

FIGHTING TIMES: ORGANIZING ON THE FRONT LINES OF THE CLASS WAR, by Jon Melrod

Deeply personal, astutely political, *Fighting Times: Organizing on the Front Lines of the Class War* recounts the thirteen-year journey of Jonathan Melrod to harness working class militancy and jump start a revolution on the shop floor of the American Motors auto company in Wisconsin.

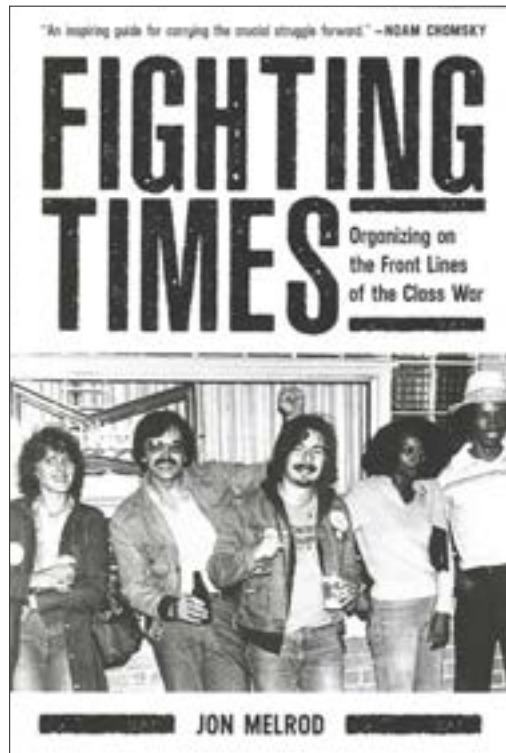
Melrod faces termination, dodges the FBI, outwits collaborators in the UAW, and becomes the central figure in a multi-year, surreptitiously funded and orchestrated lawsuit by American Motors against the rank-and-file shop newsletter *Fighting Times*, as he strives to build a class-conscious workers' movement from the bottom up.

A radical to the core, Melrod was a key part of the campus insurrection at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He left campus for the factory in 1972, hired along with hundreds of other youthful job seekers onto the mind-numbing auto assembly line. *Fighting Times* paints a portrait of these rebellious and alienated young hires, many of whom were returning Black Vietnam vets returning from the

war-torn jungles with little faith in the system and with little tolerance for authority.

Containing dozens of archival photographs, *Fighting Times* captures the journey of a militant anti-racist revolutionary who rose through the ranks of his UAW local without compromising his politics or his dedication to building a class-conscious workers' movement.

The book will inspire and arm a



new generations of labor militants and organizers with the skills and attitude to challenge the odds and fight the egregious abuses of the exploitative capitalist system.

About the Author

Born into the political and cultural quiescence of the 1950's, Jon Melrod grew up in apartheid-like Washington D.C. Active in the student movement that opposed the Vietnam War and a supporter of Black liberation, Jon embraced the ideology that the working class held the power to radically transform society. He left the campus for the factory in 1972. For thirteen years he immersed himself in

the day-to-day struggles of Milwaukee's working class, both on the factory floor and in the political arena.

Despite FBI and Milwaukee Police "Red Squad" interference, Jon organized a militant rank-and-file caucus and rose through the

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union ranks to a top leadership position in UAW local 72. After a mass workforce cutback imposed by AMC's joint venture partner French automaker Renault, he left to attend Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco in 1985. Graduating cum laude with a JD, he opened a law firm in San Francisco successfully representing hundreds of political refugees.

In 2004, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and given only six months to a year to live. Determined to overcome the illness, he marshalled both western and alternative treatments and, despite the odds, survived the deadly disease. After 13-year-old Andy Lopez was gunned down by a Sonoma County deputy sheriff, he reupped his bar membership and jumped back into the struggle against police violence.

In 2019, he married Filipina actress and human rights activist Maria Isabel Lopez and became politically active in the movement to defend the ancestral lands of the persecuted indigenous peoples of the Philippine archipelago who are under attack by the army at the behest of foreign logging and mining interests. He has also become active in the human rights struggle defending imprisoned Filipino political prisoners.

Accolades

"An eloquent voice from the frontlines of the hard, bitter, exhilarating struggles for freedom and justice that have made the world a better place. An inspiring guide for carrying the crucial struggle forward." – Noam Chomsky

"In *Fighting Times*, Jon Melrod shares his personal experiences in historical context about his human rights battles against social injustices. Jon was an early supporter of the Black Panther Party and the struggles for black liberation. As you will read, he became a target of the FBI after landing on the Bureau's radar when he called the Chicago office to coordinate sales of The Black Panther community newspaper in Madison, WI. A must-read for all freedom-loving peoples." – Emory Douglas, social justice artist and minister of culture for the Black Panther Party, 1967-1981

Author, Jon Melrod will speak at Copperfield's Books in Sebastopol, October 6, at 7pm. To pre-order at a 20% discount enter code FIGHT20 at pmpress.org.

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