SYNOPSIS
Thinking about the future is often a way of criticising and attempting to change the present. Three issues are explored in this essay. First, Britain remains an under-educated society as evidenced by the behaviour of our MPs, the quality of the tabloid press and the concentration of media power in a few hands, and the hostility of so many young adults to schooling. Second, after the hey-day of the psychologists and then the sociologists, we are now living in the age of the managers. The quality of management training in education is criticised for being too dependent on industrial research rather than empirical work in schools. Third, the education, training and employment of young people have been rocked by one crisis (youth unemployment) and are now being rocked by a very different one (demographic changes). An Industrial Training Act will be needed to make British employers train their young workers.

INTRODUCTION
A. N. Whitehead captured the deep psychological unease of the twentieth century when he wrote that 'it is the business of the future to be dangerous'. The year 2000 has been chosen by numerous environmental, educational and political groups as a convenient way of reflecting on, and perhaps even changing, the present. Raymond Williams (1983, p.3) begins his book *Towards 2000* by referring to the deep habit in Western culture of using some arbitrary mark in time - a new year, a birthday, a millennium - to try to assess what sort of world we are living in and what sort we would prefer:

The arbitrariness has still to be noted. We are counting 2000 by the scheme of a Scythian monk of (by the reckoning he established) the sixth century Anno Domini. The chronologies of a developed industrial world still follow Dionysus Exiguus.

Dennis Gabor (1964) argued that it was up to each generation to invent the future '... against the inadequacies and faults of the present ... in the end the future will be of our own making ... there is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening'. In the last few years I have attended conferences with titles such as 'Youth Unemployment', 'Education, Leisure and the Unemployed', and, 'The Demographic Time Bomb'. In retrospect, what these meetings had in common were reasonably accurate analyses of the current scene followed by depressingly limited discussions of the future options available. The thinking of most professionals present appeared to be: 'because of new technology there are inevitably going to be fewer jobs and more leisure so we must educate present and future generations for increased leisure'. Technology, please note, in this version of the future, is an uncontrollable juggernaut under the wheels of which generations of young people must be sacrificed. Technology, it is also claimed, will map out new paths for education which is seen in purely responsive terms.
idea that professionals in education or in social work may have some demands to make of technology and the quality of jobs it creates is nowhere discussed. There are also different forms of technology such as the ‘human centred’ systems, advocated by Mike Cooley (1989), which create a symbiosis between worker and machine, thus enhancing human ingenuity rather than marginalising it.

Similarly, the only scenario for the future which is seriously entertained at such conferences is that of increased leisure. Since 1983 Tony Watts in his excellent book *Education, Unemployment and the Future of Work* has presented four possible scenarios, and the leisure scenario appears to me to be the least likely. How, after all, could we run either schools or society with two diametrically opposed philosophies? A small elite imbued with the protestant work ethic would do the necessary work and simultaneously watch vast numbers of helots playing squash, swilling lager, relaxing in jacuzzis and watching porno videos. Who would want to be a member of either group in this nightmare inversion of the Greek city state?

The study of human affairs is more appropriately couched in the language of probabilities and tendencies than of certainties or inevitabilities. It is therefore a matter of concern that so many social commentators and politicians continue to employ, when discussing the future, such terms as ‘must inevitably lead to’ and ‘will undoubtedly cause’. Predictions about the future shape of society are problematic precisely because they may themselves help to bring a particular version of the future into being. Ruth Jonathan (1983, p. 4) extends the argument as follows:

The commonplace that prophecies about about human behaviour may be either self-fulfilling or self-refuting is especially pertinent to the claim that the function of education is to prepare children for the future. Since those children will *comprise* the future in social terms, we are in danger of predetermining the future in the guise of preparing for it, by circumscribing both individual and social possibilities to conform to those which we currently foresee and endorse. To propose an education directly counter to the prevailing direction of social change would in most circumstances be perverse; to advocate mere response to perceived trends overlooks the other function of education as an *instrument* of change. (Emphasis as in the original.)

The rest of this paper is devoted to the exploration of three issues — how under-educated Great Britain is; the age of the managers; and the education, training and employment of young people in the next ten years.

AN UNDER-EDUCATED SOCIETY

We live in a seriously under-educated society. We all tend to have our favourite examples and my three are: the raucous and loutish behaviour of Members of Parliament in the House of Commons; the moral collapse of journalists working for the tabloid press and the growing concentration of media power in a few hands; and the antipathy of so many young adults to schooling. Let me say something in more detail about the last two topics as anyone who listens regularly to *Yesterday in
Parliament will be familiar with the school-boy japes (such as organized heckling) of too many of our elected representatives, Conservative and Labour. The lack of interest in politics shown by most young people and their contempt for politicians are being reinforced by the behaviour of Members of Parliament.

Should it be a matter of concern that the average daily sales of The Sun are over four million and that, if the sales of The Mirror and The Star are added, the total comes to well over eight million? In sharp contrast, the combined daily sales of The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The Times, The Financial Times, and The Independent reach a total of 1.5 million. Should the concern, however, be directed not so much at the numbers of papers sold each day as at the sharp decline in the standards of tabloids? The most widely read newspapers in Britain have hit a new low which is not replicated in West Germany (even with Bild Zeitung), in France, or in the States. In the absence of any public debate and in the heat of the circulation battles which are already joined, it seems likely that this degenerated condition will continue or even intensify.

Further, in any democratic society worthy of the name legislation is needed to prevent any single commercial interest dominating access to information. And yet News International, whose Chief Executive and Managing Director is Rupert Murdoch, owns five newspapers (Sun, News of the World, Times, Sunday Times and Today) which reach 34 per cent of the British population and Sky Television with four channels whose potential market is as yet uncertain. How is such concentration of media ownership compatible with plurality and diversity?

It is also part of the zeitgeist to concentrate on the failings of the educational system rather than to list its considerable achievements since the end of the second world war. But even when the massive expansion of both secondary and higher education has been duly acknowledged, and the raising of the school leaving age both in 1947 and 1973 and the huge increases in the numbers of pupils passing O and A levels, it still has to be admitted that a large minority of the population (Sir Keith Joseph’s ‘bottom 40%) have not only failed to benefit from the system but have become in many cases actively hostile to it.

If scientists had invented a chemical compound with which to innoculate certain sections of the populace against education, we could not have been more successful in turning hundreds of thousands of working class young people away from formal education perhaps for the rest of their lives. All kinds of explanations have been offered for this phenomenon. The persistently low staying-on rates in the North East of England have, for instance, been partly attributed to the cultural traditions of the area and to the financial pressures to take a job — any job — which has become the local script for many working-class families since the 1930s. But what is rarely faced squarely by those of us in education is the considered judgement of the client group, namely, those who have recently left school at sixteen who say loudly and unequivocally that what was on offer for them in comprehensive schools deserved to be rejected out of hand.

What also needs to be faced is that, despite eleven years of compulsory schooling, racism and sexism is still endemic among working class young people in areas like the North East. Their formal education has not made even a dent in their racist and sexist views. Here are two jokes told to me recently by young North East males:
What's a bird got legs for? To walk from my kitchen to my bedroom. Is it wrong to throw bananas at black footballers playing at St James' Park? No, the bananas are all off.

The task of creating a truly multi-cultural, non-sexist and educated society in the United Kingdom is likely to be a long and uphill struggle for many decades. Meanwhile our European partners like France are developing plans, backed with sufficient resources, to extend the baccalaureat examination to 75 per cent of each age cohort by the year 2000. In comparison, Britain seeks to extend the percentage of those entering any form of Higher Education from 13% to 18%.

THE AGE OF THE MANAGERS

Jackson Hall, the former Director of Education for Sunderland, argues that we have witnessed three distinct periods in our educational history during this century. First, the Age of the Psychologists which lasted from the 1920s until the late 1950s when psychometric testing was at its zenith and primary schools could still be named after Sir Cyril Burt. The 1960s and early 1970s saw the emergence of the Age of the Sociologists who concentrated on such topics as equality of opportunity, access and curriculum. Finally, Sir James Callaghan's Ruskin speech of 1976 ushered in the Age of the Managers which is likely to be with us for some time to come.

The passing into law in England and Wales of the Education Reform Act (ERA 1988) has intensified the managerialist trend in education which Gordon Kirk (1988) identified as one of the threats to the professionalisation of teaching. It has become fashionable to talk on management courses of 'innovation overload', but even Hercules, despite his vast reputation for strength and courage, did not tackle his twelve labours simultaneously. He killed the Nemean Lion, strangled the Boar of Erymanthus and then cleansed the Augean Stables. (Readers are invited to choose their own modern equivalents of these heroic exploits from among the tasks currently being imposed upon them.) What style of management is most appropriate to the changes being ushered in at breakneck speed? Indeed, what shifts in the balance of power between headteacher and staff are we likely to see? How will senior management in schools seek to implement the changes, especially when innovation (e.g. opting out) may be financially rewarded and where schools are pitted one against the other by the publication of league tables of test scores? The atmosphere may very quickly become one where schools have to change or see pupil numbers decline so steeply that closure is threatened. Two dangers need to be avoided here. First, teachers should resist the temptation to steal a march on other schools in their area by, for example, producing glossy brochures which are more appropriate to putting half-finished hotels in the Costa Blanca in the best possible light than describing the range of educational opportunities and achievements at their institution. Second, 'the need for resolute action in the face of uncertainty and confusion causes a shift in the locus of power... Crises thus tend to lead towards the centralization of power and autocratic styles of leadership' (Hewton 1986, quoted by Ball 1986, p. 260).

The issue of management style can be posed bluntly as follows: are headteachers and deputies going to behave to their own staff in the same way that they themselves have been treated by Government or are they...
going to consult their colleagues in the way they consider they ought to have been as *the* professionals? Above all, recent legislation will test the collective capacity of schools to respond, because the range of new responsibilities and opportunities now thrust upon schools is far more than any one individual, however gifted and inspiring, could accomplish on her own. Innovation on the scale required will need to be tackled by the whole school, working to produce, implement and evaluate new policies. (Incidentally, some sympathy also needs to be extended to the hard times which have befallen the word 'initiative'. A Government initiative in education, for example, can now be defined as the public announcement of consultations about policies which have already been finalised in Whitehall.)

It is obvious that each school will need to chart a middle course between a management style based on a steep and rigid hierarchy which alienates classroom teachers and one which is so laissez-faire that acknowledged weaknesses are left uncorrected. It is shameful that the study of school organization is not sufficiently advanced to say very much more. The problem has been that most management texts used on courses with senior teachers tend to be trite condensations of manuals used in Business Schools and transferred in an unthinking way to education. The check-lists, the flow diagrams (you can tell that a 'systems' approach is being used from the arrows between the rows of little boxes) and the circular models have not been empirically tested in schools and appear to have little, if any, theoretical basis in education. Hence, the simplistic talk of 'the four key motivators', 'the seven phases of professional development', and the ubiquitous prescription couched in the jargon of 'performance indicators' and 'collegiality'. When the empirical grounding of these ideas is examined closely it turns out to be some such text as Peters and Waterman's (1982) *In Search of Excellence* which, for all its insights, is based on studies of such companies as Frito-Lay (potato chips), Levi Strauss, Tupperware, McDonalds and Disney Productions.

Fortunately, there is help available from Stephen Ball's (1987) *The Micro-politics of the School* which breaks fresh ground by constructing a new theory of school organization from interviews with teachers and case studies of schools. Three quotations I hope, will convey how wonderfully unlike most management texts this new approach is; it also has face validity in that I recognised the institutions I have worked in and am currently employed by.

I take schools, in common with virtually all other social organizations to be areas of struggle, to be riven with actual or potential conflict between members; to be poorly co-ordinated; to be ideologically diverse. . . . (p. 19)

. . . . I have attempted to indicate that the control of school organizations, focused in particular on the position and role of the headteacher, is significantly concerned with domination (the elimination or pre-emption of conflict). (p. 278)

The work experience of the teacher is undergoing a significant shift from that of respected professional towards that of beleaguered labourer. (p. 267)

Let me add a few tentative conclusions of my own. First, in too many educational institutions the professionals tend to become absorbed in pleasing (or coping with) the boss rather than teaching the client. The
issue of power and how democratically it is exercised comes to colour and pattern personal and working relationships. In institutions run as steep hierarchies, those further down the line of command are reduced to producing files for the protection of self rather than creatively responding to the needs of their clients. Too many of us spend more of our time worrying about the hidden agenda behind the latest initiative from on high than finding out how the quality of our students' learning could be improved. Eric Hoyle (1986, p. 170) uses the term 'organizational pathos' to describe this gap between aspiration and achievement and it was endemic to the educational system long before the advent of the present Conservative Government.

But the introduction of the business model to the educational world, as exemplified by the Jarratt report (1985) on efficiency in universities or the Coopers and Lybrand report (1988) on Local Management of Schools, has tended to emphasize 'management's right to manage' and straight line management rather than team management. Such notions are, in the words of Stephen Ball (1987, p. 5) 'top-dog theories' which reflect the particular interests and needs of administrators and managers. Just as the role of vice-chancellor in a university has changed from academic leader to chief executive (as recommended explicitly by Jarratt, 1985, p. 36) so headteachers of schools are no longer professional leaders but managers (DES Circular 7/88, para. 22).

A second conclusion drawn from my own experience is that in a steep hierarchy bad decisions are increasingly taken by those who do not know, while those who do know have to live with the consequences and spend their time limiting the damage done by their superiors. The decisions of senior managers, if they become too remote from the coal-face or the chalk-face, tend to become a celebration of incomplete information (for who further down the line can afford to tell them the truth?), tit-bits garnered from the black market of knowledge which circulates in any organization, and vague, good intentions (such as those displayed by England’s cricketers — they mean well, but they don’t score many runs).

Straight line management dampens down the creativity of all staff except those at the top and those who have profited (or are hoping to profit) from the system. It may even be preferable to tolerate some inefficiency at the edges which can be picked up and remedied by regular monitoring and evaluation than to depress continually those who can foresee problems but are powerless to prevent them because of their lowly position in the hierarchy. One of the claims frequently made by advocates of heads acting like industrial managers is that efficiency will thereby be increased. When the style of the industrial manager has been tried in schools, as in the adoption of new curriculum projects, it ‘. . . leads frequently either to apparent, but not real, compliance or to compliance with a degree of determination to prove the decision wrong’ (Stenhouse 1975, p. 173). The experience of curriculum development during the 1960s and 70s underlines the importance of achieving with teachers not only consultation and involvement but also active participation and consent.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE
The early 1980s saw a proliferation of books whose titles and contents spoke of that period as a turning point in history which would fundamentally change the relations between people and employment. Books like
Jenkins and Sharman's (1979) *The Collapse of Work* and Barry Jones' (1982) *Sleepers, Wake! Technology and the future of work* talked of 'a genuine leap in technology'; they predicted five million unemployed by 1990 in the United Kingdom and technological advances creating revolutionary economic and social changes. The prose was purple and the prospects, if not black, were certainly not rosy.

Even Charles Handy's (1984, p. xii) more measured words raised the prospect of a changing world where, apparently, education would be the one guaranteed growth sector in the next thirty years:

.... what we are experiencing is more than a cyclical adjustment. We are seeing the gradual tapering-off of the employment society, a society in which jobs are the measure and the means of most things.

More recently, Ranson and Ribbins (1988) have discussed the 'restructuring' of work, education and training in what they term the 'post-employment society'.

I prefer the explanation of other writers who have tried to place all this talk of discontinuity, revolution and fundamental change into a longer term perspective. For example, Krishan Kumar's (1984, pp. 217-218) detailed historical essay on unemployment as a problem in the development of industrial societies argues convincingly that 'unemployment has been a normal part of life, and even a way of life, for all pre-industrial societies and for a good part of the history of industrial societies'. Raymond Pahl (1984, p. 313) reinforced this more cautious stance when he wrote:

.... the claim that there is something unprecedented about the nature of work in the 1980s is misplaced: the unprecedented period, in terms of the patterns of the last 250 years, was the boom period of full employment for men in the 1950s and 1960s. That period of rising real wages, of demand for teenage and immigrant labour and of expanding state expenditure in health, social services and education has formed the base level, the conception of what is normal for politicians, media commentators and many academics. (Emphasis as in original).

The Government White Paper *Employment for the 1990s* which was issued in December 1988, hands over the responsibility for training the nation's young people to employers within a national system of 100 Training Enterprise Councils. Such action has been taken despite the historical failure (Weiner 1981) and the continuing complacency (Coopers and Lybrand 1985) of British employers in relation to training. The contrast between Britain and its main industrial competitors is at its most unfavourable in matters of industrial training, and legislation is needed to ensure that each company, as in France, undertakes a minimum expenditure on training and observes the statutory rights of their employees to training leave. Cynthia Cockburn (1987, p. 203) advocates a positive role in this regard for the YTS which 'could use the very thing for which it is often criticised — its closeness to employers — to challenge their practices and influence them to change patterns of recruitment, relations of work and, in particular, the gendering of jobs'. Legislation in this sphere would act as a counterpart to the Education Reform Act and would ensure that British employers enter into a full partnership with teachers by training their own young workers appropriately. The steep fall in the
number of 16-19 year olds should create opportunities in many areas for teachers and careers officers to persuade employers, who are finding difficulties in recruiting sufficient young workers, to introduce induction and training programmes, counselling and career prospects for all their new intake. It may help to clear the air, however, to acknowledge from the outset that the partners are working towards very different goals and with very dissimilar outcomes and so tension between them is highly likely. In industry, profits are the 'bottom line', the central resource is capital, and huge inequalities are generated in incomes, wealth, power and status. In contrast, the aim of education is to develop human resources and potential within an ethos of redressing the adverse effects of inequality.

Discussion with young adults in the North East has raised for me some fundamental questions about the future relationship between young people and the economy, questions which need to move from the sphere of academic debate to the conferences, manifestos and legislative programmes of the main political parties. At present there is little sign of this happening, but attitudes may change if the world of work continues to run out of both work and young workers. What has become clear to me is that the brutal pessimism of those who claim that we can never return to the days of full employment is quite unwarranted. The actions of the Swedish Government, for instance, emphasize that youth unemployment is not an economic necessity or an industrial inevitability: it is a political option. In Raymond Williams' (1983, p. 90) words:

The one great area of work that will never be made redundant... is in the nurture and lifelong care of people. The permanent need for such work... makes it nonsense to say that in any future society there will not be enough work to go round.

And none of us in reasonably secure employment with pensions and annual increments should forget that what the unemployed want is a job. Some of the main issues which will have to be tackled in the 1990s and beyond are:

— should the work that is available be distributed more equitably among the population?
— will it be necessary to introduce educational maintenance grants to encourage 16 year olds to stay on in full-time education to increase the participation rate in Higher Education?
— should all adults over eighteen be guaranteed a minimum income, as income is what people really need rather than unemployment? Or should a new social contract be offered to young people whereby a job is guaranteed them provided they fulfil their obligation to society by undergoing appropriate training (Ashby 1988)?
— will legislation be necessary to ensure that British employers introduce recognised training programmes?
— will we need in this country legislation on affirmative action along the lines used in the United States to ensure that young blacks are both hired and promoted?
— how can we move beyond equality of opportunity to similarity of achievement between the sexes?
— how can we act against the growing polarisation between the employed and the unemployed?
— what are the likely consequences of allowing some regions of the country (the North, Scotland and Wales) and some sections of the
community in all regions (young adults, the long-term unemployed, single parent families and ethnic minorities) to become further marginalised?

CONCLUSION
Raymond Williams (1983, p. 268) ends his book *Towards 2000*, by arguing: 'Once the inevitabilities are challenged, we begin gathering our resources for a journey of hope,' and his hopes were pinned on the three humane and growing movements for peace, ecology and feminism. It is, as he says, a question of gaining confidence in our own energies, capacities and ideas; we need to stand up for them and ensure that they do not disappear either from public discussion or from our own practice. The significant silences of the Education Reform Act are about community education, social cohesion, democracy, learning and equality; and, if we believe in these values, then we must go on working for them. These should be seen not as distinct, but as overlapping and mutually supportive, ideas. By ignoring the notion of community, for example, the quality of learning is impoverished because what is lost is the pleasure of people learning together and from each other for the good of all. The inspiring language of the 1944 Act (Section 7) '... and it shall be the duty of the local education authority for every area, so far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community ...' (my emphasis) has become in ERA (1988) (Section 1 (2) (a)): 'the curriculum ... promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical developments of pupils at the school and of society ...' (my emphasis). But as the Prime Minister does not believe in the notion of society, we can expect the word to be removed next time. The task now is not just to defend community education, social cohesion, democracy, the quality of learning or equality in our schools but to make them living realities in our own lives and in the lives of our pupils and students.

NOTE
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