

THE EMPLOYMENT CRISIS AND SCHOOLING IN NEW ZEALAND

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In the last decade in New Zealand the number of people who were either registered as unemployed, or who were on temporary work schemes has increased by 964 per cent, and currently stands well in excess of 100,000 persons. For these people in the 40-45 age group - who incidentally are now our senior and middle management personnel - such a scenario would have been termed preposterous if put to them at the time when they entered the work force in the 1950's. At that time labour was scarce as a relatively low birth rate cohort sought to service the products of the post war baby boom during a period of rapid economic growth. Throughout the 1960's and well into the 1970's New Zealand experienced full, or at least near full, employment. Generally speaking, people who wanted to work found a job. Today, for every unfilled vacancy, in most months there are approximately 25 registered unemployed available to fill it.¹ What, then, went wrong? This paper explains some of the causes of the employment crisis, which are basically in the areas of demography, economics, and changing social and technological patterns. After examining successive government's responses to the crisis we then look specifically at the role of the school system and the youth training programmes begun at technical institutes and elsewhere.

I CAUSES OF THE EMPLOYMENT CRISIS

1. Demographic factors

A summary of New Zealand's population trends reveals several significant factors. First, certain historical trends are very important. Prior to the Second World War the annual number of live births ranged from a low during the depression of approximately 23,000 through to a peak in 1939 of just under

40,000. During the war the numbers of births dropped sharply, and climbed again in what is popularly referred to as the baby boom which peaked in 1947 when just under 50,000 children were born. If conditions had remained unchanged one would have expected a further rapid climb in birth numbers during the period 1962 onwards as the children of the baby boom reached the procreation stage. However, the introduction of the birth control pill created conditions which witnessed a peak in 1962 of about 60,000 births followed by a slight decline in the number of births until 1965, and thereafter an increase until 1974, when a steady decline to about 48,000 in 1984 occurred.

Second, Pool (1983) in analysing New Zealand's population trends draws attention to two "wild jokers in the pack". These are migration trends and fertility ratios. In the former instance there have been major fluctuations in our recent history. Following gains every year (except for two in the 1960s,) the period 1976-1978 was marked by major losses. This trend has been balanced by return migration, but in recent years New Zealand has again lost population through emigration. Predicting migration trends is very difficult.

Predicting fertility is also problematic. It is possible that the phenomenon of a reduction in the fertility of women in the younger age groups represents a delaying of births, rather than a total avoidance of childbearing. Pool (1983) argues that even a slight increase involving only 2 to 3 per cent of women aged between 30-34 would result in enormous fluctuations in the size of annual birth-cohorts - indeed the range could be as much as 21,000 births.

The foregoing indicates some of the difficulties in identifying the number of people who may enter the work force in the next three decades. However what our analysis does reveal is that for at least the next 15 years between 40,000 and 60,000 school leavers will be seeking work per annum. Age specific

analysis of the work force suggests that in this same time about 20,000 people can be expected to leave their jobs per annum. This suggests that, as in the last decade, between 20,000 and 40,000 jobs will need to be found if growth in the number of unemployed is to be avoided. The creation of these jobs depends in large measure on the state of the economy, an analysis of which we turn to now.

2. Economic factors

The traditional indicators of a strong economy are a trend towards higher incomes, full employment, low inflation and external balance of payments. The period of the 1960s and early 1970s is often perceived by New Zealanders to be a relatively prosperous time. Income per head in 1963 was the seventh highest in the world. Registered unemployment at no stage exceeded 1% of the labour force; the Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P.) grew at an annual average rate of 3.8%. The deficit in the balance of payments averaged well under 1% of GDP per annum, and never reached the point where there was likely to be any serious difficulty in financing it. Even so, a critical appraisal of this decade and a half is important as it set the scene for the massive surges of unemployment which have occurred in the last decade.

The first point to note is that New Zealand's export growth in the period 1960-1976 was very poor by the standards of other developed countries.² For example the growth rate in exports, in volume terms, was about 40% - The second worst of all developed countries, and well below the average growth of about 300%. Viewed in another way, during the same period New Zealand's overall growth in G.D.P. per head was 29 per cent, easily the worst of all developed nations. Treasury has indicated that comparative figures for the same period are as follows: Japan 238%, Finland 102%, Austria 96%, Australia 60%, U.S.A. 44%, United Kingdom 42%. The critical factor here is that New Zealand has

virtually marked time during a period of rapid expansion by our trading partners. As a Treasury paper of February, 1979 noted, the result has been a deficit in our balance of payments which in turn has constrained the vigorous internal development needed to encourage exports. Put another way, because our growth was so slight the funds were not available to import raw materials and capital goods to build the necessary export programme - in fact "the last thirty years have witnessed a succession of expansions brought to a halt by the ensuing balance of payments crisis" (Treasury Paper, 1979 p.8). This situation has not been helped by New Zealand's high dependence on exports from the agricultural sector which have faced heavy competition from Northern Hemisphere nations subsequent to their recovery post-World War II. This situation was exacerbated by the loss of our traditional markets when Britain entered the European Economic Community. Moreover, during this period New Zealand's manufacturing sector generally speaking, engaged in import substitution rather than working towards the development of new overseas markets. Many commentators have retrospectively pointed to the restructuring which took place in overseas nations which was not apparent in New Zealand - as Franklin (1985) puts it, we remained committed to sunset industries rather than committing ourselves to sunrise industries. In the period under survey, production and manufacturing in New Zealand failed to accommodate shifts in overseas consumer preferences. By failing to restructure New Zealand was not able to ensure its international competitiveness; nor was it capable of discovering new markets and serving them satisfactorily with what their consumers wanted. New Zealand's poor economic performance in this period is reflected in the fact that between 1955 and 1975 it shifted from having the third highest income per head among O.E.C.D. nations to fourteenth.

Given this poor performance which as many commentators (e.g. Gould 1982, Lane, 1983, Franklin 1985) point out dates to the 1960's New Zealand was in no

position to withstand the first of the "oil shocks" in 1973. The massive increase in the price of oil began a period marked by an increase in the overseas deficit which, when coupled with an excess of imports of goods as well as overseas borrowing, has seen New Zealand's overseas debt climb from \$465m in 1974 to \$9388m in 1984. Following the devaluation of the N.Z. dollar, in 1984 official overseas debts, excluding government corporation and private debt, stood at \$NZ 13.8072 billion at the end of Sept. 1985. This represents 32% of G.D.P. Put in simple terms New Zealand has borrowed overseas in order to provide funds to develop the much needed "sunrise industries" (although we note that the bulk of the Think Big projects developed by the former National Government were of the import substitute type) as well as to compensate for internal deficits as government sought to maintain New Zealanders' standard-of-living - a step contemptuously referred to by our present Prime Minister as "borrowing overseas to pay New Zealanders' grocery bill!" In the period 1974-1984 the rapid growth of exports needed to ward off increasing unemployment did not eventuate; rather it was a period when successive governments pinned great hopes on major developments such as horticulture, floriculture and tourism as well as minor restructuring in manufacturing. Together with the import substitution programmes, such as the gas to petrol plant at Motunui, it was hoped that the balance of payments would improve. In 1978 the Planning Council estimated that in order to achieve a 3 per cent growth in G.N.P., it was necessary to generate growth in the volume of exports of five per cent per annum. This, of course was well above what had been achieved in the previous twenty years, and has only been reached in one year - 1983-4. Thus, in the period 1974-1984 unemployment continued to grow - slowed only by some internal fiscal measures such as the across-the-board tax cut of 1978, supplementary minimum payments to farmers, industrial and export incentive schemes, a general wage order in 1980 and income tax reductions for some earners in 1982.

While these internal measures had the effect of temporarily stimulating the economy, the overall export situation (plus a second "oil shock" in 1979) saw a steady erosion of New Zealand's position, and an increase in the numbers of unemployed people. Put crudely New Zealand's poor performance in the world market place from 1960 onwards has led to a situation where insufficient funds are available to stimulate either export orientated developments, or consumer based internal developments which in turn has led to a failure to provide jobs for all of those who want them.

3. Social Attitudes

Changing social attitudes towards work have also created fresh pressures on the job market. A combination of such factors as smaller families with the children born within a short time frame, household labour saving devices, and changed beliefs about the nature of child rearing have provided conditions under which large numbers of women have entered the work force. On the one hand women are now staying in the work force for a longer period of time, and on the other are staying out of the work force, presumably for child rearing purposes, for a shorter length of time than ever before. The case of married women in the work force supports these points. In 1936 only one woman in twelve in the workforce was married; by 1961, 16% of married women worked full time; by 1971 this figure had risen to 20% and in 1981 to just under 36%. In 1981 married women represented 51% of the full time labour force and 76% of the part time female labour force. (Employment Promotion Conference, 1985). There is now a very strongly held belief amongst many New Zealanders that women must have equal rights to work and that the changing social patterns which have become evident in the last decade should become the norm (see Middleton, 1984 for on account). This means that many more women will seek work despite the efforts of some economists to label such people as "job stealers" (Thompson,

1981). The pressures on the occupational market are obvious - already scarce jobs may become even more competitive.

4. The Impact of technology

One of the great imponderables in a survey such as this is the impact of technology - especially the introduction of computer-aided automation to services ranging from telephones (subscriber toll dialing) to freezing works (pelt-processing plants). In considering the impact of technology on employment, one comes face to face with a barrage of facts which parties of two different camps quote to sustain their own arguments. There are those whom we might call the "prophets of doom" and others who accept technology with open arms. The former present us with an impressive list of statistics illustrating how the technological revolution has rendered thousands of workers redundant, and warn, often on a note bordering on hysteria, that the unreserved acceptance of the fruits of the microchip will lead to even further massive labour shedding. Some of the better known examples often quoted as evidence of negative employment effects are the introduction of industrial robots in the United States: there were 5,000 industrial robots installed by 1982, and between 1980-1982, around 10,000 workers were rendered redundant as a direct result. (Wall 1983). A 1978 study by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers and the University of Michigan concluded that by 1985, "50% of the direct labour in automobile final assembly will be replaced by programmable automation"; by 1998 "programmable automation will replace half the direct labour in assembly of small components." Cacace (1980), an Italian economic expert in reporting a study prepared for the Council of Europe estimated that 30% of jobs in banking would disappear by 1990. He also estimated that by the end of the decade five jobs in six would disappear in the postal services, and five million of the 18 million typists and secretaries in Western Europe would find themselves without work.

Though there is as yet no hard evidence that new technology is causing the displacement of workers in New Zealand in any proportion equal to that of the United States or Western Europe, this is more due to the fact that New Zealand is on the threshold rather than in the full swing of introducing new technology. The signs are already there however, and since 1961 when the first computer came into operation in New Zealand, the new technology has been adopted for a wide variety of purposes, especially in banks, post offices and in the insurance sector.

Considering the importance of the agriculture sector in New Zealand, it comes as no surprise that some of the new directions in the application of technology have been in that area. Arthur Yates and Company have just started marketing a computer which automatically controls the water and liquid fertiliser for individual plants. By "reading" such information as how dry the plants are, how hot the weather is, and what time it is, the computer turns on all the right pumps and taps. Such precision produces increased crop yield, better crop quality and big savings in labour and energy (Wall 1983). Harris (1981) points out that Australia was to spend a \$2 million on research on automated sheep-shearing by robots, lasers and similar devices. This will undoubtedly spin-off into New Zealand. By 1985, Kearsley was able to report that "automatic sheep-pelters are available for freezing chains, and an automatic sheep-shearer is being introduced." Catherwood (1985) has stated that in New Zealand, the new technology has had considerable impact on teenage employment, especially among young women. Probably the most dramatic example can be seen in the groups of occupation labelled stenographers, typists and card and tape-punching machinists, where a 30% decline in the demand for female teenagers occurred between 1976 and 1981 (N.Z. Census of Population and Dwellings, Vol. 4: Department of Statistics).

As elsewhere, New Zealand has had its fair share of gloomy forecasting. The trade unions (especially the Post Office Association, Bank Officers, Clerical Workers and Insurance Workers Unions, and the Public Service Association) have called attention to the potency of technology for shedding labour. Their main concern was summed up by the Post Office Association

... neither the employers who are producing or using the new technology nor the government have produced so much as a hint of a plan which suggests they accept any responsibility for creating the jobs we'll need.... The government is prepared to gamble that new technology plus "free enterprise" will somehow produce wealth and work for everyone.

(N.Z. Post Office Association, 1980).

The Federation of Labour, representing practically all New Zealand's trade unions, has stated that the introduction of new technology must not be made at the expense of workers lay-offs. The Federation insists moreover that an employer who increases productivity with technology should provide alternative work for those people who have been displaced. In their view increases in productivity ought to be used to reduce working hours without loss of pay. In another context the Executive Director of the Insurance Council has reported:

We are just starting to shed jobs as a result of improved technology...productivity has greatly improved...most of the effect will be felt in unskilled and semi-skilled female unemployment especially...inflation will reinforce the trend towards replacement of staff by technology.

(N.Z. Insurance Workers Union, 1980).

In line with such statements, and recognising at the same time the benefits of technology, both the New Zealand Computer Society and the ex Commission for the Future seem to believe that more jobs will be lost than made, because primarily the new technology is designed to reduce the

requirement for labour. Harris (1981) notes that in the Post Office, STD has destroyed 2-3,000 telephone operator jobs, and that automatic telephone exchanges will destroy far more, just as electronic mail, (the sending of messages by and between computers) will reduce the demand for mail delivery. Moreover, if Viewdata is introduced consumers would be able to purchase, book, reserve and order goods and services through their personal computer, thus removing the need for many workers who now act as intermediaries in these transactions.

To balance this rather cautious if not totally negative approach, another group hail the advent of the new, post-industrial information society of the 21st century. Members of this group claim that technology has provided machines to help people do mental work thus extending human capabilities far beyond their prior capacities. It has made possible the collection and processing of large amounts of data for the purpose of producing useful information to operate a machine, to manage a business or to run a country. The individual has access, through Databanks which can be engaged through personal computers, to the greatest reference libraries in the world. Computer linked automation will release workers from tedious, menial and repetitive tasks, enabling them to enjoy greater leisure time for recreation and creativity. Since automatic machines are now capable of producing different articles, the resultant advantage is that products will be 'customized' to suit the buyers. The easy flow of information will create a much more democratic society with the possibility of participation in decision making by people at all levels. The world has moreover been transformed into a global village, a fact shown quite dramatically by the Aid to Africa Rock Concert in 1985, when an estimated 300 million viewers participated from all over the world.

There are many arguments put forward by those who advocate the acceptance and exploitation of the new technology. A comparison is often made with the short-term effects of technological innovation in history such as the revolution in the textile industry between 1730-1805, where thousands of people who had worked in their homes in England at textile manufacturing suffered poverty and unemployment as they were displaced by the new machinery. However, in the medium and long term, increased production due to the greater efficiency of the new machinery led to an expansion of exports so that by 1912 Britain was producing 60% of the world's cotton textiles. The long-term result of this technological innovation was that the British people had the highest standard of living in the world for many years. Peitchinis (1983) takes a similar view when he argues that computers and computer-related technologies are still in transition and that the negative effects on employment are only a short-term repercussion. As a result, he says, it is not yet perfectly clear what effects the technologies will have on the division of labour, on participation in work activities, on the organisation of the production processes, and on the distribution of employment amongst industrial, commercial and institutional activities. He argues that

the full impact, which will be considerable, will not come until the systems of firms and institutions are linked together into interactive networks - until the system of each enterprise is linked to the system of Banks and other financial institutions, with the system of their suppliers, with the systems of transportation companies, and with the systems of their customers, whether the customers are other enterprises or customer intermediaries, such as retail establishments. When such telematic networks come into effect, radical changes will take place in every aspect of people-work relationships: forecasts of fictional changes and impacts abound; reality will be different; certainly the organisation of work will change; the nature of work will change; and the distribution of employment amongst industries and occupations will change.

(Peitchinis, 1983, p.14).

The argument therefore runs as follows: predictions of substantial future involuntary unemployment are generally based on actual and expected reductions in the labour intensity of existing production processes, with existing organisational systems, and within the limitations of existing ranges of occupational work functions. Such pessimistic views disregard or significantly minimise the historical employment creation effect of technological change (cf. in our example of the textile industry in Britain, jobs grew rapidly as production and exports rocketed. This had a chain reaction effect as in order to build and feed the new machines iron smelting and coal mining, expanded, with a flow-on effect in these two industries). Moreover, the advocates of technological change, suggest that the relationship between technology and employment, can be looked at as one of displacement and replacement: workers are displaced from some processes and replaced by workers in other processes. Often the same workers are involved in the change, as in the case of the substitution of dial telephones for manual (operator directed) services. Thousands of telephone operators were displaced, but there was no significant outcry because other activities in the telephone industry were expanding rapidly, and the period coincided with general economic expansion and growth in employment. In New Zealand, the banking industry, despite its being probably the most computerised business in the country, increased its employee population from 10,000 in the early 1970's to more than 16,000 in the early 1980's. This is because of a great increase in services to consumers in the last decade.

The last two examples are useful in pointing out a major premise in the outlook of most of those who favour new technology. This is the vital fact that successful accommodation to a major phase of technological change requires a prolonged period of sustained economic growth, and that the frequent periods

of expansion and contraction of short duration, so characteristic of many nations' economics today, are disruptive to the adjustment process, particularly when retraining, relocation and re-employment are involved. And this is the basic difference, as Ramsay (1985) has pointed out, between the present industrial revolution and the first. As we have described earlier on, New Zealand is in serious economic difficulties, and there is not enough growth to absorb any workers displaced by the new technology. As we have noted earlier there will be a large number of young people seeking work at a time when the growth rate of our economy is unable to create very many new jobs.

New Zealand, therefore, has a choice as to how much technological change should be allowed in terms of increased output and how much should be accepted in terms of reduced labour inputs. Those in favour of the new technology in New Zealand point out that in a world where one's competitors are innovating, a failure to keep up with the general pace of innovation implies rising relative costs and reduced ability to compete, with the likely consequences to be either reduced sales, output and employment, or acceptance of lower levels of income. Taking the longer-term perspective Rose (1985, p.60) has argued that "structural unemployment is, despite its pain, essentially transient. In time, people and society adjust to the shocks brought by innovative waves. The challenge to policy is to assist that adjustment and alleviate its pain." In his report to the New Zealand Futures Trust Pickering (1983) has noted that this policy towards adjustment, in terms of research and development to keep up with the rapid expansion of the new technologies, is lagging behind. According to OECD figures, research and development in New Zealand as a percentage of GDP is only about half of what it should be. Pickering has expressed concern that since learning is the indispensable investment required for success in the technological age, then the quality and content of education ought to match the requirements of the 21st century. Those against technological innovation point

towards the contradictory but nevertheless proven fact that though technology needs new skills and imposes the condition of retraining for workers, it at the same time induces the deskilling of the labour of those who operate it. They herald even more social pains and dislocations, claims which gain credibility as unemployment clings resolutely to the scene.

New Zealand, then, like many other nations, is caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand the nation is not in a position to afford a rapid introduction of labour saving technologies; on the other hand in order to compete in the world's markets considerable technological innovation is not only, desirable but necessary. There may be no middle road to tread - however, there are several likely future scenarios which can be planned. We shall turn to these shortly. First, though, we discuss the differential impact of current employment trends.

II THE EFFECTS OF THE EMPLOYMENT CRISIS

As in most overseas nations the brunt of unemployment is being borne disproportionately by the young, females, lower class groups and ethnic minorities.

A Youths

The phenomenon of mass unemployment has effected youths most of all. Watson (1983) has shown that whereas most countries in Western Europe have between 5% and 13% of their total labour force unemployed, between 45% and 65% of these tend to be young people. Looking at the local situation, and basing our estimates on the 1981 census (N.Z. Census of Population and Dwelling 1981 Vol 4) rather than the number of registered unemployed in New Zealand, the total number of persons between 15-24 who were then unemployed was 36,150, a

figure which, out of a total number of unemployed of 60,234, represented 60% of the total.

Unemployment among school-leavers and young people was first generally recognised as significant in February 1978, when 2810 of the school leaver group registered as unemployed. This number has steadily increased in the intervening years to its peak in January 1984 when registered unemployed school-leavers numbered 10,038. Although there has been a slight decline of numbers among the young unemployed in recent months, it would seem that youth unemployment is a structural feature of the New Zealand economy. It is not cyclical in the sense that it not will simply disappear, given time. One also has to keep in mind that the numbers of young people who are participating in special government training programmes, such as School-leavers' Training and Employment Preparation Scheme (STEPS) and the Young Persons Training Programme (YPTP) need to be considered alongside the young unemployed, since only those registered as unemployed are accepted on these schemes. In August 1985 there was a total of 1917 participants in STEPS and 4371 participants in YPTP (Labour & Employment Gazette, Sept, 1985).

There are many factors which play a negative role on the chances of young people being employed. It would seem that in a time of economic difficulty, new entrants to the labour force are the first to be affected. There is often as assumption amongst employers that young people represent lower productivity in comparison with skilled adults. Employers might think of adults as being more reliable and responsible, with experience and skills already acquired, and therefore they do not have to incur the high costs of training young people on the job. Other reasons put forward to explain high youth unemployment (but not necessarily accepted by the present writers) are high levels of pay for young people as compared with adult pay rates, a lack of skills among young people

⑧ cf. Williamson pp151-152.

when the labour force requires skilled personnel, and the displacement of workers by new technology together with structural changes within the workforce as a whole which reduce the demand for unskilled or low-skilled jobs. The increasing participation rate in the workforce by women also plays a significant part.

The fact is that older workers have always been preferred to younger ones, whether in terms of experience, technical agility, work socialization or physical strength and dexterity. Before the 1970's employers were quite willing to recruit school-leavers because the adult labour supply was used up. As Finn & Frith (1981, p.74) put it

The present youth unemployment reflects the situation in the labour market as a whole and the permanent availability of adult-labour. Youth is therefore a form of the reserve army of labour, drawn on when needed, laid off when not.

This political response to youth unemployment is important because on the New Zealand scene as elsewhere, the blame is often placed on the young unemployed themselves, or on secondary schooling in general for not equipping them with the 'necessary skills'. Indeed, although both the "Interim report of the Government Committee on Transition Education" (Scott et al, 1985) and the New Zealand Planning Council's report (Catherwood, 1985) are largely sympathetic to unemployed young people, there is always the underlying assumption that if these youths had been better trained, if they had learned more vocational and life skills, then they would get employment. As Gordon (1985) has pointed out, it is a personal deficit model that is advocated, where unemployment is seen to be caused by an individual's lack of skill or knowledge. The latest document on Transition education and training issued by the Ministers of Education, Employment and Maori Affairs, "Skills for Young People" (July 1985) is more specific in its recognition of the fact that "the

solution to unemployment is mainly the function of economic policy"(p.2). and yet, in heralding ACCESS and other measures "to develop a transition education and training approach which will better equip our young people for life, including work"(p.2), there is the rather forlorn hope that somehow, jobs will be more abundant for the participants in this new scheme. We are not implying that the objectives of teaching "life skills, applied literacy and necessary, counselling for further education and work opportunities, vocational skills development and job search skills" (p.14), are worthless or that the attainment of such skills will not enhance "the longrun employment and earnings potential of the participants so as to promote their own well-being and that of society" (P.6), but, as Gordon (1985) points out after analysing the contents and suggestions of the two reports in question

It is hard to escape the feeling that young people are to be taught to be pliant, submissive, uncomplaining, thrifty and energetic workers in the face of an uncertain and gloomy future... Rather than seeing unemployment as a failure of industry to meet the needs of workers, high unemployment has signalled a new and vigorous attempt to mould people to fit the desires of employers for a cheaper and more dedicated workforce.

(Gordon, 1985, p.59).

B ETHNICITY

If the future in terms of employment chances is uncertain for a large percentage of school-leavers, it is even more gloomy for the young Maori population. The main conclusions of a background paper prepared by the Department of Labour for the Maori Economic Summit of October 1984 (Labour and Employment Gazette, March, 1985) are that Maoris and Pacific Islanders are more likely to be unemployed because their populations are younger, less educated, concentrated in low-skilled occupations which have higher unemployment rates, and because as a group they have insufficient capital for creating employment. The unemployment rate for Maoris was 2.4% in 1951, while the rate for non-

Polynesians was 1.3%. This gap had widened to a four fold difference by 1981, with rates of 14.0% and 3.5% respectively. A Department of Statistics study of the under-25 age group from the 1981 census, has calculated that 32% of the difference in unemployment between Polynesians (including Maori) and non-Polynesians could be attributed to the different demographic structure of the populations as regards:

- (i) Age: Maori and Pacific Island Polynesian (P.I.P) populations are much more youthful than Polynesians. thus, 63.4% of Maoris and 60.7% of P.I.P. were aged under 25 in 1981, compared with 43.0% of non-polynesians. The disadvantages youths find in the labour market which have been discussed above are therefore accentuated in a more youthful population.
- (ii) Sex: The unemployment rate of 15 to 19 years old Maori females is the highest of any sector of the population at 41.3%. This compares with a rate of 33.1% for Pacific Island Polynesian females and 12.5% for non-Polynesians.
- (iii) Region: The Maori population is mainly concentrated in certain areas of the North Island, forming over 17% of the total population in Northland, South Auckland-Bay of Plenty, East Coast and Hawke's Bay. These are also the areas with the highest registered unemployment rates.
- (iv) Educational level: The Education Statistics of New Zealand for 1983 show that in 1982, 64.7% of Maori students left without any school qualifications. The equivalent non-Maori percentage for the same year was 27.3%.

The remaining possibilities for explaining the differences in unemployment between Polynesians and Pakeha are such factors as occupational distribution, income differentials, cultural characteristics regarding work and discrimination. The Population Monitoring Group (1985) has shown how lack of educational attainment leads to Maori and P.I.P. concentration in low-skilled jobs such as production, transport equipment operating and labouring occupations, and have therefore suffered with the decline of the manufacturing industry. Indeed, comparing the 12 most common occupational groups of Maoris with that of 12 most common in the total population where there is the highest

likelihood of being unemployed shows that unemployment is most likely in the occupations in which Maoris are concentrated. The effect is greater at older ages, where the gap between Maoris and the total population increases. This implies that Maori remain on jobs with a higher likelihood of unemployment, whereas non-Maoris move into "safer" occupations. We should also note the 'gatekeeper' phenomenon discussed by Spoonley (1983). He has argued that Pakehas may be preferred to Maoris by the employers, even when qualifications are the same, thus increasing the level of unemployment amongst the latter group.

C. GENDER

Besides the age and ethnic variables on employment prospects, New Zealand also has a consistently higher rate of unemployment amongst women, especially among young females, than for men. In January 1985, as a percentage of the 1981 Census labour force, 5.4% of females were unemployed compared with 4.2% of males. Overall, in January 1985, females represented about 40% registered unemployed, yet they represented 55% of unemployed school leavers, and just on 50% of the 15-19 age group unemployed. The Employment Promotion Conference Backgrounder (1985) reports that young females tend to remain unemployed longer than the males, so that in New Zealand, 59% of the long duration unemployed school leavers are female, even though females leave school with the same, or better qualifications than males. Females tend to be more highly represented in the unemployment statistics, and indeed, research studies have shown that the level of female unemployment is higher than statistical figures because females make up a larger number of the discouraged job seekers and unregistered unemployed.

D. THE DISABLED

Disabled people are another group who face problems in the labour force, since their disability restricts the range of jobs open to them. There is a lack of recent data on the problems of the physically handicapped, and even less on the employment problems of those with psychological disorders. The Department of Health, in a 1971 survey of people in the Wellington region, found that while labour force participation rates of disabled people were found to be similar to that for the New Zealand population, there was an unemployment rate of 22% for handicapped males and 45% for females - this at a time when unemployment was only 2% of the total labour force. A combination of some of the variables discussed demonstrates the extent of the current employment crisis. Perhaps the most distressing statistic we uncovered in our survey was drawn from the 1981 Census. At that time of the under 20, female Maoris over 40% were unemployed. This emphasises the uneven impact of unemployment, and demonstrates that New Zealand has failed to attain the goal of social equity. In the past great faith was placed in our school system to promote social equity; it is to the role of the school which we now turn.

III THE ROLE OF SCHOOLING

(1) Theoretical Considerations

Perhaps we should commence this section with Nash's (1984) blunt assertion that "schools can't make jobs." Certainly evidence derived from some writers in the area of critical theory suggest that schools are designed to support existing structures in the community - if unemployment, either temporary or permanent, - is deemed necessary to support the structure, then schools will play a role in producing people willing to remain "unemployed and quiet"

(Freeman-Moir, 1982). The theoretical foundations for this reproductive view of schools is found most clearly in the Marxist interpretations of the "structuralists" who are led by Althusser (1971). Their position, broadly expressed, is that the superstructure (consisting of schools, the media, the church etc) will always support the structure (ie the economic base). In this sense the school is seen as a significant site for the production and transmission of ideologies which ensure the reproduction of the capitalist division of labour (see Moss & Ramsay, 1983 for an extension of this argument). In educational circles the theories of the structuralists was fired by the work of Bowles and Gintis, (1976) whose analysis of the American school system purported to reveal a correspondence between the form, organisation, procedures and curriculum content of the school and the institutions (particularly work) of the wider society. In short they argued that schooling served to indoctrinate students with the attitudes and beliefs necessary for the social and economic reproduction of capitalist economies. As they put it:

the educational system...reproduces and legitimates a pre-existing pattern in the process of training and stratifying the work force. How does this occur? The heart of the process is to be found not in the content of the educational encounter - or the process of information transfer - but in the form: the social relations of the educational encounter. These correspond closely to the social relations of dominance, subordination and motivation in the economic sphere. Through the educational encounter individuals are induced to accept the degree of powerlessness with which they will be faced as mature workers.

(Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p.265)

The tidy "correspondence" theories of writers like Bowles and Gintis have come under heavy criticism, mainly on the grounds that they pay too little attention to the role of people in constructing social realities. Those opposing the structuralists founded much of their criticisms in the work of Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. His work allowed a high degree of autonomy

to the superstructure and in so doing stressed that ideologies are not simply imposed in some mechanical manner by dominant elites. Rather ideologies are viewed as products of a process of contestation, with the oppressed coming to play a part in constructing the ideologies by which their domination is legitimated. The transmission of ideologies creates sites of contestation in which the consent of the dominated has to be won. When combined with the concern of culturalist historians with the attitudes, experience and communal action of working class people, this at least offers the hope of returning human agents to the analysis as well as reaffirming the value of struggle. Apart from Raymond Williams' work, perhaps the most significant contribution in this tradition for educationists has been that emerging from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies of which Willis's Learning to Labour (1977) is undoubtedly the best known. It has been this work in particular, or at least subsequent reinterpretations of it, that has been responsible for a recent resurgence of optimism among some sociologists of education over the transformative potential of education. (See Willis, 1982 & 1983). Willis's work has led writers like Giroux (1983) and Apple (1983) to argue that schools can in fact be counter-hegemonic agencies and that societal change can begin in schools. These theoretical views have been given some support in recent research by Anyon (1981) in the United States, Connell (1985) in Australia, and Ramsay and his associates (1983) in New Zealand, all of whom found pupils within their sample who actively contested the school (or by inference societal) norms. The latter two researchers also found teachers who resisted - Anyon, perhaps significantly, did not (See Ramsay, 1983, 1985; Anyon 1983, 1985 for a debate of reasons). The key point is that, while schools do for the most part reproduce there are as Giroux (1983) puts it "small spaces" wherein transformation may occur. The school is an agency of social production as well as reproduction. As Marx put it so succinctly, people are creators of history as well as creations of history. We turn now to a consideration of what

schools have done in relationship to employment, and conclude with some arguments on what they ought to do.

2. What schools have done

Although many schools-people would want to disclaim any specific links between school curricula and preparation for work, there is no doubt that indirect links do exist. For example, the well developed examination structure in New Zealand sorts students out into broad occupational categories. Nash (1985) has shown very clearly how credentials gained at school seem to determine life chances³; moreover, there is ample evidence to demonstrate that children from minority groups, where valued forms of knowledge are not consonant with the valued forms of knowledge of the school curriculum, are termed "failures" (see Ramsay, 1984 for a summary). It may therefore be argued that in nations which require a "reserve army" of unskilled workers, who believe themselves to be lucky if they get any form of work, a school system which fails between 40 and 50 per cent of the students is highly appropriate (Spoonley, 1983). Freeman-Moir (1981) has made this point very clearly in the New Zealand context. He has demonstrated how the dominant ideology works to bring the problem of unemployment to the level of the individual and how, when further contraction of the labour market decreases the plausibility of blaming the victim, career education is used as an "attempt to legitimate an ailing system" (Freeman-Moir, 1981, p.22). Nash (1981) elaborates on this, revealing the internal contradictions becoming evident in schooling and the curricula because of the increase of unemployment (where, in Giroux's terms, the prevailing technocratic rationality which sees schooling as a means of inculcating those work attitudes required by employers, clashes with the values of a liberal education). Nash also discusses how school qualifications and credentials act as a device to legitimate the selection of individuals into high status occupations, since they stand as an indication of a certain pattern

of attitudes towards work and as a means by which certain sections of the community are enabled to maintain their market share of opportunities. These views are of course based on Bourdieu's, (1977) ideas of cultural capital, which is passed on from parents to offsprings in terms of attitudes, language and behaviour which are legitimized as dominant by the state education system. Middle-class children therefore receive this symbolic "inheritance" which is eventually translatable into real material gains.

Nash and Freeman-Moir analyses are reasonably convincing, but in our view come down too heavily on the reproductive action of schools - although we should note that Nash does allow for social production in his analyses. As we have already argued, in line with Giroux (1983) and Shuker (1983) there are "small spaces" within the curriculum which allow for transformations. Regrettably, as we demonstrate elsewhere (Ramsay 1983; Ramsay et al 1983) very few teachers are prepared to take advantage of these spaces, viewing such political action as dangerous. For the most part, the schoolteachers' reaction to the employment crisis has been to continue as before, and to willingly consent to schools being used as holding pens for students who otherwise would be unemployed. And nor has the curriculum been changed in any marked respect, a situation we shall deal with below. Indeed the changes most often mooted and which apparently are gaining most acceptance are for skills based programmes in school which would provide a better match of school leavers with available jobs. While this is helpful for some pupils it does not, of course, create the new jobs needed for the 40,000 - 60,000 students who leave school each year.

In summary, then, the school system does for the most part provide experiences for pupils which prepare them to accept whatever cards are dealt to them in the work-place. We have, though, identified areas where resistance has occurred, a point we shall develop later. First, though it is necessary to

review briefly the transition programmes which serve as an extension of the school and are often mooted as the solution for youth unemployment.

3. Transition Programmes

Our analysis in this part of the paper has been informed by several very good research studies and commentaries (see eg Korndorffer, 1985; Heinz, 1985; Gordon, 1985). There are at present three programmes operating - The Young Persons Training Programme (Y.P.T.P.), the School leavers' Training and Employment Preparation Scheme (STEPS) and the Work Skills Development Programmes (WSDP). As Gordon (1985) points out these programmes are all based on a deficit model, that is it is premised that school leavers lack the necessary skills for succeeding in the work force. In YPTP and STEPS the deficit is identified as being work related skills; however in all three programmes these skills are broadly defined and include the development of interactional techniques as well as a range of hobby-cultural interests. Nevertheless, the main goal is to provide specific skills designed to enhance students' chances of winning a job.

It should be pointed out that the training schemes are in no way job creation; thus they may be viewed as a form of social containment inasmuch that they keep young people off the streets and out of the dole line. As Gordon (1985: 58) suggests the best graduates from the training scheme will "go to the head of the queue" when workers are being selected. Put in another way all that the training schemes achieve is a reshuffling of the pack of job-seekers.

There is also little doubt that the training schemes are not designed to promote change. Korndorffer (1985) has argued that students on YPTP had, like Willis's "lads", penetrated the discursive structure of the system and had

recognised that the training schemes were designed to maintain established privileges in society. Despite this penetration, though, Korndorffer declares herself to be pessimistic of the possibility of individual resistance becoming a source of counter-hegemonic struggle: "the students who do penetrate the discourse to some degree are the same students who 'celebrate' their marginality in the workforce; those students whose participation in non-unionised, insecure forms of employment prevents them from involvement in a 'collective' counter-hegemonic struggle which might allow transformations to occur" (Korndorffer 1985, p.166). Thus, although Korndorffer follows both Willis and Giroux (among others) by revealing that some young people do penetrate the common-sense belief that they are unemployed because they are individually inadequate (and therefore are aware, at a confused level, of the contradictions inherent in the provision of the programmes and between the discourse of "work hard, get educational qualifications and you'll get a job", and the perceived mismatch of the labour force and jobs) - and they do articulate this penetration, partial as it may be, at the level of reality of their everyday lives - she ultimately despairs of the transformative and emancipatory possibilities of such a penetration. The common sense idea that unemployment is a temporary condition based on individual pathology rather than a more permanent structural feature of the process of capital production and accumulation remains sustained and ultimately reproduced.

Nor do new proposals for transitions programmes go much further than present programmes. Gordon (1985) quite rightly notes that proposals by Catherwood (1985) as published by the National Planning Council, and the more recent recommendations of a Ministerial group (Scott et al., 1985; Marshall et al., 1985) both fall within the deficit approach^{*} discussion earlier. Both reports emphasise the need for skills - in Catherwood's instance specific work skills, in the Ministerial reports "life skills" as well. Unfortunately Scott

et al (1985) do not define what they mean by life skills --- as Gordon (1985, 54-55) queries, is the person who possesses "life skills"-

... the paragon who, in the face of no paid work, continually threatened homelessness, poverty that leads to the neglect of health and dental care (and other modern 'necessities'), no transport and continual alienation from mainstream society will develop useful hobbies and keen interest in free cultural activities?

And one may add, will be happy no matter what "life" hands out, including unemployment. Gordon (1985) goes on to argue that the best way to develop good life skills is to provide good life chances - a point we would not dispute. And, as already stated, while possibly providing improved life chances for some of the students who participate in them, neither present nor proposed programmes create a single new job. Moreover, they do not sensitise participants to the causes of the present problems which, as we shall argue shortly, are just as much ideological as they are demographic or economic. Regrettably, as with the present schemes, the proposals are a form of social containment. We turn now to a consideration of which schools should do.

4. What Schools and Training Programmes should do

There are two main contributions which schools and transition training programmes make which could transform the present situation. First, while we agree that schools cannot make jobs, we believe that they can develop conditions where job creation becomes easier. Second, given that major structural changes are necessary, school teachers also have the task of making their students aware of the causes of the present predicament and to suggest ways in which changes can be made.

(i) Developing conditions for Job Creation There is no doubt that whatever the political form states develop that the standard of living and life chances

of citizen depends on an ability to trade. While we may cavil at the capitalist system in New Zealand - and it should be challenged - there is still a need to ensure that a basis exists for the creation of satisfactory trading conditions. As we noted in Part I of this paper part of New Zealand's current problem relates to the fact that our traditional export earners were agrarian products and that the market for such products has declined. Almost thirty years ago some economists were warning that overdependence on one product (ie grass) and on one market (ie the U.K.) made New Zealand very vulnerable. Sutch (1959, 1961 1966) for example, argued that a much broader base to our export earning industries was essential. Basing his arguments on nations like Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden, Sutch averred that we needed to develop products with low material input but with highly specialized labour skills. He suggested that for our economy to develop we needed to "...import raw materials and export our skills incorporated in finished goods" (Sutch, 1961, p.19). He cited the case of Danish furniture to illustrate his case -

Recently I have seen Danish furniture for sale in New Zealand shops. The Danes had shipped teak from Burma and Thailand across the world to Denmark and by applying Danish design, skill and factory methods had enabled comparatively bulky furniture to be sent back across the world again, surmount a New Zealand tariff of over 60 per cent, and be sold in our quality shops in competition with the best New Zealand furniture. This is what can be done when businessmen, designers, craftsmen, technicians, management specialists, and the consumer at home, are brought together to serve the economic needs of a country. (Sutch, 1966, p.111-112).

In order to achieve his goal of "added value" on exported goods Sutch cited a number of preconditions several of which were specifically aimed at schooling. Indeed he saw "education" as the most important element, as it helps to form society's attitudes to other influences (Sutch, 1961, p.25). It is beyond the scope of this paper to summarise Sutch's considerations in any detail - the reader is referred to his submission to the Commission on

Education in 1961 for a full account; nonetheless two points should be made clear. First, Sutch was interested in schools creating conditions for change. One prerequisite to this were people with intellectual curiosity, tenacity and drive, clarity and precision of thinking, flexibility of mind and a capacity of adjustment to moral needs and situations. Second, Sutch placed great emphasis on "aesthetic sensibility". If New Zealanders were to produce manufactured goods which would appeal to overseas customers, Sutch argued that there must be "good taste" locally, not only amongst a "cultural elite", but also amongst the population in general. Local demand for standards would raise the standard of exported goods and make them more saleable. Third, and interestingly in the light of the proposed transition programmes, Sutch rejected vocational schooling. A broadly based, liberal education was recommended in its place.

Of course Sutch's proposals were not without their problems - the "liberal" curriculum, for example, appeared to be dominated by traditional, academic subjects. Nevertheless, we would argue that if Sutch's dual proposals for, first, a restructuring of the economy and second, for fresh directions in schooling, had been implemented New Zealand would be facing rather a difficult set of circumstances today. Education in the 1960's did a fairly good job in preparing student's for the 1940's - regrettably the 20 years time lag seems to be still in evidence (See Ramsay, 1985 for an extension of this argument).⁵

We should also add that there is an exact parallel with Sutch's views of the 1950s with some present head-in-the-sand thinking of those concerned with computer education. In a short space of time New Zealand will face a transformation of technology and a tremendous change in our style of life. Computer literacy will be essential, not only if we are to become part of the new computer age internationally, but also for sheer survival. One of the authors has argued elsewhere that disadvantaged groups will become even more

disadvantaged unless schools take specific and direct steps in providing computer literacy programmes. (Ramsay, 1985) Just as New Zealand missed out in possible restructuring by ignoring Sutch's suggestions based on "aesthetic sensibility", so too will New Zealand miss out on possible developments if we continue to fail to provide programmes on computer literacy in our schools.

(ii) Sensitising students The most critical task of schooling in the 1980's is to provide students with tools and information which will allow them to challenge existing ideologies. There is little question that coherent plans need to be developed which attack the structural inequalities revealed starkly in New Zealand's recent history. The school curriculum should in our view focus on the following areas -

...the study of economic systems, rather than simply how to be a better consumer and how to balance the household budget;

the examination of a variety of political forms, together with the realities of one's own political conditions, rather than the development of uncritical loyalty to existing political institution;

an exposure of the social and industrial forces which create and reinforce the impotence of those who are unemployed, rather than a reinforcement of the belief that only in paid jobs can people be 'useful';

the study of different social organisations...and the degree to which they may foster self-esteem and personal satisfaction, rather than the passive acceptance of existing social conditions as the best of all possible worlds;

an examination of the social relations of production, rather than simply the domestication of the working class in order to fit the existing industrial ethos.

(Bassett, 1979, pp.6-7)

A curriculum of this nature would develop children into the kind of critical, challenging and creative individuals they need to be to face the

computer-based society. Of course, such a curriculum would provoke considerable antagonisms as it challenges specific interests. In making such challenges teachers will face considerable obstacles. Elsewhere, one of the present writers has spelled out the constraints under which radical teachers operate in New Zealand (Ramsay, 1983). Encouraging resistance is not easy in a community where conformity is a valued attribute. Yet challenge we must. Pratt (1983) has observed that for half a century we have tinkered with a curriculum inherited from the Victorians. Research in new Zealand on the curriculum has been substantial, but has been devoted to teaching techniques rather than curriculum ends. Teachers, in becoming deskilled, have been diverted into studying the ways they teach rather than the ethics of what it is that they teach. And as information technology develops further, the scant control teachers have at present over knowledge may well disappear completely.

In New Zealand at present there are many young people and members of ethnic minorities who have a sense of futility. They are angered by a system which has made them economically marginal. The vast differences in the distribution of wealth now apparent will not be able to be papered over with a veneer of meritocracy. It is our view that it is the role of schools to expose these inequities and to provide students with strategies for creating their own new world. The operation of schools, as Apple (1981) has observed, has always been covertly political; we would argue that it is time for schools to become overtly political in their actions.

FOOTNOTES

Of course there is some structural unemployment - that is people lack skills to fill the available jobs or are geographically located in areas where jobs are not available. Nevertheless statistics produced by the Labour Department in 1984 demonstrate clearly that for every occupational group there were more registered unemployed than unfilled vacancies - the ratios ranged from 7:1 for spinners and weavers, through 50:1 for professional and technical workers to 96:1 for unskilled workers. These figures are for the month of March, 1983 (Labour and Employment Gazette)

The argument which follows depends in large part on a Treasury paper prepared in February 1979 entitled "Economic Briefing-Longer Term Issues".

We should note, of course, that credentials alone do not determine life-chance. Maoris with School Certificate, for example, will earn less in their life time than Pakehas with School Certificate.

4. There are certain ironies here; the demographic structure may have led to employment problems for teachers; the crisis elsewhere and the return of more children than expected to school has at least temporarily prevented this problem surfacing.
5. It is interesting that one of the more recent U.S.A. proposals on education reform is very similar to that recommended by Sutch. See M.J. Adler, The Paedia Proposal: An Education Manifesto, New York: Macmillan, 1982.

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