

TECHNOLOGY, JOB CREATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT:
CONTRASTS OF U.S. AND EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE
A Report on Wilton Park Conference No. 279

AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE

This conference, which took place at Wiston House, Steyning, U.K., 27-31 May, 1985, attempted to explore the relationships - on both sides of the Atlantic - between New Technology, Job Creation and Unemployment. One of its aims was to compare and contrast the experience which had been encountered in the U.S. as well as in Europe, and to attempt to draw some general lessons, if any could be drawn.

Whereas it has been generally assumed that the U.S. economy, for a wide variety of reasons, has been able to produce a very large number of new jobs (in the millions) over recent years, the same cannot be said for Europe, at least as far as public perceptions of things are concerned. Is this in fact correct? If so, which types of jobs have been - and are being lost and which new types have been - and will be created? Has their creation in the U.S. been due to New Technology; to differences in tax regimes; institutional or organizational characteristics which may vary; or to differences in fiscal and/or monetary policies? Or is it caused by something much more profound and basic, such as fundamental differences in perceptions of and attitudes towards work itself? If the latter is the case, and if there is a gap in this respect between the U.S. and Western Europe, is this gap narrowing or widening? What causes it, and what are some of the implications of this process?