

sistentna je sa oba ova cilja. U sistemu radničkog upravljanja trebalo bi, međutim, na drugačiji način definisati i troškove i koristi. Na šire definisani koncept troškova i koristi treba da se nadoveže i širi i kompleksniji skup kriterijuma maksimizacije i drugačiji koncept proizvodne efikasnosti. Implicitno, radničko upravljanje upućuje na potrebu za novim i različitim tipom tehnologije, kako bi se razrešila protivrečnost između radničke kontrole, upravljanja i tehnologije koja odgovara autoritarnoj kontroli i hijerarhijskoj strukturi moći koja se razvijala poslednjih dvesta godina.

Autor dakle, identifikuje tri osnovna elementa strategije razvoja socijalizma zasnovanog na radničkom samoupravljanju: kontrolu ekonomske baze koja uključuje kontrolu proizvodnog procesa i kontrolu akumulacije, ekonomsku i političku kontrolu preduzeća i države kao glavnih instrumenata za akumulaciju kapitala, i, na kraju, novu tehnologiju koja će odgovarati parcipativnim proizvodnim odnosima.

Ovi osnovni elementi strategije razvoja u pravcu samoupravnog socijalizma mogu da vode veoma različitim vrstama taktike. U ovom trenutku nije dovoljno jasno koji konkretni pravci razvoja u privredama sa privatnim preduzećima vode efektivnoj radničkoj kontroli akumulacije kapitala kako u preduzeću tako i na nivou države, i transformaciji tehnologije u tipove različite od onih koji odgovaraju samo autoritarnoj, centralizovanoj kontroli. Posebno, društvena kontrola krupnih finansijskih institucija koje dominiraju tržištima kapitala, predstavlja nerešen problem. Danas se u razvijenim kapitalističkim privredama eksperimentišu s brojnim mehanizmima koji treba da dovedu do uspostavljanja novih odnosa proizvodnje i nove strukture moći u pojedinačnom preduzeću. Važniji problem, prema mišljenju autora, predstavlja pitanje proširenja istih principa na proces akumulacije kapitala, i, uopšte, na politički proces.

## CATCHING FLIES WITH HONEY: AN INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES TO HUMANIZE WORK\*

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### THE ORIGINS

For a time in the early '70s Americans could hardly pick up a magazine without reading of workers' discontents. *Atlantic Monthly* and *Newsweek* ran stories complete with covers in a *Modern Times* motif, Chaplin trapped in the cogwheels of an assembly-line. *Life* ran a cover story on auto-workers who had struck General Motors — in defiance of their union — over the pace of the line rather than the size of their paychecks. The Government too got into the act. In 1972 the Senate held widely publicized hearings on "worker alienation" and in the same year Nixon's Department of Health Education and Welfare took official cognisance of the problem in a booklength report titled *Work in America*.)

A common theme ran through all these documents. Work was dull, repetitive and meaningless, especially for the younger generation. The solution? Greater control of production by workers themselves: job enlargement, substitution of a variety of tasks for the single task typical of the minutely divided work of the typing pool or assembly line; better yet, job enrichment, delegation of authority and responsibility for the organization of work to the individual or small group, without the intermediation of foreman or supervisor.

Orthodox economics accounts for worker disaffection and managerial responses only with the greatest difficulty. According to its logic, work organization should *always* reflect workers' preferences with res-

\*) This essay, particularly the discussion of job enrichment under the heading *The Paradox of Successful Failure* (pp. 41—47), has been informed by discussion with successive groups of students in my course on work organization at Harvard and the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) between 1971 and 1975. In particular, the contributions of two students, R. Michael Kaus and Craig Coit, should be acknowledged. Their undergraduate honors theses (Harvard University, 1973) provide substantial additional evidence supporting the theory advanced here. Remarkably similar views are presented in Andrew Zimballist, "The Limits of Work Organization", *Review of Radical Political Economy*, vol. 7, Summer 1975, pp. 50—59.

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pect to job content as well as employers' interests in profits. Workers are assumed to "trade-off" gains in terms of one job attribute, such as status or the possibility for fulfillment of creative urges, against losses in another, such as pay; jobs that are held in higher esteem and offer greater possibilities for creativity are acceptable at lower rates of compensation than jobs which are desirable only because of their monetary rewards. Thus jobs made more attractive by enlargement or enrichment should find takers at lower wages than comparable jobs organized in the traditional manner; improving the quality of work should allow employers to economize on wages. In this view, the only limit on making work more meaningful, pleasant, and healthy is the worker's willingness to forego monetary rewards in the pursuit of nonpecuniary benefits. The array of jobs offered at any one time is thus optimal, and shifts in the array take place only for one of three reasons: first, because workers' preferences change in the small, at the margin, as one moves up the income scale; second, because preference "maps" change in the large, for reasons that are beyond the purview of orthodox theory; or third, because of new knowledge that leads to the introduction of unambiguously superior jobs, jobs that combine higher productivity with higher nonpecuniary benefits — without requiring greater inputs on the part of workers.

Superficially the orthodox theory has some appeal. One can certainly point to trade-offs between the quality of work and monetary rewards: compare the job of a corporate attorney with the job of a judge or a professor of law, and most would interpret the higher prestige and greater opportunities for creativity of the judge or law professor as a trade-off against lower income. But in general, as one surveys the entire range of occupations in a society like ours, one must be struck more by the high positive correlation of job attributes such as pay, esteem, and creative possibilities than by the trade-offs between them. The assembly-line worker ranks significantly below the vice-president for production not only in pay, but in esteem and possibilities for creative self-expression also. Evidently more powerful forces than trade-offs between job attributes shape the design of jobs.

A refinement of orthodox theory designed to answer this objection would emphasize the differences in the "opportunity sets" available to different individuals; corporate vice-presidents have possibilities unavailable to assembly-line workers. The refined theory thus seeks to explain less: the determination of opportunity sets lies outside the model of job design, an accident of birth, education, and the like. But the refined theory must still *assume* a greater preference for income relative to work quality at lower levels of the occupational scale than at higher levels; it does not *explain* why these differences occur. Alternatively one can posit a bias in the opportunity sets available to individuals at different occupational levels, but this the orthodox theory doesn't do either. (The need to control the work of subordinates provides one rationale for this bias, about which we shall have more to say anon).

Moreover, economic orthodoxy completely begs the question of *timing*: in attributing changes in the array of jobs to changes in preferences or new knowledge of superior forms of work organization, it leaves unanswered, indeed unasked, why worker disaffection came to a

head in the late '60s and early '70s, not 20 years earlier or 20 years latter.<sup>2)</sup>

One answer to the question of timing is implicit in a theory of motivation proposed over a generation ago by the noted psychologist, Abraham Maslow.<sup>3)</sup> An extreme form of neoclassical theory, which generally allows for "smooth" trade-offs between job attributes, Maslow's theory posits a hierarchy of needs that individuals pursue sequentially. First come physiological needs — food, clothing, and shelter — fulfilled in the context of work by the pay-check one receives at the end of the week. Next come the social needs — for example, security — fulfilled by employment guarantees, unemployment compensation, or the availability of alternative jobs. Finally come psychological needs — love, esteem, and self-actualization. It might be too much to expect work organization to fulfill the need for love, but esteem is fulfilled through jobs of high status and prestige, and self-actualization through possibilities for creative self-expression. Individuals, according to Maslow, do not trade satisfaction of psychological needs for satisfaction of social or physiological needs. Rather, higher needs are addressed only after more basic ones are met: In the words of Bertolt Brecht, "*Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral.*"

A seductive theory, to be sure, and one that at first glance appears to fit the facts: workers' dissatisfaction in the late '60s and early '70s was manifestly a by-product of the successes of capitalism in the post World War II period. Once prosperity had fulfilled people's physiological needs and full employment had provided security for most workers for the first time, it was natural — according to Maslow's theory — for attention to shift to esteem and self-actualization.

However, as a theory of motivation, Maslow's hierarchical ordering is far from convincing. Evidence from many cultures suggests that social and psychological needs may take precedence over physiological ones, which for the most part are socially defined anyway. Moreover, Maslow appears to omit altogether moral imperatives as motivating factors. Ideological motivation can hardly be fitted under any of Maslow's categories, except tautologically.

(As a normative model for personal development, Maslow's schema leaves even more to be desired: individuals deprived of esteem, love, opportunities for self-actualization, or a moral footing are as much deformed as individuals who suffer from malnutrition. Our mental hospi-

<sup>2)</sup> This brief summary of orthodox theory might appear to be a caricature. It is not. See R. M. Scherer "Industrial Structure, Scale Economies, and Worker Alienation", in Paul T. Masson, and P. David Qualls (editors), *Essays in Industrial Organization in Honor of Joe S. Bain*, Cambridge: Ballinger, 1976, pp. 105–121. Scherer is particularly concerned with explaining the greater dissatisfaction of workers in large-scale units, and at one point (p. 114) recognizes the importance of changes over time in the opportunity sets available to individuals. But he offers no reason for these changes. Orthodox theory, it should be added, no more explains the larger problem of greater dissatisfaction at the lower end of the socio-economic scale of jobs. On the correlation between dissatisfaction and position on the job scale, see *Work in America*, pp. 13–17.

<sup>3)</sup> Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation", *Psychological Review*, 1943, pp. 370–396.

tals, prisons, and nursing homes offer ample testimony on this score).

Maslow's theory fails at a more specific level also. If motivation follows a hierarchy of needs, one would expect that older workers, generally more secure in their jobs and better paid, would be more disaffected than their younger counterparts. In the late '60s and early '70s however, the contrary occurred: according to all accounts it was younger workers who displayed disproportionately more dissatisfaction with traditional forms of work organization.

In my judgment, greater insight can be gained by dispensing with the individual perspective altogether. Instead we take as our point of departure the biases in the "opportunity sets" of jobs introduced by the capitalist mode of production. To begin with, capitalism is viewed not as a collection of Robinson Crusoes who meet only to exchange goods and services, but as a socio-economic system built on conflict and contradiction. Conflict between boss and worker is inherent in the capitalist's need to ensure his continued control over the enterprise. To this end the content of individual jobs is, and has historically been, subordinated and the possibilities for the exercise of control by workers limited.<sup>4)</sup>

A second conflict is inherent in private ownership of the means of production: *laissez-faire* capitalism lacks an effective mechanism for coordinating the decisions of the multitude of separate producers and consumers, the invisible hand so beloved of Adam Smith's disciples notwithstanding.

Specific manifestations of these conflicts require institutional changes to permit the system to continue to function. But so long as the basic features of capitalism must be respected, solutions can address problems only at a surface level and will inevitably change the form of the problem rather than resolve it in a fundamental sense. The solution to one problem thus exacerbates other problems, or creates altogether new ones. The process is thus a dialectic one, problem→solution→problem. Problem-solving in the capitalist system can be likened to trying to deflate a balloon by pressing on its outside: unless the balloon bursts, pressing on one side can only displace the pressure to another part of the balloon.

The history of the American economy is replete with illustrations of the working of this dialectic process.<sup>5)</sup> For example, consider the development of central banking. Originally intended only to counter the purely financial aspects of the boom-and-bust sequence that emerges from the anarchy of market coordination of economic activity, the Federal Reserve had the unintended by-product of intensifying economic fluctuations. More to the point of our present inquiry, the intensification of economic fluctuations, culminating in the Great Depression of the 1930s, led to political demands for governmental intervention to maintain high levels of employment, the so-called Keynesian policies of the post-World-

<sup>4)</sup> See Stephen A. Marglin, "What Do Bosses Do?" Part I, *Review of Radical Political Economy*, vol. 6, Summer 1974, pp. 60-112. Translated into French under the title "Que Font les Patrons?" in A. Gorz, *La Division du Travail*, Paris: Seuil, 1974.

<sup>5)</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Stephen A. Marglin, "La Crise Mondiale du Capitalisme", *Nouvel Observateur, Special Economie*, hors série, Summer 1975.

War II era. But full employment did not turn out to be the heaven-on-earth promised by the Keynesians. Rather in its own turn full employment created new problems. At the macro-economic level, full employment created — or at least exacerbated — inflation. Employment security made discretion the lesser part of valor in workers' negotiations about wages and other items of labour cost, and capitalists responded to the threat to profit margins with higher prices. At the micro-economic level — and this brings the argument back to the question of work organization — full employment made it less necessary for workers to put up with jobs deliberately minimized in content to enhance capitalist control. Younger workers, lacking a work-ethic born of employment insecurity, were disproportionately susceptible to expressions of dislike, resentment, and anger toward monotonous, routinized, atomized work.

Not that workers' dissatisfaction took the form of demands for a restructuring of work. That would have required a collective identification of the problem and a collective solution beyond the present capacity of the American working class. Rather the expression of dissatisfaction took individual forms—turnover, absenteeism, insubordination, even sabotage reached alarming levels. In tight labour markets, with replacements difficult to recruit, traditional forms of discipline, based ultimately on the "sack", became less and less effective. If one form or another of indiscipline cost the worker his job, the plant down the street was hiring anybody who showed up!

According to Malcolm Denise, a vice-president of Ford Motors, speaking confidentially to fellow Ford executives at the end of the '60s, "the absentee rate for our hourly employees more than doubled (between 1960 and 1968). So did the rate of disciplinary cases per 100 employees. And the turnover rate went up two and a half times". The source of the problem was frankly identified as too much prosperity. Tight labour markets had obliged Ford to make do with problem employees who were either unwilling or unable to adapt to assembly-line conditions:

Many employees, particularly the younger ones, are increasingly reluctant to put up with factory conditions... Because they are unfamiliar with the harsh economic facts of earlier years, they have little regard for the consequences if they take a day or two off.

For many, the traditional motivations of job security, money rewards, and opportunity for personal advancement are proving insufficient. Large numbers of those we hire mind factory life so distasteful they quit after brief exposure to it. The general increase in real wage levels in our economy has afforded more alternatives for satisfying economic needs.

Ford's experience was hardly unique. Nor were the adverse effects of prosperity on discipline limited to the United States. In 1972 a Swedish firm was described to the Senate Committee investigating worker alienation as unable to "hire a single... native Swede under the age of

30 to work on its relatively clean assembly operations in the past three years".<sup>6)</sup>

The solution, given the prevalent expectation of continuing high employment levels ("we can look forward", said Denise, "to operating in a chronically tight labour market"), for Ford at least, was to "pay more attention than we have in the past to the kinds of jobs we offer". Ford would hardly appear unique in this respect either. Managerial initiatives to "humanize" work must be seen in general as a response to the increase in labour costs associated with indiscipline born of prosperity. You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

This explanation squares not only with the evidence of the late '60s and early '70s, but also with the experience of the post-1973 crisis, for if job enrichment and other new forms of work organization flowered in the expectation of "chronically tight labour markets", these initiatives quickly wilted once the pressure was off. High and rising unemployment abruptly shifted workers' attention from the quality of work and the size of pay-checks to the more fundamental question of whether there would be any jobs at all. In a 1971 mini-rehearsal, unemployment proved a marvelous disciplinary device. Workers, according to the *Wall Street Journal*,<sup>7)</sup> were once again "delighted" to accept management's conditions. As one worker put it, "I was on lay-off about six month... Hell, I am just happy to have a job to come back to..."

#### THE PARADOX OF SUCCESSFUL FAILURE

It may be safely concluded that management initiatives to humanize work reflect a continuing concern with productivity and profit rather than a new sensitivity to workers as human beings. But what of initiatives themselves? To what extent have they succeeded in capturing the interest of workers, restoring discipline, and increasing productivity? Here the record is replete with paradox. First of all, despite all the talk, the most striking feature of managerial initiatives to humanize work is their relative infrequency. This paucity might be comprehensible if the reported experiments were unambiguous failures. Or if the failures of traditional organization were not so manifest. Quite the contrary: dissatisfaction with the results of traditional work organization is shared by bosses and workers (albeit for different reasons), and a frequent if not universal scenario of job-enrichment experiments begins with impressive achievements in productivity, reflecting improvements in quantity and quality of output per man hour. Moreover these gains occur to the accompaniment of initial enthusiasm all around, on the part of workers and managers alike. After some time, however — and this despite the positive contributions to productivity — enthusiasm turns to dissatisfaction. Finally, for reasons that appear somewhat confused and mysterious, the experiment is abandoned in favor of traditional forms of organization.

<sup>6)</sup> U. S. Senate, 92nd Congress, 2nd Session. *Worker Alienation, 1972*, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Employment Manpower and Poverty of the Committee on Labour and Public Welfare, S. 3916, p. 134.

<sup>7)</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, January 26, 1972, p. 1.

William F. Whyte sketched the paradigm of the "successful failure" over two decades ago:<sup>8)</sup>

The Hovey and Beard Company manufactured wooden toys of various kinds: wooden animals, pull toys, and the like. One part of the manufacturing process involves spraying paint on the partially assembled toys and hanging them on moving hooks which carried them through a drying oven. This operation, staffed entirely by girls (sic!), was plagued by absenteeism, turnover, and low morale...

... the eight girls who did the painting sat in a line by an endless chain of hooks. These hooks were in continuous motion, past the line of girls and into a long horizontal oven... The girl would take a toy from the tray beside her, position it in a jig inside the painting pattern, then release it on the hook passing by. The rate at which the hooks moved had been calculated by the engineers so that each girl, when fully trained, would be able to hang a painted toy on each hook before it passed beyond her reach...

... The girls learned more slowly than had been anticipated... Many of the hooks were going by empty. The girls complained that they were going by too fast, and that the time-study man had set the rates wrong. A few girls quit and had to be replaced with new girls...

The foreman... asked the girls if they would like to meet and discuss... the speed of the hooks...

... The meeting ended with the unprecedented request "Let us adjust the speed of the belt faster or slower depending on how we feel..."

The engineers' reaction naturally was that the girls' suggestion was heresy. (But) after considerable argument and many dire prophecies by the engineers, it was agreed to try out the girls' idea.

With great misgivings, the foreman had a control with a dial marked "low, medium, fast" installed at the booth of the group leader; she could now adjust the speed of the belt... The girls were delighted, and spent many lunch hours deciding how the speed of the belt should be varied from hour to hour throughout the day.

Within a week the pattern settled down to one in which the first half hour was run on what the girls called medium speed (a dial setting slightly above the point marked "medium"). The next two and one-half hours were run at high speed. The half hour before lunch and the half hour after lunch were run at low speed. The rest of the afternoon was run at high speed with the exception of the last forty-five minutes of the shift, which was run at medium.

<sup>8)</sup> William F. Whyte, *Money and Motivation*, New York: Harper and Row, 1955, ch. 10.

In view of the girls' reports of satisfaction and ease in their work, it is interesting to note that the constant speed at which the engineers had set the belt was slightly below medium on the dial of the control that had been given the girls. The average speed at which the girls were running the belt was on the high side of the dial. Few if any empty hooks entered the oven, and inspection showed no increase of rejects from the paint room.

Production increased, and within three weeks... the girls were operating at 30 to 50 per cent above the level that had been expected under the original arrangement. Naturally the girls' earnings were correspondingly higher, than had been anticipated...

The girls were earning more now than many skilled workers in other parts of the plant.

Thus far the experiment might seem an unambiguous success. Not quite: the seeds of its undoing are already present in the last paragraph of the description:

The girls were earning more now than many skilled workers in other parts of the plant.

As a result, pressures for change mounted:

Management was besieged by demands that the inequity be taken care of.

Moreover, the hierarchy of status and command was threatened:

The prestige of the engineers had suffered, and some of the prerogatives of management were apparently being taken over by employees.

Finally, despite the increase in productivity,

... the superintendent without consultation arbitrarily... returned the painting operation to its original status: the hooks moved again at their constant, time-studied designated speed, production dropped again, and within a month all but two of the eight girls had quit.

Whyte's conclusion bears repeating:

The factory is a social system, made up of mutually dependent parts. A drastic change in one part of the system — even a change that is viewed as highly successful within that part — may give rise to conflicting reactions from other parts of the system. It may then be dangerous for management to try a new approach in one small part of the system unless it is prepared to extend this approach to the whole organization.

It is not however the "factory", but capitalism, that determines the social system. It is in the context of specific relations of production that change in one area of the factory sets up a disequilibrium requiring change in others or a rollback to the *status-quo ante*. Pay "inequities" are only the most visible manifestation of disequilibrium. Threats to managerial power are perhaps more basic.

The basis of the social system of the capitalist factory is a strict hierarchy of command and status — and an ideology to match. Change the hierarchy of command and status, even on so trivial a matter as the speed of the line, and the entire consensual basis of the system may be disrupted. Workers who have been successfully socialized to accept their inferiority relative to supervisors and "engineers" are emboldened by their mastery of control in one small area to reach out for more. Changes in organization change people's expectations, both of themselves and others; the experience of control enlarges not only the capacity for control, but the individual and group sense capacity. In short, changes in organization change peoples' heads.

Other case studies reinforce Whyte's evidence on this point.

*The Insurance Company*. In an experiment in a large life insurance company, one group of clerical workers became autonomous with respect to decisions traditionally reserved for management.<sup>9)</sup>

Management was "pleasantly surprised by the modest character of the [group's] early decisions".

But not for long:

"... as workers became more accustomed to their new role, some of the groups began discussing promotion policy, rates of pay and returns to themselves from savings achieved through staff reduction."

At this point, in line with the experience at Hovey and Beard,

Management decided to go no further with the delegation of authority, and the "curve of [worker] decisions soon reached a peak and began to decline".

*The Artificial Fibers Plant*. A change in the direction of greater workers' control at an ICI nylon-spinning plant in Gloucester, England, led to similar changes in attitudes. One shop steward's response puts the point neatly:<sup>10)</sup>

<sup>9)</sup> Harold Wilensky, "Human Relations in the Workplace" in Conrad Arensberg, Solomon Barkin and others (editors) *Research in Human Relations*, New York: Harper and Brothers 1957, pp 41-42. (Quoting Everett Reimer, "Creating Experimental Social Change in an Ongoing Organization", presented to the American Psychological Association meetings, New York, September 1954. See also Nancy Morse and Everett Reimer, "The Experimental Change of a Major Organizational Variable", *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, vol 52, 1956, pp 120-129.

<sup>10)</sup> "Getting at the Root of a Labour Crisis", *Business Week*, October 17, 1970, p. 57.

... we are getting more out of our work. But it can't end here. You can't open up men's minds and let them stagnate. The amount of work in this plant that can still be taken over by the men is tremendous. Control by the worker is inevitable. We are capable of running and controlling this plant. Obviously the next step for us is to have more involvement in the broader decision-making.

*The Dog-Food Factory.* Finally, a highly publicized experiment in job enrichment at General Foods' Topeka (Kansas) dog-food plant appears at this writing to be foundering on similar shoals.<sup>11)</sup> According to one former employee,

... Economically [the experiment] was a success, but it became a power struggle. It was too threatening to too many people.

Another former employee described the situation in similar terms:

Creating a system is different from maintaining it... There were pressures almost from the inception, and not because the system didn't work. The basic reason was power. We flew in the face of corporate policy. People like stable states. This system has to be changing or it will die.

#### A DOMINO THEORY OF RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

If one looks at work organization through efficiency colored lenses, it is downright impossible to explain the paradox of resistance to successful change. Efficiency, in the orthodox model, determines organization; an organization which is at once more productive and more satisfying to the workers must, *à la* Darwin, be fitter to survive the competitive struggle. By contrast, my own view, sketched in "What Do Bosses Do?"<sup>12)</sup> emphasizes that work organization is shaped by the struggle of capitalists to establish and maintain control of productive enterprise. This view — in contrast with the efficiency explanation — fits quite well with the reluctance of bosses to undertake any reorganization that threatens their control.

But isn't it stretching the results to argue that capitalist control is threatened by transferring shop-floor decisions from foreman to autonomous work groups? One man's job enrichment may indeed, as has been frequently observed, be another's job impoverishment, but it simply is not credible to impute to the front-line supervisors, whose jobs are eliminated, sufficient power to restore the *status-quo ante* all by themselves. What accounts for the opposition of the relatively senior executives who presumably determine the fate of these experiments?

<sup>11)</sup> "Stone-walling Plant Democracy", *Business Week*, March 28, 1977, pp 78-79.

<sup>12)</sup> Stephen A. Marglin, "What Do Bosses Do?" *loc. c. t.*

The suggestion of one of the disenchanting former General Foods employees — "This system has to be changing or it will die" — provides a clue. It is not the foreman who is at issue but a chain of repercussions that management fears may turn out to be uncontrollable. Sound familiar? It ought to; the amorphous but none the less real "chain of repercussions" is simply a variation on the "domino theory" used by successive American Administrations from Eisenhower to Nixon to justify US military intervention in Indochina. Just as the American Government saw the problem as a choice between containing "communism" in the jungles of Vietnam or risking American supremacy throughout Southeast Asia, so might corporate executives see the problem as a choice between containing workers' control on the shop floor or risking the board-room itself.

Nor should management be faulted for viewing the problem in this perspective. The domino theory came in for some hard knocks in the '60s, particularly at the hands of American liberals who wished for their own purposes to see nothing very important at stake in order to make an anti-war stance consistent with an anti-communist world view. (Conservatives and radicals, by contrast, agreed substantially on the issue but lined up on different sides of the dominoes). But this opposition does not rob the domino theory of its basic validity: American imperialism *has* been substantially weakened since its defeat in Southeast Asia.

In any case, the domino theory is hardly a child of the Indochinese War. Indeed it has an ancient, if not necessarily completely honorable, history. Defense of the Established Church in England may seem as remote from the defense of private property and other forms of lay privilege as the speed of an assembly line is remote from the privilege of the board room. But for several centuries, observers appealed to one version or other of the domino theory to link the two. Good Queen Bess herself denounced religious dissent to her royal cousin James VI of Scotland (later to be James I of England) in these words:<sup>13)</sup>

Let me warn you that there is risen, both in your realm and mine, a sect of perilous consequence, such as would have no kings but a presbytery, and take our place while they enjoy our privilege, with a shade of God's word, which none is judged to follow right without by their censure they be so deemed. Yea, look well we into them. When they have made in our people's hearts a doubt of our religion, and that we err if they say so, what perilous issue this makes. I rather think than mind to write...

The Revolution of 1640 dealt uncharitably with royal privilege, but established religion still appeared to contemporaries to play an essential role in the ideological defense of the haves against the have-nots. When in 1641 a resolution was introduced in the House of Commons to

<sup>13)</sup> Quoted in Neville Williams, *Elizabeth: Queen of England*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967, p. 84.

abolish the episcopate, the noted poet Edmund Waller, argued vehemently against it, saying<sup>14)</sup>

...I look upon episcopacy as a counterscarp, or out-work; which if it be taken by this assault of the people, and, withal, this mystery once revealed, "that we must deny them nothing when they ask it thus in troops", we may, in the next place, have as hard a task to defend our property, as we have lately had to recover it from the Prerogative. If, by multiplying lands and petitions, they prevail for an equality in things ecclesiastical, the next demand perhaps be *Lex Agraria*, the like equality in things temporal.

A century and a half later Wesleyan Methodism became the villain. The Bishop of Lincoln observed of popular preaching<sup>15)</sup>

...the same means might, with equal efficacy, be employed to sap and overturn the state, as well as the church.

The domino metaphor, for all its usefulness, goes awry in one way: it suggests a mechanical process by which change is automatic once set in motion. It might be imagined that the specific arrangements of traditional work organization offer management and advantage akin to the advantage enjoyed by defenders of an impregnable fortress high on a hill. Once obliged to abandon the fortress for the plains, the defenders lose the tremendous advantage of terrain and are much easier prey.

I take rather a different view. In my judgment there are no overwhelming advantages of "terrain" to any particular method of organizing work. The defensive advantage lies instead in the stability of the battle lines. Once the lines are breached, the retreat to more sustainable lines may be orderly, in which case not much is lost. But there is always the possibility of orderly retreat turning into rout. Not the certainty to be sure, but the possibility. This is the great danger of job enrichment to the capitalist, the danger that causes the senior executive to identify with the threat of job impoverishment to the foreman or the threat of status loss to the engineer, even at the sacrifice of productivity.

Observe that the conflict is between control and productivity, not between control and *profit*. For capitalist control remains a pre-requisite to profit. Weaken capitalist control, and productivity increases will likely take the form of higher wages or lower effort, not the form of higher corporate earnings. Eliminate capitalist control altogether and profit disappears as an economic category. It is no wonder that when control and productivity are in conflict, managers instinctively choose self-preservation.

To the extent job enrichment is a danger to the capitalists and managers, it is an opportunity for the worker. But it is not always viewed as an opportunity, particularly by trade-union leaders and political acti-

<sup>14)</sup> Quoted in Eduard Bernstein, *Cromwell and Communism*, English translation, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930, p. 54.

<sup>15)</sup> Quoted in E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Random House, 1963, p. 43.

vists. For many, any management initiative is suspect; if it's good for capitalists, it must be bad for workers.

It is easy to sympathize with this position, when managerial initiatives to humanize work are designed, avowedly or not, to win the hearts and minds of the workers over to the corporation, to the detriment of trade-union and class loyalty. In the extreme, delegating authority over task organization and income distribution to autonomous groups may be viewed by management as a further exercise in divide and conquer rather than a building block of workers' control: A trainer threatened by a pack of hungry dogs may attempt to divert their attention by throwing a few scraps of meat in their midst. The aim is evidently to turn their aggression against one another, not to build canine power. So too must "autonomy" be taken with a grain of salt, especially when it transforms worker solidarity into identification with profit as the principal goal of work activity and breeds hostility for contributions (like trade-union activity, for example), or that do not advance production goals and production bonuses.

Nevertheless, a purely negative response to management initiatives, particularly from activists, is hardly adequate. Remember that management turns to work reorganization as a way of dealing with labour difficulties out of weakness, not out of strength. Management chooses to humanize work only when its hand is forced by absenteeism, turnover, insubordination, or similar problems that translate into low productivity. A response based on the assumption that no capitalist initiative can portend good for workers is therefore inappropriate. The challenge is to find responses that compel bosses to concede progressively more control over production to turn the orderly retreat into the rout that capitalists fear.

#### MUHOLOVKA: ISTRAŽIVANJE MENADŽERSKIH INICIJATIVA ZA HUMANIZACIJU RADA

Stephen MARGLIN

R e z i m e

Nezadovoljstvo rutinskim, razdrobljenim radom koje se u industrijskim kapitalističkim zemljama (naročito u SAD) javlja krajem sedamdesetih i početkom osamdesetih godina, manifestovalo se u visokoj fluktuaciji radne snage, izrazitom absentizmu, neorganizovanim štrajkovima, smanjenju kvaliteta proizvoda, usporavanju radnog procesa i direktnim sabotazama. Ove pojave nemoguće je prema mišljenju autora članka objasniti (kako se to ponekad čini) teorijom potreba američkog psihologa Abrahama Maslowa. Data teorija bi trebalo pre svega da pruži odgovor na pitanje zašto se nezadovoljstvo radnika javlja u kasnim sedamdesetim i ranim osamdesetim godinama ovog veka, a ne, na primer, dvadeset godina ranije ili kasnije. Prema Maslowu, naime, potrebe su struktuirane hijerarhijski i pojedinci ih zadovoljavaju određenim redosledom. Najpre dolaze fiziološke (hrana, odeća, stan), zatim socijalne (na



primer, sigurnost) i, na kraju, psihološke potrebe (ljubav, uvažavanje, samoostvarenje). Na prvi pogled teorija je u skladu sa činjenicama: nezadovoljstvo radnika u poslednjoj deceniji javlja se očigledno kao nusproizvod uspeha kapitalizma u posleratnom periodu. »Jednom kada je materijalni prosperitet omogućio zadovoljavanje fizioloških potreba ljudi i kada je puna zaposlenost većini radnika po prvi put obezbedila sigurnost prirodno je prema Maslowljevoj teoriji da se pažnja usmeri ka uvažavanju i samoaktualizaciji«. Marglinu se, međutim, ova teorija ne čini ubedljivom. On navodi primere iz raznih kultura koji pokazuju da socijalne i psihološke potrebe mogu prethoditi fiziološkim potrebama koje su, uz to, u većini slučajeva društveno uslovljene. Staviše, Marglinu se čini da Maslow u potpunosti zanemaruje moralne imperativne kao faktore motivacije. Ideološka motivacija ne može, osim tautološki, da se podvede ni pod jednu od Maslowljevih kategorija. Maslowljeva teorija ne može da se održi ni na nivou posebnog i pojedinačnog: ako motivacija sledi hijerarhiju potreba moglo bi se očekivati da stariji radnici koji su, uopšte uzev, sigurniji za svoj posao, a uz to i bolje plaćeni, budu nezadovoljniji od svojih mlađih drugova. Krajem sedme i početkom osme decenije desilo se upravo suprotno: prema svim izveštajima, mladi radnici su bili ti koji su ispoljili nesrazmerno veće nezadovoljstvo prema tradicionalnim formama organizacije rada.

U celini uzev, analiza kapitalizma kao društveno ekonomskog sistema sa stanovišta pojedinca nije adekvatna: stoga bi je trebalo u potpunosti odbaciti i početi od objektivne činjenice nejednakih mogućnosti u sticanju posla koja je posledica kapitalizma kao načina proizvodnje zasnovanog na konfliktima i protivrečnostima. Pre svega, konflikt između poslodavaca i radnika inherentan je potrebi kapitaliste da obezbedi neprekidnu kontrolu nad preduzećem. Drugi konflikt inherentan je privatnoj svojini nad sredstvima za proizvodnju. Pojedinačne manifestacije ovih konfliktata nameću institucionalne promene koje treba da omoguće sistemu da neprekidno funkcioniše. Proces uvođenja ovih promena dijalektičke je prirode: rešenje jednog problema stvara nov problem. Ciklička privredna kretanja karakteristična za laissez-faire kapitalizam koja su kulminirala u velikoj krizi tridesetih godina vodila su političkim zahtevima za državnom intervencijom u cilju visokog nivoa zaposlenosti u periodu posle drugog svetskog rata. Kejnzijska politika u tom periodu uspeva da izravna cikličke oscilacije i da, manje-više, obezbedi punu zaposlenost, ali je stvorila nove probleme. Na makroekonomskom nivou je izazivala — ili, u najmanju ruku, intenzivirala inflaciju. Na mikroekonomskom nivou — time se vraćamo na pitanje organizacije rada — puna zaposlenost stvorila je takvu situaciju u kojoj se radnici osećaju manje obaveznim da se zadovolje radom koji obavljaju.

Nezadovoljstvo radnika monotonim i besmislenim radom nije primilo oblik zahteva za njegovim prestrukturiranjem. Inicijativa za »humanizaciju« rada potekla je od menadžera i može se, uopšte uzev, smatrati odgovorom na povećanje troškova radne snage usled radne discipline koja se javlja kao posledica materijalnog blagostanja. Ovo objašnjenje je ne samo u skladu sa događajima s kraja sedme i početka osme decenije, nego nalazi svoju potvrdu i u iskustvu iz perioda posle 1973. godine (petrolejska kriza) kada se ponovo pojavila nezaposlenost i

kada su zbog naglog povećanja disciplinovanosti radnika sve inicijative za »humanizaciju« rada preko noći iščezle.

Autor smatra da se sa sigurnošću može zaključiti da menadžerske inicijative za humanizaciju rada pre svega odražavaju stalnu brigu za produktivnost i profit. U kojoj meri ove inicijative uspevaju da pobude interes radnika, obnove disciplinu i povećaju produktivnosti? Prema autoru, najčešći, iako ne univerzalni, scenario humanizacije rada sastoji se iz tri faze: početnu fazu karakterišu impresivna dostignuća u produktivnosti, praćena opštim entuzijazmom, u drugoj fazi uprkos inicijalnom uspehu entuzijazam se preobraća u nezadovoljstvo, da bi se na kraju čitav eksperiment napustio u korist tradicionalnih formi organizacije. Prema klasičnoj teoriji, efikasnost određuje organizaciju. Kako onda objasniti ovo paradoksalno ponašanje? Prema autoru, organizacija je, ustvari, oblikovana borbom kapitalista da uspostave i održe kontrolu nad proizvodnim preduzećima. Stoga kapitalisti oklevaju da preduzmu bilo kakvu organizacionu promenu koja ugrožava njihovu kontrolu, pa čak i ako ona povećava efikasnost, jer ako sistem počne da puca na jednoj tački, to može da izazove lanac reperkusija koje neće biti moguće kontrolisati: »domino teorija«, koju zastupa autor sugeriše ideju o mehaničkom procesu kod kojeg su promene automatske kad taj proces jednom otpočne. Dakle eksperiment humanizacije rada može biti ekonomski veoma uspešan, ali on, time što uključuje radnika u proces odlučivanja, poprma karakter borbe za moć a time predstavlja i veliku opasnost za kapitaliste i menadžere, ona predstavlja šansu za radnike. Ona se, međutim, ne tretira uvek kao šansa. To se posebno odnosi na vođe radničkih sindikata i političke aktiviste. Za mnoge od njih menadžerske inicijative su sumnjive, jer »ako je nešto dobro za kapitalistu, to mora da je loše za radnike«. Takvo rezonovanje je opravdano u slučajevima kada se humanizacija rada preduzima u cilju stvaranja ili povećanja lojalnosti radnika prema firmi, a na štetu sindikata i klasne solidarnosti. Ipak, potpuna negativna reakcija na menadžerske inicijative nije adekvatna. Autor podseća da menadžeri preduzimaju reorganizaciju usled svoje nemoći da se na drugi način bore s teškoćama radne discipline, odnosno niske produktivnosti. Odgovor na ovaj potez na koji su poslodavci prinuđeni treba da se sastoji u akciji koja će ih prisiliti da sve više i više ustupaju radnicima kontrolu nad proizvodnjom.