

SILK SCREEN PRINTING.

Basic things you need :-

- (1) A WOODEN FRAME to hold the organdy. (cost us) 8/-
- (2) A SQUEEGEE to fit inside the frame. (homemade, about) 12/-
- (3) ORGANDY (silk substitute). (1yd., London) 9/-
- (4) A TABLE or BENCH TO take the frame.
- (5) STENCIL. (Profilm, per sheet) 8/-
- (6) INK. (Screen Ink, per imperial quart) 17/-
- (7) BROWN STICKY PAPER. (per roll) 2/6
- (8) ABSORBENT PAPER, for printing. (free; or per 100, about) 5/-
- (9) PEGS, to hang wet posters! -----

Total initial cost, about £ 3.

PREPARATION : -

The frame should be about 1" wide & 2-3" deep. You should allow 4" all round bigger than your largest poster, eg wood 36/27 for a poster 28/19. Bridal joints are ideal for the corners.

Make the squeegee of rubber 1/2" thick, placed between 2 pieces of wood, so that the rubber sticks out at least 3/4". They can be bought ready made, but are rather expensive.

Organdy can be bought in the materials dept. of any big store. Remember to have a couple of inches so that the material can be stapled (open ended stapler or staple gun; or large drawing pins) onto the frame. Organdy does tend to rip, but it must be pulled tight to avoid any creases.

With the organdy in the well of the frame, hinge the frame onto the table. This enormously increases stability & ease of removal.

You can use ordinary paper to cut the stencil, but the result tends to be indifferent. Profilm is much more costly, but gives much better results, & we ourselves use this. Bluefilm & amberfilm, neither of which we have tried, can also be used.

Any thick poster or other thick printing ink can be used, but NOT duplicator ink. Special screen printing inks are commonly used, in a variety of colours; they need watering down quite heavily, with white spirit, as otherwise they are difficult to use & expensive! A bit of experimenting will soon show what is best for you.

EXECUTION : -

(1) Draw a bold poster on ordinary paper, doing it the exact size you want the reproduction. Put it on a flat surface & pin the profilm, shiny side up, on top of it. Then with a handycraft knife or similar cut out the letters &/or design, removing the loose pieces as you go & making sure not to cut too often into the backing paper.

Then place the cut profilm, still shiny side up, underneath the organdy in the position you will want for printing, & run a hot iron (no. 3 electric). When it has changed colour all over, except for inaccessible corners, to a darker brown, lift up the frame & gently pull off the backing paper, corner first. If small bits of the profilm come off at this point, they can be replaced by equivalent pieces of the brown sticky tape.

Mask with the brown tape round the outside of the frame (must) & the inside (optional), doing it twice over & then reinforcing the corners. If you're going to do a print of over 500, it will be worth lacquering the tape. Be careful not to mask any part of the design. It is the masking that takes up much of the difference between the size of frame & of poster. Then leave the ready frame to dry, preferably overnight.

(2) Do your original poster on newsprint, cutting out with scissors or whatever. Place it under the frame as above, & one pull of ink by the squeegee should hold it in place. Then mask & leave, as above.

You will find that ink will occasionally 'spill' slightly outside the design on your copies. This will usually rectify itself in a couple of copies, or you can clean the affected underneath part of the stencil with white spirit. If ink comes through consistently at the sides, it probably means that there is a small gap between the edges of the stencil & the masking tape. There may also be air bubbles between the profilm & the organdy, if the profilm was not ironed on properly.

Cleaning afterwards. Unless cleaned at once, the ink on both frame & squeegee will harden. The squeegee is quite easy to wipe clean with bogroll, & should be done as soon as you finish. We tho' tend to throw away the organdy each time, as its very small mesh makes it very difficult to clean, & it is quite a task to remove the stencil, too. White spirit would again be used. After a large printing, the organdy may also well be a bit worn.

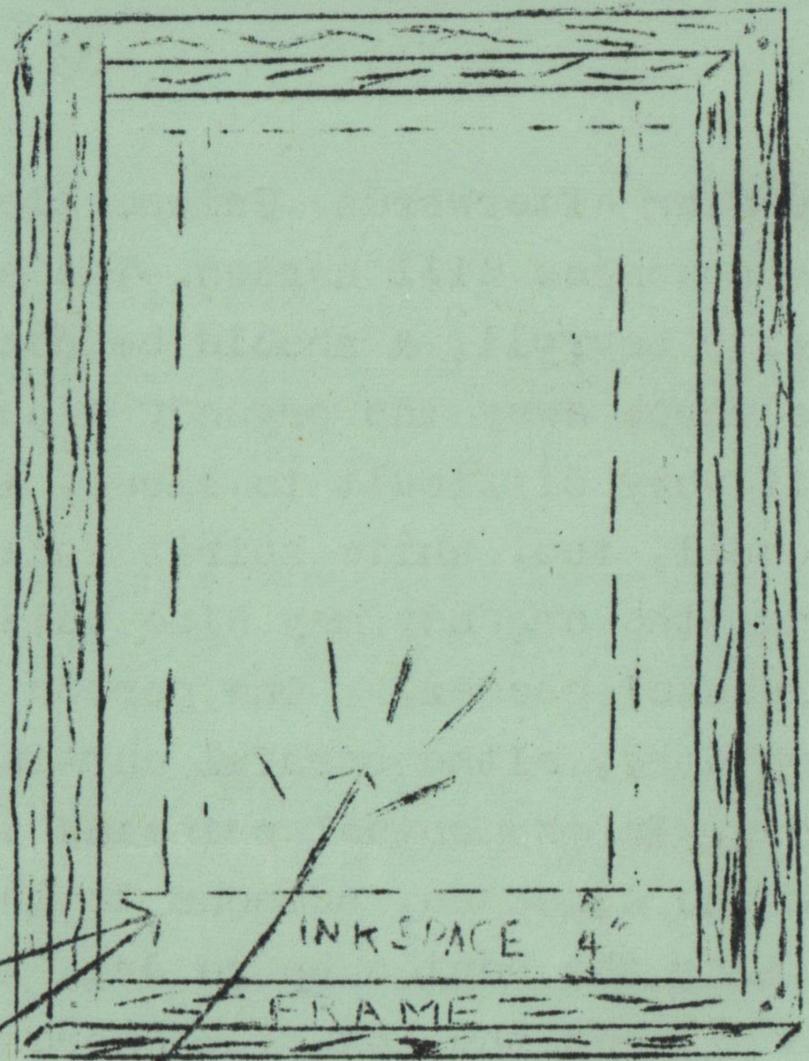
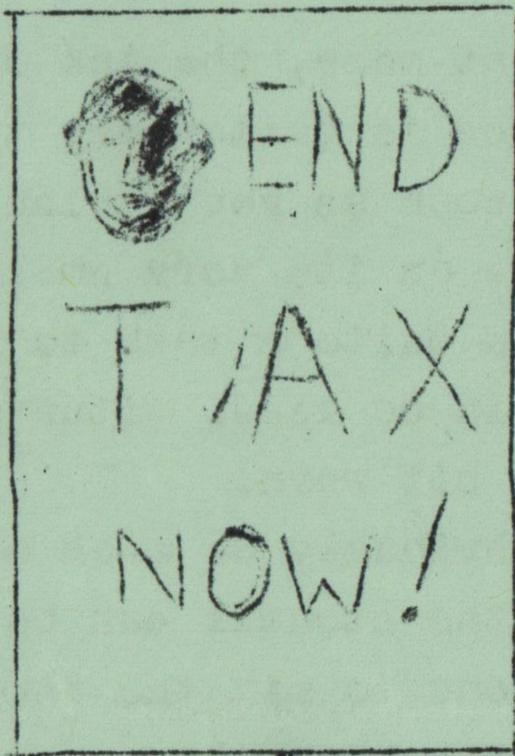
Personnel needed. One person can obviously do much of the preliminary work, altho careful cutting of the stencil can be very laborious. In the actual printing : someone to mix the ink, someone to work the squeegee, someone to insert & remove the paper, & someone to hang the copies up to dry. A break in the middle of work will do no harm, but the ink will encrust overnight. If changing colour from one poster to the next, or in the middle of a two or more coloured poster, remember that the dominant colour (eg black) will show through even weeks later as the white spirit melts it, unless you clean the screen very thoroughly.

We have been using this process ourselves for the last four months or so, & we would like to see all anarchist & libertarian groups have a go at it. It's cheap, quick, & reliable, &, after the first exploratory go, easy! We have produced 10 different designs since Easter, average print 100, mostly by people who before Easter knew nothing about the process at all! For further supplies: London, Keep's, Theobalds Rd., WC 2, have everything except the wood & the organdy; outside London, look up silk screen suppliers/printers in the trade section of the telephone directory.

Further advice from the Camden Poster Workshop, London; or ourselves, Lewisham Anarchists, 61B Granville Park, London SE 13. If you can't or won't use this information, for heaven's sake don't throw it away - give it to someone who CAN use it !

DO IT YOURSELF

THE FRAME IS A SIMPLE CASE OF 4 JOINTS. THE FRAME MUST BE BIG ENOUGH TO HOLD INK AND POSTER.

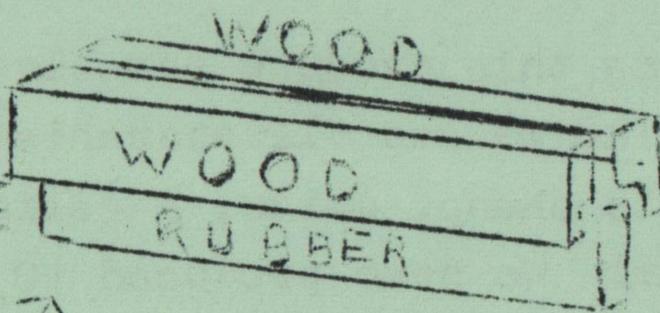


4" EACH END TO HOLD INK, ALSO 2" EACH SIDE.

(MASKING TAPE)

(ORGANDY ON UNDERSIDE PLACE STENCIL)

STENCIL IS TO BE PUT FACE UP ON UNDER SIDE OF ORGANDY.



THE SQUEE GEE IS MADE FROM 2 STRIPS OF WOOD ABOUT 3 INCH DEEP AND 1 INCH WIDE WITH A LIP ON EACH PIECE LARGE ENOUGH TO HOUSE 1 STRIP OF RUBBER OF THE SAME SIZE AS THE WOOD, PLACE RUBBER AS SHOWN, AND SCREW ALL 3 TOGETHER. THE SQUEE GEE MUST BE ABLE TO MOVE FREELY UP AND DOWN THE LENGTH OF THE FRAME.