

**PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS AND NEW DIRECTIONS  
IN SOCIAL POLICY**

BEYOND THE KEYNESIAN WELFARE STATE:  
PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS AND NEW DIRECTIONS IN  
SOCIAL POLICY IN CANADA

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## ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the responses of the labour movement, social policy advocacy organizations, and feminists to the downsizing and restructuring of the welfare state in Canada. Of interest in this research is whether these constituencies are in the initial stages of 'reconceptualizing' social welfare, given that the increasing degree of economic globalization and the rightward shift in political thinking in recent years have created a need for 'paradigm shift' in approaches to social policy among equality-seeking social movements.

It is discovered that these three social movements (labour, social policy advocates, and feminists) are at varying stages in imagining and working to achieve a progressive alternative to the postwar welfare state. Some elements of the labour movement have clearly identified the economic and political roots of growing social inequality. Some elements of the social policy advocacy community are promoting comprehensive alternative economic and social policies to the ones currently dominating political discourse. The women's movement, as represented by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, appears to be the furthest ahead in developing a theoretically grounded critique of neo-conservative / neo-liberal social welfare restructuring, and in posing progressive alternatives to it.

Theoretical issues which arise in regard to rethinking social welfare and reformulating social policy are discussed. There is also reference made to the strategic challenges which confront social movements within Canada and internationally, in their efforts to use social policy as a means of achieving greater social equality and an environmentally sustainable set of economic and political arrangements.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vi
ACRONYMS .....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background to Study .....	1
Major Questions for Investigation .....	5
Movements and Organizations Examined in This Study .....	6
Time Period Under Investigation .....	7
Expected Contribution of This Dissertation .....	8
Organization of Subsequent Chapters .....	11
Endnotes .....	11
CHAPTER 2: RETHINKING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL WELFARE .....	16
The Big Theoretical Picture .....	17
Narrowing It Down: Understanding the Welfare State .....	29

Describing and Classifying Welfare States . . . . .	29
Theorizing the Welfare State . . . . .	35
Social Democratic Perspectives . . . . .	40
Marxian and Neo-Marxian Approaches . . . . .	44
Feminist Perspectives . . . . .	47
The Anti-Racist Critique of the Welfare State . . . . .	50
The Green Critique of the Welfare State . . . . .	53
The Emancipatory Needs-Articulation Approach to Social Welfare . . . . .	54
A Theoretical Framework for This Study . . . . .	56
From Theory to Issues . . . . .	58
From Issues to the ‘Real World’ . . . . .	59
Endnotes . . . . .	61
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY . . . . .</b>	<b>63</b>
Selection of Organizations and Key Informants . . . . .	64
Labour . . . . .	66
Social Policy Advocacy Organizations . . . . .	68
SPAOs with an Exclusive Focus on Social Policy . . . . .	69
SPAOs with a Broader Focus Which Includes Social Policy . . . . .	71
National Action Committee on the Status of Women . . . . .	72
Level of Analysis . . . . .	73



Variety of Organizations .....	74
Endnotes .....	77
<b>CHAPTER 4: OLD FORMULAS OR NEW IDEAS? THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Defending the Keynesian Welfare State in the Global Economy .....	81
Work, Wages and Economic Security .....	93
Beyond Social Democracy: Redefining Political Economy ...	100
The Multiple Axes of Inequality .....	115
The Greening of Social Welfare .....	121
Endnotes .....	126
<b>CHAPTER 5: A MULTITUDE OF VOICES: ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL POLICY .....</b>	<b>130</b>
Universality Versus Targeting of Social Programs .....	131
Social Programs and Labour Market Participation .....	145
Privatization of Social and Health Programs .....	161
Building Effective Coalitions for Progressive Social Policy ...	164
Endnotes .....	185
<b>CHAPTER 6: LEADING THE WAY IN SOCIAL POLICY: THE NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>190</b>
Endnotes .....	220

**CHAPTER 7: SEARCHING FOR THE WAY AHEAD  
IN SOCIAL POLICY . . . . . 223**

    General Findings . . . . . 224

    Labour . . . . . 226

    Social Policy Advocacy Organizations . . . . . 235

    National Action Committee on the Status of Women . . . . . 240

    Theoretical Framework of This Study . . . . . 246

    Possible Directions for Further Research . . . . . 249

    Strategic Challenges in Moving Forward . . . . . 252

    Endnotes . . . . . 254

**REFERENCES . . . . . 259**

**APPENDICES**

    Appendix I: Key Informant Interviews Conducted . . . . . 279

    Appendix II: Interview Guide . . . . . 284

## ACRONYMS

AFB	Alternative Federal Budget
BCNI	Business Council on National Issues
CACL	Canadian Association for Community Living
CAP	Canada Assistance Plan
CAW	Canadian Auto Workers
CCPA	Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
CCPI	Charter Committee on Poverty Issues
CCSD	Canadian Council on Social Development
CHST	Canada Health and Social Transfer
CLC	Canadian Labour Congress
CPC	Canadian Pensioners Concerned
CPRN	Canadian Policy Research Networks
CUPE	Canadian Union of Public Employees
GAI	Guaranteed Annual Income
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ILO	International Labour Organization
KWS	Keynesian Welfare State

LICOs	Low Income Cut-Offs (set by Statistics Canada)
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
NAC or NACSW	National Action Committee on the Status of Women
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAPO	National Anti-Poverty Organization
NDP	New Democratic Party
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSM	New Social Movement
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFL	Ontario Federation of Labour
ORIT	Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores (Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers).
PSAC	Public Service Alliance of Canada
RMT	Resource Mobilization Theory
SARC	Social Assistance Review Committee
SHAG	Seniors' Health Action Group
SPAOs	Social Policy Advocacy Organizations
SSR	Social Security Review
SWS	Schumpeterian Workfare State
USWA	United Steel Workers of America
WINS	Work Income Supplement



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to Study**

This dissertation will focus on efforts being made to rethink and refashion the concept of social welfare in Canada. Specifically, I will investigate if, how, and to what extent movements and organizations that are based in civil society<sup>1</sup>, and that are committed to greater economic and political equality, have undertaken the task of reformulating social welfare programs<sup>2</sup> so that they might better meet the needs and aspirations of Canadians as we enter the new millennium.

The modern concept of social welfare, and its practical expression in social policy and social programs of the Canadian state, have roots that go back to the Elizabethan Poor Law of the early 1600s (Splane 1965; Guest 1997). The evolution of social welfare in industrial countries from a charity-based model of providing assistance to the most destitute, into a set of state-sponsored programs and entitlements for broad segments of the population, began in the late nineteenth century. In the two and a half decades following the end of World War II, publicly provided social welfare programs were greatly expanded in advanced industrial countries, in concert with economic regulation by the state according to Keynesian

principles, in order to even out the booms and busts of the capitalist business cycle (Guest 1997; Therborn 1984; Teeple 1995). This combination of social welfare provision and economic regulation came to be known as the *Keynesian welfare state* (KWS).<sup>3</sup>

The high point of development in KWS social programs, in terms of resources spent and coverage provided, was reached in the early to mid-1970s. Since then, the welfare state has been undermined and diminished in advanced capitalist countries (Loney 1986; Whitaker 1987; Block et al, 1987; Marchak 1991; McBride 1992; Teeple 1995). Over the last two decades the KWS has been under sustained attack by the forces of neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism.<sup>4</sup>

The dismantling of the KWS was initially advocated in Canada by organizations representing the interests of large corporations, such as the Business Council on National Issues (BCNI) (Langille 1987). This attack on the welfare state was subsequently taken up by political forces on the Right,<sup>5</sup> including the federal Conservative party during its time in government from 1984 to 1993. The BCNI and the Tories fashioned their strategy and policies in many ways after those of neo-conservative formations of business and the political Right in Britain (Thatcherism) and the United States (Reaganism), although it has been argued that the Canadian 'new Right' in the 1980s was not able to reshape the welfare state as quickly or as radically as their British and American counterparts (Whitaker 1987).

The term 'crisis' has been frequently used to characterize this recent period in the history of the welfare state. Given that the 'crisis' has been dragging on now

for twenty years, however, terms such as "impasse" (Myles 1988, 82-85) or "reconstruction" (Pierson 1991, 184) would seem to be more historically accurate and analytically useful descriptors of this period in the evolution of the welfare state. To be sure, there have been times from 1980 onwards when state initiatives in the social policy arena have provoked strong and widespread opposition among segments of civil society. During these periods, something akin to a 'crisis' has resulted, at least in regard to the popularity and credibility of the incumbent government.<sup>6</sup> These periods brought into question fundamental premises of the KWS, and opened up a space for new discourses<sup>7</sup> on social welfare emanating from both the Right and the Left.<sup>8</sup>

During the early phases of the New Right's attack on the KWS, many progressive organizations and movements (representing constituencies such as labour, feminists, and social policy advocates) and parties on the left (especially the New Democratic Party) argued that the programs and entitlements of the KWS needed to be preserved and consolidated. Gradually, however, attempts to defend the KWS were de-legitimated and marginalised. A new 'hegemonic discourse'<sup>9</sup> pointed to the unfettered marketplace as the mechanism best suited to generate economic growth and distribute wealth efficiently and fairly. This new discourse was linked to the increasingly powerful mythology that social spending was the root cause of growing government deficits and debt. This mythology in turn added credibility to the pressure coming from business groups and the media for cuts to social programs.<sup>10</sup>



Of course, this radical shift in discourses on social welfare did not occur in a political and economic vacuum. From the early 1970s onwards, we have seen economic restructuring (e.g. the transition to post-Fordism<sup>11</sup>) and growing material inequality (e.g. the declining middle class, and the growing gap between the poor and the wealthy). In Canadian politics at the national level, the dramatic shift to the Right begun by the Mulroney Conservative government was continued and entrenched after the election of the Chrétien Liberal government in 1993. The strongly neo-conservative Reform Party became the Official Opposition in the House of Commons as a result of the 1997 federal election. Rightward shifts have also occurred in provincial politics over the 80s and 90s, with the election of highly ideologized neo-conservative/neo-liberal governments such as Sterling Lyon's Conservatives in Manitoba, Grant Devine's Conservatives in Saskatchewan, Bill Vanderzalm's Social Credit in British Columbia, Ralph Klein's Conservatives in Alberta, and (most recently) Mike Harris' Conservatives in Ontario. Even NDP provincial governments under Glen Clark in British Columbia, Roy Romanow in Saskatchewan, and Bob Rae in Ontario have adopted a more 'business friendly' tone and have abandoned their party's traditional willingness to intervene in the economy in the interests of social equality and planned development.

The economic and political setbacks experienced by the Left and by equality-based social movements since the mid-1970s have been of almost monumental proportion. Whatever successes they might have achieved in the years of postwar boom between 1945 and the early 1970s (and the building up of the

Keynesian welfare state was certainly one on them), the events of the period of time since then clearly point to the need for the Left, labour and progressive social movements to fundamentally re-examine both their programmatic goals and their political strategies.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, parties from all across the political spectrum and broad sections of civil society had joined the new hegemonic discourse calling for the deconstruction of the KWS. What was largely absent was a counter-hegemonic discourse emanating from the Left, from labour, and from equality-seeking social movements that was capable of articulating new social welfare programs, policies and paradigms.

### **Major Questions for Investigation**

It is my purpose in this study to search out and analyse elements of such a counter-hegemonic social welfare discourse within progressive movements and organizations within Canada. Have at least some elements of such a counter-hegemonic discourse begun to take shape? If so, what has been their content? Who has been advancing them? What impact have they had thus far on popular opinion, on state policy makers, and on neo-conservative/neo-liberal beliefs in market supremacy, minimalist government, and a strict separation between 'private troubles' and 'public issues'? How have such elements of a counter-hegemonic discourse been advanced by progressive organizations and popular movements,

and by coalitions and networks among them? I intend to pursue these questions guided by theoretical insights upon which I will elaborate in the next chapter.

If we are to move closer to economic well being, social equality, and democratic empowerment for all Canadians, it seems clear that neither dispensing with the welfare state, nor maintaining the status quo in social policy and programs, are feasible or desirable alternatives. It is necessary to critically analyse and move beyond the bureaucratic and intrusive 'ambiguity' of the KWS (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 161-163). Theoretical, empirical, and practical work needs to be done, in order to refurbish and re-operationalise social welfare principles such as universality, social equity, and citizenship rights.

### **Movements and Organizations Examined in This Study**

This study will examine three segments of Canadian society, and their respective responses and contributions to shifting social policy discourses. The first to be examined will be the Canadian labour movement, as it finds expression in both central labour organizations (especially the Canadian Labour Congress) and in specific unions (including private sector unions such as the Canadian Auto Workers, and public sector unions such as the Canadian Union of Public Employees).

Secondly, social policy advocacy organizations (SPAOs) will be examined. This category includes a variety of not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations that are players in the social policy arena. Some of these organizations represent

the viewpoints and interests of the voluntary sector of human service delivery.

Other SPAOs advocate on behalf of particular constituencies, such as poor people or the elderly. Still other organizations could be characterized as ‘think tanks’, whose primary role is research, consultation, and the development and marketing of social policy proposals and social program models.

SPAOs can also be divided into organizations whose *raison d’etre* is engagement in social policy questions (e.g. the Canadian Council on Social Development, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy), and organizations which address social welfare issues as an integral part of a broader focus on public policy (e.g. the Council of Canadians, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

The third constituency that will be examined in this study is the women’s movement in Canada, which includes a broad swath of informal groups and formal organizations working for women’s equality and more specific feminist goals. In Canada, this multi-faceted constituency is brought together in a national-level umbrella organization called the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). For purposes of this study, NAC will serve as a proxy for the broader women’s movement in Canada.<sup>12</sup>

### **Time Period Under Investigation**

This study focusses on the 1980s and 1990s, with greater emphasis being placed on the more recent period. The beginning of the 1980s is a convenient benchmark for the advent of neo-conservatism in Western industrial countries,

since it was during this time that the political champions of the Right first achieved elected office in Britain (with the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1979) and in the United States (with the election of Ronald Reagan as President in 1980). In Canada, the election of 1984 brought to power the rightward-leaning Conservative government of Brian Mulroney. The agenda and policies which this government pursued during its two terms in power were taken up and continued to a very significant extent by the Liberal Government of Jean Chrétien, which was elected in 1993 and re-elected in 1997.

Our economic and political landscape has also been fundamentally altered by the adoption of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement in 1988, and its subsequent expansion into the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. The dramatic changes in the political-economic context of the 1980s and 1990s, of course, can be expected to play an important role in how Canadian social policies were framed by the state and contested by progressive constituencies and organizations.

### **Expected Contribution of this Dissertation**

Given the vulnerable situation of the KWS and the hegemony of 'anti-welfarist' discourse during the last twenty years or so, it is easy in the late 1990s to obscure the real accomplishments of the welfare state in Canada. Two examples of 'successful' social programs come readily to mind. The first is the Canadian system of health care insurance, in which the state acts as 'single payer' in a

publically funded and universal scheme for basic medical and hospital services. While 'medicare' (as it is popularly called) is far from perfect, and in fact is currently in need of substantial reform, it has nonetheless been able to deliver reasonable quality and readily accessible health services to the vast majority of Canadians for thirty years. As a state administered health insurance scheme that limits the role of for-profit providers, Canadian medicare has also been able to contain health care costs much more effectively than the American system which is dominated by private insurers and corporate providers.

Another social policy success in Canada during the post-World War II era has been the significant decrease in poverty among the elderly. Through the Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement programs, and the Canada/Quebec Pension Plans, the federal state has made substantial progress in limiting the extent and depth of poverty among older Canadians.

Clearly these and other legacies of the KWS are undervalued. It is important to reclaim the history of the benefits and successes of social welfare during the long postwar boom, when Keynesian economic thinking was in the ascendancy. As political regimes all across Canada are downsizing and dismantling health and social programs, in their headlong rush to 'harmonize' their structures and policies to fit the new accumulation strategies of global capital in the current post-Keynesian era, it is also important to think creatively in the field of social policy.

It is the intent of this research to highlight some of insights, goals, and strategies of labour and equality-based social movements in posing a progressive alternative to neo-conservative/neo-liberal welfare state retrenchment in Canada. Labour, social policy advocates, and feminists have suffered many setbacks in the social policy arena over the last two decades, and they have not as yet developed a clear, elaborate, or widely supported alternative to the Keynesian welfare state. However, they are struggling with aspects of such a reformulation. By highlighting this innovative thinking and creative debate in the social policy arena, this study aims to contribute in a modest way towards efforts to reinvent social policy and redesign social programs in the interests of working people and subordinate groups. To remain silent on the future of social welfare in Canada is to leave its evolution in the hands of global corporate elites and their political agents who have succeeded in dismantling the Keynesian welfare state over the decades of the 1980s and 1990s.

It is also my hope that this research can contribute in a modest way to efforts to re-theorize social welfare and the welfare state from a 'critical-left' perspective. In the chapter which follows, I will review a wide range of existing theories of social welfare, and will attempt to extract and synthesize from them what seem to me to be the best elements. In the substantive chapters of this research, I will analyse current efforts of progressive social movements in Canada to formulate new ideas and implement new approaches in the social policy field, in light of this theoretical exegesis. This dual and interrelated focus on theory and

praxis is intended to help illuminate some intellectual and practical ways forward, in the quest for a more egalitarian and just set of social policy arrangements in this country.

### **Organization of Subsequent Chapters**

In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework for this study will be outlined, drawing on relevant literature on Canadian political economy and theories of the welfare state. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the methodology adopted in carrying out this investigation. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6 the substantive findings of this study will be presented in relation (respectively) to the Canadian labour movement, social policy advocacy organizations, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. In the seventh and final chapter I will draw some conclusions based on the findings of the study, and discuss some conceptual, political, and strategic questions bearing on the future of social welfare in Canada.

### **ENDNOTES**

1. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (Marshall 1994, 55-6) states that there are "several competing definitions" of the concept of 'civil society', but that

its key attributes are that it refers to public life rather than private or household-based activities; it is juxtaposed to the family and the state; and it exists within the framework of the rule of law. Most authorities seem to have in mind the realm of public participation in voluntary associations, the mass media, professional associations, trade unions, and the like. ....

Civil society is always seen as dynamic and embraces the notion of social movements. It also can be seen as the dynamic side of citizenship, which,



combining as it does achieved rights and obligations, finds them practised, scrutinized, revamped, and redefined at the level of civil society. ....

2. Such 'reformulation' could conceivably include expansion, extension or reform of existing social programs; the development of new social policies or programs in light of changing economic conditions; and even the reshaping of basic assumptions (up to and including 'paradigm shift') in our overall social policy regime in Canada. My focus on 'social welfare' pertains primarily to programs of the welfare state (e.g. public pensions, social insurance against unemployment and other work-related contingencies, and income-tested income maintenance programs such as social assistance). The study will also focus in a general way on related aspects of social welfare, such as social and health services delivered by the state or the quasi-public sector to the public, employment and labour market policy (e.g. job creation, employment standards), tax policy that (potentially) redistributes wealth, and macro-economic policy that affects levels of economic equality and security in the general population. This study will *not* focus on the education system as part of a broadly defined welfare state, and will *not* analyse in fine detail specific human service policy fields such as child welfare, mental health, and corrections.

3. It is important to recognize cross-national variation in welfare state regimes. Esping-Andersen (1990, 26-7) classifies Canada as being one of the "liberal" welfare states, as opposed to other advanced capitalist countries which can be typified as having "corporatist" or "social democratic" welfare state regimes.

4. There are similarities as well as differences between neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism. Both neo-conservatives and neo-liberals advocate similar economic policies, especially the primacy of the 'free' market (i.e. the absence of regulation of the economy by the state in the public interest); the limitation of the size and power of government (partly through turning over to the private sector the responsibility for services that have been or could be delivered in the public or quasi-public sector); and the desirability of keeping taxes at a minimal level. Neo-conservatism can be said to differ from neo-liberalism in the explicit emphasis of the former on certain moral issues and themes. For instance, neo-conservatives promote the 'sanctity' of the (patriarchal) family and traditional roles for women (i.e. the subordination of women to men and the exploitation of women's unpaid domestic labour). Especially in the United States, neo-conservatism has become aligned with the religious Right and the promotion of traditional, fundamentalist-Christian moral values such legal proscription of abortion, intolerance of homosexuality, mandatory prayer in public schools, and censorship of 'immoral' (especially sexual) content in art and the media. Neo-liberalism tends to be more 'tolerant' in regard to moral and religious questions, and to espouse the importance of individual moral choice and the separation of church and state.

5. The 'Right', for purposes of this study, refers primarily to political parties that promote neo-conservative/neo-liberal platforms. However think tanks and lobby groups that urge adoption of a similar set of policies, and sympathetic media spokespersons and outlets, provide important sources of ideological (and often financial) support to neo-conservative/neo-liberal political parties. In this way, it is possible to conceive of the 'Right' in broader terms than just certain parties and politicians.

6. If one focuses on the last fifteen years at the level of the federal state in Canada, a few *prima facie* examples of crises in social policy come to mind:

i) the proposal to partially de-index Old Age Security contained in the 1984 Conservative Budget, which provoked a 'seniors' revolt' leading to a subsequent government retreat on its proposal.

ii) the promise by the Mulroney government in the mid-1980s for a national child care initiative, and its subsequent reneging on this commitment due to concerns about cost, much to the consternation of child care advocates, women's organizations, and labour.

iii) the strong arguments made during the broader Free Trade debate in 1988 that Canadian health and social programs would be dramatically weakened, as they were 'harmonized' with those in the United States in the new continental political economy.

iv) the gradual erosion (beginning under the Tories and continuing under the Liberals) in federal transfer payments to the provinces for social programs. This erosion culminated in the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) in the federal budget brought down by the Liberals in February 1995. The CHST is a diminished and 'no strings attached' form of federal cost sharing for health, social assistance, and post-secondary education programs provided by the provinces.

7. The *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* (Johnson 1995, 82) defines *discourse* as "written and spoken conversation and the thinking that underlies it". Drawing on Foucault, the *Blackwell Dictionary* (Johnson 1995, 82-3) elaborates that "[i]t is through discourse that we construct what we experience as reality, and as soon as we learn to think and talk about reality in a particular way, we cannot help but shut off our ability to think of it in countless other ways".

8. Nancy Fraser (1989, 156-57) argues that "the social" (which is distinct from the state, public political discourse, the 'official' economy, and the family) "is a space in which conflicts among rival interpretations of people's needs are played out". She points to "three major kinds" of discourses on needs:

(1) "expert" needs discourses of, for example, social workers and therapists, on the one hand, and welfare administrators, planners, and policy makers, on the other, (2) oppositional movement needs discourses of, for example, feminists, lesbians and gays, people of color, workers, and welfare clients, and (3) "reprivatization" discourses of constituencies seeking to repatriate newly problematized needs to their former domestic or official economic enclaves.

9. *Hegemony* is defined in the *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* (Johnson 1995, 128) as "a particular form of dominance in which a ruling class legitimates its position and secures the acceptance if not outright support of those below them". Although means of coercion underlie hegemony, "[f]or dominance to be stable, the ruling class must create and sustain widely accepted ways of thinking about the world that define their dominance as reasonable, fair, and in the best interests of society as a whole" (Johnson 1995, 128). As the originator of this concept, Gramsci (1971, 181-82) argues that when a set of ideological beliefs "tends to prevail, to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society – bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity", this creates "the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups". Conversely, *counter-hegemony* refers to a situation in which subordinate groups challenge, undermine, and pose an alternative to the prevailing hegemonic group and its ideological tenets. Miliband (1990, 346-48) delineates the possibilities of 'counter-hegemonic' struggles. The concepts of hegemony and discourse (cf. note 5 above) has been usefully brought together in the work of Nancy Fraser (1989) and Stuart Hall (1988), among others.

10. In fact, the government's 'debt crisis' of the late 1980s and early 1990s was largely the result of the increase in service charges on the public debt due to high interest rates (which benefits creditors such as banks), and the decrease in government revenue from corporate taxes (which benefits large companies). These factors contributing to public deficits and debt were compounded by the increase in the number of Canadians dependent on transfer payments such as Unemployment Insurance and social assistance, due to burgeoning unemployment during the two recessions of the early 1980s and early 1990s (Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice 1993, 33-40).

11. According to Mahon (1993, 7),

Fordism was based on mass production of standardized goods, by semi-skilled workers using dedicated equipment. The mass markets for which these goods were destined, in turn, were sustained by collective bargaining and the Keynesian welfare state.

Mahon argues that post-Fordism is more difficult to delineate, but that it incorporates flexible automation “facilitated by developments in microelectronics and telecommunications”, and “organizational innovations on the shop floor and in intra- and inter-firm relations”. Potential positive features of post-Fordism include “a break with the Taylorist division between conception and execution” in production, the promotion of “interactive, multidimensional planning”, and “a new interest in quality” (Mahon 1993, 8). Mahon contends that “a country’s capacity for social innovation” will determine whether post-Fordism will be a social and ecological advance over Fordism, or whether on the other hand post-Fordism will be characterized by “new forms of dependency and exploitation” (Mahon 1993, 8).

12. The question of the ‘representativeness’ of the organizations studied here of the broader movement or constituency of which they are a part is addressed in Chapter 3. Specific characteristics of NAC as an organization and as a historical force in Canadian feminism, that make it particularly interesting and ‘representative’ of the broader interests and campaigns of women in Canada, are discussed in Chapter 6.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RETHINKING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK** **FOR SOCIAL WELFARE**

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: first, to situate this study within a macro-theoretical framework of neo-marxian political economy that is informed by other theoretical currents; second, to review theories of the welfare state (at least in its Western European/North American variations), with an emphasis on welfare state theories consonant with the macro-theoretical frame of this research; and third, to draw on this critical review of welfare state theories in order to extract some specific issues and questions around which to focus the substantive findings of this research.

As discussed in the previous chapter, my research is on the responses of the labour movement, social policy advocacy organizations, and the women's movement in Canada to neo-conservative/neo-liberal downsizing and dismantling of welfare state programs and entitlements. I will attempt to map out whatever progress these three groups have made in defining creative new directions in social policy and programs for the years ahead, drawing on my theoretical framework and key questions and issues that arise from it. In the broadest terms, this research

explores how dramatically changing economic conditions and material circumstances have influenced the generation and circulation of ideas in the social policy field in Canada by the three constituencies upon which I focus.

### **The Big Theoretical Picture**

At the most general level, this research takes a historical materialist approach consonant with work done in the 'new' school of Canadian political economy over the last three decades. This school was shaped by writers such as Levitt (1970), Watkins (1967, 1982), Clement (1975), Panitch (1977, 1981) and Carroll (1986), among others. Much of the early work in the new school of Canadian political economy took a 'left-nationalist' perspective. It attempted to synthesize neo-marxian perspectives, dependency theory, and earlier Canadian work in both the staples theory tradition of Harold Adams Innis (1956, 1957), and in the Marxist tradition by people such as Stanley Ryerson (1973) and Clare Pentland (1981), in order to understand Canadian political and economic development and class relations. Debates unfolded on issues such as the relative importance of commercial versus industrial fractions and of indigenous versus comprador sections of the Canadian bourgeoisie, on the national question in Quebec, and on the failure of much of the work in this school to account for workers' struggles within a relational view of class. This last problem was addressed with the emergence in the late 1970s and early 1980s of neo-marxian Canadian labour history. Bryan Palmer (1979, 1992) and Gregory Kealey (1980)

played a particularly important role in inaugurating this approach to labour history, and much of the work in this area was published in a new journal entitled *Labour/Les Travailleurs* (now known as *Labour/Le Travail*).

A fundamental oversight in early work by the 'new' school of Canadian political economy, as it took shape in the early and mid-1970s, was the failure to recognize the essential importance of gender relations (in the household, labour market, and civil society) in structuring patterns of inequality, domination and exploitation in advanced capitalist societies. This gap was subsequently addressed by many writers advancing theories and research within socialist-feminist frameworks (Luxton 1987; Fox 1989; Luxton and Rosenberg 1990; Armstrong and Armstrong 1990; Van Kirk 1980; Parr 1990; Sugiman 1994).

Bringing gender into political-economic analysis was not just a question of filling in the blanks. As Fox (1989, 166) puts it, "[r]ecognizing that women generally experienced a worsening economic position in the historical process of 'development'", it must be concluded that

Canadian political economists' preoccupation with Canada's failure to replicate some presumably normal pattern of development should be challenged, because it implies unquestioned positive assumptions about economic development itself.

Fox (1989, 167) cites Fernandez Kelly in advancing a more "reasonable" definition of development:

an increase in equitable access to the resources that make possible life with dignity, and greater participation in the decision-making processes that shape people's lives.

In another call to avoid political-economic analysis that is class reductionist and 'male-stream', Abele and Stasiulis (1989, 270) have argued that "the survival of the labour movement, and the well being of the wider working class, depend on successfully confronting and ameliorating oppression based on gender, ethnicity, and race". They argue further that framing the political and economic history of Canada as that of a "white settler colony" fails to "speak fully to the experiences of Canada's most oppressed peoples" (i.e. Native peoples and non-British immigrants).

Creese and Stasiulis (1996, 8) take an additional step in arguing that in political economy we must "shift our theoretical lens" to incorporate "gender, race, class and sexuality". *How* we do this is of the utmost importance. Creese and Stasiulis state that

race, gender and sexuality cannot be adequately understood by grafting them on to political economy, while remaining peripheral to the more central concerns of class, the economy, and the state.

They advocate the avoidance of "reifying discourses" based on gender, race and class as discrete categories, and point to

the need to be attentive to the relational and contradictory aspects of the intersections of systems of power and structures of domination.

At the same time, Creese and Stasiulis (1996, 8) say we must be "cognizant of the local and international dimensions of this interlocking system of oppression".



There are also insights to be gained by political economy from postmodern concepts and theory, provided that the political-economic emphasis on class structures and relations is not completely written out of social analysis.

Postmodern perspectives can alert us to the salience of factors such as the multiplicity of sites of oppression and resistance, culture, discourse, individual and collective agency, and the politics of identity related to race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and other characteristics in addition to class and gender (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). Adam (1993) presents an argument for expanding a critical political economy perspective in order to incorporate postmodern insights. Albo, Langille, and Panitch (1993) point to the need to radically democratize the state as an integral aspect of progressive struggle on the left. Hall (1989) describes the importance of understanding hegemony, discourse, and culture in the "new times" (Hall and Jacques 1989) that have been visited upon us since the rise of Thatcherism, Reaganomics, and other neo-conservative/neo-liberal configurations of political-economic forces.

In this research I endeavour to work within an 'inclusive' political economy frame as described by Clement (1997, 3-4). It is worthwhile to specify in some detail the benchmarks that Clement establishes for his "holistic" approach to political economy:

- ▶ it "connects the economic, political, and cultural/ideological moments of social life";

- ▶ it is materialist in that it "begins with the assumption that the relations between people are fundamentally shaped by the way a society reproduces itself" and "[h]ow people make a living";
- ▶ it views "the ideological and the cultural [as] imbedded in the economic base and [as] an integral part of the reproduction of society";
- ▶ it incorporates into the cultural/ideological aspect of social life "the meaning that people attach to their lives, especially what is now popularly referred to as 'identities'" and "the guidelines they use for their behaviour". These cultural/ideological phenomena "are both inherited and created, covering religion, cultural traditions, sexism, racism, class consciousness, values, attitudes, interests, and ideals";
- ▶ it is historical in that "[m]aterialism is never static, uniform, or timeless", especially in regard to "social and technical change";
- ▶ it is spatial in that it is "consciously located in particular territories, which are themselves relationally specified by both domestic and international relations";
- ▶ it is concerned with agency, i.e. "the importance of the actions of people in shaping the course of history" in political arenas broadly defined, and "within the workplace, in unions, in social movements, or between the sexes".

Finally, Clement (1997, 4) states that

[t]he goal of the new political economy is to explain "the economy" and market forces so that political and social interventions can direct economic processes.

For studies such as this one, it is also necessary to have a theoretical grasp of the specific origins, trajectories, and effects of social movements in regard to the changing political economy. Carroll (1997) has brought together and critiqued a broad range of recent theoretical work on social movements, and provides some useful conceptual departure points for my study. Carroll (1997, 8) divides recent theoretical approaches to social movements into 'resource mobilization theory' (RMT) and 'new social movement' (NSM) theory, and outlines key differences between them.

RMT analyses tend to be sensitized to the specific situational context that facilitates or hinders a process of movement mobilization, while NSM formulations are typically more sensitized to the broad, macrosociological transformations of the late twentieth century, which provide new cultural, political, and economic contexts for collective-identity formation.

In addition, Carroll (1997, 8) argues that RMT emphasizes shared and rational interests among social movement actors, while NSM theory focusses upon

*new forms of collective identity*, which not only transform people's self-understandings but create cultural codes that contest the legitimacy of received points of view.<sup>1</sup>

Carroll (1997, 22) contends that RMT and NSM theories have "complementary weaknesses",

RMT ... in its silence about cultural politics and communicative action; NSM theory ... in its underestimation of the importance of structure in shaping movement activism. In another sense the perspectives converge in

turning away from the problematic of *structural transformation* in favour of a conceptualization of activism in terms of either single-issue reforms (RMT) or the politics of everyday life (NSM theory). Yet these emphases risk losing sight of the crucial relation between political economy and political praxis.

In order to avoid losing sight of possibilities for political-economic transformation, by restricting our analysis of social movements to theories based on RMT and NSM perspectives, Carroll (1997, 23) proposes that it necessary to add to the analysis "the neo-Marxist problematic of hegemony and counter-hegemony, first enunciated by Antonio Gramsci". Hegemony is a concept that captures "the practices, cultural codes, and social relations" that garner consent from dominated classes and groups to rule by the bourgeois state.

The bourgeoisie does not rule directly and singularly but participates as a leading social force in an ensemble of alliances with other groups, including intellectuals such as liberal economists and journalists who articulate perspectives that are consonant with the interests of capital. This ensemble of alliances constitutes a *hegemonic bloc* that governs by presenting its interests as universal while selectively dispensing material concessions to pre-empt unified opposition from below (Carroll 1997, 24).

The oppositional current of "counter-hegemony" speaks to the potential of social movements to resist and struggle for alternative realities.

[C]ivil society is not only a site for the organization of consent but also a field of *interest articulation* and *social struggles*. People's everyday lives are permeated not only by hegemonic practices that legitimate class, gender, sexual, and racial inequalities, but also by acts of subversion and adaptation that can be likened to a continuing guerrilla warfare (Carroll 1997, 24).

On a more empirical level, Carroll and Ratner (1995, 1996) have produced illuminating work on the potential of labour organizations with a social unionist

philosophy and new social movements to collaboratively forge a common vision and political alliance. This "neo-Gramscian" approach to social movement analysis of Carroll and Ratner has shaped the one taken here. One way of summing up such an approach to social movement analysis is offered by Carroll (1997, 25-6).

Counterhegemonic politics involves both an engagement with capital and the state and a cultural politics in the realm of civil society and everyday life to build popular support for a radically democratic order. Building an alternative hegemony thus entails a protracted "war of position" in which a coalition of oppositional movements wins space and constructs mutual loyalties in civil society, the state, and the workplace, thereby disrupting and displacing the hegemony of the dominant class and its allies.

Finally, it is necessary to theorize the significant changes that have been occurring in capitalism since the mid-1970s, that are frequently lumped together under the rubric of 'globalization'. Gordon Laxer (1995) points out that globalization is not a new phenomenon, but in fact was described midway through the nineteenth century by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*. Laxer (1995) also argues that increasing corporate power and dominance by global capital does *not* completely define the current transnational political economy, and that nation states and the collective agency of progressive social movements can still make a difference.

From the early 1970s onwards, the economic contradictions inherent in postwar capitalism became more visible.<sup>2</sup> Deep structural problems were signalled in various ways, such as the unsustainable costs of Pax Americana during the War in Vietnam, the abandonment of the gold standard by the U.S. in 1972 in favour of floating exchange rates, the oil shocks of the 1970s, galloping inflation, the advent

of stagflation, environmental crises, deindustrialization in advanced capitalist countries, and very widespread and persistent unemployment among working classes in North America and Western Europe (Marchak 1991; Teeple 1995).

The economic sea change of the 1970s and 1980s (related on the technological front to the advent to the microchip and the explosion of information technology) has been theorized in burgeoning literatures from more or less critical perspectives.<sup>3</sup> The set of changes in transnational capitalism has been described, for instance, as a transition from Fordism to post-Fordism (Drache and Gertler, 1991), as a second industrial divide (Piore and Sabel 1984), as the advent of disorganized capitalism (Lash and Urry 1987), or as a quest for a new social division of labour (Sayer and Walker 1992). The new 'lean and mean' version of capital has several specific characteristics and implications. They include the levelling down of international wage rates, of benefits for workers, and of occupational health and safety protection; labour market re-structuring toward non-standard (part-time, contractual and contingent) employment; the weakening of national movements of organized labour; and the lowering of tariff or any type of barrier to the mobility of transnational capital. The instrumentalities for achieving this last objective are free trade agreements which establish regional trading blocs, which are now culminating in the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). Trade deals such as North American Free Trade Agreement can be seen as a 'corporate bill of rights' for transnational capital. Such deals constrain the ability of nation-states (responding to democratic constituencies and

equality-based movements) to enact and enforce measures to protect workers or guarantee their economic security. New and even existing public policy initiatives (legislated minimum wage rates, provision of a social wage, the shaping of investment patterns in the public interest, or measures to protect the environment) can be prohibited by trade deals as constraints on trade, unfair subsidy, or dumping. Free trade agreements like NAFTA may contain specific clauses or side deals that are supposed to benefit workers or protect the environment, but these measures have typically been cosmetic and ineffectual (Watkins 1993).

Changing historical-materialist circumstances have led to shifts in ideological discourses emanating from economic and political centres of power. With the onset of economic crisis, opinion leaders and organic intellectuals of the capitalist class became increasingly concerned that there was an "excess of democracy" and that labour and other popular social movements were too powerful and militant (Marchak 1991). Economic and political leaders of the New Right adopted the view that the postwar settlement between capital and labour that was embodied in the Keynesian welfare state was no longer in the interests of capital. They formed organizations such as the Trilateral Commission, the Business Roundtable in the U.S., the Business Council on National Issues, and numerous think tanks (Useem 1984; Langille 1987) in order to advance their views, reshape policies of governments, and introduce a new regime of economic deregulation and increased social control over popular forces struggling against oppression and for greater social equality.

This mobilization of capital was very successful over the 1980s in mounting what has become known as the neo-conservative assault on the KWS (Loney 1986; Whitaker 1987; Block et al. 1987). Government expenditure on social programs was portrayed as profligate and wasteful, and became the scapegoat for rising and carefully orchestrated paranoia about government debt and deficit.<sup>4</sup> A skilfully deployed and unrelenting discourse began to legitimate the perception among citizenries of advanced industrial countries that the public sector had to be greatly downsized, that the costs of social, educational and health services had to be directly borne to a much greater degree by individuals and families, and that for-profit companies operating in an unfettered marketplace could meet social needs and provide public goods more efficiently and effectively than the state or non-profit organizations.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the New Right has dislodged the postwar Keynesian consensus in regard to economic policy in general, and social policy specifically. In its stead, the Right has set in place a new hegemonic discourse (to use Gramsci's term) that emphasizes market supremacy, acquisitiveness, and competition.<sup>6</sup> This discourse has powerfully shaped points of view that predominate in the mass media (Herman 1996; Winter 1990). Particular social policy discourses have emerged in the media and elsewhere in regard to personal responsibility for health, financing one's retirement income through personal savings, acceptance of bearing a much higher proportion of the cost of post-secondary education for oneself and one's children, and the economic necessity of disentiing claimants to unemployment insurance



and social assistance. In many cases, these neo-conservative/neo-liberal social policy discourses have played on deeply rooted popular ideologies, such as 'rugged individualism' and the simplistic bifurcation of the poor into 'deserving' and 'undeserving' categories (Shragge 1997).

There has been some work done on mounting a 'counter-hegemonic discourse' to the neo-conservative/neo-liberal *weltanschauung*. Much critical academic energy has been extended in this regard, as evidenced in two recent compilations in connection with bi-annual social welfare conferences (Johnson, McBride, and Smith 1994; Pulkingham and Ternowetsky 1996b). Critics aiming at more general audiences (McQuaig 1993; Saul 1995; Soros 1997; Korten 1995; Clarke 1997b) have also been asking fundamental questions about the neo-liberal 'consensus', posing the need for more or less radical alternatives, and basing their arguments on documentation of the injustices and contradictions of current political and economic forces.

It is the intent of this study to follow in this latter counter-hegemonic path of critique and searching for alternatives, influenced by the macro-theoretical frameworks described above, and more specific theoretical understandings of the welfare state as described below. At an empirical level, this study will analyse information gathered from direct participants in the current struggles of labour, social policy groups, and the women's movement in the social policy arena. To guide this empirical analysis, I will now discuss theoretical literature on the welfare state.

### **Narrowing It Down: Understanding the Welfare State**

What follows is an overview of approaches to explaining the welfare state. The first part of the discussion points to conceptualizations and typologies of the welfare state that are meant to *describe* or *classify*. The latter part of the discussion delves into attempts to *explain* the welfare state in somewhat more theoretical terms. In the latter part of this discussion, more attention will be paid to theoretical explanations of the welfare state arising on the political left and/or from other progressive and critical vantage points, in keeping with the general macro-theoretical framework for this study that has been outlined above.<sup>7</sup>

There is a deliberate focus in this discussion on the welfare state in 'advanced' capitalist nations with liberal-democratic political regimes (e.g. the nations of North America and Western Europe).<sup>8</sup> Understanding empirical trends and developing theoretical explanations for welfare programs in nation states with different political-economic formations are tasks eminently worth undertaking. But these tasks are, as the saying goes, beyond the scope of this particular study.<sup>9</sup>

### **Describing and Classifying Welfare States**

In attempting to grasp the nature and import of the welfare state, it is essential to situate social welfare programs in the broader context of state policies, laws, and other actions (or inaction) to ensure economic security and political participation for all citizens. An early theorist of the postwar welfare state,

Richard Titmuss (1968, 1992), described what he called the "Iceberg Phenomenon of Social Welfare". Above the water line, so to speak, are

the direct public provision of services in kind (e.g. education and medical care) and the direct payment of benefits in cash (e.g. retirement pensions and family allowances).

Below the water line are the two elements of "Fiscal Welfare" and "Occupational Welfare". Social welfare policy cannot be divorced from fiscal policy (how the state taxes in order to obtain its revenue) and labour market policy (the supports that the state provides to keep people employed). All three elements must be brought into play if there is to be redistribution in the interests of general welfare and social equality.

A writer who was very influential on post-World War II thinking on the welfare state was T. H. Marshall, whose essay entitled "Citizenship and Social Class" was originally published in 1950 (Marshall and Bottomore 1992). Marshall traced the gradual development of democratic rights that began with civil rights (e.g. *habeas corpus*, freedom of religion), were gradually extended to political rights (e.g. universal enfranchisement), and culminated in social rights (e.g. education, health care, adequate income and housing, etc.) that were associated with the postwar welfare state.

In order to understand the welfare state, it is also useful to situate particular welfare states such as Canada's in comparative perspective with those in other countries. Castles (1989) and O'Connor (1989) among others have taken on this task. An early quantitative emphasis in comparative welfare state work,

particularly on state expenditure in various capitalist democracies, has expanded over time to include comparison on a more qualitative basis, such as how different welfare state regimes are gendered (O'Connor 1996). Banting (1992) has tackled the particular question of the extent to which Canadian and American social welfare regimes have been converging in regard to their size and configuration since the advent of continental trade agreements, and has discovered mixed outcomes. Myles (1996) has also compared the condition of the welfare state in Canada and the United States, and concluded pessimistically that in both countries there are serious political obstacles to implementing social investment strategies for the improvement of peoples' labour market position and to raising sufficient public revenues through taxation "to embark on new and untested social strategies". For these reasons,

"'market magic' rather than democratic politics will shape the future welfare of the [North American] liberal democracies" (Myles 1996, 133-34).

Some theorists of the welfare state in the postwar era have developed typologies of social welfare in advanced industrial countries. Perhaps the best known of such typologies has been the one developed by Esping-Andersen (1990, 26-28), who identified three "ideal types" of welfare state regimes. In the *liberal* welfare state, social benefits are minimal and stigmatized, and the labour market is seen as the primary source of economic security. In the *conservative-corporatist* welfare state regime, there is less emphasis on "market efficiency" and more emphasis on social rights attached to class and status, such as state benefits for

workers, family benefits that encourage traditional gender roles, and denominational welfare programs based on dominant religious groupings. In *social democratic* welfare arrangements, social entitlements through the state are 'equalized upwards' as universal programs that benefit both working and middle classes, that are designed to garner broad political support. In the social democratic scheme of welfare, the burden of caring for children, the dependent elderly and others needing support is to a significant degree removed from the family and vested in social services of the state, which in turn provide relatively well paying and secure jobs for women and others who traditionally were excluded from the best jobs in the labour market.

Other typologies of social welfare have been advanced by George and Wilding (1985) based on political ideologies, and by Mishra (1990, 113) to take into account neo-conservative retrenchment in social welfare.

Peck (1996, 185-231) uses a theorization of the state that draws on regulation theory in order to describe a transition beyond the Keynesian welfare state to the "Schumpeterian workfare state" (SWS). Peck (1996, 191) builds on Jessop's notion of a "hollowed out" state that "provides the best possible shell for post-Fordism". More specifically, Peck (1996, 195) argues that

[t]he leading edge of SWS restructuring is indicated by changes in *state and corporate discourses*, where the emphasis on productivity and planning under the KWS has been displaced by a new discourse of flexibility and entrepreneurialism.

In regard to labour market policy, "the fundamental change is toward rejection of the Keynesian commitment to full (male) employment in favor of Schumpeterian emphasis on labor market organization as a source of competitive advantage". In regard to social policy, Peck (1996, 195-197) states that

the emblematic shift from welfare to workfare is associated with movement away from meeting social needs and toward meeting business needs. There is also a shift away from the principles of universalism, progressive income redistribution, and social rights under the KWS toward a more selective, market-oriented, and workfarist approach under the SWS where "productivist and cost saving concerns" [Peck quoting Jessop] are paramount.

Any social welfare scheme embedded in a capitalist economy must deal with the question of how to 'reproduce labour', that is how to ensure the material survival and sustenance of workers and their families on a day-to-day basis and from one generation to the next. Peck (1996, 198-226) draws on Jessop's breakdown of SWS regimes into neoliberal, neocorporatist, and neostatist variants, and offers an empirical analysis of how Thatcherism in Britain drew (primarily but not exclusively) on the neoliberal approach to set in place its version of a SWS regime. Peck (1996, 229) concludes that

[t]he neo-liberal SWS - certainly in its British variant and possibly generically - seems to be critically vulnerable to Polanyian crises of labor reproduction.

In other words, the Thatcherite neo-liberal approach to accomplishing labour market restructuring (through local bodies dominated by business and subordinate to the market) proved unable to 'deliver the goods' in terms of providing members of the labour force with jobs that would enable them to survive economically.

Thatcherism's concentration on the 'supply side' of the labour market (i.e. trying to combat joblessness through through local skills training and workfare programs) proved ineffective in confronting the realities of structural unemployment and recessionary downturns in the neo-liberal capitalist economy.

If one's goal is to develop a comprehensive yet parsimonious typology of welfare state regimes, Jane Jenson (1997) questions the wisdom of focussing primarily on labour decommodification (such as in Esping-Andersen "three regimes of welfare capitalism"), or on the "work-welfare nexus" (such as Peck's argument about a transition from "Keynesian welfare" to "Schumpeterian workfare"). Instead, Jenson (1997, 184) takes the deliberately "provocative" position that the "whole truth" of the welfare state takes us beyond "the state's response to workers' mobilization" in regard to issues related to labour market participation.

If ... we change our lens and claim that welfare states are primarily about care, then unemployment insurance is no longer the flagship program of the welfare state. Other aspects of social policy and its history come to the fore. These are programs designed to minimize the risks and burdens associated with dependency and the need for care. Social movements, including the workers' movement, claimed access to care as a social right of citizenship. (Jenson 1997, 184)

Programs and supports of the welfare state such as parental leave, child and elder care arrangements, services for the disabled, health care, and education both shape and are shaped by how caring work (done primarily by women) is organized within the family and through broader collective means. The gendering processes of the welfare state cannot be adequately understood unless questions pertaining to caring work (who does it, who pays for it, and how is it provided?) are answered.

Jenson argues for moving beyond welfare state typologies which "insist that welfare regimes are primarily about work", and which conceptualize caring work as unpaid and something to be merely tacked on to labour-market-centred understandings of social welfare. She argues that her call "to embrace fully another theoretical agenda" which relates the welfare state to caring work is not just an conceptual exercise in paradigm renewal; it is necessitated by the fact that

successor states to postwar welfare states have already moved on to a new agenda of reprivatizing and redistributing care. (Jenson 1997, 187)

### **Theorizing the Welfare State**

While typologies of welfare state regimes seek to describe the arrangements for social welfare provision, they may or may not adequately conceptualize the underlying processes that shape the origins, operation, and trajectory of welfare states. It can be argued that typologies outline the 'what, when, where, and how' of welfare states. In order to grapple with the 'why' of social welfare arrangements, it is necessary to delve more deeply into theory. Theoretical frameworks for welfare state provisions abound, and can be critically analyzed as to their validity and practical utility.

Theoretical explanations of the welfare state that adopt some sort of 'left-progressive-critical' viewpoint vary widely, as shall be illustrated below. It seems fair to say, however, that all of these explanations are oriented (in different ways and to varying degrees) to the need for greater social equality (in both economic and political domains), to an understanding of the limitations and/or the counter-



productivity of profit-oriented markets as a means of achieving equality, and to an appreciation of the multiple and interrelated forms of domination and oppression based on class, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other factors.

To be sure there are other 'mainstream', more or less 'non-critical' (or what orthodox Marxists might refer to as 'bourgeois') theoretical explanations of the welfare state. Such mainstream theories are placed by Struthers (1994) into three different categories. First of all, he points to the "logic of industrialism" perspective on the emergence of social welfare, as put forth in the influential work of Wilensky and Lebeaux (1958). Drawing on functionalist theory, this perspective "viewed welfare programs as a logical and inevitable response to the forces of industrialization, urbanization, and the expansion of a wage-earning labour force". From this point of view, industrialism

severed workers and their families from earlier kin-based networks of mutual aid, created the economic vulnerabilities associated with wage dependency, and generated the societal surplus needed to finance welfare state programs ... (Struthers 1994, 6).

The "logic of industrialism" explanation of welfare state emergence is liberal-pluralist in its orientation, and fails to adequately account for conflicting interests and power differentials based on class. It also fails to take into account oppression based on gender, race/ethnicity, and other factors. The development of the welfare state is portrayed almost as an 'automatic unfolding' that is a convergent process across nations. As Struthers (1994, 6-7) points out, this

perspective cannot adequately explain differences among industrialized countries in the timing or specific national configurations of social welfare programs.

The second mainstream, non-critical perspective which Struthers describes is the "political-cultural" school, as set forth by writers such as Lipset (1963). This perspective emphasizes the role of differing value orientations around questions such as mutual responsibility and collectivism in shaping welfare state programs in different countries. According to this view, Canada went further in developing social welfare programs than did the United States because Canadian political culture was influenced by traditional British Tory beliefs in collectivism and a "broader public acceptance for more paternalist state leadership in the solution of social problems". In contrast, American political culture is described as liberal and as harbouring "deep suspicion of state power", and therefore "was resistant to collectivist solutions to problems of dependency and need posed by industrial societies" (Struthers 1994, 7).

Similar to the point made above about the "logic of industrialism" perspective, the "political-cultural values" orientation to welfare state emergence does not take into account social conflict or group power differentials. Struthers (1994, 8) also echoes other critics in pointing out that this latter theoretical orientation fails to map out the specific mechanisms at work in translating supposedly broadly held collectivist values into particular social programs and welfare state regimes. Finally, from a historical-materialist perspective, the "political-cultural values" orientation seems quite idealist and ephemeral. If one is

interested in 'collective values' as a contributing factor in welfare state emergence, then such values become analytically useful only to the extent that they are seen as rooted in contemporary material conditions and shaped by the historically evolving dynamics of class conflict, rather than in ideological 'residues' of feudal era Toryism or 18th century liberalism.

The third 'mainstream' theoretical perspective on social welfare that is proposed by Struthers (1994, 12-14) is the "structured polity" school (e.g. Skocpol 1992). This perspective stresses the role of state officials and bureaucrats in shaping public policy and social programs. Struthers describes this approach as rejecting the view that the state is "the passive agent of societal forces", and positing instead that

[g]overnment officials often lead social change, developing welfare measures through a process of political learning from the consequences of previous policy, through the regulatory knowledge and expertise they acquire within government agencies, and through their ongoing dialogue with like-minded policy professionals or advocacy groups outside the structure of government (Struthers 1994, 12).

Skocpol's emphasis on the state and influence wielded by collective social actors within and in relation to the state is somewhat divorced from 'over-determining' class forces and social movements in civil society. As well, it can be argued that the "structured polity" perspective is too voluntarist and individualist in its understanding of social policy formation. The micro-social level counts, but the broader historical-materialist context (especially extant class forces and

political dynamics at given conjunctures) play a large role in shaping individual and collective action.

While the three 'mainstream' theoretical vantage points outlined above are not without heuristic and hermeneutic merit, they are generally inconsistent with the left-critical macro-theoretical position taken here. Therefore these 'mainstream' points of view will be drawn upon less, in the theorization and empirical analysis of social welfare which follows, than other more 'critical' perspectives.

In Struthers' (1994) typology of welfare state theories, he outlines three categories of what might be called left-progressive or critical schools of welfare state theory: the *social democratic model*, *Marxist and neo-Marxist theories*, and *gender analysis of the welfare state*. In addition to these three categories, Pierson (1991) has identified two additional ones relevant to this study. These are the *anti-racist critique* and the *green critique* of the welfare state. One other useful theoretical departure point to understanding social welfare is what might be (somewhat clumsily) labelled the *emancipatory needs-articulation* approach of Drover and Kerans (1993a).

I will now briefly discuss these six 'critical-left-progressive' perspectives on the welfare state that can point us towards a re-theorization of social welfare and towards some key issues that can be explored in this study.

## 1. Social Democratic Perspectives

Struthers (1994, 8) describes the *social democratic model* of the welfare state as the result of "pressure from the left".

The level of any nation's or region's social policy development reflects the extent to which the working class, through trade union organization and political organization, can move the state to meet its needs rather than those of capital.

Walter Korpi pioneered this view in his highly influential "power resource" model of welfare state development. Korpi (1983, 15) defines power resources as "characteristics which provide actors - individuals and collectivities – with the ability to punish or reward other actors." Of prime importance as power resources in this scheme are "capital and control over the means of production" and "'human capital', i.e. labour power, education and occupational skills" (Korpi 1983, 16).

The owners of labour power, that is the wage-earning members of the working class, are inherently at a disadvantage in regard to the exercise of power compared to the business interests which control capital. By organizing their efforts in trade unions and political parties on the left, however, wage-earners can make the distribution of power more equal. They can use tripartite societal bargaining among the state, labour and capital to achieve redistribution of wealth, protection in the workplace, and social insurance and social services.

In the power resource model the state is portrayed as a site for struggle between labour and capital, and as a somewhat neutral and potentially friendly arbitrator on behalf the working class in relation to capital. It is assumed that the

state can and will do the 'right' things, from the point of view of workers, if only social democratic parties and organized labour can obtain and maintain electoral power. This theorization of politics and the welfare state is at variance to the neo-marxist conception of the *capitalist state* (Miliband 1969; Poulantzas 1973; Panitch 1977), which see the governments in capitalist societies as having an unwavering commitment (regardless of which electoral party achieves power) to the processes of capital accumulation, to the legitimation and reproduction of these arrangements, and if necessary to the use of coercive power to maintain them.

Power resource theory assumes more or less 'zero sum bargaining' between capital and labour. Coming out of a neo-marxist background, Offe (1984, 194) argues that under the particular conditions of Keynesianism, the welfare state was a 'positive sum' arrangement for both capital and labour. As a result of the breakdown of Keynesian economic assumptions and the protracted crisis of the KWS brought about by the advent of neo-conservatism, the globalization of capital, and the transfer of employment to low-wage newly industrialising countries, however, it can be argued that unions and social democratic parties are in fact now playing a negative sum game. Labour and the electoral left have to focus on minimizing losses, faced as they are with very adverse economic and political circumstances.

As discussed above, Esping-Andersen (1990) developed the highly influential typology of welfare state regimes, classifying specific national versions of them as liberal, conservative-corporatist, and social democratic. More recently,

he has argued that despite the eclipse of the 'golden age' of postwar growth and prosperity, that (with the exceptions of Britain and New Zealand) "the degree of welfare state roll-back, let alone significant change, has so far been modest" .

Nonetheless, he also argues that

marginal cuts [to social welfare programs] today may have long-term cumulative effects of a quite radical nature. If social benefits gradually fall behind earnings, those who can seek compensation in private insurance will do so, thus weakening broad support for the welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1996a, 10).

Esping-Andersen (1996a, 10-20) argues that there have been three general responses to the economic and social changes that have been occurring since the end of the golden age. Firstly, Scandinavian countries have (until recently) compensated for rising unemployment with the expansion of public sector jobs, and have (more recently) emphasized social investment strategies to better equip working age persons for the labour market. Esping-Andersen (1996a, 15) argues that in the Scandinavian context there is a need to revitalize "consensus building infrastructure" of a corporatist nature.

The second adaptation to economic restructuring has been that taken by English speaking democracies (to a greater or lesser extent) is "the neo-liberal route" of deregulating labour markets and the private sector, and allowing wage structures to become more "flexible". While this approach *does* lead to the expansion of employment, Esping-Andersen (1996a, 17) cites evidence that it also

nurtures employment growth in low-productivity 'lousy jobs' where even full-time, all-year employment results in below-poverty income.

The outcome is "rising inequality and poverty" (Esping-Andersen 1996a, 16).

The third response to economic and social restructuring has been followed in continental western Europe, that of labour force reduction through such measures as early retirement, and denying or withdrawing supports for women (such as maternity benefits and child care) that facilitate their participation in the labour market. While this approach keeps unemployment rates low, it also makes the cost of social insurance very high, fosters the underground economy, and creates an 'insider/outsider' problem (male participants in the primary labour market are protected, while women, youth, and those not covered by social insurance are marginalised and excluded).

Esping-Andersen (1996a, 20-24) goes on to analyse how other countries in East-Central Europe, East Asia, and Latin America are taking different routes to constructing social welfare infrastructure, and the similarities and differences in their approaches compared to the longer established welfare states in western Europe, North America, and the Antipodes. For instance, in East-Central Europe, Chile and Argentina, one finds liberal social welfare regimes which feature the privatization of social insurance (Esping-Andersen 1996a, 20). On the other hand, some countries such as Brazil and Costa Rica have "so far shunned neo-liberalism", and have "in fact taken some steps towards strengthening their public social safety nets" by extending universality of coverage (Esping-Andersen 1996a, 21). Finally, East Asian countries tend to develop a hybrid welfare regime that is premised on traditional gender roles in the family, and that features (in the



conservative-corporatist welfare state model) state provision of social benefits for privileged workers in the public sector and military, and (in the liberal welfare state model) occupational welfare provisions for private sector workers who are fortunate enough to be situated in the primary labour market.

## 2. Marxian and Neo-Marxian Approaches

According to Struthers (1994, 10), *Marxist and neo-Marxist theorists of the welfare state*

argue that the welfare state is an instrument of social control, or that it reflects more contradictory purposes of serving the needs of both capital accumulation and state legitimation.

In neo-Marxian theoretical streams the Keynesian welfare state is understood as something of a paradox (Gough 1979; Therborn 1984; Finkel 1977). On the one hand, the KWS was the product of the struggle by labour and other social movements against capital to obtain a modicum of economic security and social equality in advanced industrial societies. On the other hand, the KWS was also a set of economic and political arrangements that served the interests of capital. The KWS secured peace with labour and ensured rapid accumulation in the very particular context of the long economic boom that followed World War II and that lasted (with only a few minor setbacks) until the early 1970s. As a compromise between labour and capital, the KWS was both a result of class struggle and a 'safety valve' for containing class conflict.

Offe (1984) presents a useful analysis of the contradictions inherent in the KWS that have led to its deterioration since the mid-1970s. He argues, on one hand going back to Marx and Polanyi, that the capitalist economy treats living labour as if it were an inert commodity, and, on the other hand, that the welfare state sets in place programs which decommodify labour and take workers (to some extent) out of the nexus of wage dependence and reliance on the capitalist labour market. This contradiction was sustainable during the long postwar boom, because of real economic growth (which generated a tax dividend to finance the welfare state and which limited demand on welfare state entitlements because of relatively low unemployment), and because the state followed Keynesian macro-economic policy (including maintenance and management of consumer demand). When economic growth faltered and when governments abandoned Keynesian economic assumptions for monetarist measures starting in the mid-1970s, two legs of the three legged stool of the KWS became very wobbly. The third leg (social programs) came under stress and was considerably weakened.

Offe does *not* take the position that the welfare state is on the brink of extinction. In fact, he argues (Offe 1984, 287) that the welfare state is "irreversible".

[T]he 'dismantling' of the welfare state would result in widespread conflict and forms of anomic and 'criminal' behaviour that together would be more destructive than the enormous burdens of the welfare state itself. The welfare state is indeed a highly problematic, costly and disruptive arrangement, yet its absence would be even more disruptive. Welfare state capitalist societies simply cannot be remodelled into something resembling pure market societies. (Offe 1984, 288)

Offe also points to other inherent contradictions in the KWS. For instance, he accepts the *prima facie* arguments of the Right that welfare programs create disincentives for investment and work and diminish profits margins, although he adds that these criticisms ignore "inherent crisis tendencies of the capitalist economy such as overaccumulation, the business cycle, or uncontrolled technological change" (Offe 1984, 149-152). He also posits as valid the arguments of the Left that the capitalist welfare state is ineffective and inefficient, repressive, and performs a political-ideological control function (Offe 1984, 154-57). He postulates that there are three possible outcomes to efforts to reshape the welfare state in the post-Keynesian era (Offe 1984, 158-59):

- i) a "*neo-laissez-faire* coalition, based on an alliance of big capital and the old middle class";
- ii) "the 'right dose' of welfare state expansion" which "would involve the extensive reliance on 'neo-corporatist' or 'tripartite' models of decision-making" (but which would exclude the old middle class and unorganized sections of working class);
- iii) "a non-bureaucratic, decentralized, and egalitarian model of a self-reliant 'welfare society'" brought about through efforts of working class organizations, elements of the new middle class, and new social movements.

One way of conceptualizing the post-Keynesian transformation is set out by Lash and Urry (1987), who argue that we have moved from "organized" to "disorganized" capitalism. A characteristic of the former stage was the "development of class-specific welfare-state legislation" in conjunction with "the increased representation of diverse interests in and through the state" (Lash and

Urry 1987, 3). In the latter stage, we see "the breakdown of most neo-corporatist forms of state regulation of wage bargaining" and "challenges from left and right to the centralized welfare state" (Lash and Urry 1987, 5-6). Lash and Urry (1987, 230-31) argue that, although welfare expenditures will not grow, the welfare state can be preserved through efforts of various social movements and interests. At the same time, Lash and Urry (1987, 231) foresee

less bureaucratized, more decentralized and in [some] cases more privatized forms as the welfare state of organized capitalism makes way for a much more varied and less centrally organized form of welfare provision in disorganized capitalism.

### 3. Feminist Perspectives

Struthers (1994, 15) argues that *gender analysis of the welfare state* emphasizes the dependency of women and children on the male breadwinner, the bifurcation of social welfare into insurance based entitlements for men and needs-tested and stigmatizing programs for women, and the agency of women as "clients, reformers, and state employees" in the welfare state.

In a relatively early call to bring gender into welfare state analysis, Andrew (1984, 667) argued that "the relations between women and the welfare state ... are ambiguous, perhaps even contradictory, but they are vital". Andrew (1984, 669) contends that in both pluralist and marxist conceptions of the welfare state,

the broad concentration on economics and production has meant that gender has not been given a central importance in analyses of [welfare state development].

Looking at things historically, Andrew (1984, 670) further contends that "the reform era from 1880 to 1920" helped to "set the stage for the later development of the fully-formed welfare state", and that "women's organizing and women's organizations are crucial to the developments of this period". Andrew (1984, 676-682) also points to the central roles of women in the welfare state as workers and as clients.

Nancy Fraser (1989, 144-160) points out the bifurcated structure of social welfare programs based on gender. Male wage-earners are the beneficiaries of rights-based, non-stigmatizing, contributory social insurance programs (such as unemployment insurance and public pensions). Women are assumed to be dependent on male breadwinners, and the social welfare programs set up to assist women (such as social assistance) are needs-tested, more subject to bureaucratic discretion, and premised on implicit and sometimes explicit opprobrium and moral correction.

Gordon (1990) sets out an explicitly socialist-feminist perspective on the welfare state. She argues for a "new welfare scholarship" that encompasses "racial and gender relations of power", "the agency of these subordinated groups in the construction of programmes and policies", and a recognition of the welfare state as "a complex, multi-layered and often contradictory cluster" (Gordon 1990, 192). She also calls for scholarship that situates women's welfare in relation to their ability to make reproductive choices, to obtain employment and higher education, and to maintain their rights and benefits in spite of conservative and religious

backlash. This new way of looking at women and welfare must "expand ... women's choices beyond the alternatives of dependency (on men or the state) or inferior employment" (Gordon 1990, 195). These normative claims amount to a "new welfare politics".

[T]he transformation of welfare into a non-stigmatizing, empowering system, one that encourages independence rather than dependence, must include a higher valuation of the work of child-raising and nurturance of dependents, an end to discrimination against women and minorities in the labour force, *and* a radical increase in employment opportunities overall (Gordon 1990, 195).

Orloff (1996) argues that analysing the impact of welfare state measures on women must move beyond the simplistic bifurcation of conceptualizing welfare programs as *either* a means of reproducing the oppression of women by men *or* a means of ameliorating gender inequality. She outlines the contradictory effects of maternalism discourses on the establishment of social welfare programs (Orloff 1996, 57-63). She also calls for comparative international case studies of welfare states in order to understand "the mutual effects of gender relations and welfare states" (Orloff 1996, 73-4). In a similar vein, Julia O'Connor (1996) has argued that it is necessary to move beyond analysing women *in* the welfare state to understanding the "gendering of welfare state regimes".

Bakker (1996, 32) points to "[t]he dual pressures of women's increased labour-force participation and the simultaneous contraction of the Keynesian welfare state". Furthermore, reflecting on the macro-economic framework within which social welfare policy and programs operate, she argues that

[m]acro-economics is androcentric because the male worker/consumer/citizen is often assumed to be the norm (i.e. the policy target). The interactions between paid and unpaid labour are left out of modelling considerations, as indeed are any observations from the "soft" disciplines (i.e. not math and statistics) about social networks and people's personal histories. .... [T]he macro level is conceived ... as dealing with aggregates and not talking about men or women (Bakker 1996, 32).

#### 4. The Anti-Racist Critique of the Welfare State

Pierson (1991, 80) points to the "double process of disadvantage" that racial and ethnic minorities confront in relation to welfare state apparatuses.

First, their economically and socially less privileged position tends to make them more reliant upon provision through the welfare state. Secondly, this welfare state upon which they are peculiarly dependent treats them on systematically less favourable terms than members of the majority community.

Piven and Cloward (1987) point out that the ideological attack against social welfare entitlements in the United States "has veered away from programs where the idea of economic rights is most firmly established" (such as Social Security) which mostly benefit the white middle class. Instead, the attack on the American welfare state has centred on "welfare and the nutritional subsidies for the poor", and particularly on the (now completely defunct) federal social assistance program called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Piven and Cloward (1987, 48) argue that

singling out AFDC inevitably becomes an attack on minorities. A majority of the women and children on AFDC are blacks and Hispanics; the charges [of critics of the welfare state] are not so much against "dependent Americans" as against "dependent minority Americans". Race is a deep and fiercely divisive factor in American political culture. The attack on the welfare state reflects this division and draws strength from it.

Taking an approach that is both more historical-materialist and more theoretically abstract, and writing on the experience of black people with the British welfare state, Williams (1987, 18) argues that

[w]hat is needed for social policy ... is an approach which is formulated according to the experiences of Black people as workers (including welfare workers), as consumers of welfare, and those engaged in struggles over welfare. It has to be based on an historical analysis of racism, imperialism, and neo-imperialism, in their articulation with the main goals of the welfare state: accumulation, reproduction, control [through] legitimation/repression.

Social policy's role in reflecting and reproducing racial inequality also pertains to the Canadian context. The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples documents the systematic abuse and resulting social dysfunction that was visited upon native peoples when they were sent as children to government-funded residential schools run by Christian churches (Canada 1996a, 333-409). The Royal Commission also documents the social, economic, and cultural devastation that affected first nation communities which were forcibly relocated by the federal government (Canada 1996a, 411-543). More generally, the Royal Commission points to

the process by which Aboriginal peoples were systematically dispossessed of their lands and their livelihood, their cultures and languages, and their social and political institutions. ... [T]his was done through government policies based on the false assumptions that Aboriginal ways of life were at a primitive level of evolutionary development, and that the high point of human development was to be achieved by adopting the culture of European colonists (Canada 1996b, 2).

The outcomes of these "ethnocentric and demeaning attitudes" are that



[a]boriginal people in Canada endure ill health, insufficient and unsafe housing, polluted water supplies, inadequate education, poverty and family breakdown ... (Canada 1996b, 1).

Looking to the future, the Royal Commission argues that the solution to "the painful legacy of displacement and assimilation policies that have undermined the foundations of Aboriginal societies" lies in the

redistribution of power and resources so that Aboriginal people can pursue their social and economic goals and regain their health and equilibrium through means they choose freely (Canada 1996b, 2).

Ng (1988) studied community employment services for immigrant women, using a theoretical framework which synthesizes a Marxist understanding of class with sensitivity to oppression based on gender and ethnicity. She provides a useful example of how such a holistic and critical theory can be applied to analysis of community services and activism, including the racist aspects of human services. Stasiulis (1997, 159) argues in a more general way that official multiculturalism of the federal Canadian state has not only failed to make "palatable for ethnic minorities their exclusion from the settler-society construct of a 'bilingual and bicultural' Canada". Official multiculturalism has in fact enabled state officials and elites to hide behind "the antiquated white, Christian definitions of the country", and has thus indirectly contributed to greater restrictions on entry, eligibility for citizenship, and access to public services for "the multitude of racialized and ethnic 'Others'" in Canada (Stasiulis 1997, 159).

## 5. The Green Critique of the Welfare State

Pierson (1991, 92-95) argues that this perspective consists of two general thrusts. On one hand, the "welfare state and the logic of industrialism" critique puts forth the position that welfare provision is "embedded in an industrial order which itself is premised upon economic growth" that is no longer environmentally sustainable. Regardless of the sanguine outcomes of the welfare state in terms of economic security or redistribution, it depends on an expanding economy based upon overproduction, resource depletion, pollution, and the environmentally irrational use of the factors of production. These costs make the capitalist welfare state insupportable in ecological terms in the long run. In addition, Pierson (1991, 94) argues that the social democratic version of the welfare state

means 'bracketing out' a whole range of radical issues (including socialization of production, workers' control, quality of life, planning) which were a part of the traditional ideological baggage of pre-welfare state socialism.

He also points to the problem that "the welfare state represents a national rather global response to the problem of reconciling general social welfare with economic growth".

The other thrust to the 'green critique', according to Pierson (1991, 94-5), is the "welfare state as social control" argument. The focus here is on "the exercise of 'micro-power' over the individual" through "disabling professions", through transformation of citizens into consumers, and through the displacement

of democratic process with bureaucratic administration. Pierson (1991, 95) states that

[i]nsofar as social welfare is a response to real needs - and not simply to the 'false needs' created by the requirements of industrial capitalism - these can only be satisfactorily met by small scale, co-operative, 'bottom up' self-production and self-management.

## 6. The Emancipatory Needs-Articulation Approach to Social Welfare

An innovative approach to social welfare theory has been put forward by Drover and Kerans (1993a). They argue that it is necessary to move beyond utilitarian and contractarian concepts of welfare, and beyond objective notions of 'need' as determined by experts, that have permeated thinking in social policy circles and on much of the political left. Drover and Kerans (1993a, 5-6) argue that "the welfare state has not broken past the assumption that people are infinite consumers of utilities". They advocate the reformulation of welfare as "the development of human capabilities". They point out (Drover and Kerans 1993a, 8-9) the "duality of welfare": it is comprised of both *autonomy* based on a stable social order and an ideal of universal justice, and *emancipation* that works through never-ending claimsmaking in order to achieve a more satisfactory set of social arrangements. This duality sets up "a series of dialectical tensions ... between the self and society, between justice and the good life, and between a 'thin' and a 'thick' understanding of need".

In Drover and Kerans' formulation (1993a, 6), it is necessary to make "the shift from compensatory welfare to empowering welfare".

Welfare as the reallocation of resources gives rise to a deficit model of the welfare state: those who fall below some agreed-upon community standard – for instance a poverty line – are construed as deficient and should be compensated by the rest of us who are its beneficiaries. Welfare as the development of human capacities, by contrast, is empowering. It implies that society is not divided into those who can cope and those who are deficient; rather, everyone requires the help of others in order to develop.

The second implication (Drover and Kerans 1993a, 6) is that

[w]elfare as empowerment entails a profound diversity or pluralism in people's understanding of their needs and therefore of their welfare. What is central is the struggle over the interpretation of needs.

In this study, it is assumed that a commitment to empowerment and choice in the interpretation of human need and in claimsmaking processes, at both individual and collective levels, must be at the heart of reformulating our concept of social welfare for the years ahead. At the same time, it is necessary to situate this commitment to emancipatory needs-articulation, and its ideological and practical corollaries at the 'micro-' and 'mezzo' levels, within a clear and evolving historical-materialist understanding of how political-economic power is exercised at all levels of society. The power of capital in relation to economic processes and political questions can constrain the articulation of pluralistic and "thick" visions of and actions to achieve social welfare. This seems to be particularly true in our present era in which the power of multinational corporations reaches around the globe.

### **A Theoretical Framework for This Study**

Theoretical guidance for this study will be drawn liberally and somewhat eclectically from five of the six critical schools of thought on the welfare state that have been outlined above. This research will be guided by neo-marxian and feminist points of view, the anti-racist and green critiques of the welfare state, and the potential for emancipatory needs-articulation of the "thick" variety.

The one critical theoretical perspective outlined above that will *not* be as central to the analysis which follows is the social democratic perspective. To be sure, the social welfare project of social democrats and organized labour that culminated (during the particular economic circumstances of the three decades following World War II) in the Keynesian welfare state was a 'success' in many ways. During this thirty year period in Canada, the KWS kept income inequality from becoming markedly greater, ameliorated the problem of poverty among specific groups such as the elderly, provided virtually the entire population with comprehensive and publically funded health care, and fostered a substantial degree of upward social mobility through higher education and an expanding labour market for many born into the middle and working classes.

Keynesianism and the postwar capital-labour accord came into crisis and began to deteriorate in the mid-1970s, however, and the "Schumpeterian workfare state" described above became the new ideal type of Western political economies. In this context, social democratic approaches to social welfare and social equality became increasingly ineffective, given the growth in global power of transnational

corporations. The growing reach of global capital over and against public policy determination and collective welfare programs is evident in such measures as regional and global trade agreements, 'structural adjustment' schemes being imposed on poorer countries by multilateral agencies such as the International Monetary Fund, and the increased commodification and marketization of previous 'public goods' such as health care, education, and human services such as social assistance and corrections.

Social democratic strategies designed to advance the economic position of women, such as pay and employment equity and public provision of child care, have only partially withstood the neo-conservative attack. Similarly, moderate left approaches to overcoming exclusion, disadvantage, and oppression based on race/ethnicity and to preserving the environment, have been disappointing or worse. Because of these stark historical-materialist realities of the last years of the twentieth century, this study proceeds on the understanding the traditional social democratic strategies for achieving equality and well-being at a national level<sup>10</sup> are no longer adequate. Social democratic theoretical approaches do not address, conceptually or programmatically, the increasing hegemony of transnational capital, or the related functions of state apparatuses (including that part of the state devoted to 'welfare') to protect and enhance accumulation by global corporations.

On the other hand, neo-marxian theoretical approaches unmask and specify the structure and dynamics of transnational capital and the reproduction of capitalist hegemony through social institutions such as the welfare state. Feminist

and anti-racist critiques of the welfare state point to intersecting and frequently compounding forms of domination, based on gender differences or ethno-cultural identity, that contribute to the structuration of social inequality in the era of global corporate rule. The green critique of social welfare challenges the productivist ethic and the bureaucratic and technological forms of social control that are deeply inscribed in social policy formulation and social program delivery in the capitalist welfare state. Finally, the emancipatory needs-articulation perspective points the way towards more democratic, inclusive, and nuanced processes for defining and implementing 'social welfare' in innovative and radical senses of the term.

### **From Theory to Issues**

These theoretical perspectives pertaining to social welfare are intended to serve as guideposts rather than boundaries for this study. They point us towards some contested issues and fundamental debates related to social policy, which will surface again in the evidence to be presented in subsequent chapters, and which we will revisit in the concluding chapter. These key issues and debates include the following:

how to ensure an **adequate economic livelihood and material standard of living for all**, given very significant labour market restructuring and shrinking levels of social support through programs that comprised the Keynesian welfare state.

how to conceive the **relationship between socially necessary and useful work in all its forms** in Canadian society (including paid work in the labour market, unpaid caring work in the family, and various forms of service in the community) and economic security for all (as outlined in the foregoing issue).

how to reconstruct and extend our understanding of **social equality**, bearing in mind that the practical realization of such equality depends upon further **democratization** of social policy debate and formulation in both the state and civil society.

how to reshape our understanding of **citizenship**, building on the notion of social rights of citizens as an extension of civil and political rights (Marshall and Bottomore 1992) that was an innovative feature of the Keynesian welfare state, but also extending our notion of citizenship to include rights and responsibilities we bear based on our individual and collective identities and our shared habitation of a fragile biosphere experiencing various environmental threats.

In an investigation of contested social policy terrain such as this one, it also seems necessary to analyse struggles over the use of language and discourses, as well as the possibilities and limitations of political coalescence among groups wanting to achieve more or less similar goals. For this reason, this study of the social policy arena will not only address the ‘substantive’ issues of economic security, work, social equality, democratization and citizenship as outlined above. It will also address the ‘processual’ issues of contested discourse and coalition building as vital questions in any attempt to reshape social welfare.

### **From Issues to the ‘Real World’**

It bears mentioning that in any discussion of theory, such as the one presented in this chapter in relation to social welfare, it is possible to draw up theoretical frameworks and conceptual schema that are intellectually coherent, and perhaps even elegant and highly persuasive. In the practical struggles of flesh and blood human actors in the social policy arena, however, limited resources and conflicting priorities often have a more immediate impact upon these actors than



whatever excitement they may feel about new or worthwhile ideas in regard to social policy. Individual and collective players in social welfare debates tend not to deal in neat and tidy conceptual frameworks. They engage in the complex, often frustrating, and occasionally rewarding business of working towards their social policy goals, often in very adverse political and discursive contexts. Their particular set of policy goals as organizations may be more or less explicit, complete, internally consistent, or coherent in relation to their broader ideological stances.

These complexities and contradictions of social policy advocacy are always evident to some extent within any particular organization or movement. It should be that much more noticeable in this study, which focusses on a broad array of (frequently very different) constituencies and groups. Thus it would seem that diversity and even some incoherency is to be expected in the findings below, notwithstanding the attempts in this chapter to present coherent theoretical frameworks and specific conceptual issues and questions. In the subsequent chapters, the findings presented will not necessarily or neatly fit the theories and concepts that serve as my departure points.

With this caveat in mind, let us now proceed to an empirical examination of the practical concerns and active struggles of labour, SPAOs, and the women's movement in the Canadian social welfare arena over recent years.

**ENDNOTES**

1. 'New' social movements which are thought to fit this description include those struggling against inequality and oppression based on gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation, as well as movements seeking to protect the quality of human environments and the natural eco-system. 'Old' social movements which are thought to more closely fit the RMT paradigm include organized labour and class-based political parties on the left contending for state power.
2. Regulation theory is useful in understanding the contradictions and crisis tendencies of post-Keynesian capitalism (Drache and Gertler 1991; Jessop 1990).
3. For general references on the 'new' world economic order see Kuttner 1984, Cox 1987, Bowles and Gintis 1986, Drache and Cameron 1985, Drache and Gertler 1991, McQuaig 1993, Teeple 1995, Menzies 1996, Korten 1995, and Clarke 1997b.
4. The case that social spending was *not* at the root of the fiscal crisis of the state in the 1980s is presented by the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice (1993, 30-40). This analysis argues that state indebtedness was rooted in rapidly rising interest rates (making financial capital, as government creditors, the beneficiary of the state's fiscal crisis) and decline in the importance of corporate taxes in the overall government revenue stream (benefiting the capitalist class in general).
5. Political discourses and media coverage of issues surrounding the 'marketization' of social services typically ignore the question of how fractions of capital supporting such privatization may have conflicts of interest. Arguments such as 'greater efficiency' and 'consumer choice' may in fact mask corporate interest in new investment opportunities and the enhancement of profits in such areas as health care, the administration of social assistance payments, corrections, and other traditional areas of public service provision.
6. The hegemonic discourses of the 1980s and 1990s have more than a passing resemblance to what C.B. Macpherson (1962) wrote about more than three decades ago, i.e. "possessive individualism".
7. A voluminous literature has developed, especially since the advent of neo-conservatism in the late 1970s, criticising the welfare state from a neo-conservative or neo-liberal point of view. An earlier generation of welfare state critics such as Hayek (1982) and Friedman (1962) emphasized deregulation of market forces and a minimal role for the state, although they also recognized the necessity of state provision of a guaranteed annual income for those unable to make their way in the

competitive marketplace. As Pierson (1991, 41) points out, the 1980s version of the New Right's attack on the welfare state combined in a somewhat contradictory manner 'economic liberalization' with conservative positions on 'law and order', foreign policy, minority rights, 'family values', and religious and moral fundamentalism. Pierson (1991, 45-47) also points to the use of public choice theory by New Right to attack the welfare state in recent years, and provides a concise summary of six "main substantive claims" of the New Right's critique of the welfare state (Pierson 1991, 48).

8. For this study, I am including Canada in the category of 'advanced' capitalist countries, similar to most other nation states in North America and Western Europe, as well as Japan and Australia. They are the sites in which capital has historically concentrated disproportionate amounts of investment and value-adding production. In advanced capitalist countries, representative democracy is the typical political form. Until recently, so-called advanced capitalist countries were also typified by a relatively well off working class and a high stage of technological advancement, compared to other 'underdeveloped' countries. Other 'ideal types' of nations states could conceivably include recently industrialising countries, such as Korea or Taiwan; poor countries heavily dependent on resource extraction and/or cash crops, such as many countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean; state-capitalist regimes that existed throughout eastern Europe, until the collapse of the Soviet Union and its client states; and state capitalist/market economy hybrids, such as the ones now emerging in the Peoples' Republic of China and Cuba. Of course ideal types do not capture the complexity and subtle distinctions of real world cases, and any particular national economic formation would include elements of many of these categories as well as its own particular idiosyncrasies.

9. A recent edition of the *Canadian Review of Social Policy* (No. 38, Autumn 1996) focusses on emerging welfare states in East and South-East Asia. A recent collection edited by Esping-Andersen (1996b) examines welfare state regimes and trends in North America, Latin America, western and post-communist Europe, East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

10. In a recent overview of welfare state regimes Esping-Andersen (1996a), the renowned social democratic theorist of the welfare state, seems to have resigned himself to the necessity of accomodating social policy to the imperatives of the global market and transnational capital. Mishra (1997) has recently proposed efforts to globalize social policy, or in a sense to extend Keynesian social standards into a worldwide "Social Charter", through international bodies such as the ILO. In responding to Mishra, Shniad (1997) argues that the most effective resistance to transnational corporate hegemony originates with social movements rooted in people's concrete struggles, and that sympathetic politicians (presumably including social democrats) have only a complementary role to play.

### CHAPTER 3

#### METHODOLOGY

This purpose of this research undertaking is to collect, analyse, and critically appraise the ideas and views of a group of organizations on questions of social policy. These organizations are constituent parts of three social movements: organized labour, advocacy groups dedicated to the improvement and extension of social programs, and the contemporary Canadian feminist movement. In order to carry out this investigation, I have chosen to rely on three methods of gathering empirical evidence from and about the organizations under study.

One important source of data in this study will be *key informant interviews* conducted with individuals who are positioned to exercise leadership on social policy questions within labour, SPAOs, and NAC. A second source of data will be *documentary sources*, such as policy papers and briefs to government, that have been prepared by organizations, components of organizations, and progressive coalitions within the constituencies under study. The third source of data will be *media reports* on social policy questions and the positions and activities of labour, SPAOs, and NAC in regard to these questions.

The analysis of this data is focussed on the implicit and perhaps explicit steps which the constituencies under study are taking in regard to 'paradigmatic renewal' in social welfare policy. While these constituencies may not be undertaking conceptual 'model-building' in social policy as a deliberative, coherent exercise, they must and do take specific positions on current issues in the social policy field (funding cutbacks, changes in eligibility guidelines, program elimination or reformulation, etc.). It is an interpretive task in this research to 'read off' of these positions taken by the constituencies under study whether or not, and in what ways, they have begun to question and/or reformulate some of the assumptions and principles underlying the KWS.

### **Selection of Organizations and Key Informants**

The purpose of this study is *not* to perform an exhaustive analysis of the social policy positions and advocacy efforts of particular social movement organizations or SPAOs. Such a task would be too large to be manageable within one research project, as well as not germane to my purpose. Rather, the focus here will be on individuals and elements within progressive movements and organizations who have been advancing (perhaps tentatively or incompletely) new visions of 'social welfare'. These 'visionaries' may not be in the top leadership positions within their respective movements and organizations. Most of them could be characterized as opinion leaders, however, and perhaps even as 'movers

and shakers'. The key informants and the organizations in which they are based are well situated to contribute to the formation of a broader counter-hegemonic discourse on social welfare and social policy.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, names and positions of potential informants were gleaned from documents, press reports and informal inquiry. Allowance was also made for 'snowball sampling', in which a key informant being interviewed suggested one or more other individuals as possible informants, who were then subsequently contacted. As particular persons were identified as potential informants, telephone inquiries were made concerning their willingness and availability to participate as key informants in the research.<sup>2</sup> When an individual consented to be interviewed, a package was mailed to her or him outlining the thrust of this research and the topics to be covered in the interview, and confirming the appointment time. All key informant interviews except four<sup>3</sup> were audio-taped and the discussion was transcribed. All key informants were asked to sign a consent form granting their permission for their input to be used in this dissertation and any related publications that may arise from it.

An interview guide was prepared to assist in conducting key informant interviews, and to help ensure coverage of important issues and questions.<sup>4</sup> Key informant interviews were also conducted in an open-ended format, however, to allow informants to share information and insights which did not arise directly

from the pre-formulated questions, and to take into account the particular informant's experience and expertise that was relevant to the social policy field.

I will now briefly outline the logic behind the selection of organizations from which the key informants were drawn, focussing on the three different constituencies that are the subject of this research.

### **Labour**

The Canadian Labour Congress is the national umbrella organization that represents the vast majority of unions and organized workers in English Canada. As a national federation, the CLC includes in its ranks the largest public and private sector unions. It recently added to its list of affiliates a number of unions that used to belong to the now defunct Canadian Federation of Labour<sup>5</sup>, and unions representing professional workers such as teachers and nurses. Because of the CLC's strategic importance in the labour movement in Canada, five of the fourteen key informants for this study who were drawn from the labour movement are officials or staff at the CLC.

Three additional key informants from the labour movement are with the Canadian Auto Workers. I felt that it was important to canvass the views of the CAW carefully. This union has emerged in the last several years, especially since its break from the U.S.-based United Auto Workers in 1984, as a dynamic and growing organization that is extending its organization and representation of

workers into many sectors of the labour force beyond its traditional base in the manufacturing of transportation equipment. Historically, the UAW/CAW has been the leading proponent of social unionism. Over its more than six decades on the Canadian labour scene, this union has worked politically (through the NDP and other avenues) in the pursuit of justice and equality not only in the workplace but in broader Canadian society (Gindin 1995).

Two key informants are drawn from the Canadian Union of Public Employees. CUPE has become the largest union in the country in terms of membership, and like the CAW has taken a social-unionist interest in a wide range of public policy issues beyond those that directly affect workers on the job.

The Canadian section of the United Steel Workers of America is a union which has very strong ties with the New Democratic Party. The Steelworkers have been less critical than CAW and CUPE of the NDP's failures to act clearly and decisively on labour's agenda when the Party has been in power provincially or when it has campaigned federally. The Steelworkers have also been less willing to entertain extra-parliamentary means to achieve their political goals than have unions like the CAW and CUPE. The key informant in this study from the Steelworkers is Hugh Mackenzie, the Director of Research at the union's National Office. He has been a prominent NDP strategist, and served as Executive Director of the Ontario NDP government's Fair Tax Commission in the early 1990s. Thus he represents a point of view within labour which more staunchly adheres to a



social-democratic, electoralist strategy of supporting the NDP. In contrast, over the last several years unions like the CAW and CUPE have been more willing to criticize the NDP and take independent political action when they felt it was called for.<sup>6</sup>

Because there are no labour-based key informants from specific unions other than CAW, CUPE, and the Steelworkers does *not* mean that these other unions lack interest in social policy questions. It is reasonable to assume that most if not all of them have debated and will continue to grapple with aspects of social welfare, given that this aspect of public policy is constantly contested and of great significance in the day to day lives of working people. My purpose here, however, was not to do a comprehensive survey of unions' positions on social policy questions. Rather, I wanted to identify and analyse a strategically important cross-section of labour officials and staff people, in order to get a reading on the state of critical and creative thinking on social policy by the Canadian labour movement. The key informants from labour who contributed to this study seemed well positioned to provide such a reading.

### **Social Policy Advocacy Organizations**

The key informants from SPAOs can be sub-divided into those based in organizations which specialize in questions of social policy, and those based in

organizations whose interest in social policy is part of a broader focus on political and economic issues facing Canadian society.

**i) SPAOs with an exclusive focus on social policy**

Two key informants in this study, David Ross and Susan Carter, are senior staff members with the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD). Since the 1920s, CCSD has been the pre-eminent non-governmental organization advocating on social policy questions at the federal level of the state in Canada (Splane, 1996). The CCSD is the national organization in English Canada for what might be called the 'voluntary social planning and social policy advocacy' movement, which also has provincial and local levels. Two additional key informants are drawn from these levels of this network. Malcolm Shookner is Executive Director of the Ontario Social Development Council, and Armine Yalnizyan is on staff at the Social Planning and Research Council of Toronto. The ties between local, provincial and national levels of this social planning and social policy advocacy network are voluntary rather than formal or organic.

Other SPAOs from which I drew key informants and documentation for this study are the National Anti-Poverty Organization and Canadian Pensioners Concerned. These two organizations represent constituencies that have been arguably the most important 'target groups' of social policy and programs since the establishment of the welfare state, that is the poor and the elderly.

The two SPAO 'think tanks' which were consulted for this study were the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, and the Canadian Policy Research Networks. As is argued in Chapter 5, these two organizations have a high media profile and exercise very significant influence with the federal Liberal government. They are also the most prominent 'alternative' voices in social policy discourses in relation to the frequently touted views of neo-liberal think tanks such as the C. D. Howe Institute and the Fraser Institute. I felt, therefore, that it was important to interview key informants from both organizations.

Key informants from other SPAOs were consulted because of the topicality of their particular concerns. Ian Morrison is directly involved in opposing the implementation in Ontario of workfare, the radical neo-liberal model of social assistance that is supplanting the relatively benign model of social assistance that prevailed during the era of the KWS. Rosemarie Popham of Campaign 2000 coordinates a national effort to combat child poverty that has garnered a great deal of media attention and political support over the last several years. Diane Richler is Executive Director of the Canadian Association for Community Living, which has been in the forefront of the movement to fully include people with disabilities in mainstream society since the 1970s. Liz Rykert of act.cuts.ont has been involved in the use of information technology to develop innovative and collaborative approaches to public education, advocacy, and service delivery among human service agencies.

Two of the SPAO key informants were selected specifically because they represent points of view that have some degree of sympathy with (or at least acceptance of) the neo-liberal critique of and prescription for the KWS. They are Patrick Johnston of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, and Havi Echenberg<sup>7</sup> who is an independent consultant and researcher in the social policy field. Both of these individuals have previous involvement with other SPAOs. For instance, both have served in the past in the role of Executive Director of the National Anti-Poverty Organization.

**ii) SPAOs with a broader focus which includes social policy**

Two organizations which have played lead roles in confronting the neo-liberal discourse on a range of issues are the Canadian Centre on Policy Alternatives and the Council of Canadians. This study draws on key informants and documentation from both organizations.

I also interviewed David Langille, who was then connected with the (now defunct) Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice. Langille (1987) has analysed the key role played by the Business Council on National Issues in orchestrating the rightward shift of state policy in Canada. At the Jesuit Centre he was very involved in public education on corporate power and the need to confront it. Tony Clarke also served as a key informant for this study. His most recent book (Clarke 1997b) offers an analysis of corporate power and a strategy for restoring popular

control over the state and economic and social policy. Clarke also has played and continues to play a key role as an activist in organizations such as the Pro-Canada Network and the Council of Canadians.

### **National Action Committee on the Status of Women**

NAC is a national umbrella organization representing a broad range of women's groups concerned about advancing the status and equality of women in English Canada. There are both historical and current political reasons why NAC is a particularly good representative organization of the many streams of feminism in Canada, and of their concerns about social policy issues. These reasons, which also make NAC a particularly appropriate group to consult in this study, will be further discussed in Chapter 6. It is noteworthy that NAC is currently endeavouring to maintain its inclusiveness as an organization. It has recently reached out to both women who care for young children at home, who have been critical of NAC's lack of attention in the past to their situation (*Globe and Mail*, 25 October 1997, pp. D1 and D3), and to younger women who have felt somewhat estranged from the second wave of feminism that attained prominence in the 70s and 80s (*Globe and Mail*, 8 June 1998, p. A3).

### **Level of Analysis**

This study will focus for the most part on national-level organizations and efforts intending to influence social policy debates at the level of the federal state. The term ‘national’ in this context refers to actors and campaigns based in English Canada (i.e. all of the country outside of Quebec). This study posits the linguistic, cultural and social distinctiveness of Quebec in relation to the rest of Canada. It also recognizes that the three constituencies being examined (labour, SPAOs, and the women’s movement) have different organizational structures, agendas, and cultures in Quebec than they do in English Canada.<sup>8</sup> The question of shifting conceptions of social welfare inside Quebec is a most important one, but is a question that is beyond the boundaries of this study.

There is another aspect of ‘national’ difference in regard to social policy within Canada. It has to do with the desire of First Nations to shape their own concepts of social welfare, and to design, deliver and control their own social programs, as part of their broader rights to self-government and self-determination. This is a matter of great importance and complexity, for First Nations as well as for the rest of the Canada. Similar to the question of changing conceptions of social welfare within Quebec, however, it is a matter that is beyond the scope of this analysis. This study recognizes the legitimate claims of both Quebec and First Nations to fashion social policy and programs to meet their respective, distinct needs. The focus in this inquiry will be on the (already very

broad) topic of future directions in social policy as seen from the points of view of Canadian labour, SPAOs, and feminists that are based outside Quebec and that are apart from aboriginal advocacy organizations.

The organizations upon which this study focuses are primarily ‘pan-English Canadian’ in their scope, since the study deals with conceptions of and changes to the Canadian welfare state. I also draw upon key informants and documents from sub-national organizations which are based in Ontario. Practical limitations of time and funding mitigated against a broader sampling of key informants and organizations from regions of the country outside Ontario. I recognize that individuals and groups from other parts of the country may have perspectives on social policy questions that differ significantly from those held by their counterparts in Ontario. At the same time, it is reasonable to assume that sub-national organizations based in Ontario have a significant influence (perhaps unfairly so) upon social policy discourses at the national level, due to the size, wealth, and central location of the province compared to other provinces, territories, and regions of English Canada.

### **Variety of Organizations**

The movements and organizations upon which this study focuses represent a quite disparate range of groups. Some such as national level labour organizations have a large membership, are highly organized, and have at their

disposal a relatively stable revenue base and an extensive staff support structure. Others, such as some of the SPAOs, operate on a shoe-string budget with very little staff support, and less than optimal access to office space, equipment and technology needed to carry out their day-to-day activities.

Almost all of the organizations examined in this study have had to cope to a greater or lesser degree with the problem of unstable and shrinking revenue over the last several years. Specific unions have experienced the loss of members and membership dues, due to layoffs related to labour market restructuring. Advocacy groups concerned about social policy have experienced deep cuts in funding and grants at all levels of government. Such cuts have had dramatic negative effects even on relatively high profile national organizations such as the Canadian Council on Social Development and the the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. These cuts perhaps have truncated the activities and stifled the development of smaller SPAOs in even more radical ways.

Of course, the three broad movements that are focussed upon in this research also have quite different bases in society. Unions bring together people based on their position in the labour market as waged workers, often (but not always) representing workers in one particular industry or a related set of industries. NAC is an umbrella organization for a wide range of groups concerned about women's equality, some of which may not be entirely comfortable with the label "feminist". The SPAOs which are examined in this study represent a wide



range of interests and opinions in the broad 'third sector' (i.e. that part of society which is not the state and not the market-driven private sector).

Because of the variation in the level of resources, social bases and collective identity of the social movement organizations examined here, it seems reasonable to expect that there will be considerable diversity and even some degree of dissonance in their social policy 'voices'. From a methodological point of view, this poses a challenge in regard to carefully listening and correctly discerning what these various organizations, both 'the great and the small', have to say on fundamental questions of social policy. The most important messages may not always be emanating from the best resourced and highest profile groups. This methodological challenge perhaps parallels to some extent the theoretical challenge cited in the previous chapter, that of sifting through and understanding the theoretical confusions and contradictions that are played out among the diverse participants in social policy discourse in Canada.

**ENDNOTES**

1. A complete list of key informants is found in Appendix I.
2. Of course, not everyone contacted as a potential key informant consented to an interview. The author tried unsuccessfully to arrange appointments with Bob White, President of the Canadian Labour Congress; Maude Barlow and Peter Bleyer who are respectively the Chairperson and the Executive Director of the Council of Canadians; and Sunera Thobani, a Past President of NAC.
3. The four exceptions were the interview with Sid Ryan of CUPE, which had to be conducted over the phone from his home due to the demands of his schedule, two interviews in which the tape recording device did not function as anticipated, and one interview in which no tape recorder was available. In all of these cases, the researcher prepared notes on the interview which were as detailed as possible.
4. The interview guide used in the key informant interviews can be found in Appendix II.
5. In 1996 the Canadian Federation of Labour, the smaller national labour organization that was separate from the Canadian Labour Congress and was not affiliated politically with the New Democratic Party, decided to merge with the CLC (*Globe and Mail*, 4 May 1996, p. B2).
6. The CAW has indicated its willingness to support Liberal provincial candidates in strategic ridings in order to defeat the Conservative government of Mike Harris (*Toronto Star*, 29 August 1998, p. A10). CUPE's Ontario Vice-President Sid Ryan sent a letter to the President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, Wayne Samuelson, objecting to the Federation's reluctance to organize a province-wide Day of Action for the fall of 1998. According to officials of CUPE Local 3906, of which the author is a member, Samuelson and the OFL were reluctant to take direct political action against the Harris government for fear of taking attention away from and/or arousing opposition to the NDP in the period leading up to the provincial election expected in the spring of 1999.
7. Havi Echenberg was recommended to me as a key informant by Bob Baldwin of the CLC, who suggested that I interview her in order to get a point of view on current social policy debates that would differ from his own and others' within organized labour.
8. Such differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada are readily apparent in the two differing sets of organizations pertinent to this study. There

are three central labour organizations in Quebec (Confédération des syndicats nationaux, Central de l'Enseignement du Québec, and the Quebec Federation of Labour). The first two organizations are sovereigntist in their political orientation. Only the last organization maintains a relationship with the CLC, and it can be characterized as one of "sovereignty-association" (Heron 1996, 141-43). La Fédération des Femmes du Québec plays a role that is roughly equivalent to that of NAC in English Canada, but the two organizations are independent of one another and have sometimes been in conflict (Vickers et al, 1993). There is also a very different set of SPAOs in Quebec compared to the rest of the country. For instance, the Conseil québécois de développement social is a distinct organization from the Canadian Council on Social Development. Some of the 'national differences' between social policy advocates in Quebec and English Canada are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

## CHAPTER 4

### **OLD FORMULAS OR NEW IDEAS?** **THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY**

It is my intention in this chapter to analyse the responses of the Canadian labour movement to the neo-conservative/neo-liberal restructuring of the Canadian welfare state over the last several years. Of particular interest is the question of whether organized labour is reaching beyond the model of the Keynesian welfare state, and beginning to rethink and reconstruct its conception of social welfare for the new millennium.

Historically labour has used direct action in the workplace, broader social activism, and political mobilization in parties of the left in order to put pressure on capital and the state for justice and dignity for working people in Canada. These struggles were indispensable elements in establishing social programs such as workers' compensation, public pensions, and medicare.<sup>1</sup>

Despite high levels of unemployment, massive shedding of jobs, and the strong anti-labour sentiments of various governments over recent years, the Canadian labour movement has managed to maintain its membership base of about 2.3 million people. In spite of the extremely difficult political and economic environment in which labour has been operating over the last two decades, some

successes have been achieved. For instance, the Canadian Auto Workers have managed to stand their ground in recent bargaining rounds with large companies such as Canadian Airlines and General Motors, both avoiding concessions and making some modest gains. Unions have undertaken mergers with one another to be better equipped to deal with increasingly large corporations. Some inroads have been made in organizing (particularly young) workers in poorly paid but expanding sectors of the labour market, such as food service (*Hamilton Spectator*, 14 July 1997, p. C12), call centres (*Globe and Mail*, 5 August 1997, p. B10), retail sales (*Hamilton Spectator*, 4 November 1997, p. E5) and homework in the needle trades (Canadian Labour Congress 1997a, 110). Initial progress has also been made in establishing links with labour movements in other countries, in order to confront the power of transnational corporations in a globalized economy, and to challenge the enactment of multilateral trade pacts designed to drive down wages and curtail the ability of governments to exercise any control over capital.

Within Canada, labour has become more adept at working in coalitions with other progressive social movements. The fruits of such collaboration have included the cross-country Women's March Against Poverty in summer of 1996, the Alternative Federal Budget process, and the Days of Action mobilization in Ontario against the right-wing agenda of the Tory government of Mike Harris.

Within this general set of challenges and opportunities facing the Canadian labour movement, social policy poses important questions. Let us now turn to a

more detailed examination of how labour has been grappling with social policy questions. First of all, I will discuss the general positions and approaches that Canadian labour has taken in regard to defending the beleaguered Keynesian welfare state, in light of the profound economic restructuring that has been occurring on a global basis in recent years. Next, I will discuss the record of labour in thinking through and taking action in relation to four more specific issues which seem to salient (at least based on the discussion of theory in Chapter 2) in reconceptualizing social welfare in this post-Keynesian era.

### **Defending the Keynesian Welfare State in the Global Economy**

Over the last several years the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) as a central labour organization has articulated a comprehensive and well-researched set of positions on social policy questions. Within the limits of the current social policy discourse, the CLC has formulated what would seem to be a progressive set of positions and policies designed to protect and advance the economic and social security of union members, working people more generally, economically disadvantaged Canadians, and groups who experience particular forms of oppression, particularly women and ethno-cultural communities who are subjected to racism.

A useful overview of the CLC's ideal vision of social welfare in Canada is contained in its submission (CLC 1994) to the federal government's Social Security

Review (SSR) that was conducted under Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy, shortly after the Liberals defeated the Conservatives in the 1993 federal election. In this document, the CLC states that "the Canadian social security system is unfinished business", and that it

can and should contribute to a real sense of social solidarity. It should contribute to not only equality of opportunity, but a high degree of equality of living standards for all members of society. It should make a positive contribution to the ongoing struggles for equality and independence of women, aboriginal people, people with disabilities and visible minorities (CLC 1994, 2).

Such a social security system must be "embedded in a healthy labour market" if it is to be effective and affordable. More specifically, social security should replace earnings if they are interrupted due to "unemployment, retirement, maternity and parental leave, sickness and disability"; it should "make strong minimum income guarantees to all Canadians"; and it should ensure "access to essential health and educational services that are required for participation in economic activity, the social and political life of the community and personal development" (CLC 1994, 2).

In regard to spending on specific programs, the CLC (1994, 8) argues that Canada's social security arrangements are "underdeveloped," and that spending should rise in the areas of social assistance, child care, public pensions, maternity and parental benefits and unemployment insurance. A new element proposed is "a comprehensive system of disability insurance [and] disability supports". On the

question of overall social spending, the CLC Submission to the SSR points out that total program expenditure would have to rise almost \$18 billion to reach the average level for countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and that it would have to increase by \$70 billion per year in order for Canada "[t]o tie for fourth place in social spending with mighty Denmark" (CLC 1994, 9).

The CLC's view of Canadian social welfare arrangements as a system in need of restoration and extension, rather than metamorphosis, is borne out in interviews with people in key positions at the CLC. For instance, Bob Baldwin (1996), the CLC's Director of Social and Economic Policy, responded in this way to a question about what form of social welfare arrangements might be proposed by the political left as a successor to the Keynesian welfare state.

... [T]he premise for the question seems to be that we need a substantial revision of the track we were on, and I'm not sure that that's true. I think that the current economic and employment context makes that old welfare state paradigm really difficult. But I guess I haven't yet persuaded myself that high levels of unemployment and underemployment should be the starting point for our analysis of what to do with social security. I think there is a more basic debate about the labour market and whether we can in fact get back to something more closely approximating full employment. Then I think that the so-called Keynesian welfare state is quite viable.

For CLC Executive Vice-President Nancy Riche (1997), who comes from Atlantic Canada, the role of social welfare is not a theoretical or esoteric issue. She is familiar with instances of elderly people literally starving before the Old Age



Security program was initiated. She also comments on the importance of universality and regional equity in health care.

[W]hen I'd speak outside Canada, one of the things that was so good to talk about was ... our health system. And I'd talk about it from the perspective of being from Newfoundland, the absolute poorest province, the lowest standard of living, *yet* my health was just as well looked after as everybody's in Canada. I was able to have ... surgery at no cost, just like the Prime Minister. ... And that came about because we made a conscious decision that we're this *big* country geographically, but if you're part of this country, then there should be some equality.

In relation to the future of social welfare programs, Riche (1997) also argues that in view of the rightward shift in social programs, the *status quo ante* looks appealing.

Clearly people say, "well what's the alternative?" Even to go back to what it used to be in the 70s, somehow or other makes us old fashioned, we don't know what we're talking about, we're not forward thinking. But surely part of it is to look at what we had that was good.

Dick Martin (1997), the CLC Secretary-Treasurer, takes a similar position in advocating the need for restoration and enhancement of existing programs, in particular the Canada Pension Plan and unemployment insurance. Beyond that, he also advocates for research into the feasibility of comprehensive disability insurance, and consideration of some sort of guaranteed annual income scheme that would provide dignity for all, rather than mere subsistence.

If we are to restore, enhance and extend existing social welfare programs it is necessary to confront the discourse, which has been carefully constructed and deployed by the right for over twenty years now, that spending on social programs

is what causes the growth of government deficits and debt. The Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) do just that, in a brief (CAW Canada 1994) prepared during the lead-up to the federal Liberal government's budget which came down in early 1995. This submission is a sophisticated and nuanced critique of the government's fiscal policies. It asserts (CAW Canada 1994, 2) that there are "some progressive, *pro-labour* arguments about why government deficits, and the accumulating debt which they cause, should be eliminated as soon as is economically and socially feasible". The brief also clearly rejects the argument that social program spending is the cause of the fiscal crisis of the state, pointing instead to high interest rate policies. The brief condemns the Social Security Review as an exercise in budget cutting, and as an attempt to "ram the round peg of what is left of Canada's social programs into the square hole of the permanent, controlled recession" (CAW Canada 1994, 11).

While this CAW brief recommends the protection of spending levels on Unemployment Insurance, it does not address the question of changes in the nature and structure of social programs. But it does turn the question of "social spending" on its head.

By far Canada's largest "social" program is the welfare programs we have established over the past 15 years for financial investors and bond-holders. This year the federal government will spend something close to \$40 billion in interest payments. This exceeds the total spending of the federal government on *all* of the social programs considered in Minister Axworthy's [Social Security Review]: unemployment insurance, child tax

benefits, transfers to the provinces for welfare and post-secondary education, student loans, and others (CAW Canada 1994, 12).

In another document (CAW Canada 1995) that addresses the need to fight back against the overall attack on social programs, the CAW strategy is clearly a defensive one in regard to preserving the existing programs of Unemployment Insurance, social assistance, public pensions, and medicare. It is interesting to note that where an "offensive" is advocated, it is in regard to

drawing public attention to the role of the financial system in bankrupting the public sector, the inability of the private sector (despite all the pro-business policies that have been put in place in recent years) to create jobs, and the extravagant waste of corporate executives and their ever-more-outlandish salaries (CAW Canada 1995, 2).

This proposed offensive does *not* include a component of progressive restructuring of social programs within this broader (and ultimately determining) context of fiscal and economic policy. Nonetheless, the CAW emphasizes that the moral rationale for social welfare programs takes us a step outside of a purely economic calculus.

We want a Canada that values all of its citizens precisely *because* they are citizens, and not solely on the basis of their "value" in the private marketplace (CAW Canada 1995, 2).

The CAW also makes the point that the so called free market mechanisms which determine how wealth is created and distributed are socially constructed, and can be adapted and changed.<sup>2</sup> The argument is posed in this way:

we reject the implicit assumption that financial markets and institutions are some type of inexorable, universal force which somehow holds the world

economy within its irresistible power. Our financial system is a *social* institution, which was set up to perform concrete functions: collect and allocate financial resources, and exert some discipline over the use of those resources, in the interests of economic efficiency. If this institution is no longer fulfilling its stated purpose in a socially beneficial manner, then it must be changed (CAW Canada 1994, 14).

In addition to linking economic and social well-being to fiscal policy and the behaviour of financial institutions, the labour movement also links these aspects of well-being to labour market conditions. It is instructive to look at the CLC's views on the latter. In an analysis of how and why the labour market has polarized and unemployment has risen during the period after the postwar "Golden Age" of near full employment, CLC economist Andrew Jackson points to the factors of global "competitive austerity" and technological change (Jackson 1996). He lays most of the blame for harsh labour market conditions, however, on something else.

[O]ver the past twenty years and more, macro-economic policy in the advanced industrial countries, including Canada, has been dominated by the objective of maintaining low inflation, and unemployment has been deliberately used to help achieve this objective. Repeated doses of macro-economic restraint have tended to raise structural unemployment over time. While disguised in technical terms, the reality of policy has been to use unemployment to limit and control the bargaining power of labour vis à vis employers in the labour market (Jackson 1996, 29).

As an antidote to this downward spiral in the well-being of working people nationally and internationally, Jackson proposes a "positive adjustment model" or the "high road" of adaptation to the post-Keynesian global, high-tech economy. Within this model, labour markets are to be regulated nationally and internationally, and public policies are to be implemented in leading industrial

countries which ensure job security, high wages, and 'worker-friendly' labour market adjustment mechanisms, such as retraining and relocation. Positive adjustment involves employers and employees negotiating technological and organizational innovation in order to make productivity gains and maximize competitive advantages in the global market. If there is political will at the national and international to take this high road, so the argument goes, there is the potential to "choke off the 'low road' to corporate international competitiveness" (Jackson 1996, 44).

The achievement of global labour market regulation, and of an international commitment to macro-economic policy would result in greater economic equality rather than polarization, would of course be no mean feat. The probability of capital embarking on such a course due to enlightened self-interest, with some strategic prodding from organized labour, popular sector organizations, progressive national governments and multi-lateral agencies, makes for an interesting debate, and we shall return to this question below. In order to take this high road to greater economic equality within and among countries through labour market transformation, it would be essential to build effective links and mobilize resources across labour movements on a transnational basis. The Canadian labour movement has made efforts in this regard.

Within the CLC, there is a commitment to work co-operatively and to provide leadership with labour leaders from other countries. All four current

elected officers of the CLC serve on international labour bodies (Riche 1997). Specifically, in February 1997 Executive Vice-President Nancy Riche was serving as a Vice-President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), as well as chairing the Women's Committee of this organization; President Bob White was also a ICFTU Vice-President; Secretary-Treasurer Dick Martin was a Vice-President of ORIT, the regional body of ICFTU for the Americas; and Executive Vice-President Jean Claude Parrot was on the governing body of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Riche (1997) also referred to her own and others' involvement in regard to the (so far unsuccessful) attempt to draw up a social clause for World Trade Organization members, to increase the number of signatories to ILO Conventions, to advance the agenda for women's equality on an international basis, and to build popular links with labour movements in Asian Pacific countries.<sup>3</sup>

CLC President Bob White, in his capacity as Chair of the OECD's Trade Union's Advisory Committee, led a delegation of labour leaders in a meeting with American President Bill Clinton as a precursor to the 1997 G7 Summit hosted by the United States. As cited in a press report (*Globe and Mail*, 10 June 1997, p. A13), the delegation

presented [Clinton] with a trade-union statement that calls for the co-ordination of macro-economic policies to increase employment. It also urges labour-management efforts to improve the quality of the workplace, invest further in education and training, guarantee the rights of workers in

international trade and investment agreements, and provide new debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries.

Besides action taken by the CLC leadership, the Canadian labour movement has forged international links on other fronts as well. Labour representatives, along with popular sector organizations, participated in the Common Frontiers encounter with people in similar positions from Mexico, in the lead-up to the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement. A participant (Traynor 1996) characterized this encounter in very positive terms, as an opportunity to both share lessons learned in Canada during the free trade debate of 1988, and to build solidarity links with movements struggling for economic and social justice in Mexico. The Canadian Union of Public Employees has also participated in "a North American network of labour organizations around health care" (Katz 1996). Other ties at the level of specific unions have been established across borders between Canada, the United States and Mexico (CLC 1996, 78-81).

Thus it appears that Canadian labour is taking steps to understand and confront the implications of the globalizing economy for workers in this country and internationally. As demonstrated above, labour has also grasped the connections between labour market restructuring, government fiscal policies, and declining levels of social well-being.

Organized labour must also reflect on how its goals and efforts to achieve these goals are articulated in the ideological discourses in which it is engaged. An issue which arose in a number of interviews conducted for this study was the success of the forces of neo-conservatism/neo-liberalism in appropriating from labour and the left the language of positive change and the mantle of moral leadership in the social policy arena. Terms which historically have been associated with social democratic and radical left parties have been adopted by the radical right in labels such as the "Reform" Party and slogans such as the Common Sense "Revolution". Young neo-conservatives portray themselves as moral crusaders who will put an end to excessive and unnecessary government spending on social programs for middle-aged baby boomers (*Hamilton Spectator*, 2 October 1997, pp. A1 & A6). The appropriation of positive language and of the moral high ground by the right would seem to be an important determinant in rolling back the gains made by labour and other equality-seeking movements during the long postwar boom, and in cutting back and/or privatizing significant portions of the welfare state.

Indeed, some formerly positive terms associated with social programs have become a source of stigma. CLC Vice-President Nancy Riche (1997) made this remark:

what the Right has been very clever about doing in the last number of years is stealing our language. So the word "welfare" has become a bad word. When one time Canada *bragged* about being a welfare state ... that word



has become dirty. So one of our biggest challenges is to either come up with new language that's acceptable and positive about this, or reclaim our old. I think the former rather than the latter, because we've lost so much.

The question of democratizing the design and delivery of social programs has been recognized to some extent within the labour movement as a desirable goal (Ontario Federation of Labour 1991, 1993). However it does not appear that much has been done in practical terms by labour to enable broader democratic governance of social programs, nor to equip labour representatives to participate in such decision-making processes. One notable and instructive exception is the experience of labour activists with the Essex County District Health Council (Silversides 1994).

Symbolic issues such as language, and process issues such as democratic control, are very important in regard to the shape and direction of social programs in the years ahead. On a more substantive level, it can also be argued that labour has not yet adequately addressed broader questions that would underlie any progressive reconceptualization of social welfare for the years ahead. Important questions along this line include

- how to define and remunerate work;
- what kind of economic and political structures will ensure material security, a modicum of equality, and meaningful and fulfilling work for all;
- how inequality relates to gender, race/ethnicity, and other social categories as well as to class;

- and what needs to be done to reconcile social welfare, economic "growth", and environmental sustainability.

How labour and other progressive social movements grapple with these four questions<sup>4</sup> will contribute to the determination of social welfare objectives and instrumentalities in the years ahead. I will now examine these four substantive issues in the light of evidence gathered in this study.

i) *Work, Wages and Economic Security*

It perhaps comes as no surprise that the labour movement, whose *raison d'etre* is to collectively advance the interests of working people in relation to their employers and the broader political and economic institutions which determine the social conditions of work and workers, has not rushed to embrace the "end of work" theses advanced by various commentators. As an economist in the employ of the CLC, Andrew Jackson, is critical of Jeremy Rifkin's argument (1995) in his bestselling book entitled *The End of Work*. Jackson (1996, 6) levels two criticisms at Rifkin's notion that technological advances will lead to "a 'post jobs' world in which people will receive some kind of basic income, in return for 'work' in the non- market voluntary sector". Jackson (1996, 6) contends that "it is dubious to what extent we can separate the two key functions of jobs – jobs as a source of income, and jobs as a source of social and individual well-being". He is also pessimistic that "taxation levels could be raised to anywhere near the extent

necessary to provide decent incomes to all in a high unemployment society".

Jackson (1996, 6) predicts instead "the harsh reality of workfare – forced labour in return for sub-poverty line incomes for those excluded from paid employment" is what awaits us if we frame policy according to Rifkin's position.

Jim Stanford (1996), an economist with the CAW, is also critical of the end of work thesis, although he frames the issue in more positive terms.

As our society does become more productive, we have a choice. It's a choice that we've always had, since the industrial revolution, a choice of how do we want to capture the gains of that productivity. Do we want to capture it in more things, in a higher material standard of living, or do we want to capture it in more time, time in our households, and pleasure time, and time to work in our communities? I think it is a choice. As an economist, I don't think that we have to have shorter working hours. If the economy was managed with full employment as its goal, we could have everybody working forty hours a week, despite new technology. ... The reason that there isn't enough work is because of macro-economic policy to promote unemployment, not because of new technology.

To be sure, Rifkin's popularization of the "end of work" concept is built on rather simplistic analysis, and contains an exaggerated and somewhat misplaced faith in the voluntary sector as the focal point of meaningful work in the future. Notwithstanding the flaws in Rifkin's analysis, the disappearance of paid work and what must be done to adjust to this reality is probably an issue that is not going to disappear. The labour movement has recognized this to some extent. Unions are grappling with the issues of work distribution, especially in their campaigns to channel overtime hours into the creation of more jobs (CLC 1997a, 73-75; CAW Canada 1994, 23-4). It may be the case that wage and salary earners would

choose to work for less than full-time hours, and to vary their working time at different stages of their personal and family lives, if they had such options open to them and if income could be supplemented through social entitlements and flexibility in the work arrangements of other family members.<sup>5</sup>

However even the modest proposal of redistributing work through curbing the overtime of those now employed and hiring additional people has been the subject of considerable controversy within unions. The CAW has made this principle a key demand in collective bargaining (Stanford 1996; Hargrove 1997), despite the fact that many senior union members have been reluctant to forfeit their opportunity to maximize their incomes through overtime. This reluctance is attributable in part to the general anxiety that permeates the work force concerning the possibility of temporary or permanent layoff (Hargrove 1997).

Given the controversy surrounding the redistribution of overtime, more radical approaches to the reapportionment of work time would no doubt be even more contentious, at least in the short term. Women in particular must be concerned in this regard. Proposals for flexible work time arrangements that sound appealing may in fact put many more women at risk of being trapped in unpaid domestic labour and/or in poorly paid, contingent segments of the labour market.

Perhaps the questions of how to optimally distribute paid work, and how to balance paid and unpaid work in ways that will maximize the likelihood of

economic security and personal fulfilment, could be best addressed in a context within which income is not wholly or constantly dependent on participation in the paid labour force. Schemes to provide a minimum economic floor below which no one is to fall, which would have the effect of decommodifying labour, are frequently packaged as guaranteed annual income (GAI) schemes of various types. Debate about a GAI for all people in Canada took place in the labour movement during the federal government's social security review in the mid-1970s. Haddow (1994, 355) describes the CLC's response at this time as "reactive and indistinct".

[T]he CLC had misgivings about the GAI's potential use as an alternative to treasured broader social measures but, since the major GAI initiative of the period did not pursue this 'Friedmanite' course, saw no need to oppose it. However the CLC never elaborated a comprehensive statement about how the GAI would fit into its social goals and never actively promoted a GAI (Haddow 1994, 355).

On the other hand, the recommendation of the Macdonald Commission in 1985 to scrap most existing social security programs in favour of a minimalist version of the GAI led the CLC to formulate, after a delay of over two years, a social democratic version of the GAI (Haddow 1994, 357-59). The CLC saw the Macdonald version of the GAI<sup>6</sup> as "an attack on the economic security of all workers" that would subsidize abysmally low wages and get the government off the hook for ensuring full employment (Haddow 1994, 358). As an alternative, the CLC version of GAI was formulated as a program of last resort in cases of failure of the three mainstays of social security: a "secure, well-paying job"; existing

programs of social insurance, child benefits, and universal social services such as medicare; and progressive taxation and tax relief for low-income households (Haddow 1994, 358-59).

The issue of GAI appears to be recycling yet again at the CLC, albeit in an indirect way. Cindy Wiggins of the CLC staff co-chaired a Social Policy Committee as part of the process of putting together the Alternative Federal Budget for 1997.<sup>7</sup> Issues to do with guaranteed economic security for all Canadians were addressed in this process. Wiggins (1997) describes what transpired in this way:

During the process of putting together the social policy section of the AFB, we had discussions that weren't identified as talking about a Guaranteed Annual Income, but the discussions had all the components. [We asked] is this the direction we want to go in? And I know there's been discussion out there in response to the Alternative Federal Budget, that the notion of a Guaranteed Annual Income is *not* specifically identified in the AFB social policy section. So it would seem to me that there are people out there who are interested in going back to that debate, and with the specifics that we put into the social policy of the AFB this year, all the elements of a GAI are essentially there. We just haven't labelled it as that. So I would suspect that if we do this process again next year, and I'm assuming we will, that might be more directly on the table than it has been in the past. ... [T]his year we focused on the notion of social rights being economic rights, and economic rights being social rights, and the notion of rights of citizenship, and also couched it in terms of the devolution of federal responsibility for national social programs down to the provinces ... And that is how we came up with the general rubric of calling for a frontal assault on poverty that was multi-faceted, not just one little initiative here, initiative there. To really seriously address the question of poverty in this country, you did need a multi-faceted approach that included economic issues like job creation and specific program initiatives as well. This is what led me to believe that we were moving towards a notion of a GAI.

It may be that the formulation and adoption of a progressive GAI approach to income security, and the structuring of such an approach on principles of equity and adequacy rather than on the desire to cut social spending, involve a preliminary step. This prerequisite step would be a radical rethinking of what we mean by 'work' in late capitalist societies such as Canada, as well the relationship of work in all its forms to wages, income and wealth transfers by government, and other material and practical forms of support for individuals and families. Perhaps it is necessary to expand and reconceptualize our concept of 'real' work to incorporate various forms of socially valuable and necessary labour performed in the home and community that is currently non-waged. Child and elder care, domestic labour, community activism to meet others' needs and protect the environment, and creative and artistic endeavour to enrich our communities (as opposed to commodified entertainment to enrich large corporations) are all essential and valuable forms of labour outside the wage economy. How can these types of work be enabled and supported, in practical and financial terms, through public policy that is democratically determined and public programs that are accountable to citizens and communities?<sup>8</sup>

Thus there is an apparent need for an extended, inclusive, and truly democratic debate<sup>9</sup> on how to move ourselves in the direction of universal economic security for all and a more holistic understanding of the nature of work in Canadian society. Such a reformulation of work would have to include as a *sine*

*qua non* a commitment to feminist principles, to prevent women from being trapped in domestic labour and pink collar ghettos.

Some persons interviewed for this study were quite critical of labour's failure to begin to grapple with the (albeit broad and complex) question of redefining work in late capitalist societies such as Canada. As a social policy academic who has worked with unions, Allan Moscovitch (1997) rejects the GAI approach as inherently conservative. But he also argues that

the answers lie in the nature of work itself. And that the labour movement, if it's going to do anything at all that would be valuable, has got to attack the regulation of work. They've got to attack employment, they've got to attack the regulation of work. The future has to do with how people work, how much they work, the conditions they work in, not just the wages. I mean they [labour] have been guilty as much ... in this country as any union in the U.S. of bread and butter unionism. They have focused to such a large degree on money that ... and the same on the social security side, that they have *not* had the focus they should have had on the nature of work, on the nature of leisure, leisure time and how people use their time. This is to me where the future lies. It doesn't lie in more and more hours for fewer and fewer people.

On the question of distributing overtime among workers, Moscovitch (1997)

includes not just monetary but moral elements in his analysis.

But people who get the [premium for working overtime] have been prepared to accept it. Why? Well in my view, because they have become accustomed to measuring themselves and their lives in terms of materialism, to put it bluntly. Does this sound like a moral crusade? Perhaps it is. Maybe it's time for people to think about how they live their lives. I don't think all the answers lie in constructing more and better social security programs. I think the answer lies in sharing the work that we have. I think the answer lies in reducing the number of hours of work that people do, so that they can have more leisure time. Increasing the availability of community-based leisure programs of all types.



Judy Rebick (1997) is critical of the emphasis placed by organized labour on social insurance as the most important aspect of social security. She presents an alternative feminist perspective in keeping with the reality of today's labour market conditions, in which she argues for universal and adequate guaranteed annual income, a shorter waged-work week, and public programs to support both paid labour in the era of the contingent worker and unpaid labour in the home and community.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, the question of how to design programs that can ensure social and economic security for all Canadians must be addressed with an understanding of how the broad political-economic context enables or inhibits the achievement of this goal. Let us now examine how labour understands the political economy of social welfare in this broader sense.

ii) *Beyond Social Democracy: Redefining the Political Economy*

Since the founding of the New Democratic Party (NDP) in 1961, the bulk of the labour movement in Canada has been closely aligned with this party, and has been wedded to the NDP social democratic vision of a "humanized" capitalism (Morton 1977; Avakumovic 1978; Penner 1992). This vision has had as its major elements a belief in the desirability of a mixed economy of private enterprise and public ownership; Keynesian macro-economic intervention to smooth out the cyclical booms and busts of capitalist growth; and a relatively comprehensive

social welfare state which would protect workers from the vicissitudes of the labour market and from hazards to individual wage-earning capability, and which would ensure the financial viability of families, especially those with young children. This strong commitment to a NDP version of social democracy has perhaps been best exemplified over the years in the Steelworkers Union. Their Research Director at the national level, Hugh Mackenzie, describes it in this way:

This is an organization that very much sees itself as a social democratic organization politically. And so our approach to social policy issues would be consistent with that.

Other unions leaders and activists have seen the need for the labour movement, while not abandoning its political alliance to the NDP, to also engage in "street politics" (Hargrove 1997), and to reach beyond purely "electoralist" approaches and push hard for its political objectives even when a NDP government is elected (Turk 1996). As then Director of Education at the Ontario Federation of Labour and as a former Ontario NDP President, Jim Turk (1996) expressed these views:

I think the difference is not whether you support the NDP or whether you believe in extra-parliamentary social movement building, but rather whether your strategy is an electoralist strategy, in a narrow sense, that is your political work is consumed by electoral work, or whether you have a broader vision of movement building *and* electoral work. And I think that's the difference. There are a number of organizations in the labour movement that *essentially* restrict their political work to electoral work. You're either running an election or you're gearing up for an election. And there are others, and I'm certainly in that camp, who say that unless you've built a social movement pushing .... that's supportive of the policies you want, even if you win an election, you're not going to have a government

that's going to be able to do what you want, because all elected governments immediately come under a variety of structural pressures ... economic pressures, corporate pressures, and so forth. Unless there's a really strong social movement pushing for progressive changes, there's *always* strong corporate pressure against progressive changes. So unless you've built that kind of movement, you leave a government largely vulnerable to those kind of corporate pressures.

Turk (1996) applies this analysis to Ontario provincial politics in the early 1990s.

There were a whole bunch of factors that came together in a unique situation, allowing the NDP to win [the 1990 Ontario election]. But having won, there wasn't this sudden groundswell and movement and pressure for certain kinds of policies. So immediately, a ton of bricks fell. The economy wasn't good, the corporate folks started putting *all* sorts of pressure on. In the face of that the labour movement, especially the more electoralist wing in labour, said "well, look, we can't be critical of our party now that they're in power, and just add our voice to the corporate voices criticizing them. So we have to go along with whatever [Premier] Bob [Rae] says and wants." So you had enormous pressure coming from one side, to move to the right, and no effective pressure coming from the other side to balance that, because any pressure would be viewed as criticism. And so, not surprisingly, things got pushed to the right. If you look when the Tories win, or the Liberals win, the corporate world doesn't say "well, geez, our guys got elected, we can't be seen to be critical of them." The National Citizens' Coalition, or the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation, or the Business Council on National Issues, they step up their lobbying [laughs] even when their folks win. We didn't do that. And then finally something *so* contrary to a lot of our beliefs happened with the Social Contract, that people started speaking up. And as you know, there was a division in labour about how loud that voice should be. And the public sector unions said, "it's got to be loud. We've violated a fundamental tenet of democratic society." Others, especially some private sector unions, said "yes, it was bad that they did that, but if we're too publicly critical, we're just going to lead to their defeat."

Strategic questions around electoralist efforts and social movement work are vital. But both strategies are means to certain ends, those being the economic and social policy objectives of organized labour. As discussed above, the CLC

leadership is still very much committed to the revitalization of social security arrangements that pertained during the heyday of the Keynesian welfare state, arrangements that privilege social insurance programs as the most important element. As we have seen, there has been some criticism of this position by friends of labour. Moscovitch (1997) expressed this view quite dramatically.

Before the [1993 federal] election, and for about two years afterwards, I tried to influence some people I know in the labour movement to get involved, and to do something other than repeat over and over again "everything is fine". I said, look, there's a train coming, and you're going to be under it if you're not getting on it. Well, they're under it. They've been run over. It's called the Unemployment Insurance reforms. They were run over completely. Not only were they run over, but nobody even paid attention when they screamed. And they didn't scream very loud anyway. They couldn't get anybody terribly interested even in the labour movement to do anything about it. Now the coverage of Unemployment Insurance has dropped from about somewhere between 80 and 90 per cent down to less than 50 per cent.

Besides this very significant constriction of UI, in recent years the Canadian state has abolished one of its last universal programs when it replaced Family Allowances with the Child Tax Benefit, and has vastly reduced federal funding and policy leverage in the fields of social assistance, health and post-secondary education. If indeed the Keynesian welfare state is dead, or at least mortally wounded, are there elements of organized labour who are grappling with alternative mechanisms and paradigms (or elements thereof) that could ensure economic security and social well-being for workers and for Canadians in general?

Certainly there do not appear to be any progressive alternative blueprints for social welfare<sup>11</sup> that labour (or anyone else) is in the process of drafting. In fact, with the possible exception of labour's efforts to shape the social policy components of the Alternative Federal Budget referred to above, there appears to be very little work being done in the labour movement to redesign social programs. Perhaps such detailed planning is more the purview of progressive social policy advocacy organizations, working in concert with bureaucrats and constituencies affected by social programs (and the latter would certainly include labour).

Where labour may have a more vital role to play is in advocating for democratic and equitable economic structures and processes within which specific social programs and policies can be situated. After all, the Keynesian welfare state was constructed during the post-World War Two era when macro-economic assumptions and policies had undergone a substantial paradigm shift. The neo-classical, laissez-faire concepts that held sway in advanced capitalist countries before the Great Depression had given way to the Keynesian paradigm of government action to manage demand and ensure economic equilibrium.<sup>12</sup> In our present conjuncture, perhaps it is the role of the labour movement to catalyse and participate in the struggle for a similar seismic shift in economic thinking. In a globalized economy in which transnational corporations thoroughly dominate the economy and polity, the efforts of labour or other progressive constituencies to

tinker at a national or sub-national level with the design of social programs and the details of social policy are inherently limited strategies.

Evidence was gathered in this study that at least some elements of the Canadian labour movement are struggling with these broader questions of political economy in the late 20th century. Buzz Hargrove (1997), President of the Canadian Auto Workers, emphasizes the fundamental injustice of gaping inequalities in the distribution of wealth and income in the new globalized economy. He also speaks of the importance of **re-regulation of the capitalist marketplace** in the interests of economic equity.

I always have argued that the people who are promoting deregulation today are the people who always oppose regulation to start with - the wealthy, the powerful, the elitists in our society, those with money never needed regulation. They never needed the social infrastructure of the country. They just want everything the other way - don't have any laws, any health and safety, any environmental concerns, don't force any kind of tests on them ... They'll get rid of it all, and they'll destroy any kind of semblance of a sane society or sense of community, if you allow them to do that. I always believed in reform of regulation. ... The first thing [Ontario premier Mike Harris] attacked was the labour movement, because we are the only counter-balance, and the only ones that are really effectively arguing that regulation is not bad. There are regulations that should be changed and updated constantly. ... [R]egulations that were designed in an earlier period of time, like social policy ... may not be satisfactory today, and we shouldn't be afraid of change.

Perhaps this position is not a startlingly radical one when considered within the overall scope of leftist thinking. However Hargrove and the CAW have been swimming against a tidal wave of contemporary business pressure for progressively greater deregulation of all aspects of economic activity by all levels

of government. The CAW's strong position in this regard received some media prominence during the union's fight against concessions to Canadian Airlines in 1996 (*Financial Post*, 7/9 December 1996, p.19), when the union called for government re-regulation of the airline industry in order to safeguard jobs, levels of service, and safety (Hargrove 1997).

The CLC puts has put forward several proposals for the regulation of transnational capital at international levels, and for the reshaping of investment patterns in the public interest. These proposals include "a small transactions tax on foreign exchange"; "restoring and increasing national controls on capital outflows"; "long term planning and co-ordination of national production strategies, combined with a clear emphasis on reigning [*sic*] in the financial sector of the economy"; capital funds that are "rooted" in (especially underdeveloped) communities and regions; a "National Investment Fund ... to support sector development banks, community economic development funds, worker co-ops, and so on"; and local and sectoral economic planning. These measures are described as "a shift of power in society, from mobile capital, to workers and to democratic governments ... in order to realize our social objectives". Undertaking "a commitment to full employment involves moving in the direction a different kind of economy and society" (Jackson 1996, 43-47).

One significant example of Canadian labour's readiness to reject programs and assumptions of global capital (at least at the level of the CLC leadership) was

the strong mobilization against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). Canadian labour (CLC 1997b), in conjunction with labour and popular sector organizations in many different countries, mounted a strong opposition to the MAI. This concerted and informed opposition succeeded in forcing the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development to at least postpone their attempt to implement the MAI, an agreement which would have further significantly eroded the power of states to set policies to enhance social equality, protect the environment, and generally balance and check the power of transnational corporations (Clarke and Barlow 1997).<sup>13</sup>

Thus the CLC and other facets of the labour movement in Canada<sup>14</sup> advocate the regulation of capital and the reform of fiscal policy, along with the reinstatement and gradual extension of progressive labour law and social programs, in order to advance the interests of working people. There is also some attention being paid to alternative economic models and processes that might provide alternatives to capital accumulation by transnational corporations.

One approach which has attracted much attention over the years has been **worker owned enterprises**, in which employees maintain substantial if not majority ownership of the enterprise, and participate to some degree in the direction and management of the company. This approach is often touted as the preferred one when corporations launch a capital strike and threaten to shut down



operations and eliminate jobs, contending that the rate of return on investment is insufficient.

Worker ownership must be realistically assessed as to its viability on a case by case basis. On one hand, it can be successful given the right circumstances, such as the cases of Algoma Steel and Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company in Northern Ontario (*Globe and Mail*, 8 July 1997, p. B13). On the other hand, worker ownership can be a problematic approach in industries which have expanded their market from a national to a global basis, and within which a small number of large companies with immense amounts of capital can overwhelm initiatives based on much smaller pools of worker capital. Jim Turk (1996) cites the small electrical appliance industry as an example.

When I was working with the United Electrical Workers, G[eneral] E[lectric] began a serious downsizing. They eliminated more than a quarter of their entire worldwide work force. Part of that was at a small appliance plant in Barrie. They already shifted from making all of the small appliances for Canada in that one plant to a global product mandate system, where [of] four or five small appliance plants around the world, each one would specialize, so they could have longer production runs of that product, and supply the whole world market. So the Canadian plant in Barrie made electric kettles, electric fry pans, and lawn mowers for GE for the whole world market. GE said, "well, we're closing it." And there was immediate pressure, "well, let's have workers get investment capital, and the workers buy it and run it." Well, it would have been a *disaster*, because what would a group of workers or a workers' co-op do with 400,000 fry pans, and 500,000 lawn mowers? You have no marketing network, you easily produce more than the total Canadian demand. Even if you had the whole Canadian market with no competition, to sustain that plant you've got to sell much more, and then you have no brand name, you're going into competition with giant multi-nationals in a world market.... And so simplistic notions of "well, we'll just buy it, we'll take it

over, we'll run it", at a period when we've already have been locked into a free trade environment, and an increasing proportion of our economy is export-oriented, it gets into very complicated and difficult things, and gives business some ability to resist those initiatives.

Another approach often touted as an alternative to purely profit-oriented capital accumulation is pooling of capital in **ethical investment funds**. An economist on the staff of the CAW, Jim Stanford (1996) is critical of this strategy.

The ethical investment funds tend to stay away from big, dirty manufacturing industries that pollute, or that have plants in the third world. All of the ethical investment funds that I've seen have got a really heavy stake in Canadian banks. Now, what's ethical about the Canadian banks? They made six billion dollars in profit this year, they are profiting from Canada's debt crises, they're manipulating the international financial system, they're extracting huge amounts of economic surplus out of impoverished third world countries, yet this is supposed to be an ethical investment just because they don't have a factory that blows smoke in the air. That's nonsense, in my opinion.

Another interesting strategy in redefining economic arrangements on the local and regional level is the building up of the **social economy**. There are several definitions of this approach (Levesque and Ninacs 1997, 5-7) which make for some conceptual confusion of tongues. In an effort to define an economic sector which is distinct from both the government-dominated public sector and the corporation-dominated private sector, the Quebec Task Force on the Social Economy has enunciated five principles to guide its efforts (Levesque and Ninacs 1997, 6).

- i) A primary goal of service to members or the community rather than accumulating profit

- ii) Autonomous management (as distinguished from public programs)
- iii) Democratic decision making process
- iv) Primacy of persons and work over capital and redistribution of profits
- v) Operations based on the principles of participation, empowerment, and individual and collective accountability.

On the other hand, Levesque and Ninacs (1997, 15) cite an OECD report

(Sauvage 1996) in which three risks in the development of a social economy are identified.

- ▶ the risk associated with the "reductionist" trend inherent in industrialized countries, that tolerates experimentation for a limited time, but soon attempts to steer innovative practices into one or other of the two dominant models, the most viable towards the conventional private sector, the others to the state, even though partnership would be more beneficial;
- ▶ the risk of "ghettoizing" the social economy by seeing it as merely a well of cheap labour, and inexpensive means of privatizing public services or, by limiting enterprises to "collective utility" markets, institutionalizing them as tools for managing poverty and exclusion rather than a means of escape.
- ▶ the risk of broadening its mercantile dimension, and the danger of commercializing all facets of human existence with, as a corollary, a diminished concept of the common good and redefinition of state operations and mutual assistance as mere commercial transactions, thereby degrading citizenship to a mercenary consumption of public services.

On a practical level, the development of a social economy has progressed much further in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada, and Quebec-based labour organizations have been important players in this development. The potential for

building a social economy as a form of economic organization needs to be vigorously pursued by the labour movement outside of Quebec, with attention to the conceptual and practical challenges as outlined above. The labour movement in English-speaking Canada has not, as a matter of priority, struggled for the pooling of social investment capital and the marshalling of technical and organization supports for social economy initiatives. It has been shown from experience in Quebec that the ready availability of such funds and supports are essential in efforts to build up the social economy (Levesque and Ninacs 1997).

**Worker pension plans and investment funds**, to which union members contribute and over which they may exercise some control, are seen by many as a tool to use in directing investment towards social ends (Finn 1996a and 1996b). In contrast to the development of a social economy, the judicious investment of capital funds by labour does not necessarily tamper with the managerial or organizational tenets of capitalism, nor does it seek to supplant the profit motive as the mainspring of the economy. Nonetheless, social investment at the behest of labour can conceivably achieve useful ends, particularly when used in concert with other mechanisms such as worker ownership or development models using social economy principles.

An economic strategy even more radical than the building of a social economy sector within a predominantly capitalist economy, or the use of labour-controlled funds to partially supplant profit motive with social objectives as the

criterion of investment, would be the **transformation of the ownership of capital from private hands to a social base**. This approach was in fact attempted in Sweden in the 1970s and 1980s, through the Meidner Plan, which was put together and promoted by the Swedish central labour organization for blue collar workers. This plan called for the redirection of a portion of corporate profits into "wage earner funds" that would be used to incrementally socialize ownership of the commanding heights of the economy through the purchase of shares of large Swedish corporations.<sup>15</sup> Ownership by private capital would gradually give way to collective ownership by worker-controlled and democratically administered funds designed to combine capable management of economic activities with genuine economic democracy.

The Meidner Plan failed as a practical attempt, due to the failure of the Swedish social democratic party to fully support it, a vehement campaign of opposition by Swedish capital, and failure to take into theoretical account the structural power and unity of capital (Olsen 1991). In the present context, one might ask questions about the viability of a Meidner-style scheme at the national level in an increasingly globalized, free trade context. Nonetheless, proactive and legislatively mandated schemes for social capital formation and social investment to extend economic democracy remain good ideas that the labour movement in Canada (especially outside Quebec) have yet to fully think through and test out.

One last approach to reshaping the political economy in the interests of people rather than capital is the use of **state administration and public enterprise**. Of course, government provision of services and ownership of the means of production have been primary targets of the neo-conservative/neo-liberal ideological campaigns of the last two decades.<sup>16</sup> This attack was mounted against the public sector despite the fact that the state apparatus in capitalist countries faithfully enacts and reflects the structural imperatives of capital, as has been convincingly demonstrated by marxian state theorists such as Miliband (1969) and Poulantzas (1973). Even government-owned enterprises which have not behaved any differently than their private sector counterparts in regard maximizing profit to the exclusion of all other ends (Mulvale 1985) have been divested from governments into the hands of private capital.

Labour organizations have not been silent on the question of public sector management in an era characterised by a relentless push towards privatization. Larry Katz (1996), Research Director at the national office of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, offers these comments:

CUPE finds itself in a very difficult situation. We are saying is that [in] this restructuring, we are prepared to look at inefficiencies, we are prepared to look at waste, we want to look at what's responsible for that. And we would like to see improved planning, we'd like to see management excellence in the public sector, we'd be all in favour of creating institutions of public sector management excellence. But we're not prepared to see essential services either eliminated or hived off to the private sector, because we've already learned that quality deteriorates and accountability deteriorates, and it's not smart from a cost perspective. And if there's

going to be change, we are going to look after the needs of our members, and there should be employment security. Any meaningful restructuring process has to also involve the creation of other jobs for people to go to, and they haven't been there.

It is interesting to note some of the disastrous results of privatization in the backyards of politicians who have been the most vocal supporters of this approach. In Britain, the privatization of water utilities under the former government of Margaret Thatcher has resulted in profiteering, higher rates, environmental infractions, and breakdowns in supply (*Globe and Mail*, 17 October 1996, p. A10). In New Brunswick, former Premier Frank McKenna's entry into "public-private partnerships" in areas such as highway and school construction, medicare billing and administration, tax collection, corrections, and social assistance delivery has been followed by "potentially expensive divorces", and has been criticised for lack of "public accountability, costly failures, and demoralized civil servants" (*Globe and Mail*, 20 October 1997, p. A4).

In addition to pointing out the pitfalls and failures in privatization of public sector responsibilities, the labour movement (and especially public sector unions) perhaps should revisit and redesign to some extent their traditional positions in favour of state administration and public ownership as policy instruments. It may be timely for labour to propose innovative models for the combination of economic rationality and efficiency with the achievement of social goals in the public and quasi-public sectors. Perhaps it is time for labour (and the left more generally) to

question received faith in the mechanisms of state ownership and government administration, and to strive to define new organizational forms in the broader public sector which would combine democratic control and accountability, workplace democracy, and customer/client involvement in corporate direction.<sup>17</sup>

iii) *The Multiple Axes of Inequality*

Aside from addressing class inequalities through collective bargaining with employers and mobilization in the broader political arena, unions (at least those which espouse a social-unionist set of principles) are committed to struggles to overcome inequalities based on factors other than class. Of course one fundamental axis of inequality in our society is gender.

The CLC remains firmly committed to employment and pay equity approaches to resolving outstanding gender differences in the paid labour market. The CLC's Director of the Women's and Human Rights Dept., Penni Richmond (1997), argues that many employers are "not buying into the right wing slander campaign" in regard to employment equity, and are continuing to pursue this goal (with some push from unions in collective bargaining) because it makes "good business sense" in our increasingly diverse society. On the other hand, she says that

there's this feeling that pay equity is done now, it's a one shot deal. In fact, the vast majority of women working in Ontario haven't been touched by it. The vast majority of women working *elsewhere* haven't been touched by it.



It's not even begun to slip into the private sector in many of the jurisdictions. They're just achieving pay equity in Quebec this year, at least achieving pay equity legislation. So we've got a *massive* [unevenness in] development and progress across the country.

At the same time, Richmond (1997) argues that the principle of pay equity is not as contentious in principle as that as employment equity. When pay equity is framed as a "family issue", and when unions such as the Public Service Alliance of Canada have really pushed for it in bargaining, progress has been made even in the current very inhospitable climate. She points to the example of recent amendments to the federal *Employment Equity Act*.

While pay and employment equity strategies should not be abandoned, there is a need to assess their efficacy and to revisit the political-economic assumptions upon which they are based. O'Connor (1996, 96) points out that

the strategy of employment equity may be severely limited because of structural forces behind occupational segregation. The objective of integrating women into the male-dominated industrial sector of the labour force is based on the assumption of an expanding industrial sector, but the sector of the advanced capitalist economies that is expanding is the service sectors and in some countries a significant proportion of the jobs being created are "bad jobs".

Furthermore, there is evidence (O'Connor 1996, 96-7) that

the feminization of jobs associated with the sharp increase in female labour force participation throughout the 1980s has been closely related to an erosion of labour regulations

in terms of both explicit standards and enforcement. Finally, in regard to pay equity, the question can be asked if pay equity approaches are now limited in that

"the problem is bad jobs and low pay for everyone and not necessarily unequal pay, though this may be an exacerbating factor" (O'Connor 1996, 97).

Aside from supporting unions in the struggle for gender equality in the workplace, the CLC has also made conscious and sustained efforts to work collaboratively with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) in regard to the broader feminist struggle. Some of the outcomes and tensions arising from this collaboration in regard to social policy questions will be explored in the chapter on NAC later in this study.

Another example of an effective alliance between labour and various other groups seeking equality are the coalitions for social justice that have come together in various parts of the country at local and provincial levels, and that are loosely affiliated with the Action Canada Network. These coalitions often focus on issues and strategies that unite progressive groups, but that are not being specifically addressed by particular organizations that are constituent parts of the coalitions. For instance, the Ontario Coalition for Social Justice has undertaken projects such as research and publicity concerning "corporate welfare" through the tax system, and the publication of a resource booklet on legal questions for social activists who engage in non-violent direct action (Turk 1996). At the national level, the Action Canada Network has been trying to shed light on and foster opposition to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, building on its experience in opposing the

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, and the North American Free Trade Agreement.

At the local level in Hamilton-Wentworth in Ontario, the Coalition for Social Justice was a co-sponsor (with the local Labour Council) of the Days of Action against the Tory government of Mike Harris in February 1996. With considerable organizational help from the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Hamilton Days of Action steering committee succeeded in turning out well in excess of 100,000 people into the streets to protest social cuts, privatization, and tax breaks for the wealthy. Other communities which have mounted successful Days of Action are London, Peterborough, Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto, North Bay, Windsor, and the Niagara Region. In all of these mobilizations, labour and popular sector organizations staged large marches and rallies and shut down work sites across the communities.<sup>18</sup>

To be sure, there have been tensions and sometimes open conflict in the Days of Action coalition work between labour and other movements, in Hamilton and other communities. Nonetheless, the results have been edifying. The Days of Action in Ontario have been an historically unprecedented development in the political history of the province, turning out thousands and (in the case of the Hamilton and Toronto Days) tens of thousands of unionists and social activists to protest against the neo-conservative assault on health, education, and social programs. Even though the Harris Tories are proceeding with their agenda, it may

well be that the political culture in Ontario, which for several decades has been quite conservative and non-activist, has been significantly and permanently altered.

Research by William Carroll and Robert Ratner (1995; 1996) suggests that there is considerable convergence between labour activists and leaders in other equality-seeking movement, at least in the lower mainland of British Columbia, in regard to their visions of a more equitable and just society. Carroll and Ratner (1996, 418) point out that although "identity politics predominate in (certain) new social movements" and not among labour activists, "the political-economic injustice frame appears to serve as a common interpretive framework for most activists across the entire spectrum of movements".

The CAW is one labour organization with a strong historical commitment to social unionism, and that commitment is manifested today in its coalition work. President Buzz Hargrove (1997) describes this work with an interesting combination of realism and idealism.

A lot of dedicated community activists that don't necessarily agree with labour on some of our issues, recognize that given the choices between the business community and where they're at today ... find themselves more naturally allied to organizations like the Canadian Auto Workers union. And our [commitment to coalition work comes] firstly out of self-interest. Just one example, the Starbuck's dispute in Vancouver, where we just reached a settlement. Starbuck's didn't settle with us because we have this strong union, we have all these workers. We have *ten* locations out of about a hundred in Vancouver, which means we have about a hundred workers out of about a thousand in Vancouver. And then you extrapolate that ... they have over a *thousand* stores throughout the U.S. and Canada. They're a *billion* dollar operation. I mean, we were peanuts. We could have struck them, they could have closed those shops, and went on forever.

But their fear was our relationship in the broader community, and our ability to mobilize a boycott of Starbuck's stores if we couldn't have got a reasonable collective agreement. ... We have to reach out into the broader community. Those people who have a commitment to community, a commitment to a different vision than the corporate bottom line.

When we started meetings with the coalitions, they were very suspicious. Some of them still are. Some of our people are very suspicious of them. There's always these kind of things. You're constantly fighting and putting out bush fires. But we have, I think, a *reasonably* good relationship, and we put our money where our mouth is. We recognize that most of these groups don't have the resources we do, so we're able to help in that regard, and that always puts you in good stead, as long as your support is unconditional, you don't have strings attached to it. And we have their issues out front with our members constantly. All of us are struggling to get support on these issues today, but clearly we're in the forefront of arguing. We strengthen our relationship with other unions that aren't necessarily part of the mainstream of labour, or haven't been historically. So there's been a lot of building going on.

I think long-term, it is going to be meaningful. ... It's certainly been an enriching and enlightening experience working with the social groups.

An interesting example of unions building ties with other workers and movements is found in the Social Justice Fund of the Canadian Auto Workers and the Humanity Fund of the Steelworkers. As part of collective agreements negotiated by CAW and Steelworker bargaining committees, a small portion of workers' wages is set aside in order to support projects in international development and solidarity abroad, as well as social agencies serving vulnerable populations within Canada. Through these Funds, these unions financially underwrite worker solidarity and social justice projects across national boundaries, and especially in the Southern hemisphere.

Thus the work of building effective coalitions between labour and other movements, both at home and abroad, is fraught with challenges and opportunities. The importance of such bridge building cannot be overemphasized, given the need to form a counter-hegemonic bloc in relation to capital and its allies in this era of global corporate dominance.

iv) *The Greening of Social Welfare*

The synthesis of social welfare objectives with principles of environmental sustainability is a fundamentally important question that gets very little attention in either academic inquiry<sup>19</sup> or public policy discourses.<sup>20</sup> The "greening" of social welfare is an issue that the labour movement, like other progressive constituencies and social policy organizations, has not addressed in a very substantial way as yet.

A fundamental contradiction of the Keynesian welfare state is that it is premised on the assumption that economic growth is necessary and desirable as the motive force of capital accumulation. Growth is in turn related to ever-rising levels of consumption, and to a relatively unfettered marketplace in which pollution and resource depletion are "externalities" which do not figure into the calculation of costs nor hinder the extraction of profits. From a social-ecological point of view, however, constantly rising consumption, pollution and resource depletion are incommensurate with environmental sustainability and social well-being in the medium and long term.

One noteworthy green initiative by trade unionists at a local level is a publication entitled *Global Guardian* (CAW Windsor n.d.), put out by the Windsor [Ontario] Regional Environment Council of the Canadian Auto Workers. The publication's motto is "Labour Working Toward Sustainability." It states that its mission is to "elevate the working classes' level of understanding on environmental issues" and to "foster greater concern and involvement in both the workplace and within the 'green community.'" Articles in the *Guardian* address a variety of concerns, including the need to eliminate carcinogens in the workplace and in the broader environment, the need to preserve and restore biodiversity in surrounding Essex County, the poor environmental records of the federal and provincial governments, and the international struggle of the union movement in countries such as Indonesia to confront the environmental destruction being wrought by governments and multinational corporations.

Some reflections on the relationship between environmental concerns about growth and social well-being were offered by Jim Turk (1997) when he was at the Ontario Federation of Labour.

[T]here's some interesting stuff written about how we define what counts in the gross national product. There's all sorts of horribly destructive activities in which we engage that generate growth. And there are all sorts of socially useful things we do that don't get counted. So ... and this is again a tricky point. A lot of us who see ourselves as environmentalists and talk about growth, but we're not talking about growth as [inaudible] clear-cutting forests, or other kinds of things that would generate growth and income, but in the long run are far more costly. Or the development of

nuclear power, which in the short run is growth, but [has negative environmental consequences].

Notwithstanding such admirable examples of local activism and individual insight into environmental issues, it would appear that the broader labour movement has not yet begun to grapple in a fundamental way with the contradiction between economic growth and environmental sustainability. There remain serious differences between specific unions and environmental organizations on such questions as logging practices in the forestry industry. On a more philosophical level, labour organizations such as the Canadian Auto Workers point to the Brundtland report on "sustainable development" as a basis for "working people to reject the corporate choice between jobs and the environment" (CAW Canada n.d.). However, radical ecologists and left-green commentators argue that the seemingly attractive concept of sustainable development does not confront the fundamental contradictions between economic growth as the engine of capital accumulation, and our ability to sustain ourselves in our fragile biosphere (M. O'Connor 1994).

Perhaps labour and other movements seeking equality and justice need to move away from growth models entirely, and explore approaches to "steady state" economic planning carried out through democratic means for social ends rather than the enhancement of private profit. James O'Connor (1994, 171-73) argues that some form of ecological socialism may be the only hope in the long run for



meeting basic human needs in an equitable and efficient manner, and in ways that are symbiotic with the global biosphere and that protect local environments and the quality of life in communities.

If we are to travel down such a path, labour would have a role to play in advocating the abandonment of high levels of consumption and ecologically-damaging forms of production. The CAW represents an interesting test case in this regard, since this union was built by, and still represents, workers who manufacture private automobiles, the emissions from which pose a tremendous threat to the environment. The Auto Workers (CAW Canada n.d., 1-2) are at least addressing this contradiction between the interests of members and environmental sustainability.

Emission of noxious pollutants from cars and trucks - hydrocarbons, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide and sulphur oxide - have helped to create unhealthy cities, acid rain, the greenhouse effect, and the depletion of the ozone layer. The CAW is committed to helping develop transportation policies that are environmentally sound, yet will not lead to the destruction of the transportation industry. We support high emission control standards to limit pollutants emitted by automobiles. By taking a stand for a cleaner environment through tougher controls on our employers, we reject the blackmail of choosing job security over the environment.

The CAW also points out that

[t]he corporate community and their friends have been fast to capitalize on sincere public concern over the environment. The focus of blame quickly shifted to the responsibility of the individual citizen. While 'blue box' solutions can play a role, the real issue is to get to the source of the problem and work towards a global approach to environmental cleanup (CAW Canada n.d., 2).

The CAW argues that union members who are environmental activists in the workplace can provide leadership within the broader environmental movement (CAW Canada n.d., 2).

Though the CAW may be among those leading the way, it would appear that the Canadian labour movement as a whole is only at a beginning stage in understanding and acting upon the interconnections between economic security and environmental sustainability. In contrast (as discussed in section iii) above) Canadian labour has made relatively more progress in grappling with aspects of inequality other than class, such those based on gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. In order to move beyond the assumptions and limitations on thinking about social and broader public policy that pertained in the Keynesian era, the labour movement in Canada must continue and extend constructive debate on how we could organize the economy to put the public good ahead of private profit, as was discussed in section ii), and ensure material security for all beyond dependence on the market, as discussed in section i) above.

It would appear that labour must lead the broader debate on these aspects of equality and social security, if an effective critique is to be mounted of the neo-liberal decimation of the Canadian welfare state, and if a politically credible alternative to this restructuring is to be proposed and realized. We will return to this theme in the concluding chapter, after evidence concerning Social Policy

Advocacy Organizations and the National Action Committee on the Status of

Women have been examined in the next two chapters.

### ENDNOTES

1. The growth of such social programs is associated in power resource theory with the size and strength of organized labour and the tenure of labour-supported social democratic governments (Esping-Andersen 1985). Olsen (1991, 110) points to the failure of power resource theory to take into account the Marxian tenet that capital is inherently more powerful than labour in capitalist economic arrangements.
2. The document under discussion here (CAW Canada 1995) stops short of calling for the dismantling or replacement of existing economic arrangements under monopoly capitalism.
3. In labour's work to build its transnational ties, it would seem important to critically assess the cost and benefits of international quasi-judicial strategies (social clauses or side deals in trade agreements, adoption of ILO Conventions, etc.) compared to the costs and benefits of transborder popular mobilization, job action, and putting forth an alternative discourse on economic organization and social security. Perhaps there is a tendency to over-invest in the quasi-judicial approaches because the relevant instruments and institutions already exist (though they may be very ineffective), and to under-invest in transborder direct action and political education because we are less experienced in these approaches.
4. These four issues parallel the specific issues arising from the analysis of theory related to social welfare and the welfare state that were presented in Chapter 2 (cf. pp. 58-59).
5. One study (OECD 1995, 22) of flexible working time in eight OECD countries found that

Employees also have a considerable interest in more flexible working hours, which, however, do not necessarily coincide with those of the firm. The increased interest in flexibility on the part of employees is the result of:

- ▶ increasing labour market participation by women
- ▶ an increase in the number of people combining education or training

- ▶ with work; and increasingly diverse lifestyles.

At the same time, workers are less willing to accept unsocial working hours [night and weekend work].

6. Haddow (1994, 355-56) points out that the Macdonald Commission had received a "detailed" submission from the Canadian Manufacturers Association, advocating replacement of existing social security programs with a neo-liberal GAI scheme. Such an approach was lent credibility by arguments at Commission hearings advanced by the BCNI and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce "for substantial reductions in social expenditure and for more selectivity as a way to achieve this".

7. Besides participating in and providing organizational support for the formulation of the Alternative Federal Budget, the CLC and affiliated unions contribute substantial funding to the AFB project.

8. Our public social insurance program to support senior citizens (the Canada Pension Plan) and means-tested income maintenance programs (the Guaranteed Income Supplement component of Old Age Security) provide useful models to examine in regard to a more radical and broad de-commodification of labour. People have some assurance through public policy measures such as these that they can escape wage dependency when they are elderly; public pensions have also been an essential element in cutting the poverty rate among the elderly in half. This same programmatic approach of combining social insurance with income-tested support could conceivably be applied to categories of people other than the elderly (e.g. parents with young children, persons requiring or wanting time to equip themselves with new labour market skills, individuals who are community leaders or creative artists) to provide reasonable financial security beyond wage labour. I am indebted to Prof. Jim Struthers of Trent University, who used this example in remarks he made at a community forum on social assistance in Hamilton, Ontario, held on 20 October 1997.

9. One might be pessimistic about likelihood of such a debate taking place, when virtually all of the mass media are owned by large corporations devoted to private profit. Edward Herman (1996) identifies the difficulties inherent in moving public discourse beyond the bounds of discussion acceptable to economic and political elites, using the "propaganda model" of the mainstream media which he developed with Noam Chomsky. Barlow and Winter (1997) point to the remarkable amount of control that Conrad Black now exercises within Canadian media circles, as the proprietor of over half of the daily newspapers in the country, and how Black's

political views influence the content and the management style of these newspapers.

10. Rebick's views are presented in more detail in Chapter 6.
11. There are an abundance of neo-conservative schemes for radically overhauling the social welfare system that are being advanced by groups like the Fraser Institute, the C.D. Howe Institute, the Reform Party, and the Ontario Tory government of Mike Harris.
12. Though he died in 1945 before the full flowering of the welfare state that bore his name, John Maynard Keynes had more than a little to do with bringing about the paradigm shift in economic thinking in the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s. As detailed in Hession's biography (1984), Keynes moved easily and frequently between academic work, media commentary, and government service in promulgating his views on economics and desirable economic policies. As he did this, he became increasingly influential in all these circles. Keynes was at the centre of the planning for and proceedings at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944, that established the postwar international economic order. Neo-Keynesian economic views held sway in universities and government bureaucracies for at least two and half decades after World War Two. For instance, the Canadian bureaucrat Robert Bryce was a self-identified Keynesian, and rose to become the most important civil servant in the country during this period. Bryce's Keynesian views and his key role in shaping the welfare state in Canada were widely reported in the press on the occasion of his death (e.g *Globe and Mail*, 31 July 1997, p. A13; *Hamilton Spectator*, 31 July 1997, p. C6).
13. It is interesting to note that the Canadian government has resisted suggestions from the American government that labour and environmental standards be included in the MAI (*Globe and Mail*, 23 October 1997, pp. B1 and B14).
14. The Ontario Federation of Labour (1995) advocates a very similar set of macro-economic and labour market policies as that advocated by the Canadian Labour Congress.
15. The Meidner scheme also addressed the need for democratic decision-making at the micro-level, i.e. within specific workplaces (Himmelstrand et al 1981, 134-37).
16. A book that dramatically influenced political and corporate leaders by legitimating the attack on the public sector, and by popularizing the indiscriminate and dogmatic privatization of public services and government enterprises, was

Osborne and Gaebler (1992). Of course another dynamic underlying the Right's push for privatization is the opportunity for capital to realize surplus value in industries which have been "government monopolies". For instance, large corporations have gained control over segments of the Canadian medicare system, as is documented by CUPE (1998) in its "Anti-Privatization Data Base" on the internet. Unions in Quebec have been vigorously opposing privatization in the health care sector (*Globe and Mail*, 10 July 1998, p. A6).

17. Interesting issues and approaches in this regard are raised in Albo, Langille and Panitch (1993).

18. In September 1998 controversy erupted within the Ontario labour movement, when the OFL and some unions apparently backed away from a previous commitment to stage a province-wide Day of Action (e-mail posting by Tom Patterson, 5 September 1998).

19. Two exceptions to this general dearth of academic attention are Soper (1993) and Teeple (1995).

20. A notable exception in this regard would be the progressive literature that emerged in the 1980s out of the public health movement in regard to "healthy public policy", which incorporated an understanding of social and environmental determinants of health into advocacy for more liveable and sustainable communities (Hancock et al. 1985; Labonte 1989).

## CHAPTER 5

### A MULTITUDE OF VOICES:

#### ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL POLICY

In this chapter I will analyse the positions and views of Social Policy Advocacy Organizations (SPAOs) concerning current challenges and possible future directions for the welfare state in Canada, as expressed in key informants interviews with SPAO leaders<sup>1</sup>, documents of these organizations, and media reports.

The presentation and analysis of data which follow will be organized around four themes that consistently emerged from the evidence as ones of great importance:

- i) *universality* versus targeting of social programs
- ii) how social programs should relate to *labour market participation*
- iii) role of *privatization* and for-profit market mechanisms in meeting social needs
- iv) issues related to building an *effective coalition* among SPAOs and social movement organizations, in order to shape a left/progressive alternative to the neo-liberal restructuring of the welfare state.

## I. Universality Versus Targeting of Social Programs

The concept of universality of social programs was never the defining characteristic of the Canadian welfare state. To be considered 'universal' a social program should cover everybody in the population regardless of income level or status in the labour market. Eligibility for the program should not be subject to tests of a recipient's income, means, or needs,<sup>2</sup> nor should it depend on prior financial contributions from one's wages (as is the case with social insurance).

The two universal 'demogrant' programs of the Canadian welfare state prior to the 1990s were the Family Allowance and Old Age Security. They have been replaced by two income-tested programs, the Child Tax Benefit (in 1993) and the Seniors Benefit (in 1996).<sup>3</sup> The one remaining (and obviously very important) universal welfare state program in Canada is medicare, which is delivered by the provinces under the *Canada Health Act*.

In regard to medicare, SPAOs converge in their views that medicare must remain a universal, publically funded, and publically administered program. There are concerns about the intrusion of for-profit health care providers, which will be discussed in section III below. Among SPAOs there is awareness of the strength of the pro-medicare lobby. Sherri Torjman (1996) of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy observes that there was a very strong negative reaction from the health lobby to the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) which surprised the federal government, and which stood in contrast to the



exhaustion, demoralization and powerlessness of constituencies other than health that were objecting to the impact of the CHST. Susan Carter (1996) of the Canadian Council on Social Development points out that in the competition among programs for CHST block funds at provincial Cabinet tables, health will be given top priority, post-secondary education will get second priority, and the status of social services and social assistance will be nebulous. Torjman's and Carter's views on the pre-eminence of health programs over other social programs are consistent with polling results that indicate high, wide and consistent public support for medicare as the 'crown jewel' of Canada's social programs.<sup>4</sup>

When the issue of universality is considered in relation to social programs excluding health, there are differences of opinions within SPAOs. A trend that was evident among key informants in this study was that organizations that are more devoted to research and 'think tank' functions have come to accept the demise of universality in income support programs as the new reality, and perhaps even the best option, in a difficult fiscal environment. In contrast, organizations committed to a more advocacy oriented role are upset with and resistant to the demise of universality.

A particularly good example of a SPAO in the former category is the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. This very influential organization works on the assumption that targeted programs are here to stay, and in fact has had tremendous influence in shaping the development of the Child Tax Benefit and the Seniors

Benefit with the current Liberal federal government<sup>5</sup> (Carter 1996; Johnston 1996; Toupin and Dumaine 1996). The President of Caledon, Ken Battle (1996), states clearly that he favours an "income tested approach rather than a classic demogrant or universal approach". In a newspaper article (*Globe and Mail*, 19 June 1998, p. A8) about Caledon's role as architect of the federal government's integrated child benefit, Battle is characterized as someone who disagrees with "some of the precepts of the social-activist community, particularly its rigid adherence to the principle of universality".<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, Caledon Vice-President Sherri Torjman (1996) makes the point that our welfare state never was very universal. She argues that contributory, non-universal social insurance for wage earners only was always a large component of our welfare system. Torjman points out that the Family Allowance program, which was inaugurated in 1944, was established in order to prevent a postwar recession, and this motivation was at least as strong as any commitment by the federal government to the principle of universality in social programs.

The President of the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) is Judith Maxwell, a former Chair of the Economic Council of Canada. Observers see CPRN as another voice, in addition to Caledon, which is being listened to very carefully by the federal Liberal government (Carter 1996; Johnston 1996). Maxwell states that even in highly developed welfare states in Europe

the very comprehensive safety nets that they had there are becoming more and more at risk. They're just *very* difficult to sustain.

She argues that we need a "thinking man's revolution in social policy" in which one of the code words will be "self-reliance". In a study of Canadian values underlying social welfare that was undertaken by CPRN (Peters 1995, 74), it is argued that "the principle of universality ... is slowly being revamped". The study concludes that what Canadians *really* mean when they refer to universality is "access and availability" regardless of ability to pay, and that we "are seeking more targeted options that reflect a balance between need, personal autonomy, and collective responsibility" (Peters 1995, 74).

As an independent social policy consultant and researcher, Havi Echenberg (1996) accepts the necessity of targeted programs, and the adjustment of social policy to the exigencies of deficit reduction and the globalization of investment. Although not a proponent of universality, she states that what we should be striving for is some form of pan-Canadian uniformity (with or without Quebec) in social programs, to avoid "spillover effects" from one province to another when program changes are made at the provincial level. She also gives the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney credit for actually improving the financial situation for the poorest of the poor by increased targeting of social benefits (Echenberg 1996).

On the other hand, key informants who are more involved in advocacy activities on behalf of one or more constituencies are unhappy about the demise of universality, and see it as a setback in the historical trajectory of the welfare state in Canada. The Executive Director of the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO), Lynn Toupin, framed the issue in this way:

[T]here is clearly a move in government policy towards targeted programs. We've moved away from the notion of universality and tax back through a fair taxation system ... toward this notion of giving the money to those most in need. And again, while on the surface of things, this looks like something that makes sense in the context of scarce resources, this has clearly contributed to the breakdown in terms of collective responsibility. It's happened, actually, more quickly than I would have expected, because we've seen [it] come to pass in terms of child benefits. There is this sense that a person [should] not [be] receiving a benefit to which others that are more in need are entitled. There is this rapid disintegration [toward] "why should we be putting our tax dollars towards those people?" It's this whole notion of "if I'm not receiving it, I really don't understand why they should be getting it" (Toupin and Dumaine 1996).

In its submission to the Social Security Review, NAPO makes a case for a universalistic approach to the elimination of poverty through the redistribution of wealth.

The elimination of poverty has to be a collective goal for our society and one that is front and centre in federal government policy. Effective social programs are required, along with good jobs and a fair tax system to redistribute the wealth that is created by all. The wealth of our nation is not just the sum of all the money and assets we have in the banks. It is also the sum of our work, both paid and unpaid (National Anti-Poverty Organization 1995, 4).

NAPO argues that income support programs must

provide all Canadians with a level of support that will allow them to live decently. Living decently means having enough money to actively participate in society, not just to exist on its margins (National Anti-Poverty Organization 1995, 45).

NAPO specifically advocates "restoring universality of income support programs for Canadian families with children" (National Anti-Poverty Organization 1995, 45) .

Mae Harman (1996) of Canadian Pensioners Concerned (CPC) identifies the abandonment of universality as the most important issue that her organization is addressing. She argues that universal public pensions are the right of all Canadians, and should be rooted in a fair and progressive taxation system. In an Open Letter to the Minister of Finance (Canadian Pensioners Concerned 1996, 1) the organization argues with considerable passion that

[a]long with liberal minded Canadians of all ages, we continue to hold the view that Income Security programmes and Canada's Social Programmes are the base upon which Canada's unique character as a nation that *cares for all citizens* rests [emphasis in original].

Canadian Pensioners Concerned (1996, 6) recommends the retention of the universal Old Age Security program instead of the adoption of the income-tested Seniors Benefit. CPC also advocates enhancing the income-tested Guaranteed Income Supplement for poor seniors, while at the same time "clearly differentiating it from the OAS which is not a welfare programme". Concern with alleviating poverty through the targeted GIS is combined with a strong commitment to

universal public pensions as the right of people who have paid taxes all of their lives.

Campaign 2000 is a consortium of national organizations set up to monitor the federal government's progress in advancing toward its goal of eliminating child poverty by the turn of the century, a goal adopted in the form of an all-party resolution in the House of Commons in 1989.<sup>7</sup> Rosemarie Popham (1997), the Campaign's Coordinator, states that although the group avoids the language of universality because it carries negative political baggage, it does endorse universal income security for families with children.

Our premise is that targeted programs end up not being very good programs. Programs for poor people often end up being poor programs. Social policy is about more than providing money to people. It's a way of building a strong, bonded society. Deeply divided societies like the [United] States are characterized by programs that are highly targeted ....

In a discussion paper (Novick and Shillington 1996), Campaign 2000 maps out its particular version of universality. The group calls for a substantially improved child tax benefit which would decrease as family income rose, but would not completely disappear even for the highest income earners.<sup>8</sup> Funding for the Child Benefit (as well for smaller residual programs for the poorest families) would come from a newly-created Social Investment Fund for Canada's Children. The Fund would be jointly managed by Ottawa and participating provinces, while also allowing for social policy sovereignty for Quebec and First Nations (Novick and Shillington 1996, 26-28). In making its case for designation of tax revenues for

the Children's Fund, and mandated program expenditures by it, Campaign 2000 advances the following rationale (Novick and Shillington 1996, 27).

Social security funds are institutional expressions of national values, founded on principles of mutual care and intergenerational reciprocity, and are powerful indicators of states of social cohesion. The public challenge in the operation of funds is to preserve the integrity of the purposes for which they were established, and to avoid transforming them into instruments of public charity. For social security funds to preserve their national character, they must remain inclusive and benefit a majority of working families and adults.

It appears, therefore, that Campaign 2000 has made subtle but important conceptual and semantic shifts in recommending how to implement 'universality' to combat child poverty in the current fiscal context. Rather than mailing everyone in a certain category a monthly cheque of a predetermined amount (as we used to do with the Family Allowance), income testing through the tax system can be used to tailor benefits to need, and benefits can be incorporated as part of a social investment fund that is transparent, inclusive of most if not all Canadians, and economically and politically sustainable.

The Canadian Council on Social Development has been in the forefront of social policy advocacy in Canada since 1920. It no longer champions universal programs in areas other than health. Executive Director David Ross (1997a) regrets the passing of universality in regard to income security programs, but takes some comfort that targeting has not been implemented to the extent that neo-conservative political forces would have liked. He also argues strongly that social

policy formulation should take into account the relationship between income gradients (such as quintiles and deciles) and negative social outcomes, in order to help prevent us from falling into the 'deserving / undeserving' dichotomization that is implicit in highly targeted programs (Ross 1997a).

The CCSD no longer advocates universality in the conventional sense of uniform benefits for everyone that pertained during the growth of the Keynesian welfare state. However the CCSD (1997, 9) does enunciate four beliefs as part of its Mission Statement that are clearly universal in their orientation.

- the right to economic security and an adequate standard of living for all;
- universal access to basic social and health programs;
- public participation in improving social conditions;
- a fair and compassionate society, with equal rights for all.

This continuing embrace of universality on a philosophical level by the CCSD would seem to be the basis of its much repeated position (CCSD 1998, 1) that the very serious "social deficit" caused by welfare state restructuring must be addressed by the federal government at the same time as it eliminates the fiscal deficit. The Council's universalistic orientation also takes it into advocacy of generic labour market policies to protect the most vulnerable and improve equality among workers (which will be discussed in more detail in the section II below). In



fact, Ross (1997a) argues that one should no longer distinguish between social and labour market policies in pursuing progressive policy formulation.

Rethinking the conceptual foundations of social well-being has been a task undertaken by the Roeher Institute (1993), an arm of the Canadian Association for Community Living. The Institute takes the position that the framework for social well-being that was set in place after the Second World War was governed by three key elements. The first, *security*, was based on "the idea that people's basic needs should be met through a managed economy and public provision" of "a number on income programs and social services" (Roeher Institute 1993, 4). The second, *citizenship*, incorporated civil and political rights and the "idea" of social citizenship "that recognized individuals' rights to be included in the institutions of society, to have basic needs met, to be cared for when needed, to develop capacities and to make contributions to society" (Roeher Institute 1993, 6). The third, *democracy*, was expressed largely through voting in elections and collective bargaining in the workplace (Roeher Institute 1993, 19). The Roeher Institute argues that these elements "remain important" and "efforts to strengthen them are needed" (Roeher Institute 1993, 48). It also argues, however, that the well-being of individuals, communities and society is being threatened in our current context of "rising economic insecurity" (Roeher Institute 1993, 10-12), "growing inequalities" (Roeher Institute 1993, 14-16), and increasing recognition that

"[w]elfare state arrangements have ... been unable to deliver on the promise of citizenship" (Roehrer Institute 1993, 17).

The Roehrer Institute proposes that three new elements must be added to our framework for achieving well-being. *Self-determination* is a capacity which is developed through nurturing and supportive families and personal relationships, and through provision of information and support to ensure that all citizens (including the less powerful) are able to take part meaningfully in "political and other institutions" and "education, jobs and community activities" (Roehrer Institute 1993, 31-32). *Democratization* goes beyond voting and collective bargaining to "recognizing, respecting and drawing upon diverse points of view in decision-making processes at all levels of society", including the economy<sup>9</sup> (Roehrer Institute 1993, 34). *Equality* is broadened as a concept to ensure that "differences such as gender, race and ability can be accommodated in ways that result in an equality of well-being in the context of diversity" (Roehrer Institute 1993, 48).

The Roehrer framework for social well-being is noteworthy. It is an attempt to build on and extend the postwar conceptual framework for social welfare in our very different political and economic context half a century later. While it does not directly address the "institutional/residual" or "universal/targeted" distinctions in social program design that were prominent themes in postwar social welfare theorizing (see Wilensky and Lebeaux 1958; Titmuss 1968), the Roehrer framework is clearly 'universalistic' in its approach. As

the umbrella for the Roeher Institute, the Canadian Association for Community Living is unique among SPAOs in promoting this 'from-the-ground-up' reconceptualization of social well-being. There will be further discussion of such new elements of social well-being as proposed by Roeher and CACL in the concluding chapter.

There have been some suggestions that we need to forge a new commitment to universal social protection in the form of a *Canada Social Security Act*.<sup>10</sup> Malcolm Shookner (1996), Executive Director of the Ontario Social Development Council, states that such an Act would have the potential to capture people's imagination and become (like medicare under the *Canada Health Act*) part of the popular conception of what it is to be a Canadian. Shookner (1996) feels that such legislation could contribute in practical terms towards the achievement of a truly national social security system, by establishing a methodology for defining adequacy of benefits across the different regions of the country, and by ensuring trans-provincial portability of benefits. Shookner (1996) also argues that, unlike constitutional guarantees of social rights which would be subject to the usual byzantine negotiation process between the federal government and the provinces, "Parliament could pass [a Social Security Act] next week if the political will was there".<sup>11</sup>

Another conceivable means of guaranteeing social rights universally is through a social charter embedded in the Constitution. Informants in this study

were not enthused about the prospects of such an approach in Canada at this time. Toupin and Dumaine (1996) of NAPO argue that popular support could potentially be marshalled for an *effective* social charter, but that the final watered down version of a social charter that was contained in the ill-fated Charlottetown Constitutional Accord would have been more harmful than helpful in regard to guaranteeing the social well-being of Canadians. Patrick Johnston (1996) is opposed to social charters in principle.

I'm not a big strong supporter of [a social] charter of rights. I'm not convinced that with the introduction of our current Charter [of Rights and Freedoms] that we've ended up being a fairer, more compassionate, more generous, just society. We've become more litigious, but at the end of the day has that really in any substantive way improved [our] lives? I'm not convinced it has.

The Charter Committee on Poverty Issues (CCPI and NAPO, 1993, 84)

takes the opposite view from Johnston. The Committee argues that

[i]n order to make more progress in the area of legal protections, and to overcome court resistance to recognizing social and economic rights in Canada, the federal and provincial governments need to more explicitly recognize social and economic rights in Canada's human rights legislation and, if possible, in the Canadian Constitution.

Ian Morrison (1996) argues that provinces are in fact accomplishing constitutional reform by stealth, but with the aim of undermining national uniformity. If social programs vary markedly from one province to the next, not only is there an imperative set up for a 'race to the bottom', but programs are also more likely to be residual and targeted. Morrison (1996) sees the deliberations of

an Interministerial Council on social policy as an attempt to rejig the constitutional division of powers in such a way that "the federal government disappears from social policy". Morrison is convinced that efforts to devolve power and responsibility for social policy from the federal to the provincial level is being driven by a neo-conservative agenda, with the Ontario Tory government blocking every attempt to achieve any degree of federal-provincial agreement on social policy questions. Such efforts by provinces to preserve the *status quo* will effectively undermine any attempts to move back towards more universal coverage (Morrison 1996).

Arguments based on the 'politics of scarcity' are used frequently to justify targeting as opposed to universality in social programs: since resources are scarce, targeting is a more efficient use of shrinking funds. Shookner (1996) goes beyond narrow discourses about 'deficit hysteria' as the ineluctable driving force of cuts, to present an impassioned argument as to why a wealthy country like Canada has no need to shred its social safety net.

Canada is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. But we've been told for years by our politicians that we've run out of money, we're living beyond our means, we can't afford it .... Talk about cruel hoaxes .....

Working in the international field for a while, with the [World] Social [Development] Summit, the issue of money comes up. Nobody can say there is no money, because the money doesn't leave the planet. It's leaving our pocketbooks and our national treasuries, but it's still in the system. It is in the international financial markets. ... [We must] rechannel some wealth into public good, instead of strictly to private wealth. ... Until the national government can get control back of the nation's wealth and its own Bank [of Canada], and put it to work for Canadians, we're going to still be at the

mercy of the international money handlers. So the problem isn't that there is no money, the problem is where is the money and how is it being spent?

The prospects for and definition of universality in social programs are contested issues at this stage in the history of the welfare state in Canada. This is certainly the case in the political realm, with the rise of the Right in such guises as the Reform Party of Canada and the Harris Conservatives in Ontario. But as we have seen above, the feasibility and meaning of universality are also contested concepts among SPAOs. These debates are related in no small measure to the question of how social programs should be related to labour market participation, which will now be addressed.

## II. Social Programs and Labour Market Participation

The question of how income security in Canada should be related to labour market participation is a contentious one in the general public, the political arena, and within SPAOs. In the broader political realm in recent years we have been witnessing the dramatic strengthening of the view that beneficiaries of social assistance should be required to work for their benefits. This is perhaps most notable in Ontario, where workfare has been introduced by the Conservative provincial government of Mike Harris.

Patrick Johnston was a Senior Policy Advisor to the Social Assistance Review Committee in Ontario in the 1980s, and the principal author of a report

that recommended a major overhaul of the province's social assistance system along more progressive lines (Social Assistance Review Committee, 1988).

Johnston cautions that the pro-workfare sentiment has always been a strong undercurrent in Ontario politics, even before the Harris Conservatives used it to help themselves get elected in 1995.

[E]ven then [in 1986-88], there was a real antipathy towards people on welfare. And people supported workfare. We [SARC] got access to a lot of the public opinion polling that was done, so in the Report we actually had recommendations about the need for the government to educate the province or the public about the system, because there was so many misconceptions and misunderstandings. But because it was in a period of booming growth, most people didn't give voice to those things. But we have retrenched and come into leaner times, and we have a government in power now that gives voice to that [anti-welfare sentiment].

While welfare bashing can pay political dividends, there would also appear to be economic imperatives behind the neo-liberal retrenchment of income support programs through lowering rates of social assistance, demanding work in exchange for welfare, and decreasing coverage and increasing eligibility criteria for unemployment insurance. A key player in framing the Alternative Federal Budget, union economist Jim Stanford (1996), makes the case that in the 1970s real wages were increasing and

workers were using the social welfare system to really expand their share of the economic pie, and their degree of economic power.

For this reason, employers succeeded in bringing about a

shift in macro-economic thinking, where full employment has been explicitly abandoned as a goal of macro-economic policy.

In Stanford's view (1996), social policy adjustment was a necessary corollary to this macro-economic policy shift, and both changes have "helped to discipline the work force" through "a high permanent level of unemployment" and a much reduced social safety net for workers to fall back on when they lose or leave their jobs.

While Stanford is involved with the AFB and 'wears a SPAO hat', he is also on the staff of the Canadian Auto Workers, and thus reflects and shapes union thinking on economic questions such as the relationship between social programs and labour market participation. How do SPAO leaders who are *not* connected to the labour movement view this question? Based on the data gathered for this study, it would appear that opinion is divided.

There are groups like Caledon Institute of Social Policy and the Canadian Policy Research Networks who see it as inevitable that individuals will be heavily dependent on the labour market for economic security, and who believe that little can be done or should be attempted in public policy to directly create jobs or to intervene in the labour market in the interests of workers. Put another way, they restrict their focus to 'supply side' arguments about the need for 'investment' in 'human capital'. Other groups, notably the Canadian Council on Social Development, advocate public policies to create jobs and improve wages and benefits. They also advocate a modicum of income security beyond paid work through relatively more generous government transfers, thereby giving individuals



and families more freedom from labour market dependence. Among SPAOs there appear to be no explicit arguments being made for the radical decommodification of labour and the relative autonomy of income security measures from labour force participation. (This position *is* being taken by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, as will be discussed in the next chapter.)

It is not surprising that the two SPAOs which are the most influential with the federal government in regard to social policy formulation, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy and the Canadian Policy Research Networks, both adopt a position similar to the government's favouring high individual dependence upon, and avoidance of state intervention in, the workings of the labour market. In the case of CPRN, its views are no doubt consistent with those of the large corporations that contribute to the revenue base of the organization.<sup>12</sup>

In its submission to the Liberal government's Social Security Review, the Caledon Institute (1995, 11) advocates that "frequent users" of Unemployment Insurance (with an example given of someone who makes three claims within a five year period) be referred to a new program of "Employment Assistance". This program "would provide the supports they need to enter or re-enter the labour market", especially employment training. Caledon's position is premised on

the view that, given the appropriate supports such as child care and disability-related services, most people are employable to a greater or lesser degree. The problem is the lack of supports to facilitate participation in the labour market (Caledon Institute 1995, 11).

The only exception to this pattern are "some persons with severe disabilities or health-related conditions [who] may be unable to work for long or at all" and who "should be eligible for ongoing adequate income support" at levels higher than provincial welfare rates (Caledon Institute 1995, 11). Caledon argues that welfare should be returned to its original purpose

as a program of last resort - to provide short-term, emergency assistance to 'unemployable' Canadians with no other source of income (Caledon Institute 1995, 13).

As President of Caledon, Ken Battle (1996) laments the inequalities of the marketplace. He argues, however, that the state should restrict its role to after-tax transfers among citizens. He does not see direct government intervention in the labour market or economy in the interests of greater equality as a feasible strategy.

Our capacity to combat primary inequalities, like the inequalities that come out of the wage system, I think are pretty limited. And I don't think [laughs] we're going to see government doing more to intervene in the economy. So, we're stuck with the sort of traditional after the fact, post-tax transfer role of government. I think it's worrisome, because market-based inequalities are still strong and they're increasing.

Judith Maxwell (1996a, 18), the President of CPRN, describes what she sees as the role of the state in "a resilient society".

The state has already given up, for the most part, subsidies, trade protections, command and control regulation, short-term job creation. ... The state (i.e. federal *and* provincial governments) must declare to citizens what it will continue to do by way of social investment and last resort support systems.

Maxwell takes for granted that the role of the state in intervening in the labour market or broader economy is largely defunct in our era of global competitiveness. Citizens are the site of "investment" to make them ready for the labour market, or they are forced to fall back on "last resort" social programs. Maxwell (1996a 10) spells out what she sees as areas of innovation in social policy:

welfare to work programs, active supports for learning, school to work transitions, and early childhood development.

With the exception of the last item which relates to children, all of these areas for social policy development relate directly to pushing people into the labour force. Suzanne Peters (1995), Director of CPRN's Research Network on families, has formulated a list of "core Canadian values" that she sees as underlying social policy and programs, and she identifies "self-reliance" as the first one (Peters 1995, 69).

CPRN has been addressing the question of employment and unemployment in more specific terms. In early 1997 the organization released a report entitled *The Future of Work in Canada* (Betcherman and Lowe 1997). Unlike the CPRN documents cited above, this report raises the possibility of a somewhat more interventionist role for public policy in shaping labour market exigencies. For instance, Betcherman and Lowe (1997, 44) argue that as part of macroeconomic public policy, measurable goals for lowering unemployment could be set, just as governments set targets for deficit reduction or bringing down the rate of inflation. They also recommend that thought be given to questions such as

[s]hould compensation and benefits - for example, insurance and pensions - be contemplated for unpaid work? Are there ways to more evenly distribute work time across the adult population, including across age groups? What are the prospects for work sharing, limitations on overtime, and a shorter work week? Also, are there arrangements that could be considered to ease the currently sharp transition from work to retirement?

Betcherman and Lowe (1997) raise these issues as questions rather than as proposals or recommendations. They are also vague on the role of public policy (as opposed to other means such as voluntary measures by employers or citizens, or negotiated agreements between employers and workers) in addressing these issues. They also reject by implication the possibility of progress in public policy towards guaranteed income. Betcherman and Lowe (1997, 11-14) argue that a guaranteed income scheme would be a common outcome of two future scenarios that are unlikely to unfold: the unduly pessimistic "technology not people" scenario, in which jobs will be lost on a massive and permanent basis due to computerization; and the unduly optimistic "work not jobs" scenario, in which contractual and other forms of non-standard work, as well as self-employment, will be readily available for all but a few in the information society. They see the future of work more likely resembling "almost business as usual". Given this context, they advocate that the aim of social policy should be "self sufficiency" (Betcherman and Lowe 1997, 10). We should eschew direct job creation by government, in favour of creating a "fertile environment" for the market to do so

through appropriate "macroeconomic, industrial innovation, and labour policy" (Betcherman and Lowe 1997, 15).

In contrast to Caledon and CPRN, the Canadian Council on Social Development advocates a moderate degree of government responsibility for labour market intervention, job creation, and the lowering of wage dependence through income security measures. To be sure, CCSD (1998, 1) makes the assertion that "the best way to end unemployment and poverty is a steady pay cheque". But the Council is not optimistic about the current ability of the labour market to furnish an adequate supply of sufficiently large pay cheques, and thereby ensure broad economic security. The CCSD released a major study of poverty among labour market participants (Schellenberg and Ross 1997, 45-6) which reaches the conclusion that

the marketplace, as it currently functions, is unlikely to be able to generate enough well-paying jobs for those who are poor. Unless changes to our labour market institutions are made - many of which require government spending - it seems unlikely that families that are now market poor will have any real hope of becoming more self-reliant in the future.

Given the inadequacy of the current labour market in providing economic security, the CCSD (1998, 1-2) calls for "investing resources to generate jobs, improve economic security and employability, as well as reduce child poverty". CCSD Executive Director David Ross (1997b) has put forth "a five point plan for job creation". His prescription includes voluntary measures such as the exercise of "corporate leadership and social responsibility", and public policy initiatives to

restore public service jobs previously cut, to create new jobs in the third sector, and to redistribute work.

The Council (CCSD 1998, 2) urges the federal government to "revisit the changes made to the unemployment insurance system" since 1990, which have resulted in a decrease in the proportion of unemployed people collecting benefits from 83% to 43%. In its submission to the Social Security Review, the CCSD (1994) made thirteen recommendations. Eight of them advocated public policy initiatives related to labour market improvements and/or alternative sources of income security. The first five recommendations (and excerpts from their accompanying rationales) illustrate the Council's moderately interventionist position in regard to labour market issues. The CCSD (1994, 3-5) recommended:

- That the creation of quality employment opportunities be the number one priority of the federal government

... [O]ur labour market has an excess of ready-to-work individuals; no amount of training or "incentives" will get all of these people into well-paying, full-time jobs ....

- That the government examine ways of redistributing employment.

The [Social Security Review] discussion paper alludes to the possibility of a shorter standard work week, the option of flexible work schedules for parents, having non-standard work covered under UI, and applying premiums to *all* wages and salaries (which would reduce the incentive for employers to replace regular salaried employees with temporary replacements). The CCSD supports all of these measures and would also add policies to encourage employers to limit overtime.

- That society redefine what constitutes valued work.

... Even though there are not enough "regular jobs" in the economy, there are many other roles to be filled that are vital to our collective well-being - such as caring for children and the elderly, or performing community services. This work should be recognized and supported. Recognition would not necessarily be in the form of a wage, but could be done through a combination of tax provisions like credits or deductions. ....

- That the government recognize the trend toward non-standard employment and its resulting higher frequency of unemployment claims.

The proposed two-tiered UI system will categorize frequent users ... [who] will be penalized for their "dependence" on UI, with reduced benefits and more stringent eligibility regulations. But as "non-standard" forms of work become more prevalent ... [t]he two-tiered system being proposed ... is at odds with the way the economy is moving and would penalize individuals for taking the only kind of work available.

- That improved minimum wages, the prorating of benefits [for part-time and temporary workers] and direct income supplementation [through the tax system] be considered, to counter income insecurity in the labour market.

Three additional recommendations that bear on income security programs

advocate easing the transition between welfare and work "with necessary supports such as child care and flexible family leave provisions", the avoidance of more restricted targeting of the child tax benefit on only the poorest, and recognition of "the economic benefits contributed by those who collect government transfers" (CCSD 1994, 5-8).

While these recommendations represent fairly bold policy initiatives, CCSD Executive Director David Ross (1997a) does not recommend that social policy groups advocate for a comprehensive scheme of guaranteed annual income. He

feels that an *adequate* version of guaranteed income would be a "political non-starter" in the current fiscally tight public policy environment.

As Coordinator of Campaign 2000, Rosemarie Popham (1997) objects to the Finance Department's characterization of the government's Work Income Supplement (WINS) as "significant step in addressing child poverty". She argues that such programs are in fact labour market strategies to move people from welfare to work, and must not be confused with strategies that address child poverty. Popham (1997) says that linking child poverty measures with welfare-to-work programs

is potentially very divisive. It separates out "deserving" children who are poor because their parents are working from "undeserving" children whose parents are on social assistance.

In a similar vein Diane Richler (1997), the Executive Director of the Canadian Association for Community Living, sees the need to separate out any disability-related support that people may need from income support and labour market entry programs from which they benefit. Richler illustrates how, in one sense, people with disabilities can be victimized by the 'deserving' label. Disability-related services and supports are often linked, in practice if not in formal policy, to social assistance programs. This social assistance may be readily granted to the 'deserving' person with a disability; however, if that person is endeavouring to move off social assistance and into the labour market, they often lose their disability-related services that they need regardless of their employment situation.



The person may thus be penalized for striving for economic self-reliance. Working within a human rights framework, CACL wants to maximize opportunities for labour market inclusion for people with developmental and other disabilities, while at the same time maintaining an adequate income support system for those without an adequate market income, and a network of disability-related supports for all who need them regardless of their status in the labour force.

Richler (1997) points out how changing patterns of work and technological innovation in how work gets done, that are usually considered deleterious, can open doors for at least some individuals.

[I]ronically some of the changes that are taking place in the labour market now work to the advantage of people with even very significant disabilities. I'm thinking of one young man whom I know who wanted to get a job. People were being challenged to figure out what he could do, until they thought of having him work at home on a computer. Now this is a young man with no speech and with very limited mobility. But he's able to do a kind of inputting of data from his home that allows him to work, minimize cost for his employer, and be very productive.

Richler (1997) goes on to argue that there are attitudinal barriers among bureaucrats to policies for labour market inclusion for people with a disability, and that progress towards employment equity for disabled persons hinges on "creat[ing] communities that don't allow some people to be able to get all the work and all the income, and other people not get any".

A human rights framework like that used by CACL leads to the consideration of questions about access and equity for all potential labour market

participants, whether or not they carry a disability label. But perhaps underlying questions related to the political economy of the labour market remain to be posed. Even if conditions approximating ideally equitable access to the labour market were to exist for all people in Canada, is it reasonable to assume that enough jobs will be available for them in the years ahead? What are the limitations of the market in creating an adequate number of good jobs? To what extent and in what ways should job creation measures through the state and third sector be used to bridge the gap between demand for and supply of jobs? How can public policy be used creatively to redistribute work, improve wage levels, and ensure rights and benefits for non-standard workers? Caledon and CPRN for the most part are precluding such question from their work. The CCSD has addressed such questions in a preliminary fashion. Are there other progressive social policy constituencies grappling in a more fundamental way with the issue of how to ensure economic security for all beyond primary reliance on the labour market?

Some of the key informants from SPAOs<sup>13</sup> offered a political-economic analysis questioning (implicitly or explicitly) the legitimacy of market forces as the primary determinant of the distribution of wealth in Canadian society. For instance, Tony Clarke has been a key player in the fight against free trade in the 1980s and the Multilateral Agreement of Investment in the 1990s. Clarke (1997a) does not offer detailed prescriptions in regard to social program design. He makes the more fundamental argument, however, that the goals of economic

redistribution and comprehensive social security that were the project of the Keynesian welfare state were *not* theoretically or programmatically flawed, as the neo-liberal discourse that dominates public policy would have us believe. Rather, Clarke (1997a) argues, the demise of the KWS was the result of deliberate interventions in the political process in order to shift economic orthodoxy.

[T]he question of whether or not Keynesian economics works or doesn't work depends upon whether or not there are forces that work to make sure it doesn't work. And that's been the story, I think, of what has been happening in the last 20-25 years. Deliberate moves have been made to bring [Keynesianism] to an end. It's been political. It's been consciously motivated .... [M]arket economics demanded that the market ... be free enough to operate. It demanded that the direction in which the Keynesian welfare state was going had to be stopped.

Clarke (1997a) clearly rejects the argument that the erosion of social security and the increase of insecurity for labour market participants result from ineluctable and blind forces in the marketplace, over which states have no control and only minimal influence. He calls for a "re-tooling of the state", including the development of authentic and effective mechanisms for citizen participation and democratic control, as prerequisites to the renewal of social programs (Clarke 1997a).

A specific project that has translated the imperative of 'taming the market' into a comprehensive and pragmatic program is the Alternative Federal Budget.<sup>14</sup> As discussed above, one of the key players in the AFB has been the CAW economist Jim Stanford, and he is concerned about how the Left should respond to

the neo-liberal project of disciplining the labour force. It is useful to examine in more detail the framework proposed in the AFB for attenuating labour market dependence, and providing income security as a right of citizenship.

A principle underlying the Alternative Federal Budget is "zero tolerance for poverty". In order to achieve this condition, the AFB proposes putting in place a National Income Support Fund.

[It] will be cost-shared and national standards will be put in place founded on the principle that the right to adequate income is a basic human right. Key among these standards is a prohibition of workfare, a universal right to appeal the denial of assistance, and levels of assistance tied to the cost of living across the country (CCPA and Choices 1998, 141).

The National Income Support Fund would consist of two levels.

Level 1 establishes the income floor, which would provide a base of financial support to both families and individuals in need at an amount equal to no less than 60% of Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-Offs (LICOs) ..... Over five years, the floor will be raised to 75% of the LICOs (CCPA and Choices 1998, 147-48).

It is pointed out in the AFB proposal that current provincial levels of social assistance can be as low as 25% of the LICO benchmark. Level 2 on Income Support would restore funding cut by the provinces for supporting people with disabilities and in ill health, and for the provision of counselling, relocation assistance, and emergency funds to those in financial need.

The AFB also make recommendations concerning Unemployment Insurance (CCPA and Choices 1998, 118-19). It calls for extending UI coverage to 70% of the unemployed from the current level of 41%, for freezing both

employee and employer contribution rates, and for "restor[ing] the UI benefit rate to 60% of weekly earnings from the current variable formula".

In regard to pensions, the AFB recommends (CCPA and Choices 1998, 179-80) retention and fine tuning of the public programs of Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Canada Pension Plan as part of a "comprehensive and coherent retirement incomes strategy" for Canada's seniors. A key aspect of such a strategy would be balancing public and private pension schemes. The AFB cautions against encouraging reliance on RRSPs, since current trends suggest that such a measure "would almost certainly increase the risk that more seniors in the future will end up with sub-standard incomes". It is suggested that

tax support for workplace pension plans and RRSPs needs to be reviewed to determine if it would make more sense to curb tax support for private arrangements in favour of improving public pension programs.

Taken together, the AFB proposals for income support, unemployment insurance, and public pensions would approximate a comprehensive system of guaranteed economic security for everyone in Canada. Such a system would certainly not render the labour market irrelevant to economic security, and in fact the AFB goes into detail (CCPA and Choices 1998, 93-115) about how to enhance employment opportunities.

There is broad agreement that the AFB as a whole is not "pie in the sky", but based on realistic forecasting and sound fiscal analysis of public policy options.

For instance, numerous key informants for this study described the AFB as a sound and practical plan. Additionally, the AFB package was run through a "sophisticated computer model of the Canadian economy" by Infometrica Limited and found to be sound (CCPA and Choices 1998, 48-51). The AFB does not just focus on public expenditures, but also on revenues. It includes provisions for overhauling the tax system to make it fairer, and measures to eliminate the deficit and pay down the debt of the federal government.

The question of how to relate social programs to the labour market is a very broad one, and as can be seen in the foregoing discussion, evokes widely varying responses among SPAOs. Another important but more specific question for SPAOs is the role of private sector, for-profit organizations in the provision of social and health services. Let us now consider evidence from this study related to this latter question.

### III. Privatization of Social and Health Programs

Three key informants addressed the question of increasing the role of private sector, for-profit organizations in the delivery of social and health services. Havi Echenberg (1996) argues for a pragmatic, case-by-case assessment of privatization as a possible alternative to government provision of service to the public. Using an example drawn from outside social policy, that of auto insurance, Echenberg argues that in some cases the private sector has the expertise and

infrastructure to deliver a program more efficiently than the state. On the other hand, she cautions against privatizing that which is "most fundamental" such as health insurance or social assistance.

Mae Harman (1996) is more definite about the dangers of privatization. She is disturbed about opening up the provision of home care services in Ontario to competitive bidding, which will pit non-profit and for-profit organizations against each other in a race to lower costs. She argues that for-profit service providers can provide service at lower cost because they "cut their corners"; that non-profits will have to respond to competition from for-profits by scrimping on patient care, lowering salaries, and getting rid of unions; and that when the dust has settled after a few years of competition, "some of [the non-profits] are going to be washed out".

David Robinson (1997) of the Council of Canadians puts the question of future direction of social programs in clear terms.

If you're going to change programs, then in what direction are they going to be changed? Are they going to be changed in the direction of lining the pockets of private investors, or are they going to be changed in providing all Canadians with a decent level of service? ... We were warning that changes to the Canada Pension Plan that the government was proposing would lead to the kind of gradual privatization of the whole Plan which would be a windfall for the banks. ... The richer you are, the more you can contribute, therefore the better off you are. The poorer you are, you can't contribute, well, you're out of luck. So we are trying to expose the winners and losers. Who really stands to gain from the kinds of policy initiatives that the government is proposing, and the Reform Party is proposing, or other business groups and business interests are proposing? Recently our goal has been to try to tell people "Look! People are proposing these things

not because they necessarily care about these programs, but because they care about their stockholders, and they care about making more profits."

Robinson (1997) also points out the stake that private health care companies have in having health services delisted from medicare in order to expand their opportunities for profit-making.

Tony Clarke (1997b, 157-58) concurs with this analysis, and identifies social programs and public services as a "battlefield" where

citizen-based campaigns need to be mounted which are designed to unmask and profile the main corporate political machines in the service sector that are planning the takeover of Canada's health and education systems.

Clarke argues that the time is ripe for such a takeover, given shortfalls in federal government funding and provincial government interest in privatizing programs.

He documents the progress of corporations in opening up new investment opportunities in what have been government funded not-for-profit services, and the likelihood that corporations will gain control of these service 'markets'. In the health field, Clarke (1997b, 158) states that

Canada's public health care system is an annual \$72 billion dollar enterprise. Today, private U.S. health care corporations are planning their strategies for global expansion, starting with Britain but with an eye on the Canadian market as well. Several management consulting firms have been hired to promote the privatization of health care in Canada, including the world's largest, KPMG, whose Toronto office is headed by the same people who masterminded the drive to privatize hospitals in London, England.

Clarke (1997b, 160-62) points to other advances of corporate power in the public sector, including management of CPP funds by private sector investment firms; the



elimination of social housing as an alternative to housing stock built by private developers, or controlled by for-profit property management firms; and the launching of workfare as "a pool of cheap labour" for business.

It is significant that Clarke embeds his analysis of privatization in the need to act on a "citizen's agenda" for confronting growing corporate power. Let us now turn to what was learned in this study about SPAO views on how to mobilize resources and direct efforts around such a citizen's agenda for social welfare.

#### IV. Building Effective Coalitions for Progressive Social Policy

Several key informants offered assessments and prognoses in regard to coalition work among SPAOs. For instance, David Robinson (1997) points to the free trade debate that preceded the 1988 federal election as a rallying point for social movements in Canada. He said that the anti-free trade campaign was "something that everybody could plug into" because free trade threatened a wide range of constituencies, including the cultural community, workers, and the environmental movement. Robinson (1997) outlined the continuing coalition work of the Council of Canadians. The Council's coalition partners have included the Action Canada Network, the Canadian Health Coalition, Common Frontiers (composed of labour and popular sector groups of the three NAFTA countries), the Sierra Club, and the CLC (in regard to the impact of international trade negotiations on the environment and on labour standards).

Mae Harman (1996), speaking from the point of view of an activist on seniors' issues, makes the observation that there has been an increased willingness to work together among organizations representing the elderly in her community of Toronto, and that "much of the old competition is gone". National level co-operation is also evident. Four organizations<sup>15</sup> formed the Coalition of Seniors for Social Equity (One Voice 1996, 1,4), in order to make a common representation in consultations being held by the Finance Department concerning the future of the Canada Pension Plan. There is also a group (One Voice 1996, attachment) called the Seniors' Health Action Group that

is a Task Force set up to unite Canada's seniors in saving Medicare. SHAG's 10 members include provincial and national seniors organizations, national health and poverty groups, and educators.

It is interesting to note that SHAG (One Voice 1996, attachment) frames the issue of preserving and improving medicare not just as a seniors issue, but in the broader context of the need to maintain our social safety net as a whole.

[A]n intact safety net is essential for persons at each stage of life. Health care, education, and income security programs (e.g. unemployment insurance, pensions, social assistance, and special tax credits) are the individual threads of the safety net. Together they help Canadians cope with the myriad crises that can arise in life's journey. Weakening just one thread weakens them all.

In April of 1996 the Council of Canadians convened The Citizens' Forum on Pensions, out of which came a Joint Statement endorsed by nine seniors' organizations working at national and provincial levels, and four national groups<sup>16</sup>

representing people of different ages. The Statement (Council of Canadians, 1996) strongly rejects the argument that we need to sacrifice the universality of the Old Age Security "on the altar of deficit reduction". It criticizes "political leaders and corporate-funded think tanks" for "irresponsible rhetoric" designed to create public opinion conducive to privatization of Canada's public pensions, either "outright or by stealth". The Statement expresses "outrage" about the extremely inadequate public consultation on CPP reform, and "condemn[s] the failure to consider viable alternatives to the cuts to OAS, GIS and CPP such as job creation, progressive tax reform and lower interest rates".

The question of trying to develop creative social policy alternatives when programs are being sacrificed on the deficit reduction "altar", as Harman (1996) puts it, is a troublesome one. Robinson (1997) comments that

we've been placed in the odd position of defending in many cases programs that we never really liked in the first place, that we always thought could be better. But now we're there trying to defend them.

Armine Yalnizyan (1996) comments on the impossibility of simultaneously riding "two horses" - that of trying to build local bodies for democratic decision-making on human services, and that of reducing the deficit. She observes that the latter horse is "galloping" and is "going to win the day".

Tony Clarke (1997a) offers a relatively optimistic view of the potential for coalition work among social movement organizations, based on previous lessons learned.

[W]e have made some real advances over the last 10 or 15 years with regards to coalition politics in this country. At one time ... when one talked about a coalition, one talked about single issue coalitions. ... What's happened in the last fifteen years is that, through trial and error and various kinds of experiments, we've actually shown that it is possible to put together a broader base coalition that deals with the larger agenda of economic and social policy in this country.

On the other hand, Clarke (1997a) sounds a cautionary note in regard to issues of organizational 'culture' and coalition 'process'.

If [coalition politics] is going to sustain itself it has to be cultivated and nurtured and developed over a longer period of time. And that means that there have to be changes in the internal culture of organizations. You have to change the organizational culture of unions. You have to change the organizational culture of public interest groups and various citizen movements and citizen organizations ... to work together for collective rights, and to work together around a common agenda. And you have to develop the processes where people can really learn to put their own agendas on the table, but listen to other people as well, and out of that to develop some kind of common ground for action.

Clarke (1997a) also points out the need to create stronger "institutional vehicles" for coalition work, including an adequate and dependable financial base and staff complement. He argues that hard choices may need to be made by existing organizations (for example, in the labour movement) to reallocate relatively scarce resources from existing activities to coalition organizations.

This problem of an inadequate and even shrinking resource base for social movement work was raised in a pointed way by two other key informants. They were concerned with the loss of information needed by social movement organizations and coalitions to develop well-researched positions and press their

advocacy demands. As Executive Director of the Ontario Social Development Council, Malcolm Shookner (1996) works in variety of coalitions on the provincial and international stage. He points to the closure of libraries within the Ontario government, including that of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, as putting us at risk of losing access to "decades of learning, and knowledge, and experience" needed to develop social and broader public policy. He is also disturbed by the cutting of provincial funds to local community planning bodies which serve as "umbrella organizations" for a variety of local agencies and voluntary sector groups. Bodies such as local social planning councils provide a meeting ground for "people at the neighbourhood and community level", and often enable agencies to "come up with a new idea that everybody can buy into" (Shookner 1996).

Ian Morrison (1996) is a key player on the provincial level in two coalitions, Workfare Watch and the Ontario Social Safety Network. He points out what he sees as a "particularly serious problem" for progressive organizations and coalitions.

People are so overloaded, and so burned out, and so many organizations are disappearing, that even capacity ... the knowledge base to even sustain an alternative vision, let alone do anything about it, is under threat.... At some point, when the Right not only has total control over media expressions of things, but total control over the information that's created that allows you to do social policy, you're in very serious trouble.

As an example of his concern, Morrison (1996) cites the lack of "methodologically rigorous ... research on welfare use in longitudinal terms". When regressive programs such as workfare are proposed, Morrison contends that such gaps in knowledge mean that social policy debates degenerate into "duelling stereotypes".

If the political debate just relies on simple-minded slagging, the Right will always win, because by definition their response to all complex social issues is a simple-minded response. And they have massively more resources to do that, so ... the disappearance of the information capacity [in social policy] ... should be a serious concern.

One particular approach to generating sound information about social programs is the "social audit" described by Havi Echenberg (1996). She refers to it as a method "to involve the research community and the stakeholder advocacy organizations in evaluating outcomes of social spending" that is "evidence-based".

You wouldn't only look at numbers, you would also be looking at other outcomes. So it ties into a lot of different work that's going on about how do you measure social well being, ... trying to come up with new indicators, .... [trying] to involve all the stakeholders, including the unions - the people delivering the service - as well as those using it, and academics, and research institutes, and so on. [This process] doesn't have 'penalty power', but it would have the ability to put the issue on the table publically every year, and engage a lot of people, make a lot of people knowledgeable, which I think is half the battle.

In a similar vein, the CCSD (1998, 3) proposal for an Annual Social Report is aimed at "improving Canadians' understanding of our social deficit".

Ottawa should produce a national social report that identifies specific targets - or benchmarks - to measure progress in job creation, improving social security and employability, and combatting poverty. ... This reporting will stimulate discussion and subsequent action throughout our society on ways to improve Canada's social well-being.

Sound information on social programs, needs and problems can be useful in confronting what Ken Battle (1996) labels "the power of public mythology". Both he and Mae Harman (1996) refer to the false but widespread myth that the Canada Pension Plan is fiscally unsustainable. More generally, Battle (1996) points out what would be seem to be an important but often overlooked message in coalition work to preserve Canada's social programs.

[T]he forces for inequality are very strong, and I think that's just a given. And *so far*, the social security system, the welfare state, in all of its forms has managed to greatly reduce those market inequalities and to counter increasing inequalities. We [at Caledon] have looked at income distribution trends in great detail. What you read about in the paper, and what everybody goes on and on about, is the growing gap between rich and poor, and the obvious visible signs of greater poverty and inequality, and concerns [that we are] becoming more like the Americans. I'm glad people are seeing that. But you know, the other side of the coin that is always missed, certainly by the media, is the fact that if you look at the distribution of income after taxes and transfers, it's *remarkably* less unequal, and it hasn't got more unequal. In fact, it's gotten more equal, which is interesting. So the power of income security programs and the income tax system for redistribution is actually, I think, being underestimated. The welfare state does, for all the criticism of it, greatly reduce income inequalities in Canada. I mean *enormously* so. And provide income in kind that we can't quantify.

In addition to having a better understanding of the current benefits of the welfare state, as a means of engendering broad support for it and effective coalitions to protect and rebuild it, it would also seem important that we recover our collective memory about why the welfare state was launched in the first place. Armine Yalnizyan (1996) makes the point that the genesis of the postwar welfare state was in the hardship, suffering and sacrifice that Canadians endured

collectively during the Great Depression of the 1930s and during World War Two.

She says that these experiences

taught people to realize that governments can make decisions that affect our daily lives. So people started making demands at the highest level, .... collective demands of ourselves, essentially, [through] our elected leaders.

In a similar fashion, Ken Battle (1996) points to the need to recover "shared memory" of why the welfare state was established, and to share such historical insight with young people.

If getting out positive messages about the rationale, current benefits, and future prospects of the welfare state is a big challenge to progressive coalitions, it would appear that this is so partly because the media is not interested in such messages and themes. This was an issue that was stressed by key informants of varying ideological positions<sup>17</sup>. Yalnizyan (1996) made the point that

[t]here's *one* hegemenous voice that is permitted to speak, and anybody else is considered kind of noise of the gadfly, unnecessary buzzing in one's ear.

As a case in point, Finn (1996) discusses the cursory media coverage of the Alternative Federal Budget.

Last year when they ignored us, [we approached] a couple of the major papers including the *Globe and Mail*. We asked some of the reporters later why they didn't give us some coverage. The answer was "well, who are you guys? There's no possibility that anybody's going to take you seriously. You haven't got any chance of ever having these policies implemented, so why should we pay attention to them?" This was the sort of circular reasoning [that we encountered]. Of course, we pointed out to them, "well, look, we thought one of the roles of the media was to let people know that there were alternatives to the *status quo*, that some



people were thinking differently and had some different ideas." But that doesn't seem to phase them anymore. I mean, if you're not one of the power brokers ... then they don't take you seriously. So it's a self-defeating kind of a rationale, and certainly in our view it goes against one of the central mandates of a free press.

In mounting any coalition to work for progressive social change in Canada, the question of *nationhood* and its incumbent claims is always a difficult issue, in regard to both developing substantive positions and mobilizing coalition partners. As well as concerns about Canadian nationhood and independence in relation to the United States as hegemonic world power, there is also of course the issue of Quebec nationalism, and increasingly of late the insistence by First Nations on their right to self-governance. The question of the relationship between English Canadian activists and Quebec activists in the social policy field arose in key informant interviews with SPAO representatives.

The issue of how to forge effective social coalitions between English Canada and Quebec has been an issue at the Council of Canadians. Staff member David Robinson (1997) states that the organization's official 'three nations' position (recognizing the right to self-determination of Quebec and First Nations) has been a controversial and divisive policy within the organization.

[A] lot of our membership has been with us since '85 and '86 and '87, and are staunch Canadian nationalists in the sense of the 1960s nationalism - Expo and Pearson and all that kind of stuff. So they're fundamentally opposed to any kind of so-called special status for Quebec.

Robinson adds (1997) that although many newer members of the Council are more accepting of the three nations position, the policy "is not something that is a major campaign or a major focus of what we do".

Peter Bleyer (1992, 113) discusses the challenge facing the Pro-Canada Network in its mobilization against the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement in the 1980s, within the context of our "'binational' federal system". A difficulty which the Network faced was

the unresolved co-existence of two nations (not to mention the First Nations) within one federal state. By its very nature the fight against free trade was bound to run up against this, and with it, the broader question of Canadian identity. The revitalized Canadian nationalism of free trade opponents outside Quebec contrasted sharply with the approach taken by the Coalition quebecoise en opposition au libre-échange and other free trade opponents within Quebec. ... [M]obilizing progressive nationalist opinion in a 'binational' state and avoiding internal antagonism are no simple tasks.

Such difficulties notwithstanding, Bleyer (1992, 113) argues that

diversity of participation in a process that strives for new democratic norms offers the opportunity to move beyond the redistribution of resources to the reconstruction of political identities.

Lynn Toupin (Toupin and Dumaine 1996) gives a more up-to-date assessment of the state of relations between social movements in Quebec and the rest of Canada. She argues that there is no essential disagreement between "social policy groups outside Quebec and in Quebec about the fundamentals", only about which level of the state should be responsible to manage programs. As a native of Quebec, Havi Echenberg (1996) feels ambivalence in regard to the question of

Quebec sovereignty, and argues for the need for "pan-Canadian uniformity" in social programs in which Quebec should have the option to participate or not, according to its own wishes.

Besides the divide between Quebec and English-speaking Canada, key informants mentioned other sources of division that can hinder the building of coalitions for progressive social policy. For instance, there is concern that welfare state restructuring may precipitate a generational divide between older people who are benefiting from programs, and younger people who have less access but still contribute to meeting the costs of the welfare state. Armine Yalnizyan (1996) observes that those who were growing up as children of young families in the postwar period, who benefited from the welfare state expansion of that era, are still benefiting as seniors through programs such as the public pension plans. She also observes that programs that are more likely to be used by younger people today, such as unemployment insurance, are being incrementally dismantled. She fears that "it can only create bad feelings between generations", and that "it erodes this notion that the older generation is in a way stewards of the world that the younger generation comes into" (Yalnizyan 1996).

Mae Harman (1996) is dismayed that baby boomers have become self-absorbed with their own material well-being, and are "sitting on their hands" and letting seniors fight the battle to preserve public pensions on their behalf. But Harman (1996) goes a step further, accusing Finance Minister Paul Martin Jr. of

"deliberately driving wedges between the generations" by portraying public pensions as a welfare benefit rather than an entitlement of all citizens, and thereby undermining support for these measures among young people.

Patrick Johnston (1996) makes the point that public disenchantment with at least some social programs may not be function of age.

I think [there is] frustration on the part of the public, who are not sure that all the government programs have really done much for people with disabilities, or have addressed a lot of those problems. It seems like there's a whole hell of a lot of money that's just been chewed up. At the end of the day, you still have thousands and thousands of people who are homeless. I mean, I don't think most people take any delight or joy in seeing the number of people who are homeless. I think that really bothers them, and I think increasingly they say "Wait a minute, we're spending piles and piles of money going to government so that this doesn't happen. There's something *wrong* here."

If Johnston's assessment is correct or even partly correct (and the electoral successes of parties of the Right would seem to indicate that it is), such public sentiment presents a serious impediment for coalitions trying to break down old assumptions about social programs in order to refashion them in progressive ways.

As the Executive Director of a national organization comprised of people with first hand experience of poverty, Lynn Toupin (Toupin and Dumaine 1996) points out the existential gap that exists between her constituency and those who are paid substantial salaries to implement and deliver programs for low income people.

I'm seeing this huge gap develop. There's a gap in understanding. These [poor] people don't live in their neighbourhoods any more, they don't have

any points of commonality, with the odd exception of people who still go to church sometime .... There are very few instances where people of different classes are now put together in a real context .... And I find that particularly worrisome, when you talk to people who are in positions of authority. Their understanding - *real* understanding - of poor people's priorities and what they're living on a day-to-day basis is just nil.

There was reference in some of the evidence gathered for this study to the relationship between broadly held collective values of Canadians and their willingness to support the welfare state. Some key informants felt that such values cut both ways; there was both support for and skepticism of the welfare state. For instance, Ken Battle (1996) expresses the view that Canadians are of two minds about social policy. On one hand, he believes "there is the compassion, there is realizing the need to save medicare and the safety net, and these things". On the other hand, he feels there are very strong sentiments about private responsibility for one's self and one's family.

This view is borne out in an extensive study by the Canadian Policy Research Networks (Peters 1995) about "values that Canadians uphold with respect to health, education, and social supports" (Peters 1995, v). The findings of the study include the following:

The underlying value [in regard to income support programs] appears to be that people should be encouraged to do as much as they can, rather than "receive something for nothing" (Peters 1995, 14).

In income security, we accept that it is fair for some individuals through talent or luck to have more than others. At the same time, seven in ten of us accept a role for government in redistributing wealth; we want to ensure

that those at the bottom of the income ladder do not live in misery (Peters 1995, 19).

We are not ready to discard [our social safety] net; we want it to become more of a springboard (Peters 1995, 23).

It is worth noting that Battle's observation and Peters' conclusions are both offered in the context of some taken-for-granted assumptions about the validity of the neo-liberal discourse on social welfare. If challenged to analyse the material circumstances and contradictions of life with different assumptions in play, people may be less ambivalent about the role of social programs in ensuring dignity and equality. This question of how 'values' relate to broader assumptions within one or more discourses about social welfare will be addressed again in the concluding chapter.

Yalnizyan (1996) argues not so much that we are ambivalent about the welfare state, but that young people in particular have developed values antithetical to it. She points to widely held moral positions that the individual is foremost, and that individuals must put their own and their family's well-being ahead of others' needs. She also points to what she calls the "disaggregation of the collective" and the "lottery mentality" as values that have become more prominent. She describes the latter as

this notion that you'll do your best, but you may win or you may lose. It's a mug's game.

In regard to the other end of the age spectrum, Harman (1996) expresses dismay that many seniors take the view that if "I'm all right, Jack" then there is no need to challenge setbacks in social policy. She cites the example of seniors who may oppose the abandonment of the principle of universality in old age pensions, but who do not mobilize against the new targeted Seniors' Benefit because they are 'grandparented' and remain as beneficiaries under the old universalistic rules of Old Age Security (Harman 1996).

Organized religion is often seen as a repository, protector and champion of values in our society. Tony Clarke (1997) discusses some history and potential of religious faiths, in translating their values into coalition work for social justice.

Faith communities have a real contribution to make in terms of coalition politics and movement building in this country. Our history shows that the movements that came out of the 1930's were in part inspired by the social gospel movement, were in part inspired by strains of the same thing inside the Catholic community. ... [S]olidarity building is not something that just happens mechanically ... in response to ... economic and material conditions. Solidarity is something that has to be nurtured and cultivated. And in some ways it requires a certain set of moral values or ethical values, a certain degree of moral vision ... because solidarity fundamentally is people agreeing to walk side by side with one another in a common front. ... [C]hurches, because they had developed experiments in coalition building amongst themselves, learned what it meant to be a catalyst, learned what it meant to help people come together, to work together, and have certain skills in helping to make that happen.

Clarke (1997a) argues that in the Christian and Jewish traditions there is "the fundamental religious commitment to the poor as a sustaining element of what spirituality is". He feels that unfortunately churches have chosen

a political option ... in favour of serving the needs of the more affluent members of faith communities, rather than continuing with the basic commitment to the mission of becoming engaged in the struggles of the poor and the oppressed.

He calls for "a rebuilding of that capacity to be faith communities in a coalition and a social movement building process".

Clarke (1997a) also discusses the need for a progressive social movement coalition to form an alliance with one or more political parties. To bring about the changes wanted without such an alliance would be "like whistling in the wind", according to Clarke. He feels that the New Democratic Party, which traditionally supported social movements, is "somewhat weak" and "very much divorced from what is happening in terms of social movement activities". These sentiments were echoed by Robinson (1997), who noted what he sees as a split between community groups working for change and the NDP. In addition, both he and Toupin and Dumaine (1996) commented on the difficulty of using Parliament as a forum for progressive legislative change when the small NDP caucus lacked official party status between the 1993 and 1997 federal elections. During this period the party did not have advantages such as guaranteed time during Question Period, assured representation on House of Commons Committees, and a regular complement of research staff. Even if the will to work with social movement organizations had been present in the NDP, the means of doing so in Parliament was limited.



Aside from such practical impediments, however, a number of informants were chagrined at what they saw as the NDP's lack of an alternative political vision to neo-liberal orthodoxy. Finn (1996) referred to "differences of opinion" within the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Left more generally about "whether the NDP has self-destructed, whether there's any hope of reviving it as a true party of the Left". Both he and Shookner (1996) felt that the rightward tack of Bob Rae's Ontario NDP government in the early 1990s paved the way for Mike Harris and his very conservative regime. As Finn (1996) put it, if there was no alternative to neo-liberalism the voters decided that they might as well vote for "a *real* Tory Party".

While there seems to be some consensus among SPAOs that the NDP lacks a visionary alternative to the current neo-liberal discourse, they can point to no other political formation on the left that is offering such a vision. Needless to say, critics to the right of the NDP are also critical, but for different reasons. Maxwell (1997) feels "that the voices of the left are now defenders of the *status quo*". Echenberg (1996) characterizes the NDP as "too knee jerk", lacking "rigour", and in denial of the new economic realities. One key informant who had complementary things to say about the erstwhile NDP provincial government in Ontario was Mae Harman (1996). She made positive comments about the NDP initiatives to keep long-term care under public aegis and to bring in advocacy legislation for vulnerable adults.<sup>18</sup> Harman (1996) praised Ontario's New

Democratic government for engaging in genuine consultation with stakeholder groups in regard to pending legislation, "although we did not always get what we asked for". She contrasted this with the subsequent Conservative regime, using the example of legislative hearings on the removal of rent controls.

... the Conservatives sit there and giggle, and they always ask the same questions, and they always have the same answers.

Several key informants raised 'tactical' issues bearing on how advocacy coalitions need to conduct their work in the social policy arena, in order to maximize the possibility that they will achieve the results they desire. Popham (1997) pointed out that SPAOs must become more adept at working with the federal Finance Department, since it is now the locus of decision-making on social policy, rather than the departments of Health or Human Resources Development. Popham (1997) and Johnston (1996) made the identical point that national level social policy advocates must increasingly concentrate their efforts on provincial governments, given the reality of decentralisation of social welfare in recent years. Battle (1996) holds the view "that the role of provincial and local advocacy groups is going to be all the more important" with the advent of the CHST as the vehicle for transfer payments from Ottawa to the provinces.

Liz Rykert (1996) is a co-facilitator of a group called "act.cuts.ont", which is a community based coalition monitoring and resisting the Harris government cuts in Ontario using the internet as their forum for sharing information, educating,

and mobilizing. Rykert makes several interesting observations about the potential of community organizing in cyberspace. She argues that electronic collaboration has the potential to avoid hierarchies and be a "leveller", to create a much richer flow of information and pattern of communication, and to open the boundaries of organizations both internally and externally. She observes that many national level social policy advocacy bodies were set up as a 'hub' - a central point of contact for grass roots activists from a particular constituency, and for the various arms of the state with an interest in that constituency and its issues. With the coming of the internet and the information society, organizations have to reconfigure their structure from a hub to a 'web' model. This can be an opportunity as well as a problem. Rykert (1996) uses the example of how information technology can transform conferences from 'real' events that necessitate costly travel and a pre-set agenda, into 'virtual' events that are accessible regardless of one's location and that can be more interactive in their format.

Although use of the internet and web in coalition work is still in its infancy, organizing in cyberspace is thought to have played a key role in the success of popular sector groups in derailing (at least for the time being) the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment that was being developed at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (*Globe and Mail*, 29 April 1998, pp. A1 and A13).

From her vantage point in a large but local social planning body, Yalnizyan (1996) stresses the tactical importance of building coalitions that can include persons who may not have had a history of progressive-left commitment and activism. She cites the example of people connected with local service agencies who may have voted for the Harris Conservatives out of a vague sense that it was necessary to "crackdown on welfare", cut taxes, and rein in the deficit. At the same time, these people are witnessing first hand the devastating impacts of the cuts on their agency's clients. Yalnizyan (1996) argues that

the real task for the activists and the advocates ... has been to in a sense become less strident, more reflective of what's going on, so as not to lose those people that are standing in a very new place for themselves politically. [You must] not completely alienate them, nor give them such a vacuous, knee jerk response that you lose them for another three or four years.

In drawing this discussion of coalition building to a close, it is perhaps fitting to point to an already successful example of this process. A number of key informants (from SPAOs as well as from labour and NAC) expressed support for and have been actively involved in the Alternative Federal Budget.<sup>19</sup> Since 1995 the AFB coalition has been going through the labourious process of putting together what is widely regarded<sup>20</sup> to be a comprehensive and practical fiscal alternative to prevailing neo-liberal orthodoxy being embraced by the federal Liberal government.<sup>21</sup>

Ed Finn (1996) of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives sees the AFB as

a vehicle for uniting all of these disparate groups out there - the NGOs and the social action groups, and the churches, and environmentalists, and so on - and getting them behind a project where they all see the value of it, and see the possibility of their benefiting from it, from these policies.

He also points to what he sees as "the educational value" of the AFB in helping participating organizations to

learn more about the economic issues and social issues, and what the alternatives are, and become better able to articulate them and defend them.

In this way, Finn (1996) argues, "the [Alternative] Budget can be used to get our ideas and alternatives more widely known to the general public". Robinson (1997) concurs with Finn, arguing that the AFB has the dual function of educating the public, especially through the media, and of serving as a tool for activists in combatting the argument within their communities and even within the ranks of their own constituencies that "there is no alternative".

It seems clear, based on the evidence presented above, that SPAOs are facing both challenges and opportunities in regard to future directions in social policy and social welfare programs. In the next chapter I will analyse how the National Action Committee on the Status of Women is perceiving such challenges and conceptualizing such opportunities at the current conjuncture of the welfare state in Canada.

**ENDNOTES**

1. Nineteen key informant interviews were conducted with twenty individuals who occupy key leadership positions within SPAOs. (One interview was conducted with two key informants from the National Anti-Poverty Organization; the rest were conducted with individual informants.) Informants were equally divided by gender, all worked in professional capacities in the social welfare field. Thirteen of the key informants worked with national level organizations; four worked with provincial organizations in Ontario; one informant worked with the Metropolitan Toronto Social Planning Council, which while nominally a local organization has a national profile; and two informants were independent consultants with strong past and current ties to national level groups concerned about social policy. All but four of the informants worked in capacities in which social policy issues (broadly defined) were their exclusive focus; the four exceptions worked in organizations that had a broader focus on economic and political questions, but which were keenly interested in social policy as part of their agenda. (See Appendix I for a listing of key informants for this study.)
2. For programs in which cash benefits are paid to every individual in a given universe of people (e.g. pensions for everyone over 65 years old), it becomes a matter of interpretation whether (or under what conditions) a program ceases to be 'universal' if some or all of its cash benefits are 'clawed back' from higher income earners through a progressive income tax system (Mackenzie 1996).
3. The federal government recently reversed its previous decision to replace the universal Old Age Security program with the income-tested Seniors Benefit. Pressure from seniors' organizations was an important factor in bringing about this switch back to the universal pension scheme (*Globe and Mail*, 29 July 1998, pp. A1 and A4).
4. Peters (1995, 96) cites Angus Reid polls in 1995 in which "health care" consistently ranks ahead of "poverty" and "social services" as public policy priorities, although all three of these items rank far behind "unemployment/jobs", "deficit/debt", "national unity/Quebec", and "the economy (general)". In a 1997 *Globe and Mail/Enviro-nics* poll (*Globe and Mail*, 23 January 1997, pp. A1 & A8), respondents were asked to choose a spending priority for any "extra money" in the run-up to a federal budget. "Health care" was chosen by 25% of the respondents. This figure lagged behind the top priority of "building and construction programs to create jobs" (31%), but exceeded "reducing the federal deficit and debt" (18%), "increasing benefits for children in low income families" (13%), and "reducing taxes" (9%).

5. The influence of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy on the federal Liberal government is no doubt related to the fact that the Institute's President, Ken Battle, is a former Director of the National Council of Welfare. In his previous role at the Council, Battle was critical of the former federal Conservative government's social program cuts. Battle originated the term 'social policy by stealth' to describe how the Tories eroded the universality of social programs through incremental changes to social benefits and related tax measures (Battle and Torjman 1995, 5).

6. The same *Globe and Mail* article states that "[Battle's] drift from universality cast him in a suspicious light with his anti-poverty soulmates". The Executive Director of the CCSD corroborates this view (Ross, 1997a).

7. In fact, the number of children living in poverty in Canada rose by 58% between 1989 and 1995, and Campaign 2000 has officially abandoned its goal of eliminating child poverty by the millennium (*Globe and Mail*, 28 November 1997, p.A4).

8. The Proposed Child Benefit would be \$4200 per child per year for families with an annual income of \$15,000 or less, and would gradually decrease as income levels rose. Families with annual incomes of \$60,000 or more would receive the base amount of \$420 per child, which would be claimed as a tax credit rather than received as a transfer payment (Novick and Shillington 1996, 20).

9. The Roeher Institute (1993, 45) states that "[a] key to alternative institutional arrangements" related to its framework for well-being is "democratic social bargaining". This concept is "based on a recognition that traditional market mechanisms and party politics are incapable of resolving the conflicts that can arise from growing diversity and the associated social and economic trade-offs". Social bargaining is carried out by "institutional mechanisms for building consensus on major social and economic policy issues".

10. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (in collaboration with the Canadian Labour Congress) originated the concept of a Canada Social Security Act (Sharma 1997, 1-14). NAC's position in this regard is outlined in more detail in Chapter 6.

11. It would seem politically prudent, nonetheless, for the federal government to seek provincial/territorial support for national social security legislation. A recurrent theme arose in key informant interviews in relation to the introduction of the CHST that would seem to be generalizable to the possible future introduction of a Canada Social Security Act. Informants argued consistently that it is essential that the federal government combine the 'carrot' of substantial and dependable

federal transfer payments to the provinces (rendered mostly in the form of cash, as opposed to non-monetary forms such as tax points) with the 'stick' of federally imposed standards or conditions for the spending of this money by the provinces. Without both a carrot and a stick at the federal level, they argued that the achievement of something approximating a consistent and adequate national social safety net would be unlikely. This point was made strongly by Battle (1996), Carter (1996), Johnston (1996), Robinson (1997), and Toupin and Dumaine (1996). Maxwell (1996b) presents an interesting typology containing "five archetypes for the social union". Her schema does not address, however, the question of how to overcome fundamental ideological conflict between (for instance) a federal government keen to develop progressive social policy, and one or more provincial governments who are staunch advocates of rolling back the welfare state.

12. In the fiscal year 1995-96, CPRN acknowledged support from seven large corporations (BCE, IPSCO, The Mutual Group, Noranda, NOVA, Power Corp., and the Royal Bank). In CPRN's audited financial statement for that year, revenue from "donations" (which is differentiated from "federal funding", "grants", "other income") amounted to \$319,794, or 16% of its total revenue base. (See CPRN, 1996). A particular study by CPRN (Betcherman and Lowe 1997) entitled *The Future of Work in Canada*, which is discussed below, was jointly funded by Industry Canada and Noranda Inc.

13. Namely Clarke (1997), Finn (1996), Langille (1996), Shookner (1996), and Toupin and Dumaine (1996).

14. To be sure, the AFB is premised on the *taming* rather than the *transformation* of market forces in the capitalist political economy of Canada. As a short- to medium-term analysis and prescription, the AFB calls for 'humanizing' capitalism rather than working towards a more democratic and socialist political economy.

15. Namely L'Assemblee des ainees et aines francophone du Canada, Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Federal Superannuates National Association, and One Voice (the Canadian Seniors Network).

16. Besides the Council of Canadians itself, these groups that endorsed the Joint Statement were the Canadian Federation of Students, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the National Anti-Poverty Organization.

17. Specifically, Battle (1996) and Yalnizyan (1996) could be characterized as somewhat 'centrist' in their work as social policy advocates. Finn (1996) and



Robinson (1997) could be seen as having a more 'left' orientation. All four stressed the failure of the media to present a balanced picture of the welfare state and of viable alternatives to neo-liberal restructuring of social programs.

18. When the Tories under Mike Harris were elected as the government of Ontario in 1995, they opened long-term care to the for-profit sector and abandoned the Advocacy Act.

19. Key informants for this study played the following roles in putting together the 1998 AFB: Ed Finn of the CCPA and David Robinson of the Council of Canadians were on the national secretariat; Hugh Mackenzie (USWA), Lorraine Michael (NAC), Jim Stanford (CAW), and Cindy Wiggins (CLC) served on the AFB steering committee; and on the level of policy working group co-ordinators, Jim Stanford was involved in macro-economic policy, Hugh Mackenzie in taxation, Cindy Wiggins in social policy, Bob Baldwin of the CLC in pensions, Lorraine Michael and Joan Grant-Cummings of NAC in women's issues, and David Robinson in culture. Lynn Toupin as Executive Director of NAPO has served on the AFB steering committee in the past, and NAPO continues to be represented there. The CCSD is represented on the steering committee for the 1998 AFB, but the Caledon Institute and CPRN are not. The breakdown of steering committee membership is as follows:

labour organizations: 17

SPAOs: 13

NAC: 1

other organizations: 7

Representing "other" organizations are committee members from the Canadian Federation of Students (2 representatives), the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Oxfam Canada, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, and the Canadian Council of International Co-operation. One individual in the "other" category represents both Democracy Watch and the Community Reinvestment Coalition (CCPA and Choices 1998, 377-78).

20. The 1998 AFB was endorsed by 117 economists and political economists (CCPA and Choices 1998, 52-54). Two of the more 'centrist' (as opposed to left-leaning) key informants in this study made positive comments about the AFB. Armine Yalnizyan (1996) referred to the AFB as "reasonably crafted" and as a document which "had a lot of *very* serious work done on it". Ken Battle (1996) characterizes

the AFB as a "really good thing", especially since its authors have "worked out the numbers". However Battle adds that "I don't think the Alternative Budget carries much weight downtown at the Department of Finance".

21. In 1997 and 1998 a coalition of labour, social action and church groups in Ontario have produced an Alternative Budget for the provincial level of the state (*Globe and Mail*, 4 October 1997, p. A12; *Globe and Mail*, 22 June 1998, p. A3).

## CHAPTER 6

### LEADING THE WAY IN SOCIAL POLICY:

#### THE NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Since its inception in 1972, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) has worked for equality and participation of women in Canada. Molgat (1997, 2-4) traces the formation of NAC back to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, which tabled its Report in September 1970. Several feminists in the Toronto area, under the leadership of Laura Sabia, recognized that they needed a strong and independent voice to monitor the government's efforts in implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission. They realized that it was not sufficient to limit their efforts in this regard to participation in an advisory group under state auspices, which was what the federal Liberal government of the day had in mind.

At its founding conference in 1972, NAC brought together the "jeans and suits". Younger, more radical feminist activists met and participated in debates with older women who were also committed to feminist goals, but who tended to use more established political channels in their efforts to achieve them (Molgat 1997, 4). In its early years, NAC struggled to put feminist issues on the agenda of

governments and society more generally (Molgat 1997; Vickers et al 1993). In more recent years NAC has been working to advance the rights and interests of women in a very inhospitable context, given the rise of neo-conservative/neo-liberal ideology and political programs in the 1980s and 1990s (NAC 1987; NAC 1996, 3; Hannant 1988).

In its history, NAC not infrequently has been embroiled in lively and sometimes fractious internal debates (e.g. Vickers et al 1993, 94-130 and 148-52; Molgat 1997, 9-10). There was conflict within NAC in the 1980s related to differing feminist ideologies and partisan affiliations among activists, and to debates between English Canadian and Quebec women revolving around the more general "national question" of autonomy/independence for Quebec in relation to the rest of the country. More recently, there has been conflict within NAC concerning its strong commitment to affirmative action principles and to promoting leadership by women of colour, which led to the resignation of several members of the executive in 1995 (*Toronto Star*, 22 June 1996, p. C5) and to the withholding of financial support from some traditional supporters (Molgat 1997, 16).

Nonetheless, NAC has survived and remains the most broadly based and inclusive organizational manifestation of the various currents of feminist activism in English Canada. The majority of women on NAC's Board are Regional Representatives from every province and territory. In a study that carefully

mapped ties among 33 national women's organizations in Canada, Phillips (1991) identified NAC as the centre of a loose network. As an umbrella group for women's organizations<sup>1</sup>, NAC is now comprised of 650 organizational constituents (Molgat 1997, 16). The organization meets annually to consider issues and adopt resolutions<sup>2</sup>. Vickers et al (1993, 295) contend that NAC has become "a permanent part of the broader political system".

Vickers et al (1993, 293-94) have argued that the "more determined anti-statist agenda" of the second Mulroney government (after its re-election in 1988) was a factor in solidifying and radicalizing NAC in the early 1990s. The authors contend that the rolling back of state power (along with other factors such as the Montreal massacre and attacks on abortion rights) cast NAC "as part of an extraparlimentary opposition to a federal government whose behaviour reflected an [increasingly] hostile attitude to the traditions of the Canadian welfare state." Vickers et al (1993, 294) describe the organizational evolution of NAC in this way:

NAC now sees itself much more as part of the women's movement. It has also abandoned its early multipartisan stance for a more extrapartisan position, as fewer of its activists than ever before are involved in political parties. Instead of being concerned about the partisan balance of its leadership, NAC is now far more attentive to successfully representing women's groups within a framework that values feminist politics ....

To the extent that women's issues get attention and analysis in the English Canadian media, NAC has often been the key organization that has been

articulating feminist values.<sup>3</sup> Over the years, politicians had to pay attention (willingly or otherwise) to events such as the Annual NAC Lobby on Parliament Hill<sup>4</sup>, and televised national leaders' debates that have been organized by NAC during federal election campaigns.

The presentation of findings which follows draws upon documentary and media sources, as well as key informant interviews with five activists in NAC (including the current President and a past President).<sup>5</sup> All of the key informants have had extensive involvement in social policy questions. Based on analysis of these documents, news reports and interviews, I will structure the discussion around four prominent themes that emerged from the evidence collected.

**1. There is a clear need in Canadian social policy to move beyond presuppositions of the Keynesian welfare state, and towards a progressive reconceptualization of social welfare.**

Compared to the labour movement and the various social policy advocacy organizations examined in the previous two chapters of this study, NAC is articulating much more clearly the need for a fundamental paradigm shift in regard to how to guarantee universal social and economic security in the current post-Keynesian context. In particular, women leaders within NAC are either explicitly advocating or implying that the time has come to reject KWS model of the male-breadwinner "family" wage, and the resulting bifurcation of income maintenance programs into 'first class' social insurance programs (originally designed for male

breadwinners) and 'second class' social assistance programs (originally designed for female homemakers and mothers). With varying degrees of consciousness and precision, NAC activists are beginning to articulate a new model of social welfare premised on economic security for all regardless of one's status in relation to the paid labour force.

Barbara Cameron (1996) is an academic and has worked on social policy questions as a NAC activist. She posed the issue of 'paradigm shift' at the most theoretical level, as a necessary but as yet incomplete project.

[The women's movement] *must* come up with a feminist alternative [to the Keynesian welfare state]. We can't just be saying the same old defensive stuff. But when we came to do it, it was quite clear the work hadn't been done, and the NAC Executive didn't know what they meant by it. .... Once we got into it, I realized we in fact hadn't really theorized the significance of reproduction, and the feminist thinking about reproduction, into our view of the welfare state. So my criticism of the women's movement right now is that we haven't got beyond Keynes. We haven't integrated what we've learned ourselves and we haven't thought through what a different kind of welfare state would look like.

Cameron (1996) argues that a key component of such an alternative paradigm of social welfare is "a language of social rights".

.... [O]ne element of whatever system that you want to end up with is that there is an explicit notion of social rights that Canadians have, and who's responsible for guaranteeing them. In the postwar period it has primarily been the federal government. But we haven't had a language of social rights in Canada. We've had a bureaucratic language of national standards, and Canadians know in their bones that this has something to do with their sense of who they are ... English Canadians do, of their sense of who they are as Canadians. But there's no language to talk about it. It's as if these are sort of administrative criteria. We've got this peculiar vacuum around our language, which ... is something that the people around NAC are

talking about. We've had a couple of meetings on it. What is the vocabulary we need to be talking about using, in order to begin to counter what the Right's done? ... because they've been so successful with language.

In regard to defending the principle of universality of social programs in an era of increased targeting and selectivity, Cameron (1996) contends that "we've got some slogans around [universality], but I don't think we've got a program".

Judy Rebick (1997) served as President of NAC from 1990 to 1993, and is a prominent activist on the Left and a media personality. She argues that in the past NAC has tended to deal with social policy questions on an issue-by-issue basis, within a framework which took the liberal welfare state for granted. The one exception to this pattern, according to Rebick (1997), was the "huge debate" which took place on the question of pensions for homemakers (in 1981-82) before her time with the organization. This *ad hoc* approach to social policy was no doubt reflective of the diversity of political orientations among NAC leaders, and of NAC's structure as a lobby group composed to a large extent of organizations focussed on specific issues such as child care or violence against women (Rebick 1997).

Rebick (1997) argues that NAC was forced to alter this traditional way of doing social policy work when the Mulroney government attempted to overhaul the Constitution of Canada through the Meech Lake Agreement in 1987 and the Charlottetown Accord in 1992. Rebick states that "the contradiction between



Quebec and the rest of Canada inside NAC became very prominent" during debates about the Constitution. Women's groups from English Canada were firm backers of equality rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, seeing them as a set of general protections for women across Canada. They argued that the distinct society provisions in Meech Lake "would undermine equality for women in Quebec". However women from Quebec with a pro-sovereignty perspective disagreed with this position. Rebeck describes what came out of work done to reconcile these apparently contradictory views within NAC, work in which she herself was deeply involved.

What it came to was that in Meech and in Charlottetown both, there was the proposal for devolution of power, and particularly for the opt-out clause in social programs. This meant in our analysis, both in Meech and in Charlottetown ... worse in Charlottetown than Meech ... that the federal government was basically absenting itself from its role in the creation of new social programs ... and in Charlottetown, in fact, arguably even in existing social programs. This was a big concern for us, particularly around childcare, but generally around social policy. So we began to discuss social policy in that framework. How can we argue for a continuing federal role, which we were convinced and are convinced is *essential* to any universal social program in this country, without denying the right of Quebec to control its own destiny? And so we came up with the asymmetrical federalism position, or the opt-out for Quebec, or whatever you want to call it ... special status, whatever.

Rebeck (1997) also refers to this as the "three nations position", in which English Canada, Quebec, and aboriginal people all possess the right to self-determination. This Constitutional position was adopted by NAC in 1991, and advocated in

submissions to the federal government (NAC 1991; Cameron and Rebick, 1992) and in a document aimed at a wider public audience (NAC 1992).

Thus it appears that NAC was pushed away from an *ad hoc*, issue-by-issue approach to social policy and towards creative thinking on social welfare during the protracted and torturous wrangling over Constitutional change in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As Cameron (1996) puts it, NAC had to react to and challenge the Right's discovery that it could "piggy-back a neo-liberal agenda of hollowing out the central state onto Quebec's demands [for autonomy]". As someone from Quebec and as a political leader firmly committed to the business agenda, Prime Minister Mulroney wanted to use constitutional reform in order to simultaneously bring soft sovereignists back into the federalist orbit, and hive off social welfare responsibilities and costs onto provinces that would then be impelled to engage in a 'race to the bottom'. The Mulroney government's objective of hollowing-out the federal state ran directly counter to NAC's objective of constructing a framework of social rights and a set of more extensive social programs through the federal state. NAC saw such social rights and federal programs as pertaining to all of English Canada, and as a progressive alternative to the Keynesian welfare state that was imperfect in its original conception and diminished in its capacity as a result of successive cuts.

There was an attempt to mollify constituencies supporting the welfare state during the Mulroney government's second round of constitutional negotiations which culminated in the Charlottetown Accord. A "Social Charter" was included in the proposed constitutional package. Once again, NAC was wary of any attempt to use constitutional reform as a means of weakening the ability of the federal state to develop and deliver social programs. Judy Rebick (1997) argues that Ontario NDP Premier Bob Rae "glommed onto" the Social Charter as a way to make the Charlottetown Accord marketable to the Left and progressive constituencies, despite the fact that its proposed social rights would not be justiciable and would be subject to opting out by the provinces under the "notwithstanding" clause of the existing Constitution. In a brief prepared by Cameron and Rebick (1992, 12), NAC declared that it was prepared to support a social charter only if

the rights guaranteed in [such] a Charter of Social and Economic Rights were significant and could be enforced, that such a Charter was not a trade-off for entrenching the economic rights of corporations, and that the rights guaranteed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms were protected.

NAC (1991, 2) also opposed constitutional restriction of federal spending power in areas of shared jurisdiction with the provinces as a "threat to social programmes". Such restriction would severely limit the ability of the federal state to set national standards for social programs, and

would prevent for all time the introduction of a Canada-wide system of child care and severely restrict the initiation of any other major social programmes (NAC 1991, 2).

After the defeat of the Charlottetown constitutional package in the 1992 referendum, the question of future direction in social policy did not disappear. Rebick (1997) refers to the Social Security Review under the new federal Liberal government in 1994 as another attempt at "restructuring social policy" according to the neo-liberal agenda. This was the occasion, according to Rebick (1997), for the NAC Executive to

take a step back from everything we'd done up until then, and say "okay, what as *feminists* ... what kind of social policy do we want to see?" Like *not* talk about what we should lobby for tomorrow, but actually ... now we're looking at a complete restructuring of the welfare state in this country. That's what's happening. So, let's go into it with *our view* of what the welfare state should be, with feminist principles.

Rebick (1997) points out that the KWS distinction between social insurance and social assistance was premised on steady employment of male breadwinners. She feels that this premise no longer pertains in our current context of a high participation rate of women in the labour force, and the pervasive and growing trend towards non-standard (i.e. part-time, short-term and on-call) employment. Although Rebick understands that her view is not a popular one among current labour leaders, she nonetheless argues that

from a *feminist* point of view, the concept of Unemployment Insurance doesn't make any sense at all. The concept of a guaranteed annual income makes more sense, because why do we want to distinguish between people who have a permanent attachment to the workforce and people who don't?

Why, from a feminist point of view, would you want to distinguish between those two groups of people? There's no reason, from the point of view of welfare, you see. You've got a situation where you have an unstable workforce, where you have a shifting workforce, where people don't have the expectation anymore for long term stable jobs because of the restructuring of work. *And* you have a situation where you have the vast majority of women working outside the home. What you want to do is create a system of services and assistance, income assistance and social assistance, which will strengthen the working person, and which will strengthen the work in the home and work in the community versus paid work. So to me that means a shorter work week and a guaranteed annual income have to be the *centre* of the social welfare system now.

Other NAC activists interviewed were not as explicit or detailed as Rebick in their views concerning what sort of social welfare system should succeed the KWS. Nonetheless, they were very clear in their support for a continuing presence of the federal government in social policy formulation and in social program delivery. They were also strongly in favour of the principle that social welfare must be fundamentally driven by human need and principles of equity and justice, rather than the neo-liberal discourse of human resource development and competitive advantage that has influenced governments across the political spectrum.

For instance, Lorraine Michael is a NAC activist<sup>6</sup> who has been heavily involved in social policy questions. Michael (1996) argues that governments have a responsibility to be *leaders* in providing universal services on the basis of need; that people requiring services should have a fundamental role in determining social policy; that the economy should be made to work to enable universal public

services; that a truly progressive tax system should be the fiscal underpinning of a renewed welfare state (with no clawbacks which would undermine broad public support for universality); and that user fees should be prohibited in service sectors (such as chronic health care) into which they are creeping. Michael (1996) also raises the question of how women's unpaid work (particularly in the home, but also in other settings such as farms and fishing boats) should be recognized in public policy. She argues that there is a moral imperative to ensure "full economic security for women until the day they die", through the extension and reconfiguration of existing social programs.

Historically NAC has placed a high priority on the achievement of affordable, accessible and publicly administered childcare for women and families (Friendly 1986; Willis and Kaye, 1988). Martha Friendly (1996) is a childcare advocate and NAC activist who has been a key player in regard to this issue for a number of years. She points to childcare as a useful barometer of the lack of willingness on the part of recent federal governments to take a leadership role in what would be a new area of national social programming. Despite promises of a national childcare policy that were made by the federal Conservatives before they were elected in 1984, and despite years of intensive lobbying by NAC and childcare organizations in the latter part of the 1980s, no substantive improvements in childcare were forthcoming from the Mulroney government. After the Liberals were elected in 1993, Human Resources Minister Lloyd

Axworthy's plan to initiate a modest federal program in child care was derailed by the cost cutting agenda emanating from the Department of Finance (Friendly 1996).

Beyond the specific issue of childcare, Friendly (1996) points to bureaucratic confusion and lack of political imagination as major impediments to creative social policy within the neo-liberal state. She argues that the adoption of "centrist positions" by the NDP in Ontario and elsewhere have made it "respectable to be right wing", and that provincial Premiers (including NDP incumbents) have been protecting their "fiefdoms" to the detriment of efforts to initiate and improve social programs on a national basis. In such a context, it is difficult if not impossible to design and fund creative public programs, whether it be childcare or other initiatives.

The current President of NAC, Joan Grant-Cummings (1997), points to the need to work for a guaranteed income and a national childcare program, while not ignoring the need to extend and improve existing programs such as public pensions, social assistance, respite care for families with elderly or disabled members, and community health centres. Grant-Cummings also argues (1997) that NAC should "lead the debate" on ways to factor in the work that women do in the home into our formulation of economic and social policies. Although not addressing the question of social policy specifically, the previous NAC Past

President Sunera Thobani told journalist Rhonda Sussman (1994, 23) that for

NAC

equality is the bottom line. We can afford equality. There are choices we can make as a society. There are alternatives.

In its most recent *Voter's Guide* (Sharma, 1997), NAC advocates for a federal Social Security Act. Such legislation would reinstate the four "basic rights" of the former Canada Assistance Plan that were abolished when the Canada Health and Social Transfer was instituted in 1995, and would add a fifth stipulation.

Components of the proposed Social Security Act are as follows (Sharma, 1997,

11):

1. The right of any person in need in Canada to an adequate level of income. This amount would take into account such basic needs as clothing, food, housing, fuel, utilities, household supplies, childcare, personal needs and support services.
2. The right to social assistance based solely on need. People should not be forced to participate in community work, work-for-welfare, or train-for-welfare programs.
3. The right to appeal administrative decisions related to a person's social assistance entitlement.
4. The right to assistance no matter how long a person has lived in a province.
5. The right to assistance without discrimination in the design or delivery of programs and services. Discrimination based on sex, race, national or ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion, age or mental or physical disability should be illegal.



Sharma (1997, 12) also argues that the rights outlined in this proposed Social Security Act would have to be subject to federal government enforcement through "stable, significant cash transfers to the provinces". Federal offloading of social programs has precipitated a "race to the bottom" among provinces in recent years (Sharma 1997, 5-9; Thobani 1994). It is NAC's position that substantial federal funding must be reinstated in federal-provincial cost sharing arrangements for social programs, if there is to be any reconfiguration of social welfare driven by an equality and justice agenda (NAC 1995, 100.10.17/95 and 100.10.18/95). Only the federal level of the state has the fiscal capacity to tax and spend at sufficient levels to provide universal economic security across Canada, and in so doing to address regional economic disparities and to support provinces and territories with small populations and/or limited economic opportunities.

Additionally, principle 1 above (the right to an adequate level of income) could in fact be legislated and implemented in a manner which moves income security beyond the CAP model of "needs testing" (Pulkingham and Ternowetsky 1996a, 10) towards some form of universal scheme for economic security based on less stigmatizing income testing. Income maintenance based on this latter mechanism could potentially be set up to be universally accessible, to pay benefits that are *genuinely* "adequate", and to fit the changing circumstances of people's family lives, patterns of attachment to the paid work force, and collective and personal aspirations. In this sense, NAC's proposal for a Social Security Act has at

least the potential to move public policy on incomes beyond the KWS model of residual, modest transfers to ameliorate the worst of market-driven inequalities, towards a post-Keynesian paradigm of a guaranteed and adequate level of income for all through substantial redistribution of wealth and the marshalling of economic productivity for social good over private profit.

**2. Women need social services, and the state must ensure the availability of such services in the public sector.**

Neo-liberal supporters of welfare state downsizing have attempted (with considerable success) to discredit and dismantle publicly administered and government funded social and health services. Such targets of neo-liberals in the social and health service sector have included programs delivered directly by the state, programs delivered through the broader public sector (such as school boards and community hospitals), and services of voluntary, not-for-profit agencies which receive government funding. It is argued by neo-liberals that such services should be spun off to the private sector, and subjected to the laws of supply and demand in the marketplace. Even if state funding is still to be allocated to service provision, the case is made that money would be better spent on delivery through the 'more efficient' private sector operating according to the profit motive. Critiques of this neo-liberal position have been formulated, not surprisingly, by public sector unions (PSAC 1998; CUPE 1998). Their members are confronted

with a significant reduction in wages, benefits and job security, or perhaps with the outright loss of their jobs, when the work that they do is contracted out to the private sector.<sup>7</sup>

During the first term of the neo-conservative Mulroney government, Hannant (1987) produced a comprehensive critique of privatization on behalf of NAC. This study defined the phenomenon (pointing to the sale of state assets, deregulation, contracting out, and commercialization as distinct components); traced its extent both nationally and internationally; focussed attention on its impacts on women as employees and consumers in both private and public sectors; and analysed some of its deleterious effects in the various sectors of telecommunications, air transportation, child care, and the nursing home industry. Hannant (1987) makes a case for preserving service industry jobs in the relatively well paid public sector, which employs a high proportion of women workers, and preventing the transfer of this work to the poorly paid private sector. Hannant (1987) is also concerned about the maintenance and enhancement of publically funded and administered social programs that relieve, at least to some extent, the burden of caring work in the private sphere that falls mostly upon women.

NAC activists have been particularly critical of one aspect of the push for privatization. They have opposed the shift in social policy discourse at the national level away from the need for universally available and readily accessible public services, and towards increasingly targeted income support programs for people in

need. The privatization proponents argue (or quietly assume) that persons receiving income assistance from the state should buy the services they need in the private sector, or provide them on an unpaid basis within the home, rather than having public services upon which to draw. Barbara Cameron (1996) puts the issue this way:

[T]he federal government won't get involved around the funding of services ... like a national child care program. So what you end up with as the federal role is money in people's pockets, or tax credits, or whatever towards the purchase of child care services, or whatever else you need for children. But you don't end up with the services. And women have to have services. It is a male view of social programs to [focus upon] income support, because the services replace the labour of women in the home, and that's what women need - the services. I think that's sort of the conventional wisdom around the left-liberal social policy types these days. The federal role will be income [support], and the provinces will have complete responsibility over services. It's not good for women.

Cameron specifically mentions the frustration of childcare advocates that the Caledon Institute on Social Policy (arguably the most prominent and influential think tank acting as a counterpoint to the neo-liberal advocates in the social policy arena) "keep[s] just talking about the income side of things" to the exclusion of federal policy initiatives and funding for public service provision.

Within this neo-liberal social policy emphasis on income support in lieu of public services, there is a sub-theme of the need to target income support so that it goes to the most needy and "deserving" groups. In the absence of universal public services, transfer payments from the state to persons are to go to those who are perceived as unable to subsist through their own devices within the wage labour

market, and who are therefore considered morally exempt from doing so.

Attention has been paid, for instance, to sparing people with disabilities from the moral opprobrium of workfare (*Globe and Mail*, 1 November 1997, p.A3)<sup>8</sup>.

Similarly, it is considered commendable in public discourses to support poor children through programs like the Child Tax Benefit (*Globe and Mail* [editorial], 28 November 1996, p. A22; *Toronto Star*, 24 September 1997, p. A6), with absolutely no reference being made to the responsibility of public policy makers to ensure an adequate supply of well paid and secure jobs for the parents of poor children.

On the other hand, non-disabled, working-age adults who receive social assistance (including women who are sole-support parents) have *not* been spared from the public backlash against income support programs that has been carefully nurtured and orchestrated by the Right.<sup>9</sup> NAC activist Barbara Cameron (1996) expresses the concern that the neo-liberal policy of downloading responsibility for income support from senior levels of the state to local government will combine with the general stigmatization of income support for the "undeserving", with unfortunate consequences for women.

[P]eople on social assistance ... are better off when the control [of the program] is farther away from the community. ... [L]eaving things in the local community, when it has to do with people who are on social assistance, is not a great idea, because you get this sort of moral policing of people ... they just don't have any rights. So what you need to do is entrench the rights, but you've got to put it at a higher level, you can't put it

in the local community. You don't want every busybody snooping into what the people on social assistance are doing.

It is interesting to note that much of the recent work in developing new models of public service delivery has been emanating from the women's movement. Friendly (1996) and Cameron (1996) point to the "hub" model of organizing childcare services, and Grant-Cummings (1997) points to women's health services under women's control as innovative and practical approaches to providing services. Cameron (1996) argues against relying on the traditional voluntary sector (which is premised on a charity model) in order to render services that should rightfully be the responsibility of the state. But Cameron (1996) also sees the potential for feminist and other progressive sectors of the community to critique state services and to develop innovative program models and delivery mechanisms that are under democratic control.

Of course public services which lessen the burdens of domestic labour and caring work are not a new idea, and in fact were a real if limited feature of the Keynesian welfare state. These services have been a prime target for cuts in the neo-liberal deconstruction of the KWS, which has been particularly bad for women (Armstrong 1996; Aronson 1992). Thus, as part of any reconceptualization of social welfare arrangements along egalitarian and democratic lines, public services must be enhanced and extended rather than cutback and eliminated. NAC is clearly representing the view that the bolstering of public services will decrease

women's vulnerability in both the labour market and income redistribution programs, and will guard against reprivatization of caring work as part of women's unpaid labour in the home.

**3. Practical steps must be taken towards genuine, participatory democratization of the state, the economy, and civil society**

In its positions on questions of public policy, and in its approach to priority-setting and decision-making within its own ranks, NAC is issuing clear and consistent messages concerning the need for profound democratization in political and economic spheres and in institutions and organizations in civil society. In pursuing democratization as a goal both 'externally' in the political economy and 'internally' as a social movement organization, NAC is putting into practice what Findlay (1993, 163) refers to as "the process of democratization in the largest sense of the term".

Democratic 'retrieval' is of great political significance in our quest for equality and social justice. ... The state as a set of apparatuses and social relations must be made accountable to the people. Processes must be developed to place more control in the hands of the people. But we must also think about how the practices of ruling have penetrated and shaped our everyday lives. Thus the movement for democratization must take as problematic not only the social relations - the forms of representation - embodied in the state as we have been taught to define it, but the relations that are part of everyday lives and the organizations in which we work and struggle.

In an interview with journalist Rhonda Sussman (1994, 23), NAC Past President Sunera Thobani sees democratization as a multi-faceted struggle.

When I look at the struggles of the women's movement for women's equality, for me that's essentially a fight for democracy. [When] I look at anti-racist struggles, for me these are fights for democracy. When we have labour fighting for the rights of workers to have control over their working environment or over what they produce, for me that's essentially a fight for democracy; a fight to make democracy real in people's lives.

NAC (1991) has incorporated into its advocacy on constitutional questions a fundamental concern with democratic process that goes beyond formal equality of individuals before the law. NAC calls for participation of distinct collectivities in democratic processes, and affirmative action to ensure that individuals from excluded groups are able to exercise political power. NAC (1991, 8) argues that "aboriginal peoples and the people of Quebec" should have "social programmes under the control of their own governments in order to protect and develop their particular cultures". NAC (1991, 9) also takes the position that

measures to improve the representation of women and racial and other minorities in Canadian political institutions must be part of any reform of the Canadian constitution. Any new political institutions, such as a reformed Senate, must include equal political representation for women.

Specifically in the area of social programs, NAC stands for democratic process as well. A resolution from the 1995 Annual Meeting (NAC 1995, 100.10.19/95) demands

that the federal Liberal government commit itself to an open and democratic process for the establishment of national standards for federally-funded social programs, that Canadians be fully informed of the proposals and positions of all governments at every stage of the discussion and that a full debate be held in the Canadian Parliament before national standards for social programs are approved.



NAC not only promotes democratization as a broad and noble concept in social programs and other areas of public policy. NAC has also struggled internally to put more fundamentally democratic decision-making processes into practice, and to overcome the predominance of white, heterosexual, non-disabled women in leadership positions. In her report as outgoing President, Thobani (NAC 1996, 3-4) describes the conflict that occurred within NAC in regard to empowering women of colour, as well as struggles to make the organization inclusive of aboriginal women, lesbian women, and women who live with disabilities.

On a very practical level, current NAC President Joan Grant-Cummings (1997) is sensitive to differences in how democratic organizations get their business done. She observes that for women, one's lived experience counts in making a contribution to collective decision-making. In other formally democratic but more hierarchical organizations such as unions, Grant-Cummings (1997) notes that decision-making clout is much more a function of one's position in the organizational structure. In this sense, NAC aspires to a more radical concept of democratic process which is consistent with feminist valorization of grounded experience over formal role as the basis of agency and power in social life (Smith, 1987). This concept of democracy has the potential to transform both social movement organizations and the formulation of public policy.

There is sensitivity within NAC as to how the origins and deployment of 'expertise' may affect the state's ability to act in a manner consistent with broad popular will. Such sensitivity seems largely absent from the critical analysis of other organizations that advocate on questions of social policy.<sup>10</sup> Barbara Cameron (1996) points out that even when a relatively progressive government is elected, its actions are susceptible to shaping by bureaucrats and 'experts' who are not in touch with working class interests or popular concerns.

I was involved in a couple of sessions with [a senior cabinet minister in the newly elected Ontario NDP government.] .... I was a bit scared by her lack of sense of class in all of this, ... her inability to see that the advice she was getting was class-based advice, and that [you] ought to hire people to give you the solutions you want from your perspective. ... Expertise is not neutral.

As a NAC activist, Lorraine Michael (1996) is sensitive to the relationship between progress on social policy questions for women and the effective involvement of women in the democratic politics of unions. She argues that "the women's movement inside the labour movement is growing". Michael sees this increased level of democratic activism of women in the labour movement as having positive spinoffs, including more "gender specific analysis" within traditionally "male driven" labour research on questions such as job loss related to free trade; the "extremely important" CLC project on women's work (Canadian Labour Congress 1997a); and the attainment of workplace childcare in collective agreements.

Michael (1996) raises another important issue related to the meaning of democratization in the late 1990s. She sees the need to maintain independent and vociferous political action coalitions that maintain an arm's length relationship with all electoral parties, including the NDP. She describes a meeting which she had with the provincial NDP leader Peter Fenwick in her home province of Newfoundland. The meeting was set up to discuss Fenwick's suggestion that the New Democrats should be allowed to formally belong to a broadly based coalition fighting for equality and social justice.

I said "Peter, we have a new politic going on here, and a political party cannot be a member of the Coalition, even though we probably all vote NDP. Something new is happening." And I said "we can't trust that a political party, even the NDP, will do everything that we want it to do if it becomes elected." I said "so if you're really sincere about saying you agree with us, then you'll learn how to work with us, and we [will] work together. But you can't be a *member*. Right?" And Peter couldn't get it. He couldn't get it. Now that struggle is still going on.

There is an aspect of "democratization" that takes us a step outside of state or social movement politics, but is nonetheless extremely important in determining how much control women and men have in regard to circumstances of their everyday lives. If the ideal of democracy includes personal freedom and self-determination, then the process of democratization must encompass a degree of freedom from the temporal demands of waged labour and some flexibility in the use of one's personal time. Women in particular cannot participate in democratic political processes if they are working a double day of waged and domestic labour,

especially in the absence of institutional support and collective resources that can be drawn upon in regard to caring work performed within families for children, elders, and other dependent kin.

In this sense, the question of democratization is tied to issues such as shorter and more flexible hours of paid work, ready access to good quality child care, community support for seniors, parental and family leave related to child care, and respite services for families with a disabled member. Women still shoulder the bulk of unpaid caring work within the family,<sup>11</sup> even as their labour force involvement becomes increasingly important in keeping families from falling into poverty (*Globe and Mail*, 27 August 1997, pp. A1 & A6). For women especially, opportunities for involvement in democratic decision-making in the state and civil society will continue to be limited unless labour and other social movements immerse themselves in questions to do with the 'politics of time'.

As discussed above, NAC has been the leading advocate for an adequate national system of childcare since the early 1980s. Martha Friendly (1996) argues that while there is a need for strong national standards and adequate state funding for childcare programs, there are also limits to how much and when young children should be separated from working parents. Friendly (1996) asserts that childcare policy should be linked to flexible labour market policies on such questions as the length and scheduling of the working day, vacation entitlement, and the

distribution of work time over the careers of workers with children, in order to facilitate effective parenting.

It is interesting to note that Friendly also argues (1996) that child care is not just about enabling labour force participation of mothers and fathers. It is also about providing choices for families and enrichment for children.

I think that child care is a service, a broad service. Children ... whether their mothers are in the paid labour force or not, should be able to participate in it, like they do in kindergarten, and they do in other countries, appropriately. I mean not in a compulsory way. ... What I would do is have universal high quality childcare that everybody can use. I don't think people who are not in the paid labour force would send their kids full time, but in France they do. They send their kids a full school day when they're three [years old], because they like it. It's for children. And I would have the kinds of services that people who are not in the paid labour force want, which they say they do want. I would make sure that people had enough money to live on, no matter what they're doing.

Thus it can be argued that childcare is about more than just enabling the participation of women in the labour market, particularly one dominated by "bad jobs" and non-standard employment. Friendly points to the possibility of tying universal childcare and guaranteed economic security together in the interests of parents and children. Making substantive progress in both areas of social policy could not only increase women's availability for the labour force participation. Such progress could also enhance the ability of women to be involved in political processes within the state, in the community, and in labour and other social movements.

Perhaps the most fundamental threat now being posed to democracy in Canada and other countries is the set of recent initiatives to enhance the rights of transnational corporations to trade and invest at will across national borders, free of any limitations placed upon them by democratically elected governments. In concert with labour and other coalition partners, NAC has been consistent and unstinting in its opposition to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (Vickers et al 1993, 272-74), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAC 1993), and most recently the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (NAC, 1997c). NAC's opposition to the erosion of democracy implicit in the growing predominance of global corporations relates to a fourth theme in the organization's recent work on questions of economic justice and social equality.

**4. Ensuring the social welfare of people in Canada cannot be divorced from questions of global economic equity and justice, particularly as they pertain to the nations and peoples of the Southern hemisphere.**

NAC has been a leader in recent years in tying the struggle for social equality in Canada to the question of economic justice and redistribution of wealth on an international basis. NAC (1997b, 2) outlines the rationale and strategy behind its international work in this way.

[T]he impact of globalization on women's political, social, economic, civil and cultural rights - on all women's human rights - has been at the heart of NAC's organising, lobby and advocacy efforts in recent years .... NAC's work in organising to improve the situation of Canadian women, its briefs and deputations to the Government, its coalition-building within the social

movement, has been broadened by an international perspective that involves women impacted by globalization [in] both [the] North and South of the Globe. It has become imperative for NAC to strengthen its links with women's groups outside of Canada, and to coordinate with them in regional and international actions including the United Nations processes.

The specific effects of globalization on women that NAC seeks to challenge include unemployment, growth of low wage and insecure employment, and "poverty of women [that] is increasing as social infrastructures are being dismantled" (NAC 1997b, 2). NAC also cautions that

[w]hen we speak of globalization, the capitalist economic restructuring process, many of us in Canada are tempted to focus only on what it happening to women in the South, and in so doing deny the impact of globalization on women in Canada (NAC 1997b, 4).

The impacts of globalization in Canada include "over 5 million poor people, the majority being women and children"; unemployment rates that range from somewhat to staggeringly high among women of colour, women with disabilities, young women, and aboriginal women; and "Canada [placing] second only to Japan in having the highest number of low-paid female jobs of the industrial giants" (NAC 1997b, 12).

NAC's emphasis on diversifying its leadership along racial and ethnic lines has had practical effects. The organization's two most recent are Presidents Sunera Thobani (1993-96) and Joan Grant-Cummings (1996-present). They are both women of colour with roots in developing countries, and in the role of President both have made a high priority of (to borrow the title of a recent NAC

[1997c] document) "challenging the global corporate agenda" in the interests of "remaking the economy through women's eyes". During Thobani's term as President, NAC played a leadership role in deliberations before, at and after the United Nations' World Conference on Women held in China in 1995. NAC's other international initiatives during Thobani's Presidency included outreach work with women's organizations in Bangladesh and with Tamil women's groups in Canada; a public awareness campaign about exploitation of women and children in Asian toy factories; a brief (in conjunction with the National Anti-Poverty Organization) at the United Nations, arguing successfully that Bill C-76 (which replaced the Canada Assistance Plan with the Canada Health and Social Transfer) violated the U.N. Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and a National Day of Action Against the "Head Tax" levied against immigrants and refugees by the federal government (NAC 1996, 13-14).

Current NAC President Joan Grant-Cummings (1997) argues that what is happening locally in regard to cuts in social programs and entitlements is very much tied to the economic agenda of global corporations. She asserts that NAC works to ensure not only the attendance but also the empowerment of women from the South in international forums. NAC also promotes broader understanding at such meetings of the interconnections between economic and social policy (Grant-Cummings 1997).

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Of all the groups examined in this study, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women has been approaching the question of the future of social welfare with the least degree of loyalty to the model of the Keynesian welfare state, and the greatest degree of willingness to undertake bold new directions in social policy. Compared to their counterparts in labour and social policy advocacy organizations, NAC activists are also more attuned to the need to tie questions of social policy to more fundamental issues of equality, democratization, and global economic justice. In the concluding chapter, consideration will be given to some possible reasons for these differing approaches to social welfare between NAC and other progressive constituencies, as well as to some implications of these differences in regard to substantive and strategic questions in the social policy arena.

## ENDNOTES

1. Individual women can affiliate with and financially support the organization as "Friends of NAC", but this status carries with it no vote or ability to hold office. There has been some discussion within NAC about amending its constitution to incorporate individual membership with voice, vote, and eligibility for election to office. There has been a concern, for instance, that women in rural areas and isolated or northern communities may not have the opportunity to join NAC-affiliated groups. In a survey of Member Groups and Friends of NAC, there was support expressed for retaining the organizational membership structure, although there was also support for more involvement of individual members at the regional level of the organization (NAC 1997a, 36).
2. NAC's *Index of Abridged Resolutions, 1972 to 1995* (NAC 1995) contains in excess of 800 Resolutions adopted at Annual Meetings over these years.

3. For instance when Joan Grant-Cummings was elected President of NAC, the *Toronto Star* (22 June 1996, p. C5) ran a feature article entitled "NAC's new leader vows to set more radical course". NAC's 25th Annual Meeting garnered a newswire story saying that the organization will "take a more aggressive approach to lobbying government on a variety of issues, all focused on one theme: Women's rights are human rights" (*Hamilton Spectator*, 22 September 1997, p. D9). On the Canadian Business and Current Affairs database of major Canadian newspapers and periodicals, NAC scores 336 'hits' (citations) for the period of January 1995 to March 1998. This number exceeds that of national umbrella organizations representing labour (e.g. 288 hits for the CLC) and social policy advocates from the voluntary sector (e.g. 179 for the Canadian Council on Social Development).
4. In 1997 the Liberal government sent "more than a dozen Ministers - including Finance Minister Paul Martin and Health Minister Allan Rock" to the meeting with NAC. It was reported that these Cabinet members knew that they "would be chastised" by "Canada's most high profile women's lobby group", but they "chose to take their lumps". On the other hand, it was also reported that NAC "is looking for ways to counter the image that it has lost the political clout it once had" (*Hamilton Spectator*, 23 Sept. 1997, p. C4).
5. Numerous attempts were made to arrange an appointment for a key informant interview with another Past President, SuneraThobani. Two different appointment times were set, but on each occasion Ms. Thobani had to cancel the appointment. In the discussion which follows, reference is made to an interview conducted with Ms. Thobani by a journalist (Sussman 1994).
6. Lorraine Michael is also a staff person with the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice, so for purposes of this study could be said to have a SPAO affiliation as well as an affiliation with NAC.
7. Brendan Martin (1993) argues for a middle road between bureaucratic statism and the neo-liberal position of maximal privatization of public services. He contends that democracy and citizenship must be reconceptualized "in the age of globalization", so that both "global economic relations" and the "public sector" can be reformed "in the public interest" (Martin 1993, 186-87).
8. Ironically, the widespread perception that most disabled are unable to work is incorrect. People who live with disabilities are both able and eager to take their place in the paid labour force (Canada 1996c, 50; Canadian Association for Community Living 1996).

9. Ontario Premier Mike Harris has mused in public about the advisability of denying a special allowance for women on social assistance who are pregnant, because they very well might spend it on beer instead of on the needs of their babies. Even when Harris's office issued a hasty apology in response to outraged reactions to his remark, the release still contended that the program to which the Premier referred was "wide open to abuse" (*Toronto Star*, 17 April 1998).

10. An exception among the organizations examined in this research is the National Anti-Poverty Organization. See pp. 175-76 of this study.

11. A report by the Vanier Institute of the Family states that "[a]mong married couples, fathers spend an average of 2.8 hours a day on household work, while wives spend a average of 4.6 hours a day" (*Globe and Mail*, 9 February 1998, p. A8). NAC recently held a conference on the economic value of unpaid domestic work. A news report about this conference stated that "[u]sing Statistics Canada 30-hour definition for full-time work, most Canadian women work part-time in the paid labour force and full-time in the unpaid [labour force]" (*Globe and Mail*, 25 October 1997, pp. D1 & D3).

## CHAPTER 7

### SEARCHING FOR THE WAY AHEAD IN SOCIAL POLICY

In this final chapter I will draw on the findings of the three previous chapters, in order to address the questions posed in the first chapter. To what extent and in what ways are the labour movement, social policy advocacy organizations, and feminists contributing to the progressive reformulation of the concept of 'social welfare' in Canada? More specifically, are these constituencies thinking beyond the paradigm of the Keynesian welfare state? Have they begun to visualize social policies and social programs that could provide a progressive alternative to the neo-liberal dismantling of the KWS in late 20th century Canada?

These questions are obviously of practical importance in regard to maintaining an adequate 'social safety net' for people in Canada, particularly those individuals and families who experience economic and social hardships. As was discussed in Chapter 2, these questions are also relevant to the intellectual project of re-theorizing social welfare as an aspect of public policy for the 21st century. If the Keynesian model of the welfare state is no longer a 'good fit' in our globalizing political economy in which neo-liberal assumptions prevail, what can progressive social movements contribute to re-theorizing social welfare and/or a desirable set

of political and economic arrangements which will protect, extend, and deepen social equality, democracy and ecological sustainability in Canada?

As my findings and concluding analysis are presented below, I will also reflect on the 'material basis' of the social policy ideas that have been emanating from labour, social policy advocates, and the women's movement in Canada in recent years. This investigation has focused upon three constituencies that are very different from one another in regard to who they represent, how they pursue their practical goals, and what material interests drive their activities. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the various degrees of inclination and approaches to 'paradigm shift' in social policy among the three movements proved to be a complex, diverse, emerging and sometimes conflictual array of perspectives and emphases.

### General Findings

The overall findings of this study indicate that much work still has to be done by labour, social policy advocates, and feminists in re-imagining social welfare as a preliminary step in struggling for a feasible and progressive alternative to the Keynesian welfare state. First steps in this regard have been taken by some elements of these movements. There is a great deal of intellectual, political and practical work that remains to be done, however, if social movements committed to greater equality and social justice are to articulate a progressive, coherent and

politically sustainable alternative to what Jessop (1996) calls the Schumpeterian welfare state that is being championed by the ideological forces of the Right and being set in place by neo-liberal governments. To make the point in neo-Gramscian theoretical terms, labour, progressive movements, and the Left have yet to mount an effective counter-hegemonic discourse in the social welfare policy field to counter and eventually displace the neo-liberal discourse that currently prevails.

The Keynesian welfare state was a significant and progressive step forward towards social security and social equality in the years following the mid-point of the 20th century. We are now almost at the end of the century, however, and new economic circumstances and new challenges to social and ecological well-being point to the need for 'paradigm shift' and creative thinking in social and other aspects of public policy.

At a very general level, conclusions can be reached about the progress in reconceptualizing social welfare by the three sets of social movement organizations that were examined in this study. Some elements within the **labour movement** are moving beyond the political and economic assumptions that have underpinned the Keynesian welfare state, and are seeing the need for a more or less fundamental shift in the political economy which would beget a very different set of social welfare arrangements. **Social policy advocacy organizations** split into two groups. Some SPAOs tend to work within the assumptions and imperatives of

neo-liberal welfare state restructuring, and aim to modify and ameliorate the more negative aspects of such restructuring. Other SPAOs tend to reject (implicitly or explicitly) such neo-liberal assumptions to a significant degree, while also aiming to preserve the best features of KWS social programs. The **National Action Committee on the Status of Women** has made the greatest progress in re-imagining social welfare beyond the KWS paradigm, according to the needs and interests of women and other vulnerable groups in the new global political economy.

Let us now focus in more detail on each of these three constituencies which were examined in this study.

### 1. Labour

During the long postwar boom, labour tended to place almost all of its hope for greater social equality and economic security in collective bargaining, industrial relations mechanisms, and electoralist strategies in support of social democratic parties and policies.<sup>1</sup> As documented in Chapter 4, leaders within the labour movement and elected officials and key staff of the CLC have not abandoned their faith in these methods. There is still a high degree of support for and confidence in these leadership circles for the postwar model of political power, economic reform, and the Keynesian welfare state.

In recent years, however, elements of the labour movement have become more aware of the limitations of these approaches. Political regimes supposedly aligned with labour have not proven very effective in controlling transnational capital or in protecting and rebuilding social programs. For instance, the nominally left-of-centre government of Tony Blair's Labour Party in Britain has been refashioning its social policies much along the lines of Thatcherite neo-conservatism,<sup>2</sup> and has created unrest in its own party ranks and among the poor by promoting welfare-to-work programs (*Hamilton Spectator*, 23 December 1997, p. B4). In British Columbia modestly progressive labour legislation proposed by Glen Clark's NDP government was withdrawn upon pressure from business to do so (*Globe and Mail*, 17 July 1997, pp. A1 & A4). Indeed, examples abound from all around the world of social democratic governments tacking to the right since the advent of neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism (Laxer 1996).

This waning of confidence within parts of the labour movement in the efficacy of social-democratic electoralist politics and Keynesian economic and social policy is particularly evident in unions such as the CAW and CUPE. Labour leaders such as Buzz Hargrove (1997) and Sid Ryan (1997) respectively represent these two unions. They emphasize the importance of engaging in "street politics" such as the Days of Action in Ontario against the Tory government of Mike Harris; of building strong links with other social movements; and of educating union members and all Canadians about the social injustices which result from the



economic dominance of large corporations, and the need to challenge that dominance.

Additional findings in the study point to at least the potential for labour to fully break out of the KWS paradigm and to adopt a more timely and creative approach to social policy. While Canadian labour has not advocated a complete de-linking of individual economic security from labour market participation, it has taken firm and informed positions on the need to eliminate overtime and redistribute paid work as means of lowering under- and unemployment. Unions have also been consistent and strong advocates of measures such as paid leave for parenting and education, and accessible, affordable and high quality child care, as means of bringing paid work, personal life, community participation, and family and household responsibilities into better balance for working people.

Organized labour has also adopted a position that is tantamount to support for a guaranteed annual income scheme, in its support for extended and strengthened income security measures as formulated in the Alternative Federal Budget. This position in favour of economic security for all regardless of status in the labour market differs from previous GAI proposals that have emanated from the Right, such as that of the Macdonald Commission in the mid-1980s. Labour-backed proposals for income security in the AFB are not structured as a unitary, 'one-size-fits-all' scheme, but consist of different components geared to different demographic characteristics and personal needs of Canadians.

It can be argued that labour's advocacy of such a multi-faceted approach to universal income security is preferable to a unitary scheme. In pragmatic political terms, the prospect of designing, funding and implementing a truly adequate and comprehensive GAI program in Canada in the near future is slim to non-existent. The reasons for this include the continuing reticence of governments to commit money to new programs; the decentralization imperative in social program delivery that is very strong; and the ongoing advocacy by politicians of all stripes and policy makers at all levels of government of 'human capital enhancement' strategies, that construct labour market entry as the primary and even panacean social policy objective.

Even if a unitary GAI scheme were practically achievable in the short- to medium-term, other questions could be posed in regard to the political advisability of such an approach from the point of view of labour and other progressive constituencies.<sup>3</sup> One monolithic income security program that would supplant all others, including demogrant and social insurance programs that enjoy widespread popular support, would increase the vulnerability of income security to further political attack from the Right. It would be easier for those opposed to income security measures to hit one target than it would be for them to simultaneously take aim at several. On the other hand, a medium- to long-term strategy to incrementally build up a co-ordinated and comprehensive economic security system for individuals and families (that would combine social insurance,

demogrants and income-tested programs) in order to guarantee that no one in Canada would fall below a reasonable and adequate income floor, would appear more politically 'marketable' and capable garnering widespread support within the labour movement, other social movements, and the Canadian public at large.<sup>4</sup>

A fundamental shift in thinking about social policy (within the labour movement as well as in broader circles) towards universal and guaranteed income security measures would appear to be unlikely, however, unless labour movement leaders and activists make proposals and stimulate debate among their own members, sympathetic political actors, and state policy makers. Such a dramatic shift in social policy discussions within the state would also perhaps provoke questions about the necessity and desirability of change in processes and structures of the political economy, at both national and international levels. Guaranteeing economic security for all, independent of their status in the paid labour force, could very well imply the need for fundamental changes in how wealth is measured, generated, distributed, and redistributed through the tax and transfer system of the state.

Of course, what states can do in political terms to influence economic redistribution in today's globalized environment is conditioned and often determined by patterns and rules of trade and investment that serve the interests of transnational corporations. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 4, the labour movement in Canada advocates the more effective regulation of capital both

nationally and globally, and actively participates in multi-national forums to promote and protect the interests of workers and of democratic and popular movements around the globe. On the other hand, the data presented in this study suggest that Canadian labour movement is ambivalent at best towards alternative economic structures and mechanisms (such as public enterprise, worker ownership and control, building the social economy, and investment strategies to socialize the economy) that would supplant profit as the exclusive, primary, or even a subsidiary imperative in economic activity. It remains an unresolved question if and to what extent the goal of radically egalitarian and democratic social policy can be achieved within the context of regulated and reformed global capitalism, or whether achieving this goal necessitates fundamental transformation in national and international political-economic arrangements.<sup>5</sup>

In any coherent effort to remake social policy and the political economy within which it is embedded, organized labour may not necessarily be the best equipped constituency to provide the fine detail of social policy analysis and proposals for change. Work at this level of specificity within a transformative project in social welfare may be better left to progressive social policy analysts and think tanks, working in a dialogical and constructively critical alliance with progressive elements of the labour movement. Martin (1995, 132) makes the argument that

[l]abour's role in coalitions may not be as the visionary leadership - that can be left perhaps, to the artists and poets, to prophetic popular religious organizations, or academic theorists. What unions are good at is organizing, networking - getting people involved - and in general building the structures to face power.

Martin's point may be well taken, although he may underestimate labour's potential for making specific intellectual contributions to reformulating social welfare. Perhaps it is especially likely that such creative input will come from labour activists other than older white males, who tend to dominate elected leadership posts and union bureaucracies. There was discussion in Chapter 4 of the fact that the Canadian labour movement has made progress in taking the fight for equality beyond the traditional union emphasis on class, and has focused on other dimensions of inequality such as gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. This broadening of the scope of labour's struggle is related to the increasing diversity of its membership, diversity which enhances labour's potential to make creative contributions to social policy formulation in the years ahead.

An important reason underlying this potential of the labour movement to help rethink and reshape social welfare lies in its social basis as a movement. In very basic and material terms, the labour movement consists of people who come together as workers in order to protect and improve their ability to earn a decent livelihood, and to thereby ensure an acceptable quality of life for themselves and their families. The economic improvements and modicum of material security that were won by the labour movement during the long postwar boom have been

undermined and in many instances lost since the advent of neo-liberal globalization. Material necessity and shifting political-economic circumstances suggest that workers' movements in Canada and elsewhere should expand their focus beyond social benefits at the bargaining table, and act to achieve public policy which ensures economic security for all, regardless one's social location and relationship (or lack thereof) with organized labour.

It was demonstrated in Chapter 4 that elements of the labour movement are at least beginning to grapple with the fundamentally important and complex relationships between social well-being and environmental sustainability. Unions made gains at the bargaining table and in material standards of living during the era of Keynesian economic expansion. This era was characterized by rising levels of consumption, resource depletion, pollution, and waste. At least some labour activists are now grappling with the need to reconcile the question of economic security for working people in the present with that of ecologically rational economic strategies to ensure a viable life for future generations. Labour has the potential to play a role in the 'greening' of social welfare and other aspects of public policy.

It is also possible for labour to reach beyond strictly electoralist approaches to social change, and to challenge the discourse surrounding transnational capital as the only and best paradigm of economic organization. Some empirical, conceptual and strategic trails have been blazed in this regard. Convincing, up-to-

date, and readily accessible critiques of global capitalism and of transnational corporations have been advanced by various writers (e.g. Korten 1995, Menzies 1996, Clarke 1997b), all of whom see the need for the mobilization of popular movements such as labour.

The labour movement has the potential to take its proposals for progressive *programs* such as the ones discussed above (socially rooted capital, methods of regulating capital in the short and medium term, social clauses in international trade agreements, etc.), and to use them and other elements in order to construct practical, equality-based *paradigms* for restructuring the economy, enlarging and deepening democratic decision-making, and bringing ecological concerns into the centre of programs to maximize social well-being. The advocacy of reformist policies and the pursuit of incremental strategies to achieve high wage, economically secure labour market conditions need not be abandoned by the labour movement. On the other hand, labour and other equality-seeking movements also appear to be recognizing that new times call for new goals and strategies.

If the most desirable paradigm of social welfare for the future is one that is tied to the eclipse of capital accumulation as the primary motive force of the economy, then the role of labour in securing such a new vision of social welfare arrangements would be a case of 'back to the future'. Transcending capitalism has been a goal of many different working class movements and organizations in the

history of Canada. Elements of the working class and the labour movement have played a key if not determining role in groups such as early socialist and labour parties, the more radical wing of the social gospel movement, the One Big Union, the International Workers of the World, the Communist Party and other radical left groups, and (in its early years when it sought to transcend capitalism) the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation.

There appears to be much intellectual and political work that must be done if a paradigm shift is to occur in economic organization, and thereby ensure security, freedom, and dignity for all in a set of social arrangements different from those of global monopoly capital which currently pertain. But there is also a body of experience acquired by the labour movement that can be built upon, in order to help guide us and support us on such a path. In particular, the ties that have been established by Canadian labour movement with workers in other countries, and with other equality-seeking movements and popular sector organizations both at home and abroad, provide glimpses of ways forward.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Social Policy Advocacy Organizations

It was demonstrated in Chapter 5 that there are widely varying opinions among SPAOs concerning desirable goals and effective strategies in the social policy arena. Of the SPAOs examined in this study, the ones which are the most influential with government policy makers and which have the highest profile in the



media are the Caledon Institute of Social Policy and Canadian Policy Research Networks. They are also the organizations which have been the most willing to work within the assumptions of neo-liberal economic restructuring, and to take for granted the predominance of global corporations. While there are differences in approach and emphasis between Caledon and CPRN,<sup>7</sup> they both accept that Canadians must 'adjust' to tougher labour market conditions, and that the time has come for governments to abandon the principle of universality in social programs.

The Canadian Council of Social Development and the National Anti-Poverty Organization have goals and strategies which differ from Caledon and CPRN. The CCSD and NAPO are committed to the role of the state not only in ameliorating the worst forms of economic inequality, but also in shaping labour market conditions for the benefit of working people, and in providing adequate and dependable forms of economic security independent of one's labour market attachment. Without compromising on their goals, the CCSD and NAPO are nevertheless prepared to entertain means towards these ends that may vary from those that prevailed during the era of the Keynesian welfare state.

Interestingly enough, the SPAOs examined in this study that are going the furthest in rejecting neo-liberal parameters in the formulation of social policy goals are groups which are *not* dedicated exclusively to social policy advocacy, but to a broader public policy agenda. These organizations are the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Council of Canadians, and the participants in the

Alternative Federal Budget process. The CCPA has been pointing to the need for a critique of and an alternative to neo-liberal orthodoxy that has reshaped economic and political institutions, and that has been at the root of the demise of the Keynesian welfare state. The Council of Canadians has achieved a high profile in its efforts to marshal English Canadian nationalism against the growing power of global corporations, the weakening of our national culture, and the decline of social programs that Canadians used to take for granted. The Alternative Federal Budget coalition has brought together an impressive array of progressive movements and organizations, including key players from all of the three constituencies examined in this study, in order to develop an exhaustively researched, comprehensive, and feasible alternative to the 'neo-Liberal' fiscal program of the federal state that has had such a deleterious effect on social welfare in Canada.

It is noteworthy that most of the key informants from SPAOs examined in this study have an 'idealistic' commitment to their social policy positions; that is, they advocate for social policy measures and outcomes to which they have a moral, intellectual, or ideological commitment, but their advocacy in the social policy arena is *not* a function of lived experience or unmediated, direct exposure to conditions of economic hardship or social oppression.<sup>8</sup> This fact does not make their social policy advocacy less significant or genuine. It does, however, cast

their discussion of what 'values' underlie or should underlie social policy in a particular light.

For example, CPRN (Peters 1995) places great emphasis on the importance of 'self-reliance', which it claims is a value that Canadians do and should embrace as a premise in social policy. CPRN, like most of the other SPAOs examined in this study, is led by relatively highly paid professionals who move in relatively powerful and privileged circles. Affluent SPAO careerists are in a position, in terms of their own economic class and social status, within which 'self-reliance' can be socially constructed as an underlying value in social policy in a way that has the ring of intellectual truth and academic respectability. On the other hand, 'self-reliance' may be construed and experienced very differently by workers who have lost their jobs because their employer wants to enhance profits by moving production to low-wage countries, or by women with young children who are living below the poverty line on social assistance because they must escape violent husbands.

All of our idealistic notions of 'values' are shaped and mediated by the material circumstances of our lives, and by our collective and shared memory of such material realities. The Great Depression visited upon the vast majority of Canadians material circumstances in which suffering and misery were pandemic. Canadians' collective memory of the 1930s was an essential element in the political consensus and social 'value base' that enabled the construction of the Keynesian

welfare state after World War Two. Descriptive or normative statements about social values that are divorced from historical-materialist conditions must be treated with caution. Neo-liberal discourses are quite preoccupied with the moral desirability of 'self-reliance', 'competitiveness', 'initiative', and 'enhancing our human capital'. We are exhorted to embrace these values and to allow them to direct the restructuring of the economy, the reshaping of political goals and processes, and the reformulation of social welfare programs. But from a historical-materialist point of view, we should be suspicious of any value formulations that are disconnected from the questions of how to ensure everyone in society can sustain themselves materially, participate politically, and find socially meaningful ways in which to contribute to their community.

Labour activists and feminists tend to be more existentially rooted in material realities of the labour market and the domestic economy than most SPAO leaders. Unionists and women (as well as other groups who directly experience conditions of exploitation and subordination) have the potential to act as an antidote to spokespersons from SPAOs who may have good intentions, but who have been co-opted (unconsciously or otherwise) into neo-liberal discourses on the desirability and/or inevitability of new value premises that should guide social policy formulation.

It is noteworthy that the organization that has developed what is perhaps the most progressive and comprehensive political-economic critique of all the

SPAOs investigated in this study is the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. CCPA is unique in the SPAO community in that it receives most of its funding from the labour movement.

### 3. National Action Committee on the Status of Women

Based on the findings in this study, it would appear that NAC's momentum towards paradigm shift in social welfare policy is the most pronounced of all the organizations examined. More than their counterparts in labour and social policy advocacy organizations, NAC is grappling with the need to fundamentally refashion income maintenance programs in the post-Keynesian era to provide genuine and life-long economic security for women and all people. At the same time, NAC is aware of the need to not only extend and strengthen public services that relieve the burden of caring work within the family that falls inordinately upon women, but also to create and test new ways of delivering services that are responsive to local conditions and the wishes and needs of women and families who rely upon them. While NAC has not as yet developed detailed and comprehensive proposals for the refashioning of income maintenance, or for the extension and democratization of social programs, the organization is politically and ideologically committed to moving in these directions.

It is an intriguing question as to why NAC appears to be leading the field, at least in comparison to labour and social policy advocacy groups, in its

willingness and effort to rethink social policy and programs 'from the ground up' . Perhaps one important reason for NAC's leadership in innovative thinking on social welfare is that its activities and concerns are grounded in the everyday practical concerns and material struggles of women, as they experience them in both the public and domestic spheres of their lives. NAC's *raison d'être* throughout its history has been to improve the "status" of women across Canada in terms of economic security, political empowerment, social equality, and legal protection. NAC has always been particularly concerned about economic security for women as a prerequisite to the achievement of other aspects of equality and advancement. In recent years (and not without internal struggle) NAC has focused especially on economic inequality and social oppression affecting women that is based not only on gender, but also on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability. Situations of 'compound inequality' put specific groups of women at particular risk of material deprivation, denial of opportunity, and even physical and health-related danger in their daily lives.

Perhaps another reason for NAC's leadership in critical thinking on social policy is its strong commitment to the importance of theorizing the welfare state and the political economy within which it is embedded. NAC activists comment that they feel that their efforts in this regard are at a preliminary stage of development, and have to be developed much further. While this may be true, it would appear that in comparative terms NAC is far ahead of labour and social

policy advocacy groups in their attempts to re-theorize social welfare in ways that make sense for women and that address the material realities of Canadian society.

In addition to NAC's base in the practical, material realities that confront women, and its recognition of the importance of theory in struggles for equality, there are perhaps other more 'micro-sociological' reasons for NAC's leadership in social policy rethinking. As a national-level umbrella organization composed of hundreds of diverse groups, NAC is led by activists who are not directly accountable to specific constituencies which may have a relatively narrow set of interests or insights. Thus, the NAC leadership is in a position to take bolder initiatives and to develop more comprehensive analyses than might be the case for leaders of more delimited groups. The particular individuals who have led NAC have also been dynamic and even visionary in their roles. Recent Presidents Judy Rebick, Sunera Thobani, and Joan Grant-Cummings come to mind in this regard. Finally, NAC has no doubt been influenced by socialist-feminist intellectuals based in central Canada (such as Barbara Cameron and others) who have played an active role at the national level of the organization. These 'organic intellectuals' (to use Gramsci's term) of Canadian feminism appear to have been influential in both theoretical and practical terms in shaping NAC's role as a leading critic in the social policy arena.

NAC's general approach to social policy questions has been and to a large extent still is based on a fairly conventional 'left/progressive' understanding of the

primacy of the state and public policy in shaping social welfare for people in democratic societies. One example of this general approach is NAC's advocacy of a Social Security Act which was considered in Chapter 6. NAC's position in this regard could be interpreted as a relatively modest one, in the sense that it is essentially an argument for a return to the *status quo ante* under the Canada Assistance Plan (albeit with the important addition of a prohibition against discrimination). Nonetheless, in the prevailing context of deep cutbacks and anti-welfare discourses at both the federal and provincial levels of the state, reintroducing and strengthening principles similar to those of CAP could be seen as an extremely important first step towards progressive social policy reform.

Janine Brodie (1994) takes a less 'statist' and more 'postmodern' approach to the question of "what is to be done?" in social policy, in light of economic restructuring and the threat that it poses to women. She argues that the demise of the KWS pushes feminist activism concerning welfare beyond the terrain of the state, and into uncharted areas of "discursive struggle" (Brodie 1994, 30-31).

So long as the [Keynesian] welfare state remained unchallenged, the organized women's movement could and did expand its sphere of influence, particularly inside the state itself. The current round of [neo-liberal] restructuring with its attendant shifts in discourse and state form, however, is eroding the very political spaces within which the contemporary women's movement found much of its cohesion and empowerment. Social welfarism is rapidly being displaced by an, as yet, unfinished discursive struggle about the very meaning of the public and the private.



Brodie argues (drawing on Donna Haraway) that the challenge for the women's movement is "to read the webs of power created by restructuring in order to understand the political potential of new couplings and new coalitions", and to "begin to 're-public-ize' political spaces and build a new social consensus about the boundaries and content of the public and private" (Brodie 1994, 42-43).

NAC's understanding of democracy and political participation of women has always been premised on the indispensability of the state and the state's institutional role in developing policies and supporting programs for women's equality. As discussed in Chapter 6, the birth of NAC in 1972 was an indirect outcome of the work of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, and the determination of women outside the state not to let the Commission's Report and recommendations die as public policy initiatives. In contradiction to some postmodern and feminist theoretical tendencies, which have presumed the "de-centering" of the state and the degeneration of large broad political projects into a pastiche of local preoccupations and multiple identities, NAC has never shied away from advocating the use of the state to defend and advance the interests of women.

In this context, it is interesting that NAC developed a very bold and radically democratic position during the course of the Constitutional debates that racked the country during the late 1980s and early 1990s. After considerable (and often very painful) internal debate on the constitutional reform proposals that were embodied in the Meech Lake Agreement and the Charlottetown Accord, NAC

developed a "three nations" policy (Cameron 1996; Rebick 1997) that recognized the principle of national self-determination for aboriginal peoples, Quebec, and English Canada. This constitutional position was tied to NAC's principled opposition to the hollowing out of the federal state by neo-conservative/neo-liberal forces, and the downsizing, dismantling and privatization (to both the marketplace and the family) of social programs.

Given the thorny nature of constitutional debates in this country, and their tendency to bring out anti-Quebec sentiment in English Canada, xenophobic *laine pur* elements among *indépendistes* in Quebec, and racist rumblings in all parts of the country in relation to First Nations, it would appear that NAC is significantly ahead of public opinion in advocating a three nations position. Nonetheless, it is very important for women and for the future of social welfare that NAC took this position. The potential for democratic reformulation of social welfare assumptions and social program design in Canada will be severely compromised if NAC and other progressive organizations do not challenge politicians who use accommodation of Quebec's demands for autonomy as an excuse to further weaken the ability of the federal state to regulate the market, to redistribute wealth, and to ensure public services for all people in Canada.

### Theoretical Framework of This Study

In Chapter 2 it was indicated that this study would be guided by theoretical understandings drawn liberally and somewhat eclectically from five critical schools of thought on the welfare state: neo-marxian and feminist points of view, the anti-racist and green critiques of the welfare state, and the concept of emancipatory needs-articulation of the "thick" variety. It appears that all five of these theoretical vantage points have been helpful in framing and conducting this analysis. All five points of view have also contributed, albeit in differing degrees, to whatever progress has been made in mapping future directions in social welfare by the three constituencies that were examined.

Neo-marxian and feminist perspectives seem particularly salient in progress thus far by elements of the labour movement and by NAC in rethinking social welfare. Both constituencies have drawn on both theoretical streams, in framing their overall understanding of social equality, and in developing positions on specific issues. It must be noted, however, that while NAC has developed a degree of comfort with looking at issues in more 'radical' feminist and neo-marxian ways<sup>9</sup>, the labour movement is more fragmented in this regard. Much of labour is still wedded to a 'moderate' social democratic analysis, and maintains significant hope in and commits significant resources to the resuscitation of the Keynesian welfare state. This lingering faith within large sections of the labour

movement in a social democratic way forward is expressed primarily in the support of many unions and labour leaders for an un-reconstructed New Democratic Party.

The broad range of SPAOs examined in this study, as one might expect, run the gamut between 'moderate left' and 'moderate right' in regard to a neo-marxian understanding of class inequality. Most SPAOs could be characterized, perhaps, as being wedded to a somewhat incoherent melange of social-democratic and liberal-capitalist assumptions regarding social welfare. Of the organizations examined here, CCPA is furthest to the 'left', and CPRN is furthest to the 'right'. Cognizance of and commitment to feminist principles among English Canadian SPAOs tend to be weak at best.

The critique of racism as an impediment to social equality is evident to some extent within labour, and is particularly strong within NAC. This theme appears for the most part to be absent from the social policy analysis of SPAOs examined in this study.

Awareness of the need for the 'greening' of social welfare, and commitment to processes of emancipatory needs articulation in the formulation of social policy, gain some rhetorical support but are not practically supported as matters of high priority by the Canadian labour movement and SPAOs examined in this study. NAC is somewhat further along in understanding and embracing these theoretical innovations in social policy. This is perhaps in keeping with NAC's more fundamental commitment of neo-marxian and feminist insights mentioned above.

The greening of social policy is consistent with an understanding of the parallels between class- and gender-based exploitation on the one hand, and environmental exploitation on the other. The need for empowerment of oppressed groups through deepening and extending democratic processes is consistent with an understanding of the need for emancipation of women in all spheres of public and private life.

We can thus adumbrate the influences (or lack thereof) of the five theoretical orientations adopted in this study upon Canadian labour, social policy advocates, and feminists. On a more abstract level, it seems clear that much more work needs to be done in theorizing a coherent and convincing 'left-feminist-anti-racist-green-emancipatory' alternative to the KWS.<sup>10</sup> Re-theorizing social welfare along these lines is not only an unfinished project - it has barely been undertaken!

It was not the purpose of this research to undertake such a fundamental re-theorization of social welfare. But perhaps in exploring how some potential ingredients for such a broader theoretical reformulation of social welfare have been embraced and applied by social movements in Canada in recent years, this study can shed some light on how we might rethink and reconstruct equality and justice in a socially-well society in the years ahead. As always, truly progressive theoretical innovation must proceed in conjunction with practical political struggles, and in this study we have examined such struggles of workers, advocates, and women on questions of social policy.

### Possible Directions for Further Research

In a sense, this research has not done justice to the three movements which have been investigated. Because of the very broad swath of groups and activists that comprise the labour movement, the social policy advocacy community, and the women's movement, I have had to limit my data collection to a few individuals and organizations in each of these three movements. Especially in the case of labour and SPAOs, I have tended to draw on the perspectives and information of established and 'moderate' spokespeople and organizations that fit more or less within the 'mainstream' of their constituency. In this investigation the voices of activists and innovative thinkers who may be estranged from the established leadership, and who may have a local rather than national base of operation, have for the most part been absent.

In materially-based practical struggles for social equality, political energy and critical thinking often emanate from the margin more than from the centre. For this reason, further research into social policy innovation within social movements might usefully focus on the concerns and analysis of grassroots 'malcontents', and on their dialectical interchanges with those who hold power within their own constituency (if it is organized and structured beyond the local level) and with the social policy apparatus of the state.

In this research some attention has been paid to the practical and theoretical challenges of reshaping social policy to address racism, emancipatory

needs articulation, and ecological sustainability. Social movements and academics, however, have only begun to address the practical and theoretical implications of these imperatives in social policy. In further theoretically-informed empirical research into social policy innovation, much more attention to these questions would appear to be warranted.

The broad focus of this research, and the incommensurability of many of the organizations studied here, also suggest the value of a more restricted but in-depth focus on specific constituencies or social movement organizations. Both 'single case studies', and comparative analyses of (perhaps two or three) social movement organizations which are strategically important and/or sites of innovative thinking in social policy formulation, may provide additional insight into changes in social welfare discourses.

Such deeper looks at one or a few groups may shed light on questions that are only addressed in a preliminary fashion here. How does material, lived experience mesh with idealistic critique and discursive struggle around social policy questions in specific constituencies? What determines the adoption of postures of defense, reaction, and resistance by some social movement organizations, and the undertaking of struggle to achieve a new vision of social welfare by others? How do aspects of identity, on the individual and collective levels, shape social policy activism? What 'works' (or does not work) in regard to single issue or broader coalitional mobilization, in the efforts of social movements

to bring about changes that they desire in the social policy arena? These questions have been addressed in a preliminary fashion and to varying extents in the 'survey' of social movement organizations in this dissertation. However more bounded and in-depth research could shed additional light on the above questions.

Finally, of course, this research has focused on social movements in Canada. Research is needed (and for the most part is lacking) on how progressive social movement organizations have been sharing ideas and pooling resources across national boundaries, in order to work for consistency and improvement of social welfare arrangements on a transnational basis. There was considerable cross-fertilization spanning national boundaries during the period in which Keynesian social welfare arrangements were developing. In recent years we have witnessed an increasing degree of globalization of the economy, the proliferation of multinational trade agreements and trading blocs, and the increasingly prominent (and almost always destructive) role that multi-lateral institutions play in relation to existing social welfare arrangements of specific countries. As capital 'goes global', there would appear to be an imperative for progressive movements concerned about aspects of social policy to do the same. In fact this process has begun, as has been indicated at different points in the preceding chapters. Ongoing academic research into the challenges and successes of transnational efforts to improve and reshape social welfare would appear to be warranted.



### Strategic Challenges in Moving Forward

If progressive struggles within Canada for the fundamental transformation of social policy and programs are to attain their goals, they cannot take place only on a national level. These Canadian struggles must be linked in working partnerships with labour and popular sector organizations in other countries. Transnational corporations engage in Schumpeterian "creative destruction" on a global basis, in order to amass greater wealth and power. In efforts to stem the increase of global corporate power, it is essential that social movements seeking equality and justice reach across national borders and work in solidarity. A transnational popular sector must be built to bring about change on a number of fronts on both the national and international levels.

Progressive change in social welfare can only be achieved if progress is made in regulating global capital, in replacing 'free' trade that enriches global corporations with planned and managed trade that serves the interests of workers and broad populations, and in developing economic alternatives to capital accumulation and concentration that are efficient, sustainable, and under democratic control.

In working toward such an ambitious set of goals, perhaps the three constituencies examined in this study might be able to employ to good effect a rough 'division of labour'. First of all, unions may be able to make their greatest contributions on broad questions of political-economic analysis and mass

mobilization of grass roots activists. Secondly, SPAOs may be able to most effectively contribute on 'middle-range' questions in the social policy field, such as how to efficiently implement the principle of universality, how to structure sustainable income security mechanisms within and beyond the labour market, and how to cost-effectively combine innovative public administration and local democratic control of social programs. Finally, feminist organizations may be ones best equipped and with the most at stake in ensuring that social reproduction and caring work are at the centre of any progressive refashioning of social policy. In other words, the feminist movement might play the lead role in 'en-gendering' welfare state regimes and social policy formulation.

All three of the progressive movements examined here have placed a high priority on working in coalition with one another, and indeed with other progressive movements which were not investigated in this study but which are seeking compatible social, political and economic goals (e.g. First Nations, lesbians and gays, the environmental movement).<sup>11</sup> Coalition building, be it at the local, regional, provincial or national level, is a process fraught with difficulties and challenges. But it is also a process with which progressive organizations in Canada have acquired significant experience. In fact Canadian unions, social movements, and popular sector organizations are frequently called upon in international forums to share and reflect upon our experience in coalition work (Traynor 1996; Grant-Cummings 1997).

The radical remaking of Canadian social welfare cannot succeed unless progress is made in refashioning the global political economy - in moving towards a political economy in which economic goals and political actions around the world accord with the ideals of social equality, mutual responsibility, and democratic process. Education about the process of globalization, and about possible alternatives to the prevailing notion of globalization as neo-liberal economic restructuring aimed at enhancing corporate profitability, will be of critical importance in this regard.

The challenge remains for Canadian labour, social policy advocates, and feminists to more completely and successfully translate our *national* experience in struggling for social equality into *international* struggles with working people and social movements from other countries for a more humane and liberatory form of globalization. Only then will we be able to contribute towards the re-invention of social welfare for 21st century, within a global community that puts genuine democracy and equality into practice, and that preserves and protects the biosphere upon which our very existence depends.

#### ENDNOTES

1. The decision of most labour leaders in Western democracies during the postwar years to follow the social democratic route to 'humanized capitalism', as opposed to pursuing more radical goals such as the socialization of the means of production or democratic economic planning, is related to a whole host of material and ideological circumstances. A complete discussion of this question goes

beyond the scope of this current research. Undoubtedly, however, factors such as economic prosperity and low unemployment, support for the inauguration of social programs by parties across the political spectrum, and anti-Communist hysteria during the early years of the Cold War helped to keep labour leaders and most unions from 'straying' too far to the left.

2. It has been reported in the press that Prime Minister Tony Blair of the "New" Labour Party in Britain has developed "an increasingly warm political relationship" with former Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (*Hamilton Spectator*, 26 December 1997, p. AA10).

3. The often cited disadvantages of a multi-faceted approach to universal income security, which combines social insurance, demogrant, and income- or means-tested programs, are the possibilities for inter-program duplications and gaps, the multiplication of administrative costs across the different programs, and the continuing stigmatization of those who must rely upon 'last resort' social assistance elements of the income security system.

4. One advantage that a multi-faceted income security system has over a unitary guaranteed income scheme, in terms of achieving broad and durable public support, is that for many elements in a multi-faceted scheme a direct connection can be drawn between individual contributions made (e.g. through taxes or payroll deductions) and individual benefits received. This is obviously the case with social insurance plans such as the Canada Pension Plan and so-called Employment (i.e. unemployment) Insurance. But a similar 'money-in, benefits-out' connection can be made (in political and/or accounting terms) for social investment funds for particular groups such as children (as was discussed in Chapter 5), and for social benefits for other particular categories of people. Social programs can thus be constructed in such a way that they are perceived to reflect 'natural justice' in terms of collective costs and benefits across society. These programs thereby become less susceptible to cuts resulting from anti-taxation campaigns orchestrated by the Right, in which the state is portrayed as a 'black box' into which our tax money disappears and out of which no tangible benefits emanate.

5. There is a need for some theoretical caution and some practical humility in regard to the pursuit of wholesale political-economic transformation, given our historical experience in the 20th century with the degeneration of Leninism into Stalinism in actually existing socialist states. Certainly the state and political institutions provide avenues for the achievement of greater social equality and justice. It would also seem advisable, however, to endeavour to strengthen those aspects of civil society which have the potential to deepen democracy and better

equip citizens to participate in collective self-governance both within and outside state structures.

6. Sam Gindin (1995, 268) points to the need for the labour movement to move beyond social unionism to embrace what he calls "movement unionism". He describes the latter as "making the union into a vehicle through which its members can not only address their bargaining demands but actively lead the fight for everything that affects working people in their communities and the country".

7. Based on the evidence gathered for this study, it could be said that Caledon is more attuned to the role of the state in using cash transfers to lower the rate of economic inequality. On the other hand, CPRN is more focused upon human capital strategies for labour market entry, and sees income security measures of the state as playing a secondary role. Drawing on Wilensky and Lebeaux's (1958, 138-40) time-honoured differentiation, Caledon has a more "institutional" and CPRN has a more "residual" orientation in the social policy field.

8. The three exceptions to this pattern among the organizations surveyed in this study would be the National Anti-Poverty Organization, Canadian Pensioners Concerned, and a substantial proportion of the membership of the Canadian Association for Community Living.

9. It would seem likely that most NAC activists with socialist-feminist principles would eschew to some extent labels such as 'radical' and 'neo-marxian'. On the level of political mobilization, such labels set one up for problems of popular credibility, related in large part to the narrow and conservative ideological leaning of the corporate-dominated media. On the level of theory and ideology, moving marxian and radical-critical perspectives beyond reductionistic and 'malestream' orthodoxies of the past, and making them relevant to social realities and social struggles in our 'postmodern' world, is an unfinished project.

10. Based on my research, I would offer some initial thoughts on the question of re-theorizing social welfare. I would argue that a democratic and socially inclusive conceptual reformulation of social welfare and the welfare state would of necessity be tied to struggles to redefine and reshape the state, the family, and the nature and organization of work in late capitalist society. Such transformations, in both material realities and values, would also have to address the question of reconciling equality and difference in regard to gender, ethno-cultural identity, and other factors, as well as the question of symbiotically balancing production and reproduction in the global biosphere. Finally, progress in retheorizing a more "socially well" society would entail grappling with the potential and limitations of markets (including local and bio-regional ones, and ones organized to meet needs

rather than maximize accumulation), as well as the various aspects of civil society, such as community structures, voluntary associations, and social movement organizations.

It is my position that struggles for different social welfare arrangements are positive and progressive when they attempt to move (whether deliberately or otherwise, and however inchoately) towards the following goals, which are derived from and consistent with the five theoretical perspectives on the welfare state (identified above) that have guided this study:

- **social equality** of opportunities *and* outcomes;
- the strengthening of **mutual caring** and emotionally nurturant ties within families and communities;
- **democratic freedoms** that are not just formal and tied to individual choice, but that are enacted through participation and empowerment of both individuals and communities in shaping our political-economic and cultural context and directions.
- the **primacy of human need over human greed**, including a commitment to achieve symbiosis between social production and reproduction and the global biosphere that supports life in all its (human and other) forms.

In order to place these value-based tenets on a sound historical materialist footing, social policy frameworks must address at least three substantive issues of fundamental importance:

- *income and economic security* for all in Canadian society
- practical means for ensuring *democratic control* over social policy formulation and social welfare provision
- the *incorporation of environmental and ecological concerns into 'social welfare'* in the broadest sense.

11. Joan Grant-Cummings (1997), the President of NAC, makes a strong argument for a "Summit of Progressives" from across Canada that would bring together representatives from labour, social movements, and popular sector organizations for the purposes of strengthening alliances, evaluating successes and

failures, and mapping strategies.

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## APPENDIX I

### Key Informant Interviews Conducted

#### LABOUR

Robert Baldwin.  
National Director, Social and Economic Policy Dept.  
Canadian Labour Congress  
19 February 1996 Ottawa

Buzz Hargrove  
National President, Canadian Auto Workers  
14 July 1997 Hamilton

Larry Katz  
Director of Research, Canadian Union of Public Employees (National Office)  
20 February 1996 Ottawa

Duncan Mac Donald  
Program Director, Ontario Federation of Labour  
26 June 1996 Toronto

Hugh Mackenzie  
Research Director, United Steelworker of America (National Office)  
20 June 1996 Toronto

Dick Martin  
Secretary-Treasurer, Canadian Labour Congress  
27 February 1997 Ottawa

Nancy Riche  
Executive Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress  
25 February 1997 Ottawa

Penni Richmond  
Director, Women's and Human Rights Dept., Canadian Labour Congress  
27 February 1997 Ottawa

Laurell Ritchie  
Staff Member, Canadian Auto Workers (National Office)  
8 October 1996 Toronto

Sid Ryan  
President, Ontario Division  
Canadian Union of Public Employees  
14 July 1997 by telephone

Jim Stanford  
Economist, Canadian Auto Workers (National Office)  
22 May 1996 North York

Ken Traynor  
Pro-Canada Network and Common Frontiers  
25 November 1996 Toronto

Jim Turk  
Director of Education, Ontario Federation of Labour  
Co-Chair, Ontario Coalition For Social Justice  
9 July 1996 Toronto

Cindy Wiggins  
Senior Researcher, Canadian Labour Congress  
27 February 1997 Ottawa

#### SOCIAL POLICY ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Ken Battle  
President, Caledon Institute of Social Policy  
21 February 1996 Ottawa

Susan Carter  
Associate Executive Director  
Canadian Council on Social Development  
22 February 1996 Ottawa

Tony Clarke  
Polaris Institute  
26 February 1997 Ottawa

Havi Echenberg  
Independent social policy consultant  
21 February 1996 Ottawa

Ed Finn  
Editorial Board Member  
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives  
22 February 1996 Ottawa

Mae Harman  
President, Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Ontario Division  
27 August 1996 Toronto

Steve Kerstetter  
Director, National Council of Welfare  
25 February 1997 Ottawa

Patrick Johnston  
Executive Vice-President, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy  
10 December, 1996 Toronto

David Langille  
Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice  
10 December 1996 Toronto

Judith Maxwell  
President, Canadian Policy Research Networks  
26 February 1997 Ottawa

Ian Morrison  
Ontario Social Safety Network and Workfare Watch  
25 November 1996 Toronto

Rosemarie Popham  
Campaign 2000  
9 January 1997 Toronto

Diane Richler  
Executive Vice-President, Canadian Association for Community Living  
9 January 1997 Toronto

David Robinson  
Research and Communications Coordinator  
Council of Canadians  
26 February 1997 Ottawa

David Ross  
Executive Director  
Canadian Council on Social Development  
18 March 1997 Ottawa

Liz Rykert  
acts.cuts.ont  
3 October 1996 Toronto

Malcolm Shookner  
Executive Director, Ontario Social Development Council  
9 July 1996 Toronto

Sherri Torjman  
Vice-President, Caledon Institute of Social Policy  
25 March 1996 Hamilton

Lynn Toupin and Francois Dumaine  
Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director  
National Anti-Poverty Organization  
20 February 1996 Ottawa

Armine Yalnizyan  
Staff Member, Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto  
24 September 1996 Toronto

NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Barbara Cameron  
Political Science Dept., Atkinson College, York University  
8 October 1996 Toronto

Martha Friendly  
Co-ordinator, Child Care Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto  
10 December 1996 Toronto

Joan Grant-Cummings  
President, NACSW  
11 November 1997 Toronto

Lorraine Michael  
Former Chair, Social Policy Committee, NACSW  
Ecumenial Coalition for Social Justice  
25 November 1996 Toronto

Judy Rebick  
Former President, NACSW  
13 January 1997 Toronto

#### ACADEMICS

Bob Jessop.  
Professor and Head of Dept. of Sociology  
Lancaster University, England  
12 November 1996 Hamilton

Allan Moscovitch  
Director, School of Social Work  
Carleton University  
24 February 1997 Ottawa



## APPENDIX II

### Interview Guide

#### Introduction

In this research, I am interviewing a number of key informants from social movements and organizations committed to greater equality and to the preservation and enhancement of social programs in Canada. These informants are drawn from the labour movement, women's organizations, and social policy advocacy bodies. With them, I am exploring the extent to which their organizations, both individually and in concert with other groups, have begun to chart new directions and to formulate new ideas which may contribute to reformulating our overall vision or paradigm of 'social welfare' in Canada.

With this general objective in mind, I would like to put to you a number of more specific questions.

#### Questions Re: Your Organization

1. Please characterize the overall approach or philosophy which your organization take to questions of social welfare policy.
2. Which issues or debates in the social policy / social welfare arena do you / does your organization see as the most important ones over the period since 1980 ?
3. How successful has your organization been in influencing social policy formulation and social program (re-)design in the period since 1980, both in general terms and in regard to specific issues and debates ?
4. Please describe in as much depth as possible the factors underlying your successes and failures during this period in the social policy arena

#### Questions Re: Other Organizations and Alliances

1. In your estimation, what other organizations besides your own have been successful in pressing for progressive change and enhancement of social programs since 1980 ?
2. What factors would you point to in explaining the successes and failures of

these other organizations in the social policy arena?

3. How successful (or otherwise) has your organization been in forging alliances and coalitions with other organizations or constituencies advocating for progressive change in the social policy field ?
4. What have been the factors aiding or hindering such alliances and coalitions?
5. What impacts have these progressive alliances and coalitions had on the structure and operation of social programs since 1980 ?

Questions Re: Government

1. There have obviously been important changes in the federal government's approach to social policy and social welfare in the period since 1980. From your own point of view within this organization, please describe and evaluate these changes.
2. Please describe your perception of the **external influences** on the federal government's decision-making in regard to social programs in the period of time since 1980? How have these influences shifted over successive Liberal / Conservative / Liberal regimes ?
3. Please describe your perception of the **internal locus of decision-making** in regard to social programs within the federal government since 1980. How has this locus shifted over successive Liberal / Conservative / Liberal regimes since 1980?
4. Please describe your perception of changes in the **balance of power between the federal and provincial governments** in regard to decision-making on social programs since 1980 ? How would you evaluate the desirability of these changes, in regard to the social policy goals of your organization ?
5. Do you see the switch from federal / provincial cost-sharing under the Canada Assistance Plan to more recent Canada Health and Social Transfer as a positive or negative development?
6. More generally, please describe the position of your organization on the issue of "national standards" vis-a-vis "provincial flexibility" in regard to

designing, delivering and assuring the quality of social and health programs.

7. What do you see as the role(s) of municipal government (local and/or regional) in the design, delivery and evaluation of social and health programs ?

Questions Re: Influences of NGOs on Federal Social Policy

1. Please outline your perceptions of which non-governmental advocacy organizations (or 'lobby groups') interested in influencing the formulation of federal social policy have been most successful in achieving their goals in the period since about 1980. What factors would you point to in explaining their (relative) success?
2. Please describe your perception concerning the impact of the business sector in general, and of business advocacy organizations in particular (e.g the Business Council on National Issues, the Canadian Manufacturers Association, the Canadian Bankers Association, Canadian Federation of Independent Business), on social policy formulation in Canada since 1980.
3. Please describe your perception concerning the relative influence of 'think tanks' of various political perspectives (e.g the Fraser Institute, the C.D. Howe Institute, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives) on social policy and program restructuring ?

Questions Re: Political Strategy

1. To what extent do you believe that the NDP or any other party / political movement is capable of presenting an alternative vision of social welfare based on equality, economic security, collective responsibility, and democratic accountability and control ?
2. As pay and employment equity programs fall into political disfavour, what strategies should be adopted to address the labour market disadvantages of groups such as women, visible minorities, aboriginals, and disabled people?
3. What public policy measures should be advocated to resolve the continuing problem of the 'double day' of women, who both work in the paid labour force and still perform most of the domestic labour in the household ?
4. Do you see any arguments or initiatives which could displace deficit

reduction as the driving force behind government policy making in general, and the slashing of social spending in particular ? (e.g. fiscal deficit vs. social deficit) Please outline any activities which your organization has undertaken in this regard.

5. In what ways should organizations advocating for progressive change in social welfare programs address the question of the overall structure and levels of taxation, especially at the federal level ? To what extent has this question been addressed by your organization or others ?

Questions Re: Broad Strategies and Program Models in Social Welfare

1. Please describe the position of your organization in regard to the following questions of broad strategies and program 'models' in the social welfare field:
2. In regard to each of the following items, please indicate the level of priority (e.g. high / medium / low) which your organization attaches to it:
3. Please describe the practical steps which your organization has taken over the last fifteen years to move towards the implementation of the following strategies / program models in the social welfare field:
  - guaranteed annual income
  - social insurance vs. demogrants vs. means- of needs-tested entitlements (To what extent should social insurance be 'actuarially driven'?)
  - desirability and feasibility of a 'charter of social rights'
  - tendencies towards 'privatization', 'marketization' and 'corporatization' of social welfare programs that is proceeding apace in the U.S., and is being touted in various provinces

Should this direction be resisted in principle, or are there social needs that could be met as well or better by the 'private' sector?

If so, how would you delineate "private sector"? (e.g would you differentiate the not-for-profit from the for-profit sector? voluntary associations from quasi-ngo's from quasi-state bodies?)

How should "effectiveness", "efficiency", and "efficacy" be conceptualized, in regard to formulating a policy stance on 'privatization'?

Questions Re: 'Philosophical' Issues in Social Welfare

1. Please share your perceptions, hopes, and misgivings in regard to the following 'philosophical' issues and potential future directions in the field of social welfare:
  - 'democratization' of social policy formulation and social program design and delivery
  - claimsmaking in social welfare based on 'thin' versus 'thick' understandings of human need
  - the design and control of social 'programs' and 'benefits' by collectivities in 'civil society' (i.e. groups that fall outside both the state and the market) such as First Nations, ethno-cultural communities, social movements, worker organizations, economic co-operatives, faith communities, etc.
  - instilling a 'public enterprise' culture and the use of 'social entrepreneurship' in not-for-profit social welfare programs
  - the linkage of social welfare concerns and programs to matters of 'fiscal welfare' (equitable fiscal, monetary and taxation policies) and 'occupational welfare' (secure, non-alienating work that provides an adequate living, occupational health and safety, employment and pay equity, job retraining)
  - the formal recognition in social policy of the socially necessary and useful work that is done outside the paid labour market (e.g. child care and domestic labour within the family, voluntary community service, environmental protection and renewal, etc.)
  - the 'greening' of social welfare (incorporation of ecological and environmental concerns into social policy)

Conclusion

Please add any observations, clarifications, or second thoughts which come to mind in regard to any of the topics which we have covered in this interview.

Are there important issues or developments in the social policy field which you feel have not been raised in the course of this interview ? Please elaborate.

Thank you very much for your time and thoughtful comments.

