

SPORTSCENE

NBA

Draft helps rich get richer

By Lester Rodney

When the National Basketball Association (NBA) holds its annual draft of college players, the teams draft in the inverse order of finish, from best to worst. This is in order to maintain a little balance in the league, to keep the rich from getting richer and the poor from getting poorer. Of the 23 NBA teams, the three weakest as of this writing are Cleveland, Indiana and San Diego. At least their fans can look forward to acquiring the cream of the college crop for next year, right?

Wrong. Dallas, a successful team, traded for Cleveland's first round pick, giving up journeyman Mike Bratz, who's not even

with Cleveland any more. And Cleveland fans are supposed to maintain an interest in the Cavaliers. Indiana? The contending Portland club owns their first round pick, acquired for backup center Tow Owen, who is not even in the league any more. And the champion 76ers hold San Diego's first round pick, the result of a trade for Lloyd Free, not quite such an absurd steal, but bad enough. Free isn't with the Clippers any more either.

Nor is there anything new about this year's first round draft farce. It happens all the time as inept businessmen who buy a pro sports franchise for vanity and don't know doodly about the game are gleefully bilked by the smarter organizations.

Biggest heist of all was the Los

Angeles Lakers sending over-the-hill guard Gail Goodrich to New Orleans for three top draft picks, one of which brought them Magic Johnson. Even if Goodrich had been in his prime, a 6'1" guard is hardly the kind of player who can turn a franchise around. No knowledgeable fan of high school age would have given better than a number two for Goodrich. The deal gutted and finally wrecked the New Orleans franchise. Cleveland, basically a good sports city, has been teetering on the edge of similar NBA disaster due to just that combination of owner stupidity and unrestrained cupidity by the smart ones. Would you believe the championship Los Angeles Lakers two years ago adding first pick James Worthy to their roster in exchange for having sent Don Ford (he's gone) to Cleveland? Or the Boston Celtics adding number one pick Larry Bird as the reward for sending M.L. Carr to the then struggling Detroit Pistons? (Carr is back with the Celtics as a sub.)

What could the NBA do about all this? Short of that happy day when the fans who support a professional team have something to say about who is allowed to own the team, the league could partly restore the original intent of the draft by simply prohibiting any team from trading away its first draft choice. That would protect a franchise and the fans and play-

ers from owners who know little about basketball, and from owners trying for a quick short-term attendance fix at the expense of the team's future.

No charge, NBA. It would really work. Poll the paying clientele in the cities with chronic losers and get an earful.

Super thought and Super Bowl.

In *These Times* senior editor John Judis, a closet sports fan, reminds us that during the 1982 pro football player strike, the two teams most united behind the strike, with the most prominent strike leaders, and the owners most favorably disposed to the players' demands were the Raiders and the Redskins, who wound up in the Super Bowl. (Gene Upshaw and Mark Murphy were the player strike leaders.) The two teams least united behind the strike? The disappointing Dallas Cowboys and San Diego Chargers. (Cowboy quarterback White was viewed as a company fink by some of the players, and Charger quarterback Fouts was loudly opposed to the strike and ready to play for a scab team.)

Judis, who works in Washington, D.C., and has observed the Georgetown basketball team, disagrees with my prediction that the Hoyas will win the NCAA

championship; he thinks they won't even make the final four. I like what I've seen of Georgetown on the tube, pulling away impressively from strong Nevada-Los Vegas and Syracuse on the road, and I'll stick with the hunch, though picking the NCAA tournament winner has to be the wildest guessing game in all of sportsdom. North Carolina—loaded and beautifully coached—could obviously breeze right on through without losing a thing (or get bumped off in the first round). Anyone who is cer-

Trading draft picks is a short-term attendance fix for greedy, know-nothing team owners.

tain Houston, Kentucky, Illinois, Ray Meyer's last DePaul team or even obnoxious Bobby Knight's improving Indianans can't jell in time to supply the final net-cutting act at Seattle's Kingdome in March knows something this humble observer doesn't.

Hero

Continued from page 13

bloc" based upon a labor movement that has regained—in precisely the context described in *Working Class Hero*—a class struggle perspective and that reaches out to the new social movements (minorities, women, environmentalists) that are "objectively aligned in opposition to the dominant neo-liberal and conservative fractions of capital." Is that pie in the sky? I think not. In September 1981, at the Solidarity Day demonstration in Washington, something like Aronowitz' "new political bloc" was assembled—but it did not go anywhere, and it was never mobilized again. Yet there was proof that a decisive call for such a mobilization would be answered.

But if that is to happen there must be a flowering of the intellectual life of the working class. My impression—gained in part from teaching young men and women from union families—is that the "organic intellectuals" from the traditional working class have been weakened because of the availability of college education (itself a very real social gain). At the same time, the stratum of middle class intellectuals who identified with the unions decreased for a variety of reasons (a superficial, ultra-leftist hostility to the actual organizations of actual workers being one of them). As a result, at a

time when labor desperately needs debate and discussion—new departures in both theory and practice—there is not much going on.

That makes Stanley Aronowitz' new book doubly important. It asks the right questions, even when it gives flawed answers. And more often than not, the questions and answers are excellent and the analysis of the new situation is fresh and stimulating. One can only hope that *Working Class Hero* does not remain a lonely individual accomplishment, that it is the beginning of a new working-class intellectual life with enormous practical relevance.

Michael Harrington is co-chair of Democratic Socialists of America.

Games

Continued from page 16

ter how skillfully the video wizard presses the buttons.

These computerized games of death are a way both of fulfilling a fear of nuclear death and of comforting the player at the same time: they are ways of "feeling" and "handling" the unthinkable. While they removed from nuclear warfare the distance and remoteness it has assumed in our society, they also allow the fake warrior to witness, and therefore survive, the end of the world.

This sort of game, or its evolution, was not inherent in the

technology itself. It could, and in the case of home video games still does, produce other patterns. In fact, the first arcade video games did not deal with total warfare. "Pong" (1972) was a duel between two paddles and had to be played with a partner. "Sea Wolf" (1976) was an update of the old submarine periscope games of yesteryear, with the player as the hunter and not the hunted.

"Space War" in 1977 brought a battle to the center of the screen for the first time, but the conclusion was not foreclosed: your money, not your skill, bought time, and you could finish without losing anything other than your shirt. Only in 1978, when "Space Invaders," introduced from Japan by the Midway Company, hit the U.S., did video games become big business. The player had been turned into a victim, remaining trapped in the role ever since.

Non-war video games also play out the same situation of death and loss. Those which have as a theme a voyage or a rescue, and a less bleak ecology ("Frogger," "Donkey Kong," "Crazy Climber"), have crea-

tures who are playing for time in a game they are sure to lose—defenseless people relying on their quickness and agility to sidestep the menacing, overwhelming world.

A similar picture emerges from the maze games, the most famous of which is "Pac-Man." Here, the victim, caught in a labyrinth that resembles a claustrophobic marketplace, is constantly transformed from hunter to hunted and back again, switching back and forth in this subordinate/dominant role according to the amount of energy available. This sort of game gives us an image, not only of the nuclear predicament, but of a paranoid, violent world where we do not control the decisions that might lead to our destruction, because we do not, to be quite frank, control anything very important in our lives.

Computerized games, therefore, give back what the player has lost in society: some degree of participation—twisted, vicarious and tangled as it may be—in the preservation of the player's own existence. The game

warns players that they are doomed and insecure and, at the same time, it tells them that, meanwhile, they must hustle, be suspicious, breed quick reflexes and go it alone. Like all mass entertainment, the video game helps its clients to play out their anxieties and identify them without having to acknowledge the loneliness, the hostility, the grinding terror inside.

The game, however, is not that innocent. The U.S. children of the '50s who were harrowed by subterranean visions of extinction and who had to live through the air-raided drills of the Cold War, are the ones who have invented the buttons on today's games. Many of the youngsters frantically playing today's video games may be in charge of tomorrow's real buttons. In fact, people who live life as a video game may, heaven and Pac-Man help us, be in charge of those weapons right now.

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March 1

PSR Chicago's March Chapter meeting will be on "Public Speaking for PSR: Beyond the Medical Model." It will be held Thursday, March 1, at 6:30 p.m. in the AB Dick Auditorium at Rush Medical Center, 1750 W. Harrison. Everyone is welcome and urged to participate in this lively discussion.

March 4

The Wayne State film *Talking about Women Workers* will be shown at

YMCA, 5256 N. Broadway at 2:00 p.m., with discussion following; admission free. This is the first of a series of film discussions planned by Industrial Workers of the World. For info call IWW at 549-5045.

March 18

Performances for Peace presents Irving Ilmer, violist and violinist, and William Dresden, pianist, in a special benefit concert at Wellington Avenue Church, 615 W. Wellington, at 2:30 p.m. Call 663-1781 for tickets and information.

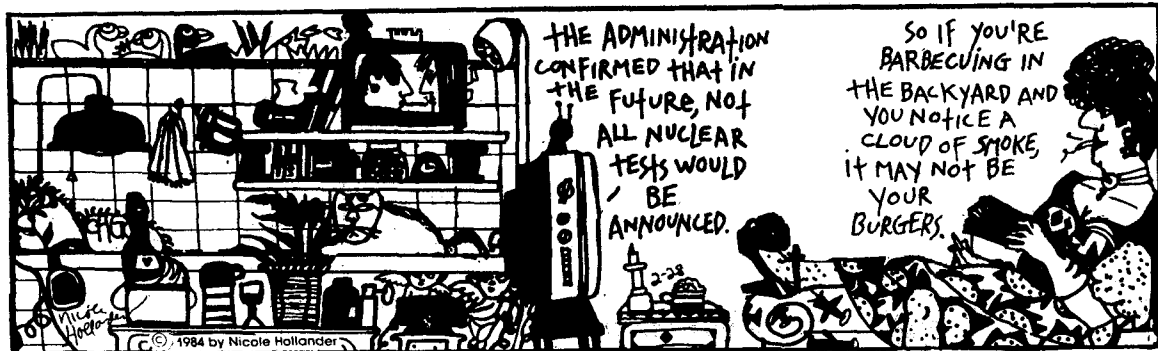
SACRAMENTO, CA

March 11

WAND (Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament) presents Dr. Helen Caldicott and Dr. William Caldicott speaking on: "1984—The Most Important Year of Our Lives" Sunday, 10:00 a.m. at Sacramento City College, 3835 Freeport Blvd. Tickets: \$3.50, SCC Business Office, or call (916) 451-2524 days; (916) 456-2040 eves.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



Jesse

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of social justice. A nation 53 percent female ought to afford an equal rights amendment for women. After all, his wife is a woman, his mother is a woman, his daughter, his aunt.

Also, the government ought to have some responsibility to protect steel and agriculture. If you become dependent on foreign sources of steel, you can have your industrial base zapped. If you become dependent on foreign sources of food, your nation can starve.

In the past decade, the Democratic Party has been torn apart by conflicts between groups in the Rainbow Coalition and the old guard, with some of them being drawn into the conservative camp over issues like busing, affirmative action and integration.

The old wineskin must expand and make room for the new wine. It does not have to crack and split. You have a new generation of people who want to participate in the Democratic Party and not go to a third party. If the Party is wise enough to accommodate the majority of Democrats, it will win.

Under what conditions would you give up hope on the Democrats and support another party?

I don't want to project that. I'm not inclined to support a third party. Making the Democratic Party more effective is a legitimate goal on the one hand and removing the repressive Reagan regime is a legitimate goal on the other. We have to

delicately balance those two concerns.

Do you see some permanent political arrangement emerging out of the Rainbow Coalition?

It could very well be. Just as labor has an identity that grows out of converging interests of its members, the Rainbow has an identity that grows out of the interests of its members. The Rainbow is progressive in its politics, inclusive in its politics. It intentionally goes out of its way to pull people together across lines. It's a school of thought.

If you don't win the nomination, what do you want to achieve?

Delegates lose their role in July. The Rainbow continues. The struggle for corporate accountability will continue, pressure on the Defense Department to end waste and fraud and abuse and the rising danger—these dimensions of the Rainbow's life will serve notice on members of Congress, governors, those who would be president.

What do you think of Mondale?

I think instinctively he's a liberal and sensitive on social issues, cautious and traditional on foreign policy, but beyond that you must also judge a man by the company he keeps. This kinship with organized labor and unwillingness to challenge organized labor is a matter of great importance, because labor's record is not a progressive one relative to exclusionary practices on blacks, Hispanics and women. Also, labor looks at Poland quite differently from South Africa. Yet both governments impose martial law, break unions and arrest leaders. Lane Kirkland went along with the Grenada invasion. Mondale could never quite make up his mind whether it was right or wrong.

We were demonstrating against the war in Vietnam in the '60s. Mondale was supporting it. We went to the convention in 1968 in Chicago. Mondale was co-tailing Humphrey with [Mayor Richard J.] Daley forces. Last year Mondale came to Chicago to campaign against Harold Washington and went back to get [Alderman Edward] Vrdolyak's endorsement. Mondale has been on the board of Control Data, which set up the computer network of South Africa's secret police agency. So his relations with Control Data and South Africa, the Vietnam war, the Grenada situation, the late response to American military involvement in Lebanon, no challenge whatsoever to Israel in invading Lebanon, using ostensibly defensive American weapons for offensive purposes—these are matters he'll have to sharpen up on.

Jackson has his own handicaps. In his eyes, they are mainly "an historical association with a movement [for civil rights] that was perceived to be narrowly focused but was actually broadly focused," benefiting poor whites, Hispanics and even businesses. Jackson laments he is still referred to as a "black leader," implying a narrow base. But, he says, "these [college] kids that follow me today obligate me to speak to and for them as well as for black and Hispanic students."

Jackson's evangelical preacher style, much as it inspires, makes some older New Hampshire residents uncomfortable. "For New Hampshire it's a little bit of a rousy-rousy approach," observed Ham Chase, a civil engineer who has lived in Keene for 30 years. "But we can go for this. He's saying things that have to be said. He appeals to the better things of

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people and doesn't cut anybody out. All this nice eloquence is good. They need some enthusiasm. I like Mondale as a political figure, but Mondale has all the votes he needs. I would much rather give my vote to this guy."

"Don't throw away your conscience," McGovern advised Iowa voters in the *Des Moines Register* debate. His strong showing there with a shoestring campaign suggests many heeded him. Jackson is the beneficiary of much of that sentiment in New Hampshire. "With Mondale out front," said retired city planner Joan Cobb, "it leaves us freer to vote our conscience."

Jackson's campaign in New Hampshire started with a small core of environmentalists. Then the national campaign hired a number of ACORN organizers to run the operation. Many chapters of ACORN, a national federation of low-income organizing projects, have endorsed Jackson, and preliminary results of a poll of members showed Jackson with 56 percent support, Mondale up with 30 percent—shy of the three-fourths needed for organizational endorsement.

Jackson has clearly succeeded in three major tasks in New Hampshire. He has made it clear he is not a candidate for blacks only. He has shown that even in this conservative state there is a strong left-liberal vote. And he has demonstrated that with the right strategy and the will, Democrats can bring into their fold large numbers of the politically disaffected, both white and black.

"After Reagan's flood," Jackson told the audience in Keene, "we must see the sign of the rainbow." Pot of gold at the end or not, it has certainly brightened the wintry political landscape.

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Someplace you've never even heard of is suddenly in the news, and you find yourself staring glumly at the "Troublestan at a Glance" box in the *New York Times*. What I need, you say to yourself, is an "at a glance" box that answers my kind of questions. What you need is *World View 1984*, edited by Francois Geze, Yves Laco  te and Alfredo Valladao, the French-based publication now in its second year as an English-language version of a year-book offering "an alternative, critical view of the world." Most useful are its short, punchy and analytic articles on major issues—international trade, for example—and its debates on such topics as the Palestinian state question and the New International Information Order (the ostensible grounds for our huffy pullout from UNESCO). Sometimes the articles answer questions you never would have thought to ask. There are pieces on sex tours of Southeast Asia, on how banks rate countries and on mystical religion in Brazil. An innovative section on culture includes articles on feminist fiction, Japanese comics and the following excerpt, an analysis of video games as nuclear culture by culture critic Ariel Dorfman's (author of *The Empire's Old Clothes*). —Pat Aufderheide

The Empire's

By Ariel Dorfman

AS THE VIDEO GAME craze spread across the U.S., parents complained of coins vanishing and doc-diagnosed new ailments, like "joystick hand" and "asteroids finger." Some towns prohibited the coin-op games; others issued ordinances regarding age limits and the times that arcades should close; and certain countries even forbade the entertainment as pernicious.

The Amusement Game Manufacturers of America, however, did not complain. In the midst of the recession they reported that 32 billion 25-cent coins had been played into the machines during 1982. In fact, until E.T.'s phenomenal success saved the film industry, video games had been the year's top money-spinner in entertainment, ahead of movies and records.

With such profits to be had, it is not strange that many justifications have appeared for video games. Educational consultants find them a means of acquiring computer literacy; behavioral scientists speak of "interacting with the technology of the future" and "confidence building"; psychologists point out that kids are working out their aggressions on the games rather than spending their money on drugs, and that unathletic youths can use the games to acquire status with their peers.

Many of these explanations are probably true, but they do not account, by themselves, for the games' popularity. There may be another explanation. Video games in their present form would be inconceivable if the world did not have the means to blow itself to pieces—because the same computer technology that spawned real missiles with warheads also spawned those mock missiles with psychedelic flares on the screen.

Video games imitate the strategy, the targeting, the jargon of the "war games" played in real rooms by real adults in uniform. (*Newsweek* reported that the Pentagon has been using versions of video games as training devices.) However, the relationship is deeper: electronic games are the product of a society where apocalypse is possible. Though the scenes on the screens supposedly occur in faraway constellations where indefinable aliens are opponents, they are really ways of acting out, at another level, the nuclear predicament.

This is overtly so only in "Missile Command," a game where the player must defend six U.S. cities (in a more "international" version, "Red Alert," there are five foreign cities plus New York), with a final annihilation by a mushrooming of clouds as the words "the end" flash on a spasmodic farewell. In other games, though the alien may have an extraterrestrial name, the result and the process are the same: in "Asteroids," "Defender," "Omega Race," "Galaxians," the triangle, the humanoid, the ship are ultimately melted, vaporized and zapped out of existence no mat-

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Ariel Dorfman

examines nuclear videos

New

Games