

**Carl Albert**

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Sen

Gerald Ford and Robert Novak

# Politics and Carl Albert's Decision

Breaking a precedent of long standing in their cordial relationship, House Speaker Carl Albert consciously failed to inform Rep. Gerald Ford, the Republican leader, of his decision not to accept the torrid case of Vice President Spiro Agnew last Wednesday.

That omission by Albert was no oversight. It was an intentional signal to Ford and the House Republicans that the majority Democrats were ready to assert a new partisanship in the pyramid of bewildering constitutional crises now threatening this country with its harshest challenge since the Civil War.

Ford, the Michigan congressman who has led his party in the House for nine years, sat in with Albert, House Democratic leader Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill Jr., of Massachusetts and other House leaders in an indecisive meeting Tuesday evening on Agnew's request for a complete House investigation of conspiracy and bribery charges against him. Claiming that Agnew's unique request to the House must be taken seriously, Ford urged on his colleagues the following course: establish a select committee of distinguished members to receive and study all the evidence.

At that evening session, O'Neill's position was not abruptly stated but seemed clear: don't force the Democratic majority to take Agnew off the hook and out of the courts particularly in view of President Nixon's repeated demands that the Senate Watergate Committee end its hearings and turn the matter over to the courts.

But Albert was obviously torn. Some intimates of the Speaker were convinced he hoped to finesse the whole issue by routinely sending the Agnew investigation to the House Judiciary Committee, headed by Rep. Peter Rodino of New York.

O'Neill had other ideas, partly germinating from his own sense of partisanship and partly springing from an acute undercurrent of partisan feelings among younger, more liberal House Democrats who have felt anesthetized by their leaders' lack of combative spirit.

O'Neill's conclusion, after careful checking with his Democratic whip: accepting the Agnew plea would infuriate the more militant Democrats. He considered that even such conserv-

ative southerner Democrats as Rep. Joe Waggoner of Louisiana, who has good ties with the White House, were loath to get mixed up in the explosive Agnew affair which seemed to be pitting the President against either his Vice President or his Attorney General.

O'Neill, then, quietly informed the Speaker of these conclusions. Albert, who has become the most pressurable speaker in memory, rushed out with his statement refusing to accept the Agnew request without telling Ford.

Actually, many Republicans—quite likely including Ford himself—had no more desire to grab the hot coal of Agnew's request than O'Neill did, regardless of their statements. But Ford was hurt and angered by the degree of partisanship that kept him in the dark.

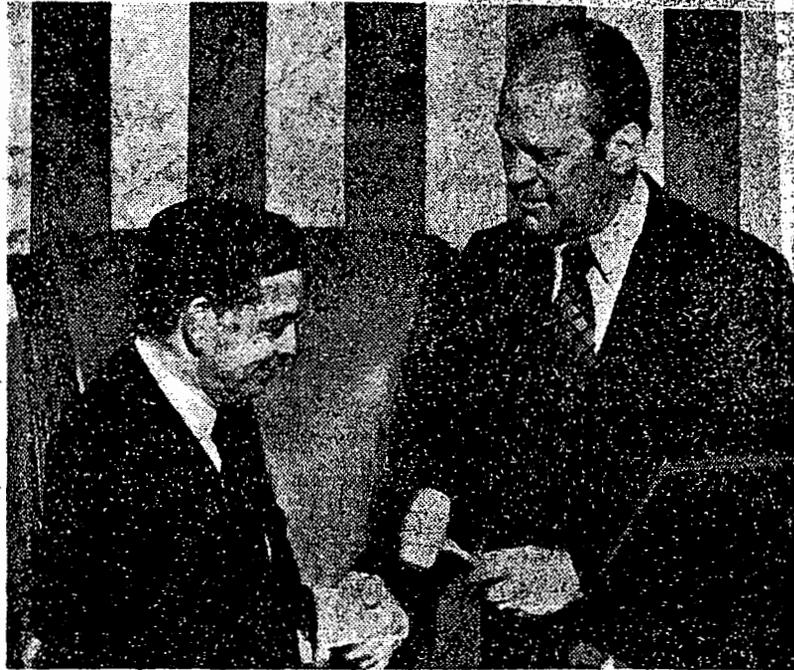
Ever since Watergate became the only game in town last March, the Democrats have wisely eschewed normal partisanship. Whatever political benefits they have gained from President Nixon's terrible troubles have accumulated on their own. The best Watergate politics, the Democrats correctly decided, was to let Watergate

play itself out and not try to milk it.

Now, however, that mood is beginning to change. For example, senior Democrats in both houses, thinking ahead to Agnew's possible removal or resignation at some future time, are now plotting demands on the President that would severely reduce his freedom to name a successor.

Any successor he may choose will be pressured to give a public commitment not to run for president in 1976. In addition, the Democratic leaders are now planning a most exhaustive investigation and hearings for any nominee Mr. Nixon may send Congress if Agnew does not survive. In private, responsible Democrats in Congress believe they have a serious chance to defeat John B. Connally for vice president if his name is submitted. They fully intend to try.

Partisan politics, muted for so long during the Watergate scandals, will continue to intensify with the start of the 1974 congressional election campaign. That puts additional burdens on a system of government already overloaded with disorder.



House Speaker Carl Albert with Rep. Gerald Ford.

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# Albert Raps Nixon Cutbacks

By Albert B. Crenshaw  
Washington Post Staff Writer

House Speaker Carl Albert, representing the Democratic leadership of Congress, yesterday called President Nixon's proposed cuts in federal spending for the poor and elderly "irresponsible," and said his overall Fiscal 1974 budget has "its hands in its pockets and its eyes on the ground."

"Congress will not tolerate the callous attitude of an administration that seems to have no compassion for the down-and-out citizens of this country," the Oklahoma Democrat said in a radio speech that was his party's formal reply to the President's budget speech of Jan. 28.

The 10-minute address was carried by all four major radio networks, which gave the Democrats equal time to answer Mr. Nixon's speech.

"It is apparent," Albert charged, "that big business will not suffer from the Nixon budget cuts. The rich won't suffer either."

Instead, he said, "you, the average American taxpayer... will continue to pay a disproportionately large share of your income in federal taxes while getting fewer federal services in return."

Albert said that "the American people deserve far more, this nation, if it is to survive, requires far more," and he pledged that "the 93d Congress will accept its responsibility to fill the void and supply the leadership the President has failed to produce."

Albert's speech was the latest salvo in the continuing conflict between Congress and the White House over how

federal money should be spent and whether Mr. Nixon has the authority to impound funds appropriated for purposes of which he does not approve.

In his budget speech, the President said that the cuts were necessary to head off inflation. He has since threatened to veto any bill that exceeds his \$268.7 billion budget, and to impound the money in any bill passed over such a veto.

Albert denied that "Congress is not responsible enough to control spending," citing a 40 percent increase in presidential budget request

during the Nixon administration and deficits larger than those of Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson combined."

He noted that "Congress does not believe every single one of the President's budget-cutting moves is wrong," but added: "We cannot support a wholesale effort, systematically to scrap worthwhile programs that have given hope and promise to so many Americans."

Noting that the proposal Fiscal 1974 budget is 10 percent larger than 1973's, Albert said the President "in his budget speech made no mention of the critical problem of

tax reform, an omission that gives no hope to the middle and low-income taxpayers who are forced to pay the share of income taxes.

A budget that would the door on hospital health clinic construction, health clinic construction, eral aid to education libraries as well as (reduces) eran's benefits and scores of other programs. Albert said, "... point us toward a bright tomorrow."

"It is a budget in the sense of affirmative action budget of limited horizons. It is devoid of any great vision of America."

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# Albert Presses House

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## Reform Drive

By Mary Russell  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Speaker Carl Albert made a rare appearance before a congressional committee yesterday to urge colleagues to look into ways to make Congress work harder and faster.

The occasion was the first hearing of the select House committee studying reform of the committee system.

Albert, who became the first Speaker in 100 years to testify before a committee, described his frustration at the close of the last session when bills piled up and were either passed without adequate deliberation or left hanging.

He called the closing days a "nightmare." Of 498 bills reported out by committees in the last session, 80 were reported out in the final 12 days, he said.

Albert pointed out that the last session failed to act on such important legislation as the highway bill and appropriations for foreign aid and Labor-HEW.

The speaker suggested several remedies the committee might look into, including:

- Fixing a date after which committees may not report their bills.
- Asking or demanding that the executive departments send up reports and recommendations early in the season.
- Establishing a transition period at the end of each biennial Congress so that party caucuses could be held in December, disposing of committee assignments and elections to leadership posts before the new Congress convenes.

Albert complained that it takes so long for each new Congress to get organized and moving, "the leadership spends the first few months of

almost every session contacting committee after committee week after week, literally bird-dogging for enough bills to give the House a reasonably respectable program for three or four days a week."

Congressional Quarterly describes this year's start as even more sluggish than usual.

"During January, February and March the House met on 43 days, but only 88 hours. That's an average of barely two hours a day." Almost all of the 15 bills that passed were minor and non-controversial or had been cleared in the previous session and were being re-passed in similar form.

Rep. Richard Bolling (D-Mo., chairman of the select committee, said, "One thing has become clear. Individual members must take seriously their responsibilities to legislate. We can do a superb job of reorganizing the committee system but it won't do any good unless the individuals take seriously their responsibility."

The select committee, which plans to hear from members of Congress and academic experts in the fall, has \$1.5 million and a year and a half to study committee structure and jurisdiction.

By appearing at the opening session yesterday, Albert became the first Speaker to testify since Speaker James G. Blaine appeared before a committee investigating the Credit Mobilier scandal in 1872. In that scandal, members of Congress and high government officials were accused of accepting stock in return for letting the government be defrauded out of some \$37 million in the building of the Union Pacific Railroad.

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CAROLAN

# '76 PRESIDENTIAL FORUM

1156 15th Street, N.W. Washington D.C. 20005  
(202) 296-4726

Jim Karayn, Executive Director

February 20, 1976

The Honorable Jimmy Carter  
1795 Peachtree Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Dear Governor:

This is the kind of press reaction the Presidential Forum  
has been receiving, even prior to its first event.

Very truly yours,



Jim Karayn

JK/mb  
Enclosures  
cc: Mr. Hamilton Jordan

# An Appeal To the Networks

By James Reston

WASHINGTON, Jan. 17—After all the post-Vietnam and Watergate talk about the need for reform in Presidential politics—even after some useful controls over campaign financing and convention procedures—the preliminary skirmishes in the primary election states still sound like communiqués from a battlefield.

There is very little in all these grinning faces and simplistic slogans on the nightly news reports from the hustings that can help a puzzled voter identify the central issues of the coming years. We are beginning, vaguely, to recognize "Ronnie," "Jimmy," "Mo" and "Scoop"; but while they tour the primary election states exhausting themselves and their meager audiences with ten or twelve "speeches" a day, the nation as a whole hasn't the vaguest idea what sort of characters they really are.

Why can we not, then, finally in this Bicentennial election year, have at least a fair and honest series of discussions on national television by the candidates and potential candidates on the major questions that will affect the lives of the American people in the coming four or eight years?

We obviously will not get a national primary, or even regional primaries, in '76, but we do have national television networks, and plenty of prime-time dozers, and if "Meet the Press" and "Face the Nation" can get the candidates to play catch-as-catch-can before the football games, presumably they could organize a really thoughtful series of discussions on the major issues of the campaign.

There are some fundamental issues lurking around the edges of these primary election exhibitions in New Hampshire, Florida, Iowa, and other spring-training camps.

Is the increasingly powerful Federal Government really the enemy of the economic and social well-being of the people? Sometimes it has obviously failed, sometimes succeeded both in domestic and foreign policy, but where

and why, and what are the remedies? In a world of increasingly powerful big labor unions and multinational corporations at home, and centrally organized economies and cartels abroad, is it really reasonable to suppose that we will have less rather than more Federal control in the next decade? Or that the states will match the

Federal Government's record of social progress over the last two generations?

These are obviously questions on which serious men and women can divide, and they are being seriously debated by many private individuals and institutions all over America, but not by the candidates in the Presidential campaign.

They are hunting delegates and headlines. The two major parties are avoiding the debate because they suspect their candidates are divided on the answers or have no answers. But the private citizens and the private institutions of press, radio and television, among others, need not be helpless in the face of this spectacle. Especially in this preliminary phase of the campaign, it may still be possible to bring some common public sense to bear on this present incoherent political process.

The candidates, if they are pressed hard enough by the responsible voters and private institutions of the nation, cannot refuse to discuss the presiding questions of the coming years. Most of them are complaining anyway that they can't get a national audience and would welcome it.

They could not, if asked, refuse to make their financial and medical records available; to indicate their preference for Vice President—a critical question after Spiro Agnew and Thomas Eagleton in 1972, especially since the leading candidates in '76 are now in their sixties—and even to indicate what kind of Cabinet they would appoint.

The issue in this early phase of the campaign is not whether the people like what they see—obviously they don't like it at all—but that they don't see very much except the superficial political tactics of the old politics.

The networks, reaching a national audience, have a special responsibility here. They have the instrument and they have the informed and inquiring minds to bring the main political questions and characters into every village in the land, but this requires a new formula for inquiry, and new, more generous allocation of time.

The difficult and complex questions cannot be explored by a number of reporters in a hurry. It takes at least an hour for one or at most two carefully prepared reporters to question the candidates, with the uttermost fairness, in order to get at the quality of the minds and characters of these men who hope to lead us into the eighties.

In a way, everybody now feels trapped in the old techniques of politics, television, newspapering and show business, but there is nothing in the Constitution or even in the rules of the Federal Communications Commission that says we can't change them, and we still have time.

After all, as Irving Kristol said in *The Wall Street Journal* the other day, there is something to be said for old-fashioned conservative "stupidity," but he added that "there will always come . . . in the life of a nation [a time] when 'stupidity' is not enough."

# Equal Time for Voters

By James Reston

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27—In an appeal to the networks in this corner recently, it was suggested that they help raise the level of discussion in the Presidential campaign by submitting the major candidates to thoughtful and extended questioning on the major issues before the nation.

Now comes Richard Salant, the president of CBS News, with the answer that they recognize the need and would like to meet it but cannot do so under Section 315 of the Federal Communications Act (the equal time requirement) unless they include every Dick and Harry running for President on a host of minor tickets.

"Who are Rick Lowenherz, Billy Joe Clegg, Arthur Blessitt, Stanley Arnold, Bernard Schechter, Robert Kelleher, and Ellen McCormack?" he asks. "They are all people who are on the final list for the Democratic nomination in New Hampshire or Massachusetts or both. Who are Don Dumont and Lar (America First) Daly? They are on the final list of candidates for the Republican Presidential nomination in Illinois."

Accordingly, Mr. Salant finds the problem unmanageable but adds that if the Congress were to repeal 315, "I know that no further appeal to the networks will be necessary, because we are just as anxious to go forward as you are that we do so."

Careful checking indicates that there is no chance of repealing 315 during this campaign or any other, for the simple reason that members of Congress are not eager to vote in favor of giving TV time to people who are trying to replace them in office, but there is one exception to 315 which may still make serious Presidential TV discussions possible.

That exception is that a network may broadcast "a bona fide news event" involving major candidates, without extending equal time to a lot of other minor candidates. CBS could not create a "bona fide news event" on its own, but if some private non-broadcasting organization arranged a series of public discussions by the leading candidates, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS and any other network would be free to cover the meetings.

As a matter of fact, precisely such a series of meetings is now being arranged by a private nonpartisan organization named "'76 Presidential Forum" of Washington, D. C., under the sponsorship of the League of Women Voters Education Fund.

These forums will take place in Boston, Feb. 23; Miami, March 1; New York, March 29; Chicago, April 26, and Los Angeles, May 24. All the

major candidates, including President Ford, have been invited to participate. All except the President, Governor Reagan and Governor Wallace have agreed to take part in at least one and these three are still weighing it.

Moderator of the forums will be Elie Abel, dean of the Columbia University School of Journalism. Audiences will range from 600 to 1,100 and will include a bipartisan panel of experts on the subjects to be discussed. The prospect now is that the forums will be carried live by PBS.

In order to avoid the scattered incoherence of most TV interview shows, each forum will be devoted to a different topic: jobs, inflation and the cost of energy in Boston; Social Security, welfare, medical care and veterans' benefits in Miami; busing, housing, education, transportation, crime and race in New York; foreign policy and trade in Chicago; and national growth and national priorities in Los Angeles.

It will probably take some adjustment of public, candidate and network attitudes, however, to give this project its maximum effect. The candidates are not always as unanimously favorable to these television discussions as they like to pretend. Nelson Poynter, chairman of the board of The St. Petersburg Times and Evening Independent, and Dave Taylor, publisher of The Boston Globe, recently offered to present the candidates in a public discussion and provide two hours prime-time television coverage on four stations in Florida and Boston, but the project had to be canceled because most of the major candidates did not accept the invitation. Some of them don't like comparisons.

The League of Women Voters has been able to stage these political discussions for over a generation mainly because it had strong public support that the candidates could not ignore.

Finally, the commercial networks have tended to avoid such discussions unless their own people were moderating the event, but this is different from saying that Section 315 of the Communications Act makes a coherent discussion by the major candidates unmanageable. If the League's bona fide news events are clearly an exception to the "equal time" rule, as we believe, then the question is no longer that the problem is unmanageable but merely who manages it and gives it the distribution it deserves.

So we appeal again to the networks. Even if the majors would carry one issue and men who are likely to forum piece, plus one or two more by PBS, the voters might finally get a little better understanding of the affect their lives. Equal time for the people is what we need.

## MARY McGRORY:

# All Eyes on the Candidates, None on the Nation?

"How happens it" Alexis de Tocqueville marveled a century and a half ago, "that everyone takes as zealous an interest in the affairs of his township, his country and the whole State as if it were his own?"

In *Democracy in America*, that most sympathetic of Gallic observers answered his own question: "It is because everyone in his sphere takes an active part in the government of society."

That is not the case this year. Faced with the need to choose a president, the electorate seems apathetic to the point of sullenness. Confronted with a dozen or so Democrats — who except for two are ideological look-alikes — and two Republicans who are quarreling over the custody of their party's extremists, the voters are regarding the entire process with glazed eyes.

The only public question — and a majority of citizens regard it as a private matter — which has excited visible passion is abortion. The President, for example, had a long interview with Walter Cronkite on CBS news last week. The only segment found worthy of rebroadcasting related to his views on abortion on demand.

It says a great deal about us in our 200th birthday year that there is more argument about the unborn than about the born.

The Ford administration, it should be noted, sent no representative to the conference on children held by the National Council of Organizations for Children and Youth here this past week. Sen. Walter F. Mondale, D-Minn., who has devoted himself to legislation to protect poor, hungry, battered children, received an

award. He briefly sought the presidency, but had to drop out. Children do not vote, they are not the kind of constituency that could steer a man to the White House.

As for those who stayed in the race, none has the stature and none has found an issue that sets him apart. The contest between Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford is focused on the negative question of what government should *not* be doing.

Into this depressing state of affairs has stepped the League of Women Voters, which is sponsoring a series of five presidential forums. The hope is that somehow the unproductive exchanges about *who* can make a difference might be shifted to the more promising subject of *what* can make a difference in this country.

The forums will be held all over the country, beginning in Boston on February 23, the night before the New Hampshire primary. The subject is adapted to the region: "High Employment, Low Inflation and Cheap Energy: Can We Have Them All?"

Elie Abel, dean of the Columbia School of Journalism, will be the moderator. He will hold the candidates' feet to the fire on the question. Questions from the audience will be taken. Local experts have been lined up to probe further. The whole affair will be broadcast by the Public Broadcasting System.

So far, only Democrats, and not all of them, have accepted the invitation for Boston. That is the peril of this noble experiment: that it could be just another, if more structured, Democratic fashion show, similar to

a dozen others that have bored the electorate since October.

The timing of the first forum is such that some poor Democrat would see it as an opportunity for an eleventh-hour star turn for a breakthrough with New Hampshire voters the next day. If that happens, Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford, both of whom have expressed effusively their approval of the invitation in declining it, might want to participate in the second act, which is scheduled for Florida on March 1. The subject chosen for that evening is made for them: "From Social Security to Welfare: What's the National Responsibility?"

New York City is slated for March 29. The survivors of the early primaries will be asked for their views on the urban crisis and race relations. From there, it's Chicago and foreign policy as it relates to American life, and finally, in Los Angeles, two weeks before the last primary, they will talk about environment.

It sounds like a large-scale return to the town meetings which Tocqueville observed with wonder and admiration when he wandered through our infant nation. Whether it works, of course, depends entirely on the candidates. Refusal to participate might become an issue in itself.

The league is to be commended for trying to light a small candle in the election-year darkness. They hold out at least the promise that in the next few months we can possibly stop talking about how *they* are doing — that is, the candidates — and turn to how we are doing — that is, the country. In our Bicentennial Year, it seems an entirely appropriate topic.

# The Washington Star

JOE L. ALLBRITTON, *Publisher*

JAMES G. BELLOWS, *Editor*

SIDNEY EPSTEIN, *Managing Editor*

EDWIN M. YODER JR., *Associate Editor*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1976

## Presidential forums

An exceptional opportunity is being offered this election year to provide voters with a better understanding of the issues and of the qualifications of those who would lead the United States for the next four years. The League of Women Voters is arranging a series of "presidential forums" to coincide with primary elections in five sections of the country.

The success of the project depends largely on two things: agreement by the candidates to attend; and willingness of commercial television to use prime time to cover the forums.

The forums are the brainchild of Jim Karayn, former president of the National Public Affairs Center for Television, a unit of the Public Broadcasting Service. The League of Women Voters, one of the foremost organizations in voter education services, agreed to sponsor the forums; the Democratic and Republican National Committees have endorsed the project and the party chairmen. Robert Strauss and Mary Louise Smith are serving on the steering committee; and prominent business, labor and community leaders are actively involved.

Different issues will be discussed at each forum, the first of which will be held February 23 in Boston and the last May 24 in Los Angeles. Others are scheduled March 1 in Miami, March 29 in New York, and April 26 in Chicago. The moderator will be Elie Abel, a former television network correspondent who now is dean of the Columbia University School of Journalism.

Why should candidates attend? A self-serving reason is that it will provide an opportunity for exposure, at no cost and little effort. But most important, they owe the voters a chance to size them up; if there has been a better forum for this purpose in recent presidential elections we haven't heard about it.

Indications are that most of the candidates for the Democratic nomination will attend one or more of the forums (only candidates qualified and on the ballot will be permitted to partici-

pate). But so far neither of the Republican contenders — President Ford and Ronald Reagan — has agreed.

Presidents always are leery of head-to-head encounters such as these, figuring that they don't need the exposure and that they might stand to lose more than they would gain in direct comparison with challengers. We hope President Ford doesn't take that attitude. As President, Mr. Ford ought to have a better working knowledge and deeper understanding of the issues than most Americans and should not fear comparison. For Mr. Reagan, the forums would provide an opportunity to dispel the idea that he is shallow.

Would it be fair to suggest that candidates who refuse to participate do so because they think they can't cut it?

As for television coverage, the Public Broadcasting Service, with 258 affiliated stations, has tentatively agreed to provide gavel-to-gavel coverage of the forums, which will run from 90 minutes to 2½ hours. But public television has a limited audience, which means that commercial television stations will have to participate if maximum benefit is to be realized. Sponsors of the forums expect some local stations will provide coverage.

But the biggest boost could come from agreement by the networks to broadcast one or more of the forums. Since these could be covered as "news events" the networks would not be bound by the equal time provision of federal law requiring that a station or network providing time to one candidate must provide equal time to all candidates.

It will be interesting to see if the networks pick up this opportunity to provide an unparalleled service to voters. If they don't, would it be fair to suggest that they simply use the "equal time" law as a convenient excuse for not providing free time for political discussions by candidates?

By League of Women Voters

FORUM FOR THE CANDIDATES

By Juanita Greene  
of our Editorial Board

The early stage of the race for the Presidency is being run in a fog of myth and personality. It is not what the candidate does or does not stand for that is attracting him to the voters, but what fantasies he can conjure, how he projects in flashy speeches in shopping centers and on television.

What issues have arisen, and they are pitifully few, have not been matched to the men who would be President, except in the case of George Wallace and busing.

This not only makes for a bland campaign, but it also bodes ill for the country. It can't be run on image or personality. Out there being ignored are hard issues which will require difficult decisions of any President. The public has a right to know where the candidates stand on them. Though the candidates understandably would rather not have to work from these rocking boats, it is reasonable to assume that the people would like to study them under such circumstances. Pressed to pertinency and depth they might say things that would help the voters find the candidates they are looking for.

Into the void between the issues and the candidates are rushing the members of the League of Women Voters, those indomitable women of integrity and energy who so often step in where practical politicians fear to tread. They will try to get the major candidates to face the major issues in a series of five regional "Presidential Forums" which will be held in advance of primary elections. The programs, each dealing with a separate set of issues, will be broadcast by public television and, it is hoped, by many commercial stations and perhaps even by the networks.

The key to success, of course, is the willingness of the candidates to participate. All the major Democrats except Wallace have agreed to show up for at least one Forum. The participation of President Ford and Ronald Reagan is undetermined.

Miami will be the scene of the second Forum, scheduled for March 1 at 8:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Four Ambassadors. The issue will be income support programs, from Social Security to welfare and including Medicare, Medicaid, unemployment benefits, other pensions and food stamps. Jimmy Carter, Milton Shapp, and Sargent Shriver are definite with Henry Jackson a strong possibility, and arrangements still pending with the others. It is believed if President Ford can be persuaded to make one appearance, it will be here.

The model is designed to keep the candidates on the issues, to frustrate their considerable talents at sliding off into palatable generalizations of no substance. Experts will be on stage to carry out this function but questions will come from the audience. Miamians wishing to participate can call or write the office of the Florida League for tickets at Room 203, 255 University Drive, Coral Gables, phone 442-4094.

These Forums, financed by a grant from the William Benton Foundation, are the only events planned thus far that will give television viewers the kind of exposure they need to make rational choices. The schedule for the others are Feb. 23 in Boston, on the economy; March 29 in New York, on the crisis of the cities; April 26 in Chicago, on foreign policy; and May 24 in Los Angeles, on growth and the environment.

In planning each Forum, the League has called in resource persons who are knowledgeable on the subject matter. In addition, each Forum is being supported by a Steering Committee of important persons in the region. Moderator of all will be Elie Abel, Dean of the Columbia School of Journalism.

There is a chance, of course, that the project will fall flat on its face. But the risk is worth taking if it will indeed "help begin to erode the malaise and apathy engulfing so many of our citizens." These are the words of Robert S. Strauss, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, who is supporting the Forums, as is his counterpart in the Republican party.

As things stand now, the thing that separates the two front running Republican candidates is the fact that one was a movie star and still is a pretty good actor and the other is a former Congressman who has managed to stay in the White House a year and a half with no major scandal erupting. The members of the pack of Democratic contenders are barely distinguishable, except for Wallace and Jackson. And what are the issues that divide them?

The candidate who is said to be breaking away at a faster walk is Carter, who according to a recent poll, taken for the New York Times and CBS, is seen as a liberal by 22% of the voters, a moderate by 37% and a conservative by 22%. That's what happens when there's lack of clarity on the issues in the minds of the people.

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# IN SEARCH OF A HERO THE



## BY MARSHALL FRADY

It is, of course, the most staggering of presumptions—casting oneself for the part of President of the United States. Of all mortal enterprises on this earth now, there is probably no venture involving quite its ponderous measure of vanity, bravado, obsession, avidity: It's the nearest thing we have to hubris in this prosaic age. Accordingly, it is always an awesome moment in the life of any strong and ambitious man when at last he commits himself to that ultimate self-assertion, makes that

final move to realize himself on such a scale.

And it has begun for most of them this time, as usual, in the thin, bright sun and dull, inky twilight drizzles of that far cranny of New Hampshire—a tiny, insular, intimate countryside of weather vanes and stone fences and small, black, secret ponds like pools of graphite, surrounded by dark cedars and hemlocks, beside which one can fancy beleaguered Yankee farmers striking contracts with the Devil after cold, red sundowns. For long months now, here among the crisp, white Norman Rockwell villages and sooty, weary little tintype cities along the coast, they have been mill-

ing and tracking to and fro toward the primary of February 24, the first small moment of real popular truth for their campaigns.

Udall, at it for over a year now, the tall scaffolding of his shoulders beginning to sag a bit and his smile gone slightly goofy and askew; Carter, with the quiet, amiable, unobtrusive diligence and patience of a mole, haunting factory gates and street corners like a solitary sidewalk missionary with his handful of pamphlets and neighborly inextinguishable grin; Harris, dark and squat and untidy, calliooping through the tattering leaves and dustings of snow like some improbable populist tent-

# DEMOCRATS



evangelist; Bayh, most recently unhatched, dewy and bright-eyed and brisk as an imperishable college cheerleader. An unnatural passion it seems, indeed, that keeps propelling them into all those obscure little glum auditoriums with metal folding chairs under wan, dingy lights, that lusts to spend itself among so much drab beaverboard and chewing-gum-grey tile floors, plastic mustard curtains and Styrofoam cups.

But for a certain order of strong and proud men in this country, there is only one thing to be in the United States, and that's President of it. This society was conceived above all else as a political community, out of a political vision and trans-

port, and it remains a political society probably more than any other on earth. No other enterprise, no other American mystique—whether Hollywood or business or sports—can really challenge politics as the definitive national mythology of power and glory. All anticipations of personal greatness first are in that direction: No neighborhood or schoolyard of Inner America turns up an exceptional youth—an eager and exultant Icarus among his peers, charged with an extra fierce vitality, with a remote and self-contained air of rapt self-communion—who is not instantly, to his family and his neighbors and his teachers and finally to himself, a potential

President. In the late Scotch-ethered hours one night in a stale, subterranean Holiday Inn lounge called *The Long Shot* somewhere on the far-flung outskirts of Miami, one of Carter's aides was asked when he first detected signs that Carter was entertaining such national hankerings, and he confessed, "Well, I mentioned it to him once about midway through his term as governor. I was a little embarrassed to even suggest it, but I noticed that it didn't surprise him at all. You can be damn sure, it's almost a law of nature, that if anybody else ever mentions the possibility to a guy, he's already thought of it himself long before." And decades later, even after all the others

have forgotten, it lingers, the private, solitary, sunset *tristesse* of unnumbered men in chairmen's offices, university executive suites and publishers' penthouses across the face of the land: that it somehow never happened, they never made it. Egos once regarded as inevitable, seemingly big and furious and canny and redoubtable enough to make it all the way up the churning salmon-run of national power, they have somehow wound up, after the brief, brilliant magnesium-flare of their beginning, strayed and stranded in a long, vague, declining afternoon with their Promethean will and energies left finally unanswered, aborted.

It's a kind of urgency that, more ferociously than nature, abhors a vacuum, which may be one reason why, in the blankness left after 1972's disaster, there has now transpired such a rampant overpopulation of the Democratic field. They have continued to multiply almost overnight like mice, in some political Malthusian phenomenon. It's as if the more who enter, the more possible it seems to others, the more other appetites are engendered and enlarged even while, with each new entry, the possibilities for all of them are impoverished by a fraction. Whenever yet another candidate materializes among them, it seems to touch off a general, dim pang of dread among them all, a high, fine nervousness. After Bayh bounded into it, there were immediate mutterings of alarm among the others about his effects; it was an event that instantly and necessarily profoundly disarrayed all their intricate equations. But then Bayh himself was soon privately grumping about yet another impending prospect, Church—"I wonder how strong he might be coming off those hearings. Group out there in California has just completely turned his head about this thing, I'm afraid." It's become like a dull, collective uneasiness now that their sheer increasing profusion diminishes them all until, at some point, they will consume and cannibalize one another altogether.

That restless vacuum among the Democrats has been only giddily magnified now by the emerging possibility that Ford, at least by the time of the Florida primary, will have become no more than a perfunctory transitional figure in the history of the Presidency. It could all be wide open.

The truth is, we are come to an elusively unsettling pass in our experience, almost like a kind of coma. We are a nation that began stray-born as a waif and founding of history, and, though ours is now the second-oldest government on the planet, we have never yet con-

**Candidates have continued to multiply almost overnight like mice, in some political Malthusian phenomenon, until their sheer increasing profusion diminishes them all**

cluded who we are and what we are really for. It's as if an unspoken schizophrenia has been running through our nature from our very inception, like some secret warfare in the national soul—one impulse being that wintry, constricted, authoritarian ethic of probity and order and asperity from Plymouth's flinty theocracy; and the other, more obscure but perhaps more elemental in our character, being that headlong, rowdy, yawping exuberance of the frontier, a readiness for adventure not all that unacquainted with the exhilarations of anarchy, a gusty-hearted eagerness for the far, unknown, windy margins of life that is most tellingly inferred from our poets and lyricists like Whitman, Twain, Thomas Wolfe, Kerouac. All of our history—from Salem through Shays' Rebellion to the Wobblies, from Sacco and Vanzetti through the McCarthy hearings to Vietnam and the street melees of the Sixties and even Watergate—could be read as a playing out of that furious duality and ambivalence in our psyche, a continuous struggle with the primal mystery of who we actually are, our true identity, our image.

But after passing through the epic national dramas of the last two decades, we seem suddenly to have emptied out into a limbo, some vague, brackish, drab flatland in our history. It was not un-

commonly assumed that Watergate would actually prove a kind of American political pentacost, a serendipitous blessing, a catharsis ranging beyond the immediate particulars of the case to redeem and renew our covenant with our beginning and our knowledge of our nature. And indeed, Watergate did loose a season of judgment over America's political estate almost Biblical in its wholesale, ransacking balefulness, the avenging angel's sword whistling right and left in a scourge of both the present and recent past, governors, congressmen, senators smote and toppling everywhere. But at the same time, it seems to have left the country itself hung in some dull, bleary lassitude of spirit. Lurching out of all this, we have struck on monotone and middling times, vacant of any great angers or passions or belief, made up of vague and meager presences, vague and meager matters having to do with little more than maintenance problems in the system. The general citizenry, one somehow senses, has lapsed into a massive ennui. The electorate has become politically autistic. It may simply be that we have entered one of those transitional in-between hiatuses in history. But it is a muzzy, distracted, inconclusive weather in which it's hard for any single figure to emerge and take on dramatic definition and dimension—a circumstance, actually, which most of the current applicants for the Presidency find not all that dismaying. Carter, for one, submits. "To deal with individual human needs at the small everyday level can actually be noble sometimes." But it is also a peculiarly uncertain and dangerous moment in the life of the Republic.

It is a pervasive malaise that lingers on discreetly like a progressive etherizing of the nerves of life of the country, not only in the expositions of Ford and his curiously humanoid secretaries with names like Zarb on energy and the economy and transactions abroad, but in hymns about "helping to build America" from the savings and loans establishment—"We're working to keep your trust. . . . Exxon wants you to know"—and pious little pastoral idylls about calendar-picture villages and green meadows and peaceful drifts of fish among offshore oil derricks from none other than the calluses of earthly defilement (George Orwell did not so much write the manual for our age as did Lewis Carroll), a lunatic inflation of passions over laundry bleach and deodorant soap and margarine and toilet tissue.

The most ominous and malign of all the divides in America now is that deepening rupture between language and reality. And through all the nice, allusive,

inferential dissemblings, the bland little flimflams of altruism from oil companies and power conglomerates, through all the dapper, nimble patter, there yet blows some final, thin, dead chill from the black outerspace nothingness that is the primal source of all evil: the nihilistic Void. Because evil is finally neuter. It is cut off from all true passion and experience, save perhaps the small, cold fever of self-interest. It is, actually, the advance of emptiness, an advance that, like cancer, usually has the appearance of a booming, avid, hectic vitality. Nowhere, in all those bustling vigors and elaborate electronics and softly spooling tapes and strenuous respectabilities of the Nixon White House, was there one good, lusty, medieval conscience with a lively sense of good and evil; familiar with the fine, old, burly dread of brimstone. The evil in that case was not even aware of its malignancy. All it was aware of was efficiency, methodology. In that, it presented an epiphany of the new mien and form of evil in our age. Nixon himself, in his soul, amounted to only the ultimate technician—consummate technician of law, of argument and exhortation, most of all a technician of appearances: the master Modred of all technicians. Faulkner once averred, during the Cold War of the Fifties, that there no longer seemed any problems and struggles of the human spirit: There was only the question, When will I be blown up? If that drab angst has waned since then, still less are there any true travails of spirit for this generation of political and moral technicians: There is only the question, Will it work, and how will it look? Indeed, as Jacques Ellul has grimly suggested, the whole world of nature in which we so long strived has already been replaced altogether by technology. Technique, not only materially but experientially, has become the sole *why* of what we do.

One still knows, with one's blood and brine, that all this should be met with fury, instance by instance. But it cannot be engaged—one meets instead with impalpability. It is a kind of disembodied vandalism against us. So that one is finally left, after so many existential short-circuitings of rage and repudiation, gradually singed-out. It is thus that we are all conducted, gently, dully, into the final deep, white fog. When that long totalitarian evening eventually falls over the land, it will not be with a thunderclap, but to the soft electronic hum of the dishwasher in the kitchen and the quiet murmuring of the six o'clock network news. It has, perhaps, become a commonplace by now, but no less mortally true for that, that the American totalitarianism will be

more corporate than political, a strictly indigenous variety totally devoid of the lurid, operatic, Visigoth glares and blusters of the German precedent, having far more to do here with Disneyland and suburban shopping malls and the Up With People chorus and Jaycee luncheons on Wednesday afternoons at the local Holiday Inn, and so unsuspected to the very end by the vast majority of Middle Americans. It will stroll right in through the front door wearing the wholesome, reassuring, eye-crinkling grin of Fred MacMurray. It will not so much be effected by government as by that vast corporate estate, merely facilitated by government and beyond any direct accountability to the people, which already presides over all the instrumentalities for it—that whole new cosmos of technology that has simply accumulated blindly and, almost on its own, begun to arrange and accomplish it; in that way a new order's technology has always tended to pre-occur and then tug history by the nose after it.

It's as if we have been living for almost two decades now in the hectic commotion of the instant, nothing really taking beyond its momentary celebrity. It's the pop-reality, the pop-metaphysic of an electronically homogenized massociety, in which the only verities of our lives

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lie in the collective experience: The more widely and spectacularly any matter registers to the popular eye, the more real it is; the more private and solitary a matter, the less real somehow. Nothing really happens except as it takes place and counts in the public notice. We live only in the streets, the stadiums, the talk shows, the television news reports, the news magazines, the convention halls—and when alone, we are dim ghosts, almost disappear. In that way, then, the individual—that old portion of the solitary human heart which is the troublesome and contrary part, perhaps, which needs sometimes irrationally and impractically the truth, but is also the part that needs to be free, and is the only portion that can love—is gradually being extinguished, is ceasing to exist. The technological and corporate passion is efficiency, which eventually becomes a passion not only for efficiency in means and processes, but in emotions, in the expense of experience. The individual life has always been a notoriously inefficient proposition.

In all this, the heroes of this age have come to offer themselves as heroes of efficiency. Accordingly, it's no surprise that campaigns for President of the United States seem now to have become for the most part a competition of technicians—a contest of accountants.

Indeed, the very effort of running for President has itself become almost wholly an exercise of techniques. The candidates themselves like to profess sturdily that they regard the long exertion as an appropriate apprenticeship and audition for the fearsome, complex rigors of the Presidency, and that it also brings them into a closer intimacy with the true kaleidoscopic mind and mood of the citizenry—that, in short, they are enlarged by the process. But, in fact, it acts more to contract and mechanize them. For each of them, the struggle for nomination and election is a matter of performing the same set choreography of political sentiments, like a vaudeville trooper performing his personality, performing constant repeating takes of his image, in an unceasing series of one- and two-hour stands across the country. It amounts, really, to an ordeal of showmanship, a trial of grace and flair and nimbleness and concentration, like those dance marathons of the Thirties, apart from any actual communion with the audiences, the people. As Carter reportedly confided to an aide recently, he had not been able to think an original thought in six months. At scattered moments of solely private and individual encounters, their eyes go glazed and remote, they are

not really there behind their eyes. During yet another of his expeditions into Florida recently, Carter began chatting with a gathering in a hotel suite: "It's good to be here in—here— in Tampa. Yesterday I was in—" and after a long, wordless silence, an aide called from the side of the room, "Pensacola," and Carter went on, "Pensacola, and we had a very good day there." The act itself—the minutes of that same endlessly recurring performance of their image—becomes the whole reality in which they exist, are imprisoned. It is all an immense enterprise of theater, a massive masque, a tournament of gymnasts. And we are all largely lost in these mere motions: It is no accident that so much political writing seems after the manner of the reportage in the Monday morning sports pages, made up of statistics and game patterns and player averages and locker-room conjectures; it is merely political athletics, with issues simply serving as numbered plays in the game.

At the same time, candidates are even further insulated from reality in the sheer process of aspiring to the Presidency in the special way that Morris Udall, just as he was about to commit himself to that adventure, already understood and ruminated on uneasily one bright winter morning in his Washington office over a year ago. "Something just seems to happen to a man's perception of who he is, his sense of proportions," he mused. "There's a quantum difference between whatever attentions you enjoy as a governor or a member of Congress, and then going into a ballroom to hear yourself introduced by name as a candidate for President of the United States, and everybody coming to their feet and gazing on you and applauding. Suddenly, without even having won anything, it becomes the golden hour of your life. Just the fanfare, the celebrity of running—you can begin to believe all that about yourself."

As a matter of fact, in all these respects, the manner of contending for President of the United States is not all that unsuitable a conditioning for the White House. The Presidency itself now seems an office that has amplified, in involvements and instrumentalities, beyond the reach and ken of any single mortal, and has assumed in fact an intangible but distinct life and vision and volition of its own—its own independent and continuative being of reflexes, instincts, interests, which at least since Roosevelt has simply overwhelmed and assimilated the assorted individual identities of its successive occupants, save in the airy incidentals of style and image. But in most



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large and significant senses, they all wind up acting more or less alike, curiously cease behaving like themselves when they were candidates, and so befuddling their previous ideological constituencies and even probably themselves now, and then—this simply because they become the office itself, which behaves through them. It is particularly true of the institution of the Presidency that it is never so much the lengthened shadow of a singular man as the men who briefly inhabit it become the foreshortened shadow of the institution.

As it happened, most of the Democratic cast of contenders presented themselves at a party conference on campaign issues last November in Louisville, Kentucky—a somewhat raffish and gritty river city, its waterfront lately reconstructed into replicas of the galleries and facades of its mythic past with a mint-bright, toy-like Disneyland tidiness, but with a general complexion over the rest of the town of old cigar leaf, a cold, dusty wind smacking down glum streets in a chill, dull sunshine off the wide waterspaces of the Ohio. Terry Sanford did not happen to show up, an invisibility that turned out to be commensurate with his prospects. And among those who did appear were figures who, even by that point, were already waning into little more than dim blips, bare wispy glows on the radar screen of prospects—Shapp, sitting behind the panelists' table on the stage during one session, very small and slumped and hunched with wrists bent downward in a crabbed, crotchety pose peculiarly hinting a rocking chair on the front veranda of a rest home, with his dark, dewy slow loris eyes and lips pinched forward in poutish glowers, black, bristly eyebrows beetling over his hands as they dangled his glasses, some gnomish look about him of Rumpelstiltskin. Even so, he evinced a peppery, doughty, liberal decency in his commentary to queries from the floor, and took on surprising cracklings—"It's Richard Nixon who should have been deprived of his citizenship, not war dissenters. Ford's problem is that he's a center, and he still sees everything upside down." In a faintly touching way, for all his monumental implausibility, he yet proves himself again and again at such gatherings one of the more spirited and bracing and shrewd of the lot.

Bentsen, long and groomed and grey, was still gamely maintaining that immaculate, dapper pleasantness of a consummate television-movie simulation of a Presidential candidate, complete with the prefab, deft one-liners, the precision watchwork modulations in manner

***Sporting an unflagging grin, Bentsen would dispense watercress-salad phrases of tentativeness: "What I have stated is.... Perhaps later on it could be justified, but right now I'd say..."***

and balsa-wood positions, a winning grin flared instantly and effortlessly as a blink, a flash bulb, a camera-shutter, eyebrows wagging amiably: Indeed, from its very beginning his campaign had seemed exclusively composed of such cosmetic calculations, film-image properties. That may be why there seemed some quality of celluloid about him, his voice like celluloid, light, dry, liquid, crisp, weightless—a mellifluously tapered and manicured figure with nonetheless oddly ashen eyes despite their sparklings of light now and then. Receiving a number of questions from the floor that were something less than polite, his eyes would flutter as he mustered his plucky, sporting, unflagging grin, and he would dispense watercress-salad phrases of tentativeness: "What I have stated is. . . . Perhaps later on it could be justified, but right now I'd say. . . ." that kind of thin expository gruel, while occasionally lapsing into fitful, emphatic gestures as if reminding himself to at least continue performing the appearances of an assertive and authentic candidacy. As a freshman senator out of the mahogany-paneled suites of Texas high finance, Bentsen had originally aspired to offer himself, out of five years of innocuous and circumspect competency in Washington's marbled catacombs, as a temper-

ate and respectable executive with just the proper muted sheens of charm to be exquisitely appropriate and attractive to the middle mass of the party—a perfect commodity, an eminently sensible political computation. Only, some elemental kinetic was lacking in it. Now, even the secondary aspiration to which he had apparently repaired—to be "everyone's second choice"—was becoming as wraithy as the first. By Louisville, in fact, one of his principal aides seemed most absorbed in the rather contracted concern of fretting over the costs of having to Xerox checks for campaign expense accountings—"Somebody ought to really look into that," he insisted. "That's the real unwritten story of this whole campaign, the unbelievable expense of that requirement." Asked once during a panel session if he would grant total amnesty to Vietnam dissenters still in exile, Bentsen replied, "I would not," and then, to a brief smack of a clap fan in the back of the auditorium as he was reaching for a glass of water, he paused and arched his eyebrows to spy the source of that surprise, to spot that one thin sputter of hope: "Ah, there *are* some of us out there, it seems. . . ."

He was finally asked by one reporter, "Your reception down there this morning was a little less than enthusiastic, was it not?" and he produced again his dauntlessly debonair grin, however harried, his eyebrows flicking, but his excellently diaphanous patience seemed, just fleetingly, to fray a discreet stitch or two against this invocation yet once more of his abysmal improbability, and he chimed with a kind of toneless, flat, beleaguered cheerfulness: "And which news media are you with?" Momentarily, as he gripped the lectern, there appeared faint, white spots on the knuckles of both fists.

Jackson, who also paid a call on the gathering, had loomed the longest as the candidate most substantially mobilized, the possibility of most imposing logistics. But, as with Bentsen to a degree, something in his offensive seemed now to have gone somewhere subtly but massively inert, static, for all its formidable engines and equipages, impressive funding and organization—like the awesome C-5A, his campaign was simply having a final, cumbersome difficulty actually working. A small, pudgy, tubby man in neat, snug vest-suits, with meager, thin eyes and a dour, droopy face like a sagging, plump sack of turnips, he has become the utter congressional creature during his 28 years on Capitol Hill, one of its sober high bishops as well as most resolute cold warriors, given to a perma-

nent ill-humor with the Russians even while something in his own sedulous, stale deliberation curiously suggests nothing so much as a Russian Politburo official. A bachelor until he was 49, nourishing his soul solely on legislative hearings and committee reports, he still drinks only parsimoniously and never listens to the sound of music at all, has partaken only of All-Bran and prune juice every morning for the past ten years, and tossed salad and cottage cheese with a clump of ground beef every noon. His sole reverences and fidelities have been invested in his vision of America as large corporations, a bulky military musculature, monolithic unions, mammoth GNP and a gargantuan edifice of government after the architecture of the New Deal. At sporadic moments when particularly exercised over one or another of these enthusiasms, Jackson is wont to briefly whisk his arms up and down in the style of a land-bound pelican—this constituting his single oratorical flourish. In fact, something about his ponderous solemnity during a panel session in Louisville seemed to irresistibly, inordinately tempt Shriver, also on the platform with him.

However faerie and whimsical Shriver's own prospects (he responded to one inquiry about busing with "I delivered a six or seven page speech which has my views on it, and anybody who wants to have a copy of what I said, it's available"), he is by far the most zestfully urbane of the whole company, carbonated with a champagne urbanity, an ebullient insouciance for all his unlikelihood. A certain tautness in his movements, a starchiness in his neck and arms, in his crisp speech, with heavy eyebrows like stripes drawn by charcoal and a heavy cap of hair like a toupee over his rosy chicken hawk's face, he had at Jackson with a gleeful, flurrying combativeness unmistakably Kennedyesque, that same spry and spiffy incisiveness of licks in exactly the same kind of creaky, crinkly voice like cellophane crackling, like a speeded-up tape player. Discussing Soviet shortfalls on the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accord, Shriver, in pure eye-twinkling mischief, blurted that Jackson, for one, should personally hold the Russians to account: "I mean, why don't you and a few other senators just go to Helsinki. . . ." To the surf of laughter from the floor, Jackson flushed, and after a moment bawled in his pump-organ voice, "Mr. Shriver, that's a cute question. But who are you gonna meet with in Helsinki? Who's in Helsinki?" Quickly, almost stuttering in his eagerness, Shriver bumbled that was exactly the point, that it was one of the



**Hubert Humphrey**  
by Robert Grossman

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classically great debating ploys to address an empty chair, to which Jackson—dimly sensing now that perhaps he was being lightly sported with, but not quite certain—merely humphed, “Well, that’s absurd, and you know it,” while flushing even more floridly, not deigning now to even regard Shriver with his eyes.

But abiding through all these appearances and proceedings in Louisville was a vague, unspoken suspicion that it might all amount to no more than a transitory foreground commotion before the ultimately impending loom in the distance of Hubert Humphrey. One of the conventional sophistications in current speculations about the Democratic situation is that, over the long course of the primaries, with so diverse a chaos of candidates, it will all wind up at Madison Square Garden in July in a final, spent, exhausted inconclusiveness, out of which Humphrey, a still serviceable anointee of the past, bunioned and pummeled and cauliflower-faced old battler of the politics of gladness, would inherit the nomination. Humphrey is one of the true poignancies, if not tragedies, of American political drama over the past 30 years, always a more gallant and decent and expansive spirit than the dingy and unseemly circumstances in which he has too often found himself caught and compromised. (As one Washington commentator put it, “Hubert’s tragic flaw is that if he’d been a woman, he’d have been pregnant all the time—he just has a hard time bringing himself to say no out of self-calculation, and just hopes for the best.”) But whatever Humphrey’s own private, lingering, sundown wistfulness as one of those Might-Have-Been Presidents in the land, if it is also his deliberation now to await that promising possible scenario for New York in July—and he has happily advertised he would not be disinclined to answer an invitation—it amounts to a somewhat mischievous whimsy on his part. Because the greatest probability is that the actual nominee will, in fact, be selected out of the developing dynamics of the primaries—no unmomentous selection, considering that nominee could well be the only factor between Reagan and four years of presiding over the destiny of the country. By continuing to hold himself as a contingency and yet abstaining from the primaries, Humphrey is working a not inconsiderable distraction in it all: The outcome of those primaries, which will almost certainly be decisive anyway, will be determined through an impeded, incomplete, imperfect process. The critical decision will have happened somewhat peripherally. In that sense, nothing will have so ill

become Humphrey as his irresponsibility in actively entertaining this last flirtation. “Somebody ought to get the message to him,” remarked one Democratic official. “that, in all due respect, for the sake of the meaningfulness of this party in this campaign, he ought to go ahead and get in the primaries, or declare himself unequivocally and irrevocably out of the thing. The only admirable thing for him to do at this point is either fish or quit cutting bait.”

But whiffs, however fleeting, of those highest Olympian ozones of the Presidency’s power and consequence leave a daze in which more men than Humphrey have hung drifting for the rest of their lives. On the last day of the Louisville gathering, McGovern appeared and delivered the most arresting, spirit-surg-ing address of the entire occasion, a commanding pronouncement on busing—“Today, no less than during the Civil War, the treatment of races reaches that spiritual depth which is at the ground of our national being. It is a more important measure of America than the gross national product. . . . It counts more than how we are doing materially, but whether America has a meaning beyond mere existence . . . the flaw of racism that is deep in the character of our society may bring down all the rest and the best work of our lives. . . . I do not want a great political party which nearly lost its soul in Vietnam to sell its soul on busing.” All in all, he carried away the whole three-day affair. If there seemed some final, vital property absent in all the contenders who had also appeared there, it might have been that last dimension of auspicious, solitary mystery, and McGovern somehow wore that glamour now, after his own ultimate exertion and defeat: It was as if he had never so carried in his presence those extra Presidential magnitudes as in his obsolescence now.

In 1972, even before the Eagleton disaster, there had been something in McGovern’s parson-like earnestness—that drawn, pursed, rectitudinous mouth, almost spinsterish, primly zippered like a Presbyterian elder—which had given off some faint, secret, elusive dank of weakness, the slight fastidious preciousness of someone who had been raised as a boy by elderly grandparents, an intimation of some inner vulnerability to corruption in the brutal swelter of gutteral exigencies not unreminiscent of Woodrow Wilson or, even more particularly in McGovern’s case, one of Hawthorne’s righteous Puritan devines: no incidental touch of Rev. Dimmesdale about McGovern. Perhaps it was some dim, inarticulate brute instinct in that great beast of the

common electorate so trusted by Jefferson that had, in fact, sniffed this. In any event, over the course of his press conference McGovern betrayed that, like Humphrey, he had not quite been able yet to relinquish his own brief, Faustian headiness—submitting that if circumstances should so evolve that the convention arrives at an impasse, yes, he would be agreeable to a beckons: "I'd like to be one of the alternatives. . . ." And then proposing, "When you become President, you take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States. . . ." As he recited that phrase he lifted up his right palm almost unthinkingly in the glare of the television lights, as if by sheer reflex still prompted to enact that furiously pursued moment that had somehow escaped him—the shadow of that final great gesture and instant which had eluded him now cast, solitary and isolate and detached out of all time and place, against the total white blankness of the wall behind him.

In fact, there was the strange abstraction of a shadow-show to the whole issues convention in Louisville. Aside from McGovern's speech, the only rude intrusion of any true elemental issue into its diaphanous dissertations over "programs" and "priorities" came with an anti-busing demonstration outside the auditorium on the second day, viewed by most delegates from behind windowpanes up on the second floor—Confederate and American flags swimming over the abrupt, moiling combustion of a multitude across the street, Wallace placards bobbing, he now haunting this occasion as he has, like a perennial dark gremlin, a troll, the career of the Democratic Party over the past 14 years. Stumpy, glowering, dowdy, clangorous, uncontrollable, he constitutes yet another imponderable in the physics of the 1976 campaign, though this last time, since the sudden berserkness in that Maryland shopping center four years ago, as a blasted ghost of who he once was, merely simulating the motions and sounds and electricities of his prior self, with his campaign likely to flare more thinly and emptily than is generally supposed, the last fierce instant's glare of a light bulb before it goes out forever. But on the whole, for a conference convoked to explore critical tensions and dislocations in American society, those three days in Louisville took on the peculiar oblique and dream-like quality of a chamber-music performance, raptly preoccupied with infinitely intricate variations on the single theme of revising and rearranging systems, structures, maintenance procedures.

***It was as if McGovern had never so carried in his presence those extra Presidential magnitudes as in his obsolescence now***

At one point, historian Henry Steele Commager arose like a ruffled Druid wandered out of deep woods, weathered and baggy with long white hair astraggle, to announce, "We are in a desperate state. . . . As to the state of national leadership, there is none. The state is zero. This is the era of the chairman of the board, not leadership." The assembly was also advised by pollster Peter Hart that a recent sounding of the American citizenry discovered a tidal backwash of nausea and despair with all the conventional structures and institutions which have ordered American society so far, and, more startlingly, a readiness to embark on profoundly new departures far more radical than those posed by most candidates. Fifty-eight percent are convinced that the major corporations actually direct the conduct of the nation's affairs, while only 25 percent still assume the government actually exercises control over corporations; about 47 percent also persuaded now that megabusiness is the agent of most that's amiss in the country's life. And though 81 percent yet remain disinclined to government ownership of public commerce, 74 percent would have local community representation on industrial boards of directors, and a majority of citizens even subscribe now to employee ownership and control of companies as

an alternative to exclusive private ownership. Nevertheless, against the apocalyptic intimations of this new disposition in the national commonry, party chairman Robert Strauss still sturdily tromboned, "Those who would grasp at public disenchantment . . . are those who don't know what the hell America is all about. People don't want less government, they want *better* government. They don't want their social programs dismantled, they want them more *efficient*."

The auditorium where the sessions were held was a cavernous hall of high, dim girders like a hangar for dirigibles, its far gloomed spaces vastly vacant and filled with the empty boom of electronically blared rhetoric, thin, shallow eddies of delegates sifting idly up and down its aisles and gusts of newsmen like a winter sky-full of starlings wheeling and swooping, fitfully and randomly sighting on each other and so plunging back and forth among its distracted and tenuous proceedings, the successive brief comings and vanishings of candidates. Once, a delegate arose from the audience to notify the candidates then sitting on the stage. "In all we're doing here, in all we're saying, we are acting from the voices of dead spirits. We are ruled by the dead here." This provided, at least, the convention's only metaphysical moment—there was, just for an instant, a huge hush over the floor, then a general uncomfortable shuffling and rustling like some immense suspiration of caught breath, a few twitterings; and one of Bentsen's aides, a chap in a plaid mod suit with a mineral-textured face like pumice and a coiffure of aluminial hair, wearing delicate aviator glasses like tinted cellophane and a bulky, gold-link digital-computer watch on his wrist, turned to a newsman beside him and allowed with a small smile, "I see some of Fred Harris' folks are among us."



Indeed, there has long seemed a certain touch of the metaphysical to Harris' candidacy. Proceeding outside all the conventional sophistications and realities, it has been a campaign assuming, at times, the vaguely daft and whistly eccentricity of Peter the Hermit's crusade. Harris himself is a rather improbable article in this age of executive

princelings. A hefty, pouchy, swart boar of a man with a lumpish, hominy homeliness of face, a bit shambled in attire, a kind of barging, porcine urgency about him with something of a bulby glare in his anthracite-dark eyes and stray, ragged tufts of black hair hanging over his brow, Harris rather suggests a tabernacle faith-healer, or some florid, rambunctious drummer of pans, novelties, cough medicines. His followers seem, for the most part, a rather ragamuffin and errant lot—a waitress at a boat club living with a Vietnam veteran now cleaning fish for work, legions of thin, pale, spectral students, a youth serving as a quality-control chemist at a Budweiser brewery. They are generally innocent of those metallic, brisk efficiencies and facile, capable sheens of, say, Carter and Bayh operatives. Each candidate, of course, is to a degree living out the ultimately private dreams and inner romances of his followers, living their lives more largely and bravely and vividly for them—he is, in a way, serving to realize each of them on the uttermost epic scale of fulfillment—and at those small moments when a candidate might lapse into boorishness and tinniness (Harris, for instance, has a disconcerting habit of quickly guffawing at his own drolleries right after delivering them), when he betrays signs of a mere mundane mortality that disappoint the passionate self-investment of his courtiers in him, the light briefly dies in their eyes. But Harris' tumbleweed of faithful almost unanimously explain their services to Harris not as the restlessness of a political regular "just to be a part of the action in somebody's campaign this year," as one of Bayh's aides put it, but simply a calling of heart out of belief in Harris' belief.

Harris is engaged in his campaign in an evangelism uttered directly out of that great elusive vision which has haunted American politics for over a century like an abiding, distant, phantom glimmering of the promised land—populism. Perhaps the only truly indigenous and home-grown American revolutionary proposition since 1776, it had its inception in those haggard, smoke-hung decades after the Civil War and, for a long season up until the turn of the century, enfevered the South and the wide plains of the Midwest, a kind of spontaneous popular combustion of country-Jacobin radicalism among a beset and desperate yeomanry, including now and then blacks, which ranged itself against the proprietorial estate of Wall Street and those various monopolists, trusts, merchants, bankers and textile barons of the Gilded Age. The populist sensibility has continued to gutter since then, luridly flaring with Huey

Long, gaudy and clamorous tribune to the nation's Jacquerie during the Thirties. Indeed, Wallace himself is a mutation of populism into a more meager and sullen blue-collar version. Wallace and Harris, for that matter, derive from precisely the same political voltages; Harris holds exactly Wallace's kind of gusty, rowdy political impulses and energies—only he is like a reversed, mirror-image of Wallace. He passed through certain pilgrimages of intellect and spirit which left him fundamentally different bearings, registers of mind and feeling wholly vacant in Wallace. And he preaches his neopopulist gospel at campaign stops which take on all the air of revival meetings.

"What a nice-lookin' group of people you are here tonight," Harris will beam, one bulky paw stroking and strumming his coat lapel and tie, the other hung by a thumb-hook to his handkerchief pocket. "Maybe we could tell the folks in the other room in there I'm 'bout to say a few words here. . . ." Alone among the company of Democratic candidates now in the field, Harris has the capacity for a walloping, steamy, organ-pealing oratory that makes the blood surge, the skin prickle, the soul shudder: "Corporations run this government and this country now, and don't you fool yourselves. Too few people have all the money and all the

**Wallace's campaign is likely to flare more thinly and emptily than is generally supposed, the last fierce instant's glare of a light bulb before it goes out forever**

power—the concentration of wealth now in this country is far worse than it was during the Depression, and that translates directly into political power. We got a foreign policy that primarily answers to the interests of the multinational corporations and a domestic policy that primarily serves the interests of the super-rich and the corporations. We got to change that. We give the tax breaks to the giants, the Exxons, the IBMs, the Gulf Oil companies, the giant banks. But what we gotta have is a graduated income tax for corporations, not graduated loopholes. Take them and the super-rich off welfare. Did you know that last year 24 millionaires paid exactly *zero* income tax? One thing I'd start with is a tax increase for the Rockefeller, the J. Paul Getty's. Rockefeller paid not a single *dime* in income tax a year or so back here for the privilege of living in this great country of ours. What we oughtta do is sue that man for non-support. 'Course, now, we shouldn't forget, he did give us a \$35,000 bed—I don't want to seem like an ingrate."

Briefly plucking at his nose as one would plunk at a jews-harp, with a delivery in which there lurk those whunking Okie chords of his origins, those deep-gullied tin-bucket inflections, Harris bays on, "We're in no jeopardy in this country militarily, really. The jeopardy is that our economy is falling apart from trying to look out after these corporations and monopolies. We got a bunch of clumsy giants that are actually inefficient and expensive. Prices would come down naturally and there'd be a lot more people working if we really had a competitive business system in this country, but we haven't had anything like that since, as the lawyers like to say, the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. If I had just one thing I could do as President, it's put people in this country back to work again. It costs us money for people not to work—more than that, it costs us human beings, costs in human spirit. Small business has always been the backbone of this country, but what's happened? These giants like 7-11, for instance, they've driven the mom 'n' pop-stores outta business. We been miseducated in this country—bigness is not generally better, *bigness is generally worse*. It grinds people down. What I'm talking about is a diffusion of wealth and power. Quit subsidizing these large corporations, things like bailing out Lockheed, and quit subsidizing unemployment through the welfare system as it is now, and start using that money to subsidize *employment*, jobs. Break up these monopolies like GM, and really give them a dose of the

free-enterprise system. Some folks say I frighten business—well, anybody who's for monopolies would find all this frightening, I suppose, but anybody who's for real competition and free enterprise would be for me. Too few people have all the money and all the power, and it ought not to be like that. That's not what Thomas Jefferson had in mind. That's not what we thought we'd agreed to back there 200 years ago. It's time we got our country back. And you don't get it by beggin'—*you take it.*"

This Pentecostalism almost invariably brings audiences heaving to their feet in storms of applause, and Harris concludes in the manner of an old-fashioned, tent-revival altar call: "I'm gonna ask you to make a commitment of support tonight. Nothing's more important than what you'll do here tonight. I believe you and I have a chance to change this country and so in some way change the world, and it can start right here in this room tonight. . . ." The truth is, something about Harris' actual presence seems curiously out of rhyme with his political testament. He carries an ambience which often affords slight, discreet bogglements and dislocations to the finer sensibilities of his faithful. He spoke one evening to a drawing-room gathering in an expensive manorial suburb of Detroit—a somewhat tweedy and long-maned and ethereal assembly of dispossessed liberals left adrift since the McCarthy and McGovern crusades, collected now in scattered small auroras of lamp glow among potted ferns and Persian rugs and impressionist paintings on the walls—and into this salon of exquisite liberal aesthetes, Harris improbably brought the burly, pig-eyed ferocity of some warty, backwoods Oklahoma sheriff, the brutish heats of a red-dirt demagogue. His feet spraddled with one hand plunged deep in the pocket of his wadded, buttoned coat and his other blunt hand heavily punching the air, his coarse oil-black hair furrowed right down the middle of his head with a razorback scagginess at the back, stiffly askew now in the glare of a lamp over his smoke-cured ham hock of a face, he accosted them all a little uneasily. They were unaccustomed to attaching this sort of appearance and manner to what he was actually saying: "I'm talking about a diffusion of wealth and power—the sort of things we haven't been seriously talking about for 50 years. . . . What Wallace has done is make the frustrations and discontent of the common folks into a race deal. It's not a race deal at all, it's a *class* deal. The issue is *privilege.*" Raking his hair back with clumsy swipes of his blunt

hand, he took a sip from his glass mug of beer with a kind of wild bullfrog glare over the rim as he listened to questions—"Naw. Naw. We got to quit propping up every dictator around the globe who can afford a pair of sunglasses. Looks like we'd of learned that by now."

There's been a certain surreal and swashbuckling quaintness about the way Harris has gone about pursuing the Presidency. Hauling out of a far outer twilight of possibility with negligible funds and organization, he has conducted his campaign from phone booths in airline terminals and on the street corners of scanty far-flung New England towns, late at night, bulkily huddling inside the closed glass door, mumbling on a shabby unlit cigar as he scrawls notes on the back of an envelope in the bleak, wintry murk of a solitary streetlight overhead. Checking into a motel, he would rummage out of his wallet cash in advance for his room. It all seemed impossible light-years, galactic distances from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue—he sitting alone at midnight in the tarnished yellow shine of an airport coffee shop with a glass of beer and a taco plate, deposited by himself up front in the cabin of a lumbrous propeller plane at a stopover at some meager wind-

**To the question, "Don't you ever wish the pace would slow a little?" Harris grunted, "Well, that's what I thought it was already. Couldn't hardly afford for it to get any slower"**

sock airfield in the wide, lost outback of Wisconsin, ruffling through an airline magazine in the long, wind-buffeting silence outside and then dozing off. Met at his destination an hour later by two students, he heaved his suit-bag and briefcase into the front trunk of their car with an amiable hoot, "Damn, somebody been haulin' stove-wood in there, looks like." and so set out for his next call stuffed into the front seat of a rickety, rusty, red Volkswagen slapping over vast, flat, empty expanses of upper Wisconsin. Stopping at a truck-stop diner for a bowl of chili, he swapped chortles with the two students over bumper-sticker witticisms they had seen, with one of the students presently inquiring, "Don't you ever wish the pace would slow down a little?" Harris grunted, "Well, that's what I thought it already was. Couldn't hardly afford for it to get any slower." He gave a chugging little laugh. Geneva conferences, National Security Council sessions and State of the Union addresses seemed as remote and vague as the emerald City of Oz. But striding on back out to the Volkswagen, he blared, "Boy, that was good chili. Eatin' that chili makes me want to run for President. 'Course, 'bout everything does. Just gettin' up in the morning does."

One Democratic track-tout of literary inclinations dismisses Harris, with a sniff, "I think maybe he and Gene McCarthy have been on *Meet the Press* just one time too many. I don't know, there seems to be this peculiar desperation always hanging in the party which produces and accommodates such deliriums, allows a certain credit for madness. There's a kind of lyrical, whiskey lunacy to this Harris thing. Sure, he's got the fire in his belly, he's got the truth—but it's like, what if they gave a revival and nobody came? So maybe he should be a newspaper columnist. Harris has got that great flair and energy of hopelessness—the invigoration and élan of doom. He's like Thomas Becket: He's going about it all with much intensity and concentration, knowing the soldiers are in the cathedral."

Whatever, Harris has in fact come barreling into the Democratic scrimmage for President directly out of that second, windier, lustier part of the long mystery of the nation's schizophrenic struggle between Plymouth and the frontier to find its meaning and its image—out of that rowdier, exultant, expansive, unruly impulse toward adventure and dangerous dreams that has run restlessly throughout the American experience. And, in that sense, however doomed Harris' undertaking might finally be, it may have presented us with one of our last existential moments of truth.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# UDALL

With so thronged a field now of variously liberal contestants—Carter, Harris, Bayh—Morris Udall's candidacy of genial, quiet thoughtfulness has come to be a proposition operating on an increasingly abstruse political calculus of contingencies, secondary oblique potentialities, pastel possibilities finely nuanced now almost to the point of inflexibility. A loftily tall, gangly and attenuated figure with a long, lank mule skinner's face wearing the elusively awry squint of one glass eye from the slip of a knife-blade in boyhood play, he resembles some ramshackle combination of John Updike, Abraham Lincoln and Don Quixote. From a Mormon family in Arizona that became a kind of political dynasty of tribal power in those idly inhabited, sun-stricken, southern scrub-wastes of the state, Udall grew up as something of a local Renaissance youth—captain of the high-school basketball team, editor of the paper, leading man in the school play, president of the student body, quarterback of the football team who also marched with the band during half time, later, at the University of Arizona, student body president and high scorer on the school's basketball team (he learned to gauge dimension with two quick, blurred wags of his head before shooting). After his older brother, Stewart, was elevated out of Congress into Kennedy's Camelot Cabinet as Secretary of the Interior, Mo succeeded to his desk. There, he steadily compiled a respectable reputation as a prudent and sensible progressive, diligently dispatching regular newsletters to his constituents back home that, collected into a book, have since become a classic chronicle of one solitary odyssey of conscience and goodwill through the reefs and sirens of the congressional system of power. A mild and earnest and winsomely unpretentious soul, yet he was not so innocent of deep, private musks of ambition that he did not, in time, lurch to depose the Speaker of the House, antique and raspy John McCormack. It was the first frontal foray against the bluffs of the seniority system in over a century. Udall capsized awesomely, 178 to 58 in a secret ballot, but did so gracefully and engagingly, whatever the pain, with his wryly aslant little smile of unfaltering affableness.



**Mo Udall**  
by Gerry Gersten

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ness and fine, bemused  
reflectiveness apart  
from it all*

Nevertheless, two years later he made a lunge for the Majority Leadership against Hale Boggs. Again he foundered, but once again, stylishly, winningly, chipper and gently rueful and self-effacing. Something about these two good-hearted and conscientious failures enhanced him; he emerged with a special political handsomeness, and, before long, a number of his House colleagues began mentioning to him the possibility of offering for the Presidency, muttering flattering breaths on his deep brimstones of ambition, this time the most fearsome ambition of all.

In truth, more than any of his competitors now in the Democratic melee for President, Udall has about him a quality of amiable and utterly civilized decency: He is, for one thing, capable of casual small gallantries—as Pima County's prosecuting attorney back in 1952, after unsuccessfully arguing for the death penalty in one case, he provided the defendant upon his release from prison with a personal loan because he found him so likable. During a session of Congress not long ago, as he was presiding over a crucial committee hearing on environmental legislation, he was slipped a note from an out-of-town newsman outside in sudden funding straits on an assignment, and presently emerged into the flare and wash of television lights to take the newsman aside and hastily cosign a check for him. Even through a calamitous, spirit-sacking divorce (Udall's second wife, Ella, is a gusty and assertive lady whom he fondly calls "Tiger"), he has remained a monumentally patient and long-suffering sort, with deep, calm vaults and reserves of cheerful undismay amid all sieges of harassment and tribulation. A mellow-seasoned man with a wit as brisk and dry and glittery as a desert's winter-morning light, Udall's thoroughly civilized disposition has, in fact, become his peculiar un-gainly difficulty as a Presidential candidate. It's as if he is hung by his nature in some abstraction of drollness and fine, bemused reflectiveness apart from it all. Having always cherished a high sense of the burlesque, he has seemed unable to bring himself to finally enter into the immediate, grimed and grunting churn and welter and blunderous heaving of the matter in which he finds himself entailed. It's a diffidence that distresses his aides extravagantly, and they are ceaselessly presenting him with desperate memos reproving him for his lingering air of amused detachment—which Udall will promptly flourish, with an amused little dry smile, to newsmen. He campaigns almost as an anti-candidate, as if he is Will Rogers watching himself run. He likes to propose to audiences, "Now, a

one-eyed divorced Mormon can't be all bad." Indeed, his compulsive, modest waggeries occasionally leave one dangling a bit ambivalently: He sometimes concludes his appeals by recounting the campaign of one Arizona politician who would energetically present his political principles to listeners and then offer, "Them's my views, and if you don't like 'em, I'll change 'em." If anything, Udall's final, mortal disability has been that he suffers from a sensibility too excellently refined—like that figure, actually, who seems his own political and spiritual lodestar, Adlai Stevenson. Udall is fond of citing a moment in one of Stevenson's campaigns against Eisenhower when he noticed at one stop a placard assuring him, *You have the support of all thinking Americans*, and Stevenson remarked, "That's not enough—I'm going to need a majority."

Most of all, in all this one senses that Udall is without that last, elemental, primeval lust in the deep loins of his soul for the sweet, musky bitch of power—the final hot carnality of ambition which is probably critical in the end to any aspiration for the Presidency. His pilot observed one morning as he was waiting to loft Udall again back up into Massachusetts, "He's light—you know? I've flown all these guys around at one time or another, and this one, I mean he just doesn't seem as tense and all-wrought-up all the time like the others. He's a light and easy fella." Surpassingly civil and articulate and generous of spirit, he is also refreshingly devoid of that capacity for sheer wolverine meanness which is no doubt necessary to actually win it ultimately—as the process itself has more than once before tended to edit out those natures most exquisitely and elegantly tempered to serve as a President. Unassuming to an almost disconcerting degree, at the least faintly uncomfortable about the simple blatancy of his ambition now, yet Udall doughtily and doggedly continues going through the motions.

At a home somewhere on the outer suburbs of Boston, he addressed a large congregation of neighbors gathered in a pine-paneled sunporch in the back of the house—they had all been sipping from plastic glasses of white wine as they waited for him and had now a sweetly tinged ambiance of gentle booziness in the late afternoon. Mo stood in the center of the room—long and dangling, looking like an effigy assembled out of raw plank slats, his coattail hanging a bit too short, slightly frayed. He commended himself for their consideration somewhat wanly and tenuously, with vague, fleeting smiles

*Continued on page 40*

# THE DEMOCRATS

to the air, shuffling a little awkwardly as if still murmuringly abashed by his presumption, offering a recitation of his eminently worthy struggles against the congressional seniority system, against pillagings of the environment, his direct personal facilitation of the first disclosures about My Lai. ("I hope you'll look not at who's the most handsome, or who has the best rhetoric, a rhetoric that stirs your soul—it does no good to find somebody who turns you on if they aren't electable. We ought to think favorably of someone who turns you on maybe 90 percent of the time, but can get elected. I believe, modestly, that better than the rest, I can do it. I think when the chips were down, I've been there. So if you're tired of losing elections," he finished with wispy tentativeness, "and would like one who could win one for a change, give me your heart and your hand and your help. And I hope some of you'll get carried away maybe and want to go to work for us. . . .") And to a polite pattering of applause, with a scattering of parting pleasantries, he plunged on out.

As he folded his long frame like a carpenter's ruler back into the rear set of his car again, his daughter, Bambi, one of his six children, a lithe, buoyant, freshly pretty girl who had detected him flagging during the rounds that morning, now happily chirped, "That one must have gone a little better. You're smiling a little now."

In fact, one senses in Udall now an almost drowsy, vast exhaustion with all the striving, all the trying; as if quietly, in those empty, flat minutes of the afternoon driving to another appearance, alone in the deep lost caves of his nights, he longs for nothing so much now as the simple sweet ceasing of all that strain and urgency and uproar and savage antic motion. "It would be the greatest relief in the world to me to know now it's no use," he confessed, riding on through the thin, bright, mica-glistening sunlight of this Boston winter afternoon to yet another suburban den gathering, another performance. Absently fingering the door handle beside him, he gazed out the window at the wide tinfoil-glinting water of Boston Bay. "You find yourself almost wishing someone would tell you that for sure—that it's no use—so you could quit. You start just looking forward to it ending, even if it's losing, just for it all to be over with."

He briefly pondered his prospects in Arizona. "I ought to do all right in the caucuses there, at least. Jackson's been stirring around a little down there, but

nothing much. Of course, seems like everywhere I've been lately—Tempe, Prescott, Tucson—they tell me Jimmy Carter was just through there a week or so ago. Everybody said when he started out, no way you could get elected President the way he got elected governor in Georgia, shaking hands with everybody in the nation. But damn, if he doesn't seem to be doing something like it. Incredible, he's even out there in Arizona, running around. The sonuvabitch is as ubiquitous as the sunshine. . . ."



Indeed, Carter has, to an uncanny extent, managed a continental amplification of his governor's campaign in Georgia, a feat of sheer relentless, sedulous diligence over all obvious likelihood. A trim, slight figure of impeccable Sunday-morning-church neatness with a grin of almost anguished conviviality wide as a watermelon rind, yet with a certain heatless and wintry manner about him, eyes like pale-blue sleet and hair with the blanched glisten of spun beach

***"Seems like everywhere I've been lately—Tempe, Prescott, Tucson—they tell me Jimmy Carter was just through there a week or so ago. The sonuvabitch is as ubiquitous as the sunshine...."***

sand fluffed over a pink, splotchy, sun-chapped face. Carter has prospered through an almost preternatural capacity for shaking hands from early dawn on sidewalks and at shopping centers with the steady, oblivious, tireless application of a sewing machine. He seems as fatigueless, undentable as aluminum. It's a faintly forbidding fortitude (as a youth, Carter says, he began running cross-country and "I used to cough blood but I wouldn't stop") which carries him, with his dauntless indestructible grin, unflinchingly right on through those flat, dull coffee-haggard gullies of spirit of four o'clock in the afternoon, on up to midnight. "God, it's almost unholy," remarked one newsman who was with him for two days. Waiting outside a factory gate for a shift change in the Florida panhandle recently, Carter himself proudly reported, "Once, in New Hampshire, I shook hands with 4,500 people before I had a bite of breakfast." Standing in the drab sunlight of the cold afternoon, a wind like deep ice-water scattering his hair, hastily grabbing handshakes and shuffling out his handbills as shoals and rills of workers lapped past him, uttering in his muted murmur with his home-baked grin, "Hi, I'm Jimmy Carter, I'm gonna be your next President, hi, I'm Jimmy Carter. . . ." Once, solicitously swooping swift and delicate as a swallow to open a mailbox for one kerchief-wrapped lady with a handfull of letters who tried to circle away from him, he commented with an odd detachment to a newsman nearby, "They'll take that brochure home and read every word. All most of 'em get is the weekly newspaper and the Baptist magazine. And later on when they see you on TV, they'll tell their friends, 'I shook hands with that guy,' or, 'My cousin shook hands with that guy.' This is exactly the way I won in Georgia."

Carter was one of that new political generation which emerged in the South in the late Sixties—Dale Bumpers, Reubin Askew—of eminently circumspect and nicely mannered young political accountants succeeding those spectacular old turbulent rogue-centaurs of the Gothic past. Somewhat vanilla presences altogether, possessing about all the hoohawing, hair-raising voltages of Methodist summer camp directors, like the South itself in its domestication at last into the suburban void over the rest of the country, they afforded considerably less outrage to the national decency. But one somehow sniffed in all the respectability some faint, stale, chill whiff of an immense collective psychic impoverishment of the South—the perverse difficulty being that life, when it comes most full and

real, also probably comes most prodigally mixed and dangerous and troublesome. In any event, Carter's most notable feats as governor were something less than operatic, consisting primarily of various engineering rearrangements in the state's administrative structures while maintaining a demeanor of polite inoffensiveness. Even so, as one of his aides recalls, "I knew there was just no way this guy was going to serve four years and then just quit. He had more to him than that."

Despite his fresh, sunny Tom Sawyer geniality as an amateur at the smoggy poker table of high politics, Carter happens to hold, beneath all the cotton and caramel, fiercely precisioned machineries. It's a computered deliberation shared by his retainers—his press secretary, Jody Powell, a straw-haired young man with a tobacco-leaf tawny out of a south Georgia sun-stricken junction called Vienna, having about him that vaguely lethal Cracker look of pale mercury eyes and a thin, almost lipless mouth like a small hawk. "They may all seem like soft-spoken little Georgia boys," one Carter operative smiles appreciatively, "but they're cold-blooded as hell under all that niceness." Carter himself grew up in a negligible little crossroads community called Plains down in the wide, musing, buzzard-floated expanses of south Georgia. Even then, he was a somewhat uncommon and imposing lad, consuming *War and Peace*, he reports, when he was 12. It was like a boyhood passed in a barber-shop calendar scene by Paul Deftlesen, and afterward he went on into the Navy where he became a nuclear physicist and married his childhood sweetheart, Rosalynn—a resolutely pleasant-natured girl with a certain demure, gingham prettiness. With the death of his father, he came back home to make his life for the next 9 years tilling and ginning peanuts—one reporter with him for several days recently observed, "You know, it's like over all those years of communing with those peanuts, he gradually took on something of their quality, their texture. Damn, if he doesn't look vaguely like a peanut himself now." After patiently accreting a comfortable deposit of wealth, he then began to answer his vaster restlessness, first gaining a seat in the state senate, then making one dashing but lost guerrilla skirmish for the governorship, finally winning it four years later.

But as a Presidential candidate, he could not have seemed a more vapory proposition in the beginning. An amicable peanut-squire out of south Georgia's empty, piny, sun-dazed, gnat-shimmering flatlands with an occasional whimsy for

***Carter has prospered through an almost preternatural capacity for shaking hands with the tireless application of a sewing machine***

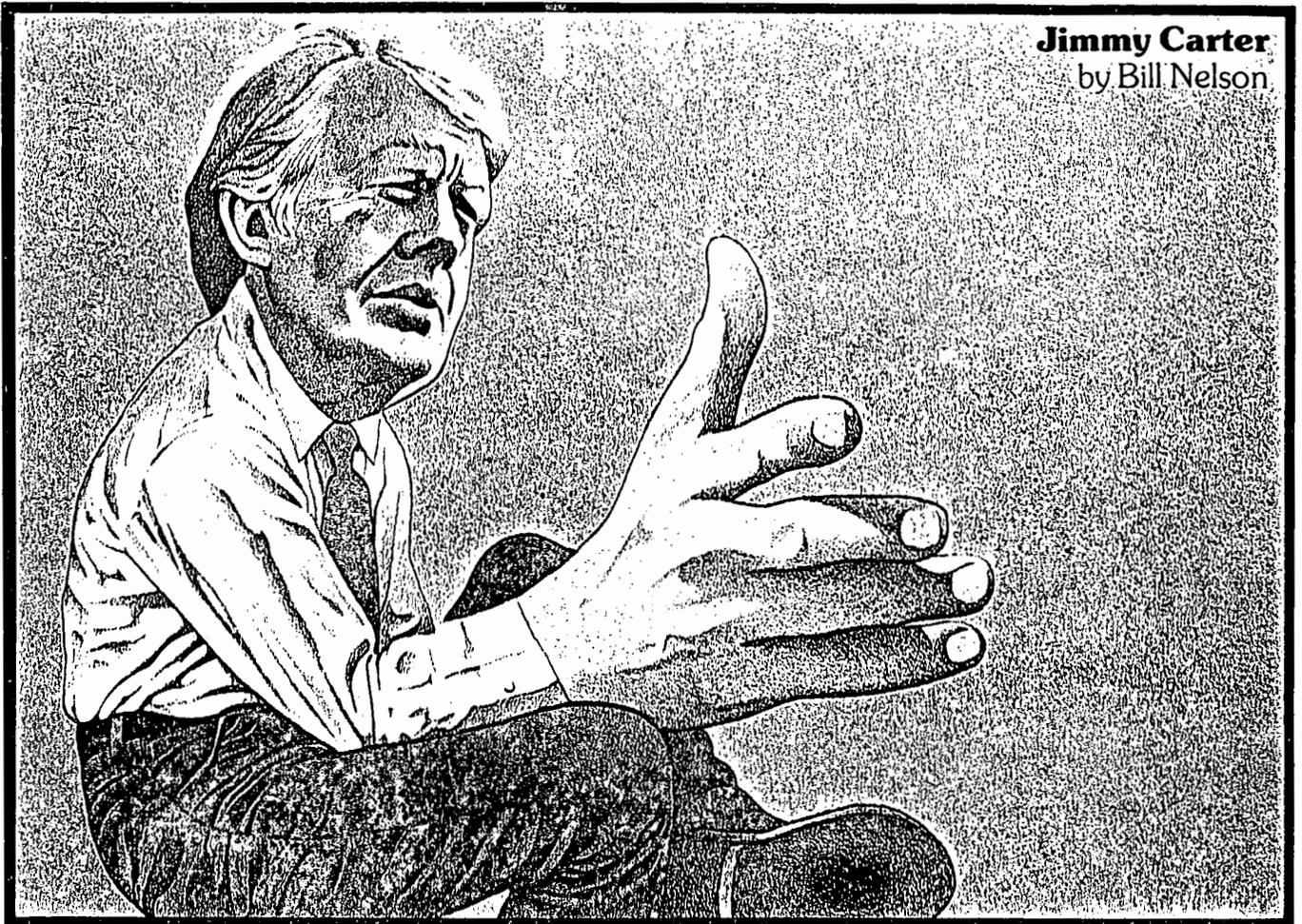
Dylan Thomas and Reinhold Niebuhr, as governor he had amounted to little more than a brief and mildly diverting occurrence in the vague outlying precincts of national relevance, regarded even in Georgia as a passably pleasant if rather conspicuously ravenous opportunist and commonly referred to there as "little Jimmy Carter" and, now and then, as "little Grinny Carter." Of course, any prophet's always without honor in his own turf; those who sniffed, "Can any good come out of Nazareth" were without doubt the townsfolk of Nazareth. Carter, however, always had rather less of the prophet than the bookkeeper about him. But as one correspondent with him not long ago in Florida mused, "It reminds me of what Roosevelt once told an admiral who was having a lot of trouble with MacArthur—'Never underestimate a man who overestimates himself.'" As Carter himself recounts, "While I was governor, I couldn't help but study the material coming through there on visits that was being considered at the time as Presidential possibilities. I'd always thought of Presidents as historical figures, you know—they weren't really human beings in my mind. Then, as governor, I met Humphrey and Jackson and McGovern and the others. They came out and stayed at the mansion." And with the ferociously

meticulous attentiveness and scrutinies of his own quiet, long-submerged ambition, he contemplated each of them with his mild blue eyes and easy cordial smile. "and after a while, I began to realize I knew more about most matters than they did. It sort of surprised me. There wasn't anything all that special about them at all." He was unheartened, as it were, by their prosaicness, inspired by their mundaneness; it was their bad luck not to impress him sufficiently to dissuade him from his speculations and tantalizations of contending against them.

As it's turned out, not only his campaigning approach but his proposals for the nation now as a Presidential candidate comprise for the most part merely a larger, expanded recycling of his gubernatorial career in Georgia. He is running on the administrative passions—the rather sexless, ardorless urgencies of efficiency, deliverance and redemption through procedure and technique. When he poses, "Can our system of government as we know it continue to exist?" the crisis he refers to is not so much ideological as managerial. "I'm running to coordinate the complicated mechanisms of government," he declares. "When I become President, I'm determined to be a tough, competent, aggressive, businesslike manager of things up there." With an enthusiasm that is almost spiritual, he proposes, "We have a real need for uniform, predictable, well-structured, well-organized programs. . . ."

Virtually blank of any of the swaggers or macho of a truly dramatic political presence, Carter may be aspiring to the Presidency as little more than an excellent, earnest, well-mannered clerk, but he has managed to make himself into one of the most forbidding clerks ever known. At the least, he preempts certain sober second meditations on the beatitude "The meek shall inherit the earth." Through no more than a single-minded, unremitting assiduousness, it has stunningly come to seem possible that he could actually pass the great miracle—that he could inherit the White House. His original calculations were somewhat minimal: to acquit himself decently in the early primaries and then accomplish an impressive if not decisive hit on Wallace in Florida, substantial enough to at least commend him to the convention as a Vice-Presidential prospect. That script has since escalated considerably. For one thing, his campaign was provided an unexpectedly galvanizing dynamic by the sheer gap of agreeable surprise between the initial assumptions about his negligibility and his actually beguiling assured personal presence, not to mention

**Jimmy Carter**  
by Bill Nelson



how he began to fare in early testings. He has since traveled far on the mere dazzle of that difference; he has been, spectacularly, what Saul Bellow calls a contrast-gainer. Now, it's become the marveling, gleeful suspicion of his staff that the journalistic establishment—particularly the *New York Times*—"looks like they've sort of decided to adopt us."

Carter also happens to have, dimly, the look of some unknown, undiscovered country cousin of Jack Kennedy—the ghost of that look, however dwindled and dusty in Carter, not the least of his serendipitous political properties. No matter how chimerical a figure of mere glimmers and gestures and graces he may eventually prove to be, JFK was nevertheless a momentous and protean event in American political life simply in his effect on the style of political theater here—forevermore altering it from a play of protagonists who suggested high-school principals, like Eisenhower and Taft and even Stevenson, and loosing us into an age of romantic politics, of matinee princes, of cavaliers. This generation of politicians, in image and manner, are indeed all the children of Kennedy. Nixon was only an aberrational atavism in all this, as is his extension, Ford. The Kennedy political physics, the Kennedy aesthetic, has become

generic—a national mythic romance of nostalgia, brought to its climactic definition and confirmation in Robert Kennedy, so profoundly endemic now in American political life that it continues to resist all hopelessness in pining and heaving after the last reluctant, harried one of them left, despite his own repudiations and dubious fitness. It is by no means, then, one of Carter's incidental windfalls that he happens to provide a certain tantalizing illusion to that formidable nostalgia. That faint, spectral, déjà-vu effect he carries is not lost on him.

But in the managerial enthusiasms and furtive Kennedy auras of his campaign, Carter is proceeding in it somehow as if he were teaching a Sunday-school class. He is pursuing the Presidency through a kind of politics of niceness—a gentle, custard-pudding didacticism, made up of sentiments having the subtle savor and complication of the Sunbeam pledge. He will conclude many of his appearances with his own home-sewn, wall-sampler homily version of that classic moment in political drama of Bob Kennedy's moving soliloquy in the wild, fiery night of Indianapolis after King's assassination, a moment of high moral theater, which has since become a stock effect almost all candidates labor to simulate. "I

once visited Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia," Carter narrates, "and I heard the same prayer heard there 200 years before by our forefathers. They had a vision of what our country should be—and were any of those leaders any more intelligent than we are? love their country more? Were they any closer to God than we are? I don't think so. I don't think we've lost anything precious that we can't restore. God hasn't done anything to make us a weak country."

Some cynics might suggest that Carter is not so much sicklied over with the pale caste of thought as with a potato wash of goodliness. But, in fact, he is utterly earnest, is possessed by a relentless, unblinking wholesomeness. "Social workers are my favorite kind of people," he often enthuses. "When they went to college, before they got disillusioned by the bureaucracies they wound up in, their hearts were opened to help blind people, poor people, the handicapped, the afflicted. . . ." Indeed, out of a vision of human distress that tends toward the Salvation Army dialectic, he is ceaselessly referring to "the afflicted" and "afflictions," to the extent of "the affliction of not having work to do." To those on welfare, he would administer through government programs "understanding, respect and love." Citing one employment program

***"Once in New Hampshire," Carter proudly reported, "I shook hands with 4,500 people before I had a bite of breakfast"***

for the indigent in his home county, Carter relates. "To see the pride that exists now in those women who are doing something useful... in God's sight..." and he hesitates, a lapse of suspended breath while he rolls his eyes about him gravely for a moment. "... will bring tears to the eyes." He announces, "Only 10 percent of those on welfare could actually work," standing very still as he delivers this news. "The other 90 percent..." and again he pauses with a certain melodramatic breathlessness, "... can't work," this almost mumbled, a soft downbeat finish in the syncopation of his delivery in these offhand little political devotionals: "What we oughtta do with that 90 percent," he sings, waits and then smiles; "... is love them," uttered again with that low, wispy, sinking, portentous finish and a faintly apologetic half-moon grin, his pale dusty eyelashes batting shyly as if in fleeting embarrassment at the simple, obvious, overwhelming decency of these disclosures. "The question is whether we can have a government. . . ." another vapor-hang of hesitation; "... that is right and decent," the grin now stealing forth again, "and honest, and truthful," tolling forth the words once more, raptly, as if in some adolescent's stricken infatuation with his discovery of idealism and the noble.

In all this sincerity, Carter has seemed to move in a constant rainbow of political good luck—most notably, when he was blessed with the almost supernatural stroke of good fortune of having most of the other candidates decide, back when Carter still looked fairly negligible nationally, to abstain from Florida and leave the field to him to attend to the special task of dispatching Wallace. As it's worked out, he may well wind up dispatching them all there, so have the caprices of circumstance since tumbled. Now, with his coup in Iowa and the likelihood that he will fare far more imposingly in the primaries to follow than was ever originally supposed, he seems sure to come booming into Florida with a walloping accumulated momentum against Wallace, in what will be Wallace's first authentic primary effort. Florida remains the critical and decisive moment for Carter, but on a scale now far more momentous than was envisioned in the beginning. In his increasingly jaunty forays now into the furthest inner reaches of Wallace's old tribal territories there, he affects a serene élan, a kind of doughty un intimidation, taking a moment aside as he was shaking hands outside a Pensacola cardboard plant recently to inform a reporter with a small smile, "We

only about three and a half miles from the Alabama line here, you know..." A shift foreman, watching him from a distance, assured a huddle of newsmen, "You in Wallace country is what you're in here, fellas. He's been around a long time—but I have to say, this guy coming out here himself like this personally instead of sending somebody, you got to admire it. It's good." Downtown along Pensacola's main street, Carter was directed by a local aide—"Let's run 'im into Child's here"—into a cafe with barbershop-tile floors and the slightly tatty, glazed mummy of a tarpon mounted on one wall; Carter strode eagerly to a long table at the back full of businessmen taking their mid-morning coffee, where he was promptly notified, "This is Wallace country back here 'round this table, sorry." Carter's face flushed, became almost all grin, as he burred, "Okay, good deal, wouldn't want it to be unanimous."

If Florida was more or less ceded to him in the beginning, Carter has since flourished there to the point where he ebulliently professes, "It always would have suited me if the rest of 'em came on in; I'm willing to beat 'em all." In his pluckiness now, though, he is prone to occasionally over-strut himself a bit bumptiously and to over-advertise his auspicious associations, happily announcing, "Mr. Allon, Mr. Rabin, Mr. Bar-Lev—they're all close friends of mine," and, until not long ago, indicating he was being regularly advised by former Undersecretary of State George Ball, with Ball finally grumping to reporters that he'd only chatted once, and that only momentarily, with Carter.

In fact, he is not above indulging in the invocation of other hasty, wishful mirages of a more disquieting order. Whenever he is confronted with queries about his approach as President to bus-ing, he eagerly cites the arrangement worked out in Atlanta "while I was governor" as an enheartening and promising precedent. But an Atlanta attorney who aided the school board in devising that plan reports that he called on Carter at the delicately poised last phase of negotiations to ask him to lend his good offices toward helping conclude the matter only to be apprised that the governor was simply not going to get involved. "He even refused to return my calls," the attorney recalls bitterly; besides that, he adds, the Atlanta plan has worked "only by the grace of whites having fled to the suburbs until it's become an almost all-black system. Jimmy just sort of neglects to mention that."

No matter. If simple motion were

substance, Carter would be Charlemagne. In Pensacola recently, he abruptly appeared through the glass doors of the courthouse out of an ashen, chill-skied morning and, followed by a tumbling wake of reporters and Secret Service agents, proceeded to go through its corridors and offices with the dispatch and thoroughness of a Roto-Rooter—skimming and bobbing among its random early-morning population of secretaries and officials and citizens like a bumblebee in a garden of gardenia blossoms. "Hey, lemme shake your hand. I intend to be your next President . . . Yawl gettin' any peanuts down here at all? . . . Hi, don't forget me, now. . . . Oh, yeah, you from Georgia? Got any kinfolks up there? . . ." all the while, with each handshake, translating with a deft, instant, magician-like flicker his pine-green pamphlet into their palm, giving as he did his quick little curious possum-grin of shyness, abashment. Someone told him, "You're moving around mighty early this morning," and he piped, "Well, the courthouse didn't open until eight." Any open door along the way exerted on him an immediate gravitational check, tugging—"Hi, I'm Jimmy Carter, is it all right if I speak to your folks in here?" He once glanced at a closed door in one office—"Is there somebody in there, too?"—and paused before it, patiently strumming and ruffling his sheaf of pamphlets like a Las Vegas faro dealer while someone behind him said, "Yes, but she's. . . ." with a sudden, muffled short grumble of water then sounding behind the door and a secretary emerging to discover, with a small start, almost bumping into him, Carter standing immediately before her, beaming. "You the first girl I've ever given a pamphlet to in the bathroom," he allowed, and then impulsively dabbed her cheek with a slightly awkward little buss, turning to go with a low, light, boyish twitter. "Henh-heh-henh." Someone called behind him, "Mr. Carter, you missed Mizz Patch," and he swung back, "Sorry, I didn't mean to be rude," presenting her a handbill with that sheepishly proud smile of a seventh-grader offering up an excellent report card.

And so off again, this muted stam-pede moving after Carter in its own intact, detached pocket of furious clamor and urgency, forging on up stairwells with sudden little scuffling collisions with idle downcoming traffic, a dull fitful storming of feet on down corridors with Carter, now and then glimpsing over his shoulder happily to check the entourage toppling after him. At one point, he charged on through the closed double doors of a courthouse—"You can go in there. Gov-

***Carter is pursuing the Presidency through a kind of politics of niceness—a gentle custard pudding didacticism, made up of sentiments having the subtle savor and complication of the Sunbeam pledge***

ernor, there's a bunch of folks in there," the sheriff invited—and everyone spilled after him into what, it turned out, was the county criminal courtroom, its wooden pews filled with a scattering of rather glum, funereal faces now right before the convening of that morning's session for the disposition of their assorted delinquencies and dreads and abject woes—Carter nevertheless proceeding on his bustling rounds among them with an oblivious festiveness, regarded with dull, incredulous, bleak, pained stares as he chirruped to them, "Hope you enjoy your day in court!" A few minutes later, at a bank across the street, he startled customers in glass cubicles in the midst of the tense, humid privacies of applying for loans, they too mustering smiles a bit distracted and faltering—he winding up once, in his courtings about, briefly behind a teller's window, apparently unnoticed, greeting folks over the glass panel as they stepped up uncertainly. "Hi, I'm Jimmy Carter, I plan to be your next President. . . ."

As he moves along in this manner, Carter is wont, now and then, to place his freckled, tan-furzed hand on the back of secretaries' heads, let it linger lightly on the long, sleek sheens of their hair. At Pensacola's city hall, he flicks up the head-scarf of one receptionist and softly ruffles her hair in his fingers as he sput-

ters stammerously, "I wanna meet all the pretty girls in Florida." But it is a part of his unremitting and carefully calibrated seminarial composure that he allows himself no more than such momentary, tentative flirtations and titillations with those deeper luxurious Dionysian sirens at play in the mystique of power. Once, after a radio talk show in Miami Beach during which he had been called by a girl he had once idly courted as a teenager back in Plains, he indulged himself in the exquisite headiness of phoning her back, sitting behind a desk in a side office with one cordovan wingtip shoe cocked up on the rim, flushing to a tea-tinge as he murmured, "Roxie Jo? Hi, this is Jimmy. . . . Yeah. . . . Well, fine. . . . Married? . . . Where you livin' now? . . ." and then blurted with a strangled-looking grin, "You still as pretty as you ever were? . . . Sure. . . . Sure. . . . Naw, naw, I couldn't do that—" His face, in a suffusion of crimson now as if steeped in beet juice, melted almost completely into his grin. "Unh-unh, I swear, no," he gurgled.

But no more than that. Carter is, in all respects, preeminently a man of implacably measured restraints and modulations. Recalling an incident when he once became exasperated over a disarray in scheduling, he remarked that no one would have noticed "because I have complete control"—his only evidence of irritation, he indicated being a faint rippling of a muscle now and then along the jaw. He has staunchly abstained from any sip of spirits since the day he announced his candidacy; "It's just not all that necessary to me," he explains, "and I've seen a lot of others let it get to them a little bit." In fact, it is averred by some that his ceaseless, inexhaustible industry in campaigning really owes to the sublimated tensions of these ruthlessly pent compressions in his nature. Though he dispenses blandishments extravagantly—he will tell reporters, "We really feel honored and privileged you'll be spending some time with us, really do"—he seems to find it unbearably uncomfortable to have to entertain flatteries himself. He is made squirmish and taut of neck when ambushed and captured in casual one-on-one banter, as if it offends his compulsion for economy of expenditures—"I don't really like to waste time," he once conceded, "if it looks like somebody's just trying to contrive a conversation."

It was at a reception of some 450 supporters at Tampa's Conventional Hall that he was most utterly among his own people, the essential and definitive gathering of his variety of faithful. It was a tumultuously effusive convocation

("You lookin' good!") of the New South's young country-club Bourbons—junior bank executives and architects and attorneys with pale, pampered, faintly translucent faces and chestnut manes of fine-spun hair, wearing vest-suits of large plaid prints, their wives otter-sleek and sun-burnished in pastel gowns, furiously vibrant, faces shiny with a bright-eyed avidness, a kind of constant, thrumming, hectic expectancy which seemed to have only begun wasting them discreetly at the edges, at their tight temples and cheekbones, the new Scarlett O'Haras of the South's suburbs. They were, if not precisely the beautiful people, the pretty people of the Brave New South's wholesale transfiguration into a massive Santa Monica. Among them were older women in candied bouffant confections of hair with sweetly shattered faces, their husbands in Las Vegas leisure-suits in Popsicle hues of yellow and orange with string ties, their cheeks a little whiskey-scorched. "Fact is," a local reporter pondered, "damn if they don't all look like Republicans here. Strange crowd."

Carter swam into them, in high buoyancy now. Many of them he recognized with delighted squeals, "Aw, shucks! I can't believe it, lookahere—good to see you again. . . . McRae! Great day in the mornin'!" moving through an exchange of whoops and jubilant hoots like some small-town high-school homecoming festivity. "You just keep that nice smile, Jimmy. . . . Jimmy, you gonna do great down here, I'm working all the Christians for you, now," on into an antechamber, a cavernous and dimly illuminated hall like an airport hangar with plastic sheeting over its vaulted windows where the bar was in full, clattering, uproarious swing. In that bleary blue light, a white frost of beard was just beginning to show on Carter's jowls and chin like a dusting of ground glass. One old friend brayed to him, "Jimmy, what in the world you doing running for President?" and Carter, taking a quick little chest-expanding breath of happy concurrence with the dizzy audacity of it all, chirped, "Winnin' it, it's lookin' like."

During the dinner later in the convention hall, a chorus from a local high school—all barbered inoffensively, spankily sanitary and radiant and unanimously grinning with gladness—serenaded the crowd, belting out *California Dreamin'* like thronging Easter bells. Finally, Carter could not resist arising from the head table on the rostrum and skipping down and strolling over to stand by himself at the foot of the low stage where they were ganged and singing, cozily beaming up at them while personally receiving their blessing, his

arms snugly crossed and cuddled to his chest and his head shoved forward in that stubborn terrapin manner of his, a beatific grin of sheer transport on his uplifted face as they hymned to him, "Oz never did give nothing to the Tin Man/ That he didn't, didn't already have. . . ."



Among the plentiful chorus line of Democratic candidates, it's probably Carter who has been afforded the most disquiet by the abrupt, blithe bound of Birch Bayh into the auditions. Emerging late, he has managed to assemble a very sizable estate of serious organizational support very rapidly. Riding recently through the rusty winter woods and fields of Massachusetts, Bayh offered in his crisp, Indiana, guitar-string whang, "I didn't want to run if it looked like somebody was going to be able to do the same things I felt needed to be done to get this country going again. After a while, it looked like none of them was going to be

***Bayh's are farmboy good looks, altogether, the bright, sparkle-eyed swagger of a young corn prince***

able to put together the broad cross-section it's going to take to win. So. . . ." A nattily groomed figure with the spry snappiness of some young drugstore gallant out of *The Music Man*, he ducked his head to one side with a waggishly atilt smile, ". . . I thought I'd at least give 'er a try. You never know unless you try. I was able to put it together out there in Indiana several times, which is not exactly a bastion of liberalism."

More exactly, Bayh's approach in his campaign for the nomination is more or less that of a political plumbing contractor, his notion being to reassemble and consolidate again all the elements of that traditional FDR coalition now scattered among the other candidates—the redoubtable old consensus of labor, liberals, minorities and those briny, gristled old party brokers like Daley of Chicago. As Bayh likes to pose at party conclaves, "We need someone who can weave together the common threads in the hearts of us all. . . ." adding, with a bit of a clink to that lyric sentiment, ". . . all those common threads of personal self-interest." During Bayh's 14 years in the Senate, he has answered, for the most part, to the middle liberal respectability—he has been an advocate of the ERA, national health insurance, labor interests and civil rights laws and, most recently and combustibly, legislation to accommodate abortion. His most notable hour, perhaps, came with his successive successful sabotagings of the Haynsworth and Carswell nominations to the Supreme Court.

A bouncy chap with a hint of chunkiness that gives him something of the quality of a Collie puppy, Bayh has a certain urchin-choirboy freshness about him, with a tan neck and a shag of glistening cinnamon hair rippled with the merest wavy nuances of curliness, his pastel-blue summer-sky eyes squinting conscientiously between mildly mod sideburns in a rather pale face the complexion of buttermilk—his are farmboy good looks, altogether, the bright sparkle-eyed swagger of a young corn-prince. Indeed, after the death of his mother and his father's wartime transfer by the Air Force to Washington, Bayh was raised in Indiana by his grandparents among their 460 acres of wheat and corn and soybeans—as well as, being something of a semi-orphan, among the extravagant dotings and cuddlings of various middle-aged, hen-plump womenfolk.

He wound up inheriting the farm when he reached young manhood and, with his wife, Marvella, a perky-witted girl from Oklahoma whom he had married after she whipped him in a National

Farm Bureau debate contest, abided there for a short season. Bayh now likes to rhapsodize about the idyllic agrarian romance of that farming interlude, with a reverence approaching a Crunchy Granola commercial: "There's no more meaningful feeling in life than the feeling you get making things grow, being in touch with nature like that. It gives you almost a *religious* feeling, you know—seeing that corn come in in the fall. It's just good for a man's soul."

For all that, he soon became glumly, miserably restless—"I left it all because I like people" is his explanation—and managed, only 26, to levitate himself on up into the Indiana legislature. It was consummately his element, he found. He wound up the youngest House Speaker in the history of Indiana. In 1962, when he decided to take on Indiana's blustering old buffalo Republican senator, Homer Capehart—who guffawed at the idea—Bayh succeeded in delivering himself out of the void of his general anonymity over the state by means of a radio jingle—*Hey, look him o-ver, he's my kind of guy. His first name is Birch, his last name is Bayh.* That ditty, for all practical purposes, constituted his campaign. "Hell, people got to where they started calling the radio stations asking them to play that little song again," remembers one journalist. It was enough, along with Bayh's assiduous and maniacally folksy trompings about the state, to retire Capehart, and Bayh frisked on up to Washington.

In the Senate, he soon struck up a convivial camaraderie with Ted Kennedy and came by a certain short glare of national celebrity when, riding with Kennedy in a light plane that crashed one icy night near Southampton, Massachusetts, he dragged Kennedy out of the wreckage, as press reports had it, "though seriously injured himself." Traveling over a thin highway in the Massachusetts countryside last December, Bayh suddenly leaned forward to inquire of the driver, "Now this is somewhere around Southampton, isn't it? Yeah—" and then settled back in his seat to husk in awe to a newsman beside him. "Damn near died here. . . ." As it turned out, the local doctor who had treated him showed up among the group at his next stop, and Bayh recalled the episode for the gathering. "Yeah, it was one of the most traumatic moments in our life." But afterward, as the doctor stood outside watching Bayh whisk away on down the sidewalk, he was asked how critically damaged Bayh had been, and he smiled lightly. "Naw, it wasn't serious. Just a little back sprain. We turned him loose from the hospital after a day or two."

**"We got a bunch of our people in the crowd holding cameras with flashbulbs, so when he arrives they'll be popping and blazing—no film in the cameras, but those flashbulbs will be going off everywhere"**

In time, Bayh established himself as one of the more energetic young starlets in the Senate, and finally, in 1971, he made a brief initial scamper for the Presidency—but rapidly abandoned it when a singular blankness of any promising developments happened to coincide with the discovery that his wife had breast cancer. With surgery, she has since been restored to haleness, says Bayh. "She's real tough. But she's not getting into this now—she's doing her own thing." And last October, in a circus tent set up one pumpkin-mild day in a wheat field behind his old farmhouse in Indiana, Bayh announced he was going to have at it again. "As I travel around the country," he explains now, "there are people who are just looking for someone who has the capacity simply to look at you and make you feel he's honest."

Bayh, at least, has applied himself to conscientiousness with a vengeance. At a small assembly of labor officials roosting in metal folding chairs under bleak fluorescent light-tubes in an upper room of a New England city hall, he shook his way cordially around the room, breathing, "No, sit still. Sit still," and after he had delivered a short, sober chat—one foot propped up on the seat of a chair while he leaned forward with a kind of taut, urgent earnestness, a fist cocked on his waist—he then barked, "All right, now, what's on your mind." There was a certain stiffness in his poses and movements, like a newly unwrapped doll, he standing now a bit bulgy chested with his arms hung down in front of him with a rigid straightness, hands laced tightly together with palms to the floor, then turning, still erect of back and shoulders, quickly to the side for a question with a curt pivot of heel and toe like a minuet's pirouette. Asked about the closer government regulation of oil monopolies, Bayh ventured with an almost pained delibera-

tion, "I'm for it, I'm for it, but look. . . ." and then held for one of his long suspenseful pauses of pondering during which he paces gravely several steps back and forth, his hands shoved into his pockets, and then abruptly stops to regard the floor in further laboring meditation for a moment, at last peeping back up from under his fair, furrowed brow with a conclusive *tsk* of concern, ". . . but look, I just don't want government bureaucracy taking over the oil industry, that's all. I mean, I'm a progressive kind of guy, but I just. . . ."

In fact, if Udall's defect has been one of lurking diffidence, Bayh's would be precisely the reverse—a compulsive, flurrying excess of eagerness, a style of vigorous if slightly amorphous sincerity—"I'm for exploring alternatives for energy while relying in the meantime on nuclear power plants, alternatives like, coal, like solar energy; in fact, I get kind of excited when I think about developing alternatives." In this effusiveness, Bayh occasionally suffers little boggles and lapses of terms, blurting to one audience, "We need a program for cancer detection—if my wife were here, she could lecture you on that, having had an encounter with that particular disease herself, and having lost a mother to it myself. A program just, for cryin' out loud, for a simple little pabst-test. . . ." and he threw his arm out in incredulous, appalled dismay, ". . . just a simple little easy inexpensive *pabst-test!*"

As a matter of fact, Bayh, who religiously ends each campaign day by picking up a pint of chocolate ice-cream on his way back to his hotel, is not the most cerebral of creatures—the first time he took his bar exams, he flunked them. Rather, with his glister of casual handsomeness and zestfulness, he reminds one more than anything else of some television game-show host—the emcee, say, of *The Dating Game*. For that matter, there is a slight lingering, vagrant dash of the Lochinvar about Bayh, he being generally acknowledged around Washington as the buoyant and ambitious young Midwestern senator of one of Barbara Howar's dalliances in *Laughing All the Way*. After one evening reception in the ballroom of a Cambridge hotel, Bayh bobbed back into the car to instantly mutter to an aide, with a small cough, "Who was that girl with the shoulder bag standing up there in the front of the group to my left? I saw her the other night too up here, and she had on an outfit that'd knock you out, fella." At the least, he is given to a certain bright nimbleness of eye. The word from some Washington insiders is that Bayh—realizing what must

be the collective fantasy of a whole generation of American bucks now in their late thirties—has lately cultivated special amities with at least two matronly Mousketeer alumnae.

In like manner, his campaign for the Presidential nomination now has seemed rather reminiscent of a fraternity rush on some 1950s campus, consisting principally of pizzazz and pep rallies. As one of his aides eagerly announced before a campus appearance, "We're gonna create a crackerjack media event there, hopefully. We got a bunch of our people in the crowd holding cameras with flashbulbs, so when he arrives they'll be popping and blazing all around him as he goes in—no film in the cameras, but those flashbulbs will be going off everywhere." In fact, his retainers tend to have the glib, transistorized efficiencies and chromium excellencies peculiarly evocative, at once, of both Kennedy's and later Nixon's operatives, and most of them explain, "I just wanted to be a part of somebody's Presidential campaign this year, and I looked around and Bayh seemed the best bet." His crowds, too, at receptions and benefits rather resemble Kennedy crowds—roomsful of shining people, all glimmerously enameled with a chic, patent handsomeness as if minted into being right off the page of a Buick Riviera ad. But campaigning along sidewalks and in shopping centers, Bayh is, in fact, a county-fair boomer, cozily hugging grandmotherly ladies, ramming his hand under the arm of a policeman and leaning in chummily to him as he carries him along for several yards, blaring like a cornet to a restaurant owner emerging in a white apron out of his side door in Southampton. "Hi, I'm Birch Bayh, you people were mighty good to me and my wife back there a few years ago, we still gettin' Christmas cards from you folks up here!"

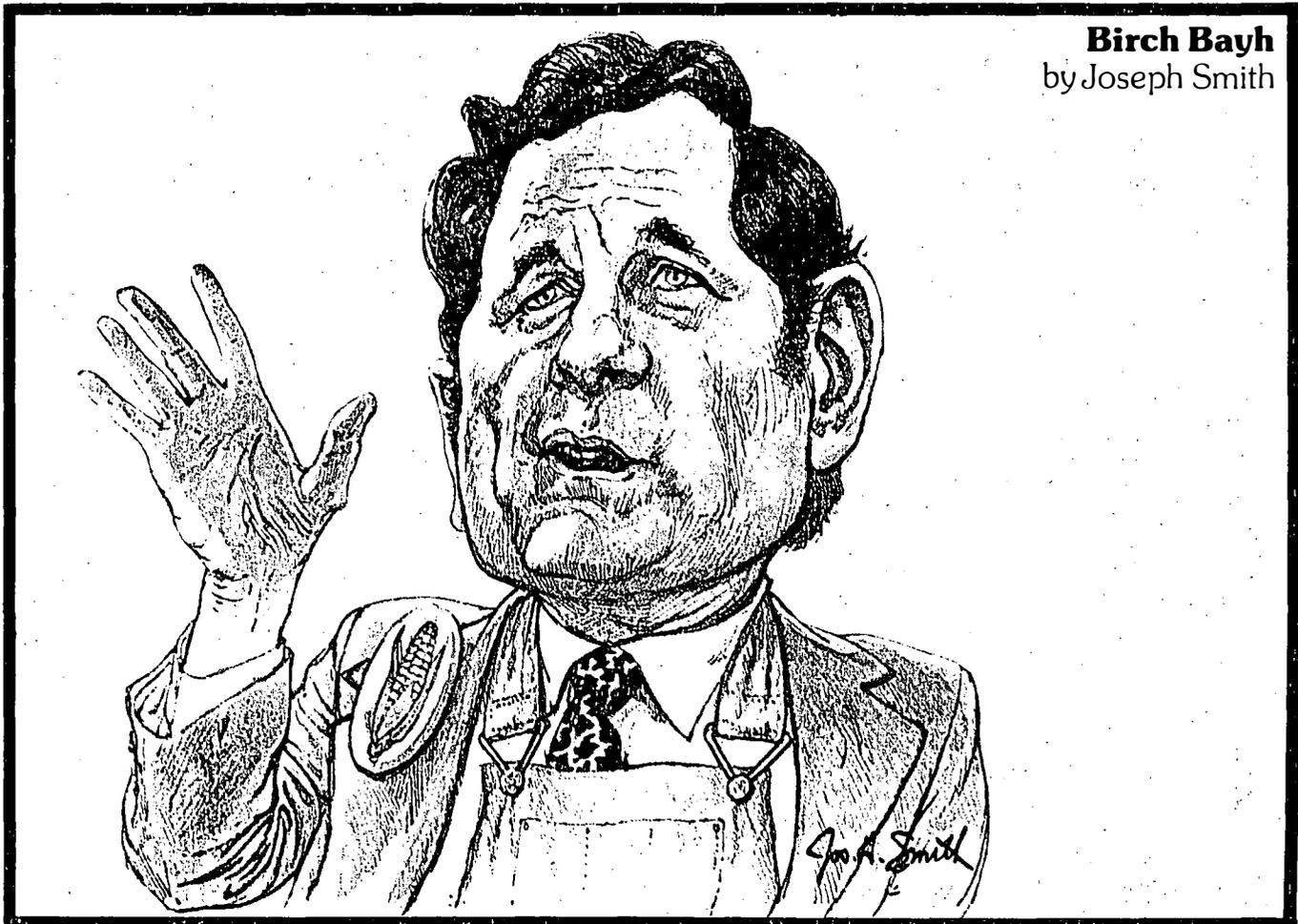
Especially when he is among students, Bayh tends to flourish somewhat clinky phrases filched out of faintly dated lexicons of high hip. Receiving a delegation of students one evening in his hotel room, he gravely shuffled off his coat, yanked open his collar and settled himself on the rug with his legs crossed Indian-fashion ("which I thought a little peculiar since there were still empty chairs around," recounts a student there) and then solemnly proposed, instantly glazing all eyes around him, "All right. Let's rap." To a convocation at the University of Massachusetts recently, he declared, "Now this may not be a good thing to say on a college campus, but—but—" and he paused with that air of straining conscientiousness, "but I wanna lay this on you,"

and the heaviness he then laid on them was: "We can't win this thing unless we get behind a candidate who has the capacity to put a coalition together . . . . Excuse me for getting a little exercised here, but I want to put it right on top of the table, because that's how I feel about it." Ask to comment on certain programs put forth by the People's Bicentennial Commission, he stalked up to the very edge of the stage with his squint of frankness, hands wedged in the slash pockets of his trousers with his coattail flared back over his wrists, and intoned, "Well, my wife met with Jeremy Rifkin, and I can tell you—she was very impressed with where he's coming from . . . ."

Finally leaning with arms crossed on the lectern—one sometimes gets the impression he is shuttling through a kind of varied slide-show repertoire of assertive, emphatic poses and gestures—he began, "I—look—I," and he tucked his chin in thoughtfully for a moment, "—I want to urge you all to get involved in this campaign. Lemme just tell you why." His voice has subsided now to a low, almost anguished wheeze, uncertain and cracking a little, as if near to splintering apart under the seriousness of the moment. "I mean, well, it's something that affected me more than just about any other thing in my life, and I'd just like to share it with you. I was speaking on a campus once not long ago, and somebody sitting . . . ." he glanced up, raised his arm and pointed, ". . . about, about right *there*, he stood up. Tall, black guy. Dark glasses. Beautiful Afro. And he said, 'One more question, one more question.' Well, I was already late to catch my plane, last flight out that evening. But what the heck. . . ." he dipped his head and gave a little toss of his hand in the air, ". . . so I miss the plane. Ended in my missing the flight. But he said, 'I've listened to everything you've had to say here about what you'd like to see this country be, and I think you really mean it . . . .' Said, 'I'd really like to believe you, but, but I just got back from Vietnam. I live on the West Side of Chicago, where kids are eating lead paint, getting bit by rats. I mean, I mean, what are you *really talking about?*' Well, I searched my mind for some evidence of good faith that I could give him . . . ." he paused, then gave a small shake of his head and a faint sideways smile, ". . . you know, I've told this story a hundred times, I guess, and I still get a little lump in my throat—" This, it was clear by now, was Bayh's own particular Bob-Kennedy-in-Indianapolis dramatic soliloquy, like Carter's forefathers-in-Carpenter's-Hall recital. "So I finally said to him, 'Look. The Carswell

**"It gives you almost a religious feeling, you know," says Bayh, "seeing that corn come in in the fall. It's just good for a man's soul"**

**Birch Bayh**  
by Joseph Smith



nomination. When that nomination came down there to the Senate, we didn't think we had a prayer to beat it. But there were 50 of us at least who still believed. Still believed. And as a result of a handful of students from Columbia Law School—they read every word of every case of G. Harrold Carswell, and it was that little handful of students who found the white supremacy issue, who found the mediocrity issue. And we beat that nomination. And those students did it."

There was an empty and rather hugely suspended hush over the auditorium: Somehow, it didn't all—ghetto children bitten by rats, the black Vietnam veteran who wanted to believe, how G. Harrold Carswell's nomination was defeated—quite come together. The audience stared at Bayh, a unanimous absence of any gulps among them, whatever lumps the imprecise beauty of the parable may have lodged in Bayh's throat.

Later that afternoon, he pulled up at a motel where he was to address a gathering of local Democrats, his aides spilling on in ahead of him with quick, breathless greetings to local Bayh partisans there, "How many here?" "About 40." "Christ. Jeez. That all? Well—" Bayh strolled in to find a thin spattering of people in the wide, yawning spaces of a vast, circular supper club and,

after one rapid glimpse around, kept his eyes from then on closely and intensely fixed on each of the well-wishers shaking his hand. Standing before the clutch of party workers in this gloom touched with vague glows of sulfur and brimstone, and striking one of his Beau Brummel stances, Bayh proposed, "Why don't we get involved in a dialogue?" Somehow, it had the sound of an obscurely indecent suggestion. He was presently asked, "Will you enunciate exactly how and where you differ, Senator, from the other liberal candidates?" At this, he took one of his long, pensive pauses, one finger softly tapping his pursed mouth in extended careful reflection, briefly glancing up at the ceiling. (At one gathering elsewhere late one evening, he paused so long after one question that there began to creep over the room a faint, chill uneasiness that he had maybe flipped suddenly into momentary coma, simply blanked out on his feet with his arms crossed and his head lowered with a forefinger curled thoughtfully over his mouth, until finally someone murmured thinly, "Senator?" and he wagged his hand, "No, no, I know the answer to that question, I'm just wondering how broad an answer I ought to give you.") At last he essayed, "Well—I—okay, then. Look. Fred Harris had some rather differing opinions about

things when he was in the Senate than now when he's running for President. But we all believe about the same things. The difference between us is the capacity to use the institutions to accomplish some very tough things. The others haven't really fought the tough battles I've fought. I've won most of 'em, too. I've learned what it takes to win in this system. I happen to believe if you just stand up and be honest, if people can look you in the eye and feel you're honest, you can convince a lot of people in a lot of different circumstances with a lot of different points of view."

Afterward, riding back to Boston through a dim, misting, indefinite dusk, a journalist who had been with Bayh through that day ventured the question, a trifle ponderously, as to whether there might not actually be a profound popular suspicion now, as was indicated by the Hart poll several weeks earlier, that corporations were the true invisible, effective government of the country, and if there might not be a popular readiness for renovations of the nation's economic and power systems far more radical than those posed by most candidates. "What," Bayh grunted. "I don't see how any of that kind of talk is all that radical. All that political rhetoric is simplistic." He shifted and settled himself against the door in a

kind of cramped huddle in his overcoat, his mood seeming to have suddenly gone strangely flat and sour. "People want the system to work," he mumbled, "the institutions just aren't working now. For instance, what I would do is—I—is I would have a crash study. Crash study to determine, for instance, the impact of conglomerates and multi-conglomerates, the relationships of the financial community to government. And a more progressive income tax for everybody. And when these multi-nationals make their gadgets abroad, with foreign labor, and then start selling those gadgets back in this country, that's where we'd draw the line."

"Gidgets?"

"Well. Anything you want to write it." And he turned to glare dully out of his window for a moment. "I don't think the corporate structure is innately bad at all," he presently insisted again, his voice wan and toneless. "It's just bad when it's treated with favoritism. That's all." And with that, he abruptly announced, "I'd like to take a little nap here," crowding himself impatiently against the door, somewhat grumpily shoving a wadded coat under his head—and so dozed. When the limousine finally pulled up in front of his hotel, not too long before his next scheduled appearance that evening, he was asked what he ever dreamed during these short naps snatched in cars and on planes in his plungings between campaign stops. "I never dream," he muttered, and bustled on out of the car.

Well before Watergate—indeed, with that surprisingly prosaic and potty collection of sulky bureaucratic uncles who appeared for civilization's judgment at Nuremberg—we should have begun to develop a new consciousness: that evil does not come now in those forms to which we've long been accustomed to recognizing it. No longer does it shuffle onstage before us as Richard the Third, humped and shadowy and smirking. Rather, in this age, it most often wears the circumspect vest-suits and shell-frame glasses of executive boardrooms, speaks in mild, civil, sensible modulations of language and carries an attaché case, dwells among graphs, charts, statistics, policy profiles, program reports, that whole paper universe of bureaucracies, corporations, research centers, government agencies, which collectively—in their applications to life of processes, structures, systems, designs, the mechanistic, as the final medium and definition of human experience—accomplish in the end, in the way of all institutions however human, itarian, only inhumanity, isolation and atrophy of the heart, ultimately working

## Fred Harris

by Michael Gross



**Harris' final misfortune is to have appeared as merely an engaging, gutsy anachronism at a moment of almost Proustian effeteness in political sensibilities, an overnerved, fastidious self-consciousness in the public constitution which seems unable to abide any Rabelaisian gustos and garlics in our leaders**

thereby incalculable havoc with human flesh.

The deepest crisis of these times, perhaps, is a crisis of appearances. It's as if our conscience's vision still perceives with only one eye, in flat dimensions of the conventional respectabilities: honorable men are civil and sober, and sober and urbanely civil men of circumstance and responsibility, whatever their occasional indiscretions, "are not criminals at heart," as Ronald Reagan reminded us during the Watergate scandals. There might be nothing left for Middle America but to landslide into wholesale madness if it ever came to suspect, to glimpse for an instant, the true, dark, furious abyss of possibility always just a blink away from the comfortable, innocent, sunny surfaces of a Norman Rockwell scene—that is, at once, the sadness and the danger, because the subtle etherizing of the heart and small annihilations of the soul and extinguishment of the individual life in the next totalitarianism will come upon us with the innocuous, pleasant, familiar smile of Marcus Welby.

Neither, for that matter, does goodness appear among us in the mien and guise by which we've long presumed to recognize it. Frequently, it's as if there is no way for it to move about in this age other than with the air of a fugitive, almost guiltily, like one of Graham Greene's poor, dingy, furtive, God-haunted derelicts. Watching Senator Sam Ervin against all the facile, sophisticated machineries of the Nixon executives during the Watergate hearings, one suspected it sometimes came blunderous, flawed, seemingly sluggish, crude and absurdly archaic, unprepossessingly plain and rudimentary, even at times buffoonish.

It remains, actually, the old immemorial fair-is-foul, foul-fair dramatic game, old as Oedipus and Othello and Don Quixote—the mirror-play of appearances between truth and counterfeit, health and malaise, life and emptiness.



## **HARRIS REDUX**

Fred Harris—bluff, barging, disheveled, a touch of the rank about him—in fact tends to strike a number of discriminating sensibilities somewhat disagreeably. He seems to have about him a certain muggy smack and sweat of the opportunist's desperate, glitter-eyed hunger, something of the traveling horse trader about him, a riverboat Gildersleeve hustling mining bonds. Ralph Nader, for one,

has averred, "He's just a man looking for a job," and, indeed, Harris himself when he is sometimes interrupted in his living room deliveries will happily honk, "Just a minute, I'm selling cars here . . ." One common cynicism holds that he was inspired to depart the Senate and cast out on his first Presidential excursion back in 1972, which promptly miscarried for want of money, out of a final recognition of his political bankruptcy back in Oklahoma—and that, since then, there has been no direction for him to plunge other than the Presidency, having been propelled all his life by some obscure, voracious, free-float hankering for higher horizons. "It's a Pavlovian thing with Harris," one Washington writer suggests. "Ever since he was a boy, he's been driven to be somebody important some day, and nothing he's gotten so far has been quite important enough. He was disappointed by Humphrey in 1972 when he wasn't chosen Humphrey's running mate, and he'd lost his electability in Oklahoma with his big turn all of a sudden to the left—it was like slats dropped in front of a rat in a maze. So he took off on this track, because there was nothing else he could do."

As a neo-populist evangel, Harris' origins are authentic enough, but he arrived at his vision now through a somewhat wayward and circuitous pilgrimage. He was the son of a dust-bowl sharecropper and occasional migrant harvester, and was picking cotton by the time he was 5—"We'd get up around four o'clock and feed what stock we had, and then get in the fields with the first light, right before the dew started to dry off." In those gaunt years of viciously laboring to hack and scabble mere survival out of worn, shabby, implacable earth, the local bank came to seem to Harris a kind of temple, a mystic sanctuary holding the magics and sacraments of deliverance into a distant glamour of plenty and peace, paradise. Obsession comes out of trauma, and the firmament of wealth, power, security betokened by a bank became Harris' fixation in his boyhood as the refuge from mean and sullen struggle.

An old photograph from an FFA convention ceremony shows Harris as a whippy, thin, dark, tomahawk-faced youth, already glistening with eagerness. As he was traveling about on oratorical contests then, he was followed by a willowy, black-eyed girl with long, crow-black hair named LaDonna, the granddaughter of a Comanche medicine man. Their marriage subsequently developed into a deep symbiosis, one of Harris' winsome simplicities being that he is one

of the few politicians who seems to genuinely and profoundly cherish his wife. Away from her very long, he lapses into the lumpily woebegone. She being fully as spirited and shrewd a public personality as he, it has become one of the not incidentally beguiling prospects of Harris' campaign that, even more than FDR and Eleanor, his would be, in a real sense, a dual Presidency.

From his early boyhood Harris was recognized, in his spare and scruffy little community of Walters, as uncontainable. After graduating from the University of Oklahoma, where he made Phi Beta Kappa, he swarmed on into the state legislature at 26, then at 33 was anointed to succeed to the unexpired term in the U.S. Senate of late Oklahoma oil boyar Robert Kerr. His first years there, Harris dutifully answered to the appointed solicitudes for oil, gas—that estate of interests which had seemed almost religiously his salvation for so long as a boy—and for the martial establishment, specifically its Vietnam investment, he having been swiftly assimilated on his arrival in Washington by Lyndon Johnson. One evening back in Oklahoma as he was dining with family and friends, the phone rang and he was told the President was on the line, and Johnson notified him that he had been installed on the Kerner Commission on civil disorders in the nation's cities. Johnson then delivered the admonition, Harris chortles, "that he didn't expect me to make any trouble for him on there, or, he said, *Fred, I'll cut your peter off*. What he said, Damn, it's a right rare experience to have the President of the United States threaten you with that."

As it turned out, though, it was from his service on the Kerner Commission that Harris' Damascus Road experience ensued. Up to that point little more than merely a precocious and enterprising Senate hack possessed of a certain special alacrity of curiosity, Harris proceeded to blunder through a succession of large illuminations—not only about the chasmic divides of race and economic lot in American society, but about the war, about the corporate galaxy which had been the star-faith of his youth, about the pathologies of privilege. He found himself, in his late thirties, abruptly pitched into a new consciousness. In the process, it was as if he had accidentally discovered his beginnings, his source, discovered himself. At a recent gathering of party liberals in New York City, he was told, "You come from Oklahoma. You come out of the oil country. Very frankly, your early record leaves a lot to be desired. What do you say to that?" Harris replied, "I grew up."

Indeed, his past is not unspeckled. Not long ago, a Gulf Oil lobbyist reported he had smuggled money to one of Harris' Senate campaigns, and the morning this news appeared in the papers, Harris, who was forging then through white postcard villages in the upper cedared reaches of New Hampshire, repaired repeatedly to second-floor rooms in college inns and corner phone booths by grocery stores to check the matter out with his Washington office. When he was finally asked about it that afternoon as he stood in a cold-winded parking lot in a black topcoat, Harris snuffled, "Well, what they seem to be talking about is when I was first running for the Senate back there 12 years ago. We can't find any record of it yet, but we're trying. All I can say is, if what they said were true, they sure as hell didn't get their money's worth."

But somehow, however errant his passage through the past, it's precisely because Harris has been so mixed a creature that he seems now to carry some extra register and dimension of reality. He has the peculiar existential authenticity of the prodigal. He has about him somehow the wise weight of having known, in the sinks of his own heart, if not evil then dull, brackish silts of badness, cheapness, the monotones of venality. He has grappled, as the preachers say, with sin, looked into the eye of the Devil and emerged with a smoky singe of fuller experience than most. And for that reason, it seems he has the heft and definition of belonging somehow more authentically to the true, massy teem of human experience.

Precisely because of this, it may be Harris' final misfortune to have appeared as merely an engaging, gusty anachronism at a moment of almost neurasthenic, Proustian effeteness in the political sensibilities, resulting generally from a surfeit of collective electronic self-mirroring, an endless obsessive perusing and inspection of our images and manner and gestures, our breath and fingernails, in television and news magazines and day-long radio talk programs. It has produced an exhausted, over-nerved, fastidious self-consciousness in the public constitution which seems unable now to abide any Rabelaisian gustos and garlics in our leaders—Johnson with his ebullient vulgarities having been a casualty of, along with the rest of it, that particular preciousness, just as it would have likely undone Jackson and Lincoln. It is, on the whole, a melancholy and not undangerous turn for the country, no slight part of our conditioning toward some totalitarianism, since it tends to produce diminished, synthetic, savorless person-

alities as leaders—Tupperware men, electronic men.

In the midst of all this, Harris has come snorting forth like some squat, dark, solitary mystic out of the old deep, lost woods of the country's experience. On a campus with the wheat-bright heads of Wisconsin youths drifting like angels in a dream of provincial folk-innocence back and forth outside in afternoon sunlight beyond the window of a lecture room, he stands with one bulky hand gesturing upward as if lobbing invisible birds up in the air one after another as he speaks, his other fist holding a paper cup of coffee clumsily at his coat lapel, "What we're talking about is diffused power structures, is a break-up of the system of predatory privilege in this country, is democratizing again the way this country operates and the way it's run. It's all deeply American, actually. It's so conservative, it's almost primitive American. It's about a pluralistic society. It's what we thought we had created and started back there 200 years ago. Things have gotten outta whack, is all. But you just give people a glimpse of what this country was really *supposed* to be, and what it *could* be—and there'll be no stopping it. And that's what we're gonna do, we're gonna give them that glimpse. . . ." He forgot his topcoat again as he lurched on back to the car, barged back for it hooting, "Damn, I'm gonna manage to lose that thing yet, and it isn't even mine, had to borrow it from my father-in-law coming through Chicago." Late that night, at the end of a long day, riding in the front passenger seat back to his motel with three aides, he presently bent over and, scuffling a moment, luxuriously removed his shoes, whereupon, after another moment, the car windows around him began to be stealthily rolled down a discreet inch or two.

And the next evening, to a small collection of his supporters clustered around him in wooden folding chairs in a blank, feebly lit New Hampshire town hall, Harris hulking forward wearily in a green leather desk chair with his cement-sack knees spraddled, holding his inevitable coffee cup in both hands, looking up to croak to a couple hesitating in the door, "C'mon in, we got some coffee and doughnuts left in here," simply chatting now in his low, hoarse, raspy voice, "I just wanted to stop by here and see some of you people again. I think we're doing awfully well, I never thought by this time we'd have come as far as we have. Seneca, you know, said something about the danger always in organizing of losing sight of your objective. But I don't think that could happen too easily with us,

since we've tried to stay away from a lot of structured organization in this campaign. It's a citizen campaign with a citizen candidate for a citizen President," and he mused on, as much to himself it seemed now as to the others, a neglected and dilapidated stage littered with miscellaneous flotsam like an attic in shadows behind him, and with no more than a dozen of his people listening quietly in the hush of this bare room in a dumpy city hall in some obscure, lost little New England town in the vast deeps of an American night, "I'm gonna be like Harry Truman and Roosevelt, and have independent-minded cabinet members who'll argue things out. There's nobody up there now who'll just say straight out to the President when he's wrong, 'Mr. President, you just wrong on that.' Every now and then, the President needs to hear somebody say, 'Bullshit, Mr. President.' That's the kinda men I'm gonna have when we get to the White House. And I think we're gonna do it, now. I've just got that kind of feeling. . . ."

Then the next morning in Manhattan, to a small deputation of Democratic counts and duchesses sipping coffee in an East 74th Street apartment, a drawing room at this mild, early, sunlit hour calm in soft beiges and cocoa-browns with a dove-grey carpet and salmon scalloping over the drapes, ethereally tapered women in long, black, ankle-length dresses settled like swans in the corners, and Harris himself in this bower of privilege and power somewhat more muted and compressed in manner, looking for once almost vaguely ambassadorial in a rich grey suit, but in the low bleat of his voice over the room lurking still those whunking, burly homespun chords of the American interior, "The thing about McGovern now, McGovern didn't lose on these issues. It's just that there were a lot of blue-collar people who never joined up with that campaign, for several reasons. McGovern kept talking about calling everybody to a higher ideal. Well, my daddy down there in Oklahoma working on a farm for a living, he wants you to say a word or two about him. Heppin' the folks like him in this country, that is the higher ideal. When McGovern was actually trying to talk to my dad, my dad thought he was just talking to welfare mothers. Another reason why so many working people didn't join up with McGovern, of course, was Wallace. Now Wallace is absolutely unacceptable, we all agree on that. But having said that, you have to think about all those people who are attracted to him—what it is about him that speaks to them, and why."

Harris now began fingering and

**"You know, they tell me at a lot of elitist cocktail parties, 'Fred, we love what you say, but will they get it'—meaning, of course, the great unwashed. Well, I'm a member of the great unwashed. And let me tell you something—they get it quickest"**

rolling with one heavy mitt at the cigar tucked away in his coat handkerchief pocket. His voice gathered a bit of its usual calliope steams. A spiky strand of hair hung over his brow. "Well, why Wallace speaks to so many people in this country is just what we're talking about in this campaign—privilege for the few. You can't leave all those people to Wallace. Their frustrations and angers are legitimate. They're *right* in what they feel is wrong with the way this country's working. It's what my campaign's all about, and it's why I'm starting with a lot of those people who never did join up with McGovern, and it comes from having to explain it to my dad and my own people all these years. . . ." Two stout fingers now were shoved all the way in his handkerchief pocket and rummaging, and his other hand was churning the air. "You know, they tell me at a lot of elitist cocktail party circles, 'Fred, we love what you say, but will they get it'—meaning, of course, the great unwashed. Well, I come from 'they'—" His black eyes were crackling now, and his voice was at full whump. "—I'm a member of the great unwashed. And let me tell you something—they get it *quickest*. They get it *quickest*."

He cuffed his scattered hair clumsily back straight from his forehead. In the air of the hushed room there hung a harp of light from the morning outside, and he tugged thickly for a moment on the fingers of one hand, while several heads in front of him bent for small, careful sips from their cups. "What you may still hear now and then is, 'Fred Harris is the only one of them I really believe in, but he hasn't got a chance.' Well, all you gotta do in a situation like that, where everybody in their heart wants to be for you, only wants the slightest chance of

promise to join in with you, all you gotta do in a situation like that is just show the slightest difference, the slightest strength—and the whole thing takes off. That's what's gonna happen in this campaign. I don't think anything quite like it has ever happened before in this country. *Fred Harris is gonna win*—and if you believe strong enough, you yourself will be helping to make it come to pass. I'm askin' you to come in with me. Because right now, you can be a large part of decidin' which way the wind's gonna blow in this country. . . ."

In a chair immediately in front of Harris, a silver-haired gentleman quietly removed his glasses, the lenses fogged, and briefly cleared them with the end of his tie. Harris, after a hasty, lurching round of handshakes, heaved on out the door, descended in the elevator and disappeared into the din and swarm of the street outside.

But one seems finally to know, in the pit and quick of one's spirit, it is almost surely hopeless—a night ride, a brief whinny and whirl and booming of distant phantom horses out on the far, wild, weedy edges of the glassy-towered corporate computered age, a civilization almost empty now of reckless winging dreams and visions, made up of the technological metaphysic and a J. Walter Thompson theology of appearances, the Nielsen conscience, all life reducing to a matter of methodology. In this Presidential season's collection of political mechanics, the only other anomaly among them with a measure of spontaneous private reality would be Morris Udall, easy and gangling, but it is precisely because of his own private graces of decency and thoughtfulness and civilized mildness that the heart sinks also for his fortunes. And in all this, the sifting of the primaries constitutes the only real moment of meaning—the true crucible in which is cast the nation's destiny, as the past has too often shown us; with the alternatives that are left afterward, it's too late, what follows then is an illusionary conflict, a great mime grappling.

But if, indeed, we are almost un-noticingly entering into some undefined new ice-age of the human spirit, some new, strange twilight of technological and electronic barbarism, it seems not too much to suggest that, however doomed Harris' campaign now, at the least it may be providing the nation one last, whooping, existential foray out to the windy margins of our possibility, one last skirmish and adventure in our long, fitful struggle to find out who we are. Whatever befalls Harris in the months ahead, that adventure itself is gift enough. ●

MAJOR LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FIRST SESSION  
OF THE 94TH CONGRESS

The Honorable Carl Albert

The Speaker of the United States House of Representatives

The 94th Congress has been meeting for more than eleven months. The first Session has been distinguished by significant legislative accomplishments. This record is all the more remarkable since it has been achieved despite continued political confrontation brought about by divided party control of the executive and legislative branches. In this respect I would like to discuss the background of this divided government, review some important party developments at the opening Democratic Caucuses and describe some of the outstanding legislative achievements of this first Session.

Many factors have contributed to divided government and resulting legislative confrontation. Over the past twenty-three years the Republican Party has controlled the White House for all but the eight years of the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations. President Eisenhower worked with only one Republican-controlled Congress, the 83rd (1953-1954). President Nixon, first elected to the White House in 1968, never did have the broad political appeal that might have resulted in a Republican Congress. In 1974, Nixon was forced to resign the Presidency as the result of the Watergate cover-up and the threat of an impending impeachment. Vice President Gerald Ford of Michigan, our former colleague in the House, succeeded Nixon as President in August, 1974. With the appointment and confirmation of former Governor Nelson Rockefeller as Vice President the United States was confronted with its first nonelective executive leadership in the history of the country. Neither Ford nor Rockefeller had been endorsed by a nationwide popular mandate.

The November, 1974 elections resulted in overwhelming support for Democratic candidates in both the House of Representatives (291 Democrats to 144 Republicans; a net gain of 43 Democratic seats) and the Senate (61 Democrats, 38 Republicans, 1 seat contested; a net gain of four Democratic seats). Democrats have organized both the House and the Senate for eleven consecutive Congresses, a record without precedent in the history of our Republic.

The 94th Congress had launched its organizing efforts even before the convening of the new Congress in January, 1975. Under the provisions of the Committee Reform Amendments of 1974, the Democratic Caucus met the first week of December to reexamine and consider changes in its committee leadership, structure and operating procedures. The Caucus began by transferring the committee assignment function from the Ways and Means Committee to the more broadly based Steering and Policy Committee. The Ways and Means Committee, with its wide jurisdiction over a great amount of important legislation, was expanded from 25 to 37 members. In order to expedite leadership control over legislation moving to the Floor, the Speaker was given the power to nominate members of the Committee on Rules.

Other modifications in Caucus rules included provisions that Appropriations Subcommittee chairmen be approved by Caucus vote; that full committee chairmen not serve simultaneously as chairmen of other full, select or joint committees; that House-Senate

Conferences be open to the public; and that jurisdiction of the House Committee on Internal Security be transferred to the Committee on the Judiciary. Finally, building on a series of earlier changes in House Democratic party procedures, this organizational Caucus brought about a change in the leadership of three House Committees-- Agriculture, Armed Services and Banking, Currency, and Housing. All of these actions were aimed toward making Caucus and Congressional machinery more efficient, in order that the programs of the Democratic majority might more effectively and expeditiously be enacted into law.

For nearly a decade the Democratic Caucus has been adopting procedures to streamline party leadership and bring about more open, democratic and responsive party governance. The end result has not only furthered the goals of the majority of the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives, it has, by reflection, furthered the wishes and beliefs of a majority of the American people.

When the 94th Congress convened in January, 1975, there were several reasons to expect a degree of cooperation between the legislative and executive branches. The problems confronting the nation were severe -- unemployment and the energy crisis headed the list. Perhaps the very severity of the problems might bring the two branches together. Furthermore, the President knew the Congress and the Congress knew the President: Gerald Ford had been a House Member for more than 25 years before becoming President. Backing away from his 1974 insistence that curbing inflation was his Administration's highest priority, President Ford's 1975 State of the Union message called for a shift from fighting inflation to an emphasis on creating new jobs.

In fact, as the Democratic Congressional leadership had been saying for months, it was long past time to begin fighting unemployment. But nevertheless, it was a realistic note to hear the Chief Executive acknowledge that "the State of the Union is not good" and a hopeful sign that he was willing to promise cooperation in the fight to put the people of America back to work.

Unfortunately, the spirit of cooperation was short-lived. Within weeks after the opening of the 94th Congress, Congress and the President clashed on one of the most fundamental points in the Democratic agenda, protection for those most hurt by the recession. The issue was a simple one. President Ford and his advisors wanted to raise the cost of food stamps for the poor, for the elderly, and for those who had lost their jobs as a result of the recession. There is little need to elaborate on this or other legislative battles in the early months of this Congress. Many of these themes were amply developed in my statement reviewing "The Democratic 94th Congress at Mid-Session."

Clearly, the mood of conciliation first advanced by President Ford in his State of the Union message foundered on its first testing -- and on virtually every succeeding evaluation. The old conservative Republican inclinations -- favoritism toward Big Business, disregard for the unemployed and for the workingman's family and an assignment of a low priority to America's social and environmental needs -- proved too strong. And as I noted in my mid-session review, these themes continue to be the dominant ones for the Ford Administration. Constructive cooperation with the Democratic Congress in an effort to solve the problems of the American people in a time of crisis has all but been abandoned.

Faced with an increasingly intransigent Republican President, the Democratic Congress turned to passing its own legislative programs. In December and January, a Task Force of the House

Democratic Steering and Policy Committee came up with a fourteen point legislative program. The main thrust of the agenda were bills designed to revive the economy, including tax relief and reform, reduction of unemployment, an emergency housing measure designed to conserve energy, and programs for the needy. Much of this agenda has been completed, although many problems remain to be solved. Indeed, the 94th Congress passed more legislation in its first six months than any Congress since Franklin D. Roosevelt's first 100 days, save one. Only the 89th Congress under Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson had a more impressive beginning.

The 94th Congress enacted two major tax bills. Last March, Congress passed the largest tax cut in the history of the nation -- \$22.8 billion. H. R. 2166 provided for cash rebates of up to \$200 per taxpayers and increased the low-income allowance to \$1,900 for single persons and \$2,500 for joint returns. This bill also contained a provision repealing the oil depletion allowance.

In December, the House, with Senate action expected shortly, passed another major tax bill, this one designed to extend the 1975 cuts into 1976. The extensions, necessary to keep withholding provisions from mounting in January, will amount to \$13.3 billion for the full year 1976. H. R. 10612 also contains a range of provisions designed to promote greater tax equity, restrict tax shelters and tighten or eliminate certain tax preferences. The net effect of the tax reform features would be to increase revenues by about 1.5 billion in calendar 1976, rising to 2.5 billion by 1981. As the end of the first Session nears, a veto from President Ford remains a strong possibility.

Of the more than one dozen bills vetoed so far by President Ford in this session, three were overridden Health Revenue Sharing (P. L. 94-63), the Education Appropriations (P. L. 94-94), and the School Lunch legislation (P. L. 94-105). In his first sixteen months in office, President Ford has had seven vetoes overridden, more than any other Republican President in this century. He had vetoed a total of thirty-nine bills as of early December, 1975, a rate which makes him one of the most veto-prone Presidents in history.

It is important to note, however, that with both the vetoed Emergency Housing Bill and the Emergency Jobs Bill, the Democratic Congress quickly reformed its ranks and came back to pass modified pieces of legislation. Even if the revised bill was not as beneficial as the original legislation, it still provided the nation with some measure of relief. These "second-try" bills rarely received much, if any, attention in the press -- certainly not the amount of attention devoted to the head-on, veto override confrontation. Nevertheless they are important, both for the contributions they make to the economy as well as for the evidence they provide of the unwillingness of the Democratic Congress to stand aside and accept the doing-nothing, recession-prone, economic policies of this conservative Republican Administration.

Conflicts over economic policy -- between a progressive Democratic Congress and a standpat, conservative Republican Administration -- have clearly dominated the first Session of the 94th Congress. But other issues have also been in the forefront: especially energy legislation and the development of a Congressional Budget process.

The long and tortuous effort to develop a comprehensive energy policy for the nation can be summarized in one phrase: Congress stood up for the people against the high-price policies of the Ford Administration. Twice the President sent proposals to the Congress to end controls and permit the price of domestic oil -- some sixty percent of production -- to soar, and twice the House voted

his proposals down. Twice the Congress passed the legislation extending oil price controls and maintaining price stability for the consumer, and twice the President vetoed the legislation.

Undaunted, the House and Senate continued their long and difficult work on a comprehensive and fair energy program for the nation. Conferees of the two Houses agreed upon a landmark Energy Policy and Conservation Act in early December. The legislation has four basic objectives: (1) an increase in domestic energy production and the creation of a strategic petroleum reserve; (2) the encouragement of energy conservation through increased efficiency of appliances and automobiles; (3) the setting of an oil pricing policy (\$7.66 per barrel composite price for all domestic oil) that encourages production consistent with economic recovery and price stability; and (4) the authorization of standby measures in the event of further energy crises. The President's principal energy advisors have recommended that he sign the bill, although the final outcome is still in doubt.

This Congress also saw the implementation of a new and comprehensive budget process. Until this year, neither the House nor the Senate had a means for looking at the total budget picture. Through the diligent work of the Appropriations Committees of the two Houses, the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Finance Committee, expenditures and revenues were carefully examined and set, but at no stage in our overall fiscal procedures did we fully evaluate them so as to consider the proper level of stimulus or restraint for the economy.

This year, under the leadership of the new Budget Committees, the Congress had adopted spending targets in the spring and ceilings in the fall that clearly set forth congressional objectives designed to achieve a rapid recovery from the present recession.

The Congress, in its Second Concurrent Resolution, sets forth ceilings of \$408.0 billion in budget authority and \$374.9 in outlays, thus generating a significant increase in programs aimed at stimulating the economy and helping to create new jobs. This session of the 94th Congress has not only seen the implementation of greater congressional control over the budget, it has also witnessed the use of that control to create a stronger economy for all Americans.

Some of the major legislative accomplishments of the first Session of the 94th Congress have been set forth. A more detailed summary prepared by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress will appear in the final edition of the Congressional Record for this Session.

Even while reflecting upon the quite remarkable record of this Congress, one cannot help but consider what might have been. The 94th Congress has been characterized by Democratic majorities too often thwarted by a recalcitrant Republican Administration. This country has been ruled too long by divided government. What this country needs is executive leadership from the same party as the party which controls the House and Senate.

Given the present strength of the Democratic party in this country, given the continued leadership of the Democratic party in Congress, that inevitably dictates that the electorate should seek out the strongest possible Democratic candidate in 1976 and elect him the President of the United States.

The time has come to discard the negative economic policies of a Republican Administration and once again unleash the mammoth productive capacity of the greatest industrial nation in the world. A Republican Administration which does not move vigorously to put eight million unemployed back to work is not utilizing America's

resources to the fullest. Too often this Administration has turned its back on the needy, the ailing and those without jobs.

A true conservative, Edmund Burke, once remarked: "government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants." This session has demonstrated that Congress does not lack men of vision and wisdom. What is needed is an active, progressive-thinking Democratic President, working in harmony with a Democratically-controlled House and Senate. Until then, the country will continue to reap the discomforts, the uneasiness and the stalemates of divided government. With a united party leadership, President and Congress, we can get this country moving again.

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*U.S. House of Representatives*  
*Democratic Steering and Policy Committee*  
1320 Longworth Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

ELECTED ZONE MEMBERS  
1. JOHN E. MOSS, CALIF.  
2. MORRIS K. UDALL, ARIZ.  
3. DAVID R. OBEY, WIS.  
4. MELVIN PRICE, ILL.  
5. EDWARD MEZVINSKY, IOWA  
6. WRIGHT PATMAN, TEX.  
7. F. EDWARD HEBERT, LA.  
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John Brademas, Chairman

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Democratic Members of the House  
FROM: House Democratic Task Force on Information  
RE: The House record in 1975

With the first session of the 94th Congress tentatively scheduled to adjourn on Friday, Dec. 19, this packet of information has been prepared to assist you in assessing House activity in 1975. It includes:

- 1 -- A statement from Speaker Carl Albert.
- 2 -- An analysis of the session by the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee's Task Force on Information.
- 3 -- A compilation of legislative activity prepared by the Office of the Majority Whip.
- 4 -- A table of fiscal information for fiscal years 1961-76 prepared by the Congressional Research Service.

Except where otherwise noted, the information included is up-to-date as of Wednesday, Dec. 10. A more complete and detailed account of the year just ended is being prepared by the Congressional Record in January. This same information packet is being distributed to the press in Washington, to some 1,000 editors, editorial writers and commentators around the country and to Democratic Governors, Mayors, State Chairmen and National Committee members.

Resume of House Activity

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975*</u>
Days in session.....	175	159	166
Public bills enacted.....	145	236	101
Bills passed.....	260	288	291
Joint resolutions adopted.....	37	17	17
Concurrent resolutions adopted...	38	46	27
Simple resolutions adopted.....	245	229	251
Bills introduced.....	12,150	5,540	11,052
Joint resolutions introduced.....	870	312	743
Concurrent resolutions introduced	412	286	504
Simple resolutions introduced....	762	763	907
Quorum calls.....	185	190	195
Yea-and-nay votes.....	307	325	331
Recorded votes.....	234	212	238
Bills vetoed.....	5	23	14
Votoes overridden.....	1	4	3

\* As of Dec. 10