

From this base we can look for aesthetics within our sticker design. The demands of size and use require extreme simplicity and clarity. The artist who supports the status quo looks for obscurantism and mysticism as "truth", because he does not dare say, simply, this is how life is. At best he will strive to find a personal private truth. The progressive cultural worker wants a bright and shining understanding: this is how life is, truly. A personal understanding of the wider social truth.

It is not a question of abstraction versus realism either. As long as the abstractions are instantly recognisable, such as the symbol of the wheel, they can be used. Indeed, part of the cultural workers task is to find and develop such symbolism. We must search through our personal and political experiences for those unifying factors, in our own, our people's consciousness. The clenched fist is

indeed part of our reality.

More than that, we must bring our images together to enrich, to deepen understanding. It is not merely that workers hold a flag, a hammer, a flower: they hold them with strength of purpose, grace and even direction — forward! It is not merely that two workers stride towards the future. It is the texture of their clothes, the starkness of their forms. We are not just telling people something. We are bringing them a new image that should sharpen perception. The question of technique gains urgency.

And we can fail, too, sometimes. The image can be too simple, it can inspire only an insipid "oh yes, but we know that already! This is the cliché." The work can be incompetent unclear for technical reasons. We do see ineffective and downright bad progressive art on occasion.

So we say: our stickers are not so easily dismissed as "only propaganda". Like all serious cultural work, they search for a sharper understanding, a clearer perception, and they follow an aesthetic demanded by that search, within the restrictions of the medium.

We could of course make these points about posters and backdrops, about any progressive graphics. The same logic applies: the role of graphic work within the people's struggle is to find clear and vivid imagery to improve our understanding of the situation and the need to change it. But stickers are such an unacknowledged form of cultural work, summarily dismissed as propaganda. Rather this seemingly insignificant form must also be seen as a part of our flowering culture, the one we are building now, today, for our own tomorrow. We cannot neglect or dismiss any part of this as "merely propaganda". These images become our truth.

### Our Army.

In the middle of the night  
They woke us  
To move us  
As the enemy was expected.

Outside in the darkness  
I stumbled,  
Almost fell.

A comrade steadied me,  
Took the sleeping baby  
from my arms,  
and handed me his AK.

Marius Schoon.  
Lubango, Angola.  
January, 1984.

