

PATHS TOWARD UTOPIA

Graphic Explorations of Everyday Anarchism

Cindy Milstein & Erik Ruin

Introduction by Josh MacPhee

Consisting of ten collaborative picture-essays that weave Cindy Milstein's poetic words within Erik Ruin's intricate yet bold paper-cut and scratch-board images, *Paths toward Utopia* suggests some of the here-and-now practices that prefigure, however imperfectly, the self-organization that would be commonplace in an egalitarian society. The book mines what we do in our daily lives for the already-existent gems of a freer future—premised on anarchistic ethics like cooperation and direct democracy. Its pages depict everything from seemingly ordinary activities like using parks as our commons to grandiose occupations of public space that construct do-it-ourselves communities, if only temporarily, including pieces such as "The Gift," "Borrowing from the Library," "Solidarity Is a Pizza," and "Waking to Revolution." The aim is to supply hints of what it routinely would be like to live, every day, in a world created from below, where coercion and hierarchy are largely vestiges of the past.

Paths toward Utopia is not a rosy-eyed stroll, though. The book retains the tensions in present-day attempts to "model" horizontal institutions and relationships of mutual aid under increasingly vertical, exploitative, and alienated conditions. It tries to walk the line between potholes and potential. Yet if anarchist and other autonomist efforts are to serve as a clarion call to action, they must illuminate how people qualitatively, consensually, and ecologically shape their needs as well as desires. They must offer stepping-stones toward emancipation. This can only happen through experimentation, by us all, with diverse forms of self-determination and self-governance, even if riddled with contradictions in this contemporary moment. As the title piece to this book steadfastly asserts, "The precarious passage itself is our road map to a liberatory society."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Cindy Milstein is the author of *Anarchism and Its Aspirations* (AK Press, 2010), and has contributed essays to anthologies such as *Realizing the Impossible* (AK Press, 2007), and *Globalize Liberation* (City Lights, 2003). She is an Institute for Anarchist Studies board member, and has been involved in collective projects ranging from Black Sheep Books to the Hope from People, Not Presidents campaign, from the New World from Below convergence to the Renewing the Anarchist Tradition conference. She resides in San Francisco.

Erik Ruin is a printmaker, shadow-puppeteer, and occasional maker/editor of various publications, including the anthology *Realizing the Impossible: Art against Authority* (coedited with Josh MacPhee, AK Press, 2007). He frequently works collaboratively with other artists or activist campaigns, such as in imagery created for urban farming and prison abolition groups, and collectively, most prominently as a founding member of the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative. He resides in Philadelphia, PA.

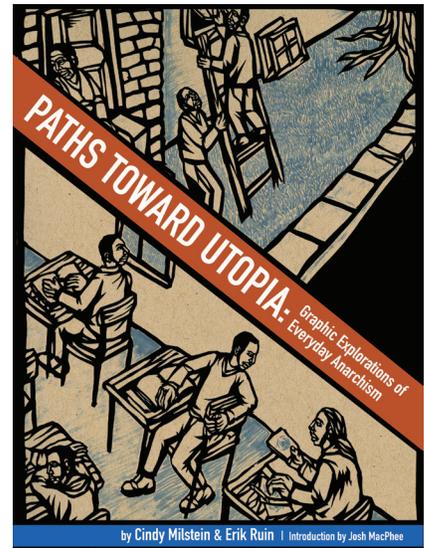
ABOUT JOSH MACPHEE (INTRODUCTION)

Josh MacPhee is an artist, curator, and activist currently living in Brooklyn, NY. His most recent books are *Celebrate People's History! The Poster Book of Resistance and Revolution* (Feminist Press, 2010) and *Signal* (PM Press, 2011).

ACCOLADES

"This remarkable book is inspiring and emboldening, allowing us to see the contours of another world that is not only possible but already in formation."

—Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, author of *Outlaw Woman: A Memoir of the War Years, 1960–1975*



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