
ECONOMICS, LABOR, & BUSINESS

they must fight factory-by-factory for new members against sometimes fierce employer resistance. No such difficulties hamper European labor unions. By custom (and often by governmental edict), labor unions enjoy industry-wide recognition. They negotiate not with individual companies but with national employer associations. "There are virtually no important industries on the continent to which union recognition does not extend," Kassalow reports.

The fate of U.S. "Big Labor" may well hinge on whether it can win over workers in the growing service industries, such as banking, insurance, medical care. In Europe, these industries are already unionized.

During the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s, U.S. labor unions reaped some benefits from the decentralized style of American collective bargaining. European unions had difficulty cashing in on the boom because industry-wide bargaining forced them to accept labor contracts keyed to the least profitable companies. That kept union wages low: Some European employers during those years "often offered benefits well above the negotiated minimums, in order to recruit a satisfactory work force." U.S. labor unions, by contrast, were free to demand fat contracts from prosperous firms, skimpier ones from marginal companies.

Now, decentralization is hurting American unions, hindering efforts to form a united front against employer demands for wage and fringe benefit "givebacks" and for a national industrial policy to save jobs in declining industries.

In general, Kassalow writes, economic hard times hurt U.S. labor unions and their members more than their European counterparts, while booms bring them greater benefits. But, on both continents, organized labor's elixir is economic growth, which helps boost membership and wages.

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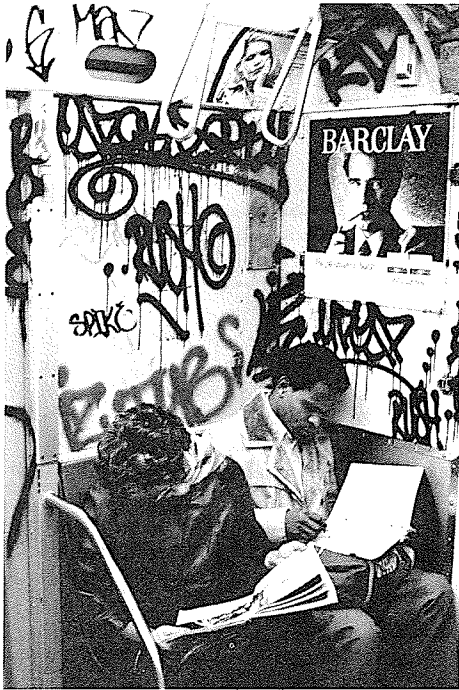
Preventing Crime

"Crime Free" by Michael Castleman, in *Social Policy* (Spring 1984), Room 1212, 33 West 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

It is hard to imagine a better candidate for a late-night holdup than a 7-Eleven convenience store. Yet while nationwide crime soared during the past eight years, the 7,000-store chain enjoyed a 56 percent drop in armed robberies.

The reason is simple: The 7-Eleven's parent, Southland Corporation, hired ex-criminal Ray Johnson to tell it how to deter would-be robbers. Johnson advised the company to move cash registers to the front of its stores, remove signs from the windows, and install exterior floodlights—all of which increased the possibility that a holdup would be seen and reported. He told the company to put the clerk and cash register on an elevated platform, so that would-be robbers could not see how much

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To subway riders, graffiti is more than a nuisance; it is an assault on the senses. Experience shows that quick cleanups of such spray-paint "art" discourage further defacement.

money was in the till, and hence know whether their risks would be well rewarded. As a finishing touch, the company sometimes installs conspicuous tape measures on the inside of front doors. This alerts criminals to the fact that clerks are trained to prepare detailed descriptions of them.

The success of the 7-Eleven formula, argues Castleman, an editor of *Medical Self-Care Magazine*, shows that "self-help" can be a more effective crime stopper than either eliminating the "breeding grounds" of crime or pushing for surer and swifter punishment.

Neighborhood watch groups are another example of effective crime fighting, he says. As many as five million Americans in 20,000 communities may be involved in such efforts. Not only do community watch groups help by reporting crimes to the police quickly, but they also serve as a signal to undesirables that the community cares and is on guard.

Signs of apathy and neglect are invitations to crime. In a 1969 experiment, Stanford University psychologist Philip Zimbardo abandoned two cars, leaving their hoods up, one in a run-down Bronx, New York, neighborhood, the other in suburban Palo Alto, California. Within a day, the Bronx car had been virtually stripped, but the Palo Alto car went untouched for weeks. Then, Zimbardo took a sledgehammer to it. Within hours, passers-by reduced it to a wreck. The lesson is borne out

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in everyday experience: Quick repair of vandalized street lights and careful design of public facilities can reduce the appearance of neglect and thus minimize damage.

Fighting crime, Castleman argues, is at least as much a matter of refusing to give criminals opportunities as it is of getting more cops on the street and tougher judges on the bench.

Is TV Creating a 'Uni-Age' Society?

"The Adultlike Child and the Childlike Adult: Socialization in an Electronic Age" by Joshua Meyrowitz, in *Daedalus* (Summer 1984), American Academy of Arts and Sciences, P.O. Box 515, Canton, Mass. 02021.

Until recently, middle-class American children and adults lived in two different worlds, each with its distinct sphere of knowledge, language, behavior, and dress. Through their control over playmates, books, and conversation, parents and schoolteachers shaped what youngsters knew about life's "nastier realities."

No longer. "Childhood as a protected and sheltered period of life has all but disappeared," observes Meyrowitz, a University of New Hampshire professor of communication.

Not only do children today speak, act, and dress more and more like adults; many younger adults, reared on TV, act and dress "like overgrown children." Designer jeans, shorts and sneakers, T-shirts: These are now standard-issue clothing in a developing "uni-age" society. Adults and children alike use profanity; youngsters address their elders by their first names. In the courts, new "children's rights" are being carved out; on television, child actors (e.g., Gary Coleman) "play the roles of adult characters who are imprisoned in children's bodies."

Why the change? In some measure, Meyrowitz suggests, America's shift from a "book culture" to a "television culture" is responsible.

Parents once controlled what crossed the thresholds of their homes, but TV opens an entirely new "doorway" which is, as a practical matter, largely beyond their ability to control. (American children aged two to five average 25 to 32 hours of TV-viewing weekly.) In sound and colored pictures, the young see adults behaving not in ways that their parents may extol, but engaged in lying, cheating, adultery, mayhem. Problems that were excluded from the world of the young—birth control, abortion, alcoholism, suicide—have made a forced entry.

In addition to expanding children's knowledge of the wider world, TV takes them "backstage" in their own homes, revealing the anxieties and fears of adulthood that parents usually try to conceal. Once children become aware that the cool, calm self-possession of their parents is sometimes "staged," they may become "more unwilling to accept all that adults do or say at face value." That may also help explain the childlike behavior of so many young adults, Meyrowitz speculates. When there is nothing left to "hide from the kids," there is less reason not to act like a kid.