

JIMMY CARTER  
REVEALED:  
He's a Rockefeller Republican

by Christopher Lydon

It has dawned on the liberals of his party that Jimmy Carter is not entirely one of them. Some people knew that all along—David Rockefeller, for instance, who now has a friend at the White House. In the following pages, a political reporter inquires into Carter's ideological loyalties, and an economic columnist explores the importance of Carter's "Trilateral Connection."

It sounds too simple, I grant you, but just for the sake of argument, try thinking of Jimmy Carter as a Rockefeller Republican. It is hardly more simplistic than "populist," "New South," "evangelical," and sundry other handles that have been tried out on Carter; it fits more snugly than any of the others do, and for me it's held firm for more than a year now.

No, alas, this is not an argument that David Rockefeller first invented Jimmy Carter around 1971, arranged for Zbigniew Brzezinski to train him in global politics, and then rigged his nomination and election. Nor do I believe what some Reaganites have suggested: that a piqued Nelson Rockefeller—dumped from the Republican ticket in favor of Senator Bob Dole, a Reagan designee—contrived last fall to make Jimmy Carter the vessel of his revenge on the GOP. On the contrary, I observe here the ban on conspiracy theories in mainstream American journalism and political discussion. So unfashionable are conspiracy theories that if indeed a photograph had been preserved from 1973 or 1974 of the several American members and aides of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission—such men as Richard Holbrooke, now an assistant secretary of state; Warren Christopher, the undersecretary of state; their immediate superior, Cyrus Vance (who had been, among other things,

chairman of the trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation); Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal; Defense Secretary Harold Brown; National Security Council Director Brzezinski and the NSC's analyst of Soviet intentions, Samuel P. Huntington; also then senator, now Vice President, Walter F. Mondale; and a formerly obscure but promising Georgia governor, now President, Jimmy Carter—if, as I say fancifully, some indisputable record had been preserved from three or four years ago of these men signing blood oaths to remember and honor their fellowship if and when one of them came to power, most editors, commentators, and indeed politicians would have clucked disparagingly that only nuts think power works that way in America. Maybe they are right. In any event we will not get into conspiracy theories here, or into any diagram of power mechanics that might suggest a literal explanation of Carter's rise. This is more nearly a game of categories, a parlor exercise in thinking about who Jimmy Carter is and where, metaphorically, he came from.

I stumbled blindly on the Rockefeller clue in the spring of 1976 and I admit I didn't know what to do with it when I found it. The first crucial observation was that Jimmy Carter, altogether the smartest strategist and most compelling campaigner in a poor primary field, had no base in the Democratic party and little prospect of getting one. He was a former right-to-work governor in a labor-bossed party, from a state that hadn't voted Democratic for President in sixteen years; a rural southern WASP in a party (presidentially speaking) of northern urban ethnics; and a stranger, it seemed, to the several power establishments—representing Jews, the congressional barons, foreign policy types, liberals, and the rest—that even in revised manuals were supposed to count for a lot. He bragged, of course, that he was indeed an uninitiated New Boy and that his outsiderhood would attract a new and unconventional base. It didn't take Dick Tracy, though, or even a confirmed cynic, to figure out that presidential politics was no place for outsiders.



How did anyone still suppose that the power of the White House could be exercised, much less exchanged, outside of the oligarchical harnesses that confined other areas of American life?

In October of 1975 I had remarked to Jimmy Carter, after greatly admiring his progress to that point, that had he devoted comparable resources (roughly a year of his own and his family's time, the full-time assistance of perhaps twenty people, and about \$1 million) toward capturing a dominant position in industry, he wouldn't have made a small dent against General Motors, say, in the automobile business, or even against Gillette in the razor blade business. Would market shares be any less protected, I wondered aloud, in the Democratic party?—protected not only by the active older brand names like Kennedy and Humphrey but also by permanent interests like labor, the Israeli lobby, the peace Left, and others who would want liens on the next Democratic nominee? Carter answered simply and with his usual foresight that his success in the early caucuses and primaries would light the skies with his own brand name, and that he expected not to be in an "adversary" position when he approached the oligarchs before the convention.

His early successes were nonetheless unconvincing, I thought. There was genius in the way Carter conned other competitors out of the Florida primary for what amounted to a one-on-one test against George Wallace—and used the prospect of that Armageddon to raise black interest and liberal money. Much of the latter was actually diverted beforehand into the season-opening media event, the Iowa caucuses. But so what? He couldn't beat Hubert H. Uncommitted in Iowa; in all the early primaries (New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Florida, Illinois, Wisconsin, New York, and Pennsylvania), the network and newspaper polls of primary-day voters showed uniformly that Humphrey and Ted Kennedy (both of them eager for the nomination, I persisted in believing) were the overwhelming favorites of their party. The Carter voters, moreover, did not seem to constitute a base at all—a conservative minority in New Hampshire, a liberal minority in Florida; he did particularly well everywhere among Democrats who had voted for Richard Nixon in 1972; his primary victories hung repeatedly on strength in rural areas where any Democrat would be hard-pressed in the fall; he was weak again and again in cities where a successful Democrat would have to run strong in the final election. Some of his "victories," as in the Illinois primary over the

deflated campaigns of Fred Harris, Sargent Shriver, and George Wallace, were illusions of television reporting; his defeats, as in Massachusetts and New York, were abysmal. He was short in categories that defined the core Democratic vote: working-class whites, blacks, browns, Jews, Catholics, union-organized and not. Yet people, especially media people, were taking Jimmy Carter seriously. What was going on here?

Every clever, coldhearted, main-chance operative in Democratic politics was jumping aboard the Carter opportunity, but that didn't explain what made it work. Some more fundamental combination of forces rallying around Jimmy Carter had yet to be accounted for. That was when the Rockefeller theory occurred to me, and I hadn't even been looking for it. Nor do I share the U. S. Labor party's ability to find Rockefeller fingerprints everywhere. Furthermore, as I've said, I didn't want to find a conspiracy. Yet at least three main elements in the Carter engine looked like spare parts from the Rockefeller shop.

One was *Time* magazine, which gave Carter early prominence with a flattering cover portrait in 1971. Through 1975, *Time's* advertising in other magazines for its own campaign coverage looked more like an ad for Jimmy Carter: a half-page picture presented the candidate in a Kennedyesque rocking chair under the caption: "His basic strategy consists of handshaking and street-cornering his way into familiarity."

### **Should the Trilateral Commission be viewed as a cabal of multinational financiers or should it be seen simply as David Rockefeller's foreign policy toy?**

Through 1976 and into 1977, *Time's* hagiographers were hard to separate from the Carter promotional staff. The White House returned the favor regularly—in April, for example, by giving *Time* the first exclusive "Day With Jimmy Carter." And *Time* kept earning more favors with ever gushier accounts of Carter and his men—as of that shrewd Republican survivor from the Nixon years, "that tall, rumpled, totally unpretentious and incisively brilliant intellectual, James Rodney Schlesinger. . . . MR. ENERGY: DOING THE DOABLE—AND MORE." Not that there was anything new or wrong about *Time's* adjectival politicking, but I couldn't remember the weekly newsmagazine extending itself that way in the past except for the more eastern and international (or Rockefeller)



wing of the Republican party—for Willkie in 1940, Eisenhower in 1952, and Scranton in 1964. Was Time Inc. getting ready to bury Henry Luce's Grand Old Party? In 1976, in any event, *Time* placed a formidable bet on Jimmy Carter, and won.

The second Rockefeller connection—more obvious, less noted—was the Trilateral Commission. The Trilateral Commission was David Rockefeller's brainchild, a somewhat more energetic young cousin of the elite Bilderberg Conferences at which Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands had been gathering senior bankers and political figures from Europe and the United States since the mid-fifties. Should the Trilateral Commission be viewed as a cabal of multinational financiers—indeed, as the first step toward a multinational government? Should it be seen simply as David Rockefeller's foreign policy toy? This debate has barely begun.

The commission was conceived in 1972 as a private vehicle for planning the industrial world's course out of the international monetary crisis (and John Connally's cowboy responses) of that period, away from the "Nixon shocks" that had troubled Japan, into a new stability of banking relationships among the First World and of trading agreements with the Third World. The distinctive contribution of the Trilateral Commission was its very three-sidedness, encompassing as equals sixty members each from North America, Western Europe, and Japan. David Rockefeller handpicked the key members and the staff experts who have produced a dozen pamphlets so far on such subjects as "A New Regime for the Oceans," "Energy: the Imperative for a Trilateral Approach," and "Seeking a New Accommodation in World Commodity Markets."

Jimmy Carter had been the one Democratic governor chosen among sixty North American members of the Trilateral Commission in 1973. The official explanations have run that the commission needed a southerner and that in the southern governor category Carter won a photo-finish race against Governor Reubin Askew of Florida. A couple of years earlier, in fact, Carter, ever alert to his future, had been currying Rockefeller attention. In an interview David Rockefeller recalled with amusement that Jimmy made the first, ever so slightly brash, overture in 1971, calling almost as soon as he had been sworn in to say that Georgia sold a lot of bonds in New York, and would David Rockefeller please schedule a lunch at which Governor Carter might meet some bankers. Like so

many others, David Rockefeller was more than pleasantly surprised and intrigued at meeting the peanut-farming politician. As a Trilateral Commissioner Jimmy Carter was silent but assiduous at the occasional meetings—a careful notetaker and offstage brain-picker. He proudly mentioned his Trilateral studies and trips whenever questions of his international experience popped up in the early presidential campaign. But presumably the much greater value of Trilateral membership was the private reassurance it conveyed that David Rockefeller had deemed him a promising student and had gotten his education under way. The Trilateral Commission's executive director, Zbigniew Brzezinski, became quite literally Jimmy Carter's tutor, and now, of course, directs the White House foreign policy staff, as Henry Kissinger did in the first Nixon term. Perhaps all David Rockefeller hoped for in assembling the American delegation, a Trilateral colleague mused the other day, was to be sure he included the prospective secretary of state in the era following Nixon's. How could he have guessed that his Trilateralists would staff all major policy posts in the new government—including, as if by a miracle, the vice presidency and the presidency? How indeed?

Carter's third overt Rockefeller link, by my reckoning, was Martin Luther King, Sr., the venerable "Daddy" King, as Carter called him affectionately. By virtue of his son's fame the King name on handbills and radio commercials was magic among black voters who knew next to nothing about the father. One thing that most of them didn't know was that Daddy King was a lifelong Republican, of the Civil War or Lincoln Republicans, who had supported Richard Nixon for President in 1960 until, in late October, John Kennedy's phone call to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s home dramatized the Democrat's concern about the younger King's confinement in a Georgia jail on a restaurant sit-in charge.<sup>1</sup>

The black colleges, seminaries, and professional schools of Atlanta, whose alumni became a powerful Carter network to the black middle class around the country, had received millions of dollars in Rockefeller benefactions over the years. The Kings' Southern Christian Leadership Conference specifically had received personal checks from Nelson Rockefeller in 1963—when it counted for the civil rights revolution, and counted heavily against Rockefeller in his search for 1964 convention delegates. (Representative An-

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. recounted Daddy King's 1960 conversion in *A Thousand Days*: "King's father told newspapermen that he never thought he could vote for a Catholic but that the call to his daughter-in-law had changed his mind. 'Imagine Martin Luther King having a bigot for a father,' Kennedy said—then added quizzically, 'well, we all have fathers, don't we.'"

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drew Young of Atlanta, who had been the only member of the Congressional Black Caucus to vote for Gerald Ford's confirmation as Vice President, was also one of the few who voted for Nelson Rockefeller's confirmation in 1974.) The King connection may have been Rockefeller money at its noblest; in any case, Daddy King was loyal. Through 1975 he told politicians and journalists that Nelson Rockefeller was his first choice for President in 1976 if only he could find a way to run; Jimmy Carter was his second.

There was nothing wrong with that, either. But it was enlightening to see Jimmy Carter's first and foremost black backing in this perspective, coming from the older church establishment of Atlanta because the Rockefeller alternative was not available.

Carter secured and broadened that black support by confronting George Wallace in the Florida primary. The long buildup of that rendezvous with Wallace seemed to me the definitive Carter masterstroke of daring, bluff, and ballyhoo. The black enthusiasm it generated in the South was recycled in the North as reason enough for white liberals to support Carter. What the good vibrations drowned out was that Carter had persistently bad relations with black Democratic politicians, and he never had anything resembling a program for black America. Even such Georgians as Julian Bond and Mayor Maynard Jackson of Atlanta remained hostile as long and as loudly as they dared.

In the North the secular leaders and institutions of black political power were almost all aligned against Carter before the convention, waiting and hoping that Kennedy or Humphrey would come forward with something more substantial for black folks than Jimmy Carter's benevolent words. Jimmy Carter's capture of the black vote (attaining better than 90 percent of the turnout in November) seemed to me the clearest example of a process he repeated again and again: reaching into Democratic constituencies over the heads of hapless "leaders," charming goodly numbers of listeners with vague but fervent words ("I would rather *die* than disappoint Daddy King"), but escaping the crass exchanges of nomination politics, never leaving any negotiable IOUs behind him. Andrew Young discovered all that after the election, when he pressed the black claim to two Cabinet seats, pointedly not including the United Nations ambassadorship.

Wasn't there a pattern here? Jimmy Carter seemed better at dissolving Democratic constituencies than at energizing them. One of his distinctive skills seemed to lie in draining the self-confidence, cohesion, and hope-

ful assertiveness out of the various blocs that some missing leader (I kept imagining Kennedy or Humphrey) might have made into a coalition for progressive change.

**A** lone or combined, Jimmy Carter's several Rockefellerish connections would never be evidence of conspiracy; the question anyway was rather what power centers, trends, and ideas had combined to fill Carter's sails, and such currents are usually mysteries to themselves and each other. But even a year ago it seemed to me fair to say there was a Rockefeller style about the whole Carter enterprise.

On foreign policy, what intimations Carter gave

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suggested the Rockefeller brothers' liberal imperialism, born again. Like the Rockefellers, and unlike almost all other politicians of presidential scale in 1976, Jimmy Carter had somehow escaped the political and personal crucible of Vietnam. He was the rare figure for whom the "lessons of Vietnam" were not, in some form, the starting point of the discussion; he could make them sound quite irrelevant.

He seemed to reveal an engineer's competence in the matter of nuclear proliferation and a good politician's instinct for that emerging issue. Overall, when he talked about the American role in the world, the onetime submarine officer managed to make the United States's economic and military dominance sound both more liberal and more imperial than did the men he was running against. A spring evening in Madison, Wisconsin, sticks in my mind: when a television panel interview turned to questions about Africa, Carter spoke eloquently of the contributions that black American graduates of the civil rights movement might make. Surely, he said, we could find more fitting ambassadors to send to young African nations than Shirley Temple! Follow-up questions about what he would do in Africa after changing ambassadors stopped him dead in his tracks; that discussion was over. To his credit, I guess, he never suggested that the foundations of American foreign policy would be other than business as usual. (UN Ambassador Andrew Young seemed to confirm as much in a typically unguarded conversation with Joe Lelyveld of the *New York Times Magazine* about the prospects for empathy with the Third World and for racial change in southern Africa: "In Young's vision," Lelyveld re-



ported, "the catalyst that brings about change turns out to be that troublesome and maligned behemoth, the American multinational corporation." Did he mean those friendly folks from ITT who helped bring change to Allende's Chile?)

In his general approach to domestic policy, Jimmy Carter defined himself early on in broadly Rockefellerish terms as a big-government conservative. That is, he was a vigorous executive free of the hang-ups that many Republicans suffer about the sheer size and power of government; but he kept himself free, too, of Democratic rhetoric connecting government activism with public purposes and constituencies of need. Carter was promising to make government more rational and more effective—not smaller, he said. He spoke with gusto of a "strong, independent, aggressive" presidency—but for what? The main job ahead seemed to be reorganizing the government, and the public purpose in that was always a mystery. If the object was to eliminate overspecialized subdivisions, might he eventually want to revive the one-room schoolhouse? Whether there were 1800 identifiable government entities or 200, they would all be tied on organizational charts to the President and his Cabinet—and might, in any combination, still be unmanageable.

### **Like certain Yankee Republicans of my New England youth, Carter wanted to make it on the appeal of superficially clean, reformist politics without any substantive mandate.**

Carter played skillfully on the eternal antigovernment constituency—traditionally a Republican gambit. His more remarkable success, and his more important service to the status quo, was in dissolving latent constituencies within the Democratic fold—in blunting the initiative and fogging the vision of a vestigially working-class party. This from a man who was billed not just as a Democrat but as something of a populist, yet saw neither villains nor victims in the society he asked to lead. According to Carter, there were no problems of economic or social justice in the land; no racism, no militarism. The job ahead was to make government as good as the people.

Long before the flowering of his "symbolic" style as President, Carter showed an uncanny knack for *spiritualizing* and *bureaucratizing* issues—getting away somehow without *politicizing* issues into anything resembling an "us against them" frame. Race and abortion were the best examples of the spiritualizing tack. All Carter felt he had to do on either front was to demonstrate that he himself was pure of heart. He

often said that no black group had ever hassled him about his opposition to busing after he told how his own daughter, Amy, went to a mostly black school at home. Jimmy was okay on race! Next question? On abortion he so fervently elaborated his personal view that "abortion is wrong" that relatively few people noticed that in the way of legislation or constitutional amendments he was proposing to do just what most of his rivals proposed: nothing.

The classic example of how to bureaucratize an issue was Carter's treatment of tax reform. Surely the country needed tax reform, he said, if then Treasury Secretary William Simon, on the Right, and scholarly Joseph Pechman, on the Left, both said so. Granted their "reforms" were not compatible, but Carter promised to explain someday how tax reform could be a break for working families and business corporations at the same time. The answer would involve making the Internal Revenue Service administer a clearer, simpler, more predictable tax code for everyone! The idea that the tax code is a political, not an administrative, document was inadmissible in Carter's discussions. Of course he always tried to avoid saying who would pay more, and who less, under the tax reforms he had in mind. He slipped up in an Associated Press interview in September, and later repudiated the story.

He had another formula for talking about better, broader medical care that let him off saying who would pay for that, too. A surgical procedure that involved ten days' hospitalization in Brooklyn at a cost of, say,

\$1500, was being done in San Diego with only four days in the hospital, at a cost of perhaps \$500, Carter related cheerfully. Now if every hospital could work as efficiently as that one in San Diego. . . . Having blurred the case for national health insurance in the campaign, Carter in office has postponed the whole matter indefinitely. He was vague enough, too, about welfare reform that he felt free this spring to despair of the long-awaited overhaul, at least in his first term.

What bothered me during the campaign was not so much that Carter's con games were succeeding against other guys' con games but that Carter's steady progress toward the nomination was being used to argue a smug and essentially false view of economic realities, among other things. "Jobs: the Non-Issue of 1976," proclaimed *Time's* Hugh Sidey, a clarion voice of the establishment rooting Carter on. "It could be," Sidey declared last June, "when we [sic] finally write the definitive analysis of this period, that as few as half a million people who were employable, who really



wanted and sought jobs, and who had really been unemployed long enough to undergo hardship, were still out of work this spring, though the unemployment figures were near 7 million." Shades of Herbert Hoover railing against the people who quit good jobs to profiteer in the sidewalk apple trade! The basis for Sidey's callous view was quite simply that Jimmy Carter had waltzed around the jobs issue and gotten away with it. Carter's triumph, it seemed to me, was a comfort to too many people who always felt that ugly and miserably difficult problems such as 8 percent unemployment could be ignored with impunity.

Once I started looking for them, other little giveaway Republicanisms popped up all over the Carter campaign. Carter seemed to have his own Ripon Society of antiseptic issues analysts. I took it that he wanted to project an impression that his answers to public questions would come not from his own experience or from the collective wisdom of his political coalition but from the relatively clinical consideration of expert advisers. But why should voters have been asked to wait a year or more to hear the shape of his tax reform ideas? There was an elitism about policy-making, a squeamishness about political interest, that seemed un-Democratic in Carter's treatment of issues. Like certain Yankee Republicans of my New England youth, Carter wanted to make it on the appeal of superficially clean, reformist politics without any substantive mandate.

There was a corporate air about the campaign as a whole. To my perhaps old-fashioned eye, Carter had taken the politics out of politics. No one described the Georgia Mafia around Carter better than a suddenly out-of-date Robert Kennedy Democrat who observed that if Jimmy Carter had set out in 1973 not to run for President but to wage a proxy fight for control of the Anaconda Corporation, he'd have had the same people with him. Hamilton Jordan, Jody Powell, Bob Lipshutz, Charles Kirbo, and the rest—take away Jimmy Carter, and his lieutenants were men without political direction. They all seemed more than decent people, stunningly good at their campaign assignments, yet not quite public men. Most of them were eager to say they had not been in politics before Jimmy and wouldn't be in politics after Jimmy.

First, last, and always, Jimmy Carter lacked a base in the Democratic party. It's embarrassing now how long it took me, after discovering that, to realize that Carter was more than content to play it that way. Late last March, when his campaign had hit a comfortable cruising speed on its own self-propulsion, I asked Carter to imagine his Inauguration: How many political figures, I puzzled, would stand there on January

20 feeling "we did it," sharing the President's victory because they had shared his risk? Who, to put it crudely, could claim a piece of Carter's presidency? To that question, he answered, on calm reflection, only one man: Andrew Young. "I don't know if I could think of any other one," he said. Right about that time, when barely a dozen small states had started picking convention delegates, Richard Reeves was developing in *New York* magazine what struck me as a bizarre theory: that Carter's early string of first-place finishes (however inconclusive his pluralities, however modest the net of delegates) had secured a huge investment of television's credibility in his continued success. In essence, once Walter Cronkite had announced on half-a-dozen Tuesday nights in late winter that Jimmy Carter had won another caucus or primary, how could the network explain in July that he was losing the nomination—that all the primary coverage hadn't mattered?

What Reeves (and, I'm sure, Carter) saw was that in 1976 a media base was much more important than the demographic base I knew he'd never get. Sure enough, when Jerry Brown whipped Carter over and over, east and west, in May and June, the networks looked the other way. (Was it because media power had found what it wanted in Carter and stuck with him? Or because the networks, with no particular feeling for Carter, sensed they could not be in on the creation and destruction of a political figure in one short cycle of primaries without revealing their overwhelming dominance and inviting a reaction? All that is part of another inquiry.)

Another way to look at Jimmy Carter's base, or lack of it, is still to ask: If he had fallen one vote short at the convention last summer and a ticket had been formed of some combination of Humphrey, Kennedy, Brown, and, say, Dale Bumpers, how many Democratic hearts would have felt broken? Had Jimmy Carter actually lost the election to Gerald Ford, would anyone outside the Carter entourage have risen to urge him to run again in 1980?

A President who acknowledges very few commitments and political debts. A citizen population with such scant knowledge of, and such thin affection for, its leadership—and so little active bargaining power against it. Are not these, rather than limousines and gold-braided epaulets on the uniforms of the White House guards, the essential elements of the imperial presidency? Even as he sheds the more obvious imperial trappings, Jimmy Carter has refined the imperial tricks of the electronic age, detaching the presidency from popular direction and the old institutional restraints. The brilliant devices of his in-office campaign to stay "close to the people" serve the imperial purpose, of course. The "dial-a-President"



lottery that gives every phone caller the same chance of talking to President Carter and Walter Cronkite is a nice way of saying that there's no one that Jimmy Carter *has* to talk to. All citizens, all power centers, are equidistant from this President who wants to be close to everyone.

**I**t is probably too simple, as I said at the outset, to call Jimmy Carter a Republican. The more complicated truth may be that the rise of television and the demise of party in American politics have finally brought forth a new specimen, the post-partisan President, who will try to govern, as he campaigned, almost exclusively on the strength of personal rating points in popularity polls. Carter achieved his phenomenal victories of 1976 without presenting any of the "handles" customarily required of presidential candidates—that is, without a record in national affairs, without an organizing issue of any kind, without any overt political alliances or network

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of friends outside Georgia. Must he not hope to preside in the same style? His first three months in the White House suggested some success and some inherent limitations in such an approach: he increased his Gallup poll popularity without building either solidarity with Congress or a following in the organized politics of the states, so far as I can see. (Witness the apparently counterproductive intervention of the White House in the North Carolina and Florida legislatures' consideration of the Equal Rights Amendment.) He generated a modest number of "reform" goals, but not the movement consciousness that major reforms usually need. He assumed what may just be a truly heroic job of resolving an energy crisis that is still invisible to a majority of Americans. Yet presidential concentration on energy as the number one problem also served to distract attention from other distressingly visible crises, including urban degeneration and an unchecked plague of youth and ghetto unemployment.

It is only fair to say that the stress on conservation in Carter's energy program makes it very different from the \$100 billion energy plan that Nelson Rockefeller cooked up for Gerald Ford in 1975. Rockefeller's answer was based not on conservation but on

expanded production; it would have involved enormous public subsidy of the energy industry's leap into exotic fuels, nuclear and otherwise. Different as it is, the Carter plan would realize another dream of the energy industry: effective price deregulation that would peg all fuel costs at the extortionate levels fixed by the world oil cartel.

Carter has shown confidence in office, even pleasure in the job, but not yet boldness in spending the political capital he has supposedly acquired. His first hundred days reminded me of nothing so much as a comment by Robert Shrum, a disillusioned liberal speechwriter who quit Carter's campaign staff with the observation to the candidate: "I am not sure what you truly believe in other than yourself."

Still, I cannot help supposing that Jimmy Carter is a Republican deep down. Surely it is hard to call him a Democratic President when his most notable skill is at atomizing, confusing, denying, and neutralizing the various Democratic constituencies that elected him; when his Cabinet represents the IBM board of direc-

tors more heavily than the ranks of Democratic party activists and elected officials; when the man who opened his fall 1976 campaign at Warm Springs, Georgia, in memory of Franklin D. Roosevelt, led in March 1977 what seemed to

be a White House boycott of the New Dealers' anniversary dinner in Washington; when even the nominally more liberal members of his circle wade into office speaking the same slogans as the Republicans who just left.

Charles Schultze, the new head of the Council of Economic Advisers, was one of the many Carter voices trying to reassure business late last winter, saying it was time "for bringing Adam Smith to Washington." Another was Carter's young pollster, Patrick Caddell, who barely a year earlier had been touting evidence that the American public was ready for "radical" economic cures. Around Inauguration time Caddell's new stance was pro-business: "We've all learned . . . you need the goose to lay the golden egg." What does it mean to call Jimmy Carter a Democratic President when labor's demand for a \$3 minimum wage, up from the current \$2.30, is discounted to a 20-cent improvement at the White House? When relations with Democratic party cadres in the states have deteriorated to the point where the White House chose to let the Democratic National Committee vote *unanimous* condemnation of Carter's patronage policies (as it did in April) to avoid the embarrassment of further debate and further recitation of the



non-Democrats' being awarded federal plums?

How much easier it is to picture Jimmy Carter as a Republican—and, mind you, not in a defamatory way, either. Call him a Teddy Roosevelt “Bull Moose” Republican, if you will, for his blend of moral uplift, administrative reform, liberal imperialism, and anti-politics. Give Carter credit for recognizing that that stripe of Republicanism has been popular through most of this century. John Kennedy was undoubtedly right in supposing that if the Republicans had had the sense to dump Richard Nixon in 1960, Nelson Rockefeller would have won the fall election handily. Were it not for the truth-in-labeling problem that arises in Carter's running as a Democrat, you could congratulate him on coming honestly by his Republicanism. He is, after all, a self-made millionaire, a businessman who has met a payroll (and kept the unions out of his plant!) and who revealed over and over in his brilliant campaign the healthy effects of small-business discipline.

*Time* let the cat halfway out of the bag in its January cover story of the Man of the Year: “Carter is a Democrat who often talks and thinks like a Republican.” Further clues keep piling up. David Broder wisely made a page-one story in the *Washington Post* in February of the news that it was the *Republican* leadership in the House that jumped to introduce Carter's government reorganization plan, after Democrat Jack Brooks of Texas, chairman of the House

Committee on Government Operations, balked at what he considered an arguably unconstitutional and potentially Nixonesque reach for wider executive authority. Pat Caddell, in a memo written last December and leaked into print in May, informed Carter that what calls itself the Republican party was not the real opposition, The GOP “seems bent on self-destruction,” Caddell wrote. “We have an opportunity to coopt many of their [the Republicans'] issue positions and take away large chunks of their normal presidential coalition. Unfortunately,” he added, “it is those same actions that are likely to cause rumblings from the left of the Democratic Party.” And so they were. George McGovern, whistling in the dark, had been loyal to Carter throughout 1976, but by May 1977 he was seeing things from a different perspective. Distressed about Carter's emphasis on a balanced budget and his reluctance to enact reforms in health care and welfare, McGovern remarked that it was hard to tell who won the election. Carter brushed away criticisms from McGovern and other liberals, saying, “They are very difficult to please.” And it was plain that he was not going to go out of his way to please them. Charles Kirbo, Carter's lawyer friend from Atlanta, told reporters at breakfast recently that the President was pleased to be widening his base since the election. What did that mean? “He told me he was getting some support from Republicans,” Kirbo said. Not the first time or the last, I thought, and only fair, too. □



## THE TRILATERAL CONNECTION

by Jeremiah Novak

For the third time in this century a group of American scholars, businessmen, and government officials is planning to fashion a new world order. Discouraged by UN inadequacies, disheartened by chaos in the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and the World Bank), and worried about the United States's waning strength, these men are looking to a “community of developed nations” to coordinate international political and economic affairs.

“After every major war in this century Americans sought a new world order. Wilson pushed the League of Nations; Roosevelt and Truman constructed the UN-Bretton Woods system; and now, after Vietnam, Jimmy Carter gives us the Trilateral plan.” So said C.

Fred Bergsten, assistant secretary of the treasury and one of sixteen top Carter appointees who belong to the Trilateral Commission. All sixteen represent a deeply internationalist tradition that is part of the eastern American establishment. “Liberal internationalism is our creed,” said Bergsten.

And Jimmy Carter is its prophet. Carter is a charter member of the Trilateral Commission and an advocate of its basic internationalist viewpoint. According to one Carter campaign aide, “Carter reeks of Protestant America's manifest destiny, and embodies the frontier tradition, the open door, and Cordell Hull's free trade internationalism, all wrapped up in one.”

If there is one book in Carter's gospel, it is Zbigniew



Brzezinski's *Between Two Ages*, published in 1970, in which Brzezinski, now national security adviser, formed the concept of "a community of developed nations" that would direct the world to new levels of freedom, human rights, and economic progress. He rejected both Kennedy's inaugural globalism and the establishment prejudice toward Atlanticism that dominated the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson years. Insisting that the community of developed nations should include Japan, he called his plan "more ambitious than the concept of an Atlantic Community, but historically more relevant."

Brzezinski's community would include not only the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, but eventually all other "advanced nations," even communist ones. The emphasis is on "developed" and "advanced." As Richard Cooper, who along with Brzezinski is a key architect of Trilateralism, wrote in a recent Trilateral paper, "Only those nations whose decisions can affect the whole group should be admitted."

Brzezinski's message did not find immediate acceptance. However, in December 1971, after the United States unilaterally went off the gold standard, causing the U.S.-Western Europe-Japan alliance to totter, Brzezinski convinced Huntington Harris, a Brookings Institution trustee, to fund a series of Tripartite Studies. Joining Brookings scholars were thinkers from the Japanese Economic Research Center and the European Community Institute of University Studies. The results of these studies influenced David Rockefeller to found the Trilateral Commission. According to his own testimony Rockefeller had begun calling in 1972 for the establishment of a Trilateral Community. He broached the subject at the Bilderberg Conference of corporate leaders, where it found immediate acceptance. Among those in attendance was Michael Blumenthal, now secretary of the treasury.

As chairman of the Trilateral Commission's executive committee, Rockefeller was able to attract members who include the chief executive officers of the Bank of America, First National City Bank, Exxon, Caterpillar, and CBS, as well as such labor leaders as I. W. Abel and Leonard Woodcock, and such scholars as Richard Cooper, provost of Yale, and Harold Brown, president of the California Institute of Technology.

From Europe came, among others, the heads of Thyssen, Royal Dutch Petroleum, and Unilever. From Japan, the chairmen of the Bank of Tokyo and Fuji Bank. This high-powered group appointed Brzezinski full-time director of the Trilateral Commission, and he recruited a group of scholars who wrote a series of

fourteen monographs dealing with political and economic problems facing Trilateral nations.

Although the commission's primary concern is economic—principally the same issues that concerned Cordell Hull, Henry Morgenthau, Harry Dexter White, and John Maynard Keynes at Bretton Woods—the Trilateralists pinpointed a vital political objective: to gain control of the American presidency. For, as Samuel Huntington, a Harvard government professor and a Trilateral scholar, has written: "To the extent that the U.S. was governed by anyone in the decades after World War II, it was governed by the President, acting with the support and cooperation of key individuals and groups in the executive office, the federal bureaucracy, Congress, and the more important businesses, banks, law firms, foundations and media, which constitute the private establishment."

In 1973, with Richard Nixon in deep trouble because he did not have this support, the Trilateralists found it essential to play a role in determining the direction of the American presidency. As early as May 1975, Brzezinski, at a Trilateral Commission meeting in Kyoto, hailed Carter as "one political leader with the courage to speak forthrightly on difficult political issues." And Peter Bourne, Carter's former deputy campaign chief, has been quoted as saying, "David Rockefeller and Zbig have both agreed that Carter is the ideal politician to build on."

Carter reciprocated by reiterating during his campaign that "we must replace balance-of-power politics with world order politics"—the Trilateralists' basic theme. Of late this theme has been echoing through the halls of Congress, as some of the Administration's Trilateral appointees, such as Cooper, Bergsten, and Cyrus Vance, have testified. "The basic philosophy of the Administration," Bergsten told Congress, "is that domestic and international issues are inextricably linked."

Such concepts are being well received by many in Congress. For instance, as Representative Henry Gonzalez of Texas said after attending the International Development Association (IDA) replenishment conference in Geneva in March, "The arrival of Bergsten and Cooper was like a breath of fresh air. There's a new sense of flexibility and understanding that has gained new respect for the U.S. among our allies. They know that the people in this Administration care."

The Administration's internationalist views have also received a big boost from Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns, a Nixon appointee. Speaking at the Columbia University School of Business on April 12, he made an impassioned plea for a greatly strengthened IMF. His call echoed that of a 1973



Trilateral pamphlet written by Richard Cooper, now assistant secretary of state for international economic affairs.

The Trilateralists' emphasis on international economics is not entirely disinterested, for the oil crisis forced many developing nations, with doubtful repayment abilities, to borrow excessively. All told, private multinational banks, particularly Rockefeller's Chase Manhattan, have loaned nearly \$52 billion to developing countries. An overhauled IMF would provide another source of credit for these nations, and would take the big private banks off the hook. This proposal is a cornerstone of the Trilateral plan, because it makes possible the continuation of free trade internationalism.

Perhaps the best example of Trilateralism was the post-Inaugural trip to Europe and Japan of Vice President Walter Mondale (also a Trilateralist). He assured leaders of Carter's determination to work in deep consultation with them. Institutionally, the Rambouillet, Puerto Rico, and London conferences, where Trilateral leaders have met to discuss economic issues, symbolize this new community of developed nations. To implement its aims, the Trilateral Commission has called for the formation of commissions to coordinate the political and economic power of the Trilateral area. These commissions will subordinate national economic policy to international needs. As Bergsten said in a speech on April 22 to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, "The world's major economic powers must, in a positive sense, exercise collective responsibility for the stability and progress of the world economy."

Many Americans, in government and without, view this new emphasis on collective responsibility as a threat to traditional national sovereignty. Others worry about the basic political philosophy that motivates the Trilateralists. In particular, many people are concerned about the views of Samuel Huntington, who is an editor of *Foreign Policy* magazine—often a showcase for Trilateral thinking. (Trilateralist Richard Holbrooke, the former managing editor, is now assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs.) Among other worrisome statements, Huntington wrote in *The Crisis of Democracy*: "In some measure the advanced industrial societies have spawned a stratum of value-oriented intellectuals who often devote themselves to the derogation of leadership . . . and their behavior contrasts with that of the also increasing numbers of technocratic and policy-oriented intellectuals."

Huntington also made the following statement in his essay: "Al Smith once remarked 'the only cure for the evils of democracy is more democracy.' Our anal-

ysis suggests that applying that cure at present could well be adding fuel to the flames. Needed instead is a greater degree of moderation in democracy."

Penn State political scientist Larry Spence criticizes Huntington's condemnation of value-oriented philosophers as "a direct attempt to raise the status of the technocratic elite, who curry to the needs of the wealthy corporations. If he gets his way," Spence declared, "we will have a new supernational community dominated by the multinational corporations."

Another critic is Walter Dean Burnham, professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Writing in "Dialogue," the Trilateral Commission's newsletter, Burnham stated: "Firstly, Professor Huntington systematically inflates the claim of authority against the claim of liberty in any situation. . . . There is, I think it is fair to say, a visible pro-authority bias to his work. . . ."

Huntington's authoritarian views were widely debated by the Trilateralists themselves, many of whom demanded that Huntington's book not be published under Trilateral auspices. Yet, as Dr. Spence put it, "The book still stands as the official position of the Trilateral Commission."

Despite the debate over *The Crisis of Democracy*, the Trilateralists' internationalist stance is being lobbied for in Congress by a new organization called New Directions. The group was founded at the instance of Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame University and chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation. Hesburgh, with the support of Vance and Paul Warnke (a Trilateralist and Carter's chief arms limitation negotiator), was able to recruit John Gardner, chairman of Common Cause, and others to form the new lobby group. Essentially, the group's "Approved Action Program" reinforces Trilateral positions on expansion of international financial institutions, increased development assistance for poor nations, a strong plank for conservation of energy, and reduction of arms sales.

The alliance of Common Cause and New Directions with Trilateral thinking gives the Trilateralists two formidable companion organizations. It was Harlan Cleveland, a member of the board of governors of New Directions, who, on July 4, 1976, wrote a "Declaration of Interdependence" for the Bicentennial program in Philadelphia. He also published a paperback called *The Third Try at World Order*.

Jimmy Carter, as President, presides over this new internationalism. Indeed, it is said that when he faces Congress he goes as an internationalist; and when he travels to Western Europe and Japan he is welcomed as a brother Trilateralist. In the last analysis, it is Carter who directs the third try for a new world order. □