

Jacobin Redesign Process Book





RAISON D'ÊTRE

Jacobin is a leading voice of the American left, offering socialist perspectives on politics, economics, and culture.

Rule not aligned

Four font sizes used

Excessive use of rules

Awkward placement, too close to the black box.

No hierarchy, confusing layout and hard to read.

Awkward placement of page numbers, aligned to right when everywhere else is aligned to left.

Not aligned

It should be remembered that the political education of Social Democracy, before the Revolution, was in one respect materially deficient. We had learned how to be an opposition. We had to take over Government, and that in the fullest sense; in industry, in the localities, in the State. The task had been studied, it is true, but theoretically, from the outside. We are only now beginning to see it from within. Our previous studies have proved anything but superfluous; indeed, they have been our best guides. But they are insufficient.

— Karl Kautsky, “Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany” (1924)

Not aligned

Center aligned

Citoyens



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Jacobin is a leading voice of the American left, offering socialist perspectives on politics, economics, and culture. The print magazine is released quarterly.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

\$29 US (print)
\$39 Canada (print)
\$59 international (print)
\$19 (digital)
Solidarity \$59
Institutions \$69
Lifetime \$295

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© 2019 Jacobin Foundation
ISSN: 2470-6930

BOOKSTORE DISTRIBUTION

Central Books (Europe)
Disticor Direct
TNG
One Source
Small Changes

CIRCULATION (JANUARY 2019)

Circulation: 39,210
Web Visitors: 1,258,274

Weired placement for prices, sometimes left, sometimes right.

Bad rag

Three columns, maybe too narrow for articles

Not aligned

Non existent hierarchy,
no idea where to look at
and what is what.

Too much spacing
between the page
number and title.

Too much leading

Center aligned

Features

ISSUE 32 WINTER 2019 JACOBIN



pg. 50

WIELDING THE IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY

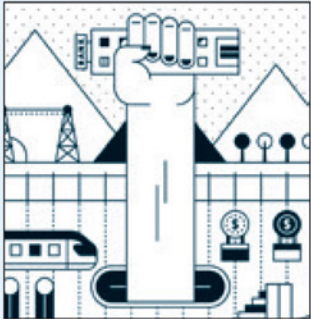
MEAGAN DAY



pg. 26

THE STATE WE NEED

DAVID BRODER



pg. 58

A PLAN TO WIN SOCIALISM IN AMERICA

PETER GOWAN

+

WINNING DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

BY KALEWOLD H. KALEWOLD



pg. 81

MODERN MONETARY THEORY ISN'T HELPING

DOUG HENWOOD

Right alignment,
doesn't look good.

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Matthew Yglesias is a senior correspondent for *Vox*.

3 Column grid but the
rows are not in grid.

Too much information
packed together, the
change in weights does
not really help with the
clarity of the texts.

Too much spacing
between the page
number and title.

Left and right has different
margins, not sure if it is a
designed feature.

The space looks too large.

Not a fan of the repeated
initial letters in different
sizes. Headings could
surely be in a larger size.

The same 3 Column grid
got divided into 6. Making
the space super tight

Sudden change in
arrangement.

Departments

7

PARTY LINES

The Exercise of Power

12

STRUGGLE SESSION

Don't Call It a Comeback

10

THE SOAPBOX

Letters + The Internet Speaks

21

FRIENDS & FOES

You Can Have Brandeis or You Can Have Debs

37

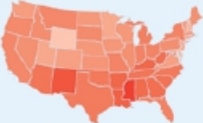
VULGAR EMPIRICIST

Socialism Is for the Children

38

UNEVEN & COMBINED

Solving Poverty Is Simple



42


CANON FODDER

What Is Europe?

44

CANON FODDER

In His Own Words



48

FIELD NOTES

When Social Democracy Radicalized

68

RED CHANNELS

The Man Who Shot America In the Face

71

WAYS OF SEEING

Our Very Own Albert Speer

76

WAYS OF SEEING

The Real Life of Social Realism



97

THE WORST ESTATE

Propagandists of Privilege

100

GIRONDINS

Where Are They Now?

104

GIRONDINS

The Hater Class

107

VERSAILLES

The Whitlam Coup



113

POPULAR FRONT

The Purgatory of Canadian Social Democracy

116

DUSTBIN

Revisiting A Very British Coup in the Age of Corbyn

119

MEANS & ENDS

Socialism: An Idea That Will Live on Beyond 2020



FRONT MATTERS

FORWARD EVER, BACKWARD NEVER

Not aligned, it seems like some letters are squeezed, can't tell if it's a deliberate design choice or they just didn't care about it.

Weird alignment

Not sure why “Front Matters” is in a lighter weight when it is the title of the whole chapter.

Might be too symmetrical.

Font size is gigantic, the target is young people not elders, there is no reason to make it this big.

F

FRONT MATTERS
PARTY LINES

BY BHASKAR SUNKARA

The Exercise of Power

By the 1930s, French socialists had already lost much of their industrial working-class base to a Communist split. The party seemed set on a reformist path to socialism, but it still expressed its goals in explicitly Marxist terms.

Rebuilding the Socialist Party’s (SFIO) infrastructure throughout the 1920s, its leader Léon Blum grappled with the question of why and under what conditions a socialist would enter government. He distinguished between the “exercise of power” (taking office to prepare the groundwork for socialism) and the “conquest of power” (the actual dismantling of capitalism). In the end, Blum settled for the “occupation of power,” to keep it out of the grasp of fascists.

When the Jewish radical Blum rose to power in 1936, the antisemitic politician Xavier Vallat complained, “For the first time this ancient Gallo-Roman land will be governed by a Jew.” Just before

becoming prime minister, Blum was dragged from a car and beaten, nearly to death, by a right-wing mob. A picture of him, heavily bandaged with swollen features, appeared on the March 9, 1936 cover of *Time* magazine.

With Nazism on the rise in Europe, in these dark times, the “occupation of power” seemed a noble enough pursuit for the Popular Front coalition. Occupy power now, and even if you can’t win the reforms you want you can prevent the Right from undermining the conditions needed for a future conquest or exercise of power.

Yet something unexpected happened when the Blum government entered office — the ambitions of working people were unleashed. Not content with a resounding electoral victory for Popular Front parties, workers went on strike, occupying factories and paralyzing production.

A TRUE STORY OF THE FUTURE

7

2 Column grid, but the previous pages are using 3 column grid, making it seems very inconsistent.

Gigantic negative space

F

PARTY LINES

Marceau Pivert, leader of the SFIO’s radical left, proclaimed that “everything is possible” in the new environment. Business leaders appealed to Blum to restore order. The result was a series of reforms, the Matignon Accords, which granted workers the legal right to strike, made it easier for them to form unions, and offered large wage increases. They also won unemployment insurance and two weeks of paid vacation. Exhausted but overjoyed, millions flocked to the countryside and the sea for the first time that summer. The dignity these reforms afforded to working people was undeniable. Though they were the product of grassroots rebellion, not Blum’s program, they couldn’t have been implemented without the Popular Front in power.

Of course, the dilemma of social democracy soon became apparent: capitalism isn’t a fortress that can be surrounded and stormed rampart by rampart, it’s a dynamic, moving target. It’s difficult to keep workers mobilized once gains are made, and capital has the structural power to undermine those gains.

As Léon Blum would write in *Tribune* shortly before he died, “There is perhaps no more difficult a task than that of a Government working within the framework of a capitalist society and having neither the power nor the mandate to transform it completely at one blow.”

The upsurges of May and June 1936 triggered a business counteroffensive over the implementation of the reforms. With political instability growing, Blum’s middle-class coalition partners abandoned the fight. The leader had neither the support nor the resolve to pursue more radical measures. Blum was pushed out of power in little more than a year.

Knowing this history, why is the socialist left in the United States interested in Bernie Sanders? His aims are social democratic, unlike even the reformist socialism of Blum. No comparable wave of working-class militancy would greet his election. And his campaign won’t be supported by a coalition of radical parties — we don’t even have a single party representing the interests of workers.

For all its resilience, capitalism’s inequalities still provoke resistance. Billions resent the unfair choices offered to them. But in the United States today, we lack the three ingredients necessary for almost every socialist advance of the past hundred and fifty years: mass parties, an activist base, and a mobilized working class.

Quite simply, despite the promising revival of socialist ideas, despite the recent growth of the Democratic Socialists of America, despite the popularity of left-wing leaders like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, we’re in an almost unprecedented state of weakness. But we can’t just wait for street movements to appear out of

Nº 52 / WINTER 2019

8

They tried to avoid only have one line of the next paragraph on the bottom, but now the right column is longer than the first one.

Spacing between two paragraphs are too tight, making it hard to read without indentation.

The location of this part moved up and closer to the edge, there is no reason to do it.

The rule and title moved down and closer to the edge, because of the change from 2 column grid to a 3 column grid.

Even though the names are colored, it is still hard to tell who is speaking. The layout makes it a very confusing piece.

The placing of the conversation members are confusing and far away from the content. In addition, the placement still follows a 2 column grid.

The previous 2 column grid has changed to a 3 column grid with a smaller font size. There is no consistency.

Very inconsistent negative space.

Quote is center aligned, hard to read even though it is placed at the center of the page.

F

FRONT MATTERS
STRUGGLE SESSION

A CONVERSATION WITH
SETH ACKERMAN
LIZA FEATHERSTONE
MATT KARP
MATTHEW YGLESIAS

Don't Call It a Comeback

As 2020 approaches, *Jacobin* indulges in some crass Sunday morning horse race punditry.

SETH ACKERMAN

Let me start with a question for Matt Yglesias. Some people really hate Bernie Sanders. As someone who knows many of them up close and personal, what is it about Bernie that pisses them off?

MATTHEW YGLESIAS

Something people in the Bernie fan base should think about is the fact that many of the things people say they don't like about Bernie are really what they mean — even if it seems crazy to you. For example, a lot of people who have left-wing politics also have a very dyspeptic attitude toward the Democratic Party as an

institution. To them, the fact that Bernie Sanders has a little “I” next to his name rather than a little “D” seems good. If anyone has a problem with that, it just seems laughable, like it’s a crazy excuse that a stupid person is making up.

But there is actually a large minority of Americans who are really into the Democratic Party. You don't need to agree with that viewpoint, but it's a viewpoint that is out there. The fact that Sanders holds himself aloof from the party, from its symbolism, that he talks about the Democratic Party as an institution in a *Jacobin* magazine kind of way —

it alienates a lot of people. There's this old line from Henry IV, during the French religious wars. He said, “Paris is worth a mass” — if people want me to be a Catholic king, that's what I'm going to do.

I think it's a serious question for Bernie Sanders as a person, and the movement that's behind him. AOC [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez] is a controversial figure because she has ideas about policy. Those ideas threaten some people. They're going to be contentious. But there is a much wider circle of people who are happy to clap for her on social media, and I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that she is, formally speaking, a Democrat. There's a “D” next to her name in the AP style guide. She talks about it as “our” party that she wants to change, and Bernie doesn't do that. That may have made sense for him in Vermont politics in the 1980s. But if you want to be the Democratic Party presidential nominee, I mean, it seems like a small thing to do.

12

NR 52 / WINTER 2019

Don't Call It a Comeback

MATT KARP

I agree generally, but I feel like the problem might be a little more fiendish than just a question of branding, or the question of a little “D” or a little “I.” The issue isn't just Bernie's formal affiliation, or his inability to socialize nicely with establishment progressives. It's because the nature of his project is an attempt to transcend the Democratic Party in the name of a broader working-class politics. So much of his ideological substance is bound up with an opposition, not just to these people and their brand, but to the Obama-ish politics they espouse.

Bernie was smart enough to not actually criticize Obama too much in the campaign, given how phenomenally popular he is. But Bernie does represent a pretty substantive rejection of Obamaism. That gives him his power, but it also means he can't really pivot away from that and just pretend to be Elizabeth Warren.

LIZA FEATHERSTONE

You're right — people who vote in the Democratic primary are often really passionate about the Democratic Party. One of the things that makes

politics in the primaries, you've got to find stuff like that — not abandoning the core of what you're about, but finding things to emphasize that speak to where people are.

election, that's part of it. Hardcore Democrats are not the people you worry about in a general election campaign. You worry about people who have mixed views, and Bernie is in tune with the feeling of, “I don't love the Democratic Party.” So that's good.

But if you want to win a primary — well, there are a lot of Democrats in the Democratic primary.

MK

So you're saying we might not be able to get there just with Twitter dunks on the “Dorkacrats”? That might not do the trick? [Laughter]

SA

I wonder if he could try to embrace the symbols, not of today's Democratic Party, but of the FDR-era party.

MY

Sure, but he could also say, “Look, we've got these great new freshmen! This person, and that person, who I love.”

LF

There were some pretty significant groups that he did do well with in the Democratic primary — young people, people in rural areas. And some of those groups don't necessarily hate the Democrats, but they do feel the Democratic Party has lost its way. That's an ahistorical narrative, because the party hasn't really shifted ideologically in one consistent direction. But it is a consistent narrative that you hear: that the Democrats just aren't Democrats anymore. They used to be liberal, and now they're not.

Bernie was gathering a different coalition than progressive Democrats have in the past ... people who didn't already identify as white-collar progressive types.

Bernie an interesting general election candidate, when we think about him facing off against Trump, is precisely that: a lot of people hate both the parties. But, yes, you do have to get the nomination before you can be in that situation.

MY

If you were to make a case for his electability in the general

A TRUE STORY OF THE FUTURE

13

Inconsistent naming.
Chapter title is missing.

Weird placement of
image, feels out of place
and is too small to see.

C

RED CHANNELS

of McKay’s breakout film *The Big Short*. Both films tackle something hard to fathom with a vivid, entertaining, fact-checked frenzy of explanation, illustration, allusion, and metaphor.

The main complaint critics are making about the film is that what worked so well in *The Big Short* isn’t working nearly so well in *Vice*. It leaves audiences somewhat confused about what they’re watching — an overly convoluted attempt at a conventional biopic, a proudly polemicist Michael Moore-like semi-documentary, or maybe a gallows-humor dark comedy with surreal touches about the disastrous state of the nation?

Over the course of the film, McKay seems to embrace and flaunt the “all of the above” option.

Therefore, there is no shortage of approaches to the film’s central concern, which is how Cheney’s will to power shaped our current ghastly reality. There’s a narrator, for example, a young war vet (Jesse Plemons) we don’t know who tells us he’s going to explain his close relationship to Cheney at the end of the film, and then winds up speaking postmortem. There’s a scene of Dick and Lynn Cheney in their bedroom discussing their ultimate power grab that takes its dialogue directly from Macbeth. Most significantly, there’s a false ending halfway through the film, after Cheney realizes his presidential ambitions will never be actualized because he has all the charisma of a dead fish. As the credits roll, the Cheneys seemingly retire from public life, settling into their idyllic Virginia estate, never to wreak havoc on any of our lives again.

That false ending seems a clearer indication of McKay’s overall strategy than anything else he does. It’s very funny when the credits roll, because of course we know that didn’t happen, and that there’s no



dominating the early scenes of the film. That story is all about Cheney the taciturn drunk who blows every opportunity till his wife Lynn gives him a steely ultimatum — get it together, or she’s outta there. Then he scores a government internship assigned to Donald Rumsfeld (a hilarious Steve Carell with a braying, maniacal laugh) and the rest is history — a miraculous though bumpy rise to political power.

Yet throughout that story line, he’s torn between the demands of his job, with its increasing temptations toward the abuse of power, and his love of his family. At the ultimate crisis point, he chooses his family, and steps away from politics in order to spare his daughter any public humiliation. The end.

But that’s a typical, whitewashed “important man” bio the film only shows us in order to mock and repudiate it. The actual end of the film involves Cheney breaking the fourth wall to stare at us confrontationally and growl that he only did what we empowered him to do. Since that’s complete bullshit — we sure as hell never elected Cheney to direct a lying campaign to lock us into perpetual war — we’re left with the impression that he’s long since drunk his own Kool-Aid and now actually believes he’s lived a heroic life. Which seems pretty likely.

After all, the film reminds us, Dick Cheney is the man who shot his own friend in the face and never expressed any public remorse. The friend apologized instead, presumably for having a face in a world where Cheney was carrying a gun. ■

70

NR 52 / WINTER 2019

Inconsistent font size with
the page number.

Center aligned | Inconsistent placement

F

FRONT MATTERS
FRIENDS & FOES

BY SHAWN GUDE

ILLUSTRATION BY
KIKI LJUNG

You Can Have
Brandeis or You Can
Have Debs

Elizabeth Warren’s political
tradition is the left edge of middle-class
liberalism; Bernie Sanders hails
from America’s socialist tradition.
Don’t confuse the two.

Elizabeth Warren understands better than most the difference between her and Bernie Sanders. “He’s a socialist,” Warren explains, “and I believe in markets.” She’s a “capitalist to [her] bones,” and Sanders is a democratic socialist.

Minor quibbles aside — Warren presumably doesn’t derive most of her income from capital ownership, and markets are compatible with socialism — the Massachusetts senator is right. She and Sanders draw their lineage from distinct political traditions.

Warren is a regulator at heart who believes that capitalism works well as long as fair competition exists; Sanders is a class-conscious tribune who sees capitalism as fundamentally unjust. Warren frames her most ambitious reforms as bids to make capitalism “accountable”; Sanders pushes legislation called the “STOP Bezos Act” and denounces CEOs for exploiting workers. Warren seeks a harmonious accord between workers and employers; Sanders encourages workers to fight back.

Foreign policy differences spring from their respective traditions as

well. While both are suspicious of military interventionism, Vermont’s junior senator has shown himself much more willing to criticize the crimes of US empire — famously proclaiming in a 2016 debate with Hillary Clinton that “Henry Kissinger is not my friend.” Warren, though a critic of Bush-style adventurism, sees America’s role in more conventional terms, arguing in a *Foreign Affairs* essay this year that we should “project American strength and values throughout the world.”

A TRUE STORY OF THE FUTURE

21

What is Jacobin?

Jacobin is an **American socialist quarterly magazine** based in New York. It is a leading voice of the American left, offering socialist perspectives on politics, economics, and culture. The publication began as an online magazine released in September 2010, expanding into a print journal later that year. Jacobin founder Bhaskar Sunkara describes Jacobin as a radical publication being:

“largely the product of a younger generation not quite as tied to the Cold War paradigms that sustained the old leftist intellectual milieux like Dissent or New Politics, but still eager to confront, rather than table, the questions that arose from the experience of the left in the 20th century”.

The publication contains highly sought-after advertising opportunities in print, web and audio formats. It is released quarterly and reaches **75,000 subscribers**, in addition to a **web audience of over 3,000,000 a month**.

Where does it fail?

Jacobin’s target group is clearly the younger generations, and this can be clearly seen from their current graphic style. Compares to other socialist magazines like the Monthly Review, Jacobin looks modern, clean, and much more pleasing to people’s eyes. The color palette they use is also very bright, seperating them from those old, dull, “boring” traditional magazines. However, although the magazine made an effort to please the younger generations, the details are just lacking. There is little continuity, the hierarchy is confusing, the photo placement is weird and feels out of place, and the whole structure of the magazine is not very well designed. In addition, the font size they used are oversized and hard to read. As a quarterly magazine that discusses about such a hard topic, Jacobin definetely doesn’t want to turn people away.

In addition, the magazine is currently struggling. Jacobin relies almost entirely on subscribers. They have only once received a mysterious briefcases filled with unmarked currency. It is important to not let the design drive their potential subscribers away, as that is the key to its survival.

Objective

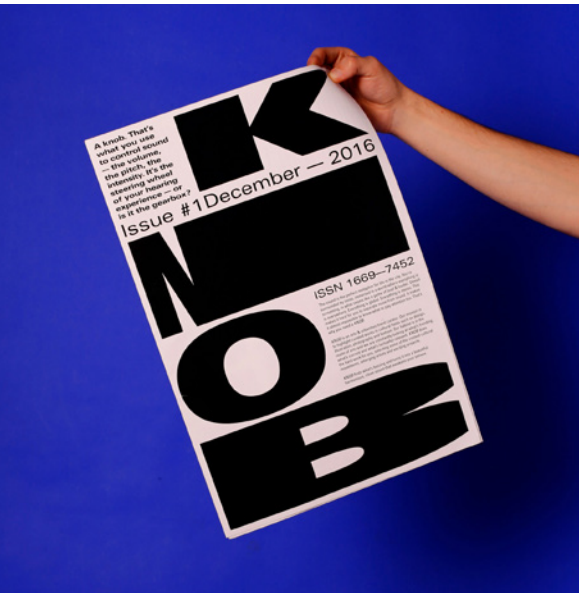
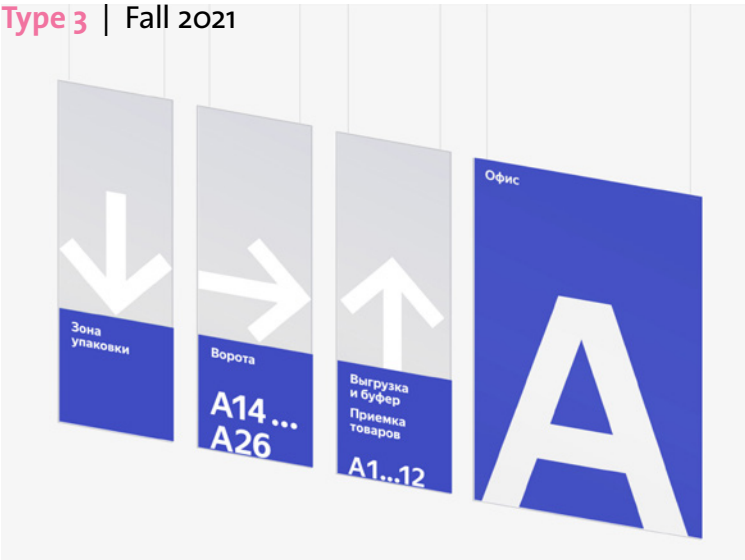
Rework Jacobin’s overall structure, layout, and their graphic placement. Making it looks not only modern, but also cool so they can attract younger generations. It is not only important to the magazine’s survival, but also on par with the magazine’s goal, which is to make a cool, sleek socialist magazine that will refresh socialism’s impression in people’s mind.

Target Audience

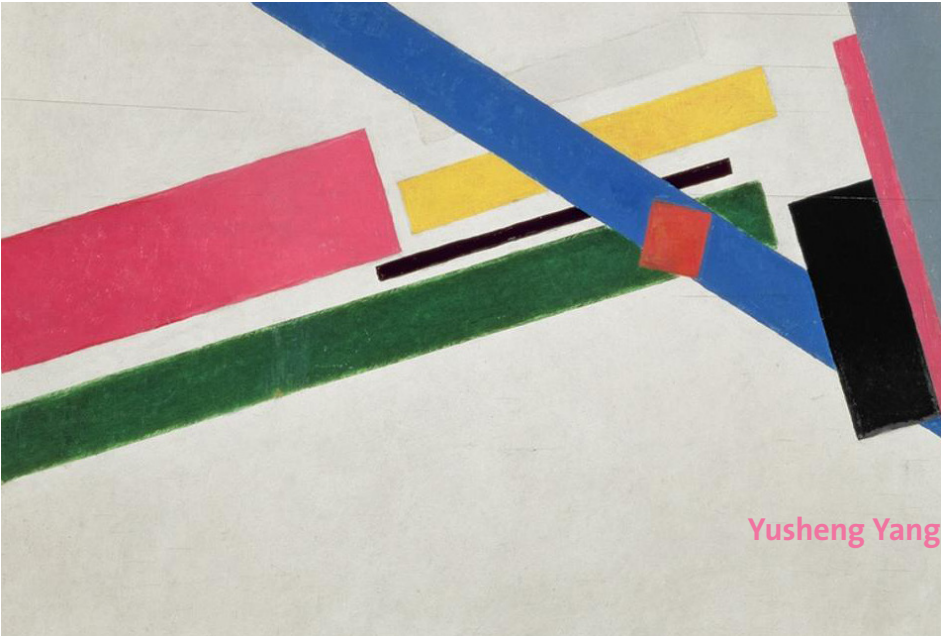
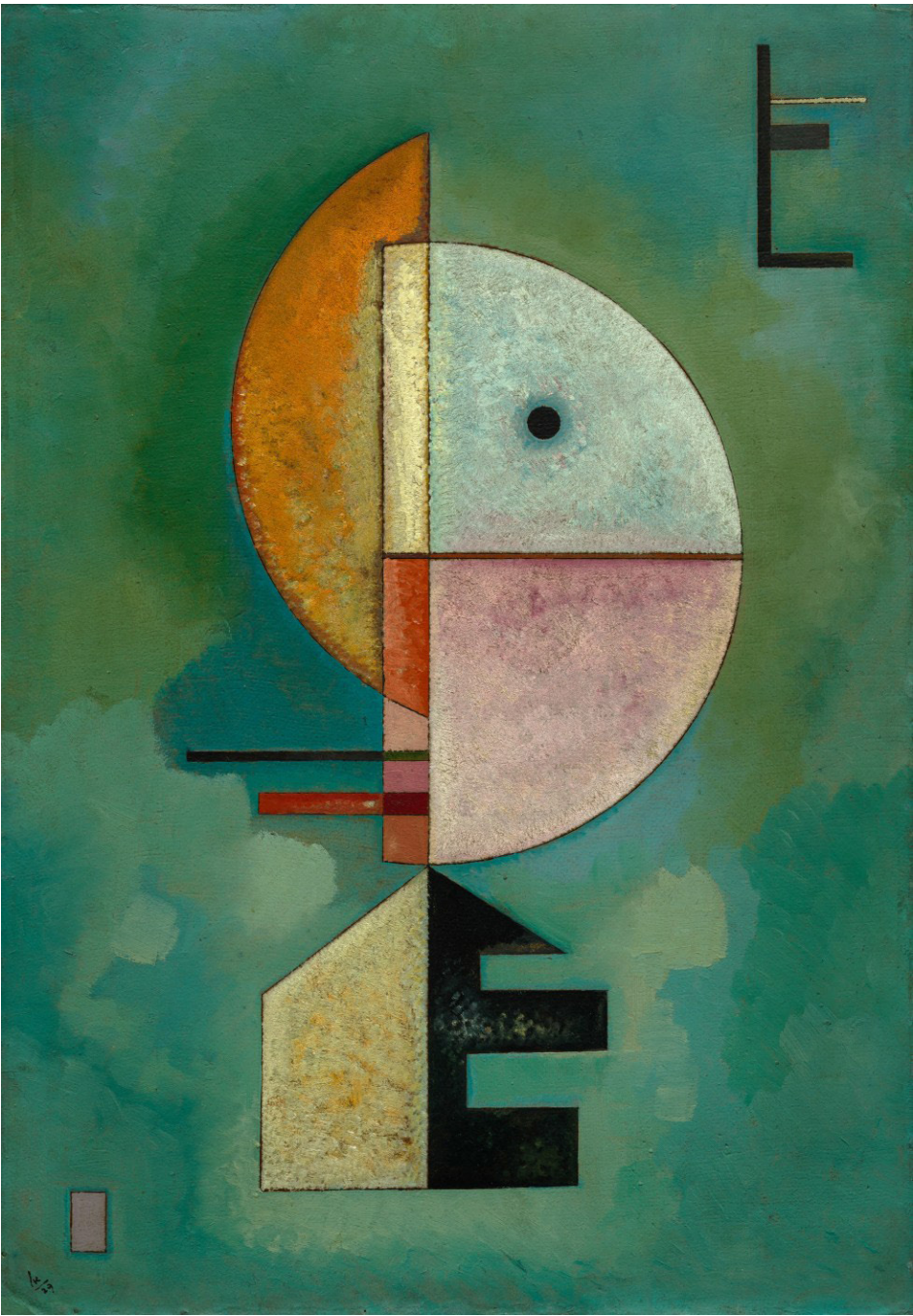
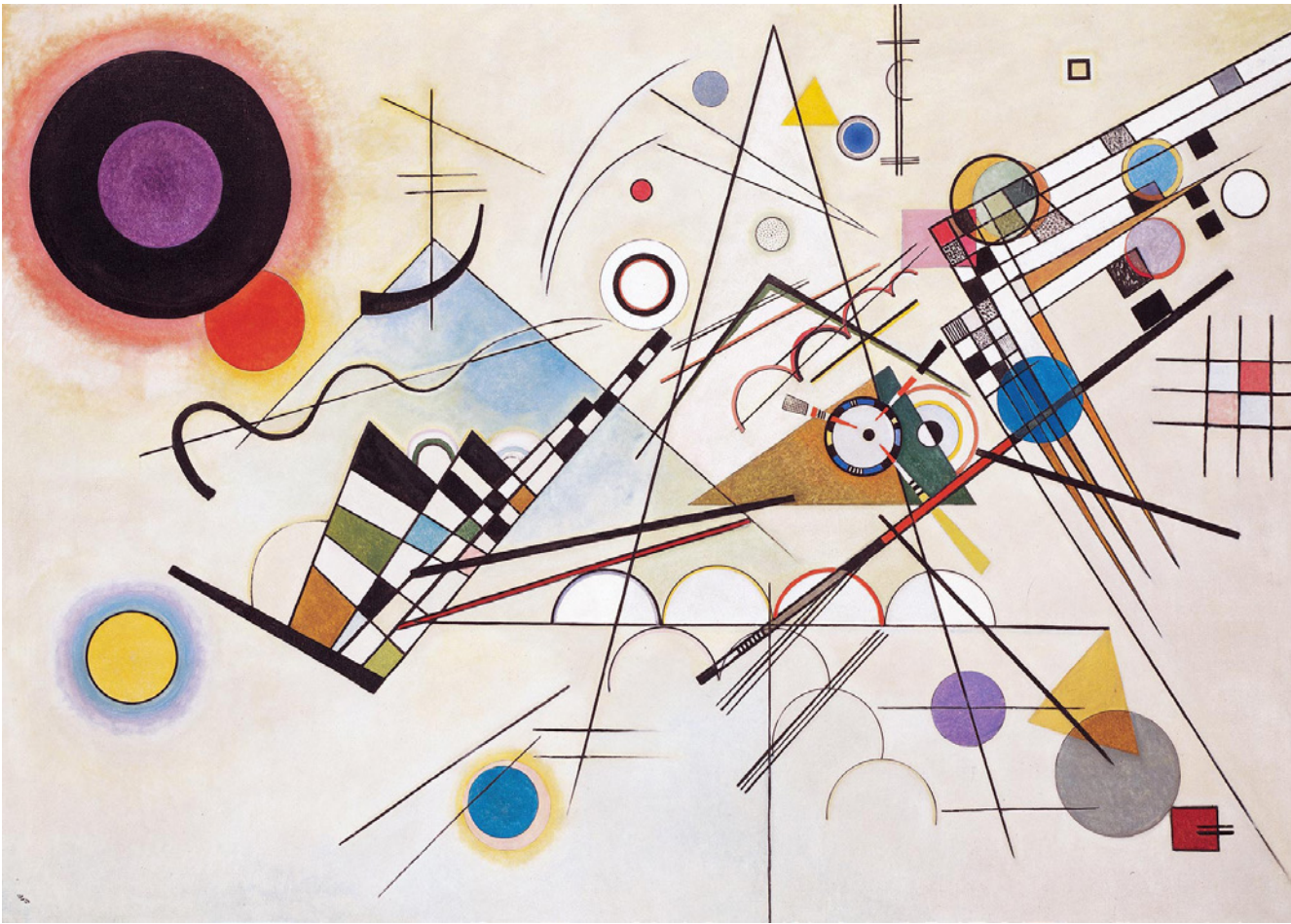
Groups unite organizers, workers, student activists, and those new to the Left.

The Competition

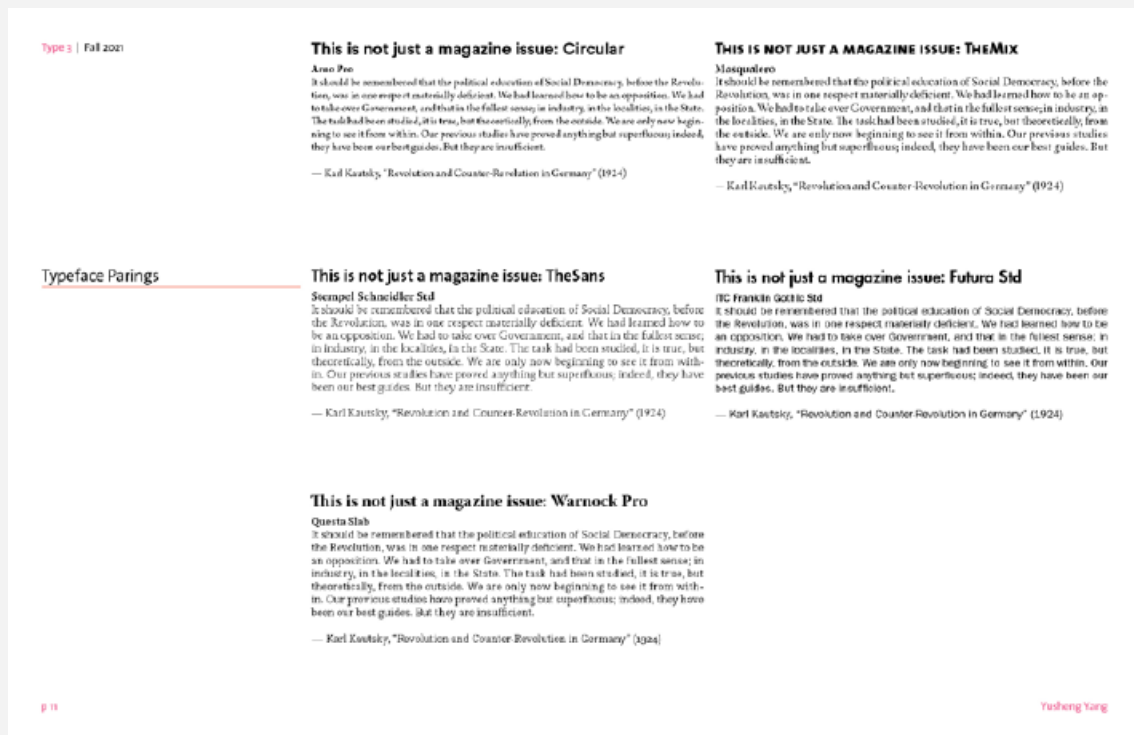




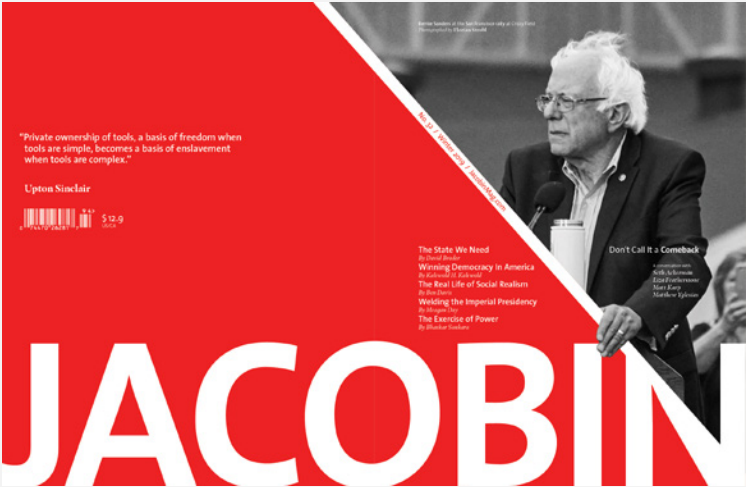
Imagery and Color Selections



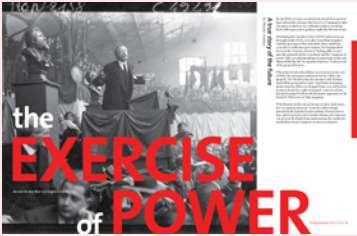
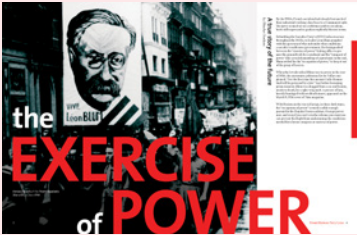
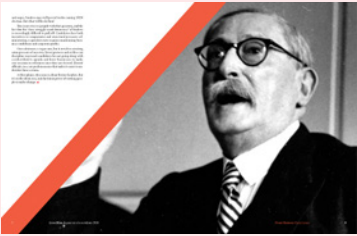
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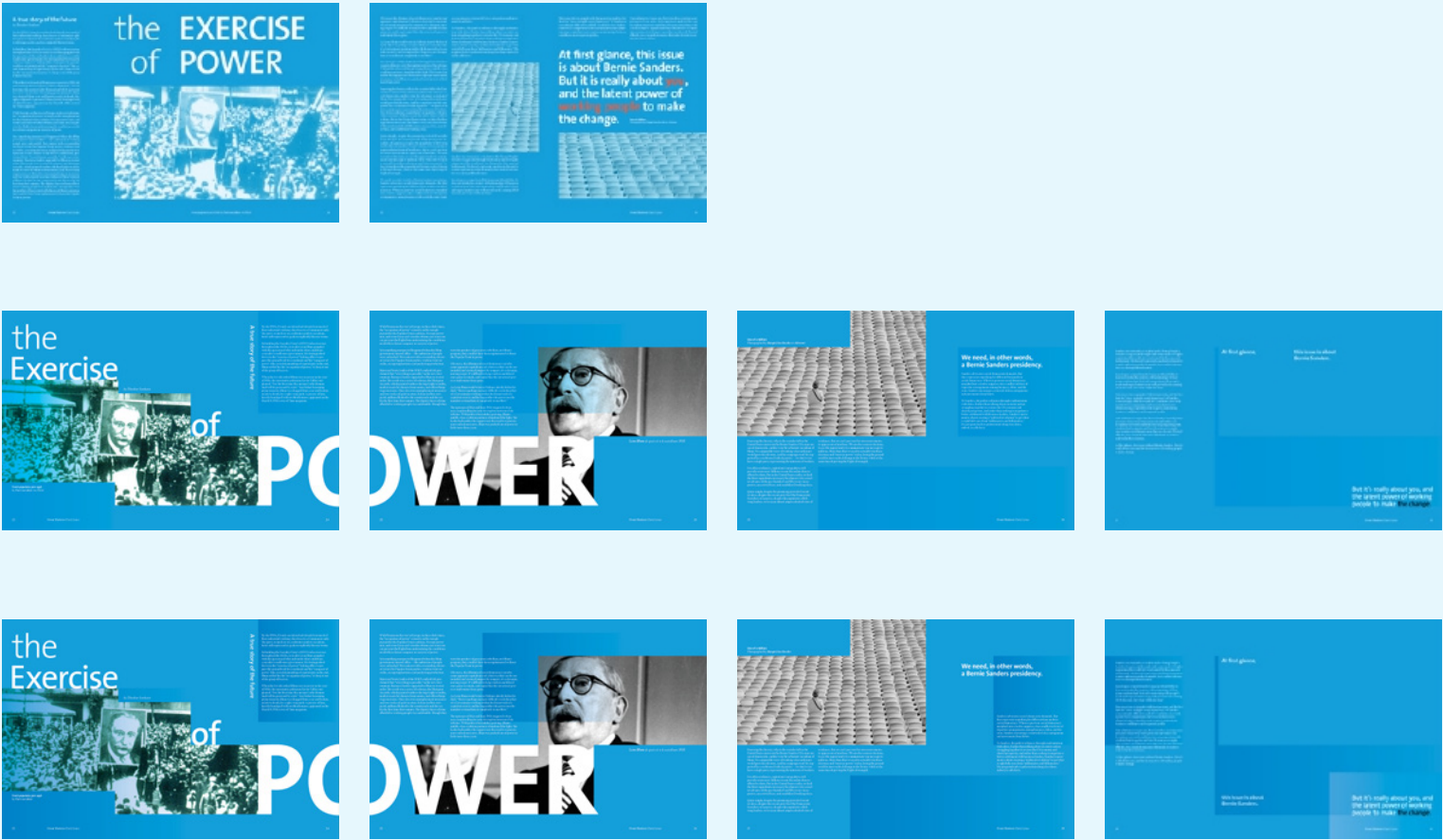
Cover Development



Red Article Development



Blue Article Development





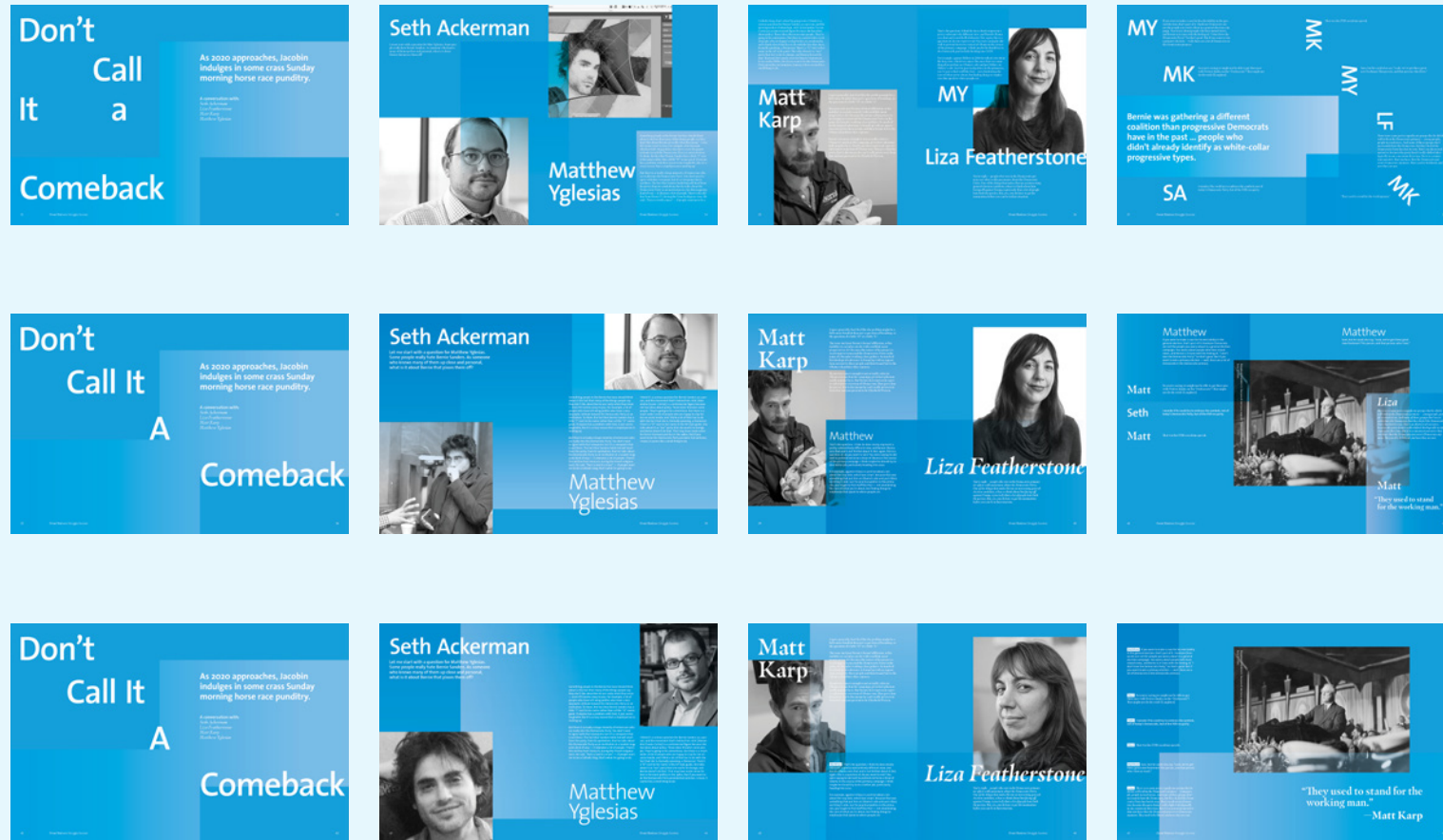
Misc.



Red Interview Development

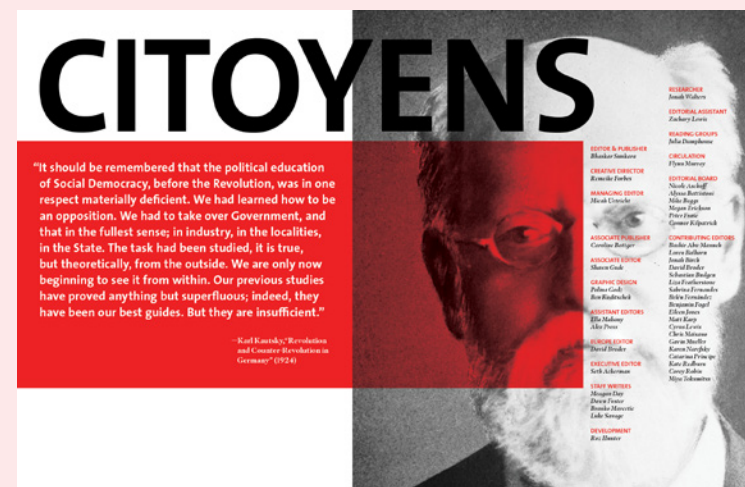
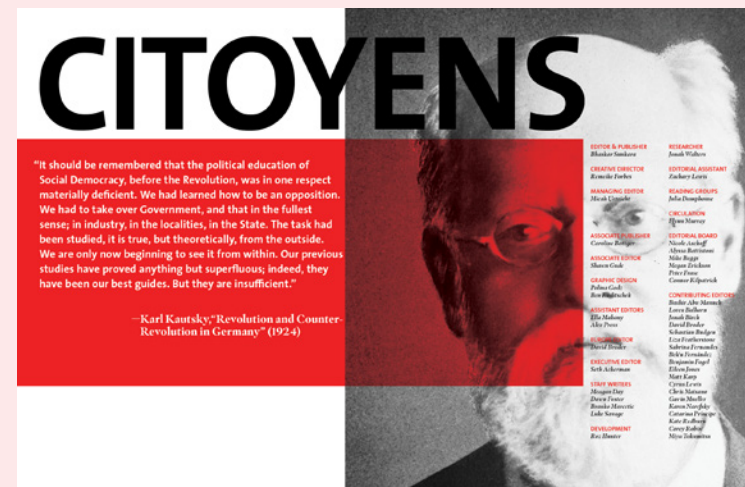


Blue Interview Development



Contenu & Citoyens Development

1	THE CRISIS OF POWER <i>By Thomas Sowell</i>
7	Don't Get It a General <i>By Robert A. Dahl</i>
21	You Can Have Bread or You Can Have Debt
29	Is There a Future for the Children?
37	Solving Poverty Is Simple
39	What Is Simple?
43	In His Own Words
45	What Is Democracy? Revisited
48	Is There a Future for the Children?
68	Is There a Future for the Children?
71	Our Very Own Worst Enemy
97	Paradoxes of Progress
109	Where Are They Now?
109	The Road to Nowhere
127	The National Crisis
137	The Rhetoric of Canadian Social Democracy
145	Building a Very British Canada in the Age of Capital
149	Capitalism, Socialism, and the Future of the World
26	The State, Who Read <i>By David S. Garrow</i>
58	Weakness, Democracy, and the Future <i>By Robert A. Dahl</i>
76	The Last Days of Socialism <i>By David S. Garrow</i>



Contenu & Citoyens Development

CONTENU

7	The Exercise of Power <i>By Elizabeth Tepper</i>		
12	Don't Call It a Comeback <i>A Letter to the USA Sally Krawcheck Lisa Goldberger Mark Day Meredith Goldner</i>	38	The State We Need <i>By David Butler</i>
16	Letters <i>The Bestman Speaks</i>	42	Joining Reality in Sleep <i>By David Fleming</i>
17	What Is to Be Done? <i>By David Fleming</i>	44	The Hater Class <i>By Lisa Goldberger</i>
		48	Socialism Is for the Children <i>By David Fleming</i>
		50	Welding the Imperial Presidency <i>By Margaret Day</i>
		58	Winning Democracy in America <i>By Paul Finkelman</i>
		68	Where Are They Now? <i>By Thomas J. Davis</i>
		71	Our Were Once Silent Sinner <i>By Thomas J. Davis</i>
		76	The Real Life of Social Realism <i>By Ted Low</i>
		97	The Paraglyphs of Canadian Social Democracy <i>By Lisa Kemp</i>
		100	Paraglyphs of Privilege <i>By Lisa Kemp</i>
		104	The Man Who Shot America in the Face <i>By Edward Jones</i>
		107	When Social Democracy Radicalized <i>Working Between Two Fires</i>
		113	Revisiting A Very British Coup in the Age of Corbyn <i>By David Henderson</i>
		116	Socialists Are Ideas That Will Live on Beyond 2020 <i>Make your favorite one-day writing to count.</i>

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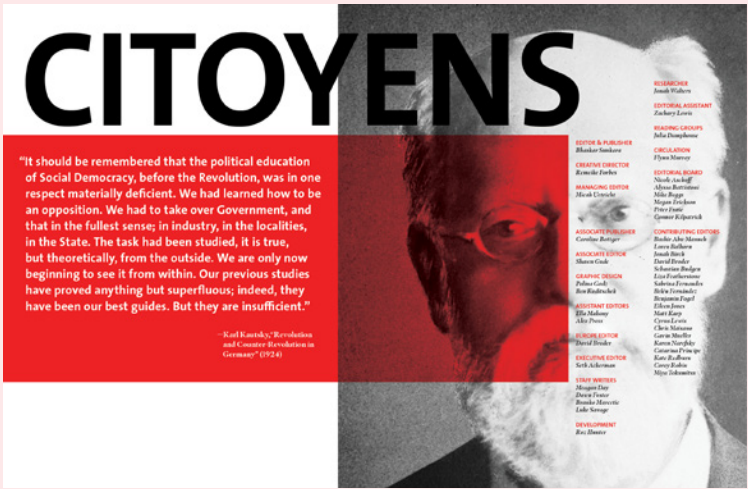
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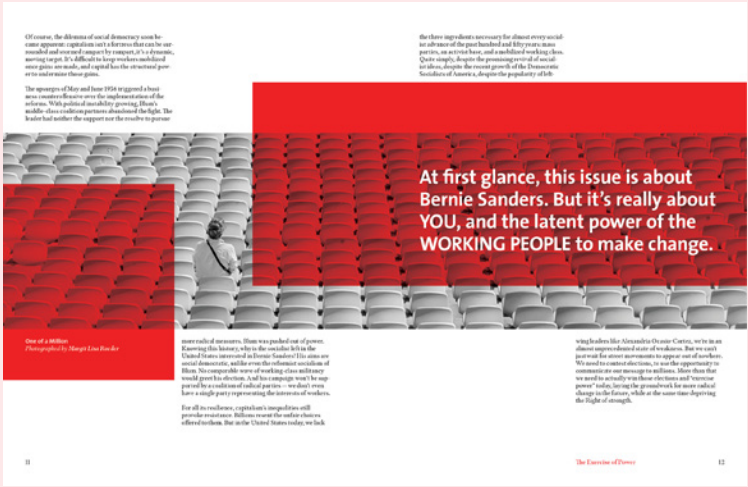
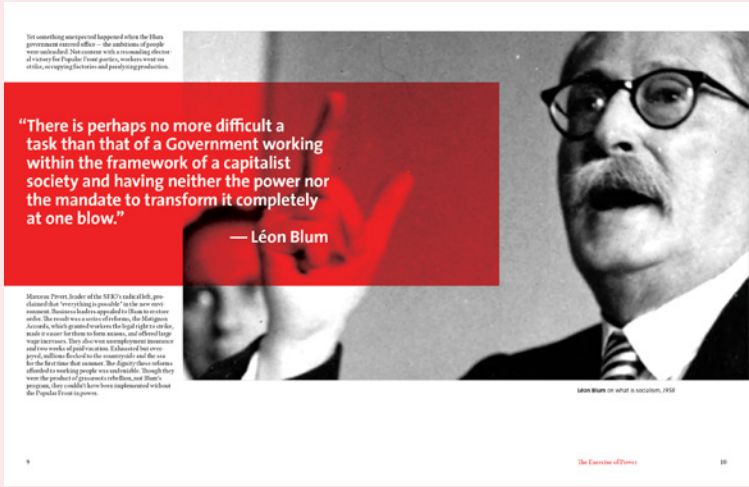
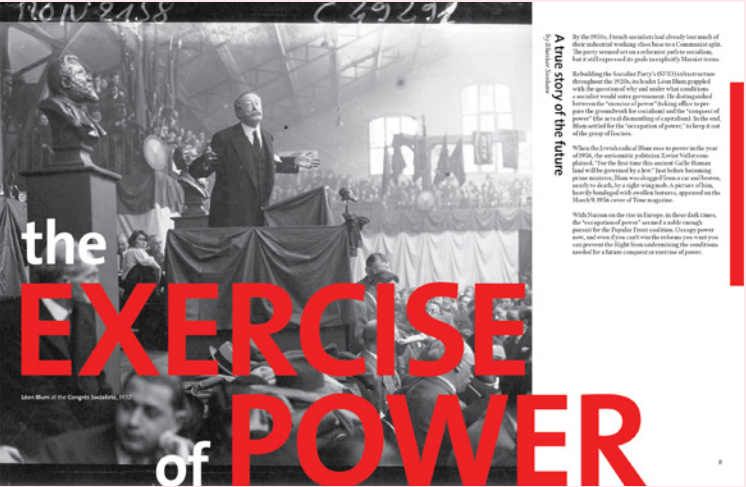
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"It should be remembered that the political education of Social Democracy, before the Revolution, was in no respect materially deficient. We had learned how to be an opposition. We had to take over Government, and that in the fullest sense; in industry, in the localities, in the State. The task had been studied, it is true, but theoretically, from the outside. We are only now beginning to see it from within. Our previous studies have proved anything but superfluous; indeed, they have been our best guides, but they are insufficient."

Karl Kautsky, "The Imperialism and Conflict: The Revolution in Germany" (1924)



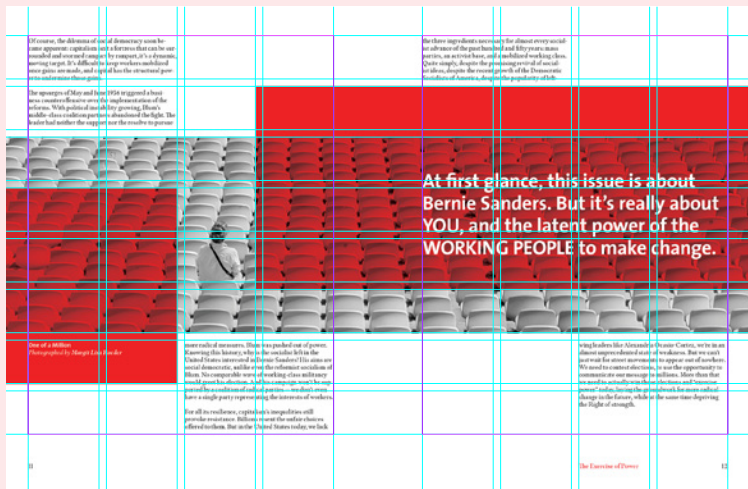
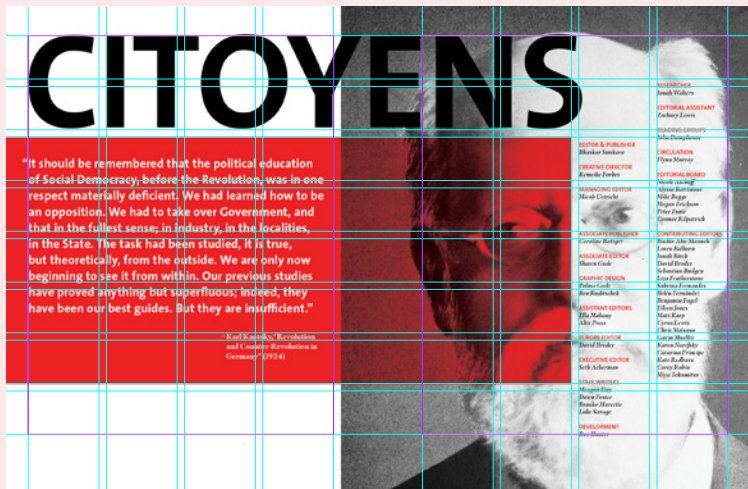
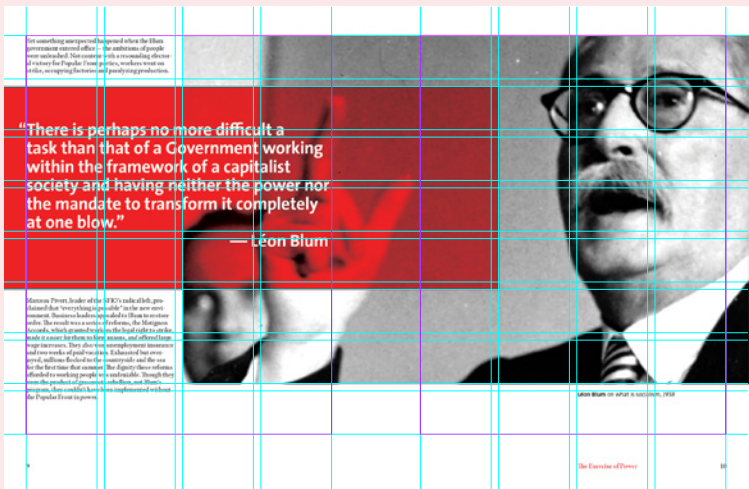
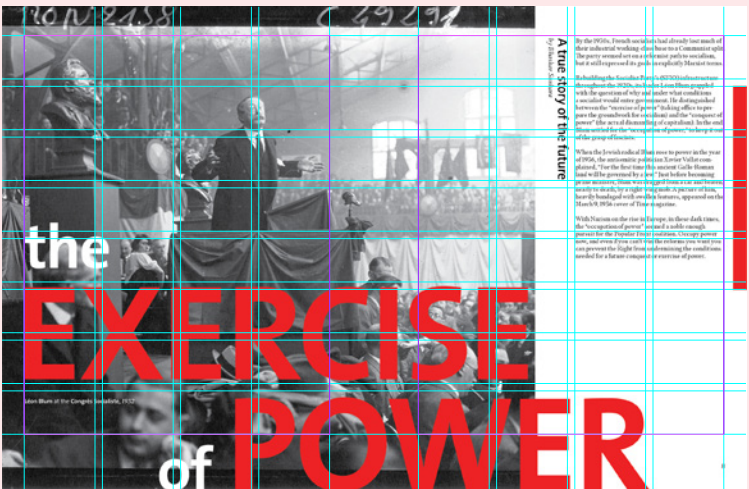
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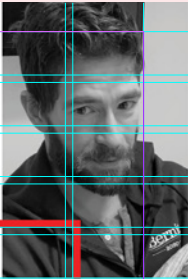




Matt Karp

agrees possible that there has been a change in the way that the Democratic primary is run. It's because the nature of the project is an attempt to represent the Democratic Party in the sense of a broader working class party. It's because of the feeling that the Democratic Party is not a party of the people, but a party of the elite. It's because of the feeling that the Democratic Party is not a party of the people, but a party of the elite.

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Liza Featherstone

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That's Callie's A Goodbook

"They used to stand for the working man."

—Matt Karp



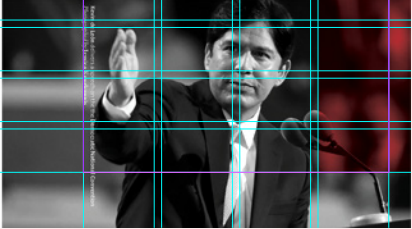
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Grids Overlay

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