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.

JAGDISH BHAGWATI
New York, New York

To the editors:

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

And the ban played on

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

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 RHODES
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-