

POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION:
AN ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSE?
1750 - 2001

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a philosophical discussion of a historical review. The subject matter is post-compulsory education (except universities) and the review covers the period from 1750 to 2001. The Industrial Revolution in England is used as the starting point of the review since it is here we find sources of radical and instrumental influences on education which persist today. These factors are polarised aspects of post-compulsory education which the thesis will explain were balanced counterweights until recently.

The thesis will consider primary data in the form of official reports, unofficial documents, Green and White Papers, Royal Commissions, manifestos and Acts of Parliament. Secondary data is also surveyed in the form of critical analyses, academic texts, theses and dissertations, articles and reviews. In addition, the political and economic climate pertaining to particular periods of English history is considered as these helped to shape decision-making and contextualise the influences on post-compulsory education. The work of influential individuals is considered and analysed, as is their contribution to the formation of trends and themes. The thesis chapters are presented chronologically with reference to macro and micro-economic factors where appropriate.

The unique contribution of the work is contained in the breadth of the review and the bridging of the gap between historical events and documents and the philosophical interpretation of them as they influenced post-compulsory education. It is cross-disciplinary and offers a synthesis of material on a subject and over a timescale not presented before.

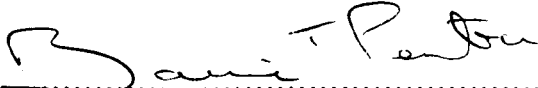
The thesis seeks to examine the contestable nature of education within the setting of post-compulsory education and the uniquely English conflict of radical and instrumental ideological ideas that have framed policy and strategy. Additionally, it contributes to the discussion about the role of post-compulsory education and the relationship between education, culture, economy and society.

The chronology is important in providing the framework for the argument: that a vocational and academic divide is especially prominent in England and its source is found in the Industrial Revolution. While the year 1750 is an arbitrary starting point it represents the decade when the Marriage Act required the writing of a signature; the first significant recorded rise in urban population and the building of the first working canal in industrial England. From there we can trace the widening gulf between radical, liberal thought which might be considered agrarian idealism and instrumental, utilitarian industrial pragmatism. For England, the industrialisation process unfolded in a peculiar way and the effect on post-compulsory education is recorded and analysed so that traditions and decision-making can be placed in historical context and their influences understood.

The thesis will help practitioners in post-compulsory education and observers from other disciplines understand the deeply historical nature of existing policy and qualifications and how we have reached the present academic and vocational divide.

DECLARATION

This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of any degree, qualification or course.

Signed  Date 28.02.02

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife SUSAN CATHERINE PENNINGTON and my son JOHN EDWARD GEORGE PENNINGTON.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	i
Abstract	ii
Declaration	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Dedication	vi
Introduction	1
Economic necessity	3
A progressive alternative	5
Transformation opportunities	8
Legitimation crisis	9
Thesis structure	11
Chapter One: 1750 – 1914, A Revolution without Education	16
Introduction	16
A Radical Tradition	17
Individualism, science and economic policy in the Industrial Revolution	21
Exhibitions, Commissions and Acts	23
Polytechnics and post-compulsory education	26
Cultural decline?	28
Untrained inventiveness	34
Working Class Colleges	37
Gradual state intervention	38
The Universities	40
Oxford and Working-Class Education	42
Democracy and Education	46
Conclusion	47

Chapter Two: 1914 – 1944, Catalysts of Change	49
Introduction	49
1918 Education Act	50
A patchwork of responses	53
A Design for Democracy	57
Improvisation, institutions and individuals	64
Education and training: separate and different	66
Education and elections	69
Key thinkers in further and adult education	70
The rise of social efficiency	76
The Spens and Norwood Reports	80
Conclusion	85
Chapter Three: 1944 – 1973, An Experiment with Consensus	89
Introduction	89
The 1944 Education Act	91
The beginnings of a legitimisation crisis	96
Tripartite answers	98
Imperfection copied	104
Post-war: illusions and reactions	105
A localised patchwork	108
Henry Ford and social efficiency	109
Post-compulsory education as a copy of industry	113
Industrial policy and the effect on post-compulsory education	115
Reports replace ideas	118
From Expansionism to Pessimism	124
The supply and demand of labour	126

Crisis vocabulary	128
Russell: light before the dark	130
Conclusion	136
Chapter Four: 1973 – 1992, National Prioritisation and the Politics of Expediency	139
Introduction	139
An economic agenda	140
The world runs on oil	144
Efficient education	146
A creature of corporate parentage	148
Enforced co-ordination	149
Prepared for the worst	153
Monetarism at the MSC	154
Controlling the statistics	159
The MSC's influence on post-compulsory education	166
Zenith and nadir	170
The Further Education Unit	172
Training for jobs?	175
Training and Vocational Education	177
A troubled quango	180
Skills shortages again	182
Getting people back to work	185
The legacy of the Manpower Services Commission	188
Post-Fordism, Japanisation and industrial decline	191
Flexible specialisation	195
New qualifications and more quangos	197

Standards and competence as policy drivers	200
An outcome style of reasoning	203
Signs of change for post-compulsory education	204
Conclusion	206
Chapter Five: 1992 – 2001, Intervention and Change	210
Introduction	210
The need for change	212
The recent processes of change in post-compulsory education	214
1992	216
Funding arrangements	220
Colleges championed	223
Governance, management and staffing of post-compulsory education	225
The business of post-compulsory education	227
The new curriculum	228
Levels of competence	233
Quality assurance in new vocationalism	236
Official reports	243
Other influential reports	247
False dawn	254
Conclusion	256
Discussion: Instrumentalism and Individualism	261
Introduction	261
The need to change perceptions	262

Britain fails in its training	264
Plato's men of gold, silver and bronze	269
Selection, values and a place in society	270
Winners and losers	276
Competence and the knowledge society	281
The Audit of War	286
Economic rationales and human capital	288
Competitive advantage of nations	292
Common sense as policy	294
Globalisation and the demise of the nation state	296
New technologies in the knowledge world	299
Education and training as links to the economy	303
Vocational Education, Social Efficiency and Democracy	305
Individualism and the work ethic	309
Problems repeating themselves	312
Educated leaders and trained followers	317
Truths and interpretations	324
A culture of fear	330
Is there a future in the past?	331
Intellectual freedom	333
Progressivism: an alternative discourse?	342
References	345
Glossary	369
Appendix One: Fordism and Flexible Specialisation	371
Appendix Two: National Targets for Education and Training	372
Appendix Three: National Learning Targets for England	373
Appendix Four: Schedule 2a Courses	374

Appendix Five: Progression through qualifications	375
Appendix Six: The Common Skills Competence Statement	376
Appendix Seven: Key Skills	377
Appendix Eight: Influences on Post-compulsory Education	
a) Royal Commissions	378
b) Other official reports	379
c) Green and White Papers	383
d) Legislation	385
e) Non-governmental reports, guidelines and discussion papers	386

INTRODUCTION

'We are all who we are, in quite large measure, because of the history of politics'

(Dunn, 2000, p.71).

Capitalism (as the organisation and use of resources for economic gain) has reconciled human limitations against state survival by mitigating most of the population's most immediate practical concerns with some acceptable degree of security. This unwritten contract has not been one of peaceful negotiation rather it is an uneasy product of a history of contestation and areas of power struggle. In a less populated world (pre-Industrial Revolution) it was a relatively easy venture for the state to control events through constraint and coercion. Industrialisation forced governments to rethink their models of behaviour management yet the imprint of past successful approaches remain as forceful habits on political decision making.

Radical education in the nineteenth century was an oppositional movement to Tory-Anglican orthodoxy. Secular knowledge had an intrinsic excitement since it was not constrained by political or religious dogma as keys to understanding the world and people within it. Radicals engaged in a vigorous educational practice which would be called adult education today but would be misleading at that time. Rather the child/adult differences were less emphasised then and radicals believed that all members of society could take part in a lifelong learning 'educational enterprise'. There was, among radical believers, a heightened sense of purpose that education would remove superstition and balance the ideological resources of state authority with informality, improvisation and the ephemeral.

As the need for a national education framework developed it became one that was highly regulated and which corresponded to a new set of social conditions: regular work patterns, principles of discipline and deference and organisation by rules.

Schooling had the additional effect of accentuating the child/adult distinction in terms of learning experience and also further delineating gender and class differences. Radical themes were subsumed because of powerfully supported 'solutions' and as the underlying social conditions became more hostile to a seemingly uncontrolled alternative. The notion of working class 'demand' for universal education is somewhat misplaced in that prevailing economic relations and changes in ways of earning money are themselves active forces. The main virtue of the 'demand' explanation is that it provides a place of popular agency should anyone wish to see this part of history as one of a victory over capitalism. If this is an accurate representation then the victory was Pyrrhic.

Johnson (1988) asks if radical education (as a source of meaningful lifelong learning) is recoverable. He suggests that this is possible under the right conditions but he is right to point out that it is who produces the knowledge and poses the questions that is just as much a central issue now as it was in the nineteenth century. He contests that self-education (or knowledge as self-production) is the only knowledge that really matters - ultimately you cannot be taught, you can only learn.

This thesis is a philosophical study of a contested area of education. The post-compulsory experience in England has provided a bedrock of radical tradition against a state-sponsored instrumentalism as this historical survey will demonstrate. It has, however, suffered the same fate as universal, compulsory education in that it has been 'normalised' as a confined and confining product which serves to represent a particular view of the future. The basis of this thesis is that a 'progressive discourse' is isolated and rejected because of the political gain to be achieved through an individualistic, instrumental discourse. Drawing upon the analyses made by Michel Foucault (1978, 1980) I wish to outline how the latter has attained dominance yet is actually counter to the stated aims of a 'renaissance in learning' (DfEE.1998).

This position may appear to be a Marxist representation of the hegemony of the capitalist state in securing its control through subordination of the greater percentage of the population. Marxist theory would suggest that such power is an economic one. In fact the theoretical basis outlined here is that power is exercised in many levels of social life and in the way we behave as subjects. This is somewhat fatalistic and as a practitioner in post-compulsory education I have to regard it as a cul-de-sac proposition. Power is productive as well as repressive and there is a positivism in how we may regard the future should we ask the right questions. Foucault suggests:

'What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repressive.'

(1980, p.119).

Economic necessity

Governments increasingly face contradictions in the way the state is represented to the people. The economic necessity for greater worker flexibility and innovation has resulted in new organisational forms supported by an attendant vocabulary of change. 'Multi-skilling' swims in the same river as 'employability' in a deliberate area of language use which mixes trepidation of an unknown jobs future with the vague but seductive promise of social enhancement via continuous training. Given this analysis we can see that shifts in the economy have been supported by ideological and policy shifts in education and training under the misnomer 'lifelong learning.'

It has been necessary to create a completely new curricula of vocational experiences to 'normalise' a particular view of the future through a strategic, institutionalised discourse which is contingent and challengeable. 'Discourse' here is used not only as a form of language and debate but also as activities and relationships which are used to shape, change and control education and training for an instrumental purpose. It is proposed here that there are many alternatives to the prevailing representation of the future which are equally as valid for the 'renaissance' of learning in England. I believe that post-compulsory education would be ideally situated to provide that experience.

Balanced against the need for a flexible workforce is the contradiction of offering real choice in an open marketplace of appropriate qualifications. The discourse of a multi-skilled pool of labour is misleading since the implications of a post-Fordist world is one of extreme differentiation. The minority experience is being represented as the norm (in that it is 'normal' to be a core, high-skill worker). While people may strive for this goal it will be increasingly unachievable as global markets fragment, realign then dissolve at greater rates than ever before. Employability replaces employment as the social contract between state and people is managed by a fear discourse (Ferudi, 1996). Such a discourse is neither neutral nor benign when used in this way. It is an exercise of power in social formations which is strategic and ongoing and is an active process which attempts to maintain the semblance of normality and to manage issues in a period of uncertainty:

'Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy.'

(Foucault, 1978, pp.101 -102).

The nature of this instrumental discourse and the apparent validity of its source (the 'government') corrals people (especially within the workforce) into disciplined and known patterns of behaviour as they strive to operate within the curricula constraints made for but not by them. Such behaviours become more readily managed within an actual social structure of employment inequality (they may never have the right number or type of qualifications but to give up is an admission of individual failure). The fact that alternative discourses are excluded or even denied to exist is a product of the way the dominant political discourse is constructed (Hake and Meijer). It is also indicative of the behavioural parentage of instrumentalism that the driving motivation behind it is economic (personal gain) rather than the liberation of thought that would accompany a true renaissance.

A progressive alternative

I have worked as a lecturer in further education colleges for 12 years. The differentiation between adult, further and post-compulsory terms has become increasingly blurred and practitioners often freely mix references without distinction. I have settled on the phrase 'post-compulsory' since it adequately refers to a range of experiences which not only includes colleges, outreach centres, self-directed study and distance learning but also to a distinctly different set of methodologies which mark it out from the university approach.

My interest is driven by a passion for lifelong learning as an individual process rather than as an instrument of policy. It is the socialising and perspective transforming aspects which, I believe, are the real foundations of a learning renaissance. The act of passing from one mentality to another makes us more human in the transforming. This is a personal experience and one which is learned and not taught (though it can

be guided). As a practitioner I have become aware of the instrumental demands placed upon colleges to be part of a vocational discourse which excludes radical alternatives. Attempts to engage learners in an experiment with other possible sources and definitions of learning are met with resistance or open hostility. I have concluded that learners have become practised in the observance of credential-gathering behaviour which they assume affords them a positional good in society (ie. one that is scarce and financially beneficial for them).

As a teacher trainer latterly, I have felt that my desire for discussion on the subject of methodologies, the nature of training and education and the perceived need for particular qualifications in a closely defined market was at odds with the demands made by the courses I taught and the expectations of trainee teachers. The encouragement of creativity, an enquiring mind or simply a love of learning seemed excluded by the structure and formalities of presentation which I felt did not do justice to potential teachers or the learners who would eventually look to them for inspiration. The gulf between the radical past and an instrumental future, therefore, became the subject of this research. A progressive alternative exists in which 'safe' behaviourism can be contested as narrow and short-term.

The role of the colleges as an institutionalised form of dominant instrumental discourse is obvious to those who worked in colleges before incorporation on 1st April 1993. Before then there was an acceptance of difference and a belief in the liberating power of a general education. The need for a competent worker had equal status with the need for a *thinking* worker and parity of esteem between education and training was an academic discussion rather than a barrier to learning. The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act was a value-laden end through controlled means providing a singular curriculum way of life of top-down instrumentalism. While a liberal education links thought with action (and consequences) a new vocationalism produced a cultural ideological shift which linked qualifications with a perceived

promise of employability. The ability to develop a transitive consciousness had all but disappeared except for a few who could access a wider, general education experience by virtue of their cultural capital.

A political dominant discourse normalises institutional (college) activity through the structure of the main qualifications offered (vocational), the funding restrictions attached to the 'market' of those qualifications, the attendant prescriptive managerialism and administration plus the reductionism within the teaching profession converting teachers into deliverers of pre-packaged modules of information. Supporting this are politicised demands made upon management to provide statistics to justify funding arrangements and contractual restraints on teachers to control inputs (time, resources) and outputs (numbers of students who qualify).

Interpretations of these factors as representative of actual need and demand are contingent upon the position of their promoters within society. I wish to present here an argument that to real promoters of this discourse are in a minority and cannot truly represent a majority of the populace. Neither can a purely instrumental approach achieve the goals of a 'well-educated' labour force (*The Learning Age: a renaissance for a new Britain*, 1998, p.4). A liberating education is critical and evaluative. It provides learners with the cognitive skills with which to balance alternatives and make informed decisions outside of political assumptions made for them. The history of post-compulsory education provided here is necessary to demonstrate that it has been a focus of contestation throughout that time between those in a position to define what is legitimate knowledge and those excluded from decision-making. New vocationalism serves to limit horizons of transformation to the 'here-and-now' rather than 'what can be' through heightened intellectual awareness and a collective will to change.

Transformation opportunities

It became apparent that professionals within post-compulsory education were in open retreat from a discourse which had considerable economic sanctions at its disposal. There remains the positive possibility, however, of radical change in which 'new spaces, relationships and identities... (are) ... created that allow us to move across borders, to engage difference ... as part of a discourse of justice, social engagement and democratic struggle' (Giroux, 1992, p.129). To create those spaces is an act of faith and courage but also an obligation on the post-compulsory teaching profession.

Foucault's (*op.cit*) concept of intellectuals taking up struggles connected to democratic ideals must be related to Gramsci's (1929) notion that everyone is potentially an intellectual though not identified as such by social function. Gramsci also believed that 'all men (*sic*) are philosophers' (p.323) and that intellectualisation was a process of educational function and its source in class hierarchy. It is worth stressing the relationship between Gramsci and Foucault's observations particularly in the area of discourse. Gramsci felt that every social group creates organically one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function in social, political and economic fields. In this way, habits of behaviour are formed and reproduced in as much that more dominant strata allow them to function in certain ways. Gramsci's notion was that the 'engaged' intellectual (rather than pure functionary within a given set of rules) connected his or her work to broader social concerns that affected their perceptions of relationships within the world. Active intellectuals (which can mean anyone) make connections between what is and what can be separate from enforced and artificial parameters of possibility. This is radical education using the motivation of transforming perspectives as its core belief for the power of the instrumental discourse is contingent (likely to happen but not necessarily so) on the increasingly fragile relationship between qualifications accumulation and personal economic security.

Gramsci's hegemony (dominant authority) theory has two meanings here: a process within a civil society whereby a fraction of the populace exercises control through cultural, moral and intellectual leadership and how a particular view of the world is maintained as 'truth' in order to shape the interests and needs of subordinate groups. Cultural resources are distributed unequally and instrumentalism imposes limits on such resources by making them a factor of the 'here-and-now' (ie. they have to be replaced frequently to have currency). I believe that this, in turn, will lead to a overheating in the vocational qualifications structure as those participating in the vocational training experience will reach 'burnout' in a frustrating search for core, permanent worker status.

Legitimation crisis

This will produce a legitimation crisis (Habermas, 1976) for the government.

Habermas explains (p.38) that:

'The state apparatus no longer, as in liberal capitalism, merely secures the general conditions of production ... but is now actively engaged in it. It must, therefore, ... be legitimated, although it can no longer rely on residues of tradition that have been undermined and worn out during the development of capitalism.'

On the subject of contesting alternatives he adds (pp.37-38):

'To ward off system crisis, advanced capitalist societies focus all forces of social integration at the point of the structurally most probable conflict - in order all the more effectively to keep it latent.'

At the same time, in doing so they satisfy the political demands of reformist labour parties.'

The point of probable conflict in Britain is the 16 - 19 age group which signifies the normal age of entry into the workplace. Post-compulsory education has a tradition of supporting this portion of the community and became a valuable if unwilling ally in government attempts to change attitudes and motivations in line with an enterprise culture and then lifelong learning. This manipulation of an entire education sector is a constructed logic which claims authority over self-realisation (the achievement of a continually developing personality as a result of self-determined learning). It serves only to replicate a closed system of education which deters and defends against the virtues of reflective practice and critical adaptability. The crisis which advanced states face can only be addressed by an open society with its citizens actively participating from a foundation of political awareness yet the curricula experiences for the majority will actually contribute to a deepening legitimisation crisis through a repetition of learned formulae and assertive common-sense morality detached from a moral justification.

Politicised lifelong learning, therefore, attempts to legitimate a constructed logic with behavioural objectives cloaked in liberal terms. The *Learning Age* is a safe haven for instrumentalism. Its two chief mechanisms of change - the University for Industry and Individual Learning Accounts - have already struck serious credibility barriers. The Ufi has succeeded in attaining more students for colleges but is also contributing to the eventual dissolution of the traditional college experience by advocating distance learning through modular packages. The ILAs have a worse history to record. These were formally dissolved in December 2001 with headline accusations of (unsubstantiated) mass fraud.

Change today is so rapid, ubiquitous and unpredictable that it eclipses state considerations of employment and focal points of crisis. A learning society cannot be built on hyperbole which maintains inequalities through competitive individualism.

Thesis structure

The breadth of this historical survey is unique. Like Foucault, I wish to become involved in the *how* of constructed logic by engaging in a dialogue with the past. While the term 'post-compulsory education' is meaningless in the Industrial Revolution at a time when there was no national elementary provision, it is to 1750 that we can begin to trace the factors of cultural capital and the peculiar attitude of the English to education which remain powerful constructions today.

This thesis places post-compulsory education in a philosophical perspective which a review of the literature demonstrates as fragmented and incomplete (Smithers and Robinson, 2000). The unique interpretation is that it requires historical breadth to give meaning to present policy as representative of a constructed logic. A new synthesis of materials is appropriate to emphasise issues of a continuing academic/vocational divide which has no essential justification and which contradicts stated values of inclusion and participation. This is especially relevant to post-compulsory traditions which were sources of radical and alternative discourses and champions of liberating experiences throughout the period of extensive industrialisation.

Chapter One (1750 - 1914) explains how the Industrial Revolution in England contributed to formulating persistent and peculiar trends in educational policy making. Against a background of upheavals and revolutions the English elite managed to sustain itself. Indeed, the industrialisation process unfolded without the need for a

universal compulsory education system. The radical alternatives are discussed through the Chartist and Co-operative movements and particular far-sighted individuals as philosophical spring sources for post-compulsory ideals. In the vacuum of laissez-faire government there appeared a rich seam of enlightenment which provided themes and characteristics for adult educators in years to come. The work of several Royal Commissions is discussed since they warned of state complacency against the increasing evidence of international trading competition.

Chapter Two (1914 - 1944) traces the important developmental years for post compulsory education when significant thinkers put their ideas into practice and offered a liberating antidote to the drudgery of factory life. Britain was having to rethink its place in world affairs as it became obvious that it could not meet the expectations of its people who had given so much for military success. By now it was apparent that the emerging compulsory sector (since 1870) was making political and economic demands on governments unfamiliar with such massive social intervention. Post-compulsory education remained excluded from mainstream decision making despite its low cost ability to compensate for the inadequacies of the new compulsory sector. The potential of post-compulsory learning was recognised by both the 1918 and 1944 Education Acts but lack of funds thwarted best intentions. What did occur was the formulation of a tripartite strategy (later compromised to bipartite) which followed a Platonic division of educational 'best fit.' This trend gained and sustained a hold on government attitudes which was transmitted to parents via a system of language use and institutionalised vocabulary.

The social experiment with consensus - including education - which immediately followed the end of World War Two is discussed in Chapter Three (1944 - 1973). Political stability was possible under the guise of a consumer boom and sound employment prospects. There were few crisis points in education and the age of entry into the workplace provided few difficulties because it was a time of large private and

public bodies who were mass employers. The post-compulsory experience supported the supervisor/foreman class in night school and apprentices on day release but managed to maintain its liberal approach to studies throughout this period.

Community courses unrelated to qualifications flourished. By the early 1970s the idealism that characterised the immediate post-war years had evaporated as Middle East conflicts and oil crises exposed Britain's vulnerability in world markets.

Britain was ill-prepared and mostly unprotected as external factors it could no longer influence began to impinge on economic policy. The apparently irrefutable logic of Fordism which had so effectively galvanised industry was found desperately wanting in the new world order. What happened thousands of miles away *did* affect government. The cost of maintaining a burgeoning compulsory sector left post-compulsory work to drift in the backwater of political thought.

Chapter Four (1973 - 1992) considers the global and national changes which were to influence the post-compulsory sector so much. Both Labour and Conservative parties sought new rationalities and new constructs of logic to counter failing economic responses. While the economy remained firmly fixated on its old ties with the finance markets it was necessary for other aspects of society to change in order to fit long-standing traditions. James Callaghan's 1976 Ruskin speech can be regarded as the fulcrum of changing attitudes in terms of educational accountability. His words were not lost on an incoming Conservative government which sought a root and branch change to education at all levels. To support a drive towards 'relevance' and 'competence' in the workplace a whole new curriculum experience had to be devised. A powerful new quango - the Manpower Services Commission - epitomised a direct link between enterprise and education; individual aspirations and personal economic success. The MSC's role in formulating new areas of rhetoric to serve a common sense policy of value and effectiveness cannot be underestimated since it reflects an

increasing affection of government for non-accountable quangos and the ability of a new constructed logic to take hold of public thought in such a overwhelming manner.

Chapter Five (1992 - 2001) explores the impact of the Further and Higher Education Act. Though hastily drawn up and rapidly rushed through Parliament it changed the face of post-compulsory education overnight negating the softening effects of liberal traditions in one movement. Quangos were created to administer it and control outputs through a strict finding regime which effectively controlled the learning experiences through new vocationalism. Institutions unfamiliar with the rigours of profit and loss found the workplace reduced of teaching practitioners but awash with administrators.

An incoming Labour government did not change these priorities. Several important official reports which, in many ways, suggested a return to a more liberal past were politicised into a lifelong learning experiment which made 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' an either/or choice. Participation seemed compulsory on pain of derision. The role, nature and influence of the new regime is explored and the highly contentious issues of skills shortages, competence and globalisation are discussed in an alternative discourse.

The Discussion brings the concepts of a peculiarly English tradition of academic and vocational differentiation together. The use of official reports to weave a new lifelong learning logic is demonstrated as instrumentalism by another name. It is suggested that the complex qualifications policy will actually result in a *decline* in the nation's skill base as people disengage from an unproductive system. Lifelong learning is not a political tool but an individual process of discovery. To make it an arm of economic decision making is inviting a legitimation crisis based on an impoverished instrumental qualifications structure.

If a true renaissance of learning is to occur then it must be one of enlightenment and not constraint. If a government 'owns' the marketplace of learning then it must offer transforming educational experiences for its population. A self-directed learner has access to alternative perspectives for understanding their relationships in society and how they might change them. Controlling those experiences - it must be assumed - is derived from fear and a need to sustain the rarity value of cultural capital. A community liberated by education in the truest sense ('leading out' from the darkness of ignorance to the light of understanding) would be difficult to manage and manipulate. A progressive alternative is suggested not only from a practitioner's perspective but as a gauntlet to the dominant policy. Is there a place for a perspective transforming Charter for Andragogy in the new learning Britain? It is essential that the debate on lifelong learning transcends the mere academic and this thesis attempts to place this relatively uncontested policy in the public domain and contribute to an alternative radical discourse.

CHAPTER ONE: 1750 - 1914**A REVOLUTION WITHOUT EDUCATION****Introduction**

This chapter surveys the beginnings of those concepts, ideals, bodies and individuals which, together, found common ground in what was to become post-compulsory education. It is to the Industrial Revolution that we must seek to find sources of tradition, trends, attitudes and responses for it is that period in English history which witnessed upheavals at almost every level of English life making changes in other aspects of society inevitable. Industrialisation polarised debate and activity into key areas not least of which was education. Since we are encouraged to believe that we are experiencing another revolution - of silicon, communications and knowledge - it is timely to reflect on how the first Industrial Revolution occurred almost in isolation of government support and influence and in the absence of mass education

Education has always had a strong relationship with work. This is especially so of English education and the division of that education into vocational and academic, mass-produced and elitist. Williams (1961) notes the first English schools from the late sixth century had a basically vocational intention: the training of intending priests and monks. As education expanded in the middle ages its role was still vocational as it prepared knights, squires, future clerics and craftsmen for their roles in life. This remained true throughout the eighteenth century which was remarkable for the growth in new vocational academies serving commerce, engineering, navigation and the armed services - young people here pursued courses to prepare them for an occupation already implied by their status and social rank. Old classical education was reserved for those entering the Church, the Law and, later, the Civil Service.

The Industrial Revolution forced thinking into a conscious reproduction of strata in education as a reflection of society and anticipated work patterns. The central theme of the thesis will be the perpetuation of this academic/vocational divide as a deliberate political mechanism through the period from England's Industrial Revolution up to the present. In particular, the work will concentrate on the desire and attempts of post-compulsory education during this period to overcome the undemocratic nature of the education system with its heritage of general, liberal trends. A radical, liberal tradition has found fresh political favour in terms of widening participation, inclusive practice and, especially, lifelong learning.

There is a source of division within the assessment process which is driven by links to jobs and professions. It provided a neat mechanism by which the middle class could gain and defend an elite position in society as the administrators of capitalism and commerce through specialist knowledge and skills. It was only during the Industrial Revolution that - as Williams (*op.cit*, p.9) describes it - '... the old humanists muddled the issue by claiming a fundamental distinction between their traditional learning and that of the new disciplines', notably science and technical education. Watts (1985, p.6) claims that: '... elite educational institutions ... tended to propagate a particular academic and cultural heritage which was associated with a gentlemanly disdain for vocational application and particularly for industrial manufacture.' Wiener (1981, p.127) had similarly concluded that a 'gentrification of the industrialist' had taken place and that cultural factors contributed significantly to Britain's economic decline.

A Radical Tradition

The characteristic feature of English adult working class education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the centralisation of administrative control into the hands of upper class people and institutions. The Adult Schools were, typically, organised

by landed or religious gentry; the Mechanics' Institutes by the manufacturers and associates in government; the Working Men's College, University Extension Programme and the Social Settlement by the clergy, welfare workers and middle class educationalists. While the working class were welcome in the classroom their programme of instruction was determined by their 'betters'. The belated appearance of a co-ordinated adult education for the working class can be attributed to a repressive regime against trade unions, a concentrated effort in the elementary sector and the control of real knowledge with a minority ruling elite (Hodgen, 1925).

When it did emerge, however, it drew its inspiration from a range of political radicals who attributed a central importance to education as a socialising and civilising influence. That English radical tradition in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries owed much to the work of French philosophers and the influence of the French Revolution (Hinden, 1964). This, in turn, placed it in a precarious position with the British government which found the notion of a popular uprising too disturbing to contemplate.

John Locke is perhaps the spring source of English radicalism. He suggested (1671) that the mind was a blank - a *tabula rasa* - and that its ideas were formed by external influences through the body's senses. These transactions and collections of information created intellect and character with education and the environment acting as prime stimuli. In this way, society itself could be improved by the improvement of men's (sic) minds. Education was a positive form of social engineering.

Such thoughts influenced Tom Paine (*Rights of Man*, 1791), William Godwin (*Political Justice*, 1793) and Robert Owen (*A New View of Society*, 1813). Paine was highly influenced by the emancipatory episodes in France and America which served to strengthen his belief in equality and freedom for all. He followed this with a trenchant criticism of prevailing religious beliefs which he found to be hypocritical

and a force of indoctrination. Control by the Church was a bar to social change and his *Rights of Man* was banned for twenty years for saying so.

Godwin (*ibid*) firmly believed that people only begin to know themselves when they recognise that there are no limits to improvement which they cannot overcome by their own efforts. They will only exert the effort towards success if they rid themselves of the fettering prejudices of the 'chilling system of occult and inexplicable causes and consider the human mind as an intelligent agent' (p.112). Such assertions were countered by mechanical philosopher Adam Smith who believed that the only difference between a philosopher and a street porter lay not in natural talent but in habit, custom and (rigidly controlled) education.

For Jeremy Bentham, the purpose of social organisation was happiness which was best achieved by individuals following their own best interest guided by pure knowledge untrammelled by state intervention. In certain areas, Benthamites advocated strong government influence (public health, poor laws and education). Bentham believed that 'education is only government acting by means of the domestic magistrate' (1780, p.14). He is, therefore, regarded as the founder of individualism and utilitarianism on the one hand and the source of a changing attitude to social intervention through commissions, reports and inspectorates on the other.

Bentham's contemporary was Robert Owen who pursued a humanistic, liberating education for all. For him men were made in infancy and a good education influenced society for 'it is only by education, rightly understood, that communities of men can ever be well governed and by means of education every object of human society will be attained with the least labour and the most satisfaction' (1821, p.34). Any error in the formation of character was not the fault of the individual but that of the teachers and conditions under which that person lived. By changing those conditions and the nature of the teaching it would be possible to change the character of the entire

population. The 'right' kind of education was one that understood the external world and one which developed reason so that superstition, dogma and indoctrination would be overcome.

Carlyle, Thompson, Hodgskin, Lovett, Cleave, Watson, Hetherington, O'Brien and Harney were to figure prominently among radical activists in the 1830s and 1840s - all passionately convinced that education had the power to transform society and raise people above the daily drudgery of their work. Many went to jail for these beliefs (including Carlyle for 6 years and Lovett for 2) which only served to give them time to consolidate and formalise their beliefs in writing.

Their theories bordered on the revolutionary. William Thompson held that a worker was entitled to the full value of his product and that society defrauded him of it. His *Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth* (1850) suggested that labourers must become capitalists and acquire the necessary knowledge and insight to make capital work for them. The hold of the Establishment on power-knowledge defied the 'natural laws of distribution' (p.4). Through the co-operative movement, these natural laws found fertile ground through the acquisition and diffusion of pure knowledge unfettered by political bias. This was different from Owen's utopian viewpoint in that Thompson was a materialist. The role of education as a liberating force, however, remained a constant Magnetic North.

From the 1790s, thinking about popular education was conditioned by new social ideals and by responses to social changes. Efforts to establish schools came from a variety of sources: political and social radicals, philanthropists, social engineering utilitarianism, laissez-faire economists and the evangelical movement. Ideals of justice, rights and education blended together uneasily with social control. The writings of economist Adam Smith and Benthamite philosophy dominated this era with ideas of minimal legislative interference, interplay of free forces and utilitarian

social ideals (including a preoccupation with useful knowledge and, hence, education).

Individualism, science and economic policy in the Industrial Revolution

The English Industrial Revolution was a unique phase in the history of the world. That it occurred at all was the culmination of a diverse but interacting set of circumstances: a record series of harvests, the discovery and exploitation of steam power, the design of mass-production machines, centralised power and control in one city (London has few comparisons where administrative, fiscal, political and economic power are found in one location), cheap labour and cheap raw materials from a vast empire. While the politics of the period are labelled *laissez-faire* there was, in fact, systematic government support for merchants and manufacturers in the shape of import tariffs and protection of markets overseas.

Britain's far flung colonies usually meant that the Royal Navy was fighting somewhere at some time and wars are natural sources of technological advances. The government adopted a policy which deliberately promoted trade through colonisation and protection made possible, as Hudson (1992, p.18) noted 'by the emergence of a new kind of British state with a fully reorganised fiscal and military apparatus, heavy taxation, and a professional bureaucracy'.

Hudson (*ibid.* p.31) describes the nineteenth century situation as:

'Internally the maintenance of order and justice, and much economic and social regulation, were devolved locally and the power of the state was diluted by a patronage system which provided income and office for members of the landed classes. Internal economic regulations also

declined... But the military expansionism overseas was a different matter: the fiscal and borrowing implications had a major effect on the internal economy and on social and political life'.

The greatest impetus came from the process of invention and factory application of mechanical aids to production through steam power. The work of Isaac Newton represents a watershed in the history of science in that he offered mechanistic solutions of immense explanatory power to problems and debate of the time. His theories start the march of triumph for the 'mechanical philosophy' in which Nature is seen as a great machine.

For Carlyle (1829, p.441), this discredited the artisan and represented a 'loss of faith in individual endeavour and 'natural force'. Ranged against Carlyle's humanistic philosophy was Jeremy Bentham who believed that 'in every human beast ... self-regarding interest is predominant over social interest' and 'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure' (*op.cit*). In these two works we witness the contrast between internal and external control of events, free will and mechanical forces, the spiritual and utilitarian. What is important to this chapter is how education became caught up in the sharply contrasted debate.

Hobsbawm (1968) concluded that Britain won the first industrial revolution but lost the second because the output of technological progress was a function of the input of scientifically qualified staff, equipment and money into research projects. Yet, he observes, that many industries chose to make progress in the same way using science as and when manual labour was hopelessly deficient and even then it was left to the classic British compromise of an amateur contriving a machine of convenience rather than a highly refined and tested piece of machinery. The distancing of invention from marketing is also apparent as factory owners sought out inventors rather than vice versa.

The individualism that drove much of industrial development and invention is typified by Michael Faraday who discovered the law of induction, was first to produce an electric current from a magnetic field, invented the electric motor and dynamo and demonstrated the relation between electricity and chemical bonding all without any formal scientific education. Indeed he was mathematically inept using plain language and diagrams to explain his work since he did not understand equations. Though born in 1791, Faraday's approach was already an established English practice. One visiting German physics professor commented in 1780: '(He) ... could scarcely find words to describe what wretched people English artificers generally were in matters of theory. He cannot conceive how they continue so excellently to construct machines which they nevertheless often explain and understand quite incorrectly' (Kelly, 1962, p.75).

Voluntarism and individualism were the norm and several Royal Commissions (Newcastle 1858-1861, Clarendon 1861-1864, Taunton 1864-1868, Devonshire 1870-75, Samuelson 1882-84, Cross 1886-88 and Bryce 1894-95) were critical of educational standards at all levels and all made some reference to the link between national development and universal education. The seemingly continuous string of such Commissions might, at first, indicate a change of heart by government and a move towards a more structured, national response to technical training. International exhibitions and legislation might also suggest a co-ordinated and committed policy. A survey here will reveal otherwise.

Exhibitions, Commissions and Acts

Betts (1998) has noted that the campaign for technical education can be traced to the aftermath of Great Exhibition of 1851. T.H. Huxley, when interviewed by the Samuelson Commission in 1881/84, had observed a changing perception after that

event which had meant to be a showcase of British technical expertise. Huxley had previously given evidence to the Devonshire Commission on Scientific Instruction and the Advancement of Science that: 'The great blunder that our people make ... is attempting to teach from books ... The consequence is, that when they attempt to deal with scientific teaching, they make nothing of it' (p16).

Trade and commerce exhibitions were a means to an end. The emphasis on *just* technical training was also singular in focus and had the result of drawing attention away from the growing need for administrative, marketing and management techniques which France, Germany and America were so obviously engaging. Edwards (2000,) noted that there was ambivalence among manufacturers towards innovation and training dedicated towards it: 'They believed that empiricism and scientific understanding had only a limited impact on the developments that were taking place... and ...the educated amateur and educated man strengthened resistance to science-based innovation' (p.293).

Owens (1987) suggests that: 'There had been little impetus for technical education as there had always been a plentiful supply of labour in spite of economic growth and skill in industry was easily acquired' (p.76). With more advanced machinery and new industries of chemicals and electricity these assumptions were increasingly tenuous.

Governments, however, looked to other factors to assuage these fears. The 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War seemed to remove France as an industrial competitor and Britain had profited from the American Civil War. The death of Prince Albert - an enthusiastic supporter of science and education - no doubt adversely affected public opinion on these matters. While the 1870 Elementary Education Act was a success on the statute books, its practical limitations became evident almost immediately as local authorities responded to it with mixed efforts. There was still a marked lack of

technical instruction with no direct link between the new elementary schools and what was required afterwards.

The schools followed an existing pattern of curriculum and did not look forward to new skills required in industry and commerce. Keane (1970) notes that the proponents of technical education faced the same uphill struggle even after the 1870 Act was in place: 'Public opinion seemed indifferent, if not hostile, to the introduction of a public system of technical instruction and ... until the fortuitous arrival of the "whiskey money" in 1890 it was largely from a few progressive industrialists that the most significant developments owed their origin' (p.356).

A.J. Mundella (industrialist, MP for Sheffield and Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, 1880-1885) had previously witnessed the effectiveness of education in Saxony (a compulsory system) and, having travelled in every part of the country: '... he could bear testimony to the fact that there was scarcely a child of ten or twelve years of age in that country ... who could not read and write correctly and with ease' (Hansard, 12 March 1869). By 1896 this Saxony continuation school system was being described by Dale (Board of Education Chief Inspector of Elementary Schools) as 'one of the greatest experiments ever made in the history of education' (p.483). He noted that a boy of 15 or 16 would have become a working member of an industrial community and would be contributing to improvements in manufacture and in planning processes (p.484).

The popular notion that a sound general education generated the best foremen and managers was accepted but the Liberals who instigated it fell from power in 1885. The hard work of pursuing the cause of technical and continuation education was left to individuals and interest groups and Betts (1984) has noted that the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 can be credited to a specially created pressure group - the

National Association for the Promotion of Technical Education - the last and most successful effort of the technical educationalists in the 1860s and 1870s.

Polytechnics and post-compulsory education

Another activist of note was Quintin Hogg who opened the London Polytechnic in Regent Street in 1881 (though this was a result of several expansion moves going back to the one roomed 'ragged school' in York Place in 1864). Hogg's industrial courses were wholeheartedly approved by the London Trades Council because they were practical and because they were given only to recognised apprentices. In this way the Polytechnic avoided conflict with union interests. By the time Samuelson had reported in 1884 Hogg was running courses in bricklaying, metal plating, electrical engineering, plumbing, clock making, marine instrumentation, mathematics and technical drawing. The Polytechnic was so well organised that it came under the provisions of the City Parochial Charities Act of 1883 and received grants of £11,750 immediately and £3,500 each year afterwards. With Regent Street as a model other polytechnics were established (nine by 1897 with a total enrolment of 26,000 - the greater majority were manual workers).

Hogg's Polytechnic was 'a piece of life-long philanthropy by a city merchant' (Wood, 1932, p.3) and much inspired by his evangelical upbringing. The practical nature of its work was slowly broadened to include the arts and women were admitted. The age limits were removed and in 1894 the London Polytechnic Council was created to regulate funding, arrange examinations, standardise teaching and co-ordinate administration.

Cotgrove (1958, p.33), however, remarks that:

'It is difficult to see how ... technical instruction could have developed other than as an extension of night school ... [which] ... began as an attempt to meet the educational needs of those who worked in the day; it continued in making good the deficiencies in the three R's' and as these were increasingly met by the extension and improved efficiency of the public elementary system, evening class emphasis shifted to vocational training.'

Moreover, traditions established by the mechanics' institutes of giving scientific instruction to make better workmen, the inferior status of scientific and technical studies, the middle class hold on universities and the prevailing laissez-faire philosophy which sanctioned state aid only as an intervention into poor relief influenced governments to provide funds for technical instruction of the working classes which, as a consequence, usually meant evening classes. These traditions were reinforced by the scepticism of most industrialists about the teaching of a trade away from the workshop.

A more substantial development of day classes might have resulted from a greater awareness of the value of scientific and technological studies for their children by the manufacturing classes such as existed on the continent but, in the absence of such awareness and with a preference for copying middle-class ideals, the demand for day classes remained small.

The tradition of post-compulsory education being associated with the working class and with evening attendance started here but the inadequacy of technical instruction was matched by a shortage of relevant training for administrators. The lack of adequately trained clerks was a constant complaint in the City (Webb, 1904). Britain failed to notice the extent to which France, Germany and the United States were

training a middle level of management in business studies, marketing, administration, accounting and communications.

Cultural decline?

Perhaps the most influential supporter of the cultural theory of decline is Martin Wiener's 1981 book 'English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit'. It had the unique position among academic works as being quoted by both Left and Right of British politics: the Left as another example of class-based inequality and the Right as a vindication of laissez-faire capitalism. Wiener dismisses the purely economic reasons for British industrial decline while accepting their importance. Instead, he concentrates on the values and culture with British society which were essentially anti-industrial. While the landed gentry were willing to accept the financial rewards of an industrial base it remained too strong to allow ambitious industrialists to enter the circle of influence centred so much on London. The social, economic and political gap was kept deliberately and artificially wide - much wider than on continental Europe.

What did occur, however, was the creation of a class below the gentry which copied the bourgeois culture with pseudo-aristocratic attitudes and values which were equally anti-industrial. Thus, the sons and grandsons of self-made businessmen pursued a private education/military upbringing which suited neither scientific research nor business life. This can be witnessed in the expansion of elite education and public schools in the late nineteenth century assisted by better transport networks facilitating Army, colonial or trade service abroad. The newly established social groups wished to confirm their status by assimilation with existing landed and professional elites.

Professional examinations for doctors (1815), lawyers, (1835) and accountants (1880) were so structured as to exclude all but a privileged few. Civil Service entry examinations (1860s) were similarly prescribed. The nature of these examinations (theoretical and written) established a pattern of elitism within English qualifications which has been intransigent to change. The vocational and practical nature of medicine, for example, would seem to dictate a particular form of testing distanced from a written check on memory yet the format remains relatively unchanged. As a form of cultural capital it provided a convenient hold on power for a middle class unable to maintain a hold on financial capital.

Wiener (*ibid.*) claims that having entered into an elitist system, the offspring of industrialists were effectively stripped of their backgrounds and disavowed their class. This was aided and abetted by a literature of anti-capitalism which permeated down through every level of society producing a bias against entrepreneurs and a conservative managerial culture. Warwick (1985, p.100) supports this claim of 'bourgeois ideological production' claiming also that the working class only gained access to the franchise in trade for their quiescence and 'responsibility'. As part of this invention an educational system 'was deliberately constructed to create class barriers and inhibit mobility across them'. Similarly, a civil service was developed whose upper ranks constituted a sort of 'bourgeois freemasonry' (Leys, 1983, p.66) and a military structure was constructed with highest ranking officers exclusively from public schools.

Warwick (*ibid.* p.123) had already observed that 'if the price for creating this new society was the loss of technological and industrial leadership ... it was, apparently, a price influential Victorians thought worth paying.' The dramatic decline in Britain's industrial base and the equally significant increase in tertiary sector businesses, particularly financial, gives credence to both Wiener's and Warwick's cultural arguments for decline.

This is not a universally held view. Rubinstein (1993) argues that Britain was really an industrial nation by accident with an unsustainable manufacturing base. Indeed, it has always been, in recent history, a commercial, financial and service-based country whose comparative advantage lies within its banking, insurance and financial institutions. He further suggests that Britain's apparent decline is simply a working out of industrialisation to be replaced by a transfer of resources and energy into the service sector of business activity. Judge and Dickson (1990) suggest that the hegemony of finance capital was so strong that it served to insulate state policies from such pressure as was occasionally exerted by industrial capital.

The dynamic area of growth in education was no longer the charity schools but private, fee paying establishments for a higher social class. The grammar schools too, became more middle class and fee paying. This typical education received by sons of industrialists and the gentrification of their aspirations is at the heart of the culture critique of Britain's decline with the public school 'detachment from the modern world' in the form of an '... absence of science of any sort from their curricula' (Wiener, *op.cit.* p.19). While the strong expansion of middle-class education in both grammar and public schools after 1830 was a response from parents this growth was not matched by commensurate employment opportunities in a manner which would have influenced economic performance.

The fastest growing occupations were in lower middle class employment as clerks and shop workers - unlikely to attract public school boys. This indicates a system driven by consumer demand (parental choice) rather than market driven (response to job demand). The Empire provided the employment prospects for these boys and a State willing to use their talents abroad rather than at home. The condition of education was, therefore, far from abysmal and this traditional perspective has had to be

modified in major respects. Arguably, it was merely reactive (to social upheavals, parental aspirations and economic stresses) and, hence, imperfect.

There was a notable rise in literacy in rural areas but children entering the work force situation in populous towns required to work long, full days militating against widespread literacy. Industrial cities and towns, therefore, recorded a downturn in literacy rates. Stone's (1969) argument that education contributed to economic activity is somewhat diluted by Schofield's (1968) assessment that : 'The English experience in the century from 1750 to 1850 may perhaps be taken to cast doubts on the utility of positing universal relationships between literacy and economic growth' (p.32).

Indeed, Nicholas (1990, p.12) argues that many of the new occupations of industrialisation were the least literate: 'Britain's industrialisation process was set in the mould of unskilled labour-intensive production at an early stage ... once started, the Industrial Revolution did not call for increasing literacy levels in the years before 1840'. In Nicholas's view, it was a significantly slow process after that.

Sanderson (1995, p.38) goes as far to state that: 'The industrialisation itself, with its rising population, technical change and demand for children helped to create an illiterate society. In turn, the new technology could operate with an illiterate labour force which it had helped to produce, and economic growth was not impeded by educational retardation'. Economic growth in this case refers to Gross National Product and the enrichment of a few. Clearly, there were serious social implications for such growth.

There was, however, a gradual appreciation that although education was of limited value in actual job performance it had important wider bearings on the creation of an industrial society. Such thoughts were linked to efficiency, discipline and worker

subservience. By making potential workers aware of the availability of jobs (through the reading of notices at the very least) it put employers in touch with employees. On a deeper, political level there was something positive to be gained from a controlled readership through carefully measured and censored doses of 'correct' material.

The propaganda war for the hearts and minds of working class adults could only be won if they were literate. Reading matter was made increasingly more accessible and cheaper through technology, new newspapers, reduced taxes and better transport. The 1850 Public Libraries Act allowed the formation of rate-supported municipal libraries while the Penny Post established in 1840 had a similar stimulating effect on the art of writing. Per capita delivery of letters per annum rose from 4 in 1839 to 32 by 1871 (Sanderson, 1995). This paints an optimistic portrait of educational change but as Sandberg (1982) has pointed out, this was relative only. For although Britain was the richest and most industrially advanced nation in the world by 1850 it was still, educationally, second rate. Its literacy levels were exceeded by all the Scandinavian countries as well as Germany, Switzerland and Holland.

Crafts (1985, p.19) has shown that in 1870 when Britain was, arguably, world economic leader, its school enrolment ratio was only 0.168 compared with the European norm of 0.514 and 'Britain persistently had a relatively low rate of accumulation of human capital.' Not that it appeared to matter. The fullest study of long-term economic growth (Matthews, Feinstein and Odling-Smee, 1982) concluded that between 1856 and 1873 improvements in education contributed only 0.3% per annum to the growth in labour quality (0.2% for formal school education, 0.1% for technical education and nothing for university education). The conjunction of economic success with limited educational achievement and subjugated human capital bode ill for the future. As Nicholas (*ibid.* p.41) suggests 'the habit of under-investing in human capital was one of the most pervasive industrial revolution legacies.' Gowing (1978, p.18) agreed: 'Britain had achieved so much in the early nineteenth

century with so little education that she felt no need to create the educational infrastructure which her potential competitors were building.'

Britain's history of industrial endeavour was highly localised with excellent theoretical work finding few bridges to practical application. This distancing of research and educational endeavour from utility was to thwart efforts in reform well into the twentieth century. An ideological reproduction was firmly in place which favoured classical studies and worked against science and technology. This became a power-laden discourse which contained thinly-veiled barriers to career progression and assimilation into elitist positions. The forward-thinking work was carried out by self-made scientists and businessmen who had the financial means to stand outside that academic constraint.

So far, this affected chiefly the comfortably well-off business and professional classes but there was a movement to spread technical expertise to the working class. One person in particular, George Birkbeck, gave scientific lectures to working men. On settling in London, Birkbeck was instrumental in the formation of the London Mechanics' Institute in 1823 with the idea of providing a grounding in Physics, and Chemistry to artificers, mechanics and craftsmen from a wide range of disciplines. It became the model for an extensive provincial body with an impressive numerical spread. There were over 300 by 1841.

Fractures appeared in the system which had high ideals but was let down by the poor literacy of the attendees. Birkbeck came to doubt, with some accuracy, whether the literacy levels of the country was high enough to support post-compulsory education of some academic rigour. Accordingly, individual institutes took separate paths related to local levels of reading ability. The concept was not a failure. It fulfilled an obvious local role for many towns in need of a respite from the drudgery of work and if they changed from their original purpose then it was a democratic change. Royle

(1971) suggests that they contributed in no small measure to the political emancipation of working men however, they did not create the scientific culture that was so evident among the middle class.

Untrained inventiveness

British inventiveness continued to thrive however. Charles Parsons patented the steam turbine in 1884. Sebastian de Ferranti (trained in a British factory) developed the high voltage distribution system in 1889. Arthur Wright made the first practical, electric meter and the first public generating station beat the American equivalent into service. Electric trams started in Brighton and an overhead railway was built in Liverpool. The first electric underground tube in the world was in London in 1890. Alexander Graham Bell was a Scottish emigre and though Edison is credited with the invention of the incandescent lamp it was actually jointly perfected by him and the British Swan company. Marconi had to come to Britain for support of his ideas for radio transmission. J.B. Dunlop 'rediscovered' the pneumatic tyre just in time for the bicycle revolution and in glass-making, Pilkington's were world leaders in patents. All of this unfolded before 1900.

There are two key issues here. Firstly, Britain's industrial revolution seemed to have struck, by pure accident, a balance between (minimal) educational provision and economic efficiency which pervaded the thoughts of those in and out of industry for decades to come. It was not a result of planning or government intervention but was nonetheless effective. There is some argument that to invest in mass education at the lower social levels plus a serious scientific education at a higher level would have required an investment which would have taken resources away from industrialisation itself - an Arkwright frame and a National school were roughly the same cost (£50,000). Herschel (1831, p.77) summed up the contemporary attitude to education

by concluding that he saw no benefit in fostering an 'overwhelming mass of mediocrity'.

Secondly, British schools did not consciously train spontaneity or originality but rather 'character building' through hard work, repetition and obedience. British science was among the best in spite of its individualistic properties and retained its lead after World War One in key areas particularly physics and medicine. It had been slow to develop links with education and modern industrial techniques which led to missed opportunities but Britain was still the richest and most productive economy in Europe.

While scientific education circulated well among the middle class any such ideals foundered at working class level. Apart from local successes there was a disturbing lack of real technical expertise where it mattered at a time when Prussia was expanding its Technical High School system. Industrial achievement had bred complacency and lack of urgency. A lively scientific culture at one level of British society failed to transmit to the class where it could be most beneficial and effective for sustained growth.

So began a long struggle for working class recognition and rights in which education became one on the battle grounds. Thompson (1963, p.88) notes that: 'Given the elementary techniques of literacy, labourers, artisans, shopkeepers and clerks and schoolmasters, proceeded to instruct themselves, severally or in groups'. This self-sufficiency and voluntarism helped forge a picture for the working class which because of their hard won rights and erratic education contained a political dimension.

Middle class control of entry to the professions through the academic rigour of examinations and the rationing of elementary instruction forced the working class to increasingly organise itself - precisely the opposite of the desired effect. Thompson

notes that this segregation induced a 'peculiar toughness and resilience' (*op.cit.* p.52) as the working class struggled for the 'egalite' earned with bloodshed in France.

The efforts of philanthropists and moralists such as Robert Owen were to run out of steam because of their inherently paternalistic nature and narrow scope. They were, essentially, still evangelical and regressive in their approaches with simplistic memories of an agrarian past which neglected the logic of history. A few enlightened employers did take an interest in the further education of their workers. A notable example was Crosfields Engineering which offered regular lectures - both scientific and popular - and a library of technical books and journals. The directors actually gave a sessional bonus of five shillings for attendance at lectures and a further five shillings for passing examinations. Employees were allowed to leave work early to attend classes (Kelly, 1965).

In Bootle, the Johnsons company sent all their men to technical school but had to postpone instruction since basic literacy was so poor. They held special classes in firm's time to bring each worker up to an acceptable level of basic education so that they could attend technical lectures. Those who wished to attend continuation classes were let off work and had their fees paid but such examples were infrequent and often out of frustration with the national system (Kelly, *ibid*).

These examples were rare and the evidence suggests that the Victorians traded premier industrial position for the maintenance of privilege and the reluctant acceptance of some change was too little, too late. As Payne (1974, p.54) notes: 'There seems little question that many known cases of neglect have correctly been ascribed to the fact that the Englishman had yet to learn that an extended and systematic education up to and including the methods of original research (was) now a necessary preliminary to the fullest development of industry'.

If there was a sharp contrast between the first and second industrial revolutions it was the change from 'accidental' inventions to purposeful research and design based on previous knowledge; that is to say that the technical creations of the twentieth century required at least some advanced knowledge of pure science and a far more consistent experimental and development process. The new era of science was epitomised by much closer links between technologists, professional scientists and industrialists. Two major growth industries - chemicals and electricity - were entirely based on this principle and while Britain was not slow in the application of electricity domestically it did little to capitalise on its pioneering work.

Germany (chemicals) and America (electricity) did not make such an economic miscalculation implementing important changes through the application of this relationship within the factory system of mass standardised production. Concurrently appeared the *organisation* of mass production by means of a planned flow of processes and the 'scientific management' of labour. By 1900, the foundations of modern, large scale industry were laid. The last major influences were the increases in scale of economic enterprises, the concentration of ownership and production and the rise in the number of politically and economically powerful monopolies and oligopolies. Post-compulsory education now faced the burgeoning power of mass production as a political force.

Working Class Colleges

Previously, post-compulsory education had been narrow in character and, often, a means by which adults could catch up on literacy and numeracy skills. The Working Men's and Women's Colleges saw that there was a real difference between education for work (functional competence) and education for life (autonomy of thought and responsible action in a community). As Dobbs (1919, p.13) put it: 'It was necessary

that education should start with the problem of social reconstruction and should be grounded on a deeper and more spiritual analysis than had underlain earlier movements. The new ideal was not information but enrichment of personality'.

The realisation that Britain was beginning to lag behind other trading nations was a significant impetus to the changes in compulsory education in the later part of the nineteenth century but further and adult education has always tended to shadow the fortunes of the compulsory sector. There was, therefore, a substantial increase in the interest and provision of post-compulsory education by the turn of the century on the back of changes in the compulsory sector and the future seemed positive but too many school leavers faced 'blind alley' employment (Sanderson, *op.cit.* p.48). A particular problem was the gap between the school leaving age and the recognised starting age of apprenticeships. Leaving school occurred at 10 in 1876, 11 from 1893, 12 from 1899 and, permissively, 14 in 1900 (though this was only achieved by 1918). For many there was a chasm of time to fill and as long as boys were cheap labourers there was little incentive for industry to invest in new machinery (Freeman, 1914).

Edwards (*op.cit.* p.19) also noted a 'deeply ingrained Victorian propensity not to interfere' ... which had ... 'a critical bearing on the debate because of the importance of general education to technical education'. Clearly, one was impossible without the other. The building blocks of a structured educational process were not in place.

Gradual state intervention

Despite the general recognition that the English education system was in need of interventionist legislation, the requisite Bill was subjected to an extended period of debate from March to October 1902. Entrenched positions were quickly exposed as the Church fought to maintain a strong Christian input. In addition, elementary

education was seen to be entirely separate from secondary provision and technical education was to be kept distinct from either. Birkett, in particular, was unhappy about any prominence given to scientific and technical instruction requiring it to be 'quite apart from the general lines of education.' (Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. CV, C.912, 1902). Ash (1988), however, concluded that with the infusion of Science and Art Department grants and the work of the Technical Instruction Committees it was largely inseparable from secondary education.

For Hobsbawm (*op.cit.* p.34) the 1902 Education Act was:

'... to exclude from higher education the children of the working class [and] ... Knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, therefore, took second place in the new British educational system to the maintenance of a rigid division between the classes.'

The Act was certainly retrospective in objectives looking to, primarily, academic outcomes. The annual reports of the new Board of Education sustained a belief that its work was organised into three distinct branches: elementary, secondary and technical which continued the separation of aims tradition already acknowledged. Additionally, while the effectiveness of evening classes was recognised in Board reports of 1906/7 and 1907/8 they also noticed the 'trifling increase' in numbers of those between ages 15 and 21. The 1902 Act allowed Local Authorities to 'arrange course of instruction specially adapted to local conditions and industries' but this had been implemented at 'very different rates' (Board of Education Report, 1908/9, paras. ix - xii).

By this time there was a need to identify the needs and purposes of education and employment more closely. Under regulations established in 1913 trade and junior technical schools were created allowing a continuation of a general education

combined with a definite preparation for some industrial employment. Training for manual skills and a school/work liaison had been the subject of discussion since the 1870 Elementary Education Act and was specifically mentioned by the 1911 Acland Report. It concluded that 'secondary education has been too exclusively concerned with cultivation of the mind by means of books' and 'the attitude of depreciation too frequently adopted towards industrial occupations' (paras. vi - xiii). In this regard it mirrored the findings of the Samuelson Commission.

Acland's report was the first official use of the phrase 'further education' but in the absence of a well-defined compulsory sector it was a vague term. There was enough to be done just to get children to school and to attain some level of national standards in literacy for anyone to be really interested in additional effort after schooling. In any event in the few remaining years before the Great War the dominant topic of conversation in political circles was that of German military strength.

The Universities

The significant feature of early twentieth century adult education was the entrance of the universities onto the scene. The two ancient universities of Cambridge and Oxford had, by comparison with new universities abroad, become social and (with a few subject exceptions) intellectual anachronisms by 1850 providing an education for a gentleman destined for a career in the Church, the law or, increasingly, Civil Service. The Industrial Revolution appeared to have passed them by and a Royal Commission was needed (1852-53) to make urgent reforms resulting in two Acts of Parliament. The Acts were successful in stimulating changes to 'disgraceful extravagance' and a more positive attitude to accept 'men of genius' from 'menial occupations' and lower social classes (paras. iv - xxi).

The early history of University Extension is poorly recorded but the expression was firmly in place by the 1840s. There were, however, conflicts of timing (a working day at that time could be fourteen hours) and practicalities of transport. It was not until the turn of the century that its real impact was noticed. In 1899, university adult provision in the shape of Ruskin Hall (later College), Oxford indicated the trend. Its stated aim was to provide a training in subjects which are essential for working class leadership.'

Fees were modest (£52 for full annual residence compared with £300 at Oxford university for course fees only) and conditions were sparse but there was no shortage of enthusiasm. In the 1903 intake there were four miners, two composers, a brushmaker, a joiner, an engineer, a warp dresser, a weaver, a docker, a billposter, a clerk, a tailor, a shop assistant, a postal worker, a farmer and two trade union officials. Subjects studied included politics, history, geography and commerce (Kelly, *op.cit*).

The early years of the twentieth century witnessed a flourishing University Extension programme with approximately 50,000 students in average attendance. The Oxford variation derived its summer meetings from the American 'chautauqua' which had its origins in a Methodist camp on the shores of Lake Chautauqua in New York State. Oxford imitated this so closely that 'chautauqua' became synonymous with summer school. They not only gave the students an opportunity of residing for a short period in the splendour of university surroundings and hearing some of the most distinguished scholars of the day but also demonstrated the character of the movement. Marriott (1946, p.55) wrote of his time as Oxford's Extension Secretary:

'What it meant to an elementary teacher from a country school, or to a Lancashire mill-hand, or a collier from South Wales, to come even for a month under the magic spell of Oxford's beauty, to listen to some of the greatest authorities on history, science or art, come into daily contact

with men and women inspired by similar zeal for higher education and to exchange ideas with them can be understood only by those who, like myself, were privileged to be their confidants and to see the leaven visibly working'.

The Extension Programme not only left its imprint on those students fortunate enough to attend the universities themselves but it was the blueprint for the creation of a significant number of local colleges. What was most significant about these was the informal teaching style and student-centred approach which came to typify post-compulsory education and its approach to learning: the open-ended debate on a wide range of issues was not just a technique; it also represented a view of the nature of education which post-compulsory education made its own - unafraid of dissent or polarities of attitude as long as it was expressed in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

The distancing of British governments from technical education and scientific research left the voluntaristic traditions of adult education to continue and make its own mistakes. The absence of a coherent national policy meant that other bodies had to operate as best they could. Thus, in spite of its obvious successes, the Extension movement had serious inherent weaknesses.

Oxford and Working-Class Education

The 1908 *Oxford and Working-Class Education Report* was not an officially sanctioned study. It is not especially well remembered today and receives no mention in Blyth's (1983) *English University Adult Education 1908-1958* nor Maclure's (1979) *Educational Documents*. Harrop's 1987 review is the only significant survey of this important report and she identified it as 'a classic of adult education' (p.5). The 1908 Report represented the first major attempt to put into context the unique tradition of

adult extension classes in the universities and was the result of a conference held by working class and educational representatives in Oxford in 1907 through the Workers' Educational Association. Though it was Cambridge that had initiated the extension programmes the strong relationship between Albert Mansbridge and Oxford generated its own inertia culminating in the Report which set out how Oxford University could meet the increasing demand for a post-compulsory education experience.

This is a contemporary attempt at a detailed content analysis of its findings which are used here to reflect a radical tradition and belief in the benefits to society from the widening of access to a liberal, general education for all. The 1908 Report triggered a 200-page internal response by Lord Curzon, Chancellor of the University, on reform having described the 1908 document as 'singularly able and attractive'. A change in government in 1906 had, no doubt, influenced changes at the universities. Indeed, paras. 77-78 note: '... the constitution of English society and in the distribution of political power' made it imperative that the working class '...should obtain the knowledge necessary to enable them to show foresight in their choice of political means.'

The most important paragraphs relating to democratic themes are 78-83 in which John Milton's (1644 tract) definition of education is quoted as a guiding principle: ' ... that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the duties of all offices.' These paragraphs recognised the failure of the universities to address issues of class, exclusion and status and sought, instead, to create 'ministers or school masters' from 'ploughmen.' In addition, each child should be taught that the aim of education is not material self-advancement but to take part in the uplifting of the working class and elevation of the community in general.

Paragraph 82 is particular in its condemnation of an educational divide: 'Any organisation of Higher Education which is based on the assumption that education of

a "general" kind is desired or needed only by those entering the professions, while technical education alone is suitable for persons engaged in manual labour is fundamentally mistaken ... technical and general education ought not to be distinguished on the ground that they are fit for different classes but because they stimulate different sides of the same individual.' It adds: '... a man who will throughout life work with his hands needs a general education for precisely the same reason that it is needed by a specialist like a lawyer or doctor in order that he may be a good citizen and play a reasonable part in the affairs of the world.' The Report observed that a two-nation state existed and challenged universities to become part of a trend to reverse this. Again, in paragraph 82:

'The truth is that the education of every class must keep two objects in view, because in a democratic community, every man and woman is in a twofold relationship to the rest of society. On the one hand, as a workman, whether with head or hand, he must obtain the technical qualifications needed to maintain him in independence, or to advance him in life. On the other hand, as a member of a self-governing nation, he must acquire the civic qualities which enable him to co-operate with his fellows and to judge wisely on matters which concern not only himself but the country to which he belongs'.

The comparisons with international competition were just as acute in the early twenty-first century as they are in the twenty-first:

'It may be very good for the commercial prosperity of the nation that our workmen should be higher skilled and more capable than their brethren in America or in Germany but when education has merely made a man into a better workman it has not done all that it can for him nor all that he has a right to expect.'

The 1908 Report concluded that it was time for the working man to share in the education which is called 'liberal' because it concerned life not livelihood and 'it is to be desired for its own sake and not because it has any direct bearing upon his wage-earning capacity'. Indeed, this liberal education should be a common heritage for the state of affairs had wronged the working class and 'sterilized the universities themselves' (Conclusion, p.89).

The real test of modern democracy, the Report suggests, is the satisfactory response to the following paragraph (89):

- * Criticism - not only in Parliament but in the Press and at public meetings.
- * Publicity - the acts of the executive and its reasons should be laid before the public.
- * Consultation - citizens' representatives should be chosen to serve on public bodies assuming a condition of fellowship democracy.
- * By the constant pressure of a majority of elected representatives upon their administrative chiefs by their power of passing a vote of no confidence.
- * How can the State organisation of impartial power be reconciled with party government? Would not the party in power inculcate its own opinions?

The 1908 *Oxford and Working-Class Education* Report was a document of visionary proportions infused with the conviction that education should be a liberating experience available to all. Its importance lay in its radical traditional beliefs which were evident in its findings. Its timing, however, was unfortunate. Within six years millions of men who would have gained so much from seeking answers to those questions were to realise that they were subservient to the needs of the nation as Britain invoked conscription powers for the first time.

Democracy and Education

The concepts explored in the Report continued to be represented by people of vision however. John Dewey in 'Democracy and Education' (1916) concluded that education was a social process in which the 'native powers' (p.9) of individuals can prosper. He further suggested that the then current distinction between a liberal education for an elite few and vocational preparation of the many should be abolished. In a previous work he had concluded that a democracy should embrace the concept of a liberal education for every member of the community since it was: 'the education that will liberate his capacities and thereby contribute both to his own happiness and his social usefulness ... In short, a liberal education is one that liberates' (1914, p.3).

As Carr and Hartnett (1996, p.64) note: '... it is easy to understand why Dewey regarded the distinction between liberal education and vocational education to be of crucial significance for the future of democracy.' A liberal education had always been one for an elite few while a vocational experience was a very narrow version for the masses. A privileged minority were educated while the rest were trained placing a price on education and linking it, economically, to social elevation and status.

It was clear from the official reports and Commissions of the late nineteenth century that a national technical initiative funded by a radical central authority was necessary if England wished to maintain an industrial edge. These conclusions challenged some fiercely held beliefs in both the political and industrial hearts. Edwards (1988, p.115) has identified five stalwart traditions which worked against change:

- a) powerful groups (including unions and employers) believed in a form of education which owed more to an old apprenticeship system than to skills required in a new scientific age.
- b) technical education was associated with and the concern of the working class.

- c) general and technical education were separate. General education was afforded to the middle class.
- d) England was not under serious threat from foreign industry.
- e) traditional industries would continue to dominate the economy and provide sustained income.

To this could be added a faith in the ability of an expanding empire to offer both raw materials and a ready market and an attendant self esteem from a powerful military presence throughout the world. In the heady summers of Edwardian England it was a churlish notion to challenge such supremacy.

Conclusion

The contrast between organic and mechanical, natural and manufactured, humanistic and utilitarian was polarised during the English Industrial Revolution. The contest between free-will and determinism was won by the mechanical philosophers who believed that Nature was a vast machine whose mysteries could be explained in time. This had a substantial influence on concepts of work and the place of human endeavour at the heart of an increasingly powerful economic agenda. The role of education as a reflection of the victory of utilitarianism would be set for generations. In addition, the 'scientific' determination of human nature and behavioural explanation of actions and motivation gained substantial credence.

Successive governments had reacted sluggishly to changing international dimensions and felt comfortable enough to ignore the more alarmist protestations following industrial and technical exhibitions. Some advances were made in elementary education but strong traditions meant that the English system was backward-looking

and highly class structured. Technical expertise was distinctly working class and this attitude was supported by employers and unions for their own ends.

A serious academic/vocational divide had been allowed to develop at the highest political levels as a source of conscious social reproduction. Little had happened to shake political or public satisfaction in British military, naval and trade supremacy. The first Industrial Revolution occurred almost in isolation of direct government involvement and through the efforts of an innovative 'knowledge elite'. This was to have a lingering influence on the relationship between industry and government and industry and its work force well into the twentieth century.

A significant trend was instigated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which was a mixture of perceived military/industrial domination, cheap raw materials, ready markets, domestic stability, rigid class structure and an emerging elementary education designed to reinforce some of these perceptions. Governments were too caught up in making elementary education work to consider wider educational issues. The 1908 *Oxford and Working-Class Education* document faded into obscurity. Its potential as an influential report subsumed in foreign affairs. Post-compulsory education lost out in the struggle for public and political hearts and minds because of its working class heritage, financial expediency and lack of effective co-ordination.

CHAPTER TWO: 1914 - 1944

CATALYSTS OF CHANGE

Introduction

Examination of events, policy and circumstances from the Industrial Revolution in the first chapter already allows us to witness trends and patterns which became important factors in subsequent decision-making and responses. It presents a unique interpretation of how current thinking and discourses are still subject to a peculiarly English tradition. Some things did change however. Britain's military strength could be exemplified by a relatively small, professional army being able to overwhelm local forces with advanced weaponry. Although set piece battles with a major adversary were not rare (there were 140,000 men in total at the start of the battle of Waterloo) this constituted most of the available forces. The twentieth century changed that.

The situation at the start of World War One differed little from that of the close of the nineteenth century but signs of significant shifts in the balance of power showed almost immediately. Britain experienced serious manufacturing defects (notably artillery shells and torpedoes) which necessitated imports from America and prompted the formation of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in 1916. This created a fund of £1 million to offer to industries as research grants. Industrial reaction was lacklustre with a general indifference to science and the common belief among companies that most research was wasted as inapplicable.

In addition, this governmental reaction was still locked in the previous century since there was no attempt to link elementary education with anything that followed. Up to 1914 the supply of science graduates was too small to meet even a moderate growth in research and development (Report on Scientific and Industrial Research 1915-16). It

would require a visionary Act of Parliament and the enthusiasm of one man to make such links.

1918 Education Act

For Britain to be victorious in the First World War it required massive national conscription and overstretched industrial capacity. The huge effort led to high expectations for a new society in which education would play a leading role. A major social landmark in 1918 was the passing of another Education Act (Fisher Act) which sought to pay some heed to the question of national competence by placing on the statute books a recognisable national system of education 'available to all persons capable of profiting thereby' (para. xv). Andrews (1976, p,2) considered it to be of such significance as to place it in the same category as the 1870 and 1944 Education Acts as 'a legislative measure of the first importance'.

One of the great strengths and weaknesses of the English system of education was the delegation of duties and responsibilities to counties and county boroughs which made the resulting provision a patchwork of responses based on local enthusiasm or neglect. For its part the Act was positive and forward-looking in that local education authorities had to make plans for:

'... practical instruction suitable to the ages, abilities and requirements of the children, and for organising in public elementary schools courses of advanced instruction for older or more intelligent children who choose to stay on after 14.' (para. viii).

Additionally, LEAs were to 'establish and maintain a sufficient supply of continuation schools.' This provoked heated debate at the Bill reading stage with MacDonald,

Socialist and Labour Member for Leicester, fiercely resistant believing that '... this Bill advocating what is barely and boldly vocational education which is wrong and has nothing to be said for it' (*Parliamentary Debates*, c.2036, 1918). Magnus (Education Bill Committee stage member) wished to draw a distinction between technical training and practical instruction and felt that vocational matters lay outside the mainstream of character-building liberal education (c.2058). This contributed to an already developing argument about the nature and contributions of 'education' and 'training.'

Wedgwood, Labour Member for Newcastle under Lyme, was concerned that a strictly vocational training would control the course of a young person's life and was against a direct relationship between school and employment (c. 2037). Yet the tone of the Bill's wording was conciliatory and radical in that young people should be afforded:

'... opportunities ... which had hitherto been denied to them ... so that in the years to come however hard the calling may be in which they have to earn their living they will be always able to have other higher and better opportunities.'

The Act's sentiments seemed to be reflected in a passionate speech by MacDonald who believed that none would fail to be impressed:

'... by the extraordinary effect which a technical or vocational training, liberally interpreted, intellectually conceived and energetically pursued, has on the development of the general intelligence, and no one can fail to recognise that often it is the shortest way to a liberal education to provide some element of technical training' (c. 2112).

Yet these concepts fell victim to Britain's post-war depression. Andrews (*ibid.* p.14) notes that with a few exceptions, continuation schools - which may have done so much to assist in a national technical revival - were to remain an aspiration only:

'It is to be deeply regretted that the economic crisis of the early 1920s arrested the development of the majority of the continuation schools; as a result it has never been possible to assess their worth as schools and their potential contribution to educational progress.'

In reality, industry had been active in dislocating this area of the Act. A group formed within the Commons by Sir Henry Hibbert (subsequently referred to as the Lancashire Group) repeatedly and forcefully drew attention to the disruption that would be caused to industry by part-time attendance at continuation schools. This assault from the textiles lobby was supported by other factions (mines, steel and shipbuilding in particular) and Fisher made significant concessions to accommodate them. Ultimately, governments were too busy dealing with immediate economic pressures and a pre-occupation with integrating primary and secondary education to give additional time, effort and money to post-compulsory education at a time when other nations were seriously pursuing the notion.

Yet the contribution of the German education system to their near-victory was recognised in official circles. Lloyd George commented in September 1918 that: 'The most formidable institution we were fighting ... (was) ... the schools in Germany' (*Manchester Guardian*, 13 September 1918, p.6). As Betts notes (1995, p.33), however, the idea of copying another country's educational success stories assumes that good relations exists among them: 'The establishment of effective systems of compulsion and continuation schools in Great Britain, based on German and particularly Saxon models, were not the least of the casualties of the First World War'.

A patchwork of responses

In the absence of a co-ordinated political response the task of organising a national system of further education was taken on by philanthropic individuals and organisations. This tended to concentrate on a liberal grounding which became known as the 'Great Tradition' - a uniquely English form of adult education which, according to Wiltshire (1956, p.88) is humane, free from intellectual means-testing, socially purposeful, non-vocational and pursued for the love of learning.

At this point it is worth considering the impact that interested parties have on the concepts and ideas that they promote. Industry, by now, had little time for supporting technical training over and above that which it needed and could get from the universities and limited in-house training. Governments were dealing with the mammoth task of organising, administering and enforcing new legislation which dealt with the education of young children.

Wealthy philanthropists wished to introduce a liberal, holistic education to a mostly working class audience. There was little co-ordination of effort. A fully functioning national response which embraced social, economic, technical and vocational education and training was simply impossible given the barriers of finance, conflicting ideals and long-standing antipathy to concepts of what was 'education' and 'training'. What occurred, therefore, was a patchwork of activities which had no compulsion attached and, in spite of best intentions, would remain a fragmented and unplanned arrangement. A survey of some its components and leading protagonists will highlight the complex and conflicting character of post-compulsory education:

The Workers' Educational Association was founded by Albert Mansbridge (1876-1952) who argued for representative education as the basis for working class

liberation. His goal was to co-ordinate co-operatives, trade unions and the universities to this end. Established in 1903 it adopted the now familiar W.E.A. title in 1905. Within five years it had 50 branches, 900 affiliated organisations and over 5,000 members. Important for its work was the 1902 Education Act which allowed some adult courses to attract grants from central funds. The combination of government support and enthusiastic local government aid stimulated the growth of adult tuition before World War One. In many ways, the movement contributed to the making up of deficiencies in the compulsory sector, once again, with many adults attending to attain a satisfactory standard in literacy and numeracy.

Oxford University set the pace in adopting a tutorial system - an approach copied at all other institutions and symptomatic of the less formal approach of the movement. Regular attendance and regular essays were the only discipline and hardly needed enforcing. By the outbreak of war in 1914 only the universities of Exeter and Southampton excluded themselves. There were sixteen separate classes in Liverpool alone studying politics, art, composition. English Literature, Greek plays and history. Of the teaching costs the universities donated half themselves. The early success of the W.E.A. owed much to the support of Oxford and progressive elements in the Board of Education and the Church.

It is possible to generate a romantic mystique about this period. In fact post-compulsory education was neither universal nor entirely practical. In the absence of a regular, reliable public transport network there was still a huge percentage of the population unable to attend classes but it was successful in achieving its limited aim of bringing a wider education to as many people as possible. The informal, tutorial style gained widespread popular appeal after the rigour and discipline of an elementary classroom.

The First World War put much political activity and social restructuring on hold (though it did serve to alarm the government about its command structure and the chequered success of compulsory education). Mansbridge was ill throughout this period but on returning to full health he established the World Association for Adult Education in 1918 - an ambitious aim even for the architect of modern, liberal adult education. The British version appeared in 1921 as the British Institute of Adult Education. Both bodies were especially active in the inter-war years in the collection and dissemination of knowledge and arrangement of conferences. The most notable difference after 1918 was the increasing attendance of women at tutorial classes.

While the W.E.A. attracts most of the critical acclaim in this period there were notable alternatives. The Labour College formed by Ruskin sessionists in 1909 with trade union help (notably the South Miners' Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen) operated under the banner of class struggle. In 1916 these two unions combined to take full financial and administrative control. The residential work of the Labour College was suspended for the duration of World War One but correspondence courses continued. A large number of provincial classes were organised especially in the industrial areas of South Wales, Clydeside and Northern England. By 1918 there were 5000 students attending and in the same year a Scottish Labour College was founded in Glasgow.

While the W.E.A. had a declared political neutrality and could, as a consequence, attract public funding, the Labour College claimed the moral high ground of the working class cause. In addition, the trade unions were faced with competing philosophies of education. The W.E.A. found inspiration from the liberal, humane culture of the universities and the belief that problems and differences could be resolved through mutual respect and discussion but the Labour College based its existence and operations on the Marxist assessment of class struggle offering an education 'designed to equip the workers for their struggle against capitalism and

capitalist ideology.' (Horrabin, 1918, p.14). Most other unions were somewhat reluctant to commit support to either the W.E.A or Labour College because of this polarity of philosophies.

For sheer numbers of students the National Council of Adult School Associations cannot be matched. Formed in 1899 it had 1,900 schools and 100,000 students in 1909/10 of which 43% were women. It organised a correspondence course in 1917 - by no means the first but certainly the best organised of its time and though its influence was localised (Yorkshire and the Midlands) the Council gained national acclaim.

It is clear that it was largely the efforts of individuals that tended to make things happen. The inability of the industrial sector to assert or even frame its interests frustrated the development of a cohesive state policy towards technical training. Governments between the wars had largely sought to influence industry through unsophisticated macro-economics (supporting the pound by buying it in a crisis) and, generally, the internationalist perspective of finance capital remained undiminished. Few industrialists challenged the re-establishment of the Gold Standard in 1925 as an 'expression of London's rightful place in the world financial system as the only basis for the imposition of a world monetary order' (Longstreth, 1979, p.98).

Industrial policy as such was one of regional assistance for areas of unemployment. It was, in essence, a piecemeal reaction to local difficulties which inevitably meant the North and Midlands. (Employment in the South East actually increased after World War One). This had two effects on post-compulsory education. The close association between local authorities and colleges was forged and post-compulsory work was funded, particularly in deprived areas, as a means of relieving both unemployment and as a source of recreation.

Perhaps more importantly is the contrast of individual ideals against political traditions and practice. Blake (1985, p.56) has stressed the continuity of conservative ideas from the mid-nineteenth century to the twentieth:

'The person who was a conservative ... in Peel's day, his outlook, prejudices and passions, would have been quite recognisable to his counterpart who voted for Winston Churchill in the 1950s. There was a similar belief that Britain, especially England, was usually in the right. There was a similar faith in the value of diversity, of independent institutions, of the rights of property; ... a similar scepticism about human nature' a similar belief in original sin, and in the limitations of political and social amelioration; a similar scepticism about the notion of equality.'

While this might seem a strange, even contradictory, combination of qualities they are powerful emotional beliefs and passions which affect not only attitudes to society but the functions of government itself. Thus, there is an inclination to preserve the status quo; a preference for diversity rather than equality or uniformity (including respect for authority and 'betters'); the need for order; the respect and protection of property even above human rights; a dislike of utopian planning; history as an account of pride and superiority; tradition above contract and the acceptance and continuation of prejudices as 'natural.' For post-compulsory provision, there was still a conservatism of thought which acted as a brake on both philosophy and practice of learning and teaching.

A Design for Democracy

While the 1908 Oxford Report mentioned in Chapter One had no official backing and is largely forgotten, *Design for Democracy: The Adult Education Committee of the British Ministry of Reconstruction* (Cmnd 321) is still remembered and quoted at adult

education conferences. Commonly called *The 1919 Report* (and so termed subsequently here) it was the most important single contribution to the literature of further and adult education in the first half of the twentieth century. It had no equal until 1973 and, indeed, was reprinted in 1980. The contrast between its findings and the prevailing political traditions is stark.

It was a considerable exercise in post-war enthusiasm which probably contained the seeds of its own demise: it was too optimistic and unrealistic - the Ministry of Reconstruction was disbanded before the Committee had time to report. Its timing was also unfortunate coming at the end of a bankrupting war and at the beginning of a series of grim annual economic national performances. Short-lived governments did not help.

Its inception was, surprisingly, found deep in the darkest days of World War One. As the Battle of the Somme raged Asquith set up a Cabinet Reconstruction Committee which was replaced by Lloyd George's committee in 1917. An entire government department had to be created to deal with the huge task of post-war repair - the Ministry of Reconstruction (August 1917). Adult education formed a sectional committee within it. (Interim reports on industrial and social renewal were followed by reports on museums, libraries and education in the army).

The 1919 Report had no parallel for its wide-ranging survey of adult education and its liberating qualities. Compared with the 1908 Report, it has enormous depth and breadth and offered a mass of detail bound together by a social philosophy which was humane and egalitarian. The wider diffusion of knowledge was considered a powerful ally of democracy and it concluded that an apex of highly trained intelligence was unhealthy for a nation.

Waller states in his review of the Report's values (1956, p.15): 'Adult education should be a normal part of educational provision in a democratic community and by its means higher education should become as universal as citizenship'. He further notes: 'From the unifying conception of the good society comes that breadth of vision which must impress every reader of the Report ... its unity is to come from collaboration, from common humanity and shared social purpose, not from any kind or degree of regimentation'.

The political driving force was Lloyd George but the philosophical and moral impetus within the 1919 Report was that of R.H. Tawney. The practical insights (ie. what was actually possible) were also his. Although credited with writing the sections on the supply of teachers and the organisation and finance of adult education, his handiwork is noticeable in other parts of the Report. As Elsey (1987, p.78) notes: 'Even with the driest subject matters Tawney had the literary skills to elevate thought to a high level of lucidity and comprehension'.

There were four pillars of thought woven into the tough fabric of the Report by Tawney's careful wordcraft: a fellowship of learning reflecting the humanitarian spirit of adult education; liberal education expressed as knowledge with understanding and analysis; adult education as a purposeful means of securing and maintaining a democratic citizenship and the strong bond between education and society as mutually-supporting structures of civilisation.

While war had destroyed the best intentions of the 1908 Report it was war which had created the best intentions of the 1919 Report. Economics were to stifle its radical hopes and 'native tradition' (Waller, *ibid.* p.33). A survey of the Conclusions and Recommendations reveals its radical tradition:

- * The adult educational movement is inextricably interwoven with the whole of the organised life of the community ... it originates in a desire amongst individuals for adequate opportunities for self-expression and the cultivation of their personal powers and interests ... it is rooted in the social aspirations of the twin principles of personal development and social service.
- * We have ... firmly expressed the view that the defect of to-day is not that there is too much teaching which is partial or one-sided in character but that there is too little education of any kind.
- * We recommend the general establishment of non-vocational institutes as evening centres for humane studies.
- * The State should not refuse financial support to institutions colleges and classes merely on the ground that they have a particular 'atmosphere' or appeal especially to students of a particular type.
- * The rural problem ... is essentially a problem of re-creating the rural community and of developing new social traditions and a new culture.
- * Technical education, though it must be an integral part of our educational system, is not an alternative to non-vocational education ... Technical education should be liberalised as far as possible by the inclusion in the curriculum of pure science and of studies which will enable the student to relate his own occupation to the industry of which it is a part, to appreciate the place of that industry in the economic life of the nation and the world and to interpret the economic life of the community in terms of social values, ie. of economic history, economics and sociology.
- * Vocational instruction ought to be part of general education, differing not in kind but only in the medium through which the powers of the pupil are stimulated and strengthened.

Unemployment, industrial unrest and the gathering storm of world conflict played havoc with the practicalities of the Report but not its values. Post-compulsory education adopted part of its tradition from this Report's gravity. The section on

'Technical Education and Humane Studies' has particularly relevant clauses which bolstered the further education colleges in another era. It is worth quoting them at length since they form the bedrock of further education:

'Frequently in this Report we have drawn a sharp distinction between technical and vocational instruction on the one hand and non-vocational and "humane" studies on the other. We are aware that this clear-cut division is liable to misinterpretation. The latter may be a means of economic advancement, and the former, tightly conceived and practised, may be an important means of personal development. The former may produce pedants, and the latter men of wide interests and sound judgement. Nevertheless, whilst recognising that true education is a matter of method and spirit rather than of curriculum, we feel that the distinction between vocational and non-vocational education is one which may usefully be made, more especially because the distinction is one which exists in the popular mind and has taken root in practice ...

One result of modern developments in industry has been ... to supersede the need for the long apprenticeship which has survived from mediaeval times. Another even more important result has been the tendency towards specialism and the division of labour ... the development of the distributive and transport industries has led to the rise of large classes of workers, most of whom require no lengthy training for the efficient performance of their duties ... skill in recent times has become more diffused ... and for a very considerable proportion of people in this country a sustained and lengthy technical education is unnecessary ... People will desire a higher standard of fitness, durability and beauty in commodities and more sound craftsmanship in the things they buy. Technical education must always be a necessary and important part of a national system of education; but unlike general or

humane education, it is not a universal need. It can hardly be denied that much of the technical education which is carried out suffers because it is based on inadequate foundations ... Technical education has, unfortunately, only too often defeated its own object by the narrowness with which it has been conceived and carried out. It has been frequently illiberal in its spirit and too closely confined in its scope. In consequence technical education has not become the powerful educational force it might have been and in aiming too exclusively at increasing the economic efficiency of the producer it has not achieved this object with complete success; because technical efficiency is primarily dependent on qualities requiring for their growth opportunities of expression which cannot be adequately provided within the range of purely technical or, indeed of scientific studies. The narrowness of aim, this concentration on purely economic considerations, is seen reflected in the mass of students themselves, who cannot escape from the prevailing atmosphere, and whose sole motive for attending vocational classes is usually a desire for immediate economic betterment - a perfectly laudable motive in itself. Unfortunately, it has led to impatience on their part with any kind of subject or treatment of a subject, which does not seem to be intimately connected with this limited end... Too great an emphasis has been laid on material considerations and too little regard to other aspects of life. "Getting and spending we lay waste our powers".

Technical efficiency is but one element in national well being. Our powers ought to be directed into wider channels in order that the intellectual and spiritual treasures of the race should be the heritage of all rather than the possession of a few, and so that the social virtues and the social spirit shall enjoy freedom of growth' (paras. xxx - xxxviii).

Several post-war slumps culminating in the Great Depression slowed progress even further but the universities and W.E.A worked tirelessly to realise the Report's major conclusions. The universities, themselves, underwent a radical change of perspective during this time as they accepted a wider range of students. Often accused of ivory-towerism, their extra-mural activities introduced them to a diversity of students from a variety of backgrounds. There is no doubt that this synergy created a changed atmosphere in the university halls which made access to higher academic work less daunting.

While central government was content to delegate funding and control of post-compulsory education out to the regions, local authorities warmed to the new duties and spending powers, however limited by realities. More and more authorities supplied direct grant aid, accommodation for students, buildings and even provided the lecturers in some cases. Some assumed total responsibility and governance of the local university extension programme but did not interfere in the informal style of teaching or curriculum. Indeed, there was an obvious affinity with the philosophy of a broad education in which the students were encouraged to choose subjects.

A Report by H.M. Inspectors of Literary classes concluded in 1923:

'There is, in London, a very large number of men and women between the ages of 20 and 40 who, having received a good elementary education find themselves interested in Literature or Music or Art or in what is sometimes called "modern thought". They read a great deal, especially the works of living authors. They are not students in the sense that they are pursuing a definite course of academic study but they are students in the sense that they are cultivating serious academic interests' (p.76).

The Adult Education Committee perceived the importance of such changes and did not hesitate to reach the conclusion in 1929 that traditional forms of adult education did not necessarily suit all groups of people. It also noted with enthusiasm the quite extraordinary efforts made by London's County Council Education Authority to make provision for a broad spectrum of appeal which became 'community education'. In addition: 'The London Literacy Institutes and Men's Institutes clearly provide for the needs of a part of the population which has not found its way into adult education through the usual channels ... in fact people who, consciously or unconsciously desire further culture for its own sake' (para. vii).

Improvisation, institutions and individuals

This first half of the twentieth century represented a period of unification in education with legislation signalling a change in approach from laissez-faire to interventionist. The 1918 Representation of the People Act mirrored a resurgence of interest in a broader political process which manifested itself in social legislation. For example, the 1918 Education Act was intended to: '... conquer a kingdom without the means of even taking a province' (Kekewich, 1920, p.11). It compelled local authorities to provide 'for the progressive development and comprehensive organisation of education in respect of their area' and provided for nursery schools, continuation classes and 'senior' schools. Fourteen was established as the compulsory leaving age and continuation schools were to provide post-school, part-time education.

For post-compulsory education it was a time of creative improvisation by local authorities and determined pragmatism by voluntarists. Town halls and churches were given over to evening classes and in rural areas residents established their own system of post-compulsory lectures in village halls. Y.M.C.A huts served as cultural and

recreational centres for ex-Armed Forces personnel and miners' institutes sprang up in remote communities.

The origins of the British community school and college movement are usually attributed to Henry Morris (Head of Education in Cambridgeshire) who in 1924 submitted plans for 'Village Colleges' in the country where adult evening classes would use the same rooms as daytime secondary lessons. The first was opened in Sawston in 1930 with a fifth by 1954 and these Village Colleges were intended to be a rural response to a rural problem acting as a focal point for community regeneration: an holistic institution integrating educational, social, cultural and recreational activity.

Though idealistic, the concept stemmed from Morris's hard-headed pragmatism and was a natural response to the 1919 Report of the Adult Education Committee, Tawney's *Secondary Education for All* (1922) and the 1926 Hadow Report on *The Education of the Adolescent* all of which made forceful arguments for the expansion of liberal adult education. Morris never tired of criticising the 'insulated school' and was an early advocate of lifelong learning but his vision came up against a lack of leadership in rural areas where the squires and parsons of a bygone age were ill-placed to respond to change. (Without the 1944 Education Act introducing compulsory secondary education it is doubtful whether Morris's ideas would have been pursued in Cambridgeshire let alone Leicestershire, Devon and Cumberland in the post-war period).

For adult education the restriction on funds was offset, to some extent by the universal availability of cheap books with Penguin established in 1935 as an inexpensive publishing house almost entirely dedicated to educational works. Womens' Institutes pressed local authorities to respond to the Public Libraries Act of 1919. It should be noted that some libraries acted as further education institutions themselves especially in rural districts: 'To relieve the tedium of idle hours quite irrespective of intellectual

profit or educational gain. It is sufficient that the rural inhabitant should be rendered a happier man...' (Kenyon Report, 1927, para. xvi).

Finally there was the advent of a true mass media in the form of a national broadcasting radio network and a thriving London and provincial press. The B.B.C. established its adult education section as early as 1927 by which time there were two and a quarter million registered receivers. A regular series of twenty minute talks were included in the schedules for each evening and one afternoon each week and these were supported by pamphlets giving detailed notes and illustrations.

In 1928, a committee of inquiry set up by the B.B.C. and the British Institute of Adult Education recommended that 'contact between mind and mind is a vital part of the educational process' (para. xxvi) and a Central Council for Adult Education was established whose main accomplishment was the foundation of a huge diversity of discussion groups on education-related topics. The weekly journal *The Listener* was a direct result. It is likely, though, that the B.B.C.'s most influential work was achieved through its normal programmes and their regular talks about books, films, music and travel which did not come under its educational scheduling.

Education and training: separate and different

The conflict between concepts of 'education' and 'training' which were peculiarly English are now evident. While the lack of an adequate system of elementary and, then, secondary education hindered the development of vocational education in the nineteenth and early twentieth century there were other factors which continued to operate to the same end. A lack of recognition for scientists, poor remuneration in technical careers and a separation of goals and perceptions of the major influences on policy all conspired to perpetuate a division of status. Industry continued to

emphasise and reward the production processes rather than research and management skills (*Factors in Industrial and Commercial Efficiency - Report of the Committee on Industry and Trade*, Balfour Committee Report, 1927).

The Malcolm Committee (*Report of the Committee on Education and Industry, England and Wales*, 1927/28) had already recognised the importance of co-operation between schools and industry and acknowledged an issue which remained contentious five decades later: youth unemployment. (Its terms of reference were to inquire into and advise upon the public system of education in England and Wales in relation to the requirements of trade and industry, with particular reference to the adequacy of the arrangements for enabling young people to enter into and retain suitable employment).

The Report voiced concerns over the conflicting roles of the State Departments of Education and Labour sometimes in terms of underlying educational philosophy (general versus vocational) and sometimes in different administrative practices. From industry itself it was difficult to extract a coherent view. While taking evidence from individual members of the National Confederation of Employers Organisations it was impossible to formulate a collective response.

The Malcolm Committee was careful to avoid a narrow curriculum approach and were convinced that a greater degree of contact between local work opportunities and the schools would let in 'light and air' (para. iii). A repeated theme of the Report was the acceptance of a broad education for life alongside the preparation for work. (It did, however, come down firmly against a purely vocational education in elementary schools). The Malcolm Report does not appear to have been considered in parliament and little more was heard of it.

Strangely, the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions had initiated 'an inquiry into the relationship of Technical Education to other forms of education and to

industry and commerce' (the Emmott Committee, 1927, *terms of reference*) coincident with the work of the Malcolm Committee. Neither report acknowledged the existence of the other yet a similarity of wording in key areas means that they were clearly aware of each other's work. The Emmott Report commented that it had been 43 years since the Samuelson Commission and that during that time 'influences have modified our national life to such an extent that the conditions and needs of today differ profoundly from those of 1884' (para. ii).

Although an unofficial report it did usefully provide evidence of the state of mind of industrialists and educationalists which indicated a chasm of opinion existed. It suggested that it would be pointless for government to get involved in promoting further technical education until bridges had been built between these main parties. This was probably naive in that the gulf was too wide for a voluntary reaction by either schools or industry. With these parties maintaining a cold distance and politicians preoccupied there was little scope for movement.

While industry itself was ambivalent towards education and headteachers were protective of their areas of authority, a few individuals did believe a direct link was required between education and industry to address the dichotomy of opinion. In 1924 Lord Eustace Percy (President of the Board of Education) stressed this importance and lay responsibility with the LEAs. Like MacDonald and Wedgwood in 1918 he was firmly convinced that an effective education should be based upon the teaching of the humanities for all. The view was taken at the time that the principal source from which industry would be served was the junior technical schools. (*The Education of the Adolescent - The Hadow Report 1926*). The problem remained, however, that only 3% of school leavers between 14 - 16 went to such schools. The same report recommended that all children should have the right to post primary education (and for this to be termed 'secondary', para. vii) as part of a continuous and

unified system. While the school leaving age had been raised to 14 in 1922, Hadow recommended a further increase to 15 (by 1932) and then 16 at a date to be appointed.

Laudable in intent the education system was inadequate to contain the classes of 50 - 60 teenagers in dilapidated buildings with minimal resources (Simon, *op.cit*, p.33).

The Report also advocated a clean break in the education of children between the ages of 11 and 12 and suggested two streams: academic (grammar) and practical/realistic (secondary modern). To clarify this break Hadow suggested the word 'primary' supplant 'elementary' (para. vi). While the report came up against considerable political, parental and industrial inertia (it had exceeded its terms of reference and alarmed both government and business as to the attendant costs) in it lay the foundations of the 1944 agreement on education.

Education and elections

It is often difficult to reflect on a period in which education was considered as only a marginal political matter and appreciate how sweeping such legislation as the 1918 Education Act and the 1926 Hadow Report were. In context it is worth remembering that education is first mentioned in a party election manifesto in 1918 (Craig, 1975) by one party only (the Coalition under Lloyd George and Bonar Law) and in the same sentence as employment and temperance. Labour and Liberal manifestos in 1922 include education under headings of 'Higher Standard of Life' and 'defence of essential social services' (paras. 12/13 respectively) and these two parties repeat much the same thing again in the hastily-called election the following year. (R. H. Tawney had edited a Labour policy document entitled *Secondary Education for All* in 1922).

Only in 1924 did all three parties allocate a separate heading to education as part of their election programmes with an emphasis on reducing class sizes, buildings

improvement and an adequate supply of qualified teachers (and attractive salary scales) much of which is familiar today. The 1924 Conservative manifesto was alone in mentioning education after school: 'The systematic promotion of schemes of adult education under the Local Education Authorities and the further development of all kinds of technical education' (Craig, *ibid.* p.45). Education as a vote winner was for another generation.

Key thinkers in further and adult education

While official and unofficial reports stressed the need for closer liaison between the emerging schools system and an increasingly threatened industrial base and the good work of individuals and organisations with their voluntaristic style stressed a more general approach, the backdrop of inflexibility of mind and vagueness of objectives at economic policy level made such arguments relatively academic. The finance markets to which Britain had such a strong allegiance were displayed in all their vulnerability in Wall Street in 1929. More generally, the retreat from free competition effectively meant that 'Britain became a non-competing country at home as well as abroad' (Hobsbawm, *op.cit.*, p.86). British governments were ill at ease with the new world order and singularly ill-prepared to take any action. In this light the paces made in education can be seen as a positive response against adversity - much of it due to individual efforts. This was a time of the great contributors to education in general and adult/further education in particular.

Three British men stand out in the inter-war period as stalwarts of belief in and practitioners of adult education: Albert Mansbridge, Basil Yeaxlee and Richard Henry Tawney. This is not to diminish the work of many thousands of people and hundreds of organisations and their valuable contributions but simply to recognise the creativity

and imagination (which became such a hallmark of college ethos) of these men and women without whom much great work would never have been conducted.

Of greatest importance is their attitudes and influence on the key themes of voluntarism, vocationalism and liberalism within adult and post-compulsory education which set the conditions for learning and styles of teaching for decades. In addition, their work was devoted to the provision of a wider curriculum than their jobs necessitated and a belief in the enlightening process that a general education bestows. While acknowledging the importance and economic reality of education for work all three perceived a greater, responsible community through a broadening of perspectives and choices.

Albert Mansbridge (1876-1952) has been briefly mentioned already. The 'Great Tradition' describes a uniquely British form of adult education which has as its incentive a love of learning for its own sake. More than anyone else Mansbridge was responsible for the popularising of this style of learning based on mutual trust, respect and willingness to explore horizons. This is distinctly removed from 'skills' training and any utilitarian project.

Described as the prophet-founder of the Workers' Educational Association which, in turn, receives the accolade of the biggest educational revolution of his generation, Mansbridge was also responsible for other, less well-known, educational innovations. They include the Central Library for Students (1916), the Church Tutorial Association (1918), the Seafarers' Association (1919) and the College of the Sea. (1938) David Alfred's biography concludes that Mansbridge's influence came not from originality of thought but the way he took existing ideas and integrated them into practical frameworks of mass appeal. Thus, he made them attractive to: 'diverse social groups who, inspired by his sincerity, commitment and enthusiasm, then helped him put them into action' (Alfred, 1987, p.63).

So closely bound in his thoughts were spirituality, wisdom and knowledge that Mansbridge was convinced that the individual's desire for them 'is so uniform as to constitute a law of life.' He introduced his book on 'University Tutorial Classes' in 1913 with two educational maxims: 'How shall a man learn except from one who is a friend?' (Xenophon) and 'The lecture is one, the discussion is one thousand' (Arabian proverb). That the W.E.A. was established and Mansbridge's ideals found such widespread accommodation must be seen against a highly volatile political, economic and military canvas making his accomplishments stand out as singularly impressive.

Mansbridge had a healthy disrespect for the notion that culture is confined to the dominant social class. He emphasised the importance of satisfying peoples' need for knowledge without necessarily defining the content observing that working folk produced their own scholars and that all music, art and literature was derived from the basic and fundamental activities of man. This is considerably at odds with the notion of men of bronze, silver and gold and the apportioning of status and power.

Though the concept of lifelong education is thought to have been created in the 1970 United Nations International Education Year this is really a grave injustice to Basil A. Yeaxlee (1883-1967) whose intellectual energy and tireless commitment to the ideal was much in evidence half-a-century earlier. His *Lifelong Education* was the original English publication which sought to establish a way of viewing education in total in order to 'attain ... unity of spirit and purpose amidst differentiation of functions' and 'recognise the educational value of the unorthodox, and perhaps unsuspected, means of education to which thousands ... respond' (1929, p.10).

'Lifelong Education' was the first formal attempt this century to combine the whole of the educational enterprise under a set of guiding principles with each phase or agency

(formal, non-formal, informal) enjoying equal esteem. Yeaxlee's thoughts rested upon the idea that learning and living could be integrated both horizontally across work, leisure and community and vertically through time from cradle to grave.

The kind of integration that he envisaged demanded a degree of co-operation and sharing of philosophies (a broad liberal education as an end in itself pursued in a supportive environment with democratic representation) and resources which the emergent educational provision lacked. The stage of potential social reforms after World War One and major changes in secondary provision provided the scene for this first, fully articulated argument for education beyond compulsory, vocationally-biased delivery and content. Yeaxlee's position was not, therefore, one of providing a 'catching up' education but that adult provision should be an extension of what (however little) had preceded.

Yeaxlee was a contributor to Lloyd George's 1919 Reconstruction Committee which had expressed dissatisfaction with the concept of technical and vocational training and had viewed such activity as outside the province of adult education. He saw the possibilities for a new technical and vocational preparation as part of a reinterpretation of education and its relationship to industrial, social, community, professional and private life and to the whole life experience itself and he remained optimistic about the possibilities which he perceived emerging from the post-war educational debate and prevailing mood of social reconstruction.

Much of education for adults, he argued, should be practical in terms of its relationship to students' experiences and interests whilst, at the same time, it ought to be concerned with the validity of 'intellectual authority' so that it would help adults to reflect on their expanded knowledge and to think rationally: 'No man is free so long as he remains ... in bondage to intellectual authority, however venerable, or to his own

crassness and ignorance, however absorbed he may be in the practical service of his kind' (*ibid.* p.15).

The intellectual authority he spoke of refers to the 'outlook, prejudices and passions' (p.18) of the conservative mind and a pluralism involving segregation and selectivity. He also encouraged his readers to consider new and informal methods of learning and teaching and: ' ... look about them for new and promising forms of educational life and activity among men and women, and perhaps themselves to take some share in adding to the number' (p.19).

His strong religious beliefs convinced him that respect and responsibility emanated from within through a process of enlarged knowledge and reflection and could not be imposed by an outside authority. It was, thus, a policy of evolutionary development for each citizen and not a mass, politically driven strategy. Yeaxlee argued for the transformation of education so that it could prepare everyone for spiritual, political and educational freedom through lifelong education.

No one could be a passive observer or victim of their condition but vital, responsive agents of change unfettered by prejudices and free to pursue knowledge and understanding suited to their individual, responsible purposes within a democratic community. This, by definition, brings his beliefs into sharp contrast with conservative attitudes and ideals of government. For him there was no academic/vocational divide other than that which was artificially and deliberately created by the governing elite.

Richard Tawney (1880-1962) has been described as The Patron Saint of Adult Education (Elsey, *op.cit.*). In a crowded and creative life, adult learning was a passionate personal commitment where he worked out his values and position in life. As a lecturer he was better off the lectern in informal discussions than on it during a

formal lecture which was an indication of his preferred style of teaching. Good teaching and high intellectual standards were, for Tawney, essential complements to the ideals of equality of opportunity for workers and the use of education for political ends. He taught such ideas during a time when the world faced totalitarianism. Intelligent citizenship had to spring from a sound education in a social democracy of moral reasoning.

In his time as W.E.A President he was a working leader devoting much time and great energy to its executive affairs ranging from political in-fighting to appointing new staff. His main struggle was to prevent splinter groups breaking away from the core theme of commitment to working class post-compulsory education. He was also a member of the 1919 Adult Education Committee whose Final Report is still regarded as the definitive document on the matter with its practical and philosophical insights. Chief among its conclusions were:

- * that adult education should cater for the varied needs and tastes of the people. It should, therefore, include not only citizenship studies but science, music, languages, literature, drama and craftsmanship.
- * that the provision of a liberal education for adults should be regarded by universities as a normal and necessary part of their functions.
- * that each university should establish a department of extra-mural adult education with an academic head and adequate teaching and administrative staff to develop and co-ordinate the various branches of the work.
- * that University Extension should be eligible for government grant.
- * that joint committees of education authorities, universities and voluntary bodies should be established to do for non-university adult education what the university joint committees had done for tutorial classes.
- * that local education authorities should establish evening institutes for social, recreational and educational activities especially for young people.

* that generous help should be given to the establishment of village institutes and that experiments be made in the creation of residential colleges in rural areas.

Tawney himself wrote two complete sections on the supply of teachers and the organisation and financing of adult classes. His 'four pillars' of thought were: fellowship of learning, liberal teaching, democratic citizenship based on critical minds and the values of socialism. Tawney believed that adult education was bound by these values and that only continuous education could furnish the skills of critical perception and rational assessment. His work on the subject of equality (1952) is rich in the thinking of social partnerships as much as political and economic considerations and linked self-fulfilment through education with a reduction in inequalities in society. Post-compulsory education was, for him, an inalienable right which served, therefore, both the individual and the community as mutually supportive.

The rise of social efficiency

Ranged against this radical tradition was an increasingly important theory of social efficiency in which educational institutions are regarded as instruments of industrial endeavour and economic policy. Two Americans have had a considerable influence in their own right on both sides of the Atlantic - John Dewey and E. L. Thorndike - and typify the widening gulf between liberal traditions and a new technocratic model. The first was regarded as a pragmatist who was the 'philosophical founder father' of the alternative idea of recurrent learning movements (Flude and Parrot, 1979). Thorndike was his social efficiency counterpart whose work on behavioural science greatly influenced industrialists in both America and Britain with the idea that the brain was a habit-forming machine.

Together they tried to present their contrasting cases to an American society which, firstly responded to the needs of the First World War and secondly, to the realisation that American was, by far, the largest single industrial power in the world. In this way, the conflict between vocational and liberal education was galvanised into an 'either/or' struggle which is still unfolding today.

Dewey's holistic and unifying view was that sterile academic/traditional classicism was just as narrow as occupationally-specific training and was, eventually, unproductive for the individual and society. Although he concentrated heavily on early learning his works are permeated throughout with concepts of continuous intellectual growth using personal experience and empirical knowledge as the base for self-development. Dewey recognised that it was folly to separate a phase of life from the whole of life itself:

'Education should not cease when one leaves school ... The inclination to learn from life itself and to make the conditions of life such that all will learn in the process of living is the finest product of schooling.'

(Dewey, 1914, p.41)

He viewed personal growth as a reward of education and one of the tests of schools and of a quality education was the extent to which they create a desire for more learning and provide the means by which that desire is effective in fact. A chain reaction was established which never really ended in which individuals gathered greater skills of ability and perception; in which past experiences were brought to bear on present ones and in which cognitive connections could be made between apparently disparate events or facts to aid problem-solving.

Dewey envisaged an independent-thinking adult armed with the capabilities of intelligent enquiry was an obligation of any education system. 'Ways of knowing' rather than 'states of knowledge' (p.44) were of primary importance to him. These views were similar to proponents of lifelong learning and Tawney is seen as his philosophical counterpart in Britain. They are also very evidently in conflict with notions of social and industrial efficiency which see education and training as necessarily subject and task-specific for maximum profit advantage.

The spirit of lifelong learning in America may be traced in Dewey's thoughts from the late 1890s through to 1939 and Tawney reflected much of these ideals in Britain. Leaders in adult school movements, co-operative colleges, mechanics' institutes, working men and women's colleges and religious or philanthropic organisations had tended to see these concepts as compensatory or 'add-ons' in life. Dewey's call for reform was intended for all education at all ages.

In the early part of the twentieth century, however, there were burgeoning tensions between the democratic institutions that had developed since the eighteenth century and the considerable demands of Fordist economies which placed burdens on that democracy and the rights of the individual. It was a conflict of resources and expectations and the trade off workers would make for financial well-being. The notion that had successfully developed in the nineteenth century that the individual was a separate entity from the state with rights and needs was to jar against the demands of mass production and social efficiency philosophy.

There are few theories of education and learning which have had so great an impact on actual schooling and post-compulsory education than those of Thorndike who is diametrically opposed to lifelong learning. His psychology background emerges in his educational writings as he speaks of stimuli response, orderly progression of tasks

and identifying specific elements of the task and presenting them in the most efficient way to elicit the correct response (Thorndike, 1913).

While he did not deny that insightful learning did occur it was a most infrequent form of learning and only helpful if it made stimuli responses more efficient. The emphasis on scientific methods of production and management in the early twentieth century made his theories a source of much debate and interest among educationalists and industrialists. His best known works were the three-volume *Educational Psychology* (1913-1914) and *Adult Learning* (1928) though he was a prodigious writer covering such areas as the measurement of intelligence (an enormous influence on tripartite educational theory), prediction of vocational success, algebra, psychological testing and dictionaries.

He had concluded by 1913 that humans, through an innate trial-and-error process, are actively seeking the best (most efficient) way to do things. If they could be instructed in that best way without the wasted time involved in trial-and-error then worthwhile learning had taken place. Repetition and association with rewards and punishment made the learning more effective. Thorndike was clearly influenced by the Law of Effect formulated by Alexander Bain in 1877.

The pleasure-pain principle of behaviour modification contained within that theory was a source of experimentation by Thorndike on animals (and no more than a modern interpretation of Jeremy Bentham's *Principle of Utility, op.cit*). He, somewhat, rashly announced in 1924 that he could take any babies and turn them into a tinker, tailor, soldier and sailor with appropriate conditioning. He withdrew this concept at the Ninth International Congress of Psychology in 1929 but there is no doubt that his views on conditioning had a significant effect on work training in a Fordist society.

He remained committed to the theory that mental and intellectual functions were merely biological connections and his studies of adult learning convinced him that, while they are still capable of learning, the ability to do so declines with age. In terms of actual intelligence, Thorndike was a believer in the everyday notion that what goes up must come down and that raw intelligence peaked in early adulthood. The effect on political thinking cannot be underestimated. Educational psychology driven by intelligence testing and vocational relevance found a welcome home in industrial economies seeking efficient use of resources (both in factories and schools). The ties between education and economy were cemented in theories of interconnectivity expounded by Thorndike. The belief that appropriate stimuli administered by a trained scientific management aware of the nature of reward and punishment effects was simply too attractive to ignore. Similarly, the need for a schooling system which reinforced traditions of status, obedience and those very concepts of reward and punishment was a prerequisite to industrial success.

While nothing is quite that politically conspired there is no doubt that social efficiency through educational psychology had enormous attractions for Fordist nations. It can be said that Dewey argued for the individual while Thorndike argued for the state. For John Dewey only the eradication of that distinction could make education truly effective for all (Carr and Hartnett, *op.cit*).

The Spens and Norwood Reports

The 1926 Hadow Report on *The Education of the Adolescent* had provided much food for thought in official circles. Sir William Spens was to extend that thinking in 1938 with a remit to consider aspects of secondary education notably the organisation and interrelation of schools other than those administered under the elementary code with

particular attention to the framework and content of education of pupils who do not remain at school beyond the age of about sixteen.

While implying that another type of school with a different curriculum was acceptable, the terms of reference placed firm constraints on educational experts to confine themselves 'without intermeddling with major questions of policy' (Simon, *op.cit.* p.42). Spens also concluded that the school leaving age be raised to 16 and he, effectively, recommended the tripartite system of secondary education: grammar, technical and modern schools. In addition, the validity of IQ testing was accepted (Barber, 1994).

This is an important aspect of education at that time since it confirmed the credence given to Thorndike's scientific measurements of ability. The concept became used, in time, as the mechanism of selection in the 11-plus. The climate of opinion brought about by impending war was most forcefully witnessed in Board of Education's Permanent Secretary Maurice Holmes reaction that the idea of a school leaving age of 16 was 'a pious expression of opinion' and that Spens' ideas would place a huge burden on the Treasury (Memorandum, 14 January 1939 quoted in Simon, *ibid.* p.39). While a few ministers and senior civil servants saw a 'social merging and full equality of opportunity' after the now inevitable war (Cleary, {Principal Assistant Secretary of the Elementary Branch} 1939) there was little support from other permanent secretaries with public school and Oxbridge backgrounds.

However, while the Second World War may have constrained some minds it galvanised others and Holmes had to admit that the Board of Education should be active in preparing for a post-war scenario. Working for the newly appointed President of the Board of Education - Butler - he was a shrewd civil servant who could detect a change in political climate. Butler took over the Committee for Post-War Reconstruction's Green Book (*Education after the War*) in the summer of 1941.

Butler's contribution to the Committee was to infuse other members and officials with an urgent sense of modernisation which, he felt, had been interrupted by war. Hadow and Spens were to be vindicated.

While further education was specifically mentioned in the Green Book in part-time, full-time and adult education class forms (Board of Education, 1941, para.5) it was the question of a secondary curriculum which once again reared its head as the major driving force. (The Green Book's proposals are the first time that 'further education' is officially documented as a discrete provision). What should constitute content in a secondary school was much in debate and politically sensitive. This was reflected in the fact that the committee established to consider this was, in reality, a sub-committee of the Secondary Schools Examination Council yet, in practice, it answered directly to Butler and under Sir Cyril Norwood, the SSEC did not even receive copies of the report.

Leaders of the teaching profession (Sir Ronald Gould, President of the N.U.T. for example) would have liked a sharper focused debate on curriculum but Butler was a pragmatic politician who saw the whole issue spiralling out of political control unless it was contained within a committee at his sole disposal. Thus, the Norwood Report (1943) substantially supported the tripartite system and marked the opening of a 'long period of campaigning and manoeuvring by the various interest groups' (Gosden, 1983). The relation of a technical high school to local industry was deemed an essential one and Norwood doubted whether that relationship could be maintained unless the school was free to direct its own destiny (pp.18-19).

The Spens Report had been virtually shelved before the outbreak of war but Norwood - which had broad areas of agreement with the earlier committee - was the foundation of the 'settlement' of 1944 which had considerable long-term implications for the modern educational state (McCulloch, 1993). While civil servants may have been

responding to a change in political winds, Butler veered away from a strict curriculum focus and, instead, relied upon a general brush stroke in policy formation.

This was to contain as many of the powerful vested interests as possible by avoiding the particular and promoting the wider picture. This approach has received some criticism. Simon (1986) argued that, in a period of high social expectation, the educational agenda was allowed to be controlled by a conservative, tripartite mould. Barnett (1986, p.8) describes the Norwood Report as 'an exercise in hypocrisy' reinforcing the notion of a monolithic, conspiratorial elite through the preservation of Norwood's grammar school academic values.

There is, no doubt, a difference between Spens' emphasis on a vocational element in grammar schools and Norwood's 'sound learning for its own sake' (para. iv) but the findings were, essentially similar. Why should another committee, therefore, be appointed? The Spens Report had contained some unresolved and contradictory issues that encouraged some doubt about their implementation. It had argued in favour of broadening of the grammar curriculum but also recommended that junior technical schools be upgraded to secondary school status to become 'technical high schools'. This meant that - as one member, Lady Simon (in an interview with R.H. Tawney, 11 January 1939) put it: '... we show by our curriculum proposals that we don't really believe in our administrative proposals'.

It was not made clear why the grammar curriculum needed to be widened when there were three different types of schools for pupils of different abilities recommended. Another problem was the assumed parity that technical high schools would achieve with the existing secondary schools in the absence of a recognised external examination such as the School Certificate.

Indeed, it was the matter of examinations which was used to artificially frame the Norwood Committee's terms of reference so that it could not be accused of being incorrectly constituted. Its terms were constructed, therefore as: 'To consider suggested changes in the secondary school curriculum and the question of School Examinations thereto' (p.1).

Once it began to meet, however, Norwood allowed considerable freedom of discussion on anything related to secondary education. This manoeuvre over terms of reference was at a critical stage in the development of post-war reforms and was to give grammar schools a stronger role in the years to come with an overt recognition that parity of esteem between school types was impossible (Meeting three of the Committee, 5 - 7 January 1942 and Norwood Report p.78).

The tripartite system which was vigorously advocated became transfixed by an examination at age 11 and, ironically, the subterfuge over terms of reference became a source of vilification for the failures of the post-war settlement. As McCulloch, (*ibid.* p.180) reflects: 'Over the medium-term perhaps after all it was Spens' reformism that emerged triumphant ...' It is also a counter-argument to the Educational Establishment elite conspiracy argument that the machinations of Ministers and civil servants were contested with some success in a forum flourishing with different ideologies.

The stage had been set for a broad sweep approach to educational reform. Much of the work had been done for the changes expected and required in a post-war Britain and, with Prime Ministerial backing, Butler was able to put through changes which were to shape education and lives for two generations. Compromise ran throughout the planning and execution of the subsequent legislation and, once again, there was much attributable to wishful thinking that realistically achievable. The influence of

powerful parties in those changes left further education significantly isolated and marginalised.

Conclusion

The twentieth century had started with a contradiction of ideas for education and training. Official reports and Royal Commissions had indicated that Britain was losing ground to economic rivals and there was much political rhetoric about responses. Against that trepidation were the powerful conservative beliefs of British superiority, the restraint of passions and preservation of order, a sharp division in the structure and nature of the classes, the pre-occupation with looking back and scepticism of new ideas particularly utopian planning.

Wisdom, it was felt by the governing class, was found not in theoretical speculations of isolated thinkers but in 'the deposit of traditional customs and institutions' (Quinton, 1977, p.43). The apparent failure of entrepreneurship and the cultural predisposition towards status quo - while offering simple explanations for Britain's decline - tell only part of the story. Britain's exceptional economic lead was achieved without a national policy of education and fostered a belief in the individual researcher/inventor.

The country's economic prowess was, effectively, based on the work of enthusiastic tinkering and mass employment in key industries. The first industrial revolution had exhausted its potential and while other countries seized upon the inventions of the second revolution (aided by a respect for research and development) Britain's 'tinkering' was no longer effective without the organised and systematic support of infant industries by government which maintained faith in financial markets.

This conflict of forward-thinking planning against an almost romantic perception of the past remained in place throughout the period leading up to the Second World War. A liberal education through the diverse institutions representing adult and further education was regarded as a worthwhile end in itself by official bodies and their reporting mechanisms but faltered when the forces of conservative thought and tradition were ranged against it.

A considerable amount of effective work was done by individuals, universities, trade unions and voluntary organisations but the social conditions which had produced Disraeli's 'Two Nations' (1845) were still in evidence and still working against a coherent democratic educational system. A system which promoted a general education for a privileged elite while 'bestowing' a vocational training for the rest did little to foster a democratic tradition within schools and mass schooling became characterised by bureaucratic control and the maintenance of authority.

It was a peculiarly English trend that education as a community or civic virtue was especially weak while the notions of deference and knowing one's place in the hierarchy have survived long into a nominally democratic age. The proposition that an extension of a general education to the masses would not only debase such an education (and lower academic standards) but elevate the consciousness of a considerable majority of the population was a powerful concept within government and the ruling elite and enough to dissuade many politicians - with a few exceptions such as Balfour and Fisher - from grasping the nettle of a wider, general education for all. An educated public with a grasp of political responsibilities and civic duties - as perceived by Dewey as key to a democratic society - received little establishment support. The debate over vocational education was won by the social efficiency philosophers.

Snedden (1924, p.23) argued that the ultimate aim of education was 'the greatest degree of efficiency'. This notion was inspired by the work of E. L. Thorndike whose writings on psychology and education have proven so influential and pervasive throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Snedden agreed with Thorndike that humans fall into ability levels which parallel the hierarchical work of modern society: new technologies and equipment would differentiate people into functions according to their 'probable destinies' (p.24).

Such concepts fitted neatly with Fordism: a standardisation of products; mechanisation of most tasks; such tasks were subject to the rules of scientific management and the use of flowline production making workers static contributors to the whole. The notion that education should 'serve' the nation by providing manpower which operated efficiently was set.

The striking aspect of early twentieth century economic development in Britain is how the legacies of the Industrial Revolution continued to bind policy-makers to attitudes unsuited to the vastly different and continuously changing conditions in the new global economic picture. Economic policy was slaved to 'sound financial principles' despite evidence to the contrary of their actual benefit. The devotion to the Gold Standard in 1925 was an example but that strict orientation towards financial markets was finally checked by those markets themselves in the Wall Street Crash of 1929.

When the State did intervene it was not as a result of a coherent plan or well-developed industrial strategy but as a series of ad hoc measures facilitating mergers and the formation of monopolies - a reactive approach which has dogged successive British governments. Even after the Great Depression, British economic policies remained fixated with nineteenth century ideals of deferential attitudes, class rigidity and the hierarchy of work roles. Party manifestos of the 1920s and 1930s include

education as an afterthought or detail rather than a driving influence as Britain came to terms with a diminishing international role.

Organising and administering elementary, then secondary education, became a huge enterprise for British governments which placed post-compulsory education on the side lines of political thought. Those governments were ill at ease with the new world order and only with the relative recovery of sterling in an international role and the revitalisation of City institutions was this disquiet temporarily settled.

In the meantime, individuals, groups, organisations, and ultimately, the Second World War contributed to a reassessment of those beliefs and traditions not least by the working class who felt that the hardships of war deserved some reward. The idiosyncratic and elitist nature of British education would be challenged not by a rethink due to cultural and economic change but, once again, by the social impact of global conflict. Contained within those expectations was a belief that a post-compulsory experience was needed to prevent 'fading' of earlier education, to provide access to employment and continue the socialising element of a young person's life.

These aspirations derived their inspiration from an English radical tradition, hard-fought working class representation, world war austerity and the drive and passion of key educationalists and a select few politicians. In 1944, these seemed like worthwhile and achievable goals but the essentially contestable nature of education was to work against them as post-compulsory education lost out to the now vote-winning aspect of the compulsory sector. The academic/vocational divide remained rigidly in situ within organisational, political and institutional frameworks.

CHAPTER THREE: 1944 - 1973

AN EXPERIMENT WITH CONSENSUS

Introduction

Education in Britain at the outbreak of war had been in a serious state of disrepair. For 80% of all children there was no continuing education after age 14. The compulsory part-time education for 14 - 18 year olds envisaged in the 1918 Fisher Act was never implemented. Slim parliamentary majorities (1923-31), vested interests, cuts in teachers' pay and reduced funding to LEAs plus the Depression had put educationalists in retreat (Barber, *op.cit*).

Even the 1936 Education Act had been emasculated: the Church had successfully resisted state attempts to extend control over their schools. The agricultural body - so powerful in the Tory party - had seen to it that the raising of the school leaving age to 15 was so riddled with exemptions as to be meaningless. Paradoxically, the crisis of war changed this stagnation period. As Argles (1964, p.24) was to note:

'In Britain the idealism of the war years led to a great amount of rethinking in the field of education. The climax of the growing realisation that national provision for children and young people had been completely inadequate was the White Paper of 1943'.

The White Paper was *Educational Reconstruction* received a largely positive response with the only serious opposition from the Roman Catholic Church. Any other criticism was from those impatient with the proposed time scale rather than the content (notably the TUC). Few could argue against its coherence and comprehensive nature with a balanced discussion of views and sobriety in sharp contrast to the White Papers of the 1980s and 1990s.

Several themes are interwoven in this chapter which constitute political influences, consequences of political influences or factors creating political influences on post-compulsory education. Some are contradictory yet combine to generate a strange synergy which ultimately gave post-compulsory education its peculiar culture of liberalism and voluntarism. Many of the influences are historical - hence the need for a review from the Industrial Revolution - but others were contemporary and reactive in nature and, as is so often the case for education in general, more of a reflection of strong personalities and traditional ideals working in an increasingly shrinking world picture.

The themes which moulded post-compulsory education so strikingly after the Second World War comprise: a commitment to tripartism; the effects of Fordism and Scientific Management; a declining international role for Britain and loss of colonies; a seemingly irreversible trend of boom and bust economic cycles; establishment loyalty to capital finance; continuing concerns with the impact and relevance of vocational education and training and relationship with national output; a hierarchical and bureaucratic work and social structure; a new professional body of management plus a low skill work force; an increasingly well-organised and active labour movement and, finally, a string of official reports which recognised - to some extent - the need for change and the elements that hindered an effective educational response.

By 1939, the British state was more interventionist and protectionist than any other time in its industrial history. Yet its policy makers did not conceive any coherent industrial policy in the wake of complex mixtures of advances and retreats in global fortunes. More generally, the withdrawal from free competition effectively meant that 'Britain became a non-competing country at home as well as abroad' (Hobsbawm, *op.cit.* p.68). The legacy of the nineteenth century was to fix government attention on external relations over which they had increasingly little control at the expense of

domestic policies. Britain looked at the world through the eyes of bankers and traders (Pollard, 1984).

Such a fixation was to the detriment of industrial regeneration as so many of British factories reflected their age through reduced production. Output of Spitfires and Hurricanes in the rush to re-arm was more seriously affected by the poor quality of factory machinery than by management, training or personnel issues. While there may be no direct correlation between the outflow of capital and the level of investment there is, rather, a complex interaction of forces leading generally to investment failure. Governmental refusal to react positively to internal industrial pressures was one of those forces:

'... the policies intended to maintain the position of sterling discouraged and distorted industrial investment through high interest rates to attract foreign funds and prevent the flight of "hot money", ... and recurrent bouts of deflation to restrain home demand and "free" resources for export production.'

(Jessop, 1980, p.44)

The 1944 Education Act

While public schools retained their independence the stage was set for massive intervention in the state system of education. The 1944 Education Act was a radical response to several urgent needs: official reports signalled that only a massive mobilisation of resources could address important sociological, political and economic realities; the British public would not tolerate a government of inertia after the privations of war; significant minorities were excluded from education and the nation needed a period of healing in which education would play a leading part. A long but

illuminating piece from Butler's work *The Art of the Possible* (1971, pp. 46 - 52) illustrates the politics of the period and the sometimes convoluted gestation of legislation:

'The Prime Minister sent for me. He saw me after his afternoon nap and was purring like a tiger. He began, "You have been in the House fifteen years and it is time you were promoted." I objected gently that I had been there only twelve years but he waved this aside. "You have been in the government for the best part of that time and now I want you to go to the Board of Education. I think that you can leave your mark there. You will be independent. Besides," he continued, with rising fervour, "you will be in the war. You will move poor children from here to here," and he lifted up and evacuated imaginary children from one side of his blotting pad to the other; "this will be very difficult." He went on: "I am too old now to think you can improve people's natures. Everyone has to learn to defend himself. I should not object if you could introduce a note of patriotism into the schools." And then with a grin, "Tell the children that Wolfe won Quebec," I said that I would like to influence what was taught in schools but that this was always frowned upon. Here he looked very earnest and commented, "Of course, not by instruction or order but by suggestion." I then said that I had always looked forward to going to the Board of Education if I were given the chance. He appeared ever so slightly surprised at this, showing that he felt that in wartime a central job, such as the one I was leaving, is the most important. But he looked genuinely pleased that I had shown so much satisfaction and seemed to think the appointment entirely suitable. He concluded the interview by saying: "Come and see me to discuss things - not details, but the broad lines ..."

The crisis of modern war is a crucial test of national values and way of life. Amid the suffering and the sacrifice the weaknesses of society are revealed and there begins a period of self-examination, self-criticism and movement for reform. It is remarkable how in England educational planning and advance have coincided with wars. In the earlier years of the twentieth century the Boer War and the First World War have both provided an impulse. Alas, many of the proposals of the Fisher Act of 1918 were killed by an economic blizzard which was to freeze the educational pattern for most of the inter-war years. Grammar schools, which had emerged as part of the public provision of education when the century was young and which were the acknowledged route to the professions, were restricted to a small minority of children. The vast majority of children spent the nine years of their education in elementary schools which still suffered from the blight of poverty and inferiority associated with the traditions of the past. Thus, through sheer lack of opportunity, much human potential was wasted. Already in 1926 the Hadow Report on the Education of the Adolescent had recommended reorganization of schools with the provision of separate post-primary schools for the senior (eleven-plus) age groups. The Board of Education had encouraged reorganization - in practice the building of new senior elementary schools - but among local authorities progress had varied and in many areas the old all-age elementary school persisted, indeed was not finally obliterated for another forty years. The Hadow Report had also recommended that the school leaving age should be raised to fifteen - an increase called for by the need to make post-primary education a course with sufficient length to be meaningful. The Education Act of 1936 gave partial effect to this by laying down that, as from 1 September 1939, all children were to remain at school until the age of fifteen unless they obtained work which the local authority approved as beneficial. On that day, however, German troops invaded Poland, the evacuation of the school

children began, and the raising of the leaving age was indefinitely postponed.

War brought the building of schools and education itself to a halt in many areas. The evacuation of school children threw the educational system into serious disorder, and thoughts of reform were put aside. There were considerable doubts whether the structure itself could be held together. In January 1940 some half a million children were getting no schooling at all. Energetic action by the Board of Education gradually restored the position. But the revelations of evacuation administered a severe shock to the national conscience; for they brought to light the conditions of those unfortunate children of the "submerged tenth" who would also rank among the citizens of the future. It was realised with deepening awareness that the "two nations" still existed in England a century after Disraeli had used the phrase. The challenge of the times provided a stimulus for rethinking the purposes of society and planning the reconstruction of the social system of which education formed an integral part.

Realisation of a full democracy - an order of society free from the injustices and anomalies of the pre-war period - was the ideal. Educational problems were thus seen as an essential part of the social problem and the urgent need for educational reform was increasingly realised.'

The passage from Bill to the statute books was impressive in terms of the resistance it encountered along the way not least from the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. Both saw problems of denominational title, acts of collective worship and, more pragmatically, funding. Butler's political skill was in accommodating such a range of requirements across such diverse interests but even he admitted its flaws and called it a 'classic example ... of our inveterate prejudice for fragmentary and gradual legislation' (*ibid.* p.59).

Despite its weaknesses the Butler Act was a comprehensive, far-reaching, optimistic and enthusiastic piece of educational legislation and represented a political watershed. Yet within it lay the seeds of a legitimisation crisis that allowed a determined New Right movement to break the bonds of consensus. Its compromises were its weaknesses. In the meantime there was a recognised need for trained personnel and 'the duty which a civilised community owes its citizens demands this' (Peters, 1967, p.21). In the 1944 Act, further education was seen as an important third stage of a continuous learning process and was precisely defined for the first time as:

- a) Full-time and part-time education for persons over compulsory school age (and)
- b) leisure time occupation, in such organised cultural training and recreative activities as are suited to their requirements, for any persons over compulsory school age who are able and willing to profit (from them).

(Sections 41 -47)

Thus, there was an explicit distinction between vocational, work-related instruction and those courses that constituted leisure, pleasure and pastime but no higher status was afforded to either one. In fact there was a consistent pattern of thought to be extracted from the letter and spirit of the vocabulary of the Act which clearly saw both strands as valid, relevant and worthwhile in themselves:

The Act must: ' ... contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community' while colleges were to provide students with 'physical, practical and vocational training as will help them to develop their various aptitudes and capacities and will prepare them for the responsibilities of citizenship.'
(p.48)

In this way the Act formalised what further educationalists had been informally pursuing through the earlier part of the century: a balance of practical training for work roles and a more general education for recreational and citizenry purposes.

For some three decades the British education system was dominated by its provisions which owed much to the recognition of the importance of education to economic advance and social welfare and came to be regarded as the foundation of the post-war welfare state (Chitty, 1992). Education was now regarded as a continuous process for lifelong gains and the Act advocated this in a non-partisan, expansionist way.

The beginnings of a legitimisation crisis

Educational policies and the underlying values interact or are a reflection of the themes and moods of their period. War created an enormous tide of high expectations and the new Labour government had a huge task at the beginning of its administration amidst steel, timber and skilled labour shortages but a sense of solidarity through hardship and a heightened awareness of the inherent weaknesses of the social and class system expressed itself as a desire to accept austerity now for universally important results later.

Britain's policy makers failed to notice that the country's industrial base was to be superseded because of historical legacies and strict allegiance to capital and finance markets. While there was no shortage of innovation and world class technology (Britain was foremost in medicine, radar, sonar, electronics, jet engines and communications) much of this was sold abroad at disparagingly poor prices (Hobsbawm, 1994). The tradition of the amateur individual or small group of enthusiastic boffins was a strong feature of this era and little changed from the days of Faraday or Davy.

British governments also misunderstood or failed to acknowledge that the country's international role was much diminished. Britain's economic and foreign policies were dictated by historic determinants: defence of sterling, a favourable balance of payments and a series of withdrawals from a long list of colonies often involving guerrilla warfare - all of which were conducted with decreasing effectiveness. The pursuit of a nuclear deterrent was an obvious example of a desire to maintain status in a world which had changed dramatically yet it was done in a time of civilian austerity and championed by a Labour Prime Minister. The high level of defence spending skewed the research and development effort in Britain (50% of which was devoted to military studies) and was to be maintained at a higher rate of spending than any OECD country other than the United States (Hobsbawm, *ibid*).

A dynamic and creative civil sector barely survived the financial constraints imposed by high interest rates and tight credit controls in order to sustain this input into military (mostly nuclear - the conventional forces were substantially scaled down) spending. Labour and Conservative governments were ensnared by an imperialist tradition (painfully exposed in Suez in 1956) and the perceived need for a strong alliance with America against a totalitarian Soviet Union. A robust foreign policy again tended to downgrade domestic problems. This political and economic framework places the high expectations on and in education and social remodelling after World War Two into perspective and the inevitable clash of policy, aspirations and results that followed.

To reflect on the history of education and its institutions up to that time is to confirm the continuity and persistence of the principles and practice of hierarchy, selection and differentiation. Often, in their presentation, (ie. their philosophical or ideological justification) these differences have been tripartite between social classes, types of children and types of institution provided for them. An inappropriate use of scientific

education and the absolute 'measurement of everything' were powerful forces of cultural capital.

Tripartite answers

This 'rule of three' has been a recurring concept in attempts to explain division and difference though its practical expression has often provided an imperfect fit. The 1944 Education sought a similar theme in its often loosely prescribed spirit of the law but it drew upon a tripartite tradition of some age. Plato's *The Republic* gave classical tripartism its philosophical justification with its division of those who counted in society: the philosopher (kings); the auxiliaries (merchants) and the artisans - together these constituted the gold, silver and bronze strata of Greek civilisation. The first class was to receive a liberal education, the second a vocational training and the third a socialisation process with some basic vocational grounding.

This top down structure (which excluded the slave class) became a familiar image in English writing about society and education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and was reflected in the reform of English educational institutions from the 1850s onwards. The results were quite obvious: public schools served the upper classes while secondary schools looked after middle class aspirations. Elementary schools (previously provided by a voluntary church initiative) were supplied for the working class under elected school boards. The social origins and directions of children were evident in the fee structure, curriculum offered and leaving ages of each school type and purposefully mirrored the national class system. It was a structure not only intended to maintain a hierarchical status quo but was a projection of future intentions and a clear statement that this was a permanent social and educational fixture.

Subsequent Acts passed between 1850 and 1880 pursued this functional model with vigour and they did not stop at the strict delineation of purpose between school types. They also apportioned a three tier approach to the middle class secondary sector in the Schools Enquiry Commission of 1868 and the Endowed Schools Act of 1869: three grades of school - upper, middle and lower middle classes - were created to represent the levels of middle class attainment, normally this was directly related to employment status. In addition, these grades of school differed in their curricula according to assumed leaving ages which, in turn, assumed a particular area of future employment. In this way, a tripartite model was tested and elaborated by further distinctions in the important middle sector.

While the effect was to perpetuate a social distinction among pupils there was an acknowledgement of the value of a meritocracy which translated into scholarships especially for bright elementary pupils to attend a secondary school after attempting an examination at age 11. This process started and confirmed a scholarship ladder of competitive selection to grammar schools with the 11+ system and within it lies the source of a rift between academic 'education' and vocational 'training'.

The explicit reason for this reorganisation of English education was the confirmation in the minds of children of their social status and the rights, duties and privileges of each class. This was largely a consequence of their fathers' position in life and the system sought to enforce the continued adherence to paternal realities while substantially suppressing any other aspirations - educational or otherwise.

The language of justification is an important element here as it was one of status quo based on the lack of need for anything radical: the Industrial Revolution, military supremacy and economic strength through a significant empire had occurred through such a rigid class structure and there was no perceived requirement to alter a winning system.

Through 'greater intelligence and leisure' the middle and upper classes could 'assert their superiority' and 'conquer back ... some of the influence they have lost by political change' (Lowe, 1867, p.56). Such proclamations of preservation and distinction of social strata were characteristic of establishment rhetoric and language at the time and chiselled the confirmation of a set of rigid beliefs into the both the creators and 'beneficiaries' of legislation throughout the next century.

The rhetoric and the Acts it generated were transparent statements of the functions expected of the education system expressed in unambiguous terms of class authority and right to rule rationalised as a 'need to know basis only'. Best (1985, p.9) notes that: '... the schools of Britain not only mirrored the hierarchical social structure (as, in the absence of a strong government determined otherwise, they were bound to do) but were made more and more to magnify its structuring in detail.' A source of a legitimisation crisis is established once a ruling body decides that the purpose of its existence is to pursue self-maintaining policies in spite of the body of evidence and obvious changing external factors dictating otherwise.

A further example of the continuing belief in the tripartite system is witnessed in the 1920s and the development of state secondary education. The term 'secondary' was confusing and it retained its middle class connections even after the 1944 Education Act when it came to mean the second stage of all children's schooling. Until then, secondary schools with their own preparatory units were still fee-paying and served a middle class body.

The pre-World War One Liberal government had widened the ladder from elementary to secondary systems with the Free Place Regulations of 1907 which required 25% of secondary intake to come from elementary schools. This change coincided with an increased demand from a middle class clientele for places. Faced with too many

children for too few places local authorities introduced selection processes to determine who should attend secondary school.

The 1918 Education Act had set the minimum leaving age at 14. For the 11 - 14 age group in elementary schools the Act placed a duty on Local Education Authorities a duty to provide advanced courses for 'more intelligent children' (Section 2) while Section 4 (4) stated that no child should be prevented 'from receiving the benefits of any form of education by which they are capable of benefiting through inability to pay fees'. This led to a spate of new school building (and increase in local rates) which were called Central or Immediate schools. Salaries for teachers here were less generous than for secondary schools.

In some towns the local technical colleges established Junior Technical or Trade Schools recruiting at 13 and providing pre-employment courses up to the age of 15 or 16. At a time when the greater proportion of post-compulsory education was in the form of evening classes these schools made use of college staff and resources during the day. It is of interest to note that the time at which post-compulsory education started has always been a grey area but that it was at a considerably younger age at the beginning of this century. What was obvious was that the boundaries created in the nineteenth centuries were now incapable of maintaining its original intentions.

The 1920 Committee on Scholarships and Free Places - taking the 1918 Act as its guiding principle - concluded that 75% of elementary pupils were 'capable of profiting' (para. iv) from a secondary education up to 16 or beyond. This was a radical concept since it undermined a ruling establishment belief in status quo and was being ventured at a time when most children from the lower classes were expected to start working at age 14 or 15.

Perhaps a clear way forward - as suggested by Tawney and a few Labour local authorities - was to provide a break at 11+ for all children so that after the primary stage all would proceed to a secondary stage (in the strict sense of the word). This did not gain universal acceptance since it meant a complete overhaul of the curricula. It was left as an issue for the Board of Education's Consultative Committee (Hadow Report) of 1926 to consider. This gave official approval to the treatment of post-11 schooling as post-primary but kept the term 'secondary' to describe academic grammar school curriculum.

The Report was happy to recommend building upon the various forms of selective and non-selective provision developed locally by LEAs. In effect, Hadow supported local improvisation, experimentation and needs but avoided facing the real issue of provision for all children to receive a secondary (next phase) education. This official report accepted the existence of a system simply because it was there and served to confuse 'the conceptual with the concrete' (Simon, *op.cit.* p.40). The political influences here are noteworthy. Tawney's ideas and the limited use of a universal secondary education for all by a handful of local authorities could be tolerated but when it came to tacit government approval on a national scale then the process of grudging and slow change only became the motivating factor.

Historical adherence to known and trusted values manifested itself as limitations to what was developed by local initiative in response to social and industrial pressures and centralised control of funding plus the imbalanced influence of a minority made this a decisive political influence. Yet anomalies were a natural result of this intransigence versus international realities and the question of a 'real' secondary education was referred to a Consultative Committee in 1934. The resulting Spens Report of 1938 replaced the previous limited definition and accepted that all children should proceed to a secondary school at age 11.

The Committee rejected calls for a single secondary school (called multilateral) for such reasons as the size of school, the place of the sixth form and the difficulty in finding headteachers capable of leading both a grammar and modern type. Instead, a tripartite system of existing secondary (renamed grammar), new secondary technical (based on the existing and successful but under-resourced junior technical schools) and secondary modern schools. It was hoped that each type, while serving a particular purpose, would still have parity of esteem. This was probably wishful thinking against entrenched tradition especially after significant attempts to make a tripartite system so obviously differentiated: 'We hope that our recommendations to secure parity of status for all forms of secondary education will make it easier to transfer pupils to schools better suited to their needs and without creating any sense of slur or failure' (para. xxii).

In addition, the tripartite approach as suggested was combined with selection by IQ testing and what was proposed was a hierarchy of schools in which the technical and modern types could only ever be unequal partners after the brightest and best had been selected for the grammar schools. The saving grace of the Spens Committee was the recommended common curriculum in all three secondary schools from ages 11 - 13 to facilitate effective transfer between types.

Thus, the stage was set before World War Two for a reinforcement of a tripartite secondary system which still contained strong elements of hierarchy and status and reinforced divisions of perception and practice between academic and vocational education. While the 1944 Education Act provided for education according to age, aptitude and ability the acceptance of the 'rightness' of the differentiated and selective system in the Board of Education and in most LEAs made its implementation inevitable. This government approval was obvious in the proposals of the 1943 Norwood Committee Report on Curriculum and Examinations which had rationalised current provision by identifying three kinds of 'child mind'.

These were rough - but apparently well accepted - groupings of pupils 'whatever may be their ground, have in fact established themselves in general educational experience' (para. viii). This early use of pseudo-psychology may seem extraordinary now but commanded considerable favour and support among academics and politicians alike and both central and local government followed a path of tripartite selective secondary education for all from the age 11. In most places the technical school did not feature and by 1958 only 3.7% of secondary pupils were enrolled in secondary technical schools and the numbers declined thereafter (Bailey, 1989). In reality, post-war secondary provision was bipartite and parity of esteem was forgotten as parents came to realise the magnitude and significance of the 11+ examination.

Imperfection copied

The pattern and theme of three was, therefore, copied by post-compulsory education after the Second World War though more on paper than in practice. It was officially intended that, in the new system, only grammar schools would keep pupils beyond the age of 15/16 and the sixth form was seen as vital to the continuance of an academic route to the universities and professions - a route established through formal examinations in the nineteenth century. Those who left other schools went to work and any additional education was the function of colleges of further education. Those training for skilled jobs attended technical colleges in part-time day and evening classes.

Such colleges were often a reflection of and named after the local dominant industry. Thus, there were colleges of Mining, Shipbuilding, Iron and Steel and Textiles not to mention the still important Colleges of Agriculture. The semi-skilled or unskilled work force might be able to attend day or evening sessions at the county colleges from

ages 15 - 18. These provided a wide curricula which were often more of a relief from the tedium of the factory than vocationally relevant and in a democratic age were intended to make up for the limitations of non-grammar education. It was an unwritten principle of all colleges that every student attending should have some element of general or liberal education contained within their studies. Even very specific training in engineering had lectures on art appreciation, history and music.

The county college idea was to focus on preparing young people for work and citizenship with a true equality of status between the two concepts but these colleges were not regarded as a priority in the austerity of post-war Britain and faded as a policy aim. As the voluntary staying on beyond 15 became more common raising the leaving age to 16 was increasingly seen by teachers and LEAs as the next logical advance and as the alternative to compulsory day-release for all. Thus, the idea of a tripartite system for post-secondary school was also dashed on the rocks of reality with the majority of young people leaving school at the earliest possibility into a relatively full employment economy. Post-compulsory education became a function of training skilled workers and lower management but still with the ideals of a liberalising influence in all its provision.

Post-war: illusions and reactions

Post-school education became an issue again in the mid-1950s as Britain maintained the myth that it was still a major international nation but lacked the technical expertise to be world dominant. It was technical education and not further education, however, which received the focus of governmental attention. The White Paper of 1956 entitled *Technical Education* did not hide the belief that the needs of the economy were the principal objective of post-compulsory provision. Though this was not a new concept in principle the White Paper made a clear connection between input

(government finances) and output (gross domestic product). To improve the service to industry and commerce the government offered the money to build and extend colleges and their facilities under a scheme of national, regional and local colleges. This was the period when most colleges can trace their history of first construction or of massive expansion.

The first - a limited number of Colleges of Advanced Technology or CATs - were to have a national role of offering advanced courses to technologists and best practice to other institutions. (There were 10 CATs by 1962). It was envisaged that beneath these would operate a hierarchy of regional and local colleges: the regional colleges would offer higher level work including university degree standard course while the local establishments would cater for local industrial needs on a mostly non-advanced basis.

The speed of expansion in the number of students and the demand for courses other than vocationally-driven made the distinction between college types blurred and a tripartite system was, once again, more of a paper exercise than practice. Most of the funding was focused on the CATs which were flagship institutions designed to act as a model for others. After the Robbins Report of 1963/4 they were removed to the university sector as technological universities.

While Robbins made a reality of the principle of a single, unitary system of higher education this was to last only two years - a binary approach followed Anthony Crosland's appointment as Secretary of State for Education and Science in 1965. He perceived that higher education must be based upon the twin traditions of an autonomous sector represented by the universities and a public sector of leading technical colleges and colleges of education.

The 1966 White Paper formally established new polytechnics as the second higher education force justified on the grounds of their relevant vocational courses and the concentration of expensive resources in fewer centres. In this way, all the educational sectors in Britain after age 11 settled into a bipartite system which, by design or by local interpretation, still segregated students into distinct areas of perceived ability and potential employment prospects. Post-compulsory education used its lack of political focus to match the needs of local business and a continued belief in the liberalising influences of a general education.

At a time of unification of secondary provision the division of higher education seemed illogical and was subsequently reversed. The theoretical ideals of the vocational relevance and comprehensive nature of the new polytechnics implied criticism of the universities but still managed to create a second-class degree citizen. All this discussion was at the exclusion of the greater majority of 'other colleges' in the White Paper's title *A Plan for Polytechnics and Other Colleges*.

There was no framework for development and changes in a local context. Instead, some regional colleges extended their influence on a unilateral basis and began to form the third trend in a binary world - a College or Institute of Higher Education. Post-compulsory education was given no official direction or policy framework. The 700 or so (in 1966) other colleges providing non-advanced further education did so under the supervision of their Local Education Authority which simply strengthened bonds already forged in the 1920s and 1930s.

Most authorities left the daily running of colleges to the Principal and staff. Some redesignated their colleges as 'tertiary' by transferring all post-16 courses and students from their secondary schools. This, at least, gave colleges some local sense of purpose and formed the basis of a tradition of a community institution. Indeed, many included the word 'community' in their title. A large number of further and adult

education establishments sought to include under-represented groups by formulating and presenting specific courses (English for ethnic minorities, Basic Skills for adults, law for female employees, special educational needs) a long time before central government recognised the need and value of such provision.

A localised patchwork

These responses differed on a very local basis and continued to develop locally into a 'patchwork quilt' of courses with little national structure or organisation. The reasons were fairly obvious. Westminster had little understanding of the functions of post-compulsory education and the needs of the economy were seen to be catered for in terms of professions, a management elite and a skilled work force whether the system actually provided these or not.

Non-advanced or community studies were not a priority but were regarded as useful enough in a patriarchal sense to attract a certain level of funding. Local authorities were trusted enough to spend the finances as they saw fit. There was no attempt to define a national standard for further education colleges or to fit them into a national policy jigsaw which resulted in an unplanned and uncoordinated system attuned to local circumstances and much removed from central influence, control or interest.

The affirmation of LEA leadership and community centred activities made further education colleges a special place in the hearts of the local citizens and businesses alike. Many received awards and sponsorships from large companies not only to train staff but as a no-strings-attached recognition of the importance of their work in a civic role. As these colleges drifted away from government they established a pattern of vocationally relevant courses (not just non-advanced as expected) but also

specialist provision for apprentices, craft upskilling, recreational and social/community studies for citizenry.

At the heart of the, largely unwritten, college constitution was the acceptance of potential in all and the release of potential through focused training on the one hand and a emboldening liberal education on the other. It was, perhaps, the only sector that made little play on the previous experience or ability of its students but welcomed anyone who was a willing participant in a bold experiment. The only sign of a vague government interest was still on a technical note and came in 1973 and 1975 with the establishment of the Technician Education and Business Education Councils (TEC and BEC) respectively.

Henry Ford and social efficiency

While tripartism (at least in principle, bipartite in practice) remained the guiding force in educational policy by those most anxious to prevent serious or radical reorganisation from taking place, the influence of Fordism and Scientific Management on the ruling establishment cannot be understated. Henry Ford was not the creator of the underlying principles of the 'ism' which carries his name. His genius lay in successfully combining concepts already flourishing but unconnected. Under his strong hand these systems can be simply stated as:

* Products were standardised and tasks involved in the creation of those products are also subject to standardisation. Similarly, the flow of tasks in a process of production can be systemised. This was distinct from craft production where each part is individually designed. A bumper on a Ford Model T was the same in 1929 as it was in 1913.

* If tasks are the same then a significant amount of mechanisation can be introduced. Specialist machines for a particular industry could be justified in capital costs because of the amount of mass production that could be attributed to them.

* Those tasks that remained could be made subject to the provisions of Taylor's *Scientific Management* (1911). Work study specialists could break down each task into component operations and rationalise functions into the least number - and most effective - of movements.

* Flow line production replaced nodal activity. The product now moved past the (semi-skilled) worker rather than the (skilled) worker moving to and from the product.

A Ford Model T cost less than a tenth of the price of a craft-built car in 1916 and Ford captured 50% of the domestic market. The process was simple enough but was set to transform industry after industry in the twentieth century and in doing so changed government policy and reinforced hierarchical perceptions of power in the workplace. As education became increasingly tied to economic performance the apparent success of the Ford system became to be seen as a model for education itself.

Many of the principles of Fordism arose from the natural tension between high fixed costs and low variable ones leaving volume as the only real option for profit. Ford recognised that mass production required mass consumerism and a willingness to spend disposable income on a standardised product. This called for a massive investment in infrastructure and a commitment to fair wages (at the cost of subservience to the factory).

General Motors, Standard Oil and Firestone Tires bought the electric trolley and tram networks of 44 major urban areas and dismantled them to ensure the survival of the car as the mass transit system. Fordism was linked to domestic protectionism which

allowed mass producers to recoup their initial costs. Having gathered a profitable momentum at home they would attack the international market with marginal costs. This approach formed part of America's international policy towards Japan in preventing its expansion into the oil producing areas of South East Asia. Mass producers were especially vulnerable to sudden falls in demand. Hire purchase and redundancies became as much a symbol of Fordism as freeways and skyscrapers.

Protectionism and isolationism were an American way of life until war prompted massive industrial output. One of the side effects of Fordism was the creation of the 'mass worker' in huge factories: production lines had taken the skill out of work and erected a distinct wall between mental and manual labour treating humans as parts of the whole machine. The result was a high labour turnover, shop floor resistance and strikes (even in war time).

This prompted Fordists to seek pools of new labour particularly among groups facing discrimination, from rural areas and, eventually, from cheap, undeveloped regions of the world. The core philosophy of higher wages for managerial control of production still applied and a strong system of wage bargaining became established both in America and Britain centred on the annual round of negotiations in the car industry linking pay rates to productivity.

Fordist bureaucracies were fiercely hierarchical. Links between departments were made through the centre rather than directly. Planning was done by specialists who developed a craft status for their particular line of work. Rule books and guidelines were issued to all management and supervisors relating strict criteria for responsibilities and duties. Even suppliers had to agree to fixed price contracts in order to be on a list of accepted sub-contractors. The entire structure was a blueprint for low margins and high volume.

The threads of Fordism - production and consumption, agreed bargaining, managed national and international markets and central organisation and control - struck a cord with several governments around the world but especially in Britain and gave rise to a culture which extended well beyond the factory gates. It is marked by a commitment to scale and standardisation of everything and depends on aggressive marketing in a macro and micro sense, authoritarian relations, cost reduction, centralised planning and rigid job descriptions. Such is its scale that it becomes part of, and even drives, government policy. Lenin embraced scientific management and aimed to create a stopwatch Russia.

Fordism came into its own during periods of sustained warfare when the work force sublimated individual aspirations for a larger goal. Mass production of the same tank or aircraft was a significant contribution to victory but in peacetime, the growing influence of an organised labour pool and the very effects of consumerism - a demand for more leisure time in order to spend the higher wages) worked against the principles of Fordism.

For contained within Fordism's desire for predictability is the legitimisation crisis imposed by reality. The same conflict appeared in the fabric of education: any attempt to standardise a product (or student) or maintain the status quo of a perceived successful system tended to be overtaken by world events, domestic upheavals or the consequences of economic cycles. The very nature of predictable outcomes demands an increasing flow of precise data on which outcomes can be planned. Yet the data was inherently unstable, based as it was, on shifting social conditions, world trading conditions and rising individual expectations.

The adherence and loyalty to a winning formula was a difficult habit to break and Britain's overwhelming attachment to Fordism is easily explained by the attraction of a powerful hierarchical structure, subservience of labour to management with the

promise of mass employment. Contained within this structure was a social bargain: education for all the people required a mass supply at low unit cost. It is an overstatement to portray schools as a factory system of inputs and products achieved at the lowest costs but the influence of the Fordist constructs is difficult to ignore. This became reflected particularly in secondary provision and the economics of education were never lost on any Minister.

Post- compulsory education as a copy of industry

Ever since the introduction of compulsory education in 1870 educational instruction has been modelled on contemporary industrial principles. Large numbers of pupils were confined to classes in a teaching day of a specific duration. Much of what they did was by rote and acceptance of the teacher's commands without question was an integral part of school life.

The principles of production applied in Ford factories in America and Britain involving 'the planned, orderly and continuous progression of the commodity through the shop, the delivery of work instead of leaving it to the workman's initiative to find it, and an analysis of operations into their constituent parts,' (Taylor, *op.cit.* p.13). The need to achieve a stated standard costed output to a given schedule and consistency of output based on strict management control under an umbrella of conformity to detailed rules is as familiar to politicians as a Detroit (or Trafford Park) production line.

Fordism came late to post-compulsory education. It arrived as post-Fordism was already entrenched in education's role model: industry. Yet governments have pursued the Fordist guidelines with vigour in spite of the examples of history but in the era after the Second World War it was the left to Fordist policies in secondary

education and the tripartite structure to emphasise discipline, the work ethic and hierarchy.

In addition, it made a business of education. Personal wealth and status were linked unashamedly to 'getting a good education' which became the standby response of teachers to a demotivated class. There still remained much, however, outside the control of the teacher or the government that could render even a good education ineffective.

Britain's commitment to finance capital and a positive balance of payments invariably met with problems and after every crisis, the will of industry to grow was seriously hampered by restrictions on investment. The problem, as noted by Eatwell (*op.cit.* p.7) was that 'whenever something went wrong with the balance of payments, domestic investment was hit on the head.'

The policy was double-edged: any decline in manufacturing output as a consequence of under-investment added to a negative balance of payments. Government reaction to this was to attempt to sustain foreign confidence in sterling and the integrity of Britain's financial institutions. As monopoly and state-owned businesses increased as a deliberate policy of protectionism (in the Fordist tradition) the international perspectives of these companies took over the policies of the day.

The legacy of an industrial malaise was hard to disguise for long. A direct manifestation of public concern was the particular operation of organised labour. Unlike their European counterparts, British trade unions emerged from the Second War intact and revitalised. The major achievement of the Trades Union Congress in 1944 was a government commitment to the maintenance of a high and stable level of employment which shaped policy for a whole generation. Full employment essentially undermined the disciplinary zeal of Fordism but contributed significantly

to union power. Simultaneously, the decentralised nature of collective bargaining was enhanced with shop-floor power often being more important than the national union machinery.

The less formal local system of shop stewards established close control over specific production processes and ensured that changes only occurred as and when higher wages had been conceded. It is ironic that one of Fordism's principle strengths - the distinction in production processes - became one of its greatest weaknesses.

Workplace collective bargaining under the banner of full employment served, therefore, to influence the pace of technological change in Britain.

That is not to say that management were not a party to such influences but that the restrictive practices by the mass worker has immediate effects on mass production. Fordism became a victim of its own successes and could be strangled using its own principles. Britain maintained its international outlook making domestic industrial policy a series of overlapping approaches each having 'its own period of prominence, (and) each relying less than it might on what went before' (Morris and Stout, 1985, p.89). The divergent pressures on industry have been stated but it was partly responsible for not stating its claims more assertively while relinquishing command of production to organised labour which struck at the very heart of low cost Fordism. Governments were unwilling or unable to compel or create an industrial consensus in which unions and organisations found mutual benefit.

Industrial policy and the effect on post-compulsory education

The lack of coherence in Britain's industrial policy is best explained through the reactive responses to contemporary conditions and problems. The attempts at planning a policy were mostly regional with origins in the Special Area legislation of the 1930s.

The aim was to alleviate unemployment in specific parts of the country. More direct interventions came in the shape of massive injections of cash into ailing industries - a policy pursued by Labour and Conservative governments and this ad hoc approach was an immediate consequence of the perceived rightness in a full employment commitment. The more notable rescues included Upper Clyde Shipbuilding, Rolls-Royce, British Leyland, Chrysler (UK) and International Computers Limited. Such interventions were a legacy of a commitment to full employment (*Employment Policy*, Cmnd 6527, 1944). An important third strand to policy was more strategic than the previous two and this was a stimulation of new products through research and development (Judge and Dickson, 1990).

There is no doubt that Britain had a high profile in innovative design and technologies in the post-war period yet consistently failed to capitalise on them. In addition, many civilian projects were starved of funds at the expense of an international military standing. An important aspect of British industrial policy has been its stop-go attitude to planning. Whereas a change of government in France or Japan had little influence on industrial strategy, in Britain a change of government often meant the complete dismantling of the previous administration's projects.

The Macmillan government dabbled with indicative planning in the early 1960s with the establishment of the National Economic Development Council with 'its assessment of possibilities' for economic growth. The Wilson government (1964-66) tried a coherent but over-ambitious National Plan and even the Heath administration (1970-74) changed its mind and declared an interventionist role in strategy.

One reason for the discontinuities of planning in Britain has been the antipathy between industry and associated financial structures. This opposition reached peaks during Labour terms in office but even Conservative flirtations with such planning in the early 1960s or during Heath's strategy after 1972 met with little enthusiasm. The

simplistic but essentially accurate reason lay in the obsessive fixation on the balance of payments and exchange rate control of which were becoming victims of an internationalised market. The power of the Treasury steadfastly assured that vital resources were directed to plug gaps in the economy to reassure parties abroad which sacrificed domestic concerns including education. Any issues of technical expertise or the skills of the labour force were lost in the traditional arguments of saving foreign investments.

In the absence of consistent industrial policy or even a consensual basis for the development of such a policy post-war governments have resorted to a range of, often contradictory, short-term measures which attempted to exploit labour through wage cuts or by enforcement of incomes policies and industrial relations legislation. Yet for these to work required the compliance of an understanding work force. Policies, such as they were, contained their own paradoxes. The government was a mass employer of the public yet could not restrain its own staff and workers. As an example to industry it was in disgrace.

Secondly, as incomes policies required union co-operation, the implementation of such a policy generates disillusionment with the very political and institutional framework within which such restraint is expected. The transient nature of these concepts and their propensity to have exactly the opposite effect on wage control were key characteristics of government industrial policy after the war.

Even the need to restrict the power of unions by a Labour government was a reflection of a perceived requirement to placate overseas holders of sterling (Crouch, 1979). The subsequent Conservative administration tried to curb unofficial strikes and alter the balance of industrial power with the 1971 Industrial Relations Act yet in the face of massive union opposition the Act's provisions became inoperable.

The response was a disastrous statutory wages policy. The economic crisis inherited by Labour did not become, as Tony Benn would have liked 'the occasion for fundamental change and not the excuse for postponing it' (1980, p.66) rather, as Leo Panitch (1979, p.91) observed 'the crisis became the basis for maintaining the existing balance of wealth and power in British society by increasing the exploitation of the working class'. In each case there lay the foundations of a legitimisation crisis which found a reason and a time to surface.

Reports replace ideas

The post-war period is characterised by a string of official committee reports covering many aspects of education. Post-compulsory education featured as an incidental system or not at all in these reports. It repeatedly lost out to the vote-catching elements of education which were more likely to capture the hearts and minds of the public.

In each case the chairperson's name has been applied to the report following on from tradition in these cases. Almost all of these reports were prepared by committees of inquiry appointed directly by the Minister/Secretary of State but some were inquiries conducted by the Central Advisory Councils for Education (CACE) set up by the 1944 Education Act specifically to advise ministers in important issues.

The 1945 Percy Report investigated the needs of higher technological education in England and Wales and the role of universities and technical colleges in meeting them. It recommended the expansion of university science teaching and the creation of the Colleges of Advanced Technology. Although this was carried out the co-ordination of a national scheme was disappointing.

The CATs were a useful model but never became a national system and were eventually absorbed into the university sector. The opportunity to include higher technological education into some of the larger colleges of further education was missed since there existed a perception divide on what these colleges were expected to do and what they could perform.

The Barlow Report on *Scientific Manpower* (1946) established what was already a widely held view: that Britain had no system of planning for a skilled work force and was especially vulnerable in the area of science. The report recommended more university places were needed particularly for science students. These places were provided. Ostensibly, this appears to be an effective response but the lack of outcome evidence leaves the actual results open to question. Universities did not track the eventual destinations of their graduates and the number of science students making it into relevant employment as anticipated is unavailable.

The Clarke Report on *School and Life* (1947) was the first CACE report and its brief was interpreted widely with an examination of the 'transition from school to independent life.' Recommendations were made on a wide range of issues: increased expenditure to reduce pupil/teacher ratios, upgrading of old buildings, relationships between school and home, youth clubs, health of young employees at work, 'compensatory' education (for those who achieved little at school) and post-compulsory education for workers in routine jobs.

The Clarke Report was radical in that it saw an important role for further education on many levels and not just for non-advanced vocational courses. It suggested that additional education could offer a stimulus away from the drudgery of factory life with recreational or additional skills programmes. It adopted a humanist approach in recommending that education is not a function of employment and that schools should

not prepare pupils for particular types of work - industry itself benefited from a rounded person as a worker.

Response to the Clarke Report was probably the first indication that grand ideals carry a price tag. Getting its energy from the sweeping concepts of the 1944 Act it pursued innovative ideas of its own. This was, probably, its greatest weakness. The sheer scale of its recommendations meant that few of them were actually implemented. The more obvious results were the release of funds to provide better buildings, some youth clubs and some post-compulsory education courses but it was not on a significant scale.

The austerity of post-war recovery meant that most resources went into the compulsory sector. Clarke, however, remained undeterred and completed a second report - *Out of School* - in 1948 which considered the pursuits of children out of school hours. Reports of this nature tended to reflect the consensual value system of the time and accommodated the aspirations of a wider social spectrum than previously. The transient form of values and the breadth of reform were their greatest enemy.

In 1954, the Gurney- Dixon Report established patterns on early leaving in schools which provided course beyond the minimum official age - in effect, grammar schools. The continued importance of father's occupational status was noted: the higher that status the more chance there was of a pupil remaining at school and attaining more qualifications. It is interesting to note that such pupils were characterised as more 'promising' by the headteachers who formed the core of respondents in the report.

The committee speculated on possible reasons for differences in academic performance including 'bad living conditions' (para. xvi) and unfavourable attitude of some parents to education but there was no great depth of analysis into these ideas.

The report was chiefly an investigation at the psychologically important 10 year anniversary of the 1944 Act and its findings cast doubt on the Act's ability to reduce social/class based inequalities in the education system.

Consequently, it suggested the creation of more grammar school places (no doubt inspired by the headteachers questioned in the report) and that financial assistance be provided for pupils who stayed at school after the minimum leaving age. The significant value system at work here is the belief in a tripartite education in which the grammar school is seen as part of the provider of professions and leaders. That the report indirectly criticised the 1944 Education Act may have been largely ignored at the time but was to resurface in another form at a later date.

The most important relevant report of that decade was the Crowther Committee's findings delivered in 1959. Asked to consider the education of young people aged 15 to 18 it was specifically tasked with issues of qualifications below GCE level. Its findings notably confirmed the Gurney-Dixon view about the relationship of attainment with the father's occupation. Crowther was much more conciliatory in his reactions, though, and argued that there was a considerable wastage of talent among the offspring of skilled manual workers. This, he termed 'neglected educational territory' - a reference to those pupils compelled to leave at 15 for a craft or technical training rather than the academic career they were capable of pursuing.

The report recommended an expansion of post-compulsory education to accommodate these leavers. Of 16 - 18 year olds the report concluded that 50% should be in colleges on a part-time basis at least to further their academic grounding. (This would have called for a quite dramatic change in the curricula of most further education colleges to facilitate such an intake). This compared with 12% at the time of the report. Such expansion only took place in the 1980s as a response to unemployment pressures. Crowther accepted that some comprehensive schools could be established

but that the existing tripartite regime should continue but with further divisions within it. It went as far as to suggest sub-divisions in post-compulsory education so that an academic structure could be integrated into colleges with lecturers from universities provided the basis for initial change.

The report also recommended that the top third of secondary modern schools could follow an examination route below GCE (the future CSE of 1965) but most should be spared exams. It also reinforced two clauses of the 1944 Act: that the school leaving age be increased to 16 and compulsory further education should be implemented in county colleges - again, to make up for limitations within the grammar system. The leaving age finally went up in 1972 but compulsory further education has never been introduced.

The Newsom Report of 1963 *Half our Future* had terms of reference which overlapped that of Crowther and had similar recommendations. Though not directly relevant to this thesis it is interesting in that it was still confirming a strong commitment to tripartism and the different levels of natural ability in children. In spite of the, by then, 'progressive' element in schools it suggested a curriculum 'broadly related to occupational interest' without addressing issues of equality of opportunity and social or financial restrictions to those aspirations.

The greatest impact on higher education at the time came as a result of the 1963/4 Robbins Report formed to consider the long term development of higher education in Britain. It, also, confirmed that entrance to universities and CATs was strongly influenced by paternal occupation - the child of a professional was 20 times more likely to enter full-time higher education than the children of semi- or unskilled workers.

Even with controls on mental testing the ratio remained high and the proportions from each social grouping remained stubbornly at 1920s levels (although absolute numbers had increased with the provision of extra places). As with other reports there was an overwhelming conclusion that an 'untapped pool of ability' (para. iii) existed in lower socio-economic groups and a massive expansion of higher education should follow with the specific aim of attracting this pool. Grants to assist students can be traced to this report's findings

The Dainton Report of 1968 investigated the flow of science and technology candidates into higher education since there had been an alarming swing away from science in sixth forms. The report called for a change in sixth form instruction with less specialisation and some mathematics for all pupils. The findings struggled against the reality of a shortage of qualified teachers and strong grammar school defence of the notion of sixth form study in depth. This was tacitly supported by Ministers and the Civil Service. The Dainton Report is remarkable in its demonstration of the power of vested interests in a particular sector of education.

Thus, the tripartite system was a physical result of an ancient tradition but phrased and formed to present a humanistic approach which afforded opportunities for all but 'according to their ability'. In that interpretation lay the seeds of its downfall at the hands of skilful political linguists. Convincing statistical data of wasted talent was still at odds with an existing powerful structure. Bernstein (1977, p.57) illustrated the point with references to the persistence of ideology and power in reproducing strongly-held belief systems:

'How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control. From this point of view, differences within, and change in the organisation,

transmission and evaluation of educational knowledge should be a major area of social interest.'

From Expansionism to Pessimism

Educational policies are a product of the values of the period and interact with the mood, fashions and events of their time. Politicians, interest groups and professions are both the products and producers of changes in values and social needs. Education is, perhaps, the most volatile of collective activities since it involves so many doing so much with the hope of useful change for those involved.

Historical analysts will remark at the great changes that occurred in the three decades after the Second World War when the Opportunity State was in most obvious evidence with the easing of social relationships and Fordist factories feeding a burgeoning consumerism. It has been shown however, that education is more susceptible to historical change than other aspects of social activities and educational ideological movements are more vulnerable to attack because of their essentially contestable nature.

The significance of Bernstein's analysis of educational knowledge and its control is that it offers a way of examining the cultural and economic assumptions underlying 'common sense' theories of social difference. In the Frankel and Reeve work (1996) any study of post-compulsory education which does not recognise the importance of such principles from school into colleges and beyond is incomplete. Their view is that post-compulsory education has historically served the educational career aspirations of distinct occupationally defined strata in the lower professions and semi- or unskilled work force.

In institutional terms, colleges became 'lost' between the compulsory sector and universities with its curriculum traditions overlain by occupational imperatives, class and status divisions which differentiate academic, vocational and work-based routes. McCrae, McGuire and Ball (1996) further suggest that these traditions have impacted on the continuation of gendered provision in areas associated with childcare and secretarial studies on the one hand and engineering, science and technology on the other. This firm rooting in a system it did not actively seek to be part of gives post-compulsory education an uncomfortable blend of diverse demands, challenging expectations and swiftly changing values responding to economic or political fortunes.

In many ways, post-compulsory education could be relatively thankful that it remained outside of mainstream political thought. While having to respond to trends and fashions in educational value thinking it could rest assured that it might at least avoid the upheavals that had impacted on other sectors. Its culture and content, consequently, became significantly 'home grown' with largely local responses to local business and social needs.

Further education colleges lacked the scale and grandeur of universities and the formality and discipline of schools and so combined a heady mix of motor vehicle mechanics with Beaudelaire and informality with grand designs. Though references to a 'golden age' would be distinctly overstated, there was a theme within post-compulsory education which embraced learning for living in its widest definition. Britain's 'Two Nations' created a bipartite response - a cultural capital/academic examinations sector and a pragmatic but liberating working class sector. Meanwhile, what Gleeson (1989, p.52) called the 'myth of tripartism' was unfolding. Despite the dominance of the apparent tripartite perception the middle strand has always suffered a troubled and low key existence. Efforts to raise the profile of technical schools met with little enthusiasm and only 20% of all LEAs made such provision available.

With the exception of 10% of school leavers entering trade apprenticeships the majority of school leavers entered semi- or unskilled employment. The robust economy at the time hid this wastage of talent from statistics. Only severe economic crises and obvious decline in manufacturing output exposed the failure of tripartite divisions around the social class lines which the 1944 Act traced naively to reflect and reproduce expected openings and opportunities in society at that time.

Though Crowther anticipated this looming crisis as early as 1959 with recommendations for innovative reforms in 15 - 18 provision the historical lessons went unheeded. At the height of experimentation it was probably regarded as one experiment too far. Attempts to explain such policy failure with reference to the loss of technical schools is only one strand of a complex argument. Funding neglect, an unrealistic internationalistic stance and organised labour were more significant than the lukewarm attitude to technical schools. The real tripartite division lay between public and grammar schools and the rest. Whitty (1991) has suggested that the CTCs and Technology Schools are largely repeating these earlier experiences.

The supply and demand of labour

From the end of the war economic pressures for educational expansion were evident in the adult and further education sector by the efforts to ensure an adequate supply of trained manpower. The 1945 Percy Report proposed the development of university level courses in selected technical colleges with a national body to supervise awards. From these recommendations came the establishment of advanced work in technical colleges under the National Council for Technological Awards from 1955. Its Diploma in Technology was degree level though it faced the critical eye of industry which did not regard it as such. Based on the 'sandwich' principle it involved a four year period of study with some time in industry.

The 1946 Barlow Committee focused its attention on the forecasting of scientific manpower needs and recommended the immediate doubling of output of qualified technologists and professional scientists. This first attempt at official prediction of the subject greatly influenced developments in higher and post-compulsory education in the production of such manpower. Yet even this proved too modest a calculation. By the mid 1950s it was clear that the sights had been set too low and that in many disciplines, particularly technology and pure science, the numbers of students was insufficient.

The teaching of science and mathematics suffered in subsequent years - the swing towards these subjects in the decade after the war had not been sustained. From then on Britain was playing 'catch up' with government awareness and reactions to the problem apparently outstripped by events. The 1957 White Paper *Technical Education* declared an official sense of urgency and proposed the concentration of advanced technological courses at a number of 'colleges of advanced technology.' Ten of these were designated immediately and from 1962 received grants direct from the Ministry of Education rather than local authorities. The White Paper was not so narrowly drafted as to pursue a single solution conclusion. It stressed that 'a place must always be found in technical studies for liberal education ... We cannot afford either to fall behind in technical accomplishments or to neglect spiritual and human values' (Section 14).

The Ministry of Education published a circular in 1957 entitled 'Liberal Education in Technical Colleges' to 'stress the importance of introducing a liberal element into technical education' (Section 3). A resultant feature of technical education was the rapid expansion of liberal studies departments in these colleges and the broadening of courses to include such studies.

There were significant anomalies, however, and of the 1954 figures for day release students 27% of males under 18 were sent to college but only 7% of females. The 1954 Gurney-Dixon Report on early leaving concluded that a pupil's performance at school was closely related to his or her father's occupation and status. Lower status tended to have a direct influence on the decision to leave school early and not pursue post-compulsory education. This was the first investigation into the working of the 1944 Education Act and cast doubt on the effectiveness of the Act to reduce social/class inequalities in education.

As noted the Crowther Report of 1959 had looked specifically at the education of boys and girls between 15 and 18 and argued that there was a considerable wastage of talent with a need to attend to the 'neglected educational territory' of pupils who left at 15. It concluded that there should be more further education. It confirmed the aim of the 1944 Act to raise school leaving age to 16 (eventually done in 1972) and the need for compulsory part-time further education (never implemented).

Crisis vocabulary

The good intentions of the post war period witnessed in these White Papers and Reports were thwarted by the economics of playing superpower, an attachment to finance capital markets and the defensive power of organised labour (Judge and Dickson, *op.cit*). There had been a bi-partisan agreement about expansion with underlying motives of widening opportunities, tapping into the well of hidden talent and the concepts of equality and liberal studies even with no obvious economic justification. There was a sharing of broad values about all levels of education in reaction to the 'common sense' policy of competitiveness and appropriate manpower planning. Post-compulsory practitioners responded as best they could to mixed messages.

By the late 1960s all signs of that benign co-operation had eroded and the bedrock consensus on which implementation so rested had gone. Within the Conservative Party there was some assessment by back benchers that they lost the 1964 Election because it merely offered watered down versions of Labour policy. Right-wingers and constituency activists firmly felt that consensus politics had lost them votes.

The Conservatives became bitterly divided on the subject of consensus, not just with education but on a whole range of issues including Defence and Welfare. The views of these critics did not amount to a 'coherent rival philosophy' (Corbett, 1969, p.785) but after the Conservative defeat of 1974 the preservationist faction dominated right-wing thinking in the Party and found expression in six Black Papers (1969-1977) which struck an unexpected chord throughout the country with a vocabulary of 'fight' and 'crisis'.

The 1976 Ruskin College talk by Prime Minister Callaghan contributed in no small measure to re-opening the debate on the relevance of education and its specific relationship with economic activity. Heath and Wilson had failed to breath new life into the old system and international crises had swamped traditional Keynesian responses. The oil crisis stunned western economies out of their delusions of certainty and continuity.

The post-war consensus depended on continuing prosperity for its success. When that fragile prosperity (based on capital finance) receded so did the consensus. As any semblance of social and political unity collapsed the Conservatives sought to revive the market liberalism that had prevailed in the previous century while Labour rank and file (perhaps not the leadership) looked back to the 1920s and 1930s for neo-Marxist inspiration. Both parties had factions within them with radical ideas for education.

Following the defeat of Edward Heath in 1974, Sir Keith Joseph set out to articulate the views and aspirations of right-wing radicals within Tory ranks. He had tried to persuade Heath to move away from the 'middle ground' of politics but soon realised that these aspirations would only bear fruit under a totally new leadership. Joseph made a series of speeches attacking the 'left wing ratchet' and the dire consequences for the economy of 'middle ground politics'. 'It created not prosperity but crisis' (Joseph, 1976, p.68).

There was already an implicit connection between education and economic activity and, more precisely, the negative effects of 'progressive' education and poor economic fortunes. A radical alternative view and vision existed. Finding its inspiration from the Chartist and Co-operative Movements, enthusiastic individuals and Reports such as the 1908 *Oxford and Working-Class Education* and the 1919 *Adult Education Committee*, the Russell Report (1973) sought moral high ground in ideals of participation and community.

Russell: light before the dark

So impressive had been the 1919 Report that it is mentioned 54 years later in the major review of adult education under the Chair of Sir Lionel Russell: *A Plan for Development*. Appointed in 1969 by Prime Minister Harold Wilson it was a sop to adult educators who had suffered under a spate of public expenditure cuts rather than a serious attempt to change policy. Russell set about the task with a vigour reminiscent of Chartists and Co-operatives and delivered the Report in 1973. He had been educated at Christ's College, Cambridge and had been Education Officer for Birmingham from 1946 to 1968 and was fully supportive of the ideals, values and motives expressed in a long history of radical education:

'Everyone who has worked in adult education during the last fifty years has had reason to be indebted to the eloquent and comprehensive Final Report of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, presented in 1919. We too have found our thoughts stirred by this Report and have been struck by the extent to which the principles and values there enunciated are still valid. But that Report was the last - indeed, in terms of an official body, the only - major review of adult education in England and Wales ever to have been undertaken and it is over fifty years old'.

(Introduction, para.1)

(Russell was clearly aware of the Ashby Report for the Ministry of Education {1954} *The Organization and Finance of Adult Education in England and Wales*. He was equally aware that this had been Churchillian deftness to ward off pressure from the T.U.C. and from the Labour ranks over cuts in Extension classes and possible 10% cut in adult education budgets overall. Even though it was a magnificent piece of politicking to avert a crisis it is worth mentioning the liberal/vocational argument it contained: 'How many there must be in Britain, after the disturbance of two destructive wars, who thirst in later life to learn about the humanities, the history of their country, the philosophies of the human race, and the arts and letters which sustain and are borne forward by the ever-conquering English language?' {Churchill quoted in the Ashby Report, pp.66-67, 1954}.

The Report effectively put the burden of responsibility back onto the Ministry of Education who devolved it back to the LEAs who simply supported adult classes through the rates. Some types of vocational instruction were added to the list of programmes that attracted a government grant and these were mainly allocated to further education colleges whose liberal instruction was already an accepted facet of college life. Dr. Eric Ashby was a pragmatist who extolled the virtues of

'Technological Humanism' - a mix of old and new, liberal and vocational. Since the terms of reference were quite limited the Ashby Report had a minimal effect on the development of adult education. Its short-term political goal was achieved).

Terms of reference for the Russell Report were:

'To assess the need for and to review the provision of non-vocational adult education in England and Wales; to consider the appropriateness of existing educational, administrative and financial policies; and to make recommendations with a view to obtaining the most effective and economical deployment of available resources to enable adult education to make its proper contribution to the national system of education conceived of as a process continuing through life'.

The terms are important. There was clearly a financial imperative and no new resources were to be made available. In contrast to those restrictions there was an acknowledgement that education was a lifelong process - a tradition now rooted deep in the fibre of adult education and embraced by colleges.

In the preamble to the recommendations (of which there were 118) the underlying philosophy is expressed in a succinct paragraph:

'The value of adult education is not solely to be measured by direct increases in earning power or productive capacity or by any other materialistic yardstick but by the quality of life it inspires in the individual and generates for the community at large. It is an agent changing and improving our society: but for each individual the means of change may differ and each must develop in his own way, at his own level and through his own talents. No academic subject or social or creative activity is superior to another provided that those

engaged in it develop a greater awareness of their own capacities and a more certain knowledge of the totality of their responsibilities as human beings'.

(Para. 6)

The pursuit of a direct connection between government input and educational output is explored and challenged in paragraphs 7 and 8 of Part I: *Assessment of Need*:

'Education for industry and commerce tends to find its justification, by natural transfer, in the economic importance of the process of production and marketing. Thus, because initial education and education connected with employment both have such an obvious pay-off in terms of production and consumption, these forms of education are immediately recognised as worthy of expenditure. In fact these easily measurable effects of education are only a few of the benefits it confers. Education is concerned with developing the ability of individuals to understand and to articulate; to reason and to make judgements; and to develop sensitivity and creativity ... This Report is therefore concerned with opportunities for men and women to continue to develop their knowledge, skills, judgement and creativity throughout adult life by taking part ... in learning situations which have been set up for the purpose as part of the total public provision of education'.

Links between lifelong learning and the needs of a thriving community were made early on in paragraph 9.3: 'The attainment of an acceptable quality of life for all and the development of a free, democratic society require that these demands and needs be met'. Russell must have believed that the criteria for a real democracy were still unsatisfied. He also identified with a worrying British trend of divisive educational provision:

'It cannot be in the interests of justice or the efficient use of human resources

that numbers of our fellow citizens now find themselves too late at the gates of wider opportunity and with no further recourse. Educationally, we are still Two Nations and among the educational "have-nots" the needs are vast'.

This strong theme is revisited later: 'It is central to our argument for a comprehensive service of adult education that deficiencies of educational opportunity must be remedied so that every individual has the educational resources, not only to fulfil himself as a person, but to play his full part in society. This is an essential basis for a just and democratic society, as well as for ensuring a reasonable quality of life for everyone' (paras. 27 and 28).

The need for democracy to be subjected to challenge and critical analysis is closely connected with the enlarging of minds and the ability to judge situations:

'The way of democracy is to submit areas of controversy to debate, in the belief that right judgements are built upon knowledge, critical enquiry and rational discussion. Those who lack the knowledge, or the tools of enquiry and expression, and who thereby feel excluded from a say in the decisions that govern their lives, are effectively disfranchised. The need for education in social and political understanding, recognised from the early days of Chartist and Co-operative adult education and re-affirmed by the WEA will continue to be one of the prime needs of the future' (para.41).

Continuous education, devised by Tawney in 1919 and repackaged today as 'lifelong learning' is accorded suitable respect in paragraph 49:

'It will be seen that this outline of the place of emerging adult needs in the whole educational system has much in common with the European concept

of "permanent education". (This phrase, a literal rendering of the French *education permanente* is used as a convenient alternative to the more cumbersome if more accurate form "'lifelong integrated education" that appears in many official documents)').

Paragraph 58 proposes a series of values and needs of 'permanent education' abridged here:

- * Remedial (completion of schools' unfinished specialisation)
- * Balancing (filling in the gaps)
- * Second-chance
- * Up-dating skills
- * Education about education
- * Counselling and clarification of choices
- * Creativity
- * Physical activity
- * Educative social activity
- * Intellectual activity
- * Role education (magistrates, police, shop steward, managers)
- * Social and political education
- * Community education
- * Education for social leadership

These needs were described as changing and evolving with the individual as their role (and, supposedly, their minds) also developed. In particular, the 'broader education of workers' was perceived as essential with references to industrial relations training, day-release opportunities for young workers, an enlarged educational experience for working mothers and provision for occupational change and retirement.

The Russell Report was a piece of work infused with a radical tradition to which it alluded more than once. While its terms of reference were clearly meant to avert any attention to finances the recommendations inevitably decried the availability of resources and the dire need of additional cash to achieve its many goals. In terms of timing the Report missed the tide of affairs.

The government and Trades Union Congress were soon caught up in an economic and social struggle and the Manpower Services Commission took on a massive training brief which overshadowed any developments in adult education. Thus, the Russell Committee had little influence on subsequent policy. The Report was handed to the then Secretary of State for Education and Science, Margaret Thatcher on 5th December 1972 for publication in the new year. Its values and strong ideals of 'knowledge with understanding' quickly disappeared.

Conclusion

The importance of a historical perspective on post-compulsory education has been further expounded in this chapter. On the one hand, policies and changes are a product of the values and fashions of the time but, on the other, the influence of powerful minorities and traditional belief systems can be seen to permeate the new. Thus, ancient 'rules of three' abound in literature, education and policy-making while having little empirical support.

During the nineteenth century the influence of the classical tradition and of the public and endowed schools compounded by laissez-faire and anti-democratic sentiments were dominant. Mass schooling was essentially to maintain a social status quo and more valuable to the constitution than the working class it was created for. Whether as cause or effect, Britain's policy makers showed a distaste for genuine evolution, were

reluctant to construct a national education system and educate the nation's work force and supported only those concepts which might usefully serve, or be suitably moulded to serve, minority interests.

The 1944 Act was one such example where traditional values gained strength from a genuine desire to offer opportunities for all. Britain still had a bifurcated education system with separate parts detached from a national policy or common understanding of the communities it served. Vestiges of old stratifications and status remained. This was still true of post-war governments whose responses were largely reactive and, then, usually to the defence of sterling on international markets or of a colony.

Such fixations drew attention away from domestic concerns yet cracks were already evident in Fordist organisations including the government as a major employer. Increasingly vigorous labour sought to use the apparent strengths of Fordism and convert them into weaknesses. In the absence of a real say in political power organised unions made their impact felt in terms of wage power. A government bargain to pursue full employment in a world that was becoming less certain was another example of a contemporary fashion or belief having little long-term sustainability.

The resilience of financial capital against industrial needs is almost uniquely British and set the country on a irreversible path towards a service society and a vulnerability to world markets and pressures so cruelly exposed in the oil crisis of 1973. That the same conditions existed before the 1929 Wall Street Crash was lost on most ministers if not historical analysts.

Further and adult education could be said to have thrived in a limited way as government attention was diverted but as finances are the driving force of most government policy and actions this was only a temporary reprieve. During this period

of relative calm it was able to flourish in a very localised sense contributing to industry either directly through its training schemes or indirectly offering recreational courses for those workers seeking solace from repetitive jobs. Woven throughout its curricula were themes of opportunity, citizenry and the value of a liberal education for all. This perspective was recognised in the Russell Report which can now be viewed as the last official recognition of a liberal, radical tradition.

While post-compulsory education had a strong tradition of vocationalism and was justly proud of training a local work force it was considerably more detached from government policy than any of the other sectors. Its relationship with local authorities was cemented because of central government's lack of interest. Post-compulsory education gained its strength and developed its culture from the better ideals of mechanics' institutes, from the writings of educational reformers and from a humanistic approach of its own practitioners based on the clientele they served.

The legitimisation crises which affected Fordism, organised labour, tripartism and British foreign policy sought their place and moment with dramatic consequences in the 1970s. Britain's 'Two Nations' still existed, though with blurred edges now which presented policy problems for government which had to deal with increasing aspirations and expectations. It was, perhaps, inevitable that post-compulsory education would also face its own crisis of existence as it attempted to accommodate tensions between the academic and the vocational.

CHAPTER FOUR: 1973 -1992**NATIONAL PRIORITISATION AND THE POLITICS OF EXPEDIENCY****Introduction**

Educational policy cannot be analysed without reference to the historical perspective in which it is formulated - what has gone before shapes and moulds the minds of decision-makers in cultural and legitimation terms. Tripartism, as personified in the 1944 Education Act, can be justified because of its apparent 'rightness' and mass elementary education serves to reinforce social structures. Yet it is equally true to say that policy is also a product of its time - economic factors, trends in public opinion and the force of will of individual politicians. Education is, therefore, an amalgam of prior knowledge and its perceived wisdom and the driving influences of change based on contemporary fashions in thought.

The period after 1973 was to test radical theories to breaking point allowing the concepts of conservatism and traditionalism to grow in the fertile soil of economic upheaval and industrial discontent. In the early part of the twentieth century the social efficiency philosophers had won over the liberal and humanistic approach propounded by John Dewey (Wirth, 1991). A similar battle was about to be fought at the end of the century. The last chapter confirmed the continued existence of traditional structures and value systems in education and training and suggested that the post-compulsory experience was always set to lose out to financial and political manoeuvring.

The themes of this chapter as they influence educational policy are as great in number and no less complex than those considered previously: the increasing and irreversible role of macro-economics on domestic conditions, the counter-reaction to an industrial relations impasse, the change in fortunes of a consensual base and the reactionary and

expedient nature of government in the shape of quangos and, eventually, revisionary legislation.

The role of a Post-Fordist move towards a service economy and its influences on policy will also be discussed. As Goodman (1968) noted: 'The question is whether or not our beautiful, libertarian, pluralist and populist experiment is viable in modern conditions'. The influence and effect of a classical, liberal education on that question cannot be overstated. It is demonstrated here that post-compulsory education lost out once more. During this phase of British history its transformation from a local response to an arm of national policy was started though the chase for funding (a succession of reactive initiatives) was a taste of things to come.

An economic agenda

Analysis of changes in educational policy would be incomplete without referral to the economic world in which they existed. Such an argument can be used to prove the direct allegiance of education to national output but this is simplistic. That did not prevent such an argument gaining ground in the 1970s, however, in the guise of 'new vocationalism'. There will be a degree of overlapping of ideas and themes throughout this thesis as references to previous policies and plans form a vital aspect of its conclusions.

Thus, discussion of vocationalism and the relevance to economic performance can be seen as a constant trend in educational history. The difference in the 1970s was that it gained a status and importance which exceeded statistical support and away from any really informed critical analysis. That the vocabulary of change was so easily imported in order to secure the status quo is attributable to those social efficiency philosophers and politicians who were to change the face of education for a

generation. That post-compulsory education became an arm of such policy so quickly and efficiently is equally as attributable.

The difficulties that Britain was encountering in finding new directions for education and establishing a system in which preparation for working life share an honourable and full place in the scheme of things cannot be understood without constant reference to past conflicts of policy. It is a paradox of British education that policy tradition has been as unfavourable to a deep and comprehensive vocational philosophy as much as it has been to a universal liberal democratic theme. The English, in particular, have never before established a national system of vocational education and training apart from an uncoordinated mosaic of provision.

While schools had both an overt and hidden purpose beyond the general educational one of developing the mind and potential while maintaining the status quo, not until the 1970s was there an open, declared statement of purpose which linked the educational process with the world of work and on which government acted so vigorously.

Among the industrialising nations Britain was late in establishing a fully-fledged, nationally maintained school system relying on voluntary and church efforts for most of the nineteenth century. The tradition of gap-filling and compromise typified the development of education thereafter. A clear strand of thought within such a process was the adherence to laissez-faire attitudes. As Longden (1987, p.41) comments: '... the political philosophy ... inherent in British life since the Reformation ... dictated that education was essentially voluntary and the responsibility of the individual'. Such guiding principles were to be revisited as domestic responses to macro-economics in the shape of social security, employment policies and, latterly, education provision.

A random look at examples of vocational training for school leavers in the past indicates that they were intended for highly specific purposes and outside the mainstream curriculum. ie. mostly industry based and sponsored. This attitude had a strong association with the firmly entrenched belief behind the academic - largely classical - provision made available to those who managed to complete secondary education was good enough for everything they might do. The bifurcation of the genteel and the 'popular' was alive in the pedagogical English writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and sustained an influential following in their views about the mentalities of the higher orders and lower ranks. There were, in effect, two nations of educational curricula.

Shapin and Barnes (1976, p.44) drew out this distinction with reference to three sets of dichotomies which have long persisted in educational assumptions: 'the *sensual* and *concrete* character of the thought of the lower orders against the *intellectual*, *verbal* and *abstract* qualities of the thinking of those above them'; 'the *simplicity* of the thought of the lower orders and the *complexity* of that of their betters'; the *active* use of knowledge and experience by the higher orders contrasted with the *passive* and *automatic* way in which the lower ranks were assumed to react to experience'. Young (1953, p.5) used a Victorian proverb to encapsulate this approach: 'Servants talk about People: Gentlefolk discuss Things.'

Despite the most devastating criticisms of the consequences of these assumptions - not least in Royal Commission Reports - about the 'natural' order, this rigidity of thought and purpose persisted beyond the liberal intentions of the 1944 Education Act. For all its value in laying the foundations of a post-war secondary education, this piece of legislation - with its quasi-psychological terminology - maintained traditional distinctions between mental, manual and technical work enshrining these into what became an unstable tripartite network. This instability, plus encroaching international

and domestic realities, created the right atmosphere for a paradoxical but persuasive movement centred on voluntarism and control.

Britain's inability to make a decisive contribution to world events became obvious in World War One. By the end of World War Two its status was one of a respected elder statesman at best. For about twenty post-war years, though, it could boast sustained growth and relatively little unemployment. This, however, must be set against the dramatic turnaround in the economic fortunes of Japan and Germany and the continued growth of America as world leaders in manufacturing. Britain had, essentially, a sluggish economy.

Three theories exist for the country's relative decline: the maturity theory suggests that an industrial base which evolves first will mature and decline first; the trade specialisation theory points to Britain as a net importer of food and raw materials by the 1950s making it a highly specialised workshop - any change in world conditions undermine that position; the failure theory sees decline as a product of policy failure either to stimulate growth or to compete successfully in a changing market. For Britain, there was an element of truth in all three suggestions and these were to become highly visible in the oil crisis of 1973.

By the early 1970s Western countries has become to rely on a regular supply of imported oil for heavy engineering and domestic power. While Britain had withdrawn from Middle East politics there was an increasing reliance on crude from the region. The area had a range of new national governments either as kingdoms under the Shah of Iran or military rulers such as Nasser in Egypt who were determined to make their resources work for them. While the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries - OPEC - had been formed in 1960 it had faced the combined strength of the 'Seven Sisters' cartel: Standard Oil (New Jersey), Standard Oil (California), Royal Dutch Shell, Mobil, Texaco, Gulf and British Petroleum which effectively controlled global

crude prices with their buying power. Western governments tacitly approved of the cartel's tactics to regulate the supply of this vital commodity.

Gradually, OPEC began to use cartel-braking methods such as the establishment of independent oil companies (Occidental being the first) to supply outlets denied to them by the Seven Sisters. A 1967 Saudi attempt at an oil embargo failed because the United States was a net exporter at the time but it was a clear indication of a change of mood. By 1973 the state of the American economy and its fixation with Watergate signalled that the time was right for another attempt.

The world runs on oil

In early October 1973, a multi-national Arab force attacked Israel and simultaneously an embargo was placed on America and the Netherlands (associated with Israeli intelligence activity). The European Community aligned itself with Arab interests as a matter of survival (as did Japan) but international concern put bid prices up from \$3 to \$16 per barrel immediately impacting on inflation and output. The effect on Britain was quick and dramatic. 68% of Britain's oil came from the Gulf states. An oil importing country is not only obliged to give up consuming other goods and services to pay more to oil producers but it has to pay in the international oil currency of dollars. The demand for more foreign currency tended to drive down the exchange rate making all imports more expensive (Esland, 1990).

A strange consequence of the international allegiance to oil dollars is that countries with small populations such as Saudi Arabia did not have the fiscal infrastructure to spend its new inflated revenues on massive capital projects and so put the money into major financial centres of the world - New York and London - which gave the impression of easing the balance of payments distortion.

This, in turn, delayed any policies to encourage expansion and output as both America and Britain were more concerned with inflation than unemployment, failing to realise that the type of inflation they faced was driven by rising import prices rather than domestic spending. A common religion, antipathy towards Israel and the connections between America and this client state meant that there was an uncommon solidarity among OPEC members.

The new found enthusiasm was a victim of its own success. Oil prices could not stay high forever as the West reduced its demand for imported crude and sought other sources. France's determination to avoid such external factors and its resultant massive nuclear power policy can be traced to this period. Non-OPEC sources of oil were expanded with direct assistance from the West.

For Britain, the discovery of vast reserves of oil in the North Sea and the technology with which to extract them came at the same time but there was still a lasting legacy of this crisis. Future disruptions had an imbalanced effect on the market: the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and disruption of Iranian oil supplies forced crude prices to double even though the shortfall never exceeded 4% at its peak. OPEC solidarity was broken by then as Saudi Arabia agreed to increase productivity. In any case, another OPEC country, Iraq, attacked Iran in September 1980.

The invasion of the macro-economy of the world had been obvious prior to the 1973 oil crisis most notably in Suez in 1956 but Britain's change to a specialist workshop had gone relatively unnoticed. The immediate impact of an oil shortage on a net importer was worsened by the United States' protectionism of domestic markets and Britain's alliance with finance capital at the expense of industrial regeneration. Consequently, unemployment rose in the 1970s and worsened in the 1980s contrary to the accepted wisdom of the 'Phillips Curve' which predicted lower employment at the

expense of higher inflation. This first oil crisis coined the phrase 'stagflation' to account for the previously unthinkable co-existence of high inflation and high unemployment.

The Keynesian doctrine that a government could spend its way out of a depression was seriously challenged leaving the way open for monetarist policies accepting a natural state of unemployment which could not be reduced by demand management. Most notable proponent of this new theory was Martin Friedman who argued forcibly that the solution to unemployment did not lie in government policies aimed at controlling inflation through altering taxes and government expenditure but rather in 'supply side' policies removing distortions in the labour market such as minimum wage legislation and ratios of unemployment benefit to wages.

Britain's mature Social Security system meant that the governments of the 1970s were facing massive unemployment budgets in the face of decreasing tax revenues. This was at a time when the maturity, trade specialisation and failure theories of Britain's economy were most painfully in evidence. 1981-82 production output was no better than the three-day week output figures of 1973-74 yet the labour market was growing as 'baby boomers' reached working age.

Efficient education

There were several triggers to the debate about education and its links with national production and efficiency. The initial rise of unemployment was accompanied by an association of voluntary joblessness with generous benefits and redundancy payments which were seen to delay a search for jobs (Layard, 1979). Similarly, employment protection legislation was regarded (by the CBI) as a factor against hiring workers.

By the time unemployment reached 2 million such influences were regarded as marginal. Britain simply had more potential workers than available jobs.

Comparisons with the 1930s were to be expected but there were some important differences. In real terms Britain fared worse than its competitors in spite of North Sea revenues and oil independence. In addition, unemployment and declining output was becoming a long-term malaise rather than a cycle and the young were especially vulnerable: companies reduced recruitment and cut back on training and traditional apprenticeships. The young also faced stiff competition from long-serving adult workers in times of recession and were usually the first to be made redundant. The union hierarchy supported such a system with an enforced 'last in, first out' policy.

This was a reversal of trends from the Great Depression when the most immediate impact was on older adult males. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s there was decline in demand for unskilled teenagers which more than offset the trend towards staying on at school and the eventual lifting of the leaving age in 1972. Larger companies began restricting access to jobs to qualified staff over 18 or even over 21 and the localised nature of some job prospects exacerbated the trend. New technologies were learned and then retaught internally denying access to youngsters and the increase in numbers of cheaper female staff all contributed to a crisis in youth unemployment.

Within local labour markets the chances of a school-leaver finding a job became critically attached to qualifications. In 1977, 53% of young unemployed had no qualifications at all (Colledge et al, 1977). Yet there had been a concerted effort to not only relate economic performance with education but to relate qualifications with personal wealth. The greater part of that effort had come in the shape of a quango (quasi-autonomous non-government organisation) whose very title made no excuses of its brief - the Manpower Services Commission.

A creature of corporate parentage

The Manpower Services Commission was a product of the Employment and Training Act of 1973 and lasted until its transformation into the Training Commission (a 10-day existence) in 1988. In turbulent political and economic conditions it attracted considerable critical analysis. Coffield labelled it the 'Ministry of Social Control' (1984, p.8) while Benn and Fairley (1986, p.12) regarded it as an 'increasingly sinister corporate creature that was changing the nature of British society - in particular jobs, training and education.' Finn (1986, p.54) thought that its mission was nothing less than the 'radical restructuring of the British working class.' Educationalists also conceived of the MSC as determined upon narrowing the school curriculum and thus ensuring that the middle class received a standard education whilst the working class was entertained by something called training (Morris and Griggs, 1988). In practical terms - if not in policy - it was a wedge between academic education and vocational training and confirmed a two-nation state at least in qualifications.

The MSC countered such arguments with the logic of the day that if Britain was to respond to the need for economic regeneration it needed a social ethic to do so - society had to rethink its attitude to wealth and its creation. The significance of this simple and apparently flawless approach gave the MSC a power and influence more subtle and pervasive than was recognised at the time - a power enforced as its reputation for crisis management was proven time and again.

Though not a direct policy consequence of the oil crisis, the MSC did find its foundations in responses to entrenched industrial relations and the now flexible correlation between inflation and unemployment. In some ways it was a direct attempt at making concrete and sure that which was fluid and unstable. The subsequent Yom Kippur War and oil embargo served, in a simplistic way, to reinforce

the validity of this as a sound idea. The new quango set itself three important tasks. Its mammoth guiding principle was to overturn the dichotomy between education and training that had emerged in the nineteenth century. This evoked its second aim of elevating the importance and status of vocational training and redefine that significance in direct economic terms. A vast system of statistical data production was one of the consequences.

Finally, at an institutional level, the MSC attempted a complete overhaul of education and training provision which significantly impinged on the activities and policies of both the Department for Education and Science and Department of Employment. The MSC contributed to a blurring of the debate on the roles of education and training by advocating the sharing of existing resources and opportunity rather than growth and this it did while conflicting with existing DES attitudes to 'education for life' and 'training for work'. The aim was to produce a pro-training culture whereby policy makers treated human capital as an investment similar to machinery or plant. Though its work was to gain strength and succour from political influences (Callaghan's Ruskin speech and Thatcher's monetarist policies) it repeatedly came up against British industry's inertia towards training.

Enforced co-ordination

Like the first attempt at a prices and incomes policy the first effort to create a unified system of education and training goes back to Elizabethan times. The 1563 Statute of Artificers was the only piece of legislation to deal exclusively with training for work until the 1964 Industrial Training Act. Between those dates Britain had pioneered an industrial revolution without recourse to formal education measures at all - another instance of an alleged British capacity to muddle through without planning or state

intervention: pragmatic empiricism and what Rosenbrock (1977, p.391) called 'the marriage of intellectual inquiry and practical skill'.

The MSC found some of its roots in the formation of the Central Training Council out of the 1964 Industrial Training Act. Though created by a Conservative government it was intended to play a part in Labour's national planning processes by liaison with the National and Economic Development Councils to look after the manpower requirements of individual industrial sectors. A direct result was expanded post-compulsory education facilities. Although intended to benefit employers there was a universal dislike of a levy charged for providing training with smaller firms paying disproportionately higher rates. Trade unions were characteristically divided between urging greater state participation to help semi- or unskilled workers while clinging to the protected rights of craft members.

The workings of the Act quickly came under review. Enoch Powell (in a speech to the Nottingham Branch of the Institute of Marketing, 11 January 1971) claimed that a 'Great Training Robbery' had taken place and that 'the Act had ignited a prairie fire of bureaucratic and profligate spending'. It was not long before the Department for Employment issued a discussion document '*Training and the Future*' (1972).

The urgent need for a perceived answer to the political fallout of world events and the need to be seen to be doing something gave the document more influence than would be considered normal. The resulting Education and Training Act was conceived in a haste peculiar in those times. The uncharacteristic interest of the Heath government in training was as much administrative as economic as it was especially keen to enforce the recommendations of the 1968 Fulton Committee on the Civil Service with its hiving off of individual functional units within departments and the establishment of management units with executive powers, budgets and responsibility.

Heath's confrontation with organised labour transformed the political landscape in which the MSC found itself. Political influences included a considerably enhanced level of support from the new Labour government and the TUC as backers of central planning of industrial strategy. Indeed, Labour's election manifesto had promised to transform the quango into a 'powerful body responsible for the development and execution of a comprehensive manpower policy'. Two White Papers '*The Regeneration of British Industry*' (1974) and '*A New Approach to Industrial Strategy*' (1975) confirmed this.

Yet the great expectations of post-electoral euphoria gave way to the realisation that the promise of a rational manpower policy had been lost in pursuit of what Holmes (1985) called Labour's shibboleth - Industrial Policy. In fact, there was no significant change in economic philosophy. Denis Healey followed much the same corporatist and incomes policy approach as the Heath government with manpower planning relegated to providing key skills in technical jobs. The MSC was at a loss in this paradox of elevated language and coarse practicalities and observed in its 1976/77 Annual Report that it was still seeking clear direction from the government as to its role. In truth, financial constraints were against it for the moment.

Yet the political influences were still at work. A damaging report by the OECD had sent shock waves through the DES (where rivalry with the DE was intense). The 1975 report recorded a lack of 'a balanced analysis of persisting and new trends in society, in technological development and the role of the state'. Since OECD reports are one of the shop windows of the world these were hurtful comments from outsiders about Britain's outlook. This was at a time when Britain was still recovering from the oil crisis and only just accessing reserves in the North Sea - a delicate and politically sensitive time for any country seeking International Monetary Fund aid.

The DES was singled out for 'passivity, inertia and obsessive secrecy' (Section 1)- a criticism endorsed by a Select Committee the following year. For its part, the DES conceded that it had 'erred in encouraging schools to prepare for the social rather than the economic role' (Section 3). There is no doubt that the OECD report was a source for the Prime Minister's Ruskin Speech in 1976 which shifted the balance between the warring departments.

The emphasis was firmly on employment with an agenda that the MSC saw as distinctly its own. In managerial and accountability terms, the MSC reported to the Secretary of State for Employment with no representative elections. The Industry Training Boards had no seat on the ten-person Board and most senior officials were Civil Servants with no background in education or training so that even employers and British industry were not effectively represented. Callaghan had endorsed employers' views that new recruits had few of the skills that were required to equip them for a productive contribution. That this was a claim at least one century old seemed to have been lost on most observers. The swing in emphasis heralded a new era of vocationalism taken up by the Green Paper *'Education in Schools'* (1977) which confirmed a sea change in the role of schools for at least a decade:

'In addition to their responsibility for the academic curriculum, schools must prepare their pupils for the transition to adult and working life. Young people need to be equipped with a basic understanding of the functioning of our democratic political system, of the mixed economy and the industrial activities, especially manufacturing, which create our national wealth'.

(para. vi).

Prepared for the worst

It could be said of the MSC that it was always well prepared and this change in policy dove-tailed in with its already published *'Towards a Comprehensive Manpower Policy'* (1976) which had designated youth as a priority group. The fortuitous convergence of climate and expediency put the MSC at the forefront of political influence. The scheme that was endorsed by this convergence was the Youth Opportunities Programme.

That it was aimed at low school achievers was no accident since youth unemployment was now regarded as a structural weakness in the economy rather than a temporary, cyclical feature and low achievers were increasingly less likely to find any work. The Special Programmes division of the MSC now took the lead in policy formation and implementation leaving the DES and DE to argue about principles. Sheer weight of numbers overwhelmed the YOP scheme (and shocked the government as to the scale of the problem). Initially offering 80% guaranteed employment or further training this fell to 25% by 1981/82 with a attendant fall in the quality of training.

This pattern was repeated throughout subsequent initiatives but each one was supported by the supposition that 'it must build towards its objectives', and were a 'constructive alternative to unemployment' (Holland Report, 1977, para. v). Despite the statistical evidence, the YOP system was viewed by the MSC as a success. In limited political terms it held a similar sway over government in taking away a huge number of potential social security claimants out of the benefit system. It had demonstrated the technocratic skill of a quango with a mission and one which had stolen the thunder of two powerful Whitehall bodies. Even the most vitriolic critic had to concede that no other body or institution had impacted on unemployment (figures) so quickly and on a national scale.

Yet the messages of this limited success were again lost in the expedient atmosphere of the period. Industrial unrest and the public humiliation of Britain's borrowing from the World Bank distracted observers from noting the MSC's central message about training. While publicly representing the British worker the Labour government had been unable to incorporate manpower policy within its economic and industrial strategy and to raise training onto the same platform as physical investment. It was, in fact, governed by finance capital and inflationary pressures from world trade imbalances. Its policies confused the employment debate by spawning a rhetoric of permanent and temporary jobs and, arguably, the 'political buck of unemployment was passed to the new Thatcher government' (Holmes, 1985, p.14).

Monetarism at the MSC

While the period under Labour might be termed a false dawn for the MSC a decade under the Conservatives was a time of opportunity. This did not appear the case at first. A Prime Minister thirsty for efficiency and a dislike for non-productive quangos seemed set to disband this obvious relic of 'big governments in an overloaded democracy' (Parsons, 1984, p.77). Yet with judicious negotiating skill the MSC secured a place in the hearts and minds of the New Right. It was to be a practical example of the return to laissez-faire and would even assist Sir Keith Joseph's goal of achieving 'a law-abiding free enterprise reconstruction of Britain's social relations of production' (Coates and Hilliard, 1986, p.29).

This regeneration of possibilities was at the expense of more visionary plans of fostering a new training culture and, as international and domestic fortunes changed adversely again, the MSC was fire fighting youth unemployment which contributed so significantly to riots and discontent on the streets of Britain's cities. Demoralisation

among the young was also seen as sapping the work ethic which, in turn, would hinder any recovery.

The MSC fully appreciated the importance of schools and colleges in swinging opinion away from broad and vague social goals to vocational targets. Moreover, the quango's new vocationalism, as piloted by its collaborator in the DES - the Further Education Unit - offered a solution to what was to be perceived as the crisis in education. The MSC was to become the master of 'off-the-shelf' packages which tantalised decision makers with instant results. In the meantime its opponents could only offer more of the same which was an increasingly discredited position. This easy answer philosophy symbolised the Conservative election victory and Labour's apparent inability to present any new ideas.

Political factors which hampered Labour's administration were a naive belief in a pact with a strong, organised TUC and a reluctance to admit that full employment was out of reach - a commitment which was part of an overall Welfare State strategy. That strategy was to be dismantled under a new consensus of monetarism. Barnett (*op.cit.* p.88) whose ideas were so influential on the new right blamed Beveridge more than anyone else (including Keynes) for 'committing future governments to full employment' which, he firmly believed handed power over to the employees and led to Britain's appalling post-war productivity.

Yet the MSC's early days under a Conservative government looked decidedly fragile. The new administration had no great plans for training other than placing it firmly back into the hands of employers and many at the MSC feared abolition. This was intensified when 57 quangos were dissolved in the first 18 months of office. However, the Pliatsky Report (1980) on Non-Departmental Public Bodies made no major recommendations about the Commission and a reprieve was confirmed as the government realised that, while they had given up on a full employment policy, they

could not ignore it at Prime Minister's question time. The MSC had a new lease of life but, in keeping with the centralist strategies of its new masters, had greater ministerial control placed upon it.

This situation was used effectively by the MSC senior staff who sought to gain favour with a succession of Secretaries of State. One aspect of government that the Commission could rely upon was the new right's deep hostility to trade union influence and, in particular, its role in Industrial Training Board and apprenticeship schemes. Here, the MSC could count on government support of initiatives which reduced union activity while giving the Department for Employment the credit. A timely report by the Central Policy Review Staff (a government 'think tank') in May 1980 castigated existing training schemes generally but the apprenticeship system especially for its maintenance of restrictive practice and an exclusive craft network.

It suggested a 'modernised apprenticeship' (Section 4) arrangement which redesigned and classified all tasks in all occupations to facilitate the transfer of flexible labour. Senior Director of the MSC, John Cassels, saw this as an opportunity to rethink and repackage ideas of vocational education and training based upon the prevailing trends in industrial relations. In the long term he remained committed to a Youth Training Scheme which would ultimately restructure Britain's skill base. In the short term the MSC had to content itself with firing the debate about skills training which it did with political adroitness.

Significantly, Cassels was promoted to the Cabinet Office as a permanent secretary while Sir Richard O'Brien was removed as Chair of the MSC because of his support of Labour's consensual approach. He was replaced by David Young as the 'government's own man'. It was widely reported that Young (later Lord Young) told Len (later Lord) Murray that his aim was to give education a badly needed shock (Jackson, 1986). As it was, Lord Young was to epitomise 'the polished bogeyman of

the education world' who 'personified the attempted take-over of the classroom by the training world' (TES, 19 November 1982, p.3).

Young not only introduced a fresh outlook to the MSC but a new style of management. He regarded himself as having the final say in policy decisions and strengthened the MSC's power base by working closely with Peter Morrison at the Department of Employment. Together, they worked for additional funds for the Commission and, more importantly, Young's appointment indicated that the future of the MSC was strictly in line with the government's economic policy. While O'Brien had been willing to criticise the illogical and the perverse, Young was a committed monetarist and saw the MSC as an arm of fiscal decisions and 'common sense' management. This, essentially, was a strategy of anti-inflation and the acceptance of unemployment as a price worth paying to keep British goods competitive and make Britain attractive to foreign investment.

Education policy under a Tory of the old school, Carlisle, went no further than preserving the remaining grammar schools and repealing Labour legislation which had attempted to make the comprehensive system universal. As Caroline Benn (interview for BBC News, 19 July, 1988) noted, however, 'the legislation was so ineffective they needn't have bothered'. Stronger voices in the party were expressing more radical views. Rhodes Boyson of Black Paper authorship advocated a complicated voucher system as a means of restoring selective schools - a concept that the Prime Minister admired. Carlisle, too, endorsed demands for a national set of standards in reading, writing and arithmetic which would be set by the Assessment of Performance Unit at the DES and monitored by tests at set ages. However, as Jones (1983, p.32) points out, the introduction of such sweeping changes would have challenged 'beliefs and practices that are deeply rooted in the education system' and would have entailed 'a confrontation with almost all the entire apparatus of state education' for which the government was not yet prepared.

The process started by the Ruskin Speech in 1976 was irreversible and Sir Keith Joseph acknowledged that Callaghan had built upon the Black Papers which would lead to a new solution to the perceived problem with schools. The new order would connect this alleged crisis with youth unemployment and present them with an opportunity to start the process of a general remoralisation of the work force beginning with its youngest entrants. The government, initially, was not prepared to allow the MSC to manage these elements in a coherent strategy. The Commission had yet to prove itself as a controller of a mass unemployment issue.

Immediate effects of a monetarist policy was a substantial rise in unemployment. Actual statistics are much disputed, not least because training schemes hid some of the figures, but within a year of taking government the level had passed the 10% mark nationally. Among 'wets' and die hards alike there was an apprehension about continued high levels, an apprehension justified in the summer of 1981 when rioting broke out in cities across the country. As Sir Leo Pliatsky (1983, p.90) recorded:

'Sentiment against expenditure cuts crystallised further among non-monetarists as the summer brought with it fresh outbreaks of rioting by young people in one inner city after another. There was a fairly general belief than unemployment among the young, and especially young coloured people, and the urban squalor in which they lived were among the causes of the riots and that there was a need to spend more money, not less, on dealing with them'.

The politics of the subsequent major expansion of the Youth Opportunities Programme and other MSC measures at a cost of £500 million extra was not lost on Sir Leo who added: 'The budget of the Manpower Services Commission, a quango which earlier in the government's life had been under a cloud overhead and suffered

cuts in staff and programmes, was now being re-expanded as an essential instrument in their measures' (*ibid.* p.91). Yet even this expenditure was exceeded in Mrs. Thatcher's second administration.

While the Conservatives were directly using training for political purposes - controlling statistics, face-saving and fire-fighting - it was also determined to return it to its voluntaristic roots. Putting money into youth unemployment through the MSC meant it sought savings elsewhere and it abolished sixteen of the twenty-three Industry Training Boards. The remaining seven barely survived.

Another reason for such a substantive review was one of culture. Former Secretary of State for Employment, Peter Morrison, argued in a 1985 interview that 'the economic recession of the 1970s had not radically altered Britain's attitude towards training since the recession had made resources so scarce that employers as usual reduced in the first instance finances allocated to training'. He confirmed a Cabinet belief that the country required a fresh approach 'from the bottom up so to speak'. This coincided with MSC opinions, especially those of John Cassels, author of a consultative document *A New Training Initiative* (1981).

Controlling the statistics

This document, with its impressive glossy format and logo that was fast becoming an MSC hallmark, reintroduced concepts of human capital and the need for a training revolution to produce flexible, multi-skilled workers able to move across old craft boundaries so despised by the new right. The MSC made a virtue of the impossibility of predicting long term skill requirements and, instead, proclaimed that modern workers need adaptability based on continuous skill updating. In addition, in the

New Training Initiative, it saw a solution to the crisis of education by building a bridge between school and work.

Even more, it was perceived as a mechanism by which traditional divisions between mental and manual work could be broken down. Now every school leaver would be offered a foundation that combined the academic and the practical. No longer would irrelevant study in arcane subject specialisms for written examination be separated from practical applications tried and tested in the workplace. The least qualified would also get the opportunity in a new apprenticeship system which had been denied them in the old, union system.

All this, it was intended, would bring about far-reaching social change which accepted the parity of esteem for theory and practice. Individuals would be free to move between crafts and jobs as supply and demand factors changed the production and service industrial base. New vocationalism would make a job-for-life increasingly unrealistic as people with flexible and responsive attitudes grasped opportunities as they arose in other sectors or geographically.

The New Training Initiative had other advantages seized upon by a Cabinet which saw multiple solutions in its apparent simplicity. The most obvious and immediate was the relief it gave to unemployment statistics. So a national vocational training scheme for all school leavers was an idea that had found its time and place.

For the MSC such an apprenticeship scheme would enhance its own influence not only with the government but even with the TUC for while some of its members resented the loss of power in the craft apprenticeship system they could still be seen to support a widening access to training for all young people. For parents it was, perhaps, the only alternative to long term dole prospects for their children and for the

pragmatic media it was 'an anti-riot device keeping sixteen-year-olds off the unemployment records and off the streets' (*The Times*, 2 September, 1983, p.2).

The New Training Initiative gained admiration at the highest level of government. It was a method to undermine trade union power by suggesting a completely new approach to working practices and filled a vacuum left after the abolition of the 16 Industry Training Boards. Potentially, here lay a means of by-passing schools and the educational establishment which was still considered pro-Socialist and steeped in 'progressive' attitudes. A rising generation could be imbued with a pro-enterprise awareness and be alerted to the benefits of individual initiative and the values of free enterprise.

A fortunate coincidence of ideas had met with a happy conjunction of key personalities to produce and give political sway to, what would have been ordinarily, just another consultative document. The MSC's mastery of timing should not be understated, however, since the document's wording was specifically geared to gain maximum influential attention:

'Employers have too often taken or been forced to take a short term view and relied heavily on being able to buy skills they need from the market place. Training has been seen as a dispensable overhead rather than an investment for the future'.

(MSC, 1981, pp. 4-5)

In place of a disorganised, unplanned approach, the Initiative argued that a systematic training and retraining for the entire work force take place not only to revive individual firms but as a cure for unemployment itself. To this end, it suggested three main principles:

1. 'We must develop skill training, including apprenticeships, in such a way as to enable young people entering at different ages and with different educational qualifications to acquire agreed standards of skill appropriate to the jobs available and to provide them with a basis for progression through further learning'.
2. 'We must move towards a position where all young people under the age of 18 have the opportunity, either of continuing in full-time education, or of entering training, or a period of planned work-related training and education'.
3. 'We must open up wide opportunities for adults, whether in employment, unemployed or returning to work, to acquire, increase or update their skills and knowledge during the course of their working lives'.

(MSC, *ibid.* p.6)

The last comment was a token gesture to adult unemployment and training. Its response here was to encourage training for specific skill shortages. By far the greatest weight of MSC attention focused on the young as a source of potential uprising and violent discontent but also as a source of new recruits in a massive social restructuring exercise. They would be the most geographically and attitudinally flexible for the experiment with new, portable skills. The resultant Youth Training Scheme tried to avoid accusations that had dogged the YOP system as a make-work contrivance. Thus, part of the marketing included a one year training programme for all school leavers whether in or out of work. Yet the addition of a training element worked against the new scheme as a cosmetic exercise.

Nevertheless, new Secretary of State for Employment, Norman Tebbit, in characteristic style, acquired £1 billion worth of provision for YTS after which 'the cost of training is basically a matter for the individual employer' (*The Youth Training*

Scheme - A White Paper, 1981, Section 2). This attitude only served to undermine the system before it even started.

A distinct line was drawn between state-funded training and private provision with a price tag on the latter. In addition, it clearly confirmed that such funding was for 16 - 18 year olds, was temporary and excluded the needs of adults in work or not. Even hard-line monetarists Miller and Wood (1984, p.13) argued:

'The New Training Initiative or "Tebbit" scheme ... which is due to start in 1983 at an annual cost of £1 billion, will replace YOP on a larger scale, but is little different from it in principle. Unfortunately, it is open to the objection that it provides training rather than proper jobs, which are being demanded and its cost is likely to destroy jobs and job opportunities elsewhere in the economy'.

A core of believers - Mrs. Thatcher, David Young, Norman Tebbit and Sir Keith Joseph - grasped the cultural importance of the New Training Initiative: the fostering of an initiative enterprise, a voluntaristic and self-help attitude, a faith in small businesses, a re-education of an entire generation to pro-enterprise appreciation and the reduction of government in industrial support. In more pragmatic terms, Peter Morrison (in a 1985 interview) added: 'Britain will have to train its way out of the recession'.

The first step was to transform the YOP into a high quality scheme as Norman Tebbit told the Conservative Party Conference in 1981 - the supposition was that what the economy needed and what employers were insisting upon was a better qualified work force. This was becoming increasingly questionable as new technologies were taking over the workplace. It also assumed a willingness of geographical flexibility which was sluggish in practice. Occupations requiring large numbers of staff were actually

in significant decline as traditional industries found themselves facing stiff international competition. The new vacancies existed for a small number of high skill jobs. This recession was different in that it was a combination of unemployment and deskilling and employers were turning to cheaper, part-time sources - especially women returners - a pattern particularly noticeable in the service sector. It was to this part of the economy that the government turned to increasingly for its hopes of domestic revival.

The rhetoric of a quality training system was undermined by Tebbit's insistence that the allowance which YTS trainees received would be £10 less than the YOP and those who refused to join the scheme would lose their right to supplementary benefit altogether. This was justified on the basis that the training quality of the YTS was much higher than YOP which, it was admitted, had no formal training at all - hence the distinction between training 'allowance' and YOP 'wage'.

This he did without consulting the MSC yet, as with his unilateral declaration against the Training Boards, it was simply a ploy to feign a huge concession after the sting of his critics had been drawn: they accepted that the YTS allowance should fall to £25 (instead of the 'intended' £15) and supplementary benefits were not entirely withdrawn but sanctions were introduced against those who refused or withdrew from a YTS place.

Pressure from the TUC and its members on the MSC board were seen to have gained some concessions from Tebbit by demanding that the allowances be set at the same rates and in their 1982 Annual Report the TUC confirmed its support of the government schemes because of its apparent victory. Gavin Laird of the Boilermaker's Union expressed a widely held union view:

'Let it be said, unequivocally, our union recognises, and the trade

union movement recognises that training schemes are a poor second best for permanent jobs ... But having said that, you cannot afford to throw the baby out with the bath water. The Youth Training Scheme, with all (its) deficiencies ... is far better than that which was produced originally by the Department of Employment and Mr. Tebbit. The three TUC representatives have done a magnificent job when you compare how the scheme was originally'.

(Labour Party, 1982/3, p.231)

It was a measure of Tebbit's skill that senior members of the TUC were so easily decoyed and that to do so he was willing to use the MSC. Others were not so easily confused.. Careers officers protested vociferously throughout the country (since it would be they who would have to cajole youngsters into the system) and the left of the Labour Party who represented the rank-and-file trade unionists and parents whose children it was largely aimed at were a source of constant, if submerged, opposition. This remained an ineffective and uncoordinated grouping and the government was able to introduce its schemes quickly. The TUC remained somewhat divided over the value of government training schemes. While reservations were expressed in 1981, two years later Ken Graham told the TUC Youth Conference that:

'The scheme is fully consistent with TUC policy on training for all, but we have to ensure that something which is consistent when written down is consistent in practice ... The more that schemes are established within the unionised sector, the greater the ability to ensure that these young people are not treated as cheap labour'.

(TES, 25 February 1983, p.4)

The TUC hierarchy clearly felt that they could maintain a watchful eye on quality and an influence on unionised apprenticeships by staying on the board of the MSC. Yet

traditional apprenticeships associated with strict craft division and the modernised system intended under the new training scheme were incompatible as history was to show. The efficient secret of Tebbit's policy was that the trade union movement had to be seen to support a national training scheme or face derision by a government willing to undermine it at every opportunity. Continued attacks on union power and declining membership meant that attempts to perform a quality control function were thwarted and the unions were soon to realise that their political influence was to become negligible.

The MSC's influence on post-compulsory education

To facilitate the transition from rhetoric to reality the MSC established 55 local Area Manpower Boards which were, effectively, mini-quangos. These were to administer the YTS and advise the MSC on how the scheme was being implemented in each area.

Private training agencies sprang up to take advantage of the grants of £1950 that the MSC gave for every trainee that they could place on their schemes. Further education colleges made useful amounts securing large contracts of this nature but the new agencies soon found that they lacked the resources and administrative infrastructure to make the scheme profitable and there were numerous bankruptcies. The process did, however, set a precedent for the future privatising of training.

The original intention that the scheme would apply to all youngsters whether in or out of work never materialised and from a forecast of 33% of all trainees the numbers actually employed sank to 5% of the total. In Labour-controlled inner cities the local authorities topped up the allowance to £40 per week. With further education colleges taking the lion's share of numbers the resulting provision was, as Sheldrake and Vickerstaff (1987, p.43) remarked: 'a mixture of state involvement and private

provision, the corporatist element remaining, symbolically at least, in the form of the tripartite MSC'.

The Area Manpower Boards tended to operate according to local needs (just as the colleges did) and so there appeared a melange of different types of YTS. Among these were sub-hierarchies all of which worked against a unified system. ITeCs and higher level courses in further education colleges provided training in occupationally specific skills in demand in the labour market and this did correspond to the advertised aims of the YTS but its provision became prohibitively expensive. In any case, the numbers of trainees qualifying from such course clearly exceed the relevant jobs available.

Other highly selective schemes run by large companies were mainly conversions of already existing apprenticeships affording businesses the opportunity to acquire government funding for training they did anyway and which was subject to a minimum level of performance by trainees. The YTS, contrary to the declared intentions of the New Training Initiative, had divided into mini-schemes few of which provided training which offered a certainty of real employment with marketable skills. Providers of training - be it private agencies, colleges or large firms - focused on the immediate financial benefits to themselves rather than long-term national goals.

Levels of take-up in the scheme reflected the state of local labour markets: lowest in the South-East and highest in the North-East and Merseyside. The MSC's own figures showed a reduced chance of finding a job in the depressed regions particularly for ethnic minorities (Leavers' Survey 1986). Patterns of discrimination continued to pervade the system with young women continuing to be over-represented on schemes training for low paid traditionally feminine work (administrative, clerical, leisure, hairdressing and services).

The government maintained a robust defence at all times. David Young told the magazine *The Director* in April 1983 (p.3) that: 'Training should not be confused with education. Training is about work related skills and is intimately concerned with employment. It is for that reason that training in this country must be employer dominated and employer led'.

With such attitudes driving the scheme it is not surprising that, despite the best efforts of many of those involved in it, the YTS scheme came to reflect the worst conditions existing in the labour market. It also demonstrated, in absolute terms, industry's traditional, obstinate unwillingness to contribute towards the cost of youth training. It was seriously intended that after one year of public funding employers would pay for subsequent years financing. This idea was quietly forgotten as it became obvious that there was no support from businesses looking for every and any saving. The first major survey of employers' reactions to YTS (*'How the YTS helps employers'*, Sako and Dore, 1986, p.195) was that it provided: 'the opportunity ... to screen young people before offering permanent employment.'

Also, very important are the 'savings that result on labour costs' (*ibid*, p.3). As the Conservatives actively promoted small business enterprises at the expense of traditional large employers the ability to find suitable (if any) employment for trainees was caught in a paradox of their own making. Most small firms find employees their own way and distant from government efforts and most YTS placements were in low skill positions especially in retail and restaurants which hardly inspired the recruits with entrepreneurial values.

In an effort to make the scheme more appealing employers were exempt from the provisions of the Sex Discrimination and Employment Protection Acts regarding trainees as well as most racial relations legislation. In return, employers gave little back. They retained control over the hiring and firing of apprentices and gave no

support to a national vocational qualification continuing to prefer traditional academic qualifications as indicators of real value for posts of responsibility. Head of the Further Education Unit, Jack Mansell (*Times Educational Supplement*, May 10, 1984, p.16) thought that the YTS Leaving Certificate 'presents itself as a most superficial document'.

The dexterity of ministerial response in such cases remained robust. David Young declared that, instead of a recognised qualification, the criterion of success of the scheme would be how many people found jobs at the end of it. Yet there was evidence that the scheme made unemployment worse. Employers would gladly use a trainee for six months at a time rather than employ someone permanently and the government's own idea of 'additionality' - paying employers to replace two workers with five trainees - was divisive.

In effect, the government was subsidising industry. Both YTS and YOP increased employers' dependence on state funds to employ temporary staff whom they did not have to train. A cycle of short-term, frustrating and mostly unproductive work experiences began for thousands of young people.

These flaws were disguised in the run up to the 1983 General Election and the tacit approval of the TUC had taken the wind out of opposition sails. The MSC had effected a change in union demands for the right to work to a right to training. This was to be a major political influence throughout the 1980s and had a significant impact on the curricula delivered in further education colleges. A commitment to full employment was replaced with access to training for employability - a significant shift in policy emphasis. Yet as that decade unfolded it became obvious that mass unemployment and recession could get schemes off the ground but the resilience of business to change and refusal to contribute to funds pushed government deeper into costly cosmetic exercises.

The MSC's guiding principle of a coherent national training system always met with the pragmatic survivalism of its political masters. Along with other shibboleths of the old consensus Mrs. Thatcher's first administration had deliberately abandoned the Welfare State's commitment to full employment. The consequences of monetarist experimentation had forced U-turns in stated policy as both domestic strife and international fluctuations demanded reactionary intervention.

Funding was now directed in areas that were thought to be prerequisites for high and stable employment. The MSC's achievement was to ensure that training occupied the high ground of debate within these prerequisites. At first, this was the bargain between the quango and the new right but as election success followed election success, there was enough ministerial confidence to confirm an original belief that this was not the business of government. The responsibility for employment and, hence, personal welfare, was laid at the hands of the individual while government simply provided the opportunities (stated qualifications).

Zenith and nadir

The second Conservative administration saw the zenith and nadir of the MSC. The quango's role as a fire fighter was established and respected in Tory circles and this prolonged its life but the differences in perceived roles finally and fatally became clear later. The 1983 victory seemed to convince the new right that there was a mandate for change at all levels particularly a free enterprise solution to economic and social affairs. Unemployment became a social problem (the individual's fault) rather than an economic one (the government's responsibility).

Peter Jenkins commented in *The Guardian* (11 October 1984, p.2) that the government was 'hitting on the cultural revolution solution' to the economic crisis and the government formally renounced its commitment to full employment in a White Paper *Employment: the Challenge for the Nation* (1985). In it the MSC was allocated the continuing and enhance role of fostering an enterprise culture with its sponsorship of the Enterprise Allowance Scheme. Training was to be seriously repackaged and marketing by linking policy areas together with, for example, the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in schools was to be linked with a new two-year YTS.

The major political influences on training policy in this administration were the continuing success of industrial relations reform and the replacement of macro-control of the economy with a micro-approach to employment. Main areas of attention were a new round of union legislation, a further reduction in costs for industry, special assistance to small business and increased provision of training for new technologies. These measures included abolition of the Wages Councils to 'price the unemployed back into work' (Riddell, 1986, p.18). Naturally, such responses elevated the work of the MSC again with a revitalised rhetoric of 'efficiency', 'productivity', 'competitiveness' and 'stability' so favoured by Cabinet. This was supported by glossy brochures and stylish videos (copied by the thousand for presentation in colleges) for which the MSC became famous.

It was also party to the debate about the 'crisis in education' which formed the basis of attacks on the teaching profession as a whole. Mrs. Thatcher saw schools as the obvious place to start weaning the British people away from collectivist values and debilitating dependence on a welfare system. It was perceived that colleges and schools were full of subversive lecturers and teachers sapping the entrepreneurial spirit from young minds. To the difficult dilemma of getting around this leviathan

with its notorious British duplication of central and local control through the DES and the LEAs, Lord Young presented the quango as an obliging and pliant instrument.

The MSC lacked a particular image of education. Its national training system was grand but not inclusive or particularly deep in research. As Grosch (1987, p.141) commented: 'The MSC has little or no refined educational image; its pronouncements on education smack more of the director's boardroom or manager's office than of the professor's study or the teacher's classroom'. Lord Young's vision was no deeper. In 1989 he was convinced that: '... just as Latin was vital to the educated of the fourteenth century, so a knowledge of taxation and marketing is to the educated of the twenty-first century'.

In fact, the MSC relied heavily on the inspiration of some and the perspiration of others. Most of its general ideas came from the Further Education Unit of the DES set up in 1977. The FEU became a willing partner as an advocate of colleges in the continuous schools versus post-compulsory education debate in the department. Grosch (*ibid.* p.141) called it 'the acceptable face of vocationalism' since it, at least, steered a middle path between academia and specific training and acknowledged the benefits of each.

The Further Education Unit

The Further Education Unit was established by the DES in 1977 with a research and reporting remit particularly relating to college curricula. It quickly spread its influence through colleges with a number of Regional Curriculum Bases that represented the first systematic attempt to create a regional network for the support of a specific area of curriculum development in post-compulsory education. It was the

FEU that recognised that colleges were ill-prepared for the changes in training provision.

Traditionally, post-compulsory education supplied such training needs as employers could not provide them. It took over this role from various apprentice night schools and technical schools when they became absorbed into the reformed comprehensives during the 1960s. As Green (1986) pointed out tertiary modern further education has always had three distinct tiers of students taught in three completely contrasted and isolated styles. Now traditional craft and clerical courses were being squeezed by academic programmes and filled by students from decapitated comprehensive sixth forms and vastly expanded pre-vocational courses.

As youth unemployment rose and the expected numbers remaining at school to form a new sixth form did not materialise increasing numbers of youths gravitated towards further education colleges. There they filled classes that grew out of the provision for school-leavers with moderate or severe learning difficulties with its emphasis on 'life skills': cooking, mending plugs, shopping and some basic literacy and numeracy.

The FEU developed this life skills foundation into an 'Instructional Guide to Social and Life Skills' (1984) which assumed that students lacked some elements of ability and know-how which were 'responsible for the individual's lack of employment.' Therefore, one of the aims of the initiative was 'to adjust trainees to normal working conditions, giving attention to such matters as time-keeping, discipline and the maintenance of relations with others' (Sections 1 - 3).

The FEU (*ibid.* Sections 4 - 5) went further by adding a behavioural philosophy within which to identify and assess these attitudes now labelled 'skills' which combined to create 'applied competencies' which could be checked against a 'profiled assessment'. To ensure that these skills and competencies were work relevant the FEU described -

for the wider benefit of trainers in post-compulsory education - an example known as the *Coventry LightBox Assembly*:

'Here trainees construct, wire and test equipment, then package it and write the accompanying advice notes. The organisation is tight and efficient and a convincing assembly regime is produced. When the lightboxes reach their destination in the main college building they are dismantled and their components fed back for reassembly'.

(FEU, 1984, Section 6).

Such contrivances illustrates the depth to which the vocabulary of new vocationalism had penetrated post-compulsory education even before the MSC adopted and popularised the principles of the FEU. Such vocabulary was to find a place in the MSC's heart.

Similarly, the MSC was able to use the existing institutional framework for guiding the 'transition process' - the Careers Service. Though essentially the same animal it had been renamed three times since the war and the only reason that it had not been disbanded was that it was viewed as an essential part of entrepreneurial philosophy in which youngsters were motivated to think positively about job availability. With YTS the Service was a major referral agency for young people onto schemes.

The Institute of Careers Officers were told in no uncertain terms that their profession was on the line and the Service's future depended on how it handled YTS. Its role under the LEAs meant that its advice was likely to be more acceptable than the MSC's representations.

This demonstrates the MSC's skill at maximising existing structures to promote its own aims. Controlling the information given to school-leavers and influencing the

structure of courses while at college were aspects of the MSC's strategic aim of a national training policy. A sub-policy was the repackaging of practical skills as worthy and of equal parity with academic qualifications.

The new profiled assessments were not designed to fail the majority but provide everyone with a 'can do' list which gave credit for any and all attainments whether they were part of a coherent whole qualification or not. This was a significant trend giving way to competency-based standards and skills as the benchmark for the industry lead body qualifications which became National Vocational Qualifications. Lead bodies copied the MSC designs for their own variations.

Training for jobs?

The MSC's global ideas and the government's new-found confidence in its ability to influence met as a dynamic force in the arena of training. Concepts of enterprise culture, law-abiding free enterprise reconstruction and the replacing of social values with a voluntaristic, individual approach joined to secure dominance over educational tradition. Education was somewhat subordinated to securing a comprehensive manpower planning strategy which both the government and MSC now believed was the rational means of modernising the economy.

There was no resistance from industry which accepted any help it could in the recession. It particularly welcomed finance for training which was one of the few items of expenditure where they could make savings. The White Paper *Training for Jobs* (1984) was, therefore, well-received in business and in colleges which would benefit from its suggestions. Only the educational establishment and its friends at the DES seemed opposed. Mrs. Thatcher set about marginalising the LEAs with which

the DES shared responsibility for schools and colleges as sources of discontent. Rate-capping was the first of several tactics to limit the power of local authorities.

Fundamental to this assault on social structures were simplistic explanations which gained political currency for their apparently obvious solutions. Much was made of the lack of professional status of engineers (which is not true since they have a Royal Charter); the attraction of the professions and Civil Service at the expense of industry and the intransigence of the educational establishment in maintaining rigid views on ideas of a 'rounded child'. The failure of Britain's industry to renovate was ascribed to a mix of restrictive union practices and lack of entrepreneurial spirit. As Carr and Hartnett (*op.cit.* p.124) note: 'Education could fairly be seen to have a role in each of these "causes of decline" particularly as it was consuming an increasing proportion of national wealth'.

Thus, the second Thatcher administration can be characterised by a concerted effort to reduce union power, a commitment to money supply economics, a reduction in local authority power, a dilution in the influence of the DES/LEA alliance and large scale involvement in training. The latter it did with the continued approval of the TUC members on the MSC board and most left-wing councils which acted as training agencies for MSC schemes.

Only four major unions opposed YTS (CPSA, UCW, POEU and NGA) while the Civil Service union dragged its feet so effectively that Lord Young was unable to set the example he so wanted by having youth trainees in his own department. In the event, the MSC was able to dispense with union support but this was not the scheme's biggest problem. The sheer scale of numbers led to confusion and corruption.

Checks on trainees were infrequent and inaccurate allowing training providers the opportunity to inflate figures and, therefore, grants. Instead of introducing trainees to

the world of work the YTS system prepared them for a 'world of constant confusion' (Loney, 1983, p.28). Throughout its existence the YTS was dogged by accusations of sexism and racism while its safety record defied national averages. In the recording year of 1986/87 there were 9 fatalities, 315 major accidents and 1728 reportable incidents (Hansard, 24 July 1987). This was worse than the deep-sea fishing, road building and steeplejack trades put together.

The MSC's own structure and statements of principle conspired against its aims. Its undemocratic and unrepresentative nature allowed it to act independently of judgement and accountability other than to its own Chairmen who were, invariably, there to use this to further government policy. As Benn and Fairley (1986, p.7) comment:

'It is run entirely from the top down. All its boards - both national and local area boards - are created by appointment from overseeing bodies ... Its commands come not only from the top down, but from the centre outwards. Its objectives for work, education and unemployment require only that the MSC orders are carried out. There is no need for feedback or discussion'.

Training and Vocational Education

This lack of accountability gave the quango a sense of destiny and immortality sustained by increasing levels of funding. When Lord Young decided that enterprising attitudes must reach down to schools and up to those over 18 it was to the MSC that he turned initiating the TVEI system for 14 - 18 year olds to fulfil the second objective of the New Training Initiative: to provide vocational education and training across the ability and age ranges.

The 'Falklands Factor' has been quoted as a driving influence in the launch of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), (McCulloch, 1986). Mrs. Thatcher certainly appeared emboldened to take action from the centre on a whole range of issues and there was a sudden increase in 'task forces' to 'take action' to deal with a range of problems from football hooliganism to inner cities. In this context an 'initiative' as Holt (1987, p.76) suggests 'appears to mean a unilateral decision taken without asking anyone who might object'.

The Prime Minister announced this latest initiative in an answer to a parliamentary question planted by her friend Sir William von Straubenzee on 12 November 1982. Neither the DES or DE are alleged to have known about it. Apparently even the MSC was not consulted and this is probably accurate since it considered this its sovereign territory. That there was much subsequent diversity of interpretation also supports the supposition that Mrs. Thatcher 'went solo' on this one. Lord Young assumed that it was for low attainers while Tebbit judged it to be the 'rebirth of technical education'.

In the event Young had to backtrack to assure everyone that TVEI was open to all pupils of a wide ability range. Like YTS it was intended to be a 'pump priming' exercise which would eventually be funded by local industry once its benefits were obvious. The concept of 'bad money after good' had not worked its way through to ministers yet and Moon (1983) had already noted the tendency of government pilot schemes in response to unemployment becoming the basis for further policy developments before the consequences had been fully evaluated.

TVEI did not draw upon or involve educationalists. Nor did it follow the guiding advice of the Plowden Advisory Committee model where representatives of a wide range of interested parties join with the 'great and the good' to scrutinise and recommend changes as appropriate. It did not follow a pattern of legislative change

which affected an increase in school leaving age or a comprehensive system of education. Rather it drew its inspiration from a commercial/industrial model which moved resources (people in this case) from where they were to where they were considered most useful. Personal aspirations, goals and qualification desires were immaterial in this context.

Thus, its mode of operation was executive and managerialistic. This was a deliberate policy to avoid encumbrance by 'experts' and to disassociate it from the educational establishment who were sources of criticism. In very real terms TVEI was a political intervention particularly into schools from an outside agency rather than change through internal symbiosis.

It is a key feature of this process that most LEAs acquiesced (because of the funding involved) and unions felt they had to support it. In this way it was another 'experiment doomed for success' (Chitty and Worgan, 1987, p.22) and the MSC was nicknamed 'Mad Scramble for Cash' (Ainley and Corney, 1990, p.84) as LEAs bid for scarce resources. The stated outcomes were the same as those for YTS: 'By the time they leave, our youngsters will be highly employable' (David Young in *Education*, 19 November 1982, p.7).

The suddenness of its inception and lack of clarity of senior directives resulted in a disparate range of TVEI programmes. None were the same. The hidden agenda was to instil an enterprise culture among youngsters with employability as the stated goal but details were, inexplicably, left to local interpretation. Pupils signing on at age 14 for a four-year programme of vocational training had no idea what to expect and what they received varied from region to region: 'not the sum of its parts, but a pot-pourri of separate efforts' (Holt, *ibid.* p.16).

Two common factors emerged however: no grammar or independent schools displayed any interest in adopting TVEI and employers remained as distant from the training process as they always had been. The shock tactics which accompanied its introduction seemed only to conspire in its downfall: perhaps because its themes were more about hearts and minds rather than resources and it asked pupils to make a vocational choice when they were only 14.

A troubled quango

Meanwhile, the MSC faced a legitimisation crisis of its own. Jackson (1986, p.37) had observed that 'Young disappeared ... just at the point where he had got the Commission into a real mess'. The MSC had infiltrated colleges profoundly particularly in their provision of non-advanced further education (NAFE). Encouraged by this success it promoted TVEI. Young declared that the MSC would take over all NAFE funding taking this aspect away from LEA control - some £220 million in 1984.

On this occasion even the MSC balked at the idea of such direct intervention but they were forced into agreement by the Chairman's executive powers (the one and only time they were used). Labour councils refused to countenance any changes and even Conservative councils wanted to control the allocation of monies. As it was, Young went to the House of Lords making way for a less abrasive character, Bryan Nicholson, who quickly averted a potential public display of rebellion. The MSC's role was watered down to a limited planning and administrative role in NAFE.

Nicholson, however, could not change certain fundamentals. There had been a consistent reduction in employment in certain locations especially in heavy engineering and other mass production industries. Skills shortages also existed

because of employers' persistent reluctance to support training expenditure. The MSC's programmes were structured so that businesses not only ignored training but would be paid from public funds for making any limited effort.

The second Thatcher administration's training policy was a range of initiatives and schemes which propelled the MSC into job creation and job searching for the unemployed. In reality, all that could be done was to try and convince industry and commerce that training meant profits. The government's own schemes convinced them that this was a fundamental philosophy yet a Cooper's and Lybrand report - *A Challenge to Complacency: Changing Attitudes to Training* - commissioned by the MSC in 1985 confirmed that training fell into the same category as building maintenance - an overhead which can be ignored when times are hard. A 1987 National Audit Office Report - *Report on the operations of the Manpower Services Commission* - was just as critical of the MSC's attempts to train the work force in higher level skills particularly cybernetics.

This report detailed a catalogue of confusion of both provision and estimated requirements of business. Therefore: '... it is difficult to see how the real requirement for MSC support for training can be determined accurately without a better balance sheet than exists at present of the supply and demand of skills' (p.24).

The idea of 'hands on' computer training or 'computer literacy' as a part of the YTS foundation course, while it attracted European Social Fund finances, had no clear aim, unrecorded results and fell far short of the higher level skills need in the technical drawing rooms of industry. Programmes often lacked quality under timing pressure and from the weight of numbers of trainees. Specialised courses of a high calibre became luxuries in a mass training regime. After 15 years (1973 to 1988) and an estimated £25 billion there was still a skills crisis in Britain. Indeed, serious skill training in Britain all but ceased which stifled development when the economy

revived. Effort had concentrated on 'firefighting' exercises for government statistics rather than meaningful policies aimed at raising national skill levels. The MSC had represented a widespread incursion into the diverse and fragmented arena of training and had done little to change fundamental weaknesses in provision and perceptions.

Skills shortages again

The Association of Chambers of Commerce reported crisis levels of shortages in March 1988. In the Thames Valley 92% of firms reported difficulty in obtaining skilled manual and managerial personnel and the very British industrial arts of piracy and poaching returned with the inevitable attendant pressure on wage inflation. This was especially acute in small firms which could least afford to lose staff. The government's insistence on short term initiatives had created the bottleneck of a skills mismatch when the economy could least deal with it (Corfield, 1990). A paradox of the time was that some local economies overheated while some stagnated.

The interaction of the jobs and housing markets trapped both middle-income earners and the poor. The MSC's programmes were not a conspiracy but this polarisation of events were unforeseen consequences of crisis management techniques designed to bring stability to unstable times. The existing divisions between labour markets, ages, race and gender were exacerbated. These problems were hidden with some political adeptness in the run up to the 1987 election but with the return of Mrs. Thatcher for a third term the MSC's fate was sealed.

In 1986, the MSC boasted a budget of £2 billion and had 1 million people on its programmes. Half a million school-leavers were expected on the two-year YTS scheme and another half a million were targeted for the Community Programme. The

quango also subsidised employed staff on the New Workers' Scheme and funded non-advanced courses in further education.

On its patronage depended a vast range of private agencies and charities running multifarious youth and community projects. Urban regeneration had gained a high political status and the MSC's finances could be seen in the balance sheets of local authority Centres for the Unemployed, churches and volunteer organisations. The Commission also allocated £100 million to the 'Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative' in 1987. At this time the MSC not only enjoyed ministerial support but union and opposition accolades.

The MSC spent £16.5 million on marketing campaigns during 1986/87 (half the entire government total on advertising and more than the largest corporate advertising budget at that time). The MSC's press releases were relayed by a compliant media with few editorial assessments or corrections. The occasional criticism was dutifully countered: Employment Secretary, Tom King was given an inserted box to correct a 'misleading argument' after an unfavourable comment by John Pilger in the *Daily Mirror* (February 1985). The restricted right to publish independent research on the Commission's work was a source of discontent among universities while the only published criticism - the National Audit Office (*ibid.*) - received very little air time or column space.

Beneficiaries of the quango's schemes were unlikely to rock the boat - further education colleges were massively in favour of any organisation with such funding clout. With massive advertising resources and a controlled press, the MSC board started to believe its own success stories. In the absence of informed analysis and in a political climate of blinding confidence it could claim to be undisputed master of all it surveyed.

It was just at that moment that the political ground shifted. Its 'Gang of Four' supporters disbanded. Sir Keith Joseph found himself embroiled in a dispute with teachers which he was unable to resolve. While he had surrendered the DES to Young and Tebbit his public performances appeared increasingly incoherent and he seemed 'overwhelmed by the magnitude of his problems and his own evident incapacity to solve them' (TES, 11 April 1986, p.3). Young and Tebbit, meanwhile, fell out over chairmanship of the Conservative Party - a long and public feud in which both annoyed the Prime Minister.

This left Mrs. Thatcher's ears open to the siren song of new right educationalists and simple tales of the golden years of Victorian values. The U-turn that followed swept away the commitment to the MSC and its policies and completely recast Tory education policy towards a free market model. This ran parallel with an 'ideological cleansing' (Simon, 1988, p.142) at the DES where older civil servants had retired to be replaced by career-minded and flexible younger staff.

Typical of the openly expressed new attitude was the opinion of a DES official quoted by Ranson (1984, p.241) who suggested: '... if we have a highly educated and idle population we may possibly anticipate more serious social conflict' so '... people must be educated once more to know their place'.

Now traditional, elitist views of education as an initiation process into appropriate social strata were resurrected with distinct disciplines inherited through the Arnoldian themes of public school. The 1980 DES document *Framework for the Curriculum* was rewritten to form Kenneth Baker's National Curriculum which was greeted with dismay by schools.

Ted Wragg of Exeter University called it 'one of the worst DES papers ever produced' (*Times Educational Supplement*, 25 September 1987, p.44). Though Baker

consistently fought with Thatcher over policy he was a new right thinker of the same ilk and conducted his stay at the DES with abrasiveness tackling the teachers' unions with a spirit not shown by Sir Keith Joseph.

He also introduced City Technology Colleges as a 'halfway house' between the independent and state sectors. The CTCs not only stepped on MSC toes but appropriated the substance and style of its approach to technical and vocational education - TVEI had been violated. The DES had regained the initiative and influence by using the MSC's own tactics of rapid movement and glossy brochures. In the 10 CTCs that sites were initially found for lessons were replaced with 'educational events', classrooms by 'workstations' and teachers by 'area managers' following 'learning parameters and procedures' (lesson plans).

Getting people back to work

Meanwhile, there was a substantial review of the Department of Health and Social Security which had to be 'consistent with the government's overall objectives for the economy' (Green Paper, *Reform of Social Security*, 1987, p.3). There was an 'inescapable connection ... between public spending and the taxes required to finance it' (*ibid*, p.6). While not intended to generate savings the Green Paper clearly expected a redistribution of existing funds.

The idle but able-bodied were to be set to work to earn their maintenance until they too developed the values of free enterprise and initiative. This was consistent with the government view that unemployment was a result of poor attitudes among the public rather than government policy. Contributing to this lack of spirit was an intransigent education system. One of the MSC's final acts was to establish the Restart programme at Benefit Offices around the country. This involved an

availability for work test and allocation of suspected fraudsters to Job Clubs and Job Training schemes.

The political advantage was that such people could be removed from the unemployment register with relative ease making the manipulation of psychologically important figures just before an election quite simple. Out of more than 4 million Restart interviews only 0.5% found work and the Job Training Scheme actually had no element of training in it. Its compulsive aspect made MSC board members restive. Nicholson was already unhappy about the commitment to prevent any young person from claiming benefit who 'unreasonably refused' a place on the YTS.

Tension increased between the Commission and government as the quango saw its programmes taken over by the DES or new DSS. There was, no longer, any government pretence at training a national work force and the dole mentality took over the YTS parameters of operation. The 1988 Education Reform Act signalled the end of vocationalism in schools which left teachers exhausted and confused after all the efforts put into TVEI.

When the end came it was a painful affair. The MSC lost its employment functions, its Job Centres and the Enterprise Allowance scheme to the DE. This was followed by Restart, Careers and Occupational Information Services and the disability services. The 1987 Employment Act proposed a new Training Commission whose purpose was purely a co-ordinating role. Two Careers officers writing in the *Times Educational Supplement* (15 January 1988, p.15) asked 'Whatever happened to the Training Partnership?'

A TES editorial in the same year could now see the YTS as 'nothing more than a quick and impoverished fix for mass unemployment' (15 April 1988, p.33). The Training Commission marked a watershed in British training history because training and

unemployment were no longer seen to co-exist. Unemployment was an individual's problem brought on by a poor work ethic. Training was given to those willing and able - though this was enforced by withdrawal of benefit.

The government had secured a long-standing ambition of raising the age of entry into the labour market (and unemployment statistics) allowing DSS minister, John Moore, the confidence to announce to the House of Commons on 2 November 1987 that 'unemployment for young people need no longer exist'. That aim was to be resurrected by New Labour under the guise of Curriculum 2000 contained within which is a determined effort to raise the school leaving age and ease pressure on entry points to employment.

Policy making in vocational education and training had come full circle. A new Training agency was an exact copy of the Training Services Agency created in 1973. Its brief was to improve YTS and launch the Employment Training programme aimed at including long-term unemployed up to 50 years old. (This is copied under present New Deal arrangements).

Norman Fowler's White Paper *Employment for the 1990s* (1988) had gained favour and the Training Agency was established to oversee the national network of Training and Enterprise Councils in England and Wales and Local Enterprise Councils in Scotland. These were employer-dominated and focused on the delivery of national training programmes for local labour needs which were, by then, makework plans to address issues of unemployment chiefly in areas formerly dependent on heavy engineering, mining and construction. Private training agencies and colleges dusted off their old bid applications and presented them to the new quangos.

The sweeping changes at the DES, DE and DSS changed the political framework in which the MSC operated to such an extent that it was a highly visible embarrassment.

To a great extent it was caught off guard by the rapidity of events for which it had become famous in anticipating and co-ordinating responses. National control of training - what remained of it - was placed firmly back in the hands of Whitehall as part of a growing centralisation process yet another looming recession simply confirmed the power of entrenched beliefs. Colleges were to play an integral part in that restructuring and the scene was firmly set for another Act in the academic/vocational discourse in which National Vocational Qualifications played a significant role. An exaggerated concern for tradition and past models of education now extended to post-compulsory education in ways previously not considered (Lawton, 1994). Colleges were to become a rich source of 'outcomes' in a Zeitgeist - spirit of the age - represented by efficiency, managerialism and anti-pluralism taking away elements of partnership and co-operation.

The legacy of the Manpower Services Commission

The MSC had a grand design for the reshaping of education and training in Britain which necessitated the transformation of deeply rooted traditions and intransigence in industry, the education system and even government departments. As Perry (1976, p.312) argued:

'The training problem is part of a larger education problem, and this in turn is part of a social attitude based upon Britain's prosperity and leadership in the nineteenth century which generated a feeling of effortless superiority in the service of the church, state and the professions rather than in industry and commerce. It was largely this social climate that created the dichotomy between education and training which caused it to be more deeply entrenched than elsewhere'.

Success for the MSC depended on the reversal of such views and the perceived anti-industrialist attitudes permeating British education. Martin Wiener's 1981 volume *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850 - 1980* was widely read at the MSC and the quango agreed with the author's assumptions that the 'British disease' was 'rooted deep in the nation's social structure and mental climate' (p.34). At the heart of the MSC's goal was to explain to the work force 'the way in which wealth is produced and used in society' (MSC, 1975, para. 7).

The Commission was equally as impressed with the work of Professor Ralph Dahrendorf, former Director of the London School of Economics who was convinced that a connection existed between economic success and cultural attitudes and called upon the British government to devise strategy within this 'cultural sphere' (*The Listener*, 14 October 1976, p.9). Therefore, the MSC set about changing what it thought to be the distorting and delaying influences of ingrained attitudes.

This, immediately, brings it into dispute with concepts of a liberating educational experience for all. That the educational process should be so inextricably linked to the workplace not only brought the quango into direct conflict with practitioners, academics and even the DES but it struggled with the free enterprise and monetarist policies of the administrations of the 1980s where it should have been able to prove its point once and for all.

Ultimately, the MSC deepened the dichotomy between education and training which is a peculiarly British problem (Kaufman, 1986). Its attempt to refashion attitudes was eventually broken on the back of a traditional Tory attitude to elitist education and a political zeal which made training give way to enterprise. From 1986 to 1989 such values were increasingly challenged by a neo-liberalism from practitioners at all levels of education. It is a paradox of Baker's stay at the DES that he fought with Mrs. Thatcher over a broad, balanced curriculum - a pluralist measure - and defended

the GCSE against fierce right-wing attacks yet sought to eradicate tenure and university autonomy: 'an exemplar of Tory confusion on education' (Lawton, *ibid.* p.67).

Much of the MSC's work was grand in vision but dwarfed by realities. In an analysis of the New Training Initiative it can be seen that while further education colleges offered a range of post-compulsory education and training leading to national examinations or awarding body qualifications the overall provision of this non-advanced vocational education was limited to about 30% of the work force.

Courses were generally associated with craft/technician levels of training, usually via an apprenticeship, for young people - mainly male - of above average ability. The curricula for these were determined by the major examining boards. Not all the content was relevant to the job but it reflected a certain professional culture and was a significant contribution to career progression. The NTI inference was that new policies could be applied using old tradition with similar results but with 'added value' of transferable skills. The problem immediately became both quantitative and qualitative. As Skilbeck *et al* (1994, p.97) observed: 'A heavy price has been paid for the often superficial and always over-hasty decisions that were substituted for the hard, time-consuming analysis that was needed at the beginning of the 1980s. Hence, policy has too often seemed to be partial, shallow and poorly integrated'.

The Commission's role was often sketched out by government and particular ministers but it must accept responsibility for the limited and sectional responses which it relished so much. It willingly took on the fire-fighting role expected of it in successive administrations but, ultimately, 15 years of schemes, initiatives and programmes provided insufficient evidence to conclude that increased vocational education in either quality or quantity had improved economic performance.

From the point of view of post-compulsory education, colleges found themselves pursuing an increasingly corporate agenda. Bid writing for MSC funding became an advertised skill requirement in job applications. Programmes were meant to address local unemployment and skill problems yet singularly failed to do so because of their conformity to a centrally-inspired norm.

Colleges found themselves caught in an ability trap: training unsuitable candidates for high-skill computer and technician courses while training low ability students for jobs that simply did not exist. The enormous faith placed in the cultural revolution solution reinforced rather than diluted ideas of equality and liberalism in the profession. The support of social inequality became a byword for the third Thatcher administration as a driving force of material advance while training became a key aspect of enterprise inculcation. Individualism as a philosophy was strengthened through the marketing of qualifications as pathways to personal wealth while self-employment was promoted through interest rate and administrative machinations.

Post-Fordism, Japanisation and industrial decline

While post-compulsory education had successfully found a niche for itself after the Second World War with a mix of craft apprenticeships, non-advanced adult courses and special needs support it was to become affected by the drive for efficiency and direct association with economic performance initiated by Callaghan's Ruskin Speech in 1976. The industry which resisted training as a strategic objective so determinedly inspired governments to use its Fordist approach to a planned, orderly and continuous progression of the commodity through the shop, the delivery of the work instead of leaving it to the workman's initiative to find it and an analysis of operations into their constituent parts.

Many of these ideas as applied by Ford were the outcomes of Frederick Taylor's research into scientific management and the search for efficiency through the most appropriate use of resources, including human, involving the least number of movements. This meant that training could be standardised as a 'package'.

Fordist principles were applied to the traditional curriculum in colleges with YOP as the pilot. Its structure focused on outcomes - employable youngsters - rather than the process of development and much emphasis was placed on the most efficient training using the least amount of resources. This structure was to find its way into the new qualification system suggested by the New Training Initiative in 1981: National Vocational Qualifications.

As post-compulsory education was harnessed to a Fordist approach to the production of trainees a significant material shift was occurring in the market place and social structure of Western cultures. Mass production and its Fordist foundations were challenged as early as 1968 on the streets of the world but had already exposed its weaknesses in boardrooms and shop floors. Demand could no longer be orchestrated (as Henry Ford had done with the Model T) and workplace resistance made the basic tenets of Fordist factory systems unsound. Management could no longer manage with impunity.

To overcome the limits of mass production the response - led by retailing - was to create niche markets so that customers believed they were being *different*. Markets can be discreetly segmented by age, gender, household incomes, neighbourhood, occupation and 'lifestyles' and correlating consumption patterns across commodities. In this way the most obvious shift is away from manufacturers' economies of scale to retailers' economies of scope and innovation (the concept demands a steady flow of new 'models').

While the High Street has witnessed a revolution so has the workplace. At the behest of government, Japanese companies have brought their own techniques to mass production to alleviate its worst effects: poor quality control, labour unrest and slow response time. Japanese factories now demand stocks to be at a minimum with suppliers delivering 'just-in-time' to replenish stores. A zero-defect policy demands strict adherence to quality control systems and the web of production processes are co-ordinated by computers calling for complex 'systemisation' (rather than 'automation').

This requires a highly qualified work force with multi-skills and a team attitude which is in sharp contrast to the single-skilled basis of scientific management and limited association with other workers. Yet it also marginalises unskilled workers (often youngsters) since the Japanese factory needs staff that are computer literate as well as skilled in the production processes. The emphasis switches to experience and the value of inter-operability supported by continuous training. Single union/no strike deals are commonplace.

While of clear benefit to the (reduced) number of workers able to secure employment in such factories (Sharp, Honda, Toyota, Mitsubishi, Toshiba, Sony etc) it also hardens divisions between core and peripheral workers. The cost of a commitment to core workers in benefits and security is a fluid attitude to peripheral workers who find themselves caught in economic cycles much as before.

Sub-contracting, franchising and outsourcing become commonplace in this new labour market. The approach has found deepest roots in America and Britain which both sought to overcome the bottlenecks of mass production through automation, Japanese-style flexible union relations and a competitive edge through quality. A whole new ideology was created and spawned a string of volumes exhorting businesses to re-engineer or down-size without pain. Post-Fordism is alleged to be

market-driven yet its foundations are a reaction to the inadequacies of a former system and its reducing capacity to provide capitalism with its life blood - money.

While generating high-skill work for a minority it is essentially divisive and it validates only what can command a place in the market. In Britain, it was embraced as a political influence which satisfied the attraction of foreign investment (mostly Japanese but increasingly Korean and Taiwanese), the reduction in union strength and the fostering of High Street consumption through liberating the purchasing power of individuals (tax policy) in a new commodity economy. It is useful here to consider the flexible, core worker as seen from the view of government. Such an analysis will serve to focus on the role of training - and colleges in that training process - in the creation of such a valued employee. There are four relevant concepts of flexibility:

* Numerical flexibility assumes a liquid labour market which can be adjusted almost as quickly as any other manufacturing process. In turn, this demands relaxed employment protection and limited organised union strength. Part-time and short notice contracts become an important aspect.

* Functional flexibility calls for inter-changability of work operations - everyone can do everything. This calls for above average ability and the 'right attitude'.

Traditional craft divisions are seen as counter-productive.

* Distancing strategies involves the displacement of employment relationships with commercial ones as employers decide, for example, to sub-contract rather than reorganise internal staffing.

* Pay flexibility is concerned with the extent to which a company's pay and reward structure reinforces other flexibility issues and associates quality output with remuneration.

The flexible firm (Atkinson, 1985) has helped to shape government economic and training policy. Key factors of 'core' and 'peripheral' workers, temporary and part-time contracts, flexibility of working hours and attitudinal shifts are as important to national economic policy as they are to employees. An important issue is the result of this increasing segmentation of workers: peripheral workers can expect reduced benefits, training and possible routes to high-skill labour which denies them access to the commodity market.

Flexible specialisation

Phillimore (1979) has described the condition first explored and cemented in the 1980s as 'flexible specialisation'. **Appendix One** illustrates his perception of the differences between Fordism and flexible specialisation. Absent from it is the area of training which in Fordist factories was semi-skilled or unskilled, limited in scope and duration and for standardised tasks only. For flexible specialisation training is wide and deep and draws upon already screened applicants of above average capability.

Training is continuous and makes increasing demands on multiple functionality. Work organisation and skills are of special importance in this debate. The defining characteristics of mass production were the hierarchically organised processes with extensive division of labour into specialised tasks requiring minimal skills. For optimists, flexible specialisation offers the chance to reclaim control of the labour aspect for workers with a renewed emphasis on skills, less alienation and better working conditions.

These issues had major implications for government policy and Conservative administrations have favoured the latter set of conditions. In Piore and Sabel's (1984,

p.17) *The Second Industrial Divide - Possibilities for Prosperity* they pose two scenarios for post-Fordist society: one is a restricted scene of flexible specialisation where 'isolated communities of producers ... seek their fortune in disregard of the fate of their rivals ... (and) ... where an island of craftsmen, producing luxury goods ... (is) ... surrounded by a subproletarian sea of misery'.

The other scenario is where 'local community structures (are) co-ordinated by national social-welfare regulation and (where) the provision ... of research facilities and training (is) ... partly a public responsibility'. The first appears overly pessimistic but the second is equally as ill-starred given the failure of governments to ensure an equitable distribution of training rights and access to a commodity economy.

The acceptance and indulgence of flexible specialisation is in sharp contrast to the Fordist doctrines making inroads into post-compulsory education. As colleges chased funding (usually MSC grants) in the late 1970s and 1980s it was clear that there was a significant shift from its liberal traditions. Stand-alone, non-standard courses were phased out or became peripheral activities as qualifications (and funding) became outcome driven. Increasingly, the post-compulsory experience became led rather than leader in terms of provision. New contours appeared in the college curriculum landscape which were formed by economic pressures of defined inputs on the one hand and stated outputs on the other.

This necessitated a system of measuring processes in a new currency of credits related to the average time required to achieve a designated outcome. The preoccupation with developing a standard measure (ultimately translatable into units of time) encouraged a regular throughput in the form of a production line. Speed was no longer controlled by the lecturer but by the routines of organisation.

New qualifications and more quangos

Why post-compulsory education became embroiled in a disused principle from industry is a direct consequence of government policy and a reshaping of the qualifications structure. The new Tory administration of 1979 had no clear strategy on training but was a willing listener to the MSC's proposals for a New Training Initiative which subordinated education to the service of industry. It was especially welcome as - originally conceived - employers gaining from a set of new standards would contribute to their funding. Three important themes were outlined in the 1981 NTI (*op.cit*, para. 4) proposals:

- * To bring industry into the decision-making process as lead 'customer'
- * To formulate standards of training as prescribed by industry to address its needs
- * To redress the supplier-led (college) approach and its perceived lack of clarity in objectives.

One of the NTI's stated aims was to reform and increase skill training in order to end the reliance on time-serving and introduce standards to this new system of training. The MSC had a more grandiose purpose for this aim but the outcome was Norman Tebbit's YTS.

It was another 4 years before the wider view of the Commission was taken on board during the 'Review of Vocational Qualifications' (a product of the review group set up under the recommendations of the White Paper *Education and Training for Young People*, 1985) which was intended to rationalise what had become a confusion of awards and because YTS had, by then, demonstrated that some occupations were not served by any qualification structure at all. The 1985/6 *Review of Vocational Qualifications in England and Wales* (MSC/DES, 1986) recommended the establishment of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and a process of

setting standards through 'industry lead bodies' was established. This was designed to deflect criticisms that vocational programmes did not provide the skills relevant for actual work and were too general in nature.

There was implied criticism of the liberal strands and seams found in colleges which had become regular and accepted aspects of craft training in particular but common in most further education courses. Standards were set for each occupation which, although obviously different in process and application, seemed to have a rigidly similar adherence to vocabulary. These standards were incorporated into assessment and certification structures under awarding bodies, the larger ones being BTEC, RSA and City & Guilds, so producing an approved NVQ for each occupational area.

The idea was that this process would lead to a rational set of portable qualifications which were understood by each industry based on their stated skill needs and free of prescribed duration, mode of delivery or restrictions to access. Rationalisation would involve a reduction in the number of awards. The government fully endorsed the review board findings in the White Paper *Working Together - Education and Training* (1986).

When first suggested this was welcome news for businesses and individuals who found difficulty progressing in traditional, academically-based qualifications. Occupational standards are the basis of NVQs (or SVQs in Scotland) which are designed to identify what people have to do to show that they are competent in a job. Most of these standards have been set under a 'key purpose' for the job and the setting of 'performance criteria' for the achievement of that key purpose.

In contrast to the academic curriculum where the government has always been swift to counter allegations of falling standards it pursued a vigorous revision of vocational education in response to industry criticisms. Of direct importance to post-compulsory

education were the unveiled attacks made on colleges in the White Paper *Training for Jobs* (1984) which required them to be more responsive to the needs of the local labour market when planning course provision.

Indeed, a condition of Training Agency funding of NAFE (later work-related FE) which had been taken away from LEAs was that colleges had to prepare development plans for labour market trends. *Training for Jobs* also firmly suggested that colleges made provision for a new qualification for vocational education by restructuring its teaching year, providing flexible and open learning modes of learning and roll-on/roll-off programmes.

The next significant development in that process announced in the 1988 White Paper *Employment for the 1990s* shifted responsibility for the funding and planning of vocational education to employers at local level as represented on the boards of newly created Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs in Scotland). Their purpose was to introduce a demand-led system of training in which employers have the greater share of responsibility for the determination of what that training should be.

Moreover, TECs were given specific responsibility for the particular age group of 16 - 19 year olds. The idea of TECs arises from the Private Industry Councils scheme in America. Keep (1991) asserts that the decision to introduce TECs was based on one visit by the then-current Secretary of State to two PICs. They were launched in 1989 and tasked with local delivery of national enterprise and training schemes and so, effectively, took over from the London-based MSC in this respect.

Scepticism greeted the TECs as soon as they were announced. The success of the policy of making employers responsible rested on simple matters such as who was seconded from local industry to sit on the TEC boards, their relevant experience and acquaintance with education and training facilities. In addition, British industry had

been through cycles of recession (and was about to enter another) which had depleted some sectors and eradicated others while those large companies with a positive attitude to training were already spending considerable amounts of their budgets on *internal* provision.

The distinction between large firms and SMEs in this country is significant since government policy towards free enterprise meant that much was left to exhortation rather than compulsion. Given other priorities there was little interest from the companies that the government wanted to include.

From a post-compulsory education point of view the programmes supported by the TECs were to be 'local and tactical'. In reality, this diluted any national strategy and forced colleges to respond to short-term, reactive TEC planning geared to industry needs with little regard for the individual. Research by Ashton et al (1990) highlighted the fact that employers contribute to the failure of the VET system by attracting a high proportion of 16-year olds into the labour market with low-skill, low-pay jobs with limited training prospects and actively rewarding the decision to leave education.

Standards and competence as policy drivers

Yet the government's remit to the new quango - the NCVQ - was to ensure that all vocational qualifications were based on occupational standards of job competence; approve awarding bodies; promote the new qualifications and establish links with the academic route with a view to gaining 'parity of esteem'. It was seen as fundamental to their success that the new qualifications could be gauged by a (conservative) industrial base alongside GCSEs, A-Levels and degrees. This has proven more problematic than was predicted and the latest attempt at bridging the divide is in the

form of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) which are a product of the 1991 White Paper *Education and Training for the 21st Century* and were designed as a third route into employment and higher education.

As defined by the review board an NVQ is 'a statement of competence clearly relevant for work and intended to facilitate entry into or progression in employment, further education and training issued by a recognised body to an individual'. They were deliberately different from previous qualifications in terms of design, accessibility and arrangements for assessment - students provide a portfolio of evidence of competence consisting of elements and performance criteria.

The credit accumulation and transfer system was designed to be an important aid to progression based on standardisation of 'product' or outcomes. In the early years YTS was the main focus for the new standards which became Levels 1 and 2. Development was not evenly spread and the Further Education Unit survey of 1989 showed that some Industry Lead Bodies had still not written their standards. Pressure to do so led to some inappropriate copying of unrelated industry vocabulary and performance criteria.

Advocates of the new vocationalism could argue that the needs of employers and the economy had never received sufficient priority in Britain. The stated objectives of YTS, TVEI and the CTCs were a familiarity with the world of work and accompanying ethics and attitudes. Motivation towards that world, it was suggested, would be improved by learning through and at work by trainers from work rather than remote teaching by lecturers unattached to the processes. The work-related (as distinct from work-based) curriculum for schools made enough significant progress for it to be mentioned in the preamble of the 1988 Education Reform Act yet the National Curriculum effectively worked against such ideals with its subject disciplines. In effect, the new National Curriculum proposed a traditional structuring

of both topics and methods with almost grammar school rigidity. The movement to engage all pupils in an academic streaming towards an examination climax did little to support aspirations towards a vocational alternative. The sub-messages of tradition, status quo and elitist reproduction of a (singular) mode of achievement came at a time when National Vocational Qualifications were in their infancy and being promoted as a worthwhile learning experience. The polarisation of an academic and vocational divide was harshly exposed when the government really needed the calm waters of dispassionate debate.

As Skilbeck *et al* (*ibid.* p.98) note: 'What is sorely missing, however, in the programmes that followed the NTI, is that wider sense of social, civic and educational purpose, that understanding of the relationships that must be developed between knowledge, values and practical accomplishment, so evident in the thought and practice of the early advocates of work-based learning'. Unfortunately, NVQs took their lead from the already limited perspective and constricted framework of YTS.

Also, there was enough evidence to state that the provision of vocational education and training at that time was confusing, overlapped and limited access. Armed with the vocabulary of logic and seemingly irrefutable clarity of purpose, the NCVQ acted swiftly to stake out its territory and set a strategic role for itself and by the early 1990s it had established a comprehensive system for validating NVQs offered by awarding bodies (which required its permission).

Five levels of NVQ were created immediately with stated parity of learning with academic qualifications. Each statement of competence incorporates specified standards relating to the ability to perform in a range of work-related activities and the underpinning skills, knowledge and understanding required for performance in employment (Jessup, 1991).

There is no apparent need for higher order skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation as detailed in Bloom's *Taxonomy* (1956). NVQs, therefore, are types of performance profiles which specify units of competence derived from an analysis of employment functions by the Council and the 130 national lead bodies as principle 'consumers'.

According to Jessup, a leading architect of the changes and consultant to the NCVQ, there have been considerable difficulties in achieving what the Council, educators and Confederation of British Industry regard as sufficient breadth to the standards. For some industries, some competencies were so narrow as to be pointless yet these were direct reflections of the jobs as they were assessed. Jessup admitted that the necessary amendments constituted a 'Herculean effort' since 'the underpinning skills, knowledge and understanding' (p.67) are not always obvious in each sector nor do they necessarily exist in a ready-made form through a job description.

An outcome style of reasoning

Another issue of concern - for colleges and the individual trainees themselves - is the emphasis on outcomes rather than a process model. The nature of a competencies model is that it focuses on those which are achieved - a tendency encouraged by their industrial heritage and Fordist concepts of production. Outputs (numbers awarded) are clearly what the government wanted since they could become part of the vocabulary of achievement and competitiveness. So much faith has been placed on the new qualifications that they are given prominence in national education and training targets (a CBI initiative of 1992 and taken up by the government) which can be seen in **Appendix Two**. According to Sir Brian Wolfson, (in Skilbeck *et al*, *op.cit*, p.88) Chair of the National Training Task Force, the targets are intended to:

'... focus our full attention on the need to raise standards of achievement in education and training in Britain so that we can secure the competitiveness of the British economy and a higher standard of living for Britain's people. The Targets are necessary, urgent and ambitious. If they are to be achieved, everyone in business, education and training must be involved'.

The NCVQ reacted to criticisms of NVQs limited outcomes approach with the GNVQ which are underpinned with 'statements of achievement' rather than competence and 'provide a genuine alternative to A-level qualifications' (NCVQ, 1993). An Advanced GNVQ (now termed Vocational A-level) was equivalent to 2 A-levels. Acceptance of this middle strand has been sketchy. The real test is in the long-term acceptance by University Registrars and the industries that the NCVQ (now Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) wish to impress.

It is instructive to compare the emerging structure of vocational assessment and accreditation with moves during the same period to establish the National Curriculum in state schools in England and Wales following the 1988 Education Reform Act. The outcomes based structure of the new curriculum follows a similar assessment design with each subject area divided into attainment targets which resemble elements of competence in NVQ parlance. Though a pluralistic curriculum in outline its key differences with previous broad-based studies was the strict emphasis on outputs and attendant administrative requirements.

Signs of change for post-compulsory education

While the 1988 Education Reform Act carried little mention of post-compulsory education it had more closely defined it and set the seed for later, more sweeping, changes. 16 - 19 Education and training was made significantly more separate from

higher education and, in keeping with the market approach, more financial and managerial powers were delegated to colleges' governing bodies. Here, the Act indirectly pointed to a major change in influence - away from local education authorities and towards industrial membership of college boards. With its higher education work largely curtailed and LEA support on the wane colleges found themselves firmly in the government's sphere of influence. 25% of its courses were funded by the Department of Employment through the MSC.

Yet this was occurring when colleges were increasingly competing with sixth forms for a declining 16 - 19 population. The 1988 Act did little to settle the nerves of college staff and merely added another dimension to a wider government policy which sought to control the fortunes of the young. New vocationalism has meant that, except for a minority, most school-leavers have been ascribed a new status; not as entrants into the labour market but as recruits to a vocational preparation machinery. The Act reinforced the old advanced/non-advanced divide and centralised provision for an entire generation of youth.

After what Lawson and Silver (1973, p.213) described as 'expressed need and unsystematic effort', the state decided to take over the school-work transition but while accepting the need to advertise the relationship of NVQs and GNVQs to GCSEs and A-Levels, it staunchly defended A-levels against any changes to delivery and style that might bring them closer to NVQs across the educational/vocational divide. Instead, it saw new vocationalism as offering wider access to a majority while maintaining a minority qualification for those pursuing higher education aspirations. The GNVQ 'invention' highlighted a lack of commitment to parity and helped forge a neo-tripartism.

Conclusion

The oil shock of 1973/74 was an acute and painful warning to Fordist Western nations. Britain's allegiance to capital finance and a positive balance of payments was severely tested and found to be wanting. Governmental reactions to this situation were often paradoxical and uncoordinated in spite of the universally held belief in the vocabulary of modernisation, economic regeneration and technical reskilling. Time after time, Labour and Conservative governments ignored historical evidence and precedent and the social and cultural anchors which created the dichotomy between education and training; academic and vocational.

As long ago as 1963, Wellens had argued that Britain needed a 'training revolution from the shop floor to the boardroom' which required a 'new culture, new attitude and a new awareness' (p.19). This was hardly new and, indeed, was essentially a reprise of the Samuelson Commission Report's conclusions in 1884. The task described then, and in 1963, was nothing more than the complete retraining of the British work force. Wellens and the influential Ruskin Speech 13 years later served only to trigger short-term reactive measures usually under the auspices of specially created quangos (MSC, TECs, NCVQ, QCA).

What distinguished British training policy from other industrial countries, according to Sheldrake and Vickerstaff (*op.cit*) was the ambiguity of policy makers and corporate interests towards the contribution training could make to improved economic performance. Two key attitudes exist within the industrial body politic which reinforce this attitude: the Industrial Revolution occurred with little or no formal training structure and it was successful without the help of central government.

Industry was also significantly confused by a discussion of manpower issues which ignored simple realities of a declining industrial base. Bacon and Eltis (1976) confirmed in their volume 'Britain's Economic Problem: Too Few Producers' that unemployment would be worse in any future recessions as the large employers were no longer around to soak up staff when the economy picked up again. The use of quangos was, in part, a method of instituting quick fixes as rapidly as possible and circumventing the normal Civil Service reaction times. It also distanced government from embarrassing questions.

This allowed policy makers the opportunity to focus on macro considerations of labour relations, creating an enterprise culture and putting downward pressure on wage expectations except through the meritocracy of hard work. The MSC's real role was partly to provide a source of cheap labour and partly a mechanism for employment statistics manipulation (Tomlinson, 1986).

Key questions remained in the early 1990s after a significant period of centralisation and intervention. The divide between academic and vocational qualifications remained in spite of all efforts. This is as much due to business indifference as to government defence of the A-Level 'gold standard'. NVQs are the subject of continuous reviews and have been the subject of or have been contained within several reports in their short lifetime which has done little to secure for them the credibility they require.

The energetic identification of certain students for types of training have similar long-term segregational effects as the social stratification education of nineteenth and twentieth century elementary tradition. It assumes that mobility and flexibility can be products of an outcomes-based model of instruction. Trials, experiments, pilots and a series of initiatives left post-compulsory education - the main provider - confused as

to its direction. Government plans were frequently contradictory and responses were, consequently, often inappropriate.

Employment and training programmes rose by 50% (in £ terms) during the first half of the 1980s as anti-unemployment measures but fell by 11% in the second half of the decade for the questionable reason given in the November 1988 Autumn Statement that 'the fall in unemployment makes savings possible on the social security and employment and training programmes'. The cuts were based on the belief that training schemes were mainly for the unemployed rather than to improve the skills of those in work (Johnson, 1991).

A frequent charge levelled against post-compulsory education (and schools) was their inability to prepare youngsters for work. There was an apparent irrefutable logic to this which allowed a rapid sequence of curriculum, strategy and funding changes to take place but the policy tended to ignore long-term structural and cultural weaknesses in the economy which were beyond the scope of education and training. The policy assumed that there were no other major factors and, thus, promoted 'single-way' policy initiatives. The changes made by industry to overcome the problems of Fordist mass production meant that Britain became a flexible specialist in an international market calling for smaller numbers of highly skilled workers.

A Conservative reversal of Fordist principles: on industrial unions, on large manufacturing centres and on full employment opened Britain to one post-Fordist model which retained its fixation on international capital and the influence of London and the problems inherent in that fixation - inadequate resourcing of infrastructure, social injustice and the decline of mass employment opportunities as traditional industries declined. Key words of this approach were *choice, value, expenditure control, centralisation* and *accountability* (Lawton, *ibid.*).

New vocationalism is a political phenomenon and, now, a major political influence. National prioritisation meant that curricula and institutions had to be altered and this was signalled most significantly in the 1988 Education Reform Act. The market principle of economics was to go much further than that. National Targets for Education and Training (**Appendix Two**) called for strict, centralised control of the outcomes model and the creation of quangos to achieve it. A market of qualifications was formed in which the government was to become a monopoly supplier controlling factors of assessment, quality and modes of delivery. NACETT - the National Accreditation Council for Education and Training - is tasked with keeping a close watch on the targets and the qualifications which underpin them and has deftly repackaged them as 'National Learning Targets' (1999) with reduced expectations and an expanded time scale in which to accomplish them (**Appendix Three**).

Post-compulsory education received scant recognition as governments remained pre-occupied with restructuring the compulsory sector. Philosophical, as well as economic and political debate, meant that it languished in the shadows of serious discussion. Post-compulsory education may well have been the instrument of departmental machinations (though not national economic policy) but a lack of understanding of the system meant that it was a vulnerable tool of quangos and determined individual politicians alike.

Its efforts to bridge a continuing gap between academic and vocational worlds were thwarted by direct intervention mostly through funding mechanisms and bureaucratic managerialism. Its local bias and focus afforded little lobbying power at Westminster or within Whitehall and it was, thus, a relatively easy target for a 'nationalisation' programme when the political climate was right.

CHAPTER FIVE: 1992 - 2001
INTERVENTION AND CHANGE

Introduction

With the breakdown of consensual educational policy it is possible to trace the start of an experimental period in which education and training were directly associated with national economic performance more than ever. Though not a new concept in principle, the period after the 1973/4 oil crisis and the 1976 Ruskin Speech is characterised by increasingly interventionist policies based on such principles of social and industrial efficiency.

The discussion of manpower issues, however, became clouded and confused by the attachment of policy makers to physical forms of investment and the assumed similarity of function of each. This led to a series of White Papers and subsequent schemes most of which were intended to reduce unemployment by delaying entry into the job market. The programmes administered by the MSC and then the TECs actually reduced wages and became more aligned to being out of work than preparing for work with effective training.

The Labour government was thrown off any Socialist course by successive crises and had little visionary ideas about the role of further education (Benn and Fairley, *op.cit*). The incoming Conservative administration had fewer ideas still in 1979 but quickly saw the potential of a quango approach to crisis management. Consecutive electoral victories bolstered confidence in which anything was possible and significant successful results against organised labour confirmed a sense of impregnability. With renewed vigour the government was able to intervene in areas of policy on a massive scale harnessing a vocabulary that was singularly focused yet paradoxical in

underlying themes. Thus, *value, quality* and *choice* intermingled freely with *centralisation, control* and *tradition*.

Monetarist values found a home in every government department and tilted the balance of power in favour of the privatisers. Market forces and consumerism were allowed to dominate and the free enterprise work ethic and culture were openly taught as model alternatives. To introduce and infuse the new concepts into a British public different set of qualifications had to be created which were wholly related to work and dictated by an outcomes-based approach and objectives model of curriculum.

From the state's point of view it became aligned to an economic efficiency model only in the sense that, like industry, training should respond to perceived areas of shortages in precisely defined skill areas. It departed from industrial views when it came down to the question of who should pay. By the time of the third Thatcher administration in 1987 there was a concerted effort to make changes at all levels of policy and enforce a market approach into the public arena.

The 1988 Education Reform Act altered both the curriculum and administration for primary and secondary schools but contained messages for post-compulsory education of things to come. Whether deliberately or fortuitously the 1944 Education Act and the legislative arrangements contained within it established a balance of control in educational institutions. When it was working well this balance could be called a partnership where State, Church and Local Authorities all had an important part to play.

The 1988 Act shifted that balance and moved significant areas of control over to the Secretary of State at the DES in a move of unprecedented centralisation eroding the confidence of teachers and LEAs (Bash and Coulby, 1989). It was symptomatic of the sway of the 'feel good factor' that the administration accepted some watering down

of the National Curriculum after severe pressure for a review (under Sir Ron Dearing) but still pursued a similarly interventionist policy with post-compulsory education which needed another interventionist Act.

This chapter will consider and reflect upon the political influence of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act and its transformational effect on colleges. Further education colleges became instruments of new vocationalism and were agents of employment policy. The new administrative, managerial and funding regimes are assessed in terms of political aims and objectives as will the National Vocational Qualifications system which is so clearly tailored for delivery in the tertiary sector.

The need for change

The history of post-compulsory education up to the 1980s is one of local responses to relative state indifference. Concern about youth education and training is a common theme in the twentieth century in legislation (1918 and 1944 Education Acts), reports (Hadow's *Education of the Adolescent* 1926; Crowther's *15 to 18* 1959; Dearing's *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds* and White Papers (*Learning to Compete: education and training for 14-19 year olds*, 1996; *Learning to Succeed*, 1999). The apparently seamless transition from school to work in other nations (FEFC reports on visits to Korea, Singapore, Taiwan) is a source of inspiration for lifelong learning and prime mover in initiatives such as New Deal, Modern Apprenticeships and the Curriculum 2000 changes.

Neglect of post-compulsory education was a result of Cabinet incomprehension about the sector and traditional distancing of the government from training needs (except in times of war or economic crisis). From the 1900s there was public and official concern about the debilitating effects of industrialisation centred on social, physical

and moral effects of 'blind alley' or 'dead end' jobs. From the Boer War onwards recurrent moral panics surrounded these working class youngsters as future citizens, soldiers, parents and workers as the devil might find work for idle hands.

For instance, in the 1930s the Labour Ministry ran Government Training Centres in Special Areas while Local Authorities allocated money to Juvenile Instruction Centres for unemployed youth. Conflict between the Education and Employment departments in the 1970s and 1980s typified the divisions within British attitudes to the academic and the vocational. All of which meant that, unlike most developed nations, England and Wales had no pattern of provision in post-compulsory education. Paradoxically, the legislation designed to address this with a national framework actually created a competitive environment detrimental to economic development. While two factions became a unified Department for Education and Employment, training remained the responsibility of employers through local TECs.

Neither have colleges been recognised as part of mainstream educational culture. The result was that post-compulsory education became largely marginalised and generally misunderstood as a valuable system in its own right. Though it is inextricably linked to the compulsory and higher education sectors it remains a local affair heavily controlled from the centre - this is linked to social status through its working class origins. Given its lack of political kudos and ineffective representation in government it is hardly surprising that its provision became a patchwork against a backdrop of educational debate dominated by primary and secondary matters.

From the early 1970s both political parties had sought to control public expenditure with education a prime candidate for review. It was no accident that the majority of schemes and initiatives of the 1970s and 1980s came from the Department of Employment rather than Education and it was these which contributed to the mosaic

provision in colleges. The increasing control of central government can be found here as colleges became more dependent on funding through employment programmes.

The recent processes of change in post-compulsory education

The process of rationalisation had begun in earnest with the MacFarlane Report assessment of 16 - 19 provision (1980) but it was a sign of the times that its recommendations for tertiary colleges as official policy (with a broad-based general and vocational curriculum) were deleted at the highest level. Eventually, however, the unrelenting pressure of persistent unemployment diverted attention away from a coherent policy into one of fire fighting.

Several political influences converged on post-compulsory education to enforce change. It was also a victim of its own success in that it had shown itself to be a flexible (if not entirely willing) participant in the make-work initiatives of MSC origin. Because of its local focus, it was identified as a prime mover in the employer-led schemes through TECs using previous associations with industry as a framework for development. Colleges were also huge spenders. In the accounting year 1993-4 further education had a budget of £2 billion. (It was over £3 billion in 1999/2000 and the Learning and Skills Council has a first year budget of £6 billion). In the wake of the Poll Tax U-turn it presented itself as a suitable subject of cutbacks to recoup the monies lost in this administrative debacle. (Although, perversely, the need to use training as a way of influencing unemployment statistics led to a deliberate policy of student numbers expansion and extra funding).

The confusion of qualifications and awarding bodies offering separately developed, differently structured and unrelated courses led to the formation of the NCVQ with its brief to make sense of the considerable number of different qualifications. Closely

related to this rationalisation was a desire to increase efficiency which in contemporary terms meant less local control and more centralisation; market-driven principles of funding and management and the greatest influence on decision making by employers.

This trend towards a market orientation in education policy has been identified as a broader movement in British government 'of which the efficiency strategy, decentralisation, performance monitoring, management information systems and devolved accountability to executive agencies are among the main pillars' (Raab, 1993). Measuring college performances and success had to be rationalised so the significant contribution from the DES in the third Thatcher administration was the 1987 White Paper *Managing Colleges Efficiently* which shaped, in large measure, the planning framework required of post-compulsory education and introduced concepts of specific performance indicators such as staff to student ratios and unit costings per course.

Ball and Bowe (1992, p.97) in their analysis of the relationship between education, values and the market culture made it clear that the market 'celebrates the superiority of commercial planning and commercial purpose and forms of organisation against those of public service and social welfare'. One of the more contentious aspects of education as a market is the concern with allegedly 'falling standards' (Pring, 1997, p.1).

It has been argued that the preoccupation with quality assurance is a manifestation of a market ideology with an overwhelming Fordist concern with quantitative indicators (Elliott, 1996). New vocationalism lends itself to measurable results through performance criteria and skills checklists. It is equally at home with quality assurance techniques and scientific management since these concepts rely on education as 'parts of a system' which can be broken down into sub-sections, each subject to 'quality

assurance'. Modularisation and the accumulation of units are, thus, essential elements in the construction of a qualification. This has led to increasing bureaucratisation and a drift towards 'managerialism' to control it.

1992

In Kenneth Baker's view (in his 1993 autobiography and the background to the 1988 Education Reform Act, p.119) schools, colleges and polytechnics had been 'held back by their local authority controllers' and 'were clearly capable of operating independently'. For the compulsory sector the lure of grant maintained status and individual budgetary control and for polytechnics the lure of university status were manifestations of the market approach.

Post-compulsory education was not so coherent a body that it could respond so quickly and effectively and so required two doses of market medicine at the same time. Firstly came incorporation. This was not in the sense of limited company status but, instead, was designed to release colleges from LEA control and install an industry-style management structure. Secondly, a totally different funding format was established with two new quangos to oversee the allocation of public money - the Further Education Funding Councils (one for England and one for Wales).

The Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 was the first major recasting of post-compulsory education since 1944. It required colleges to create governing bodies or 'corporations' which were responsible for assets, staff and management policy. Though of charitable status they were empowered to supply goods and services other than education and training, acquire and dispose of land, borrow and invest, enter into commercial contracts which are incidental to the provision of post-compulsory education.

Although not covered by the provisions of the Companies Act they have the same right of confidentiality as private companies and can set frameworks for staff hiring, pay and conditions. Principals became Chief Executives of the new governing bodies which have few, if any, local authority representation. One board member had to be from the local TEC. Colleges received the greater part of their finances from the new Funding Councils. (Scotland's 43 colleges are still funded by the Scottish Office). The FEFC for England consisted of 13 board members from industry with the first Chair a former Chief Executive of Boots the Chemist.

Colleges, in effect, entered into contracts with the FEFC to provide training services agreed in advance. The FEFC stated categorically which courses it is willing to support through Schedule Two, an appendix of the 1992 act reproduced here as **Appendix Four**. Delivery was controlled by the achievement of specified performance indicators which parallel the requirements of National Vocational Qualifications. Responsibility for delivery was, thus, devolved downwards while power and control is effectively centralised.

The build up to incorporation may have taken some years but the final details and passing of the Bill were achieved in some haste. With the uncertainties surrounding the result of the 1992 General Election some colleges delayed preparation for any change believing it would never happen. Another term in office gave the then Secretary of State, Kenneth Clarke, the opportunity to press through with what was regarded by the major lecturers' union, NATFHE, as a 'quick fix' with particular emphasis on the National Education and Training Targets (randomly mutated to NTETs later).

Behind much of the rhetoric was the government's awareness of the relatively poor performance of YTS and other initiatives and a recognition that the previous approach

based on Germany's separate schooling for a minority and Youth Training for a majority had failed. To make capital of any new regime required a measurable outcomes format which could be readily quoted. A statistical bureaucracy was, therefore, essential. The absence of accurate information further convinced Clarke that the incorporation route was the best. So the FEFC's aims set out in Circular 93/12 of June 1993 (Section 1) were:

- * To secure throughout England sufficient and adequate facilities for further education to meet the needs of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the communities in which they live;
- * To contribute to the development of a world-class work force as envisaged in the National Education Training Targets;
- * To promote improvements in the quality of further education;
- * To promote access to further education by people who do not participate in education or training but who would benefit from it;
- * To ensure that the potential of the sector and its financial needs are properly represented at national level.

The FEFC was not a planning organisation. Its role was to oversee the activities of colleges in a 'free market' situation which is neither free nor a real market. An FEFC spokesperson declared in a *Times Educational Supplement* interview (8 December 1995, p.3) that: 'It is a matter for colleges to decide what they offer and where. It is not for the Council to dictate what they should and should not be offering'. This created a huge paradox for colleges in that the FEFC provided most of their finances and dictated, through its Schedules, what it was prepared to fund.

It is in the area of funding which has had the greatest impact on colleges since money directly affects management, personnel and administration decisions in the new 'business of learning' (Ainley and Bailey, book title, 1997). It is a result of the legislative haste that a funding methodology had not been worked out by the time the Act passed onto the Statute Books. In the first year of incorporation historical levels of financing were guaranteed but among the 70+ circulars that the FEFC issued in its first 18 months of existence was 'Funding Learning' in December 1992.

This restated that the only programmes of learning that would be funded would be those listed under Schedule Two of the Act, payment for which would be numbers-driven. Colleges would gain additional funding only if they could attract and retain 25% more students over the next three years. Units of funding became the new currency - and entered into the new vocabulary of governing body meetings - of decision making.

The system centred on three 'census' points in the year which detail enrolment, on programme and achievement student numbers. There were extra units for students with learning difficulties or needing additional support on the core skills of literacy, numeracy and computer skills as well as for English as a second language and child-care.

The way in which courses were individually funded altered college responses to them. Subjects taught in classrooms were rated at a lower tariff than laboratory or open learning programmes - a clear indication to some colleges that a reduction in lecturing staff was in order. Offset against this deprofessionalising of the teaching body was an increase in the numbers of administration staff who were necessary to supply the demand for statistics on which funding decisions were made.

Funding arrangements

Each year the FEFC made a funding agreement with each college which was partly a contract to meet student number targets and partly based on student enrolment, retention and completion of agreed courses. The actual amount paid dropped year on year over five years forcing colleges to work hard on reducing costs simply to stand still in business terms. If an individual college failed to meet agreed targets either through under-recruitment or higher than expected drop out rates then the FEFC would 'claw back' overpaid funds in the next financial year (making that year's budget tentative and unreliable).

By attaching units of funding to individual students the new approach was designed to encourage participation and retention. A massive recording system was, therefore, a prerequisite to the successful pursuit of units. The usual response was considerable investment in Computerised Management Information Systems supported by paper records which proved demanding of most colleges. Despite extended deadlines, 300 colleges had still not filed their returns for 1994/5 funding claims by the summer of 1996. (In January 1996, after he had resigned from the FEFC, Sir William Stubbs apologised to colleges for the difficulties created by the records systems). Yet this reporting framework - especially the Individual Student Record or ISR - propelled the funding methodology.

The accuracy of college returns has been in some doubt since their inception which has delayed a stated FEFC aim of an average level of funding (ALF) unit across the further education network. The known divergences in college funding at the time of incorporation (based upon the total income from the FEFC divided by the number of units generated by its students) were sources of much irritation in the profession since small colleges suffered in proportion to their limited numbers of students. The notion

of 'convergence' in which all colleges eventually operated on the same average level of funding only showed improvement in the years 1993/94 and 1996/97 (Smithers and Robinson, 2000).

If returns to the FEFC were inaccurately recorded then the league table of ALFs were similarly estimates. Since 1994, 169 colleges have had their 1993-94 returns qualified by auditors while 10 colleges had their 1994-95 funding agreements retrospectively changed because the FEFC admitted to defects in college data. Such errors could amount up to 10% of a college's units totalling millions of pounds. The overall fall in incomes due to the policy of convergence was accelerated by further cuts announced in Kenneth Clarke's 1995 budget marking the end of a brief period of politically motivated growth.

The funding regime inspired some ingenious and creative responses. A few colleges managed to grow by franchising courses to students in employment and in community organisations - often certifying competencies that such students already possessed but which could be traded in for units. This franchising could exceed 50% of some colleges revenue but was very short-term since students could not be certified again and again for the same competencies.

Another tactic was to repackage previously-labelled non-vocational courses to fall under the provisions of Schedule Two thus turning the recreational 10-week course in flower arranging into a one year vocational floristry course. Distance and Open learning became a stock in trade since such teaching methods attracted larger units. The respect for geographical boundaries that had typified pre-1992 arrangements dissolved in the competitive arena.

Colleges were informed that there would be no special arrangements if they found themselves in financial difficulty in accordance with government policy on industry.

They entered a period of great concern as those who found themselves on Senior Management Teams in colleges were frequently from academic backgrounds of limited accounting base. The FEFC had promised a review of the funding method (inevitable considering its inherent inaccuracy) which appeared in 1998 through a Commons Select Committee chaired by Margaret Hodge and discussed later.

The attention to post-compulsory education at senior political level was fleeting as colleges found themselves forgotten as the government faced divisions over Europe and leadership becoming daily more evident. Any focus of attention had evaporated by May 1994 when Chief Executive of the AfC, Ruth Gee, told the *Times Educational Supplement* (p.12):

'Colleges were promised freedom from control and a light touch from the funding bodies. Instead, the colleges have found themselves subjected to a regulatory regime which demands detailed returns on individual students. Yes, there is institutional autonomy but it functions in what some might call a national straightjacket'.

The sudden availability of considerable budgets, a funding mechanism based on student numbers and a qualifications system functioning on outcomes has led to financial impropriety in post-compulsory education. While under LEA control colleges had to justify expenditure but under a centralised regime find themselves being inspected every four years. College principals who were on indifferent salaries found themselves transformed into Chief Executives on three times as much. A Chief Executive with any tactical sense could ensure compliant governors (*New Statesman*, 5 June 1998, p.6). Such was the case at Derby College in 1994 when an investigation found: 'It was suggested that there was a deliberate policy to remove governors who were liable to question the actions of the principal or the failure of the governing body to carry out its responsibilities (*ibid*).

Colleges championed

There was some relief in the shape of the Education and Employment Committee (sixth) Report under the Chair of Margaret Hodge to the Commons (May 1998). In it, further education has been identified as having made efficiency savings beyond those in other sectors and was the 'unsung sector of education' (p.1).

The key point is that criteria for the allocation of public money to further education should be made clear'. The report noted an increase in the number of financially weak colleges from 6% in 1994 to 27% in 1997 with arguments that '... poor financial health is linked with levels of funding. The National Audit Office has concluded that there is a correlation between colleges in poor financial health and their management and governance' (p.2).

The report condemned the lack of logic in stated aims of increasing participation and support of lifelong learning in a market dominated by efficiency savings: 'The decline in financial support for further education students in recent years runs wholly counter to the aim of increasing participation on FE for all parts of our society' (p.3). Hodge also reported back on areas of franchising, strategy, staffing, qualifications and governance. On franchising she suggested that it should not be allowed to distort the way colleges work and how they are funded as there had been evidence 'where franchising would seem to have added minimal value to students'.

In terms of strategy a clear 'hands off' message was given to government in the way the sector is run. Although funding should be used as a planning tool to ensure that strategic priorities are met, central government does not have a role at a detailed level.

'Further education is a locally responsive service: the Government's role should be to put in place a strategic framework that will promote effective local relationships'.

The contribution of teaching staff was praised in the report as 'the major factor in the many achievements made since incorporation'. Financial pressures and an industry model have led to a huge growth in part-time workers against a backdrop of increased insecurity. The report, therefore, recommended a framework for model conditions of employment 'reflecting the fact that it is a national service' (p.2).

The issue of parity of esteem in qualifications was broached obliquely in that the proposals to allow only one re-sit for A-level modules 'fit ill' with their stated commitment to lifelong learning. 'If the current agenda of widening participation and lifelong learning is to be put into practice, the qualifications system needs to recognise the need for achievement over differing timespans' (p.3).

Hodge was also wary of any 'mission drift' by colleges distracted by providing lucrative higher education work for which they were ill-qualified. Openness and accountability were the key concepts of governance in the report to counteract the worst excesses of post-incorporation culture change. The report concluded that the present system made it 'too easy for governors and principals to bend or break the rules without anyone intervening at an early stage' (p.7).

In the first parliamentary debate (July 1998) on the report Margaret Hodge told the Commons that: 'If we are serious about widening participation and improving skills we must address the issue of student support'. Access to such support had become a 'question of geography rather than need'. The £10 million allocated by the FEFC to widen participation was regarded as 'derisory and grossly inadequate'. Her aim of an additional £600 million to support FE students was based on a redistribution of child benefit for 16 - 19 year olds. 'Allowing a free market in FE in the name of consumer choice is nonsense. FE should be more actively planned, nationally and locally, to ensure the most effective use of resources'.

Charlotte Atkins, Labour MP for Staffordshire Moorlands (as reported in *The Times Educational Supplement*, July 10 1998. p.10) supported the call for extra resources describing the funding of FE as 'a bit like progressive arsenic poisoning - if one waits for the symptoms to show it is too late'. She backed recommendations that the FEFC should intervene more readily in college management and said that the 'unhealthy control' exercised by the previous principal and chair of governors at Stoke-on-Trent College had led to cuts in courses and staff. 'What shocked me most about the whole episode was the hands off approach of the funding council. Even when it was alerted to the problems several times by staff at the college it refused to intervene'.

Michael Fowler, a former FE lecturer and now Labour MP for Worcester also commenting in the *Times Educational Supplement* (p.10): '... people stop referring to the "Cinderella" sector. We owe it to all our students and would-be students to no longer use that term; we should value more highly that crucial part of our education system'. While a further £225 million was allocated immediately to colleges (7.82% of the 1997/98 further education budget figure) the immediate consequences are not apparent. Many colleges need cash for commitments to buildings upkeep and to obtain current technology computers.

Governance, management and staffing of post-compulsory education

Further education colleges had to become complex organisations after incorporation to manage the range of courses and provide the administrative and record-keeping systems demanded of them. Fordist concepts of production were in keeping with reduced levels of unit funding and year-on-year efficiency gains expected as an economy of scale.

Once it became clear that the LEAs had no role to play and colleges were faced with substantially increased costs (not least in salaries for the burgeoning administration) governors found themselves involved in planning course provision for which few of them were qualified. The driving influence was funding provided by the government for YTS and Restart initiatives. In the main, governors tended to delegate most matters to the Principal.

Boards were slimmed down but representation from industry increased as well as representation from the local TEC. Student governors are allowed but 106 colleges do not take up this option. The 1992 Act severed all links with local authorities. Strangely, sixth form colleges were excluded from the sector at the time (as an oversight) but were allowed to run the same courses as colleges resulting in some bitter rivalry.

Common articles of government of the colleges were published giving boards responsibility for: determining their educational character and mission; overseeing their activities; effective and efficient use of resources; ensuring their solvency; safeguarding their assets; approving annual budgets; appointing senior staff and setting the terms and conditions of all staff.

The structure of college management followed that of business in function and terminology. Reorganisations became commonplace affecting not only management but lecturers who could find themselves in a newly named department teaching something completely different. Sometimes this was a reflection of trends with departments such as business and general education growing fast while engineering and mining decreased or disappeared.

To accommodate the new conditions trading companies were established under the corporate umbrella with newly appointed staff. These were to take advantage of the

'empowerment' contained within the 1992 Act to allow colleges to market their own courses and offer 'consultancy' work to businesses. Alongside such initiatives were 'delaying' or 'downsizing' plans for mainstream lecturing posts with the goal of having a core of generalist teachers with multiple subject flexibility and a periphery of specialist lecturers which could be used only when required. This afforded colleges the unique marketing advantage of waiting for student enrolment numbers before actually running a course and employing a part-time teacher on a short contract. With incorporation the Colleges' Employers Forum (CEF) was formed and owned by the 355 colleges who originally joined. They instantly adopted an aggressive stance of terms and conditions. (The CEF eventually merged with the Association for Colleges to form the Association of British Colleges though the 'British' was quickly dropped due to Scottish objections.

Many college Senior Management Teams pursued implementation of the new contracts with vigour as part of a policy to ensure efficiency savings and as a mechanism to support new core/periphery staffing structures. Others tried a long term approach but this did not prevent serious strike disruption. The result was that in 1995 more days were lost to industrial action in further education than any other sector of the economy (Central Statistical Office, 1996).

The business of post-compulsory education

For those who remained in the profession paradoxes typified the new structures. Control had gravitated to the centre and management as practised on a daily basis was top-down with an emphasis on finances (increased enrolments/reduced overheads). The remaining teaching staff found themselves responsible for programme and departmental targets and were suddenly a part of the college marketing machinery.

With redundancies a constant option there was little choice but to acquiesce to the demands of an increasingly managerialistic approach. Similarly, those teaching staff who had operated willingly in the familiarly student-centred domains of pre-1993 were forced into decisions which were almost wholly financially propelled. As Elliott (*op.cit*, p.55) notes: 'The key point is the differential emphasis placed by lecturers and managers upon business and educational values. Lecturers feel that ... business methods have become an end in themselves, sustaining a "control" ethos and a managerialist culture'.

Noticeably absent from the list of approved course in Schedule Two were programmes for leisure and recreation for which colleges were justifiably proud. Refusal to fund such courses and the loss of 'community' status was a source of great discomfort to many staff. The obligation to provide these was left to the depleted Local Education Authorities. The statutory definition of further education - contained in an appendix to an Act of Parliament - replaced a historically and geographically-defined one based loosely on the 1944 model and to which colleges had responded with a variety of curricula over many years. Legal structuring of the sector now divorced it from adult education which seemed to be cast in the wilderness for LEAs to pick up if possible. The emphasis was clearly on employment skills particularly for the young.

The new curriculum

In 1994-95, 3 million students were enrolled in further education (2.2 million on FEFC funded courses). 10% were GNVQs, 8% NVQs, 10% GCSEs and 18% A/As-level students. In 1998, 70% of 16 and 17 year olds were in full-time post-compulsory education. Expansion of the further education sector (from 30% to the above stated 70% in 15 years) can be explained variously as: a substitute for

employment, a demand for improved GCSE/A-level results and the political expectations placed upon new vocational qualifications which are largely delivered in colleges.

From a voluntaristic system catering mainly for a minority of school-leavers destined for trades the boom in staying-on and adult returning has had two immediate effects: an opportunity to create a foundation for universal post-16 provision but the generation of 'credential inflation' as more people achieve vocational qualifications.

Recent attempts to place a retro-modern tripartite structure on post-compulsory education in terms of qualifications (Academic, GNVQ and NVQ) have a tendency to look backwards and to plan for an ideal, Fordist model of teaching and selection (Green and Rikowski, 1995). It is useful to remember Katz's (1965, p.290) observations that historic compromise is part of English policy making to: '... preserve the traditional and respond to the modern by avoiding the resolution of uncomfortable dilemmas ... their evasions of the essential confrontations have left Britain with unresolved and debilitating tensions'. It is to that curriculum compromise that this chapter now turns.

There is no single curriculum for post-compulsory education as can be identified in the National Curriculum for schools. The diversity of students and their aims would exclude such a notion. Curriculum design, therefore, tends to be a mix of government policy, local LSC needs, traditional recreational sessions and awarding body courses. The latter tend to be dominated by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA now Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examining Board - OCR), Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC now EDEXCEL) and the City & Guilds of London Institute (CGLI). These operate on a commercial basis and are, therefore, in direct competition.

There are over 200 other awarding bodies most of them associated with professional status (such as the Institute of Transport and Logistics and Institute of Personnel and Development). The majority are bringing their qualifications into the NVQ arena with performance criteria and production of portfolios of evidence instead of examinations.

Further education colleges also offer GCSE and A/As level courses. 'Full cost recovery' programmes are provided on a profit-making basis for corporate clients while there are still many recreational style courses especially in association with 'outreach' facilities in schools in the evening. During the passing of the legislation there was vociferous debate about the adult education sector and what constituted its purpose. It is a paradox of political debate that the focus of attention was on outcomes for this aspect of college work even then when the motives for taking such courses can be social, hobbyist, recreational, general interest or therapeutic.

However, the curriculum categories that developed most rapidly in the 1990s were NVQs, GNVQs (or recently Vocational A-levels). For many reasons the ideal of work-related courses was hard to achieve. Day-release programmes suffered from a lack of co-ordination and continuity between college and work. There were some outmoded practices encountered in the syllabuses of some courses and trainees in Britain are at a marked disadvantage in post-compulsory education because of the lack of modern equipment, resources, hardware and software. In addition, real work experience was often difficult to arrange and few companies offered integrated and well-planned introductions to work.

As a result, though young people could graduate from catering, motor vehicle mechanics, hairdressing and engineering courses the jobs available in these sectors could not absorb the candidates on a significant scale. Post-compulsory education was turning out more qualified students than could reasonably be absorbed by the

economy. Since it is not possible for most students to find work placements or real work experience it follows that many qualifications were obtained by an almost totally 'paper' system tested under simulated conditions in classrooms.

The NCVQ was tasked with bringing the structure of vocational qualifications closer to the level of competence found in advanced European nations and other competitors, notably in the Far East. This has not been trouble free. The major tension in curriculum design is between the learning needs of the student and the assumed requirements of a particular occupation. This conflict is fought out against a background of neo-tripartism as defined by government and supported in official reports (Dearing, *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds*, 1996) which make recommendations of parity of esteem familiarly desperate. Careers advice on qualification routes may well follow a similar selectionist approach dependent on perceived abilities and performance at school rather than painting an accurate picture for the student.

As the range of full-time course in colleges grew in the 1980s it was common for curriculum leaders and lecturers to experiment with ways of creating worthwhile learning experiences which rivalled the best schools (Cantor, Roberts and Pratley, 1995). This involved a broadening of syllabuses to include general studies, a variety of teaching/learning opportunities and an impressive range of extracurricular activities. A positive pastoral and recreational spirit was encouraged.

The greater concern with the 'whole educational experience' was partly selfish in that colleges wished to emulate and exceed the provisions of sixth form colleges with whom they competed. Interesting, and often expensive, experiments were tried to make for a creative education. Thus, language A-level students, who would ordinarily expect an exchange student teacher, could now anticipate a trip to Brussels and the European Parliament as part of their studies.

Catering students would attend major sports tournaments as part of the hospitality arrangements experience. Colleges also provided specialist support for those students finding difficulty with literacy or numeracy so that they could still take part in their studies. The Education Act of 1981 accelerated the integration of special needs students into mainstream provision and post-compulsory education was especially willing and very well placed to accommodate these new responsibilities. Social, communication and life skills were integrated into the college curricula as well as some supervised work experience. Continuous staff development created teams of lecturing and support staff that could offer the widest possible continuation of educational experiences.

Political demands, however, radically altered this somewhat self-styled curriculum - its apparent 'randomness' being its own worst enemy. YTS and TVEI had already placed vocational outcome regimes into courses with a view to increasing the relevance of school and training to the world of work. Because of their generous funding arrangements colleges pursued the schemes with vigour but there were internal tensions not least between the curriculum teams as providers of a more general, liberal education and senior management who chased the available finance through rigid official apparatus.

As the realities of funding mechanisms became legally grounded in 1992 the outcome model of new vocationalism gained a high profile and is an integral part of national targets expected to support economic development. When comparing skill levels of the work force in the UK with those of industrial competitors, it has not been made entirely clear whether British workers fall behind in actual levels of skill or in the possession of qualifications.

Levels of competence

The new qualifications body set five NVQ levels: Level One is the most basic for those working under close supervision; Level Two is the intermediate or basic craft level; Level Three is advanced craft or technician level equivalent to A-levels; Level Four is higher technician and management and Level Five is professional/degree. At all levels attainment is expressed in 'can do' statements set under Industry Lead Body criteria and much play is made of comparisons with the academic route (see **Appendix Five**).

In adopting a radical approach (it could have set a framework into which existing qualifications fitted) it generated further tensions in the sector. Indeed, the NCVQ (now QCA) did not assume that post-compulsory education was a natural provider of such qualifications nor did it take on board the awards offered by the main examining and awarding bodies. In terms of political status this was a deliberate statement of power and authority supported at the highest level.

At first, the NCVQ asserted that the only evidence which would be acceptable would be assessment in the workplace. This was a direct threat to colleges and meant that qualifications could be obtained with no direct, formal input at all. It was also short-sighted in that the new structure only helped those already in employment. The Council recognised that such a policy would seriously hinder the achievement of national targets and allowed simulated work experience to count (such as time spent by catering students in the college restaurant). Though a successful outcome for colleges it still raised important curriculum questions for them.

Used to programmes which were developmental but broad and involving a variety of assessment techniques colleges now had to rethink totally their teaching and learning strategies. Even the business courses had insisted on an overall appreciation of the

organisation and its environment but now had strict assessment of minute and separated skill functions. BTEC's policy of 'Common Skills' (**Appendix Six**) which gave credit for relationship and communication skills and had a general, theoretical base was swamped by the minutiae of detail of individual abilities expected in each Industry Lead Body stipulations. Common or Core Skills became resurrected as Key Skills for Curriculum 2000 purposes.

Though initiating debate about the educational process through its actions the NCVQ distanced itself from those processes which it left to training providers. It is this policy gap and the creation of a qualifications inflation that has exposed the NVQ system to some severe criticism. Typical is the research by Alan Smithers then at Manchester University's Centre for Education and Employment Research (1993) which featured prominently in Channel Four's 'Dispatches' documentary '*All Our Futures*'.

This gave a public airing to views expressed within post-compulsory education notably: mixed interpretations of standards among trainers; the linking of funding to outcomes and the potential for fraud; the speed with which awards can be attained and the absence of a sufficiently broad grounding in theory; teaching and learning strategies which are non-reflective and the lack of networks to express and obtain examples of best practice.

This unease has been compounded by the reluctance of major professional bodies to take on board the NVQ philosophies in their own award schemes where developments at Levels 4 and 5 were expected to make most inroads.

The NCVQ's policy initiated a very tense relationship with colleges. The Council had powerful support in government and could not afford to be seen to be failing in its objectives. There was been only a modest realisation of simplification of the

qualifications and bodies involved and, in reality, the Council accepted the conversion of existing qualifications to competency-based models with little fuss. It did not significantly affect the proliferation of award-giving and standard-setting organisations and vested interests which have managed to survive its drive for simplicity.

These curricular changes prompted by a change in assessment policies imposed on the sector have impacted on colleges at many levels. The FEFC (1994) noted that colleges have incurred substantial extra costs from introducing and implementing NVQs and from their slow acceptance by employers. In agriculture and art and design the effects have been more sharply felt because these are often associated with smaller, specialist colleges. The agricultural colleges had thirty year's experience of national proficiency tests independently assessed by farmers and growers and have their own awarding body the National Examinations Board for Agriculture, Horticulture and Allied Industries.

They have considerable experience of financial autonomy and had a broad curriculum to cater for the diversity in the industry and to ensure a viable future. They did not, therefore, fit neatly into the categorisation of lead bodies and would not have been able to meet the demands of the wide range of clients (from small holdings to substantial land owners) if they had. Moreover, few farmers would have realistically dealt with the necessary paperwork associated with work-related assessment.

Similarly, art education has found it difficult to meet a performance-criteria objectivity in an essentially subjective area. While the demand for art and design courses remains high the chances of obtaining directly related work experience is very low. This only serves to highlight the tensions already in evidence in the academic/vocational debate. Many bodies wished to retain a firm theoretical but broad grounding in their studies but are compelled by financial constraints to deliver

work-related performance criteria for which there may be no actual employment prospects.

The government firmly rejected all efforts to broaden the A-level curriculum and turned down suggestions contained in the 1988 Higginson Report calling for five subjects. Instead, the search was on for parity of esteem. The GNVQ went partially down the road to an explanation of this approach and was also a response to criticisms of NVQs. Written tests were imported at the insistence of the, then, DFE.

The major attraction for those at school has been the alternative that GNVQs offer over A-levels into university but curriculum changes in post-compulsory education have met with difficulties. Staff confused by the new requirements have given inappropriate advice to students which may well have led to higher-than-usual drop-out rates. The FEFC inspectorate has acknowledged such factors in its early annual reports (1994/5/6).

Quality assurance in new vocationalism

Examination of the NCVQ's aims of producing highly skilled and adaptable workers highlight three areas of debate. The first issue is one of potential narrowness of approach. The process of formulating an NVQ is occupationally specific - standards for individual industrial and commercial sectors, often single industries - are defined in terms of contemporary occupational activities, however mundane. This perception was influenced by the 'task' regime of YTS and the Manpower Service Commissions guidelines.

The domination of lead bodies under employers, the hasty definition of standards and the commitment to assessment in the workplace were further guarantees that it was

short-term training needs that had political pre-eminence. The lack of breadth in training might be understandable if the British work force had benefited from a long period of general education prior to entering the workforce as is the case in Japan and America. However, the participation rate of 16 and 17 year olds in education was significantly lower than that of major competitors. Until 1989/90. Britain was the only main industrial nation in which the majority of 16 year olds left full-time education and training.

In the absence of an extended and effective period of general education before entering work it is essential to emphasise breadth in post-compulsory provision, a strategy now pursued in Germany where the off-the-job curriculum for trainees has been increased from one day to one-and-a-half or two with the extra time given over to foreign languages and theoretical studies. As Prais (1989) points out, this approach leads to higher vocational qualifications where the general education inputs are regarded as valuable facilitators reducing the perceived differences between academic and vocational.

There are now clear areas of dissatisfaction between policy makers and providers about the narrowness of NVQ standards. The CBI, instigator of national targets, noted in 1989 (p.3): '... the emphasis on standards setting by separate industry bodies has not naturally led to the development of cross sector "generic" competencies'. It also argued that all education and training should be designed to develop self-reliance, flexibility and broad competence and awareness as well as skills. The CBI report continued (p.4):

'As employers increasingly require the skills for adaptability and innovation in employment education and training needs to be broadly-based, concerned not just with technical understanding of the job but competence should be concerned with adaptability, management of

roles, responsibility for standards, creativity and flexibility to changing demands. Task competence is not enough to meet this need although some employers concentrating on their short-term needs may believe it is'.

This exposes the second issue: industrial and commercial investment in education and training is poor in Britain. Several studies confirm this traditional weakness. The MSC/NEDO (1984) Report *Competence and Competition* revealed that West German employers spent three times as much on initial and continuing vocational education and training as those in the UK. Anderson (1987) noted that British companies spent an average 0.15% of turnover on training while France, Japan and West Germany allocated between 1 - 2%.

British managers remain narrowly concerned with training because of the pressure to attain short-term profits through a finance capital system driven by large institutional investors. This is not a recent phenomenon but the drive to privatise and introduce the public to share ownership in the 1980s has added a new dimension. 'Windfall' gains from the conversion of building societies to PLC status continue to fuel demands for immediate returns on investment. This is in sharp contrast to Japanese market attitudes which see profits as a long-term element of management responsibilities.

Such a narrow concern for training introduces the third problem: British management may have neither qualifications nor experience on which to base training decisions. This is closely related to the previous point about short-termism but is exacerbated by the lack of training for management itself. Constable and McCormick (1987) suggest that the UK has not developed a clearly understood and effective method of training for its managers and that few British managers have sufficient in-depth knowledge of training themselves to make judgements for others.

When the NCVQ was first created it was under governmental pressure to show rapid results in the development of new competence-based qualifications. The haste of the pressured responses generated problems not least in interpretations of criteria and expected outcomes for each industry. A succession of Green and White Papers, speeches, FEFC and FEU documents asserted the need for a much greater commitment to training and for a reformed system of instruction. Additional pressure came in the form of an imposed aim of self-financing by 1991 (subsequently extended). In order to do this it had to establish its credibility and be visibly making progress which required the tacit approval and co-operation of the Awarding Bodies (especially BTEC, City & Guilds and RSA).

The sometimes bitter, public exchanges between the quango and the awarding bodies in the early years were a severe embarrassment to the NCVQ but the power struggle shifted towards the outcomes model simply through the mechanism that all awarding bodies for the NVQs had to be accredited by the quango. This afforded it a serious hold on awarding body finances and their standards.

Underlying quality control issues were the implications of cost. Finegold and Soskice (1988, p.27) had already noted the employers 'limited training perspective' and '... the pressure to maximize immediate profits and shareholder value'. Workplace assessment was clearly an expensive method calling for a large number of suitably qualified assessors. Competence assessment would be at the heart of such a system yet the list of assessor competencies were noticeable by their absence at any time in the early years of reform. Neither the Training Agency nor the Training and Development Lead Bodies initiated any such criteria. Eventually, the NCVQ had to step into the void and agreed competencies with the major awarding bodies.

The omission has never been satisfactorily explained but a high profile announcement that thousands of workplace assessors needed training would have undermined

employers' confidence and jeopardised any interest in NVQs. Having qualified workplace assessors is now a reality and part of the NCVQ's powerbase but it is not universally accepted. Many major organisations remain distant from NVQs while others who started down the path found its assessor and administrative requirements too debilitating (eg. W.H. Smith).

In colleges, the moves towards work-based assessment presented challenges to traditional methods. Some staff feared marginalisation as the greatest emphasis was placed on activities away from the classrooms. A related problem was that assessment in the workplace is only as good as the workplace. Enormous efforts had to be made in staff development to move from norm to criteria referencing and assessment on a pass/fail basis. Besides general concerns about quality there were technical difficulties such as relating the successful performance of a routine job with less definable qualities like contingency planning and initiative.

This related to concerns of devaluation of knowledge and detachment from creativity and interpretative skills. In the early days of assessor accreditation there was considerable attention drawn towards the tendency to administrative convenience and vague 'witness statements' which were broad generalities rather than a reflection of accurately stated competencies (Burke, 1995).

This detailed look at a particular (though important) section of college functions highlights the contested area of 'quality' as a driver of change. Quality assurance is a powerful influence which has permeated the ethos of post-compulsory education. While having considerable inherent power as a phrase of political and emotional strength it remains an abstract. It has replaced 'responsiveness to client's needs' and 'market awareness' as the *sine qua non* of the sector:

'There is an everyday sense in which the term has long been applied to

educational processes and outcomes. In the political arena of recent years, however, the term has been inseparably linked to notions of efficiency and cost effectiveness, which have their origin in the 'Great Debate' concerning educational standards and costs, launched following Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in October 1976'.

(Elliott, 1993, p.46)

Lecturers, as reflective practitioners, find some difficulties in the prevailing definitions and interpretations placed upon them by outcomes-based awards and a strategic inspection system especially since many of the criteria are evidently from industry. The initiation point for an upsurge in interest in quality can be found in the 1988 Education Reform Act which placed particular emphasis on measuring 'outputs' from colleges.

Post-compulsory education had already witnessed the introduction of staff/student ratios by the Audit Commission in the early 1980s as a measure of efficiency. Socio-political factors are important in recognising why such a perspective came about. The government saw the removal of polytechnics from LEA control as a major success but failed to compare like with like. Polytechnics were considerably better resourced and could attract additional funds (especially through research and foreign students). The quality movement imposed on colleges can be seen as part of a government-inspired drive towards efficiency and savings which had parallel trends in higher education and the compulsory sector. This necessitated the formation of a quasi-market among competing cost centres while giving them locally-defined industry targets under an umbrella of national education and training goals.

Most colleges engaged in pursuit of quality assurance 'labels'. Many followed the industry path of achieving BS5750 (now ISO 9000) which works by a system of document control and 'fitness for purpose' definitions. Only those procedures deemed

by British Standards to be 'within document control' are taken into account. It is not difficult to imagine why such an approach was considered reductionist in the absence of any significant mention of the students and little evidence of the quality of teaching and learning. Other colleges sought the 'Investors in People' kitemark which is meant to represent an organisation committed to the quality of staff training and human resource development. This is a valuable quest in itself but it can only be regarded as part of a quality portfolio.

Taking a lead from industry again, Senior Management Teams introduced concepts of 'Total Quality Management' and 'Taiken' (Continuous improvement) from American and Japanese business sources. This resulted in 'quality circles' or 'focus groups' of lecturers and administrative staff reporting their best ideas to senior management. Of a more holistic approach than BS5750 it ran into the difficulties that many ideas were financially ill-timed or politically inappropriate to be taken seriously.

Finally, the question of external inspection is a vexed one for colleges. Part of the FEFC's brief was to visit all English colleges in a four year cycle to check on performance criteria. In preparation for these visits colleges had to have in place a computerised student tracking system with Individual Student Records, up-to-date prospectuses, college charters, development plans, department-by-department strategic plans, schemes of work, lesson plans and syllabuses for every subject. The seriousness of the inspections was not lost on colleges who were told that the results would 'inform funding decisions'.

College areas and departments received a grade from 1 (many strengths and few weaknesses) to 5 (many weaknesses and few strengths). Colleges had to respond to criticisms in any areas with a plan of action. The FEFC inspection teams insisted on a timescale for improvements and returned to ensure compliance outside of the four year cycle. Areas of universal concern in the sector were student retention, resources

and accommodation which have been traditional issues but all of which are taken into consideration as quality matters in an inspection.

With the first rounds of inspections completed it was obvious that the regime was very expensive for the government. Some colleges had two inspections but others were allowed to introduce a self-assessment inspection which are largely based on FEFC criteria and use the same gradings. Such colleges experienced internal difficulties not least through the lack of available qualified staff to make observations of the methods and approaches of colleagues. Such is the political influence of quality assurance that the phrase carries a kudos and impact of its own. Few would challenge the need for a system which generates approaches and methods allowing each student worthwhile educational experiences but the FEFC and self-assessment models focused resolutely on outcomes in keeping with trends towards perceived efficiency and value-for-money. With qualifications as commodities in the marketplace of post-compulsory education and students become funding targets it is not a great leap of imagination to use industrial-style quality control as sole guide to success.

Official reports

It has already been noted that the post-compulsory education sector attracts Green and White Papers in some volume and with the arrival of the FEFC became subject to a steady stream of circulars. It is, however, largely devoid of any in-depth research. This may be due to the disproportionate interest in the compulsory and higher education sectors and perhaps may be a direct consequence of the lack of direct acquaintance with a knowledge of this area in Whitehall.

In the late 1990s it began to attract the keen eye of governments quick to spot its unique positioning in political/economic terms. A range of official reports have been

published all of which impact on the demands and opportunities within post-compulsory education. Reports by Capey (1995) and Beaumont (1996) looked at some of the problems raised by the new vocational qualifications in particular and were, essentially, review documents to consider critical responses and reactions.

Dr. John Capey, Principal of Exeter Further Education College was asked to review the GNVQ assessment system. His findings suggested a radical simplification of the procedures for assessment and its administration. While recognising the differences between a GNVQ and NVQ (philosophical and practical) it did not press the matter of what educational processes should be involved and to what end. The Capey Report seems, in retrospect, to dedicate much effort to the discussion of what is learned but not how it is assimilated. The independent approach to learning received much praise but there was no reference to why two-thirds of registered candidates failed to complete their GNVQs using this process. Capey, having been required to focus on assessment, failed to present a clear conclusion as to the relevance and validity of the model existing at the time or offer any alternatives. It was, thus, ineffective as a report lacking in credibility by not putting forward anything tangibly new.

Gordon Beaumont's (1996) review of 100 NVQs and SVQs was, originally, an internally inspired document intended for the NCVQ. Such was the poor publicity surrounding the vocational system at the time that ministers encouraged the former Chairman of the CBI Training Panel to take a wider and more independent view. His report subsequently went to the DfEE with the NCVQ Council allowed to comment. It had the potential to be extremely critical and damaging but itself contained anomalies and contradictions which reduced its impact. Set against its main critical conclusions was the generalisation that 'There is widespread support for the NVQ concept' (Beaumont Report, p.7):

- It suggested that setting standards and designing qualifications should be kept separate.
- It concluded that NVQs currently framed were all but incomprehensible.
- It listed a range of problems connected with assessment including definitions of standards.
- It found the assessment system incapable of supporting output-related funding (essentially the bread and butter of further education colleges).

While it was clear that there was a need for occupationally-relevant qualifications, Beaumont felt that NVQs did not represent them at that time. Indeed, he believed that candidates were unsure of the competencies they were trying to achieve and how these related to their jobs. The claim that between 80 - 90% of employers supported NVQs rested on a small sample (100 firms) surveyed by the Beaumont committee. In fact, only one in five companies bothered to reply and the claim conflicts with the 1994 CBI internal survey which found a poor take-up of NVQs among its members. Beaumont saw the problem with NVQs as one of vocabulary and suggested simplification and clarity. Smithers (1997) believed that it was a more serious conceptual issue. What could have been a fulcrum report indicating the need for substantial change was actually diluted by the Chairman's own belief in the NVQ system.

A far more comprehensive study of qualifications for 16 - 19 year olds was conducted by Sir Ron (now Lord) Dearing (March 1996). He identified a particularly worrying trend in disaffection and a generation potentially disinterested in education at all and he lamented the missed opportunities to develop a true parity of esteem between NVQs, GNVQs and GCSE/A-levels. The resulting White Paper *Learning to Compete: education and training for 14 - 19 year olds* deliberately broadened the declared age range to include school/industry initiatives. Secretary of State, Gillian Shephard, announced that the government had an: ' ... enduring commitment to

extending personal choice, empowering young people and their parents, providing more information and demanding higher standards...' (p.2).

The White Paper introduced the concept of 'Learning Credits' in which young people could 'cash in' their credits for training or education up to Level 3. It announced local strategies to bring 'disaffected' 14 - 19 year olds back into learning. Much of the importance of Dearing's review has been lost in the change of government in 1997 but the new Labour administration has taken on board some of the wider implications of disaffection, inclusivity and widening participation. The continuing divergence between vocational and academic awards was also recognised.

Themes of Dearing's report (he stepped outside his terms of reference) have been incorporated into reworked notions of 'lifelong learning' and access which have much of Tawney and Dewey about them. These have manifested themselves in a diversity of official reports which have generated considerable interest in the sector. Contained within the brief summaries of these reports is an explicit or implicit recognition of the role of post-compulsory education in involving the community in all its contrasts while still recognising an economic contribution to national wealth.

The now largely forgotten quinquennial review of the NCVQ was very damaging for the Council. It was part of a pre-set five-year analysis which should have been a formality but the report - conducted by the DfEE itself - found the Council lacking in vision and severely short of its targets. It concluded that the NCVQ 'has not been able to establish a national framework for all, or even a majority, of vocational awards'. In addition, 'there remains a negative perception of the organisation from some quarters' (paras. 3/4).

The incompatibility of the NCVQ's marketing and regulatory roles was noted and a direct result was the merger of SCAA and NCVQ to become the Qualifications and

National Curriculum Authority (QNCA) and subsequently shortened to Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). While the quinquennial report was potentially lethal it would take a strong Secretary of State to change a new system yet again with the attendant costs and criticism. It was decided to stick with NVQs and hope that time would shake out the problems.

Other influential reports

The report on the educational provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities under the chairmanship of Professor Tomlinson (*Inclusive Learning*, June 1996) was a major undertaking with 'no agreed definitions by which to set the boundaries of the enquiry'. It also followed themes established by Dearing in the need to increase participation and establish an 'inclusive approach' to learning difficulties.

It clearly identified internal structural problems: unless senior management is knowledgeable and committed in the pursuit of creating a good service for students with difficulties the work and dedication of middle management and teachers is frustrated; the emphasis on highly funded students in mainstream course has meant that staff development in provision of teachers to assist with learning difficulties is lacking and organisational structures may thwart the successful teaching and necessary support systems. The report recognised the difficulties colleges had in meeting their (rather vague) legal obligations in 'having regard' to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Tomlinson had to record that further education was not providing a sufficient or adequate system but this was a matter of definition, funding and training. The report recommended, therefore, the establishment of a central co-ordinating and advisory

body for accredited teacher training concerning students with additional needs; funding for increased staff development in this field and a three year finance package for colleges to implement the committee's recommendations. From the student's point of view it suggested a new pre-foundation level qualification and additional funds to assess student needs. Colleges were to survey the physical accessibility of their buildings and a reinterpretation of funding rules was advised so that the FEFC could pay for a wider range of courses.

In real terms, the Tomlinson Report probably suffered from a change of government and a delay factor before the new administration found time for post-compulsory education. Its findings became submerged in the government's over-arching philosophy of 'lifelong learning' and a 'Third Way'. Colleges have absorbed aspects of the report and specialist staff development is common if not universal but the report has been absorbed into New Labour's agenda for employment engineering aligned to qualifications and earning power related to age.

The Kennedy Report (1997) *Learning Works*, addressing issues of widening participation, witnessed a fierce defence of colleges at 'the heart of a self-perpetuating learning society' (p.3) which 'must be recognised and celebrated'. In addition 'only further education can deliver to all the entitlement to have an opportunity to achieve level 3'. In its summary of key findings it regarded the case for widening participation as 'irresistible' and that 'learning is central to economic prosperity and social cohesion' (p.26). The equity demanded by a democratic society dictated, in the report, that all should have the opportunity to succeed and that 'market principles alone will not widen participation'. The significant increase in funding was regarded as in need of a 'radical overhaul' and that 'widening participation must be the key priority for public funding in post-16 learning' (p.38).

The general direction of the report was away from the narrow exclusivity of employment-led qualifications and into a much wider arena of reaching those students who do not naturally seek education or training opportunities. The committee was tasked with finding ways of reaching those individuals and communities who are under-represented. In a move initiated by Dearing, Helena Kennedy exceeded her brief and sought to involve everyone and their right to reach their own potential. Commenting on her committee's report she noted:

'Further education has a real and lasting impact on people's lives, but most adults in this country receive no further learning opportunities after completing their initial education and training. Over half our young people come out of school and start adult life in need of compensatory education. If we want to thrive economically, and if we want to see a society at ease with itself and which makes the best possible use of its human and social capital, we must make an attack on this backlog of thwarted potential. My committee has set an agenda for this task'.

(ibid. p.39)

Kennedy noticed that outcome-driven funding had created some inequities and continued others. The pressure on colleges to become businesslike had made them focus on those qualifications and those students most likely to attract the greatest amounts of money:

'Since funding has been related to successful outcomes, namely qualifications attained by students, there has been a tendency for too many colleges to go in pursuit of the students who are most likely to succeed. There has been growth, but the students recruited have not come from a sufficiently wide cross-section of the community and there is concern that initiatives to include more working-class people, more

disaffected young people, more women, more people from ethnic minority groups are being discontinued because they fall through the gaps in the system'.

(*ibid.* p.40).

She also recognised the work done by particular companies with their employees by providing a wide, liberal education:

'The employees involved in the educational development schemes at Ford and Unipart may not be learning anything directly connected to their job. However, simply by engaging in the learning process their self-worth and capabilities are improved and, as a result, their contribution to, and overall effectiveness for, the organisation are enormous. Their own employability is also greatly enhanced'.

(*ibid.* p.42).

Kennedy boldly states that 'all types of learning are valuable' and that 'learning for work and working for life are inseparable'. Additionally, 'a healthy society is a necessary condition for a thriving economy' (p.3).

A quite radical review of funding arrangements was proposed which would alter the distribution of money to help named minorities into colleges. This, in itself, might conflict with governmental emphasis on highly skilled workforce requirements.

The response from David Blunkett on 25 February 1998 in *Further Education for the New Millennium* was positive. It retained, however, the traditional caveats of 'big challenge' and 'major collective effort' (p.2). Overall, it recognised - for the first time in an official response - the role of the further education sector as the only organisational framework in which it could start to implement some of the

recommendations. Interestingly, it specifically repeats Kennedy's call for 'new and comprehensive *National Learning Targets*' which 'set out alternative options for targets for post-school achievement by young people; a target for adults; and a target for employers. National targets are a means of encouraging everyone to develop their talents, and to realise their potential'.

The reaction to funding restructuring was more lukewarm with a 'Learning Card' already introduced in the leaflet *Investing in Young People* in December 1997. This was a statement of entitlement to appropriate advice and course in post-16 education but specifically to help students attain at least Level 2. In addition, 'Individual Learning Accounts' had also been established in January 1998 to assist study up to Level 3. This still placed funding responsibility in the hands of the individual who had to open a learning account with a bank since 'individuals have a responsibility to invest in learning for their own career development'. This initiative was intended to dove-tail into yet another scheme announced in January 1998, the 'University for Industry' (Ufi) which 'is at the heart of the Government's vision for lifelong learning'.

The introduction of the Ufi and the anticipated increase in individual learning account holders was expected to 'stimulate new demand for learning and thus bring down costs by achieving economies of scale'. The exact micro-economic process involved in achieving this was not discussed. Meanwhile, the Ufi pins its hopes for success on being 'a new kind of public-private partnership which will boost the competitiveness of business and the employability of individuals'.

The rhetoric of Ufi's strategic objectives is familiar:

* To stimulate demand for lifelong learning amongst businesses and individuals; and

* to promote the availability of, and improve access to, relevant, high quality and innovative learning , in particular through the use of information and communications technologies'.

Although Baroness Kennedy was deeply unhappy about the bias of funding towards schools and universities her criticisms were muted in the final report (*Times Educational Supplement*, February 27, 1998). The radical reform of the FEFC funding policy never happened though colleges have received extra funding it is still heavily biased towards higher achieving students. The cap on student numbers was lifted and another 500,000 were to be encouraged into further and higher education. The Job Seeker's Allowance system was reviewed to allow more unemployed to study and a review of discretionary awards promised. The sweeping nature of Kennedy's recommendations plus the barely hidden agenda of massive emphasis changes in FEFC funding arrangements made most of her work politically sensitive.

Government reactions in *Further Education in the New Millennium* resorted to proposals, consultations and discrete initiatives. Upheaval of current mechanisms was considered too drastic. In summary, the Kennedy Report on widening participation was probably ahead of its time coming so soon into a new Labour government's term of office. Its recommendations were far reaching but the huge swing in funding emphasis meant it fell out of synchronisation with official policy on upskilling.

The report of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (*Fryer Report: Learning for the 21st Century*, January 1998) also pursued themes of accessibility, publicity, review of needs and government commitment. It revealed a 'disturbingly long' list of groups under-represented in post-school education including older adults, ex-offenders, disaffected youths and ethnic and linguistic minority groups (p.1).

At the core of Fryer's findings was the recognisable radical tradition of learning throughout life as 'normal and accessible' with learners 'put at the centre'. Again, as with Dearing, Tomlinson and Kennedy there was a vision of learning for 'all aspects of life' and for 'personal and collective development'. The aim of learning would be to 'stimulate achievement, encourage creativity, provide and enhance skills, contribute to the enlargement of knowledge itself, enhance cultural and leisure pursuits and underpin citizenship and independent living' (pp. 2 - 5).

The patchy, voluntary approach to learning at the workplace was acknowledged and emphasis was placed on helping those at the lower end of the skill ability range (with individual learning accounts) and the self-employed in the form of tax breaks or direct payment incentives. Of particular interest was the report's huge emphasis on community learning through supporting family literacy, through voluntary organisations, through local learning centres and outreach or village halls and through local libraries, galleries and museums. This would be achieved through partnerships between TECs, colleges, universities, employers and local authorities.

The key role of the FEFC as main provider of finances was underlined and Fryer actively endorsed the findings and recommendations of Baroness Kennedy that the under-represented should be 'unit rich'. Fryer also returned to the vexed question of FEFC liaison with the Local Government Association over the issue of discretionary grants, access funds and strategic planning.

While not directly criticising further education colleges, Fryer did look for a new appraisal of their own contacts with minority groups and the width and depth of advice and provision. This would require 'strengthening their own research and intelligence skills, possibly by closer working with local authorities, TECs and universities' - a weakness similarly identified by Kennedy. Fryer's report identified the conflict between post-compulsory education's need and desire to include the

community and the nature of the funding constraints which placed economic and efficiency parameters on its strategies.

False dawn

To those in the post-compulsory education profession the reports of Dearing, Tomlinson, Kennedy and Fryer contained strong images of a radical tradition - individual, community and student-centred. All the reports recognised the role of the FEFC but advised on the need for a rethink of emphasis and reappraisal on which skills required reviewing. The shift away from education and training for employability was remarkably consistent in each report and signalled a significant swing in attitude from the assertions of official and think tank reports on the 1980s. On particular note was the recognised need for stronger links between the FEFC and local education authorities and a return of colleges to the community role they lost in 1993.

This theme throughout recent official reports suggests a radical reversal of previous structures of power, control and funding which drove curriculum and management models. Inclusiveness, lifelong learning and widening participation are streams of the same river and it is moving against existing managerialistic and corporate institutions and administrative systems.

Responses to these reports were mostly incorporated in the Green Paper *The Learning Age* and the subsequent White Paper *Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post-16 learning* with familiar rhetoric. The government recognised an 'immediate and immense challenge of equipping individuals, employers and the country to meet the demands of the 21st Century' and 'to modernise the framework for post-16 education and training and raise quality' (p.2).

The actual changes involve the creation of a Learning and Skills Council responsible for college funding, advising on the National Learning Targets and the financing of Modern Apprenticeships, National Traineeships and other work-related training. This move effectively dissolved the FEFC and TECs structure from April 2001. New Regional Development Agencies will co-ordinate local skill needs (which TECs were supposed to do and National Economic Development Agencies before them). The work of the TECs in adult unemployment will be taken over by the Employment Service. Though responsibilities may have shifted the actual effect is illusory. An enlightening and emancipatory learning experience remains elusive as learners gather at a crowded pool of vocational qualifications.

In a move that surprised most observers, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett announced that the Office for Standards in Education would be given a direct role in the inspection of college provision for those courses provided for students up to age 19 and the numbers of governors on college boards from local business and industry would be reduced.

With enthusiastic vocabulary the DfEE appeared to have galvanised post-compulsory education (for it is that sector which bears the brunt of the changes) into a long campaign to reskill and upskill the nation for a global economic battle. Funding, management, structure and operations remain transfixed in the legislative events of 1992 and these are binding it to frequently conflicting responses to the new (and additional) demands being placed upon it.

Conclusion

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 marked a watershed for colleges. The haste of drawing up and implementing policy resulted in compromise to which neither policy makers nor colleges were totally committed (Bradley, 1997). Notions of enterprise culture, added value, relevance, competence and direct impact on the economy were interwoven insecurely with choice, employability and political expediency. It became almost obligatory that any White Paper or official report used the term 'skills' in regard to post-compulsory education and 'relevant' in regard to those skills. Indeed, government reporting adopted a vocabulary life of its own.

Competence and outcomes became inextricably linked with capability, career prospects and, hence, personal wealth. The legitimisation crisis facing the New Right was one of individual employability in the face of significant downsizing. The solution lay with individual responsibility coupled with the inexplicably 'better' education systems of Britain's trading competitors. Policy intentions spanned a range of outcomes which - because of personalities or departmental conflict - were not always explicit, often duplicated and even contradictory.

Policy-making in the 1980s and 1990s brought vocational education closer to intended economic outcomes than at any time previously. It was not a Conservative idea. The Labour government's consultative paper of 1979 *A Better Start in Working Life* set the tone of accountability and connectability. Rapid increases in youth unemployment made such relationships easy rhetoric to state and easy policy to make for the Tories.

Post-compulsory education had always been about work through its adjacent purposes of literacy and numeracy skills for adult (workers) and 'second chances' plus its evening class tradition for apprentices though these had functioned within a largely liberal environment with strong connections to general education as a foundation. The

concerns expressed in a continuous flow of documents laid blame at the doors of colleges for not making that traditional attachment to work relevant or up-to-date.

The motives to change post-compulsory education to address this alleged lack of focus and accountability were invoked through a need for skills or competencies with industry coerced to participate as lead bodies in the design of the required qualifications structures. The political and economic considerations were more controversial in that colleges, through incorporation, became embodiments of the enterprise culture through work experience, job creation and alternatives to the dole schemes.

While, on the one hand being criticised for their ill-defined purpose, they were pressed into service as a 'safety net' on the other. This instrumentalist approach often found solutions in the exercise of change itself - a corporate mentality would make colleges more flexible, responsive to change and more aligned to national economic policy (often directly through targets of achievement). If staff could be more accommodating of change and made more responsible (for student numbers and, hence, funds) then this could be transmitted to students as a key skill in a hidden curriculum.

Yet often the result was what Robson (1998, p.585) describes as a 'profession in crisis' with lecturing in a state of 'marginality and low status.' Post-compulsory education, more than any other sector, lost the debate between general education and vocational relevance; liberality and occupational relevance; democracy and social efficiency. It was the easiest to coerce and legislate into change and a new managerialism was invoked which generated the worst record for industrial relations in the years 1993 - 97. It had no great protagonists or major lobbyists to defend it and it had already been identified by the MSC and ministers as a vital instrument of change at a significant area of economic activity with the minimum of investment.

The managerialism it created was not new and it had already been witnessed in local authorities, the BBC and the NHS. It was typified by a strict regard for well-controlled targets and budgets, efficient use of resources, extensive use of quantitative data, incorporation of consumerism and market forces into decision-making, financial and service-level accountability and flexible contracts. Underpinning new managerialism was the assumption that the managers were committed to the three 'Es': economy, efficiency and effectiveness. What it meant were enforced changes in contracts, student number driven funding, a deliberate vocational curriculum through funding mechanisms and a reduction in permanent, full-time employment.

It is also clear that the board of governors of several colleges were unwilling or unable to get to grips with their responsibilities. The drive for post-compulsory education to be at the vanguard of new vocationalism to support economic objectives has exposed the weaknesses of market capitalism in the worst way through the abuse of power and misplacement of accountability. Indeed, the FEFC who has carried out the investigations of impropriety remained unscathed from any criticism yet was the body solely responsible for funding, auditing and inspection of colleges.

Through incorporation, managerialism transformed not only the nature of colleges but the nature of knowledge and work. This proved problematic in that the assumed relationship of skills to economic performance is never direct and, assuredly, more complex than stated. The failure of market economics only served to contribute to a motivational decline and another legitimisation crisis for NVQs.

That crisis led to the issuing of a somewhat duplicated set of terms of reference to several key commissions and bodies towards the end of the Conservative term in office. The need for some guidance had an air of desperation and there may have been some relief within the Conservative Party that an educational crisis was avoided

by the election of a Labour government in 1997. The reports particularly from Dearing, Kennedy, Tomlinson, Fryer and the Hodge Select Committee were universally in support of the post-compulsory education sector and strongly favoured a return to a more humanistic, Deweyian philosophy within colleges. New vocabulary of the 'learning society, inclusiveness, widening participation and lifelong learning' pervading these reports which were suitably uplifting while remaining largely abstract and ambiguous.

These reports were greeted warmly within the sector as indications of a new broom which was badly needed after a long period of enforced managerialism. The Labour government also embraced them but, more significantly, incorporated them into their own new approach to economic thinking. The learning society was still to be one tied to national economic performance. Two kinds of change underscore the new vocabulary within post-compulsory education. One is institutional: colleges are to play the leading role in involving everyone they can in the pursuit of independent wealth-making through the pursuit of relevant qualifications. The other is substantive: what counts as relevant knowledge and skills will be defined for us.

To achieve these changes New Labour is changing its approach from market economics to producer capitalism which asserts that advanced nations can only compete on quality and this will require highly-skilled, well-paid workers. With this in mind the Labour government has done nothing to change the current range of qualifications. Its response to training and education as key determinants of economic success is the same as the Conservative administration before it.

This brings into question attitudes to social equity, what constitutes relevant skills and knowledge and the role of elitist traditions within that framework. The reports relating to post-compulsory education are positive and well-intentioned. There is, no doubt, a perceived need for better industrial relations and a closer accountability of the

new managerialism but for the most part, there has been no change. Lifelong learning and similar partner phrases may only serve to conceal a less abrasive but still pervasive economic strategy in which the individual is held responsible for personal positioning in society through qualification gathering.

The tripartite qualification structure (essentially a bifurcated system for all practical purposes) in place, however, enforces a mirror society of post-war Britain which structured careers and potential though, this time, age limits are less well-defined. (Peculiarly, there is an over-emphasis on the vexed question of youth education and training particularly in the Curriculum 2000 concept). There is a theme of raising the school leaving age using vocational and academic programme mechanisms to push the entry into the labour market upwards delaying stresses in the employment market at a crucial intersection.

Despite the changes that have taken place in British politics a number of issues continue to dominate in post-compulsory education. The speech made by Prime Minister Callaghan in 1976 still resonates in college corridors as successive administrations sought to involve then compel post-compulsory education into employment policy decisions. This necessitated the reduction of discretionary areas of professional practice while strengthening market and managerial controls. As some commentators suspected (Avis et al, 1996) an incoming Labour government did little to alter the parameters of those controls invoked by the Conservatives through legislation.

DISCUSSION

INSTRUMENTALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

Introduction

This thesis has attempted a historical review of radical and instrumental influences on post-compulsory education to highlight the continuing disparity in English education between the academic and vocational experiences. There is a need to engage in the historical in order to present the contemporary: an education for leaders and a training for followers is a serious misrepresentation of lifelong learning and reversal for radical traditions. From this follows a philosophical discussion of the themes and trends which have influenced post-compulsory education since 1750. An alternative discourse is offered since the future of learning experiences need not be contingent on their history or as a product of a dominant discourse.

This approach is much inspired by the work of Michel Foucault (1970, 1974, 1980). It is primarily one of asking analytical questions summoning the resources of social and historical inquiry into an experience peculiar to England. Foucault's studies carried with them a critical, normative dimension urging us to identify dangers implicit in the accepted nature of things and to indicate how our present arrangements might be differently arranged. While accepting that things are as they are there is an implied message in such analysis that we should not be willing supplicants to important areas of life.

This thesis is here described as a history of the present so that it is analytical rather than archival. It is an attempt to understand historical conditions upon which contemporary practices depend particularly those which appear paradoxical. Historical inquiry is applied here to discover how these conditions came to acquire their characteristics, importance and status when others might have served equally as

well or better. It connects previously unrelated bodies of evidence over an extensive period to present an alternative style of reasoning other than the purely economic.

If there were no substantive links with the past then the survey would be narrative at best but English post-compulsory education is steeped in historical struggles and is now representative of the dominance of one set of conditions - social efficiency, individualism, managerialism and lifelong learning - which require the rigour of critical insights to test their efficacy.

The need to change perceptions

The inability to change the nature of qualifications has resulted in a policy to change perceptions and expectations. In the past, maintaining the status quo has proven to be an expensive social and economic policy providing a rich source of tension through injustice and threats to hard-fought democratic tradition. From this summary of the principle developments it is clear that a succession of starts, initiatives and reactive management was used in response to particular and varied needs and pressures.

The reticence of industry and schools to co-operate was not solved by compulsion and the result has been an accretion of courses, programmes and schemes of, sometimes, conflicting rationales, curricular bases, teaching, learning and assessment strategies. Changes in youth labour (with other factors such as rising achievement rates in GCSE) have led to fundamental changes in the participation of 16 - 19 year olds but while opportunities to learn in vocational studies have been expanded in other areas they are becoming more restricted thereby continuing to reinforce the inequalities that have always existed in the education and training system.

With university fees increasing and small classes being cut the education of adults is becoming a luxury commodity in the market of education. The New Deal and Modern Apprenticeships maintain this youth orientation while Lifelong Learning and University For Industry attempt to address adult needs. The bringing together of the Departments of Education and Employment into one body was mirrored by the merger of the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (to become the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority - QCA) as a political move supported by both major parties and indicative of the seemingly overwhelming direct association of education with 'skills'. The creation of the Department for Education and Skills in 2001 cements that perception.

Disparity of esteem has been the fate of rhetoric despite coercion, cajoling and legislation (Robinson, 1996). Dearing's *Review of Qualifications for 16 - 19 Year Olds* only served to reinforce a tripartite system of post-compulsory provision which stereotyped young adults into role functions. Desires for parity in qualifications and advertising campaigns to promote equality of recognition foundered on industrial intransigence and academic tradition.

Even the government conspired internally against its external protestations when it came to the matter of A-level reviews. While some see potential for change (Young, 1997) it seems unlikely that the implementation of Dearing's reforms will remove any of the long-standing divisions and anomalies in the youth end of education and training. The principles of lifelong learning expounded by Dewey and Tawney may well have become a political banner to rally around but the efficiency ethos of behavioural sciences is rooted deeply in the economic/industrial psyche of political thought and decision-making.

Other official reports have pleaded the case of post-compulsory education and recognised that colleges are probably the only national source of a coherent response

to calls for a 'Third Way' - a mix of traditional courses, recreational, general education and New Deal/Modern Apprenticeships aimed at *everyone* in the community.

Restating the National Education and Training Targets differently as National Learning Targets illustrates the breadth and depth of the problem: 35% of 19 year olds without NVQ Level 2; seven million adults with no formal qualifications at all and one in five adults can barely read (*Times Higher Educational Supplement*, February 27, 1998, p.10).

Post-compulsory education found a niche for itself in providing a diversity of courses for both business, personal and recreational purposes. The relatively good economic position masked significant differences between the parties, however. For Labour, vocational and technical education was incompatible with the drive for comprehensive schooling and social equity while its heavy dependence on union funding for financial and electoral support prevented any serious attempts at interfering with union control of training and craft apprenticeships (Hall, 1986). For the Conservatives, preserving the grammar schools was the main influence (up to the 1997 Election defeat when a grammar school was promised in every town). Interfering in the training sphere would have violated a belief in the free market system (Wiener, *op.cit*).

Britain fails in its training

One of the main factors which hindered politicians from taking a more active education and training role was the weakness of the central bureaucracy in both fields. On the training side it was not until the formation of the Manpower Services Commission in 1973 that the state developed any capacity for implementing a national labour market policy. Political expediency detracted from the opportunity this presented.

Staff of the prime mover in economic policy-making, the Treasury, had 'virtually no familiarity with, or direct concern for, the progress of British industry' (Hall, *ibid.* p.86). None of the other departments (Education and Science, Employment, Trade and Industry or Environment) seemed to have an overall brief or responsibility in post-compulsory education and training which made projections of skill requirements an impossibility. A dearth of accurate statistics resulted from internal bickering and defensive posturing.

Even if the government had a coherent bureaucratic structure it lacked the capacity to implement it. Wilensky and Turner (1987) compared the state structure and corporatist bargaining arrangements of eight major industrial nations and ranked Britain last in its ability to execute manpower policy. Historical decentralisation of power in the DES made effective control of a national system problematic at best.

The lack of organisation was especially apparent in the post-compulsory sector which was accorded low priority until the 1970s (Salter and Tapper, 1981). A significant anchor on change is the interlocking network of social and industrial institutions which afford technical and work-related subjects a second class status while a general/liberal education was out of bounds except to a few.

The responsibility for vocational education and training had fallen to post-compulsory education almost by default and while the 1944 Act had attempted to find a statutory home for this provision the money was never forthcoming. Colleges responded to the sometimes conflicting messages from government and local business demands with what became a 'jungle' of courses.

This tangle still had three main strands: academic sixth form, technical courses approved by major awarding bodies and the 'new sixth form' who remained in full-time education without committing to an A-level or specific training course

(MacFarlane Report, *op.cit*). A range of influences curtailed access to the technical route: lack of career prospects in certain options, lack of funding/loans for post-compulsory education students and the higher status afforded the academic sixth reinforced by the almost total exclusion of technical students from higher education.

The majority left education for jobs with no formal or continuous training. Those who did receive training were almost entirely under the apprenticeship schemes run by unions within industry frameworks. The shortcomings of that path were well-known: restrictions on age and gender; qualifications based on time served rather than a nationally-recognised proficiency standard; little off-the-job general education (though colleges 'ignored' this) and promotions stifled by older employees.

In the early 1960s the combination of declining competitiveness, expansion in the number of school-leavers and increasing skills shortages (with attendant 'poaching') prompted a reform of apprenticeships and other forms of training (Perry, 1976). The state compromise was the formation of the Industry Training Boards which was a corporatist, minimum intervention policy succeeding in a limited form but also creating a controversial grant/levy system. Though raising the level of training it was the short-termism of industry which overcame the Training Boards best efforts.

Another reason that Britain failed in its training is the concentration of the country's firms into those product markets which have lowest skill capacities - goods manufactured with continuous, Fordist representations of unit production (Reich, 1983). An analysis by NEDO of international trade in the 1970s showed that Britain performed best in 'standardized, price-sensitive products' and below average in 'the skill and innovation-sensitive products' (Greenhalgh, 1988, p.44). New and Myers (1986) study of 240 large exporters confirmed that only a minority had attempted high technology solutions and most concentrated on traditional, mass-production technologies and Fordist structures.

In addition, Britain has a high proportion of its employment based in the small to medium-sized business sector (approximately 35% total UK employment - Employment Department, 1992) which were at the forefront of New Right resurgence of entrepreneurship and enterprise. The paradox for such companies is that they appear to depend on the creative energies of individuals but are ill-placed to spend vital funds on training. In Britain, there is a growing body of knowledge which argues that small businesses often lack the wide range of skills necessary to analyse the market accurately and maximise the potential advantages of speed of flexibility and output.

While successive administrations responded to (particularly) youth unemployment and disaffection, Pettigrew *et al* (1989) in a comprehensive review of the available literature claim that it is distinguished by a lack of specialised research to ascertain the importance of human resource issues to small business strategies.

Training has also been affected by a long-term shift from manufacturing to low-skill, low quality service jobs with the largest growth in employment reflected in the part-time sectors of catering, leisure, retail and tourism. Political influences on labour relations and (for colleges) legislation have resulted in a casualisation process of once permanent, full-time posts (*Times Higher Educational Supplement*, July 3, 1998, p.24).

Recruitment policies have entrenched traditions. The Crowther Report (1959) had identified two main sources of young recruits: an apprenticeship entry or a (minority) number of university graduates for management posts. There was little incentive for those unlikely to attain a higher education place to stay on in school or attend college. Once in employment, recruits found the bulk of jobs to be 'of a routine, undemanding variety' requiring little or no training (Tipton, 1983, p.79).

Further brakes on training can be found in the hierarchical structure of British businesses with many training decisions made by middle managers themselves ill-qualified to make such policy. The lack of management training and the continuing adherence affiliation of management recruitment and promotion with academic qualities remains a block to coherent training strategies. A Coopers and Lybrand (1985, *op.cit*) survey found that this approach was hindering long-term planning. British firms also lack structures such as German work councils which enable employees to exercise control of their own training.

This training survey has attempted to explain the reluctance and resistance of British businesses in the sphere of training but British firms do not operate in a vacuum. The short-term perspective of most British boards of directors is a direct consequence of shareholder expectations and pressure and the historical separation of financial and industrial capital (Hall, *ibid.*).

Without access to large, industry-oriented investment banks, British companies have had to finance more investment from profits. Similarly, the structure, traditions and customs and practices of industrial relations have placed training in the cauldron of influences which have proven detrimental to any successful strategy.

A new Labour government has supplied much needed funding but this alone will not address continuing crises in expectations, qualifications, managerialism and democracy. Socialist ideals of lifelong learning to accommodate a diversity of individual needs and aspirations are in conflict with National Learning Targets which are deliberately geared towards the achievement of recognised qualifications (or status such as Investors in People) and which are assessed as such. Leisure or community courses remain fringe activities.

Plato's men of gold, silver and bronze

In a mass market of qualifications the suppliers are the government and their agencies and the consumers are the public. Consumption assumes payment and payment assumes disposable income. Supply assumes there is a ready market but in a monopoly situation a supplier can alter the product and the price. Systems or structures of qualifications are quintessential creations of government as sole supplier.

In this way they are powerful political influences representing not only what governments perceive to be the right formula for a successful trading nation but also reinforcing social structures through role expectations and, in England's case-tripartite qualifications. A nationally applied tripartite system of schools or a national framework in which all qualifications are allocated to one of three pathways is a political influence of considerable importance to the individuals in a majority who study within it.

Governments can, and increasingly have, imposed such a model to the degree that they control funding and enforce compliance through legislation. This affects choice through the market mechanism of controlled availability. The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act went much further by demanding inspections and targets in concert with funding restrictions. In the British economy the government, as chief source of expenditure, imposes its own curricula, qualifications and institutional arrangements as it sees fit within the circumstances of the time. (Even this 'monopoly' position cannot operate in a vacuum and Britain's trading imbalance and loyalty to finance capital makes it especially vulnerable to world market factors).

Many political decisions can be seen in this light of short-term objectives and market forces and tripartite responses are directly related to particular pressures and tensions not only in education and training but in relatively unrelated issues of oil, crime and

election preparation. A tripartite system is not a natural product of differences in learning style or student preference - it is one possible response which may be a limited and ultimately unsatisfactory method of defusing short-term demands with what can only be a unwieldy and difficult-to-dismantle system.

Selection, values and a place in society

Education is not just about selection. It also includes inculcation of substantive skills and values which in the compulsory sector have been dominated by reading, writing and mathematics because these are generally relevant to the workplace in adult life. Their vocational relevance of the curriculum is increasing and while there are valid moral arguments for literacy and numeracy hours there are very valid vocational ones also. The needlework and history lessons of the nineteenth century were a mixture of factory preparation and instilled patriotism.

The British education and training system is overwhelmingly state organised and financed and the government effectively decides what is good for the consumers (the public) in direct terms through products (courses and qualifications) supplied and how much it will spend. By indirect methods (such as Curriculum 2000) it also dictates who will receive the products. Students compete within the system.

In academic subjects the influence of employment and the economy may appear less obvious but there are barely hidden expectations of A-level and degree students and beneficiaries of the gold standard in education. What the government produces is a result of the various forces at work upon it (which includes media headlines) but also what it views as the 'needs' of the country. What it actually comes up with may also depend on its majority in Parliament and in the absence of a coherent and well-organised opposition.

It is in the government's own interest to organise education 'neatly' in clearly stated objectives which can be pursued at the cheapest possible unit cost with students allocated areas which the government considers important in any contemporary context. Balanced against this political influence are the aspirations of a public who 'want to get on' and the realities of the framework in which they can attain their particular goals. In the nineteenth century, formal qualifications had little to do with the life chances of most people. Local contacts and family connections were far more important as access points to apprenticeships or management. Assessment by examination were middle class mechanisms of cultural capital which became absorbed, in time, by the compulsory and university education systems through their middle class protagonists.

Thus, in modern society, education (in effect, a particular kind of education) is the single most important route to, and general legitimator, of success. The enthusiasm for more certificates can, therefore, be rationalised in purely (individual) economic terms. The perceived hierarchy of qualifications is mirrored in the statistics showing economic returns to types of certificate while the gap between those with and without certificates has been widening (Bennett *et al*, 1992; Karoly, 1996; Robinson, 1997). High unemployment among youths gave this search for qualification status (rather than 'qualified') additional impetus but some basic/foundation course were probably 'parking places' at best for those without a job.

The relationship between qualifications and success is illustrated not only in income terms but by the correlation between the local economy and staying-on rates: in a reversal of trends the last decade of the twentieth century witnessed that the more active the local economy and the lower the rate of unemployment, the higher the numbers who stay on in education creating recruitment crises (Cheng, 1995).

In this situation, any point at which there is serious selection among students will be a point of strain. So students staying on to gain the qualifications that they perceive (and have been told) are so important to their personal wealth do not wish to be told at 11, 14 or 16 what their options are and that life has been decided for them. Dearing's proposals tried to reverse this age-focused selection but there are few indications of serious changes. The tripartite structure of A-levels, GNVQs and NVQs simply serve to cement this relationship between age, selection and decisions made that are only reversible with maximum effort later in life.

It follows that tripartism is an administrative convenience to relate qualifications to student types on a broad selection basis rather than a clear statement of aims and national objectives. If this is the case then other structures are equally as possible but politically less attractive. What is new to the tripartite equation are the notions of lifelong learning, inclusivity and widening participation which draw previously untouched sectors of the community into the training system and away from Social Security expenditure. Such concepts also neatly reinforce employment engineering designs on employment and income expectations at key life stages. Finegold (1992) noted that Britain was already stuck in a 'low skills equilibrium' and that qualifications served to maintain and rationalise such a status quo.

The education system's role in developing the right skills (for the economy) is consistently under strain because of the three stream system it follows. Looking at the last century it is possible to observe that major European countries have, at some point, taken measures to promote courses which they believe to be under-subscribed but essential to national welfare (Bash and Green, 1995). These tended to be technical or work-related and reflected a political view of what was considered to be relevant and in short supply.

Employers may vocalise their concerns about suitably qualified and skilled recruits while still pursuing a personnel strategy based on academic results. This is not an English trait - the high levels of motivation observed in German *Hauptschulen* is because of the importance of good grades to get into higher education or lucrative apprenticeships.

Young people's choices tend to be rational from their own point of view (Wolf, 1993a, 1996, 1997) and they are conscious of the relative hierarchy of qualifications. They are also aware that modern employment is tenuous. In such a situation it is logical to keep options open as long as possible and pursue a general education rather than a specific vocational route. This is against New Labour policy in that it is looking for a cheap, mass vocationalism for the majority with the rigid structure of Curriculum 2000 which places further education colleges in a serious resource, staffing and funding dilemma and directing them back to their strictly vocational roots.

This will only bother government in as much as it generates selection pressures. Governments are more concerned by immediate 'scare stories' of specific shortages in what it considers to be key areas. This explains the periodic panics over technical education in this country which does not seem to have affected others. In France and Germany, for example, there is a long tradition of high-achieving students entering technical routes in their late teens.

In Britain, perceived skills shortages are addressed through financial mechanisms such as bursaries for specific subject areas and open-ended commitments to funding engineering faculties as a high per-student rate (which explains the large number of engineering faculties in British universities chasing a small number of suitably qualified applicants).

An alternative method is to alter student choices and make a shortage area more attractive to the well-qualified. The ill-starred technical schools were one such attempt (Sanderson, 1994) as were the CTCs. The key element here is the central role of government as setter of targets and producer of courses. Institutional tripartism occurred because of political efforts to change consumer choice and influence the relative desirability of existing pathways. The results of such direct political influence are distinctive especially at the point of entry into the labour market and sphere of training where choices of types of learning and types of assessment meet with a controlled flow of public funds.

In England, the attempted tripartite system generally diluted into bifurcated routes but education for the post-compulsory sector remains distinctly streamed into three parts. The 'three pathways' proposed by Dearing (1997) for the 16 - 19 year age group and, by extension, for all post-compulsory non-HE awards, derived from the 1944 resurrection of Plato's men of gold, silver and bronze. Of the three categories, A-levels are the longest standing while GNVQs have made only a partial impact yet. (Advanced GNVQs lasted only seven years from 1992/99).

NVQs are a wide ranging qualification not only for young people on government schemes but for those in particular sectors who require official recognition of skills in order to practice. For the country the increase in the number of A-level students is striking. In 1966, approximately 15% of the student cohort followed full-time A-level courses. By 1998 this had risen to 38% with concerns over standards an annual summer media event.

The partial and imperfect way in which Advanced GNVQs and now Vocational A-levels have replaced BTEC Diplomas and Certificates is central to the tripartite scheme of things. These earlier awards were vocational in nature. As participation rates increased the tone of the Diplomas and Certificates changed to contain a general

education element which can be observed in the 'Common Skills' underscoring their achievement. These qualifications became increasingly popular as a way of 'hedging bets' by students unsure of their chances at A-level.

In other words, they became an important method of easing entry point pressure in the education and labour markets placed there by selection points. The BTEC National student could be identified in academic terms as one having reasonably good GCSE results which were short of entry onto a three A-level programme. Some Diplomas, particularly in Business, developed a very general education flavour. The initial conceptual framework for GNVQs was similarly general:

'The award of a GNVQ will *not* imply that students can perform competently in an occupation immediately on qualifying. Students will, however, have achieved the *general skills, knowledge and understanding which underpin a range of occupations.*' (Original emphasis)

(NCVQ, 1993a, p.7)

Such aims were aimed at bridging the so-called academic/vocational divide at least in a marketing attempt at parity. This has now become officially applied terminology with advanced GNVQs transmuted into vocational A-levels. In the 1980s the British government decided it was time to regulate the mass of vocational qualifications so that they would form the main second stream for a *bipartite* system. The reason it has had to introduce a third element was not government strategy but consumer demand. Continuing demand for BTEC Diplomas and very clear evidence of problems within NVQs meant that a GNVQ award was rapidly constructed all of which impacted on post-compulsory education (as provider of all three) at a time of legislative, administrative and institutional upheaval. The haste to respond to the criticisms (which, it could be argued were an attempt to bridge the academic/vocational divide) only served to confuse further (Smithers, 1997).

Winners and losers

There is now a post-19 population almost none of whom are taking GNVQs but are following paths of their own because they are not engaged in a teenage struggle for labour market selection. This sector of the community is treated differently as a policy in the Curriculum 2000 scheme of things since they constitute less of a choke point in the entry to employment area. One is left with the question of logic, however: why should government push all the awards in the sector into a framework which was developed as an administrative response to a failed bipartite policy and to the preferences of a very particular group of the consumer population?

The political influence of tripartism is immense. It does not reflect any substantive three way division in the employment arena and defies history in that previous attempts at tripartism actually highlighted the essentially non-tripartite nature of the market for qualifications which is considerably more complex and dynamic than this convenient structure would suggest. While selection procedures are extremely important in upper secondary classes they are less so for adults.

By attempting to enforce a tripartite mechanism on the entire post-compulsory sector governments have created a legitimisation crisis which distorts provision for the greater majority in that sector who are over 19 years of age. A short-term response to a failed attempt at bipartism and particular pressures on the youth market is not a sufficient basis on which to base a design for the education and training of the bulk of the population. In Edward's (1991, p.101) assessment on 'Winners and Losers: The Education and Training of Adults' we note:

'The contradictory effects of the current changes in the opportunities

for adults to learn make it impossible to assess precisely who are winners and losers. If the focus of development is vocationally relevant learning we may all be losers in fulfilling our wider roles and interests within our community with unknown consequences for the "quality of life". However, it may be that if more adults do participate in learning - even in a restricted field of their lives - and that participation is meaningful and relevant to them, it will place increasing demands on providers to develop more and a wider range of opportunities. In providing access to any learning, therefore, an indirect consequence may be increased demand and pressure for further learning opportunities to be made available (something which has traditionally made states very wary as a possible threat to the status quo.)'

The New Labour concentration on a the 16 - 19 age group deserves analysis. The 64-page QCA document *Curriculum Guidance for 2000* which sets out plans for changes to qualifications for 16 - 19 year olds contrasts sharply with the 3-page pamphlet on *Unitisation and Credit in the National Curriculum Framework* aimed squarely at adult learning ie. beyond age 19. Thus, the structure set out in *Learning to Succeed* is taking shape and a bipartite system of delivery and standards is to be promoted within a tripartite qualification framework (A-levels, GNVQs/'vocational A-levels' and NVQs). Curriculum 2000 intends to abandon the notion that the needs of learners can be met by making A-levels and GNVQs more flexible. Qualifications for adults are now structurally different. Such a notion was rejected by Lord Dearing.

What we see is a divided curriculum which impacts on the way further education and sixth form colleges can respond. It is quite possible that this is intended to be so. The majority of colleges will return to their traditional fayre of training courses and the work-related or work-preparation programmes of Manpower Services Commission days since they will be unable to staff, resource and accommodate higher level

qualifications. They will be in direct competition with small training agencies which are inherently cost-effective and efficient because of their size.

Yet they will face three sets of inspection systems: Ofsted for their limited 16 - 19 provision, the new Learning and Skills Council Adult Inspectorate for post-19 programmes and the Training Standards Council for government initiatives such as New Deal and Modern Apprenticeships. This supposes that the Employment Service - in charge of work-based learning for adults - leaves such inspections to the LSC. Such an inspection structure is considerably more rigorous than that faced by schools or universities and is evidently aimed at securing cost-effectiveness. Indeed, the LSC's remit is squarely fixed upon a 'return on investment' criteria (*Learning and Skills Act, 2000*, para.16):

- * meeting local and regional needs
- * improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of provision
- * promoting the quality of opportunity in education and training locally
- * widening access, particularly for those who face disadvantage in the labour market because of their race, disability, gender or age.

What has eventually emerged is a three-stranded model of education and training with each strand supported by three dominant ideological groups as identified by Williams (*op. cit*) as early as 1961: liberals (or old humanists), industrial trainers and public educators. For Ball (*op.cit*, p.52) the views of the public educators had held sway until the 1970s but in recent years 'the field of education policy making is overshadowed by the influence of the old humanists and industrial trainers.'

Maclure (1991, p.31) has referred to the 'historic failure of English education to integrate the academic and the practical, the general and the vocational.' We have seen that such a divide is peculiarly English and centuries old. It is feasible to trace

such perspectives to rival views in ancient Greece and the disagreements between Plato and Aristotle about the nature and pursuit of knowledge (Schofield, 1972). The blueprint for the English divide lies convincingly in the nineteenth century when the polarities met as a process of rapid industrialisation and when the 'gentleman was taught to consider himself above specialisation ... technical specialisation was the mark of one who had to use the knowledge to earn a living and not for the leisured pursuit of wisdom and beauty ...' (Wilkinson, 1970, p.12).

The developments in technical education and the struggle for recognition were to demonstrate how powerful the influence of this non-instrumental conception of knowledge could be. The post-1944 consensus may well have instigated a political truce but as Shilling (1989, p.84) observes the 'education-industry relations shifted from a collective to a corporate strategy and schools became subject to greater industrial influence.'

Traditionalists in the Civil Service are happy for a reworking of NVQs as long as the A-level/degree academic string is largely untouched. The Labour Party originally aligned itself with legislation ending employment under the age of 18 (1991 *Today's Education and Training: Tomorrow's Skills*) but withdrew from such a radical approach when in power. The vested industrial interests of today had as much influence on government as those who diluted the main points of the 1918 Education Act which similarly wished to concentrate on education and training at a decisive age.

The difficulties peculiar to English education in recent decades in finding a sense of purpose and direction and parity for vocational studies are tied to a traditional inhospitable attitude to a broad and comprehensive training philosophy just as it has resisted the implications of a mass liberal democratic theory. Explanations lie within the English paradox of radical values, parliamentary debate and power groupings,

industrialisation, financial markets, gentrified entrepreneurs and public ignorance of the effects of this dualism (Silver and Brennan, 1988).

Such value systems were reinforced through an education process in which the sons of industrialists actively participated. This bifurcation of the genteel and the popular, like laissez-faire economics and politics, is reflected in pedagogical writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in views about the mentalities of the higher and lower orders. Peters (1978) argued that instrumental and non-instrumental (practical and theoretical, vocational and academic) activities can be pursued for their own sakes and it is often the context of the learning and the ends to which it is aimed that are decisive.

Dearden (1990, p.47) confirmed this view by commenting that 'a process of training could be liberally conceived in such a way as to explore relevant aspects of understanding and in a way which satisfies the internal standards of truth and adequacy.' These remain individual voices isolated in entrenched values.

New vocationalism, despite heavy public relations efforts, has yet to develop its own momentum and, indeed, has to make direct comparisons against academic qualifications to find some rationale and justification. The allegiance to old standards of description and conventional wisdom inevitably means a continuation of the perceived relationship between educational attainment on one hand and economic earnings and employability on the other.

Comparative studies of educational achievement are problematic but there is some evidence that British results in general education standards (as opposed to those of high achievers) are low. A Green and Steedman survey (1993) confirmed that, in a comparison with German, French and Japanese 16 - 18 year olds, the UK's overall standards were the lowest.

Competence and the knowledge society

The dangers of these findings are self-evident if future economic success in a 'knowledge society' depends upon a solid grounding in general education plus additional specific vocational skills. The number of jobs in Britain grew by some 1.8 million between 1970 and 1990 to just under 26 million. The pattern of employment over the same period changed considerably. More than one million skilled jobs disappeared as did 1.8 million semi-skilled posts. In contrast, more than 3 million managerial, technical and professional jobs were created (Office of National Statistics, May, 1991). This led Aldrich (1996, p.32) to conclude:

'Few now believe either in the possibility of full employment or in the capacity of governments or the market to ensure that jobs can be shared between those who wish to work. Indeed, the obverse appears to be true: that successful economies will depend upon the employment of the ablest and best qualified for as long as possible, to the exclusion of their less capable contemporaries'.

The comparison with competitor states raises several key questions for policy makers. The first is the amount of public expenditure on education and training which also draws attention to the nature and effectiveness of such training. While it can be argued that it is sufficient to invest in human beings in as general and as open a manner as possible it has been a matter of policy since the 1970s that British investment was towards specific and measurable economic and social ends. This latter approach, of course, means central control of curriculum and standards.

Another issue is the relationship between education and training and society in general. Given the high achievements of the minority and the continuing poor

performance of the majority in post-compulsory education it would appear that the tripartite system is filtering those who can achieve into the professions while detaching others from the motivated and democratic culture for all as perceived in the rhetoric of lifelong learning and widening participation.

Definitions and the accuracy of the vocabulary of 'competence' and 'skill' serve to confuse rather than illuminate. Even in the 1990s after decades of trial and error Britain's workforce remains under-educated, under-trained and under-qualified (Aldcroft, 1992). This is against a continuing theme of skills shortages reinforced by amateurish management and lack of investment instrumental in generating low productivity.

Aldrich (*ibid.* p.86) came to five conclusions about the historical allegiance of governments to an economic/education policy interface:

1. There is no constant relationship between education and economic output. The latter depends on a complexity of circumstances some of which are economic policy while others are cultural.
2. English educational institutions have had a negative attitude to vocational education except as a preparation for traditionally high-status professions. The tripartite system reinforces this approach. The nature of the training a doctor is philosophically different (and perceptually superior) to the training of a mechanic.
3. While the cultural explanations of decline attributed by Wiener (*op.cit*) and Barnett (1972) must be subjected to rigorous scrutiny there is no doubt that the industrial, commercial and technological revolutions did not overthrow the traditional hierarchies and institutions of an eighteenth century England - the Church, aristocracy, monarchy

and Parliament. The same is true of the medieval education system of universities and public schools.

4. Though the inadequacies of these continuities were identified as early as the 1850s any reforms were piecemeal. Avoidance of substantial reform is a joint responsibility between government, local authorities, employers, unions, universities, teachers and parents reflecting a nineteenth century social and cultural division and the ability of those who can use the English traditions to promote their own ends and those of their children.

5. The role of the government, however, has been lacking in coherence and vision. The combination of Employment and Education departments may reinforce traditional hierarchies rather than weaken them. The inability to create a high number of technical schools is as much a problem in the 1990s as it was in the 1950s or, indeed, 1880s. It is interesting to note that in terms of economic performance it is always a matter of what reforms education needs to undergo rather than any change in industrial policy which receives ministerial attention.

Aldrich's comments serve as a basis for further discussion of this education/industry mismatch. Educationalists have long complained that industry does not specify what it wants from the education system while industrialists frequently complain that education does not provide them with suitably-qualified employees. In the face of rapidly shifting skills requirements it is a task of fleeting perfection to specify what is a current and relevant skill.

The task of defining what is a competence and who is competent complicates an already out-of-focus picture. For Norris (1991, p.9) competence was an 'El Dorado of a word with a wealth of meanings and the appropriate connotations for utilitarian times.' Yet the notion of a competent craftsman or artisan lies deep in English

education tradition. Certificates of competency were issued in the mid-nineteenth century for specific job functions in the coal mining industry (Berkovitch, 1977; Osborn, 1993).

Although a term of approbation 'competence' also carries with it a sense of lowest common denominator; of sufficiency rather than expert; of adequate rather than complete. Eagleton (1983, p.11) described a competent reader as a 'static conception' and Jessup (*op.cit*, p.8) was clearly aware of the 'basic minimum' nature of the word even as he defends it. The classification of functional analysis employed by the NCVQ (Mansfield, 1989) rather than the characteristics of superior performance (Tuxworth, 1989) seems to lead inevitably to the lower order concept.

Such disagreements about definitions and the diversity of views on the role of performance as against knowledge in the literature does not support claims of validity, reliability and relevance. 'Generic' competencies or 'key skills' - seemingly applicable across a wide range of employment - merely compound the confusion. While there may be some justification and legitimacy in the support of skills such as literacy and numeracy there is little philosophical or empirical evidence to give credence to the notion of such broad competencies for all seasons. Though emotive and persuasive on a political stage competencies remain conceptually imprecise (Hyland, 1994).

A continuing theme in the defence of new vocationalism has been the use of particular vocabulary to create a sense of worth. Indeed, a new language of achievement is in place responding to skills shortages and preparing for flexible working in a competitive market. As the list of vocational courses burgeoned so did the range of apparent competencies. Instead of being job specific as intended, NVQs copied much of their skill areas from material written in the 1970s and 1980s and bolted on additional requirements as a response to criticisms of lack of depth. Much of the

debate about a general, liberal grounding was lost in the notion that occupational practice could do without it.

As Bailey (*op.cit*, p.17) points out the 'belittling of knowledge and understanding' by the industrial trainers and supporters of the 'economic utility model of education' was both fallacious and disastrous for education in general and vocational education in particular. It forced traditionalists onto the defensive which put any academic reforms on hold and created a hole in occupational training which was devoid of an effective theoretical base.

The situation for those (mostly young) students not entering higher education is one of an uncharted mass of awards in which opportunities are unclear. The least able are the least protected and the least well-advised as they find themselves facing schemes and initiatives which tend to perpetuate their under-achievement. Even if the education and training system were a more reflective organism in which industrial needs could be mapped accurately and immediately it would still face inappropriate but entrenched standards set by university tradition.

The very system and structures intended to raise vocational training's profile served only to impair its status and impetus further as the 1993 Smithers (*op.cit*) survey demonstrates. The introduction of core skills (later Key skills - see **Appendix Seven**) and GNVQs can be regarded as attempts to put things right though MacFarlane (1993, p.53) contests that these have exacerbated the academic/vocational divide because the 'vocational curriculum has abandoned its separate non-examined general studies component and with it the liberal education ideal.'

Placed in the long term view, new vocationalism is reviving a similar set of justifications that were evident after 1944 which appealed to the human capital, social democratic and meritocratic theorists in turn. The difference is that the liberal,

general education approach has been replaced by a more functional, market-driven system in which liberalism is castigated as the reason for economic (in employment and relevant skill terms) decline.

Progressive education can be blamed for its lack of validity and its anti-industrial values at the same time (Whitty, *op.cit*; Jones, 1989). New vocationalism, in this context, can be seen as a political tool to help change the climate and culture of English institutions by promoting enterprise and individualism through market forces.

This expansionism of availability has historical antecedents in the Plowden-style progressivism, Newsom's raising of the school-leaving age, in new sixth forms and YOP/YTS schemes and in the new universities. All of these appeared in specific economic and political contexts which served the governments of their day and responded to dominant educational theories (be it human capital, liberal/general or occupational relevance).

The Audit of War

Aspects of economic policy today find themselves focused on skills shortages, flexibility and 'value-added products' (in terms of extra qualifications). The intellectual wisdom behind this is Corelli Barnett (*op.cit*) whose book *The Audit of War* made unfavourable comparisons between English and German education systems. English industry is condemned to a low skills equilibrium in which low quality training and poor quality production are mutually reinforcing.

This is a highly influential model of vocationalism which has focused previous Conservative and present Labour government's training efforts. Yet a comparison with Germany - or any other country - depends on all things being equal. Germany

retains a high degree of heavy industry and engineering and state control of major industries. Britain has systematically withdrawn from heavy manufacturing and replaced its economic drive with financial and service sector jobs. This impacts immediately on the skills required and the training needed to furnish those skills.

Therborn (1986, p.15) noted that 'the gulf between high and low employment countries (was) widening'. By focusing on policy process as well as outcome he was able to expose a number of popular myths. These included the prevailing concern over public versus private sector development and export orientation versus domestic demand - as arguments they appeared to be the product of ideology rather than economic analysis.

Indeed, proponents and opponents of the welfare state (including education) were criticised for selecting profit rates, levels of social expenditure and taxation or the size of public sector employment as key explanatory factors in comparative levels of unemployment and economic development a balanced general education/vocational skills training schemes and special employment in public services.

The British policy on mass unemployment has been recorded elsewhere but can be characterised in brief by stating that it achieved superficial loyalty but not participation. Ultimately, it was unsustainable, based as it was on economic individualism (and hedonistic aspirations), extreme libertarianism (based on the case for laissez-faire capitalism on moral grounds) and the use of the market as the final, impassionate arbiter of what is right for the economy, however imperfect that market may be.

In this light the use of education as scapegoat for national ills is highly questionable. Political influences on post-compulsory education were most noticeable as schemes introduced students to enterprise, acquisitive expectations (which translated into

acquiring qualifications), personal responsibility for wealth and welfare and a low wage regime or continuous training situation in place of full-time, permanent employment. The TUC's acceptance of training in place of youth employment did not help.

Economic rationales and human capital

The alignment of education and training to an overall national economic strategy has an apparent logic which often shields it from critical analysis: a wealthy country can provide social services and offer its people real chances of equity. There are enough examples of poor countries with dictatorships to make additional analysis appear churlish. Efficiency, therefore, has become equated with democracy and rights within this argument. At another level and in business terms a vast 'investment' is expected to generate a vast return. This is a human capital theory (Becker, 1964).

The theory is contestable, however, if the equation is heavily biased towards the efficiency side and the vocabulary of investment is reflected in earnings (employability) as a consequence of additional education and training. According to human capital theories these individual choice processes are inherently rational so that an efficient educational policy will be one which permits them to take place unobstructed. This, in turn, assumes an equality of opportunity which simply does not exist. It further denies the existence of sectors of the community with restricted access to education or with additional needs or regards them as non-productive and, hence, out of the equation. It is also an over-simplification in terms of measurable, direct consequences.

Some kinds of education influence outcomes directly - you cannot become a pilot or doctor without specific training - but the economic value of much, perhaps most,

education is less direct and difficult to measure. However immediately irrelevant education may be to a particular occupation it does increase the capacity to learn and increase the cost-effectiveness of later training. So far as individual educational choices are concerned they are usually formed under considerably more complex influences than human capital theory assumes. The objectively measured costs and returns are not equal to all in the community. The task of measuring results can only be achieved in broad terms of changing contexts.

To address this anomaly statistics of individuals employed or placed on training course take the place of actual returns of economic value. Such statistics then need to be supported by a structure of outcomes-driven qualifications to give them additional credibility. These have the extra bonus of allegedly meeting the stated skills needs of industry which, again, are factors contributing to national economic efficiency and competitiveness.

Despite these reservations human capital theory and rate of return analysis are notions that governments consider worth keeping because of their apparent logic and 'irrefutable' evidence of education's contribution to production and growth. Yet Britain's peculiar education system distorts availability and choice. University courses receive popular support than that of other sectors making higher education an attractive option for individuals as the doorway to more career paths.

With long lead times involved in creating alternative strands, governments much choose structures and allocate funds on the basis of future 'demands' and requirements which might include responses to recession and unemployment rather than real individual choice. In this way their policies drive provision, access and qualification pathways. This is sustained and enforced by financial strictures which are the major arbiters of choice and the greatest influence on equity in the post-16 education and training system.

The concept of human capital was not fully explored until 1961 when American economist Theodore Schultz analysed educational expenditure as a form of investment. Becker's (*op. cit*) book *Human Capital* furthered the concept and set the pattern of policy on both sides of the Atlantic in terms of analysing labour demands, wage determination and earnings capacity for individuals.

The idea gained credence in political circles as a measurable (and quotable) benchmark for investment but the actual process has become one of screening for employment which enables employers to identify suitable characteristics in applicants which will make them more productive. This is an identifiable trend in Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships which 'achieve specific vocational training goals in a shorter time, adopting a different approach, flexibly applied to suit employees and trainees' (DfEE leaflet, 1998).

If this happens to be a project which identifies employability as the key strategy then anyone who participates in additional education or training to further their chances of employment and increase personal earnings (and disposable income) is a statistical successful outcome. The political imperative is, therefore, to engage the public in a personal pursuit of employment and qualification progression which contributes to such statistical cost-benefit analysis in positive terms. This is always achieved at the expense of alternatives in the cost-benefit study which were perceived to have fallen short of profitability or rate of return figures.

In addition, once this policy is in place it generates a legitimacy of its own in terms of political survival - it would be a brave Secretary of State who denounced and replaced an extremely expensive vocational education structure and, in any case, new vocationalism serves an employment engineering strategy.

Human capital theories had a ready audience in the Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s since it fitted neatly in with ideals of economic nationalism, individual responsibility and the heaping of blame onto education. Sleeping partners in the shifting political sands were a determined commitment to capital finance, a fixation with foreign policy and the favoured treatment of defence, agriculture and financial institutions. The pressure on education to deliver technical competencies, skills and workplace discipline was in keeping with corresponding attention to reducing union power and centralising control.

Esland and Cathcart (1985, p.212) suggest that 'for liberal humanism is being substituted a version of social and economic Darwinism where enterprise and the possession of skills for technological capability have become the dominant values.' Such an approach served to deal with the continuing low probability of employment giving legitimation to a significant overhaul of qualifications, management and institutions. It is difficult to escape Gleeson's (1983, p.37) conclusion that:

'... the plethora of curriculum guidelines emanating from the MSC and the DES ... may obscure a related and perhaps more pressing political problem: namely the effect a fall in demand for labour has on the principles of authority and discipline in society. Work preparation for non-existent jobs, therefore, takes on a "new" connotation; one less concerned with training for particular technical skills and one more concerned with "educating" people for the social order.'

While the service sector has a burgeoning demand for staff they are of a low-skill variety. The human capital approach has still not been able to explain why some countries are more successful in supplying high levels of quality education and training to address this imbalance. The answer may lie in Britain's institutional self-

reinforcing low-skill equilibrium with its origins in the country's experience as the first industrial nation, the effects of which have continued on the current stage of economic competition making British governments and companies less willing to invest in higher-level skills than their main competitors.

Higher skills (compared with more skills) are expensive and tend to raise expectations which the employment structure of the country cannot meet. While 15-20% of school-leavers opt for a higher education, (36% in South Korea), 7% of these acquire degrees in their chosen area while the majority of young adults face an uncertain future in a qualifications morass (OECD Report, *Education at a Glance*, 1995

Competitive advantage of nations

Britain suffers from low-staying on rates in further and higher education (Finegold, 1999). Despite direct intervention through its New Deal and Modern Apprenticeship schemes the government has convinced fewer people to stay on in schools or colleges. This reflects a similar disinterest during the 1950s when employment was a much simpler and easier option. Labour's new emphasis on participation (as urged in official reports) is one political response but the onus is on colleges to generate the numbers of students rather than explore wider issues of what constitutes a relevant course and the exercise may simply be designed to feed a statistical machinery.

The nature of the electoral cycle and 'investment' mismatch plays a significant role here. Education and training policy serves a number of aims apart from its alleged support of national economic policy. Britain has undergone and continues to follow a succession of reforms and borrowed policies which address immediate employment matters rather than plan long-term. Keep (*op.cit*, p.79) called this process the 'pick 'n' mix' approach which reinforced the institutional lack of support for a high-skill policy.

While this analysis suggests some structural reasons why Britain's education and training policies may have failed economic strategy it is important to keep in mind that even if such institutional and historic constrictions could be altered thereby encouraging the principle actors to invest more this would not necessarily lead to an improvement in the skills base in Britain's case. This country already suffers from a key shortage in teachers in most areas but especially in mathematics, sciences and foreign languages.

The problem is partially hidden by the fact that many teachers cover in classes for which they are only marginally qualified. In further and continuing education, as Rose and Wignanek (1990) note in a comparison between Britain and Germany it is pointless spending vast amounts on additional training without first creating a pool of well-trained tutors.

We are entering another expansionary period in education and training driven by a change in government, White Papers and official reports. The 16 - 19 year-old context is still seen as the most dynamic generating contradictions within stated policies of lifelong learning and inclusive practice. This episode of expansion, therefore, seems set to reproduce at least some of the major preoccupations of earlier periods without pause to call into question those established assumptions about skills, student needs, business needs and economic fortunes.

A common thread that unites these expansionary bursts is the association of raised skill levels with economic threats and international competition. Attendant changes in curriculum in education have, thus, been associated with vocationalism and attacks on established institutions (at least, publicly).

Common sense as policy

However, the way in which vocationalism is used to undermine general education and support theories of human capital/economic regeneration have not remained the same. Expansionary episodes take place within different social and political contexts and the ideological justification and rationale vary accordingly. Hence, the dimensions of continuity and similarity co-exist with significant differences between periods.

Enlarging access and changing provision can be justified in their own right as socially beneficial goals but these notions are still driven by 'relevance' and 'practicality' and ultimately form themes in an engineering of employment and earnings expectations.

New vocationalism derives much of its political potency from its appeal to a broad spectrum of concerns with its 'common sense' simplicity. Who would openly refute the need for a highly-skilled workforce? Therefore, it is ideally placed to play this accommodatory role and has proved far more successful than possible alternatives such as 'community education' in being all things to all people.

Post-compulsory education's part in this is to be the proving ground for a range of approaches and mechanisms later introduced more widely across the curriculum - a situation described unkindly by Moore and Hickox (1999, p.71) as an 'educational Guernica'. State and market controls were allowed to affect and shape the curriculum delivered in colleges through explicit programmes of study geared towards competency and economic relevance.

The net effect was to change both the context and content of vocationalism. Essentially, the liberal educationalist focus gave way to a content related to skill requirements of the labour market and in a context of an industrial training skills model. Specific and observable performance in an environment of enterprise were perceived as the key to securing economic growth.

The role of the government and direct political influence cannot be understated here. Whereas market liberalism is actually neutral in terms of the content of the curriculum in that it believes a market should be consumer-driven, new vocationalism is neither truly market-led nor neutral. Indeed, education and training is considered too important to be left to the free play of markets so the state controls what it regards as national imperatives from the centre. Ironically, market forces are applied to qualifications as if they were commodities.

Thus, we witness a substantial reversal from a 'hands-off' liberal philosophy to a deliberate interventionist approach in contrast to Germany and Scandinavian countries which pursue a collaborative social market. This represents a repackaging of previous legitimations of education in new forms by making economic performance a direct consequence of the qualifications machinery. Most crucially, new vocationalism rests many of its assumptions on the possibility of predicting the future needs of the workforce to meet economic goals.

Vocationalist emphasis on real learning situations and crude behaviourist psychology based on competency and outcomes (Jones and Moore, 1993) means that it risks ignoring deeper intellectual competencies that are necessary to generate true flexibility in post-industrial structures.

If comparisons with other nations are to be made then it should be noted that in France and Germany a factory manager is likely to have come from the same school as a civil servant and promotions are far more likely to be based on job performance than accumulating qualifications. One of the problems already noted by Collins (1979, *op. cit*) was the possibility of 'credential inflation' in which the value of an award is diluted simply by the number of people who attain it.

Psychologically, this can only undermine confidence in the qualification and detract from any serious attempts at addressing skills shortages. Indeed, it must be argued that if businesses are still complaining of specific shortages then they have been badly serviced by the qualification system. The ironic implication of this is that liberal education - which claims no such relevancy - is less susceptible to such problems and is more likely through its adherence to rigorous content and assessment to provide the deep competence that modern economies really require (Moore and Hickox, *op.cit*). Moreover, when we consider the ultimate goals of educational activity, notions of intrinsic and instrumental value blur as Bailey (1984, p.90) suggests: 'it is precisely its general and fundamental utility that provides part of the justification of a liberal general education'.

Globalisation and the demise of the nation state

The globalisation of trade calls into question the nature and need for nation-states and a realisation that international prosperity depends on mutuality if not direct partnership. A world-wide consensus arose which recognised the need for quality education and training but in America and Britain (and others such as New Zealand and Australia) this requirement was linked to political projects with a wider agenda. While much has been written about the flawed New Right arguments there is now a sufficiency of evidence to analyse in the New Labour approach.

The Labour government has continued to embrace the increased power of multinational companies which have become larger with a more open world economy. Former national champions such as ICI, Mercedes-Benz, Ford and British Petroleum no longer maintain close domestic ties. Instead they partake in a global auction for investment, technology and jobs. This is particularly evident in America and Britain and has contributed significantly to the breakdown of old Fordist relationships

between government, employers and staff. This does not just apply to the concept of mass production and huge factories but also to the Keynesian demand management relating to mass markets and mass consumption (which includes services).

Efforts to pass responsibility for major aspects of social welfare back onto the individual are examples of this changing relationship and introduced market rules of engagement. One aspect of this is a nation-state's desire to seek advantages within a global economy favouring its own. A balance of an elite core of high-skill workers plus a flexible majority of low-skill staff is a key advantage. In a market economy the prosperity of workers depends on their ability to trade their (changing) skills in an unfettered international auction. The need for ever-changing skills is a source of qualification 'overheating' - there can never be enough of the right skills but there can be too many of the 'wrong' variety.

The transformation of Western economies has entailed new rules of wealth creation. The greatest profits are found in customised or specialist areas of production rather than mass standardisation. To respond to this each nation has had to reassess its own social institutions and human resources.

Economic advantage seems to lie within the quality and productivity of human capital but only in as much as they can influence the customised and non-standard aspects of production. Such industries do not have the capacity to offer mass employment and while their work-forces may be specially skilled they are in a minority. Knowledge, learning, information and technical competence are the new raw materials of international commerce (Brown and Lauder, 1999).

Recognising that the new pioneer lands are made of knowledge has led to a wave of government, quango and institutional responses and pleas for action. The National Commission of Education suggested in 1993 (para.16) that:

'For us, knowledge and skills will be central. In an area of world-wide competition and low-cost global communications, no country like ours will be able to maintain its standard of living, let alone improve it, on the basis of cheap labour and low-tech products and services. There will be too many millions of workers and too many employers in too many countries who will be able and willing to do that kind of work fully as well as we or people in any other developed country could do it - and at a fraction of the cost'.

One of the last reviews carried out by the previous Conservative government in December 1996 entitled *Learning to Compete* concluded (p.6):

'The 21st Century will present us with unprecedented challenges, both social and economic. Through rapidly developing technology the world is becoming smaller and the pressure on each nation to succeed is becoming ever stronger. If we are to thrive as a society and prosper as a nation, we must ensure that our education system produces not only well-educated and highly skilled young people but also people who have been developed socially, intellectually and morally'.

Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett launched the *Learning Age* (1998) pamphlet with the introduction:

'We stand on the brink of a new age. Familiar certainties and old ways of doing things are disappearing. Jobs are changing and with them the skills needed for the world of tomorrow. In our hearts we know we have no choice but to prepare for this new age, in which

the key to success will be the education, knowledge and skills of our people'.

Yet these proclamations which contain a mix of protest and pleading are no more than refrains from the Devonshire Report 1875 (need for more science teaching), the Samuelson Report 1884 (to support technical instruction), the Hadow Report 1926 (to give a practical and realistic bias to school studies) and the Barlow Report 1946 (doubling the output of scientists). Matching of skills with a changing world kaleidoscope, however, remains a source of contestation and political struggle. Such ideological debates are not merely reflections of economic conflict. Rather, they often have their own limited scale agendas and parameters. As Dale (1989, p.37) notes the state: 'is a set of publicly financed institutions, neither separately nor collectively necessarily in harmony'.

New technologies in the knowledge world

Assumptions about the impact of new technology are snared on conventional wisdoms of the role of management and workers. While 'flat organisational structures' are strong characteristics of contemporary management books the reality is that firms tend to cling to known and consistent security blankets in the shape of authority and power hierarchies. The demise of Fordism does not necessarily mean that the majority of workers will find jobs which exercise their range of capabilities (Harvey, 1989).

The global auction concept has had serious repercussions for education and training. Market reforms in education are likely to leave a large majority of the present and future working population without the capacity to function in a global economy unless they are active participants in a highly constrained lifelong learning strategy and are job mobile. The apparently open-handed and inclusive New Labour concept of a

learning society contains sub-texts in which the nature of 'relevance' and skills are controlled terms relating to personal status.

The Left has had to restructure its responses to the transformation of capitalism in order to pursue goals of social justice and economic efficiency. This has meant the formulation of credible policies to global operations which include domestic financial management and perceived fairness of distribution of funds and social equity (Rogers and Streeck, 1994). Strategic investment in the economy (including education and training) is regarded by New Labour as a way of moving towards a high-skill, high-wage 'magnet' economy which attracts outside investment because of the internationally recognised belief that advanced economies can only compete on quality since the new Asian 'tiger' economies can still mass produce with a low-cost base.

Underlying this approach is a vision of a knowledge society combined with a flexible workforce. This post-Fordist view accepts that it is impossible to deliver widespread prosperity when trying to compete on price. Therefore, a policy which adapts both physical and human capital is required: modern technology and a culture of relevant learning. This has become known as producer capitalism (Dore, 1987; Thurow, 1993) in which relatively low-cost, long-term investment in education and training replaces market capitalism and its focus on short-term investment for quick profits and low-wage labour.

In practice this means government intervention in employment legislation with guaranteed minimum wages, relaxed union controls and back-to-work schemes for the unemployed. The role of the state changes from creating the right environment for the market to flourish to that of 'strategic trader' (Krugman, 1993, p.111) guiding industrial development where appropriate and providing the relevant infrastructure. Here the pursuit of a highly educated workforce is a priority.

The widespread use of computers and high speed communications is a key aspect of producer capitalism which, in turn, influences education policy. A speech by President Clinton in 1992 encapsulated this new view in which he saw that: 'what we earn will depend on what we learn.'

The effect on post-compulsory education has been the same in Britain as it has been in America. Instead of encouraging an enterprise culture as they did under the New Right, colleges are exhorted to promote a lifelong learning culture in which all participate. A 'magnet' economy attracting significant investment will depend heavily on good skill levels in the areas indicated: information technology and communications - hence their increased appearances in course and programmes across the whole curriculum span including teacher training and the Arts.

Employment mobility depends upon a significant willingness to subject oneself to substantial upward and downward movement in employment and education terms (Esping-Andersen, 1994). Assumed, also, is the belief that unemployment is tolerable in the short-term as long as the time is spent updating skills. Equally, being in a low-paid job is superior to unemployment.

Thus, educational and training opportunities within a wholly inclusive environment are pivotal to underpinning the mobility and flexibility required in a magnet economy competing on quality not price. Only a spread of key skills, it is theorised, (identified by governments official reports and think tanks rather than the public themselves) can address long-term unemployment and the issues of international competition. Guarantees of full employment remain firmly buried in the past but education and training schemes take the place of the dole within this new thinking. Colleges play a fundamental role to support this.

New Labour's view that future prosperity depends upon exploiting advanced technology, creating a producer/magnet economy and concentrating on knowledge as an industry has the benefit of fitting neatly in with generalised, common sense political statements about lifelong learning, inclusive practice and widening participation. The favourable acceptance of commissions and reports on education, particularly those involving post-compulsory education, is witness to this. The theory, however, has significant areas of concern.

Firstly, there can only be a minority of future jobs which require leading edge technical skill. Not all employment will change towards a high-tech base and, indeed, Britain's employment structure is moving towards a predominantly service sector economy.

Secondly, there is no really clear end to Fordist traditions - some factories operate quite well without the need for change at all. Widening participation to include everyone in the quest for a limited number of places, therefore, seems political rather than practical. The use of the labour market as a legitimate mechanism for resolving distribution of wealth is no more tenable now than under the New Right.

While the notion of raising skill levels for all appears socially acceptable as a goal in raising the spirits of those who have faced the alternative it also raises expectations to levels that even a flourishing magnet economy cannot reasonably support. One unintended consequence of the expansion of post-compulsory education is the potential massive wastage of talent among college graduates unable to find demand for their particular skills.

This is in stark contrast to the skills shortages and recruitment difficulties experienced by firms in a survey of Britain's 70 National Training Organisations (*Times Educational Supplement*, June 11 1999, p.9). The most severe problems related in

that survey were middle management and technical occupations requiring supervisory, marketing and specialist IT knowledge (rather than broad computer skills).

The National Council of Training Organisations reported that all sectors of the economy were experiencing such difficulties yet this was 14 years after NVQs were introduced and 11 years after the National Curriculum. The worst aspect of that statement is that it is made when the economy is still patchy in industrial performance. A situation of rapid growth could not be sustained and the 'importing' of graduate and specialist talent is a real consideration.

Education and training as links to the economy

Taking the results of several OECD countries we can see that Gross Domestic Product has been divorced from employment for at least 20 years just as growth has not led to shared prosperity (1992,1994). In Spain, the economy grew by 93% between 1970 and 1992 but it lost 2% of its jobs (*Financial Times*, October 2 1993, p.6). In Canada, Australia and New Zealand the main indicators of economic performance - inflation, balance of payments and growth - vary dramatically but unemployment stubbornly refuses to fall below 7% or more. Since the oil crisis of the 1970s the lower limit of unemployment has been pushed up substantially and it has been locked there since with no amount of policies in education and training affecting it in real terms (other than in the production of official figures).

Overall it appears fallacious to use pricing as a way of getting people back to work (New Right) or pretend that education and training in the form of relevant skills (New Left) will be equally as practical. Unemployment is set to remain a structural feature of modern trading nations and the temporary full employment under Fordism cannot be copied in the present international arena. A core of workers in corporations retain

power through their high level of qualifications and specialisms while the deregulation of whole sectors in the 1980s and 1990s enabled senior executives to participate in wealth extraction rather than wealth creation (Lazonick, 1993).

The use of education and training to raise technical standards, for example, does not resolve the question of positional advantage (Hirsch, 1977). In other words, access to independent schools or good academic qualifications remain a key factor in the determination of career destinations. The return to a tripartite system through traditional routes, GNVQs and NVQs has only exacerbated that truism. The change of policy from merit to market under the New Right encouraged the underfunding of sink schools for the less fortunate and favourable resourcing of 'centres of excellence' for the more well off. NVQs appeared in parallel to provide qualifications which aspired to parity of esteem but were never likely to compete directly for the higher paid jobs or university entrance.

There is clearly a conflict of policy in which a commitment to social justice through education is still thwarted by structural tensions in the qualification system. Appeals to the need for flexibility and employability only serve to heighten the sense of insecurity about work patterns (Newman, 1993; Peterson, 1994). New Left are facing a problematic relationship between equity and efficiency.

John Dewey had already noted in 1939 (p.42) that every expansive period in history is marked by social trends which serve to 'eliminate distance between peoples and classes previously hemmed off from one another.' At times when the opposite happens it narrows the range of contacts and ideas and the culture of the privileged tends to become 'sterile, to be turned back to feed on itself; their art becomes a showy display and artificial; their wealth luxurious; their knowledge over-specialised; their manners fastidious rather than human.'

Vocational Education, Social Efficiency and Democracy

Technology has always acted as a catalyst for social change. This is as true now as it was during the Industrial Revolution. The debate and inherent tensions in vocational education which took place in the first twenty years of the 20th century were to be repeated in the last twenty. The choice then was whether schools should be servants to technological efficiency or whether they should help people humanise life under technology. Social efficiency philosophers such as Snedden (*op.cit*) and Prosser argued for vocational schools with 'habits of correct thinking and correct doing' (Prosser and Quigley, 1950, p.63). The work of psychologist Edward Thorndike supported this hypothesis of the mind as a habit-forming machine.

On the surface, John Dewey (*ibid*, p.74) agreed that 'sterile, bookish education' served little purpose and he also wanted to broaden the curriculum to include sciences. Beyond that there were profound differences which are echoed in today's debates about national efficiency. Dewey argued that a separation of education and training made both areas narrower and that such a strictly-defined curriculum would label individuals into pre-ordained areas of work. In addition, if a country was to act democratically then individuals must emerge from the patterning of culture plus the value choices each person can make alone with informed reasoning. The argument was one of choice and democracy. For Dewey, meaningful participation could not be sustained under urban-corporate conditions dictated by vocational education alone.

It is relatively easy to debate and justify a reconciliation between vocational and academic education yet extremely difficult to break down the adversarial positions that have formed over centuries. Dewey's writings are helpful here since his starting point was this very dichotomy. He had a healthy dislike for all rigid divisions and argued passionately against any either/or choice. Instead of the notions that education

is development from within or formation from without he preferred the Aristotelean tradition of education as a 'leading out' activity to bring out the highest in human potential with training in the art of inquiry.

Dewey envisaged active participation in the construction of knowledge in which knowledge and truth are not absolutes but constructed by humans from their own experiences. He attacked 20th century practice on the grounds that it had become highly specialised, one-sided and narrow. It was an education:

'... dominated almost entirely by the medieval conception of learning ... something which appeals for the most part to the intellectual aspect of our natures ... not to our impulses and tendencies to make, to do, to create, to produce, whether in the form of utility or art.'

(*op.cit*, 1916, p.37)

In attacking the sterile nature of pure academic pursuit Dewey did not favour the other extreme. His purpose was to promote the virtues of a wider, general education which included both vocational and academic values emphasising 'the continuity of knowing with an activity which purposely modifies the environment'. As a fierce opponent of social efficiency and scientific management Dewey perceived a broad conception of vocationalism which was neither narrowly focused nor occupationally specific but which allowed for a 'genuine discovery of personal aptitudes so that a proper choice of a specialised pursuit in later life may be indicated' (*op.cit*, 1914, p.38). This connects well with the general preference for a pedagogy which exploits the learner's interests and experience and, ideally but not exclusively, has relevance to the solution of practical problems (Peters, 1977).

Dewey's two main arguments against a narrowly conceived vocational education both have a direct relationship with contemporary debate about the post-16 curriculum. First, when 'educators conceive vocational guidance as something which leads to a definitive, irretrievable and complete choice, both education and the chosen vocation are likely to be rigid, hampering further growth' (*op.cit*, 1916, p.40). Secondly, and important to the notion of magnet economies, the needs of a constantly evolving industrial society can never be met by narrow skills training which neglects aspects of a general education. He was convinced that (p.41):

'... any scheme for vocational education which takes its point of departure from the industrial regime that now exists is likely to assume and to perpetuate its divisions and weaknesses and thus to become an instrument in accomplishing the feudal dogma of social predestination.'

This warning is as relevant to tripartite qualifications and lifelong learning flexibility now as it was to Fordist industrial operations then. The nature and value of work is placed into question here and with it the ideas surrounding quality of life and managerialism as diametrically opposed. The task of overcoming these contradictions, as Dewey defined it, was to develop strategies for bringing qualities of the democratic ethos into institutions undergoing change because of science, technology and corporatism.

Elitist answers had not worked. Neither had strictly vocational ones. His general strategy was to seek a freeing of minds across the general population with schools and colleges pivotal in providing a wide curriculum in which young people could learn to understand the transformations taking place in the lifetimes and, rather than being remote from and fearful of them, they could be confident their education had equipped them for change.

The power of Dewey's arguments remain undiminished and there is some validity in the idea that new integrations of a general education with occupational/technical training could serve to revitalise school and college experiences which could, in turn, lead to social transformation. (Interestingly, arguments against his notions of selfhood included the dualism of German design which had been upheld as a main source of that country's economic revival and as a reason for maintaining a strict division of purpose. Germany has significantly had to rethink its academic/vocational apprenticeship model in the new world order of competitive advantage.)

For all practical purposes the debate at the beginning of the 20th century was won by the social efficiency philosophers. There had been little desire to heed Dewey's words on either side of the Atlantic as the need for armaments had become the imperative. Practical needs won over untried theory but that victory has had implications for the rest of the century.

The thinking remained static that pupils could be sorted into occupational destinations at an early stage with an appropriate education to match. Additionally, the social efficiency success made education accountable to society in terms of relevance and students ability to link into a work society:

'Learning will develop the human and intellectual capital which is now at the centre of a nation's competitive strength. It will provide the tools to manage industrial and technological change and help generate the ideas, research and innovation on which economic progress relies.'

(The Learning Age, 1998, para. 3)

Individualism and the work ethic

The unquestioned dominance of such perspectives and the moral and cultural assumptions in attendance have been a factor of Labour's term in office as they were in Conservative administrations. The drive to individualism has strong associations with Greek Cynics and Stoics through mediaeval Christian doctrine, the writings of Descartes and a rich bed soil on English liberalism. It manifested itself as a separation of mind and body, subject and object, work and thought. Ultimately, the result was a disassociation of education from training.

Within this liberal tradition, individualism was closely associated with a mercantile Britain, entrepreneurialism and political laissez-faire. The state distanced itself from citizens unless it benefited the state (taxes, recruitment of soldiers, Poor Laws). Macpherson (1964, p.13) had noted that 'the individual is essentially proprietor of his own person, and capacities, for which he owes nothing to society.' This philosophy was a key ingredient of market theories of economics but has found some overlapping with New Labour's concepts of a learning society in which everyone is engaged in a global auction of skills.

The cross-party appeal of such ideas stems from intuitive beliefs in natural (and measurable) abilities, the right of government to determine educational links with economic performance and the intrusion of human capital theories contained within that right. Hemming (1969, p.7) saw individualism as a 'natural' product of evolution which underpinned notions of tripartite segregation of talents and skills. The principle has influenced politicians in that few would deny a 'natural' allocation of different human abilities is quite evident

For the past two decades and continuing as a trend one of the central premises of economic an employment policy has been that responsibility for generating job

opportunities rests essentially with the individual either in direct terms (self-employment) or indirect (new skills in a flexible recruitment environment).

Colleges were a tool in the generation of an enterprise culture on the one hand and in delivering a new structure of competence-based qualifications on the other. In this supply-side argument employers were freed of any responsibility for employment save that which met their, largely, short-term needs. Human Resource Management and the new managerialism it represented was mostly a reactive aspect of industry dealing with current demands and down-sizing as necessary.

Manpower planning was a thing of the past except in terms of how fewer people were needed to perform the same or more work. This meant that City institutions which were criticised by observers such as Hutton (1995) for having such a negative impact on national investment have remained untouched by Conservative and Labour governments.

Where politics have played a leading role it has been in the holy grail of inward investment from international players predominantly motor vehicles and electronics. By 1998 this approach had generated 160 billion pounds worth of foreign owned business investment (*The Observer*, 2 August, 1998, p.33). What was not so obvious at the time was the instability of the global auction that the New Right and New Left so passionately pursue. In other words, if investment is so easy to bring in it is equally as easy to extract. Walters (1998, p.121) noted:

'Britain has become as easy to exit as it is to enter because of flexible, insecure labour conditions and lack of pressure on investors to integrate with the local economy, causing the UK to either stand by and watch as foreign firms pull out when the going gets tough or bail out factories to stop the shifting abroad.'

The very flexibility demanded by governments of the workforce is exhibited by international organisations who contract and expand with impunity. Individuals have less and less control over such fluctuations and the pursuit of the 'right' skills is more a case of guesswork than accurate assessment. The *Learning Age* and *Learning to Succeed* Green and White Papers make no reference to the negative impact of globalisation on employment.

Much of the rhetoric makes its stand on the belief in the present qualification system working its way through the workforce once colleges are brought online to assist in the process. To a great extent, the role of post-compulsory education is, again, non-negotiable. The emphasis on prescriptive skill developing courses with little scope for critical reflection is set to increase not diminish with limited scope for discussion.

Once again, the vocabulary of 'change', 'innovation', 'technology-driven' and 'flexibility' are as difficult to disagree with as were 'choice', 'quality' and 'value' under the New Right. Just as the Conservatives made elements of the political rhetoric their own so Labour have found a rich source of motivational spin in 'developing social capital' and 'New Deal'.

With a heavy leaning towards vocational qualifications post-compulsory education is providing training for a post-Fordist economy whose demands are largely low-skilled service sector jobs (in which GNVQs found it difficult to settle). Not surprisingly, recent aspects of post-compulsory expansion reflect this rather than challenge it revealing stark contradictions between government reports and the reality of segmented, casualised labour.

The way in which colleges are still operating in a competitive market (they compete for student numbers) simply confirms that they will provide those courses which

generate most funding rather than react accurately to local and national needs. This, in turn, compounds inherent inequalities of opportunity rather than fostering inclusivity - a college may have an over-subscribed demand for health and beauty courses while the region may have a very limited local demand.

Problems repeating themselves

If a current problem for educationalists, politicians and colleges management is one of how to respond to such questions then it is salutary to remember that the Crowther Report (1959) addressed the same issues unsuccessfully. In the post-election period the situation is complicated further with issues of markets, managerialism, legislation and the potential conflict with democracy and professionalism. The responsibility of the individual for self-development and continuous upskilling appears to be under strain when compared with the increased insecurity of employment no matter what qualifications are held. It is also at odds with the humanistic vocabulary of recent reports and Papers. The competitive ethos which underpinned market philosophies is so deeply imbued in the political/economic conscious that it has been woven into New Labour policy.

Almost imperceptibly, then, technology and the associated skills have been almost glorified. To pursue those skills is becoming an integral part of teaching, engineering, administration, clerical, factory and service sector jobs. Few are unaffected. The driving influence of instrumental rationality prevents the examination of themes, interests and social contexts. The skill is set above the understanding. Interpreting the ideas of Jurgen Habermas (1975), Mezirow (1981) posits three generic domains of worthwhile learning each with its own interpretative categories, criteria for establishing the validity of ideas and methods of enquiry as well as its own learning goals, content, needs and modes of educational intervention.

These domains were: task-oriented problem-solving, understanding meaning in interpersonal communication and self knowledge through perspective transformation. The instrumental rationality model of competency-based skill accumulation barely matches the definition of the first domain and falls significantly short of the remaining two. Mezirow concludes that formula or packaged programmes do not fully address the differences in goal and nature of the learning task.

These findings support Braverman's (1974) attack on scientific management and the disassociation of the labour process from the skills of the workers, the separation of conception from execution and the use of the monopoly of knowledge to control each step of the labour process. The theory is just as valid in an increasingly service sector economy with its standardised hotel rooms, standardised telesales scripts and standardised fast food delivery.

It has also found a welcome home in new managerialism which seeks to detach staff from the appropriate knowledge for critical enquiry. Instrumental rationality finds its sustenance in Taylor's (*op.cit*) view that the end justifies the means. A cost-effective product is one which has undergone least interaction with people.

This distancing of humans from the process and product has worked its way through Fordist factories into a post-Fordist consciousness seamlessly in spite of the uplifting rhetoric of empowerment. Hart (1992, p.106) concluded that 'educational practices that move entirely within the narrow confines of instrumental reason, and which consider instrumental reason as their only standard, lose their critical and therefore truly educational potential.' If the experiential, participative and critical, informed reasoning elements are neither taught nor expected of a worker then it is difficult to imagine a realistically flexible contribution is attainable in the workplace.

It is equally problematic that the moral dimensions of decision-making as a citizen will also remain largely untouched by those pursuing a prescriptive training programme. The very flexibility required of a modern economy and so readily identified in government reports and papers is ill-served by the reshaping of skill through the present vocational structure. As Gleeson (1989, p.61) suggests '... without a broadly based general education it is most unlikely that students will be able to utilise forms of training that they have not been educated to absorb.'

If a new form of utilitarianism is allowed to flourish then it will 'universalize self-interested decision-making' (Singer, 1979, p.49). Although theoretical at one level such moral perspectives are taking hold in education and training policies and have a practical manifestation in terms of what is on offer and what can be translated into personal wealth through the sale of employable skills. The language of the market is transmitted to the 'customers' through the NVQ system.

In terms of the range of vocational responses brought to bear on economic challenges and employment demands in recent years the introduction of NVQs can be regarded as supportive of an individualistic solution to alleged problems of skills for a global auction by claiming to offer appropriate competencies for this supposed deficiency.

Yet, having set out to provide a relevant and meaningful alternative to traditional academic routes this policy widened the gulf through application of vigorous market-based qualifications and the pursuit of facts over understanding, analysis and evaluative skills. In addition, concentration on individual performance against standards detracts from the intercommunicative and interdependent nature of business and commerce - a significant contradictory aspect of vocational training's stated aim of flexibility.

The concept of ownership and empowerment has gained considerable currency through this qualification structure in terms of learner autonomy. This is reinforced by the sub-division of jobs into key skill areas which are allocated a scarcity value by the very fact that six 'Key Skills' are now available for study at NVQ Levels separately or as 'add ons' to other qualifications. There are several philosophical weaknesses in the presentation of scarcity elements in skills and ownership of them. Firstly, skills are generally available to be acquired by anyone with the right aptitude and inclination. Competition for some skills is hardly competition at all and sole ownership is exceedingly rare.

Secondly, the possession of appropriate skills does not automatically equate to job opportunities. The movement to relate funding to vocational relevance has led to the formation of over 18,000 individual qualifications just to acquire accreditation (213 of those qualifications have never had students - *Skills for All* report 1999) yet the market /individual choice philosophy attached to them results in some courses being over-subscribed yet clearly incapable of leading to relevant employment in all cases. The NVQ legitimises its approach partly through open access yet this creates its own crisis of irrelevance and relationship with national economic demands.

The explanation for these enormous changes comes in two distinct but inter-operable policy movements that altered the world of education, training and work forever. The first was the erosion of the 'welfare settlement' and the second was the Thatcher revolution which has maintained its momentum. Both involved a tectonic shift of policy between private and state capital.

On the larger world platform capitalism 'defeated' communism. In Britain, the mixed economy is steadily moving its strength from state responsibility to individualism with the government as provider of cheaper alternatives to social security dependency. The

need for cheap substitutes is reflected in a structured education and training system which remains divided by access through funds and income.

English society, like railway carriages in the nineteenth century had 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes. In schools, children learned of the teacher, prefect, pupil triad. In the army there were (and still are) officers, NCOs and troops while the BBC naturally postulated three audiences in Third, Home and Light programmes (Ainley, 1999). The 'peculiarities of the English' can, perhaps, be explained through the analogy of England as a place of parent, nanny, child; king, ministers and citizens or (in private schools) monitors, leaders, fags. This vision of a stratified 'system of everything' is especially attractive to those in the middle as a place of comfort having neither total responsibility but still in control of a significant majority. The division of non-manual work and manual labour was further sub-divided into skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations.

This, in turn, within a class-laden society meant 'respectable' and 'rough'. That there were few major challenges to this structure was due, in the main, to its security and predictability. A reasonable probability of employment was as good an incentive as any. The consequences for education were that it was, inevitably, front-loaded: whatever needed to be done was achieved before the prevailing school leaving age. This was 'lifelong earning' and the education and training was formatted to reflect the strata of society. The almost accidental boom period of 30 years after World War Two led those who lived through it to assume that living standards could rise forever and that Keynesian economic controls could prevent any slumps.

These assumptions were fuelled by the three pillars of capital accumulation and consumption: Fordism, modernisation of Third World nations as consumers and the 'Soviet project' of catching up with the West. Other influences and control mechanisms were the military strength of the United States, a British obsession with a

nuclear deterrent and the economic exclusion of the Soviet Union and China from technology gains.

The party, as Labour Minister Anthony Crosland noted, was over in 1974 as advanced capitalist countries' output fell by 10%. A long and tortuous route was followed by the Labour governments of Wilson and Callaghan to fit socialist values with the new world order but the rise of Mrs. Thatcher to power can be seen, in retrospect, as inevitable. She sought a shift of capital away from state to private hands under a 'law-abiding free enterprise reconstruction of Britain's social relations to production (Sir Keith Joseph quoted in Coates and Hilliard, *op.cit*, p.89).

The free enterprise solution was seen as a neat modernisation trick to avoid a crisis of the welfare state. In effect, problems could be privatised too (Wallace and Chandler, 1989) by contracting entire organisations or even, national institutions. The state became a holding company with each sub-contracted unit a profit centre in its own right. Even if it did not, technically, make any money (such as a college) it had economic obligations to the state (such as education and training targets with year-on-year reducing costs). Government by quango meant a firm control on spending while re-allocating responsibility. New Labour has managed to maintain this 'contracting state' because of a popular consensus but it has inherited an unstable compound.

Educated leaders and trained followers

A persistent belief (among parents at least) that 'real' education is properly reserved for the academically minded minority has kept participation rates well below other advanced countries producing a relatively uneducated workforce. Lord Dearing recognised 'cultural obstacles' to reform created by 'pervasive attitudes inherited from the past about the relative worth of achievement in the academic and vocational

pathways' in particular their association with separated provision for 'the able and the less able' (Dearing , 1996, *op.cit*, para.61).

His report makes only passing reference to the size of those obstacles and no reference to the long record of failure to overcome them. The persistent devaluation of vocational qualifications, although challenged in policy rhetoric, reflects entrenched assumptions about the kinds of learning appropriate to future leaders and their followers.

It has been assumed for centuries that an able minority are best prepared for leadership through the study of a limited range of academic subjects in depth. The capacity of that approach to survive relatively intact is incomprehensible without the tacit approval of a governing elite. In contrast, the less able majority are furnished with a limited skills base and motivated by direct connections with future employment. This was almost always separated from extended general education (Green, 1995).

The emphasis on the important transitional phase of life (adolescence) is important to policy making. Reviewing educational provision for the 15-18 age group at a time when a trend to longer school life was becoming apparent, the Crowther Report (1959) identified 'the education of the ablest' as being 'what the English system does best'. It also saw the high cost of that preoccupation as a neglect of the rest which was especially conspicuous at the post-compulsory age. The steep decline in job opportunities at the traditional entry into the job market age has brought a rising demand for an 'educational waiting room' (Edwards and Usher, 1997, p.70).

Emphasis on GCSE A-C grades in school performance tables may sustain a perception of failure in anything 'less'. This view has made A-levels a magnet for many candidates unsuited to the academic approach and for whom the risk of disappointment is high (Dearing, *op.cit*). Thus, the government's high profile displays

of league tables are counter-productive in terms of achieving parity of esteem.

Between the rhetoric and the reality lies the dark shadow thrown by A-levels and their 'long life and innate quality with a pedigree extending back to 1951 (and beyond that to the Higher School Certificate). Used as a proxy measure of promising applicants (a guide to potential rather than ability) A-levels remain the most marketable of credentials. It can hardly surprise the government that in a qualifications accumulation world they are still pursued with vigour.

Reasonable proposals for curriculum space to develop other skills were met with Curriculum 2000 which has attempted, in part, to address these issues with a wider range of subjects studied and the introduction of Key Skills (Information Technology, Communications and Application of Number). The implications for further education colleges are significant. Colleges face questions of staffing, resources and funding if they wish to partake in the experiment to change the post-16 curriculum - a challenge pursued in the Conclusion part of the thesis.

A-levels remain the selective instrument for middle class managerial and professional employment but, in an apparent convergence of learning objectives, the vocational route is expected to incorporate 'the value of conceptual study' and to promote 'general intellectual capacity' by developing the 'higher order skills' of analysis, synthesis and evaluation (SEAC, 1992). Such outcomes are expected from very different curriculum models, pedagogy and assessment techniques. After outlining the enormous difficulties in achieving parity of esteem it is a leap of faith to expect the two strands to achieve the same objectives.

Charles Handy (1984) has described the British education system as having outgrown the society that produced it. Adaptability and flexibility appear to be the cardinal virtues of the labour market rather than the reliable repetition of tasks for which education prepared the future workforce.

Most obvious has been the ending of the disregard of youth training and education not least because of the social dangers of youth unemployment. By 1989 the CBI could count on broad acceptance of a 'skills revolution'. Somewhat optimistically, two A-levels were expected of 60% of the population even though it represented a current attainment level reached by only 15% because nothing less was deemed appropriate for the new era of 'knowledge work' (*op. cit*, p.4).

Acceptance of the economic argument for a better educated workforce has impacted significantly on post-compulsory education but has caused disturbances to various national and local arrangements of pathways of learning which were typically arranged to suit individual as well as employer needs. The hierarchy these pathways followed reflected a tripartite system which gave a rough but relatively easy access to the appropriate employment sectors they served. Academic qualifications were used as a screening process (Wolf and Rapiou, 1993).

The English system is distinguished by the selectiveness of that particular track and the lack of high status alternatives to attract the most able student (Sanderson, 1994, *op.cit*; McCullough, 1989). The academic track leads furthest and fastest to where successful (personal wealth) outcomes are taken as evidence and so receive greater preference - at least by parents - over vocational credentials.

This has subjected colleges to dilemmas in the counselling of students on the appropriateness of courses. A third of A-level candidates never complete their courses but 'marginal' students miss out on the potential rewards (Audit Commission, 1993). Ministers find themselves facing rising participation, criticism of falling standards, conservation of academic values while needing to portray a viable alternative.

In the liberal (rather than liberating) tradition, technical knowledge is what an educated minority hire and direct but do not themselves possess or need (Mathieson and Bernbaum, 1988; McCulloch, 1991; Sanderson, 1994, *ibid.*) 'Different' education is allowed but different has never meant equal. The question, then, becomes one of knowledge 'pure' and knowledge 'applied'. Despite the move from narrow track to broad highway, A-levels still demonstrate remarkable resistance to reconstruction.

That detachment was, in no small measure, responsible for the heavy concentration of effort into performance criteria and 'usefulness' in NVQs. In 1996, A-level entries displayed the same emphasis on ten main subjects that they did forty years before.

Thus, the 'exchange rate' of these qualifications has stayed very much the same. Strangely, Advanced GNVQS (now vocational A-levels) were similarly criticised for their over-specialised delivery so that the general education aspect is reduced to the core skills supposedly integrated in the programme. Among the damaging consequences attributed to the newer models' 'disdain for knowledge' was the discouragement of 'teaching in a conventional sense'.

Without a syllabus, teachers of NVQs and GNVQs were described as using so much time devising units of study and appropriate materials that they had little time to reflect on the methodology of teaching them. Worse still, they were portrayed as being deliberately discouraged from using the 'only two methods known to be effective' - whole class and direct instruction (Smithers, 1993, *op.cit.*, p.10).

Scientific and technological innovation is no longer episodic. It has become almost routine. The new currency of economic power is knowledge and that is the source of real revolution for it widens the gap even further between intellectual and manual labour; between a relatively small number of jobs and the majority; between the educated leaders and the trained followers. Other things have changed with that

revolution the most important - politically - is the nature of unemployment for, no longer, can the unemployed be seen as a reserve army of labour waiting for the next phase of economic recovery or expansion.

The meaning of work has altered to place occupations and progression in crisis (Aronowitz and De Fazio, 1994). Governments now have to deal with the mass obsolescence of people. The embracing of technology as a key skill contains the seed of disassociation for those unable to access the hardware or the skills creating a new disadvantaged class based on the knowledge society. Leadership will not only go to a minority academically-educated few but those with instant access to electronic information while the former opportunities to engage in crafts through apprenticeships have all but disappeared for the ablest manually skilled.

A new legitimisation crisis appears inevitable. Aronowitz and De Fazio believe that the highly publicised benefits of new technologies for work and its culture are 'vastly overblown' and serve only an 'ever smaller number of people'. For the greater majority, computerisation has resulted in further 'subordination, displacement or irrelevance'. The government's own *Labour Market and Skills Trend, 2000* suggests (p.17):

'Increasing skill requirements may be reflected in one or both of two problems. The first relates to skill levels of the labour force and may be manifested in difficulties recruiting suitably skilled workers. The second relates to skills of a firm's existing workforce which may exhibit a gap with what is required to meet business objectives. The latter is referred to as a skill gap'.

Since the CBI believes the necessary strengths of flexibility and adaptability are paramount before any technical or specific skills this may explain the publication's inability to focus. The Third Report of the National Skills Task Force (DfEE, 2000)

is equally as general in this area. It, too, exhorts the need to upskill the workforce with particular attention on those 'adults who missed out on education and training earlier in life' by recommending that these are brought up to basic skill Level 2 or even 3 over time.

In detail, it suggests 'an increase in the proportion of adults holding at least a Level 2 qualification to 85% over a 10 year period'. Subjects or areas are not detailed and it would appear that pursuing these goals are worthy enough without additional discussion. Indeed, the Introduction serves that purpose without extra embellishment:

'Too many of our workforce, raised in the routine "jobs for life" culture of the 1950s, 60s and 70s left school with few qualifications, if any. They lack basic skills, aspirations, self-belief - and frequently the opportunity - to broaden their horizons through the power of learning. They have become trapped in the decreasing (*sic*) number of low-skill jobs, unable to grasp new opportunities and contribute their latent talents to our increasingly knowledge-based society'.

Scant statistics are provided of the particular skills and training required. This, again, is left to the broad sweep public relations campaign which generally includes Information Technology. The 1998 Skills Needs in Britain survey isolated, in as much as it could, that a skills gap existed in technical and practical skills (64% of employers); computing and IT (55%); communication skills (55%) and customer handling (53%) but like the employers questioned failed to isolate the specifics of those responses. What is exposed here is the lack of correlation between the need for skills as stated by employers, the suggested skills framework of government to meet this unsubstantiated, generalised need and the delivery structure to carry out the considerable transformation.

New Right ideas of expanding further and higher education provision are equally at home here and sit comfortably in the arena of a learning society. Occupational fluidity is regarded as an essential aspect of modern industrialised countries and graduates are encouraged to build up a portfolio of competencies so that they can move from project to project on a temporary contract basis (CBI document *Thinking Ahead*, 1994).

New Right governments were accused of widening the gap between skilled and unskilled work and academic and vocational qualifications. Britain has the lowest labour costs per unit output of any industrialised country. Work reorganisation and intensification, job shedding, union regulations, new technology and culture change exemplified the dramatic restructuring required to achieve this. New Labour continues the policies which includes heightened differentiation in education.

The teaching profession at all levels is now party to the co-ordination of this differentiation between academic and vocational in the learning system by getting everyone to achieve learning goals that relate to an increasingly illusory world of work. A legitimisation crisis is contained deep within this instrumentalist conception for change is so rapid and unpredictable that attention to it tends to eclipse consideration of continuing inequalities and newer forms of economic polarisation.

Truth and interpretations

The philosophical argument of this thesis is that interpretations of truth and knowledge are contingent upon how the promoters of them are positioned by themselves and others in society. The extent to which definitions of that truth and knowledge are accepted - and how far alternatives are accommodated - depends on the

use of dominant power. The fragility of the power relationships can be regarded as a measure of that society's real democracy.

'Historicity' is the representation of history as cultural, contextual and created through a dominant discourse. Just as the victors write history so dominant factors generate a climate in which policies are common sense and responses to crises are necessary means to an end. Foucault (1980) showed that events are described according to a constructed (rather than actual) logic which is easier to present if sites of resistance are dislocated and an environment of consensus is prepared in advance.

The 'area of language use' (McDonnell, 1986, p.3) is vital in achieving the right context and authoritative environment. Institutions protect themselves by manifesting their own version of rationality and boundaries as normative. If they are powerful institutions (such as A-levels or government) then their ability to exclude is powerful in proportion. Alternatives are seen as inferior since they do not meet the criteria of acceptable knowledge. Actions can become collectively habitual if they are at once self-preserving and comfortable. At this point, institutions claim sovereignty over individuals who is then subject to its rules (Berger and Luckman, 1966). In education, where people struggle for forms of capital (authority, cultural, practical, status), it is cultural capital which endows people with symbolic power to dominate and control.

Cultural capital is the currency of exchange and power. The State employs legitimate enforcers of cultural capital (teachers and lawyers) while attempting to alleviate tensions created by alternative discourses (such as the nature and relevance of vocational training). People are constrained to making choices within the power framework already in place. Institutions (broadly defined) are mechanisms for reproducing truths and ideologies.

There is a direct link between power and knowledge here and carrying and sustaining authority is a matter of 'knowing'. This is not the knowledge of skill (applied) but the knowledge of subject (pure). That this has no validity or rationality as measured against stated outcomes (say, a competitive workforce) does not prevent its reproduction as a coercive power of dominant thought. This has enormous ramifications for post-compulsory education as a legitimate enforcer in the power relationship.

Unlike primary and secondary education, further education is not compulsory though sections of it are taking on that aspect as part of the welfare to work policy (New Deal). Reference to earlier educational developments provides an indication of how cultural capital has influenced rationales for change in further education. Finch (1984), for example, explores the tension in legislative and policy activity between promoting the interests of the individual and wider society (economic) needs. She claims that change only occurs if those wider (political) needs are addressed. The result is a re-worked interpretation of legislation or White Papers to suit the dominant discourse of the time.

Preece (1997) argues that such discourses normalise institutional activity by giving meaning to behaviour and responses by defining boundaries for that behaviour according to forms of logic which ultimately become common sense values. The nature of the discourses are inherently unstable giving rise to constant reshaping and rewording often under the guise of 'new' initiatives.

Ball (*op.cit*) suggests that education is especially susceptible to these policy developments since it is an emotive tool readily available to conceal conflicting ideologies and power struggles. Thus, Thatcherite values of consumerism and competition successfully reconstructed logic to make earlier socialist rationales appear as disorder and disruption. New Labour can make New Right values appear

unrepresentative and undemocratic even though the power-knowledge balance has not shifted.

Initiatives to develop a curriculum of relevance for the working class were prevented by orthodox thought and the dominant discourse from flourishing as a national system as subversive and Marxist. (The grass roots National Labour Colleges were deligitimised as biased and partial). The compromise was through the Workers Education Association and the University Extension programme which Mansbridge (1920) accepted as the best alternative in that moment in history. The key function of working class education was still social stability.

Against its own barometer of normality - without action and, therefore, without change - university extension classes were 'safe'. By the second half of the twentieth century, however, Wiltshire (*op.cit*) despaired of the decline in the 'great tradition' in light of creeping vocationalism and mass employment. Subsequent key policy initiatives can be seen as sites of resistance where political activity generated new rationalities for power-knowledge dominance.

The Robbins Report (1963) on expanding university places should have been a victory for working class inclusion but the statements (regimes of truth) it contained were presented without exploration signifying an assumed, ideologically-positioned status and meaning with phrases such as 'transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship', 'promotion of the general powers of the mind' and 'advancement of knowledge and learning' (paras. 3 - 4). An internalised sense of common culture and unchallenged power positioning was woven into a document ostensibly aimed at widening participation.

In this way, power relations are colonised at the point of perceived economic or political activity. Governments are able to invoke contemporary rationalities to

maintain position so the University Grants Committee Report (1984) was able to draw upon demographic changes (reduced numbers of 18-year olds) and the enterprise statements of the time: 'A knowledgeable and skilled workforce in every trade, industry and profession is essential for the prosperity, economic health and progress of the country' (p.7).

The utilitarian values of training reappeared at around the same time as government recognised their importance in the language of employment, credit transfer, mobility and the need for new 'knowledges' which became the common sense vocabulary of change. The cultural capital of government controlled vocationalism emerges as another guardian of cultural capital than an alternative discourse. It is better to offer the muted role of a vocational system to the masses than let large sectors of the population loose on the open ended values of critical thought (Schuller, 1991). If some aspects of the gold standard are altered to accommodate more people then some aspects will alter to become rare again. It is possible to popularise A-levels through Curriculum 2000 while not affecting assumed superiority.

Cultural capital changes according to the socio-economic needs of the dominant power discourse and not the public's needs. It becomes a force of change only if a crisis is perceived or new rationalities can influence an election. At other times, it sustains the status quo by providing the common sense boundaries of power-knowledge relationships.

Change in meaning (not content) is applied when the balance of power shifts or new resistances and demands arise. Resistant discourses are quickly disqualified under the common sense rule and pressure sustained by dominant truths. If the myth of parity of esteem cannot be maintained then a new truth can be invoked - that of a skills shortage. Should that be insufficient in itself then additional truths can be applied

such as individual responsibility and wealth accumulation. Internal desires and external stresses are combined to create a sense of dread and need to act.

Attempts to make the public participate in lifelong learning emphasise the need to prevent people from being marginalised through lack of skills and provide powerful antidotes to crisis-ridden pessimism of Conservative government. Yet they also contain their own instrumental curricula of compliance with responsibility for individual inclusion in a global competitiveness (or suffer the consequences).

Based on fears that these demands erode democratic citizenship there have been calls for a more critical, cognitively-challenging and reflective dimension to post-compulsory education and training (Avis *et al*, *op.cit*), a reapportion of the radical aims of adult education (Ross, 1995; Alexander and Martin, 1995), for critical pedagogy which uses social difference and dissent as 'spaces' for generating critical reflection about their implication (Edwards and Usher, *op.cit*) and for curricula to relate to students' needs and interests (Bates, 1998; Eraut, 1997; Swann, 1998).

The arguments of human capital theory, however, are so persuasive that such calls go unheeded. The problems of unemployment, job insecurity and continuous training can be 'privatised and handed over to individuals to solve' (Coffield, 1998, p.176). Other policy initiatives in welfare reveal potentially authoritarian tones and financial support is often linked to additional updating of skills. In addition, rhetoric about lifelong learning, a commitment to learning organisations and personal flexibility all obscure the actual dispensability of employees (Coffield, 1999). A move towards compulsion in lifelong learning may be a result of a wider moral and ideological trend in the guise of liberal intentions.

A culture of fear

Ferudi (1996, 1998) contends that a culture of fear and low expectations has been created to legitimise political intervention in education and training. Concerns about 'globalisation' and international competitiveness serve to emphasise risk aversion and place trust in the 'experts' (in this case, the State) as the source of appropriate advice and solutions. In this way, lifelong learning gains a moral crusading tone in which the individual's scope for action is diminished. State intervention in personal life and behaviour is encouraged then regulated as risk aversion becomes the norm. Uncertainty, generated by fears of an insecure future, result in a cycle of dependency and victim culture in which the State offers potential 'answers' as the 'expert'.

In any institutional setting there are basic recipes that shape thinking and guide decision-making. These recipes are not articulated theories or legal guidelines nor do they appear in employment manuals but they are, instead, habits of thought and practice which routinely govern styles of thinking and action. New recruits learn these ways quickly to 'fit in' and they become the common sense of the participants in that institution prompted and shaped by the structures and cultures within it. Such recipes tend not to change rapidly and once learned can be hard to dislodge.

Today, in institutions of post-compulsory education, there is a success recipe for recruits which draws upon the economic language of cost-benefit, value-added, best value and fiscal responsibility. Managerialism supplies a portable set of responses for all situations drawn from the private sector when other logic lost credibility.

The economic style of reasoning, like the social one before it, has a thematic and cultural coherence (the success of exemplars applied elsewhere) rather than strict logic, critical analysis or tight conceptual structure. It is a combination of techniques,

models and analogies that are loosely bound together for their popular appeal. Economic rationality as policy is a language of representing superimposed on practices sometimes quite removed from economic considerations (such as the actual experience of learning). These habits of thought have become a default characteristic of decision making in post-compulsory education

Anxiety about the collapse of family virtues, drugs and crime statistics generate reactionary policies and extensive new disciplines just as similar concerns marked stringent developments in the crime and punishment system in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Hudson, *op.cit*). In this way, standards in education become both a call to arms and a reason to impose controls if used eloquently and within a culture of fear. Being left behind in the skills revolution implies both economic and social exclusion. 'State knowledge' and access to appropriate skills has replaced the welfare state

Is there a future in the past?

In Silver's (1990) *Education, Change and Policy Process* he poses the notion that historians and policy makers rarely come together explicitly yet the question of what is decided today invariably has close ties with what has gone before though - using Foucault as guide - this need not always be so if critical analysis is applied.

Despite protestations of the need for suitable skills to 'underpin national competitiveness and personal prosperity' (*Learning to Succeed*, 1999) the structures in place and set to continue link education and training to economic performance, reaffirm the appropriateness of a tripartite system and reinforce social inequalities by promoting competence acquisition for specific jobs devoid of a general/liberal grounding for interaction and community.

Post-compulsory education has always been associated with work. Its traditions are firmly fixed in the evening and weekend classes which did so much to meet local demands and which gave each college its own distinct characteristics. They were local responses to local demands and were so without any central control or influence. Preoccupations with the compulsory sector and higher education became something of a fixation for governments during the twentieth century allowing post-compulsory education a relatively long period to formulate its own mix of vocational relevance *and* general education.

This was partly as a response to the monotony of factory life for most of its students and partly because its practitioners believed in a Deweyian blend of the two which gave their courses a parity of esteem to which governments could only aspire. Without any real stated policy as such colleges provided the flexibility in the workplace for their students that drives so many official reports and responses now deriving their curriculum from the needs of local industry and their inspiration from a liberal/radical tradition of non-Conformist/philanthropic sentiment.

That is not to say that post-compulsory education was the source of economic saviours for British factories nor does it suggest that a 'golden age' of post-compulsory education existed outside of policy making. The complexity of interaction among resources and outcomes does not confer such status on any aspect of education and training but colleges did serve their local communities on many levels in the absence of central government attention. The attention of decision-makers came quite late then but came at a time when market philosophies were driving other significant changes particularly in the privatisation programmes of the New Right.

This process required the invocation of a special form of vocabulary, installation of a rigorous new managerialism, reduced influence of professionals and introduction of

quangos to oversee standards and control funding. During these changes 'common sense' rhetoric successfully overcame the slight and subdued opposition.

Educationalists were largely ignored and the power of unions had already been diluted in other sectors.

The unassailable logic of flexibility and appeals to the lowest common denominator of self-interest allowed market values to pervade. The supply-side theory of market philosophy placed the emphasis for that flexibility on the individual but it was the state that offered the qualifications as commodities to be bought as relevant skills in a global auction. The move to make Britain a low cost/low skill service economy under the Conservatives has been altered under New Labour to creating a high wage/high skill country attracting outside investment with its specialisms and quality workforce. The methodology remains intact. Little has changed in the qualification structure and a vocational/academic divide is still evident.

Intellectual freedom

A liberal or liberating tradition extends back to ancient Greece and Rome with the education of free men as distinct from slaves. Jones (1971, *op.cit*, p.19) reminds us that 'the domain of the free man was decision: he should be competent to judge on any issue'. Such a definition was fully understood in ancient times and translated into a wide 'curriculum' of studies including logic and intellect. It is that intellectual aspect which most attracted the English radicals. It is the freedom of the mind which is a prerequisite to intellectual freedom and the ability to judge on any issue.

Further, only an educated mind can be truly liberated and able to contribute in every sense to the development and protection of the community. This is a definition of education which includes the acquisition of public forms of knowledge which are the

conceptual apparatus of rational thought. Liberal, in this sense, is the absence of ignorance - a key tenet of radical theorists. To be truly free is to be free of irrational or conditioned responses and, so, the following conditions apply:

- * There is more than one possibility from which to choose
- * There is knowledge of what is and is not possible
- * There is knowledge of what is desirable
- * There is knowledge of the techniques for attaining these goals

Intellectual freedom is similar to political freedom in that constraints naturally exist in terms of frameworks and possibilities. Laws, rules and conventions apply to all in a true democracy. A parallel system of constraints must exist in the world of intellectual freedom otherwise the use of the word freedom is meaningless. Freedom of speech only exists if there has been a constraint before. The values within those constraints are important because they are constantly expanding to include new 'freedoms'. In educational terms, what we acquire as knowledge must contribute to 'right' choices. In addition, the expansion of freedoms allows connections to be made with other concepts which may have not been made had ignorance continued.

There is, therefore, no reason why technical subjects cannot be taught with this liberating approach in mind. Indeed, it is the making of important connections that leads to discovery and invention. An ignorant mind or one that is a slave to convention cannot 'see' the links. Sadly, two nations of training and education have unfolded in Britain - one is instrumental, cheapened and narrow; the other has become elitist and fashioned for future progression.

Training - which should contain a neutral set of values - has become value and class laden. Its potency lies in its efficiency and ready alignment to production. Criteria for success can be explicitly stated and observed. It is neither abstract nor detached. The

whole point is that training can be related to goals which may or may not be discrete from the training process itself. Typically, its structure is defined in terms of specific content and activities of competence.

Further education, continuing education and adult education have no such special delineation. The legal and administrative description of further education in the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act is an unhelpful list of course and programmes that the government willingly funded as part of national targets. The Learning And Skills Act 2000 proposed no substantive new direction other than more funds for particular (economic) initiatives.

There is still no discrete identifiable set of activities which neatly describes the work of post-compulsory education . Adult education - which further education colleges adopted as a kindred spirit - is similarly placed. Because of the lack of interest by government initially and a fixation with compulsory education subsequently, post-compulsory education sought its lodestone among the radical tradition discussed earlier. It was a comfortable fit since it responded to the growing aspirations of the working class in the absence of suitable official alternatives. The consequent mix of values is uniquely British: role and job training merged with appreciation of liberal studies treating people as 'independent centres of value' (Paterson, 1979, p.134).

Although this may have appeared to have been a contradiction it was perfectly understandable to late nineteenth century manufacturers and certainly to the protagonists and educationists who believed that an enlarging of awareness of mind can only serve the person in their ability to contribute fruitfully to their community and society. The alternatives are a subdued frustration or a destructive ignorance. Indeed, post-compulsory education often came to the rescue of frustrated souls as an oasis of inspiration and respite from the rigours of an industrial world. The more alert

factory owners were aware of the soothing effect of a liberal education and provided schools for workers and children alike.

There has been no tidy definition of post-compulsory education. Its patchwork history and conceptual ambiguity defy tight description. Its values, however, made it distinct, benign and reflective. It contained a socialising aspect while avoiding dogma; it understood that education is a journey and embraced 'lifelong learning' before this became a utilitarian political mantra; it realised that the world had changed and accommodated the vocational instruction as a reality but, equally, promoted notions of equality and freedom of mind for everyone long before the universal franchise. Though politically in the backwater there are official or quasi-official points in its history which encapsulate these implied democratic values.

Three reports on 'adult' education stand out in the twentieth century as embracing radical traditions and the use of a liberalising education for the working class:

- * *Oxford and Working-Class Education*, 1908.
- * *The 1919 Report, (Adult Education Committee)*
- * *The Russell Report*, 1973

They have been used in this thesis to illuminate the radical thread of learning that binds post-compulsory education with its past, compare those ideals and values with the politicised contemporary model and explore the conclusion that while two nations of qualifications and outcomes exist today, there is no logical reason to exclude alternative discourses other than the political goal of containment. It is also suggested here that the production of a two nation educational state is a political contrivance in the power-knowledge discourse in which knowledge without understanding (ie. ignorance) alleviates pressure at the point-of-entry into the labour market and a potential legitimisation (in this case, employment) crisis.

The thesis has been one of historical critical analysis to understand present political and economic theory in context. It is suggested here that the humanistic values of education have been demoted to a purely instrumental arm of central policy and that a fundamental concept of perspective transformation has been ignored. Examining problems, organising options and acquiring new skills to deal with change require cognitive expansion experiences. Post-compulsory education would provide a rich source of relevant learning to allow learners to assume responsibility for decision-making and autonomous action. Alternative perspectives broadens access to meaningful options for the individual distancing them from a risk aversion victimhood.

This requires education to engage the learner in different learning strategies which relate to internal needs rather than external forces. Though there is a strong history of divide in England from feudal times the sharp contrast between the humanism and mechanism, determinism and free-will, radical and instrumental has been galvanised since the Industrial Revolution.

Two nations of qualifications, influence and knowledge were created with no room for compromise and no areas of common interest. Carlyle and Bentham, Dewey and Skinner, Paulo Freire and Rhodes Boyson are counterweights in this increasingly one-sided debate. The extremes at which these philosophies find themselves appear to defy reconciliation. Apparent necessity, an instilled sense of fear and economic logic have secured the moral high ground for instrumentalism. Yet, in the perverse English educational arena it is the radical ideals of a general education which has maintained an elite status.

Mezirow (*op.cit*, p.38) offers a *Charter for Androgogy* as an antidote to politicised lifelong learning. It embodies radical, liberating traditions with contemporary thought

and is suggested here as a potential reconciliatory alternative to compulsory imposition:

'Androgogy, as a professional perspective of adult education, must be defined as an organized and sustained effort to assist adults to learn in a way that enhances their capability to function as self-directed learners. To do this it must:

1. progressively decrease the learner's dependency on the educator;
2. help the learner understand how to use learning resources - especially the experience of others, including the educator, and how to engage others in reciprocal learning relationships;
3. assist the learner to define own learning needs - both in terms of immediate awareness and of understanding the cultural and psychological assumptions influencing perceptions of needs;
4. assist learners to assume increasing responsibility for defining their learning objectives, planning their own learning programme and evaluating their progress;
5. organize what is to be learned in relationship to current personal problems, concerns and levels of understanding;
6. foster learner decision making - select learner-relevant learning experiences which require choosing, expand the learner's range of options, facilitate taking the perspectives of others who have alternative ways of understanding;
7. encourage the use of criteria for judging which are increasingly inclusive and differentiating in awareness, self-reflective and integrative of experience;
8. foster a self-corrective, reflective approach to learning - to typifying and labelling, to perspective taking and choosing, and to habits of learning and learning relationships;
9. facilitate problem posing and problem solving, including problems associated with the implementation of individual and collective action, recognition of

- relationship between personal problems and public issues;
10. reinforce the self-concept of the learner as a learner and doer by providing for progressive mastery, a supportive climate with feedback to encourage provisional efforts to change and to take risks, avoidance of competitive judgement of performance, appropriate use of mutual support groups;
 11. emphasise experiential, participative and projective instructional methods, appropriate use of modelling and learning contracts;
 12. make the moral distinction between helping the learner understand a full range of choices and how to improve the quality of choosing Vs. encouraging the learner to make a specific choice.'

The way in which lifelong learning has been adopted and adapted by New Labour constitutes an attempt at co-option to 'affect the way we think and speak about education' which could be 'too broad to implement in a meaningful way' (Smithers and Robinson, *op.cit*, p.195). Post-compulsory education's goal of generating dissent in the form of positive, reconstructed ideas and responses has been somewhat industrialised (quantitative interpretations of quality; systemised administration and delivery; managerialism), commercialised (knowledge as a commodity in a market place) and managerialised (financially effective and corporately identified) leaving learners with a learning experience bereft of perception altering links.

Education as dissent has a poor track record in Britain. Giving actual power to learners in order to frame their own learning is radical. Government prefers a controlling hand in the lives of workers - one which would stave off revolutionary zeal and promote an acceptance of one's lot. The struggle for education as a source of freedom and political equity held too powerful possibilities for radical change and the contrast between political expediency and actual empowerment continues.

Robert Owen's proposed lifelong learning was a purposeful learning as a means of developing a more equitable society. It was a renewing and emancipatory concept engaged equally by non-Conformists of the time, recognisable by John Dewey, Albert Mansbridge, Basil Yeaxlee, Richard Tawney and Paulo Freire.

The mechanisms used by government to avert tensions within the job market are to provide a system of dams and sluices which prevent advancement or to accredit as many people as possible by identifying and certificating what they already know and do. This is represented in the qualifications structure by emphasising norm-referencing for the first and criterion-referencing for the second. There are now efforts to introduce the first into the second (initially through advanced GNVQs but now vocational A-levels) as a means of nullifying criticisms of either. The effects of a differentiated student population remain as do the perceptions of employers and universities. English post-compulsory education has been given the task of providing the vocational arm of this bifurcated strategy but in a somewhat impoverished cultural setting.

Tomlinson (1993) suggests that the English have never achieved a sense of the democratic intellect observable in the French or Scots. John Knox ordered that there should be a schoolhouse in every kirk and the ability to read was a tenet of Calvinism. Dissenters of a democratic frame of mind either emigrated or were marginalised in small communities. The Industrial Revolution only led to a consolidation of hierarchies. The English have not experienced a real revolution of either spirit or polity and remained deeply attached to continuity and past symbols.

Civilisations and democracy are often judged by history through the contexts in which decisions are made and policies implemented. Lifelong learning has taken on dimensions far removed from utopian ideals and post-compulsory education has become an instrument of control and measurability. If we are to avoid a world which

is 'mechanical in head and heart' (Carlyle, *op.cit*, p.444) and if judgement of our era is to be raised above a caustic indictment of political manipulation of buzz-words then there is a need to identify the dangers implicit in the contemporary shape of things by critical analysis of the influences that shaped them.

It is, perhaps, inevitable that a study of post-compulsory education in general and the radical and instrumental influences in particular should generate questions above and beyond those it sought to answer in the first place. The 'wide angle' nature of the survey places the thesis in some jeopardy since the strands of understanding and connections of meaning are frequently stretched perilously thin. Policies are rarely distinctly related to plans of action in fine detail. They are, rather, generalised sweeps which may take several attempts to achieve even some form. **Appendix Eight** contains only a small sampling of influences on post-compulsory education which still finds itself the subject of such political meanderings. What we can witness are movements in general directions; changes of emphasis and efforts to support and maintain a dominant discourse so that direction and purpose are not diverted by alternatives. Further education, however, deserves a substantial historical review for it is only with a broad survey that the political influences on a liberalising tradition can be portrayed. This thesis is presented as an alternative discourse drawing upon the theoretical works of Foucault, Gramsci and Habermas and constructed from experience within the post-compulsory sector.

Chartism, Co-operatives, romantic philosophers and radical politicians were antidotes to the 'Old Corruption' - a phrase coined by William Cobbett in 1816 in his newspaper *Weekly Political Register* as a reflection of the governmental and administrative standards of the day. They saw the task of radicalism as one of enshrining equal opportunities in every aspect of life and society at a time when the forces of nature and mechanistic, scientific interpretations of them were gaining ground. Radicalism

also faced an increasingly monolithic bureaucracy as governments became more involved in the administration and control of a more aware population.

Bureaucratic central agencies are not the preserve of solutions, however. Social and political theorists (Scott, 1998; Hirst, 1992; Selznick, 1992; Kooiman, 1993) have argued that effective government in complex societies cannot rely upon certainties or coercion as it did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead, it should harness the capacities of local organisations and associations of civil society together with the powers and knowledge they contain. The alternative is that - to paraphrase Rousseau (1762, p.44) - post-compulsory education will be 'forced to be free.'

Progressivism: an alternative discourse?

Globalisation, post-Fordism, hegemony and the power/knowledge discourse are ways of explaining how we have a post-compulsory regime. They tell us *how* we arrived at the curricula and institutions of delivery and in what manner the arguments of skills shortages, technological imperatives and markets have attained a dominance in those arguments. Yet to the greater majority of college students these are academic debates of no practical concern. Most would apply a significantly greater amount of thought towards their NVQ portfolio assessments than to the politicisation of lifelong learning. Indeed, as a very broad brushstroke piece of evidence, this may be used to imply that the art of critical analysis and the meaning of real empowerment have, indeed, become casualties in the power/knowledge discourse. Assessing that someone can do something is useful but is inherently sterile in any expansive sense.

I believe that there are positive and meaningful alternatives in the post-compulsory experience. These learning experiences discard the spiral of specification and codification of all knowledge which lead with their 'seductive promise of complete

clarity' (Wolf, 1993b, p.5). My progressive alternative would differ not only in content but methodology, aims and in scope. Rather than the finite boundaries of criteria I would perceive no learning boundaries at all.

Such a class in a college (or village hall, or community centre, or pub) would ask participants to be part of and contribute to an 'educational enterprise' in which their enjoyment was as much a part as their learning. I would place no time limit on the enterprise as there are no examinations or portfolios to complete. Assessment is done by self and peers. My activities would move from early frameworking of the enterprise to complete participant independence.

I would propose a methodology which would include discussion of individual and joint ambitions and identification/description of personal learning needs. Reciprocal and team learning relationships are encouraged as is personal reflection and evaluation. Assessments and discussions are value-free and non-judgmental with an underlying theme of progression from immediate understanding to a greater awareness of the learning processes and I would help them to explore how people make sense of their surroundings.

I would encourage participants to take responsibility for their own learning and plan their own outcomes. I would introduce them to a variety of approaches and learning techniques so that they can make informed decisions about how they can judge their own work and by what standards (outside of conventional means). Learners would be asked to break boundaries of self-concept so that they can grasp and understand the perceptions of others as different but valid through discussion and reflective writing. In addition, experiential, participative and consultative styles of learning would be actively engaged so that learners can produce alternative models of learning for themselves and formulate a critical self-directedness for future educational enterprises they may pursue.

Eventually the learner will become a participant in a lifelong learning experiment of their own choosing rather than one implied or coerced from outside forces. In this way a learner is no longer a passive observer of norms but a creator of experiences which contribute to their own perspective transformation. Future decisions and actions are increasingly emancipatory in that they are products of critical and informed reflection and in which the individual has a deeper meaning of their part in social relations and political life. I would no longer work within schemes of work and lesson plans and such a classroom would never witness a checklist of performance criteria. This class would consider the mundane and the philosophical:

- What size of class do they want?
- When do they want to start and on what days?
- How do they want to learn?
- How do they wish to be assessed if at all?
- What do they want to learn? Why?
- What are pre-conceived ideas? Where do they come from?
- How do they think?
- How do they know they are learning?
- What is competence? Who is competent?
- What are the constraints on their learning? How can we change them?

Such classes exist at the Southern Institute of Tulane University in Louisiana in their Anti-Bias Teacher Training and Leadership Training Projects where the progressive classes formulate their own direction and are aware of the cultural and institutional constraints on their efforts to learn and approaches to overcome them . Based on this model I would include an understanding of the power relationships which have previously worked to influence habits of perception, thought and behaviour. The 'lifelong learner' in this class loves learning as a contributor to freedom rather than as a political product of a dominant discourse.

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GLOSSARY**A list of abbreviations used in this thesis**

ALF	Average level of funding
BEC	Business Education Council
BTEC	Business and Technician (later Technology) Education Council
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CRAC	Careers Research and Advisory Centre
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
CTC	City Technical College
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DoE	Department of Employment
DSS	Department of Social Security
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
FEDA	Further Education Development Agency
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FEU	Further Education Unit
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
ITB	Industry Training Board
ITeC	Information Technology Centre
LEC	Local Enterprise Councils (Scotland)
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NACETT	National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets
NAO	National Audit Office
NATFHE	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education

NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NEDO	National Economic Development Office
NETTS	National Education and Training Targets (later NETTS)
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NTI	New Training Initiative
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PIC	Private Industry Council
RSA	Royal Society for the promotion of the Arts
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SCAA	Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SEAC	Schools Examination and Assessment Council
SME	Small to Medium-sized Enterprise
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
TDLB	Training and Development Lead Body
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TES	Times Educational Supplement
THES	Times Higher Educational Supplement
TUC	Trades Union Congress
TVEI	Training and Vocational Education Initiative
UI	University for Industry
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
YMCA	Young Mens' Christian Association
YOP	Youth Opportunities Programme
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

APPENDIX ONE
Fordism and Flexible Specialisation (Phillimore, A. J., 1979)

	<i>Fordism</i>	<i>Flexible Specialisation</i>
1. Production concept	Mass production; economies through fixed capital and production processes	Flexible automation; economies through working capital and distribution
2. Technology	Purpose-built machines; R & D functionally separate	General purpose and flexible machines; importance of design
3. Products	Limited, standardised	Specialised; niche, variety
4. Inputs	Materials and energy intensive	Materials and energy saving information intensive
5. Work process & skills	Fragmented and standard tasks; strict division; labour representation	Open-ended tasks; core of skilled workers and satellite part-time, short-term contract
6. Payment	Rate for the job; pay deals	Pay per person; informal pay negotiations
7. Organisation/management	Hierarchies; centralisation; multi-divisional	Flatter structures; centralised information and planning; decentralised production; sub-contracting of non-core tasks
8. Markets	Manufacturers dominate retailers; mass advertising	Two-way relationship with customer/manufacturer; niche advertising
9. Suppliers	Arm's length; stock held 'just in case'	Two-way relationship; stock held 'just in time'
10. Competitive strategy	Cost-cutting and produce to capacity leading to over-production; stockpiling and mark downs	Compete by innovation and quality; respond through diversity, sub-contracting or lay-offs

APPENDIX TWO**National Targets for Education and Training for AD 2000**

(Original Targets, Confederation of British Industry, 1989;
endorsed by government in 1991 and revised 1995 by the National Advisory Council on
Education and Training Targets)

Foundation Targets:

1. By 11 years, 90% of pupils will achieve at least a national foundation standard in English and Mathematics.
2. By 16 years, at least 55% of young people will achieve GCSEs in grades A-C in English, Mathematics and Science plus any other two GCSE subjects at the same level or their vocational equivalent.
3. By 21 years, 65% of young people will achieve two A-levels or the vocational equivalent and a further 25% will achieve a first degree, a higher diploma or an award of equivalent level.

Lifetime Targets:

1. Organisations employing in total at least 40% of all employees will be recognised as Investors on People.
2. Over 90% of adults of working age will possess a defined level of competence in the use of English and Mathematics.
3. Each year, 10% of adults of working age will achieve nationally recognised qualifications.

APPENDIX THREE
National Learning Targets for England for 2002
(DfEE 1998)

Targets for 16-years-olds:

50% of 16-year-olds getting 5 higher grade GCSEs

95% getting at least 1 GCSE

Targets for young people:

85% of 19-year-olds with a Level 2 qualification

60% of 21-year-olds with a Level 3 qualification

Targets for adults:

50% of adults with a Level 3 qualification

28% with a Level 4 qualification

Targets for organisations:

45% of medium-sized organisations recognised as Investors in People

10,000 small organisations recognised as Investors in People

Learning Participation Target:

A 7% reduction in non-learners.

APPENDIX FOUR**Schedule 2a courses as listed under the Further and Higher Education Act, 1992: Statutory definition of further education courses****Further Education Funding Council criteria for assessing eligibility**

<i>Type of course/Objective</i>	<i>Criteria for eligibility</i>
a. Vocational qualification	Approved by Secretary of State
b GCSE or A/AS level	Leads to examination by one of the Examining bodies
c. Access course	Approved by Secretary of State
d. Course which prepares students for above	Primary objective is progression to course outlined above
e. Basic English literacy	Provides basic literacy skills
f. Teaching English to students for whom it is not used at home	Improves English for those who do not use it at home
g. Basic Mathematics	Course designed to teach basic principles of Mathematics
h. Proficiency or literacy in Welsh	Course for proficiency or literacy in Welsh (Wales only)
j. Independent living or communications skills for those with learning difficulties which prepares them for courses listed in d) to g)	Primary objective is progression onto: * course listed in a) to c) * English course for those for whom it is not spoken at home * Basic Mathematics course
	Course includes assessment of student's preparedness to progress with results of assessment available to the Council.

APPENDIX FIVE**Progression through qualifications (England & Wales);
Major categories of awards: 2000**

<i>Postgraduate qualifications</i>	<i>(MANAGERIAL)</i>	<i>NVQ Level 5/ Professional qualifications</i>
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<i>Degree</i>	<i>(EMPLOYMENT)</i>	<i>NVQ Level 4/Foundation Degree</i>
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<i>GCE A/AS Level</i>	<i>NVQ Level 3</i>	<i>Advanced Vocational A-level</i>
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(ADVANCED APPRENTICESHIPS)

<i>GCSE Grades A – C</i>	<i>NVQ Level 2</i>	<i>Intermediate Vocational A-level</i>
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(INTERMEDIATE APPRENTICESHIPS)

<i>Grades D – G</i>	<i>NVQ Level 1</i>	<i>Foundation Vocational A-level</i>
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Academic**Vocational****Practical**

APPENDIX SIX
The Common Skills Competence Statement
(Common Skills and Core Themes General Guideline, BTEC, May 1992)

<u>Common Skill</u>	<u>Competence</u>
Managing and developing self	1. Manage own roles and responsibilities 2. Manage own time in achieving objectives 3. Undertake personal and career development 4. Transfer skills gained to new and changing situations and contexts
Working with and Relating to Others	5. Treat others' values, beliefs and opinions with respect 6. Relate to and interact effectively with individuals and group. 7. Work effectively as a member of a team
Communicating	8. Receive and respond to a variety of information 9. Present information in a variety of visual forms 10. Communicate in writing 11. Participate in oral and non-verbal communication
Managing Tasks and Solving Problems	12. Use information sources 13. Deal with a combination of routine and non-routine tasks 14. Identify and solve routine and non-routine problems
Applying Numeracy	15. Apply numerical skills and techniques
Applying Technology	16. Use a range of technological equipment and systems
Applying Design and Creativity	17. Apply a range of skills and techniques to develop a variety of ideas in the creation of new/modified products, services or situations 18. Use a range of thought processes

APPENDIX SEVEN
Key Skills

(Department for Education and Employment, {Qualifications for Work Division}, 1999)

The term Key Skills is used to define those generic skills which individuals need in order to be effective members of a flexible, adaptable and competitive work force and for lifelong learning.

The skills can be summarised as being:

- Numeracy
- Written communications
- Spoken communications
- Information technology
- Problem solving
- Getting on with others
- Improving yourself

In terms of actual qualifications needed to accredit these skills there are six which can be attained from Levels 1 to 5. These are designed to match the levels of responsibility expected by an employer:

- Application of Number
- Communication
- Information Technology
- Problem Solving
- Working with others
- Improving own performance

Key skills are mandatory in Vocational A-levels but not in A-levels or NVQs. However, the government has indicated that students on these programmes have a right of 'entitlement'. They have, therefore, been integrated into such courses and are a part of the new National Curriculum (September 2000).

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