

ビジネスマンのための英語雑誌

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なりふりかまわぬ残業過多症に米労働長官が苦言

RAY MARSHALL

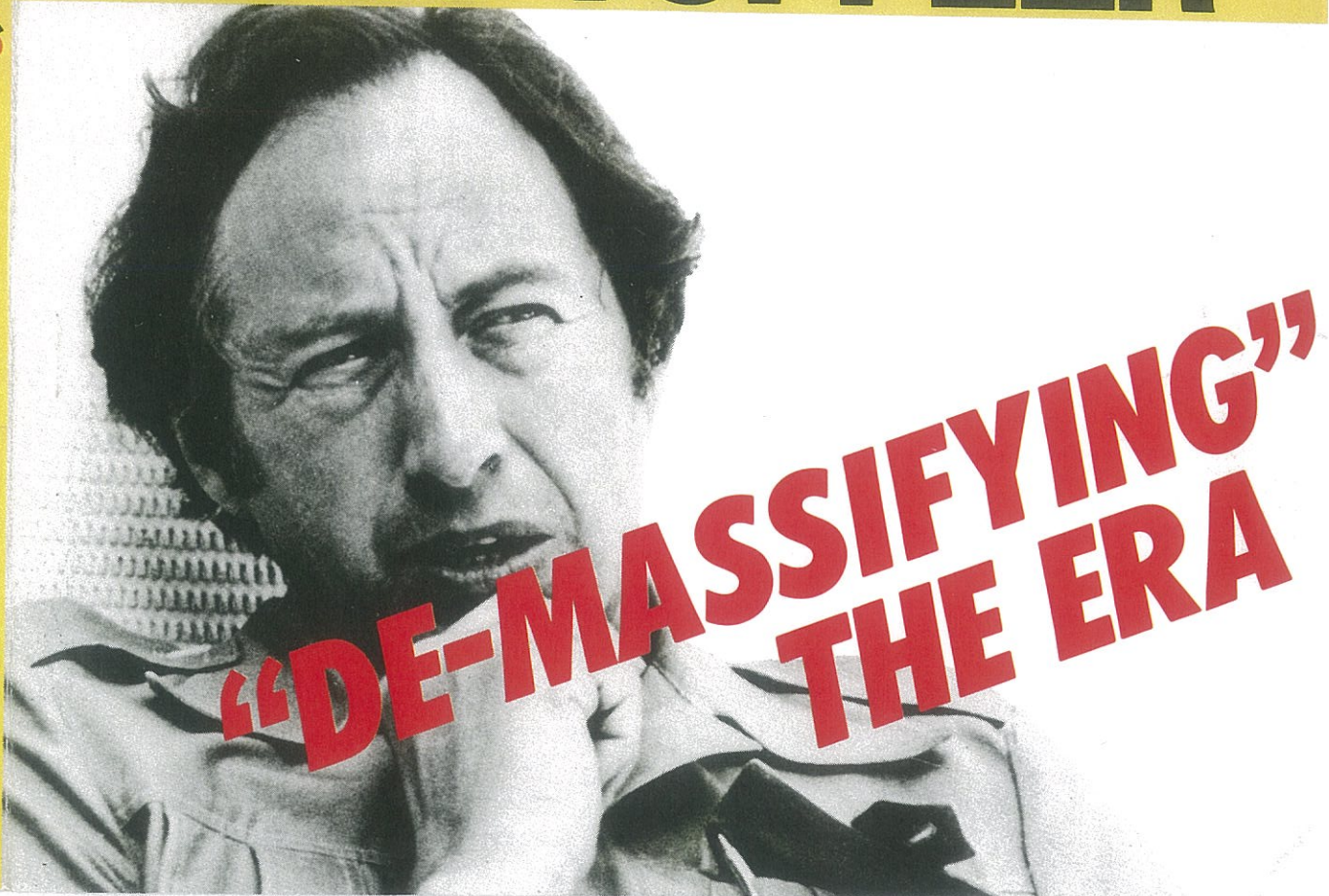


タスク・フォースが早々と明かす“レーガニックス”

LOWELL HARRISS

東京に上陸した『第三の波』の衝撃

ALVIN TOFFLER



“DE-MASSIFYING” THE ERA

●株プロビュー社●

特集：わたしたちはほんとうに
働きすぎなのでごめいましょうか



Who Says The Japanese Work Too Hard?

みんなと一緒に
楽しく働いている日本人

Thomas J. Nevins

総テクニクス・マネジメント・トランスファー代表取締役

「残業で作られた車は輸入しない」とか、日本の海外市場での成功の理由を“働きすぎ”に求める声
が大きい。

しかし、賃金の引き下げ、労働時間の延長は、い
まありえない。生産工程の機械化、自動化による労
働の減少に成功のカギがあったことを教えるべきで
ある。

そう、労働投入量を減少させた国こそ、工業国として
成功するのである。

Facing a No-Win Situation

The reason why this question has become an issue is largely because the Japanese have been successful in capturing surprisingly large shares of foreign markets, in too short a period of time. There are many reasons for this. Many of them are known by enlightened Japan hands. It is not the scope of this short essay to touch upon them.

For those who haven't studied, it is very tempting to simply say that the Japanese work too hard. This reminds us of the earlier argument which held that Japan's success in world markets was because of cheap wages. Both arguments are very wrong and very dangerous for they disguise the real reasons for Japan's productivity and business achievements. It is also most unfortunate because if foreign countries and their businessmen and policy makers are led to believe that “cheap wages” or “hard work” explain Japan's results, they face a no-win situation. Wages cannot be reduced, nor will the people of other countries readily welcome the sacrifice of working harder and longer. In the meantime, non-Japanese competitors will fail to implement the concrete management measures which have really helped Japan and time is wasted instead of developing the needed and useful Japanese practices and systems.

enlightened : (問題の全容が)わかって
いる、通じている

hands : (技量・能力などに関連しての)人
scope : 目的、意図

disguise : (正体を)隠す
business achievements : 業績

policy makers : 政策立案者

no-win : 本来の意味は「勝者のいない」で
あるが、転じて「解決不可能な、どうし
ようもない」を指す

in the meantime : (話変わって)一方では

implement : 実施する

concrete : 具体的な

flat : きっぱりした

barely : ほとんど~しない

go out of their way to : わざわざ~する

chances : 見込み, 大きな公算

overtime : 超過勤務, 超過勤務手当

thinner : thin(薄い)比較級, 塗料を薄める「シンナー」も同じ綴り

supplements : 追加, 補足

different than : = different from. than
の使用の可否については, 文法学者のあいだで意見が分かっている

conceptualized : 概念化された

transplanted : 移植される

kidding : だますこと

Can We Say that the Japanese Work Too Hard?

For most Japanese the answer is a flat no. The reason is that the Japanese really enjoy their work, and the line between work and play barely exists for most Japanese. For many Japanese, work is play and play is work. This is a big reason why they don't go out of their way to take all the days of vacation which are available to them, even though the company often very sincerely encourages them to do so. Even when a Japanese leaves work, or plays golf on a Sunday, chances are he will be with people from his company.

In the United States and other foreign countries, overtime is not paid to white collar office employees, even for very young ones just out of school at age 22 or so. In Japan, of course, it is payable until the "Kanrishoku" (manager) level at age 35 or older. Although much of the overtime worked is not recorded by the employee, nevertheless, the housewife would not be pleased if the pay envelope was suddenly thinner with no overtime supplements. I am sure that if white collar workers in the U.S. could make extra money by staying on after 5:00, many of them would. Yet very few Japanese or foreigners are even aware of this difference in practice.

If we confine our argument to the human resource area, the main reason why Japanese industry has been successful, is not that the Japanese work hard, but that they work together and enjoy their work. And it's not true, that they like to work "because they are Japanese and a little different" than most other people in the world. They enjoy their work "because of the management and behavior atmosphere in which the work. This was barely created as a conceptualized and conscious "people management strategy" which has effectively applied sound organizational-behavioral theory and common sense. Much of it can be transplanted or implemented management in other countries.

The first step, however, is for foreigners and Japanese to stop kidding themselves. Hard work didn't get the Japanese to where they are today. It would be more accurate to say that teamwork and good management did.

What the Statistics Show Us

Actually in terms of the hours worked per day or per week, there is very difference between Japan and other advanced industrial nations. When we look at the statistics