CHAPTER 2

THE LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE ON ILLITERACY

Unemployment, Poverty and Adult Education

In a 1972 article on adult basic education in Canada, Michael Clague observed that:

> Ostensibly the 'ABE target group' is made up of individuals who lack the education and skills necessary to compete successfully in the labor market. Indeed this is probably the most widespread assumption about both the group to be served and the purpose of ABE: upgrading for the disadvantaged to improve their employment situation.[1]

This perspective, which sees illiteracy as a primary cause of poverty and unemployment, and correspondingly, sees adult basic education as a particularly effective anti-poverty strategy, is still the dominant one in 1982, ten years after Clague made this comment. It continues to provide the key assumptions of thought and practice in the sphere of adult literacy and basic education in Canada. When we examine the history of this perspective, we find that adult educators played a significant role in its formulation and dissemination in the 1960's and early 1970's.

Early History

In 1960, the problem of illiteracy was so poorly understood and so little discussed that, according to adult 'educator J.R. Kidd:

> when a questionnaire came from UNESCO to Ottawa requesting information about illiteracy in Canada, it was quickly returned to Paris with a short letter stating that the questions did not apply here.[2]

However, in the context of deteriorating economic conditions, the problem was soon brought to wide attention.

In the period of the late 1950's, Canada suffered from the highest unemployment rate of any Western industrialized nation, a condition which was having destructive

social and political consequences for political elites, not the least of which was the increasing erosion of public confidence in the ability of both Keynesian fiscal and monetary policies, and the Ottawa government which espoused them, to maintain the more or less steady growth which had characterized the Canadian economy since the end of World War II. [3] At this time, an influential minority of labor economists argued that this, unemployment could not be explained, as was traditionally done, by reference to a deficiency in the level of aggregate demand in the economy. Instead, they said, it was due to a mismatch between the education and skills of the workforce and the ones required by the existing job openings--leading to the condition known as "structural" unemployment. As part of their evidence, they pointed to the low average education level of the Canadian work force relative to other Western countries. [4]

An early exponent of this hypothesis was the Canadian Association for Adult Education, as represented by its Associate Director, Arthur Pigott. In an appearance before the 1961 Senate Special Committee on Manpower and Employment, Pigott expressed support for the new view:

> There is good reason to believe that our present predicament lies to a considerable extent in ... a lack of correspondence between the job demands of trade and industry and the number of workers qualified and available for the jobs.[3]

He argued for immediate expansion of skill training for the unemployed. In addition, he noted that:

> More than half the registrants for unemployment insurance have only a primary school education. This is a very large number of people. Among them no doubt are a great many who have good intelligence, and who are willing to undertake training. It will first be necessary to give them an "adult" course in elementary education.[6]

In Pigott's view, the investment was justified because:

> Instead of paying unemployment insurance and public assistance benefits to certain people almost in perpetuity, how great is the economic gain if, by retraining, a great many of them can get back into the stream of production--and become taxpayers.[7]

He saw a causal relationship between illiteracy, lack of job skills and unemployment:

> Welfare expenditures, some economists tell us, if properly made have much to do with the stemming of recessions and depressions. Prevention is always better than cure. It is not enough to offer casework and financial relief for individuals and families deteriorating through economic

> incompetence. For them a basic element of prevention comes through adequate education, [8] training and opportunities for retraining.

What Pigott presented to the Senate Committee were the assumptions of an emerging new view of undereducation and illiteracy. The brief was warmly received by one of the members of the committee, Senator David Croll, in whom it had clearly struck a responsive chord:

> Mr. Chairman, speaking for myself, I was stimulated by the presentation made here today. I think it is one of the very best that we have had before us...[9]

That it also influenced the findings of the committee in some small part is indicated in the wording of the Final Report, submitted in June of 1961 to Parliament:

> Nothing has impressed the Committee more than the very heavy incidence of unemployment among young people, the unskilled, and the inadequately educated. This has been brought out repeatedly, both by the Committee's own research staff and by other witnesses. Every study that has been made reveals that in the economy of today the emphasis is increasingly on skill and training .... This situation must be viewed with a sense of urgency. Without any question we must devote a much larger proportion of our resources to education and training of all kinds.... [10]

In spite of evidence to contradict the structuralist argument--which showed that in fact it was low aggregate demand due to a depressed world market for Canadian resources that was the main factor in the high unemployment[11]--the structuralist logic prevailed, and job training and academic upgrading for the unemployed were funded by the federal government in 1960 under the new Technical and Vocational Training Act (MA). The immediate goal, which was particularly politically attractive, was to remove unemployed workers from the labor market into training, but the long term goal was reduction of the rate of unemployment itself. [12]

Upgrading

Under the terms of the MA, Job training and academic upgrading were to be established by the provinces at federal government expense. However, in practice, most provinces concentrated on job skill training and did little to implement upgrading, even though there was evidence of a high drop-out rate from job training on the part of those with Inadequate basic education.[13] In response, a pilot program In academic upgrading was organized in Elliot Lake, Ontario in late 1963 at the urging of Frontier College, a long-standing adult basic education institution based in Toronto. [14] The program was set up with the joint cooperation of Frontier College, the Ontario Department of Education and the National Employment Service, an arm of the federal government. The aim was to demonstrate that chronically unemployed adults with low

educational standing could be helped to adapt to classroom and home study and to make sufficient progress in academic upgrading to be able to successfully move into skill training programs. The organizers believed that for the program to succeed, the teacher must believe in the change potential of participants and be:

> willing and able to apply certain "social work principles: maximum allowance for limiting factors in the “clients" history (e.g. alcoholism, family difficulties).[15]

According to the director of the program, who was also the head of Frontier College at that time, the results were encouraging and appear to suggest a way of providing adult educational opportunity for men usually considered social welfare "cases" instead rather than educational problems.[16]

As the 1960's progressed, the more multi--dimensional issue of poverty came to the fore in Canada as the economy, now expanding in the wake of increased demand for Canadian resources (mainly stimulated by the Viet Nam war), was obviously failing to provide "uplift" for various groups and regions in Canada. [17] At this time, numerous theoretical and empirical studies on the causes and cures of poverty were appearing in the U.S. as a result of the "War on Poverty"declared by President Johnson in 1964, and they were influencing[18] opinion here. Most of them were based on, the new "human capital" theory which saw under education and lack of job training as the core factors in the genesis of poverty. They quite uniformly recommended massive public expenditures for education and training, which, it was suggested, would have payoffs both in terms of economic growth, and in[19] terms of reduction of poverty.

An important intervention during this period was an article published in Macleans Magazine in 1965 on the subject of adult illiteracy. The author, Barbara Moon, called attention to the extent of the problem and explicitly argued that there exists a causal connection between illiteracy and economic hardship:

> ...the worst unemployment crisis since the Great Depression is demonstrating, with crude drama, what a few uneasy educators have been saying all along: that Canada suffers from under-education so widespread in the populace that it is clogging the economy and condemning Canada to the status of an also-ran among the industrial nations.[20]

The article sparked widespread attention and coverage in the media, and had an impact on discussions at a national conference on poverty which was convened in Ottawa later that year. [21]

Manpower

In 1967 the federal government initiated the Canada Manpower Training Program, largely as an instrument of manpower policy aimed at maintaining productivity through augmenting the mobility, training, and information of unemployed workers, but secondarily as a means of responding to poverty. The second objective was alluded to in the speech of the Minister of Manpower and Immigration inaugurating the Act which set up the program:

> We want to provide a second chance to the people who need it most. These are the men and women who missed the chance to acquire a skill during their youth or whose skill has been made obsolete by technological change.[22]

An important component of the new Manpower effort was Basic. Training for Skills Development (BTSD), an adult basic education program which enabled those clients who needed it to upgrade their general educational levels prior to entering job training. By the 1968-9 fiscal year, it was far and away the largest ABE program in Canada, with 64,000 participants, or approximately 85% of all those enrolled in ABE in Canada at that time.[23]

However, in practice, the new Manpower program largely helped those likely to quickly benefit from training, and passed over the riskier category of subliterate adults, who were more impoverished and needed help the most. Adult educators from the Canadian Association for Adult Education and Frontier College forcefully argued this point in appearances before the Special Senate Committee on Poverty in 1969 and 1970.[24] The Frontier College brief suggested that the length of time a client of the Manpower program could remain in upgrading be extended beyond 52 weeks in order to accommodate those who had the most grades to cover--subliterate adults--and that the BTSD program be reorganized to take into account the needs of the poor as had been discovered in the Elliot Lake experiment:

> ... the policy should recognize that many "poor" persons are marginally motivated, and the initial Basic Training for Skills Development training should be adapted to deal with the motivation of the clients, not just formal basic education skills. Our experience suggests that such an approach is essential, especially in working with adults at a basic education level. Not to adopt this more flexible approach is in fact to discriminate against, "poor" Canadians in Manpower programs.[25]

The committee report, issued in 1972 and received with a great deal of interest in Canada, strongly supported the suggestions of the two adult education organization briefs, and argued for an explicit redirection of the Manpower program toward the goal of reducing poverty.[26]

In the same year, the federal government introduced changes in the Manpower program which did in fact enhance the access and utility of training for the poor.

Although the 52 week limit stood, the BTSO program was reorganized in a way similar to that suggested by Frontier College, and a new program of basic literacy and pre-employment life skills training, called Basic Job Readiness Training (BJRT), was introduced. [27]

NewStart

The innovations which were introduced were directly based on research and development work in adult basic education carried out by the federally-funded Canada NewStart program, which had been in formal operation since 1967.[28] Its history is of interest here because of the involvement of adult educators.

In 1965, Prime Minister Pearson had proposed the selection of several areas for "special pilot projects" to "determine the best methods of meeting the training needs of adults in designated areas".[29] This constituted an acknowledgement that existing manpower policies were not helping the most impoverished in Canada. These initial projects were superseded in 1967 by the Canada NewStart Program, a broad research and development program formed through the cooperation of the federal government and six provinces. According to a federal government publication describing the program:

> The Canada NewStart program was established as an experiment in federal-provincial co-operation to find ways of alleviating chronic poverty and disadvantage.[30]

The emphasis of the program was to be on educational strategies to attack poverty:

> Education and employability have long been associated with one another and assumed to be positively correlated. It was to be expected, then, that when the Canada NewStart program was launched in 1967 it would contain substantial emphasis on adult basic education.[31]

Six autonomous "corporations" were to operate for a period of four years, until 1971, and then be dissolved. Each contained ABE programs, some type of life skills training, occupational training, individual and family counseling, and a community development program. [32]

Adult basic educators were prominent in the staffs of the new programs. For example, it was under the directorship of the well-known Canadian adult educator, Stuart Conger, that Saskatchewan NewStart developed the basic theory and methods of life skills training, the BLADE program (a basic literacy program for grades 0 through 4) and LINC (a program for grades 5 through 10). The two basic education "packages" were designed to make use of individualized instruction, as coordinated by "resource persons" rather than traditional teachers, with input from learners and utilizing materials keyed to the life situations of impoverished adults.[33]

In 1971 these and other innovations began to be introduced into the Canada Manpower Training Program, marking the zenith of the influence of the Canadian adult education profession on the course of the development of the federal government intervention in adult basic education.

The Liberal Perspective

It is clear that adult educators have had a noteworthy influence on the development of views on the meaning and significance of illiteracy in Canada and programs based on them. From 1961 through 1972, they lobbied governments, consulted with them and on occasion pressured them in order to influence the availability and shape of basic education opportunities for the poor. The outlook on illiteracy which guided them, and in turn they helped to shape, can be called the liberal perspective in recognition of its roots in the political philosophy of liberalism, especially post-Depression liberal welfare state doctrine. This doctrine has placed increasing responsibility on governments for providing social welfare and educational services which the private market economy either can not or will not provide.[34]

It is helpful at this point to summarize the liberal perspective in succinct terms so that it can later be compared with those alternative perspectives which are challenging it.

The Liberal Perspective: Deficiency and Remediation

An important point of reference for the liberal perspective has been the body of empirical data which show the link between level of education, labor force status and income. Table 2-1 (below) divides the population of Canada into families (of two or more members) and unattached individuals (i.e. living outside a family setting). Low income is determined according to the Revised Statistics Canada Poverty line. The table shows that the low income family heads and unattached individuals have markedly lower rates of educational attainment, showing disproportionate representation in the 0-8 grade completion category. For example, 46.9% of low income family heads possess this level of education, while only 27.8% of non-'low' income family heads do so. The disparity is even more marked among unattached individuals. The figures confirm the statement made by the Economic Council of Canada in its 1968 Review that "the association between low income and lack of education beyond the elementary level is particularly strong"[35]

Further evidence of the economic position of those with low levels of schooling is found in Table 2-2 (below). Those with 0-8 years of education show a higher rate of unemployment and a lower rate of labor force participation.

According to these measures, it is apparent that Canadians with low educational attainment tend to suffer serious economic hardship.

Table 2-1: Composition of Low-Income Families and Unattached Individuals and Non-Low-Income Families and Unattached Individuals by Education of Head, 1978

EDUCATION	FAMILIES		UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS	
	Low-Income (percent)	Non-Low Income (percent)	Low-Income (percent)	Non-Low Income (percent)
0 - Grade 8	46.9	27.8	41.9	18.1
Some High School and no post-secondary	41.4	44.4	36.1	44.2
Post-secondary Certificate or diploma	5.5	9.9	8.0	12.2
University degree	2.9	11.5	7.1	16.8

Source:Statistics Canada, Income Distributions by Size, 1978, as adapted in David P. Ross. The Working Poor (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1981), pp. 8-9.

Table 2-2: Labor Force Participation Rates and Unemployment Rates by Level of Education, All Ages, April, 1979

Education	Participation Rate (Percent)	Unemployment Rate (Percent)
0- Grade 8	44.3	11.5
High School	65.0	9.6
Some post-secondary	66.5	7.2
Post-secondary certificate or diploma	73.2	4.8
University degree	82.1	3.6
All levels	62.1	8.6

Source:Statistics Canada, The Labor Force, May, 1979, as adapted in Education and Working Canadians: Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Educational Leave and Productivity (Ottawa: Labor Canada, 1979), p.118.

However, these data only show that there is an association between the variables; they do not establish whether there is a relationship of causality. At the heart of the liberal perspective on illiteracy is the hypothesis that it indeed is a causal relationship, that these adults suffer economic hardship primarily because of their low educational attainment.

Assumptions

This argument is based on three main assumptions. First, it is believed that one's income and occupational status depend on one's productivity as a worker, which in turn is a function of one's personal stock of "human capital", including basic education, job skills, work-relevant attitudes, etc. [36] Therefore, it is concluded that those with inadequate basic education will tend to disproportionately experience unemployment, underemployment and poverty. [37] A Canadian specialist on adult illiteracy argues:

> Income levels - particularly the distribution of income among employed persons - depend upon the distribution of the work force among the various occupational groups which, in turn, is determined by the educational level of the available labor force. Illiteracy levels of a population supply an important segment of the educational status. An illiterate person is scarcely fit for even the most menial occupational role, therefore, the illiterates and the poorly educated constitute an unemployable segment of the work force.[38]

The second main assumption of the liberal perspective on illiteracy is that the application of increasingly sophisticated technology in business and industry is responsible for what has been a rapid rise in educational requirements for jobs since the late 1950's. [39] Based on this, and recalling the first assumption, it is concluded that the persistent poverty and unemployment of the 1960's and beyond has to a large degree resulted from the increasing erosion of the productivities of undereducated adults in the face of technological advance. In a report prepared for Labor Canada, another expert on adult illiteracy, Gary Dickenson, writes:

> As a society progresses, the educational requirement imposed on its members also advances so that a given level of educational achievement at one moment in history is not adequate at another. The more rapid the rate of technological change the more quickly the minimal level of educational achievement rises. In Canada, technological and the related social changes have increased the need for a more highly educated work force thus limiting employment for those in the population who are undereducated. At the moment, one third of the population of Canada 15 years of age and over can be classified as undereducated and therefore its employability is marginal.[40]

The third main assumption is that undereducation arises from, and in turn feeds into, a self-perpetuating "culture of poverty." Adherents of the liberal perspective believe that while "imperfections" in the economic system (e.g. racial discrimination in employment, and insufficient job opportunities and inequalities in spending for public services and education) play a significant role in the initial creation of poverty, they argue that the poor in turn proceed to reject the larger society, its values and its lifestyles and form a distinctive, self-contained and self-perpetuating "culture of poverty" which becomes a major cause of poverty in and of itself. [41] In their influential 1970 study entitled Adult Education and the Disadvantaged Adult, Canadian adult educators Anderson and Niemi state:

> The differences between the disadvantaged and other members of society are such as to suggest that a distinctive sub-culture of poverty has developed within the dominant culture. In urban slums, for example, the hard core poor have developed their own self-contained social system .... Furthermore, such a subculture appears to be self-perpetuating as it socializes its younger members to its own ranks.[42]

Undereducation is seen as playing the key role in the self-perpetuation of this "culture," or "subculture." In the view of adherents of the liberal perspective, the poverty culture is characterized by, among other things, material deprivation, an impoverishment of language and experience, a "live for today" attitude and a lack of concern about education.[43] All of these factors are seen as contributing to serious learning handicaps among children from impoverished families, many of whom fail to develop crucial academic skills in the elementary grades--particularly literacy skills. Later, as undereducated adults, many fail to secure adequate employment, and in this way, continue the poverty culture into a new generation. This is termed the "vicious circle" of poverty, and lack of basic education is seen as the primary element. For example, in a 1972 article on adult basic education in Canada, Anderson and Davison state:

> it is clear that the undereducated adult differs from the general population with respect to education, income, employment, occupation, family size, health, and residence .... Today it is well known that the(se) socio-economic factors ... and the attitudes they engender, have created unique sub-cultures with characteristics quite distinct from those of the dominant middle class society .... Here, education is the crucial variable. To a great extent, it determines occupation, which in turn determines income, and all of these are related to family size, health, and residence .... [44]

Similarly, in discussing the origin of concern about illiteracy in the decade of the 1960's in Canada, Professor Alan Thomas of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education states:

> the "Multiple-Problem Family Studies" begun in the United States and repeated in at least two Canadian cities revealed... (that) poverty was not

> a one-generation misfortune alleviated by social assistance and eliminated in the next generation by public education. For one third of the population it was a permanent state perpetuated over many generations. Poverty became a principal item on the national agenda and the, lack of education, of basic literacy, was quickly seen as an associated if not the prime factor.[45]

Remediation

Together, the three assumptions outlined above, and the arguments based upon them, are termed by critics the "deficiency" model of poverty in view of the fact that shortcomings in the poor, their families and the communities which they form are identified as some of the primary causes of poverty. [46] It is closely associated with the education-based "remediation" or "adaptation" anti-poverty strategy. [47] In its more advanced forms, this strategy encompasses a multi-faceted and integrated "ecological" approach to correcting these presumed shortcomings. [48] Michael Brooke, a well-known figure in the field of Canadian ABE, discusses the period of its formulation in the late 1960's and early 1970's:

> The complexities of human nature had been compounded by the severe demands of the day, and seemingly straightforward problems required solutions of a most intricate nature. This was especially true of attempts to alleviate specific ills of the disadvantaged such as unemployment, where the solution was far more complex than simply providing vocational training. Other factors associated with unemployment, such as family and personal instability, poor housing, bad work habits also required attention, along with the individual's need for a saleable skill .... It made little sense to treat part of man and leave the rest. It was uneconomical and showed a lack of understanding of human behavior. The problems of the disadvantaged had to be treated within an ecological framework rather than a simple cause and effect model. These facts have since been recognized by the majority of adult educators and trainers. In Canada, the introduction of innovations such as life-skills, literacy, Basic Job Readiness Training, and recurrent education in *ABE* programs is indicative of a greater appreciation of the complexities of the relearning process.[49]

The remediation strategy incorporates literacy training, adult basic education, job skill training and life skills training, all designed to enable the poor to become competent in non-poverty social settings, primarily the labor market. For example, in a 1973 federal government publication, an adult educator who participated in. the initial development of the first life skills training course in Canada, under the NewStart program, describes the presumed personal deficiencies which the course attempts to correct:

> *A* description of the disadvantaged population establishes the relevance of life skills. Many disadvantaged have a complex, interlocking set of inadequate behaviors. Some lack the skills needed to identify problems, to recognize and organize relevant information, to describe reasonable courses of action, and to foresee the consequences; they often fail to act on a rationally identified course of action, submitting rather to actions based on emotion or authority. Often they do not benefit from their experience since they do not evaluate the results of their actions once taken, and display fatalistic rationalizations of the consequences. They lack the self-confidence to develop their abilities, and have low, or often surprisingly unrealistic aspiration levels.[50]

The basic assumption of the "remediation" strategy is that when impoverished adults are helped to become more socially competent and more productive and stable as workers, the self-perpetuating poverty "cycle" will be broken. Literacy training is often considered to be the essential starting point for change, as functional literacy is a prerequisite for advance in other areas, especially job training. [51]

Sometimes these remedial education and training activities are built into a "community development" approach, which solicits some form of participation of the poor in groups or communities in the assessment of needs and the planning and provision of the new opportunities. Consistent with the "adaptation" model, this form of community development is essentially aimed at enabling a group or community to achieve accommodation within, rather than to radically transform, the prevailing socio-economic system. [52]

The remediation or adaptation approach presupposes that governments serve as the source of funding. Public investments in the human capital of the poor are considered justified in view of the failure of private decision-making within the context of a private market economy to distribute human capital in an equitable manner. It is argued that these investments will yield a high return both in terms of social benefits accruing to the entire society, and also in narrow economic terms, i.e. in increased incomes for the poor and consequent growth in the economy. For example, in 1969 an influential American economist, Lester Thurow, wrote that:

> Private decisions will not lead to the socially desired distribution of human capital...the market for human capital is imperfect ... the distribution of investment in human capital must be altered by public policies .... Given the general characteristics of the poor, large returns could be earned by remedial programs designed to raise everyone in the labor force to at least eighth grade standards of literacy. The social benefits from such a program are large, but from a narrow economic point of view also the benefits are also large .... Without this level of education, training has little payoff .... Since most individuals in this low range are beyond the normal school age, efforts to bring the working population up to this

> standard must focus on adult education programs. This is precisely the area where the least effort has been made in educational programs for the poor. [53]

Orthodoxy

The liberal deficiency-remediation perspective provided the theoretical linchpin of what was a remarkable convergence of interests in the late 1960's and early 1970's period. On one hand, it supplied political elites with the rationale for one phase of a government sponsored "war on poverty" which responded to the problem by altering the characteristics of the victims--the poor--while leaving intact the basic economic and political institutions of Canadian society. For, adult educators, it formed the theoretical basis for new programs to deal with the long-neglected problem of illiteracy. As well, it rationalized a not-inconsiderable increase in employment opportunities for the profession. (In fact, adult basic educators had not even constituted a distinct professional group within the field of adult education in Canada until the new employment opportunities in the academic upgrading component of the Canada Manpower Training Program caused their numbers to grow rapidly.) [54] Finally, for impoverished and unemployed Canadians, the liberal perspective guided and informed the development of what was touted as a major new avenue for economic and social advancement.

In view of the usefulness of the liberal perspective, there was little motivation to seriously question it, and it served as orthodoxy throughout the 1960's and early 1970's. The depth of the involvement of the Canadian government in the remediation approach is indicated in the fact that in an 8 month period in 1974, the federal government spent nearly 65 million dollars on the academic upgrading and life-skills training components of the Canada Manpower program, or just over 28% of the total expenditures for the whole program. [55] One critic of the program, Anthony Berezowecki, referred in 1974 to the "rapid emergence of adult basic education as 'big business' all across Canada." .[56]

The Liberal Perspective in Question

In the latter half of the 1970's the corrosive effects of sustained high inflation combined with economic stagnation caused earlier concerns about upoverty amidst affluence" to give way to fears that the declining competitiveness of the North American economies within a deeply troubled capitalist world economy might in fact spell[57] the end of affluence itself. In this atmosphere of economic crisis, serious questions began to be raised about the value and effectiveness of existing liberal policies, including the 'educational solution' for unemployment and poverty. The controversy became particularly intense in the United States, where evaluations of the "war on poverty," including literacy and upgrading programs, yielded disappointing results. In his 1977 review of evaluation studies of the existing programs, Hon M. Levin, a political economist of education, states:

> the overall thrust of such programs was predicated on the view that the poor are poor because of their low productivities resulting from personal incompetencies. By providing more education and training it was hoped to raise competencies, productivities, and earnings of the impoverished. A wide variety of programs were either initiated or expanded during the poverty decade, and the evaluations and relevant research suggest that their effect on the reduction of poverty was minimal.[58]

Similarly, Bowles and Gintis conclude:

> The record of educational reform in the War on Poverty has been just short of catastrophic .... liberal preeminence in the field of educational theory and policy has been shattered.[59]

They quote the report of a major study of the educational programs of the War on Poverty conducted by the Rand Corporation. It concludes that:

> virtually without exception all of the large surveys of the large national compensatory educational programs have shown no beneficial results on the average.[60]

In Canada the Economic Council of Canada presented some figures pertaining to the Canada Manpower Training Program which were intended to "throw some light on the program's contribution to reducing poverty". [61] In a study of low-income trainees, it was found that:

> If $3000 per trainee is arbitrarily defined as a "poverty level,"...Just under 50 per cent of the sample was below this level before training and about 40 per cent after training.[62]

These modest gains hardly constituted a vindication of the Manpower program as an anti-poverty strategy. Later studies varied in their conclusions, some positive and others negative. In a 1976 summary of their findings, labor economist Morley Gunderson stated that:

> Many individuals have been raised out of poverty by Canada Manpower Training; however, the effectiveness of training the disadvantaged remains an open question.[63]

In 1977, Pierre Dandurand reached even more pessimistic conclusions based on his own research into the Manpower program. He suggests that:

> the program of vocational training undertaken within labor policies in Canada essentially served counter cyclical ends and has not tangibly

> changed the position of the unemployed nor of the workers with very low incomes at whom it was aimed.[64]

Similarly, Paul Gingrich concludes:

> In the late 1960's and early 1970's, the Liberal government, in response to high unemployment levels, introduced broader unemployment insurance coverage, manpower training programs and direct employment creating programs such as winter works, LIP, OFY, and later LEAP and FLIP. These Projects, usually aimed at the young or seasonally unemployed, minimized the appearance of unemployment, boosted consumption, undoubtedly bought votes and became a trademark of Liberal policy, but did little to solve any of the structural problems of the Canadian economy.[65]

In view of the dubious record of programs such as manpower training and academic upgrading in the U.S. and Canada, various social scientists have argued that the liberal "remediation" strategy for reducing poverty is a failure. [66] At a more basic level, in view of the crisis situation in North American economies, the entire liberal doctrine which helped to inaugurate and sustain the post-World War II welfare state has come under increasing challenge. Bowles and Gintis argue:

> The disappointing results of the War on Poverty and, in a larger sense, the persistence of poverty and discrimination in the United states have decisively discredited liberal social theory .... [67]

As for the situation in Canada, Paul Gingrich asserts that:

> the liberal, neocapitalist ideology while not dead, is under attack on all sides. With this ideology discredited by the events of the 1970's, the critiques of both left and right gain increasing support.[68]

In the following chapters, we will examine these critiques, as embodied in conservative and critical (socialist and Marxist) thought, particularly focussing on the explanations put forward for the apparent failure of the liberal "remediation" strategy, and the proposals for alternative perspectives on poverty and illiteracy. Let us begin with the conservative position, first as it has developed in the United States, and then as it has emerged in Canada.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

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6. Ibid., p. 1164.

7. Ibid.9 p. 1166.

8. Ibid,., p. 1166.

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10. Ibid., "Final Report", p. 8.

11. Frank T. Denton and Sylvia Ostry, An Analysis of Post-War Unemployment, Economic Council of Canada, Staff Study No. 3 (1964).

12. Op.cit., Dupré, p. 15-16, 39-40.

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16. Ibid., po 124.

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