

About The Cover

Elizam Escobar was born in Puerto Rico. Between 1968 and 1980 he worked in New York City as an illustrator for various marxist publications and taught in the city's public schools. In 1979 he began to work as an artist in the Hispanic Arts Association and the Museo del Barrio. During these years his paintings were exhibited in the Bronx Arts Council, Workers Arts Festival, the Second Festival of Hispanic Art, and elsewhere.

In April, 1980 he was accused of belonging to the Armed Forces for National Liberation (of Puerto Rico) and convicted of seditious conspiracy. Elizam is now serving a sixty-eight year sentence. In prison he continues to paint and to write. The paintings have been exhibited in Chicago, New York City, and in Puerto Rico. His articles, poetry, and drawings appear in *De Pie en Luchar*, *Red Bass*, *Left Curve*, and other publications. A major exhibition entitled *Art As An Act Of Liberation* has been organised by the Friends of Elizam Escobar Committee. In the catalogue for that exhibition Escobar writes:

Art and poetry, and their discourses, if they are for real, are always critical of Power: their politics is to transform reality and not to merely ideologize it. We should not pretend to possess truth or to have the only, unique truth. But an artist or a poet with a critical consciousness is always uncompromising with Power in relation to truth, in order to be for a revolution and real democracy.

Knowledge, Michel Foucault reminds us, is Power. For people, collectively and individually, to have control over determining the meaning of their lives, they must have the power to produce knowledge about themselves. The contributors to this first issue of the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons* have taken up the struggle to change the development of research about questions which deeply affect them. In doing so, they, like Escobar, seek to transform their reality by challenging the Power to inscribe and interpret that reality. Thus it seems appropriate that Escobar's "A Wel-

tanschaung," (which can be translated as "world-outlook") should be the frontispiece for the first issue of the journal.

A copy of the catalogue, *Elizam Escobar: Art As An Act Of Liberation* is available by writing to Friends of Elizam Escobar c/o Editorial el Coqui, 1671 N. Claremont, Chicago, IL 60647.

Howard Davidson