

## **Carlos Alfred Cortéz**

A worker, intellectual, poet, and artist, Carlos Alfred Cortéz was born in South Milwaukee on August 13, 1923. He was the son of Alfred Cortéz and Augusta Ungerecht a progressive radical working-class couple with links to the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and anti-war social pacifism. Cortéz grew up in Milwaukee exposed to various languages and cultures. After graduating from high school in 1941 he immediately joined the Young People's Socialist League. Although he was drafted in 1944, he rejected it on political grounds becoming a conscientious objector. Following his father's footsteps, he joined the IWW and held a variety of jobs from construction, clerk in a bookstore, loading and unloading boxcar and another unskilled work. Since the 1940s Cortéz drew cartoons for the Industrial Worker newspaper and wrote poetry becoming its editor in 1969 until 1975. He was a columnist throughout the 1980s.

Moving to Chicago in 1965, Cortéz began a forty-year long relationship with the city's culture and art as a poet and graphic artist. His art, influenced by José Guadalupe Posada, Francisco de Goya and Kathe Kollwitz, also reflected his personal understanding of an indigenous and American Indian perspective within an internationalist frame. Joining the Chicago art scene, Cortez throughout the years was a member of important collectives such as Movimiento Artístico Chicano (MARCH), MiRA, the Chicago Mural Group, Mexican Printmaking Workshop and the groups Midwest Artists for Peace and the Artists' Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. Cortéz identified himself as a philosophical anarchist and as a soapbox artist and poet.

Links for his life and work:

Rene Arceo, "Carlos Cortez Koyokuikatl: The Man and Artist (Part I)"

<http://www.elbeisman.com/article.php?action=read&id=848>

Rene Arceo, "Carlos Cortez Koyokuikatl: The Man and Artist (Part II)"

<http://www.elbeisman.com/article.php?action=read&id=878>