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Conference seeks solutions in dealing with stagflation

By Robert Dorfman

Solutions to the economic problem of "stagflation," including social control of industry and the reindustrialization of the American economy, were a few of the suggestions at a conference for Creating Alternative Futures.

The two-day conference, focusing on inflation and

the economy, sought an exchange of solutions and ideas from the local community in a response to the present economic disorders.

Sidney Lens, contributing editor of *The Progressive* magazine, said, "America never did rid itself of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Instead, we invented a form of capitalism that passed the burdens (of gov-

ernment) on to future generations.

"We converted the Depression into World War II, as we could not solve our economic problems.

"We got richer," Lens said, "based on fraudulent prosperity by exploiting those from underdeveloped countries."

Lens told the audience that 1979 was the first year that a president deliberately lowered the standard of living, calling it a paradox that Carter thought a lowered standard of living would be in the nation's "best interest."

A second speaker, Harriet Barlow, administrative director of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance in Washington, D.C., said to get our economy going again, the government needs to disarm nuclear weaponry and return management of our lives back to the citizenry.

"There needs to be an economic hemorrhage," Barlow said, "blending the philosophies of Herbert Hoover with the present economic policies of today."

Barlow said the more industry we have, the better off we are. Fifteen small businesses are healthier for Lincoln than one big business, Barlow said.

"Ownerships of big corporations should be decentralized," Barlow said, "by placing emphasis upon self-reliance and self-control."

The final guest lecturer, Jim Hightower, author of *Hard Times*, said, "Corporate power is moving directly to the corporations." As an example of this power shift, Hightower expects that oil will be controlled by the energy corporations.

Hightower said he thinks that with the election of Reagan, "America lost a lot of good Democrats and the economy will move backwards as decentralization will become an ideal and not a reality."



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