

Editorial

GOP campaign ad is truly misleading

There's a new advertising campaign on the airwaves that we think is extremely misleading, and more than a little offensive, as well.

The commercials for this campaign appear innocent enough. They aren't racy or smoking of innuendo; they don't feature dangerous jets or speed boats. In fact, the commercials look pretty wholesome.

In one ad, the camera focuses on a darling eight-year old girl. She is blonde, with big, blue eyes. She lives in a very nice neighborhood. This little girl, a voiceover tells us, was fortunate enough to be born during the Reagan administration. She has never known inflation. Her family has never experienced unemployment. Her country has not been at war. Lucky little girl!

Toward the end of the commercial, the voiceover asks why we'd ever want to go back to the days before the present administration. The screen reads "The Republicans. Jobs, Prosperity, Peace."

We've come to expect shady or questionable advertising campaigns during the political process, and we've certainly seen examples of poor taste and propaganda from both political parties. But this new approach strikes us as hitting a new low.

The little girl and her white-bread family may indeed be well-off. They aren't part of the new generation of homeless living on the streets. The jobs that her parents have aren't the new jobs "created" during this time of seeming economic prosperity — sub-existence minimum wage dead-end jobs.

Her family's prosperity is secure for now, despite a mountainous national debt that will have to borne by the little girl when she grows up and becomes the head of a household herself.

Eight years after his election, it is easy now to see that the president's promised "Reagan Revolution" never actually happened. Like the new commercial, the president promised us jobs, prosperity and peace.

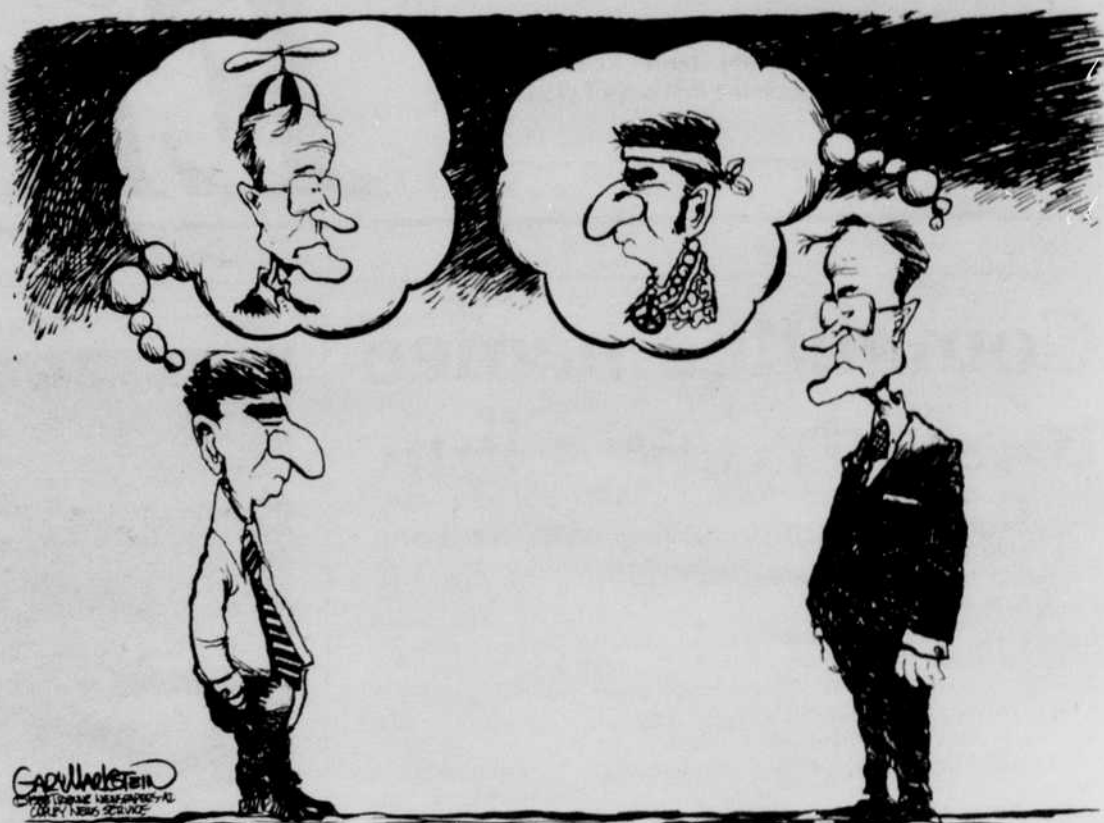
Reagan promised to balance the budget and cut the deficit; instead our debt is higher than ever. Reaganomics, trickle-down tax cuts and a strong dollar were to make us competitive in international trading; instead, we went from being the world's greatest exporter of goods to being a dumping ground of products from overseas. Tough talk and additional military spending were to make our country secure; the president has avoided declarations of war, but American servicemen have perished in global hotspots pursuing foreign policy blunders.

The commercial also demonstrates the hard time that George Bush and fellow Republicans are having in dealing with Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis. Despite such gaffes as calling the Massachusetts governor an "invalid," the GOP has had a hard time taking Dukakis to task on his record.

So instead, the Republicans are raising the spectre of a return to the "stagflation" of the Carter years. This tactic ignores the fact that the seeds of 1981's economic recovery were laid during Carter's administration. It also ignores the fact that the Democratic presidency had a better foreign policy agenda, and a cleaner record on corruption.

The Republican ad campaign presents a prosperity and a peace that is dangerously deceptive. It promises things that the GOP party has failed to deliver, while sugar-coating the failures of the Reagan administration.

Things may be indeed be dandy for the mythical little girl in the commercial. She doesn't have much to worry about; her interest in the affairs of this country is probably slight. Let's hope that the rest of the country is above the mentality of an eight-year-old.



Commentary

Vatican church didn't do enough to prevent annihilation of Jews

A letter, "Church fought genocide," by Doris Storms in the Eugene Register Guard Mailbag (July 21) challenges the justice of German dramatist Rolf Hochhuth's stirring 1963 drama, "The Deputy," that implies Pope Pius XII failed to organize an effective international effort to halt annihilation of Jews in Nazi death camps, a situation about which he was fully informed.

Commentary by
Bert Tryba

Storms suggests the March, 1937 encyclical "Mit Brennender Sorge" ("With Burning Anxiety") promulgated by then Pope Pius XI, took a strong stand against Nazi persecution of Jews. That encyclical was in great part fashioned by Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (the later Pius XII), who had been the Vatican representative to Germany for much of the time since the early 1920s and was an expert in German affairs.

Storms further argues that the book, "Three Popes And The Jews," (1967) by Pinchas Lapide, negates Hochhuth's inferences and shows Pius XII and the Catholic Church saved the lives of more than 800,000 Jews through its efforts during the Holocaust.

Lapide, a Canadian journalist born in 1922, served in the British army in Europe late in World War II and later formed an American kibbutz in Israel. A diplomat, he has written a number of books promoting Jewish-Christian ecumenism that enjoy considerable favor in Christian bookstores.

While literary reviewers recommend his book for popular libraries, one observed, "it is not definitive history." Another notes, "It is when the author (Lapide) discusses the pontificate of Pius XII, to which the bulk of the book is devoted,

that his tendency to weave fact and fiction become predominant."

A survey of "The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1958," compiled by Claudia Ihm, for the period 1922-1945 and the New York Times Indexes, 1933-1945, provides a horrifying but instructive insight into the history of a period when intelligent, capable nations allowed themselves to fall under the domination of ultranationalist megalomaniacs, fired by concepts of national and racial superiority that had a messianic character. This was true not only for Germany, Italy and Japan but also for the Soviet Union. The result was indescribable misery and death for tens of millions of men, women and children. It is a period of history of which study should be compulsory for the humanities education of every student, not just for understanding of the Holocaust, but for its many other philosophical aspects.

Pius XI assumed the papacy in 1922, the same year Benito Mussolini and the Fascists came to power in Italy with Vatican help. The Church was having problems not only in Spain and Mexico, where religious practices were curtailed and Church property confiscated, but in Italy too. The previous Italian government charged the Church with illegal financial dealings.

The Lateran Treaty (1929) between Pius XI and Mussolini's government established the Vatican as an independent state with special rights in Rome, and with guarantees of Catholic education for children of Catholic families. The Pope regarded the Fascists (and the Nazis) as a bulwark against the spread of socialism. Pius XI chose to maintain neutrality, as facism grew and Italy moved to consolidate colonial power on the Horn of Africa by conquering Ethiopia, another Christian country, and adding it to its

Eritrean and Somali colonies.

This period is perceptively portrayed by Ignazio Silone in his masterful novel "Bread and Wine," (1936). One can gain an interesting assessment of Catholic intellectual freedom and judgement by comparing the Book Review Digest (1937) reviews for that novel with that of the review in Catholic World (May, 1937).

Religious censorship and suppression of intellectual freedom inherent in the Index of Forbidden Books of the Church required Catholics to get special permission from pastors to read listed books — or face the threat of excommunication — until it was revoked in 1974. This list included the works of Galileo, Voltaire, Diderot and Freud among numerous luminaries of enlightened thought. "Letters To The Provincials" by Catholic priest and mathematical genius, Blaise Pascal, was listed because it revealed that sophisticated prelates and laity regarded Catholic dogma, doctrine and rites in a more worldly manner than simple clerics and worshippers. The intellectual deprivation imposed by the Catholic Church over the past 500 years provides a revealing perspective of the Catholic fear of independent thought.

Here, we must define the word "atheism" to understand why it inspires such virulent Christian fear and animosity. The word is usually defined with a theist bias that infers that "God" exists and that the atheist is too perverse to accept the obvious: e.g. One who denies "God"; is anti-"God" or subscribes to "Godless" philosophy, etc.

The Vatican was the first state to recognize the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler in 1933 when it signed a concordant assuring Catholic education and marriage. This agreement under-

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