Youth unemployment and the MSC: 1977-1983

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Introduction: the paradox

This story is written in the past tense; it ends in 1983\(^1\). In that year the Youth Opportunities Programme was replaced by the new Youth Training Scheme. Afterwards the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) no longer had a policy specifically for dealing with youth unemployment\(^2\). Both the government and the MSC have made it clear that the new Youth Training Scheme (YTS) is not a youth unemployment measure. It is “first and last a training scheme”; it is “not about youth unemployment”\(^3\). Youth unemployment has disappeared from the explicit policy agenda, and the problem is now defined in terms of training or the broader concept of vocational preparation. This article describes and explains this change.

Public concern. That this should have happened is paradoxical. Public concern with youth unemployment remained strong over the period. 1981 was the year when the policy debate took its crucial turn. In April of that year, 86 per cent of an opinion poll sample thought that youth unemployment was a “very serious” problem. Only three per cent did not think it was at least “fairly serious”\(^4\). Later that year, after riots in several English cities in July, 72 per cent of another sample agreed that “it would be proper for central government to spend large sums of money to deal with” youth unemployment. Only 19 per cent disagreed\(^5\). Only 32 per cent agreed with the statement: “Though I am sorry for school leavers without jobs, unions cannot afford to let them take jobs away from their members”; 51 per cent disagreed. This indicated public approval for measures to reduce youth unemployment even at the expense of an increase in adult unemployment.
There are many reasons for this public concern about the problem of youth unemployment. Unemployment rates were considerably higher among young people than among adults. Youth unemployment inspired feelings of compassion and justice. Young people were not responsible for the political and economic decisions that had caused Britain's economic plight, so why should they be made to suffer the consequences to such a disproportionate extent? There was concern for the effects on young people's social and psychological development, and on their willingness and ability to hold down steady jobs in later years. There were fears for the social consequences of youth unemployment, whether manifested in riots, crime, delinquency or political extremism. Finally, the distribution of unemployment helped to explain the degree of importance attached to youth unemployment. Longer-term adult unemployment was concentrated among the politically weakest members of the workforce, and this helped to account for the political acceptability of high levels of adult unemployment. Unemployment, and more importantly the fear of unemployment, was much more widely distributed among young people; and even those who did not themselves become unemployed suffered the indirect consequences of unemployment, often having to accept jobs below their initial aspirations. Many adult voters in relatively secure and desirable jobs were worried about the prospects of their teenage children soon to leave school.

Recent deterioration. There is no reason to believe that this public concern diminished over the period under discussion, between the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Indeed on any objective criterion the problem of youth unemployment grew considerably worse. In October 1978, in the first year of the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP), there were 19,726 unemployed under-18s in Scotland. In October 1982 the total stood at 30,680. The increase would have been much greater but for YOP, which accounted for some 5,400 young people (most of them under 18) in October 1978, and for some 30,100 young people in October 1982. Early in 1977, 19 per cent of the previous year's school leavers from Fife, Lothian, Tayside and Strathclyde were still seeking permanent jobs. At a similar date in 1979, 18 per cent of 1978 school leavers from these regions were unemployed or on YOP. Two years later, however, the corresponding figure was 39 per cent (for the whole of Scotland it was 35 per cent) and the trend was still upwards. The average duration of youth unemployment also increased sharply. Those who had jobs were also affected: it became increasingly difficult to change jobs, the traditional recourse for young people stuck in monotonous or dead-end jobs.

School leavers without qualifications remained at a substantial relative disadvantage, even though the position of all qualification groups had deteriorated in absolute terms. Males and females were affected to a similar degree. Regional disparities were as great as ever; in 1981, when 35 per cent of the previous year's school leavers were without jobs, the percentage varied among the mainland Regions from 15 per cent (in Borders and Grampian) to 44 per cent (in Strathclyde). Local variations in youth unemployment reflected, on a larger scale, local variations in adult unemployment. Among 1980 school leavers each percentage point variation in the local unemployment rate was associated with a two or three percentage point variation in the school-leaver unemployment rate. The relative position of Scotland as a whole eased somewhat: in October 1978 Scotland accounted for 13.9 per cent of unemployed under-18s in Britain, in October 1982 for 11.6 per cent. However the difference between the Scottish and British averages was small compared with the wide variations within Scotland.

The paradox. The paradox is that over a period when the actual problem of youth unemployment was getting worse, and when public concern about the problem was at the very least not declining, youth unemployment came to be replaced by the problem of training as the central item on the MSC's policy agenda. This article seeks to explain this paradox by providing an account of the formulation of policy, the effects of policy and the debates about policy since 1977, when the Holland Report provided the initial blueprint for YOP. The account makes special reference to Scotland, but most of the developments it describes were British in scope. In particular, this chapter examines the key role of an interest grouping which I call the education and training lobby, and which embraced the MSC itself. The paradox is explained, in part, in terms of a further paradox: that the policy shifts which diverted the explicit focus from youth unemployment were made possible by the deteriorating problem of youth unemployment and by the widespread political support for measures that were perceived to tackle the problem.
The scope for a youth unemployment policy

A policy to deal with youth unemployment could try to do one of two things, cure the problem or alleviate its worst consequences. In this section I consider the scope which existed for either type of policy to be effective. My argument is presented briefly. A more detailed analysis of the youth labour market and the policy options is presented elsewhere(12).

During youth unemployment, the main explanations for the rise in youth unemployment lay on the demand side of the labour market, and the most important by far was the recession. Youth unemployment rates closely followed the trend in adult unemployment rates - except that the relationship was disproportionate, and young people were affected more than adults by both the ups and the downs of the unemployment cycle. Other suggested explanations for youth unemployment included changes in the industrial and occupational structure, the increased competition from adult women, and changes in relative wage rates. However the available evidence suggests that none of these factors had any very significant effect on the level of youth unemployment. More importantly, perhaps, they had almost no effect on the largest rise in youth unemployment which took place after 1979.

Factors on the supply side of the labour market - the quantity and "quality" of young people seeking employment - were relatively unimportant. Contrary to popular belief demographic factors (such as the 1960s baby bulge) have not had a major influence on recent trends in youth unemployment. By far the largest increase in youth unemployment took place after the annual flow of school leavers onto the labour market had started to fall(13).

Nevertheless young people did compete with adults, directly or indirectly, for jobs(14). Could a supply-side policy - education or training to make youngsters more employable relative to adults - make a contribution? Possible, but the scale of such a contribution was likely to be small.

In the first place there was no evidence that the declining employability of young people had contributed to rising youth unemployment. Indeed there was no evidence that young people had become less employable. The Holland Report (discussed in the next section) was strongly influenced by a survey of employers, some of whom perceived a decline in the calibre of young people coming to them for jobs(15). In fact only 31 per cent of employers thought there had been a decline, and since the survey was conducted while the "Great Debate" was at its height, it is if anything remarkable that this proportion was not higher. In any case, those who perceived a decline tended to be employers of apprentices, whose insistence on recruiting 16-year-olds meant that they had had to recruit young people with lower relative levels of educational attainment, as more and more able youngsters stayed on at school. Employers have complained for decades about "falling" educational standards. They cannot have been right all of the time unless British education really has been on a "continuous slide" throughout the century.(16).

Second, young people had to compete with adults on the basis of attitudes, motivation, reliability and stability rather than knowledge and technical skills(17). The concept of skill has been debased in recent educational parlance and is often used to cover attitudinal and behavioural dispositions; but the transmission of such dispositions is a much more difficult task for education than the transmission of knowledge or conventional skills(18).

Third, and most important, the main reason for high youth unemployment had nothing to do with the competitive strength of young people and adults but lay in the labour market processes which made young people disproportionately vulnerable in a recession. No amount of extra education or training would change those processes.

The implication of all this is that a policy which focussed on the supply side of the youth labour market, and in particular an education or training-based policy which attempted to increase the quality of youth labour, could not be expected to cure youth unemployment. This was true in the 1970s. It was even more true in the early 1980s when the vastly increased scale of youth unemployment dwarfed the very marginal contribution that a supply-side policy could hope to achieve.

A palliative. The alternative policy to a cure for youth unemployment was a palliative, something that would minimise its consequences. Here, however, policy was beset by ignorance, about what the
consequences of youth unemployment actually were, and about the ways in which they might be averted or alleviated\(^{(19)}\). Many policy-makers worried about the possible effects of youth unemployment on an individual's employability in the longer term. If entry into employment was a necessary stage in an individual's occupational development, the failure to make such an entry might deprive the individual of many valuable learning experiences. A possible strategy to offset these effects was to provide a substitute for employment. Another strategy was simply to help the most vulnerable young people to find jobs. If it was not possible to find jobs for all unemployed youngsters, then help should be concentrated on those who were at greatest risk of the ill-effects of unemployment. Palliative policies often had a redistributive element.

The MSC and youth unemployment in 1977

The MSC, The Manpower Services Commission (MSC) was established in January 1974, following the Employment and Training Act of the previous year. The MSC was added as something of an afterthought to the Bill, whose original purpose had been to scale down the impact of the 1964 Industrial Training Act which had set up Industrial Training Board's (ITBs) with powers to raise training levies from employers\(^{(20)}\). The MSC partly owed its existence to joint pressure from the TUC and CBI, both of which were represented among its members. Initially the MSC had two main operative arms, the Employment Services Agency and the Training Services Agency. The latter took over the government's own training programmes, notably the new Training Opportunities Scheme, and was responsible for co-ordinating the work of the ITBs. (Both Agencies were later renamed Divisions.) However the MSC's activities in relation to youth unemployment were largely conducted through the Special Programmes Division, which was set up in 1978 and became perhaps the most controversial wing of the MSC until it was merged with the Training Services Division in 1982.

The Scottish dimension. The MSC has always been a British body. (Northern Ireland has its own manpower ministry.) It was initially responsible solely to the Employment Secretary, but since July 1977 the MSC has reported "to the Secretary of State for Scotland in respect of its activities in Scotland to the extent that it is possible to distinguish a specific territorial dimension to them. Any functions of the MSC relating to matters which cannot be identifiably split between the countries continue to be matters for the Secretary of State for Employment, acting in conjunction with the Secretary of State for Scotland\(^{(21)}\). The MSC's activities in Scotland have been directed by a Manpower Services Board and a Manpower Services Director, advised by a Manpower Services Committee for Scotland.

In the words of an official of the Scottish Economic Planning Department, the "overall framework is a GB framework... But when it comes to the implementation of the programme (YOP) within Scotland, then the MSC will take account of the local position in each area of Scotland"\(^{(22)}\). To the extent that MSC policy differed in Scotland from the rest of Britain this largely reflected the application of a uniform set of principles to the specific circumstances of Scotland and especially to the higher average levels of unemployment in Scotland. But compared with other British "regions", Scotland had a particularly wide range of local unemployment rates\(^{(23)}\). Consequently many of the distinctive "Scottish" features of MSC policy reflected local initiatives rather than policy decisions at an all-Scotland level. For instance the Scottish claim to have "pioneered" training workshops within YOP largely reflected the initiatives of particular local authorities, notably Fife\(^{(24)}\).

However, in one respect a specifically Scottish dimension to MSC policy was inevitable: the policy had to mesh in with a different structure of local government and a different educational system. Paradoxically the very marginality of Scotland - the fact that decisions taken in London tended to take for granted a uniform (English) educational system - encouraged the Scottish Education Department to be more assertive with respect to educational aspects of MSC policy than the DES was south of the border. The greater centralisation of the Scottish education system also contributed to this. This assertiveness was reflected in greater contact between MSC and the SED than between the MSC and DES; in the work of the SED-funded Educational Resources Unit for YOP between 1979 and 1982, and subsequently of the Scottish Vocational Preparation Unit; in the initial refusal of Scotland to be included in the MSC's Technical and Vocational Education Initiative for 14-18s in 1982; and in the SED's own Action Plan for 16-18s, which proposed a modular structure for post-16 provision that would embrace MSC schemes as well as schools...
and colleges(25). The Action Plan was hailed by the EIS, the main teachers' union, as a "vigorous reassertion of the integrity and worth of the Scottish educational system and a determination to resist the encroachment of outside bodies, particularly the Manpower Services Commission"(26).

However these distinctive Scottish features concerned the tactics more than the broad strategy of policy. To see the general drift of MSC policy with respect to youth unemployment, we must look principally at decisions taken in London and Sheffield rather than in Edinburgh.

Youth unemployment measures in 1977. At the beginning of 1977 there were five main measures with which the MSC was addressing the problem of youth unemployment (27). Incentive training grants to employers or ITBs aimed to offset the reductions in craft apprenticeships and technician traineeships caused by the recession. The MSC itself provided short training courses, mainly at semi-skilled level, for unemployed young people, and rehabilitation courses for the disabled. Third, there was the Job Creation Programme (JCP). This was not restricted to young people, although in its first two years some 40 per cent of its Scottish participants had been in the 16-18 age group(28). (Scotland accounted for about 30 per cent of the British total.) Fourth, the Work Experience Programme (WEP) had started in 1976, rather sluggishly in Scotland. It was limited to unemployed 16-18 year olds and aimed to provide them with experience of a range of jobs in normal places of employment. Finally Community Industry, set up in 1972, provided work experience projects for those unemployed young people judged to be most disadvantaged.

The Holland Report

The Report. In October 1976 the MSC appointed a working party "to study the feasibility of putting into effect an objective of ensuring that all those in the age bracket 16-18 who have left school and are not engaged in full-time education and are unable to get a job should have the opportunity of training or of participating in programmes such as the Job Creation and Work Experience Programmes"(29). The working party was chaired by Geoffrey Holland, it commissioned surveys of young people, of unemployed young people and of employers, and reported in May 1977. The Holland Report, Young People and Work, reviewed the problem of youth unemployment and at 1977, evaluated the various measures that had attempted to deal with the problem and proposed a new structure of provision which, with few modifications, was to become the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) in April 1978.

Review of existing measures. The report listed a number of criticisms of the existing measures. Although both the quality and the quantity of provision were often impressive, the different measures were uncoordinated. Their coverage was uneven: some young people found themselves competed for by different schemes, whereas others, especially girls and the unqualified, had difficulty finding any scheme place. Wages or allowances varied between schemes. There was little provision for progression between schemes; their temporary nature inhibited planning and development. The Holland proposals aimed to bring the existing types of provision within a co-ordinated programme, with more opportunities for progression, a uniform allowance, more even provision across different groups of young people, and a longer (five-year) time horizon for planning.

The criticisms of the existing measures were mainly administrative. The report offered neither a critique of the strategy underlying those measures, nor even any analysis of what that strategy was. In practice the new programme (YOP) inherited the main outlines of the earlier provision, and especially of WEP and JCP. Two thirds of YOP places were to be provided on work experience on employers' premises (WEP) schemes, similar to WEP. More than half the remainder were to be provided in training workshops or in project-based or community service schemes, all of which had their counterparts in JCP. The other schemes were to be work preparation courses, mostly modelled on the existing training provision for unemployed young people.

The strategy of YOP. Yet the Holland Report contained little discussion of the underlying strategy either of the new programme or of the schemes it was to replace. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to find in the report any clear account of what this strategy might be. The report "start(ed) from two principles", the first of which was "that the new programme must be designed to meet the personal needs of individual unemployed young people as they seek to secure permanent employment"(30); but this begged several questions. What were these
"personal needs"? Were they causes or consequences of youth unemployment? Apparently neither, since the "kinds of needs unemployed young people have are essentially no different from the needs of others making the transition from full-time education to work, though those needs may sometimes be best met by different kinds of provision". So why a programme specifically for unemployed young people? Perhaps in order to provide an employment surrogate - an alternative source of the experiences and formative influences which employment normally provided. In this respect the programme aimed to tackle the consequences rather than the causes of youth unemployment: "Unemployment can easily lead to permanent disadvantage: if those without skill knowledge or motivation have no opportunity to acquire them, they may well find themselves over the years suitable for only a diminishing range of unskilled jobs". Yet it is surprising that the first chapter of the Holland Report, which provided a useful review of the causes of youth unemployment, contained no such discussion of its consequences.

Although the objectives of the Holland Report remain enigmatic, we can draw at least three conclusions about the strategy of YOP.

First, although those in government may have welcomed the short-term cosmetic effect of the new programme in removing people from the register, it was also intended to improve the employment chances of young people after they left the programme. This was true whether the underlying intention was to cure youth unemployment or to alleviate its consequences, for one of the most feared consequences was to create a new generation of unemployable young people and YOP could only avert this by helping those most at risk to get a foothold in employment.

Second, there was an explicit redistributive element in YOP. Not only was it to help young people to compete with adults but it was to favour the least advantaged, and especially the "unqualified and least able", among young people. These young people were felt to be at greatest risk of suffering the longer-term effects of early unemployment and of becoming the future hardcore of unemployables.

Third, YOP was to achieve these things through its interventions on the supply side of the labour market. It was to give young people a "competitive edge" over adults. It was to improve their employability, give them skills, remove their handicaps and give them experience to make them more attractive to potential employers. The problem was that the Holland Report itself appeared to discount such supply-side factors as explanations of unemployment among young people. "Unemployed young people are not different from other young people except in the narrowest sense and in the shortest term.... Success or failure in getting a job is often a matter of luck and frequently determined by factors well beyond the control or achievement of the individual such as the state of the national economy, the local industrial structure or the kind of preparation for work available at school. Unemployed young people are not failures: they are those whom others have so far failed." The Holland Report appeared to espouse an asymmetrical explanation of youth unemployment: supply-side factors were not responsible for the present unemployment of young people, but, suitably enhanced, they might influence their chances of employment in the future.

The assumptions about future unemployment levels. Three other features of the Holland Report are relevant to the future history of policy outlined in this chapter. First, although the time horizons of the programme were lengthened (it was planned on a five-yearly rather than an annual basis), it was still conceived as a temporary measure to deal with a problem that would eventually pass. The report recognised the difficulty of predicting future trends, and it made three alternative projections, all of which anticipated a general decline in youth unemployment over the following years. The new programme, in other words, was not designed to deal with the kind of increase in youth unemployment which was actually to occur.

Kinds of "skills". Second, in the attempt by YOP to make young people more employable there was a substantial emphasis on their motivation, attitudes and social skills. These personal qualities were considered to be important criteria on which employers selected their recruits, and young people's relative lack of these qualities was believed to contribute to the level of youth unemployment. Many of the educational aspects of the Holland proposals could potentially be incorporated into the emerging concept of "vocational preparation", which tended to emphasise social and personal skills rather than specific technical competences. This still left considerable...
scope for conflict between the student-centred and the economy-centred views of education; but the possibilities within YOP seemed open enough for protagonists of both sides to want to fight over it.

No integration with normal employment. Third, YOP was to remain separate from regular employment and training provision. The second of the two principles from which the Holland Report started was (in part) "that the... programme...must not be more financially attractive than being in full-time work". Since the purpose of YOP was to give young people a leg-up into employment, it should not deter them from finding or accepting real jobs. YOP trainees should have tried to find work before entering the programme: they should have been unemployed for at least six weeks, and to begin with there was a closed season (until September) for summer term school leavers. Once on YOP, young people should continue to look for, and accept, any suitable job opportunity that might arise. Thus YOP was, from the start, geared strictly towards unemployed young people, and there was no attempt to blur the distinction between YOP and ordinary employment or training. YOP remained separate from the counter-cyclical measures to maintain apprenticeship numbers.

The impact of YOP on the labour market.

Growth. The new programme started in April 1978, and in its first year received 23,600 entrants in Scotland. However, since the first large influx of trainees only occurred in September 1978 the early scale of the programme is more accurately given by the second-year intake: 36,300 entrants (17 per cent of the British total). From the start YOP was substantially larger than the schemes it replaced; and it was reasonably successful in its aim to provide comprehensive coverage of the young unemployed. A study of Scottish school leavers during the first year of YOP suggested that, among the unemployed, males, those with O-grades and those who had not played truant while at school were relatively likely to be found on YOP schemes. However some of these inequalities were smaller than had existed in relation to the earlier schemes; and by the third year of YOP the disparities had diminished further. In any case disparities in chances of entry to YOP were reflected less in the probabilities of different unemployed young people getting a place on YOP than in the length of time they might have to wait for it. Through the Easter undertaking the government promised that every school leaver who had not found a job or FE place should receive "the offer of a suitable place" on YOP by the following Easter. In 1981 this was replaced by an even more ambitious Christmas undertaking.

The Easter undertaking encouraged a more or less comprehensive coverage of unemployed school leavers, although this may have been at the expense of older unemployed people in the 16-18 age group. (The long-term unemployed were also covered by the undertaking after 1980.) Seventy per cent of YOP entrants in the first year of YOP were school leavers who had not been employed since leaving school. This proportion tended to rise slightly in subsequent years. Another effect of the undertaking was to make the scale of the programme respond to the demand, and to compel the government and MSC to expand the programme in line with the substantial increase in unemployment that took place after 1979. By 1981/82, the fourth year of the programme, the number of entrants had risen to 70,000 in Scotland. This figure double-counts those entering more than one scheme; but it can be put in perspective by pointing out that in the previous year 87,500 young people had left school of whom around 67,000 directly entered the labour market. By the end of 1982, some 30,000 young people were likely to be on YOP at any one time. In purely quantitative terms, the MSC's achievement was considerable.

Effects on employment and unemployment. The most immediate effect of YOP on the labour market was therefore to remove a large number of unemployed youngsters from the register. However the total effect on registered youth unemployment was smaller than the number currently on YOP, for two reasons. In the first place, in the short run young people entering YOP reduced the intensity of their search for employment. Some YOP trainees therefore missed out on jobs they might have entered, and not all of those jobs would have gone instead to other unemployed young people. The second reason is substitution. An MSC survey in 1980/81 estimated that about 29 per cent of WEEP trainees were taken on instead of ordinary employees, most of whom would have been young people. The Director of MSC Scotland claimed in 1981 that the level of substitution in Scotland was probably lower than in the rest of Britain, but there was no direct evidence to support or refute this claim.
YOP also aimed to increase the employability of young people after their schemes. Of cohorts entering YOP at different times in 1979, from 55 per cent to 59 per cent were employed when surveyed by the MSC one year later. (In Scotland the follow-up surveys, based on smaller samples, showed employment rates of 55 per cent to 65 per cent.) From the beginning of 1981, however, a deterioration was apparent. The employment rate among different cohorts of the previous year’s entrants varied from 33 per cent to 55 per cent (from 29 per cent to 46 per cent in Scotland). The 1982 figures showed a partial recovery, with employment rates of 49 to 54 per cent in Britain and 46 to 51 per cent in Scotland. The deterioration in 1981 occurred at a time of rising unemployment. There is no reason to believe that the programme became inherently less effective. Nor do these figures tell us how many young people would have found jobs in the absence of YOP.

The 1979 Scottish School Leavers Survey compared less qualified youngsters who were on YOP in October 1978 with others who were unemployed and not on YOP at that time, to see which group was more likely to be employed some six months later. In the comparison the effects of other observed influences on employment, such as school examinations and social background, were controlled. Being on YOP in October 1978 was estimated to increase a girl’s chances of employment in April 1979 by 14 percentage points; among boys the effect was smaller. Analyses of the 1981 survey showed very similar results, despite the substantially lower absolute levels of employment. This suggests that the (relative) effect of YOP was stable, and the declining (absolute) employment rates of YOP trainees were due to the changing economic situation rather than to any decline in the effectiveness of YOP itself.

An MSC survey of WEEP sponsors looked at the number of young people taken on into permanent employment by their scheme sponsors. For every 100 trainees who had been through the schemes, five were afterwards taken on by their sponsors into jobs which were specially created for them or would otherwise have remained unfilled. Seven were recruited into jobs which the sponsors would otherwise have filled with adults and 11 into jobs for which the sponsor would have taken on other under 19s. Therefore, for every 100 trainees who went through WEEP, 12 new jobs were provided for young people aged under 19, though some of the jobs which were specially created for them might have been a way of sponsors’ holding on to good trainees until a suitable permanent vacancy arose. These findings are an indication that WEEP is achieving one of its prime objectives by improving the relative competitiveness of unemployed young people. These conclusions should be treated with some caution, partly because they were based solely on employers’ own estimates as reported to the MSC; partly because effects on other employers’ recruitment were not considered, and partly because many of the extra recruits might (as the authors acknowledge) have been taken on pending a suitable vacancy and might not have been permanent net additions to the workforce. The more important point is that these estimates, even if valid, do not necessarily support the authors’ conclusions that WEEP improved young people’s competitiveness - at least, not if competitiveness is understood to be a characteristic of the young people themselves rather than of the situation in which they found themselves. A possible - indeed the probable - explanation is that many employers used WEEP as an extended screening and induction period, at the end of which they could select new recruits in the light of considerably more information than they would have had about other job-applicants. This process naturally gave the young people on WEEP an advantage, compared both with adults and with other young people. But this explanation makes no claims at all about the effect of WEEP on the skills or other characteristics of young people that might make them competitive. The effect of YOP arose, less through its impact on the supply side of the labour market (young people’s employability) than through its impact on the demand side (employers’ recruitment practices).

However there is some evidence that YOP had at least a marginally redistributive effect on youth unemployment. In the 1979 Scottish School Leavers Survey the ‘effect’ of YOP was larger for the least qualified young people, and the 1981 survey showed that young people’s chances of being kept on by their sponsors did not depend on their qualifications - in stark contrast to their chances of finding employment elsewhere. This does not necessarily mean that YOP had more effect on the employability of less qualified school leavers than on the qualified. Instead, it simply means that employers, with the much greater information on potential employees derived from the WEEP “screening” period, were able to dispense with the use of educational qualifications as a (less satisfactory) criterion for selection. Once again, the main change occurred on the demand side of the labour market, on employers’ recruitment practices.
From this review of the impact of YOP on the labour market four main conclusions emerge. First, the effect on the level of youth employment was modest, and probably negative, since more jobs may have been lost through substitution than were gained as a result of YOP. The programme was the victim of changing economic circumstances. Whether or not it could have increased employment in the conditions that had been anticipated in 1977, this goal proved impossible after the collapse of the labour market after 1979. Second, YOP reduced the level of registered unemployment, because it withdrew young people from the register, although the reduction in unemployment was smaller than the number of young people on YOP at any one time. This achievement is not to be scorned; most young people much preferred YOP to unemployment. Third, YOP probably had some redistributive effect on youth unemployment, in the intended direction, although this effect was only marginal in the extreme conditions of the 1980s. Fourth, where YOP did help young people find employment it usually did so through its effects on employers' recruitment practices more than through its effects on the employability of the young people themselves. There is little evidence that YOP substantially increased employment among young people through its investment in their training or education. Indeed the YOP schemes with the best subsequent employment rates tended to be the (WEEP) schemes with the worst record of education or training. Apart from its immediate effect on the register, most of the effects of YOP on the labour market came about through its impact on the demand side of the market. They were achieved in spite of, rather than because of, the original strategy of YOP which tried to intervene on the supply side.

The rise of the education and training lobby

Critics of YOP. By 1981 the critics of YOP seemed to have become more vocal than its supporters. Criticism focussed on four main points. First, in 1981 the employment rate among YOP graduates fell sharply, and youth unemployment levels generally were rising steeply. Second, the weekly allowance paid to YOP trainees was held at £23.50 for a second year, with no adjustment for inflation. By September 1981 the real value of the allowance had fallen by 22 per cent since April 1978 when YOP began. The allowance was still more than most young people would receive on supplementary benefit (just over £15) but the difference was often eroded by extra meal and travel costs. (Only travel costs in excess of £4 were paid for by the MSC.) The YOP trainees who most resented the low allowance did not accept that it was an allowance for training rather than a reward for productive labour. Many young people on WEEP schemes argued that they were doing the same work as ordinary employees earning two or three times as much and should be paid commensurately. Some young people felt they were being exploited as "cheap labour" by WEEP sponsors. This is therefore linked to the third criticism of YOP, that trainees were being used to substitute for ordinary employees, a point that has been discussed above.

Above all, the critics of YOP deplored the allegedly low average quality of education and training on the programme. The strongest criticisms were made of WEEP schemes, which were claimed to be inadequately monitored by the MSC as it strove to achieve quantity of provision at the expense of quality. Many trainees, it was alleged, did not receive the variety of occupational experiences that the programme was intended to offer. The provision of education and training was condemned as inadequate and often non-existent; in 1981 only 28 per cent of work experience trainees were offered education or training off the job. It was recognised that some of the provision was of a high quality. YOP had provided an opportunity to try out a variety of new approaches; the problem was to raise the standard of the whole programme to the level of the best.

The critics of YOP included some of the young people themselves; in 1981 there were increasing signs of dissatisfaction among YOP trainees, with a demonstration in Edinburgh and attempts elsewhere to unionise trainees. They were mainly dissatisfied with the level of the allowance and the poor prospects of employment after YOP. There was little evidence of dissatisfaction among young people with the education or training provided on the scheme. In this respect young people differed from the other critics of YOP who tended to place most emphasis on the quality of education and training. These included the youth lobby, represented by the British Youth Council and by Youthaid, a youth unemployment pressure group formed in 1977. In January 1981 Youthaid published a report on YOP entitled Quality or Collapse, which argued that YOP was unequal to its original task of fighting youth unemployment and should be used instead to invest in the continuing...
education and training of young people. Other groups with interests in YOP included the voluntary organisations, local authorities, colleges, the careers service, employers and trades unions. The attitudes of the unions were mixed. YOP was first introduced partly in response to pressure from the TUC, and the majority of unions remained supportive of the programme, but unions expressed fears about substitution and some unions either never co-operated or remained very critical of the programme.

The education and training lobby. Most of these groups belonged to an informal coalition which I will call the education and training lobby and which became the dominant influence on the policy debate. Many of the members of this lobby were part of the policy process that they sought to influence, and this added to their strength. Employers, trades unions and other groups tended to be represented on MSC committees and working parties by their education or training specialists. Education departments were largely responsible for planning and administering the local authorities' involvement in YOP. The further education colleges were the largest providers of off-the-job training on YOP, and many colleges saw YOP as a source of funds to rescue other areas of FE from the effects of spending cuts. The MSC itself was a leading member of the lobby. A radical initiative on training would give it "a new role... to justify its separate and continued existence", but its motivation ran deeper than corporate self-interest. For its original purpose had been to plan, to coordinate, and sometimes to provide training. The rise of special programmes eclipsed this purpose for a while, but the failure of these programmes to remove the problem of youth unemployment gave the MSC an opportunity to reassert its original training objectives.

The strengths of the lobby lay also in its unity. The education and training components of the lobby pursued different objectives, and both were internally divided, but for a brief period this very disparate set of interests found common cause. The education part of the lobby included many who had been critical of the objectives both of specific training and of social and life skills courses on YOE. It also included those who wanted universal educational provision for under-18s, and advocates of the emerging concept of vocational preparation. The training lobby, by contrast, had hitherto been largely preoccupied with the quantity and quality of craft and technician training. Only recently had it shown much practical interest in vocational preparation. It was moreover internally divided, often on industrial relations lines. Different members of the training lobby sought to remove the restrictions associated with apprenticeship, to reduce youth wages, to increase government regulation of privately supplied training, and to increase government funding or direct provision of training. Nevertheless the different factions of the education and training lobby managed to agree, first on the need for more and better provision for young people, and second that YOP or a successor programme should form the starting point for the desired reforms. All factions of the education and training lobby realised that they had much to gain from a promised expansion of education and training and a new degree of government intervention. For the time being they suspended the debate over the form that this expansion should take.

Perhaps the strongest reason for the unity and strength of the education and training lobby lay in the logic of the situation. Politically and practically this situation was dominated by two central facts. First, the government needed to act, or at least to be seen to act, on youth unemployment. Not only was there political pressure for action but the government itself feared the consequences of prolonged youth unemployment. Second, YOP was clearly unequal to the task of tackling youth unemployment at its current scale. The proposed solution to the situation presented by these two facts was to provide better education and training (or vocational preparation) for young people. This could be justified in either of two ways. Either better education or training could be seen as a way to reduce youth unemployment; or the old programmes could be re-aligned and redesigned to serve new purposes. In practice there was little reason to believe that a purely supply-side policy based on youth training could have a very substantial effect on youth unemployment, apart from the immediate effect of withdrawing young people from the register; and since this effect was vulnerable to accusations of statistical manipulation it was a doubtful selling point in political terms. So those who made their reasoning explicit tended to argue instead that YOP should "find a new justification and set of objectives".

Thus, the case for more and better education and training on YOP was argued in different ways. Some argued that it would reduce youth
unemployment. Others argued that it was desirable on other grounds, either for reasons of national economic interest or because of the perceived needs of young people themselves. However, conscious perhaps that training was a less powerful political argument than youth unemployment, this latter group tended to be vague about its objectives and was content for people to believe that its proposals would also increase youth employment. (Government ministers still field questions about youth unemployment by referring to the Youth Training Scheme.)

The Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. Thus the education and training lobby tended to be publicly vague about its ultimate goals, not to base proposals on any rigorous analysis of the labour market, and often to base its explicit criticisms of YOP on problems of implementation and quality rather than on the underlying strategy. These are characteristics of much of the evidence submitted to the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs early in 1981, and in particular of its report, Youth Unemployment and Training, published in December(70). The report condemned substitution, while admitting that some degree of it "may be inevitable"(71). It proposed higher allowances (while arguing that the main problem was the disparity between allowances for young people in YOP and in different kinds of continuing education or traineeships), and was disturbed by the lack of "progress towards the basic objective of giving participants a 'competitive edge'" in the labour market. "Given the massive sums expended on YOP programmes we are perplexed by the lack of convincing evidence that they are successful in raising the 'competitive edge' and employability of youngsters. We are bound to see this as evidence of the need for an enhanced training content in YOP"(72). Much of the Committee's report therefore focussed on the quantity and quality of training and education on YOP, and on related issues such as the training and conditions of staff, the role of the FE colleges, the matching of young people to opportunities and the planning of progression between schemes. They proposed a "Training Year" in which "a post-educational training period would be offered to all school leavers of 16 and 17 who do not choose to or cannot continue in full-time education", other than apprentices(73). The training year should be based on the best of YOP, like WEEP but with a "transformed" content.

Only in one sentence, buried relatively late in the report, did the Committee make explicit its belief that its proposals would help deal with youth unemployment(74). Elsewhere the connection was merely implicit, and at one point the Committee appeared to approve of one witness's proposal to "turn the whole programme (YOP) on its head" and subordinate its employment objective to education and training objectives(75). For the most part the assumed connections (implicit in the title of the report, Youth Unemployment and Training) were taken for granted. YOP was failing to tackle the problem of youth unemployment, therefore more and better training was needed. The belief that training was an effective solution (and the only solution) to youth unemployment was simply asserted, and then only once and at a much later stage in the report. What is remarkable about the report is not only that there was no evidence to substantiate this belief but that the committee did not think it necessary to find any. Thus does the conventional wisdom acquire legitimacy.

The problem re-defined. Thus, in the early 1980s the problem of youth unemployment came to be re-defined as the problem of training. Paradoxically, this happened partly because supply-side policies such as training were failing to cure youth unemployment. Training policy has always been marginal to the British political scene, and has usually derived its impetus from concerns with other social or economic issues(76). This was clearly the case with youth training in 1981, when the government's thinking was conditioned by the politics of youth unemployment rather than by the intrinsic benefits of improved training(77). The education and training lobby managed to use the political opportunity provided by youth unemployment to forward its objectives. Yet it could only do this by remaining vague about its fundamental objectives, or at least by claiming to see some future in a supply-side policy to deal with youth unemployment.

The New Training Initiative

The Consultative Document. The MSC acknowledged the validity of many of the criticisms of YOP outlined in the previous section. Some, such as the level of the allowance, it was powerless to redress (although it asked the government to increase the allowance). It attributed the declining rate of employment after YOP to the general rise in the unemployment rate. And successive annual reviews of special programmes
acknowledged that the monitoring of schemes and the quality of education and training could be improved, and promised to do better next time. Above all, the MSC was itself a leading member of the education and training lobby, and Jim Prior (Secretary of State for Employment until September 1981) was also keen to see an improvement and extension of vocational preparation for young people. Paradoxically, the "failure" of YOP gave them their opportunity.

In May 1981 the MSC, with the endorsement of the government, published A New Training Initiative: A Consultative Document. The document stated general objectives and principles rather than detailed proposals. Nevertheless, it set the terms for the debate that followed. Its opening words set out its premise: "Training is not given sufficient priority in Britain"(78). Three objectives were outlined: skill training (including apprenticeship) should be developed, time-serving replaced by required standards of performance and age restrictions removed; adults should have wider opportunities to acquire, increase and update their skills; and "we must move towards a position where all young people under the age of 18 have the opportunity either of continuing in full time education or of entering training or a period of planned work experience combining work-related training and education"(79). With respect to this last objective the document's key assumptions were: that policy changes should be dictated by the perceived needs of the economy (although the document at least implied that these needs would not conflict with the educational needs of the individual); that the need for an adaptable and versatile workforce called for "a foundation of skills, knowledge and experience... and familiarity with... a range of tasks, activity or processes"(80); and that unified Vocational Preparation and YOP provided a foundation on which to build. Thus the document envisaged a process of evolutionary change; the existing structures should be adapted to provide higher (or at least more consistent) quality, to cater for all school leavers entering the labour market, and to serve new objectives. For although the new provision might "reduce the vulnerability of individuals to unemployment"(81), the consultative document left no doubt that the proposed reforms were designed to improve training and only indirectly to reduce unemployment.

An Agenda for Action. The MSC received nearly 1000 written submissions on its consultative document, and most of these discussed the objective of providing a vocational preparation for all young people. In December 1981 a further document, A New Training Initiative: An Agenda for Action, summarised the main points of these submissions and indicated the key areas for action. "In our view, one of the most important outcomes of the consultations on A New Training Initiative is that for the first time there is agreement amongst employers, unions, the education and training services and other interests that all young people entering employment need good quality basic training as a foundation for work and for further training or retraining, and acknowledgement too that, for the majority of young people, those needs are not currently being met"(82). An Agenda for Action thus helped to identify and sustain the emerging consensus. It made few specific proposals although it strongly argued the important principle that public intervention, and public funding, were required. It proposed to establish a "high level task group" to report by April 1982 on "guidelines for the structure, scope and content of a general scheme of vocational preparation for young people"(83). This was to become known as the Youth Task Group.

The White Paper. However the context for the task group's deliberations was transformed by a government white paper, A New Training Initiative: A Programme for Action(84). This was published at the same time as An Agenda for Action but in many respects it went against the spirit, and sometimes the letter, of the MSC's document. It proposed to replace YOP with a higher quality Youth Training Scheme (YTS). This would last up to one year, would provide young people with work experience and with generally applicable skills and knowledge, would offer a minimum of three months off-the-job training or education, and would provide for induction, assessment, guidance and counselling. However these "Tebbit proposals" would restrict YTS to unemployed school leavers and would only be guaranteed to 16-year-olds. Moreover the allowance for YTS trainees would be reduced to about £14.42 a week (£7.50 a year) and 16-year-olds who did not participate would lose their entitlement to supplementary benefit.

The Tebbit proposals were widely criticised. Restricting the coverage of YTS to the unemployed was in direct contradiction of the New Training Initiative proposals and the submissions received in response. The reduced allowance, and the element of compulsion implicit in the supplementary benefit proposals, threatened to
alienate the trades unions and many would-be trainees, and discouraged participation from employers who had no wish to take over responsibility for large numbers of unwilling conscripts.

The Youth Task Group Report. It was up to the Youth Task Group (YTG) to produce a better plan. Its proposals had to respect a constraint which turned out to be critical: to have a chance of acceptance by the government they must not exceed the £1 billion cost of the Tebbit proposals. Government reluctance to incur substantial public spending has been a constant feature of British training policy. In April 1982 the YTG presented its unanimous report. It proposed a year-long YTS, the content of which was much as outlined in the white paper. However it also proposed restoring the supplementary benefit entitlement for 16-year-olds, restoring the YTS allowance to the YOP level (currently £25), and extending provision to cover all 16-year-olds in the labour market (including employees), and all unemployed 17-year-olds, who wanted to enter.

At first glance the YTG performed a financial miracle. YTS was to be expanded from 300,000 to 450,000 trainees a year, and the allowance raised from £750 to £1,300 a year - all for the original price of a billion pounds. The key to the financial strategy of the Youth Task Group was the principle of additionality. Most YTS schemes (so-called "mode A") were to be run by "managing agents", the majority of whom would be ordinary employers. Each managing agent was expected to take on three additional trainees for every two young people normally recruited. All five would (typically) become YTS trainees. Thus employers would not have to pay the wages of their first year trainees, they would get a contribution towards their training costs, and they would have the productive services of the additional YTS trainees. This made the scheme financially attractive to many employers, especially those who either had spare training capacity or could easily benefit from the labour of extra young people. To balance this, the amount of money offered for training was small - £550 to cover all the induction, training, supervision and other costs for each trainee, plus £100 administrative costs for each approved place. Thus the YTS's financial strategy worked, partly because it proposed to utilise spare training capacity, but also through a system of financial swings and roundabouts the net losers in which were the young people who would ordinarily have entered employment (who would have their wage replaced by a much lower allowance), further education (which would have to accept lower rates of payment if it was to provide the education or training element) and probably those managing agents (including many education authorities) who would not benefit directly from their trainees' work experience. These financial conditions of YTS entailed a shift of emphasis away from further education and towards industry. The financial squeeze on further education was supposed to be offset by the consequent reduction in apprentice courses (for which FE did not charge), but in many areas (including Scotland) apprenticeships had already fallen to such a low level that education authorities were still likely to lose out.

However, when the YTG report was published, attention was drawn to what the report promised rather than how the promises were to be delivered. The extended coverage, the restored allowance, the removal of "compulsion" - all of these guaranteed widespread support, especially from the education and training lobby. The fact that the proposals were made unanimously by a group which included TUC and CBI representatives - and the likelihood that neither unions nor employers would co-operate with the original Tebbit proposals - doubtless had an influence. So did the support of the MSC's new Chairman David Young, a former director of the right-wing Centre for Policy Studies, whose appointment in April had raised fears of a takeover by the government. After a period of uncertainty (and reported reluctance to restore the supplementary benefit entitlement to 16-year-olds) in June 1982 the government accepted the broad outlines of the YTG proposals.

Public reactions, and second thoughts. Even before the YTG report, the issues were described as a choice between "the Tebbit plan" and "the everybody-else plan". And public reactions to the YTG plan were formed in the awareness that this was the only alternative to the Tebbit plan that stood a chance of realisation. The effect of this was to create very substantial support for the YTG proposals and to divert attention, at least in the short run, from some of the problems inherent in their financial strategy. For from the very start the YTG proposals were based on substitution and low youth earnings. YTS was to cover the employed and the unemployed; it was to be incorporated into employers' ordinary recruitment and training practices; the productive labour of YTS trainees would inevitably substitute, in part, for ordinary employment and this was part of the bait to attrac...
employers. So was the allowance paid to the trainees they distributed in any case have recruited. It is true that these measures were compatible with the government's desire to increase "flexibility" in the labour market by encouraging wages - and especially youth wages - to fall (80). But it was disingenuous to claim, as Youthaid did in December 1982, that the government was "using special programmes quite deliberately to cut wage levels". Youthaid wrote then that "it is now clear that YTS will be used by employers to convert existing employees into trainees on lower wages and with less security" (9). But this had always been clear to anyone who read and understood the YTG report, ever since April 1982 when it was published. Such second thoughts about YTS were encouraged by what some perceived as a new political direction being taken by the MSC, especially after it failed to invite former members of the Special Programmes Board who had been critical of the MSC's operations to serve on the new Youth Training Board that would oversee YTS (99). Nor were anxieties eased by the failure of the MSC to appoint youth service or trainees' representatives to the new area manpower boards (91) by a leaked MSC memo proposing to circumvent hostile education authorities and trade unions (92) or by the disruption caused by the MSC's move to Sheffield at a time when guidelines for YTS were urgently being sought.

Educationists also became worried, especially at signs that industry rather than education was to play the leading role in the new schemes and that "cowboy" trainers might try to undercut the colleges (93). Some educationists had always resented the MSC's encroachment into the educational domain. However, in the build-up to YTS some of the MSC's former friends expressed their concern. George Bain, the depute director of education for Strathclyde and the only Scottish member of the YTG, said in February 1983 that he "shuddered" at some of the current developments. Many employers wanted to use YTS to develop only specific skills rather than the general foundation, to provide YTS without help from further education or to use inexperienced trainers. Mr Bain said he was "not sure that the programme produced by the task group is what we are now about to implement. Subtle influences are afoot changing its direction and objectives" (94). But how far were these really new influences, as opposed to the logical consequences of the YTG's financial strategy? It was the YTG plan which greatly reduced the per capita allowance for education and training under YTS, and which made the scheme attractive to employers using the lure of free trainees' labour. And the YTG's strategy in turn rested upon an even longer-standing feature of policy: the government's refusal to contemplate a substantially higher level of public spending on training.

These issues only surfaced later in 1982. Initially the YTG plan was felt to be so much better than the Tebbit plan that it attracted largely uncritical support. For the same reason the underlying strategy of the YTG plan, and especially the consequences for youth unemployment of a mere supply-side policy, received critical attention only belatedly. In December 1982 Youthaid wrote that in the current climate YTS would "not be the much heralded 'bridge' between school and work but a 'gangplank' between school and unemployment for more than half its graduates" (95). Yet precisely the same objection could be made against Youthaid's own proposals published in Quality or Collapse? in the previous year.

On the surface there was no reason to expect YTS to cure youth unemployment. The passage of the YTG report to which Youthaid alluded read thus: "This report is about providing a permanent bridge between school and work. It is not about youth unemployment" (96). The Tebbit white paper had been equally clear: "The new scheme is first and last a training scheme" (97). But it was not understood that way by the public. Even The Times headlined the parliamentary report "£4000m package for young unemployed" and its leader sagely remarked: "Mr Tebbit's announcement responds more to the pressure of unemployed youngsters than it does to the opportunity of a root-and-branch revision of training for the young" (98). By 1982 the policy was unmistakably a training policy; but the political impetus still came from youth unemployment.

The Future of the Youth Training Scheme

The achievement of the education and training lobby. The YTG obtained what was probably the best compromise available in the circumstances; and the fact that it was a compromise should not obscure its significance. The education and training lobby did not obtain all that it wanted, but it secured acceptance of its essential objectives. Its political achievement was considerable. It forced a rare "U-turn" in a government not noted for flexibility (99). It won a substantial reform
of training, based on government intervention and public funding, from a government whose policy towards the YTSs had signalled a wish to reduce such intervention and funding. It established the principle of vocational preparation for all school leavers, embodied this principle in a permanent scheme, and secured its future with a strong commitment from all political parties. Above all, it won a permanent base on which to build, and improve, in the future.

The coalition breaks up. Nevertheless, the future development of YTS will depend upon its political base. YTS was the product of a loose coalition of political groupings. This coalition is already starting to break up, and it is likely to fragment further as a result of forces inherent in both the structure and the environment of YTS.

First, the coalition between the different factions of the education and training lobby, and especially between the educational and industrial interests, has served its purpose and is breaking up. There is growing conflict both over the content of education and training on YTS and over who should provide it. The YTS’s stratagem for YTS tended to favour the industrial rather than the educational interests; as described above, educationists in 1983 became increasingly worried that their role in YTS might be reduced, especially in Scotland where the employers and the local authorities failed to agree on a rate for college provision of YTS courses. A further round of the “education/training debate” is in prospect, with YTS as its focus.

Second, the trades unions’ support for YTS is likely to be tested. The YTS allowance replaces the wage which many YTS trainees would have received had they been able to enter employment directly. TUC policy is to press employers to top up the allowance; but the amount of topping-up is likely to be small. The impact of YTS is likely to reduce youth earnings, not only among trainees but also among young people in regular employment. The problem of substitution will remain with YTS; the additionality principle builds substitution into the very structure of YTS (mode A) schemes so this cannot be avoided merely by an emphasis on tight monitoring. Indeed the additionality principle is potentially ambiguous, and consequently hard to police, and it will become increasingly so over time as the definition of firms’ normal intakes becomes more and more arbitrary.

Moreover, YTS threatens further to erode the apprenticeship system, although there has been considerable variation in the terms of the agreements which different craft unions have negotiated.

Underlying these problems is the break-up of a third coalition, that between the government and the education and training lobby. The government’s main concerns throughout were to counter criticisms of high youth unemployment and to avoid large commitments on the public purse. This in turn meant that the YTG had to work within a billion-pound limit, and the resulting financial stratagem, as I have argued above, is a main source of current anxieties about YTS. It seems probable that the scale of public funding will be a major area of conflict over YTS.

The fourth and perhaps the most important coalition was between the education and training lobby on the one hand and those who wanted to reduce youth unemployment (or at least to be seen to be doing something about the problem) on the other. The education and training lobby achieved its objective by successfully re-defining the political problem of youth unemployment as a problem of youth training, while retaining the political impetus and support associated with the former. But this re-definition cannot last. I have argued that a purely supply-side policy (such as training) cannot substantially increase the level of youth employment. After two or three years unemployment among 16- and 19-year-olds will still be high, and it may be aggravated by knock-on effects if YTS places substitute for jobs for older teenagers. Not only may this reduce the motivation of trainees — and consequently the effectiveness of the training itself — but it may erode the political support for the programme. YTS may be vulnerable to future political pressures precisely because it is expected to, but will not, cure youth unemployment.

References

1. This paper uses data from the Scottish School Leavers Surveys, which are conducted by the Centre for Educational Sociology in conjunction with the Scottish Education Department and funded also by the Social Science Research Council and the Manpower Services Commission. Neil Fraser, Ruth Jonathan, Andrew MacLeod and Charles Raab made helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. The opinions expressed are those of the author alone.
2. The low-wage recruitment subsidy, the Young Workers Scheme, is administered by the Department of Employment.


7. Figures from the MSC.


9. Ibid, Figure 2.

10. Ibid, Table 2.


13. See also B. Main and D. Raffe, op. cit. (reference 8).


22. From oral evidence to the committee; ibid., p.34.


24. The claim was made in evidence to the Committee on Scottish Affairs, op. cit., p.34. On YOP in Fife, see J. Morrison, 'Youth Unemployment: the Fife Experience', in SBP, All the Time in the World, HMSO, Edinburgh, 1980; M. McLeish and R. Mullin, A Programme for Opportunity: the Youth Opportunities Programme in Fife, Fife Careers Service, Kirkcaldy, n.d. (1981/82); and Fife Region's evidence to Committee on Scottish Affairs, op. cit., pp.188-189.


27. MSC, Young People and Work (the Holland Report), London, 1977, pp.25-29. A sixth measure, the Youth Employment Subsidy, was administered by the Department of Employment.


30. Ibid., p.33

31. Ibid., p.33.

32. Ibid., p.34.


35. Ibid., section 3. Early advertisements for YOP appealed to sponsors to help break the vicious circle of "no experience - no job - no experience".

36. Ibid., p.33.
37. Ibid., p.22, Table IX.

38. The Holland working party was significantly influenced by the employers' survey it had commissioned. See MSC, Young People and Work: Manpower Studies No 1978, London, 1978, chapter 7.


44. MSC, Review of the First Year of Special Programmes, London, 1979, p.18. See this and subsequent Reviews for the fulfillment of the undertaking.


52. Figures supplied by the MSC.


54. The "effect" in 1981 was 11 percentage points for girls and six percentage points for boys. See B.Main, School-Leaver unemployment and the Youth Opportunities Programme in Scotland, Discussion Paper Series, Department of Economics, University of Edinburgh.


56. D.Raffe, op.cit., (reference 43); A.MacLeod et al., op.cit., (reference 49).


63. For examples of this lobby and its arguments see the evidence submitted to the Committee on Scottish Affairs, op.cit. (reference 21).


70. Committee on Scottish Affairs, Youth Unemployment and Training, Session 1981-82, HC 96-I.

71. Ibid., para.36.

72. Ibid., para.31. My emphasis.

73. Ibid., para.78.

74. The last sentence of Ibid., para.76.

75. Ibid., para.27; Session 1981-82, HC 96-II, p.121.


77. This is evident in the confidential advice to the Prime Minister from John Hoskyns, head of the Number 10 Policy Unit, in February 1981, and in the CPRS report on which he was commenting. See The Times, 20 May 1983.


79. Ibid., para.23.

80. Ibid., para.27.

81. Ibid., para.30.


83. Ibid., para.41.


87. Times Educational Supplement, 16 April 1982.


91. 'Comment', Youth in Society, No. 75, February 1983.