

BLACK MUSIC

Out of a musical Fort Knox

By Kalamu ya Salaam

The vaults of Atlantic Records are a musical Fort Knox stacked with the bullion of '50s and '60s R&B, blues and early R&R. *Albert King Masterworks*, *The Coasters Youngblood*, *Professor Longhair The Last Mardi Gras* (each two record sets) and *Ray Charles A Life in Music* (a big

rock as well as the sound of commercial blues within a few years' time." King's *Born under a Bad Sign* album (Stax, 1968) became, writes Palmer, the most influential blues album of its era. Within months Eric Clapton and Cream "were regurgitating chunks of it whole (e.g., 'Strange Brew' and 'Born under a Bad Sign')."

Albert King is an important

a personnel listing for each number. Although a bevy of honking tenor sax solos by King Curtis virtually defined the role of the tenor sax in R&R, the music on these recordings is of minor substance. What matters is the attitude and the delivery, and in this regard The Coasters were without peer.

Produced and written by a non-black songwriting team,

Longhair is the "Professor" of the wild piano style characterized by a rolling rhythm, percussive chords and trembling right hand embellishments. Here is where rock'n'roll piano jumps off.

This set was recorded February 3 and 4, 1978 at Tipitina's, the place where he frequently tickled the ivories in his last years. On a couple of cuts he flashes his idiosyncratic piano stylings, but for the most part Longhair's singing dominates these tracks. Longhair's voice is like Louis Armstrong shifted into boogie woogie with a whiskey hangover and whistling where the trumpet breaks would be. Longhair does not sound like nor imitate Armstrong, but he does the same thing that Armstrong did: translate an instrumental approach to a vocal style. Longhair's inimitable swoops and slippery rhythm accents are wonderfully captured on this recording. Although not as strong as *Crawfish Fiesta*, it is an important addition to the limited body of Longhair recordings.

Raw soul.

The five record Ray Charles box set is without a doubt the most important of the four packages in this series. Only Stevie Wonder is comparable to Ray Charles, and were it not for Ray's pioneering work it is doubtful that Wonder would have been

when he finished it was always musically excellent, a spiritually moving experience and undeniably black. This set documents the forging of the Ray Charles style.

First there are the blues—the cathartic song that laughs at pain and triumphs over trouble by shouting it out. If all Ray Charles sang were the blues he could have my money. But then too there is jazz—not three-chords-funk or fusion, but, he notes, "serious jazz." During the Atlantic years his band was as much a jazz combo as an R&B group, and they always played jazz numbers as part of their repertoire.

But the linchpin was gospel. Although others sang with a gospel-influenced style, it was Ray Charles who brought in the musical elements of gospel music: the way he used the Raylettes—his female singers who were the choir to the preachings of the right reverend; original songs written in the eight and 16 bar lengths common to gospel music; and especially the use of cyclical repetitions with a 3/4 or 6/8 rhythm over which he shouted and drove the band, the singers and the audience into a trance-like state, e.g. "I Got A Woman." Ray Charles is the mixed-media master of music.

Ray Charles' recordings of the '50s and the '60s never sound dated or stale. When one compares his music with other music of the same period, it is evident that Ray Charles was indeed charting new directions.

All of the major directions are included here. I think it would have made more sense to group the songs by style, particularly the jazz numbers (which include

"Professor" Longhair (below) was a major influence on Fats Domino.



You can trace the vitality and the longevity of great black music in this classic series of reissues.

able to achieve what he has, for it was Ray Charles who opened the ears of America to what some call "raw soul."

Charles sang as a man possessed, with a frenzied force that shattered the conventions of what many people knew as popular music. By sheer force of character, Ray Charles consistently stuck to the music forms within which he matured, and welded together blues, gospel and jazz into a unique style that allowed him to perform not only his own music and the music of his peers with authority, but also to range far and wide into C&W or pure pop Americana. And

a beautiful trio rendition of Ger-shwin's "The Man I Love"). But that caveat aside, any set that includes the live version of the ultimate Ray Charles blues number, "Drown In My Own Tears" (on which the Raylettes flutter in and forever influence the singing of female groups), the rocklicking "Let The Good Times Roll" (on which nearly the entire Basie band shouts at Ray Charles and Ray roars back with a force that almost overpowers the horns), the aforementioned "I Got A Woman" and "The Man I Love," plus four or five blues and jazz cuts with Milt Jackson (some of which have Ray's sharp blues alto sax) and numerous minor hits by Mr. Ray Charles, any set of albums that includes all of that, well!

This series is an indicator of the vitality and longevity of great black music not only as the root of American pop, but also, and more importantly, as a musical genre unto itself. May there be more releases of this same caliber from Atlantic. Or, as Ray would say, acknowledging the applause of an audience, "Thank you much. We appreciate it." Yes, indeed.

Kalamu ya Salaam is an editor of *Black Collegian*.



Ray Charles opened the ears of America to "raw soul."

five record box set), all attractively packaged, are the latest shipment of valuables from a company that probably has over a million hours of historic recordings on tape but that keeps only a fraction of that music in their catalogue.

Without exaggeration, these recordings represent the roots of contemporary American pop music. Their value is admirably documented in notes by producer Albert Goldman on the Longhair set, liners on the Albert King and Coasters by leading critic Robert Palmer, and in an attractive booklet by Nat Hentoff on Ray Charles. Much more than hype, these writings serve as primers on and validators of the cultural importance of these recordings.

As Palmer perceptively points out, Albert King's "mature playing and singing and the definitive soul rhythm section of the '60s slicked together to produce music that would fundamentally alter the mainstream of white

pre-Hendrix electric guitar influence. Although he lives and works here, his influence has traveled via English guitarists who admired and emulated him rather than by guitarists who heard him on his home ground.

Throughout these cuts Albert King demonstrates that he is a master at mixing a sophisticated and relaxed approach to rhythm and vocals while maintaining an emotionally intense authority in his solo guitar style. Palmer aptly metaphorically dubs Albert King "The Velvet Bulldozer." Seven cuts are from the aforementioned influential *Bad Sign* album and feature Booker T & the MGs, plus Isaac Hayes on piano and the Memphis horns.

The Coasters' set is quintessential rock and roll, dance-oriented, full of fun with a broad anti-authoritarian streak. Cut in the mold of the great Louis Jordan, The Coasters combine a droll comic delivery with fine singing. Every one of their great hits is included here, along with

Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. The Coasters' hit songs are subtle social commentaries often written in short-short story format. Leiber and Stoller were uncanny in their ability to capture aspects of black life in song form. The reaction of most black people to The Coasters is an instant smile or chuckle.

Leiber and Stoller went on to songs that celebrated youth, and thus was rock'n'roll born, progressing from an infatuation with black culture to a celebration of youth culture. Although they may not be the first group you think of, The Coasters produced by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller were a defining element of rock'n'roll.

As far as modern pop is concerned, Longhair's music is a New Orleans abnormality. Yet it is an important uplink between boogie woogie and '50s R&B. In fact Fats Domino acknowledges without hesitation that Professor Longhair was one of the major influences on him and others.

Salvador

Continued from page 11

has been a 70 percent rise in the cost of living since the decree was implemented.

The most chilling restriction is the law defining the state of siege giving security forces and military courts untrammelled power to arrest and hold people on suspicion of "subversion." According to Article 11 of decree 507, a person is subject to arrest for treason for membership in an organization "that has issued statements that harm public order or state security or incite to acts that could damage the national economy."

Union leaders interpret the provision as being a strike ban, since any union meeting to discuss strike action would come under the decree's wording. The decree hit all unions hard, although it was aimed especially at the large union umbrella organizations—such as FEN-ASTRAS—that in the past attempted to organize coordinated national strike actions to pressure the government into reforms. In another blow to the possibility of strikes, the government in 1980 decreed the militarization of most major industries, including the electrical industry, in effect subjecting workers to military codes prohibiting desertion.

The union restrictions have short-circuited what appeared early in the Salvadoran conflict to be the left's most powerful weapon—the threat of a general strike. Strikes called in June and August 1980 were partially successful, but resulted in massive arrests and drove many leaders underground. A third general strike, called with minimal advance preparation in January 1981 to support the FMLN first general offensive, failed to appreciably hamper the government's military efforts in stopping the offensive.

A FUSS leader, in a semi-clandestine news conference, said he is not involved in party politics "much less the takeover

of the government." His union's goal is primarily economic reforms benefiting workers, which he said can only be achieved through a "pluralistic government" including the leftist FDR-FMLN.

Another FUSS leader added: "We don't want to sound like we are disassociating ourselves from the revolutionary call of the historic moment. We want to say that we are part of the revolutionary movement. We are part of the struggle to achieve the unity of all social groups."

The non-left unions have become in-

cording to several union leaders. "It is difficult to see the army as the ally of the workers," a CTS leader said. "Bodies are still always appearing. There has been more repression since the election, but they use different methods. Before the bodies appeared out there in the street, with the head cut off and tied to a pole to sow terror. Now, they throw the bodies off the cliffs."

In the first job action since the left-organized general strikes of 1980, 7,000 government workers staged a sit-down



A woman identifies photos of her slain son at the San Salvador legal aid office.

creasingly restive in the government camp, especially since the right parties won the March elections on platforms of dismantling the reforms that were the basis for the union support of the government in the first place. The alliance with the Christian Democrats has always been tenuous, because the Christian Democrats until now were a middle-class party with few activities in union mobilization.

The army traditionally was the arm of violence against union organizing, ac-

strike in June to demand six weeks of back wages. The wages were paid, to the encouragement of the union movement, whose leaders said they are hoping to test the limits of government tolerance with future actions.

"The UPD, to the extent the government weakens the reforms, is prepared to become active in opposition to the government," a UPD leader said.

Peasant leaders in the Salvadoran Communal Union (UCS) complained bitterly that the new government has turned over the agrarian reform agencies to the extreme right ARENA party, known as the party representing the old landowners displaced by the 1980 agrarian reform.

UCS leader Samuel Maldonado, one of the few leaders who allowed his name to be used, said he felt the unions should create their own political party through the UPD, rather than relying on the Christian Democrats to be their representatives in the government. He was deeply pessimistic about the elections that



A Salvadoran peasant

brought the right back to power. "I don't call this democracy," he said. "It doesn't do any good to have a constitutional government if you don't have justice."

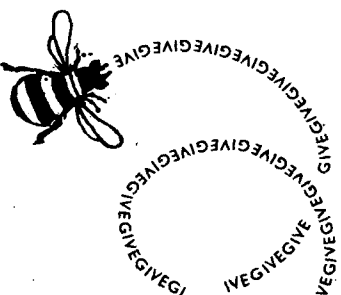
"We are in the middle. At some point you have to decide where you are going to go. To them (the oligarchy and the army)? I doubt it."

"To the other side (the left). Yes. Because they are the ones who try to do social justice, and the (oligarchy) never brings social justice."

In another interview, a labor organizer working in the government land-reform agency described the bureaucratic changes undertaken by the new ARENA leaders to undercut the implementation of reforms, including firing or demoting organizers like himself who believe in the reforms. "If the reforms are reversed, of 100 peasant beneficiaries, 20 or 30 will go over to fight with the guerrillas. I know it."

Maldonado made a similar warning if the reforms are stalled. "Then there will really be a civil war," he said.

In These Times Special Summer Gift Sale!



Give one six month gift subscription
and give another one free!

Take advantage of our SPECIAL SUMMER GIFT OFFER—Give one six month gift subscription for \$13 and give another six month gift for FREE! Just fill out the coupon below and we'll do all the rest—even send the gift cards!

In These Times
1509 N. Milwaukee
Chicago, IL 60622
☐ Bill me later.
☐ Payment enclosed.

My name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Send my first \$13 six month gift to:

My name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Send my FREE six month gift to:

My name _____

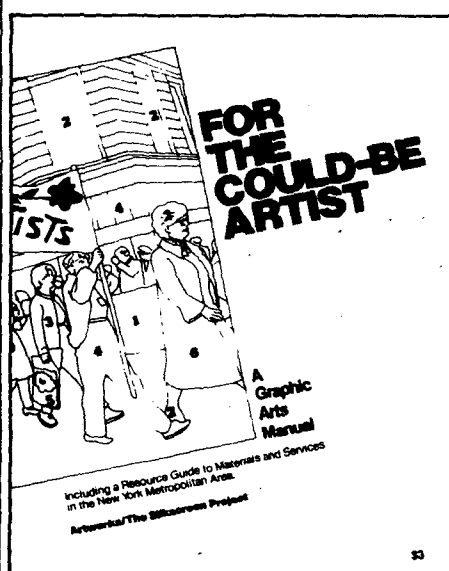
Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Sign gift cards _____

For faster service use our toll-free number: 800-247-2160
Iowa residents call: 1-800-362-2860

DESIGN YOUR OWN
LEAFLET, OR
POSTER, OR
T-SHIRT, OR...



A 32 Page Manual on
Tools of the Graphic Arts Trade
and How to Use Them

Order from: Artworks, Box 1407
Cathedral Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10025.
1-5 copies—\$3.00 each; 6-10 copies—\$2.25
each; 11 copies and over—\$1.80 each.
Please include 10% for postage. Payment
must accompany order.

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of Paul Ginger.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

August 27

Towards a Revitalized Left: DSA Chair Michael Harrington; Guillermo Ungo, President, FDR (El Salvador); William Winpisinger, President, IAM; and Barbara Ehrenreich, DSA Vice-Chair, will discuss prospects for the left in the 1980's. Sponsored by the Western Region of DSA. 8:00 p.m. Friday, Nourse Auditorium, 275 Hayes. For advance tickets or more information, call (415) 550-1849.

LOS ANGELES, CA

September 11

Peace Planning Workshop by DSA, Los Angeles Local. The morning session will review the key arguments for opposing the arms race and provide the critical information needed for the fall Bilateral Nuclear Weapons Freeze campaign. The afternoon session will consider past, present, and future mass movement activity to reverse the arms race, and the role of socialists in that effort. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Socialist Community School, 2936 W. 8th St. For more information: (213)385-0650.

INDIANA, PA

October 21-23

Indiana University of Pennsylvania is sponsoring a conference "The Industrial North: The Future of Jobs, Productivity and Community." Participants include Staughton Lynd, Barry Bluestone, Jack Russell, Harley Shaiken, Jack Sheinkman, Stuart Butler (consultant to the Heritage Foundation), and Alfred Warren (vice president for industrial relations, General Motors). Contact Irwin Marcus, Department of History, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana PA 15705 for additional details.

CLASSIFIED

PUBLICATIONS

WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING in El Salvador? How great a radiation threat is posed by nuclear power plants and their toxic wastes? Read about these and other crucial issues in *The Progressive*, America's leading independent magazine. New subscriber offer: 12 issues for \$12. If you enclose payment with your order, you will receive an extra month free. Mailing address: The Progressive, 408 E. Main St., Madison, WI 53703.

GLOBAL THREATS to Third World minorities reported and analyzed in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*. For sample: Cultural Survival, 11 Divinity Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138.

A FRIENDLY LETTER is a new Quaker newsletter, reporting on the Friends' work for peace, justice and religious community. A unique, challenging monthly. Subscriptions \$12/yr, samples FREE from P.O. Box 1361, Dept. TT, Falls Church, VA 22041.

THE SOCIALIST STANDARD from London, oldest continuous socialist monthly. Trial subscription \$5.50 six months. Order WSP, c/o Seifert, 97 Spring St., Watertown, MA 02172.

PLANT CLOSINGS Resource Guide—information and annotated bibliography of events, effects, issue analyses, church responses, legislation and worker ownership—"A good tool for organizers," says Roberta Lynch of ITT/DSA. \$3. ICUIS, 5700 S. Woodlawn Ave., Chicago, IL 60637.

LAUGH! GUTS: The unique cartoon magazine guaranteed to rearrange your synapses. What vision! \$1.50 ppd. Steve Lafler, Box 982, Eugene, OR 97440.

FREE SAMPLE—political newsletter. Write: Washington Report, P.O. Box 10309, St. Petersburg, FL 33733.

MAY DAY! A Quarterly Journal of Democratic Socialism. Subscription \$10.00 annually. Socialist Tribune, Dept. M, P.O. Box 402801, Miami Beach, FL 33140.

HELP WANTED

THE FLORIDA PUBLIC INTEREST Research Group, an environmental and consumer advocacy organization run and funded by the students of Florida, is hiring one Senior Organizer and 3 campus Project Directors. Senior Organizer (\$12,000 plus benefits) will coordinate activities on campuses in Tallahassee, Miami and Boca Raton and lead organizing in Tampa. P.D. (\$8,000 plus benefits) will coordinate daily office activities on campuses. Send resumes, references, and writing sample

CHINESE PEOPLES CAP Lined all cotton cap from China. Durable, practical, comfortable. Navy, tan, grey or white. Sizes: S-M-L-XL. Send \$5.00 ppd. or 2 for \$9.00 ppd. to: Newport Cap Co., P.O. Box 1226-T, Newport, Oregon 97365

WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY

Learn what thousands of firms are doing to improve working conditions and productivity through:

- worker ownership
- democratic management
- quality of worklife programs
- producer cooperatives
- worker buy-outs

Join AWD

- receive Workplace Democracy, a quarterly newsletter
- attend national conferences Annual memberships are tax deductible. \$20 individual/\$30 organizations/\$10 income under \$10,000/\$5 unemployed

Call or write: The Association for Workplace Democracy
1747 Connecticut Ave. NW, Wash. DC 20009, (202) 265-7727

to FPIRG, P.O. Box U-6367, Tallahassee, FL 32313.

THE INSTITUTE FOR FOOD and Development Policy is seeking a full-time experienced financial development director to plan and direct its annual grant-raising drives from foundations and individuals and its direct mail and membership donor campaigns. \$14,630 annually, full medical and dental benefits, and child allowance. Send resumes to Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1885 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94103.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER Administrator/Coordinator: The Santa Cruz Westside Community Health Center is opening this fall to provide primary medical care and health education to three medically underserved neighborhoods. The Board of Directors is seeking applicants for the position of Administrator/Coordinator. Requirements: Administrative and organizing experience, ability to accept major responsibilities, commitment to community control over accessible health care, excellent communication skills. Previous experience in health care and ability to speak Spanish are encouraged. Salary: \$900-1100/month. To apply: Job description and more information are available from: SCWCCHC, 1700 Mission St., Box 104, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. Or, call (408) 429-6434 or 423-2293.

PUBLICITY DIRECTOR needed to coordinate promotion for progressive public education and research organization. Responsibilities include media contact, producing publicity materials and promoting institute books. \$14,630, medical and child benefits. Apply to Publicity Director Search Committee, Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1885 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

BOSTON DSA seeks half-time office staff. Salary plus health insurance. Call Kate at (617) 492-4608.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR—Washington, D.C. Direct program activities, raise funds, coordinate meetings, build organizational ties for nationwide networking organization. Intelligence agency abuse, political rights, freedom of information. Experience fundraising and directing program required. \$17,000 annual, good benefits. Send resume and writing sample to: Campaign for Political Rights, 201 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.

The Ugly Truth About Crime and Criminals!
WILL 20TH CENTURY SOCIETY END BY 2000 A.D.?
The author, William L. Parham, a retired consulting criminologist, makes a persuasive case for that possibility—"in the absence of prompt remedial action," and argues with compelling logic for:

- UNIFORM IMPOSITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY FOR SPECIFIC CRIMES;
- MANDATORY RESTITUTION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME;
- UNIFORM CRIMINAL CODE—A MANDATORY GUIDE FOR INFERRIOR JURISDICTIONS.

"...a chilling condemnation of America's Justice System...Brave, indeed, and rare will be the reader who switches off a bedside light before checking all doors..."
E. EUGENE BOYLAN, Publisher, Ottawa Sentinel
"...Should be read by all concerned citizens...lawmen and law enforcement professionals..."
ROBERT F. SHUGART, The Police Chief
769 pages, clothbound, \$15.95. Send Orders to: VERITAS PUBLICATIONS, Box 4418-T, Arlington, Virginia 22204

WANTED

A social issues organization in Chicago to share Loop office space. Air conditioned—your share only \$225/month. Call Women for Peace (312) 663-1227 or drop in Suite 705, 343 S. Dearborn.

New Location
GUILD BOOKS
2456 North Lincoln Avenue
Chicago, IL 60614
(312) 525-3667
New store hours: noon-10:30 p.m., seven days a week
Literature • History • Politics
Art • Women & Minority Studies
Wide Selection—Periodicals & Records • Books in Spanish
Come in and browse.

FRED SMALL, nationally touring performer for peace, pro-feminist, progressive songs, seeks booking agent/manager. Experience preferred but not required. Fifteen hours per week minimum. 11 Kilsyth Road, Medford, MA 02155. (617) 395-5967.

BUTTONS, POSTERS, ETC.

BUTTONS & BUMPERSTICKERS in-stock & custom-printed (union made). Free stock catalogue, wholesale custom printing prices. Donnelly/Colt, Box 271-IT, New Vernon, NJ 07976, (201) 538-6676.

NEW PEACE POSTCARDS and paraphernalia, lovely original art, religious (non-sectarian) quotes. Help spread the message that the arms race must stop, by god! 20 assorted cards \$3; samples FREE from: Kimo Press, P.O. Box 1361, Dept. TT, Falls Church, VA 22041.

BORN TO CLEAN and Ladies Against Women—buttons \$1; Consciousness Lowering Kits, \$5; Plutonium Players Theater Troupe, 1600 Woolsey, Berkeley, CA 94703.

"STOP THE ARMS RACE NOW!"; "Nuclear Free Zone"; "Work for a Nuclear-Free World"; "Freeze Nuclear Weapons"; "Make Love, Not War"; "Solidarity" (Polish); "Beware the Actor" (Reagan graphic); "Let Them Eat Jellybeans"; "Money for Jobs, Not for War"; "Politically Correct"; "Question Authority"; "Take the Toys Away from the Boys—Disarm." Buttons: 2/51; 10/54; 50/151; 100/251. Ellen Ingber, P.O. Box 752-T, Valley Stream, NY 11582.

ATTENTION

MOVING? Let In These Times be the first to know. Send us a current label from your newspaper along with your new address. Please allow 4-6 weeks to process the change. Send to: In These Times, Circulation Dept., 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622.

COMPUTER SCIENCE student wishes communication concerning computer uses to build our movement. Redchip, 1392 Yokayo Dr., Ukiah, CA 95482.

FOR SALE

CARS sell for \$117.95 (average). Also Jeeps, Pickups. Available at local

Donald Shaffer Associates, Inc.

All forms of Insurance
Specialists in Pension & Employee Benefit Planning

11 Grace Ave.
Great Neck, NY 11021
212-895-7005/516-466-4642

In These Times Classified Ads Grab Attention



...and work like your own sales force. Your message will reach 67,000 responsive readers each week. (72% made a mail order purchase last year.) ITT classes deliver a big response for a little cost.

Word Rates:

60¢ per word / 1 or 2 issues
55¢ per word / 3-5 issues
50¢ per word / 6-9 issues
45¢ per word / 10-19 issues
40¢ per word / 20 or more issues

Display Inch Rates:

\$16 per inch / 1 or 2 issues
\$15 per inch / 3-5 issues
\$14 per inch / 6-9 issues
\$12 per inch / 10-19 issues
\$10 per inch / 20 or more issues

All classified advertising must be prepaid. Telephone and POB numbers count as two words; abbreviations and zip codes as one. Advertising deadline is Friday, 12 days before the date of publication. All issues are dated on Wednesday.

IN THESE TIMES Classified Advertising, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622. (312) 489-4444



Wear ITT This Summer!

In These Times T-shirts and hats are now available. Wear them this summer and stay cool while publicizing your favorite newspaper.

T-shirts:
X-L black and red
L black, light blue and red
M black, light blue and tan
S black, light blue, tan and yellow
Specify 1st and 2nd \$6.95 each postpaid.

Red or blue mesh hats are adjustable and come in one size. \$5.95 each postpaid.

Special Offer
Buy a T-shirt and a hat together for just \$11.00.
ITT, Box A, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622.

Gov't Auctions. For Directory call 805-687-6000 Ext. 2440. Call refundable.

BOOKS

WHAT ABOUT WAR, the environment,



T-Shirts/Buttons: REGULAR CUT—Purple/White, Lt. Blue/Red or Kelly Green/White: S/M/L/XL; FRENCH STYLE (Jr. cut)—Yellow/Purple, Dark Navy/Lt. Blue, Lavender/Purple: M/L/XL. Shirts \$9.00 plus \$1.00 shipping/handling, Buttons \$1.00, post. paid. New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Inc., 5 Neher Street, Woodstock, N.Y. 12498. (Tax-deductible)

the human suffering? Many of us think the same about such social insanity. What do we do about it? "World Without Wages," 228 pp., \$8.50 postpaid. Order WSP, c/o Seifert, 97 Spring St., Watertown, MA 02172.

REDLETTER BOOKS. 666 Amsterdam, New York's independent left bookshop.

THE ISRAELI INVASION of Lebanon. New 190 page book of carefully selected articles on civilian casualties, conditions of refugees, mistreatment of prisoners, cluster bombs, Israeli and U.S. Jewish dissent, and Israeli and U.S. policies. The most substantial writings appearing during the first months of current war, drawn from 100 newspapers and periodicals from U.S., Canada, England and Mideast. Essential resource book for activists doing work on this issue. Send \$7.50 Claremont Research, 160 Claremont Ave., New York, NY 10027.

Progressive Periodicals Directories, Hot Off The Press

Useful for publicity mailings, networking, details on periodicals about culture, environment, health, int'l labor, media, peace, etc. Complete info. on each included. Southern edition only \$2; National edition only \$4; Both for \$5. From Box T-120574, Nashville, TN 37212.

Town without Fear



By John Brentlinger

VILLA SIN MIEDO, PUERTO RICO

There's a tradition in Puerto Rico of poor, landless people being called *rescatadores de terreno* land rescuers (they don't call themselves "squatters"). La Perla, in Old San Juan, is one of the oldest such communities. Another important one was in Santurce, adjoining San Juan, before it was destroyed for urban development. There are many others. The land rescue communities are a result of the poverty and unemployment created by various aspects of U.S. colonial control: the takeover and pollution of large land and fishing areas by high technology industry; huge corporate farms that are highly mechanized and produce for export; emphasis in construction on luxury hotels and condominiums, and middle-class housing; land speculation; and the U.S. military, whose bases occupy 17 percent of the island.

The small and middle-sized farms that used to provide the main work of the island and the bulk of the domestic food supply have been almost completely eliminated. Agriculture now uses less than 20,000 workers, in a labor force of more than a million. Even official statistics say 238,000 of those are unemployed. Formerly self-sufficient in food production, the island now imports 85 percent of its food from the U.S.

A problem of "over-population" emerges, and a welfare problem. Thirty-five percent of Puerto Rican women have been sterilized through government and foundation programs; 65 percent receive food stamps; 50,000 families are in line for government housing.

The Villa was founded in November 1980, when a group of homeless poor people occupied 65 acres of government land, about 20 miles east of San Juan. It was on Route 3, a four-lane road lined with U.S.-owned factories. The government had



been leasing the land to a farmer who supported 40 high-breed cattle on it. Soon it was supporting a community of 250 families with homes and gardens, a collective farm and a variety of services. They called it Villa sin Miedo—Town without Fear.

Miguel Gonzalez, a leader and spokesperson for the Villa, whose parents were rescuers in the Santurce community where he was born, explained the background of the Villa: "We have people here rescuing who lived in New York. A family might have sold their house and land and gone to the U.S.—in the '40s and '50s there was a big migration—and what they found there was prejudice, discrimination, insults, unemployment, welfare, drugs and no education.

"Now they are coming back because they got sick and tired of second-class treatment. They discover this land is not as small as they said it was, that this is Puerto Rico—the name says it, 'rich port.' There's nothing poor about Puerto Rico, it's the exploitation that's been going

on by the capitalistic system—that's what makes it bad. You read the papers and find out what's happened in Nicaragua, what happened in Cuba, and you come here and you see all the land going to waste.

"The government says the land is for the people, and that the government is for the people and by the people, and the people come down here and don't have a place to sleep and they want to cultivate it. They want to work the land."

The government fought Villa sin Miedo almost from the beginning. An eviction order was issued in March 1981. While it was being contested in the courts there were many police attacks. Houses were burned, electricity was cut off, and people who resisted the attacks were shot, gassed, jailed and beaten. Though rescuers' communities have been tolerated traditionally, in the Villa people were not just occupying land. They were also building their own schools, free health clinic and collective farm. Being in the Villa meant being taken care of by the Villa, and responsibility to work for, and contribute money to, the collective projects.

The Villa was widely discussed in Puerto Rico, and it became an issue between the two leading political parties—the New Progressive Party, pro-statehood and industrially-oriented, led by Gov. Romero; and the Popular Democratic Party (PDP), against statehood (though not independentist), historically connected to the countryside, with a majority in the legislature. The PDP, eager to embarrass Romero with the plight of the homeless, put a bill through the legislature ceding the land to the Villa. But the governor

Villa was destroyed in May. Special shock troops sealed the road and came in with helicopters and automatic weapons, bulletproof vests and phosphorous bombs. Gas was used to drive the people out without their possessions, and every house was burned. Bulldozers cleared the burned rubble and the gardens. Many were injured and 16 were jailed (bail totaled more than \$9 million). A policeman was killed. The residents were herded downtown and slept on the floor of the senate chambers, by invitation of the senate majority. After several moves they now have temporary use of church land while they raise money, with help from mainland support groups, for housing materials and land for a permanent settlement. The government has offered to place them in various housing projects, thus splitting them up. They are demanding compensation for their property losses, a return to the land, and that they all stay together.

When they talk about what Villa sin Miedo meant to them, the rescuers stress what they



vetoed it, saying the Villa was dominated by agitators and subversives. He noted that the "fanatic" Lolita Lebron and the Socialist leader Juan Mari Bras have visited the Villa. He expounded the "inviolable right to private property" and "the non-absolute right to housing," and castigated the opposition for their "irresponsible" support for lawbreakers.

After a year and a half, the

This do-it-yourself housing project in Puerto Rico means a lot more than shelter to the residents.

learned. They have learned they have many resources among themselves—nurses, farmers, carpenters, gardeners and plumbers. They have learned to use outside resources—the loan of a tractor for the farm, rental of a bulldozer for their roads, and medical, legal and agricultural expertise, from sympathetic intellectuals. They deeply appreciate the safety, health and security of their town, in contrast to life in Puerto Rico (which has the highest crime rate in the world). They speak much of giving and receiving, of never being refused, and the bond, the *conciencia* that had developed in the group.

Above all they talk of loving to work the land and grow their own food. One man told me he would go to his garden every morning at 4:30, to watch his plants and see if they were doing well. "They live too," he said. ■

John Brentlinger teaches philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



Photographs:
Mel Rosenthal