

Opinion

The decline and fall of the Reagan Empire

When the stock market crashed last month, I was ready to celebrate. The political twilight zone I had come of age in, "The Reagan Era," had lost its final refuge. Reaganites everywhere can no longer dodge criticism of a dangerously simplistic foreign policy or a pitiful record on civil rights issues by pointing to an apparently healthy economy.

Admit it! It was always his smile you liked after all. Even the girls and boys on Wall Street didn't believe in Reagan's ostrich economics. We'll just bury our heads in an incredibly large military budget and hope the deficit goes away, right?

Jerry Rosiek
Guest Columnist

As soon as I heard about the crash, I picked up a pencil and began a column. The first paragraph went like this:

"I just heard about the stock market crash on the public radio station, and I am elated. I know, I know, economic disaster is imminent. Comparisons with the crash of 1929 are already clichéd, and the new crash is only a few hours old. But job prospects and depressions aren't on my mind right now. My first thought when I heard the news was, 'Thank God! Now a Democrat won't be blamed for Reagan's economic idiocy.'"

Maybe it sounds like I got my priorities mixed up, putting partisan politics before my country's economic health. But I didn't vote for him. I, along with the 40 percent of the electorate who

voted for Mondale and Ferraro, never bought into the supply-side mythology. So we've been expecting something to go wrong all along.

The big question for us was not "if" but "when?" And the best possible answer was "before Reagan leaves office." Because we wanted the man responsible for this mess to be blamed for it. Not out of spite, although that's probably part of it, but so we can learn from this trillion-dollar mistake.

I didn't finish that column because the market was jumping around too much. I feared lest I celebrate too soon. But now it looks as if the market did indeed crash. And it looks as if respect for Reagan's economic policies crashed right along with it.

Anthony Lewis wrote in the *New*

York Times on Oct. 22 that the most embarrassing thing about the crash was how in a moment of frightening crisis our president was treated as essentially irrelevant. He added, however, that such treatment was not surprising. Because "no one in this country, not even those who admire Mr. Reagan as a person, thinks he has any sense of economic reality."

So the last chapter in "The Decline of the Reagan Empire" has been written. In the first chapter, the Democrats won the Senate, and we learned that the country really didn't like Reagan's domestic policy. In Chapter Two we read about the Iran-Contra scandal and how Reagan really didn't have a clear grasp of his own inconsistent and illegal foreign policy.

In Chapter Three, Robert Bork was

rejected by the Senate for a seat on the Supreme Court. We saw in the public reaction how much the country disapproved of what Reagan was trying to do to the Supreme Court.

And in Chapter Four, the stock market crashed, and we saw that Mr. Bush was right: Reagan's economic policies were "voodoo" after all. Strange this is, now Mr. Bush is the biggest voodoo doctor on the block.

It's time for even Reagan's most loyal supporters to admit it — the emperor has no clothes on.

Paul Simon in '88.

Jerry Rosiek is a senior physics and philosophy major and a regularly appearing guest columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Twelfth Man, sound off

EDITOR:

November is critical to Texas A&M as the Aggies host the Razorbacks and Longhorns. To win both games and return to the Cotton Bowl, it will be necessary for the Twelfth Man to "sound off" and wave their Towels continuously.

There's always a lot of talk about hearing difficulty for opposing teams at Clemson's "Death Valley" and LSU's Tiger Stadium. We need to intensify the noise level at Kyle Field. This can be accomplished, in part, by assigning some of the yell leaders to the west side of Kyle Field.

The Twelfth Man needs to make intimidation a real factor. As a final thought, consider the fan support, white hankies and noise level in the Minnesota Twins' Metrodome, which had a big part in determining the winner of the World Series. Gig 'em.

H. O. "Bud" Bradford '61

Three tough games

EDITOR:

I can almost smell the Cotton Bowl from Houston! But, before we count our cotton bolls before they bloom, we have three very tough games to win. And we definitely won't win them if we have the same half-empty stadium with half-asleep fans in the seats. Even our yell leaders are continuing a "new" Aggie tradition — don't do more than eight yells per game.

LSU outyelled us, Arkansas will do so, and if this keeps up, we probably will be outnumbered and outyelled by TCU. Don't even think about the noisy t.u. cowbells and their ilk.

Could we just pretend it's the 1985 A&M-t.u. game for the next three weeks? That crowd was wild-eyed and pumped up, and the football team caught fire from them and never let up, either. Result: 42-10 Aggie victory.

H.O. (Hank) Wahrmond, III '74

A great display of unity

EDITOR:

Thanks for those people who were fortunate enough to participate in one of the greatest displays of Aggie unity I've seen next to Silver Taps and Muster. On Halloween, I and 50 to 75 fellow Ags held a yell practice directly in the middle of Austin — 6th Street — in the midst of thousands of T-sips and other college students.

But it wasn't just the yell practice that made me feel so proud, but the fact all facets of A&M were well-represented and definitely well-heard. There were SB's and Frat Rats and CT's and other nonregs all together as one. This display reinforced Barbara Chappuis' letter of Oct. 30 that stated that the organizations one belongs to don't matter. So Ags, be proud (as if you weren't already) because when it comes down to a question of unity, we are all one and proud as hell! Gig 'em!

Patrick Schulte '90

Lack of professionalism

EDITOR:

On Nov. 9, I came across a *Battalion* article that was an abomination of both Aggie spirit and good journalism. I am referring to the article concerning the airplane incident involving Mark and Travis Clark.

Instead of focusing on the condition of her fellow Aggies, Tracy Staton displayed her blatant lack of professionalism by conducting her own amateur investigation as to who was at fault. Throughout the entire story, the inference was that Mark was at fault.

Finding fault is not what is important. What is of real importance is the condition of the two injured Aggies. Ending the article with a description of the previous condition of the plane showed extremely poor taste. The story was an appalling display of biased journalism. Staton, please do us all a favor and leave the investigating to the FAA.

Kristi Outler '90

Editor's Note: Tracy Staton's story and the accompanying headline did, in fact, focus on the injuries Mark and Travis Clark sustained in the plane crash. The headline explained that one student was in intensive care, and the first few paragraphs reported both students' conditions. In the rest of the story, Staton accurately reported facts given to her by Coulter Field employees, Mark Clark's flight instructor, the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board. For Staton to exclude these facts from her story indeed would be biased journalism and a blatant lack of professionalism.

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion

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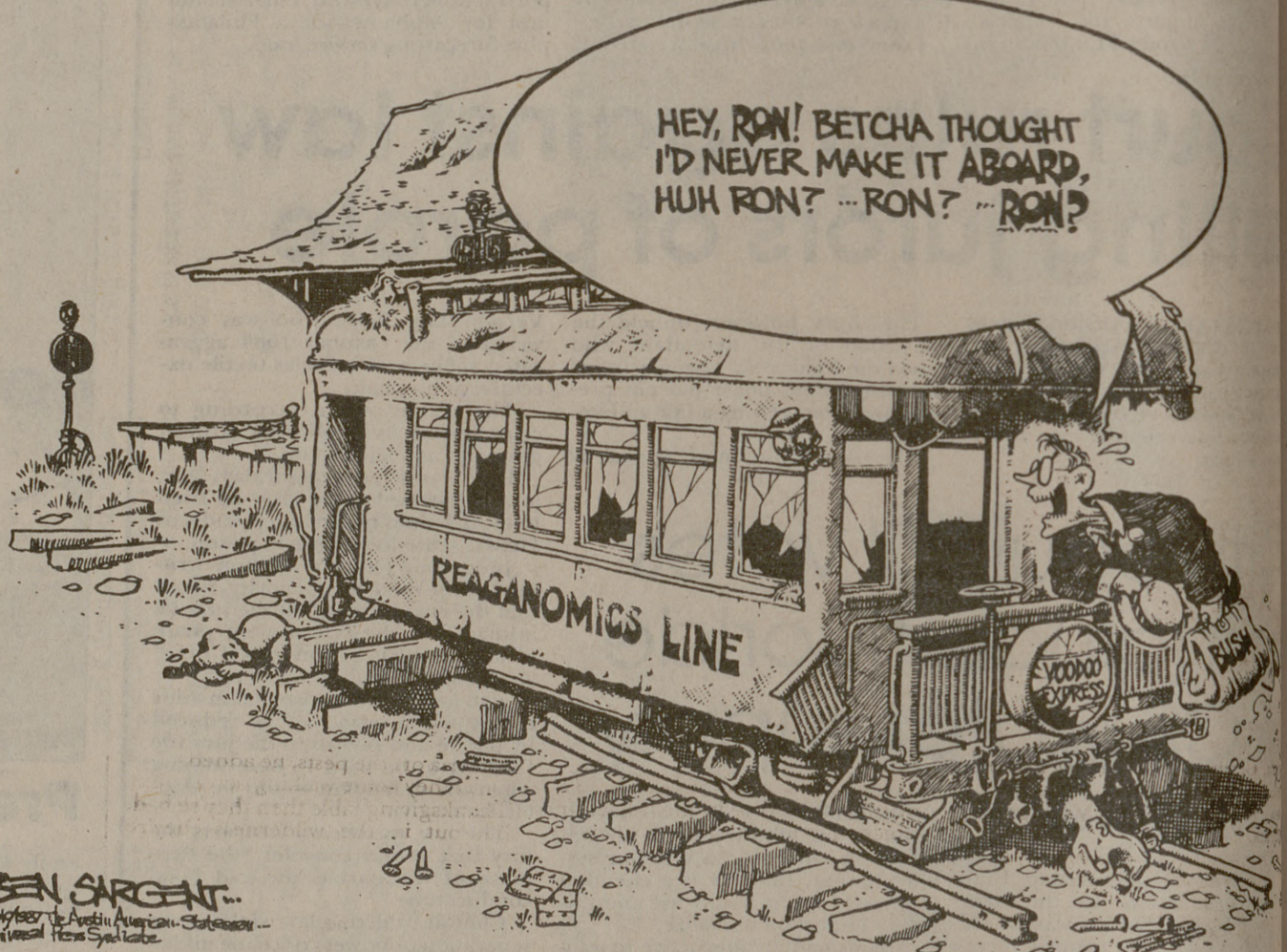
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BEN SARGENT...
Editor of the Austin American-Statesman...
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Commercial mumbo-jumbo is just silly

Once in a while, I develop a deep hatred for certain TV commercials — usually because they're loud or moronic. But now I've found one to hate because it makes me feel stupid and inferior.



Mike Royko

You may have seen this commercial or heard it on the radio. It is for Wang computers.

The commercials aren't loud or raucous or silly. Just the opposite. One man quietly talks to another. What he says is something like this:

"I was giving a seminar on network management . . . making SNA work without IBM. Anyway, the room was filled with MIS guys who didn't believe it could happen . . . so I showed them it has happened with one of the biggest SNA networks in the world . . . No IBM mainframe . . . no IBM controllers . . . no IBM screens on the desk . . . What's there instead? In the center, five IBM look-alike mainframes and a Wang VS.

"Plus, a VS computer at each node . . . hundreds of them . . . and thousands of our work stations covering the whole country. One network. And the whole thing . . . the entire network . . . managed by a Wang VS. . . ."

"And blink, blink, blink, I could practically see the lightbulbs go on over their heads."

He's snickering when he finishes, like, isn't he smart, didn't he show those guys something. And I'm sitting there grinding my choppers because I don't have the slightest idea what the heck this wise guy is talking about.

I don't claim to understand everything people tell me. But I don't expect to be made to feel stupid by a television commercial. If anything, commercials are supposed to make us feel superior.

They are also intended to make us buy things. Well, I have news for Mr. Wang — there is no way I will buy one of his computers if he is going to make me feel too dumb to even plug it in.

Since I'm too stubborn to turn off my TV when this commercial comes on, I decided to find out what the pompous punk is jabbering about.

I asked my assistant, who got good grades in college, to ask the Wang people or their advertising agency what's going over my empty head.

She called Wang and gave me this report:

"OK, SNA means Systems Network Architecture, which is a system that brings networks of computers together so they speak to each other. MIS means Management Information Systems. Those are corporate guys who buy computers and run information systems. VS is Wang's main departmental-level computers. And a node is . . ."

I know what a node is. A node is a skinny geek who wears thick glasses and has a runny nose and got an A in calculus.

"No, a node is one group of people

working on their own departmental processings, such as personnel, accounts, law and so on.

"The rest is kind of basic. Work stations are desk-top computers. Network means the design that links all the computers in one corporation together."

Well, why didn't they say so? Why doesn't their commercial just say: "I go together with these corporate guys who buy computers and showed them how we can give them stuff that works and won't blow a fuse so they have to go down in a dark basement or call an electrician." I could understand that.

My assistant said: "The advertising agency that made this ad explained that they do it on purpose."

Why? To make me feel stupid?

"Sort of. Here's what the ad agency guy said: 'It's techno-babble. People in the computer industry and, in particular, people in management information systems — that's MIS — will understand the lingo and they rather expect computer sales people to have a little bit of that haughty manner. It's not that it's excessive. It's showing a little bit of pride in their expertise. But it works because people who buy the equipment expect that.'"

Wang's ad agency said that? Techno-babble? A bit of bravado? Haughty manner?

"Right."

Then I'll tell you this: Old man Wang was pretty lucky he went into the computer business. Because if he tried that pitch selling eggrolls, he'd be washing dishes.

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BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

