
home?" In short, there just might be *another* retail revolution on the horizon.

The Myth of the Miserable Union Worker

"A Re-examination of the Relationship between Union Membership and Job Satisfaction" by Michael E. Gordon and Angelo S. DeNisi, in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (Jan. 1995), 201 ILR Research Bldg., Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853-3901.

Are union members more unhappy with their jobs than others are? Economist Richard Freeman in 1978 found that union members were less happy but were also less inclined to leave their jobs. He saw that as a strength: through contract negotiations and grievance procedures, union workers were able to express their discontents and improve their working lives. Non-union workers' main option was to quit. Most later research has supported Freeman's findings.

Gordon and DeNisi, of Rutgers University's School of Business and Institute of Management and Labor Relations, respectively, object that the earlier research was based on national surveys and did not adequately take into account the possibility that the union members' working

conditions actually were worse. Pursuing this line of thought, the Rutgers researchers examined three surveys in which union and nonunion employees worked together.

A 1986 survey of 188 public-sector employees in an "agency shop" (in which workers must pay a fee about equal to union dues but do not have to join the union) and a 1980 survey of 1,578 federal workers who operated in an "open shop" (in which neither union membership nor dues are required as a condition of employment) produced the same result: no connection between job satisfaction and union membership. So did a 1989-90 survey of 721 Rutgers professors, of whom about 64 percent belonged to the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

It is true, Gordon and DeNisi acknowledge, that unions generally do try to bring worker discontents to the fore during an organizing campaign. Once they have been chosen to represent workers, however, they have every incentive to make workers happier with better wages and working conditions. Studies of both private- and public-sector unions, the authors point out, have shown "that workers who were most satisfied with their jobs also tended to be most satisfied with their union."

SOCIETY

Welfare Cowboys

"Storm over the Rockies" by Karl Hess, Jr., in *Reason* (June 1995), 3415 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Ste. 400, Los Angeles, Calif. 90034-6064.

The sagebrush rebels in the American West who oppose wetlands regulation and higher grazing fees and who imagine themselves at war with the federal government (or did at least before the sobering tragedy of the Oklahoma City bombing) conveniently overlook their own extensive reliance on that same government. What these ranchers, miners, and

others mainly want, argues Hess, a writer affiliated with the Foundation for Research on Economics and the Environment in Bozeman, Montana, is to keep "federal lands . . . safe for ranchers and ranching."

The 28,000 public-land ranchers, Hess points out, do not object to "the myriad programs and subsidies [through which] the federal government has made sure that cattle stay king on the western range." (Little more than one-third of the West is in private hands, and the federal government lays claim to most of the rest.) For decades, Washington has paid

trappers about \$30 million a year "to purge the western range of wolves, bears, cougars, and coyotes that prey on domestic livestock." Federal dams on western rivers supply ranches with plentiful subsidized water, even in times of drought.

"A more massive subsidy to both private- and public-land ranchers," Hess says, is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's emergency feed program, which pays ranchers half the cost of hay and grain to keep their herds alive during the worst droughts. In recent years, he says, the program has become "an entitlement program for dry years and wet. . . . Nevada ranchers, the most vocal of sagebrush rebels and the most intent on kicking Uncle Sam out of the West, receive on average \$18,000 per year for every man and woman in the program." The program not only costs the taxpayers as much as \$500 million a year but also encourages overgrazing—which means less grass produced next year and greater need for drought relief. "But as long as government payments for emergency feed grow as fast as the grass disappears," Hess notes, "ranchers can stay in business, and even make a profit."

The West's real war, Hess contends, is with itself. "The West, paradoxically, is the most urbanized region of the nation. It has a sparse and tiny rural population; Nevada, for example, has 90 percent of its population in its three major urban centers." While the ranchers cling to their government privileges and subsidies, western environmentalists, sportsmen, and outdoor enthusiasts have other uses in mind for the region's vast expanses of public lands. The latest sagebrush rebellion, Hess says, may turn out to be subsidized ranching's "last hurrah."

A Role Model Fallacy?

"Following in Her Footsteps? Faculty Gender Composition and Women's Choices of College Majors" by Brandice J. Canes and Harvey S. Rosen, in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (Apr. 1995), 201 ILR Research Bldg., Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853-3901.

It is conventional wisdom in academe these days that if there were more women teaching science, engineering, and mathematics, then more female undergraduates would decide to major in those subjects. This idea has had consequences. Colleges are trying to hire more female professors, for example, and the National Science Foundation has awarded grants for women scientists and engineers to serve as visiting professors. But the conventional wisdom may well be invalid, contend Rosen, an economist at Princeton University, and Canes, a graduate student at Stanford University.

Examining data from the 1970s and '80s from Princeton, the University of Michigan,

Don't Hound 'Deadbeat Dads'

Liberals and conservatives alike now seem to favor extracting child support from the "deadbeat dads" of children whose mothers are on welfare. Writing in the *American Spectator* (June 1995), George Gilder, author of *Wealth and Poverty* (1981), spies a pitfall.

Because of the promotion of early sexual activity through television, films, sex education, and the welfare state—all attacking the constraints of chastity and female modesty—the girls of the welfare culture are widely promiscuous from the age of 14, whether black or white. Many black youths, in particular, can be linked as DNA dads to some ghetto child or other. Thus the threat of garnishment makes official employment a treacherous arena for inner-city men. They can never know when their paychecks will be devastated by a huge lien, representing years of support payments for some unknown child (or even for a known child who has long received payments off the books). Like all welfare crackdowns focusing on desirable activity—honest work, savings, and tax payments—the DNA-Dad programs will destroy marriages and forcibly drive men out of the official economy into crime and other underground work.
