

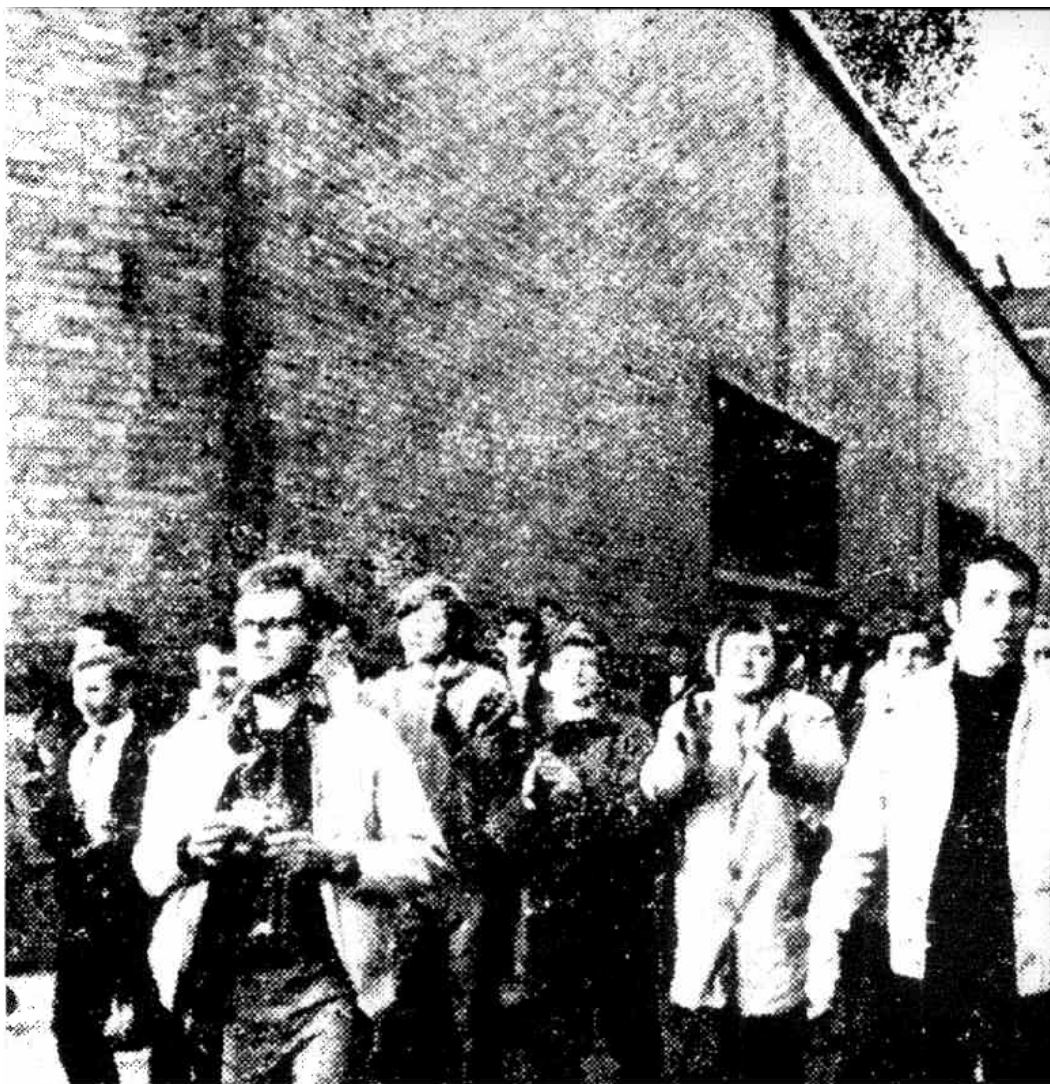
UNTHINKABLE

artifacts from the collection of Lorraine & Fredy Perlman

April 2012

gallery: 2739 Edwin, Hamtramck, Mi

<http://2739edwin.com>



All photos by Rebecca Cook

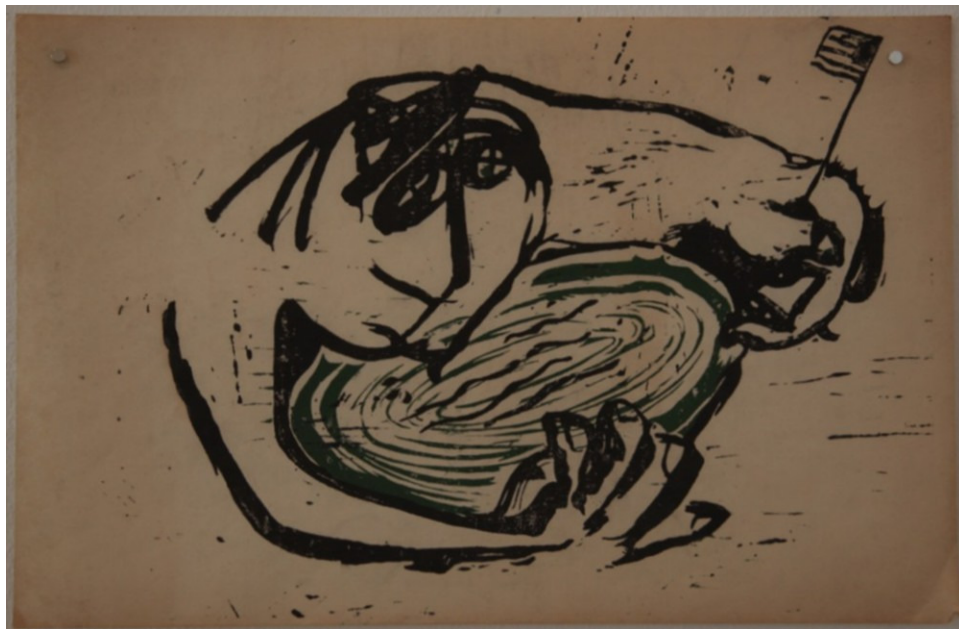
All quotes from

*"Having Little, Being Much - A Chronicle of
Fredy Perlman's Fifty Years".*

Lorraine Perlman, Black & Red, Detroit, 1989



Wood-Cut Prints from 1st edition of "The New Freedom"
(1961)



"The New Freedom" was self-published in an edition of 91 with text by Fredy Perlman and wood-cut prints by John Ricklefs

“In publishing his first book himself, Fredy intentionally avoided commercial media. He conceived of this work as a gift, not a commodity. In its opening pages, John and Fredy challenge the reader to widen the network of non-business communication. Fredy never revised these principles on transmitting written words; over the years he made the challenge in many forms “

“When the course in Turin ended, Fredy took a train to Paris and found himself caught up in the tumultuous events of May 1968. His experiences during those intense, joyous weeks deeply affected his views and remained a constant reference point when he considered possibilities for social change ...

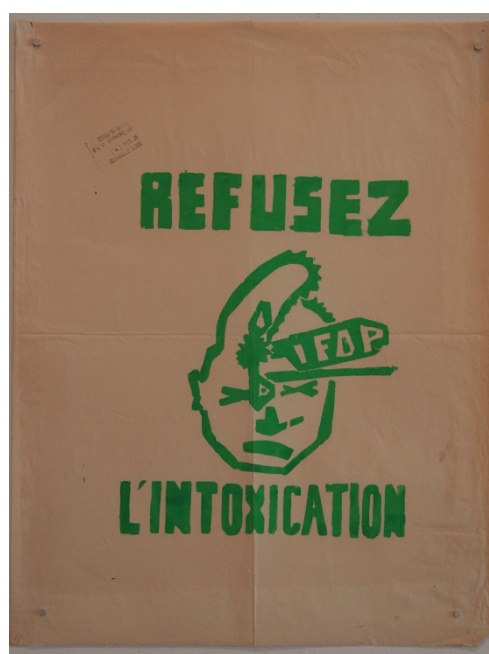
The act of rebellion itself was exhilarating. The massive street actions in which thousands confronted the forces of the status quo gave rise to hopes that the old world was about to be overturned. Within days the prestige of political parties, representatives and experts, melted. Many buildings were occupied, and the State's authority was effectively excluded from these liberated areas. People organized committees to carry out necessary tasks. There was a feverish exchange of views, proposals for collective activity. Discussions went on around the clock – some in amphitheater where there was a microphone, but mostly between individuals who were discovering the joys that the mass media had deprived them of. There was a widespread conviction that one's daily activity was about to be transformed and that everyone would participate in choosing and bringing about new social arrangements.

Many of the mass demonstrations in Paris ended with the construction of barricades and confrontations with the police. Tear gas was frequently used and demonstrators were chased and beaten by aggressive riot squad police. Though he was never beaten, Fredy fell ill after one demonstration and spent two days in bed, unconscious most of the time.

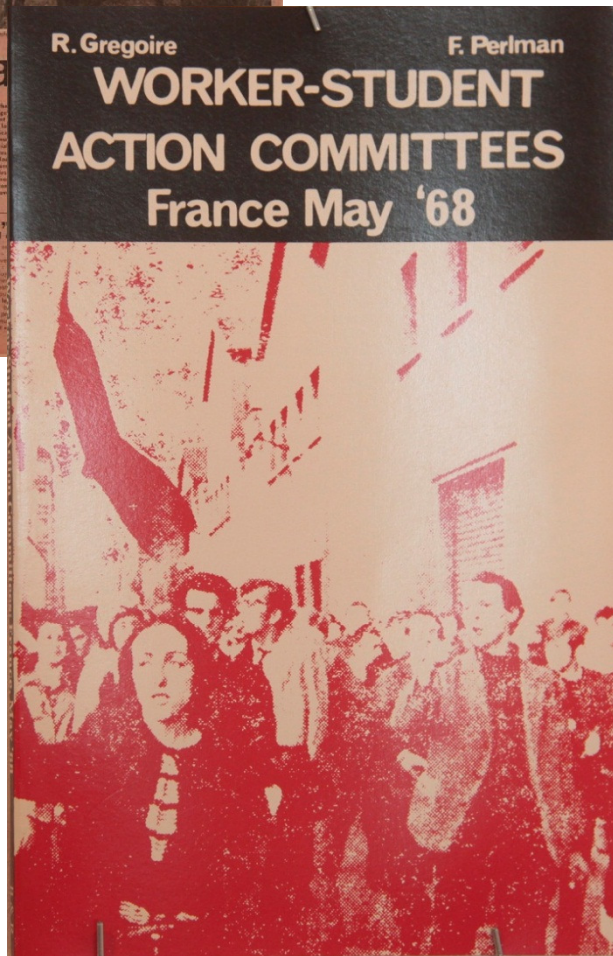
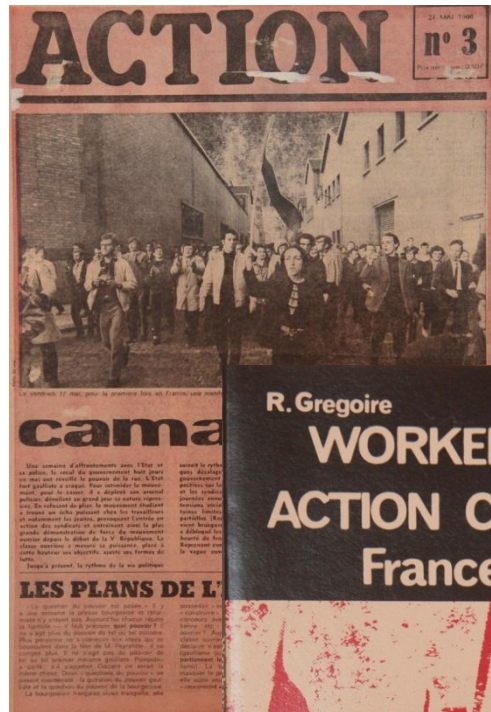
During these action filled weeks, there was little time for reading , but Fredy learned about ideas and histories which influenced him in the decades that followed: the texts of the Situationist International, anarchism and the Spanish Revolution, the council communists.”



"Action", #4,5,7,10,12 & 15, Paris, June 1968



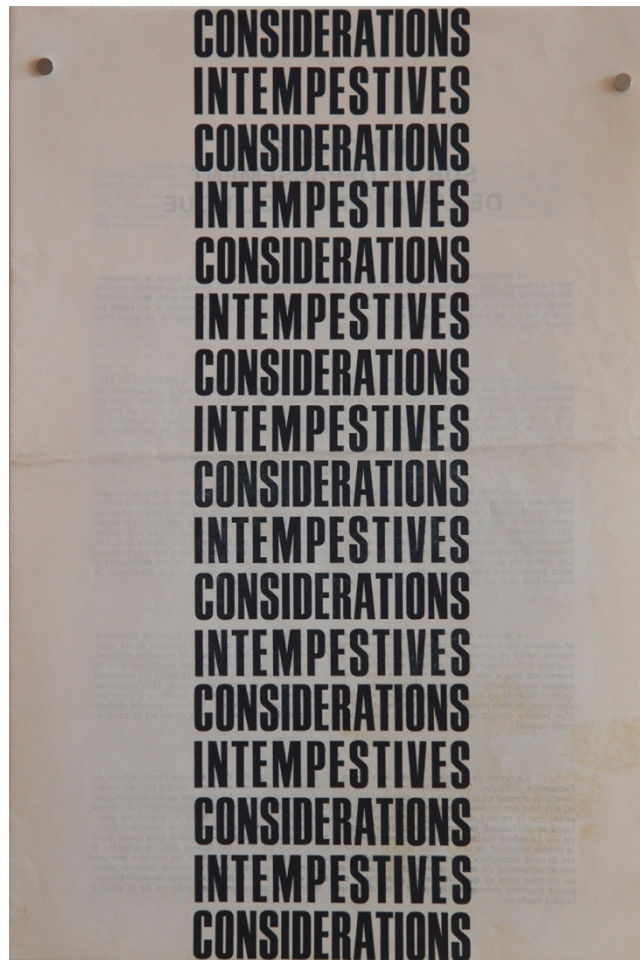
Posters, Paris, ca. May 1968



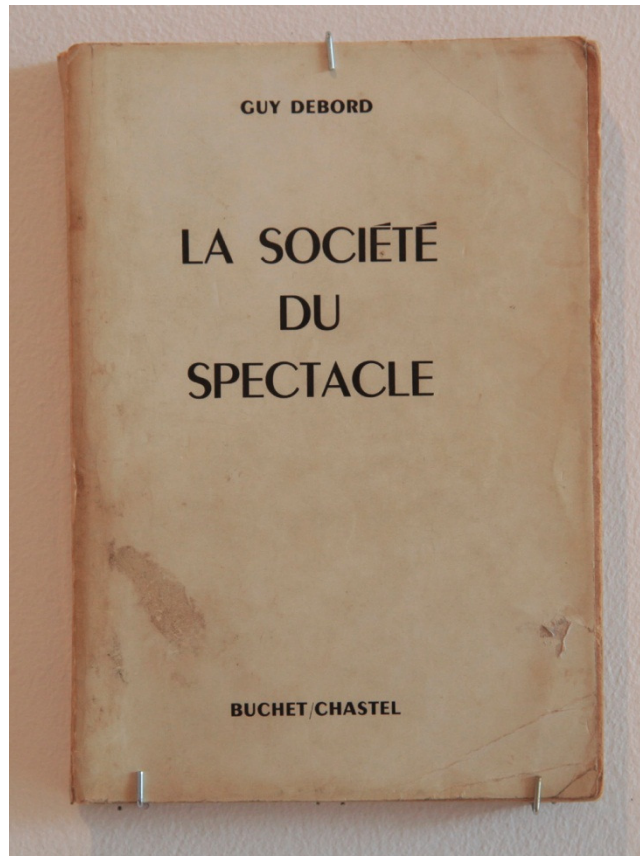
Action #3, Paris, May 1968 (back)
 “Worker-Student Action Committees, France May ‘68”
 Fredy Perlman and Roger Gregoire, Black & Red,
 Detroit, first published in 1969 (front)



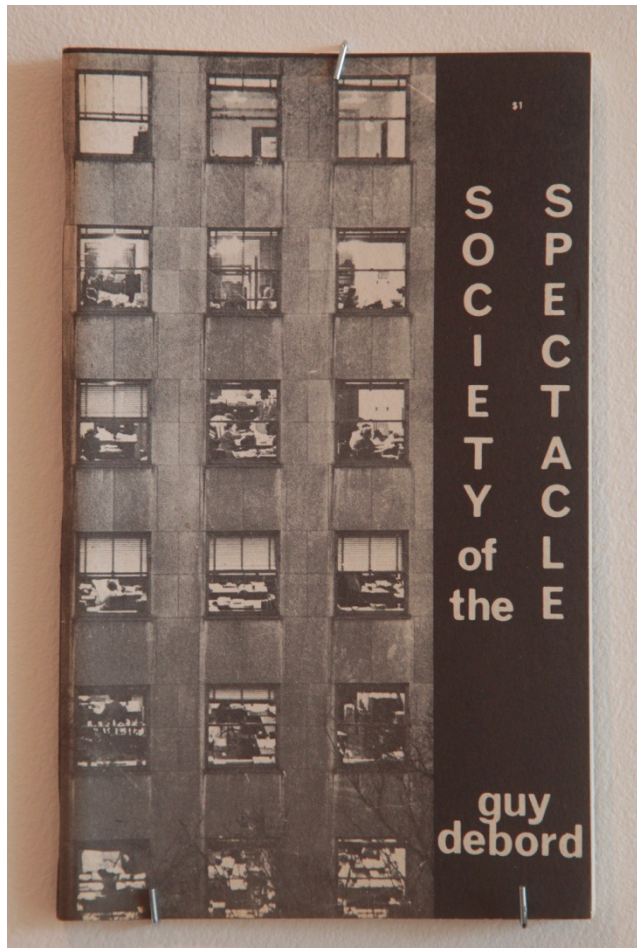
Posters, Paris, ca. May 1968



Manifesto, Strasbourg, 1968



“La Societe du Spectacle”, Guy Debord,
1st French Edition, 1967



"Society of the Spectacle", Guy Debord,
1st English Translation, Black & red,
Detroit, 1970



Cover of Society of the Spectacle, 2nd Edition,
Black & Red, Detroit, 1971

“Debord’s book was profoundly understood by all of us who worked first on translating it and then printing it. Although the Situationists’ “coherence of the critique” was viewed skeptically (as a potential rigid ideology) and a photo of the French Situationists was included in the chapter that denounces self-appointed centralized decision-making, translating Debord’s book was a rewarding activity for us in the Detroit of 1970.”

Note: “Society of the Spectacle” was translated from the French by a group of friends that met on Gladstone Street in Detroit in late 1969. The first English translation was published at the Detroit Printing Co-op in 1970.

Detroit Printing Co-op

1969-1980

"The equipment of the Printing Co-Op is social property. It is and shall be controlled by all individuals who need, use and maintain it.

It is not and shall not be owned or controlled by any individual or group of individuals, whether they claim, to serve, represent, or speak for society, whether they are elected or self-appointed.

The purpose of the Printing Co-Op is to provide access to printing equipment to all those individuals in the community who desire to express themselves (on a non-profit basis), with charges made only to maintain the print shop (rent, utilities, materials, maintenance of the machinery).

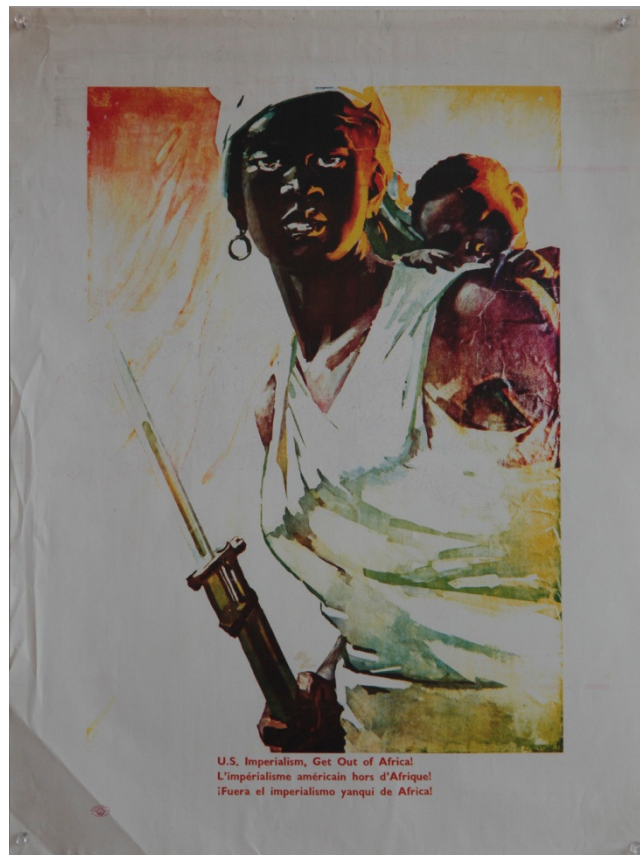
It is not the purpose of the Printing Co-Op to solve the problem of unemployment, nor to provide business opportunities for enterprising capitalists."

“..In late 1969 Hannah Ziegallaub and Jon Supak moved to Detroit from New England At the beginning of the new decade Judy and Don Campbell came from Minneapolis. Their arrival brought together the nucleus of a group that established the large printing facility on Michigan Avenue. The impetus for its founding came from a phone call from Bernard Marszelak, a Chicago printer-militant who told Fredy that a complete, but defunct, print shop was being sold.”

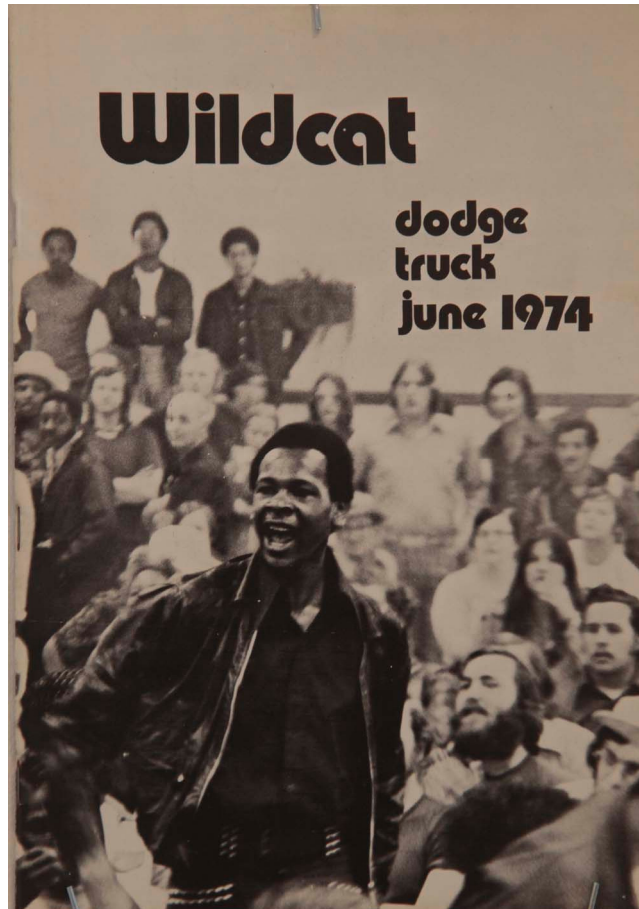
Note: The Detroit Printing Co-op operated from 3914 Michigan in South West Detroit from 1969-1980. The equipment included a 1920-s era Harris press purchased with other items from a defunct print shop in Chicago for \$4000. Financial support came from printing for other organizations such as Radical America. Printers were members of the Industrial Workers of the World, as indicated by the IWW bug on prints.



Image from poster for benefit concert, 1970



Poster from Black Star Publishing, ca. 1974



"Wildcat", Black and Red, Detroit, 1974



Books and Pamphlets published at the Detroit Printing Co-op



"Interior of the Detroit Printing Co-op,
March 1976." Photographer unknown.



"Fredy in Printing Co-op, 1979"
Photo by K.D. Wolff

“In the summer of 1971 Fredy and I took a trip to Alaska..... The trip marked a change in Fredy’s view of the society he lived in. He began asking whether human intervention was ever benign....It would be five years before Fredy started preparing himself for a systematic critique of Progress

“In 1976 Fredy undertook a systematic study of world history. He started by reading the volumes of the *Cambridge Ancient History* series. During the next five years he compiled a forty-page list of books he wanted to read. It was organized into categories like “Early modern Europe”, “North American Archeology”, “Science and Technology”, “Islam”. These lists contained works of fiction as well as historical and cultural studies. Fredy took notes from many of the books on the list, sometimes typing out entire passages. To help organize the material, he prepared large sheets (the size of a table top) on which he recorded events according to chronology and continent. These charts begin with 9000 B.C. and continue to the present. Some of the column headings are: “Social Relations” which is sub-divided into “Rural” and “Urban; “Capital”; “Material Conditions (Technology)”; “Literature”. He used several colors of ink to record the entries. This survey of world history covers at least 80 large sheets, some filled with miniscule handwriting.”

Agamenre Apophis II Eg. counterattack, xenophobia, expansion:
 Asehre Khamudy Seferenre Tao II, "the brave":
 roots Apophis out of Middle Eg.

or 1580 Khamose - offered against Hyksos.
 Dyn 18 - 1567-1320 - New K. @ Nubian & Sudan forces.
 Nebpetyre Amosis - wife-sister Ahmose-Nefertiti
 (Ahhotep - mother of Kamose & Amosis). She "unified" Egypt.
 "Eg. Pharaohs return to Thebes; centralized military
 monarchy. Horse-drawn war chariot.
 Money economy. Merchants,
 soldiers, clerks, priests, artisans.
 Market bazars for craftsmen's prods.
 Money incomes. Law codes & judges.
 Tribal lands become estates."

15 yr. war: reduction of Avaris; plunder & enslavement.
 Conquest of Delta & march to Sharuhen in Palestine; many Asians
 are driven out of Egypt (incl. Moses & his tribes?).

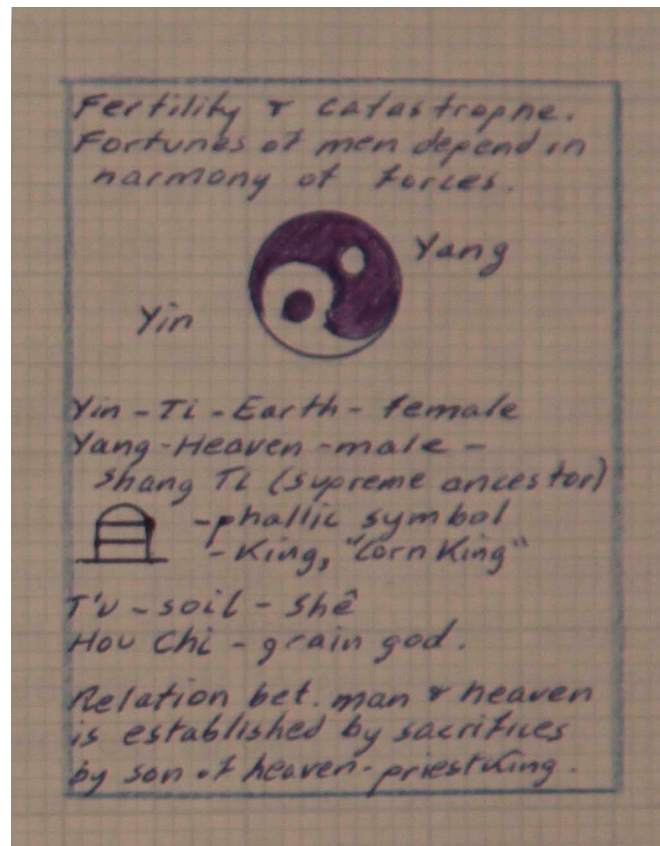
DeserKare Amenophis I & Nefertiti
 Expansion to Nubia; building of ABYDOS; activity in Sinai
 Special corps of Necropolis workers in workers' village.

Section of handwritten chart detailing the history
 of the Mediterranean, Levant, Anatolia, Mesopotamia,
 India and China from 1760 BC to 1480 BC

““Leviathan” was the label Fredy gave to the machine-like beast which, in the guise of divine authority, state or commerce, posed as humanity’s friend but which, in fact, devoured all natural organisms. Fredy called Leviathan’s own account of its trajectory “His-story”.”



“Against His-story, Against Leviathan!” (1983) and
“The Strait” (1988).



Section of handwritten chart detailing the history of the Mediterranean, Levant, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, India and China from 1760 BC to 1480 BC



Research for “The Strait”

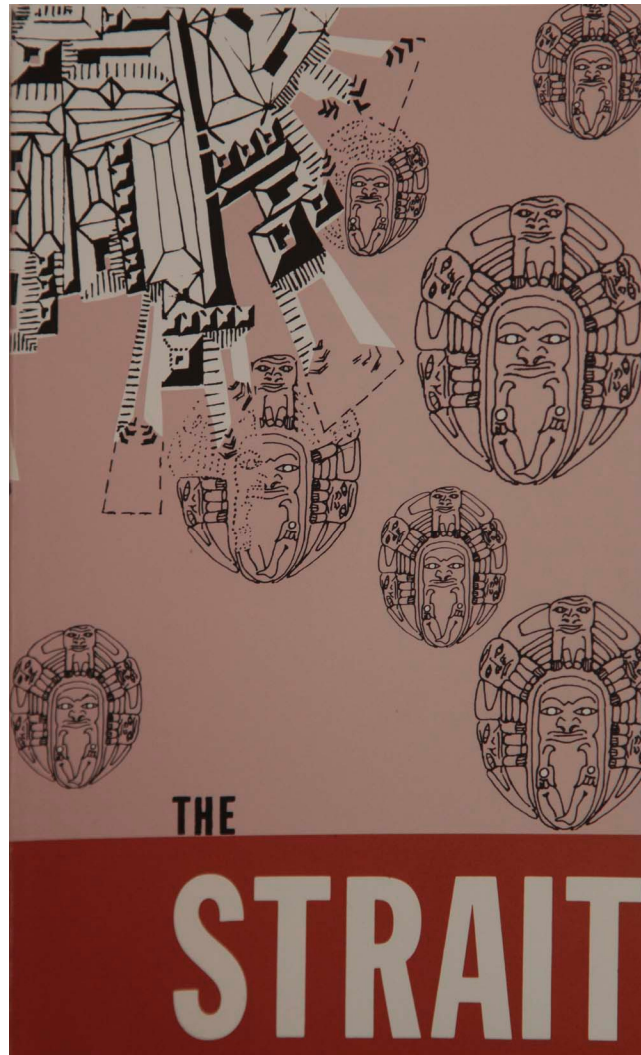
“..... (Fredy) was still determined to write his expose of the world-changers. This was the work he had been preparing to write since he left Colombia University in 1959. He aspired to incorporate in a unified account the many things he knew about the nefarious effects of commodities and technology; about the inadequacies of all institutions; the numerous ways of being a toady; the hazards of one speaking to many and, of course, about saviors who claim to protect their followers from all of the above.

To avoid His-story's clutches, Fredy turned to a non-linear interpretation of human events. This new approach tremendously expanded the setting of the story. Becoming acquainted with non-Leviathanic views of the world, he came to see as narrow arrogance the study of exclusively human interactions. In his new guides' interpretations of the world, all living beings were included.

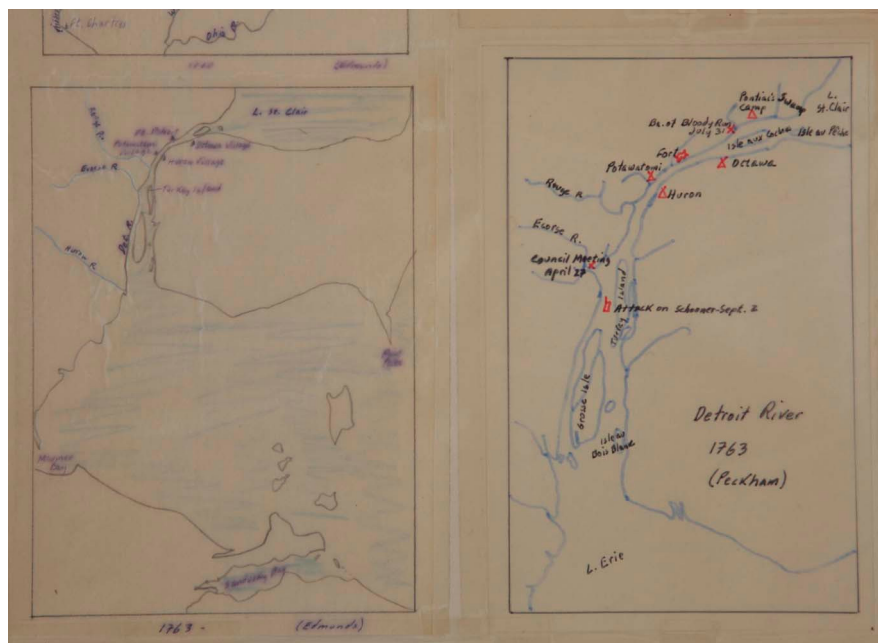
With humility, Fredy tried to absorb the teachings of the North American shamen and “remembers” whose insights often originated in the era preceding the arrivals of Europeans. He read the powerful denunciations and appeals of people who disliked the world-changers' ways and whose heritage provided a perspective for rejecting them. He also read memoirs of individuals, legends of a people and about the significance of rituals. Always a lover of words, Fredy

was entranced by the eloquence of these texts and convinced by the writers' visions. He read scholarly treatises as well; though he was often angered by their reductive condescension, they led him to original sources.

In his notes Fredy wrote messages to himself about the crucial importance of the story being "oral". His goal was to emerge with a song. He was surely aware that the hundreds of characters would not make the story easy to read, nor would the avoidance of the Invaders' system of dates make the chronology obvious. But this story, emulating its oral predecessors, could not have recourse to the European establishment's dating system. Births, deaths, plagues and battles correlate events described by Obenabi and Wabnokwe, the narrators of Fredy's story. As setting, he chose the place in which he was living; the title of the work is the English translation of Detroit."



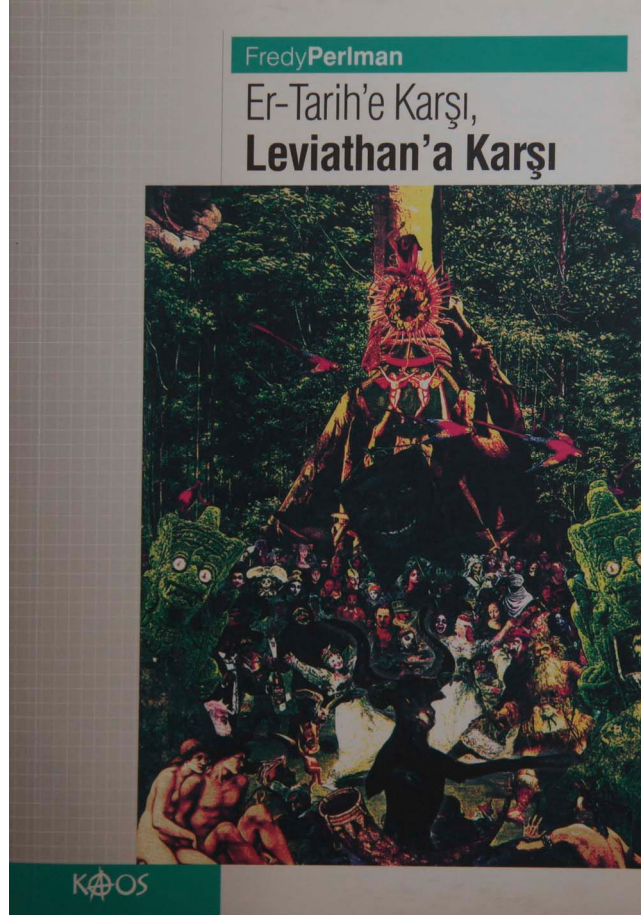
"The Strait", Fredy Perlman,
Black & Red, Detroit, 1988
Cover design by John Ricklefs



Research for "The Strait"



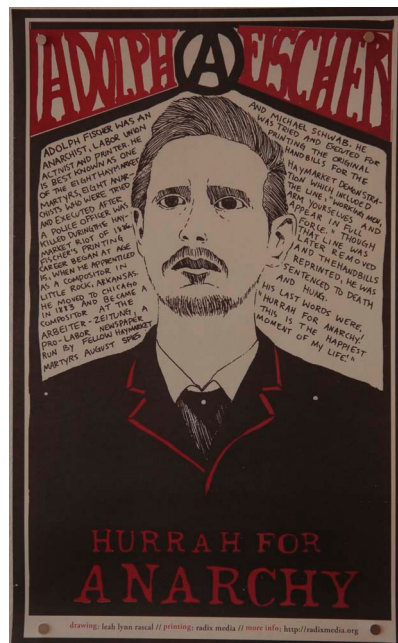
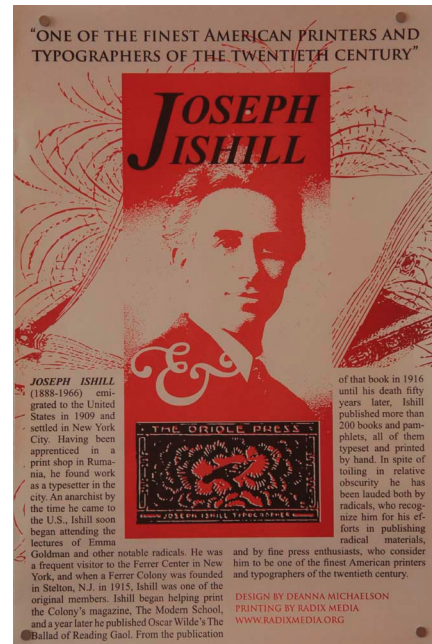
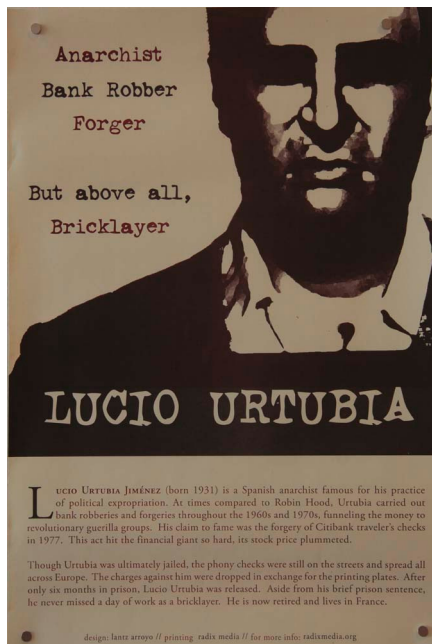
Handwritten charts for “Against His-story” and “The Strait”



Turkish translation of “Against His-story”



Translations of Fredy Perlman's works



Radical Printer Poster Series, Radix Media, Portland, 2012



Radical Printer Poster Series, Radix Media, Portland, 2012