

Honest Politics: Jimmy Carter [B1]

Il mandato del trentanovesimo presidente degli Stati Uniti, fra il 1977 e il 1981, fu piuttosto agitato. Ciononostante, grazie al suo impegno per mettere i diritti umani al centro del dibattito, divenne un politico ammirato in tutto il mondo.



With the slogan “My name is Jimmy Carter and I’m running for President”, Washington outsider James Earl Carter Jr., a former peanut farmer from the American Deep South, introduced himself as the Democrat who would return integrity to US politics. While he did not quite succeed, Carter stands out as a president who did everything he could to make America moral again.

PEANUTS TO PRESIDENT

Born in Georgia on 1 October 1924, Carter won the US presidency in 1976. It was a time of despondency: the Watergate scandal had led to Richard Nixon’s resignation but his successor, Gerald Ford, had issued a presidential pardon, enraging many people. Carter was deeply religious but he was also just, and wanted both US domestic and foreign policy to be “competent and

compassionate."In his inaugural [address](#), he said: "Because we are free, we can never be indifferent to the [fate](#) of freedom [elsewhere](#)."

PEACE AND INCLUSIVITY

Carter [pardon](#)ed all conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War. He brought an unprecedented number of women, African-Americans and minorities into his administration. He installed thirty-two solar panels on the roof of the White House. He also revived the practice of presidential mediation in disputes between other nations: in 1978, he played a key role in [brokering](#) the Camp David Accords between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin — who [loathed](#) each other — bringing an extraordinary [if uneasy](#) peace to the [Middle East](#).

ECONOMIC DISASTER

Unfortunately, Carter inherited a domestic economy in stagflation. Deindustrialisation in the Midwest (an area that became known as the Rust Belt) caused mass unemployment as US companies moved manufacturing [abroad](#). There was a [sharp](#) increase in [income](#) inequality, a major energy crisis, and high inflation. The Soviets chose this moment to invade Afghanistan, [heightening](#) Cold War tensions. In Iran, fifty-two American diplomats and citizens were taken [hostage](#).

BLIND OPTIMISM

In the 1981 presidential election, Carter lost by a [landslide](#) to Ronald Reagan: a charismatic neoliberal, who had the solar panels on the White House roof removed. In his [leaving speech](#), Carter made a promise that was to define his post-presidency: "In a few days I [will lay down](#) my official duties in this office, [to take up](#) once more the only title in our democracy superior to that of President, the title of citizen."

A NOBLE LEGACY

In 1982, Carter and his wife Rosalynn founded the Carter Center, which has played an active role in human rights and disease prevention globally. They also helped publicise Habitat for Humanity, known for charitable home construction projects worldwide. Carter's leadership in the protection of human rights led to many major initiatives of the 1980s and '90s. He was awarded the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize "for his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development".

Glossary

- **elsewhere** = altrove
- **abroad** = all'estero
- **heightening** = esacerbando
- **leaving speech** = discorso d'addio
- **not quite** = non proprio
- **stands out** = distinguersi
- **despondency** = sconforto
- **pardon** = indulto
- **to take up** = riprendere
- **founded** = fondare
- **loathed** = detestare
- **income** = redditi
- **landslide** = valanga di voti
- **issued** = emettere
- **enraging** = far infuriare
- **address** = discorso
- **fate** = destino
- **brokering** = mediare
- **played an active role** = giocare un ruolo
- **untiring** = instancabile
- **will lay down** = deporre, abbandonare
- **if uneasy** = seppure scomoda
- **Middle East** = Medio Oriente
- **sharp** = netto, forte
- **hostage** = ostaggi