

TO BE EQUAL

THE APPRENTICESHIP ALTERNATIVE

By John E. Jacob

The way America educates, trains, and utilizes its workforce is a national scandal.

We're wasting the talents of millions of people and putting ourselves at a competitive disadvantage against economic rivals like Germany, that have long-standing apprenticeship systems that prepare young people with the skills to be productive.

Most American youngsters who aren't college-bound get second-rate schooling that doesn't prepare them for skilled careers. Such vocational training as exists is usually inadequate — skills quickly become obsolete and there are no national standards that qualify people for employment.

Employers and educators have to train young people for real world jobs but few do. Very few corporations account for almost all of the \$30 billion a year business says it spends on employee training, and most of it goes for ongoing management training.

The German system makes a lot more sense than the chaotic American non-system, and it's a big reason why Germany has been so successful in international markets.

Their system is driven by three principle factors: a nationwide employer tax that finances training; national standards and accountability, and national policies that unite the schools, employers, and unions in training efforts.

Students in the 9th and 10th grades spend time in workplaces to learn about career opportunities. About age 16, they begin

training as apprentices in one of 377 occupational categories, splitting their time between school classrooms and workplaces where they learn theory and practice skills.

Along the way, they take exams to measure progress and get whatever remedial work is required to successfully complete their apprenticeships.

So German youngsters are learning competitive high-level skills and beginning careers while many of our young people drop out, work after school in menial jobs, or graduate with diplomas that don't guarantee marketable skills.

While we have escalating illiteracy rates, German youth learns to solve complex problems, work as part of a team, commit to lifelong learning, and learn independently.

It doesn't take an Einstein to figure out which way is better.

The German system isn't unusual — it's common to many countries that are performing well in the global economic race.

They take the long view — investing in a high performance workforce that gives them the edge in quality and productivity.

We take the short-term view — saving on labor costs by replacing people with machines, "dumbing down" the task workers do, and hiring part-timers. The idea seems to be that if labor costs are driven down far enough, we'll be able to compete.

But that's a dead-end strategy. We'll never drive wages down far enough to compete with the Third World countries, especially in an age in which everybody has the same tech-

nology.

Productivity and quality are the basis for competitiveness in today's world, so scrimping on investing in our people's skills is a sure-fire way to ensure economic decline.

And a highly paid, highly-skilled labor force means high

consumer demand and a rising standard of living. A low-pay, low-skill work force means low consumer demand and lower living standards.

It's time we took a long, hard look at Germany, Scandinavia, and policies that link school with careers.

We have different traditions of apprenticeship training and policies that link school with careers.

We have different traditions and history, so we can't just copy what they've done. But we can find elements of their system that can be adapted to our own



JOHN E. JACOB traditions.

The longer we wait, the more young people will drift along, unschooled and unskilled, and unprepared for responsible adulthood.

GENUINE SOUL THE LEGACY OF BLACK MUSIC

GOSPEL JAZZ

MILLER GENUINE DRAFT PRESENTS GENUINE SOUL: THE LEGACY OF BLACK MUSIC

Miller Genuine Draft is pleased to present a one-of-a-kind recording, "Genuine Soul: The Legacy of Black Music", in support of Black Music Month. African-American music has played a very important and vital role in America's history, reaching and influencing people all over the world. Available as a CD or cassette, this limited edition recording features top African-American artists primarily performing original songs! You can listen to a wide range of artists including MC Lyte, D-Nice, Third World, Branford Marsalis, Al Green and Patti Austin, just to name a few...tracing the evolution of Black music from be-bop to hip-hop, rhythm and blues, new jack swing and contemporary gospel.

Miller Genuine Draft is proud to support the celebration of Black Music Month, by offering everyone the opportunity to hear and experience this history-making recording. Look for details at participating retailers. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of "Genuine Soul: The Legacy of Black Music" will be donated to the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, providing merit scholarships to the 36 historically Black public colleges and universities throughout the country. Look for details at participating retailers.

FOR DETAILS ON ORDERING CDs AND CASSETTES CALL 1-800-MILLER 9

Miller Genuine Draft
THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOLARSHIP FUND
JANA PRODUCTIONS, INC.
Jana Productions a Division of Strachan • McDuffie Communications Group

THINK WHEN YOU DRINK
MILLER BREWING COMPANY REMINDS YOU TO PLEASE.

Miller Brewing Co., Milwaukee, WI

Keep Hope Alive... STOP THE VIOLENCE

BEAR'S AUTO REPAIR
20 years experience
SPECIALIZING IN ALL MINOR AND MAJOR AUTO REPAIRS

SENIOR, STUDENT, MILITARY DISCOUNTS WITH THIS AD

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
8 am to 6 pm
2029 W. Bonanza, Suite #D
Barry Martin (702) 648-2502
Licensed and Insured