

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY
OCTOBER 23, 1980

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"I may not have it worked out in time for the election. We need a three-side coin in the worst way to help with the voting."

Carter's experience demands re-election

By FRANZ SCHURMANN

Pacific News Service

Academics, more than most other constituencies, tend to vote their ideals. As thinkers, they admire the power of intellect in leaders, and so many will vote for John Anderson. As policy counselors, which many of them are or aspire to be, they want leaders to be forceful, and so this year some who normally vote Democrat will cast their ballot for Ronald Reagan.

What academics, who by and large consider themselves an elite, cannot abide is incompetence. Incompetence is what virtually all the disparagement of Carter boils down to. The image of Carter, once a naval officer, is of a wavering captain letting the ship of state roll aimlessly on stormy waves. Why is it — many academics wonder — the United States can't have someone at the helm like West Germany's decisive Herr Schmidt or Britain's determined Iron Maiden, Margaret Thatcher?

What Carter's accusers never mention is that the United States and the world have undergone profound and convulsive transformations during the preceding decade. The United States is now sailing on political oceans as little known as the actual oceans were in Columbus' day. Schmidt and Thatcher can move forcefully ahead, but the fact is that for all their importance, Germany and Britain are essentially sailing on choppy but known inland seas.

The United States is the only nation in the world which bears responsibility for a big, complex and rapidly changing society at the same time that it finds itself in the linchpin position of all kinds of international systems, also changing much more rapidly than people realize.

What this means is that the president of the United States is also a kind of president of the world. And Carter has realized after four years of hard gained experience that the only way to manage his ship — and the ships of other peoples — is to move sideways into the waves, zigzagging confusedly at times. What matters is that the ship survives and keeps moving. That is why I shall vote for Jimmy Carter.

Never has the United States been more enmeshed, economically and politically, with the world than now. Never has the U.S. government borne more responsibilities for keeping the peace abroad and maintaining the national and also the world economy. Yet never before has the U.S. government had less power to fulfill those responsibilities. The reason is not the incompetence of the leader and his advisors, but the growing limits to the power of the nation-state. As noted Harvard sociologist

Daniel Bell put it, the problem of the nation-state today is that it is too big to deal with the small problems — meaning local — and too small to deal with the big problems — meaning global.

consensus in the United States as to what to do, and more voices, all pleading the cause of manifold special interests, telling the President to go in a dozen different directions at once.

In addition to incompetence — his own and that of his advisors — Jimmy Carter is faulted for a pitiful record in the two key contexts that form the touchstone of the election, the economy and foreign policy.

Fault for the woes of the economy is heaped on his shoulders. Yet his detractors do not mention that he has presided over one of the greatest structural transformations of the U.S. economy since the Great Depression.

The de-industrialization of communities, the soaring cost of energy and other essentials have struck the United States in a way that could have produced what author Paul Erdman proclaimed some years back as "The Great Crash of 1979." It did not come, but few credit Carter for good navigation.

Again and again, he has been accused of bobbing in foreign policy. But look at the record — the peace and prosperity for the booming nations of the Far East, the new favor and influence the United States enjoys in Africa, global approval of our campaign for human rights in Latin America. And in the explosive areas, especially the Middle East — where even now the international lineups are multidimensional and changing constantly — he has maneuvered carefully, all the while keeping contacts versatile, both the Soviets and the Iranians.

Jimmy Carter, if re-elected, will not raise morale in the United States or lead us to some shining city on a hill. A Reagan victory might do that. But forceful actions at this time could easily risk disaster in foreign affairs and the economy. And what he could do with less risk, like taking sides with the right-wing in Central America, would once and for all bury such human rights idealism as remains in the U.S.

A vote for Carter, ironically, is a vote for just those qualities which academics so admire: intelligence and leadership. But those qualities have come from experience of navigating on dangerous seas with ship's officers, crew, and passengers giving him strident but conflicting advice and jeering at every wrong move.

Editor's note: Franz Schurmann is professor of history and sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.

U.S. lacks nationally based, opposing political parties

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Leonard Lurie has written a new book which blames political parties for the poor quality of American presidents. He proposes a new system that would eliminate the party role in nominating presidential candidates.

In charging that the two major political parties are interested in nothing but seeking and holding power, Lurie makes a point many would agree with. But to go from there to a conclusion that political parties have no useful function may be just a bit simplistic.

As Lurie reports and high school history students know, the Founding Fathers did not like political parties.

Well, the Constitution is a marvelous plan for a government, but neither it nor the men who wrote it were perfect. It should be recalled that the drafters of the original Constitution didn't trust ordinary citizens to elect presidents or senators, and decreed that a slave was only three-fifths of a human being. Because its drafters opposed political parties does not make them bad, as Lurie seems to argue.

Political parties developed in the United

States to help deal with issues that divided Americans such as slavery, tariff policy, management of national finances and the government's proper role in developing the wilderness.

The parties were effective in organizing the sides in these controversies and deciding them within the framework of the Constitution.

The parties continued to play an important role into the 20th Century, when they stood for essentially different approaches to national problems then current, especially the question of how best to raise the standard of living in a country bursting with industrial and agricultural productivity.

The problems we have now with political parties arose after World War II when the Democrats and the Republicans essentially began agreeing on great issues that once divided them, especially on the basics of economics.

This movement toward what Nelson Rockefeller called the "mainstream" blurred the differences between the parties and their candidates. Voters seemed to have no more than a choice between managers of stores selling the same basic merchandise.

The current economic debate illustrates this.

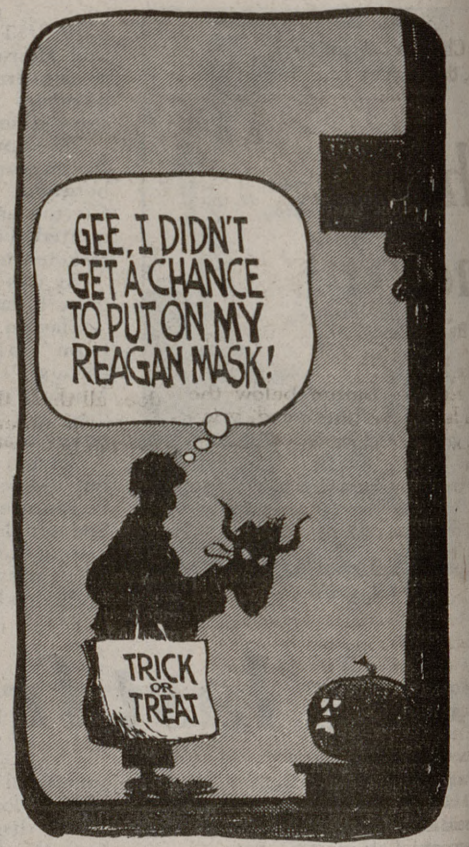
Ronald Reagan is calling for a huge tax cut which he concedes is a copy of a plan pushed by Democrat John Kennedy. President Carter is pursuing a policy of fighting inflation at the expense of extra unemployment classic GOP solution.

At the same time, there are issues that divide Americans — abortion, health care, energy management, environmental protection, equal rights for women and others.

But the major parties, by now accustomed to seeking the middle of the road on the old issues have run away from clear and opposing positions on many of the new ones.

The point here is that we do not have organized, nationally based political parties which clearly represent the opposing sides on various issues. We have lots of narrow parties that represent one issue, but so far no coalitions of the sort that grew into the major parties.

If such organizations develop — and there is some evidence that they are beginning to in the form of the Citizens and Libertarians and the Moral Majority — we may again find very good use for our political



It's your turn

OCA officer offers advice on parking

Editor:

I have some information, comments, and a few quasi-complaints concerning the already well hashed problem of parking on campus. Mostly, this letter will be of interest to off-campus students, for, being an OCA (Off-Campus Aggies) officer, and an off-campus student, I feel this is where my main responsibility lies. For all you Ags who search for a parking place for what seems like an eternity, I have some good news. How do literally hundreds of empty parking spaces on the main campus sound? They are there, in PA 62, right off of FM 2154, behind Kyle Field. Parking there could save you time, gas, shoe leather, and some frustration.

Those of you who live in apartment complexes, BEWARE! The fire marshal is busy painting yellow stripes, better known as fire lanes. The increasingly frequent fires have made this necessary, and they will tow your car away. It hasn't been enforced rigidly in the past, but it will be now.

Finally, how many of y'all come to campus

early in order to get a good parking place only to find the prime day-student parking places occupied by cars that appear to have been there all night. Well, here is some good news: the campus police are aware of the problem, and they are working on a system to get the people who either fraudulently or accidentally receive a day-student parking permit and use it when in reality they are not entitled to it. If you are aware of someone who does this, report them and maybe we can eliminate this problem.

Good Hunting,

Jeff West '81

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by 24 additional signatures.

Band congratulated

Editor:

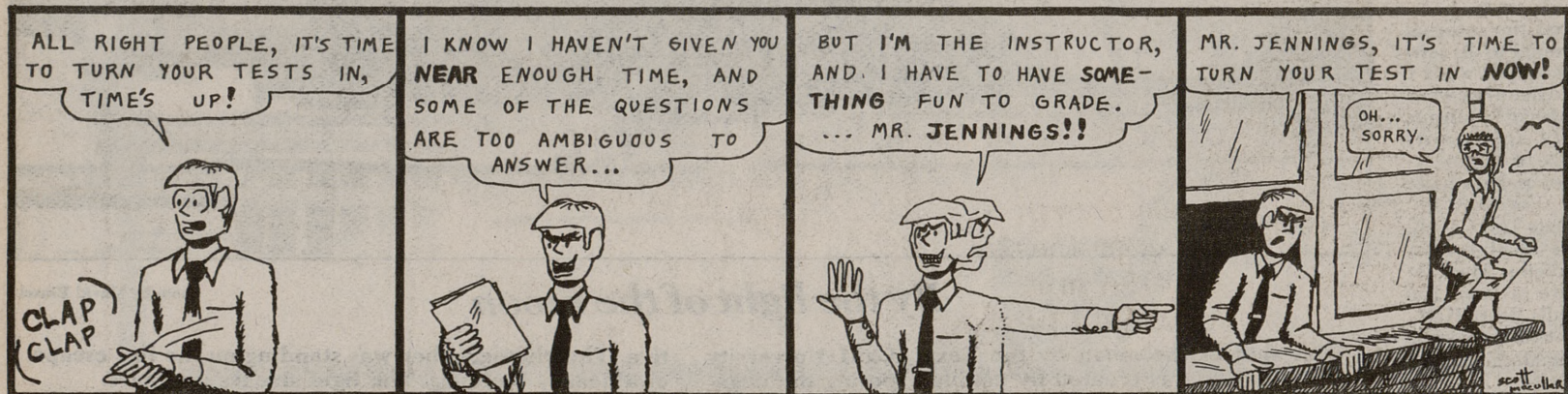
Aston Hall would like to congratulate the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band for their performance in the Fall '80 Aggie Blood Drive. One at 234 pints each is a prime example of Aggie spirit and competition. Both outstanding efforts and helped us once again beat t.u. We look forward to even better performances in the Spring.

Bob Hancock

Aston Hall President

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied three more signatures.

Warped



By Scott McCullar

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