

**FUTURE PROBLEMS:
WHAT TO DO ABOUT SURPLUS LABOUR ?**

The structural changes in the world's labour markets are putting more than a little strain on many a countries' resources in the same manner that medical science has put more than a little strain on Japan's resources simply because people of that country are living longer and longer.

The problem for the existing as well as the future leaders of the world will not just be fighting inflationary tendencies, trying to find solutions to balancing national budgets, trying to find satisfactory answers to prevent the spread of fanatical, religious fundamentalism, which, only too often is jingoistic by its very nature, having to respond to labour's many and varied demands, etc, but what actions to take with regard to the many members of existing labour forces, many of whom are fast becoming redundant due to the fact that they are unable to meet the demands of modern industry because of their lack of knowledge and their inability to meet modern-day challenges.

Further, many of the redundant workers of today appear to be unable to cope with the many sudden changes that are taking place in the workplace and so, as the US Labour Department has discovered, they are unemployed and have stopped looking for jobs on the premise that there are no jobs available to them.

In the decade, ended December 31, 2007, the number of applicants for places at universities for undergraduate courses and post-graduate courses has increased from about 72 million to about 136 million.

That is an increase of 88.89 percent within a period of just 10 years. And the numbers of applicants continue to grow.

As more and more university graduates enter the ranks of labour, they bring with them, among other things, unique talents, extrapolated and interpolated from their studies.

No longer may it be suggested that only the developed economies of the world have monopolies on the most-intelligent people because, to be trite, the playing field is fast becoming level.

Only last Tuesday, Great Britain's Prime Minister, Mr David Cameron, on a visit to India, 100 industrialists in tow, stated that, by the year 2030, the Indian Continent would explode with highly talented people, primed and more than ready to compete with Europe in many fields of endeavour.

It is especially telling that many, if not most, of the leaders of the Western World did not have sufficient nous to realise that, back in 1980, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was being primed to become the second-largest economy of the world, knocking Japan completely out of the ring.

Technology is changing the face of the industrialised world and what was, only 50 years ago, science fiction is, today, science fact.

Automation is, already, an accepted part of the mass-production process in most industrialised countries of the world and the next step, along this technological road, must be better and faster robots, able to replace man to an even greater extent at the workbench and on the assembly line.

Robotics is the future.

Technology is increasing production as never before in history, but, as it progresses, so the requirement for the creation of new traditional jobs wanes.

While the service sector of most economies continues to hire along with the accelerated need for more qualified teachers, doctors, dentists and salespeople, in many industries, the requirements for the traditional worker – as they have come to be known – on the assembly line is on the decline because machines have, already, started to replace them, in part, at least, if not completely.

One visit to a modern airport is proof positive of this proposition since computerisation has replaced the need for junior staff to sit behind a counter, issuing and/or confirming passengers' tickets.

As the number of emerging economies continues to rise, so are more unique skills required and, with those skills, academia comes to the fore.

The skills of yesteryear may not be in such great demand in today's world and, whereas unemployment may continue to be high in many countries, at the same time, those who offer their services might be completely unable to meet today's challenges and so they continue to stand in the long lines, waiting for their dole payments.

There is, in many countries, today, a vast chasm between those skills that management requires of a workforce and those skills that are readily available to management.

Shortages of certain skilled workers are becoming only too obvious – while the unemployment levels in many economies grow and grow.

It is a paradox that if Zeno of Elea (495 – 430 BCE) were alive today, he would make the situation of today famous by proving that today's worker was better off, being unemployed, than working for somebody in order to earn his daily bread.

Meanwhile, as already touched upon at Paragraph One of this report, because of changes to man's lifestyle and of the many advances of medical science, the average age of a person is getting older and older: People are living longer and longer.

And this phenomenon is causing another, completely unrelated, problem to those, confronting managements of industries.

All and more of the above suggest, strongly, that workers must be equipped, today, with the necessary skills in order to transition from the world of yesteryear to the world of tomorrow.

Where this is not immediately possible, then, think tanks must be established in order to make the best use of the labour that is unable to be retrained, easily, to meet today's many challenges.

Every economy will, no doubt, have to find unique solutions to its special problems and, if wisdom flourishes, then these unique solutions can be shared with other economies, thus creating international think tanks upon which all may benefit: Workers; leaders of industry; and, the governments of countries.

Throughout history, one notes that science has always destroyed the traditional jobs of the day. This will continue, ad infinitum, with constant advances in technology, causing the replacement of the jobs of the day with the type of employment that meets the requirements of the period.

The problems, facing the working man of the 21st Century, will not suddenly disappear, melting away like the snow that thaws when spring brings with it, the morning sun, but should governments neglect the problems – and this is likely to result in income inequalities -- social problems will erupt and fester.

And these social problems could well become violent, leading to governmental instabilities.

The global economic crises of the past few years has displaced many workers, even in some of the largest economies of the world, such as Spain's, France's and Italy's, not to mention that of the United States of America, but many of these workers might well discover that, when they seek to rejoin the workforces, their skills are no longer in great demand as they were just a few short years ago.

It is clear that the restructuring of many an economy in order to cope with the problems of tomorrow will, in a very short space of time, become mandatory.

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