

	CHAPTER 5
WHAT COMES NEXT? CANADIAN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES	GREGORY ALBO

What has finally to be said, though, is that the major changes in work and production which are now happening and which are only weakly interpreted by the received ideas...are evidence as much of opportunity as of danger.... In the reality of labour saving, and in the availability of new skills and activities, we could, quite practically, enter a new world of human work. Sharing the political effort to make it like that is then in practice our first task.

Raymond Williams¹

INTRODUCTION

In both intellectual and trade-union circles, there now appears to be a consensus that a dramatic transformation of work is occurring. The issue at hand, as Raymond Williams observes, is evident: what should a socialist policy be for the labour process and employment structures coming after Fordism? The debate in Canada has tended to be narrowly focused. Indeed, much as industrial policy was central to disputes about the economic crisis of the 1970s, training policy is invoked today as the means to overcome the traditional weaknesses of Canadian manufacturing. In coping with the marked uncertainty resulting from technological change and intensified competition for world markets, national training regimes have been identified as a decisive institutional variable demarcating stories of manufacturing success from the tales of failure. Yet just as Canada fared poorly in comparisons with other states in industrial policy, Canada does no better, and possibly worse, in training the national labour force. A "new" solution to the old Canadian problem—the weak manufacturing core of the economy—now seems to reside in upgrading training.²

This debate needs to be placed in its wider setting. The Fordist model, based on mass production technologies utilizing semi-skilled workers and dedicated machines, is being displaced by a regime of flexible automation, built around the flexibility of new technologies and a core of polyvalent workers that can adjust process and product as final demand alters. The precise contours of this new production regime lie somewhere between two organizational poles: a core of multi-skilled workers providing a functional flexibility within the internal labour market of the firm, with a majority of peripheralized workers moving in a constant flow of dismissals and hirings in the external labour market as product demand alters; or a broadly-based reskilling of the labour force, tied to an extension of employment security that incorporates peripheral workers, so that flexible adjustment occurs via responsible autonomy for workers within the labour process and without resort to unemployment shocks.³ Given the dangers and opportunities implicit in these widely divergent scenarios, the basic material interest of workers in training and employment policy are unlikely to converge with the interest of manufacturers in maximizing labour flexibility to preserve market shares in the short run.

The narrow parameters of the contemporary training debate in Canada, however, presuppose that the routes out of the crisis of Fordism are few, and singularly dependent on market-responsive, high value-added manufacturing within new industrial districts. This is, perhaps, best illustrated in the post-

Fordist future projected by the widely discussed Ontario Premier's Council Report:

...we cannot cling to low-wage, low value-added activities where we have no competitive advantages, but must move into the high value-added, high-wage goods and services wherein lie our best hopes for prosperity over the long term.... A critical determinant of whether we can make the transition will be the education, skills, ingenuity and adaptability of our workers. They must be prepared for work which will demand the sophisticated knowledge and talents that are the trademarks of a truly developed nation.⁴

Such a strategy may indeed be, in part, a precondition for high levels of manufacturing employment. Expanding manufacturing might also make a modest contribution to reducing unemployment. Yet the claims of the post-Fordists in Canada are much bolder: the creation of a supply of skilled labour will lead to the effective demand for the commodities produced and, ultimately, to good jobs and full employment for all. This reinvigorated form of Say's law—supply creates its own demand which Keynes rightly challenged, provides the rationale for deepening the income and skill polarization of the labour market while selling itself as the cure.

The return of stagflation in the 1990s indicates the overwhelming failure of neoliberal strategies to overcome the barriers to sustained accumulation which first presented themselves in the 1970s. We are still in the period "after Fordism." According to different national settings and political projects, alternate economic paths remain possible. In Canada, the pressures of international competition, especially from continental free trade, have intensified the reliance on defensive forms of flexibility of wage and cost competition. Only pockets of high-quality production have appeared. The historical shortcomings of training and employment policy have contributed to this tendency.

The crisis in the labour market, therefore, challenges the labour movement, and the Left more generally, to engage in a broader set of democratic struggles for the "requalification of work," based on "quality training" and the "right to work." The route to an offensive flexibility—reskilled workers producing high-quality, socially useful goods—requires the extension of solidarity to the jobless, via a concerted attack on working hours and efforts to shift income to the poor who have a higher propensity to consume domestically produced goods. The post-Fordist pursuit of international manufacturing competitiveness alone will result in the private gains of the few from new technologies at the expense of the possible democratic gains of the many.

THE ROAD TO DEFENSIVE FLEXIBILITY: THE HISTORY OF EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The dynamic relationship between technological change, work organization and skills has been neglected until recently.⁵ In the standard economics or sociology literature, technology or organizations were seen to entail a certain type of labour process and thus a specific growth process. The wider context of the national form of economic adjustment and the narrower processes of skilling were either ignored or treated as static parameters. Yet these institutions, which set the terms of exchange between wages and skills in the labour market, play an important role in regulating the organization of the workplace and the pattern of accumulation.⁶ In other words, a *social choice* is involved in the organization of the workplace, albeit a choice constrained by the social relations of capitalism.⁷ The "technical capacities" of the national labour force is an important factor affecting these choices.

The processes of skills production are critical to industrial restructuring, not just because they allow for flexibility in responding to market shifts, but for the *kind* of flexibility they can create. Industrial restructuring by definition implies that old labour processes and accumulation regimes give way to a new order. The mass production processes of Fordism tended to rely on a sharp separation of conception and execution. This rigid differentiation of tasks produced a skill polarization: conception requiring specialist technical skills concentrated in design offices; skilled manufacturing, and trades jobs filled by apprenticeship or specialist training; and a mass of unskilled assembly jobs with limited specific training tied to a minute division of labour. In contrast, flexible automation tends to use reprogrammable technologies to reintegrate production and design. As a consequence, the labour process can be more flexible in responding to differentiated product demand. Flexible automation, moreover, requires skills that will make workers more flexible: multiskilling; general skills rather than specific ones; and analytic and problem-solving abilities rather than procedural capacities. Thus, for core workers at least, skills are likely to be crucial to a reorganized labour process, both to exploit the potential productivity of new technologies and to involve workers directly in improving productivity.⁸ Nevertheless just as Fordism differed across countries, there is unlikely to be a uniform adaptation of the new forms of work organization under a regime of flexible automation.

National forms of labour adjustment will be crucial. The condition of workers in capitalist labour markets is not determined solely by qualifications and skills. These are only one dimension of the labour regime, which also includes

wage-determination, work-time allocation, worker mobility, and the labour process. As the period of Fordism demonstrated, suppressing unemployment is central to workers' struggles to shape the form of economic adjustment. Thus the essential message of Göran Therborn's *Why Some Peoples Are More Unemployed Than Others* cannot be stressed enough: the roads to employment success for workers are littered with the debris of class struggles to restrict the use of unemployment shocks to achieve economic adjustment.⁹

Indeed, tight labour markets would appear to be crucial in determining whether an *offensive* strategy of flexibility can be adopted, whereby technological upgrading is combined with the extensions of workers' rights. The alternative is a strategy of *defensive* flexibility, with the pressures of international competition leading to a downward ratcheting of social rights and living standards. As Boyer has observed, these divergent tendencies demarcate the opportunity and the danger of flexible automation:

On the one hand, there is the opportunity to mitigate some of the worst features of Fordism: less need for a hierarchy exercising authoritarian control, the possibility of doing away with tedious, dangerous, or purely repetitive jobs, opportunities of raising qualifications through general and adequate technical training.... But on the other hand not all companies or sectors are in a position to adopt this strategy: falling back on cheap, unskilled labour is a great temptation—and a very real danger, particularly as minimum wage levels are lowered.... Equally, it is not certain that computerization will undermine the historical division between manual labour and intellectual work. If some repetitive tasks can be abolished and others made potentially more varied and interesting, the rationalization and Taylorization of intellectual work itself may occur. To summarize, the present changes seem to be relatively open-ended: they are so diverse that they cannot be rigidly determined solely by what is technologically possible.¹⁰

The rationalization of industry can lead to a deepening of traditional mass production technologies with only isolated pockets of quality production, further de-skilling, and high unemployment. Alternatively, the restructuring of work with flexible technologies offers the opportunity to reconstruct core manufacturing sectors and establish the basis for entirely new forms of work relations. This is the choice with respect to employment policy.

THE POSTWAR ORDER: WHAT HAPPENED TO EMPLOYMENT POLICY?

Canada's labour adjustment policies have a long history. The empirical trends are well known, but they bear repeating. First, flexibility has been provided by high unemployment levels. Unemployment tends to be the highest among the major capitalist countries and has been rising since the 1960s, with important spatial concentrations. Second, rapid labour force and employment growth have added to market flexibility. Extensive economic growth based on widening the labour stock was an important characteristic of postwar Fordism in Canada, fueling job growth in the low-wage service sector as well as precarious forms of employment. Third, training has depended, by and large, upon actions of firms and individual workers. Despite large inflows of skilled immigrant labour, skill shortages have been constant. Fourth, a fragmented collective bargaining system generated localized bargaining. Wage differentials tend to be large, and the non-unionized workforce has little employment security. Finally, labour market institutions are centred at the enterprise level, so adjustment has been largely conducted through the market.

Overall, macroeconomic policy is intended to provide an adequate level of demand; labour market expenditures are dominated by income security programs, based on the insurance principle and intended to cushion short-term spells of unemployment. These postwar trends underline the tendency to adopt defensive measures of adjustment. Current trends in labour market flexibility in Canada need to be assessed in relation to a long-term growth process that has been relatively extensive, relying on the expansion of output by rapid labour force growth and employment in low-wage, low-productivity sectors.

Contemporary debates about the inadequacies of Canadian training policy have a certain familiarity. Over the postwar period a new wave of reform issued from each significant shift in the labour market. Moreover, each labour market reform promised a new balance between market-based employment strategies and the failure of the market to supply either enough training or jobs.

A broader labour market "bargain" that would include national labour market institutions did not figure in the commitment to maintain high and stable levels of employment promised in the 1945 *White Paper on Employment and Income*. The reliance on market forms of economic adjustment was central to the document. Indeed, the underlying theme of the White Paper was dependent industrialization: employment levels in Canada would depend upon trade in raw materials and capital inflows, in particular as

sources of effective demand. Market forces would dominate production and distribution, and no role for the state in stabilizing investment levels or in constraining the labour market was set out. The federal government would support employment levels by allowing fiscal deficits to run up during a recession, and by indirect measures of tax and budgetary policy. Employment goals were consequently modest, avoiding specific targets.

With employment policy playing only a marginal role in the postwar order in Canada, there was little incentive to modernize labour market institutions. Therefore, labour market policies barely changed for almost two decades after the war. The only major new policy of the period was a national unemployment insurance program in 1940. The insurance scheme also led to the consolidation of the National Employment Service (NES), designed to deliver the program and to play a minor information role by posting jobs.

Training, the other significant component of labour market policy, also was in place before 1945 and developed in response to war mobilization. The 1942 Vocational Training and Co-ordination Act grew out of existing programs of support for provincial vocational education institutions, enacted in 1937 and 1939 to train unemployed youth. The Act failed, however, to expand the levels of training and to build training institutions across the country.¹¹ As a result, industrial training remained especially reliant upon "poach-
ing" skilled workers from other nations, a characteristic of dependent industrialization in Canada dating back to the National Policy.¹² Training policies did not figure prominently as either a positive means of adjustment or for the retraining of the unemployed. Low skill levels and loose labour markets were structurally imbedded in the truncated form of Fordism which dominated growth.

THE GREAT AUTOMATION SCARE AND THE MODERNIZATION OF LABOUR MARKET POLICY

The long cycle from 1956-66 of high unemployment, followed by an unprecedented economic recovery, began the process of modernization of Canadian labour market policies. In a debate which remarkably mirrors the current discussion of new technologies, the Great Automation Scare put training policies at the centre of employment policy. Taylorism, it should be recalled, involved not just the splintering of tasks, but the concerted application of technical advances to production. This tended to produce a triadic segmentation of the labour market, commonly observed in North America,

of technical, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Automation under Fordism further separated conception and execution, increasing the number of technical employees needed to maintain and oversee automated processes. These technical skills required more formal training, and could not be obtained from existing apprenticeship training. The emphasis on expanding training also found support from a slightly different concern. It was argued by many that the increase in unemployment in the early 1960s was structural, the result of a mismatch between the existing skills of workers and new job openings. Keynesians dismissed these training-centred accounts, seeing instead lack of effective demand as the basis of unemployment. Whatever the source of the problem identified, it nonetheless became accepted opinion in both camps that the tradeoff between unemployment and inflation could be improved through policies to enhance adjustment in the labour market. In particular, training policies could help dissolve skill bottlenecks, which developed during recoveries and slowed growth.

Two other factors also greatly favoured the expansion of training.¹³ With Europe booming by the 1960s, there were fewer skilled workers available to stock the Canadian labour market and the number of youth entering the labour market was about to soar. A new training system thus had to be put in place quickly, and the federal government in 1960 patched together the Technical and Vocational Training Act (TVTA). Although the new act gathered disparate programs into one scheme, it changed little with respect to apprenticeships or training in industry. Industry was encouraged to expand training, but industry continued to prefer not to train, so the postwar failures of market-driven training structures were compounded. The significant departure, partially a result of the TVTA, was the explosion in capital expenditures and training allowances for both vocational high schools and community colleges targeted at youth. The infrastructure for a publicly based training system was established. Indeed, these institutional programs, in the absence of private training systems, quickly became the cornerstone of training policy until the 1980s. Training policy, however, remained only tenuously linked to industrial policy making.

The TVTA remained the major labour market policy through the early 1960s, but that was soon to change. With Fordism at its peak as the decade closed, the concept of "active labour market policies" spread across the capitalist bloc. Active policies meant a variety of measures to speed the pace of adjustment of the labour supply so that more employment could be purchased with lower levels of inflation. In Canada, this was the mandate given to the new Department of Manpower and Immigration in 1966. The administrative

reorganization consolidated existing labour market programs. The two main innovations of the Department illustrate well the continuities with the previous policy of relying on the market for labour adjustment. The Manpower Mobility Program and the creation of local Canada Employment Centres had the objective of improving price signals through better information and the removal of barriers to mobility.

To some extent, the 1967 Adult Occupational Training Act, which replaced the TVTA, went against the policy norm of relying on market determination of occupational skill distribution. It increased the role of government in targeting training needs. The TVTA had left occupational selection up to individual trainees and course offerings up to colleges. Large skill gaps remained a problem, as did over-enrollment in some courses. To compensate for the combined failure of the market and passive state funding of training, the federal government began to purchase occupational spaces in provincial training institutions after making employment forecasts. The new approach also stressed retraining adult workers suffering job displacement due to technological change.¹⁴ This shift in emphasis was partly a result of the impact of automation which helped spark the dramatic rise in working-class protest in the mid-1960s, notably wildcat railway and postal worker strikes over redundancies and automated processes. In other words, the new training policy responded to pressures for employment security, as technology changed and fears of job loss mounted.

The late 1960s, in many respects, represented the high point of labour market policies in Canada. Strong growth and steadily improving productivity kept employment strong and incomes growing, with unemployment only moderately increasing between cyclical peaks. In turn, the stability of Fordist production processes allowed skill needs to be met by amending the postwar training regime to include occupational targeting, while still relying on immigration to keep the labour market well stocked. Dependent industrialization and dependent skills formation could continue to march in tandem.

The decline of Fordism in the early 1970s shattered the job market. Unemployment levels spiralled upwards, as the rate of employment growth consistently failed to match labour force growth. Labour market policy initially shifted the supply-side focus to the demand side in an attempt to provide short-term employment for youth and the unemployed. The Canada Works Program provided community-based direct job creation and general training. Such programs, however, could not stop the surging unemployment. Each level of additional demand stimulation purchased fewer jobs, partly because of shifting capital-labour ratios and partly because of inflation. Indeed, without

continuing economic growth, the structural contradictions between rapid growth in the labour supply, stability in the hours of work, and low levels of unemployment could no longer be contained. The labour market conditions which produced the extensive postwar growth now provided the basis for imposing forms of labour market flexibility which would overturn the employment security provided earlier.

While the labour movement and much of the Left held tenaciously to Keynesianism and the old growth model, notably in the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) embrace of incomes policies, the Right began to forge a new agenda. It was already accepted in the main economic policy branches of the government that little could be done for the unemployed by 1975, when the Bank of Canada gave its official approval to monetarism. The new theories of unemployment suggested workers were voluntarily unemployed, either because they were searching for work or keeping their "reservation wages" too high. Labour market programs slowly began to fall in line with the new thinking, by targeting individual responses to market incentives. Unemployment insurance levels and requirements were tightened. Employment creation shifted from communities to wage subsidy incentives for businesses, as in the Employment Tax Credit Scheme of 1978-81. Similarly, the Canada Manpower Training Program began to shift from broad-based, formal skilling to narrow, on-the-job training to meet specific skill shortages. Basic skills funding was reduced.¹⁵ In these years, the crisis was still largely seen as transitional, however, so the intent was to clear labour market imbalances by reintroducing some wage and skill flexibility, without assaulting the entire labour regime of Fordism.

THE REVENGE OF THE MARKET AND THE COLLAPSE OF LABOUR MARKET POLICY

This narrow defensive flexibility was not to last. The deep recession of 1981-82 forcefully altered the political and economic landscape in Canada. Since 1982 government policy has single-mindedly pursued the rationalization of product and labour markets to secure export markets. Labour market policy has been central to this strategy, and in particular to forcing workers to bear the burden of adjustment. Downward wage pressure has been imposed, with real wage losses the pattern set for most of the 1980s. A series of government studies in the early 1980s generalized the need to extend flexibility to the entire labour market.

The influential *Dodge Report* asserted that governments could do little to effect the aggregate level of employment which was set by market forces. Policies, however, could improve flexibility by reducing disincentives to work, by eliminating job creation programs, and by relying less on institutional training and more on industrial training. Despite record volumes of unemployment from 1982-84, direct employment creation schemes were abandoned within federal labour market policy.¹⁶

There was one exception to the embrace of market-based employment strategy after the *Dodge Report*. The National Training Program of 1982 did attempt occupational targeting of the skill mix. Training expenditures would cover fewer programs, which explicitly meant less funds for basic skills development for the unemployed. Instead, high-quality, high-skills training in selected occupations, where skill shortages existed or which had received "national occupation" designation as critical skills, would be targeted. Training policies were, therefore, to be more selective and supply core worker skills, which the market was failing to provide, to meet the specific needs of industry.

The occupational targeting of such functionally specific skills was also the downfall of the National Training Program, however. Its skills projections were premised upon the success of Liberals' resource-based megaprojects. With the recession, these projects were scrapped, so industry did not spend training allocations, and the narrowly based high-quality skills soon became redundant.¹⁷ The conclusion drawn by business groups in Canada, including small businesses which received few training benefits and large capitalists who wanted greater control over training, was simple: state-administered training schemes based on imaginary occupational projections were a waste of training funds; business itself should control training levels and content. This conclusion was wholly congruent with the more general shift to neoconservatism in federal policy making, and the offloading of social programs to provincial governments and the market.

The change in government in 1984 brought the Tories and the solidification of a labour market strategy for defensive flexibility. The Tories thoroughly embraced the New Right position that governments not only cannot, but also should not, create jobs. Expanding employment in community-based "third sectors," where useful services but not profitable private consumption goods might be provided, was a waste of productive wealth. Labour market policy should provide incentives for private employers to train; governments should not attempt to determine which skills were needed nor to control the delivery of training. This was the reasoning of the consultation paper on training introduced by the Tory government in 1984. It argued that institutional training in

Canada was too rigid, especially for the service sector, where job growth was strongest. The new employment strategy should build around the notion of work experience for youth and workers re-entering the labour market, and less on the development of specific or formal skills, especially skills associated with worker credentials in apprenticeship or technical training, which increased their leverage in the labour market.¹⁸

This thinking formed the basis of the Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS), implemented in 1985 and is still the core of federal labour market policy. The basic premise of the CJS is that the private sector can best determine training needs, and it should control delivery as well. Funds are available to firms providing initial work experience with some minimal training component. In this employer-centred, non-institutional system, small and large businesses can supply training. The privatization of training under the CJS thus completes the return to market determination of skills training, and marks the abandonment of an employment policy with the objective of improving the condition of the unemployed.¹⁹

The wage subsidy scheme that takes up the bulk of labour market funds under the CJS has added to the polarization of skills in the labour market. Some workers still receive formal qualifications, although apprenticeships and technical degrees are becoming more restrictive, but short-term, job-specific nontransferable training is more common. This strategy has had the effect of providing individual firms with cheap labour, undermining worker qualifications, and depositing large numbers of workers in low-wage segments of the workforce.

The recently announced Labour Force Development Strategy (LFDS) of the federal government to some extent recognizes that the market-driven training strategy has failed. The quality training necessary to compete in many sectors is not being provided by existing institutional programs and business is not picking up the slack. Basic skills such as literacy and numerical proficiency, necessary for service-sector work, are also lacking.²⁰ Some form of joint business-labour regulation is proposed to replace strict reliance on wage subsidies to encourage training. At the same time, the LFDS strips the funds for increased training out of the unemployment insurance budget by stiffening eligibility requirements, and leaves intact the privatized training structure.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEFENSIVE ADJUSTMENT IN CANADA

The new federal labour market strategy illustrates how imbedded the logic of defensive adjustment is in employment and training policy. This labour force strategy repeats the long history of labour market policy. In this sense, the national form of economic adjustment in Canada of relatively extensive economic growth dependent upon expanding low-wage employment sectors continues. Raising the quality of training for core workers alone, as the new Labour Force Development Strategy proposes, is unlikely to break the reinforcing circle of low productivity, low-wage job growth and institutionally unstable, market-centred employment policies.

The deterioration in employment since the crisis of Fordism began has evoked a response exhibiting significant policy instability. This point is crucial. The Canadian case unequivocally demonstrates that, at least in the provision of training, an important parallel can be drawn between markets and states. Markets have proven to be, theoretically and historically, extremely inadequate providers of worker qualifications. States may also suffer from "institutional failure": repeated strategic shifts, and resulting institutional instability, can severely disrupt the provision of even those "goods" best provided by non-market mechanisms.²¹ The lack of internal coherence in the state's labour market policy shifts have all contributed to the present inadequacies of labour market policy.²² The result should not be unexpected. If national training structures are important to the choice of paths of economic adjustment, the history of employment policy seems to have cut off several roads.

Institutional failure, however, is only part of the story; political failures are also important. The instability of labour market policy is ultimately related to the inability of the labour movement to lessen worker competition and impose a strong political commitment to full employment. Without the power of a politicised labour movement to keep the labour market tight, and thus sustain pressure for offensive forms of flexible adjustment, a strategy of defensive flexibility, undermining further the labour market position of workers has been consolidated in Canada. The most visible sign of this neo-liberal project has been, of course, continental free trade: Canadian access to U.S. markets is to be assured, while state economic policies to build the national market are curtailed. Deregulating the labour market by overturning existing forms of employment security has also been important. Trade union freedom of collective action has been restricted; wage flexibility has replaced productivity bargaining; collective agreements have been stripped of union security clauses; and training facilities

have been privatized. Canada today represents a *locus classicus* case of defensive adjustment: labour market flexibility ensures that wage-earners bear the costs of the instability of international trade, budgetary restraints, and new production processes.²³

TRAINING, JOBS, AND DEMOCRACY

The elements of a "new culture" and "new way of life" which are being spread around under the American label, are still just tentative feelers.... What is today called "Americanism" is to a large extent an advance criticism of an old strata which will in fact be crushed by an eventual new order and which are already in the grips of a wave of social panic, dissolution and despair. It is an unconscious attempt at reaction on the part of those who are impotent to rebuild and who are emphasizing the negative aspects of the revolution. But it is not from the social groups "condemned" by the new order that reconstruction is to be expected, but from those on whom is imposed the burden of creating with their own suffering the material bases of the new order. It is they who "must" find for themselves an "original," and not Americanised, system of living, to turn into "freedom" what today is "necessity."

A. Gramsci²⁴

The disastrous social and economic consequences of defensive flexibility have led to a search for an alternative. Attempting to preserve old forms of industrial activity and methods only contributes to the vicious spiral of cost competition in output and labour markets. Canada, and especially Ontario, would lose any such battle with low-cost exporters in Mexico and the "union-free" states of the U.S. Positive forms of economic flexibility are required to cope with market uncertainty generated by continental rationalization. Upgrading the quality of goods production to compete in more specialized markets, whether it be the post-Fordist variants of flexible specialization or diversified quality production, is the recommended route.²⁵ Competition would occur on the basis of the quality of goods and not their production costs; high wages and good jobs could thereby be preserved. As one of the studies for the influential *Vision 2000* review of Ontario's colleges concluded:

The key to international competitiveness involves the cumulative technological base of society, including the production skills and tacit knowledge of much of the workforce...Overall, the key to success in the emerging technological era appears to be a commitment to training and a willingness to empower workers with skills and greater autonomy.²⁶

The rest follows: as the competitiveness of manufacturing improves, unemployment levels would be brought down, the crisis of Fordism ended, and a new world of liberated work entered.

With few alternatives seemingly available, and maintaining that industrial employment remains important, this position has been endorsed by much of the Left. It has had special resonance in regions that traditionally have had large industrial cores and now seek a supply-side strategy for the regeneration of the manufacturing base. As Robin Murray recently put it: "In the era of mass production the powerful locational pull was proximity to markets. Now it is technical labour and its associated infrastructure that has become the dominant factor in shaping the hierarchy of space."²⁷

Industry has been centred in Ontario; it is here that the post-Fordist strategy has been taken up most vigorously. With federal economic policy under the Tories adopting market solutions, the Ontario state is the one government able to support a stripped-down industrial policy oriented to creating high-tech, export-based Canadian multinationals. In contrast to other provinces where training policies have been reduced to providing for temporary low-wage jobs, quality training policies in Ontario would support quality production. When compared to the neoliberal alternative, this reasoning has its attractions, but it also has its limits.

This "manufacturing matters" thesis oddly mirrors the "post-industrial society" thesis it so firmly rejects.²⁸ The latter suggests that new technologies and evolving economic structures mean good jobs will be found in information services and that full employment is obsolete because paid work should no longer be necessary to secure adequate income. The former proposes that resparking productivity in manufacturing, and especially further building up an export base, will be sufficient to re-establish high wages and a high volume of employment. Neither thesis has been of much help in addressing the jobs crisis, however.

On the one hand, there is little indication that income claims are becoming less attached to paid labour; if anything, welfare provisions are becoming more work-dependent and increasing pauperization the most visible sign of the employment crisis.²⁹ Indeed, *contra* the post-industrial utopians, levels of proletarianization have been increasing, manufacturing shares of employment remain significant, and, as the changing role of women strikingly illustrates, access to paid work is the *sine qua non* of democratic participation. On the other hand, manufacturing competitiveness alone is hardly enough to ensure high wages, which are a consequence of broader structural factors and social struggles. High-quality manufacturing can be even more competitive with low

wages, as the Asian NICs are impressively demonstrating.³⁰ Moreover, the manufacturing-matters thesis tends to exhibit a simple fallacy of composition: employment gains at the firm level are extended to the economy as a whole. The aggregate employment impact, however, depends upon the rules for sharing out productivity increases and export revenues, as well as the various factors which determine the supply of labour.³¹ The critical question, as Ajit Singh pointed out some time ago, is whether the manufacturing sector meets domestic needs and also earns enough foreign exchange to pay for required imports, *at socially acceptable levels of exchange rate, output and employment*.³²

DEFENSIVE FLEXIBILITY OR REQUALIFICATION OF WORK: THE PROSPECT FOR NATIONAL SETTINGS

The conditions under which for high-quality production may be established are quite varied, therefore, and different national settings need to be examined closely.³³ In Canada and the U.S., a segmentation of the North American labour market has been occurring, as the weaknesses of centralized collective bargaining and high unemployment allow individual firms to externalize the costs of flexibility. The break with Taylorism, indeed, was made possible by the political defeat of workers' organizations through the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, although reuniting conception and execution has offered real gains for some workers in terms of new skills and job enrichment, these gains have not been extended to all. The multiskilled, flexible core worker has gained additional security from companies which wish to protect their training investments; the peripheral worker has had more insecurity and less training. "Precarious" forms of employment have soared: part-time work, contracting out, fixed-term contracts, and serial redundancies have all increased.³⁴

As well, individualized forms of training at the workplace often accompany the new techniques; consequently, individualized bargaining between the involved worker and management tends to develop. In turn, this process contributes to a further fragmentation of wage formation as wages become tied to individual productivity through bonus systems. It is more difficult to establish a wage pattern as a result, and particularly to generalize wage gains to peripheral workers. Yet, the *collective* negotiation of worker involvement in production remains crucial to blocking defensive flexibility at the firm level.³⁵

Even if we grant that a regime of flexible automation allows a virtuous circle between the available supplies of labour (in terms of qualifications) and the

demand for labour (in terms of job content and wages), it still does not follow that the aggregate level of employment will be sufficient to lower unemployment levels. As Phillimore has noted: "Paradoxically, the better use production makes of the quality of labour, the smaller the quantity required."³⁶ The reskilling of workers to exploit new technologies will alter the internal labour market of the firm, and to a degree the product strategy, but it will not directly alter the aggregate level of employment. Chris Freeman and his colleagues have posed the right questions:

Historically speaking, over the past two centuries it is incontestable that the combined effect of these forces [of technological advance and growth in demand], together with the persistent reduction in working hours, has made it possible to generate millions of new jobs on a scale which more than offset the tendency of rising unemployment as a result of labour-saving technical change. The questions which must be asked, therefore, are: first, why has this process been periodically disrupted? Secondly, are there special features about the present trends in technology and in the economy which would permanently (or for a long time) prevent a return to another period of high growth in output and employment, as occurred after previous periods of deep structural change and recession?³⁷

It is difficult, then, to isolate a strategy for the requalification of work for the manufacturing sector. Larger questions about the structure and organization of industry, the desired rate and quality of the growth model, and the quantity of labour supplied in terms of hours and numbers of workers are central to determining aggregate employment levels.³⁸

An employment strategy that places a premium on labour is central to the way new technologies will be introduced, as there is no generalized logic of upskilling from flexible automation.³⁹ This is a simple point, but one that is consistently neglected by the post-Fordists. With large labour reserves, firms will not adopt an exclusive strategy of functional flexibility. Fluctuations in output may be met by a labour deployment strategy that utilizes various forms of precarious employment. Industrial restructuring would expand the qualifications for core workers, leaving a substantial portion of workers cut off from new skills because training investments would be lost through their periodic unemployment. A new training regime of itself will neither increase the job opportunities or skills of marginalized workers. Manufacturing certainly does matter, but not as its protagonists would suggest.⁴⁰

In national settings with an unstable training regime and a slack labour market, like that of Canada, a strategy for an offensive flexibility must begin from the principle of extending solidarity to the jobless, through new measures

for employment and reduction of work-time. Flexibility strategies do not of themselves lower unemployment, and yet low unemployment is the precondition for a modernization of industry that would make the labour process emerging after Fordism educationally intensive for all workers.

ALTERNATE PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIALIST EMPLOYMENT POLICY

It is precisely because flexible automation is part of the creation of a "new order," in Gramsci's sense, that current struggles of the labour movement tend to raise more questions than answers. What political strategies and organizational forms can provide the basis for working-class unity in a setting of increasingly diverse forms of wage-labour and mass unemployment? How do we make this project *truly popular* and move beyond the equation of socialist politics with either Keynesianism or statism? What types of policies will fit with the diversity of social spaces yet combat uneven development? Is a production-centred politics adequate to accommodate the needs of the unemployed, women, or the environment? Are concrete solidarities across national boundaries necessary? And, finally can these diverse struggles be combined in an alternative socialist politics? These are perplexing questions, yet they must be addressed if the restructuring of work is to extend substantive worker autonomy over the labour process and equitably distribute paid work. Several principles for a progressive employment strategy can be elaborated, however.⁴¹

1) Macroeconomic balance remains important, but new forms of investment planning and collective bargaining norms are even more so.

If full employment remains a central objective, valuable lessons of the Fordist period must not be forgotten in the rush to embrace new times. A simple Keynesian reflation will be profoundly inadequate. Macroeconomic balance will have to entail new mechanisms of control to constrain and shape market forces: worker participation in popular planning at the firm and industry level; national planning agreements over investment flows; regional and local development boards; and public ownership of core sectors. The instability generated by the Free Trade Agreement and the recession of 1990-91 illustrates all too well that investment in new technologies cannot be generated by market forces alone.

Similarly, the lesson of Fordism that there must be consumers as well as

producers means that free collective bargaining still has its place. But again, past bargaining practices, which were narrowly focused on wage struggles, are not enough: wage solidarity with the poorly paid takes precedence; equal pay for equal work is crucial; increased choice between leisure and wages is vital; and the quality of production and consumption itself can no longer be ignored. Moreover, in solidarity with the jobless, a bargaining norm of an "annual free time factor" must take precedence over annual wage improvements in sharing out productivity increases. The macroeconomic logic of Fordism is deepened while qualitatively transforming its contents from a focus on consuming goods to increasing free time.⁴²

2) The right to work in practice will entail less work.

A tight labour market is central to a training policy aimed at upgrading the skills of all workers.⁴³ Macroeconomic expansion will not be sufficient to lower unemployment, and exporting more soon becomes a zero-sum game of dumping job losses on the countries of the South (one of the terrible consequences of 1980s growth). The right to work, therefore, must be directly linked to a "decline in work," measured by annual hours per worker. Recent experience suggests that growth rates would have to consistently approach levels of the postwar boom to lower unemployment. But this would be enormously costly to the natural environment, and also block redistributive efforts to shift output to the South by soaking up available investment funds. Moreover, the unemployment that goes unmeasured because workers have been discouraged or have shifted to part-time, or because of the lower participation rates of women would still not be remedied. Collective bargaining to reduce working hours so as to equitably distribute paid work, say to a maximum of 1500 hours per year with severe restrictions on overtime work, is unavoidable. Work solidarity between workers means increasing the purchasing power and working hours of the unemployed and marginalized relative to core workers.

The politics of time should not be limited to fixing standard hours. A whole range of measures to radically reshape and liberate the allocation of worktime are possible: flex hours, banked time, single seniority lists based on hours worked, sabbatical leaves, early retirement, and sharing domestic labour. The government might sign "solidarity contracts" with employers and unions to develop such schemes, financial aid being conditional on the expansion of employment, particularly for young people. The struggle for working-time flexibility merges the demand for jobs with the demands of other progressive forces that paid work accommodate the diversity of lived experiences, giving

workers time when it is needed most.⁴⁴ The right to work raises the question of how we work.

3) Quality training must be for quality products within a slower, quality growth model.

It is surely correct for the labour movement to accept measures which overturn Taylorism, but the upgrading of training to increase worker involvement in production can mean many things. In employer-centered versions, it means multiskilling core workers and preserving the training investment by limiting mobility. Quality training from the standpoint of workers is quite different: long-term, broad skills rather than short-term, specific ones; transferable skills over firm-specific skills; theoretical as well as practical knowledge; and extension of worker autonomy over the labour process. Technical degrees and apprenticeships provide for a broader skills base, more satisfying work, and transferable, recognized skills. Thus formal qualifications, earned through institutional training or a mixture of formal training and on-the-job training, tend to allow workers more flexibility and control over their labour process.

The requalification of work requires that the broad skills of technical competency be extended to all workers. In Canada the failure of privatized training systems and the improbability of corporatist regulation makes the community college system the most appropriate place to expand workers' skills. In doing so, these institutions will have to internalize flexibility in program delivery while preserving common standards, increasing transferable skills, and extending opportunities for continual learning into working-class communities.⁴⁵

Linking the demand for training to the quality of production connects what goes into the labour process with the use-values that come out. This is important. The requalification of work rejects the narrow management rights clauses of Fordism, and extends both the need and capacity of workers to control the introduction of new technologies and to discuss alternate product design. Indeed, a portion of liberated freetime should be dedicated to increasing worker participation in running the enterprises at which they work. Unions too could develop their own technology networks, popular plans for industry, and socially useful products. To put it more sharply, upward adjustment to quality products and skills can mean two things: producing extraordinary consumption items for a privileged stratum, or quality products for a mass market that also re-shapes the way we live (Porsches or rapid mass transit; opera houses or community theatre centres; antibiotics-saturated beef or organic grains).⁴⁶ To the extent workers recapture the skills and capacities of their own labour power, these visions become credible alternatives for democ-

ratic socialist planning.

4) The democratic principle of equal access to knowledge must extend training to all workers.

The struggle against a rigid division between conception and execution has long been a demand of the socialist movement, and a variety of programs and structures are necessary. Educational opportunities should be available in all regions and at all ages. Basic literacy and skills are fundamental to participation in society and at work, and a diversity of public and community programs should be supported. Similarly, access to training means flexibility in delivery and adequate training allowances so older workers and low-income earners are not excluded. It also means that an emphasis on continual learning at the firm does not exclude younger workers from gaining training or employment.

Equal access to knowledge also entails, of course, equality of opportunity for women, Aboriginal people, and racial minorities. "Skill" is a social construction which has often been used to exclude and reinforce elitism.⁴⁷ The requalification of work obliges, therefore, equality of opportunity and solidaristic recognition of differential skills.

5) Continual learning is a workers' educational and cultural demand.

The continual application of new techniques and innovations in production means that continual learning must be incorporated as a key element in the requalification of work. Older workers need skill upgrading; workers permanently displaced need retraining. Workers with specific skills or trades should have access to both formal and on-the-job training through flexible programs for upgrading during working hours. To better prepare for task and skill changes, unions need information about production plans well in advance of implementation. But other forms of training and learning, specific to the job or not, are a social right for all workers. Learning should be an ordinary part of life. Annual paid educational leaves that are universally available will allow training choices are not limited to the specific needs of the job.⁴⁸

6) Democratic administration is essential to implementing labour market policy.

Insofar as the requalification of work contributes to expanding the capacity of workers collectively to shape their futures, substantive aspects of democracy are included. Representative forms of democracy for the bodies governing employment are important—indeed, they are critical if collective negotiation

of worker involvement is to incorporate the unorganized and jobless.

Currently, training, except where it is part of collective agreements, occurs almost completely on the basis of employer voluntarism. There are a variety of proposals to expand training argue for either a bipartite or tripartite training board system, albeit with some extension to community groups, but ignore other aspects of employment policy.⁴⁹ Such corporatist structures have strong limitations in that they tend to be dominated by the most economically powerful producer groups, and thus institutionalize the inequalities of capitalist social relations. A wider, mandated representation allows women, racial minorities, and the jobless to have their interests represented as well.

Even the inclusion of community groups has limits, however, as there is no direct democratic participation of the workers themselves in the delegation of responsibility to the labour market boards. Indeed, it may be necessary to establish a statutory labour market system structured through local, democratically accountable bodies similar to school boards. If encompassed within a national labour market policy, the local boards would decentralize decision making, allowing local communities to be more broadly active in establishing production, employment and training priorities.⁵⁰

It could be argued too that Work and Environment Boards incorporating environmental considerations into employment planning are needed. Such bodies could be divided into units concerned with workplace ecology, unemployment, training, domestic labour, employment equity and sustainable production. The proliferation of labour market policy bodies already requires administrative consolidation alongside decentralization of the delivery of the service. Through such publicly elected labour market boards, workers and their communities could be directly involved in the collective negotiation over the conditions of work, as well as the environmental conditions of production, with the providers of jobs and training.

The demands which make up this vision of requalified work read like a kind of socialist wish list in the Canada of today, an extension of social rights in a period of downward adjustment of the collective rights and status of workers.⁵¹ But so it should be. For even if the best alternative to be hoped for in present political conditions is the bundling of a progressive qualification process with quality capitalist production, it is equally evident that this narrow, post-Fordist strategy is unlikely to succeed on its own terms. The future for workers and the jobless outside the core sector remains dismal and increasingly insecure. The election of an NDP government in Ontario did little to correct this, or to alter the necessity of building the political currents to support a progressive model of development. It is, therefore, inescapable that we

stake out a broader collective project that seeks to expand creative capacities—particularly in redefining the nature of work and the allocation of time—and begins to forge new social alliances.

JOB COMPETITION OR WORK SOLIDARITY: EXPANDING POLITICAL VISIONS

When Fordism was making its historical appearance and vocational training institutions were springing up to ready workers for the new trades, the American educator John Dewey noted the critical democratic choice at hand:

Those who believe in the continuous separate existence of what they are pleased to call the "lower classes" or the "labouring classes" would naturally rejoice to have schools in which these "classes" would be segregated. And some employers of labour would doubtless rejoice to have schools supported by public taxation supply them with additional food for their mills.

Alternative forms of work and training, however, existed which acknowledged the interest of workers in advancing their skills:

...the development of such intelligent initiative, ingenuity and executive capacity as shall make workers as far as may be possible, the masters of their own industrial fate... The kind of vocational education in which I am interested is not one which will "adapt" workers to the existing regime; I am not sufficiently in love with the regime for that. It seems to me that the business of all who would not be educational time-servers is... to strive for a kind of vocational education which will alter the existing industrial system and ultimately transform it.⁵²

Even more than in the past, the technologies embodied in flexible automation offer a vast potential to develop the intelligent initiative, ingenuity and executive capacity of workers. A small step in this direction will mean training and jobs. The danger in Canada in the post-FTA world is that the labour movement will focus its political efforts on shoring up the local manufacturing sector as the winds of continental adjustment and global competition howl.⁵³ Such a narrow, short-term strategy of bolstering regional capitals however, will inevitably fuel the competitive bargaining for manufacturing jobs between sub-national states on both sides of the border. This competitive process is visible already in the Premier's Council's strategy in Ontario and the story could be repeated across the country. Without a broader, democratic vision of the future of work incorporating the jobless, new training policies tied to quality manufacturing for the new global economy will continue to reproduce the skill

and income polarizations characteristic of the 1980s.

It is a startling paradox of Canadian history that just as the labour movement is finally finding its own way, after a century in the shadow of Gompers, it has become imperative that we find new mechanisms of solidarity and support that span the continent.⁵⁴ The internationalization of the struggle for work solidarity is necessary to put in place the kind of international order which will maximize national autonomy for alternate, ecologically sound development paths, and replace the present vicious circle of freer trade, intensified competition, followed by accelerated environmental and work degradation. Struggles around the requalification and democratization of work are more likely to contribute to this joint project than those seeking manufacturing competitiveness. They may, to quote Gramsci's words again: "turn into 'freedom' what today is 'necessity.'"

ENDNOTES

I would like to thank Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon for their insightful, encouraging comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. Raymond Williams, *Towards 2000* (London: Penguin, 1983), p. 101.
2. The case for a joint worker-management interest in upgrading training for quality production has been forcefully presented in: L. Muszynski and D. Wolfe, "New Technology and Training: Lessons from Abroad," *Canadian Public Policy*, 15:3 (1989); W. Streeck, "Industrial Relations and Industrial Change: The Restructuring of the World Automobile Industry," *Economic and Industrial Democracy* (EID), 8:4 (1987); and a slew of government reports, most notably, Ontario Council of Regents, *Vision 2000: Quality and Opportunity* (Toronto: 1990) and Premier's Council of Ontario, *People and Skills in the New Global Economy* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1990).
3. See: R. Mahon, "From Fordism to ?: New Technology, Labour Markets and Unions," *EID*, 8:1 (1987); H. Kern and M. Schumann, "Limits of the Division of Labour: New Production and Employment Concepts in West German Industry," *EID*, 8:2 (1987); and F. Wilkinson, "The Restructuring of Labour Markets," *Labour and Society*, 13:4 (1988).

4. *People and Skills in the New Global Economy*, p. 1. It should be noted that training is not being put forward, as it was in the 1960s, as a solution to structural unemployment and skill bottlenecks. The argument now is even more convoluted: skilled workers will create the high-quality products in demand, and such demand, in turn, will employ these very same workers. As domestic markets are not likely to be deep enough, export-led industrialization is key, with foreign exchange earnings trickling down to non-manufacturing workers.
5. R. Hyman and W. Streeck (eds.), *New Technology and Industrial Relations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); A. Sorge and M. Warner, *Comparative Factory Organization* (London: Gower, 1986); and M. Maurice, F. Sellier and J. Silvestre, *The Social Foundations of Industrial Power* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986).
6. Or as Storper recently put it: "In reality, both 'firms' and 'industries' are being redefined, such that the notion of returns as strictly internal loses its meaning in any dynamic, historical sense. In sum, in functioning industrial systems, both the division of labour and technological innovations tend to be endogenously and dynamically reproduced and are, in turn, mutually reinforcing." See: "The Transition to Flexible Specialization in the U.S. Film Industry," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 13:2 (1989), p. 297.
7. On the different factors shaping the skilling process see: S. Wood (ed.), *The Degradation of Work* (London: Hutchinson, 1982); E. Batstone et al., *New Technology and the Process of Labour Regulation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), Ch. 1; and R. Allen, "The Impact of Technical Change on Employment, Wages and the Distribution of Skills: A Historical Perspective," in C. Riddell (ed.), *Adjusting to Change: Labour Market Adjustment in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986). Especially fascinating on this issue, in relation to economic performance, is: T. Nichols, *The British Worker Question* (London: Routledge, 1986).
8. Although differing in their assessment of flexible automation, several authors note the new skills profiles: R. Kaplinsky, "Industrial Restructuring: Some Questions for Education and Training," *IDS Bulletin*, 20:1 (1989); A. Phillimore, "Flexible Specialization, Work Organization and Skills," *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 4:2 (1989); and P. Mehaut, "New Firms' Training Policies and Changes in the Wage-Earning Relationship," *Labour and Society*, 13:4 (1988).
9. Göran Therborn, *Why Some People Are More Unemployed Than Others* (London: Verso 1986), pp. 20-36. Also see: J. Grahl and P. Teague, "Labour Market Flexibility in West Germany, Britain and France," *West European Politics* (1990).
10. R. Boyer, *The Search for Labour Market Flexibility* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1988), p. 260. This choice has been discussed with respect to Canadian trade unions in G. Albo, "The 'New Realism' and Canadian Workers," in A. Gagnon and J. Bickerton (eds.), *Canadian Politics* (Peterborough: Broadview Press 1990).

11. The exception was wartime, when there was no choice but to train the domestic labour force.
12. S. Dupré, *et al. Federalism and Policy Development* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1973), pp. 14-5; and G. Laxer, *Open for Business* (Toronto: Oxford, 1990), p. 35. Canada compares interestingly to the U.S.: B. Elbaum, "Why Apprenticeship Persisted in Britain But Not in the United States," *Journal of Economic History*, 49:2 (1989).
13. See: OECD, *A Medium Term Strategy for Employment and Manpower Policies* (Paris: OECD 1978), Ch. 2; and L. Muszynski, "The Politics of Labour Market Policy," in B. Doern (ed.), *The Politics of Economic Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), pp. 260-3.
14. S. Peitchinis, "The Development of Manpower and Economic Development: Is Co-ordination Possible?," *Relations Industrielles*, 22:1 (1967); and R. Phidd and B. Doern, *The Politics and Management of Canadian Economic Policy* (Toronto, 1978), pp. 374-9.
15. B. Cullen, *Employment Strategy* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1976).
16. Task Force on Labour Market Development, *Labour Market Development in the 1980s* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1981); Economic Council of Canada, *In Short Supply: Jobs and Skills in the 1980s* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1982); and *Canadian Labour Markets in the 1980s* (Kingston: Queen's Industrial Relations Centre, 1983).
17. CEIAC, *The National Training Act* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1985), R. Abella, *Equality in Employment*, Vol. 1 (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1984), pp. 158-75; and Economic Council of Canada, *Strengthening Growth* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1985), pp. 41-2 and 103-4.
18. CEIC, *Consultation Paper: Training* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1984); CEIC, *Canadian Jobs Strategy* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1985).
19. Senate of Canada, *In Training: Only Work Works* (1987); and M. Prince and J. Rice, "The CJS: Supply-Side Social Policy," in *idem* (eds.), *How Ottawa Spends 1989-90* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989).
20. CEIC, *Success in the Works* (Ottawa: S and S, 1990); and R. Mahon, "Adjusting to Win? The New Tory Training Initiative," in K. Graham (ed.), *How Ottawa Spends 1990-91* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990), pp. 16-9.
21. Cf. Therborn, *Some Peoples*, p. 132.
22. The current situation is discussed in: R. Mahon, "Towards a Highly Qualified Workforce: Improving the Terms of the Equity-Efficiency Tradeoff," in *Colleges and the Changing Economy* (Toronto: Ontario Council of Regents, 1989).
23. See the range of country studies in: S. Rosenberg (ed.), *The State and the Labor Market* (New York: Plenum Press, 1989). Even if she fails to adequately recognize technological discontinuities, Anna Pollert's 'deconstruction' of flexibility needs to be accounted for (and most praisers of post-Fordism do not):

- "The 'Flexible' Firm: Fixation or Fact?," *Work, Employment and Society*, 2:3 (1988); and C Smith, "Flexible Specialization, Automation and Mass Production," *Work, Employment and Society*, 3:2 (1989).
24. "Americanism and Fordism," *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers. 1971), p. 317.
 25. Piore and Sabel, *Industrial Divide*; A. Sorge and W. Streeck, "Industrial Relation and Technical Change," in Hyman and Streeck (eds.), *New Technology*; Muszynski and Wolfe, "New Technology"; and Premier's Council, *Competing in the New Global Economy, Vol.1* (Toronto: Queen's Printer 1988). These varied strategies are assessed very interestingly in: E. Schoenberger, "From Fordism to Flexible Accumulation: Technology, Competitive Strategies, and International Location," *Society and Space*, 6:3 (1988).
 26. D. Wolfe, "New Technology and Education: A Challenge for the Colleges," in *Colleges and the Changing Economy* (Toronto: Ontario Council of Regents, 1989), p. 16.
 27. "Regional Economic Policy in Europe in the 1990s in the Light of the Experience of the 1980s," (Paper prepared for Agenor, March 1990), 10. In contrast, see: N. Smith, "The Region is Dead! Long Live the Region!" *Political Geography Quarterly*, 7:2 (1988).
 28. The following particularly applies to the Americans (Block versus Cohen and Zysman), but it also is characteristic of the Europeans (Gorz and Offe versus Streeck and Sorge on the continent). It used to also cover the British, but then "New Times" came along and the new realists decided manufacturing was the rage.
 29. The 'green' argument on rupturing the link between paid employment and income is political nonsense but also socially unjust: it is premised on reducing the consumption levels of active workers to increase the consumption of (by choice) inactive individuals and not on the basis of more useful work for all or by spreading work. Individual contributions to total social labour are a *right* and *obligation*. Although wrong, the most interesting case for this work-income split to lower unemployment, tied to a reformulated incomes policy, has come from liberals such as James Meade and Ron Dore.
 30. Guy Standing observes that because high-tech is already present in many low-wage countries, notably the Pacific Rim, the flexibility views are fanciful. See *Labour Market Analysis and Employment Planning* (World Employment Program Working Paper N. 23, 1988), p. 15.
 31. See the essays (especially Robert Boyer) gathered in J. Kregel, E. Matzner and A. Roncaglia (eds.), *Barriers to Full Employment* (London: Macmillan, 1988).
 32. A. Singh, "U.K. Industry and the World Economy: A Case of De-industrialization?" *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 1:2 (1977).
 33. Within the international literature, the work of Rianne Mahon has been excep-

- tional in pointing to the importance of national settings and class struggles in shaping any flexible automation regime, in contrast to the often sweeping generalizations characteristic of much of the post-Fordist literature. See especially Mahon, "From Fordism to?"
34. L. Poulin-Simon, "Labour Market Flexibility: A Canadian Perspective," in G. Laflamme *et. al* (eds.), *Flexibility and Labour Markets in Canada and the United States* (Geneva: ILO, 1989), pp. 66-8.
 35. D. Leborgne and A. Lipietz, "New Technologies, New Modes of Regulation: Some Spatial Implication," *Society and Space*, 6:3 (1988), p. 269; and Mehaut, 'Training Policies.'
 36. Phillimore, "Flexible Specialization," p. 87.
 37. C. Freeman and L. Soete, "Introduction," in *idem* (eds.), *Technical Change and Full Employment* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 5. Also see: Wilkinson, "Restructuring of Labour Markets."
 38. The empirical study by B. Rowthorn and A. Glyn, which follows up work by Therborn, also notes that low unemployment is only loosely correlated with economic growth, and while avoiding a collapse in industrial employment may be an important precondition for lowering unemployment, growth in service employment is crucial. But having noted this, they tell us nothing about new rules of co-ordination for employment policy, and simply invoke the alleged successes of the "corporatist countries." See: 'The Diversity of Unemployment Experience Since 1973,' in S. Marglin and J. Schor (eds.), *The Golden Age of Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).
 39. S. Wood, 'The Transformation of Work?' in *idem* (ed.), *The Transformation of Work?* (London: Unwin and Hyman, 1989), pp. 13-20.
 40. As Sheila Rowbotham noted, "The awkward fact is that new forms of organizing production involve many workers who are not at all in control of their work... An analysis which is to be the basis of an effective strategy has to alert us to several potentials in flexibility in terms of conditions and organizational responses." "PostFordism," *Z Magazine* (Sept. 1990), p. 35. It is these different potentials which has led A. Gorz, in his most recent book, to suggest bleakly that "it is a small core of privileged workers who are integrated into new-style enterprises at the expense of a mass of people who are marginalized and whose job security is destroyed...who are often reduced to competing for the privilege of selling personal services (including shoe-shining and house-cleaning) to those who retain a secure income." *Critique of Economic Reason* (London: Verso, 1990), pp. 70-1.
 41. See the article by Robin Murray on this strategy: "Ownership, Control and the Market," *New Left Review*, 164 (1987), p. 96.
 42. See the following: A. Lipietz. "An Alternative Design for the 21st Century," (mimeo); and R. Mahon, "From Solidaristic Wages to Solidaristic Work: A Post-Fordist Historic Compromise for Sweden?" *Economic and Industrial*

- Democracy*, 12:3 (1991). It is important that these bargaining principles become generalized, otherwise productivity gains from worker involvement are contained within the firm and serve to polarize workers. See the discussion by M. Aoki on quasi-rents: "A New Paradigm of Work Organization and Co-ordination?" in Marglin and Schor (eds.), *Golden Age*.
43. See: M. Rustin, *For a Pluralist Socialism* (London: Verso, 1985); C. Gill, *Work, Unemployment and New Technology* (Oxford: Polity, 1985), Ch. 7; and M. Wiedemeyer, "New Technology in West Germany: The Employment Debate," *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 4:1 (1989), pp. 63-4.
 44. A. Gorz, *Paths to Paradise* (London: Pluto, 1985); M. Luxton, "Time for Myself: Women's Work and the 'Fight for Shorter Hours,'" in M. Luxton and H.J. Maroney (eds.), *Feminism and Political Economy* (Toronto: Metheun, 1987); and European Trade Union Institute, *Flexibility and Jobs: Myths and Realities* (Brussels: ETUI, 1985). The essays by Gauvin and Michon on France and Berg on Norway are interesting discussions of the political dynamic created by the struggle for the 6-hour day. See: Rosenberg (ed.), *State and the Labor Market*.
 45. These views have had a slight echo in many recent government reports in Canadian, notably Ontario Council of Regents, *Vision 2000: Quality and Opportunity* (Toronto, 1990). Also see N. Jackson, "Working Knowledge: The Politics of Skills Training," *Our Times* 8:3 (1989).
 46. These are, of course, part of the many issues raised by local experiences in Britain, and also discussed more recently. See M. Mackintosh and H. Wainwright (eds.), *A Taste of Power* (London: Verso, 1989); and N. Costello, J. Michie and S. Milne, *Beyond the Casino Economy* (London: Verso, 1989). On linking worktime reduction and popular planning, see the insightful comments of S. Gindin, "Time-Out: Reducing Worktime to Our Benefits," *Our Times* (March 1991).
 47. On the dangers of unequal access under flexible automation see: J. Jenson, "The Talents of Women, the Skills of Men: Flexible Specialization and Women," in S. Wood (ed.), *The Transformation of Work?* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989); and C. Cockburn, *Two-Track Training* (London: Macmillan, 1987).
 48. Muszynski and Wolfe, "New Technology," pp. 250-1; and P. Osterman, *Employment Futures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 159-60.
 49. For a discussion of recent Canadian proposals for training boards and the effort to democratize training boards in Britain, see: R. Mahon, "Adjusting to Win?"; and C. Benn and J. Fairley (eds.), *Challenging the MSC* (London: Pluto, 1986).
 50. M. Rustin, *Pluralist Socialism*, pp. 161-2; and L. Panitch, "Capitalist Restructuring and Labour Strategies," *Studies in Political Economy*, 24 (1987), p. 148.
 51. "Modern methods of production have given us the possibility of ease and security for all; we have chosen, instead, to have overwork for some and starvation

for the others. Hitherto we have continued to be as energetic as we were before there were machines; in this we have been foolish, but there is no reason to go on being foolish forever." Bertrand Russell, *In Praise of Idleness* (London: Unwin, 1935), p. 25.

52. J. Dewey, "An Undemocratic Proposal," in M. Lazerson and W. Grubb (eds.), *American Education and Vocationalism: A Documentary History 1870-1970* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1974), pp. 143-7.
53. A striking illustration of this failure of vision on the Left is the widely endorsed 1990 CLC Convention Document N. 14, *A New Decade: Our Future*, which asserts the need for full employment, but makes no serious arguments on how to get there, except by driving up growth (which is irreconcilable with environmental claims). Indeed, the discussion of the future of work is slight, with not even a mention of work-time reduction! NDP economic documents are even more barren of forward-looking thinking. In contrast, see the stimulating paper produced by Sam Gindin and David Robertson, "Democracy and Productive Capacity: Notes Toward an Alternative to Competitiveness," (mimeo, 1990).
54. For some discussions along these lines see: R. Mahon, "Post-Fordism, Canada and the FTA: Some Issues for the Left," in Daniel Drache and Maric Gertler (eds.), *The New Era of Global Competition: State Policy and Market Power* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); G. Albo, "Canada, Left-Nationalism and Younger Voices," *Studies in Political Economy*, 33 (1990); and, more generally, M. Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream* (London: Verso, 1986), p. 301ff.