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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

March 4, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JACK MARSH  
MAX FRIEDERSDORF

FROM:

JERRY H. JONES

The attached article by Walter Pincus is forwarded to you with the suggestion that you may want to get it to some of our Republican friends on the Hill so they can make use of it in speeches and floor remarks.

Thank you.

in an effort to get the Arab governments to protest against a "partial" settlement between Israel and Egypt. The Syrians also think that they can prevent the Israelis and Egyptians from reaching an agreement that excludes them by shifting the negotiating scene to Geneva, where it would be difficult for individual Arab regimes to make separate deals. Their desperation to go to Geneva prompted the Syrians to issue a statement not long ago affirming that the full-scale conference would have to open by early March. But that ultimatum was echoed only by the Russians, who are also anxious to participate in the negotiations, and it has since been dropped by the Syrians. Judging from my conversations here, though, it seems to me that the Syrians would renew the UN mandate in the Golan area if they had some assurance that the Geneva conference might be resumed soon. "What we want is a sign that the Israelis are sincerely interested in peace," a top Syrian official said to me the other day; and that ambiguous comment, if it in fact mirrors Assad's thinking, may suggest that Syria is searching for any pretext that will save it from going to war—especially alone. The most optimistic prospect, consequently, is some contrivance that can postpone a conflict.

I should add here that I found the Syrians less committed to the Palestine Liberation Organization than I had anticipated that they would be. They were at the forefront of the drive during the Arab summit meeting in Rabat last fall to legitimize the PLO as the

"sole" representative of the Palestinian people, and they still recite the slogan from the communique that confirmed that decision. But when they now say that the PLO is "responsible for the Palestinian problem," as one Syrian official explained, it strikes me that they no longer hold, if they ever did, that their own chances for a settlement with Israel are going to be contingent on the creation of an autonomous Palestine. In other words, the Syrians appear to be fearful that they may be sold out by Egypt but, if they can get what they want, they would not hesitate to sell out the Palestinians. There is, in all this tangle, another contradiction that is not adequately clarified by the Syrians. They claim to recognize the existence of the state of Israel, yet by having sanctified the PLO's call for a "democratic secular" Palestine, they are indirectly underwriting the destruction of Israel—unless, of course, their declarations are more rhetorical than real.

The general impression I draw from a few days in Syria, then, is one of fragility. Like almost everyone else in the Middle East, the Syrians want to avert another war that they say will resolve nothing. But the margin for accommodation between them and their Israeli adversaries is so slim that, while short-term deals may be made, the chances for a long-range settlement seem to be remote. It may be too much, however, to attempt to imagine more than the immediate future, and that is why, I think, one can only plausibly conjecture on what may happen tomorrow.

*Don R. info.*

Making Good Use of the Hired Help

## House of Ill Repute

by Walter Pincus

Though it is over 190 years old, the House of Representatives today is suffering growing pains. A new House membership has forced a shift in staff structure, an increase in personnel and development of second echelon leadership that promise changes that go far beyond the highly publicized removal last month of two old committee chairmen. If organized properly, these reforms could help lead the House, lately in disrepute, back to a role in government coequal with the White House. That future however is far from certain. Blocking the way are the egos and personal ambitions of a few reformers, a handful of byzantine

old-time Democratic chairmen and ranking Republican members, not to mention a Speaker, majority leader and minority leader who have trouble understanding and thus dealing rationally with change.

To understand the past House organization and what's now taking place, one must first know that unlike the Senate, where size of personal staffs is determined by state populations, each congressman has the same hiring allowance. It permits up to 16 employees at any one time so long as the total of annual salaries doesn't exceed \$194,004. A quirk in the House rules apportions the money available in monthly

installments, so if a member doesn't use up his allowance one month, he can't spend what's left over the next. Thus everyone in the House starts out even.

Perhaps because there is this equality between congressional newcomer and veteran, it was almost inevitable that the committee staff system would be autocratic. Chairmen have ruled House committees jealously; power has almost never been shared; professional staffs have been kept small and subcommittees at a minimum. Thus the Education and Labor Committee, with 122 employees, nine subcommittees and a one-year budget of \$1.6 million, is a House giant. Yet it pales in comparison to the Senate Judiciary Committee with its four million dollar budget, 17 subcommittees and 277 employees. At the other extreme was the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, which under Wilbur Mills had a \$500,000 budget, a professional staff of 14 and clerical staff of 21—including two Mills chauffeurs—and responsibility for taxes, trade, health care and social security.

Aged tyrannical chairmen, entrenched by seniority, and small inevitably loyal staffs meant conservative, slow-moving committee operations prone to various sorts of corruption.

Last year, the administrative assistant in the office of Democratic Rep. Joe Evins of Tennessee, one William A. Keel, Jr., was paid a \$36,000 salary by the House Select Committee on Small Business where he was listed as a "research analyst." Evins chairs the committee. In 1974, the House Public Works Committee carried James L. Oberstar as a \$36,000 a year "administrator." In fact Oberstar ran the personal office of the committee chairman, Minnesota Democrat John Blatnik. Oberstar ran it so well he succeeded his late boss in the last November's election and is now a congressman.

Two House rules were violated in these two cases. Standing committee staff members are not permitted to "engage in any work" or be "assigned any duties" outside the jurisdiction of the committee. Furthermore the maximum annual salary permitted a personal staff employee in 1974 was \$33,710—less than that which could be paid a committee professional.

Abuses extended beyond individual staff members. The House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee in 1974 supported a \$400,000-a-year investigative subcommittee that boasted a \$36,000-a-year chief counsel, two \$32,750 staff assistants, two \$31,000 staff attorneys, another \$30,000 staff assistant, three more staff attorneys earning over \$22,000 and four clerical assistants paid between \$12,000 and \$18,000 apiece. No subcommittee on Capitol Hill, House or Senate, boasted a pay scale approaching that special subcommittee on investigations chaired by Rep. Harley Staggers, who's also chairman of the Commerce Committee. Yet during the year, the Staggers investigative group turned out fewer than a dozen reports and held less than 30 days of hearings. The cost was so great

and the performance so poor that the committee last month took the unprecedented step of replacing Staggers as leader of the investigations subcommittee.

The one man who has more to say than any other about House staffing is the redoubtable Rep. Wayne Hays of Ohio. As chairman of the House Administration Committee, Hays passes on the pay and expenses of all House committees. The story is often told of how Hays has used his power to satisfy his whims. When Rep. Donald Fraser ventured to oppose a Hays measure, for several weeks thereafter he couldn't get his pay vouchers approved.

A review of financial records of Hays' committee shows that the Ohioan is a bit looser with the pursestrings when he is the one doing the spending. In 1973-74, Hays' committee paid \$2500 in consultant fees to E. Jean Walker. Mrs. Walker is the wife of John T. Walker, who at the time was Hays' chief counsel on the Administration Committee. Another Hays consultant over the past two years (at \$1250 a month) is former Rep. Arnold Olsen—a Hays crony from the days when Olsen was chairman of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee. A third Hays consultant during 1973, at \$333.33 a month, was Ernest Petinaud, the former head waiter of the members' Capitol dining room. Also a pal of Hays, Petinaud gained some national recognition when it was discovered that Hays had taken him to Europe at government expense as part of a NATO parliamentarians' delegation.

Still another Hays consultant was writer Suzannah Lessard then also on the staff of the muckraking *Washington Monthly*. She was hired to rewrite, for \$10,000, a history of the House, that originally had been compiled by the Library of Congress. According to Ms. Lessard, Hays said the research was brought up to date and redistributed every 10 years. He was not happy with the library version and wanted her to improve on it. She said she finished the work about two years ago, then found Hays' staff had lost one of her chapters and it had to be redone. For \$1000 more she did that, and has not heard anything more since what became of the manuscript.

Hays is not the only chairman to call on consultants. The House Public Works Committee, among others, used them last year with apparent mixed results. One fellow, Max Taher, was an old friend of Chairman Blatnik and for his \$1200 (or thereabouts) a month, did little for the committee outside helping redecorate its offices. Another consultant, Richard Royce, was a former staff member of the Senate Public Works Committee. Royce runs his own consulting firm in Miami. He commutes to Washington on committee assignments. One potential problem in the Royce relationship, however, is his interest in a corporation that does sewer work of the sort envisioned by legislation under study by the committee.

The ill repute in which the House has properly been held may have to be reconsidered if the new House takes advantage of its opportunities. As part of last year's House reforms, each committee was required to establish at least four subcommittees; the chairman and ranking member of each of them to get his own staff person. Once the bill had been approved, the House leadership should have started planning for the influx of new employees and the need to house them somewhere. There are 140 subcommittees so at least 280 new House staffers had to be expected. Where would they have their desks?

In typical House leadership fashion, the problem was treated with last-minute haste. In early February, the three members of the House Building Commission—Speaker Carl Albert, Majority Leader Thomas O'Neill and Minority Leader John Rhodes—met with a House Appropriations subcommittee and asked urgent approval of \$17 million to renovate and operate an office building several blocks from Capitol Hill. The building, being vacated by the FBI, had served as headquarters for its identification division and at one time housed 4000 employees. It was far too large for House needs, but it was, according to O'Neill, the only structure available. The \$17 million was approved and eventually a passel of House offices including the House computer operation, party congressional campaign committees, and various other House services are expected to be moved out of the three House office buildings thereby releasing space for the new subcommittee staffs.

Lack of leadership planning in housekeeping and legislative matters may be the result of inadequate leadership staffs. Albert and O'Neill particularly have neglected to set up any substantive policy staffs of their own. Between them they have some \$500,000 a year

for hiring. Democratic House whip John McFall is allocated an additional \$200,000 of which some \$44,225 is spent by the chief deputy whip, Rep. John Brademas. Out of his funds, Albert pays for his Speaker's office, and O'Neill, while picking up the salaries of his own top assistants, also last year used part of his budget to pay key members of the Democratic Study Group.

A fourth leadership fund, \$150,000 earmarked for the House Democratic Steering Committee (scheduled to go up to \$227,520 next year) is more difficult to trace. There is a House Democratic Steering Committee that works for Speaker Albert, but it only has a staff of four and an outlay of some \$92,000 a year.

The Republican leadership has funds comparable, though smaller than the Democratic majority. At the steering committee level, however, the House Republican Conference receives \$148,710, plus an additional \$212,115 for minority employees. With its funds, the Republicans have put together a staff that serves their House party caucus—a step the Democrats have yet to take. Since the caucuses are becoming more active, it's likely that Democratic Caucus leader Phil Burton will want funds for his operation.

Both parties, but particularly the Democratic leadership, ought to start planning and organizing the new House committee operations. They'll have some \$20 million more in the coming year to pay salaries. Will the only change from the past be that more individual chairmen now can go off on their own—like a few did in the past? Or will action on the popular issues of energy and economy, be coordinated so the same witnesses are not asked the same questions before different committees. The House has to demonstrate that it will spend the new money for purposes other than self aggrandizement or featherbedding.

## Is Privacy Possible?

# Exposing Ourselves in Public

by Thomas J. Cottle

In the last decade, a decade some point to as a period of genuine social revolution, capitalism came under severe attack. At the most moderate and sanguine professional meetings, one heard references to changing the economic system, fighting the laws of private ownership. America needs changing from top to bottom,

these people said. Money is the root of all evil and private ownership the ground in which this root grows.

But this is only part of the so-called social revolution, the part where the economically and politically minded enter. There is another part where the psychologically minded enter. And this part, too, has as one of its