

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

A NATIONAL MAGAZINE
OF POLITICS, BUSINESS,
AND CULTURE

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1995 VOL. 6, No. 5

PUBLISHER *CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH*

EDITOR IN CHIEF *KARL ZINSMEISTER*

SENIOR EDITOR *SCOTT WALTER*

ASSISTANT EDITOR *CHRISTINE M. DOANE*

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
BILL KAUFFMAN
MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER
KATHERINE DALTON

OPINION PULSE EDITORS
KARLYN H. BOWMAN
EVERETT C. LADD

ART DIRECTOR *DEANNE D. YETMAN*

GRAPHIC DESIGNER *ALLYSON NEILY BROWN*

FREELANCE ARTISTS
KATHLEEN COLE
JEANNE BERGER

BUSINESS MANAGER *ASHLEY H. COOPER*

INTERNS
CHRISTOPHER BELLANCA
MUKANG CHO
STACEY LASKY
OPEYEMI OLUWOLE
PATRICK ROBERTS
MARJORIE STINCHCOMBE

CHIEF OF OPERATIONS *DAVID GERSON*

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE
(ISSN 1047-3572), published bimonthly by the
American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy
Research. Copyright © 1995, the American
Enterprise Institute. All rights reserved.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th
Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 or fax: (202)
862-7178 or e-mail 75272.1226@compuserve.com.

PRODUCTION AND BUSINESS OFFICE

The American Enterprise
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
(202) 862-5886.

OFFICE OF THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

The American Enterprise
430 South Geneva Street, Ithaca, NY 14850.
(607) 272-0909.

MANUSCRIPTS

The editors welcome mailed inquiries briefly summarizing article ideas. We will not be responsible for returning any unsolicited manuscripts. Send to Senior Editor at Washington D.C. address.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

\$28 one year. Overseas: add \$30.
Subscription correspondence and address changes:
The American Enterprise, P.O. Box 3000, Denville,
NJ 07834. (800) 562-1973.

Bird's Eye

KARL ZINSMEISTER

Work, Truth, and Romance

This being an issue with a focus on work, I thought I'd start this column with a brief description of our own work patterns here at *The American Enterprise*.

For we are a kind of virtual magazine, produced out of the ether by individuals working in five or six different states. As your editor in chief, I am based in the small town splendor of upstate New York. Our main production office in Washington, D.C., is a place I have visited a total of three times over the last year, for a score of hours or so in grand sum. Other *TAE* editors are also far-flung. One works from home in Louisville, Kentucky, another does likewise in Maryland, a third is located a few hours' drive from me in Western New York. A fourth contributes from Connecticut.

So where do we meet to work together? In Cyberia. There are three phone lines coming into my home office, and they hum most of the time. We have occasional conference calls, heaps of letters and packages are mailed and expressed back and forth, and thousands of phone calls, faxes, and e-mail transmissions buzz day and night long. The Ithaca-to-Washington, D.C. communications traffic is especially intense. And, for myself at least, it has been an extraordinarily satisfying way to work. (I promise to let any editors who disagree with me have a word at the end of this column if they want!)

I have very effective, very different, and very understanding working relations with the dozen or so individuals whose decisions and contributions from hundreds of miles distant go into co-creating *The American Enterprise*. The rap on telecommuting is that a lack of "around the coffee pot" office bonding can sometimes lead to miscommunication and lost connections. I don't doubt that this can sometimes occur. But I can say that in our own case this has not been a serious obstacle, and that there have indeed been advantages (quite apart from the personal ones of better connection to family life and lower necktie-buying expenses) associated with our mixture of locations and traditional versus satellite home offices. After all, our magazine aspires to chronicle developments in American culture in their national fullness—and it's a big, boisterous country. Being sprinkled across several parts of it seems to help.

Our work arrangement, while unconventional, is hardly the most unusual or interesting one you'll come across. My friend Marvin Olasky accomplishes a similar task in editing *World* magazine (which is based in North Carolina) from Texas, with the assistance of another key editor in St. Louis. Their accomplishment is actually more striking, because they put out issues on a weekly basis. Liberated by new technology, driven by the need to connect the best workers available regardless of their physical location, and encouraged by the growing determination of Americans to organize their lives according to individual rather than institutional priorities, thousands of enterprises of all sorts are pioneering new work patterns.

Our treatment of the subject of work on the pages following is catholic. We touch on driven professionals who work too much—at the expense of their families and communities. We consider candidates for the underclass who work too little, missing the joys and rewards of self-provision. James Payne's article, informed by time spent in an actual shelter for day laborers, and imbued with respect for the dignity and difficulty of manual toil, is a fine piece of thinking and writing I imagine many readers will appreciate. Later, we've paired contributions from African-American streetfighter Tony Brown and author Dinesh D'Souza on the tragic failure of blacks in this country to use small businesses to build

economic independence, the way other disadvantaged groups have with smashing success.

Following that are a series of arguments about the merits of work versus schooling. Is it possible academic education has been overblown as an instrument of self-improvement? Are there significant numbers of individuals slipping off the academic path who could succeed if there were as much encouragement for work and enterprise as there is for academic schooling? Certainly the demand for a college B.A. has reached manic proportions (see INDICATORS). A sacrilegious thought in America: Do too many of us go to college? Some of our writers think so.

Daily work is a major source of human purpose and meaning. It is also the way we materially support ourselves and our loved ones—so the rise or fall of wage levels is a very big deal for most workers, affecting our personal hopes, our degrees of national optimism, our collective sense of justice or injustice. We often hear it said today that payrates have stagnated in this country, and that the broad upward mobility of the American Dream has come to an end. That is a very serious claim, and in an article starting on page 44 your editor examines it closely.

Other tidbits that glance up against the subject of work are strewn throughout this issue. Among other things, you'll find a larger than normal complement of true work stories in IN REAL LIFE, the department in every installment of our magazine where we let Americans talk about their everyday vocations.

Following our features on work you'll find an excerpt from Dinesh D'Souza's major new book on race and multiculturalism. In it, he warns about the importance of truth-telling in intellectual life, and of the dangers associated with the current tendency of Afrocentrists to assemble curricula for children that are riddled with inaccurate and exaggerated claims about black culture. As professor Harry Kaufmann has written in the *New York Times*, "unverified, indeed disproven, claims masquerading as knowledge deserve anger and contempt" from serious educators, no matter whether launched in the name of black pride or any other good cause, and D'Souza exposes a passel of fakery and factual error, as is the scholar's duty. There is real danger, he warns, in building black "self-esteem" on the shifting sands of myth and put-downs of other groups.

Just the same, it seems to us there is a kernel of wisdom at the core of the Afrocentric project. Africans and Europeans arrived on America's shores at the same time, and it's true, as Afrocentrists point out, that our society bears important African imprints in addition to the dominant European ones. They are right, too, that children need to see wholesome aspects of themselves in what they study. Afrocentrists have also shown insight in demanding discipline and self-improvement from their fellow

**WE ARE A VIRTUAL MAGAZINE,
PRODUCED OUT OF THE ETHER BY
WORKERS IN SIX DIFFERENT
STATES. SO WHERE DO WE MEET?
IN CYBERIA. OUR JOB IS TO
UNDERSTAND AMERICA,
AND BEING SPRINKLED
ACROSS THIS BIG, BOISTEROUS
COUNTRY SEEMS TO HELP.**

blacks. The sharp dress, the insistence on respect for women, the Black Muslim prohibitions on alcohol and other intoxicants, the calls to work, these are more than just superficialities. It's relevant that most Afrocentrists, including black nationalists and Muslims, have insisted that gangster rap should be viewed as pathological.

Hoping to discredit the falsehoods and the enmity that have been a part of the Afrocentric movement without discounting its emphasis on self-love, pride, and positive cultural models, we've complemented D'Souza's article with several others. You will find reflections from Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Anthony Appiah on the double-edged sword of race-pride. And capping the section is a quartet of articles outlining some candidates for what we bill as

"alternative Afrocentrism"—schools of thought associated with specific personages from American history who might be constructively studied and emulated by seekers of black excellence. Booker T. Washington, Jessie Fauset, and Zora Neale Hurston represent arbitrary choices on our part, but they amount to a powerful start on any search for African-American exemplars.

The prod to truth-telling amounts to a kind of theme in this issue of *The American Enterprise*. Stephen Budiansky's article urges us to discard the romantic notion of nature as a pristine and inerrantly self-regulating system. Nature is regularly roiled by organic disasters, competition among species (like elephants vs. baobab trees, to take an example from one of our articles), and by the influence of man. To pretend that mankind can just step out of the picture today and let nature flourish is an illusion. Man must manage—intelligently and forcefully.

At the end of our features section, Laurens van der Post's tale of the Hiroshima bombing calls for a different kind of truth-telling. The Japanese have never been especially forthright with themselves about the circumstances surrounding history's only atomic attacks, and as the years recede, many Westerners too have lost sight of the true nature of what happened. Van der Post's reflections on some of the essential facts behind the momentous event may help counterbalance this memory loss.

Offered in that same antidotal spirit is this issue's TRANSCRIPT item on American Indian culture. Just as injustices done to Native Americans should be viewed unblinkingly, so should the Indians' actual ways of living be recalled accurately. Having shed some of our earlier distortions of Indian life, the nation's current tendency is to turn Native Americans into PC plaster saints, a transformation that the historical record will not support.

Unblinking truthfulness. No doubt we've fallen short in places, but that is what many of the articles that follow aspire to, on subjects ranging from racialism, to income levels, to the significance of work. Please read on.

Sidelights



National
Public Radio's **Nina**

Totenberg, reacting to Sen. **Jesse Helms'** comment that government spends too much on AIDS research. . . . When Father's Day and Gay Pride Day fell on the same date this year, the *Washington Post Book World* devoted 224 column inches to the gay/lesbian experience and 42 column inches to heterosexual fatherhood. . . . **Kristine Holt**, a Democratic candidate for County Commissioner in Venango, Pennsylvania, is a woman who used to be a man. Her campaign slogan: "Committed to Change."

Last year, 129 teamsters' union officials learned over \$100,000; highest paid was **Frank Wsol**, secretary/treasurer of Chicago Local 710 (\$399,418). . . . Pay and benefits for an average blue-collar worker at the U.S. Postal Service came to \$44,342 in 1994. ✂ Your tuition dollars at work: A college intern in a Senate office threw out a personal letter from a Dr. **Henry Kissinger** because it was from out-of-state. . . . Over a third of Britain's schoolchildren can't identify **Winston Churchill** or V-E Day. . . . In a letter attacking **Lamar Alexander** two teachers twice misspelled *Tennesseans*. . . . New York Mayor **Rudolph Giuliani** was similarly vilified by college students who misspelled his name, "tiution," and "priority." ✂ **Leonard Jeffries**—chairman of the City University of New York's black studies department and infamous for anti-white and anti-Semitic diatribes—has been succeeded as chairman by **Moyibi J. Amoda**, a native Nigerian said to hold moderate views. ✂ **James and Susan McDougal** of Whitewater fame are selling dirt from the **Clinton's** own Lot 24 at \$23.90 a cubic foot.

—SW

"It had to happen," writes the London *Spectator*, "a hospital for hypochondriacs is to open in Norway." The magazine predicts Hypochondria Awareness campaigns that warn, "We are all at risk!"

✂ Rome's communist newspaper *Il Manifesto* has been reduced to raising money by issuing shares of stock. . . . Latvia has opened its first stock exchange since 1940.

. . . China's cellular phone coverage now extends nationwide, with over 2 million users.

✂ Current estimates indicate Japan's top banks hold around \$600 billion worth of problem loans. Bad loans may end up equaling one-quarter of Japan's GDP and require a government bailout costing \$175 billion to \$350 billion. ✂ High-tech American companies like Sun Microsystems and Intel fear rising anti-immigration sentiments will hinder their ability to hire skilled workers. Asian immigrants make up about 25 percent of Silicon Valley's work force, reports *Reason's* **Glenn Garvin**.

✂ Raising teenagers isn't easy, one working mother told the *Wall Street Journal*: "She and her attorney husband... sold their second home to reduce the pressure to keep earnings up. She cut back to a 40-hour week from 60 and began volunteering at her daughter's school." . . . *Women's Quarterly* editor **Danielle Crittenden** complains that "parents have come to treat their children not as raw specimens of humanity, in need of educating and civilizing, but as tiny citizens in their own nations of families, with rights equal to their parents." . . . Co-ed teenage "slumber parties" are becoming popular among teens, reports the *Wall Street Journal*. During one party, **Scott Murphy's** father walked in on his son and a girl "at a tender moment." The elder Murphy "apologized on the spot, which everyone agreed was cool." . . . When Americans remade the French movie *Nine Months*, they took out the slapping of a truculent 13-year-old. "In American movies you can kill 10,000 people and that's okay. But slap

a loudmouth brat? Forget it," said the French director. . . . From a recent Nike ad: "We are hedonists and we want what feels good.... And we will jump up and down and scream until we get it."

The Manchester, New Hampshire *Union Leader* has reminded readers that **Pete Wilson**—who now calls himself a "Reagan conservative"—stumped the state for **Ford** in 1976 and denounced Reagan as California's "worst governor." . . . An economic liberal in social liberal clothing? Famous for combining liberal moral views with conservative fiscal ones, Massachusetts Gov. **William Weld** is angering former supporters with his backsliding on crime, government reduction, and affirmative action—"a warning to voters elsewhere about the integrity of new-age fusion Republicanism," says Bostonian **Jon Keller**. . . . Do as I Do: Deficit hawk **John Kasich** (R-Ohio) cut his House Budget Committee's operating expenses by \$2.1 million and reduced staff by 33 percent. ✂ When an accounting firm estimated that eliminating the marriage penalty tax would cost the U.S. Treasury \$25 billion, a California customer rephrased that: "Not to eliminate the marriage penalty would cost married taxpayers \$25 billion." . . . Washington, D.C. Delegate **Eleanor Holmes Norton** is wary of congressional plans to abolish D.C. taxes: "I don't want this to be Hong Kong or some kind of tax haven. The price of land would go through the stratosphere."

✂ Democratic State Rep. **Ron Wilson**—who represents an inner-city Houston district—sponsored the bill that restored Texans' right to carry concealed handguns: "I really don't care if the crime rate decreases because of this bill. All I want to do is put innocent people, those who are potential victims, in a position of being able to protect themselves." ✂ "If there is retributive justice, he'll get AIDS from a transfusion, or one of his grandchildren will get it," said