

THE MICE THAT ROAR

Tired of Republican rhetoric and Democratic dialogue? The truly exciting candidates — with real new ideas — are out there. But they may never be heard, no matter how loud they roar.

By James W. Harris

"There ain't a dime's worth of difference between the Democratic and Republican parties."

—George Wallace, Alabama governor and 1968 American Independent Party presidential candidate

Fed up with mainstream politics? Think the Democrats and Republicans sound more like Tweedledee and Tweedledum?

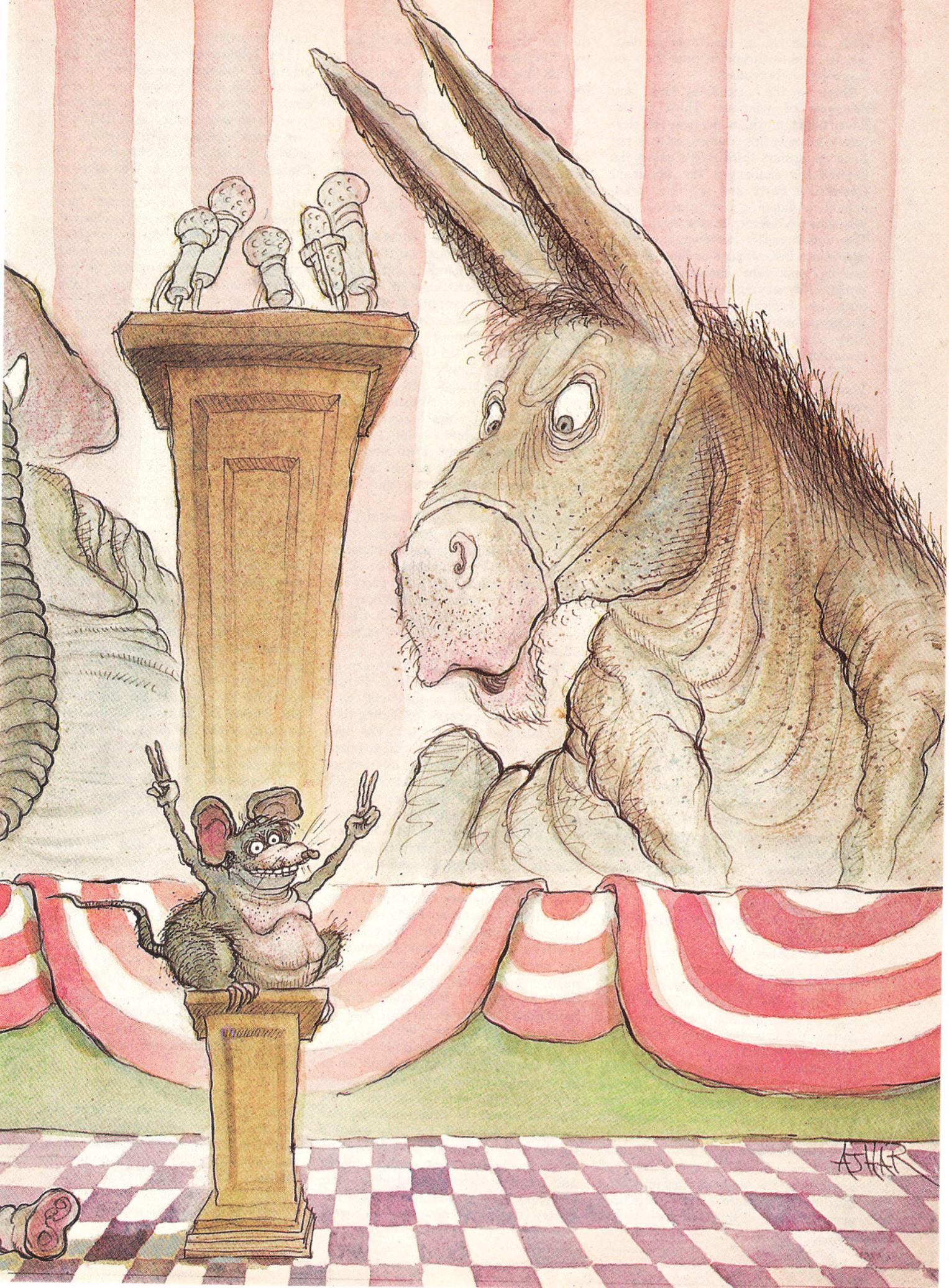
If so, you're not alone. Growing numbers of Americans are becoming increasingly doubtful and cynical about the current two-party system. In fact, only 53.2 percent of Americans even bothered to vote in 1980 — a ten-percent decline in just two decades. Fully 35 to 40 percent of voters now define themselves as Independents instead of Democrats or Republicans — a striking increase over previous years. Numerous surveys indicate that public confidence in politicians and government institutions is skidding near all-time lows.

It is in precisely such times as these — times of distrust in the dominant two parties and of increasing concern over domestic and international issues — that third parties have flourished in America. This year is no exception. Numerous third party and independent candidates of all stripes are running for president of the United States.

Many of these, inevitably, are frivolous, tongue-in-cheek candidates of the kind that pop up every election year — guys like Richard Grayson, presidential hopeful of the Committee for Immediate Nuclear War, who advocates nuclear holocaust as a cure for "boredom, soap operas, and peddlers on [New York's] Fourteenth Street." Or like television entertainer Larry Harmon — better known professionally as Bozo the Clown — whose Bozo Party urges Americans to "put a real Bozo in the White House."

However, there are also a smaller number of serious, committed third-party candidates for president, who — despite oppressive state and federal election laws — will appear on numerous state ballots across the country. They will receive anywhere from a few thousand to perhaps a million or more votes. They will present articulate, carefully researched views on the important issues of the election year that match those of millions of Americans — and they will generally deal with





these issues in a far more honest, serious, and forthright manner than the major-party contenders.

None of the candidates have any delusions of winning. Third parties haven't had much in the way of electoral success in this country, at least not since an upstart third party called the Republicans challenged the dominant Democratic Party and got their presidential candidate, a lanky, laconic lawyer named Abe Lincoln, elected in 1860. This doesn't mean, however, that third parties are insignificant or incapable of causing important changes. In fact, primarily by serving as vehicles to introduce new, radical ideas into the mainstream political discussion, third parties have often exerted profound influence upon American society.

Take the example of Norman Thomas, Socialist Party presidential candidate from 1928 to 1948. Thomas never even came close to winning; his highest-ever vote total was around two percent in 1932. Yet because the Socialist Party was a "party of principle," with candidate Thomas arguing eloquently for a set of ideals, Thomas made enormous inroads among intellectuals, college-age youth, and opinion makers, who in turn carried his ideas into the general political discussion. The results were startling: A great number of the major domestic and economic concerns of the Socialist Party—all considered quite radical at the time—rapidly passed into the commonly accepted American law. Indeed, if today someone opposed these one-time radical Socialist proposals—things like minimum-wage laws, child-labor reform, old-age pensions, pro-union legislation—that person might well be accused of being downright un-American! Who really won the political battles of that period, then—the Republicans and Democrats, who elected their candidates into office but whose parties have since changed dramatically? Or the Socialists, who lost elections but saw nearly all of their reform proposals adopted by the major parties and put into law?

I'd say the Socialists won hands down.

Other parties have had similar histories. The Progressive Party, the Populist Party, the anti-slavery Free Soil Party, the women's suffrage Equal Rights Party, and many other near-forgotten third parties have faded into obscurity—but have also seen their central concerns accepted by the major parties and put into law. Civil service reform, the progressive income tax, reduced working hours, immigration restriction, jobless pensions, stricter conservation laws, and a host of other important political changes were all adopted by the major parties only after third-party pressure forced them into general debate. If third parties have lost

the elections, they very frequently have won the issues.

With this in mind, then, let's take a look at the most important third parties and candidates of 1984.

THE ANDERSON DIFFERENCE

In 1980, ex-Republican Congressman John Anderson made an independent bid for president and garnered 6.6 percent of the vote. His campaign slogan was "the Anderson difference."

In the 1984 race, the "Anderson difference" is that Anderson won't be running. (Instead, he intends to form a new third party and participate in the 1988 elections.) This is important news for third-party candidates, especially for those of the two largest third parties of 1980, the Libertarian Party and the Citizens Party. Both of these parties, although profoundly different from each other and from Anderson, drew large numbers of votes from the same broad class of voters: white, young, educated, and affluent. With Anderson out of the way, both parties hope to draw further support from this large, disaffected constituency.

David Bergland, a 42-year-old California lawyer, is the presidential candidate of the nation's largest third party, the Libertarian Party. Founded in a Colorado living room in 1971, the party has grown rapidly with each election. Its 1980 presidential nominee, Ed Clark, was on every state ballot and received 921,299 votes.

The philosophy of the party can be expressed in a single sentence: People should be free to do as they wish with their lives and property, providing they don't interfere violently with the lives and property of others. Libertarians thus oppose all government interference in both the personal and economic realms. Because of this, they don't fit easily into the usual right-wing/left-wing political categories. As the *Congressional Quarterly* recently put it, "Clearly, the Libertarians are on a wavelength of their own."

A tongue-in-cheek "condensed" version of the Libertarian Party platform, written by party founder Dave Nolan, is actually a pretty accurate summary of the party's views: "Regarding government: We favor the abolition of damn near everything. We favor drastic reductions in everything else. And we refuse to pay for what's left!"

David Bergland is calling for a *laissez-faire*, free-market economy; abolition of all victimless-crime laws; and a foreign policy of strict nonintervention in the internal affairs of other nations. According to Bergland, the only possibly legitimate functions of government are its protective functions—police, courts, and national defense—and even these services should be paid for through voluntary donations or user fees, since

"taxation is theft."

"The Libertarian Party is the only organized political movement in the country that is working to reduce government across the board, to maximize freedom on every issue," says Bergland.

In direct contrast to the extreme individualism of the Libertarians is the Citizens Party, formed in 1980 as a "national progressive political party committed to nuclear disarmament, full employment, environmental protection, equal rights, and economic democracy." Its first presidential candidate, noted biologist and environmental activist Barry Commoner, achieved ballot status in 30 states—a record achievement for new parties—and polled an impressive 234,000 votes. (By way of comparison, the next highest vote total in 1980 came from the Socialist Workers Party, with 49,038.) The party continued its 1980 success with over 200 local campaigns in 26 states—including 17 victories—and forged alliances with a variety of American and European peace groups, including West Germany's Green Party.

At the time of this writing, the Citizens Party has yet to hold its nominating convention. Feminist Sonia Johnson is the only announced candidate for nomination. Johnson, who was excommunicated from the Mormon church in 1979 for her Equal Rights Amendment activism, has said that her campaign will focus on massive reductions in nuclear weapons, increased funding for social programs, and her view that "patriarchy"—the rule of men—is responsible for most of the world's ills. Her remedy for the latter is "an analysis and philosophy based on the values of women's culture, values such as nonviolence, cooperation...nurturing."

"It's essential that we end the arms race and begin a race for peace," Johnson urges. "Because either war is finished or we are."

The Citizens Party and the Libertarian Party are the country's largest third parties. They are by no means the only important ones, however. Several other parties are running very active, visible campaigns. These parties can be broadly categorized as being on the far left or the far right, if we define "left" as favoring collective government solutions to social problems, and "right" as desiring a limited federal government and a strong emphasis upon free enterprise, individualism, and fundamentalist Christian values.

THREE ON THE LEFT

Three significant radical-left third parties are running presidential candidates this year: the Communist Party USA, the Socialist Workers Party, and the Workers World Party. (The Socialist Party, while running some congressional candidates, will not run a presi-

Why They Can't Grow up to Be President

"Despite the homage that is paid in American politics to the concepts of free enterprise and free competition, the two major parties are intent on doing everything possible to kill off their third-party rivals."

—Frank Smallwood, The Other Candidates

The schoolroom homily that "every boy and girl in America can grow up to be president" is as ingrained a part of the American psyche as baseball, Horatio Alger, and apple pie. Unfortunately, it's just not true. Over the past 50 years or so, the Democrats and Republicans have erected a web of legal and financial barriers that make it almost impossible for third-party candidates to even run in this country, let alone win.

One of the worst difficulties that third parties face is simply getting on state ballots across the country. Each state has different rules for achieving ballot status. Some, like Utah, which merely requires that parties collect 500 signatures of registered voters on petitions, are relatively easy. Many others, though, are all but impossible. Take Georgia, for example. Third parties there must collect signatures on petitions equal to 2.5 percent of the registered voters in the state. In 1984, this translates into over 61,000 signatures. A safety hedge—usually about an extra third—must be collected as well.

This process is enormously complex and expensive. In 1980, it cost the Libertarian Party over \$40,000 simply to get their candidate's name listed on the Georgia ballot in this manner. That's more money than over half of 1980's third-party candidates were able to raise for their entire 1980 campaign. Other exceptionally difficult states include Florida (48,000 signatures and a ten-cents-per-signature "validation

fee"), Oklahoma (44,000 signatures in 90 days), and Oregon (50,000 signatures).

Some states defend these laws, arguing that without them, the ballots would be crowded with frivolous candidates. That's so much hogwash. The examples of North Dakota, Tennessee, New Jersey, and other states where access is easy and where there are no excessive numbers of candidates, prove this. Ballot-access restrictions exist for one reason only—to cripple third parties and maintain the two-party monopoly. Stark proof of this is that after the 1980 elections—in which John Anderson and Libertarian Ed Clark achieved ballot status in all 50 states—several states actually passed legislation making ballot access even more difficult.

"Even in Nicaragua they've got eight parties on the ballot," fumes Populist Party ballot qualification director James Yarbrough. "Democracy does not exist when you have laws designed to deny voter freedom of choice."

Federal campaign finance laws are also thorns in the side of minor parties. Individuals are prohibited from contributing more than \$1,000 to campaigns. This hurts third parties, which traditionally have relied heavily upon partisan individual donors to fund their campaigns. Federal matching funds are available after the elections to candidates who achieve over five percent of the total vote; the Republicans and Democrats will rake in over 80 million dollars of this money—tax money—in 1984. However, almost no third party ever achieves five percent of the total vote. These laws thus insure that the major parties will have massive funding for their campaigns, and that third parties will receive very little. (A recent Federal Elections Commission ruling now allows individuals running for third-party nomination to receive up to \$100,000 in matching campaign funds.)

The extensive and costly financial record-keeping required by federal law is also a burden for chronically

understaffed third parties.

Completing a trilogy of government-imposed barriers to third parties are so-called equal access laws. These were originally designed in the mid-'30s to give all candidates equal access to broadcast media. In 1959, these laws were amended to exempt newscasts, news interviews, and news documentaries from this requirement, thus giving broadcasters considerable discretion as to how much air time candidates receive. In 1975, the Federal Communications Commission classified the televised candidate debates sponsored by the League of Women Voters as news events, exempting them from equal time requirements. Thus in 1980, John Anderson and Libertarian Ed Clark—who were qualified candidates in every state in America—were kept out of the televised debates, along with other third-party candidates. Again, the effect of such decisions is to entrench the two-party system and ignore third-party challenges.

All of these laws severely weaken third parties and hamper their campaigns. By penalizing third parties for being small, such laws almost guarantee that these parties will never grow to be large. This in turn leads to another common complaint of third parties: a near total absence of national media coverage, especially on network television. When third parties receive national television coverage at all, they are generally presented sideshow fashion, as "human interest" stories, instead of the serious political efforts they in fact are.

The 1980 Citizens Party candidate, Barry Commoner, tells a campaign anecdote that is a classic in this regard: "There was practically no substantive [network] coverage. . . . When I met with ABC, I said, you know, the issues are not being discussed in this campaign. It's up to you to show that some of us are discussing the issues. And they said, 'Yeah, yeah, that's an interesting idea.' One of them turned to the other and said, 'We ought to do a program on that after the campaign.'"

dential candidate this year.) If all three sound somewhat similar in campaign rhetoric, it's not surprising. They share similar historical and ideological roots, and differ primarily on issues of strategy, party organization, and foreign-policy analysis.

The Communist Party USA was formed in 1919, and has had a stormy and active history in this country. Communist Party USA members have fought in antiwar activities, labor struggles, and civil rights actions for decades.

They have also faced, at times, government surveillance and harassment, especially during the McCarthy era of the '50s.

Gus Hall, Communist Party candidate for president, may well qualify for the title of Grand Old Man of American Radical Left Politics. The 73-year-old Hall has been a Communist Party leader and activist for more than 50 years—including eight and a half years spent behind bars in Leavenworth Prison for advocating the overthrow of the U.S.

government. He was the party's presidential candidate in 1972, 1976, and 1980. His running mate this year, as in 1980, is black activist Angela Davis.

The Hall/Davis campaign is calling for massive public works programs, food distribution to the needy, guaranteed jobs for all, and affirmative action with quotas. These programs will be financed, says Hall, by cutting the military budget in half, declaring a moratorium on payment of the national

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debt, and raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy. Hall considers the 1984 election to be "perhaps the most important election in U.S. history," because of the need to halt "Reaganite militarism, aggression, cutbacks, plant closings, racism, and discrimination."

"I fought against fascism, in the armed forces and in the people's anti-fascist struggles," Hall says. "Now I see this militaristic administration allied with fascism in South Africa, in Chile, in El Salvador, in Uruguay and Paraguay, as well as the reactionary, ultra-right forces at home. Our party refuses to accept the prospect of four more years of Reaganism, mainly because the world literally may not survive it."

The Socialist Workers Party broke from the Communist Party USA in 1938 during the bitter feuding that split the socialist world movement over whether Joseph Stalin or Leon Trotsky should succeed Lenin as Soviet Union leader. The party has over 1,000 members in 29 states, many of whom work in various industrial jobs and in unions.

Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Mel Mason is a veteran of radical politics. A labor organizer, former Black Panther, and civil rights activist, the 40-year-old Mason was elected in 1980 as an avowed Socialist and Socialist Workers Party member to the Seaside, California, city council. He served there until December 15, 1983, when he stepped down to run for president on the Socialist Workers Party ticket.

"This capitalist government does not represent the majority of people—it can't, because it serves a different class, the employers," Mason says. "And their interests are totally incompatible with ours. We need a workers and farmers' government that would begin to reorganize society on a totally different basis."

Key points of the Mason campaign are foreign policy issues: halting draft registration, ending U.S. intervention in third world countries, and unilateral nuclear disarmament of the United States. Other major concerns include ending all "anti-union" legislation, halting farm foreclosures, guaranteed jobs and education, affirmative-action legislation with quotas, and cutting the work week from 40 to 30 hours with no cut in pay.

The Workers World Party split from the Socialist Workers Party in 1959, primarily over differences in strategy and foreign policy. Workers World Party members have been active in numerous antiwar and civil rights activities, and the party ran its first presidential

candidate in 1980.

Workers World Party presidential candidate Larry Holmes (no relation to the boxing champion) is running a campaign very similar in its major concerns to that of Mel Mason. Like Mason, the 32-year-old Holmes is a longtime black activist and strongly supported Jesse Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" Democratic Party bid—so much so that Holmes would have stopped running and supported Jackson had Jackson been nominated. (Although the Constitution doesn't explicitly prohibit those under 35 from running for president, it does prohibit them from holding office.)

"The Jackson campaign is a movement against inequality, against racism, and for the rights of oppressed people. In our view, there is no more important movement in the country today," Holmes said in January 1984 while announcing his own candidacy.

A major goal of the Holmes campaign is "talking to people everywhere about socialism and rallying people against U.S.-sponsored wars and occupation in Lebanon, Central America, Grenada, and Southern Africa.

"We believe that a job, as well as all human needs—be they education, the best medical care technology can offer, decent housing, food, heat in winter, and everything else people need to live comfortable and productive lives—should be a right," says Holmes. "There is no practical reason why the economy could not be owned in common by the working people and planned so they are guaranteed jobs and everything else that they need with full equality."

TWO ON THE RIGHT

During the last several years, a flood of newsletters and tabloids dealing with politics from a right-wing "Christian patriot" perspective has appeared. With names like *The Duck Book*, *The Justice Times*, and *The Upright Ostrich*, the movement resembles in many ways the underground newspaper phenomenon of the '60s. Dissatisfaction with the Reagan Administration, disillusionment with the two-party system, and calls for an alternative "Christian, constitutional, patriot" third party are frequently heard in these publications. They reflect the view held by many on the right that Ronald Reagan—the most rhetorically conservative president in decades—has betrayed them by failing to take a hard-line position on such key right-wing/populist concerns as a gold standard, massive income tax cuts, reduction of the federal government, and social/moral reforms.

Two prominent third parties—the American Party and the newly formed Populist Party—hope to benefit from this increasingly active and vocal constituency.

The American Party was formed in

1972 by supporters of George Wallace, after Wallace was gunned down and paralyzed while seeking the Democratic nomination for president. John Schmitz, their 1972 nominee, received over a million votes, quite impressive for a new third party. However, the party was wracked from the beginning by factionalism, personality differences, and doctrinal disputes—chronic troubles for most third parties—and vote totals dropped after each election.

This year's American Party candidate is Delmar Dennis. Dennis, a 44-year-old Baptist minister, is a former staff member of the John Birch Society who gained national fame in the 1960s when he infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan as an undercover operative for the FBI.

National Chairman Earl Jeppson summarizes the party's views: "What we would like to see is simple: a return to God, constitutional law, and a free-market system." The party's comprehensive platform calls for repeal of the income tax, replacement of Social Security with private alternatives, and greater emphasis upon states' rights. The party opposes affirmative action, supports tough anticrime and antidrug laws, and favors outlawing abortion. They favor a strong military, a Monroe Doctrine foreign policy, and a halt to Communist subversion in the western hemisphere. The party would end foreign aid, cease trade with the Soviets, withdraw from the United Nations, and reclaim the Panama Canal.

Despite falling vote totals, National Chair Jeppson is optimistic about the party's future. "I've seen a greater amount of interest this year in the American Party than I have seen in the past dozen years," he says. "If the American people want constitutional government—and if we are able to get our message out—then yes, we will eventually succeed."

The Populist Party (no relation to the turn-of-the century party of the same name) is by far the newest of the third parties here, having only been formed in early 1984. Yet it has grown very rapidly. According to the party's ballot qualifications director, James Yarbrough, the party hopes to achieve ballot status in 35 to 40 states and to end the year with active chapters in every state.

One reason for the party's rapid growth is that it has successfully sought coalitions, alignment, and endorsements from a number of ideologically similar organizations, including the American Independent Party and smaller conservative/right parties. Support from *The Spotlight*, a controversial far-right "populist" weekly tabloid which claims a readership of over one million, has benefited the party enormously.

Party founder Robert Weems defines
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his variety of "populism" as an "America first" philosophy. "Power to the People" appears on the cover of the party's platform. Populists plan to emphasize four major issues in 1984: repeal of the income tax, repudiation of the national debt, halting illegal immigration, and rebuilding major American industries with protective tariffs.

The party platform also calls for price parity to family farmers, anti-usury laws, and "welfare for the truly needy only." The party would deny voting rights to persons on welfare for over a year—"no representation without taxation." The Federal Reserve System would be abolished, and increased emphasis given to states' rights.

Populists would "resurrect antidegeneracy laws and crack down on crime" by reinstating, enforcing, and/or strengthening laws against pornography, lewdness, homosexuality, drugs, and street crime. Current immigration laws would be replaced with one which "works to preserve America's cultural heritage."

The party advocates a foreign policy of "armed neutrality," based upon the Monroe Doctrine. "The only legitimate function of our military is to guard our borders and our sphere of influence," says founder Weems.

At the time of this writing, the Populist Party had not yet selected a presidential candidate. Among the leading contenders is Bob Richards, two-time Olympic gold-medalist pole vaulter, best known to Americans as a spokesman for the breakfast cereal Wheaties.

THE PROHIBITION PARTY

Finally, no report on American third parties would be complete without discussing the nation's oldest active political third party, the Prohibition Party, which has participated in federal elections since 1872. According to Prohibition Party candidate Earl F. Dodge, the most important issue of the 1984 election year is "the moral decay in and out of government." Dodge's remedy for this is "the application of Christian principles to government" with the goal of "destroying the liquor and gambling traffic."

"Beverage alcohol is the chief cause of poverty, broken homes, juvenile delinquency, vice, crime, political corruption, wasted manpower, and highway accidents in America," reads the party's 1984 platform. "Our party alone offers a program of publicity, education, legislation, and administration leading to the elimination of the liquor traffic."

Obviously, alcohol prohibition is a major concern of the Prohibition Party. Yet it sometimes surprises people to

In Their Own Words . . .

"I believe Ronald Reagan has done more to hurt the cause of conservatives and Americanism generally than Jimmy Carter ever could. So many conservatives think Reagan is one of them that they have gone to sleep thinking the country is in good hands. The truth is that Reagan is the biggest spender of all time. His record is totally unacceptable. . . . Reagan joined the Republican Party, ran on the American Party platform, and carried out the programs of the Democrats."

—Delmar Dennis, American Party

"When I ponder what can be done about a global network of warlords who spend enough in one day preparing for and waging war to feed the entire human family for one year, I am reminded of the ancient Israelites who were advised to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks—a creative military conversion plan, and still very sound economic policy."

—Sonia Johnson, candidate for Citizens Party presidential nomination

"Reagan and Schultz rant and rave about peaceful competition between the U.S. and the USSR. Well, in the socialist countries there is no unemployment, no hunger, no homelessness, no slums, no racism. There are systems of free education and child care and a system of free medical care. Why not peaceful competition to create such conditions in the U.S.?"

—Gus Hall, Communist Party USA

"What is taxation? Some people in government—who have guns—say, 'We have a voluntary tax system, so give us some of your money or we'll shoot you.' There are two groups in this country that don't operate on the principle of respect for the rights of others. One of those groups is the criminal element. The other is people in government. . . . The people in

government are no different from you and I, and why should they be telling us how to run our lives?"

—Dave Bergland, Libertarian Party

"You'd be amazed to know how many long-suffering, productive people are ready to get the establishment off their backs. They are really fed up and are sick and tired of the same old diet of high taxes that buy nothing for taxpayers but plenty for the bankers and corrupt politicians overseas, destruction of their cities and neighborhoods, the lowering of all standards, bad education, crime, violence, drugs, and aggressive war mongering just to put the unemployed to work."

—Robert H. Weems, Populist Party founder and chairman

"By any fair measure, our government at the federal level has shown it is almost completely devoid of any of the moral or ethical values our Founding Fathers espoused."

—Earl F. Dodge, Prohibition Party

"The Democrats and Republicans always talk about 'we.' 'We' have to work harder to make 'our' companies more profitable. 'We' are being hurt by imports. 'We' are threatened by Cuba. 'Our' national security is endangered by tiny islands like Grenada. . . . But who's 'we'? The owners of Greyhound, the big oil companies, and the U.S. government. Working people have nothing in common with them."

—Mel Mason, Socialist Workers Party

"Where is it written that some capitalists must be satisfied with a fat profit before factories can reopen and people can work? The truth of the matter is that under capitalism, there can never be full employment. . . . because when you produce for profits, the whole idea is to get a few workers to work as hard and as long for as little profits as possible."

—Larry Holmes, Workers World Party

learn that the Prohibition Party is more than a single-issue party. Their platform focuses on the whole gamut of national issues, from welfare to income-tax reform to immigration control, from a perspective that may best be described as "Christian conservative." Prohibitionists call for welfare cuts, a ban on abortion, a gold standard, an end to federal involvement in education, and increased states' rights.

During the past century, the Prohibition Party has championed a number of

important reforms that were only later adopted by the major parties, including voting privileges for women (1872), direct election of senators (1872), the progressive income tax (1896), child labor reform (1908), old-age pensions (1916), and others.

Prohibition Party Candidate Earl Dodge expects to be on the ballot in seven or eight states, and to receive 10,000 to 15,000 votes.

If it is true that, historically, third par-

ties often force change by advocating new or radical ideas, what can we draw from observing the central concerns of 1984's major third parties? Surprisingly, there is one issue that draws unanimous agreement among every party here (except possibly the Prohibition Party and the American Party): foreign policy. The consensus is that America's foreign policy is far too militaristic and interventionist, and should instead be oriented more toward simply defending American shores.

Another major concern is the economy. Here, of course, the right and the left are split, except for their violent opposition to the Reagan Administration's policies. The left offers social ownership of the means of production, jobs programs, and a planned economy as solutions; the right and the Libertarians call for a free-market economy, an end to the income tax and the Federal Reserve, and a return to a gold standard.

What is the future for third parties in America? Almost certainly, we will see a continuation and expansion of third-party activity as dissatisfaction with the two-party system grows and as ever-expanding communication technology allows special-interest groups to transmit their views to more of the population. Furthermore, 1988 may well see two major attempts to challenge the two-party system. Conservative spokesman and *Conservative Digest* editor Richard Viguerie has already announced plans for a new broad-based conservative party, to be formed after the 1984 elections. And John Anderson will be launching his proposed National Unity Party after 1984 as well.

Whether these or other third parties can ever grow to seriously challenge the two dominant parties remains to be seen. In the meantime, if you're unhappy with the Democrats and Republicans, and can't find a niche in this year's third-party smorgasbord, there's still another choice for president: nobody.

That's right, the Nobody for President Campaign—a loose coalition of anarchists, yuppies, nonparty Libertarians, and other principled nonvoters—is gearing up once more to back its perennial presidential candidate, nobody. And their arguments do have a certain logic.

After all, as Nobody supporters point out, "Nobody can solve unemployment. Nobody can stop war. Nobody can halt inflation. Nobody keeps his campaign promises. Nobody cares."

And, of course, "Nobody loves you when you're down and out."



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