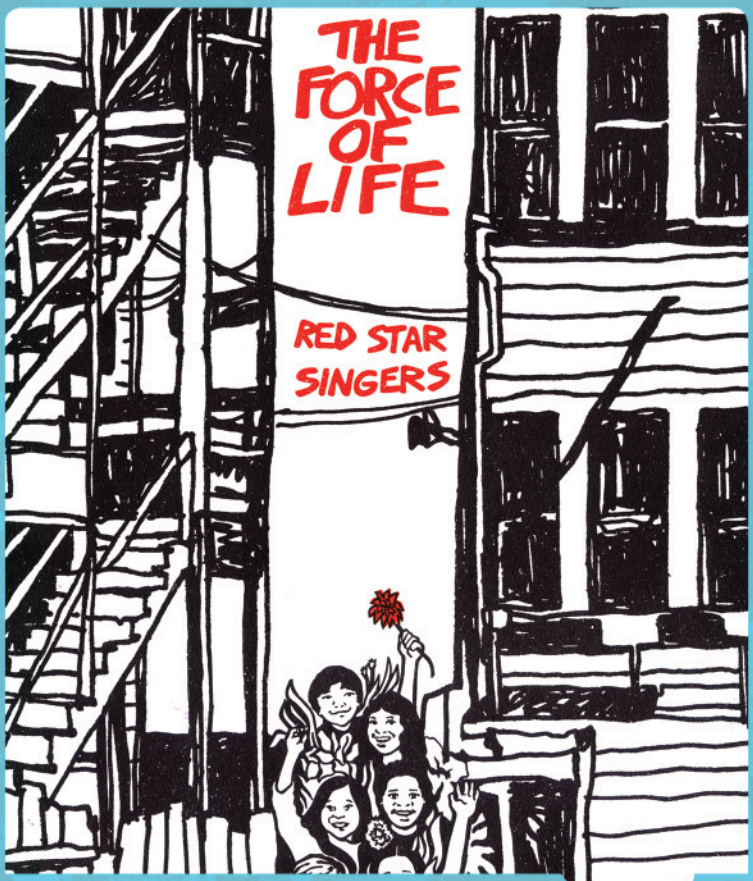

SIGNAL:03

SIGNAL:03

Signal:03 edited by Alec Dunn & Josh MacPhee

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Background image on this spread from *Medu Arts Ensemble Newsletter* vol. 5 no. 1. Image on following page spread by Collective Graphics Workshop from Paredon Records #1012, 1973.

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Thanks to everyone who worked on this issue, and their patience with the tardiness of the editors. Special thanks to the Kate Sharpley Library, Alan Moore for hustling *Signal* in Spain, Olivier Matthon, and everyone at PM Press for their continuing support of this project.


SIGNAL is an
¡UNIDOS
MUERA LA

idea in motion.

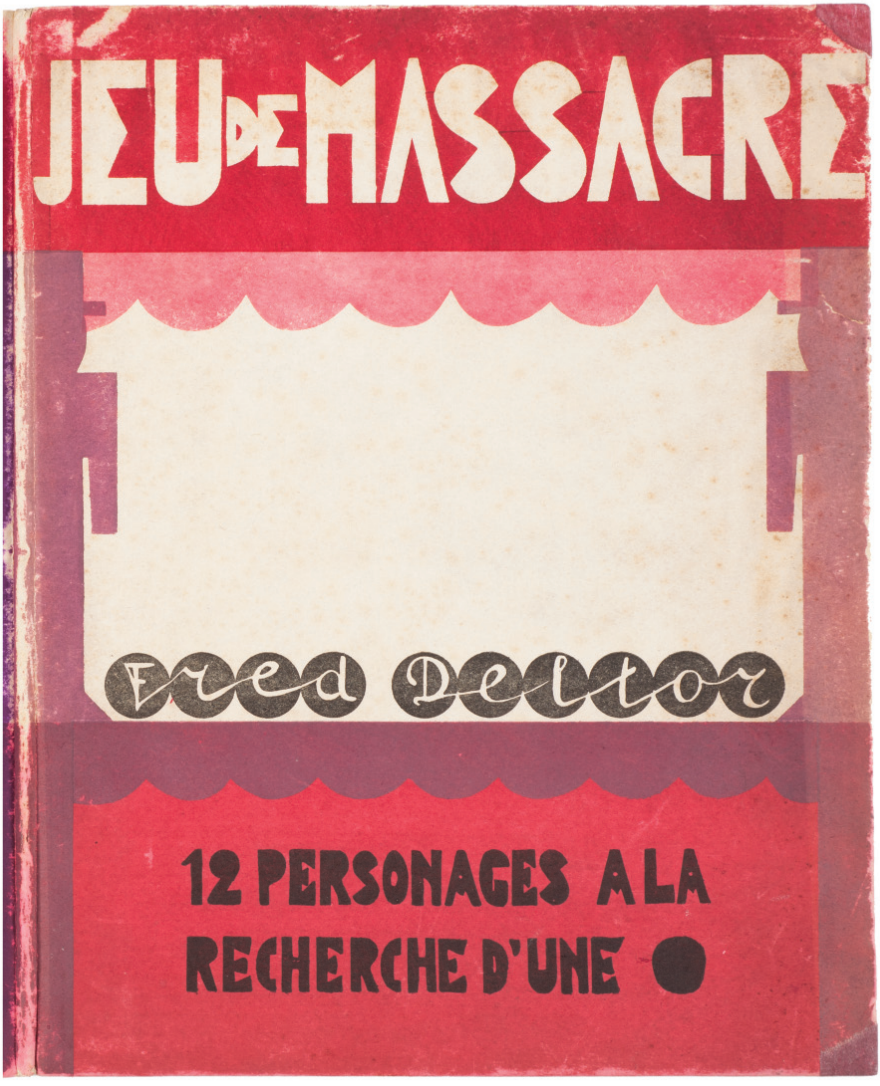
There is no question that art, design, graphics, and culture all play an influential role in maintaining gross inequality. They have also been important tools for every social movement that has attempted to challenge the status quo. But not all tools are the same: we don't use a nail gun to plant a garden, or a rake to fix the plumbing. A healthy and hearty examination of how culture has been used to foster social transformation can be utilized to challenge our own current practice and give us insight into what is possible.

Signal aims to broaden the visual discussion of possibility. Social movements have successfully employed everything from printmaking to song, theatre to mural painting, graffiti to sculpture. This entire range of expression and its implications for both art and politics are open for exploration. We are internationalists. We are curious about the different graphic traditions and visual languages that exist throughout the world. We feel that broadening our cultural landscape will strengthen the struggle for equality and justice.

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 culture 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. At the same time, cultural production can also challenge capitalism, statecraft, patriarchy, and all the systems used to produce disparity. With *Signal*, we aspire to understand 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


JEU DE MASSACRE
Fred Deltor
12 PERSONAGES A LA
RECHERCHE D'UNE

JEU DE MASSACRE
GAME OF MASSACRE

An Anarcho-Communist Print Portfolio by Fred Deltor (Federico Antonio Carasso)

ARTICLE BY STEPHEN GODDARD

Around 1930 a remarkable portfolio of anarchical prints, *Jeu de Massacre. 12 Personnages à la Recherche d'une Boule* (Game of Massacre: 12 Figures Looking for a Ball), was published in Brussels by Les Éditions Socialistes. The artist's name is given as Fred Deltor, a pseudonym for Federico Antonio Carasso (1899–1969), an Italian-born sculptor and furniture carver. The pseudonym "Deltor" is contrived from "Del Torino" (from Turin), the artist's native province in Italy. I will refer to the artist as Carasso throughout this essay.

Jeu de massacre is generally given in English as the game of Aunt Sally, which is fully described in the 1911 edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

> Aunt Sally, the English name for a game popular at fairs, race-courses and summer resorts. It consists in throwing hard balls, of wood or leather-covered yarn, at puppets dressed to represent different characters, originally a grotesque female figure called "Aunt Sally," with the object of smashing a clay pipe which is inserted either in the mouth or forehead of the puppet. In France the game is popular under the name *jeu de massacre*.[1]

Carasso's portfolio comprises a printed clamshell cover (pg. 6); twelve sheets printed in the stencil technique known as "pochoir" (pgs. 14–25); a list of the plates in French, Dutch, German, English, Russian, Italian, and Esperanto (pg. 9); and a preface by the French communist and novelist, Henri Barbusse, written in the manner of a sideshow barker (pg. 13, see appendix for full text and translation). Barbusse is best known as the author of *Le Feu* (Under Fire)—the highly acclaimed anti-military novel based on Barbusse's experiences in World War I.

The twelve pochoir prints depict twelve puppet-like figures who are targets of anarcho-communism, and are all "looking for a ball"—they are ready to be set up on a stage, like that depicted on the cover of the portfolio, and to be struck down in a game of *Jeu de Massacre*. The twelve figures are described here in English:

Military is a bullet-headed, shark-toothed, uniformed figure brandishing a scimitar whose prosthetic (or skeletonized) left leg seems tangled in barbed wire.

Property wears a black suit and is embellished with gold coins and a landlord's key. He towers above an apartment building and a factory.

Philanthropy has a chest in the form of a bank vault full of cash and tosses a single coin toward a cadaverous figure (lacking an arm and a leg) in front of a hospital.

Social democracy is a two-faced figure who wields the attributes of both royalty and communism.

Justice is surmounted by a figure whose head is a gold coin and who tips her scales with his feet.

Colonization wears clothing whose patterns evoke slavery and brandishes a whip in one hand and a pistol in the other.

Fascism is garbed with a skull and bones motif as well as the colors of the Italian flag. He holds a club in one hand and an impaled head in the other.[2] Fascism further presses one knee against the bars of a jail that holds Italy captive.

Police spy holds out a pair of handcuffs. His body is constructed in part by a monolithic building topped by a jail; and his head is outfitted with a huge ear and numerous eyes that glance up and down, right and left.

Parliament is lame and ridiculous, to judge by his harlequin's garb, crutch and single wheel.

Middle-spirit [petty-bourgeois] wears a suit that is part formal and part frivolous. He raises his eyebrows disinterestedly, enumerating time and numbers from his clock-face chest and his counting fingers.[3]

Religion is supported by wealth and wears a devilish heart-shaped red mask, or, in Barbusse's words, a demagogical heart [see appendix].

Patriotism eats £100,000 and waves the French flag while defecating in a chamber pot decorated with the French colors.

le militarisme
het militarisme
der militarisme
military
милитаризм
il militarismo
militarismo

le fascisme
fascisme
der faschismus
fascisme
Фашизм
il fascismo
fasismo

la propriété
den eigendom
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property
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le mouchardage
"mouchards"
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шпик работает....
la spia
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la philanthropie
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филантропия
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humaneco

le parlementarisme
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parlamentarismo

la social-démocratie
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social-democracy
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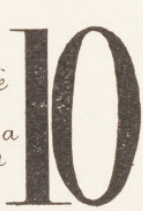

l'esprit moyen
middengeest
der filister
middle-spirit
Филистер
il piccolo borghese
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la justice
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la giustizia
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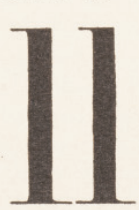

la religion
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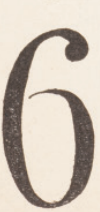

la colonisation
kolonisatie
die kolonisation
colonization
колонизация
il colonialismo
koloniigo

le chauvinisme
chauvinisme
der chauvinismus
patriotism
шовинизм
il nazionalismo
sovinismo

Like Barbusse, Carasso's political stance began to take shape in the course of the First World War.[4] Carasso was called up for military service in 1916 or 1917. After his initial training he was transferred to Rome, where he and a friend led an uprising in protest of the bad conditions in the barracks. This event led to both young men being exiled to Libya, where Carasso witnessed the brutality of war firsthand.[5] After the conclusion of the war, the artist's early engagement with activism and radical thinking was enlarged by his involvement with the socialist weekly *L'Ordine Nuovo* (The New Order) and his engagement with the Communist Party. When Mussolini rose to power in 1922, Carasso realized it was time for him to leave Italy, moving first to Paris and then, in 1928, to Mechelen, Belgium. He found work in both cities as a furniture carver.[6]

As Geraart Westerink has established, Carasso was quick to make contact with the artistic and literary avant-garde in Belgium, where he met the prominent artists Frits van den Berghe, Gustav van de Woestijne, and Victor Servranckx, as well as the writer Gustave van Hecke, editor of the socialist newspaper *Vooruit* and promoter of several progressive journals such as *Variétés*, *Arts*, and *Le Centaure*.[7] It was at this time and in this milieu that Carasso fashioned the meticulously crafted *Jeu de Massacre*. By 1932 Carasso was sought by the police for his activism and communist connections, no doubt exacerbated by Barbusse's introduction to *Jeu de Massacre*, and he went into hiding in the coastal town of Blankenberge. Not long after, however, Carasso became increasingly apolitical, and he was able to make a clean break with his activist past upon moving to Amsterdam in 1933.[8] Just prior to his departure Carasso's friends helped realize a successful exhibition of his work in Brussels, where, under the name of Fred Deltor, it was displayed along with the work of James Ensor.[9]

In Holland, Carasso became a member of the Nederlandse Kring van Beeldhouwers (Dutch Society of Sculptors). In 1947 he was commissioned to make a sculpture for the Amsterdam Olympic stadium in memory of athletes who had died in World War II, and in 1956 he was appointed professor of sculpture at the

Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, a position he held until his death in 1969.[10]

Stylistically Carasso's figures betray a knowledge of many of the important international impulses associated with progressive art organizations, periodicals, and movements of the 1920s, such as De Stijl (Holland), *Het Overzicht* (Belgium), Constructivism (Russia), and, as Westerink has properly observed, Agit-prop (Russia).[11] Schematically *Jeu de Massacre* seems to have at least a loose connection with another series of stage figures: Lazar El Lissitzky's provocative lithographic suite of 1923, *Figurinen, die plastische Gestaltung der elektro-mechanischen Schau "Sieg über die Sonne"* (Figurines: The Three-Dimensional Design of the Electro-Mechanical Show "Victory over the Sun"), a pioneering work in the Russian Constructivist idiom that Carasso may well have known.

The technique of pochoir involves making precise, hand-cut stencils, one for each color, and then brushing pigment across the stencil onto the paper below, much like a screenprint but without the screen. While this technique demands very careful cutting to make the stencils and very careful registration when printing multiple colors from multiple stencils, pochoir may have appealed to Carasso because it can be printed away from the public eye, in the studio or at home without a press. The two pages of text (titles and essay by Barbusse), as well as the black texts on the portfolio clamshell, were realized with a photomechanical process, presumably lineblock, a method of producing a relief printing-block from a photographic negative. While lineblock can be printed by hand, in all likelihood the very evenly printed black for the covers and texts was realized with a mechanical press. The edition size is unknown, but, in addition to the copy at the Spencer Museum of Art, illustrated here, a handful of other copies are known to exist.

Carasso's *Jeu de Massacre* stands as a brilliant melding of communist polemics, folklore, and avant-garde idioms realized during the critical and transitional years between the two World Wars.

Translations by the author and Olivier Matthon.

Preface

This is the game of massacre. Come!

Everyone come closer, comrades and friends, and you as well, if you'd like, ladies and gentlemen.

Shrewd people have often spoken to you of jokes and puppets to explain the great domestic and foreign policy of our lovely time (which we are so proud of). They also told you about puppets and acrobats to give you an accurate idea of the tyrants who, right here, conduct their business at the same time as yours—and better than yours. Come closer, here they are! All at once, we will administer contemporary history square to your eyes.

Here it is, the opulent collection of royal, imperial, and divine puppets, that control you as they wish, you poor crowd, and who, by a tragic reversal of roles, pull, from one end to the other, the strings of your poor destiny.

The comrade that has assembled them all before you, is a famous fitter-mechanic. He decked out each of these formidable gnomes, each of these essential characters, and this with a few well-chosen spots of color. He has made them schematic, geometric, neat—like machines to subdue and crush the world, baroque and monstrous like caricatures. That comrade, who knows how to juggle with synthesis, has made a super-reality.

There is something that draws the eye in nearly all these vaguely human mechanics, parasites of modern society. They are golden circles with numbers above. It is on these wheels of gold that everyone rolls, and that you are being duped, all of you!

In addition, you will see that these gearwheels guiding our government, with their biped shapes, are made of fragments and pieces fitted together: there are elements of strongboxes, swords and artillery shells, basement windows, tipped balances, pistol-shaped hands, and skeletons, and even demagogic hearts and crocodile tears.

To the worker-builder who brought about this symbolic gallery of our time for your amazement and edification and who is a noble executioner and a superb surgeon, I shout: Bravo!

Here is the game of massacre, the supreme game of massacre that perhaps, someday, will massacre all of you!

Henri Barbusse

Préface

Voici le Jeu de massacre. Approchez!

Approchez tous, camarades et amis, et vous aussi, si vous voulez, mesdames et messieurs.

Des gens avisés vous ont souvent parlé de farces et de guignols pour vous expliquer la grande politique intérieure et extérieure de notre belle époque, (dont nous sommes si fiers). On vous a aussi parlé de marionnettes et de saltimbanques pour vous donner une idée juste des potentats qui, ici-bas, conduisent leurs affaires en même temps que les vôtres – et mieux que vôtres.

Approchez, les voici! D'un seul coup, on va vous administrer l'histoire contemporaine dans les yeux.

La voilà, la riche collection de pantins royaux, impériaux et divins, qui vous mènent où ils veulent, pauvre foule, et qui, par un renversement tragique des rôles, tirent, d'un bout à l'autre, les ficelles de votre pauvre destinée.

Le camarade qui les a montés de toutes pièces devant vous, est un fameux ajusteur-mécanicien. Il a pensé chacun de ces grimes formidables, de ses caractères essentiels, et cela en quelques taches de couleurs, bien senties. Il les a faits schématiques, géométriques, nets – comme des machines à mater et à écraser le monde, baroques et monstrueux comme des caricatures. Ce camarade-là, qui sait jongler avec la synthèse, a fait de la surréalité.

Il y a quelque chose qui tire l'œil dans presque toutes les mécaniques vaguement humaines, parasites de la société moderne. Ce sont des ronds d'or avec des chiffres dessus. C'est sur ces roulettes d'or que tout roule, et que vous êtes roulés, vous tous!

Par ailleurs, vous verrez que ces rouages directeurs de notre régime avec leurs silhouettes de bipèdes, sont fait de débris et de morceaux emboîtés ensemble: Il y a du coffre-fort, du sabre et de l'obus, du sous-pieds et de la balance faussée, et des mains en forme de browning, et du squelette, et même, du cœur démagogique et des larmes de crocodile.

A l'ouvrier constructeur qui a fait surgir pour votre stupéfaction et votre édification cette galerie symbolique de l'époque et qui est un noble bourreau et un superbe chirurgien, je crie: Bravo!

Voici le jeu de massacre, le jeu de massacre suprême
Que vous massacrerez peut-être un jour, vous tous!

Henri Barbusse.


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1. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*. New York: The Encyclopaedia Britannica Company, 1910. Eleventh edition (1910–11) vol. 2, p. 922. "Aunt Sally" is also given as the translation of *Jeu de Massacre* in *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary*. Second Edition. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989, 338.

2. It is probably fortuitous that the head bears more than a passing resemblance to the head of the dystopian robot (Maria) in Fritz Lang's 1927 film masterpiece, *Metropolis*.

3. Given in Carasso's mother tongue as "il piccolo borghese."

4. The best resource for details about Carasso's life and work are found at a website that is managed by Marino Carasso http://www.carasso.nl/. This includes Marino Carasso's biography of the artist: http://www.carasso.nl/bioNed/ [hereafter cited as Carasso, biographie]; and the full text of Geraart Westerink's essay for the exhibition Carasso. Het verborgen oeuvre/ L'opera nascosta (Hannema-De Stuers Fundatie, Heino/Wijhe. 31 maart–3 juni 1996): http://www.carasso.nl/oeuvreNet/ [hereafter cited as Westerink, *oeuvre*]. Both resources are given in Dutch and in Italian.

5. Carasso, *biographie*.

6. Carasso, *biographie*, and Westerink, *oeuvre*.

7. Carasso, *biographie*, and Westerink, *oeuvre*, see the section "Verblijf in Frankrijk en België."

8. Carasso, *biographie*.

9. Carasso, *biographie*. Apparently Ensor was to have an exhibition at the Atrium Gallery in Brussels, but upon seeing Carasso's work he happily gave over half of the space to the expatriate artist.

10. Carasso, *biographie*, and the anonymous essay about Carasso for Sculpture International Rotterdam: http://www.sculptureinternationalrotterdam.nl/collectie/kunstenaars/Carasso.php?lang=en.

11. Westerink, *oeuvre*, see the section "Het Belgische Werk, Jeu de Massacre."

12. Copies are known to be at the Houghton Library at Harvard, the Rare Books & Special Collections Library at Princeton University, The Wolfsonian at Florida International University, the Bibliothèque royale / Koninklijke Bibliotheek in Brussels (two copies), the International Institute of Social History (IISG) in Amsterdam, and at the Peace Palace Library in Den Haag. Westerink, who tells us that the portfolio sold for 25 francs, surmises that Carasso had four copies with him when he moved to The Netherlands, two that he kept for himself and two that he gave away to the writer Maurits Dekker and the sculptor Gerrit van der Veen (Westerink, *oeuvre*, see the section "Het Belgische Werk, Jeu de Massacre").

EDITÉ PAR LES EDITIONS SOCIALISTES 59 RUE DES ALEXIENS BRUXELLES.

PRIX 25 FRS

PAR01008, 1971,
design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Photo Pic, Paris.

Making Revolutionary Music

Paredon Records cofounder Barbara Dane
interviewed by Alec Dunn & Erin Yanke

Paredon Records was a left-wing, New York-based record company that released over fifty LPs of international music between 1969 and 1985. The first record's music was from Cuba and the final record was from El Salvador. Between these two bookends, from revolutionary Cuba in the 1960s to the Central American struggles of the 1980s, Paredon chronicled the turbulent period of Third World liberation movements and the New Left musically.

Paredon was started after Barbara Dane and her husband Irwin Silber visited Cuba in 1967. Dane had been a noted singer of folk, blues, and jazz with several records under her belt. Silber founded the long-running music periodical *Sing Out* and was a formative figure in New York's folk scene.

Paredon featured several spoken word records (from Huey, Che, Ho, and Fidel, naturally), but the strength of the label is in its dizzying variety of music: miners' songs from Chile, sub-rosa recordings by Filipino activists, modern compositions by Mikis Theodorakis, guerilla songs by the Viet Cong, folk-psych records from Cuba, among many, many more. Worth noting as well is the consistently striking cover art and booklet design, the majority of which was designed by Dane and Ronald Clyne (whose work for Folkways and Paredon Records stands out as some of the best American graphic design of the mid-twentieth century).

PAR01040, 1978,
design by Ronald Clyne.

PAR01050, 1985,
cover art by Radio Venceremos System.

We interviewed Barbara Dane over the phone on Christmas Eve, 2012. It was a three-hour interview in which she simultaneously answered questions and orchestrated dinner preparations for a family reunion. A loquacious woman with a beautiful voice, it was easy to see how Dane made lasting contacts with people all over the world: she was funny, forward, and able to stay focused in the midst of chaos.

I wanted to ask you a little bit about your life and career in music and political movements before Paredon . . .

Because otherwise people will wonder who is this old lady bullshitting . . .

You started out as a singer?

I grew up in Detroit just after the depression. I went to a public school but it was in the next neighborhood over, where there was money, and in my neighborhood there was no money. My classmates had little starched dresses and Shirley Temple curls that their maids probably combed out for them every morning, whereas we were sent to school in simple woolen things that didn't have to be ironed and short Dutch bobs that didn't have to fussed with, because my mom was always working. So I was aware of class differences from the get-go, and I had always wanted to express something for the people

PAR01028, 1975,
design by Ronald Clyne.

PAR01020, 1973, cover art by Artist
Resource Basement Workshop.

around me who didn't have a whole lot of outlets for expressing themselves. I realized that my strongest tool was that I could sing. I found a really great teacher who was a *bel canto* teacher, which teaches you that singing comes from the whole body, not from your throat but from the balls of your feet. You have to stand the proper way and use your muscles the right way. So I learned all that stuff but I knew I was not going to end up singing little sopranos, Ave Marias, things like that.

Then I got involved with a bunch of people, some communists, and we got together to challenge the local Detroit racist behavior. Detroit at the time was as much (if not more) segregated then any southern town. You couldn't go have a cup of coffee with a friend if the friend was the "wrong" color, or you were the "wrong" color. There was a Michigan Equal Accommodations Act, but no one was pursuing it, so we decided to challenge it by going in a group and seeing if they'd serve us at the Barlam Hotel, which was a big old hotel on Cadillac Square with a coffee shop.

My friend was one of the leaders of the pack, a black woman, gorgeous, a little bit older then us. She worked right across the street at the National Maritime Union office. The NMU was one of the more radical unions at the time but she couldn't eat lunch anywhere around there. We thought we'd do this and afterward she'd be able

PAR01045, 1982, design and art by Juan R. Fuentes.

to eat lunch there. Well, to make a long story short, this guy kicked us out of there, screamed and yelled, and we then pulled together a demonstration. We had church groups and unions and PTAs, whatever, a big picket line, every Saturday. And there I was called upon to lead singing, because I could throw my voice out over the crowd, and I'd sing "We're Gonna Roll the Union On"—those kinda songs.

How long did you stay in Detroit?

I stayed in Detroit until I was twenty. I figured I could make a nickel here and there singing pop songs. Then some promoter calls me and asks if I want to go on the road with some well-known big band, so I went in for the interview. The guy says right away, "Take off your coat and turn around," and right away I say, "Heh, what's

PAR01005, 1971, designer unattributed.

that got to do with singing?" He says, "Oh, I've heard you, you're a pretty good singer." I said, "Wait a minute, I think I'm in the wrong place." So I fled, and right then I understood that basically a young woman was selling her looks and not her gifts or skills. So I didn't want to be part of that stuff. Which set a tone for . . . like forever!

During that time I became pregnant and was forced to look at my life a little bit. I'd hooked up with a man named Ralph Cohn, who was the first man who talked about Marxism to me in concrete terms. We left for California, went to LA, and spent a few months there in dire circumstances. No money, no job, no nothing. And then my mom married someone who lived in San Francisco and invited us up here. I stayed in the Bay Area up until '64 and during that time was always in a whole mix of trying to make a living with

THIS IS FREE BEL

Irish Rebel Songs of the S

Sung by 'The Men of No Propert

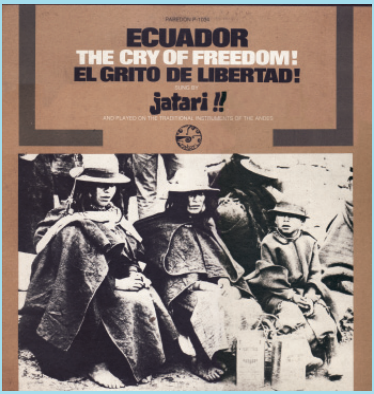
PAREDON P1006

singing and trying to change the world with singing. That's a pretty tight rope to walk.

When you started in the ´40s it was viable for you to be a singing star and a pop singer and also a radical. And then we go into the Red Scare and the blacklist and that period of reaction. . . . Did you feel that? With trying to perform and get work?

The answer is so big, it's hard to condense anything. At first I was trying to make connections in the commercial world where I could make a living singing. I was working at a department store, supporting my child, supporting my husband too (who was not much of a breadwinner). So, back then they had amateur shows on the radio. TV was just starting and there were contest on there too. One of the contests was called Miss U.S. Television! Here I was, having to walk across the stage in a bathing suit and high heels with a banner across the front of me, and singing my folk songs for my talent, like a Miss America pageant, which was totally anathema to me, but I won, and the prize was a 13-week series on TV. So I had a TV show. Looking back—that was the first time folk music was on TV that I'm aware of, even including New York or anywhere. So I went and did my little show: Miss U.S. Television. But TV at the time was still a little industry. By this time I had

PAR01006, 1971, design by Ronald Clyne.



PAR01034, 1976, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by El Punto.

PAR01026, 1974, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Nancy Van Wicklen.

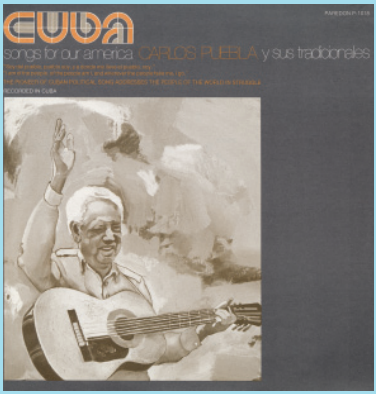
switched husbands, and I was pregnant with my second child. So I had to drop out just as I was beginning to be pretty well known.

The Weavers on the East Coast were a big sensation, making big hit records. A producer at the time wanted me to form a group because he was thinking if we had a West Coast group similar to the Weavers then we could really make it. After getting past the pregnancy, I did form a group and it was a pretty great group, but we had some differences and I didn't go on with them. So I went waltzing on back to my political life and I also went on to be a jazz singer just because the music interested me.

And you had some records out around that time, right? I read somewhere that you'd sang with Louis Armstrong, and didn't you have a record with Lightnin' Hopkins?

That all comes a little bit later. The traditional jazz world to me was glorious. I loved the music, I loved being out in front of a band. It was a whole exhilarating experience for a solo singer. I did make a record right then, my first album. It was called *Trouble In Mind*. From that record I was asked to come down to LA and make a single, which I did, called "On My Way." And it was a pretty successful. Once you had a breakout locally, then the majors started to look at you, and Capitol noticed me and I made an album for them. I signed

PAR01036, 1981,
art by Laurel Roth.



PAR01018, 1975,
design by Ronald Clyne.

to them and was supposed to make a bunch more. The first album did pretty well, and then here's what happened. At some point I did a concert at the Pasadena Playhouse, opposite Louis Armstrong and his band. I was singing with the Firehouse Five, and Louis heard me singing. He appreciated what I was doing and he asked me to do a tour in Europe with him. I was, of course, thrilled. That would be the epitome of any blues singer's work. I was all set to go on that tour and all of a sudden the phone doesn't answer when I call. I didn't receive any mail from anyone. Everything got cut off all of a sudden. Sharply. Nobody ever explained anything. Communication just completely shut down. I never went on the tour. At the time Louis was called Ambassador Satch and he was doing all these State Department tours. It seems that the State Department people took notice of my notoriety in the political arena and they pulled me off the tour. And they also put a word in with Capitol, you know, asking them why they wanted me there. So the way blacklists work is you just don't know what happened. Nobody tells you that you've been blacklisted, you just become a nonperson.

So that's what happened there, and I was disappointed, but I was used to picking myself up and starting over, so that's what I did. I picked up the guitar and started to sing by myself again.

What year was that?

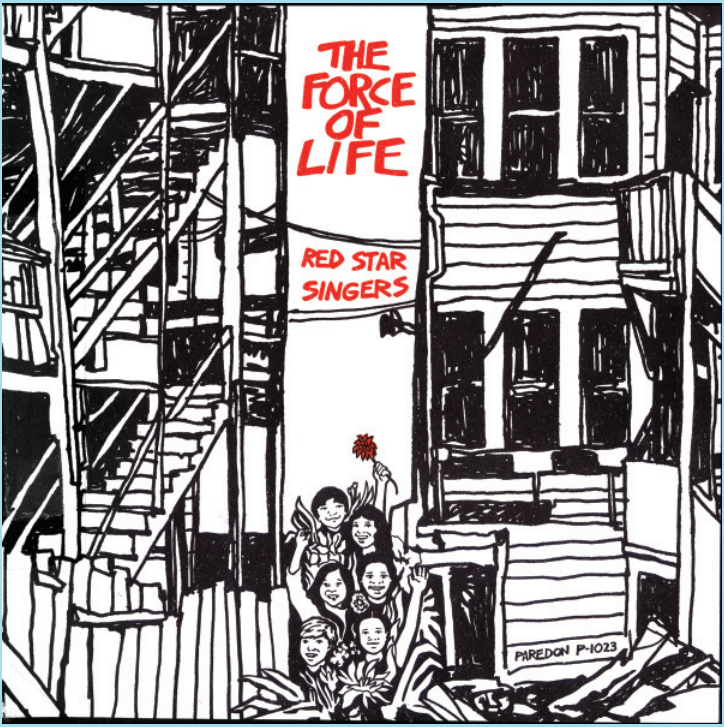
Around '58, '59 I guess. After that I went back to solo singing.

When did you meet Paredon cofounder Irwin Silber? Did you meet him in Detroit?

No, no. . . . He'd always had his base in New York. He was the guy who practically invented the hootenanny and was editor of *Sing Out!* magazine. Irwin and I knew each other as colleagues for twenty years, but we didn't have a personal relationship. In 1964 Irwin came to the Bay Area. At that time he was very closely linked with Moe Asch and Folkways Records and on that trip he was presenting the Folkways catalog at the American Libraries Association convention. He was in a new city and looked up people he knew. I had split from my second husband, and I was singing around the Bay Area a lot. So he called me up and asked me out to dinner, we went out to dinner, and somehow a spark flew. We got together. From that point on we realized that our destinies were meant to be linked. We stayed together for 43 years until he died a couple years ago. I moved to New York in '64 in order to be with Irwin.

Then in New York, in 1965, Irwin and I organized something called the Sing-In for Peace, which turned out to be the first sizable anti–Vietnam War rally. We decided to put on an event at Carnegie Hall and invited 60-odd performers—all the major known performers and also singers from the small towns. We had so many performers that we had to convince Carnegie Hall to have a late show too, so we filled it up once, about 3,500 seats, and then we filled it up again. After which we had a three o'clock in the morning candlelight vigil in Greenwich Village. So that really was the first time we saw a lot of antiwar action on the streets about Vietnam.

In the midst of getting used to New York, I was thinking a lot about Cuba, because it was this very incredible event. The whole Cuban Revolution was like something you would dream of. Somebody came up from Cuba, a New Yorker originally, but she had a radio show in Cuba and she came up to find someone who could make a tour in Cuba. And the reason I got to be the one who did it was she first went to Pete Seeger and Pete said he couldn't do it, "Why don't you ask Barbara?" That's how I got chosen.



PAR01023, 1974, cover art by Jane Norling.

I had a fantastic month in Cuba, singing for the young people, going up in the mountains, going everywhere. Being written up in every conceivable publication. I developed a long-term relationship with Cuba, and went back several times for conferences and performances. The woman who initially invited me—Estela Bravo is her name—she and some others put together what was called the *Canción Protesta Encuentro*. So it was an *Encuentro*, a meeting, a get-together. They invited people from all over the world, actually. It was a signal event, and to me it was close to the idea of what happened during the Spanish Civil War, when a lot of cultural figures from different countries went to Spain to support the struggle.

PAR01009, 1971, design by Ronald Clyne.

After I got home from this festival, where I got to meet, sing with, and appreciate with all of my heart people from Chile, from Argentina, from Vietnam, and people from Europe, from Africa. Everybody. I met all these people and realized the power that they are bringing to the world with their songs, distilling the energy and the truths of these revolutionary movements and putting it into song where people could hear it.

I could easily recognize the fact that these people were making revolutionary music and that they were also in a revolutionary situation, and they had very few resources. But they did have their voices, their thoughts, their hearts, and they can put it out there and help to

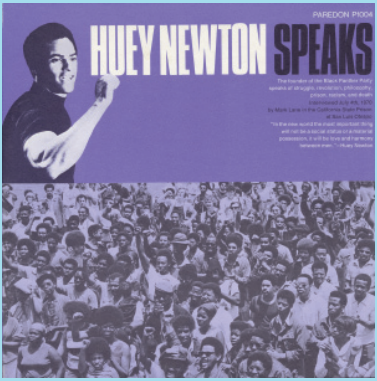
further the cause. I learned a lot. One thing especially: if you have a viable movement, you will have songs. If you don't have songs, then the movement is probably a little off the mark!

Now, talk about the U.S. condition at that time, in terms of our cultural attitude towards foreign people, you know how xenophobic it is now? It was even worse then. I would get up in front of a group of progressive people and sing one song in Spanish and someone would come up afterwards and whine, "Why did you sing in Spanish?" It was a challenge. I tried to reproduce the songs by singing them myself, by making English translations and singing them in English translation, by finding other people who could sing in those languages, really anything I could try. And then it suddenly dawned on me—people have to hear the actual creators of these songs in their own languages. We need a record label.

And you started the label in 1969/1970 . . .

Yeah, the *Encuentro* was in '67, I actually started then, when I got home with all of this material and tried to make English-language versions of all these songs. Then I thought about the record label. As soon as I thought of that, I told everyone I met that I was starting this record label, and told them why I was doing it. I was not asking for support but just saying, "I'm gonna do this, and by the way if you know anybody that wants to help me do it, put up some money, let me know."

I was talking about it with a friend who'd lived in Cuba for a while and had been helping me with some translations. I was telling her about it and she said, "I think I know somebody who might help. If he comes to town I'll grab him." So one day I get a phone call from her, and she says, "So and so is in town and he's only gonna be here today. I want to bring him over to your house for dinner in a couple of hours. He has plenty of money." So I had to run around, try and put the house in order, and try to get some groceries and make a dinner that some rich guy wouldn't think is too poverty-stricken. They came over, and I just proceeded to tell them what my idea was. Then I sang him a couple of songs, and at the end he said, "Well, I really want to do this and I'll give you whatever comes in on this one particular stock when it comes in. I'll send you the whole amount and that'll be



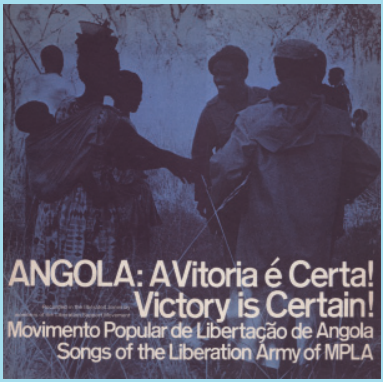
PAR01001, 1970, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Barbara Rothrug.

PAR01003, 1970, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Carolyn Mugar.

it. I won't give you any more, I don't want you to report back, I don't want you to tell me what you did with it, I don't ever want to hear from you again asking for more." I was like, "Oh, okay, here we go." It turned out to be $17,000. Now $17,000 was a pittance of what somebody would've charged in a commercial record company to make a record in those days. They used to just pile on the studio time and all the different arrangers and promoters and god knows what else. But I could dream about this realistically, because Irwin was very wise in these ways. He'd kept *Sing Out!* running all through the blacklist. He knew how to keep a publishing company and publication going during lean years, and also he worked with Moe Asch and did a fair amount of promotion for Folkways. So between the two of us, I thought, "We can do this."

The Folkways business plan was very intelligent. Moe Asch realized he didn't want to have a big warehouse full of LPs to worry about, so he worked with a pressing plant over in New Jersey that would press 100 and then another 100—whatever you need. Like, you have an order for 500, you could get 500 pressed tomorrow. We used that same place. And Moe had also developed these relations with a printer in Brooklyn. The printer was progressive and really into the music and liked the whole Folkways thing, so we talked to him about doing our covers as well. Here's the economic basis for it:

PAR01001, 1970, design by Ronald Clyne, art by Servando Cabrera Moreno.



PAR01002, 1970, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Karen Enstrom/Roy Harvey.

what Moe had developed was having these stock cardboard sleeves that you could paste on the labels to order. Again, you don't have to print up a million of them; you don't have to have the whole record manufactured as a complete thing. You can just paste it on as needed. If you look at the records, they're 12" x 12" on the front and then fold around about 5 inches on the back. It was done this way so they could print four at once, four-up on a single sheet of paper. Folkways used matte paper instead of shiny paper for economic reasons too.

As LPs became more on the market, they became more slick and full color and everything. At this printer, what dictated what you could do was economics. If you could do it in two colors. And so you figure out things like one color has red, the other blue, so then a third cover can have purple. You figure out how to work with two colors, matte paper, that size. All dictated by the economics of the situation.

So we started by doing four at a time, just because the printer could print four-up. We had these first four: *Canción Protesta*, just the Spanish-language songs that were sung in Cuba. Then an Angola record, because somebody out west was doing a lot of Angolan support work and they'd gone and recorded all kinds of interesting things, among them little kids singing and another person in a hospital singing something. Little scraps of Angolan reality. Then

the next record was about the GI movement. I took someone from Radio Free People, which was a group that existed in New York then, who took a Nagra, which was a super professional recording machine which weighed about 25 lbs. (this I know because I carried one throughout Cuba on that first trip), with me to three or four of the GI movement bases and recorded me singing with GIs. Then we had the Huey Newton tapes. So that was our first four records: Huey Newton was spoken, the GI Resistance was just crudely recorded really, the Angolan one too. Those are both reality happening on a record. And then the *Canción Protesta*.

Paredon Records and Folkways shared a look. There are people that see Paredon Records and they think it's a Folkways imprint, or a Folkways record. Was there a part of you that welcomed that kind of confusion?

Oh no, I didn't care, I never cared what anyone else did, so I never looked at it that way at all. But as far as the guiding principles, Moe would put out just about anything that made any kind of sense at all, that he could without putting out much money in front, that he could get without much studio time. If he could get a finished tape just sent to him, he was really happy with that. His business plan was having a pipeline of product, so if he put out mediocre stuff it didn't much matter. It all sold to some degree, enough to have a cash flow going. And he had regular buyers like the ALA. He saw that his stuff would sell to librarians better than to record stores.

So Folkways was a flow of product. Some of it is great and fantastic and memorable and some of it is total bogus. Like the one they put out about the rainforest that they made in a bathtub in the Bronx or some place. You know? You have to know what you're looking at. If you look at, for example, his record from Vietnam, it's of a Saigon guy, it's iffy, it isn't really politically focused—it's just music, it's a pop singer or somebody doing folk songs. Moe wasn't out looking for music that said something about a particular time or situation. If it fell on his lap he wasn't gonna be too picky.

My guiding principle was that I wanted to put out stuff that nobody was gonna put out, because it's talking about the most radical changes in these places. It's talking about the cutting edge in this country.

PAR01019, 1970, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Ted Polumbaum.

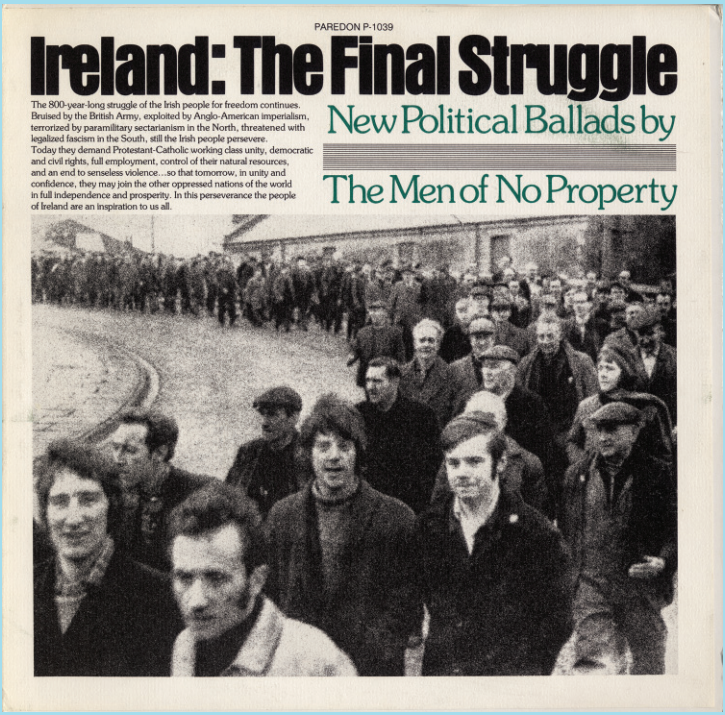
The way we did it was that we had no overhead. It was always done in the back room. We didn't have no offices or anything. All the work we put in on our own. Irwin did the distribution work and I did the production. And each record is different, each record has a different story.

PAR01030, 1975, designer unattributed.

So the Encuentro *in Cuba, that became the basis for the first Paredon record?*

It also became my connection with the world of political singers out there. In a sense, I knew that I had only one or two shots of putting something out from any given movement because we didn't have the money or resources for more. I had to take the best that I could find and go with it. That's why there's such a range for having only fifty titles in the whole label.

If I only had one record from wherever, Chile for example, then I wanted it to be the cutting edge of that. So the Chilean things I have, and I have a couple, one I put out without any permissions from anybody. One is a *cantata*, it's called *Chile: The Siege of Santa*



PAR01039, 1975, design by Ronald Clyne.

Maria de Iquique. At the time I knew nothing about Chilean music except for Violetta Parra's children, who were wonderful young performers who came to the *Encuentro*, so I knew them but I didn't know anything more about Chilean music. Anyway, some Chilean people in New York came to me and said, you gotta put something out, and here's the thing you should put out because it's this great *cantata* and it's all about the Nitrate miners in the Chilean mines. That sounded great! But I had no way of contacting anyone, so I just went ahead and put it out. That's basically how I did everything. I'd find it and put it out. If I could talk to the person first and make proper arrangements that was fine, but if I couldn't and it felt urgent to get it out I'd just get it out and make up for it later. Like Daniel

Viglietti, he's like the Pete Seeger of Uruguay. He's a great, great artist and he was put in jail when he got back from Cuba, because he was connected to the Tupamaros. I thought it was very important to get his name out in the world, to get people to know about him and raise a stink about the fact that he's jailed.

So I had the opportunity to make a swap for a master tape from a bunch of songs he'd recorded in Cuba. The Cubans were wonderful that way. If you were there and you said, I can't make records at home, I have no studio, I have no record label . . . They'd let you have a studio and a producer and you could go ahead and make your record there. So he had a master tape, and he had given it or sold it to Le Chant du Monde, a record label in Paris that was pretty progressive. I met them and made a swap for something that they wanted. Just a swap, no money involved, no contract or anything. And I put it out. And again, when he got out of jail and things quieted down a little, I realized he was upset that something was put out with no agreement beforehand, so we made it up later. And we're great friends and it's all fine. That's the way I did things, just went barging ahead because that was the way it had to be, you know, we're not playing games here. We're trying to save lives, we're trying to save the world, all this stuff, get the idea?

What was it that you traded with Le Chant du Monde?

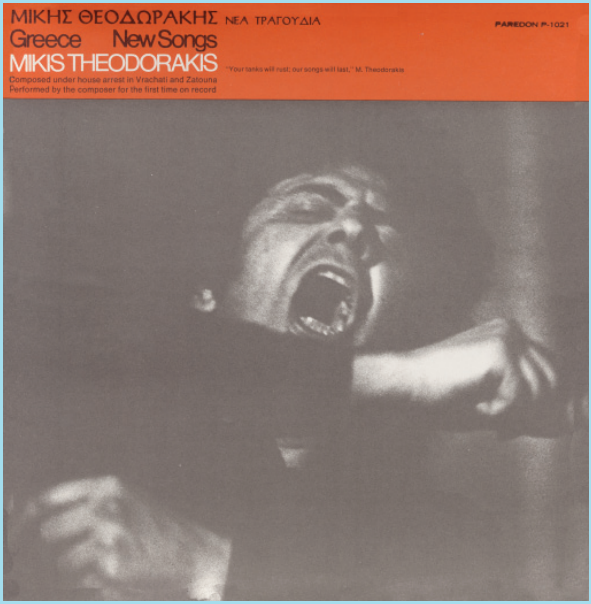
I traded them for some Irish music. I put out a couple of Irish records during the period. . . . One was called *This Is Free Belfast* and the other was called *The Final Struggle*. I got in touch with those people through Ewan MacColl, and it was all underground. I never met them, didn't know their real names—never have and probably never will. Ewan got me in touch with them and they sent me all the material in some clandestine fashion, and we put those out. I even created the name for the group, as they didn't have one, so I called them Men of No Property. That's one of the phrases that comes up in Irish revolutionary lingo.

The same with the other Chilean record I put out, *Songs for the Resistance*, which has such a great cover. Ooh I love that picture. Have you ever seen it? The cover on that one is so powerful.

PAR01041, 1978, design by Ronald Clyne.

Very powerful. And this was put out after the coup? In 1975?

I think so. A lot of the cover images or photographs I got out of the *Guardian*'s photo files, which was the leading progressive newspaper of its time, and they let me have access to their archives. Irwin worked there. Anyway, somebody contacted me through the *Guardian*. I never knew their name, they just said meet me in this coffeehouse. I went and met the guy, I noticed he had a couple of fingers missing, somebody—just a student who had been tortured. So he brought me the tape, and then we met a couple of more times and he brought me the information that I needed to make the booklet from. I didn't have any idea of the names of the artists, which is why you don't find them on there, and it just says produced by



PAR01021, 1974, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by John Veltri.

PAR01042, 1978, design by Ronald Clyne, art by Supalaks Jittidecharaks.

Karaxu. Now, we know who some of the artists are. One of them was Angel Parra—Violetta Parra's son, and Patricio Manns, and Karaxu is a group. So I did eventually find out who they are and updated the last version of the cover.

And on a lot of these you worked with Ronald Clyne, who designed most of the covers for Folkways Records.

I worked with Ronny because we knew him really well and enjoyed him socially, and he lived a few blocks from me. He was a brilliant guy. And if you caught him at the right time of day, before he drank too much wine, he was very very clever about what he did. You can see that he could take any kind of photo, work with it, and make it meaningful and not destroy the meaning of it. And always, his forte was selection of type and layout and all that. I'd bring him the basic tools, the basic elements, photos and also drawings from artists I'd met.

So I was the art director too. I came up with the concepts and the tools to give Ronny, and then worked with him. There were some interesting debates that went on about the covers. Like, for example, the Theodorakis one. . . . In Europe Mikis Theodorakis was considered by many to be Europe's greatest living composer, and he was always mainly directed by his politics. I knew him because during the Greek junta in the late '60s and early '70s I made a singable translation of three pieces from Romiossini. I took the first three songs and made them with singable English lyrics.

I went to sing in a festival in Italy. I was waiting backstage and Theodorakis was on stage with his band doing a sound check. Maria Farantouri, who I consider to be the greatest living singer of her time—well, between her and Violetta Parra and Mahalia Jackson. Okay, there they are, those are my three choices. Anyway, Maria was sitting next to me, waiting for her chance to do her sound check as well. I took the liberty of telling her about my three English-language Theodorakis songs. She said, "Oh, Mikis has to hear those." She brought me on stage and made me sing them for him. And then he made me get up and do them in the festival with him, because he really liked them. So I met him and that cemented a relationship. When he eventually got over here, after the junta in Greece

was put out of business, I was asked to sing the same stuff with him out in Astoria, Queens, where the Greek community is solid. I said, "Mikis, do you want to record anything?" He'd just gotten out of years of house arrest where he hadn't been able to record anything. And he said yes! He would, definitely, right now. So we went to the studio and spent maybe an eight-hour stretch of him sitting at the piano just playing all these incredible things he'd written during house arrest, singing them himself. And he's not really a singer, but when you hear him singing this stuff, it's so emotional and so right. So of course, this brings me to one of the principles that we worked with, I had to make sure that there was some sort of movement in this country that would support the record I was putting out, people to buy the thing, because each record had to support the next record that we were putting out. You had to keep that in mind. I knew that there were plenty of people involved in the Greek movement in this country, so that didn't bother me for starters.

Anyway, once we get it at the stage of putting it out, I ended up with this great picture of Theodorakis: he's got his mouth wide open and he's singing and conducting at the same time. It's really a great picture. And that's what I wanted on the cover. Then I start hearing from these Greek factions—the cautious ones—who said, "Oh no, that looks like he's throwing rocks or something. Too militant-looking." They came up with a different picture of him conducting, looking more like a conductor than a militant. To get their help in promoting the thing, I had to make that compromise, so I put it out at first with that cover, and then after a while I saw that they weren't doing a lot to help get the record out anyway, so the next round of covers I changed the picture. That was one of the beauties of having small runs: if something didn't work out, you could change it. So we wound up with the good picture.

Another one with a debate about the cover was called *Algo Se Quema Allá Afuera!* (Something Is Burning Out There). It's from a Puerto Rican singer named Estrella Artau. Estrella was very young, in her early twenties I guess. She was writing terrific songs and tearing 'em up at the rallies in New York about Puerto Rican independence. And yet she wasn't getting proper support from the movement because she was a lesbian. I recognized that she should have more support,

PAR01032, 1975, design by Carlos Osorio (1st printing).

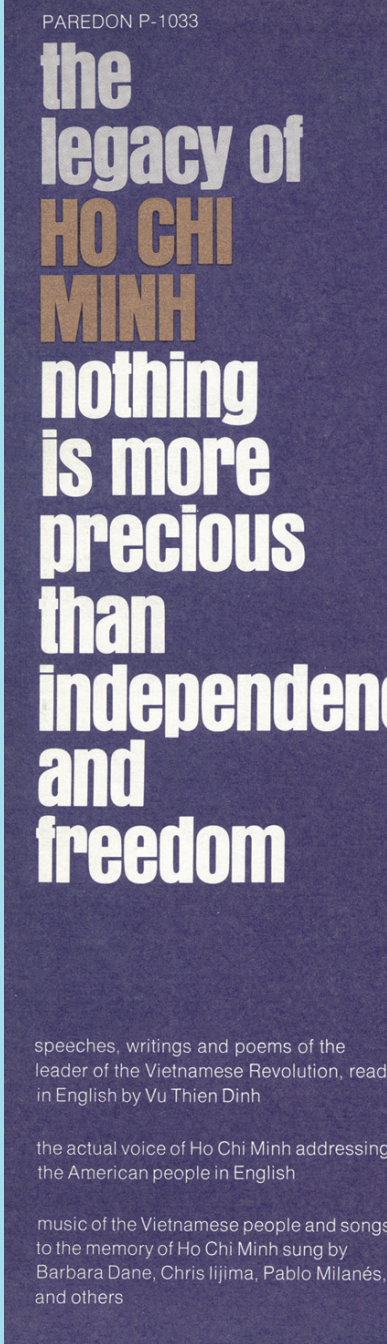
PAR01032, 1975, design by Ronald Clyne (2nd printing).

because amongst the Puerto Ricans making music in New York, I thought she was the strongest. I wanted to record her, but she was going to go back to live in Puerto Rico, so I had to be quick about it. She had this little concert coming up out in New Jersey, in a school. Just a small thing where she was going to play solo, so I brought somebody with portable equipment and we recorded it, and that's what we put out. It's not ideal, you know, I would have liked to have had her in one of those huge rallies where she's really got a few thousand screaming people in the audience, but it wasn't like that.

With the cover, I had somebody make me some kind of a picture, it's supposed to represent a little village in Puerto Rico, and since the title is *Something Is Burning Out There* it's supposed to indicate a fire going on. Anyway, it didn't work. That one didn't really work at all. We even printed it and put a few out there, but it didn't have the force I wanted. I got somebody else to draw a big flame with the words "Puerto Rico," and that ended up being the cover for that one. And I liked that one. That was Ronny's solution: strong type and very bold.

Tell us about the image that you used for the Ho Chi Minh cover.

That's a great image. It was a poster from Cuba, and it was made by a young



PAR01033, 1976, design by Ronald Clyne, art by Pablo Labaniño.

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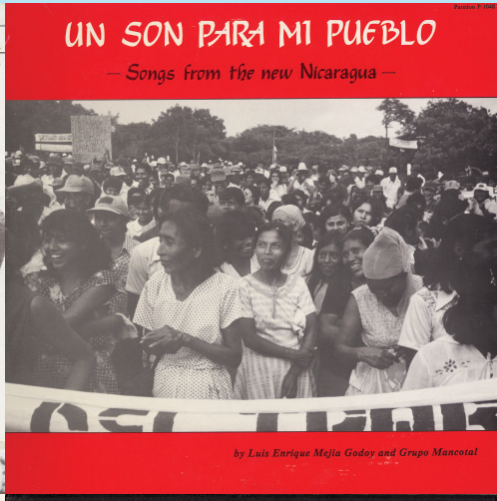


Clockwise from top left: PAR01017, 1973, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Arbolito; PAR01048, 1983, design by Juan Fuentes, photo by Jim Eitel; PAR01035, 1978, art by Karen Lynch; PAR01024, 1974, design by Ronald Clyne, art by Cathy Blank and Wendy Sambery.

artist. My son Pablo went to the famous *Escuelas Nacionales de Arte*, the national school of art in Cuba that they set up right after the revolution to train young Cubans to create their own art forms. It was a part of democratizing art in Cuba, finding a way to have people from humble backgrounds to be assisted and trained in whatever their propensity in the arts. So there was this young guy, Pablo Labaniño. He had just made this fantastic poster about Ho Chi Minh. As you can see, the whole Vietnamese struggle is depicted in the face.

I was determined to make Ho Chi Minh feel like a real person to people here, so I wanted to put together some of his most important thoughts and have somebody take up the job of reading it, in a voice that would seem, not purporting to be Ho Chi Minh, but that would feel like that. So I wanted a Vietnamese reader. I'd go sing at a protest in Washington or something like that, and if they had really good organizers they would have a Vietnamese patriot on the program. So anytime I'd ever heard of anybody Vietnamese there I'd be checking them out, and finally I heard one guy giving his little five-minute thing during the rally. He had a voice that had a lower pitch, which our ears are more familiar with, and had good English pronunciation. So I thought, "Perfect!" and I approached him and said, "How would you like to be the voice of Ho Chi Minh on this album I'm putting together?" He was delighted with the idea. He came up to New York and we spent a few days with him reading the text. The funny part was what emerged from that: he had everything right, he really felt it, his voice was perfect—however, he had a terrific stammer. An unexpected thing. The engineer I worked with all the time, who was paid by the hour, but was reasonable with me because he was into the material, he had to take hours and hours to clip out all the stammers. So when you listen you'll never hear it.

For the text, I'd asked a few people who I knew were avid readers of Ho Chi Minh's thoughts and poems and things. I asked them to pull some things together. I wanted to focus on Ho Chi Minh's genius. He understood exactly how a communist party should function. You create the conditions where you had a mass base like they did in Vietnam, but you also have a leadership that is responsive to it, and is exercising what they used to call democratic centralism. Given the times they were in, you had to have a very

well-disciplined base, so I wanted that to come across for the more politically sophisticated listener to understand the value of having a party. You know he's got that thing on there, "The Path Which Led Me to Leninism." It's a very moving part on how he got to be a Leninist, and I put a little bit of music around here and there so it wouldn't be just too dry. I enhanced it a little bit and had somebody softly playing the "Internationale" on the trumpet.

And then I got these great songs, one from Pablo Milanés, Milanés is famous for "Su Nombre, Ho Chi Minh." In fact it's a very complicated melody, and yet when it was being sung in Cuba, kids on the street would sing it, even though the melody is very demanding. Anyway, it's got these great songs, and it really came across cohesively of Ho Chi Minh's thrust, of what made it possible for them to achieve the tremendous things that they did.

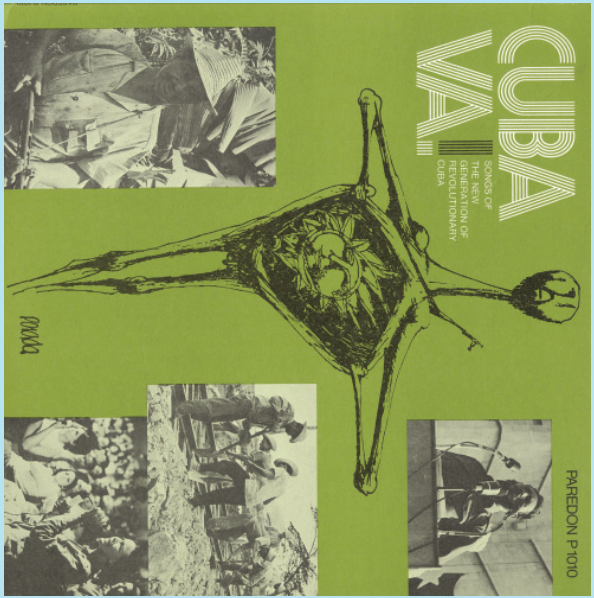
I wanted to ask you about a little drawing that ended up as a symbol on all the record labels themselves of Paredon releases. The drawing looks like it first came from the Cuba Va! *record.*

Yeah. It was a drawing that came from a Cuban artist named Posada. I saw that drawing on the wall of an exhibit I went to when I was at the *Canción Protesta* and I took a picture of it. Then when I was looking for an image to use for the label at one point, I saw this picture of a guy, this skinny representative of the starving masses of the world, and he's got the sun coming out of his guts. That's exactly what I wanted. So I used it, and the next time I saw Posada I thanked him, and he said he was thrilled that we used it. That's how we got that symbol.

How did the Filipino record come about?

Well, that's a good one! I went over there a couple of times in relation to the GI movement, to do some support singing. And actually my son Pablo went with me. He was my sidekick and accompanist on a lot of these trips I went on. I probably could never find another musician as good as he is to go and do these risky things. So we went to the Philippines doing this support stuff for the GI movement. Well, martial law had just been put in place there, and so when someone comes into the country they send you an invitation to come down and

PAR01029, 1976, design by Ronald Clyne,
cover image from the *Guardian*.



PAR01010, 1971, design by Ronald Clyne, art by Posada.

talk to someone at their office of immigration. People from the movement told us we shouldn't go because the first thing they'll do is deport us instantaneously, just escort us right to a plane. As a result of it, I got in contact with people in the Philippine movement and then we decided to try and put a record out. We had to do it over time because martial law was not a joke, you know. They eventually wound up recording the songs, but they had to do it in somebody's basement, doing three one night and the next night another two in a house that was not known. They got it all recorded, and they got someone to bring it to me—all these steps, and all these terrible sacrifices people are making to get this record to me. And then when I got it, it turned out not to be viable. I forget, maybe the tape didn't work. Anyway the whole damn thing had to be recorded again, and the only way they could think of doing it was with Filipinos living here, so it finally got recorded over here with some Filipinos

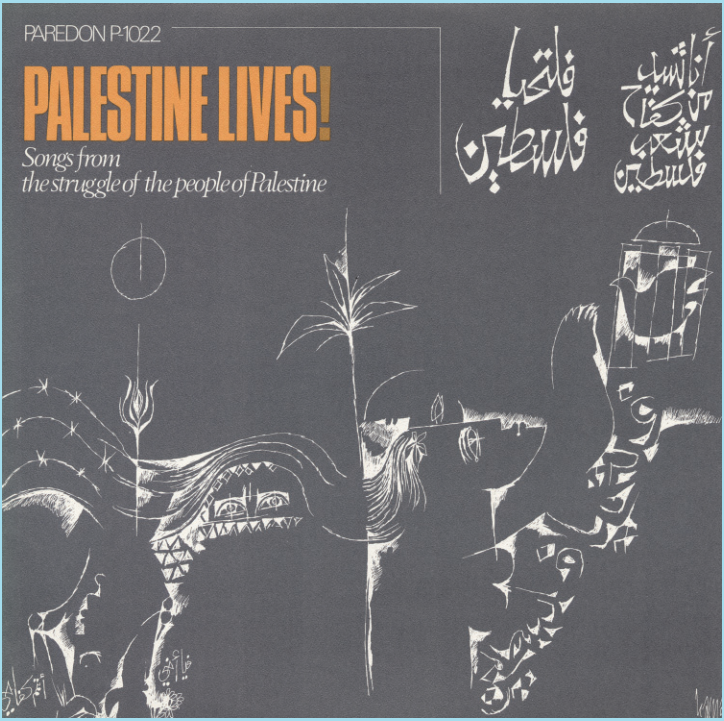
From top to bottom: PAR01047, 1983, design by Juan Fuentes; PAR01046, 1982, design by Suellen Ehnebuske, photo by Earl Dotter; PAR01007, 1971, design by Ronald Clyne.

who wanted to help the movement. So that's how that one got done. All of the records are all kind of individual. . . . For example, we got *Huey Newton Speaks* because Mark Lane, who wrote the definitive book about the Kennedy assassination, was also the lawyer for Huey along with Charles Garry, and they were able to go visit him in jail. Huey had been in solitary for two years, I believe—a long time! And they got to interview him, as they were his lawyers, so Mark was able to bring a small tape machine in there and interviewed him in the visitor's area at the jail. He had that tape, and I thought, "Hell, we should get this out," because he had some very interesting ideas, very unorthodox for the time. Huey, for all his craziness, was also very brilliant. It was one of our first records.

Where did Palestine Lives!, *which had members of Fatah singing on it, come from?*

Okay, I'll tell you how I got that one. At the time I was

From top to bottom: PAR01016, 1973, design by Collective Graphics Workshop; PAR02001, 1975, designer unattributed; PAR01031, 1975, design by Ronald Clyne, art by Fritz M. Joseph.



PAR01022, 1974, design by Ronald Clyne, art by Kamal Boullata.

looking everywhere, how can I make some kind of connection that could alert people to the Palestinian situation? My feeling was if you could get people to listen to a little taste of their music—their culture—you could get the sense that they're real human beings. They hurt too, they bleed, they cry, they're like you. Maybe you should take a kinder stance toward them. I was desperately trying to find something and it was very hard back then to make contact with anyone Palestinian. I was in France, and I was asking everybody, thinking I might have a better chance there. "Do you have any Palestinian stuff?" I was going to record stores, usually to the left-wing record stores. I kept hearing "No, no, no, no, no." Well at one place a guy said, "Just a second. I've got something under the counter here." He had a little stack of 45s, and they were all from Al-Fat'h, and it was a

PAR01025, 1974, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Victor Camilo.

little series of things they put out. He only had one or two copies of the whole thing, and I said, "I'll take everything you got." I brought it back home, and I had it mastered right off those little 45s. Then I had to find somebody to translate them, find someone to make a booklet, make some notes, all that stuff. That was another one of the most valuable things for me working on all these records: it always brought me closer into a movement. It forced me to know more about it, to meet some of the people deeply involved. That fantastic cover was made by a very famous artist, Kamal Boullata, and he is still very active in the movement. I contacted him about the artwork, and he was so involved in everything he just took the bull by the horns and he went out and did all the translating work and did some interviewing, and it made for a really excellent booklet. So I met

PAR01013, 1973, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Plaza de la revolución

some pretty great people involved with Al-Fat'h. But I also didn't want it to be too partisan, I didn't want it to just represent one section of the Palestinian situation. I found this woman who had just made a short documentary about Palestine. She had all these interviews, like the one with a little boy who says, "I'm making a map of my country with a stick in the sand." Very touching. Anyway, I asked her if I could use pieces of the soundtrack from this film. And then I mixed them in there so you could hear some Palestinians talking.

Those are the narrative pieces in between the songs?

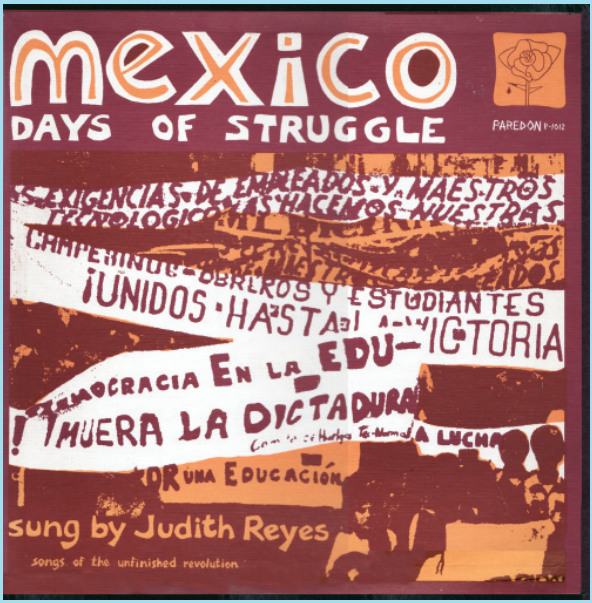
Yeah, they come from her film. And that documentary she made was one of the first that documented the Palestinian

movement, I think. There may have been other things, but the only thing I could ever find was her documentary, and the fact that she let me use the soundtrack was really a bonus. And I liked it because it had a bit more of a human touch. The Al-Fat'h stuff was for marching around.

Are there any projects with Paredon that you look back on and are most proud of?

You know something, every time I look at this—right now I'm holding this shoebox with the fifty releases, the titles are facing me—and I swear, it's like *Sophie's Choice*; choose one and the other doesn't make it. I'm proud of them all and so glad it got done. It doesn't matter if my name is attached to the project or not, just the fact that all this stuff is still available.

For example, I'm so glad we could get the Second Declaration of Havana in some kind of recorded form. And there it sits in the archives of the Smithsonian/Folkways for anybody to go there and listen to it. And the booklet is quite instructive. If you read the speech in English, you're gonna get an education about the whole situation in Latin America at the time. And still, really, like all of Fidel's speeches, it's a teaching thing, a compilation of a lot of information that he knows that his people and other people need, and you know anybody who says, "Uh, he talks for like four or five hours"—you gotta remember, he starts out at the beginning of the revolution and he's talking to people who are largely illiterate, so you have to pass on everything verbally. So this is a great teaching moment when you have a million people standing there in front of him, and he's giving this speech, teaching the whole economy of the moment and the politics and everything, giving the state of the union all at the same time. Anyway, the Second Declaration was presented in the Plaza de Revolución, but directed at the world. It was intended to document the times for the whole region and it does in Fidel's flawless Spanish. And then we put, as we've tried to do with other spoken word things that were in a different language, we put the translation side by side so you have parallel access, you could check your Spanish or your English with its partner on the other side of the page.



PAR01012, 1973, design by Collective Graphics Workshop.

PAR02501, 1971, design by Ronald Clyne, photo by Jorge Lopez.

And that one I got because they'd issued it in LP form in Cuba. Frankly, I took it home, copied it right off of that original, and put it out. I probably spoke to someone down there about doing it, but maybe not.

If you want to talk about ones that I'm proud of—that Che one and the Ho Chi Minh one, I put both of those together. And as far as the struggle to get the materials, I won't even tell you how hard it was to get the odds and ends of things that went into those. Putting them together and putting some songs in from different people was a real labor of love in both cases, and I'm very happy that I did it. You know how many people that I run into now, young people, who have no idea who Ho Chi Minh or even Che Guevara was except for a picture on a T-shirt? So to have something that represents who they actually were and what is the importance of them, their lives, you can get some of that from the recordings.

I want to talk about *What Now People?* The whole idea behind it was that we wanted to have a song magazine on a record. So we could put out an LP and get these songs that were of the moment out there, so people could sing them. We actually managed to get three of those out, and they all have very interesting topical songs. Like the first one starts right off with a great song which is very contemporary now, "Multinational Corporation Man," which is humorous and very cutting-edge. That was the concept, and it was hard to pull off, actually, because you have to pull together at least a dozen songs from different parts of the country, different sections of the population and make it cohesive. I did get three out, with the help of one particular friend who got interested in it, Kathy Jarvis. I wish I could've kept it going. I think even now in some current form and some current media it could still be an interesting idea: a song magazine.

I always wanted to find more stuff from the U.S. to interlace with all this international material, because the idea was that it was a movement without borders. It's a movement for survival, it's a movement for justice, peace, against racism—all that. And all of these are universal things. So I wanted to make sure we had some American artists represented here.

I made an album called *I Hate the Capitalist System,* which is the first song on that album, and that song was written in Kentucky

PAREDON P-1014

I HATE THE CAPITAL SYSTE

BARBARA DA

by Sara Ogan Gunning, and it's about her family dying of starvation during the mine organizing days. So it's not an abstract thought, it's a real thought. Then we got the Covered Wagon Singers, which was a group of antiwar Air Force people from Mountain Home, Idaho. They wanted to take their message all over the state. The cover says it all: "We are taking the GI out of genocide." That's their flag that they were marching around with. That's a wonderful album, their own songwriting and singing, a little bit of history in the notes. We've got the Red Star Singers, with the cover by Jane Norling. And those folks were out here in this part of the country doing very good work with their music. And then Beverly Grant who did a record called *Working People Gonna Rise*, and her group was called the Human Condition. Beverly is still singing today.

Why did you stop the label?

I was traveling a lot. One year I was in Asia a couple of times, Europe a couple of times, parts of the U.S. It was one of the main Paredon years. And then the minute I'd get home, I'd go in the back room and start working on Paredon. It was so interesting to me

PAR01014, 1973, design by Ronald Clyne.

Each Paredon release contained a booklet including lyrics, essays, photographs, and contact information for activist and solidarity groups.


P-1016 BROTANDO DEL SILENCIO – BREAKING OUT OF THE SILENCESUNI PAZ

THE WOMAN OF LA RAZA

by Berita Martinez

The history and oppression experienced by the woman of La Raza—"The Latin woman"—in the United States are not well-known, even in these years when so much is heard about women's liberation. By "La Raza" we mean the dominant population of the American continent, the peoples who are a racial mixture of native Indian, European and African. For us, the women of La Raza include Chicanas, Puerto Ricans, women from Central and South America. Our national or cultural backgrounds may vary but we have more in common than differences.

Before the Spanish conquest in the Americas, the native Indian woman was far from being completely free—but she often participated more fully in the life of the society than did her sisters in Europe. The coming of the Spaniard, with his Catholic Church and feudal social system, was a turning point. La Raza itself is the product of rape and sexual oppression, with the European male taking advantage of the native Indian female in every way and thus producing a whole new race. Our roots lie in the act of rape: the rape of women, the rape of an entire continent and its people.

Inside the borders of the United States, the woman of La Raza lived first under Spanish rule, then Mexican rule and beginning in 1848 under U.S. imperialist rule. That year, the process of rape was resumed. The Chicana was raped by the invading gringo both in the literal, physical sense as well as in the sense of those forms of oppression imposed on all our people—both men and women.

Today we can say that the Chicana, together with the Puerto Rican and other Raza women, suffers from a triple oppression.


Recorded at the National Radio Station in Luanda, People's Republic of Angola P-1001

ANGOLA: FORWARD, PEOPLE'S POWER!

SONGS OF VICTORY AND CONSTRUCTION

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PAREDON P1002

ANGOLA :

Victory Is Certain!

A Vitória É Certa!

Songs of the Liberation Army of MPLA

(Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola)

Recorded in the liberated zones by members of the Liberation Support Movement

Produced and with notes on the music by Barbara Dane

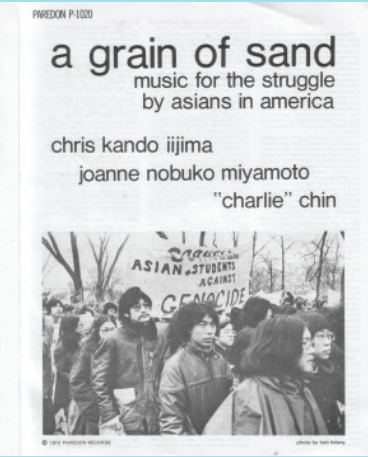
Booklet edited by Pat Feyerabend

A detachment of MPLA guerrillas, Moxico District (MPLA's Third Region), eastern Angola.

and so compelling, so when you're working on things that are your passion, it doesn't seem like work. Such pleasure, such a great feeling when you're doing something that you think matters, and so I would just come home and bust my butt and not take any time off. All during those years I was doing the occasional, professional singing gig, but time was going by and finally after eleven years I realized that if I didn't focus on my singing work, now that I was getting older, I wouldn't be able to do my best work. So I decided that I should hand this over to some other people. Irwin was leaving the *Guardian* too, which was his financial and movement base. So we were going to move back to California—back for me at least, for him the first time. We came to live in the East Bay, in Oakland.

The idea was that we'd find some people out here who would be able to take over and run Paredon and that way I could focus on the singing and Irwin could focus on starting a new newspaper with a new group. So we did. We found some quite wonderful people and formed a little collective and gave it to them. They started to try and do it. But really we had underestimated completely how

From left, booklet covers for PAR01016, PAR01041, PAR01002, PAR01030, PAR01020, and PAR01012. Booklets edited and designed by Barbara Dane.



important Irwin's and my own track record and experiences were. Getting new material . . . how do they get new material? I just got it as a result of my other work, I'd meet people in the course of what I was doing and I had some credibility, so I could get it done. But here's some people out of nowhere, and how are they gonna convince people to do it? You have to build a whole series of connections. They tried, and they did some wonderful events to try and broaden the reach of it out here, but they couldn't sustain it. They eventually packed everything into someone's garage and sold off a whole lot of the stock.

What have you been doing since the end of Paredon?

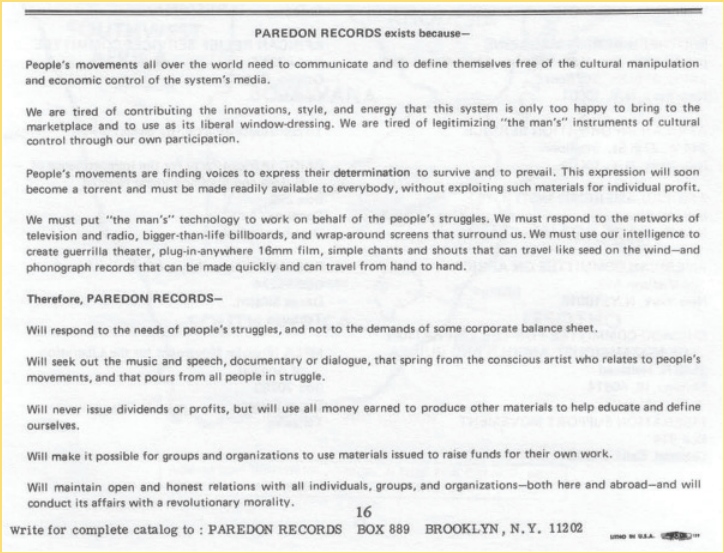
What have I been doing ever since. . . . Oh boy, we moved back to California in the early '80s. Well . . . wow . . . I can't tell you what I've been doing (laughs). Politically, I was very active with Line of March, then Irwin wrote a book called *Socialism: What Went Wrong*. They were analyzing Soviet socialism and Mao Zedong's thoughts and all that, trying to analyze what to keep and what is

not applicable. And create new theory, which I'm not very good at. I listen and learn but can't say that I can make any. At any rate, just trying to be part of the movements—and then in the last ten years I've just basically been getting older is what I've been doing. I spent a long time taking care of Irwin when he had dementia. He had Alzheimer's and a whole lot of physical problems, so I had to become his caregiver for the last few years. Now I'm eighty-five and I have to use my walker all the time as of a few weeks ago when my back collapsed. I've been doing some concerts here in Berkeley—birthday concerts which turned out to be sell-out concerts, which is only because I don't do them more than every few years!

Paredon Records releases are available digitally through the Smithsonian Folkways Archive: www.folkways.si.edu

Images courtesy of the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Institution.

Many thanks to Stephanie Smith, Brice White, KBOO radio, and Matt Knowles.



PAREDON RECORDS exists because—

People's movements all over the world need to communicate and to define themselves free of the cultural manipulation and economic control of the system's media.

We are tired of contributing the innovations, style, and energy that this system is only too happy to bring to the marketplace and to use as its liberal window-dressing. We are tired of legitimizing "the man's" instruments of cultural control through our own participation.

People's movements are finding voices to express their determination to survive and to prevail. This expression will soon become a torrent and must be made readily available to everybody, without exploiting such materials for individual profit.

We must put "the man's" technology to work on behalf of the people's struggles. We must respond to the networks of television and radio, bigger-than-life billboards, and wrap-around screens that surround us. We must use our intelligence to create guerrilla theater, plug-in-anywhere 16mm film, simple chants and shouts that can travel like seed on the wind—and phonograph records that can be made quickly and can travel from hand to hand.

Therefore, PAREDON RECORDS—

Will respond to the needs of people's struggles, and not to the demands of some corporate balance sheet.

Will seek out the music and speech, documentary or dialogue, that spring from the conscious artist who relates to people's movements, and that pours from all people in struggle.

Will never issue dividends or profits, but will use all money earned to produce other materials to help educate and define ourselves.

Will make it possible for groups and organizations to use materials issued to raise funds for their own work.

Will maintain open and honest relations with all individuals, groups, and organizations—both here and abroad—and will conduct its affairs with a revolutionary morality.

16

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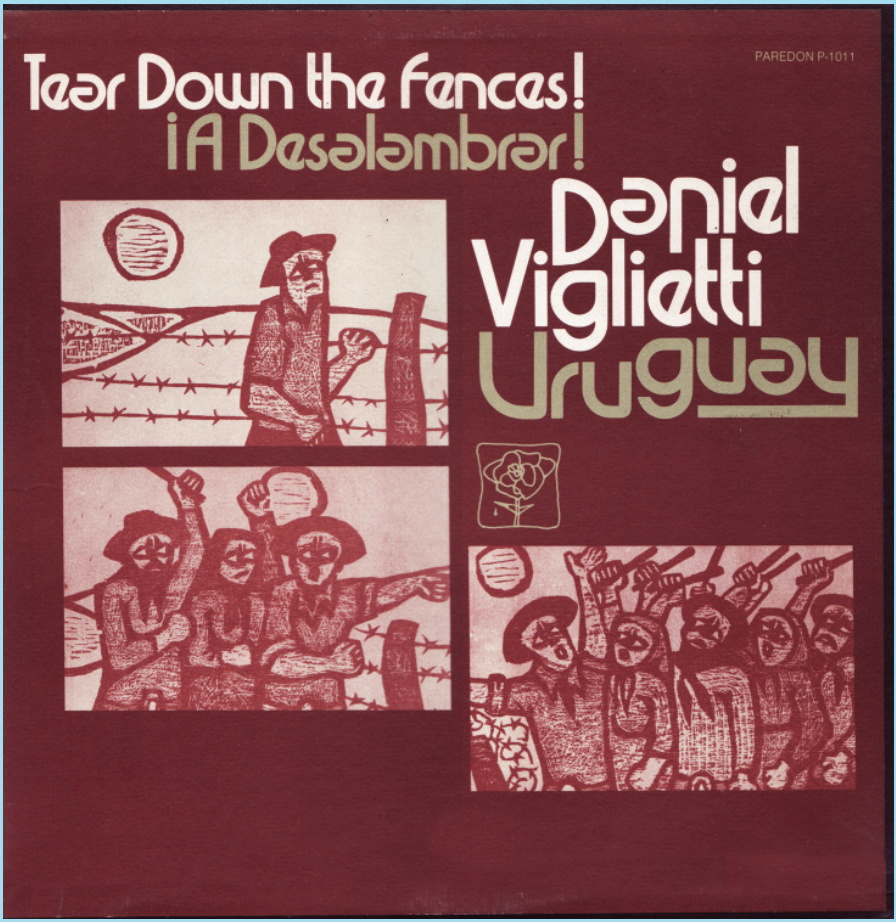

PAR01011, 1973, design by Collective Graphics Workshop.

LE SAVOIR EST UNE ARME!

Visual Artifacts That Become Us

Oppositional Cultural Heritage from Québec's 2012 Maple Spring

David Widgington

From February to September 2012, a student-led strike seized the attention of Québec. The protest movement initially focused on access to higher education but broadened its scope to include the privatization of public institutions, the exploitation of natural resources, and the hollowing out of democratic processes. It was the longest student strike in Québec history and a period of vigorous action that politicized a generation. The 204-day strike, known as the *printemps érable*, dominated media coverage and captured Québec's imagination due to its abundant and creative forms of dissent. "Maple Spring" is the English translation of *printemps érable*, which rhymes with *printemps arab*, or "Arab Spring," referring to the protest movements that toppled governments across North Africa in 2011. Beyond wordplay, the inventiveness of the Québec movement is captured in posters that announced major convergences as well as on the banners and protest signs that punctuated daily demonstrations. To this day, movement messages still linger as stencils, graffiti, and murals—exquisite reminders of opposition more than a year after the beginning of the strike.

Protest movements—if defined by the space they occupy in the streets, by the duration with which they capture the public interest, or by the artifacts they leave behind—are ephemeral by nature. After demonstrators disperse, little evidence remains of their presence. Banners get rolled up and brought home. Protest signs are usually discarded (voluntarily, or forcibly at police checkpoints). The

resounding slogans of dissent fall silent. Posters fade in the sun, disintegrate in the rain, or are hidden under newer calls for convergence. What remains at the end of a mass mobilization is a memory of collective dissent, a sentiment of belonging, and a more critical stance toward the status quo.

How does a protest movement remember itself and build an oppositional consciousness that can reach beyond the ebb and flow of its specific time and place? How can a protest movement learn from its own past rather than rely on other (often hostile) representations of its actions? If a movement is to progress, it needs to build its own oppositional cultural heritage, both to self-identify with its past and to better relate contemporary struggles to former campaigns. The histories of social movements help us understand that oppression will remain if it is not continuously challenged. When people criticize the student strike by saying that Québec students have no reason to complain because we have the lowest tuition in the country, we reply: of course we do, because we have fought for decades to keep it that way. Frederick Douglass said it succinctly: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It

never did and it never will." A protest movement needs to archive its own cultural production—its posters, banners, protest signs, actions, installations, and other oppositional artifacts—as a first step toward self-representation. Subsequent steps could include recirculating the artifacts within the movement and remixing the symbols to create new meanings.

I've created an archive of visual artifacts from the *printemps érable*. The purpose of this collection is not to nostalgically memorialize past struggles but to build stock for future collective self-identification and to crystallize oppositional consciousness.

* * *

On February 13, 2012, in response to government-imposed tuition increases, two student unions (from different universities) voted by general assembly for an unlimited general strike. Student unions throughout Québec, representing more than 316,000 students, quickly voted to join the strike as well. The first province-wide protest was on March 22. With an estimated 200,000 demonstrators on the streets of Montréal, this action began to transform a

student strike into a Québec-wide mass movement.

The expression *printemps érable* was taken from cardboard signs screen-printed by the École de la Montagne Rouge, an ad hoc group composed of striking students from the Design Department at the Université du Québec à Montréal. *Printemps érable* signs were printed onto cardboard and handed out to hundreds of protesters at the demonstration's departure point. The expression was thereafter adopted as the unofficial name for Québec's 2012 oppositional period. The 22nd day of each month thereafter became the official province-wide date of mass protest (though street demonstrations were not limited to these monthly gatherings—more than 600 protests happened during the six-month strike).

On April 24, student demonstrators gathered outside of the Montréal Convention Center to protest a mining conference celebrating the wholesale privatization of natural resources by the same government that was privatizing education. While Québec Premier Jean Charest ridiculed the protesters during his opening speech, the police violently attacked demonstrators with batons, tear gas, and rubber bullets in

the streets that surrounded the Convention Center. A video of this speech went viral, and in response the strike's first nighttime demonstration was organized, scheduled to leave that evening from a public square adjacent to Université du Québec à Montréal. The systematic police brutality and contempt displayed for the protestors became a catalyst for both internal movement organization and external solidarity from onlookers. The increasingly aggressive temperament experienced on the streets is well represented in the visual artifacts collected within the archive. The tone of the protest movement began to shift.

A tradition began of evening demonstrations through downtown Montréal that regularly extended into residential neighborhoods. Some nights drew only a few hundred protesters, while others had up to thirty-five thousand people marching through the streets. Five thousand was not uncommon. When government negotiators were intransigent with the students, the nightly demonstrations


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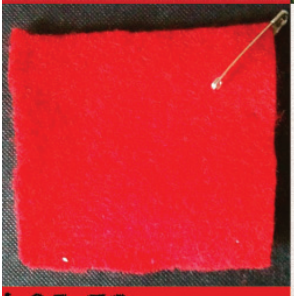


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Oui à la gratuité
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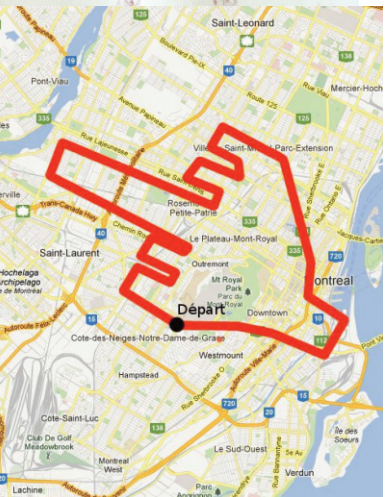
ENSEMBLE,
NOUS AVONS
BLOQUÉ
LA HAUSSE


La grève est étudiante
LA LUTTE EST POPULAIRE

provided a rapid response that swelled with indignation. Their ad hoc autonomy allowed them to reach the hundredth consecutive night of protests on August 1, and persist beyond that. The nightly protest became the circulatory system of the student strike—its heartbeat.

The government attempted to divide the student movement, as it had done during a 2005 student strike. It refused to negotiate with the largest student coalition (CLASSE) until its spokesperson publicly denounced protestor violence during demonstrations. Corporate media uncritically regurgitated the government demand and demonized the student movement by ignoring a nuanced discussion which distinguished between the symbolic breaking of bank windows and the systematic police brutality that inflicted serious injuries on protestors.

On May 4, 2012, the governing Liberal party changed the location of its annual convention from Montréal to Victoriaville to distance itself from the protests and control media coverage of the event. Their plan backfired as protestors arrived in the small town (about 150 kilometers from Montréal) by the busload. Media



activists recorded serious injuries and riot police preventing an ambulance from accessing the injured. Community University Television—Concordia (CUTV), a campus/community television station based in Montréal, streamed the protests live to thousands of viewers around the globe, and revealed an appalling use of force against legitimate protest. The police repression that followed left little space for government public relations.

As oppositional momentum grew, so did the visual representation of the deteriorating relationship between the state's (in)security apparatuses. Artact Qc, an artist who consciously chooses anonymity, was prolific in his digital paintings of the police brutality experienced during protests. Professors—"Teachers Against the Hike"—joined in and brought their own banners to demonstrations in support of their students. Solidarity from the group Angry & Supportive Mothers, disgusted by seeing their children brutalized by the police, followed. Seniors Against the Hike joined the demonstrations as well. Students became less isolated in their struggle.


POLICE
GRÈVE ÉTUDIANTE LUTTE POPU
TES LA GRÈVE SOCIALE!
CHARTS YOU HOW
Il était une fois, un printemps au Québec...


SOIS
JEUNE
ET
TAIS
TOI

The primary symbol of the movement was the red square. The symbol was initially introduced into the visual landscape in 2004 by Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté [The Collective for a Poverty-Free Québec], then borrowed by students during a 2005 student strike. The strike was against the government's decision to transfer $103 million from bursaries to loans, an action that would have left students "carrément dans le rouge" (squarely in the red) if the strike hadn't prevented it. In 2012 it reemerged as the student movement's omnipresent icon. Red felt squares were pinned to jacket lapels and backpacks. Red duct tape was stuck to lampposts and street signs. It was adopted in solidarity by nonstudent supporters of the strike. This symbol emanated a growing movement cohesiveness and collective self-confidence. Its significance became particularly clear during demonstrations, when people appeared on their balconies or leaning out of apartment windows brandishing red bed sheets, sweaters, and anything else red in order to express their solidarity with the passing protest.

Another key symbol—and tactic—is the casserole, with its wooden spoons, pots, and pans. Although not as iconic as the red square, it represents a significant turning point in the strike. Whereas the night marches had been predominantly made up of students, the casserole movement was developed by a broad base of Montréal residents in residential neighborhoods. They were an auditory and a performative act of popular resistance. At 8 p.m. every night, in many Montréal neighborhoods and in other towns and cities throughout Québec (and eventually elsewhere in Canada), individuals stood in their doorways or on their balconies banging kitchen utensils and casseroles—the French word for saucepan. People walked from their homes to major neighborhood intersections where others gathered in the hundreds, bing-banging along the way: a dissenting celebration. This clanging on pots

and pans started in mid-May after the government passed Bill 78, which required groups of more than fifty to give police notice of their gatherings (and itineraries of their marches) at least eight hours in advance. Bill 78 also challenged the students' right to association by criminalizing student union general assembly decisions to strike and picket academic institutions. The casserole transformed the student strike into a much larger movement in which anyone and everyone who felt the need to express dissent was welcome to participate.

Nearly a dozen *assemblées populaires et autonomes de quartier* (neighborhood popular autonomous assemblies) emerged to organize casserole marches and information sessions (among other initiatives) on a local level. On one particular night—May 26—not long after the passing of Bill 78, the neighborhood casserole marches converged downtown to join the night demonstration in a massive chime that wound through city streets for more than twenty-five kilometers, and lasted for more than four hours. Along the entire route, solidarity emerged in windows, on doorsteps, and on sidewalks, clanging the demonstration past. The casserole movement brought strength to the students in times of intensifying repression and police violence.

During this time I began archiving visual artifacts from the student strike into an online archive: posters, banners, protest signs, stencils, graffiti, digital images, editorial cartoons, and other oppositional imagery. It grew quickly to more than three thousand images, which I categorized into albums by genre. Assembling and sorting the images allowed each album to be viewed as a corpus for the first time. Symbols, themes, styles, and creative influences revealed themselves when images that shared common attributes sat alongside others, creating signifying constellations.

The archive reveals the protest movement's main

I
QC

protagonists: its student representatives, its exuberant affinity groups, and its protest mascots. These protagonists hold a mutual affiliation to opposition and when represented and (re)mediated on posters they become part of Québec's oppositional cultural heritage. The movement's most reviled adversaries are also well represented: the police, Premier Charest, the education ministers, and a few particularly opinionated "journalists" reveal the complexity of the oppressive forces that attacked the movement. The archive also draws attention to the strike's primary political issues: police brutality, access to higher education, and the privatization of public institutions. The image collections offer responses to the changing political landscape: judicial injunctions against student picket lines, the introduction of antidemocratic Bill 78, and government negotiations.

The recurring symbols within the archive reveal a conscious challenge to the tyrannical language of government press conferences, regurgitated by the mainstream media. Without access to its own history, a protest movement will end up relying on these external and oppressive narratives of its own past. Although the social movement poster and banner are physical objects, their physicality is less important than the semiotic reminders of

DES ÉLECTIONS, UN COMBAT, UN DÉBAT...

ILLUSTRATION RÉALISÉE PAR ERICK (CNRS)

FACE À FACE

ANARCHO PANDA VS ARNACO PANDA

INFORMEZ-VOUS AVANT DE VOTER,
MAIS LE MOMENT VENU, L'IMPORTANT, C'EST DE VOTER


LE COMBAT EST
AVENIR

movement consciousness they provide during (re)mediation: when they are later sampled, mashed-up, and reproduced on new posters—to encourage new actions during subsequent social upheavals.

The archive is a reminder of actions taken to bring about progressive change. It allows us to see that more than specific victories of a particular movement are at stake, it is the change in ourselves that is also important. When developed, oppositional consciousness can imagine the possibility of real change and can instigate action needed to bring about that change. Collecting oppositional artifacts in an archive is not for nostalgia nor the memorialization of the past.

Instead, it creates a storehouse from which to build the antagonistic cultural heritage required to combat social oppression from one upheaval (*printemps érable*) to the next. The archive's artifacts are fuel to the fire of dissent that can keep the embers warm in the intervals between intense political and social activity and can feed the flames during periods of insurgence.

Image Credits

Page 74: *Le savoir est une arme!* (Knowledge is a weapon!), designed by Camille Robert. The image has been used by the German student movement Bildungsstreik, as early as 2009, but comes from a poster from the Paris, May 1968 period.
Page 76: *La grève générale illimitée, me gusta!* (The unlimited general strike, I like it!), designer unknown; *Retour à la normale? La fin de la grève n'est pas la fin de la lutte* (A return to normal? The end of the strike is not the end of the struggle), designed by Alain Savard. Adapted from a poster by the Atelier Populaire (Paris, 1968).
Page 77: *Profs contra la hausse* (Profs against the hike), photograph by Josué Bertolino. Photo of third monthly 'national' demonstration, May 22, 2012.
Page 78: *Mouvement Historique, Victoire Historique* (Historical movement, historical victory), screenprint by École de la Montagne Rouge; *Se soumettre ou résister et vaincre* (To submit or to resist and vanquish), designed by Moïse Marcoux-Chabot. A copy of a Paris, May 1968 poster which references a Québécois student who received a serious eye injury during a demonstration.
Page 79: Unknown designer. The red flag refers to the red square and the pot and spoon refers to the casserole movement that emerged after Bill 78 was voted into law by the provincial Liberal Party (PL 78).
Page 80 (clockwise from top left): Concordia Student Union; *Angry Grévistes—le jeu* (Angry Strikers—the game), designed by Big Tree Studios; *Collective Exhibit* (Exposition Collective); Red square *fleur de lis,* designed by Pierre Cornudet, France; *La grève est étudiante. La lutte est populaire* (This is a student strike. This is a popular struggle), sticker, designer unknown; *Ensemble, nous avons bloqué la hausse* (Together, we have blocked the hike), produced by CLASSE; *Non à la gratuité minière! Oui à la gratuité scolaire!* (No to free mining! Yes to free education!), sticker designed by BixiPoésie; *LOI 78, je me souviendrai* (Bill 78, I will remember), designer unknown; Typical red felt square and pin.
Page 81: *La grève est étudiante, la lutte est populaire* (This is a student strike, this is a popular struggle), student demonstration, April 14, 2012. Photo by Josué Bertolino.
Page 82: Anonymous stencil artist, photo by Cindy Milstein; *Assemblée Générale de Vote de Grève* (General assembly vote to strike), designer unknown; *Départ* (Start), designer unknown. This image was in response to a new municipal law requiring demonstrators to provide the route of their march to police in advance.
Page 83: *Il etait une fois, un printemps au Québec* (Once upon a time, a Québec spring), art by Chloé Germain-Thérien.
Page 84: *Sois jeune et tais toi* (Be young and keep quiet), digital print by Moïse Marcoux-Chabot. Adapted from a Paris, May 1968 poster.

Page 86: *The Provocation*, digital painting by Artact Qc.
Page 88: I■QC, designer unknown; *L'entente* (The agreement), screenprint by École de la Montagne Rouge; *Le 17 mai, sexe, amour, et gratuité scolaire, rouge partout* (On May 17: sex, love, and free education. Red everywhere), designer unknown.
Page 89: *Des élections, un combat, un débat . . . Face à face. Anarcho Panda vs Arnaco Panda. Informez-vous avant de voter, mais le moment venu, l'important, c'est de voter* (Elections, a battle, a debate. Face to face. Anarcho Panda vs Scam Panda. Inform yourself before voting, but when the time comes, the important thing is to vote), poster designed by Éric Cyr. A general euphoria was stirring after the students forced an early election of the hated Liberal government. The support that students received by the opposition Parti Québécois during the strike quickly dissolved after their election to power and the reversal of most of their election promises.
Page 90: *Le Combat est Avenir* (Struggle is the future), screenprint by École de la Montagne Rouge.
Page 91: *Avec vous dans l'ombre* (With you in the shadows), anonymous stencil artist, photographer unknown; *Haut les mains! Le système bancaire Canadien et autres formes de gansterisme à cravate* (Hands up! The Canadian banking system and other forms of suit-and-tie gangsterism), designed by Kevin Yuen-Kit Lo, May 15, 2012.
Page 93: *100e manif de unit 1 août 2012* (100th night demonstration, August 1, 2012). Flag carried by the author, photo by Josué Bertolino.

ÉPOCA CLANDESTINA

Spanish Anarchist Newspapers from the Illegal Years

From the Kate Sharpley Library. Notes by Alec Dunn

Following the fall of the Spanish Republic in 1939, the fascist junta outlawed the massive and powerful anarchist union—the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (the National Confederation of Labor, or the CNT). CNT activities went underground with guerilla units inside of Spain as well as activity directed against the Franco government by exiles in neighboring France. Found here are the mastheads of several anarchist newspapers from this period, published in France and smuggled into Spain. They are documents of a movement attempting to maintain its reach and momentum despite existing in exceedingly hostile environments (not only fascist Spain but also Gaullist France).

Solidaridad Obrera (Workers' Solidarity) began in 1907 and it has been the primary paper of the CNT for over 100 years. This masthead began to be used in 1930, and it is still used today. The typography manages to be both militant and modern-looking, with sharp angles and a mixture of circular O's in an otherwise condensed type. It almost looks like a futuristic freight train running across the top of the page.

The CNT also published a newspaper as the mouth of the organization itself, titled (appropriately) *CNT*. The three *CNT* publications pictured show little variation in masthead design over twenty years. All three are bold, simple, and straightforward. The oldest expresses a clean sans-serif'd *CNT* in tall, strong type. In 1947 it switched to a


C.N.T.

Mientras Franco cabalgue sobre España, no existirá tranquilidad ni orden. Franco representa la traición. El provocador de una lucha que ha costado al pueblo español su riqueza, su sangre y su libertad.

El régimen de Franco no puede participar del ambiente democrático de Europa porque no posee los superiores valores de la libertad

ÓRGANO DEL MOVIMIENTO LIBERTARIO

EPOCA VI — Precio, 25 cts. — ESPAÑA, OCTUBRE 1945 — NÚM 15

AÑO XVI
EPOCA IV
NUMERO 27

cnt

ESPAÑA
15 JUNIO 1947
Precio: 50 cts.

ORGANO DEL COMITE NACIONAL DE LA C. N. T

EDITORIAL — La C. N. T. continúa

CNT A.I.T.

ORGANO DE LA CONFEDERACION NACIONAL DEL TRABAJO

MADRID, ENERO 1966 — Nº 8

script typeface, implying motion and perhaps unity. The most modern masthead pictured, from the mid-1960s, also seems to be the most dated. The almost cartoonish title is surrounded on one side by a classic CNT icon—a man wrestling a lion (and winning!)—and on the other by an aged-looking profile of three workers (seemingly an office worker, an industrial worker, and an agricultural worker).

Worth noting is the range and localism of the other publications pictured here. The masthead for *Extremadura Libre*, published for the Extremadura region, got a splash of red and expressed a new dawn rising over the arid lands of Western Spain. *Castilla Libre,* for the Castile region in Central Spain, presented an elegant look, while *Cultura y Acción* (for the Aragon region) gave a modern and playful

LIBRE EXTREMADURA

ORGANO DE LA CONFEDERACION REGIONAL DEL TRABAJO DE EXTREMADURA

Epoca clandestina — Extremadura, 1 Mayo 1947 — Núm. 1 25 céntimos

Castilla Libre

—ORGANO DE LA CONFEDERACION REGIONAL DEL TRABAJO DEL CENTRO—

cultura y acción

órgano de la confederación regional del trabajo de aragón, rioja y navarra

Nueva época. — Segunda quincena de Abril 1955

Solidaridad Proletaria

ORGANO DE LA CONFEDERACION REGIONAL DEL TRABAJO DE ANDALUCIA

Epoca clandestina — 1 de Mayo de 1947 — Núm. 1 - 25 cts.

FRAGUA SOCIAL

ORGANO DEL COMITE REGIONAL DE LEVANTE Y PORTAVOZ DE LA C.N.T.

— INFORMACION, ORIENTACION Y COMBATE DEL MOVIMIENTO LIBERTARIO —

Epoca III - Noviembre de 1946. — Precio: 50 cts. — Numero 18

tierra y libertad

ÓRGANO DE LA FEDERACIÓN ANARQUISTA IBÉRICA

appearance. *Solidaridad Proletaria* for Andalucía used a delightfully Byzantine cursive. *Fragua Social*, which covered coastal Spain, had a hand-carved typeface for its masthead and subtitle. And *Tierra y Libertad* (Land and Freedom) used a drawn masthead which, with its implied shadow, effectively evokes the earth and the bright sun.

Also pictured are two youth papers. *Juventud Libre* (Free Youth) expresses youthful vigor in the two mastheads found here. One is constructed from flames and the other, italicized and slightly smashed, embodies a feeling of conflict. *Ruta* (the Road), one of the most militant papers, had perhaps the most staid design, but it was given some life by this threatening inscription to the right of the logo: "Neither reformists nor barbaric rulers shall make us bite the dust. Nothing can stop the libertarian youth in their march towards Social Revolution."S

YUGOSLAV PARTISAN MEMORIALS

Majdanpek

Hybrid Memorial Architecture and Objects of Revolutionary Aesthetics

Robert Burghardt and Gal Kirn

1. Introduction

In Yugoslavia, between 1945 and 1990 several thousand monuments to the revolution were erected. In the 1940s and '50s they were often simple memorial plaques, which listed the deaths of local villagers. The larger and most important memorial sites, the ones that we call "socialist modernist," were built from the '60s through the early '80s. These monuments are not only modernist, but contain a unique typology: monumental, symbolic (fists, stars, hands, wings, flowers, rocks), bold (and often structurally daring), otherworldly, and fantastic. Yugoslav Partisan memorials open the path to the future that started with both the horrific events of World War II and to the socialist revolution that grew out of the resistance to fascism.[1] This article will focus mainly on the existence of these modernist Partisan memorials, which are largely overlooked today.

One should remember that the former Yugoslavia is now shattered into seven different new nation-states, but one can still find an impressive collection of socialist modernist memorials dotting their landscapes with specific aesthetic strategies that testify to a certain shared past. Instead of formally addressing suffering, these memorial sites incite universal gestures of reconciliation, resistance, and progress. After the bloody destruction of Yugoslavia in 1990s, the new nation-states attempted to reframe the multiethnic Partisan victory from World War II as a defeat. This brought about a new

historical constellation which rendered these monumental sculptures into ambiguous objects: beautiful, sad, powerful, strange, weak, bold, and almost invisible. Many monuments were destroyed in the early '90s by nationalist forces, some were vandalized, others simply abandoned and unnoticed. Nevertheless, for those that encounter them, they remain highly imaginative objects: they could be ambassadors from far-away stars, witnesses of an unrealized future, historical specters that haunt the present.

What is the relationship between memory and those objects designated to mark specific histories in space, and what has all this to do with emancipatory politics?

* * *

Some argue that memory always has to do with specific stories of places, people, and events that are long gone, buried in history. They say that it is only through the materialization of charged objects that we can save these stories from complete oblivion. On the other hand, an antimonument critique claims that they predetermine memory in a hegemonic manner, and that they perform, to paraphrase James Young, the function of remembering for us, turning us into passive receptors of the visual content.[2]

We wish to address the Partisan memorial sites beyond these traditional binary oppositions and claim that their legacy depends on the circumstances of two ideas: How did these monuments come about? And what and whom do they represent in specific moments of time?

The politics of history are important: Whose stories are being told? And are the present and future being determined by these stories? These questions, and the complex link between objects and social practices, can be explored through the Yugoslav monuments. In addition to their initial double coding of war and social transformation they have since been charged with another set of meanings that engage both a history of the oppressed and an unrealized future.

Yugoslavia is a country that no longer exists except in memory, so it is on spatial sites of remembrance that historical drama is being staged for us again. The legacy of monuments points toward a past that had more future than the present does. Yugoslavia pursued, in many respects, more progressive politics than its successor states have, and most post-Yugoslav societies are absent viable future prospects. Twenty years after the break-up, after the full advance of neoliberal recuperation, the promise of joining the European market does not have enough force to make up for the loss of Yugoslavia's

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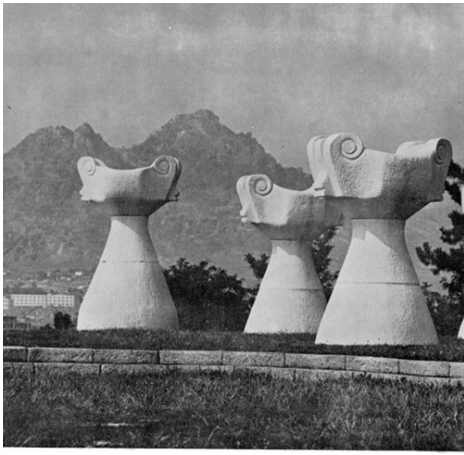
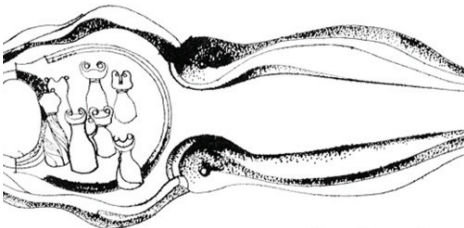




multiethnic and socialist perspective. The past, the Partisan victories celebrated in the memorial sites, have become Walter Benjamin's image of the oppressed.[3] So strong that they haunt the present, reminding us of history as something unfinished rather than bygone.

2. The typology of Yugoslav Partisan memorial sites

Initially, construction of the memorial sites were part of a large popular movement, an important part of everyday people's practices of remembering the war. Around 80 percent of the monuments created in the first ten years were built in an uncontrolled and spontaneous manner. Art historians refer to these memorial sites as "popular architectonic monuments"—sites not ordered from above.[4] Most often stonemasons designed and built them; sometimes they invited or cooperated with artists and other voluntary workers from the local village. This self-initiated memorial practice resulted in a wide range of monuments: from simple plaques to small pyramidal structures to memorial rocks and sculptures. Most of the time they simply commemorated the victims of the fascist terror. It was only beginning in the mid-1950s that memorial politics became a part of more established (political) organizations, such as the Veterans' Association of People's Liberation Struggle and the development of an official committee assigned to commemorate the Partisan struggle.

These institutions started with a more systematic dissemination of memory politics and were able to finance larger projects. The first phase saw a mixture of popular forms of sculpture, offering up realism that did not differ much from war memorial sites in the East or West. Importantly, in Yugoslavia it is rare to see the massive socialist realist monuments that are typical in Eastern Bloc countries, such as Treptower Park in what was East Berlin. The gravity with which the Yugoslav government took cultural policy is apparent by the creation of a special committee in the mid-1950s charged with the creation of memorial sites.[5] Its major task was to deal with and discuss new concepts for memorials, which would best express such abstract notions as revolution, liberation, struggle, unity, brotherhood, and the

figure of the Partisan. In the few years of its existence the committee formulated only a small number of recommendations for design and construction and was not able to really monitor the overall memorial policy. It did nevertheless push for a more organized and open effort of creation of new memorial forms.

This lack of oversight was especially evident in the case of modernist monuments which do not have much in common with the early realist and popular architectonic memorial sites. What they do share is the location: most of them were erected on historic sites of the Partisan struggle, in open spaces outside of towns. They do not occupy the streets and squares of big cities, typical sites with high visibility. Instead, they form an invisible network of symbolic places, generating an alternative map of the former Yugoslavia.

The placement of the monuments created a new and very specific form of memorial park (spomen park)—they often have picnic facilities, while some also have cafés, restaurants, or even hotels, accompanied by museums, and usually amphitheaters which served as open-air classrooms. Adding to their double function of mourning and celebration, the parks were conceived as hybrid complexes; they merge leisure with education, architecture with sculpture, and object with landscape. The mode of the amphitheater is important—one can find them integrated into the sculptures themselves, sometimes converting the monument itself into a stage set. As classical modernist works of art, the monuments exist as objects in the landscape, while their surroundings have been turned into parks staging the monuments. Not only are the monuments staged, but they themselves stage the landscape surrounding them, making it more grandiose and perhaps even overdetermining its potential interpretation. Nature and sculptural object enter into a dialogue, raising questions of the relationship between humans and the environment. This very plastic and spatial aspect is a constant feature. The forms of the monuments often only become tangible while moving through them, where they invite us to investigate the relationship between sculptural form and our bodies.

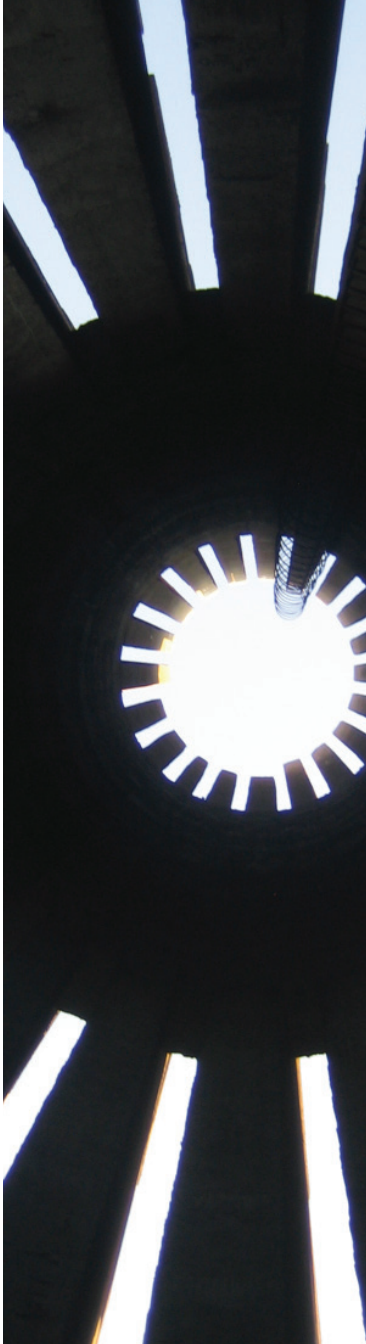
Petrova Gora

Kozara

Three case studies: Kozara, Kosmaj, and Tjentište

Visiting the monument in Kozara, located in northern Bosnia, is a fascinating experience. Designed by Dušan Džamonja in 1972, it forms a cylinder, made out of twenty trapezoidal concrete pillars, with conical gaps between them. Visitors can enter the monument through the gaps, which are designed so that humans can

just squeeze through them. Inside the cylinder one stands in a dark, chimney-like space from which the outside can be glimpsed through the vertical slits one has entered through. Inside the monument one has a feeling of being entrapped, being besieged. The experience recalls the events of World War II in the Kozara mountain range where German troops (with the help of Ustaša collaborators) surrounded the neighboring forests and closed in on Partisans and villagers. The circular form of the monument relates on the one hand to the integrative idea of the *kolo* (circle), a traditional dance from the Kozara mountains, as well as the claustrophobic experience of being encircled. These two circles bring into focus two exclusive logics: one based on antifascist solidarity and struggle that moved beyond ethnicity and the other besieging the first and attempting to destroy it—the logic of fascist hatred and ethnic exclusivity. The siege/encirclement could be broken only through the circle/kolo. The inverted circular form of the gaps (through which the inside of the monument can be accessed) make it easy to squeeze in, though getting back out is physically unpleasant. Once one escapes the sculpture, one is in a wide-open clearing, which was used for kolo dancing up until the 1990s.



Kosmaj

Another interesting monument lies in Kosmaj, also a small mountain range, in the middle of Serbia. This monument, designed by Vojin Stojić and Gradimir Vedaković in 1971, marks another Partisan retreat. The monument has been placed at the highest position within the mountain range. Five fingers point into the air, distributed via a ground plan based on the geometry of a five-pointed-star. These create a spiky vertical object, which is read from afar as a single form. Once the monument is approached, one realizes that the fingers are not connected, and the geometry of the star becomes vaguely readable in the gaps that the fingers leave against the sky. In the moment when the fingers appear to be detached from one another, the monument reveals its structural boldness, a sort of exercise against the forces of gravity. Their long vertical form leans slightly forward and sticks tall up into the air.

The battle of Sutjeska was one of the most hazardous and fragile moments during the war, a turning point for the whole Partisan movement. Trapped in the high mountains on the edge of Montenegro and Herzegovina, the Partisan general command barely escaped from German and collaborationist troops while thousands were killed in the forests close to the village of Tjentište. A sculpture, done by Miodrag Živković in 1971, marks the site of the breakthrough. Two monumental rocks form an artificial gorge. The sculpture reproduces the experience one has marching through the mountains. The shapes of the rocks change constantly, according to the point of view and the movement of the visitor. During the approach from below the rocks seem massive and monolithic. Once the passage between the rocks is crossed, one realizes that the form opens up into further sophistication. Climbing higher up the path and looking down, the rocks have transformed into wings. And if one keeps walking along the path leading down to the small museum—which houses a large mural on the events by Krsto Hegedušić—the rocks appear to dissolve into fingers. The symmetry of the rocks, which is very clear from the front side, shifts slightly during the passage through the monument, evoking a more fundamental asymmetry. The rocks are similar,


Tjentište

Jajce
site of the first all-Partisan meeting

but are not copies of one another. This asymmetry, in turn, can be related to the imbalance of the Partisan struggle against an overpowering and regimented armed force.

3. Historical context: World War II

On March 27, 1941, Serbian generals overthrew the Yugoslav monarchy, which had signed a treaty with the German Reich. The generals quickly broke the treaty which resulted in heavy bombardments of Belgrade—on April 6—and the subsequent partitioning and occupation of Yugoslavia. On April 17, the Yugoslav Royal Army unconditionally surrendered and the old political elite either fled to London or collaborated openly with the Nazis and other occupation forces (Italian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian). Resistance against occupation and fascism was largely, but not exclusively, developed by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The Communist Party, illegal since 1921 and used to working under extremely

repressive conditions, was the only political force which addressed all of the people, beyond their ethnic identification. The Party was the predominant force in the antifascist resistance, but it did not exclude other democratic forces including cultural workers and Christian Socialists. The antifascist struggle for liberation was seen as a trigger to a social revolution, which is why it received the title of the People's Liberation Struggle. Other nationalist militias, like the Serb Četniks, joined the fighting, but quickly changed sides and collaborated with the Nazi forces. The Croatian, openly fascist, Ustaša operated as a puppet-regime (the Independent State of Croatia) hand in hand with the occupying forces. The Slovenian Home Guards collaborated first with Italian Fascists and later with the Nazis. Partisans not only waged war against foreign occupation forces but also engaged in civil war and were constantly under attack from local collaborators. The German occupation and the accompanying fratricide cost hundreds of thousands of lives. Many civilians were slaughtered in "ethnic cleansings" and in reprisal actions against Partisan activity.

The Partisans largely operated without military assistance from the Allies, who supported the Četniks, and only recognized the Partisans after the Tehran Conference of 1943. By the end of war, there were more than 800,000 Partisans organized into four Yugoslav militaries, which made it the largest resistance army in Europe. The Antifascist Council of National Liberation organized an all-Yugoslav meeting in which the outlines of a new state were determined. This sealed the end of the monarchy and opened the path for the Yugoslav "third way" approach to socialism. The


Bubanj

experience of self-reliance was the basis toward an independent socialism, which began on June 28, 1948, when Yugoslavia insisted on an equal position within the USSR-dominated Eastern Bloc.[6] Stalin would not accept any power on equal terms and excluded Yugoslavia from the Cominform, the military and economic alliance of Eastern socialist states.

The Yugoslav model . . . self-management socialism

Yugoslavia's postwar modernity was structured through two defining ruptures: the break with the prewar monarchy and capitalism, and the subsequent split with Stalinism. These events set a starting point for the distinct Yugoslav model of socialism. During the 1950s and '60s, Yugoslavia went through a period of rapid change, with a considerable lift in living standards, and a substantial rise in education levels, both of which resulted from planned industrialization, urbanization, and massive educational programs. Tito, the Partisan leader and later dandyesque president of Yugoslavia, was brilliant in playing the two opposing Cold War powers off each other, and leveraged a profitable position in between. Moreover, with Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Jawaharlal Nehru of India he started developing a new Partisan politics, the Non Aligned Movement that subverted the bipolar imperialist world order.

Yugoslavia's modernization was based upon its own path to socialism and its model of self-management. After the break with Stalin, it was recognized that the centralized, top-down structures of existing socialism were problematic and a self-governing structure (which anticipated participation in industry as well as in the

Bubanj

political decision-making processes) was proposed. In reality, nothing approaching true worker self-management was broadly practiced, but through its promise, Yugoslavia quickly introduced capitalist/free-market elements and endorsed a consumer culture based on Western imagery. A good example is the film *Ljubav i Moda* (*Love and Fashion*) which portrayed Belgrade as a modern city with a Western, '60s lifestyle. The Yugoslav system embraced joy in consumerism, which was manifested excitingly in architecture, with its very flexible brutalism and fantastic forms. Tito himself exemplified the Yugoslav turn toward Capitalist decadence, representing himself as bourgeois and posing with film stars on his personal holiday resort on the Croatian Island of Brioni.

The disparity between the constitutional guarantees and the reality of self-management led to a popular revolt against the "red bourgeoisie." Dissatisfaction transformed into workers' strikes in the 1960s, the 1968 Yugoslav student rebellion, and the first nationalist uprisings in the beginning of the 1970s. However, the '60s were also characterized by optimism and new freedoms, which reflected directly on the production of art and the culture of political dialogue. Intellectuals and cultural workers debated the development of the Yugoslav socialist model and focused on the works of a young Marx and the concept of alienation. They also produced some important artworks, among them the socialist modernist monuments.

4. Yugoslav modernism: aesthetics of politics, politics of aesthetics?

In the ideological systems that developed in art after World War II, the opposing models were socialist realism vs. modernist abstraction, which were identified with the communist and the capitalist worlds, respectively. After the break with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia distanced itself from Eastern Bloc art hegemony. In 1952, at a Yugoslav writer's congress in Ljubljana, the Croatian writer Miroslav Krleža renounced socialist realism. A favorable reception of his position by party officials marked the path toward

socialist modernism, which not only became the prevailing form in literature, but also in architecture, sculpture, theater, cinema, and performance art. Today, the role of modernist art in the cultural heritage of socialist Yugoslavia is heavily debated. Either the artists are considered heroes, who fought for artistic autonomy and freedom under the dominance of the socialist system, or they were mere vassals of an authoritarian state, coating it with a nice, modern image. The relationship, however, between the state and artists in Yugoslavia cannot be grasped with this binary of state artist or dissident. The State did not prescribe a certain style of art, rather it appropriated new tendencies and positions of the arts into its own cultural policies. Nonetheless art that didn't cause too much stir was preferred, especially if it was formal and decorative. This formalist tendency within Yugoslav modernism earned it the moniker "modernist aestheticism."

Artists like the sculptor Vojin Bakić or the architect Bogdan Bogdanović worked most of their lives for state institutions, yet insisted on never giving up their own independent artistic positions. Bakić, who was related to artist groups like Nove Tendencije (New Tendencies) followed a path into abstraction which aimed at questioning traditional patterns of reception/expression. Bogdanović took

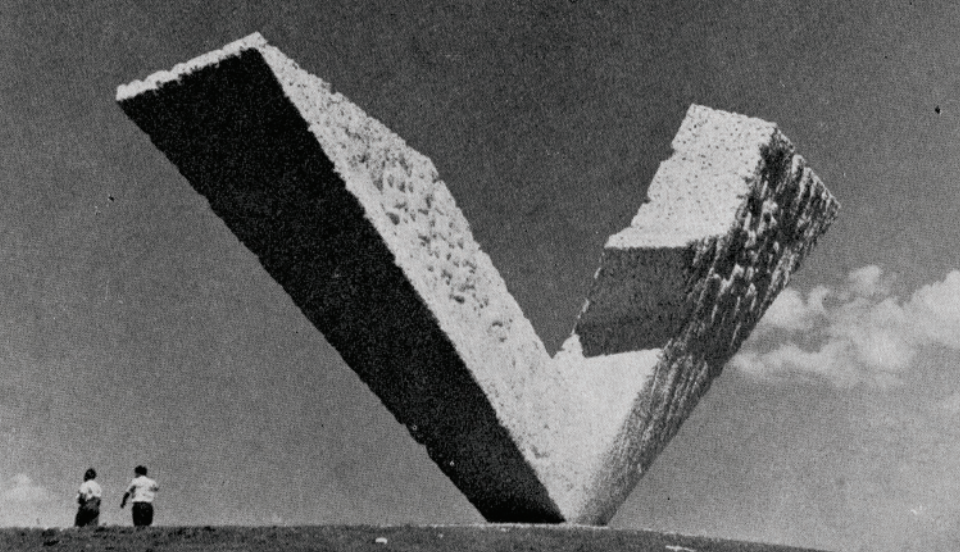

Makedonium

Kragujevac

a critical stance toward socialist bureaucracy. While fully supporting the Partisan struggle, he ultimately developed an abstract-surrealist language, which strived toward the universal while being simultaneously grotesque and fantastic.

The contradictions between the socialist project of modernization and the rifts in social reality have been addressed most explicitly in Yugoslav film production. On the one hand you had the so-called Black Wave films, which attempted to open taboo questions about the continuation of revolution, New Left ideas of liberation and sexuality, unemployment, and the failure of industrialization. The Black Wave points to places of national pain and asks questions rather than gives answers. These films triggered both massive discussions and severe denunciations at the end of the 1960s. Importantly, a communist ideologue claimed that memory in Yugoslavia, in fifty years or more, would not be found in the Party newspapers or in the minutes of political meetings; that, instead, it would be preserved in artworks. This explains why film became a site of struggle for contested ideologies.

Apart from the Black Wave, there were also blockbuster films that contributed epic visualization along with monumental aestheticization—Partisan films like *The Battle of Neretva* (with a



budget of $85 million, the majority paid by self-managed enterprises—by the people) easily fit into the American/Hollywood war film genre, with its linear plot and black-white morality. This film is arguably the first major moving image monument to Partisan struggle. While there is not much aesthetic similarity to be found with the abstract memorial sites, the film's use of grandiosity and heroism are comparable.

The Black Wave did not challenge the sacredness of Partisan memory, but questioned its legacy and monumentalism. In distinction to official spectacles, these films do not affirm but rather attempt to correct and revise official memory, opening up a discourse that at the time attempted to detour the Party from its structural position of mediating and judging official history.

5. Between abstract form and revolutionary politics

The practice of memory takes place in a space in which objects and social practices relate to each other, neither the monument nor the counter-monument offers simple solutions to memory politics.

The immanent motives of the monuments are various formal and artistic universalisms, as well as the politics referred to by them. The universal characteristics that these monuments share are

fascinating. While their universalist core is present, these monuments are also the result of a very specific historical circumstance. Their sense of being both in and out of time generates a multilayered space, opening a dialogue between the history of art and the history of distinct geopolitical experiences. The idea of a communist revolution contains many universalist claims (such as the equality of men and women), but even more it desires the creation of a world, or cosmic, community. In the specific case of Yugoslavia, the communist revolution materialized not only to abolish private property and to create a more just distribution of surplus value, but also manifested itself into the project of modernization, education, antifascism, and a common multiethnic space. Perhaps the major task of these monuments was to consider how these universal claims of the revolution could be brought into an aesthetic language.

Like Tatlin and his proposal for a Monument to the Third International, we seem to be faced with a logical contradiction in the very idea of a monument to the revolution. Revolutions are generally associated with the overthrowing of government and destruction of (oppressive) inheritances and institutions (not with memory and its institutionalization). What should be remembered while the changes are being made? By keeping a place of transformation open for further change, we can consider history an open process and a potentially revolutionary practice. A monument could block that motion, throwing the subject into a passive position (faced with a prescribed idea of history). One becomes, the observer of an event, led by an avant-garde. On the other hand, the idea of "making history" indicates that social change generates new stories and memories that want to be stored and experiences that want to be preserved. Consider the idea that revolutionary history strives for opening history up. To paraphrase Marx's tenth and eleventh "Theses on Feuerbach," we could say that all the hitherto memorial sites have only interpreted and memorialized the past, and it is time for monuments to assume the position of the future communist society.


Mostar

The Yugoslav monuments institutionalize the collective memory of the events of World War II and combine it with a formal gesture of turning toward the future. The most obvious strategy for representing universalism is abstraction. The abstract, like the universal, evades the concrete. In the abstract formal language of the Yugoslav memorials lies a certain openness that allows space for one's own thinking and associations. It facilitates multiple interpretative approaches and engenders fantasies. Abstraction allows for an appropriation of meaning that bypasses official narrations, allowing access to the monuments also for people disagreeing with the official line of politics.

Many of the monuments allegorize a universal narrative of progress, in which the future is addressed as an abstract possibility of redemption. As such, they tend toward escapism, marking history as a predetermined stream flowing in the direction of a better future. This concept can be seen in the recurring symbolism of wings or large forms rising into the sky, almost like rocket launching pads. The combination of monumental form and vertical expression amplify the passive position of the spectator, although none of the monuments aim at total subordination of the subject (something typical of Stalinist or fascist monumentalism). The monuments play much more within the realm of modernist art, and the apparent futurism in many is closely linked to the narratives of progress and modernization. In their display of a linear and progressive time structure their idea of revolution is idealistic, masking the often painful, difficult, and complicated processes of social transformation.

6. Modernist monuments today: destruction, decay, and decontextualization

It is precisely because of their antifascist and communist legacies, which symbolize a (im)possible socialist Yugoslavia, that many modernist Partisan monuments have been destroyed or abandoned and left to decay. They had to be destroyed, because they were a sign of a different future that embodied the universalist claim of the Partisan figure. It seems that this specter haunted some, inciting

them to a rigorous "monument cleansing" with dynamite. The new nationalist memorials built in their place are mostly either figurative, historicizing kitsch, or both. Partisan memory is increasingly relegated to oblivion. Due to their distant locations, monuments are infrequently visited, and only then by the few surviving Partisans and by art historians.

When the Partisan narrative stood directly against nationalism, memorials were attacked. In Croatia, a large number of antifascist sites have been destroyed or damaged. In states like Slovenia, Serbia, or Macedonia, the narratives of self-liberation and struggle have been easier to integrate into new nationalistic narratives and Partisans have been reconciled with other patriotic groups like the Četniks and the Home Guards, who received their own memorial sites. Within Macedonia the historical revisionism is drastically visible: in ethnic Albanian areas such as the town of Struga, the monuments are in neglect, while in the ethnic Macedonian sections the monuments are well kept, such as the Bogdanivic memorial in Prilep.

The formal aspect of universalism represented in these memorial objects has been more stable than the defeated political claims of universalism in the revolution. Most of the museums around the memorial sites are closed and very few educational trips to them are

organized, so they are now entirely decontextualized. With the recent fashionable academic interest in an "archaeology of modernism" we have slowly experienced a renewed interest in these monuments, which still clearly catch people's attention and imagination. They arouse interest as strange objects, posted on many design blogs, and trigger enthusiasm and discussion. Some argue that this interest can be instrumentalized to help save some of them from total demolition; that we should insist on the monuments' high artistic value. This tactic is politically problematic, as it follows an understanding of art as a space autonomous from the social conditions it is produced under. This formalism denies the social function of objects and the complex role that they play within political discourse, it is a type of intellectual abandonment.

What seems contradictory at first glance, attention that results in abandonment, could be best described as musealization, or the taking of objects out of social practice and the placement of them in a zone of objective contemplation. The things that we find in museums tend to have fallen out of use. They form sediment in our knowledge of the past, without playing an active role in the present. It is only when these objects connect to a social practice beyond the museum that they can take on power. Therefore, we are not interested in simply saving these monuments, but exploring the possibility of using them to retrieve emancipatory and antifascist politics. It is not only about accumulating parts of the past which give us optimism—or as Raymond Williams would say, "resources of hope"—but also about their actualization and mobilization for present struggles.

The formalism of the pure art approach is embedded in the contemporary postcommunist time, which is predominantly characterized by two discourses: one of totalitarianism and one of nostalgia. Neither of these open the present to the future. In the name of freedom, the discourse of totalitarianism cuts us of from the tradition of social struggles (as it describes all attempts to overcome liberal capitalism as potentially totalitarian, or a threat to freedom), while nostalgia dwells in the (re)construction of an idealized past

(the good old days). Within this logic, we are disconnected from all potentials within our present, as the past is used to both close off potential futures and keep us looking backward. This is an historical closure, which is very concretely felt as a lack of a viable future perspective (and optimism) in most Yugoslav successor states. In this moment, granting the idea of artistic autonomy to the monuments is to become complicit with both nostalgia and the ideology of totalitarianism.

7. Conclusion

Walter Benjamin's idea of official history as the history of the victor gets a particular twist in the Yugoslav context, where the history of the Partisan struggle was a struggle of the oppressed that was converted into a history of winners. Unique to this history is that the oppressed succeeded in liberation, and even in achieving

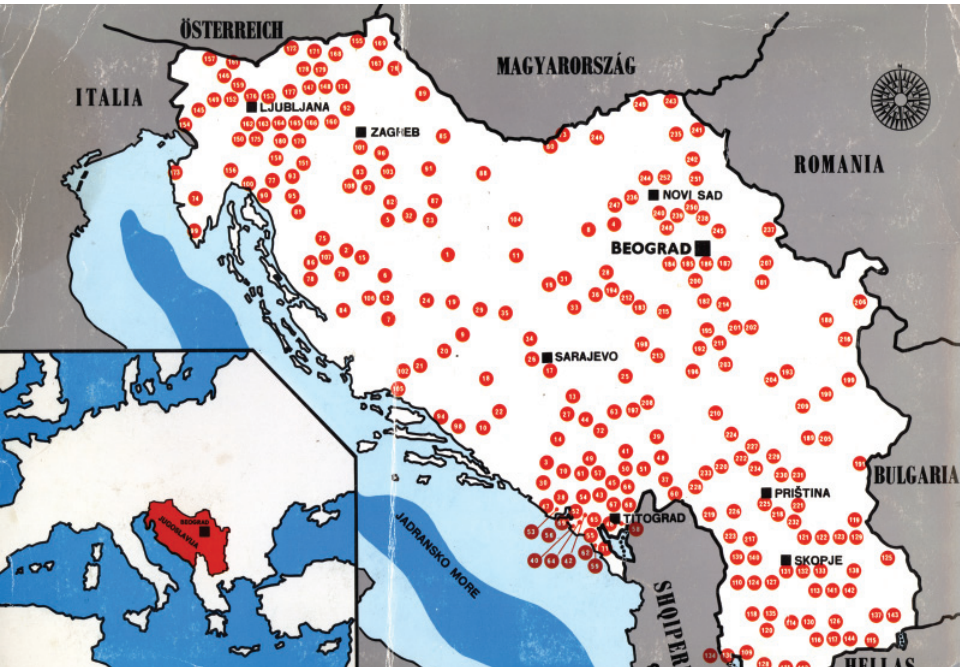
significant transformation of society, with limited intervention from either the capitalist West or the Soviet Union. The Yugoslav claim to autonomy was disturbing to both Eastern and Western blocs. It was particularly disturbing for memory, especially for the broader collective European memory, as the Yugoslav experience structurally left the memorial logic of World War II which depends on trauma and victimization. This affirmative case of emancipation has a precise discontinuity with the logic of victimization that relies heavily on the paradigm of the Holocaust. Today, Partisan history has been wiped out by the new winner: the anticommunist narrative and ethnic nationalisms. This defeat is readable in the ruined monuments, discernable as a general abandonment of the ideals of the (Yugoslav) revolution. The former victors (Partisans) become witnesses of contemporary exclusion and repression. Although not victims, they have become part of the history of oppression (as well as oppressed history).

Partisan monuments attempted to open a common space through a new language, which seems an adequate answer to the political project of socialist Yugoslavism. A monument marks clear positions in space. As such, it is the object of disputes, scandal, thought, and memory. The dispute over the Yugoslav past is one of the points where post-Yugoslav societies face not only their shared history but also their common possibilities. Consequently, a monument to the revolution, if it is to earn that name, can only refer to something unfinished.

Although the real future of these memorials already lies in the past, they maintain the promise of a better future in the formal structure of a sculpture. As physical witnesses, they are not only monuments to World War II and the Partisan struggle, but have become monuments to Yugoslavia itself, to its progressive antinationalist and antifascist perspective. They maintain an invisible network throughout the territory of former Yugoslavia and their remains continue to map the disruption and segmentation of a formerly common space.

1892 1937 1977

SPOMENICI REVOLUCIJE



Endnotes

1. With scant military assistance from Allies, the Partisans were consequently the only explicitly pro-Yugoslav force. They managed to get Yugoslavia back under Yugoslav control and gained massive popular support by the end of the war. While the war was still going on, the antifascist councils of national liberation organized an all-Yugoslav meeting in which the outlines of the new state had been determined. This sealed the end of the monarchy and opened the path for the Yugoslav "third way" model. By the end of war there were more than 800,000 Partisans organized in four Yugoslav armies, which made it the largest resistance movement and army in Europe. This experience of self-reliance was the basis toward an independent socialist path.

2. This refers to the discourse of antimonuments, that criticize the "modernism" and direct pedagogical intervention in form and content. However, also within the antimonument tradition we can find particularly interesting experiments that do not obscure the political message due to a more abstract form, for example Jochen Gerz's antifascist memorial in Hamburg-Harburg, or Hoheisel and Knitz's "zermahlenen Geschichte."

3. Here we are drawing on Benjamin's concept of history, in which he articulates the idea that even though the oppressed of the past have been vanquished—both physically and through the writing of history—by the victors, these victors continue to produce new victims. This opens the possibility of solidarity between past generations and the currently oppressed. Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Selected Writings, Vol. 4.*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

4. See analysis of *Nelida Silic-Nemec Javni spomeniki na Primorskem, 1945–1978*, Koper: Zalozba Lipa, 1982.

5. See Heike Karge's book *Steinerne Erinnerung—versteinerte Erinnerung? Kriegsgedenken im sozialistischen Jugoslawien*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010.

6. In this respect, it is important to stress that the Yugoslav Partisan forces were not internationally recognized until the Tehran Conference in December 1943. It was only then that they became formally a part

of the Allied antifascist forces. This peculiar situation and tension with the exiled royal government in London meant that Yugoslav Partisans had to rely on their own resources facing both occupation and local collaborationist forces. For a more detailed account of the complicated and ambiguous relationship of the Allies toward Partisans and collaborators see Bilandžić (1980), Kardelj (1980), and Komelj (2009).

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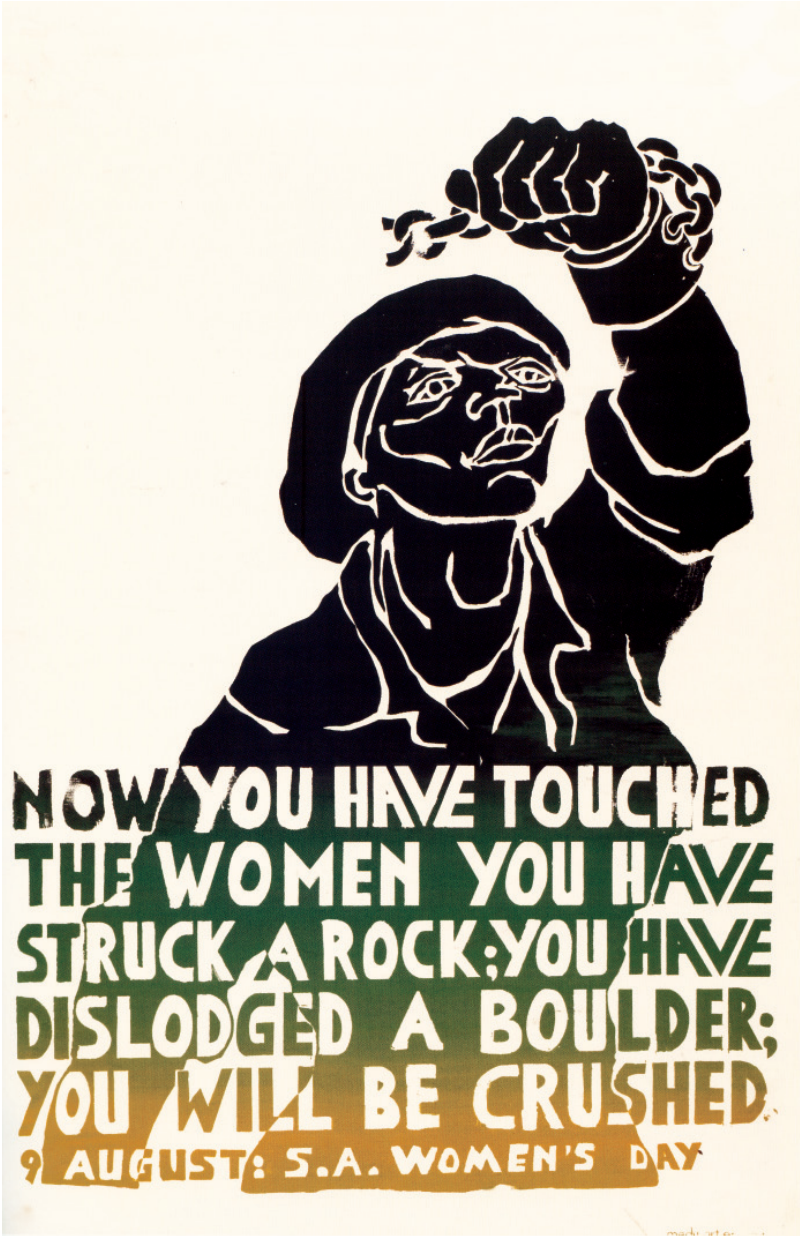
CONFRONTING NEOLIBERALISM
WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE MEDU ART ENSEMBLE

JOSH MACPHEE

In the Fall of 2012, I was asked to present on a panel titled "Can Art Affect Political Change?" In attempting to answer this question I reframed it as a problem, because problems beg solutions. Whether art can or cannot effect political transformation is far too open-ended an inquiry, the answer will always simultaneously be yes and no. A better one might be: "Why is it so difficult for artists today to make work that is politically effective?" For me, the primary answer is that we are too colonized by neoliberalism. Artists are one of the subjectivities in the vanguard of capitalism: as a class we work long hours for little pay, we have traded in stability and a safety net for ephemeral and affective senses of freedom, and we have become almost biologically entrepreneurial. Is it possible to effect meaningful, bottom-up political change while building your own personal art brand? I would suggest the answer is no.

Although it seems far away and long gone, looking at a project from Southern Africa thirty-five years ago raises interesting


NOW YOU HAVE TOUCHED THE WOMEN YOU HAVE STRUCK A ROCK; YOU HAVE DISLODGED A BOULDER; YOU WILL BE CRUSHED.
9 AUGUST: S.A. WOMEN'S DAY

Opposite page: Medu's mission statement, c. 1983; below, top: Medu members screenprinting posters, 1979, photograph by Teresa Devant; below, bottom: screenprint poster for Medu music concert, design by Judy Seidman, 1984; previous page: screenprint poster, 1981, design by Judy Seidman.

ideas about how to combat the neoliberal infection of contemporary political art. The project is the Medu Art Ensemble, a collective of mostly exiled South African cultural workers based in Gabarone, Botswana from 1978 to 1985. Although initially influenced by the Black Consciousness Movement and an all-black group, by 1980 they had become an international, multiracial organization of black, white, Indian, and "coloured"—a South African term for mixed race—members whose work focused on the ending of Apartheid. Medu, which means "roots," ranged from fifteen to fifty members, and had six distinct units: Music, Theatre, Graphics, Photography, Writing, and Film. The most well known members were the trumpeter Hugh Masekela and the writer Wally Serote.

Medu Art Ensemble considered themselves "cultural workers," not artists—both because they didn't see themselves as elite and isolated individuals, and also because all of their work grew out of collective dialogue, and often collective production. Members of all units would meet and talk about the work

A BRIEF DISCRIPTION OF MEDU ART ENSEMBLE.

Medu Art Ensemble is a cultural association operting in Botswana. Medu (for short) is a registered society under Botswana law. Medu was formed in 1979 by members of the disbanded Pelandaba Cultural Effort and Dashiki, the two previously having fused into Tuka Cultural Unit. Medu at its inception drew heavily on the experience of these disbanded associations, and has been in existence now for four years. Medu continues to be a forum for co-operation between South African exile artists and Botswana artists. Also present in Medu is a large group of artists from the international community.

Medu consists of the following creative units:

Theatre
Graphic Arts and Design
Publications and Research
Film
Music
Photography

Medu is administered by an executive which is elected yearly.
Medu's aims and objectives can be summarised as follows:
a). training Botswana nationals and exiles in the above mentioned skills,
b). fostering an environment suitable for cultural work,
c). creating closer relations between cultural workers and the community,
d). establishing closer relations and practical co-operation amongst Southern African cultural workers.

Medu has grown to be seen as a cohesive body of cultural workers. Our collective cultural work increasingly addresses important community issues and events. All forms of art produced by Medu

are orientated towards finding simple and accesible forms of expression and distribution.

Medu was one of the major organizers of the historic festival, symposium and exhibition "Culture and Resistance" held in Gaborone in July 1982. This project drew to Gaborone the largest contingent of cultural workers from South Africa and those living in exile. One outcome outcome of this event was the formation of a Southern African Arts Trust Fund in Gaborone, which has expressed a wish to share facilities with Medu regarding the training and running of workshops for Southern African artists.

Medu has been conducting the following training programs:

a). art classes for primary school children,
b). art classes for adults
c). art classes for secondary students
d). photography worshops
e). music workshops
d). theatre workshops
f). writer's workshops

In addition to this, Medu invites Music and theatre groups from outside Botswana especially South Africa to perform in Botswana.

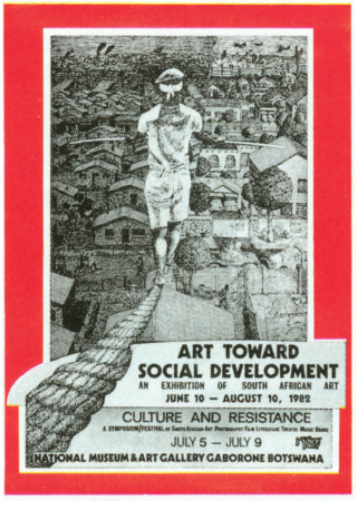
Medu has sent out a funding proposal recently for the establishment of an arts centre to carry out its programs outlined above. A carriculum is presently being drafted.

Opposite page: Medu's mission statement, c. 1983; below, top: screenprint poster for Medu play Maruma, 1979; below, bottom: screenprint poster for Medu exhibition, 1981.

of everyone, so musicians had a voice in the discussion of graphics, and filmmakers weighed in on writing projects. In the graphics unit, posters were either collectively signed, or sometimes not signed at all. In addition, outsiders were encouraged to participate in Medu's work. Anyone from Gabarone could help print posters or take part in theatre workshops. Many South African exiles also traveled through and took part in Medu's activities.

Much of the group's work was creating anti-Apartheid culture to export throughout the world in the form of traveling performances, publications, and posters. But many posters and publications were also snuck across the border into South Africa. Medu members did not separate their artistic endeavors from political work or other aspects of life. Member Thami Mnyele, who had had a successful career as an artist in South Africa before going into exile in Botswana, stated, "For me as craftsman, the act of creating art should complement the act of creating shelter for my family or liberating the country for my people. This is culture." Similarly, Dikobee wa

Below, top: screenprint poster for Culture and Resistance Festival, 1982, design by Thami Mnyele; below, bottom: offset printed poster for Culture and Resistance exhibition, 1982, design by Gordon Metz.



Magale Martins, an artist and one of Medu's central contacts within South Africa itself, stated, "Our art must become a process—a living, growing thing that people can relate to, identify with, be part of, and understand—not a mysterious world or universe apart from them." In an effort to fulfill this goal of broad participation in cultural production, Medu trained activists and artists in simple screenprinting techniques, and even created prototypes of screenprint workshops in a suitcase, which could be snuck into and used in townships and bantustans. Bantustans are the South African equivalent of Native reservations in the U.S. context, and similarly populations were often forced into these extreme rural areas which had few facilities and no running water.

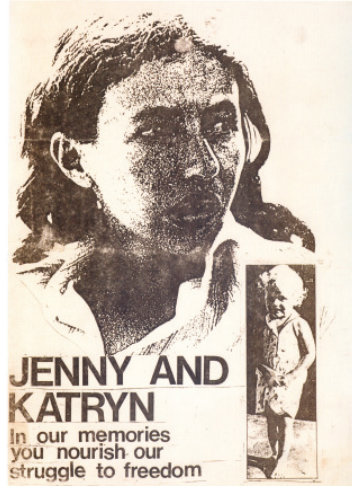
To further their goal of creating a cultural front against Apartheid, Medu organized the 1982 Culture and Resistance symposium, festival, and exhibition. The conference was organized in Botswana, but in close connection with cultural workers and political activists in South Africa, including the aforementioned wa Magale Martins, who gave the

opening speech. Over two thousand people attended, most of them crossing the border into Gabarone. The conference was a rare opportunity for South African cultural workers to exchange ideas across disciplines and geographies.

Out of the conference, Medu pushed hard for increased cultural work in South Africa. They trained silkscreen groups to produce posters for the growing network of resistant people's organizations, from labor unions to student groups, women's organizations to left-wing churches. Many of these groups would join together to become the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983, a nonracialist coalition of hundreds of anti-Apartheid groups. The Culture and Resistance event had built connections between artists and developing civic organizations, and these networks, or "community-based cultural structures" were being mobilized.

As the struggle became more militarized, the content of the posters was militant too, often celebrating the release of activists from prison, or memorializing those killed by the government. One

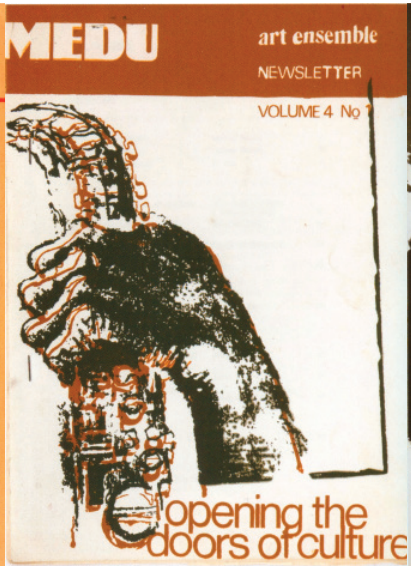
Below, top: Photocopy poster, 1984; below, bottom: screenprint poster designed by Thami Mnyele and Judy Seidman, 1982.



This page spread, issues of *Medu Art Ensemble Newsletter*, 1979–1984; following page spread: screenprint poster, design by Judy Seidman, based on photograph by Eli Weinberg, 1982.

poster remembers Medu member Marius Schoon's wife Jeanette and daughter Katryn, killed by a South African government letter bomb sent to them in Angola. Medu was simultaneously developing a second position, as explained by Thami Mnyele: "It should be clear now that the artist cannot content him or herself with art practice only, for it can never be a substitute for political practice; for it is impossible to make a revolution with drawings, paintings, and sculptures only, no matter how progressive they may be."

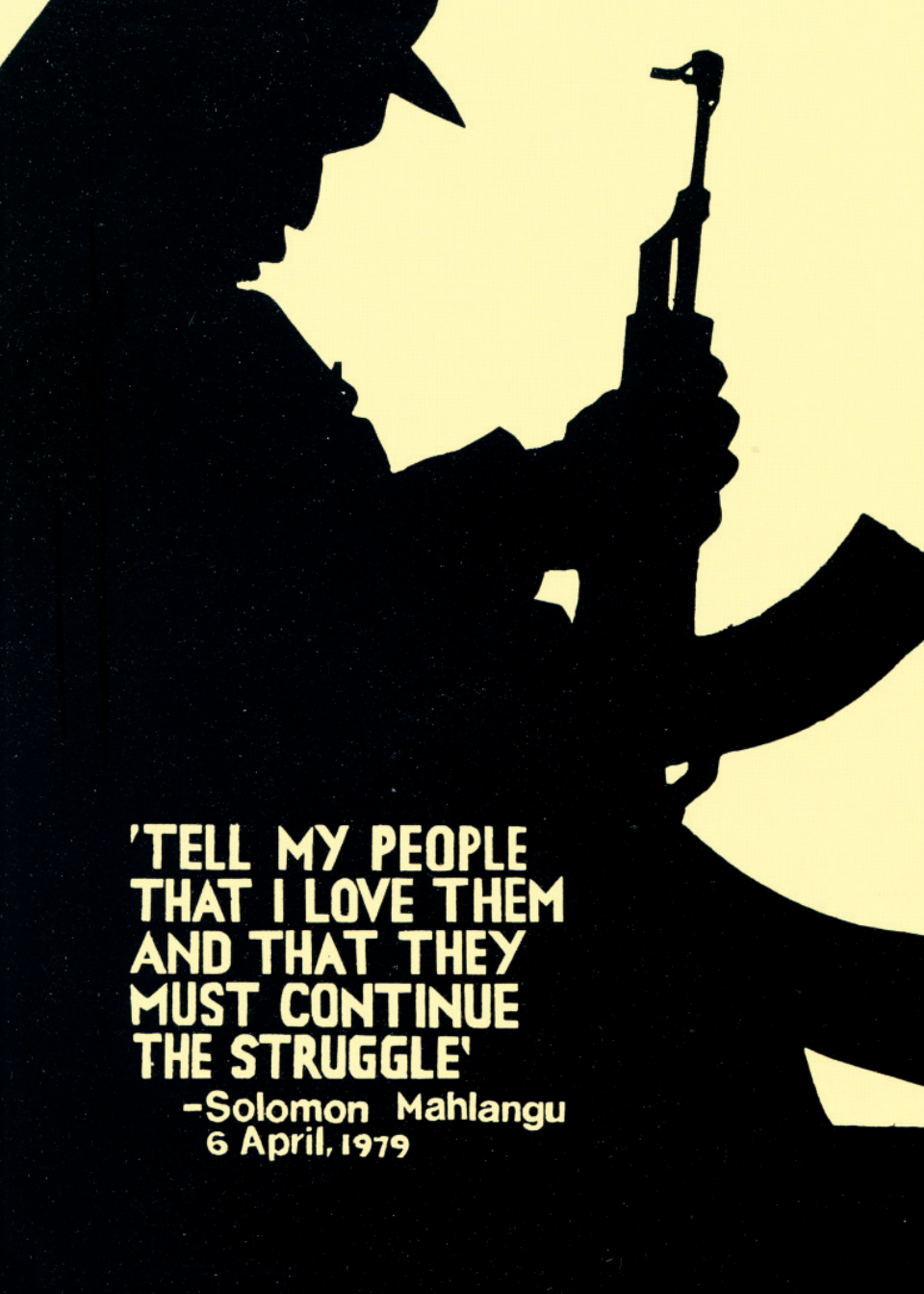
Many Medu members, including Mnyele, had joined the African National Congress (ANC), and now multiple members joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the ANC. While training people in Botswana on how to make art, they took on the additional task of sneaking into South Africa to train those in the townships how to fight. But as former Medu member Judy Seidman has stated, this was not a one-way process. While some artists entered into the ANC and MK through the work of



Medu, the opposite was also true—ANC militants initially sent to Botswana for armed actions ended up feeling that their self-expression through collective cultural organizing was just as important as their activities in the armed struggle. The relationship between Medu and the ANC had been discussed and argued out within the organization for years. Medu was intended as an independent organization, not as a wing of an organization with the commensurate demand to promote its party line. The distinctions are blurry, as it is clear that the work of Medu helped set the groundwork for the renewed mass activity of the anti-Apartheid movement in the mid-1980s, most of which was loosely aligned to the ANC. In 1984 and '85, some members left Gabarone for London and Lusaka, Zambia, where they set up the ANC's Department of Culture. This was created with the explicit aim of organizing cultural producers into the ANC and with the expectation that they would promote the organization's positions within their art.


THERE SHALL BE WORK AND
ALL SHALL ENJOY EQUAL
AFRICA MAYIB
THE PEOPLE SH
26 JUNE: SOUTH

MEDU ART ENSEMBLE


'TELL MY PEOPLE
THAT I LOVE THEM
AND THAT THEY
MUST CONTINUE
THE STRUGGLE'
-Solomon Mahlangu
6 April, 1979

Opposite page: screenprint poster designed by Judy Seidman, 1979; below, top: offset poster designed by the Screen Training Project in Johannesburg for the UDF; below, bottom: stenciled graffiti in South Africa, 1980s.

The South African government had been putting pressure on Botswana to shut down Medu for years, and on June 14, 1985, the South African Defense Forces took matters into their own hands. They snuck across the border and attacked the exile community in Gabarone, with a focus on political organizers. A dozen activists were killed, including Medu members Thami Mnyele and Mike Hamlyn. This signaled the end of the Medu Art Ensemble, as surviving members fled and either went deeper into exile or snuck back into South Africa to play a larger role in the armed struggle.

But the seeds they planted bore significant fruit. In Johannesburg, the Screen Training Project was started, and in Capetown the CAP Media Project. Both of these screenprinting groups produced hundreds of thousands of posters for the organizations of the United Democratic Front. When these screenprint workshops were suppressed, people turned toward writing graffiti on the walls. When graffitists were jailed, artists started printing anti-Apartheid T-shirts, which were, in turn, banned. The

culture of anti-Apartheid morphed and evolved based on the demands put on it by both the movement and government repression.

Integral to each phase of the anti-Apartheid movement was cultural production. And part of the reason for this can be gathered from Medu's "3 Principles":

—The message of the art stems from the vision of the nurturing community; it is not the outpouring of private inspiration by a genius, madman, or saint.

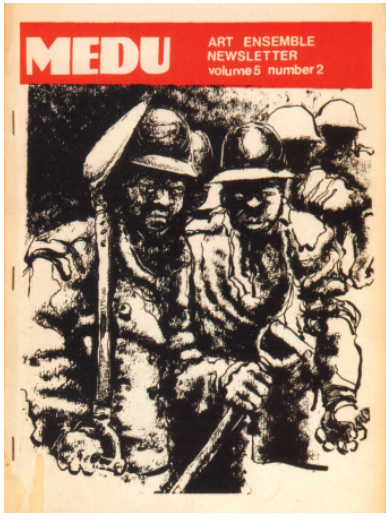
—Each element of the work—the material construction, skills and technique, and also symbol and image—must contribute to the meaning.

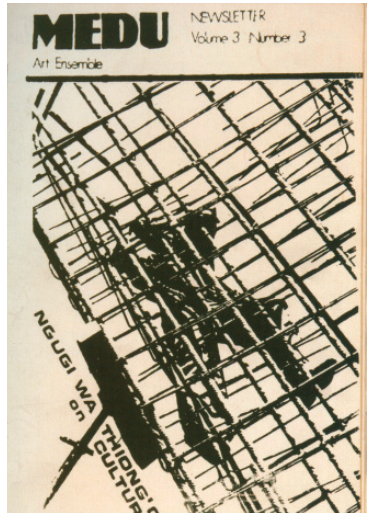
—The reaction of the audience plays a key role: An artwork's message depends on how the audience interprets the work in terms of his or her own history and experience.

Although they worked thirty years ago, halfway around the world, on a continent most people in the United States know almost nothing about, I believe Medu had ideas that can be refashioned as tools in our own struggles, particularly the struggle against neoliberalism. Here are three:

First is the concept of embeddedness. If an artist deeply embeds themselves in a struggle and/or community, they gain some protection from the attacks and demands of capital. The solidarity and mutual aid which can develop in communities of resistance can begin to replace the capitalist needs of social reproduction. This is never a clear or perfect transition, but it may relieve some of the pressures on an artist to build a career above all else. However, it has to be done honestly—one has

This page: three editions of *Medu Arts Ensemble Newsletter*, 1982–1984; following spread: screenprint poster designed by Thami Mnyele and Judy Seidman, based on a woodcut by Figlan Mpikaypheli, 1982.



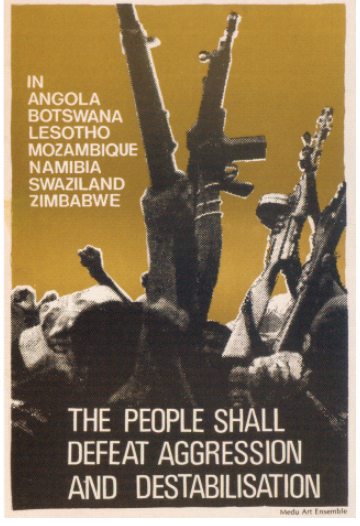


to be willing to take direction from what is learned in movements, not simply participate in order to extract material for the art world. Medu members sublimated their art careers in the service of the anti-Apartheid movement, the African National Congress, and the goal of a liberated South Africa.

This was not a neat and tidy process, and we might find much at fault in the organizing of the time—especially the more authoritarian strains within the ANC. Medu's call to sublimate themselves and their work into a collective whole, to transform from artists into cultural workers, may have gone too far in erasing

the qualitative values which art can bring to a struggle. Ironically the willingness of many in the anti-Apartheid movement to suppress their individual desires and ideas to the larger voice of the ANC ended up greasing the ability of that same political machine to convert South Africa into a deeply neoliberal society. While art can't be held responsible for what has happened in that country, it is important to remember that cultural works which can't be entirely instrumentalized can act as a bulwark against dogmatism and repressive hierarchies within movements. It appears that even given these issues, for Medu the merger into the movement was

Below, top: screenprint poster, c. 1982; below, bottom: offset printed poster designed by Judy Seidman, 1983.



extremely politically effective at the time, and thus ultimately very dangerous. It cost many of them their lives, or the lives of their loved ones.

We find ourselves today in a very different historical and political moment. There is no powerful movement organization—no ANC—which has any potential to channel our artistic production into realpolitik. Instead, as artists we largely compete with each other for limited resources, accept the decimation of what is left of a social safety net, and invest as much—or more—of ourselves into self-promotion than we do into the actual art we create. Clearly a turn toward collectivity, and away from the extreme individualism we are currently mired in, could go a long way before we face the political problems Medu had to negotiate.

Second, working in ways similar to Medu might relieve us of the burden of being politically effective as *individuals*. It is as a group, an ensemble, even a class, that we can potentially find political power. This simple idea is so easily lost within the contemporary context, especially in the United States, where the

primacy of our individuality is celebrated and reified not only by the mainstream, but by counterculture as well. Medu's demand to convert artists into cultural workers may seem like a simple linguistic shift, but it actually implies much more than that. While artists are perceived of as being productive alone—sometimes because of this *aloneness*—the same is not true of the worker, who is understood as one of the multitude of workers needed to accomplish any job. In order to be a politically effective part of a social struggle, artists might have to give up the sense that their labor is somehow special and unique from all other kinds of work.

And finally, the dominant art worlds tend to demand that politics simply be the subject of an artwork or practice, making it a fixed and static thing. In this context, politics is always outside of us, we look at it from the distance provided by the artist. Yet politics is nothing if not the relationships between people, which are ever changing. We can't sublimate politics into art any more than we can art into politics. They are each terrains on which to understand human relations. We need to learn the difference between making art *about* politics vs. doing the things we need to do to improve our lives and communities, whether they are defined as art or not.

The members of Medu Art Ensemble saw themselves as both cultural workers and political organizers. At their best, neither took precedence in Medu. These two ways of being, the artist and the activist, grappled to create something new, a fully engaged individual who saw themselves as integral to a struggle and also to the society that the struggle was attempting to bring into being. At their best, Medu members took advantage of their exile from the repressive social conditions of South Africa to experiment with alternative ways of living and creating. They built a microcosm of a nonracialist society, with democratic internal decision-making as well as an openness to external participation. They not

only did this in Botswana, and for themselves, but actively pushed to export their activities back into the communities they had left behind. These somewhat simple ways of being projected a vision of a future South Africa which deeply threatened the Apartheid state and, I believe, has the potential to threaten the current neoliberal one as well.

A version of this essay was originally presented in October 2012 on a panel at the New School in New York City, "How Can Art Affect Political Change?" organized by Natalie Musteata and part of the programming of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics. Thanks to those whose help in editing and research made this possible: Lindsay Caplan, Alec Dunn, Billy Kensington, Cindy Milstein, and most importantly, Judy Seidman, whose previous work, research, and guidance have continually helped me understand and explore the relationship between art and politics.

MEDU

art ensemble

NEWS LETTER
Volume 6 Nos 1 & 2

The following sources were consulted while writing this essay:

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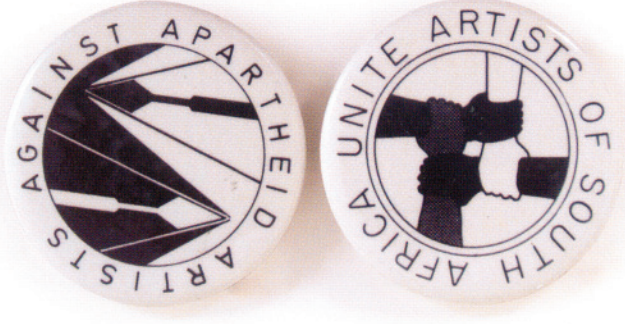
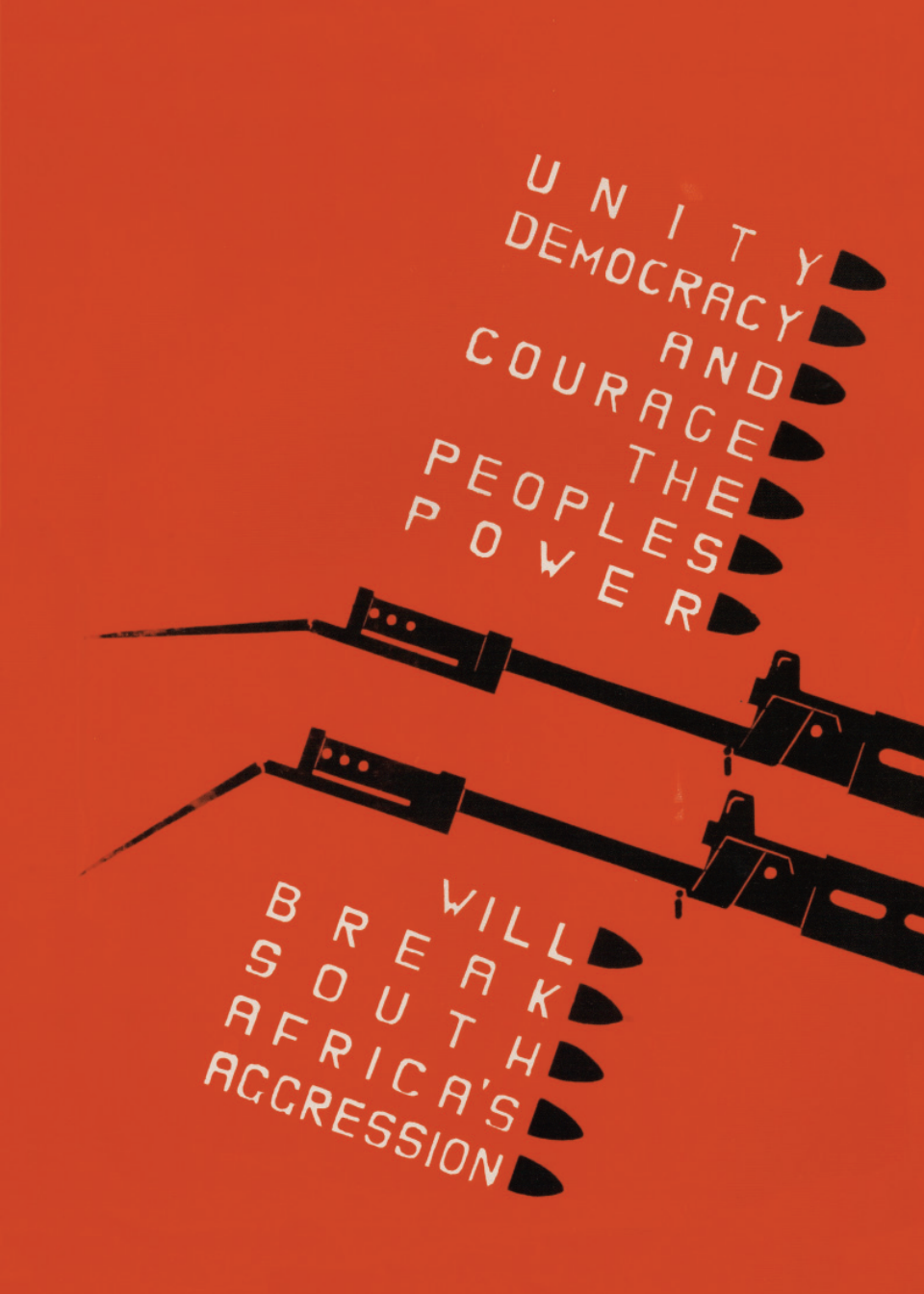


Previous page: *Medu Arts Ensemble Newsletter*, vol. 6 no. 1&2, artist unknown, 1984; above: buttons given to all who attended the Culture and Resistance Festival, 1982; opposite page: screenprint poster designed by Thami Mnyele and Sergio-Albio González, 1982.


UNITY
DEMOCRACY
AND
COURAGE
THE
PEOPLES
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WILL
BREAK
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