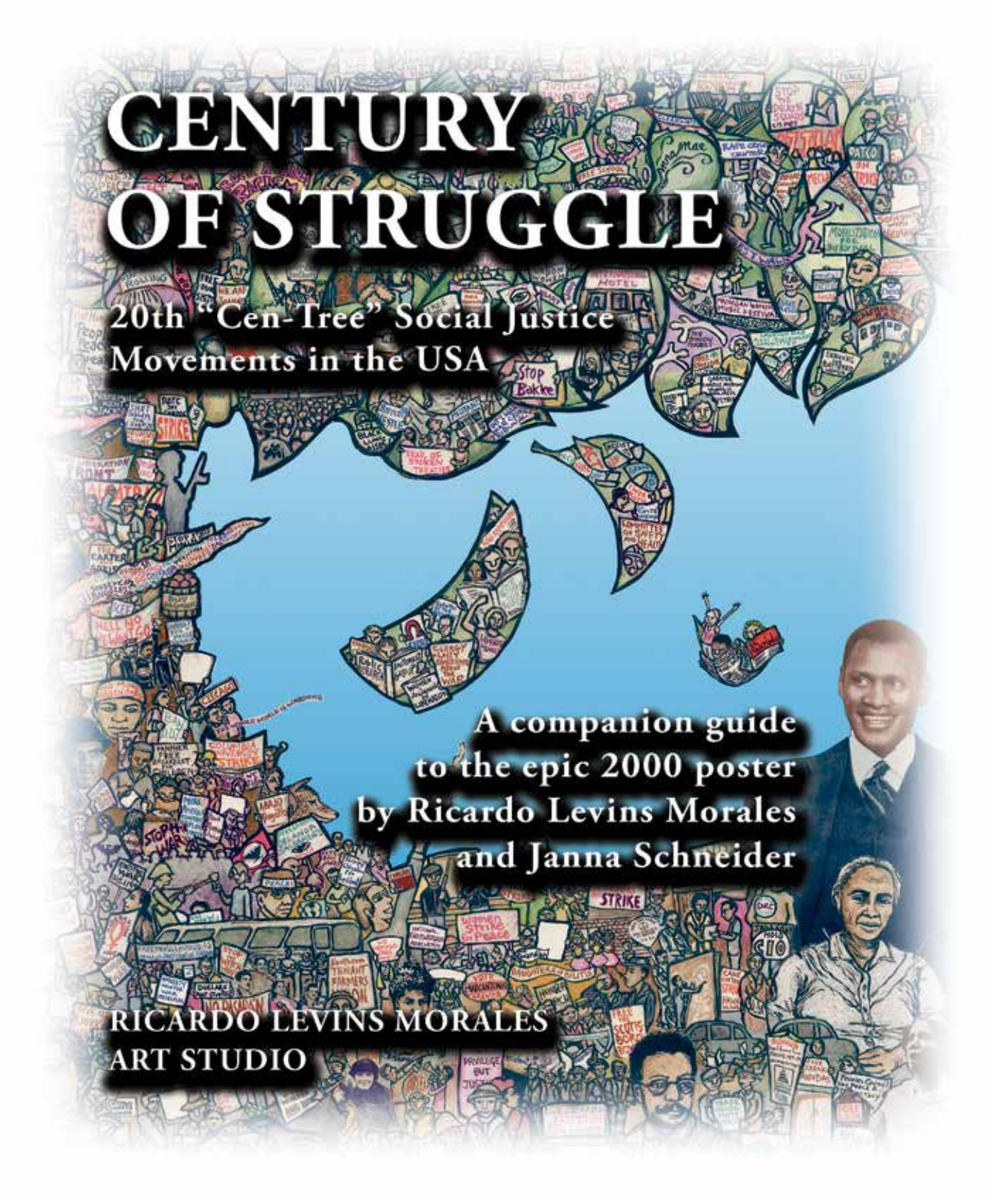
CENTURY OF STRUGGLE
20th "Cen-Tree" Social Justice Movements in the USA
A companion guide to the epic 2000 poster by Ricardo Levins Morales and Janna Schneider
RICARDO LEVINS MORALES ART STUDIO

Century of Struggle: 20th "Cen-Tree" Social Justice Movements in the USA
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Published by Ricardo Levins Morales Art Studio dba RLM Arts
RLM Arts is a proud union shop, member of The News Guild/CWA Local 37002.
This publication union printed in Minneapolis, Minnesota USA.

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ISBN 979-8-9890115-6-8

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Introduction

"I study history... because I am interested in the future."

—Labor historian Peter Rachleff

Welcome to the companion guide for ***Century of Struggle***—an epic storytelling poster created at the end of the 20th Century by Northland Poster Collective artists Ricardo Levins Morales and Janna Schneider.

Ricardo and Janna's poster was published by Northland in 2000. Ricardo was already part of the collective, and Janna would become a core member. After collecting a large amount of historical data and arranging it chronologically, they began illustrating. They traded off hosting the art board in their homes while working their way through a century of history of radical struggles and movement figures. Today in 2025, Ricardo continues producing posters and other movement art at RLM Art Studio (a cooperatively operated union shop) while Janna is an accomplished ceramicist and sculptor.

This guide can either be read in order from beginning to end, or by skipping around from section to section per your interests. With over 700 unique illustrations and collage pieces representing different facets of 20th Century US social movements, we couldn't possibly fit everything in the poster into this zine. But each section features a curated selection of examples on that section's theme, generally in chronological order, along with suggestions for further inquiry.

Topics illustrated in the poster, such as in the leaf to the right, are formatted in the guide like this: **Screen Printing (B5)**. You can use the locator key in the centerfold to aid you in finding the image in the poster, via the coordinates given. Although it's not strictly necessary, we recommend having a copy of the 24x36" poster nearby to refer to. Otherwise, you can find a hi-res image of the poster at RLMArtStudio.com.

The information provided within is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather to provide a jumping-off point for additional research and learning about the topics discussed.

A series of reflection questions for classes and study groups appears towards the back of the zine. After that, citations for reference material used in the text are given. We encourage educators (formal and informal) to use the guide in groups (and we'd love to hear about it if you do).

The poster is organized with historical figures and events in the 1900s and 1910s at the bottom of the tree, moving chronologically up the trunk until happenings from the 1990s populate the top of the canopy. As a result, looking in the vicinity of one illustration will reveal other things that took place more or less around that same time period—an intermingling ecology of resistance.

Thanks for reading. On the next page are some brief words from Jennings (researcher/writer) and Jaime (designer/editor).

Northland Poster Collective Members around 2004, with Ricardo and Janna circled.

*from **Jennings Mergenthal** (writer/researcher)*
Much of Jennings' work can be found at PuppetStudies.org.
For the past several years I have had the pleasure of working with the studio as the historical researcher on its annual Liberation Calendar. There are always more dates than we can include as many are too depressing, too niche or too complex to distill into twenty words. But here I've been granted freedom! A hundred and fifty words each!

It's been fascinating to comb through the range of events on the poster, some of which I knew quite well and others completely new to me. In all of them I saw a relevance to where we are today, in both lessons learned and lessons forgotten. This isn't (yet) a thousand page book—it's a starter. I'm hopeful it can be a jumping off point for new perspectives and further discussion. Above all, I hope that this diversity of history can be a reminder that our current conditions are not new and have never been inevitable.

§

*from **Jaime Hokanson** (designer/editor)*
My first exposure to the "Century of Struggle" poster came from the wall of a collective house around 2010. Kids added their own slogans like "No Homework!" and "Free Candy!" to the blank signs in the poster, and everyone occasionally stopped to ask each other "who's that?" or "what's this bit about?"

In the years since then, I've been lucky to work at RLM Arts, Ricardo's shop founded after the closure of Northland Poster in 2009. I've heard on a regular basis about his desire to have a study guide accompaniment to Century of Struggle, and I'm pleased to at last help realize that goal, with Jennings' incredible research and writing assistance.

Once, I asked Ricardo about an element of the poster that puzzled me—a small white line on the left border, about four inches from the top. He said I was not wrong to be puzzled: that it was a nod to certain cultures in which leaving a small design imperfection in an object allows for the spirits to find their way out—and for our own egos to be kept in check. In this zine, I know there are surely imperfections. Although Jennings wrote the vast majority of text, some small sections were also written by Ricardo and myself. Ultimately, with my eyes on every page of the final product, I take responsibility for any errors that may be found within. Any corrections are welcome.

Ricardo holds a framed print of Century of Struggle, outside the RLM Arts studio/storefront in south Minneapolis (2025). The store sells posters, cards, pin buttons, stickers, and much more featuring Ricardo's 50+ years of artwork. You can also browse and buy his art, and learn more about Ricardo, at RLMArtStudio.com.

A CENTURY OF STRUGGLE

A CEN-TREE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS IN THE USA

Cultural Work

Cultural work—the cultivation of a rich soil of ideas, values, and narratives in which the seeds of social change can sprout and blossom—is at the heart of Century of Struggle, and therefore makes a great topic to lead off this study guide.

Reflecting back upon the trajectory of Northland Poster Collective and other allied cultural workers, Ricardo wrote in 2019, "We felt that art mattered in social movements. It was a struggle to convince some sectors. There was a gathering in the 1980s of labor organizers and cultural workers, and virtually no organizers showed up. It wasn't taken that seriously. But we won that battle! Today, every emerging movement has its art-build days and its focus on creative visuals. It is hard to remember that was a hard sell."

Another group of artist-activists, Syracuse Cultural Workers, described four elements of cultural work upon its founding circa 1980: 1) That the task of creating culture in society is not that of well-paid elites alone 2) That people who create culture should be recognized and valued as real workers, not "patronized" 3) That creation is based in a desire to improve lives, not just to turn a profit, and 4) That all of us can be cultural workers by freeing ourselves from the elitism and unhealthy competition of capitalism.

Here's some examples from the poster of cultural work projects that have strengthened movements for social justice while also inspiring and mobilizing communities.

§

One of the activities of the **1913 "Woman Suffrage Procession" (F5)** in Washington DC, was a tableau (a type of pageant where performers freeze in positions to recreate famous historical or mythological scenes), "Allegory," held on the steps of the treasury building. Written and directed by Hazel MacKaye and Glenda Smith Tinnin, the pageant featured Columbia (the personification of the Americas) summoning feminine virtues to her and demonstrating how women's enfranchisement aligned with democratic ideals. The parade and pageant were

successful in demonstrating public support for suffrage while emphasizing the femininity of the protests, which made them more politically palatable. The movement met its primary goal in 1920 when the 19th amendment, ensuring white womens' right to vote, was ratified. The vote for women of color, of course, would take a lot longer.

§

During the Great Depression, the Roosevelt Administration orchestrated the New Deal, one of the largest transformations of society in US history, which would touch nearly every aspect of US lives. One of its programs was the Works Progress Administration, which built roads, bridges, and federal buildings, including post offices, across the country, particularly in underserved rural areas. One percent of the cost for new federal building construction was set aside for interior design and administered by the Section of Fine Arts, which curated **federally-funded murals (E5)** in post offices across the country. Artists applied through anonymous juried competitions and were selected by talent, rather than by need like other New Deal programs. They were encouraged to visit the communities and post offices before submitting sketches for review. If selected for a commission, the murals were collaboratively designed by the artist and the Post Office Department, with final say given to the community. While many New Deal era post offices do not survive, some others have been selected for historic preservation and can still be viewed.

§

Beginning in the 1960s Chicano artists across the United States (but especially in the Southwest) created politically engaged public murals. Promoted by communities as well as organizations like United Farm Workers and the Raza Unida Party, the **Raza Murals (B2)** drew from the Mexican muralism movement that emerged following the Mexican Revolution and especially the artistic traditions of José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and others. Murals provided a way to spread ideas in a format that would be seen by everyday people.

Depicting historical and cultural motifs and scenes, as well as present-day issues like police brutality and economic inequality, the murals

promoted cultural awareness, overlooked histories and community pride and self determination. While many of the original murals have not survived, others have been preserved because of their cultural significance, and the muralism movement has continued to evolve to this day.

§

The **AIDS Quilt (A1)** is a massive community art project that began in 1985 when activists Cleve Jones (a mentee of Harvey Milk, *Page 28*), Mike Smith and Gert McMullin, Joseph Durant, Jack Caster, Ron Cordova, Larkin Mayo, Steve Kirchner, and Gary Yuschalk created a small memorial commemorating the lives of their friends lost to HIV/AIDS. Each panel of the quilt is 3 x 6 feet and was designed by friends and family in memory of a loved one. The Quilt was first displayed on the National Mall in Washington, DC in 1987 and consisted of 1,920 panels covering an area larger than a football field.

The Quilt toured cities in North America for the next ten years as it continued to grow in size, serving as a public commemoration during a period of intense stigma around HIV/AIDS when many people, especially gay men, were denied traditional burials or memorial ceremonies. The full Quilt was last displayed in 1996, and in 2019 was digitized. The nearly 50,000 panels, stitched with over 100,000 names, are now available to see online at https://www.aidsmemorial.org/loc.

Suggestions for further inquiry (from left to right):

Harlem Renaissance (F5) **Rock Against Racism** (A4) **Galería de la Raza** (B6)
The Last Poets / The Revolution Will Not Be Televised (C3) **Hip Hop Movement** (B2)

RIGHT to REMAIN

The right to remain is a fundamental value, enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in articles stating that no one ought be subject to arbitrary exile, while everyone has the right to a nationality, the right to change that nationality, and the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution.

But the right to remain goes beyond questions of migration, too. Internal colonization within the borders of the so-called United States has displaced countless Native nations and peoples, crimes that continue today. Meanwhile, poor and homeless folks across the US are displaced from their houses, apartments or tents via gentrification and punitive policing. The examples below are cases of people fighting for the fundamental human right to be as they are, in the place they call home.

§

In the late 1910s, conservative interests organized against the growing popular trends of socialism and anarchism led by immigrant communities, who mobilized to **Stop the Deportations (F6)** that resulted from the Palmer Raids. Politicians promoted xenophobic sentiments galvanized by World War I, with the repression spearheaded by attorney general Mitchell Palmer and a young J Edgar Hoover (later responsible for COINTELPRO as director of the FBI—*see page 37*). Palmer launched a series of high profile raids against (mostly) immigrant activists, arresting more than 10,000 and holding them in inhuman conditions with the eventual goal of deportation.

Palmer needed the Department of Labor to allow the deportations, but shortly after the raids began the Secretary of Labor took ill, and the task fell to the acting Assistant Secretary, Lewis Post. Post took a more skeptical approach, ruling that the vast majority of the arrests were illegal and that all were entitled to legal hearings. Post's delays undermined the momentum of the raids and opinion began to turn as the detainees' conditions became public, in part due to the advocacy of the nascent American Civil Liberties Union. While 556 people were deported, including Emma Goldman *(page 21)* and other labor activists who had lived in the country for decades, Palmer and Hoover's goal of thousands of deportations was ultimately thwarted.

§

In 1893, American business interests staged a coup against Queen Lili'uokalani and overthrew the **sovereign Kingdom of Hawai'i (A3)**. Kānaka Maoli (aboriginal islanders) organized political and military resistance and even in the United States there was widespread mainstream political opposition to expansion, including from President Grover Cleveland. When the pro-expansionist Republicans took control in 1898, Hawai'i was annexed by the United States. Under US occupation, the Hawaiian language and culture were outlawed and suppressed and the islands were heavily militarized.

Political and cultural resistance continued throughout the 20th Century, and in the 1980s, Hawai'i saw a revival in language revitalization initiatives and advocacy for reparations from the United States. In 1993, Congress offered an empty acknowledgment of the US Government's involvement in the coup a century before, but the struggle for Kānaka Maoli autonomy and sovereignty remains.

§

In 1968, elderly Filipino and Chinese residents of the **International Hotel (B5)** began an anti-eviction campaign. As downtown San Francisco expanded, the nearby ethnic enclaves of Chinatown and Manilatown faced destruction and redevelopment. The I-Hotel was a single room occupancy hotel in Manilatown that housed mostly long-term, single, elderly, male occupants with nowhere else to live. The residents and community organizers would fight the destruction of the building for the next decade as a series of building owners sought to turn the hotel into a parking garage. Residents were evicted in 1977 and in 1979 the I-Hotel was demolished. In 2005, thanks to the continued community advocacy, a new building opened with 104 affordable housing units and space for the Manilatown Heritage Center.

§

Founded in Minneapolis in 1968, the American Indian Movement (AIM) addressed racism and poverty facing the Indigenous community. It gained international attention with the seizure and occupation of Alcatraz Island and other actions including the Trail of Broken Treaties (a cross-country march to Washington DC) and occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In February of 1973, AIM occupied the town of **Wounded Knee (B3)** on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, the site of an 1890 massacre. The 71-day occupation drew attention to the corrupt tribal administration, the poverty and police brutality that faced Indigenous people and the failure of the US Government to honor its treaty obligations. A military siege by U.S. Marshals and the FBI cut off food, water, electricity and supplies. Three activists were killed, and the occupation ended in early May.

Like other militant organizations, AIM faced withering repression, killings, and sham trials orchestrated by the FBI. But the group gave rise to many other organizations, including Women of All Red Nations (WARN) and the International Indian Treaty Council as well as schools, job programs and cop-watch patrols.

§

Inspired by the events of Wounded Knee, early in the morning of May 13, 1973, a convoy of Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) from the Kahnawake and Akwesasne reserves began to occupy an abandoned 600 acre camp at Moss Lake in northern New York, restoring the name **Ganienkeh (B2)**, declaring their independence and demanding the return of ancestral lands. After a year of occupation, white locals began to try and violently evict the encampment which responded in self defense. The settlement remained at the site until 1977, when the state agreed to a land swap, placing 5,000 acres of land into a trust for the settlement's relocation, and to drop all charges related to the occupation. The relocated Ganienkeh is still largely closed to outsiders and remains largely autonomous.

§

The Hopi reservations and the surrounding Navajo reservation were created in the 1860s in the Southwest US, which included the shared Black Mesa/Big Mountain area. In 1974, Congress solidified the reservation borders by ratifying the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act, which mandated the forced partition of the area, removed about 100 Hopis and 13,000 Navajos (Diné) from their homes, and authorized oil drilling and other resource extraction. The Act exerted colonial force upon complex issues of competing land claims, contradictory policies of the Navajo and Hopi tribal governments, and the area's people.

While many were displaced after mining began, about 300 families refused to leave. **"Relocation means to disappear" (A5)** became a rallying cry, as there was no Diné word for "relocate." Over the following decade residents protested displacement, desecration of burial grounds, and environmental degradation caused by mining. After ongoing protest, the mining company was found to be violating the rights of the residents in 1996 and after many appeals, the mining contract was terminated in 2010.

Suggestions for further inquiry (from left to right):
AIM Occupation of Alcatraz Island (C4) **Palestine - Share the Land, Harvest the Peace** (D4) **Draft card burning** (E5)

Gay Liberation

LGBTQ+ folks have been around since the dawn of time, but the 20th century in the US was filled with poignant struggles for our dignity and freedom. It's worth noting that new understandings in and amongst movements for queer and trans liberation have emerged more broadly in the 21st century—for instance, the fact that it was Black and brown trans women who largely deserve credit for the 1968 Stonewall Riots, the anniversary of which led to June's recognition as pride month.

Illustrative of this evolving attitude, for example, in Century of Struggle *trans liberation movement mothers Marsha Johnson and Sylvia Rivera are not explicitly shown (though drag queens are represented by the fist-raising femme in the lower left). But the poster does include an illustration depicting the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. That event was formed in the 70s as a celebration of lesbian feminism—but by the late 90s, was annually protested for its exclusion of trans women. While exploring the stories of struggle below, we can also reflect on how they are told differently across the decades.*

§

In 1924, Chicagoan Henry Gerber founded the **Society for Human Rights (F4)**. While stationed in Germany in the US Army, Gerber had learned of German homophile (a term used for groups supporting sexual minorities) organizations and the work of sexologist and early advocate for LGBTQ+ rights Magnus Hirschfeld. Gerber chartered the Society as a nonprofit and published a periodical: *Friendship and Freedom*. In 1925, Gerber and the other members of the society were arrested for "obscenity" after the vice president's wife reported the group. The charges were dropped but Gerber was excoriated in the press, fired from his job and bankrupted by legal fees. Gerber left Chicago but continued to correspond with other activists and publish articles until his death in 1972.

§

Following Stonewall, New York activists founded the **Gay Liberation Front** (GLF) **(C4)**. They split from older, more establishment homophile organizations like the Mattachine Society who tended towards respectable displays and gradual change. The most visible difference of GLF was their reclaiming of the term "gay," used historically as a slur. GLF also took an approach of political activism, supporting national liberation, anti-capitalist and anti-colonial struggle and running meetings via consensus. GLF would spread nationally in name, but never had a centralized national structure. Members and the decentralized cells would later become parts of Lavender Menace, the Street Transvestite Action Group (STAR), Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and others.

§

The name **Lavender Menace (D5)** originated when it was used as an insult in 1969 by National Organization for Women (NOW) president Betty Friedan to describe the political threat that could supposedly undermine the women's movement if it was publicly associated with lesbianism. In 1970, Rita Mae Brown and other lesbian activists, including those involved in GLF, staged a zap (a takeover) at NOW's Second Congress to Unite Women, cutting the lights and microphones and picketing inside the event with shirts reading "Lavender Menace" to demand that NOW integrate lesbians within the women's movement. NOW acquiesced the following year. While the Lavender Menace (later Lavender Liberation and Radicalesbians) was not a long lived organization, it served as a crucial turning point in the conceptualization of second wave feminism's inclusion of lesbianism.

§

ACT UP—the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (C5)—was founded in 1987 and took direct action against the AIDS crisis, leading pointed actions against pharmaceutical companies and the government in protest of its inaction towards AIDS. They held pickets and die-ins, even forcing the FDA to close for a day. Through their advocacy, they successfully lobbied the FDA to make experimental drugs available to patients with AIDS and ran the first intravenous needle exchange program in the United States. Members also founded Housing Works, an organization dedicated to providing support and shelter to unhoused people with AIDS. Beyond specific campaigns, ACT UP and the people it inspired brought a new level of militancy, power and pride to the queer community as embodied in one of the slogans within their 1990 manifesto: "**An Army Of Lovers Cannot Lose."** ACT UP would expand its advocacy nationally and would serve as an organizing inspiration for later movements like Black Lives Matter.

Suggestions for further inquiry (from left to right):

Mattachine gay men's society (E3) **Stonewall** (C3) **Daughters of Bilitis** (E5)

Faces of Struggle

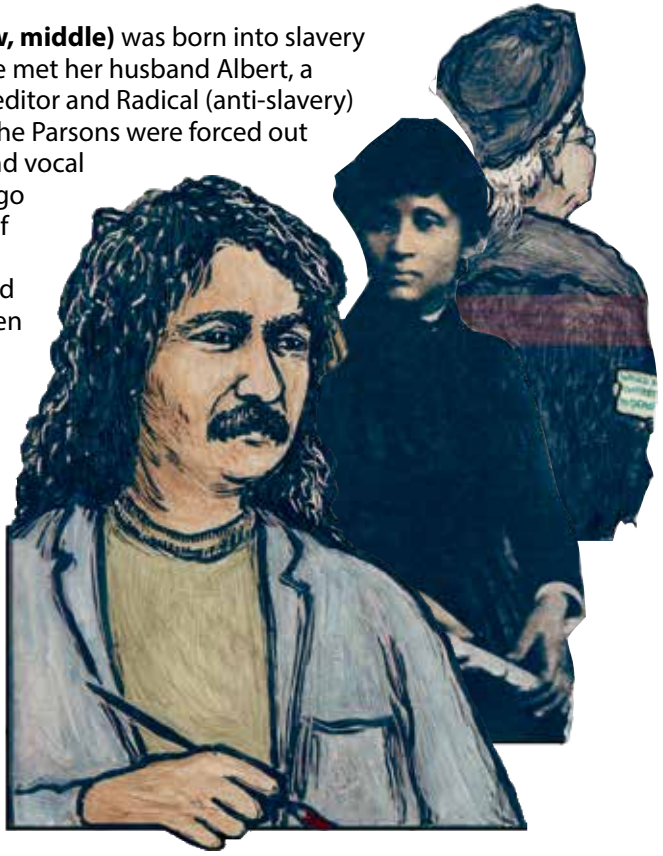
Portraits and faces make up a large number of the images in Century of Struggle. Most do not represent any particular person, but rather an imagination of the everyday people like us who fought for justice in an earlier time. These anonymous characters include two of the people in the lower left **(D1)***—a student sporting pin buttons from their local Raza (Chicano/Latino) group, and a drag queen with a punk rock haircut raising a fist of solidarity in the air.*

The other large portraits in the lower left and right corners of the poster are discussed on these pages. Following that is a listing of some of the smaller illustrated faces of specific notable people depicted.

Leonard Peltier (below, left) *is discussed in the Political Prisoners section on* Page 38.

§

The labor rights organizer **Lucy Parsons (below, middle)** was born into slavery in Virginia in 1851. As a young adult in Texas she met her husband Albert, a former Confederate soldier turned newspaper editor and Radical (anti-slavery) Republican who agitated for Black civil rights. The Parsons were forced out of Texas because of their interracial marriage and vocal opposition to the Klan, so they moved to Chicago where they were involved in the coordination of the series of strikes and protests for the eight hour workday in May 1886. Albert was convicted without evidence and executed along with seven other anarchists in what became known as the Haymarket Affair. Steadfastly, Lucy remained a militant labor activist and orator, referred to by Chicago police as "more dangerous than a thousand rioters."



Along with Mother Jones (see below), Lucy was a founding delegate of the Industrial Workers of the World. During her life, she publicly identified as Mexican and Indigenous, repeatedly denying questions about her Black heritage; her advocacy focused explicitly on the white working class rather than taking an intersectional lens towards race or gender. Parsons died in a house fire in 1942, aged 89.

§

One of Parsons' contemporaries in the labor movement, **Mary Harris "Mother" Jones (previous page on right)** was born in Ireland and baptized in 1837. She left Ireland for North America as a child due to the Great Famine and began to work as a dressmaker. Her husband and four children died in a yellow fever epidemic in 1867, and four years later she would lose her home and shop in the Great Chicago Fire. She became interested in radical organizing after witnessing the indifference of the Chicago elite to the plight of the poor. In the 1890s, she began to organize with the United Mine Workers and was first referred to by the strikers as "Mother."

Jones would travel as an organizer in the coming decades, highly respected for her ability to mobilize striking workers as well as their families. She fought and organized for rights for the unemployed and an end to child labor in an era where 20% of children younger than 16 worked a job rather than attending school. For her rabble rousing, she was frequently imprisoned and exiled from towns across the country. Towards the end of her life she faced criticism from younger labor leaders for her opposition to militancy, but still remained a towering figure in the labor movement. Mother Jones died in 1930 and in 1976 became the namesake of a nonprofit investigative magazine.

§

Rose Scheiderman (below, right), a feminist, socialist and trade union activist was born in 1882 in Poland. She immigrated to the United States and was forced to drop out of school to work and support her family at age 13. Working in a factory as a cap maker, she became frustrated with the working conditions and in 1903 organized her shop with the Jewish, Socialist, United Cloth Hat and Cap Maker's Union. She would continue to work as a labor organizer and also became active in calls for women's suffrage. In a 1912 speech she popularized the call that "the worker must have bread, but she must have roses too," a rallying cry for the labor movement ever since.

She was elected president of the National Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) in 1926 and through her relationship with first lady Eleanor Roosevelt she would shape the creation of the Social Security Administration and the National Labor Relations Act, both major gains for workers' rights still under attack today. Later as New York Secretary of Labor, she advocated for pay equality and to promote unionization in women-dominated professions. She continued to serve as WTUL president until her retirement in 1949, and she died in 1972.

§

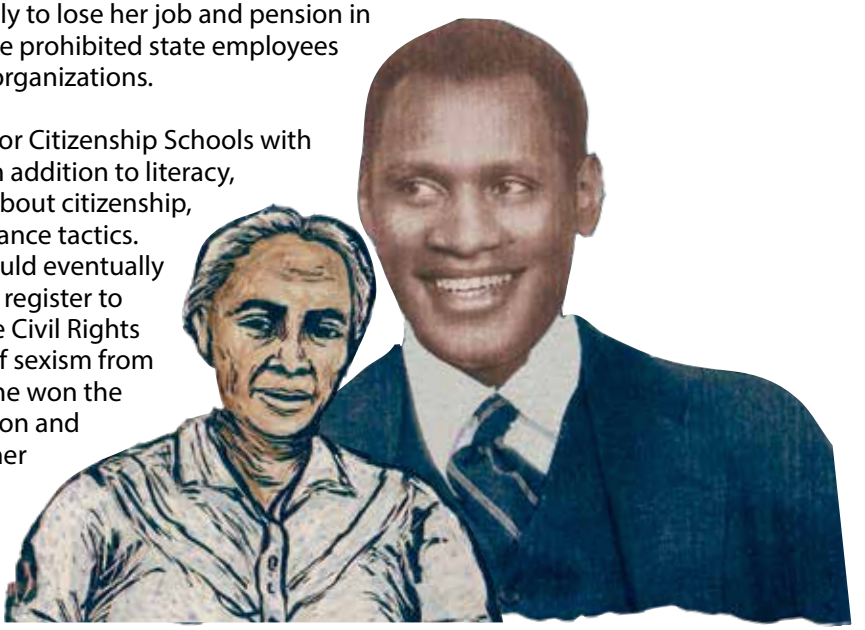
Paul Robeson (below, right), civil rights activist and star of stage and screen was born in 1898. After a stellar academic and athletic career at Rutgers University, he professionally trained as a lawyer. At this same time, he was quickly becoming a prolific dramatic and vocal performer. He traveled nationally and internationally in productions of Othello, Emperor Jones, Showboat and others. His travels to Europe helped grow his progressive politic into an internationalist one—advocating for colonial self-determination and labor rights and against fascism and racial discrimination. Naturally, this drew the eye of the US Government.

The FBI began surveilling Robeson in 1941, revoked his passport in 1950, and called him to testify before the House Unamerican Activities Committee in 1956 as part of the "red scare" repression against suspected communists. Robeson remained defiant in his activism and continued to perform and protest nationally, but his status would never fully recover. His passport restored in 1958, Robeson returned to international travel and performances, but in declining health. Towards the end of his life, Robeson found himself alienated from much of the Civil Rights Movement, both for his radical leftist politics and his past performances of characters steeped in anti-Black stereotypes. Robeson retired to Philadelphia where he died in 1976.

§

The groundbreaking educator **Septima Poinsette Clark (below, left)** was born in 1898 in South Carolina. In 1916, after passing her teachers exam, she began to teach on Johns Island, SC despite a prohibition on Black public school teachers. In the evenings she taught adult literacy classes and during summers she continued to pursue her own education, earning her Bachelor's Degree in 1942 and her Master's in 1946. She became active in the NAACP and helped successfully challenge the prohibition on Black teachers, only to lose her job and pension in retaliation in 1956, when the state prohibited state employees from participating in civil rights organizations.

Clark developed the curriculum for Citizenship Schools with a former student, Esau Jenkins. In addition to literacy, the schools taught participants about citizenship, civil rights, organizing, and resistance tactics. The model would spread and would eventually help about 700,000 Black people register to vote. Clark remained active in the Civil Rights Movement, and in her criticism of sexism from within the movement. In 1979, she won the restoration of her teacher's pension and she died in 1987, the same year her second autobiography won the American Book Award.



...and more faces of struggle:

A selection of other faces scattered throughout the poster. How many can you find?

Abbie Hoffman (D3) (1936-1989) was the eccentric founder of the New Left group, the Youth International Party, the "Yippies". Known for using theatrical tactics, the yippies nominated Pigasus (an actual 145-pound pig) for president outside the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Pigasus, along with seven Yippies, was taken into custody by the Chicago police.

AJ Muste (E4) (1885-1967) was a pastor, Marxist and radical pacifist. Muste began his career as a labor organizer in the 1910s and became an outspoken critic of military violence and nuclear proliferation.

Alexander Berkman (E3) (1870-1936) was one of the leaders of the North American anarchist movement. In 1892 he was jailed for the attempted assassination of industrialist Henry Clay Frick. Following his release he spoke against US involvement in World War I, until his deportation in 1919. In the poster, he's gazing across the way at his lover and co-conspirator, Emma Goldman.

Allen Ginsburg (C4) (1926-1997) was an influential poet of the Beat Generation. Ginsberg also spent his life advocating for drug destigmatization and against the Vietnam War and nuclear proliferation. Though ostensibly a proponent of human rights, including gay rights, he opposed age of consent laws and engaged in sexual misconduct against youth.

Cesar Chavez (C4) (1927-1993) was a farmworker and labor activist. With the United Farm Workers, he helped organize a five-year national grape boycott in protest of poor pay and a lack of workplace protections. Chavez was a proponent of nonviolence and also organized against the Vietnam War and for gay rights and immigration reform.

Emma Goldman (F4) (1869-1940), another outspoken anarchist leader, traveled widely as an author and orator. She was a lifelong anticapitalist and an early public supporter of gender equality, "free love" and gay rights. Along with Alexander Berkman and others, Goldman was deported in 1919 and continued to travel internationally and speak out against the rise of fascism in Germany and Spain.

Eugene Debs (F5) (1855-1926) One of the most prominent socialists of his era, Debs began as a railroad worker and union organizer, helping lead the 1894 Pullman Strike. He soon became a socialist, running for president every cycle between 1900 and 1912. Debs was jailed for his opposition to US involvement in World War I. He ran for President once more from prison and pulled nearly a million votes, the highest of any Socialist candidate to date in the United States.

Harry Belafonte (F2) (1927-2023) was an internationally famous actor and singer outspoken in his political activism. As his celebrity grew, he became publicly critical of the Cold War and US aggression towards Cuba. A close friend of Martin Luther King, Jr., he used his status and money to support the civil rights movement. Later on he opposed apartheid in South Africa, the invasion of Grenada and the War on Terror.

Many are only aware of **Helen Keller, (F4)** (1880-1968) for learning to communicate as a child while deaf and blind. During her own life she saw her radical politics dismissed by contemporaries because of sexism and ableism, but as an adult she became an active socialist supporting suffrage and the NAACP, helping found the American Civil Liberties Union, and actively writing and lecturing about disability rights and pacifism.

Ida B. Wells (E5) (1862-1931) was a journalist, educator and civil rights activist. Born enslaved but emancipated in 1865, her journalistic career documented oppression against Black people including extensive study of the social role of lynchings as terrorism. She advocated for suffrage and the rights of Black veterans and was a founding member of the NAACP.

John Carlos (1945-present) **and Tommie Smith** (1944-present) **(C3/C4)** are Olympic track athletes known for their Black Power salute during the 1968 Olympics, protesting anti-Black oppression. For their action they were condemned by the Olympic Committee, suspended by the US team and castigated by the press, despite Smith having set a world record that would stand for eleven years.

Malcolm X (D4) (1925-1965) was a Black revolutionary. With the Nation of Islam (NOI) he helped build the Black Muslim movement, attacking racism while critical of mainstream civil rights activism. After a split with the NOI in 1964, he embraced Pan-Africanism and anti-imperialism, giving his famous "Ballot or the Bullet" speech. He was assassinated in 1965, and much is still unknown about the involvement of the US Government and the NOI in his killing.

Marcus Garvey (F4) (1887-1940) was a Black nationalist and Pan-Africanist advocate. Through his organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Garvey was active in promoting Black capitalism and economic self-reliance.

Margaret Sanger (F5) (1879-1966) was a feminist activist, proponent of reproductive rights and founder of what would become Planned Parenthood. Sanger's advocacy, though, was only intended to benefit a certain type of white woman as she persistently supported eugenics as an explicitly racist, classist and ableist project.

Martin Luther King, Jr. (E3) (1929-1968) was a pastor and civil rights activist. He has become well-known for his speech in the March on Washington and his assassination in Memphis whilst supporting a sanitation workers strike. However, popular memory erases his criticism of the Vietnam War, advocacy for poor people and repression by the FBI—which placed informants, wiretapped, and attempted to blackmail him.

Meridel Le Sueur (C3) (1900-1996) was a writer, activist and Communist, publishing diverse works on workers' rights, womens' autonomy, the struggles of marginalized people and environmentalism, inspiring generations of artists and creatives.

Mumia Abu-Jamal (A1) (1954-present) is a journalist and political prisoner falsely accused and sentenced to death in 1982 for the killing of a police officer. He continued to write and report on social movement issues from behind bars, for which he was punished with solitary confinement. Abu-Jamal remained on death row until 2011 and is still serving life in prison without possibility of parole.

Nicola Sacco (1891-1927) & **Bartolomeo Vanzetti** (1888-1927) **(F3)**, shown in the poster with a group of supporters (F5), were anarchists, Italian immigrants, and a shoemaker and fishmonger, respectively. They were falsely convicted of murder and sentenced to death during a wave of anti-immigrant, anti-anarchist sentiment. Their plight became an international cause célèbre and drew attention to the political nature of the judicial system, even after their executions.

Pete Seeger (E2) (1919-2014) was an activist and folk singer, shown here with The Weavers folk quartet. Seeger worked to integrate leftist political consciousness within his work. Blacklisted in the 1950s for his Communist ties, he emerged in the 60s and beyond as one of the most influential figures in folk music.

Ricardo Flores Magón (F5) (1873-1922) was a journalist, anarchist and vocal opponent of the Porfiriato, the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz that controlled Mexico from 1876 until the 1910 Mexican revolution. Along with his brothers Enrique and Jesús, Flores Magón organized and spoke out against the Porfiriato through his newspaper *Regeneración* (1900-1918). He fled to the United States, where he faced persecution by both the Mexican and US Governments.

W.E.B. DuBois (E3) (1868-1963) was a Black intellectual. During his seventy year academic career, he was active in history, sociology, and data visualization, among other fields. His work served to revolutionize conceptualization of the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era. As a founding member of the NAACP he served for 24 years as editor for the quarterly magazine *The Crisis* (1910-present) uplifting social justice and the work of Black artists and intellectuals. Later in life, DuBois explicitly embraced socialism, Communism and anti-colonialism.

Electoral Activism

Mainstream media loves a close election. The personalities and horse-race jockeying make for simple "he said, she said" content to be consumed like celebrity gossip, allowing crucial matters to be reported without investigative rigor. Yet, the unfairness built into the system is transparent. Many a young activist has started their journey by wondering, "why does the US only have two political parties?"

Such a political system, and its inherent conservatism and inflexibility, has never been predestined but is today an entrenched reality. This is an intention of the system, not a mistake—as some of the examples of third parties and independent candidates below will show. By posing a credible threat to corporate and elite power, and occasionally even succeeding in upending the established order, these agitators (and the occasional dissident from within the major parties) teach us how hard elites will fight to maintain the status quo.

§

The turn of the 20th century heralded an era of working class dissatisfaction with the two-party system. In 1915, rural socialists in North Dakota organized the **Nonpartisan League** (NPL) **(F2)** to address the concerns of farmers overlooked by the political establishment. The following year they swept into the state executive branch and the House of Representatives with a progressive agenda, thanks in part to their newspaper, the *Nonpartisan Leader*. The next year, the Minnesota chapter of the NPL merged with the state socialist party and the Federation of Labor to form the **Farmer-Labor Party** (FLP) **(F3)**, promoting solidarity between urban and rural workers and a similar progressive agenda. Throughout the 1920s, both parties would become the primary opponent to their statewide Republican parties, and would again sweep into power in the 1930s, dramatically reshaping state politics.

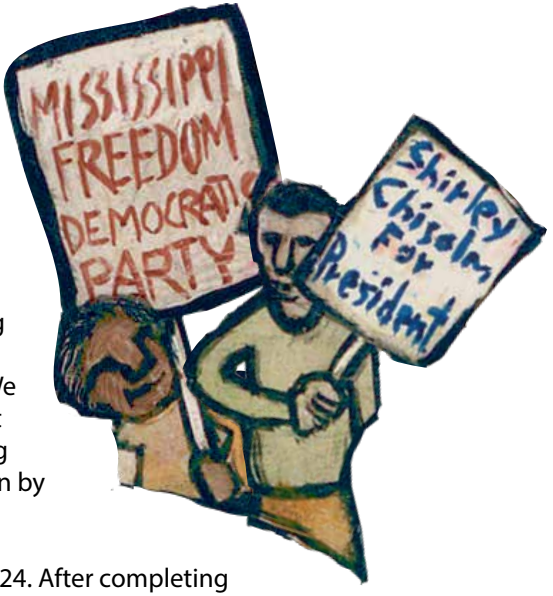
The FLP merged with the Minnesota Democrats in 1944, and the NPL followed suit in 1956, forced to moderate both their leftist radical side but also losing a significant share of their voting base to Republicans. The effects of both parties have been long-lasting. The NPL-founded North Dakota state-owned bank, grain mill and elevator still exist as successful public utilities despite decades of attempts to destroy them, and the FLP's support for the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters' Strike helped galvanize the labor movement both in Minneapolis and nationally.

§

Vito Marcantonio (E5) was born to a family of Italian immigrants in East Harlem, New York in 1902. Leading an active youth as a community organizer and public speaker, he fell under the wing of the socialist Republican Fiorello La Guardia. In 1934, Marcantonio won a seat in the House of Representatives as an ardent believer in the New Deal. A strong advocate for public housing and the rights of his district, he was arrested in 1936 for leading a protest against cuts to the Works Progress Administration and lost the subsequent election. Returning to Congress the following term, Marcantonio remained incredibly independent, competing in and winning primaries for the Republican and Democratic parties, as well as the independent American Labor Party.

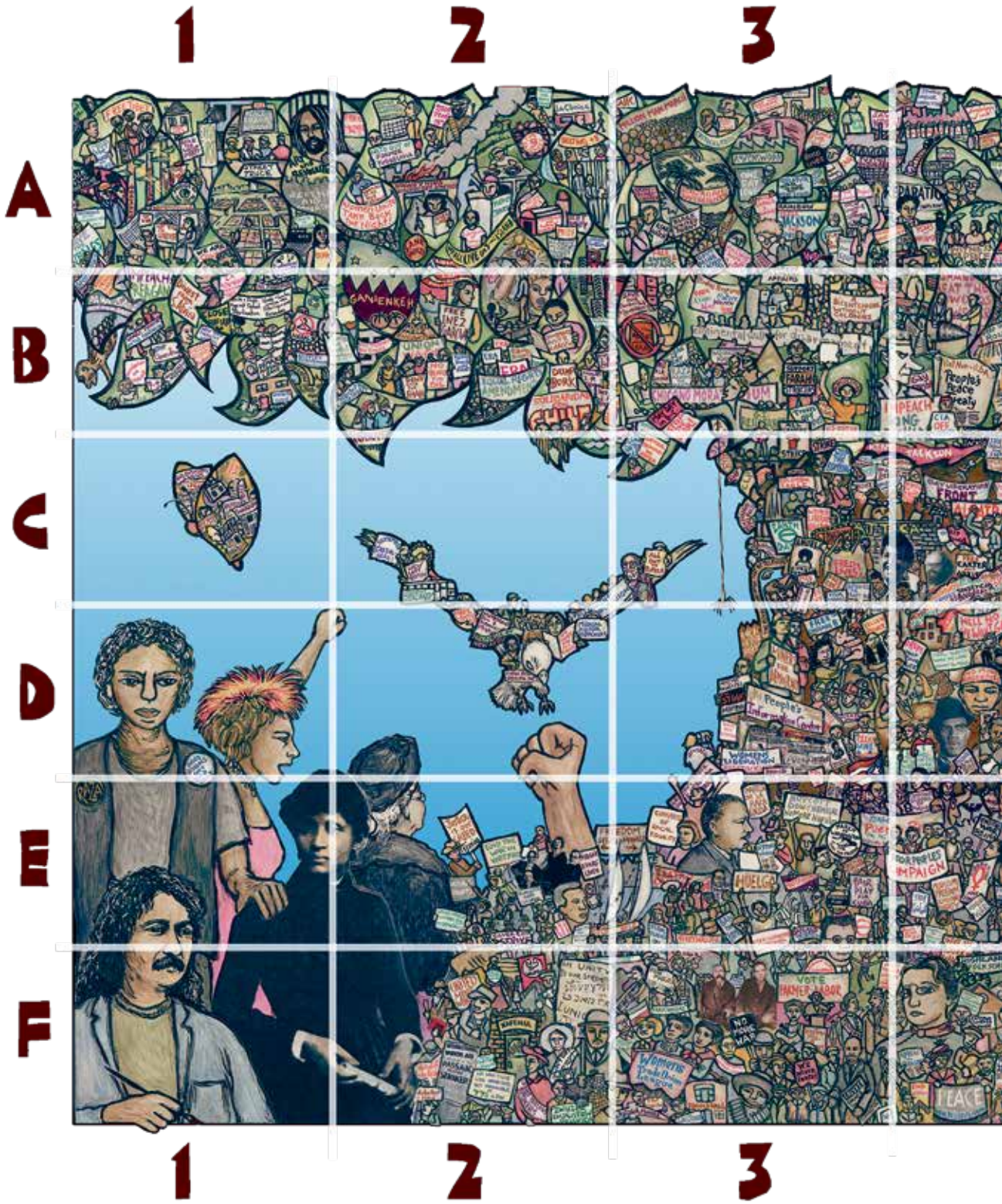
Throughout his career he advocated for labor rights, civil rights, anti-lynching laws and Puerto Rican independence. Repeated attempts to smear him as a Communist were largely unsuccessful because of his intense popularity in his district, despite his sympathy for and support from Communists. Marcantonio cast the only vote against the Korean War, which narrowly cost him the 1952 election. Returning to work as a lawyer, Marcantonio defended the American Communist party and W.E.B. DuBois. While preparing for a return to Congress, Marcantonio died of a heart attack in 1954, and was denied a Catholic funeral by the conservative Cardinal.

§



Historically, the Mississippi Democratic Party barred Black voters from participating in party meetings and primaries, effectively locking them out of the political process. In 1964, Black civil rights activists launched the **Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party** (MFDP) **(E4)** holding parallel, integrated caucuses to seat delegates at the Democratic National Convention. The DNC refused to seat the party in place of the white Mississippi delegation, eventually offering the compromise of two seats to MFDP delegates. The MFDP refused, to which delegate Fannie Lou Hamer responded, "We didn't come all this way for no two seats." Despite being shut out of that convention, the MFDP later succeeded in winning a Democratic Party policy to no longer seat delegates chosen by racially discriminatory processes.

Shirley Chisholm (E4) was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1924. After completing her undergraduate and master's degrees and working as a teacher she became active in the local chapters of the League of Women Voters, NAACP and Democratic Party. When a court-ordered redistricting in 1964 created a new majority Black and Puerto Rican district in her neighborhood, she ran for the State Assembly, winning a seat despite persistent sexism from her male opponents. In 1968, her effective communication, refusal to be cowed and fluent Spanish helped her become the first Black woman elected to Congress.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LOCATOR GRID

These coordinates are referred to throughout the text
to help you find relevant locations in the poster.

In 1972, Chisholm became the first Black person to announce a campaign for president with a major party and the first woman to seek the Democratic party nomination, building a coalition of women and voters of color. At the convention she received 10% of the delegate votes despite again facing intense opposition from male politicians. Even following the election, as a part of Democratic House leadership, she continued to be slighted by colleagues but remained an active, independent voice for women, the poor, and refugees. Chisholm retired from Congress in 1983 and taught at Mount Holyoke and Spelman Colleges, and remained active as a lecturer until her death in 2005.

§

Harvey Milk (A5) was born in 1930 in Woodmere, New York. Milk realized he was gay before high school, and after college he resigned from the Navy when questioned about his sexual orientation. Milk moved to San Francisco in 1972 with his partner Scott Smith where they opened a camera store and became active in community organizing. After two attempts to enter electoral politics, in 1975 he was appointed to the Board of Permit Appeals, where he helped organize a boycott of Coors Beer against its anti-union policies.

Two years later he won a bid to become a San Francisco City-County Supervisor, becoming the first openly gay elected politician in California where he advocated for the rights of queer people and people of color, the creation of daycare centers, and community control over the police. He also served as a powerful mobilizing force against Proposition 6, which would have mandated the firing of gay public school teachers. Milk (along with Mayor George Moscone) was assassinated in 1978 by former Supervisor and policeman Dan White. When White was convicted of only manslaughter and sentenced to just eight years in prison, passionate protests erupted across the city in what became known as the White Night Riots.

Suggestions for further inquiry (from left to right):

"Clean Gene" McCarthy (D3) **Harold Washington** (A4) **Partida de la Raza Unida** (E3) **Henry Wallace/Progressive Party** (F3) **Jesse Jackson** (A3)

STRIKES

In the era of sailing ships, sailors protesting poor working conditions would "strike", meaning to lower, a ship's sails to bring it to a halt until their grievances were addressed. This created the term we still use today when workers conduct collective job actions to defend their interests: the strike.

Dozens of such strikes are represented in Century of Struggle, along with other examples of groups like students and renters bringing business as usual to a standstill. Strikes take many different forms in social movements such as refusal to work, refusal to pay, or refusal to continue life as usual. Here are just a few.

§

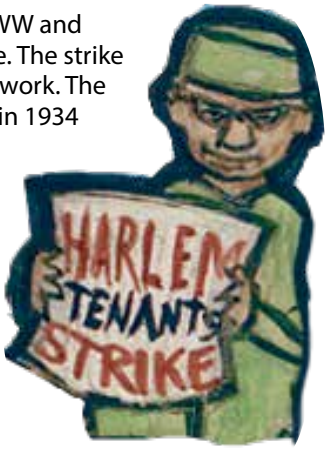
In 1909, garment workers with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in New York City organized the **Ladies Tailor Strike (F2)** (also known as the Uprising of the 20,000), the largest strike by women workers in US History. The strikers were mostly young women in their teens and 20s, recently immigrated from Europe and heavily Yiddish speaking. The eleven-week strike called attention to the dangerous conditions for female factory workers and by the end, 85% of shirtwaist workers in New York had joined the union. Many of the strike organizers like Clara Lemlich and Rose Schneiderman *(page 19)* would go on to have extensive careers as union organizers. They would strike again the following year and the plight of garment workers would be given national attention in 1911, following the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire where unsafe conditions killed 146 workers. By the end of the decade, the ILGWU had emerged as one of the powerhouses in national union politics. The ILGWU would promote education, healthcare and affordable housing for its members and would even sponsor a satirical anti-capitalist and anti-fascist Broadway show in the 1930s, *Pins and Needles*.

§

A general strike, in which all workers in an area stop their jobs, is one of the most powerful tools of the labor movement. Consequently, today they are functionally illegal in the United States. But it hasn't always been this way. In 1919, the **Seattle General Strike (F5)** was called, when 101 unions walked off the job in support of shipbuilders striking for an increase in stagnant wartime wages. Up to 100,000 people, a third of Seattle's population, are believed to have participated, including the families of strikers, the unemployed and nonunion workers including Japanese American labor organizations excluded from white unions. For several days, the streets were patrolled by union volunteers, who also organized public meals and celebrations. Although the

strike remained orderly, local officials mobilized the military who arrested IWW and socialist party activists and newspaper staff involved in promoting the strike. The strike officially ended after six days, though some unions had already returned to work. The general strike model would later be used in San Francisco and Minneapolis in 1934 and Oakland in 1946.

§



In 1963, a group of predominantly Black and Puerto Rican apartment building tenants in New York's Harlem neighborhood organized a rent strike, citing more than a hundred unaddressed health and safety violations in their building. When brought to court, residents participating in the **Harlem Tenants Strike (E5)** provided the judge with enormous rats caught in their apartments. Within a few months, the protest spread to nearly 2,000 tenants. When the landlords refused to face tenants in court, the judge reduced rents to as low as $1 and rejected eviction requests. The publicity forced the city to increase building inspections, protections for tenants and consequences for slumlords. The tactic of public rent strikes also gained traction with tenant rights groups across the city.

§

In April 1968, the Society of Afro-American Students and the Students for a Democratic Society at Columbia University in New York City led campus-wide protests against the war in Vietnam, the University's involvement in the military industrial complex, and neighborhood gentrification. **Columbia University Strikers (D4)** took over five buildings and held them for six days. Eventually, administrators called in the police, leading to a mass arrest. This would backfire when students, staff and faculty went on strike, effectively ending the semester several weeks early. Administrators would acquiesce to student demands and also institute a policy of reform designed to include greater student input (but primarily to ensure that future student movements could not disrupt campus again.) The highly effective tactics of the Columbia protests would inspire the student movement nationwide.

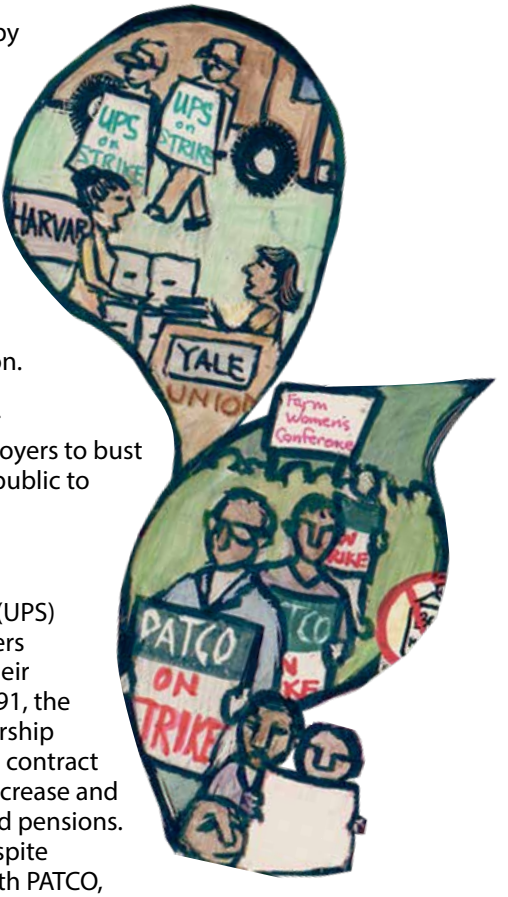
Despite being violently opposed by administrators at the time, the protests have become a core part of Columbia's self-mythologization, showcasing a time when students valiantly spoke out against injustice. While celebrating this part of the history, Columbia administrators again violently cracked down on the April 2024 encampments protesting the genocide in Palestine, which drew inspiration and tactics directly from the 1968 protests.

§

In 1981, the 12,000 members of the **Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization Union** (PATCO) **(A6)** walked off the job when negotiations for their contract with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) broke down. About 20% of flights were impacted and President Ronald Reagan ordered the strikers

back to work within 48 hours, citing a 1955 law prohibiting strikes by government employees, which had never actually been enforced. This was also despite the fact that PATCO had actually endorsed Reagan's election the previous year.

Reagan followed through, firing more than 11,000 air traffic controllers and replacing them with supervisors and military controllers. The strikers were banned for life from ever returning to the FAA (though this was overturned a decade later by the Clinton Administration). PATCO was decertified as a union and went bankrupt. The FAA began to hire new controllers, who would organize a new union, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association.



The failed PATCO strike marked a tipping point in the broader labor movement. Reagan's vigorous strikebreaking inspired private employers to bust unions as well, and the FAA's public relations machine pushed the public to view strikers and unions with suspicion.

§

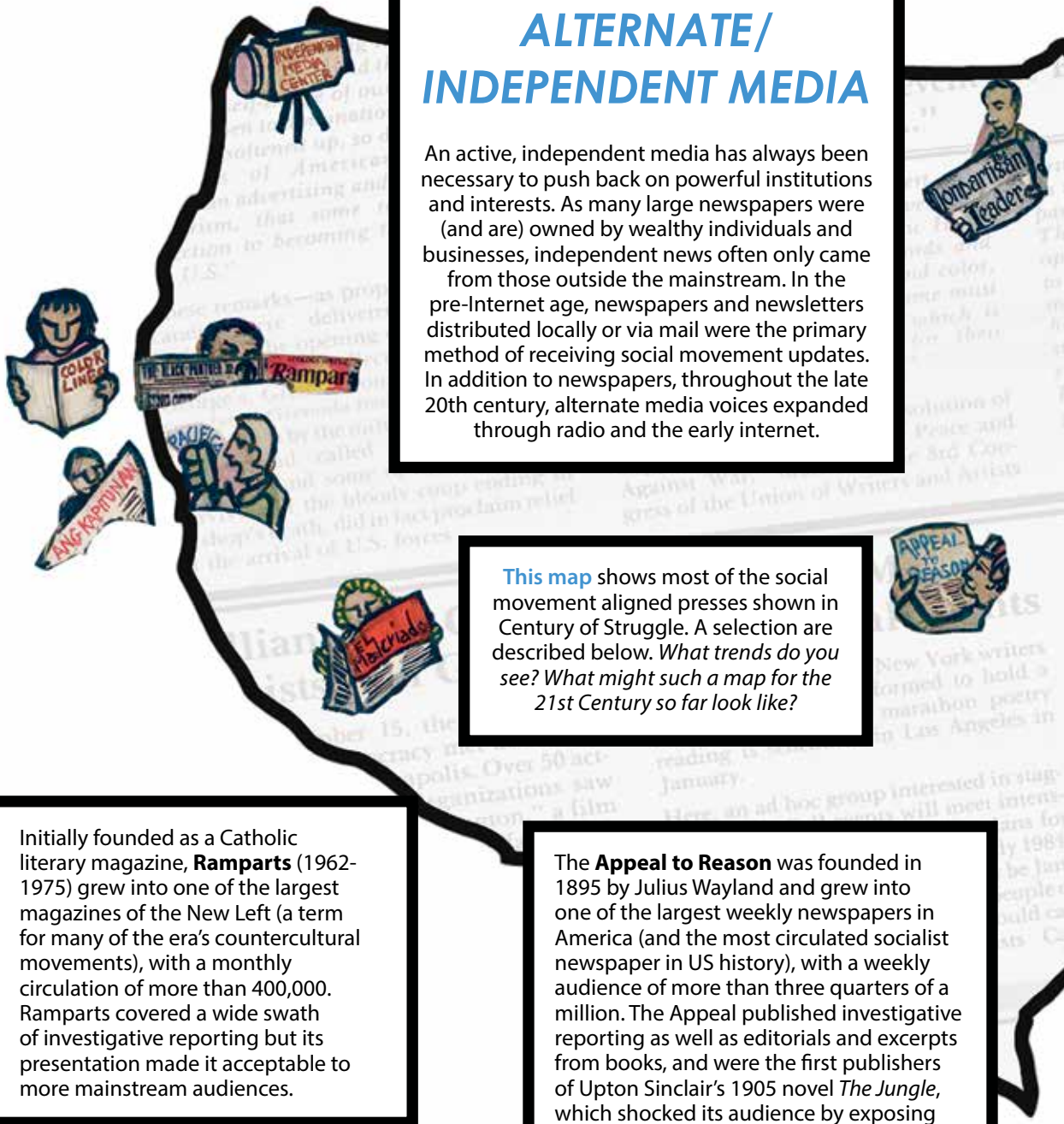
In 1997, the **Teamsters struck against the United Parcel Service** (UPS) **(A6)**. For decades, UPS had been cutting the pay of part time workers (who received fewer benefits), while also dramatically increasing their number, with cooperation of the Teamsters union leadership. In 1991, the reform-minded Teamsters for a Democratic Union swept into leadership positions after decades of complacency and corruption. In the new contract campaign, UPS refused to hear the Teamsters' demands for a pay increase and to consolidate part time jobs into full time ones with healthcare and pensions. During the fifteen day-strike, all UPS package delivery stopped. Despite attempts to scaremonger about the impacts of the strike, unlike with PATCO, public support remained overwhelmingly on the side of the Teamsters and UPS was forced to concede.

Suggestions for further inquiry (from left to right):

Women Strike for Peace (E5) **American Woolen "Bread and Roses" Strike** (F6)
San Antonio Pecan Sellers (F4) **Justice for Janitors** (A5) **Gallo Ag Workers Strike** (E5)

ALTERNATE/ INDEPENDENT MEDIA

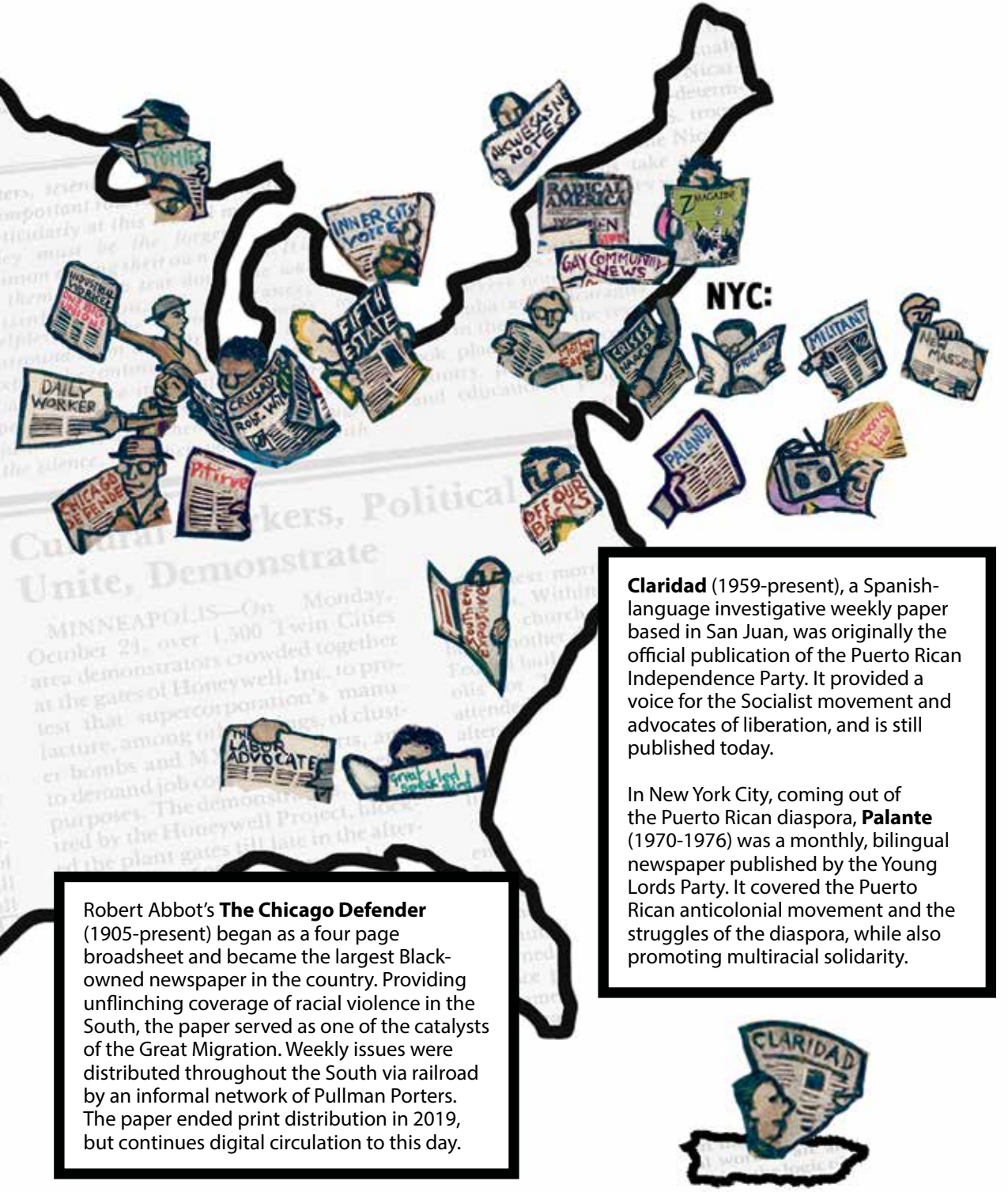
An active, independent media has always been necessary to push back on powerful institutions and interests. As many large newspapers were (and are) owned by wealthy individuals and businesses, independent news often only came from those outside the mainstream. In the pre-Internet age, newspapers and newsletters distributed locally or via mail were the primary method of receiving social movement updates. In addition to newspapers, throughout the late 20th century, alternate media voices expanded through radio and the early internet.



This map shows most of the social movement aligned presses shown in Century of Struggle. A selection are described below. *What trends do you see? What might such a map for the 21st Century so far look like?*

Initially founded as a Catholic literary magazine, **Ramparts** (1962-1975) grew into one of the largest magazines of the New Left (a term for many of the era's countercultural movements), with a monthly circulation of more than 400,000. Ramparts covered a wide swath of investigative reporting but its presentation made it acceptable to more mainstream audiences.

The **Appeal to Reason** was founded in 1895 by Julius Wayland and grew into one of the largest weekly newspapers in America (and the most circulated socialist newspaper in US history), with a weekly audience of more than three quarters of a million. The Appeal published investigative reporting as well as editorials and excerpts from books, and were the first publishers of Upton Sinclair's 1905 novel *The Jungle*, which shocked its audience by exposing conditions in the meatpacking industry.



Robert Abbot's **The Chicago Defender** (1905-present) began as a four page broadsheet and became the largest Black-owned newspaper in the country. Providing unflinching coverage of racial violence in the South, the paper served as one of the catalysts of the Great Migration. Weekly issues were distributed throughout the South via railroad by an informal network of Pullman Porters. The paper ended print distribution in 2019, but continues digital circulation to this day.

Claridad (1959-present), a Spanish-language investigative weekly paper based in San Juan, was originally the official publication of the Puerto Rican Independence Party. It provided a voice for the Socialist movement and advocates of liberation, and is still published today.

In New York City, coming out of the Puerto Rican diaspora, **Palante** (1970-1976) was a monthly, bilingual newspaper published by the Young Lords Party. It covered the Puerto Rican anticolonial movement and the struggles of the diaspora, while also promoting multiracial solidarity.

Rural Organizing

Both in alternative media and amongst activists in progressive urban centers, struggles in rural areas of the US often get overlooked. People in small towns and countrysides often take the blame for right-wing lurches in politics, due to the stereotype of rural folks as uniformly white, racist and uneducated. But many of the stories in Century of Struggle show rural activists breaking barriers and winning campaigns: from farmworkers' rights to environmental justice, movements for native sovereignty and labor strikes. Here's a few.

§

The Farmers' Holiday Association was founded in 1932 by Iowa farmer Milo Reno. The FHA grew out of the advocacy group the Farmers Union as a way for low and middle class farmers to organize against foreclosure. They coordinated "**Farm Holidays**" **(F3),** statewide strikes in the Midwest, where farmers refused to bring their goods to market to increase demand (and prices).

FHA members would also use tactics ranging from protest and roadblocks to militant vigilante actions. One effective group tactic of the FHA was the "penny auction," in which foreclosed property would be bid only as high as a few cents and returned to the rightful owner, spiting the bank out of foreclosure profits. The FHA splintered in the mid 1930s as grain and dairy farmers disagreed on tactics for a national strike, and the movement officially rejoined the Farmers Union in 1937.

§

In 1934, a group of Black and white sharecroppers and Socialist Party members in Tyronza, Arkansas organized the **Southern Tenant Farmers Union** (STFU) **(E4)** to protect sharecroppers from eviction and ensure that New Deal financial relief would benefit sharecroppers, instead of just the planters who owned the land. The Union quickly spread into Oklahoma and Texas with active groups in other states, and at its height claimed more than 35,000 members. It successfully integrated itself into a part of the South conventionally considered hostile to unionization.

The explicit radicalism and multiracial, rural character of STFU was met with hostility by the establishment unions. The union declined in the 1940s, as radical voices were forced out and mechanized farming led to a decline in sharecropping. Various offshoots would continue and integrate within the wider union movement, officially dissolving in 1960.

§

During the 1940s, the chemical dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethylene **(DDT) (D4)** was first used as an insecticide by the military. Because of its effectiveness, it spread to the civilian market where it was used extensively for anti-malaria efforts, in agriculture, and in homes as a pest and weed control. While early advocates claimed there were no ill health effects, by the 1950s, scientists began to notice adverse impacts to the bee populations and health trends in birds including thin eggshells and fragile bones. Additional adverse impacts were noted in livestock and in the communities that lived around DDT-producing factories.

Many in the broader public became aware of the problem in 1962, after the release of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, which called attention to the declining insect populations and the consequences of biomagnification (where concentrations of toxins, like DDT, accumulate through higher levels of the food chain). Carson's claims were dismissed by many establishment figures, but hit a nerve with the nascent environmental movement and helped everyday Americans reconsider their relationship to nature. Carson died of cancer in 1963, but after a series of court cases, DDT was banned nationwide in 1972.

§

In the late 1970s, declining exports and land value spelled trouble for family farms. Many small farmers found themselves trapped in unsustainable debt and threatened by the increasing dominance of agribusiness. By the early 1980s, thousands were in delinquency and faced looming foreclosure. In 1984 in Minnesota, farmers and advocates came together in **Groundswell (A2)**, a grassroots movement that organized statewide protests and advocated for relief. The following year, musicians Willie Nelson, Neil Young, and John Mellencamp organized Farm Aid, in the model of the 1985 Live Aid televised benefit concert, to raise funds and awareness around the issue.

Farm Aid has continued to this day and in 1995, Nelson joined protesters in Nelson Township, Missouri in a campaign against a factory hog farm, launching the **Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment (A2)**, uniting criticism of agribusiness as bad for people, animals, and the environment. The decline in small farms slowed, but rural economies and the number of small farms have continued to dwindle.

Suggestions for further inquiry (from left to right):

Schenley Grape Boycott (D3) **5 Cents for Fairness** (A2)

Black Lung Association (C5) **Silver City Miners' Strike** (E2)

Political Prisoners

A social movement, it's often said, is only as strong as its support for its political prisoners. The US government makes no official distinction between political and other prisoners. But a look at Century of Struggle reveals many people targeted specifically for their political positions—and/or due to bigotries in the halls of power— throughout the 20th century and beyond.

Noticing who is targeted for state repression reveals the state's weak spots. When the government imprisons, surveils, harasses, and assassinates its subjects, it tell us what has the "people power" to bust up systemic oppression. Here are some of those stories—from movements against colonialism (within the US and abroad), for cross-racial solidarity, and against patriarchy—that threatened elite interests.

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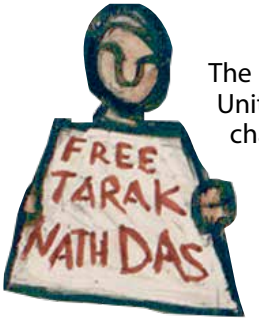

The Bengali revolutionary and academic **Taraknath Das (F6)** immigrated to the United States in 1906 and became a citizen in 1914. Three years later, Das was charged by the US with collaborating with Germany to overthrow the British colonial government in India and was sentenced to nearly two years in prison. Despite heavy lobbying by the British government to have him deported (where he would be made to serve a more severe sentence), public outcry stateside ensured he would remain in the country.

In the 1923 Supreme Court decision United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind, Das and about fifty other naturalized citizens originally from India had their US citizenship revoked, which would not be restored until 1946. Das continued to lecture and travel internationally until his death in 1958.

§

During the rise of racism and xenophobia during World War II more than 120,000 Japanese Americans on the West Coast and 900 Unangax (the indigenous peoples of the Aleutian islands in Alaska) were removed from their homes by the US military. Both immigrants and US-born citizens were stripped of their property and imprisoned in camps from 1942-1946. Following their release, the former prisoners struggled to rebuild their lives and began to lobby for **Reparations for Internment (A4)**, which would not be won until 1988. Surviving eligible Japanese American internees received $20,000 and Unangax internees received $12,000.

§

The founding of the **Black Panther Party** (BPP) **(C3)** in 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton was a pivotal event in the Black freedom struggle. With chapters in many cities, a widely circulated newspaper, and free health clinics, breakfast for children programs, and community patrols against police violence, the party became a leading force on the US left. Labeled the greatest threat to national security by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, the Panthers and allied groups were subjected to a relentless campaign of harassment, disinformation, and trumped up charges (including against Newton, Seale, Ericka Huggins, Angela Davis, and the Panther 21).

The police assassinations of members and leaders like Bobby Hutton, John Huggins and Fred Hampton (and allies like Manuel Ramos of the Young Lords) undermined the organization's stability. Meanwhile, internal divisions intentionally amplified by government infiltrators also contributed to the party's decline. Such government tactics were part of COINTELPRO, an effort by Hoover to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize" groups like the Panthers, AIM *(see page 14)* and civil rights organizations. While officially disbanded, the tactics of COINTELPRO continue to be employed against movements today. Fifty years after the BPP's founding, over a dozen Panthers were still imprisoned; many died in prison, with others only released after 30-40+ years of confinement.

§

Joan Little (B4) (pronounced "Jo Ann") was the first woman acquitted of murder after defending herself during a sexual assault. In 1974, while in jail in North Carolina, she stabbed her rapist jailer to death with an ice pick. Little fled the jail before turning herself in a week later. North Carolina sought the death penalty, but her case became a political cause and Little was found not guilty at trial. The global campaign to save Little's life had successfully highlighted the sexual violence and racial disparities Black women face in the criminal justice system, and struck a blow against it.

§

Leonard Peltier (F1, B5) is a Lakota, Dakota, and Anishinaabe activist and was one of the longest-confined political prisoners in the US. Born in 1944, after surviving boarding school he worked as a laborer and community counselor and became involved in the American Indian Movement (AIM), participating in the 1972 occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In the following years on Pine Ridge Reservation in so-called South Dakota *(see Wounded Knee Occupation, page 14)*, surveillance and infiltration by the FBI created a culture of intense paranoia and discord within AIM. This was exacerbated by extreme violence from FBI-supported tribal government vigilantes, who called themselves "GOONs."

Under these conditions, in 1975 two FBI agents in unmarked vehicles were killed in a shootout at Pine Ridge. Peltier was blamed for the murder, and in the following highly politicized trial, he received two life sentences. Later, the FBI was found to have bribed and coerced witnesses and to have submitted inconsistent evidence. Peltier served over 49 years as a political prisoner, during which time he raised awareness about AIM and prison life through his writing and artwork. After many failed attempts at clemency and parole, amidst deteriorating health, in 2025 his sentence was at last commuted to home confinement in North Dakota as one of the very last acts by President Joe Biden before leaving office.

Suggestions for further inquiry (from left to right):
Hollywood blacklisting (E4) **Inez Garcia** (B2) **MOVE** (A4) **Soledad Brothers** (B4)

The '76 Bicentennial

July 4, 2026 will mark 250 years since the founding of the United States. As shown throughout this zine and poster, ever since its founding, "liberty and justice for all" has had some major qualifiers. We can learn from looking back to this previous milestone anniversary that the myth of the U.S. as a beacon of freedom in the world has not survived without dissent.

For many US Americans, the lead-up to the 1976 Bicentennial—200 years since the nation's founding—was a time of unparalleled patriotic fervor. Planning began in 1966, when President Lyndon Johnson brought together a group of politicians, celebrities, intellectuals and business interests into the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (ARBC) which planned the Bicentennial celebration period as a liberal political project, a way to revive the notions of unity and consensus that had been pointedly disproven during the struggle for civil rights. As newly elected President Richard Nixon assumed control of the planning process in 1969, many on the commission were replaced by Nixon donors, and the tone shifted to a more conservative mission of promoting American supremacy, deifying the founders and promoting nostalgia for a mythic, bygone past.

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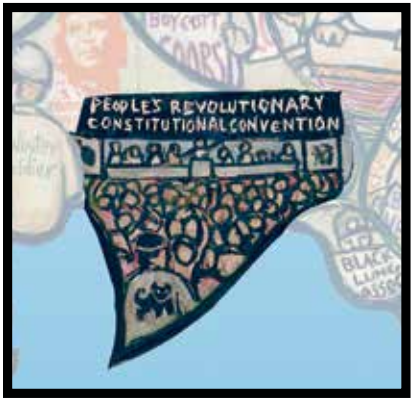
In response, in September of 1970 a movement-wide gathering of 10,000 activists was convened in Philadelphia by the Black Panther Party *(page 37)* to draft a new "Peoples' Constitution" for the United States. In parallel to the authorship of the original constitution in 1787, they were joined by representatives from across the New Left, a broad and at most loosely affiliated formation of progressive, radical and countercultural groups that coalesced in the 1960s. This was the Plenary Session for the **Peoples' Revolutionary Constitutional Convention (B4)**, held that November in Washington, D.C. with the goal of formally ratifying the document and planning its implementation.



The comprehensive document called for socialized medicine, gay rights, gender equality, the enfranchisement of children, the abolition of the military, police and the United States, freedom and autonomy for Palestine and Puerto Rico, and much more. In the end, a combination of internal and external pressures undermined the convention and its project. But the strategy of a unifying project built around a common vision remains relevant.

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Another vocal opponent of Nixon's bicentennial planning was the **Peoples' Bicentennial Commission (B1)**. Also a product of the New Left, the Commission drew national attention to peoples'

history and criticized the role of corporate sponsorship in planning the Bicentennial, including leaking documents to the press. The ARBC was dissolved in 1973, and replaced with the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA) which, unlike its predecessor, abandoned all plans to hold a grand unified ceremony or celebration and instead opted to support local, independently organized celebrations through grant funding. By the time of the Bicentennial, however, the national organization of the people's committee had largely collapsed. Their attempts to hold a July 4th counter-program were overshadowed by a more politically incisive movement...

§

... The **Bicentennial Without Colonies (B3)**, which drew attention to the hypocrisy of celebrating democratic, egalitarian ideals behind the founding of the nation when those ideals had yet to be extended to all. Between thirty and sixty thousand marchers converged on Philadelphia (site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence), with others marching in San Francisco, to challenge the official July 4, 1976 celebrations. Ahead of the event, notoriously racist Philadelphia mayor Frank Rizzo requested 15,000 federal troops to patrol the streets—though his request was denied.

The July 4th Coalition, which organized the protests, was was spearheaded by the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement, representing the three pillars of US empire: colonialism, slavery, and genocide.

Suggestions for further inquiry (from left to right)

1992: Anti-Columbus Anniversary (A6) **1970: People's Peace Treaty (**B4)
1977: Puerto Rican independentistas occupy Statue of Liberty (B5)

ANTI-GLOBALIZATION

During the 1980s, the United States (and the world) turned towards neoliberalism, a social order dominated by state institutions supporting free market capitalism. Core to neoliberalism is the idea that expanding the power of corporations by removing government regulation will lead to both an increase in profits and quality of life for all. While profits for the wealthy have indeed increased at an ever-quickening pace, wealth inequality has dramatically escalated as neoliberalism has globalized in scope.

The rise of neoliberalism spawned a counter-current known as the anti-globalization movement (or, sometimes, "alter-globalization," a nod to the fact that as capitalist institutions gained worldwide reach, so too did social movements learn from and exchange ideas across borders and continents). This movement became a major nexus of social change activism in the 1990s, only diminishing in size and power as a result of the war and repression that followed the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US.

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One of the early neoliberal projects was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), conceived of during the Reagan administration and signed in 1993 by President Bill Clinton and his Mexican and Canadian counterparts. NAFTA reduced trade "barriers" (such as environmental protections and worker rights) between the three North American countries to incentivize companies to operate internationally. Significant lobbying to **Stop NAFTA (A4)** came from US unions, who anticipated that unionized manufacturing jobs would be outsourced to Mexico where companies could operate with less oversight, while Mexican farmers would lose their livelihoods as they were undercut by cheaper, subsidized US crops entering the market. Despite the political and civic opposition, NAFTA was implemented, and resistance to neoliberalism intensified.

§

The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, known most frequently as the **Zapatistas (A2)**, formed in Chiapas, Mexico in 1983 as a guerrilla self defense unit for Maya people, taking their name in honor of the Indigenous revolutionary Emiliano Zapata. On January 1, 1994, the same day NAFTA took effect, the Zapatistas declared war on the Mexican government, explicitly naming neoliberalism as a threat to the lives and livelihoods of

Indigenous people. Using guerrilla tactics, they seized government offices and redistributed privately held land to landless farmers. Their autonomous territories are governed by a traditional council of elders rather than a single leader. They have actively fought for land reform, against neoliberalization and violence against women and continued to actively maintain their sovereignty in the Chiapas region against the Mexican Government.

Over the past three decades, the Zapatistas' struggle has gained increased power for rural and Indigenous people in Chiapas, while modeling community self-organization of education, healthcare, and the judicial system. Meanwhile, their commitment to horizontal self-determination and their international solidarity efforts have inspired movements worldwide, with many taking up their slogan "¡Ya basta!" ("Enough is Enough!").

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Also in 1994, the **50 Years is Enough (A4)** campaign launched against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, both founded in the 1940s to promote free trade (that is, trade free from regulations) and economic growth and toprovide loans to so-called "developing countries." The campaign brought public attention to the ways that global free trade organizations like the IMF force dependency on loans, leverage debt against smaller countries, ignore the human impact of their policies and promote an environmentally destructive path towards economic growth. Throughout the 90s, protests would follow the IMF meetings and conferences.

§

Another institution founded in the 1940s was the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, which in 1995 would become the World Trade Organization (WTO). It also advocated internationally for unrestricted free trade and free market capitalism. Much like NAFTA, this helped create vast profits for the wealthy while coming at the expense of the lives and livelihoods of poorer people and smaller countries as manufacturing was outsourced to places with fewer safety and environmental protections.

In November of 1999, an ideologically diverse group of more than 50,000 protesters converged on the WTO meeting in Seattle, using a diversity of tactics to protest and disrupt the WTO's ongoing global exploitation. Some donned giant sea turtle puppets alongside a mass march of unionists, while others dressed in **black bloc (A1)** spread the police thin throughout the downtown area. Like during the 1919 general strike *(see page 29),* the unprepared Seattle police responded violently, unable to stop demonstrators from shutting down the meetings in a major movement victory now known as the **"Battle of Seattle" (A5)**.

§

The strategies deployed at the Battle of Seattle informed mass movements over the coming years and decades. One such strategy was the propagation of movement-produced news and info, as led by the creation in Seattle of an Independent Media Center (Indymedia) covering the action.

Twenty-five years later, globalized neoliberal capitalism has continued to grow largely unchecked, but not without continued resistance. After 9/11/01, mass mobilizations reminiscent of the 1990s anti-globalization movement were generally put down with considerably more police and military force, both in the US and abroad, as authorities sought to prevent another "Battle in Seattle." In the past, such political discontent might have been able to manifest in the organization of a new political party. But with both the Republicans and Democrats fundamentally embracing neoliberalism as a success, opponents have not found competitive space in the electoral arena in the years since. Instead, anti-capitalist sentiment has rooted itself in neighborhood initiatives and in the streets.

Simultaneous to two-party control, the independent press has been weakened while mass media pushes conventional narratives of success and profits while erasing the human cost. Post-Seattle, Indymedia spawned countless projects under the philosophy of "Be The Media", including early forms of the social network Twitter used as protest communication tools at mass mobilizations like the 2004 and 2008 political party conventions. A quarter of the way into the 21st Century, the internet and social media allow us more than ever before to study and learn from our social movement ancestors, their struggles, and their triumphs—but the consolidation of these tools largely into the hands of a few billionaires creates new threats.

Echoes of the anti-globalization era rang in the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement, which employed strategies learned in prior decades not just in one location, but at occupations in cities big and small across the country. Subsequently, the Black Lives Matter movement and the 2020 George Floyd Uprising built on those reverberations, and added a racial justice lens. As ever, we set new roots, grow new trunks, and sprout new leaves and flowers.

What things would you draw on the expanding tree of 21st Century people's movements, and what part will you play in growing them?

Suggestions for further inquiry (from left to right):
Justice in the Maquiladoras (A3) **Close the SOA** (A4) **Ruckus Society** (A6)

Reflection Questions

(for use by study groups, classes, or yourself)

What topics and what peoples seem underrepresented or left out of the Century of Struggle poster? Is there anything you can think of that you would add?

In what ways might the form of a tree be a metaphor social justice movements?

Why do you think Ricardo Levins Morales and Janna Schneider left some of the protest signs in the poster blank?

Choose an illustration from the poster showing an issue or event you're unfamiliar with. Research and report back to the group.

Choose one thing each from the "roots" of the tree, the trunk, and the canopy. How might have the earlier events/issues/subjects influenced or inspired the later ones?

Start your own tree for the 21st Century with drawings representing the 2000s, 2010s, and 2020s so far. What's on it?

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The TRICKSTERS

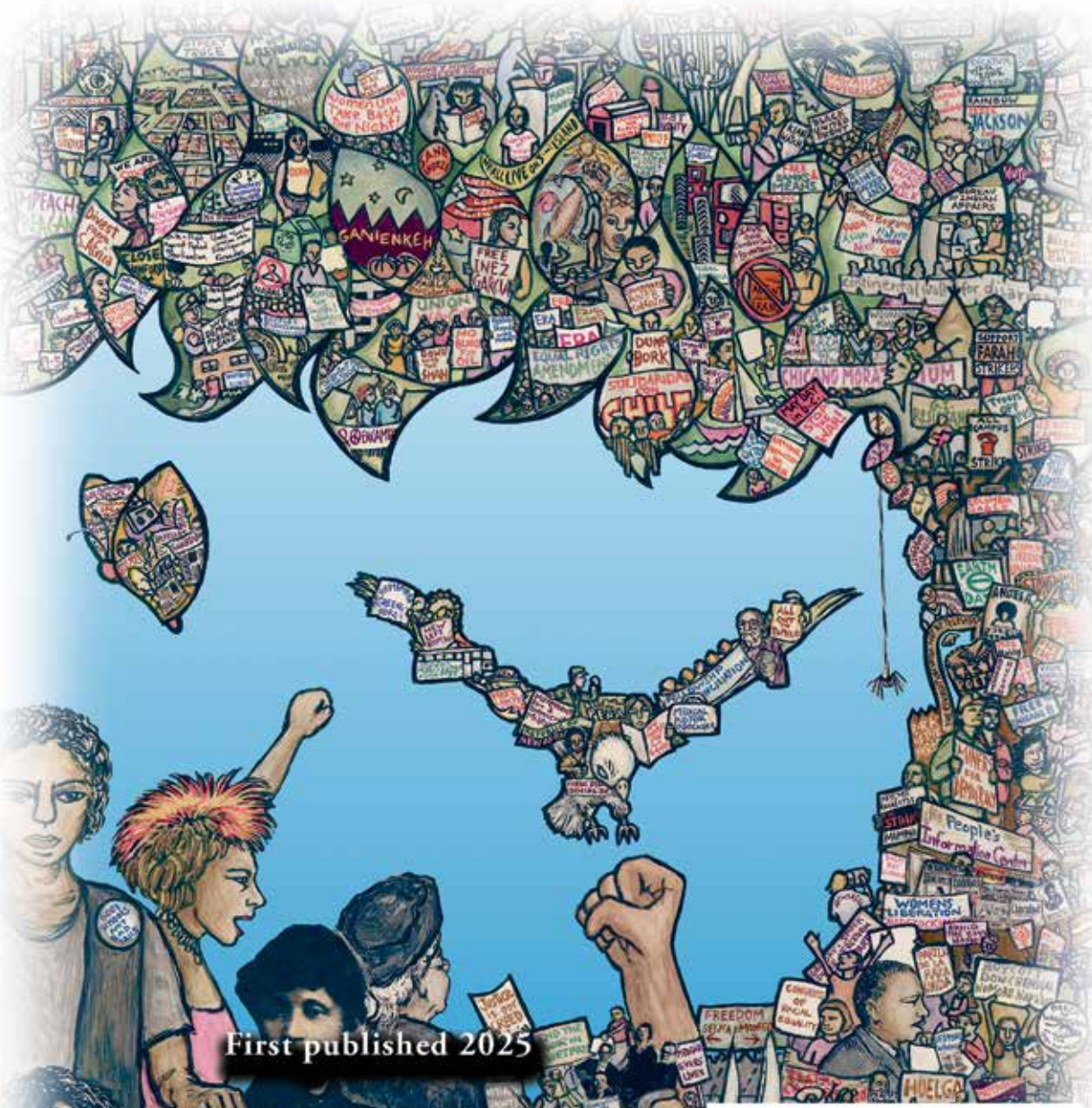
Sneaking in amongst the other illustrations of the poster are four "trickster" characters—beings who in folklore, mythology or spiritual practices use their special knowledge and skills to play tricks and pranks and otherwise upend conventional wisdom and behavior. Can you find them all?

The **Anansi** spider is a mischievous character in West African and Afro-Caribbean lore who, in oral tradition, uses cunning and wisdom to outplay powerful opponents. The spider thus became a symbol of the resiliency and resistance of West African slaves, and its many tales were diligently passed on by elders. Many of the tricks used by Anansi—such as "playing dumb" and spreading rumors—were also ones that could be used against plantation masters.

Leprechauns, today associated with St. Patrick's Day in the US, are supernatural, solitary fairies in Irish folklore whose pranks tend to be mischievous but not harmful. Despite tales involving pots of gold, they make a living as humble working-class shoemakers. Alas, in modern times, non-Irish depictions of the leprechaun have sometimes relied on ethnic stereotypes rather than actual mythology.

Sun Wukong, or the **Monkey** King, is a Chinese trickster deity with superhuman powers and transformative abilities. Often bending rules and challenging authority, Sun Wukong is a main character in one of China's greatest novels, *Journey to the West*, written in the 16th century. The legend originated perhaps as much as a millennium earlier, and versions of it are popular in other Asian countries, too.

Among Native American cultures, the **Coyote** is one of the most popular trickster figures, particularly among western peoples such as the Salish, Paiute, Shoshone, Nez Perce, Tohono O'odham, Apache, Zapotec, and many others, and plays an important role in the creation of the Navajo people. Depending on the culture, Coyote may be a sacred character demonstrating creativity and resilience; in others, he's a mischievous, comical joker—and sometimes shares both roles.



First published 2025

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ISBN 979-8-9890115-6-8

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