

# THE CONTINUING CRISIS



• In the first month of the new decade the official Laotian radio broadcast the solemn judgment of millions of adepts of Dr. Marx when it intoned that 1989 was "a nightmare year for socialism." A good point that, and during January the Polish Communist party shed its name and heaved aside the red star from all official stationery. In East Germany former Marxist-Leninist wizard Mr. Erich Honecker was arrested. In Bulgaria the same status befell former Bulgarian leader Mr. Todor Zhivkov; and the Czech government asked Moscow to remove its troops, post haste. On January 29, in Washington, D.C., the Food and Drug Administration drastically limited the use of Red Dye No. 3, yet still there are no changes at the Harvard Law School or in the Cuban Politburo. History cannot be delayed forever, comrades!

• The United States Playing Card Company conferred its annual awards for "best" headlines on four of the nation's most authoritative newspapers, among them the *Sun* for "Grossed Out Surgeon Vomits Inside Patient," the *National Enquirer* for "Politician Gives Birth—To His Twin Brother," the *Globe* for "Man Explodes On Operating Table," and *World Weekly News* for "Bride's Kiss Makes 80 Guests Sick." Quite possibly the awards committee did not have time to evaluate a lulu from the boy editors of *Time*—to wit: "Man of the Decade, Mikhail Gorbachev." Mr. Troy Hayden, son of Manuel Antonio Noriega look-alike Tom Hayden and Miss Jane Fonda, has been arrested in Los Angeles, California, for spray-painting what police call "gang-type" graffiti on The Environment during a nature walk through metropolitan Los Angeles. True to his parents' code of social consciousness, the young moralist was wearing a "Heal the Bay" T-shirt at the time of his arrest, but there is irony here. California Highway Patrol Sgt. Rick Walker further described Mr. Hayden's graffiti as "white gang stuff," and Mother Jane had always raised young Troy to be a person of color. Can it be that in the Republican 1990s this impressionable young man has fallen under the spell of the Republican National Committee and its activist arm, the Ku Klux Klan? There is a whole generation of young Americans out there

to be deprogrammed, Tom & Janel!

• The bizarre sociology of New York City continues to supply stories of singular contrast and imbecility. On January 10, an ambulance carrying a critically ill man to Bellevue Hospital was brought to a halt by a laughing deliveryman's double-parked UPS truck. When a friend of the ailing patient pleaded "He's dying, let us through," the deliveryman cracked up. While sirens screamed, the laughing deliveryman "purposely slowed down," according to testimony gathered by concerned UPS officials, and leered lewdly at the disappointed paramedics. Tammany Hall returned to life on January 1, when Mr. David N. Dinkins, the first of the black Irish to be elected mayor of New York since Mayor Jimmy Walker, was inaugurated. Mr. Dinkins arrived in the mayor's office trailing behind him hundreds of favors rendered and thousands of favors sought, not to mention his tricky tax returns, stock deals, classic garbage contracts.

• That New York City remains a vigorous intellectual hub was vividly demonstrated by that legendary hoaxer and teacher at Manhattan's New School, Mr. Alan Abel, who duped much of the Manhattan press into misreporting the winner of a \$35 million Lotto jackpot. Mr. Abel's deception set off a stupendous debate among the city's intelligentsia. Mr. Joey Skaggs, formerly of the School of Visual Arts, whose hoaxes include duping a television station into presenting him as "Joe Bones, head of a Fat Squad of diet-enforcers," was moved to depreciate Mr. Abel's work as "a publicity stunt." "It's not complex," averred Mr.

Skaggs, who went on to speculate that colleague Abel, despite access to the New School's erudite faculty, may have "run out of ideas." Mr. Abel has defended himself, insisting that his hoax abounds with "social significance" and "nuance"; but at this writing it appears that the New York intellectual community is leaning toward the Skaggs position, though all await Susan Sontag's analysis in the forthcoming issue of the *New York Review of Books*—if there is a forthcoming issue. In these dark days of the Bush Terror no New York egghead knows what to expect next. Think of what the administration did to Noriega, and Noriega, true to the voodoo catechism, always swaddled himself in red underwear.

• And there are more New York tales. Manhattan's assistant district attorney Mr. John F. Kennedy, Jr., who plans a second attempt to pass the New York Bar Association exam no matter what the odds, broke from his onerous studies to fly to Rome, New York, where he solemnized the closing of a local lunatic asylum, comparing it to the dismantlement of the Berlin Wall. Finally, State Senator Martin Connor of Brooklyn has gone before the New York State Senate to demand that magazines bearing "fragrance strips" be banished from the state. "The only hazard New Yorkers should face when opening a magazine is a paper cut, not a migraine headache," attests the enlightened Mr. Connor, whose communications director, Miss Amy Solomon, is "chemically sensitive." Adding momentum to this latest humanitarian drive is that paradigmatic New Yorker, Mr. Richard Zachary, who showed up at a Manhattan hearing on smelly magazines wearing a gas mask. When Mr. Zachary stepped back out on the streets of Manhattan his chances of being mugged, murdered, or sexually molested were greater than were he to walk the streets of Beirut—yet his civic concern is his neighbor's smelly magazine.

• The *Los Angeles Times* reports that dialogue is continuing between Los Angeles police officials and the Nation of Islam to propitiate hard feelings that have steadily worsened since police officers arrested an unnamed Muslim who had stepped into traffic while at-

tempting to sell a bean pie. Muslim-made bean pies are a Muslim specialty item. Anti-Armenian rioting in the southern Soviet republic of Azerbaijan approached the dimensions of civil war, motivating the Kremlin to send the Red Army into action in the province. Feminists shuddered when in Ballston Spa, New York, a Mr. Ronald J. Longo, 45, was convicted of second degree murder for his actions in defending a waitress at the Spa City Diner from the complaints of another customer, the late Mr. William McEntire, who became indignant over a faulty cheeseburger. Mr. Longo killed Mr. McEntire with a knife. Mr. McEntire had wanted lettuce and tomatoes with his viand.

• In a follow-up on a story from last month's "Crisis," Mr. Richard Craft, winner of the *Washington Times's* coveted Gruesome Murder of the Year Award, was sentenced on January 8 to fifty years in prison for murdering his wife and disposing of the corpse via a wood chipper. Responding to widespread disparagement that he had shown "apparent lack of emotion," the former airline pilot declaimed that "I have feelings like everyone else." On January 17, Washington's controversial Mayor Marion Barry declared that the capital's war on crime was succeeding, twenty-four hours before he himself was apprehended on charges of possession of cocaine at the Vista International Hotel (Room 727). At Harvard University researchers released a thoughtful report discrediting the claim that oat bran is the health food of the decade, though it made no mention of the fact that the stuff tastes somewhat like peat moss. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, the famously callipygous Mr. Darron Anderson, 21, is no longer quite so proud of one of his comeliest assets. Mr. Anderson, who was accused of being one of the two men who robbed Garfield's Restaurant and Pub, has now been identified beyond any doubt by a waitress who recognized his strikingly beautiful buttocks. Further details of the trial are not available, but prosecutor John Kelson asserts that upon seeing Mr. Anderson from behind she "was adamant." In response to queries as to whether Mr. Kelson had also noticed the accused's posterior the fastidious prosecutor replied, "I personally never cast my eyes upon a



defendant's nether regions . . . but the witness apparently did." Mr. Anderson got five years.

• In Washington Mr. Paul Corbin died, aged 75. Mr. Corbin had the distinction of being an aide and lifetime loyalist to Mr. Robert F. Kennedy, a

friend to former CIA Director William Casey, and to *The American Spectator*. He had many other distinctions, some of which could have gotten him before cancer did on January 2. Among the frauds of the old decade to expire was Mr. Baghwan Shree Rajneesh, 58, an-

other Indian guru to die of Rolls Royce poisoning. He once owned eighty-five. Mr. Aldo Gucci, who brought the Gucci label to the U.S., passed on in Rome. The actress Miss Ava Gardner died of natural causes in London, and in Los Angeles Mr. Laurence J. Peter, author

of *The Peter Principle: Why Things Always Go Wrong*, died in his sleep. His book sold eight million copies in more than thirty languages, even though after its initial success the amused Mr. Peter insisted that he was only kidding. His was a useful life. —RET

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Horrors

It is with more than mild astonishment that one comes across a rave review of Andrea Dworkin's latest ravings in *The American Spectator* (January 1990), of all places. Having taken pity, evidently, on writers left unemployed by the death of *Ms.* magazine, the *Spectator* now features self-professed feminist Florence King as a frequent contributor. Florence King can scarcely find words to do justice to her admiration for Andrea Dworkin. According to Ms. King, Andrea Dworkin is "a rock-em, sock-em Carrie Nation who has won my admiration and respect." And who, presumably, deserves that of the *Spectator's* readers as well. Dworkin, in Ms. King's encomium, "rises to Boudicean heights of dignity and fighting spirit." There is much more in the same vein. It all goes far beyond the *New York Times Book Review's* nominally favorable but rather disgusted review of the same book, whose author was content to praise Ms. Dworkin as "idealistic." Ms. King goes on to express outrage that Dworkin has been subjected to "censorship" in the liberal media; as if this were some kind of rare event (George Gilder, please call home). According to Ms. King, by opposing pornography, Ms. Dworkin has become "conservative" but just doesn't know it yet.

Now, to anyone who has followed Ms. Dworkin's career, all this is (to put it mildly) somewhat problematic. There is a very good reason why publications, including left-liberal ones, should refuse to publish Dworkin: her stock-in-trade is to describe the male sex in terms that make Hitler's characterizations of Jews look respectable and rational. It is not censorship to refuse to print such characteristic Dworkinisms as the following, wholly typical example: "Men love death. In everything they make, they hollow out a central place for death, let its rancid smell contaminate every dimension of whatever still survives." This is not protected speech, but the ravings of a lunatic. Were there an Anti-Defamation League for men, Andrea Dworkin would keep it busy single-handed.

Sure, Dworkin opposes pornography, on the grounds that it "exploits

women" (antipornography feminists being singularly blind to the prevalence of homosexual, masochistic, and pedophilic pornography). But Ms. King fails to point out that there is a crucial difference in the reasons for feminist and conservative opposition to pornography. Feminists who oppose pornography do so out of antagonism to masculinity and femininity, normal heterosexuality being their actual target (Dworkin describes intercourse as a "scarring, hurting, jagged edge of pain and grief"); conservatives who oppose pornography do so because it encourages socially corrosive forms of sexuality. These points of view are fundamentally irreconcilable, and lead to strikingly different legal positions. Thus, feminist definitions of pornography are so sweeping that in a major decision upheld by the Supreme Court in 1986, a federal appeals court struck down the antipornography law promoted by Dworkin's organization as a form of "thought control" that would place "the government in control of all the institutions of culture, the great censor and director of which thoughts are good for us."

Nevertheless, let feminists not despair: *Ms.* is dead, but *The American Spectator* is ready to take up the slack. After all, why should Ms. King be the only feminist to write for a conservative publication? Why stop at showering fulsome encomiums on the delectable Ms. Dworkin? Why not commission this heroic figure TO WRITE FOR THE SPECTATOR HERSELF? Clearly, Ms. King's Boudicean peroration points to no less an honor. In which case the *Spectator's* editors will undergo the politically maturing experience of seeing their country's name spelled "Amerika" (Ms. Dworkin's invariable orthography) in the *Spectator's* own pages.

A better approach, of course, would be to relegate the *Spectator's* resident feminist to the back page, where she can enjoy the company of her idol, and which has momentarily invaded the rest of the magazine. Gentlemen, really.

—Nicholas Davidson

Author, *The Failure of Feminism*  
New York, New York

### Florence King replies:

Mr. Davidson's letter sounds so much like the hysterical polemic of a typical Women's Libber that I lost the thread of his argument somewhere around the middle. Like the Libbers, he seems to have a propensity for the logical fallacy known, I believe, as "*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*."

Nonetheless, I will try to reply to his remarks in a general way.

First, he does not know the difference between a rave review and a mixed review.

Second, he identifies me as *TAS's* "resident feminist" and "frequent contributor." I must have missed some issues because the Dworkin review was my first full-length piece in *TAS*. My only other contribution was a three-inch squib in the Christmas book recommendations last December.

Third, he calls me a "self-professed feminist." Far from professing such an untruth, I have been called "Fascist Flossie" and "Ku Klux King" by former employees of the late and unlamented *Ms.* magazine, and I am the only woman in America to have been called a *necrophiliac* by NOW. The story is too long to go into, but you must admit I have achieved a first.

Politically, I fall somewhere to the right of Vlad the Impaler; I believe in absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings, and define democracy as the crude leading the crud. As for sexual equality, I've had wimp and I've had macho, and macho is better. Thanks to Women's Libbers, today's men are so pussy-whipped that if they had been on the *Titanic*, they would have apologized for damage to the iceberg.

I am prouder of that Dworkin review than anything I've written in eight years as a reviewer. Felix Unger thinks it's fun to be neat; I think it's fun to be fair.

### CFR Goes Too Far

Imagine my surprise upon learning that Mr. Tyrrell proudly professes to be a hireling of the one-worlders ("Hill-Jack Bugaboos," *TAS*, January 1990). Mr. Tyrrell's case turns on establishing a false dichotomy (either you are serious about foreign affairs, in which case you recognize the superior wisdom of the

Council on Foreign Relations, or you are not, in which case you are a reactionary peckerwood or left-wing hippie).

Let me assure Mr. Tyrrell there are some of us whose domestic accoutrements include neither motorcycle parts in the drawing room nor FMLN posters in the study, who are yet dubious about the bona fides of the CFR. Mr. Tyrrell, of course, is entitled to belong to any organization he wishes; he is perfectly right in describing those who demand his public recantation as coercive imbeciles. But for him to leap to the conclusion that all opponents of the CFR (including Barry Goldwater) are morons is equally childish and unbecoming. . . .

Is Mr. Tyrrell angling for the Strange New Respect Award?

—Michael S. Lofgren  
Alexandria, Virginia

### Down the Hatch

Surely no one in Washington deserves a Strange New Respect Award more than Orrin Hatch (see Tom Bethell's "Communists Shoot People, Don't They?" *TAS*, January 1990). He would have earned it even if his only act of betrayal had been his co-sponsorship of the so-called Act for Better Child Care Services, an especially pernicious and mind-bogglingly expensive social engineering/income redistribution program designed to kick mothers and babies out of their homes—the former into factory assembly lines, the latter into government-controlled institutions.

Not content with this perfidy, however, Mr. Hatch—as if striving to prove to skeptics on the left how genuine are his new-found compassion and enlightenment—has joined forces with Teddy Kennedy in an attempt to throw more taxpayer money at Title X, the federal "family planning" program that has proved to be such a spectacular failure at curbing teenage pregnancy, abortion, and illegitimacy. Mr. Kennedy's proposed legislation, which Mr. Hatch has endorsed, would hand over more of our hard-earned money to America's premier abortion provider (Planned Parenthood), provide funds for developing and marketing RU-486 (the

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