

# THE CONTINUING CRISIS



•February, and the Stock Market hit record highs. The government's index of leading economic indicators scored its largest gain in nearly four years, and a future Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist was arrested in St. Petersburg, Florida. Mr. Michael Conrow, 33, was arrested after police said they had found 370 stolen diapers at his home. He now stands accused of having taken possibly as many as 1500 dirty diapers from porches after posing as a driver for the Di-Dee Diaper Service. When arrested Mr. Conrow was wearing a disposable diaper. In Washington, letters, memorandums, and official documents continue to leak to the press; and all the natives wonder how long the furor can last.

•An ugly incident in Beckley, West Virginia, has added fuel to civil rights leaders' apprehensions that intolerance is rising in the Republic. In Beckley, heretofore adjudged one of West Virginia's most progressive communities, Mrs. Jeania Denny was set upon by a pack of vicious sixth graders when she showed up at Center Elementary School costumed as a "Care Bear" and hoping to enhance the Valentine's Day spirit at her son's school. Younger children merely "peeked into the eyeholes to see who was in there," Mrs. Denny informed local human relations authorities. However, the sixth graders' advances were of a more personal nature, and when Mrs. Denny resisted, "fists started coming at me." A hint as to how bizarre American politicking has become was provided when Senator Joseph Biden, the boy senator from Delaware, notified Iowans of his aspirations for the Democratic presidential nomination and added, "I want you to know that I do do windows and I will carry groceries." The month brought mixed news for Miss Joan Rivers, the talk show host. A Federal Drug Administration report concluded that a new drug for treating baldness is safe and effective. Unfortunately, it has been responsible for cases of a sexual dysfunction known as "exaggerated erection."

•In London Lord Avebury continues to lead a national debate over the most beneficent way possible to dispose of his remains on that unhappy day when he breathes his last. Americans have their political tempests; the British have

his Lordship's valuable limbs. His vow to leave what remains of his corpse, once various laboratories have picked over its functional parts, to London's Battersea Dogs' Home "to give the doggies a good meal" was rejected by Battersea's authorities. Now the British peer has notified the *London Standard* that he could die confident that his remains would not be wasted if he were buried in the open sea where he might "enter the marine food chain." Another possibility would be to entomb him in the usual manner but to plant a tree above his grave which would "combine being biodegradable and the concept of a lasting memorial." His Lordship could also move to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where Dr. Martin Spector has been accused of obtaining and selling human body parts in violation of Philadelphia's public health code. Syrian forces moved against Beirut's warring militias, but not before the spiritual leader of the Shiite Hezbollah ruled that Palestinians besieged in refugee camps could without fear of sin eat human flesh so long as it was that of bombardment victims. And in Washington, D.C., AIDS claimed the life of Mr. Ronald E. Rump. Mr. Andy Warhol also passed away after an unanticipated heart attack.

•In Michigan, state senator Jackie Vaughn III, a Detroit Democrat, reintroduced legislation to require public schools to teach "peace and human kindness." The bill was again met with spit balls and laughter, but Senator Vaughn is intrepid. In Jackson, Mississippi, state representative Will Green Poindexter, a Democrat from Inverness, faces equally dim prospects for his bill to permit dwarfs to hunt deer with crossbows during archery season. In our nation's capital Senator William Proxmire conferred his "Golden

Fleece" award on the Agriculture Department's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) when he discovered that APHIS director Mr. Bert Hawkins had asked employees to compose an agency song "which will be sung on occasions both great and small . . . to remind us of the team spirit that guides us in our job of protecting U.S. agriculture." Senator Sam Nunn warned that any attempt to reinterpret the ABM treaty would provoke "a constitutional crisis of profound dimensions."

•Mr. Robert Gates, heretofore the deputy director of CIA, was nominated to succeed the gallant William J. Casey. Mr. Casey, who for six years has presided over the rebuilding of his agency and been President Reagan's soundest source of advice for keeping the government adult, was unable to resume his duties after the removal of a cancerous brain tumor impaired his ability to communicate. Former President Jimmy Carter heaved up pungent memories of the fruit-cake nature of the regime the Reaganites replaced when he sang to a rapt audience at Rice Institute for Policy Analysis that "I try not to be a racist and wouldn't call myself a racist, but I have feelings that border on it . . ." Possibly the glassy-eyed Wonder Boy of New Age Liberalism thought the Rice Institute had invited him for self-analysis rather than policy analysis, but on the basis of his statement it appears that Jimmy really is a racist. Christian though he is, Jimmy revealed that "It's hard for me to believe that one of those children [starving Africans], in the eyes of God, is as important as Amy." To those who believe that there never can be another imbecile like this in the White House, I submit the corpus delicti of young Senator Biden. Or how about the Hon. Richard A. Gephardt, who on February 23 declared his intention to be elected President of the United States by declaring war against Japan and South Korea—in fine, what in earlier times was boomed as the "yellow peril"?

•In Peking, political reform continued as the official New China News Agency announced that 15 million rats (*Rattus rattus*) had been exterminated in the capital alone. In Moscow, Mr. Yuri Churbanov, the late Mr. Leonid Brezh-

nev's fat son-in-law, has been spirited away to the hoosegow, another proof of Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev's Good Government campaign. Back in the United States, a 20-year-old student at Lawrence, Kansas's Haskell Indian Junior College was rushed to Lawrence Memorial Hospital after he injected himself with chicken soup and became hallucinatory. Catholic church-goers began weeks of indoctrination into the economic imbecility and malice of their bishops when parish priests began obligato discourses on the bishops' pastoral harangue against capitalism, and in Lagos, Nigeria, beggars voted to reject small coins from alms-givers as a protest against the government's devaluation.

•In the Philippines the Aquino Administration celebrated its first anniversary with volleys of small arms fire. U.S. sanctions against Poland were withdrawn as quietly as possible. Australia's Prime Minister Bob Hawke, who in 1954 set a world beer-drinking record by washing two and a half pints of the bubbly stuff across his esophagus in 12 seconds, announced plans to become that country's first Labourite to serve three terms as prime minister. And this journal's 1979 recommendation that women's lingerie be sent to the sacred city of Qum to subvert the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's numinous regime has apparently been picked up by the West German government working through Mr. Rudi Carrell, putatively a comedian on Westdeutscher Rundfunk. Mr. Carrell's joke, however, elicited complaints of such heat from the Iranian galoots that the Bonn government has actually apologized, and all of Mr. Carrell's future jokes about ladies' unmentionables will presumably be directed at Great Britain's House of Lords.

•February was, by tacit consent, condom month in the United States; all enlightened eminences sang praise of the wondrous device, which was first experimented with in the 1640s when an unknown Englishman rummaging through the bowels of a cow first noted the thinness of the animal's large intestine and how if duly sealed at one end it would prevent the exchange of bodily fluids during coitus. The Good News has been spreading ever since, and early in the month the Rev. Carl



F. Thitchener, 54, of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst, New York, distributed modern condoms during a church service while the Associated Press took pictures. The Rev. Thitchener's other accomplishments include, according to UPI, a

1958 indecent exposure charge, a 1982 streaking incident in the presence of a corps of Livingston County, New York Brownies, and at least two drunk driving charges. All of which suggest that the time has come for developing a condom to cover one's entire body.

Finally it appears that former California Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., is preparing to join Senator Biden and Congressman Gephardt in the Democratic presidential race. He has been studying Zen Buddhism in Japan for five months and has developed

"techniques of concentration" that allow him to speak in complete sentences, some of which have two coherent clauses. Perhaps this explains New York Governor Mario Cuomo's mysterious withdrawal from presidential contention on February 19.—RET

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Elmer Fudge

What has prompted you to change your name at the height of your career (*TAS*, February 1987)? It may be true, as Joseph Epstein says, that R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. "represents a distinct case . . . of cognominal overload," but does R. Elmer really solve the problem, and isn't it a bit late, in any case?

—Aaron Haspel V  
New York, New York

Back in 1888, your great-grandfather Elmer Tyrrell married a girl named Mary Emmett, daughter of a prominent Copperhead politician, Randolph Emmett, of Greencastle, Indiana. Randolph had a great deal of money, mostly extorted from the residents of Utah during his sojourn there as Chief Justice of the Utah Territory, appointed by President Buchanan.

Successive generations descending from Elmer and Mary were careful to use the name "Randolph Emmett" for their children, in hopes that the great man might bestow more than their fair share of his fortune on them when he died. Unfortunately, however, shortly after your father came along, the great Randolph Emmett finally died, and bequeathed all his money to the ASPCA, leaving his descendants only a rich knowledge of, and fascination with, polygamy.

You were so named because your father believed himself to be the greatest man on earth, and felt the infant would be honored to live in his shadow.

Meanwhile, your great uncle Elmer Tyrrell, Jr. (Elmer Senior thought he was the greatest man on earth, too), ran off to a far country where he took a non-white wife, and was never mentioned again by the rest of the family . . . until his grandson, also named "Elmer Tyrrell," developed a unique formula for manufacturing glue from cow horns, while working in a rendering plant at Sioux City, Iowa.

History has a way of repeating itself, and sure enough, this Elmer Tyrrell became patriarch of the famed Elmer's Glue Company, and rich enough to have avaricious relatives naming their children after him.

Opportunist that you are, you sprinted to the Arlington courthouse

recently and changed your name from Randolph Emmett to Randolph Elmer Tyrrell, in an attempt to ingratiate yourself with this distant cousin, who is reported to be manipulating many others in the family, as well.

Does this win your contest?

—Lawrence B. Hughes  
Marshall, Michigan

You have wronged Madonna. Madonna, you may remember, is the author of that curt and cryptic letter in the February issue reading, "Saluto R. Emmett, Scortaris te, Vale." By transposing Madonna's order (deliberately? probably) you have turned a beautifully classic message into ungrammatical gibberish. It should run, "R. Emmett, te saluto. Scortaris! Vale." Which is to say, "Hi, Emmett. I hear you've been running around with hookers. So long, M."

I must say I'm surprised. Can this be the reason you've changed your name to Elmer? Oportet te paenitere.

—John M. Duff  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**General Westmoreland on Dan Burt**  
I found Ben Stein's article, "Free to Libel," in the February 1987 issue of *The American Spectator*, impressive and agree with its argumentation. However, I take issue with the expressed myth that I was betrayed by my lawyer, Dan Burt.

My attorney did not betray me. Near the end of the trial, I weighed with Mr. Burt my chances with the jury and decided to accept a settlement after the judge imposed an inordinately high burden of proof on my attorney before a jury dealing with matters unfamiliar to them. Further, I was disillusioned by the large number of low level, narrowly focused witnesses for the defense who were allowed to present to the jury, in the context "state of mind," hearsay evidence.

—W. C. Westmoreland  
Charleston, South Carolina

### Send Me No Flowers

I write to correct some inaccuracies, not of fact, but of implication, in Fred Barnes's review of my *Why We Lost the ERA* (*TAS*, February 1987).

Take the following passage, literally

correct, in which Barnes writes that I describe Phyllis Schlafly as moving, in his words, "the argument from one over equal rights to one centered on the practical effects the amendment might have, such as requiring combat duty by women and weakening the family. 'Once opponents turned public attention to the amendment's effects, they were already on their way to winning.' Mansbridge says." Some readers might take away from Barnes's two sentences, which slide almost imperceptibly from "effects the amendment might have" to "the amendment's effects," the idea that I thought the ERA would require combat duty by women and weaken the family. In fact, I argued that the ERA would have done neither. I devoted two chapters in my short book to explaining why the ERA would not have required sending women draftees into combat. Why? Because I thought the story of how people—both for and against the ERA—came, incorrectly, to think the ERA would have this effect shows how our "adversary" politics tends to distort our understandings of reality.

Take another example: "Mansbridge insists that homemakers weren't merely fantasizing when they concluded that both the ERA and the women's movement were not out to aid them." The sentence is, again, literally correct. But it implies, and subsequent sentences seem to confirm the implication, that the ERA would hurt homemakers. In fact, I spent most of one chapter spelling out how the ERA would affect homemakers. (It would encourage, for example, the feminist legal theory that the homemaker makes an equal contribution to the marriage. This new doctrine, which states with a state ERA have been more likely to adopt than those without, helps combat the pernicious effects of no-fault divorce laws—which, incidentally, no feminist organization ever supported and which feminist scholarship has shown is more likely to hurt women than to help them.) I conclude that for homemakers the ERA "would have had little short-term impact after 1976." Its effects would have been almost entirely indirect, as a mandate "encouraging" attention to the admittedly subtle prob-

lems of women when most political, economic, and even social power is held by men. As with draftees in combat, the real story I have to tell here is how and why some of the public came to see the ERA as having an effect that it would not in fact have had.

Finally, I do not argue that the ERA "lost fair and square." In the unratified state legislatures, where the ERA had to win only seven more votes, 80 percent of the women legislators favored the ERA, compared to only 40 percent of the men. But less than 15 percent of these legislators were women. Was that fair and square?

I do point out that right was not always on the side of the ERA movement. Anti-feminists were often telling us important things that we needed to hear. We should have listened more carefully to opponents' worries about the amendment's effects and respected more deeply the kinds of truth those worries reflected. The practice of adversary politics makes listening to one's "opponents" difficult.

Yet the underlying willingness to listen to women in the feminist movement has surfaced dramatically in the enthusiastic reception my book has received from one feminist reviewer after another, even though the book is quite critical not only of our strategy but of our entire stance. The response of feminists to my book, along with much of my earlier experience, bespeaks a women's movement very different in fact from the movement the media sometimes conveys, and that Mr. Barnes too implies with his perhaps not carefully chosen words, "hysterical" and "feminist screeds."

—Jane Mansbridge  
Professor of Political Science  
Northwestern University  
Evanston, Illinois

### Fred Barnes replies:

Okay, okay, I get the drift. With friends like me and *TAS*, Jane Mansbridge doesn't need any enemies. Even I can imagine the embarrassment she must have felt as a committed feminist upon reading a rave review in a conservative sheet. Must have been tough explaining that one to her friends. Anyway,  
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