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# THE CONTINUING CRISIS

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• March 7 to April 4, and it is now numbingly apparent that America is governed by an imbecile. Did you note his flummoxing of the UN vote condemning Israel? Did you note his March 29 letter to Iran? How about the goofball March 4 address where he inadvertently yet blithely overlooked two key pages? How about that interview with the *Washington Post's* Meg Greenfield wherein he states that, notwithstanding an 18 percent inflation rate and 20 percent interest rates, "the people are prosperous and at ease"? Verily he is an imbecile. He entered office as a pert ignoramus. He has now evolved into dithering imbecility. His anthem, axiom, panacea, and political first principle is "There is nothing that can be done about it"; and the galoots around him applaud.

• During the Watergate Spectacle there were the episodic Watergate Revelations, each one followed by a "firestorm" in the press. Today there are the White House Blunders. They grow ever more frequent and possibly ever more idiotic. Yet there follows no Firestorm, no outburst of indignation. Is the press in a stupor? Are the boys stationed at the Washington Press Club bar as imbecilic as the dolt in the Oval Office? There should be a howl from every editorial column. There should be a Firestorm accorded every blunder. What has happened to our venerated Fourth Estate?

• The Carter administration's UN vote was an egregious breach of faith with a responsible and reliable ally. All the world knows that. Still a lawfully constituted government simply does not renounce its vote by saying ever so vulpinely that it resulted from a "failure in communications." All the world knows that, too. And that sniveling, idiotic epistle that the Wonderboy sent to Iran, that was an almost unimaginable blunder. But to turn around the next day and disown the letter—that was the blunder that set all Europe agog. Where is the Firestorm?

• Europe is shocked. It is more shocked by these White House Blunders than by any of the Watergate Revelations. When will our press report their shock and their steady drift away from their North American ally? When will the domestic Firestorms begin? In terms of international relations the Wonderboy's Blunders are more dangerous than the Watergate Revelations. One merely has to read the foreign press to grasp this terrible fact.

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• Another contributor to the classified section of the *New York Review of Books* may be in trouble. Police in Leeds, England, have discovered a mass grave containing at least 250 pet cats and dogs. In sports news, the Carter constituency fell into the mulligrubs when Mr. Rip Howell, a 23-year-old geology major from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, failed halfway through his attempt to spend 34 hours seated in a tub of ketchup. A frankly gleeful

story in from the New China News Agency reports that a Marxist-Leninist telephone operator in northeast China has completed her 590,000th call without error or complaint. A microphone in Stockholm, Sweden, sprang to life and electrocuted the Rev. Kaarlo Toivo as he was about to begin a full-immersion baptism. According to reports from Latin America, one of the most highly regarded gate-crashers in the world, Mr. José Antonio Valencia, came a cropper when he smuggled himself into that ill-starred reception at the Dominican Republic Embassy in Bogota, Colombia. Not 30 minutes after Mr. Valencia had grasped his first canapé, the Embassy was overrun by the heroic urban guerrillas of the April 19 Movement. At this writing the suave Mr. Valencia, along with nearly 20 ambassadors, languishes in their stern grip, and no one, not even Senator Kennedy, seems to care.

• Otherwise Senator Kennedy cares deeply. Throughout the month he continued to whine and to blubber across America, maudering over the plight of the poor and fuliginous and threatening retribution to the privileged few—that is to say, to the taxpayers. Wherever he does go he conjures up scenes of squalor and destitution: chimney sweeps hornswoogled by tycoons, children orphaned for the fun of it, the aged driven from their homes by smirking bankers, cabals of white supremacists oppressing woebegone darkies. It is a sad tale. Dickens could scarcely improve on it.

• In Aberdeen, Scotland, justice was served when Mr. Alexander Webster, estranged husband of Mrs. Irene Webster, was fined 50 pounds by Sheriff Philip Love. It was Mr. Webster who, during a family tiff last May, petulantly heated up a skillet coated with lard, and, in the presence of Mrs. Webster and her friend, Miss Janice Morrison, brazenly sautéed the family hamster. "I had a few drinks and was feeling a bit low so I just fried the thing," Mr. Webster admitted. The trial ended when he heaved the unfortunate *Cricetus minimus* from the verandah of his top-floor flat. It was never seen again. Back in the States, the sexual harassment of women is reaching crisis dimensions, so much so that the editors of *Ms.* are losing faith in the system. On March 12, another female coal miner, Mrs. Eleanor R. Bowen of Mingo County, West Virginia, died in the line of duty; and in Moline, Illinois, John Deere & Co. summarily fired Miss Jodi Stutz when it was discovered that she in her innocent curiosity had used the company's new Xerox machine to photocopy her naked rump. Finally in Detroit, Michigan, those two policewomen who had chastely refused to assist a male colleague when he was attacked by a nude man burning money were dismissed from the force—the first dismissals for cowardice in the city's history.

• Consumerists in Abilene, Texas, were sing-

ing "I Told You So" when it was learned that the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company had inadvertently listed the Elliott-Hamil Funeral Home in its yellow pages under "Frozen Food—Wholesale." Mr. Robert E. White, America's newly-appointed Ambassador to El Salvador, engauded the legend of the Carter administration with a stupefying speech to the San Salvador-American Chamber of Commerce. There he accused the assembled capitalist roaders of funding the rightist terrorists who he hypothesized were responsible for the March 24 assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero. He then declared in stirring dudgeon that leftist leader Mr. Juan Chacon had also just been assassinated. Here was a memorable instance of Carterism with its grinning face; within hours of Mr. White's sermonics a robust and inflamed Mr. Chacon held a lively press conference, and the Yankee Colossus was again wearing grease paint and baggy pants.

• Mr. Angelo Bruno, a penniless immigrant who rose to become one of the most powerful and prosperous vending-machine salesman of all time despite almost constant harassment from the FBI, died of acute lead poisoning on March 21. Though never accepted by Philadelphia's polite society—such as it is—Mr. Bruno's funeral brought out over a thousand mourners. "He was a nice man, a good man," said Mrs. Amelia Rubolina; and Dr. Joseph Fiorello, cousin to the deceased, stated categorically, "He was one of the finest people I have ever known." Finally, the long-concealed truth is leaking out about "humane societies." In Boise, Idaho, the indigenous humane society is being sued for \$261,500 for its barbarous treatment of Pup, the priceless German shepherd of Mrs. Richard Millington, a local dowager.

• Proof that champions of traditional societies can provide fresh solutions to contemporary problems comes from the remote parts of India's Uttar Pradesh state, where much concern has been registered over the lascivious ways of those local police covering sex crimes. Now the Hijra (Eunuch) Association of Basti District has formally proposed that the Uttar Pradesh state government recruit eunuchs for this sort of police work, a proposal that will doubtless inspire many a feminist on our side of antiquity.

• Finally, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, has been found the Wonderboy's ideal Supreme Court nominee: Judge Richard Braithwaite, a confessed kleptomaniac who has pled guilty to shoplifting charges and who will be allowed to remain on the bench thanks to an understanding Circuit Court. Is it not time that kleptomaniacs too be represented on the High Court? After all, thieves now appear before the Court out of all proportion to their number in society at large. —RET

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*The American Spectator* was founded in 1924 by George Nathan and Truman Newberry over a cheap domestic ale in McSorley's Old Ale House. In 1967 the Saturday Evening Club took it over, rechristening it *The Alternative: An American Spectator*; but by November 1977 the word "alternative" had acquired such an esoteric fragrance that in order to discourage unsolicited manuscripts from florists, beauticians, and other creative types the Club reverted to the magazine's original name. *The American Spectator* is now published monthly at 102 West Sixth Street, Bloomington, Indiana. Second class postage paid at Bloomington, Indiana, and additional mailing offices.

A one-year subscription (12 issues) costs \$12, outside the United States \$14. Foreign air mail rates sent on request. All correspondence (manuscripts, subscriptions, threatening letters, federal grants, etc.) should be sent to *The American Spectator*, P.O. Box 1969, Bloomington, Indiana 47402, (812) 334-2715; New York office, (212) 724-3799. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes.

Microfilm editions of *The American Spectator* are available from Xerox University Microfilms, 200 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. ISSN 0148-8414.

Published remarkably without regard to sex, life-style, race, color, creed, or (most redundantly of all) national origin.

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Volume 13, Number 5, May 1980.

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# EDITORIAL

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## THE TRAVELS OF PARSON ANDERSON

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Tom Wolfe, midst the drolleries and insights of his superb book, *The Right Stuff*, depicts the press metaphorically as the "Victorian Gent," the espouser of seemingly sentiment. I wonder what Wolfe has made of the instantaneous eminence of candidate John Anderson, that vaguely clerical figure now wowing the Victorian Gent with poetry and pronouncements on college campuses, in suburbs, in television studios—wherever Puritan sophisticates gather.

Anderson is not just well received by the press; he is revered. His chances of becoming the Republican nominee are just a shade more promising than those of Harold Stassen, and his chances of becoming president are only marginally better. After all, Republicans too have rights, one of which is to nominate the candidate of their choice. The second-place showings occasionally conferred on Anderson by ritualistic liberals roaming into Republican primaries will not make him the paladin of the GOP. Republicans generally are out of sympathy with him, and he is out of sympathy with them, an issue he exploits very handsomely.

Yet the Anderson bleep has suddenly filled the Victorian Gent with wholesome visions: Ronald Reagan is floundering in high seas, George Bush is going under—on comes the invincible Anderson of Illinois! This is too much. This is hallucination. Anderson has now become the candidate of good works. Americans of seemingly sentiment speak of him in the same hushed tones generally reserved for UNICEF, Planned Parenthood, and the Sierra Club.

Why the solemnity? Anderson espoused right-wing orthodoxy during the debacle of 1964; he espouses goo-goo orthodoxy today, when even Jimmy Carter is starting to sound like Grover Cleveland. One gets the

impression that Anderson, as a student of politics and ideas, misses things.

Nevertheless, the Victorian Gent insists that Anderson is waging "a campaign of ideas," a claim that gives the candidate pleasure, not to say exultation. Well, I have removed my hat and scrutinized the *corpus delicti*. Alas, the candidate emits much music, all of it duly composed for organ—but ideas? His reliquary contains essentially only one worthy of the fanfare we are hearing, to wit: Anderson favors a 50-cent tax on gasoline, the consequences of which would be, he insists, nothing less than miraculous, at home, abroad, everywhere.

Now this idea may be absolutely copper-bottom; surely it is audacity

itself. But it will not make him the Adlai Stevenson of the 1980s, nor will it wing him into the White House. In fact, it is just the kind of idea that would assure Anderson of a brisk and painful slaughtering on November 4, were a legion of magicians to intercede and wrest the Republican nomination for him. The recently retired Prime Minister of Canada, Joe Clark, can testify to this.

A campaign of ideas? Ho ho ho. When Anderson smilingly offers himself up as a barnstorming Socrates, a Jefferson for moderns, a wallower in the ambience of the highfalutin, he approaches the outer limits of our credulity; even the Victorian Gent might be moved to doubt. "I believe," Anderson notified a Yale audience on March 6, "in the power of ideas. That's the romance, the excitement, of this cam-

paign." This romance borders on narcissism.

Beyond his 50-cent gasoline tax, his ideas are modest, familiar, somewhat contradictory, and, in general, primly liberal. True, he is skeptical of wanton government spending and wage and price controls, but then his positions on social issues, defense, and foreign relations put one in mind of a conventional liberal and nothing more.

Of course, this is precisely what Anderson is: a conventional liberal, playing the time-honored role of liberal egghead and moralist for all it is worth. It is rather amazing that, at a time when so many reputedly wise pundits are speaking of America's rising conservative mood, many of the same pundits insist that Anderson is a superbly electable candidate.

He is not. What he is is a mischief-maker whose mischief is downright dangerous to those whose politics he claims to champion—namely, the pols of the center and of the left. Thanks to the votes Anderson's quixotic campaign diverted in Illinois, George Bush was mortally wounded, and Teddy Kennedy's war chest remained in astonishingly straitened condition. Bush was the only candidate with a prayer of stopping Ronald Reagan, and Kennedy is the one candidate who has forthrightly offered the ideas of the Left to the voters.

This is much to the Massachusetts Messiah's credit as an ideological pol if not a practical pol. Of course, he has presented the Left's ideas with the requisite sophistries, his favorite being to include the average taxpayer when he essays the hellish conditions forced upon us by the rich, while neglecting to mention that, when it comes time to soak the rich, the average taxpayer will get a thorough dunking, too. Nonetheless, Kennedy is the Left's legitimate candidate,



*Adapted from RET's Monday Column in the Washington Post.*