NEWS & VIEWS

The "New" Emancipation

Hopefully, by the time you read this you will have already been overwhelmed by the "new" Emancipation. During the past several weeks, we have collectively redesigned the layout and developed a set of regular columns: **News and Views; Shoptalk;** and **Anarchist History Notes.** We plan to continue to have frequent columns on Ecology and on Anarcha-Feminism . . . as well as Book Reviews and, of course, whatever else happens to come up.

We will be aiming to achieve the highest possible flexibility, while still covering certain topics regularly. Sam Dolgoff plans to write a regular column on labor issues, **Shoptalk.** (See page 9) **Anarchist History Notes** will have a variety of writers, including Elaine Leeder who sent in this month's note on Rose Pesotta. (See page 3). **News and Views** is where you, the reader, can be heard. Let us know what you Anarchs out there are up to and what you're thinking.

Emancipation is published to provide a forum for anarchist ideas. We get a lot of our money and support from AAA, but we are not "the organ" of the Association. That is why you will see articles that disagree with each other in the same or different issues. And this is why we would like to receive your submissions. (Please send them typed double-spaced!) We do edit when that appears necessary, but we try to let the author know before we go to press. (Readers should note that articles in **Emancipation** represent the views of the author, not AAA or the **Emancipation** collective unless so stated.)

We hope that in the next issue this space will be filled with your views.

Anarchy in Action

This time last year, Mayor Barry (despite abundant and frequently presented information regarding the tragedies hitting our growing numbers of homeless people) was still telling us that the 750 shelter beds for homeless people in Washington were sufficient. Fortunately, there are those who (from their work with the homeless) knew better and these knowledgable ones have not been idle. The Christmas Eve freeze came and all of the space made available were full; but volunteers (sparked by the Community for Creative Non-Violence) were able to respond to the emergency and, on a days' notice, shelter an additional 439 people, a number that continues to grow as the homeless learn where shelter is available. Seven people had already died of exposure and neglect.

How many of the sheltered 439 would be dead in the ice and snow by now if we had been content to wait for our "leaders" to act?

Mr. Barry, Mr. Reagan: Why were you willing to stand by and let these people die? And, meanwhile, dear Reader, ask yourself; If our present ways of governing ourselves allow the Barrys and Reagans to make decisions involving our survival, then what changes must we make in our ways of governing? And how are we going to most quickly bring those changes about?

Update on Resistance

Update: From a letter dated 12/31/83 from Rechaza, Lorede Chingatu who is a prisoner in Marion, we learn that conditions there have even worsened, but that resistance has also increased; one-third of the population at Marion is now on a hunger strike. Standing Deer, Leonard Peltier, and Rechaza will continue to a deathfast. Rechaza points out that the authorities can interfere with a hunger strike through force-feeding. But as a ritual within the concept of Lakota religion, a deathfast should be allowed -- if the prison authorities choose to abide by the First Amendment to their Constitution. A deathfast, Rechaza explains, "is what an older Indian does when he or she leaves the tribe to go somewhere and die in order to spare the tribe a burden during times of trial and hardship." Sacred tradition, he continues, "requires of us to return to the heart of the creator before we become worms in Greed's Iron House or before we lose our communion with the creator."

Report on the A-Fest

Music, films, speakers, dancing, and videos mixed with camaraderie on New York's lower E. side on New Year's eve. Old aquaintances were renewed and new ones made during the course of the A-Fest celebration, which lasted all weekend. In the words of one of our A-friends from Philadelphia, "I stayed in NYC for around 4 days and started a lot of new relationships with great people. Hopefully, some subversive activity will come out of it." Several D.C. and Philly anarchs spent a stimulating and fun time in the wee hours of the 1st of January talking to a group of libertarian comrades who'd recently arrived from Alaska.

To top it all off, our New York comrades who organized the A-Fest were able to donate fifty dollars to AAA's Anarchist Project Fund from the money collected.

HISTORY NOTES

ROSE PESOTTA (1896-1965). Russian-Jewish labor organizer and anarchist. Born in the Ukraine, she was active in radical underground circles. After coming to the U.S. in 1913, she became a dressmaker. She was active in Local 22 of the ILGWU and soon became a paid organizer. In 1934, she was elected the first woman vice president of the union. Her organizing activities took her to Puerto Rico, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Montreal, Boston, and in 1936 she was CIO organizer for the Akron and Flint Rubber workers' strikes. In her labor work she was arrested, harassed and beaten. She was a flamboyant and articulate speaker as well as a tireless activist. Having worked for the Sacco and Vanzetti defense committee, she corresponded and visited with them in prison. She was a personal friend of Emma Goldman's and worked to bring her to the U.S. just prior to Goldman's death. Other anarchist activities included writing for Road to Freedom, organizing summer camps for anarchists, fund raising for Spanish refugees and political defense work. After a colorful career as a labor organizer, she returned to the sewing machine and wrote two autobiographies, Bread Upon the Waters and Days of our Lives, about her background and her labor activities. As one of her last political acts, she marched with her union contingent in the Martin Luther King Washington demonstration in 1963. Wherever she worked she fought male domination and centrist tendencies and was called "The Gentle General."

Elaine Leeder is currently working on a full-length biography of Rose Pesotta. She teaches at Ithaca (NY) College and is also co-editing an anthology of the writings of contemporary anarchist feminist women, Emma's Daughters.

El Salvador

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*defended not only the working conditions and living standards of El Salvador's teachers but also the human rights and trade union rights of all Salvadorans. "Since 1979, 264 ANDES activists have been killed. Between January, 1980 and January, 1982, at least one teacher was assassinated every month for 25 consecutive months. . . . Incredibly, within this atmosphere of terror and death, ANDES still attempts to function as a union. ANDES remains a certified legal organization . . . ANDES holds membership meetings and conventions, but the meeting places are never advertised or published—for fear of raids by the security forces in uniform or attacks by civilian-clothed Death Squad thugs."**

*According to the Special Fact Finding Report by the National Labor Committee in support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador.

This begins to get more interesting - the presidents of teachers' locals dabbling in radical politics? And these people are definitely not siding with the "duly elected" government of El Salvador.

The evening begins with some fine singing by a group "El Jicaro" and we join for a hearty rendition of "Solidary Forever" with the chorus in Spanish and additional verse dedicated to Sister Rivera and the teachers' struggle in El Salvador.

Ms. Rivera, ably assisted by a fluent translator, delivers a stirring and informative speech, describing vividly her own experiences, the hearing of which leaves us all shaken. To hear of torture directly from the tortured is powerfully moving. She makes a strong statement on the impossibility of ANDES supporting "free" elections in El Salvador. The choice she tells us is nonexistent, as the candidates are all from the right.

She pleads for support from the teachers' locals present to help the families of the assassinated teacher activists and for support of ANDES in literacy campaigns in El Salvador. She also bluntly criticizes the mass media and the Kissinger Commission for the misinformation the people of the U.S. receive on events in El Salvador.

All join in standing applause for Marta Rivera: she has spoken with such directness and determination. We are saluting a brave woman. The fact that she is lucky to be alive reminds us of the seriousness of U.S. involvement in the horror of El Salvador.

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