

## **Computerizing the workplace.**

Work still remains central to the lives of millions of people. The amount of leisure time enjoyed by the average U.S. citizen shrunk by a staggering 37 percent between 1973 and 1989. The average working week, including travel to work time, grew from 41 hours to nearly 47 hours.

There is no evidence to support fears of mass unemployment caused by technological change. Job losses would be more likely to result from the slow adoption of new technology rather than the too-rapid adoption.

There is little doubt that the computerization of factories and offices has led to the steady erosion of employment opportunities, particularly for less skilled manual workers and for clerical workers.

While the U.S. economy generated 18 million new jobs between 1982 and 1989 there was a net loss of jobs in manufacturing of more than half a million; and in the 1990 to 1992 recession, 1.1 million manufacturing jobs were eliminated almost overnight. By the year 2000, employment in the manufacturing industry as a proportion of the total U.S. labor force could be as low as 10 percent.

The majority of jobs in the future will be in low-tech or no-tech occupations such as cashier, receptionist, waiter, maid, hospital orderly, janitor, and security guard.

One trend is the growing tendency of U.S. companies to export routine data-processing jobs to countries with cheap labor by using the latest satellite and telecommunications technology.

There is wide agreement about the high-tech sector's inability to create large numbers of jobs in the future.

A U.S. economy dominated by services can continue to support real increases in income and wealth for a long time. Service sector jobs are generally less well paid, and they offer fewer fringe benefits. A quarter of the U.S. workforce is now in low-wage jobs.

*In many instances, the 1990s young couple now takes home less money together than did the 1960 father alone.*

The use of flexible manufacturing systems and computer-based systems in finishing, inspection, and production control after the mid 1990s will severely erode employment opportunities.

## **Quality and quantity of work.**

Computers are transforming the office of the future into a kind of stressed out factory of the past.

Another issue causing considerable controversy at present is that of the computerized monitoring of employees. Computerized monitoring is constant, reliable, and cheap. Supervisors are no longer limited by what they can observe with their own eyes. A complete record of employee performance exists in the printout.

## **Health and safety issues.**

Video data terminals caused by strain, headaches, backaches, stiff backs, and sore wrists.

Repetitive strain injury (RSI) can demonstrate itself in many ways, among those is the painful affliction known as carpal tunnel syndrome. An epidemic of RSI now seems to be sweeping the United States and Europe.