

THE EMPIRE TRIPS ITSELF



part of a series on social justice organizing by
Ricardo Levins Morales
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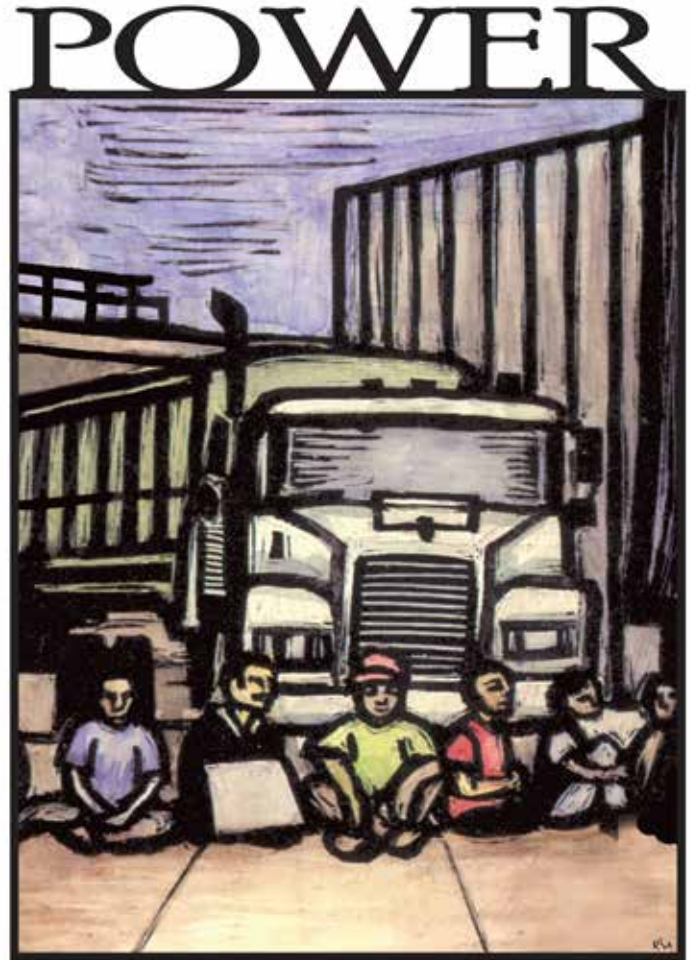
The struggle

for justice takes place on a lot of different levels. It involves building alternatives, new kinds of relationships, new understandings, and it also involves confrontation.

To be clear, we are living in a world where a self-appointed aristocracy—one that is essentially criminal in nature—controls a great deal of the wealth and the political institutions on earth. We're up against some challenges.

I think it's important to keep in context that it's possible to turn advantages into disadvantages and vice versa.

I want to give an example of that, which has to do with power blindness.



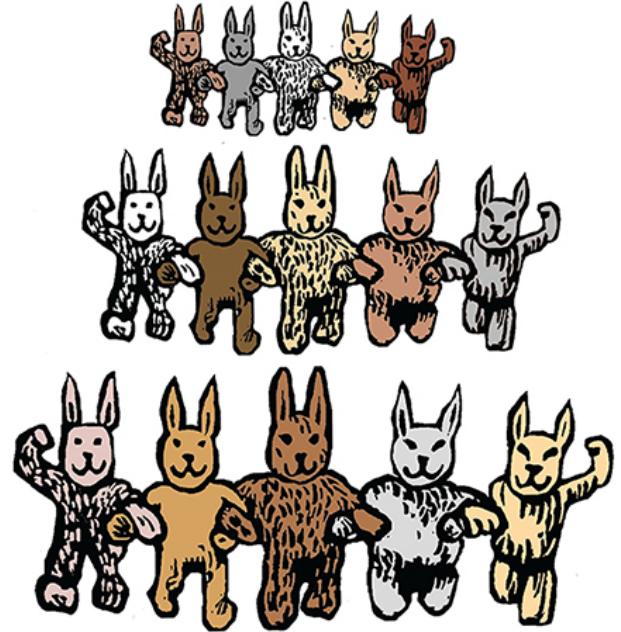
I heard a news report once on the radio about an experiment about driver safety. People sat in simulators to pretend they were driving. One of them was a big Humvee, one was a mid-size car, and one was a little compact. And no matter who sat in what seat, the person in the compact always drove more carefully. The person in the Humvee just sort of zoomed along oblivious because they can run over a Volkswagon Bug and not even feel the crunch.

If they had had a bicycle example in there too, I think that they would be even more aware, because the bicyclist needs to be aware even of every pothole. The Humvee driver doesn't need to notice anything.

That translates into political power and other forms of power.

The United States lost the war in Iraq, and further in Afghanistan, because they were driving a Humvee.

Bosses Beware



When we're screwed,
we multiply!

Being by far the most massively important and powerful military force on earth, they simply thought they could drive over all the little Bugs and the trees, and not pay attention to the layers of culture and loyalties and consciousness that exist in both of these countries.

The very advantage that they had militarily guaranteed and led to military defeat.

I think that's the way we need to look at the conflicts in which we're involved.

The things that both our foes and ourselves think are the demonstrations of their power are also the cause of their downfall. **We have to be the trickster in order to understand how to develop our choreography around that.**



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.