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# **LATIN-AMERICA**

Theory at the Margins

# **SOUTH-AFRICA**

Post-Apartheid

# **LABOR UNIONS**

Transnational Organizing



## Editorial

### Red Book

I was a shy and bookish child. Soon, I became a bothered child. I remember riding with my family through the South—where I'm from—to visit my grandmother. As we crossed over into North Carolina, there was a large billboard sitting in the middle of a green pasture. "Welcome to the Land of the Ku Klux Klan," it read. I knew what it meant and was not surprised it was there. It was the South and was as much a fact of life as the wood-framed gas stations with the Dr. Pepper pop machines out front.

I knew what it meant, was not surprised it was there. But I also knew it was wrong. As wrong as the signs on those quaint gas stations that said "white" on the front of the wooden buildings and "colored" on the back.

I cannot honestly say whether it was this sense of wrongness or my bookish curiosity that years later drew me to the sidewalk across the street from Red Book, a battered red-painted corner commie bookstore—complete with a big yellow star—in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I know I have not stopped kicking myself for not having had the courage to at least pick up a copy of *Old Mole*, a leftie hippie fuck-you publication that had folded years earlier.

I don't know how many weeks (or months) I went on passing Red Book, feigning casual interest, or stood across the way screwing up my nerve. Even after all these years, there may still be footprints worn in the concrete there, size 7 and a half girls, that I would be hard pressed to say were not mine.

There came a day when I had enough of a reprieve from my shyness that I slipped through the doors of Red Book. I can't remember how long I stayed, probably long enough to figure out a way to slip around the friendly desk clerk. But I can guarantee you that, even if I had had only fifty cents, I would have walked out with some piece of literature to read.

Twenty-five years have passed since I mustered the courage to walk into the Red Bookstore. But I am still shy. So, I stood for a while wearing out the pavement outside the SR offices before entering to be interviewed for the position of editor of *Socialist Review*. But I am still bookish and still bothered by that bill-

board sign I saw forty-two years ago. So, I screwed up my nerve, kicked myself in the butt, opened the door, and walked in.

As this issue of *Socialist Review* goes to print, Austria's nazi-praising Freedom Party is now a part of the country's ruling coalition, the death watch for Mumia Abu-Jamal continues, and prisoners tortured under the hand of New York state governor Nelson A. Rockefeller during the 1971 Attica revolt—for it was that, not a riot—have been tossed a few bucks as “compensation.”

That old Klan sign may be down but its politics are alive and well....

Wickie Stamps

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