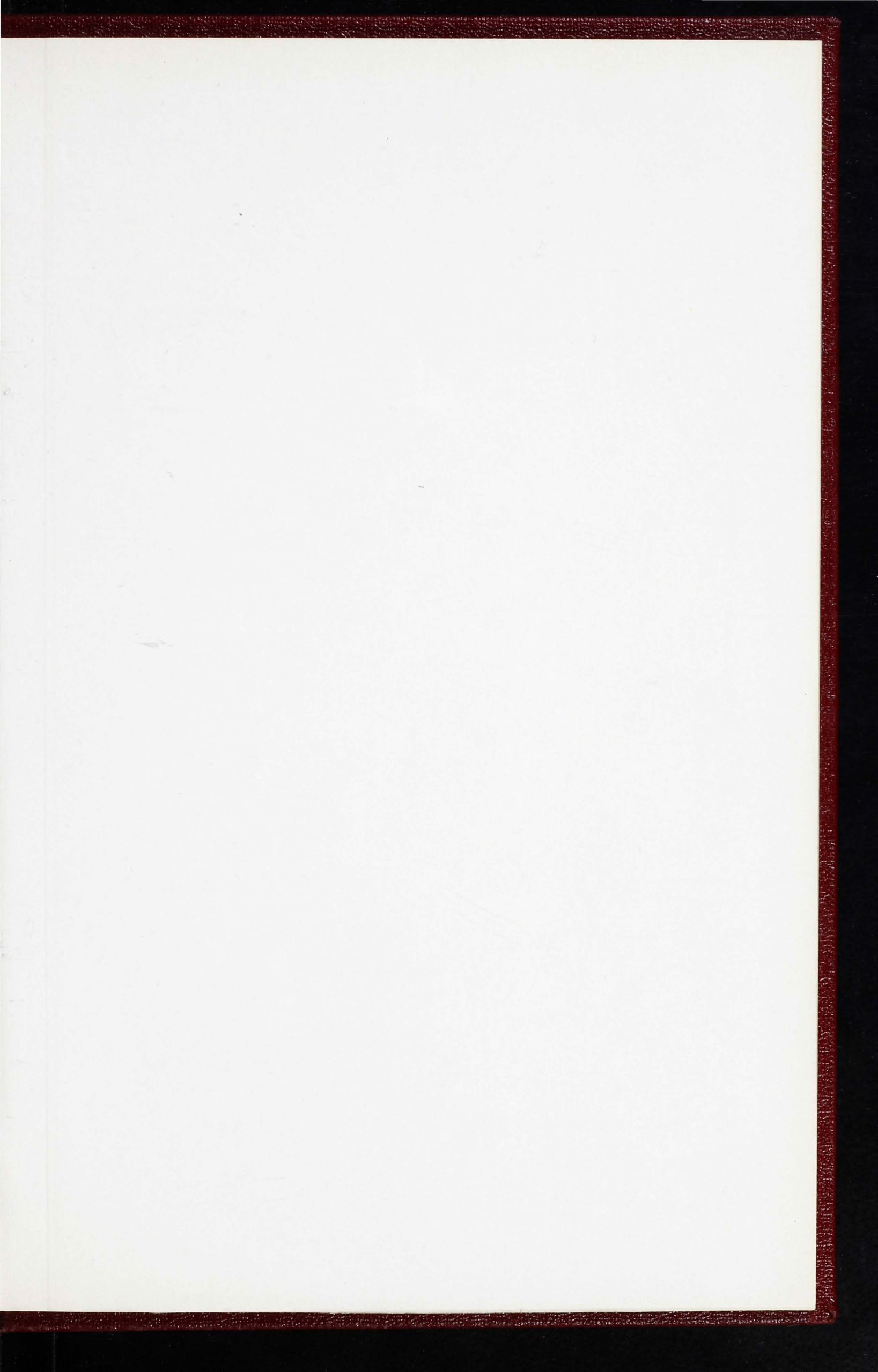
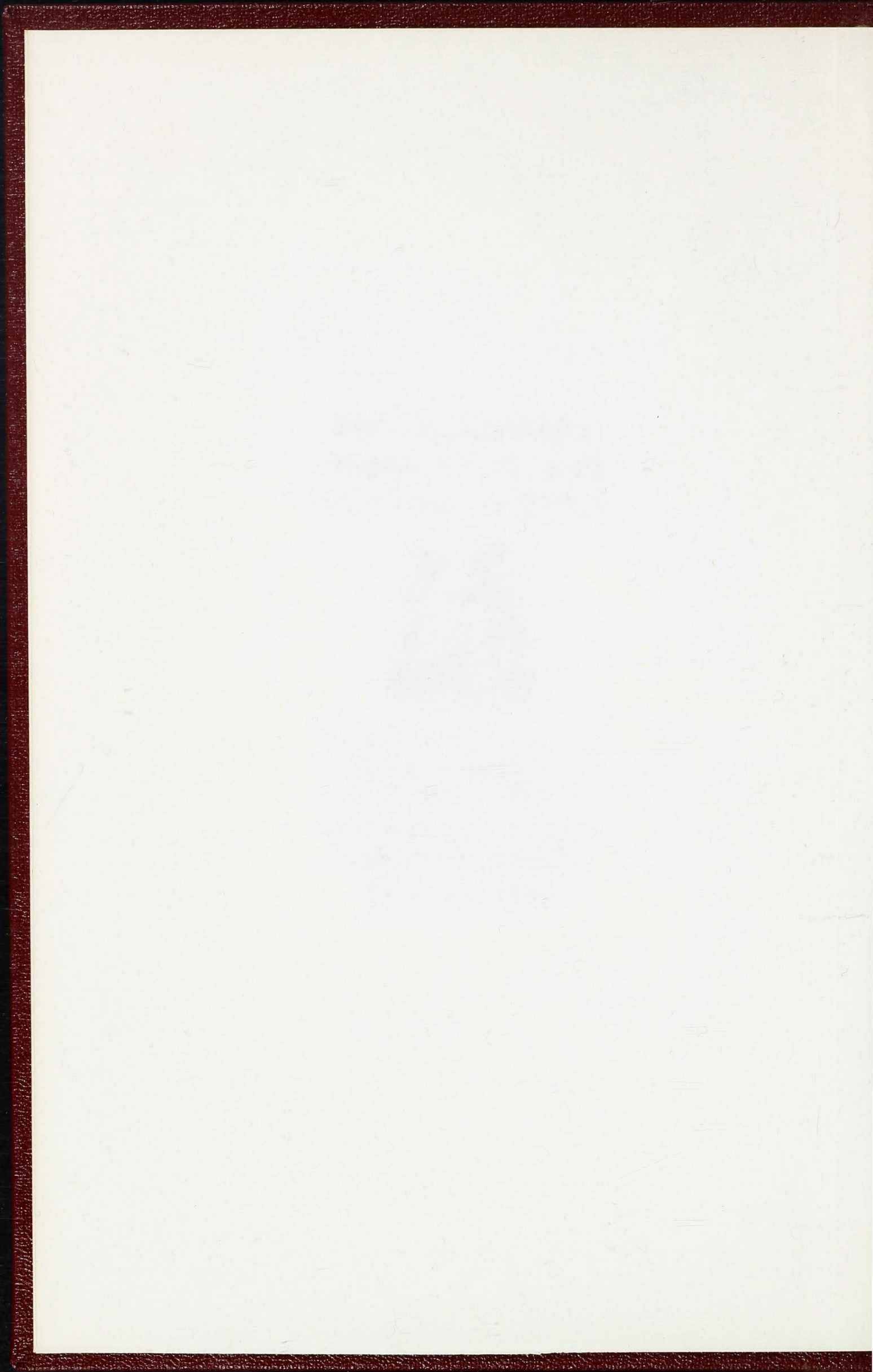


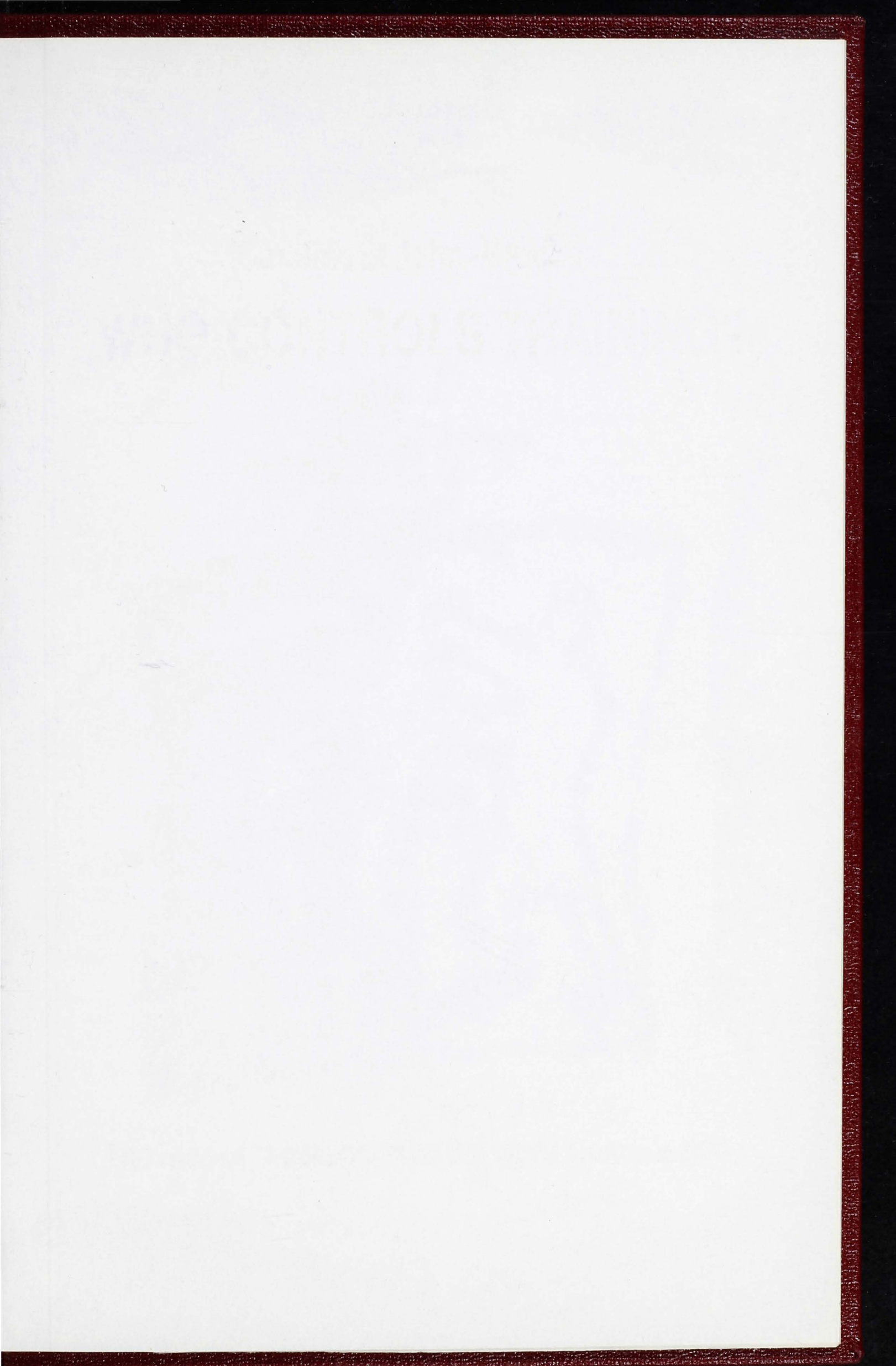
BRITISH LIBRARY
OF POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC SCIENCE

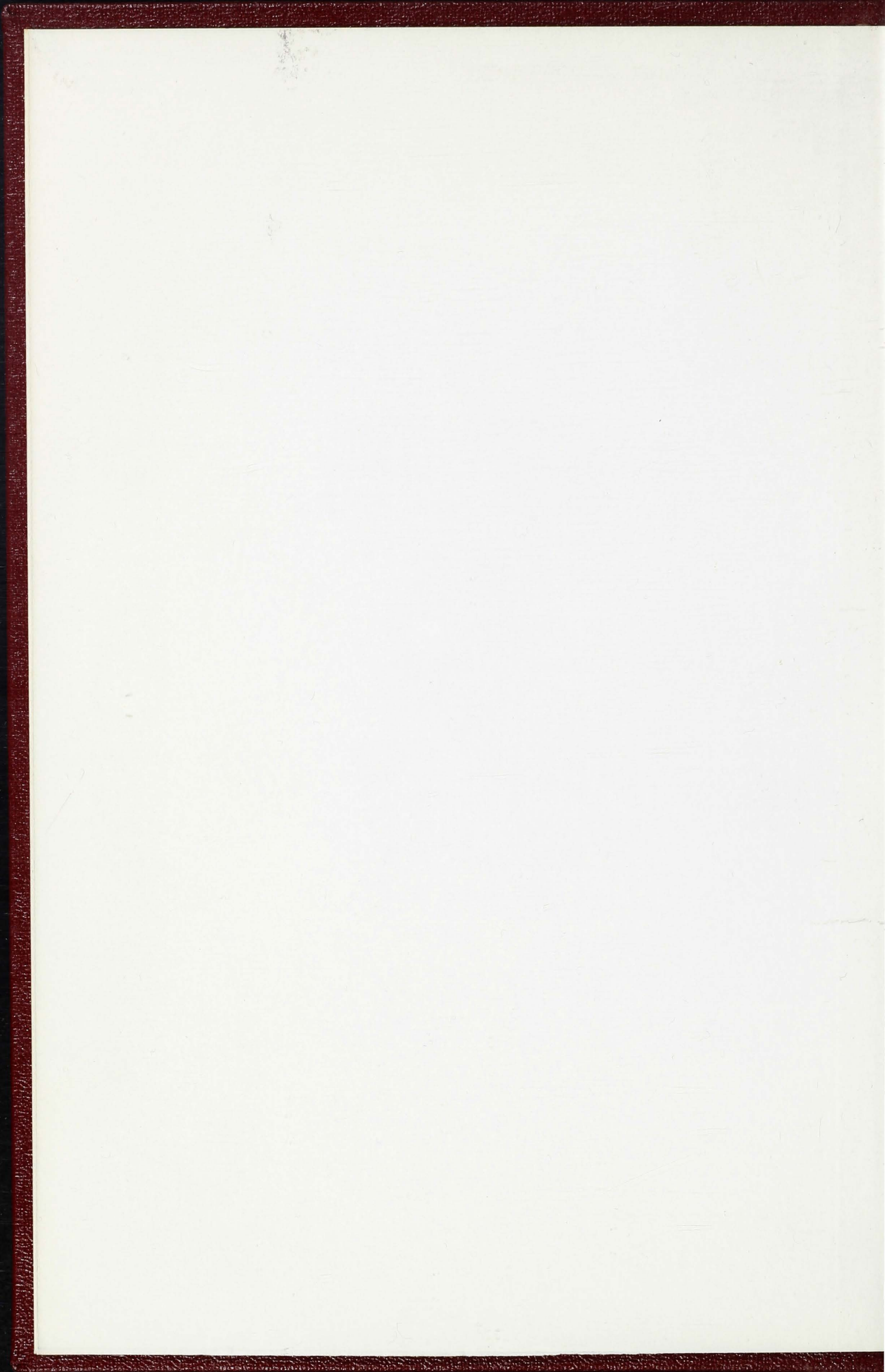


LONDON SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE
10, PORTUGAL STREET,
LONDON WC2A 2HD
Tel. 01-405 7686









**Fabian Society
No. 506**

Caroline St John-Brooks

WHO CONTROLS TRAINING?

The Rise of the Manpower Services Commission

HD
5715
.5
.G7
S14



Fabian Tract 506

Who Controls Training? – The Rise of the Manpower Services Commission

Chapter

1	Introduction	1
2	The Government's Policies for Young People	4
3	The Role of the Youth Training Scheme	7
4	Whatever Happened to Education?	10
5	Effects at the Local Level	14
6	A New Policy for the 14s to 19s	17



22/10/85.
PAMSS.h
HD
5715
.5
GT
S14

Caroline St John-Brooks is the Education Correspondent of *New Society* and a member of the Labour Party.

This pamphlet like all publications of the Fabian Society represents not the collective view of the Society but only the views of the individuals who prepared it. The responsibility of the Society is limited to approving the publications it issues as worthy for consideration within the labour movement.

September 1985
ISBN 0 7163 0506 2
ISSN 0307 7523

Typeset by Lithosphere Printing Co-operative Ltd. (T.U.) 01-837 1174
Printed by Blackrose Press (T.U.) 01-251 3043
Published by the Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN

1. Introduction: How the MSC Grew

Ten years ago, job preparation and training were the responsibility of industry (through the Industrial Training Boards and apprenticeships), the trade unions and the local education authorities. Now they are virtually monopolised by central government, operating through the Manpower Services Commission (MSC).

The rise of the MSC has been one of the most marked phenomena in the training and education policy of the last decade. An arm of the Department of Employment, this quango was founded by the Heath Government and launched in 1974. Growth, under succeeding Labour administrations, was very rapid. In 1975/76, the Commission's annual budget was £250 million; in 1976/77 it was £370 million; in 1977/78 it was £450 million. Every year the sum has risen, until in 1984/85 the Commission's budget was £2,014 million, with spending of £2,134 million planned for 1985/86.

The Commission itself consists of a chairman (at present Bryan Nicholson, the chairman of Rank Xerox UK who is on secondment for three years), three Trades Union Congress members, three Confederation of British Industry members, two local authority members, and a tenth member who represents the teaching profession.

The chief functions of the Commission were originally to "help people train for and obtain jobs which satisfy their aspirations and abilities, and to help employers find suitable workers".¹ A further role was to advise the government on manpower policy issues, and to develop in the long term a comprehensive manpower policy which would "enable the country's manpower resources to be developed and contribute fully to economic well-being," and "ensure that there is available to each worker the opportunities and services he or she needs in order to lead a satisfying working life".²

At first, the Commission worked through two agencies: the Employment

Services Agency (ESA) and the Training Services Agency (TSA). The ESA was responsible for Jobcentres, Professional and Executive Recruitment, sheltered employment and rehabilitation. The TSA's main programme was the Training Opportunities Programme (TOPs), plus help to meet the training needs of industry through the Industrial Training Boards and other mechanisms. TOPs, in particular, expanded fast. In 1973, 40,000 or so people took TOPs courses. Only two years later, the numbers had more than doubled.

At the same time, the Commission itself ran the Job Creation Programme and the Work Experience Programme. Job creation was seen as a way of creating temporary jobs for adults: at that time, unemployment was seen as temporary and cyclical. Work experience was seen as a way of helping young people to improve their employment prospects, not as a substitute for a job.

The pressure of youth unemployment

The Commission turned its attention, at an early stage, to the problem of youth unemployment. In its annual report for 1976/77, Richard O'Brien, the chairman, wrote to Albert Booth, the Employment Secretary, remarking on the anxiety which high unemployment – then standing at less than 1.3 million jobless – was causing. "We have thought it essential to extend and refine a range of special measures to alleviate its worst effects, especially for young people," he said, and thanked the Government of the day for agreeing to the Commission's proposals for a "new prog-

ramme of opportunities for unemployed young people" which would represent "a more coherent and long-term approach to the problem of young people and work".

It was this new purpose – helping young people in particular to improve their chances of getting a job – which was stressed at the beginning of the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) in 1978. YOP, which is still probably the most famous of the MSC's special programmes, put 1.8 million people through work experience during the four years of its operation.

At first a way of enabling unemployed, unskilled and unqualified school leavers – then about 10 per cent of the total – to compete more effectively for jobs, the programme rapidly became a way of keeping an ever-growing army of jobless teenagers off the dole queue, and out of the unemployment figures.

By 1982, half all school leavers were going onto YOP. In the following year, more than half did. And whereas about 70 per cent of ex YOP trainees found jobs in the early days, the figure was nearer one in three towards the end of the programme's life.³ YOP fast became an end in itself, rather than vocational preparation for a real job. Most YOP graduates went straight back onto the unemployment register.

The scale of YOP, and the speed of its expansion, along with rocketing unemployment, is now often forgotten because of the massive publicity surrounding the new Youth Training Scheme (YTS). The 162,000 YOP entrants of 1978/79 had become 553,000 by 1981/82, most of whom were on work experience placements lasting up to six months. (The other type of YOP consisted of work preparation courses lasting 13 weeks or less.) Within the work experience group, most young people were working on employers' premises, but about one in five was working on a community project or 'experiencing' work in a training workshop.

But as jobs dried up, the idea of young people competing for them became less and less realistic, and as YOP placements began to substitute for jobs, employers –

having got used to the scheme – increasingly began to use young people as cheap labour. The speedy growth of the programme meant that proper inspection and monitoring was beyond the resources of the MSC, especially as many placements were in small, non-unionised firms.

Training on the job was often non-existent, and towards the end of YOP's life the Commission itself admitted that at least 30 per cent of young people on YOP were doing jobs which otherwise would have been done by fully-fledged workers for a proper wage.

As a result, parts of the programme lost credibility among young people, their parents and trade unions. But there was also widespread concern over Britain's lack of industrial competitiveness, which many people put down at least partly to the country's inadequate training arrangements, and the collapse of the apprenticeship system as the recession forced firms to cut back. YOP itself had never been designed to cope with mass youth unemployment.

So, in 1983, the Youth Training Scheme was launched. Unlike YOP, it included a compulsory 13 week period of off-the-job training. This increasing emphasis on training, not jobs, follows the pattern of development experienced by the MSC itself. As the job market has collapsed, new initiatives have emphasised the need for training rather than held out any real hopes of employment.

The New Training Initiative

The main development of the last two years has, of course, been the New Training Initiative, of which the YTS is one element. The other two strands, as described by the MSC's annual report for 1983/84, are the development of occupational training (including apprenticeships), and the opening up of opportunities for adults to continue adding to their skills throughout their working lives. That for the foreseeable future the MSC will be increasingly concerned with training, not jobs, is demonstrated by its new spending

patterns. In all, £1,113 million was spent in 1984/85 by the MSC's training division – £834 million of it on the YTS – whereas only £846 million was spent by the employment division.

These two divisions have been the main executive arms of the Commission since reorganisation in April 1984. The training division covers the YTS, the Industrial Training Boards, the Open Tech, TOPs, and Community Industry. The employment division is responsible for Jobcentres, rehabilitation, sheltered employment, the Voluntary Projects Programme, the Enterprise Allowance Scheme (both of which began in 1982), and the Community Programme (which offers temporary jobs to the long-term unemployed).

The Community Programme and the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, which offers some support to people who are trying to set up as self-employed, are the only employment division programmes on which spending has risen – demonstrating the Government's vulnerability on the question of long-term unemployment. Jobs have been replaced by a plethora of special schemes. The original Job Creation Programme was scrapped in 1979, when the forerunner of the Community Programme – the Special Temporary Employment Programme – was launched.

As well as these two divisions, the Commission runs Professional and Executive Recruitment (now self-financing), the Skillcentre Training Agency (recently

heavily cut back as part of an effort to make it self-financing too), and the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative. And as the extent of its operations and the amount of its funding has grown, the MSC has moved ever further not only into the field of training, but into the arena of education itself. It is this shift in the balance of power – the way in which the world of education has lost much of its traditional influence, and the world of training (through the MSC) has grasped the initiative – with which this pamphlet is concerned.

The YTS, with its compulsory training element; the Open Tech; the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, through which courses in the schools themselves are funded; and the White Paper *Training for Jobs*⁴ (which proposes that a quarter of the money spent on work-related further education should be controlled by the MSC, not by the local education authorities) – all these show the MSC pushing further into the traditional territory of education. How and why has this happened?

There are four main contexts within which the MSC's growth in power at the expense of the traditional mechanisms for training and education should be explored: the Government's overall policy for youth; the role of the YTS in centralising youth training; new attitudes to education; and the erosion of local authority autonomy.

2. The Government's Policies for Young People.

In spite of Britain's miserable record when it comes to training young people for work, it is clear that the shift in Manpower Services Commission policies outlined in the Introduction has only been brought about by unemployment – and youth unemployment in particular. This is an area where the Government feels vulnerable to political attack and even civil disorder. Witness the 1981 riots, and the violence of miners attempting to defend their jobs. Witness, too, the appointment of Lord Young – until October 1984 the chairman of the MSC – as a special Minister to tackle unemployment.

There are 1.8 million 16 and 17 year olds in Britain, over 1 million of whom have left school or college. Fewer than half of these have jobs; 350,000 are on the Youth Training Scheme; 220,000 are on the dole.

So although the MSC rhetoric stresses training – and no-one doubts that it is necessary – there was a much more urgent political objective for the YTS: keeping young people out of the dole queue and safely occupied off the streets. Ever since the scheme was first planned, Government ministers have been attracted by the idea of making it more or less compulsory, by refusing supplementary benefit to young people who turn down YTS places. So far, the Commission has steadfastly resisted such a move, although young people who leave a scheme 'without good reason' lose six weeks' benefit, and those who refuse places risk losing money.

The eventual aim is to take under 18s out of the job market for good. By April 1986, the MSC hopes to be running a two-year work-based traineeship for every 16 or 17 year old who is not still at school or college. Geoffrey Holland, director of the MSC's special programmes, has pointed out that in other industrialised nations an extended period of training or education up to 18 at least is the norm.

A second Government objective for

young people is related to the overall economic policy. The massive loss of jobs over the last five years has, in the Government's view, been caused at least partly by union power and excessively high wages. So the YTS is designed to play its part in driving down the wages of young people. (Department of Employment evidence as to whether young people really do 'price themselves out of jobs' is conflicting. Most research⁵ has been unable to establish any significant relationship between youth unemployment and youth wages, but a report published in 1983⁶ concluded that the employment of people under 18 between 1969 and 1981 was adversely affected by their average earnings in relation to those of adults. Certainly, the Government is convinced that this is the case, while the trade unions argue that it is not.)

Because those who join the YTS are paid an allowance of £26.50 a week direct from the MSC, employers can get the labour of a 16 year old absolutely free for nine months, instead of having to employ one at the going rate. This is a key incentive in persuading employers – many of whom have shown no interest in training in the past – to take on a "trainee," often instead of an employee.

What is more, the Young Workers' Scheme (YWS), which is administered by

the Department of Employment and covered 92,000 young workers by April 1984, was in that month newly restricted to 17 year olds. This rearrangement of the scheme – which pays employers £15 a week for each 17 year old employee paid less than £50 a week, – was carried out because fewer 16 year olds were taking up YTS places than had been hoped. Ministers were afraid that the YWS was a counter-attraction.

So this scheme has offered a face-saving stepping stone for the year following the YTS. Too many young people coming off the YTS, expecting a job because they have been 'trained' for one but unable to find one, would soon have brought the scheme into disrepute. The YWS has offered another year of a Government-controlled and subsidised programme at wages below the going rate. The new YTS will perform this function too, as well as offering training.

Government policies are fast blurring the distinction between training and work. A massive propaganda exercise is afoot to change the climate of opinion, so that young people are no longer seen as having any claim on 'real' jobs.

It is true that young people in Britain lack training compared with those from other industrialised nations. In West Germany, for instance, 1.8 million teenagers are in training at any one time, and 600,000 school leavers enter two or three year traineeships every year. But here, well over half the age group traditionally leaves school at 16 and comes, untrained, onto the job market, which is one reason for Britain's relatively poor economic performance. And the recession has resulted in discrimination in favour of adults already in jobs, and against school leavers – especially those without skills.

It's not true, though, that very many young people have no paper qualifications. The last decade or so – since the raising of the school leaving age to 16 in 1972 – has seen a general increase in the number of young people with examination passes. Only 10 per cent of 1982's school leavers had no qualifications, for instance,

compared with 20 per cent in 1974.⁷

But few O levels or CSEs have vocational relevance – though employers do use them extensively as a way of weeding out applicants. The public examination system in Britain, after all, was really designed as a preparation for university or college; the broad two-year O level course is an introduction to the specialised two-year A level course which, in its turn, is both qualification and preparation for a three year degree course in higher education.

O level was originally intended for the top 20 per cent of the age group – roughly the proportion which used to be selected for grammar school education – though today a much higher proportion than that achieves a couple of passes.

The gulf between education and employment

The recognition that most young people did want qualifications, but that the academic approach was not useful for many of them, led to the development of the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) in the 1960s and 1970s. Some adventurous courses and forms of assessment were developed within the CSE, which was seen as a chance of releasing young people from the rigid demands of traditional examinations, and encouraging them to be more creative, thoughtful and questioning.

A grade one pass at CSE was assessed as being equal to a pass at O level, and the marked rise in the number of such passes has shown that many young people are capable of a high standard of work within a less traditional format. But few CSE courses contained any element of vocational preparation or emphasis on skills – in fact, many teachers believed, in the days of full employment, that their job was to enhance each pupil's personal development, not to create 'factory fodder.' And although the rhetoric of our public life stresses the importance of creativity,

originality and a critical approach, these qualities are not in truth valued by most employers who are, not surprisingly, more interested in the conformist virtues.

Consequently, employers never really took to the CSE, but continued to base their selection of young workers either on O level results – which though non-vocational did at least show a certain level of brains and conscientiousness – or their own tests and interviews. It remains to be seen whether the new General Certificate of Secondary Education, to be introduced in 1986 with the first examinations taking place in 1988, will meet the needs of pupils and employers more successfully.

So there developed a hiatus between the values of the school and the values of the workplace – which meant that those young people, mostly working class, who identified adulthood and achievement with a job, no matter how unskilled, early became disenchanted with school, failing to see the point of many of their courses. When teachers attempted to broaden their horizons, they demanded more practice in basic skills. But they found such practice stultifying and repetitive, and many schools experienced a marked increase in truancy among their less academic pupils – most of whom were from the unskilled working class.

Many surveys have shown young people and their parents stressing the importance of learning skills at school, with teachers tending to emphasise less tangible qualities. (There is no evidence, however, that teachers attempt to put young people off industry. The findings of the Schools Council Industry Project⁸ were that the pupils and their parents were actually less favourably disposed towards industry than their teachers were.)

The Government's insistence that vocational preparation is an important part of education, along with the recession and the jobs famine, have at least forced both educators and trainers to rethink what young people really need to get from their schooling. When jobs are taken for granted, it is easy to forget how important they are in an individual's development,

giving self-respect and a sense of competence not easily acquired in school, except by those who are particularly successful.

There is a danger, of course, that the pendulum will swing to the opposite extreme. Only work-oriented skills are now seen as important by this Government. Indeed, its attempts to cut back on arts and social science courses in universities show that the stress on work-oriented learning in the interests of economic recovery penetrates Government thinking about all levels of education. Personal development is seen as a luxury not to be encouraged, or supported by public money. It is a position which, oddly enough, is usually more characteristic of the governments of iron curtain countries than those of the western democracies.

The Government is surely mistaken in thinking that the education system has entirely ignored preparation for work in the past. Many schools have for years arranged work experience for pupils in their final year – though usually only for a minority. And the Department of Education and Science piloted a programme of Unified Vocational Preparation in 1976. The idea was that young people entering unskilled jobs should have a programme which combined college attendance with their workplace experience. The pilot schemes were well-received, but with the change of government and rise in youth unemployment the MSC stole the DES's thunder.

But meanwhile, many schools and teachers were at a loss as to how to motivate young people who could see that a job was unlikely. 'A good job' had for many years been the carrot which would persuade them to work for their examinations. Without it, cynicism and demoralisation set in.

The Government's answer has been the Youth Training Scheme, which kills several birds with one stone. It removes some potentially disruptive young people from the streets; it is cheaper than encouraging them to stay on at school or college at a time when local authority spending is being restrained; it offers a holding tank

for a pool of cheap labour; politically, it gives the impression of a commitment to improving the lot of the jobless young, while offering employers the chance of

trying them out for nine months with no obligation to give them a job; and it could – perhaps – provide a better-trained workforce for the future.

3. The Role of the Youth Training Scheme

The YTS, as was outlined in the last chapter, was designed to fulfil several functions, not all of which are compatible. Arguments over its desirability and effectiveness have focused on two issues in particular: the possible exploitation of young people, and the quality of the training they receive.

The Government, quite obviously, is looking for a way of reducing unemployment as cheaply as possible, without creating more jobs through reflation. In this sense, the YTS is a job creation programme, but the jobs are temporary and paid well below the going rate. Such a policy could only be sold to young people, the public and, indeed, the Manpower Services Commission itself – which, after all, includes union representation – as a training scheme.

But if the YTS is to remain cheap, it must be employer-based, because employers – if pushed – will train young people in exchange for their labour. This is really not very different from past apprenticeship arrangements, when young people learned on the job. The difference is that when the recession hit, many employers simply stopped taking on new staff, and spending money on training. Apprenticeships – antiquated and overlengthy, but offering a thorough training – disappeared at an alarming rate during the 1970s.

At first, the 1979 Conservative Government evidently believed that training could be left to employers and the free market. Almost at once, it abolished 17 of the 23 remaining Industrial Training Boards which imposed levies on employers and distributed grants for training. Firms had complained that the boards merely increased bureaucracy, and they would be better off organising and financing training for themselves.

But, as happens all too often, industry, itself short of money and ideas, dragged its feet. In fact, our poor training record is more the result of short-sighted industrialists and mean governments than of an unfocused education policy. In most European countries, the government pays for all or most training, and in some it is the employer who actually bears the cost of training in the first instance. In France, employers are taxed to provide a fund for training, and in West Germany employees and employers alike subscribe 4 per cent of the wage bill to a similar fund (from which unemployment benefit also comes).

To encourage employers to play their part, the YTS offers the incentive of a government grant (which the MSC agrees is unlikely fully to cover a proper training programme), and the free labour of the young people. Large companies and nationalised industries with a well-established training programme of their own are generally putting some of their own resources, too, into high quality schemes for large numbers of trainees.

But so long as the scheme is employer-based, young people – the majority – who are placed with small employers, will remain open to exploitation. The profit motive will see to that. Questions about the quality of training offered have dogged the YTS from the first.

A major source of controversy surrounding the YTS involves its basic structure. Is the scheme so constructed that it has ineradicable flaws, or is it a fundamentally sound scheme which just needs improvement?

The Government, naturally, is unwilling to admit that the scheme has deficiencies, unless forced to make improvements because it fears that the reputation of the scheme is at risk. The MSC itself has admitted that quality is a problem, and has set up a quality unit headed by Canon George Tolley, director of the MSC's Open Tech and former director of Sheffield Polytechnic.

Canon Tolley has identified some of the problems which have emerged during the scheme's first year as being: making sure that work experience and the off-the-job training are properly related; ensuring that the trainers themselves are properly trained; setting standards for what trainees are learning; and making sure that the certificate which a trainee gains at the end does show what he or she can do.

And the new two-year version, announced at the end of June 1985, implicitly admits deficiencies in the present scheme by stressing that managing agents will have to satisfy the MSC that they are financially stable, as well as offering satisfactory training: several private training organisations receiving YTS money have

gone bankrupt or have had to be closed, leaving their trainees stranded.

Young people will be protected by a training agreement guaranteeing that they will receive 20 weeks off-the-job training during the two years, and will receive a qualification at the end. A training standards advisory service will be set up to police the scheme.

The scheme as it now stands offers a year of training and work experience to every 16 year old school leaver. It is run by the managing agents, who organise nine months' work experience and three months' training for every trainee. The managing agent gets a grant of £2,050 per trainee from the MSC, from which the young person must be paid £26.50 a week. The managing agent can be a large company or nationalised industry – in which case both elements are often provided in house – or a local authority, or a college of further education. Some are consortia of local businesses or colleges.

But many are new companies set up for the sole purpose of organising the scheme. They may provide their own training, or they may buy it in from training centres or commercial training organisations or colleges of further education. Then they find work experience placements, often with small local firms, for the trainees. It is in this sector that many problems of quality and control have arisen.

Employer-based "Mode A" schemes were planned to provide 300,000 YTS places. A further 160,000 were to come from "Mode B" places, in which the MSC itself acts as managing agent, and organises – through its Area Manpower Boards – places in Information Technology Centres, training workshops, community projects or colleges.

There are two types of Mode B places. Under Mode B1 come the community projects, ITECs and training workshops. Mode B2 schemes are provided by colleges of further education, who offer work-skills courses combined with work experience. At the end of November 1983, almost threequarters of YTS trainees were in Mode A placements, 21

per cent in Mode B1, and 8 per cent in Mode B2.

The Christmas undertaking

The Government made a commitment early in 1983 that every jobless 16 year old would be offered a place on the YTS by the Christmas after he or she left school – the so-called Christmas undertaking. Politically, such a commitment was very attractive: a symbol of the Government's concern about youth unemployment.

But this meant generating 460,000 training places in less than a year. There was widespread scepticism as to whether such an undertaking would be possible. It was expected – by MSC officials as well as others – that there would be a shortfall in the 300,000 employer-based Mode A places, which would have to be made up by Mode B places.

In the event, a massive drive for places – and a lack of attention to quality – meant that the Christmas undertaking was fulfilled in 1983, and there was a different kind of shortfall: among young people, who were less willing than the Government had hoped to take up YTS places.

Some youngsters chose to stay on the unemployment register holding out for a real job. Others – and their parents – were suspicious of the scheme, suspecting it of exploiting young people. YOP had left an unfortunate legacy in some areas. Yet others went back to school or college. In January 1984, only 225,000 young people were on the YTS, while 110,000 were still unemployed. In January 1985, the same number were on the dole, though the number of YTS trainees had risen to 250,000, and the number staying in education had fallen from 405,000 to 395,000⁹.

This means, of course, that the scheme is still not satisfactorily fulfilling one of its least-publicised but most important objectives: to keep young people off the job market. The question of making the scheme more or less compulsory, by removing supplementary benefit from 16 year olds, has been repeatedly canvassed

as a solution. Some ministers, such as Norman Tebbit, are known to have been in favour of compulsion from the start. The MSC itself, though, and its chairman Bryan Nicholson, remains committed to the idea of training rather than political expediency, and has steadfastly rejected the idea.

The Government's answer to its problem of excess employer-based places was to announce in March 1984, only six months after the start of the scheme, that Mode B1 – especially the community-based schemes – would be cut back. The 89,000 approved Mode B1 places were to be reduced to 70,000. Tom King, the Minister for Employment, gave the reason as being that employer-based places were more suitable as an introduction to work. But employer-based places were also a great deal cheaper: £1,560 a year, compared with £3,000 or so for a Mode B place.

This strategy has been condemned for several reasons. First, abuses of the scheme are most often found in Mode A places, when employers treat the compulsory training element casually, and use their trainees as cheap labour. Some managing agents look on the whole enterprise as an opportunity for making a profit out of government money.

Some even charge the sponsors who provide work experience for the trainees £10 or so a head per week¹⁰, demonstrating that the young people are carrying out productive work for their sponsor, but without being paid for it. It is a fair bet that those Mode A places left unfilled are the worst.

Secondly, the young people for whom Mode B schemes have been most successful – for instance, those who need extra help because they are disabled, slow learners, or young offenders – are likely to be the only trainees left in these schemes, making Mode B a 'sink' version of the YTS, rather than a genuine alternative.

Thirdly, young people with such special needs could end up in unsuitable employer-based placements, with employers unable or unwilling to cater for

them. This would discredit the YTS among employers – who are looking for willing hands – and trainees alike. Many workers on Mode B schemes feel that their trainees are often quite unready for a normal workplace. The more sheltered Mode B schemes give them a chance to mature and find their feet in the adult world, helped by experienced youth workers and supervisors.

And fourthly, gearing the scheme almost exclusively to employers' interests – which has been done in order to generate as many Mode A places as possible – means that employers have too much power. Important aspects of the scheme, such as the commitment to equal opportu-

nities for girls and young people from ethnic minorities, are at risk if employers are not policed properly. Many will pick and choose among trainees in a discriminatory way.

Under the new framework for a two-year scheme, the two modes are to be merged, and the funding structure changed to a basic grant of £160 a month for each trainee, with a monthly premium of £110 per trainee for a minority of places to make sure that the special training needs of disadvantaged young people can be met. Again, these improvements tacitly admit that the earlier version had problems; the MSC has rightly reasserted its commitment to equal opportunities.

4. Whatever Happened to Education?

In the discussions and arguments over how best to equip young people for the adult world, the voice of education has been pointedly ignored by the Government in favour of voices from employment and industry. Why? There are several reasons, mostly political.

Part of the government's argument with education is based on its insistence that young people are unemployed as a result of their inadequate qualifications, rather than as a result of the collapse of the job market. This means that joblessness can be presented as the fault of the individual and his or her preparedness for work. Responsibility is pushed back onto the schools, which are then considered to have 'failed.'

While it is true that for some time the schools and further education colleges

have only met the needs of less-able teenagers in a patchy and inadequate way, the real causes of youth unemployment clearly lie elsewhere. Blaming education is a political device, rather than a useful analysis. (Where such a device does gain, though, is creating the climate within which funds can be released in order to improve the situation.)

When this stance is allied to a political philosophy which sees all aspects of institutional life in relation to the competitiveness of the British economy, it is plain to

see that education is regarded primarily as a producer of workers, and is judged by its success or failure in achieving this end. Of other educational values we have heard little in the last five years.

The developments of the last five years, too, make it plain that the needs of employment policy have been taking priority over education policy. The Manpower Services Commission has been making increasing inroads into areas traditionally seen as the responsibility of the education service.

Is it surprising, then, that in 1983 Stuart Maclure, editor of the Times Educational Supplement, wrote in an article entitled "The educational consequences of Mr Norman Tebbit,": "The way in which the MSC and the Department of Employment have taken over leadership in this area is a matter for almost paranoid anxiety for the educational world"?¹¹

The shift has taken place at least partly because – as I have indicated – policy for the 16 to 19 age group is increasingly seen as a mixture of education, training and employment. But the world of education has for years been against such a blurring. The distinction between education and training, and the conviction that education is not just about fitting people for jobs, has been jealously defended.

When training became a key plank of Government policy or, at any rate, a key element in Government rhetoric, the Government inevitably looked to the Department of Employment, which has always taken responsibility for it, rather than to a Department of Education which had always held aloof. And when moreover that Government suggested that schools and colleges had neglected their duties in this matter, education found itself in a vulnerable position, and the scene was set for a takeover.

So the MSC has been able to infiltrate areas of influence traditionally controlled by the DES and the 104 local education authorities. Its success has been for three main reasons, interrelated but separable in principle. The first is the economic recession, and the Government's efforts to

cut public spending. The second is a shift in values among policy makers, which has taken place over the last decade or so. And the third concerns the Department of Education itself, as a bureaucracy and in terms of its relationship to the local authorities which run education at the grass-roots.

Cuts in education spending

The first, and overriding element, is the overall economic strategy. The Treasury has long been a hard taskmaster in the eyes of spending departments, but since 1979 its influence has been ever more pervasive. The policy of almost every Government department has been infused by the necessity for cuts.

But after 20 years of continuous expansion, the education world found it hard to restrict spending during the first round of cuts – those demanded by the International Monetary Fund during the 1970s. Demography, too, has hit the education service. A fall in the birthrate during the 1970s meant that the number of primary school children fell from 4.9 million in 1971 to 3.7 million in 1984. And this 'trough' is only now making its way through the secondary sector.

The years of expansion for an ever-expanding client group are over for the moment, no matter what government is in power. Even from a purely demographic point of view, education is no longer such an important national priority; the main client group has moved on.

The Government's cuts have had an administrative effect, too. Less money means tighter planning, to ensure that money is, as far as possible, delivered to the right spot. But the Department of Education, in its partnership with the local authorities, cannot guarantee to do this. They have traditionally had a right to spend their rate support grant, as well as their rate income, as they please.

Disillusion with education

The second factor underlying the rise of the MSC in the training world is also related to the increasing emphasis on economic performance in which education is expected to play its part. But this element is not rooted only in changed economic factors, but in changed values.

A shift in values as to what education should achieve began some years ago – and values are important in policy terms. Maurice Kogan, Professor of Government at Brunel University has described social policy itself as “operational statements of values.” This shift really goes back to 1977, and James Callaghan’s Ruskin College speech, which, with hindsight, was crucial in the softening-up process by which the education system has been earmarked for tighter government control.

Callaghan expressed anxiety about the lack of attention that the schools were supposedly paying to basic skills, and about the fact that employers could not find school leavers with the skills they wanted. His speech struck an answering chord of anxiety in the public which the education establishment – in spite of the evidence, shown by public examination results, that standards have actually been rising – has been unable to counter convincingly.

The widespread assumption that schooling has failed has considerably weakened the position of the Department of Education, and the argument that its arm’s length relationship with the local authorities made for an effective partnership.

And the speech had two further, more deep-rooted and far-reaching effects. First, it gave confidence to the ‘common-sense’ lobby inside and outside education. The opinion of the experts had been devalued. This important trend has been particularly marked since May 1979, as a result of Mrs Thatcher’s brand of conviction politics.

Callaghan’s speech marked the emergence of the no-nonsense voice of the man of the people, later to be parodied by Rhodes Boyson. The Education establish-

ment, he implied, had had things their own way for far too long. Employers and parents should have more say. (The notion of the “parent” as a force for educational change is an interesting element in the ideology of Sir Keith Joseph, the present Education Secretary.)

The second effect, ever more noticeable in current education policy, is the demotion of what used to be thought of as professional opinion to the role of mere interest groups. When Anthony Crosland was Education Secretary, for instance, between 1965 and 1967, he brought A.H. Halsey into the department as an advisor, and discussed policy with people such as Michael Young, Noel Annan, Asa Briggs, David Donnison and John Vaisey. The National Union of Teachers had a role in decision-making which it is hard to imagine today, and so did the Campaign for the Advancement of State Education.

Halsey’s view then that Crosland’s book *The Future of Socialism* established education as “a serious alternative to nationalisation in promoting a more just and efficient society,” now seems very much a view of its time – partly, of course, as a result of Halsey’s own research.

His book *Origins and Destinations*¹² concluded that social progress – among males, at any rate – could be accounted for as much by the overall increase in national wealth as by any educational input. So an important plank for the justification of education – that it increased the life chances of working class people – disappeared just as education was in need of justification.

What’s more, the academic left had for some years been attacking state education on the grounds that it did not deliver the kind of education that working class children could use effectively. So now, when Sir Keith Joseph argues that schools have failed such children, it’s hard to deny that he has a point.

How far things have changed can be gauged by looking at a paper by Rob Cuthbert, of the Further Education Staff College, published in 1981¹³. The producers of education, he points out with some

asperity, have more influence over education than anyone else does. Their attitude is "Hands off, we're the experts." He cites the Schools Council, the University Grants Committee (UGC) and the National Council for Academic Awards as examples of the phenomenon. Today, the Schools Council has gone, to be replaced by two councils under tighter DES control; the UGC is virtually a means of imposing Government policy on the universities; and the CNAA has to liaise with a Government-appointed National Advisory Board for Local Authority Higher Education.

The impotence of the DES

The third factor influencing the relationship between the MSC and the DES is the question of local authority autonomy. A determined government wants to direct where the money goes, and the Secretary of State for education has always had a delivery problem – as Mrs Thatcher, the longest-serving Education Secretary since the war, is well aware.

But the MSC can channel the money direct – and quickly. Rapid delivery is particularly important at a time of change. Time scales no longer allow policy makers the luxury of commissioning a report or setting up an advisory body as a means of promoting change. This Government's watchword, as a result, is very much "suck it and see," picking up the pieces ad hoc after the event if need be, as their procedures for cutting back the universities have demonstrated.

Officials in the DES and the local education authorities have admitted, for instance, that they would not have been able to get the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative off the ground so quickly through the normal channels. Over half the local authorities now have TVEI projects running in their secondary schools.

And would the DES have been capable of generating such an initiative anyway?

Years of powerlessness have engendered a passivity in the department which has made a creative response to the new dispensation hard to muster. Policy making in a climate of cuts needs a clear sense of priorities. This, the government has got, but departmental officials seem to be still labouring to escape the old consensus.

The department now seems to be in the strange position of having, in Joseph, a Secretary of State who has considerable influence within the cabinet (unusual in an Education Secretary) but who does not see his own department as the best mechanism for carrying out some of the policies he wants to see.

He sees the MSC as a more useful mechanism for delivering some of those policies. When Norman Tebbit, for instance, became Employment Secretary, Joseph expressed his keenness to work with him; education and employment are in his mind closely related issues. And Joseph wants to leave behind him a coherent strategy for vocationally-oriented education for less-academic pupils.

It is significant that Lord Young, ex merchant banker, ex chairman of the MSC, now Government minister, was a policy adviser to Joseph when he was at the Department of Industry. Both men are deeply interested in ORT – the Organisation for Rehabilitation and Training – an international network of technical colleges which retrained destitute Jews after World War Two. Joseph has been impressed by the organisation's success in vocational training for young people, and to some extent the TVEI is modelled on it, especially the emphasis on 14 as an appropriate age to start.

The education system, as it is constituted at present, represents to the Government the bad old liberal consensus. The massive political and economic changes of the last five years have meant shifts in the balance of power within British society, which teachers, schools, colleges and local authorities alike are having to come to terms with.

5. Effects at the Local Level

As described in the previous chapter, the Manpower Services Commission has been able to deliver money direct to the local level, which it achieves through its 55 Area Manpower Boards. This has given the Commission an advantage over the traditional partnership between the Department of Education and Science and the local education authorities.

Over the last decade – beginning with the Youth Opportunities Programme – this directness has had a profound effect on relationships at the local level, particularly at a time when money has been tight, and alternative sources of funding few. Three programmes in particular have implications for the relationship between local and central government: the Youth Training Scheme, the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, and the plan for funding further education which was outlined in the 1984's White paper *Training for Jobs*.

The Youth Training Scheme

When the YOP started, many local youth workers and trainers, often working with or within voluntary organisations, found that MSC money was available for schemes to help the young unemployed – but at a price. That price was the possible erosion of local freedom and educational values. Youth workers had to decide whether to join schemes funded by MSC money, knowing that there could be a conflict between their aims and those of the Commission.

Many decided to take the money, but to orient the schemes so that they included social, political and general education, as well as skills to improve 'employability,' which the MSC and the Government preferred to emphasise. Some of these schemes turned out to be the most successful so far as young people were concerned,

and in due course they formed the core of the Mode B programme.

So the MSC was able to colonise large numbers of youth workers, whose schemes then became dependent on the Commission's money, although they felt ambivalent about some of the aims – both stated and unstated – of YOP. What is more, in 1982, colleges of further education which were involved in YOP were warned by the MSC that the social and life skills courses that they offered should not include any "political and related activities," and threatened that courses which did would be closed down.

But in general, youth workers running YOP schemes were able to go their own way; the inadequacy of the MSC's local monitoring allowed some genuinely educational schemes, which offered trainees a real chance of developing themselves, to flourish. Unfortunately, it allowed inadequate and exploitative work experience placements on employers' premises to flourish too, and in the long run they proved to be a far greater source of controversy.

The coming of the Youth Training Scheme, many of whose projects were based on updated YOP schemes, meant that local workers, often committed to the general education of young people, as well as their employability, were roped into a much tighter and work-based programme.

In 1982 the Employment Minister, then Peter Morrison, advised the MSC that YTS schemes should avoid any kind of social education apart from that which was

strictly necessary for work. But there was such an outcry from the Youth Training Board itself, and the trade unions on the MSC, that the ruling was dropped.

Economically, times had meanwhile got worse; little money was available from elsewhere. Local authorities were experiencing budget cuts and the threat of rate-capping; other sources of finance – charities, foundations, grants from central government – had more calls than ever on their funds. It looked as if the Government was taking responsibility for youth training. So local workers had little choice but to stay within the YTS, and operate within its criteria, whatever doubts they many have had.

The cutbacks in Mode B1 schemes outlined in chapter two were a further assault on local autonomy. The Area Manpower Boards were not consulted – only told how many places they had to lose. The fact that the oversupply of Mode A places was primarily in London and the South East, where youth unemployment was not so serious, was ignored in the overall plan, so Mode B schemes which were full of trainees and even had waiting lists had to be scrapped. Local needs took second place to the national plan, just as the needs of vulnerable young people took second place to the needs of employers.

The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

This is the initiative which has had most direct impact on the relationship between local education authorities and the Department of Education and Science. The initiative, which was most unusually announced by Mrs Thatcher herself in November 1982, was launched with no local consultation at all – or consultation with the DES.

It was a plan secretly developed by Sir Keith Joseph, Lord Young (who was then at the MSC), and Norman Tebbit, with the enthusiastic support of the Prime Minister. As I suggested in chapter four,

the idea that young people should be introduced to technical and vocational education at the age of 14 (and therefore at school) before boredom and disillusion have set in, is an important element in the thinking behind the TVEI.

So here was the MSC directly influencing the school curriculum, which had always been the province of the local authorities, the schools, and the teachers. Again, the fact that it was offering money at a time of cutbacks gave the Commission power to push through its ideas against opposition. In spite of an outcry from the local authority associations, it was hard to resist the prospect of £21 million to be spent on expensive technical equipment.

As with some of the Mode B YTS schemes, it has at least been possible within the TVEI to use MSC money to run a scheme to suit local needs and aims as the teachers and the local authority see them. Different areas have chosen to spend the money in different ways, and complete uniformity has been avoided.

Some schools have created a separate TVEI stream of 14 of 18 year olds, but others have invested in equipment and teachers in order to spread technical and vocational education through the whole age group. Many teachers fear that the TVEI is Sir Keith Joseph's attempt to create a selection process which would separate the academic sheep from the technical goats, but in some authorities the TVEI has been successfully presented as a high-status course – which was, reportedly, what the MSC originally intended until dissuaded by trade union worries about neglect of less-able pupils.

But though the TVEI money seems to be being used with some success to cater for diverse needs as the local education authority sees them, the overall effect of the policy has been again to increase centralisation. In the future, TVEI money could be made conditional on schools carrying out central government policies more precisely.

Training For Jobs

The plans outlined in the White Paper, *Training for Jobs*, in April 1984 have been the most controversial of all. Local authorities at first refused to take part in the scheme, through which in 1985/86 the MSC will take control of £155 million which up until now has been spent on work-related further education by local authorities. After a year of resistance, though, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities finally capitulated early in 1985. The Association of County Councils had agreed terms with the MSC some months earlier.

The Government – which did not consult either the local authorities or the MSC – argues that the training and vocational education provided by LEAs should be more responsive to the needs of the labour market.

Through the relationships which the Commission has already built up with local authorities and colleges, the money which it controls will be used to support further education and training “closely geared to labour market needs”. Priority will be given to new subjects such as electronics and robotics, to updating courses, and to occupations – such as business studies – where traditional programmes no longer meet the needs of commerce and industry.

Eventually, a quarter of the money for this type of further education is expected to come from the MSC, which the Government refers to as the “national training

authority”. The White Paper heralded a marked strengthening of the Commission’s role, and its degree of control at the local level.

Whatever the real merits or inadequacies of local authority further education in its traditional form – and the chances of a centralised bureaucracy identifying local labour market needs more accurately – this new move has all the hallmarks of previous MSC developments.

Attention is diverted from the real causes of unemployment to deficiencies in the education system. By emphasising training, the Government can suggest that it is genuinely tackling the problem of unemployment (which meanwhile continues to rise inexorably). It asserts, for instance, that labour market needs are not being met – whereas the real problem surely is that labour is not needed at all.

As with the YTS, *Training for Jobs* represents a slackening of control over employers – whose perceived needs, however short-term and ill-analysed, are seen as adequate criteria for directing large areas of the public education system.

But at the same time, schools, colleges and the local authorities are experiencing unprecedented degrees of control and supervision in the interests of a Government policy in which they may have little faith. For a Government which promised to roll back bureaucracy and reduce government interference, this is a strange development.

6. A New Policy for the 14s to 19s

Having looked at the way the Manpower Services Commission has developed under the pressure of unemployment, the most important question to be asked is: how far should its influence be rolled back or its programme changed under a different government?

Should the YTS be scrapped?

Many people think that the Youth Training Scheme is so deeply flawed in conception and intention that no amount of tinkering with it in the future will deliver quality training. However, that is not the argument which will be put forward here. Although the YTS was, indisputably, begun for reasons which were not the same as those which appear in the propaganda, it has at least succeeded in delivering a year of training to some young people at a time when their chance of getting jobs were very slim.

It is, of course, true that the scheme has resulted in some jobs for adults actually being lost through substitution, in the driving down of young people's expectations and wages, and in the exploitation of some young people by unscrupulous managing agents and sponsors. But schemes run by conscientious managing agents and sponsors have been extremely effective.

Places on many of these schemes have, it is true, gone to the best-qualified young people who in better times would have gone into apprenticeships, but some have not. Employers – because the YTS encourages them to try out a wider range of young people – are beginning to lose their negative preconceptions about today's youth.

And the colonisation of resources at the local level described in chapter five does mean that a valuable network has been built up in some areas, between local firms, colleges and community groups. It would be foolish to dismantle such networks and start again from scratch. And many small firms, unused to even thinking

about training, and in the habit of being completely unaccountable so far as the conditions of their workers are concerned, are gradually getting used to the idea that the fate of young people is not always someone else's business.

The changes brought about by pulling so many disparate elements into a training scheme – even if, as we have noted, it has many flaws – could be used as a basis for building a better scheme which would be a genuine preparation for adult life, both in and out of work.

The experience of the last few years has been uncomfortable for many people in education and training – having the initiative wrenched away from them by ideologues with little understanding of the area which they were invading. But it must be accepted that the MSC has provided fresh ideas at a time when they were badly needed, and had it not been for the parlous economic situation, the opportunity for change would not have been grasped.

There are three aspects of the YTS which are valuable, and should be taken seriously by all in education and training. The first is, quite simply, that a Government committed to cutting public spending has been forced to spend large amounts of money on a training scheme for young people.

Now that the machinery has been set up, only those who deny that training is needed in Britain – or those who persist in believing, in the teeth of the evidence, that full employment could be engineered quickly by a Labour Government – could want to scrap it completely. Training is needed, not only because Britain's competitors spend more time and more money

on it than we do, but because unskilled jobs have disappeared, and modern life is more complicated than ever. Many 16 years olds need extra time to mature into adults – and surely no-one would seriously want to return to the days when most 16 year olds left school to go straight into a dead-end job with a bit of day release if they were lucky.

But it is clear that school is not necessarily the right setting for this extra period of training and development for many young people. Their restlessness and disenchantment with conventional schooling must be taken seriously. And this leads us to the second potentially productive rethink brought about by the Commission – this time through the TVEI. Based, as I have suggested, on the idea of ORT, the TVEI begins at 14, not 16. And it is from 14 that any new scheme should begin.

The system generally thinks in terms of the 16 to 19s, because 16 has been the school leaving age since 1972. But 16 is an arbitrary age, created by the examination system. When the school leaving age was 14, those who were academically inclined stayed on to do a two-year course leading to the school certificate. But it is at 14 that pupils decide on their options for the next two years – and it is at 14 that the less academic begin to opt out, unconvinced of the value of their CSE courses, and, in many cases, resentful of the school hierarchy.

The third important rethink which should take place is on the question of skills. They may have become the buzzword of the 1980s, but they should be taken seriously all the same, for a variety of reasons.

Having a particular skill gives an individual a feeling of competence. The skill itself – changing a tyre, for instance, cooking a meal, mending a fuse, sewing on a button – may not be particularly high level, but it has a defined aim, and its accomplishment adds to the individual's sense of having a grip on the world.

Over the last couple of decades, teachers have tended to neglect definite skills in favour of more nebulous, explora-

tory kinds of personal development. These are important too, but should be allied more closely with definite skills so that young people know what they can do and what they have achieved, in a way which makes sense to them.

The problem with an exploratory approach is that what has been learned is not always clear. There is an argument that the most important kinds of learning usually are not obvious at once: that's probably true, but it's a rare teenager who is prepared for a diet of suspended disbelief.

This is not to say that the YTS approach to skills is the best. In many cases, the whole elaborate theory of 'transferable skills' is ignored by trainers and, in particular, sponsoring employers, who are mainly interested either in skills related only to a specific job, or to the crudest notion of work habits: punctuality, tidiness, politeness, and so on. 'Communication skills' are all too often reduced to the ability to make a good impression at an interview.

But although there is still a very long way to go, combining the ideals of education and the mundane practicalities of the YTS approach could lead to a more fruitful fusion of the academic, the creative and the practical. This pamphlet has so far concentrated on how we got here, rather than on where we should go next, and that has been its main aim. But it seems appropriate to end with a brief sketch of possible future policy.

A new approach

One way of achieving this could be a complete rethink of the secondary school curriculum from the age of 14. The present blurring of education, training and employment should be retained, in the interests of offering as wide a choice as possible to young people attempting to decide on a future which we ourselves cannot guess at.

The recent Hargreaves Report on secondary education in London schools suggests that young people might be bet-

ter motivated if their studies were structured in separate units lasting ten weeks or so, with defined aims and a definite conclusion.

Why not extend this approach to units of training and work experience? Why should restless 14 and 15 year olds not be able to spend time out of school in the real world, in colleges or on employers' premises? Their practical experience, of course, would have to be carefully integrated with the school courses, so such a policy would not be the equivalent of lowering the school-leaving age. But it would mean that school as an institution would not necessarily form the whole of every 14 or 15 year old's educational experiences. Voluntary organisations could have an important role to play here.

Traditional academic courses leading to public examinations would be available in schools as well as these practical units. Blocks of time could be used to build up credits, rather as happens in the United States today. The difference would be that some of those blocks of time could be spent in the workplace.

It would be important, of course, to make sure that young people who opted for work experience did not thereby cut themselves off from all chance of a more academic education later on. But it seems unlikely that they could cut themselves off any more thoroughly than those who already play truant, have (illegal) jobs, and spend long hours of boredom in classrooms where the only source of amusement is making sure that their teachers cannot teach.

Any such system would need careful organisation, but the experience of the YTS shows what can be done. Employers would have to enter more wholeheartedly into partnership with the schools, and give up the idea of using young people as cheap labour. If they are against the idea of a training levy, this is what they could do instead. Young people already contribute to the cost of their training with their labour.

Schools and colleges would have to think more clearly about exactly what they

are teaching and why. Colleges would have to liaise with both schools and employers at the upper end of the age range and offer a much broader and more flexible range of courses – a development which is coming anyway, not only with the YTS but with the new Certificate of Pre Vocational Education (or 17 plus). Many of these changes are already in the air, but have not gelled into a coherent coordinated system. The unit structure is a way in which it could work.

Such a structure could encourage the more academic teenagers, too, to study more technical or vocational units, which is not always easy today. Some may decide on a unit of work experience to make more sense of their theoretical studies. Less-academic young people, after escaping from the classroom into work experience, may use their experience of the outside world to decide on a course of further study. After all it is not uncommon for a school leaver to wish he or she had used schooldays more productively.

Such a scheme would break up the rather paternalistic climate in some schools. Young people's choices, after all, should be taken much more seriously, so long as there are also opportunities for them to change their minds – as adults can if they are lucky.

The YTS network could fit quite naturally into this scenario, as one of the options for 16s and over, perhaps with several units linked together give a longer period of work experience. So a 16 year old could, for example, have four options: remaining unemployed, on a small amount of supplementary benefit; staying in fulltime education with an educational maintenance award of perhaps £25; taking up a YTS-type traineeship at £34 a week (the amount trainees would now be getting if the YOP allowance had kept up with inflation); or getting a job. There is little doubt that 'real' jobs for the young will become scarcer; this should be seen as an opportunity, not a cause for alarm.

A further opportunity which should be grasped is that the number of people aged 16 and 17 is due to fall from its 1980 peak

to its lowest level this century in 1993. This is the moment to set a coherent policy for this age group in motion. Smaller numbers will make it both cheaper and easier to organise.

What should happen to the MSC?

Through the MSC, the basic structure of a training scheme has been established. But the fact that it is a quango, and as such not properly accountable to Parliament, is a problem. The fact that it is under the Department of Employment means, too, that the idea of training is skewed towards employers' interests alone, as if their short-term perceptions could be a substitute for a long-term policy.

Any coherent provision for the 14 to 19 age group should be under the wing of a Department of Education and Training, which would subsume the training services of the MSC, while its more direct job creation functions should revert to the Department of Employment. The link between education and training should be strengthened, and the idea that training is for jobs, and education for life, should be scrapped.

For one thing, many of the skills which are necessary in a job are important in life too. And while specific skills, best taught in a working environment, are needed for many jobs, it is still not certain exactly which ones are most useful for the future. Employers must begin to take seriously the idea that they too have an educative function. Schools and colleges do not have a monopoly on education and training: nor should they have. All adults have a duty to equip the young for the future. Until this idea becomes widespread, the YTS will remain a job creation scheme run on the cheap.

The most difficult problem could be combining the advantages of centralisation – which gives the MSC its immense power at present – with the advantages of local autonomy, so that speed and direct-

ness of delivery can be linked with local flexibility and accountability.

A new Department of Education and Training could organise training through the Area Manpower Boards set up by the MSC, but they should be accountable to the local education authority and its elected members. And the new department should have strong representation on the ground, building up local and regional links. It is important that education and training interests should work together. Funding should come from the Department to the local authority as it does today from the DES. In the interests of a coherent national policy, the developing system of earmarked money could continue, but within a framework of consultation, not imposition.

The unpalatable fact is that this Government has demonstrated how to drive policies through against widespread opposition, and it has set up the mechanisms – and, very importantly, the propaganda machine – to do so. Other parties should learn from this: even if dismantled, the MSC will have done important work, and the money which has already been invested should not be wasted.

What is needed is a clear recognition of the different interests involved in youth education and training: the politicians, the economy (long and short term), the employers the education industry, local authorities, the unemployed, and the young people themselves.

All these stand to gain and lose different things. At the moment, the interests of the education industry, the local authorities, young people, and the long-term economy are being sacrificed to those of the politicians, the employers and the short-term economy. Employers have mostly involved themselves in the YTS in their own interest: now the stress must be on the high-quality training and education which is needed by young people and the long-term economy alike.

References

- 1 *MSC Annual Report, 1976-77*
- 2 Ibid
- 3 *Hansard*, 2 April 1985
- 4 *Training for Jobs Cmnd 9135*, HMSO, 1984
- 5 See the summary in *Wages Councils: TUC submission to the Government's consultative paper*, May 1985
- 6 *Employment Gazette*, vol. 91, No.6, 1983
- 7 *Statistics of School Leavers: CSE and GCE*, Department of Education and Science, 1982
- 8 *Schools and Industry*, by Ian Jamieson and Martin Lightfoot: Schools Council Working Paper 73, 1982
- 9 *MSC Labour Market Quarterly Report*, May 1985
- 10 *There's money in the YTS*, by Caroline St John-Brooks, *New Society* vol 66, No. 1096, 1983
- 11 *The educational consequences of Mr Norman Tebbit*, by Stuart Maclure, *Oxford Review of Education*, vol 8, No.2, 1982
- 12 *Origins and Destinations*, by A.H. Halsey, A.F. Heath, and J.M. Ridge, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980
- 13 *The 'neutrality' of the Department of Education and Science*, by Rob Cuthbert, *Higher Education Review*, Spring 1981
- 14 *Improving Secondary Schools*, Inner London Education Authority, 1984

**A NEW POCKET SIZED
PAPERBACK EDITION
OF THIS LABOUR
MOVEMENT CLASSIC.
ESSENTIAL READING**

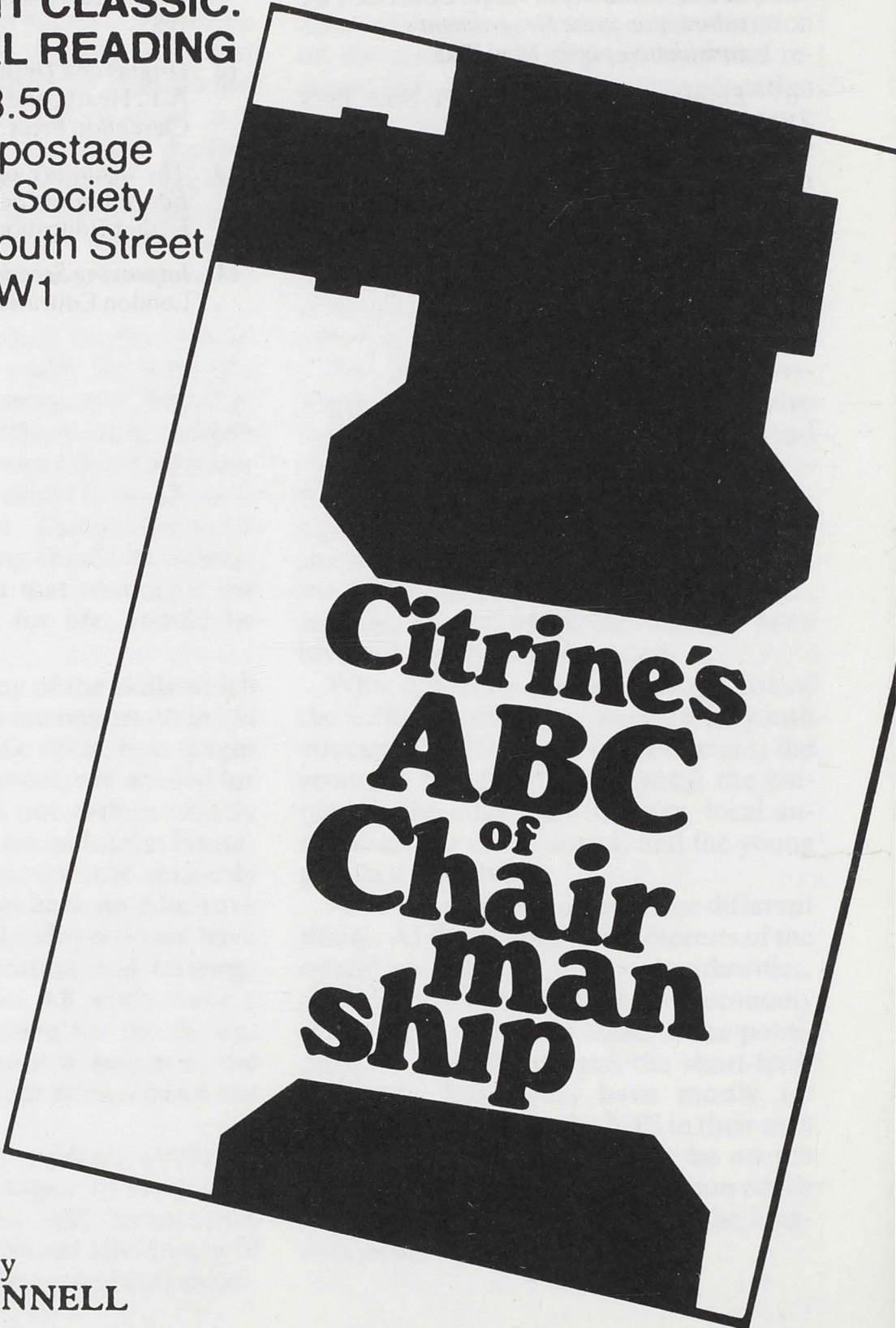
£3.50

+ 30p postage

Fabian Society

11 Dartmouth Street

SW1



**Citrine's
ABC
of
Chair
man
ship**

edited by
MICHAEL CANNELL
and
NORMAN CITRINE

Recent Fabian Pamphlets

Available from the Fabian Society

Fabian Essays in Socialist Thought



◆ Edited by Ben Pimlott ◆
for the FABIAN SOCIETY

Fabian Essays in Socialist Thought
(Gower, 1984)
ed. Ben Pimlott
paper £8.50
cased £19.50

Also available



edited by
MICHAEL CANNELL
and
NORMAN CITRINE

03 02 1980
02 01 1980

Recent Fabian Pamphlets

Tracts

485 Bryan Gould, Shaun Stewart, John Mills, Austin Mitchell	Economic recovery: what Labour must do	£1.50
486 Nicholas Kaldor	The economic consequences of Mrs Thatcher	£1.50
487 David Donnison	Urban policies: a new approach	£1.00
488 Emma MacLennan, Chris Pond, Jill Sullivan	Low pay: Labour's response	£1.50
489 Roy Hattersley, Eric Heffer, Neil Kinnock, Peter Shore	Labour's choices	£0.90
490 David Downes	Law and order: theft of an issue	£1.50
491 David Blunkett, Geoff Green	Building from the bottom: the Sheffield experience	£1.50
492 Keith Ewing	The Conservatives, trade unions, and political funding	£1.50
493 G. Bernard Shaw	The Fabian Society: its early history (reprinted with a preface by Melvyn Bragg)	£1.50
494 Raymond Plant	Equality, markets and the State	£1.50
495 Bernard Crick	Socialist values and time	£1.50
496 Anthony Wright, John Stewart, Nicholas Deakin	Socialism and decentralisation	£1.50
497 Carl James	Occupational pensions: the failure of private welfare	£1.50
498 eds. Brian Abel-Smith & Peter Townsend	Social security: the real agenda	£1.50
499 Hugh O'Shaughnessy	Towards a democratic Central America	£1.50
500 Peter Townsend	Why are the many poor?	£1.50
501 Denis Healey	Labour and a world society	£1.50
502 Michael Mann	Socialism can survive: social change and the Labour Party	£1.50
503 Martin Linton	The Swedish road to socialism	£1.50
504 John Lloyd	Understanding the miners' strike	£2.00
505 David Griffiths & Chris Holmes	A new housing policy for Labour	£1.50

Special Centenary Publication

100 Years of Fabian Socialism £2.50

Books available from the Fabian Society

Patricia Pugh	Educate, Agitate, Organize – 100 years of Fabian Socialism (Methuen, 1984)	<i>cased</i> £19.50
ed. R.H.S. Crossman	New Fabian Essays (Dent, 1970)	<i>cased</i> £1.75
ed. Ben Pimlott	Fabian Essays in Socialist Thought (Gower, 1984)	<i>cased</i> £19.50 <i>paper</i> £8.50
ed. Howard Glennerster	The Future of the Welfare State (Heinemann, 1983)	<i>paper</i> £5.95
eds. M. Cannell & N. Citrine	Citrine's ABC of Chairmanship (NCLC, 1982)	<i>paper</i> £3.50
J.P.M. Millar	The Labour College Movement	<i>cased</i> £5.50

Postage: books 50p per title (ABC of Chairmanship 30p), pamphlets post free.

WHO CONTROLS TRAINING:

The Rise of the Manpower Services Commission

The rise of the Manpower Services Commission has been one of the most marked phenomena in the training and education policy of the last decade. Caroline St John-Brooks places its growth in power in four main contexts:

- the Government's overall youth policy;
- the role of the YTS in controlling youth training;
- new attitudes to education;
- the erosion of local autonomy;

Whilst recognising the deficiencies of the YTS, she stresses positive aspects which should be used to build a better scheme. This would have the aim of being a genuine preparation for adult life in and out of work.

She concludes by sketching out a possible future policy to include:

- a complete rethink of secondary school curriculum from the age of 14 to allow some 14 and 15 year olds to spend time in colleges and employers' premises;
- the establishment of a Department of Education and Training to organise training (transferring the more direct job creation functions of the MSC to the Department of Employment);
- a clear recognition of the different interests included in further education and training.

Fabian Society

The Fabian Society exists to further education and research. Since 1884 it has enrolled thoughtful socialists who wish to discuss the essential questions of democratic socialism and relate them to practical plans for building socialism in a changing world. Beyond this the Society has no collective policy. It is affiliated to the Labour Party. Anyone who is not ineligible for membership of the Labour Party is eligible for full membership; others may become associate members. For membership and publications details, write to: John Willman, General Secretary, Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN.

£1.50

