

## The Chic Sheikh

*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good.*

But President Nixon said that's not good enough. "Let there be year-round daylight saving time," he said. And there was year-round daylight savings. And the Sun said, "That's better. Now I can sleep an hour longer."

Gods move in strange ways their miracles to perform. Sometimes they work. Sometimes not. As when Nixon said, "Let there be no recession in the United States of America." Lately I've been getting the feeling I am not living in the United States of America. If I am, it's by courtesy of the Arabian oil sheikhs.

To the President, the daylight saving plan seemed second best only to Joshua's commanding the sun to stand still. Mr. Nixon, of course, knew that the sun *does* stand still and the earth revolves around it. And he was not about to become the first President to command the earth to stand still. (And no letters, please, explaining that the sun does move.)

Personally, I saw this energy crisis coming some forty years ago, with the emergence of the original Sheikh of Araby, Rudolph Valentino. In my mind's eye there still run and rerun old movies of Rudolph Valentino and his oil-slickened hairdo. There was no oil shortage for him.

Rudolph Valentino had no energy crisis of any sort, even though each night, when he was fast asleep, the beautiful Vilma Banky into his tent did creep. Or Theda Bara. Or Agnes Ayres. It wasn't love that sent them creeping. It was oil, of which they had less than an independent gas station, while he had more than Exxon.

NOW WE LIVE in different times. Sheikhs don't look like Rudolph Valentino anymore. Not even the current sons-of-sheikhs. And now there's women's lib. Gloria Steinem would peer through her oversized spectacles with grievous disdain at the proposal that she creep into Faisal's tent. Nor would Bella Abzug creep into a tent, wearing one of her oversized hats and pleading for oil for the lamps of the Bronx.

However, it is more than likely that President Nixon was never a Rudolph Valentino film buff. (That was way before George Scott's *Patton*.) Too bad. He could have come to share my early suspicion of sheikhs and my prescience that they would, one day, turn off their spigots of oil for America.

Possessing this weird sense of the occult and recalling old movies of Rudolph Valentino setting up tents in all that desert sand for Vilma Banky to creep across, I foresaw the day of our energy crisis a year of months before the great debate on whether there was, is, or will be a shortage of gasoline in our land.

So gone are the carefree, careless days. And we are carless. A pitiful plight exacerbated by the remembrance of Rudolph Valentino racing across the sands on his horse. *He* didn't have to worry about gasoline. And if his horse tired, there was always a camel. Which, as we all know, can go several days without refueling.

But I'm not complaining about this new way of making-do. Although I could. This winter my office has been like summer. No heat. When asked how I manage to work in this frosted cubicle, I gayly reply, "No sweat!"

No man could do less for his country. Although at times it does gall me when the curtains part on a TV giveaway game show to display the grand prize, a shiny new car.

Only one thing I don't understand about operating on daylight saving time. It's not a complaint. Just a wonderment. We get up at seven in the morning, when it's really six o'clock, and the house is pitch black. So, we turn on the lights an hour earlier to get the kids dressed to send them off to night school. And in the evening we turn on the lights later, when the sun sets, which, by standard time, would be an hour earlier.

To this inexperienced IBMer (itsy-bitsy moron), we break even, don't we? And all because of Rudolph Valentino and those daily lube jobs on his hairdo.

I believe they're trying to confuse us. Turning night into day and versa-vice. But try my patented formula for Happiness through Adversity. Simply say to yourself: "Oh, well, daylight saving or standard time, twenty-four hours from this very minute, today will be yesterday." □



"Dad, what did people talk about before Watergate?"

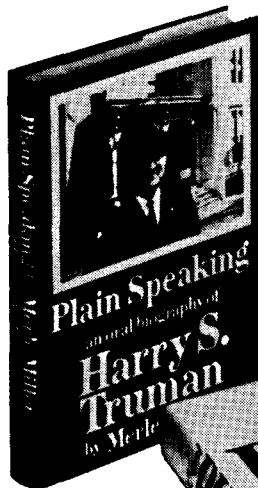
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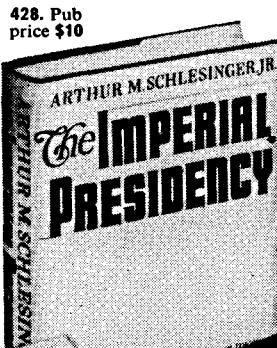
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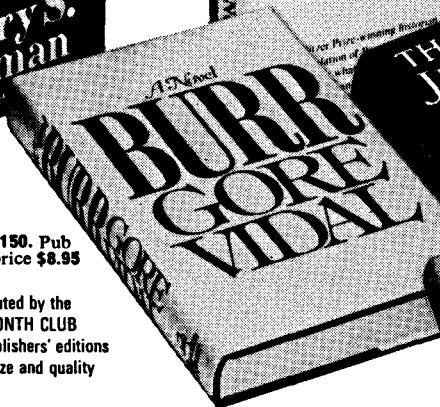
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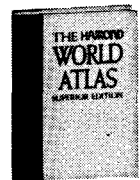


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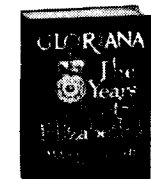
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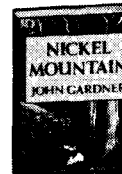


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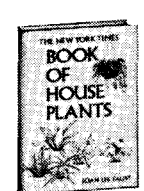
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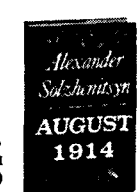
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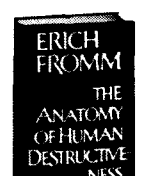


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# Détente Nourishes a New U.N.

**Events in the Middle East have strengthened the U.N.'s peacekeeping potential and have led to a redefinition of the hitherto ambivalent role of the secretary-general.**

by Max Jakobson

When the Arab-Israeli war flared last October 6, many people instinctively asked, What is the United Nations doing about it? Hardly anyone expected a reassuring answer: The question was asked in despair or in scorn. Like an atheist's prayer, it expressed a deep-seated longing for some higher international authority that would stop other nations from disturbing our peace—a deity we know does not exist.

The answer to the question was, of course, that the United Nations was quite obviously doing nothing at all. The Security Council took more than two days from the outbreak of fighting to arrange a meeting. When it did meet, on October 8, its members staged a pointless and largely irrelevant debate. Four days later the speeches petered out, but the fighting in the Middle East grew fiercer. In the meantime the real search for peace went on elsewhere. The cease-fire agreement was made in Moscow, not in the Security Council. The warring parties were brought to the conference table by Henry Kissinger, while the United Nations mediator, Gunnar Jarring, remained unemployed. The United Nations stock declined to a point at which Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim himself felt the need to express "profound concern" about the role of the United Nations. Failure to act for the maintenance of peace, he said on October 11, might "jeopardize the central point of the organization's existence."

*Max Jakobson, a Finnish historian and diplomat, represented his country at the United Nations from 1965 to 1972.*

Yet even the superpowers found that they could not do entirely without the United Nations. The cease-fire agreement negotiated between the United States and the Soviet Union was legitimized by the Security Council. Supervision on the ground was provided by the United Nations. The sight of the blue berets along the banks of the Suez Canal revived faith among the believers: The United Nations was needed after all. On the political level, too, the superpowers were finally persuaded by the other members of the Security Council to accept a United Nations role. Waldheim was allowed to preside over the formal opening session of the Geneva peace conference, and Maj. Gen. Ensio Siilasvuo, the Finnish commander of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), was assigned the chairmanship of the military working group.

The events of recent months have, in fact, had a profound impact on the organization. The latest phase of the Middle East conflict has revealed the extent to which détente shapes the course of events. This, in turn, has led to a reassessment of the function of the United Nations in international politics and a redefinition of the role of the secretary-general.

THE OFFICE OF secretary-general has been clouded in ambiguity since its inception. The charter offers no clear guidance, for the founding fathers of the United Nations were deeply divided over this issue and failed to resolve their differences. The Soviet Union wished to place the secretary-general firmly under the control of the Security Council by proposing that each of the Big Five in



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*Kurt Waldheim and Secretary of State Henry for a more independent secretary-general*

turn nominate one of their nationals to serve for two years at a time. Many of the smaller states, alarmed at the extent of the veto power the Big Five insisted on reserving for themselves, strove to give the secretary-general some degree of political independence. No real compromise was reached, but instead both concepts were written into the charter. As a result the chapter on the secretary-general turned out to be like a photograph with a double exposure. It describes him as the chief administrative officer whose task is to carry out decisions adopted by the competent organs of the organization: a manager, not a policy maker. But it also grants him the right to take political initiatives by virtue of Article 99, which empowers him to draw the attention of the Security Council to situations likely to endanger international peace and security.

The conflict over the role of the secretary-general has come to be associated with Dag Hammarskjöld. But it did not begin with him: He was supposed to put an end to it. Trygve Lie's political pretensions had annoyed the big powers; they wanted a faceless bureaucrat to admin-