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IS RONALD REAGAN THE MAN FOR THE '80s?

One gets the impression that the liberal media is giving redundant and extensive coverage to the Democratic Presidential candidates in the hope that, by the sheer volume of their attacks, they can weaken and defeat Ronald Reagan next year.

It's too bad that the liberal media can't maintain against the Andropov crowd for the assassination of KAL #007 the same high pitch of emotional indignation which the media spewed out over James Watt, Anne Burford, and "Debate-gate." The massacre of #007 was quickly reduced by CBS-TV to "the airliner incident."

New York Times senior pundit James Reston is trying to "frame" the political question of the year in a way to elicit the answer he wants. Forget whether or not Reagan has been a good President, Reston says; the question is, "Is he what the United States needs in the 1980s?"

There is a better way to phrase the political question of the year. Why would the country take one of the Seven Dwarfs when we can get Snow White? Reagan may not be perfect, but he surely stands tall when compared to his critics.

Obviously, the liberals will never reconcile themselves to the November 1980 landslide victory for the most conservative candidate who has run for President since Calvin Coolidge. It must cause even more acute pain when the liberals view the world-wide failure of socialism and the triumph of conservatism.

Margaret Thatcher's stunning political success has been a victory not only for the economic conservatism of thrift and fiscal integrity, but even for patriotism, military defense, and the Victorian values espoused by the social conservatives.

While Thatcherism blooms, socialism has fallen on hard times. It's hard to say which has fallen lower -- the practical socialism of Sweden or the intellectual socialism of France.

Traditionally very leftist, the French intelligentsia elected one of their own,

Francois Mitterrand, as President. The author of several books, he has always been most at home in the company of writers and sociologists.

But under Mitterrand, liberal intellectualism appears to have gone bankrupt. Despite Mitterrand's attempts to pamper the intelligentsia, no reputable writer has published a book in support of Mitterand's socialist government. And, mirabile dictu, the French intellectual leftists have even become disillusioned with the Communist Party (which belongs to Mitterrand's socialist coalition)!

Thirty years ago, Sweden was hailed by U.S. liberals as the shining example of the "middle way." It had an extensive network of social welfare programs which helped make the Swedish income distribution one of the most equal, as well as highest, in the world.

Living beyond its means finally caught up with Sweden. Government spending now exceeds 70 percent of the Gross National Product (compared with only 35 percent in America), but Sweden still runs a huge deficit. The average Swedish worker now pays income tax at the marginal rate of almost 80%, plus a 20% national sales tax on most purchases.

Sweden's social ills are even worse. Sweden has some of the world's highest rates of premarital sex, illegitimacy, abortions, and suicide. Loneliness has become a national disease.

In the United States, economic liberalism (culminating under Jimmy Carter) brought inflation, high interest rates, high unemployment, and bankruptcies. Social liberalism has brought sexual "liberation," pornographic entertainment even on television, herpes, AIDS, and shocking rates of abortion and illegitimacy. Intellectual liberalism has brought us 23 million functional illiterates. Emotional liberalism has brought divorce, teenage suicide, singles' bars, and loneliness.

What do the Democratic Presidential candidates have to offer but more of the same? While they pander to every special interest group, Reagan speaks to the soul of the American people. Ronald Reagan captured the spirit of America when he ran in 1980, and he still is the best spokesman for "the right stuff."

To consolidate his 1980 victory with another in 1984, all Ronald Reagan has to do is to shrug his shoulders at the Seven Dwarfs and say, as he did to the carping Carter in the 1980 television debate, "There you go again."