

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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FIFTY PENCE

*"You take advantage of Africa and when your belly is full you tell Africa not to be awkward."*

Omar Bonga, President of Gabon, addressing the rich nations at the Copenhagen Summit, March 1995.

## PIOUS WORDS FOR THE WORLD'S POOR BUT NO ACTION!

**T**hey had a week in Copenhagen. More than a hundred nations and some 13,000 diplomats, experts, civil servants, not to mention heads of governments (at least at the weekend), to give their blessing to the United Nations 50th anniversary super-show and to declare that something ought to be done about most of the so-called United Nations which are living in conditions of abject poverty.

A good time was had by all – the delegates, that is – and at a cost of £37 million, which some commentators have calculated could have provided for the immunisation of 60 million children in the third world. A mere bagatelle when UNICEF, which does the immunisation campaigns, points out "that it comes to less than a thousandth of a percent of the amount of money to lift the world's children out of poverty and ill health" (*Independent on Sunday*, 12th March).

The attitude of the G7 industrialised, developed, greedy super-states was illustrated by the fact that two of the principle members – the USA and Britain – refused to attend.

Incidentally, if one can accept the truth of his statement, President Muluzi of Malawi, said to be one of the poorest countries in the world, cancelled his trip (and presumably his retinue) to Copenhagen because it would cost £125,000 "and he would rather the money went to poverty alleviation at home". Good for him, and he didn't miss very much apart from the cocktails.

**T**o imagine that these super-summit political conferences can achieve anything for a majority of the world which is at the stark poverty economic level for all kinds of reasons, including that of climatic

*disasters*, is wishful thinking. After all, the 'prosperity' of the industrialised world has been provided over the centuries by the third world. It is now more sophisticated than in the 'bad old days' of colonialism. Now Western capitalism is going to the Far East (at the expense of unemployment at home) but the rest of the third world is starving and more indebted just in interest payments to the bankers than they receive in 'aid' from the bankers' nations. As the environmental correspondent, Polly Ghazi, of the *Observer* points out:

"It is a dangerous myth that private investment will replace the need for aid. A mere 100 transnational corporations now control a staggering \$3.4 trillion in financial assets. They are placing their money not in debt-ridden African nations, but in safer  
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## LATEST STATISTICS for what they're worth

**I**n December imports from the rest of the world (EU figures are now only issued quarterly) exceeded exports by £1,640 million, more than double the November figure. Needless to say a government spokesperson pointed out that the figures should be treated as "a one-off" and that in fact 1994 was a successful year. After all, the balance of trade was only about £11,000 million in the red! A successful year indeed!

**T**he government is also preening itself with the latest unemployment figures showing yet another 25,000 have been taken off the register. They don't tell us whether that's because they have been on the dole for more than a year and have been automatically taken off the register but are presumably still receiving some sort of relief from another source.

Incidentally, unemployment figures for the young are officially put at over 20%.

## STINKING FISH GALORE!

**T**he latest declaration of war, this time between Canada and the European Union over the Canadians' seizure of a Spanish fishing trawler fishing *outside* the Canadians' imposed 200-mile exclusion fishing zone – in other words, fishing in so-called *international waters* – leaves us with a déjà vu feeling that we have seen it all before.

Readers may recall that British fishermen were preparing to declare war on the forty Spanish trawlers that were due to fish in the so-called 'Irish Box' at the end of this year by order of the EU (*Freedom*, 11th February) and in that editorial we made two points: firstly that for profit the sea was being fished dry, and secondly that the oceans and its fish "belong to us and not a bunch of pirates intent on fishing the seas dry".

**W**e have quoted from that editorial for the latest 'crisis' simply underlines our first point and, in our humble opinion, until we the people worldwide halt the exploitation of the oceans by the ever-rapacious trawler owners then no quotas and even the de-commissioning of trawlers will not halt the rape of the oceans. For instance with quotas how many

inspectors will be required to cover all main fishing nations. And as one asks in other fields, who is to inspect the inspectors? The few that are caught give one an idea of the scale of over-fishing that is taking place. A news item this very month told of a trawler arrested by a Royal Navy Fisheries Protection vessel last August "after spotting illegally retained fish on board" 200 miles – no, not off the Canadian coast – south west of Britain. It exceeded its quota by 36 tons – quite a lot of fish *and money for the trawler's owners!*

But there is more to it. The boat's owners are the Falmouth-based Liners and Trawlers Association Ltd which is Spanish owned, British registered and crewed! Plymouth stipendary magistrates convicted them on "fifteen charges of breaching quotas, four of making wrongful landing declarations, two of false log book entries and four of catching undersized fish". They were fined £311,000 and ordered to pay £15,000 costs.

**T**he holier-than-thou attitude of the Canadian government is that they have a partial moratorium on  
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# THE 'NEW LOOK' CLAUSE 4

## Nothing about socialism, capitalism, the rich and the poor!

The 1995 draft of the Labour Party's constitution begins with the statement that it "is a democratic socialist party" but ends: "on the basis of these principles Labour seeks the trust of the people to govern". Assuming it to be a *socialist* party (which Article 2 of the 1995 draft shows it is not) it is certainly not democratic since what it is concerned to do is that a bunch of ambitious *Labour* politicians be given the power to run our lives for us instead of the *Tory* bunch!

Article 2 throws overboard the original Article (Clause) 4 which put the emphasis on "common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange" by advocating that:

"... the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition [be] joined with the forces of partnership and cooperation to produce the wealth the nation needs and the opportunity for all to work

and prosper, with a thriving private sector and high quality public services, where those undertakings essential to the common good are either owned by the public or accountable to them ..."

For anarchists the alternative to private enterprise (capitalist production - including services - for profit) is not nationalisation\* but workers' control. Workers and their families are also consumers and surely in a non-profit society it is in the interests of all that efficiency and quality of services are paramount.

Not a word by the 'New Look' Labour hierarchy about the land (at one time the Labour Party was in favour of nationalising

\* Neither Nationalisation nor Privatisation: an anarchist approach, Freedom Press, 81 pages, £1.95 (post free inland).

agricultural land). Yet the situation demands a response from a party calling itself *socialist*. Apart from the other significant fact: that 73% (nearly three-quarters of the land of this island) is owned by 3% of the people, about 1½ million out of a population of more than 50 million, the land that produces our food is in the hands of an ever-decreasing number of speculators, investors, pop stars, football millionaires - you name them, all concerned either with the return for their capital or simply the 'prestige' of being 'gentlemen farmers'. Oliver Walston, a well-known broadcaster on farming (he has a Sunday morning breakfast programme as well as travelling world wide), also sits on 3,000 acres of arable land and has publicly declared that it would not be profitable but for the CAP (the EU subsidies for arable farmers). Meanwhile the rural economy is collapsing as the Walstons of this world swallow up more and more small farms and, needless to say, more farmworkers join the army of Portillo's 'work-shy'!

And not only have the 'New Look' middle-class-vote-catching Labour politicians not a word to say about land ownership, they are also silent about the European Union's set-aside programme which has meant that in this country some million acres (a strip 27 miles wide from London to Brighton!) of arable land have been put out of production and the farmers paid more than £100 per acre to do so. Their silence is further proof that they are neither *democratic* nor *socialist*. They are capitalists (some even go to Church on Sundays), just

another bunch of politicians seeking office and a little bit of power to push around the unemployed, the pensioners, the claimants and the carers. But as we will go on pointing out: the real power is with the multinationals, the transnationals, the money markets (look what they are up to at the moment speculating on the dollar), the banks, pension funds and insurance funds.

The 'New Look' Clause 4 will probably win Labour some of the votes of the white-collared-city-pen-pushers who thought they were in their job for life, and of liberals wanting to get the Tories out (a kind of political game) and depending on how the millionaire press directs its fire, at the actual elections Labour should win the contest.

The losers, as always, are the mass of the people. In our editorial following the Labour Party's annual conference in which we asked "What's so 'outdated' about Clause 4?" (*Freedom*, 15th October 1994), our reply was that the objectives of Clause 4 *could never be achieved via the ballot box*.

All that the 'New Look Clause 4' may do is to provide the votes for a Labour Party at the next jamboree. But, be sure, nothing will change until the exploited of the world realise their strength. They produce all the material things we all need and yet are treated as inferiors - denied the basics of a civilised existence.

An 'outdated' slogan for the 21st century: WORKERS OF THE WORLD ARISE and forget about your vote!

### PIOUS WORDS FOR THE WORLD'S POOR BUT NO ACTION!

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bets like Eastern Europe and China. Sub-Saharan Africa attracts only one per cent of foreign investment. [our italics]

We are now in danger of producing a world more divided than ever between rich societies and the debt- and poverty-laden southern nations.

In the last 50 years, global GDP has risen sevenfold while the total number of people living without basic food, water and sanitation has risen, fuelled by the population boom, to encompass a fifth of humanity."

The two-column headline "World leaders make pledge to fight poverty" (*Guardian*, 13th March) ended with the dying Mitterand's excellent statement for his biographers (reproduced elsewhere) and referred to the 90-page document that emerged from their debates but which apparently was a "non-binding declaration" - that is a document not worth the paper it is printed on so far as action is concerned!

We are sure than the spokesman for Christian Aid, one of "hundreds of non-governmental organisations" present at the Copenhagen summit, was right when he said:

"This summit has put poverty on the map and let rich countries off the hook."

Though the poorest homeless in this country cannot be compared with the millions in Africa, South America and the other third world countries, poverty is a major problem in the so-called prosperous countries including Britain. Some commentators suggest that Mr Major did not put in an appearance at the summit because of the 'poverty problem' at home. We doubt whether most politicians have feelings. Major, Portillo,

Lilley and Howard have no feelings. They are fundamentalists driven by dogma - one only has to see them delivering on television.

Major refused to attend the final weekend of the Copenhagen summit, but according to the *Observer's* correspondent:

"Mr Portillo sent to Lady Chalker, the Overseas Development Minister, the speech she should give at Copenhagen on the government's behalf. The solution to world poverty, he wrote, was simple. Open up markets, drop all trade barriers and the poor would vanish from the face of the Earth. Heated debate ensued, but the Portillo line won through."

And she was quoted as declaring that "it is free trade that is the key to global prosperity".

What she didn't say was that under capitalism there is no such thing as *free trade* as you and I understand it.

The dying President of France, Francois Mitterand, for all his sins made a telling statement to the Copenhagen conference to which surely anarchists could subscribe.

"He rejected the model of 'naked capitalism'. 'Are we really going to let the world become a global market without any rules other than those of the jungle and with no purpose other than maximum gain, maximum profit, in the minimum time'." (*Guardian*, 13th March 1995)

What better condemnation of the capitalist system by, after all, an old capitalist?

### STINKING FISH GALORE!

(continued from page 1)  
fishing in their 200-mile zone in order to build up the fish stocks - rather late in the day, seeing that they have allowed their own fishermen to destroy their fish stocks over the years. According to Mathew Horseman in the *Independent on Sunday* (12th March) the Canadian government:

"... established an expensive programme to pay fishermen not to work; in Newfoundland along 40,000 are now even without the seasonal work that kept them from year-round reliance on social assistance."

The *Independent* correspondent describes the situation in the distressed villages of the Maritimes province to explain the government's action and also its 'militancy' against foreign fishing boats, even in so-called 'international waters'.

"Boats tied up in harbours, the canning facilities are shattered and the taverns full of unemployed fishermen. Fishing is a way of life in this region, the country's poorest by far."

According to the Canadians, three-quarters of the seized boat's catch was undersized. In the British case referred to earlier, "some were less than half the permitted size". For goodness sake, if you allow so-called fishing boars to have nets "fifty miles long with openings that would alone accommodate sixteen jumbo jets", it is surely time to give the fish a rest and *catch* all the trawler owners, the businessmen and the fisheries ministers who are about to meet to discuss once again how to reconcile capitalism with conservation in the net and cut the nets - as apparently the Spanish trawler captain did to hide the evidence!

There is no way of reconciling capitalism with conservation. Get rid of the profit motive, get rid of private ownership of ocean-going trawlers, encourage the small off-shore fishermen.

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## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# COPING WITH ETZIONI

## apostle of phoney communitarianism

Decades ago the American evangelist Billy Graham used to jet into Britain to be photographed with royalty and political bosses and address big audiences with soothing music at Wembley Stadium. This month an American sociologist Amitai Etzioni flew in to give a lecture in London (admission £10) organised by *The Times* and an independent think-tank, Demos.

He is the author of a best-seller in the US in 1993, *The Spirit of Community*, not yet published in Britain and from publicity in the journals I read (*The Guardian* and *New Statesman & Society*) I learn that he has influenced radical Conservative MPs, now that market values have gone stale, as well as the Liberal leader Paddy Ashdown, who says he is "a communitarian of long standing, happy to be associated with an idea whose time has come", as well as Labour politicians groping for ideas that might win votes in the same way that Bill Clinton's election campaign was "punctuated with communitarian rhetoric".

Now anarchism too is punctuated with communitarian rhetoric. In the definition written by Kropotkin for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* it is:

"... the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government — harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being."

According to the account by Paul Anderson and Kevin Davey in the *New Statesman* for 3rd

March, the central communitarian argument is that:

"A good society is one in which people live freely, take responsibility for themselves, their families and their communities, and solve most problems at the level of the neighbourhood or household ... And in America, he says, the balance between rights and duties has swung too far in favour of rights. The prime task in American society is to redress the balance with measures that encourage people to recognise their duties and to act on them ... This, first of all, puts a premium on parenting — which, say the communitarians, means that parents should be actively discouraged from splitting up and that single women should be dissuaded from having children ... Encouraging responsibility does not, however, end with the family. The education system is crucially important — and communitarians argue for a wide range of measures to instil a sense of civic duty and to iron out anti-social behaviour. Neighbourhood self-regulation is also vital. Some communitarians argue for compulsory community service for teenagers; some back curfews on teenagers to prevent them roaming the streets at night ..."

In other words, the grand word communitarianism turns out to be part of the culture of contentment in the US, seeking to reduce the cost of welfare payments and of policing in the poverty belt that surrounds every American city. It is just another

prescription by the affluent for the 'underclass' in order to reduce public budgets. What I resent, as a self-appointed spokesman for anarchists and libertarian socialists, is that Etzioni chooses to dress up this programme of blaming the poor for their poverty, in the language of community. By far the wisest response to the Etzioni gospel came from another sociologist, Ray Pahl, in the *New Statesman* for 10th March. He has the advantage of actually reading Etzioni and his wise conclusion is "Let us move beyond communitarianism to a diverse, tolerant and friendly society based on creative individuality". You'll have to seek out his article to see why he says this, but the subheading to his article 'Friendly Society' provides some clues. It says "in embracing a mythical idea of community, the Labour Party may be making a grave error by ignoring the very real support networks that people build among themselves". He and I have investigated informal settlements and the informal economy and I can see exactly what he means. The communitarianism seen as a programme by our politicians short of ideas, is something quite different from the way in which people cooperate to keep afloat in an economy that rejects them.

But since we are going to be exposed to a basin-full of the allegedly communitarian ideology, I make no apology to anyone for repeating in this notebook the comments I made in the *New Statesman* for 17th March.

"Something rang a bell when I read Amitai Etzioni's rallying-cry that 'We must see each of our communities as part of ever larger and more encompassing communities, so that a community of communities can be developed at the level of the nation, the continent, or even the world' (*New Statesman & Society*, 3rd March)."

I reckon that in 1946 he must have bunked off school or military training to hear Martin Buber, professor of social philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, discoursing on the neglected alternative socialist tradition of Proudhon, Kropotkin and Gustav Landauer and hoping for a social pattern "not, as now, composed of the pseudo-representatives of amorphous masses of electors ... bound to their representatives by some windy abstraction, by the mere phraseology of a party-programme, but concretely, though common action and common experience. The essential thing, however, is that the process of community-building shall run all the relations of the communes with one another. Only a community of communities merits the title of Commonwealth" (later translated in Buber's *Paths in Utopia*, Routledge, 1949).

Politicians climbing aboard the community bandwagon, as they have nothing else to offer, relate it to the collapse of the self-sustaining family and neighbourhood. They're into underclass-theology and its burden on the welfare, health and law-and-order budgets. The existence of an underclass isn't new (read Mayhew, Charles Booth or Seeborn Rowntree) but the underclass disappeared in the one modern period of full employment, the Second World War, which also chanced to be, according to the medical statisticians, the time of our healthiest children in spite of the enforced break-up of two-parent families.

Where are the political plans for local income-generation? Where is the support for local enterprises serving local needs? Where is the championing of self-help housing and a lavish provision of nursery and pre-school education? Where is the street-corner community health centre?

All the community activists I've met have to devote much of their time to finding the right

boots to lick for funding, as the rediscovery of community is heavily dependent on living wages for the people dedicated to it. The current paring down of education budgets illustrates this.

Like the Americans, the British have a genius for reducing every social and economic disaster to issues of personal morality. I tried, in the Christmas issue of *New Statesman* (16th/20th December 1994) to draw readers' attention to a host of community-building activities in contemporary Britain, from Bob Holman's Easterhouse to the Eldonian's Vauxhall, Liverpool. Dick Anderson's Balsall Heath story illustrates the dilemmas they face.

The local activists involved, making compromises with tedious realities every day, don't have time to evolve an ideology. If they had it wouldn't be all that different, I'd bet, than the tradition of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* (Freedom Press, £6.00), Buber's long out-print rewording of the local communitarian ideal of the cooperative commonwealth in the face of Fabianism and Marxism, and even my own twenty-year-old *Anarchy in Action* (Freedom Press, £3.00).

I don't know where we anarchists went wrong, except that we sought to influence people rather than politicians. The fact that Etzioni has a few ideas to rub together attracts the Conservative, Liberal and Labour public relations exercises looking for populist slogans. But behind this is the spectacle of chancy affluence and desperate squalor, side by side in contemporary Britain, though separated by a wall of personal mobility and security guards. This is as real here as it is in the United States or any city of the so-called third world.

And in the homeland of individual self-advancement no politician is willing to embrace the idea that communitarianism demands a programme of share-and-share alike. Whose votes would it win?

Colin Ward

## Through the Anarchist Press

No change can be observed in the human being since written records and drawings have been kept for many thousands of years. Neither the size nor the ability, bodily or mentally, has altered. What the early writers have written can be read today without much difficulty and you shall find that the subjects and problems have not changed one iota. It is for this reason that I find reading ancient writers so interesting.

What I cannot understand is how, despite all warnings by the wisest, the human condition has remained the same. In other words progress, if any, has been slow. Political conditions, or conditioning, has not altered. The rulers are few and change their guises. While all our efforts are spent on restraining the foe at home, the conditions deteriorate abroad.

There are seven million people *homeless* in the richest country in the world. You do not know, you are not told, but even if you know there is nothing that you can do about it.

There is a dialogue extant of which I am reminded between the poet Horace (very much the anarchist) and a lawyer who advises Horace not to write satires but to write Caesar's praise or otherwise *keep quiet*. Says the lawyer: "When the mighty passion of poetry is upon you, poor wretch, venture to sing the exploits of invincible Caesar; you will gain many rewards for your labours".

Nothing has changed. When you follow the dictates of the ruling club it's roses, roses all the way. But thousands of years later one is grateful to Horace because all his life is still open to our view, as he wished it, "painted on votive tablet".

Who else had the good sense to write down and respect the thoughts of his slave Davus: "Who then is free? He who is wise, over himself true lord and unterrified by anything that passes". A modern reminder is when the atom bomb was described as a paper tiger.

But things have changed in the methods of rulers in the past half century. Writing itself has become an anachronism in itself. A recent proof of this is the august BBC which will not

commission 'new writing' this year. The message only denotes the source. Murdoch's monster screens flickering images from Peking to Athens, the picture images of basketball players, there is no language except noise, the roaring of the crowd, the smack of the ball into the net, new kinds of educators have taken over and now what can be understood has a different meaning to what needs to be understood. As long as you learn how to tie your shoelaces, that should give you an easy honours degree. The bad drives out the good is an old saying, but the logic of it is only now being understood. For if all knowledge is trivia then you might as well sit in front of your monster screen and watch the illusion of movement. A scriptwriter working for these people, before being sacked, managed to change the script aiming at total incomprehension, such as: "Zybesco just won the shot put with a toss of minus eight feet".

Ever since the '60s, which gave the ruling class its worst shock worldwide, the tactics have changed. By definition the 'subjects' are those who are in your grip. The communication satellites, those big lamps shining into everybody's homes and into public places, you just watch, and they are the final modifications in control and power. In the old days the poor king had to send his messengers around with the symbol of a bloody sword whereas today's messengers will show you nothing that you need to know, but they do teach two or three words of English and how to open your mouth for your shouts of joy and sorrow.

The advocates of electronic mail could put this into their pipe and smoke it that when the method of subjugation is 'to push the buttons of meaninglessness and see who jumps' the only revolutionary answer is to switch off. When three satellites, equally spaced around the globe, is all that is needed for total control of all communications, can you imagine what the Anarchist Broadcasting Corporation would put out to astound its worldwide audience?

John Retz

## Religious Propaganda

Children in British schools are subject to relentless religious propaganda, and have been so for generations. The 1944 Education Act requires a daily 'Act of Worship' and 'religious education' lessons in every school, but in fact such activities had been going on in every state school since education became free and compulsory in the 1870s.

And what has been the effect of all this propaganda?

Well, a couple of academics from Trinity College, Carmarthen, last month published a study entitled *Teenage Values and Religion*, for which they and their researchers questioned 15,361 persons aged 13 to 15 about their religion.

6,401 of the respondents said they believed in God, 3,840 described themselves as atheists. The remaining 5,120 said they were agnostics. That is to say, 42% of those questioned were religious believers, and the rest were not.

Similar surveys are done from time to time, and at every survey the percentage of the religious goes down. It has been said that unbelievers are a growing minority, but after this year it must be said that, among secondary school pupils at least, they are a growing majority. Religious propaganda is evidently not enough to produce a religious population. For that you need draconian anti-blasphemy laws, or other sanctions, to terrify people into believing.

We are disappointed that anarchist propaganda is not more successful, but take heart from the fact that even the most persistent propaganda is getting less and less successful. People aged 13 and over do not believe statements just because they are instructed to believe. They are too mature for that.

## — HEALTH —

## Fighting for Life and Death

It has been an extraordinarily emotive month as far as health matters are concerned. A man dies after being ferried 200 miles around the country in search of a specialised hospital bed, such is the crisis in NHS management. A young girl is denied a last chance of chemotherapy treatment on the NHS on the grounds that the odds against success are too long to warrant the £75,000 state money. We are still shocked by these cases but we shouldn't be. They are the inevitable outcome of a system which is replacing care with cost effectiveness and patience with performance-related pay.

As with any insurance cover the company, i.e. the government, should be more explicit about who will get treatment, where and how many times.

On a London hospital ward last week a slice of toast caught alight inside a toaster. My friend, the ward manager, cleared the kitchen and extinguished the fire. She followed procedure by reporting the matter to the fire officer. The next day she received a memo from the fire officer telling her that in future even if the fire is out she must break the emergency glass and allow the fire brigade to come out. The cost of calling out the fire brigade is £1,500 – the cost of 150 cataract operations!

Technosceptics may be persuaded by new computer link-up programmes spreading throughout the USA and Europe that GPs can consult medical specialists about patients' complaints via a computer link in the surgeries. Specialist and patient meet face to screen image. These instant referrals are inexpensive and patients feel less anxious in

the GP's surgery and more confident to ask questions. Surgeons are now able to participate in operations across the miles as there is also a sensor which transmits vibrations from the patient's body to the consultant surgeon. A sort of laying-on of hands from afar. It could also have the added bonus of checking that consultants' NHS time is not being shared with their private patients. Like all technological breakthroughs, however, it is open to abuse. Stockbrokers are using these systems so that their screen presence can be felt on the stockmarket floor and dealing can be continued from holiday locations.

Whenever the subject of euthanasia raises its emotive head it is met by an onslaught of metaphors – the slippery slope, the open floodgates, the wrath of Hippocrates, going down the Dutch road, and the high moral ground.

The Modern Times film 'Death on Request' shown on BBC2 on Wednesday 15th March was preceded last week by Radio 4's 'The Moral Maze' where the arguments for and against euthanasia were debated. The well-known ethical and religious arguments were raised and Claire Rayner ended the programme with the memorable remark: "You may wish to share your autonomy with

your God. That's up to you, I do not."

The extremely moving 'Death on Request' had many memorable phrases and images. This poignant film traced the last three months of the life of Cees Van Wendel de Joode. The 62 year old Dutchman was terminally ill with motor neurone disease and had decided to end his life on his birthday with the help of his doctor and his wife Antoinette.

Viewers spent an hour in the company of these three people tenderly preparing for the administering of a lethal injection. It seemed strange at first to be waiting to watch someone die, but when the end came it seemed a natural, even joyful one. The doctor, Wilfred Van Oijen, injected his patient whilst saying "You will fall asleep now, you will not dream".

The day before he died Cees had told his wife: "I'm going to the Milky Way and the Big Dipper. That's where you'll find me."

According to a newspaper interview, Antoinette finds it hard to believe that thirteen million people have watched her husband die. "It's a shame really – Cees would have loved the idea of the Vatican getting upset about him choosing when he wanted to die."

The 'Late Show' discussion of 'Death on Request' spoils the impact of the film for me,

even though the arguments of the pro-euthanasia lobby easily outweighed the consideration of those against it. Ludovic Kennedy, a long-term campaigner for the use of regulated euthanasia, said he received at least twelve letters a month from distressed, mostly elderly people anxious to know what can be done to help them end their lives with dignity. An English anaesthetist working in the Netherlands stressed that euthanasia was already being administered in Britain but that no one was admitting it. In answer to the claim that abuse would take place if a pro-law was passed, he said that on the contrary, a strictly regulated service would help avoid this. Dutch doctors are obliged to contact the police each time they take a life on request.

It was distressing to see Dr Van Oijen moved to anger by opponents suggesting that he had manipulated his patients by not offering sufficient choices or that death had been suggested because palliative care in Holland is sub-standard. It was in fact the doctor's position which I found the most poignant, both in the film and on the 'Late Show'.

The fears and reservations expressed were important and need to be discussed publicly and often, but the attitudes of the anti-euthanasia contributors on this programme were either paternalistic, arrogant or authoritarian. For many people the security of euthanasia would make life much more joyful.

Silvia Edwards

## Glasgow Anarchist Group

We intend to have a conference soon with a view to inaugurating a Scottish Anarchist Federation. We are sending 'Aims and Principles' to groups and individuals throughout Scotland for their examination.

Should our efforts prove successful, we hope it may be instrumental in stimulating comrades south of the border into linking with us to establish an Anarchist Federation of Britain.

Glasgow Anarchist Group  
Aims and Principles

1. Our organisation in theory and practice promotes the destruction of all forms of capitalism and state oppression. The capitalist mode of production is based on the exploitation of labour. As the state machine protects this mode of production it cannot be utilised to achieve an equalitarian society. We therefore concentrate our methods of struggle by direct action in industry and in the community. Diverse forms of strike and protest are supported.

2. As the trade unions divide and sub-divide the workforce, an alternative form of organisation must be constructed. We advocate organisation in industry on a class basis embracing all workers: skilled, semi-skilled and non-skilled. Local autonomy prevails at the respective workplaces where committees are formed by the assemblage of the workforce. These committees are subject to instant recall.

To fortify our organisation, committees are federated locally, regionally and nationally in any given industry. This applies to all industries throughout.

Then all these national federations or networks are linked in a national confederation of labour. Here we have the maximum of flexibility allowing action to be taken at local, regional or national level as circumstances demand.

3. This situation also pertains in the community; we support rent strikes, consumer boycotts, anti-tax protests, protests against deterioration of transport services, health care and education. Community organisation is dove-tailed with industrial organisation.

These activities are defensive against the encroaching power of capital to become offensive by initiating the social general strike which would be the decisive battle and the prelude to the social revolution; the revolution of reconstruction.

4. Reconstruction means the abolition of wage slavery. Production is for use instead of profit. Division of labour is replaced by integration of

labour and education.

We negate remunerative differentials. As services rendered to the community cannot be precisely measured we advocate free access to the means of life. Modern technology and scientific advance makes this industrially feasible.

5. As war is the health of the state and capitalism, we are anti-militarists and reject all frontiers. The world should be our country.

6. We desire the equality of all regardless of gender, age, race, sexual orientation, disability or culture. We demand responsible freedom of expression.

7. We oppose the exploitation and mismanagement of natural resources. We seek to live in harmony with our environment and reject the exploitation of all creatures.

We celebrate our differences and what we each believe beyond this.

DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH NOT  
OUR WEAKNESS!

*N.B. These aims and principles were passed and accepted at the meeting which was arranged for this purpose on 4th December 1994, by the entire group at the main organisation meeting for the centre. All in attendance at the time agreed to this and we hope all find them acceptable as a lot of work was done by all concerned and the group have been working on this since the summer school last year.*

## Ernie Crosswell

Ernie Crosswell, who contributed letters to *Freedom* for a number of years, died at the end of February. He was a Spitfire pilot during World War Two, but became a pacifist at the time of the Suez crisis. Shortly afterwards he became an anarchist and from then on sent about two letters a day to the local and national papers. He was particularly elated when he managed to get one of the 'heavies' to print his views.

I have known Ernie over the last few years and, although I met him only once, we became close friends, keeping in touch by correspondence and telephone. He shared my particular brand of anarchism and I shall miss him very much.

Derrick A. Pike

Northern Anarchist Network  
Re-established

The municipal magnificence of Manchester Town Hall provided the unlikely setting for the meeting 'to re-establish the Northern Anarchist Network' on 18th February.

Almost forty comrades gathered in the city to discuss the way forward for the movement in the region, from Merseyside, Bradford, York, Sheffield, the North East, Stoke, Rotherham and many towns in between.

The agenda had been left open and this may go some way to explaining the difficulties that were experienced during the morning session, for in truth there were several personal agendas running simultaneously as various groups and individuals attempted to gain the meeting's approval for what they saw as the way ahead. Some wanted to link the NAN with attempts to re-establish the Anarchist Federation of Britain, some wanted to form an organisation of class struggle anarchists, some wanted to clearly define the aims and principles of the Network, whereas some were happy to leave these unspecified so as to allow the participation of the greatest number of people.

In fact this latter point proved, initially, to be a major block on progress. A number of comrades argued that it would be fruitless to form a network inclusive of anyone who simply declared themselves to be anarchists as this could include everyone from class war to anarcho-capitalists. What was needed was an organisation with a clearly defined set of principles which could provide a forum for all class struggle anarchists in the North. This idea was rejected by a majority in the meeting as being too narrow a position to adopt. It was felt that whilst it was true that there were people who used the term 'anarchist' to describe themselves whilst not generally assuming the stance taken by most within the movement, we should not and could not prescribe what was and was not anarchism. Added to this, it was highly unlikely that A-caps would want to be associated with the NAN.

It was argued that whilst there were, indeed, differences of opinion over the precise aims and methods we advocated, what we shared in common was our belief in freedom; that what we should be focusing on was not our differences but what united us. Anyone wishing to pursue a particular revolutionary method or take a particular ideological stance already had the opportunity to do so by associating with one of the existing groups. What was lacking was a network to draw all of these strands together in a non-sectarian way, giving rise to comradesly discourse and action. Whilst the morning's contributions had been genuine and passionate, the meeting broke for dinner with a fair

degree of pessimism as no clear way forward could be seen.

Perhaps it was the lunchtime refreshments, perhaps it was the bargains picked up at the Kate Sharpley Library stall at the bookfair across the road. Whatever the reason, the afternoon session got off to a much more productive start. In truth, the conversations that had taken place outside the restrictions of the committee table had sorted out one or two of the problems that had begun to clog the proceedings.

It was suggested that the network should not try to be too ambitious; perhaps the geographical area it was attempting to cover was too large. Much of the discussion that had taken place, quite spontaneously, during the dinner break was between comrades looking at how they could come together more productively in their own localities. This gave rise to the proposal that the network act as a point of contact and co-operation for smaller networks built along geographical and interest lines. This idea was debated with increasing enthusiasm, and expanded. It was felt that NAN could provide a forum for groups and individuals to become aware of each other's activities, to draw together people for conferences where issues could be debated, to give a focus for co-ordinated action and social events. It was felt that an important component in this would be a regular bulletin giving updates on activities and news, promoting future activities and providing reports from the different groups and networks.

These points were debated at length and it was decided that the Sheffield group, being well organised and having good facilities, accept responsibility for the production of the first bulletin, and also act as a secretariat for a period of time. It was suggested that this dual role could rotate through the various groups. The meeting closed on this positive note with a future meeting in Sheffield scheduled for early summer. At least two new networks are currently being established in Manchester and in Yorkshire.

This conference brought together anarchists from all across the northern region, some who have been around the movement for many years, some who were attending a meeting for the first time. It proved the opportunity to decide exactly what it was that we needed to further our aims, through consensus. And, in the best anarchist traditions, when our needs change so will the organisation. Hopefully everyone left feeling that something worthwhile had been achieved.

Nick W.

The Northern Anarchist Network can be contacted at PO Box 446, Sheffield S1 1NY.

## Food for Thought ... and Action!

Amendments to Freedom Press Bookshop stock and booklist.

### BACK IN STOCK

*Nationalism and Culture\** (Rocker) hardback only, £21.00 (a large number of copies also arrived with varying degrees of damage and will be priced accordingly for shop customers). *Deschooling Society* (Illich) new edition, £6.95. *Catch 22* (Heller) with new preface, £5.99. *East End Jewish Radicals* (Fishman), the long-awaited paperback edition with 21 photographs/illustrations, bibliography and index, 336 pages, £15.99.

### PRICE INCREASES

*Lobster* is now £2.50 as from issue 28; *Organise* is 60p as from issue 37.

### PRICE DECREASES (!)

*Green Anarchist* back down to 75p; *Squall* down to £1.20 (from £2), new design and format; *Kronstadt 1921* (Avrich) now down from £11.95 to – wait for it – £5.65, in a different edition; *Anarchist Studies* journal down to £6.00 from £6.95.

### NOTIFIED OUT OF PRINT

*East End 1888* (Fishman); *Marxism Versus Reality* (Moseley); *Nature's Web* (Marshall); *Manifesto of Libertarian Communism* (Fontenis); *New World Order* (Chomsky); *Introduction to 'My Disillusionment in Russia'* (Goldman); *Green Anarchism, its origins and influences*; *A Lie Too Far* (O'Hara); *On the Poverty of Student Life*; *Anarchism and Ireland*.

### OTHER AMENDMENTS

*The Anarchist Yearbook 1995\** is of course in stock and has been since the Anarchist Bookfair last year, but the booklist still shows the 1994 edition because the new one wasn't published until after we went to press. Still £1.50.

Titles distributed by Freedom Press Distributors (marked\*) are post free inland (add 15% for overseas orders). For other titles please add 10% towards postage and packing inland, 20% overseas. Cheques in sterling payable to FREEDOM PRESS please.

## Little Tenement on the Volga

*Little Tenement on the Volga*  
by C.S. Walton  
Claudia Press, £5.99

The official propaganda line on recent events in Russia is that the evil of Communism has finally been overthrown and the free market is about to usher in a new era of freedom and prosperity for the peoples of the former Soviet Union. Reality, of course, is very different. C.S. Walton has recently returned from Russia and in *Little Tenement on the Volga* she gives us a first-hand account of dreadful and worsening poverty. Now the Iron Curtain is down the industries of Russia have been exposed to the direct competition of the more advanced industries of the West. Unsurprisingly, they're going under, creating huge unemployment in a society that was already desperately poor by our standards. The old overcrowding in housing, the pollution caused by unaccountable industries, the unbelievable inefficiency in shops, are still

there, but now the health service is collapsing, crime is soaring (with ex-KGB men as Russia's new mafia), the shops are empty and Russia's centuries-old alcohol problem just makes everything worse.

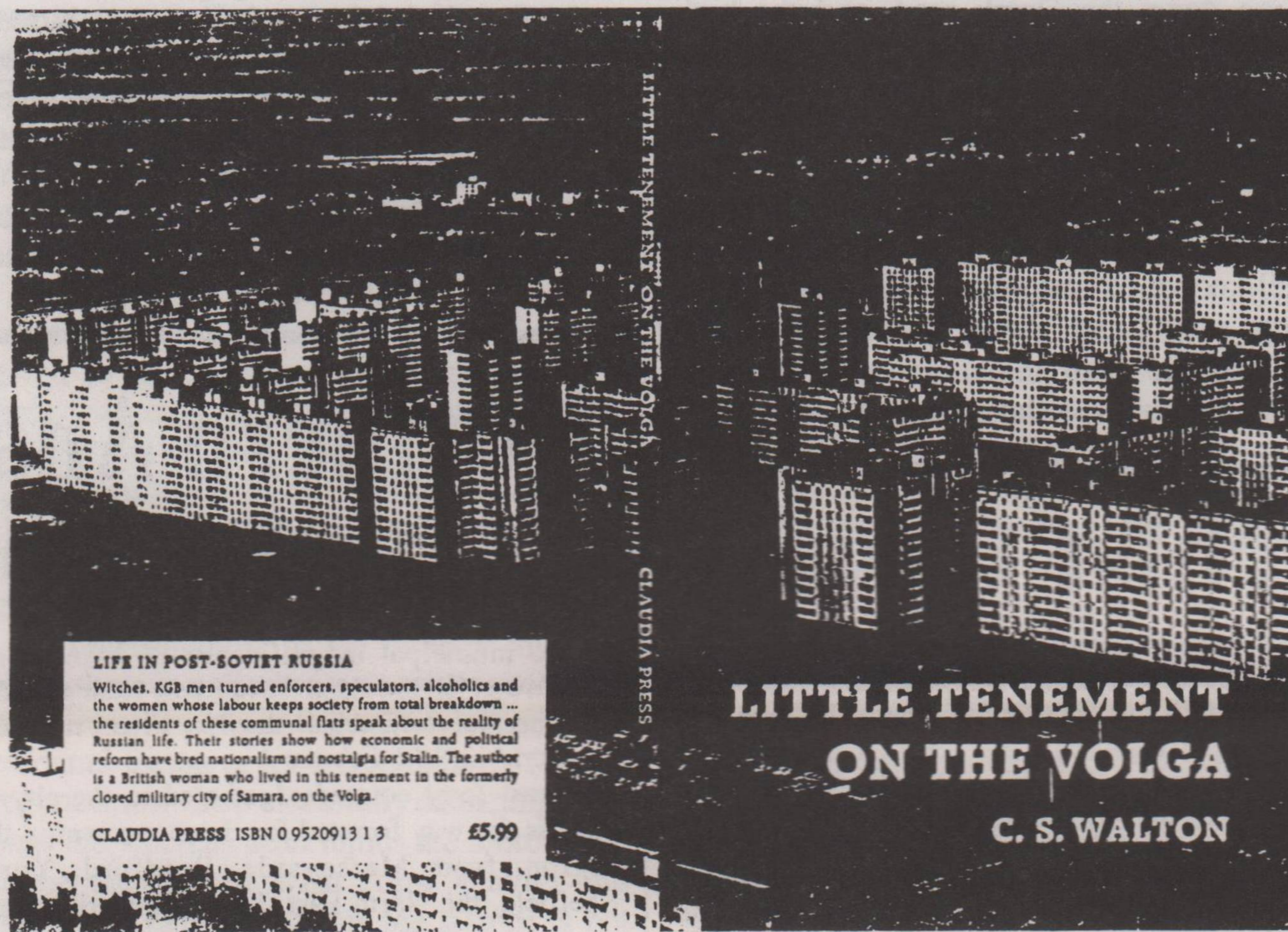
Walton reports that "in all my world travels I have never seen such determined self-obliteration through alcohol". Again, "alcoholism exacerbates economic chaos beyond measure. Delivery men are too drunk to carry bread into bakeries, professors cancel classes and repair men will not lift a finger until they are given a bottle. I have faced shop assistants too paralytic to serve. A medical student friend told me he had watched surgeons perform operations with shaking hands." On holidays hospitals are packed with the victims of drunken violence. Gorbachev may have caused his own downfall by trying to curb Russian drinking. Cutting back the state's own production of alcohol caused a deficit in government revenue in an already shaky financial situation. And the shortfall in

alcohol production was met by an increase in illegal distilling, some of which was poisonous and led to blindness and death.

Those familiar with Walton's earlier writings (*I, Claudia*, *Love Lies Bleeding* and *The Rebel's New Clothes*) will not be surprised to find her usual unorthodox stance on sexual politics. Most Russian women work and in addition they do all the housework for their alcoholic husbands (and sons). Although alcoholism is a problem for women as well as men, it is less of one for them and "in the long term, drinking is less damaging to general female health than the perpetual infantilism they nurture in their men. Female care allows men to make an art-form of irresponsibility" (blaming women, at least in part, for their predicament is typical of Walton's individualist viewpoint). One holiday day she watched drunken men being helped home. "Most passed in threes: a man in the middle, carried by his wife and mother, each trio a perfect representation of Russian family life."

The official propaganda line is to denounce the tortures, deportations and mass murders of Stalin's time as those of an almost uniquely evil regime, comparable only to Hitler's Germany. In truth the unique feature of the Communists' ultimately unsuccessful attempt to industrialise Russia was that the atrocities normally attendant on industrialisation were inflicted on the peoples of their own society. Most of the horrors of the West's industrialisation were visited on the unfortunate inhabitants of Africa, the Americas and elsewhere. Now the Communists' genocidal ambitions have come to nothing Russia is being returned to its former status as a third world country (or colony). Pity the poor Russians. In comparison with us they were badly off before. Now things are worse and getting worse still. Walton is gloomy about the future. "The inhabitants of both tenement and country are depressed and impoverished. Their fear kindles racist and authoritarian beliefs. The more scared people become the louder they clamour for strong state control. When they can no longer find refuge in the bottle or the stars, they will seek it under the centuries-old heel of despotism."

Mo



## LATE SLEAZE EXTRA!

— LITERATURE TO DEPRAVE AND CORRUPT, FROM FREEDOM PRESS BOOKSHOP —

Compiled as a very mild antidote to those sad characters and primitive puritans who have recently latched on to the anarchist movement and who can't tell the difference between the portrayal of an event – pleasant or not – and the real thing, and who seek to suppress in others the subconscious desires they despise in themselves.

*Fanny No. 2 – Voyeuse: women view sex*, edited and published by Carol Bennet and Cath Tate. A whole raft of women have drawn, written and published both this and the following seven comix, which take a woman's look at the humorous side of sex and sexuality. This one covers fantasies, peep shows, new men, lesbian sex, stand-up comics and a lot more. £2.50 (prude index 5).

*Fanny No. 3 – Immaculate Deception: dissenting women*, various contributors, Carol Bennet. A side-swipe at the established church and the religious institutions which hold women in such base regard. £2.50 (prude index 2).

*Fanny No. 4 – Night Fruits: prophetic women*, various contributors, Carol Bennet. "The flowering of women's thoughts on prophecy, coincidence, dreams and nightmares." £2.50 (prude index 1).

*Dyke's Delight No. 1*, various contributors, Carol Bennet. Comic strips by some of the best lesbian cartoonists around. Excellent anthology. £2.50 (prude index 4).

*Dyke's Delight No. 2*, various contributors, Carol Bennet. An equally good, if not better, sequel. £2.50 (prude index 4).

*Tüs and Clüs No. 3*, various contributors, Last Gasp. Women's comic strips from the late '70s and '80s including 'I was a Sex Junkie', 'First Lover', 'Monogamy', 'Wet Dreams' and more. £2.00 (prude index 6).

*Tüs and Clüs No. 5*, publishing details as above. Another collection of sexual nostalgia cartoons. £2.25 (prude index 5).

*Tüs and Clüs No. 6*, publishing details as above. Featuring 'Bedroom Politricks', 'The Fishy Facts of Life', 'More Than a Woman' and many others. £2.00 (prude index 6).

*Peter Pank* by Max, Knockabout Comics. A brilliant spoof on the Peter Pan and Wendy classic by the renowned Spanish comic strip artist. Features the famous duo, with Tinkerbell, a hippie princess, and Wendy in Punkland with magic flying powder, nymphomaniacs, Teddy Boys, S&M and sex all over the place. High quality production in full colour. A4, 61 pages, £4.95 (prude index 7).

*Some Thoughts on the Science of Onanism: being an address delivered before the members of the Stomach Club, Paris, 1879*, by Mark Twain, Chronos Publications. I kid you not, one Samuel Langhorne Clemens, alias Mark Twain, actually gave this talk on masturbation to the above-named society, but it remained unpublished – not surprising considering the American public's horror that Huckleberry Finn should 'sweat' rather than 'perspire' – until 1943. This reprint is an example of some of his 'unprintable' 'obscene' poems, ballads and essays which he delighted in writing for the amusement of his friends. My main

quibble with this otherwise entertaining, though slight, offering is that even with the inordinately large typeface the publisher has only managed to expand the actual text to five and a half pages, including footnotes, and he still manages to make at least one typographical error. Could he be going blind, one wonders? However, this is just about redeemed by a smart cover and some delightful illustrations, although the price is still somewhat imaginative. A5 pamphlet, 16 pages, £2.20 (prude index 8).

*Erotica for Beginners* by Errol Selkirk, Writers and Readers Publishing. Lifting up the camal skirts of history, this overview gets its hands down humanity's underwear. Creatively written and beautifully illustrated throughout, this is one to keep by the bed. 96 pages, £4.99 (prude index 5).

*Too Hot to Handle* by Fiona Pitt-Kethley, Peter Owen Publishers. Well known on the poetry scene for her often explicit and aggressive treatment of sexuality, the author here makes a witty, perceptive and satirical attack on the hypocrisy that surrounds contemporary attitudes to sex. About half this book consists of articles on sex written for various newspapers and magazines which subsequently turned them down, ostensibly for other reasons but often in fact because they were a bit too hot. The other half is made up of a one-act play, and her "notorious but hitherto unpublished love letters to the poet Hugo Williams". We are told that she once did a striptease on Hastings beach in front of an open-air gospel meeting, but the participants took not a blind bit of notice. Had their eyes on the heavens, I suppose. A great value hardback, originally £15.50 for 134 pages, our price £2.99,

postage as per original price (prude index 4).

*Brat Attack No. 5: the 'zine for leatherdykes and other bad girlz*, Deva. Another one of those grassroots, all-women productions which confound and terrify the pleasure *gauleiters* and self-appointed morals police who refuse to believe that any woman would even *want* to read what they call 'pornography' let alone write, draw and publish it (and if they do they're sick and need help). This little number from California is yet another piece of evidence that such people are wrong – they just can't bear the thought of anyone enjoying forms of pleasure which fall outside their tunnel vision. Get a life, you people – get out there and have some good consensual sex and loosen up a bit! Similar to *Queer with Class* (unavailable at the moment), *Brat* is packed with wild cartoons and illustrations and some excellent articles and is, dare I say it, even better, though in a different style. Good value too at 52 pages for £3.50 (prude index 11).

(The prude index: a measure out of 10 of the amount of gnashing of teeth and tearing of hair likely to be provoked among such unfortunates as the Cambridge 'Anarchist' Group, but which well-adjusted individuals can safely ignore.)

A <sup>z</sup> indicates items in very short supply – to be sure of getting one order immediately, and please list alternatives in case you're too late.

### Messalina

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**The Oxford Book of Money**  
edited by Kevin Jackson  
Oxford University Press, £17.99

**Passionate Attitudes: the English Decadence of the 1890s**  
by Mathew Sturgis  
Macmillan, £20.00

#### Drunken Boat

Art Rebellion Anarchy, New York (available in the bookshop soon – no orders yet please!)

A J. Sheppeck, the chairman of the LRT Pension Fund, took time off to drop me a brief note telling me that my investment in the hyped Barings Bank "is safe". This I know, that all the international economic experts involved in the fiasco in that comedy of errors known to the tabloids as Barings Bank are now putting their combined economic brilliance to coax my £43 a week industrial pension back from the warm sunshine of Singapore, and for that me, the women, orphans and aged vicars are grateful. Leaked information now informs me that the Dutch ING have taken over my bank, and the debt of £916,000,043, and I and the widow, the orphan and the vicar can now sleep three abed – immoral maybe, but economically safe until the next Gamblers Anonymous pushes the wrong key in the computer capitalism one-arm bandit.

One expected much from Jackson's book, but what one finds is an anthology on who said or wrote what about the history of Exchange and Mart as £ s p. A wit has written that the only thing that wealth cannot buy is poverty, and economically brilliant minds inform us that money is merely a convenient way of storing wealth or as a method of exchange, and God I wish that I had thought of that.

Freud in his *Character and Anal Eroticism* claimed that there is a link between gold and shitting, but years on the loo have never made me one wit the richer but just a few ounces lighter. Jackson's book is amusing and lightly entertaining while doing a Freudian in the Little Boy's Room, but money as coinage or paper has passed its sell-by date in human history. The rich never see it for they have that little piece of playing card size plastic. The middle class are hepped on the plastic card, while the superior working class now block the check-out exist of the supermarket with their tongue between the teeth cheque writing. Only the labouring class at the bottom of the

## £weat

social system count out the coinage and the paper money. Coinage and paper money will disappear from our social system as the computer syphons every transaction from pay to purchase to poverty into the banks, and pray God that it is not Barings.

There are those among us, unbelievers to a 'person', who brush all social and economic problems aside with the fundamentalist promise that come the 'anarchist society' everything will be a Candide, 'everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds', but I have this bleak vision of a society modelled on a bovine Swiss canton, PC to a woman and collective cheese making. For I quote a friend and believer that "there will be no money therefore no crime", but comrades, managerial international bureaucratic capitalism has already beaten him to the draw for the danger contained within a free meal computer capitalist coinless society and that ol' 'anarchist collective society' dominated as ever by the strongest personalities is the loss of individual freedom for good or evil men and women will shape their societies within the framework of the technology of the week and the role of the individuals who deem themselves anarchist is to guard and protect their own individual liberty within that society.

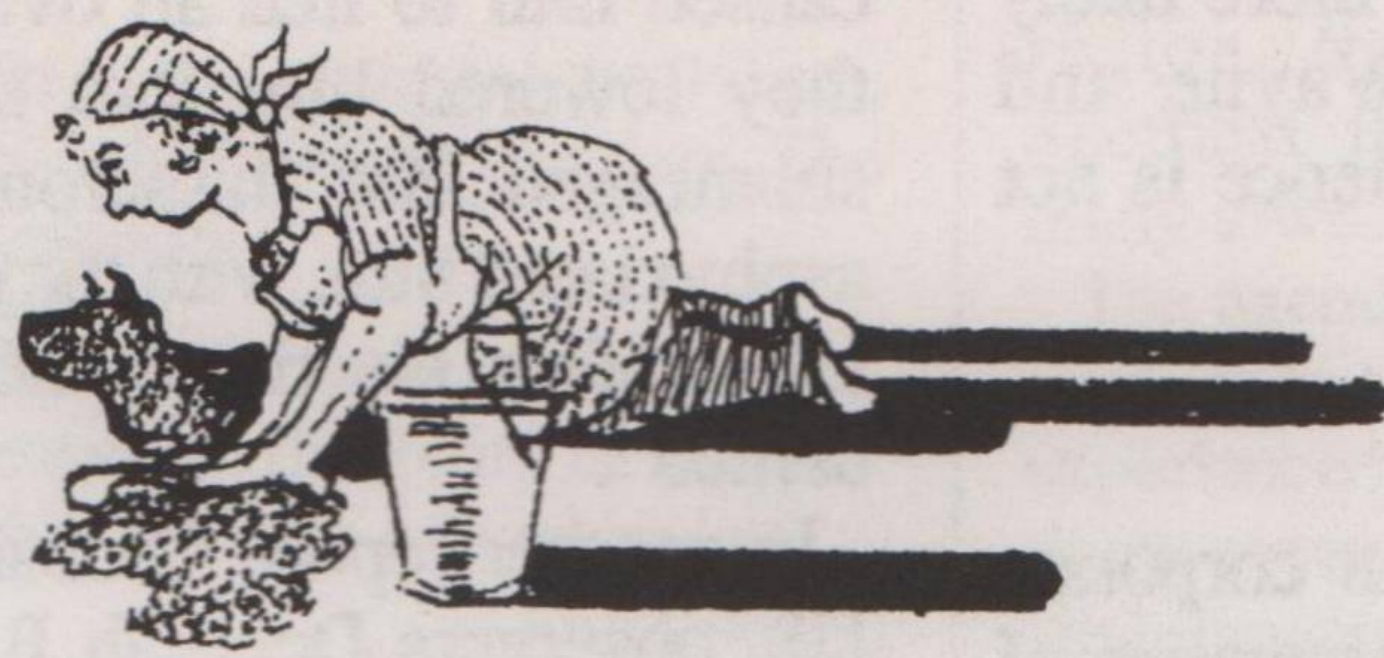
Jackson cannot provide a quote that has always bedevilled anarchist theoreticians as to who in that moneyless society will do the dirty work for in a monetary society coinage is the carrot and the stick and if there is no ideological carrot or stick then who will clean out the Freudian loo? The vocal computer class within the anarchist movement will

dismiss the question with a lordly wave of the pinky, stating that for one hour once a week, time permitting, they would dust their frontage pavement, but personal liberty and who will do the dirty work are two basic questions that understandably I can find no quote in Jackson's book or from the beer-table theoreticians working out their tax deductible house mortgages. Money may be the root of all evil, but it can also buy harmless and harmful pleasure, and the mild decadence of the fin de siècle 1890s that gave the Town and his shymaking frau the vapours was a style that could only perform with solid silver in the bank. They giggled and they mocked as they pretended to trivial minor evils. They claimed or did sip absinthe and puff hashish and wrote poems of death and dying women and "iron lilies in the Strand". Beardsley penned his marvellous erotic drawings and weepingly died pleading for their destruction, and only Swinburne seemed to have had the best of the deal by living in domesticated Putney, all roast beef and plum pudding and trips to the 'bondage, humiliation and whipping with sandwiches included in the price' brothel. It was a short historic period of exhibitionism wherein the French set the fashion with, as we all know, Gerard de Nerval swaying through the gardens of the Palais Royale dragging his lobster along by a sky blue ribbon. Victorian materialism had finally come into full and evil flower and as always those with a full belly who despised the dirty money and the nouveau riche and, as always with limited talent, sought to shock their own social strata.

Poor Oscar Wilde carried it to its limit by going beyond pouting his painted lips at his small world and by mixing with the labouring classes via their anus, and those he sought to shock destroyed him. For that period of shockable exhibitionism one had to have a solid conservative materialistic new wealth

rising class and those individuals with money, no talent and the leisure to be bored so get the lobster with the blue ribbon. This is 1995 and but a few years ago one could sip absinthe in a Soho pub, buy crack if one is fool enough to use it and dream up the next gormless 'exhibition' for the state or private 'art' galleries. But mind-destroying drugs are on public sale, necrophily and cannibalism are a thing of public entertainment and bondage and S&M brothels' addresses can be found in almost any telephone box, so decadence is no more for Marxist surplus values, profit and the lowering of the class barrier in relation to these matters has destroyed its naughty swing of the hips and the wagging of the finger that it once had. There was a mild renaissance of middle class decadence based on the same premise when the leisure, slightly talented, middle class fringe discovered Freud and the Id and the subconscious in place of William Morris fairies for surrealism took their fluttering place. Entertainingly it gave much pleasure with its subject matter but has become a small hiccup in the history of art. *Drunken Boat* is a magnificent magazine gift for the young with an exploring mind and a feel for the pleasures of creative arts. It is a pleasure to hold and to handle, but the foot soldiers of the 1920s, before and after, have become myths and legends that the work never justifies. It will end up in dealer's cellars along with William de Kooning's \$20,000,000 daub, but, comrades, if they gave a widow's mite of pleasure what else matters. What should concern us is the £916,000,043 that Barings Bank lost, for £43 of that was my pension. A wise man lying on the floor of the White Hart pub whispered to me as I knelt down beside him that one should never betray a friend or a cause except for money, and I still do not understand it.

Arthur Moyses



## Anarchism on local radio

The commercial London Radio station (successor to the old LBC) has a weekly live programme called 'If I were Prime Minister', in which representatives of various causes explain how they would like the country to be run. On Tuesday afternoon, 7th March, the programme was given to anarchism, and for twenty minutes Nicolas Walter was interviewed by Robbie Vincent about how anarchists would like the country to be run.

Once the inevitable confusion about the meaning of anarchy and the image of anarchism was settled, most of the time was spent on an elementary exposition of anarchist ideas about social and political organisation. There was little discussion of violence or non-violence, individualism or communism, or other matters at issue among anarchists, and the questioning was sympathetic at all times, even over the hard problem of crime. The final question was what would happen in an anarchist society to the Houses of Parliament, and the answer was that given by William Morris in *News from Nowhere* a century ago – it would be used as a Dung Market!

Without knowing the audience for such a local radio programme on a weekday afternoon, it is impossible to say how many people heard it, but at least some outsiders may have had an unexpected introduction to anarchism.

## Statewatching

**Turning up the Heat: MI5 after the Cold War**

by Larry O'Hara

Phoenix Press, 96 pages, £5.00\*

O'Hara's book looks at one aspect of the security services in detail and so bringing or trying to bring (no criticism intended) our knowledge of MI5 up to date. It includes chapters on Welsh and Scottish nationalism, the current state of play of Marxist and parallel groups and how the security services manipulate them, Ulster Loyalism and its links with Fascism and other areas. It also points out that although the security services are designed to deal with known phenomenon (such as *terrorists* and other *bad people*), in reality, in a changing world, just like any other bureaucratic organisation MI5 has to find a rationale for existence. It has to invent *demons* to fight and destroy, or perhaps not destroy for if they are destroyed there would be no reason for MI5's existence, would there? Contain might be a better word. Demons held in check by our wonderful security services.

Most statewatchers are aware of the in-fighting currently going on, at least at

\* Post free inland, please add 15% for overseas orders.

managerial level, between MI5 and MI6, MI5 and Special Branch and all the security services and the police. Further, as it is being axed and made redundant, the Customs & Excise have suddenly up-rated their operations too. Who's next and who will come out of the closet? Have you noted, at long last, the Special Branch have started investigating fascist groups instead of just the left and the IRA. Takes you back to 1939.

It was said of Adolf Hitler's Germany that he carefully failed to define the boundaries of power in the different security services of the Wehrmacht, SS, Gestapo, etc., to keep them so busily watching each other that none of them became too powerful and threatening to the leadership. The same thing appears to be going on in Britain and in the new Europe too except the struggle is bureaucratic and not imposed from the centre but some services are becoming very powerful by co-ordination with foreign states.

Of course O'Hara's book is speculative. A lot of what he says is a linkage of research and the content analysis of the media and inspired guesswork. But can I, as a sociologist, say here that if you wait around for the empirical research to be proved by scientific method, the approach of many 'hard' activists, you often

end up being given the runaround by the respondents. You have to be innovative, even is invention sometimes leads to inaccuracies. After all, you can amend these later as new knowledge becomes apparent. In any case those dealing with you are just as speculative about you as you are about them. Even with the big Kray-like computers and mathematical and statistical analysis they cannot stop the essential factor in anarchist action, monkeywrenching, being wide awake and aware of what's going on and attacking it in passing, as it were. Who needs cells? Where there's a will, you put the boot in. We are all soldiers in the fight. *They*, in turn, will not attack you for what you are or what you have done but what they think you are and what you might do even if it never occurred to you to do it. Agent provocateurs might suggest it.

O'Hara enables a little lateral thinking to come into play. You move into an arena of uncertainty. But can you be wrong here? Can you trust the state's answers? Is a put-down simply a cover-up? I suppose what I am saying here is we are within the spectrum of spook-watching journals like *Lobster* here. Detailed analyses of truth interlinked with uncertainty. Less who killed President Kennedy, but rather watch your back, who killed him does not matter, what matters is: is the state a serial killer and are you next?

Peter Neville

# CHIAPAS

## The biggest unreported story of 1995 (so far)

**The current situation in Chiapas and, by implication, Mexico should be of enormous interest to one and all. Yet apart from tittle-tattle and economic speculation there is a big silence in the establishment press. Why? You would have thought that human rights and torture would be of considerable interest to, at least the liberal, press. Not so and it's the usual story of power and influence. But where they are silent is where we begin this two part analysis of the Mexican crisis. Several questions will need asking but first let's find out what there is to be so quiet about...**

The answer to our first question is not hard to find. US corporate interest is too directly involved in the Mexican economy to allow interference/discussion/debate in what boils down to, given the realities of the Nafta, an issue of strategic importance. A recent article in *Counterpunch*,<sup>1</sup> based on an internal report prepared by Riordan Roett, director of Latin American Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, who is currently serving as an advisor for Chase Manhattan, spells out the reality of the situation: "In the name of investor confidence, a powerful US bank is calling on the Mexican government to crush the Zapatista insurgency in Chiapas". It is Chase Manhattan who are leading the Wall Street war party, specifically its Emerging Markets Group, which has billions at risk in Mexico.

The article quotes Chase's 13th January 'Political Update on Mexico', where it states bluntly: "The government will have to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and security policy". Chase (wrongly) believes that the December crash of the peso was prompted by the Zapatistas and is also believes (correctly) that any negotiated settlement to the conflict will have to come at the expense of foreign investors, whose security in Mexico was the fundamental purpose of the NAFTA agreement. Hence the need to finish off Subcommandante Marcos and his comrades.

Chase plays down the possibility of a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Chiapas, saying "it is difficult to imagine that the current environment will yield a peaceful solution". Zedillo may not be able to gain the confidence of the Zapatistas and their supporters because "the monetary crisis limits the resources available to the government for social and economic reforms". In other words, foreign investors should have first rights to the dwindling reserves at the Mexican treasury, which will leave almost nothing left to implement the anti-poverty programmes Zedillo has promised for Chiapas.

Indeed Zedillo turns out to be just the clown/puppet we would expect. It is US corporate interest who are calling for a bloodbath. They must regret having put their demands on paper in such an open manner ... or must they? An obedient press reports nothing.

Roett, in his paper, calls on the Mexican government to take a hard-nosed approach to all of this. "The Zedillo administration will, need to consider carefully whether or not to allow opposition victories if fairly won at the ballot box", he writes, and he has been lobbying fiercely in Washington to promote his scorched earth policy for Mexico. He has

1. Silverstein and Cockburn, 'Major US Bank Urges Zapatista Wipe-Out' in *Counterpunch* volume 2, number 3, 1st February 1995.

## IN BRIEF

At the start of the film 'Jaws' the mayor of a coastal village, fearful of damage to the tourist trade, rejects the advice of the police chief to prohibit swimming off the beach.

In the real-life tourist and fishing village of Greenport, Rhode Island, the mayor has organised a referendum on the police and the villagers have decided by a two-to-one majority to sack the entire police force.

This does not make them police free. The local town, Southold, now provides the village with a police service and charges for it. But the charge is only about a quarter of what it cost to maintain the village's own folksy force of nine drunks and layabouts.

Village taxes were collected in advance of the referendum and the abolition of the police has given the village council a surplus of \$525,000. They are using \$125,000 to build a board walk, \$100,000 to set up a home improvement loan scheme and have refunded \$300,000 to the 1,395 village taxpayers.

briefed Bob Dole, testified before the Senate Steering Committee, advised State Department officials and addressed hundreds of political and financial leaders at a 11th January seminar organised by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

To be fair to Chase several high-ranking US military officials have long been lobbying for war and, according to reports from Santiago and Buenos Aires, military advisors from Chile and Argentina – two of the most brutal of Latin America's armies – have been sent to train Mexican troops. Parallels exist with other situations in the area during the eighties and the usual story seems to be unfolding.

Nothing must be left to chance. The military solution has full US backing. US helicopters, given to the Mexican regime ostensibly to fight drug trafficking, have been sighted in the combat zone and there have also been eyewitness accounts of US military personnel slipping into the Chiapas militarized zone, during the government's February offensive, to act as 'observers'.

An unwillingness to get directly involved when there is a client regime willing to do the nasties is of course not new. This is merely the essential lesson of hard colonialism. The US regime knows how electorally damaging body bags are whereas dead injuns are more likely to be associated with John Wayne and popcorn. Given all of this the silence is not surprising.

### Human Rights Abuses

Bad enough it might be to do your corporate laundry in public but at least the vagaries of the economic system are reportable. Whilst the economic columnists argue about the peso and the respective responsibilities of Salinas and Zedillo, peasants are tortured and killed. Obviously not enough to make a news story in commercial terms but still the story is leaking out (and threatens to upset the doves within the American establishment if they can't be prevented from hearing it). It is the Internet which has, in recent weeks, been bringing people reports (many backed by NGOs like Doctors without Frontiers groups which will placate the doves – we're not dealing with 'professional radicals' here) of the various atrocities being carried out by the US-backed Mexican regime.<sup>2</sup>

As Mexican troops search the Lacandon jungle for the elusive Marcos, correspondents in San Cristobal de Las Casas send out reports put together by national and foreign observers of sackings and cases of torture, based on direct testimonies, in the area affecting indigenous people in more than thirty communities in the municipalities of Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, and Altamirano. During the past few weeks, twelve organisations of medical aid, legislators, church members and human rights activists from Mexico, United States, France, Spain, Italy and Germany, have been dedicated to visiting diverse civilian communities, collecting testimonies of the actions of the military forces during their movement through the area as they established a blockade that was impeding the arrival of food and

2. Information sent by The Anarchives, tao@asynca030.nist.gov

medicine to some 20,000 indigenous refugees.

On 12th February for example, the same day that the Army allowed observers and reporters to enter the area and three days after having initiated its action, the testimony of Lorenzo Hernandez Velazquez was collected. He was detained arbitrarily by members of the Federal Judicial Police, and was taken by helicopter from the Tani Perla community, in the municipality of Ocosingo, without any arrest warrant. This same day, the observers received reports regarding the situation in the communities of San Miguel, La Garrucha and Lazaro Cardenas, in the municipalities of Ocosingo and Altamirano. Homes were raided; properties, food and clothes destroyed; as well the Army refused to give water to those who decided to remain in their homes. Since 13th February, many more testimonies have been received of cases of torture of indigenous people carried out by members of the Federal Army at the military checkpoint in Chiapas, in the municipality of Las Margaritas.

According to one report in one case a man "was blindfolded, beaten, and dragged about 200 metres. They beat him on the head; they tried to strangle him with their hands; he was also kicked in the stomach. Afterwards they put him in a bag that contained a substance that caused him to itch all over his body. Later, they lowered him into the river, and they submerged him numerous times until they asphyxiated him, with the goal of getting (him to) confess his tie to the EZLN, which he denied".

In another report, Global Exchange and the US, observers Deborah Billings and Tequila Minski offered other testimonies from collective farms and ranches in Ocosingo and similar cases were reported in the La Peninsula, California, Xante, Las Tacitas and Avellanal ranches. In the San Antonio La

Victoria collective farm they said that on 20th February, the Army took a young man away bound from the La Union collective farm. Domingo Hernandez had his hands tied behind his back. When the Army got to the collective farm, they made him point out the houses of the leaders of the collective farm's organisation. The soldiers carried off the generators from the homes – the only sources of electricity – and they gave them to the PRI members, arguing that this organisation was useless because it was against the government and that they should ally themselves with the PRI. The Global Exchange representative presented another case from the La Union collective farm where a campesino, 53 years old, Aniceto Hernandez, was "tortured by the Federal Army" accusing him of being a Zapatista.

There are many, many more such reports, most more distressing than those we mention above in so far as they generally end with a corpse. We will spare you the details. You've already had more than *The Guardian* will give you. Where will all this end?

Standing back somewhat we can see that the position of the EZLN here is crucial. Simply from a military viewpoint their situation is not viable. Although there are reports of their holding some weaponry in the way of mortars they lack any military backing and resemble a traditional peasant army unable to match the sophistication of the Mexicans with US backing and Argentinian training. Politically their position is stronger with widespread support among the local population. This however is in some respects worrying. The political objectives of the EZLN are hard to see. Ostensibly they seem to want to reach a negotiated settlement with the Mexican regime. This is dangerous for several reasons.

Although, as we have argued, Zedillo is in no position to make any agreements, any reformist attempt to solve the problems faced by the people of the area within the limits of the economics of the NAFTA are bound to fail. True, to start with, the EZLN made clear their opposition to the prevailing spirit of integration, but this does not come through clearly in more recent pronouncements. Whilst the turbulence caused by the actions of this grouping are to be welcomed their longer-term political aspirations must be considered with some suspicion. Given such an analysis can we conceive of a situation which will be more conducive to a positive outcome? Within it what will be the role of groupings like the EZLN and what are the implications for the region in general?

*to be continued ...*

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