MayDay Rooms Pamphlets: 01
Camera Forward!
For centuries the pamphlet has been the medium of choice for agitators, poets, ranters and revolutionaries. Wherever people have needed to spread ideas cheaply, quickly, and outside of the official press, they have made their own short-form publications. Most often pamphlets are produced for the moment: dissenting ephemera to be quickly consumed, and then passed on or cast away. Today, as frictionless pixels glide across scrolling backlit screens, the fluttering of paper leaves might seem leaden. Yet the pace of contemporary media is determined not only by its immense speed of production and its cacophony of voices, but also the speed with which things are trashed, or disappear, as the crowd of each moment falls quickly into the silence of high-tech historical forgetting.

Returning to the pamphlet is a gesture of defiance. Our archival work returns so often to the pamphlets of past struggles. Returning to the pamphlet means salvaging the materials by preserving them in a world that would otherwise hide them from view; keeping hold of documents that were never supposed to last; and reading them outside of their time. But here we are returning pamphlets in order to make something new: writing and making once again in this tradition, against an official press. If once that official press was the newspaper and the book, today
it is the monstrous monopoly platforms that guarantee that everyone can speak but nobody can be heard; media that reduce thinking and action to instantaneous opinion, always ready to be washed away by the steady flow of the next day’s news. We hope that these pamphlets offer an alternative historical time: bringing moments of the past into the present, and making some critical space in opposition to capitalism’s pointless and unceasing dynamic of creation and destruction.

The MayDay Rooms Pamphlet Series brings together reproductions of documents from radical history while offering a space for extended engagement and critical reflections on their contemporary relevance. Each pamphlet will contain newly created content – including essays, poems, and illustrations – set alongside reproductions of materials to which they are responding.

The first two pamphlets in this series arose from an open call for submissions. These have been grouped thematically: the first centres on histories of activist film and photography in the 1970s; the second on the material production and design of printed radical ephemera. Both interrogate the histories of social movements that have disappeared from view, as they were defeated, left by the wayside, or pushed underground. In unearthing this important material, and once again presenting it to the public, we hope to fashion a perspective that allows new social movements to find courage and inspiration in the struggles of those who have come before them.

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**Camera Forward!**

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The left of the late 1960s confronted a world of images. Photographs brought news of both atrocities and revolution; advertising increasingly determined the time and motion of a consumer society. Some opposed the 'society of the spectacle' in absolute terms, seeing control increasingly concentrated in the hands of the few, with the image becoming the foundation of all social relations. Others armed themselves with Super 8 film, second-hand gestetners, and slide projectors.

It was a time of rebellion and promise: solidarity ranged between student uprisings, the victories of decolonisation, soldiers broken by imperialist wars doomed to lose, resistance to Soviet troops in Prague, workers’ struggles emerging before the precipitous decline of industrial production in the West. At this very moment, the reality of class society seemed to have been exchanged for an all-encompassing mediascape, as a newly inaugurated sphere of fate. History appeared reduced to the adoration of the image for the sake of the image; the world a cinema with even its moments of action an invention to placate its viewers, to sate their boredom, their horror, their discontent. A stream of mass-produced fantasies, designed to screen off both the experience of labour and the possibility of a life free from it.
Some became iconoclasts, trying to tear down the image, only to discover that the very images of their iconoclasm were the most powerful adversaries of all. Others took the image into their own hands; no longer was the image to be projected from some machinery behind people’s backs. Putting cameras into the hands of normal people meant resisting the slick productions of conglomerated enterprise. In the following decade photographic and cinematic projects proliferated on the far left. The images that were produced forged a new perspective: photography and cinema gave new views of everyday lives: of struggles, of street life, of informal worlds, of which image-making was a part. Against the spectacle’s lie – that everyone, everywhere, is always a consumer – these images bore the marks of their own making.

This pamphlet tours some of the histories of photographic and cinematic life within this fracture of the spectacle. These media were put to work for different causes: as new forms of self-representation; as weapons; as the bringers of news good and bad; as evidence – both in the courts of law, and in the great tribunal of history. Some films were made to tell stories of struggles with the hope of sparking others, others were made simply so that people could express elements of their lives that were hidden by society’s violence.

These new forms of photography and cinema worked themselves out into new social forms. Many became the lifeblood of social movements, which promised that history would be changed by their motion. Others displayed the stubborn reality of life, asserting marginal views from which the world seemed already to have moved on and hoped to forget. Even more endured as elements of a counterculture, or within a persistent underground that stood against the social order, hoping to gain strength. The essays in this pamphlet tell some of the stories of these images, and the lives and struggles of which they played a part.

Lotte L.S’ piece – part essay, part poem – addresses the works of Cinema Action, placing them in the history of radical newsreel-style art films. During the struggles of 1968, several significant filmmakers in France created cinétracts: unedited shorts, often without sound, shot on a single reel. These films, which documented struggles, were often shown extremely quickly: as impetus, analysis, and sustenance for a revolutionary movement. Cinema Action was born out of this moment, and would continue for a number of years to create newsreel-style films, most often on a larger scale. Lotte L.S’ poem-essay returns to this film poetics, made in and for revolutionary movements, with screenings taking place ‘at committee and union meetings, university assemblies, on factory floors – aiming to take the cinematic medium outside the realm of entertainment and transform it into militant action.’ Her essay attempts, on the one hand to recontextualise these efforts in the great history of struggles and calamities of this moment; and to excoriate against a present in which art-making at the service of collective action has been supplanted by the monetisation of working class struggles, with the invention of ever more terrible communities in place of explosive social antagonisms. This in turn becomes the basis for an inquiry into the conditions of revolutionary poetics, set within social movements, in a world that has never ceased to aestheticise revolutionary struggles as a means of undercutting and undermining them. The course of this inquiry travels from France to the UK and back; out into a world of manifold violences and equally manifold resistances. It traverses the eye and the bomb. It strains between the provisional promises of the news of the past, and the inevitability which seems to have made the whole world old once again.

Freya Field-Donovan’s essay takes as its subject Wilf Thust’s film Where is the Gaiety? and associated materials he produced during the early 1970s. The film documents an adventure playground in Notting Hill. At a time of social strife (not far from the social antagonisms that led to the prosecution of the Mangrove Nine) Thust turned his camera to the strange realm of the playground: full of children, who have their own views on the antagonisms of the world in which they find themselves; a place viewed sometimes with suspicion from beyond its fences. Thust’s film enters into the lives of children allowing them to offer a perspective from within this scene on their divided social world. Field-Donovan’s essay offers a presentation of the precise work of the film, in which, within this world-within-a-world, questions of image-making draw upon theories of radical pedagogy. She describes how such questions arose within Thust’s own life – in his trajectory from working on education in Germany, to becoming a part of the Four Corners collective, who
workshopped community film in London throughout the 1970s. She also draws out some of the theoretical lineages of educational theories from which Thust’s film draws, giving new readings of the film’s images, allowing them to speak in a difficult poise between documentary and essay. The playground offers a marginal perspective onto a world of social strife: society enters its boundaries, as a place in which social humanity and social inhumanity can be seen all the more clearly through the uninnocent eyes of children.

Johanna Klingler’s essay offers a comprehensive view on the work of radical photographer and historian Terry Dennett, who is today best known as a close collaborator to photographer Jo Spence. Klingler’s essay shows how his various artistic and propagandistic practices developed through the combination of inquiry into the history of image-making from below, and collaborative social intervention in his own time. Dennett’s image-making is newly placed within the trajectories of long histories of the avant-garde worker photography movement in 1920s and 1930s, and the Labour Album – topics that he researched and built archives around, while trying to reanimate them in his own time. Klingler shows how these perspectives allowed Dennett to develop his own ideas for a radical photography, including creating ‘social archives’ and ‘crisis projects’, that gathered evidence of the degradation of normal human existence at the hands of capital and the state. In all cases, Dennett was particularly interested in making the technologies of photography accessible – teaching children who couldn’t afford cameras how to make their own out of old wellington boots; teaching workers how to ‘use the camera as a weapon’ by making propagandistic slide-shows of their struggles. Klingler’s essay seeks out the range of people and groups with whom Dennett collaborated, showing these collaborative relationships to be the productive force in his work.

Jack Booth’s essay locates itself in a now-demolished squatted row of houses in West Kentish Town. It takes as its cue a cartoon that was published in the countercultural newspaper the *International Times*. The first half of Booth’s essay describes how the *International Times* became a media site in which conflicting and contrasting political tendencies on the left coalesced in the wake of the uprisings of the late-1960s. In one sense the movements of this time imagined their impulses to be the formation of a New Left, contrasting themselves to the autocracy of the Communist Party, especially after Hungary in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968. Booth sees a second movement that starts to separate itself from the New Left and its obsessive entanglements (however negative) with the Communist Party. This new politics is concerned with culturalism, urbanism, third worldism, and the efforts to carve out niches for itself not in opposition to the state, but in zones from which the state is deterritorialised: in short this new politics inaugurates a new communitarianism. Alongside this, Booth describes attendant processes and theories of ‘feedback’ and nihilist psychology that developed informing this new politics as a theory of new media. The second half of his essay looks in detail at one such community, closely examining the community film production in West Kentish Town that would become the London Filmmakers Co-op. Films are made both to defend squatted, informal ways of living in the city, as well as to document and intervene in the life of the community. Booth goes on to consider how the development of this new communitarian cultural politics became the site of the birth of a new ‘third sector’ and of community arts companies, the history of which continued to exist long beyond the clearances and demolitions of all the squats.

Taken together, these essays offer a view of a history of confrontation and the negotiation of terrain. The fear of a world made into an image was matched with a bravery and perseverance of those who took the making of images into their own hands, with their own eyes seeing anew. A story is told in which activists, artists, filmmakers, and community workers started to chip away at the capitalist monopoly on vision. What they produced over the course of a decade contained not only their own images of a world, now seen from below, in views freed from authority, but visions of those darkened spots that the spectacle had obscured in its terrible glory.
Ici et Puis

LOTTE L.S.
What is the relation between the moving image & a form of life?

What role can cinema play towards revolution? How to unlace the relationship between documenting struggle & struggle itself, the way they rub up against one another in the darkly lit aisles of the auditorium. What is the distinction between revolutionary cinema, & a kind of cinema that aestheticises revolution? That feeds the parasites of the art world through its representation of riots, of struggle, of revolution(ary) impulse – represented & sold back to us to consume. & how can it remain for 'us', by us – when intelligibility is something to fear as much as desire. How can 'we' remain unrepresentable, yet armed with the cinematic tools to share in struggles across real & imagined borders – to think, do & act together, then & now?

1 Ici et puis is an affectionate piss take of the title of Godard's 1976 film, Ici et ailleurs: 'we, I, didn't want to see, you, she, he, nobody wanted to see that their dreams are represented.'
I could choose to write of shots of people prying paving stones from the street with an iron bar.

I could choose to write of shots of people throwing water from their windows to ease the tear gas.

Shots of daffodils slowly unfurling, only to be trampled by the cops, running.

Shots of manning one barricade, then another...

This was not the abstract view of a remote future. It is 07:55. It is the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail announcing they have begun a factory occupation strike. Everyone goes towards the canteen. More than 122 factories occupied by workers. A journalist awakes and asks:

“Did you sleep well? Because here is what happened in your own town last night.”

June, 1968—next to the Sorbonne, the home of Ann Guedes and Gustav (Schlacke) Lamche is raided; they are interrogated and along with 500 others, driven in armoured cars to the German border by the French state, who state that their further presence in France ‘is not conducive to the welfare of the French nation.’ From Germany they go on to London and form Cinema Action, a left-wing film collective.2

In the wake of ’68, several later members of Cinema Action had also been in Paris, filming and participating in demonstrations and strikes. Marc Karlin, who joined Cinema Action in ’69 and went on to form the Berwick Street Film Collective, had met the French filmmaker Chris Marker in Paris, who at the time was making cinétracts – a collaborative (and individually uncredited) effort by filmmakers in France to document the movement of ’68 while actively taking part in it. The films – each between two and four minutes – were also an attempt to ‘democratise’ film and create autonomous, anonymous networks for production and distribution. Marker had already formed the film anti-war film collective SLON, influenced by Soviet agitprop films and aiming to provide counter-information on what was happening on the streets, and made Far From Vietnam (1967) in collaboration with Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, Agnes Varda and others.

Made in May and June of ’68, each ‘tract’ could be quickly and cheaply shot on a single reel of 16mm black and white film, using a rostrum camera to animate still images with pan and zoom effects, without sound or editing. Photographs of the events were intercut with newsprint, advertisements, posters and other texts – a montage style influenced by Soviet filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov – that when seen together, created meaning to identify a ‘we’ beyond the borders of nation state: alongside images of protesters and police in Paris, we see Vietnam, Che Guevara, bodies covering up on the beaches of Franco’s España. Images were inscribed with text subverting their original meaning, echoing the Situationist International’s ideas of détournement. Made collectively and left unsigned, cinétracts were often made one day and screened the next – at committee and union meetings, university assemblies, on factory floors – aiming to take the cinematic medium outside the realm of entertainment and transform it into militant action.

2 Thanks to Chris Reeves at Platform Films for letting me trail round central London asking endless questions about the ’70s and Cinema Action (and for the surrealness in King’s Cross) and for creating the invaluable Cinema Action website (where several images and quotes from members used here are taken from.)
Soon after their formation in London, Cinema Action took a French film about recent events in Paris—riot police clashing violently with student demonstrators—to workers at a Ford factory in Dagenham. “There were about four people looking and three of them were thinking about how to get to the pub,” a collective member later said. “But one of the four was able to arrange a big showing at one of their main meetings. So, we had all of a sudden 2000 people looking at the film, in French!” Soon those who had come to screenings began to come to Cinema Action meetings. Reimagining film production as a collective and non-hierarchical creative, and militant, practice centred on class struggle, the films challenged another kind of collectivism: the traditional cinema audience in which ‘otherwise violent social tensions temporarily “disappear”.’ Arguments ensued on the factory floor: heated discussions over the convictions of the film, and how strategies shown could be taken up or abandoned. Not to, as with traditional ‘documentary’ cinema, capture an objective and fixed image of the world, but instead film towards a transformation of it.

Cinétracts (1968)

Also, 1968—

~ Bombs damage buildings of diplomatic missions: the Spanish Embassy, the American Officers club in London, the Spanish, Greek & Portuguese Embassies in the Hague, the US Consulate in Turin, the US Embassy in Madrid, the Spanish ambassador’s residence in the Hague [claimed by the First of May Group].

~ Anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in Warsaw, Tokyo, Algiers, Rome, Paris, Berlin [100,000 march past barricaded shops & offices from the Embankment to Hyde Park Corner in London].

~ Incendiary devices ignite in Moabit Criminal Court & a major department store in West Berlin [claimed by a group that later goes by the name Red Army Faction].

~ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hijack an El-Al airliner.

~ Bomb attacks in Paris on offices of three US multinationals: Chase Manhattan Bank, the Bank of America & Transworld Airlines.

~ Ten million workers strike across France, occupying factories, plants, offices, airports, universities: the Sorbonne, Sud-Aviation, Renault, Théâtre de l’Odeon, Citroën, Nanterre University, The Saclay Nuclear Research Centre, Rhodiaçéta, a provincial Rail Sorting Centre [31 of factories in Hauts-de-Seine; 20 of 40 factories in Boulogne-Billancourt; 16 of 26 in Malakoff].

~ Italian general staff establish a training camp in Western Sardinia, where fascist Avanguardia Nazionale members receive CIA-sponsored training in terrorism & ideological indoctrination, under the NATO ‘Gladio’ plan requiring member states to establish national security to ‘fight communism’ [within 4 years more than 4,000 people – predominantly neo-fascists – undergo training in Sardinia].

~ Tanks from Russia, Poland, Hungary & East Germany invade Czechoslovakia, & Czech Communist Party hardliners are established in power. Tens of thousands take to the streets of Prague to protest Soviet occupation.

~ The Imperial War Museum in London is firebombed.

~ The West German Foreign Ministry is firebombed.³

‘What does the hard look do to what it sees? Pull beauty out of it, or stare it in?’ the poet Denise Riley asks. What is the difference between seeing & aestheticising? When the words ‘idea’, ‘theory’, ‘perspective’ all share a common etymological root: to look. When ‘revolution’ necessitates a seeing things for how they truly are. Yet when intelligibility is as much to be feared as to be desired, to be recognised also means to be tabulated, monitored, regulated: disciplined: ‘visibility doesn’t reliably change the relations of power to who or what is visible except insofar as the visible prey are easier to hunt.’

After May ‘68, the French filmmaker Chris Marker dedicated more & more of his time to the collective he had created – in opposition to individual authorship – SLON (‘Society for launching new works’, or elephant in Russian). Inspired by the filmmaking practices of the Soviet filmmaker Alexander Medvedkin, SLON’s objectives were to make films & to encourage industrial workers to create film collectives of their own. In ‘67, members of the collective were invited to the Rhodiacéta textile factory in Besançon – eastern France – to document the struggles of the workers on strike (the first in France since 1936). Over 3000 workers occupied the factory, many of them sick of working the ‘4/8’ – a seven-day schedule shared by four teams who worked staggered 8-hour morning, afternoon & night shifts: two morning shifts followed by two afternoons, then three night shifts, & finally two days of rest before the cycle began again (interviews with workers – especially one who performs the same gesture at a machine 244 times during an 8-hour day with bandaged hands – makes me think of people I’ve met in the town where I live, who rise at 4am to begin singular movements in 12-hour shifts at nearby factories). In À bientôt, j’espère (1967–68) ‘we’ hear the perspectives of the strikers themselves: their everyday life, their struggles, their demands, their victories. The terms of the strike in the Rhodiacéta factory weren’t restricted to demands related to hours, pay or working conditions (At one Citroën plant, a leaflet made by workers on strike makes no mention of wages: their demands are political, social, cultural – not economic). One of the most prevalent demands of the strikers in Besançon was access to ‘culture’ – ‘not as a utopian slogan but as a pragmatic political claim.’
A shot in À bientôt, j’espère rests on a poster during the occupations that reads, ‘Centre culturel populaire de Palente-les-Orchamps demands BREAD for all, but also: peace, laughter, theatre, life.’ One worker declares: “For us culture is a struggle, a claim. Just as with the right to have bread & lodgings, we claim the right to culture – it’s the same fight.”

But culture isn’t a ‘right,’ it’s a real living force. When many workers in Argentina were faced with the shuttering of their factories in the early 2000s, they retook them – creating spaces inside for a cultural centre, theatre and print-making workshops, a free health clinic, a people’s lending library, an adult middle and high school education program, and a University of the Workers.
KEY DECISIONS

* let audio-visualy disenfranchised groups be the organising voices and minds of our narratives
* support democratic and socialist struggles
  - make films with and for working class communities
  - learn and pass on how to make and market working class film
* form or join cinema development lobbies
  - defend the right and habit to assemble as cinema-users
  - promote the spread of national, regional and local grant aid
  - support experimental and innovative films + screenings
* initiate a distinctly defined schedule within which cinema action's unconventional and non-profit distributing mode of production can be accommodated in a manner supplementing the basis of existing industrial agreements: the workshop declaration

EDITING

* let the disenfranchised be the organisers:
  eschew commentaries
* incorporate the dynamic potential of the project group, with and without craft skills into the rough cut.
* learn from those without skills and pass on how to edit non-authoritarianly.
* our films are then cinema action films, when they have obtained the status of unanimous fine cut approval by our members.
Cinema Action was many different things to many different people. “About giving voice to working people and militants involved in struggle,” said one collective member. “A call to action... more interested in an enabling action rather than in giving a particular line,” said another. “The core of our strategy was to bring about better solidarisation – improved solidarisation of the dispossessed,” a third spoke. “A lot of us thought the revolution was round the corner and it was time to start arming the masses and Cinema Action was part of that arming,” another stated. “You weren’t trying to record history. You were trying to make history. And it was set in a context as part of a debate – not entertainment, not an illustration, not a portrayal of the struggle – but part of the struggle.”

• Squatters (1968–70)
• Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (1971)

• People of Ireland (1973)
• The Miners' Film (1974/5)
• Viva Portugal (1973)
These films give an idea of the reach of Cinema Action’s preoccupations: from squatting campaigns, to workers strikes, to miners’ meetings, to escalating demonstrations across the country, while acting in solidarity and conversation with struggles further afield – from anti-authoritarian resistance in Portugal, to armed struggle in Ireland, to the barricades of the enragés in France.

A preoccupation with the possibilities of seeing: of what it might mean to be armed with the ability to glimpse back at ourselves, our struggles, our subjectivities – to enable us to see the parts of our lives in new arrangement – rather than an unconditional commitment to cinema or filmmaking as a form on its own.

But what marks the movement from subjectivity to subject? A friend tells me they plan to write and stage a play based on a poem-essay I wrote, about the death of a friend killed in a Turkish airstrike while fighting against the Turkish state in Rojava. The still-alive friend tells me: “This is my contribution to the struggle... to spread awareness.” He seems surprised when I don’t jump at the idea. Who will be involved? Who will fund it? Who will it be spreading awareness to? I feel some kind of pressure to know who should be asked for permission to do it. But who to ask – a friend that could at best tokenistically represent the ‘community’ or struggle being portrayed? The words, his death – in stage directions, punctured with dialogue, little annotations and abbreviations, on the page and in the voices of performers – reduced to language, to art, to ‘cause’. “Why the need to transform or do something with every feeling or experience we have,” another, still-alive, friend asks: “What might happen if we just left it alone?”

Is there a distinction between ‘culture’ and ‘art’? And when ‘art’ is a historical and political set of processes to be produced, purchased and consumed – and culture is just being alive – is art something we can opt out of? People will scratch out poems on the walls of prison cells if they have to without reading a single book, paint without ever seeing a painting, sing without hearing song. To think otherwise is to believe that we are unable to know – or imagine – what is flickering at the edges of our own eyesight. ‘If “the people” have only ever existed as a spectral figure for the benefit of the state – under the pretence of outsourcing authority, or power, or blame, or desire – or as a seemingly homogenous mass of “ordinary” people: those not backed by wealth or particular passports, can there be “a people” of art, a people of cinema?’ In collectivity there may exist less discrepancies between ‘culture’ and ‘life’ and ‘organising’ – or rather, these discrepancies are more able to pull and push and flounder in more-than-passive relationship to one another – and so in Cinema Action. It’s much harder to capitalise, to recuperate a moving, shifting thing. And so community becomes culture.

‘There is no part of yourself you can separate out saying, this is memory, this is sensation this is the work I care about, this is how I make a living it is whole, it is a whole, it always was whole you do not “make” it so.’

There is a difference between being denied art – and having culture censored, reappropriated and sold back to you – and choosing to disown art and the worlds that buoy it. In April ’68, Philippe Garrel won the top prize at the Festival du Jeune Cinéma at Hyères for *Marie Pour Mémoire*. On accepting, the 20 year old announced that he was ‘finished’ with cinema. If film was to have any meaning, he said, “it should resemble a brick thrown into a movie theatre”. He began to make films with a small group – *Zanzibar* – after a trip made to the then-Maoist country by some of the group’s members. Their work was funded by the French heiress Sylvina Boissonnas, who it’s claimed would sit at a table at La Coupole on Boulevard du Montparnasse in Paris and write checks on the spot to whoever’s ideas she liked. Likewise, Cinema Action were funded and resourced by wealthy sympathisers: the owner of a corporate film company in Mayfair, his wealthy friends (including landowning Lords), the daughter of the owner of a Texan oil company. Such is the common ‘anti-capitalist’ take on trickle-down economics: the upper classes finance the middle classes, who in turn claim to make resources – and the power they consolidate – accessible to the working classes. Despite how dominant approaches to ‘identity politics’ render the question not what you do but who does the doing, proximity to the subject matter of a film, or poem, or play; if in fact it is not a ‘subject matter’ but the very life of the person doing the creating – then does a difference in class foster aestheticization? As Trevor Stark writes of Marker’s paradoxical time filming in Besançon: ‘How to translate the workers’ struggle into cinema such that the filmmaker would not simply reinscribe the relations of domination between those who have access to culture and those who do not, between those who have the power to represent and those who are simply represented?’ And why is this more often deemed acceptable in ‘art’ than in political organising? 6

But a real distinction exists between culture & conditions; between culture, conditions & ‘community’. (O, community – a word so often appropriated by funding applicants, academics, & those who are admitted the vantage point to look inwards from the outside; whose existences live in sharp separation from who they talk about, not a bargepole of distance but of bedrooms, *boulangeries*, bank statements.) ‘There’d be workers who work & bourgeois who bourgeois,’ states the voiceover at the beginning of Godard’s 1972 *Tout Va Bien*. 7 years later, the preface of *Photography/Politics: One* notes the sinister beginnings of many photographic projects later branded ‘art’: Matthew Brady’s Civil War negatives kept by the US Signal Corps; Henry Jackson’s plates of the Far West in the Bureau of Reclamation; many of the Depression photographs of Evans, Lange & others found filed & indexed in the Library of Congress as part of the work of the Farm Security Administration. Their ‘re-presentation’ as ‘art’, in ‘art’ books and ‘art’ shows5 came later. But the art show has never been democratic, has never been for all. The origins of galleries were areas in royal palaces, castles, country houses – the private property of the wealthy, made partially accessible to ‘the people’ during periods when the owners were away – when art collections could be viewed by those who wore ‘appropriate’ dress or were able to tip a housekeeper. Cinema Action screened their *cinétracts* in factory canteens, union meetings, lunch hours, bus depots, shipyard assembly areas, building sites. Place – the question of where – can aestheticise as much as any other factor. Take, for instance, the recent ‘strictly limited’ UK premiere of Pere Portabella’s 1974 film, *El Sopar* (*The Supper*) at Brixton prison. Portabella’s documentary takes place on the night of the execution of the militant anarchist, Salvador Puig Antich, by Franco in the Spring of 1974 – filming a conversation between five freed political prisoners over dinner. To protect the film’s participants from persecution, production was coordinated in secrecy, notices of secret shooting locations sent to technicians and participants at staggered times; but in 2019, £17 got you in, got you a buffet dinner ‘prepared by prisoners’.

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6 Trevor Stark, in ‘Cinema in the Hands of the People’ – Chris Marker, the Medvedkin Group, and the Potential of Militant Film’ (2012). The essay also informed much of my writing about SLON and Marker’s time in Besançon.
But after all, it was me who wrote the poem-essay that inspired the idea for my still-alive friend’s play. I proofed the words, sent them to the editor, later thought about the ones that no longer felt true or applicable or desirable. I was paid $200 to do so, by a literary foundation that I later discovered are funded by stocks from a multimillion-dollar pharmaceutical company. When my ‘I’ implicates a collective ‘we’, where are ‘we’ left? How to write, or make films, or produce plays that refuse to feed the deadening academisation and petrification of past and current struggles, then and now? To dodge the deathwish of a political economy disguised as aesthetics.

To abandon an essay that presents a subjective summary of a single year’s ‘struggles’ – to leave out Warsaw, Martin Luther King, Tlatelolco Plaza, mass protests against Ayub Khan, the occupation of Hornsey College of Art, the Rodney riots. To reduce struggle to such a specific, singular event: May 68.

Few of my friends would call themselves a ‘writer’ or a ‘poet’, but everyone around me does write, I discover: friends sending me poems past midnight, penning essays in secret, journals stacking up on bedside tables. It is too easy to forget or dismiss the everyday practice of culture, to which everybody has a claim. Different to those who forge careers from the discrepancies between politics and aesthetics; those who have the almost-admirable audacity to call themselves ‘theorists’ – as if theory was anything other than our lives.

And what of Cinema Action? “The group began to drift apart as members sought their own individual ways and production”, said Pascale Lamche, the daughter of Guedes and Schlacke. “This was partly economic – it became difficult to sustain a living organising facilities for other filmmakers; partly political – it was difficult to retain a coherent political core around a younger generation that were keen to find their way as film producers, writers, cameramen or actresses rather than militants, and around forms of production that required an entirely different set of priorities (i.e. feature films require identifiable director, good marketing and exhibition strategies, etc.).” Previously, theirs had been an approach uninterested in and consciously opposed to the individualism of art or culture in bourgeois society, in private property that lent a room to the purported people’s gallery, to hierarchies of ‘expertise’ and ‘specialism’. Remember the cinétracts of which you are the director, producer, editor, cinematographer, distributor all at once. ‘Today is the reign of technicians’, declares a fake Godard film released on YouTube in 2018: ‘Supermarket technician, mobile television technician; audiovisual technician, police technician... Technique took over gesture.’
Over a decade on from Cinema Action’s formation, *So That You Can Live* (1981) was a “different type of film” said Ann Guedes. Cinema Action still lived and worked as a collective centred on class struggle, but their analysis of “how best to continue the struggle” was changing. *So That You Can Live* follows three generations of one family – Shirley, Roy, Diane and Royston – in South Wales, as the local area faces pit and factory closures. Shirley, a union convener at the GEC factory loses her job, and subsequently her union card, after spending parts of 1976 on strike with over 400 women to demand equal pay. The film took five years to make; it included the staging of specific shots, and readings from ‘The Country and the City’, a text written specifically for the film by the late Welsh Marxist critic Raymond Williams – techniques that differed in tone and practice to Cinema Action’s earlier films. Historical processes, and their present, pressing feelings, are drawn out through Diane’s O-level Economics questions: ‘What factors influenced the location of manufacturing industry?’ and the drift of the camera along the endless rows of books of the South Wales Miners’ Library. With a steady, slow-moving eye on the landscape – shots in which we watch people watch the landscape that surrounds them – the film reflects on questions of gender equality and organised labour in the workplace, class and ‘community’, and the changing environments of city and countryside in Britain as capitalism quickens its pulse. There seems no specific ‘message’ to the film, no clear call to ‘action’ or campaign that *So That You Can Live* desires to drive the audience towards. Rather, there is a textured knowingness – clear in the film’s title itself – of lives lived within the conditions that seek to end us, and the culture – the songs, the relationships, books and laughter – that enliven us to live beyond them. ‘What do you mean, “history”?’
The Film & Photo League
The Film & Photo League

From 1934 to 1935 the (Workers’) Film & Photo League represented a grass-roots manifestation in Britain of the Communist International’s cultural politics, during the period of the ‘left turn’. Guided by the ‘united front from below’ strategy, the League articulated the Comintern’s ‘class against class’ policy through the means of agitprop. This involved using filmmaking, photography, exhibitions and screening events as tools for mobilising working-class politics. MayDay Rooms holds a collection of materials from the Film & Photo League, which also provides a powerful visual record of the conditions of working people’s everyday lives and related Communist campaigns, such as the National Unemployed Workers’ Movement. The material was collated by the photographer Terry Dennett in the 1970s for a study ‘of the cultural politics of the interwar period’. This informed his own subsequent work, examples of which can be found in another MayDay Rooms’ collection: The Worker Photographer. We have reproduced for this pamphlet two photo collages Terry made from FLP material.
Camera Forward! 44
The FILM is a Weapon. Use it.

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Write for Details.

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15
The Worker Photographer

The Worker Photographer was a project initiated by Terry Dennett in the late 1970s. It explicitly set out to provide a partisan representation of working-class perspectives through the medium of photography. This approach took inspiration from Communist agitprop of the interwar period, such as the work of Der Arbeiter Fotograf and The Film & Photo League. As well as the industrial struggles of workers at Ford, themes addressed included safety in the workplace and the depiction of class relations in the bourgeois press. MayDay Rooms holds a collection of materials produced by The Worker Photographer.
The camera is 35mm equipment is best, but an instant camera will do. Your preference of cameras is not as important as their compatibility with the manual controls, since most of the work is done with a microfilm camera. The following are some of the cameras that are available:

- Agfa Dia Direct
- Fujifilm Instax

At the present the black and white slide film available is Agfa Dia Direct. This film is produced with the processing required for in advance, and comes back to you complete with a slide mount in each frame. The film is available in a variety of sizes from 35mm to 350mm.

**Collecting Images:** The Agfa Torn Torn Slide Show does not only have to contain pictures from the personal life, it also has to contain a variety of images from different photographers, even the little ones that are considered "non-worthwhile." The slide show is a collection of images that are considered "worthwhile" by the photographer or audience.

**Camera Forward!**

- **56**

**The Worker Photographer**

**Socialist Photojournalism**

- **Wanted:** Workers Photographers and Work Correspondents

**The Worker Photographer**

- **Article by Mike Arians:** "Make Your Own Agitprop Slide Show"

**MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED:**

- A 35mm camera
- A light meter
- A tripod
- A slide projector
- A set of slide mounts
- A set of slide films

**PLANNING A SLIDE PRESENTATION:**

- Selection of images
- Selection of slides
- Selection of order

**SUPPORTING ARTWORK:**

- If you plan to make a large slide show, you can use artwork, drawings, maps, or photographs. You will need a light table or a slide projector to display your slides.

**CONCLUSION:**

- In our class, the division of society we are taught to think of "amateur" photography is a social construct. It is a social category that is not objective or scientific. It is a social category that is constructed by the society.

- The role of the photographer is to make the world of others, and aesthetic and visual conditions are almost devoured by class and gender roles.

**SUBSCRIBE:**

- **The Worker Photographer**
- **Socialist Photojournalism in Britain**
- **The One That Got It All!**
- **Wanted:** Workers Photographers and Work Correspondents

**NOT THE STREET DOPE SYSTEM:**

- Between Fleet Street and the Left press, there is a large and growing gap. Yet the situation in socialist journalism has not improved. It is a jolly pity that the election campaign has been a jolly pity. The election campaign has been a jolly pity. The election campaign has been a jolly pity. The election campaign has been a jolly pity. The election campaign has been a jolly pity. The election campaign has been a jolly pity. The election campaign has been a jolly pity. The election campaign has been a jolly pity. The election campaign has been a jolly pity.
LESSON 1. WHO WE SHOULD DISAPPROVE OF.

People who want decent pay and are prepared to fight to get it.

LESSON 2. WHO WE SHOULD APPROVE OF.

People who are happy to work for no pay or low pay.

NEWSPAPER PHOTOS LIE. READ, BUT
TRY TO DISCRIMINATE AMONG THEM.
Not all newspapers are alike. Some are
manipulating facts to serve a purpose.

LESSON 3.
"Britain" is apparently made up only of "decent people" - part

"Britain" apparently does not include any of the Swinish Multitude.

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE EMPLOYING CLASS IS PRESENTED BY THE "NATIONAL" PRESS IN:
1. Their selection of what to report.
2. Their decision on what to leave out.
3. The impression they give that their views are the only possible one.
4. Their use of pictures and language to support their views of the world.

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE EMPLOYING CLASS IS PRESENTED BY THE "NATIONAL" PRESS IN:
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2. Their decision on what to leave out.
3. The impression they give that their views are the only possible one.
4. Their use of pictures and language to support their views of the world.

HOW "FREE" AND "INDEPENDENT" IS THE BRITISH PRESS?

By 1974, 80 per cent of British newspapers (over 130 daily and Sunday papers) were owned and produced by only three companies: The Associated Newspapers, the Daily Mirror, and the Mirror Group. The remaining monopolies are the Pearson-Leser Group with the Financial Times plus 11 provincial daily papers; Associated Newspapers with the Daily Express and 14 provincial daily papers; Associated Newspapers with the Daily Mirror, etc.

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE EMPLOYING CLASS IS PRESENTED BY THE "NATIONAL" PRESS IN:
1. Their selection of what to report.
2. Their decision on what to leave out.
3. The impression they give that their views are the only possible one.
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2. Their decision on what to leave out.
3. The impression they give that their views are the only possible one.
4. Their use of pictures and language to support their views of the world.
Photography for the workers—workers' photography

Photography for the workers

Standing at Despouy's pose to three questions that form the basis of the documentation of photography in the struggle against capital and for conditions in the working class. It is not too long since photography was the property of the capitalist, but now the working class controls it. The camera, once reserved for the bourgeoisie, is now in the hands of the workers. The struggle against the capitalist class is reflected by photography. This struggle is not only for the change in the conditions of work, but also for the change in the conditions of life, for the change in the conditions of thought and feeling.

Workers, photographers, come! The time has come for you to begin the photography of your own activities. The struggle against capital is the struggle against the condition of work, against the condition of life, against the condition of thought and feeling. You are the photographers of your own activities, you are the photographers of your own struggle.

Organising for safety at work

Safety in the Workplace

The workplace is a place of danger. The worker must be aware of the potential hazards that exist in his workplace and take steps to prevent accidents. The worker must also be aware of the policies and procedures that are in place to ensure his safety.

One of the most important policies is the policy of safety at work. This policy is designed to ensure that the worker is protected from harm. The policy includes safety training, safety equipment, and safety procedures. The worker must be familiar with these policies and procedures in order to ensure his safety.

Another important policy is the policy of safety at work. This policy is designed to ensure that the worker is protected from harm. The policy includes safety training, safety equipment, and safety procedures. The worker must be familiar with these policies and procedures in order to ensure his safety.

Health and Safety

Health and safety are important issues for all workers. The worker must take steps to protect himself from injury and illness. This includes taking breaks, wearing protective equipment, and following safety procedures.

The worker is also responsible for reporting any accidents or injuries that occur in the workplace. This includes reporting accidents to the supervisor, as well as reporting any unsafe conditions.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that the workplace is safe and that the worker is protected from harm. This includes providing safety equipment, training, and procedures. The employer must also ensure that the workplace is free from hazards that could cause injury or illness.

In conclusion, the worker must be aware of the potential hazards that exist in his workplace and take steps to prevent accidents. The worker must also be aware of the policies and procedures that are in place to ensure his safety. This includes safety training, safety equipment, and safety procedures. The worker must be familiar with these policies and procedures in order to ensure his safety.
Injuries at work

...all your fault

Who we are:
The Work Hazards Group of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Industry (BSSRI) consists of members who believe that health and safety at work can be controlled at the workplace. The Work Hazards Group believe that proper working conditions can only be achieved by workers becoming well-informed about the hazards and dangers of their work. To aid the struggle for better working conditions we publicise a newsletter (briefly distributed and various booklets and pamphlets on health hazards (Major, O'Halloran, Anderson, Shell, Work, Hospital Hazards, Eden, Fies and D, Working to Live, Working to Die) and offer practical help, advice and support to those in need. We are based at 9 Holland Street, London NW1.

Some considerations when making health and safety photographs

A. Only photograph when it is relevant.

B. Remember photographs can be more effective if related to other information in a report or presentation.

C. Nothing happens in isolation. Look for the whole effect. If you want to make a point about health hazards, look for the whole picture, not just the isolated hazard.

D. Never rely on your memory. Always collect a set of documents at the same time as the photographs. This could include a job description, a list of tasks, a list of materials, a list of chemicals, a list of equipment, a list of risks, and a list of controls.

E. Remember that some hazards are not visible. Look for the whole effect. This could include the presence of dangerous materials, the presence of dangerous equipment, the presence of dangerous procedures, the presence of dangerous conditions, the presence of dangerous practices, the presence of dangerous attitudes, and the presence of dangerous policies.

F. Remember that some hazards are not obvious. Look for the whole effect. This could include the presence of dangerous materials, the presence of dangerous equipment, the presence of dangerous procedures, the presence of dangerous conditions, the presence of dangerous practices, the presence of dangerous attitudes, and the presence of dangerous policies.

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Please allow all credits to THE WORKER PHOTOGRAPHER to be reproduced in their full context.

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Working Together
Creating Social Spaces –
The Praxis of Terry Dennett

JOHANNA KLINGLER
Terry and Jo developed many of their methods and political statements together. They considered the ‘study of specific apparatuses and the economic point of production as central to any understanding of history’. Under this shared rubric, Terry’s work focused on urban crisis and social exclusion, while Jo produced work about women in class society in relation to reproduction and domestic labour as well as the (ill) body as a political site of struggle.

Together they helped to found the Half Moon Photography Workshop Collective, which produced Camerawork magazine. But due to political disagreements they did not remain in the collective for long. Jo and Terry repeatedly tried to introduce a discussion of class issues into the magazine and the projects of the Half Moon Photography Workshop. When this was rejected, they split from Half Moon acrimoniously. In the editorial to Photography/Politics: 1, published a number of years later, they explicitly state their political aims, which can be understood as an emancipation from the policy at Half Moon.

From this point onwards, they produced work together under the name Photography Workshop Ltd. Photography Workshop was an independent educational, research, publishing and resource project, founded in 1974. Based in their home at 152 Upper Street, London, it was the initiative under which most of their activities and productions were distributed, and later, under which almost all of their archival material was held (and stamped.) From here Terry and Jo published various teaching kits, posters, the broadsheet The Worker Photographer (three issues) and edited the books Photography/Politics: One and Two, which they considered to be the ‘first serious collections of essays on photography, history and politics in this country’.

The photographic projects Jo and Terry started together – such as Remodelling Photo History and The Crisis Project – produced visual content, including photographs and collages, which were put on display in several art institutions. Yet they were only interested in the category fine art peripherally, since they did not primarily identify as artists. They both worked ‘9–5 jobs’: Terry as a photographer at the London Zoo and Jo a high-street photographer, with their political and artistic activities taking place around that. Jo described her struggles in defining an identity for her activities and came up with the terms ‘cultural worker’ and...
'educational photographer,' which emphasise processes of active cultural production rather than the 'fetishized products of my labour, cut off from its own history, elevated to object status.' Neither of these terms seemed to work as well as the 'magical word artist'.

While they used the opportunities provided by the establishment artworld to gain visibility for their work, they were more interested in projects that undermined the separation of artistic and cultural work from the rest of life. Terry not only collected magazines and information material by radical artist groups such as The League of Socialist Artists but was also a member of The Provisional Committee for Progressive Realist Art and Culture. In a socialist tradition, they promoted 'a realist art and culture expressing the life conditions, aspirations and struggles of the working class and all working people for a better life', which had been brought to collapse and extinction under a monopoly-capitalist society. Thus, they believed that 'all forms of artistic expression and awareness, together with a heightened cultural sensibility in general, amongst all sections of the working class and working people of our land' ought to be strengthened. Alongside this, they asserted that art and culture is not a sole purview of 'the educated and enlightened', citing the example of the Ashington miners, a group of mine workers who started painting in the 1930s without any formal artistic training.

They referred to their artistic work as standing in line with the 'language and methodology of dialectical and historical materialism,' which should lead to an understanding of photographic work within the language of "an Eisenstein, a Brecht or Benjamin." Meanwhile, they were strongly influenced by John Heartfield and the tradition of his political photomontages. Heartfield was an employee of the German anti-fascist newspaper AIZ (Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung) [Workers'-Illustrated-Newspaper], run by Willi Münzenberg, and published weekly between 1921–33 in Berlin and between 1933–38 from his exile in Prague. His works should not be mistaken for the products of an individualist artist. As an artist, activist and a journalistic agitator, Heartfield used and invented photographic methods in order that his images could be wielded as weapons in the political struggle against fascism, in order to act quickly in the face of changing political circumstances. This immediate

5 Ibid. p.161.
6 Ibid. p.216.
7 Document of the Provisional Committee at the Bishopsgate Institute: DENNETT/30
8 Spence, Cultural Sniping: The Art of Transgression, pp.41–42.
piqued the interests of radical artists. One such group arose around the LEF journal (Levy Front Iskusstv) [Left Front of the Arts] in Soviet Russia and another around John Heartfield in Germany.

The Russian and Soviet protagonists often go even further in their aims, wanting not only to educate people to become critical of capitalism and fascism, but also to change humanity in the spirit of the new socialist technologies, to become bodies of a ‘new world’. Meanwhile, the early worker photography movement directly challenged the bourgeois class through the taking and reproduction of photographs. In the 1920s (and to this day) many capitalists did not want the insides of their factories to be seen by the public, nor the conditions of work to be widely known. The propaganda of the AIZ brought these conditions to light, leveraging class struggle on the hiddenness of collective suffering within private enterprises. Photographs of the inside of a factory, depicting production, could be set in contrast to new mass media advertisements, that limited their depiction to the outside, or semblance, of the commodity for the sake of consumption. This presented an immediate challenge to a capitalist class whose profits rely on the hiddenness of labour – and the entirety of the production process – within the commodity.

Terry and Jo refer very specifically to methods of political agitation and propaganda, predominantly in relation to working class photography in the Soviet Union and Weimar Germany. They engaged with this through their comprehensive study of another German magazine, Der Arbeiterfotograf (Worker Photographer, 1926–1932), which Terry collected. Der Arbeiterfotograf aimed to represent political content – and more specifically class division – within capitalism. Here, the specific function of representing class differences and working class struggles served not only as a strategy for convincing the masses by speaking to their experiences, but also as an educational medium. Instead of working solely through aestheticisation, the photograph functioned as a tool intended to make passive perception impossible.

In the practice of agitation, Vladimir Lenin advocated the representation of a certain pressing idea: agitation should demonstrate or represent the most impressive example of a complex situation, which should then unfold itself within further information and thus educate the recipient. This kind of photography also arose due to widespread illiteracy in Russia during the late-19th and early-20th century. As the pedagogical aspect of Lenin’s conception was not often acknowledged when using representation as a political strategy, other working class magazines in Germany simply illustrated the conditions of working class life, but failed to provide information about structural problems. In this way, they simply competed with the illustrations of bourgeois magazines but failed to educate workers. While agit-prop photography emerged primarily as a political tool, it soon took on new dimensions as a means of educational dissemination.

10  Spence, Cultural Sniping: The Art of Transgression, p.52.
11  Joachim Bütte, Der Arbeiter-Fotograf, introduction.
Terry and Jo both refer to their work as social realism, or socialist realism (and later, especially in Jo’s case also to psychic realism). Realism, here, is understood as the method of representing a political problem by bringing its underlying dynamics to light, as opposed to realism considered as an aesthetic style of precise depiction. Meanwhile, the term ‘socialist realism’ invokes a distinct period of artistic production under the Stalinist regime. This included art produced explicitly in the interest of the regime, as well as socialist filmmakers, whose self-led work has begun to evolve before that time (for example, Dziga Vertov, one of Terry and Jo’s most significant role models).

Beyond their relationship to these older traditions, their engagement in different activities has to be understood under the rubric of a Marxist concept of praxis. The processes producing visible outcomes of their work must be taken into consideration just as much as the visual products themselves. With this in mind, Jo and Terry addressed their critique of capitalism towards various symptoms of exploitation and social division, including issues of gender and race.

Collaboration – The Crisis Project

The Crisis Project provides a good illustration of a collective project that Terry and Jo worked on together. It also offers an impression of what Terry’s photographic practice looks like. The Crisis Project brings together two different themes: Terry’s focus on the urban space as an indicator of economic crisis; and Jo’s on physical and mental health – and especially her experiences as a cancer patient, which work through medicine as an exemplary field of social, political and economic inequality. Their ways of working together on different aspects, in order to visualise crisis as a consequence of capitalism’s antisocial nature, provides a productive mode for collaboration; individual concerns could be linked together towards an expansion of evidence. These respective concerns grew into two separate Crisis Archives. This method allowed them to accumulate content through connecting individuals in a solitary manner, in which responsibilities could be shared and individual work could be built into a broader context.

The way they put their ‘archives’ on display derives from a re-reading of Dziga Vertov’s principle of ‘factography’: a way of montaging together different views of everyday reality into agitative sequences. Factography, as used in the Soviet Union, followed – or rather constructed – an ideology that aimed to transform the human and human labour by following the examples of machines. For Vertov this was developed in relation to film, by imagining how the ‘kino eye’, the lens, could function as a role model for the human eye. But the aspects of his work that were of special interest for Terry and Jo were his montage and archival practice, in which facts from the everyday were collected together and produced into and through the work. The concept of factography must be differentiated from documentary in

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12 Spence, Cultural Sniping: The Art of Transgression, p.203.
14 Marx, Thesen über Feuerbach, p.33.
15 Bright, Lundström (eds.), Real Stories: Revisions in Documentary and Narrative Photography, p.50.
17 Bright, Lundström (eds.), Real Stories: Revisions in Documentary and Narrative Photography, p.50.
The term ‘documentary’ was coined in 1926 by filmmaker John Grierson to designate the depiction of reality at its most objective, passive and impartial. Factography, in contrast, does not claim to reflect reality veridically, but to actively transform it. Factography is praxis, the outcome of a process of production. As a method, truth is an effort not to reflect human experience but to organise it. [...] In sum, the difference between factography and documentary lies in recording facts as opposed to producing and inscribing facts.18 Vertov states:

Alongside the unified film-factory of grimaces (the union of every type of theatrical film work, from Sabinsky to Eisenstein) we must form a

FILM-FACTORY OF FACTS
the union of all types of kino-eye work, from current flash-news-reels to scientific films, from thematic Kinoprawdas to stirring revolutionary film marathon runs.
Once again.
Not FEKS, not Eisenstein’s ‘factory of attractions,’ not the factory of doves and kisses (directors of this sort have not yet died out), and not the factory of death, either (The Minaret of Death, Death Bay, Tripoli Tragedy, etc.) Simply: the FACTORY OF FACTS.

Interpreting Terry and Jo’s work as factography suggests treating their visual productions not as individual and separate static objects, but instead as different constellations or frozen moments of a larger, ongoing practice. In Terry’s archive, in particular, this view becomes necessary because while there are few finished works, there are many different experiments, rearrangements, drafts and reproduced material. Much of the content appears in different

18 Emmelhainz, Jean-Luc Godard’s Political Filmmaking, pp.94–100.
contexts and combinations. As such, their visual practice has to be understood more as manifested through the traces, productions, and constructions of ongoing processes, than through completed works.

In the process of putting the collages together, they often used images that derived from Photo Theatre. This was a method of staging photographic representation of social conditions. Influenced by the work of the dramatists Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal, Jo and Terry had already used this method in a preliminary collaborative project called Re-modelling Photo History. The images were then supplemented with text, aimed at challenging the viewer’s assumptions: a method familiar from the work of John Heartfield or Victor Burgin. Both the collages and the final displays consisted of juxtapositions of related material from their archives, such as newspaper cuttings; historical illustrations, cartoons and postcards; slogans; and plain photographs. The assemblages were then laminated as serial panels to ensure qualities such as robustness, reusability and transportability.

Terry’s ongoing work, Scenes of the Crimes, was his contribution to the Crisis Project. This project recollects and depicts scenes in the urban sphere, emphasising the antisocial consequences of liberal capitalist politics and economics. His own photographs (street shots as well as staged shots) and his collected material (historical documents, advertisements, newspaper articles etc.) form the basis for his collages. His crime scenes represent, for example, luxury goods, expensive restaurant menus, and sale offers, juxtaposed with scenes of

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21 Walter Benjamin uses the same description when talking about the photographs of Eugène Atget in A Short History of Photography.

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• Fig. 3-5, Terry Dennett, collage panels, The Crisis Project. Source: MayDay Rooms Archive.
Within this work, the exclusion and marginalisation of those exploited and oppressed by economic processes is treated as a symptom of structural crisis. In this way, records of individual living conditions become valid historical witnesses. Often, Terry put his own work into dialogue with works of the past. Some of the materials exhibited under the Crisis Project were juxtapositions of his own photographs with those of Charles Parks, who had documented urban crisis and social exclusion nearly a century earlier in his...
photographs for Jack London’s *The People of The Abyss* (figures 6–9).22

In planning and undertaking The Crisis Project we have proceeded as if we had been given a ‘historical commission’ for a future government to produce visual material for a criminal trial against those who have presided over the despoliation and pollution of today’s society. Technically of course this is fantasy but in fact the archives we are building up using this ‘historical imagination’ approach will, if they survive, be truly transported forward to the future and the project will then almost certainly become a reality. ‘Scenes of the Crime’ uses two genres: legal record photography (documentation of the scenes of the crime) and staged photography.23

Figure 10 marks a staged setting Terry composed. It shows a menu from Ritzy Restaurant and a bottle of Champagne in a setting that represents the everyday conditions of rough sleepers. Figure 11 shows another example of Terry using

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Jo and Terry’s collaboration created processes through which material and knowledge could be collected and expanded; objects were seen in new ways, outside of the disciplinary contexts in which they had been produced. These processes not only formed new types of knowledge, but also challenged the traditional concept of authorship and the canon. Not every step of their processes was enacted jointly: they worked on their own archives, but collected and worked through the material together; they organised workshops together while focussing on different topics. The division and combination of duties in their collaborative processes is best understood as pushing against a liberal, individualist working morale, while also allowing the collaborators to take their respective living conditions and interests into account. After Jo passed away, Terry continued to develop his work on the Crisis Project/Scenes of the Crimes. In particular, his work continued to engage with homelessness. He entered into a collaboration with the biologist Shaheed Macgregor. Together they worked on a project called Eating Rough, Sleeping Rough. This provided a broad context to the subject matter through research and photographic depiction, as well as providing facts around questions of nutrition at a biochemical level, and manuals for DIY medical care.

Education and Self-Organisation
While Terry aimed to document evidence of social injustices, and to confront his audience with their presentation, his intention was not just to shock. Two cornerstones of Terry’s practice were education and self-organisation. His work with children attempted to teach them from a young age to free themselves from ideological stereotypes and dependencies. In fact, it was through their work at The Children’s Rights Workshop in 1973 that Jo and Terry first met, as they both started to engage in such workshops alongside their day-jobs as photographers. They especially helped children to question social roles and gender stereotypes. Jo concentrated on methods that would reveal types of identity as social constructs. By critically analysing magazines with them, and letting them imagine and practice their own ways of representation, she taught children how it was possible to reconstruct themselves. Meanwhile, Terry was concerned with the demystification of capitalist products, and his workshops involved teaching children about the technologies behind photography. By dismantling the logics and technologies of photographic equipment, he taught the children how to build cameras themselves. He wrote comprehensive guides on how to produce photographic chemicals in order to stay independent from capitalist suppliers such as Kodak and their ‘mystification’ of technique and product (figures 12–13).

A similar logic appears in Jo’s research and work in which empowerment occurs through the demystification of given knowledge and stereotypes, and the development of experimental and alternative knowledge regarding one’s own body. This was displayed particularly clearly in her work on alternative medicine: one of her main critiques of the capitalist medical sector was its allocation of stereotypical roles to patients, and especially to women. As a cancer patient she chose alternative treatments as well as a role/representation of herself as an ill woman she felt comfortable with.
Critical responses to such stereotypes, through transformed self-representation, also ran through her work remodelling stereotypes in photographic history (in a collaboration with Terry called *Remodelling Photo History*) and her extensive work on the family album.28

The publishing activities of Photography Workshop must be interpreted in general both as gestures of structural education and of the emancipatory (re-)organisation of knowledge production and distribution. Their broadsheet, *The Worker Photographer*, which took inspiration from the left German newspaper *Der Arbeiter Fotograf*, aimed to educate readers in radical photographic practices. The first issue introduced the workers’ struggles at Ford Dagenham through the workers’ agit-prop photographs. Alongside reproducing part of a slideshow created as part of a campaign against continual layoffs, the broadsheet also contains a guide for producing similar slideshows. It gives information about necessary equipment, and tries to motivate readers to follow the workers’ example.

**The Labour Album/Social Archive**

Terry’s research on working class history included work on ‘labour albums’, which developed into social archives. These albums, created by clubs, organisations, and fraternities, were modelled after family albums or diaries. As club albums, they became collections of political ephemera, notes, newspaper cuttings, leaflets, documentation of group activities, and photos of important socialist personalities. The albums also became the representative sources, used to pass on knowledge within activist groups, and to share stories of successes and failures with other groups. While little knowledge has survived about the development of these albums, there is evidence of the Clarion Camera Club’s social albums. These had a dual function: both as educational means and as agitational and propaganda materials to be used in struggles against bad working and living conditions. Socialist groups created displays of this material, with photographs presented in vitrines in public places, which aimed at educating people on a political level. The development of lantern slideshows, cheaply printed pamphlets and zines, and picture postcards developed through this practice of collecting and presenting knowledge and experiences. In the 1890s the Clarion Group produced the *Merrie England Show*: a lantern show consisting of two hundred slides, comic
songs and piano accompaniment, which toured Britain. The show focused on ‘Slum Conditions’ or ‘Political Fraud’, and aimed at unmasking the ‘evils of capitalism’ while revealing the ‘advantages of socialism’. Crwys Richards, a member of The Clarion Camera Club, also initiated the Sweated Trades Exhibition in 1904, using agit-prop and working class photography in ways that would later be adopted in the Soviet Union and Weimar Germany. Private libraries and collections evolved in order to provide other activists with access to socialist literature and collected political material. These albums and archives did not function as containers for dead matter, but rather as sources for active communication and exchange, allowing viewers to grow from each encounter. The labour albums and archives did not exist just as spaces for storing and displaying physical objects, but produced new social spaces within the relations of solidarity and collectivity.

Terry’s own collection should be approached as just such a space; not only with regard to the materials he collected, the sources he referenced and the aims he pursued, but also in the way he managed and Jo’s archive, and his own, after her death. For the two of them, it was very important to make their work publicly approachable, especially to other activists and young researchers. The archives have to be considered not only as the foundations for numerous texts, photo collages, exhibitions, workshops, and collaborative projects, but also as a result of the social processes that were engendered in their production. Terry’s work was not only a development of earlier politically engaged practices, in collecting and actualising the methods – he also aimed at unmasking the ‘evils of capitalism’ while revealing the ‘advantages of socialism’. Crwys Richards, a member of The Clarion Camera Club, also initiated the Sweated Trades Exhibition in 1904, using agit-prop and working class photography in ways that would later be adopted in the Soviet Union and Weimar Germany. Private libraries and collections evolved in order to provide other activists with access to socialist literature and collected political material. These albums and archives did not function as containers for dead matter, but rather as sources for active communication and exchange, allowing viewers to grow from each encounter. The labour albums and archives did not exist just as spaces for storing and displaying physical objects, but produced new social spaces within the relations of solidarity and collectivity.

Photographs are documents we can make ourselves, documents we can have some control over with regard to distribution. Also important in this respect are the ephemeral materials of everyday life, the redundancy notices and tax demands etc. Such material constitutes a vivid historical counter-archive, for it often contains photographic images made outside the sanction of officialdom and of events censored from the press, and, perhaps more importantly, shows things so ordinary and everyday, or so unique, that no one else has recorded them. Such material if it can be made to survive will give those who follow us the possibility of seeing other images and hearing other voices than those of governments and ‘official’ artists of our day. In his postscript to the article ‘Popular Photography and Labour Albums’ Terry proposed a perspective for the contemporary or future use of labour albums and social archives:

[... in summing up these developments within labour photography we can see that today many of these ideas may still be relevant to groups far removed from the labour movement – for example, in the politics of the ‘green movement’. Given that popular photography and the family album are still so important in people’s lives, in a time of rapid economic change we should still continue, as family and social archivists and historians (working in the tradition of the labour movement), to produce albums about our everyday lives and all kinds of political struggles – even if we are not sure what to do with them at the moment. In the age of Thatcherism, we are certainly in a dilemma as an increasingly restrictive regime limits the means whereby ordinary people can communicate through their cultural work to a wider audience, as in the early days, or for instance during the CND period. [... In a society which is becoming increasingly individualistic and self-centred, we are in danger of forgetting the importance of these treasured little albums as social documents for the future, when there will again be a variety of means of mass distribution. To this end, a number of newly developed ideas are offered below: The illustrated public letter [...]

The illustrated public letter [...]

Research
As a social historian (a term with which he referred to himself), Terry gathered a lot of information that had not been previously brought together. This included a massive collection of political cartoons from the late 19th century onwards, international working class history ephemera, material about British working class movements, and documents of the British Workers’ Film and Photo League (WFPL).
Part of the research carried out by our Photography Workshop Ltd at that time was focused on the forgotten social and cultural history of art activism within the labour and trade union movement especially in the interwar period between the first and second world wars. Part of this research was used in these shows but the WFPL project came into being when Metropolis Films Ltd [owned by Terry Dennett] was researching left wing film of the 1930s [...] I obtained a photocopy of the league’s minute book and address lists and subsequently tracked down and interviewed a number of surviving members. We also recovered a WFPL film thought to have been lost and a number of photographs and documents in the possession of League member John Maltby. The film Liverpool: Gateway to Empire is now in the collection of the British Film Institute London.

In total he created four exhibitions in the course of his research. Each of these exhibitions consisted of series of laminated agit-prop collage panels. They were produced following the demands of practicality, so that the exhibitions could easily be transported and exhibited repeatedly.

In 1986, the article Proletarische Fotografie in Großbritannien 1848–1984. Zusammengestellt von Terry Dennett (London),' was published in the German magazine Arbeiterfotografie. This text presumably follows a similar structure to the exhibition, only less comprehensive.

The history of photography as it has evolved within the labour movement is one of the elements which is almost entirely missing from all bourgeois texts on photography. This project seeks to make a start to correct this, by examining the literature and photographic sources from within the labour movement itself. From the very early period, very few primary sources are available and are often only discovered by accident (for example see colour picture of the Chartists’ meeting). The photographs and documents presented here are a small part of the materials which are being gathered during research for a forthcoming book (PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT, PAST AND PRESENT) to be published by Lawrence and Wishart, London. The material has been brought together especially for this festival and represents the first public showing of the work. As the research is still in progress we would be happy to receive any comments or information on the evolution and development of Socialist photography in Britain. Relative information from other countries will also be helpful.

While the book mentioned here never came into existence, Terry’s archive shows advanced plans and materials for another book: The Labour Encyclopaedia: A Sourcebook for the Historian and Activist. He was working on this together with Ruth and Edmund Frow, and planned to publish it with Pluto Press. This Encyclopaedia also shows a similar structure to the exhibition in Leipzig, however it is extremely rich in further exploring diverse aspects and material.
• Fig. 22–23, Terry Dennett, exhibition plan. Source: The Bishopsgate Institute, Terry Dennett Archive

• Fig. 24, Terry Dennett, exhibition plan, information material: introduction (station 1). The Bishopsgate Institute, Terry Dennett Archive.

• Fig. 25, Terry Dennett, exhibition plan, information material: WFPL (station 21). The Bishopsgate Institute, Terry Dennett Archive.

• Fig. 26, Terry Dennett, exhibition plan, information material: The Photographic Co-operative Society, 1894 (station 6). Source: The Bishopsgate Institute, Terry Dennett Archive.
Terry’s research on the British WFPL can be seen as one of his main achievements. It is mainly due to his work that the movement is known about today. His research resulted in the aforementioned exhibition as well as the essay ‘The (Workers’) Film and Photo League’ published in Photography/Politics: 1.41 In his essay ‘The Worker Photography Movement in Britain, 1934–1939’, Duncan Forbes notes that Terry’s research ‘deserves extended consideration as historical struggles fuelled the rising class consciousness of activists within the bitterly fractured present,’ resulting even in an attempt to refound the movement itself.42 However, the original initiative was soon drained of its radical agenda in favour of a more popular cross-class, social-democratic policy. It therefore has to be considered less productive than Terry’s interpretation and narration of it suggested.43 Yet the enthusiasm, which spread in the 1970s, and led to artistic and political action, can partly be credited to Terry’s efforts to bring the movement and the WFPL’s methods into the present. While the reception of the British working-class photography movement can to some extent be interpreted as a product of Terry’s practice, his efforts ought not be considered only as research, but as an actualisation and staging of the potentials carried within this history.

**Fantasy**

Jo and Terry were always aware of the problems of documentary. Since documentary photographs are hardly able to show structural correlations or social self-documentation, they took up alternative methods of staging facts in order to influence the viewers’ perceptions.44 Images were produced to encourage people to identify with the problems on the ground that they represented. The aim was to stimulate reflection on common experiences and structural contradictions. As such, the photographic work could function as a social and political weapon, forged to produce spaces for change and action.

Exhibiting such private material in a public space allows our images and text to connect with other people’s transitory memories, fantasies and lived experiences. In short, we try to offer our images as motivational (and contradictory) starting points, as working tools and methods, for others to produce similar documents of their own lives-in-context. In this respect our exhibitions are much more of a pedagogical exercise than consumerist fine art. Such interventions from below are politically essential at this time for it is our belief that global economic crisis cannot be separated from so-called personal crisis.45

They were inspired by the methods of the worker photography movement, especially with regards to their emancipatory methods: documenting sites of struggles, organising community teaching, and documenting antagonisms such as police interventions.46 While acts of autonomy — through the production and recording of one’s own visual representation — were important to them, they did not believe any
simple visual testimony of reality would have enough power to change people’s behaviours and overcome ideology. The methods of Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal therefore became crucial for their educational works: these aimed at making people understand a world beyond ideology by turning the passive spectator into a protagonist, transforming feeling into thinking and acting.47

Photo Theatre became their totally ‘non-realistic’ method.48 It was used in almost all of their photographic projects, including Remodelling Photo History (also called The History Lesson), The Crisis Project, and Photo Therapy (Jo’s collaboration with Rosy Martin). Their strategy was to visualise and activate historically rejected or underrepresented constellations of social and political struggle through fictive theatrical staging. In this way, Terry and Jo produced visual objects, which, through the use of fantasy, transformed a political message into a narrative. Viewers were then able to be affected by entering into these unfolding situations. Yet the fantasies their works offered were not only addressed towards an outside; they also developed as experiential processes in the work of their production. This was especially the case for Jo, as she remodelled situations she had lived through as part of a life defined by gender, class, and other social roles and conventions. In confronting reality/normality, either by unveiling the constitutive conditions of economics and politics, or by dismantling established social principles, Jo’s and Terry’s fantasies demonstrated the possibility of an alternative narrative of reality. This alternative vision could, at the same time, become a part of a new, transformed reality. Thus, their use of fiction opens up a space in which it is possible to encounter and change the very sphere where subjectivity and society are produced as concepts – or even as myths – within an ideological system. Such an investment in fantasy could rewrite a world that otherwise uses narratives to reproduce itself as a repressive apparatus.49

In this way, Jo and Terry did not only address conditions or structures within society, but attacked the construction of visual representation as an ideological tool: ‘We are not trying to show familiar objects in unfamiliar ways, but rather to denaturalise the genre of photography which already consists of fully coded visual signs’.50 In order to not parrot the dominant modes of visual reproduction they tried to ‘call such practices into question, so that it begins to be easier to understand that the camera is not a window on the world, nor are meanings of pictures fixed, but that visual signs (in this case photographs) are in themselves sites of struggles’.51

The collective project Remodelling Photo History offers a good example of how Terry and Jo not only deconstructed social stereotypes, but reclaimed the ground on which they were created. As an act of empowerment, Jo’s body appeared in ways that broke habits of representation. The images not only ask about the nature of stereotypical how, but also what these stereotypes leave out. While Terry and Jo built on culturally familiar motives and situations in Remodelling Photo History, Jo also developed projects individually (as well as with Rosy Martin), in which she elaborated on common social formats. In this other work, she concentrated on the fairy tale as social narrative,52 as well as on the family album, which exists predominantly as a fantasy of social bias. Hence, she notices the stereotypical shape of the lives these albums include: happiness, births, a wedding etc. Here, the events are integrated in the narrative of the happy nuclear family, which the individual, however unhappily, must reproduce both in reality and in image. Jo then traced those aspects and experiences excluded or rendered unacceptable within the common representation of life (sadness, dissatisfaction, loneliness, confusion etc.) The traumas resulting from this systematic repression became the subject of her re-modelling.53

Fantasy was used furthermore as a method to make individual experiences shareable. As fantasies offered a means to visualise the political and economic conditions of life, and to approach how these relate to (often painful) experiences. Making content and contexts visible, which otherwise might feel private, insignificant, shameful, inappropriate, or off limits due to hierarchical power structures, means claiming a space for the development of emancipation and solidarity between individuals, who would otherwise be separated in their struggles by these very structures.

Afterword
Terry and Jo’s work was never just an oppositional reaction to social conditions, but rather an active confrontation. They attempted to understand how institutions, such as the
family or photography, produce political, ideological, social and economic systems. In doing so, they engaged in various fields of action while targeting different aspects of perception. This work produced fields of action, creating spaces that allowed for learning, interaction, and organisation. They attempted to demystify the institutional inventory of capital and the state, and to affect dynamics and structures by creating their own spaces (as far as this is possible). While their political work has to be understood within the complexity of its different processes, the great achievement of their method was to incorporate these multilayered aspects into visual works.

Nevertheless, it is wrong to limit their work to its visual appearance or the field of art. While the sphere of art can provide methods, space and possibilities for radical and creative voices, it also threatens to become just another institution, within which politics are limited to self-referential systems of ideology. While there are radical practitioners fighting from within the artworld, the way that political subjects are addressed often takes place solely within the autonomous sphere of art. Confrontation is therefore contained. The bitter aftertaste of what this ‘bubble’ really does – or could do – has been criticised by many artists, commentators, and activists. Often, the appearance of political questions in this sphere seems like merely a reproduction, or even an appropriation, of political forms rather than active engagement in politics. Urgent struggles are taken over in order to be exhausted and consumed in transient trends, which in the end serve only private financial and social capital.

The specific way in which capitalist structures transform and subsume even their critique into categories, which can be profitably put to use, while bolstering the systems, remains a problem. In his text for *Photography/Politics*, Allan Sekula asks ‘How do we produce an art that elicits dialogue rather than uncritical, pseudo-political affirmation?’ Even though such questions have been productively addressed and dismantled by generations of artists, it remains no less relevant today than it was in the 1970s or 1980s. Here, it makes sense to look at Terry’s and Jo’s work as an example of a practice that does not produce content from inside of an autonomous or self-referential sphere or for the sake of capital. Instead, their work produced both content and new forms through engaging in their social and material relations. In this way it was able to challenge the boundaries of limited disciplines and fields.

In a world as highly professionalised, sped-up, and capitalised within its different disciplines and fields as ours today, the praxis of Terry Dennett and Jo Spence provides inspiration for how structural limitations can be challenged. They emphasised the creation of spaces that subvert the reproduction of institutional categories, by pointing the weapon of their work at the very relations of production in which they were enmeshed. More than ever, we need to remember the great potential of collective support structures, forgotten knowledge, silenced experience of the exploited and struggling and the belief in a fairer life for everybody, not just a view – and to create space on this base, in order to gain strength and penetrate rigid dominant patterns.

The Little Red Blue Book

As part of ‘The Worker Photographer’, Terry Dennett developed a set of guidelines for how workers could create agit-prop slide-shows, in order to display and disseminate the stories of their struggles. In doing so, he worked with Ed Emery, who had spent the previous decade agitating among workers at Ford’s Dagenham plant. The following archival excerpts show the development of these ideas, including photographs from Emery’s agitational pamphlet ‘The Little Red Blue Book’ (1977). Ed Emery’s entire archive of workers struggles at Ford is now part of the MayDay Rooms archive, documenting workplace disputes from the 1960s to the 1990s. In 2019, he performed his Ford slide show at MayDay Rooms.
In 1977 the workers of Ford's Assembly Plant at Dagenham decided that they were sick of Ford's ever-growing list of layoffs, low or no earnings, lack of security etc. They went on strike, and after 3 weeks of picking the Dagenham Estate (and the nationalisation of the Body Plant), they were about to bring many of Ford's operations to a standstill.

Imaginative tactics and a spirit of determination had shown their strength once again in the Assembly Plant - the plant that had been so badly defeated in 1962. But now the full-scale TUC, ACMS and GMB officialites stepped in, with a view to destroying the strike. After 3 weeks the strikers returned, without winning their major demands, but with limited guarantees against layoffs (by no means enough).

The strike had nevertheless won an important victory - the first seeds of a new phase of workers’ organisation at Ford-Dagenham.

Throughout the strike, Ford workers and department photographers were taking photographs of the latest developments. These photos have now been combined together with historical material about the Ford Workers’ struggle. It now forms a 60-minute colour slide show, with a spoken commentary.

The Slide show is a weapon in the campaign for a reorganisation of the Autos sector industry - a very long-standing demand of our workers everywhere. The Slide show is available for showing to Trade Union branches, Shop Stewards Committees, Socialist Clubs, political organisations etc. It is accompanied by a pamphlet about the Ford workers’ fight for a secure living income. (The pamphlet is extensively illustrated with pictures from the Slide Show).

Contact
Red Notes, 2a St Paul’s Road, London N1.

For showings in the London area, please contact a member of Ford Notes. Notes for showing the Slide Show are cheap and negotiable. (Please ask).
we are a group of socialists working in and around Ford's-depot. One of our activities has been to look into the question of WORKERS' PHOTOGRAPHY. For some reason (don't know what!), capitalists do not like workers photographing their own place of work!

Now, if we are socialists, we believe in taking over these places of work... so why not start by asserting our right to take pictures of them?

The difficulties of this were well summed up by Jack, who wrote in a MLAC-CAMFLY newsletter: "We have to face the fact that the plant is always ready to strike."

Our activity is taking three forms:

1. Recording strikes.
2. Recording conditions in the plant.
3. Gathering history.

Let's start with history. We went to a few places and asked for pictures of Ford workers in struggle in past years. The response was as one would expect: "No! We don't want pictures of that!"

One of the few pictures we got was a photo of a group of strikers outside the plant, with a sign saying "We demand equal pay!"

Now, the struggles. In June-July 1977 there was the big "offshore" dispute at Fordham. During this dispute we were able to break through the "official view" of Ford management by photographing fellow workers (after all, Ford management had been using their own secret cameras to document the "official view").

The photographers were working for the "official" newspaper, but the "official" newspaper was not interested in our pictures. We took a whole box of slides of the photographs - including a remarkable scene of a union official being chased off the plant!

In this particular, these slides showed how the workers were able to use their own cameras to document events. The slides were later used in a film, after a strike had been called out, showing the struggle of the strike for the Guaranteed Wage.

Finally, the conditions are much better. Photos of our factories are not easy to get - especially fords - in the USA United Auto contracts of 1974, Ford was the employer who refused to sign the clause allowing shop stewards to photograph dangerous working conditions, so the health and safety provision. As we all know, many have had a lot to hide!
Adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

**COMMUNICATION OF THE PICKETS TO THE PICKETS**

You can never tell what you’re going to get when you go onto the streets. You may find yourself in a situation where you are needed to communicate with the other pickets. This is where your knowledge of communication methods comes into play. You can use radios, walkie-talkies, or even simple hand signals to get your message across.

**COMMUNICATION OF THE PICKETS TO THE PRESS**

When communicating with the press, it’s important to be clear and concise. Make sure you have a good understanding of the issues at hand and be prepared to answer any questions that may come up.

**COMMUNICATION OF THE PICKETS TO THE PUBLIC**

When communicating with the public, it’s important to be respectful and polite. Make sure you have a clear understanding of the issues at hand and be prepared to answer any questions that may come up.

**COMMUNICATION OF THE PICKETS TO THE POLICE**

When communicating with the police, it’s important to be calm and collected. Make sure you have a clear understanding of the issues at hand and be prepared to answer any questions that may come up.

**COMMUNICATION OF THE PICKETS TO THE WORKERS**

When communicating with the workers, it’s important to be clear and concise. Make sure you have a good understanding of the issues at hand and be prepared to answer any questions that may come up.

**COMMUNICATION OF THE PICKETS TO THE MANAGEMENT**

When communicating with the management, it’s important to be calm and collected. Make sure you have a clear understanding of the issues at hand and be prepared to answer any questions that may come up.

**COMMUNICATION OF THE PICKETS TO THE ATTORNEY**

When communicating with the attorney, it’s important to be clear and concise. Make sure you have a good understanding of the issues at hand and be prepared to answer any questions that may come up.
They're a hard breed (Fred Webb)

It's a pharos flouting a "press officer", always on the look out to get the strikers came. Our Governor and the Press Officers in this area, he gave no incredible number of interviews; but usually they print more of the Company's side. You can't control what they're doing, although you report them, they print every LINT (1) when they come down to talk to you, they're always two-faced bastards, and they'll print a savage story about you, if they get a chance. And they're evil bastards: They wouldn't know a signet from the back end of a bull.

The police also completely distorted our statements. They said it was because of a man who had damaged the plant, and the strike was costing £2,000,000. But in fact that wasn't true. It was only a little part of the whole thing. And also when they were talking, people thought it was government, police etc - not real fighting workers. (Fred Webb)

Ford management aren't worried about having photos. Anybody who manages an already bossed-up team are already bossed-up. And when he's trying to win management he's already bossed-up. Ford management are currently under way as is a old stage to the present's stage unions. Consequently, thoughts often centre at Ford...
The South Island Photo-Show
South Island Photo-Show

Terry Dennett and Jo Spence met while Jo was working at the Children’s Rights Workshop. Childhood was in the political limelight, after the 1970 Stepney School strike, the banning of The Little Red School Book, and the infamous ‘Schoolkids Issue’ of Oz Magazine. They both continued to run workshops teaching children photography skills over the following years. Often cameras were not available, so for his workshops in Stockwell, Terry designed ways for children to make their own cameras out of things they had at home: boxes, jam jars, wellington boots, old prams; his ‘Photo-Chemical Handbook’ teaches children how to develop their own images with soluble vitamin c tablets. This collection includes photographs, photograms, photo-paintings, hand-coloured photographs, contact sheets, and collages made by children who took part in Terry’s workshop. Alongside these are the technical manuals that Terry created, and posters for the exhibition of their work at the Cockpit Arts Centre.
Where is the Gaiety?

FREYA FIELD-DONOVAN
Wilf Thust: Where Is The Gaiety?

This collection contains materials towards Wilf Thust’s 1973 film Where is the Gaiety? The film examines life in and around an adventure playground in Notting Hill. The collection gathers together books of photographs and scripts that became the basis of the film, original film reels, and other photographs taken in the playgrounds as part of the project. The film examines how the adventure playground is viewed by the children it served, and the communities who lived around it. The film poses, in particular, political and cultural questions of racism that had dominated life in Notting Hill around this time. At the same time that this film was made, Wilf Thust became a founding member of Four Corners: an organisation based in Bethnal Green that brought photography and film-making into a local community, teaching people new ways of representing themselves.

With thanks to Wilf Thust.

All analysis is the author’s own rather than the intentions of the artist.
In every child who is born, under no matter what circumstances, and of no matter what parents, the potentiality of the human race is born again: and in him, too, once more, and of each of us, our terrific responsibility towards human life; towards the utmost idea of goodness, of the horror of error, and of God.'

—James Agee

Not all enclosures are restrictive. Some hold space for protection, for measured lessons, for the supervised experimentation that allows someone to set boundaries in themselves, and between themselves and others, for learning, to have too much, and then to learn to temper, both pleasure and pain. Institutions can offer this; so can the home, friendships, various iterations of holding spaces and patterns within which relationships between oneself and the world are formed. Some of these are considered natural, like the childhood acquisition of movement and language, or social and sexual bonds. Others are seen as unnatural, like the various manmade institutions designed to administer the legal, political and economic functions that reproduce society at large. The natural and the unnatural form one of the foundational binaries used to navigate the value and category of experience.

1 Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (1941), p.289.
Childhood, in its idealised form, is related to innocence. Innocence at its most simplified is metaphorically coded as natural, related as it is to a lack of experience, unqualified or unacculturated judgement, to the sweetness and virtue of simplicity. An un-innocent child is one who has seen too much, or knows too much about the adult world, about violence, cruelty or complicity. These un-innocent childhoods are related to those administrative functionings. Having no access to resources; money; formal education; legal and political institutions makes those supposedly natural bonds and units harder to hold together.

This essay will consider a work made about an experiment in anti-authoritarian education by Wilf Thust. The film and the photo albums that make up the work are experiments in education themselves. They teach us that pedagogy is a reproductive apparatus by giving us the distance we need to see these workings. Through the formal means chosen by Thust, naturalised behaviours, attitudes, and social capacities are unpacked and denaturalised, and shown to be acquired through repetition and habit. The work teaches us that race and class unevenly distribute access to the value of innocence and to the intuitions which hold up this virtuous fantasy.
We learn that we need to be able to have distance from our habits and attitudes to be able to recognise their historical dimension. We must give up our own fictions of innocence to stay open to learning.² We must learn to denaturalise and re-naturalise different habits of perception to create pedagogical environments that allow all people to feel themselves as both spontaneous and political beings.³

The German born filmmaker and educator Wilf Thust spent three weeks working as a play leader in an adventure playground in Notting Hill Gate in the summer of 1973. He completed a film as a record of that time in 1974 called *Where is the Gaiety?* The film is made up of a series of black and white photographs Thust had taken over those three weeks, animated into a motion picture in a department of the London Film School. These animated stills are interspersed with intertitles and overlaid by anonymised speech. That summer is also documented by a series of photo albums made after the film’s completion, which can be found in the MayDay Rooms Archive.

² Thank you to Alexandra Symons-Sutcliffe for her research into this topic, which lead to my interest in the subject.

³ In his introduction to *Against Innocence*, Revd Dr. Giles Fraser explains the banishment of innocence as not ‘a council of despair; [but] rather, a fearlessly honest description of what it takes to love our neighbour.’ Revd Dr. Giles Fraser, in Andrew Shanks, *Against Innocence: Gillian Rose’s Receptions and Gift of Faith* (London: SCM Press: 2008), xi.
Thust, along with Jo Davis, Mary Pat Leece and Ron Peck, was one of the founding members of the film collective Four Corners. The four met whilst enrolled at the London Film School, and began to experiment with collective filmmaking. The first two films completed by Four Corners were Railman (1975), and On Allotments (1976). Both films were made with and about people’s everyday struggles and social worlds, working to complicate the opposition between formal experimentation and social realism.

After this, they set up a workshop in a disused double-bedroomed house along Bethnal Green Road in the borough of Tower Hamlets. Four Corners still exists in the same site today but functions very differently. In 1978 Four Corners began to research the then declining East End cinema culture. The projects resulted in a reel, titled THE EAST END CINEMA TAPE (1979). After this they set about creating a 40 seat cinema and film workshop with the aim of opening Four Corners to the local public. Two important works ensued, Ron Peck’s Nighthawks (1978) which focused on the negotiation between the public and private life of a queer geography teacher in London and Jo Davis and Mary Pat Leece’s Bred and Born (1983), a film made with and about four generations of a family living at the Isle of Dogs.

Thust’s work at Four Corners focused particularly on young people. He later ran The Young Peoples Cinema Workshop for teenagers in the East End. Originally from Germany, Thust had taught art in a school in Bremen. There, he began experimenting with his teaching, incorporating puppetry into the school curriculum, and allowing the children to make their own short films.

From 1976-78 Thust worked in Germany with an alternative research teaching project set up by the new University in Bielefeld. On returning to the UK in 1979 he created a Young People’s Cinema Workshop for teenagers in the East End with Paul Hallam and two other new members of Four Corners until the refurbishment of Four Corners as a Cinema and Film Workshop. Later in 1982 to 1984, Thust ran more workshops with young people and youth workers. Out of this experience and alongside it he made a series of films titled Is That It?

Material from the The Young Peoples Cinema Workshop can also be found at MayDay Rooms.
This position allowed him to take what was known as a ‘secondment’, a year long sabbatical to enhance his filmmaking experience and to improve his English in London by enrolling at the London Film School.

The Notting Hill project began during Thust’s first year in London, after initially visiting the playground in 1972 with a colleague from Bremen called Annegret Nettelroth. Nettelroth had become interested in adventure playgrounds as experiments in anti-authoritarian education, and read with much excitement about examples in the UK. Many adventure playgrounds like the one in Notting Hill Gate were set up to provide a space for less regulated, more creative forms of play for local children. These parks were often located in working class, immigrant neighbourhoods. Those who championed them thought they could provide a nurturing alternative to the disciplinary and punitive education system. The emphasis on self-led play and the gentle guiding role of the play leader as opposed to the traditional teacher chimed with many of the principle of reform pedagogy, whose influence gained traction in West Germany after 1945, and which had directed Thust and Nettelroth’s pedagogical training.
Reform pedagogy has long roots in German language educational theory. Its origins can be found in Rousseau’s novel *Emile* (1762), which catalogues a child’s removal from the city to the countryside where Rousseau believed an individual’s propensity for freedom could be better cultivated than in the metropolis. *Emile* influenced the Swiss-German educational reformer Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi’s *Wie Gertrud ihre Kinder lehrt* [How Gertrude teaches her children.] 1801.7

For 30 years Pestalozzi lived in isolation on his Neuhof estate, writing profusely on educational, political, and economic topics, indicating ways of improving the lot of the poor. His main philosophical treatise, *Meine Nachforschungen über den Gang der Natur in der Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts* [My Inquiries into the Course of Nature in the Development of the Human Race], 1797, reflects his firm belief, instructed by Rousseau, in the resources of human nature against the doctrine of original sin, and his conviction that people are responsible for their own intellectual and moral states.

Rousseau’s and Pestalozzi’s primary desire for education was that it should develop the individual’s faculties to think for themselves, a foundational principal of the later flourishing of Montessori’s and Steiner’s educational principles. Many reformist pedagogical ideas have

7 Pestalozzi, unlike his great mentor Rousseau, was given the chance to test his pedagogical concepts. The French-imposed Helvetic Republic in Switzerland invited him to organise higher education, but instead he collected scores of war orphans and cared for them almost single-handedly, attempting to create a family atmosphere and to ‘restore’ their moral qualities.
penetrated deep into the German state school system, characterised by early language learning, cross-age and interdisciplinary teaching, and self-directed activity. The persistent problems of the benefits of such educational ideals can be traced through Thust’s project.8

We learn from the film that the children are encouraged by the play leaders to ‘be themselves’ and to ‘solve their own problems.’ Much like Rousseau’s and Pestalozzi’s flight from the metropolis, the playground is shielded from the ‘dreary, worn-out’ urban neighbourhood whose children it serves. The play structures themselves are ramshackle and handmade, relating formally to handicraft and the human scale. The ‘gaiety’ that the textbook describes is forged against the logic and scale of the city that encloses the park. This is especially evident in the first photo album, where wide angle shots of modernist city planning around Notting Hill, with its grid-like aesthetic patterns and standardized, functionalist tropes, are contrasted with photographs from inside the playground where wooden structures appear as rakish, organically inspired forms. Images of small children pouring paint into little home-made pots, learning to

8 In 1976 Thust took up an appointment to a new University in Bielefeld as an educational researcher in the art department. A new building had been added to the University specifically for the purpose of researching alternative teaching in theory and practice in primary and secondary education. The unit was based on the pedagogical work of Hartmut von Hentig, a key proponent of West German reform pedagogy post 1945. The now discredited member of the scientific advisory board of Bielefeld University is little known in Anglophone culture, but was widely influential in progressive schooling in Germany.
hammer, manipulate and to play with their surroundings give a sense of a tactile form of learning that encourages a curiosity toward the external world driven by imagination, immediacy, and resourcefulness. But the higgledy-piggledy, somatic activity of the children is only available to the

viewer through the mechanically reproduced, standardised form that the camera lens makes available. The pattern of play depicted is not that which unfolded chronologically in any one given day; nor does it not follow faithfully the predilections of one or more of the children as they move between objects and activities, but rather is an edited sequence that abstracts activity from a lived experience of time. In this way, access to some idea of authentic or natural play is impossible. The children are encouraged to be themselves, but those selves are inseparable from the infinite reproducibility of the filmstrip. The boundary between the natural and the unnatural becomes troubled; its location and affect less clear, the self-directed play more mechanical. The restrictions within, as well as outside of the playground, become apparent. The generalisations of race and class come to the foreground.

9 Jean-Jacques Rousseau sees Eros as a driving force that creates the social person. The birth of the sexual drives at adolescence, he argues, can lead a person to a life of vanity or one of compassion. In this case, the issue is not repression but a channeling of Eros through education. In Rousseau’s educational plan, Eros provides the psychological force for directing self-love to understanding that an injury to another can also be an injury to oneself. This creates compassion, which leads to helping others. Without this education, Rousseau believes, Eros turns self-love into vanity, which results in people spending their lives devoted to their personal appearance and accumulation of wealth. Joel Spring, Wheels in the Head: Educational Philosophies of Authority, Freedom, and Culture From Socrates to Human Rights (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 155.
Where is the Gaiety? is constructed from still images – like all films – but in this case that re-animation from stillness is accentuated. The pro-filmic signs of movement: the pan; the close up; the cut from one portion of space to another, are laboured, their devices laid bare. Rather than the air of immediacy or actuality that the motion picture has been attached to, Thust’s film brings us back to the essential nature of moving image: its stillness. Cinema consists of a linear sequence of still photographic images, each differing slightly so as to create the illusion of motion. Movement out of stillness is the paradoxical fact of the medium. The illusion of motion is only successful if the individual photographic image becomes invisible. The illusion here is suspended. Instead, we see the organisation of space and time by means of the camera. In this way, each image is significant. The slow, manual speed of the animation, or the hand turning the page of the album, extends the time of viewing single images. The effect for the viewer is of a disciplined simplification, a paring down and a sharpening that thickens each image. Against the grain of contemporary trends in structural film that focused on film’s production process as a vehicle of procedural abstraction, Thust’s work holds fast to photography’s history of political abstraction, to an aesthetic pedagogy of class relations, where photography’s form is deployed to assemble those relations into workable social form, rendering those boundaries knowable and testable. This self-reflective procedure infolds the artist himself, as artist, and as playleader.10

10 Thank you to Jacob Bard-Rosenberg for illuminating this contrast
A quote from an English publication on adventure playgrounds from 1972 appears near the start of both the film and the photo album. It reads:

Fencing provides an acceptable barrier that will keep people out of the playground when it is supposed to be closed and provides children with activities and a world of their own that gives them a sense of comfortable enclosure. There is gaiety in the air somehow in this adventure playground, and you feel it as soon as you enter through the gate from the street of this dreary and worn out neighbourhood.\textsuperscript{11}


After this we are shown the concrete wall that encloses the park, and a chainlink fence; the entrance; the facades of shabby terraced houses and the narrow snaking gardens that surround them; the stoops that lead from the street to these front doors and the Goldfinger high rise that looms above. The film introduces the adults involved by name and with a description of where they are from, their relationships to the playground, and their educational backgrounds. There is a mixture of black and white play leaders and children. Thust includes himself in the profile. Next we are introduced to a young black boy called Sylvester. He explains what he does in the playground, and why he is there. Sylvester’s voice runs over a series of portraits of himself, and later, of other children and play leaders. The photographs focus on their hands and faces. The figures appear in groups or alone.
Quotes attributed to ‘black male voice’ and ‘white female voice’ are repeated throughout the film and the photo albums, creating a recursive trope that guides us through a set of statements that roll out between the images of children and adults at play and at work.

White female voice: ‘The whole idea is to be yourself. Children should be free. We shouldn’t interfere, say and preach. Let the children solve their own problems.’

Black male voice: ‘The black community says: “Our children are being socially “killed” daily by British democracy, tolerance and fair play.”’

Middle class idealism meets working class realities. White institutionally sanctioned experimentation meets racism, systemic underfunding and unemployment for the Caribbean community.

Thus attempts to draw out the contentious contradictions at play in the park by segmenting a set of three simple phrases throughout the slide-show of photographs. Each phrase appears once, followed by a set of images, and then repeats, this time with a question mark at the end:

‘The Black Community’
‘The Black Community?’
‘Be Yourself’
‘Be Yourself?’
‘Solve Your Own Problems’
‘Solve Your Own Problems?’
The problems of the city are not dissolved by the charm of
the playground in Thust’s work. The film and photo albums
constantly remind the viewer of an outside, both physically
and psychically. Sylvester’s monologue over images of
him in the playground speaks of the outside, of being
expelled from school, of the subsequent violent fall out
with his father, how he has nowhere else to go... The images
of Sylvester seem timeless. His poses resemble classical
postures, the black and white film enters the images already
into a conversation with a generalised history, not located
temporally by the shifting technical capacities of colour’s
capture on film. When Sylvester speaks he speaks not just
of himself, but of the shared experience of those denied a
‘natural’ or ‘innocent’ childhood by the visible and invisible
apparatus of British imperialism.

Thust’s work is about measurements and boundaries, about
the lines of demarcation between the inside and the outside.
Just as the doorway or the corner of the street resonate
through visual history as those sites of community rituals of
self-representation, so does the portrait act as an evocation
of an inaccessible inner existence, an unseen reality under
the surface. Rather than representing individual stories,
or claiming to know or understand the children depicted,
the portraits in the work speak of general patterns of social
inequality and general patterns of learning through the
techniques of montage.

The works begs questions: Who defines ‘The Black
Community’? What self can you be in relentingly hostile
conditions? When does solving your own problems stop and
start being emancipatory?
Rousseau’s baseline assumption in *Emile*, about the tension-filled and paradoxical relation between the individual and society, is instructive here. The educational plan detailed in *Emile* calls for the removal of a young Emile from Paris (the symbol of societal corruption) to the French countryside (where unnatural relations of domination are much less evident). According to Rousseau, only if one can obtain critical distance from the effects of power endogenous to society during childhood and adolescence can the experience of ‘freedom’ be actualised later on, within society, as form of political being. Rousseau’s countryside, then, is never far from the city, from politics, or from power. His depictions of retreat are laden with irony, formal disruptions, the rediscovery of some kind of cultural interference at precisely the moment that any purity of intuitive nature is posed.

The film shows us that in the adventure playground no such dialectical relation is held up, the ameliorative qualities of retreat from the ‘dreary worn out neighbourhood’ and self-directed play stop there, they are unable to answer the questions posed around the violence of British democracy and fair play, remaining sealed off to the wider world behind the fence. The political organisation that was taking place in Notting Hill at the time sits behind the work: the fights for housing, for an end to racial violence and policing, for a transformative educational system, for jobs and prospects and political power for the black community. The community’s own political and cultural organisation had a long tradition in the area: Notting Hill Carnival had been founded only some years earlier in 1966; Notting Hill was also home to the Mangrove restaurant, around which the high profile case of the Mangrove Nine was still being fought in 1973.
The playground, under-resourced and isolated, could never have woven that thread between somatic pleasure and political being, between a rich inner world and the necessary power of institutional life. But in between the form of the photographs and the contents they depict lies the intellectual possibility of a truly dialectical pedagogy, one only achievable through transformations in the economic world by the construction of a social ethic built on historical knowledge. Here, childhood’s metaphorical terrain, rather than innocence, would be the possibility of change, a rebirth guided by the generous self-knowing love that is only achieved through a committed council with the past and its pains.

11 Ivan Illich, whom Thust was interested in, astutely describes the impoverishment of education against the backdrop of the general impoverishment of life under capitalism as such: "Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what the schools do for them. They school them to confuse process and substance. Once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is, the better are the results; or, escalation leads to success. The pupil is thereby 'schooled' to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is 'schooled' to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work. Health, learning, dignity, independence, and creative endeavour are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools, and other agencies in question." Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society, (1970).
The images, and their form, give us a framework for thinking about education. The slow unpacking of the contradictions of this educational experiment offers a chance to build on its failures and successes. Looking at the photographs we see the little hands learning to grip, understanding through experience what pressure to exert on what material, what to handle with care and what to handle with force. These hands grab on to other hands, build little forts to hide in and jump off, adult’s hands soothe or chastise, set boundaries and encourage. The photographs portray mixed emotions – fights as well as communion – but these difficulties are not attributed to one person or another but to all by way of photography’s standardising procedures. The formal means chosen by Thust gives the viewer access to the specific generality of human complexity, compromise, and possibility that must be worked with and over truthfully to learn to live better. Emotional and motor skills are both acquired by repetition, work, determined production, done again and again. No educational project should aim to achieve a state of innocence, but rather a state of knowledge. Within the work the potential to learn and teach differently is reborn.
Squat City

The Afterlives of the International Times: A Brief History of the ‘Non-New Left’ in Britain from 1968–1977

JACK BOOTH

• Anonymous, Squat City, in International Times, No. 9, 1 May 1977.
In the British situation, the old Left has been scattered, and a minority sucked up into the new corporate state. A new Left has to be created out of the existing fragmentary and divided opposition – from industrial militants already fighting the wages freeze and attempts to outlaw unofficial organisation (many of them still members of the Communist Party); left socialists, some of them still grumpily and despairingly hanging on in local Labour Parties for want of anything else; tenant activists battling against savage rent increases; students fighting American imperialism in Vietnam; a multitude of left groups, some industrial, some purely political, by-products of the degeneration of the old labour movement; and a host of others who would act if only they could see that it was part of a continuing, organised and credible struggle, rather than an individual gesture.  

We have given up on communism – only to fall more deeply in love with the idea of ‘the community.’  

This article is a brief history concerning a strand of communitarian thought that came out of the ‘underground’ publication the *International Times* in the late 1960s. It will address a brand of communitarianism that realised itself in the form of community video, which burgeoned in a heavily squatted area of West Kentish Town in the first half of the 1970s. I will look at how ideas of community formulated in the *International Times* met, and rubbed up against, the practicalities of forming and partaking in communities in this area of London. In order to frame the idea of community theorised within *International Times*, I will use the writings of community video practitioners and the videos these practitioners made, considering these against the broader movements of leftism within Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In particular, the British New Left will be considered as a counterpoint to the types of leftism espoused by community video practitioners, allowing me to examine how the call to form a New Left was realised.  

The call to form a New Left came from the British journal *International Socialism* in 1968, yet this project had been underway for around a decade prior, beginning in 1956 in the grouping known as the British New Left. That year inaugurated what one observer has called the ‘double conjuncture’ in reference to two key events at the time: Khrushchev’s secret speech denouncing Stalin, and the Suez Crisis that caused Labour to denounce Egypt’s nationalisation of the Suez Canal. It prompted a New Left to form in order to find a path between Stalinism and the Labour Party. E.P. Thompson was a forerunner of this new position, and in 1957 in an article in *The New Reasoner* titled ‘Socialist Humanism: An Epistle to the Philistines’ he called for a socialist humanism to replace the mechanical conception of Marxist doctrines adopted by Stalinism. In another article written that year and published in the *Universities and Left Review*, titled ‘Socialism and the Intellectuals’, Thompson discouraged joining either Labour or the Communist Party of Great Britain, as those who did join ‘seemed to get swallowed up in seas of expediency.’ This first period of the British New Left has been characterised as aiming ‘at facilitating the growth of a general socialist consciousness out of the multiplicity of anti-capitalist struggles.’  

Many of these struggles linked up to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) that grew throughout the late 1950s. This first grouping of the British New Left slowly ebbed coinciding with the ‘decline of CND by 1961.’ A second phase of the British New Left emerged and was partially represented in the *New Left Review* publication that had formed in 1960, combining journals *The New Reasoner* and the *Universities and Left Review*; by 1962, under the editorial guidance of Perry Anderson, it had taken a step back from activist concerns and became a ‘primarily theoretical exposition and construction, aimed at the creation of a Marxist culture.’ It was during this time that the publication began to be ‘more geared to the emerging preoccupations of Continental theory.’ The publication still had at its core the rejection of official Communism and also social democracy, while drawing succour from Marxism in the hope of mapping the sites of working class consciousness. By the time of 1968, ‘the old left’ that the *International Socialism* editorial above references was in fact the old New Left, and had undergone at least two transitions. ‘The new left’ of 1968 that *International Socialism* called to be formed was in a similar moment to 1956. If 1956 was formed out of Suez and the Secret Speech, then 1968 was formed out of a reaction against Wilson’s Labour government and the ‘complete disenchantment’ it had engendered with those on the left, and simultaneously the affirmation of ‘the interna-
The publication *The Black Dwarf* demonstrates an emergence of this New Left in 1968. The paper’s conception of a new Left can be found in various editorials; a good illustration of their standpoint comes from the editor Fred Halliday’s open letter ‘A Reply in Defence of The Dwarf.’ Here Halliday defines the position of the recently created publication as advocating for the ‘overthrow of bourgeois society’ through the ‘revolutionary organisation of workers’ via, not solely through, students who could play an ‘auxiliary role in the revolutionary process.’ Marxism still held sway over their conception of extraparliamentary politics; what was new about this brand of the British New Left was a strong commitment to political action – both workers’ strikes and student demonstrations – combined with a belief in students as being an important additional vanguard to achieve revolutionary socialism. The paper, typifying the stance of sections of the British New Left, maintained a commitment to Marxist theory and embraced an activism that was organised as well as spontaneous and decentralised.

Another publication that could be seen to fit in with the *International Socialism*’s call for a New Left was the *International Times*. *International Times* had been running since 1966 and was self-styled as the UK’s first ‘underground’ publication. In its inception it fused the anti-capitalist politics of CND, music of 1960s London popular culture, a broad range of artists and writers from John Latham to Alexander Trocchi, and the existentialist psychiatry practised by R. D. Laing. As well as *International Times*’ ecstaticism of content, it was well known for its classified advertisements and social events. By 1968 the *International Times* propounded a politics that was anti-imperialist, supported student struggle, minority causes and revolution in a broad sense. While these elements can be identified as being within *International Socialism*’s call to form a New Left and overlap with topics and ideas in *The Black Dwarf*, the *International Times* diverged from the British New Left through its direct advocacy of...
The Black Dwarf expressed similar distain for social categories. In their pre-issue they wanted to take off the labels or categories that their readers had attached to them. However, they did not assume that these labels were already dissolved, as International Times had; rather the assumption was that they would be worked through instead of being discarded a priori. The lens to which they would be worked through was Marxist and had the aim of supporting two outcomes: first they supported, national, that is British, working class struggle; those ‘who go on strike have always got a case, and we are going to put that case;’ secondly, they backed working class international struggle, which included the ‘National Liberation Front of Vietnam [as] an obvious example. But there are others all over Asia, Africa and Latin America.’14

By 1970 The Black Dwarf had succumbed to the sectarianism that Ali derided. Ali wanted the publication to ‘politically organise its readers,’ whereas others at the publication, like Fred Halliday and Clive Goodman, did not want to compromise its ‘independence from every left group.’15 The editorial board split in 1970: The Black Dwarf carried on publishing for a short while after; and Ali and Robin Blackburn went on to form Red Mole. The sectarianism that split The Black Dwarf centred around two different approaches to the best course of action after 1968. While not reneging on Marxism, both groups settled on an extrapolparliamentarism refusing both social democracy and official Communism, albeit with different outlooks. The remainder of The Black Dwarf editorial board espoused a type of anti-factionalist leftism based on class struggle, while the Red Mole, like International Socialism, was increasingly Trotskyist. By 1970

10 Here the International Times shows crossovers with and influence from U.S. that The Black Dwarf and the British New Left in general did not explicitly have. This is represented in the International Times’ membership to the Underground Press Syndicate (UPS). UPS originated from a group of publications in the U.S. coming out of California and New York. Their aim was to create an international grouping of ‘underground’ publications, allowing those in the syndicate to republish articles that appeared in other publications that were part of UPS. For International Times this meant that they republished a lot of ‘underground’ articles from the U.S.


16 John Hopkins. ‘Open Letter to Tariq Ali.’ International Times, No.29 (1968) p.11. Ironically Ali had met Régis Debray in 1967 when Ali, Perry Anderson and Robin Blackburn had been sent to Bolivia by Bertrand Russel’s Peace Foundation to document Debray’s trial, in lieu of Debray being captured for his involvement with Che Guevara while the latter was attempting to overthrow the Bolivian Regime.


International Times ideological underpinnings were less discernible. Instead of a direct engagement with proletarian struggle, it developed two almost antithetical poles of ideological thought: on the one hand it took individual discovery or self-abstraction or ‘self-dissolution’ as one pole of its thinking and as the other extraparliamentarism, which in 1968 centred around anti-imperialist and student struggle. The two poles were brought together in 1970 through the idea of action: this was not action in uniting and galvanising workers’ struggles; it was a direct action that sought to effect and create a community that was intended to be ‘without class,’ thus demonstrating a radical break from traditional forms of leftism espoused by the British New Left.19

In 1970, a short-running series of articles in the International Times titled ‘Fourth World’ stated that the alternative to political affiliation was to ‘assert our power in community’ and form a ‘New World which is a honeycomb of SMALL human communities.’ The article rhetorically asks readers ‘How do you join’ this type community; the answer was, ‘You don’t. You act. You act here and now on your own doorstep to build bridges, to communicate with your neighbours.’20 ‘Our power’ presumably referred to a now-established ‘underground’, who were encouraged to embrace community, which was to be made on the ‘doorstep.’ The qualities of the doorstep being both private and public belies the article’s belief in community as something that dissolves these two aspects, rather than accepting their rigid separation in parliamentary politics, while pointing towards communication as a means of uniting people in a community. This was a starting point for John Hopkins who looked at creating community through communication, specifically emergent communication technologies namely video.

In a column in the International Times in 1970 titled ‘Real Time Television’, Hopkins promoted the New Arts Lab, which was one of the first video workshops in the UK. The aim of these workshops was to demystify the medium of television and to allow people to represent themselves, thereby fulfilling the ‘crucial prerequisite of community’ of the ‘decentralisation of power and function.’21 Hopkins saw video as a method to get round a ‘hierarchically structured society’ and video, for him, would function as ‘decentralised television.’22 Video, as well as ‘providing genuine decentralised informa-

19 It should be noted that the International Times espousal of a classless position was hollow as the publication represented a bohemian class that had gained this status through a refusal to work rather than a lack of job opportunities. This was certainly true in the 1960s as the level of unemployment in the UK rarely strayed over 4 percent; only after the OPEC Oil Crisis in 1973 did unemployment rise over 4 percent.


tion networks,’ had uses relating to psychiatry: Hopkins saw one of video’s core principles as providing ‘intense feedback’ for the individual. Such ‘feedback’ was one of the intentions that the International Times had been founded on, in the form of feedbacking readers interest, through the publication of readers’ letters, articles and poems. Video, for Hopkins, superseded print as it was the medium par excellence for individual feedback in that it could instantly playback to the individual the representation of themselves in real time. In this way removing the individual from the ‘unsatisfactory’ past and future and facilitating a perpetual present. Therefore, Hopkins considered video a ‘transcending machine,’ insofar as it both facilitated decentralisation through its ability to dissolve the hegemonic power of television, to represent minority communities, and allowed for a dissolution of self through allowing the individual to have an ‘intense feedback’ and therefore to be continually present. These principles would have been worked through in the workshops that Hopkins facilitated and in the communities he represented in the videos he made.

For the rest of the essay, I want to look at the videos Hopkins made with his collaborator Sue Hall. These are, for me, afterlives of International Times and speak to a section of a ‘non-new left’, as distinct from the British New Left. Hopkins and Hall’s idea of community was based on a similar dualism of the International Times: at one end an extraparliamentarism based around anti-capitalist struggle and direct action; and at the other, a desire to dissolve the self and find a basis for the individual away from historical categories of class, gender and sexuality. These two aspects were linked increasingly in International Times through a loose idea of community that was both a set ethics and a moral compunction. Hopkins and latterly Hall devised the idea of community video to concretise a conception of community through the form of video. Their idea of community found material form in the West Kentish Town squatting community in the first half of the 1970s. The centre of this community was Prince of Wales Crescent. The Crescent had been marked for slum clearance and was to make way for a 20 storey tower. 24 In the years between local residents moving out in 1969 and the Crescent’s eventual demolition in 1977 it became the centre of activities for squatters in West Kentish Town. The International Times had covered Prince of Wales Crescent from its inception to its demolition. Early on and in June 1972 it ran an article on the Crescent calling it the ‘nub of North London’s liberative freak community,’ declaring the community’s intention to live in the area despite police harassment. A caricature in the International Times from May 1977 titled Squat City can be found in the squatting archive at Mayday Rooms. The picture holds within it the afterlives of social movements spawned by International Times and a squatting history of West Kentish Town: it shows a large house, as a cross section, with people living in cramped bedrooms. Each room depicts a type of squatter: a single mother feeding her child; a group holding a meeting; in the basement there is a depiction of a Baphomet and a man muses over the benefits of squatting as a camera lens comes out of his wall. The locality is specified in the subheading ‘Twixt Belsize Park and Chalk Farm.’

The caricature in 1977 references the uptake in the squatting movement that had grown considerably since the late 1960s and the end of the squatting community on Prince of Wales Crescent. Squat City plays the role of eulogy for the Crescent and a lament for those that it supported. In the years between 1972 and 1977 the Crescent and the surrounding ‘liberative freak community’ of West Kentish Town formed a variety of businesses and community groups: there was a mental health care service; residents’ associations; and the housing project SCH. 25 These were formed alongside media and arts groups. John Hopkins was prolific in terms of creating these types of groups. Notable ones include TVX, the Institute for Research in Art and Technology, and the Centre for Advanced TV Studies. 26 The Centre for Advanced TV Studies was set up with Sue Hall, a prominent organiser at the time who formed Fantasy Factory which ran one of the first independent video editing suites in the UK and also created Graft-On. 27 These groups found voice in various ways in International Times, however, it was through Hopkins, and the groups he created and was associated with, that clear overlaps with the editorial standpoint of International Times can be seen to have become actualised, particularly in the form of community video.

Hopkins and Hall produced a variety of videos during their time in the squatting community in West Kentish Town. The synthesis of extraparlamentarism in the form of community and the dissolution of self or self-abstraction coalesced

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23 John Hopkins. ‘Italy the Politics of Information.’ ’Time Out’, (1970) and ‘Time Travel & Mind Swap with your friendly transcending machine.’ International Times, No.73 (1970) pp.20-21. In the latter article Hopkins compared the process of video as similar to the sessions he was having with ‘Ronnie Laing’. He is referring to R.D. Laing.

24 The bottom three floors of the tower were originally designed as a community centre, and the remaining 17 storeys were for council tenants. The development also wanted to be ‘traffic free’ and was to be accessed only with ‘footpaths… between the low-rise blocks and open gardens and courtyards. Traffic will use underground roads, and there will be one underground garage for each family.’ Sylvia Jones, ‘What Will Life Be Like on the Future Estates?” Express & News, (May 5, 1967).

25 Some notable examples include Community Fed, a still existing food cooperative, The Mental Patients’ Union, which provided mental health support, Euroso, an artists’ administration service and the Prince of Wales Crescent Residents’ Association.

26 These groups were based at 13a POWC, an old dairy, which was shared with London Film Makers’ Cooperative.

27 The name was a play on Grafton Road that came off the Prince of Wales Road.
TIME TRAVEL & MIND SWAP
WITH YOUR FRIENDLY TRANSCENDING MACHINE

IN THIS first part of a four-part series on the controversial radio host, Terence Mckenna, a self-styled channeler of the radioactive waves of media, and a popular radio show, Terence, whoever the gas and the drugs, had long been part of the mainstream media. His show, "The Terrence McKenna Show," was a weekly program that aired on a variety of radio stations around the world, and it became famous for its innovative and thought-provoking content. Terence was a man of many talents, and his show was a reflection of his diverse interests and passions.

Terence's influence on the media industry was significant, and he was known for his unorthodox approach to broadcasting. He often used his show as a platform to discuss topics that were not typically covered by mainstream media, such as psychedelic experiences, spirituality, and alternative medicine.

In this first part of our series, we will explore Terence's life and work, and how his show became a source of inspiration for many people around the world. We will also discuss the controversy surrounding his show, and the impact it had on the media industry. In future parts of this series, we will explore Terence's other work, including his books and lectures, and how they continue to influence people today.

To read more about Terence Mckenna and his show, visit our website at www.terrencemckenna.com.

John Hopkins
in community video and found practical applications on Prince of Wales Crescent, where Hopkins and Hall shot video of, amongst other things, evictions of squatters and police brutality. *Squat Now Whist Stocks Last* shows the eviction of 'Dr John' and those who he squatted with on the Prince of Wales Road adjacent to Prince of Wales Crescent.28 Dr John Pollard was a self-proclaimed community leader of squatters in West Kentish Town.29 Living with him at the time of the eviction were 'founders of the Mental Patients Union and members of Dux Deluxe pop group.' Those in the house had barricaded the doors and tore down internal parts of the staircase; as people in the house were slowly removed, four of the squatters remained on the roof, as is shown in the video, drenching Police from above with a hosepipe. Hopkins' video was shown on the BBC and as he put it the video allowed 'the squatters [...] to brief themselves in absolute detail by playing the tape again and again and again...’30 The video was also intended to be used for evidence in court, however, it was not admitted. A video that was admitted as evidence in court was shot by Sue Hall titled *Ben’s Arrest*. This was filmed on Prince of Wales Crescent and shows Police ‘violently arresting a young black man before apparently beating him up in the back of the Transit van.’ The video set legal precedent in the UK as it was ‘accepted as evidence at a court of sessions in South London and the tape was played to the jury.’31 These two videos formed part of Sue Hall’s entry, titled *The Politics of Squatting – Excerpts*, into *The Video Show* in 1975. These videos became a form of activism for these practitioners as *Squat Now Whist Stocks Last* allowed all those who were arrested to avoid being charged by Police.32 *Ben’s Arrest* intervened directly in the law as it set legal precedent and proved the innocence of someone wrongly accused. This type of activism directly challenged the scope of legal power through the vitality of community video, while Hall and Hopkins used it to also formulate an ideal community. This is aptly shown in Hall and Hopkins video *Forming a Residents’ Association* (1974).33 The video is about the formation of Prince of Wales Crescent Residents’ Association. It aimed to give a template to others by showing how the association was formed and what its aims were. From the video we learn that the residents’ association aimed to be a member-led body, formed for the purpose of renegotiating the planned demolition of the Crescent with the council. The medium of video merges with struggles around housing, functioning as a

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29 David White. ‘The New Settlers.’ New Society, (December 14, 1972). In this article ‘Dr John’ also outlines a survey he conducted of the squatters in the area: out of 99 people the median age is 24; a third have a degree; 22 percent are artists; 63 percent are self-employed; and 36 percent had full time employment.
30 Anonymous. ‘The Day the Squatting Had to Stop.’ Express & News (March 8, 1974).
31 Jackie Hatfield. ‘Interview with Sue Hall & John Hopkins.’
32 Ibid.
33 The video can be found at http://www.the-lcva.co.uk/videos/e25c36e2dd813b7e0014a5b
Camera Forward! 177

mode of self-representation and galvanising communitarian output, while also providing an administrative record of the meeting that aimed directly to solve problems immanent to their situation.

This type of activism form Hopkins and Hall's political aspirations of community video, in that it can directly challenge and cajole legal and governmental authority while also having the power to affect a type of self-determination for the community being represented. This self-determination came from the fact that it was someone either inside, outside, or with a status of both, who made the community video and was sympathetic to the community being represented. The status of the person who made the video required, as a prerequisite, an empathetic understanding of the community being videoed and when this was coupled with the fact that community video was intended as an activist concern it raises empathy up to becoming a political model intended to jolt and disrupt the cold and distant impersonality of state power.

In an issue titled 'Communications' in the International Times there is a double page spread that detailed the galvanising effects of community video on community as it 'allows the complete control of the means of communication by the people in a community,' and says that it has the 'potential of catalysing community dialogue, and can become an important tool in community development.' The article references the 'Challenge for Change' projects initiated by the Canadian government in the early 1970s in the 'poorer areas of Montreal, Drumheller and other communities' as an example of where community video has been used, but it does not describe the effects it had on the communities there. More fundamentally there is not a specific definition of community. Strangely the closest the article gets to a definition of community is through its comparison of 'video users' to ‘tantrikas [adherents to Tantra]' both of whom channel 'the free energy of the greater body;' this ‘greater body’ in Tantra was the union of the individual to the cosmos and in community video this was the union of ‘the needs and means of the individual and the needs and means of community.’ For the article community video effects an ideal union of individual with community, and therefore the definition of community exists in the realisation of individual needs within a community.
Hopkins and Hall expounded on the power of community video in 1976, when they wrote an article titled ‘The Metasoftware of Video.’ The pair describe the formal capacities of video similarly to how Hopkins had in 1970 in his column ‘Real Time Television’, seeing it as a medium dedicated towards: ‘decentralisation, flexibility, immediacy of playback, speed of light transmission, global transmission pathways, [and] input to two of the senses [hearing and sight].’ Their desire for total communication is elaborated through cybernetic theory and broadens out their idea of feedback through equating it to ‘response’. They therefore allow it to be measured at all levels of communication, rather than specifically as an individual feedbacking their interest: ‘there is no reason why response cannot be viewed as a communication in reply to a prior communication.’ Communication thus becomes the reaction to information rather than the traditional idea of communication as an exchange and/or the imparting of information. The idea was that communication was no longer the measure of certain things, and instead was now the measure of all things, as exchange/authority (imparting), became reduced to response, meaning that all communication had become valid at the cost of knowing how or what communication was useful or operative. Furthermore, the effect of treating all communication as a response renders information unhierarchal and thereby without the stipulations of traditional power. In the vacuum of stabilised and regulated forms of power individual means can coalesce with community needs.

For Hopkins and Hall this ideal of communication, measured purely as individual response, which engendered community agency, was beginning to find material force in the mid-1970s. The materiality of these ideas found form in the West Kentish Town squatting community, where the three videos referenced were filmed, and through a wider culture of community work at the time, in which the pair identified video as part of a burgeoning of ‘community services’ that were emerging at this time. Hall and Hopkins see community video as being able to harmonise individual and community needs, with the effect of creating both a socially engaged process and a business model which the pair termed the ‘third sector.’ These services were ‘neither wholly commercial nor wholly state supported, but which [were] in the form of independently run public services.’ The idea of the ‘third sector’ was a term akin to another community group active in the West Kentish Town squatting community: Inter-Action’s coinage of the term ‘social enterprise.’ Both took the idea of merging private and public spheres to make community projects that were defined as independent, or privately run, ‘public services.’ In the 1970s the idea of independently run public service would have appeared novel and even ground breaking, in its alternative to state intervention it effectively recasts the idea of civil society in opposition to state power, as opposed to the Gramscian idea of the two being in unity with one another. The idea of an independent public service has become sedimented in 21st century in the form of grass-roots organisations (NGO) and non-governmental organisations (NGO). As David Harvey states, these have ‘proliferated remarkably under neoliberalism, giving rise to the belief that opposition mobilised outside the state apparatus and within some separate entity called ‘civil society is the powerhouse of oppositional politics and social transformation.’ Community video was one of the harbingers of such change, providing an announcement for the transformation of oppositional politics conducted exclusively from the outside; a change that has been unopposed and welcomed under the logics of neoliberalism.

By March 1976 Prince of Wales Crescent had come to an end, the Ham and Highgate Express ran the title: ‘Squatters Go Quietly – To GLC Flats.’ After negotiating within the GLC for some on the Crescent to be rehoused, the majority on Prince of Wales Crescent dismantled their barricades and peacefully left the Crescent. The history of Prince of Wales Crescent and wider West Kentish Town squatting community is held with the caricature of Squat City: it depicts a brief history of a section of the non-New Lefth, a strand of which became focused on using community video to allow the full freedom of individuality to be harnessed in community action. Community video originated as the site of anti-capitalist struggle for Hopkins replacing the political struggles of the late 1960s, demonstration, revolt, student insurrection. Fighting authority through direct action was instead rethought as a claim to decentralise dominant modes of media representation for groups that, if not exclusively part of the underground, were considered as poorly represented.

36 A community organiser on the Crescent, E. D. Berman founder of Inter-Action, went on to set up an NGO Advisory Service.
There are no producers or consumers. Just people.
with extraparliamentarism in the form of community. Despite some of Hopkins and Hall’s community video practice joining up with the extraparliamentarism of the New Left, it was their desire to liberate the individual from institutional form which set them apart. Those on the British New Left perceived ‘a crisis’ in the established institutions of the left and turned towards extraparliamentary politics and a critique of culture through a Marxist lens to engage with class politic anew, yet their drift away from these institutions was not absolute.38 This preference for cultural critique had become symptomatic of their drift away from traditional institutions and led, according to Davis, to their indistinguishability from forms of non-New Left by the late 1970s.39 Yet their distrust of institutional form never amounted to a wholesale rejection. Whereas, community video practitioners, steeped in the radical anti-authoritarianism of the International Times and the non-classed lumpen squatting milieu of West Kentish Town, saw the power inherent in institutional form as abhorrent and looked to solve problems for themselves. Community was a potentiality and a halfway point, neither capitalism nor class struggle. What emerged for community video practitioners in the vacuum of institutional form was an entrepreneurial power found in community action.40 Hopkins and Hall (as well as similar groups on the crescent such as Inter-Action) began by the mid 1970s to embody community action as enterprise, affirming the socially progressive traits of socialism and social democracy within the nascent environment of rabid deregulation and privatisation. The effect was to disarm themselves and their adherents of a critique of class and economic oppression, replacing it instead with a toolkit for professionalising concerns around social inequality and a reduction of politics to the solution of immediate and surface problems; this was an idea of community reduced to the individual which began as a bridge from anti-capitalist activism and realised itself as a ‘third sector’ enterprise.

The MayDay Rooms Pamphlet Series brings together reproductions of documents from radical histories offering a space for extended engagement and critical reflections on their contemporary relevance. Each pamphlet will contain newly created content – including essays, poems, and illustrations – set alongside reproductions of materials to which they are responding.

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