

# THE ENEMY ADVERTISES THEIR WEAK POINTS



part of a series on social justice organizing by  
**Ricardo Levins Morales**  
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**One of** the principles in the Chinese soft martial arts is that your enemy will always tell you where they're vulnerable. They do that by what parts of themselves they try to protect and where they allocate their resources. For example, if you saw me riding my bike to work in the morning, you'd notice that I'm wearing a helmet. I'm advertising to you where I think I'm most in need of protection. If we apply that on a social scale, we'll notice that in the U.S. a tremendous amount of resources are going into the maintenance of two massive systems of incarceration. One that was developed after the Civil War for Black folk but has expanded to include other dark and poor people, and one that is engineered to contain immigrants. For the most part, people who have not harmed anyone.



**Ricardo Levins Morales** is an artist and organizer based in Minneapolis. He uses his art as a form of political medicine to support individual and collective healing from the injuries and ongoing reality of oppression.



Ricardo was born into the anti-colonial movement in his native Puerto Rico and was drawn into activism in Chicago when his family moved there in 1967, including support work for the Black Panthers and Young Lords and later participating in or acting in solidarity with farmers, environmental, labor, racial justice, antiwar and other struggles for peoples empowerment. In addition to his art, he also leads workshops on creative organizing, social justice strategy and sustainable activism, and mentors and supports organizers.



**RLM Art Studio** is a union shop that produces and sells artwork Ricardo has made over the years as posters, cards, buttons, shirts and more. We also produce custom button pins at bulk prices for campaigns and causes. Browse and order online at [RLMArtStudio.com](http://RLMArtStudio.com).



## That tells us that something else is going on. What are they trying to protect?



It could be that these populations, for demographic or historic reasons, have the ability to shift the balance of power, if they were freed from these straitjackets of legal entanglements. Undermining those systems, challenging them, confronting them, and dismantling them is a strategic task for the entire movement.

This is true across the board. It's true of storytelling. What are the stories they're trying to suppress? What does that tell us about their vulnerabilities?

## If they are trying to

criminalize Chicano and Native struggles in the schools in Tucson, well, let's tell those struggles out in the streets. If right-wing pundits spend their time trying to prevent their listeners from being curious about other people, that's a strategic vulnerability, because it means that their default is to become curious about us. And curiosity is the basis of compassion. Compassion is the basis of solidarity.

We have an opportunity just by listening to and watching the enemy, to get a list of vulnerabilities, of places where the stories need to be told.

They are putting so much frantic energy and desperation into trying to maintain the lies, **it's revealing where their weak places are.**

