

the Confederates who took up arms against what they perceived as tyranny understood that it is force, and not discussion or votes or laws, that ultimately determines the courses in which political power runs, and the risk they assumed when they took up arms was no larger than what they would have faced had they remained peaceful.

What we face today is far more re-

pressive, far more dangerous, and far more entrenched than the oppressors of the late 18th and mid-19th centuries, and we have far more reason to take up arms against the oppressor and its agents than they did. There can be little question today about the ethical legitimacy of using violence in defense of a way of life that the rulers of the nation do nothing to protect and much to destroy and

about which they no longer care or can be made to care through the normal processes of politics and law. It is probably counterproductive now to start shooting federal judges, bureaucrats, and politicians who lie their way from one election to another, but it's certainly not too early to start making a little list and letting them know who's on it.

## CORCYRA MEMORANDA

*"Words changed their ordinary meanings and were construed in new senses. Reckless daring passed for the courage of a loyal partisan, far-sighted hesitation was the excuse of a coward, moderation was the pretext of the unmanly, the power to see all sides of a question was complete inability to act. Impulsive rashness was held the mark of a man, caution in conspiracy was a specious excuse for avoiding action."*

—Thucydides

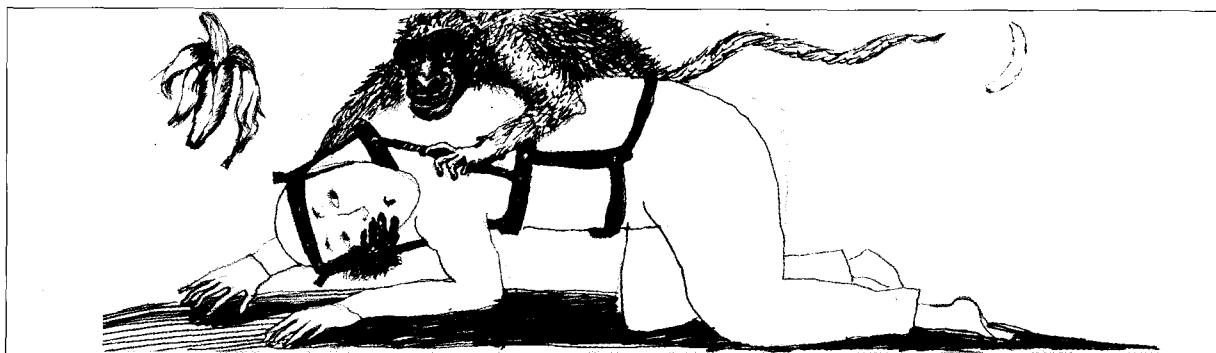
**Homophobe:** a nonce-word used to designate a person who disagrees with the homosexual rights agenda. According to folk etymology, the "word" would be a compound of Latin *homo* (man) and Greek *phobos* (fear), but who in the world is afraid of Virginia Woolf? "Homophobe" is constructed on the analogy of "homosexual," which is interpreted by the uneducated as "having sexual feelings toward men." This misinterpretation gives rise to the common pairing of "lesbians and homosexuals" on the assumption that homosexual ought properly to be applied to males.

All of this is nonsense, of course. "Homosexual" is an unnecessary and illiterate hybrid of Greek *homos* (like or same) and Latin *sexus* (gender) and given the more or less impossible meaning of "having sexual feelings toward a member of the same sex." According to the OED supplement, this "irregular" formation entered English in 1892 by way of a translation of Kraft-Ebbing. As for "homophobe," if this coinage had any meaning whatsoever, it would refer to persons with an inordinate fear of persons like themselves.

Even if one wished to reinterpret the first element of "homosexual" as a reference to Latin *homo*, it would be necessary to grapple with the unpleasant fact that *homo* does not mean, as any schoolboy knows, man as opposed to woman (in Latin that meaning is covered by *vir*), but man as opposed to beast. On this understanding, among homosexuals would be included everyone but bestialists and fetishists.

The potted etymologies and strained interpretations ("daffynitions" in the language of humor magazines) of all words relating to same-sex eroticism are a perfect illustration of the rule that obfuscatory language is the product of dishonesty. English has perfectly good words to describe the acts of males who confound the excretory and the reproductive systems, but "buggery" and "sodomy" are too graphic, too honest; they remind the hearer all too well of the facts of the matter. Recourse is had to the dog Latin variations on "the love that dare not speak its name." If intimate matters or sexual identity must be discussed at all in public, some colorless term like "homophilia" or "homocroticism" might be adopted out of politeness to homophiles and a general sense of decorum. But words like "gay" and "homophobe"—so many verbal bullets being shot at "straight society"—only invite contempt.

—Thomas Fleming



Anna Myeck-Wodecki

## Why Monkeys Get Fat in Banana Republics

by Thomas Fleming

Much to no one's surprise, Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon was elected President of Mexico this past August. There were the usual cries of foul both from the opposition parties and from citizens' groups monitoring the election: insufficient ballots were provided to certain polling places where the opposition was strong, so it was said, and government employees were brought in early to exhaust the supply; secrecy was inadequate, a serious problem in a country where a majority of the population receives its income from the government. There were, in addition, the usual reports of intimidation and ballot-stuffing, but these were mild and scattered cases that did little to dim the luster of the ruling party's victory. Zedillo's handsome lead in the preelection polls was confirmed by the results, and that was enough to convince the *New York Times* that the election—"the cleanest on record for Mexico"—was another step in that nation's progress toward North American democracy.

A prudent man with any knowledge of politics would conclude just the opposite. That a party in power for 65 years, and one so manifestly corrupt as the Institutional Revolutionary Party, should win another landslide victory is evidence of nothing more than the plain fact that most Mexicans are still not ready for self-government. Mexico is, as much as the old U.S.S.R., a party state, and the fact that there are opposition parties means exactly nothing. In communist Poland, the communists tolerated, even encouraged opposition parties because—as one of the leaders of the Liberals once told me—such parties were useful window-dressing for the regime. But, like dummies in the window, they could only wear the uniform or strike the proper attitude. They could do nothing.

What a curious name, the Institutional Revolutionary Party. On the logic of the cliché that a successful revolution is betrayed the moment it succeeds, one would have thought

that to institutionalize a revolution was to betray it. Revolutions are meant to break up the logjam of decadent institutions, and the moment that revolutionary leaders begin to consolidate their principles, they have created a regime as corrupt or even more corrupt than its predecessor. Mao knew this very well and called in the unlettered students and peasants to wage unceasing war upon the intellectuals and technocrats who enjoyed all their privileges in the name of the people. (Zedillo was trained in economics at Yale.) As frightening and destructive as Mao's cultural revolution must have been, it was a very sensible, even necessary device to prevent the revolution from becoming institutionalized.

The enemies of the revolution always come from the ranks of its leadership. Robespierre knew this, in putting down the only slightly less sanguinary Girondists, who seemed more disposed to exercise power by governing than by stoking the flames of revolution; so did Hitler, when he rounded up Ernst Röhm and his squads of jackbooted Ganymedes. (Hitler's puritanism obviously contributed to his distaste for Röhm, but the effect of his coup was to eliminate an entrenched source of potential opposition.)

Stalin, among the most Machiavellian of modern politicians, systematically executed or interned nearly every major Bolshevik leader he could lay his hands on. Like Hitler, Stalin had complex motives; his personal hatred of Jews and foreigners obviously rang a bell with the Russian people, and it would be a mistake to minimize Stalin's (or Hitler's) megalomania. But the effect of the purges and the terrors was to delay the bureaucratic ossification that set in after Stalin's death. I remember reading a Russian defector's explanation of Gorbachev. Here was a man who had failed at everything, but on the strength of personal charm and the party's old-boy network he made his way to the top, where he proceeded to bungle the