

THE CONTINUING CRISIS



•January, and neither the President's State of the Union Message nor his budget went over very well, the Liberals finding both too parsimonious, the conservatives finding them too spendthrift and timorous. Moreover, the news stories issuing from our nation's capital became ever more difficult to square with observable reality. Reagan the miser! Reagan the radical tax cutter! Reagan the warmonger! Actually, our federal government is now spending billions more than were targeted for it by the Reagan Administration. The fabled tax cuts have yet to affect us significantly. The Republic is at peace. The pundits who have created the concern over a bellicose, niggardly, radical Reagan Administration are ideologues whose brains have been fully stocked, shelf after shelf, cranny, and nook, by the *Zeitgeist*—they are panicked by illusions.

•Historians may someday mark the first month of 1983 as the starting point for the rise of yet another group of aggrieved Americans, to wit: the transsexuals. The frequency of their appearances in the news this month suggests that increasing numbers of Americans are coming out of the closet and onto the butcher block; in view of Americans' historic restlessness, transsexuality could prove to be a boon for kinky surgeons.

•In New York, Nassau County police officer Jennifer McCormick, assigned to a desk job since her sex change, has announced her intention to resume patrol duty, and the *Washington Post* reports that police officer Bonnie Davenport, formerly a male patrolman, has been assigned to a midnight patrol with officer Bobby Almstead, the Washington, D.C. Police Department's only avowed homosexual. Dubbed by less enlightened colleagues as "the fruit-cakes," Bobby and Bonnie specialize in domestic feuds; and though some of their colleagues snicker and even

gag, they have gained laudations from their supervisor, Sergeant Frank Weinsheimer, who apprised the *Post* that his nocturnal sleuths run a neat little patrol car and are "more patient, more understanding, more thorough" than the beefy, macho types. "They bring a special quality to the job," Sergeant Weinsheimer opined, a quality that used to be *malum prohibitum*.

•Transsexuals were active in court, too. On January 12 Orange County Superior Court Judge James F. Judge presided over the adoption proceedings wherein 45-year-old Joanna Clark, who underwent a sex change in 1975, adopted as her daughter Anna Marie Mostyn, 25. Miss Mostyn's anatomical redecorating has at this point been modest. Hormone treatment has coaxed from her a pert little bustline; however, she has as yet been unable to undergo the requisite surgery to turn her into a Venus, and thus she is one of the few United States citizens whose anatomy actually conforms to the gender guidelines of our federal government.

•Judge Judge's courtroom was a scene of jubilation: "I'm a mother! I'm so happy," enthused Mrs. Clark. "It's the happiest day of my life." But hold! Obstacles remain. Miss Mostyn is serving a fifteen-year prison sentence for knocking off a bank; and she languishes in the California Medical Facility in Vacaville, held by confused officials who know not where to place her. Miss Mostyn's indefatigable lawyer, Miss Amanda Skolan, has filed a \$3.25 million lawsuit against the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, alleging that to send such a comely prisoner to a male hoosegow would condemn her to ravishment and a life of moral compromise. The case looms as one of the momentous Constitutional battles of the century, especially if it comes to the attention of an enlightened jurist such as the Hon. J. Skelly Wright.

•At this point Miss Mostyn's foster

mother is sanguine. "The bottom line," she reported to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "is that Anna Marie is now the daughter I always wanted, the focal point in my life. I'm looking forward to sitting in a church pew someday and watching her walk down the aisle. . . . Normalcy in her life, that's all I want for her." A touching story, that, and who doubts that there now stand over a thousand head of holy clerics eager to preside over such a marriage ceremony. But the Reagan madness is still upon us. In Madison, Wisconsin, the Know-Nothing citizenry is in rebellion over the decision by the city's Welfare Appeals Committee to pay for the \$25,000 sex-change operation of an unidentified 33-year-old man who insists that unless the operation is paid for he will commit suicide, and in Miami mossbacks are incensed that transsexuals in an adult-education class are using the female comfort station in a local grammar school—what about their God-given right to void?

•On January 5, President Reagan announced he was nominating Elizabeth H. Dole to be Secretary of Transportation, and seven days later he announced the nomination of Margaret Heckler as Secretary of Health and Human Services. At this rate, women will hold every Cabinet post in the federal government by March 30, yet feminists remain unappeased. Mr. Nikolai V. Podgorny, former president of the USSR, and Mr. Meyer Lansky, a financial consultant for the Cosa Nostra, both died of natural causes. Mr. Paul Bryant, the football coach of the University of Alabama, suffered a fatal heart attack, and Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker, the Hamster of the Senate, announced retirement plans that were characteristically vague and absurd.

•In Boston, a tough law-and-order meter maid showed how effective government can be when she ticketed

a parked car in which a corpse slumped rather obdurately against the steering wheel. In Yonkers, New York, Mr. Edward Tondrik, who had been attracting curiosity for months by his enormous purchases of room deodorizer, was arrested when police found the mummified remains of his 86-year-old mother lying peacefully on her bed where she had expired over ten months ago. Mr. Larry Walters, the 33-year-old aeronautical genius who re-designed a \$100 Sears aluminum lawn chair so that it would fly at altitudes of 15,000 feet, has been fined \$4,000 by the FAA for operating an aircraft for which there is no "airworthiness certificate" and various other infractions. Mr. Walters's lawn chair was assisted in its epic flight by 45 helium balloons, and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the whole thing was funded by the Synthetic Fuels Corporation.

•What came as reassuring news to many in South Carolina has caused widespread indignation amongst feminists. Apparently those talking dolls that appeared in South Carolina stores at Christmastime with the recorded message "Kill Mommy" were actually meant for Florida's Hispanic market and their message was "Quiero Mommy," meaning "I want mommy"—not exactly a gender-neutral message, eh? Editors at the *Progressive* were relieved to hear that the Stanford University English Department's award for execrable prose will be based only on the worst opening sentence of a novel. Three West German doctors were convicted of removing heart pacemakers from the dead and re-using them. And a relative of the Rev. Ayatollah Rhuollah Khomeini has been jugged in Düsseldorf, West Germany on charges of merchandising vibrant Moslem culture still somewhat frowned upon in the decadent West.

—RET



Richard Grenier

THE GREATEST PEACE MOVEMENT OF THEM ALL

Remember Brest-Litovsk (the Russians do).

Daily, sometimes hourly, Lenin addressed the crowds of thousands from a raised platform in front of the palace of Kshesinskaya, the celebrated ballet dancer. Kerensky, minister for war of the Provisional Government which had succeeded the Czar, was given to flights of frenzied oratory, impassioned exhortations to continue the war against Germany to save the new social democracy. But Lenin, leader of a contending faction, was stolid, down to earth, his hands buried in the side pockets of an old blue jacket. Again and again, he asked one question of the crowds: "What do you get from the war?" then answered it himself: "Wounds, suffering, hunger, and death." The crowds roared their approval. Russia, Lenin proclaimed, wanted peace.

It was the greatest peace movement in modern history. We have had others since. During the rise of Hitler in the thirties many in the Western democracies spoke in the name of "peace," enunciating attitudes of appeasement which discredited the word as a slogan for decades to come. But during the Vietnam war, "peace" became respectable again, although in the smug ignorance of history and the semantic muddle of the times it was rarely clear whether the speakers were pure pacifists (would capitulate in any war), selective pacifists (only in some), or merely people who felt war was just awful (these were the intellectual dregs as no admirer of the martial virtues from Homer on down has ever said war was a garden of delight).

This grand and glorious jumble of ethical schools has now taken the field again in the current nuclear weapons debate, with Quakers, Catholic bishops, Communists (with placards to prove it), and concerned citizens for a humane water-supply locking

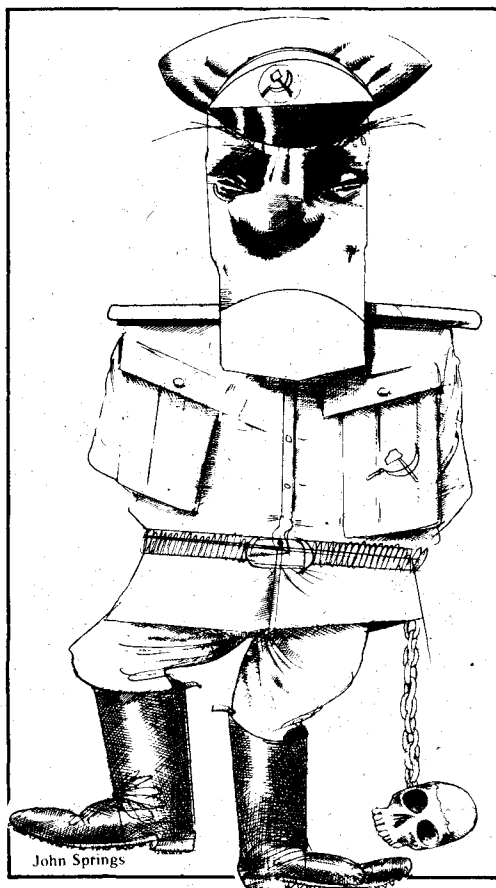
arms happily in their common struggle against nuclear war. The bishops, who in the draft of a pastoral letter debated at their recent council in Washington seem to be veering sharply toward the pure pacifist position, are of course right in saying that nuclear weapons have given war an entirely new and alarming scale, making it far harder to satisfy the Church's criteria for a just war: "discrimination" and "proportion."

But since I have always believed, with George Orwell, that to abjure violence is a luxury which a delicate few enjoy only because others stand ready to do violence in their behalf, I wonder whether even these bishops are prepared to live in the world to which the total repudiation of deterrence would lead. And since the peace movement has drawn out such an

ecstatic crowd of unsophisticated new supporters, it is worth recalling the vicissitudes and fate of earlier peace movements, particularly the most spectacular of them all, the forgotten Russian peace movement of 1917. Here, too, finicky ethical distinctions were lost. Russia, its Czar already overthrown and the fabric of its society grievously rent, was entering the fourth year of a terrible, "unpopular" war.

Lenin's words were heard. Vast antiwar demonstrations filled the streets of Petrograd, clashing bloodily with police and army. At the front, working-class Bolshevik agents infiltrated the army in massive numbers. *Why should they fight this war for the landlords and the factory owners?* Russian troops were crossing no man's land with bottles of vodka to fraternize with the Germans, a movement strongly supported by the German High Command—although officially condemned so as not to compromise it. When the Russian Provisional Government attempted its last offensive against the Germans in July 1917, regiment after regiment mutinied and murdered its officers. The army was now in a state of anarchy. Word reached the front that peasants were seizing the lands of the landlords back home, and peasant-soldiers threw down their arms and deserted by the hundreds of thousands.

All of Russia was in a state of anarchy. In Petrograd, mobs rioted, looted, there were two aborted coups. Russia seemed to have two governments, the Provisional Government of which Kerensky was now prime minister, and the Petrograd Soviet, each issuing contradictory proclamations. The Czar's regime had been weak and inefficient, but the present situation was simple chaos. It has been said that the Bolsheviks didn't even need to seize power, they just picked it up. And the constant drum roll was: *Peace! Peace! Peace!* When Kerensky fled the Winter Palace and Lenin claimed supreme power, General Dukh-



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