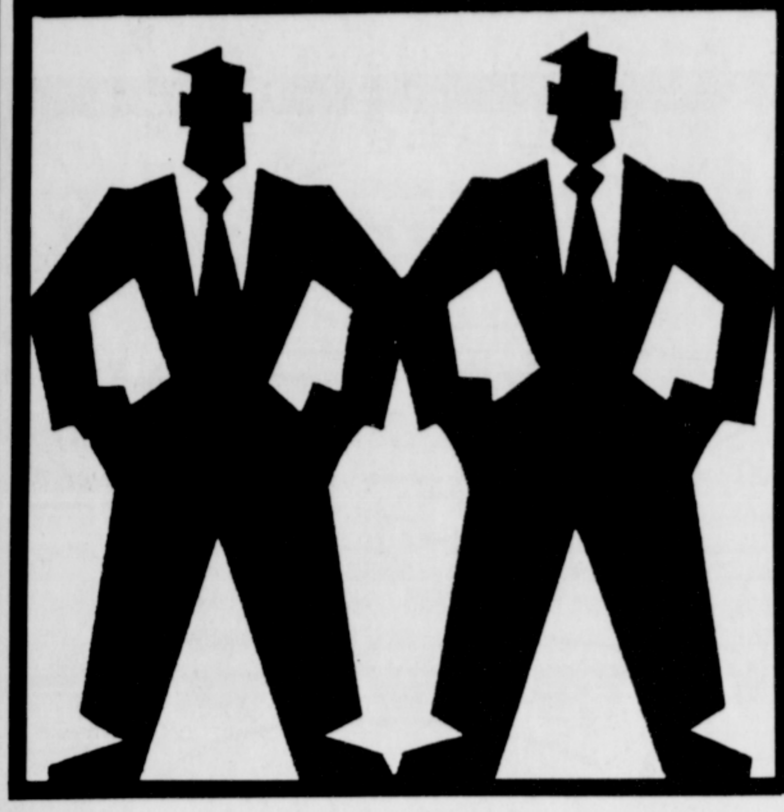


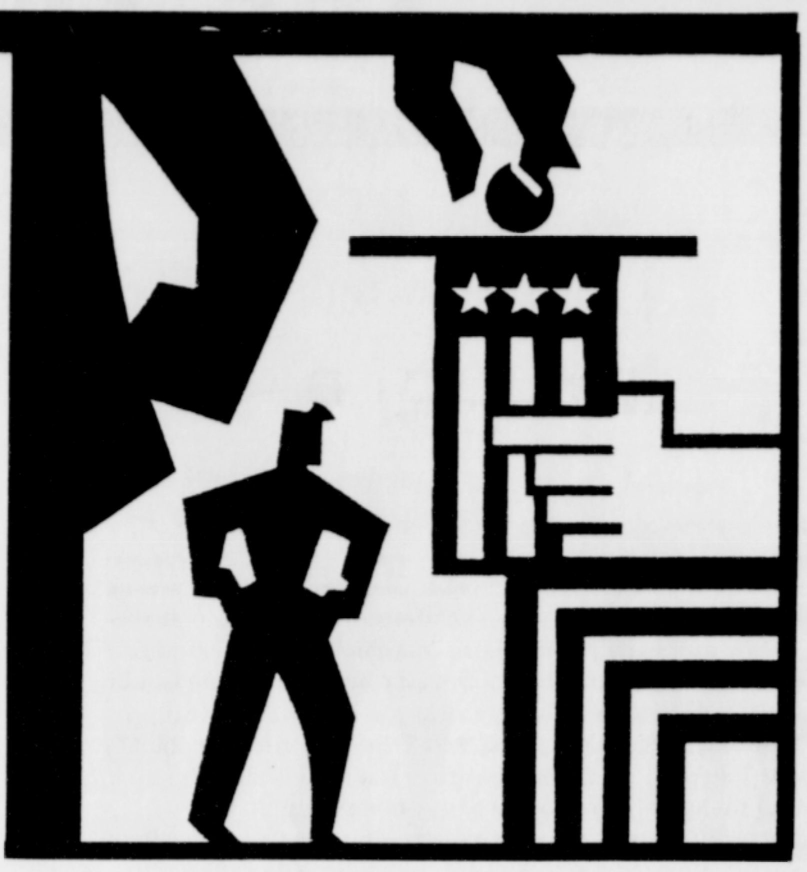
lifetime job security, totally paid health care, continual upgrading of their skills by the company to meet new demands, and higher wages than the best paid American industrial workers.

The program showed beautiful high-speed trains in operation. A manager said that the essential process for building and operating the trains was invented by Americans. Americans have brilliant ideas, he said, but they are unable to put them into operation fast enough.

We are still operating as though we are the only industrial power in the world.

Many of Reich's proposals carry significant weight in the Clinton administration, though they are bitterly opposed by professional and political adherents of the status quo who have engineered and profited from the economic disaster confronting the country:

-- He recommends a truly progressive income tax and closing "gaping tax loopholes." We should eliminate mortgage interest deductions above a certain level. Previous tax reforms and current practices have caused governments at all levels to rely more on the Social Security tax, state and local sales taxes, property tax, user fees and lotteries, which are regressive, taking larger bites out of low and middle incomes than of the rich.



and training programs, an adequate supply of housing, and comprehensive health care -- if administered in ways that mesh with the opportunities in emerging flex-system enterprises -- should promote adjustment within the labor force. They would give people the will and ability to learn new skills, to discover new job opportunities, and to relocate. They would support economic change."

On a recent "60 Minutes" TV show, economist Lester Thurow was interviewed as he toured German industrial facilities. A state-of-the-art automobile plant with workers performing complex tasks was featured. The company, part of a giant conglomerate, had established a huge apprenticeship training program in shops which used the same machines as the factory. The program served 1400 students at a time. They were folks who didn't go to college. What they were facing was

*All quotes in this article are from Reich.
**See box.

-- We should insure that any reasonable talented American child can become a symbolic analyst, regardless of income. This would require fully-funded, stimulating preschools, nutrition and health programs, excellent public schools everywhere, financing college for all kids who want to go, and substantial investment in universities, research facilities and airports. There should be structured programs to insure that young symbolic analysts get on-the-job training.

-- We need to increase the number of workers who can apply symbolic analysis to production and in-person services.

-- We must fully fund programs for the poor with the aim of including them into the producing economy. We should provide skilled job training and education, with good daycare, remedial instruction in math, reading and writing, and intensive preschool programs.

What attracts capital worldwide has more to do with these kinds of public sector investments; the skills of the workforce and the quality of the infrastructure are the main drawing cards for international investment.

It appears that America is at a crossroads where the choices are: a continuation of the current downward spiral where factories close and move, leaving workers under-utilized, untrained, with less income, leading to less public money (taxes) to spend on education, training, infrastructure, services and so on; or an upward spiral where continually better-trained workers and modern infrastructure generate good jobs, which in turn provide on-the-job training and valuable experience, which attracts investment and more jobs, which pay taxes to upgrade schools and universities and infrastructure, and so on.

Harry Johnson lives in Astoria. His most recent articles for the NCTE have been "What's Wrong With Free Trade?" (November 1992), "What's Wrong With Health Care?" (December 1992), and "What's Wrong With Education?" (January-February 1993).

WHY WE NEED CLINTONOMICS

BY ARTHUR HONEYMAN

Bill Clinton's economic ideas are anything except new, but one might aptly dub them "Clintonomics" in the same way that "Reaganomics" became so titled. What is even more interesting and apropos about this observation is that both nomenclatures represent economic ideologies at opposite ends of the socio-political spectrum. "Reaganomics" clearly represents the stoneage laissez faire dog-eat-dog economics which relies on the law-of-the-jungle lack of regulations tactics to keep down-and-outers out of the game of competition and under the thumbs of the already established status quo of financial warlords -- in short, to promote the ideas of American capitalism. "Clintonomics" on the other hand supports the notion that what's good for the people is what's good for the country, and this means that the status quo must be subject to constant change via social and economic upward mobility. People first.

Whereas Reaganites are naturally threatened by the notion that those who already have gained economic access to the pinnacle of wealth and achievement (personal and/or public) ought to contribute the most to society by adhering to the principles of noblesse oblige -- which disavows any excuse for those who merely take up space -- Clinton liberals staunchly believe that the future of America depends on creating the opportunities for upward mobility by everybody, and, further, individuals who have the wealth ought to put it to good use by contributing the lion's share needed to achieve those opportunities. Mind you, this is, by no means, an original idea. Much of industrialized Europe, for example, has long successfully financed many social services via high taxation -- especially of its well-to-do citizens.

For a number of decades, the United States has been losing its status of economic superiority among the industrial giants of the world while it continues to reign militarily supreme as the globe's now one and only "superpower." Interestingly, it seems as though many of those industrial and technology giants have been concentrating their newly amassed fiscal resources on heavily reinvesting most of them in socially and globally responsible curricula such as nationalized health care, education, child and senior care, universal accessibility for handicapped individuals, environmental improvement and salvation, birth and population control, etc. -- as opposed to U.S. concentration on military strength. Beyond this, there seems to exist a possible tri-causal connection between the burden of military over-expenditures, the lack of adequate taxation on the wealthy in this country (which, as a class, seems to strongly support and depend on the military's continued overpowering existence and influence), and the national deficit.

Through extensive deregulation and funding cuts for programs beneficial to the average citizen during the last 12 years or so, the wealthy in the U.S. have grown wealthier while the increased numbers of homeless individuals (due to massive layoffs and lack of governmental support) have virtually achieved pre-Rooseveltian proportions. Whether or not such is the purpose of Reaganomics, the result is that it is an employer's wage market, not an employee or job seeker's market. In short, the gap grows between the wealthy all-powerful few and the impoverished powerless many.

And, if Clintonomics cannot bridge that gap, upward mobility for the average American will not happen, the middle classes will diminish, and our society will stagnate in a modern version of feudalism (fewdalism!).

Arthur Honeyman is a Portland writer and poet and publisher of the resurrected Wheel Press Gazette, from which the above commentary has been reprinted. He is a frequent contributor to the NCTE.