

CURRENT WISDOM

New York Times

Amuck on the campaign trail the Messiah Mondale manifests the analytical powers of the paradigmatic New Age pol, circa 1984:

"My enemy isn't Ronald Reagan. My enemy is apathy, despair and cynicism." Mr. Mondale then raised his voice. "My enemy is to be found in that attitude that there's no way trying, there's no point in trying, you can't succeed, politicians are all bad, politicians never make any difference.

"And it's the ultimate irony of this campaign that this Administration that has spread so much despair and heartache and suffering, that has closed the door on hope to so many millions of Americans, who has driven so many from work and broken so many dreams, could by that very fact create the despair that would re-elect them."

[October 28, 1984]

Village Voice

In that reliquary of New Age piety, the *Village Voice*, a Mr. Geoffrey Stokes traduces the wise Midge Decter and then commits infamy:

Rather surprisingly, given the excesses of which she has proven herself capable, Decter wasn't actually the most cretinous of the *Policy Review* panel. That honor must go to lumpen-gadfly R. Emmett Tyrrell, whose airy response to a serious question about the state's role in preventing child abuse was a judgment that "child abuse is one of those nonce enthusiasms. You probably won't hear anything about it six months from now. It is particularly popular now, because radicals use it as yet another way to assault bourgeois society and the bourgeois family." As though this were not wicked enough, Tyrrell further trivialized the issue by linking it with one of his favorite villains: "Child abuse," he pronounced—without, of course, any evidence—is to a large degree a problem with sexually liberated households. You are not going to find a great deal of child abuse in the home of an orthodox Jew, or an orthodox Catholic, or an orthodox Protestant."

[August 28, 1984]

New Statesman

Whilst reconnoitering at the First International Feminist Bookfair, Dr. Alison Hennegon, feminist in residence at Britain's infelicitously named *New Statesman*, hears the authentic voice of Third World wimminhood:

There are lesbians, from black and "Third World" countries, which supposedly "haven't any lesbians," wondering uneasily whether to shut up about their "irrelevant" and culturally denied sexuality until After the Revolution. Equally uneasily, of course, they wondered just how much they wanted a revolution which didn't want them. It was a conflict poignantly illustrated one evening: an Indian woman, explaining that, amid so many other pressing problems, Indian feminists had not yet begun to consider heterosexism, was passionately interrupted by another Indian

woman who yelled "Who hasn't considered heterosexism yet? To say that suggested there are no Indian lesbians. There are, dammit. I'm one."

[June 22, 1984]

Whales Et Cetera (sic)

Mr. Phil Clapham of the Center for Coastal Studies, Provincetown, Massachusetts, passes on an amusing and instructive anecdote from his busy life with Carole—"friend and colleague":

Naming whales may sound like fun, but I can assure you that after you have stretched your mental resources for the first twenty or so, the novelty wears off with remarkable rapidity. We currently recognize a couple of hundred humpbacks, and each season brings twenty or thirty new whales to our files. Unlike the aforementioned Salt, by no means do all of them possess distinctive marks which readily suggest good names; many have either all-white or all-black tails with only subtle differences separating them. Friend and colleague Carole Carlson and I, constantly bemoaning the lack of good field marks, joke that one day genetic improbability will come through and we'll see a tail go up with "Pizza" written on it in natural black pigment.

[*The Connecticut Cetacean Society Vol. II, 1984*]

Newsweek

A timely bull from Mr. Peter Shaeffer of Davis, California, an obvious subscriber to the *Nation*:

Before Nancy Reagan expresses her confidence of victory over school-age drug abuse by campaigning on 3,000 billboards across the country (*Periscope*, Feb. 20), she might be well advised to reflect on how many of the young people in question have been driven to drug abuse as a direct consequence of her husband's policies.

[March 19, 1984]

Washington Post

The incomparable *Post* reports on the hard times into which protest politics have fallen midway through the reign of Reagan:

"We are anti-Reagan women and we are voting, voting for our lives," the protesters sang as the straw-and-newspaper likeness of Reagan refused to burn. After repeated attempts, it finally collapsed into flame and ash. But the throng of U.S. Park and District police on hand did not move to arrest any of the participants.

Despite their best efforts to misbehave, the demonstrators were permitted to do just about anything short of charging the White House gates. For almost 30 minutes, they raced from intersection to intersection near the White House, blocking traffic with their bodies and their banners.

Police responded quickly by rerouting lunchtime motorists around the protestors. They never attempted to break up the impromptu roadblocks or take anyone into custody.

"Could you imagine a group of black

demonstrators not getting arrested?" asked Suzette Rowe, a member of the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV), which is organizing the protests, noting that most of yesterday's protestors were white. "This is disgusting."

[October 2, 1984]

The Torch

Moral philosophy at its most complex and enrapturing posited within the confines of the student gazette of Roosevelt University:

In response to the student senate's complaint about the contraceptive ad in last week's *Torch*, I would like to issue a retort.

At the meeting of September 27, 1984 the president of the student senate said, "This type of ad should not be in the *Torch*." He implied that the contraceptive ad, along with the beer ad, was "bad" or immoral.

I don't know if the president thinks that sex is "bad" or immoral. If he does, it reflects *only* his own personal value system. I don't believe that the student body, which he is supposed to represent, thinks that sex in general is immoral.

I think that sex *can* be considered an immoral act in particular circumstances. One such circumstance is when the participants behave in an irresponsible fashion, i.e., do not use contraceptives when conception is unwanted. Hence, since students do not think sex is "bad," and most students do not want babies while going to school, the contraceptive ad in last week's *Torch* was, perhaps, "good."

—D. Kimberley Moe
[October 1, 1984]

New York Times

The New Age Liberals continue their indefatigable struggle to keep religion out of American politics. Rev. Young, we are with you:

Mayor Andrew Young of Atlanta said today the only black votes President Reagan should receive are those of "cold-hearted black millionaires who are probably going to hell."

At a news conference before a voter turnout rally at Fort Valley State College, Mr. Young was asked if any black had cause to vote for Mr. Reagan instead of the Democratic challenger, Walter F. Mondale.

"We have some cold-hearted black millionaires who are probably going to hell, and they ought to vote Republican," Mr. Young replied.

[October 27, 1984]

The Nation

Mr. Christopher Hitchens, that unscotchable progressive, journeys to historic Berkeley, California, only to come down with nostalgia and the blues:

Loafing among the crowd, most of whom had come out of sentiment or curiosity, I found myself resenting the ceaseless denigration of "the sixties" that had been so much a part of this year's Democratic style. This feeling, which first came over me in a flush of rage as I watched the

Democratic Convention hall emptying when Coretta Scott King got up to speak, is mounting as I write. Mention of the 1960s need not and should not be an occasion for sneering, embarrassment or amnesia.

[October 20, 1984]

Philadelphia Inquirer

From the city of brotherly love, Comrade Shoshana Bricklin reveals the terpsichorean roots of Dr. Marx's flumiddiddle:

Not by accident did it happen on May Day. The Philadelphia Marxist School, situated above a bookstore close by the Penn campus, celebrated its grand opening yesterday.

Ideological purists may shudder to learn that the event was marked with a wine and cheese reception.

"Look, every organization I've ever *been* in has wine and cheese," said Shoshana Bricklin, 31, a recent graduate of Temple University Law School, a founder of Grass Roots Alliance for Solar Pennsylvania and a member of the "self-selecting collective" that runs the Marxist school.

After all, being a Marxist does not necessitate being grim and humorless. "You know the saying, 'If I can't dance, I don't want to come to your revolution.' I want to have *fun*. I'll never survive otherwise," said Bricklin.

[May 2, 1984]

Chicago Tribune

A few geopolitical thoughts from Dr. Andy Rooney, one of the Republic's mainstream *philosophes*:

If we're going to make some kind of peace with the Soviet Union, we've got to admit we do some wrong things.

For instance, we have our own propaganda machine, and it may work better than the Soviets' machine. Americans are propagandized on every side to believe that the USSR is the enemy and that we are about to go to war with that country. In our novels, movies and television shows, the Soviet Union is evil. This is bound to get to us. Our children grow up thinking they know who the enemy is just as Russian children do.

We're spending \$280 billion this year on weapons. And although we now call our War Department the Defense Department, for internal good will, it's getting ready to fight a war with the Russians and the Russians know it. It would make anyone jumpy.

The unfortunate fact is that the prospects of war are good for business. Almost all our major manufacturers get in on a piece of the Pentagon action. The companies that make our toasters, our farm equipment, our cars, our airliners, our television sets and even our sewing machines, all depend, for a large part of their profits, on selling war goods to the government.

Businessmen may not like war, but they love the prospects of one. There's nothing better for the economy than this prospect of war with the Soviet Union. Businessmen don't know what they'd do without it.

[September 30, 1984]

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