PS1 for 10/27/88#SEIZING THE MORAL HIGH GROUND OF POLITICS

The most fascinating thing about George Bush's apparently successful campaign is not only that he has seized the political initiative and put Michael Dukakis on the defensive, but that Bush has also seized the high moral ground of debate. He has defined conservative as good and liberalism as bad, and firmly put conservatism on track as the winning ideology.

For decades, liberals have self-portrayed themselves as concerned, caring, and compassionate, while casting conservatives as unconcerned, uncaring, and selfish. Liberals were always talking about helping the less fortunate, whereas conservatives discoursed about the virtues of the work ethic, thrift and economy.

But liberalism is based on a con game, most succinctly described by that most powerful social worker of all time, Harry Hopkins, as ""tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect.'' A liberal never saw a tax increase he didn't like, and never saw a tax cut he did.

For decades, liberals have been getting themselves elected by bribing votes from some groups with money appropriated from other groups. Elect us, the liberals cried, and we will pick the pockets of the uncaring rich and redistribute income to the needy who have more votes!

One day, the American people woke up and discovered that liberal means being liberal with other people's money, and that liberals always demand higher and higher taxes that leave us with less and less purchasing power while enriching only the bureaucrats. The American people discovered that the lion's share of the tax burden has been shifted onto the backs of families with children.

The American people discovered that our generous subsidizing of poverty has produced only more poverty and more broken families. The American people discovered that liberals don't provide solutions, they

just aggravate the problems.

President Ronald Reagan taught the American people the dramatic lesson that cutting taxes is the best way to stimulate the economy and create new jobs in the private sector which is, after all, what people want rather than a handout. When the high marginal tax rates on the rich were cut, the poor became the chief beneficiaries because that tax cut stimulated 18 million new jobs over the last seven years.

George Bush has helped the American people to learn that the highly-touted compassion claimed by liberals is also a fraud. Liberals are indeed compassionate with criminals, but downright heartless about their victims and about our civil right to live in a crime-free community.

Liberals invariably oppose the death penalty, even for the most heinous crimes. We discovered also, to our horror, that when juries sentence criminals who really deserve the death penalty to life-imprisonment-without-possibility-of-parole, the liberal response is to secretly release those murderers on unsupervised furloughs.

Liberals used to claim the high moral ground with their sanctimonious talk of peace and arms control. Conservatives occupy the high moral ground today with their proven strategy of the liberation of Grenada and support of Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. That's what brought Mikhail Gorbachev to the bargaining table.

The media have been crying around that the presidential candidates don't talk about the ""real issues'' but have relied on ""sound bites.'' Look who's talking! It's the media, not the candidates, who decided to cover issue speeches and position papers in 20-second bits and pieces.

The American people have a right not only to choose their candidates, but to choose which issues they think are real. The

American people have determined that the issues they care about in this campaign include a no-tax-increase promise, the Pledge of Allegiance, the furlough/death penalty, and the liberalism that comes out of the American Civil Liberties Union and the Harvard Law School.

The media are having a hard time coping with this judgment because they had largely convinced themselves that, when Ronald Reagan talked about moral values, traditions, patriotism, prayer, parental rights, the right to life, and conservatism, he was effective only because people were just responding to his skills as the Great Communicator rather than what he said.

George Bush is not an actor and he has no television skills capable of diverting viewers from the substance of what he says. It's clear that people are listening to the substance, and they like what they hear.