

“A tour-de-force through the revolutionary 1970s and turbulent 1980s, to our troubled state today. Poignant and personal, passionate and political ... this book is a testimonial to the lessons learned from a life in the struggle.”—*Dan Berger, author of Outlaws of America*

ARM THE SPIRIT:

A WOMAN'S JOURNEY UNDERGROUND AND BACK

by **Diana Block**

In June 1985, Diana Block, her two-week old son and five companions—all of them active in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence—fled L.A. after finding a surveillance device in their car. Facing the possibility of arrest because of her militant activities, Diana spent the next decade living underground, on the run from the FBI, raising two children and juggling security, solidarity and motherhood. In a perfect demonstration that the personal is political, Diana's memoir offers unique insights into the reasons why many people took up arms against the U.S. government in the 1960s and 1970s in response to racism, male supremacy and war. The book also traces Diana's political development on either side of her time underground, offering a fresh look at the history of the 1970s and an analysis of the social terrain of the 1990s when she resurfaced and tried to reintegrate into a very different world.

Relayed with emotional depth and a poetic style, *Arm the Spirit* brings a woman's perspective to a subject typically dominated by heroic, male discourse. Diana paints a vivid, complex picture of underground life and its many challenges: What is it like to raise children who don't know their mother's real name and birthday? How does it feel to see your own history distorted on an episode of “America's Most Wanted”? Which aspects of underground life are terrifying, which are stultifying, and which ultimately strengthen the spirit and will to resist?

A captivating tale of struggle and solidarity—told from the inside.

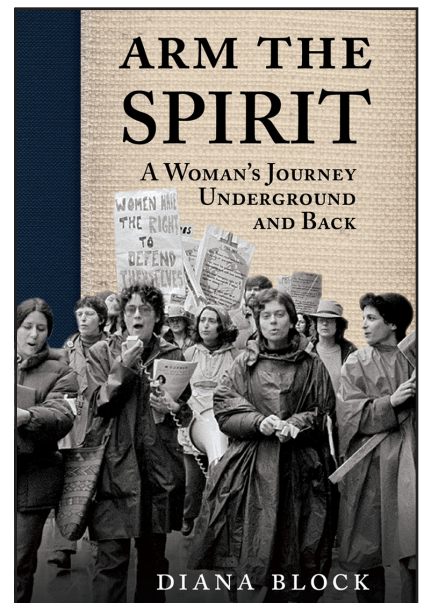
“Diana Block's *Arm the Spirit* is a stunning piece of work with pitch-perfect voice and strong writing. She gives voice to many of us who took up the vocation of revolution and have remained true to the vision of a radically transformed world. *Arm the Spirit* is honestly self-critical without renouncing the continuing long struggle to end capitalism, imperialism, exploitation, and oppression, which Diana Block remains an integral part of, a role model for us all. —Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, author of *Outlaw Woman*

“*Arm the Spirit* is one woman's tale of wanting a better world, struggling to bring that vision to fruition and then literally having to flee for her life. It is a story of internal exile that holds lessons for us all, particularly in these times when a “war on terror” has so often become a war against our own best citizens. Block's telling is helped by beautiful poetry and resistance to dogma. This is truly a story for every reader.” —Margaret Randall, author of *Stone Witness* and *Sandino's Daughters*

“Diana Block elaborates a true definition of solidarity—both in words and in deeds. As a life-long Puerto Rican independentista, I have struggled with many North Americans over this essential concept. This is a story of victory and the will to confront a difficult life without remorse or victimization. Block offers a snapshot of many pains, sufferings, and challenges, but most importantly, she articulates a powerful lesson: life is most fully lived, when lived for others.” —José E. López, Executive Director, The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Chicago

“The powerfully poignant story of a mother balancing political commitment with raising children, knowing while underground that arrest and imprisonment could terminate the joys of parenthood in a heartbeat. This is a must read book that brims full of life, politics, love and poetry.” —Robert Meeropol, Executive Director, Rosenberg Fund for Children

Diana Block has been a social justice activist for 40 years. Active in the second wave feminist movement, she was a founding member of San Francisco Women Against Rape and helped to start the Bay Area chapter of the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee. Since returning to public life in 1994, after a decade spent underground, she has been a prison abolition activist with the California Coalition for Women Prisoners. She has written political articles, poems and short stories for many years and is currently a member of the editorial collective of *The Fire Inside*, a newsletter for women prisoners.



ARM THE SPIRIT
A Woman's Journey Underground
and Back

ISBN: 978-1-904859-87-1

March 2009

6" X 9", 392 pages

\$19.95

HISTORY/WOMENS STUDIES



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