem e
confiança
até à vitória
comissão de apoio aos revolucionários presos

15


16

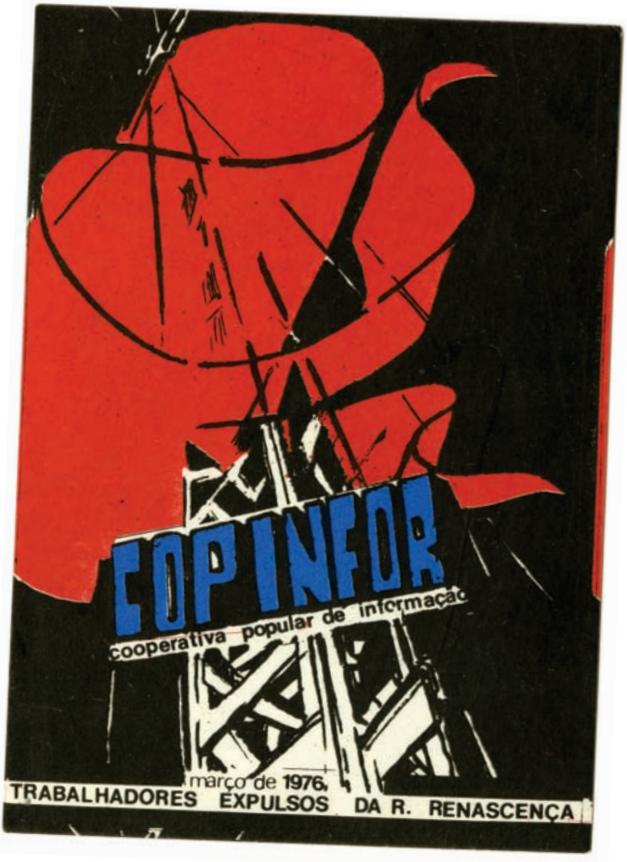



17

10. Commitment to Solidarity with the Revolutionary Armed Forces!—City of Sintra/CSMR
11. No Prison for Antifascists/AFMRP
12. Commitment to Solidarity with the Revolutionary Armed Forces—Prisoners!—City of Sintra/CSMR
13. Freedom for Imprisoned Revolutionaries/CAARP
14. Students Demand the Immediate Release of the Arrested Military Revolutionaries/unknown
15. Courage and Confidence to Victory/CARP
16. Freedom for Antifascist and Revolutionary Prisoners/CLARP
17. Free the Revolutionaries!—Put the Secret Police in Prison!/CLARP
18. Victory Is Certain—The Struggle Continues/CAARP


18

Although the stories behind these stickers are still largely untold, we can see from their breadth of subject matter, artists, and producing organizations that they were a truly popular communication form. Groups as diverse as unions, radio stations, farmers' organizations, left-wing soldiers' groups, day cares, and political parties all produced auto-colantes. Some are clearly designed by professionals, while others seem slapped together by people who are creating art for the first time. Hopefully this short article will spur on further exploration of the role of stickers in the Portuguese Revolution. S




## Por Culturala de um Povo

**For a People's Culture**

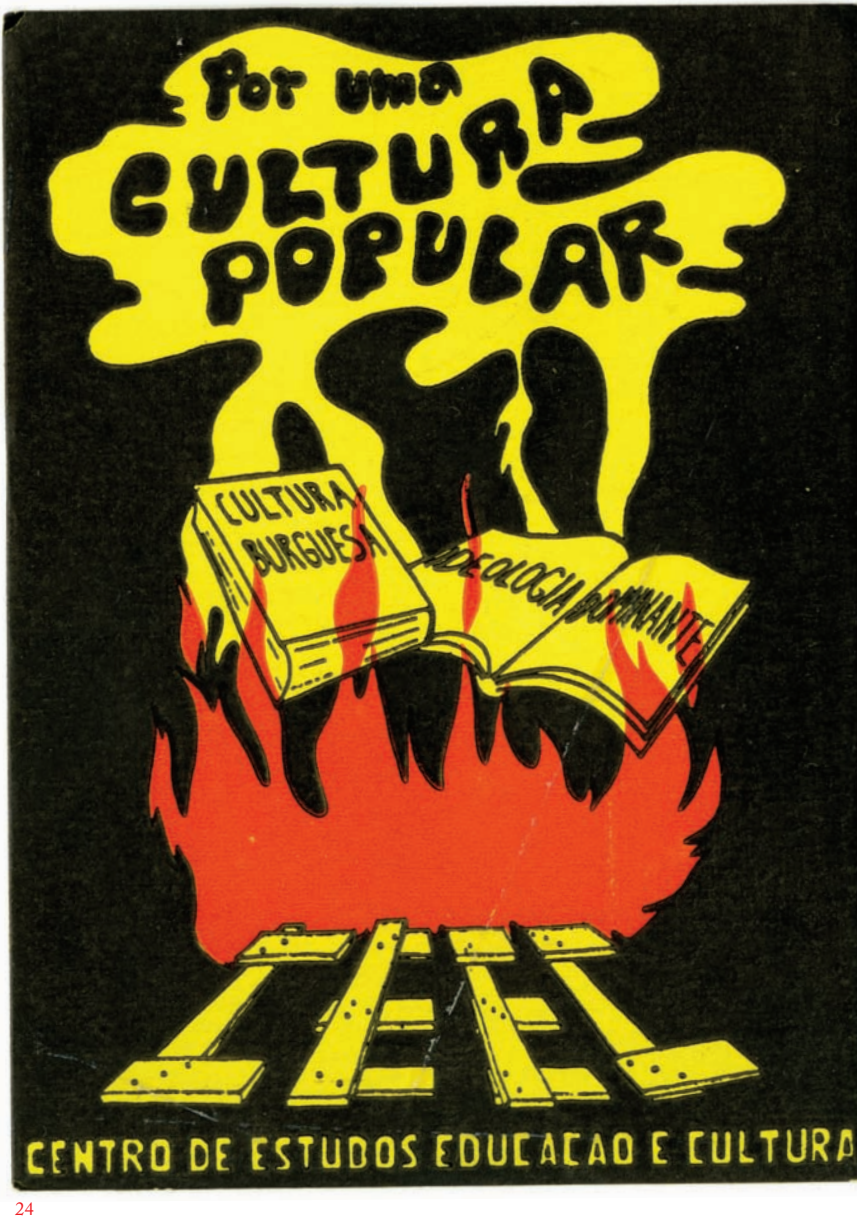

20


21


22

19. People's Information Cooperative—March 1976—Workers Expelled from Rádio Renascença/COPINFOR
20. Rádio Renascença—In the Service of the Working Class of Peasants and Working People/Rádio Renascença
21. Rádio Renascença Until the Final Victory/unknown
22. Reading—Investigative—Critical—Collaborative—Revolutionary Information/República
23. Art and Culture—At the Service of the People's Struggle!/unknown
24. For a People's Culture/CEEC


23


Por uma
CULTURA
POPULAR
CULTURA BURGUESA
IDEOLOGIA DOMINANTE
CENTRO DE ESTUDOS EDUCACAO E CULTURA

# Solidariedade Internacional

## International Solidarity


25


26


27

25. Solidarity with the People of the Colonies/unknown
26. Solidarity with the People of Spain/unknown
27. Freedom for All Political Prisoners in Latin America/Casa de Solidariedade com a América Latina
28. Union of Agricultural Workers—Porto District/STA
29. For the Advancement of Agrarian Reform/Agricultural Cooperative of the Youth of the Parish of Boa Fé-Évora
30. Ahead for Agrarian Reform/unknown
31. Without Agrarian Reform There is No Socialism—Solidarity/unknown
32. Revolutionary Commission in Support of Agrarian Reform
33. People's Power—Revolutionary Unity/MFA
34. Out with the Bastards—Power To Those Who Work/CRTSM
35. Join the Armed Organization—The Revolution Will Triumph/PRP
36. People's Power/MES
37. For a United Revolutionary Front—FSP—LCI—LUAR—MDP CDE—MES—PRP-BR/FUR

Agrarian Reform

# Reforma Agrária


28


29


30


32


31

## Partidos Políticos

## Political Parties


33


34


35


36


37

Glossary

AFMRP — Associação de Familiares dos Militares Revolucionários Presos/Family Association of Revolutionary Military Prisoners.

CAARP — Comissão Anti-Fascista de Apoio aos Revolucionários Presos/Commission to Support Anti-Fascist Revolutionary Prisoners.

CARP — Comissão de Apoio aos Revolucionários Presos/Commission to Support Revolutionary Prisoners.

CEEC — Centro de Estudos Educação e Cultura/Center for Education and Cultural Studies. A Porto-based organization whose mission was to develop a "People's Culture" which did research and publishing around education, political history, and anti-colonial struggles.

CLARP — Comité de Libertação dos Antifascistas e Revolucionários Presos/Committee for the Liberation of Antifascist and Revolutionary Prisoners.

COPINFOR — Cooperativa Popular de Informação/People's Information Cooperative.

CRTSM — Conselhos Revolucionários de Trabalhadores, Soldadas e Marinheiras/Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors.

CSMR — Comissão de Solidariedade com os Militares Revolucionários/Commitment to Solidarity with the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

FSP — Popular Socialist Front. A major split of left-leaning members from the Portuguese Socialist Party, which attempted to build an alliance with the MES and LUAR.

FUR — Frente de Unidade Revolucionária/United Revolutionary Front. Briefly held together coalition of parties to the left of the PCP.

Interdindical — The main trade union federation, controlled by the PCP.

LCI — Liga Comunista Internacionalista/Internationalist Communist League. A small Trotskyist party.

LUAR — Liga de Unidade e Acção Revolucionária/United League of Revolutionary Action. A far-left political party that aligned closely with a council communist tradition. The most popular of the "ultra-left" groups, they carried out bank expropriations and showed up as muscle in support of worker's occupations.

MDM — Movimento Democrático de Mulheres/Democratic Women's Movement.

MDP-CDE — Movimento Democrático Português-Comissões Democráticas Eleitorais Portuguese Democratic Movement-Democratic Electoral Commissions. An electoral coalition founded before the Carnation Revolution, at different points it ran the provisional government with the PCP.

MES — Movimento da Esquerda Socialista/Movement of the Socialist Left. A split from the PCP; although they had members in the postrevolution provisional government, they regarded themselves as a movement, not a political party.

MFA — Movimento das Forças Armadas/Armed Forces Movement. The main organization of officers in the Portuguese military who carried out the left-wing coup of April 1974.

PCP — Partido Comunista de Portugal/Portuguese Communist Party. Along with the Portuguese Socialist Party, one of two mass left political parties.

PIDE — Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado/International and State Defense Police. The Estado Novo regime's secret police, much hated by the general population of Portugal as well as the people in Portugal's colonies.

PRP-BR — Partido Revolucionário do Proletariado–Brigadas Revolucionárias/Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat-Revolutionary Brigades. An organization founded in 1970 to carry out an armed struggle against the Estado Novo. Formed into a political party after the revolution.

Radio Renascença — The radio station that played "Grândola, Vila Morena," the song that was the signal for the MFA to launch their coup, leading to the Revolution. In 1975 it was occupied by its workers, and the struggle to maintain the occupation became a rallying cry across many revolutionary groups and elements.

República — Left-wing newspaper.

Sindicato Vidreiro — Glass Workers' Union.

# Sticking with the German Antifa in Berlin

**Joel Morton**

I visited Berlin for the first time in the summer of 2000. It was eleven years after the fall of the Wall, and ten after the German Democratic Republic ceased to exist as a nation-state. Walking the streets of east Berlin, I began to take a keen interest in the explicitly antifascist, or Antifa, stickers that used images and icons from U.S. popular culture in their messaging. The more I looked, the more I found them stuck to lampposts, streetlights, electrical boxes, trash cans, drainage pipes, and mailboxes. Amid the teeming flow of graffiti, I began to collect Antifa stickers, first those that appropriated aspects of American pop culture and eventually any kind of Antifa sticker I could find.

As a general term, "antifa" is short for antifascist, and in Germany "Antifaschistische Aktion," or Antifa, refers to a range of radically militant, decentralized antifascist youth groups whose shared goal is to confront and smash neo-Nazi organizing. Street art, including the stickers discussed here, is an important means by which Antifa actions are announced and coordinated. Antifa artists and designers tend to remain anonymous for various reasons, but especially because of a real concern over reprisals from fascist groups. One of my favorite stickers, an image of Lisa Simpson as Antifa-crusader, epitomizes one type of Antifa design that draws directly from U.S. pop culture. On a solid pink background, a scowling and booted Lisa Simpson swings from a rope with one hand while aiming a spray paint can with the other. She is a heroic Antifa street artist, determined—as the bold white text makes clear—to confront a planned Nazi march on May Day. The sticker also features in the upper left the readily identifiable Antifa symbol of two flags, one red, one black, enclosed within a circle. Most of the stickers include a version of this symbol and often (as in this example) a website for a particular event or group.

Many Antifa stickers wield pop culture, including superhero figures such as Spiderman, the Incredible Hulk, and, in an example

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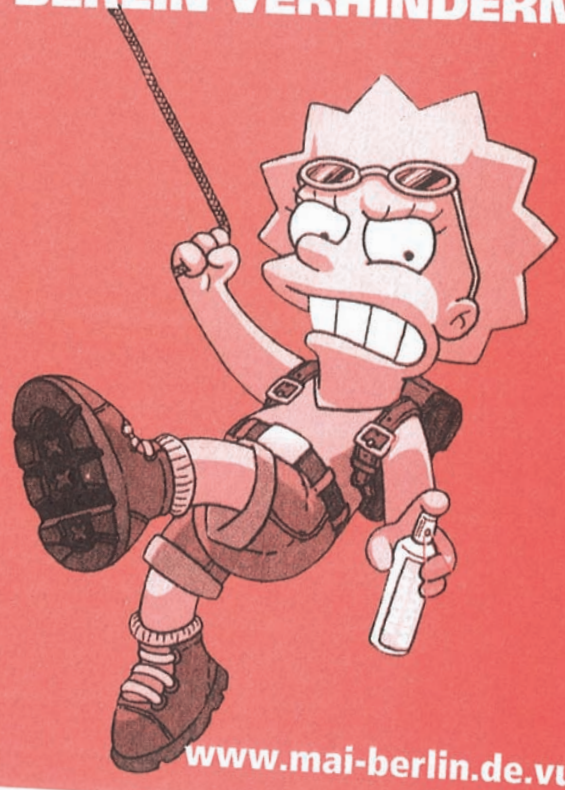
## NAZIAUFMARSCH IN BERLIN VERHINDERN!



www.mai-berlin.de.vu

found recently, Wonder Woman. Here Wonder Woman is used in playful promotion of an antifascist "Skills for Intervention" workshop for Brandenburg, the area surrounding Berlin. Images from Hollywood films are employed as well. One clever sticker from 2009 uses an old film promo for *Casablanca*, including a still of Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, but with "Stop the Nazi Demo" as the film title, hailing antifascists to confront a planned Nazi rally. Another example employs a grim-faced Brad Pitt in his role as a relentless Nazi-killing tank commander in the 2014 film *Fury*. Note in the background and on Pitt's lapel pin the Antifa logo. Pitt's plan is "Den Naziaufmarschen Zum Desaster Machen" (to make the Nazi march a disaster).

Antifa sticker designers also draw from documentary images of World War II itself. One such sticker uses a combat photo of an American B-17 flying over German territory, with explosions below. This time we see the Antifa flags symbol altered to appear as an Israeli flag—some Antifa groups calling themselves "Anti-Deutsch" hold an deliberately uncritical view of Israel based on an ideology in which Nazism and anti-Semitism cannot be separated from capitalist Germany, and only Israel can protect the Jews. The large text at the top, "Es mal wieder so richtig krachen lassen!" (Let it crash again!), expresses the wish that Germany again be completely destroyed, that "Bomber Harris" should "do it again," a reference to the World War II–era British head of the Royal Air Force Bomber Command, Arthur Harris, who oversaw the Allies' massed bomber attacks on German civilian populations. [The Anti-Deutsch often celebrate U.S. and UK military power because they believe it is the only force that can protect Israel, and therefore—in their logic—end anti-Semitism.—Eds.]

World War II, in particular the final destruction of the Nazi regime, remains central to Antifa historical memory. Every year, early May includes not only the May Day celebration of International Workers' Day, but also May 8, the anniversary of the formal end of the war in Europe. Here's a typical Antifa sticker memorializing the end of the war, which uses a war-era photo of a U.S. soldier and a Red

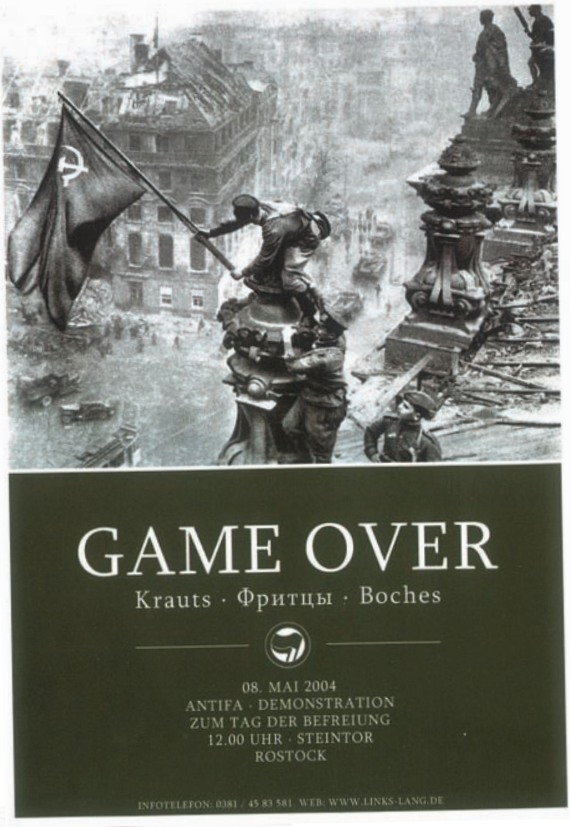

★ f_antifa brandenburg [fabb] :: fabb.antifa.cc ★
F_ANTIFASCHISTISCHE
Skills for Intervention
Workshopreihe in Brandenburg
AKTION
★ 29.-30.10. Frankfurt (Oder) ★


HUMPHREY BOGART · INGRID BERGMAN · PAUL HENREID
Presented by
NONAZISINHALLE.TK
"Nazidemo stoppen"
HALLE · 7.11.09
HBF · HALLMARKT · 11.00
Directed by MICHAEL CURTIZ


Es mal wieder so richtig krachen lassen!
bomber harris, do it again
ANTIFASCHISTISCHE AKTION
Pankower Antifa Offensive [PAO]
www.pankow.antifanews.de


ANTIFA! HERE WE ARE.
1. MAI NAZIFREI
BERLIN BLEIBT ROT
DEN NAZIAUFMARSCH ZUM DESASTER MACHEN
AKTUELLE NEWS AUF WWW.ANTIFA.DE


FEST ZUM
71. JAHRESTAG DES SIEGES
ÜBER DAS FASCHISTISCHE DEUTSCHLAND
9 MAI
TAG DES SIEGES
WER NICHT FEIERT, HAT VERLOREN!
MONTAG 9. MAI 2016 AB 15UHR
AM TREPTOWER PARK 34-35
AM SÜDLICHEN EINGANG ZUM SOWJETISCHEN EHRENMAL
neuntermai.vvn-bda.de


GAME OVER
Krauts · Фритцы · Boches
08. MAI 2004
ANTIFA · DEMONSTRATION
ZUM TAG DER BEFREIUNG
12.00 UHR · STEINTOR
ROSTOCK
INFOTELEFON: 0381 / 45 83 581 WEB: WWW.LINKS-LANG.DE


СПАСИБО!
... heisst Danke!
www.pankow.antifanews.de
pankower antifa offensive [pao]


Army soldier congratulating each other on finishing off Hitler. The 2016 sticker celebrates the 71st anniversary of the victory "über das faschistische Deutschland" (over fascist Germany), with another line of text, "Wer Nicht Feiern, Hat Verloren!" (One who doesn't celebrate is the loser!), reminding viewers to celebrate the annihilation of fascism. Another sticker from 2004 uses a famous black-and-white photo of Red Army soldiers raising the Soviet flag over the Reichstag, with the large English text "Game Over." [Other wings of the German Antifa movement hold political positions in support of Stalinism as the only force that was able to destroy Nazi German power.—Eds.]

Antifa stickers also address and seek to shape generational German attitudes toward the war and its aftermath. In one striking sticker, a photo image of a young German boy is shown yelling at and giving the finger to his grandfather. Set over a background of orange and white, the text-heavy sticker includes the headline, "Opa halt's Maul!" (Grandpa, shut up!), adding, "Deustche täter sind keine opfer!" (German dead are not victims!). Although steeped in history, here again the practical point is to draw in young people to confront a planned Nazi march, this time in Dresden.

Yet another version of Antifa sticker uses photo images of young women as idealized antifascist troopers. On a faded green background with white text set within thick, black horizontal stripes, one sticker uses a martial arts photo of a young blond woman smashing a swastika with her fist. The main text reads, "1.Mai/SMASH Nazi Aufmarsch


in Berlin" (May 1/ Smash the Nazi March in Berlin). Another such Smash-themed sticker, using the same color scheme and identical font, shows a different (though again blond) woman, arms crossed, sternly looking through sunglasses directly at the viewer. A third example is less explicitly confrontational, showing another woman (once again blond) with protective eye goggles atop her head, peering thoughtfully over her shoulder at (or just past) the viewer. The text, angled across the top of the sticker, reads, "Gesichstrevisionismus Bekämpfen!" (Combat historical revisionism!). The call here is to prevent a Nazi march (Naziaufmarsch verhindern!) in Magdeburg, a small city near Berlin. Note, as usual, the double-flagged Antifaschistische Aktion logo.

Young German men are depicted in Antifa stickers as well. But unlike the use of actual photos of young women, images of young men tend to be stylized types, often masked figures meant to depict antifascists in action against Nazis. One repeats the pink background of the Lisa Simpson sticker, but features a hand-drawn image of an earnest young punk standing astride a plunger, presumably to detonate a bomb meant for fascists. The call here is for a May Day action to "Naziaufmarschen Verhindern" (Prevent the Nazi March!). In another, a young man rides a skateboard in front of a large granite statue etched with the words "Rot Front" (Red Front). A third example uses images in red and text in black to issue the historical demand in German and English, "Nie wieder Deutschland!" and "Never again." In red, in a design style resembling stenciling, a strong, masked young man swings a sledgehammer into the traditional German eagle, a national symbol in use before, during, and after the Third Reich.

Numerous other images of righteous, physical, determined

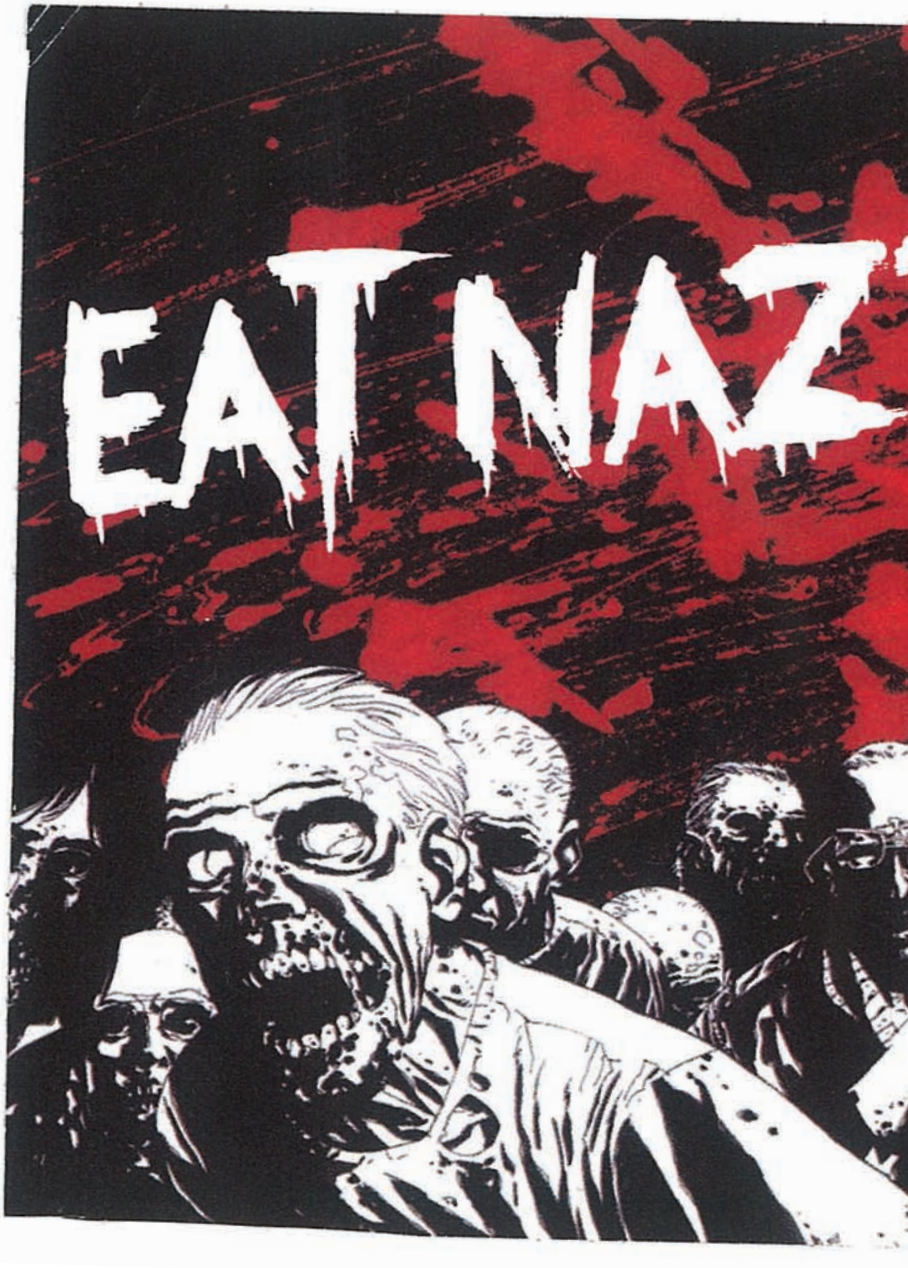

1.MAI / SMASH
NAZI_AUFMARSCH IN BERLIN
10:30H / U-STRAUSBERGER PL
ANTIFA -DEMONSTRATION
WWW.MAI-BERLIN.DE.VU


1.MAI / SMASH
NAZIAUFMARSCH IN BERLIN-MITTE
10:30H / U-STRAUSBERGER PLATZ /
ANTIFA -DEMONSTRATION
WWW.MAI-BERLIN.DE.VU

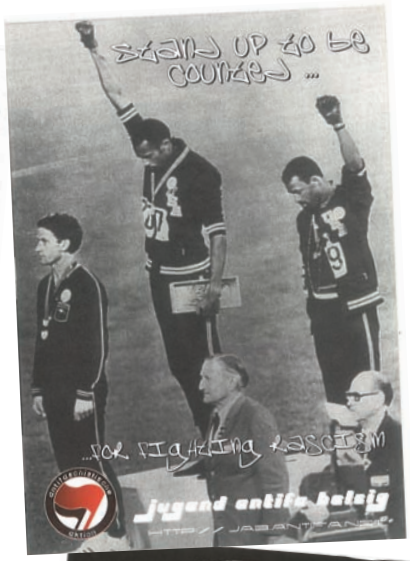

GESCHICHTSREVISIONISMUS
BEKÄMPFEN!
19. Januar 2008 / Magdeburg
>>>> Antifa-Demo >>>>>>>>>
Naziaufmarsch verhindern!
mehr Infos: www.16Januar.tk


1.Mai*BERLIN
NAZIAUFMARSCH
VERHINDERN!
www.mai-berlin.de.vu


ROTFRONT
//NORDOST.ANTIFANEWS.DE
ZUSAMMEN KÄMPFEN/MIT ALLEN MITTELN
AUTONOME ANTIFA NORDOST BERLIN


EAT NAZ


TS NOW



YOUTH AGAINST FASCISM AND GOVERMENT NORDBERLIN
YAFAGO@GMX.DE




young men appear in other Antifa stickers. These include the use of a famous photograph of John Carlos and Tommie Smith's raised fists on the victory stand at the 1968 Mexico Olympics; a film still of Bruce Lee pointing at a bad guy and exclaiming, "Fascho Musik wird hier nicht gespielt! Ist das klar!?" (Fascist music will not be played here! Is that clear!?); and anime characters ready to "Smash Fascism!" or, in a gentler version, looking to attend an electro and hip-hop Antifa-Konzert.

Let me conclude this quick trip by offering some additional interesting examples. An immediately identifiable, one might say classic, Antifa sticker uses no human figures but only the text "Siempre Antifa(scista)" (always antifascist) on an unfurling banner backed by a red star, set within a white wash across a black background. Another text-and-image-only example offers the simultaneously stern and comic reminder, "Kein Sex Mit Nazis" (no sex with Nazis), on a white background with black flowers in each corner, ink dripping, like blood, from words, flowers, and the Antifa double-flag symbol. And another recently found, oddly comic example plays with the globally popular zombie theme to show a scary group of the Antifa undead staggering toward the viewer, along with the text, set against a black and red sky, "Eat Nazis Now."

Here in Berlin, my neighborhood is a Nazifreiezone… Is yours? S


INCITE!
DEMOC

INCITE
IN THEIR OWN WORDS

It is 1980 … The Dirty War against the Disappeared in Argentina continues … Death squads kill nuns and villagers in El Salvador … Two thousand demonstrators are gunned down in South Korea … The U.S. and the USSR brandish nuclear missiles with the threat of mobile launchers and neutron warheads that destroy people but save real estate … The Soviets invade Afghanistan; Iraq invades Iran … The American hostages remain inside the embassy in Tehran … Massive strikes led by Solidarity spread across Poland from the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk … Riots in Brixton and Bristol in the UK, sectarian battles in Belfast … Even nature gets in on the drama with the eruption of Mount St. Helens … The Hollywood cowboy blusters for the election and a feeble U.S. economy continues to stumble … But the burning question of the summer is "Who shot J.R.?" … Blood and flames and voodoo economics …

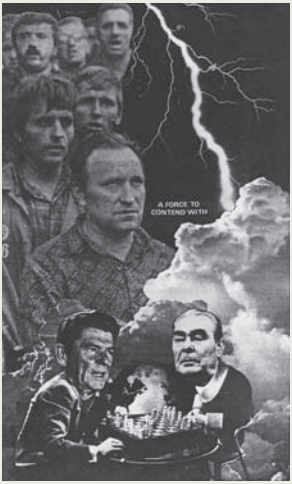
RACY

There is enough dissonance and misery and outrage that a few young ex-suburbanites, artists who desired to be part of the defiant shout, like the punk bands on the stages of scruffy clubs and the airwaves of alternative radio, tried to join the revolution.

Could we make art that served the cause?

The ideal of revolution from below, the struggle to transform all relations of power, between men and women, races, classes, nations, an international resistance to empires of any kind, at any level, within a family or a superpower, was an exhilarating inspiration. The music scene, punk and experimental, was thriving in underground clubs. There were impromptu gatherings in abandoned warehouses with names like Night of Mayhem. Fliers promoting shows and performances were pasted on streetlight poles and walls all over the San Francisco Bay Area. The styles were rough and confrontational, collages cut from magazines and books, easily and cheaply reproduced on then-new high-speed copiers that were widely available.

Incite! was made up of four members: Mark and Mimi had photography degrees from the San Francisco Art Institute; Jeff

had studied graphic design at UC Davis and was working for an ad agency; and Angela had a long history making graphics for the *Revolutionary Worker* and other publications.

The posters were their initial foray into xerox street art, where Incite! joined other artists like the San Francisco Poster Brigade, *Processed World*, and Dead Kennedys. One time while putting up fliers near the California College of Arts and Crafts Angela noticed a woman not far behind them peeling the posters off for her "collection!" They rented a post office box in Oakland, with the address enabling other artists and kindred spirits to contact them. Over the four years of Incite!, they built up an extensive mailing list and contacts that eventually reached Europe and even the Soviet Union, resulting in a samizdat, or underground, exhibition in an apartment in Moscow with xeroxes smuggled in by friends.

The effort was very much an organic whole, with artistic and political motives intertwined. As with anything organic, the ideas and art evolved, especially as they met and corresponded with other artists and musicians. In many ways, San Francisco is a small town, and the political art–punk


Chick-fil-A
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

rock subculture was intimate enough that they knew most of the people involved with similar work and aspirations: *Processed World*, Valencia Tool & Die, ARE (Artists for Revolution in the Eighties), *RE/Search* magazine, *Creep* magazine, Winston Smith, Bob Black and The Last International, Club Foot, Club Generic, Bound Together Bookstore, the *Revolutionary Wanker* zine, and others. At one point there was even a punk mini-mall called the Compound in an old firehouse in the Mission District where they sold bound collections of their collages zine, *X-Cite*.

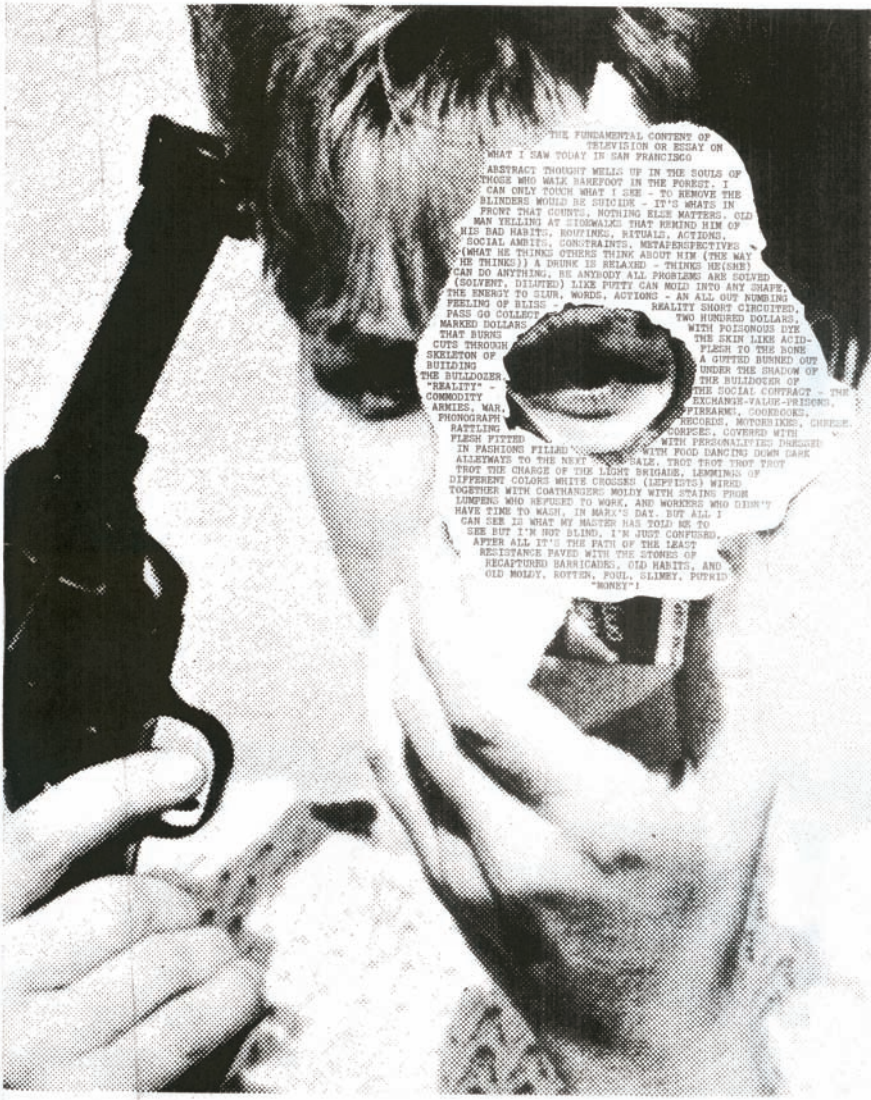
Jeff and Mark were also in a band called the Geeks, which had been together since the late sixties and finally found a more receptive milieu for their disruptive jazz-fueled punk rock. Jeff did the fliers for Geeks gigs and has made fliers for many of the bands he has been a part of ever since.

Angela states that in the beginning Incite! was inspired by the Revolutionary Communist Party, with RCP artist R.O. involved in early meetings. Mimi and Mark reject that version of the story, claiming they had already left more organized politics. [This disagreement shelved this article for five years, as it was originally slated to be published in *Signal:01*. We've resuscitated it for this issue because (a) we feel the graphics are valuable and should be seen, and (b)


we hope the extra time has cooled the conflicts between the original members, and they'll see the benefits of this being in print.—Eds.] Either way, they all looked to John Heartfield and the history of political photomontage. Exposure to the diverse Bay Area community had the effect of broadening their political perspective, both as individuals and as a group. Mark claims a gravitation to a more anarchist view of society and a freer aesthetic that was more personal in subject and technique. Incite! always created the posters as individuals, with the collaboration being the collective identity. That said, they would all meet and discuss what each had done, the political content, the aesthetics, and then, perhaps, make some changes to the pieces.

According to Mark, the early work was more influenced by Maoism and the traditional Left, and as they matured personally and politically, the art evolved as well. In contrast, Angela believes Incite! became less antagonistic to imperialism and more a reflection of the members discontent, the byproduct of alienation and adolescent rebellion. Either way, even thirty-five years down the road, much of the work still resonates.

When Incite! finally wound down in 1983, they were all ready to move on to other explorations. Mark Chambers began a long series of

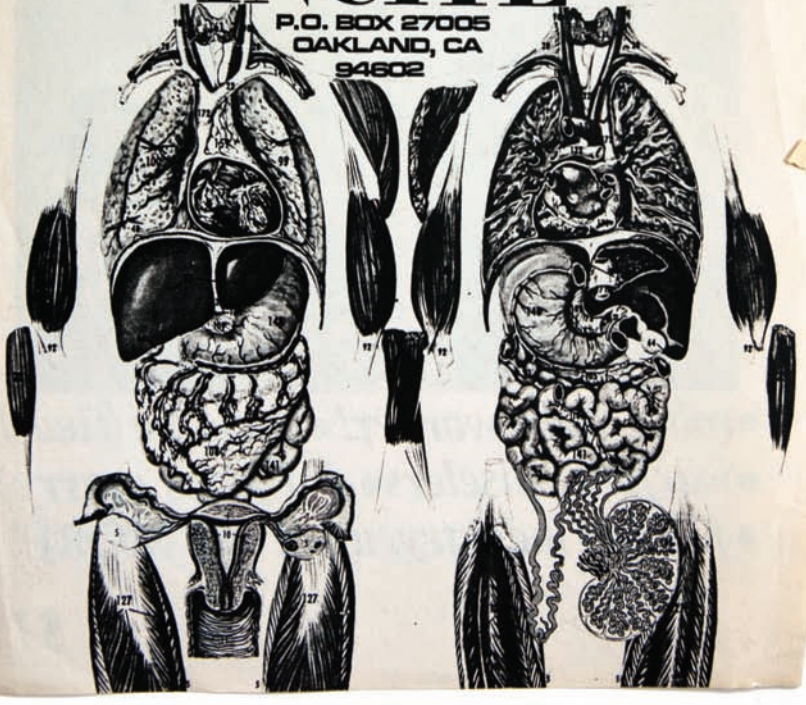

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTENT OF
TELEVISION OR ESSAY ON
WHAT I SAW TODAY IN SAN FRANCISCO
ABSTRACT THOUGHT WELLS UP IN THE SOULS OF
THOSE WHO WALK BAREFOOT IN THE FOREST. I
CAN ONLY TOUCH WHAT I SEE - TO REMOVE THE
BLINDERS WOULD BE SUICIDE - IT'S WHATS IN
FRONT THAT COUNTS. NOTHING ELSE MATTERS. OLD
MAN YELLING AT SIDEWALKS THAT REMIND HIM OF
HIS BAD HABITS, ROUTINES, RITUALS, ACTIONS,
SOCIAL AMBITS, CONSTRAINTS, METAPERSPECTIVES -
(WHAT HE THINKS OTHERS THINK ABOUT HIM (THE WAY
HE THINKS)) A DRUNK IS RELAXED - THINKS HE(SHE)
CAN DO ANYTHING., BE ANYBODY ALL PROBLEMS ARE SOLVED
(SOLVENT, DILUTED) LIKE PUTTY CAN MOLD INTO ANY SHAPE,
THE ENERGY TO SLUR, WORDS, ACTIONS - AN ALL OUT NUMBING
FEELING OF BLISS - REALITY SHORT CIRCUITED,
PASS GO COLLECT TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS,
MARKED DOLLARS WITH POISONOUS DYE
THAT BURNS THE SKIN LIKE ACID -
CUTS THROUGH FLESH TO THE BONE -
SKELETON OF A GUTTED BURNED OUT
BUILDING UNDER THE SHADOW OF
THE BULLDOZER THE BULLDOZER OF
"REALITY" - THE SOCIAL CONTRACT - THE
COMMODITY EXCHANGE-VALUE-PRISONS,
ARMIES, WAR FIREARMS, COOKBOOKS,
PHONOGRAPH RECORDS, MOTORBIKES, CHEESE,
RATTLING CORPSES, COVERED WITH
FLESH FITTED WITH PERSONALITIES DRESSED
IN FASHIONS FILLED WITH FOOD DANCING DOWN DARK
ALLEYWAYS TO THE NEXT SALE. TROT TROT TROT TROT
TROT THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE, LEMMINGS OF
DIFFERENT COLORS WHITE CROSSES (LEFTISTS) WIRED
TOGETHER WITH COATHANGERS MOLDY WITH STAINS FROM
LUMPENS WHO REFUSED TO WORK, AND WORKERS WHO DIDN'T
HAVE TIME TO WASH, IN MARX'S DAY. BUT ALL I
CAN SEE IS WHAT MY MASTER HAS TOLD ME TO
SEE BUT I'M NOT BLIND, I'M JUST CONFUSED,
AFTER ALL IT'S THE PATH OF THE LEAST
RESISTANCE PAVED WITH THE STONES OF
RECAPTURED BARRICADES, OLD HABITS, AND
OLD MOLDY, SOFTER, FOUL, SLIMEY, PUTRID
"MONEY"!

# X-CITE IS -NOT THE POLITICAL ORGAN OF INCITE

EDITOR: ANITA REASON CO-EDS: MILITANT DILETTANTES

CONTRIBUTORS: LAST INTERNATIONAL, LOGOSEXUALS, GEEKS

P.O. BOX 27005
OAKLAND, CA
94602

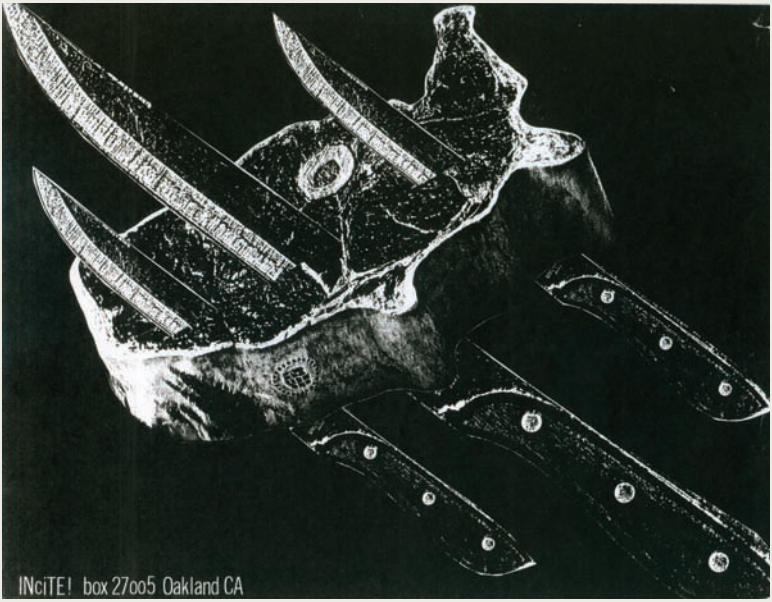


# X-CITE

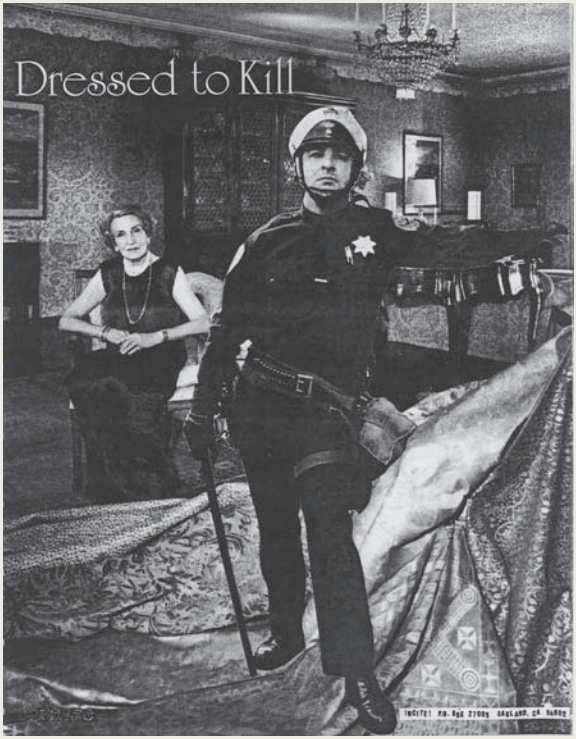

- *robot stabs worker!* • *déclassé (fieds)*
- *warfare chiselers* • *did jesus marry?*
- *fascion industry, u.s.a.* & MORE!

*$1*

miniature tableaus, Mimi Plumb returned to photography, Jeff Jones was a founding member of the punk polka band Polkacide, and Angela Casazza went to graduate school to train as an art therapist and for years worked with at-risk children, trying to make a difference in their lives by bringing them the means to create. S

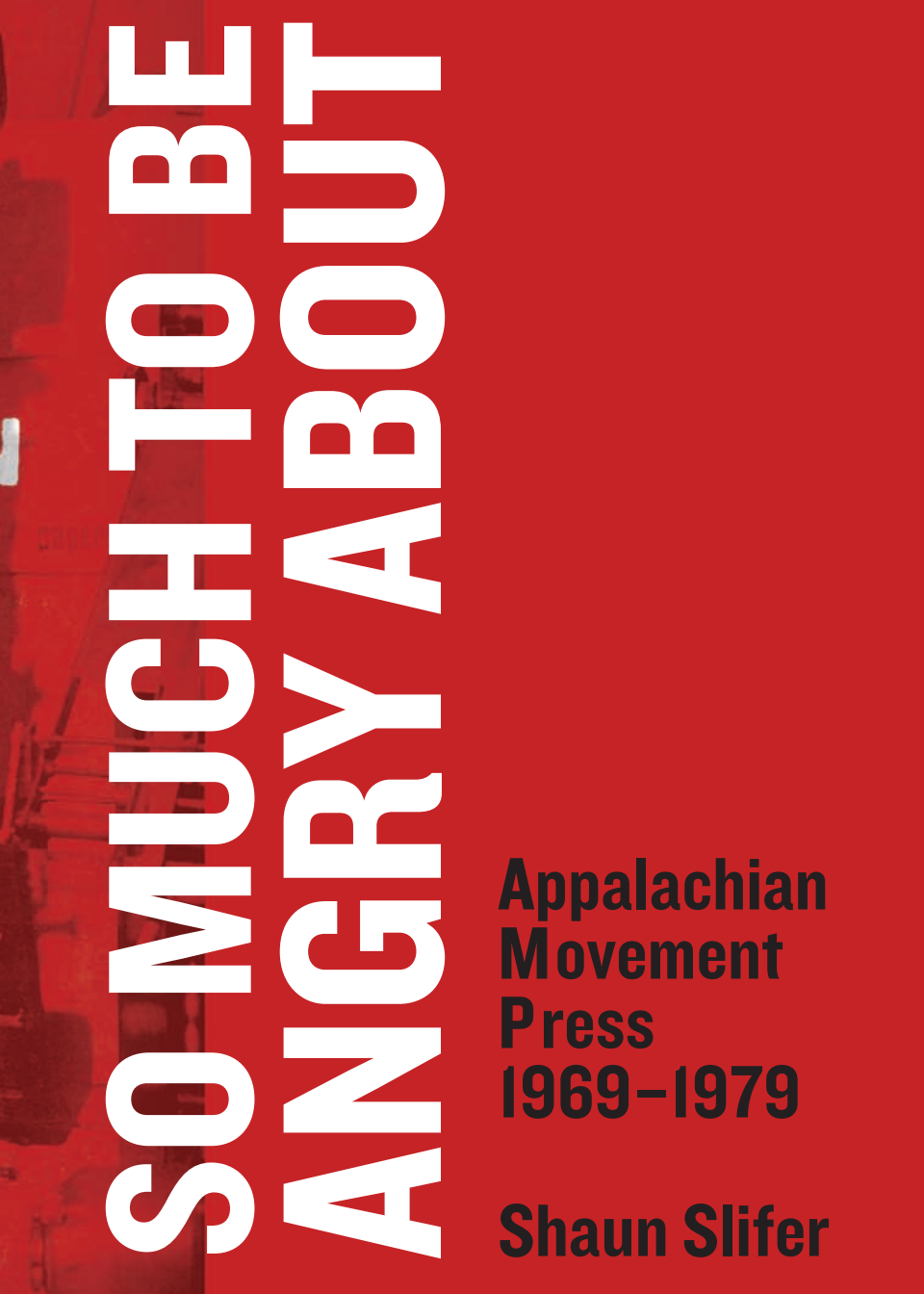


POLITICIANS


Dressed to Kill


UPI
Lies
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
Lies
Atlan
LIES
Harpers
Lies
TIME
The Economist
Newsweek
Lies
San Francisco Examiner
GANNETT


APPALACHIAN
MOVEMENT
PRESS
LABOR DONATED



# SO MUCH TO BE ANGRY ABOUT

## Appalachian Movement Press 1969–1979

Shaun Slifer

"In the fall of 1969, a few of us in Huntington decided we needed a print shop. We decided that this was our only hope in getting correct and full information to all Appalachians. We had been through many years of education in our mountain schools and knew what a complete lack of any information on our culture and history and on our present day political and economic existence there was. We wanted to print pamphlets on famous Appalachians who are ignored in schoolbooks. We wanted to print pamphlets on our Appalachian heritage—on the fight against slavery by mountain people at the time of the Civil War, on the long struggle to gain a greater degree of freedom through organizing unions in the coalfields, and on the general spirit of independence and self-reliance of Appalachians throughout history. We wanted to print pamphlets about how today all our wealth is being taken from us—the wealth we produce, with our resources and our labor, that does not benefit us, but is added to the bank accounts of super-rich corporate owners in Philadelphia, New York, and Pittsburgh."

—Tom Woodruff, foreword to *Freedom on the Mountains* by Don West, 1973

Amid the turmoil of the 1960s in the United States, Appalachian Movement Press (AMP) was born in Huntington, West Virginia, at the end of 1969. Earlier in the same year, a small group of students at Huntington's Marshall University finally gained college recognition for a chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) after four years of battling public uproar and red-baiting. The Huntington SDS chapter did not survive the national dissolution of the SDS as a viable movement, but the local shift in ideas about activism brought on by the fight for official recognition of the chapter, fought by some of the same activists who would go on to start Appalachian Movement Press, was profound.

During this time Tom Woodruff and Dannie Stewart, both organizers of the Huntington SDS chapter, sought to create an activist printing press with others. Appalachian Movement Press would be a radical, independent, regional press with the overall purpose of uplifting Appalachian people to self-determination. Their alternative, grassroots publishing outfit would remedy the lack of historical

# A TIME FOR ANGER

DON WEST

Garrison and other famous figures of the pre-Civil War era (*Robert Tharin - Mountain Abolitionist*, by Don West, 30¢).

There's poetry and labor songs and a booklet on mountain folk traditions; a history of a Socialist newspaper, published in Huntington in the early 20th century and run out of business by the governor and the state militia; and even a 1972 calendar. Prices range from a dime for *Thoughts of Mother Jones* to $2 for the calendar.

If AMP has anything like a bestseller, says Woodruff, it's a booklet of poems by Don West. "That one sold 6,000 copies and the songbooks average 5,000 sales. We often set up literature tables at folk conferences, music festivals, Appalachian fairs, that kind of thing. We also distribute through some bookstores."

What money is made pays subsistence wages. If any is left over, it goes back into the shop. The Huntington office has a complete

**AMP's storefront on 8th Avenue in Huntington serves as a combination print shop, office, and bookstore. It is equipped with two offset presses, a platemaker, and a paper cutter.**

understanding of Appalachian history by Appalachians themselves, republish and amplify anticorruption journalism from other sources, and act as the primary publishing outfit for the regional organizer and poet Don West.

Working as part of a national emergence of activist "movement" print shops, Appalachian Movement Press began in a context specific to a burgeoning Appalachian identity movement, and in concert with organizations that were part of grassroots movements specific to, and speaking to, people living in the Appalachian region. The region itself is an area of grey, somewhat cultural boundaries that geographically follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. The Central Appalachian region, where AMP was focused, includes eastern Tennessee, western North Carolina, eastern Kentucky, parts of western Virginia and eastern Ohio, and the entire state of West Virginia [1].

With the idea of "getting correct and full information to all Appalachians," and also to create a viable print shop in service to regional movements that would benefit from a sympathetic regional activist press, Woodruff, Stewart, and others spent six months raising

MP is not a commercial shop. Instead, according to Woodruff, the Press exists to provide a service to groups at work for social change: student groups, the Black Lung Association, the Welfare Rights Organization, and others.

here's a need for that. But more cycle. If you had the money, you coal-chemical-steel conglomerate

$750 to buy the equipment to begin Appalachian Movement Press. Two thirty-year-old AB Dick offset presses, a binding machine, and other related gear formed the basis for the AMP operation, and their first shop was located in the house of Dave Workman, one of the original organizers. Later a building was rented (for $90 a month) near the intersection of Sixteenth Avenue and Eighth Street in Huntington, which housed a first-floor bookstore specializing in radical literature, with Woodruff, living as a paid AMP employee on subsistence wages, housed upstairs [2]. In 1974, Woodruff found seed money through a local Episcopal church, which allowed them to update and replace some of their aged equipment.

Yvonne Farley, who later worked with Don West at the Appalachian South Folklife Center, remembered AMP as part of "an Appalachian intifada" [4]: a growing complex of leftist activists in West Virginia in the 1970s who were organizing around (or splintering from) federal War on Poverty initiatives, involved in actions against strip mining and corruption in the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) union, organizing for recognition and treatment of black lung disease (coal workers' pneumoconiosis), and embracing

Above: Spreads from a feature on AMP in *West Virginia Illustrated*, July-August 1972.

# CONSPIRACY IN COAL

by T.N. BETHEL

a newfound Appalachian identity which resisted mainstream stereotypes of the region as backward and challenged industrial capitalism for it's responsibility in creating and maintaining systemic poverty in the region. AMP was one part of a loose network of activist groups that included dissident, reformist members of the UMWA, Miners for Democracy, the Council of the Southern Mountains, political parties like the Socialist Workers Party and Revolutionary Communist Party, and the aforementioned SDS chapter ushered in by Woodruff, Stewart, and others. As well as creating and distributing their own publications as part of the AMP rubric, they also served as the regional go-to print shop for these organizations, often charging about half the market rate [5]. *Mountain Life & Work*, the regular magazine of the Council of the Southern Mountains, was their first sustaining bread-and-butter printing contract [2].

## "He Gave Us His Spirit"

Central to AMP's beginnings was Don West, a north-Georgia-born poet, a civil rights activist, an ordained Congregationalist minister, a militant labor organizer, and an educator. As West himself tells it, he was radicalized in his youth when he witnessed firsthand the lethal violence used against striking textile workers in Marion, North Carolina, in 1929. Here he was exposed to militant union organizing, the violent backlash against this organizing, and the political ideologies that would provide the fundament for his life's work [4].

"We were broke," Tom Woodruff wrote in the foreword to West's 1973 AMP pamphlet *Freedom on the Mountains*, "so we looked around for people with money who would help us out. We contacted a lot of rich people who gave us no money. We contacted a lot of people with no money, but they gave us no support. We went to see Don West—he had no money, but he gave us what he had. He gave us something much more—he gave us his spirit. . . . A spirit of self-reliance and independence, a spirit of freedom and democracy which enables us to work through any hardships and struggle to reach our goals. Don West is the epitome of that spirit. . . . He is an angry Appalachian, but there is so much to be angry about."

West was already sixty-three when the young founders of AMP approached him for guidance. While he may have had some initial

misgivings about the "hippie printers" in Huntington, West eventually came to believe in the overall value of their mission and would come to be a friend and mentor to Woodruff. He also likely saw in AMP an opportunity to publish his own work free from editorial oversight and distributed directly to Appalachian people. Indeed, by this time in his writing career, West had lost most of his earlier, tenuous patience for the conventional arena of poetry review and critique in which his work had generally been lauded. His poetry style flew in the face of many accepted conventions of literary writing, but AMP provided a direct line to the people he most wished to write for. West turned to AMP to publish not only his poems but also his yet-unpublished research writings on the abolitionist movement in Appalachia during the Civil War, his thoughts on traditional mountain music and customs, and various increasingly trenchant essays addressing what West saw as the need to motivate Appalachians to self-determination. West's writing was almost the only original material that AMP published. As the editors and organizers of the press weren't themselves concerned with being recognized as individuals, West, already a revered character, became the central figure, enough that some joked that AMP should have instead been called the "Don West Press." [4]

Decades earlier, when West was a student, he put himself through the Vanderbilt School of Religion in Nashville and had already been publishing his poetry in several literary journals and leftist political papers. Intrigued by a trip to Denmark to visit the folk schools there, he later cofounded the Highlander Folk School in Grundy County, Tennessee, in 1932 with Myles Horton and James Dombrowski. Highlander became a critical center of civil rights training and provided for West a model of the center he and his wife later founded in southern West Virginia, the Appalachian South Folklife Center.

Before AMP, West's poetry had appeared regularly in communist, leftist, and religious publications, as well as in regional movement magazines like *Mountain Life & Work*. Of both his writing and his activism, Jeff Biggers notes that "West sought to validate homegrown movements and literary expressions in an attempt to dispel any need for direction or interference from outside forces,"

PAINT CREEK
MINER

Famous Labor Songs From
APPALACHIA

by Charles Patterson

WEST VIRGINIA
WONDERLAND

by
William C. Blizzard

35¢

The Pittston
Mentality:
Manslaughter on
Buffalo Creek

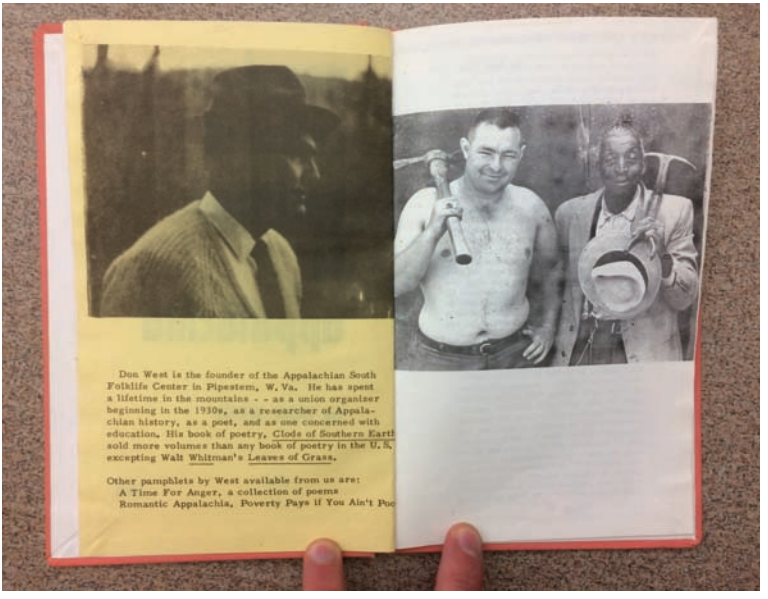
by Thomas N. Bethell
and
Davitt McAteer

25¢

THE
WEST
VIRGINIA
ESTABLISHMENT

by
ROD
HARLESS

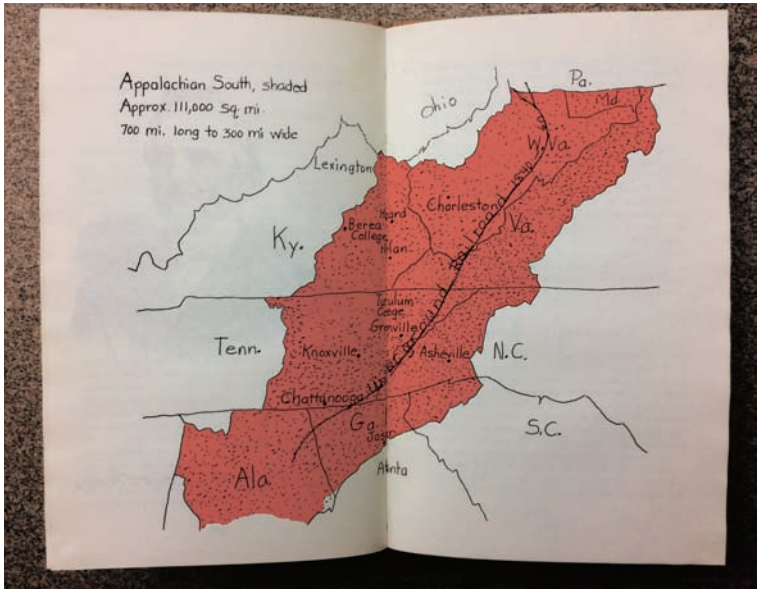
$1.00




Opening spread from *People's Cultural Heritage in Appalachia*, 1971.

while also taking to task the negative Appalachian stereotypes he saw proliferating in popular entertainment culture. West "didn't wish to elevate his folk traditions to a 'higher art' . . . Such a rendering would have transmuted the essence of 'folk' culture or 'living word' and denied its inherent value and contributions: choosing a 'high' form would have been an implicit designation of 'low' to his own vernacular. West believed that poetry in the language of 'his people' was not only an expression of his own culture, but an act of resistance in turn." [3]

West's early work as an organizer for the Communist Party in Georgia eventually pushed him underground, living and publishing under many aliases. His life was threatened several times during his stint as a field organizer in eastern Kentucky mining communities in the 1930s, and in 1948 the Ku Klux Klan burned his home and barn to the ground. His early connections with the Communist Party would haunt both he and his wife Connie for the rest of their lives—the FBI would deem them interesting enough to track the details of




Inner spread from *Robert Tharin: Biography of a Mountain Abolitionist*, ca. 1970.

their lives and movements for over thirty years.

In 1965 the Wests bought six hundred acres in Summers County, West Virginia, and later founded the Appalachian South Folklife Center, near the town of Pipestem. The ASFC would focus on "the restoration of self-respect and human dignity lost as a consequence of the region's colonial relationship with industrial America." [11] Getting the community in rural Summers County to come around to Don and Connie's vision for ASFC took time, and FBI files from early in its formation focus divisively on community concerns about itinerant "hippies" congregating on the center's acreage, mostly during their frequent folk music festivals [6].

## "Our Wealth Is Daily Stolen from Us"

Appalachian Movement Press was guided by the concept of "internal colonialism," a theoretical model of political economy that several activists involved with AMP applied to the coal-rich central Appalachian areas of eastern Kentucky and most of West Virginia.

APPALACHIAN MOVEMENT
PRESS
745 7th Street, Huntington, W. Va. 25701



*THE STATE OF APPALACHIA*

Southern and Central Appalachia are incredibly rich in resources. These include a favorable geographic location, abundant rainfall, a varied and fast-growing forest, immense coal, oil and gas deposits and important quantities of mica, gypsum, talc, limestone, iron-ore, gneiss, grahamite, marble, and commercial clays. Yet it is the poorest part of America. The nation's five poorest counties are in Eastern Kentucky.

— Harry Caudill in the Introduction to *The Federal Government in Appalachia* by James Branscome

*sit down and read. educate yourself for the coming conflicts.*

*mother jones*

At the time, Appalachian writers and activists had begun to speak of their home as a "colony within a colony." In this framework, their mountains and land had been colonized by wealthy industrialists from northern urban centers, often in collusion with powerful regional elites, to be exploited as resource extraction centers, first for timber, then for coal. The people of the region gained little from this arrangement beyond repression and poverty. "As the Appalachian radicals apply the internal colonialism model, it has been used to examine the process by which dominant outside industrial interests established control and continue to prevent autonomous development of the subordinate internal colony." This model suggests "the creation of an anticolonial movement and a radical restructuring of society with a redistribution of resources to the poor and powerless." [7]

AMP rooted itself firmly within this narrative. From their 1976 catalogue: "Appalachia is a colony. Our wealth is daily stolen from us. Our natural resources and our labor are exploited by giant corporations whose owners do not live here. Not only do these owners not live here, but they make no contribution to the process of production. Our natural resources rightfully belong to all of us, and it is by our labor alone that they are made useful to us in the form of products. Yet today we receive no value from our resources and a mere pittance for our labor. The greatest share of what is produced from our resources and labor goes into the pockets of these corporate owners who do nothing at all to earn it. They live and have become the richest people in America by exploiting us. We at the Appalachian Press are dedicated to putting an end to the exploitation of our land and labor." This statement appeared occasionally on the inside covers of their publications and as an advertisement in several years of issues of the folk culture journal *Foxfire*.

In a contemporary context, particularly when viewed from outside the region, it's not hard to look back and wonder if this newfound Appalachian identity—conceived of by many as a largely, but certainly not entirely, white identity by the 1970s—which saw itself as colonized, perhaps failed to fully reckon with the earlier colonialism of the region. The cover of 1973's *Fighting for Survival: The Bootleg Coal Industry* features an anonymous quote that highlights

Opposite: Detail from the front cover of the 1977 AMP catalog.

this dissonance: "As for the 'stealing' part of it, how did the different companies get their coal lands? In some cases they paid $6 an acre; was that a fair price? In other cases they stole it from the Indians. . . . Well we're the new Indians, taking what coal we can back from the companies." The mountainous areas of Appalachia certainly had, prior to European settler influx and the 1830 Indian Removal Act, been densely populated by a number of nations, primarily Cherokee and Shawnee. Yet it has been erroneously repeated by historians in modern times that the state of West Virginia "was only a 'hunting ground' and that there were no Indigenous peoples living in the area when the white settlers came." [8] In any case, this burgeoning Appalachian identity, as understood by AMP in the context of the 1970s, drew predominantly from a largely Scots-Irish ethnic settler tradition, to the perhaps-unintentional exclusion of any Indigenous people who either preceded or continue to live in the region. Since the identity grew in popularity in the decade after the outmigration of a significant number of the black population to northern industrial centers in the 1950s and '60s, it also didn't generally apply to black Appalachians in practice.

David Walls puts into context that activists like the AMP founders "hit upon the internal colonialism model for reasons that had more to do with the focus of the New Left in the late 1960's—imperialism abroad and oppression of racial minorities at home—than the appropriateness of the model to the Appalachian situation." [7] Walls and others suggest that a more appropriate framework would be to understand the region in light of the typical functioning of any industrialized capitalist state, where peripheral areas are sacrificed to bring resources to core centers—southern West Virginian coal fields, for example, sacrificed to keep the lights on in Philadelphia. Whether or not the application of the internal colony economic theory holds up to scrutiny outside Appalachia, it's nonetheless a popular analogy for understanding the single-resource-industry domination that continues to haunt the region today. (For example, my first exposure to the "resource colony" idea occurred at anti–mountaintop removal mining info sessions and marches around 2004 and 2005.)


**The Shame That Is Kentucky's!**

The Story of the Harlan Mine War.

By E. J. COSTELLO

35¢

**LOOK OUT ——**

**THERE'S A PROFIT**

**IN YOUR APPENDIX!**

HOSPITALS IN WEST VIRGINIA

25¢

# SONGS

# for

# Southern Workers

## 1937 Songbook of the Kentucky Workers Alliance

Prepared by
DON WEST

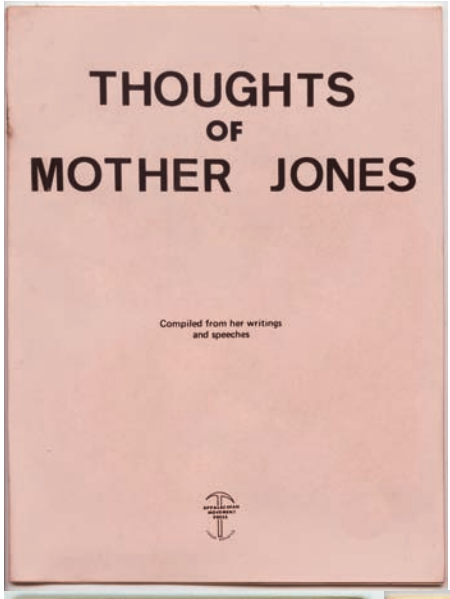
$.25

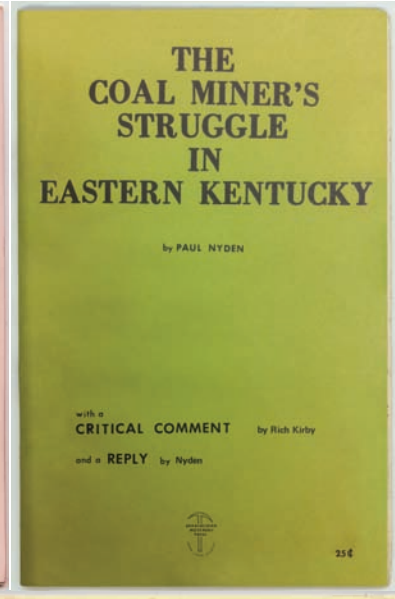
It was from this easy-to-grasp analogy that AMP located itself as an accessible publishing platform from which Appalachians could find inexpensive literature to educate themselves and then develop the motivation to act in collective interest to liberate the region from their colonizers in far-flung and alien urban centers. AMP had three primary points of focus: republishing original texts about early twentieth-century Appalachian movements towards workplace determination and union formation, republishing modern articles on government corruption and coal industry deception in relation to environmental degradation, and continual publication of Don West's original creative works and historical research. AMP published each of these themes under a unified banner of self-determination for Appalachians hoping to buck the yoke of a coal-dependent economy and history, in order to eventually join an international struggle for justice.

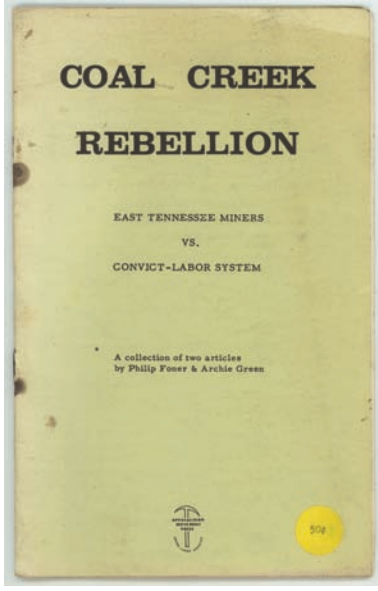
"Basically, they were real troublemakers," AMP printer John Strong Clark told me about the AMP founders during a phone interview, "but they had a printing press."

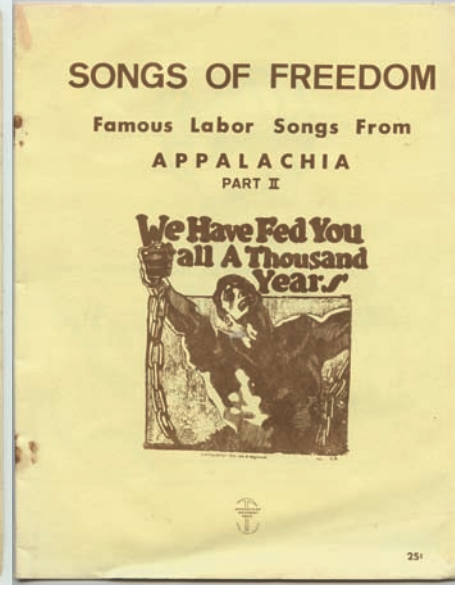
## "$0.00 for Unemployed Appalachians"

AMP appears to have hit the ground running not long after Woodruff, Stewart, and others bought their offset printing outfit. A majority of the extant publications they produced are dated from early 1970 through 1974, and bear the earliest incarnation of their logo, or printer's colophon: a simple drawing of a coal pick, the words "Appalachian Movement Press" striking across the pick handle, with the slogan "Labor Donated" below. This logo would appear on the front or back cover of every AMP publication for the first few years, a bold and clear graphic expression of the press's steadfast focus on the history and culture of working Appalachians which, by and large, centered on the work of extracting coal. In 1974, the AMP logo added the word "Union" before "Labor Donated," reflecting Woodruff's membership in the Worker's Education Union Local 189 of the American Federation of Teachers. This subtle change expressed AMP's lack of concern with aesthetic fussiness —the original slogan appears to have just been shifted, by hand, to one side to make room for the additional word. In this way it remained for years,


THOUGHTS
OF
MOTHER JONES
Compiled from her writings
and speeches


THE
COAL MINER'S
STRUGGLE
IN
EASTERN KENTUCKY
by PAUL NYDEN
with a
CRITICAL COMMENT by Rich Kirby
and a REPLY by Nyden
25¢


COAL CREEK
REBELLION
EAST TENNESSEE MINERS
VS.
CONVICT-LABOR SYSTEM
A collection of two articles
by Philip Foner & Archie Green
50¢


SONGS OF FREEDOM
Famous Labor Songs From
APPALACHIA
PART II
We Have Fed You
all A Thousand
Years
25¢

and the awkwardness of this cut-and-paste approach to their own consistently reproduced logo is one of my favorite, barely noticeable, details about later AMP publications.

Pamphlets were sold cheaply and subscriptions, which promised back-orders as well as all future volumes as they were created, were available in a tiered structure based on income (in 1972 they had around three hundred subscribers [5]). An early list of annual subscription rates from the back of a 1972 pamphlet is typical:

$7.50 for working Appalachians
$5.00 for students
$0.00 for unemployed Appalachians
$25.00 for wealthy Appalachians (income over $15,000)
$15.00 for libraries and institutions

Aesthetically, almost everything Appalachian Movement Press published had a stripped-down, almost austere quality. Most of their publications, particularly those printed from 1969 to 1976, have no illustrations beyond the tiny AMP logo. A few pamphlets reproduce a photo here and there, or reprint classic cartoons from socialist or communist papers, but AMP publications were generally not illustrated. Perhaps this was due to a desire to keep their pamphlets looking accessible or because the printers didn't know or work with many graphic artists. Either way, when viewed side by side over the years, the overall look of nearly everything AMP produced begins to suggest an aesthetic of its own: bold declarations on the cover titles, covers printed in whatever color paper stock was available, clear and clean pages inside. It could be that the AMP organizers never considered that graphics could build upon the writing or they felt that the crucial work they wanted to share rested in the texts they printed, and that the packaging should be clear and the design simple and stark.

## "To Gain a Greater Degree of Freedom"

In an effort at motivating their working-class Appalachian readership to a collective understanding of their history of workplace struggles for basic rights and a union, AMP republished several writings highlighting key moments in regional labor history.

Essential information about the mine wars in Harlan, Kentucky, the West Virginia Mine Wars, and an inspirational series of quotes from Mary Harris "Mother" Jones were part of their mission to make this regionally relevant history available to the people whose ancestors had lived it.

Many of these pamphlets were printed with the knowledge and consent of allied historians and writers who knew the AMP organizers (or who were at least admired by them) but decidedly not with the permission of the original publishers of the articles. For example, two essays detailing the history of the Coal Creek War in Anderson County, Tennessee (1891–1893), make up the pamphlet *Coal Creek Rebellion: East Tennessee Miners vs. Convict-Labor System*. Philip Foner's essay originally appeared in his *History of the Labor Movement in the United States Vol. 2* (1955), and Archie Green's essay originally appeared in his book *Only a Miner: Studies in Recorded Coal-Mining Songs* (1972).

Other publications included 1971's *The Socialist & Labor Star: Huntington W. Va., 1912–1915,* which was the full text of a grad school research essay by David Alan Corbin, who was, at the time, a student at Marshall University and friends with Stewart and Woodruff. Corbin is now a well-respected Appalachian historian, author of *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880–1922* (1981), a foundational text in West Virginia Mine Wars history. This essay, as AMP published it, was part of Corbin's earlier research into socialist movement history in West Virginia, and *The Labor Star* was a socialist newspaper also originally headquartered in Huntington from 1912 to 1915.

In 1972, AMP endeavored to republish the majority of Tom Tippett's *When Southern Labor Stirs* (1931) as a series of four pamphlets. The original book is a study of the series of textile workers strikes in 1929 that erupted in the Elizabethton rayon plants in Tennessee; the Loray Mill strike in Gastonia, North Carolina; and the Marion Mills in Marion, North Carolina. The Marion strike, where several workers were killed by newly deputized strike-breakers, was the strike Don West claimed as his pivot point into radical politics and organizing. AMP would republish this same series again in 1978, with decidedly more lively, illustrative covers, to coincide with

# THE SOCIALIST & LABOR STAR


## Huntington W. Va. 1912 — 1915

BY
DAVID CORBIN

APPALACHIAN MOVEMENT PRESS

$1.00

# War In the Coal Fields

THE NORTHERN FIELDS
1931

AS REPORTED AT THE TIME IN THE LABOR DEFENDER & LABOR AGE

APPALACHIAN MOVEMENT PRESS

25¢

renewed unrest in southern textile factories. "The first printing of this pamphlet has been out of print for some time" the inside covers declared. "We are rushing it back into print in hopes it will aid the J.P. Stevens workers in their boycott of the cruel and oppressive J.P. Stevens Company."

A trilogy of larger-format pamphlets was published in 1973, each of them a facsimile of articles from *Labor Defender* (published by International Labor Defense) and *Labor Age* (published by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action) that focused on radical union activities in the Appalachian coal fields in 1931–32. During that time, faith in the United Mine Workers (UMWA) union under the leadership of John Lewis was flagging, due in part to Lewis's active purging of leftist elements from the union. Alternative, Left-led unions were started across the country to considerable rank-and-file popularity (and brutal repression from the UMWA). The AMP pamphlet *The West Virginia Miners Union 1931* details one such effort, spearheaded by Frank Keeney, who had previously been a key militant UMWA organizer during the West Virginia Mine Wars era and was central to the miners' march, which culminated in the Battle of Blair Mountain, the largest armed labor confrontation in U.S. history. *Harlan & Bell Kentucky 1931–2: The National Miner's Union* focused on similar activities in eastern Kentucky. Completing the trilogy, *War in the Coal Fields: The Northern Fields 1931* details a wildcat strike that occurred in the bituminous coal fields of northern West Virginia, eastern Ohio, and western Pennsylvania.

## "Picking Poverty's Pocket" Highlighting Regional Corruption

Appalachian Movement Press also focused on publishing articles and investigative journalism from other sources that highlighted the disastrous and, as they defined it, colonialist relationship between working-class people on one side and colluding coal industry and government officials on the other.

*The Pittston Mentality: Manslaughter on Buffalo Creek* (1972) was an article by Thomas N. Bethell and Davitt McAteer that was originally published in the *Washington Monthly* earlier in the year. The article gives a timeline leading up to the Buffalo Creek flood

# HARLAN & BELL KENTUCKY 1931-2

*Kentucky coal strikers meeting in the woods. They set guards against the gun-thugs of the bosses.*

# the National Miner's Union

AS REPORTED AT THE TIME IN THE LABOR DEFENDER

APPALACHIAN MOVEMENT PRESS

40¢

disaster, a coal slurry impoundment dam in Logan County, West Virginia, which burst open on the night of February 26, 1972. Out of a population of 5,000 people in the area of sixteen coal towns affected by the dam burst—125 people were killed, 1,121 were injured, and over 4,000 were left homeless. A total of 507 houses, forty-four mobile homes, and thirty businesses were destroyed. "We publish it with the permission of Tom Bethell," the inside cover reads, but, "it is unauthorized by the magazine."

*Picking Poverty's Pocket*, a reprint of an essay by Barry Barkan and R. Baldwin Lloyd, addressed the history of absentee land ownership by resource extraction companies and the effects of new mechanized strip-mining practices on union miners. Bethell's *Conspiracy in Coal* also originally appeared in *Washington Monthly*, and documented the lead up to the 1968 Farmington, West Virginia, mine collapse at Consolidation Coal's (now CONSOL Energy) Mountaineer No. 9 mine, which killed 78 workers. The hilariously titled *Look Out—There's a Profit in Your Appendix!* was an anonymous and brief treatise against hospital profiteering in West Virginia.

*The West Virginia Establishment*, printed in 1971, stands out as one of AMP's thickest publications. Written by Rod Harless, the booklet is a critique of power players in both Kanawha and Raleigh counties in West Virginia and at least half of the pages are composed of data tables breaking down a who's-who of regional companies and their top officials and personnel. It's not the most invigorating read if you aren't keyed in to the history of regional politics, but its naming of names shows AMP's commitment to exposing corruption on their home soil.

## "To Send Messages Heavenward" Children's Books and Books of Songs

Two children's books (at least labeled as such) stand out in the Appalachian Movement Press catalog, both for their playfulness and for their seriousness of intent. *The Hillbillys: A Book for Children*, by Rod Harless and Dan Cutler, is the darker of the two. It is a pessimistic view of prior generations' inability to counter corporate takeover of mineral resources. Thirty-eight illustrated pages tell a story of "an ancient mountain kingdom called Hillbilly Land" and an "order of men called Royal Profiteers," who have an insatiable

# THE HILLBILLYS

## a book for children

by Rod Harless
Dan Cutler

35 ¢

It became impossible to breathe the air
some sections of Hillbilly Land, the Hillbillies had
gas masks to protect their lungs and goggles to
their eyes.

26

Night had fallen when Boone and Lazar got to the top of the ridge. They all looked all round them, expecting trouble. But all was quiet. The huge platter moon looked down kindly on the two little creatures . . . Little to the big moon so far away yet so close to Apple Valley and Buttermilk Creek.

As Boone clopped along the ridge, Lazar crept down to the posterior position so together they could see fore and aft. Lazar was the one who spotted strip mine bully with its huge blade pressed against the mountain soil. Strip mine bully was a bulldozer. The bully had not the brains necessary to smile and cry.

appetite for eating thin green chips called "Profits" (which are mined underground and must undergo complicated processing before being eaten). In the story the Hillbillies, after being forced to mine for "Profits," eventually organize and march to Capital City. But after meeting with the Head Hillbilly, they are placed under a magic spell where they forget all of their problems. After several more confusing and unsuccessful trips to Capital City, the Hillbillies return home in dismay and sink into despair. They decide to purchase gas masks and sets of goggles for their now-poisoned community, and to leave it to the next generation to try and solve the problems of Hillbilly Land.

AMP's other youthful offering suggests sabotage as a vehicle for engagement with strip mining, in the (likely unavoidable) event that reasoning with your local coal company on rational grounds should fail. *Lazar & Boone Stop Strip Mining Bully to Save Apple Valley & Buttermilk Creek: A Story for Children & Mature Adults* by Michael J. Clark and illustrated by Margaret Gregg is a twenty-four-page booklet that came out in 1973 and is perhaps AMP's only publication that bears a sincere copyright. Words positioned around full-page illustrations in a classic children's book style, *Lazar & Boone* tells the story of Lazar, a toad, and Boone, a "long-eared mule with a crooked smile," along with Farmer Caudill (a clear reference to Harry M. Caudill, the influential Appalachian lawyer, author, and environmentalist). On hearing that strip mining is coming to their otherwise utopian hollow, Lazar and Boone decide to confront the "strip mine bully," which turns out to be an inert bulldozer. After a night of one-sided conversation, Lazar fails at convincing the bulldozer not to strip-mine Apple Valley—since heavy industrial machinery is incapable of listening to reason—and the next day the "bully" begins violently destroying their town. Explosions from dynamite rain coal over the local homes, and all of the other residents flee. And so, by moonlight, Lazar, Boone, and Farmer Caudill sneak up the hill to where the bulldozer rests, and, using the remaining dynamite from the mining operation and a wooden match the farmer happens to be chewing on, they blow it up. Into their now-idyllic future, the residents of Apple Hollow curiously use the dozer's blade to reflect sunlight back into the sky, "to send messages heavenward." In the afterword, Clark suggests that the Apple Valley sabotage may have

actually occurred and warns that "mountain people and their friends will solve their own problems if they can find the necessary tools."

As part of their commitment to promoting cultural heritage as it overlapped with social struggles, AMP also produced a number of music books. Besides 1973's reprint of Don West's *Songs for Southern Workers: 1937 Songbook of the Kentucky Workers Alliance*, they produced two editions of sheet-music-and-lyrics books of popular workers' rights tunes that had particular Appalachian significance. In the introduction to the first slim volume, 1970's *Paint Creek Miner: Famous Labor Songs from Appalachia*, Tom Woodruff would write that "the poetry and songs written in the midst of battle here have been and still are revered by all workers. Appalachians weren't sitting in the back row during this struggle, they were driving the bus." *Songs of Freedom: Famous Labor Songs from Appalachia Part II* followed after *Paint Creek Miner*, but the descriptions of the included music were taken entirely (and admittedly) from *Songs of Work and Freedom*, edited by Edith Fowke and Joe Glazer (originally published by the Labor Education Division of Roosevelt University, Chicago).

## "He's an Angry Appalachian" Don West's Original Works in AMP

As previously mentioned, Don West collaborated with Appalachian Movement Press to print his newest work, and to reprint his previously published writings. Many of these publications were collections of West's poems from other sources. Reprints were made from West's popular books *Clods of Southern Earth* (1946) and *The Road Is Rocky* (1951), which AMP dutifully kept stocked through the 1970s.

The only full-sized book AMP produced was *O Mountaineers! A Collection of Poetry* in 1974. Largely a collection of Don West's previously published poems, it was available in both hardback and paperback and quietly eschewed the word "Movement," with publishing attribution going to Appalachian Press. The cover contains several reproductions of Connie West's paintings, and the introduction (written earlier, in 1964) was by the executive director of the New Deal's National Youth Administration, Aubrey Willis Williams. Given that the AMP shop operated on a slim budget and lacked the means to

# WHAT'S NEXT ?

by

Ernest Seeman

75¢

bind larger books, *O Mountaineers!* was one of their most ambitious projects and was outsourced to the Charles H. Kerr publishing company in Chicago for printing.

West devoted considerable time to original research into Appalachian history and focused in particular on the abolitionist movement in the region and the broad resistance to the Confederacy leading up to and during the American Civil War. West hoped, through this research, to paint a different story of the Southeast to Appalachians and the rest of the country, a story defining the Civil War largely as a battle of wealthy elites whose interests actually ran counter to the majority of the southern population, particularly those in the isolated mountains. West began writing a book on this history but never finished it. He did, however, publish some of the finished chapters and other thoughts as AMP pamphlets. Illustrated with portraits and a hand-drawn map, *Freedom on the Mountains* (1973) is one of these, outlining the region that West called "the Birthplace of Modern Abolitionism." *Robert Tharin: Mountain Abolitionist* (ca. 1970) was another pamphlet by West, rich with detailed research and printed directly from a typewritten manuscript in two parts. The first half is a detailed background of the Appalachian abolitionist movement, including vignettes about individual leaders and an overall analysis of how the Slavocracy sought to maintain its power. The second half focuses on the story of little-known Alabama lawyer Robert Tharin. West uses Tharin's activism (which was focused on educating poor whites) to discuss the class distinctions between the minority, slaveholding aristocracy and the majority poor white population of the South, arguing that there was never a "unified South" under the Confederacy, but rather a violently stratified class system that white abolitionists sought to dismantle.

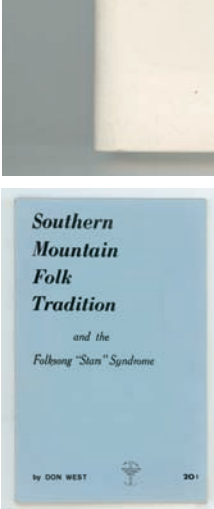
West also published a number of cultural critiques. In his explicitly anticapitalist pamphlet *Romantic Appalachia, or, Poverty Pays If You Ain't Poor* (1969), he describes his frustration at the repeated history of outside discoveries of Appalachian people and their culture by northern elites and missionaries, and in later years by federally funded VISTA volunteers and other "poverty warriors." West maintains that the attraction is a romanticization of Appalachia brought on by faulty media stereotypes, and that these waves of

# ROBERT THARIN

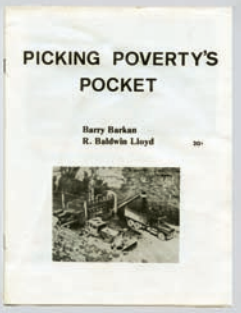
## biography of a mountain abolitionist

By Don West

APPALACHIAN MOVEMENT PRESS





# Freedom on the Mountains

(Excerpts from a book manuscript on Southern Mountain history.)

**By Don West**


35¢

visitors will never fundamentally alter the poverty they find in the region if they don't challenge capitalism itself. *Southern Mountain Folk Tradition and the Folksong "Stars" Syndrome* (ca. 1972) was a reprint of two essays, first appearing in *Appalachian South* magazine. In both, he rails against mainstream interest in what he refers to as the "cult" of "singers of folk songs" (differentiated from traditional "folksingers") as an "extremely vulgar trend," full of competition and vanity centered in a New York–based elitist, materialistic society which runs counter to the original traditions of the custom. "The affluent 'folksinger' is an anachronism."

It can be difficult at first not to read West's later works as isolationist, particularly when he extensively rips on folk music stars and itinerant volunteers from northern states "sowing their radical oats," and when he writes poems tearing down the clothing styles of the young urban attendees at the folk music festivals he hosted at the ASFC. But undergirding West's impatient and sometimes sarcastic rhetoric was a genuine belief in the power of education to motivate "mountaineers" to self-empowerment and determination. West didn't see this ever happening if mountain people relied only on outside influence and promises—their determination had to be homegrown, and the region's history, he firmly believed, proved that this was eminently possible.

His later work published by AMP edged firmly towards this goal. James J. Lorence summarized West's fundamental ethos, "A committed Internationalist, he viewed the American working-class struggle within the larger context of a transnational movement that would one day usher in a better day for humanity in a worker's utopia. West's faith in the ultimately successful class struggle was rooted in his youthful conversion to a Marxist philosophy that replaced the more traditional religion of his adolescence." His philosophy blended "the economic and social determinism of Marx with a uniquely personal interpretation of revolutionary Christianity focused on the comrade Jesus as the son of man." [4]

## "We Printed the Radical Stuff"

One of the few noticeable changes in the last couple years of AMPs run is a small shift in their logo, or colophon. Replacing the

miner's pick, a black cat emerges, variously understood by the Left as a symbol of work stoppage, sabotage, and general solidarity across industrial trades. The black cat was a symbol of bad luck for the bosses.

Some of the covers of the previously released pamphlets changed as well—their reissue of four volumes from Tom Tippett's *When Southern Labor Stirs*, in 1978, featured new illustrated covers depicting factory scenes. This slight change in design sensibilities coincided with a changing of the guard at the print shop. Most of the original people working in the shop had moved on, and Tom Woodruff wanted to teach new printers how to use the A.B. Dick presses to continue AMP's work and learn the printing trade in the process. John Strong Clark was one of these younger printers, and after spending a couple years at Marshall he got involved in AMP, both because their mission spoke to his own family heritage in the coal industry and because he was curious about the trade. "Our job was to reprint coal mining literature. We printed the radical stuff. It was considered 'radical' because in the coalfields, at that time, if you were against strip mining, you were in bad shape: they were liable to shoot you." [9]

Once Clark and Jack Frazier (whom Clark pins as "VP," with himself as "the president . . . of a sort," by 1978), had a handle on the equipment, Woodruff "handed over the keys and the checkbook." [9] Clark and Frazier continued to reprint the foundational AMP catalog, which by the late 1970s offered over forty titles, as well as a couple of titles from the Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, the United Electrical Workers, the Council of the Southern Mountains, and Solar Age Press (also of Huntington, West Virginia). By this time, AMP was operating out of its third location, a rented building near the intersection of Seventh Avenue and Eighth Street in Huntington. The owner of this building was a principle at the local Chapman Printing, and he quietly supplied plates, ink and other supplies, and was "loose with the rent" because "he understood what we were trying to do." [9]

Since there had never been any consistent funding beyond the income from publications AMP sold while tabling at festivals and through mail order (as well as occasional small donations), any work done with AMP was still essentially "labor donated." Marshall

students who wanted to be involved with AMP came by the shop to lend help with the work, largely stapling and collating of publications after they rolled off the presses. In 1976 and 1977, Frazier produced a small catalog that they mailed out to libraries around the East Coast, in an effort to put their publications in more places and bring in a little extra money from sales to keep the shop running.

Meanwhile, the newer members of the AMP shop continued to keep the project funded by continuing to make connections with organizations in the region who were looking for printers for their own like-minded publications. *Mountain Call*, published by the Fannin brothers out of Mingo County, West Virginia, was one such magazine. *Green Revolution*, edited by AMP member and sometime shop manager Paul Salstrom, was the monthly periodical from the School of Living, a back to the land organization. Founded and edited by AMP member Miriam Ralston, *MAW: Magazine of Appalachian Women* fostered communication networks between women in the region to broaden feminist analysis and viewpoints. [12] Besides movement periodicals, the printers were still happy to take most of the other "jackleg" jobs their friends brought their way if it helped keep the project afloat. [9] *The Life of Rev. John Rankin, Written by Himself in His 80th Year,* published in 1978, was a sixty-five page booklet AMP contracted with the Lawrence County (Ohio) Historical Society, a previously unpublished autobiography of an abolitionist in keeping with the theme of their other historical work.

The new operators pushed the graphic design of AMP's publications farther than Woodruff, Stewart and others had previously, and they printed more than pamphlets. They produced another calendar, *Stop the Stonewall Jackson Dam: Save Our Heritage*, and distributed it for free. They experimented with printing posters and even small illustrated cards. Their 1977 catalog offered batches of stickers that were "suitable for placing above faucets and water fountains, particularly in public places." Emblazoned with CAUTION: POISON, the stickers' fine print read: "The Environmental Protection Agency has determined that this water contains carbon tetrachloride, chloroform, and other cancer-causing chemicals," a design and text that has sadly been reproduced and reapplied to the modern-day natural

# STRIPMINING KILLS

gas–drilling regions of New York and Pennsylvania.

When I asked Clark what drove him to stay involved with AMP besides his interest in learning the printing trade, he didn't hesitate. "My grandfather died of black lung in the Pennsylvania coal mines before the union. I remembered that from when I was five years old. Both of my wife's parents lived in coal camps. We were just trying to keep this history alive: no one records a lot of stuff, it just gets lost." [9]

## "Did You Get Angry?"

It's difficult to pin down exactly when Appalachian Movement Press folded up operations in Huntington. It seems that by 1976 or so, AMP began to run out of steam for seeking out new material to publish or repackage. By then, Tom Woodruff had moved into full-time union organizing work with 1199 (the Health Care Workers union), and was elected union president in 1980. According to a current profile on Bloomberg, he "successfully initiated the first major service-sector organizing drive in a region in which hostile laws historically prevented all but workers in the mining industry the freedom to form a union. In addition, he focused on helping mostly working-class women in hospitals and nursing homes unite their strength to have a voice in the quality of care, which in turn raised standards for both patients and caregivers in Appalachia." [10] Woodruff went on to climb to the executive ranks of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), resigning as an officer in 2013 but continuing to work full time as a consultant today. When AMP began, Woodruff told me, "we wanted to start an Appalachian Rights movement that didn't quite start. There was even a theory at one point that we ought to secede from the country, but those are kind of young, wild, impractical ideas. We'd hoped for an Appalachian revolutionary movement, but that didn't happen." [2]

John Clark says that he felt that AMP had simply run its due course. He returned to Hinton, West Virginia, where he and his wife Teri, who would eventually serve on the board of the nearby Appalachian South Folklife Center (AFSC), operated the Bluegrass Printing Company, a community letterpress print shop.

Opposite: "Strip Mining Kills" poster, printed and designed by John Strong Clark, 1978

Don West purchased all of Appalachian Movement Press's equipment, and Woodruff himself helped to move it from Huntington down to Pipestem and into a two-story building on the ASFC grounds that already housed a darkroom and several weaving looms. Likely the equipment was meant to diversify what could be produced at the Folklife Center. An undated, early ASFC newsletter highlights the Center's functions including a library, a summer camp, the folk festival, and other burgeoning projects. The newsletter also describes "a complete offset printing plant and publishes pamphlets, booklets and other materials on Appalachian history, heritage and people." Now dubbed Mountain Freedom Press, the listing of available publications via mail order that follows are clearly the remnants of the AMP catalog as transported from Huntington earlier that year.

West hired a printer to run the A.B. Dick offset presses, and in November of 1979, they finished printing *Gospel Millions*, a sprawling fifty-four-page collection of a series of articles, including photos, detailing the inner workings and funding/donation infrastructures of regional evangelical churches and gurus by investigative reporter Jim Haught. The articles were originally published in the *Charleston Gazette* earlier that year, and focus on the sort of spiritual corruption that was right in line with the kind of deceptive, exploitative systems West hated most.

Haught's reprinted writings were probably the only full-fledged publication to roll out of the repurposed Appalachian Movement Press equipment—no other bound publications seem to exist after that date. It's quite possible that the ASFC used the offset press to run their newsletter, print posters for their folk music festivals, and other projects, but it seems unlikely that Mountain Freedom Press continued as a publishing outfit after *Gospel Millions*. Meanwhile, the Wests were now wintering in St. Petersburg, Florida, and although they bought a small dwelling in Cabin Creek, West Virginia, and continued to shuttle between homes until Don's death in 1992, their involvement in the Folklife Center and other projects slowly waned (though the Center itself remains active).

Where many of the better-documented movement presses in the U.S. during the 1970s operated out of large urban areas,

Appalachian Movement Press was specific to its rural context in southern West Virginia: internationalist in intention but regional and class-conscious in audience and focus. During their decade-long run with very little sustaining income, AMP provided a voice that strengthened a burgeoning Appalachian identity, became an outlet for mountaineers to access investigative articles on regional corruption and previously suppressed working-class history, and, perhaps most lastingly, served as a willing organ for the later work of Don West. AMP may have never sparked an Appalachian Revolution, but the press was devoted to its mission of nurturing and playing a vital role in the resistant culture they believed was at the heart of modern Appalachia. S

Author's Note: A truly thorough research project to unearth a barely documented organization like Appalachian Movement Press would take years of digging through archives, finding hidden collections and gems, and doggedly pursuing original sources and participants. I compressed a majority of the work for this article into the months of April through June 2017 while working part-time jobs. In particular, I had trouble finding details or contact for many of the other people who worked on AMP during its ten-year run. I have some names but little context for them: Charles Berry, Jeanine Caywood, Robert Gatewood, Dave Workman, Thomas W. Gibbs… and many others whose names my interviewees couldn't remember. I hope this article is found by others who can contribute more to the story in the future and fill in the gaps about the people who were involved. Special thanks are due to Jon Averill, John Strong Clark, Tom Woodruff, Roger May, Paul Salstrom, and Dr. Lou Martin, who all provided direct help that was critical to bringing this research into focus.

Perhaps because so much of their work was focused on reprinting existing works for broader distribution, AMP hasn't received much, if any, attention until now. Occasionally collectors can be found selling their publications at conferences and online. Firestarter Press, in Baltimore, was reprinting AMP's titles as recently as the early 2000s. The Appalachian South Folklife Center has multitudes of AMP's work in nonarchival storage, nearly forgotten remainders from when Mountain Freedom Press ceased operations. Selections of publications are available in only a handful of university libraries,

including West Virginia University in Morgantown (WV), Appalachian State University in Boone (NC), Radford University (VA), and Ohio University in Athens (OH). A small collection has been donated to Interference Archive (NYC) by the Appalachian South Folklife Center through the process of my research for this article.

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Opposite: Back cover of *O Mountaineers*, 1974

## WHAT THEY'VE SAID ABOUT DON WEST'S POEMS

"Don West marshals words into poetry to sing for democracy and decency, to picture and plead, to startle and shock, to point out what America is and what America can be. His are the poems of our heartbeats and our longings from the cotton South to the orange grove West, as American as Route 66."

---LANGSTON HUGHES

"Don West pioneers, blazing a new trail for southern literature by bringing it down to earth where the people are."

---REV. CLAUDE WILLIAMS

"There is a new voice from the Southland, the voice of a poet, a prophet and a preacher. It is the voice of a singer from the red hills of Georgia with feet set in its rugged soil and keen eyes far away on the future of his people. . . Don West's work will live. For it has the abiding value of true emotion truly expressed."

---MAY JUSTICE
Chattanooga Times

**Don West is a preacher, a teacher, a Union organizer, a farmer, and a poet. He has been a school superintendent and college history teacher. He worked as a Union organizer in Eastern Kentucky in the 1930's. He has pastored several churches in the South. He is the founder of the Appalachian South Folklife Center in Pipestem, West Virginia and works there now.**

**But above all else, Don West is a poet. He's not much like most of the other poets. His poems aren't the fancy, frilly, big worded say–nothings that serve only as mental exercises for the upper classes. His poems are more like what poetry ought to be. His meaning is clear to everyone. No subtle symbolisms with a million different interpretations. But the hearts and the guts of people jump out at you from these poems. Read them. They're about real people. About real conditions. And they speak so clearly of the injustice in America yesterday and today. And they speak with hope for the future. They clamor for a democratic America.**

DON AND CONNIE WEST AT PIPESTEM, WEST VIRGINIA

# CONTRIBUTORS

Daniel Drennan ElAwar is an illustrator and printmaker whose work focuses primarily on issues of displacement, dispossession, and disinheritance. He currently works as an assistant professor of illustration at Emily Carr University in Vancouver, Canada.

Alec Dunn is an illustrator, a printer, and a nurse living in Portland, OR. He is a member of the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative.

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Yobany Mendoza is a painter, printmaker, educator, and cultural promoter based in Mexico City. He's a hardcore bicyclist and admirer of the animals that live on this planet and the wealth and wisdom of all Native peoples that inhabit and have inhabited this world.

Joel Morton is a freelance editor of academic and cultural texts. His collection of Antifa and other German cultural and political street art includes several hundred items. He is based in Berlin and can be reached at jj.morton0@gmail.com

Shaun Slifer is an artist, writer, self-taught historian, scrimshander, and museum professional based in Pittsburgh, PA. He regularly works in collectively structured groups including the Howling Mob Society, the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative, and the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, where he is the creative director and exhibition designer.

Catherine L. Tedford, gallery director at St. Lawrence University (Canton, NY), writes about stickers on her research blog, *Stickerkitty*.

Ryan Lee Wong is a writer and arts organizer based in Brooklyn. He organized the exhibition *Roots: Asian American Movements in Los Angeles 1968-80s* at the Chinese American Museum and *Serve the People* at Interference Archive. He has served as a Visiting Scholar at the A/P/A Institute at NYU, a Visiting Critic at RISD, and an assistant curator at the Museum of Chinese in America. Wong has contributed arts writing to the *Village Voice*, *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, and *Hyperallergic*.

"If you are interested in the use of graphic art and communication in political struggles, don't miss the latest issue of *Signal*."
—Rick Poynor, *Design Observer*

**Signal:01**
—The Taller Tupac Amaru
—Red Rat Comix
—Graffiti Writer IMPEACH
—Early 20th-Century Anarchist Imprint Logos
—Mexico 68: The Graphic Production of a Movement
—Adventure Playgrounds: A Photo Essay
—Anarchist Graphic Designer Rufus Segar


**Signal:02**
—Japanese Anarchist Manga
—British Anarchist Broadsheets from the 1910s
—Oaxacan Street Art in a Mexican Context
—Malangatana: Revolutionary Mozambican Painter
—The Lost Art of Gestetner Printing
—Revolutionary Murals in 1970s Portugal
—Røde Mor: Danish Political Arts Collective


**Signal:03**
—Anarchist-Communist Antiwar Collage
—Paredon Records' Revolutionary Music
—Visual Artifacts from the 2012 Québec Student Strike
—Spanish Anarchist Newspapers Mastheads
—Yugoslav Partisan Memorials
—South Africa's Medu Arts Ensemble


**Signal:04**
—The Cover Art of *Palestinian Affairs* Magazine
—The Bay Area's Antimilitarist Peace Navy
—Street Art in Response to the Juárez Femicides
—Toronto's Punchclock Press
—Political Posters in New Zealand
—Kommune 1: Berlin's Militant 1960s Counterculture
—Max-Karl Winkler and Three Continents Press


**Signal:05**
—Emerging Print Collectives
—Design and Displacement in Barcelona
—Italian Political Records
—Political Printmaking in 1970s Uruguay
—NYC's Come!Unity Press
—The Pyramid as a Symbol of Capitalism

PM Press was founded at the end of 2007 by a small collection of folks with decades of publishing, media, and organizing experience. PM Press co-conspirators have published and distributed hundreds of books, pamphlets, CDs, and DVDs. Members of PM have founded enduring book fairs, spearheaded victorious tenant organizing campaigns, and worked closely with bookstores, academic conferences, and even rock bands to deliver political and challenging ideas to all walks of life. We're old enough to know what we're doing and young enough to know what's at stake.

We seek to create radical and stimulating fiction and non-fiction books, pamphlets, T-shirts, visual and audio materials to entertain, educate, and inspire you. We aim to distribute these through every available channel with every available technology—whether that means you are seeing anarchist classics at our bookfair stalls; reading our latest vegan cookbook at the café; downloading geeky fiction e-books; or digging new music and timely videos from our website.

PM Press is always on the lookout for talented and skilled volunteers, artists, activists and writers to work with. If you have a great idea for a project or can contribute in some way, please get in touch.

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