

VIEWPOINT

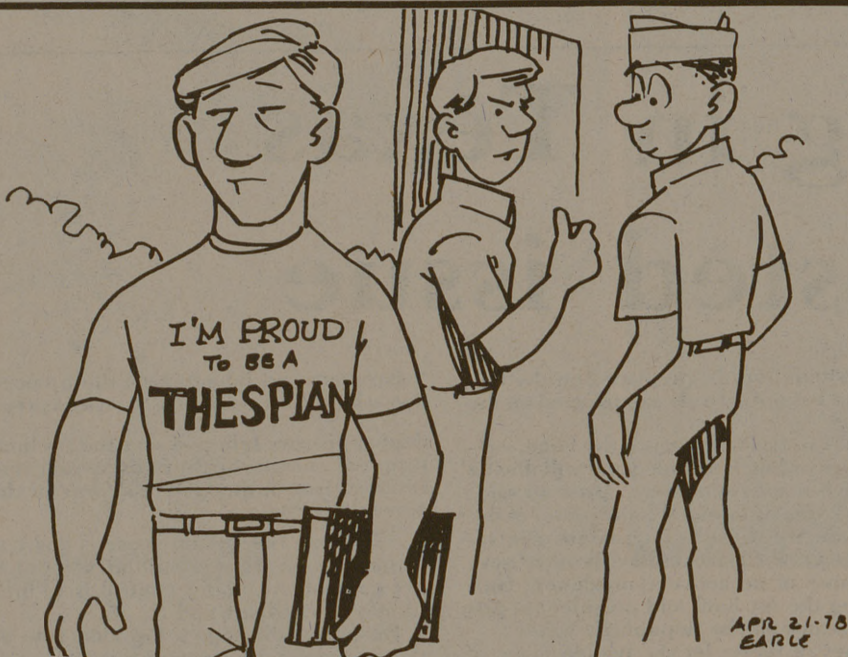
THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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APRIL 21, 1978

On the right track

In the continuing attention to human rights in international affairs, one bright spot should not go unnoticed. The European Convention of Human Rights went into force a quarter century ago. Control is exercised by the European Commission and the European Court for Human Rights. Some 7,500 complaints about alleged violations of human rights have been filed with the commission in the past 25 years. Of these every third petition was directed against the federal republic of West Germany and its judicial or penal institutions. But of these 2,500 complaints, not a single one has been sustained by the commission and the court. That is not only a remarkable record. It is a most heartening affirmation — for a world which painfully recalls the hideous atrocities against human rights of the Nazi regime in that same Germany — that nations and peoples and institutions can change for the better. Let those who despair at times for the future of human rights take courage from this accomplishment by the West Germans.

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Carter reads the riot act

WASHINGTON — President Carter has admonished his troops to shape up. Obviously concerned with his declining popularity after 15 months in office, Carter decided that his Cabinet and White House staff were not performing up to par. To make his point in the privacy of an official family gathering, the president invited the Cabinet and chief advisers to Camp David for a mountain-top soul searching session. Carter, who apparently felt he knew where the fault lies, "worked over everybody," press secretary Jody Powell told reporters with some pride. "He read the riot act."

Washington Window

Before he took office, Carter gave his Cabinet members full freedom to select their staffs and to run their departments in their own way. He told them that they did not have to answer to any White House aides. President Richard Nixon's Cabinet was dominated by the White House staff, and members could not get appointments with Nixon without going through Oval Office gatekeeper H.R. Haldeman. Carter stressed the independence and self-reliance of the Cabinet in those beginning months. At the first meeting of the Cabinet, he stunned reporters by announcing that he was considering opening

such meetings to press coverage. That idea was short-lived. Members did not buy it on grounds that they needed confidentiality to express themselves freely, and Carter also had second thoughts. But then the pendulum swung to a point where more and more irritation was being expressed in the inner White House against so-called "leaks." Cabinet officials and their department deputies were sometimes berated behind their backs and accused for leaking stories to the press. Leaks, however, have not caused the crisis of leadership in the Carter administration, nor the heavy criticism. Rather it is the public perception that Carter has failed to live up to his campaign promises and that he has not been the "can do" man they had expected. The top aides were told to stop their "intramural squabbling and bickering," and to start operating as a team. Under those circumstances, inevitably someone

is put in charge to keep the team on its toes. A chief of staff, perhaps, but he will not be called that in this administration. There is no question that there will be a change in the operations. Some of the deputy White House staffers may find themselves doing other jobs, and there will be much more coordination and follow through on policies with the departments. While Carter previously was all in favor of Cabinet officials speaking out for themselves, it is clear there is now a movement afoot to have the administration speak with one voice. It is not known if the president, during the Camp David meetings, confessed to any errors on his own part. But Powell said, "Oh, sure," when asked whether Carter's "shortcomings" also had been a part of the discussion. There were no resignations and none asked for, but it was clear that Carter did lay down the law and has decided that to make his mark in history he must change his style of governing.

Merit controversy hits judgeships

WASHINGTON — A lot of people are cynical about politics and politicians these days, but John F. Seiberling is not one of them. When Seiberling, the Democratic congressman from Akron, Ohio, heard Jimmy Carter say, in his campaign, that he wanted to take the judiciary and the Justice Department out of the political patronage system, he believed him. When President Carter urged legislation to create 150 new federal district judges, John Seiberling thought it would be wonderful if those judges were chosen on merit — not through the patronage of their home-state senators. Seiberling offered an amendment in the House, requiring that before those judgeships could be filled, the president must establish "procedures and guidelines for the selection, on the basis of merit, of nominees," for those posts. House Republicans, who had little to lose from the change, supported the idea unanimously, so did most House Democrats, who are also excluded from the judicial patronage pool unless their state happens to have no Democratic senators. But, knowing well that the Senate would not voluntarily deny itself this patronage, the House took the precaution of insisting, in a separate 321-19 roll-call vote, that its representatives in the House-Senate conference keep the merit selection provisions in the final bill. It turned out that the House conferees did need to have their spines stiffened. When the conference met, senators offered substitute language, calling on the president to issue "standards and guidelines" for merit selection, but omitting any "procedures" for seeing that they were carried out.

Commentary

Seiberling wrote Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) of the House Judiciary Committee that the Senate language would do no more than "codify the existing practice and imply that district court judges are already chosen by a merit selection system." What Seiberling wanted was a requirement that all senators have merit boards to recommend judgeship candidates to the president. Rodino did not see it that way. "It is my firm intent, of course, to uphold the House position," he wrote, "but we should not be inflexibly wedded to the House language." Other House conferees were even more wobbly. Rep. Barbara Jordan (D-Texas) called the House language "holow, vain and useless." By a 5-4 vote, with Seiberling in the minority, the House conferees decided to accept a slightly reworked version of the Senate language, omitting any reference to selection procedures. The effect is to leave it to each senator to decide what he wants to do. Senators from 18 states have set up some form of judicial

"merit-selection" boards, but most of them are controlled by the senator's appointees and are purely advisory to him. Where, one may ask, were President Carter and his administration while Seiberling and Company were fighting to keep merit selection from being mugged? As usual, the answer is complicated. Back on March 3, at a news conference with college editors, Carter was asked a carefully constructed question, referring to the administration's studied neutrality toward the fate of the Seiberling amendment. "Your administration has failed to support this," the questioner said. "Will you reconcile your campaign promise and support this?" "I'm in favor of anything that's possible, either done by administrative act, voluntary action on the part of U.S. senators or congressional action that would guarantee merit selection of every person appointed to a position of responsibility in the judiciary," the president said. "Within the framework of my own authority, I have acted already. And I would favor an extension of that authority through congressional action." That sounded straightforward enough. But one week later, on March 10, when Attorney General Griffin Bell was before the House Judiciary Committee, Seiberling asked him if the administration would support the House provisions in conference. "Well," said the president's close friend, "I haven't taken a position on that yet, because I was waiting for the confer-

ence committee to start. I felt I would be called upon to give some statement, how that language would be implemented in the event it stays in the legislation. I would rather keep my options open if I can right now." Keeping options open turned out to mean keeping the administration's mouth shut, while the merit selection procedures were mugged in the conference committee. Associate Attorney Gen. Michael J. Egan says, "We have not taken any position with respect to it, except that the president favors merit selection in almost any form." While Carter made the point to the student editors that he had written a personal note to every Democratic senator asking him to create a merit-selection board for judicial nominees, Egan said, "We've been fearful that they (Seiberling and his friends) would attempt to require use of (such) commissions on the district court level. We did have some problems on that... and we felt that flexibility should be maintained." Only one other point is relevant to this story. The argument recounted here was taking place at the same time the Panama Canal treaties were pending. One outspoken opponent of taking judges out of the senatorial patronage pool happens to be Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.). And the spokesman for his viewpoint among the conferees happened to be Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.) (c) 1978 The Washington Post

Letters to the editor

UT student offers opinions of gay reactions

Editor: The A&M student body. I attend The University and am writing in response to the A&M student body's reaction to "Blue Jeans Day" sponsored by the National Gay Task Force. That was the most narrow-minded, reactionary response to such a simple symbol of opposition to the oppression of their (the gays') rights that I have ever seen. This is just another example of how conservative and intolerant a school can become. I would suggest your student body review its values and morals, and that perhaps the reaction was so intense because of how insecure your males are about their masculinity. This simple act of defiance on the part of gays threatened them to the degree that it put the majority of Aggies into a fervent pitch of fear that if they wore blue jeans they would be thought gay (heaven forbid). I would also like to congratulate The Battalion on its tolerance of others' views and support of the First Amendment to the degree that it will print an ad that is contrary to the majority of the student body's beliefs.

— Neal P. Pfeiffer
U.T. freshman — Psychology major

Narrow-minded

Editor: I am not out to insult the A&M student

body but I feel the need to say something. This is my first semester here and I am a little disappointed. Because I am an out-of-stater I have listened and watched to try and understand the Texas way. This has included along with the pleasant things hearing a professor use the term bush-bunnies, hearing racial jokes and reading in Thursday's Battalion that Gays have no civil liberties. Only because I have gone to other universities and lived different places in the country do I know that so much can be learned by just being a little open-minded. This is supposed to be a place of higher learning. We should be expanding with our knowledge and ridding ourselves of prejudices in preparation for (I hate to use the term) the real world. Unfortunately the bulk of the A&M student body is too worried about what Jane or Joe Blow in the next room will think should any discrepancy in opinion arise. I don't want to hear violins but this is really too bad. There are so many different backgrounds represented on this campus yet the strongest cliché I have been witness to is alive and well. This was illustrated Friday. I am sorry to tell ya, folks, but Gays exist. I do not agree with their way of life but I have to support their right to it. We all should because someday we may have our civil liberties questioned. The Blue Jean Day idea was not too original but why the devil let it be such a big deal? I wore my jeans Friday and did

not find myself surrounded by Gays, beat up by rednecks or feeling lesbian tendencies Saturday morning. Let's see some individualism out there. It could be rewarding if not a nice change. — Amanda Creighton, '80

Stick to yells

Editor: Now that the furor of elections and Blue Jeans Day has passed, I would like to express my concern about the actions of yell leaders Reagan, Hancock and Wright. Their "Beat the hell out of Dolph Briscoe" yell at the Clements rally was entirely uncalled for. They are elected by the student body to lead yells at athletic events, not beer and pizza political rallies. They have a legitimate right to be involved in politics, but they should not be dressed in yell leader uniforms and performing a yell created for an athletic event. One duty of the Ross Volunteers is to act as an honor guard for the governor of this state. And I feel it shows poor taste for elected representatives of our student body to be shouting beat the hell out of that same governor. I have no great admiration for Dolph Briscoe, but I did not vote for yell leaders to express my or anyone else's political opinions. In the future they should confine

their activities to the job we elect them to perform. — Harvey Laas, '79

No islands here

Editor: Monday's responses to Blue Jean Day confirmed my estimation that the future of this country is in trouble. The predominant message implied by these letters was that those who did change their normal attire were "intimidated" or "vain." In response to this, I say Bologna! This is an important issue which will greatly affect the future of TAMU. The attack on the people, for showing preference, is a poor excuse for apathy. I suggest that Mr. Willey, Chandler, and Jones review the judgements they passed down on those individuals who care! Mr. Schlain suggests that all Anti-Gays are "closed-minded bigots" and that they should be sent off to some island. The elimination of prejudice can be accomplished by changing the human race to one color, having the same sex, class, religion, etc. An alternative is to give everyone a prefrontal lobotomy. I think if any group of individuals should be sent to an island, it should be Mr. Schlain and his fellow literary contributors with their distorted outlooks on the situations. — Eugene W.K. Soo, '78

TOP OF THE NEWS CAMPUS

Faulk to speak at benefit

John Henry Faulk, the nationally known humorist and speaker from Madisonville, will appear in a benefit performance for the Bryan-College Station Association for Retarded Citizens Sunday. Musical festivities will also be included at the informal gathering at the Grove on the Texas A&M campus from 1 to 9 p.m. Aggies Aid Retarded Kids is sponsoring the individuals and music groups performing to benefit the retarded. AARK will accept a dollar contribution at the gate.

OCSA to host beer bust

The Off-Campus Student Association will host a dance and beer bust for all off-campus students Saturday, 8 p.m., at the Quonset Hut. The tickets will cost \$1 and will include music, beer, cokes and chips. Tickets may be purchased at the Student Programs Office in room 216 in the MSC and at the OCSA Cubicle. Texas law prohibits sale of tickets at the door.

STATE

Assistant police chief fired

Houston Police Chief Harry Caldwell Thursday fired one of his assistant chiefs being investigated on federal charges of obstruction of justice after he refused to resign. City attorneys served Carol M. Lynn, a former police chief in a recent administration, his indefinite suspension papers. Lynn was arrested April 11 by FBI agents after he allegedly accepted a \$25,000 bribe from a Houston oilman to "put in the fix" on a federal securities investigation. Lynn's suspension must be reviewed by the civil service commission. He has a right to appeal.

Chief's son charged in shooting

The son of Galveston Police Chief Ernest Galvan was charged Thursday with shooting two patrol officers following a barroom brawl and a chase ending on a beach highway location called "Dead Man's Curve." Eddie Galvan, 30, was charged with aggravated assault on a police officer, attempted capital murder and aggravated kidnapping. What started as a minor bar disturbance ended in a chase after Galvan fled the bar in a hijacked pickup truck with its occupant. Police caught Galvan after the vehicle crashed about seven miles from downtown.

Police find dynamite in raid

Fort Worth police Thursday found nine sticks of dynamite, several guns and possibly stolen merchandise in a raid on what was described as the headquarters of the Bandidos motorcycle gang. Four were arrested in a raid Tuesday, but police released them while officials tried to trace the dynamite and merchandise. Twelve gang members were arrested April 9 in a brawl at a chili cookoff that resulted in seven knife injuries.

NATION

Former FBI head arraigned

Former FBI Director L. Patrick Gray and two senior assistants were arraigned Thursday for their alleged part in illegal wiretaps and mail openings during a hunt for fugitive Weatherman terrorists. Gray, former Associate Director Mark Felt and former Intelligence Chief Edward S. Miller were called before U.S. District Judge William B. Bryant to plead to charges of conspiring to violate civil rights of surveillance targets. The former officials were indicted last week for their alleged part in the illegal mail openings and wiretaps of friends and associates of fugitive radicals in New York City in the early 1970s. The criminal prosecution of Gray, Felt and Miller and the administrative punishment of 70 others have been heatedly protested by FBI agents and retired agents.

EPA orders recall by Chrysler

The Environmental Protection Agency said Thursday it has ordered Chrysler Corp. to stop the sale of some of its 1978 cars unless an exhaust problem is fixed and to recall 77,000 of them for the same reason. The agency said the cars affected by the order are certain models of the Plymouth Fury, Dodge Monaco, Charger, Magnum and Diplomat, and the Chrysler Cordoba and LeBaron equipped with 318-cubic-inch engines. Chrysler said it planned to make a production line modification next week to correct the situation in advance of an April 29 deadline set by EPA for the company to halt sales.

WEATHER

Fair skies with mild temperatures today. Increasing cloudiness and warmer this afternoon. High today upper 70s, low tonight near 60. High tomorrow near 80. Winds from the southeast at 12-18 mph. 30 percent chance of rain late Saturday afternoon and evening.

THE BATTALION

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor or the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the University administration or the Board of Regents. The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting enterprise operated by students as a university and community newspaper. Editorial policy is determined by the editor.

LETTERS POLICY
Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

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