

# THE CONTINUING CRISIS



• On August 2 the Iraqi tyrant Mr. Saddam Hussein sent 170,000 of his troops to requisition Kuwait and choice real estate in Saudi Arabia, thus creating on the Kuwaiti-Saudi border the Middle East's largest concentration of amoebic dysentery. With unanticipated alacrity President George Herbert Walker Bush orchestrated a worldwide embargo against Iraq and sent an American expeditionary force to Saudi Arabia. Soon the astonished Saddam Hussein found himself the object of a naval interdiction of all trade with his country, including many Porta-Johns urgently needed by his embattled army. Jordan's King Hussein (no relation) undertook an immediate diplomatic mission to Washington, hoping to prevent hostilities and perhaps secure for the Iraqis adequate supplies of Kaopectate. But the American buildup in the desert continued, and as health hazards multiplied around the fortifications of the unsanitary Iraqis, it seemed increasingly likely that units of the World Health Organization would be summoned to assist any Iraqi pullout and to disinfect those smelly encampments.

• Those American reformers always in such a lather about "white-collar crime" must have thrown little festivals in their hearts when the Internal Revenue Service in Omaha, Nebraska, weighed exhuming the corpse of a recently deceased tax dodger, Mr. Ehsanolla Motaghd, to confirm that he is indeed dead and not engaged in another of his clever ruses. Then, too, there are Mr. Motaghd's gold fillings. The infelicitously named Rep. Floyd H. Flake (D-N.Y.) and his lovely wife Margaret pleaded not guilty to outrageous and unconscionable charges that this 45-year-old man of the cloth had diverted \$141,700 from his Allen African Methodist Church, of which he is pope, and from its associated Allen Senior Citizens Apartments—built with a \$10 million federal loan—to his own purposes. The Rev. Jesse Jackson's National Rainbow Coalition, Inc. was sued in D.C. Superior Court by Tommy's Limousine, Inc. in an attempt to collect \$14,586.36—the unpaid remnant of a \$22,317.73 bill rung up by the Rev. J. J. in the summer of 1989, when he used a limousine practically every day to demonstrate an arcane point of his African-American socialist philosophy.

Elsewhere politicians were giving of themselves in August, or at least promising to. In Italy, perhaps the most famous member of parliament, the ec-dysiast Miss Ilona Staller, announced a peace plan for the Middle East. "I am available," the blond beauty declaimed, "to make love with Hussein to achieve peace. I am willing to let him have his way with me if in exchange he frees the hostages." It could get kinky, Miss Staller!

• The animal rights movement was presented with a vivid demonstration of the unkind treatment accorded animals by bipeds early in the month in Brazil, where Mr. Ray Santos, a politician running for state representative, was bitten by a rat during a televised campaign appearance. Mr. Santos promptly reciprocated, notifying the rat, which he held by its tail, that "Starting now, we begin our campaign against rats." Subsequently Mr. Santos received eight anti-rabies injections, a consideration denied the rat, who has yet to be located by concerned citizens or potential supporters in the animal rights movement. In Washington, D.C., the court declared a mistrial on twelve of fourteen counts in the drug trial of Mayor Marion Barry. The astute Mr. Barry immediately called for a city-wide healing process. If the process works, Mr. Barry will be mayor-for-life, for he is the city's leading heel. Supporters of Senator Jesse Helms's reelection campaign have filed a complaint with the FEC against "The Oral Majority," a homosexual organization that is ha-



assing the senator and, incidentally, not being exactly up front with the public. Candor and proper regard for public health should admonish the senator's antagonists to rechristen their group "The Anal and Oral Majority," thereby providing a full account of their amorous rites.

• The movement away from accepting personal responsibility for one's dubious behavior continues. Researchers in Englewood, Colorado, led by Dr. I. Kaufman Arenberg are attempting to convince the public that the simian daubings of the late Mr. Vincent van Gogh are not the artist's fault. Like the alcoholic's aberrant behavior, Mr. van Gogh's paintings are, according to these researchers, symptoms of Miniere's disease, an inner-ear malady conducing to vertigo, deafness, erratic vision, and nausea, hence that ghastly "Wheatfield With Crows" thing. What possible good can come from such sophistry? Vincent van Gogh was a very untidy man, with the manners of an Adolf Hitler and none of the redeeming qualities of our own Mapplethorpe or Serrano, the Michelangelo of the urinary tract. And, incidentally, the *Wall Street Journal* on August 9 reported on an art museum worthy of a fat grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Just a mile from Washington's Smithsonian museums, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hughes' frequently overlooked Potato Museum has shut its doors to the 500 or more tourists who for fifteen years have been flocking to it under what delusions one can scarcely imagine. Possibly they are English tourists in search of some good home cooking.

• A fire cut off electricity throughout lower Manhattan, and three of the men who brutally assaulted the Central Park jogger were found guilty of serious breaches of the peace. In Amherst, Massachusetts, new high school guidelines against "sexual harassment" will make it *malum prohibitum* to exchange "intimate" sexual gossip in school hallways or to "stare or to leer with sexual overtones"—prohibitions that will make the school year long and tedious for Amherst's vaunted high school cheerleaders. East German soldiers will no longer march the goose step, according to Defense Minister Rainer Eppelmann. German progressives have protested that the goose step

is repugnant to democratic values, and animal rights activists have long posited that it is painful to the geese.

• In New York State, sportsmen are complaining that conflict of interest statutes were flouted when Governor Mario Cuomo signed into law legislation banning dwarf-tossing and dwarf-bowling. In Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Mr. Mark A. Peterson, 29, has pled not guilty to raping simultaneously two of a woman's twenty-one personalities in the congested back seat of his car last June. In London, a hot, dry summer has pig specialists worried that the famed porkers of the Cotswolds are failing to copulate. Mr. Mike Williamson, an authority at the Cotswold Pig Development Company, advises farmers that boars and sows will be less reluctant to mate if they "freshen up" by having buckets of mud thrown on them—though caution must be exercised lest farmers spill the powerful aphrodisiac on themselves.

• On August 28 the College Board released test data demonstrating that college-bound high school seniors had recorded the lowest reading scores in a decade, which is good news when one considers the appalling stuff they will be asked to read if they attend such benighted institutions as Stanford University or the Patrice Lumumba University of Moscow. The potential dangers of licking toad slime were again manifest after two Canadians, Mr. Garry Murphy and Mr. Paul Cherrie, overindulged themselves on the slime of Mr. Murphy's cane toad. The slime, when properly ingested, produces a mellow high, then violent retching and partial paralysis. It has become very popular among upper-class Canadians and faculty members of the Harvard Law School.

• In Bologna, Italy, Mr. Ettore Maserati, who with his brother Alfieri founded the Maserati automobile company and racing team, died. He was 95. In New York the oldest New Yorker under indictment for murder, Mr. Oliver Barre, 95, died when hit by an express bus. In Santa Barbara, California (where else?), a 92-year-old man died at the wheel upon smacking his 1964 Corvette into a brick wall. And from France comes the sad news that one of the most tireless and intelligent proponents of modern conservatism,

Mr. Jean-Marie Benoist, has died of stomach cancer. He was 48 and a treasured friend of this magazine.

• Former President Jimmy Carter continues to amaze. Late in the month in Oslo, Norway, at a conference sponsored by the Elie Wiesel Foundation

for Humanity, the insufferable twit chided the Western democracies for their "personalized hatred" of Mr. Saddam Hussein and for adding him to a historic list of enemies "stripped of any redeeming human characteristics." A few days later, the Rev. Jackson an-

nounced immediate plans to fly to Baghdad to interview the unfortunate Mr. Hussein. Meanwhile, Mr. Hussein continued to round up Western civilians and incarcerate them at Iraqi sites likely to be attacked in the event of war. He also forced Western children to par-

ticipate in propaganda films with him. Viewed a certain way these are acts of peace and humanity, and certainly all Americans can be grateful that Mr. Carter has the leisure time to view them far away from the lusty swales of our nation's capital. —RET

## C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

### Micah Milhous Morrison

Micah Morrison's article "Environmental Gore" (*TAS*, August 1990) took me back to the late '60s and the Nixonian paranoia that pervaded the right. Like Nixon, Morrison uses the eccentricities of the fringe elements to denigrate an entire movement. By equating the aborted actions of Earth-Firsters or the alleged enthusiasm for AIDS of "some Deep Ecologists" with the Green Revolution, he is trafficking in the same sensationalist innuendo Nixon used in his attempts to squelch the anti-war movement.

Mr. Morrison's paranoia is further demonstrated when he states that "Greenpeace and the Rainforest Action Network do little to hide their larger agenda of overturning the real culprit in environmental carnage, industrial capitalism." Overturning industrial capitalism is not the aim, nor has it ever been, of any major Environmental Group. Rather, it is the raising of the consciousness of industrial capitalism and making it take responsibility for its actions. The sale of chemical pesticides (whose use is outlawed in the U.S.) by Dupont and other manufacturers to Third World nations demonstrates a total lack of corporate consciousness and responsibility in the pursuit of profit. Bringing this behavior under public scrutiny is the aim of us environmentalists, as any informed journalist well knows.

That Mr. Morrison has swallowed the corporate scam hook, line, and image is demonstrated by his stated belief that "not only has the corporate world jumped on the ecological bandwagon, but Bush will be making a mighty effort to remind voters that he is the environmental President."

The recent marketing binge regarding "degradable" trash bags is evidence superlative of the real motives of the corporate world. After inundating stores with "biodegradable trash bags," manufacturers were required to take them off the shelves when it was demonstrated that they were little better than their non-biodegradable counterparts. Soon afterwards, a spokesman for Mobil Chemical Company, manufacturer of Hefty trash bags, stated that "degradability is just a marketing

tool." The corporate world jumped on the bandwagon, when marketing wizards saw polls showing a great majority of Americans put environmental quality at the top of their priorities list for the '90s. Simple greed, Mr. Morrison, not concern for our environment, motivates corporations.

As for Mr. Bush being the environmental President, actions give a far clearer understanding of his real loyalties than reading his lips. Mr. Bush has come foursquare behind the oil industry in his advocacy of Offshore Drilling, even in the face of polls and initiatives on both coasts, indicating that the great majority of citizens favor a complete ban on any further drilling. Seventy percent of Californians recently voted to stop all offshore exploration for oil, yet Bush continues to call for it in the Santa Barbara Channel.

In his enthusiasm to de-green Senator Al Gore, Micah aimed his partisan weapon not only at Gore but also at the Environmental Movement, *per se*. Obviously duped by corporate flimflam and fitted with blinders, Mr. Morrison set out on this safari with a gun loaded with innuendo, buzz words, and misrepresentation, not to mention a round or two of Nixonian paranoia.

—Bob Joslin  
Whitefish, Montana

Micah Morrison hit the bullseye. As a former Tennessean, I have followed the politics of the Gore family for years. Albert Gore, Sr. lost his seat in the U.S. Senate when his connections with the Eastern liberal establishment became more important to him than his Tennessee constituency. Similarly, Albert Gore, Jr. is just as liberal as his father, perhaps even more so. In the 1988 presidential primaries, Albert Gore, Jr. recognized this and made rather obvious attempts to "run away from his record." His ploy became so obvious that even his fellow dwarves were calling the matter to his attention. I believe it was Richard Gephardt who said during the campaign: "Al Gore keeps tripping over his own record."

—Jim Larkins  
Austin, Texas

### T. E. vs. R. J.

R. J. Stove's review of a recent biography of Richard Aldington was very disappointing because it unequivocally endorsed Aldington's spiteful contempt for T. E. Lawrence (*TAS*, August 1990).

Mr. Stove repeats the oft-told account that Aldington's scathing biography of Lawrence received a chilly reception from the "British establishment," despite the fact that "no one could convincingly dispute the truth of Aldington's findings. He had done his research too well."

I hope Mr. Stove has occasion to consult Jeremy Wilson's new biography of Lawrence. In it, Mr. Wilson writes that "Lawrence was not as Aldington claimed, a habitual liar, and [the] *Seven Pillars* is remarkably accurate on questions of fact. Those who had wished in the 1950s to show that Lawrence was pathologically dishonest hoped that the contemporary documents would eventually demonstrate that they were right. In the event, the documents have done exactly the opposite." Mr. Wilson also describes Aldington as an embittered expatriate who believed that if he could destroy Lawrence's reputation this would deeply wound the British establishment. Shouldn't Mr. Stove have treated these matters?

—Anthony Cavender  
Houston, Texas

### R. J. Stove replies:

Though I haven't yet read Jeremy Wilson's biography (not having been able to obtain a copy by the deadline date for my review), Mr. Cavender's extract fails to address the issues that Aldington raised. Like the denunciations which greeted Aldington's book in 1955, it insists on playing the man rather than playing the ball. You can't dispose of someone's biographical credibility by calling him an expatriate. As for Aldington's alleged embitterment, those who actually saw him on a regular basis during his later years were struck mainly by his singular freedom from bitterness, both before and after *Lawrence of Arabia*. We should not forget that Aldington began as a Lawrence supporter.

Nevertheless, I am grateful to Mr. Cavender for alerting me to the Wilson

work's claims, and shall be interested to learn how Mr. Wilson copes when he comes to explain the Lawrence Bureau's behavior towards Aldington. If Aldington's account was indeed fallacious, why did it scare the hell out of Lawrence's admirers? Surely the appropriate response would have been either to ignore it or to laugh it away. In fact, the Lawrence Bureau tried desperately to prevent publication altogether. This is a strange way of behaving towards a fraudulent book. It is much more plausible as a response to an accurate one.

Lawrence himself, incidentally, told Bernard Shaw that *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* "was an effort to make history an imaginative thing." He produced several versions of *Seven Pillars*: these differ not only from each other but from the *Secret Dispatches* on the same subject. When Lawrence himself created wholesale confusion about his achievements, is it surprising that Aldington eventually refused to take him at his word?

### Kasten Doubts

I have no problems with the underlying principles expressed in Senator Robert W. Kasten's article "Moynihan and the Conservatives" (*TAS*, August 1990), but I fail to understand his concern for some folks having to pay twice in any privatization scenario. Without privatization and with no change in payroll taxes, a lot of folks will pay twice, even if Social Security immediately moves to a pay-as-you-go rate of taxation.

Unless I have missed something, the excess dollars presently flowing into the "Trust Fund" are "invested" in the safest securities in the world: U.S. government securities. The invested cash, now in the general fund, is used for general government expenditures, thus making the difference between government receipts and expenditures, The Deficit, appear much smaller than it really is.

As for Social Security, its manager looks at his balance sheet and sees a nice portfolio of Government Securities earning interest and says "all is well." The immediate problem is that since the government makes nothing and therefore creates no wealth, the in-

(continued on page 49)