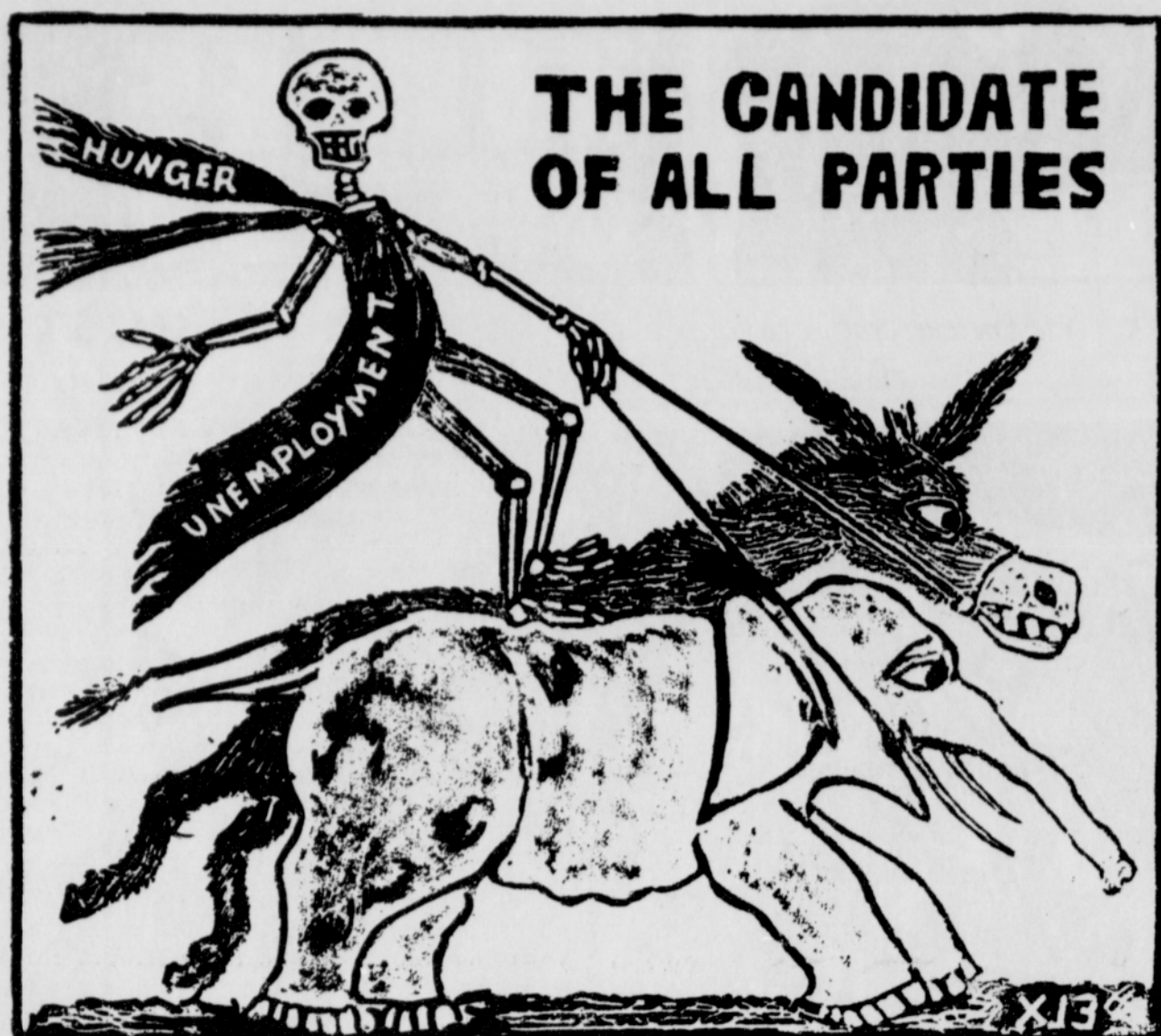




ADrift IN THE WASTELAND

by D. Lynn Crussel

Now that the bread and circuses promises of the Democratic National Convention are behind us and the politically safe choice of Dukakis and Bentson has been made, we can turn our attention to the law and order promises of the Republican convention and the inevitable choice of George Bush.

The choice between the two is a difficult one for me. It is not really a choice between 'law and order' and 'bread and circuses.' It is not a choice at all. The Democrats throw the voters a few 'law and order' phrases, such as the War on Drugs, and the Republicans toss out some 'bread and circuses' promises so as not to alienate the working classes too much, but both parties come down to the same thing. They offer no new solutions to the social ills that plague America.

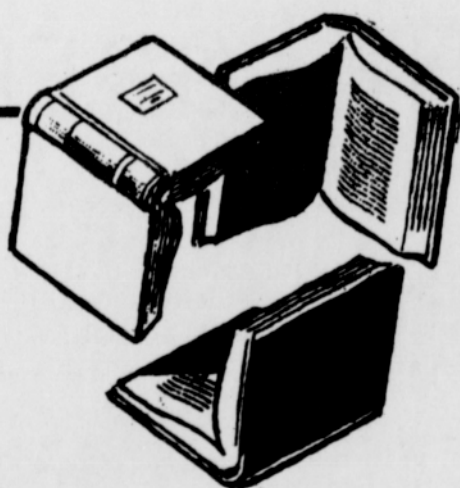
America has become a political wasteland where promises of the impossible, tried and untrue solutions fall from the mouths of politicians on both sides of the Demopublican fence like pearls to the populace. These non-solutions, though couched in the catch-phrases of the eighties, are no different than the non-solutions that I have heard politicians spout since my first political awareness in the sixties.

Politicians in both parties see the only solution as spending more money. And they have done their damndest to keep voters ignorant of the fact that their solutions don't work. They claim that it is not the method that is at fault but only the lack of money to finance it properly. They play a game of blinds, hoping that by thumping their Bibles or lawbooks loud enough they can convince a majority of the voting public that their solution will work if only they can have the quantity of money necessary to implement it.

Too many Americans perceive the government as 'the fixer,' with all the answers, not a Big Brother but a Daddy with the checkbook that can solve all our problems. But this

childish fantasy breaks down when we consider that, at least the real Daddy with the checkbook spends his own money to fix things. The Leviathan that is our government has no money of its own. It is therefore forced by political survival to acquire as much of everyone else's money as possible. By political necessity, both major parties must contend that only through money are solutions possible.

The political propaganda coming across our television screens has begun full-swing for the Republicans, trying to convince the voters that their solutions have worked. Jobs, peace and economic growth are the catch-phrases they use to paint the previous seven years in a fantasy of positivism. The Republican media experts want to divert attention from the horrendous involvements they have had in conflicts all over the world. The belief that money is the solution led Colonel Ollie North to sell arms to the Iranians to help finance the war in Nicaragua — weapons that are used to kill Americans. If this is Republican peace, I want none of it.



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Unemployment rates have dropped in some places since 1980; it has risen in others. By manipulation of the economic factors of our society, it appears there is an increase in jobs and economic growth. But the reality is that the economic benefits accrue to only a few. Those who operate in the areas where the government's largess has a positive effect see things as improving. But true economic growth does not come from favoritism to one endeavor over another. There is an inherent conflict with the U.S. Constitution. This does not seem to bother the administration. The Constitution is an inconvenience the Reagan people ignore when it gets in their way.

As a voter I feel I'm caught in a "Catch-22" situation. Their foreign policy has made a target of all Americans. Any decrease in military involvement overseas increases the chance that we will be drawn into a real war somewhere on the planet. We have been set up. The choices seem to be either vote for a Republican to maintain our current involvement or vote for a Democrat and risk another Viet Nam.

The economic policies, on the other hand, are creating a greater diversion between the upper and lower economic strata. If this continues the scenario for internal civil unrest, perhaps even revolution, is being set.

As long as the American voter remains blinded by this political two-stepping, that voter will continue to vote for "the lesser of two evils." And as long as the voter acquiesces to casting his/her support for evil, greater or lesser, the result will be the same.

D. Lynn Crussel lives in Astoria. She works in a bookstore, reads and writes.



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