Yet what about the information worker as a conscientious objector? Should we not also be looking towards a more principled (ethical or moral) set of such standards?

I for one do not see my job as being one in which I should (because of some spurious set of ideas) be confused with those library and information workers within military or nuclear establishments. Likewise, I do not see any justification for using my skills to help those who would perform vivisection, or any other such totally unprincipled acts.

Clearly these are issues that we as information workers should be concerned about.

In summary, I have only here given a very brief outline of what concerns me and I hope that it will add to our debates and help develop ideas within the profession.

---

**ADDED ENTRIES**

**THE CUBA POSTER PROJECT**

by Lincoln Cushing

In 1991, a colleague, Dan Walsh of Liberation Graphics, asked me if I wanted to join him in a lawsuit against the U.S. Treasury Department to allow travel to Cuba for “business” related to the importation of First-Amendment materials. I couldn’t resist an offer like that, and little did I know that I would soon be documenting and cataloguing one of the most potent bodies of political visual art in the world. The Cuba Poster Project was born. I would be transported from a crank-em-out and put-em-up poster-maker to the other side of the looking glass, a conservator and archivist.

The Cuba Poster Project is dedicated to documenting and cataloguing posters produced in Cuba since the revolution. The vast majority of these were through the auspices of three agencies: Editora Politica, OSPAAAL (the Organization in Solidarity with the People of Africa, Asia and Latin America), and ICAIC (the Cuban Film Institute). Editora Politica (EP) is the official publishing department of the Cuban Communist Party, and is responsible for a wide range of domestic public information posters covering such topics as support for agricultural production, celebration of patriotic anniversaries, publicity about sporting events, and education about public health. In addition, many other agencies utilized the resources and distribution powers of EP for their own work, including FMC (the Federation of Cuban Women), the CNT (the National Confederation of Workers), and OCLAE (the Latin American Students Association). OSPAAAL is officially a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) recognized by the United Nations, based in Havana, Cuba and with a board of representatives from all over the world. It is the primary producer of international solidarity posters in Cuba. Among its many activities has been the publication of *Tricontinental* magazine since 1967. At its peak, circulation was 30,000 copies, produced in 4 different languages and mailed to 87 coun-

---

*Progressive Librarian #15*
tries. Included in most issues were folded-up solidarity posters, thus establishing the most effective international poster-distribution system in the world. ICAIC produces posters for all films made in Cuba, and for many years also created publicity posters for foreign films shown in Cuba as well. These posters were all of identical size to fit in special kiosks throughout Havana.

Posters are a vital, expressive visual art which have historically been a medium of choice for presenting oppositional voices. Unfortunately, the timeless issues they raise are usually eclipsed by their short life-span in the public record. A variety of factors conspire to dramatically limit the number of poster images that not only survive, but are available to researchers, organizers, and the viewing public. These include physical deterioration (bad ink/paper stability, staining and tearing due to poor display techniques, fading from exposure to sunlight, infestation by bugs and rot, damage from improper storage, etc.), irreversible damage and loss (insecure storage resulting in fire and water damage, posters being thrown out as trash), and privatization (posters being bought up by collectors/dealers). Cuba is no exception. As in the rest of the world, the very agencies that produced the work had devoted little energy to preserving them. An example of this a request last year by OSPAAAL for display copies for an exhibit on Che Guevara. The agency did not have eight of the 18 different posters they had produced, and we were able to send down giant digital prints from our archive.

Because of the irreplaceable political and cultural heritage represented by this ephemeral art, I have been working with other independent poster archivists to develop an approach for documenting and cataloguing the images and information in such a way that these works will forever remain potent voices of change. Our approach seeks to empower poster-producing organizations to preserve their own visual history and allow them to breathe new life into images that were created many years ago. Because we are also concerned with preserving oppositional poster art in general, we see the documentation of "small" collections to be key pieces in the construction of a major archive of domestic and international posters. Our approach accomplishes these goals through the following objectives:

1. Capturing the graphic image with clarity, fidelity, and archival permanence as 35mm slides.
2. Duplicating the image in a format that allows tremendous control and flexibility for collateral uses (reproductions, website displays, etc.) on CD-ROMs.
3. Cataloguing the relevant accompanying information in an electronic database that is essential for researching and image retrieval.

Although shooting high-quality slides of artwork is not new, the digitization of images and databases has only recently become affordable to smaller collections. One of the wonderful features of a digital catalog is that it is possible to build a complete "collection" without possession of the actual artifact, thus freeing producing agencies from the whole separate difficult task of poster collection and conservation. An image-rich database means that poster images can be quickly located and compared without reliance on curatorial memory or access to the actual poster. The Biblioteca Nacional Jose Marti, which is Cuba's main national library, has been very interested in our work and will be one of the recipients of the Cuban collection once it is completed.

For more information about our project, look at our website at http://www.zpub.com/cpp, e-mail lcushing@igc.org, or call (510) 845-7111.