

CORRESPONDENCE

Philosophy of Reich

To the editors:

Mickey Kaus on Robert Reich ("The Policy Hustler," December 7) gets his facts right but the broad picture wrong.

Yes, Reich did not take a Ph.D. in economics. Many of us also know that the Kennedy School economists view him with suspicion and possibly contempt. Of course, we are a tough bunch that is hard to please: Kaus might have been amused to hear the members of the economics department at Harvard pronounce on the merits of their Kennedy School colleagues.

But surely credentialism is a vice, not a virtue. Reich is an intellectual whose writings on economic issues have justifiably engaged our attention.

To condemn him for getting his numbers wrong is also downright silly. Who does not? Lester Thurow is maligned by his foes as "less than thorough." Ken Galbraith does not even stoop to consider numbers. Original ideas, expressed with an articulation that irrevocably concentrates our mind on them, are worth a thousand numbers.

For my money, Reich's latest thoughts on the effects of the globalization of the world economy are on the ball. *The Work of Nations* remains the most eloquent and analytical statement of the global nature of economic activity today and the need to return to "fundamentals" such as education, training, and retraining to cope with its probable effects on the wages of the unskilled et al. Both the analysis and the proposed solutions will be debated through the 1990s. But Reich at least starts us at the right place.

In eschewing now the Japan fixation of many Clinton supporters, and in his liberal cosmopolitanism, Reich also offers us the best prospect of containing the xenophobic, "what is in it for the USA" edge that the campaign exhibited.

JACQUES BRACQWITZ
New York, New York

To the editors:

I found Mickey Kaus's cover story about Robert Reich mean and cruel. Why were all these flaws only discovered by TNR when Reich received a prominent position on the transition team and not when he was appointed a contributing editor? All TNR writers will have to look over their shoulders now for attacks by their brethren once they achieve prominence that makes other staff jealous. It is too bad that instead of congratulating

Reich and wishing him well in what is obviously a complex and difficult job, TNR found it necessary to attack a colleague. Not much loyalty in this group.

FREDERICK WISEMAN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the editors:

I wish to protest vehemently your choice of the words "The New Reich" in reference to Robert Reich, printed on the cover of the December 7 issue. It was pure sensationalism, a play on words implying that the incoming administration of Bill Clinton somehow has a connection to the Third Reich, an entity abhorrent to the Jewish people.

Reich and Clinton deserve better than this, and so does the readership of your magazine. I believe an apology is in order.

RACHEL MELAMED
Carmichael, California

And the ban played on

To the editors:

Your editorial in favor of ending the ban against homosexuals in the military ("Ending the Ban," December 7) is fundamentally flawed. You "believe that the right to serve one's country is as fundamental to the idea of equal citizenship as any right can be"; but the purpose of the military is not to provide an opportunity to "serve one's country" to anyone. No one has a right to military service, and we properly keep many people from serving based on military readiness criteria (physical and mental standards).

You also incorrectly equate the ban against homosexuals in the military to the former ban against blacks. But racial identity is based on skin pigmentation and other physical features; homosexuality is based on behavior. Many, if not most, Americans consider homosexual behavior to be sinful. Many others believe that homosexuality is abnormal and should not be encouraged. What these people profess is not an unreasonable prejudice to be overcome by "education."

You fatuously claim that the "focus on sexual attraction is ... overrated" because the military "by and large, has dorm room facilities and individual showers." But those facilities and showers are part of a "peacetime" environment. We maintain military forces to fight wars, a fact that you seem to ignore. During wartime, communal showers and barracks will be the rule, just as they are now aboard Navy ships and submarines. Do you think that women forced to shower with men would accept your argument that "grown-up people can adjust"? Nor will most heterosexual men

and women if they are forced into intimate environments with homosexuals.

ANDREW G. VAN SANT
Commander, USNR
Annapolis, Maryland

To the editors:

You state, "Living intimately with those who might be the focus of sexual attraction ... is overrated. ... Surely grown-up people can adjust." But the Navy provides separate facilities to people living with those they know may be sexually attracted to them. Funding and shipboard space aren't available to separate gay men from "straight" and gay men! If the ban were lifted and a man (gay or not) were raped, the government (knowing sexual attraction may exist) would be liable for not providing separate facilities.

Should a man be convicted of raping a woman if the government required him to share shower and sleeping facilities with her? As a submarine commander, one of my men (gay) violated a shipmate at sea. Could the government have convicted him if, knowing he was homosexual, it didn't provide separate facilities?

Solve these issues *before* lifting the ban and lifting people's right to privacy from those known to be sexually attracted to them.

Just out of curiosity, did TNR publish this article on December 7 on purpose?

DAVID F. TUMA
Captain, USN (Retired)
Port Hueneme, California

Making hate

To the editors:

What a cold, vicious piece of work Katha Pollitt's review of my book *Making Love* was ("The Prisoner of Sex," November 9). My point of view is hardly Stakhanovite, as Pollitt claims, but hers is evidently Stalinist.

I expected better of TNR, to which I subscribe and which I follow with enthusiasm. I hope your readers will approach *Making Love* with open minds. In case they couldn't tell through the clank of Pollitt's sneering, it's a straightforward memoir of one human being's sexual experience, honestly recalled.

RICHARD ROBERTS
Madison, Connecticut

Jack and Jim

To the editors:

Jim Holt misconceives the lesson of his intriguing thought experiment ("Misconception," December 7), as the following variation on his experiment illus-

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