

A battle could be sparked anywhere, but beginning last year (1977) a major trouble site in Little Peng's hometown was the movie theater. Members of different gangs were attracted there by films from Albania, Rumania, and Yugoslavia, shown for the first time since the fall of the "Gang of Four" and the easing of the ban on foreign films. "Yugoslavian love stories are really vivid," Little Peng explained. "One movie I saw was called *The Bridge*—it was an antifascist film. Of course, all these movies have a little love story in them. They're already censored [in China], but what little is left is enough to drive the audience wild. And then there were some movies with exciting trapeze artists....I guess if a western [European or American] movie got there, it wouldn't even have to have a nude scene to make people even wilder. I'll bet the audience will rush up front and try to climb up the screen!"

"You went to the movies at the risk of your life," Little Peng said. "Parents were always warning their kids not even to go near one....The authorities are so stupid. If they increased the number of showing times, there'd be much less trouble....The theater was small and the number of tickets was limited. Fighting was taking place all the time around there. One gang member goes up to another and says, 'Have you got a ticket?' The other says, 'No.' The first one says, 'Let me search.' The other refuses. So, wham—out comes a fist! Then, wham—another fist back. A great fight can get started like this."

Little Peng himself was once involved in a fight when he went with a friend to see a movie: "There were four of them there [in front of the theater] standing around smoking. They flicked their cigarette butts at us. We said, 'What did you do that for?' They said, 'We did it because we think you're great stuff. If we didn't think so, we'd stick the butts right into your mouths.' This was, of course, a matter of human self-respect. The two of us got into a terrific fight with them. It so happened two others of our gang

were nearby and came to our aid. We fought so hard that one of them got a bloodied head and another had his foot hurt so badly he couldn't walk. One of us got a sprained wrist. It was a desperate battle! We used everything we could lay our hands on—sticks, rocks, knives. It got so fierce that onlookers called the police—but we scattered before they came....If they made an investigation, it led nowhere...."

"The authorities," scoffed Little Peng, "have absolutely no control."

It was through such fights, some accidental and others pre-arranged, that "great fighters" rose to fame—those "who fought under any conditions—even four people at a time—and who didn't bother with second-rate fighters." Prearranged fights always involved the use of deadly weapons, because (as Little Peng put it) "fists alone are not enough for venting your hatred." Serious injuries and even death might follow.

Sometimes, internal injuries were incurred which remained "undetected" until years later. Little Peng and his friends were told this once by a famous fighter who was now much older and openly regretted his fighting days. "You may not feel anything when you're sixteen to nineteen," he told them, "maybe even through the age of twenty-three. But when you're twenty-five or even later, you feel the symptoms....I could have used my fighting days to learn a skill or a trade—to learn something," he added. He was giving advice—the sort that Little Peng and his friends would never have tolerated from their parents or anybody else. But the "famous man" had earned the right to a respectful audience.

"It made sense," Little Peng accorded, but he was plainly unmoved. The old become practical when the fun's over. If fate had not whisked him suddenly and finally out of the Chinese context, he would even now be walking cocksure down some street looking for trouble. His friends still are. □

Seymour Martin Lipset

Presidential Greatness in the Age of Carter

There has been a tide of concern in recent years over the "imperial presidency," yet in fact it is the weakness of the American presidency today that is indisputable. This is not to say that the image of the imperial presidency is wrong, or that what gave rise to it has disappeared. It was, and remains, a valid conception. The number of people working directly for the White House has steadily grown—even though every recent president has promised to cut down the size of the executive branch. This is as true of Jimmy Carter as it was of his predecessors.* As a system the presidency, or the government, has become an all-powerful institution. But the main consequence of bigness is differentiation, and that means that the chief executive, as an individual, loses much of his ability to control the government. Presidents coming into office, including Jimmy Carter, have not usually appreciated this. Most assume that because they are smart they will know how to control. After a while they realize that this is impossible.

Trying to deal with differentiation led to the basic problems of the Nixon presidency. To a considerable degree, of course, the isolation of the Oval Office was a function of Nixon's personality,

his passion for privacy, and his suspicion that the bureaucrats were trying to do him in, as in fact many were. But independent of personality, to control a large and differentiated government means that the president has to be isolated from many people who have good reason to see him. As FDR noted about a much smaller presidency in 1939: "It has become physically impossible for one man to see so many persons, to receive reports directly from them and to attempt to advise them on their own problems...."

Given these developments, it is curious that Jimmy Carter, alone among modern presidents, has tried to operate without a chief of staff—someone with authority to control the flow of information and to influence his personal agenda. Carter's White House is organized, not in hierarchical fashion, but rather like "the spokes of a wheel," with different aides having equal rights of access. Carter is his own chief of staff. According to Richard Cheney, Gerald Ford's chief of staff, this procedure cannot work: "Somebody has to be in charge. Without an orderly structure, there's no accountability, no orderly flow. You always run the risk of being blind-sided." James Howe, Jr., an adviser to Roosevelt and other Democratic presidents, agrees: "Carter's doing an

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* According to Don Bonafede, writing in the March 4, 1978 *National Journal*, the Executive Office of the President has grown "since the beginning of the Carter administration." As this article goes to press, the President is trying to get authorization from Congress to increase sizeably the number of highly-paid senior assistants in the White House.

awful lot of stuff he shouldn't be doing. He must be exhausting himself on things that aren't that important."

The president obviously cannot react to all the memoranda he receives from the myriad of government departments. Moreover, the cabinet members, though appointed by the president, actually become the spokesmen for their departments. Joseph Califano heads Health, Education and Welfare, which is larger than many national governments. Like other ministers, he winds up representing his department to the president. What the president needs, therefore, is a staff loyal to him which will oversee the departments. The White House staff, or the Executive Office, thus becomes a second cabinet composed of the president's people.

When Richard Nixon first took office he held a televised press conference to introduce his cabinet members. He emphasized his campaign commitments to an open administration, to regular cabinet meetings, and to a cabinet that would function as a body and possess real authority. We now know what actually happened—the enhanced power of the White House staff of Haldeman and Ehrlichman, and the conflicts over authority and control. Nixon did not want independent cabinet members.

Nor does Jimmy Carter, who repeated this entire Nixon episode. He introduced his cabinet members to the public and announced he would have a truly collegial cabinet whose members would have broad authority. But the truth about cabinet authority can be found in the story of John Dunlop, a man widely rumored in the press to be a candidate for Secretary of Labor.

Dunlop was not appointed Secretary, despite strong backing from the AFL-CIO. According to newspaper reports, Dunlop was rejected because he was considered weak on affirmative action, and various black and women's groups publicly opposed him. But Dunlop himself explained what really happened:

Carter never intended to appoint me. He said he always meant to appoint Ray Marshall. I believe him. The reason is fairly simple. Look at the cabinet. They all have one thing in common that does not characterize me. Not one of them has a constituency of his own and I do.

That is, Dunlop had close ties to the labor movement. Had he been appointed Secretary of Labor, he would have had the AFL-CIO behind him; and if a fight between him and the president had developed, and Dunlop threatened to resign, as he had done in the Ford administration, that would have meant a conflict not just with Dunlop, but with the labor movement as well.

Cyrus Vance, Michael Blumenthal, and the rest of the cabinet do not have constituencies either. Carter appointed people he can fire tomorrow if they disagree with him, knowing that no one will make a fuss about it. The one exception to this is Andrew Young, who does have a constituency in the black civil-rights movement. If Carter were to remove Young as UN Ambassador there would be an outcry from blacks. But Young is not in an area of direct concern to his constituency. So it seems that Carter deliberately planned to have, not an independent, but a weak cabinet over which the White House staff could exert influence and power. Carter wants to be a strong president, and that requires that the White House, rather than the cabinet and departments, be the center of policy.

Franklin Roosevelt tried to increase his ability to make effective decisions by including in his government people with diverse approaches to the same area. Recognizing that different values and interests produced different "solutions," he made a habit of assigning the same problem to people or agencies with varying biases on the assumption that they would disagree and submit alternative policies to him. Other presidents followed the same strategy. Under Nixon and Ford, Fred Iklé, the head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, frequently disagreed with Henry Kissinger over arms control. On one occasion, Iklé complained to Ford about agreements reached by Kissinger with the Russians, and the President overruled the Secretary of State.

Jimmy Carter, however, by believing there is a "correct" solution to every problem, by relying on "experts," and by insisting that he make all decisions himself, has reduced his options and made himself a servant of his subordinates. In foreign policy and defense his experts largely come from one ideological camp—New

Politics, McGovern liberals and members of past administrations who have publicly recanted their role in the Vietnam war. In the Transition Task Force which they dominated they recommended each other. As a result, the State Department under Carter and Vance is more openly politicized than in previous administrations. Foreign Service Officer Neal Boyer noted in a (leaked) confidential memorandum that "of the 36 most senior positions in this department, 22 are filled by political appointees, as compared with only 12 in the last administration." McGovern himself has said that State Department appointments have been "excellent...quite close to those I would have made myself." The effect of having drawn almost all foreign-policy experts from one ideological camp can be seen in Carter's Middle East policy. All those concerned with the Middle East share the viewpoint outlined by Zbigniew Brzezinski in a series of articles published in 1974 and 1976. The prominent members of the Democratic Party who disagree with it have been excluded from discussions in both the National Security Council and the State Department.

The prevalence of New Politics supporters in foreign-policy and arms-control posts, people who are convinced that a mutually advantageous accommodation with the Soviet Union is possible, increasingly worries America's allies in Western Europe and Japan, who see Russian armament policies and maneuvers in the Middle East and Africa as evidence that Soviet expansionism continues. Commitment to withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea has led conservative Japanese politicians to feel they may have to come to a closer accommodation with their Communist neighbors. According to Flora Lewis, writing in the *New York Times* of April 1, 1978, European leaders express "uneasiness and bewilderment" over Carter's foreign policy. In France, not surprisingly, the conservative *Le Figaro* wrote some time ago of its concern over the influence of left-oriented "progressistes" on American policy in Europe. But recently, according to Miss Lewis, a "surprising attack came in a front-page article in *Le Monde*, a [left-oriented] newspaper that had long been sharply critical of what it considered over-assertive American 'superpower' attitudes around the world. Now, it said, Washington is failing to protect Western interests, especially in the Horn of Africa, but also in East-West relations generally."

Unlike Franklin Roosevelt, who welcomed conflict and tension within his administration and who gave the various segments of his coalition the sense that their representatives were part of the government, Jimmy Carter sees harmony as a virtue. When asked by Saul Pett of the *New York Times* what was his "greatest single satisfaction with the job so far," he replied that it was creating a "harmonious and highly efficient team." The way in which Carter's most important domestic program, his energy package, was put together reveals his preoccupation with expertise and harmony. According to the *New York Times*, "the plan was conceived in secrecy by technicians" and "reflected a detached, almost apolitical attitude." Those involved "functioned as if they were a self-contained unit and their task as hush-hush as the Manhattan project." It is hardly surprising, therefore, that those who disagree with Carter's energy plan have felt compelled to wage bitter campaigns against it in the Congress.

As with the State Department, Carter's domestic administration contains a large number of McGovernites—many of whom even backed Fred Harris or Morris Udall for the nomination in 1976—while almost no one who supported Henry Jackson holds a major position. In the October 1977 issue of *Fortune*, Juan Cameron wrote that "a great many of the sub-Cabinet-level positions have been given to a diverse array of public-interest lawyers, consumerists, civil-rights workers, and environmental advocates." Cameron argues that even though Carter may not have known the ideological backgrounds of any of these individuals, and did not directly appoint most of them, they were hired because they exhibit the political tendencies and approaches to government that he personally likes. As an anti-establishment outsider, Carter prefers others similar to himself. In Cameron's words, "There is no question that a curious affinity exists between the Georgian's traditional populism and the leftist thinking of the public-interest people who surround him."

Carter's reliance on New Politics types does not contradict his dependence on experts, or his concern with finding the correct "solutions" to problems. Indeed, he recruits his experts among New Politics academics and public-interest lawyers. In so doing he follows in the footsteps of Richard Nixon, who also depended on lawyers, albeit corporate ones, and professors. Under both Nixon and Ford, although nobody seems to have noticed, there was professor Kissinger at National Security and State; professor Schultz at Treasury; professor Schlesinger at CIA and Defense; Dean Butz, former professor, at Agriculture; professor Moynihan in Domestic Affairs; professor Levi in the Attorney General's office; professor Dunlop at Labor; professor Mathews at HEW; and professor Burns at the Federal Reserve. Nothing was more wrong with that television serial based on the Nixon administration, "Washington Behind Closed Doors," than the statement of President Monkton, "Don't hire anyone from Harvard," a statement Nixon actually made. Nixon's administration was full of people from Harvard and other Ivy League schools; and he appointed academics, not because as a group they were Republicans or conservatives, or because he had a constituency in academe, but because they were experts.

Carter has done the same thing, although his cabinet does contain more people with Washington bureaucratic experience than either Nixon's or Ford's. His professors are concentrated more at the subcabinet level. Still, there are many academics at the head of Carter departments: Brzezinski in National Security, Brown in Defense, Marshall in Labor, Schlesinger in Energy, and Kreps in Commerce. Patricia Harris, Secretary of HUD, has taught at Howard University Law School, serving briefly as Dean. Treasury Secretary Blumenthal is a businessman, but he is a businessman with a Ph.D., a former professor who does not have strong ties to the business community. He resembles Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense under Kennedy and Johnson, another ex-professor businessman who retained close connections to the academic world.

The Carter administration is also composed of outsiders. Except for Brzezinski, and very recently Strauss, the top echelon in the White House is all Georgian. As such, Georgians are no better or worse than Kennedy's Boston Irish mafia or Nixon's California mafia, but a Georgian background is inherently more provincial. The people who entered the White House with Carter knew each other well in Georgia and stayed together throughout the long campaign. Of course, being at the summit they have been able to meet everybody in Washington and thus become more cosmopolitan; but they still remain a clique and basically rely on each other for information and ideas.

Carter consciously balanced this provincial-outsider White House by appointing many Washington insiders to the cabinet, something which shocked his Georgian populist collaborators. It should be recalled that Hamilton Jordan had said, "if you find Vance and Brzezinski in this administration, you'll know we did something wrong"—but they and others like them were appointed. Jordan and his friends are there to manage them, to give the President his options, to protect him against the departments.

Carter's conception of government is avowedly populist. As a populist he thinks little of interest groups whom he believes to be incorrigibly selfish. Labor defends labor, business defends business; the government, however, should represent all

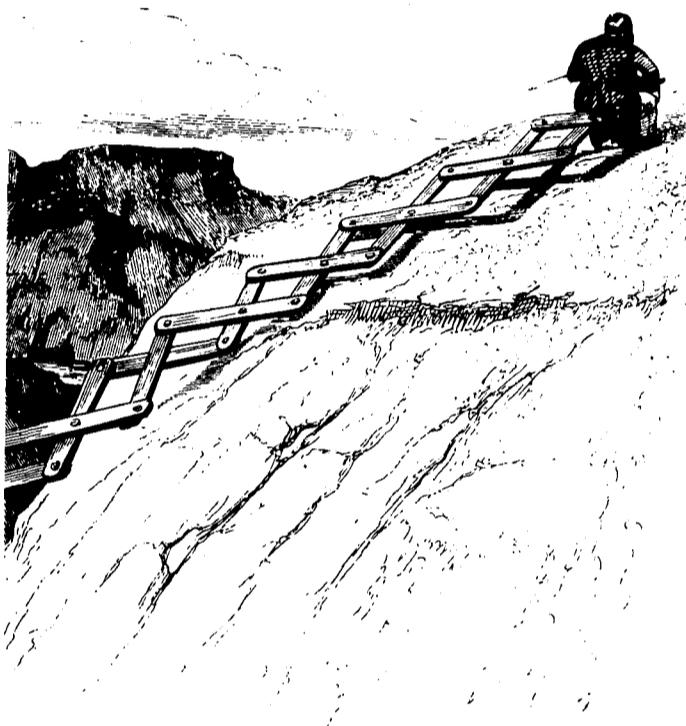
the people. What is wrong with this view is that it is basically apolitical and undemocratic. Populists fail to recognize that democracy is inherently pluralistic; that it is based on conflict among interests; that coalitions among diverse interest groups are the stuff of politics; and that there is no common interest other than that which emerges out of the struggles, compromises, and deals.

In his rejection of interests, Carter resembles the unlamented former politician John Lindsay. When Lindsay became Mayor of New York, he announced that he would not deal with the "power brokers." He said he represented the people, and would not negotiate private deals with the unions. On January 1, 1966, the day he took office, the unions went on strike. Lindsay was broken by them, and capitulated to them more than the wheelers and dealers had. Robert Wagner, his predecessor, had negotiated better contracts from the city's point of view by making covert agreements.

When Carter took office, he too was determined not to deal with interest groups. He would represent the interests of the people. But what happened? The interests revealed their power. When they demonstrated anger at being ignored, Carter quickly backtracked—he could hardly do otherwise. Like Nixon, he had been elected by a narrow electoral college majority, and thus had to begin work on his reelection campaign the day he entered office. But to be reelected he must have the votes, and in particular he must not alienate the constituencies that elected him.

Thus, a pattern of standing on high principle and then giving way emerged in the first fifteen months of the Carter presidency. He refused to deal with the AFL-CIO for some time, and the AFL-CIO became publicly angry with him. George Meany voiced regret for having worked so hard for Carter in 1976, threatened not to do the same in 1980—and had his way. Carter did a sudden turnabout and began to espouse positions on minimum-wage and trade-union-rights legislation which the union movement advocated.

Similar events occurred with respect to the Middle East. Carter and Brzezinski undertook a policy of pressing Israel to compromise, to yield on crucial issues (such as the demands of the Palestinians) which Israel believed detrimental to its security interests. Pressure by the U.S. on Israel has repeatedly created conflict between Carter and pro-Israel groups, particularly the Jews but others as well, most of whom have been traditional Democrats. When they attacked the administration, the White House backed down. After one such confrontation in July 1977, Carter held a meeting with the presidents of major Jewish organizations at which he said that, unlike his predecessor, he would never pressure Israel by threatening to withhold aid, that the U.S. and Israel may disagree, but such disagreements are among close friends. In October, following public outrage against the joint U.S.-Soviet statement calling on Israel to recognize "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians," Carter caved in again. He told a group of pro-Israeli congressmen that he would sooner commit "political suicide" than endanger Israel's security. Following Sadat's initiatives, Carter has finally challenged the Begin government's tough territorial line, presumably in the hope that the coalition regime, which includes a number of "doves," will break up. If it does not, it remains to be seen whether Carter will resist the pressures on him to modify his stand.



This pattern of public confrontation and retreat under fire has reduced Carter's credibility among participants in the disputes at home, and among our friends and enemies abroad. Carter has become increasingly subject to criticism which is strikingly similar to the kind that was directed at John Lindsay. *Newsweek* reported: "The complaint is commonplace in Washington that Carter, far from being the stiff-necked purist of Georgia legend, bends too easily under pressure." An article in the *New York Times* commented: "Once perceived as being 'too stubborn,' Mr. Carter is now seen by many as a man prone to retreat too quickly." And the *Economist* noted that the behavior of the White House has "made our conclusion of a year ago seem almost embarrassingly prophetic: 'Mr. Carter has shown an alarmingly visceral streak when under pressure.'" Like Lindsay, Carter has turned out to be more vulnerable to interest-group pressure than politicians who recognize from the start that they must negotiate with the interests if they are to maintain an effective coalition.

The weakness of the Carter presidency may be due largely to certain basic trends in democratic politics, specifically, the fact that welfare states are exposed to steadily increasing demands from growing numbers of well-organized interest groups, outside of and within the government.

As Steven Roberts has written in the *New York Times*: "Citizens say they want Government off their backs, but they welcome Federal benefits.... These demands on the Federal Government have been compounded by the enormous growth of special interest groups, which often concentrate on one issue: equality or the

environment, birth control or gun control, prayer in schools or money in campaigns, saving the whales or saving the family." And David Broder has stressed the inability of the Carter administration to stand up to the pressure exerted from inside government. He noted that the "new" urban program made public on March 25, 1978, the product of an interdepartmental task force assigned the job a year earlier of getting rid of programs which did not work, "proved mainly to be a device for protecting every program of every agency represented.... None of the 160 recommendations call for eliminating any single existing federal program—despite the almost universal acknowledgment that some of them are real losers!"

The capacity of politicians and governments to satisfy the often contradictory demands of these external constituencies and internal bureaucracies has declined. As various publics have been educated to demand more from their governors, those in office find it impossible to deal with them. New York City broke down financially. On a larger scale, the U.S. government faces the same dilemma. Those at the summit, mayors or presidents, are blamed for these failures and, not surprisingly, their popularity goes down. Ironically, the very growth of government makes them appear weak and ineffective. Writing in the *Washington Post*, David Broder has emphasized that Carter's experience "tells you a great deal, not only about the inability of this President to achieve his goals, but about the inherent frustrations of a governmental process so big and complex as to overwhelm almost anyone." □

Anne Crutcher

The Feminine Mistake

A hundred years ago, feminism was wanting to vote, to go to college, to earn a living at a profession other than the oldest. It was wanting to own property and to decide whom to marry without asking Papa. Clear-cut, and rather humble, goals.

Fifty years ago, a few people were beginning to understand that it was a little more complicated than it looked. Women's handicaps were subtler and more pervasive than the most militant had supposed. Women's real desires were more mixed than the most self-aware quite knew.

But 40 years ago, it was possible to see it all spelled out, complete with nuances, by a woman who knew how to transcend feminine disadvantage as well as how to identify it. By that time, Virginia Woolf had written both "A Room of One's Own" and "Three Guineas," the first in 1929 and the second in 1938. Between them, these two essays sum up just about everything 20th-century women are up against in trying to express themselves as human beings with intellectual as well as emotional dimensions and with legitimate ambitions to have a hand in running their world.

Virginia Woolf faced all the embarrassing questions. To answer the one about why so few female geniuses, she replied by introducing Shakespeare's sister. A hypothetical girl just like him in brains, energy, imagination—everything except sex. What would have happened?

He had little education; she would have had less. She would have been home learning to bake and brew while he was out talking to soldiers, travellers, tavern trulls, and courtiers. If she ran away to London to go on the stage as he did, either rape or passion

would have made her pregnant at 16. What then would there have been for her but to hang herself?

It is an image that still conveys.

So does the image of the inviolate room of one's own. Virginia Woolf was very clear about the way intellectual achievement requires privilege. A place to be alone, and somebody else doing the housework.

In "Three Guineas," she took on the Victorian proposition that women don't need to earn money because they share so fully in the resources of the men in their lives. Coolly, she pointed out the obvious: that when sharing is a matter of largesse, it doesn't assume very large proportions. She compared figures on the money going into exclusively male causes and interests and the money going into projects women might share. The conclusion had to be that the woman's share was her pearls and dresses.

Meanwhile, there was the matter of "Arthur's Education Fund." In even the most prosperous Victorian households, nobody thought of investing in higher education for Arthur's sisters. For all the brilliant effects of her self-education, this Victorian daughter always resented missing the university training her brothers got. Furthermore, she was as aware as any affirmative-action purist that Oxbridge and its American equivalents give their customers more than book-learning. There was always the honing of mind on mind within a self-confident elite. There was the building of the old-boy network so the elite could take care of its own and keep the outsiders out.

She understood the connections between successful functioning, power, and self-respect. She saw how keeping women out of the professions and the more desirable economic activities denied them these elements of fulfilled humanity.

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