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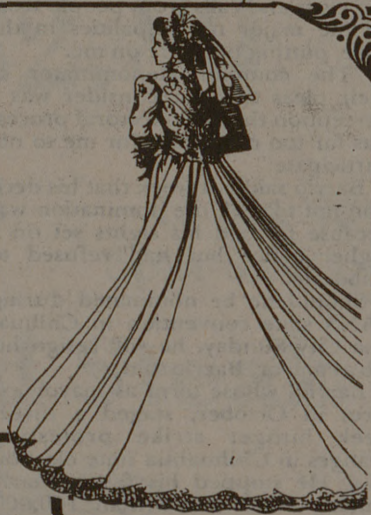
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World and Nation

Civil rights

Urban League blasts Reagan's policies

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The National Urban League on Thursday called the Reagan administration "a Rambo-like destroyer of civil rights gains" and said its economic policies have left black Americans struggling to survive.

The chasm between blacks and whites widened even more in 1985, as most whites enjoyed economic recovery while blacks "slipped further and further to the rear of the parade," league president John E. Jacob said in issuing the organization's 11th annual assessment of black America.

"The signs of a nation moving toward a state of being permanently divided between the haves and the have-nots were plain to see over the past months," he said.

Jacob noted that unemployment among whites was 5.9 percent at the end of last year, while 14.9 percent of the nation's 27.9 million blacks were out of a job.

Jacob was particularly harsh on the Justice Department's efforts to

"Black people today have jobs and opportunities they would not have had without (President Lyndon Johnson's) executive order."

— John E. Jacobs, National Urban League president.

revise a presidential executive order signed by Lyndon Johnson in 1965, which authorized the government to set numerical hiring goals and timetables for firms holding government contracts.

"Black people today have jobs and opportunities they would not have had without the executive order," Jacob said.

"If there is any single message we want to send the president today it is this: 'Hands off affirmative action,'" he said. "If the administra-

tion wants to be a Rambo-like destroyer of civil rights gains, it should not pretend that its efforts are good for black citizens. . . ."

The report said median family income for blacks in 1984, the most recent figure available, was \$15,432. In constant dollars, that was \$540 less than in 1980 and almost \$1,500 less than in 1970, according to an economic summary by David Swinton, director of public policy studies at Clark College.

He said that in 1984 the median black family had about 56 cents to spend for every \$1 available to white families.

Jacob said budget cuts during the Reagan years have seriously hurt federal programs for children, young adults and the unemployed. He said "the most tragic aspect of all" is the staggering number of black children living in poverty — 51.1 percent in 1985.

The disintegration of the black family can only be addressed by dealing directly with black male unemployment, he said.

Mexico may need U.S. aid due to plunging oil prices

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Mexico could be forced to halt interest payments on its \$96.4-billion foreign debt or seek emergency aid from the United States and international bankers if oil prices tumble to \$20 a barrel and stay there, some private analysts say.

The fall in oil prices in recent days has raised new concerns about the ability of Mexico, the second largest debtor in the developing world after Brazil, to maintain payments on its debts and shore up its sagging economy.

Robert Pastor, Fulbright professor at the Colegio de Mexico in Mexico City, said, "The further decline of oil prices could really set back everything the country has been trying to do for the last couple of years."

Javier Murcio, economist at the

private forecasting firm of Data Resources Inc. in Lexington, Mass., said "It puts Mexico back in its financial position, the recovery of the economy and its standing with creditors."

Mexico depends heavily on oil sales to bring in revenues to make interest and principal payments on the debt and to buy imports of raw materials, spare parts and other needed goods.

The drop in oil prices affects the Latin American debtor nations differently. Like Mexico, oil-producers Venezuela and Ecuador will see the expected earnings needed to help pay their debts shrink. Their debts, however, are considerably smaller at \$35 billion and \$7 billion respectively.

Such oil importers as Brazil, which has a \$100-billion debt, will benefit from the decline.

A one-dollar drop in oil prices translates into a loss to Mexico of \$1.5 million daily, or about \$550 million a year. Mexico is scheduled to pay \$2.6 billion to creditors this quarter, according to local press reports.

In recent days prices in the world petroleum market have slipped, in some cases below \$20 a barrel for the first time since 1979.

Mexico is the world's fourth largest producer of crude and the single biggest supplier to the United States. It is not a member of the oil cartel, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

The government oil monopoly, Petroleos Mexicanos, or Pemex, does not sell on the spot market, supplying its crude only under contract.

American among 38 killed by fire

Associated Press

NEW DELHI, India — Fire raged through a luxury hotel before dawn Thursday, killing at least 38 people, Indian officials said. One American was among the dead, and 38 people were hospitalized.

Some victims were found in their beds, and others escaped by breaking windows, tying bedsheets together and lowering themselves to the ground. Several leaped to their death from the 10-story Siddharth Continental Hotel, which is near the airport in the upper-class Vasant Vihar suburb, fire officials said.

Police and fire officials said it was the worst hotel fire in the Indian capital since independence from Britain in 1947.

About half the victims were foreigners but names were not released pending notification of relatives, po-

lice said. The victims included a West German diplomat and his wife, an Argentine diplomat, three Britons, two Japanese, two Australians, an Iraqi, a Soviet citizen and the American.

"It was only by the grace of God we got out alive," said Jane Rosser, an official for the U.S. relief agency CARE, who is based in Bangkok, Thailand. "If I had awakened minutes later in that hotel without lights, I wouldn't be here."

She said she herded a half-dozen people into a room, smashed open a window and got them to tie bedsheets together. They lowered themselves about 30 feet and dropped onto a balcony, then groped their way to a fire escape.

"I knew that when I opened the door and gulped the smoke I would be dead if I didn't act," Rosser, a na-

tive of Newton, Mass., said. "I must have done what I had seen in the movies."

She told the Associated Press she heard no fire alarm, the hotel lights were out, and there were no auxiliary lights marking emergency exits on the fifth floor where she stayed. She also said there was no working sprinkler system, the windows wouldn't open, and she saw no one organizing rescue operations.

A spokesman in New York for CARE said Christopher Roesel, 37, of Alexandria, Va., a technical adviser stationed in Bangkok, was hospitalized in serious condition from smoke inhalation.

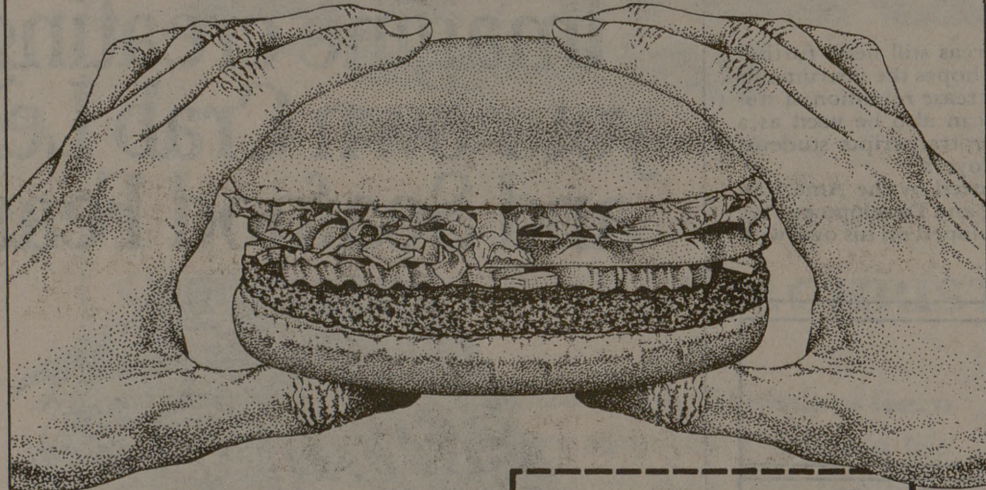
An American identified by a hospital source as Richard Arnell was seriously injured. No further information was immediately available.

The Texas A&M

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