READING SIGNS OF CHANGE

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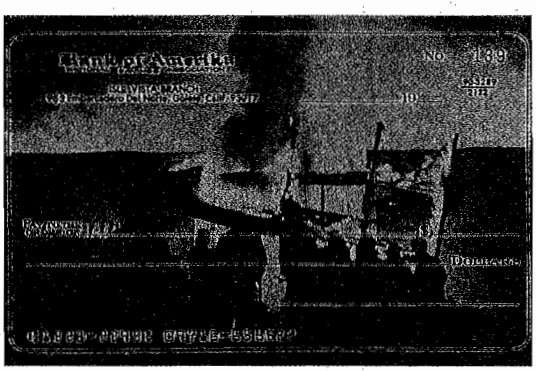
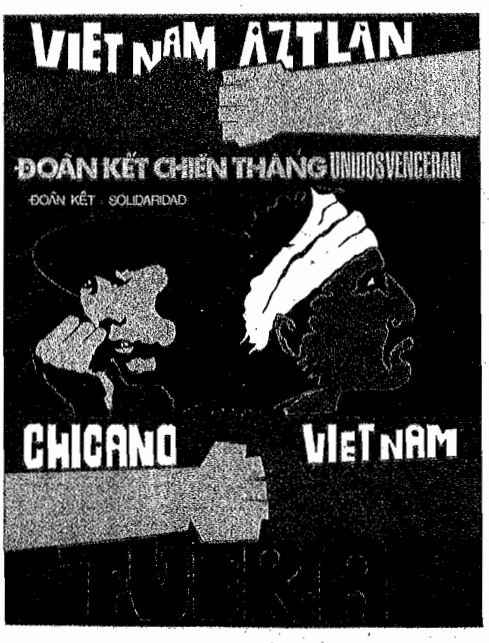
In the last half of the twentieth century, political movements exploded in a million different directions, offering at first glance what might seem like a bewildering array of actions. From peace to black power, gay activism to student and worker strikes, and feminism to liberation from car culture, activists themselves chose new terrains for resisting established forms of power. As they changed their lives to focus attention on previously unacknowledged issues, they created poignant images to facilitate their struggles.

"The people make history," little more than an empty rhetorical device in the mouths of politicians and pundits, comes alive in the art of *Signs of Change*. A wide variety of forms of representation, media used, and political foci is evident. The inner tension among these differences, far from being reflective of the global movement's weakness, shows its diversity, its vibrant inner dialectic of development, differentiation, and progression. Without the free expression of divergent viewpoints, no movement can claim to reflect a truly popular impetus.





Are there universal dimensions to what appear to be contradictory and sometimes even conflictual issues and tactics? Is there a unifying grammar of liberation that clusters these many aspects of struggle within an overriding logic? Or has the "postmodern turn" doomed insurgency to fragmentation, isolation, and an inability to challenge the system as a whole?

By creatively assembling fragments of the movement's history, *Signs of Change* gives us the means to comprehend the movement's universal meaning and its logical structure. The cultural artifacts in this collection may seem juxtaposed across unbridgeable divides of continents and time, but they nonetheless share qualities forged by people as they fight for lives worth living. In each struggle represented here, direct-democratic forms of decision-making and militant popular resistance are intimately woven together. People's self-organization is contained within a grammar of autonomy, decommodification, and solidarity (which I call the "eros effect").[1]

The "eros effect" refers to moments of suddenly popular social upheavals that dramatically transform established social orders. When people identify with insurgent movements and massively rise up, the basic assumptions of a society—patriotic nationalism and the authority of the government, hierarchy, the division of labor, and specialization—vanish overnight. During moments of the eros effect, popular movements not only imagine a new way of life and a different social reality, but millions of people live according to transformed norms, values, and beliefs. The conscious spontaneity of self-directed actions of hundreds of thousands of people—sometimes millions—who come together in beloved communities of struggle is a new tool in the struggle for freedom.

In the twenty-first century, human beings continually demonstrate a capacity to govern themselves without the "help" of politicians and leaders. Indeed, ordinary people today consistently show a far greater intelligence than economic elites or political leaders. In the 1960s, social movements provide astonishing evidence of the creation of participatory forms of popular power that contest the established system in favor of more freedom. In May 1968 in France, the entire country convulsed in near-revolution as organs of self-government sprang up everywhere from the grassroots. Two years later in the United States, four million students and half-a-million faculty declared a nationwide strike in May 1970 in response to the killings at Kent State and Jackson State Universities, the invasion of Cambodia, and the repression of the Black Panther Party. Once again, no central organization brought together this strike—the largest in US history. Despite the absence of centralized organization (or should I say because of it?), people were able to formulate unified national demands around *political* issues (not simply problems like tuition increases or demands for higher wages) and to question the structure of the militaristic system that compelled universities to be part of weapons research and development. Although the movement fell short of its long-term goals, it provoked numerous political reforms and thoroughly transformed civil society.

In almost every country in the world, insurgent social movements intimately related to each other emerged in 1968. From Japan to Senegal, as in dozens of other countries, militant students were at the cutting edge, often detonating massive social explosions. In Mexico, hundreds were killed protesting the coming Olympics.[2] When the Czechoslovakian experiment of "socialism with a human face" was brought to an early end by half-a-million invading Soviets, people in Prague took down street signs and buildings identification markers. It took the Russian Army a week to find the post office.[3] In France, the May 1968 general strike of ten million workers was sparked by student protests. When the Communist-dominated trade unions negotiated a settlement calling for higher wages with the government, thousands of workers threw bottles and lunches at their union leaders, and booed them off the stage. Around the country, workers rejected the Communists' settlement. They wanted new kinds of lives—self-management and an end to drudgery, not better pay for enduring stultifying assembly lines and offices for the majority of their lives. Opposing capitalism and Soviet-style Communism because neither kind of society was free, these movements became known as "New Left" to distinguish them from their Communist—or "Old Left"—predecessors (or, as some insisted, nemesis).

The eros effect that erupted in 1968 transformed millions of people. The US

women's liberation movement gained momentum throughout the 1960s, with 1968 being the year of protests at the Atlantic City Miss America competition. Women's consciousness-raising groups had been forming among networks of friends throughout these years, and by 1970, there were over two hundred such groups in New York City alone.[4] Feminism rapidly became an international movement and continues to transform people's everyday lives.

The US New Left reached its high point in a remarkable five-month upsurge from May to September 1970. The movement produced the political strike of millions on campuses, the National Organization for Women's call for a general strike of women (and the design of the modern symbol for feminism), the eruption of Vietnam veterans, the first Gay Pride week, and the Chicano Moratorium. As the entire society was disquieted, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, and a rainbow of constituencies flocked to Philadelphia in answer to the Black Panther Party's call to write a new constitution for the US. More than ten thousand people attended this Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention and agreed that it made sense to replace the nation's standing army and police forces with popular militias and community groups and to redistribute the world's wealth.[5]

While that particular phase of our movement's buildup was torn apart by government repression and internal divisions, today, more than at any point in the 1960s, activists continue the quest to empower new forms of governance that work to enhance all forms of life, including that of planet Earth. Larzac, France, where some of the world's finest Roquefort cheese is produced, became one focal point for ecological sensibility. While farmer José Bové's attack on McDonald's in 1999 resonated around the world, the sheep from Larzac spoke most eloquently in the 1970s when they were brought to Paris for a protest against the government's plan to use some of the region's deep canyons for nuclear tests. The sheep grazed peacefully along the banks of the Seine except for one small detail: they refused to drink both the river water and Parisian tap water—a scandal of no small proportions. Water was eventually trucked in from Larzac amidst popular sentiment that the sheep showed more common sense than France's political elite.

The global wave of movements in the later half of the twentieth century is united by forms of direct democracy present in all of them—from Rosa Parks and the struggle to desegregate buses in Montgomery; to the student movements in dozens of countries; to the international counterculture embracing Christiania's communards in Copenhagen, San Francisco's Diggers, Amsterdam's Provos and Kabouters, and Berkeley's partisans of People's Park; to the Black Panther Party's Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention; to the 1980 Gwangju uprising in South Korea; and to the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1999. In all of the above struggles, networks for direct action based upon strict principles of participatory democracy were organized.

The erotic energies unleashed by these movements tie people together in intimate ways with more force than years of sharing jobs, taking the same classes, or living in the same apartment buildings are often able to do. Impulses to return to the land, to live in communities based on love and respect for one another, and to observe basic notions of peace and justice cannot be controlled by any elite. "Smart mobs" (crowds whose members communicate with each other) in today's protests formulate direct actions, as people increasingly use their own intelligence and personal technologies, like text messaging, to decide when and where to act, and at which targets to aim. In Seattle in 1999, some people advocated strictly constructed pacifism and condemned property destruction, while others attacked symbols of corporate power like McDonald's and Niketown in actions they felt decolonized corporate control of public space.

The art in *Signs of Change* was produced when activists chose to initiate changes in arenas they regarded as significant and problematic. The connective threads running through grassroots movements weave together innumerable strands of what might seem like very different struggles. In the 1970s, the most spectacular of dozens of autonomous groups that constituted Italian Autonomia were the Metropolitan Indians, who adopted the paint and attire of Native Americans. Like US Yippies or Dutch Provos before them, these working-class youth committed to liberation from daily drudgery and boredom, proudly embraced the aura of the "other" because they considered themselves marginalized outsiders. Like Black Panthers, they defended themselves with guns, and they never lost their sense of humor. Their 1977 manifesto included:

* Free marijuana, hash, LSD, and peyote for anybody who wanted to use them.
* Destruction of zoos and the rights of all animals in the zoos to return to their native lands and habitats.
* Destruction of the Altar of the Fatherland, a memorial sacred to fascists in Rome.
* Destruction of all youth jails.
* All empty buildings to be used as sites to establish alternatives to the family.
* Historical and moral revaluation of the dinosaur Archaeopteryx, unfairly constructed as an ogre.

At the Black Panther Party's Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention in 1970, the same drugs beloved by Italy's Indians had been named "life drugs," as opposed to death drugs, like cocaine, speed, and heroin. In Denmark twenty years later, Christiania's communards erected signs prohibiting these

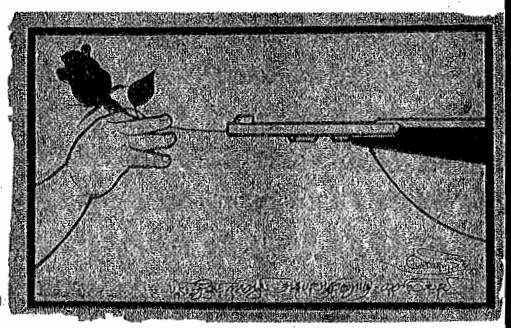
18. Metamorphosis, **Bank of America**, offset lithograph poster, 1970, USA.

In February 1970, students at the University of California Santa Barbara, angered by the Vietnam War, the firing of a professor, and police brutality, rioted and burned down a Bank of America after police wrongfully arrested a student.

19. Malaquías Montoya, **Vietnam Aztlan, Chicano Vietnam**, offset lithograph poster, 1972, USA.

20. Artist unknown, **Poster from the August 8th Uprising**, hand painted poster, 1988, Burma.

21. Christiania (artist unknown), **Hvad Sejrede? [What Victory?]**, offset lithograph poster, c. 1980s, Denmark.



same death drugs from their community, while simultaneously permitting the open sale of marijuana and hash. The Panthers, Metropolitan Indians, and Christiania were all dealing with a massive flood of heroin coming in part from US involvement in Southeast Asia, a problem that tied the communities together across continents. No formal means of communication united these three communities of struggle; rather, the eros effect of intuition and love made the same conclusion flow naturally from people's hearts.

The Metropolitan Indians stormed a jazz festival in Umbria, and then offered their critique: it "serves up a spectacle just like the ritualized demos and rallies serve up politics as spectacle. In both cases, we're reduced from a public to spectators."[6] Groups of young Italians began to do the same thing in movie theaters. Entering in groups of forty or more people, they would simply refuse to pay or pay what they felt was reasonable. These were not "spoiled children of the rich," as film director Bernardo Bertolucci referred to militant students of 1968 before he caricatured them in his film, *The Dreamers*. The Metropolitan Indians carried irony and paradox to their political limits, even in circumstances that would have been taken seriously by most people. By putting play and joy at the center of political projects that are traditionally conducted in a deadly serious manner, they did to Italian cities what Dada had done to the European art world at the beginning of the twentieth century. Dada's anti-art scandalized the world of galleries and parodied the seriousness of artists, and the counterculture's anti-politics broke with traditional conceptions of political conduct and revealed a wide gulf between themselves and previous generations.

Continuing in the New Left tradition of directly changing everyday life, the autonomous movement (or Autonomen) in Germany, was galvanized in the crucible of militant struggles against nuclear power in the 1970s, the broad-based peace movement, German feminism, and squatters in hundreds of occupied buildings. Unlike other groups from the period, this movement has sustained itself over several generations of activists. Allied with farmers and ecologists (as in the Larzac struggle), the Autonomen successfully played a big role in stopping the German nuclear power industry's attempt to produce bomb-grade uranium. As they developed through militant actions, the Autonomen became a force resisting the corporate system *as a whole*. In 1988, more than a decade before the Seattle protests against the WTO, tens of thousands of people in Berlin confronted a global gathering of the most powerful wizards of high finance to demand global economic justice, and they compelled the world's bankers to adjourn hastily a day earlier than planned.[7]

Unlike Social Democracy, anarchism, and Leninism, which are the main currents of the twentieth-century left, autonomous social movements are relatively unencumbered by ideology. The absence of any central organization dictating actions helps keep theory and practice in continual interplay. As one small group acts, another is inspired to rise up, and they, in turn, galvanize yet others. This chain reaction of social insurgency, a process I understand as essential to the eros effect, leads to the emergence of social movements capable of transforming civil society.

A brutal resurgence of German racism appeared after the fall of the Berlin Wall. As racist attacks on immigrant African and Vietnamese workers in the eastern part of the country intensified, the autonomist movement redirected its energies to confront neo-Nazi groups. Autonomen formed at least four different anti-fascist publications that provided quality exposés of the New Right, and closed down Nazi demonstrations permitted by the police. These anti-fascist groups, or Antifa as they became known, were able to mobilize hundreds of people to stop racist pogroms in Hoyerswerde and Rostock. While the police stood by when racist mobs attacked immigrants, the Antifa fighters arrived to save the innocents. Only then did police finally act—but they arrested the anti-fascists, not the racists.[8]

Autonomous activists seek to live according to a new set of norms and values within which everyday life and all of civil society can be transformed. They want to transform isolated individuals into members of collectives within which egalitarian relationships can be created. These relationships are intended to subvert the traditional parent-child, husband-wife patterns that characterize patriarchal lifestyles. In place of the hierarchies of traditional political relationships (order-givers/order-takers, leaders/followers, media stars/media consumers), they strive for political interactions in which these roles are subverted. At their high point in the 1980s, their collective forms negated atomization; their activism transformed the passivity of consumerist spectacle—thereby negating the reification and standardization of mass society; their self-determination contrasts sharply with the all too prevalent alienation produced by hierarchies of power.

In the struggle to create new human beings fit for freedom, political movements play paramount roles. Although many believe that participatory democracy is the province of only brief periods of time, what you see in *Signs of Change* is proof to the contrary. These creations of liberated collectives emanate from forms of participatory democracy at multiple points in time and geography. Humanity's history encompasses thousands of years, and there have always been societies that lived communally and enjoyed our planet's resources and wealth. Today politicians have made militarized nation-states their provinces

of power, and billionaires have appropriated as their private property the collective legacy of generations of workers whose sweat, blood, and tears produced our cities, canals, irrigable lands, seed stocks, and all our wealth.

Humanity's creative energies and our unending need for freedom, graphically arrayed in these works of protest art, constitute the planet's most powerful natural resource. Billions of dollars of advertising seeks to channel our life-forces into consumerism. Constant messages of fear discipline us to accept wars as necessary (or sometimes "humanitarian"). By way of contrast, the calls to action in *Signs of Change* seek to put equality, autonomy, and love at the center, not hate and fear; they remind us that human beings remain capable of changing the political and economic structures that condemn billions to a living hell at the periphery of the world system, and millions more to lives of drudgery at the core of the capitalist system.

Like the art you see in this exhibition, political movements have gone far beyond the era of individual ownership and authorship. What we are witnessing is nothing short of human beings emerging as subjects of collective liberation. In the cultivation of agriculture, no one person can claim corn's bountiful harvest as their invention; similarly no one artist claims this show as their private inspiration or production. Does this mean the individual is lost in the shuffle of collective creation? If one means the single person as ego, then perhaps the answer is affirmative. But if, on the other hand, we mean the individual as proud creator of an imaginary world that inspires us to move beyond the wretched conditions of the present, then clearly we are talking about the free compositions of liberated individuals (rather than the tight formalism of egocentric "bourgeois" individuals). In contrast to nearly all other exhibitions in recent memory, the near-absence of individual signatures in these works of art is part of the process of rescuing art from commodification and of resituating the life-force in its proper place at the center of our own communal productions.

Does this mean art's capacity to imagine a better life, to expand the domain of our senses and imagination, needs to be constrained to politics? To do so fails to understand creativity's own subversive power, and art's capacity to dream another reality. Art's great promise is by no means contained in the mold of politics, yet without art's graceful enunciation of our innermost desires and needs, politics is woefully impoverished and suffocatingly rational.

Forms of direct democracy and collective action developed by the New Left continue to define movement aspirations and structures. This is precisely why the New Left was a world-historical movement. In Gwangju, South Korea in 1980, people refused to accept a new military dictator and stayed in the streets for democracy. When the army brutally attacked the city, outraged citizens beat back a vicious military assault and held their liberated city for a week, using general assemblies and direct democracy to run their commune. Within a dozen years, a chain reaction of uprisings swept East Asia—the Philippines in 1986, Korea and Taiwan in 1987, Burma in 1988, Tibet and China in 1989, Nepal and Bangladesh in 1990, and Thailand in 1992. Unlike the uprisings in East Europe in this same period, the eros effect in East Asia was not precipitated by leaders at the highest levels of government seeking to shift power blocs, but by the accumulation of experience and desire for freedom in the hearts and minds of millions of people.

Almost without exception, revolutionary social movements in the twentieth century prior to the New Left sought simply to conquer national political power—either to take it over through elections or overthrow it through violence. The goal of autonomous movements is to transcend nation-states, not capture them. The great refusal articulated in the Greek poster's OXI ("NO") speaks to such intuition. Even when inarticulate, our intuition, like our love and solidarity, defies the Old Left's stodgy

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22. Artist unknown, **Krieg Dem Krieg [War Against War]**, offset lithograph poster, 1982, Germany.

A poster for an anti-NATO action. The slingshot became common in the autonomous movement in the 1980s, used by Autonomen in battles at Startbahn West, nuclear power plants, and attempted squat evictions.

23. Artist unknown, **OXI [NO]**, relief print, 1969, Greece.

In 1967, a US-supported, right-wing military government took control of Greece. Many groups, both in exile and in Greece, organized to oppose this Junta.

24. Still from ***The Land Belongs to Those Who Work It/La tierra es de quien la trabaja*** (2005, 15:00 minutes, Chiapas Media Project, in Spanish and Tzeltal with English subtitles), Mexico.

rationality while simultaneously challenging the existing powers-that-be.

In the twenty-first century, as society's velocity of change accelerates, so too must our movement's capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. In the absence of the capability to innovate tactics and targets, revolutions atrophy, or even turn into their opposite (as happened in both the US and the USSR). Alongside participatory currents, the history of social movements is also the history of popular insurgencies being placated, accommodated, and sold out by parties and organizations of all kinds—whether they are French or Italian Communists, Czech or Bangladeshi democrats, or Korean or US trade unions. Ritualized protests organized by top-down groups with leaders whose faces do not change no longer suffice to bring the "masses" into the streets. Apparently, entrenched elites, like Leninist-style parties, are no longer needed to transcend the reformism of spontaneously formed movements, since these movements are themselves capable of developing a universal critique and autonomous capacities for self-government.

Betrayals within the movement (or "psychic Thermidors" as Herbert Marcuse named this phenomenon) internally sap the strength that we so badly need to defend ourselves from right-wing physical assaults (to say nothing of the incessant corporate consumer onslaught). In Chile, democratically-elected President Salvador Allende was killed in a 1973 *coup d'etat* orchestrated by US officials that brought fascist dictator Augusto Pinochet to power for seventeen years. In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas came to power in 1979, only to face the reduction of their lands to absolute poverty by a US war against them.

Even great victories won, like the breakthrough of Vietnam's national liberation struggle, become subverted by the limitations of isolated political autonomy in a sea of global capitalism. The global anti-apartheid struggle brought Nelson Mandela out of decades of imprisonment on Robbin Island and into the highest seat of power in the South Africa, but the African National Congress was still compelled to implement neoliberal economic policies that continue to plague the poor. Similarly, East Asian uprisings against dictatorships, even when they included significant forces against capitalism, enabled the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to broaden their markets. In democratic South Korea, the Philippines, and elsewhere, newly-elected administrations implemented neoliberal programs that permitted foreign investors to penetrate previously closed markets and to discipline workforces of millions of people in order to extract greater profits.

Compared to dictatorships, democratic governments, like countercultural spaces, *also* contain greater freedoms and new opportunities for subaltern groups—women, workers, minorities, gays, and youth. Clearly, the victories in achieving democracy in Korea, ending apartheid in South Africa, mitigating US racism and sexism, and promoting expanded rights for subaltern people can't be taken as end goals, but as the staging grounds for better lives as well as for future struggles.

Attacks on the poor constitute an essential component of the capitalist system. The residents of the International Hotel, a San Francisco haven for Filipino seniors on limited incomes, were evicted after a long struggle against gentrification. The US prison-industrial complex has expanded to the point where now more than two million people—most of them poor or people of color—languish in prisons and jails. And yet, despite all the horror and injustice, resistance blossoms again and again. In the 1980s when the AIDS epidemic began taking lives and there was no governmental response, those affected formed ACT UP to bring attention and resources to the problem.

The 1999 protests in Seattle broke new ground when Teamsters and Turtles, workers and ecologists, Lesbian Avengers and Zapatista partisans all converged for unified action. The world-wide synchronicity of protests that day involved actions in dozens of other cities around the world. Precursors to Seattle exist in victorious confrontations of attempted imposition of the corporate behemoth's domination in Caracas (1987), Berlin (1988), and Seoul (1997). After Seattle, as the giants of industry and high finance took aim on millions more workers and their consumer counterparts, people in places such as Cochabamba, Bolivia (2000) and Arequipa, Peru (2002) fought back against attempted privatization of communal natural resources and won significant victories.

While political leadership based upon authoritarian models of organization have withered among freedom-loving movements, the power of example remains instructive and potent—especially when its promulgators are among the poorest inhabitants of a world capable of providing plenty for all. Nation states and corporations' quest for global domination and the destruction of indigenous cultures and local autonomy finds its most articulate negation in the Zapatista movement for dignity for the peoples of Chiapas, Mexico. What began as an insurrection on the same day that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect has turned into a world-wide focal point for grassroots actions against neoliberal capitalism's systematic injustices—its perpetuation of billionaires' wealth alongside hundreds of millions of starving human beings. Zapatista *encuentros* (international gatherings of activists) in the jungle were instrumental in preparing the ground of the now mythologized protests against the WTO in Seattle. In Europe, they helped inspire the actions of Reclaim the Streets, Carnival Against Capitalism, and EuroMayday.

Around the world, grassroots movements against corporate capitalism have emerged, confronting elite summits and making demands to cancel the national debt of the world's poorest countries. Made famous by celebrities like Bono, the struggle against world starvation and human misery will, unfortunately, one

day need to remind Bono that his brotherhood with World Bank presidents Wolfensohn and Wolfowitz failed to end hunger. In the future, when we observe continuing human misery and ecological devastation, humanity's wisdom will be enriched by the insight that it is the system that is the problem. Bono is attempting to work with a failed system, and it is the system itself that must go.

The twentieth century will be remembered for its horrific wars and mass starvation amid great prosperity. As this exhibit illustrates for us, it will also be known as a time when human beings sought to overturn the self-serving decisions of politicians and corporate executives and when we moved directly to meet our own needs. With the ghost bikes showing up across the US (bikes painted white, chained to street signs at crash sites, in memoriam to those injured or killed), we see precisely a human response to unsustainable urban planning. The wisdom of city bureaucrats, corporate CEOs, and politicians in Washington, DC have seldom brought us anything but more highways, more cars, and more deadly fumes. Those who brave the urban landscape by riding bicycles risk death while Hummers and SUVs are celebrated consumer goods. In a society where forgetfulness is the watchword of conformity, where grabbing all the gusto today means forgetting yesterday, these ghost bikes serve as a reminder of the lives and life-force lost to the logic of corporate culture.

Alternative models for social organization are evident throughout *Signs of Change*. In December 2001, the people of Argentina provided us with an example of how we can change the world. Refusing to submit to IMF/World Bank impoverishment, they mobilized to sweep out collaborationist politicians. Workers took over factories, hotels, and offices and ran them more productively than capitalists were able to do. Argentina's people showed the world their spontaneous refusal to allow their labor and wealth to enrich those who were strangling their livelihood. In Oaxaca, Mexico in 2006, a teachers' strike, demanding such outrageous items as shoes for their pupils, drew the entire city into its epicenter, and with other organized grassroots elements formed Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO). The mobilized citizens fought a courageous battle for control of their city; as the struggle matured, they declared APPO the de facto governing authority. A popular, participatory council became the city's government for months. Despite what has become a bitter struggle marked by physical attacks and eviction by thousands of police, APPO continues to organize.

The movement artifacts in *Signs of Change* would have been impossible to conceive and create without the safe haven of refuge offered by ateliers, garages, and living room tables. While they may seem marginalized and insignificant, these spaces can be incredibly significant facilitators of our capacity to envision our lives in terms that are not geared solely to subsistence. In such free spaces, people can experience, however temporarily, a break from the sometimes overwhelmingly incessant imposition of capitalist logic.

Free spaces are essential to people's movements building momentum. In parts of the world where people have these spaces, their everyday lives are profoundly different than the ones lived in the hierarchical, competitive, and patriotic spaces of the dominant culture. I think that it's in those areas that the movement can begin to fight the status quo. There, people can experiment with new social forms and create visionary new programs while organizing against wars and other atrocities. Because of this, we can't understand them just as "countercultural spaces" in the way that term gets used by the mainstream or by sociologists. At their best, they are spaces for the cultivation of the desire to live more fulfilling lives. Because experiences of direct democracy and unfettered creativity flow from our infinite need for freedom, they tend to ripple outward and have influence far beyond the immediate contexts from which they arise. Governments recognize the threat posed by these spaces. That explains why Christiania suffers continual threats from police invasions, and why Ungdomshuset, a Copenhagen youth movement center that existed for decades, was violently evicted on March 1, 2007.

We know from the history of the left how the system uses a dual strategy of repression and recuperation against social movements. It encroaches upon the free spaces we create and uses them to make profit. As the greatest natural resources on the planet, creativity and the human need for freedom are tremendously seductive to capital. Soon after the Black Panthers popularized the slogan, "Right On!" Parker Brothers brought out an advertisement singing "Write on brothers, write on!" to sell their pens, and president Richard Nixon uttered, "All Power to the People!" in a 1972 radio address.[9] So long as the world system retains its institutions of power, our free spaces and ideas will continually be appropriated by the capitalist logic of hierarchy, competition, and commodification—the main form of capitalism's transformation of life into dead labor, into objects that can be bought and sold. Even Dada, the great movement against art's commodification, had its remnants auctioned off in 1968.

Signs of Change has assembled action-art that is not simply about our past—it concerns our future. Far from being muffled, cries for change are daily amplified. Largely invisible on CNN and media except for occasional sound bites, million of activists around the world work incessantly for peace and justice. Without central organization, some thirty million people in dozens of countries took to the streets on February 15, 2003 to protest the second US war on Iraq, even though it had not yet started. With the construction of a transnational civil society unanchored in any state or political party, a new world becomes visible. While now seemingly marginalized, the global movement today involves more activists than at any other point in our species' historical evolution. As we become increasingly aware of our own power and strategic capacities, our future impact can become more focused and synchronized. As the multitude of humanity animates our own dynamic, the tendency we can project into the future is for the activation of a global eros effect, in which synchronous actions erupt and unify people across the world.

Endnotes

1 Autonomous movements are independent of political parties and self-organize themselves along non-hierarchical lines. For discussion of these concepts and the movements that brought them to life, see my book, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (Oakland: AK Press, 2006). I first uncovered the "eros effect" from an empirical study of the world-wide revolt of 1968, which I published as *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston: South End Press, 1987). Further materials can be found at www.eroseffect.com (June 6, 2009).

2 A reliable estimate put the number of people killed at 325. See *Massacre in Mexico* by Elena Poniatowska, Octavio Paz, and Helen R. Lane (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991).

3 Interview with Emile Kacirek, Prague, February 1980.

4 See Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful* (New York: Random House, 1970), xxv.

5 The documents from the workshops at the Panthers' convention are contained in *Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party*, edited by Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas (New York: Routledge, 2001).

6 *Indianer und P38* (Munich: Trikont, 1978), 18.

7 These protests at the meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund became examples for activists the world over.

8 See *The Subversion of Politics*, 160.

9 Richard Nixon, "356: Radio Address on the Philosophy of Government," October 21, 1972, *The American Presidency Project*, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=3637 (June 6, 2009).

25. Still from ***Iraq Veterans Against the War: Operation First Casualty*** (2008, 5 minutes, Elizabeth Press for Democracy Now!), USA.