

skills-based—visas. And an estimated half-million more enter without coming to the attention of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) but intending to stay.

The population of the United States is growing by 58,000 people a *week*. Nearly half of that growth is immigration; some additional portion is due to children born to immigrants, who have significantly more children per woman than native-born Americans. The immediate impact of this on the labor force is significant, and down the road the numbers are immense. In the next 60 years the American population is set to grow 50 percent by Census Bureau projections and nearly 100 percent if one extrapolates our present growth rate.

Now, how does immigration relate to unemployment? The INS issues work authorization papers, either as “temporary work permits”—many of these to people who arrive in the United States without documentation of any kind—or as “green cards,” which are issued to refugees and legal immigrants. In the first six months of 1992, 439,000 temporary work permits and 390,000 green cards were issued. Even if only 75 percent of all holders of green cards entered the labor market immediately, we still get 659,000 newly authorized foreign workers competing for the total number of new jobs. This very nearly matches the number of new jobs (864,000) that were created nationwide within the same period.

In all of 1992, the economy created well short of 2 million net new jobs while the potential labor force grew by nearly 1 million net new American workers, by 1.3 million legal immigrants, refugees, and asylees who received work authorization papers from the INS, and by approximately one-half million illegal foreign workers. Clearly, workers exceed jobs. Without immigration of any kind, the job market could come into balance by reabsorbing the unemployed, reengaging the “discouraged” worker, and inducing certain of the more productive older workers to postpone retirement.

But under present conditions, I need hardly say, native-born Americans, especially those just coming into the job market and particularly the least skilled, are having a tough time. An economic slowdown is hard enough to overcome, but our continuously and rapidly growing labor force, driven by the highest levels of immigration this country has ever

seen, is putting paid to any prospect that the majority of the young or their children will enjoy the American dream.

No administration or government program, and no foreseeable private investment of the quantity needed, can expect to overcome unemployment in the face of 1.5 million immigrants every year. If the administration and Congress want to improve employment prospects for Americans, let them establish policy that limits immigration, from all sources combined, to under 200,000 a year. This level would about equal the annual voluntary flow out of America. Only then can unemployment cease to burden job-seekers and taxpayers alike, the consumer market regain strength, and joy return to the land.

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## The Trickle-Free Economics of Robert Reich

by Ralph R. Reiland

Robert Reich explains in “Clintonomics 101” in the *New Republic* that “every factor of production other than people and infrastructure is moving with ever greater ease across national boundaries.” True, our airports and sewers don’t usually pick up and leave the country, and not many Americans are heading for Ethiopia or Chile to strike it rich. More importantly, says Reich, and lucky for us, it’s those very things that are stuck here—people and infrastructure—that are the keys to our prosperity: “Upon these two assets, the future standard of living of a nation’s people uniquely depends.”

The problem, according to Clintonomics, is that the greed and tax cuts of the Republicans have left us knee-deep in potholes and urban guerrillas. “Starved of tax revenues and confronted with a growing budget deficit,” Reich

argues, “the federal government has reduced support for child health, education, training and infrastructure by a third.” Reich is getting so good at cooking the numbers that he should wear a chef’s hat. A federal government that eats up one-fourth of the total income of the world’s largest economy is hardly in danger of starving, and federal spending is up, not down, on children’s programs and infrastructure.

Childhood immunization and infant mortality funding jumped 45 percent in real dollars between 1989 and 1993, from \$6.7 billion to \$9.7 billion. Head Start spending doubled from \$1.4 to \$2.8 billion in 1990 dollars in the same period, and expenditures at the Department of Education increased by \$7 billion to \$31.4 billion. At the same time, child nutrition programs expanded by 49 percent in real dollars to \$9.7 billion, and food stamp funding grew from \$14.9 billion to \$27.1 billion, an 82 percent increase.

Marian Wright Edelman of the Children’s Defense Fund says it’s “a scandal” that every American child isn’t fully immunized, and President Clinton calls for the government to buy all the childhood vaccines and supply them free to all children. It’s a good idea—it’s how we virtually eliminated polio three decades ago—and here in Pittsburgh we already do that. All immunizations are completely free to all families in the city and surrounding Allegheny County, regardless of income. Still, one-fourth of two-year-olds in the county are not fully immunized. Here, it’s the parents, not the taxpayers, who too often drop the ball, and that’s the real “scandal.” In a country that still has a degree of individual responsibility left, every human problem doesn’t mean that capitalism is evil or that America has failed or that a new government program is needed or that taxes are too low.

As with child health programs, Reich spins a tale of Republican underfunding when it comes to the infrastructure. He has become a true believer in the litany that the “12 years of neglect” caused everything from the L.A. riots to the hunger in Somalia to the collapse of the Chicago tunnels. President Reagan got instant blame from the Democrats when the Chicago River spewed 250 million gallons of water into the basements beneath the Loop. Reverend Jesse Jackson said, “This country is literally falling apart. Without vision, the Bible says, the

people perish.” Jerry Brown dropped in and saw a jobs program in the waters of Marshall Field’s basement: “Don’t tell me we can’t put people to work, the pipes under Chicago are bursting.”

The real story, as David Johnson of the *Chicago Tribune* later reported, had nothing to do with Republican budget cuts and everything to do with goofing off by the Democrat’s patronage-bloated city work force:

As a chronology of the events that led to the disaster revealed, at every step where they could have saved the day, city workers were loafing, dallying, or goofing off. The saga goes back to last spring, when a maritime construction company was awarded a \$335,000 city contract to pound clusters of 50-foot-long wooden pilings into the river bottom around an old drawbridge. . . . The city engineer in charge of monitoring the job never made a final inspection of the site because he couldn’t find a parking spot near the bridge. When an inspector eventually discovered the damage five months later, he took dramatic photos of the cracked tunnel wall, exposed pilings, and the leaking river silt, but didn’t pick up his film for a week. It took another week and half a dozen meetings before someone decided to write a memo recommending that the tunnel breach be repaired. Then city officials balked at paying the repair costs—\$50,000 more than the \$10,000 originally estimated—and instead scheduled another round of meetings. . . . And the wall came tumbling down.

It wasn’t country-club greed or low taxes that turned that small leak into a multi-billion-dollar flood. It was just one more case of us not getting our money’s worth from the government. Our “contributions” to the public sector weren’t too small—they were too large and too squandered.

Reich tells us that infrastructure spending is low and declining when it’s actually bloated and expanding. Federal spending on highways and airports increased by 19 percent and 38 percent respectively in the last four years in real dollars. The same is true for transit and HUD spending, up 23 percent and 52

percent from 1989 through 1992. Still, even with the need to cut spending and reduce the deficit, infrastructure has become the mantra of the Clintonites, with a steady drumbeat for fiber-optics and more roads. This time, we’re asked to have faith that higher taxes will go for more than eight guys standing around a pothole.

What we have here is a con job—a fake infrastructure crisis based on fudged numbers, like JFK’s missile gap. The bottom line in Clinton’s program is a \$16 billion increase in infrastructure spending for next year that cats up the entire proposed \$10 billion annual tax increase on top income earners and all of the proposed \$6 billion in new corporate taxes. Does anyone outside of Harvard or North Korea think it will “grow the economy” to transfer economic decision-making and all these assets from the most successful people in the private sector to the amateur central planners in the White House?

With Head Start, Clinton proposes to double its spending to \$6 billion by 1996, in spite of the fact that its own founder, Dr. Edward Zigler of Yale, says it’s now so mismanaged and unproductive that we should just shutter one-third of its centers. Winston Churchill said, “Some see private enterprise as a predatory target to be shot, others as a cow to be milked, but few see it as a sturdy horse pulling the wagon.” Reich can’t see the horse. He can’t see why we need private entrepreneurs to innovate and risk and invest when those in the faculty lounge can do everything better.

Reich says, “The investments of wealthier Americans no longer trickle down to the rest of the American people.” If that’s true, if nothing trickles down, then why does he support the tax credits that attract new business to the inner city? Isn’t the goal that a new pizza shop owner and auto body shop hire a dozen jobless kids and that what trickles down is less poverty, less crime, less drug dealing, and more self-reliance? In the 1980’s, did Reich notice the 76 percent jump in new business investment in real dollars and the 20 million new jobs? Didn’t the jobs trickle down from those investments? In the Reich paradigm, a politically correct trickle is any spending by the government, while an incorrect trickle is any claim that anything positive can flow from the private sector.

“The success of American capitalism no longer depends on the private invest-

ments of highly motivated American capitalists,” says Reich. So, for the first time, it no longer matters if we demoralize the ambitious and destroy the profits in the private sector. The government can get wealth from taxes and direct investments from the Oval Office and the Labor Department. Bullet trains and Federal Infant Stimulation Centers can trickle down, and the President can tell us that we are no longer alone.

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## Academic Snobbery

by Jacob Neusner

### It Can’t Happen Here

“Different strokes for different folks” means, in academic language, “We have our own culture, so bug off.” Europeans tell this to Americans who are curious about native habits. I remember that while teaching at Frankfurt University in 1991 I commented in a memo to colleagues on students who don’t do any reading or preparing for classes and on professors who don’t talk to anybody anyhow. In reply, a colleague on the theological faculty there told me, “Well, we have our own academic culture, and, anyhow, now I won’t have supper with you.” I hadn’t known he was planning to; neither had he.

While a Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge University, last year, I saw a copy of a letter that I would have supposed no circle, however tightly closed, would have wanted sent from its midst. Write it to feel better, but then trash it—everybody knows that! It was a response from a woman at a research institute to a letter from a man with whom she had spent some years in graduate seminar. The man had written to invite her out for supper; they had published books on similar subjects, and he wanted to talk to her about a problem of common interest. After making fun of his name and saying she couldn’t even remember him, she declined the invitation in the following manner: