

LEARNING UNIT

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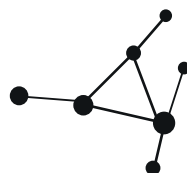
# PEDAGOGY AND CRITICISM OF CAPITALISM IN WEST BERLIN FROM 1969

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Working Group: Berlin  
Authors: Claudia Hummel

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# CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM  
# CRITIQUING SCHOOL  
# COMIC  
# CRITICAL PEDAGOGY  
# LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN



**intertwining hi/stories**

## ABSTRACT

1970, West Berlin. At the height of the Cold War, three years after the revolts staged by students, particularly in Paris, Frankfurt, and (West) Berlin, the publisher Basis Verlag started calling itself a socialist collective. The name of the publisher "Basis Verlag" unmistakably refers to the Marxist pair of terms "base" and "superstructure". Many of the books they published were about the relations of production, and criticism of mass media. These books also asked how children (in particular those of the working classes) could gain access to designing society through an education intended to be emancipatory.

The books and materials were aimed specifically at kindergarten and primary school teachers, interested parents, and possibly at leftist academics.

In the context of the research group "Intertwining Histories", which focuses on the various intersections of art education and colonialism, I asked myself: how and from when was colonialism associated with the criticism of capitalism and made into a subject of discussion within the pedagogic literature of West Germany?

*Das Geschichtsbuch / The History Book* (1971) was the first educational book I found which brought these two threads – the criticism of capitalism and colonialism – together. First published in Sweden in 1970 by the authors Annika Elmquist, Gittan Jönsson, AnnMari Langemar and Pål Ryberg, it was translated from the Swedish original by Doris Jacobi, Ingrid Schwarz and Peter Jacobi.

The Learning Unit contains a commented version of *Das Geschichtsbuch* and asks the following questions: Which books do we learn with and why? And, which knowledge was brought into the German speaking realm of art and education through translations?

## AUTHOR

Claudia Hummel works as an educator, art mediator and curator. Her work focuses on research on the intersection between education and the arts in the field of critical art pedagogy, as well as on art mediation, and the history of art and pedagogy in Berlin (West) and West Germany since the 1970s. She participated in conceiving the programmes for kids and teens at documenta 12 (2007) and documenta 13 (2012). She has taught at the Institute for Art in Context at the Berlin University of the Arts since 2009, where she focuses on artistic collaboration with social groups.

## ADDRESSEES

This Learning Unit is for artists and pedagogues in German speaking countries.

## INTRODUCTION

Politics of books

This Learning Unit questions the book as a medium in pedagogy.

We all learn from books. Books and the knowledge communicated within them can significantly shape our understanding of the world. This is because school and text books frequently have a performative effect: they imply that the information within them is true and important just because it is printed there.

We are often unaware that school and text books as well as pedagogical literature are always criss-crossed with time-dependent societal states of knowledge, with a present or absent consciousness of facts, with unreflected, naturalised perspectives, and therefore also contain blind spots in relation to certain contexts. Only when looking at old books does it become clear to us that books are informed by societal questions, conventions and even ideologies of a past time.

My colleague, artist Annette Krauss, and I have been working on how school books are time-dependent and informed by society. When I was introduced to the research group "Intertwining Histories" we had already critically analysed maths books from 1985 to around 2010 in relation to how their inherent politics of text, image and numbers were determined by society.

Parallel to this, I have collected pedagogical literature published in West Germany in the 1970s and am frequently fascinated by the vehemence with which economic and societal conditions, combined with the class question, were made the topic of these books.

In the context of the research group "Intertwining Histories", which focuses on the various intersections of art education and colonialism, I asked myself: how and from when was colonialism associated with the criticism of capitalism and made into a subject of discussion within the pedagogical literature of West Germany?

*Das Geschichtsbuch/The History Book* was the first educational book that I found, which brought these two threads – the criticism of capitalism and colonialism – together. I found its politics of representation unique, as the whole book is made up of comics or picture stories.

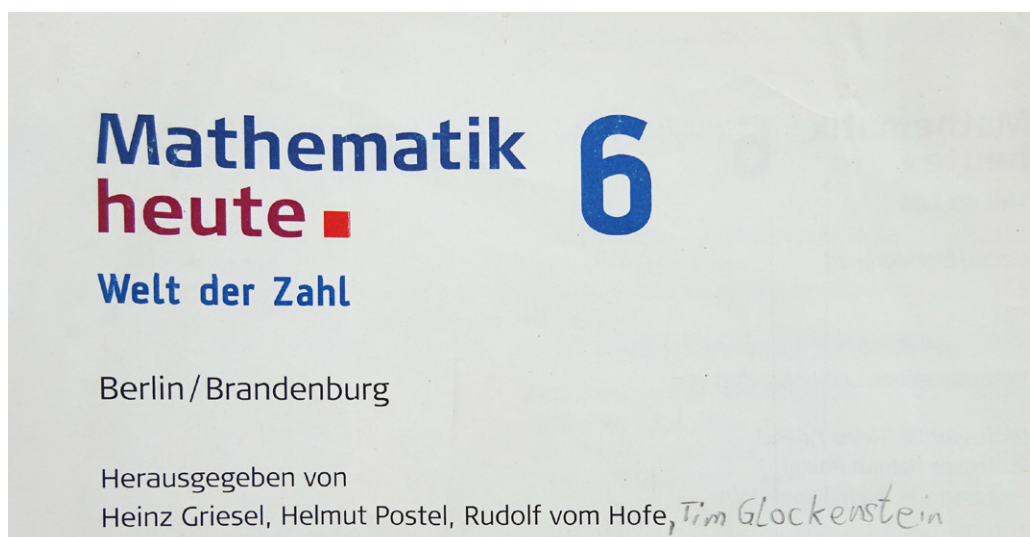
By revising the German version of *Das Geschichtsbuch*, published by Basis Verlag in West Berlin, the Learning Unit asks the following questions: Which books do we learn with and why? And, which knowledge was brought into the German speaking realm of art and education through translations?

Basis Verlag was a committed leftist publishing house, starting in the late 1960s, ending its activities in the second half of the 1980s. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the field of leftist pedagogical literature got reorganized and partially lost, as there seemed to be no position of opposition possible anymore. How far are the books of the Basis Verlag a hint on interrupted paths in the history / histories of (art-)pedagogy?

Within the field of pedagogy, this is a good enough reason to ask how the struggles between history (or histories) and alternative history (or alternative histories) are portrayed in teaching books; which forms of knowledge, speakers, and portrayals are used to convey history; and it is also interesting to examine the blind spots of these engaged books from a contemporary perspective.

## Bookmark Politics

Students inscribe their presence in school or teaching books by underlining or scribbling in them. This is familiar to us, from our own experiences as students or through observing others.



As adults we may underline or use post-it notes to highlight important passages or add additional aspects and meanings to books. Sometimes we add other materials: we put newspaper articles, postcards, index cards or just bookmarks inside books. All these additions can be seen as comments on our books. And also, on us.

The German version of *Das Geschichtsbuch* is commented on by me in different ways. My positionality, my bookshelf, my way of associating, dealing with and processing, which are all shaped by my socialization, education and habitus: all these come across in the comments. The comments are written as well in reference to the context of West Berlin in the 1970s.

The English version *The History Book* serves just as a comparison for English speaking readers. I didn't do research about the realm of publications within *The History Book*, which was published in the US.

The "commented book" is, however, not finished. The commentary has just begun. It is an invitation to anyone who wishes to, to also comment on it.

The following desire forms the basis of the work of commenting: to find a method with which one can not only inform oneself through books and find a form for this information, but also exert influence over the book itself, by adding to it, writing in it, or when necessary writing over its contents.

To what extent can a performative interaction with books enable us to question, break or extend their own performative nature?

- DE - 4: 1 BERLIN 15
- EN - 3: TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

## CONTEXT WEST BERLIN 1967

The Second World War ended 22 years ago. The Federal Republic of Germany has had its own constitution for 19 years and is referred to as a *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). People who were born during the war or just after were then old enough to critically question their parent's roles during National Socialism. They did this by rejecting the authorities that had raised their parents. They also questioned the authority of their parents, which was sometimes associated with an oppressive silence in regard to what happened to them and what they did during the Nazi era.

The rejection of the authorities was not only a programme concerning family relations. Universities and those affiliated with them were also massively challenged. Students revolted.

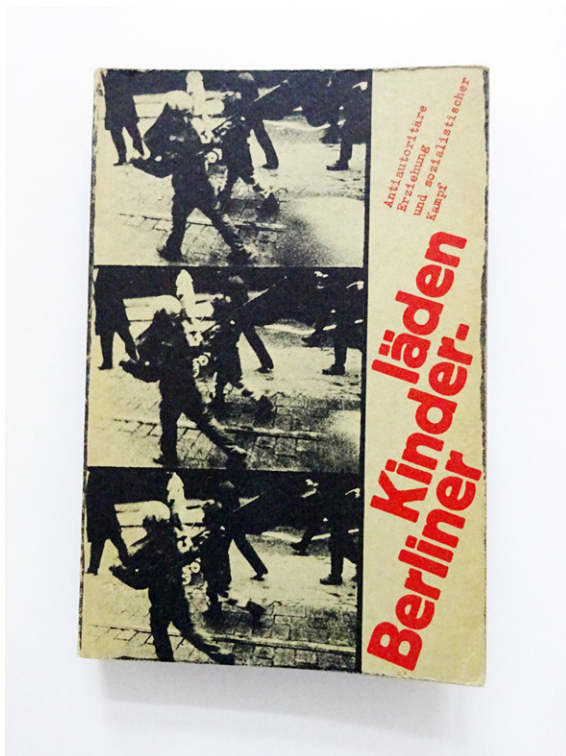
The aim of this critical questioning of the previous generation was to create in turn with their own children a society in which the horror of National Socialism could never repeat itself.

The goal was to establish an anti-fascist society built on the principle of solidarity. The revolutionary students conceptualised the desired solidarity as transcending class boundaries. Many were conscious that to establish such a society, things needed to be learned, and therefore the field of education needed to be changed in many ways.

For example, *Kinderläden* (literally: "children's shops"), and new types of self-organised kindergartens were started. Founders of these *Kinderläden* were often parents, in particular mothers who worked, studied or wanted to study. The term *Kinderläden* refers to these initiatives often renting empty shop spaces, in order to have a place to take care of groups of children during the day. "To take care of" is perhaps the wrong expression because the *Kinderläden* movement was characterized by its active reflection and debate of anti-authoritarian education.

Today, self-organised *Kinderläden* are usually in the hands of parents, who work freelance in creative industries or who are academics.

- ▶ Which legacies of the left criticism of the 1970s are being carried forward by this creative class?
- ▶ How are these legacies being hijacked by a neoliberal society?
- ▶ How and when did "anti-authoritarian" become "neo-liberal"?



Autorenkollektiv. Berliner Kinderläden. Antiautoritäre Erziehung und sozialistischer Kampf. Köln (Cologne): Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1970.



Bott, Gerhard. Erziehung zum Ungehorsam. Antiautoritäre Kinderläden. Frankfurt: März Verlag, 1970.

- DE - 4: Basis-Verlag
- EN - 4: The Midnight Special

## BASIS VERLAG (BASIS PUBLISHING HOUSE)

1970, West Berlin. At the height of the Cold War, three years after the student revolts, particularly in Paris, Frankfurt, and West Berlin, the publisher Basis Verlag started calling itself a socialist collective. The members of this collective are not found in any of their books.

The name of the publisher "Basis Verlag" unmistakably refers to the Marxist pair of terms "base" and "superstructure". Many of the books they published were about the relations of production, and criticism of mass media. These books also asked how children (in particular those of the working classes) could gain access to designing society through an education intended to be emancipatory.

At first some socialist children's books were produced: *Fünf Finger sind eine Faust* (Five Fingers are a Fist), *Martin der Mars(x)mensch* (Martin the Mars(x)Man), *Yü Gong versetzt Berge* (Yü Gong Moves Mountains) and *Das Geschichtsbuch* (*The History Book*). From 1974 onwards, the series of books *Basis Theorie* (Base Theory) and *Basis Unterricht* (Base Lessons) were produced. Later, two further sets complete with learning materials were developed.

The books and materials were aimed specifically at kindergarten and primary school teachers, interested parents, and possibly at leftist academics. The series Base Lessons particularly served as inspiration for teachers, kindergarten staff and artists to approach subjects such as "poor-rich", working world, inequality, and capitalism amongst others through descriptions of lessons, actions and extra-curricular art projects. Sometimes the books also contained critical self-reflection of the authors.



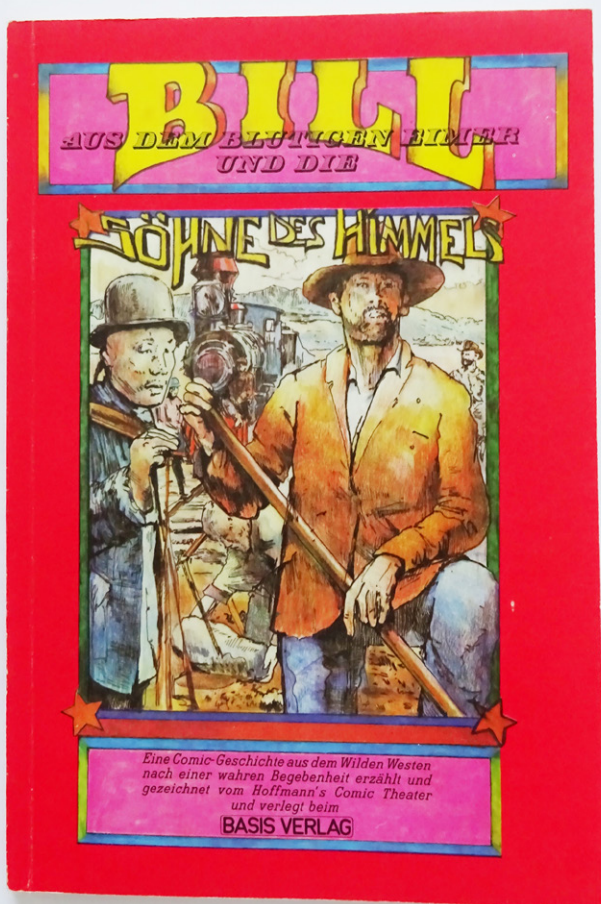
Basis Verlag publications. Photography: Claudia Hummel, 2018

- DE - 2, 3: WARUM wir dieses BUCH gemacht haben und WIE
- EN - 5: WHY we wrote this BOOK and HOW

### THE (MASS) MEDIUM COMIC

Basis Verlag also concerned itself with criticism of mass media. Its criticism of comics was done by using the medium itself. *Bill aus dem blutigen Eimer* (Bill from the Bloody Bucket), by Hoffmann's Comic Teater and drawn by Peter Möbius, is a comic book telling the story of trade rivalry between two train companies who built railways in North America while accepting responsibility for the deaths of many workers.

The comic *Bill aus dem blutigen Eimer* is a counterstatement to the widespread portrayal of North America as a country of "cowboys" (emigrated from Europe) in conflict with indigenous people, as well as to it being a country of unlimited possibilities. Work-related migration from China, as well as the disfranchisement and murder of indigenous people for the laying of the railways, are also topics in the comic.

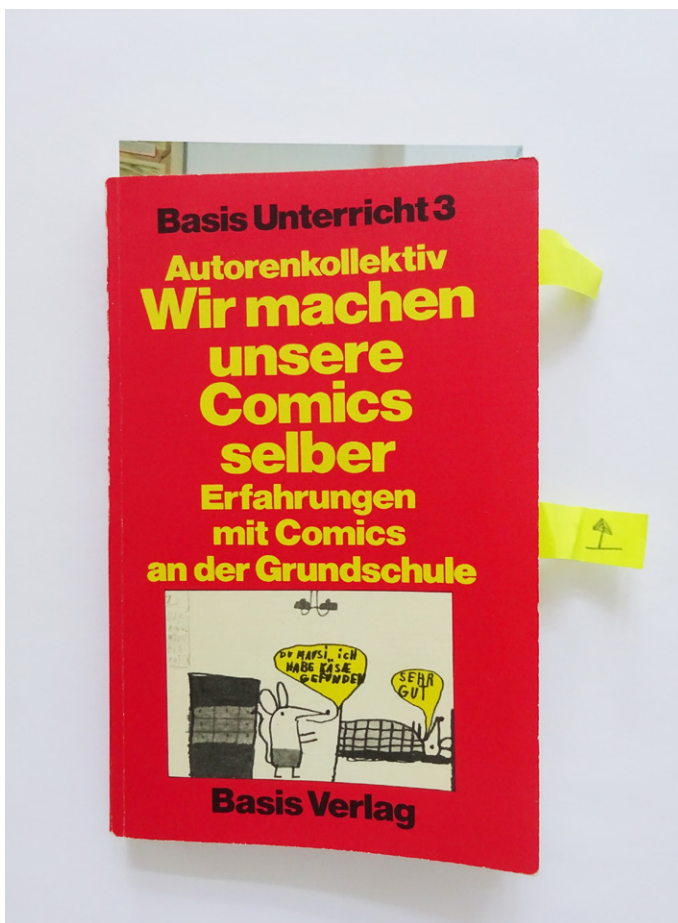


Hoffmann's Comic Theater. *Bill aus dem blutigen Eimer und die Söhne des Himmels*. Berlin: Basis Verlag, 1974.

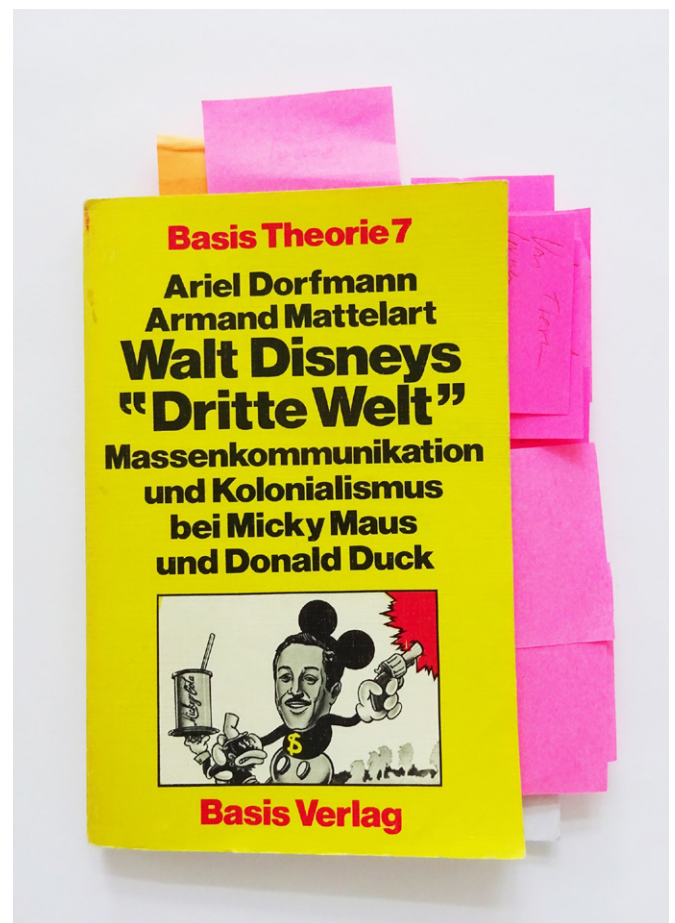


The book *Wir machen unsere Comics selber* (We Make Our Comics Ourselves) by an anonymous collective of authors demanded that criticism of mass media should always take place in the respective media – criticism of film (or TV) with the medium of film or video, criticism of comics in the medium of comics. As with visual communication, the book stated the requirement that children should be taught how to make comics in order that they can use them for their own stories and needs.

The most impressive examination of the medium of comics, *How to Read Donald Duck*, was published first in 1971 in Spanish, and then in 1977 in German by Basis Verlag with the title: *Walt Disneys "Dritte Welt". Massenkommunikation und Kolonialismus bei Micky Maus und Donald Duck* (Walt Disney's "Third World". Mass Communication and Colonialism in Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck). In the book, the Chilean literature critic Ariel Dorfmann and the Belgium sociologist Armand Mattelart scrutinise, amongst other subjects, the hidden colonial structures in Disney comics.



Autorenkollektiv. *Wir machen unsere Comics selber*. Erfahrungen mit Comics in der Grundschule. Basis Unterricht 3. Berlin: Basis Verlag, 1974.



Dorfmann, Ariel and Armand Mattelart. *Walt Disneys "Dritte Welt"*. Massenkommunikation und Kolonialismus bei Mickey Maus und Donald Duck. Basis Theorie 7. Berlin: Basis Verlag, 1977.

## VISUELLE KOMMUNIKATION / VISUAL COMMUNICATION

With the concept of "visual communication" the group ad-hoc, which was formed out of the student protests in Frankfurt, developed an alternative curriculum for art lessons in the German state of Hesse. Their aim was to transcend the middle-class definition of art, and to introduce a critical way of learning how to see (*Sehen lernen*) through confronting the images produced by mass media.

The visual communication curriculum was published in the first edition of the magazine *Ästhetik und Kommunikation. Beiträge zur politischen Erziehung* (Aesthetic and Communication. Contributions to Political Education) in July 1970.



Hartwig, Helmut. *Sehen lernen*. Visuelle Kommunikation. Kritik und Weiterarbeit am Konzept. Köln (Cologne): Dumont Aktuell, 1978.



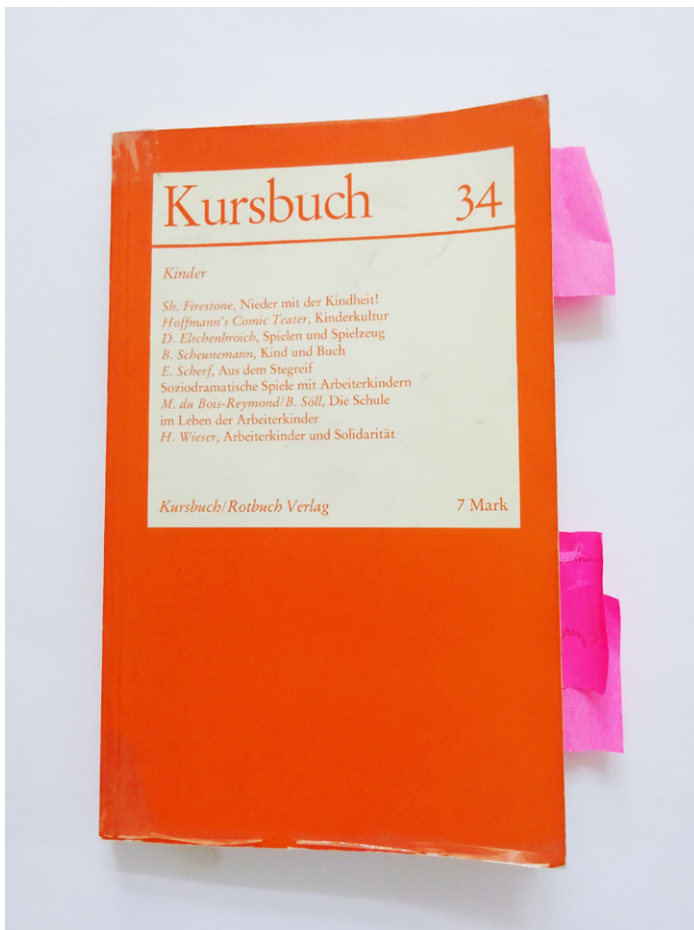
Institut für experimentelle Kunst und Ästhetik (IKAe). *Ästhetik und Kommunikation. Beiträge zur politischen Erziehung*. No 1: Visuelle Kommunikation. Frankfurt, Juli 1970.

- ▶ Did the inventors of visual communication know Dorfmann's and Mattelart's text? What influence did the text from Chile have on critical media discourse in West Berlin or West Germany?
- ▶ Does anyone know if there was, in the 1970s, a connection between Chile (Dorfmann /Mattelart) and educators/ artists in the German Democratic Republic concerning criticism of imperialism?

- DE - 3: „JAAA, EINE SEHR NETTE SACHE...ABER...IST ES DENN WIRKLICH FÜR KINDER GEEIGNET?“ „ICH MEINE, KINDER KANN MAN SCHLIESSLICH IMMER IRGENDWIE BESCHUMMELN, UND WIE KÖNNT IHR WISSEN, DASS ALLES SICH SO ABGESPIELT HAT?“
- EN - 6: YES. HR HR. THIS IS VERY GOOD. BUT IT ISN'T QUITE SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN

## CHILDREN

In the early 1970s, working class children were the subject addressed by leftist critical education. The idea was that these children should be equipped to examine their own (family) lives as well as the mostly poor conditions that surrounded them. Above all, they were to learn about artistic and educational alternatives to the allure of the consumer world that the illusions created by mass media such as comics and television promoted.



Enzensberger, Hans Magnus and Karl Markus Michel, eds. Kursbuch 34: Kinder. Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, December 1973.

- ▶ Which children are today the focus of critical education?
- ▶ Which desires or fantasies exist today (from artists, educators, and other persons) in relation to children as revolutionary subjects of society?

→ DE - 4: „VORWORT ZUR DEUTSCHEN AUSGABE: IM DEZEMBER 1970 BEKAMEN WIR POST AUS SCHWEDEN. DER VERLAG „ORDFRONT“ D.H. WORTFRONT SCHICKTE UNS EIN EXEMPLAR DES GESCHICHTSBUCHES. [...]

ALS WIR DANN EINE ERSTE ÜBERSETZUNG GELESEN HATTEN, PACKTE UNS GROSSE LUST- NUR MANCHES HÄTTEN WIR GANZ GERNE GEÄNDERT. [...]"

→ EN - 3: \*The book was originally written and published in Sweden.

## TRANSLATIONS

If I look at the titles on my bookshelf of historical educational publications (from the 1970s) concerning non-German authors, those that catch my eye are the works of Paulo Freire (published many times by rororo) and A.S. Neill (also published by rororo).

In relation to Basis Verlag, I realise that the following books were first published in other languages:

#1

*Das Geschichtsbuch / The History Book* by Annika Elmquist, Gittan Jönsson, AnnMari Langemar and Pål Ryberg is a translation from the Swedish original by Doris Jacobi, Ingrid Schwarz and Peter Jacobi.



Elmquist, Annika, Gittan Jönsson, AnnMari Langemar and Pål Ryberg. *Das Geschichtsbuch*. Berlin: Basis Verlag, 1971.

#2

*Wir fragen nicht mehr um Erlaubnis. Handbuch zur politischen Videopraxis / We Are Not Asking Your Permission Anymore. Handbook for a Political Video Practice* (Original title: *Senza chiedere permesso – come rivoluzionare l'informazione*, Feltrinelli, 1973) by Roberto Faenza, *Base Lessons 8*, Basis Verlag, Berlin 1975, which was translated into German by Petra Brüning and Max Looser.



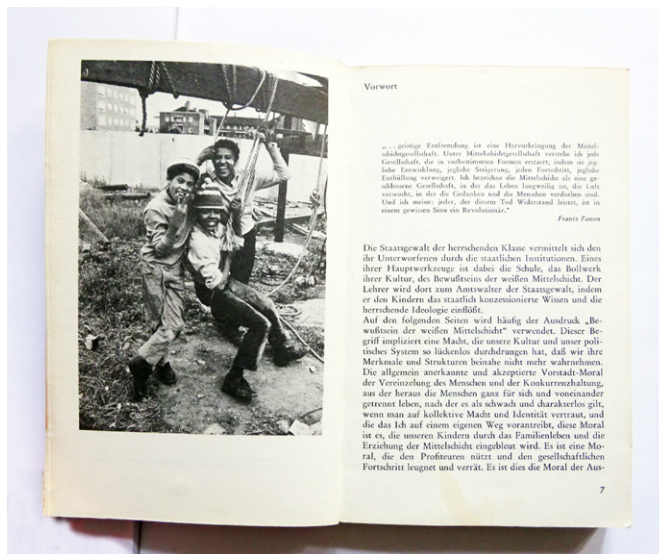
Faenza, Roberto. Wir fragen nicht mehr um Erlaubnis. Handbuch zur politischen Videopraxis. Basis Theorie 8. Berlin: Basis Verlag, 1975

#3

Mein Lehrer ist wie ein Panzer. Texte englischer Arbeiterkinder. Zur Schule im Kapitalismus / My Teacher is Like a Tank. Texts of English Working Class Children. On School in Capitalism (Original title: This New Season: Our Class, Our School, Our World) by Chris Searle, Basis Verlag, Berlin 1975, translated by Rainer Stahl.



Searle, Chris. Mein Lehrer ist wie ein Panzer. Texte englischer Arbeiterkinder. Zur Schule im Kapitalismus. Basis Unterricht 4. Berlin: Basis Verlag, 1975.



Searle, Chris. Mein Lehrer ist wie ein Panzer. Texte englischer Arbeiterkinder. Zur Schule im Kapitalismus. Basis Unterricht 4. Berlin: Basis Verlag, 1975: 6-7.

"....intellectual alienation is a product of the middle classes. I understand a middle class society as one that in its predetermined form refusing any kind of development, growth, advancement, or disclosure. I see the middle class as a closed society, in which life is boring, the air is contaminated, in which thoughts and people are tainted. And I believe that anyone who resists this death is in a sense a revolutionary".

Frantz Fanon

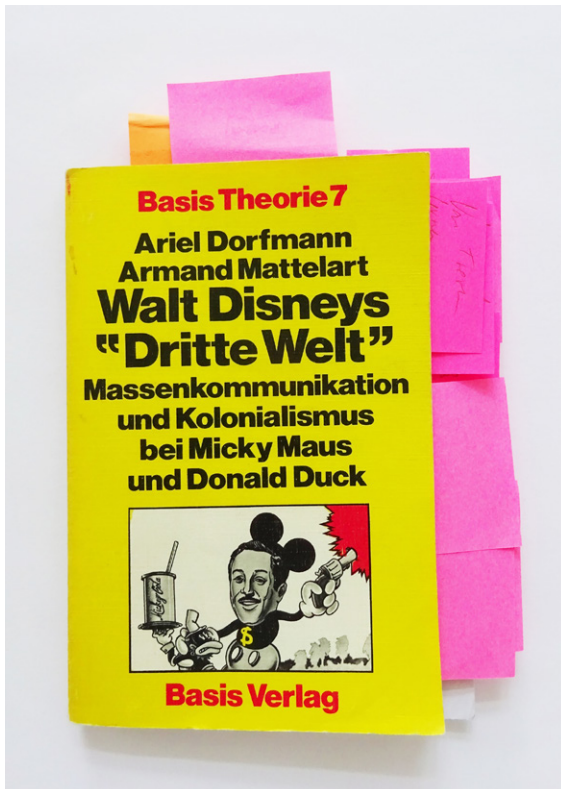
The introduction of the book *This New Season: Our Class, Our School, Our World* by Chris Searle opens with a quote from Frantz Fanon and broadens the critical educational focus of the Basis Verlag to a dimension not present in the books of the German authors. In the preface of the book it becomes clear that the criticism is directed towards the white middle class, with the institution of school as a bastion of their culture. Here criticism of capitalism necessarily comprises criticism of racism.

The book contains poems from English working-class children, which were written in school lessons together with Chris Searle. The poems formulate statements about the lives of the children in school within a racist society. The first photograph in the book shows three black children – a photograph which is unparalleled in other Basis Verlag publications, and actually, in other educational literature at that time.

- ▶ Central to the book is the criticism of the white middle class. When did you first come across the concept of "Critical Whiteness"?

#4

Walt Disneys "Dritte Welt". Massenkommunikation und Kolonialismus bei Mickey Maus und Donald Duck / Walt Disney's "Third World". Mass Communication and Colonialism in Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck (English title: How to Read Donald Duck) by Ariel Dorfmann and Armand Mattelart, Basis Theorie 7, Basis Verlag, Berlin, 1977.



Dorfmann, Ariel and Armand Mattelart. Walt Disneys "Dritte Welt". Massenkommunikation und Kolonialismus bei Mickey Maus und Donald Duck. Basis Theorie 7. Berlin: Basis Verlag, 1977.

This book, just like *Das Geschichtsbuch / The History Book* also exists in several versions:

1971: Para Leer al Pato Donald, Ediciones Universitarias de Valparaíso (Original edition of the book, in Spanish, published in Chile).

1975: How to Read Donald Duck, International General, New York (US English translation).

1977: Walt Disneys "Dritte Welt". Massenkommunikation und Kolonialismus bei Mickey Maus und Donald Duck (Walt Disney's Third World. Mass Communication and Colonialism in Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. German translation by Gaston Richter and Frowin Haas), Basis Theorie 7, Basis Verlag, Berlin, 1977.

All the books in Basis Verlag's educational series which focused on how capitalism and colonialism are intertwined were translations and first published in Sweden, Chile or Great Britain. It is interesting to see which discourses came from abroad to West Berlin through translations.

- ▶ Which non-national educational books do I use for my lessons / for teaching?
- ▶ Which book would you like to translate / have translated for use in your lessons or for teaching purposes?

→ DE - 4: SOZIALISTISCHES VERLAGSKOLLEKTIV

### **SOCIALIST PUBLISHING COLLECTIVE**

Not mentioned in any of the Basis Verlag books is who exactly belonged to the publishing collective. Only the translators and the printing companies are named.

→ EN - 6: The Midnight Special

### **THE MIDNIGHT SPECIAL**

The Midnight Special was an independent, non-affiliated bookstore and distributor which operated between 1970 and 2004.

Not mentioned in any of the Basis Verlag books is who exactly belonged to the publishing collective. Only the translators and the printing companies are named.

I would be happy to learn something about the Midnight Special.

- ▶ Do you know the background (people, network) of this publishing house?
- ▶ In the German version the makers of Basis Verlag call themselves a socialist publishing collective. Did those collectives exist in the United States as well?



- DE - 8, 9: „Titel der schwedischen Originalausgabe ‚Historie-Boken‘“
- EN - 3: \*The book was originally written and published in Sweden.

#### ON THE DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS OF *DAS GESCHICHTSBUCH / THE HISTORY BOOK*

The original title of *Das Geschichtsbuch / The History Book* by Annika Elmquist, Gittan Jönsson, AnnMari Langemar and Pål Ryberg is *Historie-Boken*. It was published by Ordfront (Word Front) in Stockholm, Sweden in 1970.

The publisher Ordfront still exists today. Their website states that the book was at one time an exams project at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design, and became Ordfront's first bestseller with 70,000 copies translated into six languages. In 2009, the publisher reprinted the book.

*Das Geschichtsbuch / The History Book* has appeared in the following languages:

German: *Das Geschichtsbuch*, translated by Doris Jacobi, Ingrid Schwarz and Peter Jacobi, Basis Verlag, Berlin, 1971.

Danish: (Danish title unknown), translated by Carol Baum Schmorleitz, publisher unknown, 1971.

(US) English: *The History Book*, translated by Carol Baum Schmorleitz, The Midnight Special, Venice, California, USA, 1974.

Italian: *Libro di storia. Controstoria del mondo moderno (1400-1974) narrata e illustrata per bambini rivoluzionari, genitori democratici e per tutti i proletari*. Edizione italiana a cura di Luigi Manconi. Presentazione di Gianni Sofri, Ed. César Viguera, Savelli, 1977.

Spanish: *Libro De Historia*, (translators unknown), Colección De Boca En Boca, Barcelona, 1977.

→ DE - 12: „Der ritter und der geistliche stellten nichts her, hatten aber trotzdem essen und kleidung und häuser im überfluss. Wie war das möglich? Nun, die ritter und die kirche waren BESITZER DES LANDES. Um auf dem land wohnen und darauf arbeiten zu können, waren die bauern und die handwerker gezwungen, an den ritter und geistlichen hohe ABGABEN zu bezahlen. (Z.b. korn, milch, schuhe, kleidung, rüstungen und heu)“.

→ EN - 10: The lords and the priests did nothing, but nevertheless they had plenty of food, clothes and shelter. Why is this so? The lords and the priests OWNED THE LAND. In order to get permission to live on the land and till it, the peasants and craftsmen had to pay a high TAX to the lords and the priests. (For example: grain, milk, meat, shoes, clothes, armour, hay.)

My six-year-old son received a toy castle set for his birthday.



Playmobil, toy castle

The figures, horse blankets (shabrack) and flags all carry the symbol of a lion. The figures that came with the castle include a king and a queen, three knights (with lion symbols), and a knight (with an eagle symbol). The aim behind this constellation is probably to prompt games about the visit or the invasion of a different knight. There are additional products that can be bought for the castle, which include further knights with lion symbols. One of these sets has a gold transport theme (is that not a topos from the Gold Rush era in North America?). Farmers, clergy, or craftspeople do not appear. Due to the lack of figures, conflicts that arise from the dependency of the farmers to the lords of the castle cannot become the subject of the game.

► Which historical contradictions do children's toys create in your surroundings?

## TOYS AND PLAY ENVIRONMENTS

Play environments and toys came under criticism in Marxism, argues Donata Elschenbroich in her article "Playing and Toys". Her criticism of middle-class theories on child's play ("Spielen und Spielzeug. Aspekte zur Kritik bürgerlicher Theorien des kindlichen Spiels") published in Kursbuch Nr. 34: Kinder (Course Book Number 34: Children) from 1973 is a commentary that the relationship between adults and children is defined through toys.

Children from middle-class families are given educational toys which are intended to stimulate concentration, and allow a product to be created. The function of the toy is to enable the child to bring forth a product, which can then be admired (by others). Working-class children, on the other hand, are given cheap toys. Sound hoses/whirly tubes or candy necklaces are given as examples of toys which either create an effect or can be consumed.

The art association nGbK (Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, New Society for Visual Arts) is a grass-roots initiative founded in West Berlin in 1969. In 1970, the working group "Play Environment" (AG Spielumwelt) was established, in which a changing constellation of people debated how art could be applied to the then so-called field of socialisation (Sozialisationsbereich). Children should be enabled to look critically at their surrounding reality through play, initiated through art. The concept "with reality" was meant for the working world of adults, and also the relationships children and teenagers have to their environments and their things.

Underprivileged working-class children were first and foremost the focus of these artistic educational intentions and interventions.

An outcome of the working group "Play Environment" could be seen at the Spielclub (Play Club) in a warehouse building in the borough of Schöneberg in Berlin – not very far from where Basis Verlag had their offices. The group, together with children from the local neighbourhood, built a play town at the Spielclub in Kulmer Strasse 20. After money for the town was printed, it was evident for all involved how the basic structures of capitalism started to be established.

- DE - 26/27: DIE WELT WIRD „ENTDECKT“ UND AUSGEPLÜNDERT
- EN - 24/25: THE WORLD IS "DISCOVERED" AND PLUNDERING BEGINS

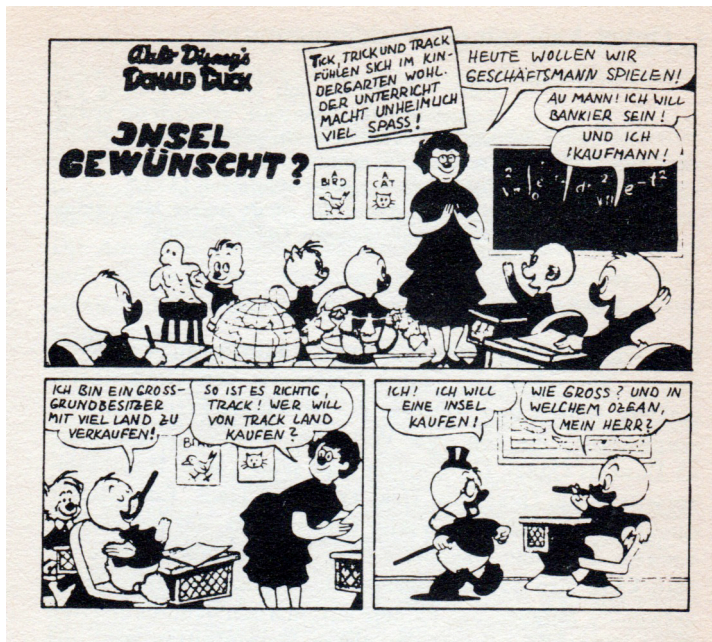


Image from: Dorfmann, Ariel and Armand Mattelart. Walt Disneys "Dritte Welt". Massenkommunikation und Kolonialismus bei Mickey Maus und Donald Duck. Basis Theorie 7. Berlin: Basis Verlag, 1977, p. 21



Kulke, Ulli. Abenteuer Weltgeschichte. 20 entscheidende Ereignisse von der Steinzeit bis heute. Weinheim: Beltz und Gelberg Verlag, 2007

The book *Abenteuer Weltgeschichte* / *Adventure World History* is not a school history book. Nevertheless, the publisher releases many books for children and teens. The book is shelved with history school books in the library I frequent.

The book's politics of imagery supports the idea that world history is a history of "discoveries" and that of the "discoverers". These discoverers are described only in the male plural form in the German text, because only men are mentioned in the book. In the book, the European colonisers are introduced as characters, while the indigenous peoples, who are "discovered" by the Europeans, remain nameless.

In *The History Book*, however, this perspective is opposed (e.g. page 39 in *The True Story of John Hawkins*). Here, the attacked people from African countries are named, such as King Alfonso from the Congo (pp. 40-42 (22/23)).

- ▶ How is the story of the beginning of colonialism shown in history books from your country?

## WHO SPEAKS?

A common criticism of books that attempt to present colonialism and its consequences is that they are often (to this day) narrated exclusively from the perspective of the colonialist. In the German edition of the *Das Geschichtsbuch / The History Book*, two pages show how people were exploited.

→ DE - 55 (29): Ellison Jack (Kohleträgerin, 11 Jahre), Sarah Gooder (8 Jahre, Türöffner\_in in der Grube), John Smith (Weber, 42 Jahre), Bob Jones (Fabrikarbeiter, 18 Jahre), Anne Brown (Spinnerin, 23 Jahre)

→ EN - 53: Ellison Jack, coal carrier: age 11; Sarah Gooder, door opener in the mine: age 8; John Smith, weaver: age 42; Bob Jones, factory worker: age 18; Anne Brown, spinner: age 23

On this page, Ellison Jack (coal deliverer, 11), Sarah Gooder (8, door opener in the mine), John Smith (weaver, 42), Bob Jones (factory worker, 18) and Anne Brown (spinner, 23) are quoted. Only for Sarah Gooder is a source mentioned ("from the report of a state commission from 1842").

→ DE - 86 (45): Assyai, 49 Jahre; Keela, 23 Jahre; Sita, 14 Jahre; M'Bezi: age 31; Kaywana: age 18; anonymen Kolonialbeamter, 49 Jahre.

→ EN - 84 (x): Assyai: age 49; Keela: age 23; Sita: age 14; M'Bezi: age 31; Kaywana: age 18; anonymous colonial administrator: age 49.

On this page six people speak from six perspectives: Assyai, 49; Keela, 23; Sita, 14; M'Bezi, 31; Kaywana, 18; and an anonymous colonial civil servant, 49.

Due to the fact that in the book the authors on the whole worked without footnotes, it is unfortunately not clear if the quotes are original or if the Swedish authors are speaking in a fictional mode.

I wonder why, I ask myself, of all these things at this point, about the sources of the quotes, even though it is not my intention to question their content.

- ▶ Who is successful in becoming a source in history?
- ▶ When is the insistence on sources a technique of power?

- DE - 76/77 (40): DEUTSCHLAND
- EN - 74 (x): Germany

## GERMAN COLONIES

It is irritating, from a contemporary perspective, that only once is there a reference to the German colonies.

How the continent of Africa was partitioned at the West Africa Conference in Berlin in 1884 is shown across two pages. Here German colonies are also listed.

Important events linked to this context – for example, the Herero rebellion in 1904 – are not mentioned in the book.

- DE - 87 (45): RASSISMUS
- EN - 85 (x): RACISM

## RACISM

In *The History Book*, the function of racism as the discriminatory and dehumanising system upon which colonialism is founded in favour of developing capitalism is clearly labelled.

Strangely, this is not the case with the depiction of the Second World War in the pictures pages of the book. Antisemitism as a form of racism is not talked about either (pp. 105 7015 (54) / English version pp.100/101).

In West Germany it has long been believed that anti-fascist work covers anti-racist work. The school days of children and teenagers in the 1970s to 1990s included anti-fascist history lessons. Anti-fascist work primarily referenced the context of fascism under National Socialism. Only after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of East and West Germany did anti-fascist work develop into anti-racist work or was complemented by it. The sad reason for this was the discrimination of and violent attacks on people who were migrant workers or who had fled to Germany, as well as a new strengthening of Neo-Nazism.

The term “anti-fascism” has long prevented an awareness of racist discourses.

- ▶ How could it be that in *The History Book*, fascism and antisemitism are not mentioned in connection to racism?

→ DE - 122/123 (53): lasst uns jetzt untersuchen, wie solch ein imperialistisches tier in seinem inneren aussieht. Am besten besuchen wir dazu einen der ganz großen imperialisten: Die bundesrepublik deutschland

→ EN - 118 (x): NOW LET'S VISIT SWEDEN, ONE OF THE LITTLE IMPERIALISTS...

### TEMPORAL RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE?

*The History Book* is a radical attempt to record an alternative history in regards to the canonised history books of the 1970s.

Described in the book are the then current independence movements of different countries that were still in colonial dependence when the Swedish edition was produced, as well as when all of the following translations of the book were made (for example, how the independence of Guinea-Bissau was achieved).

From the perspective of a person socialised in West Germany, it occurs to me that many aspects of colonial world history, such as an awareness of German colonies and crimes that took place in them are absent. The level of awareness – at least in Germany – has potentially been raised since the book was translated.

- ▶ When did an awareness and knowledge of Germany's colonial power first appear in education / in school books?
- ▶ What could the pages on German colonialism look like?

→ DE -129 (66): NEUES MORGENROT

→ EN - 133 (x): NEW RED MORNING

I have both the English and German versions of *The History Book*. Both translations are different from the Swedish original in a few passages.

In the English edition there is a double page in Chapter 8 on Swedish history in 1917, which is not there in the German version. In my opinion, this double page would have been interesting for the German version, in order to contextualise the authors.

Chapter 9 of both the English and German editions differ the most. In the German version, the chapter is called "Neues Morgenrot" (New Dawn). It mostly describes the liberation and independence of Guinea-Bissau, which is, in the book, still called (Portuguese) Guinea.

In the English edition, which was published in the USA, Chapter 9 is called "THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE". The chapter is initially about Vietnam, its French colonisation, and the Vietnam War. Following this, there are several double pages on the history of Cuba in relation to the USA. Then there is a double page on the independence of Guinea-Bissau, which was declared on 24. September 1973, and therefore happened between the production times of the German and the English translations.

- ▶ What would the book look like, if it were translated in the 1970s by critical educators from Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania or Morocco? Which pages would have been included? Which would have been replaced, and what would they have been replaced with?

- DE -150 (77): BÜCHER, DIE WIR GELESEN HABEN, UM DIESES BUCH MACHEN ZU KÖNNEN
- EN - 151 (x): CARICATURE

### IMAGE CREDITS, GRAPHIC TECHNOLOGY, POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION

Listed in the bibliography of *Das Geschichtsbuch* is the Swedish literature read by the authors which enabled them to write the book. However, they do not give the picture credits, which would inform about the drawings and prints.

In the English version of there is neither a bibliography nor picture credits.

Putting together the book's picture credits would take at least a university semester. Some are easy (for me), such as the reference to Hans Holbein the Younger and his portrait of King Henry VIII (1539/40), (*Das Geschichtsbuch*, p. 30 (17) / *The History Book*, p. 28 (x)); or The Ambassadors (Hans Holbein the Younger, 1533), (*Das Geschichtsbuch*, p. 33 (18) / *The History Book*, p. 31 (x)).

Some are less clear to me, e.g. the portrayal of imperialism as a spider web system, (*Das Geschichtsbuch*, pp. 120/121 (x) / *The History Book*, pp. 116/117 (x)).

It is possible that this double page has its model in a historical poster on imperialism from the Soviet graphic designer Dimitry Moor.

Perhaps an unreflected metaphor from antisemitic Nazi propaganda permeates this presentation form.

At times lino prints and woodcuts are used to design double pages. These pages depict colonial systems of exploitation (e.g. *Das Geschichtsbuch*, pp. 88/89 (46); *The History Book*, pp. 86/87 (x)). Here I ask myself, why were these techniques used for exactly these pages? Was it because the artist who chose to create these depictions preferred to work with these print techniques? Or were there considerations in the graphic design which related to regions or the continent of Africa?

In German, a "woodcut image" today is a metaphor for a rough (but essential) description.

- ▶ How do the contents of depictions of capitalism and colonialism change through the use of different graphic techniques?
- ▶ The first edition of *The History Book* was an exam project from four artists at Konstfack, the University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. What do studies and exam projects which address the complexity of capitalism, colonialism and world history look like today? Which graphic techniques are used, and which image politics?



Dimitry Moor, Death to World Imperialism, colour lithograph (1919)



Hans Holbein the Younger, Portrait of King Henry VIII, oil on canvas (1539/40)



- DE -146 (?): entwicklungshilfe
- EN - 151: DEVELOPING COUNTRY'S AID

## THE TEMPORALITY OF TERMS AND DISCOURSES

Today, we do not talk about "developing countries" anymore, because of the patriarchal perspective which is implied in the term. The translations of *The History Book* also show slight nuances in the discourses mentioned.

In the glossary article on "Entwicklungshilfe", the following is stated:

**entwicklungshilfe** Die reichen imperialistischen länder schicken auf kredit geld, waren, alte waffen , oder experten in die technisch unterentwickelten länder. 1., um ihre überschüssigen waren und waffen loszuwerden, 2., um ihre helfershelfer in den unterentwickelten ländern, die dortigen kapitalisten, zu unterstützen und so mit deren hilfe politischen und wirtschaftlichen einfluss zu gewinnen(siehe unter "neukolonialismus"). 3., um ein gutes geschäft mit der armut zu machen. Die unterentwickelten länder müssen nach einiger zeit alles mit zinsen bezahlen. Durch den ganzen schwindel werden letztlich die reichen länder immer reicher und die armen immer ärmer. Daneben gibt es noch die höchst seltene form der entwicklungshilfe, die den völkern in den entwicklungsländern direkt zugute kommt.

In the English edition, the following is written about "developing country's help":

**DEVELOPING COUNTRY'S HELP:** There are two kinds of aid to developing countries. Good and Bad. The good aid is the aid which goes to the people-to liberation movements or to the people who've seized control from the imperialists (example: Cuba). Most of the developing country's aid is in the form of loans, goods and experts who the imperialist countries send to help imperialism. The developing country's government is forced to accept help in order to stay in power. The imperialists continue to exploit the people. (see pages 114-115)

- ▶ Which glossary article(s) does *The History Book* need today?
  - a) Which articles should be added? Which ones should be gotten rid of?
  - b) Which language(s) / terms would be used today?

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Hans Holbein the Younger, Portrait of King Henry VIII (1539/40). Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_VIII\\_of\\_England#/media/File:Workshop\\_of\\_Hans\\_Holbein\\_the\\_Younger\\_-\\_Portrait\\_of\\_Henry\\_VIII\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_VIII_of_England#/media/File:Workshop_of_Hans_Holbein_the_Younger_-_Portrait_of_Henry_VIII_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg) (seen: 13th of July 2018)

Dimitry Moor, Death to World Imperialism, colour lithograph 1919. Source: <http://www.russianposter.ru/archive.php?sid=1Alb5itEenMic7&rid=31020067400003> (seen: 13th of July 2018)

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