

Yours for the One Big Union



Radical Wobbly Traditions in the Art of
Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl & Dylan A.T. Miner



Essay on Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl
by Dylan A.T. Miner

Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl: Wobbly Heir to the TGP

¶ Dylan A.T. Miner

¶ With the 2002 publication of *Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl: Soapbox Artist and Poet* by the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum in Chicago, as well as the 2004 retrospective of his artwork at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, Cortéz Koyokuikatl's life-long working-class engagement with the visual arts has finally gained mainstream Latina/o acceptance. Yet even the publication and retrospective exhibition, in all their celebratory praises, do not fulfill the radical goals of Cortéz Koyokuikatl. On the contrary, these examples simply confine his art and politics, by way of their placement within Latina/o museum spaces, to a certain museum-going sector of the (Latina/o) United States. By publishing this essay in a free pamphlet, I hope to critically engage a more broadly defined audience with the artwork of Cortéz Koyokuikatl. ¶ In past writings, I have argued that Cortéz Koyokuikatl is the "quintessential voice of radical Midwestern Chicanas/os".¹ Due to the fact that his imagery directly references the visual traditions of Mexico, both in form and function, similarities can be drawn between the work of Cortéz Koyokuikatl and other contemporary Chicana/o artists. However, because his artwork was created specifically in solidarity with the internationalist working-class, it has certain regional nuances not seen among most Chicana/o artists in the U.S. Southwest. It is for this reason, as will be delineated in this essay, that Cortéz Koyokuikatl has often been omitted from the "canon" of Latina/o art. ¶ Because of the multiple histories in which Cortéz Koyokuikatl pulls from, there exists the necessity for his visual production to be fully contextualized to properly understand its hemispheric importance. To wholly appreciate the work of Cortéz Koyokuikatl, one must be knowledgeable of a variety of radical histories in the United States and Mexico. In addition to opening new audiences to Cortéz Koyokuikatl's printmaking, this essay will attempt to associate Cortéz Koyokuikatl's visual language with the lineage of Leftist printmakers working in (post)revolutionary Mexico, specifically Leopoldo Méndez of the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* (TGP). Concurrent to this argument, I will locate his body of work in relation to the artistic and political struggles of the anarcho-syndicalist activities of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies). Being that 2005 is the centenary of the founding of the most radical union in U.S. labor history, it is also an advantageous time to confer a level of inquiry upon the cultural production of the IWW. Since Cortéz Koyokuikatl was a lifelong Wobbly, he is an irreplaceable cog within the historical gears of the IWW mechanism and his artwork must be analyzed to fully understand Wobbly history. ¶ With the unfortunate passing of Cortéz Koyokuikatl in January, the time is ripe for a critical confrontation of his artwork, all the while situating it in relation to larger socio-political movements. Via the varied and multiple sites in which this

exhibit will travel, I offer the following essay as a point of departure for current and future generations of radicals (Wobs, anarchists, socialists or simply curious Liberals) to continue the revolutionary legacy of Cortéz Koyokuikatl and the IWW. As a Wobbly partisan, I qualify the following text by stating that the work of Cortéz Koyokuikatl does not deserve to be isolated into the white-cube of an elite gallery space (of which you may be viewing the accompanying exhibition), but rather best serves its purpose in the union hall, outside an anarchist coffee shop or at your dinner table. As such, remember that all of the images within the exhibition and catalogue are completely out of context. The artwork of Cortéz Koyokuikatl, as well as my own, is not about the alienating space of the ivory tower or the fine art gallery, but about bringing Wobbly ideas into the public domain. With this, I am adamant that you not be uncritical about the artwork you are viewing, but rather point out its absences and in their place establish your own counter-narratives. You do not need formal training to make or understand art, you simply need critical thoughts. It is with this introduction that I pay homage to the life and works of fellow-worker Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl (x321826).

Cortéz Koyokuikatl: Wobbly Radical

¶ The IWW, as a revolutionary alternative to the racist, sexist, and xenophobic practices of early craft unions (such as the CIO), was founded in Chicago in 1905. The same ethnic and class circumstances that constituted the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World, would lead fellow-worker Alfredo Cortéz (x196755), Cortéz Koyokuikatl's father, to become a Wobbly in 1916. For the duration of his life, excluding occasional lapses in paid membership, Cortéz was an active rank-and-file union member who occasionally wrote for *La Nueva Solidaridad*, a Spanish-language IWW publication.² Alfredo Cortéz was a *mexicano* of indigenous ancestry from Sinaloa who worked throughout the United States as a general laborer. On 13 August 1923, Alfredo and his life partner Augusta Ungerecht Cortéz gave birth to a son, Carlos, near Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In addition to the radical parentage of Alfredo Cortéz, Augusta Ungerecht Cortéz, the daughter of German émigré parents, was a socialist-pacifist. So, from his birth into a radical working-class family, Cortéz Koyokuikatl was initiated into the Leftist working-class struggles of the early twentieth-century. Throughout his life, he maintained a direct relationship to working-peoples and their resistance to capitalism. Like many radicals of his generation, Cortéz Koyokuikatl was a red diaper baby.³ ¶ As a visual artist, his work draws from a variety of sources, but is directly engaged in a revolutionary struggle against capitalism, neo-colonialism, imperialism and most recently globalization. It is by way of his radical working-class "pedigree" and eventual involvement with the *Industrial Worker*, the official IWW newspaper, that Cortéz Koyokuikatl began to focus his organizing skills on artistic production. Yet even with his recent popu

larity among contemporary Wobblies and within the Latina/o community in Chicago, his printmaking has never been able to fully sustain him economically, forcing him to work a multiplicity of odd jobs. As Cortéz Koyokuikatl states, he has labored as a “harvest hand, construction worker, loafer, jailbird [and] vagabond factory stiff” simply to subsist.⁴ By consciously working these “unskilled” occupations, Cortéz Koyokuikatl has been able to focus his critical attention on the revolutionary transformation of society through his involvement with the anarcho-syndicalist IWW. ¶ In public discourse, it is commonly perceived that labor unions function under the precept of reforming society. In the United States, craft unions, as opposed to industrial unions such as the IWW, have advocated societal reformation as their primary organizational focus. Yet for the IWW, the exact opposite has historically been the case. To fully understand the revolutionary, as opposed to reformative, goals of the Wobblies, it is best to turn to IWW organizational principles. In the preamble to the IWW Constitution it states that “instead of the conservative motto, ‘A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,’ we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, ‘Abolition of the wage system.’”⁵ Following in the tradition of libertarian socialism, the IWW not only argues for the destruction of the wage labor system, but also condemns the alliance made between mainstream unions, like those of the AFL-CIO, and the management class. In short, as Anton Pannekoek so aptly states, the IWW, as an anarchist organization, opposes “the organization of production by the government [because that] means state socialism, the command of the State officials over production and the command of managers, scientists, shop officials in the shop...The goal of the working class is liberation from exploitation. This goal is not reached and cannot be reached by a new directing and governing class substituting itself for the bourgeoisie. It is only realized by the workers themselves being master over production.”⁶ ¶ While AFL-CIO affiliated unions have historically worked directly with managerial and State officials, in addition to drawing union dues directly from worker paychecks, the IWW has espoused complete autonomy from State and managerial influence, in hopes of enacting true liberation. ¶ To properly historicize the IWW, it is crucial to posit their activities, including those of Cortéz Koyokuikatl, as acts of (non-violent) revolution, in binary opposition to the reformative nature of restructuring the status quo. Labor historian Melvyn Dubofski, in the preface to *We Shall Be All*, a history of the IWW, follows my assertion and states that “however much the Wobblies swam in the mainstream, *they were not...mere reformers, nonrevolutionaries who would become good CIO men [and women] had they been born three decades later*. True, they fought long and hard for reforms in working condition, sometimes suffering and even dying to achieve them, but reform and revolution need not be mutually exclusive. At any given historical moment, to be sure, tangible reforms may vitiate the spirit of revolution among masses of workers. But that in no way

lessened the dedication of the typical IWW leader to ultimate revolutionary goals. Struggling for improvements in laboring conditions so that workers could live better today, Wobblies always sought tomorrow’s utopia.” [my italics]⁷ ¶ It is this revolutionary utopic vision that drives the printmaking of Cortéz Koyokuikatl, as well as all IWW activities in general. In an essay entitled “The Politics of Utopia,” cultural critic Fredric Jameson posits that “utopia emerges at the moment of the suspension of the political.”⁸ According to Jameson, because political (read State) apparatuses are entirely immobile and unchangeable, the political, as a semi-autonomous structure, must be separated from daily life. For the Wobblies, their eternal class struggle is precisely this suspension of the political of which Jameson speaks. The IWW believed, and continue to do so, that all organization must revolve around sites of production. By engaging in activities at these everyday, “apolitical” sites, which are malleable, the IWW is able to excise politics from their labor union organizing. In this dimension, the Wobblies are able to “suspend the political,” if only for an instant, evoking a spectre of utopia. ¶ If we understand that the Wobblies function as a revolutionary body, we are then able to look at the work of Cortéz Koyokuikatl in relationship to the art histories of other revolutionary movements. For Cortéz Koyokuikatl, his most recognizable influences come from early-twentieth century, (post)revolutionary Mexico. There is, however, one major difference between the cultural production in Mexico at this time and that of Cortéz Koyokuikatl and other IWW artists. While Mexican artworks were attached to State political structures, the Wobblies and Cortéz Koyokuikatl worked for the complete demolition of *all* State apparatuses. Even though it has been argued that artists, such as Diego Rivera, did not always coalesce to the demands of the State or their capitalist patrons, Wobbly artists simply refused to enter into negotiations with such patrons.⁹ This revolutionary gesture can be seen in Cortéz Koyokuikatl’s persistence to toil at the “unskilled” jobs that he did.

Posada, *Taller de Gráfica Popular* and Cortéz Koyokuikatl

¶ To begin to analyze the artistic production of Cortéz Koyokuikatl, we first need to look to his visual influences and how they stylistically and ideologically affect his visual production. For this, Cortéz Koyokuikatl’s most notable and acknowledged influences are the printmaking traditions of the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* and its predecessor José Guadalupe Posada. ¶ In Mexican popular culture, the *calavera*, made popular by Posada, is connected to tongue-in-cheek reflections on death, yet Posada’s political intentions are somewhat ambiguous, to say the least.¹⁰ Nonetheless, Posada has left a legacy of radical and revolutionary printmaking in Latin America and more recently throughout U.S. Latina/o communities. According to Marxist art historian David Craven, Posada’s political intentions are often times quite complicated. Craven writes that “the original intentions motivating

populist political sympathies are hardly easy to decipher, though his sense of humanity was quite clear in many of his almost 15,000 engravings. If any evident commitment to working-class politics can be located in Posada's prints, it would seem to be in the undeniably ambiguous yet loudly tabloid-like material that he represented. Nor was there any self-evident identification on Posada's part with the revolutionary movement of [Emiliano] Zapata, whose image Posada engraved for a counter-revolutionary publication not long before his own death."¹¹ ¶ As Craven so succinctly argues, the ideological leanings of Posada are at best misunderstood. Yet even if the political intentions of Posada are unclear, the manner in which he has influenced revolutionary artistic production in Mexico and throughout the Americas is undeniable. In his essay "Rethinking the Accomplishments of the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* in Relation to *la Revolución*," Craven writes that "the revolutionary legacy of Posada is now an established fact."¹² For Craven, Posada's "revolutionary legacy" refers not to the artist's political partisanship, but rather to the post-Posada graphic production of the *Taller de Gráfica Popular*. Art historians frequently associate the roots of Mexican printmaking with the populist engravings of Posada, in recent years scholars have likewise connected Chicana/o printmaking to Posada's revolutionary legacy. Art historian Holly Barnet-Sánchez considers Posada to have had a profound impact on contemporary Chicana/o artistic production. She writes that "more than any other individual artist, Posada has influenced Chicana/o aesthetics and artistic production on a national scale. Rupert Garcia, Malaquias Montoya, Jose Montoya, Esther Hernandez, Sal Torrez and Carlos Cortez [Koyokuikatl] all referred to his sense of humor, biting satire, his images of the Mexican Revolution and his ability to bring everyone to the same level through his calaveras."¹³ ¶ Barnet-Sánchez associates Posada's use of the democratic image of the *calavera* (everyone is identical upon death) to his frequent evocation by Chicana/o artists. Among the most politically engaged of the Chicana/o artists mentioned by Barnet-Sánchez is Cortéz Koyokuikatl. In his undeniably recognizable style, Cortéz Koyokuikatl combines the DIY (Do-it-yourself) aesthetic of IWW graphic arts with Posada's populism to create a unique visual and ideological form. ¶ While many Chicana/o artists of the *movimiento* were heavily influenced by the activities of Marxist social movements in Latin America, those in the urban barrios and rural *colonias* of the upper-Midwest often aligned themselves with the anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist philosophies of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* (PLM), the political party founded in part by the Flores Magón family.¹⁴ While most Chicana/o activists turned to the influences of Francisco "Pancho" Villa and Zapata as ancestral calls-to-action, Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl and other radical Midwestern Chicanas/os use these influences, but also rely heavily on the overtly anarchist tradition and writing of Ricardo Flores Magón.¹⁵ ¶ One of Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl's most well known images is his portrait of

Magón (**illustration 1**). Interestingly, the source that Cortéz Koyokuikatl used for this portrait comes directly from a linoleum-block print by *Taller de Gráfica Popular* founding member Leopoldo Méndez. In *Homenaje a Posada* (**illustration 2**), Méndez portrays Posada's studio. In the composition, we clearly see Posada, one of his assistants, and Enrique and Ricardo Flores Magón, all in different states of labor. During the repressive years of the Porfirio Díaz regime in Mexico (known as the *Porfiriato*) and throughout the subsequent revolution, the Flores Magón brothers and their contemporaries published numerous anarchist texts, including the newspaper *Regeneración*. Through Méndez's beautifully crafted print, the TGP attempted to connect the popular legacy of Posada with the anarcho-syndicalist movement of *floresmagonismo*. While the historical accuracy of Posada having actually worked with the Flores Magón brothers is in question, Méndez's image supplants "truth" in creating a historical lineage for radical printmaking traditions in (post)revolutionary Mexico. ¶ Once this transition was complete, the ambiguity of Posada's politics was reconfigured, in effect making Posada the radical ancestor of the TGP and artists like Cortéz Koyokuikatl. From this moment on, Posada has been aligned with the Left, even though during his life he frequently made illustrations for counter-revolutionary newspapers, as pointed out by Craven. As point of fact, in 2002, Cortéz Koyokuikatl edited a book entitled *Viva Posada!: A Salute to the Printmaker of the Mexican Revolution*.¹⁶ In this publication, Cortéz Koyokuikatl laces together a collection of quotes about the radical potentials of Posada with reproductions of Posada's engravings. With a book of this nature, the actual political leanings of Posada are nullified and replaced by his role as the "forefather" of radical printmaking. Does the actual partisanship of Posada matter if his work is used for revolutionary purposes? ¶ By integrating the schema of Méndez's print of Posada's studio into our discussion of the radical practices of Cortéz Koyokuikatl, it allows us to detect the manner that artists have historically been able to "manipulate history" to fit their specific objectives. Méndez, a member of the Communist-affiliated TGP, initially began to transform Posada from a forgotten populist illustrator to a national, revolutionary hero. Likewise, Cortéz Koyokuikatl compiled and published a book of quotes and engravings demonstrating the revolutionary legacy of Posada. Posada's politics matter little to our contemporary understanding of his artwork; instead, Posada has been transformed into a revolutionary artist. ¶ If we return to Méndez's relief print of Posada, we become aware of the minute ideological gradations in the composition. For instance, outside the window of the studio, State officials violently attack unarmed *campesinos* and urban laborers, as they endeavor to peacefully demonstrate in the street. Inside the studio, Posada sits at a table transferring the repressive events in the street onto an engraving. In the upper-left portion of the image, Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón watch the horrific events in anger, as Posada's assis

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tant sets type for the newspaper *Regeneración*. In the hand of Flores Magón is a piece of paper with the text: “no habrá leva, ese pretexto conque los actuo les caciques arrancan de su hogar a los hombres a quienes odian”.¹⁷ With this anti-State message, Méndez begins to connect all forms of State power with corruption; this quotation is perfectly suited for the autonomous practices of the PLM, as well as those of the IWW. ¶ To create a portrait of Flores Magón, Cortéz Koyokuikatl uses a section of Méndez’s print as raw source material. However, with his new composition, Cortéz Koyokuikatl re-contextualizes the anarchist theorist from Posada’s *taller* in Mexico City to a U.S. federal penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas. In the process, Cortéz Koyokuikatl eliminates all secondary figures and activities and portrays Flores Magón in a solitary state. By doing so, it becomes apparent that Cortéz Koyokuikatl is uninterested in constructing a fictive lineage between Posada and Flores Magón, but more accurately affiliates the views of Mexican anarcho-syndicalism (specifically the PLM) with those of the IWW. ¶ Like Cortéz Koyokuikatl, who served time in a federal penitentiary for his conscientious objection to World War II, Flores Magón served time in both Mexican and U.S. prisons for his anarchist actions and publication of “incendiary” texts. In fact, Flores Magón was forced to flee the repressive Díaz government and lived for many years in St. Louis. It was in Missouri, one year after the founding of the IWW, that Flores Magón and others founded the *Partido Liberal Mexicano*, an organization with goals similar to those of the IWW. Just as the IWW argued that the employing-class and the working-class have nothing in common, the PLM argued that “between these two social classes [working-class and employing-class], there cannot exist any kind of friendship or fraternity.”¹⁸ ¶ In 1918, Flores Magón published a manifesto addressed to the anarchists of the world. It was this text that led to his imprisonment at Leavenworth National Penitentiary. In Cortéz Koyokuikatl’s portrait of Flores Magón, which the artist has decidedly left *Untitled*, Cortéz Koyokuikatl has replaced the suit and tie of the Méndez portrait with a striped prison jumpsuit and cell-block doors. While the TGP was a very “professional” organization with a multi-class patronage, the IWW was and is an organization unwilling to make class concessions. By removing the suit and tie, Cortéz Koyokuikatl has given Flores Magón a commonality with the average “American” worker. After all, does not capitalism imprison us all as wage-slaves? ¶ Like Méndez, Cortéz Koyokuikatl has included text within his relief print. In *Untitled*, the text is appropriated directly from Flores Magón’s 1918 manifesto, which landed him a 20-year prison sentence, leading to his eventual death. By the inclusion of the text, Cortéz Koyokuikatl shows his awareness of radical Mexican art and labor histories and pulls on three affiliated historic figures: Posada, Méndez and Flores Magón. Unlike Méndez’s portrait of Posada, which shows Flores Magón in a passive state within Posada’s studio, Cortéz Koyokuikatl illustrates Flores Magón

with pen in hand having just completed his manifesto against “art for art’s sake.” In an essay for the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum catalogue on Cortéz Koyokuikatl, art historian Victor Sorell connects Cortéz Koyokuikatl’s use of the Flores Magón text with the French revolutionist painter Jacques-Louis David’s painting *The Death of Marat*. Sorell writes that in his assessment of visual culture, “Flores-Magón alludes to an art whose function is linked precisely to the kinds of cultural, political and social ends pursued and realized by David and Cortéz [Koyokuikatl].”¹⁹ For Sorell, the connection between radical artists and “political” intervention has a long history within Western art and Cortéz Koyokuikatl imbues his visual production with a certain overt, although fluid, oppositional stance. Although Sorell’s analysis is unfortunately oblique, his point is well taken in that Cortéz Koyokuikatl is not operating outside the confines of Western art history, but rather his direct “political” engagement continues the popular tradition of the artist as political partisan. ¶ Even though Cortéz Koyokuikatl’s decision to depict Flores Magón in prison while composing his artistic manifesto may be historically “inaccurate”, this maneuver demonstrates the artist’s solidarity with Flores Magón, as well as with other political prisoners. Within the composition, inscribed on the paper held by Flores Magón, is the following: “*El arte por el arte mismo es un absurdo y sus defensores han crispado siempre mis nervios. Siento por el arte tan reverente admiración y amor que me lastima verlo prostituido por personas que no teniendo el poder de hacer sentir otras lo que ellos sienten ni hacer las pensar lo que ellos piensan. Ocultan su impotencia bajo el mote de ‘el arte por su mismo.’ – Ricardo Flores-Magón.*”²⁰ ¶ While the prints of both Méndez and Cortéz Koyokuikatl include text written by the most radical of the Revolutionary leaders in Mexico, the Cortéz Koyokuikatl *Untitled* portrait speaks directly about the *revolutionary function of art*. Although the inclusion of this text may at first appear overly didactic, according to both Flores Magón and Cortéz Koyokuikatl *there is no universal iconography attached to revolutionary art*. ¶ Since the text neither asserts that art must be created in any specific genre nor posits any specific stylistic approach as a visual lingua franca, Flores Magón and Cortéz Koyokuikatl simultaneously posit an unorthodox understanding of revolutionary art-making practices. While Soviet social realism has come to be associated with the art production of State-run “Socialism”, many revolutionary movements have included *avante garde* artists and are rarely doctrinaire in their choice of specific styles and genre of fine art production. Chicano scholar Gary D. Keller places IWW artistic production in complete contrast with that of the Communist Party. He writes that the Wobblies rejected “the Communist Party/Popular Front politics of the 1930s-40s, and the notion of a ‘party line’ in art and culture...In contrast to Communist Party cultural activities, the IWW artists are notable for their exuberance and diversity.”²¹ ¶ Instead of orthodoxy, Flores Magón (through his written text) and Cortéz

Koyokuikatl (through his visual image) argue for the creation of an “art” that challenges the viewer, as well as is positioned as dialogic. It is for this reason that Cortéz Koyokuikatl’s artwork is so important in our present political climate. He does not force us into a unitary mindset, but rather offers new possibilities of how art may function. ¶ The use of “*el arte por el arte mismo*” is an interesting choice and can be read as an attack not only on the status quo visual culture of the mainstream art world (New York-centric), but also an attack on the static, statist paintings of Soviet social realism. As both an artist and poet, the inter-relationship between text and image is paramount to the understanding of Cortéz Koyokuikatl’s oeuvre. In fact, a significant percentage of his block-prints include textual elements. How may this alter the manner in which his various audiences understand and interact with his visual imagery? ¶ While this question may remain unanswered, what is apparent is that in his approach to printmaking, Cortéz Koyokuikatl draws heavily from both the TGP and Posada; however at times the quality of the printed image remains secondary to the immediacy of the message of each impression. This, of course, relates directly to his belief in the anarchist principals espoused by Flores Magón. One technique that Cortéz Koyokuikatl continues in the vein of the TGP is the use of discarded and found objects as his working surface. As the oral tradition states, when Mexico City’s Chapultepec Castle needed new flooring, the TGP used the old linoleum from the home of Franco-Mexican Emperor Maximilian to create satirical prints critiquing the unequal distribution of power within that nation. By using this specific linoleum, appropriated from the emperor’s castle, the TGP subverted the idea of ownership from an elite structure to one by and for the people. ¶ Similarly, during the 1960s-1980s, many of the prints for *The Industrial Worker* were created by Cortéz Koyokuikatl using found and discarded floor tile and other salvage materials. The use of these found materials was inevitably unruly to work with, nevertheless their incorporation in the artistic process fit ideologically with the revolutionary stance of the IWW. This ecologically sound practice positions his working process, similar to his visual images, in harmony with his (anti)political posturing. ¶ The solidarity exerted by Cortéz Koyokuikatl toward revolutionary struggles is manifest in the processes he used and imagery he created. While an essay of this length leaves little room for excessive biographical or comparative study, it has hopefully constructed a basis for genealogical analysis between Mexican printmaking traditions and the work of Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl. As a printmaker, art historian, and Wobbly, I believe that the body of work that Cortéz Koyokuikatl created during his long and fruitful life gives inspiration to the revolutionary possibilities of everyday activities. In his passing, I am reminded, like so many other Wobblies, of the telegram that IWW martyr Joe Hill sent to William “Big Bill” Haywood from his Salt Lake City prison cell on the eve of his State sponsored execution: “Goodbye Bill. I will die like

a blue rebel. Don’t waist any time mourning. Organize.” With the death of fellow-worker Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl we have briefly mourned, but revolutionary union organizing must continue. After one-hundred years of IWW activities, we Wobblies still dream of utopia.

Notes

- ¹ Dylan Miner, “Printmakers from *Taller Mexicano de Grabado*, Chicago: Carlos Cortéz, René Arceo, Tomás Bringas,” ed. Barbara Brotherton, *Into the Center: Images for the New Millenium* (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2000), 21-26.
- ² Interview with author, 28 April 2000.
- ³ More biographic information can be found in *Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl: Soapbox Artist and Poet* (Chicago: Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, 2001).
- ⁴ *Organise! For Class Struggle Anarchism* #43 (Summer 1996), 61.
- ⁵ *Preamble and Constitution of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Philadelphia: IWW Headquarters, 2002), 3.
- ⁶ Anton Pannekoek quoted by Noam Chomsky in the “Introduction” to Daniel Guérin, *Anarchism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), xv.
- ⁷ Melvyn Dubofski, *We Shall be All: A History of the IWW* (New York: New York Times, 1969), vii.
- ⁸ Fredric Jameson, “The Politics of Utopia,” *New Left Review* 25 (2004), 43.
- ⁹ For a more nuanced discussion of Diego Rivera and his relationship to industrialist patrons, see Dylan A.T. Miner, “*El renegado comunista*: Diego Rivera, *la Liga de Obreros y Campesinos* and Mexican Repatriation in Detroit,” *ThirdText* (forthcoming).
- ¹⁰ A *calavera* is a skull or skeletal figure.
- ¹¹ David Craven, “Rethinking the Accomplishments of the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* in Relation to *la Revolución*,” unpublished manuscript (2001).
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Holly Barnet-Sánchez, “‘They Inspired Us’: The Significance of Mexican (and Cuban) Art for Chicano/a Print Makers, Grupos, Centros, and Tallers in California,” unpublished manuscript (2001).
- ¹⁴ *El movimiento* is a term used to describe the Chicano Civil Rights Movement. Although different historians give different dates to the *movimiento*, most argue that it began in the late-1960s (1968) and continued through the late-1970s.
- ¹⁵ I was one of the delegates at the founding meetings of the Xicana/o Development Center (XDC) in Detroit. Many of the representatives were aligned with anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist organizations across the Midwest. In fact, the XDC building also housed the “offices” for *Active Transformation* and other anarchist organizations and publications.
- ¹⁶ Carlos Cortéz, *Viva Posada!: A Salute to the Printmaker of the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2002).
- ¹⁷ “It will not matter the pretext in which I act, the rulers will continue to root up those that they despise.” ¶
- ¹⁸ *Regeneración* (January 20, 1912), translator unknown.
- ¹⁹ Victor Sorell, “Discursive Images and Resonant Words Address the Vox Populi: The Visceral Art of Carlos Cortéz,” in *Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl: Soapbox Artist and Poet* (Chicago, MFACM, 2001), 70.
- ²⁰ “Art for art’s sake is absurd and its defenders have always struck my nerves. I feel for art the highest admiration and love. Thus it shames me to see art being prostituted to/by those without the power to feel or think differently. They hide their impotence behind the emblem ‘art for its own sake.’
–Ricardo Flores Magón.” ¶
- ²¹ Keller, Gary D. *Chicana and Chicano Space* (http://mati.eas.asu.edu/ChicanArte/html_pages/CortezIls-sOutl.html)