

Japanese methods will not work in the United States. (Jumping jacks and push-ups have not been a big hit.) But most will,

and it is these methods, not Japanese culture, that account for Japan's enviable industrial success.

SOCIETY

How We Won The War on Drugs

"Against the Legalization of Drugs" by James Q. Wilson, in *Commentary* (Feb. 1990), 165 E. 65th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Most Americans probably don't remember the nation's last war on drugs. We won it.

Wilson remembers it well. In 1972, he was appointed chairman of President Richard M. Nixon's National Advisory Council for Drug Abuse Prevention, charged with drawing up a strategy to combat what was at that time the nation's leading drug scourge: heroin. (Today, he is a political scientist at UCLA.) Then, as now, some prominent authorities—notably, Milton Friedman, a conservative Nobel prize-winning economist—argued that a war against drugs was futile, unjust, or too costly. They favored legalization.

But they were ignored, and the war against heroin was a reasonable success. Today, says Wilson, we have half a million heroin addicts, the same number that we had in 1972. What happened? Heroin lost its appeal to young people as they saw more and more users suffer overdoses, hepatitis from dirty needles, and other mishaps. In surveys of Harlem youths who had sampled the drug, two thirds pointed to health risks as a reason for steering clear of it, and nearly all cited a bad experience with the drug.

While such street-level "drug education" was important, Wilson says, government efforts to restrict the supply of heroin—by reducing Turkish opium

cultivation and shutting down heroin-processing plants in and around Marseilles—were crucial. As Friedman and other critics had predicted, new sources soon developed (chiefly in Mexico). But Wilson believes that the scarcity and high price of heroin during 1973–75 broke the momentum of the heroin epidemic.

Back in the 1970s, important evidence that the price and availability of a drug strongly influences use came from a study of Vietnam veterans by Lee Robins of Washington University. She found that most of the veterans who had been regular heroin users overseas gave up the habit once they returned home. Why? Because the drug was much harder to get and laws against its use were more strictly enforced.

At least one country *did* try legalization. In 1960, there were 68 known British heroin addicts, and all of them received legal, prescribed doses of the narcotic. By 1968, the number had grown 30-fold, to 2,000—and there were probably many more unregistered addicts, since most clinics by then were offering methadone, not heroin.

If the United States had legalized heroin, Wilson believes, it would now have several million addicts rather than several hundred thousand. If it legalizes cocaine, which he considers a more destructive drug, the results could only be worse.

Searching for The Leisure Class

"The Work Ethic—Then and Now" by Seymour Martin Lipset, in *The Public Interest* (Winter 1990), 1112 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, and "Time Squeeze" by John P. Robinson, in *American Demographics* (Feb. 1990), 108 N. Cayuga St., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

Two of the great complaints of our era are that Americans don't work as hard as they used to and, paradoxically, that life has

grown unbearably hectic. Obviously both complaints can't be justified; according to these articles, neither is.