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# Posters from the Revolution : Paris, May 1968

texts and posters from the Atelier Populaire

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Atelier Populaire (Usine-Universite-Union)

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**POSTSCRIPT**

The Atelier Populaire does not claim to be establishing a historical record of their action nor to be putting forward a solution, but simply to show the methods of struggle discovered day by day in action. The existence of the Atelier Populaire depends on the determination and need for giving the widest possible publicity to each particular struggle. The fight is neither over nor brought to a stop; the circumstances of struggle change; new methods of continuing it will be found in action in our support of the workers. Let us form in our cultural and political action the rearguard of the workers' struggle against the repressive system of bourgeois culture. Let us redouble our attempts to find both in action and through our contact with the masses the methods of struggle best suited to each situation. Let us increase the number of Ateliers Populaires so as to provide the conditions necessary for the emergence of a people's culture and an information network at the service of the workers. Let us not work in isolation: we should spread as widely as possible the lessons we have learnt at every stage of practical action.

ATELIER POPULAIRE  
August 1968  
UUU (Usines-Universite-Union)  
64 rue de Richelieu, Paris 9e.

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...

The elections are boycotted by a great number of workers, in spite of the P.C.F. (French Communist Party) which endeavours to steer the struggle to this arena. The following posters propagate the rejection of elections and the choice of truly proletarian methods of carrying on the struggle. Before the first round of voting (June 23) **181**; **182**; After the refusal of the government to reopen the electoral lists to include the young **183**; June 16 **184**; **185**; Component sections for posters to fight the elections **186**, **187**; Power to the people **188**

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...

The struggle is not finished. It continues with the awareness of new strength found in proletarian methods of struggle. Slogan put forward by the Renault workers at the beginning of the struggle **192**; **193**; June 19 **194** The impetus has been given for a protracted struggle. Mid-June **195**, **196**; Poster produced in mid-June and reissued in the fourth week of June **196**.

...

**Ten to twelve million workers stood shoulder to shoulder in unity to defend their demands and their aspirations. In front of them everything else—the bourgeois state, its police, its politicians, etc ... had disappeared, didn't count for anything... the lesson will not be forgotten.**

A workman from Renault Flins

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...

To the reader: The posters produced by the Atelier Populaire are weapons in the service of the struggle and are an inseparable part of it. Their rightful place is in the centres of conflict, that is to say in the streets and on the walls of the factories. To use them for decorative purposes, to display them in bourgeois places of culture or to consider them as objects of aesthetic interest is to impair both their function and their effect. This is why the Atelier Populaire has always refused to put them on sale. Even to keep them as historical evidence of a certain stage in the struggle is a betrayal, for the struggle itself is of such primary importance that the position of an "outside" observer is a fiction which inevitably plays into the hands of the ruling class. That is why this book should not be taken as the final outcome of an experience, but as an inducement for finding, through contact with the masses, new levels of action both on the cultural and the political plane.

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Wednesday, May 8th. The Ecole des Beaux Arts goes on strike. May 13th-A mass demonstration of workers and students is called by all their unions. Following police repression in the Latin Quarter a million demonstrators from the Place de la Republique to the Place Denfert-Rochereau manifest that they will no longer tolerate the Gaullist government because this government is no longer representative of the people, is responsible for unemployment and poverty and is the instrument of repression by employers (Nantes, Caen, Rhodiaceta, Redon).

May 14th-3 p.m. A provisional strike committee informs the Administrative Council of the Ecole des Beaux Arts that the students are taking possession of all the premises.

May 15th-The General Assembly of the strikers adopts the following platform:

Why are we prolonging the struggle? What are we fighting against? We are fighting against a class university, we want to organize the struggle in all the following aspects:

1. We criticize the social selection which operates at every stage of education from primary to university level, to the detriment of working class children and those of poor peasants. We want to fight the system of competitive examinations which is central to that selection.

2. We oppose the emptiness of the educational content and the pedagogical manner in which it is put over. Because everything is organized so as to ensure that the system produces human beings without a critical awareness both with regard to knowledge and to social and economic reality.

3. We oppose the role which society expects intellectuals to play, along with the technocrats, as the watch-dogs in a system of bourgeois economic production, seeing to it that each man feels happy with his lot, especially if his lot is one where he is exploited. What relevance does this opposition have for a college of painting and sculpture? It is of course for the student commissions to define this in detail, but we can say what it means so far as the architectural college is concerned: We want to fight against the domination of education by the profession by means of the Order of Architects or other corporate bodies. We are against the system of Dons controlling the teaching programme and are against the conformist ideology that results from this. The teaching of architecture should not consist of mere repetition of what the Don does until finally the pupil becomes a carbon copy of him. We want to fight against the conditions in which architecture is subordinated, in effect, to the interests of public or private promoters. How many architects have agreed to carry out projects such as Sarcelles, big or small? How many architects include in their specifications the conditions of the workmen on the building sites as regards their hygiene,

**Different public services.** May 28 **118**; Requested by and executed with the dustmen to stick on their dustcarts after the return to work **119**; Second week in June **120**

...

**Various sectors on strike.** Urban reconstruction project, asked for by the action committees **121**; **122**; June 21, asked for by the strike committee **123**; Asked for by the workers of the Kodak-Vincennes factory early in June **124**; June 10, asked for by different strike committees of the big stores to combat false reports which daily announced they were reopening **125**; Asked for by the strike committee of Cliche-union **126**

...

**Strikes in the academic sector.** These strikes are not usually aimed at economic targets but are directed against the cultural oppression of the regime.

For the action committee of the **Education Nationale**: fourth week in May **127** and second week in June **128**; For the **Institut Pédagogique Nationale**, entrusted with schools radio and television: end of May then second week in June **129**; For the action committees of the **Institutes of Statistics** **130**; For the action committee of **Psychiatric Medicine**; end of May (intended to be accompanied by a text) **131**; For the action committee of the **Bibliothèque Nationale** **132**

...

Posters encouraging student-worker solidarity. May 14, first poster of the Atelier Populaire **133**; Art at the service of the people **134**; May 18, start of the general strike **135**; The same problem, the same struggle **136**, **137**

The slogans become more concrete in the fight, particularly at Flins. End of May, underground Atelier Populaire at Flins **138**; June 10, **139**

...

On June 7 5,000 C.R.S. dislodge the strike pickets at Flins. June 8 97, 98; for the demonstration of June 11 99

...

The vote on the return to work is to take place on June 17. End of May, reissued on June 15, asked for by the Renault action committees 100; Second week in June, action committee at Billancourt 101; After the return to work, repression by the management ( contracts of active strikers not renewed): new stoppage with occupation of factories 102

...

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...

**Metal workers.** First week in June 107; Second week in June, the struggle of the metal workers is exemplary 108

...

**For the railwaymen.** First week in June 109, 110

...

**For the R.A.T.P. (Paris bus and Metros)** 111; End of May 112; Asked for by the action committee of R.A.T.P. 113; On June 5 the vote to return to work organized by the C.G.T. is contested by many workers: three depots continue the strike. The action committee asks for a poster and help for the strike pickets 114

...

**Strikes at the P.T.T.** (Post, Telegraph, Telephone) 115; After the occupation by the C.R.S. of the P.T.T. centre of the 13th arrondissement. This centre was reoccupied soon after with the support of the action committees, students and the local population 116; After the Grenelle agreements the P.T.T. action committee asked for the poster 117

...

**protection and safety and if they did so would any contractor carry out their proposals? We all know that in France there are three deaths every day in the building industry. We want to fight the particularly conservative content of the teaching itself which contains little that is rational or scientific and in which habitual patterns of thought and personal opinions continue to take precedence over objective knowledge. The ideology of the Prix de Rome is still very much alive! In short, we want to be alive to the true relations between the College and society; we want to fight its class character. We must recognize that we cannot carry out this fight alone. We must not deceive ourselves that members of the universities will be able to set up in their faculties really autonomous bodies which are independent of ,the educational system of bourgeois society. It is alongside the workers, the principal victims of the process of social selection which operates throughout the educational system, that members of the university should fight. The struggle against the class university should be organically linked to the struggle of all the workers against the system of capitalist exploitation. We must therefore commit ourselves to:**

<strong>- challenge the relationship which at present exists between the profession and its teaching;

- challenge the present separation of the E.N.S.B.A. (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts) from other higher education;

- refuse to operate any form of pre-selection for entry to the college;

- struggle against the present system of competitive examinations;

- establish effective relationships with the workers in a common struggle.</strong>

<strong>On all these questions we must have the most open debate.

All members of the teaching body must declare their position.

Ways of organizing the struggle must be found.</strong>

## **THE STRIKE COMMITTEE OF THE ECOLE NATIONALE SUPERIEURE DES BEAUX ARTS**

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As early as May 14th several students met together spontaneously in the lithographic workshop and deciding on direct action drew off the first poster:

[Pictured : Usine-Université-Union]

On May 16th, during the meeting of a Reform Commission set up that morning, a certain number of those taking part, both pupils and painters from outside, decided to occupy the studios in order directly and practically to put into action the programme of struggle drawn up on May 15th. At the entrance to the studios they wrote:

### **ATELIER POPULAIRE ATELIER OUI**

#### **BOURGEOIS NON**

We set to work in accordance with this principle. We are beginning to produce posters and at the same time we define our position in opposition to the Reform Commission in the following statement (distributed as a leaflet several days later, May 21st):

If we try to be precise about the words we have written at the entrance to the studios and to comprehend what they mean, they will dictate to us the main lines of our future action. The words indicate that it is not in any way a question of reforming, that is to say of bettering what already exists. Any improvement implies that basic principles are not to change, hence that they are already the right ones. We are against the established order of today. What is this established order? Bourgeois art and bourgeois culture. What is bourgeois culture? It is the means by which the forces of oppression of the ruling class isolate and set apart the artists from the rest of the workers by giving them a privileged status. Privilege locks

**Against the communications network.** Against the O.R.T.F. (French national radio and television) controlled by the government **76, 77** (May 27), **78, 79, 80**

...

After the start of the strike at the O.R.T.F. the union and the action committee of the O.R.T.F. come and ask for posters: other posters are directed against strike-breakers and the representatives of the Ministry for Home Affairs installed at the O.R.T.F. by the government to issue news bulletins and government propaganda **81, 82, 83** (Poster workshop of the Ecole des Arts decoratifs), **84** (produced in very great numbers with different slogans by the Atelier Populaire then by the O.R.T.F.)

...

Against the press which serves the bourgeoisie. Third week in May **85**; June 10 **86**

...

For a press and information service in support of the workers' struggles. June 12 **87**; Wall newspaper: five issues are produced from June 10 to the end of June **88**

...

The workers of the daily newspapers on strike and of the printers on strike supply the Atelier with free paper: printers and workers on strike give their services in printing a great number of posters. Meetings to relay news are held in streets and factories. June 11 **89**; June 13 **90, 91**; June 6 **92**

...

**Support for the strikes.** Many posters correspond to a demand from workers, action committees and strike committees of the Renault factories at Flins and Billancourt etc. These posters are often designed with or by the workers themselves. An Atelier Populaire functions at Flins in secret for a week. Third week in May, slogans of the workers **93, 94, 95**; June 4, after the appearance of the C.R.S. near Flins **96**

...



after the taking of the Sorbonne by the C.R.S. 52; Fourth week in June, after the taking of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts 53; Poster designed in a poster workshop of the Schools Action Committee (C.A.L.) at Louis-le-grand 54

...

**Against the expulsion of foreign workers, students and journalists**

Many of those expelled are put in prison in their countries of origin. Foreign workers are expelled as a measure of intimidation, to drive their compatriots to go back to work. After the expulsion of Portuguese workers on strike 55; May 27 56; After the (illegal) refusal to allow Cohn-Bendit to stay in the country 57; June 10 58; Second week in July 59

...

**Against the fascisation of authority.** Fascist propaganda themes and vocabulary appear openly in government speeches.

After General de Gaulle's speech of May 30 60, 61, 62; After the attacks by the reactionary and Communist press against Cohn-Bendit, called "Jew", "German", "undesirable" in France 63, 64

...

June 27 65; Against the anti-socialist propaganda of "law and order" 66, 67, 68 (from the poster workshop of the Faculty of Medicine)

...

**After the formation of the C.D.R. (Committees for the "Defence of the Republic")** The Gaullist militia go into action, appeal for informers. June 3, sticker for C.D.R. posters 69; June 2 70; June 5 71; June 10, sticker for C.D.R. posters 72; Frey, former Minister for Home Affairs, is named as responsible for the organization of the C.D.R. 73; June 7 74; June 30, after armed attacks against the Faculty of Orleans by extreme right-wing groups and armed attacks on electoral poster stickers by Gaullist poster stickers 75

...

the artist in an invisible prison. The fundamental concepts which underlie this act of isolation which culture brings about are:

- the idea that art has "gained its autonomy" (Malraux-see the speech made at the time of the Grenoble Olympic Games).

- the defence of "creative freedom": culture makes the artist live in the illusion of freedom.

1. He does what he wants to do, he believes that everything is possible, he is accountable only to himself or to Art.

2. He is a "creator" which means that out of all things he invents something that is unique, whose value will be permanent and beyond historical reality. He is not a worker at grips with historical reality. The idea of creation gives his work an unreal quality. In giving him this privileged status, culture puts the artist in a position where he can do no harm and in which he functions as a safety-valve in the mechanism of bourgeois society. This is the situation of every one of us. We are all bourgeois artists. How could it be otherwise? This is why when we write *Atelier Populaire* it cannot be a question of improvement, but of a radical change of direction. It means that we are determined to transform what we are in society. Let us make it clear that it is not the establishment of better contacts between artists and modern techniques that will bind them closer to all the other categories of workers, but opening their eyes to the problems of other workers, that is to say of the historical reality of the world in which we live. No teacher could help us to become more familiar with that reality. We must all teach ourselves. This does not mean that there does not exist objective, therefore admissible, knowledge, nor that older artists and teachers cannot be very useful. But this is on condition that they themselves have decided to transform what they are in society and to take part in this work of self-education. The educative power of the bourgeoisie thus challenged, the way will be open to the educative power of the people.

There are then ten million strikers in France. Those who worked in the *Atelier Populaire* go out to the occupied factories, to the

workshops and the building sites, so as to learn from the workers on strike how to constitute the rearguard of the struggle of which they are the vanguard. It is not a job for specialists. Those who come to take part enthusiastically in the production of posters are now numerous. They are workers and students, both French and foreign. Workers come with suggestions for slogans and to debate with the artists and students, to criticize the posters already made, or to distribute them outside.

*At the entrance to the studios is the notice:*

***To work in the Atelier Populaire is to give concrete support to the great movement of the workers on strike who are occupying their factories in defiance of the Gaullist government which works against the people. By placing all his skills at the service of the workers' struggle, each member of this workshop is also working for himself, in that he is coming in contact through his practical work with the educative power of the people.***

The radical students and artists re-examine their points of view by allying with the workers. They strive by action, criticism and self-criticism, to eliminate the practices of individualistic bourgeois creation which come persistently to the fore, whether consciously or not.

How is the work carried out? Projects for posters worked out in common after a political analysis of the day's events or after discussions at the factory gates are democratically proposed in General Assembly at the end of the day. The criteria for judgment are:

Is the political idea sound?

Does the poster put over this idea well?

Today, the struggle continues for us, the movement of May is not dead. The mass strike movement of over ten million workers is not crushed. Far from being finished, it is only just beginning. Everything points to this: methods of carrying on the struggle have been revived (unlimited strikes, occupation of factories, building sites, depots and offices); the strikers are aware of their strength-

...

Attacks against the representative of the system. Third week in May **24**; May 19 in reply to General de Gaulle's "La Reforme oui, la Chienlit non!" **25**; In reply to Fouchet who describes the demonstrators, workers and students as scum **26**; After the interview of June 7 at which General de Gaulle compares himself to "an angel of salvation for the people" **27**

...

Against the solution of reform within the system put forward by the government. Third week in May **28**; Against the Grenelle agreements, May **27 29**; Against university reform **30, 31**

...

Against participation proposed in May by General de Gaulle. May 20 **32**; Third week in May **33, 34**; Second week in July **35**

...

Against those in favour of capitulation. May 28, after the Grenelle agreements **36**; June 17, on a text requested by the Citroen workers, the railwaymen and the postal workers **37**; Draft text from the Citroen workers **38**

...

**Against police repression in the streets, from its first manifestations.** May 17 **39**; May 18: finished off by workers in a printer's, this poster was printed in large numbers **40**; Third week in May: to go with the two preceding posters **41**

...

Fourth week in May **42, 43**; May 25, after government speeches describing the demonstrators, workers and students as "scum" **44**; July 16, after National Fete Day **45, 46, 47. ...**

**Against police repression against workers on strike occupying their factories.** On June 6 5,000 C.R.S. occupy the Renault factory at Flins: June 7 **48**; June 9 **49, 50**; June 13, two workers from the Peugeot factory at Sochaux are killed by the C.R.S. **51 ...**

**Against police repression directed against students and schoolchildren occupying educational premises.** June 18,

this sort of enclosed stage performance has demonstrated that we would do better to go out into the streets and into the countryside. Only in these circumstances do we achieve real mass participation and effective propaganda in support of the people's struggles.

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**The following are standard posters grouped by subject produced by Atelier Populaire with a few produced in poster workshops of various Colleges, Faculties and Lycees during May, June and July 1968.** References are given as far as now possible of the needs and circumstances which occasioned their production.

Posters directed against the capitalist system Working conditions. May 20 **1**; Asked for by the metal workers, May 22 **2**; Asked for by the Citroen workers after the end of the strike **3**; End July, after the return to work **4**.

...

Exploitation, latent violence, unemployment. Fourth week in May **5, 6**; Inter-professional committee of the building trade **7**; Asked for by the workers of the milk distributing companies, to stick on their trucks **8**; June 27 **9**.

...

Posters are requested to show where the real power lies **10**; Strike committee of Contrexeville. "It is by stopping our machines unitedly that we show up their feebleness" **11**; Third week in May, Citroen workers **12, 13**

...

Posters denounce the power mechanism at the service of the capitalist system, with its arbitrary methods **14, 15, 16, 17**

...

The will to have done with the system. **18**; Third week in May **19**; Posters workshop of the Faculty of Medicine **20**; Third week in May **21, 22, 23**

the solidarity between the strikers and other working sections of the community, especially a section of the peasant class. And finally thousands of young workers' cadres are today being organized. These gains are irreversible. After the Gaullist success, blackmail and demagoguery paid off. The party of fear has pulled in all its votes. But thousands of voters have abstained. They would not vote for left-wing politicians who after having made them capitulate, dragged them on to a battleground which was not their own—that of the legislative elections. We have entered a phase of prolonged struggle. After the elections the fight will continue in work places—the new battlegrounds.

Today, as when the movement of May was at its height, the challenge which remains to be answered is that of the PEOPLE'S POWER.

The Atelier Populaire must not fall into the parliamentary trap. We have chosen the workers' battlegrounds as our own. Our task is therefore:

- to show up capitalist oppression in all the forms it has assumed today under Gaullism (repression by employers and police);

- to give support to the workers in their determination to prolong the struggle. Through our work we will help to bring them victory, in the factories, on building sites, in the depots, in the offices. It will be the victory of the cause of class war over that of class collaboration, the path chosen by the PCF (French Communist Party) and the federal leadership of the CGT (General Confederation of Workers) who regard parliamentary struggle as being central to the conquest of power.

In our choice of posters we will support struggles of a revolutionary nature. These are the struggles which will give power to the people and lead to socialism by the overthrow of the parliamentary regime which is the instrument forged by the bourgeoisie to protect its own interests. We will support the unity of all the forces of the working people grouped around the militant workers fighting against the bourgeoisie. Culture is a direct manifestation

of the class struggle. This is why the Atelier Populaire intends to continue its work through artistic activity. (Today posters and the puppet theatre, tomorrow painting, sculpture, films, songs, etc ... ) We aim at denouncing the bourgeois culture which was created by and which serves that class. The system of values which it defends and propagates appears to be established in absolute terms. But in reality, just because it assumes this mask of universality, this system of values is the best means of defending and reinforcing the capitalist structures of society. Bourgeois culture is an integral part of the system of oppression which the ruling class has erected against the interests of the people. All attempts to carry on the struggle on the level of culture alone are, in their different ways, equally deceptive. The belief that it is possible to deny a society that one does not accept by placing oneself beyond its reach, is a retreat into an attitude of passivity, thence tacit acceptance. To challenge the cultural system from the inside rapidly leads from challenging art to the art of challenge, another form of bourgeois art as cut off as the others from the people and of no use to the people's struggle. These different attitudes in the long run provide an alibi for the system of bourgeois culture and keep people's minds away from the real fight. A cultural challenge if it is to become really effective must become political and place itself at the service of the workers. We have already stated that the people will not gain power through the parliamentary system. In the same way we insist that we will not help a people's culture to develop by allowing the diffusion of bourgeois culture. We therefore cannot but denounce the system of cultural "participation" proposed by Malraux and the Maisons de la Culture, as a sort of "cultural fascism". We should work towards the development of a truly popular culture, that is to say of the people at the service of the people, we must drive for the creation of more Ateliers Populaires, in opposition to the oppression of bourgeois culture.

More and more posters are indeed being produced. Our principal task is not, however, to flood the country from one central point.

of posters. We have performed in different places and in different circumstances from this we have learned a number of lessons:

**1. Mouffetard** - At the end of May during a popular festival, we produced posters, performed in the theatre and at street gatherings. In the streets there was real audience participation, with laughter, catcalls at police repression and chanting of slogans; whereas the same evening in the theatre, the audience was composed of passive spectators. They did no more than demonstrate their appreciation by applause.

**2.** In the courtyard of the Ecole des Beaux Arts at the beginning of June: work of training and perfecting and of establishing contact. It is also a means (for us) of familiarizing ourselves with our work and of rallying new comrades.

**3. - In an Action Committee:** people did not participate because we put on a show which was not concerned with their immediate preoccupation, which was at that time the elections.

**4. - Clichy, Sunday June 16th:** On the central square near the market. There were about 200 people. They were amused and came to look behind the curtain and to question us on the events which we were presenting and on our methods of acquiring information. People felt involved and took part enthusiastically in debate. For us the effective participation stimulated by our performance at Clichy was the positive outcome of our earlier efforts.

**5. - Chably:** a film was being made about the struggle of the Renault car workers at the Flins factory. Through the puppets we established contact with the farmers. They talked to us about their own problems (the grafting of the vines and so on). We explained to them the events of May. The farmers helped us with some sequences for the film by allowing certain scenes to be shot in their farmyards, etc.

**PLANS:**

To stage performances at Sarcelles, Flins, les Mureaux and Brittany. If we refuse to perform in theatres and in the Faculties, it is not because of any systematic refusal to do so, but experience of

Caption reads: "A little wheel and a little screw" (Lenin) in support of the people's struggle.]</em>

The Puppet Theatre of the Atelier Populaire came into being on May 22nd 1968. Two actors came to the College and put up notices asking other comrades to join them. Little by little a group gathered around those making the puppets and discussion started on how best to use them. Those who made up the group were active in various different fields. There were puppeteers, painters, sculptors, actors, architects, musicians and so on. Each participates in all the stages of making the puppets and of writing the scripts. The musician plays his instrument but he also pulls the puppet strings.

#### **Aim of our work**

The Puppet Show is a means of propaganda and its aim is to give rise to discussion. We found our inspiration in the "Guignol Lyonnais", a sort of Punch and Judy Show. We revived its tradition by presenting the day's events in a satirical way. The aim is to make people laugh, so that they should express themselves without embarrassment. Laughter has always been a means of denunciation. To condemn the established order through ridicule is far more effective as a mobilizing force than to condemn it as it really is.

Example: Blows on the head of the Guignol -- truncheon blows aimed at the students. The Puppet Show is one means of distribution and propaganda with the aim of leading people to debate.

#### **For the scripts**

We use the newspapers of the bourgeois press and our own militant news sheets. The simplicity of this form of expression demands that the team should choose material which, after political analysis, will demonstrate the most striking aspects of current events. The material which goes into the scripts is chosen during a group discussion from a wide range of articles. Because our puppets are used to spread propaganda and extend the struggle, we take them to the Action Committees, into the factories and into the streets. In this way the work of the puppeteers is closely related to the production

We must encourage the creation of new Ateliers Populaires wherever the workers are fighting, so that the work of political analysis which provides the inspiration for the posters we produce and their distribution, will remain linked to the people's struggle.

## **ORGANIZATION AND METHOD**

What we have to say is of less importance than the use of your own initiative; invent many new forms of action. The Atelier Populaire consists of a workshop where the posters are conceived, and several workshops where they are produced (printing by the silk-screen process, lithography, stencilling, dark-room and so on). All the militants-workers, students, artists, etc.-from the Atelier Populaire meet daily in a General Assembly. The work of this assembly is not merely to choose between the designs and slogans suggested for posters, but also to discuss all current political problems. It is mainly during the course of these debates that the political policy of the Atelier Populaire is developed and defined. It is essential that as many workers as possible should take part. The procedure that is adopted when voting in the General Assembly is the one that you will discover for yourselves through daily experience of direct democracy. Each person submits to criticism from everyone; he takes it into account and modifies his work accordingly. Experience has taught us that there are certain dangers to be avoided:

- time lost in futile debate owing to poor organization of the day's work;
- slogans which are vague and too numerous;
- voting on projects that have been too hastily conceived.

The end result is a dissipation of effort and has a demobilizing effect. We found that the most effective solution was the creation of a provisional commission whose work was to propose a series of themes and precise slogans to the General Assembly, and to get several work groups moving. This avoids wasting effort on too

many and useless projects. It is obvious that this does not prevent new comrades from working with slogans that have not been previously selected. All authority is provisional and changes as necessary or as willed by the participants. The choice of subject matter for the posters and slogans and discussion around these help the Atelier Populaire to evolve its political standpoint. This work is the mainspring of our activity. How do the slogans arise? Where do they come from? Their inspiration is the struggle of the workers, whether they are on strike or not. We must never lose consciousness of their real needs and of the reality of their struggle. In this way slogans will emerge which strike home with solid impact; in this way we shall be able to produce posters which will support the people's struggle in an effective way. When posters are requested from outside, we consider the suggestions in so far as their particular area of the struggle is relevant to the interests of the struggle as a whole.

Experience has taught us the danger of ambiguity, and the necessity of incorporating slogans as an integral part of design. Sincerity, fantasy and imagination are only effective when they interpret and reinforce the attack made by the slogan. **One method of the Atelier Populaire: The wall newspaper**

In all we produced five numbers of this wall newspaper under the symbol of the clenched fist. Our aim was to inform. We wanted to print the truth about the people's struggle, and to give news which the bourgeois press hides or distorts. The news for the paper is collected either directly from the workers or from their strike committees, or from the militants of the Action Committees, themselves being in direct contact with the workers. The wall newspaper therefore has the same objective as the posters: to inform all the workers and the population about each particular struggle, to propagate information and slogans arising from the struggle and serving the struggle.

*[Pictured : Journal Mural, La Lutte Continue]*

#### **The Silk Screen Process For Printing Posters**

It will be appreciated that this is only a brief summary of the silk-screen process, a process enabling many thousands of posters to be speedily printed and with relatively simple materials.

1. A wooden frame and silk for silk screen (special nylon). For the sake of economy, we stretch the special nylon covering ourselves.

2. The text is drawn to the required scale on paper. This drawing is then traced onto the surface of the screen with a soft pencil.

3. The characters are filled in with liquid drawing gum, which when dry forms a plastic skin. Dry well.

4. A fine coating of filling varnish is spread over the entire surface of the screen by means of a scraper. Dry well.

5. The parts covered with drawing gum are scraped with an eraser or simply a cork. The plastic coating forms into a ball and peels off.

*[Pictured : Atelier Populaire members in the process of creating posters]*

There now remain two types of surface on the screen:

- the base where the screen is coated with varnish;
- the text where the surface of the screen was freed on removal of the plastic coating.

All that now remains is to stick a band of adhesive paper 1" in width around the mounted frame in order to prevent ink from running into the cracks.

6. Printing can begin.

The printer's ink must be of a fluid consistency for rapid drying. This should be done by dilution with white spirit and special oil, never with acetone which dissolves the varnish on the screen.

When printing is completely finished the screen should be carefully rubbed down with acetone. It can then be used for another design. If printing is stopped for even half an hour the frame should be cleaned with white spirit so that the ink does not clog the screen.

#### **The Atelier Populaire Puppet Theatre**

*[Pictured : puppet theatre models]*